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Of the Seventy

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- HOW TO -
MOVE
your
MOUNTAINS

When I was 13 years old and growing up in Orem, Utah, USA, my great-uncle Ash called and said he had a summer job for me. I gladly took it, since it wasn't easy for a 13-year-old to get a job. On my first day, Uncle Ash brought me to a lot he owned where a grocery store was being built. Construction workers had already dug a huge hole on the land where they would put the building's foundation. At one end of the lot they had piled up a huge mountain of dirt they had excavated for the foundation. It was so big that the neighborhood kids had turned it into a bike-riding hill, complete with jumps and paths.

Uncle Ash was a kind, older man about the age of my grandfather. He and his wife had never had children of their own. When I met Uncle Ash at the lot, he handed me an old wooden-handled shovel and a scuffed-up black wheelbarrow and told me that my job was to move the mountain of dirt to the back end of the lot, about 75 yards (69 meters) away.

As I look back on the experience now, I am sure Uncle Ash could have moved the dirt much faster and more efficiently with a backhoe, but he offered to pay me \$1.40 an hour, which was good pay back then—so I took the job and went to work.

One Wheelbarrow at a Time

I toiled away at that mountain of dirt for weeks, one wheelbarrow load at a time. I soon settled into a pattern: Every day, I got to the lot early in the morning, while it was still cool, filled the wheelbarrow one shovelful at a time, pushed it across the field and dumped it in the location Uncle Ash had pointed to, then returned to do it again. I pushed that wheelbarrow back and forth so many times I eventually wore a smooth path between the large mountain of dirt and the little mound I was creating.

I worked from four to six hours a day, every day, pushing the wheelbarrow back and forth, back and forth, until I thought I would never see the end of it. It seemed to me that the big mountain was not getting any smaller, no matter how hard or long I toiled.

Every now and then, Uncle Ash stopped by the lot to check on my progress. I really respected him. He was one of those older men who seem a little bit gruff but are really soft-hearted on the inside. Looking back, I can see that Uncle Ash was more interested in molding my character than in moving his dirt. He had entrusted me with this job, and I was determined to complete it even if it took me the whole summer.



A New Perspective

After a few weeks, I began to feel like I would never be able to complete the task. The original mountain of dirt didn't seem to be getting any smaller, and I wondered if all my work and effort was making any difference at all, or if I was just wasting my summer.

Then one day, something very simple happened that changed my entire outlook. As I pushed a full wheelbarrow up my pile to dump it, I noticed I had to push the wheelbarrow up higher and higher to reach the top. Then, as I was pushing the empty wheelbarrow back to fill it again, for some reason I stopped midway between the two piles of dirt. I stood and looked at the mountain of dirt I was supposed to move. It hadn't really changed. But, when I turned around and looked at the mound I was creating, I saw that it had become huge! I was making a mountain of my own.

Suddenly, my perspective changed. The piles were the same size they had been a few minutes before, but my new perspective allowed me to see that my efforts were amounting to something; they were not in vain. It gave me a sense of accomplishment and pride in what I was doing, though I still had a long way to go. As I bent and lifted the handles of the wheelbarrow to return to work, my attitude had changed. I was happier. I felt more worthwhile, more confident in myself.

Our Own Mountains to Move

What mountains of dirt need to be moved in our lives? Heavenly Father may ask us to complete tasks or face trials that seem impossible at first, but little by little as we work one shovelful at a time, we can move mountains with the Lord's help. Having faith in Jesus Christ changes our perspective so that we can look and see how far we've come with His help.

The scriptures teach us that if we have "faith as a grain of mustard seed" (Matthew 17:20), we can move mountains. There are times when mountains are moved by our faith in Christ, by His power alone. But most of the time, the exercise of our faith requires a great deal of work and persistence on our part. I learned that summer that faith and a willingness to persist can overcome challenges and obstacles that seem like mountains in our lives.

Whether our mountains are trials, commandments, skills to learn, goals to accomplish, or lifelong challenges, we can eventually overcome these things as we work and exercise faith in Christ. It will take lots of time and persistence, so don't get discouraged when it doesn't seem like you're making any progress. Don't give up and don't give in! By and by, you will accomplish the things you desire and become a better, more accomplished person in the process.



Set your goals in life by choosing the good things that will matter most and bring lasting joy and blessings. Look forward with an eye of faith to what you have chosen to accomplish or overcome, and then go to work. With diligence and with patience, your faith will be rewarded. (See Alma 32:41–43.)

No matter what your circumstances are, you can always choose something to work on. It could be playing a sport, learning to play a musical instrument, trying to get into a certain school or college, learning a new language, or acquiring Doctrinal Mastery. Choose your own mountains of dirt to move. Set your own goals and desires. When you seek opportunities to learn, work or acquire skills, and you are diligent and persistent in your effort, the Lord will bless you by increasing your talents and gifts. He will also find ways to use your talents in His work.

A Test to Prove Myself

Uncle Ash also owned a carwash. After I finished moving the mountain of dirt that summer, he hired me to work at his carwash a few days a week after school. He told me later that he gave me that job to move the dirt as a way of determining whether he wanted to hire me for other jobs. I realized that the whole point of the mountain-moving job wasn't just

hauling dirt from one place to another—it was a way for me to be tested and prove I was a diligent, hard-working young man.

Sometimes Heavenly Father will ask us to do difficult things so that we can prove ourselves to Him. We may not always understand the reasons for these tasks or trials, just as I didn't understand the reasons Uncle Ash asked me to move that dirt mountain. But when we listen and obey and diligently labor to

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show Heavenly Father our love for Him and our faith in Jesus Christ, He blesses us (see John 14:15). The good things in life come with faith, persistence, and diligence, especially as we serve our Heavenly Father. **NE**

