

My Grandfather's Testimony of



By Elder Cecil O. Samuelson
Of the Seventy

Both of my grandfathers were working men. My mother's father was a machinist for the railroad, and my other grandfather was a handyman who worked at a downtown hotel all of his career. He was a very skilled carpenter and painter.

When I was young I would sometimes work with my grandfather. One time he asked me to help him paint the frame part of their old home in Salt Lake City. I remember working with him and how I thought he was so careful in trying to teach me how to paint correctly. We spent lots of time with the wire brushes and the sandpaper and putty and making sure the surfaces were all prepared well. Then he taught me to paint a board working with the grain, starting at the top and working down.

Doing all these kinds of things, I really thought he was teaching me to be a painter. And although I learned some of the techniques and I've done a lot of painting around the house, I know he was really teaching me more than how to paint. While we were working, my grandfather would talk and tell stories. And, in retrospect, I know that he was teaching me.

Paying his tithing

One of the lessons he taught me was the importance of paying tithing. He told me

about my father, who was born in 1912, and my uncle, who was born a few years later. Both of these boys grew up in the Depression, a tough time. Because of the economic circumstances of the time, most of the young people didn't get a chance to serve missions or they had to serve missions late.

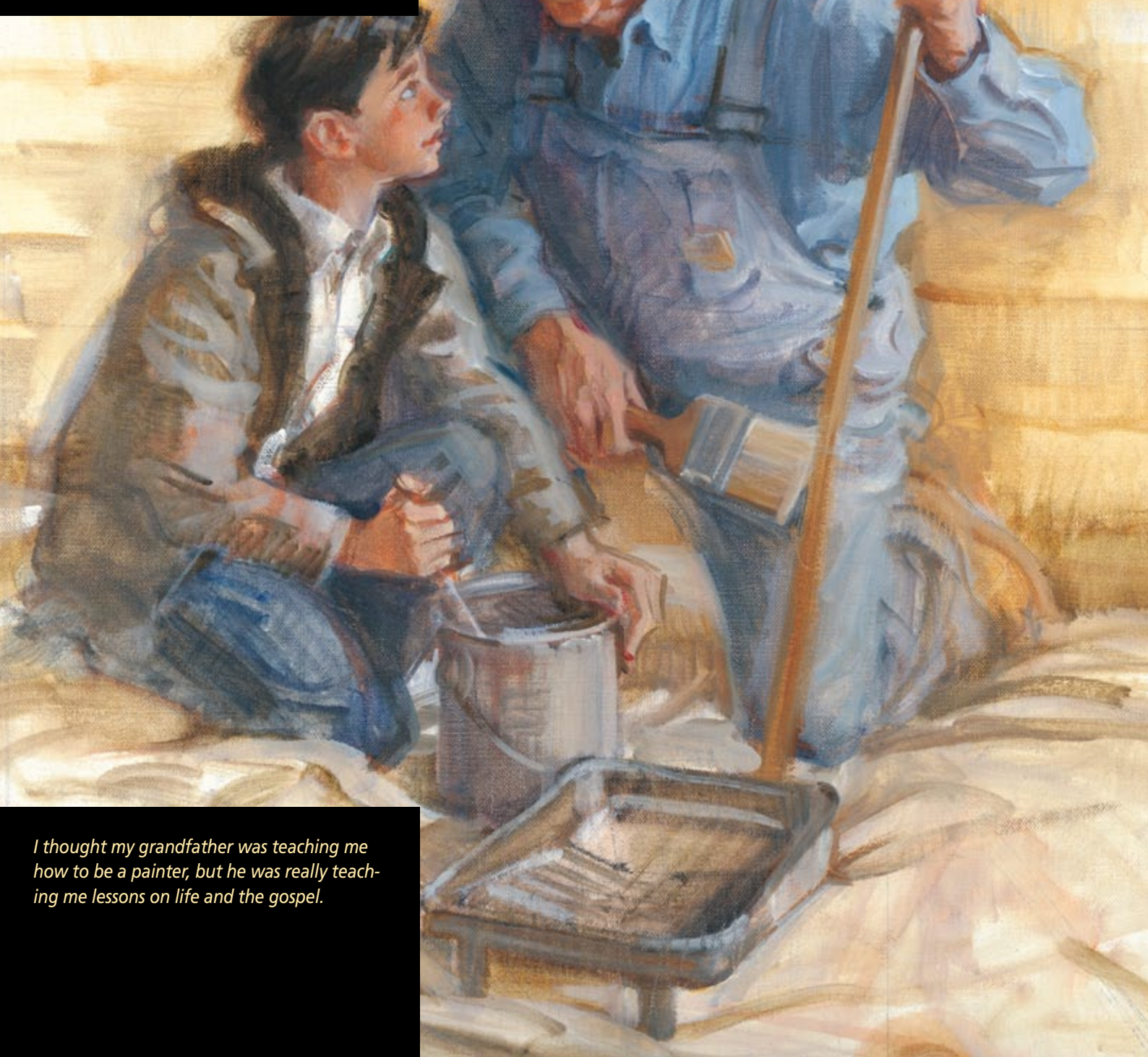
Despite these circumstances, my grandfather said, "You know, we were really blessed because both your dad and your uncle got to go on missions. And I'll tell you why they got to go. Because we were always honest in paying our tithing, so the Lord blessed us."

He said they never had enough money, and people wondered how they sent not only one but two boys. He told me that they worked hard and saved money and were very careful, but they were also very blessed. He emphasized that the blessings were evident because they didn't have any money fly out of heaven. Instead, grandfather was always able to get extra work and extra jobs.

He was a hard worker and had always worked 12 hours a day six days a week and sometimes more. He said, "Every time we thought that we'd be out of money, somebody would call me and ask me to build a room on their house or ask me to build a set of stairs or to do some painting for them."

Because of those blessings, my father and

Tithing



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his brother were both able to serve missions. I have a copy of my father's missionary journals, and I saw the record he kept during his mission of when he got money from home. Although those dates were somewhat sporadic, they are evidence of my grandfather's testimony of tithing.

Of all the commandments tithing has probably been the easiest one for me to keep in my life because of my grandfather's faith and the testimony he bore. He taught me the principle of tithing because he absolutely believed it all of his life and he was blessed because of his obedience.

Receiving the blessings

Tithing is a wonderful measure of people's faithfulness, but it is also a great evidence to people that if they are faithful in their tithing, they are blessed. That lesson that I learned and remember so vividly has been reinforced for me over and over again.

Tithing has always blessed me and my family in our lives. During the time that I was in school, my wife and I were very busy and really very poor. There were times when we wondered if we would have enough money. But we had made the commitment that we'd always pay our tithing first, and we always had enough. We've done that all of our lives. There have been challenges, but somehow there's a way when you pay your tithing that you can do the kinds of things you need to.

This doesn't mean that people who pay their tithing can't get into financial difficulty. I know perfectly faithful people with respect to tithing who have lost jobs and businesses and homes, but I'm convinced the Lord honors those who honor Him. When people pay their tithing faithfully, not grudgingly, He helps them find a way out of their financial problems and difficulties.

Following the command

As with all the commandments, if you make a firm decision early about tithing, then you never have to decide it again. And that's the way I grew up. You always paid your tithing first, and there was never a question about when you pay your tithing. You pay your tithing, first, because

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In addition to recognizing that nothing is actually yours, one of the blessings that comes from paying tithing is how you use the other money that you have. You learn the principles of thrift, and you're likely to listen to what the prophets have to say about avoiding unnecessary debt and deciding what is a want versus a need. The law of tithing is both substantive in the sense that it is real and you can count it, but it's also symbolic in terms of how you feel about other things.

Being perfect in tithing

Some of the commandments are hard to measure, like being kind and having charity or being meek and lowly and being all the other things you ought to be. But tithing is one of those things where you can say: "OK. This is what it is. This is what I'm going to do. And I may not be perfect in other things, but I can be perfect in my tithing." I'm a firm believer that being perfect in your tithing will help you to become more perfect in other things.

If you would like to have all of the blessings that Heavenly Father has prepared to give you, a very good place to start is being a full tithing payer and being honest in your tithes. That will help you do the other things you need to do, and it will ensure that, as the scriptures teach us, the windows of heaven will be open for you. **NE**