



By Elder Massimo De Feo
Of the Seventy

HOW I DEEPEN MY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

When I turned 12, I started to really think about how I could be involved in the gospel.

I was living in my hometown of Taranto, Italy. It had been only a few years since my brother and I had met the missionaries and become members of the Church, but I started feeling eager to participate more. I began to feel a desire to pass the sacrament. I remember walking to church each Sunday with a prayer in my heart that I would be called to pass the sacrament.

One Sunday morning, my branch president called me into his office. He said, “Massimo, the Lord wants you to receive the priesthood and be ordained a deacon.”

When I heard those words—“the Lord wants you”—something struck me. I felt that it wasn’t a human asking me to do something, but that it really was the Lord *personally* extending a responsibility. When my branch president looked at me, I felt that the Lord was reaching out to me.

As I began to pass the sacrament every Sunday, I could feel the power of godliness in my life. I felt responsible, I felt involved, and I knew that I was doing the Lord’s work. I felt closer to Him by serving Him.

This experience of feeling the Lord’s hand both through my leaders and in my responsibilities helped me develop a deeper personal relationship with Him. I wanted to be more involved in the gospel; as I lived that way, I felt the presence of God in my life. Developing this kind of relationship with Him is one of the most important things you can do in your youth.



SEEING THE LORD IN YOUR LEADERS

As I met with my branch president, it made a deep spiritual impression on me when I felt that it was the Lord, not just my branch president, giving me a responsibility. By recognizing the Lord in my leader, I felt closer to Him, and my relationship with Him deepened.

If you understand as a youth that when you have callings extended to you or when you sit in your classes at church, you are hearing the words of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, then you will be able to see church in a different way—a spiritual way. You will *want* to participate in the Lord’s work. You will be able to have deep spiritual experiences and will feel closer to Him each Sunday.

SEEING THE LORD IN THE ORDINANCES

We can also develop a personal relationship with the Lord by recognizing His presence as we participate in the ordinances of the gospel. When we are involved in the ordinances—like the sacrament—we know that “the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). When I passed the sacrament, even at the age of 12 or 13, I really felt that I was an instrument in His hands. I felt the presence and power of God in those ordinances and the power of godliness in my life. Having that sacred experience each week by recognizing the Lord in this ordinance helped me deepen my personal relationship with the Lord.

This is not limited to just *passing* the sacrament. We can also feel the power of godliness by *taking* the sacrament every Sunday. When we take the sacrament, we shouldn't take it lightly or occasionally or casually. We should want, decide, and prepare to partake of the sacrament, all of which will allow us to feel the power of godliness in our lives. We should use the sacrament as a powerful spiritual tool to deepen our relationship with God and to prepare ourselves for the everyday challenges of life.



A DEEP PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Decide now to develop a deep personal relationship with the Lord. The closer you feel to Him, the easier it will be to serve Him.

The Lord reaches out to each of us personally. When we attend church, we are hearing His words. When we take the sacrament, we are fulfilling His sacred ordinances. We need to recognize the presence and power of God in our leaders and in the ordinances so that we can deepen our personal relationship with Him. ■

