

More Fit for the Kingdom

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Take advantage of every opportunity to learn. If we do, the Lord can better use us in many ways to do great things.

Whenever I hear the question “Why is an education important?” I think of a phrase from the hymn “More Holiness Give Me.” The phrase in the third verse says, “More fit for the kingdom, More used would I be” (*Hymns*, no. 131).

The reason we need more education is so that the Lord can use us to do His work and bless the lives of others. If we focus on becoming more fit for the kingdom, choosing more education is usually an excellent decision. Even if we do not always see all the possible uses for the things we learn, education is an important way we can prepare ourselves to serve the Lord.

GOOD GRADES PAY OFF

Let me give you a few examples. One of the most vivid for me happened while my husband and I were presiding over the new mission in Mongolia. All of the young missionaries assigned to Mongolia were required to teach English in the schools. This was a condition to have a visa to stay in the country. Our missionaries quickly discovered that those who had paid attention in school had an easier time teaching English to the eager students. I'm sure the missionaries never dreamed that

the things they learned in high school English classes would ever be put to such good use.

Such a simple thing as being interested in their high school classes blessed hundreds of people, many of whom were introduced to and joined the Church. The Lord was able to use these missionaries' basic skills for something greater.

TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Get in the habit of taking advantage of every opportunity to learn and remember. You can learn much from those who love and teach you best—your family. Let me share with you part of a letter I wrote to my grandchildren while on our mission:

“The one ‘pearl of wisdom’ that I might impart to you is how valuable *every* experience in life is. We have been amazed at how many times, since we have been here, that we have grasped onto some idea or skill we learned along the way. Mom’s ‘basic’ cooking lessons have helped me to creatively use what we have here—carrots, cabbage, onions, potatoes, eggs, rice, and mutton—to prepare nourishing meals.”

The Church also gives us many learning opportunities. Remember, starting in Primary, you learned step-by-step how to remain calm

and repeat the words you had practiced. As you grew you learned how to organize your thoughts, illustrate them with personal experiences, and gain the confidence to speak in front of a group. These kinds of experiences can lead to practical things like doing presentations in your classes, getting better job opportunities, and most importantly, being able to teach and speak comfortably in Church.

CHANCES ALL AROUND

Opportunities to learn are all around you. Join the choir and learn to read music. You'll be glad your whole life that you have this skill. When I visited young women in Colombia and Ecuador, the young women were the ones who conducted the music, making it possible for all of us to worship the Lord through song.

Take advantage by learning the skills taught at camp and in Scouting—first aid, different methods of cooking, and recreational safety. These skills can bless your families now and in the future.

Look for opportunities to learn to care for and teach children. Now is the time to prepare for your future roles as fathers and mothers. You can literally make a world of difference in the life of a child right now, let alone being a well-prepared parent in the future.

THE LORD WILL USE US

Most people want to know how to be happy. King Benjamin helps us understand that service is the secret to happiness. In Mosiah 2:17 he teaches:



A RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY

“Because of our sacred regard for each human intellect, we consider the obtaining of an education to be a religious responsibility. Yet opportunities and abilities differ. I believe that in the pursuit of education, individual desire is more influential than institution, and personal faith more forceful than faculty.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Where Is Wisdom?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6.



“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”

What can you do as a teenager to learn to serve others? Learn as many skills and gain as much education as you can. This knowledge will allow you to be “more fit for the kingdom, more used.” And by giving service, you will unlock the secret to happiness.

Let me finish telling you about the missionaries in Mongolia. Because all the elders were expected to teach English, I became something of a teaching supervisor to help them provide the best classes possible. I would visit them in class, observe their teaching, and then give suggestions.

I never expected to have to supervise teachers on a mission. But the Lord needed someone who could help these elders do the job they needed to do in order to introduce the gospel to Mongolia. From one class I had taken in college, I knew enough to talk about the positive things they had done instead of focusing on the negative. I knew I had to build their confidence. Having these young men do a good job was so important to introducing the gospel to the Mongolian people.

Much later, when we had returned from

the mission field and the missionaries I helped were pursuing their own educations, one elder e-mailed me and thanked me for the day I came to their class to watch him and his companion. The first thing I had asked them that day was to list all the things they had done right. They made their list, but what he remembers is that I came up with a long list of things they had done well. It changed his attitude. It gave him confidence. He had not done well in school before his mission, but now, because he felt he was a good teacher of English, he thought he could return to school and succeed. It wasn't until he had graduated from college that he wrote the e-mail to thank me. I had no idea that I was helping him. But the Lord knew how to use that bit of knowledge I had learned in college to help one of His missionaries while on his mission and afterwards in his own education.

That is the value of gaining and continuing to gain an education. Remember that being “more fit for the kingdom” will help you be a better mother or father, a better wife or husband, a better employee, a better servant of the Lord. Education of any and every type will help you become more useful to the Lord as we help each other return to live with Him. **NE**