

LEARN YOUR Duty

Duty reminds us we are stewards of all that our Creator has entrusted to us.



By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Joseph B. Wirthlin was born on June 11, 1917, in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was sustained to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1986. The following excerpt is from an address he gave in general conference on October 5, 1980, as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. For the full text in English, see Ensign, Nov. 1980, at ensign.lds.org.

Most of us don't mind doing what we ought to do when it doesn't interfere with what we *want* to do, but it takes discipline and maturity to do what we ought to do whether we want to or not. Duty is too often what one expects from others and not what one does. What people think and believe and plan are all very important, but what they *do* is the thing that counts most. It is a call to throw out selfishness and to think of the common good of all.

We must always remember that duty reminds us we are stewards of all that our Creator has entrusted to us. When we accept duties willingly and faithfully, we find happiness. Those who make happiness the chief objective of life are bound to fail, for happiness is a by-product rather than an end in itself. Happiness comes from doing one's duty

and knowing that his life is in harmony with God and His commandments. . . .

Every successful man and woman in the history of the world has known his or her duty and has had a firm desire to fulfill it. The Savior had a perfect sense of duty. Even though what was required of Him surpassed the limits of human capabilities, He submitted Himself to His Father's will and fulfilled His divine duty by atoning for the sins of mankind.

Joseph Smith was true to his calling and fulfilled his duty even in the face of severe persecution and great personal sacrifice. He persevered, he endured, and he accomplished the Restoration of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. . . .

President Spencer W. Kimball [1895–1985] has accepted the charge to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. He faithfully pursues his duty and is a wonderful example to us in all that he does to spread the gospel of love. The result is a worldwide Church and the fulfillment of latter-day prophecy.

These great men . . . might have chosen to follow a path easier than the one where duty led. But they did not. Certainly their duty did not always lead to personal comfort or casual convenience. Their duty frequently meant great sacrifice and personal hardship; but nevertheless, duty they chose, and duty they performed.

Life requires us to perform many duties—some routine, others more meaningful and important. An integral part of duty is to set the proper example and to take every opportunity to bolster others along this uphill road of life. This might be done with an



encouraging word, a compliment, a handshake—any indication of caring. And we need to keep in mind that as we learn our duties well here, we also are preparing for the performance of eternal duties. . . .

The absolute necessity to do our duties at home, in the Church, in our daily work, and also for our beloved country . . . is vividly and beautifully described by the Master Teacher, Jesus the Christ. He declared:

“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither

doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

“For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

“And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

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“Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

“He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

“But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:43–49).

“Be not weary in well-doing” (D&C 64:33), my brothers and sisters. Being true to one’s duty is a mark of true disciples of the Lord and the children of God. Be valiant in your duty. Stay in step. Do not fail in your most important task, that of keeping your second estate. Be true to your duty, for it will bring you to God.

I bear you my deep and sincere testimony that this is the only way to obtain happiness and help the kingdom grow and flourish. ■

Capitalization and paragraphing standardized.