

Home-Centered Gospel Learning for Individuals and Families

SISTER SHARON EUBANK

SPEAKER: I count myself as exceptionally lucky, first of all, to be here with you. I am a fan of your work. I'm a fan of you. I also am very glad to hear Dr. Dirk Moss give that very powerful testimony from someone who has examined documents and history and is convinced in his heart through the Holy Ghost that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and that the Holy Ghost is in this restored Church.

It touched my heart to hear that testimony, and I'm thankful for it. And then to hear the music—I fully confess that I'm usually in places for the music. The most touching part of conference, often to me, is the choir. And I happen to have, right now, the best seat in the house. So I appreciated that tender rendition of “Where Can I Turn for Peace?” (Hymns, no. 129).

As this year started and we began studying Come, Follow Me for individuals, as a single woman at home, I thought, OK, I'm going to study. So I started reading. And one of the first things that I read in January in that first week was the scripture that Peter and Andrew—no, sorry.

Andrew and John are walking along the Sea of Galilee. They just heard John the Baptist say, That man right there—He's the Messiah. And they started following Him. And finally, Jesus turns around, and He says, What seek ye? What do you want? How come you're following me?

And I imagine that John and Andrew were like—and they blurted out this question of, Master, where do you live? I think they wanted to know other things, but that's the thing that they said—Where do you live? They did want to know that. Because in their mind, if this is the Messiah, they want to go back.

They've got brothers that they want to bring here. And they don't want to lose Him. They want to know where He is. But that question Jesus asks John, What seek ye? is a beautiful bookend to the end of His life. Because if you remember, Jesus asked all of the Apostles, as He was ready to ascend into heaven, What seek ye?

What do you want? What will ye that I shall do for you? And they all mentioned, When I become the age of man, I want to come and live with you in your kingdom, and if that's granted. But John wanted something different. What did John want? Yeah, he felt embarrassed.

But he wanted to stay on the earth and continue to bring souls unto Jesus Christ. Think what happened to John between the first time that Jesus asked him, What seek ye, and three years later, his answer. Instead of, where do you live? It's, Master, I want to stay as long as the earth shall live, and continue to bear testimony, and bring souls unto you.

What happened in the three-year period of John is basically what's happening to every single one of us. The Lord asks, What seek ye? And the combination of stress, pushing ourselves outside of our comfort zones, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost produces the growth that we need. Now, I happen to work in an area of stress, and so do you.

I have myself and lots of people that work with me. They're in the world in periods of stress. And I worry about them a lot. I worry about how that is being processed inside their minds and their hearts, and if they're doing OK, and if they have enough of the Holy Ghost to help them work through the areas of stress that they feel.

As an example, I have a colleague who went to Haiti after the earthquake. He was there to help. And one of the places they needed help was in the makeshift medical clinic that they had set up. And so people were just brought, as they were rescued from under the rubble, or brought any place.

They had all kinds of medical issues. And they were brought to this makeshift tent. And there were Haitian doctors. There were foreign doctors who had come to help, but they didn't have any gurneys. They didn't have any transportation. There was no way to move people from one way to the other.

They had set up an X-ray over here with a portable X-ray machine. And they saw my colleague, who's a tall six-foot-four-inch guy, and they said, "Hey, we need you." And all he did that whole day was to lift people up. And sometimes they were alive. And he carried them over to the X-ray machine, or he carried them over to surgery, or he carried them back to the recovery tent.

And sometimes they were dead. And he carried them to the morgue. He said they were all dripping all kinds of fluids. And he did that day after day after day, because he could. He was the one person there who could do it. And a couple months later, this is still in his mind. He's still processing that.

I have another colleague who worked and worked and worked in a famine in the Horn of Africa. There was a food supplement that had been shipped from Europe, sitting on a dock. And he could not get the government to release that so it could be sent out to the people who were starving. And every day, they lost a handful of people in that camp, mostly children.

Because of the unwillingness for somebody to pay the shipping for that food supplement to get where it needed to go. And that just got in his heart. It just worried and worried at him of, how can we sit by in some office and refuse to pay the pennies that it would take, and people die, and feel good about that? And he felt that stress.

I, myself, took a trip to Syria. I actually went to Syria quite a bit because Latter-day Saint Charities had some projects that we were working on with the University of Aleppo, which is the second-largest city up on the coast of the Mediterranean. I met with the president of the university.

We met with the medical school. And we set up a medical training that would take place at the university. The trainers who would come would live in the dormitories. We set this up. This was in March of 2011. Well, as I was in Syria, the Church security called me.

And they said, there's some demonstrations that will be happening in Damascus, probably peaceful, but you might just want to be aware of that. Well, this was the beginning of the Syrian conflict. Now, I've never been able to go back to Syria since. And I saw one day on the news that helicopters dropped barrel bombs on the University of Aleppo as students were taking their tests—their final exams.

And hundreds of people were killed. And it was such a personal thing to me, because I had been there just so recently and done that work. And when those negative things happen to you and you're trying to process them, you feel a lot of stress.

You feel, why is this world the way it is? And how come my efforts to make it better aren't more successful? And you wrestle with the Spirit a lot. Now, I'm not comparing these stressful humanitarian situations to conflict and war. And sometimes some of the people that you are working with are in even more stressful situations.

But the stress without the Holy Ghost—we degrade in our spirits. Because it's so—the conflict is so difficult. And Satan knows that. He's trying to chip away at us. The Holy Ghost is a Comforter. We can turn to it for peace. It's a balm. And it takes our experiences.

It paints in our minds and our hearts with the experiences that we've had so that we can find ultimate meaning in that. So I have all those things in my heart. I'm worried about my staff. I'm worried about myself trying to process those things. And I come to general conference.

And I listened on Sunday morning to President Nelson talk about one of the things that is dearest to my heart. He talked about the two great commandments, and how we can love God and love our neighbors. And so I wrote this down from President Nelson.

He says, "Regardless of where we call home, members of the Church feel passionately about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Thus, our greatest joy comes as we help our brothers and sisters, no matter where we live in this wonderful world.

"Giving help to others—making a conscientious effort to care about others as much as or more than we care about ourselves—is our joy. Especially, I might add, when it is not convenient and when it takes us out of our comfort zone. Living that second great commandment is the key to becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ" ("The Second Great Commandment," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2019, 99–100).

I can use that. That helps me process some of the experiences that I have, when I hear that from a prophet of God. Now I'm going to go over there and take one of those microphones. And I'm going to ask you a question. Because I know I share some of these hazards with all of you. And I'm wondering, what are the things that are on your mind as chaplains?

Working in the ministry that you do, what are some of the things that are on your mind? I've shared some of the things that have been on my mind. What are some of the things that are on your mind? So just think about that for a minute. And I'll at least—I don't think we have microphones out there, do we?

AUDIENCE: We do.

SPEAKER: Oh, we do. OK, so I'm putting you on the spot. But I'll come over here and use one of these. And I'd like to hear from a handful of you about what's on your mind. If you have something that you've been thinking about, raise your hand. You're not a shy group. OK, right here. We'll get a microphone. What's been on your mind and heart?

AUDIENCE: So you said processing those difficult things. I think one of the things that's been on my mind and heart is how to help service members process the difficult things that they've experienced. And so I'd like some counsel on, how do we help them process those difficult things?

SPEAKER: I love that you brought that up. And you and I are thinking along the same lines. Thank you very much. What's another one? What are things that are on your mind that you're thinking about? Raise your hand high, so those microphones can see you. Right here in the middle. OK, right here. I'll take this one first.

AUDIENCE: Chaplain Colby. I think this is universal. But we've seen an increase in mission and requirements while the resources are plummeting. And so that means we can't get it—or we can't do all the things that we feel compelled to do that need to be done. Also, what you're describing is moral injury, when you—the accounts that you talked about. And that's ever present with the military.

SPEAKER: So you brought up two things that I think about all the time, this idea of moral injury. But also, there's never enough resources for what's being required. And that's a humanitarian problem as well as a military problem.

That creates stress on the actors. It creates stress on the families and the support groups. There was a comment here that I don't want to miss. I'll come back up to you, but right here in the middle. Stand up so they can see you. Perfect.

AUDIENCE: So one thing. Chaplain Eric Ramsey. One thing that I have personally experienced, not just in my ministry but in my own family, is suicide, and dealing with the emotions and the continuing emotions, even years later, following a family member's completion of suicide, so that as I minister, it's something that I perceive as not only a deep moral injury for myself, but something that I know continues in the lives of others, as well.

SPEAKER: Thank you for bringing that up, which is something that faces so many families—all of us. And you're speaking from personal experience, not just from your chaplaincy. This comment back here on the aisle. Will you stand?

AUDIENCE: It was me. I brought him down—the microphone. How can I—how do we help to strengthen the family? I am often in counseling with couples. And it weighs on me heavily.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you for bringing up the stress that families feel.

AUDIENCE: A concern I have is—perhaps it's because of social media, but the fear people have that is not truly based on the data. So we see and hear things. But when you look at cold, hard facts throughout our country or other countries, there is such fear people have, that they are acting irrational. And it's very real to them, but it's not truth. It might happen, but it's still not the truth they think it is.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Thank you for bringing this up. Good. Thank you. I want to hear from a female person in the audience.

AUDIENCE: Here you go.

AUDIENCE: Oh, thank you. So I'm a single sister, and I have a huge responsibility. And I'm tired. And I'm alone. And I don't know what I'm doing.

SPEAKER: Aren't you brave to say that? I'm tired, I'm alone, and I don't know what I'm doing. I think most people in here would echo you. All right. Let me ask a different question. All these things are on our hearts and minds. I don't think these are unique to the people who have said them. I think those are common things that all of us are thinking about.

What did you hear at general conference, from the scriptures or from the prophets, that is meaningful to you? What did you hear? Because part of the conference was to be at general conference. What did you hear that meant something to you personally, either from the scriptures or from the prophets? OK, one back here.

AUDIENCE: I'm not a chaplain but a chaplain spouse. And I've been—like this sister, we just went through a deployment, and watching other women around me just feeling very tired and like we couldn't do it. But I was very touched by multiple Apostles talking about our burdens being lighter. And I know I felt that.

And I've been trying to help other women see it, even though they aren't of our faith, that God can still do that for them wherever they are in their faith, but that He can still lighten our burdens. Because He can't—well, He could, but our men aren't going to come home any faster, necessarily. But He can help us as we are doing so much alone and taking care of so much alone, but just lightening that burden, like He did for the people in the Book of Mormon.

SPEAKER: Thank you, first of all, for saying that you're a spouse, which is a perfectly legitimate, valid position to be in, and then also talking about the scriptures, particularly that say, I will lighten your burdens so that you cannot

feel them, coming from Alma and also from Jesus Christ. I will pull in the yoke with you. I will make your burdens bearable. Because we can't always change the circumstances, but He can help us in our response. What is something else that you heard at conference? All right. This sister right here.

AUDIENCE: Here you go.

AUDIENCE: I really loved President Nelson's talk at the women's conference about drawing on priesthood power. And I think this is important, not just for women, but also for men to understand. I've been married for about six months to this wonderful man next to me.

SPEAKER: Congratulations.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. And he was raised in a household where that was understood. That idea of his mother being a part of the priesthood power of his home was—that was just known. And I was not, even though I was raised in an LDS home. And then because of my—of things that happened in my first marriage, I had no sense of connecting to God directly through my covenants, except in my most desperate moments.

And so to hear him talk about that and talk to the sisters about the power available to us through our covenants directly to God, and then also the changes in the wordings in the temple ordinances, and those things that have also highlighted and answered questions for me as a woman that I've had since I first went to the temple. But I think it's also important for men to understand that, too, and especially these wonderful servicemen and women that we have here, that they are not leaving their spouses without power, without strength, while they're gone.

SPEAKER: I really resonate with your comment. Because I was sitting on the stand when President Nelson gave that talk. And I'll just share with you, I had to lean over and wipe my face, knowing that the lights were going to come on. Because I was so moved in his prophetic mantle to say something that has never been said in those kinds of terms before from the general conference pulpit, that it isn't just the law of tithing that the Lord says, Prove me, and I will pour out the blessings of heaven.

That is for all covenants that we make, and particularly from the temple. When we keep—make and keep our temple covenants, it opens the windows of heaven, where power, comfort, ability, capacity flows down into us by virtue of the covenants. And what is that power? It's priesthood power. And it's never been talked about, really, in that way. So that's very meaningful, as you said, for husbands and wives, for families who are separated, to know that.

Because of their covenants, there is the power of God, the priesthood power in their home, even though they may be physically separated and the relationship between the husband and wife as they jointly lead their family, so thank you for saying that. Let's have two more. Let's have this brother right here. Who do we have? Thank you.

AUDIENCE: Chaplain Larson. In considering the pains of life, and the two great commandments, and particularly what we heard from last general conference, I saw only building on things that have already been revealed. My first wife passed away 10 days after the stressing and changing of how we minister to our fellow human beings in this world.

And the outpouring of love, how people put into practice—even though it wasn't in a structured way yet, how we were reached out to by friends and family near and far. They were putting into practice the words as best they knew how, putting into the practice the words of the prophet. Now, what are we hearing most recently?

The things that really lay on my heart were, none of us are very good in this world by ourselves. We need each other in this world. None of us get very far in this world by ourselves. We need each other. That's not just a nice idea. This battle buddy concept, this airman wingmanship concept is not—the shipmate concept is not just a nice idea.

That is a fact of life, that none of us get very far in this world by ourselves. The other comment that I heard repeatedly made throughout general conference was to trust God. No matter what happens in this world, if we trust God, that is enough. He has His plan, and He's going to lead us where He needs us to be.

SPEAKER: Look how powerful that comment is from Chaplain Larson. We need each other. We don't know what we're doing. We're really tired. We need each other. It's not just a nice idea. It's critical. And that we can trust God, that He will bring people into our lives. And we can be the instruments for other people's lives to accomplish His work.

And you said that in a very personal way. That's very personal to you. All right. Let's have two more. Oh, I don't even know how to choose. Stand up. Let's get you a microphone. This sister in the middle right there. OK, excuse me. I can't see very well because of the lights. All right. Go ahead, over here.

AUDIENCE: So one of the things that's weighed heavy on my heart is the children of all these great men and women that go out and serve in these ways. And recently, I had a daughter come to me and say, Mom, I'm doing everything I can. I'm going to seminary. I'm going to church. I'm serving as the [INAUDIBLE] president, and I am so sad. Like, why am I so sad?

And I was at a loss, so I listened during conference. And during one of the conferences, he talked about Job. And Job was also doing all things, and trying to serve the Lord, and yet still suffered trials and heavy heart. And he came to the Lord afterward.

And his eyes had been opened. And he was a holier man. And it was just very powerful to me, of a message that I can take back to this sweet girl and let her know that maybe the Lord is just refining you and helping you to grow and progress, even in the midst of these dark trials.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Is this your own daughter?

AUDIENCE: This is our daughter.

SPEAKER: This is your daughter. So then, you found that story from Job and can say that. Thank you for sharing that. Let's just have one more. All right.

AUDIENCE: So one of the things that has been weighing really heavily on me is the culture of comparison that we get sucked into. And it was Peter Johnson who talked about the three Ds of the adversary—the deception, the distraction, and the discouragement.

And he really related that back to what has been weighing on me, in this idea of comparison and the discouragement that comes when we compare ourselves to others. Because we aren't living the same journey that they're living. And we aren't living the same trials and tasks that they're having to live up to.

They're living a different life than we are. And what we see in the distraction of social media is their best life, whereas we are comparing that to our worst life. And that idea of getting out of that culture of comparison felt like that was a theme through several talks, but his, in particular, stood out to me.

SPEAKER: Elder Johnson did. He was so vivid in his speaking. Because as there are more than 200 temples on the earth, and the power—the priesthood power that's flowing through the temples into our lives through the covenants—Satan must go into overdrive and do anything he can to try and distract and dissuade us from the power that is happening. So you really referenced his talk. I appreciate that. Let me take one more. There's a brother who stood up several times. It's you, right here. Will you get a microphone?

AUDIENCE: My name is Brother Jepson. I'm with the Arizona Highway Patrol. I'm a law enforcement chaplain. I deal a lot with cops who have caved in, a lot of first responders who have caved in. They feel like they were betrayed by their department, betrayed by the people that they serve, and sometimes often betrayed by their friends. And so anyway, I deal a lot with them.

Not as much as Kay does right here. Kay does an awful lot more than I do. He actually goes to those PTSD retreats and works and helps these guys. But anyway, I deal with them, nonetheless, a lot on a one-on-one basis. And the talk that really struck me the most for what I need right now—and I loved every single one of them—but was President Uchtdorf's talk about *The Hobbit*.

And that's because sometimes I feel that, all too often, we start on this great adventure, and I think that we get so overwhelmed about the bad things that happen to us that we actually lose sight of the great adventure. And we start focusing on just how bad things really are.

And one of the things that I do with every single one of these guys that I talk with is I keep their mind's eye on the great adventure and the big picture rather than the small picture. And President Uchtdorf's talk, to me, really spoke to me. And I think that really, honestly, anytime you're dealing with anyone that has a lot of moral injury, like the major over there—I think that's a major.

I think it's either major or lieutenant colonel. I can't see if it's white or gold. But anyway, what he mentioned is, no matter how bad we've been hurt, the hurt has already stopped. And the only thing that's left over is just what's in our mind.

And if we just back away from what has happened, and just look at the great adventure again, and focus on the great adventure, which is the eternal plan here that we have, we can overcome anything. It's only when we take our eyes off. I used to climb a lot of buildings when I was a kid, and climb up the outside fire escapes, and catch pigeons on the roof.

I never had any trouble climbing up there on the top of these—sometimes eight-, ten-story buildings getting the pigeons—until I looked down. Once I looked down, I froze to the ladder, and I couldn't let go. But as long as you always look up, you can just keep climbing. You can look, and you can go down.

SPEAKER: There's a built-in meme right there—you can look up. Thank you for bringing up President Elder Uchtdorf's talk. I think the first time we've ever quoted *The Hobbit* in general conference. My phone was in my pocket, and it just started buzzing with social media as it went on.

But that idea of taking the big picture, keeping in mind the big perspective, and not getting—looking down or where we are at that exact moment, but the big picture. The thing that we've just done right now, talking about the worries, the concerns, the things that we've noticed that are on our hearts, and then connecting them to the words of the prophets and the words of the scriptures is the essential skill of *Come, Follow Me*.

This is the essential skill that we want to develop, not just at church on Sunday when you're sitting in a formal class, but something that you can do anywhere, anytime, to have the Holy Ghost be a course of instruction for you between what's in your mind and heart, and the things that are worrying you, your responsibilities in your family to—what has the Lord said through His prophets and scriptures?

That is the charge that we've been given through *Come, Follow Me* for Individuals and Families. Now, I think the military has been doing this already; by that, you're much farther ahead of the Church. You've had more experience in this just because of the nature of deployments, and families that are separated, and things like this.

What have you learned about the abilities, the best practices to study as individuals and families when you're not at church? When you're outside the walls of a formal class? What have you already learned? And this is a serious question for me.

Because I am leaving to the Pacific to talk about Come, Follow Me for Individuals and Families. And I want to know from you, what are the lessons that I can share with others in the Church? Because you've been doing it longer. If you have a comment, stand up. OK, right there.

AUDIENCE: My wife and I have a Primary calling at the moment with eight-year-olds. And there was—it must have been two, three months after Come, Follow Me got started—we were teaching, started into a story about this or that. And several of the children in our class had talked about it all week long with their parents and their families. And one of them actually volunteered to give the lesson that day. And it was an amazing thing.

SPEAKER: You had an eight-year-old volunteer to give your lesson?

AUDIENCE: Absolutely. It was great. And we were both just amazingly touched by how the people in our ward—the parents in our ward had taken it seriously, and taken it as an inspired program, and were doing what they were supposed to do. And it started to click in my mind and in the minds of, I think, of our children and their families.

And it was amazing to me. And it speaks to the inspiration of the program to just give it a chance, work on it, do the things that it's telling us to do, and study this, and study that, and talk about it. And then let the Church organization and classes enhance all that.

SPEAKER: If something can give an eight-year-old the confidence to volunteer to teach a lesson like that, there's something powerful in that. What other comments are there? Right here. Please stand.

AUDIENCE: So as we've incorporated home-centered Church into our own home with Come, Follow Me, we would teach our children. We have a twelve-year-old and a four-year-old. And we would teach them according to our pace of what we assumed they already knew—the faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost.

We assumed they understood these things. And to an extent, they did. And when we turned it over to our children and gave them the opportunity at that point to teach us at their pace—their real pace; we can't keep up. It's amazing what we've been able to do. It's amazing—my four-year-old understood the concept of parables so much that he created one.

He came up with the parable of the chocolate chip cookie and how there are good things that you put in, good ingredients that create this goodness. But sometimes evil things can make their way in. And sometimes raisins find their way in.

[LAUGHTER]

The parable of the chocolate chip cookie from my four-year-old.

SPEAKER: Now, you've just shared that with all of us, and we won't forget that.

AUDIENCE: Oh, I hope not. That I am able to be floored by just their perception and learning at the pace that they need to be learning at, rather than my wife and I imposing the pace that we thought that they were at. It has been outstanding in my family.

SPEAKER: Very, very interesting comment. In just a moment, I want to ask if you've seen examples of technology. When families are separated, how they're using technology to continue to study together. But before I do that, I'm

going share a little clip. This is a clip from Lisa Magnuson. She was an intern that worked with me at Latter-day Saint Charities.

And then she went on. She got married. They went to school. Anyway, they live in the Midwest. And they have three kids. And she came to visit me this summer. And she said, look, we can't do Come, Follow Me longer than five minutes. And we do it at the breakfast table.

And I said, send me a clip. I just want to know, what can you accomplish in five minutes? She sends me a five-minute clip. It's full of chaos. I've edited it down to a minute-20 for you. I just want you to notice what has happened in this clip. There are 33 seconds of learning in this five-minute clip.

And you'll see it, because I've edited it for you. But I just want you to think about, what did the kids learn out of this entire thing? And I'm not saying that every family is doing this perfectly. But watch the clip, and you tell me what the kids have learned. And you'll smile. Just, this is the reality of our lives.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

- Scripture. It talks about [INAUDIBLE] the scripture. Will you help me? OK, so everyone listen, please. So in [INAUDIBLE] is resurrected and comes to the [INAUDIBLE], He says [INAUDIBLE] evidence of it.

- Correct. So what I think—we have a little bit of a challenge for you guys today.

- Is—juice?

- It's apple juice.

- [INAUDIBLE] apple juice.

- I don't know what else is in it, but it's apple juice.

- You get your vitamins in it.

- OK, so consider recording in a journal experiences that have helped you believe in Jesus Christ, or share it with someone you know. So today and the rest of this week, I want you guys to write in your journals. I want you to write down some things that you guys believe in, how it changed and affected your life. Dad believes in the power of keeping—making and keeping covenants.

We get the opportunity to renew covenants every Sunday when we partake of the sacrament—our baptismal covenants. Every day, Dad has the opportunity to renew his priesthood covenants. When Dad goes to the temple, it's an opportunity to take out new covenants for people who have passed, but also renew his covenants from the temple, as well.

- What do you mean by passed?

- Died. Passed away. And so those are all things that we have [INAUDIBLE] in the power of the welfare system of the Church.

[END PLAYBACK]

SPEAKER: OK.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah. You saw the 33 seconds when the kids were not talking. What was learned? What do you think the girl in the

blue, who was under the blanket earlier—what do you think she learned out of that entire exchange with her dad? Dad goes to the temple and does work for people who have passed. What does passed mean? Died. My dad does something in the temple that helps people who have already died.

I think that's going to be the point out of all the words and everything that went on in the juice, and the porridge, and everything. Is that worth it? I think it is, for the five minutes that both those parents were trying so hard, and all of that stuff going on. If that one single concept that maybe took seven seconds is the only thing that she takes away from that, is it worth it? Probably.

And if we do that over and over and over and consistently, even if it's in seven-second increments, it will make a difference in the lives of our families and the people that we love. So this is so hard in person. Anybody have anything that works over technology when families can't even sit around the same breakfast table? Anything that you've seen work? Sister on the side.

AUDIENCE: I have a sister who's a convert. And she's single, as well. And she lives in San Jose. And we are in Alabama. And one of the things we've done is we've FaceTimed with her when we did Come, Follow Me. And as we're reading scriptures or we watch a video together, we go around the room and kind of got what everybody got out of it. And it was interesting to me that, A, it brought unity for my sister. It gave her somebody to study with. But we each got something out of it. And we were able to share that with her, as well, so that was kind of neat.

SPEAKER: Thank you. I have really benefited a lot from people in my family saying, hey, come join our study. And we can do it. The technology available is amazing to us, that we can belong to family chat groups. We can FaceTime. Distance doesn't really make a difference. Any other examples? There was one here. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: I was in Turkey for a year. My family was in Germany. And my daughter was at BYU-Idaho. But when—WhatsApp—we would text what we learned that day in our scripture studies.

SPEAKER: Isn't that amazing? Was it practical? Did it work out?

AUDIENCE: While we were doing it. Yeah.

SPEAKER: OK. All right. One other comment. This brother in the green. Oh, excuse me. All right. We'll come back to you.

AUDIENCE: So let me just say first that raisins in cookies are why I have deeply rooted trust issues.

[LAUGHTER]

I was deployed earlier this year when Come, Follow Me kicked off. And my wife and I hadn't really talked about it. And I called home Monday morning, which was Sunday night for them, just after the first of the year. And the kids were telling me about how they had just done Come, Follow Me as a family. And my wife had let out with that. And we've learned several things as a family.

But the technology was miraculous for us to be able, through FaceTime, to pray together as a family across oceans, and to study together, and to share those interactions. However brief, we learned that the Lord rewards the most humble and brief glimpses of obedience and effort, however imperfect.

And then beyond that, I would try to use technology to just text snippets to the kids of what I had studied, and bore testimony. And it was just a brief connection that we wouldn't have had otherwise. And our family has been blessed, then, through technology. And then it just continued once we were reunited after that.

SPEAKER: Boy, I want to always remember what you said, that the Lord rewards the briefest snippets of obedience with blessings and power. Now, my brother in the green. You're the only one in the room in green. It's coming to you.

AUDIENCE: One of the things that I've had to do as a border patrol agent is I've been deployed many times. And over probably five years, I was deployed an average of three to four months a year. And what I found worked best for my family is I would either get on the phone, if I couldn't get a very good connection, or Skype.

And I would actually just sit down and read the scriptures with them or study Come, Follow Me with them. And we would do it together, but we were separate. And I found that that really helped out. And it really increased it. Now, my kids were a little bit older, and they'd already quit with the phrases like, Dad, this is boring. When is it going to end?

And those kinds of phrases, which I dealt with a lot when my kids were younger. But even when kids are younger, if you put, like, a dad on the phone, or something like that, to help study, or the mother, if she's gone, it adds so much more power and importance and teaches them the importance of the gospel and studying.

SPEAKER: Thank you so much for sharing your experiences. I really hope to use some of these. You have a lot of experience because of the nature of service and deployment that I think will benefit the Church. What we've just done—and I really appreciate the examples of a daughter who has a question or a family who's—why are we doing this? It's boring. Or we're separated physically.

The ability to connect what is current, and on our hearts, and the questions that we have as we live our lives in stress, with the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that is in the prophets and the scriptures, is the whole purpose of Come, Follow Me. If the purpose is conversion, how do we get conversion deep into our hearts so that it really works in our lives?

It answers the practical things that come up. It isn't just a decorative thing that we do, because we're supposedly religious people. It is everything to us. It means the world to us. To get that conviction deep in our hearts, as we heard from our friend with the Joseph Smith Papers, we have to provide those opportunities for the next generation.

Yeah. Is it hard? Is it messy? Is it ridiculous? Absolutely. But the Lord rewards every shred of small effort with blessings. He'll pour out the blessings of heaven. Maybe as I close, I just want to bear my testimony. The Lord will help us. And He'll help you as you minister to others who are struggling with things inside their hearts, with injury of many different kinds, and with the stress that their families feel.

And He will do it in the quietest of ways through the scriptures, through the words of the prophets. Let me close by just bearing my testimony in the words of Nephi. I have too many multiple scriptures here. But I read this this morning as part of my own study.

And the Holy Ghost whispered to me, why don't you share that with the chaplains? So I will. This is 2 Nephi chapter 4. It's one of the beautiful psalms of—they call it the psalm of Nephi. But I think about him. He's been through personal cataclysm—left his home—come across the desert—had to build a ship, something he didn't know how to do.

Tired. Faced a lot of opposition. Now he's separating from his family. He has not been able to bring his own family together. His brothers are at war with him. And he cries out in the agony of his personal circumstances. But this is his testimony. So I'll just read the very final part.

“Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! . . . Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way—but . . . clear [the] way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of my enemy.

“O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. [And] I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; [but] I know that cursed is he that [puts] his trust in the arm of flesh. . . .

“Yea, I know that God will give liberally [unto] him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen” (verses 33–35).

As you minister to brothers and sisters around the world who are in extreme—who have faced all kinds of injury, may the Lord be your rock. May you trust Him. And may you provide the assurance of that trust to others is my prayer for you, and my great thanks, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen.