

SACRED THINGS

By C. Gary Allred

As I tried to multitask during general conference, I realized it wasn't going as well as I thought it would.

A very pointed lesson was presented to me during the Sunday afternoon session of the April 2012 general conference. I sat in front of my computer screen and marveled at the reality of the speaker's image and the bell-clear tone of his words. With my computer I would also be able to access the speaker's words for sharing and later listening, or even print a hard copy as a study aid and future reference. It was truly amazing.

My eyes wandered across the toolbar at the bottom of my screen. I somehow decided that as long as I could hear the words being spoken, I could easily understand and absorb their meaning while also doing something else at the same time. After all, I was constantly hearing about the wonders of multitasking.

It didn't take long to convince myself. Soon I had opened another tab and was messing with some mindless game whose image effectively covered up the pulpit and the speaker and most of the Tabernacle Choir. I could hear the speaker talking, though. General conference was still streaming live onto my flat-screen monitor.



Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy was speaking about how we should hold some things sacred. I heard him say:

“Sacred means worthy of veneration and respect. By designating something as sacred, the Lord signals that it is of higher value and priority than other things.”¹

I told myself that I agreed with him. Then, as I made another move on my game, I heard Elder Pieper pass on another bit of counsel:

“But ‘there is an opposition in all things’ (2 Nephi 2:11). The opposite of sacred is profane or secular—that which is temporal or worldly. The worldly constantly competes with the sacred for our attention and priorities.”²

I nodded once more—he had my attention now. I listened to his words intently for a few minutes, though I couldn't see his face behind my game. My multitasking probably



A PROPHETIC EPISTLE JUST TO YOU

"I ask you to reflect . . . on the unique phenomenon that general conference itself is. . . . We testify to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people that God not only lives but also that He speaks, that for our time and in our day the counsel you have heard is, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, 'the will of the Lord, . . . the word of the Lord, . . . the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation' [D&C 68:4]. . . .

". . . If we teach by the Spirit and you listen by the Spirit, some one of us will touch on your circumstance, sending a personal prophetic epistle just to you."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "An Ensign to the Nations," *Ensign*, May 2011, 111, 113.

wasn't going as well as I thought it should be. Then I heard Elder Pieper say this:

"The sacred cannot be selectively surrendered. Those who choose to abandon even one sacred thing will have their minds darkened (see D&C 84:54), and unless they repent, the light they have shall be taken from them (see D&C 1:33)."³

Something was nudging the back of my mind. Then a strange thing happened. The edges of my on-screen game began to waver and break into scattered pixels. In just a second or two, everything—including the sound—was gone. My computer had crashed.

I shut off the whole system for a couple of minutes. Then I turned it back on and watched the machine reboot. Soon it was up and running. I signed back on to the Church's website and saw that Elder Pieper had concluded his talk. Conference was again streaming in, clear and true. But I didn't put my game back on.

My computer has certainly crashed on other occasions, but I kept thinking of the last words I heard from Elder Pieper that day. It seemed that my mind was "darkened" when I mixed the worldly with the spiritual, and then that which I still had was

taken from me. I know the Lord often teaches us in more subtle ways or requires us to make a greater effort. And I suppose that the reason things happened the way they did could be open to debate, but I had learned a lesson, felt remorse, and repented.

A few days later I was able to listen to all of Elder Pieper's talk and then print it out. What I had lost was restored and renewed, and so was my testimony that "sacred things are to be treated with more care, given greater deference, and regarded with deeper reverence"⁴—especially during general conference. ■

The author lives in Alberta, Canada.

NOTES

1. Paul B. Pieper, "To Hold Sacred," *Ensign*, May 2012, 109.
2. Paul B. Pieper, "To Hold Sacred," 109.
3. Paul B. Pieper, "To Hold Sacred," 111.
4. Paul B. Pieper, "To Hold Sacred," 109.

