



By Elder  
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Of the Seventy

# PLACE YOUR TRUST IN HIM

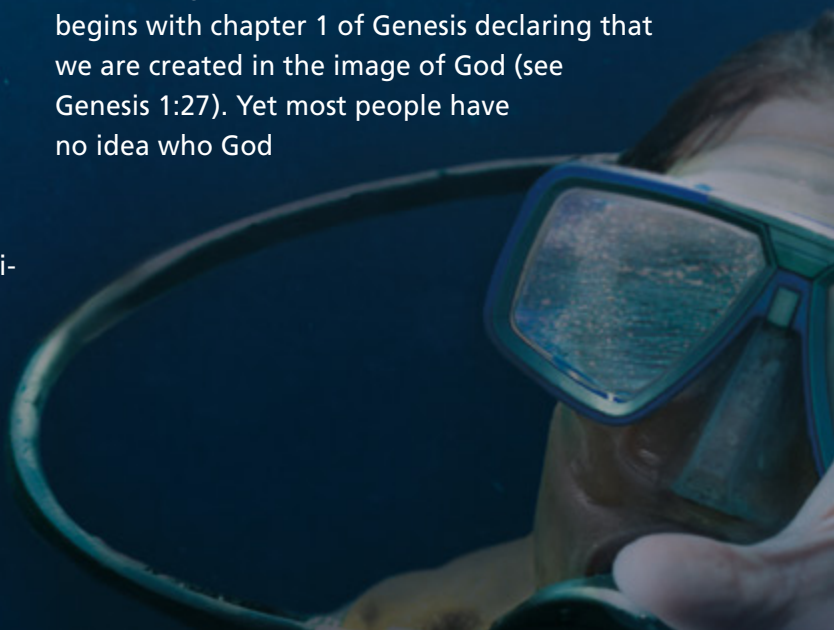
Several years ago, my brother Ron and I went scuba diving in California. After we finished, we decided to leave our equipment on the beach and go bodysurfing. We were out quite a distance when I looked back toward the beach and saw a woman in the water in full scuba gear, drowning. She had walked out into the ocean intending to scuba dive but had unexpectedly stepped off a sandy shelf into water over her head and panicked.

The woman had at her fingertips everything she needed to be safe. She could have dropped her weight belt with a flick of her finger on the quick-release buckle, pressed the button on her inflatable buoyancy vest so she could float, or put her regulator in her mouth so she could breathe underwater. We quickly swam back to her and pulled her to shore. She was embarrassed and obviously inexperienced. She had been taught correct principles of how to scuba dive safely but hadn't applied what she had learned. She was, you could say, living well below her privileges. She almost died because of it.

*The Lord will reach out to us if we will reach out to Him.*

## The Need for Vision

We often live below our spiritual privileges, even though we've been taught by the true and living God through His prophets how to safely navigate this mortal experience. We sometimes panic and flail about because we have become disoriented and lose sight of who we are. The Old Testament begins with chapter 1 of Genesis declaring that we are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:27). Yet most people have no idea who God







really is and that we are His children, with divine potential. This truth, with its eternal perspective, allows us to breathe without fear even when we are submerged by life's difficulties.

Helen Keller, the first deaf-and-blind person to receive a university degree, is often quoted as having said, "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."<sup>1</sup> The importance of vision is the underlying basis of two recurring themes in the Old Testament. The first is the

constant need for the Lord's covenant people to be reminded of who their true God is and thus their own identity—that God is not something they can create with their own hands. The second is that the Lord will protect and bless those who will have Him to be their God.

#### **Let Go of False Gods**

In two of the Ten Commandments, the Lord commanded the children of Israel, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3) and, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:4). These commandments were given to the children of Israel when, even after the Lord had miraculously delivered them from slavery in Egypt, they were quick to forget Him. The Psalmist lamented:

"They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

"Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass" (Psalm 106:19–20).

A divine wake-up call was delivered in the form of stone tablets engraved with protective commandments (see Exodus 34:1, 4, 12, 14), but it was still said of them, "And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them" (Psalm 106:36). Like the drowning scuba diver who could have dropped her weight belt, the children of Israel needed to let go of their false gods that weighed them down, endangering their spiritual lives.

Isaiah logically exclaimed, "Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?" (Isaiah 44:19) and, "Shall the





clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" (Isaiah 45:9).

Jeremiah similarly reasoned:

"[The Israelites say] to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: . . . but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.

"But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah" (Jeremiah 2:27–28).

Just as the woman could have used her scuba gear regulator to breathe life-sustaining oxygen, God, the source of all truth and wisdom, has instructed us to rely on only that which will spiritually sustain us. He has declared, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour" (Isaiah 43:11).

Habakkuk, a prophet who lived about a century after Isaiah, continued to plead with Israel to let go of their false idols and worship the only true God:

"Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.

"But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:19–20).

Zephaniah also warned Israel to repent before it was too late: "Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath" (Zephaniah 1:18).

We may say of ancient idol worship, "Yes, but that was then. I would never be so foolish!" But what do we worship today? If we are to have "no other gods"

before Him, then rightfully God should be that which we value most. Can we say that is true for each of us?

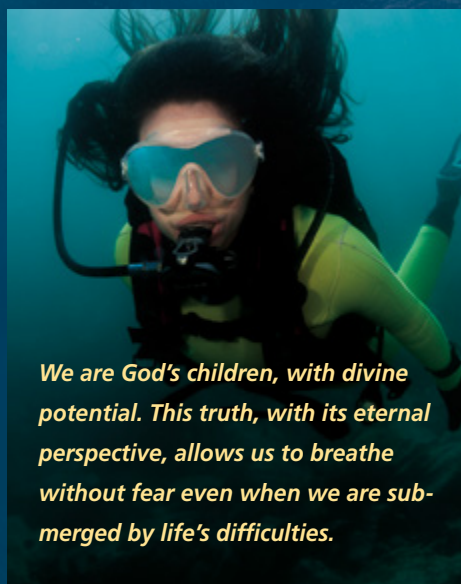
The Lord told Hyrum Smith, through the Prophet Joseph: "Seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich" (D&C 11:7).

If our greatest desire is for money, sports, music, fame, entertainment, praise, or popularity, then we risk having them

become our own graven images, replacing or taking priority over God and His plan for us. We may find ourselves "in over our heads" with the concerns of the world, lacking the clarity of thought to let go of those things that weigh us down and keep us from being spiritually safe. The ultimate irony of our displaced loyalties and priorities is that God's plan is for our ultimate happiness. Why would we not enthusiastically embrace it? We can easily panic and spiritually drown when we forget who we are, don't believe in that divine heritage, want an easier way than God's plan provides, or procrastinate obedience.

### Blessings from Trusting God

The second recurring and related theme in the Old Testament is that when we trust in the living God



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rather than in the arm of flesh, God will bless us. In 2 Chronicles 20, we read that the people of Judah were surrounded by a great, hostile multitude and had no apparent ability to survive the battle. The people fasted and prayed for deliverance, not to false gods made with their own hands but to the one true God.

Then Jahaziel, speaking for the Lord, declared to King Jehoshaphat and all of Judah, "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15). This promise was miraculously fulfilled when the enemy turned on each other, sparing Judah. "So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about" (2 Chronicles 20:30).

Another Old Testament example of blessings that come from trusting in God is presented through the courageous example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. They were told they would be thrown into a fiery furnace if they didn't fall down and worship the golden image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar. The king taunted them by declaring, "And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" (Daniel 3:15).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego answered the king boldly:

"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

"But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17–18).

This courageous reply is a marvelous example of trust in the living God. They knew that whether they lived or died, all would be well because they were following the true God, and His plan extends beyond this short mortal life. One of the most comforting promises we can rely on is that the Lord is mindful of us and will watch over us if we will put our trust in Him. "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nahum 1:7).

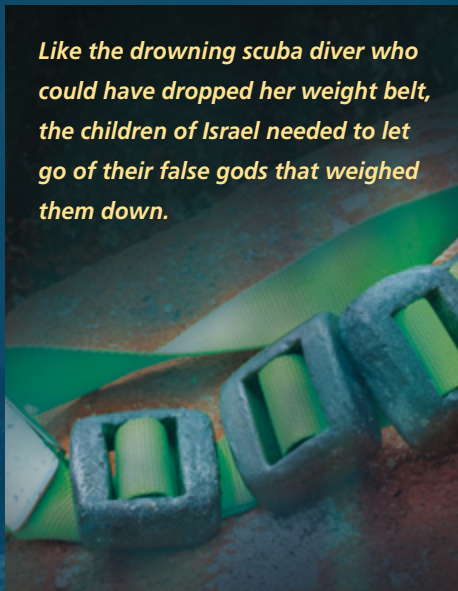
Placing our trust in the true God seems so clearly obvious and wise when compared to the alternatives; however, the lessons of mankind throughout

the ages show that, much like the drowning scuba diver, the obvious is not always so obvious. Dropping those weights which endanger our eternal well-being is a lesson for the ages. Malachi closes the Old Testament reminding us of perhaps the greatest message in the scriptures when he declares: "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10).

May we all receive the comfort, peace, strength, and guidance that come from putting our trust in the true God. He alone is capa-

ble of sustaining and saving us. There is great peace in knowing that putting our trust in God also puts the battle in His hands, "for the battle is not yours, but God's." ■

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NOTE

1. Although this quote is often attributed to Helen Keller, the wording varies according to the source.