

MAKE YOUR LIFE A

Legacy

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Of the Seventy

You can fill your life with valuable lessons for those who come after you.



She had a speech impediment, so one of the elders remarked, “Why have they sent Sister Bennion? She can’t even talk.”

She turned to that missionary and said, “Yes, I can talk.” And in that moment her problem was gone, and it never returned.

Like Nephi, I was “born of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1), who set a righteous example for their children. Here are a few of the lessons they taught me.

The Value of a Mission

I was the youngest of seven children, and every morning at 6 a.m. my father would bang on the door and say, “It’s time for prayer.” He would go into the kitchen and start cooking the oatmeal, and we would gather and get on our knees. Something we would often hear our parents say in our family prayers was, “Please bless the missionaries that they will be led to the honest in heart and that our children will have the desire to go on a mission.” When we were young and one of us was called on to say a prayer, we would almost always say the same thing, and it affected us.

In this way, our parents impressed upon our minds the importance of a mission from the time we were young. Perhaps this was because they had both served missions. My father served in the Mexican Mission, and my mother served in Missouri

at the height of the Depression.

My mother’s mission taught her a great lesson on faith. Her bishop and stake president told her that it would be difficult for her to serve a mission because she had a speech impediment, which made it hard for her to be understood. But she felt impressed to go and had the overwhelming feeling that if she would be faithful, the Lord would correct her problem and she would be able to serve.

At age 14 she had received a blessing regarding a mission. Some time later she went to the secluded upper rooms of the meetinghouse and poured her soul out to her Heavenly Father regarding her desire to serve a mission. She felt inspired to call her uncle, who was a mission president in Missouri, and ask him if she could be his secretary. (Back then they didn’t have all the formalities concerning mission calls that we do now.) He said yes, and she was set apart by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, who promised her she would bring many people into the Church. She was surprised at this, knowing that she had



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difficulty speaking.

However, after she began to serve, one of the sister missionaries became very ill. The mission president asked my mother to work with this sister's companion so that the sister could come to the mission home to recover and her companion could keep working. My mother took a train to the area where she would be working. When she stepped off the train, she was met by a couple of elders, one of whom remarked when he saw her, "Why have they sent Sister Bennion? She can't even talk." She turned to that missionary and said indignantly, "Yes, I *can* talk." And in that moment her problem was gone, and it never returned.

I was raised in a home where the parents prayed that their children would go on missions because they knew what a mission does. Without reservation, I can say that, apart from my marriage to my wonderful wife, nothing has done more for me than my mission—for education, learning to get along with all sorts of people, learning a foreign language. But much more than that, through my mission I came to know my Heavenly Father and my Savior. I know the Savior lives. I know that. I am so grateful for parents who taught me the value of a mission.

The Value of Your Name

I would like you to realize that whatever you do as a young person will set a precedent for the rest of your life.

Before Helaman's sons Nephi and Lehi went out on their missions, their father gave them this counsel:

"Behold, my sons, I desire that ye should remember to keep the commandments of God; and would that ye should declare unto the people these words. Behold, I have given unto you the names of our first parents who came out of the land of

Jerusalem; and this I have done that when you remember your names ye may remember them; and when ye remember them ye may remember their works; and when ye remember their works ye may know how that it is said, and also written, that they were good.

"Therefore, my sons, I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them" (Helaman 5:6–7).

When Helaman spoke these words, 500 years had passed away and they were still remembering Lehi and Nephi of old and what examples they were as the first prophets in the Book of Mormon; they were still naming their children after them because of their good example and their good works.

Try to visualize your own future. You too can begin a legacy by the way you act. Someday you will have children just as Helaman did. In generations to come they can look back and say that you were good.

My father's name was John. I have a hard time counting how many of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren are named after him because he was such a good man. He was honorable and well-loved, so his posterity named their children after this good man whose name they will remember by hopefully continuing that legacy.

I admonish you to make your name one that your family can be proud of and that will be remembered because of your good works for a long time. You should always keep your name clean and pure so that your grandchildren and great grandchildren will remember you as an honorable person. They should be able to say that this wasn't a person who took drugs or was involved in illicit sex or other sins, but one who remained faithful and worthy.

Believe me, your name will be remembered. For example, your missionary com-



panions will speak of you whether you were a good missionary or not. It's been many years since I served my mission, and I can still tell you the missionaries who gave everything, those who goofed off and broke mission rules, and those who did not give it their best. Many have expressed their regrets for not being the kind of missionary they could have been. Of course, nobody is perfect. However, as President Hinckley has asked, we should do the very best we can. Your name carries through from the time you are a young person up through your mission, through adulthood and beyond.

The Value of Honesty

I worked as a real estate developer, and it's not easy to get farmers to sell you their land. But I can tell you of many instances when I went out to find land to purchase and people asked me, "Are you John Arnold's son?"

I would say, "Yes, I am."

And they would say, "He was an honest man. I'm sure you'll be honest with us." I bought several properties because of my father's good name.

My father never made much money, but my parents were honest and hard working, and they taught these values to their children. My father worked at a copper mine. He didn't earn enough money to send his sons and daughters on missions or to college, so my parents bought 1,000 chickens for us to raise so that we could sell the eggs. They also contracted to deliver a large number of newspapers each evening to our neighbors.

My father would have us go out to the chicken coops and shoot the rats out of the feed troughs because they would eat the chickens' food. On many occasions I would go out with a flashlight and a small gun to shoot the rats that were in the hoppers eating the chickens' food.

I'll never forget one night when I was out on that particular assignment. My father came home from a Church meeting and looked down at me and said, "Son, what flashlight do you have?" I looked down and realized it was the one my father took to work, and it had the name of the copper mine on the side. My father said, "Son, that flashlight is for me to use on the job. You should never take anything from your employer for personal use—not even a pencil, a flashlight, or anything else. Go back and get another flashlight." I am so grateful for my father's legacy of honesty.

Most of the money from the eggs and delivering newspapers went into the bank to help pay for our education and our missions. Five of the children used the money to serve missions and all seven graduated from college. The lessons of value that my parents taught me on honesty, hard work, the Word of Wisdom, the law of chastity, and many other things continue to bless my life.

What legacy will you and I leave behind to be passed on to those who will remain after we have passed away—especially our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren? I would hope it would be like that of Lehi and Nephi of old—a legacy of love, trust, and honor. We can and should set those who follow us for hundreds of years to come on a course that will lead them to happiness, joy, and eternal life. **NE**

For more, read "Your Good Name," *New Era*, July 1996, p. 46.