

PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON:  
**Guided, Prepared,**



# Committed

*After decades of repairing hearts as a renowned heart surgeon and then touching hearts as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, President Russell M. Nelson brings a steady hand and an unfailing love to his ministry as President of the Church.*

**By President Dallin H. Oaks**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

**W**hen a President of the Church dies, many focus on the process by which his successor is selected. In fact, that process, guided by the Lord, began many years earlier. Russell M. Nelson has had a lifetime of preparation for this holy calling. I have been a witness to much of that preparation.

President Russell M. Nelson's preparation is evident in the sum total of his lifetime experiences and achievements. He is renowned as a pioneering heart surgeon. He is a brilliant writer and speaker, able to communicate in many languages. He knows and loves people, and he understands the effects of decisions on their lives. He knows and loves the scriptures and the holy temple. He is an experienced administrator who makes decisions promptly and decisively.

President Nelson has personally known, and in many instances been schooled by, 10 of the previous 16 Presidents of the Church. Now, as the 17th President, he begins his presidential ministry by assuring Latter-day Saints that Jesus Christ will continue to guide His Church.

"The Lord always has and always will



instruct and inspire His prophets," he said during the announcement broadcast on January 16, 2018. "The Lord is at the helm. We who have been ordained to bear witness of His holy name throughout the world will continue to seek to know His will and follow it."<sup>1</sup>

President Nelson's concern for the eternal welfare of God's children comes from a lifetime of heartfelt service. Just as he has literally touched many hearts as a surgeon, he has metaphorically touched the hearts of Saints worldwide with his powerful teachings, selfless service, and unfailing love. As he said during January's historic broadcast, that love "has grown over decades of meeting you, worshipping with you, and serving you."<sup>2</sup>

Left: Then-Elder Nelson offers a guiding arm to the late President Boyd K. Packer. Above: Presidents Dallin H. Oaks, Russell M. Nelson, and Henry B. Eyring enjoy visiting with members of the media during a press conference on January 16, 2018.

**Marriage:** *"Harmony in marriage comes only when one esteems the welfare of his or her spouse among the highest of priorities. When that really happens, a celestial marriage becomes a reality, bringing great joy in this life and in the life to come"* ("Celestial Marriage," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 94).

### Essential Preparation

Much is known of Dr. Nelson's preeminent career as a pioneering scholar, scientist, and surgeon of the human heart. All of that, as well as his exemplary family life, was a primary part of his preparation.

Russell Marion Nelson was born on September 9, 1924, to Marion C. and Edna Anderson Nelson. Both parents were less-active members of the Church throughout Russell's childhood, but they showered their children with love and occasionally sent them to Sunday School. Initially, young Russell was not interested in church, preferring to play football with his friends. But when he turned

16, his heart began to respond to the truths of the gospel and he was baptized along with his siblings. Years later, because of the example and persuasion of their children, the Nelson parents returned to activity.

Young Russell also responded to the promise of education. He was coming to realize, as he would later teach, that pursuing education is a religious responsibility. He graduated from high school at 16, and he was enrolled in the University of Utah when the worldwide conflict of World War II prevented him from serving a full-time mission.

While Russell was working for his bachelor's degree, his musical talent persuaded him to



Above and far right: President Nelson graduated as a medical doctor at age 22 and finished his PhD in 1954 after serving as a military doctor during the Korean War. Left: At college with Dantzel White, whom he married in 1945. Right: With family members.

join the cast of a musical at the university. The lead soprano, Dantzel White, caught his ear and his eye. They married shortly after he received his bachelor's degree in 1945. At age 22, he graduated from the University of Utah with high honors as a medical doctor. He proceeded to the University of Minnesota for postdoctoral training. There, he was a key member of the team that pioneered the development of open-heart surgery. He later served residencies in surgery in Minnesota and at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

In the midst of his education and enlarging family, Dr. Nelson was summoned to serve during the Korean War because doctors were desperately needed by the military. Because of his surgical training, he was sent to Washington, D.C., where he formed a surgical research unit at the Walter



Reed National Military Medical Center. In 1953, his military obligation fulfilled, he spent a year on the Harvard Service at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. Then he finished his PhD at the University of Minnesota in 1954.

Despite his busy medical training and career, Dr. Nelson always put his family first in his life. Dantzel White Nelson stood beside and supported her husband in all of his family, Church, professional, and military activities. Their constant, mutually supportive and loving relationship was an

inspiration and steadying influence for each of their 10 children—nine daughters and one son. Their relationship “was very sweet and very giving to each other,” according to daughter Sylvia Webster. Their youngest, Russell Nelson Jr., recalled, “It was always obvious that my parents loved each other very much.”<sup>3</sup>

Unexpectedly, Dantzel Nelson died just short of their 60th wedding anniversary. After a very lonely time, Elder Nelson married Wendy Watson, a previously unmarried woman whose doctor's degree, professorship at Brigham Young University, and loving outreach to the large Nelson family have made her an ideal companion for Elder and President Nelson.

“I am sure it is hard to walk into a family of 200-plus people and feel like you are close friends,” said daughter Sylvia.



“Wendy has made the effort and she has been amazing.”<sup>4</sup> Russell Jr. added, “Wendy’s been a very wonderful companion to him. . . . I can see how he’s been prepared over the years for this position and this calling, and a key part of that is Wendy in his life.”<sup>5</sup>

As this is being written, the Nelson family numbers 10 children, 57 grandchildren, and 116 great-grandchildren, with 2 more on the way. All who are available gather at a different home each month to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries.

### **“All Kingdoms Have a Law Given”**

When Russell M. Nelson was in medical school, he was taught that no doctor should ever touch a human heart, because once a heart was touched, it would stop beating. Only a few years later, however, Dr. Nelson and his fellow researchers reported the first successful use of an artificial heart-lung machine on a dog. The heart-lung machine took over the patient’s circulation, permitting surgery on the nonbeating heart. This breakthrough by Dr. Nelson and his colleagues was soon extended to humans and has now led to more than 1.5 million open-heart operations done annually worldwide.

The inspiration that led to this discovery came to Dr. Nelson while he was pondering the following verses in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“All kingdoms have a law given. . . .

“And unto every kingdom is given a law; and unto every law there are certain bounds also and conditions” (D&C 88:36, 38).<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Nelson reasoned that if he worked, studied, and asked the right questions, he and his team could learn what laws govern the beating heart. “It was through the understanding of the scriptures and ‘likening’ them to this area of interest,” he said, “that the great field of heart surgery as we know it today was facilitated for me.”<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his life, this ability to apply gospel principles has blessed President Nelson, his family, the Church, and the world. It was key to his preparation for his call as an Apostle and now as President of the Church.

In his professional career, Dr. Nelson rapidly achieved renown as a surgeon and medical researcher. In 1955, he accepted a position as a research professor of surgery at the University of Utah. There he built a heart-lung machine that he used to perform the first open-heart surgery in Utah—the first such operation west of the Mississippi. He lectured

and wrote numerous chapters for medical textbooks and more than 70 peer-reviewed papers in other publications. Before his call to the apostleship, he performed nearly 7,000 operations.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to his medical skill, Dr. Nelson was an inspiring teacher and an effective administrator, qualities that made him invaluable in the medical field and would later distinguish him in his Church callings.

“The duty of a doctor, primarily, is to teach,” Dr. Nelson said. He added, “A doctor is really functioning at his highest level when he is teaching his patient what is wrong and what can be done about it.”<sup>9</sup>

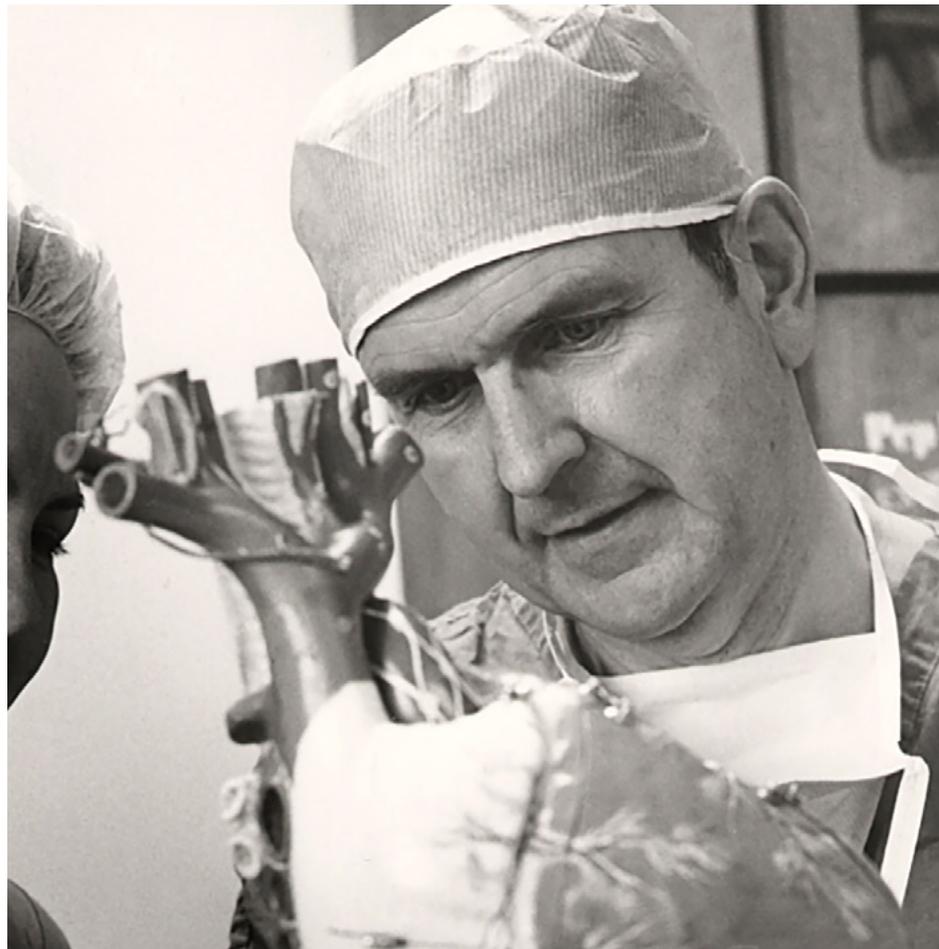


Dr. Nelson displayed this willingness and penchant for teaching and education by traveling to foreign countries to demonstrate and teach medical procedures. To aid him in teaching, he studied numerous languages, including French, Portuguese, German, Russian, and Spanish so he could better communicate with and teach doctors and researchers in other countries. After attending a meeting in which President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) advised the congregation to learn Chinese, Dr. Nelson and his wife Dantzel immediately

began to study Mandarin. His proficiency in that language allowed him to work closely with the medical community in China, where he gave lectures and performed surgery, saving the life of one of China's national heroes.<sup>10</sup>

### Seeking First the Kingdom of God

As impressive as President Nelson's medical accomplishments were, he kept his focus on the Lord and His work. Most members of the Church do not know that he served as a Temple Square missionary from 1955 to 1965, guiding visitors from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. each Thursday. This was one of his busiest times as a surgeon. He later wrote that "in 1964, we were just starting in medicine on the challenge



of replacing the aortic valve. Mortality rates were high, and the time commitment to each patient was extremely high—almost one-on-one for many, many hours, sometimes even days.”<sup>11</sup>

For many Church members, that reality would rule out a more time-consuming calling. Not for Dr. Nelson. In 1964, after he and others were interviewed as a possible stake president,

Despite his busy medical career and Church callings, Dr. Nelson remained dedicated to his wife and family. His many patients included President Spencer W. Kimball (above left), who had blessed him that the mortality rate related to aortic valve surgery would drop, which it did.

**Discipleship:** “True disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to stand out, speak up, and be different from the people of the world. They are undaunted, devoted, and courageous” (“Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 40–41).

then-Elder Spencer W. Kimball, accompanied by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, told him: “We feel that the Lord wants you to preside over this stake. During our many interviews, whenever your name has come up the response has been rather routine: ‘Oh, he wouldn’t be very good,’ or ‘He doesn’t have time,’ or both. Nonetheless, we feel that the Lord wants you. Now if you feel that you are too busy and shouldn’t accept the call, then that’s your privilege. . . .”

“I simply answered that that decision was made August 31, 1945, when Sister Nelson and I were married in the temple. We made a commitment then to ‘seek . . . first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,’ feeling confident that everything else would be added unto us, as the Lord promised. (See Matt. 6:33.)”<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Nelson’s acceptance of that calling illustrates what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently called “the childlike humility and simplicity of Russell Nelson’s faith. . . . He’s that humble, he’s that childlike, at every level and in virtually every other human relationship that I’ve seen him in.”<sup>13</sup>

Elder Kimball gave Dr. Nelson a blessing, promising that the mortality rate related to aortic valve surgery would drop and that the procedure would no longer be a drain on his time and energy.

“The following year, the time demands of the operation *did* decrease, and I’ve had the time necessary to serve in that and other callings,” Dr. Nelson said. “In fact, our mortality rates went down to . . . a very low and acceptable, tolerable range. Interestingly enough, that’s the very operation I did for President Kimball eight years later.”<sup>14</sup>

The demands of his career and Church callings meant that Dr. Nelson was severely limited in free time to spend at home. However, he did everything he could to make his wife and their 10 children a priority. Whenever he was at home, he would commit his time fully to his family. On his many travels around the world, he often took either his wife or one of their children with him. While Dantzel superbly cared for their children in his absence, she was grateful for

his dedication to them when he had a break from his busy career and callings. “When he’s home, he’s home!” she once told President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973), who at the time was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>15</sup> President Lee would often repeat this line when counseling busy priesthood leaders to focus on their families.

### Following the Prophet

I was a witness and a minor participant in an important episode in the professional life of Dr. Russell M. Nelson and his wife Dantzel. This occurred as part of my first meeting with the Nelsons in 1965, over 52 years ago. In his autobiography, Dr. Nelson tells how he was offered a professorship of surgery and chairmanship of the Division of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery at the University of Chicago. This offer, he wrote, “made resources available to me in the way of financial support, research laboratory, and staff support that would fulfill the dream of any academician. As a further inducement, the offer included four years of college for all of our nine children at the institution of their choice, with all the bills to be paid by the University of Chicago.” The dean told Dr. Nelson, “One of the reasons we want you is that we know you are a good Mormon. We want you on our faculty. We need you here to bring the influence to this University that a Mormon could bring.”<sup>16</sup>

As part of his aggressive recruitment of this remarkable doctor, the dean telephoned for my help to persuade the Nelsons to move to Chicago. I was then a professor of law at the University of Chicago and knew the dean of medicine because we served together on the university’s faculty senate. The dean asked me to have the Nelsons to dinner at our home. He urged me to tell them all about the Church in Chicago because he knew this was a critically important consideration for them.

So it was that my late wife, June, and I met Dantzel and Russell Nelson and had them to dinner and a wonderful visit in our Chicago home on Sunday, November 21, 1965. We did our best to persuade them to move to Chicago. I later learned from his autobiography that they “were very much attracted

to this offer and had even picked out a home in one of the suburbs of Chicago where [they] might raise [their] family.”<sup>17</sup>

What happened next is but one illustration of how the Lord’s inspiration directed the decisions and preparation of Russell M. Nelson. Back in Salt Lake City, he sought counsel from President David O. McKay (1873–1970) to guide the Nelsons in their important decision. The prophet prayed, and the answer came: “No.”

President McKay said: “You already live in the best city in the whole world. You have a way of life that can’t be equalled anywhere in the world. Here your daughters will be accorded the very best environment that they



can be given. They are more important to you than any fame or future that could come to you in any university. No, Brother Nelson, your place is here in Salt Lake City. People will come from all over the world to you because you are here. I don’t think you should go to Chicago.”<sup>18</sup>

Full of faith, Dr. Nelson refused the Chicago offer and remained in Salt Lake City. There, in future years, he performed open-heart surgery



**Covenants:** “When we realize that we are children of the covenant, we know who we are and what God expects of us. His law is written in our hearts. He is our God and we are His people. Committed children of the covenant remain steadfast, even in the midst of adversity” (“Covenants,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 88).

Dr. Nelson followed counsel from President David O. McKay (above) in 1965 to keep his family in Salt Lake City, Utah. Left: Meeting with stake leaders at Brigham Young University while serving as a regional representative. Above: Greeting family members following a press conference on January 16, 2018.

**Agency:** *"Often . . . agency is misunderstood. While we are free to choose, once we have made those choices, we are tied to the consequences of those choices" ("Addiction or Freedom," Ensign, Nov. 1988, 7).*

and prolonged the lives of many grateful patients, including President Kimball, Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71), President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), and many other Church leaders and members and their families.

For June and me, that Chicago meeting was the beginning of a long and treasured friendship with Russell and Dantzel Nelson. Six years later he was released as stake president and

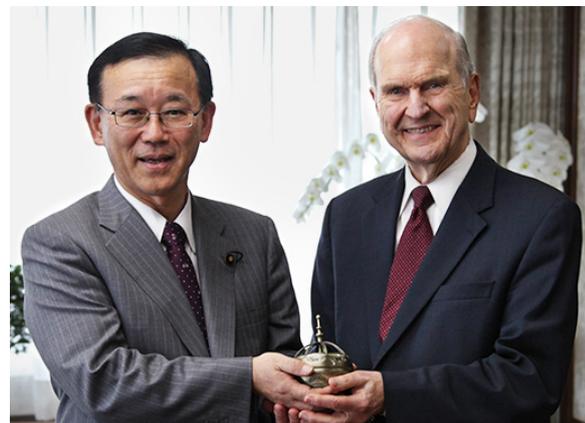
called as the General President of the Sunday School. In that same year, I was appointed president of Brigham Young University. For many years, we have served together in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and now we will serve together in the First Presidency in a friendship that began in Chicago between two academicians and their wives 52 years ago.

### Changing Hearts

On April 7, 1984, Dr. Nelson was ordained an Apostle and set apart as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "In one short moment," he said, "the focus of the last forty years in medicine and surgery was changed to



Above: Elder Nelson with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles after his call to the quorum in 1984. Right: With Japanese political leader Sadakazu Tanigaki and with Church members in Moscow, Russia. Above right: With young Church members at a stake conference in Utah, USA.



devote the rest of my life in full-time service to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

Upon his call to the apostleship, Elder Nelson declared, “The work I’m now engaged in is the most important cause in the world. It’s all-encompassing, it’s fulfilling, and it’s challenging. And I must do my best, because I have an accountability for this stewardship.”<sup>20</sup>

Since becoming an Apostle, and as



President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles since 2015, President Nelson has continued to travel the world—sharing the words of eternal life and *changing* hearts. One of his first assignments was to open the doors of the Eastern European nations to the gospel. “In . . . five years, I had 27 trips to 31 nations in Europe,” President Nelson

said. “Before President [Ezra Taft] Benson died, . . . I [was] able to report to him that we have completed our assignment: we now have the Church established in every country of Eastern Europe.”<sup>21</sup>

President Nelson has also dedicated 27 countries for the preaching of the gospel, including Bulgaria, Croatia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, French Polynesia, Kazakhstan, and Russia. Once, in the span of four days, he dedicated six separate nations.<sup>22</sup> In his apostolic ministry he has now visited 133 countries.<sup>23</sup>

As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Elder Russell M. Nelson served long years as chairman of each of its three key councils: Missionary, Temple and Family History, and Priesthood Executive (now Priesthood and Family Executive).

The Church has undergone many significant changes during Elder Nelson’s years in the Quorum of the Twelve, where he has served under five Presidents of the Church. Since 1984, the Church has more than doubled in size, from about 6 million members to over 16 million. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency have released two official statements: “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” in 1995 and “The Living Christ” in 2000. The number of operating temples increased from 30 in 1984 to 159 in 2017. In 2010, when Elder Nelson was called as chairman of the Missionary Executive Council, the Church had 58,000 missionaries. Now, after the huge increase when the age of service was lowered, the number has stabilized at about 67,000.

## Personal Qualities

Most of what has just been reviewed about Doctor, Elder, and now President Nelson is a matter of public record. I will now comment on some of his great personal qualities I have observed over the years.

First, Russell M. Nelson is an extremely nice person and a good friend and associate. He is unfailingly kind and compassionate in all of his personal relationships. He is a marvelous role model, diligent and careful to attend to his responsibilities—family, Church, and professional. And he is just fun to be around.

In his leadership style, he is always congenial and easy to approach. That is a most desirable quality in senior leaders. With him, we never hesitate to bring up a particular subject or feel that doing so is a bother to him. We're never afraid to talk to him about any particular matter. President Nelson is very open, very approachable, and very easy to talk to.

In his decision-making, President Nelson is concerned about the overall impact. He is good at thinking through the probable effect of a decision or policy or application of doctrine on various groups of members—the aged, the young, the less-active, Church leaders, and others. I have seen that quality in other leaders, but President Nelson's vision on this subject is exceptional. Perhaps it stems from his experience as a doctor who cannot prescribe medicine for one part of the body without

considering its effect on other parts.

President Nelson is an extremely good delegator, better at this than most leaders I have observed in professional and Church settings. That too is probably related to the work of the surgeon, who performs a unique task after (and before) others do theirs.

Another significant quality of President Nelson is his patience. He avoids confrontation when solving problems or getting things done. He wisely forgoes the tactic of "let's get that settled right now" in favor of allowing a little time to see if things work out on their

own. That quality will be very important in his leadership, just as it was during the two and a half years he served as President of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Having praised President Nelson's patience, I must also praise a contrasting quality. He is not hesitant to make decisions. When the time is right and the issue is ready for decision, he makes decisions promptly and decisively. He has a good sense of when a subject requires patience and more discussion and when we should just choose among alternatives and get on with the Lord's work. His associates in leadership love that.



President Nelson, age 93, remains an avid skier who enjoys family ski outings. "Those of us who work closely with him," says President Dallin H. Oaks, "are concerned only with our own efforts to keep up with him." Above right: President Nelson enjoys a swing Sister Wendy Nelson gave him on their 10th wedding anniversary.

President Nelson is also a unifier. He brings contrasting points of view into harmony and differing persons into unity. What a marvelous quality for a leader of members who are committed to the same divine doctrine but come from different cultures and traditions.

Russell M. Nelson has natural gifts of diplomacy I have observed firsthand.



**Joy:** “When the focus of our lives is on God’s plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy. . . . For Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is joy!” (“Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82).

He used them in his professional activities, even in China. Since his call to the Twelve, he has opened doors for the Church in Eastern Europe in a whole succession of miraculous circumstances. In addition, he has visited 133 different nations as the Lord’s servant. What remarkable preparation for the great position to which he has now been called!

Another of President Nelson’s great qualities—surprising to some—is his skill as a writer. His written communications are models of clarity, and his editing of others’ writing is always helpful. Members of the Twelve exchange drafts to get suggestions for improvements in the text of important talks. In that process, I have learned that no one suggests better improvements to my talks than President Nelson. As one who has spent his professional life working with words, I was

astonished to be edited so brilliantly by one whose professional life was working with bodies. I was relieved to learn that his exemplary writing is the result of hard work. Once, during a requested examination of one of his manuscripts, I saw that it was his eighth draft. If I had known of Dr. Nelson’s incredible record of professional publications, I would not have been surprised that there was no finer writer in the Quorum of the Twelve.

Most are intrigued with the age of our new president—93! Those of us who work closely with him are concerned only with our own efforts to keep up with him. He is impressively active, physically and mentally. His memory is impressive. He skis frequently with very little rest. He still uses his snowblower, both on his and his neighbors’ driveways.<sup>24</sup> I have experienced his boundless energy each Thursday.

## Atonement of Jesus

**Christ:** *“True change . . . can come only through the healing, cleansing, and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. . . . He allows you to access His power as you keep His commandments, eagerly, earnestly, and exactly. It is that simple and certain. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of change!”* (“Decisions for Eternity,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 108).

When we finish our meeting in the Salt Lake Temple, some take the elevator down to the lower floor and some walk down the several flights of stairs from our upper room. President Nelson always hurries down the stairs. I always try to keep up with him but can’t do it.

## Committed to the Savior

President Nelson has said, “Each day of an Apostle’s service is a day of learning and

preparing for more responsibility in the future.”<sup>25</sup> For him, the time of preparation to lead the Church is now over, and he has received the sacred mantle of President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What does his preparation lead us to expect during his period of leadership?

Paramount is his commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the head of His Church. As President Nelson said in his January message, quoted earlier, “We . . . will continue to seek to know His will and follow it.”<sup>26</sup> In the meantime, President Nelson’s inspired teachings identify probable subjects for emphasis.



Above: President Nelson’s proficiency in Mandarin allowed him to work closely with the medical community in China, where he gave lectures and performed surgery. Right: After a lonely time following the death of his first wife, Elder Nelson married Wendy Watson, “an ideal companion.”



During the October 2017 general conference, President Nelson reminded Church members of the great significance of the Book of Mormon. He shared the results of his personal study of the Book of Mormon, including lists of what the Book of Mormon is, what it affirms, what it refutes, what it fulfills, what it clarifies, and what it reveals. He urged members to study and ponder the book daily.<sup>27</sup>

On January 16, 2018, two days after President Nelson was set apart as President of the Church, he announced that the new First Presidency would begin its ministry “with the end in mind.” That “end” is the salvation of individuals and the sealing of families in the house of the Lord. “For this reason, we’re speaking to you today from a temple,” President Nelson said from the annex of the Salt Lake Temple.

“The end for which each of us strives is to be endowed with power in a house of the Lord, sealed as families, faithful to covenants made in a temple that qualify us for the greatest gift of God—that of eternal life. The ordinances of the temple and the covenants you make there are key to strengthening your life, your marriage and family, and your ability to resist the attacks of the adversary. Your worship in the temple and your service there for your ancestors will bless you with increased personal revelation and peace and will fortify your commitment to stay on the covenant path.”<sup>28</sup>

President Nelson also issued a call for the Saints to stay on the covenant path: “Your commitment to follow the Savior by making covenants with Him and then keeping those covenants will open the door to every spiritual blessing and privilege available to men, women, and children everywhere.” To those who have strayed from that path, he said: “I invite you with all the hope in my heart to please come back. Whatever your concerns, whatever

your challenges, there is a place for you in this, the Lord’s Church. You and generations yet unborn will be blessed by your actions now to return to the covenant path.”<sup>29</sup>

Here is another important clue: “The scripture that has become a living legend for me is in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, where the Lord says, ‘I will hasten my work in its time,’” President Nelson has said. “And I have lived . . . to see this hastening.”<sup>30</sup> Now he will guide it.

President Russell M. Nelson has always testified of the divinity of Jesus

Christ and the truthfulness of the plan of salvation our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son have given to inform and guide us. As President Nelson leads the Church into the future, Latter-day Saints can take great comfort in knowing that he will guide them in accordance with heaven’s will. “I declare my devotion to God our Eternal Father and to His Son, Jesus Christ,” he said. “I know Them, love Them, and pledge to serve Them—and you—with every remaining breath of my life.”<sup>31</sup>

I love this servant of the Lord, my longtime associate and friend, President



RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DESERET NEWS

Russell M. Nelson. Along with my fellow members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I treasure his teachings and look forward to his inspired leadership as our prophet. I testify that he has been called of God to lead the Church in our day. ■

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2018, 6.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 7.
3. Sylvia Webster and Russell Nelson Jr., in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Get to Know President Russell M. Nelson, a Renaissance Man,” *Church News*, Jan. 16, 2018, [lds.org/church/news](https://lds.org/church/news).
4. Sylvia Webster, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Get to Know President Russell M. Nelson.”
5. Russell Nelson Jr., in Tad Walch, “Who Is President Russell M. Nelson? A Man of Heart, Compassion and Faith,” *Deseret News*, Jan. 16, 2018, [deseretnews.com](https://deseretnews.com).
6. See Russell M. Nelson, “Begin with the End in Mind” (Brigham Young University fireside, Sept. 30, 1984), 2, [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).
7. Russell M. Nelson, “Begin with the End in Mind,” 3.
8. See Tad Walch, “Who Is President Russell M. Nelson?”
9. In Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle* (2003), 140.
10. See Russell M. Nelson, “Stand as True Millennials,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 30–31; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 52–53.
11. In “Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,” *Ensign*, May 1984, 87.
12. Russell Marion Nelson, *From Heart to Heart: An Autobiography* (1979), 114.
13. Jeffrey R. Holland, in Tad Walch, “Who Is President Russell M. Nelson?”
14. In “Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,” 88.
15. Dantzel White Nelson, in Lane Johnson, “Russell M. Nelson: A Study in Obedience,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1982, 23.
16. Russell Marion Nelson, *From Heart to Heart*, 149.
17. Russell Marion Nelson, *From Heart to Heart*, 149.
18. David O. McKay, in Russell Marion Nelson, *From Heart to Heart*, 150.
19. In Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle*, 186.
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21. Russell M. Nelson’s Facebook page, video posted on Sept. 11, 2014, [facebook.com/lds.russell.m.nelson/videos](https://facebook.com/lds.russell.m.nelson/videos).
22. See Russell M. Nelson’s Facebook page, video posted on Sept. 11, 2014.
23. See Tad Walch, “Who Is President Russell M. Nelson?”
24. See Tad Walch, “Who Is President Russell M. Nelson?”
25. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 6.
26. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 6.
27. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 60–63.
28. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 7.
29. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 7.
30. Russell M. Nelson’s Facebook page, video posted on Sept. 11, 2014.
31. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” 7.

## Selected Teachings

*The following teachings, and those on previous pages, come from President Nelson’s apostolic ministry, prior to his call as President of the Church.*

**Book of Mormon:** “Whenever I hear anyone, including myself, say, ‘I know the Book of Mormon is true,’ I want to exclaim, ‘That’s nice, but it is not enough!’ We need to feel, deep in ‘the inmost part’ of our hearts, that the Book of Mormon is unequivocally the word of God. We must feel it so deeply that we would never want to live even one day without it” (“The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 63).

**Death:** “We can’t fully appreciate joyful reunions later without tearful separations now. The only way to take sorrow out of death is to take love out of life” (“Doors of Death,” *Ensign*, May 1992, 72).

**Missionary service:** “The decision to serve a mission will shape the spiritual destiny of the missionary, his or her spouse, and their posterity for generations to come. A desire to serve is a natural outcome of one’s conversion, worthiness, and preparation” (“Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 18).

**Perfection:** “Be patient with yourself. Perfection comes not in this life but in the next life. Don’t demand things that are unreasonable. But demand of yourself improvement. As you let the Lord help you through that, He will make the difference” (“Men’s Hearts Shall Fail Them” [Mormon Messages video], [mormonchannel.org](https://mormonchannel.org)).

**Sabbath day:** “I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a sign between me and my Heavenly Father. . . . When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, ‘What sign do I want to give to God?’ That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear” (“The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 130).

**Temple and family history work:** “While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families” (“Generations Linked in Love,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2010, 93).