



Picture yourself on one side of a stream, and on the other side is your eternal happiness. You need to have some stepping-stones in your life to get across.

SETTING PRIORITIES

BY ELDER WON YONG KO

Of the Seventy

I was born and raised in Korea in a loving family, and I joined the Church while in my teens. I would like to share the experience of my conversion with you.

My classmate and I were working together in the school library just after winter vacation when he asked me if I was interested in going to church with him. I asked him what kind of church he was talking about, and he told me it was near our school. He said it was a lot of fun, and there were many girls. I was 16 at the time, and that description of church appealed to me. I decided to go. I had gone to a Presbyterian church for a couple of years in elementary school, and I had good memories of church.

My friend and I went to a Saturday activity, and everyone came to greet me and welcome me. I was impressed that they would be so kind to welcome a small guy they didn't know. I went to church the next day, and I was introduced to the missionaries.

The missionaries taught me about basic gospel principles, about Jesus Christ, and

about the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. All the lessons I was taught were reasonable and logical, and I was impressed by eternal progress and the plan of salvation. I had often thought about why I was here on earth and what things were waiting for me after death. It was comforting to know that if I would do all I could for myself, the Savior would do the rest.

Two months later I wanted to be baptized and confirmed, but I needed permission from my parents. They were Buddhist, but they trusted me. I decided it would be best to ask my mother first, so I asked the missionaries to come to my home during the day. Before I went to school, I told my mother that she might have some foreigners come to ask her something and that she should just say yes. And then I ran out the door to school. When I returned, my mom said she had two handsome American visitors. She said they spoke wonderful Korean, and she was so impressed that she said yes. So I got permission from my parents to join the Church.



It was comforting to know that if I would do all I could, the Savior would do the rest.



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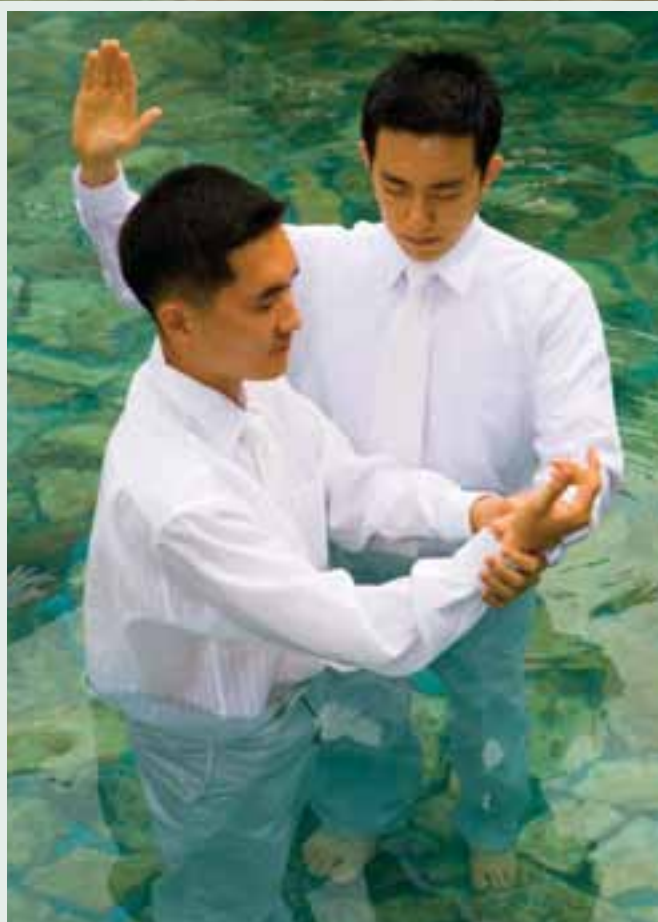
A Covenant-Based Life

When we are baptized, we make a covenant, and that is the start of our gospel life. We make and renew other covenants throughout our lives, such as taking the sacrament or, for young men, receiving the priesthood. Our life is covenant based. Heavenly Father expects us to be faithful to covenants we make, and as we do so, He will be faithful to the covenant He made to bless us.

The message I would like to give to you young people is to set priorities, understand the covenants you are making, and be faithful to those covenants even when you are required to sacrifice. As you are faithful and have an eternal perspective, the Lord will bless you, not only in the future but during your time on earth.

For example, in my high school days I chose not to study on Sundays. I would study until midnight on Saturday and then ask my mom to wake me up early on Monday morning. I kept the Sabbath day holy. Sometimes I felt a little uncomfortable because I knew that my classmates were spending the whole day studying. In Korea, getting into a good university is a serious goal. But even if I had a test on Monday, I did not study on Sunday. Because I had one day fewer to study, I really had to focus my attention. I think I made better use of my study time because of this focus. In the end I was one of the top students in my high school, and I got into one of the most prestigious universities in Korea.

Once we focus on Church and gospel



principles, then we can apply those same principles in whatever we do, and we can have support from the Lord and be blessed.

An Eye Single to God's Glory

One of my favorite scriptures is D&C 4:5, which talks about leadership qualities. It mentions having “an eye single to the glory of God.” Whenever I do Church-service work, I always ask myself, Where is my focus? Am I looking to the glory of God and nothing else?

For 28 years I worked for IBM in Korea. During that

time I also served in many Church positions, including stake executive secretary, stake high councilor, stake president, regional representative, and Area Seventy. I always tried to balance the priorities of family, work, Church callings, and time for myself. And I was always able to do what I needed to do.

As a regional representative and Area Seventy, I had to visit Salt Lake twice a year for general conference, and as an executive at work, I found that leaving the office for more than a week was not easy. I was determined to make the trip, and the president of the company knew me and trusted me when I said I would manage it. When we set priorities, we can manage our problems. I don't like to compromise my beliefs for work advancement. Once you have that mindset, then your heart is peaceful because you are doing what is right. Keeping our commitments or covenants is not easy and requires a lot of sacrifice, but when we do, the blessings we get will be a lot more than what we sacrificed.

Stepping-Stones

Picture yourself on one side of a stream, and on the other side is your eternal happiness. You need to have some stepping-stones in your life to get across. For example, choose to go on a mission, to be married in the temple, and to have a family. As you prepare for each of these events, you will be on track to reaching your ultimate goal.

When the Seoul Korea Temple was announced, we were all delighted. We knew that without the temple, we could not complete our gospel life. It took a while for the temple to be completed, but the blessings from the temple deepened the root of testimony and faith in the people. As they attend the temple, they become more committed to the gospel, and they are on track to their ultimate goal.

So I urge you young people to set intermediate stepping-stone goals in your lives. They will give you help and protection. I know that as we are faithful to our covenants, then our lives will be more worthwhile, and we will be blessed. **NE**