

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MAY 2010

Liahona

General
Conference
Addresses





A STAINED GLASS WINDOW. ORIGINALLY FROM THE ADAMS WARD MEETINGHOUSE IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA; COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

The First Vision, artist unknown

In 1820 young Joseph Smith entered a grove of trees near his home to pray to know which church to join. In answer to his prayer, he saw the Father and the Son:

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16–17).

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Summary for the 180th Annual General Conference

SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 3, 2010, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.
Invocation: Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi.
Benediction: Elder Erich W. Kopischke.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg, director; Richard Elliott and Andrew Unsworth, organists: "Sweet Is the Work," *Hymns*, no. 147; "Come, Ye Children of the Lord," *Hymns*, no. 58; "There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today," *Hymns*, no. 227, arr. Wilberg, unpublished; "Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah," *Hymns*, no. 83; "He Sent His Son," *Children's Songbook*, 34–35, arr. Hofheins, unpublished; "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 85, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 3, 2010, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Dieter F. Uchtdorf.
Invocation: Elder Lynn G. Robbins.
Benediction: Elder Craig C. Christensen.
Music by a combined choir from the Orem Institute of Religion; Ryan Eggett and Allen Matthews, directors; Bonnie Goodliffe, organist: "Come, Listen to a Prophet's Voice," *Hymns*, no. 21; "I Feel My Savior's Love," *Children's Songbook*, 74–75, arr. Dayley, pub. Jackman; "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," *Hymns*, no. 19; "Nearer, My God, to Thee," *Hymns*, no. 100, arr. Duffin, unpublished.

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 3, 2010, PRIESTHOOD SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder Keith K. Hilbig.
Benediction: Elder Michael John U. Teh.
Music by a priesthood choir from Brigham Young University; Ronald Staheli, director; Clay Christiansen and Richard Elliott, organists: "God Loved Us, So He Sent His Son," *Hymns*, no. 187, arr. McDavitt, unpublished; "Choose the Right," *Hymns*, no. 239, arr. Hall, unpublished; "Glory to God on High," *Hymns*, no. 67; "The Iron Rod," *Hymns*, no. 274, arr. Staheli, unpublished.

SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 2010, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder Kenneth Johnson.
Benediction: Elder Wolfgang H. Paul.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Andrew Unsworth and Clay Christiansen, organists: "On This Day of Joy and Gladness," *Hymns*, no. 64; "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," *Hymns*, no. 200; "This Is the Christ," Moody, arr. Bradford, pub. Nature Sings; "Rejoice, the Lord Is King," *Hymns*, no. 66; "When He Comes Again," *Children's Songbook*, 82–83, arr. Murphy, unpublished; "He Is Risen!" *Hymns*, no. 199, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 4, 2010, GENERAL SESSION

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: President Henry B. Eyring.
Invocation: Elder Christoffel Golden Jr.
Benediction: Bishop Richard C. Edgley.
Music by the Tabernacle Choir; Mack Wilberg and Ryan Murphy, directors; Linda Margetts and Bonnie Goodliffe, organists: "Come, O Thou King of Kings," *Hymns*, no. 59, arr. Murphy, unpublished; "Jesus, Once of Humble Birth," *Hymns*, no. 196, arr. Kasen, pub. Jackman; "I Know That My Redeemer Lives," *Hymns*, no. 136; "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide," *Hymns*, no. 165, arr. Wilberg, unpublished.

SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 27, 2010, GENERAL YOUNG WOMEN MEETING

Presiding: President Thomas S. Monson.
Conducting: Elaine S. Dalton.
Invocation: Karlee Gubler.
Benediction: Kendrick Smaellie.
Music by a Young Women choir from the Lehi Utah, Lehi Utah East, Lehi Utah North, and Lehi Utah South Stakes; Merrilee Webb, director; Bonnie Goodliffe, organist: "High

on the Mountain Top," *Hymns*, no. 5, arr. Webb, unpublished; "Dearest Children, God Is Near You," *Hymns*, no. 96, arr. Watkins, unpublished; "Be Strong," from *A Brand New Year: 2010 Youth Celebration*, unpublished; "O Thou Rock of Our Salvation," *Hymns*, no. 258, arr. Kasen, pub. Jackman; "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 85, descant arr. Webb.

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ON THE COVER

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By President Thomas S. Monson

Welcome to Conference

Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for your faith and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How good it is, my beloved brothers and sisters, to meet together once again. This conference marks 180 years since the Church was organized. How grateful we are for the Prophet Joseph Smith, who sought for the truth, who found it, and who, under the direction of the Lord, restored the gospel and organized the Church.

The Church has grown steadily since that day in 1830. It continues to change the lives of more and more people every year and to spread across the earth as our missionary force seeks out those who are searching for the truth. Once again we call upon the

members of the Church to reach out to the new converts or to those making their way back into the Church, to surround them with love and to help them feel at home.

Thank you, my brothers and sisters, for your faith and devotion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for all that you do in your wards and branches, in your stakes and districts. You serve willingly and well and accomplish great good. May the Lord bless you as you strive to follow Him and to obey His commandments.

Since last we met, the Church has continued to provide much-needed humanitarian assistance in various

locations around the world. In the past three months alone, humanitarian assistance has been provided in French Polynesia, Mongolia, Bolivia, Peru, Arizona, Mexico, Portugal, and Uganda, among other areas. Most recently we have assisted in Haiti and Chile following devastating earthquakes and tsunamis in those areas. We express our love to our Church members who have suffered in these disasters. You are in our prayers. We express profound gratitude to all of you for your willingness to assist with our humanitarian efforts by sharing your resources and, in many cases, your time, your talents, and your expertise.

This year marks 25 years since our humanitarian program became part of our welfare effort. The number of individuals assisted by this program could never adequately be measured. We will always strive to be among the first on the scene of disasters, wherever they may occur.

The Church continues to grow and to move forward. The building of temples is an indication of such growth. Recently we announced a new temple which will be built in Payson, Utah. We also announced major renovations which will be made to the Ogden Utah Temple. Within the next three months we will dedicate new temples in Vancouver, British Columbia; in the Gila Valley, Arizona; and in Cebu City in the Philippines. Later in the year other temples will be dedicated or rededicated. We will continue to build temples throughout the world as our membership grows. Each year millions of ordinances are performed in the temples for our deceased loved ones. May we continue to be faithful in performing such ordinances for those who are unable to do so for themselves.

Many of you are aware that a short time after October conference, my

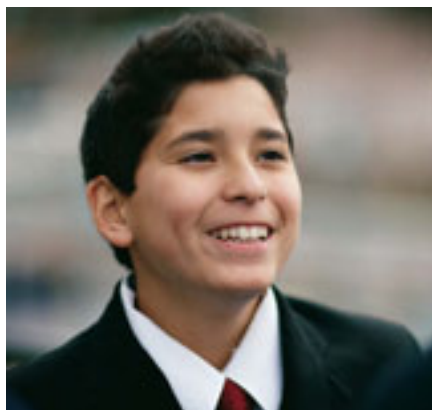




dear wife, Frances, suffered a fall, which left her with a broken hip and a broken shoulder. After two successful surgeries and several weeks of hospitalization, she was able to return home. She is doing well and continues to make progress toward a full recovery. She was able to attend the general Young Women meeting last Saturday and plans to attend a session or two this weekend. In fact, at the last minute she said, "I'm going today!" And she's here! She joins me in expressing our deep gratitude to our Heavenly Father and to all of you for your prayers and your well wishes in her behalf.

Now, brothers and sisters, we have come here to be instructed and inspired. We welcome those of you who are new in the Church. Others of you are struggling with problems, with challenges, with disappointments, with losses. We love you and we pray for you. Many messages, covering a variety of gospel topics, will be given during the next two days. Those men and women who will speak to you have sought heaven's help concerning the messages they will give.

It is my prayer that we may be filled with His Spirit as we listen and learn. That this may be so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, amen. ■



By President Boyd K. Packer

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Power of the Priesthood

The priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the power of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families.

I speak to the fathers of the families and to families everywhere in the Church.

Years ago we began correlation under the direction of President Harold B. Lee. At that time President Thomas S. Monson said: "Today, we are encamped against the greatest array of sin, vice, and evil ever assembled before our eyes. . . . The battle plan whereby we fight to save the souls of men is not our own. It [came through] the inspiration and revelation of the Lord."¹

During those years of correlation, the whole operating face of the Church was changed. The entire curriculum was restructured. The objectives and relationships of the organizations one to another were redefined. The key word during those years of correlation and restructuring was *priesthood*.

President Monson also spoke of Gideon, a hero in the Old Testament. Gideon was chosen to lead the armies of Israel, thousands strong. But of them all, he chose only 300 men.

Gideon had an interesting way of selecting his recruits. When the men drank water at a stream, most "bowed

down . . . to drink." Those he passed over. A few scooped up water in their hands and drank, remaining completely alert. They were the ones chosen.²

We live in a day of "wars [and] rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places."³ As prophesied, "the whole earth [is] in commotion"⁴ and "Satan is abroad in the land."⁵ He seeks to destroy all that is good and righteous.⁶ He is Lucifer, who was cast out of the presence of God.⁷ Against all of that, we have very positive feelings about what lies ahead.

Gideon's small force succeeded because, as the record states, "they stood every man in his place."⁸

This "dispensation of the fulness of times"⁹ opened with the appearance of the Father and the Son to the boy Joseph Smith.¹⁰ Next the angel Moroni showed Joseph where the plates containing the Book of Mormon had been buried.¹¹ Joseph was given power to translate them.¹²

During translation Joseph and Oliver Cowdery read about baptism. They prayed to know what to do.¹³ There appeared to them an angelic messenger, John the Baptist. He conferred



upon them the Aaronic Priesthood, “which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.”¹⁴

The Apostles Peter, James, and John, who were closest to the Lord in His ministry, appeared next and conferred upon Joseph and Oliver the higher priesthood,¹⁵ or “the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.”¹⁶ The priesthood, the scriptures direct, was to be named after Melchizedek, the great high priest to whom Abraham paid tithes.¹⁷

This then became their authority. Through the keys of the priesthood, they had access to all of the powers of heaven. They were commanded to carry the gospel unto all nations.¹⁸

It has never been easy to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was not easy when He lived, and it was not easy in the early days of the Church. The early Saints were subjected to unspeakable suffering and opposition.

It has been over 180 years since the priesthood was restored. We now number nearly 14 million members. Even so, we are a tiny fraction when compared to the billions of people on earth. But we are who we are, and we know what we know, and we are to go forth and preach the gospel.

The Book of Mormon makes it clear that we never will dominate by numbers. But we have the power of the priesthood.¹⁹

The prophet Nephi wrote, “It came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few . . . ; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small.”²⁰

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, “While it may be said . . . that we are but a handful in comparison with . . . the world, yet we may be compared with the leaven of which the Savior spoke, which will eventually leaven [or lift] the whole world.”²¹

We can and in due time certainly will influence all of humanity. It will be known who we are and why we are. It might seem hopeless; it is monumentally difficult; but it is not only possible but certain that we will win the battle against Satan.

Some years ago I gave a talk entitled “What Every Elder Should Know: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government.” Later, when it was to be published, I changed the title to read “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well.”²²

I include the sisters because it is

crucial for everyone to understand what is expected of the brethren. Unless we enlist the attention of the mothers and daughters and sisters—who have influence on their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers—we cannot progress. The priesthood will lose great power if the sisters are neglected.

Priesthood is the authority and the power which God has granted to men on earth to act for Him.²³ When priesthood authority is exercised properly, priesthood bearers do what He would do if He were present.

We have done very well at distributing the *authority* of the priesthood. We have priesthood authority planted nearly everywhere. We have quorums of elders and high priests worldwide. But distributing the *authority* of the priesthood has raced, I think, ahead of distributing the *power* of the priesthood. The priesthood does not have the strength that it should have and will not have until the *power* of the priesthood is firmly fixed in the families as it should be.

President Harold B. Lee stated: “It seems clear to me that the Church has *no choice*—and never has had—but to do more to assist the *family* in carrying out *its* divine mission, not only because that is the order of heaven, but also because that is the

most *practical* contribution we can make to our youth—to help improve the quality of life in the Latter-day Saint homes. As important as our many programs and organizational efforts are, these *should not* supplant the home; they should *support* the home.”²⁴

President Joseph F. Smith made this statement about the priesthood in the home: “In the home the presiding authority is always vested in the father, and in all home affairs and family matters there is no other authority paramount. To illustrate this principle, a single incident will perhaps suffice. It sometimes happens that the elders are called in to administer to the members of a family. Among these elders there may be presidents of stakes, apostles, or even members of the first presidency of the Church. It is not proper under these circumstances for the father to stand back and expect the elders to direct the administration of this important ordinance. The father is there. It is his right and it is his duty to preside. He should select the one who is to administer the oil, and the one who is to be mouth in prayer, and he should not feel that because there are present presiding authorities in the Church that he is therefore divested of his rights to direct the administration of that blessing of the gospel in his home. (If the father be absent, the mother should request the presiding authority present to take charge.) The father presides at the table, at prayer, and gives general directions relating to his family life whoever may be present.”²⁵

During the Vietnam War, we held a series of special meetings for members of the Church called into military service. After such a meeting in Chicago, I was standing next to President Harold B. Lee when a fine young Latter-day Saint told President Lee that he was on leave to visit his

home and then had orders to Vietnam. He asked President Lee to give him a blessing.

Much to my surprise, President Lee said, “Your father should give you the blessing.”

Very disappointed, the boy said, “My father wouldn’t know how to give a blessing.”

President Lee answered, “Go home, my boy, and tell your father that you are going away to war and want to receive a father’s blessing from him. If he does not know how, tell him that you will sit on a chair. He can stand behind you and put his hands on your head and say whatever comes.”

This young soldier went away sorrowing.

About two years later I met him again. I do not recall where. He reminded me of that experience and said, “I did as I was told to do. I explained to my father that I would sit on the chair and that he should put his hands on my head. The power of the priesthood filled both of us. That was a strength and protection in those perilous months of battle.”

Another time I was in a distant city. After a conference we were ordaining and setting apart leaders. As we concluded, the stake president asked,



“Can we ordain a young man to be an elder who is leaving for the mission field?” The answer, of course, was yes.

As the young man came forward, he motioned for three brethren to follow and stand in for his ordination.

I noticed on the back row a carbon copy of this boy, and I asked, “Is that your father?”

The young man said, “Yes.”

I said, “Your father will ordain you.”

And he protested, “But I’ve already asked another brother to ordain me.”

And I said, “Young man, your father will ordain you, and you’ll live to thank the Lord for this day.”

Then the father came forward.

Thank goodness he was an elder. Had he not been, he soon could have been! In the military they would call that a battlefield commission. Sometimes such things are done in the Church.

The father did not know how to ordain his son. I put my arm around him and coached him through the ordinance. When he was finished, the young man was an elder. Then something wonderful happened. Completely changed, the father and son embraced. It was obvious that had never happened before.

The father, through his tears, said, “I didn’t get to ordain my other boys.”

Think how much more was accomplished than if another had ordained him, even an Apostle.

While the priesthood is presently all over the world, we call on every elder and high priest, every holder of the priesthood to stand, like Gideon’s small but powerful force of 300, *in his own place*. We now must awaken in every elder and high priest, in every quorum and group, and in the father of every home the power of the priesthood of the Almighty.

The Lord said that “the weak things



of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones.”²⁶

The prophet Nephi also told of “the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth” and said that “they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.”²⁷

We need everyone. The tired or worn out or lazy and even those who are bound down with guilt must be restored through repentance and forgiveness. Too many of our priesthood brethren are living below their privileges and the Lord’s expectations.

We must go forward, confident of the supernal power of the priesthood. It is a source of strength and encouragement to know who we are and what we have and what we must do in the work of the Almighty.

The Lord has said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.”²⁸

Homes without the priesthood are to be watched over and ministered to by the quorums of the priesthood. In this manner no blessings will be found wanting in any dwelling within the Church.

Years ago a family gathered at the

bedside of an aged little Danish woman. Among them was her middle-aged, wayward son. For the past number of years he had been living at home.

Tearfully he pleaded, “Mama, you’ve got to live. Mama, you can’t die.” He said, “Mama, you can’t go. I won’t let you go.”

The little mother looked up at her son and in her broken Danish accent said, “But ver is yo powah?”—where is your power?

Paul said:

“[We] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

“In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”²⁹

That the work of the Lord will prevail is not a question. That we must marshal all of our efforts and unify ourselves are givens.

The authority of the priesthood is with us. After all that we have correlated and organized, it is now our responsibility to activate the *power* of the priesthood in the Church. *Authority* in the priesthood comes by way of ordination; *power* in the priesthood comes through faithful and

obedient living in honoring covenants. It is increased by exercising and using the priesthood in righteousness.

Now, fathers, I would remind you of the sacred nature of your calling. You have the power of the priesthood directly from the Lord to protect your home. There will be times when all that stands as a shield between your family and the adversary’s mischief will be that power. You will receive direction from the Lord by way of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The adversary is not actively disturbing our Church meetings—perhaps only occasionally. By and large we are free to assemble as we wish without much disruption. But he and those who follow him are persistent in attacking the home and the family.

The ultimate end of all activity in the Church is that a man and his wife and their children might be happy at home, protected by the principles and laws of the gospel, sealed safely in the covenants of the everlasting priesthood.

Every law and principle and power, every belief, every ordinance and ordination, every covenant, every sermon and every sacrament, every counsel and correction, the sealings, the calls, the releases, the service—all these have as their ultimate purpose the perfection of the individual and the family,

for the Lord has said, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”³⁰

I bear witness of the power of the priesthood given to the Church to protect us and guide us. And because we have that, we have no fear of the future. Fear is the opposite of faith. We move forward, certain that the Lord will watch over us, particularly in the family. Of Him I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Correlation Brings Blessings,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Apr. 1967, 247.
2. See Judges 7:4–8.
3. Mormon 8:30; see also Doctrine and Covenants 45:26; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:23, 28.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 45:26; see also Doctrine and Covenants 88:91.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 52:14.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 10:22–23.
7. See Revelation 12:7–9; Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–37; 76:25–26.
8. Judges 7:21.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 112:30.
10. See Joseph Smith—History 1:17.
11. See Joseph Smith—History 1:33–34, 59.
12. See Book of Mormon introduction; Doctrine and Covenants 135:3.
13. See Joseph Smith—History 1:68–69.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 13:1.
15. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:12–13.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 107:3.
17. See Doctrine and Covenants 107:2–4; see also Hebrews 7:1–4; Alma 13:15.
18. See Doctrine and Covenants 42:58.
19. See 1 Nephi 14:14.
20. 1 Nephi 14:12.
21. Joseph Fielding Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 123.
22. See Boyd K. Packer, “What Every Elder Should Know—and Every Sister as Well: A Primer on Principles of Priesthood Government,” *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 15–24; *Ensign*, Feb. 1993, 7–13.
23. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 141; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:28–31, in Bible appendix.
24. Harold B. Lee, “Preparing Our Youth,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1971, 3; emphasis added.
25. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 287.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 1:19.
27. 1 Nephi 14:14.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 82:10.
29. Ephesians 2:20–22.
30. Moses 1:39.



By Julie B. Beck

Relief Society General President

“And upon the Handmaids in Those Days Will I Pour Out My Spirit”

We know we are successful if we live so that we qualify for, receive, and know how to follow the Spirit.

In the past year I have met thousands of Latter-day Saint women in many countries. The list of challenges these sisters face is lengthy and sobering. There are family troubles, economic tests, calamities, accidents, and illnesses. There is much distraction and not enough peace and joy. Despite popular media messages to the contrary, no one is rich enough, beautiful enough, or clever enough to avoid a mortal experience.

The questions sisters ask are serious and insightful. They articulate uneasiness about the future, sorrow for unrealized expectations, some indecision, and diminished feelings of self-worth. They also reflect a deep desire to do what is right.

There has grown in me an overwhelming testimony of the value of daughters of God. So much depends on them. In my visits with the sisters, I have felt that there has never been a greater need for increased faith and personal righteousness. There has

never been a greater need for strong families and homes. There has never been more that could be done to help others who are in need. How does one increase faith, strengthen families, and provide relief?¹ How does a woman in our day find answers to her own questions and stand strong and immovable against incredible opposition and difficulty?

Personal Revelation

A good woman knows that she does not have enough time, energy, or opportunity to take care of all of the people or do all of the worthy things her heart yearns to do. Life is not calm for most women, and each day seems to require the accomplishment of a million things, most of which are important. A good woman must constantly resist alluring and deceptive messages from many sources telling her that she is entitled to more time away from her responsibilities and that she deserves a life of greater ease and



independence. But with personal revelation, she can prioritize correctly and navigate this life confidently.

The ability to qualify for, receive, and act on personal revelation is the single most important skill that can be acquired in this life. Qualifying for the Lord's Spirit begins with a desire for that Spirit and implies a certain degree of worthiness. Keeping the commandments, repenting, and renewing covenants made at baptism lead to the blessing of always having the Lord's Spirit with us.² Making and keeping temple covenants also adds spiritual strength and power to a woman's life. Many answers to difficult questions are found by reading the scriptures because the scriptures are an aid to revelation.³ Insight found in scripture accumulates over time, so it is important to spend some time in the scriptures every day. Daily prayer is also essential to having the Lord's Spirit with us.⁴ Those who earnestly seek

help through prayer and scripture study often have a paper and pencil nearby to write questions and record impressions and ideas.

Revelation can come hour by hour and moment by moment as we do the right things. When women nurture as Christ nurtured, a power and peace can descend to guide when help is needed. For instance, mothers can feel help from the Spirit even when tired, noisy children are clamoring for attention, but they can be distanced from the Spirit if they lose their temper with children. Being in the right places allows us to receive guidance. It requires a conscious effort to diminish distractions, but having the Spirit of revelation makes it possible to prevail over opposition and persist in faith through difficult days and essential routine tasks. Personal revelation gives us the understanding of what to do every day to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes,

and seek those who need our help. Because personal revelation is a constantly renewable source of strength, it is possible to feel bathed in help even during turbulent times.

We are told to put our trust in that Spirit which leads us "to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously."⁵ We are also told that this Spirit will enlighten our minds, fill our souls with joy, and help us know all things we should do.⁶ Promised personal revelation comes when we ask for it, prepare for it, and go forward in faith, trusting that it will be poured out upon us.

Relief Society—Teaching, Inspiring, and Strengthening

Additionally, the Lord in His wisdom has provided a Relief Society to help His daughters in these latter days. When Relief Society functions in an inspired way, it lifts women up and out of a troubled world and into a way of living that prepares them for the blessings of eternal life. This society has at its very core the responsibility to help sisters increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and seek out and help others who are in need. Through Relief Society, sisters can receive answers to their questions and be blessed by the combined spiritual power of all the sisters. Relief Society validates the true and eternal nature of daughters of God. It is a sacred trust, a guiding light, and a system of watchcare that teaches and inspires women to be strong and immovable. Its motto, "Charity never faileth,"⁷ is embodied in all good women.

When a girl advances into Relief Society or when a woman is baptized into the Church, she becomes part of a sisterhood that strengthens her in her preparation for eternal life. Entrance into Relief Society signifies



that a woman can be trusted and relied upon to make a significant contribution in the Church. She continues to progress as an individual without receiving much outward credit or praise.

The second general Relief Society president, Eliza R. Snow, said this to the sisters: “We want to be ladies in very deed, not according to the term of the word as the world judges, but fit companions of the Gods and Holy Ones. In an organized capacity we can assist each other in not only doing good but in refining ourselves, and whether few or many come forward and help to prosecute this great work, they will be those that will fill honorable positions in the Kingdom of God. . . . Women should be women and not babies that need petting and correction all the time. I know we like to be appreciated but if we do not get all the appreciation which we think is our due, what matters? We know the Lord has laid high responsibility upon us, and there is not a wish or desire that the Lord has implanted in our hearts in righteousness but will be realized, and the greatest good we can do to ourselves and each other is to refine and cultivate ourselves in everything

that is good and ennobling to qualify us for those responsibilities.”⁸

Measuring Success

Good women always have a desire to know if they are succeeding. In a world where the measures of success are often distorted, it is important to seek appreciation and affirmation from proper sources. To paraphrase a list found in *Preach My Gospel*, we are doing well when we develop attributes of Christ and strive to obey His gospel with exactness. We are doing well when we seek to improve ourselves and do our best. We are doing well when we increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and seek out and help others who are in need. We know we are successful if we live so that we qualify for, receive, and know how to follow the Spirit. When we have done our very best, we may still experience disappointments, but we will not be disappointed in ourselves. We can feel certain that the Lord is pleased when we feel the Spirit working through us.⁹ Peace, joy, and hope are available to those who measure success properly.

A revelation in the book of Joel states that in the last days, sons and

daughters of God will prophesy and the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon His servants and His handmaids.¹⁰ President Spencer W. Kimball echoed this prophecy when he said:

“Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world (in whom there is often such an inner sense of spirituality) will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world. . . .

“Thus it will be that female exemplars of the Church will be a significant force in both the numerical and spiritual growth of the Church in the last days.”¹¹

I bear my witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true. The Lord depends on His daughters to do their part to strengthen the homes of Zion and build His kingdom on the earth. As they seek and qualify for personal revelation, the Lord will pour out His Spirit upon His handmaids in these latter days. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Jacob 2:17; Mosiah 4:26; Doctrine and Covenants 38:35; 44:6.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
3. See 2 Nephi 32:3.
4. See 3 Nephi 19:24–33.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 11:12.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 11:13–14.
7. 1 Corinthians 13:8.
8. Eliza R. Snow, address to Lehi Ward Relief Society, Oct. 27, 1869, Lehi Ward, Alpine (Utah) Stake, in Relief Society, Minute Book, 1868–79, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, 26–27.
9. See *Preach My Gospel* (2004), 10–11.
10. See Joel 2:28–29.
11. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Role of Righteous Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 103–4.



By Bishop Keith B. McMullin

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Our Path of Duty

Duty does not require perfection, but it does require diligence. It is not simply what is legal; it is what is virtuous.

This is a troubled world. Discord and disaster are everywhere. It sometimes feels as though mankind itself may be hanging in the balance.

Foreshadowing our day, the Lord said, “The heavens shall shake, and also the earth; and great tribulations shall be among the children of men, *but my people will I preserve.*”¹ We should take great comfort in this promise.

Though disasters completely disrupt “the even tenor of [our ways],”² they do not have to leave our lives forever shattered. They can “stir [us] up in remembrance,”³ “awaken [us] to a sense of [our] duty to God,”⁴ and keep us “in the path of [our] duty.”⁵

In Holland during World War II, the Casper ten Boom family used their home as a hiding place for those hunted by the Nazis. This was their way of living out their Christian faith. Four members of the family lost their lives for providing this refuge. Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsie spent horrific months in the infamous Ravensbrück concentration camp. Betsie died there—Corrie survived.

In Ravensbrück, Corrie and Betsie learned that God helps us to forgive. Following the war, Corrie was determined to share this message. On one occasion, she had just spoken to a

group of people in Germany suffering from the ravages of war. Her message was “God forgives.” It was then that Corrie ten Boom’s faithfulness brought forth its blessing.

A man approached her. She recognized him as one of the cruelest guards in the camp. “You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk,” he said. “I was a guard there. . . . But since that time, . . . I have become a Christian.” He explained that he had sought God’s forgiveness for the cruel things he had done. He extended his hand and asked, “Will you forgive me?”

Corrie ten Boom then said:

“It could not have been many

seconds that he stood there—hand held out—but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

“ . . . The message that God forgives has a . . . condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. . . .

“ . . . ‘Help me!’ I prayed silently. ‘I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.’

“ . . . Woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. As I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“‘I forgive you, brother!’ I cried. ‘With all my heart.’

“For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely, as I did then.”⁶

For those who eschew evil and live good lives, who strive for a brighter day and keep the commandments of God, things can get better and better even in the face of tragedy. The Savior showed us the way. From Gethsemane, the cross, and the tomb, He rose triumphant, bringing life and hope to us all. He bids us, “Come, follow me.”⁷

President Thomas S. Monson has counseled: “If we are to walk with head held high, we must make our contribution to life. If we are to fulfill our destiny and return to live with our Father in Heaven, we must keep His commandments and pattern our lives after the Savior. By so doing, we will not only achieve our goal of eternal life, but we will also leave the world richer and better than it would have been had we not *lived and performed our duties.*”⁸





In the Holy Bible are these inspired words: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for *this is the whole duty of man.*”⁹

What Is This Thing Called Duty?

The *duty* of which I speak is what we are expected to do and to be. It is a moral imperative summoning forth from individuals and communities that which is right, true, and honorable. Duty does not require perfection, but it does require diligence. It is not simply what is legal; it is what is virtuous. It is not reserved to the mighty or high in station but instead rests on a foundation of personal responsibility, integrity, and courage. Doing one’s duty is a manifestation of one’s faith.

President Monson said of it: “I love and cherish the noble word *duty*.”¹⁰ For members of the Church of Jesus Christ, our path of duty is keeping our covenants in daily life.

To Whom and to What Are We Duty Bound?

First, our path of duty is to God, our Eternal Father. He is the author of the plan of salvation, “the framer of heaven and earth,” the creator of Adam and Eve.¹¹ He is the fountain of truth,¹² the embodiment of love,¹³ and the reason there is redemption through Christ.¹⁴

Said President Joseph F. Smith: “All that we have comes from [God]. . . . In and of ourselves we are but a lifeless lump of clay. Life, intelligence, wisdom, judgment, power to reason, all are the gifts of God to the children of men. He gives us our physical strength as well as our mental powers. . . . We should honor God with our intelligence, with our strength, with our understanding, with our wisdom, and with all the power that we possess. We should seek to do good in the world. *This is our duty.*”¹⁵

One cannot do his or her duty to God the Father without doing likewise

to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. To revere one requires reverence for the other, for the Father has appointed that it is only in and through the name of Christ that one can completely fulfill this dutiful charge.¹⁶ He is our Exemplar, our Redeemer, and our King.

As men and women and boys and girls do their duty to God, they feel impelled to do their duty to one another, to their family, to their church and nation, to all things entrusted to their care. They are duty bound to magnify their talents and to be a law-abiding, good people. They become humble, submissive, and easily entreated. Temperance conquers indulgence; obedience guides their diligence. Peace distills upon them. Citizens become loyal, communities become benevolent, and neighbors become friends. The God of heaven is pleased, the earth is pacified, and this world becomes a better place.¹⁷

How Do We Know Our Path of Duty in the Midst of Crisis?

We pray! It is everyone's sure way to know; it is everyone's lifeline to heaven. Said the Apostle Peter, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."¹⁸

Humble, sincere, inspired prayer makes available to each of us the divine guidance we so desperately need. Brigham Young counseled, "At times, men are perplexed and full of care and trouble . . . ; yet our judgment teaches us that *it is our duty to pray*."¹⁹

Jesus taught:

"Ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; . . .

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name; . . .

"Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed."²⁰

For prayers to be efficacious, they

must be in harmony with the plan of heaven. The prayer of faith bears fruit when such harmony exists, and this harmony exists when prayers are inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit manifests what our petitions should be.²¹ Absent this inspired guidance, we are inclined to "ask amiss,"²² to seek only our will and not "Thy will."²³ It is as important to be guided by the Holy Spirit while praying as it is to be enlightened by that same Spirit while receiving an answer to prayer. Such prayer brings forth the blessings of heaven because our Father "knoweth what things [we] have need of, before [we] ask him,"²⁴ and He answers every sincere prayer. Ultimately, it is the Father and the Son who promise, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."²⁵

I bear my witness that our path of duty is clearly marked by an undivided faith and belief in God, the

Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the power of prayer. This path is to be traveled by all of God's children who love Him and desire to keep His commandments. For the young, it leads to personal achievement and preparation; for adults, it leads to renewed faith and resolve; for the older generation, it leads to perspective and endurance in righteousness to the end. It equips every faithful traveler with the strength of the Lord, protects him from the evils of the day, and endows him with the knowledge that "the conclusion of the whole matter [is to] Fear God, and keep his commandments: for *this is the whole duty of man*."²⁶ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Moses 7:61; emphasis added.
2. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 156.
3. Mosiah 1:17.
4. Alma 7:22.
5. Helaman 15:5.
6. Corrie ten Boom, *Tramp for the Lord* (1974), 54–55.
7. Luke 18:22.
8. Thomas S. Monson, used with permission.
9. Ecclesiastes 12:13; emphasis added.
10. Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 43.
11. See Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–19.
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:36.
13. See 1 John 4:8.
14. See John 3:16; Helaman 5:10–11.
15. Joseph F. Smith, in Conference Report, Oct. 1899, 70; emphasis added.
16. See Moroni 10:32–33; Doctrine and Covenants 59:5.
17. See Alma 7:23, 27.
18. 1 Peter 3:12.
19. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 45; emphasis added.
20. 3 Nephi 18:18–19, 21.
21. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:29–30.
22. James 4:3.
23. Matthew 6:10.
24. Matthew 6:8.
25. Matthew 7:7; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:12–13, in Bible appendix.
26. Ecclesiastes 12:13; emphasis added.





By Elder Wilford W. Andersen
Of the Seventy

The Rock of Our Redeemer

I testify that those who keep His commandments will grow in faith and hope. They will be given strength to overcome all of life's trials.

Years ago I visited Nauvoo, Illinois, with my family. There the early Saints had come seeking refuge. Many had lost their homes and their farms, and some had lost their loved ones to the growing persecution. In Nauvoo they gathered and built a new and beautiful city. But the persecution was relentless, and by 1846 they were once again forced to leave their homes—this time in the middle of winter. They lined up their wagons on Parley Street, awaiting their turn to cross the frozen waters of the Mississippi River into an unknown future.

As we stood on Parley Street reflecting upon their desperate conditions, my eyes were drawn to a series of wooden signs nailed to fence posts upon which were etched quotes from the diaries of these suffering Saints. As we read each quote, to our amazement what we found in their words was not desperation and discouragement but confidence and commitment and even joy. They were filled with hope, the hope that is reflected by this quote from the diary of Sarah DeArmon Rich, February 1846: “To

start out on such a journey in the winter . . . would seem like walking into the jaws of death but we had faith . . . [and] we felt to rejoice that the day of our deliverance had come.”¹

These early Saints were indeed homeless, but they were not hopeless. Their hearts were broken, but their spirits were strong. They had learned a profound and important lesson. They had learned that hope, with its attendant blessings of peace and joy, does not depend upon circumstance. They had discovered that the true source of hope is faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in His infinite Atonement,



the one sure foundation upon which to build our lives.

Today another group of pioneers exemplifies this important principle. On Tuesday, the 12th of January, a massive earthquake struck the country of Haiti. The earthquake left the capital city of Port-au-Prince in shambles. Its impact was devastating—an estimated 1,000,000 people were left homeless, and over 200,000 were reported dead.

While the world followed the unprecedented international response, another remarkable and inspiring rescue effort was under way in Port-au-Prince—this one directed by a committee made up of local Haitian Church leaders organized according to the priesthood pattern and operating under inspiration. Members of the committee included, among others, the two stake presidents and the two stake Relief Society presidents in Port-au-Prince and the mission president, who at age 30 presides over 74 full-time missionaries in the Haiti Port-au-Prince Mission. All of his missionaries are Haitian, and miraculously not one of them was injured in this devastating earthquake.

Into the hands of these local inspired leaders were placed the resources of the Church, resources which included the generous contributions of many of you. For these contributions, the people of Haiti are profoundly thankful. Under the direction of the committee, truckloads of provisions arrived from the Dominican Republic almost immediately. Within days of the earthquake, planeloads of food, water purification systems, tents, blankets, and medical supplies arrived, along with a team of doctors.

The nine chapels in and around Port-au-Prince were mostly undamaged—another remarkable miracle. During the weeks that

followed the earthquake, they became shelters for over 5,000 Haitians and bases from which food, water, and medical attention were distributed. Basic needs were met, and order began to emerge out of chaos.

Though the faithful Haitian Saints have suffered greatly, they are filled with hope for the future. Like the early pioneers in 1846, their hearts are broken but their spirits are strong. They too are teaching us that hope and happiness and joy are not products of circumstance but of faith in the Lord.

The prophet Mormon, himself no stranger to difficult circumstances, understood and clearly taught this doctrine:

“And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope. . . .

“ . . . Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ . . . , and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.

“Wherefore, if a man have faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope.”²

Hope comes from faith in Jesus Christ. He has already overcome the world and has promised that He will wipe away our tears if we will only turn to Him and believe and follow.³

Some who at this very moment feel desperate or discouraged may wonder how they can possibly regain hope. If you are one of those, remember that hope comes as a result of faith. If we would build our hope, we must build our faith.

Faith in the Savior requires more than mere belief. The Apostle James taught that even the devils believe and tremble.⁴ But true faith requires work. The difference between the devils and the faithful members of this Church is not belief but work. Faith grows by



keeping the commandments. We must work at keeping the commandments. From the Bible Dictionary we read that “miracles do not produce faith but strong faith is developed by obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ; in other words, faith comes by righteousness.”⁵

When we strive to keep the commandments of God, repenting of our sins and promising our best efforts to follow the Savior, we begin to grow in confidence that through the Atonement everything will be all right. Those feelings are confirmed by the Holy Ghost, who drives from us what our pioneer mothers and fathers called “our useless cares.” In spite of our trials, we are filled with a sense of well-being and feel to sing with them that indeed “all is well.”⁶

I do not wish to minimize the reality of clinical depression. For some, solutions to depression and anxieties will be found through consultation with competent professionals. But for most of us, sadness and fear begin to melt away and are replaced by happiness and peace when we put our trust in the Author of the plan of happiness

and when we develop faith in the Prince of Peace.

Recently a dear friend of mine passed away from cancer. He and his family are people of great faith. It was inspiring to see how their faith carried them through this very difficult time. They were filled with an inner peace that sustained and strengthened them. With their permission I would like to read from a family member’s letter written just days before her father passed away:

“The last few days have been especially difficult. . . . Last night as we gathered at Dad’s bedside, the Spirit of the Lord was palpable and truly acted as a comforter to us. We are at peace. . . . It has been the hardest thing any of us has ever experienced, but we feel peace in the knowledge that . . . our Father in Heaven has promised that we will live together as a family again. After the doctor told Dad in the hospital that there was nothing left to be done, he looked at all of us with perfect faith and boldly asked, ‘Does anybody in this room have a problem with the plan of

salvation?" We do not and are grateful for a father and mother who have taught us to have perfect trust in the plan."

I speak to all who suffer, to all who mourn, to all who now face or who will yet face trials and challenges in this life. My message is to all who are worried or afraid or discouraged. My message is but an echo, a reminder of the constant comforting counsel from a loving Father to His children since the world began.

"Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall."⁷

I testify of Him, that He has overcome the world, that He will never forget or abandon us, for He has graven us upon the palms of His hands.⁸ I testify that those who keep His commandments will grow in faith and hope. They will be given strength to overcome all of life's trials. They will experience peace that passes all understanding.⁹ In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Sarah DeArmon Rich, in Carol Cornwall Madsen, *Journey to Zion: Voices from the Mormon Trail* (1997), 173–74; spelling modernized.
2. Moroni 7:40–42.
3. See Revelation 7:14–17.
4. See James 2:19.
5. Bible Dictionary, "Faith."
6. "Come, Come, Ye Saints," *Hymns*, no. 30.
7. Helaman 5:12.
8. See 1 Nephi 21:16.
9. See Philippians 4:7.



By Elder M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Mothers and Daughters

In these last days it is essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another.

Brothers and sisters, six months ago I spoke in the priesthood session of general conference to fathers and sons. As you might expect, my 5 daughters, 24 granddaughters, and ever-increasing number of great-granddaughters have been asking for equal time. So today I will speak primarily to the mothers and daughters of the Church.

My dear wife, Barbara, has had an eternally significant influence on our daughters and granddaughters—and they, in turn, on her. Mothers and daughters play a critical role in helping each other explore their infinite possibilities, despite the undermining influences of a world in which womanhood and motherhood are being corrupted and manipulated.

Speaking to the women of the Church nearly a century ago, President Joseph F. Smith said: "It is not for you to be led by the women of the world; it is for you to lead the . . . women of the world, in everything that is praise-worthy, everything that is God-like, everything that is uplifting and . . . purifying to the children of men" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 184).

Sisters, we, your brethren, cannot

do what you were divinely designated to do from before the foundation of the world. We may try, but we cannot ever hope to replicate your unique gifts. There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman.

I understand that some of you young women do not have mothers with whom you can discuss these issues. And many of you women do not presently have daughters in your lives. But because *all* women have within their divine nature both the inherent talent and the stewardship to mother, most of what I will say applies equally to grandmothers, aunts, sisters, stepmothers, mothers-in-law, leaders, and other mentors who sometimes fill the gaps for these significant mother-daughter relationships.

Young women, your mothers adore you. They see in you the promise of future generations. Everything you accomplish, every challenge you overcome brings them pure joy. And likewise *your* worries and heartaches are *their* worries and heartaches.

Today I wish to give you young women some suggestions on how to take full advantage of your relationship with your mother. And then I have a



few thoughts to share with mothers about how they can maximize their influence with their daughters as well as the other members of their families.

It is, unfortunately, all too easy to illustrate the confusion and distortion of womanhood in contemporary society. Immodest, immoral, intemperate women jam the airwaves, monopolize magazines, and slink across movie screens—all while being celebrated by the world. The Apostle Paul spoke prophetically of “perilous times” that will come in the last days and specifically referenced something that may have seemed particularly perilous to him: “silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts” (2 Timothy 3:1, 6). Popular culture today often makes women look silly, inconsequential, mindless, and powerless. It objectifies them and disrespects them and then suggests that they are able to leave their mark on mankind only by seduction—easily the most pervasively dangerous message the adversary sends to women about themselves.

And so, my dear young women, with all my heart I urge you not to look to contemporary culture for your role models and mentors. Please look to your faithful mothers for a pattern to follow. Model yourselves after *them*, not after celebrities whose standards are not the Lord’s standards and whose values may not reflect an eternal perspective. Look to your mother. Learn from her strengths, her courage, and her faithfulness. Listen to her. She may not be a whiz at texting; she may not even have a Facebook page. But when it comes to matters of the heart and the things of the Lord, she has a wealth of knowledge. As you approach the time for marriage and young motherhood, she will be your greatest source of wisdom. No other person on earth loves you in the same way or is willing to sacrifice as much to encourage you and help you find happiness—in this life and forever.

Love your mother, my young sisters. Respect her. Listen to her. Trust her. She has your best interests at

heart. She cares about your eternal safety and happiness. So be kind to her. Be patient with her imperfections, for she has them. We all do.

Now may I share a few thoughts with you mothers about the special role you play in your daughters’ lives. We have a family friend who travels often with members of her extended family. Her primary observation after each trip is how much the young women behave like their mothers. If the mothers are thrifty, so are their daughters. If the mothers are modest, so are the girls. If the mothers wear flip-flops and other casual clothing to sacrament meeting, so do their daughters. Mothers, your example is extremely important to your daughters—even if they don’t acknowledge it.

Throughout the history of the world, women have always been teachers of moral values. That instruction begins in the cradle and continues throughout the lives of their children. Today our society is bombarded with messages about womanhood and



motherhood that are dangerously and wickedly wrong. Following these messages can put your daughters on the path to sin and self-destruction. Your daughters may not understand that unless you tell them or, better, unless you show them how to make good choices. As mothers in Israel, you are your daughters' first line of defense against the wiles of the world.

Now, mothers, I understand that it sometimes appears that our children aren't paying attention to the lessons we're trying to teach them. Believe me—I've seen that glazed-over look that comes to the eyes of teenagers just when you're coming to what you think is the best part of your instruction. Let me assure you that even when you think your daughter is not listening to a thing you say, she is still learning from you as she watches you to see if your actions match your words. As Ralph Waldo Emerson is believed to have said, "What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say" (see Ralph Keyes, *The Quote Verifier* [2006], 56).

Teach your daughters to find joy in nurturing children. This is where their love and talents can have the greatest eternal significance. Consider in this context President Harold B. Lee's injunction that "the most important

... work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own homes" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 134). This is true for all of us, of course, but it is especially powerful when considering the relationship of mothers and daughters.

Mothers, teach your daughters that a faithful daughter of God avoids the temptation to gossip or judge one another. In a sermon to the Relief Society of Nauvoo, the Prophet Joseph counseled, "The tongue is an unruly member—hold your tongues about things of no moment" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 455).

In recent years there has been a rash of articles, books, and films written about women and girls who gossip and who are "mean." Satan is always attempting to undermine the most precious element of a woman's divine nature—the nature to nurture.

A mother-daughter relationship is where a daughter learns how to nurture by being nurtured. She is loved. She is taught and experiences firsthand what it feels like to have someone care about her enough to correct her while continuing to encourage and believe in her at the same time.

Remember, sisters, God is the source of all moral and spiritual power. We gain access to that power by entering into covenants with Him and keeping those covenants. Mothers, teach your daughters the importance of making covenants, and then show them how to keep those covenants in such a way that they will desire to live worthy to go to the temple.

In today's world this means talking to your daughters about sexual matters. Your daughters as well as your sons are coming of age in a world that openly embraces early, casual, and thoughtless promiscuity. Immodest, unchaste women are glamorized and all too often celebrated and emulated. While there are steps that we can take in our homes and families to minimize our exposure to these unsavory elements of contemporary living, your daughters cannot entirely avoid the blatant sexual messages and enticements that surround them. You need to have frequent, open discussions during which you teach your daughters the truth about these issues.

For example, they need to understand that when they wear clothing that is too tight, too short, or too low cut, they not only can send the wrong message to young men with whom they associate, but they also perpetuate in their own minds the fallacy that a woman's value is dependent solely upon her sensual appeal. This never has been nor will it ever be within the righteous definition of a faithful daughter of God. They need to hear this—clearly and repeatedly—from your lips, and they need to see it modeled correctly and consistently in your own personal standards of dress, grooming, and modest living.

All youth will be more likely to make and keep covenants if they learn how to recognize the presence and

the voice of the Spirit. Teach your daughters about things of the Spirit. Point them to the scriptures. Give them experiences that will help them cherish the blessing of priesthood power in their lives. Through keeping covenants they will learn to hear the voice of the Lord and receive personal revelation. God will truly hear and answer their prayers. The Mutual theme for 2010 applies to our youth as well as to all of us: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9). This will lead them safely to the blessings of the house of the Lord.

Make sure they know that keeping covenants is the safest road to eternal happiness. And if needed, teach them how to repent and how to remain pure and worthy.

Now, if this has a familiar sound, my brothers and sisters, it’s because I’ve been speaking to parents and their children for three general conferences in a row. Last April I encouraged the youth to “learn the lessons of the past.” From that talk I quote: “When you are willing to listen and learn, some of life’s most meaningful teachings come from those who have gone before you. . . . How much better your life will be if you will follow the noble example of the faithful followers of Christ” (“Learning the Lessons of the Past,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 31, 33).

Last October I spoke to fathers and sons in priesthood meeting, and today I have spoken mostly to mothers and daughters. In each case my message has been different but similar. I hope you are listening and see a pattern and hear a steady, consistent message that in these last days it is essential—even critical—that parents and children listen to and learn from one another.



These are not just ethereal concepts about which I have been speaking. They are the essence, the center, of God’s plan for our eternal happiness and peace.

The Church will help wherever we can. We are there to support and sustain you as parents and as children. But the home is the most important place to prepare the youth of today to lead the families and the Church of tomorrow. It rests upon each one of us as mothers and fathers to do all we can to prepare our youth to be faithful, righteous men and women. It is in the home where we must teach the gospel by precept and by example.

I conclude my counsel with this prophetic summary from President Joseph F. Smith: “Our [family] associations are not exclusively intended for

this life, for time, as we distinguish it from eternity. We live for time and for eternity. We form associations and relations for time and all eternity. . . . Who are there besides the Latter-day Saints who contemplate the thought that beyond the grave we will continue in the family organization? the father, the mother, the children recognizing each other . . . ? this family organization being a unit in the great and perfect organization of God’s work, and all destined to continue throughout time and eternity?” (*Teachings: Joseph F. Smith*, 385, 386).

May God bless us to teach, nurture, and prepare one another within the walls of our homes for the great work that must be done by all of us now and in the future is my prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Help Them on Their Way Home

We help God's children best by providing ways to build faith in Jesus Christ and His restored gospel when they are young.

Brothers and sisters, our Heavenly Father wants and needs our help to bring His spirit children home to Him again. I speak today of young people already within His true Church and so are started on the strait and narrow way to return to their heavenly home. He wants them to gain early the spiritual strength to stay on the path. And He needs our help to get them back to the path quickly should they begin to wander.

I was a young bishop when I began to see clearly why the Lord wants us to strengthen children when they are young and rescue them quickly. I will tell you one story of a young person who represents many whom I have tried to help over the years.

She sat across from me at my bishop's desk. She spoke to me of her life. She had been baptized and confirmed as a member of the Church when she was eight. There were no tears in her eyes as she recounted the more than 20 years that followed, but there was sadness in her voice. She said that the downward spiral began with choices to associate with what she thought were exciting people. She began to violate what at first seemed to be less important commandments.

She felt at first a little sadness and a twinge of guilt. But the associations with her friends provided a new feeling of being liked, and so her occasional resolutions to repent seemed less and less important. As the gravity of the commandments she was breaking increased, the dream of a happy eternal home seemed to fade.

She sat across from me in what she called misery. She wanted me to rescue her from the trap of sin in which she found herself bound. But the only way out was for her to exercise faith in Jesus Christ, to have a broken heart, to repent, and so be cleansed, changed, and strengthened through the Lord's Atonement. I bore my testimony to

her that it was still possible. And it was, but so much harder than it would have been to exercise faith early in her life on the journey home to God and when she first began to wander.

So we help God's children best by providing ways to build faith in Jesus Christ and His restored gospel when they are young. And then we must help rekindle that faith quickly before it dims as they wander off the path.

So you and I can expect a nearly continuous opportunity to help travelers among God's children. The Savior told us why that would be so when He described the perilous journey home for all of God's spirit children through the mists which sin and Satan create:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat;

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."¹

Foreseeing the needs of His children, a loving Heavenly Father placed directions and rescuers along their way. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to make safe passage possible and visible. He called as His prophet in these times President Thomas S. Monson. Since his youth President Monson has taught not only how to stay on the



path but also how to rescue those who have been led away into sorrow.

Heavenly Father has assigned us to a great variety of stations to strengthen and, when needed, to lead travelers to safety. Our most important and powerful assignments are in the family. They are important because the family has the opportunity at the start of a child's life to put feet firmly on the path home. Parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles are made more powerful guides and rescuers by the bonds of love that are the very nature of a family.

The family has an advantage in the first eight years of a child's life. In those protected years, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Satan's use of the mists of darkness to hide the path to return home is blocked. In those precious years the Lord helps families by calling Primary workers to help strengthen children spiritually. He also provides holders of the Aaronic Priesthood to offer the sacrament. In those sacramental prayers, the children hear the promise that they may someday receive the Holy Ghost as a guide if they are obedient to God's commandments. As a result, they are fortified to resist temptation when it comes and then, sometime in the future, to go to the rescue of others.

Many bishops in the Church are inspired to call the strongest people in the ward to serve individual children in the Primary. They realize that if the children are strengthened with faith and testimony, they will be less likely to need rescue as teenagers. They realize that a strong spiritual foundation can make the difference for a lifetime.

We all can help. Grandmothers, grandfathers, and every member who knows a child can help. It doesn't take a formal calling in Primary. Nor is it



limited by age. One such woman, as a younger person, was on the Primary general board that helped create the CTR motto.

She never tired of serving the children. She taught in the Primary of her ward, at her own request, until she was almost 90 years old. Little children could feel her love for them. They saw her example. They learned from her the simple principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And above all, because of her example they learned to feel and recognize the Holy Ghost. And when they did, they were well on their way to the faith to resist temptation. They would be less likely to need to be rescued and would be prepared to go to the rescue of others.

I learned the power of simple faith in prayer and in the Holy Ghost when our children were small. Our oldest

son was not yet baptized. His parents, Primary teachers, and priesthood servants had tried to help him feel and recognize the Spirit and know how to receive His help.

One afternoon my wife had taken him to the home of a woman who was teaching him to read. Our plan was that I was to pick him up on my way home from work.

His lesson ended earlier than we had expected. He felt confident that he knew the way home. So he started to walk. He said afterward that he had complete confidence and liked the idea of being alone on the trip. After he had gone about half a mile (0.8 km), it started to grow dark. He began to sense that he was still very far from home.

He can still remember that the lights of the cars as they streamed past



him were blurred by his tears. He felt like a little child, not the confident boy who had begun to walk home alone. He realized that he needed help. Then something came to his memory. He knew he was supposed to pray. And so he left the road and headed toward some trees he could barely see in the darkness. He found a place to kneel down.

Through the bushes he could hear voices coming toward him. Two young people had heard him crying. As they approached, they said, “Can we help you?” Through his tears he told them he was lost and that he wanted to go home. They asked if he knew his home phone number or address. He didn’t. They asked if he knew his name. He did know that. They led him to the nearby place where they lived. They found our family name in a phone book.

When I got the phone call, I rushed to the rescue, grateful that kind people had been placed along his way home. And I have been ever grateful he was taught to pray with faith that help would come when he was lost. That faith has led him to safety and brought him more rescuers more times than he can count.

The Lord has placed a pattern of rescue and rescuers in His kingdom. In His wisdom the Lord has inspired His servants to place some of the most powerful ways to strengthen us and to put in place the best rescuers as we pass through the teenage years.

You know of two powerful programs provided by the Lord. One, for young women, is called Personal Progress. The other, for Aaronic

Priesthood holders, is called Duty to God. We encourage young people in the rising generation to see their own potential to build great spiritual strength. And we plead with those who care about those young people to rise to what the Lord requires of us to help them. And since the future of the Church depends upon them, all of us care.

The two programs have been improved, but their purpose remains unchanged. President Monson put it this way: we must “learn what we should learn, do what we should do, and be what we should be.”²

The *Personal Progress* booklet for young women makes the purpose clear for them: “The Personal Progress program uses the eight Young Women values to help you understand more fully who you are, why you are here on the earth, and what you should be doing as a daughter of God to prepare for the day you go to the temple to make sacred covenants.”

It goes on to say that young women will “make commitments, carry them out, and report your progress to a parent or leader.” It also promises that “the patterns you establish as you work on Personal Progress—such as prayer, scripture study, service, and journal keeping—will become personal daily habits. These habits will strengthen your testimony and help you learn and improve throughout your life.”³

The Duty to God program for young men in the Aaronic Priesthood has been strengthened and focused. It will be contained in one simple book for all three Aaronic Priesthood offices. The young men and their leaders will receive a copy of this new book. It is a powerful tool. It will strengthen the testimonies of young men and their relationship with God. It will help

them learn and want to fulfill their priesthood duties. It will strengthen their relationships with their parents, among quorum members, and with their leaders.

Both of these programs put great responsibility on the efforts of the young people themselves. They are invited to learn and do things that would be challenging for anyone. As I reflect on my own youth, I cannot remember being so challenged. Oh, on a few occasions I was invited to rise to such tests, but only now and then. These programs expect consistency, great effort, and the accumulation of learning and spiritual experiences over years.

On reflection I realized that the contents of these booklets are a physical representation of the Lord’s trust in the rising generation and in all of us who love them. And I have seen evidence that the trust is well placed.

In visits I watched Aaronic Priesthood quorums in action. I have seen young men following patterns of learning, making plans to do what God wants of them, then moving out to do what they have committed to do and sharing with others how they were changed spiritually. And as I watched and listened, it became clear that fathers, mothers, leaders, friends, and even neighbors in a congregation were touched by the Spirit as they heard youth testify how they had been strengthened. The youth were lifted as they bore testimony, and so were those who were trying to help them rise.

The Young Women program has in it that same powerful pattern to develop spiritual strength in the young women and to offer the opportunity for us to help. Personal Progress helps young women prepare to receive the ordinances of the temple. They are helped by the examples of mothers,

grandmothers, and every righteous woman around them in the Church. I have seen how parents helped a daughter achieve her goals and dreams by noticing and appreciating all the good things she does.

Just a few days ago I watched a mother stand with her young daughter as they received recognition for having together become examples of outstanding womanhood. And as they shared with me what it had meant to them, I felt the Lord's approval and encouragement for us all.

Of all the help we can give these young people, the greatest will be to let them feel our confidence that they are on the path home to God and that they can make it. And we do that best by going with them. Because the path is steep and sometimes rocky, they will at times feel discouraged and even stumble. They may at times become confused about their destination and wander after less eternally important goals. These inspired programs make that less likely because they will lead the young person to invite and receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

The best counsel for us to give young people is that they can arrive back to Heavenly Father only as they are guided and corrected by the Spirit of God. So if we are wise, we will encourage, praise, and exemplify everything which invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost. When they share with us what they are doing and feeling, we must ourselves have qualified for the Spirit. Then they will feel in our praise and our smiles the approval of God. And should we feel the need to give corrective counsel, they will feel our love and the love of God in it, not rebuke and rejection, which can permit Satan to lead them further away.

The example they most need from us is to do what they must do. We



need to pray for the gifts of the Spirit. We need to ponder in the scriptures and in the words of living prophets. We need to make plans which are not only wishes but covenants. And then we need to keep our promises to the Lord. And we need to lift others by sharing with them the blessings of the Atonement which have come in our lives.

And we need to exemplify in our own lives the steady and prolonged faithfulness that the Lord expects of them. As we do, we will help them feel from the Spirit an assurance that if they will persist, they will hear the words from a loving Savior and Heavenly Father: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."⁴

And we who help them along the way will hear those words with joy.

I testify that the Lord loves you and every child of God. This is His kingdom, restored with priesthood keys through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Thomas S. Monson is the Lord's prophet today. I promise each of you, as you follow inspired direction in this, the true Church of Jesus Christ, that our youth and we who help and love them can be delivered safely to our home with Heavenly Father and the Savior to live in families and in joy forever. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. 3 Nephi 14:13–14.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "To Learn, to Do, to Be," *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 67.
3. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 6.
4. Matthew 25:21.



Presented by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

The Sustaining of Church Officers

It is proposed that we sustain Thomas Spencer Monson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Henry Bennion Eyring as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Dieter Friedrich Uchtdorf as Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Those in favor may manifest it.

Those opposed, if any, may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Boyd Kenneth Packer as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that quorum: Boyd K. Packer, L. Tom Perry, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Richard G. Scott, Robert D. Hales, Jeffrey R. Holland, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, and Neil L. Andersen.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may so indicate.

It is proposed that we sustain the counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we release the following as Area Seventies effective May 1, 2010: Jorge M. Alvarado,

Homero S. Amato, Manuel Araiz, Jorge D. Arrevillaga, Marcelo Bolfarini, Fernando E. Calderon, Gabriel A. Campos, Chu-Jen Chia, Flávio A. Cooper, Ronaldo da Costa, John C. Dalton, Kevin R. Duncan, Randy D. Funk, Robert H. Garff, Gerrit W. Gong, Frerich J. Görts, S. Horacio Guzmán, Ronald J. Hammond, Stephen W. Hansen, Yu Chen (Philip) Ho, Patrick Kearon, Christiaan H. Kleijweg, Larry R. Lawrence, Robert W. Lees, F. Rene Loli, Juan A. Machuca, Per G. Malm, Carlos S. Obata, Alexander A. Odume, A. Rolando Oyola, Melvin R. Perkins, James C. Perry, John C.

Pingree, Dinar M. Reyes, D. Chad Richardson, Maury W. Schooff, Hans T. Sorensen, John C. Taggart, Donald P. Tenney, G. Perrin Walker, Johann A. Wondra, and Kazuhiko Yamashita.

Those who wish to join us in expressing our gratitude for their excellent service, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we release Sisters Cheryl C. Lant, Margaret S. Lifferth, and Vicki F. Matsumori as the Primary general presidency.

We also release all members of the Primary general board.

All who wish to join us in expressing thanks for the dedicated service given by these sisters, please manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy Kevin R. Duncan, Gerrit W. Gong, Patrick Kearon, and Juan A. Uceda; and as new members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy Larry R. Lawrence, Per G. Malm, and Jairo Mazzagardi.

All in favor, please manifest it.

Those opposed, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the following as new Area Seventies: Ian S. Ardern, Philip K. Bussey,

Newly sustained Primary general presidency



René J. Cabrera, Renato Capelletti, Paul D. M. Christensen, Rogério G. R. Cruz, Donald D. Deshler, George R. Donaldson, Ini B. Ekong, Christian Fingerle, Craig G. Fisher, Jerry L. Garns, Jack N. Gerard, M. Keith Giddens, Brent J. Hillier, Jui Chang Juan, George M. Keele, Dane O. Leavitt, Alexander T. Mestre, Arayik V. Minasyan, T. Jackson Mkhabela, S. Gifford Nielsen, Valentín F. Nuñez, Jeffery E. Olson, R. Ingvar Olsson, Robert N. Packer, Nathaniel R. Payne, Cesar A. Perez Jr., Fouchard Pierre-nau, Michael J. Reall, Edson D. G. Ribeiro, Brad K. Risenmay, Mozart B. Soares, Carlos A. Solis, Norland de Souza Lopes, Kouzou Tashiro, Omar Villalobos, W. Christopher Waddell, Alan J. Webb, Gerardo J. Wilhelm, Kevin J. Worthen, Craig T. Wright, and Jim L. Wright.

All in favor, please signify.

Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain Rosemary M. Wixom as the new general president of the Primary, with Jean A. Stevens as first counselor and Cheryl A. Esplin as second counselor.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities, Area Seventies, and general auxiliary presidencies as presently constituted.

Those in favor, please manifest it.

Any opposed may manifest it.

President Monson, insofar as I have been able to observe, the voting in the Conference Center has been unanimous in favor of the proposals made.

Thank you, our dear brothers and sisters, for your sustaining vote and your continued faith, devotion, and prayers.

We invite now the newly called General Authorities and Primary general presidency to come forward and take their places on the stand. ■

Church Auditing Department Report, 2009

Presented by Robert W. Cantwell

Managing Director, Church Auditing Department

To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dear Brethren: As prescribed by revelation in section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes authorizes the expenditure of Church funds. This council is composed of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric. This council approves budgets for Church departments and operations. Church departments expend funds consistent with approved budgets and in accordance with Church policies and procedures.

The Church Auditing Department has been granted access to all records and systems necessary to evaluate the adequacy of controls over receipts of funds, expenditures, and safeguarding of Church assets. The Church Auditing Department is independent of all other Church departments and operations, and the staff consists of certified public accountants, certified internal auditors, certified information systems auditors, and other credentialed professionals.

Based upon audits performed, the Church Auditing Department is of the



opinion that, in all material respects, contributions received, expenditures made, and assets of the Church for the year 2009 have been recorded and administered in accordance with appropriate accounting practices, approved budgets, and Church policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,
Church Auditing Department
Robert W. Cantwell
Managing Director ■

Statistical Report, 2009

Presented by Brook P. Hales

Secretary to the First Presidency

The First Presidency has issued the following statistical report of the Church as of December 31, 2009.

Church Units

Stakes	2,865
Missions	344
Districts	616
Wards and Branches	28,424

Church Membership

Total Church Membership	13,824,854
New Children of Record during 2009	119,722
Converts Baptized during 2009	280,106

Missionaries

Number of Full-Time Missionaries	51,736
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Temples

Temples Dedicated during 2009	2
(Draper Utah and Oquirrh Mountain Utah)	
Temples in Operation	130

Former General Church Officers and Other Prominent Church Members Who Have Passed Away since Last April

Elder Royden G. Derrick, an emeritus General Authority; *Elders George I. Cannon*, *W. Don Ladd*, *Douglas J.*

Martin, and *Joseph C. Muren*, former members of the Seventy; *Sister Colleen W. Asay*, widow of Elder Carlos E. Asay, an emeritus General Authority; *Sister Jeanne C. Dunn*, widow of Elder Paul H. Dunn, an emeritus General Authority; *Sister Jelaire C. Simpson*, widow of Elder Robert L. Simpson, an emeritus General Authority; *Sister Jacqueline Y. Lawrence*, wife of Elder W. Mack Lawrence, a former member of the Seventy; *Sister Betty N. Turley*, wife of Elder Richard E. Turley Sr., a former member of the Seventy; *Brother David S. King*, former assistant in the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association general superintendency; *Sister Ann S. Reese*, former counselor in the Relief Society general presidency; *Brother Robert J. Matthews*, an authority on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible; and *Brother Truman G. Madsen*, Church scholar and former director of the BYU Jerusalem Center. ■





By Elder L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Mothers Teaching Children in the Home

I believe it is by divine design that the role of motherhood emphasizes the nurturing and teaching of the next generation.

I recently had the opportunity to travel with Elder Donald L. Hallstrom to visit five cities in the great central area of the United States. In each city we visited, we would hold a meeting with the full-time missionaries, followed by a meeting with the stake and ward leaders regarding missionary work. Between each of the two meetings, the stake Relief Society would prepare a light dinner for us to afford us time to meet with the stake presidents. When we reached Milwaukee, Wisconsin, two young families appealed to the Relief Society to let them prepare and serve the dinner. The two husbands manned the kitchen. The two mothers supervised the table arrangements and the serving of the food. Three young children handled the table setting and the serving of the food under the supervision of their mothers. This was an opportunity for the mothers to have a teaching opportunity with their children. It was very special to watch the children respond to every detail as they were taught by their mothers. They carried out their assignments completely and fully.

The experience caused me to reflect on the training I had received

from my mother. Like the prophet Nephi and also like so many of you, I was born of goodly parents (see 1 Nephi 1:1).

One of my nieces recently shared with me four notebooks my mother had filled with notes as she prepared to teach her class in Relief Society. I would imagine these notebooks—and there are others I have not yet examined—represent hundreds of hours of preparation by my mother.

Mother was a great teacher who



São Paulo, Brazil

was diligent and thorough in her preparation. I have distinct memories of the days preceding her lessons. The dining room table would be covered with reference materials and the notes she was preparing for her lesson. There was so much material prepared that I'm sure only a small portion of it was ever used during the class, but I'm just as sure that none of her preparation was ever wasted. How can I be sure about this? As I flipped through the pages of her notebooks, it was as if I were hearing my mother teach me one more time. Again, there was too much in her notebooks on any single topic to ever share in a single class session, but what she didn't use in her class she used to teach her children.

I believe it is even safe to say that while my mother was an enormously effective teacher among the sisters at Relief Society, her best teaching occurred with her children in the home. Of course, this was largely due to the greater amount of time she had to teach her children compared to teaching the Relief Society sisters, but I also like to think she prepared so thoroughly, first, to be an example to her children of diligent Church service and, second, because she recognized that what she learned from preparing her lessons could be used repeatedly for a higher purpose—teaching her sons and her daughters.

Please allow me to reminisce for a few moments and share a few of the lessons I learned from my mother about teaching the gospel in the home. My mother understood the value of teaching her children about standards, values, and doctrine while they were young. While she was grateful to others who taught her children outside the home at either school or church, she recognized that parents are entrusted with the education of

their children and, ultimately, parents must ensure that their children are being taught what their Heavenly Father would have them learn. My siblings and I were quizzed very carefully by our mother after we had been taught away from the home to be certain the correct lessons were reaching our ears and shaping our minds.

I used to think some days as I ran home from school that I was through learning for the day, but this illusion was quickly destroyed when I saw my mother standing at the door waiting for me. When we were young, we each had a desk in the kitchen where we could continue to be taught by her as she performed household duties and prepared supper. She was a natural teacher and far more demanding of us than our teachers at school and church.

The scope of Mother's teaching included both secular and spiritual lessons. She made sure none of us were falling behind in our schoolwork, which she would often supplement. She also would practice her Relief Society lessons with us. We, of course, received the unabridged versions found in her notebooks, not the abridged versions that had to fit in a single class period.

Part of our learning at home also involved memorizing scriptures, including the Articles of Faith, and the words of prophets, seers, and revelators. My mother was someone who believed a mind would become weak if it was not constantly exercised. She taught us as we would wash the dishes, churn the butter, and help in many other ways. She did not believe in letting idle thoughts enter her children's minds, even when they were engaged in physical labor.

I am not using my mother as a role model for parents in today's world. Times are very different today, but

while times may change, a parent's teaching must never be devalued. Many activities link the values of one generation to the next, but perhaps the most central of these activities is parents teaching children in the home. This is especially true when we consider the teaching of values, moral and ethical standards, and faith.

Teaching in the home is becoming increasingly important in today's world, where the influence of the adversary is so widespread and he is attacking, attempting to erode and destroy the very foundation of our society, even the family. Parents must resolve that teaching in the home is a most sacred and important responsibility. While other institutions, such as church and school, can assist parents to "train up a child in the way he [or she] should go" (Proverbs 22:6), ultimately this responsibility rests with parents. According to the great plan of happiness, it is parents who are entrusted with the care and development of our Heavenly Father's children. Our families are an integral part of His work and glory—"to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). On God's eternal stage, it is usually intended that parents act as the central cast members in their children's lives. Fortunately, there are

understudies involved in the production who may step in when parents can't. It, however, is parents who have been commanded by the Lord to bring up their children in light and truth (see D&C 93:40).

Parents must bring light and truth into their homes by one family prayer, one scripture study session, one family home evening, one book read aloud, one song, and one family meal at a time. They know that the influence of righteous, conscientious, persistent, daily parenting is among the most powerful and sustaining forces for good in the world. The health of any society, the happiness of its people, their prosperity, and their peace all find common roots in the teaching of children in the home.

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith taught: "It is the duty of parents to teach their children these saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that they will know why they are to be baptized and that they may be impressed in their hearts with a desire to continue to keep the commandments of God after they are baptized, that they may come back into his presence. Do you, my good brethren and sisters, want your families, your children; do you want to be sealed to your fathers and your





mothers before you . . . ? If so, then you must begin by teaching at the cradle-side. You are to teach by example as well as precept” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 153).

The example of my mother as a teacher in the home invites another thought, more generally about teaching. The leaders of the Church spend a great deal of time thinking about how to improve teaching in the Church. Why do we invest this time and effort? It is because we believe in the immense power of teaching to increase the faith of individuals and strengthen families. It is my belief that one of the most effective things we can do to improve teaching in the Church is to improve teaching in our homes. Our teaching in the home prepares us to teach more effectively at church, and our teaching at church helps us to teach more effectively at home. Throughout the Church there are dining room tables covered with reference materials and notebooks filled with ideas for lessons to be taught. There is no such thing as overpreparing to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, for gospel insights, whether or not they are used during class time, can always be taught in the home.

The inspired document “The Family:

A Proclamation to the World” states:

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. . . .

“ . . . By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners” (*Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

According to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the principles I have taught about teaching in the home apply to both parents, but they are especially crucial to the role of a mother. Fathers most often spend much of their day away from home in their employment. That is one of the

many reasons so much of the responsibility for teaching the child in the home falls on mothers. While circumstances do vary and the ideal isn’t always possible, I believe it is by divine design that the role of motherhood emphasizes the nurturing and teaching of the next generation. We see so many challenges today from distracting and destructive influences intended to mislead God’s children. We are seeing many young people who lack the deep spiritual roots necessary to remain standing in faith as storms of unbelief and despair swirl around them. Too many of our Father in Heaven’s children are being overcome by worldly desires. The onslaught of wickedness against our children is at once more subtle and more brazen than it has ever been. Teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the home adds another layer of insulation to protect our children from worldly influences.

God bless you wonderful mothers and fathers in Zion. He has entrusted to your care His eternal children. As parents we partner, even join, with God in bringing to pass His work and glory among His children. It is our sacred duty to do our very best. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Blessing of Scripture

The central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

On October 6, in the year 1536, a pitiful figure was led from a dungeon in Vilvorde Castle near Brussels, Belgium. For nearly a year and a half, the man had suffered isolation in a dark, damp cell. Now outside the castle wall, the prisoner was fastened to a post. He had time to utter aloud his final prayer, “Lord! open the king of England’s eyes,” and then he was strangled. Immediately, his body was burned at the stake. Who was this man, and what was the offense for which both political and ecclesiastical authorities had condemned him? His name was William Tyndale, and his crime was to have translated and published the Bible in English.

Tyndale, born in England about the time Columbus sailed to the new world, was educated at Oxford and Cambridge and then became a member of the Catholic clergy. He was fluent in eight languages, including Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Tyndale was a devoted student of the Bible, and the pervasive ignorance of the scriptures that he observed in both priests and lay people troubled him deeply. In a heated exchange with a cleric who argued against putting scripture in the hands of the common man, Tyndale

vowed, “If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough, shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost!”

He sought the approval of church authorities to prepare a translation of the Bible in English so that all could read and apply the word of God. It was denied—the prevailing view being that direct access to the scriptures by any but the clergy threatened the authority of the church and was tantamount to casting “pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6).

Tyndale nevertheless undertook the challenging work of translation. In 1524 he traveled to Germany, under an assumed name, where he lived much

of the time in hiding, under constant threat of arrest. With the help of committed friends, Tyndale was able to publish English translations of the New Testament and later the Old Testament. The Bibles were smuggled into England, where they were in great demand and much prized by those who could get them. They were shared widely but in secret. The authorities burned all the copies they could find. Nevertheless, within three years of Tyndale’s death, God did indeed open King Henry VIII’s eyes, and with publication of what was called the “Great Bible,” the scriptures in English began to be publicly available. Tyndale’s work became the foundation for almost all future English translations of the Bible, most notably the King James Version.¹

William Tyndale was not the first, nor the last, of those who in many countries and languages have sacrificed, even to the point of death, to bring the word of God out of obscurity. We owe them all a great debt of gratitude. We owe perhaps an even greater debt to those who faithfully recorded and preserved the word through the ages, often with painstaking labor and sacrifice—Moses, Isaiah, Abraham, John, Paul, Nephi, Mormon, Joseph Smith, and many others. What did they know about the importance of scriptures that we also need to know? What did people in 16th-century England, who paid enormous sums and ran grave personal risks for access to a Bible, understand that we should also understand?

Not long before his death, the prophet Alma entrusted the sacred records of the people to his son Helaman. He reminded Helaman that the scriptures had “enlarged the memory of this people, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and brought them to the knowledge of





their God unto the salvation of their souls” (Alma 37:8). He commanded Helaman to preserve the records so that through them God might “show forth his power unto future generations” (Alma 37:14).

Through the scriptures, God does indeed “show forth his power” to save and exalt His children. By His word, as Alma said, He enlarges our memory, sheds light on falsehood and error, and brings us to repentance and to rejoice in Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

The Scriptures Enlarge Our Memory

The scriptures enlarge our memory by helping us always to remember the Lord and our relationship to Him and the Father. They remind us of what we knew in our premortal life. And they expand our memory in another sense by teaching us about epochs, people, and events that we did not experience personally. None of us was present to see the Red Sea part and cross with Moses between walls of water to the other side. We were not there to hear the Sermon on the Mount, to see

Lazarus raised from the dead, to see the suffering Savior in Gethsemane and on the cross, and we did not, with Mary, hear the two angels testify at the empty tomb that Jesus was risen from the dead. You and I did not go forward one by one with the multitude in the land Bountiful at the resurrected Savior’s invitation to feel the prints of the nails and bathe His feet with our tears. We did not kneel beside Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove and gaze there upon the Father and the Son. Yet we know all these things and much, much more because we have the scriptural record to enlarge our memory, to teach us what we did not know. And as these things penetrate our minds and hearts, our faith in God and His Beloved Son takes root.

The scriptures also enlarge our memory by helping us not forget what we and earlier generations have learned. Those who either don’t have or ignore the recorded word of God eventually cease to believe in Him and forget the purpose of their existence. You will remember how important it

was for Lehi’s people to take the brass plates with them when they left Jerusalem. These scriptures were key to their knowledge of God and the coming Redemption of Christ. The other group that “came out from Jerusalem” shortly after Lehi had no scriptures, and when Lehi’s descendants encountered them some 300 or 400 years later, it is recorded that “their language had become corrupted; . . . and they denied the being of their Creator” (Omni 1:15, 17).

In Tyndale’s day, scriptural ignorance abounded because people lacked access to the Bible, especially in a language they could understand. Today the Bible and other scripture are readily at hand, yet there is a growing scriptural illiteracy because people will not open the books. Consequently they have forgotten things their grandparents knew.

The Scriptures Are the Standard for Distinguishing Truth and Error

God uses scripture to unmask erroneous thinking, false traditions, and sin



with its devastating effects. He is a tender parent who would spare us needless suffering and grief and at the same time help us realize our divine potential. The scriptures, for example, discredit an ancient philosophy that has come back into vogue in our day—the philosophy of Korihor that there are no absolute moral standards, that “every man prosper[s] according to his genius, and that every man conquer[s] according to his strength; and whatsoever a man [does is] no crime” and “that when a man [is] dead, that [is] the end thereof” (Alma 30:17–18). Alma, who had dealt with Korihor, did not leave his own son Corianton in doubt about the reality and substance of a divine moral code. Corianton had been guilty of sexual sin, and his father spoke to him in love but plainly: “Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?” (Alma 39:5).

In a complete reversal from a century ago, many today would dispute with Alma about the seriousness of

immorality. Others would argue that it’s all relative or that God’s love is permissive. If there is a God, they say, He excuses all sins and misdeeds because of His love for us—there is no need for repentance. Or at most, a simple confession will do. They have imagined a Jesus who wants people to work for social justice but who makes no demands upon their personal life and behavior.² But a God of love does not leave us to learn by sad experience that “wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10; see also Helaman 13:38). His commandments are the voice of reality and our protection against self-inflicted pain. The scriptures are the touchstone for measuring correctness and truth, and they are clear that real happiness lies not in denying the justice of God or trying to circumvent the consequences of sin but in repentance and forgiveness through the atoning grace of the Son of God (see Alma 42).

Scripture tutors us in principles and moral values essential to maintaining civil society, including integrity, responsibility, selflessness, fidelity, and charity. In scripture, we find vivid portrayals of

the blessings that come from honoring true principles, as well as the tragedies that befall when individuals and civilizations discard them. Where scriptural truths are ignored or abandoned, the essential moral core of society disintegrates and decay is close behind. In time, nothing is left to sustain the institutions that sustain society.

The Scriptures Bring Us to Christ, Our Redeemer

In the end, the central purpose of all scripture is to fill our souls with faith in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ—faith that They exist; faith in the Father’s plan for our immortality and eternal life; faith in the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which animates this plan of happiness; faith to make the gospel of Jesus Christ our way of life; and faith to come to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He has] sent” (John 17:3).

The word of God, as Alma said, is like a seed planted in our hearts that produces faith as it begins to grow within us (see Alma 32:27–43; see also Romans 10:13–17). Faith will not come from the study of ancient texts as a

purely academic pursuit. It will not come from archaeological digs and discoveries. It will not come from scientific experiments. It will not even come from witnessing miracles. These things may serve to confirm faith, or at times to challenge it, but they do not create faith. Faith comes by the witness of the Holy Spirit to our souls, Spirit to spirit, as we hear or read the word of God. And faith matures as we continue to feast upon the word.

Scriptural accounts of the faith of others serve to strengthen our own. We recall the faith of a centurion that enabled Christ to heal his servant without so much as seeing him (see Matthew 8:5–13) and the healing of a Gentile woman's daughter because that humble mother would accept, as it were, even the crumbs from the Master's table (see Matthew 15:22–28; Mark 7:25–30). We hear the cry of suffering Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15)—and professing, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: . . . [and] yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25–26). We hear and take courage from the determination of a tender boy prophet, hated and bitterly persecuted by so many adults: "I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

Because they expound the doctrine of Christ, the scriptures are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, whose role it is to bear witness of the Father and the Son (see 3 Nephi 11:32). Therefore, being in the scriptures is one way we receive the Holy Ghost. Of course, scripture is given through the Holy Ghost in the first place (see 2 Peter 1:21; D&C 20:26–27; 68:4), and that same Spirit can attest its truth to you and me. Study the scriptures carefully,

deliberately. Ponder and pray over them. Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation.

Consider the magnitude of our blessing to have the Holy Bible and some 900 additional pages of scripture, including the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. Then consider that, in addition, the words of prophets spoken as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in settings such as this, which the Lord calls scripture (see D&C 68:2–4), flow to us almost constantly by television, radio, Internet, satellite, CD, DVD, and in print. I suppose that never in history has a people been blessed with such a quantity of holy writ. And not only that, but every man, woman, and child may possess and study his or her own personal copy of these sacred texts, most in his or her own language. How incredible such a thing would have seemed to the people of William Tyndale's day and to the Saints of earlier dispensations!

Surely with this blessing the Lord is telling us that our need for constant recourse to the scriptures is greater than in any previous time. May we feast continuously on the words of Christ that will tell us all things we should do (see 2 Nephi 32:3). I have studied the scriptures, I have pondered the scriptures, and on this Eastertide, I bear you my testimony of the Father and the Son, as They are revealed in the holy scriptures, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. The following sources were consulted for information about William Tyndale: David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (2003), 140–57; Lenet Hadley Read, *How We Got the Bible* (1985), 67–74; S. Michael Wilcox, *Fire in the Bones: William Tyndale—Martyr, Father of the English Bible* (2004); John Foxe, *The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (1997), 121–33; "William Tyndale," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Tyndale, accessed February 28, 2010; Bible Dictionary, "Bible, English."
2. See interview of Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, in Michael De Groote, "Questioning the Alternative Jesus," *Deseret News*, Nov. 26, 2009, M5.





By Elder Koichi Aoyagi
Of the Seventy

Helping Hands, Saving Hands

May we follow the counsel and example of the prophet and each day seek out those in need.

My brothers and sisters, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to speak at this conference. I am grateful for President Thomas S. Monson, and I testify that he is a prophet of the living God. I am deeply impressed by the wonderful example of President Monson, who has spent his life using his hands to help and save others.

We live in a day when many people are faced with calamities and are in need of help due to the devastating effects of earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. The Church is reaching out to these people through humanitarian aid. Church members faithfully give generous fast offerings each month and perform service in a spirit of love. They literally offer helping hands in the Lord's way. They follow the commandment of the Lord to "remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple" (D&C 52:40).

Today I would like to focus on hands that help and save spiritually. The Lord's work and glory truly is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Many

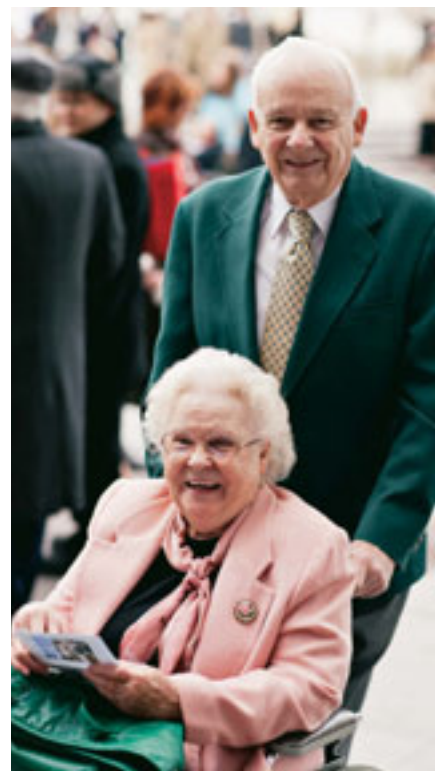
around us need spiritual help. As we offer a saving hand to less-active members, to part-member families, and to those not of our faith, we invite all to "come unto Christ."¹

As a new convert to the Church, I experienced a spiritual rescue through the saving hands of a faithful member of the Church. I grew up in Matsumoto, Japan, close to where the Nagano Winter Olympics were held. My hometown looks very much like Salt Lake City, a valley surrounded by beautiful mountains. When I was 17 years old, I met two American missionaries, Elder Carter and Elder Hayashi. Though our ages were only two or three years apart, the elders had something wonderful that I had never felt before. They were diligent, cheerful, and filled with love and light. I was deeply impressed by their qualities, and I wanted to become like them. I listened to their message and decided to be baptized. My parents, who were Buddhist, strongly opposed my baptism. Through the help of the missionaries and the Lord, I received permission and miraculously was baptized.

The next year I entered the university in Yokohama. Living alone, far from my hometown and the people I knew, I

became lonely and strayed from the Church. One day I received a postcard from a Church member back home. She wrote that she had heard I was not attending Church meetings. She quoted a scripture and invited me to return to church. I was overwhelmed by the words of the scripture. This helped me realize that maybe I had lost something important, and I pondered and struggled for many days. This also caused me to remember a promise the missionaries had made to me: "If you read the Book of Mormon and ask in fervent prayer if the promise found in Moroni is true, you will know the truth through the power of the Holy Ghost."²

I realized that I was not praying with all of my heart and decided to do so. One morning I woke up early, knelt in my small apartment, and prayed sincerely. To my surprise, the confirmation of the Holy Ghost came upon me as promised. My heart burned, my body shook, and I was filled with joy. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, I learned that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, live and that They





truly appeared to Joseph Smith. I made a commitment in my heart to repent and faithfully follow Jesus Christ for the rest of my life.

This spiritual experience changed my life completely! I decided to serve a mission out of gratitude to the Lord and to the Church member who rescued me. Following my mission, I was sealed in the temple to a wonderful girl, and we have been blessed with four children. Not coincidentally, this is the same girl who saved me by sending a postcard to that lonely apartment in Yokohama many years ago. I remain ever grateful for the mercy of the Lord and the help of this Church member, who invited me to once again come unto Christ.³

I know many of you privately extend your loving and saving hands each day. This includes a faithful Relief Society sister who cares not only for the sisters whom she is assigned to visit teach but also any sisters who are sick or otherwise in need of help. She visits often and for years has strengthened the faith of many. I reflect on a bishop who often visited the widows and widowers

in his ward. This pattern of help continued for many years after his release.

I know a priesthood leader who takes time with a young man who has lost his father. He joins with him in activities, teaches him the gospel, and gives advice the way his father would. Another family rejoices in sharing the gospel. The parents and children each testify of the gospel to those around them and are loved by many.

As part of a Primary activity, my five-year-old granddaughter places a popcorn seed in a large glass bottle each time she does a good turn. She sings this Primary song in a loud voice as she looks for good things to do each day: “Follow the prophet, follow the prophet, Follow the prophet; he knows the way.”⁴

I do not have time to tell you about all the good things I see Church members do. They follow the counsel of the prophet—not out of duty or responsibility but of their own free will, anonymously and joyfully.

Sometimes we feel that we are weak and lack the strength to rescue others, but the Lord reminds us,

“Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40).

I close with a quote by President Thomas S. Monson: “My brothers and sisters, we are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us.”⁵

May we follow the counsel and example of the prophet and each day seek out those in need, that we might be the hands of the Lord in helping and saving His children, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. See Moroni 10:4–5.
3. See Matthew 11:28.
4. “Follow the Prophet,” *Children’s Songbook*, 110–11.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 86.



By Elder Bruce A. Carlson
Of the Seventy

When the Lord Commands

Faithful obedience, regardless of the apparent size of the task, will bring the Lord's guidance, assistance, and peace.

The story is told of two outdoor enthusiasts who hired a bush plane to fly them to a remote lake for their annual fishing trip. Following a successful outing, the pilot returned to retrieve them. However, he quickly informed the fishermen that his small plane would not support them, their equipment, and the added weight of the fish they had caught. A second flight would be required.

Now, the sportsmen were not interested in paying for a second round-trip. So after a promise to pack tightly and a small bonus payment, the pilot reluctantly agreed to attempt the flight.

The fishermen grinned knowingly as the pilot forced the aircraft into the air. However, seconds later the plane stalled and crashed into a large, flat swampy area at the end of the lake.

The plane had stalled as it flew because of a well-known phenomenon called “ground effect.” Ground effect is created when air is compressed between the aircraft’s wings and the earth’s surface—when they are in close proximity. In this case, as the bush plane inched its way upward out of ground effect, it was required to fly

on its own power, which it simply could not do.

Fortunately there were no serious injuries, and after regaining their senses, one of the fishermen asked the other, “What happened?” The second replied, “We crashed on takeoff—about a hundred yards (91 m) from where we ended up last year!”

Like the two sportsmen, occasionally we believe that there must be an easier way, a shortcut or modification of the Lord’s commandments that will accommodate our individual circumstances. Thoughts such as these fail to acknowledge that strict obedience to God’s laws brings His blessings and failure to abide by His laws leads to foreseeable consequences.

At the time of his appointment as President of the Church, Harold B. Lee said: “The safety of the Church lies in the members keeping the commandments. . . . As they keep the commandments, blessings will come.”¹

When we choose to disobey a commandment, it is usually because (1) we have convinced ourselves that the commandment does not apply to us; (2) we do not believe that it is important; or (3) we are certain that it is too difficult to obey.

1. This Commandment Doesn’t Apply to Me

During the closing years of King Solomon’s reign, the Lord informed him through His prophet, “I will . . . rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.”²

Shortly thereafter, the prophet Ahijah identified that servant as Jeroboam, an “industrious” man whom Solomon had made “ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.”³ Jeroboam’s duties required him to travel from the mountains of Ephraim, where he lived, to the capital of Jerusalem. During one of those trips, Ahijah met him along the road. Through Ahijah, the Lord said, “I will . . . give ten tribes to thee.”⁴ He also instructed Jeroboam, “If thou wilt . . . walk in my ways . . . to keep my statutes and my commandments, . . . I will be with thee . . . and will give Israel unto thee.”⁵

After hearing of Ahijah’s prophecy, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, so Jeroboam fled to Egypt.⁶ Upon Solomon’s death Jeroboam returned from exile to the northern part of Israel and began to lead the northern ten tribes.⁷

However, Jeroboam’s plan to rule the kingdom involved a mixture of good and evil. He established Shechem as the nation’s capital, a city of great religious significance to his people. But sadly he introduced satanic rituals into their worship.⁸

Jeroboam convinced himself that some of God’s commandments were not applicable to him. As a result of his actions, all of his descendants were slain, and because of the heathen practices he had introduced into their sacred ordinances, the ten tribes of Israel were eventually driven from their inheritance.⁹

Just as flying out of ground effect

with more weight than an aircraft's wings can sustain will lead to disastrous consequences, our partial or selective compliance with God's laws will fail to bring the full blessings of obedience.

2. This Commandment Is Not Important

Decades later Naaman, a Syrian war hero, "a mighty man in valour,"¹⁰ traveled from his native country to Israel and approached the king, Jehoram, to be healed of leprosy.¹¹

Naaman was directed to the prophet Elisha. "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, . . . and thou shalt be clean."¹²

Despite this prophetic promise to be cured, Naaman was offended that Elisha did not greet him in person and even more insulted with the prophet's direction to wash seven times in the small and muddy Jordan River. His pride demanded something more noteworthy and grand, something matching his stature and place in the community and nation.

Fortunately for Naaman, his servants convinced him that regardless of what the prophet asked him to do, if obeyed, it would bring the Lord's blessings. Naaman washed himself in the Jordan River as directed and, as a result of his obedience, was cured of his leprosy.¹³

Obedience to the Lord's commands, in spite of how trivial or unimportant we believe them to be, will surely bring His promised blessings.

3. This Commandment Is Just Too Hard

Following the Lord's command, the prophet Lehi led his family into the wilderness. During the first few days of the journey, Lehi instructed his son Lemuel to be "firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the



commandments of the Lord!"¹⁴

However, when the prophetic requirement came to return to Jerusalem to retrieve the brass plates, containing a "record of the Jews,"¹⁵ the two oldest boys rebelled, saying, "It is a hard thing."¹⁶

Despite his older brothers' murmuring, Nephi's faith in and obedience to the Lord's commands led to obtaining those brass plates. A nation was built, a language was preserved, and the gospel of Jesus Christ was taught for generations to come.

At times we may rationalize that the Lord will understand our disobedience because our special circumstances make adherence to His laws difficult, embarrassing, or even painful. However, faithful obedience, regardless of the apparent size of the task, will bring the Lord's guidance, assistance, and peace.

The Prophet Joseph Smith petitioned the Lord on two occasions,

asking if a prominent friend, Martin Harris, could take the first 116 handwritten pages of translated material from the book of Lehi from Harmony, Pennsylvania, back to Palmyra. Each time, the Lord counseled Joseph to avoid entrusting the manuscript to Mr. Harris.

Martin was seeking to use the translated material as evidence to stop his associates from spreading rumors about his friendship with Joseph Smith. On the third request the Lord granted Joseph's appeal.¹⁷

Martin lost the manuscript, and as a result the plates were taken from the Prophet Joseph Smith for an extended period. This was a painful lesson for the Prophet Joseph, who said, "I made this my rule: *When the Lord commands, do it.*"¹⁸ This should and can be our rule as well.

The Lord's response when we obey His commandments is sure. He has promised us, "If you keep my

commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life.”¹⁹

Additionally He has counseled us, “I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and *delight* to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.”²⁰

Obedience to the Lord’s commandments provides us confidence in our chosen path, qualifies us for His guidance and direction as we pursue our efforts, and offers us the potential to become like our Savior, Jesus Christ, and return to our Father’s presence.

It is my prayer that each day will find us striving to be more obedient to the laws, ordinances, and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ in order that He may more fully bless our lives.

I testify that obedience to God’s commands brings the blessings of heaven; that our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, live; that the Book of Mormon is the word of God; and that President Thomas S. Monson is the Lord’s prophet for our day, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Harold B. Lee, quoted in Stephen W. Gibson, “Presidency Meets the Press,” *Church News*, July 15, 1972, 3.
2. 1 Kings 11:11.
3. 1 Kings 11:28.
4. 1 Kings 11:31.
5. 1 Kings 11:38.
6. See 1 Kings 11:40.
7. See 1 Kings 12:2–3, 20.
8. See 1 Kings 12:25–30.
9. See 1 Kings 14:10, 15–16.
10. 2 Kings 5:1.
11. See 2 Kings 5:5–6.
12. 2 Kings 5:10.
13. See 2 Kings 5:11–14.
14. 1 Nephi 2:10.
15. 1 Nephi 3:3.
16. 1 Nephi 3:5.
17. See *History of the Church*, 1:20–21; Doctrine and Covenants 3; 10.
18. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 160.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 76:5; emphasis added.



By Elder David A. Bednar

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Watching with All Perseverance

A spiritual early warning system . . . can help parents in Zion to be watchful and discerning concerning their children.

Recently I was driving my car as drops of rain from a thunderstorm began to fall on the windshield. On the side of the road, an electronic sign displayed a timely warning: “Standing Water Ahead.” The surface on which I was driving appeared to be quite safe. But this vital information enabled me to prepare for a potential hazard I had not expected and could not yet see. As I continued toward my destination, I slowed down and watched carefully for additional signs of danger.

Early warning signals are evident in many aspects of our lives. For example, a fever can be a first symptom of sickness or disease. Various financial and labor market indicators are used to forecast future trends in local and national economies. And depending upon the area of the world in which we live, we may receive flood, avalanche, hurricane, tsunami, tornado, or winter storm warnings.

We also are blessed by spiritual early warning signals as a source of protection and direction in our lives. Recall how Noah was alerted by God of things not yet seen, and he “prepared [the] ark to the saving of his house” (Hebrews 11:7).

Lehi was warned to leave Jerusalem and take his family into the wilderness because the people to whom he had declared repentance sought to kill him (see 1 Nephi 2:1–2).

The Savior Himself was spared through an angelic warning: “Behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him” (Matthew 2:13).

Consider the language of the Lord in the revelation known as the Word of Wisdom: “In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in





the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation" (D&C 89:4).

Spiritual warnings should lead to increasingly vigilant watching. You and I live in "a day of warning" (D&C 63:58). And because we have been and will be warned, we need to be, as the Apostle Paul admonished, "watching . . . with all perseverance" (Ephesians 6:18).

I pray for the guidance of the Holy Ghost as I describe a spiritual early warning system that can help parents in Zion to be watchful and discerning concerning their children. This early warning system applies to children of all ages and contains three basic components: (1) reading and talking about the Book of Mormon with your children, (2) bearing testimony of gospel truths spontaneously with your children, and (3) inviting children as gospel learners to act and not merely be acted upon. Parents who do these things faithfully will be blessed to recognize early signals of spiritual growth in or challenges with their children and be better prepared to

receive inspiration to strengthen and help those children.

**Component Number One:
Reading and Talking about the
Book of Mormon**

The Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the Savior's gospel and is the only book the Lord Himself has testified to be true (see D&C 17:6; see also Russell M. Nelson, "A Testimony of the Book of Mormon," *Liabona*, Jan. 2000, 84; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 70). Indeed, the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.

The convincing and converting powers of the Book of Mormon come from both a central focus upon the Lord Jesus Christ and the inspired plainness and clarity of its teachings. Nephi declared, "My soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn" (2 Nephi 25:4). The root word *plain* in this verse does not refer to things that are ordinary or simple; rather, it denotes instruction that is clear and easily understood.

The Book of Mormon is the most correct of any book on earth because it centers upon the Truth (see John

14:6; 1 Nephi 13:40), even Jesus Christ, and restores the plain and precious things that have been taken away from the true gospel (see 1 Nephi 13:26, 28–29, 32, 34–35, 40). The unique combination of these two factors—a focus on the Savior and the plainness of the teachings—powerfully invites the confirming witness of the third member of the Godhead, even the Holy Ghost. Consequently, the Book of Mormon speaks to the spirit and to the heart of the reader like no other volume of scripture.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that abiding by the precepts found in the Book of Mormon would help us "get nearer to God" than any other book (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 64). Regular reading of and talking about the Book of Mormon invite the power to resist temptation and to produce feelings of love within our families. And discussions about the doctrines and principles in the Book of Mormon provide opportunities for parents to observe their children, to listen to them, to learn from them, and to teach them.



Youth of all ages, even infants, can and do respond to the distinctive spirit of the Book of Mormon. Children may not understand all of the words and stories, but they certainly can feel the “familiar spirit” described by Isaiah (Isaiah 29:4; see also 2 Nephi 26:16). And the questions a child asks, the observations a child shares, and the discussions that occur provide crucial spiritual early warning signals. Importantly, such conversations can help parents to discern what their children are learning, thinking, and feeling about the truths contained in this sacred volume of scripture, as well as the difficulties they may be facing.

Component Number Two: Bearing Testimony Spontaneously

Testimony is personal knowledge, based upon the witness of the Holy Ghost, that certain facts of eternal significance are true. The Holy Ghost is the messenger for the Father and the Son and the teacher of and guide to all truth (see John 14:26; 16:13). Thus, “by the power of the Holy Ghost [we] may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

The knowledge and spiritual conviction we receive from the Holy Ghost are the result of revelation. Seeking for and obtaining these blessings require a sincere heart, real intent, and faith in Christ (see Moroni 10:4). A personal testimony

also brings responsibility and accountability.

Parents should be vigilant and spiritually attentive to spontaneously occurring opportunities to bear testimony to their children. Such occasions need not be programmed, scheduled, or scripted. In fact, the less regimented such testimony sharing is, the greater the likelihood for edification and lasting impact. “Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say; but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man” (D&C 84:85).

For example, a naturally occurring family conversation at dinner may be the perfect setting for a parent to recount and testify of specific blessings he or she received during the course of relatively routine activities that day. And a testimony need not always begin with the phrase “I bear you my testimony.” Our witness can be declared as simply as “I know I was blessed with inspiration at work today” or “The truth in this scripture always has been a powerful source of direction for me.” Similar opportunities to bear testimony also can arise while traveling together in a car or bus or in a multitude of other settings.

The reactions of children to such impromptu testimony bearing and their eagerness or reluctance to

participate are potent sources of spiritual early warning signals. A child’s expression about a lesson learned in family scripture study or a candid statement of concern about a gospel principle or practice can be most illuminating and help parents better understand a child’s specific question or needs. Such discussions—especially when parents are as eager to listen intently as they are to talk—can foster a supportive and secure environment in the home and encourage ongoing communication about difficult topics.

Component Number Three: Inviting Children to Act

In the grand division of all of God’s creations, there are “things to act and things to be acted upon” (2 Nephi 2:14). As children of our Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with the gift of moral agency, the capacity and power of independent action. Endowed with agency, we are agents, and we primarily are to act and not merely be acted upon—especially as we “seek learning . . . by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).

As gospel learners, we should be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22). Our hearts are opened to the influence of the Holy Ghost as we properly exercise agency and act in accordance with correct principles—and we thereby invite His teaching and testifying power. Parents have the sacred responsibility to help children to act and to seek learning by faith. And a child is never too young to take part in this pattern of learning.

Giving a man a fish feeds him for one meal. Teaching a man to fish feeds him for a lifetime. As parents and gospel instructors, you and I are not in the business of distributing fish; rather, our work is to help our children learn “to fish” and to become

spiritually steadfast. This vital objective is best accomplished as we encourage our children to act in accordance with correct principles—as we help them to learn by doing. “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God” (John 7:17). Such learning requires spiritual, mental, and physical exertion and not just passive reception.

Inviting children as gospel learners to act and not merely be acted upon builds on reading and talking about the Book of Mormon and bearing testimony spontaneously in the home. Imagine, for example, a family home evening in which children are invited and expected to come prepared to ask questions about what they are reading and learning in the Book of Mormon—or about an issue that recently was emphasized in a gospel discussion or spontaneous testimony in the home. And imagine further that the children ask questions the parents are not prepared adequately to answer. Some parents might be apprehensive about such an unstructured approach to home evening. But the best family home evenings are not necessarily the product of preprepared, purchased, or downloaded packets of outlines and visual aids. What a glorious opportunity for family members to search the scriptures together and to be tutored by the Holy Ghost. “For the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; . . . and they did all labor, every man according to his strength” (Alma 1:26).

Are you and I helping our children become agents who act and seek learning by study and by faith, or have we trained our children to wait to be taught and acted upon? Are we as parents primarily giving our children the equivalent of spiritual fish to eat, or are we consistently helping them to



act, to learn for themselves, and to stand steadfast and immovable? Are we helping our children become anxiously engaged in asking, seeking, and knocking? (See 3 Nephi 14:7.)

The spiritual understanding you and I have been blessed to receive, and which has been confirmed as true in our hearts, simply cannot be given to our children. The tuition of diligence and of learning by study and also by faith must be paid to obtain and personally “own” such knowledge. Only in this way can what is known in the mind also be felt in the heart. Only in this way can a child move beyond relying upon the spiritual knowledge and experiences of parents and adults and claim those blessings for himself or herself. Only in this way can our children be prepared spiritually for the challenges of mortality.

Promise and Testimony

I bear witness that parents who consistently read and talk about the Book of Mormon with their children, who share testimony spontaneously with their children, and who invite children as gospel learners to act and not merely be acted upon will be blessed with eyes that can see afar off (see Moses 6:27) and with ears that can hear the sound of the trumpet (see Ezekiel 33:2–16). The spiritual discernment and inspiration you will receive from the combination of these three holy habits will enable you to stand as watchmen on the tower for your families—“watching . . . with all perseverance” (Ephesians 6:18)—to the blessing of your immediate family and your future posterity. I so promise and testify in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul

May the joy of our fidelity to the highest and best within us be ours as we keep our love and our marriages, our society and our souls, as pure as they were meant to be.

As Sister Holland and I recently disembarked at a distant airport, three beautiful young women getting off the same flight hurried up to greet us. They identified themselves as members of the Church, which wasn't too surprising because those not of our faith usually don't rush up to us in airports. In a conversation we hadn't expected, we soon learned through their tears that all three of these women were recently divorced, that in each case their husbands had been unfaithful to them, and in each case the seeds of alienation and transgression had begun with an attraction to pornography.

With that stark introduction to my message today—one it is challenging for me to give—I feel much like Jacob of old, who said, “It grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech . . . before . . . many . . . whose feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate.”¹ But bold we need to be. Perhaps it was the father in me or maybe the grandfather, but the tears in those young women's eyes brought tears to mine and Sister Holland's, and the questions they asked left me

asking, “Why is there so much moral decay around us, and why are so many individuals and families, including some in the Church, falling victim to it, being tragically scarred by it?”

But, of course, I knew at least part of the answer to my own question. Most days we all find ourselves assaulted by immoral messages of some kind flooding in on us from every angle. The darker sides of the movie, television, and music industry step further and further into offensive language and sexual misconduct. Tragically, the same computer and Internet service that allows me to do my family history and prepare those names for temple work could, without filters and controls, allow my children or grandchildren access to a global

cesspool of perceptions that could blast a crater in their brains forever.

Remember that those young wives said their husbands' infidelity began with an attraction to pornography, but immoral activity is not just a man's problem, and husbands aren't the only ones offending. The compromise available at the click of a mouse—including what can happen in a chat room's virtual encounter—is no respecter of persons, male or female, young or old, married or single. And just to make sure that temptation is ever more accessible, the adversary is busy extending his coverage, as they say in the industry, to cell phones, video games, and MP3 players.

If we stop chopping at the branches of this problem and strike more directly at the root of the tree, not surprisingly we find lust lurking furtively there. *Lust* is an unsavory word, and it is certainly an unsavory topic for me to address, but there is good reason why in some traditions it is known as the most deadly of the seven deadly sins.²

Why is lust such a deadly sin? Well, in addition to the completely Spirit-destroying impact it has upon our souls, I think it is a sin because it defiles the highest and holiest relationship God gives us in mortality—the love that a man and a woman have for each other and the desire that couple has to bring children into a family intended to be forever. Someone said once that true love must include the idea of permanence. True love endures. But lust changes as quickly as it can turn a pornographic page or glance at yet another potential object for gratification walking by, male or female. True love we are absolutely giddy about—as I am about Sister Holland; we shout it from the rooftops. But lust is characterized by shame and stealth and is almost





pathologically clandestine—the later and darker the hour the better, with a double-bolted door just in case. Love makes us instinctively reach out to God and other people. Lust, on the other hand, is anything but godly and celebrates self-indulgence. Love comes with open hands and open heart; lust comes with only an open appetite.

These are just some of the reasons that prostituting the true meaning of love—either with imagination or another person—is so destructive. It destroys that which is second only to our faith in God—namely, faith in those we love. It shakes the pillars of trust upon which present—or future—love is built, and it takes a long time to rebuild that trust when it is lost. Push that idea far enough—whether it be as personal as a family member or as public as elected officials, business leaders, media stars, and athletic heroes—and soon enough on the building once constructed to house morally responsible societies, we can hang a sign saying, “This property is vacant.”³

Whether we be single or married, young or old, let’s talk for a moment about how to guard against temptation in whatever form it may present itself. We may not be able to cure

all of society’s ills today, but let’s speak of what some personal actions can be.

- Above all, start by separating yourself from people, materials, and circumstances that will harm you. As those battling something like alcoholism know, the pull of proximity can be fatal. So too in moral matters. Like Joseph in the presence of Potiphar’s wife,⁴ just run—run as far away as you can get from whatever or whoever it is that beguiles you. And please, when fleeing the scene of temptation, do *not* leave a forwarding address.
- Acknowledge that people bound by the chains of true addictions often need more help than self-help, and that may include you. Seek that help and welcome it. Talk to your bishop. Follow his counsel. Ask for a priesthood blessing. Use the Church’s Family Services offerings or seek other suitable professional help. Pray without ceasing. Ask for angels to help you.
- Along with filters on computers and a lock on affections, remember that the only real control in life is self-control. Exercise more control over even the marginal moments that

confront you. If a TV show is indecent, turn it off. If a movie is crude, walk out. If an improper relationship is developing, sever it. Many of these influences, at least initially, may not technically be evil, but they can blunt our judgment, dull our spirituality, and lead to something that could be evil. An old proverb says that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step,⁵ so watch your step.

- Like thieves in the night, unwelcome thoughts can and do seek entrance to our minds. But we don’t have to throw open the door, serve them tea and crumpets, and then tell them where the silverware is kept! (You shouldn’t be serving tea anyway.) Throw the rascals out! Replace lewd thoughts with hopeful images and joyful memories; picture the faces of those who love you and would be shattered if you let them down. More than one man has been saved from sin or stupidity by remembering the face of his mother, his wife, or his child waiting somewhere for him at home. Whatever thoughts you have, make sure they are welcome in your heart by invitation only. As an ancient poet once said, let will be your reason.⁶



- Cultivate and be where the Spirit of the Lord is. Make sure that includes your own home or apartment, dictating the kind of art, music, and literature you keep there. If you are endowed, go to the temple as often as your circumstances allow. Remember that the temple arms you “with [God’s] power, . . . [puts His] glory . . . round about [you], and [gives His] angels . . . charge over [you].”⁷ And when you leave the temple, remember the symbols you take with you, never to be set aside or forgotten.

Most people in trouble end up crying, “What was I thinking?” Well, whatever they were thinking, they weren’t thinking of Christ. Yet, as members of His Church, we pledge every Sunday of our lives to take upon ourselves His name and promise to “always remember him.”⁸ So let us work a little harder at remembering Him—especially that He has “borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows . . . , [that] he was bruised for our iniquities . . . ; and with his stripes we are healed.”⁹ Surely it would guide our actions in a dramatic way if we remembered that every time we transgress, we hurt not only those we love, but we also hurt Him, who so

dearly loves us. But if we do sin, however serious that sin may be, we can be rescued by that same majestic figure, He who bears the only name given under heaven whereby *any* man or woman can be saved.¹⁰ When confronting our transgressions and our souls are harrowed up with true pain, may we all echo the repentant Alma and utter his life-changing cry: “O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me.”¹¹

Brothers and sisters, I love you. President Thomas S. Monson and the Brethren love you. Far more importantly, your Father in Heaven loves you. I have tried to speak today of love—real love, true love, respect for it, the proper portrayal of it in the wholesome societies mankind has known, the sanctity of it between a married man and woman, and the families that love ultimately creates. I’ve tried to speak of the redeeming manifestation of love, charity personified, which comes to us through the grace of Christ Himself. I have of necessity also spoken of *el diablo*, the diabolical one, the father of lies and lust, who will do anything he can to counterfeit true love, to profane and desecrate true love wherever and whenever he encounters it. And I

have spoken of his desire to destroy us if he can.

When we face such temptations in our time, we must declare, as young Nephi did in his, “[I will] give place no more for the enemy of my soul.”¹² We can reject the evil one. If we want it dearly and deeply enough, that enemy can and will be rebuked by the redeeming power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, I promise you that the light of His everlasting gospel can and will again shine brightly where you feared life had gone hopelessly, helplessly dark. May the joy of our fidelity to the highest and best within us be ours as we keep our love and our marriages, our society and our souls, as pure as they were meant to be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Jacob 2:7.
2. See, for example, Henry Fairlie’s excellent *The Seven Deadly Sins Today* (1978).
3. See Fairlie, *The Seven Deadly Sins Today*, 175.
4. See Genesis 39:1–13.
5. Lao Tzu, in John Bartlett, comp., *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. (1968), 74.
6. See Juvenal, *The Satires*, satire 6, line 223.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 109:22.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 20:77; see also verse 79.
9. Isaiah 53:4–5.
10. See Acts 4:12.
11. Alma 36:18.
12. 2 Nephi 4:28.



By Elder Dallin H. Oaks
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Healing the Sick

We have this priesthood power, and we should all be prepared to use it properly.

In these times of worldwide turmoil, more and more persons of faith are turning to the Lord for blessings of comfort and healing. I wish to speak to this audience of priesthood holders about healing the sick—by medical science, by prayers of faith, and by priesthood blessings.

I.

Latter-day Saints believe in applying the best available scientific knowledge and techniques. We use nutrition, exercise, and other practices to preserve health, and we enlist the help of healing practitioners, such as physicians and surgeons, to restore health.

The use of medical science is not at odds with our prayers of faith and our reliance on priesthood blessings. When a person requested a priesthood blessing, Brigham Young would ask, “Have you used any remedies?” To those who said no because “we wish the Elders to lay hands upon us, and we have faith that we shall be healed,” President Young replied: “That is very inconsistent according to my faith. If we are sick, and ask the Lord to heal us, and to do all for us that is necessary to be done, according to my understanding of the Gospel of salvation, I might as well ask the Lord to cause my wheat

and corn to grow, without my plowing the ground and casting in the seed. It appears consistent to me to apply every remedy that comes within the range of my knowledge, and [then] to ask my Father in Heaven . . . to sanctify that application to the healing of my body.”¹

Of course we don’t wait until all other methods are exhausted before we pray in faith or give priesthood blessings for healing. In emergencies, prayers and blessings come first. Most often we pursue all efforts simultaneously. This follows the scriptural

teachings that we should “pray always” (D&C 90:24) and that all things should be done in wisdom and order.²

II.

We know that the prayer of faith, uttered alone or in our homes or places of worship, can be effective to heal the sick. Many scriptures refer to the power of faith in the healing of an individual. The Apostle James taught that we should “pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” adding, “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). When the woman who touched Jesus was healed, He told her, “Thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:22).³ Similarly, the Book of Mormon teaches that the Lord “worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men” (Moroni 10:7).

A recent nationwide survey found that nearly 8 in 10 Americans “believe that miracles still occur today as [they did] in ancient times.” A third of those surveyed said they had “experienced or witnessed a divine healing.”⁴ Many Latter-day Saints have experienced the



power of faith in healing the sick. We also hear examples of this among people of faith in other churches. A Texas newspaperman described such a miracle. When a five-year-old girl breathed with difficulty and became feverish, her parents rushed her to the hospital. By the time she arrived there, her kidneys and lungs had shut down, her fever was 107 degrees, and her body was bright red and covered with purple lesions. The doctors said she was dying of toxic shock syndrome, cause unknown. As word spread to family and friends, God-fearing people began praying for her, and a special prayer service was held in their Protestant congregation in Waco, Texas. Miraculously, she suddenly returned from the brink of death and was released from the hospital in a little over a week. Her grandfather wrote, "She is living proof that God does answer prayers and work miracles."⁵

Truly, as the Book of Mormon teaches, God "manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, working mighty miracles . . . among the children of men according to their faith" (2 Nephi 26:13).

III.

For this audience—adults who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood and

young men who will soon receive this power—I will concentrate my remarks on healing blessings involving the power of the priesthood. We have this priesthood power, and we should all be prepared to use it properly. Current increases in natural disasters and financial challenges show that we will need this power even more in the future than in the past.

Many scriptures teach that the servants of the Lord "shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:18).⁶ Miracles happen when the authority of the priesthood is used to bless the sick. I have experienced these miracles. As a boy and as a man I have seen healings as miraculous as any recorded in the scriptures, and so have many of you.

There are five parts to the use of priesthood authority to bless the sick: (1) the anointing, (2) the sealing of the anointing, (3) faith, (4) the words of the blessing, and (5) the will of the Lord.

Anointing

The Old Testament frequently mentions anointing with oil as part of a blessing conferred by priesthood authority.⁷ Anointings were declared to be for sanctification⁸ and perhaps can also be seen as symbolic of the blessings to be poured out from heaven

as a result of this sacred act.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus's Apostles "anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6:13). The book of James teaches the role of anointing in connection with the other elements in a healing blessing by priesthood authority:

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:14–15).

Sealing the Anointing

When someone has been anointed by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the anointing is sealed by that same authority. To seal something means to affirm it, to make it binding for its intended purpose. When elders anoint a sick person and seal the anointing, they open the windows of heaven for the Lord to pour forth the blessing He wills for the person afflicted.

President Brigham Young taught: "When I lay hands on the sick, I expect the healing power and influence of God to pass through me to the patient, and the disease to give way. . . . When we are prepared, when we are holy vessels before the Lord, a stream of power from the Almighty can pass through the tabernacle of the administrator to the system of the patient, and the sick are made whole."⁹

Although we know of many cases where persons blessed by priesthood authority have been healed, we rarely refer to these healings in public meetings because modern revelation cautions us not to "boast [ourselves] of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation" (D&C 84:73).





Faith

Faith is essential for healing by the powers of heaven. The Book of Mormon even teaches that “if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them” (Ether 12:12).¹⁰ In a notable talk on administering to the sick, President Spencer W. Kimball said: “The need of faith is often underestimated. The ill one and the family often seem to depend wholly on the power of the priesthood and the gift of healing that they hope the administering brethren may have, whereas the greater responsibility is with him who is blessed. . . . The major element is the faith of the individual when that person is conscious and accountable. ‘Thy faith hath made thee whole’ [Matthew 9:22] was repeated so often by the Master that it almost became a chorus.”¹¹

President Kimball even suggested that “too frequent administrations may be an indication of lack of faith or of the ill one trying to pass the responsibility for faith development to the elders rather than self.” He told about a faithful sister who received a priesthood blessing. When asked the next day if she wished to be administered

to again, she replied: “No, I have been anointed and administered to. The ordinance has been performed. It is up to me now to claim my blessing through my faith.”¹²

Words of Blessing

Another part of a priesthood blessing is the words of blessing spoken by the elder after he seals the anointing. These words can be very important, but their content is not essential and they are not recorded on the records of the Church. In some priesthood blessings—like a patriarchal blessing—the words spoken are the essence of the blessing. But in a healing blessing it is the other parts of the blessing—the anointing, the sealing, faith, and the will of the Lord—that are the essential elements.

Ideally, the elder who officiates will be so in tune with the Spirit of the Lord that he will know and declare the will of the Lord in the words of the blessing. Brigham Young taught priesthood holders, “It is your privilege and duty to live so that you know when the word of the Lord is spoken to you and when the mind of the Lord is revealed to you.”¹³ When that

happens, the spoken blessing is fulfilled literally and miraculously. On some choice occasions I have experienced that certainty of inspiration in a healing blessing and have known that what I was saying was the will of the Lord. However, like most who officiate in healing blessings, I have often struggled with uncertainty on the words I should say. For a variety of causes, every elder experiences increases and decreases in his level of sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit. Every elder who gives a blessing is subject to influence by what he desires for the person afflicted. Each of these and other mortal imperfections can influence the words we speak.

Fortunately, the words spoken in a healing blessing are not essential to its healing effect. If faith is sufficient and if the Lord wills it, the afflicted person will be healed or blessed whether the officiator speaks those words or not. Conversely, if the officiator yields to personal desire or inexperience and gives commands or words of blessing in excess of what the Lord chooses to bestow according to the faith of the individual, those words will not be fulfilled. Consequently, brethren, no



I felt that same trust in the words of the father of another choice girl whose life was taken by cancer in her teen years. He declared, “Our family’s faith is in Jesus Christ and is not dependent on outcomes.” Those teachings ring true to me. We do all that we can for the healing of a loved one, and then we trust in the Lord for the outcome.

I testify of the power of the priesthood of God, of the power of the prayer of faith, and of the truth of these principles. Most of all, I testify of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose servants we are, whose Resurrection gives us the assurance of immortality, and whose Atonement gives us the opportunity for eternal life, the greatest of all the gifts of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 163.
2. See Mosiah 4:27.
3. See also Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43.
4. *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Beliefs and Practices: Diverse and Politically Relevant* (The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, June 2008), 34, 54, <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports#>.
5. See Steve Blow, “Sometimes, ‘Miracles’ Are Just That,” *Dallas Morning News*, Jan. 30, 2000, 31A.
6. See also Matthew 9:18; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32–35; 16:18; Luke 4:40; Acts 9:12, 17; 28:8; Doctrine and Covenants 42:44, 48; 66:9.
7. See, for example, Exodus 28:41; 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; 2 Samuel 5:3.
8. See Leviticus 8:10–12.
9. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 252; see also Russell M. Nelson, “Neither Trust in the Arm of Flesh,” *Liabona*, Mar. 2010, 40; *Ensign*, Mar. 2010, 24; *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 474.
10. See also 1 Nephi 7:12; Doctrine and Covenants 35:9.
11. “President Kimball Speaks Out on Administration to the Sick,” *Tambuli*, Aug. 1982, 36–37; *New Era*, Oct. 1981, 47.
12. *Tambuli*, Aug. 1982, 36; *New Era*, Oct. 1981, 46–47.
13. *Teachings: Brigham Young*, 68.
14. See also 1 John 5:14; Helaman 10:5.

elder should ever hesitate to participate in a healing blessing because of fear that he will not know what to say. The words spoken in a healing blessing can edify and energize the faith of those who hear them, but the effect of the blessing is dependent upon faith and the Lord’s will, not upon the words spoken by the elder who officiated.

Will of the Lord

Young men and older men, please take special note of what I will say now. As we exercise the undoubted power of the priesthood of God and as we treasure His promise that He will hear and answer the prayer of faith, we must always remember that faith and the healing power of the priesthood cannot produce a result contrary to the will of Him whose priesthood it is. This principle is taught in the revelation directing that the elders of the Church shall lay their hands upon the sick. The Lord’s promise is that “he that hath faith in me to be healed, *and is not appointed unto death*, shall be healed” (D&C 42:48; emphasis added). Similarly, in another modern revelation the Lord declares

that when one “asketh according to the will of God . . . it is done even as he asketh” (D&C 46:30).¹⁴

From all of this we learn that even the servants of the Lord, exercising His divine power in a circumstance where there is sufficient faith to be healed, cannot give a priesthood blessing that will cause a person to be healed if that healing is not the will of the Lord.

As children of God, knowing of His great love and His ultimate knowledge of what is best for our eternal welfare, we trust in Him. The first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and faith means trust. I felt that trust in a talk my cousin gave at the funeral of a teenage girl who had died of a serious illness. He spoke these words, which first astonished me and then edified me: “I know it was the will of the Lord that she die. She had good medical care. She was given priesthood blessings. Her name was on the prayer roll in the temple. She was the subject of hundreds of prayers for her restoration to health. And I know that there is enough faith in this family that she would have been healed unless it was the will of the Lord to take her home at this time.”



By Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Of the Presidency of the Seventy

The Divine Call of a Missionary

The Lord needs every able young man to prepare and recommit, starting tonight, to be worthy of a call from the prophet of God to serve a mission.

Good evening, my dear brethren of the priesthood. Tonight I would like to speak about missionary service. I direct my comments to the vast army of young men who hold the Aaronic Priesthood who are gathered throughout the entire world and to their fathers, grandfathers, and priesthood leaders who watch over them.

Missionary work is a subject very close to my heart, as it is to every member of the eight Quorums of the Seventy, whom the Lord has appointed to go “before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.”¹ Missionary work is the lifeblood of the Church and the lifesaving blessing to all who accept its message.

When the Master ministered among men, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring, “I will make you fishers of men.”² The Lord extended those calls to humble men so that through them others would hear the truths of His gospel and come unto Him.

In June of 1837, the Prophet Joseph Smith called Heber C. Kimball, an Apostle, to go on a mission to

England. Elder Kimball’s call came as the two sat in the Kirtland Temple and Joseph spoke with divine authority: “Brother Heber, the Spirit of the Lord has whispered to me, ‘Let my servant Heber go to England and proclaim my gospel and open the door of salvation to that nation.’”³

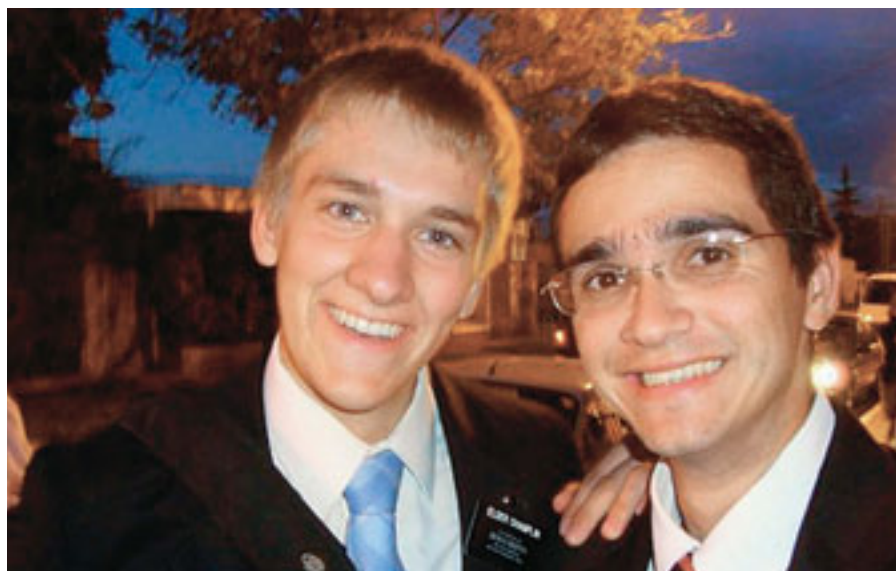
That whispering of the Spirit is an example of how the call comes to

servants of the Lord to send missionaries to their fields of labor.

Today missionaries go forth two by two as appointed by the Lord, carrying that same message, with the same divine call to serve from the prophet of God. Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has said of those called to serve: “The missionary opportunity of a lifetime is yours. The blessings of eternity await you. Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service.”⁴

The stage is yours, my dear Aaronic Priesthood boys. Are you ready and willing to play your part? The Lord needs every able young man to prepare and recommit, starting tonight, to be worthy of a call from the prophet of God to serve a mission.

I remember fondly our entire family’s great joy when two of our children received their calls to serve as full-time missionaries. Excitement and anticipation filled our hearts as they each opened their special letter from the prophet of God. Our daughter Jenessa was called to the Michigan Detroit



Buenos Aires, Argentina



the bishops and stake presidents, medical notes, and other issues relating to each missionary.

He then referred to another screen which displayed areas and missions across the world. Finally, as he was prompted by the Spirit, he would assign the missionary to his or her field of labor.

From others of the Twelve, I have learned that this general method is typical each week as Apostles of the Lord assign scores of missionaries to serve throughout the world.

Having served as a missionary in my own country in the Eastern States Mission a number of years ago, I was deeply moved by this experience. Also, having served as a mission president, I was grateful for a further witness in my heart that the missionaries I had received in New York City were sent to me by revelation.

After assigning a few missionaries, Elder Eyring turned to me as he pondered one particular missionary and said, “So, Brother Rasband, where do you think this missionary should go?” I was startled! I quietly suggested to Elder Eyring that I did not know and that I did not know I could know! He looked at me directly and simply said, “Brother Rasband, pay closer attention and you too can know!” With that, I pulled my chair a little closer to Elder Eyring and the computer screen, and I did pay much closer attention!

A couple of other times as the process moved along, Elder Eyring would turn to me and say, “Well, Brother Rasband, where do you feel this missionary should go?” I would name a particular mission, and Elder Eyring would look at me thoughtfully and say, “No, that’s not it!” He would then continue to assign the missionaries where he had felt prompted.

As we were nearing the completion

Mission, and our son, Christian, was called to the Russia Moscow South Mission. What humbling and thrilling experiences, all at the same time!

As Sister Rasband and I had the privilege of presiding over the New York New York North Mission several years ago, I marveled as the missionaries arrived in New York City.

As I interviewed them on their first day in the mission, I had a profound sense of gratitude for each missionary. I felt that their call to our mission was divinely designed for them and for me as their mission president.

After finishing our mission assignment, I was called by President Gordon B. Hinckley to serve as a Seventy in the Church. Part of my early training as a new General Authority included an opportunity to sit with members of the Twelve as they assigned missionaries to serve in one of the 300-plus missions of this great Church.

With the encouragement and permission of President Henry B. Eyring, I would like to relate to you an experience, very special to me, which I had with him several years ago when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Each Apostle holds the keys of the kingdom and exercises them at the direction and assignment of the

President of the Church. Elder Eyring was assigning missionaries to their fields of labor, and as part of my training, I was invited to observe.

I joined Elder Eyring early one morning in a room where several large computer screens had been prepared for the session. There was also a staff member from the Missionary Department who had been assigned to assist us that day.

First, we knelt together in prayer. I remember Elder Eyring using very sincere words, asking the Lord to bless him to know “perfectly” where the missionaries should be assigned. The word “perfectly” said much about the faith that Elder Eyring exhibited that day.

As the process began, a picture of the missionary to be assigned would come up on one of the computer screens. As each picture appeared, to me it was as if the missionary were in the room with us. Elder Eyring would then greet the missionary with his kind and endearing voice: “Good morning, Elder Reier or Sister Yang. How are you today?”

He told me that in his own mind he liked to think of where the missionaries would conclude their mission. This would aid him to know where they were to be assigned. Elder Eyring would then study the comments from

of that assignment meeting, a picture of a certain missionary appeared on the screen. I had the strongest prompting, the strongest of the morning, that the missionary we had before us was to be assigned to Japan. I did not know that Elder Eyring was going to ask me on this one, but amazingly he did. I rather tentatively and humbly said to him, “Japan?” Elder Eyring responded immediately, “Yes, let’s go there.” And up on the computer screen the missions of Japan appeared. I instantly knew that the missionary was to go to the Japan Sapporo Mission.

Elder Eyring did not ask me the exact name of the mission, but he did assign that missionary to the Japan Sapporo Mission.

Privately in my heart I was deeply touched and sincerely grateful to the Lord for allowing me to experience the prompting to know where that missionary should go.

At the end of the meeting Elder Eyring bore his witness to me of the love of the Savior, which He has for each missionary assigned to go out into the world and preach the restored gospel. He said that it is by the great love of the Savior that His servants know where these wonderful young men and women, senior missionaries, and senior couple missionaries are to serve. I had a further witness that morning that every missionary called in this Church, and assigned or reassigned to a particular mission, is called by revelation from the Lord God Almighty through one of these, His servants.

I conclude with the Lord’s words to the Whitmer brothers, who had a profound role in the early days of the Restoration. They were witnesses to the gold plates, and their signed testimonies are included at the front of every copy of the Book of Mormon. They were among the first band of

missionaries called by a prophet of God in 1829 to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the preface to section 14 of the Doctrine and Covenants, it states, “Three of the Whitmer sons, each having received a testimony as to the genuineness of the work, became deeply concerned over the matter of their individual duty.”

To John and Peter Whitmer Jr. the Lord said this: “For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you.”⁵

I suppose many of you young men have asked yourselves that same question. Here is the Lord’s answer: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you

may bring souls unto me, that you may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father.”⁶

At this time in your life, a mission call from the Lord, my young friends, is the most important work that you can do. Prepare now, live righteously, learn from your family and Church leaders, and come join with us in building the kingdom of God on earth—accept your divine appointment in “so great a cause.”⁷ This is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Luke 10:1.
2. Matthew 4:19.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 327.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “That All May Hear,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 49.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 15:4; 16:4.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 15:6; 16:6.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 128:22.





By David L. Beck
Young Men General President

The Magnificent Aaronic Priesthood

There is an urgency for you to fulfill your duty to God. I am confident that you will.

I am honored tonight to speak to the amazing young men of the Church. I have been blessed to meet many of you throughout the world. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

You face your challenges with extraordinary strength and courage. I express my love to you and the confidence I have in you.

You inspire the people around you more than you can imagine. Listen to the words of a young man who is not of our faith, trying to describe his friend who holds the Aaronic Priesthood: “I do notice something different about Luis. . . . This guy is nothing like . . . other people. It’s just something you see in him. . . . I don’t even know what it is, but he’s different than all of them. It’s just something you feel; it’s not [something] . . . you see visually. You just feel it.”

There is something very important that sets Luis and you apart from other young men. You have received the Aaronic Priesthood. It is a sacred gift, and many do not fully appreciate it. Tonight I will help you see how you can discover for yourselves the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

I. God Trusts You

When God entrusts you with His sacred priesthood, He shows great confidence in you. He knows He can trust you to use the priesthood to serve others, just as He has trusted other young men to do some of His most important work.

For example, the world would not have the Book of Mormon’s powerful witness of Jesus Christ if it had not been for two young men whom God trusted. Mormon, the prophet who compiled this sacred record, was just 10 years old when he was assigned to observe and later record the history of his people. At age 15, he was “visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus” (Mormon 1:15).

The Book of Mormon was translated and published by Joseph Smith,



who was called to his great work at age 14, when he was visited by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: “Great things are expected of you. . . . Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: ‘Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence’” (“The Call for Courage,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2004, 54, 57).

II. The New Duty to God Program

To help you respond to that urgent call, the Church is introducing a new Duty to God program, as President Henry B. Eyring announced earlier today. I am excited about this program. Materials will be sent to your bishops and branch presidents beginning in June. You should begin using them as soon as you receive them.

As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities that will help you build spiritual strength and learn and fulfill your priesthood duties. Each activity follows this simple pattern:

First you **learn** about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. You discover what Heavenly Father wants you to do, and you strive to gain a spiritual witness about why it is important.

Next you make plans to **act** on what you have learned. You are encouraged to base your plans on your own needs, circumstances, and opportunities to serve others. This is a wonderful chance to take responsibility for your own growth and develop spiritual self-reliance.

Then you **share** what you learn and experience with others. As you do so, you will strengthen your testimony and build faith in those around you. You will increase your ability to talk



about the gospel with others.

I am grateful to a young man who shared with me the following experience. He and another Aaronic Priesthood holder were assigned to administer the sacrament to a man who was homebound and very sick. They arrived at his home not realizing that recent medical treatments prevented him from eating any food—even a piece of the sacrament bread. After blessing the bread, the young man presented the sacrament to the frail man. He took a piece of the blessed bread, waited a moment, and then held it against his lips. The young man said when he saw this faithful brother express his reverence for the sacrament, he felt as though he were watching him kiss the feet of the Savior. He could tell that he loved Him.

The significance of the sacrament was impressed upon that young man in an unforgettable way that day. You will have sacred experiences, just as this young man did.

Your parents, leaders, and quorum members play an important role in the Duty to God program. Your Sunday quorum meetings will provide regular opportunities to learn, act, and share. The new Duty to God program will guide you on your journey to fulfill your duty to God and discover

the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

III. Fulfill Your Duty to God

During the past year I have been on a journey that has forever changed the way I view you and the Aaronic Priesthood. I am excited for you to discover for yourself what I have discovered. You will learn why the Aaronic Priesthood is so important in your life and how vital it is to the Church. You will appreciate why it is referred to as one of the “grand heads” of the priesthood (see D&C 107:6). You will understand better the meaning of priesthood keys, the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel (see D&C 13; 84:26).

Satan would have you think that you are too young or that there are too few of you to do significant things with the Aaronic Priesthood. None of that is true.

God’s words to Moses are for you today: “Behold, thou art my son; . . . and I have a work for [you]” (Moses 1:4, 6).

He has given you His power to do great things. As you fulfill your duty to God, you will strengthen and bless your family. This is your greatest priesthood duty. Listen to a mother describe the impact her son has on his

family: “Leo has the priesthood in our home, and it’s a huge blessing. He’s a good example to his siblings; . . . he makes sure they always pray. He passes the sacrament on Sundays. His little brother sees him. He helps . . . with family prayer. I know that he will continue to be a blessing as he gets older. He will be able to baptize his younger brother. It’s a comfort and a gift to us.”

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will reach out to your friends who are not of our faith and help prepare them to join the Church. Like a true brother, you will watch over and strengthen them. You will lead out in the rescue of other young men who have lost their way.

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will be a force for good at all times and in every circumstance. Your righteous example and your faithful priesthood service will be a powerful way to invite all who know you to come unto Christ.

In their most critical time, the Nephites looked to a young man, Mormon, for leadership and inspiration (see Mormon 2:1–2). Today, we look to you to be a great strength to the Church and a force for good on the earth. This is what the Lord expects.

IV. Become a Faithful Priesthood Man

I testify that you will feel your heart changing as you become a faithful priesthood man. You will seek to be completely clean and administer the sacrament worthily. You will treat every young woman with kindness and respect. You will honor your parents. You will avoid offending the Spirit in what you think, say, or do. You will come to know the Lord, whom you serve, and you will ever strive to be like Him.

I testify that your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood will change the lives of those you serve. There are people who need your priesthood service. Your family needs you. Your quorum needs you. The Church needs you. The world needs you.

There is an urgency for you to fulfill your duty to God. I am confident that you will.

On a cold morning a few weeks ago, I jogged along the Tagus River in Lisbon, Portugal. I came to a monument dedicated to the Portuguese explorers from centuries past. I stopped as the sun rose and splashed its warm light on the imposing monument and on me. I was inspired as I looked at the determined faces of the explorers gazing out over the water. These were men who were willing to do things that very few had done. They left a familiar and comfortable world and courageously went out into the unknown ocean and discovered new lands. They changed the world.

I see you when I think of that monument of courageous explorers. I see you on a personal journey that few in the world today choose to pursue. I see you fulfilling your duty to God.

I pray that we may all understand the magnificent Aaronic Priesthood and trust, as God does, those who bear it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

Continue in Patience

The lessons we learn from patience will cultivate our character, lift our lives, and heighten our happiness.

In the 1960s, a professor at Stanford University began a modest experiment testing the willpower of four-year-old children. He placed before them a large marshmallow and then told them they could eat it right away or, if they waited for 15 minutes, they could have two marshmallows.

He then left the children alone and watched what happened behind a two-way mirror. Some of the children ate the marshmallow immediately; some could wait only a few minutes before giving in to temptation. Only 30 percent were able to wait.

It was a mildly interesting experiment, and the professor moved on to other areas of research, for, in his own words, “there are only so many things you can do with kids trying not to eat marshmallows.” But as time went on, he kept track of the children and began to notice an interesting correlation: the children who could not wait struggled later in life and had more behavioral problems, while those who waited tended to be more positive and better motivated, have higher grades and incomes, and have healthier relationships.

What started as a simple experiment with children and marshmallows became a landmark study suggesting that the ability to wait—to be patient—

was a key character trait that might predict later success in life.¹

Waiting Can Be Hard

Waiting can be hard. Children know it, and so do adults. We live in a world offering fast food, instant messaging, on-demand movies, and immediate answers to the most trivial or profound questions. We don’t like to wait. Some even feel their blood pressure rise when their line at the grocery store moves slower than those around them.

Patience—the ability to put our desires on hold for a time—is a precious and rare virtue. We want what we want, and we want it now. Therefore, the very idea of patience may seem unpleasant and, at times, bitter.

Nevertheless, without patience, we cannot please God; we cannot become perfect. Indeed, patience is a purifying process that refines understanding, deepens happiness, focuses action, and offers hope for peace.

As parents, we know how unwise it would be to indulge our children’s every desire. But children are not the only ones who spoil when showered with immediate gratification. Our Heavenly Father knows what good parents come to understand over time: if children are ever going to mature and reach their potential, they must learn to wait.



Patience Isn't Merely Waiting

When I was 10 years old, my family became refugees in a new land. I had always been a good student in school—that is, until we arrived in West Germany. There, my educational experience was a significantly different one. The geography we studied in my school was new to me. The history we studied was also very different. Before, I had been learning Russian as a second language; now, it was English. This was hard for me. Indeed, there were moments when I truly believed my tongue simply was not made to speak English.

Because so much of the curriculum was new and strange to me, I fell behind. For the first time in my life, I began to wonder if I was simply not smart enough for school.

Fortunately I had a teacher who taught me to be patient. He taught me that steady and consistent work—patient persistence—would help me to learn.

Over time, difficult subjects became clearer—even English. Slowly I began

to see that if I applied myself consistently, I could learn. It didn't come quickly, but with patience, it did come.

From that experience, I learned that patience was far more than simply waiting for something to happen—patience required actively working toward worthwhile goals and not getting discouraged when results didn't appear instantly or without effort.

There is an important concept here: patience is not passive resignation, nor is it failing to act because of our fears. Patience means active waiting and enduring. It means staying with something and doing all that we can—working, hoping, and exercising faith; bearing hardship with fortitude, even when the desires of our hearts are delayed. Patience is not simply enduring; it is enduring well!

Impatience, on the other hand, is a symptom of selfishness. It is a trait of the self-absorbed. It arises from the all-too-prevalent condition called “center of the universe” syndrome, which leads people to believe that the world revolves around them and that all others

are just supporting cast in the grand theater of mortality in which only they have the starring role.

How different this is, my dear brethren, from the standard the Lord has set for us as priesthood holders.

Patience, a Principle of the Priesthood

As priesthood bearers and representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must serve others in a manner consistent with His example. There is a reason that almost every lesson on priesthood leadership at some point arrives at the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. In a few verses, the Lord provides a master course in priesthood leadership. “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned.”²

The character traits and practices described in these verses are the foundation of godly patience and are inseparably connected to effective priesthood and patriarchal service. These attributes



will give you strength and wisdom in magnifying your callings, in preaching the gospel, in fellowshipping quorum members, and in giving the most important priesthood service—which is indeed the loving service within the walls of your own homes.

Let us always remember that one of the reasons God has entrusted the priesthood to us is to help prepare us for eternal blessings by refining our natures through the patience which priesthood service requires.

As the Lord is patient with us, let us be patient with those we serve. Understand that they, like us, are imperfect. They, like us, make mistakes. They, like us, want others to give them the benefit of the doubt.

Never give up on anyone. And that includes not giving up on yourself.

I believe that every one of us, at one time or another, can identify with the servant in Christ's parable who owed money to the king and who pled with the king, saying, "Lord, have patience with me."³

The Lord's Way and Time

The children of Israel waited 40 years in the wilderness before they could enter the promised land. Jacob waited 7 long years for Rachel. The Jews waited 70 years in Babylon before they could return to rebuild the temple. The Nephites waited for a sign of

Christ's birth, even knowing that if the sign did not come, they would perish. Joseph Smith's trials in Liberty Jail caused even the prophet of God to wonder, "How long?"⁴

In each case, Heavenly Father had a purpose in requiring that His children wait.

Every one of us is called to wait in our own way. We wait for answers to prayers. We wait for things which at the time may appear so right and so good to us that we can't possibly imagine why Heavenly Father would delay the answer.

I remember when I was preparing to be trained as a fighter pilot. We spent a great deal of our preliminary military training in physical exercise. I'm still not exactly sure why endless running was considered such an essential preparatory part of becoming a pilot. Nevertheless, we ran and we ran and we ran some more.

As I was running I began to notice something that, frankly, troubled me. Time and again I was being passed by men who smoked, drank, and did all manner of things that were contrary to the gospel and, in particular, to the Word of Wisdom.

I remember thinking, "Wait a minute! Aren't I supposed to be able to run and not be weary?" But I *was* weary, and I was overtaken by people who were definitely not following the

Word of Wisdom. I confess, it troubled me at the time. I asked myself, was the promise true or was it not?

The answer didn't come immediately. But eventually I learned that God's promises are not always fulfilled as quickly as or in the way we might hope; they come according to His timing and in His ways. Years later I could see clear evidence of the temporal blessings that come to those who obey the Word of Wisdom—in addition to the spiritual blessings that come immediately from obedience to any of God's laws. Looking back, I know for sure that the promises of the Lord, if perhaps not always swift, are always certain.

Patience Requires Faith

Brigham Young taught that when something came up which he could not comprehend fully, he would pray to the Lord, "Give me patience to wait until I can understand it for myself."⁵ And then Brigham would continue to pray until he could comprehend it.

We must learn that in the Lord's plan, our understanding comes "line upon line, precept upon precept."⁶ In short, knowledge and understanding come at the price of patience.

Often the deep valleys of our present will be understood only by looking back on them from the mountains of our future experience. Often we can't see the Lord's hand in our lives until long after trials have passed. Often the most difficult times of our lives are essential building blocks that form the foundation of our character and pave the way to future opportunity, understanding, and happiness.

Patience, a Fruit of the Spirit⁷

Patience is a godly attribute that can heal souls, unlock treasures of knowledge and understanding, and

transform ordinary men and women into saints and angels. Patience is truly a fruit of the Spirit.

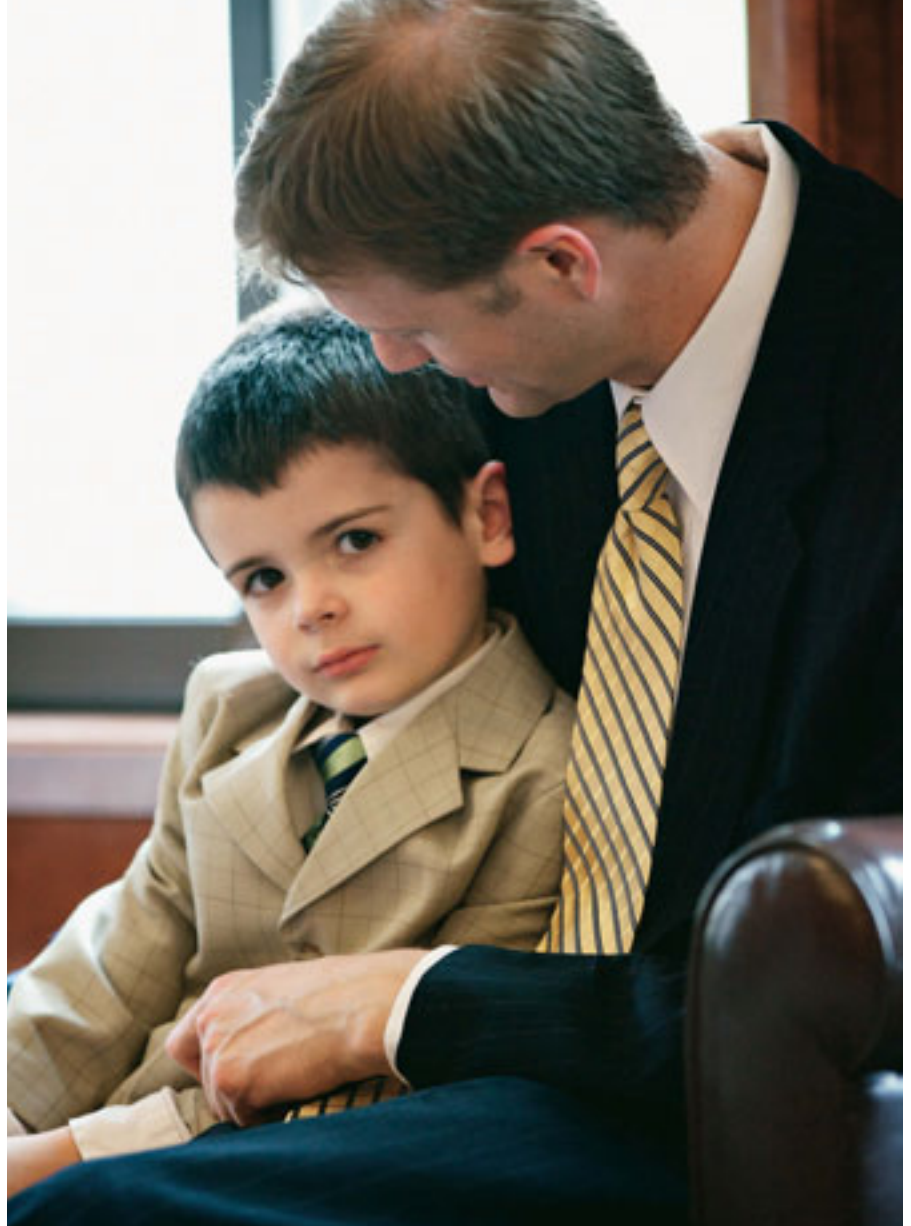
Patience means staying with something until the end. It means delaying immediate gratification for future blessings. It means reining in anger and holding back the unkind word. It means resisting evil, even when it appears to be making others rich.

Patience means accepting that which cannot be changed and facing it with courage, grace, and faith. It means being “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father.”⁸ Ultimately, patience means being “firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord”⁹ every hour of every day, even when it is hard to do so. In the words of John the Revelator, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and . . . faith [in] Jesus.”¹⁰

Patience is a process of perfection. The Savior Himself said that in your patience you possess your souls.¹¹ Or, to use another translation of the Greek text, in your patience you *win mastery* of your souls.¹² Patience means to abide in faith, knowing that sometimes it is in the waiting rather than in the receiving that we grow the most. This was true in the time of the Savior. It is true in our time as well, for we are commanded in these latter days to “continue in patience until ye are perfected.”¹³

The Lord Blesses Us for Our Patience

To paraphrase the Psalmist of old, if we wait patiently for the Lord, He will incline unto us. He will hear our cries. He will bring us out of a horrible pit and set our feet upon a solid rock. He will put a new song in our mouths, and we will praise our God. Many



around us will see it, and they will trust in the Lord.¹⁴

My dear brethren, the work of patience boils down to this: keep the commandments; trust in God, our Heavenly Father; serve Him with meekness and Christlike love; exercise faith and hope in the Savior; and never give up. The lessons we learn from patience will cultivate our character, lift our lives, and heighten our happiness. They will help us to become worthy priesthood bearers and faithful disciples of our Master, Jesus Christ.

It is my prayer that patience will be a defining characteristic of we who hold the priesthood of Almighty God; that we will courageously trust the Lord's promises and His timing; that

we will act toward others with the patience and compassion we seek for ourselves; and that we will continue in patience until we are perfected. In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Jonah Lehrer, “Don’t! The Secret of Self-Control,” *New Yorker*, May 18, 2009, 26–27.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41; see also verses 39–45.
3. Matthew 18:26.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 121:2.
5. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 75.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 98:12.
7. See Galatians 5:22–23.
8. Mosiah 3:19.
9. 1 Nephi 2:10.
10. Revelation 14:12.
11. See Luke 21:19.
12. See Luke 21:19, footnote b.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 67:13.
14. See Psalm 40:1–3.



By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

Act in All Diligence

We are to learn our duty from the Lord, and then we are to act in all diligence, never being lazy or slothful.

Brethren, I am grateful to be with you tonight. And I am humbled by what I know of your faithful priesthood service. I speak to you tonight of diligence in the Lord's service. Recent experiences led me to that choice.

One was my careful study of the remarkable new booklet for the Aaronic Priesthood, about which Brother David L. Beck spoke. It is entitled *Fulfilling My Duty to God*. As I read and pondered what it expects young men to do and to become, I realized that it was describing what President Brigham Young promised to the priesthood holder who is diligent over a lifetime: "An individual who holds a share in the Priesthood, and continues faithful to his calling, who delights himself continually in doing the things God requires at his hands, and continues through life in the performance of every duty will secure to himself not only the privilege of receiving, but the knowledge [of] how to receive the things of God, that he may know the mind of God continually."¹

Just a few weeks ago, I saw a new deacon start on that path of diligence. His father showed me a diagram his son had created that showed every row in their chapel, a number for each deacon who would be assigned to pass the sacrament, and their route

through the chapel to serve the sacrament to the members. The father and I smiled to think that a boy, without being asked to do it, would make a plan to be sure he would succeed in his priesthood service.

I recognized in his diligence the pattern from the new *Duty to God* booklet. It is to learn what the Lord expects of you, make a plan to do it, act on your plan with diligence, and then share with others how your experience changed you and blessed others.

The deacon made that diagram to be sure that he would be able to do what the Lord had called him to do. At the start of his priesthood service, the Lord was teaching him to delight in

continually "doing the things God requires at his hands."²

The other experience that led me to speak of diligence to you tonight was watching a man near the end of his priesthood service in this life. He had been a bishop twice. His first call as a bishop, years before I met him, had been when he was young. Now he was old, released for the second time as a bishop. His increasing physical limitations made any priesthood service very difficult.

Yet he had a plan to act in diligence. He sat every Sunday he could get to church near the row nearest the door where most of the people would enter for the sacrament meeting. He got there early to be sure a seat was vacant. Each person arriving could see his look of love and welcome, just as they did when he sat on the stand as their bishop. His influence warmed and lifted us because we knew something of the price he paid to serve. His task as a bishop was finished; his priesthood service did not end.

You have seen such examples of great priesthood servants. Tonight, I will try to tell you about what I have learned about them. It begins with



their learning to know whose service they are in and for what purpose. When that goes down into their hearts, it makes all the difference.

First, I will speak directly to the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. You will become more diligent as you feel the magnitude of the trust God has placed in you. There is a message from the First Presidency for you in that *Duty to God* booklet: “Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill. He will help you as you turn to Him in prayer, listen for the promptings of the Spirit, obey the commandments, and keep the covenants that you have made.”³

John the Baptist returned to earth to restore the priesthood you young men hold. He held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood. It was John to whom Jesus turned to be baptized. John knew who called him. He said to the Lord, “I have need to be baptized of thee.”⁴

John knew that the priesthood of Aaron “holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” when the Lord sent him to ordain Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on May 15, 1829.⁵ He knew who called him and for what glorious purpose he was sent.

Your priesthood allows you to offer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to the members of His Church today. That is the same privilege the Savior granted the Twelve Apostles in His mortal ministry. He did it again when He called twelve disciples after His Resurrection to lead His Church.

The Lord Himself, as described in the Book of Mormon, provided the emblems of His infinite sacrifice and administered them to the people.



Think of Him and how He honors you when you perform your priesthood service. As you remember Him, you will be determined to perform that sacred service, as nearly as you can, as well and faithfully as He did.⁶

That can become a pattern in your life that will increase your power to be diligent in every priesthood service for which the Lord is preparing you and to which He will call you. That determination will help you prepare for receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, which was anciently called “the Holy Priesthood, after the Order of the Son of God.”⁷

Now, I wish to speak to those who have been called and honored to serve in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Like the Aaronic Priesthood, the Melchizedek Priesthood is more than a trust to do what the Lord would do. It is an invitation to become as He is. Here is His promise:

“For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by

the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

“They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

“And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;

“For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

“And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

“And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.”⁸

There is a pattern by which all priesthood holders are lifted to that glorious blessing. One place in scripture where the Lord gives the pattern for us is in the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

“He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself



not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. Even so. Amen.”⁹

We are to learn our duty from the Lord, and then we are to act in all diligence, never being lazy or slothful. The pattern is simple but not easy to follow. We are so easily distracted. Studying the daily news can appear more interesting than the priesthood lesson manual. Sitting down to rest can be more attractive than making appointments to visit those who need our priesthood service.

When I find myself drawn away from my priesthood duties by other interests and when my body begs for rest, I give to myself this rallying cry: “Remember Him.” The Lord is our perfect example of diligence in priesthood service. He is our captain. He called us. He goes before us. He chose us to follow Him and to bring others with us.

This evening I remember Him, and it stirs my heart. This is the Saturday night before Easter Sunday, when we remember His Resurrection. I remember His example in the days before.

Out of love for His Father and for us, He allowed Himself to suffer beyond the capacity of mortal man. He told us some of what that infinite sacrifice required of Him. You remember the words:

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.”¹⁰

From the cross on Calvary, the Savior announced, “It is finished.”¹¹ Then His spirit left His body, and His mortal remains were placed lovingly in a tomb. He taught us a lesson by what He did in three days in the spirit world, before His Resurrection, which I remember whenever I am tempted to feel that I have finished some hard task in His service and deserve a rest.

The Savior’s example gives me courage to press on. His labors in mortality were finished, but He entered the spirit world determined to continue His glorious work to save souls. He organized the work of the faithful spirits to rescue those who could still be made partakers of the mercy made

possible by His atoning sacrifice. Remember the words from the 138th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“But behold, from among the righteous, he organized his forces and appointed messengers, clothed with power and authority, and commissioned them to go forth and carry the light of the gospel to them that were in darkness, even to all the spirits of men; and thus was the gospel preached to the dead.

“And the chosen messengers went forth to declare the acceptable day of the Lord and proclaim liberty to the captives who were bound, even unto all who would repent of their sins and receive the gospel.”¹²

Whenever we remember Him, it becomes easier to resist the temptation to want a rest from our priesthood labors. We must have remembered Him today, and so we are here to learn our duties, determined to do what we are covenanted to do, in all diligence. And because of His example we will endure to the end of the tasks He gives us in this life and be committed to do the will of His Father forever, as He was and is.

This is the Lord’s Church. He called us and trusted us even in the weaknesses He knew we had. He knew the trials we would face. By faithful service

and through His Atonement, we can come to want what He wants and be what we must be to bless those we serve for Him. As we serve Him long enough and with diligence, we will be changed. We can become ever more like Him.

I have seen evidence of that miracle in the lives of His servants. I saw it a few weeks ago in the living room of a faithful priesthood holder.

I had known him as a deacon, a father, a bishop, and a member of a stake presidency. I had observed for decades his diligence in serving God's children with his priesthood.

His family was gathered around him in his living room. He was smiling, dressed in a white shirt, suit, and tie. I was surprised, since I was there because I had been told that he was in the midst of painful medical treatments that had not yet cured him.

Yet he had greeted me as he must have greeted hundreds of other visitors over a lifetime of priesthood service, smiling. I had come to help him in the trials he faced, but as so often happens in priesthood service, I was helped and I learned.

We sat and chatted pleasantly. He told me how his father had tended to my mother as she approached death. I had not known that. I realized then that he had learned as a boy from his diligent priesthood father how to give succor. That thought made me grateful for the times I had taken my little boys with me on priesthood visits to comfort and bless.

After a few minutes, he asked quietly, "Would it be appropriate to ask if you could give me a blessing?" His former stake president, with whom he had served for years, anointed his head with oil consecrated by the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

As I sealed the blessing, I was

taught by the Holy Ghost at least part of what the Lord had already done for this faithful priesthood holder. He was clean, his sins washed away. His nature had been changed to want what the Savior wanted. He had no fear of death. The desire of his heart was to live to give service to his family and to others of Heavenly Father's children who needed him.

I walked out into the night grateful to have witnessed the Lord's kindness to His unfailingly diligent priesthood servants. He changes their hearts to want what He wants and to act as He would act.

I close now with this counsel to the Lord's priesthood servants. Ponder deeply and diligently in the scriptures and in the words of living prophets. Persist in prayer for the Holy Ghost to reveal to you the nature of God the Father and His Beloved Son. Plead that the Spirit will show you what the Lord wants you to do. Plan to do it. Promise Him to obey. Act with determination until you have done what He asked. And then pray to give thanks for the opportunity to serve and to know what you might do next.

I testify that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ live. They are resurrected and glorified beings who love us and watch over us. The keys of the priesthood were restored by heavenly messengers to the Prophet Joseph Smith. They have been passed in an unbroken line to President Thomas S. Monson. Those keys are held by each of the living Apostles.

I leave you my blessing that you may come to feel by the Spirit the magnitude of the trust and promises you have received as ordained priesthood servants in the Lord's true Church, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 128.
2. *Teachings: Brigham Young*, 128.
3. *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* (booklet, 2010), 5.
4. Matthew 3:14.
5. See Doctrine and Covenants 13.
6. See 3 Nephi 20:3–9.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 107:3; see also Alma 13:1–9.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–38.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 107:99–100.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19.
11. John 19:30.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 138:30–31.





By President Thomas S. Monson

Preparation Brings Blessings

Let us consider our callings, let us reflect on our responsibilities, and let us follow Jesus Christ.

Brethren, you who are here in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City are an inspiring sight to behold. It is amazing to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world, others of you—fellow holders of the priesthood of God—are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary, and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

One of my most vivid memories is attending priesthood meeting as a newly ordained deacon and singing the opening hymn “Come, All Ye Sons of God.” Tonight I echo the spirit of that special hymn and say to you, “Come, all ye sons of God who have received the priesthood.”¹ Let us consider our callings, let us reflect on our responsibilities, and let us follow Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Twenty years ago I attended a sacrament meeting where the children responded to the theme “I Belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” These boys and girls demonstrated they were in training for service

to the Lord and to others. The music was beautiful, the recitations skillfully rendered, and the spirit heaven-sent. One of my grandsons, who was 11 years old at that time, had spoken of the First Vision as he presented his part on the program. Afterward, as he came to his parents and grandparents, I said to him, “Tommy, I think you are almost ready to be a missionary.”

He replied, “Not yet. I still have a lot to learn.”

Through the years that followed, Tommy did learn, thanks to his parents and to teachers and advisers at church, who were dedicated and

conscientious. When he was old enough, he was called to serve a mission. He did so in a most honorable fashion.

Young men, I admonish you to prepare for service as a missionary. There are many tools to help you learn the lessons which will be beneficial to you as well as helping you to live the life you will need to have lived to be worthy. One such tool is the booklet entitled *For the Strength of Youth*, published under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It features standards from the writings and teachings of Church leaders and from scripture, adherence to which will bring the blessings of our Heavenly Father and the guidance of His Son to each of us. In addition, there are lesson manuals, carefully prepared after prayerful consideration. Families have family home evenings, where gospel principles are taught. Almost all of you have the opportunity to attend seminary classes taught by dedicated teachers who have much to share.

Begin to prepare for a temple marriage as well as for a mission. Proper dating is a part of that preparation. In cultures where dating is appropriate, do not date until you are 16 years old. “Not all teenagers need to date or even want to. . . . When you begin dating, go in groups or on double dates. . . . Make sure your parents meet [and become acquainted with] those you date.” Because dating is a preparation for marriage, “date only those who have high standards.”²

Be careful to go to places where there is a good environment, where you won’t be faced with temptation.

A wise father said to his son, “If you ever find yourself in a place where you shouldn’t ought to be, get out!” Good advice for all of us.

Servants of the Lord have always



counseled us to dress appropriately to show respect for our Heavenly Father and for ourselves. The way you dress sends messages about yourself to others and often influences the way you and others act. Dress in such a way as to bring out the best in yourself and those around you. Avoid extremes in clothing and appearance, including tattoos and piercings.

Everyone needs good friends. Your circle of friends will greatly influence your thinking and behavior, just as you will theirs. When you share common values with your friends, you can strengthen and encourage each other. Treat everyone with kindness and dignity. Many nonmembers have come into the Church through friends who have involved them in Church activities.

The oft-repeated adage is ever true: “Honesty [is] the best policy.”³ A Latter-day Saint young man lives as he teaches and as he believes. He is honest with others. He is honest with himself. He is honest with God. He is honest by habit and as a matter of course. When a difficult decision must be made, he never asks himself, “What will others think?” but rather, “What will I think of myself?”

For some, there will come the temptation to dishonor a personal standard of honesty. In a business law class at the university I attended, I remember that one particular classmate never prepared for the class discussions. I thought to myself, “How is he going to pass the final examination?”

I discovered the answer when he came to the classroom for the final exam on a winter’s day wearing on his bare feet only a pair of sandals. I was surprised and watched him as the class began. All of our books had been placed upon the floor, as per the instruction. He slipped the sandals

from his feet; and then, with toes that he had trained and had prepared with glycerin, he skillfully turned the pages of one of the books which he had placed on the floor, thereby viewing the answers to the examination questions.

He received one of the highest grades in that course on business law. But the day of reckoning came. Later, as he prepared to take his comprehensive exam, for the first time the dean of his particular discipline said, “This year I will depart from tradition and will conduct an oral, rather than a written, test.” Our favorite trained-toe expert found that he had his foot in his mouth on that occasion and failed the exam.

How you speak and the words you use tell much about the image you choose to portray. Use language to

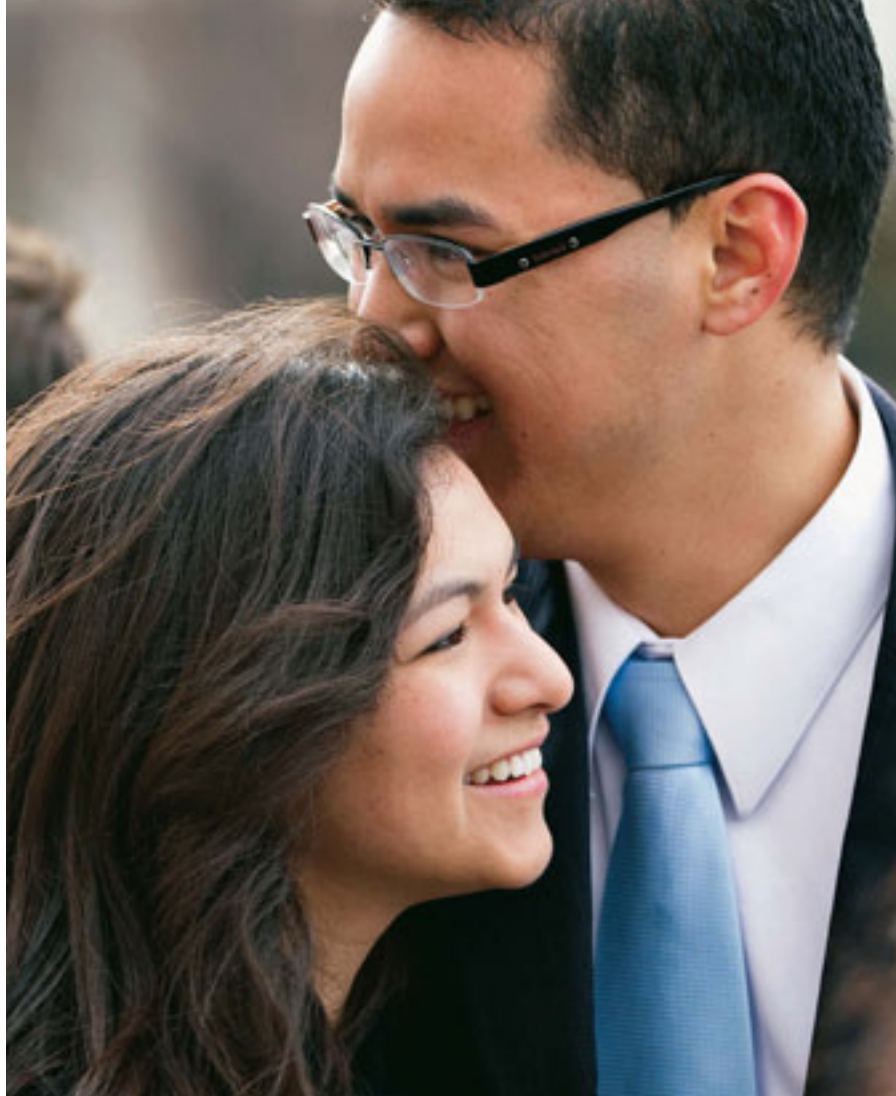
build and uplift those around you. Profane, vulgar, or crude language and inappropriate or off-color jokes are offensive to the Lord. Never misuse the name of God or Jesus Christ. The Lord said, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”⁴

Our Heavenly Father has counseled us to seek after “anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy.”⁵ Whatever you read, listen to, or watch makes an impression on you.

Pornography is especially dangerous and addictive. Curious exploration of pornography can become a controlling habit, leading to coarser material and to sexual transgression. Avoid pornography at all costs.

Don’t be afraid to walk out of a movie, turn off a television set, or





echo in truth the line from Tennyson spoken by Sir Galahad: “My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure.”⁷

Not long ago the author of a paper on teenage sexuality summed up his research by saying that society sends teens a mixed message: advertisements and the mass media convey “very heavy messages that sexual activity is acceptable and expected,” inducements that sometimes drown out the warnings of experts and the pleas of parents. The Lord cuts through all the media messages with clear and precise language when He declares to us, “Be ye clean.”⁸

Whenever temptation comes, remember the wise counsel of the Apostle Paul, who declared, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”⁹

When you were confirmed a member of the Church, you received the right to the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He can help you make good choices. When challenged or tempted, you do not need to feel alone. Remember that prayer is the passport to spiritual power.

If any has stumbled in his journey, there is a way back. The process is called repentance. Our Savior died to provide you and me that blessed gift. Though the path is difficult, the promise is real: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”¹⁰

Don’t put your eternal life at risk. Keep the commandments of God. If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness.

change a radio station if what’s being presented does not meet your Heavenly Father’s standards. In short, if you have any question about whether a particular movie, book, or other form of entertainment is appropriate, don’t see it, don’t read it, don’t participate.

The Apostle Paul declared: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”⁶ Brethren, it is our responsibility to keep our temples clean and pure.

Hard drugs, wrongful use of prescription drugs, alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco products destroy your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Any form of alcohol is harmful to your spirit and your body. Tobacco can enslave you, weaken your lungs, and shorten your life.

Music can help you draw closer to

your Heavenly Father. It can be used to educate, edify, inspire, and unite. However, music can, by its tempo, beat, intensity, and lyrics, dull your spiritual sensitivity. You cannot afford to fill your minds with unworthy music.

Because sexual intimacy is so sacred, the Lord requires self-control and purity before marriage as well as full fidelity after marriage. In dating, treat your date with respect and expect your date to show that same respect for you. Tears inevitably follow transgression.

President David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church, advised, “I implore you to think clean thoughts.” He then made this significant declaration of truth: “Every action is preceded by a thought. If we want to control our actions, we must control our thinking.” Brethren, fill your minds with good thoughts, and your actions will be proper. May each of you be able to



Happiness comes from living the way the Lord wants you to live and from service to God and others.

Spiritual strength frequently comes through selfless service. Some years ago I visited what was then called the California Mission, where I interviewed a young missionary from Georgia. I recall saying to him, “Do you send a letter home to your parents every week?”

He replied, “Yes, Brother Monson.”

Then I asked, “Do you enjoy receiving letters from home?”

He didn’t answer. At length I inquired, “When was the last time you had a letter from home?”

With a quavering voice, he responded, “I’ve never had a letter from home. Father’s just a deacon, and Mother’s not a member of the Church. They pleaded with me not to come. They said that if I left on a mission, they would not be writing to me. What shall I do, Brother Monson?”

I offered a silent prayer to my Heavenly Father: “What should I tell this young servant of Thine, who has sacrificed everything to serve Thee?” And the inspiration came. I said, “Elder, you send a letter home to your mother and father every week of your mission. Tell them what you are doing. Tell them how much you love them and then

bear your testimony to them.”

He asked, “Will they then write to me?”

I responded, “Then they will write to you.”

We parted and I went on my way. Months later I was attending a stake conference in Southern California when a young missionary came up to me and said, “Brother Monson, do you remember me? I’m the missionary who had not received a letter from my mother or my father during my first nine months in the mission field. You told me, ‘Send a letter home every week, Elder, and your parents will write to you.’” Then he asked, “Do you remember that promise, Elder Monson?”

I remembered. I inquired, “Have you heard from your parents?”

He reached into his pocket and took out a sheaf of letters with an elastic band around them, took a letter from the top of the stack, and said, “Have I heard from my parents! Listen to this letter from my mother: ‘Son, we so much enjoy your letters. We’re proud of you, our missionary. Guess what? Dad has been ordained a priest. He’s preparing to baptize me. I’m meeting with the missionaries; and one year from now we want to come to California as you complete your

mission, for we, with you, would like to become a forever family by entering the temple of the Lord.’” This young missionary asked, “Brother Monson, does Heavenly Father always answer prayers and fulfill Apostles’ promises?”

I replied, “When one has faith as you have demonstrated, our Heavenly Father hears such prayers and answers in His own way.”

Clean hands, a pure heart, and a willing mind had touched heaven. A blessing, heaven-sent, had answered the fervent prayer of a missionary’s humble heart.

Brethren, it is my prayer that we may so live that we too may touch heaven and be similarly blessed, each and every one, in the name of the Giver of all blessings, even Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Hymns*, no. 322.
2. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2001), 24, 25.
3. Miguel de Cervantes, in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. (1968), 197.
4. Exodus 20:7.
5. Articles of Faith 1:13.
6. 1 Corinthians 3:16–17.
7. Alfred Lord Tennyson, in *Familiar Quotations*, 647.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 38:42.
9. 1 Corinthians 10:13.
10. Isaiah 1:18.



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

"You Are My Hands"

As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are called to support and heal rather than condemn.

A story is told that during the bombing of a city in World War II, a large statue of Jesus Christ was severely damaged. When the townspeople found the statue among the rubble, they mourned because it had been a beloved symbol of their faith and of God's presence in their lives.

Experts were able to repair most of the statue, but its hands had been damaged so severely that they could not be restored. Some suggested that they hire a sculptor to make new hands, but others wanted to leave it as it was—a permanent reminder of the tragedy of war. Ultimately, the statue remained without hands. However, the people of the city added on the base of the statue of Jesus Christ a sign with these words: "You are my hands."

We Are the Hands of Christ

There is a profound lesson in this story. When I think of the Savior, I often picture Him with hands outstretched, reaching out to comfort, heal, bless, and love. And He always talked *with*, never *down to*, people. He loved the humble and the meek and walked among them, ministering to them and offering hope and salvation.

That is what He did during His

mortal life; it is what He would be doing if He were living among us today; and it is what we should be doing as His disciples and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

On this beautiful Easter morning, our thoughts and hearts are drawn to Him—the Hope of Israel and the Light of the World.

As we emulate His perfect example, our hands can become His hands; our eyes, His eyes; our heart, His heart.

Our Hands Can Embrace

I am deeply impressed by the way our Church members extend themselves to others. As we hear of your selfless sacrifice and overwhelming compassion, our hearts swell with

gratitude and happiness. You are a shining light to the world, and you are known for your goodness and compassion all around the globe.

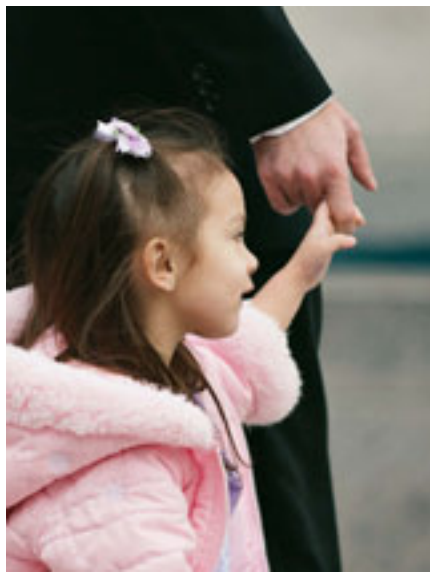
Unfortunately, from time to time we also hear of Church members who become discouraged and subsequently quit coming to and participating in our Church meetings because they think they don't fit in.

When I was a young boy, during the aftermath of World War II, Germany was broken and in ruins. Many people were hungry, sick, and dying. I remember well the humanitarian shipments of food and clothing that came from the Church in Salt Lake City. To this day, I can still remember the smell of the clothing, and I can still taste the sweetness of the canned peaches.

There were some who joined the Church because of the goods they received at that time. Some members looked down on these new converts. They even called them an offensive name: *Büchsen Mormonen*, or "Canned-Food Mormons." They resented these new members because they believed that once their temporal needs had been met, they would fall away.

While some did leave, many stayed—they came to church, tasted the sweetness of the gospel, and felt the tender embrace of caring brothers and sisters. They discovered "home." And now, three and four generations later, many families trace their Church membership back to these converts.

I hope that we welcome and love all of God's children, including those who might dress, look, speak, or just do things differently. It is not good to make others feel as though they are deficient. Let us lift those around us. Let us extend a welcoming hand. Let us bestow upon our brothers and sisters in the Church a special measure



of humanity, compassion, and charity so that they feel, at long last, they have finally found home.

When we are tempted to judge, let us think of the Savior, who “loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw *all* men unto him. . . .

“[And] he saith: Come unto me all ye ends of the earth, . . . [for] *all* men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.”¹

As I read the scriptures, it appears that those who receive the Savior’s strongest reproach are often those who hold themselves in high esteem because of their wealth, influence, or perceived righteousness.

On one occasion the Savior taught a parable of two men who went into the temple to pray. One man, a respected Pharisee, prayed: “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”

The other man, a hated publican, stood “afar off, [and] would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

And Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.”²

In truth, we “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”³ We are all in need of mercy. In that last day when we are called to the judgment bar of God, do we not hope that our many imperfections will be forgiven? Do we not yearn to feel the Savior’s embrace?

It seems only right and proper that we extend to others that which we so earnestly desire for ourselves.

I am not suggesting that we accept sin or overlook evil, in our personal



life or in the world. Nevertheless, in our zeal, we sometimes confuse sin with sinner, and we condemn too quickly and with too little compassion. We know from modern revelation that “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.”⁴ We cannot gauge the worth of another soul any more than we can measure the span of the universe. Every person we meet is a VIP to our Heavenly Father. Once we understand that, we can begin to understand how we should treat our fellowmen.

One woman who had been through years of trial and sorrow said through her tears, “I have come to realize that I am like an old 20-dollar bill—crumpled, torn, dirty, abused, and scarred. But I am still a 20-dollar bill. I am worth something. Even though I may not

look like much and even though I have been battered and used, I am still worth the full 20 dollars.”

Our Hands Can Comfort

With this in mind, let our hearts and hands be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are called to support and heal rather than condemn. We are commanded “to mourn with those that mourn” and “comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”⁵

It is unworthy of us as Christians to think that those who suffer deserve their suffering. Easter Sunday is a good day to remember that our Savior willingly took upon Himself the pain and sickness and suffering of us all—even



those of us who appear to deserve our suffering.⁶

In the book of Proverbs we read that “a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”⁷ Let us love at all times. And let us especially be there for our brothers and sisters during times of adversity.

Our Hands Can Serve

An old Jewish legend tells of two brothers, Abram and Zimri, who owned a field and worked it together. They agreed to divide both the labor and the harvest equally. One night as the harvest came to a close, Zimri could not sleep, for it didn’t seem

right that Abram, who had a wife and seven sons to feed, should receive only half of the harvest, while he, with only himself to support, had so much.

So Zimri dressed and quietly went into the field, where he took a third of his harvest and put it in his brother’s pile. He then returned to his bed, satisfied that he had done the right thing.

Meanwhile, Abram could not sleep either. He thought of his poor brother, Zimri, who was all alone and had no sons to help him with the work. It did not seem right that Zimri, who worked so hard by himself, should get only half of the harvest. Surely this was not pleasing to God. And so Abram quietly went to the fields, where he took a third of his harvest and placed it in the pile of his beloved brother.

The next morning, the brothers went to the field and were both astonished that the piles still looked to be the same size. That night both brothers slipped out of their houses to repeat their efforts of the previous night. But this time they discovered each other, and when they did, they wept and embraced. Neither could speak, for their hearts were overcome with love and gratitude.⁸

This is the spirit of compassion: that we love others as ourselves,⁹ seek their happiness, and do unto them as we hope they would do unto us.¹⁰

True Love Requires Action

True love requires action. We can speak of love all day long—we can write notes or poems that proclaim it, sing songs that praise it, and preach sermons that encourage it—but until we manifest that love in action, our words are nothing but “sounding

brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”¹¹

Christ did not just speak about love; He showed it each day of His life. He did not remove Himself from the crowd. Being amidst the people, Jesus reached out to the one. He rescued the lost. He didn’t just teach a class about reaching out in love and then delegate the actual work to others. He not only taught but also showed us how to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees.”¹²

Christ knows how to minister to others perfectly. When the Savior stretches out His hands, those He touches are uplifted and become greater, stronger, and better people as a result.

If we are His hands, should we not do the same?

We Can Love as He Does

The Savior revealed the perfect priorities for our lives, our homes, our wards, our communities, and our nations when He spoke of love as the great commandment upon which “hang all the law and the prophets.”¹³ We can spend our days obsessing about the finest details of life, the law, and long lists of things to do; but should we neglect the great commandments, we are missing the point and we are clouds without water, drifting in the winds, and trees without fruit.¹⁴

Without this love for God the Father and our fellowmen we are only the form of His Church—without the substance. What good is our teaching without love? What good is missionary, temple, or welfare work without love?

Love is what inspired our Heavenly Father to create our spirits; it is what led our Savior to the Garden of Gethsemane to make Himself a



General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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April 2010



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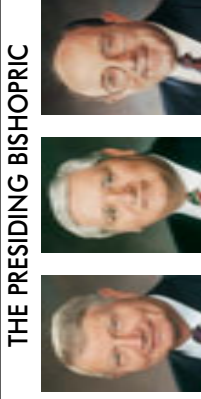
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THE PRESIDING BISHOPIC



Church members gather throughout the world for the 180th Annual General Conference. Pictured clockwise from top left are Latter-day Saints in Navotas, Philippines; Carcassonne, France; Formosa, Argentina; São Paulo, Brazil; São Paulo, Brazil; Santiago, Chile; and Prague, Czech Republic.



ransom for our sins. Love is the grand motive of the plan of salvation; it is the source of happiness, the ever-renewing spring of healing, the precious fountain of hope.

As we extend our hands and hearts toward others in Christlike love, something wonderful happens to us. Our own spirits become healed, more refined, and stronger. We become happier, more peaceful, and more receptive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.

With all my heart and soul I give thanks to our Heavenly Father for His love for us, for the gift of His Son, for the life and example of Jesus the Christ, and for His sinless and selfless sacrifice. I rejoice in the fact that Christ is not dead but risen from the grave! He lives and has returned to the earth to restore His authority and gospel to man. He has given us the perfect example of the kind of men and women we should be.

On this Easter Sunday, and every day, as we contemplate with reverence and awe how our Savior embraces us, comforts us, and heals us, let us commit to become His hands, that others through us may feel His loving embrace. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. 2 Nephi 26:24–25, 28; emphasis added.
2. See Luke 18:9–14.
3. Romans 3:23.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 18:10.
5. Mosiah 18:9.
6. See Alma 7:11–13; Doctrine and Covenants 19:16.
7. Proverbs 17:17.
8. See Clarence Cook, “Abram and Zimri,” in *Poems by Clarence Cook* (1902), 6–9.
9. See Matthew 22:39.
10. See Matthew 7:12.
11. 1 Corinthians 13:1.
12. Doctrine and Covenants 81:5.
13. Matthew 22:40.
14. See Jude 1:12.



By Elder Richard G. Scott

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

He Lives! All Glory to His Name!

Our understanding of and faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ will provide strength and capacity needed for a successful life.

It is Easter morning, that holy day designated throughout all Christendom to commemorate the victory of Jesus Christ over death. His Resurrection broke what to that point had been the unyielding chains of death. He opened the path whereby each of Heavenly Father’s children born to earth would have the opportunity to rise from death to live again.

How our Father in Heaven must have rejoiced that sacred day when His totally obedient, completely worthy Son shattered the chains of death. What eternal purpose would our Father’s plan of happiness have had except it be made alive through the infinite and eternal Atonement of His gloriously obedient Son? What eternal purpose would have come from the Creation of the earth, where intelligences tabernacled with spirits would receive a body, if death were the end of existence and none would be resurrected? What a glorious moment that morning was for all who understood its significance.

Easter is that sacred season when the heart of each devout Christian turns in humble gratitude to our

beloved Savior. It is a season that should bring peace and joy to all who love Him and show it by obeying His commandments. Easter brings thoughts of Jesus, His life, His Atonement, His Resurrection, His love. He has risen from the dead “with healing in his wings” (Malachi 4:2; 3 Nephi 25:2). Oh, how we all need that healing the Redeemer can provide. Mine is a message of hope based on principles embodied in the teachings of the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ.

Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can understand more fully the breadth and depth of healing provided by His Atonement because we have the fullness of His doctrine. We realize that what He has willingly done with immense suffering and sacrifice will affect us not only in this life but throughout all eternity.

This Easter, as you remember the Resurrection and the price paid and the gift given through the Atonement, ponder what the scriptures teach of those sacred events. Your personal witness of their reality will be strengthened. They must be more than principles you



law, we receive a blessing. When we break a law, there is nothing left over from prior obedience to satisfy the demands of justice for that broken law. The Savior's Atonement permits us to repent of any disobedience and thereby avoid the penalties that justice would have imposed.

My reverence and gratitude for the Atonement of the Holy One of Israel, the Prince of Peace and our Redeemer, continually expand as I strive to understand more about it. I realize that no mortal mind can adequately conceive, nor can human tongue appropriately express, the full significance of all that Jesus Christ has done for our Heavenly Father's children through His Atonement. Yet it is vital that we each learn what we can about it. The Atonement is that essential ingredient of our Father in Heaven's plan of happiness without which that plan could not have been activated. Your understanding of the Atonement and the insight it provides for your life will greatly enhance your productive use of all of the knowledge, experience, and skills you acquire in mortal life.

I believe that it is instructive to try to imagine what the Atonement required of both the Father and His willing Son. Three of the challenges the Savior faced were:

First, an enormous sense of responsibility, for He realized that except it be done perfectly, not one of His Father's children could return to Him. They would be forever banished from His presence since there would be no way to repent for broken laws and no unclean thing can exist in the presence of God. His Father's plan would have failed, and each spirit child would have been under the eternal control and torment of Satan.

Second, in His absolutely pure mind and heart, He had to

memorize. They must be woven into the very fiber of your being as a powerful bulwark against the rising tide of abomination that infects our world.

The prophet Lehi declared a profound truth when he stated: "Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth. Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered" (2 Nephi 2:6–7). That scripture indicates that for the proud and haughty, it is as though there never were an Atonement made.

Jesus Christ lives. He is our Savior, our Redeemer. He is a glorious, resurrected being. He has the capacity

to communicate love that is so powerful, so overwhelming as to surpass the capacity of the human tongue to express adequately. He gave His life to break the bonds of death. His Atonement made fully active the plan of happiness of His Father in Heaven.

Jesus administers the balance between justice and mercy conditioned upon our obedience to His gospel. He is the light for all mankind. He is the fountain of all truth. He fulfills all of His promises. All who obey His commandments will earn the most glorious blessings imaginable.

Without the Atonement, Father in Heaven's plan of happiness could not have been placed fully into effect. The Atonement gives all the opportunity to overcome the consequences of mistakes made in life. When we obey a

personally feel the consequences of all that mankind would ever encounter, even the most depraved, despicable sins.

Third, He had to endure the vicious attack of Satan's hordes while physically and emotionally pressed to the limit. Then, for reasons we do not fully know, while at the extremity of His capacity, at the time the Savior most needed succor, His Father allowed Him to shoulder the onerous responsibility with only His own strength and capacity.

I try to imagine what an intensely poignant moment it must have been for our Father in Heaven when the Savior cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). I don't believe Father in Heaven forsook His Son on the cross. I do believe the cry was motivated when that Son felt removed the sustaining support He had always enjoyed from His Father. His Father recognized that the Savior needed to accomplish the Atonement totally and completely on His own, without external support. The Father did not abandon His Son. He made it possible for His perfect Son to win the eternal fruits of the Atonement.

None of us can ever adequately appreciate in mortality the full beneficial consequences of the Atonement.

There is an imperative need for each of us to strengthen our understanding of the significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ so that it will become an unshakable foundation upon which to build our lives. As the world becomes more devoid of foundational standards and as honor, virtue, and purity are increasingly cast aside in the pursuit of appetite, our understanding of and faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ will provide



strength and capacity needed for a successful life. It will also bring confidence in times of trial and peace in moments of turmoil.

I energetically encourage you to establish a personal study plan to better understand and appreciate the incomparable, eternal, infinite consequences of Jesus Christ's perfect fulfillment of His divinely appointed calling as our Savior and Redeemer. Profound personal pondering of the scriptures accompanied by searching, heartfelt prayer will fortify your understanding of and appreciation for His priceless Atonement. Another powerful way to learn of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is through consistent temple attendance.

May each of us renew our determination to teach true principles within

the sanctity of our homes. As we do that, we will provide the greatest opportunity for happiness for the spirits entrusted to our care. Use the Church as a righteous tool to strengthen the home, but recognize that as parents we have the fundamental responsibility and privilege to be guided by the Lord in the upbringing of the spirit children He has entrusted to our care.

The vital importance of teaching truth in the home is fundamental. The Church is important, but it is in the home where parents provide the required understanding and direction for children. It is truly said that the most important callings in time and eternity are those of father and mother. In time we will be released from all other assignments we receive

but not from that of father and mother.

As you ponder—not just read but ponder and meditate—on scriptural passages, the power of the Holy Ghost will distill truths in your mind and heart as a secure foundation in this uncertain time in which we live. As parents, prepare your children for the challenges they will encounter. Teach them truth, encourage them to live it, and they will be all right no matter how severely the world is shaken.

This Easter, resolve to make the Lord Jesus Christ the living center of your home. Be sure that every decision you make, whether it be of a spiritual or physical nature, be guided by the thought “What would the Lord Jesus Christ have me do?” When the Savior is the center of your home, it is filled with peace and serenity. There is a spirit of calm assurance that pervades the home that is felt by the children and adults alike.

The best way to make a permanent change for good is to make Jesus Christ your model and His teachings your guide for life.

Should you have been disobedient to His commandments and feel unworthy, recognize that this is why the Lord, Jesus the Christ, laid down His life. Through His Atonement He has opened forever the opportunity to overcome such mistakes, to repent of improper choices, and to conquer the negative effects of a life contrary to His teachings.

The Savior loves each of us and will make it possible for our every need to be satisfied as we qualify by obedience for all of the blessings He wants us to have on this earth. I love and adore Him. As His authorized servant I solemnly testify with every capacity of my being that He lives, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Donald L. Hallstrom

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

Turn to the Lord

Never let an earthly circumstance disable you spiritually.

Many years ago, I observed a heartbreak—which became a tragedy. A young couple was nearing the delivery of their first child. Their lives were filled with the anticipation and excitement of this monumental experience. During the delivery, complications arose and the baby died. Heartbreak turned to grief, grief turned to anger, anger turned to blame, and blame turned to revenge toward the doctor, whom they held fully responsible. Parents and other family members became heavily involved, together seeking to ruin the reputation and the career of the physician. As weeks and then months of acrimony consumed the family, their bitterness was extended to the Lord. “How could He allow this horrible thing to occur?” They rejected the repeated efforts of Church leaders and members to spiritually and emotionally comfort them and, in time, disassociated themselves from the Church. Four generations of the family have now been affected. Where once there were faith and devotion to the Lord and His Church, there has been no spiritual activity by any family member for decades.

In the most difficult circumstances of life, there is often only one source of peace. The Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, extends His grace with the invitation “Come unto me, all ye that

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). He further promises, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you” (John 14:27).

My paternal grandparents had two children, a son (my father) and a daughter. After serving a mission and military service in Hawaii, my father returned to the islands in 1946 to establish himself professionally and raise his family. His parents lived in Salt Lake City, as did his sister. She married in 1946 and four years later was expecting a child. There is something very special for parents to anticipate a daughter (in this instance an only daughter) giving birth for the first time. No one knew that she was carrying twins. Sadly, she and the twins all died during childbirth.

My grandparents were heartbroken. Their grief, however, immediately turned them to the Lord and His Atonement. Without dwelling on why this could happen and who might be to blame, they focused on living a righteous life. My grandparents never had wealth; they were never among the socially elite; they never held high position in the Church—they were simply devoted Latter-day Saints.

After retiring professionally in 1956, they moved to Hawaii to be with their only posterity. The ensuing decades found them loving their family, serving

in the Church, and mostly, they just enjoyed being together. They never liked being apart and even spoke of whoever died first finding a way to help them reunite soon. Nearing their 90th birthdays and after 65 years of marriage, they passed away within hours of each other by natural causes. As their bishop, I conducted their double funeral.

The faithfulness of Grandpa Art and Grandma Lou, especially when faced with difficulty, has now influenced four generations that have followed. Directly and profoundly, it affected their son (my father) and my mother when my parents' own daughter, their youngest child, died due to complications caused by giving birth. At 34 years of age, she passed away 10 days after

childbirth, leaving 4 children, 10 days to 8 years old. With the example that they had seen in the previous generation, my parents—without hesitation—turned to the Lord for solace.

Throughout the world and among the membership of the Church, there is great joy and great pain. Both are part of the plan. Without one, we cannot know the other. “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25) and “for it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11) are not contradictory; they are complementary. In describing how he felt when he turned to the Lord, Alma the Younger said, “My soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain” (Alma 36:20).

Some are overcome by major problems; others let small matters become big. Symonds Ryder was a Campbellite leader who heard about the Church and had a meeting with Joseph Smith. Moved by this experience, he joined the Church in June 1831. Immediately thereafter, he was ordained an elder and called to serve a mission. However, in his call letter from the First Presidency and on his official commission to preach, his name was misspelled—by one letter. His last name showed as Ri-d-e-r, not the correct Ry-d-e-r. This caused him to question his call and those from whom it came. He chose not to go on the mission and fell away, which soon led to hatred and intense opposition toward Joseph and the Church. In March 1832, when Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were ripped from home during the night by an angry mob and tarred and feathered, a voice was heard to shout, “Simonds, Simonds [*sic*], where’s the tar bucket?” (*History of the Church*, 1:262–63). In less than 10 months, Symonds Ryder went from an eager convert to a mob leader, his spiritual decline starting with





the offense taken over the misspelling of his name—by one letter. No matter the size of the issue, how we respond can reset the course of our life.

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided a model in handling personal tragedy and opposition. Revealed to him while in the inhumane surroundings of the Liberty Jail was this divine direction (which, in part, was a description of Joseph's life to that point and also a forewarning): If "fools shall have thee in derision, . . . if thou art called to pass through tribulation; . . . if thine enemies fall upon thee; . . . if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, . . . and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:1, 5–7). Then the profound statement: "The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (verse 8). This is followed by clear direction and great promises. "Therefore, hold on thy way,

and . . . fear not what man can do, for God shall be with you forever and ever" (verse 9).

Over the ensuing years, Joseph Smith continued to righteously endure a life full of adversity. He offered this faith-filled perspective: "And as for the perils which I am called to pass through, they seem but a small thing to me. . . . Deep water is what I am wont to swim in. . . . I . . . glory in tribulation; for . . . God . . . [has] delivered me out of them all, and will deliver me from henceforth" (D&C 127:2). Joseph's confidence in overcoming constant opposition was based on his ability to continually turn to the Lord.

If you feel you have been wronged—by anyone (a family member, a friend, another member of the Church, a Church leader, a business associate) or by anything (the death of a loved one, health problems, a financial reversal, abuse, addictions)—deal with the matter directly and with all the strength you have. "Hold on thy way" (D&C 122:9); giving up is not an option. And, without delay, turn to the Lord. Exercise all of the faith you have

in Him. Let Him share your burden. Allow His grace to lighten your load. We are promised that we will "suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ" (Alma 31:38). Never let an earthly circumstance disable you spiritually.

His most exemplary act, the Atonement, required Jesus to descend "below all things" (D&C 88:6) and suffer "the pains of all men" (2 Nephi 9:21). Thus we understand the Atonement has broader purpose than providing a means to overcome sin. This greatest of all earthly accomplishments gives the Savior the power to fulfill this promise: "If ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence . . . , if ye do this, he will . . . deliver you out of bondage" (Mosiah 7:33).

As we commemorate this Easter morning, let us turn to the Lord, our "bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16). I testify He will forever light our way, our truth, and our life (see John 14:6), in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Cheryl C. Lant

Recently Released Primary General President

That Our Children Might See the Face of the Savior

It is our sacred responsibility as parents and leaders of this rising generation of children to bring them to the Savior.

Several years ago I was teaching a group of nursery leaders how to give a short gospel lesson to very young children. One of the leaders had her young son on her lap. I held a picture of the Savior in my hand and, demonstrating how to speak to young children, began talking about Jesus. The tiny boy slid off his mother's lap, toddled over to me, looked intently at the picture, and touched the face. At that point in the dialogue, I asked the question, "Who is this?" With a smile on his face, the child responded, "Jesus."

This child was not old enough to really even say his own name, but he recognized the image and knew the name of the Savior. As I watched this sweet response, I thought of the words of the Savior when He said, "Seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life" (D&C 101:38).

What does it mean to seek the face of the Savior? Surely it means more than just recognizing His picture. Christ's invitation to seek Him is an invitation to know who He is, what He has done for us, and what He has

asked us to do. Coming to Christ, and eventually seeing His face, comes only as we draw close to Him through our faith and our actions. It comes through a lifetime of effort. So how do we seek Him in this life so that we might see His face in the next?

We have the account in 3 Nephi of a people who actually saw the face of the Savior in this life. And while we may not see Him now, perhaps we can learn from their experience. After the Savior's death, He appeared to these

people, taught them, and blessed them. And then "it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought" (3 Nephi 17:11).

It is our sacred responsibility as parents and leaders of this rising generation of children to bring them to the Savior so that they might see His face and the face of our Father in Heaven as well. As we do so, we also bring ourselves.

Again the question, how do we do this, especially in a world that is full of distractions? In 3 Nephi, the parents loved the Lord. They were believers. They had faith in the miracles Jesus performed. They loved their children. They gathered them to hear the words of the Lord and obeyed His commandment to bring the children to Him.

After the children had been brought, Christ bid the parents kneel down. Then He did for them that which He has done for all of us. He prayed for them to the Father, and as He did, His prayer was said to be "so great and marvelous" that words could not describe it (3 Nephi 17:16). By coming to the Savior and accepting His Atonement, these parents were strengthened to do all that was necessary to "bring" their children.

Another of the things Christ asked these parents to do is found in 3 Nephi 22:13: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

And so, following their own experiences with the Savior, these Nephite parents taught their children about Him. They taught them to love the Lord. They taught them His gospel. They taught them how to live it. They taught them so well that there was righteousness and peace in the land for 200 years (see 4 Nephi 1:1–22).

Now, I would ask you to look around you at those you love. This is





what matters most—our families. I am sure that more than anything, you want this family to be yours eternally. The account in 3 Nephi can help us bring our children to Him because it gives us a pattern to follow. First, we must love the Lord with all our hearts, and we must love our children. Second, we must become a worthy example to them by continually seeking the Lord and striving to live the gospel. Third, we must teach our children the gospel and how to live its teachings.

Following this pattern to bring our children to the Savior is a process. Let's look at the pattern again. First, we must learn how to love the Lord and our families. This takes time, experience, and faith. It requires selfless service. Then, as we are filled with the love of the Lord, we can love. He might weep over what we do, but He loves us and is always there to help us. That is how we must learn to love our children.

Second, we must become worthy examples. This is also a process. If we want our children to come to Christ so that they might see His face, it is important that we seek to see it as well. We have to know the way in order to show it to them. We must put our own lives in order so that the children can look to us and follow. We might ask: "What do my children see when they look at my face? Do they see the image of the Savior in my countenance because of how I live my life?"

Now remember, none of us will be the perfect example for our children, but we all can become worthy parents and leaders. Our striving to be worthy is an example in itself. We may feel as though we are failing at times, but we can keep on trying. With the Lord and through Him, we can be strengthened to be who we need to be. We can do what we need to do.

And third, we have the process of bringing our children to the Savior by

teaching them the truths of the gospel from the scriptures and the prophets and by helping them to feel and recognize the Spirit. Even very young children can understand and accept things of an eternal nature. They love the scriptures, and they love the prophet. They intuitively want to be good. It is up to us to help them keep that connection to heaven open. It is up to us to protect them from influences that detract from the Spirit. We can find help and direction in the scriptures. Then we can teach our children to find their own answers there. We can teach our children correct principles and help them apply those principles to their lives. We can direct them toward the Spirit so that they can receive their own witness of the truths they are learning. We can help them find the joy of living the gospel. This will build a firm foundation of faith and obedience in their lives that will strengthen them.

Now, all of this does not come easily. The Nephite account says that those families had 200 years of peace. But surely it took great effort. It takes a lot of hard work and patience and faith, but nothing is more important or rewarding. And the Lord will help us, for He loves these children even more than we do. He loves them, and He will bless them.

You will remember that He blessed the Nephite children individually and by praying for them (see 3 Nephi 17:14–17, 21). Then "he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were

encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:23–24).

How can our children experience blessings like these today? Elder M. Russell Ballard has said, “Clearly, those of us who have been entrusted with precious children have been given a sacred, noble stewardship, for we are the ones God has appointed to encircle today’s children with love and the fire of faith and an understanding of who they are” (“Behold Your Little Ones,” *Tambuli*, Oct. 1994, 40; “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1994, 60).

Brothers and sisters, we are the angels that Heavenly Father has sent today to bless the children, and we can help them to one day see the face of the Savior as we teach the principles of the gospel and fill our homes with the joy of living them. Together we can come to know Him. We can feel of His love and His blessings. And through Him we can return to the presence of the Father. We do this as we are willing to be obedient, faithful, and diligent in following His teachings.

“Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am” (D&C 93:1).

Brothers and sisters, I know that God lives. Jesus Christ is His Son, our Savior and Redeemer. He has invited us to come unto Him and has commanded us to bring our children that we, together, might see His face and live eternally with Him and with our Father in Heaven. It is my prayer that we might all work to receive this great blessing in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

We Follow Jesus Christ

We rejoice in all the Savior has done for us. He has made it possible for each of us to gain our salvation and exaltation.

It is a significant responsibility to speak on Easter Sunday to Latter-day Saints across the world, who love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We celebrate this morning His victory over death. We cherish our understanding and feel heartfelt appreciation for the Savior’s willing atoning sacrifice on our behalf. His acquiescence to the will of His Father won the supernal victory over death and is the transcendent event in the history of mankind. I appreciate this opportunity to speak about following the Savior.

The final two days of the Savior’s mortal ministry prior to His Crucifixion are profoundly important and in some ways beyond comprehension. So much of what is essential to our eternal destiny occurred on Thursday and then Friday, the day Christ was crucified. The Last Supper, a Passover

supper, the “established memorial of Israel’s deliverance from bondage,” was commenced Thursday evening.¹ Ordinances and doctrines of great importance were initiated at the Last Supper. I will mention just three. First, the Savior introduced the ordinance of the sacrament. He took bread, broke it, prayed over it, and passed it to His disciples, saying, “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”² In this manner He instituted the sacrament. Second, His overwhelming emphasis was on doctrines teaching love as a preeminent principle. He taught, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”³ Third, through Christ’s intercession or direction, “the Holy Ghost was promised to the apostles” as another Comforter.⁴

The Savior subsequently accomplished the Atonement. He took upon Himself the “burden of the sins of mankind” and the “horrors that Satan . . . could inflict.”⁵ In this process He endured the fraudulently concocted trials and the terrible, tragic events leading to His Crucifixion. This ultimately culminated in Christ’s triumphant Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Christ fulfilled His sacred mission as Savior and Redeemer. We will be resurrected from death and have





our spirits reunited with our bodies. Based on personal worthiness, we may through His grace have the glorious opportunity of entering back into the presence of God.⁶

The Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking of these Easter events, said, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”⁷

While we rejoice in the supernal significance of Gethsemane and Calvary, our focus has always been on the resurrected Lord. Frederic Farrar, the English theologian and believer, testified that the earliest generation of believers in the primitive Christian Church celebrated the Savior as “the Risen, the Eternal, the Glorified Christ” and “contemplated Him, not as on the Cross, but as on the Throne.”⁸

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught that our message to the world is that He lives! The symbol of Christ for the Latter-day Saints will be found in the meaningful expression of our faith and the way we live His gospel.⁹

As we ponder what it means to be Christians today, think about what our path of discipleship will require of us. I suggest that we contemplate and in appropriate ways emulate what the

Savior did in those last two days of His mortal life.

First, consider the Savior’s introduction of the sacrament. The Savior knew what was about to befall Him. His sacred, atoning mission, beginning with the War in Heaven in the premortal existence, was about to unfold that evening and the next day. Yet with the trials by His adversaries imminently before Him, there is not the slightest evidence He was preparing a defense against the untrue accusations. The Savior instead introduced the sacred ordinance of the sacrament to His disciples. As I contemplate that solemn occasion, my feelings are deeply touched. Sacrament meeting is the most sacred and holy of all the meetings in the Church. After His Resurrection, the Savior instituted the sacrament among the Nephites.¹⁰ If we are to be His disciples and to be committed members of His Church, we must remember and reverence the sacrament. It allows each of us to express with broken hearts and contrite spirits our willingness to follow the Savior, to repent, and to become a Saint through the Atonement of Christ.¹¹ The sacrament allows us to witness to God that we will remember His Son and keep His commandments as we renew our baptismal covenant.¹² This increases our love and appreciation for both the Father and the Son.

The Savior also emphasized love

and unity and declared that we would be known as His disciples if we have love one to another. In the face of the eternity-shaping Atonement He was about to undertake, such a commandment requires our obedience. We manifest our love for God when we keep His commandments and serve His children. We don’t fully comprehend the Atonement, but we can spend our lives trying to be more loving and kind, regardless of the adversity we face.

The Savior’s charge to His disciples to love one another—and the dramatic and powerful way He taught this principle at the Last Supper—is one of the most poignant and beautiful episodes from the last days of His mortal life.

He was not teaching a simple class in ethical behavior. This was the Son of God pleading with His Apostles and all disciples who would come after them to remember and follow this most central of His teachings. How we relate and interact with each other is a measure of our willingness to follow Jesus Christ.

As we listen to the messages of this conference, we will be touched in our hearts and make resolutions and commitments to do better. But on Monday morning we will return to work, school, neighborhoods, and to a world that in many cases is in turmoil. Many in this world are afraid and angry with one another. While we understand these feelings, we need to be civil in our discourse and respectful in our interactions. This is especially true when we disagree. The Savior taught us to love even our enemies.¹³ The vast majority of our members heed this counsel. Yet there are some who feel that venting their personal anger or deeply held opinions is more important than conducting themselves as

Jesus Christ lived and taught. I invite each one of us individually to recognize that how we disagree is a real measure of who we are and whether we truly follow the Savior. It is appropriate to disagree, but it is not appropriate to be disagreeable. Violence and vandalism are not the answer to our disagreements. If we show love and respect even in adverse circumstances, we become more like Christ.

The Savior's promise of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles is of supreme importance in recognizing the preeminent role of the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead. The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit, the Comforter, who bears witness of the Father and the Son, reveals the truth of

all things, and sanctifies those who have repented and been baptized. He is referred to as the Holy Spirit of Promise and as such confirms as acceptable to God the righteous acts, ordinances, and covenants of each of us.¹⁴ They who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise receive all that the Father has.¹⁵

We live in a noisy, contentious world, where it is possible to be viewing or listening to information, music, or even pure nonsense virtually every waking hour. If we want to have the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, we must find time to slow down, ponder, pray, and live so we are worthy to receive and act upon His promptings. We will avoid major mistakes if we heed His warnings. It is our privilege as members to receive

light and knowledge from Him even to the perfect day.¹⁶

The atoning trials the Savior faced in Gethsemane and on the cross are a great example to us. He faced mental, physical, and spiritual afflictions that are beyond our comprehension. In the garden, He prayed to His Father, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."¹⁷ As His disciples, there will be times when we will be tried and persecuted unjustly and mocked unfairly and face temporal and spiritual storms of a magnitude that will seem unbearable to us and experience bitter cups that we pray would pass from us. No one is exempt from the storms of life.

We are preparing for the Second Coming of the Savior. The scriptures are clear that no one knows when this will occur. The scriptures do tell us that in the last days, among the bitter cups we will face, there will be "earthquakes, in divers places"¹⁸ and the "waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds."¹⁹

Devastating earthquakes and tsunamis have recently occurred in diverse places, including Chile, Haiti, and the islands of the Pacific. A few weeks ago Presiding Bishop H. David Burton, Elder Tad R. Callister, and I were able to meet with the Saints who had lost family members as a result of the tsunami that hit the eastern side of Samoa last September. The chapel was full, and it was an emotional meeting. We were able to assure these choice members that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, they can be reunited with the loved ones they have lost.

The stake president, Sonny Purcell, was driving his car when he saw the enormous wave coming far out at sea. He honked his horn and stopped





children on the road walking to school and warned them to run for higher ground and safety as fast as they could. The children followed his instruction. He frantically drove, reached his four-year-old daughter, put her in the car, and then tried to get to his mother. Before he could reach his mother, the wall of water picked up his car and swept it over 100 yards (91 m), where it lodged in a tree. He scrambled to secure his daughter on top of the car and then swam to rescue his mother, who was clinging to a branch of another tree near their house. With great effort he swam with her to the car and safety. Many were not as fortunate. They did not have time to get to higher ground and safety. Many lost their lives, particularly the young and the elderly.

We told the Samoan families that members all over the world expressed love and concern and had prayed for them and contributed fast offerings and humanitarian aid for both the members and their neighbors. The same is true for the members and their neighbors in Chile and Haiti. We do this because we follow Jesus Christ.

As we met with the families in Samoa, the significance of spiritually going to the higher ground, living a better life, and clinging to saving ordinances was abundantly clear. The Savior's example and life teach us to

spiritually avoid the low pathway, where the things of this world dominate. As I shook hands with the members after our meeting, one sister told me her family had not been to the temple and they had lost a daughter. She tearfully said their goal now was to prepare themselves for the sacred ordinances of the temple so they can be together eternally.

As I have pondered what this sister said and the current condition of the world, I have felt an urgency to counsel each of us to seek the higher ground—the refuge and eternal protection of the temple.

On Easter Sunday, April 3, 1836, one week after the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the Twelve officiated in distributing the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the members. After the meeting, following solemn and silent prayer, the Savior appeared in majesty to the Prophet Joseph and Oliver Cowdery and through Moses, Elias, and Elijah ushered in the restoration of additional priesthood keys, including the sacred sealing power that unites families throughout eternity.²⁰

Today on this Easter morning we rejoice in all the Savior has done for us. He has made it possible for each of us to gain our salvation and exaltation. But we, like the Samoan children, must run as fast as we can to the high ground He has provided for safety and peace.

One of the ways we do this is by adhering to the teachings of our living prophet, President Thomas S. Monson. He is an excellent example of one who follows the Savior.

On this glorious Easter morning I resonate with the treasured words penned by Eliza R. Snow, a faithful servant in the Restoration:

*How great, how glorious, how complete,
Redemption's grand design,
Where justice, love, and mercy meet
In harmony divine!*²¹

I bear my apostolic witness that Jesus Christ lives and is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. He has provided the pathway to true happiness. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 594.
2. Luke 22:19.
3. See John 13:34–35.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 603; see also John 14:16–17.
5. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 613.
6. See 2 Nephi 9:6–24.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49; see also Doctrine and Covenants 20:22–25.
8. Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life of Lives—Further Studies in the Life of Christ* (1900), 209.
9. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “This Glorious Easter Morn,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 65–67; “The Symbol of Our Faith,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Apr. 2005, 2–6.
10. See 3 Nephi 18:1–11.
11. See Mosiah 3:19.
12. See Mosiah 18:8–10; Doctrine and Covenants 20:37, 77–79.
13. See Matthew 5:44.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 132:7.
15. See Romans 8:16–17; Ephesians 1:13–14; Doctrine and Covenants 76:51–60.
16. See Doctrine and Covenants 50:24.
17. Matthew 26:39.
18. Matthew 24:7; Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:29.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 88:90.
20. See Doctrine and Covenants 110.
21. “How Great the Wisdom and the Love,” *Hymns*, no. 195.



By President Thomas S. Monson

He Is Risen!

The empty tomb that first Easter morning was the answer to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

This has been a remarkable session. In behalf of all who participated thus far in word or music, as the President of the Church, I have chosen simply to say to you at this moment just two words, known as the two most important words in the English language. To Sister Cheryl Lant and her counselors, the choir, the musicians, the speakers, those words are "Thank you."

Many years ago, while in London, England, I visited the famed Tate art gallery. Works by Gainsborough, Rembrandt, Constable, and other renowned artists were displayed in room after room. I admired their beauty and recognized the skill which had been required to create these masterpieces. Tucked away in a quiet corner of the third floor, however, was a painting which not only caught my attention but also captured my heart. The artist, Frank Bramley, had painted a humble cottage facing a windswept sea. Two women, the mother and the wife of an absent fisherman, had watched and waited the night through for his return. Now the night had passed, and the realization had set in that he had been lost at sea and would not return. Kneeling at the side of her mother-in-law, her head buried in the lap of the older woman, the young wife wept in despair. The spent candle

on the window ledge told of the fruitless vigil.

I sensed the young woman's heartache; I felt her grief. The hauntingly vivid inscription which the artist gave to his work told the tragic story. It read, *A Hopeless Dawn*.

Oh, how the young woman longed for the comfort, even the reality, of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Requiem":

*Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.*¹

Among all the facts of mortality, none is so certain as its end. Death comes to all; it is our "universal heritage; it may claim its victim[s] in infancy or youth, [it may visit] in the period of life's prime, or its summons may be deferred until the snows of age have gathered upon the . . . head; it

may befall as the result of accident or disease, . . . or . . . through natural causes; but come it must."² It inevitably represents a painful loss of association and, particularly in the young, a crushing blow to dreams unrealized, ambitions unfulfilled, and hopes vanquished.

What mortal being, faced with the loss of a loved one or, indeed, standing himself or herself on the threshold of infinity, has not pondered what lies beyond the veil which separates the seen from the unseen?

Centuries ago the man Job—so long blessed with every material gift, only to find himself sorely afflicted by all that can befall a human being—sat with his companions and uttered the timeless, ageless question, "If a man die, shall he live again?"³ Job spoke what every other living man or woman has pondered.

This glorious Easter morning I'd like to consider Job's question—"If a man die, shall he live again?"—and provide the answer which comes not only from thoughtful consideration but also from the revealed word of God. I begin with the essentials.

If there is a design in this world in which we live, there must be a Designer. Who can behold the many wonders of the universe without believing that there is a design for all



mankind? Who can doubt that there is a Designer?

In the book of Genesis we learn that the Grand Designer created the heaven and the earth: “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”

“Let there be light,” said the Grand Designer, “and there was light.” He created a firmament. He separated the land from the waters and said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, . . . the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself.”

Two lights He created—the sun and the moon. Came the stars by His design. He called for living creatures in the water and fowls to fly above the earth. And it was so. He made cattle, beasts, and creeping things. The design was nearly complete.

Last of all, He created man in His own image—male and female—with dominion over all other living things.⁴

Man alone received intelligence—a brain, a mind, and a soul. Man alone, with these attributes, had the capacity for faith and hope, for inspiration and ambition.

Who could persuasively argue that man—the noblest work of the Great Designer, with dominion over all living things, with a brain and a will, with a mind and a soul, with intelligence and divinity—should come to an end when the spirit forsakes its earthly temple?

To understand the meaning of death, we must appreciate the purpose of life. The dim light of belief must yield to the noonday sun of revelation, by which we know that we lived before our birth into mortality. In our premortal state, we were doubtless among the sons and daughters of God who shouted for joy because of the opportunity to come to this challenging yet necessary mortal existence.⁵ We knew that our purpose was to gain a physical

body, to overcome trials, and to prove that we would keep the commandments of God. Our Father knew that because of the nature of mortality, we would be tempted, would sin, and would fall short. So that we might have every chance of success, He provided a Savior, who would suffer and die for us. Not only would He atone for our sins, but as a part of that Atonement, He would also overcome the physical death to which we would be subject because of the Fall of Adam.

Thus, more than 2,000 years ago, Christ, our Savior, was born to mortal life in a stable in Bethlehem. The long-foretold Messiah had come.

There was very little written of the boyhood of Jesus. I love the passage from Luke: “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”⁶ And from the book of Acts, there is a short phrase concerning the Savior which has a world of meaning: “[He] went about doing good.”⁷

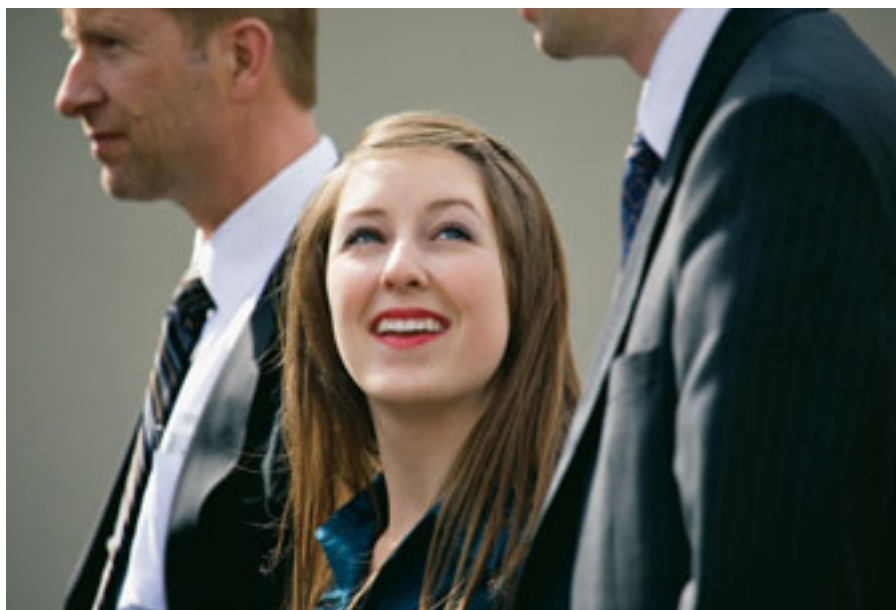
He was baptized by John in the river Jordan. He called the Twelve Apostles. He blessed the sick. He caused the lame to walk, the blind to see, the deaf to hear. He even raised the dead to life. He taught, He testified, and He provided a perfect example for us to follow.

And then the mortal mission of the Savior of the world drew to its close. A last supper with His Apostles took place in an upper room. Ahead lay Gethsemane and Calvary’s cross.

No mere mortal can conceive the full import of what Christ did for us in Gethsemane. He Himself later described the experience: “[The] suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.”⁸

Following the agony of Gethsemane, now drained of strength, He was seized by rough, crude hands and taken before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod. He was accused and cursed. Vicious blows further weakened His pain-racked body. Blood ran down His face as a cruel crown fashioned of sharp thorns was forced onto His head, piercing His brow. And then once again He was taken to Pilate, who gave in to the cries of the angry mob: “Crucify him, crucify him.”⁹

He was scourged with a whip into whose multiple leather strands sharp metals and bones were woven. Rising from the cruelty of the scourge, with stumbling steps He carried His own cross until He could go no farther



and another shouldered the burden for Him.

Finally, on a hill called Calvary, while helpless followers looked on, His wounded body was nailed to a cross. Mercilessly He was mocked and cursed and derided. And yet He cried out, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."¹⁰

The agonizing hours passed as His life ebbed. From His parched lips came the words, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."¹¹

As the serenity and solace of a merciful death freed Him from the sorrows of mortality, He returned to the presence of His Father.

At the last moment, the Master could have turned back. But He did not. He passed beneath all things that He might save all things. His lifeless body was hurriedly but gently placed in a borrowed tomb.

No words in Christendom mean more to me than those spoken by the angel to the weeping Mary Magdalene and the other Mary when, on the first day of the week, they approached the tomb to care for the body of their Lord. Spoke the angel:

"Why seek ye the living among the dead?

"He is not here, but is risen."¹²

Our Savior lived again. The most glorious, comforting, and reassuring of all events of human history had taken place—the victory over death. The pain and agony of Gethsemane and Calvary had been wiped away. The salvation of mankind had been secured. The Fall of Adam had been reclaimed.

The empty tomb that first Easter morning was the answer to Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" To all within the sound of my voice, I declare, If a man die, he shall live again. We know, for we



have the light of revealed truth.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."¹³

I have read—and I believe—the testimonies of those who experienced the grief of Christ's Crucifixion and the joy of His Resurrection. I have read—and I believe—the testimonies of those in the New World who were visited by the same risen Lord.

I believe the testimony of one who, in this dispensation, spoke with the Father and the Son in a grove now called sacred and who gave his life, sealing that testimony with his blood. Declared he:

"And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him,

this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father."¹⁴

The darkness of death can always be dispelled by the light of revealed truth. "I am the resurrection, and the life," spoke the Master.¹⁵ "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."¹⁶

Over the years I have heard and read testimonies too numerous to count, shared with me by individuals who testify of the reality of the Resurrection and who have received, in their hours of greatest need, the peace and comfort promised by the Savior.

I will mention just part of one such account. Two weeks ago I received a touching letter from a father of seven



who wrote about his family and, in particular, his son Jason, who had become ill when 11 years of age. Over the next few years, Jason's illness recurred several times. This father told of Jason's positive attitude and sunny disposition, despite his health challenges. Jason received the Aaronic Priesthood at age 12 and "always willingly magnified his responsibilities with excellence, whether he felt well or not." He received his Eagle Scout Award when he was 14 years old.

Last summer, not long after Jason's 15th birthday, he was once again admitted to the hospital. On one of his visits to see Jason, his father found him with his eyes closed. Not knowing whether Jason was asleep or awake, he began talking softly to him. "Jason," he said, "I know you have been through a lot in your short life and that your current condition is difficult. Even though you have a giant battle ahead, I don't ever want you to lose your faith in Jesus Christ." He said he was startled as Jason immediately opened his eyes and said, "Never!" in a clear, resolute voice. Jason then closed his eyes and said no more.

His father wrote: "In this simple declaration, Jason expressed one of the most powerful, pure testimonies of Jesus Christ that I have ever heard. . . . As his declaration of 'Never!' became imprinted on my soul that day, my

heart filled with joy that my Heavenly Father had blessed me to be the father of such a tremendous and noble boy. . . . [It] was the last time I heard him declare his testimony of Christ."

Although his family was expecting this to be just another routine hospitalization, Jason passed away less than two weeks later. An older brother and sister were serving missions at the time. Another brother, Kyle, had just received his mission call. In fact, the call had come earlier than expected, and on August 5, just a week before Jason's passing, the family gathered in his hospital room so that Kyle's mission call could be opened there and shared with the entire family.

In his letter to me, this father included a photograph of Jason in his hospital bed, with his big brother Kyle standing beside the bed, holding his mission call. This caption was written beneath the photograph: "Called to serve their missions together—on both sides of the veil."

Jason's brother and sister already serving missions sent beautiful, comforting letters home to be shared at Jason's funeral. His sister, serving in the Argentina Buenos Aires West Mission, as part of her letter, wrote: "I know that Jesus Christ lives, and because He lives, all of us, including our beloved Jason, will live again too. . . . We can take comfort in the sure knowledge we have that we have

been sealed together as an eternal family. . . . If we do our very best to obey and do better in this life, we will see [him again]." She continued: "[A] scripture that I have long loved now takes on new significance and importance at this time. . . . [From] Revelation chapter 21, verse 4: 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'"

My beloved brothers and sisters, in our hour of deepest sorrow, we can receive profound peace from the words of the angel that first Easter morning: "He is not here: for he is risen."¹⁷

*He is risen! He is risen!
Tell it out with joyful voice.
He has burst his three days' prison;
Let the whole wide earth rejoice.
Death is conquered; man is free.
Christ has won the victory!*¹⁸

As one of His special witnesses on earth today, this glorious Easter Sunday, I declare that this is true, in His sacred name—even the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior—amen. ■

NOTES

1. Robert Louis Stevenson, "Requiem," in *An Anthology of Modern Verse*, ed. A. Methuen (1921), 208.
2. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 20.
3. Job 14:14.
4. See Genesis 1:1–27.
5. See Job 38:7.
6. Luke 2:52.
7. Acts 10:38.
8. Doctrine and Covenants 19:18.
9. Luke 23:21.
10. Luke 23:34.
11. Luke 23:46.
12. Luke 24:5–6.
13. 1 Corinthians 15:21–22.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–23.
15. John 11:25.
16. John 14:27.
17. Matthew 28:6.
18. "He Is Risen!" *Hymns*, no. 199.



By Elder Russell M. Nelson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Generations Linked in Love

Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple.

Correspondence we receive at Easter or Christmastime provides refreshing memories of dear friends and relatives. Some of those messages are enriched with precious family photographs. Here is one that really caught my attention.

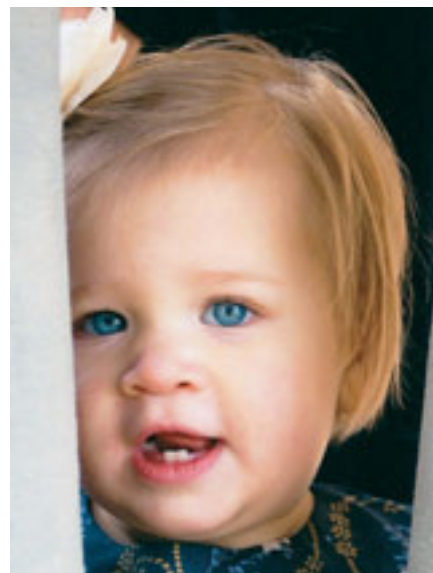
This is one of our great-granddaughters. I'll call her "Dear Ruby." This picture reminded me of her mother when she was about the same age. From my files I retrieved this photo of "Dear Ruby's" mother—one of our granddaughters.

I took this picture of "Dear Ruby's" mother some 29 years ago. Her eyes are still just as blue.

Fond memories surfaced from half a century ago, when "Dear Ruby's" grandmother—one of our daughters—was then the newest member of our family. This is one of her baby pictures. Now she is a loving grandmother, and I am "Dear Ruby's" great-grandfather. (I won't show you my picture as a baby. That would not help.) These photographs suggest the love that links our four generations together.

When I think of the love I feel for each member of our family, I sense, to a slight degree, the love that our Heavenly Father bears for His children. While the family is under attack throughout the world, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints proclaims, promotes, and protects the truth that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and our vast family history efforts are but two evidences of how this Church brings hope and help to the sacred institution of the family.

We teach that God's love for His children is infinite. Regardless of race, nationality, or gender, He loves all of them.¹ He has done so from the beginning and will continue to do so. He invites all to gain eternal exaltation for their family. His work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life—the exaltation—of His children.² "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not



"Dear Ruby," Elder Nelson's great-granddaughter



Mother of "Dear Ruby," Elder Nelson's granddaughter



Grandmother of "Dear Ruby," Elder Nelson's daughter



Temple ordinance cards

our hearts turn to our ancestors, something changes inside us. We feel part of something greater than ourselves. Our inborn yearnings for family connections are fulfilled when we are linked to our ancestors through sacred ordinances of the temple.

Because of the importance of this work, the Church has built temples closer to the people,⁵ and family history research is being facilitated as never before. Methods to find and prepare names for temple ordinances are also improving. At the October 2005 conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced an exciting step forward in family history and temple work. He said: "One of the most troublesome aspects of our temple activity is that as we get more and more temples . . . across the earth there is duplication of effort in proxy work. . . . We, therefore, have been engaged for some time in a very difficult undertaking. . . . The solution lies in complex computer technology."⁶

Since then, not only has duplication been reduced, but procedures have been simplified so that virtually every member of the Church can participate in temple and family history work. Gone are the days when this sacred work was done only by specialists. No matter your situation, you can make family history a part of your life right now. Primary children can draw a family tree. Youth can participate in proxy baptisms. They can also help the older generation work with computers. Parents can relate stories of their lives to their posterity. Worthy adult members can hold a temple recommend and perform temple ordinances for their own kin.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead."⁷ New technology

perish, but have everlasting life."³

The Atonement of His Beloved Son enabled both of the Father's objectives to be fulfilled. Without the Atonement, there would be no immortality. Without the Atonement, there would be no return to the presence of the Father and no continuation of the family beyond the grave.

Because of the Atonement, these consummate blessings can be realized by each of God's children who obey His eternal laws. Through the ages, many of His children have had access to the blessings of the gospel, but many more have not. Before the foundation of the world, our Heavenly

Father instituted the ordinance of baptism for those who die without a knowledge of the gospel.⁴ He loves those children too.

He also provided a way for them to be part of an eternal family. Every human being who comes to this earth is the product of generations of parents. We have a natural yearning to connect with our ancestors. This desire dwells in our hearts, regardless of age.

Consider the spiritual connections that are formed when a young woman helps her grandmother enter family information into a computer or when a young man sees the name of his great-grandfather on a census record. When

makes it easier than ever to fulfill that responsibility. Temple and family history work is now facilitated by a system known as the “new FamilySearch.”⁸ This Internet-based system helps members identify their ancestors, determine what ordinance work needs to be done for them, and prepare their names for the temple. It can be accessed from home, a family history center,⁹ or wherever the Internet is available. The steps are easy to follow.¹⁰

You first identify individuals for whom you desire to do temple work.

Then you print out a Family Ordinance Request. This document provides the information needed at the temple and eliminates the need to take computer discs with you.

From the Family Ordinance Request, ordinance cards are printed at the temple. After an ordinance is performed, it is recorded and entered into new FamilySearch on that very day.

Now what about those of you who have no access to a computer or prefer not to use this technology? Don't worry! Take one step at a time. Start at home. Begin with an empty cardboard box, as suggested by President Boyd K. Packer.¹¹ Put in that box important information about you and your family. Add data gathered from others of your family. Then avail yourself of assistance from your ward or branch family history consultant. The new FamilySearch system enables a consultant to perform all needed computer functions for you, including preparing names for the temple. About 60,000 consultants serve throughout the world. One in your ward or branch can be very helpful to you.

The new FamilySearch system changes the dynamics of family history work by facilitating the creation of one common pedigree. In the past, a person worked separately, keeping his or



Saints from the San Salvador El Salvador Ilopango Stake attend the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple.

her own family records. One often worked without knowing what other family members were doing. Now each person can contribute information while coordinating with others in developing their family tree.

While the new FamilySearch is a giant step forward, it is still just a step. There is more work ahead. Because the system facilitates access to information submitted to the Church over many decades from many sources, new FamilySearch may expose duplicate entries or errors that had not previously been recognized. This feature is especially useful for those with early pioneer ancestry. Duplications and errors need correction, and no one can do it better than each individual for his or her own family.

You may be frustrated as you work through these challenges. Please be assured that your concerns are well understood. The Church, under the inspired leadership of President Thomas S. Monson, is working diligently to assist you in solving these problems. Together we are striving to organize the family tree for all of God's children. This is an enormous endeavor with enormous rewards.

This is joyful work. Look at this photograph of new converts doing temple work for their own kin. These dear Saints are from the San Salvador El Salvador Ilopango Stake and are attending the Guatemala City Temple for the first time. They are holding their temple cards, each with the name of a deceased relative for whom they have performed a vicarious baptism.

In order for the Church's family history efforts to succeed, priesthood direction and leadership are essential. Leaders teach and testify of the doctrine undergirding this sacred work.¹² They issue callings and see that instruction is available.¹³ They view temple and family history activity as a way to elevate the spirit of their ward, strengthen the spiritual roots of new converts, and bless the lives of all members.

While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families.

We are exalted when we can dwell together with our extended families in



That this sacred goal may be realized for each of us is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; 2 Nephi 26:33.
2. See Moses 1:39.
3. John 3:16.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:33.
5. President Thomas S. Monson said recently that 83 percent of Church members throughout the world now live within 200 miles (320 km) of a temple (see “Welcome to Conference,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 4).
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Opening Remarks,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 5–6.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 475.
8. Presently available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and German. Will be available in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean later this year.
9. We have more than 4,000 family history centers throughout the world.
10. If you have access to a computer, go to new.familysearch.org. To register for the first time, you will need your membership number and your birth date. You can obtain this information from your ward or branch clerk. Once logged into the system, you can verify that your ancestors’ information is in the system and what temple ordinances are needed. You can identify ancestors who are not now known to you and add them to your family tree. Print out a Family Ordinance Request form to take to the temple and thus open the way for needed ordinances to be performed.
11. See Boyd K. Packer, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 12–17.
12. Under the direction of the stake presidency, one or more assigned high councilors oversee temple and family history work in the stake. On the ward or branch level, the high priests group leader or elders quorum president leads the way. Many resources, printed and online, are available to help family history consultants and priesthood leaders fulfill their duties.
13. Helpful new resources include *Member’s Guide to Temple and Family History Work* (item no. 36795) and *Instructor’s Guide* (item no. 35804) and accompanying DVD. These guides can be downloaded or viewed online at lds.org or ordered through Distribution Services.
14. Doctrine and Covenants 128:24.
15. See Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18; Doctrine and Covenants 138:18, 31, 42.
16. See Doctrine and Covenants 128:18.

the presence of Almighty God. The Prophet Joseph Smith foresaw our duty: “The great day of the Lord is at hand . . .,” he said. “Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness; and let us present in his holy temple . . . a book containing the records of our dead, which shall be worthy of all acceptance.”¹⁴

The preparation of that record is our individual and collective responsibility. As we work together, we can

make it worthy of all acceptance by the Lord. That record enables ordinances to be performed for and accepted by our deceased ancestors, as they may choose. Those ordinances can bring liberty to captives on the other side of the veil.¹⁵

Our children, grandchildren, “Dear Ruby,” and all our great-grandchildren are linked in love. They are also linked in love to ancestors. Those links, welded through sacred ordinances, lead to the exaltation of our families.¹⁶



By Elder Robert D. Hales
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation

It is our imperative duty to help youth understand and believe the gospel in a deeply personal way.

This afternoon I desire to encourage parents and all who are called to lead and serve the youth of this world. The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that we have “an imperative duty that we owe to all the rising generation” (D&C 123:11).

Throughout my life as a father and grandfather, I have pondered the question, what is my *duty to God* in relation to the youth? May I share some of what I have learned by way of personal reflection and testimony.

For all of us, doing our duty to God as parents and leaders begins with leading by example—consistently and diligently living gospel principles at home. This takes daily determination and diligence.

For youth, there is no substitute for seeing the gospel lived in our daily lives. The stripling warriors did not have to wonder what their parents believed. They said, “We do not doubt our mothers knew it” (see Alma

56:47–48). Do our children know what we know?

I have a grandson who once asked me to go with him to a popular but inappropriate movie. I told him I wasn’t old enough to see that film. He was puzzled until his grandmother explained to him that the rating system by age didn’t apply to Grandpa. He came back to me and said, “I get it now, Grandpa. You’re never going to be old enough to see that movie, are you?” And he was right!

Besides showing youth the way by example, we lead them by understanding their hearts and walking alongside them on the gospel path. To truly understand their hearts, we must do more than just be in the same room or attend the same family and Church activities. We must plan and take advantage of teaching moments that make a deep and lasting impression upon their minds and hearts.

For example, Church leaders regularly plan priesthood activities and

Scouting pow wows and encampments—but do those activities always accomplish their most important purpose? I have learned that what makes a priesthood or Scout activity most meaningful to a boy is not just getting a merit badge but having the opportunity to sit and talk with a leader who is interested in him and his life.

Similarly, mothers and fathers, as you drive or walk children to school or their various activities, do you use the time to talk with them about their hopes and dreams and fears and joys? Do you take the time to have them take the earplugs from their MP3 players and all the other devices so that they can hear you and feel of your love? The more I live, the more I recognize that the teaching moments in my youth, especially those provided by my parents, have shaped my life and made me who I am.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of parents who understand the hearts of their children. Research shows that during the most important transitions of life—including those periods when youth are most likely to drift away from the Church—the greatest influence does not come from an interview with the bishop or some other leader but from the regular, warm, friendly, caring interaction with parents.

With that in mind, when we sit down at the dinner table, is our whole family there? I remember as a young man asking permission to play baseball through dinnertime. “Just put my meal in the oven,” I said to my mother. She responded, “Robert, I really want you to take a break, come home, be with the family for dinner, and then you can go out and play baseball until dark.” She taught all of us that where family meals are concerned, it’s not the food but the family interaction that



Progress and Duty to God requirements are not just lengthy lists of items to check off. They are personal goals set by each young man and young woman to help them become worthy to receive temple ordinances, serve missions, enter into eternal marriage, and enjoy exaltation. *But let it be understood: for young men and young women to try to accomplish these goals alone would be a great loss and tragedy!*

Fathers, mothers, and leaders of youth, we urge you to participate in Personal Progress and Duty to God with your children and with the youth. Not only will they grow; you will grow too. And just as importantly, you will grow together in a bond of faith and friendship that will allow you to strengthen each other and stay on the gospel path forever, to indeed be an eternal family.

An equally important part of fulfilling our parental duty to God is teaching our children the gospel and preparing them to participate fully in the Savior's restored Church. Remember the lesson of King Benjamin's people. As a result of his teachings, many of the adults had a mighty change of heart (see Mosiah 5:2). But then it says that "there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of King Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe. . . . And their hearts were hardened" (Mosiah 26:1, 3).

It is our *imperative duty* to help youth understand and believe the gospel in a deeply personal way. We can teach them to walk in the light, but that light cannot be borrowed. They must earn it for themselves. They must obtain their own light of testimony directly from the source of spiritual light—God Himself—through

nourishes the soul. My mother taught that the greatest love we give is within our homes.

For our interactions with youth to truly touch their hearts, we have to pay attention to them just as we would pay attention to a trusted adult colleague or close friend. Most important is asking them questions, letting them talk, and then being willing to listen—yes, listen and listen some more—even hearken with spiritual ears! Several years ago I was reading the newspaper when one of my young grandsons snuggled up to me. As I read, I was delighted to hear his sweet voice chattering on in the background. Imagine my surprise when, a few moments later, he pushed himself between me and the paper. Taking my face in his hands and pressing his nose up to mine, he asked, "Grandpa! Are you in there?"

Mother, Father, are you in there?
Grandpa, Grandma, are you there?

Being *there* means understanding the hearts of our youth and connecting with them. And connecting with them means not just conversing with them but doing things with them too.

Recently I heard a mother recount how she had helped her first three daughters complete their Personal Progress requirements by doing what was expected—staying informed and signing off projects. Then she tenderly explained, tears flowing down her cheek, "Recently I have been working with my fourth daughter by actually doing her projects with her. It has made all the difference in our lives and our relationship. But oh, what sadness I feel when I realize what I lost by not doing this with my other three daughters." The saddest words of tongue and pen are those that say, "It might have been!"¹

Adult members of the Church should understand that Personal

prayer and study and pondering. They must understand who they are and who Heavenly Father wants them to become. How do we help them?

When we have a family home evening, a family council, or a meaningful gospel conversation with our children, we have the opportunity to look into their eyes and tell them that we love them and that Heavenly Father loves them. In these sacred settings, we can also help them understand, deep in their hearts, who they are and how fortunate they are to have come to this earth and to our home and to participate in the covenants we have taken in the temple to be a family forever. In every interaction we share, we demonstrate the principles and blessings of the gospel.

In these perilous times it is not enough for our youth to merely *know*.

They must *do*. Wholehearted participation in ordinances, quorums and auxiliaries, inspired programs, and fortifying activities helps youth put on the whole armor of God. Will we help them put on that armor so they can withstand the fiery darts of the adversary? To truly choose the Lord's way, they must know His way. And to truly know His way, we must teach and lead them to act, to participate, to do.

The greatest missionary work we will ever do will be in our homes. Our homes, quorums, and classes are part of the mission field. Our children and grandchildren are our most important investigators.

The greatest family history work that we will do will be within our own homes. It is the spiritual preparation of our children in the rising generation that will, through their

obedience, ensure the eternal preservation and perpetuation of our families for the coming generations.

The greatest rescue, the greatest activation will be in our homes. If someone in your family is wandering in strange paths, you are a rescuer, engaged in the greatest rescue effort the Church has ever known. I testify from personal experience: There is no failure except in giving up. It is never too early or too late to begin. Do not worry about what has happened in the past. Pick up the phone. Write a note. Make a visit. Extend the invitation to come home. Don't be afraid or embarrassed. Your child is Heavenly Father's child. You are about His work. He has promised to gather His children, and He is with you.

The greatest faith we have will be within our homes as we remain



strong in the trials and tribulations of parenthood. To a small group of mothers, President Monson recently said, “Sometimes we are too quick to judge the effect of our successes and failures.” May I add, don’t look at today’s trials as eternal. Heavenly Father does His work in the long term. “There is much which lieth in futurity,” the Prophet Joseph Smith said. “Therefore, . . . let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power; and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:15, 17).

On this Easter Sunday I would hope that we would have the opportunity of bearing our testimonies that we know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I would hope that we would bear our testimonies so that our children will know where our hearts are and that we love them. *The greatest love and the greatest teachings should be in our homes.*

I ask the Lord’s blessings to be with the parents and with the youth who are brought up in faithful homes, that they will understand the joy it is to be in a home and family where they can be loved, directed, and guided. It is my prayer that we may have eternal families and be together forever in the presence of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I bear my special witness that Jesus Christ lives. He is the shepherd of the lost sheep, the rescuer of the stranded soul, the healer of the wounded heart, the hope of all mankind. With Him as our Master, let us fulfill our duty to God with faith in Him and His eternal love for each of us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTE

1. See “Maud Muller,” *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (1876), 206.



By Elder Bradley D. Foster

Of the Seventy

Mother Told Me

Perhaps the reason we respond so universally to our mothers’ love is because it typifies the love of our Savior.

The Lord has placed upon parents the primary responsibility for the spiritual nurturing of their children. Sometimes this responsibility falls to a single parent. My own mother was relatively young when my father died, leaving her alone with four children. But she faced her adversity with faith and courage, promising us that if we stayed on the road of truth, the end would be better than the beginning. Like the children of valiant mothers in the Book of Mormon, “we [did] not doubt our [mother] knew it” (Alma 56:48). Brothers and sisters, I understand in a personal way the great influence of mothers.

My good friend Don Pearson shared an experience that highlights this influence. One night his four-year-old son asked him to read a bedtime story. Eric had picked out his favorite book: *The Ballooning Adventures of Paddy Pork*, a story about a family who lived on the isles of the sea and traveled from island to island by hot-air balloon. It was a picture book that had no words, so Brother Pearson made up words to the story.

“Paddy is in a hot-air balloon. He is landing on an island now. He is dropping a line over the side of the balloon.”

Eric stopped him. “Dad, that is not a line. It’s a *rope*.”

Brother Pearson looked at Eric and back at the picture book, and then he continued: “Paddy is getting out of the balloon and climbing down the tree. Oh no! His coat is caught on a limb!”

Again Eric stopped him. “Dad, that’s not a coat. It’s a *jacket*.”

By now Brother Pearson was somewhat perplexed. He said, “Eric, there are no words in this book, just pictures. Why do you insist that it’s a jacket?”

Eric answered, “Because Mother told me.”

His father closed the book and said, “Eric, who do you think is the last word, the ultimate authority in this house?”

This time Eric thought carefully before he answered, “You are, Dad.”

Brother Pearson beamed at his son. What an exceptional answer! “How did you know that?”

Eric quickly responded, “Mother told me.”

As President James E. Faust said: “There is no greater good in all the world than motherhood. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation” (“Fathers, Mothers, Marriage,” *Liabona* and *Ensign*, Aug. 2004, 3).

By divine design, nurturing seems to be part of the spiritual heritage given to women. I’ve seen it in my daughters, and now I see it in my



granddaughters—even before they could walk, they wanted to carry and care for their little baby dolls.

In my profession as a farmer and a rancher, I've had a front-row seat to observe how a mother's natural affection manifests itself even in nature. Each spring we take a herd of cows and their new calves up along Idaho's Snake River, where they graze in the foothills for a month or so. Then we round them up and bring them down a road that leads to the corral. From there they are loaded onto trucks that carry them to their summer pastures in Montana.

On one particularly hot spring day, I was helping with the roundup by riding at the back of the herd as it moved down the dusty road toward the corral. My job was to gather any calves that had wandered from the road. The

pace was slow and provided me some time to think.

Because it was so hot, the little calves kept running off into the trees to find shade. My thoughts turned to the youth of the Church who are sometimes distracted from the strait and narrow path. I also thought about those who have left the Church or who may feel that the Church has left their hearts while they were distracted. I thought to myself that a distraction doesn't have to be evil to be effective—sometimes it can just be shade.

After several hours of gathering up stray calves and with sweat running down my face, I yelled to the calves in frustration, "Just follow your mothers! They know where they're going! They've been down this road before!" Their mothers knew that even though the road was hot and dusty

now, the end would be better than the beginning.

As soon as we got the herd into the corral, we noticed that three of the cows were pacing nervously at the gate. They could not find their calves and seemed to sense they were back on the road somewhere. One of the cowboys asked me what we should do. I said, "I bet I know where those calves are. Back a quarter of a mile [0.4 km] or so, there's a stand of trees. I'm sure we'll find them there."

Sure enough, just as I had suspected, we found our lost calves taking a nap in the shade. Our approach startled them, and they resisted our efforts to round them up. They were frightened because we were *not* their mothers! The more we tried to push them toward the corral, the more stubborn they became. Finally I said to the cowboys, "I'm sorry. I know better than this. Let's ride back and let their mothers out of the corral. The cows will come and get their calves, and the calves will follow their mothers." I was right. The mother cows knew exactly where to go to find their calves, and they led them back to the corral, as I had expected.

Brothers and sisters, in a world where everyone is granted agency, some of our loved ones may stray for a season. But we can never give up. We must always go back for them—we must never stop trying. Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has issued a plea for us to go rescue those of our loved ones who may be lost (see, for example, "Stand in Your Appointed Place," *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2003, 54–57). With the help of priesthood leaders, parents must continue to go back and find their lost ones, assuring them there will always be a "home" within the family and the Church, waiting for



Perhaps the reason we respond so universally to our mothers' love is because it typifies the love of our Savior. As President Joseph F. Smith said, "The love of a true mother comes nearer [to] being like the love of God than any other kind of love" ("The Love of Mother," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1910, 278).

As in all things, the Savior set the perfect example in the love He showed for His earthly mother. In the final, most pivotal moment of His mortal life—after the anguish of Gethsemane, the mock trial, the crown of thorns, the heavy cross to which He was brutally nailed—Jesus looked down from the cross and saw His mother, Mary, who had come to be with her Son. His final act of love before He died was to ensure that His mother would be cared for, saying to His disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that point on the disciple took her unto his home. As the scriptures say, then Jesus knew that "all things were now accomplished," and He bowed His head and died (see John 19:27–28, 30).

Today I stand before you to bear my witness that Jesus Christ is the very Savior and Redeemer of the world. This is His Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our Heavenly Father wants all of His children to return to Him. I know this without contradiction because of the witness of the Holy Ghost to my heart. I didn't always know—when I was younger I had to rely on my parents' testimony. My mother assured me that if I stayed on the road of truth, even when it seemed hot and dusty, even when there were distractions, the end would be better than the beginning. I will be eternally grateful that Mother told me. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

their return. We never know when a heart may be turned. We never know when a soul may be weary and worn out by the world. When that happens, it seems our children almost always turn first toward Mother, with emotions like those expressed in a poem by Elizabeth Akers Allen:

*Backward, flow backward, O tide of
the years!
I am so weary of toil and of tears, . . .*

*Tired of the hollow, the base, the
untrue,
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for
you! . . .*

*Over my heart, in the days that are
flown,
No love like mother-love ever has
shone; . . .*

*None like a mother can charm away
pain
From the sick soul and the world-
weary brain.
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy
lids creep;
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to
sleep!
("Rock Me to Sleep," in *The Family
Library of Poetry and Song*, ed.
William Cullen Bryant [1870], 190–91;
punctuation modernized.)*



By Elder James B. Martino
Of the Seventy

All Things Work Together for Good

We may never know in this life why we face what we do, but we can feel confident that we can grow from the experience.

When I was young I looked forward to the spring of the year. As the weather warmed, I was ready for baseball to begin. Like most young boys, I would wish that I could become a great baseball player. I am reminded of a story about a very young boy with similar dreams. With the desire to become the next mighty ballplayer, he decided to go outside and practice. He held the baseball in one hand and the bat in the other, and he threw the ball into the air. With a wish to hit the ball as far as he could, he took a great swing, but the ball fell to the ground without even touching the wood of the bat. Not to be denied, he went at it again. As he was about to throw the ball in the air, his determination grew as the thought of a powerful hit came into his mind. But alas, the results were the same. The ball lay on the ground. But as any good ballplayer knows, you have three strikes before you are out. He concentrated even more, threw the ball in the air, and gave the mightiest swing he had ever attempted. As the ball again fell to the ground, the tears began to swell in his eyes. Then all of a sudden a great smile appeared, and he said, “What a pitcher!”

Each of us will face trials and tests, and as in this simplistic example, it is how we react to those difficulties that will determine our success and happiness. Each of us will face adversity no matter where we are. We are taught in the scriptures that there “must needs be . . . an opposition in all things.”¹ We will each face times of difficulty, and the question is not when we will face them but how we face them.

The Apostle Paul taught an interesting lesson only a few years before the Saints in Rome were to face some of the most violent persecution of any Christian era. Paul reminded the Saints that “all things work together for good to them that love God.”² Our Heavenly Father, who loves us completely and perfectly, permits us to have

experiences that will allow us to develop the traits and attributes we need to become more and more Christlike. Our trials come in many forms, but each will allow us to become more like the Savior as we learn to recognize the good that comes from each experience. As we understand this doctrine, we gain greater assurance of our Father’s love. We may never know in this life why we face what we do, but we can feel confident that we can grow from the experience.

Now, I realize that it is much easier to look back when a trial is over and see what we have learned from our experience, but the challenge is to gain that eternal perspective while we are going through our tests. To some, our trials may not seem great, but to each of us who are passing through these experiences, the trials are real and require us to humble ourselves before God and learn from Him.

On this Easter Sunday, we remember the life of our Savior. It is He whom we desire to emulate in all of our actions. May I mention five things that we can learn from those last hours of the Savior’s life on earth that can help us to face our own trials.

First, He sought not to do His will but only the will of His Father. He remained committed to His sacred mission even through the trial. As He fell to His face in the Garden of



Gethsemane, He asked, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.”³ Sometimes we pass through pain and sorrow that we might grow and be prepared for potential trials in the future. I ask a question to you mothers: “Would you ever do something that would cause pain and bring tears to your children when they have done nothing wrong?” Of course you would! When mothers take young children to the doctor to receive immunizations, almost every child leaves the doctor’s office in tears. Why do you do that? Because you know that a small amount of pain now will protect them from possible pain and suffering in the future. Our Father in Heaven knows the end from the beginning. We need to follow the example of the Savior and trust in Him.

Second, when we are faced with trials, we must learn to not complain or murmur. Nephi, after a great vision of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice, told us: “Wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.”⁴ We must always attempt to correct the problem and overcome the trial, but instead of asking “Why me?” or “What did I do to deserve this?” maybe the question should be “What am I to do? What can I learn from this experience? What am I to change?”

Several years ago while my wife and I were serving in Venezuela, our youngest son left the comfort of his high school to join with us. He did not complain, but it was obvious that he struggled as he went to this country where everything was new to him; but in an amazing turn of events, the experience went from one of trial to a



huge blessing in his life. He accomplished this by changing his own attitude and developing a determination to succeed.

Third, when we face our challenges, we must seek greater help from God. Even the Savior of us all found a need to pray “more earnestly” as He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.⁵ We can learn to gain great faith if we do this. We must remember that often the answers from our Heavenly Father do not remove the trial from us, but instead He helps strengthen us as we pass through the experience. As He did for the followers of Alma, the Lord can “ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs.”⁶ In our trials, let us not become bitter

or uncommitted, but let us follow the Savior’s example of becoming more earnest, more sincere, and more faithful.

Fourth, learn to serve and think of others even in our times of trial. Christ was the epitome of service. His life was filled with examples of helping and serving others, and His greatest gift of all was what He did for us. As He said, “For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent.”⁷ We must repent and then follow His example of service. When we serve others, we forget our own problems, and by working to relieve the pain or discomfort of others, we strengthen ourselves.

In our last general conference, our beloved prophet, President Thomas S.

Monson, stated: “I believe the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives.”⁸

Fifth, forgive others and do not seek to pass the blame of our situation to them. Sometimes we like to say, “If they had not done this, then I would not have reacted the way I did.” There is a tendency for the natural man to pass blame to someone else so as not to be accountable for his or her own actions. The Savior looked at those who had nailed Him to the cross and pled with His Father in Heaven to “forgive them; for they know not what they do.”⁹ Can we not be more forgiving?

As we pass through the trials of life, let us keep an eternal perspective, let us not complain, let us become even more prayerful, let us serve others, and let us forgive one another. As we do this, “all things [will] work together for good to [us] that love God.”¹⁰ I bear a solemn and certain witness that our Father loves us and He sent His Son to show and pave the way for us. He suffered, He died, and He was resurrected that we might live, and He desires that we “might have joy,”¹¹ even in our trials of life. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. 2 Nephi 2:11.
2. Romans 8:28.
3. Luke 22:42.
4. 1 Nephi 19:9.
5. Luke 22:44.
6. Mosiah 24:14.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 19:16.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “What Have I Done for Someone Today?” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 85.
9. Luke 23:34.
10. Romans 8:28.
11. 2 Nephi 2:25.



By Elder Gregory A. Schwitzer
Of the Seventy

Developing Good Judgment and Not Judging Others

Good judgment is needed not only in understanding people but also in facing decisions that often lead us to or away from our Heavenly Father.

We live in a world in which many situations require us to make judgments that are often difficult. Yet the Savior gave the commandment to “judge not” our fellowman.¹ How can we do this and still exercise good judgment in a world full of deception and corruption? We must judge well when making critical decisions in each phase of our life, such as choosing friends, finding an eternal companion, or choosing an occupation that will allow us to care for our family and serve the Lord. Although the Savior asked us not to judge others, He still expects us to use excellent judgment.

We may often find ourselves making quick judgments about people, which can change or redefine our relationships with them. Often incorrect judgments are made because of limited information or because we do not see beyond that which is immediately in front of us.

By way of illustration, the story is often told of the time when Jesus

visited the home of Mary and Martha, who lived in Bethany with their brother, Lazarus. It was a welcome place for the Master, where He could rest and enjoy the surroundings of a righteous home. During one of His visits, Martha was busy preparing a meal and Mary elected to sit at the Master’s feet to receive His instruction.

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? . . .

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”²

Many Sunday lessons have been taught using this story which have cast Martha in a lesser position in terms of her faith. Yet there is another story of this great woman, Martha, which gives us a deeper view of her understanding and testimony. It happened when the Savior arrived to raise her brother,



Lazarus, from the dead. On this occasion it was Martha whom we find going to Jesus “as soon as she heard” He was coming. As she meets Him, she says that she knows that “whatsoever [He would] ask of God, God [would] give [Him].”

Christ then shared with Martha the great doctrine of the resurrection, saying:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

She responded with her powerful testimony: “Yea, Lord: I believe that

thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.”²³

How often has Martha been misjudged as being a person who cared more for the deeds of doing than for the Spirit? However, her testimony in the trial of her brother’s death clearly shows the depth of her understanding and faith.

Many a sister has often heard the first story and wondered if she were a Mary or a Martha, yet the truth lies in knowing the whole person and in using good judgment. By knowing more about Martha, we find she was actually a person of deep spiritual character who had a bold and daring testimony of the Savior’s mission and

His divine power over life. A misjudgment of Martha may have caused us not to know the true nature of this wonderful woman.

On a personal level, as a young physician I learned a great lesson about making quick judgments. While I was working a midnight shift in an emergency department, a young man and his wife came in because she was suffering some severe pain. From their dress and hygiene, it was easy to see that theirs had been a rough life. His hair was ill kempt and very long. Their clothing had not been washed for some time, and the effects of a rough life were written on both of their faces.

After an examination, I sat down with him to explain the problem and discuss the treatment. This man looked at me with a deep clarity of love that is rarely experienced and asked with all the love of a caring husband, “Doctor, will my dear wife be all right?” At that moment, I felt the Spirit testify that he was a child of God and saw in his eyes the evidence of the Savior. This man truly projected love for another, and I had misjudged him. It was a lesson that left a lasting impression.

Good judgment is needed not only in understanding people but also in facing decisions that often lead us to or away from our Heavenly Father. As I look back over my own personal life, I can see many instances in which a slight change of course based on poor judgment would have led me far from where the Lord wanted me to be—decisions like having a family while obtaining an education, being active in all aspects of the gospel, paying tithes and offerings when income was severely limited, and accepting callings at difficult times, which helped me to understand more about sacrifice. Many blessings in life are missed because worldly judgment was applied

to what was really a spiritual decision.

There are many characteristics of people who have developed good judgment. I would offer four guides for developing such judgment in making important decisions.

First, put your own personal standards in alignment with the gospel of Jesus Christ. A person can never be a good judge without the gospel of Jesus Christ as a reference. The gospel has a long and successful record of guiding people to happiness. Some of the world's ideas leave mankind adrift to try to define their own standards. Because of this, we hear phrases like "a new morality." This phrase is deceptive! The standards of morality are eternal and have not changed; neither should we try to discover a new interpretation of them. For the youth these standards are written in the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth*. These standards are clearly aligned with the gospel of Jesus Christ and are intended to continue through adult life. Perhaps it would be good for us as adults to study and apply this pamphlet to our lives.

Second, listen to the messages of the living prophet. How many poor financial judgments would have been avoided had we listened to the years of advice given through our prophets about avoiding risky speculation and following a careful budget to avoid consumer debt? How many marriages would have been saved by using good judgment in avoiding media that lead to pornographic addiction and heartache? Each general conference and Church magazine contains advice from the prophets which, if applied, will lead us to good judgment. We are left without excuse when we ignore them.

Third, cultivate with the Holy Spirit a relationship of listening. We are given the gift of the Holy Ghost after

our baptism, but often we leave this gift on the shelf, forgetting that He will help us in the most important judgments of our lives. The Lord gave us this gift, knowing we would face difficult decisions in life. Listening to this voice is vital in developing good judgment. A relationship of listening often requires a quiet environment in which we can take time to ponder and hear the still, small voice. This peaceful environment is both external and internal. Therefore, it is more than shutting off the music of the world or the blare of other media; it is also shutting off the noise of sin that is internal to our soul. This will open the communication with the Spirit, which is so badly needed.

Christ said: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."⁴ The peace that comes from listening to the Holy Spirit removes the fear of making a poor judgment in life.

Fourth, keep the commandments. The willingness to keep God's commandments opens to us many

promised blessings. The Book of Mormon, in addition to being another testament of Jesus Christ, is a book about the results of keeping and not keeping commandments. The Lord said to Nephi in the second chapter of his first book, "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper."⁵

This same promise was repeated by almost every major prophet in the Book of Mormon. A thousand years of history is then recorded which bears witness that these things are true. And the same message applies to us today. Good judgment is best learned and practiced within the bounds the Lord sets by giving us commandments.

I testify that when we face difficult decisions and follow these guidelines, we can know better how we should judge. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Matthew 7:1. See also Matthew 7:1, footnote a; from Joseph Smith Translation, where the Savior commands us to "judge not unrighteously."
2. Luke 10:40–42.
3. See John 11:20–27.
4. John 14:27.
5. 1 Nephi 2:20.





By Elder Francisco J. Viñas
Of the Seventy

Things Pertaining to Righteousness

As parents and leaders we need to watch over our members and families, helping them to stay away from those things that could lead them to a spiritual death.

We are told in the Doctrine and Covenants that after the testimony of the servants of God, the testimony of earthquakes and the testimony of other events will follow. “And all things shall be in commotion; and surely, men’s hearts shall fail them; for fear shall come upon all people” (D&C 88:91; see also verses 88–90).

As a member of the Caribbean Area Presidency, I was a personal witness to the faithful Saints who replaced fear with faith. Lessons learned in Haiti may be likened to Book of Mormon illustrations.

The impression of that terrible destruction brought to my mind the words in the 28th chapter of Alma: “This was a time that there was a great mourning and lamentation heard throughout all the land” (Alma 28:4).

Forty-two members also lost their lives. While their families and friends “mourn for the loss of their kindred, yet they rejoice and exult in the hope, and even know, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending happiness” (Alma 28:12).

Immediate help was sent by the Church to members and nonmembers and was distributed under the direction of the local priesthood and Relief Society leaders. They not only received medical aid, food, water, and other basic supplies, but they also received counsel, guidance, and comfort from their local leaders. They have the support of the members of the Church in all the world that “mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9).

Different prophets in different times warned us of another tragedy that is less perceptible but not less important, and this is the “awful death [that] cometh upon the wicked; for they die

as to things pertaining to things of righteousness; for they are unclean, and no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of God” (Alma 40:26).

Nephi taught this principle to his brothers, saying to them that those who “die in their wickedness . . . must be cast off also, as to the things which are spiritual, which are pertaining to righteousness” (1 Nephi 15:33).

Samuel the Lamanite prophet taught that “whosoever repenteth not is hewn down and cast into the fire; and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness” (Helaman 14:18).

The tragedy of dying as to things that are *spiritual* has a greater impact for those who “have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression[;] they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes worse than though they had never known these things” (Alma 24:30).

As parents and leaders we need to watch over our members and families, helping them to stay away from those things that could lead them to a spiritual death. We also seek to rescue those who are now dead as to the things that are spiritual and help them to “be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters” (Mosiah 27:25).

The spiritual healing of those who have been dead as to the things pertaining to righteousness comes about through the power of the Atonement, conversion to the truth, and adherence to the principles of righteousness.

Teaching our members and families about the things pertaining to



righteousness is essential in the process of achieving an enduring conversion since it can lead them to obtain a correct knowledge of the Lord's commandments, the principles and doctrines of the gospel, and the requirements and ordinances with which we must comply in order to achieve salvation in the Lord's kingdom.

There are many examples in the scriptures that confirm the importance of teaching the "things pertaining to righteousness" to help obtain an enduring conversion. In the account that is given of Ammon and his brethren preaching the gospel among the Lamanites, we read: "And Ammon did preach unto the people of king Lamoni; and it came to pass that he did teach them all things concerning things pertaining to righteousness" (Alma 21:23).

We can see the results of diligently teaching all things pertaining to righteousness as we continue reading the account in chapter 23, where it says, "As many as believed, or as many as were brought to the knowledge of the truth . . . were converted unto the Lord [and] never did fall away" (Alma 23:6).

When Alma the Elder established the Church, he consecrated worthy men as their priests and teachers who "did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness" (Mosiah 23:18).

Parents play an essential role in helping their children to understand the things pertaining to righteousness. In the Book of Mormon we find that Alma the Younger, being grieved because of the iniquity, the wars, and the contentions that existed and distressed by the hardness of heart of his people, "caused that his sons should be gathered together, that he might give unto them every one his charge, separately, *concerning the things*



pertaining unto righteousness" (Alma 35:16; emphasis added).

It is interesting to notice that he taught and gave his children their charge separately, adapting his instructions to each son, according to that son's needs. He bore testimony and taught them doctrine and principles, preparing them to preach those same principles to others.

In a time when the family is under attack from the forces of evil and when the conditions in which we live are not so very different from those that Alma experienced, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve have set forth in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" that "parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness" (*Liabona*, Oct. 2004, 49; *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

This includes nurturing, supporting, and teaching children *in all things pertaining to righteousness* so that they may remain firm, with their "loins girt about with truth, having on the

breastplate of righteousness, and [their] feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (D&C 27:16).

Just as in the times of Alma, our leaders also watch over the members of the Church and nourish them with *things pertaining to righteousness*. Those things will help us to achieve an enduring conversion. In the document "Leadership Training Emphasis," revised December 10, 2009, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve ask that both priesthood and auxiliary leaders "encourage each family member, parents and children, to study the scriptures, pray regularly, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ" (First Presidency letter, Dec. 15, 2009).

Studying the scriptures, praying regularly, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ are works of righteousness, and the Lord has revealed this wonderful promise: "He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

In order to more effectively teach the *things pertaining to righteousness*, it is important to understand that, in addition to imparting information, we must facilitate revelation. This way, the person being taught can feel the desire to know these principles for himself or herself.

The Lord revealed to Hyrum Smith through his brother the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

“And then shall ye know . . . all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that you shall receive” (D&C 11:13–14).

In conclusion, the scriptures warn us of the danger of dying as to things pertaining to righteousness and of the serious consequences this has for those who, having been enlightened by the Spirit of God, fall into sin and transgression.

Teaching the *things pertaining to righteousness* is an important element in helping people come to a knowledge of the truth, be converted, and remain firm in the faith of Christ unto the end.

Parents have the sacred duty to teach their children regarding *things pertaining to righteousness*. Leaders and teachers can watch over and nourish the members under their care, diligently teaching them all *things pertaining to righteousness*.

This can be achieved more effectively if revelation is facilitated during the teaching process, thus creating in the people the desire to be enlightened by the Spirit of God. Then as they exercise faith, the Spirit can make known to them the *things pertaining unto righteousness*. Of these things I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Tell Me the Stories of Jesus

A stronger personal faith in Jesus Christ will prepare [your children] for the challenges they will most surely face.

When you are assigned to speak at the end of the final session of general conference, you listen to every word, wondering which parts of your talk will be given before your turn comes. There are no assigned subjects, no collaboration of themes. The Lord’s way, of course, is always the best way. He takes the individual prayerful efforts of each speaker and orchestrates a spiritual symphony full of revelation and power. Repeated themes, principle building upon principle, prophetic warnings, uplifting promises—the divine harmony is a miracle! I testify that in this conference we have heard and felt the mind and will of the Lord.

President Thomas S. Monson has described the rising generation as “the very best ever”¹ and has said to our youth: “You have come to this earth at a glorious time. The opportunities before you are nearly limitless.”² But he also warned, “We have been placed on earth in troubled times.”³ “It is a time of permissiveness, with society in general routinely disregarding and breaking the laws of God.”⁴ We are surrounded by so much that is designed to divert our attention. “The adversary is using every means possible to

ensnare us in his web of deceit.”⁵

We hold in our arms the rising generation. They come to this earth with important responsibilities and great spiritual capacities. We cannot be casual in how we prepare them. Our challenge as parents and teachers is not to create a spiritual core in their souls but rather to fan the flame of their spiritual core already aglow with the fire of their premortal faith.

This afternoon I wish to emphasize the plea of a child from a Primary song:

*Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,
Things I would ask him to tell me if he were here.*⁶

In our world today, each child, each young man and young woman needs his or her own conversion to the truth. Each needs his or her own light, his or her own “steadfast and immovable”⁷ faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, independent of parents, youth leaders, and supportive friends.

The stories of Jesus can be like a rushing wind across the embers of faith in the hearts of our children. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”⁸



The stories of Jesus shared over and over bring faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strength to the foundation of testimony. Can you think of a more valuable gift for our children?

Are the life and teachings of Jesus Christ embedded in the minds and souls of our children? Do they think about the Savior's life when they wonder what to do in their own lives? This will be more and more important in the years ahead.

Have our children visualized the premortal council,⁹ where Jesus—the greatest of all—declared, “Here am I, send me”?¹⁰ Do they see their own willingness to serve as following His example?

Do they think about His humble birth,¹¹ the Savior of the world lying in a manger?¹² Do His circumstances help them better understand the proper place of material possessions?

Do they know that Jesus often taught, “Ask, and ye shall receive”?¹³ Do His prayers of thankfulness¹⁴ and His pleadings to His Father¹⁵ flow through our children's minds as they kneel in prayer with their own concerns?

Have we told them of the love Jesus has for children, how He held them in His arms, prayed for them, and wept?¹⁶ Do our children know that Jesus stands ready “with open arms to receive [them]”?¹⁷

Do they take strength in the stories of Jesus fasting¹⁸—as we teach them the law of the fast?

In their own loneliness, do our children know the loneliness the Savior felt as His friends deserted Him and as He asked His Apostles, “Will ye also go away”?¹⁹

Have our children felt the power of the Savior's miracles? Jesus healed the leper,²⁰ gave sight to the blind,²¹ He fed the 5,000,²² calmed the sea,²³ and raised Lazarus from the dead.²⁴ Do our children believe that “it is by faith that miracles are wrought,”²⁵ and do they pray for miracles in their own lives?

Have our children taken courage from the Savior's words to the ruler of the synagogue: “Be not afraid, only believe”?²⁶

Do our children know about His perfect life,²⁷ His selfless ministry, His betrayal and cruel Crucifixion?²⁸ Have

we testified to them of the certainty of His Resurrection,²⁹ of His visit to the Nephites in the Americas,³⁰ of His appearance to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove?³¹

Do they anticipate His majestic return, when all will be made right and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ?³²

Do our children say, “Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear”?³³

To the youth and children: Live up to your important responsibilities and great spiritual capacities. Seek to know more about Jesus; open the scriptures. One idea would be to read again the book of John and then discuss it with your parents, teachers, and each other.

To fathers and mothers, to grandfathers and grandmothers, and to those without children of their own who lovingly nurture children and youth, my counsel is to speak more frequently about Jesus Christ. In His holy name is great spiritual power. “There [is] no other name given nor any other way . . . whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ.”³⁴

To mothers who are raising their children without a father in the home, I promise you that as you speak of Jesus Christ, you will feel the power of heaven blessing you.

After her husband passed away, Sister Stella Oaks raised her three young children (including Elder Dallin H. Oaks³⁵) as a single mother. She once said: “I was given to know that the Lord loved me and that I would be made equal to my mission. I felt an encircling love . . . [and knew] he [would sustain us] through the opposition that [would] arise.”³⁶

I make a special appeal to fathers: Please be an important part of talking to your children about the Savior. They need the confirming expressions of your faith, along with those of their mother.

Although there may be times when a child does not listen with a believing heart, your testimony of Jesus will remain in his or her mind and soul. Do you remember the story of Alma, who had chosen the wrong path? Returning, he said:

“I remembered . . . my father [speaking] . . . concerning the coming

of . . . Jesus Christ . . . to atone for the sins of the world.

“As my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me.”³⁷

If a child is not listening, don’t despair. Time and truth are on your side. At the right moment, your words will return as if from heaven itself. Your testimony will never leave your children.

As you reverently speak about the Savior—in the car, on the bus, at the dinner table, as you kneel in prayer, during scripture study, or in late-night conversations—the Spirit of the Lord will accompany your words.³⁸

As you do your best, the testimony of Jesus will gently distill upon your children’s hearts. They will go to their Heavenly Father in humble prayer and feel His influence through the power of the Holy Ghost. A stronger personal faith in Jesus Christ will prepare them for the challenges they will most surely face.³⁹

I met Bill Forrest and Debbie Hutchings when we were students at Brigham Young University. Bill had returned from his mission. He and Debbie fell in love and were married in the Oakland California Temple. They established their home in Mesa, Arizona, and were blessed with five sons and two daughters. Bill and Debbie taught their children to love the Lord Jesus Christ as they loved Him. Their son, Elder Daniel Forrest, currently serving in the Mexico Oaxaca Mission, said, “Every morning without fail we were there at the table before school reading and discussing the scriptures.”

Their daughter Kara, now married with two children of her own, still vividly remembers her father driving





her to early morning activities in high school. She said, “My dad enjoyed committing quotes, scriptures, and poems to memory, [and during those early morning drives] we would practice reciting them.” One of his favorite scriptures was “Remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, . . . [he] shall have no power over you to drag you down . . . because of the rock upon which ye are built.”⁴⁰

On the Friday before Easter Sunday in the year 2000, exactly 10 years ago, Bill Forrest was serving as bishop of the Estate Groves Ward in Arizona. On his drive to work, only a mile (1.6 km) from home, his car was struck by a large gravel truck. Debbie and the children left home shortly after Bill and unexpectedly came upon the tragic scene. Bill had not survived the accident. The immortal spirit of this beloved husband and father had suddenly been taken home to Him who overcame death, the Son of God, whose glorious Resurrection they were to have celebrated together that Easter Sunday.

How did Debbie and her seven children (the youngest only 5) find the strength they needed? Kara, 15 at the time of her father’s accident, recently told me: “I am grateful to my [mother and father] for the ways that they taught me [about the Savior]. They opened the scriptures with me, prayed with me, and were examples of [the Savior’s] charity, love, and patience. . . . Easter [is] a tender time in my life each year as I reflect on the life, mission, and Resurrection of our Savior and am reminded of the life of my earthly father.”

Elder Daniel Forrest said: “I was 10 years old when my father passed away. It was a tough time. . . . My mother has always been an example of the Savior’s teachings. I carry with me my father’s name badge from his mission to Spain. [Two] of my favorite quotes from my father [are]: ‘Two men can do anything as long as one of them is the Lord’ and ‘The Savior must be our foundation. Without that we flounder.’”

Faith in Jesus Christ has filled the hearts of the Forrest children. On this Easter weekend, 10 years since their father’s passing, they miss him deeply, but the sting of his death is “swallowed up in Christ.”⁴¹ They know, because of

the incalculable gift of the Savior, they can be with their earthly father and their Heavenly Father again.

Tell me the stories of Jesus.

In a moment we will hear from the prophet of God. In speaking of His prophet, the Lord said, “His word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth.”⁴² I testify that President Thomas S. Monson is the Lord’s mouthpiece upon the earth.

I testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of all mankind. His life, His Atonement, His Resurrection, His awaited return are as sure and certain as the rising sun. His name be praised forever and ever.⁴³ In the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2005, 19.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “May You Have Courage,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 123.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Righteousness,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2008, 65.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Closing Remarks,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 109.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Until We Meet Again,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 113.
6. “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,” *Children’s Songbook*, 57.
7. Alma 1:25.
8. John 14:6.
9. See Abraham 3:2–28.

10. Abraham 3:27.
11. See Luke 2.
12. See Luke 2:7.
13. 3 Nephi 27:29.
14. See Luke 10:21.
15. See Luke 11:2–4.
16. See 3 Nephi 17:11–24.
17. Mormon 6:17.
18. See Luke 4:1–13.
19. John 6:67. Speaking to the youth last year, President Monson said: “You will . . . be called upon to defend that which you believe. Unless the roots of your testimony are firmly planted, it will be difficult for you to withstand the ridicule of those who challenge your faith” (*Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 126).
20. See Mark 1:40–42.
21. See Luke 18:35–43.
22. See Mark 6:34–44.
23. See Mark 4:35–41.
24. See John 11:8–53.
25. Moroni 7:37.
26. Mark 5:36.
27. See 1 Peter 2:21–25.
28. See Luke 22:47–48; 23:32–46.
29. See John 20:11–23.
30. See 3 Nephi 11–26.
31. See Joseph Smith—History 1:17.
32. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:104.
33. “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus.”
34. Mosiah 3:17.
35. Elder Dallin H. Oaks once commented: “When I was a boy, I spent most of my evenings reading books. One of my favorites was *Hurlbut’s Story of the Bible* . . . , [a] book [of] 168 stories from the Bible. I loved these stories and read them many times” (“Bible Stories and Personal Protection,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 37).
36. Stella Oaks, “Thy Will Be Done,” in Leon R. Hartshorn, comp., *Remarkable Stories from the Lives of Latter-day Saint Women*, 2 vols. (1973–75), 2:184.
37. Alma 36:17–18.
38. In our world today we need more than ever Enos’s words about his father to be our children’s words about us: “The words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life . . . sunk deep into my heart. And my soul hungered; and I [knelt] down before my Maker” (Enos 1:3–4).
39. President Monson promised the youth: “When firmly planted, your testimony of the gospel, of the Savior, and of our Heavenly Father will influence all that you do throughout your life. . . . Your testimony, when constantly nourished, will keep you safe” (*Liabona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 126).
40. Helaman 5:12.
41. Mosiah 16:8.
42. Doctrine and Covenants 21:5.
43. See Alma 26:12.



By President Thomas S. Monson

A Word at Closing

The lighthouse of the Lord sends forth signals readily recognized and never failing.

This has been a wonderful closing session. I’ve seldom heard such fine sermons taught in so few words as we’ve experienced today. We’re all here because we love the Lord. We want to serve Him. Our Heavenly Father is mindful of us. Of that I testify. I acknowledge His hand in all things.

One brief scripture:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

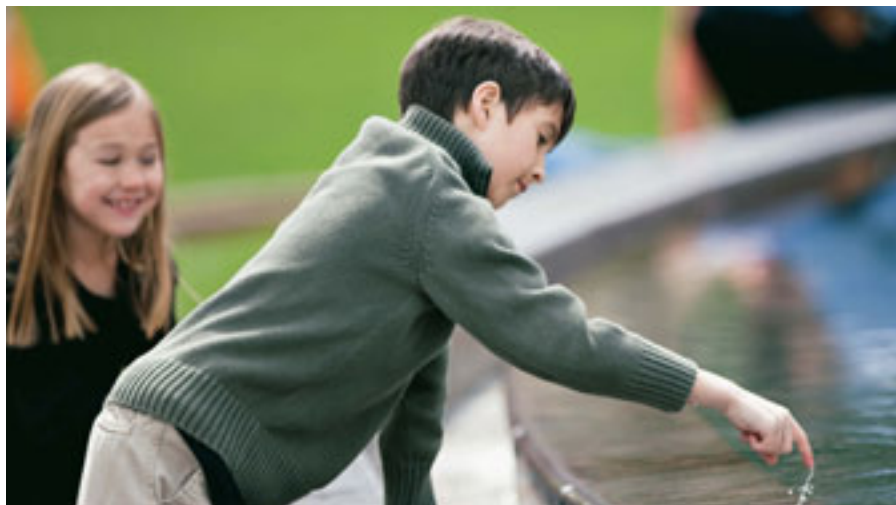
“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”¹

That has been the story of my life.

My dear brothers and sisters, we come now to the conclusion of a most

uplifting and inspiring conference. After listening to the counsel and testimonies of those who have spoken to us, I believe we have been richly blessed and are all more determined to live the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It has been good for us to be here. We express our gratitude to each one who has spoken to us, as well as to those who have offered prayers.

The music has been magnificent. I am reminded of the scripture found in the Doctrine and Covenants: “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads.”²





Remember that the messages we have heard during this conference will be printed in the May issues of the *Ensign* and *Liabona* magazines. I urge you to study the messages, to ponder their teachings, and then to apply them in your life.

I know you join with me in expressing gratitude to those brethren and sisters who have been released during this conference. They have served well and have made significant contributions to the work of the Lord. Their dedication has been complete. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

Now, we have also sustained, by uplifted hands, brethren and sisters who have been called to new positions during this conference. We want them to know that we look forward to working with them in the cause of the Master.

My brothers and sisters, today, as we look at the world around us, we are faced with problems which are serious and of great concern to us. The world seems to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace.

Permissiveness, immorality, pornography, dishonesty, and a host

of other ills cause many to be tossed about on a sea of sin and crushed on the jagged reefs of lost opportunities, forfeited blessings, and shattered dreams.

My counsel for all of us is to look to the lighthouse of the Lord. There is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what its beacon light can rescue. It beckons through the storms of life. The lighthouse of the Lord sends forth signals readily recognized and never failing.

I love the words found in Psalms: "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; . . . I will call upon the Lord . . . so [I shall] be saved from mine enemies."³

The Lord loves us, my brothers and sisters, and will bless us as we call upon Him.

How grateful we are for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and for all the good it brings into our lives. The Lord has poured out His blessings upon us as a people. I bear my testimony to you that this work is true, that our Savior lives, and that He guides and directs His

Church here upon the earth.

Now, as we come to the final moments of this conference, my heart is full and my feelings tender. I express my love and gratitude to you. Thank you for your prayers in my behalf and in behalf of all of the General Authorities of the Church. The Lord hears your prayers and blesses us and directs us in the affairs of His kingdom here upon the earth. For this we are deeply grateful.

As we leave this conference, I invoke the blessings of heaven upon each of you. As you return to your homes around the world, I pray our Heavenly Father will bless you and your families. May the messages and spirit of this conference find expression in all that you do—in your homes, in your work, in your meetings, and in all your comings and goings.

I love you. I pray for you. May God bless you. May His promised peace be with you now and always, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. Proverbs 3:5–6.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 25:12.
3. Psalm 18:2–3.



By Ann M. Dibb

Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

Be of a Good Courage

[The] guides from the book of Joshua will combine to provide the most powerful source of courage and strength there is: faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Many times, as General Authorities address the priesthood brethren at general conference, they will begin by saying that they feel as though they are addressing a “mighty army” of powerful priesthood leaders. Tonight, I feel as though I am standing before a “mighty army” of elect daughters of God. You have been chosen to move forward, standing alongside those valiant priesthood holders, in righteousness in these latter days. You are a commanding and beautiful sight.

I would like to begin this evening by briefly reviewing the historical context of our theme, Joshua 1:9: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

Moses was the mighty prophet who led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, where they had been slaves and had been influenced to worship false gods. After 40 years of hardship in the wilderness, they were ever so close to their new home, where they could be free to worship the true and living God. At Moses’s death, Joshua was called by God to be

the prophet who would complete this miraculous journey.

Joshua was an influential leader. The Bible Dictionary calls him “the highest type of the devout warrior” and indicates that his name means “God is help” (Bible Dictionary, “Joshua”). His inspired leadership was greatly needed because there were still many rivers to cross and battles to win before all that the Lord had promised to the children of Israel could be realized and obtained.

The Lord knew the prophet Joshua and the children of Israel would need great courage during this time. In the

first chapter of the book of Joshua, the Lord tells him several times to “be strong and of a good courage.” The word *courage* is defined as “mental or moral strength to . . . persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. [2003], “courage”; emphasis added). Through their courage and obedience, Joshua and the children of Israel were able to enter the land of promise and find happiness in the blessings of the Lord.

Joshua and the children of Israel lived long, long ago. But in our day we too are striving to enter a “land of promise.” Our greatest goal is to obtain eternal life with our Heavenly Father. In the first chapter of the book of Joshua, we find four sure guides to help us overcome our obstacles, complete our journey, and enjoy the blessings of the Lord in our “land of promise.”

First, in verse 5 the Lord promises Joshua, “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” We can find courage and strength in this promise that the Lord will always be there for us and will never leave us alone. We are taught that Heavenly Father knows and loves each of His children. As one of His precious daughters, you have access to



His assurance and guidance through the power of prayer. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read, “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

I believe these words and promise you that Heavenly Father does hear and answer our prayers. But often patience is required when we are “wait[ing] upon the Lord” (Isaiah 40:31). As we wait, we may begin to believe that we have been forsaken or that our prayers were not heard or that possibly we are not worthy to have them answered. This is not true. I love King David’s comforting words: “I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry” (Psalm 40:1).

No matter what you may face in your personal journey, the first guide found in Joshua reminds us to pray, be patient, and remember God’s promise: “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Joshua 1:5).

The second guide is found in verse 7, when the Lord tells Joshua, “Observe to do according to all the law . . . : turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.” The Lord is instructing Joshua to be strictly obedient to the commandments and not to deviate from the Lord’s path. President Howard W. Hunter taught: “Joshua knew that his obedience would bring success, and although he did not know exactly how he would succeed, he now had confidence in the result. . . . Surely the experiences of the great prophets [found in the scriptures] have been recorded [and preserved] to help us understand the importance of choosing the path of strict obedience” (“Commitment to God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 57, 58).

A month ago I visited a group of



young women. I asked the older girls what advice they would give a new Beehive to help her to remain faithful and virtuous in every setting that she may encounter. One young woman said, “When you walk down the halls of your school, you might, out of the corner of your eye, see something that catches your attention, something that doesn’t seem quite right. You may be curious and want to look. My advice to you is this: Don’t look. I promise you’ll regret it if you do. Believe me; just look straight ahead.”

As I listened to this young woman, I knew I was hearing the Lord’s advice to Joshua, “Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 1:7), applied to an everyday setting in these latter days. Young women, avoid the temptations that surround you by strictly following the commandments. Look straight ahead at your eternal goal. The second guide reminds us that in doing this you will be protected

and will “prosper whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:7).

In verse 8 we find our third guide. Here the Lord refers to a “book of the law” and tells Joshua to “meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: . . . and then thou shalt have good success.” The Lord is instructing Joshua and all of us to read the scriptures. Daily scripture study—especially reading the Book of Mormon—establishes a firm foundation for your developing testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel. It invites the Spirit into your life. President Harold B. Lee counseled, “If we’re not reading the scriptures daily, our testimonies are growing thinner [and] our spirituality isn’t increasing in depth” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* [2000], 66).

Within the pages of the scriptures are countless directions, promises, solutions, and reminders that will help



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us in our journey to the “land of promise.” The third guide directs us to read and meditate on the scriptures daily so that we can find prosperity and success.

After the Lord finishes speaking to Joshua, Joshua addresses the children of Israel. At the conclusion of his speech, in verse 16 the children of Israel respond to his words and provide us with our fourth guide. They answer, “All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.”

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have the opportunity to make this same commitment to follow our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, who is here with us tonight. Through prayer and the confirmation of the Spirit, each of us can gain our own personal testimony of the living prophet. This testimony grows as we listen to, observe, and have the courage to apply his teachings in our daily lives.

Listening to and obeying the counsel of our prophet allows us access to special blessings. Listen to some of the prophetic promises that President Monson extended to us in our last general conference: “May God bless you. May His promised peace be with you now and always” (“Closing Remarks,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 110). “Great promises await us if we are true and faithful” (“School Thy

Feelings, O My Brother,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 69). “I invoke the blessings of heaven upon each of you” (*Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 110).

I invite you to listen next week in general conference to the instructions and the promises given through our prophet and the apostles. Then apply the fourth guide by committing to follow the prophet’s counsel and reaffirming that “all that [he] commandest us we will do, and whithersoever [he] sendest us, we will go” (Joshua 1:16).

At the moment, these four guides—prayer, obedience to God’s commandments, daily scripture study, and a commitment to follow the living prophet—may seem like small and simple things. Let me remind you of the scripture found in Alma: “Behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6). When applied in our everyday lives, these four “small and simple” guides from the book of Joshua will combine to provide the most powerful source of courage and strength there is: faith in our Heavenly Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father knows our individual journeys are not easy. We are faced every day with situations that require courage and strength. A recent story in the *Church News* affirms this truth:

“A teacher in a high school a few months ago began her instruction one

day by asking students who supported a political issue to stand on one side of the room, while those who opposed it were instructed to stand on the other side.

“After students had formed their sides, the teacher took her stance on the opposing side. Singling out one young woman on the side of the supporters, the teacher commenced an attack on her and the other classmates for their views.

“The young woman, who was a Mia Maid in her ward, absorbed the assault that criticized her beliefs.

“[She remained] calm in the face of a public attack leveled by someone in authority” (“What Youth Need,” *Church News*, Mar. 6, 2010, 16).

This young woman showed remarkable courage on her own battlefield, which on this day happened to be her school classroom. Wherever you are and whatever you may face, I hope you will take advantage of the guides found in the book of Joshua so that you can trust in the Lord’s promise: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9).

I want to leave you with my testimony that Heavenly Father knows and loves each of you. If you turn to Him, He will not fail you! He will bless you with the strength and the courage you will need to complete your journey back to Him. I am grateful for the scriptures and for powerful examples like the prophet Joshua. I am grateful for President Monson, who strives to lead us safely back to our Heavenly Father. I pray that, like the children of Israel, we will all enter our “land of promise” and find rest in the blessings of the Lord. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Mary N. Cook

First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

Never, Never, Never Give Up!

What does the Lord want you to do? He wants you to be a valiant and virtuous daughter of God, dedicated to living each day so that you can be worthy to receive the blessings of the temple.

Last August we took some of our grandchildren to Timpanogos Cave National Monument, one of Utah's most popular destinations. It is a rather strenuous one-and-a-half-mile (2.4 km) hike to reach the cave but well worth the effort to witness the cave's beautiful, spiraling formations. I was certain that nine-year-old Ruthie would have little difficulty, but I wondered whether six-year-old Caroline would have the strength and stamina to make it all the way.

We were all very excited to begin the hike, and at first we moved rapidly along the paved trail. One-fourth of the way came quickly, but it took longer to reach the halfway point. Caroline started to get discouraged. Ruthie was doing well and encouraged Caroline to continue. We slowed down so Caroline could keep up. Then it seemed that everything went wrong. Strong winds came up, and the dust from the winds made it difficult to see. It was a little scary, and as if that weren't enough, we came across a signpost that read, "Rattlesnake Habitat. Stay on the Trail. Stay Safe."

Slowly we trudged along, three-fourths of the way to our goal, but we still had the steepest part of the mountain to climb. Tired, scared, and doubting her abilities, Caroline sat down and tearfully declared, "I give up! I can't go any farther!"

We sat down, and we talked about what we should do. We made a plan. We decided to count our steps and see how we felt after 100 steps. Ruthie and I assured Caroline that we would help her. We were to look for something that made us happy along the way and share our discoveries. We even sang some Primary songs.

Things changed. Caroline made the

choice to follow the plan. One hundred steps made an impossible task seem doable. Caroline knew we would help her, and as we looked for the good things around us and sang songs, we felt happier.

Have you ever been afraid and discouraged as you've faced a challenge that seemed far beyond your ability? Have you ever wanted to give up?

Imagine how Joshua, the successor to the great prophet Moses, must have felt, knowing that he was to lead the children of Israel to the promised land. At times I'm sure he wanted to give up. But the Lord comforted him by reminding him three times to be strong and courageous (see Joshua 1:6–9). With faith that God would be with them, the children of Israel committed, "All that thou commandest . . . we will do" (Joshua 1:16).

The scriptures are full of accounts of men and women who showed great courage to do whatever the Lord commanded, even when the tasks seemed impossible, even when they may have wanted to give up.

What does the Lord want you to do? He wants you to be a valiant and virtuous daughter of God, dedicated to living each day so that you can be worthy to receive the blessings of the temple and return to Him. In today's world that will take courage. You have the plan of salvation, which makes it



possible to do this. Moral agency, the ability to choose, is an essential part of this plan. You've already made some good choices. Before you were born, you made the choice to come to earth to receive a body and to prove yourself. You've made the choice to be baptized, which is the first ordinance required on the path to eternal life. You are now experiencing mortal life, where you continue to make choices, to learn, and to grow. Making sacred covenants and receiving the ordinances of the temple is another important step in the plan.

As you are growing older, young women, the path is becoming steeper, and you may want to give up. Life is more challenging, filled with decisions and temptations at every turn. Satan will blow winds of confusion that may cause you to question if this is the path you want to take. You may be tempted to try another route, even when signs of danger are posted. You may doubt your abilities, and you may wonder as one young woman did, "Is it really possible to remain virtuous in today's world?" The answer, my young friends, is "Yes!" And my counsel to you is similar to that given by Winston Churchill during World War II: never, never, never give up! (see "Never Give In" [speech, Harrow School, London, England, Oct. 29, 1941]).

This will take great courage, but you have His plan! What will help you follow the plan and be a valiant and virtuous daughter of God? First, gain a strong testimony, step by step. Second, seek the help of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, your family, and others who will support you in your decision to follow the plan. And finally, live to be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Of the importance of gaining a strong testimony, President Thomas S.

Monson promised the young women, "Your testimony, when constantly nourished, will keep you safe" ("May You Have Courage," *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 126).

Your testimony is strengthened "gradually through your experiences. No one receives a complete testimony all at once" (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 179). You'll recall that in order to climb the steepest part of the mountain, we approached it one step at a time. To gain a testimony, you must nourish it step by step. "[Your testimony] will increase as you make decisions to keep the commandments. As you lift and strengthen others, you will see your testimony continue to develop." As you establish personal habits of prayer, scripture study, obedience to the commandments, and service to others, "you will be blessed with moments of inspiration that will [strengthen] your testimony" (see *True to the Faith*, 179–80).

Personal Progress provides a wonderful way for you to nourish your testimony step by step. Value experiences and projects are small steps that will nourish your testimony of Jesus Christ as you learn His teachings and regularly apply them in your life. This constant nourishment will keep you safely on the path.

Second, seek the help of others to give you added strength and support. Look first to your Heavenly Father

through prayer. You are His daughter. He knows you and loves you. He hears and answers your prayers. We are taught countless times in the scriptures to "pray always" (see, for example, D&C 90:24). As you pray, the Lord *will* be with you just as the Lord was with Joshua.

We each need the help of the Savior to follow the plan and return to our Father in Heaven. Perhaps you have made some mistakes or started down another path. "Because the Savior loves you and has given His life for you, you can repent. . . . The Savior's atoning sacrifice has made it possible for you to be forgiven of your sins" (*Young Women Personal Progress* [booklet, 2009], 71). "The sooner you repent, the sooner you will find the blessings that come from forgiveness" (*For the Strength of Youth* [pamphlet, 2001], 30).

Determine now to do what is required to repent. "Partake worthily of the sacrament each week and fill your life with virtuous activities that will bring spiritual power. As you do this, you will grow stronger in your ability to resist temptation, keep the commandments, and become more like Jesus Christ" (*Young Women Personal Progress*, 71).

Latter-day prophets are on the earth to help you as well. Prophets speak for today. Be riveted on their words. They will give you the signposts that will warn you of danger and keep you safely on the path. The signposts specific to you are found in *For the Strength of Youth*. "Follow the prophet; he knows the way" (*Children's Songbook*, "Follow the Prophet," 110–11).

One of the great blessings of the plan is that we are organized into families. You have parents whose greater wisdom and experience will help you





reach your divine potential. Trust them. They want the best for you.

Learn from your mother, your grandmother, and other righteous women with strong testimonies. The role of a mother in the plan is to be a nurturer. Mothers, no one loves your daughter as you do. You are her best leader, mentor, and example. We hope you will accept the invitation to work on Personal Progress with your daughter. As I learned from working on the virtue value with my mother, your relationship will be strengthened and you both will be blessed by your mutual love, support, and encouragement.

Young women, choose good friends who will support you in your righteous decision to follow the plan. Like Ruthie, who gave encouragement to Caroline, we know that many of you can do much to strengthen each other. After you receive your Young Womanhood Recognition, it is your turn to be the “big sister.” Earning your Honor Bee will give you opportunities to strengthen another young woman with your righteous example and testimony as you mentor her with her Personal Progress.

Finally, live to be worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. When we helped Caroline, looked for the good around us, and even sang Primary songs, we invited the Spirit. We felt love, joy, and peace, which are fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). You will need that peace and assurance when Satan tries to confuse you with winds of doubt, when you are tempted to take another path, or when others are unkind or mock you for your beliefs.

Let me share with you the experience of Julie, a young woman who was able to face a challenge by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost. She was studying the Old Testament one day, and the thought came to her mind, “Read Matthew 5. Read Matthew 5.” She thought, “Why would the thought come to me to read the New Testament?” She acted on that prompting and read in Matthew, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

The next day she had some difficulties with her friends who were unkind and betrayed her. At first she was very

upset, and then she thought, “I’ve been prepared for this. The Spirit prompted me to read Matthew, and I must love and pray for my friends.” The small step of reading the scriptures prepared her to respond in a Christlike way. From that experience, she was assured that the Lord knew her, and through the promptings of the Holy Ghost, she knew what she was to do.

My dear young women, I have met many of you who, just like Julie, have not given up when faced with difficult circumstances but have chosen to follow the plan. I pray that step by step you will continue to strengthen your testimony. Seek the help of our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, prophets, and others who will support you in your decision to follow the plan. Live a virtuous life so that you may have the companionship of the Holy Ghost to safely guide you. I testify that if you will do these things, the Lord will be with you and you will be able to stay on the path that leads to the temple and to eternal life. “Be strong and of a good courage” (Joshua 1:9) and never, never, never give up! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■



By Elaine S. Dalton
Young Women General President

Remember Who You Are!

There is no more beautiful sight than a young woman who glows with the light of the Spirit, who is confident and courageous because she is virtuous.

We are daughters of our Heavenly Father. He loves us, and we love Him.¹ I am humbled and grateful to be in your presence. The Lord has blessed me with a very clear understanding of who you are and why you are here on the earth at this time. The Lord loves you, and I know you love Him. It shows in your countenance, in your modesty, in your desire to choose the right, and in your commitment to remain virtuous and pure.

Together we have shared many choice spiritual moments. We have borne testimony in camps around campfires, in chapels, and in firesides. We have been warmed by the fire of our faith. We have climbed mountains and unfurled golden banners—from Brazil to Bountiful—signifying the commitment deep within our hearts to remain virtuous and to always be worthy to enter the temple. We have prayed, read the Book of Mormon, and smiled every day, and together with our mothers, grandmothers, and leaders, we are working on our Personal Progress. And we have only just begun!

This is a magnificent time to be on the earth and to be a young woman. Our vision remains the same. It is to be worthy to make and keep sacred covenants and receive the ordinances of the temple. This is our superlative goal! And so we will continue to lead the world in a return to virtue—a return to chastity and moral purity. We will continue to do all we can to help each other “stand . . . in holy places”² and receive, recognize, and rely on the Holy Ghost.

We will continue to talk of Christ, to rejoice in Christ, that each of us will know to what source we may look for a remission of our sins.³ And yes, we

will continue to stand firm no matter what storms may rage around us because we know and testify that “it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that [we] must build [our] foundation . . . , a foundation whereon if [we] build [we] cannot fall.”⁴

The Lord’s counsel to Joshua is His counsel to you today, the “youth of the noble birthright.”⁵ “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”⁶ You are not alone! Though you may be the only Latter-day Saint in your school or your group of friends or even your family, you are not alone. You can rely on the strength of the Lord. As Joshua said to the Israelites, “Sanctify yourselves: for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”⁷ This was Joshua’s call for a return to virtue, and it is the same call to us today. We simply cannot do the work we have been reserved and prepared to do unless we can access the strength and confidence that comes by living a virtuous life.

You are young women of great faith. You brought your faith with you when you came to the earth. Alma teaches us that in the premortal realms you exhibited “exceeding faith and good works.”⁸ You fought with your faith and testimony to defend the plan that was presented by God. You knew the plan was good, and you knew that the Savior would do what He said He would do—because you knew Him! You stood with Him, and you were eager for your opportunity to come to earth. You knew what was going to be required of you. You knew it would be difficult, and yet you were confident not only that you could accomplish your divine mission but that you could make a difference. You





are “choice spirits who were reserved to come forth in the fulness of times to take part in laying the foundations of the great latter-day work, including the building of the temples and the performance of ordinances therein.”⁹

And now you are here to do what you have been reserved and prepared to do. As I look out at you tonight, I wonder if this is what Helaman’s stripling warriors’ girlfriends must have looked like! No wonder Satan has increased the intensity of his attacks on your identity and virtue. If you can be dismayed, discouraged, distracted, delayed, or disqualified from being worthy to receive the guidance of the Holy Ghost or to enter the Lord’s holy temple, he wins.

Young women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, remember who you are! You are elect. You are daughters of God. You cannot be a generation of young women who are content to fit in. You must have the courage to stand out, to “arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations.”¹⁰ The world would have you believe that you are

not significant—that you are out of fashion and out of touch. The world calls to you with unrelenting, noisy voices to “live it up,” “try everything,” “experiment and be happy.” Conversely, the Holy Ghost whispers and the Lord invites you to “walk in the paths of virtue,” “lay aside the things of this world,” “and cleave unto [your] covenants.”¹¹

I have always loved the story of the son of King Louis XVI of France because he had an unshakable knowledge of his identity. As a young man, he was kidnapped by evil men who had dethroned his father, the king. These men knew that if they could destroy him morally, he would not be heir to the throne. For six months they subjected him to every vile thing life had to offer, and yet he never yielded under pressure. This puzzled his captors, and after doing everything they could think of, they asked him why he had such great moral strength. His reply was simple. He said, “I cannot do what you ask, for I was born to be a king.”¹²

Like the king’s son, each of you has

inherited a royal birthright. Each of you has a divine heritage. “You are literally the royal daughters of our Father in Heaven.”¹³ Each of you was born to be a queen.

When I was attending Brigham Young University, I learned what it truly means to be a queen. I was given a unique opportunity, along with a small group of other students, to meet the prophet, President David O. McKay. I was told to wear my best dress and to be ready to travel early the next morning to Huntsville, Utah, to the home of the prophet. I will never forget the experience I had. As soon as we entered the home, I felt the spirit which filled that home. We were seated in the prophet’s living room, surrounding him. President McKay had on a white suit, and seated next to him was his wife. He asked for each of us to come forward and tell him about ourselves. As I went forward, he held out his hand and held mine, and as I told him about my life and my family, he looked deeply into my eyes.

After we had finished, he leaned



of the Holy Ghost . . . quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections. . . . It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness and charity. *It develops beauty of person, form and features.*¹⁶ Now, that is a great beauty secret! That is the beauty I observed in the home of a prophet. That day I learned that the beauty I saw in Sister McKay was the only beauty that really matters and the only kind of beauty that lasts.

Alma asks a penetrating question for each of us to consider: “Have [you] received his image in your countenances?”¹⁷

Recently, a group of young women visited my office. At the end of the visit, one young woman confided with tears in her eyes, “I have never thought of myself as beautiful. I have always felt very ordinary. But today, as I walked past the mirror in your office and glanced into it, I was beautiful!” She *was* beautiful because her face shone with the Spirit. She saw herself as our Heavenly Father sees her. She had received His image in her countenance. That is deep beauty.

Young women, look into the mirror of eternity. Remember who you are! See yourself as our Heavenly Father sees you. You are elect. You are of noble birth. Don’t compromise your divine inheritance. You were born to be a queen. Live so you are worthy to enter the temple and there receive “all that [the] Father hath.”¹⁸ Develop deep beauty. There is no more beautiful sight than a young woman who glows with the light of the Spirit, who is confident and courageous because she is virtuous.

Remember, you are daughters of our Heavenly Father. He loves you so

back in his chair and reached for his wife’s hand and said, “Now, young women, I would like you to meet *my queen*.” There seated next to him was his wife, Emma Ray McKay. Although she did not wear a crown of sparkling diamonds, nor was she seated on a throne, I *knew* she was a true queen. Her white hair was her crown, and her pure eyes sparkled like jewels. As President and Sister McKay spoke of their family and their life together, their intertwined hands spoke volumes about their love. Joy radiated from their faces. Hers was a beauty that cannot be purchased. It came from years of seeking the best gifts, becoming well educated, seeking knowledge by study and also by faith. It came from years of hard work, of faithfully enduring trials with optimism, trust, strength, and courage. It came from her unwavering devotion and fidelity to her husband, her family, and the Lord.

On that fall day in Huntsville, Utah, I was reminded of my divine identity, and I learned about what I now call “deep beauty”—the kind of beauty that shines from the *inside* out. It is the kind of beauty that cannot be painted on, surgically created, or

purchased. It is the kind of beauty that doesn’t wash off. It is *spiritual* attractiveness. Deep beauty springs from virtue. It is the beauty of being chaste and morally clean. It is the kind of beauty that you see in the eyes of virtuous women like your mother and grandmother. It is a beauty that is earned through faith, repentance, and honoring covenants.

The world places so much emphasis on physical attractiveness and would have you believe that you are to look like the elusive model on the cover of a magazine. The Lord would tell you that you are each uniquely beautiful. When you are virtuous, chaste, and morally clean, your inner beauty glows in your eyes and in your face. My grandfather used to say, “If you live close to God and His infinite grace—you won’t have to tell, it will show in your face.”¹⁴ When you are worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost, you are confident and your inner beauty shines brightly. And so “let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and . . . the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion.”¹⁵

We have been taught that “the gift

much that He sent His Son to show you the way to live, so that you could return to Him someday. I testify that as you draw close to the Savior, His infinite Atonement makes it possible for you to repent, to change, to be pure, and to receive His image in your countenance. His Atonement will enable you to be strong and courageous as you continue to raise your banner for virtue. You are golden. You *are* the banner!

And so I conclude with the Lord's words to each of us, His precious daughters: "Behold, . . . thou art an elect lady, whom I have called."¹⁹ "Walk in the paths of virtue. . . . Lay aside the things of [the] world. . . . Cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made. . . . Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive."²⁰ Of this I bear my witness in the holy name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See "Young Women Theme," *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 3.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 87:8.
3. See 2 Nephi 25:26.
4. Helaman 5:12.
5. "Carry On," *Hymns*, no. 255.
6. Joshua 1:9.
7. Joshua 3:5; see also Guide to the Scriptures, "Sanctification," scriptures.lds.org.
8. Alma 13:3.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 138:53–54.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 115:5.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 25:2, 10, 13.
12. See Vaughn J. Featherstone, "The King's Son," *New Era*, Nov. 1975, 35.
13. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Young Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 85.
14. Author unknown; see Elaine S. Dalton, "It Shows in Your Face," *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2006, 109.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45–46.
16. Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, 10th ed. (1965), 101; emphasis added.
17. Alma 5:14.
18. Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 25:3.
20. Doctrine and Covenants 25:2, 10, 13, 15.

Video Presentation: I Have a Purpose

The following is a transcript of a video shown during the general Young Women meeting held on March 27, 2010.

President Thomas S. Monson: "Again, my dear young sisters, although there have always been challenges in the world, many of those which you face are unique to this time."¹

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president: "In order to be virtuous and remain virtuous, you must be true to your divine identity and establish patterns of thought and behavior based on high moral standards."²

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency: "I pray with all my heart that your faith

will be increased that you are a daughter of a loving God."³

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency:

"You, my dear young women, have already made many good choices. Now you must establish patterns of virtue that will keep you on this path throughout your life."⁴

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency: "Sisters, trust and rely on the Spirit. As you take the normal opportunities of your daily life and create something of beauty and



helpfulness, you improve not only the world around you but also the world within you.”⁵

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency: “The small and simple things you choose to do today will be magnified into great and glorious blessings tomorrow.”⁶

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president: “Can one righteous young woman change the world? The answer is a resounding ‘yes!’ . . . It is the daily consistent things you do that will strengthen you to be a leader and an example—daily prayer, daily scripture study, daily obedience, daily service to others. As you do these things, you will grow closer to the Savior and become more and more like Him.”⁷

President Thomas S. Monson: “My young friends, be strong. . . . You know what is right and what is wrong, and no disguise, however appealing, can change that [truth]. If your so-called friends urge you to do anything you know to be wrong, *you* be the one to make a stand for right, even if you stand alone.”⁸ ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “May You Have Courage,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 127.
2. Elaine S. Dalton, “Come Let Us Go Up to the Mountain of the Lord,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 121.
3. Henry B. Eyring, “Walk in the Light,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2008, 125.
4. Mary N. Cook, “A Virtuous Life—Step by Step,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 117.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Happiness, Your Heritage,” *Liabona and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 119.
6. Ann M. Dibb, “Be Thou an Example of the Believers,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2009, 116.
7. Elaine S. Dalton, “It Shows in Your Face,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2006, 109.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “Examples of Righteousness,” *Liabona and Ensign*, May 2008, 65.



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

Your Happily Ever After

Heavenly Father offers to you the greatest gift of all—eternal life—and the opportunity and infinite blessing of your own “happily ever after.”

My dear young sisters all around the world, I am grateful and honored to be with you today. President Thomas S. Monson and all the leaders of the Church love you; we pray for you, and we rejoice in your faithfulness.

Over the years I have been exposed to many beautiful languages—each of them is fascinating and remarkable; each has its particular charm. But as different as these languages can be, they often have things in common. For example, in most languages there exists a phrase as magical and full of promise as perhaps any in the world. That phrase is “Once upon a time.”

Aren’t those wonderful words to begin a story? “Once upon a time” promises something: a story of adventure and romance, a story of princesses and princes. It may include tales of courage, hope, and everlasting love. In many of these stories, nice overcomes mean and good overcomes evil. But perhaps most of all, I love it when we turn to the last page and our eyes reach the final lines and we see the enchanting words “And they lived happily ever after.”

Isn’t that what we all desire: to be the heroes and heroines of our own stories; to triumph over adversity; to experience life in all its beauty; and, in the end, to live happily ever after?

Today I want to draw your attention to something very significant, very extraordinary. On the first page of your *Young Women Personal Progress* book, you will find these words: “You are a beloved daughter of Heavenly Father, prepared to come to the earth at this particular time for a sacred and glorious purpose.”¹

Sisters, those words are true! They are not made up in a fairy tale! Isn’t it remarkable to know that our eternal Heavenly Father knows you, hears you, watches over you, and loves you with an infinite love? In fact, His love





for you is so great that He has granted you this earthly life as a precious gift of “once upon a time,” complete with your own true story of adventure, trial, and opportunities for greatness, nobility, courage, and love. And, most glorious of all, He offers you a gift beyond price and comprehension. Heavenly Father offers to you the greatest gift of all—eternal life—and the opportunity and infinite blessing of your own “happily ever after.”

But such a blessing does not come without a price. It is not given simply because you desire it. It comes only through understanding who you are and what you must become in order to be worthy of such a gift.

Trial Is Part of the Journey

For a moment, think back about your favorite fairy tale. In that story the main character may be a princess or a peasant; she might be a mermaid or a milkmaid, a ruler or a servant. You will find one thing all have in common: they must overcome adversity.

Cinderella has to endure her wicked stepmother and evil stepsisters. She is

compelled to suffer long hours of servitude and ridicule.

In “Beauty and the Beast,” Belle becomes a captive to a frightful-looking beast in order to save her father. She sacrifices her home and family, all she holds dear, to spend several months in the beast’s castle.

In the tale “Rumpelstiltskin,” a poor miller promises the king that his daughter can spin straw into gold. The king immediately sends for her and locks her in a room with a mound of straw and a spinning wheel. Later in the story she faces the danger of losing her firstborn child unless she can guess the name of the magical creature who helped her in this impossible task.

In each of these stories, Cinderella, Belle, and the miller’s daughter have to experience sadness and trial before they can reach their “happily ever after.” Think about it. Has there ever been a person who did not have to go through his or her own dark valley of temptation, trial, and sorrow?

Sandwiched between their “once upon a time” and “happily ever after,” they all had to experience great

adversity. Why must all experience sadness and tragedy? Why could we not simply live in bliss and peace, each day filled with wonder, joy, and love?

The scriptures tell us there must be opposition in all things, for without it we could not discern the sweet from the bitter.² Would the marathon runner feel the triumph of finishing the race had she not felt the pain of the hours of pushing against her limits? Would the pianist feel the joy of mastering an intricate sonata without the painstaking hours of practice?

In stories, as in life, adversity teaches us things we cannot learn otherwise. Adversity helps to develop a depth of character that comes in no other way. Our loving Heavenly Father has set us in a world filled with challenges and trials so that we, through opposition, can learn wisdom, become stronger, and experience joy.

Let me share with you a personal experience I had as a teenager while our family was attending church in Frankfurt, Germany.

One Sunday the missionaries brought a new family to our meetings

whom I hadn't seen before. It was a mother with two beautiful daughters. I thought that these missionaries were doing a very, very good job.

I particularly took notice of the one daughter with gorgeous dark hair and large brown eyes. Her name was Harriet, and I think I fell in love with her from the first moment I saw her. Unfortunately, this beautiful young woman didn't seem to feel the same about me. She had many young men who wanted to make her acquaintance, and I began to wonder if she would ever see me as anything but a friend. But I didn't let that deter me. I figured out ways to be where she was. When I passed the sacrament, I made sure I was in the right position so that I would be the one to pass the sacrament to her.

When we had special activities at church, I rode my bike to Harriet's house and rang the doorbell. Harriet's mother usually answered. In fact, she opened the kitchen window of their apartment on the fourth floor and asked what I wanted. I would ask if Harriet would like a ride to church on my bicycle. Harriet's mother would say, "No, she will be coming later, but I will be happy to ride with you to church." This wasn't exactly what I had in mind, but how could I decline?

And so we rode to church. I must admit I had a very impressive road bike. Harriet's mother sat on the top tube bar just in front of me, and I tried to be the most elegant bicycle driver over roads of rough cobblestone.

Time passed. While beautiful Harriet was seeing many other young men, it seemed that I could not make any headway with her.

Was I disappointed? Yes.

Was I defeated? Absolutely not!

Actually, looking back I recognize that it doesn't hurt at all to be on good

terms with the mother of the girl of your dreams.

Years later, after I had finished my training as a fighter pilot in the air force, I experienced a modern miracle in Harriet's response to my continued courting. One day she said, "Dieter, you have matured much over these past years."

I moved quickly after that, and within a few months I was married to the woman I had loved ever since I first saw her. The process hadn't been easy—there were moments of suffering and despair—but finally my happiness was full, and it still is, even more so.

My dear young sisters, you need to know that you will experience your own adversity. None is exempt. You will suffer, be tempted, and make mistakes. You will learn for yourself what every heroine has learned: through overcoming challenges come growth and strength.

It is your reaction to adversity, not the adversity itself, that determines how your life's story will develop.

There are those among you who, although young, have already suffered a full measure of grief and sorrow. My heart is filled with compassion and love for you. How dear you are to the Church. How beloved you are of your Heavenly Father. Though it may seem that you are alone, angels attend you. Though you may feel that no one can understand the depth of your despair, our Savior, Jesus Christ, understands. He suffered more than we can possibly imagine, and He did it for us; He did it for you. You are not alone.

If you ever feel your burden is too great to bear, lift your heart to your Heavenly Father, and He will uphold and bless you. He says to you, as He said to Joseph Smith, "[Your] adversity and [your] afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if [you]

endure it well, God shall exalt [you] on high."³

Enduring adversity is not the only thing you must do to experience a happy life. Let me repeat: how you react to adversity and temptation is a critical factor in whether or not you arrive at your own "happily ever after."

Stay True to What You Know Is Right

Sisters, young sisters, beloved young sisters, stay true to what you know is right. Everywhere you look today, you will find promises of happiness. Ads in magazines promise total bliss if you will only buy a certain outfit, shampoo, or makeup. Certain media productions glamorize those who embrace evil or who give in to base instincts. Often these same people are portrayed as models of success and accomplishment.

In a world where evil is portrayed as good and good as evil, sometimes it is difficult to know the truth. In some ways it is almost like Little Red Riding Hood's dilemma: when you are not quite sure what you are seeing, is it a beloved grandmother or is it a dangerous wolf?

I spent many years in the cockpit of an airplane. My task was to get a big jet safely from any part of the world to our desired destination. I knew with certainty that if I wanted to travel from New York to Rome, I needed to fly east. If some were to tell me that I should fly south, I knew there was no truth in their words. I would not trust them because I knew for myself. No amount of persuasion, no amount of flattery, bribery, or threats could convince me that flying south would get me to my destination because I knew.

We all search for happiness, and we all try to find our own "happily ever after." The truth is, God knows how to get there! And He has created a map

for you; He knows the way. He is your beloved Heavenly Father, who seeks your good, your happiness. He desires with all the love of a perfect and pure Father that you reach your supernal destination. The map is available to all. It gives explicit directions of what to do and where to go to everyone who is striving to come unto Christ and “stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places.”⁴ All you have to do is trust your Heavenly Father. Trust Him enough to follow His plan.

Nevertheless, not all will follow the map. They may look at it. They may think it is reasonable, perhaps even true. But they do not follow the divine directions. Many believe that any road will take them to a “happily ever after.” Some may even become angry when others who know the way try to help and tell them. They suppose that such advice is outdated, irrelevant, out of touch with modern life.

Sisters, they suppose wrong.

The Gospel Is the Way to Happily Ever After

I understand that, at times, some may wonder why they attend Church meetings or why it is so important to read the scriptures regularly or pray to our Heavenly Father daily. Here is my answer: You do these things because they are part of God’s path for you. And that path will take you to your “happily ever after” destination.

“Happily ever after” is not something found only in fairy tales. You can have it! It is available for you! But you must follow your Heavenly Father’s map.

Sisters, please embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ! Learn to love your Heavenly Father with all your heart, might, and mind. Fill your souls with virtue, and love goodness. Always



strive to bring out the best in yourself and others.

Learn to accept and act upon the Young Women values. Live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. These standards guide and direct you to your “happily ever after.” Living these standards will prepare you to make sacred covenants in the temple and establish your own legacy of goodness in your individual circumstances. “Stand . . . in holy places, and be not moved,”⁵ regardless of temptations or difficulties. I promise you that future generations will be grateful for you and praise your name for your courage and faithfulness during this crucial time of your life.

My dear young sisters—you who stand for truth and righteousness, you who seek goodness, you who have entered the waters of baptism and walk in the ways of the Lord—our Father in Heaven has promised that you will “mount up with wings as eagles; [you] shall run, and not be weary; and [you] shall walk, and not faint.”⁶ You “shall not be deceived.”⁷ God will bless and prosper you.⁸ “The gates of hell shall not prevail against you; . . . and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory.”⁹

Sisters, we love you. We pray for you. Be strong and of good courage. You are truly royal spirit daughters of Almighty God. You are princesses, destined to become queens. Your own wondrous story has already begun. Your “once upon a time” is now.

As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I leave you my blessing and give you a promise that as you accept and live the values and principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, “[you] will be prepared to strengthen home and family, make and keep sacred covenants, receive the ordinances of the temple, and enjoy the blessings of exaltation.”¹⁰ And the day will come when you turn the final pages of your own glorious story; there you will read and experience the fulfillment of those blessed and wonderful words: “And they lived happily ever after.” Of this I testify in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 1.
2. See 2 Nephi 2:11, 15.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 121:7–8.
4. Mosiah 18:9.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 87:8.
6. Isaiah 40:31.
7. Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37.
8. See Mosiah 2:22–24.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 21:6.
10. *Young Women Personal Progress*, 3.

Making Conference Part of Our Lives

Consider using some of these statements, activities, and questions as a starting point for family discussion or personal pondering.

You can find general conference addresses online at conference.lds.org. You can also view and share multimedia excerpts from past conference addresses at mormonmessages.org.

Note: The page numbers listed below indicate the first page of the talk.

For Children

- Everyone can participate in family history work! Elder Russell M. Nelson suggested that children can draw a family tree (page 91). Parents can help them add the names of their ancestors.

- Read or retell Elder Quentin L. Cook's story about the Samoan children fleeing from the tsunami (page 83). Have family members pretend that floodwaters are entering the house and encourage them to find "higher ground," such as a bed or a chair. Talk about places we can find higher spiritual ground in the flood of wickedness we experience today.

- Elder D. Todd Christofferson talked about William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into English (page 32). Ask older children to read a verse of scripture in a language they do not speak. When

they say they cannot, invite them to read it in your native language. Talk about the importance of having access to the scriptures in your native tongue.

- With your family, review one of the many general conference talks about Jesus Christ. Sing "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus" (*Children's Songbook*, 57). Hand out paper and pencils or crayons. Invite your children to draw a favorite story of Jesus. Read the story from the scriptures together.

For Youth

- Review President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk about patience (page 56). What are some gospel principles and practices that can teach us patience? Consider, for example, fasting or not dating until age 16. How have you and your family members benefited from demonstrating patience in following these and other principles?

- Elder M. Russell Ballard, Elder Bradley D. Foster, Sister Julie B. Beck, and Sister Elaine S. Dalton all taught about the divine nature of women (pages 18, 10, 98, and 120). If you are female, how do their talks affect how you feel about yourself? What did you learn about your purpose and gifts? If you are male, how did these messages influence your perception of your mother, sisters, friends, and other women and young women in your life?

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught: "If a TV show is indecent, turn it off. If a movie is crude, walk out. If an improper relationship is developing, sever it. Many of these influences . . . can blunt our judgment, dull our spirituality, and lead to something that could be evil" (page 44).





The Scriptures in General Conference

As you study the messages from general conference, you might want to look up the following scriptures, which were referred to most often in conference:

- **Joshua 1:9**
- **John 14:6, 27; 19:30**
- **Galatians 5:22**
- **2 Nephi 2:11**
- **Mosiah 18:9**
- **Helaman 5:12**
- **Doctrine and Covenants 13:1; 19:16; 25:13**
- **Moses 1:39**

Here are the seminary scripture-mastery verses that were mentioned in general conference:

- **Genesis 39:9**
- **Job 19:25**
- **Proverbs 3:5–6**
- **Isaiah 1:18; 53:4–5**
- **Matthew 25:40**
- **John 7:17; 17:3**
- **1 Corinthians 10:13; 15:21–22**
- **2 Nephi 2:25; 32:3**
- **Mosiah 3:19**
- **Alma 37:6; 41:10**
- **Helaman 5:12**
- **Moroni 10:4–5**
- **Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 18:10; 19:16–19; 25:12; 76:22–23; 82:10; 84:33–38**
- **Moses 1:39**
- **Joseph Smith—History 1:17**

Here are some stories from the scriptures that were told in general conference:

- **Gideon and his 300 soldiers (President Packer, 6)**
- **Alma and Korihor (Elder Christofferson, 32)**
- **Ahijah and Jeroboam (Elder Carlson, 38)**
- **Elisha and Naaman (Elder Carlson, 38)**
- **Laman and Lemuel (Elder Carlson, 38)**
- **Parable of the Pharisee and the publican (President Uchtdorf, 68)**
- **Easter and the Atonement (Elder Scott, 75, and President Monson, 87)**
- **Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail (Elder Hallstrom, 78)**
- **Jesus and the Nephite children (Sister Lant, 81)**
- **Last Supper (Elder Cook, 83)**
- **Jesus and His mother (Elder Foster, 98)**
- **Mary and Martha (Elder Schwitzer, 103)**

As a family, discuss what you can do to make your home a place where the Spirit can dwell. Examine the art, music, books, video games, and other entertainment you have and discard anything inappropriate.

For Adults

- With your family, review the story President Thomas S. Monson shared about the young man named Jason and his family (page 87). Talk about how knowledge of the plan of salvation can bless us.

- Elder L. Tom Perry shared how his mother taught her children using some of the same material she used to teach Relief Society (page 29). What are some ways you could coordinate your Church service with your family responsibilities?

- Elder Robert D. Hales emphasized the importance of talking with and listening to children and youth (page 95). What opportunities can you create to talk with your children? What have you learned as you have listened to them?

How can you show your willingness to listen? In what ways might you take the opportunity to bear testimony spontaneously to children and youth? For examples, see Elder David A. Bednar's talk (page 40).

- Several speakers addressed the importance of Duty to God and Personal Progress (see pages 22, 54, 60, 95, and 117). What can you do to help the youth in your life benefit from these programs? ■



Learn, Act, and Share: Doing Your Duty to God

We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us. . . . Let us consider our callings, let us reflect on our responsibilities, and let us follow Jesus Christ, our Lord.

President Thomas S. Monson, "Preparation Brings Blessings," 64.

Just a few weeks ago, I saw a new deacon start on that path of diligence. His father showed me a diagram his son had created that showed every row in their chapel, a number for each deacon who would be assigned to pass the sacrament, and their route through the chapel to serve the sacrament to the members. The father and I smiled to think that a boy, without being asked to do it, would make a plan to be sure he would succeed in his priesthood service.

I recognized in his diligence the pattern from the new *Duty to God* booklet. It is to learn what the Lord expects of you, make a plan to do it, act on your plan with diligence, and then share with others how your experience changed you and blessed others.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Act in All Diligence," 60.

Adult members of the Church should understand that Personal Progress and Duty to God requirements are not just lengthy lists of items to check off. They are personal

goals set by each young man and young woman to help them become worthy to receive temple ordinances, serve missions, enter into eternal marriage, and enjoy exaltation. *But let it be understood: for young men and young women to try to accomplish these goals alone would be a great loss and tragedy!*

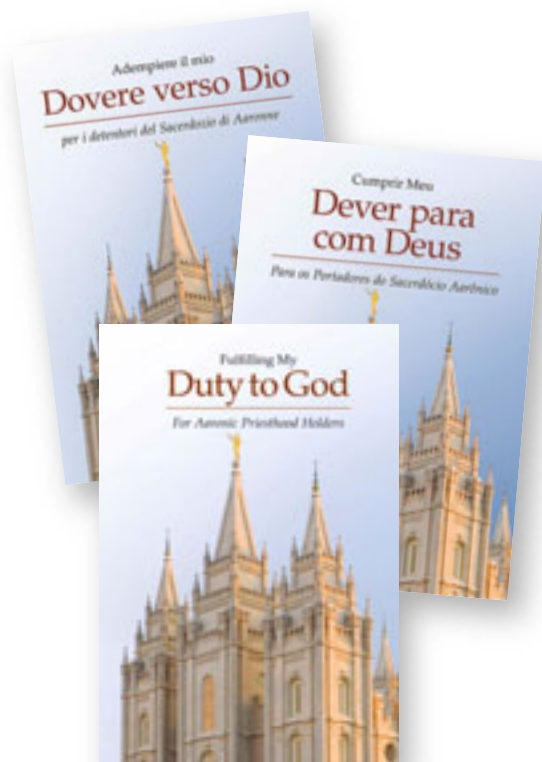
Fathers, mothers, and leaders of youth, we urge you to participate in Personal Progress and Duty to God with your children and with the youth. Not only will they grow; you will grow too. And just as importantly, you will grow together in a bond of faith and friendship that will allow you to strengthen each other and stay on the gospel path forever.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation," 95.

The stage is yours, my dear Aaronic Priesthood boys. Are you ready and willing to play your part? The Lord needs every able young man to prepare and recommit, starting tonight, to be worthy of a call from the prophet of God to serve a mission.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Seventy, "The Divine Call of a Missionary," 51.

As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities that will help you build spiritual strength and learn and fulfill your priesthood duties. Each activity follows this simple pattern:



First you **learn** about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. You discover what Heavenly Father wants you to do, and you strive to gain a spiritual witness about why it is important.

Next you make plans to **act** on what you have learned. You are encouraged to base your plans on your own needs, circumstances, and opportunities to serve others. This is a wonderful chance to take responsibility for your own growth and develop spiritual self-reliance.

Then you **share** what you learn and experience with others. As you do so, you will strengthen your testimony and build faith in those around you. You will increase your ability to talk about the gospel with others. . . .

. . . I testify that your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood will change the lives of those you serve. There are people who need your priesthood service. Your family needs you. Your quorum needs you. The Church needs you. The world needs you.

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, "The Magnificent Aaronic Priesthood," 54.

Information about the new Duty to God program is available in many languages at DutyToGod.lds.org.

Standing for Virtue: Personal Progress

On the first page of your *Young Women Personal Progress* book you will find these words: “You are a beloved daughter of Heavenly Father, prepared to come to the earth at this particular time for a sacred and glorious purpose.”

Sisters, those words are true! They are not made up in a fairy tale! Isn’t it remarkable to know that our eternal Heavenly Father knows you, hears you, watches over you, and loves you with an infinite love? In fact, His love for you is so great that He has granted you this earthly life as a precious gift of “once upon a time,” complete with your own true story of adventure, trial, and opportunities for greatness, nobility,

courage, and love. And, most glorious of all, He offers you a gift beyond price and comprehension. Heavenly Father offers to you the greatest gift of all—eternal life—and the opportunity and infinite blessing of your own “happily ever after.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Your Happily Ever After,” 124.

Young women of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,

remember who you are! You are elect. You are daughters of God. You cannot be a generation of young women who are content to fit in. You must have the courage to stand out, to “arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations” (D&C 115:5). The world would have you believe that you are not significant—that you are out of fashion and out of touch. The world calls to you with unrelenting, noisy voices to “live it up,” “try everything,” “experiment and be happy.” Conversely, the Holy Ghost whispers and the Lord invites you to “walk in the paths of virtue,” “lay aside the things of this world,” “and cleave unto [your] covenants” (D&C 25:2, 10, 13).

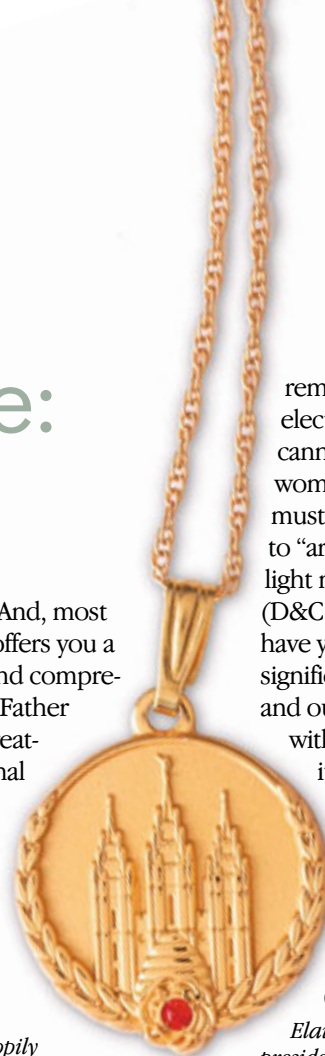
Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president, “Remember Who You Are!” 120.

Personal Progress provides a wonderful way for you to nourish your testimony step by step. Value experiences and projects are small steps that will nourish your testimony of Jesus Christ as you learn His teachings and regularly apply them in your life. This constant nourishment will keep you safely on the path.

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, “Never, Never, Never Give Up!” 117.

The Lord will always be there for us and will never leave us alone. We are taught that Heavenly Father knows and loves each of His children. As one of His precious daughters, you have access to His assurance and guidance through the power of prayer.

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, “Be of a Good Courage,” 114. ■



For more information on Personal Progress, go to PersonalProgress.lds.org.

Conference Story Index

The following is a list of selected experiences from general conference addresses for use in personal study, family home evening, and other teaching. The number refers to the first page of the talk.

Speaker	Story
President Boyd K. Packer	(6) Harold B. Lee counsels a young soldier to seek a blessing from his father. President Packer invites a young man's father to ordain his son an elder.
Bishop Keith B. McMullin	(13) Woman forgives a concentration camp guard.
Elder Wilford W. Andersen	(16) Daughter recalls the faith of her father, who died of cancer.
President Henry B. Eyring	(22) Woman is in misery because she wandered as a teenager. The Eyrings' young son gets lost, prays for help, and is found.
Elder L. Tom Perry	(29) Young L. Tom Perry is taught by his mother.
Elder D. Todd Christofferson	(32) William Tyndale is martyred for translating the Bible into English.
Elder Koichi Aoyagi	(36) Elder Aoyagi recounts his conversion and the help of a member when he had strayed from the Church.
Elder Bruce A. Carlson	(38) Two men on a fishing trip never learn their lesson and keep crashing a plane.
Elder Jeffrey R. Holland	(44) Three divorced women tell of their former husbands' struggles with pornography.
Elder Dallin H. Oaks	(47) A woman who receives a blessing declines another, saying it's up to her now to exercise faith. Girl in Texas, USA, is miraculously healed.
Elder Ronald A. Rasband	(51) President Eyring receives revelation on where missionaries should serve.
David L. Beck	(54) A young man takes the sacrament to a homebound man, who receives it with reverence.
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf	(56) A professor uses marshmallows to test the patience of four-year-olds.
President Henry B. Eyring	(60) President Eyring visits a sick friend and gives him a blessing.
President Thomas S. Monson	(64) Student cheats on an exam by turning book pages with his feet, but his day of reckoning comes. President Monson's promise to a missionary is fulfilled.
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf	(68) People add a sign, "You are my hands," to a statue of Christ without hands. Jewish legend tells of two brothers who secretly give a portion of their harvest to one another. German Saints blessed by humanitarian service after World War II.
Elder Donald L. Hallstrom	(78) Young couple turns away from the Lord and the Church after their first child dies at birth. Elder Hallstrom's parents and grandparents remain faithful despite great trials.
Elder Quentin L. Cook	(83) Samoan stake president rescues his daughter and mother from a tsunami.
President Thomas S. Monson	(87) A family who loses a 15-year-old son finds comfort through faith in Jesus Christ.
Elder Robert D. Hales	(95) Elder Hales's grandson interrupts his reading the newspaper to ask, "Are you in there?" Elder Hales's mother teaches the importance of family meals. A mother enjoys helping her daughter with Personal Progress.
Elder Bradley D. Foster	(98) A young son tells his father that he knows what he knows because his mother told him.
Elder Gregory A. Schwitzer	(103) Elder Schwitzer, as a young physician, learns not to judge others by their appearance.
Elder Neil L. Andersen	(108) A father's consistent teachings about Jesus Christ bring comfort to his children after his death.
Ann M. Dibb	(114) A young woman stands for her convictions when challenged by a high school teacher.
Mary N. Cook	(117) A young woman is blessed because she followed a prompting to read from Matthew 5.
Elaine S. Dalton	(120) Young Sister Dalton meets President David O. McKay, who introduces his wife as his "queen."
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf	(124) President Uchtdorf describes how he met and eventually won the love of Sister Uchtdorf.

Teachings for Our Time

Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society lessons on fourth Sundays will be devoted to “Teachings for Our Time.” Each lesson can be prepared from one or more talks given in the most recent general conference. Stake and district presidents may choose which talks should be used, or they may assign this responsibility to bishops and branch presidents. Leaders should stress the value of Melchizedek Priesthood brethren and Relief Society sisters studying the same talks on the same Sundays.

Those attending fourth-Sunday lessons are encouraged to study and bring to class the latest general conference issue of the magazine.

Suggestions for Preparing a Lesson from Talks

Pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you as you study and teach the talk(s). You may be tempted to prepare the

lesson using other materials, but the conference talks are the approved curriculum. Your assignment is to help others learn and live the gospel as taught in the most recent general conference of the Church.

Review the talk(s), looking for principles and doctrines that meet the needs of class members. Also look for stories, scripture references, and statements from the talk(s) that will help you teach these truths.

Make an outline of how to teach the principles and doctrines. Your outline should include questions that help class members:

- Look for principles and doctrines in the talk(s).
- Think about their meaning.
- Share understanding, ideas, experiences, and testimonies.
- Apply these principles and doctrines in their lives. ■

MONTHS	FOURTH-SUNDAY LESSON MATERIALS
May 2010–October 2010	Talks published in the May 2010 <i>Liahona</i> and <i>Ensign</i> *
November 2010–April 2011	Talks published in the November 2010 <i>Liahona</i> and <i>Ensign</i> *

*These talks are available (in many languages) at conference.lds.org.

General Auxiliary Presidencies

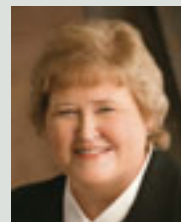
RELIEF SOCIETY



Silvia H. Allred
First Counselor



Julie B. Beck
President



Barbara Thompson
Second Counselor

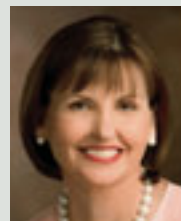
YOUNG WOMEN



Mary N. Cook
First Counselor



Elaine S. Dalton
President



Ann M. Dibb
Second Counselor

PRIMARY



Jean A. Stevens
First Counselor



Rosemary M. Wixom
President



Cheryl A. Esplin
Second Counselor

YOUNG MEN



Larry M. Gibson
First Counselor



David L. Beck
President



Adrián Ochoa
Second Counselor

SUNDAY SCHOOL



David M. McConkie
First Counselor



Russell T. Osguthorpe
President



Matthew O. Richardson
Second Counselor

Conference Center Completes First Decade of Service

By Ryan Kunz
Church Magazines

April conference opened the Conference Center's second decade of service. In its first 10 years, many millions experienced the unique qualities of the one-of-a-kind building during more than 100 sessions of general conference and 4,500 events, as well as their associated broadcasts.

The Conference Center held its first session of general conference on April 1, 2000. There, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said: “[The Conference Center] will prove to be a great addition to this city. Not only will our general conferences be held here, and some other religious meetings, but it will serve as a cultural center for the very best artistic presentations. We hope that those

not of our faith will come here, experience the ambience of this beautiful place, and feel grateful for its presence” (“To All the World in Testimony,” *Liabona*, July 2000, 4; *Ensign*, May 2000, 4).

Six months later, on October 8, President Hinckley dedicated the building.

Since then, almost seven million visitors have come to the Conference Center to attend 4,577 events. Some 4.8 million visitors have toured the building, and the center has been host to more than 5,500 dignitaries. The events held in the auditorium and adjacent Conference Center Theater have included general conference, 10 Young Women general meetings, 10 Relief Society general meetings,

three memorial events (including President Hinckley's funeral), and 125 musical performances, not including the Tabernacle Choir's *Music and the Spoken Word*, which has been held in the Conference Center 186 times.

Those numbers begin to suggest a fulfillment of President Hinckley's words.

Brent Roberts, director of headquarters facilities, has met many people in the building who have shown their gratitude for what they felt there. “They’ve walked in with tears in their eyes and the Spirit in their hearts,” he said. “It’s not just the building, though—it’s the Lord, His work, and His Spirit.”

The center was announced on Easter morning by President Hinckley during the April 1996 general conference.

An overview of the construction challenges that were met in building the Conference Center helps attest to the building's unique status. The 21,000-seat auditorium was to be carved from a downhill slope between Salt Lake City's Main Street and West Temple Street. Three large construction companies joined in the work. There were to be no support columns in the auditorium, to ensure that everyone had an unobstructed view, so the builders had to employ the use of 290-foot-long (88 m) steel trusses that would be capable of supporting loads between 250 and 525 pounds per square inch (17–37 kg per square cm). This design also would accommodate the landscaping plans for the roof. On any given day during the process, some 1,000 workers were on site.

During the construction, the building survived the highly unusual 1999 Salt Lake City tornado, and though a boom on a huge crane was snapped, the work continued.

The structure was completed on time, and visitors to the center enjoy state-of-the-art equipment and facilities.





For television, the Conference Center provides a digital, high-definition signal. The first live high-definition broadcast in Utah originated from the Conference Center during President Hinckley's 90th birthday celebration in June 2000.

Engineers created the sound system in the auditorium to provide excellent acoustics whether visitors were listening to a speaker or attending a musical event, making careful calculations to take into account the materials on the walls and ceiling, the number of people who fit inside, and the carpeting and cushioning.

President Hinckley said that the building also conveys a sense of elegance. Such elegance can be seen as visitors stroll the foyers, where a sculpture of the Savior and busts of Church Presidents can be seen; walk in the gardens on the roof, among trees, flowers, bushes, and waterfalls; look up through the nine skylights on top of the building, which can be covered for performances; and enjoy the paintings throughout the building, many of which are familiar to members of the Church and almost all of which are original.

The massive building exhibits many impressive statistics. It covers 10 acres (4 ha), or one city block. There is enough electrical wiring within the center to circle the earth twice. More than 5,900 gallons (22,330 liters) of water are recycled through fountains and water courses every minute.

However, the greatest feature of the center is neither the miles of wiring nor the amount of weight the roof can bear, nor any other mere statistic.

"It is not a museum piece, though the architecture is superb," said President Hinckley. "It is a place to be used in honor to the Almighty and for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes" ("This Great Millennial Year," *Liabona*, Jan. 2001, 80; *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 67). ■

New Duty to God Program Announced

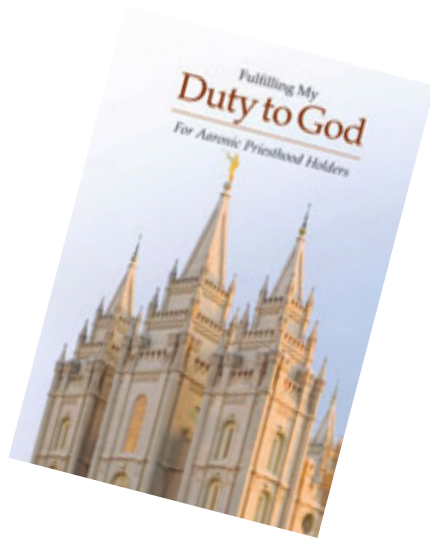
As announced during general conference, a new Duty to God program has been developed under the direction of living prophets to help young men build spiritual strength and fulfill their priesthood duties.

“[The new Duty to God program] is a powerful tool,” said President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, during the Saturday morning session. “It will strengthen the testimonies of young men and their relationship with God. It will help them learn and want to fulfill their priesthood duties. It will strengthen their relationships with their parents, among quorum members, and with their leaders.”

The new Duty to God program has been simplified and focused. The requirements for all three age groups, along with instructions for parents and leaders, are contained in one book. The book and associated materials will be made available in 27 languages between June and August 2010. Additional translations of the materials will continue to be made available throughout the year.

Activities are organized to allow young men to *learn* about a gospel principle or priesthood duty, *act* on what they learned, and then *share* their thoughts and feelings with parents, Church leaders, or their quorum.

“As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities that will help you build spiritual strength and learn and fulfill your priesthood duties,” said David L. Beck, Young Men general president, during the priesthood session of general conference. “. . . The new Duty to God program will guide you on your journey to fulfill your duty to God and discover the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.”



The program is designed to encourage young men to take responsibility for their own growth, but it also provides opportunities to strengthen relationships between the young men and their parents, leaders, and quorum members. Many of the activities can be easily integrated into family home evening and quorum meetings and activities.

“Parents, leaders, and quorum members play an important role in the Duty to God program,” Brother Beck told Church magazines. “Sunday quorum meetings will provide regular opportunities to learn, act, and share.”

Young men are encouraged to continue working in the existing program until the new program is implemented in their ward or branch. Once the new program is implemented, each young man should begin working on the section that corresponds to his current priesthood office. If he is close to completing the requirements for the certificate or medallion that applies to his office under the previous program, he may complete those

requirements while beginning to work on the new program.

“Each activity in *Fulfilling My Duty to God* follows a pattern that will help you become the priesthood holder the Lord wants you to become,” Brother Beck said.

Additional information and materials will be made available online at DutyToGod.lds.org. ■

New Format Helps Sisters Improve as Visiting Teachers

In July 2010 Relief Society sisters and subscribers to the *Liabona* and *Ensign* magazines will find a change to the traditional Visiting Teaching Message format.

“We want every visiting teacher to understand that visiting teaching is a call from the Lord and accept her assignment to love, serve, teach, and minister to another sister with that in mind,” said Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president.

The new message format will help sisters understand the purpose of Relief Society, teach principles to help sisters live the purpose, provide a historical perspective, and offer suggestions on how women can more effectively watch over and strengthen other sisters.

“The Visiting Teaching Message is a tool in the hands of a visiting teacher. As she studies the messages with her sisters in mind, she will know what to share with them and what to do for them,” Sister Beck said.

On the follow page is a sample of the new Visiting Teaching Message, with explanations of its new features. ■

Ministering Question

The purpose of this question is to help visiting teachers act on inspiration to better serve the sisters they teach.

Instructions

Instructions help visiting teachers know how to teach and apply the message.

Relief Society Purposes

The Relief Society purposes were added to remind sisters of the responsibilities of Relief Society: to increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and homes, and seek out and help those in need.

Application Question

This question is meant to prompt action on the part of each individual Relief Society sister and help her apply the message to her own life.

Message

The central message will now offer specific and timely counsel directly from the Relief Society general presidency.

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

Our Responsibility to Be Worthy of Temple Worship

Study this material, and as appropriate discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

Faith • Family • Relief

The covenants we make with the associated ordinances we receive in the temple become our credentials for admission into God's presence. These covenants elevate us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective. We make covenants to show our devotion to build up the kingdom. We become covenant people as we are placed under covenant to God. All the promised blessings are ours through our faithfulness to these covenants. . . .

"What can the women of the Church do to claim the blessings of the temple?"

"Through His prophets, the Lord invites those who have not yet received the blessings of the temple to do whatever may be necessary to qualify to receive them. He invites those who have already received these blessings to return as often as possible to enjoy again the experience, to increase their vision and understanding of His eternal plan.

"Let us be worthy to have a current temple recommend. Let us go to the temple to seal our families eternally. Let us return to the temple as often as our circumstances will permit. Let us give our kindred dead the opportunity to receive the ordinances of exaltation. Let us enjoy the spiritual strength and the revelation we receive as we attend the temple regularly. Let us be faithful and make and keep temple covenants to receive the full blessings of the Atonement."¹

Silvia H. Allred, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency.

From the Scriptures

Isaiah 2:2-3; D&C 109:22-23; 110:8-10

What Can I Do?

1. What support can I offer to help my sisters prepare for and attend the temple?
2. How can I exemplify the heritage of the early sisters who sacrificed to receive temple blessings?
3. How can I claim the blessings of the temple?

For more information, go to www.reliefsocietylds.org.

From Our History

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008) taught that Relief Society grew out of sisters' desire to worship in temples:

"During the construction of the Kirtland Temple the women were called upon to grind their china into small particles to be mixed with the plaster used on the walls of the temple, which would catch the light of the sun and the moon and reflect that light to beautify the appearance of the building.

"In those times, when there was very little of money but an abundance of faith, the workmen gave of their strength and resources to the construction of the Lord's house. The women supplied them with food, the best they could prepare. Edward W. Tullidge reported that while the women were sewing the temple veils, Joseph Smith, observing them, said, 'Well, sisters, you are always on hand. The sisters are always first and foremost in all good works. Mary was first at the resurrection; and the sisters now are the first to work on the inside of the temple.' . . .

"Again in Nauvoo, when the temple was under construction, a few women joined together to make shirts for the workmen. It was out of these circumstances that twenty of them gathered on Thursday, 17 March 1842, in the upper room of the Prophet's store."²

NOTES

1. Silvia H. Allred, "Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants," *Leadership and Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 113, 114.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Ambitious to Do Good," *Ensign*, Mar. 1992, 2.

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From Our History

By reading of the noble legacy of Relief Society, sisters can draw connections between the organization that existed in the early Church and the current Relief Society program. "We are inspired by their sacrifices and desire to take our part in building the Lord's kingdom in our season of service," Sister Beck said.

From the Scriptures

These scriptural references will help enhance the study, teaching, and personal application of the message.

More Information

Pertinent links to other resources can be found at the Relief Society Web page, reliefsociety.lds.org.

Members in Haiti Moving Forward, Firm in the Gospel

By Lauren Allen
Church Magazines

When an earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, Jean-Elie René raced home to make sure his family was safe. Upon arrival, he spotted one of his three sons crying in the street, and he could hear the screams of another son from beneath the rubble where the family's home once stood.

The 32-year-old father followed the cries and dug through the rubble until he found his five-year-old son and the body of his pregnant wife, still sheltering their nine-month-old baby from the collapsed roof of their home.

Brother René serves as ward clerk in the Leogane Ward, Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake. Although he lost his wife, his unborn child, and his home, he doesn't complain or get angry about his situation. Most days following the earthquake, Brother René could be found at the

meetinghouse, with the baby on his lap and his two other boys at his side, helping the bishop coordinate relief to ward members and others who made the meetinghouse their temporary home.

The story of Brother René is touching, but it is not unique. Members of the Church throughout Haiti suffered greatly from the magnitude 7.0 earthquake's destruction, but the calamity served to reveal the strength of Haiti's growing membership. Like Brother René, many members—both longtime and first-generation members alike—rose to the challenges and found peace and comfort in faithfulness and obedience.

Proven in Trial

Throughout their trials, members of the Church in Haiti have stood strong in the gospel as they continue to care for and strengthen each other and those in their communities.

"It is true that all we possessed, even our material possessions and our families, disappeared. But our faith in Jesus Christ was not destroyed," said Yves Pierre-Louis, bishop of the Leogane Ward. "It was a good opportunity for us to evaluate ourselves as disciples of Christ."

Local priesthood

leaders in particular were a great example of faith and testimony as they rose to the challenge, learning to fulfill their callings in difficult times and help others in need, said Elder Francisco J. Viñas of the Seventy, Caribbean Area President.

"They used their priesthood keys to bless the lives of members and nonmembers," he said. "They worked in council and received guidance from the Spirit to deal with the difficult challenges day by day."

The aftermath of the earthquake's destruction created a challenge, particularly for bishops in Haiti, said Prosner Colin, president of the Port-au-Prince Haiti Stake. Bishops and other Church leaders were left responsible for the care and aid of hundreds of ward members, as well as their own families.

"[The bishops] continue to help," President Colin said. "They understand that they lost many things, but they have the gospel. They encourage [members] to continue to live worthily."

Bishop Pierre-Louis became a community leader after the earthquake. Through the weeks and months following the devastation in Haiti, he devoted his life to the service of members and nonmembers in Leogane—tending to the needs of hundreds.

"He is the most amazing, humble servant you will ever meet," said Chad Peterson, a doctor from Arizona who spent time with Bishop Pierre-Louis as a volunteer following the earthquake.

Faith for Now and the Future

Many stories have been shared of members throughout Haiti whose resilience and faith in the Lord carried them through their trials.

"Though the faithful Haitian Saints have suffered greatly, they are filled with hope for the future," said Elder Wilford W. Anderson of the Seventy in his April 2010



general conference address. “Like the early pioneers in 1846, their hearts are broken, but their spirits are strong. They too are teaching us that hope and happiness and joy are not products of circumstance but of faith in the Lord.”

A demonstration of such obedience and faith was found when, immediately following the earthquake, Church meetings proceeded without interruption.

Regardless of the destruction of their country, members in Haiti arrived at church clothed in their Sunday best, wearing smiles on their faces. The gospel was the lifeline many relied on to pull them from their sorrow and despair.

“Despite losing their homes, jobs, and family members, the people are so loving, trusting, and good-natured. They have amazing faith,” Brother Peterson said.

Today, the Church continues to flourish in Haiti. Attendance in sacrament meeting has increased, President Colin said, and the people in Haiti continue to work to rebuild their communities.

“The members are doing well to serve others,” he said. “They visit them; they are looking for job opportunities for themselves and for the others.”

Berthony Theodor, a native Haitian and the director of welfare in Haiti, says he and other current and future leaders of the Church in Haiti gained valuable experience as a result of the disaster.

“We have the opportunity to serve others, showing them once again how much we love them,” he said. “We have come to learn once again that we are not alone in the world, that we are members of the people of the Lord.”

Brother Theodor said the earthquake—or any other disaster—couldn’t take away the peace or joy of members in Haiti.

“It’s my testimony that the Lord never forgets his children,” he said. “He knows where I am, my situation. He won’t ever leave me alone.” ■



Church Aid

Immediately after the January 2010 quake, the Church sent relief supplies to Haiti. Teams of medical personnel soon followed, setting up clinics in meetinghouses and working with local hospitals to help perform needed surgeries.

But as some semblance of stability returned to Haiti, the Church began transitioning its aid from relief to recovery, providing resources to help reestablish self-reliance and get the people back on their feet.

These resources included establishing small food facilities similar to bishops’ storehouses and sending materials for 600 transitional shelters—put together by members in Haiti—to provide shelter to the homeless during the hurricane season.

The Church also developed a medical referral program staffed by local Haitian doctors to help members receive aid and resources. LDS Family Services was also involved in training Haitians to provide emotional counseling to those struggling to cope with their situation.

The Church strengthened its employment program in Haiti, making employment specialists available to help members find jobs and microbusiness opportunities.

“We are thankful for all the support the Church brought for the members in Haiti,” said Bishop Yves Pierre-Louis. ■



Elder Kevin R. Duncan

Of the Seventy

From childhood, Elder Kevin Read Duncan was eager to serve the Lord as a missionary. “I was never, ever on the fence. I always knew I wanted to serve a mission,” he says.

Well before his 19th birthday, Elder Duncan happened to meet a General Authority serving in the Missionary Department who challenged him to memorize the missionary discussions. He met that challenge and was later called to the Chile Santiago South Mission. His time as a missionary reconfirmed his love for serving the Lord. “I knew I wanted to be a missionary every day of the rest of my life,” says Elder Duncan.

Elder Duncan, born in October 1960, is the son of David Henry and LaRene Eliza Duncan. He grew up on a family farm in West Point, Utah. Living on the farm as a boy taught him not only to work, he says, but also to love to work.

That work ethic helped him earn from Brigham Young

University a bachelor’s degree in accounting, a master’s degree in accounting taxation, and a juris doctorate in law. He started his career as a tax attorney and later founded a corporation in litigation technology.

Elder Duncan and his wife, Nancy Elizabeth Smart, were married on June 27, 1986, in the Salt Lake Temple. They are parents of five children, including one with Elder Duncan’s first wife, the late Wendy Wallentine.

Nearly 20 years after serving a mission in Chile, Elder Duncan returned on a Church-service mission as associate international legal counsel for the Church in South America. While there, he was called to preside over the Chile Santiago North Mission, living in the same mission home where he had served as a young man.

Prior to his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Duncan served as a bishop’s counselor, ward mission leader, high counselor, and Area Seventy in the Utah South Area. ■



Elder Gerrit W. Gong

Of the Seventy

Elder Gerrit Walter Gong knows the power of prayer and that Heavenly Father has a plan for His children. When Elder Gong was young, his mother was once seriously ill. He remembers praying “in little-boy words and feelings” that she would live.

“Prayers are answered differently at different times in our lives, but on that occasion, gratefully, I felt and knew that she would be better,” Elder Gong says. “I have never doubted from that time that Heavenly Father does hear our prayers and, in His own wisdom and ways, answers them.”

Elder Gong has since experienced that tender communication with a loving Father repeatedly; including he says, in marrying his wife, raising a family, making educational and career decisions, and serving in the Church.

Before his call to the First Quorum of the Seventy, Elder Gong served as a high counselor, high priests group

leader, counselor in a stake Sunday School presidency, seminary teacher, bishop, stake mission president, stake president, and Area Seventy.

Professionally, Elder Gong has served as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State at the U.S. State Department and as Special Assistant to the U.S. Ambassador in Beijing, China. He also held positions at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C., USA. At the time of his call, he was working as the Assistant to the President at Brigham Young University with responsibility for Planning and Assessment.

Elder Gong was born to Walter and Jean Gong in December 1953 and was raised in Palo Alto, California. He received a bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University in University and Asian Studies. He later earned a master’s degree and a PhD in international relations from Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar.

He served in the Taiwan Mission and later married Susan Lindsay in the Salt Lake Temple in January 1980. The Gongs have four sons. ■



Elder Patrick Kearon

Of the Seventy

While living briefly in California, Elder Patrick Kearon stayed with “an outstanding” Latter-day Saint family who introduced him to the gospel.

Two years later, back home in England, he met missionaries on a London street and eventually began investigating the Church. He came upon a scripture in the Book of Mormon that read, “Men are that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). The scripture resonated with him as he recalled the joy in the home of that LDS family and in the lives of the missionaries teaching him.

“That scripture rang in my ears,” Elder Kearon says. “In those I had met, I saw how our lives can be enormously enriched by following the Savior’s counsel to be of good cheer.”

Since joining the Church on December 24, 1987, Elder Kearon has brought that good cheer to numerous callings, including ward Young Men president, bishop’s counselor,

branch president, stake president, and Area Seventy.

As a newly called member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, he says that he has always “endeavored to be guided by the Church’s principles. I have seen how living those principles can transform lives.”

Elder Kearon was born in Carlisle, Cumberland, England, in July 1961, to Paddy and Patricia Kearon. With his father serving in the British Royal Air Force, Elder Kearon was educated in the Middle East and the United Kingdom.

He met Jennifer Carole Hulme while she was studying in England with Brigham Young University. They were married in the Oakland California Temple in 1991. They are the parents of four children, one of whom is deceased.

Elder Kearon has lived and worked in the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and the United States in various industries, including politics, health care, and the automotive industry. Before his call, Elder and Sister Kearon ran a communications consultancy in England. ■



Elder Juan A. Uceda

Of the Seventy

When Elder Juan Alberto Uceda Andrade began courting Maria Isabel Bendezu—the woman he would eventually marry—he knew she was someone special. Both had converted to the Church as youth, and both had served missions in their native country, Peru.

Sister Uceda’s conviction to marry in the temple had a great influence upon him. The nearest temple was in São Paulo, Brazil. “It took seven days just to get there, using every means of transportation available,” Elder Uceda explains. “We traveled by bus, car, boat, horse and carriage, train, truck, and even plane. When we reached the temple, we reached out our hands to touch the walls just to make sure it was not a dream. It was a foundational experience for both of us.”

The couple were married in the São Paulo Brazil Temple on April 13, 1979. They are the parents of five children.

Elder Uceda was born in

July 1953 in Lima, Peru, to Juan Jose Uceda Perez and Ines Andrade Uceda. After joining the Church in 1972, Elder Uceda studied accounting and public relations at Jose Carlos Mariátegui Institute in Lima. He also studied business administration at the Centro Andino de G.E. Institute and earned a bachelor’s degree in public relations from San Luis Gonzaga University.

Elder Uceda has worked in the Church Educational System as area director for Peru and Bolivia. In 2003 he moved from Peru to New Jersey, USA, to help his father develop an educational and language training business.

In addition to his missionary service, Elder Uceda has served as a high councilor, bishop, stake president, president of the Lima Peru North Mission, and Area Seventy. He now serves in the First Quorum of the Seventy.

“I have a strong testimony of the power of personal revelation from the Holy Spirit,” says Elder Uceda. “That testimony is continually confirmed by blessings that come from obedience.” ■



Elder Larry R. Lawrence

Of the Seventy

Through various callings and service in the Church, Elder Larry Ray Lawrence has learned to “trust in the Lord with all [his] heart” (Proverbs 3:5).

Born in August 1947 to Argil and Mary Lawrence in Cheverly, Maryland, Elder Lawrence grew up in Tucson, Arizona. He pursued his education at the University of Arizona, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural biochemistry and a doctorate of medicine, leading to an ophthalmology career.

He joined the Church in 1970, at the age of 23, and married Laurel Stott in the Mesa Arizona Temple on November 5, 1971.

Before his call to the Second Quorum of the Seventy, he fulfilled callings including elders quorum president, bishop, high counselor, stake president, and stake mission president.

Elder Lawrence says that just as his life seemed to be winding down, with their six children grown and on their

own, he and his wife were called to preside over the Russia Novosibirsk Mission in Siberia in 2001. Elder and Sister Lawrence were required to exercise complete faith as they left their home and family behind to serve in a land where the language, people, and climate were completely unfamiliar.

“It was a great test for us in just putting our trust in the Lord,” Sister Lawrence says. “Everything we worried about fell into place, and [the experience] changed our lives.”

A sign in the kitchen of the mission home provided a constant reminder to “look unto [the Savior] in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:36).

Elder and Sister Lawrence count their mission experience as among the greatest in their lives and feel it prepared them for their new responsibilities with Elder Lawrence’s call to the Seventy.

“We don’t know what’s ahead, but we know it will be good,” Elder Lawrence says. ■



Elder Per G. Malm

Of the Seventy

When Elder Per Gösta Malm was 16 years old, he served a Church-service mission helping to build new meeting-houses in Germany, Finland, Netherlands, and Sweden. He has been diligently engaged in helping to build the Church ever since.

Elder Malm was born in September 1948 in Jönköping, Sweden, to Karl Gösta Ivar and Karin Anna-Greta Malm. He learned many of life’s most important lessons from his parents, punctuated by the testimony his father bore before passing away at age 48: “Stay true to the gospel.”

“He was teaching us that in the gospel we will find solutions to the things that matter most,” Elder Malm says.

Following the 18-month building mission, Elder Malm served full time in the Sweden Stockholm Mission. After his return, he married Ingrid Agneta Karlsson in the Bern Switzerland Temple in October 1969, took over his father’s real estate business,

and earned a master’s degree from the University of Göteborg and a Swedish law degree (LLM) from Lund University.

He worked for the Church as a regional real estate manager. Later, as director for temporal affairs, he was assigned by the Presiding Bishopric to initiate a merger of the temporal affairs functions of the Europe Central, East, and North Areas.

While Elder and Sister Malm raised their eight children, he served as a stake mission president, branch president, high counselor, stake president, mission president, public affairs director for Sweden, and Area Seventy.

His experiences have served to confirm to him his parents’ teachings, which he hopes to share through his call to the Second Quorum of the Seventy. “The gospel is our anchor,” he says. “It will, if we stay true to it, produce a peace that goes beyond understanding.” ■



Elder Jairo Mazzagardi

Of the Seventy

Elder Jairo Mazzagardi knows what it means to make sacrifices in the service of the Lord. In 1990, Elder Mazzagardi received a phone call from President Thomas S. Monson, then a counselor in the First Presidency, who called him to preside over the Salvador Brazil Mission.

"I never dreamed that I would be a mission president," Elder Mazzagardi says. "I had been a stake president less than five years. Things were busy—and good—with our business. Accepting this call would mean leaving everything behind."

At the end of the phone call, President Monson offered Elder Mazzagardi time to consider the calling. But Elder Mazzagardi and his wife had decided years earlier that their lives would be consecrated to the Lord, so he accepted the call on the spot. "Whatever the Lord needs of us, we're ready to go," he says.

Before his call to the Second Quorum of the

Seventy, Elder Mazzagardi served as bishop's counselor, high councilor, counselor in a stake presidency, stake president, regional representative, Area Seventy, counselor in the Campinas Brazil Temple presidency, and president of the São Paulo Brazil Temple.

Elder Mazzagardi, an entrepreneur, spent part of his career in the meat industry and later owned a real estate company. He also served in the Brazilian army as an artillery sergeant from 1965 to 1966. He was born to Antonio and Margarida Mazzagardi in April 1947 in Itú, Brazil. He grew up there and in Jundiaí, Brazil. He and his wife, Elizabeth Ienne, met as children and were married in Hoboken, New Jersey, USA in July 1970.

Although for years they were not interested in the Church, after the Mazzagardis returned to Brazil, a friend invited them to attend the São Paulo Brazil Temple open house. There, both had powerful spiritual experiences. They were baptized on October 31, 1978, and sealed as a family in November 1979. The Mazzagardis have three children. ■



Rosemary M. Wixom

Primary General President

In a world filled with noise and insecurity, children need to discover how to hear the whisperings of the Spirit, says Rosemary Mix Wixom, newly sustained as Primary general president.

"Children can find security in prayer," she says. "They can know that they are never alone, that the Savior walks with them, and that He loves them—even when they make mistakes."

Born in December 1948 to Robert Wayne and Mary Mix, Sister Wixom grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. While she was growing up, her twin sister was her best friend, and her parents taught her to give with a happy heart. "When we walked in the door at home, I felt secure," Sister Wixom says.

When she was 12 years old, her sense of security found deeper roots. While sitting in testimony meeting, she suddenly felt a strong desire to express her feelings about the Savior. "I stood up,

and my love for Jesus just came gushing out," Sister Wixom recalls. Her mother helped her understand that it was the Holy Ghost who had prompted her feelings.

"I had never known the Holy Ghost was so powerful and so real," Sister Wixom says. Years later the Holy Ghost gave her an overwhelming feeling of peace while she was praying about one of her children. Her hope now is that parents and Primary leaders and teachers can help children learn to hear the whisperings of the Holy Ghost.

Sister Wixom received a bachelor's degree in education from Utah State University. She and her husband, Blaine Jackson Wixom, were married in the Salt Lake Temple on August 18, 1970. They are the parents of six children.

Sister Wixom was a member of the Primary general board before serving with her husband when he presided over the Washington D.C. South Mission. Sister Wixom later served on the Young Women general board, where she was serving until her call as Primary general president. ■



Jean A. Stevens

*First Counselor
in the Primary
General Presidency*

Jean Alldredge Stevens believes that feeling love early in life has a profound effect on all children. Experiencing love helps children to know and understand the great love that Heavenly Father and the Savior have for them.

Sister Stevens was born in November 1952 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, to Claron and Helen Alldredge.

“I was raised by parents of great faith,” Sister Stevens says. “They loved the Lord and they taught the gospel in our home. My mother especially had an amazing ability to love people.” She can remember feeling from an early age that her parents loved her and loved to serve the Lord.

Sister Stevens established that same pattern with her own family after marrying Mark Stevens in the Salt Lake Temple on September 12, 1973. They have five children.

Sister Stevens feels grateful to serve the Lord and is particularly grateful for the

opportunity to serve Primary children.

“Children have such a sensitivity to spiritual things,” Sister Stevens says. “They come into this life with believing hearts. You can feel their divine nature as they come to this earth having so recently left the presence of their Heavenly Father.”

Sister Stevens believes Primary leaders and teachers play an important role in helping parents teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. “Primary is a wonderful place for children to feel love and for teachers and leaders to reinforce lessons taught in the home,” she says.

Before being called to serve as first counselor in the Primary general presidency, Sister Stevens served on the Primary general board. She has also served as a ward Relief Society president, counselor in a ward Primary presidency, and Gospel Doctrine teacher. Sister Stevens graduated from the University of Utah with a bachelor’s degree in mathematics and a teaching certificate. ■



Cheryl A. Esplin

*Second Counselor
in the Primary
General Presidency*

Cheryl Asay Esplin, second counselor in the Primary general presidency, cannot remember a time when she did not believe in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. “I was taught at a young age to pray,” she says. “I remember going in prayer to find help before I did anything else, and I always received answers to my prayers.”

Born in October 1944 to Orson and Mildred Asay, Sister Esplin grew up on a farm eight miles (13 km) east of Lovell, Wyoming, USA. As the second oldest of nine children, she was often called upon to babysit. While in charge of her younger brothers and sisters, Sister Esplin remembers praying for her family’s safety while her parents were gone.

Sister Esplin graduated with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Brigham Young University. While studying, she met her husband, Max Esplin, and married him in the St. George Utah Temple on September 1,

1967. After graduating, Brother Esplin was drafted into the military, and Sister Esplin taught fifth grade for two years near her family in Byron, Wyoming.

She has served in the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary auxiliaries. Her most recent calling was on the Primary general board. She also served with her husband when he was president of the North Carolina Raleigh Mission.

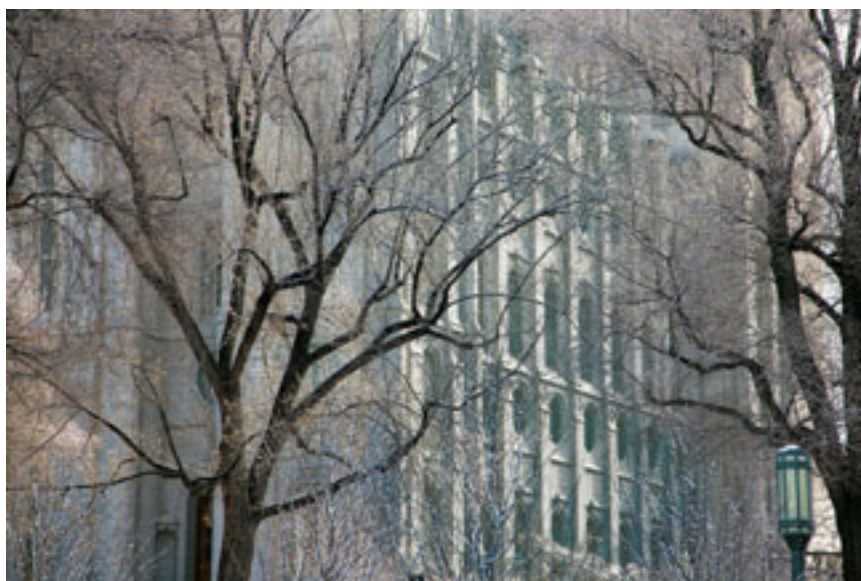
The Esplins have five children. Sister Esplin loves spending time with her grandchildren; they cook pancakes and waffles, play dress-up, go on hikes, and read stories together.

Sister Esplin loves the message of her favorite scripture, Doctrine and Covenants 84:88: “And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.” She hopes that children will remember that Heavenly Father is always available to them through prayer. ■



Harmony, Pennsylvania, by Al Rounds

The Susquehanna River at Harmony, Pennsylvania, looks much the same today as it did when Joseph and Emma Smith lived near its banks from December 1827 to June 1829. Here they buried their firstborn infant in 1828. Here the Prophet Joseph finished translating the gold plates, which became the Book of Mormon. And on the banks of the river, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist (see D&C 13: 1) and the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John (see D&C 128:20).



“How grateful we are for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and for all the good it brings into our lives,” said President Thomas S. Monson at the close of the 180th Annual General Conference. “The Lord has poured out His blessings upon us as a people. I bear my testimony to you that this work is true, that our Savior lives, and that He guides and directs His Church here upon the earth.”