

EMULATING AND HONORING OUR HEAVENLY PARENTAGE

By Scott Van Kampen

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The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of emulation, taught Elder Douglas L. Callister, formerly of the Seventy. “One of the purposes of our earthly probation is to become like [our heavenly parents] in every conceivable way so that we may be comfortable in the presence of heavenly parentage.” We emulate Them as we try to think, talk, act, and even look like Them (see Alma 5:14).¹

As a graphic designer, I have to work in the many different artistic styles required by various clients. To do so, I have found value in having a pattern. Even though the client may explain the job and its desired result in great detail, I’ve found that it helps me to have an image to look at as I work. That pattern—even if it is only a mental one—reminds me of my goal and keeps me on a consistent track.

Likewise in our mortal probation, instructions alone are not always enough to communicate information or convey a new concept. We may need a picture or pattern in our mind’s eye to help us emulate heavenly practice. Consequently, if we think of ourselves as God’s children, desiring to return to Him, we are more likely to pattern our lives after Him and to strive for the qualities that are inherent in Him.²

Our wise Heavenly Father actually provided His Only Begotten Son as our true example of how to emulate Him. During the Savior’s mortal



Because having a pattern in our mind’s eye helps us emulate heavenly practice, our wise Father provided His Son as our true pattern of following Him.

ministry, He did the will of the Father, spending His time helping others. Similarly, when we emulate the Father and His Son, we use our gifts, talents, and intelligence to give service freely. As we serve, we honor our Father and He honors us by calling us to participate in building His kingdom.

Just as in graphic design, sometimes in life a visual, tangible pattern replaces a mental one. We often learn from the service of others. I still

remember the first time as ward executive secretary that I couldn’t completely fill the bishop’s interview schedule. The bishop, however, reminded me that the Lord was in charge and He knew who needed to see the bishop that day—even if we didn’t. And sure enough, every time we had this “problem,” the phone would ring or someone would stop in to ask if the bishop had any time. And because of his inspired leadership, he did have time.

In addition to having the example of leaders, I was blessed with parents who exemplified kindness, hard work, support, honesty, and uprightness. Their examples were a pattern I could also follow, demonstrating for me the connection between emulating God and honoring our father and mother. The righteous example of our earthly parents is part of Heavenly Father’s pattern, and by honoring them, we can learn the traits we need in order to live with our Heavenly Father again. And as we become part of the righteous pattern of our children’s lives, we can help further His plan and complete His pattern of parenting by bringing not only ourselves but also our eternal families back to Him. ■

NOTES

1. See Douglas L. Callister, “Our Refined Heavenly Home,” *Liahona*, June 2009, 27; *Ensign*, June 2009, 55.
2. See Sherrie Johnson, “Instilling a Righteous Image,” *Tambuli*, June 1984, 10; *Ensign*, July 1983, 21.