

CHOOSE GOODNESS AND Joy



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Heavenly Father wants us to be happy and gives us opportunities to choose joy, happiness, and goodness.

Many seminary students will know this scripture mastery verse: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). But we sometimes forget that it’s really true. We are meant to have joy, which means to be *genuinely* happy, in an eternal sense.

Our Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to have many opportunities to learn and grow. To do that, He provided a wonderful world that He declared to be good and gives us the opportunity to choose goodness and joy. We know the commandments are to bless and help us, but we don’t always remember they also help us have joy.

Choose to Be Good

We feel glad when we make good decisions. This includes choosing to be morally good and obedient.

On occasion, courage means to be with

and stand by our friends. Other times it means that we have to stand a little apart, not judging them or feeling superior but choosing the right by doing something different.

When I was in junior high school, my friends were planning to go and throw eggs at cars during Halloween. I had good friends, but I knew that having fun at the expense of other people, including their property, wasn’t right.

“You know, this really isn’t what we want to do,” I said. But they were set on it, so I said, “Well, I’m just going home.”

I walked home that night, and my parents asked me why I was home early. When I told them, I knew my parents and Heavenly Father approved of what I had done—and it made me feel *good* to do the right.





As we choose to learn new things, the Lord can use the things we learn to bless others.

Choose to Learn

As we grow, everything we learn can be used by the Lord to bless someone, somewhere.

As a Scout I learned Morse code. Years later, while I was on my mission, an investigator came into sacrament meeting, and I felt inspired to write him a short note in Morse code which said something like, “Welcome to sacrament meeting. Happy to see you here!”

It turned out he was a radio operator, and it was a great delight to him to have somebody write him a note in Morse code. Imagine how happy I was when this investigator, with a big smile, said, “I’m so glad that you wrote me this message in Morse code!” I was amazed that something I had learned years earlier could help me on my mission to reach a certain individual in a particular way.

As we are open to new things and to learning in our lives, the Lord knows what we have learned and can use us to bless others. Morse code is a specific example, but if we are willing, the Lord can use us as instruments to bless the lives of others and bring joy to their lives and our own.

Choose to Believe

Belief is a choice. “Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend” (Mosiah 4:9).

When we choose to believe, we understand and see things in a different way. When we see and live that way, we are happy and joyful in a way that only the gospel can bring.

Sometimes we do our very best to understand a question. We study it out in our mind and try every way we can to come to our best decision. At that point, we will sometimes receive additional guidance—things we hadn’t thought of, protection from dangers we couldn’t anticipate, an open pathway we wouldn’t have thought of.

Normally the Holy Ghost doesn’t tell us things that we *know* we should do. I’ve never had the Holy Ghost tell me to go to bed on time. I knew I was supposed to do that. Usually, the Holy Ghost helps alert us to things after we’ve done everything we can.

When I was deciding about graduate school, I had been granted a scholarship at a wonderful school. Yet, after studying things as best I could and coming to what I thought was my best decision, I had a very clear feeling that I should apply to a different school.

So I did and ended up attending a different graduate school than I had initially planned. At that critical juncture, after I had done all I could, quiet guidance took me from one set of opportunities to another that opened many possibilities and blessings I would never have anticipated on my own.

We do everything we can. We live as obediently and faithfully as we can. And then we allow the Lord to prompt us toward opportunities to find and experience joy in our lives and in the lives of our friends and families, in our professional and academic experiences, and in our dating and marriage to our eternal companions.

My father used to say we make three great choices in life. First is our faith, second is our spouse, and third is our profession. I testify that in each of those key areas, we can choose joy. We can choose obedience, and we can choose faith. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be blessed with that which is good for us.

“All Things Shall Work Together for Thy Good”

In Doctrine and Covenants 90:24, we’re taught, “Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted.” We see the word *good* again. Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and *all* things will work together for your good.

In choosing good, we also have the opportunity to become our best selves. Once, many years ago as a teenager, I didn’t see some things the same way my parents did. During one exchange with my father,

I realized certain things I could say might sound smart, but they wouldn’t be true and would be hurtful. I realized I could choose not to say those things.

That was an important lesson for me. I realized that I could choose what I said and that it felt good and right not to talk back in a hurtful way. We can be better, and making good choices can help. As we do so, we feel good because we know we’re doing the right thing—and we can feel joy.

Please remember, we can choose to be good, to learn, and to believe. Heavenly Father knows how all things will work together, and He knows how all things can work together for our good. That’s a great promise. It’s also my humble testimony. **NE**

When we live as obediently and faithfully as we can, we allow the Lord to prompt us toward opportunities to find and experience joy in our lives.

