



**By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## TRUE LOVE

*Love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal life.*

Love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pathway of discipleship. It comforts, counsels, cures, and consoles. It leads us through valleys of darkness and through the veil of death. In the end, love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal life.

For me, the Prophet Joseph Smith has always exemplified the pure love of Christ. Many asked why he gained so many followers and retained them. His answer: “It is because I possess the principle of love.”<sup>1</sup>

The story is told of a 14-year-old boy who had come to Nauvoo in search of his brother who lived near there. The young boy had arrived in winter with no money and no friends. When he inquired about his brother, the boy was taken to a large house that looked like a hotel. There he met a man who said, “Come in, son, we’ll take care of you.”

The boy accepted and was brought into the house, where he was fed, warmed, and given a bed to sleep in.

The next day it was bitter cold, but in spite of that, the boy prepared himself to walk the eight miles to where his brother was staying.



When the man of the house saw this, he told the young boy to stay for a while. He said there would be a team coming soon and that he could ride back with them.

When the boy protested, saying that he had no money, the man told him not to worry about that, that they would take care of him.

Later the boy learned that the man of the house was none other than Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. This boy remembered this act of charity for the rest of his life.<sup>2</sup>

In a message of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s *Music and the Spoken Word*, a story was told about an elderly man and woman who had been married for many decades. Because the wife was slowly losing her sight, she could no longer take care of herself the way she had done

for so many years. Without being asked, the husband began to paint her fingernails for her.

“He knew that she could see her fingernails when she held them close to her eyes, at just the right angle, and they made her smile. He liked to see her happy, so he kept painting her nails for more than five years before she passed away.”<sup>3</sup>

That is an example of the pure love of Christ. Sometimes the greatest love is not found in the dramatic scenes that poets and writers immortalize. Often, the greatest manifestations of love are the simple acts of kindness and caring we extend to those we meet along the path of life.

True love lasts forever. It is eternally patient and forgiving. It believes, hopes, and endures all things. That is the love our Heavenly Father bears for us. ■

*From “The Great Commandment,” Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2007, 28–29.*

### NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:498.
2. Mark L. McConkie, *Remembering Joseph: Personal Recollections of Those Who Knew the Prophet Joseph Smith* (2003), 57.
3. “Selflessness,” Sept. 23, 2007, broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*; available at [musicandthespokenword.com/spoken-messages](http://musicandthespokenword.com/spoken-messages).