

# DON'T BE IN A HURRY

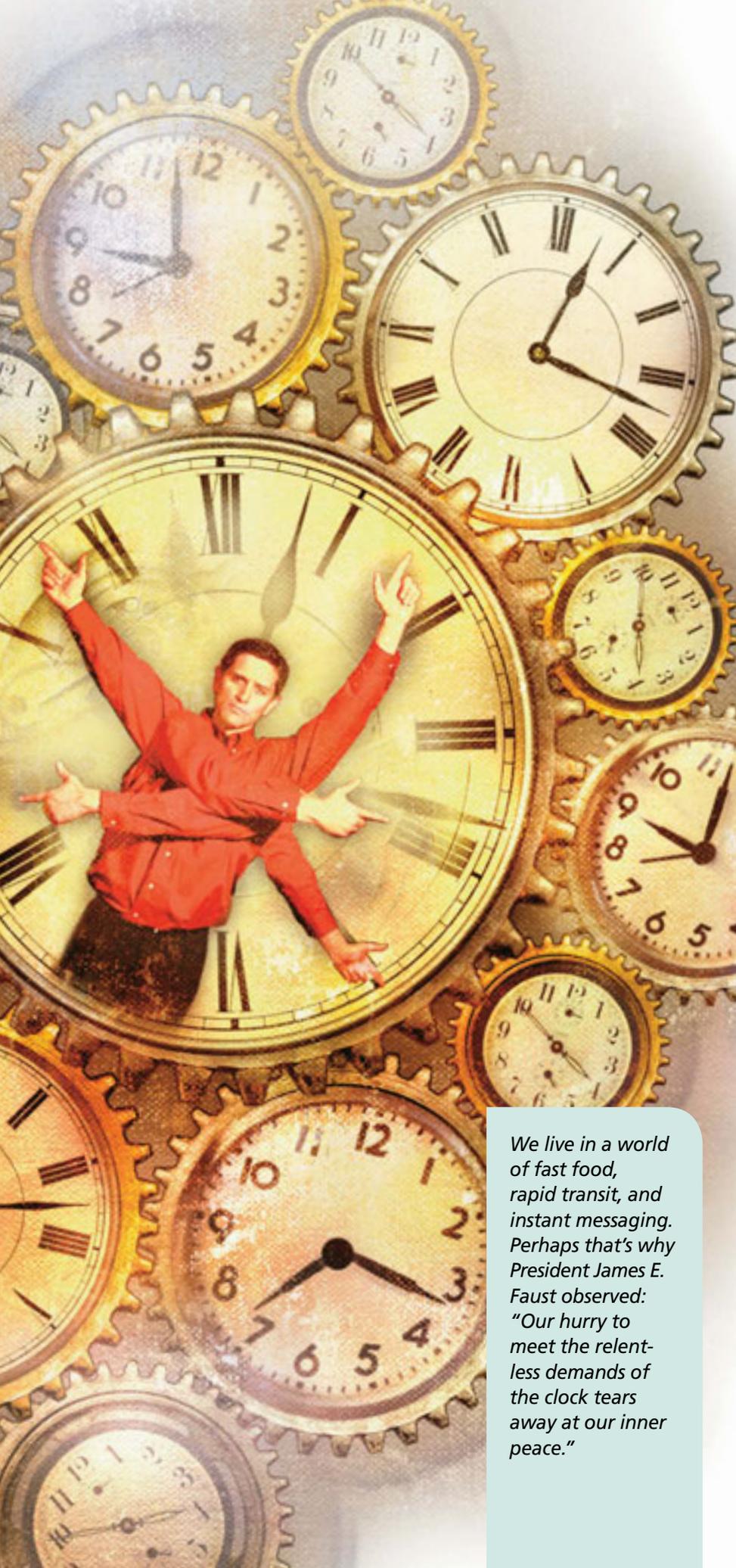
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*The counsel that President Brigham Young received in an 1845 dream may be just as important to us now as it was to him then.*

**T**he year 1845 was a busy one for Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo, Illinois. Still mourning the violent death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Saints continued their efforts to complete the Nauvoo Temple, spread the gospel, and gather believers even

as conflict with critics and dissenters hastened plans for an exodus to the West. On a Sunday in August 1845, Brigham Young (1801–77) paused from the demands of leadership to record a dream he'd had the previous night. "I dreamed . . . I saw Brother Joseph Smith," he wrote, "and as I was going about my business, he said, 'Brother Brigham, don't be in a hurry.'" President Young said Joseph repeated the counsel twice more with "a degree of sharpness": Brother Brigham, don't be in a hurry. Brother Brigham, don't be in a hurry.<sup>1</sup>



As important as that message was to Brigham Young in his day, it may be even more vital today. Think how the pace of life has quickened since then, and think of all the things—mundane and meaningful—that compete for our attention every day. We live in a world of fast food, rapid transit, instant messaging, and constant claims about how to get rich quicker, get fit faster, and succeed now. Despite the proliferation of supposed time-saving tools, we often feel pressed and stressed by the demands on our time.

Perhaps this is one meaning of the prophecy that “all things shall be in commotion” in the latter days. If so, it is troubling that the scriptures link that “commotion” with men’s hearts failing them (D&C 45:26; 88:91). As President James E. Faust (1920–2007) observed, “Our hurry to meet the relentless demands of the clock tears away at our inner peace.”<sup>2</sup> It’s easy to see how sin can harden a distracted heart, love can fade, and fear can rise in a hurry.

Let’s explore four areas where the tendency to hurry may blind us to the “immediate goodness of God” (Mosiah 25:10), and then let’s consider how we can obtain the peace He wants us to enjoy, even in a world of commotion.

### **Don’t Be in a Hurry to Forget the First Commandment**

In the midst of our modern-day frenzy, how well do we remember that our time

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on earth is actually a gift from God? While we go about our business, this earth is spinning on its axis, and all the while the Lord is “preserving [us] from day to day, by lending [us] breath that [we] may live and move and do” what we will, and “even supporting [us] from one moment to another” (Mosiah 2:21).

Do we recall, when complaining that there’s just never enough time, that God actually prolonged the days of our first fallen parents, granting them time to repent and find joy in this life and beyond (see 2 Nephi 2:21, 25)? Can we remember, when peeved at pauses and delays, that we live on borrowed time, purchased by the Savior’s blood, and that everything He does is “for the benefit of the world” (2 Nephi 26:24; see also 1 Corinthians 6:19–20)?

In return for all He gives us, the Lord invites us to love Him. Jesus taught that the first commandment is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . soul, . . . mind, and . . . strength” (Mark 12:30; see also Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; D&C 59:5). Do we sometimes forget the power of keeping the first commandment in our hurried pursuit of other good things?

“When we put God first,” President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) promised, “all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives.”<sup>3</sup> This is one reason President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) could say that “we will move faster if we hurry less.” Undistracted by other gods, we trust the Lord to help us allocate our time and talent to their very best uses each day. As a result, we do more good and we make real progress.<sup>4</sup>



#### MAKING TIME FOR CHRIST

**B**efore we can successfully undertake a personal search for Jesus, we must first prepare time for him in our lives and room for him in our hearts. In these busy days there are many who have time for golf, time for shopping, time for work, time for play—but no time for Christ.

“Lovely homes dot the land and provide rooms for eating, rooms for sleeping, playrooms, sewing rooms, television rooms, but no room for Christ.

“Do we get a pang of conscience as we recall his own words: ‘The foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.’ (Matthew 8:20.) Or do we flush with embarrassment when we remember, ‘And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.’ (Luke 2:7.) No room. No room. No room. Ever has it been.

“As we undertake our personal search for Jesus, aided and guided by the principle of prayer, it is fundamental that we have a clear concept of him whom we seek. The shepherds of old sought Jesus the child. But we seek Jesus the Christ, our Older Brother, our Mediator with the Father, our Redeemer, the Author of our salvation; he who was in the beginning with the Father; he who took upon himself the sins of the world and so willingly died that we might forever live. This is the Jesus whom we seek.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Search for Jesus,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1990, 4–5.

#### Don’t Be in a Hurry to Do It All Yourself

This life is more than an earthly career; it is “a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state . . . after the resurrection” (Alma 12:24). God knows infinitely more about that state than we do, and so He invites us to “call upon [Him] in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:8).

I love knowing that He asks us to pray and serve in the name of His Son, for I know that I am weak, but the Savior is “full of grace and truth” (Moses 5:7). Nephi put it this way: “Ye must pray always, and not faint; . . . ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul” (2 Nephi 32:9).

Missionaries honor Nephi’s injunction every morning, consecrating their day to the Lord in prayer and study. What about the rest of us? Decades after that dream of Joseph, Brigham Young asked a congregation in Utah if they had prayed that morning as families. Observing that many had not, he proposed an all-too-familiar reason: “I was in too much of a hurry.” Then President Young gave us wise counsel. “Stop! Wait!” he pleaded, “When you get up in the morning, before you suffer yourselves to eat one mouthful of food, . . . bow down before the Lord, ask Him to forgive your sins, and protect you through the day, to preserve you from temptation and all evil, to guide your steps aright, that you may do something that day that shall be beneficial to the kingdom of God on the

earth.”<sup>5</sup> That counsel will bless our lives as it reminds us each morning to kneel in prayer before we tackle the tasks ahead.

### **Don’t Be in a Hurry to Fill Your Days with “Busyness”**

A national journalist shared the following blunt assessment: “A good Mormon is a busy Mormon.”<sup>6</sup> A historian has also observed that “in Mormon culture . . . action is esteemed over contemplation.” Noting the Church’s mandate to prepare the world for the Millennium, the author wondered if our sense of “urgency, [initially] fed by noble purposefulness, [might] morph into busyness.”<sup>7</sup>

It is true that we have work enough to do, but when it comes to busyness, we may be taking our cues from the world rather than the Lord and His servants. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cautioned us against a “frantic, heedless busyness . . . [that often] crowds out contemplation and . . . leaves no room for renewal.” He likened thoughtful “intervals between [our] tasks” to “the green belts of grass, trees, and water that . . . interrupt the asphalt,” and he said that when we “plan some time for contemplation and renewal,” we will feel drawn to our work instead of driven to it.<sup>8</sup>

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve observed how easily we fill our lives with “appointments, meetings, and tasks” and then act frightened at the prospect of some quiet time. Why would that be? He feared that we might “feel that the busier we are, the more important we are—as though our busyness defines our worth.”<sup>9</sup> On another occasion, he reminded us that “being busy is not necessarily being spiritual”—for in fact, noise and busyness can actually crowd out the still, small voice of the Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) prescribed a remedy for this fever of busyness: meditation, or pondering, or introspection. President Hinckley recalled that his father “never ceased growing” because he made time for “thinking, meditating, [and] pondering.”<sup>11</sup> You may have to turn off your TV, computer, cell phone, or MP3 player, but it’s worth it. As Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, former Relief Society general president, put it: “Take time to slow down and ponder so that you can feel the Lord’s love for you.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Don’t Be in a Hurry to Be Done**

Do you know the feeling of “I wish I were done”? It shows up everywhere, even in the way we think and talk about our testimony, our conversion, and the Lord’s redeeming work in the world. If we hurry, we can short-circuit the marvel of conversion and miss the moments that God has given us to help us feel His love and renew our hope in Christ.

“There seems to be little evidence,” Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve once said, “that the Creator of the universe was ever in a hurry. Everywhere, on this bounteous and beautiful earth . . . there is evidence of patient purpose and planning and working and waiting.”<sup>13</sup>

When young Joseph Smith found himself in the fight of his life, “seized upon” by a powerful enemy who wanted to choke his prayer with despair and destroy him, when it took “all [of Joseph’s] powers [simply] to call upon God to deliver” him, “at [that] moment of great alarm,” how did deliverance come? In a “pillar of light . . . which descended *gradually*” (JS—H 1:15–16 emphasis added).

So where should we begin? For me, it is significant that the first step King Benjamin taught his people about becoming Saints was to yield “to the enticings of the Holy Spirit” (Mosiah 3:19). Learning to yield is foundational in the tests that follow. It is certainly prerequisite to more advanced tutorials that require us to be “meek, humble, patient, full of love, [and] willing to submit” to whatever the Lord requires (Mosiah 3:19). The word “yield” reminds me of another verb—to let—as in “let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds” (D&C 43:34), or “let your hearts be comforted” (D&C 98:1), or “let your hearts rejoice” (D&C 100:12).

If we commit our hearts and minds to love and serve God and our neighbors, our “small” deeds will bring about something “great” in us in time (see D&C 64:32–34). “Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit,” taught President Benson, “and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible.”<sup>14</sup> If we are in a hurry, the growth *is* imperceptible, but as we slow down, the Holy Ghost can help us recognize true progress—renewing our hope even as He teaches us what we yet lack to become like Christ (see Moroni 8:26; 2 Nephi 32:5).

*Rather than succumb to busyness and hurry, we can pause for meditation and pondering—or, in the words of the Psalmist: “Be still, and know that I am God.”*

Perhaps all this was summarized in eight words by the Psalmist long ago: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). The Lord reaffirmed that counsel in our day during a time of great commotion for the Prophet Joseph and early members of the Church: “Be still, and know that I am God” (D&C 101:16). I suppose that can be read as two separate commands, but I think it works especially well as a statement of cause and effect. If we will be still, put God first, call on Him first, and wait on Him always, then we will come to discern His still, small voice reminding us how well He knows us and how much He loves us, and He will teach us how to love and serve our neighbors as ourselves (see 1 Kings 19:11–12; 1 Nephi 17:45). As we do so, the promise is sure, “even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). ■

*Adapted from a devotional address delivered at Brigham Young University—Idaho on November 6, 2007. For the full text, visit [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

#### NOTES

1. *History of the Church*, 7:435.
2. James E. Faust, “He Healeth the Broken in Heart,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Jul. 2005, 2.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Great Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, “Let Us Move Forward and Upward,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 83.
5. *Deseret News Weekly*, Jun. 5, 1872, 248.
6. Kenneth Woodward, *New York Times*, Apr. 9, 2007, [nytimes.com/2007/04/09/opinion/09woodward.html](http://nytimes.com/2007/04/09/opinion/09woodward.html).
7. Philip L. Barlow, *Journal of Mormon History*, vol. 33, no.1 (2007), 11, 16.
8. Neal A. Maxwell, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1976, 26.
9. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Follow Me,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 15–16.
10. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Unspeakable Gift,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2003, 27; see also 1 Kings 19:12.
11. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Life’s Obligations,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1999, 5.
12. Bonnie D. Parkin, Spring 2005 Relief Society Open House Message.
13. In Conference Report, Oct. 1952, 95.
14. Ezra Taft Benson, “A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5.

