



PUT LIGHT IN YOUR LIFE

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Many of you are struggling with your identity. Some of you may wonder what the future holds for you. The world presents alluring enticements. It is bewildering. Some of you may not only be unsure about where you are going; you may also be questioning your real worth. Let me assure you, I believe with all my heart that you are a chosen generation.

I speak about coming out of the darkness and into the light. Micah said, “When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me” (Micah 7:8).

How We Receive Light

We receive light from the Lord. This can happen to us when we study the scriptures and “our eyes [are] opened and our understandings [are] enlightened” (D&C 76:12). Daily scripture study turns on the light of our spiritual perception and opens our understandings to further knowledge. I try to read from the scriptures at the close of the day. It brings a remarkable peace. I sleep better by doing this.

We receive spiritual light when we attend sacrament meeting. Partaking of the sacrament and the inspiration of the worship

service weekly charges our spiritual batteries.

We receive spiritual light when we respond to calls. Serving in a calling in the Church blesses us more than it blesses others.

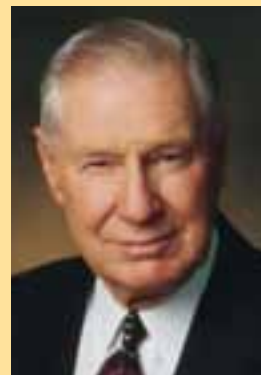
We receive spiritual light when we pay our tithing, as the windows of heaven can then open up (see Malachi 3:10).

We receive spiritual light when we sing the hymns. Singing the hymns strengthens us and brings us together spiritually.

We receive spiritual light when we pray. As a young teenager, the Prophet Joseph Smith read, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally” (James 1:5).

I commend to you his account of the First Vision, which followed as he determined that he would seek wisdom from God. He wrote, “When the light rested upon me I saw . . .” What did he see? He saw the Father and the Son. As the vision ended, he said, “When the light had departed, I had no strength” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17, 20).

Obviously, we do not expect a heavenly visitation, but we are entitled to increased spiritual and intellectual enlightenment if we first seek “the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).



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To be called to serve as a missionary for this Church is not a right but a privilege. Missionary service is joyful, but it is not fun and games; it is hard work.

What Is the Focus of Our Faith?

Part of our coming into the light depends upon the focus of our faith. Is it seen as repression or liberation? As young people mature, they feel new power, new passions, and new ambitions. Yet they are told that some of these must be restrained. Bridling our passions, or yielding appropriately to restraint, is necessary for our personal growth and progression. As Alma said, “Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love” (Alma 38:12).

A few years ago a nationally broadcast program talked about imprisoned criminals who were taming wild horses. As the prisoners formed friendships with the horses, they learned about patience, controlling tempers, respect for others, and the value of working within a system. As they watched the horses learn to obey their commands, they realized how they could have avoided the terrible mistakes that had put them in prison.

In our modern society, so many voices in books, magazines, television, and movies depict sexual intimacy outside of marriage as being socially acceptable, even desirable. Some young people, deceived by this sophistry, ask: “Why is it wrong? We are in love!” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles answered this question as follows:

“In matters of human intimacy, you must wait! You must wait until you can give everything, and you cannot give everything until you are legally and lawfully married. To give illicitly that which is not yours to give (remember, ‘you are not your own’ [see 1 Corinthians 6:19]) and to give only part of that which cannot be followed with the gift of your whole self is emotional Russian

roulette. If you persist in pursuing physical satisfaction without the sanction of heaven, you run the terrible risk of such spiritual, psychic damage that you may undermine *both* your longing for physical intimacy *and* your ability to give wholehearted devotion to a later, truer love. . . . On your wedding day the very best gift you can give your eternal companion is your very best self—clean and pure and worthy of such purity in return.”¹

Faith Carries Us Out of Darkness

Our faith is not a bundle of beliefs and practices that are too heavy to bear. Those who have come out of the darkness find that their faith carries them. Faith is not heavy; faith lifts and gives us wings to carry us over hard places. As Isaiah promised, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as

eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

Coming out of the darkness into the light frees us from the dark side of our souls, which comes from fear, dis-



couragement, and sin. You can tell one who has come into the light by his or her countenance and attitude. The Savior said it well: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

Since September 11, 2001, we have been concerned about another form of darkness—the influence of terrorists and hijackers. You are growing up in a different world than I did. For years we traveled on





airplanes without having our baggage searched or going through metal detectors.

My dear young friends, your enemies are not all terrorists and hijackers. Some are within your peer group—perhaps even among those you look upon as friends—who would encourage you to free yourselves from restraints and to try drugs, alcohol, or intimacy with someone of the opposite sex—or even the same sex. They are the critics, the dissenters, and the skeptics—anyone who keeps us in darkness and tries to keep us from finding the light in our eternal journey. Other spiritual terrorists include pornography pushers, those with no values. These people are in darkness, lack faith, and are unwilling to seek a source higher than themselves for solutions to questions and problems. Some have such egotism, poor self-image, and weak faith that they cannot conceive of obtaining light and knowledge by any other means.

Become Defenders of the Faith

All of us ought to become defenders of the faith. As we do defend our faith, we come out of darkness and move

toward the light. You young people share the responsibility of proclaiming the truth of the restored gospel. You will be effective in doing this only if you try to do right in your individual lives. To do this you will need an understanding and testimony of the basic doctrines of the Church. These fundamental absolutes of our faith are first, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Redeemer of the world and second, that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, actually appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith, restoring the fulness of the gospel and the true Church.

From this follows the purposes of the Church: First, to prepare its members for the perfect life. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Second, to foster and encourage its members to become a body of Saints, united in faith and works. Third, to proclaim the message of restored truth to the world. Fourth, to save our dead.

You may be preparing to serve as full-time missionaries. To be called to serve as a missionary for this Church is not a right but a privilege. Missionary service is joyful, but it is not fun and games; it is hard work. The Lord’s admonition



to missionaries is contained in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day” (v. 2).

All missionary service presumes personal worthiness. The Lord said, “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (D&C 38:42). Some of you are worthy, but because of health problems may not be able to stand the rigors of proselytizing in the mission field. You may find alternative service opportunities that will be a great blessing to you.

Accepting the Atonement

A few years ago, when Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Presidency of the Seventy was in Japan, the missionaries introduced him to a young Japanese brother who had just joined the Church. He was from a non-Christian background. When he met the missionaries, he was interested in the message, but he could not understand or feel the need for a Savior, and he didn’t have a witness regarding the gospel. One day the missionaries decided to show him

a film about the Atonement. The young man saw the film, but still he didn’t have a witness.

“The next morning he went to work. He worked in an optician’s shop making eyeglasses. . . . An elderly woman came in. He remembered her coming in a few weeks before. She had broken her glasses. She needed a new pair. When she had come in earlier, she didn’t have enough money and had gone away to save more in order to purchase the new glasses. As she came in that day, she again showed him her spectacles and showed him the money that she now had. He realized that she didn’t have enough yet. Then a thought came to him: *I have some money. I don’t need to tell her. I can make up the difference.* So he told her the money she had was adequate, took her glasses, [and] made an appointment for her to return when he had finished making the spectacles. . . .

“She returned later. He had the glasses ready for her. He handed them to her, and she put them on [and exclaimed] ‘. . . I see. I see.’ Then she began to cry. At that point, a burning sensation began to grow within his bosom and swelled within him. He said, ‘. . . I understand. I understand.’ He

began to cry. Out the door he ran, looking for the missionaries. When he found them, he said, 'I see! My eyes have been opened! I know that Jesus is the Son of God. I know the stone was rolled away from the tomb and on that glorious Easter morning He arose from the dead. He can make up the difference in my life when I fall short.'

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We can all see by the candle of inspiration, which is the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. It will light our way out of darkness and difficulty. The most sure way to come out of darkness and into the light is through communication with our Heavenly Father by the process known as divine revelation. President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) declared, “Whenever the Lord had a people on the earth that He acknowledged as such, that people were led by revelation.”³ The inspiration of God is available to all who worthily seek the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is particularly true of those who have received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Revelation Continues

Those who wish to come out of darkness and into the light must make sure they are in harmony with the inspiration and revelation that come through our prophets, seers, and revelators. Amos tells us, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). The prophets have tuned in over the centuries to the celestial transmitting station with the responsibility to relay the Lord’s words to others.

The best way for you young people to come in closer harmony with the Savior is to sustain His living prophet on the earth, the President of the Church. If we do not follow the living prophet, whoever he may be, we are in danger of dying spiritually.

I can testify that the process of continual revelation comes to the Church very frequently. It comes daily. This is necessary for the Church to fulfill its mission. Without it we would fail. The Church constantly needs the guidance of its head, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Continual revelation will not and cannot be forced by outside pressure from people and events. It is not the so-called “revelation of social progress.” It does not originate with the prophets; it comes from God. The Church is governed by the prophet under the inspiration, guidance, and direction of the Lord.

My belief in and conviction of the divine truthfulness of the Church has now covered a long period of time—as long as I can remember. That testimony has grown stronger as the years have passed. The certain knowledge of the truthfulness of this gospel came before I was called to the holy apostleship and has been reconfirmed many times since. I testify to you young people that the gospel contains the answers to life’s challenges and problems. It is the sure way to happiness and the fulfillment of the Savior’s promise, which is “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). **NE**

From a Church Educational System fireside talk given on September 8, 2002.

NOTES

1. “Personal Purity,” *New Era*, Feb. 2000, 6.
2. “Stretching the Cords of the Tent,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 65–66.
3. *The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, sel. G. Homer Durham (1946), 138.

When the optician banded the glasses to the woman, she exclaimed, “I see. I see.” At that point, a burning sensation began to grow within his bosom. He said, “I understand. I understand. . . . My eyes have been opened! I know that Jesus is the Son of God. . . . He can make up the difference in my life when I fall short.”

