

What Church Leaders Are Saying

about Disabilities

The Priceless Gift of a Body

“For reasons usually unknown, some people are born with physical limitations. Specific parts of the body may be abnormal. Regulatory systems may be out of balance. And all of our bodies are subject to disease and death. Nevertheless, *the gift of a physical body is priceless*. Without it, we cannot attain a fullness of joy.”¹

—President Russell M. Nelson, President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Our Differences Make Us Stronger

“The longer I live, the more I realize that everyone has felt different from the ‘regular’ members of the Church. That’s because our challenges add a level of uniqueness that sometimes makes us feel different. . . .

“ . . . Members of the Church have more in common as disciples of Jesus Christ than those things that make us feel ‘different.’

“We have been ‘baptized into one body’ (1 Corinthians 12:13). It’s our differences that make up the body of Christ. . . .

“So if you find yourself placing labels on others or on yourself, *try to remember that it is our differences that make us stronger.*”²

—Sister Reyna I. Aburto, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency



*May we all understand
the hope and strength of
our Savior’s Atonement.*

The Savior Knows Our Struggles

“Our Savior experienced and suffered the fulness of all mortal challenges ‘according to the flesh’ so He could know ‘according to the flesh’ how to ‘succor [which means to give relief or aid to] his people according to their infirmities’ [Alma 7:12]. **He therefore knows our struggles, our heartaches, our temptations, and our suffering, for He willingly experienced them all as an essential part of His Atonement.** And because of this, His Atonement empowers Him to succor us—to give us the strength to bear it all. . . .

“ . . . Some are born with physical or mental disabilities that cause personal suffering for them and struggles for those who love and care for them. . . .

“One day all of these mortal burdens will pass away and there will be no more pain (see Revelation 21:4). I pray that we will all understand the hope and strength of our Savior’s Atonement: the assurance of immortality, the opportunity for eternal life, and the sustaining strength we can receive if only we will ask.”³

—President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency

All Things to Be Made Right

“The Savior makes all things right. No injustice in mortality is permanent, even death, for He restores life again. **No injury, disability, betrayal, or abuse goes uncompensated in the end** because of His ultimate justice and mercy.”⁴

—Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Choices Are More Important Than Abilities

“Often, when we look at ourselves, we see only our limitations and deficiencies. We might think we have to be ‘more’ of something for God to use us—more intelligent, more wealthy, more charismatic, more talented, more spiritual. **Blessings will come not so much because of your abilities but because of your choices.** And the God of the universe will work within and through you, magnifying your humble efforts for His purposes.

“His work has always advanced on this important principle: ‘Out of small things proceedeth that which is great’ [Doctrine and Covenants 64:33].”⁵

—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Being Careful about Labels

“There is a need to use great care in choosing how you label or think of yourselves. **Most important, we must remember that each of us is a child of God with a potential destiny of eternal life.**”

“Every other label, even including occupation, citizenship, physical characteristics, or honors, is temporary or trivial in eternal terms. Don’t choose to label yourselves or think of yourselves in terms that put a limit on your eternal journey and goals.”⁶

—President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency



Seeing beyond Mortal Limitations

“My oldest sister was born with cataracts. She was legally blind from birth. When she was 15 months old, she got her first pair of tiny glasses with thick, heavy lenses. . . .

“Although she was bright intellectually, because of her poor eyesight she missed visual cues, and some of those things affected her social development. For example, she was never able to clearly see facial expressions. Gaps in understanding caused her to misunderstand situations, which sometimes created challenges for her and others.

“Despite these challenges, she learned to play the piano and organ. She graduated from college with a degree in education, and for many years she has used her skills as a special education teacher to help struggling students. **Her spiritual vision allowed her to see beyond her mortal limitations.** . . .

“Let us each strive to live according to clear and distinct gospel truth, so that we can open our spiritual eyes to the beauty, joy, and divine potential our Heavenly Father sees in each of us.”⁷

—President Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President

Limitless Potential

“Let me tell you of a man we met in a small village outside of Hyderabad, India, in 2006. This man exemplified a willingness to change. Appa Rao Nulu was born in rural India. When he was three years old, he contracted polio and was left physically disabled. His society taught him that his



potential was severely limited. However, as a young adult he met our missionaries. *They taught him of a greater potential, both in this life and in the eternity to come.* He was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church. With a significantly raised vision, he set a goal to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and to serve a full-time mission. In 1986 he was ordained an elder and called to serve in India. Walking was not easy—he did his best, using a cane in each hand, and he fell often—but quitting was never an option. He made a commitment to honorably and devotedly serve a mission, and he did.”⁸

—Elder Donald L. Hallstrom, emeritus member of the Seventy

Faith in the Reality of God’s Love

“There is a woman who suffers with a debilitating, chronic illness that persists despite medical attention, priesthood blessings, and fasting and prayers. Nevertheless, *her faith in the power of prayer and the reality of God’s love for her is undiminished.* She presses ahead day by day (and sometimes hour by hour) serving as called in the Church and, together with her husband, looking after her young family, smiling as much as she can. Her compassion for others runs deep, refined by her own suffering, and she often loses herself in ministering to others. She continues steadfast, and people feel happy being around her.”⁹

—Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

God Loves Us and Our Afflicted Ones

“To all of you who have challenges, concerns, disappointments, or heartaches with a dear one, know this: *with infinite love and everlasting compassion, God our Heavenly Father loves your afflicted one, and He loves you!*”¹⁰

—Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “We Are Children of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 86.
2. Reyna I. Aburto, Facebook post, Nov. 25, 2019.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 61–64.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 112.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Yearning for Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 23.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, Facebook post, June 13, 2019.
7. Jean B. Bingham, “Catch the Vision, Share the Vision!” *Ensign*, Aug. 2019, 40–41, 43.
8. Donald L. Hallstrom, “What Manner of Men?” *Ensign*, May 2014, 54.
9. D. Todd Christofferson, “Firm and Steadfast in the Faith of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 32.
10. Ronald A. Rasband, “Special Lessons,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 80.