

By David Dickson
(Based on a true story)

*What did keeping
the commandments
have to do with
this big jar?*

One at

A man with glasses and a woman are smiling as they pour cereal into a large glass jar. The jar is filled with cereal and has the word 'One' written on it. The man is holding a spoon with cereal on it, and the woman is looking at the jar. The background is a warm, yellowish glow.

There's a right way to live and be happy; it is choosing the right ev'ry day (Children's Songbook, 160–61).

Lisa looked at the big, empty glass jar that Dad set on the kitchen table. Then she peered at the bag of popcorn kernels sitting next to it. What was Dad up to?

“The scriptures teach us that we’re always supposed to keep our lamps full of oil,” Dad said, starting off their family home evening lesson. “Back in scripture times, lamps were what people used to see in the dark. They didn’t have lightbulbs.”

Lisa squinted at the jar. “So the scriptures say we need to keep our lights on all the time?” She liked her night-light. That wouldn’t be such a bad thing. But how was that jar supposed to be a light?

“In a way, yes,” Dad said. “But this is more about having a light on inside you. By keeping the commandments we can feel the Holy Ghost. That’s one way to have a light on inside.”

Dad asked Mom to read a story in the Bible about 10 people who needed to go to a wedding. The wedding was at night, but only five people had their lamps ready to go. The other five had to leave to put oil in their empty lamps. By the time they got back, they were too late, and they missed the wedding. (See Matthew 25:1–13.)

“It’s a parable,” Mom said. “That’s a story that teaches a lesson.”

“What we learn from this story,” Dad explained, “is that we need to keep oil in our own lamps at all times. We always need to be ready and have light inside us.”

“But how?” Lisa asked. She didn’t really understand

a Time

all this oil-lamp stuff.

Dad grinned. “That’s easy. By keeping the commandments. And guess what? We just did that.” Dad dipped a small spoon into the bag of popcorn kernels, scooped out a spoonful, and poured it into the empty glass jar. The kernels clattered on the bottom.



“The gospel . . . teaches us the things we must know, do, and be to walk in His light.”¹

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency

“We just had family home evening,” Dad said. “That’s keeping a commandment, and it puts oil in our lamps. We don’t have a real lamp, but we thought this jar could work as a substitute.”

Lisa looked down into the jar. Those kernels didn’t even cover the bottom.

“But it’s still so empty!” she said.

“It won’t be that way for long,” Mom said.

Lisa wasn’t so sure. She thought it would take *forever* to fill such a big jar with such tiny scoops of small kernels.

The week went on, and Lisa mostly ignored the jar. Each small scoop simply didn’t seem to make much difference. Every day, however, Mom and Dad made sure to put in a scoop whenever the family kept a commandment.

After two weeks Lisa finally took a good look at the jar. She could hardly believe her eyes. It was already halfway full!

“Mom, look!” she said, pointing to the jar.

“I know, sweetie. We’re making great progress,” Mom said.

Lisa started getting more and more excited every time they read scriptures, went to church, and kept other commandments. She felt happy knowing they were doing what Heavenly Father wanted.

Two weeks later, the jar was full to the very top.

“I’m proud of our family,” Dad said, holding up the full jar. “This is exactly what the scriptures teach us to do. We kept the commandments each day. And bit by bit the light inside us grew bright. Now who’s ready for our family home evening activity?”

Lisa cheered and clapped her hands. But even better, she realized, was knowing they had followed the commandments.

She made a promise to herself that she would always keep oil in her lamp. ◆