



LIVING THE PRINCIPLES OF

Self-Reliance

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Luis Quispe, of La Paz, Bolivia, may have sight in only one eye, but he has a clear vision of his goal to be self-reliant and provide for his family. Though he faces economic challenges and health problems, Luis is confident in his future. He does everything he can to help himself while acknowledging his dependence on his Father in Heaven. “I have learned that nothing is impossible when you have our Father’s help,” he says.

Self-Reliance: A Spiritual and Temporal Principle

For the past eight years, this 46-year-old father of six has alternated work and study to gain a degree in agronomy. Luis’s years of study involved traveling about 60 miles (97 km) from his small town of Achacachi to attend the Universidad Mayor de San Andres. Despite this sacrifice, Luis completed his education successfully and is now focused on his next goal of obtaining his own farm.

Luis is a good example of self-reliance in temporal things, such as work, welfare, and food storage. But the principle of self-reliance is as much spiritual as it is temporal. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of



the Twelve Apostles has defined *self-reliance* as “taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care.”¹

The Lord has said that He has never given a law that was solely temporal (see D&C 29:34–35). Perhaps the command to work is meant as much to bless us spiritually as to provide for us physically (see Genesis 3:17–19).

Spiritual Self-Reliance

The blessings of temporal self-reliance become especially obvious in times of crises such as natural disasters, unemployment, or financial turmoil. But spiritual self-reliance is equally crucial in such times. Those with firm spiritual foundations are blessed with peace, reassurance, and greater faith when calling on Heavenly Father for help.

Church leaders counsel us to prepare for spiritual crises. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“We have been taught to store . . . food, clothing, and, if possible, fuel—*at home*. . . .

“Can we not see that the same principle applies to inspiration and revelation, the solving of problems, to counsel, and to guidance? . . .

“If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially.”²

Giving and Receiving

Self-reliance should not be mistaken for complete independence. After all, we are ultimately dependent on our Heavenly Father for everything (see Mosiah 2:21). We need

His continual guidance, preservation, and protection.

We also depend on one another. Since we are given different spiritual gifts, we are expected to share what we have been given so that all may be blessed (see D&C 46:11–12). The key is to become self-reliant where we have the power to do so, to serve others when we can, and to allow others the blessing of serving us as the need arises.

The more self-reliant we are—both spiritually and temporally—the greater our ability to be an agent for good. Elder Hales explained: “Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance.”³

A Personal Responsibility

Luis Quispe has seen his perseverance and trust in the Lord result in temporal blessings of work, a college degree, and a stronger family. In turn, those temporal gains have strengthened his faith. He follows the admonition of President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family’s well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life.”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (2009), 1–2.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 91–92.
3. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare,” 2.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, “Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77–78.

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