

Conquering Fear

WITH

FAITH, HOPE,
AND CHARITY

By Mark D. Ogletree

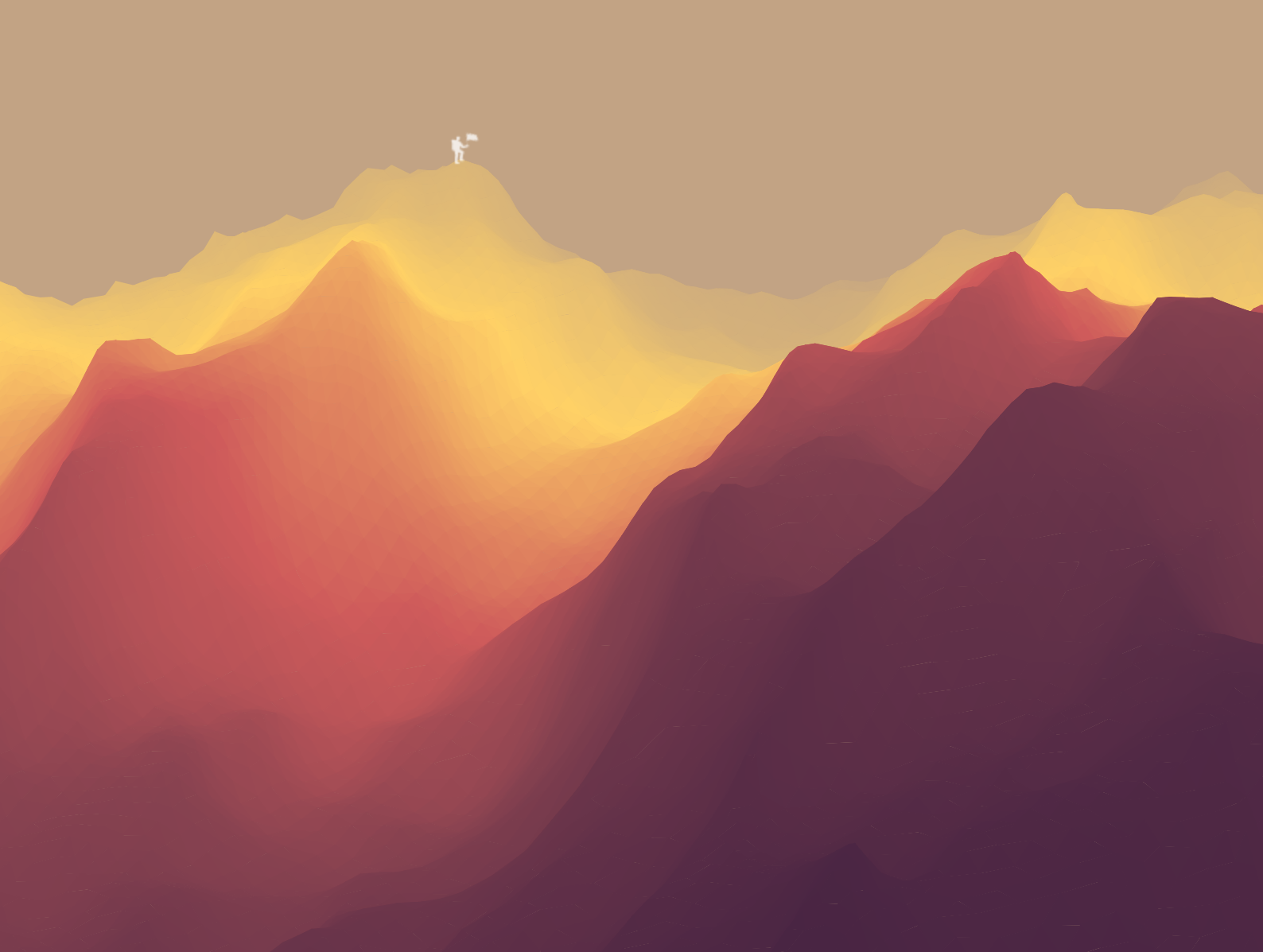
Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine,
Brigham Young University

In these perilous times, it helps to remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ is also known as “the gospel of peace” (Romans 10:15) and that the Savior has provided this assurance: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Nevertheless the troubles of the last days—days of wickedness, turbulence, chaos, and fear—can disrupt our sense of peace and security. As wars, financial collapses, and natural disasters surround us, it is easy to become full of fear instead of faith. The Savior prophesied that in the last days men’s hearts would fail them because of such fear (see Luke 21:26), making this truly a time for the faithful in heart, not for the faint of heart.

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) declared: “Fear, which can come upon people in difficult days, is a principal weapon in the arsenal which Satan uses to make mankind unhappy. He who fears loses strength for the combat of life in the fight against evil. Therefore the power of the evil one always tries to generate fear in human hearts. In every age and in every era, mankind has faced fear.”¹

Satan is a great liar; in fact, he is the father of lies (see John 8:44). He can whisper ideas into our minds that are full of doubt and fear. Darkness, confusion, doubt, and fear certainly do not come from the Lord, who is full of light and love. President George Q. Cannon (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency, stated: “Whenever darkness fills our minds, we may know that we are not



The Lord has given us key principles to use in our fight against Satan's weapons of confusion, doubt, and fear.

possessed of the Spirit of God. . . . When we are filled with the Spirit of God, we are filled with joy, with peace and with happiness no matter what our circumstances may be; for it is a spirit of cheerfulness and of happiness.”²

Remember, our Heavenly Father is the epitome of faith, hope, charity, optimism, and kindness. Paul taught, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded us that “fear comes not of God, but rather . . . from the adversary.”³

The Lord has given us several key doctrines to combat the fears we face. These doctrines become weapons in our arsenal to fight against fear and the author of fear—even Satan. These key doctrines are *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*.

Faith

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel. Faith is power; faith is strength. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that faith is “a reward for personal righteousness. . . . The greater the measure of obedience to God’s laws the greater will be the endowment of faith.”⁴ We also learn from the Apostle Paul that faith comes by hearing the word of God (see Romans 10:17). Therefore, if we want to increase our faith, we must read the scriptures, study the teachings of our latter-day apostles and prophets, and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Faith is also a decision. If we want to be immersed and saturated in faith, then we must choose to believe; we must choose to exercise faith.

We must supplant our fears with faith. Thinking of the Savior and remembering Him helps to strengthen

Hope is believing in God's promises to us. It is a gift of the Spirit. As you pray for this gift, your load will be lifted, and you will, in turn, bless and inspire others.

our faith and combat fear. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read, "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not" (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36). The Savior also taught, "And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you" (3 Nephi 18:7, 11). With His Spirit constantly with us, we will have the ability to stay focused, brush off fearful thoughts and worries, and see the world the way Christ would see it.

To have faith means to trust in God and believe in His promises to us. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said:

"There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.


". . . Fear not. Be of good cheer. *The future is as bright as your faith.*"⁵

Since a prophet of our day believed that the future is as bright as our faith, shouldn't we believe it too? Learn to choose faith over fear.

Hope

The prophet Moroni taught, "Whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God" (Ether 12:4). Hope is believing in God's promises to us and expecting the Lord to deliver us. As Mormon taught, our hope is rooted in the Savior and the Atonement (see Moroni 7:41).

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that "each time a hope is fulfilled, it creates confidence and leads to greater hope."⁶ He explained that hope is cultivated the same way faith is—by reading and studying the word of God—and by exercising hope. He said: "Hope is not knowledge, but rather the abiding trust that the Lord will fulfill His promise to us. It is confidence that if we live according to God's laws and the words of His prophets now, we will receive desired blessings in the future. It is believing and expecting that our prayers will be answered. It is manifest in confidence, optimism, enthusiasm, and patient perseverance."⁷



When you begin to feel stress and the pressures of the world, learn to turn outward instead of inward. Find someone that you can help or bless.

Elder Uchtdorf further declared that despair, or a lack of hope, “drains from us all that is vibrant and joyful and leaves behind the empty remnants of what life was meant to be. Despair kills ambition, advances sickness, pollutes the soul, and deadens the heart.”⁸ Hope, on the other hand, breeds faith, optimism, confidence, trust, and happiness.

If we have the Holy Ghost with us, we will have hope; we will expect the Lord to bless us; we will have confidence in His promises to us. Become a person of hope by trusting in God and knowing that His promises are real. Hope is a gift of the Spirit. As you pray for this gift, your load will be lifted, and you will, in turn, bless and inspire others.

Charity

The final weapon in our arsenal is charity—ultimately the greatest of the three principles discussed here (see 1 Corinthians 13:13; Moroni 7:46–47). Consider that our fears can cause us to become preoccupied with our own issues to the point that we become blind to the needs of those around us. Fear can disconnect us from the Lord’s Spirit and can separate us from other people. In an October 2011 general conference talk, Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles quoted this scripture: “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear” (1 John 4:18). He then

observed, “If we simply love God and love our neighbors, we are promised that we will overcome our fears.”⁹

President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) taught, “When you find yourselves a little gloomy, look around you and find somebody that is in a worse plight than yourself; go to him and find out what the trouble is, then try to remove it with the wisdom which the Lord bestows upon you; and the first thing you know, your gloom is gone, you feel light, the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and everything seems illuminated.”¹⁰

When you begin to feel stress and the pressures of the world, learn to turn outward instead of inward. Find someone that you can help or bless. When we put others’ needs before our own and serve and bless those around us, our own fears and problems seem to be put into proper perspective.

Faith, hope, and charity—these three great pillars of the gospel are the great antidote to confusion, doubt, and fear. As you deepen your commitment to these principles and practices, you will feel the Lord’s Spirit in your life, and you will begin to feel your load lighten. Your life will become much happier as you seek to lift the spirits of those around you. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter* (2015), 70–71.
2. *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of George Q. Cannon*, sel. Jerreld L. Newquist (1987), 17.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 338.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (1966), 264.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 92; emphasis added.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 24.
7. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” 22.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” 22.
9. L. Tom Perry, “Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 43.
10. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Lorenzo Snow* (2012), 260.