



By Elder
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Of the Seventy



PROPHETIC COUNSEL AND Temple Blessings

When I was a young man, Elder Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, visited Japan and spoke at a conference I attended. I still remember his counsel: “Young people are to go on missions, and they are to be married in the temple.”

I felt prompted by the Holy Ghost and resolved that I would serve a mission and marry in the temple, even though Japan did not yet have a temple.

At the time, I was 19 and in my second year of university studies. My parents, who were not Latter-day Saints, strongly opposed my decision to serve a mission. Every day I prayed that they would give me their permission and blessing. Six months later the Lord answered my prayer.

“We are having financial difficulties, and we can no longer pay for your school and living expenses,” my parents told me. “From this point onward you will have to live on your own. We don’t mind if you go on a mission either!”

I had my parents’ blessing, so I quit school, served a Church construction mission, and then began looking for a job to raise money for a proselyting mission. With the Lord’s help, I found three jobs! Every day except Sunday for the following year, I delivered newspapers from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m., cleaned buildings from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00

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p.m., and worked as a cook from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Then I would change clothes and work nights as a district missionary.

When I was 22, I was called to the Northern Far East Mission. Through my mission service I experienced the greatest joy I had ever felt, had many opportunities to come to know God’s love, and received many blessings. My family was also blessed during my service when my parents resolved their financial challenges.

Following the Prophet

When I completed my mission, the Spirit prompted me to follow the second part of President Kimball’s counsel and not delay marriage in the temple. A year before, Church members in Japan began planning a trip to the Salt Lake Temple. Because they were going to leave in three months, I prayed and fasted to be led to a worthy young woman I could take to the temple.

A short while later I attended a Church activity in my hometown of Matsumoto City. While there I ran into Shiroko Momose, who had attended the same high school I was attending when I joined the Church. The Spirit immediately confirmed that she was the one who had been prepared for me.

I proposed to Shiroko shortly after we began dating. She made me happy when she accepted, but she surprised me by what she said next.

“I am very happy to know that your Lord is my Lord,” she said. “When they announced the trip to the Salt Lake Temple, I longed to go. I prayed many times that the Lord would help me find someone I could marry there. About a year ago I came to know through the Spirit while praying that I should wait for you and that you would propose to me when you returned from your mission.”

That was a great spiritual experience for us, and it strengthened our resolve to marry in the Salt Lake Temple. We had little money to make the trip, but we did not let that discourage us. By then we knew that when we rely on the Lord and keep His commandments, He helps us accomplish things we could not otherwise accomplish.

We appealed to our Heavenly Father in prayer and exerted all our efforts to raise the necessary funds. Those efforts, combined with financial help from one of Shiroko’s friends, enabled us to join the Japanese Saints who went to the Salt Lake Temple.

It is not possible to express the joy we felt in being sealed there as an eternal couple. We will never forget that experience. What added to our joy is that we had researched five generations of our ancestors and had prepared their names for temple work. While in Salt Lake City we performed proxy ordinances for those ancestors. Doing those ordinances helped us feel close to them. We knew they were filled with joy because of our efforts.

We were poor newlyweds, but we made temple attendance a priority, later going to the Laie Hawaii Temple as often as finances permitted.

Blessed by the Temple

“We need the temple more than anything else,” said the Prophet Joseph Smith.¹

In God’s plan of salvation, the temple is essential to our eternal happiness because we perform sacred ceremonies and ordinances of salvation there. The Bible Dictionary tells us that the temple is the holiest place of worship on earth and is “a place where the Lord may come.”²

If we honor our temple covenants and come to the temple “with humble hearts, in cleanliness, and honor, and integrity,”³ we will feel the Holy Spirit and receive further light and knowledge. When we leave the temple, we will depart armed with power from the Lord and with His name upon us, His glory round about us, and His angels to watch over us (see D&C 109:13, 22).

When we returned to Japan after our marriage, the Lord’s promises came to pass in my life as I looked for full-time employment.

The Lord Fulfills His Promises

I was working only part-time when our first child arrived. We were elated, but I knew I would not be able to support our growing family without a full-time job. We began praying earnestly for heaven’s help.

Before I served my mission, I had wanted to work in foreign trade. But to be hired by a trading company, an



OBEDIENCE— AN UNFAILING GUIDE

“A loving Heavenly Father has plotted our course and provided an unailing guide—even *obedience*. A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 89.



applicant generally had to be a university graduate who held certain certifications. I hadn't finished college and had no certifications, but when we prayed, we felt that the Lord would bless us and prepare a job for me.

I decided to take the hiring exams at a number of trading companies despite my lack of education. The first two turned me down, but I had a curious experience when I applied at a third company.

The Church had few Japanese members during that era, and many people were prejudiced against the Church. When three representatives from the third trading company interviewed me, they looked at my résumé and learned that I was a Latter-day Saint. They began asking me questions about the Church, requesting detailed answers. Having recently returned from my mission, I had no problem talking about the restored Church of Jesus Christ.

For what must have been at least 40 minutes, I spoke about the gospel and bore my testimony of the life of Jesus Christ, the Apostasy, Joseph Smith's First Vision, the

Book of Mormon, the Restoration of the true Church of Jesus Christ, and the teachings of the Church.

Not one of the interviewers stopped me while I spoke. A few days later the trading company offered me a job at an astoundingly high salary. Later, when I asked my manager why they had hired me, he replied, "During your interview I gained an assurance that you were conscientious, sincere, and loyal, and that you would be someone who would work in such a way for our company."

I testify that the Lord fulfills His promises. During my interview I felt the power and Spirit of the Lord upon me, just as He promises to those who attend the temple and honor their temple covenants. I also felt His Spirit with me while I worked for the company, where I was blessed to make many valuable contributions.

A Temple Comes to Japan

At a regional conference in Tokyo in 1975, President Kimball announced construction of the Tokyo Japan Temple. The Japanese Saints, overcome with emotion, spontaneously burst into applause to show their joy and gratitude.

The Tokyo Japan Temple was completed in 1980. During the open house and dedicatory ceremonies, the Saints were blessed with wonderful spiritual experiences and great joy. Those experiences continued following the temple's dedication as the Saints began receiving their temple ordinances and acting as proxy for their deceased ancestors.

Today, almost 45 years after Shiroko and I were married, my decision to follow prophetic counsel continues to bless our lives and the lives of our children. We have built a wonderful home the Lord's way—founded upon the gospel of Jesus Christ, including temple covenants.

I testify that when we pray for guidance, follow the living prophets, and make the temple a priority in our lives, Heavenly Father will lead us and bless us. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 416.
2. Bible Dictionary, "Temple."
3. Spencer W. Kimball, from the Tokyo Japan Temple dedicatory prayer, in *2013 Church Almanac* (2013), 297.