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HELPING OTHERS IN THE LORD'S WAY

If the Savior were among us in mortality today, He would be found ministering to the needy, the suffering, the sick.

As we reflect on the life of the Savior and His Resurrection, certainly the many images of those who petitioned Him for help come to my mind. I can easily imagine the deformed legs of a man unable to walk since birth or the tears flowing down a widow's cheek as she follows the body of her only son as it is carried to its tomb. I see the empty eyes of the hungry, the trembling hands of the sick, the pleading voice of the condemned, the disconsolate eye of the outcast. All of them are reaching toward a solitary man, a man without wealth, without home, without position.

I see this man, the Son of the living God, look on each of them with infinite compassion. With a touch of His holy hand, He brings comfort to the downcast, healing to the sick, liberation to the condemned. With a word, the dead man rises from his bier and the widow embraces her enlivened son.

These and other miraculous acts of mercy and kindness, some widely known, others quiet and gentle, define for me one of the salient

characteristics of the Savior: His love and compassion for the downtrodden, the weary, the weak, the suffering. Indeed, these acts of compassion are synonymous with His name.

Although nearly 2,000 years have passed since the mortal ministry of the Son of God, His loving example and His teachings remain an integral part of who we are as a people and who we are as a church. Today, through its inspired welfare program, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members strive to emulate His example as we seek to relieve suffering and foster self-reliance. . . .

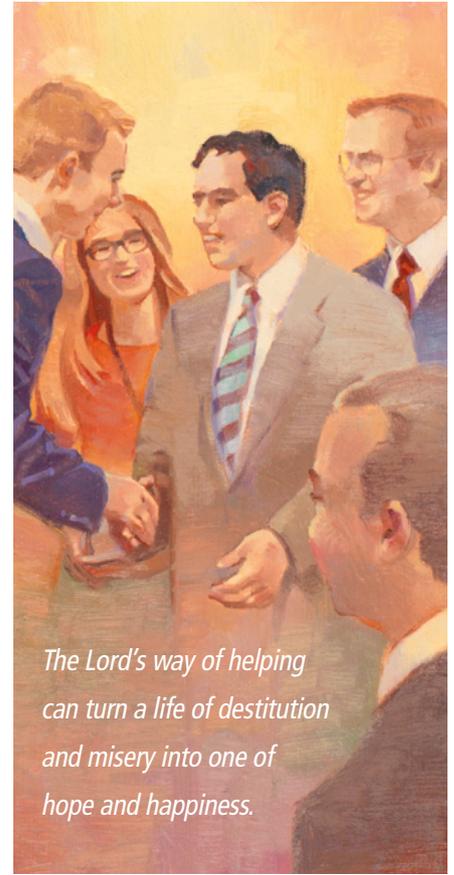
The Lord declared in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "It is my purpose to provide for my saints. . . . But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low" [D&C 104:15–16]. The Lord's way consists of helping people help themselves. The poor are exalted because they work for the

temporary assistance they receive, they are taught correct principles, and they are able to lift themselves from poverty to self-reliance. The rich are made low because they humble themselves to give generously of their means to those in need.

We teach members to be self-reliant, to do everything possible to sustain themselves, and to seek help from their families for needed assistance. When members and their families are doing all they can to provide necessities but still cannot meet basic needs, the Church stands ready to help.

In the Church, the bishop has the specific charge to care for "the poor, the needy, the single parent, the aged, the disabled, the fatherless, the widowed, and others who have special needs."¹

I am aware of how one bishop marshaled his resources to assist a man who came to him for help. The man had been happily married for years, but because of a later addiction to alcohol and drugs he was left without a job, home, or family.



*The Lord's way of helping
can turn a life of destitution
and misery into one of
hope and happiness.*

Hard years of living on the street had degraded and humiliated him. With tears streaming down his face, he pleaded with his bishop for help.

The ward welfare committee discussed this challenge. One man knew a dentist who might be willing to replace the man's broken front teeth. The Relief Society president suggested that nutritious food from the bishops' storehouse might improve his health. Another suggested that this man needed someone who could spend time with him daily and help him find the strength to overcome his addictions.

As the suggestions streamed in, the bishop realized that an entire ward of concerned brothers and sisters stood ready to help.

Soon the bishop began to notice improvements. Priesthood brethren gave the man a blessing. A charitable dentist replaced his broken teeth. Food from the bishops' storehouse improved his health. A faithful elderly couple agreed to serve as special home teachers. They were with him daily to help him stick to his resolve.

Following established principles, this good brother offered to help others in the ward. Slowly his life began to improve. Gradually the look of desperation and misery gave way to one of joy and happiness. Although it was a painful process, he was able to free himself from his addictions. He became an active member in the Church. A life of destitution and

misery turned into one of hope and happiness. This is the Lord's way of caring for those in need. . . .

If the Savior were among us in mortality today, He would be found ministering to the needy, the suffering, the sick. Following this example may be one of the reasons President Spencer W. Kimball said: "When viewed in this light, we can see that [welfare] is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. *It is the gospel in action.* It is the crowning principle of a Christian life."² ■

Excerpted from an April 1999 general conference address. For the full address, "Inspired Church Welfare," visit conference.lds.org.

NOTES

1. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (1998), 14.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, "Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77.