



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

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TRUST IN HEAVEN'S TIMING

Elder Oaks and his wife, Kristen, share encouraging counsel with single members of the Church.

ELDER OAKS: I am very concerned about the singles in the Church. I love them. I address some of their needs by quoting from a valuable article published in the *Ensign* some years ago. Leaders and members in residential stakes, this is about singles, but the message is for you:

“The situation of a Church member who is single can be illustrated by a simple analogy. Imagine that your favorite hobby is stargazing and you’ve just joined a stargazing club. You come to your first club activity eager to participate. It’s a cold night, but you’re not concerned: most of the club members are wearing club jackets, and you’ve been told you should be able to get one as well. But there is no jacket for you. You ask about it, and you are told to keep looking and that if you do your best, you will find a jacket when the time is right.

“Meanwhile, you are getting pretty cold and a little worried. And you notice that most of the other club members are talking about how nice and warm their jackets are. In fact, throughout the evening the topic surfaces continually in various forms: how to wash and dry your jacket, how to add extra pockets, how to mend it, and so forth. Some of the club members notice you don’t have a jacket. ‘You really need a jacket for these activities,’ they tell you. ‘Why don’t you have one yet?’

“. . . This analogy . . . serve[s] to show how awkward it can sometimes feel to be a single member of a conventional ward.”¹



Fortunately, there are family wards in which single members feel included and know that their contributions are valued. I hope this is true in all of our residential stakes.

My favorite former single is my wife, Kristen. I have asked her to share some remarks.

Unrealized Blessings

SISTER OAKS: I married Elder Oaks at age 53, two years after the death of his beloved wife, June. We have much empathy and love for those of you who may be single or alone. We speak to you from our hearts and experience.

When I was single, I remember wondering how I could have such a beautiful patriarchal blessing full of promises—many of which did not seem realized. I thought, “Am I doing something wrong to delay my blessings?” This was much like the young man who asked the Savior, “What lack I yet?” (Matthew 19:20).

A close friend shared with me her experience with these same feelings. She said, “I found myself just repeating the same prayer over and over again. I prayed about finding my husband. It seemed fruitless, and I wondered if my prayer was getting through.”

Then she added, “It was then that I decided to pray a different type of prayer. I told the Lord that I had covenanted with Him, and however He wanted to use me to build the kingdom, I would accept. This



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perspective made me stronger and more patient. I began to feel Heavenly Father’s direction much more in my life. Of course, I still wanted my blessings, but I wanted to [receive them] on the Lord’s timetable.”

Making Adjustments

I thought about my friend’s comments. I made some adjustments. I changed my behavior. I began to spend less time alone with the computer and began to involve myself in ward activities, like cooking and cleaning up—activities I had previously shunned like the plague but that brought me together in a very personal and loving

way with members of my ward.

I changed my study of the scriptures. Through the scriptures our ability to receive revelation is increased. We can’t recognize the Lord’s voice unless we are familiar with the scriptures. By studying the scriptures, we see how He operates and talks to us. We can’t differentiate the counterfeit voices around us unless we are familiar with His word. The Lord can speak personally to us, provide protection, and direct us to build His kingdom.

I changed my prayers. I focused more on an eternal perspective. I asked for opportunities to serve and to help others. As a direct result, I began to better understand the needs of those around me. At church I began to notice others who sat alone, and I noticed

weary young mothers who needed a hand with their many young children. I began to feel impressed to make calls to people who seemed to need my help at that exact moment. Some calls seemed routine; yet others were life changing. One call was to a family who had a flood in their basement and another to a sister so despondent from a broken heart that she no longer desired to live. Those calls were important, and only under the guidance of the Spirit did I make them.

What More Can I Do That Is Right?

My original question had been, “Am I doing something wrong?” I learned that this is the wrong question. My prayers, scripture study, and behavior began to reflect a different question: “What more can I do that is right?”

I wasn’t doing anything wrong—I had simply forgotten to maintain an eternal perspective. I had overlooked the many ways I could be an instrument for doing good, for doing the Lord’s will. Heavenly Father’s timing is not our timing, and we have to trust in Him.

Never be discouraged. I realized that the next thing we need to be working on should not discourage us or turn us away from the gospel. By praying and reading the scriptures and continuing to have faith in the promises of Heavenly Father, we can change our focus and we can learn His will for us.



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During my wait on the Lord and through life experiences—both trying and joyous—I learned how much our Heavenly Father loves us and how much He delights to bless and protect us. I came to know that this Church is not simply a church; it is the Lord’s kingdom on earth. I came to realize more fully the power of our Savior’s Atonement and the wisdom of King Benjamin’s words: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Faith is a real and vital force, and we can magnify it through our actions. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85)

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness. It is always given when righteousness is present, and the greater the measure of obedience to God’s laws the greater will be the endowment of faith.”²

What a promise. We can do it!

We live in perilous times—times that will try men’s souls. It is a time for us to step up and be the best we can be. My hope is that each of us will turn to our Heavenly Father and ask, “What more can I do that is right?” If we do, I know that He will help us and bless us. ■

From a broadcast to 146 stakes in Utah County, Utah, originating from the Marriott Center at Brigham Young University on September 16, 2012.

NOTES

1. Kathy Grant, “Singles in the Ward Family,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 45.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 264.