
Small and Simple Things

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Of the Seventy

May we discover anew the divine power of daily prayer, the convincing influence of the Book of Mormon, and true devotion when partaking of the sacrament.



Everyone who will live the gospel of Jesus Christ daily and endure to the end will gain eternal life—this is the promise of the Lord.¹ In its essentials, the gospel is simple and easy to understand and adapted to the capacity of the weakest.² Alma, the Book of Mormon prophet, aptly remarked, “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but . . . by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; . . . and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.”³

Quite recently, I was privileged to observe this process in the life of a

brother named Stan, who had been less active for some 45 years. He had lived a good life and supported both his wife and son in their activity as faithful members in the Church. Yet for personal reasons he chose to remain outside the fellowship of the Church. Even so, each month he welcomed the home teachers.

During February 2006, Stan received new home teachers. Their first visit was pleasant enough, although Stan showed no real interest in the gospel or in any matters remotely associated with spiritual things. Their next visit did little to alter their initial observations, even though Stan was a little warmer and friendlier. On their third visit, however, there was a visible change in Stan’s countenance and demeanor. To their utmost surprise and even before they were able to present their message, Stan interrupted them with a number of thoughtful questions. In the ensuing discussion he also recounted his experiences during the past month, in which he and his wife had commenced reading one chapter a day from the Book of Mormon.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie eloquently described the type of reawakening Stan experienced: “Here is a man who gains a copy of this blessed

book, begins to read it, and continues . . . until, having read it all, his famished soul is filled with the bread of life. He cannot lay it aside or ignore its teachings. It is as though the waters of life are flowing into the barren deserts of his soul, quenching the arid, empty feeling that theretofore separated him from his God.”⁴

The home teachers were reminded of the remarkable power of the Book of Mormon and how very real the influence of the Spirit of the Lord is when we turn to its sacred pages. They also more fully understood the Prophet Joseph Smith’s declaration “that the Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, . . . and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”⁵

Stan’s thirst for learning and rediscovery of the restored gospel soon expanded his reading beyond one chapter a day, accompanied by deep soul-searching and fervent prayer. To those who sometimes are concerned whether the Lord will actually hear their prayers, the Savior reminds us:

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? . . .

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts, through the Holy Spirit, to them that ask him?”⁶

Our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, also counseled: “You can’t do it alone. . . . You need the help of the Lord . . . and the marvelous thing is that you have the opportunity to pray, with the expectation that your prayers will be heard and answered. . . . He stands ready to help.”⁷

During August of 2006, Stan ventured alongside his ever-faithful wife into his ward sacrament meeting—his first in 45 years. There, with a humble and prayerful heart, he listened to the



simple sacramental prayers offered by the youthful priests. Feeling unworthy and sensing something of the depth and the meaning of this most holy ordinance, he reflected deeply and painfully without partaking of the bread or the water for a number of weeks.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, in a tender testimony many years

ago, said: “In my judgment the sacrament meeting is the most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church. When I reflect upon the gathering of the Savior and his apostles on that memorable night when he introduced the sacrament . . . my heart is filled with wonderment and my feelings are touched. I consider that gathering one of the

most solemn and wonderful since the beginning of time.”⁸

Stan continued studying, praying, attending church, and receiving appropriate counsel and encouragement from his home teachers. Then the day arrived when, joyfully, he felt he was ready to put forth his hand to partake of the precious sacrament. When we partake worthily, thoughtfully, and reverently of the holy sacrament, we are enabled to become “partakers of the divine nature”⁹ because of the Atonement of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost.

As Stan returned to activity in the Church, he received a calling and, some months later, was ordained an elder. In July 2007, Stan and his wife knelt across the altar in a house of the Lord and, by the authority and eternal law of God, were married for time and for all eternity.¹⁰

Brothers and sisters, may we discover anew the divine power of daily prayer and the convincing influence of the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures. On Sundays, when partaking of the sacrament, may we do so in the spirit of true devotion to Him who is the giver of all things.¹¹

In the wake of our best and very limited efforts and because of the Lord’s infinite goodness, “great things [are] brought to pass” by the “small and simple things.”

Finally, as to these sacred things, may I add my personal witness and assurance in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 3 Nephi 27:13–18; D&C 14:7.
2. See Matthew 11:28–30; Jacob 4:14; Alma 37:44; D&C 133:57–58.
3. Alma 37:6–7.
4. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1985), 414.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:461.
6. Luke 11:11, 13; see Joseph Smith Translation in footnote 13*a*.
7. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 468.
8. In Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 60–61.
9. 2 Peter 1:4; see also 3 Nephi 18:1–14.
10. See Matthew 19:3–6; D&C 131:1–4.
11. See Moroni 6.