



By Elder K. Brett Nattress
Of the Seventy

No Greater Joy Than to Know That They Know

I don't know if anything in this world could bring more happiness and joy than to know that our children know the Savior.

Brothers and sisters, I have recently been pondering this question: “If all that your children knew of the gospel came from you—as their only source—how much would they know?” This question applies to all those who love, mentor, and influence children.

Is there any greater gift that we can impart to our children than a memory burned deep into their hearts that we know that our Redeemer lives? Do they know that we know? And more important, have they come to know for themselves that He lives?

When I was a boy, I was my mother's most difficult young child to raise. I had an overabundance of energy. My mother tells me that her greatest fear was that I would not live to see adulthood. I was just too active.

I remember as a young boy sitting in one particular sacrament meeting with our family. My mother had just received a new set of scriptures. This new set combined the entire standard works into one bound edition, and in the very center was lined paper for note-taking.

During the meeting, I asked if I could hold her scriptures. With the hope of promoting my reverence,

she handed them down the pew. As I perused her scriptures, I noticed that she had written a personal goal in the note section. To provide context for her goal, I must tell you that I am the second of six children and my name is Brett. My mother had written, in red, just one goal: “Patience with Brett!”

As further evidence to help you understand the challenge my parents faced in raising our family, let me tell you about our family scripture reading. Each morning, my mother read the Book of Mormon to us during breakfast. During this time, my older brother,

Dave, and I would sit quietly but irreverently. To be completely honest, we weren't listening. We were reading the print on the cereal boxes.

Finally, one morning, I decided to square up with my mother. I exclaimed, “Mom, why are you doing this to us? Why are you reading the Book of Mormon every morning?” I then made a statement that I am embarrassed to admit to. In fact, I can't believe I actually said it. I told her, “Mom, I am *not* listening!”

Her loving response was a defining moment in my life. She said, “Son, I was at a meeting where President Marion G. Romney taught about the blessings of scripture reading. During this meeting, I received a promise that if I would read the Book of Mormon to my children every day, I would not lose them.” She then looked me straight in the eyes and, with absolute determination, said, “*And I will not lose you!*”

Her words pierced my heart. Notwithstanding my imperfections, I was worth saving! She taught me the eternal truth that I am a son of a loving Heavenly Father. I learned that no matter what the circumstance, I was worth it. This was a perfect moment for an imperfect little boy.





I am eternally grateful for my angel mother and for all angels who love children perfectly, notwithstanding their imperfections. I firmly believe that all sisters—I will call them “angels”—are mothers in Zion, whether or not they are married or bear children during this earthly experience.

Years ago the First Presidency proclaimed: “Motherhood is near to divinity. It is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind. It places her who honors its holy calling and service next to the angels.”¹

I am grateful for angels throughout the Church who boldly and lovingly proclaim eternal truth to Heavenly Father’s children.

I am grateful for the gift of the Book of Mormon. I know that it is true! It contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am unaware of anyone who is diligently reading the Book of Mormon each day with pure intent and with faith in Christ who has lost their testimony and fallen away. Moroni’s prophetic promise carries with it the key to know the truth of all things—including having the ability to discern and avoid the deceptions of the adversary. (See Moroni 10:4–5.)

I am also grateful for a loving Heavenly Father and for His Son, Jesus Christ. The Savior provided the perfect example of how to live in an imperfect and unfair world. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). His love for us is immeasurable. He is our truest friend. He sweat “as it were great drops of blood” for you and also for me (Luke 22:44). He forgave the seemingly unforgivable. He loved the unlovable. He did what no mortal could do: He provided an Atonement to overcome the transgressions, pains, and sicknesses of all mankind.

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can live with the promise that no matter what our struggles may be, we can always have hope in Him, “who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). Because of His Atonement, we can have joy, peace, happiness, and eternal life.

President Boyd K. Packer stated: “Save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ.”²

One of the most incredible events in human history is the Savior’s

ministering visit to the ancient inhabitants of America. Visualize in your mind what it would be like to have been there. As I have pondered His loving and tender care of that band of Saints gathered at the temple, I have reflected on individual children whom I love more than life itself. I have tried to conceive of how I would feel to behold our little ones, to personally witness the Savior inviting each child to come unto Him, to witness the Savior’s outstretched arms, to stand by as each child, one by one, gently feels the prints in His hands and in His feet, and then to see each of them stand and bear record that He lives! (See 3 Nephi 11:14–17; see also 17:21; 18:25.) To have our children turn and say, “Mom, Dad, it’s Him!”

I don’t know if anything in this world could bring more happiness and joy than to know that our children know the Savior, to know that they know “to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.” That is why, as members of the Church, “we preach of Christ” and we testify of Christ (2 Nephi 25:26).

- That is why we pray with our children every day.



By Elder Dale G. Renlund
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- That is why we read the scriptures with them every day.
- That is why we teach them to serve others, so that they can hold claim upon the blessings of finding themselves as they lose themselves in the service of others (see Mark 8:35; Mosiah 2:17).

As we devote ourselves to these simple patterns of discipleship, we empower our children with the love of the Savior and with divine direction and protection as they face the fierce winds of the adversary.

The gospel truly is about the one. It is about one lost sheep (see Luke 15:3–7); it is about one Samaritan woman at a well (see John 4:5–30); it is about one prodigal son (see Luke 15:11–32).

And it is about one little boy who might claim he is not listening.

It is about each one of us—as imperfect as we may be—becoming one with the Savior as He is one with His Father (see John 17:21).

I testify that we have a loving Heavenly Father, who knows us by name! I testify that Jesus Christ is the living Son of the living God. He is the Only Begotten and our Advocate with the Father. I further testify that salvation comes in and through His name—and in no other way.

It is my prayer that we will devote our hearts and our hands to helping all of Heavenly Father's children to know Him and to feel His love. As we do, He promises us eternal joy and happiness in this world and in the world to come. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. "Message of the First Presidency," in Conference Report, Oct. 1942, 12–13; read by President J. Reuben Clark Jr.
2. Boyd K. Packer, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 20.

Repentance: A Joyful Choice

Repentance is not only possible but also joyful because of our Savior.

My dear brothers and sisters, when I was 12 years old, my family lived in Göteborg, a coastal city in southern Sweden. By way of reference, it is the hometown of our dear associate Elder Per G. Malm,¹ who passed away this summer. We miss him. We're grateful for his nobility and his noble service and for the example of his absolutely adorable family. And we certainly pray God's richest blessings to be theirs.

Fifty years ago, we attended church in a large remodeled home. One Sunday, my friend Steffan,² the only other deacon in the branch, greeted me at church with some excitement. We went to the chapel's adjacent overflow

area, and he pulled from his pocket a large firecracker and some matches. In an act of youthful bravado, I took the firecracker and lit the long gray fuse. I intended to snuff out the fuse before it blew up. But when I burned my fingers trying to do so, I dropped the firecracker. Steffan and I watched in horror as the fuse continued to burn.

The firecracker exploded, and sulfurous fumes filled the overflow area and the chapel. We hurriedly gathered up the scattered remnants of the firecracker and opened the windows to try to get the smell out, naively hoping that no one would notice. Fortunately, no one was hurt and no damage was done.

