



Self-Reliance:

PREPARING FOR YOUR FUTURE

By Kimberly Richter

Learning responsibility today will open doors for you tomorrow.

You may have noticed a new standard in the *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet called “Work and Self-Reliance.”

This section focuses on the importance of learning to work hard and care for yourself while in your youth. Youth around the world share why they know it’s important to develop self-reliance now.

What does it mean to be self-reliant?

The *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet states that you are self-reliant when “you use the blessings and abilities God has given you to care for yourself and your family and to find solutions for your own problems” ([2011], 41).

Matthew W. of South Africa says, “I think you are self-reliant when you don’t need your parents to do everything for you because you know how to take care of yourself.”

Self-reliance is important for everyone. When you are self-reliant, you can depend on your own skills to support yourself and to help others in your family and community.

Why do I need to work?

For the Strength of Youth says, “Idleness can lead to inappropriate behavior, damaged relationships, and sin” (40). Work is the way to live a productive and meaningful life. Ben M. from Yorkshire, England, recognizes this. He says, “When you learn to work, then you understand that you have to work for things even in the Church. You don’t just get there. You’ve got to study.”

Some people believe they should be given certain privileges such as money or food even though they don’t work to receive it. This sense of entitlement is dangerous because it makes people less productive and causes them not to see the value of work.

For the Strength of Youth states, “It is false to believe that you can get something for nothing” (41). Without work, you cannot lead a happy, successful life.

When do I need to become self-reliant?

Becoming self-reliant starts now. When asked why youth need to start learning these skills early in life, Cassidy B. of Utah, USA, said, “There are so many things to learn. You can’t just expect to learn self-reliance in one day. It’s step by step.”

For the Strength of Youth states that “learning to work begins in the home” (40). Parents play a big role in helping you become self-reliant. The best time to form good habits and learn new skills is in your youth. Jayde and Sheridan C. from Leschenault, Australia, share how they have learned in the home. “Every family home evening,” Jayde says, “we set up a list of jobs to do for the week.” Then, says Sheridan, “during the week we help



6 THINGS YOU CAN DO Today



Create and follow a budget to save money for a mission and school.



Cook dinner once a week for your family.



Learn a new computer skill that would be helpful in the workplace.



Practice working hard by striving for good grades.



Help your parents with food storage or emergency kits.



Cheerfully fulfill your responsibilities in the family.



around the house and finish the chores on the list.” Jayde knows this is important for the future. “Some people don’t know how to cook or clean, but in our house we’ve learned. We’ve always helped our mom since we were little.”

If you feel you need to learn more about self-reliance in your home, ask your parents to help you. Help your mom or dad plan and prepare a meal, or ask your parents to help you start a budget and save money for a mission and school. And make sure you’re always willing to do chores without complaining.

How do I make myself do things I don’t want to do?

Self-discipline is an important part of learning to work. Without it you won’t get very far. Self-discipline is your own inward motivation and drive. It’s what helps people work hard at things even when they don’t enjoy doing them. Elder M. Russell Ballard



CARE FOR OTHERS

“All people are happier and feel more self-respect when they can provide for themselves and their family and then reach out to take care of others. I have been grateful for those who helped me meet my needs. I have been even more grateful over the years for those who helped me become self-reliant. And then I have been most grateful for those who showed me how to use some of my surplus to help others.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Opportunities to Do Good,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 25.



DO YOUR BEST

“Our Heavenly Father asks only that we do the best we can—that we work according to our full capacity, however great or small that may be.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 56.

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “You control to a large degree your own destiny. You control your own life. . . . When we apply the ingredient of self-discipline, there is not much that any one of us . . . could not accomplish. . . . If your other goals are righteous, . . . go for them. Make them happen” (“Do Things That Make a Difference,” *Ensign*, June 1983, 70–71).

The best way to develop self-discipline is simply to put your mind to it. Choose to be strong and to never give up. Anyone can choose to work hard.

What blessings come from learning to work?

For the Strength of Youth mentions two specific blessings: an ability to “contribute to the world in which you live” and an “increased sense of self-worth” (40). That second blessing seems unexpected, but think about how you feel when you’ve worked hard on something and done your best. Now compare that to how you feel when you’ve sat on the couch all day doing nothing productive. When you accomplish good things, you see how you can make a difference.

James M. of Kenya shares his experience with work. “We’re living with my grandma and my sister,” he says, “so I often help them, along with my personal studies. Work keeps me busy and helps me avoid bad influences.”

Cassidy shares additional blessings: “Because I have learned to work hard, I’ll have more doors open, more options, and the potential to lead a happier life.”

Although the specific blessings you gain from working hard and becoming self-reliant may be different for you, you will be blessed for your efforts.

Does self-reliance mean doing things alone?

For the Strength of Youth says, “Self-reliance does not mean that you must be able to do all things on your own. To be truly self-reliant, you must learn how to work with others and turn to the Lord for His help and strength” (41). Self-reliance doesn’t mean not asking for help. It means doing everything you can and then getting the assistance you need.

Self-reliance is for you.

Self-reliance will be crucial in your life. You will need it as you go on a mission, go to college, move away from home, and begin a family of your own. Start learning the skills and attitudes you need now—in your youth. You will be greatly blessed as you turn to the Lord and ask Him to help you develop those skills and attributes you’ll need in the future—and today! And as you look forward to your future, you will feel prepared and excited for the next stage of your life. **NE**



LIVE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-RELIANCE

“Self-reliance is a product of provident living and exercising economic self-discipline. From the beginning the Church has taught that families—to the extent they can—need to assume responsibility for their own temporal welfare. Each generation is required to learn anew the foundational principles of self-reliance: avoid debt, implement principles of thrift, prepare for times of distress, listen to and follow the words of the living oracles, develop the discipline to distinguish between needs and wants and then live accordingly.”

Bishop H. David Burton, former Presiding Bishop, “The Sanctifying Work of Welfare,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 81.

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