

# APRIL 2013 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

*“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).*

*As you review the April 2013 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.*

## STORIES FROM CONFERENCE



## Learning to Be Obedient

By President Thomas S. Monson

When I was growing up, each summer from early July until early September, my family stayed at our cabin at Vivian Park in Provo Canyon in Utah.

One of my best friends during those carefree days in the canyon was Danny Larsen, whose family also owned a cabin at Vivian Park. Each day he and I roamed this boy’s paradise, fishing in the stream and the river, collecting rocks and other treasures, hiking, climbing, and simply

enjoying each minute of each hour of each day.

One morning Danny and I decided we wanted to have a campfire that evening with all our canyon friends. We just needed to clear an area in a nearby field where we could all gather. The June grass which covered the field had become dry and prickly, making the field unsuitable for our purposes. We began to pull at the tall grass, planning to clear a large, circular area. We tugged and yanked with all our might, but all we could get were small handfuls of the stubborn weeds. We knew this task would take the entire day, and already our energy and enthusiasm were waning.

And then what I thought was the perfect solution came into my eight-year-old mind. I said to Danny, “All we need is to set these weeds on fire. We’ll just *burn* a circle in the weeds!” He readily agreed, and I ran to our cabin to get a few matches.

Lest any of you think that at the tender age of eight we were permitted to use matches, I want to make it clear that both Danny and I were forbidden to use them without adult supervision. Both of us had been warned repeatedly of the dangers of fire. However, I knew where my family kept the matches, and we needed to clear that field. Without so much as a second thought, I ran to our cabin and grabbed a few matchsticks, making certain no one was watching. I hid them quickly in one of my pockets.

Back to Danny I ran, excited that in my pocket I had the solution to our problem. I recall thinking that the fire would burn only as far as we wanted and then would somehow magically extinguish itself.

I struck a match on a rock and set the parched June grass ablaze. It ignited as though it had been drenched in gasoline. At first Danny and I were thrilled as we watched the weeds disappear, but it soon became

apparent that the fire was not about to go out on its own. We panicked as we realized there was nothing we could do to stop it. The menacing flames began to follow the wild grass up the mountainside, endangering the pine trees and everything else in their path.

Finally we had no option but to run for help. Soon all available men and women at Vivian Park were dashing back and forth with wet burlap bags, beating at the flames in an attempt to extinguish them. After several hours the last remaining embers were smothered. The ages-old pine trees had been saved, as were the homes the flames would eventually have reached.



Danny and I learned several difficult but important lessons that day—not the least of which was the importance of obedience.

There are rules and laws to help ensure our physical safety. Likewise, the Lord has provided guidelines and commandments to help ensure our spiritual safety so that we might successfully navigate this often-treacherous mortal existence and return eventually to our Heavenly Father. ■

From “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 89–90.

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Why do we have rules?
- Why is it important for us to choose to obey God’s commandments?
- In what ways was Jesus Christ an example to us of obedience?

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: *Gospel Principles* (2009), “Obedience,” 200–206; “Obedience,” in *Gospel Topics on LDS.org*; and D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 19–23.

## Prophetic Words to Member Missionaries

“I promise you, as you pray to know with whom to speak, names and faces will come into your mind. Words to speak will be given in the very moment you need them. Opportunities will open to you. Faith will overcome doubt, and the Lord will bless you with your very own miracles.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 78–79.



## MISSIONARY STATISTICS AS OF APRIL GENERAL CONFERENCE

Number of missionaries currently serving missions	65,634
Number of young men and young women who have received their mission calls but have not yet entered a missionary training center	Over 20,000
Number of young men and young women currently in the interview process with their bishops and stake presidents	Over 6,000
Number of new missions created	58

From President Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 5.