



By Elder
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Of the Seventy

When we recognize that we are dependent on God, we also realize that He is eager to help us.

ONLY WITH THE HELP OF GOD

My senior year in high school brought a challenge I wasn't expecting. Shortly after school began, our speech teacher assigned me to participate in debate. We studied, practiced, and competed, and I humbly learned many valuable lessons.

Months later and four weeks before the state speech competition, my teacher casually informed me that he had also just entered my name to compete in extemporaneous speech. He began explaining that on the first day I would be required to deliver at least three different seven-minute speeches in front of a panel of judges.

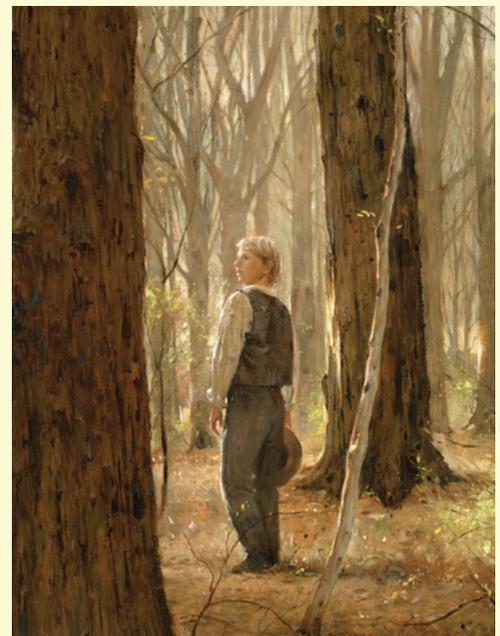
And there was another catch—the speech topics were randomly assigned contemporary issues, with only 30 minutes to prepare. I was stunned; I had never even witnessed an extemporaneous speech.

Preparing in the remaining weeks, reading as many articles on contemporary issues as I could, I still felt overwhelming self-doubt and anxiety. On the day of the competition, I asked the officials, "I've already drawn my topic, but may I go in and listen a couple of moments to someone who's actually giving his talk?" They replied, "You've only got 30 minutes. If you want to spend it listening, that's up to you."

Asking for Help

That very first time, I went in and listened for a few precious moments. I knew I needed to be alone and pray to my Heavenly Father. I noticed a secluded grove on the university campus next to a pond where I could be alone, on my knees.

I pleaded with Heavenly Father for help. It wasn't a prayer to win—it was an earnest prayer for the assistance of the Holy Ghost so that I would be able to do something I had never done before and make it through this challenge. I realized I needed God's help.



Heavenly Father answered my prayer. I remembered what I had studied and was able to connect facts and impressions. With every new topic drawn, I would first leave to pray. Then I would go to work. The next day surprisingly brought me to the final round.

My faith in God was developing into my testimony, and my faith grew stronger as I felt Him near. I thanked Heavenly Father for the help I had received, for after doing all that I could do, He made more of me than I could ever have done myself (see 2 Nephi 25:23).

In my professional life, I was an ear, nose, and throat surgeon. On one occasion in Reno, Nevada, USA, I was called on to assist the hospital's pediatric intensive care team as they treated a fragile baby boy who had been born very early. That little guy overcame some tough challenges in the first few months of life and gained enough strength to go home with his parents and family.

Unfortunately, after being home for two months, he was now back in the hospital with a serious infection in his left lung, and he was not responding well to a high dose of medication.

The intensive care specialists were suspicious that the baby might have breathed something in that became stuck in his lung, but it had not shown up on any X-rays. Due to his worsening state, they recommended that I look into his lungs with him asleep in the operating room.

At the time we did not have the technology to see very far down into the small airways of infants well. As we labored to clear the infection from his left lung, for just a brief moment I saw what he had inhaled—a bright yellow

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fragment of crayon, wedged beyond the reach of any of the instruments available to retrieve it.

A nurse in the operating suite realized the severity of the situation and mentioned that she had seen a long, slender instrument used in removing kidney stones from tight places. She quickly produced one, a slender spiral flexible wire basket that un-spirals just enough when used properly to retrieve a small stone without damaging the surrounding tissue. But how to get it there?

“I Can’t Do This by Myself”

I asked the anesthesiologist to continue to manage our little patient for a moment while I went to the corner of the operating room. “Heavenly Father, I can’t do this by myself.” The thought came to my mind: “Do your best. Together we can do this.”

I practiced several times opening and closing the wire basket in my hands in different positions. Ever so gently, the slender wire basket was passed through the instrument right up to the crayon. With delicate maneuvering, it was passed beyond, opened, and then slowly allowed to close. The airway was now clear and clean.

With the crayon removed, the child quickly recovered and thrived. He was discharged within the week with a little jar containing a bright yellow souvenir.

I know I received divine help, as real to me as though a providential hand had guided my own.

I bear humble witness of the counsel and guidance Heavenly Father does provide. There are times when you can do what you need to do only with the help of God. At such times, at all times, “acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths”

(Proverbs 3:6). ■

The thought came to my mind: “Do your best. Together we can do this.”

