

THE Purifying Path

OF OBEDIENCE, SACRIFICE, AND CONSECRATION

By Lauren Bangerter Wilde

When Ammon and his brothers served their mission among the Lamanites, they saw thousands of people baptized. Faith in Jesus Christ and in the gospel caused these new converts to change their lifestyle (see Alma 24:17–18), their culture (see Alma 23:5), their name (see Alma 23:17), and their homeland (see Alma 27:15, 22–26). The scriptures say that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, as they called themselves, were “distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27). In other words, they were a people whose hearts had become pure through faith and gospel living (see Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:22; Helaman 3:35).

This example is one we would do well to follow as we individually strive to become pure in heart—a process that starts with obedience and sacrifice and culminates in consecration.¹

Obedience

The conversion of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies began with their individual obedience to the first principles and ordinances of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). The faith and repentance that preceded the baptism and confirmation of so many is best exemplified by King Lamoni’s

father, who said, “O God, . . . I will give away all my sins to know thee” (Alma 22:18).

After their baptism, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies “did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe to keep his commandments and his statutes” (Alma 25:14; see also Alma 21:23). They made a special covenant to ensure that they would not break the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13). They buried their weapons of war deep in the earth and covenanted never to use them again for the shedding of blood (see Alma 24:17–18). Their desire to be obedient led them to make this sacrifice and covenant.

We too are led to sacrifice and make covenants when we decide to keep the commandments (see Mosiah 18:8–11). If we falter, the merciful gift of repentance allows us to renew our commitment to be obedient.²

Sacrifice

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the relationship between sacrifice and obedience this way: “Sacrifice allows us to learn something about ourselves—what we are willing to offer to the Lord through our obedience.”³ The Anti-Nephi-Lehies sacrificed their past way of life

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies sacrificed their past way of life when they buried their weapons of war.



ILLUSTRATION BY DAN BUUR

***Parenthood and nurturing children
move us along the path of obedience,
sacrifice, and consecration.***

when they buried their weapons. Later, after trying to live their new religion despite persecution from unbelieving Lamanites, they followed the counsel of their priesthood leader and moved to a new land, relying on the charitable actions of the Nephites who welcomed them there. The sacrifice made by the Anti-Nephi-Lehies blessed not only them but the Nephites as well (see Alma 27:24–27; 53:10–19).

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said that “our highest sense of sacrifice is achieved as we make ourselves more sacred or holy. This we do by our obedience to the commandments of God.”⁴ As we are obedient, we become willing to sacrifice such things as our time, our energy, and our means. Sacrifice changes our natures; it is the process by which we become holy enough to be willing to give up all we have for the Lord if we are called upon to do so.

Consecration

Latter-day Saint scholar Hugh Nibley observed that the law of consecration, “the consummation of the laws of obedience and sacrifice, is the threshold of the celestial kingdom, the last and hardest requirement made of men [and women] in this life.”⁵ For some of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, consecration meant literally laying down their lives for what they believed (see Alma 24). While we aren’t normally required to put our lives in jeopardy for the gospel or give all that we have, we do consecrate our lives in other ways. Elder Stephen B. Oveson of the Seventy and his wife wrote,



LIVING A CONSECRATED LIFE

“Spiritual confidence increases when you are truly striving, for the right reasons, to live a consecrated life in spite of your imperfections.”

**Elder Jörg Klebingat of the Seventy,
“Approaching the Throne of God with**

Confidence,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 36.



“In the long run, offering ourselves for sacred uses might simply mean maintaining a consistent attitude of meek willingness to offer all we are capable of giving at any given time while we help those about us do the same.”⁶

A consecrated life doesn’t happen all at once. The Ovesons described consecration as “a day-to-day process of dedication, humility, refinement, and purification as we follow the example of . . . our Savior.”⁷

The Book of Mormon succinctly summarizes this process with regard to the Anti-Nephi-Lehies: “They became a righteous people” (Alma 23:7). They became pure in heart. We too can become pure in heart as we strive to be more obedient, more willing to sacrifice, and more consecrated to the Lord and His work. ■

The author lives in Maine, USA.

NOTES

1. See Spencer W. Kimball, “Becoming the Pure in Heart,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 80–81.
2. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Divine Gift of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 38–41.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “The Law of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 7.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Lessons from Eve,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 88.
5. Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, vol. 9 of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (1989), 168.
6. Stephen B. Oveson and Dixie Randall Oveson, “Personal Consecration,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2005, 46.
7. Oveson and Oveson, “Personal Consecration,” 46.