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STRENGTH AND GUIDANCE FOR ANXIOUS TIMES





Our most reliable prevention of anxiety in eternal terms is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We live in challenging times. Day-to-day stresses and uncertainty, as well as wickedness, are all around us. As a result, Church leaders have noticed an alarming increase in the amount of anxiety experienced among young people.

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, wants you to know that there is help for dealing with this problem and any other problem you may face in mortality.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMPARISONS

No one knows for sure what has caused such great increases in anxiety. One suggested cause is an increased use of technology. Some of this is motivated or caused by what has come to be called FOMO, which means the “fear of missing out” on something.

A related possible cause is the way technology allows teens and others to constantly compare themselves and their lives with those of their peers. Such constant comparison enhances anxiety and depresses self-esteem.

How? What most people post on the internet are only their significant achievements and their emotional highs. This allows viewers who concentrate on such postings to compare the highs of their peers as if they were constant, compared with their own ups and downs, which suffer by comparison. Such comparisons are contrary to the scriptural teaching that we are not required to run faster than we have strength (see Mosiah 4:27). Our loving Savior will judge us individually, not according to the performance of our peers.

STRENGTH THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

Whatever the uncertainties about the causes of anxiety, we who have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ understand that the most reliable prevention of anxiety in eternal terms is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We begin with personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer. He has called us His friends, and He has promised to give us strength to overcome the inevitable challenges of mortality. We rely on the hope and assurance that come from His gospel. Our faith causes us to trust in its Author. His strength is sufficient to sustain us, and His promises are sure. We go forward with “faith in every footstep”—to use the words of a great song. You are marvelous examples of that faith. You are sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father who loves



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you, who shares your concerns, who listens to your prayers, and who honors your service.

THE GIFT OF GUIDANCE

The restored gospel gives us the perspective to understand the purpose of life and the role of opposition. It teaches us and gives us direction to grow toward the eternal destiny established by a loving Father in Heaven.

There is great power in the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Our unshakeable faith in that doctrine guides our steps. It enlightens our minds and empowers our actions. This guidance and enlightenment and power are among the greatest gifts we have received from our Heavenly Father. By understanding and conforming our lives to that doctrine and through the principle of repentance, we keep ourselves on the path toward our

eternal destiny—reunion and exaltation with our loving heavenly parents.

We were placed here on earth to progress toward our destiny of eternal life. The doctrine of the restored Church of Jesus Christ gives us a unique perspective and different values to guide our mortal decisions. It sets us apart from those who lack that eternal perspective. It allows us to be steadfast and immovable against the winds of untruths and the earthquakes of mortal adversities.

THERE IS A PLAN

We live in stressful times. For some young people, the stresses are financial, including the loss of employment or home security. For others, the stresses are associated with painful separations from those they love, caused either by divorce of parents or other threats to personal security.

We also have the challenge of living in a godless and increasingly amoral generation. We are confronted by a culture of evil and personal wickedness in the world as more and more publicized voices deny or doubt the existence of God. More and more support the idea that all authority and all rules of behavior are man-made and can be accepted or rejected as one chooses, each person being free to decide for himself or herself what is right and wrong.

My dear young brothers and sisters, we are surrounded with evil influences, but we do have Divine assurances that all will be well if we get on and stay on the covenant path. I hope you know why your Church leaders and teachers give you the teachings and counsel we give. We love you, and our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, love you. Their plan for us is the “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). That plan and Their commandments,



ordinances, and covenants lead us to the greatest happiness and joy in this life and in the life to come. As servants of the Father and the Son, we teach and counsel as They have directed us by the Holy Ghost. We have no desire other than to speak what is true and to encourage you to do what They have outlined as the pathway to eternal life, “the greatest of all the gifts of God” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7).

YOU HAVE A CHOICE

We go forward by making choices, and our teachings are intended to help you with those choices. Many choices are between good or evil, but more frequently they are choices between two goods.

Over 10 years ago I gave a talk titled “Good, Better, Best.” In that talk I said that “just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the

time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives. . . . We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best.”¹

I want nothing more than for you to make the choices that get you on, and keep you on, the covenant path. That is the path that our Heavenly Father desires for all of His children. We have a Savior who has assured us of immortality, and who suffered for our sins and has experienced all the anxiety and stress of mortal life that He will know how to succor, or help, us as we seek to return to our heavenly parents to live the life that They live. **NE**

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, Oct. 2007 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104, 107).

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