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OUR Motivation TO Live the Gospel

By Mindy Selu
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The path of discipleship is filled with blessings—those both “seen and unseen.”¹ But there are times when that path, despite its blessings, isn’t easy or convenient. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ requires work and sacrifice, and sometimes it’s difficult to find the motivation to live the commandments and make those sacrifices.

As a young adult, you’re probably also busy trying to juggle new responsibilities, make life-altering decisions, and figure out what your own path of discipleship is going to look like for the rest of your life. On top of that, there may be things in the Church’s policies or history or in gospel doctrine that you don’t quite understand and temptations you struggle with, as well as blessings you’re still waiting on and questions about God’s plan for you.

Some of us may wonder at times if living the gospel is worth the blessings we’ve been promised. We might argue that we don’t fit in, that it’s too much work, or that the questions seem to outweigh the answers. But what it really comes down to is motivation. Why do you do what you do and live the way you do? Why do you continue keeping the commandments, even when no one’s around to notice if you do?

Regardless of who you are and what stage of life you’re in, the choice to find your motivation by cultivating your faith in the Savior and His gospel is up to you.



To Whom Shall We Go?

Finding and keeping up the motivation to live the gospel is hardly a challenge unique to our day. Even when the Savior was on the earth, people still had a hard time understanding and thus obeying the principles He taught. Several of His disciples were listening as He explained a concept that seemed to offend them—His role as the “bread of life” (see John 6:35–58). They responded skeptically, saying, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” (John 6:60).

Christ, seeing that they were having a hard time believing or accepting this doctrine, asked, “Doth this offend you?” (John 6:61). Instead of putting their faith ahead of their doubts, many of His disciples “went back, and walked no more with him” (John 6:66).

But when Christ asked the rest of His disciples if they too would “go away,” Peter gave the only answer there really is to give: “To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67–68).

The Source of Our Motivation

Peter knew the source of his motivation.

It came down to the heart of why we do
what we do in the gospel:

our testimony of and faith in Jesus Christ. “We believe and *are sure*,” Peter declared, “that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:69; emphasis added). By gaining that same strong conviction of Jesus Christ, His divinity, and His work, we too can find the motivation to continue living the gospel—even when it seems hard, even when nobody else will notice, and even when we’re not sure we want to.

There will always be “hard sayings.” But there will always be the option to choose faith over any doubt or uncertainty. As Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy said, “The decision to believe is the most important choice we ever make.”²

So what do we do if we find ourselves on the other side of one of those “hard sayings”?

1. Follow the example of Peter and the other disciples who remained faithful even when it would’ve been easy to “go away.” Listen to the counsel of prophets, apostles, and other leaders:

“In moments of fear or doubt or troubling times, hold the ground you have already won. . . . *Hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.*”³

“Take one simple step forward in faith—and then another. . . . Focus on the truths [you do] believe and let those truths fill [your] mind and heart. . . .



“ . . . Start with basic gospel truths.”⁴

2. Stay close to the scriptures and follow their teachings:

“Prayerfully study and ponder the Book of Mormon each day.”⁵

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

3. Continue keeping the commandments:

“Answers to our sincere questions come when we earnestly seek and when we live the commandments. . . . Our faith can reach beyond the limits of current reason.”⁶

“As you continue to be obedient, . . . you will be given the knowledge and understanding you seek.”⁷

In the end, our motivation simply comes down to what Peter said. Do we believe that Jesus is the Christ, that He runs His Church and has the words of eternal life? Does our faith in Him take precedence over the “hard sayings” we might not understand at the moment?

The Rewards of Living the Gospel

When we do decide to love and follow God and Jesus Christ and to keep the commandments even when we don’t fully understand them, the rewards are immeasurable. The natural man asks, “What’s in it for me?” The teachings of the gospel respond: “Peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come”; a place prepared for you in the

mansions of God; all that Heavenly Father has; “never-ending happiness” (see Doctrine and Covenants 59:23; Ether 12:34; Doctrine and Covenants 84:38; Mosiah 2:41); and, as Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: “Here [in the Church] you will find what is precious beyond price. . . . Here you will find the words of eternal life, the promise of blessed redemption, and the pathway to peace and happiness.”⁸ Just to name a few.

When we devote ourselves to following Christ and obeying His commandments, we are promised all of these things and more. That doesn’t mean the path will always be easy or understandable, but the blessings we’re promised from staying strong will continue to unfold throughout our lives and even after.

However, as incredible as these blessings are, they shouldn’t be our primary motivation for living the gospel. No matter what questions you have, no matter which doctrine you don’t understand, your faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement will be the key to your motivation to live His gospel, just as it was for Peter and others.

“Our motives and thoughts ultimately influence our actions,” said Elder Uchtdorf. “The testimony of the truthfulness of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is the most powerful motivating force in our lives. Jesus

repeatedly emphasized the power of good thoughts and proper motives: ‘Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not’ (D&C 6:36).

“The testimony of Jesus Christ and the restored gospel will help us in our lives to learn of God’s specific plan for us and then to act accordingly. It gives us assurance of the reality, truth, and goodness of God, of the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and of the divine calling of latter-day prophets.”⁹

As for me, I’m going to keep trying, even when it feels hard. I’m going to keep saying my prayers and studying my scriptures. I’m going to make an effort to strengthen my testimony of the Savior every day. And I’m going to keep trying to live as He would have me live and depend on His words and His living prophets and apostles to teach me how, relying on the motivation that stems not only from my faith in and love for Him but also from His eternal sacrifice and love for me. ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 76.
2. L. Whitney Clayton, “Choose to Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 38.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 93–94; emphasis in original.
4. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Returning to Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 94.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 87.
6. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Returning to Faith,” 95.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 95–96.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 24.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Power of a Personal Testimony,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 37.



TWO CHOICES

“The Lord’s way is not hard. Life is hard, not the gospel. . . . Life is hard for all of us, but life is also simple. We have only two choices. We can either follow the Lord and be endowed with His power and have peace, light, strength, knowledge, confidence, love, and joy, or we can go some other way, any other way, whatever other way, and go it alone—without His support, without His power, without guidance, in darkness, turmoil, doubt, grief, and despair. And I ask, which way is easier?”

Elder Lawrence E. Corbridge of the Seventy, “The Way,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 36.