

MINE ERRAND FROM THE LORD



The Lord teaches us how to magnify our callings by giving us “errands” to perform, as He did with the prophet Jacob in the Book of Mormon.

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The fifth article of faith states, “We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”

A remarkable characteristic of the restored Church is that every member is invited to become involved. The miracle of the Church’s growth in both stature and recognition cannot be separated from the contributions of its members. Those not of our faith often find it hard to comprehend how we are able to enlist the participation of so many without giving them financial remuneration. But this phenomenon is not so hard to comprehend when we understand that we have received our callings from the Lord through His servants here on earth.

Jacob’s Errand

Jacob, younger brother of Nephi, spoke of his own calling: “Wherefore I, Jacob, gave

unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord. For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi” (Jacob 1:17–18). Jacob and Joseph not only received callings as priests and teachers through their brother Nephi, but Jacob also received an “errand” from the Lord to teach the people about certain commandments they had neglected. We might say that through this errand the Lord taught Jacob specifically how to magnify the calling he had already received. “And we did magnify our office unto the Lord,” Jacob continued, “taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence” (Jacob 1:19).

Being Taught from On High

How well I remember my first Church assignment—received shortly after I was converted to the gospel and baptized—when I was asked to give the closing prayer in



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Sunday School. At first I refused, being both nervous and self-conscious at having to stand at the pulpit in front of the members in our small branch. But a kind, persuasive Sunday School president who had helped me over previous hurdles got me to agree. I worried, and in my anxiety during the lesson, I did not hear much of what the teacher taught. I spent most of the time writing out a prayer on the palm of my hand. At the close of the lesson, I nervously walked to the front of the class, waited until heads were bowed, then read the prayer from my hand. That was an important step for me, one from which I grew.

The scriptures often remind me that men and women have become mighty in rising to a call, and by being obedient they have

accomplished what the Lord has asked of them. Consider how great a prophet Moses became, even though he lacked confidence when the Lord first called him. “Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue” (Exodus 4:10). Despite his inadequacy, he accepted his “errand” from the Lord and was taught from on high until he became not only a powerful prophet of God but also one of the

most prolific scripture writers in earth’s history.

A Hospital Visit

Many of the responsibilities and callings I have received have been stepping-stones in a pathway of progression. Sometimes in the course of fulfilling these responsibilities, I have received an errand from the Lord that has taught me about magnifying my calling.

Several years ago while serving as bishop, I worked in a busy London office. One day I suddenly felt the urge to seek a quiet place. There I was prompted to leave work and visit a widow who had been admitted to the hospital the day before with suspected heart and respiratory problems. On reaching the intensive care unit, I was informed of a series of complications and was told that she

was being prepared for an operation. After I explained my position, the doctors allowed me a few minutes alone at her bedside. Guiding my fingers through the complicated array of wires, tubes, and equipment, I placed my hands upon her head and gave her a blessing. The doctors and other staff members could not understand her rapid recovery over the next few days.

Becoming What the Lord Wants Us to Become

Church callings are part of the process the Lord uses to refine us and help us reach our full potential. Whether you are a Primary secretary, a Sunday School teacher, or an elders quorum president, the Lord wants you to become the best secretary, teacher, or president you can possibly be.

In October 2002 general conference Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to become converted. It teaches us what we should do, and it provides us opportunities to become what our Heavenly Father desires us to become. The full measure of this conversion to men and women of God happens best through our labors in His vineyard. . . . As an essential part of God’s plan for His children, the leadership and work of His Church are provided by His children who give their time freely for the service of God and their fellowmen. . . . This is the way men and women prepare for the ultimate blessing of eternal life.”¹

In our modern, diverse society, demands are placed on our time from many quarters. But if our eye is single to His

glory, we can find the right balance and become the son or daughter He wants us to become.

Our journey in life can be likened to steering a boat under sail. Those who have experienced being at the helm will understand the fine balance between being in control and allowing the elements to take control. We will be able to reach our destination if we set the sails properly (which can be likened to our personal preparation), keep a firm hand on the tiller (the steering device), remain sensitive to

external conditions, and fix our mind on our ultimate goal.

Responsibility and Accountability

Having received his errand from the Lord and having understood his divine commission as a teacher and priest, Jacob recognized that he had responsibility and accountability. “We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach

them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day” (Jacob 1:19).

As a convert to the Church, I have seen many changes in my life come through serving the Lord. By taking steps of faith in our Church service, my family and I have received many blessings. I am ever reminded that this is the Lord’s work, that we are on His errand, and that He grants us joy and happiness as we go forth and do His will. ■

NOTE

1. “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 69.

