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LIVING *in a Fast-Paced* WORLD

If life and its rushed pace and many stresses have made it difficult for you to feel like rejoicing, then perhaps now is a good time to refocus on what matters most.

Have you ever been in an airplane and experienced turbulence? The most common cause of turbulence is a sudden change in air movement causing the aircraft to pitch, yaw, and roll. While planes are built to withstand far greater turbulence than anything you would encounter on a regular flight, it still may be disconcerting to passengers.

What do you suppose pilots do when they encounter turbulence? A student pilot may think that increasing speed is a good strategy because it will get them through the turbulence faster. But that may be the wrong thing to do. Professional pilots understand that there is an optimum turbulence penetration speed that will minimize the negative effects of turbulence. And most of the time that would mean to reduce your speed. The same principle applies also to speed bumps on a road.

Therefore, it is good advice to slow down a little, steady the course, and focus on the essentials when experiencing adverse conditions.

The Pace of Modern Life

One of the characteristics of modern life seems to be that we are moving at an ever-increasing rate, regardless of turbulence or obstacles.

Let's be honest; it's rather easy to be busy. We all can think up a list of tasks that will overwhelm our schedules. Some might even think that



Relationship with God

their self-worth depends on the length of their to-do list.

The wise resist the temptation to get caught up in the frantic rush

of everyday life. They follow the advice “There is more to life than increasing its speed.”¹ In short, they focus on the things that matter most.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.”²

The search for the best things inevitably leads to the foundational principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ—the simple and beautiful truths revealed to us by a caring, eternal, and all-knowing Father in Heaven.

How Can I Learn What Is Most Important?

I think most of us intuitively understand how important the fundamentals are. It is just that we sometimes get distracted by so many things that seem more enticing.

Printed material, wide-ranging media sources, electronic tools and gadgets—all helpful if used properly—can become hurtful diversions or heartless chambers of isolation.

Yet amidst the multitude of voices and choices, the humble Man of Galilee stands with hands outstretched, waiting. His is a simple message: “Come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). And He does not speak with a powerful megaphone but with a still, small voice (see 1 Kings 19:12). It is so easy for the basic gospel message to get lost amidst the deluge of information that hits us from all sides.

The holy scriptures and the spoken word of the living prophets give emphasis to the fundamental principles and

doctrines of the gospel. The reason we return to these foundational principles, to the pure doctrines, is because they are the gateway to truths of profound meaning.

The Basics: Four Key Relationships

As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves. As we evaluate our own lives with a willing mind, we will see where we have drifted from the more excellent way. The eyes of our understanding will be opened, and we will recognize what needs to be done to purify our heart and refocus our life.

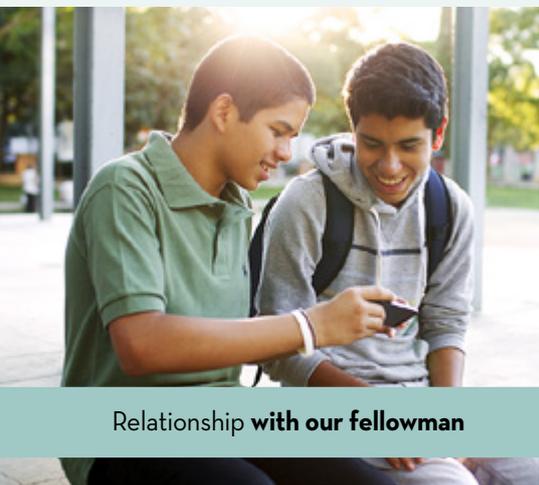
First, our relationship with God is most sacred and vital. We are His spirit children. He is our Father. He desires our happiness. As we seek Him, as we learn of His Son, Jesus Christ, as we open our hearts to the influence of the Holy Spirit, our lives become more stable and secure. We experience greater peace, joy, and fulfillment as we give our best to live according to God’s eternal plan and keep His commandments.

We improve our relationship with our Heavenly Father by learning of Him, by communing with Him, by repenting of our sins, and by actively following Jesus Christ, for



Relationship with our families

“no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Christ]” (John 14:6). To strengthen our relationship with God, we need some meaningful time alone with Him. Quietly focusing on daily personal prayer and scripture study, always aiming to be worthy of a current temple recommend—these will be some wise investments of our time and efforts to draw closer to our Heavenly Father. Let us heed the invitation in Psalms: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).



Relationship **with our fellowman**

Our second key relationship is with our families. Since “no other success can compensate for failure”³ here, we must place high priority on our families. We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple

things together, like family dinner and family home evening and by just having fun together. In family relationships *love* is really spelled *t-i-m-e*, time. Taking time for each other is the key for harmony at home. We talk with, rather than about, each other. We learn from each other, and we appreciate our differences as well as our commonalities. We establish a divine bond with each other as we approach God together through family prayer, gospel study, and Sunday worship.

The third key relationship we have is with our fellowman. We build this relationship one person at a time—by being sensitive to the needs of others, serving them, and giving of our time and talents. I was deeply impressed by one sister who was burdened with the challenges of age and illness but decided that although she couldn’t do much, she could listen. And so each week she watched for people who looked troubled or discouraged, and she spent

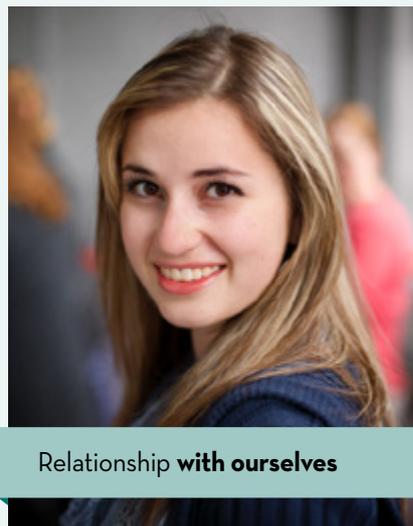
time with them, listening. What a blessing she was in the lives of so many people.

The fourth key relationship is with ourselves. It may seem odd to think of having a relationship with ourselves, but we do. Some people can’t get along with themselves. They criticize and belittle themselves all day long until they begin to hate themselves. May I suggest that you reduce the rush and take a little extra time to get to know yourself better. Walk in nature, watch a sunrise, enjoy God’s creations, ponder the truths of the restored gospel, and find out what they mean for you personally. Learn to see yourself as Heavenly Father sees you—as His precious daughter or son with divine potential.

Strength in Simplicity

Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most.

Let us simplify our lives a little. Let us make the changes necessary to refocus our lives on the sublime beauty of the simple, humble path of Christian discipleship—the path that leads always toward a life of meaning, gladness, and peace. ■



Relationship **with ourselves**

From a talk given in the October 2010 general conference.

NOTES

1. Mahatma Gandhi, in Larry Chang, *Wisdom for the Soul* (2006), 356.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 107.
3. J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; see also Conference Report, Apr. 1935, 116.