



From an interview
with Elder Richard G.
Hinckley of the
Seventy; by Hilary M.
Hendricks

*There's a right way to live and be happy;
it is choosing the right ev'ry day
(Children's Songbook, 160).*

When I was a boy, my father (Gordon B. Hinckley) often would use an interesting phrase when he was offering the family prayer. He would say, "Heavenly Father, please bless us that we may live without regret." I did not understand what that phrase meant for many years. Then, when I was about ten, I had an experience that helped me understand it better.

On warm summer nights, my friends and I enjoyed sleeping out under the stars. Our favorite camping spot was "the hollow," a

steep, wooded gully near our homes. There were no houses or businesses in the hollow, so we boys felt like real adventurers. Over the years we constructed several huts there—tree forts and ground forts—from scrap wood we collected.

One night after dark, one of my friends suggested we explore the new homes under construction on the other side of the hollow. We scrambled up the bank, raced across an alfalfa field, and began tiptoeing through skeletons of just-framed houses. It was exciting to wander through other people's homes, imagining the families who would soon move in. We were about to learn an important lesson, a lesson that, in part at least, would teach me about regret.

In the corner of one house we found a pile of wood—perfect for building our

Live without Regret



huts. The wood had been used in pouring cement for the home's foundation. We convinced ourselves the workers would throw it away. My friends and I grabbed the wood and dragged it to the hollow, talking all the way about what sort of hut we would build with it. We hid the wood among some trees and soon fell asleep.

The next morning we heard a loud groan. One of my friends was standing at the top of the hollow looking over the alfalfa field.

"We've left a trail!" he shouted. "We're going to get caught!"

Hurrying to his side, I saw a wide path of trampled alfalfa, leading to the edge of the hollow above our hide-out. If the builders wanted to know who had taken their wood, they need only follow our tracks.

My friends and I decided to go straight home and not return to the hollow for several days. For hours I hid in my parents' closet. Every police siren in the distance was surely coming for me!

"Why are you staying in here?" my mother asked.

"Oh, I'm just a bit tired," I fibbed. "It's quieter in the closet."

By the end of the week we figured no one had discovered that the scrap lumber was missing. We met at the hollow and went to work on our new hut. But I think we all felt embarrassed about what we had done.

That Saturday my father went to his office to catch up on some work. As he often did on a Saturday, he invited me to come along. He was then an employee of the Church and worked in the Church Administration Building. The office of President David O. McKay was down the hall. I had been introduced to President McKay and had spoken with him on several occasions. A tall man with wavy, white hair, he looked just like I imagined a prophet should. He spoke kindly, and I always hoped to see him when I visited Dad's office.

But that Saturday was different. We were leaving the building when President McKay stopped us in the hallway. I couldn't look at him. As I reached up to shake his hand,

I felt as if his eyes were reading the words "wood thief" on the top of my head. How I *regretted* taking that wood! Even though we knew that wood was going to be scrapped, we also knew we should have asked before taking it.

My father's prayers finally made sense! I knew that when my time came to stand before the Lord, I wanted to feel worthy.

The Lord promises that when our actions toward others are full of love and our thoughts are virtuous (good and clean), we will feel "confidence . . . in the presence of God" (see D&C 121:41–45). As you grow, you will have many opportunities to meet with your Church leaders—before your baptism, as you advance in the priesthood and Young Women organizations, as you prepare to serve a mission or enter the temple. By making good choices, keeping your thoughts pure, and repenting when you do wrong, you can feel confident when you meet with these leaders and, someday, when you stand before the Lord, you can do so "without regret." ●

