



Nine



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CRAIG DIMOND AND CODY BELL

Principles

FOR A SUCCESSFUL
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

By Jennifer Grace Jones

Church Magazines



Amy Adams of Washington, USA, was trying to decide which activities would be best for her three young children when a conversation with her mother changed her mind. “What if you gave your children something better than training in sports or dance?” Amy’s mother asked. “What if by staying home, they could learn to feel the Spirit more?” Then her mother reminded her of what President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught about the power of focusing on life’s basic relationships (see, for example, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 19–22).

Amy and her husband, Brett, prayed about and pondered this counsel and felt it would be a good idea for their family to spend more time together at home. For one year, they chose to forgo dance and sports; instead they prepared meals, learned Primary songs, visited museums, and played outdoors. “Our children were able to feel the Spirit . . . because we took the time to stop and listen,” Amy says. Their children may not be the top sports and dance stars, she says, “but they have a testimony of the Savior.”

Amy and Brett prayed to know how they should personally follow the counsel of modern prophets, and doing so allowed them to receive inspiration for their family. Amy says this inspiration led to her “proudest moments as a mother.”

In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” modern prophets have outlined nine basic principles for strong, gospel-centered families: “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129). The following teachings from Church leaders, examples from the life of Jesus Christ, and visual images give us a closer look at these nine principles and ways we can apply them.

FAITH



“Faith is confidence and trust in Jesus Christ that lead a person to obey him.”

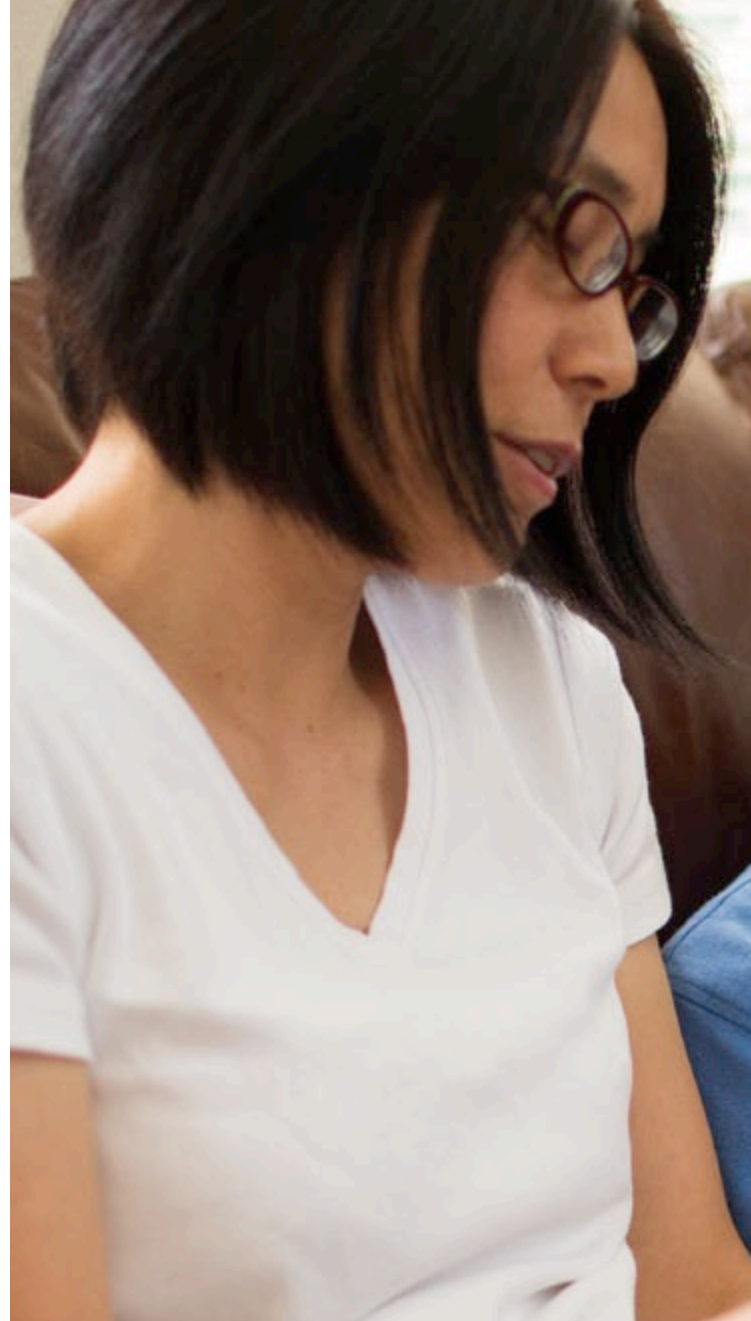
Guide to the Scriptures,
“Faith,” scriptures.lds.org.

From Church Leaders

As parents, we have been commanded to teach our children ‘to understand the doctrine of . . . faith in Christ the Son of the living God’ (D&C 68:25). . . .

“There is no other thing in which we can have absolute assurance. There is no other foundation in life that can bring the same peace, joy, and hope. In uncertain and difficult times, faith is truly a spiritual gift worthy of our utmost efforts. We can give our children education, lessons, athletics, the arts, and material possessions, but if we do not give them faith in Christ, we have given little.”

Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy, “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 38.



REPENTANCE



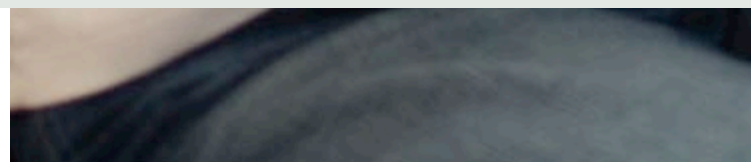
“Repentance implies that a person turns away from evil and turns his [or her] heart and will to God.”

Guide to the Scriptures,
“Repent, Repentance,”
scriptures.lds.org.

From Church Leaders

Today is always a better day to repent than any tomorrow. . . . Even should we be forgiven at some later time, the Lord cannot restore the good effects our repentance today might have had on those we love and are to serve. That is particularly poignant for the parents of young children. In those tender years there are chances for shaping and lifting spirits which may never come again. But even the grandfather who may have missed chances with his own children might, by choosing to repent today, do for grandchildren what he once could have done for their parents.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Do Not Delay,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 34.





FROM LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG DIMOND, CODY BELL, AND CHRISTINA SMITH; THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY DEL PARSON © IRI

From the Life of Jesus Christ

When the Savior concluded the first day of His ministry to the Nephites, He looked into the faces of the people and saw that “they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer.” He was filled with compassion and said, “Have ye any that are sick among you? . . . Bring them hither and I will heal them.”

The multitude then came forward with their sick, and Jesus healed them one by one. And they all—2,500 men, women, and children—knelt at Jesus’s feet and worshipped Him.

The Savior then commanded the little children to be brought to Him and commanded the multitude to kneel down. He knelt in the midst of the children and began praying. The people were overcome with joy after hearing His prayer, and they bore this testimony: “The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father.” (See 3 Nephi 17:1–17.)

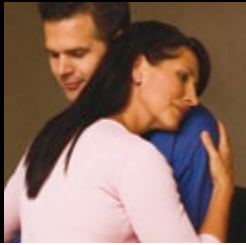
PRAYER



“Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other. The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them.”

Bible Dictionary, “Prayer.”

FORGIVENESS



“To forgive generally means one of two things: (1) When God forgives men, he cancels or sets aside a required punishment for sin. . . . (2) As people forgive each other, they treat one another with Christlike love.”

Guide to the Scriptures,
“Forgive,” scriptures.lds.org.

From the Life of Jesus Christ

A Pharisee named Simon asked the Savior to come eat dinner. While they were eating, a woman who was known in the city as a sinner came to Jesus and stood nearby weeping. She knelt at the Savior’s feet and washed them with her tears, dried them with her hair, and anointed them with ointment. Simon watched the woman and thought, “This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him.”

The Savior then turned to Simon and taught him a parable:

“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

“And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.”

Then Jesus asked Simon, “Which of [the debtors] will love [the creditor] most?” Simon answered that it was probably the debtor who was forgiven the greater debt. Jesus then turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Seest thou this woman? . . . Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.” Then He promised the woman, “Thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” (See Luke 7:36–50.)

From Church Leaders

“Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency,
“The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 77.

FROM LEFT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE BUNDERSON, DAVID WINTERS, AND MATTHEW REER, MAY NOT BE COPIED; DETAIL FROM JESUS WASHING THE FEET OF THE APOSTLES, BY DEL PARSON © IRI



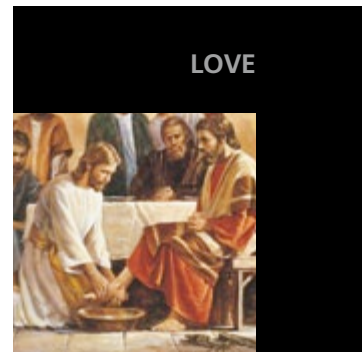


From the Life of Jesus Christ

On the eve of His Crucifixion and hours before the agony of Gethsemane, Jesus Christ observed a final Passover with His Apostles. When the meal concluded, Jesus “knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own unto the end.” The Savior then rose from supper and girded Himself with a towel. He filled a basin with water and washed His disciples’ feet. When He had finished, He gave them a new commandment:

“Love one another; as I have loved you. . . .

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” (See John 13:1–5, 34–35.)



LOVE

“Deep devotion and affection. . . . The greatest example of God’s love for his children is found in the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ.”

Guide to the Scriptures, “Love,” scriptures.lds.org.

From Church Leaders

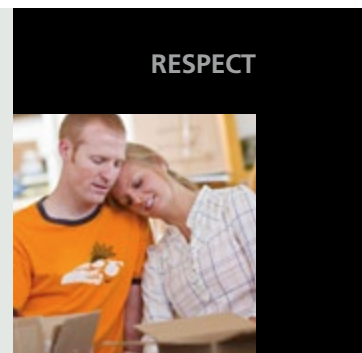
“To consider worthy of high regard.”

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), “respect.”

When we have sampled much and have wandered far and have seen how fleeting and sometimes superficial a lot of the world is, our gratitude grows for the privilege of being part of something we can count on—home and family and the loyalty of loved ones. We come to know what it means to be bound together by duty, by respect, by belonging. We learn that nothing can fully take the place of the blessed relationship of family life. . . .

“Brethren, let’s treat our wives with dignity and with respect. They’re our eternal companions. Sisters, honor your husbands. They need to hear a good word. They need a friendly smile. They need a warm expression of true love.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Love at Home—Counsel from Our Prophet,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2011, 4.



RESPECT

COMPASSION



“Literally ‘to suffer with.’ It also means to show sympathy, pity, and mercy for another.”

Guide to the Scriptures,
“Compassion,” scriptures
.lds.org.

saw how many people from the city were with the woman and how deeply she grieved, He “had compassion on her.” He touched the stretcher where the young man lay and said, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.” Immediately the man sat up and began to speak, and the Savior delivered him to his suffering mother. (See Luke 7:11–15.)

From the Life of Jesus Christ

The scriptures contain numerous accounts where the Savior demonstrated compassion for others. Being moved with compassion, He gave sight to two blind men (see Matthew 20:30–34), He cleansed a leper (see Mark 1:40–41), and He healed all the sick within a Nephite multitude (see 3 Nephi 17:6–9).

In a particularly touching account, Jesus approached the city of Nain, where He saw a funeral procession for a young man—“the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.” When the Savior



RECREATION



Healthy, virtuous activities that refresh the strength and spirit of all involved.

From Church Leaders

Just as honest toil gives rest its sweetness, wholesome recreation is the friend and steadying companion of work. Music, literature, art, dance, drama, athletics—all can provide entertainment to enrich one’s life and further consecrate it. At the same time, it hardly needs to be said that much of what passes for entertainment today is coarse, degrading, violent, mind-numbing, and time wasting. Ironically, it sometimes takes hard work to find wholesome leisure. When entertainment turns from virtue to vice, it becomes a destroyer of the consecrated life.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 17.





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From Church Leaders

Teaching children the joy of honest labor is one of the greatest of all gifts you can bestow upon them. I am convinced that one of the reasons for the breakup of so many couples today is the failure of parents to teach and train sons in their responsibility to provide and care for their families and to enjoy the challenge this responsibility brings. Many of us also have fallen short in instilling within our daughters the desire of bringing beauty and order into their homes through homemaking. . . .

“[My father] instilled in me a joy and appreciation for honest labor and prepared me for that time in my life when I would have the responsibility of providing for a family. The principles I was taught by my wise father of honest labor, of not wasting, of discipline, and of seeing a task to its completion were basic to my success.” ■

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Joy of Honest Labor,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 62, 64.

WORK



“To exert oneself physically or mentally especially in sustained effort for a purpose.”

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed. (2003), “work.”