

# THE GOSPEL AND THE PRODUCTIVE LIFE

STUDENT MANUAL

Religion 150

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# THE GOSPEL AND THE PRODUCTIVE LIFE STUDENT MANUAL

Religion 150

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT MANUAL

When we apply gospel principles in our lives, we can become more productive spiritually and temporally. The gospel teaches us to do our best to prepare for a successful future while enjoying the present. It teaches us to seek our Heavenly Father's help to develop our potential so that we can contribute to the lives of others and be examples of faithful Latter-day Saints. To do so requires faith in God and effort on our part.

The Savior taught that He is the Good Shepherd and knows His sheep. He testified, "I am come that they might have life, and they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The fulness of an "abundant" life is *eternal life*—to live forever as families in God's presence (see D&C 132:19–20, 24, 55). Eternal life is made possible through the Atonement.

The Savior's Atonement can also make our mortal life more abundant. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained, "The Atonement of Jesus Christ has given the Savior the power to help you grow into the [person] He knows you can be" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 40). Our spiritual growth must be complemented by our temporal progress. It is important for you to educate and train yourself in order to better provide for your family and serve in the home, Church, and community.

The Gospel and the Productive Life course is designed to help you understand relationships between the spiritual and the temporal. The

restored gospel does not deal just with spiritual truths. Many spiritual principles have temporal application, and our temporal lives often influence our ability to grow spiritually. President James E. Faust of the First Presidency taught: "We should try to live providently with respect to our personal lifestyles. Living providently means living well within our means and providing for future needs and events. . . . We should seek to manage our affairs so that we are better able to accept the calls which might come to us now, as well as in the future" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 59; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 43).

The purpose of this manual is to help you understand and apply the principles taught in the Gospel and the Productive Life course. Each chapter begins with an "Introduction," followed by a section titled "Principles to Understand," which lists each of the principles taught in the chapter. These are followed by "Supporting Scriptures and Statements" for each of the lesson principles. The statements are drawn from the teachings of the latter-day prophets and apostles and other Church leaders. As you read and ponder their inspired teachings, you will learn how to better apply gospel principles in your life.

The next section, titled "Application and Examples," presents hypothetical situations and accompanying questions. A "Points to Ponder" section includes additional questions to help you understand and apply the principles you studied. A "Notes and Impressions" section at the end of each chapter provides space for you to record your own insights and to answer questions given as assignments in class.



## CHAPTER 1

# THE PLAN OF SALVATION FOR HEAVENLY FATHER'S CHILDREN

### INTRODUCTION

Heavenly Father has a fulness of joy. He loves His children and wants us to become like Him. He prepared the plan of salvation, also called the plan of happiness, to make it possible for us to experience this same joy. As we grow in our understanding of Heavenly Father's plan and as we keep His commandments, we become more like Him.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Heavenly Father prepared a plan of salvation. It teaches us where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going after mortality.
- Understanding our place in the plan of salvation helps us develop faith and find joy in a world with many inequities.
- We can use our knowledge of the plan of salvation to help us in our earthly challenges.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***Heavenly Father prepared a plan of salvation. It teaches us where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going after mortality.***

- “We will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

“And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

“And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever” (Abraham 3:24–26).

***“Mortality is very brief but immeasurably important.”***



*Heavenly Father explains the plan of salvation.*

- “God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works” (see Alma 12:30).
- “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39 [Scripture Mastery]).
- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Although our memory of it is withheld, before we came to this earth we lived in the presence of God, our Eternal Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. We shouted for joy when given the privilege of coming to this earth to receive a body and to move forward in God’s plan for our happiness. We knew that we would be tested here. Our determination was to live obediently to be able to return to be with our Father forever. Part of that testing here is to have so many seemingly interesting things to do that we can forget the main purposes for being here. Satan works very hard so that the essential things won’t happen” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 78; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 53–54).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “In a premortal council at which we were all present, [Jesus Christ] accepted our Father’s great plan of happiness for His children and was chosen by the Father to give effect to that plan. He led the forces of good against those of Satan and his followers in a battle for the souls of men that began before this world was formed. That conflict continues today. We were all on the

side of Jesus then. We are on the side of Jesus today" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 96; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 71).

- The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles: "The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

"We understand that we will live a postmortal life of infinite duration and that we determine the kind of life it will be by our thoughts and actions in mortality. Mortality is very brief but immeasurably important. . . .

"We know that death is a necessary transition. It will come sooner or later to each of us. Our mortal bodies will return to earth, and our spirits will return to the spirit world. By virtue of the Savior's atoning sacrifice, we all will be resurrected. Each of us will stand before the judgment bar of the great Jehovah and be rewarded according to our deeds in mortality.

"If we make every earthly decision with this judgment in mind, we will have used our mortal probation wisely and its days will give us peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 15, 18; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 14, 16–17).

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "The Lord provided an Atonement through Jesus Christ to overcome the effects of the Fall. The Atonement is the means by which imperfect man is reconciled to a perfect God. The Atonement provides a resurrection for all who have lived in mortality and returns them to the presence of God to be judged. In addition, those who accept and apply the principles of the gospel and rely upon the merits and mercy of Christ permanently overcome spiritual death and receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom" ("Give Heed unto the Word of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jun. 2000, 25).

- President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"When you die, you are introduced to the spirit world [see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 310–11]. It is happiness, a paradise, for the righteous. It is misery

for the wicked (see 2 Nephi 9:10–16; Alma 40:7–14). In either state, we continue to learn and are accountable for our actions (see D&C 138:10–22).

"After all have been dealt with equally, a judgment will be rendered (see Mosiah 3:18; see also *Teachings*, 218–19). Each will be resurrected in his or her own order (see 1 Corinthians 15:21–23).

The glory one receives, however, will depend on obedience to the laws and ordinances of our Father's plan (see 1 Corinthians 15:40–42).

"Those who have become pure through repentance will obtain eternal life and return to the presence of God. They will be exalted as 'heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Romans 8:17; see also D&C 76:94–95; 84:35; 132:19–20; see also *Teachings*, 374)"

(*The Play and the Plan* [CES fireside for young adults, May 7, 1995], 3).

### ***Understanding our place in the plan of salvation helps us develop faith and find joy in a world with many inequities.***

- "And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:11).

- "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25 [Scripture Mastery]).



- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ and following him as our Savior and our Redeemer will influence every aspect of our lives,

***"Understanding the gospel of Jesus Christ and following him as our Savior and our Redeemer will influence every aspect of our lives."***



including all of our individual choices. Those who live according to Heavenly Father's eternal plan will not want to absorb any information that is illicit or untoward, nor will they destroy their spiritual sensitivity through immoral acts or the consumption of any harmful substances. Neither will they search for doctrinal loopholes to find reasons to challenge the ordained leadership of the Church nor tamper with the simple truths of the gospel. They will not attempt to justify any lifestyle that is contrary to the plan of happiness. If they do any of these things, they will never find the inner peace and joy that living the gospel brings. All of our Father's children can seek prayerfully to know who they are and can find real happiness if they obey God's commandments and endure to the end" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 24).

- President Boyd K. Packer: "For some reason we think the Atonement of Christ applies *only* at the end of mortal life to redemption from the Fall, from spiritual death. It is much more than that. It is an ever-present power to call upon in everyday life. When we are racked or harrowed up or tormented by guilt or burdened with grief, He can heal us. While we do not fully understand how the Atonement of Christ was made, we can experience 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding' [Philippians 4:7]" (in Conference Report, Mar.-Apr. 2001, 28; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 23).

- Elder Richard G. Scott: "I promise you that through your obedience and continuing faith in Jesus Christ and your understanding of the whole plan of happiness, even if important parts of it aren't fulfilled in your life now, they will be yours in the Lord's due time. I also promise you that you can have significant growth and happiness now in your present circumstances. As a daughter or son of God, live whatever portion of the plan you can to the best of your ability" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 102; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 75).

### ***We can use our knowledge of the plan of salvation to help us in our earthly challenges.***

- "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27 [Scripture Mastery]).

- "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.



"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28–30).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Relying always on the Lord, we must become independent of the world. We must be self-reliant. Using the agency God has given us, we must work out our own economic and temporal problems.

"We are here on earth to work—to work long, hard, arduous hours, to work until our backs ache and our tired muscles knot, to work all our days. This mortal probation is one in which we are to eat our bread in the sweat of our faces until we return to the dust from whence we came.

"Work is the law of life; it is the ruling principle in the lives of the Saints. We cannot, while physically able, voluntarily shift the burden of our own support to others. Doles abound in evils. Industry, thrift, and self-respect are essential to salvation.



"We must maintain our own health, sow our own gardens, store our own food, educate and train ourselves to handle the daily affairs of life. No one else can work out our salvation for us, either temporally or spiritually.

"We are here on earth to care for the needs of our family members. Wives have claim on their husbands for their support, children upon their parents, parents upon their children, brothers upon each other, and relatives upon their kin" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1979, 132; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 93).

- Elder Richard G. Scott: "Oh, how I would encourage you to weave deeply into the fabric of your soul the recognition that your life now is a part of a much bigger plan the Lord has for you. You lived part of it in the premortal existence. You were valiant there and came here because you wanted to grow and enjoy greater happiness. What you decide to do now will affect how well you fulfill that divine, personal plan He has for you" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 112; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 87).
- Elder Richard G. Scott: "Your Heavenly Father assigned you to be born into a specific lineage from which you received your inheritance of race, culture, and traditions. That lineage can provide a rich heritage and great reasons to rejoice. Yet you have the responsibility to determine if there is any part of that heritage that must be discarded because it works against the Lord's plan of happiness" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 112; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 86).
- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "You face great challenges that lie ahead. You are moving into a world of fierce competition. You must get all of the education you can. The Lord has instructed us concerning the importance of education. It will qualify you for greater opportunities. It will equip you to do something worthwhile in the great world of opportunity that lies ahead. If you can go to college and that is your wish, then do it. If you have no desire to attend college, then go to a vocational or business school to sharpen your skills and increase your capacity" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 70; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 49–50).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency said: "Some months ago I sat on an airplane beside a gentleman from the Far East. After exchanging a few pleasantries, he, responding to my inquiry, told me about his business activities. He then inquired about mine. This, of course, led to a gospel discussion. He had no religion, although he said his mother was a Christian. He had no concept of a God, no idea whether he had had a pre-earth existence or whether he would live on after death. He had no purpose in life except to work hard and obtain a 'reasonable standard of living.' After discussing a few fundamental gospel truths, he responded: 'Such concepts would surely give one an objective to live for.'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 117; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 79).

- How can knowing Heavenly Father's plan of salvation give purpose and perspective to the challenges of mortality?

Life is difficult for many people in the community where Carlos lives. As a recent convert to the Church, he is excited about his new-found religion. So many of life's questions have now been answered for him. One thing still troubles him, however. Many people throughout the world and even in his own country have more material goods than the people he knows. He wonders why this is so. Why has God allowed so many good people to struggle for a living, even though we all chose His plan before coming to earth?

- How would you answer Carlos's question?

- What advice would you give Carlos?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- How does the plan of salvation's description of who we are differ from that of other religions or philosophies?
- In what ways might a knowledge of the plan of salvation help us deal with trials and injustices?
- How would the world change if everyone understood that we are sons and daughters of Heavenly Father?

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**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**

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## CHAPTER 2

# THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout our lives we make many important decisions. Some decisions concern everyday matters in which we may not need the Lord's direction on every detail. Yet the Lord has promised that we can turn to Him for help and guidance. The Holy Ghost performs a special mission in the plan of salvation to bless and inspire Heavenly Father's children. We have been promised that "by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

President Ezra Taft Benson, thirteenth President of the Church, explained: "The Holy Ghost is . . . a gift from Heavenly Father. The Holy Ghost helps you to choose the right. The Holy Ghost will protect you from evil. He whispers to you in a still, small voice to do right. When you *do* good, you *feel* good, and that is the Holy Ghost speaking to you. The Holy Ghost is a wonderful companion. He is *always* there to help you" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 103; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 82).

This spiritual guidance is available in all aspects of our lives, including education, employment, and marriage.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- The Holy Ghost can bring comfort, peace, and direction to our lives.
- The guidance of the Holy Ghost is available to all worthy members of the Church.
- Prayer is a means to receive the guidance of the Spirit.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***The Holy Ghost can bring comfort, peace, and direction to our lives.***

- "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).
- "Thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth. . . .
- "Did I not speak peace to your mind . . . ? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:15, 23).
- "For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:5).
- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We need the Holy Ghost as our

constant companion to help us make better choices in the decisions that confront us daily. Our young men and women are bombarded with ugly things of the world. Companionship with the Spirit will give them the strength to resist evil and, when necessary, repent and return to the strait and narrow path. None of us are immune from the temptations of the adversary. We all need the fortification available

through the Holy Ghost. Mothers and fathers should prayerfully invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in their dedicated homes. Having the gift of the Holy Ghost helps family members make wise choices—choices that will help them return with their families to their Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, to live with Them eternally" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8).

***"We need the Holy Ghost as our constant companion to help us make better choices in the decisions that confront us daily."***





▪ Elder James E. Faust, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The Spirit of the Holy Ghost is the greatest guarantor of inward peace in our unstable world. It can be more mind-expanding and can make us have a better sense of well-being than any chemical or other earthly substance. It will calm nerves; it will breathe peace to our souls. This Comforter can be with us as we seek to improve. It can function as a source of revelation to warn us of impending danger and also help keep us from making mistakes. It can enhance our natural senses so that we can see more clearly, hear more keenly, and remember what we should remember. It is a way of maximizing our happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 41; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 32–33).



▪ President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: “If worthy, those possessing this spiritual gift can come to enjoy greater understanding and enrichment and guidance in all of life’s activities, both spiritual and temporal. The

Holy Ghost bears witness to us of the truth and impresses upon our souls the reality of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, so surely that no earthly power or authority can separate us from that knowledge. Indeed, not having the gift of the Holy Ghost is somewhat like having a body without an immune system” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 73; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 58).

***The guidance of the Holy Ghost is available to all worthy members of the Church.***

▪ “He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 31:12).

▪ “God bestows [the Holy Ghost] on those who love him, and purify themselves before him” (D&C 76:116).

▪ Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “To have the Holy Ghost as your companion, you must be worthy, cleansed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. So, your obedience to the commandments, your desire to do His will, and your asking in faith will determine how clearly the Master can guide you” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 76).

▪ Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“The Holy Ghost can be helpful to you in any righteous endeavor in which you are involved, including in school and among your friends.

“However, the principal mission of the Holy Ghost is to testify of our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. If you are careful in keeping the commandments, the Holy Ghost will help you learn more about Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. He will enlighten your mind as you ponder and study the scriptures each day.



“The promptings of the Holy Ghost may come to you in a still, small voice. You cannot grow into the [person] you must become unless you first rise above the things of the world that clamor for your attention. For example, some of the world’s music is degrading, vulgar, and inappropriate and will drown out the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Bringing into your body substances forbidden by the Lord in the Word of Wisdom will prevent you from feeling and recognizing the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

“The failure to live a clean and chaste life deadens the promptings of the Spirit. Take your thoughts to higher levels than the vulgar and immoral. Avoid objectionable television shows and movies, evil Internet sites, and all forms of entertainment that portray or encourage immorality and violence. Shun pornography like a deadly, contagious sin and disease. You cannot afford to become addicted to its bondage and slavery. It will drive the Holy

Ghost and His influence from your life" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 52; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 40–41).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We become receptive to inspiration and revelation by obedience to the commandments of God, by prayer, and by attention to the teachings of the living prophets" ("Scripture Reading and Revelation," *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 7).

### ***Prayer is a means to receive the guidance of the Spirit.***

- "Ask the Father in my name, in faith believing that you shall receive, and you shall have the Holy Ghost, which manifesteth all things which are expedient" (D&C 18:18).
- "Ye receive the Spirit through prayer" (D&C 63:64).
- President James E. Faust: "Some guidelines and rules are necessary if one is to be the recipient of revelation and inspiration. They include (1) to try honestly and sincerely to keep God's commandments, (2) to be spiritually attuned as a receiver of a divine message, (3) to ask God in humble, fervent prayer, and (4) to seek answers with unwavering faith" ("Communion with the Holy Spirit," *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 5).
- Elder Henry B. Eyring: "I have had prayers answered. Those answers were most clear when what I wanted was silenced by an overpowering need to know what God wanted. It is then that the answer from a loving Heavenly Father can be spoken to the mind by the still, small voice and can be written on the heart" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 111; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 86).
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

"We do not always receive inspiration or revelation when we request it. Sometimes we are delayed in receiving revelation, and sometimes we are left to our own judgment and understanding based on study and reason. We cannot force spiritual things. It must be so. Our life's purpose to obtain experience and to develop faith would be frustrated if our Heavenly Father enlightened us immediately on every question or directed us in every act. We must reach conclusions and make decisions and experience the consequences in order to develop self-reliance and faith.

***"We cannot force spiritual things."***



"Even in decisions we think very important, we sometimes receive no answers to our prayers. This does not mean our prayers have not been heard. It only means we have prayed about a decision that, for one cause or another, we should make without guidance by revelation.

"Perhaps we have asked for guidance in choosing between alternatives that are equally acceptable or equally unacceptable. There is *not* a right and a wrong answer to every question. For many questions, there are only two wrong answers or two right answers. . . .

"No answer is likely to come to a person who seeks guidance in choosing between two alternatives that are equally acceptable to the Lord. Thus, there are times when we can serve productively in two different fields of labor. Either answer is right. Similarly, the Spirit of the Lord is not likely to give us revelations on matters that are trivial. . . . I believe the Lord expects us to make most of

our decisions by using the intelligence and experience he has given us. When someone asked the Prophet Joseph Smith for advice on a particular matter, the Prophet stated: 'It is a great thing to inquire at the hands of God, or to come into His presence: and we feel fearful to approach Him on subjects that are of little or no consequence' [*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 22]" (*The Lord's Way* [1991], 36–38).

- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

### **1. When will God answer our prayers?**

“Across from me a woman sat sobbing. With tear-filled eyes, she told me, ‘I don’t know what I believe anymore.’ She spoke of having struggled and prayed many days to know how to make a vitally important decision in her life, without success. She anguished, ‘I don’t know what to do. If you’ll tell me what to do, I’ll do it.’ With her hand on the scriptures, she said, ‘God told us He would help us. He answers everybody else’s prayers. Why won’t He answer mine?’

“When one is caught in a whirlpool of emotion, it is difficult to find a way out alone. My prayer is to help you who have similar feelings.

“When answers to urgent prayer don’t seem to come, it may be that we don’t understand some truths about prayer, or because we don’t recognize answers when they come.

“Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail but to succeed gloriously. It may seem paradoxical, but that is why recognizing answers to prayer can sometimes be very difficult. Some face life with only their own experience and capacity to help them. Others seek, through prayer, divine inspiration to *know* what to do. When it is required, they qualify for power beyond their own capacity to do it.

“Communication with our Father in Heaven is not a trivial matter. It is a sacred privilege. It is based on unchanging principles. When we receive help from our Father in Heaven, it is in response to faith, obedience, and the proper use of agency.

“It is a mistake to assume that every prayer we offer will be answered immediately. Some prayers require considerable effort on our part. True, sometimes impressions come when we have not specifically sought them. They generally concern something we need to know and are not otherwise able to find out.

“We are here on earth to gain experience we can obtain in no other way. We are given the opportunity to grow, to develop, and to gain spiritual maturity. To do that, we must learn to apply truth. How we face challenges and resolve

difficult problems is crucially important to our happiness.”

### **2. How should we pray?**

“To better understand prayer, I have listened to the counsel of others, pondered the scriptures, and studied the lives of prophets and others. Yet what seems most helpful is seeing in my mind a child approaching trustingly a loving, kind, wise, understanding Father, who wants us to succeed.

“Don’t worry about your clumsily expressed feelings. Just talk to your Father. He hears every prayer and answers it in His way.

“When we explain a problem and a proposed solution, sometimes He answers yes, sometimes no. Often He withholds an answer, not for lack of concern, but because He loves us—perfectly. He wants us to apply truths He has given us. For us to grow, we need to trust our ability to make correct decisions. We need to do what we *feel* is right. In time, He will answer. He will not fail us.

***“Our Heavenly Father did not put us on earth to fail.”***

“I have described the absolute reality of our relationship with our Father. There is nothing about us He does not know. He is conscious of our every need and could provide all of the answers. Yet, because His purpose is our eternal happiness, He encourages us to make the correct choices.

“Sometimes, like a child, we misbehave, act unwisely, and feel we cannot approach our Father with a problem. When communication is strained, how wonderful it is to have a Mediator who works things out when we obey His counsel and repent. Such is our Elder Brother, the Savior.”

### **3. How can we recognize when our prayers are answered?**

“Perhaps Oliver Cowdery’s experiences were recorded for us to understand how to pray and how to recognize answer to prayer. Oliver was told:

“‘Assuredly as the Lord liveth, . . . even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall *ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive.* . . .

“‘I will tell you in your *mind* and in your *heart*, by the Holy Ghost’ (D&C 8:1–2; italics added).

"When we receive an impression in our *heart*, we can use our *mind* either to rationalize it away or to accomplish it. Be careful what you do with an impression from the Lord."

#### **4. What role does faith play in receiving answers to our prayers?**

"Oliver was further taught: 'Remember that without *faith* you can do nothing; therefore ask in *faith*. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . .

"According to your *faith* shall it be done unto you' (D&C 8:10–11; italics added).

"Ask in faith' means ask with confidence in our holy Father. Like many of us, Oliver did not recognize the evidence of answers to prayers already given by the Lord. To open his eyes and ours, this revelation was given through Joseph Smith:

"Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, *as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction* of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

"Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth' (D&C 6:14–15; italics added).

"If you feel that God has not answered *your* prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life of His having already answered you."

#### **5. How do answers reach the heart and mind?**

"To help each of us recognize answers given, the Lord said:

"If you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

"Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter?" (D&C 6:22–23; italics added).

"The Lord provides further insight by counseling us to study a problem out in our mind and then to ask if it be right:

"If it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall *feel* that it is right.

"But if it be not right you shall have no such *feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought' (D&C 9:8–9; italics added)."

#### **6. What if the answer we seek is slow in coming?**

"It is vitally important to recognize that the Lord also responds a third way to prayer by *withholding an answer* when the prayer is offered. Why would He do that?

"He is our perfect Father. He loves us beyond our capacity to understand. He knows what is best for us. He sees the end from the beginning. He wants us to act to gain needed experience.

"When He answers *yes*, it is to give us confidence.

"When He answers *no*, it is to prevent error.

"When He *withholds an answer*, it is to have us grow through faith in Him, obedience to His commandments, and a willingness to act on truth. We are expected to assume accountability by acting on a decision that is consistent with His teachings without prior confirmation. We are not to sit passively waiting or to murmur because the Lord has not spoken. We are to act.

"Most often what we have chosen to do is right. He will confirm the correctness of our choices His way. That confirmation generally comes through packets of help found along the way. We discover them by being spiritually sensitive. They are like notes from a loving Father as evidence of His approval. If, in trust, we begin something which is not right, He will let us know before we have gone too far. We sense that help by recognizing troubled or uneasy feelings."

#### **7. How can we be more spiritually sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit?**

"Nephi's efforts to obtain the plates of brass show how the principles work. When the older brethren were asked to go, they murmured and received no help. Nephi was assured, 'Thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured' (1 Nephi 3:6). Nephi's words 'I will go and do' reveal a positive commitment to act and to succeed by using spiritual law (1 Nephi 3:7).

"After two unsuccessful attempts, Nephi remained confident. He crept into the city toward the house of Laban without all the answers. He observed, 'I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things



which I should do,' significantly adding, '*Nevertheless I went forth*' (1 Nephi 4:6–7; italics added).

"Nephi was willing to try time and again, using his best efforts. He expressed faith that he would be helped. He refused to be discouraged. But because he acted, had confidence in the Lord, was obedient, and properly used his agency, he received guidance. He was inspired step after step to success, and in his mother's words was 'given . . . power [to] accomplish the thing which the Lord hath commanded' (1 Nephi 5:8; italics added).

"Nephi knew he was required to confide in God, to exercise faith, and to act so that he could receive help, step by step. He did not murmur nor ask for a full explanation. But, observe particularly, he did not wait passively for help. He acted! By following spiritual law, he was inspired and given power to act."

#### **8. How can we keep our personal desires from interfering with the influence of the Spirit?**

"Sometimes answers to prayer are not recognized because we are too intent on wanting confirmation of our own desires. We fail to see that the Lord would have us do something else. Be careful to seek His will.

"I confess I don't know how to make a correct decision except where there is righteousness and trust in a Heavenly Father. The principles simply will not work when agency is intentionally used at variance with the will of God. If there is unrepented sin, we are left to our own devices to flounder and struggle on our own. We *can* be rescued through our own repentance."

#### **9. In what way do answers come most frequently?**

"When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings. These require us to think, to exercise faith, to work, to struggle at times, and to act. Seldom does the whole answer to a decisively important matter or complex problem come all at once. More often, it comes a piece at a time, without the end in sight."

#### **10. What role does gratitude to the Lord play in our prayers?**

"I have saved the most important part about prayer until the end. It is gratitude! Our sincere

efforts to thank our beloved Father generate wondrous feelings of peace, self-worth, and love. No matter how challenging our circumstances, honest appreciation fills our mind to overflowing with gratitude.

"Why is it that the most impoverished seem to know best how to thank the Lord? In the highlands of Guatemala, members barely subsist. Going to the temple requires *great* sacrifice. A visit takes a year of preparation. There is hard work, sacrifice to save money and food, the spinning, dyeing, and weaving of new clothing. There is the long, barefoot walk out of the mountains, the crossing of Lake Isabel, the bus rides with little food. Tired and worn, they arrive at the temple. They scrub until they shine, dress in their new clothing, and enter the house of the Lord.

"Reclothed in white, they are taught by the Spirit, receive ordinances, and make covenants. One highland woman was greatly touched by the spirit and meaning of the endowment. Entering the celestial room, she saw others seated, with heads reverently bowed. Innocently, she knelt at the entrance to the room, oblivious to others. She bowed her head, sobbed, and for twenty minutes poured out her heart to her Father in Heaven. Finally, with her dress soaked with tears, she

raised her head. The sensitive temple matron asked, 'May I help?' She responded, 'Oh, would you? This is my problem: I've tried to tell Father in Heaven of my gratitude for all of my blessings, but I don't feel that I've communicated. Will you help me tell Him how grateful I am?'

*"When we seek inspiration to help make decisions, the Lord gives gentle promptings."*

"The counsel about prayer is true. I have tested it thoroughly in the laboratory of my own personal life. I have discovered that what sometimes seems an impenetrable barrier to communication is a giant step to be taken in trust.

"If you seek His help, be sure your life is clean, your motives are worthy, and you're willing to do what He asks—for He *will* answer your prayers. He is your loving Father; you are His beloved child. He loves you perfectly and wants to help you.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, amen" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1989, 38–41; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 30–32).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Oliver Cowdery taught school in Palmyra, New York, during the time the Prophet Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Oliver learned of the Prophet's work and was impressed that he should help. He traveled to Pennsylvania and began to serve as scribe to Joseph Smith. Several days later, Oliver asked Joseph to inquire of the Lord if Oliver was doing the right thing. In response, the Lord said: "Blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time" (D&C 6:14). The Lord commended Oliver Cowdery for his personal prayers and taught that he had already been receiving answers to his prayers through the Spirit.

- Why do we sometimes not recognize the guidance of the Holy Ghost?

- According to Doctrine and Covenants 6:15, 23, what are two ways revelation comes that we may not recognize?

- Describe how you might become more sensitive to the Spirit when praying about school or work.

Emeka is just one month away from finishing high school. He has never thought much about what he will do after graduation. His attention had been focused on his studies, sports, and friends. Emeka's family has limited resources and cannot support him financially if he goes to a university or trade school. He feels he is at a crossroads and that what he decides will have a dramatic effect on the rest of his life. He has always believed that if he worked hard and had a positive attitude, he would be successful in whatever he did. Now he is faced with several life-changing decisions beyond anything he has had to do before.

- Where can Emeka turn for help?

- What can he do spiritually before making these decisions?

- Once Emeka has made an effort to do all that he can, how can the Holy Ghost help him?

## POINTS TO PONDER

- What truths has the Holy Ghost testified of to you?
- How can you know when you are being influenced by the Spirit?
- What can you do each day to increase the influence of the Holy Ghost in your life?

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:





## CHAPTER 3

# SETTING GOALS AND MANAGING TIME

### INTRODUCTION

Goals can help us set a proper course in our lives and focus on worthy causes so that we are not “carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). Elder Marvin J. Ashton, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The direction in which we are moving is more important than where we are at the moment. Goal setting should cause us to stretch as we make our way” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 61).

With our goals in hand, it is important to use our time wisely. As the hymn states:

Time flies on wings of lightning;  
We cannot call it back.  
It comes, then passes forward  
Along its onward track.  
And if we are not mindful,  
The chance will fade away,  
For life is quick in passing.  
’Tis as a single day.

[“Improve the Shining Moments,” *Hymns*, no. 226]

When we plan our lives and use our time wisely, the Lord will bless and magnify us to better serve in His kingdom.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Setting worthwhile goals gives direction to our lives.
- We should set goals in a number of different areas.
- Managing our time gives us control over our lives so we can serve more effectively.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***Setting worthwhile goals gives direction to our lives.***

- “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent that it may not be known” (D&C 60:13).



- “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” (Luke 14:28).

- Bishop John H. Vandenberg, then Presiding Bishop of the Church: “I feel that goal-setting is absolutely necessary for happy living. But the goal is only part of the desired procedures. We need to

know which roads to take to reach the goal. In many cases we set far-reaching goals but neglect the short-range ones. With such short-range plans, we need self-discipline in our actions—study

when it is time to study, sleep when it is time to sleep, read when it is time to read, and so on—not permitting an undesirable overlap, but getting our full measure of rewards and blessings from the time we invest in a particular activity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 94).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“First, think about your life and set your priorities. Find some quiet time regularly to think deeply about where you are going and what you will need to do to get there. Jesus, our exemplar, often ‘withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed’ (Luke 5:16). We need to do the same thing occasionally to rejuvenate ourselves spiritually as the Savior did. Write down the tasks you would like to accomplish each day. Keep foremost in mind the sacred covenants you have made with the Lord as you write down your daily schedules.

“Second, set short-term goals that you can reach. Set goals that are well balanced—not too many nor too few, and not too high nor too low. Write down your attainable goals and work on them according to their importance. Pray for divine guidance in

***“Set goals that are well balanced.”***

your goal setting” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 15–16; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 14).

- Elder Ben B. Banks, then of the Presidency of the Seventy, spoke of a bicycle trip he took with his family: “On day three of our journey, I learned that even though we may have some uphill struggles in our lives, our attitude will determine how we face them. On that day we crossed the Continental Divide three times, rising from an elevation of 4,800 feet to 8,300 feet. Climbing steep mountain passes on a bike requires the right attitude to get to the right altitude. It’s the same with life. By setting worthwhile goals and keeping your eyes fixed on them, you will learn self-discipline and accomplish much. Yes, there were times when climbing the steep mountain grades was as much as I could bear, but I didn’t give up, because I was fixed in my purpose” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 50; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 43).
- President Ezra Taft Benson, thirteenth President of the Church: “Every accountable child of God needs to set goals, short- and long-range goals. A man who is pressing forward to accomplish worthy goals can soon put despondency under his feet, and once a goal is accomplished, others can be set up. Some will be continuing goals. Each week when we partake of the sacrament we commit ourselves to the goals of taking upon ourselves the name of Christ, of always remembering him and keeping his commandments. Of Jesus’ preparations for his mission, the scripture states that he ‘increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.’ (Luke 2:52.) This encompasses four main areas for goals: spiritual, mental, physical, and social. ‘Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be?’ asked the Master, and he answered, ‘Verily I say unto you, even as I am.’ (3 Ne. 27:27.) Now, there is a lifetime goal—to walk in his steps, to perfect ourselves in every virtue as he has done, to seek his face, and to work to make our calling and election sure” (“Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 5).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Marathon runners set explicit goals. You should look ahead now and decide what you want to do with your lives. Fix clearly in your mind what you want to be one year from now, five years, ten years, and beyond. Receive your patriarchal blessing and strive to live worthy of its promises. A patriarchal blessing is one of the most important guides in life that members of the Church enjoy. Write your goals and review them

regularly. Keep them before you constantly, record your progress, and revise them as circumstances dictate. Your ultimate goal should be eternal life—the kind of life God lives, the greatest of all the gifts of God” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1989, 92; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 73).

- Elder Marvin J. Ashton: “May we launch straightway toward setting goals that are gospel oriented, knowing that if we use the talents that are ours—that if we help others, strive for peace, avoid being overly sensitive or overly critical—strength upon strength will be added unto our own abilities and we will move straightway toward greater growth, happiness, and eternal joys” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1983, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1983, 32).
- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: “Begin now to establish those goals which will bring you happiness—education in your chosen skill or branch of learning, whatever it may be; a mission in which to surrender yourself entirely to the Lord to do His work; future marriage in the house of the Lord to a wonderful and delightful companion of whom you will be worthy because of the way you have lived” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 71; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 50).

### ***We should set goals in a number of different areas.***

- “Be instructed more perfectly . . . of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms” (D&C 88:78–79).



▪ Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Accomplish personal goals in each of four categories . . . : spiritual development; physical development; educational, personal, and career development; and citizenship and social development” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 48; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 39).

▪ Elder G. Homer Durham of the Seventy:

“On January 2, 1891, a 19-year-old Norwegian immigrant sat down in his home in Logan City, Cache County, Utah Territory, and wrote the following lines on some lined paper:

“‘As I have come to fully realize; that, I am as weak as all other mortals—perhaps weaker than many; and realizing that happiness in life is only obtained by having a pure heart, a clear conscience; and fearing the Lord and keeping his commandments; also as I realize that happiness in old age consists of reviewing a life devoid from great sins; the gratification of noble desires manfully carried out; and finding that my life up to this time has not been as I should like it to have been: I lay down the following regulations by which I shall try to conduct my life hereafter; to which end may the Lord Almighty, my Creator, help me.’

“He then spelled out 17 resolutions. Nearly eight months later, on Tuesday, August 25, 1891, he copied them in a hardcover journal. Here he was to record his years of struggle as a stranger-student from Utah Territory at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He began by entering the 17 resolves that were to guide his life.

“‘Resolved:

“‘1st. That religion, the science of sciences, be made my chief concernment throughout life.

“‘2nd. That I will daily pray to God in secret.

“‘3rd. That I will daily reflect upon God and his attributes and try to become like him.

“‘4th. That I will receive Light, Wisdom or Knowledge, wherever or however it may be offered.

“‘5th. That I never be ashamed to acknowledge my principles, beliefs and religion when I once become fully convinced of their correctness.

“‘6th. That I never lose one moment of time but improve it.

***“You should look ahead now and decide what you want to do with your lives.”***

“‘7th. That I maintain strict temperance in eating and drinking.

“‘8th. That I never do anything that I would not do were it the last hour of my life.

“‘9th. That I daily read the word of God, that I may learn his will and that I may be comforted, strengthened and encouraged by so doing.

“‘10th. That in any narrations I speak nothing but the pure and simple verity.

“‘11th. That I always do that which I think is my duty and for the best good for my fellow beings.

“‘12th. That I live with all my might while I do live, that I may not die a living death.

“‘13th. That I never by word or manner try to force my opinions on others but that I simply state them and offer my arguments against others!

“‘14th. That I seek to overcome the habit of being quick tempered, loud speaking, impatient motions and whatever might offend my fellowmen and hurt me.

“‘15th. That I never for a moment forget my duty towards my mother, she who has made me who I am and who will make what I will become, she who has spent the better portion of her life in my behalf and to whom I owe all the honor, respect, and affection that I can give; also that I always remember my duties toward my brother and all my friends and relations.

“‘16th. That I complete every task which I begin; also that I carefully consider my purpose and its results before taking upon me any duty.

“‘17th. That I always remember that the men and women I meet are my brothers and sisters and that I look to the beam in my own eye before attempting to remove the mote in my fellow’s eye.’

“It would be well if every young man and woman today would similarly evaluate his or her position in life. . . .

“The young man who wrote these lines . . . was John Andreas Widtsoe. . . .

“. . . In March 1921 he was called to the apostleship by President Heber J. Grant and continued in that position throughout a long and eventful life”

("Faith, the Greater Knowledge," *New Era*, Aug. 1978, 4–6).

***Managing our time gives us control over our lives so we can serve more effectively.***

- "And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order" (Mosiah 4:27).

- "Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 88:123–24]).

- President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency:

"Our house is to be a *house of order*. . . . Let us provide time for family, time for work, time for study, time for service, time for recreation, time for self—but above all, time for Christ.

"Then our house will be a *house of order*" ("Building Your Eternal Home," *Ensign*, Oct. 1999, 5).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley:

"Each of us has a fourfold responsibility. First, we have a responsibility to our families. Second, we have a responsibility to our employers. Third, we have a responsibility to the Lord's work. Fourth, we have a responsibility to ourselves.

"First, it is imperative that you not neglect your families. Nothing you have is more precious. Your wives and your children are deserving of the attention of their husbands and fathers. When all is said and done, it is this family relationship which we will take with us into the life beyond. To paraphrase the words of scripture, 'What shall it profit a man though he serve the Church faithfully and lose his own family?' (see Mark 8:36).

"Together with them, determine how much time you will spend with them and when. And then stick to it. Try not to let anything interfere. Consider it sacred. Consider it binding. Consider it an earned time of enjoyment.

"Keep Monday night sacred for family home evening. Have an evening alone with your wife. Arrange some vacation time with the entire family.

"Two, to your business or your employer. You have an obligation. Be honest with your employer. Do not do Church work on his time. Be loyal to him. He compensates you and expects results from you. You need employment to care for your family. Without it you cannot be an effective Church worker.

"Three, to the Lord and His work. Budget your time to take care of your Church responsibilities. Recognize first that every officer has many helpers, as we have been reminded today. The stake president has two able counselors. The presidency has a high council of dedicated and able men. They have clerks as they need them. Every bishop has counselors. They are there to lift the burdens of his office from his shoulders. He has a ward council, together with others to whom he may and must delegate responsibility. He has the members of his ward, and the more he can delegate to them, the lighter will be his burden and the stronger will grow their faith.

"Every priesthood quorum president has counselors, as well as the membership of the quorum. It is so with the Relief Society. No

bishop can expect to fill the shoes of his Relief Society president in ministering to the needs of the members of this ward.

"Four, every Church leader has an obligation to himself. He must get needed rest and exercise. He needs a little recreation. He must have time

to study. Every Church officer needs to read the scriptures. He needs time to ponder and meditate and think by himself. Wherever possible he needs to go with his wife to the temple as opportunity permits" ("Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve," *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 2003, 22–23).

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then an Assistant to the Twelve: "I thank Jesus for foregoing fashionableness and for enduring not only the absence of appreciation but also for speaking the truth, knowing beforehand that misunderstanding and misrepresentation would follow. I thank him for his marvelous management of time, for never misusing a moment, including the moments

***"There should be time for mental and spiritual development as well as relaxation."***



of meditation. Even his seconds showed his stewardship” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, 41; or *Ensign*, May 1976, 27).

- Elder John Longden, an Assistant to the Twelve: “Mere ‘busyness’ is not necessarily evidence of the wise use of time. There should be time for mental and spiritual development as well as relaxation: time for worship and time to express our thankfulness for our ability to work, and think, and pray, and read, and help, and dream, and laugh, and plan, and learn” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 38).
- President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church: “Jesus . . . taught us how important it is to use our time wisely. This does not mean there can never be any leisure, for there must be time for contemplation and for renewal, but there must be no waste of time. . . . Wise time management is really the wise management of ourselves” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 482).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Suggestions for planning a day:

1. Set aside a quiet, prayerful time each morning for planning.
2. Focus on what you need to do that day.
3. Write what you need to do on a task list.
4. Prioritize your list.
5. Use your time wisely to accomplish the most important items.

## POINTS TO PONDER

- What are the top 10 priorities in your life?
- In what ways are worthwhile goals important in achieving eternal life?
- In what ways can you better manage your time?
- What are some less-important activities that consume too much of your time?
- Why is the wise use of time an eternal concern?

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:



This image shows a full page of blank, white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical dashed line down the center, dividing the page into two equal halves. The paper appears to be a standard notebook or ledger page.

## CHAPTER 4

# MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES WISELY

### INTRODUCTION

The Lord has given us many resources and blesses us as we use them wisely. We should exercise good judgment in managing and replenishing the resources with which the Lord has blessed us (see D&C 104:13–18). Paying an honest tithe and being honest in financial dealings will bring the Lord’s continued blessings.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Paying tithes and offerings brings blessings.
- Avoiding unnecessary debt and saving for the future helps keep us free from financial bondage.
- Being honest in our financial affairs shows our personal integrity.
- Counseling together as families helps us decide how resources should be used.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *Paying tithes and offerings brings blessings.*

▪ “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.

“And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:10–12 [Scripture Mastery, Malachi 3:8–10]).

▪ “Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming” (D&C 64:23 [Scripture Mastery]).

***“We must be honest with the Lord as we pay our tithes.”***



*Tithing settlement*

▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley, then Second Counselor in the First Presidency: “The fact is that tithing is the Lord’s law of finance. It came of revelation from him. It is a divine law with a great and beautiful promise. It is applicable to every member of the Church who has income. It is applicable to the widow in her poverty as well as to the wealthy man in his riches” (“The Widow’s Mite,” *Brigham Young University 1985–86 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1986], 9).

▪ Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“To those who faithfully and honestly live the law of tithing, the Lord promises an abundance of blessings. Some of these blessings are temporal, just as tithes are temporal. But like the outward physical ordinances of baptism and the sacrament, the commandment to pay tithing requires

temporal sacrifice, which ultimately yields great spiritual blessings. . . .

“The temporal and spiritual blessings of tithing are specifically tailored to us and our families, according to the Lord’s will. But to receive them, we must obey the law upon which they are predicated [see D&C 130:20–21]”

(in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 27).

▪ Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the Seventy: “May tithing be regarded as a sacrifice? Yes, particularly if we understand the meaning of the two Latin words from which the English word *sacrifice* is derived. These two words, *sacer* and *facere*, taken together mean ‘to make sacred.’ That which we return to the Lord as tithing is indeed made sacred, and the obedient are edified” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 103; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 78).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency: “I do not say that if you pay an honest tithing you will realize your dream of a fine house, a Rolls Royce, and a condominium in Hawaii. *The Lord will open the windows of heaven according to our need, and not according to our greed.* If we are paying tithing to get rich, we are doing it for the wrong reason. The basic purpose for tithing is to provide the Church with the means needed to carry on the Lord’s work. The blessing to the giver is an ancillary return, and that blessing may not be always in the form of financial or material benefit” (“The Sacred Law of Tithing,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1989, 4).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We must be honest with the Lord as we pay our tithes. Faithful Saints have learned that He will ‘open . . . the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it’ (Malachi 3:10). The payment of tithing has less to do with money, but more to do with faith. Let us return one-tenth of our income to the Lord (see D&C 119:4) and never be guilty of robbing him by failing to pay our tithes. Then, we also should remember those in need and contribute generous fast-offerings for their assistance” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 41; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 32).
- President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: “The law of tithing is simple: we pay one-tenth of our individual income annually [see D&C 119:4]. Increase has been interpreted by the First Presidency to mean income. What amounts to 10 percent of our individual income is between each of us and our Maker. There are no legalistic rules. As a convert in Korea once said: ‘With tithing, it doesn’t matter whether you are rich or poor. You pay 10 percent, and you don’t have to be ashamed if you haven’t earned very much. If you make lots of money, you pay 10 percent. If you make very little, you still pay 10 percent. Heavenly Father will love you for it. You can hold your head up proud.’” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 59).

***Avoiding unnecessary debt and saving for the future helps keep us free from financial bondage.***

- “Pay the debt thou hast contracted with the printer. Release thyself from bondage” (D&C 19:35).

- “And again, verily I say unto you, concerning your debts—behold it is my will that you shall pay all your debts” (D&C 104:78).
- President J. Reuben Clark of the First Presidency: “Once in debt, interest is your companion every minute of the day and night; you cannot shun it or slip away from it; you cannot dismiss it; it yields neither to entreaties, demands, or orders; and whenever you get in its way or cross its course or fail to meet its demands, it crushes you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1938, 103).



- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church:

“We are carrying a message of self-reliance throughout the Church. Self-reliance cannot obtain when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to others. . . .

“President Faust would not tell you this himself. Perhaps I can tell it, and he can take it out on me afterward. He had a mortgage on his home drawing 4 percent interest. Many people would have told him he was foolish to pay off that mortgage when it carried so low a rate of interest. But the first opportunity he had to acquire some means, he and his wife determined they would pay off their mortgage. He has been free of debt since that day. That’s why he wears a smile on his face, and that’s why he whistles while he works.

“I urge you . . . to look to the condition of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage. . . .



“... If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts. That’s all I have to say about it, but I wish to say it with all the emphasis of which I am capable” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 71–72; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53–54).

- Elder James E. Faust, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Installment buying on easy terms has trapped many well-intentioned people into positions they did not foresee nor intend. Credit cards, charge cards, and consumer credit devices must be used very sparingly and wisely. Full payment with cash upon purchase is still sound policy in good times or bad because installments carry high interest” (“Doing the Best Things in the Worst Times,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1984, 43).

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Avoid excessive debt. Necessary debt should be incurred only after careful, thoughtful prayer and after obtaining the best possible advice. We need the discipline to stay well within our ability to pay. Wisely we have been counseled to avoid debt as we would avoid the plague. President J. Reuben Clark fearlessly and repeatedly counseled the members of the Church to take action: ‘Live within your means. Get out of debt. Keep out of debt. Lay by for a rainy day which has always come and will come again. Practice and increase your habits of thrift, industry, economy, frugality’ [in Conference Report, Oct. 1937, 107]” (*Living with Enthusiasm* [1996], 24; see “If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 36).

- Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“A debt-elimination calendar can help you reduce or eliminate unnecessary debt. Mark off several columns on a piece of paper. In the first column on the left, write the names of the months, beginning with the upcoming month. At the top of the next column, write the name of the creditor you want to pay off first. It may be the debt with the highest interest rate or the earliest pay-off date. List the monthly payment for that creditor until the loan is repaid as shown in the illustration. . . . At the top of the next column, record the name of the second creditor you want to repay, and list payments due each month. After you have repaid the first creditor, add the amount of

that monthly payment to your payment to the second creditor. Continue the process until all loans are repaid” (“Guide to Family Finance,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 45).

DEBT-ELIMINATION CALENDAR					
	Debt 1	Debt 2	Debt 3	Debt 4	Total payment
April	10	20	30	40	100
May	10	20	30	40	100
June	10	20	30	40	100
July	10	20	30	40	100
August		30	30	40	100
September		30	30	40	100
October		30	30	40	100
November			60	40	100
December			60	40	100
January			60	40	100
February				100	100
March				100	100
April					

### ***Being honest in our financial affairs shows our personal integrity.***

- “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Romans 12:17).

- “And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27).

- Elder Thomas S. Monson, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “In an issue of *Nation’s Business*,

there appeared a comprehensive report entitled ‘What It Takes to Be Successful.’ The report was prepared by that magazine’s editors after exhaustive surveys to determine those traits which, when acquired and lived, will assure a leader’s success. Business leaders, educators, and consultants evaluated the qualities a leader needs most; and the final conclusion revealed that integrity, and such variations of it as honesty or moral soundness,

***“We need the discipline to stay well within our ability to pay.”***

was given first rank by virtually all participants in the survey. The leader who has integrity, who leads by example, will never suffer the scorn of disappointed youth who declare, ‘People are always telling us what to do but aren’t doing it themselves.’” (*Be Your Best Self* [1979], 116).

▪ Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

“My father . . . was totally honest. He set a great example for the entire family.

“One time when I was about seven years old, my father sent me to a hardware store on an errand. He gave me five dollars, which in those days, could buy a great deal. When I arrived home and accounted for my purchases, he counted the change and discovered that the clerk had made a mistake and had given me one dollar too much. The store was about a mile from our home, but he insisted that I walk the entire distance back and return the money.

“This was a good lesson. . . . This is typical of the lessons of honesty he taught us children all during our childhood and teenage years” (*Finding Peace in Our Lives* [1995], 141–42).

***Counseling together as families helps us decide how resources should be used.***

▪ “And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown; and let him labor in the church” (D&C 75:28).



▪ Elder James E. Faust: “Budgeting money together will produce a special unity, as will the holding of family councils. We should work together toward storing a year’s supply of food, clothing, and other necessities. In times of stress extra acts of kindness are particularly needed and appreciated.

When there is limited money available, it is easier to teach children the wise use of money, including the need to save for the future. The family can be reminded to maintain an eternal perspective rather than concentrate on worldly possessions and wealth. Family organizations are helpful to render the individual help that may be needed. It is also

important to learn how to accept family help graciously” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 130; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 90).

▪ Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy: “In family councils we have regularly reviewed parts of the family budget over which the children had some control, such as utilities, food, music lessons, educational costs, and so on. That has helped them realize that they couldn’t just have whatever they wanted in life but had to live within a budget. As they saw their family do that month after month, they naturally wanted to do the same. Then they found it easier to do so when they were on their own or married” (*Raising Up a Family to the Lord* [1993], 252).

▪ President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church: “For two people to work out their marriage together, they need a carefully worked out budget, made by both husband and wife, and then careful adherence to the same. Many marriages are defeated in the marketplace when unscheduled purchases are made. Remember that marriage is a partnership and is not likely to be successful otherwise. There should be joint planning and joint disciplining of the family” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1975, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1975, 6).

▪ President Spencer W. Kimball: “Every family should have a budget. Why, we wouldn’t think of going one day without a budget in this Church or in our businesses. We have to know approximately what we may receive and we certainly must know what we are going to spend. And one of the successes of the Church would have to be that the Brethren watch these things very carefully, and we do not spend that which we do not have” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 167).

▪ Elder L. Tom Perry: “As regularly as you pay your tithing, set aside an amount needed for future family requirements” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 36).

▪ Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“The costs of buying a home, compared to average salaries, seem to be rising and jobs harder to hold. But there are other ways the young man and the young woman could think . . . about preparing to provide for that future family. Income is only one part of it. Have you noticed husbands and wives who feel pinched for lack of money, then choose

***“Every family should have a budget.”***

ways to make their family income keep rising, and then find that the pinch is there whatever the income? There is an old formula you've heard, which goes something like this: Income five dollars and expenses six dollars: misery. Income four dollars and expenses three dollars: happiness.

"Whether the young man can provide and still be in the home and whether the young woman can be there to nurture children can depend as much on how they learn to spend as how they learn to earn. . . .

"Think carefully about what you really need in cars, and clothes, and recreation, and houses, and vacations, and whatever else you will someday try to provide for your children. . . . The difference in cost between what the world tells you is necessary and what your children really need could allow you the margin in time that a father and a mother might need with their children to bring them home to their Heavenly Father.

"Even the most frugal spending habits and the most careful planning for employment may not be enough to ensure success, but it could be enough to allow you the peace that comes from knowing you did the best you could to provide and to nurture" (*The Family* [CES fireside for college-age young adults, Nov. 5, 1995], 4–5).

- Elder Marvin J. Ashton:

"Every family must have a predetermined understanding of how much money will be available each month and the amount to be spent in each category of the family budget. Checkbooks facilitate family cash management and record-keeping. Carefully record each check when written and balance the checkbook with the monthly bank statement.

"With the exception of buying a home, paying for education, or making other vital investments, avoid debt and the resulting finance charges. Buy consumer durables and vacations with cash. Avoid installment credit, and be careful with your use of credit cards. They are principally for convenience and identification and should not be used carelessly or recklessly. The use of multiple credit cards significantly adds to the risk of excess debt. Buy used items until you have saved sufficiently to purchase quality new items. Purchasing poor-quality merchandise almost always ends up being very expensive.

"Save . . . a specific percentage of your income" (*One for the Money: Guide to Family Finance* [pamphlet, 1992], 6).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said:

"Recently I had the opportunity to visit with a choice young couple. They were to be married within the week. Their eyes sparkled in anticipation of the important event and with evidence of their continuing love for one another. Both had the advantages of college education, good homes, and cultural experiences. It was delightful to share their personalities, plans, and potentials. Their courtship already seemed appropriately launched on an eternal basis.

"During our interview, their responses to only one question gave me concern. I hope my anxieties and suggestions caused them to reassess their pending partnership.

"To the question, 'Who is going to manage the money in your marriage?' she replied, 'He is, I guess.' He responded, 'We haven't talked about that yet.' These comments surprised and shocked me.

"How important are money management and finances in marriage and family affairs? May I respond, 'Tremendously.'" (*One for the Money*, 1; or *Ensign*, July 1975, 72).

- Why do you think Elder Ashton was alarmed that this couple had not discussed money management?

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- Earlier in this chapter, President Spencer W. Kimball explained that the Church does not go one day without a budget. In what ways is managing personal and family finances just as important as managing the financial affairs of the Church?

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- Why is money management important in marriage and family affairs?

Elder Joe J. Christensen, then of the Presidency of the Seventy, said:

“For many years my father had a practice of trading for a new car every year. Then shortly after World War II when grain prices increased, we were surprised one day when Dad drove home in a more expensive car.

“One morning my mother asked, ‘How much more did the new car cost than the other one?’

“When Dad told her, my mother said, ‘Well, the other car has always been able to get me where I need to go. I think we ought to give the difference to someone who needs it more than we do.’

“And so it was. The next year Dad returned to the less-expensive cars, and they continued their generous ways.

“If we are not careful, it is easy for our wants to become needs” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 8–9; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 9).

- What financial lessons did Elder Christensen learn from his parents through this experience?

- What is the difference between wants and needs?

- What can help us learn the difference?

Serge and Nadine waited a long time to be married. They finished their schooling and both have medium-level jobs. They were used to living on a tight budget. Now that they have more money, each begins to purchase items they feel they need and have always wanted. They notice that their purchases are often more expensive than they realized. Often when one buys something, the other feels obligated to buy something else. Gradually they begin to accumulate debts. Last week, Nadine learned that she is expecting a baby. She has always planned to be a full-time mother.

- What advice would you give this couple?

- What must they do to face the challenges ahead?

## POINTS TO PONDER

- In what ways does paying tithes and offerings bless us spiritually? temporally?
- How does avoiding unnecessary debt create peace of mind?

- Why is it important to be honest in your business dealings?
- How can managing your money as a family increase unity?

**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**



This image shows a full page of blank, white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is a vertical dashed line down the center, dividing the page into two equal halves. The paper appears to be a standard notebook or ledger page.

BUDGET FOR _____ 20 ____		
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Wages/Salaries (after taxes)		
Other income		
Total income		
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Church donations		
Savings		
Food		
Mortgage or rent		
Utilities		
Transportation		
Debt payments		
Insurance		
Medical		
Clothing		
Other _____		
_____		
_____		
Total expenditures		
Income less expenditures		

A budget helps you plan and evaluate your expenditures.

Budget for a specified period (such as weekly, biweekly, monthly), according to your pay schedule.

Balance income with expenditures, and spend less than you earn.

## CHAPTER 5

# FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST GIVES US POWER TO PROVIDE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

### INTRODUCTION



Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). As we trust in the Lord and seek His help in both spiritual and temporal matters, we receive His assistance and blessings.

In addition to having faith in Jesus Christ, we must do all we can to accomplish

our righteous desires. Sometimes this takes long periods of faithful living and great effort on our part. Moroni taught that we “receive no witness until after the trial of [our] faith” (Ether 12:6). When we work, pray, and endure with faith in Jesus Christ to improve our conditions, the Lord will help us.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brings power to grow spiritually and deal with temporal affairs.
- The Lord promised that He will help provide for us.
- The Lord will not command us in all things. We must be anxiously engaged in doing much good.
- When we faithfully turn to the Lord, He will help us understand how we can improve our lives and help others.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ brings power to grow spiritually and deal with temporal affairs.***

- “Because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, . . .

by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious” (Alma 32:42).

- “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6 [Scripture Mastery]).

- Elder Henry D. Taylor, an Assistant to the Twelve: “My beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord does keep his promises. He truly opens the windows of heaven and pours out his blessings upon those who are faithful and who obey his commandments but it will be done in his own way. These blessings may come in a financial or temporal way or may be realized by a spiritual outpouring, bringing strength, peace, and comfort. His blessings may come in unusual and unexpected ways so that at the time we may not even recognize them as blessings; but the promises of the Lord will be kept” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 158; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 108).

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “It takes great faith and courage to pray to our Heavenly Father, ‘Not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ The faith to believe in the Lord and endure brings great strength. Some may say if we have enough faith, we can sometimes change the circumstances that are causing our trials and tribulations. Is our faith to change circumstances, or is it to endure them? Faithful prayers may be offered to change or moderate events in our life, but we must always remember that when concluding each prayer, there is an understanding: ‘Thy will be done’ (Matthew 26:42). Faith in the Lord includes trust in the Lord. The faith to endure well is faith based upon accepting the Lord’s will and the lessons learned in the events that transpire” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 77).



▪ President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency: “Should there be anyone who feels he is too weak to change the onward and downward course of his life, or should there be those who fail to resolve to do better because of that greatest of fears, the fear of failure, there is no more comforting assurance to be had than the words of the Lord: ‘My grace,’ said He, ‘is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them’ [Ether 12:27]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 61–62; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 48).

▪ President Spencer W. Kimball, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “It takes faith—unseeing faith—for young people to proceed immediately with their family responsibilities in the face of financial uncertainties. It takes faith for the young woman to bear her family instead of accepting employment, especially when schooling for the young husband is to be finished. It takes faith to observe the Sabbath when ‘time and a half’ can be had working, when profit can be made, when merchandise can be sold. It takes a great faith to pay tithes when funds are scarce and demands are great. It takes faith to fast and have family prayers and to observe the Word of Wisdom. It takes faith to do home teaching, stake missionary work, and other service, when sacrifice is required. It takes faith to fill full-time missions. But know this—that all these are of the planting, while faithful, devout families, spiritual security, peace, and eternal life are the harvest” (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 11; see Conference Report, Oct. 1952, 50–51).

▪ Elder Howard W. Hunter, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We need to study the simple fundamentals of the truths taught by the Master and eliminate the controversial. Our faith in God needs to be real and not speculative. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ can be a dynamic, moving influence. . . . One of the great strengths of the Mormon religion is this translation of belief into daily thinking and conduct” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1970, 131–32).

### ***The Lord promised that He will help provide for us.***

▪ “I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints. . . .

***“The faith to believe in the Lord and endure brings great strength.”***

“For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare” (D&C 104:16–17).

▪ “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7).

▪ President Brigham Young, second President of the Church: “My faith does not lead me to think the Lord

will provide us with roast pigs, bread already buttered, etc.; he will give us the ability to raise the grain, to obtain the fruits of the earth, to make habitations, to procure a few boards to make a box, and when harvest comes, giving us the grain, it is for us to preserve it—to save the wheat until we have one, two, five, or seven years’ provisions on hand, until there is enough of the staff of life saved by the people to bread themselves and those who will come here seeking for safety” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 291–92).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “I testify that within your own personal sphere of activity and framework of responsibilities, the Lord will provide . . . help. When needed and earned, you can enjoy divine inspiration to know what to do and, when necessary, power or capacity to accomplish it.

Joseph Smith learned how to perfect the ability to follow the guidance of the Lord by practiced, personal discipline. He did not let his own desires, convenience, or the persuasions of men interfere with that

compliance as he grew and was schooled by the Lord in how to do the tasks given him. Let us follow his example” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1999, 114; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 88–89).



### ***The Lord will not command us in all things. We must be anxiously engaged in doing much good.***

▪ “For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

“Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

“For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward” (D&C 58:26–28 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 58:26–27]).



▪ Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“We’re faced with two propositions. One is that we ought to be guided by the spirit of inspiration, the spirit of revelation. The other is that we’re here [on earth] under a direction to use our agency, to determine what we ought to do on our own; and we need to strike a fine balance between these two. . . .

“. . . Implicit in asking in faith is the precedent requirement that we do everything in our power to accomplish the goal that we seek. We use the agency with which we have been endowed. We use every faculty and capacity and ability that we possess to bring about the eventuality that may be involved. . . .

“. . . We’re expected to do everything in our power that we can, and then to seek an answer from the Lord, a confirming seal that we’ve reached the right conclusion” (“Agency or Inspiration—Which?” *Speeches of the Year: BYU Devotional Addresses, 1972–73* [1973], 109–10, 113).

▪ Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Each President of the Church, armed with the Holy Ghost as a constant

companion, inherits an enormous workload at an age when most men would be retired. President Hinckley sets a pace that is unprecedented. . . . His strenuous schedule is driven by his determination to be ‘anxiously engaged’ in building the kingdom of God. Often I have heard him say, ‘I don’t know how to get anything done except getting on my knees and pleading for help and then getting on my feet and going to work.’ Unshakable faith, hard work, and contagious optimism epitomize our prophet” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 16).

▪ Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “We cannot be double minded in our relationships with husband or wife, parents or children. Are we going to savor the enjoyment of our children after they are a little older and we are not so busy? What about the valued friendships that fade because of the thoughtful, lengthy letters we plan to write but never finish and send? Are we faithful in going to our temples regularly? Consider the books we are going to read, the impulses to kindness we are going to act upon, and the good causes we are going to espouse. Are we always packing our bags with the things we value most in life but never leaving on the trip? Does tomorrow never come? Let us resolve to begin to live today—not tomorrow, but today—this hour while we yet have time” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 18; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 16).

▪ President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: “Believing requires action. If you prepare to walk down the path of life, you can be rewarded beyond your dreams and expectations. But to achieve this, you must work very hard, save, be wise, and be alert. You must learn to deny yourselves of worldly gratification. You must be faithful in paying tithes; you must keep the Word of Wisdom; you must be free from other addictions. You must be chaste and morally clean in every respect. You should accept and be faithful in all of the calls that come to you. Steadiness and toil will serve you better than brilliance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 59; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 43).

***When we faithfully turn to the Lord, He will help us understand how we can improve our lives and help others.***

▪ “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. . . . For if they humble themselves

***“Believing  
requires action.”***



before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27 [Scripture Mastery]).

- "Wherefore, be faithful; . . . succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church:

"With good employment skills, . . . young men and women can rise out of the poverty they and generations before them have known. They will better provide for their families. They will serve in the Church and grow in leadership and responsibility. . . . As faithful members of the Church, they will pay their tithes and offerings, and the Church will be much the stronger for their presence in the areas where they live. . . .

". . . The likelihood of their remaining faithful and active throughout their lives will be very high" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 68–69; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 52–53).

- Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We need to know how, what, where, and why to change. The gospel of Jesus Christ can help us set short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals by teaching us who we are, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. With this knowledge, a person will have greater strength to improve" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 89; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 62).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley:

"It is our solemn obligation, it is our certain responsibility, my brethren, to 'succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees' (D&C 81:5). We must help them to become self-reliant and successful.



"I believe the Lord does not wish to see His people condemned to live in poverty. I believe He would have the faithful enjoy the good things of the earth. He would have us do these things to help them. And He will bless us as we do so. For the

success of this undertaking I humbly pray, while soliciting your interest, your faith, your prayers, your concerns in its behalf" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 69–70; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 53).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "It is love that must motivate the shepherds of Israel. That may seem difficult at the start, because we may not even know the Lord well. But if we begin with even a little grain of faith in Him, our service to the sheep will increase our love for Him and for them. It comes from simple things

that every shepherd must do. We pray for the sheep, every one for whom we are responsible. When we ask, 'Please tell me who needs me,' answers will come. A face or a name will come into our minds. Or we may have a chance meeting that we feel isn't chance. In those moments we will feel the love of the Savior for them and for us. As you watch over His sheep, your love for Him will grow. And that will increase your confidence and your courage" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 51; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 40).

- President Harold B. Lee, eleventh President of the Church: "You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul. . . . Who of us, in whatever station we may have been in, have not needed strengthening?" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 178–79; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Fernando's family has lived in the same town for many years. Life has changed relatively little over many generations. When Fernando was seventeen, his family was taught the gospel and joined the Church. Fernando wants to know what he can do to better prepare for the future.

- What counsel would you give Fernando?

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- What role can faith play as we prepare for the future?

- How can daily scripture study, a mission, and education help Fernando grow spiritually and temporally?

Mary has been active in the Church all her life. She has a strong testimony of the gospel and has felt that her prayers have been answered many times. She has great confidence and faith in the Lord. For the past two years she has been praying about which job she should seek. She continues to go into more debt waiting for answers.

- How can Mary be blessed by applying the Savior's admonitions that "it is not meet that I should command in all things" (D&C 58:26) and that "men should be anxiously engaged" (v. 27)?

- What advice would you give Mary?

### POINTS TO PONDER

- How does a knowledge of the Savior's service to others influence your faith that He will also help you?
- What specific needs should you seek help for in your prayers?
- How can you tell when the Lord is prompting you to help others?

### NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:





## CHAPTER 6

# PROVIDING FOR SELF, FAMILY, AND OTHERS

### INTRODUCTION

Providing materially for ourselves, our families, and others is important for our growth and happiness in the gospel. It is an important part of our mission to bring ourselves and others to Christ (see 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 75:28).



### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- The temporal and the spiritual are linked.
- Our priorities should reflect gospel principles.
- Fathers are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *The temporal and the spiritual are linked.*

- “For by the power of my Spirit created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal—

“First spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, first temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work. . . .

“Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created” (D&C 29:31–32, 34).

- “And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: all things bear record of me” (Moses 6:63).



- Elder Howard W. Hunter, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Man distinguishes between the temporal and the spiritual, probably because living in mortality between the spiritual pre-existence and the spiritual life hereafter, he fails to recognize the full significance of his activities during the years he spends on earth. To the Lord everything is both spiritual and temporal, and the laws he gives are consequently spiritual, because they concern spiritual beings.

“Every phase of our life, therefore, becomes the concern of the Church. The great welfare program of the Church demonstrates this principle. The Church is interested in our social and our recreational needs, educational, family life, our business affairs, and all that we do.

“There is no way we can separate the activities of worship on the Sabbath day from the many pursuits of the weekday by calling one religious and the other temporal. Both are spiritual. God has ordained them thus, for they consist of our thoughts and actions as we wend our way through this part of eternity. Thus our business transactions, our daily labors, our trade or profession, or whatever we do become part of living the gospel” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 109).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The temporal and the spiritual are linked inseparably. As we give of our time, talents, and resources to tend the needs of the sick, offer food to the hungry, and





teach the dependent to stand on their own, we enrich ourselves spiritually beyond our ability to comprehend” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 99; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 76–77).



▪ President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church: “We deal with many things which are thought to be not so spiritual; but all things are spiritual with the Lord, and he expects us to listen, and to obey, and to follow the

commandments” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, 8; or *Ensign*, May 1977, 7).

▪ Joe J. Christensen, later of the Seventy: “I found great inspiration in a physics class and I discovered additional reverence for creation in a geology course. I shall never forget what I consider the religious educational experience I found in studying Spanish grammar, composition, and literature with one of the most effective and demanding teachers I have ever known at Brigham Young University. Far from being faith-destroying, I discovered that my experiences with psychology and philosophy became for me sources of strength to my faith. And, without embarrassment, I confess that on occasion I became misty-eyed with what I would describe as a spiritual experience by the beauty of some of the choice portions of poetry, literature, and music created by the masters” (“True Education—True Religion,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1980, 74).

### ***Our priorities should reflect gospel principles.***

▪ “Seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich” (D&C 11:7).

▪ “Then one of them . . . asked . . . ,

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:35–39).

▪ Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Jesus taught about priorities when He said, ‘Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you’ (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38; in Matthew 6:33; footnote a).

“‘Seek . . . first to build up the kingdom of God’ means to assign first priority to God and to His work. The work of God is to bring to pass the eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39), and all that this entails in the birth, nurturing, teaching, and sealing of our Heavenly Father’s children. Everything else is lower in priority. . . . As someone has said, if we do not choose the kingdom of God first, it will make little difference in the long run what we have chosen instead of it. . . .

“Our priorities are most visible in how we use our time. Someone has said, ‘Three things never come back—the spent arrow, the spoken word, and the lost opportunity.’ We cannot recycle or save the time allotted to us each day. With time, we have only one opportunity for choice, and then it is gone forever. . . .

“In terms of priorities for each major decision (such as education, occupation, place of residence, marriage, or childbearing), we should ask ourselves, ‘What will be the *eternal impact* of this decision?’ Some decisions that seem desirable for mortality have unacceptable risks for eternity. In all such choices, we need to have inspired priorities and apply them in ways that will bring eternal blessings to us and to our family members” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 108–10; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 83–84).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “In quiet moments of reflection, weigh what our Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son have identified as the key priorities of life. Review your own life to make sure that in all respects it is in harmony with them. . . . As I travel through my own



country and to other parts of the world, I see the marvelous benefits derived from the distinct cultures that exist. Yet those benefits are sometimes overshadowed by the negative influences that result from those traditions that conflict with the teachings of the Master" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 114; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 87).

- Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "When priorities are proper, the power to endure is increased. And when internalized, those priorities will help keep you from 'going overboard.' They will protect you from cheating—in marriage, in the Church, and in life" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 99; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 72).

***Fathers are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.***

- "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Timothy 5:8).

- "And again, verily I say unto you, that every man who is obliged to provide for his own family, let him provide, and he shall in nowise lose his crown; and let him labor in the church" (D&C 75:28).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency:

"Many years ago, President Stephen L. Richards, then a Counselor in the First Presidency, speaking from this pulpit made an eloquent plea to put father back at the head of the family (see Conference Report, Apr. 1958, p. 94). I repeat that plea to all fathers. Yours is the basic and inescapable responsibility to stand as the head of the family. That does not carry with it any implication of dictatorship or unrighteous dominion. It carries with it a mandate that fathers provide for the needs of their families. Those needs are more than food, clothing, and shelter. Those needs include righteous direction and the teaching, by example as well as precept, of basic principles of honesty, integrity, service, respect for the rights of others, and an understanding that we are accountable for that which we do in this life, not only to one another but also to the God of heaven, who is our Eternal Father.

***"Work is the law of life."***

"Let every mother realize that she has no greater blessing than the children who have come to her as a gift from the Almighty; that she has no greater mission than to rear them in light and truth, in understanding and love; that she will have no greater happiness than to see them grow into young men and women who respect principles of virtue, who walk free from the stain of immorality and from the shame of delinquency" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 78–79; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 59–60).



- The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles: "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

- President Spencer W. Kimball: "Our Heavenly Father placed the responsibility upon parents to see that their children are well fed, well groomed and clothed, well trained, and well taught. Most parents protect their children with shelter—they tend and care for their diseases, provide clothes for their safety and their comfort, and supply food for their health and growth. But what do they do for their souls?" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 332; see "Train Up a Child," *Ensign*, Apr. 1978, 2).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“Work is the law of life; it is the ruling principle in the lives of Saints. We cannot, while physically able, voluntarily shift the burden of our own support to others. Doles abound in evils. Industry, thrift, and self-respect are essential to salvation.

“We must maintain our own health, sow our own gardens, store our own food, educate and train ourselves to handle the daily affairs of life. No one else can work out our salvation for us, either temporally or spiritually.

“We are here on earth to care for the needs of our family members. Wives have claim on their husbands for their support, children upon their parents, parents upon their children, brothers upon each other, and relatives upon their kin.

“It is the aim of the Church to help the Saints to care for themselves and, where need be, to make food and clothing and other necessities available, lest the Saints turn to the doles and evils of Babylon” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1979, 132; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 93).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

When serving his mission, Hans felt closer to the Spirit than ever before in his life. He worked hard and accomplished what he never thought possible before his mission. Now that he is home from his mission, he no longer sets goals and is unsure what to do next.

- What advice would you give Hans?

Some neighbors of yours begin criticizing the Church because they feel it is too restrictive and expects too much of its members. They think that religion should be a Sunday event and is not important during the week. After all, people must live in the world during the week and should not have to worry about spiritual things.

- What might you say to your neighbors about the relationship of “worldly” and “spiritual” things?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- What are five of the most important priorities in your life?
- Which of your priorities seem temporal? In what ways could they be seen as spiritual?
- How might looking at them as spiritual help you meet them?
- Why is providing materially for ourselves, our families, and others important to God?

**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**

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## CHAPTER 7

# RECOGNIZING AND DEVELOPING TALENTS AND ABILITIES

### INTRODUCTION



The Lord encourages us to develop our talents and abilities. This often requires patience, self-discipline, and diligent effort. As we progress, we realize more fully our potential and become better at helping others.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Because of our development in the premortal life, each of us comes to earth with a unique combination of talents and abilities.
- When we rely on the Spirit, the Lord will help us recognize and develop our talents and abilities.
- The Lord will help us overcome our doubts and fears as we seek His help to develop our talents and abilities.
- Developing talents and abilities requires individual work.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***Because of our development in the premortal life, each of us comes to earth with a unique combination of talents and abilities.***

- “And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling

which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such” (Alma 13:3).



- “I observed that they were also among the noble and great ones who were chosen in the beginning to be rulers in the Church of God.

“Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:55–56).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“All the spirits of men, while yet in the Eternal Presence, developed aptitudes, talents, capacities, and abilities of every sort, kind, and degree. During the long expanse of life which then was, an infinite variety of talents and abilities came into being. As the ages rolled, no two spirits remained alike. Mozart became a musician; Einstein centered his interest in mathematics; Michelangelo turned his attention to painting. . . . Abraham and Moses and all of the prophets sought and obtained the talent for spirituality. . . .

“ . . . When we pass from preexistence to mortality, we bring with us the traits and talents there developed. True, we forget what went before

because we are here being tested, but the capacities and abilities that then were ours are yet resident within us. Mozart is still a musician; Einstein retains his mathematical abilities; Michelangelo his artistic talent; Abraham, Moses, and the prophets their spiritual talents and abilities. . . . And all men with their infinitely varied talents and personalities pick

***“When we pass from preexistence to mortality, we bring with us the traits and talents there developed.”***

up the course of progression where they left it off when they left the heavenly realms" (*The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:23, 25).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then of the Seventy: "In this prior life, this premortal existence, this preexistence, we developed various capacities and talents. Some developed them in one field and some in another. The most important of all fields was the field of spirituality—the ability, the talent, the capacity to recognize truth" (*Making Our Calling and Election Sure*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Mar. 25, 1969], 5–6).

- Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "During the ages in which we dwelt in the pre-mortal state we not only developed our various characteristics and showed our worthiness and ability, or the lack of it, but we were also where such progress could be observed. . . . Under such conditions it was natural for our Father to discern and choose those who were most worthy and evaluate the talents of each individual" (*The Way to Perfection* [1970], 50–51).

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "In the premortal world we were taught the Father's plan of redemption and enjoyed moral agency. Through the use of this agency, men and women developed varying appetites, talents, and capacities over time and no spirits remained the same" (*Give Heed unto the Word of the Lord* [CES fireside for young adults, May 2, 1999], 2).

***When we rely on the Spirit, the Lord will help us recognize and develop our talents and abilities.***



- "For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God.

"To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:11–12).

- "I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come

from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them" (Moroni 10:8).

- Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"One of the great tragedies of life, it seems to me, is when a person classifies himself as someone who has no talents or gifts. When, in disgust or discouragement, we allow ourselves to reach depressive levels of despair because of our

demeaning self-appraisal, it is a sad day for us and a sad day in the eyes of God. For us to conclude that we have no gifts when we judge ourselves by stature, intelligence, grade-point average, wealth, power, position, or external appearance is not only unfair but unreasonable. . . .

"God has given each of us one or more special talents. . . . It is up to each of us to search for and build upon the gifts which God has given. We must remember that each of us is made in the image of God, that there are no unimportant persons. Everyone matters to God and to his fellowmen. . . .

". . . Taken at random, let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important . . . :

". . . The gift of asking; the gift of listening; the gift of hearing and using a still, small voice; the gift of being able to weep; the gift of avoiding contention; the gift of being agreeable; the gift of avoiding vain repetition; the gift of seeking that which is righteous; the gift of not passing judgment; the gift of looking to God for guidance; the gift of being a disciple; the gift of caring for others; the gift of being able to ponder; the gift of offering prayer; the gift of bearing a mighty testimony; and the gift of receiving the Holy Ghost.

"We must remember that to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. It is our right and



***"God has given each of us one or more special talents."***

responsibility to accept our gifts and to share them" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 20).

- President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: "We must recognize that our natural gifts and abilities are limited, but when augmented by inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost, our potential increases manyfold. You need help from a power beyond your own to do something extraordinarily useful. You young [people] can have opportunities and receive blessings beyond your wildest dreams and expectations. Your future may not hold fame or fortune, but it can be something far more lasting and fulfilling. Remember that what we do in life echoes in eternity" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 56; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 47–48).

- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

*"Place the Savior, His teachings, and His church at the center of your life. Make sure that all decisions comply with this standard."*

"This principle will see you through periods of testing and growth. Upward growth occurs in cycles that build upon each other in an ascending spiral of capacity and understanding. They are often not easy, but they are always beneficial. As you walk the path of righteousness, you will grow in strength, understanding, and self-esteem. You will discover hidden talents and unknown capacities. The whole course of your life may be altered for your happiness and the Lord's purposes" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 34).



***The Lord will help us overcome our doubts and fears as we seek His help to develop our talents and abilities.***

- "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with

the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10).

- "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5 [Scripture Mastery, Proverbs 3:5–6]).

- Elder Richard G. Scott:

"In many ways, the world is like a jungle, with dangers that can harm or mutilate your body, enslave or destroy your mind, or decimate your morality. It was intended that life be a challenge, not so that you would fail, but that you might succeed through overcoming. You face on every hand difficult but vitally important decisions. There is an array of temptations, destructive influences, and camouflaged dangers, the like

of which no previous generation has faced. I am persuaded that today no one, no matter how gifted, strong, or intelligent, will avoid serious problems without seeking the help of the Lord.

"I repeat: Don't face the world alone. Trust in the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 47; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 36).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church:

"Once upon a time, a very long time ago, I was your age. . . . I worried about school and where it would lead. It was the season of the terrible economic depression. I worried about how to earn a living. . . .

"Now, here you are on the threshold of your mature lives. You too worry about school. You worry about marriage. You worry about many things. I make you a promise that God will not forsake you if you will walk in His paths with the guidance of His commandments.

"This is the age of great opportunity. You are so fortunate to be alive. Never in the history of mankind has life been filled with so many opportunities and challenges"





("A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2; or *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 6–7).

▪ Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Ask your Heavenly Father to bless you with faith and courage, and He will help you endure any challenges you may face. He will help you overcome loneliness, feelings of desperation and hopelessness, setbacks of a personal, emotional, financial, and even spiritual nature; or will strengthen you when you are simply feeling overwhelmed by all of the demands for your time and attention. He will give you the ability to serve faithfully in every assignment you receive from your local Church leaders. Your faith and your knowledge of the restoration of the gospel will give you the strength to be faithful and true to the covenants you have made with the Lord, and to share your strengths and talents gladly to build up the Kingdom of God here on the Earth! Brothers and sisters, your testimony of Jesus Christ is the most important anchor that you can have to help hold you, steadfast and immovable, to principles of righteousness, regardless of the challenges and temptations that may come in the future" (*Anchor to the Soul* [CES fireside for young adults, Sept. 6, 1992], 4; see "Steadfast in Christ," *Ensign*, Dec. 1993, 51–52).

### ***Developing talents and abilities requires individual work.***

▪ "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; "For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:27–28 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 58:26–27]).



accounting. So it is now. Our Master is absent only for a little season, and at the end of it He will call

▪ The Prophet Joseph Smith: "When the Master in the Savior's parable of the stewards called his servants before him he gave them several talents to improve on while he should tarry abroad for a little season, and when he returned he called for an

each to render an account; and where the five talents were bestowed, ten will be required; and he that has made no improvement will be cast out as an unprofitable servant, while the faithful will enjoy everlasting honors" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 68).



***"Don't face the world alone. Trust in the Lord."***

▪ President James E. Faust: "Some of you may think that you will discover your strengths and abilities by living on the edge. Perhaps you also think it is a way to find your identity or manliness. Your identity, however,

cannot be found from thrill seeking, such as intentionally and unnecessarily exposing your life or your soul to any kind of danger, physical or moral. There will always be enough risks that will come to you naturally without your having to seek them out. Your strength and identity will come from honoring your priesthood, developing your talents, and serving the Lord. Each of you will have to work very hard to qualify for your eternal potential. It will not be easy. Finding your true identity will tax your ability far beyond climbing a dangerous cliff or speeding in a car or on a motorcycle. It will require all of your strength, stamina, intelligence, and courage" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 46).

### **APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES**

Read the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14–30. Explain what happened to the different servants and why.

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- What can happen to our talents if we do not continually develop them and share them?

Yia has had a difficult week. School is not going well. His family is not happy about him joining the Church several months ago. His friends at work avoid him since he joined the Church because he stopped doing things with them that compromised his standards. He is considering changing jobs but feels that his qualifications are not strong. He fears the future.

- How might you help and encourage him to realize his potential?

### POINTS TO PONDER

- How can developing your talents and abilities help your confidence?
- How can you use your talents in your occupation?
- What skill or ability would you like to develop that you do not currently have?
- How might your patriarchal blessing help you to identify your talents?

### NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:



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## CHAPTER 8

# EACH OF US CAN HELP BUILD THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

### INTRODUCTION

Establishing the kingdom of God on earth has been the purpose of every gospel dispensation. The kingdom of God on earth is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The kingdom exists wherever there are members of the Church. We help establish the kingdom as we seek to become pure in heart (see D&C 97:21), obey God's commandments, and serve with dedication. The Lord counseled: "Seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness" (JST, Matthew 6:38).

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- We help build the kingdom of God by living righteously.
- Individuals and families are strengthened by activity in the Church.
- We should willingly serve wherever we are.
- Blessings come as we serve in the kingdom of God.

*"God expects us to arise and shine."*

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

*We help build the kingdom of God by living righteously.*



- "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).



- "Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion.

"Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work" (D&C 12:6–7).

- Elder Ezra Taft Benson, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "My brethren, may we prepare, as elders in Israel, to help enlarge and to strengthen the boundaries of Zion, enlarge her stakes, and build up the kingdom. God expects us to arise and shine because we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and I believe the hope of the world because we are the stewards of the revealed truth of God" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1955, 49).

- Elder Bruce D. Porter of the Seventy: "Personal prayer, study, and pondering are vital to building the kingdom within our own souls. It is in quiet moments of contemplation and communion with the Almighty that we come to know and love Him as our Father" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 105; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 81).

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "When we understand our baptismal covenant and the gift of the Holy Ghost, it will change our lives and establish our total allegiance to the kingdom of God. When temptations come our way, if we will listen, the Holy Ghost will remind us that we have promised to remember our Savior and obey the commandments of God" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 7).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "Personal testimony is the factor which turns people around in their living as they come into this Church. This is the element which motivates the membership to forsake all in the service of the Lord. This is the quiet, encouraging voice which sustains without pause those who walk in faith down to the last days of their lives"

(in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 69).

### ***Individuals and families are strengthened by activity in the Church.***

- “And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

“And they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

“And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them” (Moroni 6:5–7).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Over the years, my active participation in the Church has provided me access to the counsel and inspiration of the leaders of the Church on things I should do as a husband and father and leader in my family. Again and again, in stake and general conferences, in priesthood quorums, and in Sunday School classes, I have been taught and inspired by wonderful and experienced fathers, mothers, and grandparents.

“I have sought to follow those teachings to improve my participation in those associations that will persist for eternity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 40; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 35).

- President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency: “Long years ago, Joseph Lyon of Salt Lake City shared with me the lesson of a lecture which a minister from another faith observed. . . . [He related] what I’ve called the ‘hot coals’ story. He described a warm fireplace where the pieces of wood had burned brightly, with the embers still glowing and giving off heat. He then observed that by taking in hand brass tongs, he could remove one of the hot embers. That ember would then slowly pale in light and turn black. No longer would it glow. No longer would it warm. He then pointed out that by returning the black, cold ember to the bed of living coals, the dark ember would begin to glow and brighten and warm. He concluded: ‘People are somewhat like the coals of a fire. Should they absent themselves from the warmth and spirit of the active church membership, they will not contribute to the whole, but in their isolation will be changed. As with the embers removed from the heat of the fire, as they distance themselves from the intensity of the spirit generated by the active membership, they

***“Serve cheerfully and gratefully in every calling you receive.”***

will lose that warmth and spirit.” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 66; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 47–48).

- Elder Robert L. Backman of the Seventy advised that we set a goal to always stay active in the Church:

“[Church activity] will provide an anchor for you like nothing else on earth, for it will give you the opportunity to discover for yourself the real meaning of happiness. It will assure you that, no matter where you go, you belong—for you have brothers and sisters who love you and sustain you. You will know something of the brotherhood of the gospel of Jesus Christ: you will become acquainted with him as your Savior; and you will keep your testimony burning brightly.

“Consider what such [a goal] will do for you. When temptations come, as they surely will, you are going to be prepared. You will have made the choice in advance. . . . ‘I am always going to be active in God’s Church!’ . . . When you make [this basic decision] in advance, think how many other decisions are already made: living the Word of Wisdom, keeping morally clean, attending your meetings, paying tithing, studying the gospel, and so forth. You will not compromise on any important principle. You will be in control of your life, and you will enjoy the peace and serenity that come with keeping the commandments of God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 62; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 42).



and offerings, support your leaders, and otherwise keep the commandments. Serve cheerfully and gratefully in every calling you receive. Live worthy of a temple recommend and enjoy the sweet, sacred spirit that comes from frequent temple attendance” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 57; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 51).

- President David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church: “In the Church, increased participation in church activity indicates a desire to be a partaker of spirituality, the highest acquisition of the soul,

- President Ezra Taft Benson, thirteenth President of the Church: “Be an example in your Church activity—honor the Sabbath day, attend your meetings, observe the Word of Wisdom, pay your tithes

and young people desire it" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1961, 7).

***We should willingly serve wherever we are.***

▪ "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" (Mosiah 2:17 [Scripture Mastery]).



▪ Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "I applaud the efforts of Latter-day Saints throughout the world who willingly serve in building the kingdom of God.

Likewise, I respect those who quietly do their duty though deepening trials

come their way" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 33).

▪ Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Some callings and assignments in the Church may seem insignificant and unimportant at the time, but with each willingly fulfilled assignment, love of the Lord will grow. We learn to love God as we serve and know Him" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1981, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1981, 24).

▪ President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "I see two kinds of service: one, the service we render when we are called to serve in the Church; the other, the service we willingly give to those around us because we are taught to care" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 6).

▪ Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Every member can give his time and talents freely to the building up of the kingdom of God upon the earth. No member of the Church should miss this opportunity to exercise his faith and feel the spirit that comes from humble sacrifice. Seeing the great good that the Saints in South America do with their meager means helps me realize how much more many of us in other parts of the world could do. We should never forget the Savior's teaching: 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required' (Luke 12:48). He has blessed us abundantly" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 81).

***Blessings come as we serve in the kingdom of God.***

▪ "Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;

"For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul" (D&C 4:3–4).

▪ "For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

"Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory" (D&C 76:5–6).

▪ Elder Dale E. Miller of the Seventy: "As we invest our time, talents, and means to build Zion, our hearts are purified, our wisdom increases, celestial habits begin to form, and the Holy Spirit prepares us to receive the presence of the Father and the Son. By thrusting in our sickles, we reap a double portion—for ourselves and for the kingdom" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 30).

▪ President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency: "I remember that a long time ago, over sixty years in fact, when Elder Melvin J. Ballard laid his hands on my head and set me apart to go on a mission, he said in the blessing he gave me that a person could not give a crust to the Lord without receiving a loaf in return. And that has been my experience" ("The Blessings of the Fast," *Ensign*, July 1982, 2).



▪ Elder Derek A. Cuthbert of the Seventy:

"Service changes people. It refines, purifies, gives a finer perspective, and brings out the best in each one of us. It gets us looking outward instead of inward. It prompts us to consider others' needs ahead of our

own. Righteous service is the expression of true charity, such as the Savior showed. . . .

“ . . . Service helps us establish true values and priorities by distinguishing between the worth of material things that pass and those things of lasting, even eternal, value. . . .

“ . . . Service helps us establish a righteous tradition. . . .

“ . . . Service helps us overcome selfishness and sin. . . .

“ . . . Service helps us generate love and appreciation. We come to know people by serving them—their circumstances, their challenges, their hopes and aspirations. . . .

“ . . . Service is the principal way of showing gratitude to the Savior. . . .

“ . . . Service channels our desires and energies into righteous activity. . . .

“ . . . Service helps us cleanse ourselves and become purified and sanctified. . . .

“ . . . Righteous service brings us nearer to Christ, increases our spirituality, and brings others likewise. Such service is helping to prepare a people worthy, in the Lord’s due time, to redeem Zion” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 12–14; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 12–13).

▪ Elder Dale E. Miller:

“Brothers and sisters, thrusting in our sickles to help build the Lord’s kingdom should be the prime focus of our lives. It seems reasonable to suggest that we each agreed to that in our premortal life. The key decisions pertaining to education, career, marriage, and the very use of our time, talent, and means should prayerfully hinge on how best we serve the Master, building His kingdom and becoming perfected in Him.

“Our work in building up Zion takes several forms. In one context, Zion is geographic, having a center while enlarging its boundaries to eventually fill the earth. We enlarge Zion’s borders as we share the gospel with others. That is part of our job here.

“Another context shows Zion as an organization wherein we work to strengthen its stakes through our callings. Each stake, in turn, pushes deep into

the gospel soil, providing a defense and a refuge so followers of Christ might stand with confidence against the snares of the adversary. Stakes create the foundation culture for perfecting God’s people on earth” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 37; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 29).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Frank worked hard on his mission and felt that he represented the Lord well through his service and commitment to keeping the mission rules. Since his mission he has not felt as motivated to keep the commandments and has not felt the Spirit of the Lord for some time. He wonders why it seems that the

Lord’s influence was so strong on his mission and so far away now. After all, he helped build the Lord’s kingdom by what he did on his mission. He feels that now it is somebody else’s turn to serve, and he should just get married and move on with his life.

- What are some problems Frank might face given this attitude?

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- What do you recommend he do to have the Spirit’s influence back in his life?

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Cindy sits in the congregation one Sunday looking at her bishop on the stand. He has served diligently for several years. She wonders why he has been so willing to give so much of his life in this service.

*“Service . . . brings out the best in each one of us.”*









## CHAPTER 9

# BECOMING SELF-RELIANT IN THE LORD'S WAY

### INTRODUCTION

"As disciples of Christ, we should give of ourselves—our time, talents, and resources—to care for those in need. We are better able to fulfill this responsibility if we are striving to become self-reliant, for we cannot give what we do not have.

When we wisely use those things that the Lord gives us, we become more able to give to the Lord's work and provide for others" (*Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare* [1990], 3).

With Heavenly Father's help, we can face the challenges of our mortal lives with confidence and peace of mind and become self-reliant in the Lord's way. This includes recognizing that we need the Lord's help in all things.

***"Do all you can do  
and then leave the  
rest to the Lord."***

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Righteous self-reliance includes faith in and dependence on the Savior.
- The gospel teaches us to become self-reliant temporally and grow spiritually and to help others do the same.
- We have a responsibility to improve ourselves.
- Self-reliance implies the development of skills and abilities in a variety of areas.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***Righteous self-reliance includes faith in and dependence on the Savior.***

- "O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. . . .

"Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh" (2 Nephi 4:34–35).

- "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5–6 [Scripture Mastery]).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie, then of the Seventy:

"Properly understood and practiced, *self-reliance* is a desirable saintly virtue; when it leaves the Lord out of the picture, however, it becomes a vice that leads men from the paths of righteousness. The saints, for instance, should have confidence in their own abilities, efforts, and judgments to make a living, to increase in faith and the attributes of

godliness, to work out their salvation, to pass all the tests of this mortal probation. They should know that the Lord has not placed his children in positions beyond their capacities to cope with, that the normal trials and tribulations of life are part of the

eternal system. Ordinarily members of the Church should make their own personal decisions, using the agency the Almighty has given them, without running to their bishops or others for direction.

"But with it all, man of himself is not wholly self-sufficient. He is not to trust solely in his own strength, nor in the arm of flesh. The Lord is his Counselor and Deliverer, upon whom he must rely for guidance, direction, and inspiration. If the great Creator had not stepped forward to redeem the creatures of his creating, the whole plan of salvation would be void and the most perfect manifestations of self-reliance would have no worth" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 701–2).



- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Ask your Heavenly Father to bless you with faith and courage, and He will help you

endure any challenges you may face. He will help you overcome loneliness, feelings of desperation and hopelessness, setbacks of a personal, emotional, financial, and even spiritual nature; or will strengthen you when you are simply feeling overwhelmed by all of the demands for your time and attention. He will give you the ability to serve faithfully in every assignment you receive from your local Church leaders. Your faith and your knowledge of the restoration of the gospel will give you the strength to be faithful and true to the covenants you have made with the Lord, and to share your strengths and talents gladly to build up the Kingdom of God here on the Earth! Brothers and sisters, your testimony of Jesus Christ is the most important anchor that you can have to help hold you, steadfast and immovable, to principles of righteousness, regardless of the challenges and temptations that may come in the future" (*Anchor to the Soul* [CES fireside for young adults, Sept. 6, 1992], 4).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Use your ingenuity, your strength, your might to resolve your challenges. Do all you can do and then leave the rest to the Lord. President Howard W. Hunter said: 'If our lives and our faith are centered on Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our lives are not centered on the Savior and His teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right' [*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1997), 40]" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 74–75; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 61).

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Independence and self-reliance are critical to our spiritual and temporal growth. Whenever we get into situations which threaten our self-reliance, we will find our freedoms threatened as well. If we increase our dependence on anything or anyone except the Lord, we will find an immediate decrease in our freedom to act. As President Heber J. Grant declared, 'Nothing destroys the individuality of a man, a woman, or a child as much as the failure to be self-reliant' ("Address," *Relief Society Magazine*, Oct. 1937, p. 627)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 64–65).

***"Independence and self-reliance are critical to our spiritual and temporal growth."***

***The gospel teaches us to become self-reliant temporally and grow spiritually and to help others do the same.***

- "I will consecrate of the riches of those who embrace my gospel among the Gentiles unto the poor of my people who are of the house of Israel" (D&C 42:39).



- President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church: "Work brings happiness, self-esteem, and prosperity. It is the means of all accomplishment; it is the opposite of idleness. We are commanded to work. (See Gen. 3:19.) Attempts to obtain our temporal, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being by means of a dole violate the divine mandate that we should work for what we receive. Work should be the ruling principle in the lives of our Church membership. (See D&C 42:42; 75:29; 68:30–32; 56:87.)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 124; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77; see "The Lord Called His People Zion," *Ensign*, Aug. 1984, 4).

- President Spencer W. Kimball:

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof.

"No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life. (See

1 Timothy 5:8.)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 124; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77–78).

▪ Elder Harold B. Lee, then of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"If you want the blessing, don't just kneel down and pray about it. Prepare yourselves in every conceivable way you can in order to make yourselves worthy to receive the blessing you seek.

"Brigham Young illustrated this when he said, 'You may go to some people here and ask them what ails them, and they say, "I don't know but we've got a dreadful distress in the stomach and in the back and we feel all out of order and we wish you would lay your hands on us."' He said to these people, 'Have you used any of the remedies?'—meaning herbs or whatever the pioneers had. 'No,' they said, 'we wish the elders to lay hands upon us; we have faith that we should be healed.' President Young said, 'Now, that is very inconsistent according to my faith. If we are sick and ask the Lord to heal us and to do all for us that is necessary, according to my understanding of the gospel of salvation, I might as well ask the Lord to cause my wheat and corn to grow without my plowing the ground and casting the seed. It appears consistent to me to apply every remedy that comes within the range of my knowledge and then ask my Father in Heaven in the name of Jesus Christ to sanctify that application to the healing of my body.

"'But,' he continued, 'suppose we were traveling in the mountains and all we could get in the shape of nourishment was a little venison and one or two were taken sick without anything in the world in the shape of healing medicine within our reach, what should we then do? According to my faith, ask the Lord God Almighty to send an angel to heal the sick. This is our privilege.'

"When we are so situated that we cannot get anything to help ourselves, then we may call upon the Lord and his servants who can do all. But it is our duty to do what we can within our own power" ("How to Receive a Blessing from God," *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1966, 896).

▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "We are carrying a message of self-reliance throughout the Church. Self-reliance cannot [be obtained] when there is serious debt hanging over a household. One has neither independence nor freedom from bondage when he is obligated to

others" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 53).

▪ Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"We seem to be developing an epidemic of 'counselitis' which drains spiritual strength from the Church, much like the common cold drains more strength out of humanity than any other disease.

"That, some may assume, is not serious. It is very serious!

"On one hand, we counsel bishops to avoid abuses in welfare help. On the other hand, some bishops dole out counsel and advice without considering that the member should solve the problem himself.

"There are many chronic cases—individuals who endlessly seek counsel but do not follow the counsel that is given.

"I have, on occasions, included in an interview this question:

"'You have come to me for advice. After we have carefully considered your problem, is it your intention to follow the counsel that I will give you?'

"This comes as a considerable surprise to them. They had never thought of that. Usually they then commit themselves to follow counsel. . . .

"We have become very anxious over the amount of counseling that we seem to need in the Church. Our members are becoming dependent.

"We must not set up a network of counseling services without at the same time emphasizing the principle of emotional self-reliance and individual independence" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 137; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 91–92).

***We have a responsibility to improve ourselves.***

▪ "Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;





"For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:27–28 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 58:26–27]).

- The Prophet Joseph Smith: "We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 51).

- Bishop Robert D. Hales, then Presiding Bishop of the Church: "Today we are being asked to teach and practice the doctrine of work, self-reliance, provident living, giving, and caring for the poor; to increase our generous fast-offering donations to help those in need; to increase our compassionate service, involving the family in charitable acts of service to one another and to our neighbors" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 38; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 30).

- Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Let us do the best we can and try to improve each day. When our imperfections appear, we can keep trying to correct them. We can be more forgiving of flaws in ourselves and among those we love. We can be comforted and forbearing. The Lord taught, 'Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now . . . ; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected' [D&C 67:13]" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 117–18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 88).



- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: "As you pray, occasionally take a personal inventory to see how you measure up in your righteousness, in meeting the standards of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We each can know for ourselves, as the Lord

***"Let us do the best we can and try to improve each day."***

knows, where we need to improve. We must hold to the standards. If we have advanced in material, outward things, how are we doing inwardly? Are our lives acceptable to the Lord? Are we willing to acknowledge our sins and then make the effort to forsake them, repent, and make the course correction that will return us to the straight and narrow path?" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 66).

***Self-reliance implies the development of skills and abilities in a variety of areas.***



- "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and Man" (Luke 2:52).

### **Education**

- "When we have knowledge and wisdom, we are able to discern truth from error and make better choices. We are better able to understand God and our fellowmen, and we have a deeper love for them. The Lord has commanded us to gain knowledge (see D&C 88:77–80, 118; 93:53; 130:18–19; 131:6). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Improve our ability to read, write, and do basic mathematics.
- Study the scriptures and other good books.
- Learn to communicate effectively with others.
- Take advantage of opportunities to gain more knowledge"

(*Providing in the Lord's Way: A Leader's Guide to Welfare*, 6).

## Health

- “One of the reasons we came to earth was to obtain bodies, a necessary step in becoming like our Father in Heaven. The Lord has commanded us to keep our bodies and minds healthy (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; D&C 88:124; 89). When we do, we are better able to take care of our own needs and serve others. To become self-reliant, we should—

- Obey the Word of Wisdom.
- Exercise regularly.
- Provide for adequate medical and dental care, including appropriate insurance where possible.
- Keep our homes and surroundings clean and sanitary.
- Shun substances or practices that abuse our bodies or minds”

(*Providing in the Lord's Way*, 6).

## Employment

- “When we have honorable employment, we are able to provide for ourselves, our families, and others by working as the Lord has commanded. Suitable employment also gives us opportunities to improve our talents and develop the divine attributes within us. We are happier if our employment suits our interests and abilities and meets our needs. The Lord has commanded us to work and provide for the needs of ourselves and our families (see Genesis 3:17–19; 1 Timothy 5:8; D&C 42:42; 56:17). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Prepare for and carefully select a suitable occupation.
- Become skilled at our work through training and experience.
- Be diligent, hard working, and trustworthy.
- Give honest work for the pay and benefits we receive”

(*Providing in the Lord's Way*, 6–7).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley: “The individual, as we teach, ought to do for himself all that he can. When he has exhausted his resources, he ought to turn to his family to assist him. When the family can't do it, the Church takes over. And when the Church takes over, our great desire is to first take

care of his immediate needs and then to help him for so long as he needs to be helped, but in that process to assist him in training, in securing employment, in finding some way of getting on his feet again. That's the whole objective of this great welfare program” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 50).

## Resource Management

- “We should be wise stewards by exercising good judgment in managing and replenishing the resources with which the Lord has blessed us (see Matthew 25:14–30; 2 Nephi 9:51; D&C 59:16–21; 104:11–18, 78–79; 119). To become self-reliant, we should—

- Pay tithes and offerings.
- Avoid unnecessary debt and save for the future.
- Satisfy all of our promised obligations.
- Use our resources frugally and avoid wasting them.
- Use our time wisely.
- Be willing to serve those in need by sharing our time, talents, and resources with them”

(*Providing in the Lord's Way*, 7).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: “Are we wise stewards of our money? Do we spend less than we earn? Do we avoid unnecessary debt? Do we follow the counsel of the Brethren to ‘store sufficient food, clothing, and where possible fuel for at least one year’ [First Presidency letter, June 24, 1988]? Do we teach our children to value and not waste what they have? Do we teach them to work? Do they understand the importance of the sacred law of tithing? Do we have sufficient education and adequate employment? Do we maintain good health by living the Word of Wisdom? Are we free from the adverse effects of harmful substances?” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 78).



### *Social, Emotional, and Spiritual Strength*

- “We should strive to live righteously, to develop good relationships with family members and others, and to feel good about ourselves (see Matthew 7:1–2, 12; Luke 10:27; D&C 64:9–10). To become self-reliant, we should—
  - Study the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets.
  - Obey God’s commandments and heed the counsel of Church leaders.
  - Exercise faith in Christ and cultivate humility.
  - Pray frequently and fervently.
  - Strengthen our relationships with family members, neighbors, and friends.
  - Shun things that are morally and spiritually degrading.
  - Work toward worthy goals.
  - Do the best we can to adjust to change and recover from misfortune”

(*Providing in the Lord's Way*, 7).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Yussuf recently returned from serving an honorable mission. He is discouraged because he has no job and needs to finish his schooling.

- What counsel would you give Yussuf?

## POINTS TO PONDER

- In what areas of your life do you need to become more self-reliant? What must you do to become more self-reliant in those areas?
- Is there someone you can assist in some way to become more self-reliant? How?

**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**





## CHAPTER 10

# SEEK LEARNING BY STUDY AND BY FAITH

### INTRODUCTION

Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of conversion: “The change that comes is a desire to be someone even better, to reach for more light, and to give greater service to others. Those desires always lead to a hunger for education, to learn what is true, what is useful, and what is beautiful” (*Education for Real Life* [CES fireside for young adults, May 6, 2001], 1).

We should seek knowledge and wisdom throughout our lives, both in and out of the classroom. Learning helps enrich our lives and helps us better serve God and others.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- We should seek knowledge and wisdom.
- Spiritual knowledge is more important than secular knowledge.
- Education is a key to opportunity.
- The Lord will guide us to areas of learning that will help us better serve others.
- Learning is a lifetime endeavor.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *We should seek knowledge and wisdom.*

- “Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118).
- “Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand;

“Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are

abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—

“That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you” (D&C 88:78–80).



- Elder Henry B. Eyring:

“The Lord and His Church have always encouraged education to increase our ability to serve Him and our Heavenly Father’s children. For each of us, whatever our talents, He has service for us to give. And to do it well always involves learning, not once or for a limited time, but continually. . . .

“Part of the tragedy that you must avoid is to discover too late that you missed an opportunity to prepare for a future only God could see for you. The chance to learn another language is for me a painful example. My father was born in Mexico. He grew up speaking Spanish as his first language. I lived in his home for more than twenty years. I, sadly, never asked him to teach me a word of Spanish. Now I am the first contact in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for the Church in Mexico,

in Central America, and in Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador. It was no accident that I was born into a home with a Spanish-speaking father.

“But there was another opportunity. My father was a great teacher. He was a chemist. He even kept a blackboard in our basement for his children. He was eager to teach me mathematics.

He spent hours trying to help me solve problems for my physics classes. He pled with me to think more often about those things that then seemed so uninteresting and so unimportant. Years later I was

*“We consider the obtaining of an education to be a religious responsibility.”*



called by the Lord to the Presiding Bishopric of the Church and given responsibilities for computing and communications systems. What a blessing I might have had by taking the counsel I give you now" (*Education for Real Life*, 2–3).



▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "You face great challenges that lie ahead. You are moving into a world of fierce competition. You must get all of the education you can. The Lord has instructed us

concerning the importance of education. It will qualify you for greater opportunities. It will equip you to do something worthwhile in the great world of opportunity that lies ahead. If you can go to college and that is your wish, then do it. If you have no desire to attend college, then go to a vocational or business school to sharpen your skills and increase your capacity" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 70; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 49–50).

▪ Elder Henry B. Eyring: "It takes neither modern technology nor much money to seize the opportunity to learn in the moments we now waste. You could just have a book and paper and pencil with you. That will be enough. But you need determination to capture the leisure moments you now waste" (*Education for Real Life*, 4).

▪ Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "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" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6).

▪ Elder Russell M. Nelson: "Energy is always required to provide lift over opposing forces. These same laws apply in our personal lives. Whenever an undertaking is begun, both the energy and the will to endure are essential. The winner of a five-kilometer race is declared at the end of *five* kilometers, not at one or two. If you board a bus to Boston, you don't get off at Burlington. If

you want to gain an education, you don't drop out along the way—just as you don't pay to dine at an elegant restaurant only to walk away after sampling the salad" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 97; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 71).

### ***Spiritual knowledge is more important than secular knowledge.***

▪ "To be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (2 Nephi 9:29 [Scripture Mastery, 2 Nephi 9:28–29]).

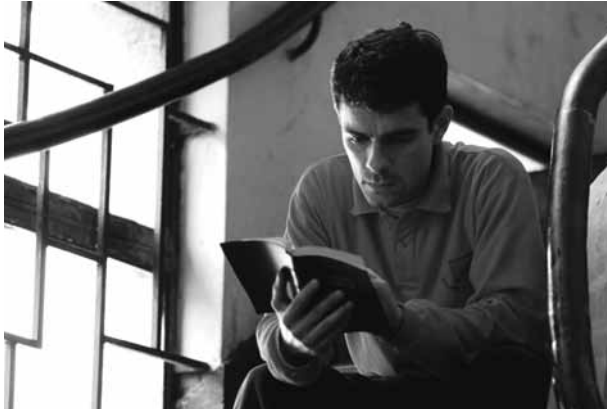
▪ President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: "Remember, the marvels of modern science and technology will not exalt us. Indeed, the great challenge we face as we prepare for the future is to be more spiritually enlightened. All of this new, expanding intellectual property must certainly be mastered through great effort and learning. But technical savvy is not fully useful unless there is a spiritual purpose and meaning to it. I am certain the Lord expects us to apply it to the advancement of His purposes and the blessing of mankind, but we must adopt those lofty ideals as personal goals and desires before we can direct technology to those purposes" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 19).



▪ Elder Henry B. Eyring:

"It is clear that putting spiritual learning first does not relieve us from learning secular things. On the contrary, it gives our secular learning purpose and motivates us to work harder at it. If we will keep spiritual learning in its proper place, we will have to make some hard choices of how we use our time. We generally know when papers will be due, when tests must be taken, when projects must be completed. And we know when the Sabbath will come. We know when the institute class will be held. We know when the prayers at the beginning of a day and those at the end should come. We know about how long it takes in reading the scriptures before we begin to

***"Putting spiritual learning first does not relieve us from learning secular things."***



feel the Holy Spirit. We know about how many hours it takes to prepare and to perform our service in the Church.

“When we see life as it really is, we plan for a time and a place for all of those things. There will come crises when there does not seem to be enough time. There will be many instances when one thing crowds out another. But there should never be a conscious choice to let the spiritual become secondary as a pattern in our lives. Never. That will lead to tragedy. The tragedy may not be obvious at first, nor may it ever be clear in mortal life. But remember, you are interested in education not for life, but for eternal life. When you see that reality clearly with spiritual sight, you will put spiritual learning first and yet not slight the secular learning. In fact, you will work harder at your secular learning than you would without that spiritual vision” (*Education for Real Life*, 3).

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “If we provide a spiritual foundation for our secular learning, not only will we better understand the laws of nature, we can gain a depth of understanding about art, languages, technology, medicine, law, and human behavior never before imagined possible” (*Enter to Learn—Go Forth to Serve* [CES fireside for young adults, Mar. 5, 1995], 4; see “Learning to Serve,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1996, 13).

### ***Education is a key to opportunity.***

- “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36).
- “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” (D&C 38:30).
- President Gordon B. Hinckley: “Get all the

***“Education is  
the key to  
opportunity.”***

education you can, I wish to say to the young people. Cultivate skills of mind and hands. Education is the key to opportunity. The Lord has placed upon you, as members of this Church, the obligation to study and to learn of things spiritual, yes, but of things temporal also. Acquire all of the education that you can, even if it means great sacrifice while you are young. You will bless the lives of your children. You will bless the Church because you will reflect honor to this work” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [1997], 172).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“You are moving into the most competitive age the world has ever known. All around you is competition. You need all the education you can get. Sacrifice a car; sacrifice anything that is needed to be sacrificed to qualify yourselves to do the work of the world. That world will in large measure pay you what it thinks you are worth, and your worth will increase as you gain education and proficiency in your chosen field.

“You belong to a church that teaches the importance of education. You have a mandate from the Lord to educate your minds and your hearts and your hands.

The Lord has said, ‘Teach ye diligently . . . of things

both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things

which are at home, things which are

abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—that ye may be prepared in all things’ (D&C 88:78–80).

“Mind you, these are not my words. These are the words of the Lord who loves you. He wants you to train your minds and hands to become an influence for good as you go forward with your lives. And as you do so and as you perform

honorably and with excellence, you will bring honor to the Church, for you will be regarded as a man or woman of integrity and ability and conscientious workmanship. . . .



“Be smart. The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands, whatever your chosen field. Whether it be repairing refrigerators, or the work of a skilled surgeon, you must train yourselves. Seek for the best schooling available. Become a workman of integrity in the world that lies ahead of you. I repeat, you will bring honor to the Church and you will be generously blessed because of that training.

“There can be no doubt, none whatever, that education pays. Do not short-circuit your lives. If you do so, you will pay for it over and over and over again” (“A Prophet’s Counsel and Prayer for Youth,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 4–5, 7; or *New Era*, Jan. 2001, 8, 10–11).

***The Lord will guide us to areas of learning that will help us better serve others.***

- “The Holy Ghost . . . will show unto you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:5).
- President Howard W. Hunter, fourteenth President of the Church: “I would like to say something to you that I consider to be very important. Throughout your life, you will be faced with many choices. How well you select among the alternatives will determine your success and happiness in life. Some of the decisions you will make will be absolutely critical and can affect the entire course of your life. Please measure those alternatives against the teachings of Jesus Christ. To be able to do that you must know and understand his teachings. As you exercise faith and live worthy of inspiration, you will be directed in the important choices you make” (*Prepare Yourself* [pamphlet, 1996], 1–2).



- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “I stand in awe that our Heavenly

Father and His Beloved Son are willing, even anxious for us to learn from them. . . . Gaining spiritual knowledge is not a mechanical process. It is a sacred privilege based upon spiritual law. I testify that you can receive inspired help.

Humbly ask your Eternal Father. Seek divine light. Exercise faith in the Savior. Strive to hearken to His counsel and obey His commandments. He will bless and lead you as you move through this sometimes treacherous world” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 120; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 88).



***Learning is a lifetime endeavor.***

- “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

“And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18–19 [Scripture Mastery]).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring:

“No service that matters can be given over a lifetime by those who stop learning. A great teacher is always studying. A nurse never stops facing the challenge of dealing with something new, be it equipment or procedure. And the workplace in every industry is changing so rapidly that what we know today will not be enough for tomorrow.

“Our education must never stop. If it ends at the door of the classroom on graduation day, we will fail. And since what we will need to know is hard to discern, we need the help of heaven to know which of the myriad of things we could study we would most wisely learn. It also means that we cannot waste time entertaining ourselves when we have the chance to read or to listen to whatever will help us learn what is true and useful. Insatiable curiosity will be our hallmark” (*Education for Real Life*, 4).

- Elder L. Tom Perry: “The rapidly changing world breeds obsolescence and requires us to be continually engaged in preparing ourselves for the future. We can become antiquated in our

***“The Lord wants you to educate your minds and hands.”***

professions if we do not stay up-to-date. Imagine how many patients a dentist would have if he continued to use the same tools and techniques he used a decade ago. What about a businessman who tried to compete without the use of computers? Or a builder who had not stayed abreast of the latest materials and methods available? Education has, of necessity, become a lifelong pursuit. We must, in our scheduling of time, allot sufficient time to educate ourselves for now and for the future” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 46; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 36).

▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“There is a great potential within each of us to go on learning. Regardless of our age, unless there be serious illness, we can read, study, drink in the writings of wonderful men and women. . . .

“We of this Church have been given a marvelous promise by the Lord Himself. Said He: ‘That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day’ (D&C 50:24).



“What a remarkable statement that is. It is one of my favorite verses of scripture. It speaks of growth, of development, of the march that leads toward Godhood. It goes hand in hand with these

great declarations: ‘The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth’ (D&C 93:36); ‘If a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come’ (D&C 130:19); and, ‘whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection’ (D&C 130:18).

“What a profound challenge is found in these marvelous statements. We must go on growing. We must continuously learn. It is a divinely given mandate that we go on adding to our knowledge” (*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 303; see “A Conversation with Single Adults,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 61–62).

***“Our education must never stop.”***

▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“The learning process is endless. We must read, we must observe, we must assimilate, and we must ponder that to which we expose our minds. I believe in the evolution of the mind, the heart, and the soul of humanity. I believe in improvement. I believe in growth. There is nothing quite as invigorating as being able to evaluate and then solve a difficult problem, to grapple with something that seems almost unsolvable and then find a resolution.

“For such reasons, and because the pace and complexity of life demand it, we cannot afford to stop learning and growing and progressing. We must not rest in our personal development—development that is emotional and spiritual as well as mental. There is so much to learn and so little time in which to learn it” (*Standing for Something* [2000], 62).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Elder Russell M. Nelson taught:

“Those who impulsively ‘drop out’ and cut short their education . . . frustrate the realization of their own potential.

“I remember my moment of resolution many years ago when, as an untrained teenager, I secured temporary employment at Christmastime. The work was monotonous. Each hour and each day passed slowly. I resolved then and there that I must obtain an education that would qualify me better for life. I determined to stay in school and work for an education as though my very life depended upon it.

“Later as stake president I was questioned by many young people about their own educational pursuits. Some asked me how long it took to become a doctor of medicine. ‘The general pattern would be four years at a university, followed by four years in medical school,’ I replied. ‘And if you choose to become a specialist, that could take another five years or more, depending upon your desire.’

“That occasionally evoked a reaction: ‘That adds up to thirteen years—and maybe *more*? That’s too long for me!’

“‘It all depends,’ I would respond. ‘Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life. How old will you be



thirteen years from now if you *don't* pursue your education? Just as old, whether or not you become what you want to be!'

“So my counsel then—and now—is to continue your education wherever you are, whatever your interest and opportunity, however you determine you can best serve your family and society” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 6).

- What does Elder Nelson’s statement “Preparation for your career is not too long if you know what you want to do with your life” mean to you?

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- What benefits come from better career preparation?

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Temzie is a recently returned missionary. He uses many of the skills he learned in the mission field in his new job. He earns enough to support himself, but the job will not be enough to support a family once he marries. Since he has no prospects for marriage right now, he has decided not to continue his education at this time. Without having to study, he has more leisure time to enjoy.

- What advice would you give Temzie?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- What does learning have to do with happiness?
- What does it mean when we say we cannot afford to stop learning?
- How does knowing that the knowledge we gain in this life will rise with us in the next life (see D&C 130:18) affect your desire for learning?
- What areas of your life will improve if you get more education?

**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**

[illegible]







## CHAPTER 11

# SELECTING AND BECOMING AN ETERNAL COMPANION

### INTRODUCTION

When we marry in the temple and live worthy lives, our union is sealed for eternity. Thus, choosing a marriage partner is choosing someone to be with not only for mortality but forever. Our relationship with our spouse affects us and our posterity throughout this life and has eternal implications.



President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church, taught: “In selecting a companion for life and for eternity, certainly the most careful planning and thinking and praying and fasting should be done to be sure that of all the decisions, this one must not be wrong. In true marriage there must be a union of minds as well as of hearts. Emotions must not wholly determine decisions, but the mind and the heart, strengthened by fasting and prayer and serious consideration, will give one a maximum chance of marital happiness” (“Oneness in Marriage,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1977, 3).

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- A marriage is enhanced when the husband and wife share similar values and interests.
- We should prepare ourselves to be the best companion we can.

- We should seek the Lord’s confirmation in choosing a marriage partner.
- The proclamation on the family is a guide for assessing our attitudes and those of our future spouse.
- A husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and their children.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***A marriage is enhanced when the husband and wife share similar values and interests.***

- “Be ye not unequally yoked together with nonbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

- President Spencer W. Kimball:

“I have warned the youth against the many hazards of interfaith marriage, and with all the power I possessed, I warned young people to avoid the sorrows and disillusionments which come from marrying out of the Church and the unhappy situations which almost invariably result when a believer marries an unbelieving spouse. I pointed out the demands of the Church upon its members in time, energy, and funds; the deepness of the spiritual ties which tighten after marriage and as the family comes; the antagonisms which naturally follow such mismatching; the fact that these and many other reasons argue eloquently for marriage within the Church, where husband and wife have common backgrounds, common ideals and standards, common beliefs, hopes, and objectives, and, above all, where marriage may be eternalized through righteous entry into the holy temple. . . .

“ . . . We recommend that people marry those who are . . . of somewhat the same economic and social and

educational background (some of those are not an absolute necessity, but preferred), and above all, the same religious background, without question” (“Marriage and Divorce,” *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 142–44).

- President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency: “When young people come to me for advice about courtship and marriage I usually suggest that they ask themselves the following questions:

***“In true marriage there must be a union of minds as well as of hearts.”***



“What kind of mother or father do I want my children to have?”

“What kind of parent am I prepared to be?”

“Do I want to associate with someone because of his or her popularity only, or do I look deeper for spiritual and moral qualities?”

“Am I analyzing our similarities and differences in background, culture, and intellect?”

“Am I prepared to adjust to these differences?”

“Do I realize that such adjustments need to be made *before* marriage?”

“These considerations will certainly help in making a proper choice for a companion with whom one is prepared to spend eternity. Then after the marriage there are many responsibilities that cannot be taken lightly; but with each contracting party assuming his or her full share of the responsibility, there is nothing in this life that will bring greater satisfaction and happiness” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 21; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 17).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“There is more to a foundation of eternal marriage than a pretty face or an attractive figure. There is more to consider than popularity or charisma. As you seek an eternal companion, look for someone who is developing the essential attributes that bring happiness: a deep love of the Lord and of His commandments, a determination to live them, one that is kindly understanding, forgiving of others, and willing to give of self, with the desire to have a family crowned with beautiful children and a commitment to teach them the principles of truth in the home.

***“The correct decisions you now make will help you prepare to be sealed in the temple.”***

“An essential priority of a prospective wife is the desire to be a wife and mother. She should be developing the sacred qualities that God has given His daughters to excel as a wife and mother: patience, kindness, a love of children, and a desire to care for them rather than seeking professional pursuits. She should be acquiring a good education to prepare for the demands of motherhood.

“A prospective husband should also honor his priesthood and use it in service to others. Seek a man who accepts his role as provider of the necessities of life, has the capacity to do it, and is making concerted efforts to prepare himself to fulfill those responsibilities.

“I suggest that you not ignore many possible candidates who are still developing these attributes, seeking the one who is perfected in them. You will likely not find that perfect person. . . . These attributes are best polished together as husband and wife” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 26).

***We should prepare ourselves to be the best companion we can.***

▪ “Marriage is ordained of God unto man” (D&C 49:15).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott: “Worthy character is best forged from a life of consistent, correct choices centered in the teachings of the Master. For a moment I speak to you who are preparing for that sweet period of discovery known as courtship leading to eternal marriage. It can be a wondrously beautiful time of growth and sharing, a time when you should focus your thoughts, actions, and plans on two individuals: the parents of your own future children. Prepare to be a successful parent by being completely worthy in every thought and act during courtship” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 31; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 25–26).

▪ Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “There are things we can start to do now. They have to do with providing for the spiritual and the physical needs of a family. There are things we can do now to prepare, long before the need, so that we can be at peace knowing we have done all we can” (*The Family* [CES fireside for young adults, Nov. 5, 1995], 4).



- Elder Richard G. Scott: “By making choices consistent with eternal truth, you will develop righteous character and increasing strength to resist temptation. You

are assured of the help of God in fulfilling your worthy decisions. You qualify to be led by the Spirit, to choose the correct path. It will warn you of temptations you might not otherwise recognize. The correct decisions you now make will help you prepare to be sealed in the temple to a worthy companion and to form and nurture your own eternal family. All who qualify for those blessings will, in the Lord’s due time, have them here or in the next life” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 69).

***We should seek the Lord’s confirmation in choosing a marriage partner.***

- “But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong” (D&C 9:8–9).



- Priesthood leaders counsel returning missionaries to participate actively in the Church, continue their education or employment, pay tithes and offerings, enroll in institute, and prepare for a temple marriage. They do not suggest a specific period of time in which to get married. Marriage is of such importance that the decision must be made only after careful and prayerful consideration.

- Elder Richard G. Scott: “If you are single and haven’t identified a solid prospect for celestial marriage, live for it. Pray for it. Expect it in the timetable of the Lord. Do not compromise your standards in any way that would rule out that blessing on this or the other side of the veil. The Lord knows the intent of your heart. His prophets have stated that you will have that blessing as you consistently live to qualify for it. We do not know whether it will be on this or the other side of the veil. But live for it. Pray for it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 33; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 27).

- Elder Gerald N. Lund of the Seventy: “When I was 16 years old and not smart enough to know very much at all, the Spirit touched my heart and I realized the significance of the woman that you marry. Starting at that time I began to pray that the Lord would find for me the woman who would be my eternal companion. Those prayers were answered, and all that we now enjoy in our family with children and grandchildren is largely responsible to her” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 101; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 85).

***The proclamation on the family is a guide for assessing our attitudes and those of our future spouse.***

- “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 1:37–38]).
- “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7 [Scripture Mastery]).
- Elder Henry B. Eyring:

“Because our Father loves his children, he will not leave us to guess about what matters most in this life concerning where our attention could bring happiness or our indifference bring sadness. Sometimes he will tell a person directly, by inspiration. But he will, in addition, tell us through his servants. . . . He does that so that even those who cannot feel inspiration can know, if they will only listen, that they have been told the truth and been warned.

“The title of the proclamation reads: ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World—The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church

of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' (see *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, p. 102).



“Three things about the title are worth our careful reflection. First, the subject: the family. Second, the audience, which is the whole world. And third, those who proclaimed are those we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators. That means that the family must be as important to us as anything we can consider, that what

the proclamation says could help anyone in the world, and that the proclamation fits the Lord’s promise when he said, ‘Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same’ (D&C 1:38)” (*The Family* [CES fireside for college-age young adults, Nov. 5, 1995], 1).

▪ Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “To know and keep the commandments, we must know and follow the Savior and the prophets of God. We were all blessed recently to receive an important message from modern prophets, entitled ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World’ (see *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102). This proclamation warns us what will happen if we do not strengthen the family unit in our homes, our communities, and our nations. Every priesthood holder and citizen should study the proclamation carefully” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 37).

▪ Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy: “May I suggest in all seriousness and solemnity that a very careful study of that proclamation will assist you in a major way as you begin to build a home and a family. Now a voice of warning. If your proposed marriage partner is not in agreement with the doctrines taught therein, know there is danger in your committing your life to him or to her” (*Search the Prophets* [CES fireside for young adults, Feb. 4, 2001], 1).

**“The family must be as important to us as anything we can consider.”**

***A husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and their children.***

- “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband” (1 Corinthians 7:3).
- “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 11:11).
- President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency:

“How beautiful is the marriage of a young man and a young woman who begin their lives together kneeling at the altar in the house of the Lord, pledging their love and loyalty one to another for time and all eternity. When children come into that home, they are nurtured and cared for, loved and blessed with the feeling that their father loves their mother. In that environment they find peace and strength and security. Watching their father, they develop respect for women. They are taught self-control and self-discipline, which bring the strength to avoid later tragedy.

“The years pass. The children eventually leave the home, one by one. And the father and the mother are again alone. But they have each other to talk with, to depend on, to nurture, to encourage, and to bless. There comes the autumn of life and a looking back with satisfaction and gladness. Through all of the years there has been loyalty, one to the other. There has been deference and courtesy. Now there is a certain mellowness, a softening, an effect that partakes of a hallowed

relationship. They realize that death may come anytime, usually to one first with a separation of a season brief or lengthy. But they know also that because their companionship was sealed under the authority of the eternal priesthood and they have lived worthy of the blessings, there will be a reunion sweet and certain” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 52).

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Obviously, family values mirror our personal priorities. Given the gravity of current conditions, would parents be willing to give up just one outside thing, giving that time and talent instead to the family? Parents and grandparents,



please scrutinize your schedules and priorities in order to ensure that life's prime relationships get more prime time! Even consecrated and devoted Brigham Young was once told by the Lord, 'Take especial care of your family' (D&C 126:3). Sometimes it is the most conscientious who need this message the most!" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 121; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 90).



- Elder M. Russell Ballard Jr., then of the Seventy: "I stand in awe when I consider the great confidence Heavenly Father has placed in you and me when he allows us the privilege of being the mortal fathers and mothers to his eternal spirit offspring. We must never forget that he has a vested interest in every one of us, and we must realize how important each human soul is in God's eternal plan. When we understand the importance of each soul, we can go before him confidently in prayer to seek his guidance and direction in our sacred assignment as parents. He said, 'This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). This seems to me to best sum up the important role that mortal parents have in the great eternal plan of life for each member of our families" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1978, 99; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 66).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: "I believe that it should be the blessing of every child to be born into a home where that child is welcomed, nurtured, loved, and blessed with parents, a father and a mother, who live with loyalty to one another and to their children. . . . Stand strong against the wiles of the world. The creators of our entertainment, the purveyors of much of our literature, would have you believe otherwise. The accumulated wisdom of centuries

declares with clarity and certainty that the greater happiness, the greater security, the greater peace of mind, the deeper reservoirs of love are experienced only by those who walk according to time-tested standards of virtue before marriage and total fidelity within marriage" ("Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 99).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Sylvie was thrilled that Marc asked if he could come to her home to visit. He was so much like her father: handsome, athletic, and well liked. Although he was not a member of the Church, Sylvie was certain that her mother would be impressed. He was polite, and she found him far more interesting than any of the young Latter-day Saint men she knew. Sylvie's mother remembered having similar feelings about her husband when they first became acquainted. She looked into her daughter's eyes and said, "I want you to know that your father's commitment to the gospel was far more important to me than his good looks or any other trait." Sylvie responded, "I just know that Marc's love for me will lead him to the gospel and that he will join the Church."

- What counsel would you give Sylvie about this relationship?

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Bill and Elizabeth have been serious about each other for about a year. Both are in their late twenties. They are returned missionaries and fully active in the Church. They enjoy each other's company and talk often about the possibility that they will marry. However, neither of them feel that they have been told by the Spirit that they should marry the other. They both wonder: "Why won't the Lord inspire me concerning whom I should marry? I don't want to make a mistake in such an important decision."



- Is it possible to be led by the Spirit and not be aware of it? How can we find out?

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- What advice would you give Bill and Elizabeth?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- What are the most important priorities you should establish as you prepare for marriage?
- What traits do you consider important for you and your spouse to possess?
- What part does faith play in helping you become a better spouse and parent?

**NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:**

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## CHAPTER 12

# OBSERVING THE LAWS OF PHYSICAL HEALTH

### INTRODUCTION

Each of us is a spirit son or daughter of God and enters mortality to gain a physical body. Our physical body is a gift from God and ultimately will become a resurrected body.

The Apostle Paul describes the body as the temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; see also D&C 93:33–35). Each of us should try to keep our body healthy by eating properly, exercising regularly, seeking competent medical help, and living the Word of Wisdom. This will help us in our work, family, and Church service.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Good health habits are important in living the gospel.
- The Word of Wisdom is an important part of the Lord's law of health.
- Proper diet, rest, and exercise provide significant health benefits.
- We must avoid substances and practices that are harmful to our bodies and minds.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *Good health habits are important in living the gospel.*

- “Man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple” (D&C 93:35).
- President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency: “The Apostle Paul declared, ‘Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are’ (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). Nutritious meals, regular exercise, and appropriate sleep are necessary for a strong body, just as consistent scripture study and prayer strengthen the mind and spirit” (in

Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 46).

- President David O. McKay, ninth President of the Church:



“The healthy man, who takes care of his physical being, has strength and vitality; his temple is a fit place for his spirit to reside. . . .

“. . . Bodily ailments deprive us of the full exercise of our faculties and privileges and sometimes of life itself. It is necessary, therefore, to care for our physical bodies,

and to observe the laws of physical health and happiness” (“The ‘Whole’ Man,” *Improvement Era*, Apr. 1952, 221).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, fifteenth President of the Church: “The body is the temple of the spirit. The body is sacred. It was created in the image of God. It is something to be cared for and used for good purposes. It ought to be taken care of, and this thing which we call the Word of Wisdom, which is a code of health, is most helpful in doing that” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 68; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 49).

- Patricia T. Holland, formerly a counselor in the Young Women general presidency:

“Anyone who reads a newspaper or magazine is constantly reminded that proper diet, appropriate exercise, and plenty of rest increase our daily capacities as well as our life span. But all too many of us put off even these minimal efforts, thinking our family, our neighbors, and our other many responsibilities come first. Yet in doing so, we put at risk the thing these people need most from us: our healthiest, happiest, heartiest self. . . .

“The issue for me then, is accepting that we are worth the time and effort it takes to achieve the full measure of our creation, and believing that it is not selfish, wrong, or evil. It is, in fact, essential to our spiritual development.

*“The body is the temple of the spirit.”*

"My oldest child tried to teach me this principle years ago. I had not been feeling well on a day I had promised to take this then three-year-old son to the zoo. As my aches and pains increased, I finally said in exasperation, 'Matthew, I don't know if we should go to the zoo and take care of you or if we should stay home and take care of mother.' He looked up at me for a moment with his big brown eyes and then stated emphatically, 'Mama, I think *you* should take care of *you*, so *you* can take care of *me*.' He was wise enough even at that age to know where his best interests were ultimately served. Unless we take care of ourselves, it's virtually impossible to properly take care of others" ("The Many Faces of Eve," in Jeffrey R. Holland and Patricia T. Holland, *On Earth As It Is in Heaven* [1989], 66–67).

***The Word of Wisdom is an important part of the Lord's law of health.***

▪ "A Word of Wisdom, for the benefit of . . . the saints . . . —

" . . . showing forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days—

"Given for a principle with promise" (D&C 89:1–3).

▪ "And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

"And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

"And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

"And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them" (D&C 89:18–21 [Scripture Mastery]).

▪ President Gordon B. Hinckley: "Look upon the Word of Wisdom as more than a commonplace thing. I regard it as the most remarkable document on health of which I know. It came to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1833, when relatively little was known of dietary matters. Now the greater the scientific research, the more certain becomes the proof of Word of Wisdom principles" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 67; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 49).



▪ President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The Word of Wisdom put restrictions on members of the Church. To this day those regulations apply to every member and to everyone who seeks to join the Church. They are so compelling that no one is to be baptized into the Church without first agreeing to live by them. No one will be called to teach or to lead without accepting them. When you want to go to the temple, you will be asked if you keep the Word of Wisdom. If you do not, you cannot go to the house of the Lord until you are fully worthy.

"We know that young people generally don't like restrictions. Believe it or not, we were young once and we remember.

***"A fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation."***

"A resistance to anything that limits one's conduct has almost taken over society. Our whole social order could self-destruct over the obsession with freedom disconnected from responsibility, where choice is imagined to be somehow independent of consequences. . . .

"The Word of Wisdom was 'given for a principle with promise' (D&C 89:3). That word *principle* in the revelation is a very important one. A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally principles are not spelled out in detail. That leaves you free to find your way with an enduring truth, a principle, as your anchor" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 22; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 17).

▪ Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"I have come to know . . . that a fundamental purpose of the Word of Wisdom has to do with revelation.

"From the time you are very little we teach you to avoid tea, coffee, liquor, tobacco, narcotics, and anything else that disturbs your health.

"And you know that we get very worried when we find one of you tampering with those things.

"If someone 'under the influence' can hardly listen to plain talk, how can they respond to spiritual promptings that touch their most delicate feelings?

"As valuable as the Word of Wisdom is as a law of health, it may be much more valuable to you spiritually than it is physically" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 28–29; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 20).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency:

"Is observance of the Word of Wisdom necessary? The Brethren have long felt that it certainly must be. Observance of the Word of Wisdom is concerned with the care of one's body, which, the Lord has assured, is of itself a temple, a tabernacle of the spirit. He has said, 'Yea, man is the tabernacle of God, even temples; and whatsoever temple is defiled, God shall destroy that temple' (D&C 93:35).

"I recall a bishop's telling me of a woman who came to get a recommend. When asked if she observed the Word of Wisdom, she said that she occasionally drank a cup of coffee. She said, 'Now, bishop, you're not going to let that keep me from going to the temple, are you?' To which he replied, 'Sister, surely *you* will not let a cup of coffee stand between you and the house of the Lord.'" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 1990, 67; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 51).

### ***Proper diet, rest, and exercise provide significant health benefits.***

- "Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124 [Scripture Mastery, D&C 88:123–24]).
- Fruits, vegetables, grains, and wholesome herbs are good for us. We should eat meat sparingly. (See D&C 89:10–17.)

***"Proper physical conditioning is facilitated by regular exercise."***

- Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Proper physical conditioning is facilitated by regular exercise, but it should be suited to the abilities and preferences of the individual. . . .

"Like many other good things, exercise has benefits when applied wisely and in moderation. But I offer a word of caution regarding excess. It is folly to assume that if a little of anything is good, a lot is therefore better" (*Twenty Questions* [address to religious educators, Sept. 13, 1985], 4).

- Elder Joe J. Christensen, then of the Presidency of the Seventy:

"Choose some sport or other vigorous physical exercise that is consistent with your situation and physical condition and be regular in pursuing it. Get the blood circulating and give your major muscles a workout. An appropriate amount of time and effort spent in exercising will help you to be more effective in all other areas of your life.



"I don't know what your choice will be. Personally, I prefer racquetball or walking to jogging. . . . Of course, you need to make your own choice but resolve to do something physical regularly. . . .

"Some of you are not getting the rest that you need. Some are habituated to going to bed late and sleeping much longer than your system really needs and thus missing out on some of the personal inspiration you could be receiving.

"Adequately rested, there is great value that can come to you as an early riser. Years ago, Barbara and I were asked to drive President and Sister Marion G. Romney from Provo to their home in Salt Lake City. Along the way, President Romney shared some of his personal experiences when he was first called to serve as a General Authority way back in 1941. He had been serving as a stake president at the time and had gone to General Conference where he was called, without prior knowledge, to be a General Authority. He was shocked and very nervous. He felt that he needed some advice, and so he went to Elder



Harold B. Lee, a new member of the Quorum of the Twelve and former associate as a stake president. He asked him for advice about how to be successful as a general authority.

“Elder Lee said:

“If you are to be successful as a General Authority, I will give you *one* piece of advice: Go to bed early and get up early. If you do, your body and mind will become rested and then in the quiet of those early morning hours, you will receive more flashes of inspiration and insight than at any other time of the day.”

“President Romney said,

“From that day on, I put that counsel into practice, and I know it works.

Whenever I have a serious problem, or some assignment of a creative nature with which I hope to receive the influence of the Spirit, I always receive more assistance in the early morning hours than at any other time of the day. Following that counsel has helped me a great deal through the years.” (See: Joe J. Christensen, *To Grow in Spirit* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], pp. 27–28).

“You can have a similar experience in your own life. You can change, even if you consider yourself a ‘night person.’ Set the habit in 21 days. When it comes right down to it, it is a matter of *strong* resolve and ‘mind over mattress.’” (*Resolutions* [CES fireside for college-age young adults, Jan. 9, 1994], 5).

***We must avoid substances and practices that are harmful to our bodies and minds.***

- “Behold, verily, thus saith the Lord unto you: In consequence of evils and designs which do and will exist in the hearts of conspiring men in the last days, I have warned you, and forewarn you, by giving unto you this word of wisdom by revelation” (D&C 89:4).

- President Gordon B. Hinckley:

“Some have even used as an alibi the fact that drugs are not mentioned in the Word of Wisdom. What a miserable excuse. There is likewise no mention of the hazards of diving into an empty swimming pool or of jumping from an overpass onto the freeway. But who doubts the deadly consequences of such? Common sense would dictate against such behavior.

“Regardless of the Word of Wisdom, there is a divinely given reason for avoiding these illegal substances.

“I am convinced that their use is an affront to God. He is our Creator. We are made in His image. These remarkable and wonderful bodies are His handiwork. Does anyone think that he can deliberately injure and impair his body without

affronting its Creator? We are told again and again that the body is the tabernacle of the spirit. We are told that it is a temple, holy to the Lord. In a time of terrible conflict between the Nephites and the Lamanites, we are told that the Nephites, who had been strong, became ‘weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and

that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them; yea, it had withdrawn from them because the Spirit of the Lord doth not dwell in unholy temples’ (Hel. 4:24).

“Alma taught the people of Zarahemla: The Lord ‘doth not dwell in unholy temples; neither can filthiness or anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God’ (Alma 7:21). Can anyone doubt that the taking of these mind- and body-destroying drugs is an act of unholiness? Does anyone think that the Spirit of God can dwell in the temple of the body when that body is defiled by these destructive elements? If any of you are tampering with these things, resolve forthwith, and with the strongest determination of which you are capable, that you will never touch them again” (“A Plague on the World,” *New Era*, July 1990, 6; see Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 65; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 50).

- Elder Boyd K. Packer:

“Narcotic addiction serves the design of the prince of darkness, for it disrupts the channel to the Holy Spirit of Truth. At present the adversary has an unfair advantage. Addiction has the capacity to disconnect the human will and nullify moral agency. It can rob one of the power to decide. Agency is too fundamental a doctrine to be left in such jeopardy. . . .

“I plead with all of you to pray earnestly that somewhere, somehow, the way will be discovered to erase addiction in the human body.

“It is not just human suffering, even human life, which is at risk; it is all of the personal and social

***“Your willpower becomes strong when joined with the will of the Lord.”***

and political and spiritual freedoms for which humanity has struggled for ages. At risk is all that was purchased by the blood of martyrs. Moral agency itself is in jeopardy! If we all pray fervently, the Lord will surely help us. And with those prayers, teach your children to obey the Word of Wisdom. It is their armor and will protect them from habits which obstruct the channels of personal revelation" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1989, 16–17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14).

▪ Elder Russell M. Nelson:

"From an initial experiment thought to be trivial, a vicious cycle may follow. From trial comes a habit. From habit comes dependence. From dependence comes addiction. Its grasp is so gradual. Enslaving shackles of habit are too small to be sensed until they are too strong to be broken. Indeed, drugs are the modern 'mess of pottage' for which souls are sold. No families are free from risk. . . .

"We are free to take drugs or not. But once we choose to use a habit-forming drug, we are bound to the consequences of that choice. . . .

"The spirit and the body are the soul of man' (D&C 88:15). Both spirit and body have appetites. One of life's great challenges is to develop dominance of spiritual appetites over those that are physical. Your willpower becomes strong when joined with the will of the Lord.

"Addiction to any substance enslaves not only the physical body but the spirit as well" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 5, 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 6–8).

▪ Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"Some years ago one of our sons asked me why it was not a good idea to try alcohol and tobacco to see what they were like. He knew about the Word of Wisdom and he also knew the health effects of these substances, but he was questioning why he should not just try them out for himself. I replied that if he wanted to try something out he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. 'Ooh, that's gross,' he reacted.

"I'm glad you think so,' I said, 'but why don't you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While you are proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don't you apply that principle to some others?' That illustration of the silliness of 'trying it out for yourself' proved persuasive to one sixteen-year-old" (*Sins, Crimes,*

*and Atonement* [address to religious educators, Feb. 7, 1992], 7).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Perry has been invited to a party after graduation. It sounds like it will be fun, but he does not know if there will be alcoholic beverages. He really wants to be with his friends that evening.

- What should Perry do?

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Ngozi is asked by her younger sister, "Why shouldn't I try alcohol and tobacco at least once so I'll know what it's like for myself? I'll never do it again. What's the harm if it's only once?"

- What would you suggest Ngozi say to her sister?

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José's family are not Church members. They did not completely approve when he joined the Church and now feel that he looks down on them. They often try to tempt him to drink and smoke. He is frustrated but determined to keep his standards. He doesn't wish to condemn his parents, but he wants them to take better care of themselves.

- What advice would you give José?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- What are you doing to stay healthy? Do you need to improve any health habits? If so, what do you need to do to succeed in making these changes?
- In what ways can your physical health affect your spiritual health?
- How can you determine how much sleep you need?
- In what ways is your body a temple of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16)? What can you do to respect and care for this temple?

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:



## CHAPTER 13

# “THESE THINGS SHALL GIVE THEE EXPERIENCE”

### INTRODUCTION

The Lord’s plan for His children includes living in a mortal environment where there is an opposition in all things (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Knowing that opposition and adversity are a common part of life, we can meet and overcome these challenges by remaining faithful to the Lord and trusting Him to help us. As we rise above adversity, our weaknesses are turned into strengths (see Ether 12:27 [Scripture Mastery]).

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- Adversity is part of our mortal experience.
- The challenges of mortality can help us grow.
- Maintaining faith in Jesus Christ helps us solve problems and overcome adversity.
- We must endure to the end.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *Adversity is part of our mortal experience.*

- “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad” (2 Nephi 2:11).
- “My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them” (D&C 136:31).
- Bishop Richard C. Edgley of the Presiding Bishopric: “I believe we all understood that by coming to earth, we would be exposed to all of the experiences of earth life, including the not-so-pleasant trials of pain, suffering, hopelessness, sin, and death. There would be opposition and adversity” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 75; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 65).
- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Knowing that we are in mortality

to learn and to develop our faith, we should understand that there must be opposition in all things. During a family council in my own home, my wife said, ‘When you may think that someone has a perfect family, you just do not know them well enough.’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 44; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 34).



▪ Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Mortality presents us with numerous opportunities to become more Christlike: first, by coping successfully with those of life’s challenges which are ‘common to man[kind]’ (1 Corinthians 10:13). In addition, there are also our customized trials such as experiencing illness, aloneness, persecution, betrayal, irony, poverty, false witness, unreciprocated love, et cetera” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 28; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 22).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Much adversity is man-made. Men’s hearts turn cold, and the spirit of Satan controls their actions. In foreseeing the day of suffering in our time, the Savior said, ‘The love of men shall wax cold, and iniquity shall abound’ (D&C 45:27). Violence, immorality, and other evils run rampant on the earth. Much adversity has its origin in the principle of agency” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 30; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 23).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “The Lord is well aware of our mortality. He knows our weaknesses. He understands the challenges of our everyday lives. He has great empathy for the temptations of earthly appetites and passions. The Apostle Paul wrote in his epistle to the Hebrews that the Savior is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities’ because He ‘was in all points tempted like as we are’ [Hebrews 4:15–16]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 46; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 34).

#### *The challenges of mortality can help us grow.*

- “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:8).

▪ Elder John B. Dickson of the Seventy: "Our challenges may be physical, spiritual, economic, or emotional, but if we will treat them as opportunities and stepping-stones in our progress, rather than barriers and stumbling blocks, our lives and growth will be wonderful. I have learned that between challenges it is very restful but that any real growth I have ever enjoyed has always come with a challenge" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 63; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 45).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Just when all seems to be going right, challenges often come in multiple doses applied simultaneously. When those trials are not consequences of your disobedience, they are evidence that the Lord feels you are prepared to grow more (see Proverbs 3:11–12). He therefore gives you experiences that stimulate growth, understanding, and compassion which polish you for your everlasting benefit. To get you from where you are to where He wants you to be requires a lot of stretching, and that generally entails discomfort and pain" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 16–17).

▪ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, then of the Presidency of the Seventy: "Afflictions can soften us and sweeten us, and can be a chastening influence. (Alma 62:41.) We often think of chastening as something being done to punish us, such as by a mortal tutor who is angry and peevish with us. Divine chastening, however, is a form of learning as it is administered at the hands of a loving Father. (Helaman 12:3.)" (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [1979], 39).

▪ Elder James E. Faust, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"In the pain, the agony, and the heroic endeavors of life, we pass through a refiner's fire, and the insignificant and the unimportant in our lives can melt away like dross and make our faith bright, intact, and strong. . . .

"This change comes about through a refining process which often seems cruel and hard. In this way the soul can become like soft clay in the hands of the Master in building lives of faith, usefulness, beauty, and strength" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1979, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1979, 53).

▪ Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

***"Any real growth I have ever enjoyed has always come with a challenge."***

"Our needed conversions are often achieved more readily by suffering and adversity than by comfort and tranquility [see 2 Nephi 2:2; D&C 121:7–8].

"Most of us experience some measure of what the scriptures call 'the furnace of affliction' (Isaiah 48:10; 1 Nephi 20:10). Some are submerged in service to a disadvantaged family member. Others suffer the

death of a loved one or the loss or postponement of a righteous goal like marriage or childbearing. Still others struggle with personal impairments or with feelings of rejection, inadequacy, or depression. Through the justice and mercy of a loving Father in Heaven, the refinement and sanctification

possible through such experiences can help us achieve what God desires us to become" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 33–34).

▪ Sister Mary Ellen W. Smoot, then Relief Society general president: "It does not take much living to find out that life almost never turns out the way you planned it. Adversity and affliction come to everyone. Do you know anyone who would not like to change something about themselves or their circumstances? And yet I am sure you know many who go forward with faith. You are drawn to those people, inspired by them, and even strengthened by their examples" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 13; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 13).



▪ Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin:

"I testify that the Man who suffered for mankind, who committed His life to healing the sick and comforting the disconsolate, is mindful of your sufferings, doubts, and heartaches.



“‘Then,’ the world would ask, ‘why does He sleep when the tempest rages all around me? Why does He not still this storm, or why would He let me suffer?’

“Your answer may be found in considering a butterfly. Wrapped tightly in its cocoon, the developing chrysalis must struggle with all its might to break its confinement. The butterfly might think, ‘Why must I suffer so? Why cannot I simply, in the twinkling of an eye, become a butterfly?’

“Such thoughts would be contrary to the Creator’s design. The struggle to break out of the cocoon develops the butterfly so it can fly. Without that adversity, the butterfly would never have the strength to achieve its destiny. It would never develop the strength to become something extraordinary” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 73; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 59–60).

▪ Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “A life without problems or limitations or challenges—life without ‘opposition in all things’ [2 Nephi 2:11], as Lehi phrased it—would paradoxically but in very fact be less rewarding and less ennobling than one which confronts—even frequently confronts—difficulty and disappointment and sorrow. As beloved Eve said, were it not for the difficulties faced in a fallen world, neither she nor Adam nor any of the rest of us ever would have known ‘the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient’ [Moses 5:11]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 115; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 84).

### ***Maintaining faith in Jesus Christ helps us solve problems and overcome adversity.***

▪ “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12 [Scripture Mastery]).

▪ “They that await 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).

▪ Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: “Even when the winds of adversity blow, our Father keeps us anchored to our hope. The Lord has promised, ‘I will not leave you comfortless’ [John 14:18], and He will ‘consecrate [our] afflictions for [our] gain’ [2 Nephi 2:2]. Even when our trials seem overwhelming, we can draw strength and hope from the sure promise of the

Lord: ‘Be not afraid nor dismayed . . . ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s’ [2 Chronicles 20:15]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 33; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 27).

▪ Elder M. Russell Ballard: “As I travel throughout the Church, I see

members being tried in the crucible of affliction. I see members suffering from debilitating health concerns. I see husbands, wives, and parents living in trying circumstances they cannot change regarding their spouses or their children. Every one of us is faced at times with unpleasant situations, adversity, and affliction that we cannot change. Many circumstances can be addressed only with time, tears, prayer, and faith. For us, like Hyrum, peace may come only when we bring ourselves to say, ‘But what can I do? . . . Thy will be done O Lord.’” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 9).

▪ Elder Robert D. Hales: “I have come to understand how useless it is to dwell on the *whys*, *what ifs*, and *if onlys* for which there likely will be given no answers in mortality. To receive the Lord’s comfort, we must exercise faith. The questions Why me? Why our family? Why now? are usually unanswerable questions. These questions detract from our spirituality and can destroy our faith. We need to spend our time and energy building our faith by turning to the Lord and asking for strength to overcome the pains and trials of this world and to endure to the end for greater understanding” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 14–15).

▪ Elder Richard G. Scott: “When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. Some serve a useful purpose; others do not. To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys. It really does no good to ask questions that reflect opposition to the will of God.

***“To receive the Lord’s comfort, we must exercise faith.”***

Rather ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial? Willing sacrifice of deeply held personal desires in favor of the will of God is very hard to do. Yet when you pray with real conviction, ‘Please let me know Thy will’ and ‘May Thy will be done,’ you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father” (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17).

- Elder Jeffery R. Holland: “The wounds in his hands, feet, and side are signs that in mortality painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect, signs that tribulation is *not* evidence that God does not love us. It is a significant and hopeful fact that it is the *wounded* Christ who comes to our rescue. He who bears the scars of sacrifice, the lesions of love, the emblems of humility and forgiveness is the Captain of our Soul. That evidence of pain in mortality is undoubtedly intended to give courage to others who are also hurt and wounded by life, perhaps even in the house of their friends” (*Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* [1997], 259).

- President Spencer W. Kimball, twelfth President of the Church: “May I remind all of us that if we will live the gospel and follow the counsel of the leaders of the Church, we will be blessed to avoid many of the problems that plague the world. The Lord knows the challenges we face. If we keep his commandments, we will be entitled to the wisdom and blessings of heaven in solving them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 128; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 92).

- President Howard W. Hunter, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Why face life’s burdens alone, Christ asks, or why face them with temporal support that will quickly falter? To the heavy laden it is Christ’s yoke, it is the power and peace of standing side by side with a God that will provide the support, balance, and strength to meet our challenges and endure our tasks here in the hardpan field of mortality” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 18).

### ***We must endure to the end.***

- “Thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

- “Be patient in afflictions, for thou shalt have many; but endure them, for, lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days” (D&C 24:8).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

“When tragedy strikes or even when it looms, our families will have the opportunity to look into our hearts to see whether we know what we said we knew. Our children will watch, feel the Spirit confirm that we lived as we preached, remember that confirmation, and pass the story across the generations.



“I have one such story in my legacy. Grandmother Eyring learned from a doctor in his office that she would die of stomach cancer. My father, her oldest son, had driven her there and was waiting for her. He told me that on the way home she said, ‘Now, Henry, let’s be cheerful. Let’s sing hymns.’ They sang ‘O My Father’ (*Hymns*, no. 292) and ‘Come, Come, Ye Saints,’ where the last verse begins, ‘And should we die before our journey’s through’ (*Hymns*, no. 30).

“I wasn’t there, but I imagine they sang loudly—they didn’t have very melodic voices—with faith and no tears. She spent part of her last months in the home of her oldest child, her daughter. Aunt Camilla told me that Grandma complained only once, and then it was not really a complaint but just to say that it hurt” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 87; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 64).

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: “Faithful members of the Church should be like oak trees and should extend deep roots into the fertile soil of the fundamental principles of the gospel. We should understand and live by the simple, basic truths and not complicate them. Our foundations should be solid and deep-rooted so we can withstand the winds of temptation, false doctrine, adversity, and the onslaught of the adversary without being swayed or uprooted. Members whose roots are only at the surface of the gospel need to sink them deeper until they reach the bedrock below the soft



- What difficulties will John face?

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- What should he do?

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- Whom can he turn to for help?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- Why is adversity an essential part of our probation?
- In what ways can life's challenges provide opportunities for personal growth?
- What does it mean to turn to the Lord in times of adversity?

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## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:

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## CHAPTER 14

# HONORING COVENANTS

### INTRODUCTION

Receiving ordinances and keeping covenants are essential to Heavenly Father's plan. The scriptures often refer to His people as a "covenant people." The Lord's blessings exceed our mortal expectations. To live in the presence of our Heavenly Father, we must receive all of the necessary ordinances and keep all of the required covenants.

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- A covenant is a sacred promise between God and His children.
- By honoring our covenants we can fulfill our divine potential.
- Priesthood authority is necessary to receive the covenants and ordinances of salvation.
- Honoring our covenants prepares us to receive eternal life.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

#### *A covenant is a sacred promise between God and His children.*

- "Every person who belongeth to this church of Christ, shall observe to keep all the commandments and covenants of the church" (D&C 42:78).
- "And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days" (Mosiah 5:5).
- "[A covenant is] an agreement between God and man, but they do not act as equals in the agreement. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and men agree to do what he asks them to do. God then promises men certain blessings for their obedience.

"Principles and ordinances are received by covenant. Members of the Church who make such covenants promise to honor them. For example, members covenant with the Lord at baptism and renew those

covenants by partaking of the sacrament. They make further covenants in the temple. The Lord's people are a covenant people and are greatly blessed as they keep their covenants with the Lord" (Guide to the Scriptures, "covenant," 55).



- Elder Jack H. Goasland Jr., then of the Seventy: "A covenant is a contract or an agreement between two or more parties in which each side makes a commitment to a certain principle or principles. In the Church, we think of a covenant as an agreement that we as members of the Church make in return for blessings that Heavenly Father has promised all who willingly choose to live by His commandments. We often speak of covenants in connection with the temple, but each member of the Church also enters into a covenant at baptism, which we renew each week as we worthily partake of the sacrament" ("Covenants," *Church News*, Feb. 13, 1993, 8).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "The Latter-day Saints are a covenant people. From the day of baptism through the spiritual milestones of our lives, we make promises with God and He makes promises with us. He always keeps His promises offered through His authorized servants, but it is the crucial test of our lives to see if we will make and keep our covenants with Him" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 30).

*"The Latter-day Saints are a covenant people."*

- Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Our Father in Heaven understood the need for His children to be reminded of the promises He has made to us if we would obey His laws. In making such covenants, the Lord offered

blessings in exchange for obedience to particular commandments. A plan was laid out for us from the very beginning. The central figure in His plan of salvation is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 53).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “A periodic review of the covenants we have made with the Lord will help us with our priorities and with balance in our lives. This review will help us see where we need to repent and change our lives to ensure that we are worthy of the promises that accompany our covenants and sacred ordinances. Working out our own salvation requires good planning and a deliberate, valiant effort” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 15; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 14).

### ***By honoring our covenants we can fulfill our divine potential.***

- “[Through Christ’s glory and virtue] are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4).
- “Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old” (D&C 66:2).
- Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “With each ordinance is a covenant—a promise. A covenant made with God is not restrictive, but protective. Such a concept is not new. For example, if our water supply is not clean, we filter the water to screen out harmful ingredients. Divine covenants help us to filter out of our minds impurities that could harm us. When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness [see Moroni 10:32], we lose nothing of value and gain the glory of eternal life. Covenants do not hold us down; they elevate us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 42; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 34).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “God truly is our Father, the Father of the spirits of all mankind. We are his

literal offspring and are formed in his image. We have inherited divine characteristics from him. Knowing our relationship to our Heavenly Father helps us understand the divine nature that is in us and our potential. The doctrine of the fatherhood of God lays a solid foundation for self-esteem. The hymn titled “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301) states this doctrine in simple terms. Can a

person who understands his divine parenthood lack self-esteem? I have known people who have a deep, abiding assurance of this truth and others who understand it only superficially and intellectually. The contrast in their attitudes and the practical effect of these attitudes in

their lives are remarkably apparent” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 15).

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Investigators are not only hearing our testimony of Christ, but they are hearing echoes of other, earlier testimonies, including their own testimony of Him, for they were on the side of the faithful who kept their first estate and earned the privilege of a second estate. We must always remember that these investigators, every man, woman, and child, were among the valiant who once overcame Satan by the power of their testimony of Christ! So when they hear others bear that witness of Christ’s saving mission, it has a familiar feeling; it brings an echo of truth they themselves already know” (“Missionary Work and the Atonement,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2001, 11–12).



- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “All of the myriads of mortals who have been born on this earth chose the Father’s plan and fought for it. Many of us also made covenants with the Father concerning what we would do in mortality” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 97; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 72).
- The Prophet Joseph Smith: “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose I was ordained to this very office in that

***“A covenant made with God is not restrictive, but protective.”***

Grand Council" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 365).

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "An eternal bond doesn't just happen as a result of sealing covenants we make in the temple. How we conduct ourselves in this life will determine what we will be in all the eternities to come. To receive the blessings of the sealing that our Heavenly Father has given to us, we have to keep the commandments and conduct ourselves in such a way that our families will want to live with us in the eternities" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 65).

- President James E. Faust of the First Presidency: "For you to achieve your potential, you will need to honor four sacred principles in your lives. These four are:

"1. Reverence for Deity.

"2. Respecting and honoring family relationships.

"3. Reverence for and obedience to the ordinances and covenants of the holy priesthood.

"4. Respect for yourself as a son of God" (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 59; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 45).

***Priesthood authority is necessary to receive the covenants and ordinances of salvation.***

- "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19 [Scripture Mastery, Matthew 16:15–19]).

- "This greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

"Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

"And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh" (D&C 84:19–21).

- Elder Robert D. Hales: "Think of it, brothers and sisters—the priesthood has been restored. It is here on the earth today. . . . The First Presidency and

Quorum of the Twelve are modern-day Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Under the direction of these prophets, seers, and revelators, who hold the keys in this dispensation, priesthood holders in the Church

today have the legitimate right to act in the name of God. As His authorized agents, they are commissioned to go forth and bless others through the power and authority of the priesthood, making all priesthood covenants, ordinances, and blessings available

today" (in Conference Report, Sept.–Oct. 1995, 42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 33).

- President James E. Faust: "Priesthood is the greatest power on earth. Worlds were created by and through the priesthood. To safeguard this sacred power, all priesthood holders act under the direction of those who hold the keys of the priesthood. These keys bring order into our lives and into the organization of the Church. For us, priesthood power is the power and authority delegated by God to act in His name for the salvation of His children. Caring for others is the very essence of priesthood responsibility. It is the power to bless, to heal, and to administer the saving ordinances of the gospel. Righteous priesthood authority is most needed within the walls of our own homes. It must be exercised in great love. This is true of all priesthood holders—deacon, teacher, priest, elder, high priest, patriarch, Seventy, and Apostle" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 56–57; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 41).



- Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"On April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, the same heavenly beings that appeared to the Savior and his three Apostles on the Mount, appeared and

conferred additional priesthood authority and keys upon the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery for the building up of the Church preparatory to the coming of Christ to rule and reign on the earth forever. Moses appeared and conferred the keys of the gathering of Israel. Elias restored the covenants and authority given to Abraham. Elijah bestowed the keys and power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and of the children to their fathers. (See D&C 110:11–16.)

***"Priesthood is the greatest power on earth."***

“These same keys of the kingdom held by Peter, James, and John, who served in the First Presidency in the dispensation of the meridian of time, [have been] conferred upon Joseph Smith and all subsequent Presidents of the Church” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 107–8; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 74).

***Honoring our covenants prepares us to receive eternal life.***

- “Be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven” (D&C 6:37).
- “Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life” (Mosiah 26:20).
- “Give heed unto these things and be diligent in keeping my commandments, and you shall be blessed unto eternal life” (D&C 30:8).
- Elder Russell M. Nelson: “Temple ordinances, covenants, endowments, and sealings enable individuals to be reconciled with the Lord and families to be sealed beyond the veil of death. Obedience to temple covenants qualifies us for eternal life, the greatest gift of God to man [see D&C 14:7]. Eternal life is more than immortality. Eternal life is exaltation in the highest heaven—the kind of life that God lives” (in Conference Report, Mar.–Apr. 2001, 40; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 33).
- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin: “The ideals of faith, hope, and charity are most evident in the holy temples. There we learn the purpose of life, strengthen our commitment as disciples of Christ by entering into sacred covenants with Him, and seal our families together for eternity across generations. Receiving our own endowment in a temple and returning frequently to perform sacred ordinances for our kindred dead increases our faith, strengthens our hope, and deepens our charity. We receive our own endowment with faith and hope that we will understand the Lord’s plan for His children, will recognize the divine potential within each of us as children of our Heavenly Father, and will be faithful to the end in keeping the covenants we make” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1998, 33; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 27).
- Elder Henry B. Eyring: “I know that the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood were restored by those who received them from the Savior. . . . I bear solemn testimony that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ, in which the ordinances and the

covenants are offered, which if accepted and honored produce peace in this life and assure us eternal life in the world to come” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 44; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 33).

- Elder Russell M. Nelson: “The Savior’s gift of *immortality* comes to all who have ever lived. But His gift of *eternal life* requires repentance and obedience to specific ordinances and covenants. Essential ordinances of the gospel symbolize the Atonement. Baptism by immersion is symbolic of the death, burial, and Resurrection of the Redeemer. Partaking of the sacrament renews baptismal covenants and also renews our memory of the Savior’s broken flesh and of the blood He shed for us. Ordinances of the temple symbolize our reconciliation with the Lord and seal families together forever. Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life—the greatest gift of God to man [see D&C 14:7]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 35).

- Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society general president:

“Covenants—or binding promises between us and Heavenly Father—are essential for our eternal progression. Step-by-step, He tutors us to become like Him by enlisting us in His work. . . . How often do you reflect that your covenants reach beyond mortality and connect you to the Divine? Making covenants is the expression of a willing heart; keeping covenants, the expression of a faithful heart. . . .

“... The doing is where we prove who we really are. Thus, every time we reach out with love, patience, kindness, generosity, we honor our covenants by saying, ‘Here am I; send me.’ . . .

“The spiritual integrity to keep our covenants comes from consistency in scripture study, prayer, service, and sacrifice. Such simple steps nurture our souls so we can say, ‘Send me to help a sister and her newborn; send me to tutor a struggling student; send me to



***“Obedience to the sacred covenants made in temples qualifies us for eternal life.”***



love an outsider. Send me where you need me, when you need me.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 103, 105).

## APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES

Edson is a newly baptized Church member. He loves the fellowship he has found in the Church and looks forward to attending meetings each Sunday. He tries very hard to keep the covenants he made at baptism. He is still trying to change some minor bad habits he developed during the years before he learned of the gospel. Because of these imperfections, Edson often feels unworthy to take the sacrament.

- What part of the sacrament prayers could you discuss with Edson to help him better understand this holy ordinance? (see D&C 20:77, 79).

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- What would you teach him to help him keep his covenants without becoming discouraged?

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- What difference do our desires make to the Lord as we strive to keep His commandments? (see Mosiah 4:27; D&C 137:9).

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Moua has just gone to the temple to receive her endowment. She was excited and grateful for such a blessing. She was overwhelmed by the experience and was told that she was not expected to understand everything on her first visit. She had a strong feeling come over her testifying that the covenants she made that day were right. Now she wonders what she should do to more fully understand what happened and how she can learn more.

- What advice do you have for Moua?

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Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The First Presidency frequently report to the Quorum of the Twelve that when they have called a man and his wife in to counsel with them over whether or not they will accept a mission call the immediate answer is, ‘We’ve been to the temple!’ Meaning: We are under covenant. That word *covenant* is a powerful, motivating word” (*The Holy Temple* [1980], 166).

- Why do you think that the word *covenant* is so motivating to Latter-day Saints?

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- How have the covenants you have made influenced your life?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- What ordinances have you received? What specific covenants did you make with each ordinance?
- Why is making and keeping covenants so important to achieving exaltation?
- What are the differences between covenants with the Lord and contracts between people?
- How can honoring covenants become a more significant part of your life?

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:



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## CHAPTER 15

# SERVING ONE ANOTHER

### INTRODUCTION

Disciples of Jesus Christ recognize the needs of others and seek to serve them. There are people all around us whose lives we can bless. We can enrich their lives as we share our talents with them. We can comfort and encourage them during times of sorrow. Simply sharing our testimony or our gospel perspective may help someone solve a problem or endure a difficult situation. The Lord blesses His children through our efforts.

***“Service is a covenant obligation of all members of the Church.”***

### PRINCIPLES TO UNDERSTAND

- The Lord’s servants and the scriptures teach us to serve each other.
- Everyone needs help at some time.
- We can serve each other in many different ways.
- Serving each other should be a lifetime pursuit.

### SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES AND STATEMENTS

***The Lord’s servants and the scriptures teach us to serve each other.***

- “Teach [your children] to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiah 4:15).
- “Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).
- President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency:

“The Lord has said,

“‘He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it’ (Matthew 10:39).

“We lose our life by serving and lifting others. By so doing we experience the only true and lasting happiness. Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made.

“Knowing that service is what gives our Father in Heaven fulfillment, and knowing that we want to be where He is and as He is, why must we be commanded to serve one another? Oh, for the glorious day when these things all come naturally because of the purity of our hearts. In that day there will be no need for a commandment because we will have experienced for ourselves that we are truly happy only when we are engaged in unselfish service. Let us use the freedom which comes from self-reliance in giving and serving.

“Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what Godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one

cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak.

“There is an interdependence between those who have and those who have not. . . . Once a person has been made whole or self-reliant, he reaches out to aid others, and the cycle repeats itself.

“We are all self-reliant in some areas and dependent in others. Therefore, each of us should strive to help others in areas where we have strengths. At the same time, pride should not prevent us from graciously accepting the helping hand of another when we have a real need. To do so denies another person the opportunity to participate in a sanctifying experience” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1982, 135–36; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).



- President Gordon B. Hinckley, then First Counselor in the First Presidency: “It is a responsibility divinely laid upon each of us to bear one another’s burdens, to strengthen one another, to encourage one another,

to lift one another, to look for the good in one another, and to emphasize that good" (*Let Faith Replace Our Fears* [CES fireside for young adults, Mar. 6, 1994], 7).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "In latter-day revelation the Lord has commanded that we 'succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees' (D&C 81:5). In another section of the Doctrine and Covenants, he instructed us to be 'anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness' (D&C 58:27). . . . Indeed, service is a covenant obligation of all members of the Church of Jesus Christ" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1984, 13; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 12).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Obedience always includes service to others. Service in God's work allows us to feel a part of what He feels and come to know Him" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 18; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 17).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "[Jesus's] deliberate use of Jews and Samaritans clearly teaches that we are all neighbors and that we should love, esteem, respect, and serve one another despite our deepest differences—including religious, political, and cultural differences" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 36).

- Elder Henry B. Eyring: "[The Savior] called us to serve others so that we could strengthen our own faith as well as theirs. He knows that by serving Him we will come to know Him" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 81; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 66).

- Elder Carl B. Pratt of the Seventy: "We do pretty well at fulfilling callings, at going to meetings, at paying our tithing; but have we learned to truly live the second great commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'? (Matthew 22:39). This is not something that can be assigned to the elders quorum or to the visiting teachers; this has to spring from the heart of every true disciple of Christ, a person who will look automatically and without being asked for opportunities to serve, to uplift, and to strengthen his fellowman" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 12).

***"Those who need help come in all age brackets."***

### ***Everyone needs help at some time.***

- The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles: "Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. . . . Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

- President Harold B. Lee, eleventh President of the Church: "Who of us, in whatever station we may have been in, have not needed strengthening?" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 179; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 123).

- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Life in today's world can be at times so complicated and the challenges so overwhelming as to be beyond our individual capacity to resolve them. We all need help from the Lord" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, 115; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 84).



- Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of President Gordon B. Hinckley's experience as a young missionary: "Shortly after Elder Hinckley's labors began in England, he became discouraged and wrote to his father. After reading that letter, his father's wise reply closed with these words: 'Forget yourself and go to work' [in Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1996), 64]. Thanks to noble parents and a crucial decision to remain, Elder Hinckley completed his mission with honor. Now he often states that the good things that have happened to him since have all hinged upon that decision to stay. On his mission, he developed good habits of study, work, communication, budgeting, time management, and more. There he learned that nothing is too hard for the Lord [see Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:37]" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 17; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 15).



▪ Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Those who need help come in all age brackets. Some of His sheep are young, lonely, and lost. Some are weary, afflicted, and worn with age. Some are in our own family, in our own neighborhood, or in the far corners of the world where we can help with fast offerings. Some are starving for food. Some are starving for love and concern” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 129; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 91).

▪ Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “When the Saints settled in the valleys of the mountains, they promptly established a Perpetual Emigrating Fund to assist the poor to move from Winter Quarters, and later from the nations of Europe. At least half of those who journeyed to join the Saints could not have come without the help of leaders and members who were determined to include everyone who desired to gather to Zion” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 73).

### ***We can serve each other in many different ways.***

▪ “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27).

▪ “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . .

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it

unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35–36, 40 [Scripture Mastery, Matthew 25:40]).

▪ President James E. Faust of the First Presidency:

“As the Savior Himself said, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends’ [John 15:13].

“Most of us don’t demonstrate our unselfishness in such a dramatic way, but for each of us unselfishness can mean being the right person at the right time in the right place to render service. Almost every day brings opportunities to perform unselfish acts for others. Such acts are unlimited and can be as simple as a kind word, a helping hand, or a gracious smile. . . .

“I wish to testify that the greatest fulfilling service to be rendered by any of us is in the service of the Master. In the various pursuits of my life, none has been as rewarding or beneficial as responding to the calls for service in this Church. Each has been different. Each one has brought a separate blessing” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 21; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 21–22).

***“We have a great tradition of unselfish service in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”***

▪ Elder Dallin H. Oaks:

“Millions . . . serve from their homes on a Church-service basis. So it is with the [many thousands of] bishoprics and branch presidencies and the faithful presidencies of the quorums and Relief Society, Primary, and Young Women who serve with them and under their direction. So it

is with millions of others—faithful teachers in wards, branches, stakes, and districts. And think of the hundreds of thousands of home teachers and visiting teachers who fulfill the Lord’s command to ‘watch over the church always, and be with and strengthen them’ (D&C 20:53). . . .

“We have a great tradition of unselfish service in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of this Church is the fact that we have no paid or professional clergy in our thousands of local congregations and in the regional stakes, districts,



and missions that oversee them. As an essential part of God's plan for His children, the leadership and work of His Church is provided by His children who give their time freely for the service of God and their fellowmen" (in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 73; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 69).

- Elder James M. Paramore of the Presidency of the Seventy: "The Church helps us to overcome selfishness and uncertainty by serving others in dozens of ways over a lifetime. Some of our fondest memories go back to those associations we have had in service together" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 11; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 11).

- Sister Betty Jo N. Jepsen of the Primary general presidency: "Serving others in any way is an indication of our desire to respond to the Savior's invitation to come unto Him. How about a checkup on our service to others? Let's ask ourselves, Will I make that visit to my homebound friend? Will I open my mouth to defend and testify of the truth? Will I give of my worldly goods? Do I share some of my fresh, productive time with my children? Do I serve with joy in my Church calling?" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 108; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 77).



- President Thomas S. Monson of the First Presidency: "Our service to others . . . can bolster human spirits, clothe cold bodies, feed hungry people, comfort grieving hearts, and lift to new heights precious souls"

(in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 62; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 47).

### ***Serving each other should be a lifetime pursuit.***

- "Because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.

"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" (Mosiah 2:16–17 [Scripture Mastery, Mosiah 2:17]).

- "Therefore, 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" (D&C 4:2).

- Elder Russell C. Taylor of the Seventy:

"Live a life of service. . . .

". . . Service opens windows in your life instead of just mirrors that always reflect yourself" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 54; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 42).

- Elder Robert L. Backman of the Seventy: "May you realize that this is your world, a beautiful world with unlimited opportunities to grow, to learn, and to serve. Will you make it a better world through the preparations you make now and the noble service you render throughout your life as a token of the love you have of your Father in Heaven and his Son" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1980, 62; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 42).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard: "From the time one is first ordained to any office in the priesthood, he should be committed to a lifetime of service in the kingdom of God. Young men should be taught by loving and sensitive fathers, bishops, and priesthood advisers that priesthood means service" ("The Greater Priesthood: Giving a Lifetime of Service in the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Sept. 1992, 72).

- Elder Richard G. Scott, then of the Presidency of the Seventy: "I know [God] lives. I love him with every fiber of my being. With you, I want to use my life in service to him and in lifting Father's children" ("Four Fundamentals for Those Who Teach and Inspire Youth," in *Old Testament Symposium Speeches*, 1987 [1988], 6).



## **APPLICATION AND EXAMPLES**

Manuel, Marta, and their family lived outside their native country for three years while Manuel served as a mission president. During this time they gave faithful service to others. Since they had sold their home to serve their mission, on their return they arranged to rent a small house.

As they entered their new home, they were shocked to find furniture in place, beds made, dishes in the cupboard, and food on the shelves.



Manuel and Marta sat down in the living room, surrounded by their loved ones, and wept. For so long they had given service to others, and now others were serving them. They knelt in grateful prayer as a family.

- What clues might we look for that our neighbors are in need of our service?

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Bishop Vaughn J. Featherstone, then of the Presiding Bishopric, related the following account by Brother Les Goates. Brother Goates's father, George, farmed sugar beets west of Lehi, Utah. In 1918, when the events he describes took place, more than 20 million people around the world died in the Spanish influenza epidemic.

"Winter came early that year and froze much of the sugar beet crop in the ground," writes Brother Goates. "My dad and brother Francis were desperately trying to get out of the frosty ground one load of beets each day." One day they received a telephone call that George's nine-year-old grandson Kenneth "had been stricken with the dread 'flu,' and after only a few hours of violent sickness, had died." George was asked to go to Ogden and take the boy to Lehi for burial.

When George arrived at the home he found his son Charles was also sick. Charles asked his father to take the boy and return for him the next day. "Father brought Kenneth home, made a coffin in his carpenter shop, and . . . with [my brother] Franz and two kind neighbors [dug] the grave. . . .

"The folks had scarcely returned from the cemetery when the telephone rang again." They learned that Charles had died and four of his young children were also sick. Charles's body was sent to Lehi by train, but the next day George had to return to Ogden to get one of the grandchildren, seven-year-old Vesta, who had since died. Before he returned to Lehi with Vesta, a call came again that one of her sick sisters, five-year-old Elaine, had also died. So George made yet "another heartbreaking journey to bring

home and lay away a fourth member of his family, all within the week."

The next day George told his son Francis, "'Well, son, we had better get down to the field and see if we can get another load of beets out of the ground before they get frozen in any tighter.' . . .

". . . As they drove along the Saratoga Road, they passed wagon after wagon-load of beets being hauled to the factory and driven by neighborhood farmers. . . .

"On the last wagon was . . . Jasper Rolfe. He waved a cheery greeting and called out: 'That's all of 'em, Uncle George.'

"My dad turned to Francis and said: 'I wish it was all of ours.'

"When they arrived at the farm gate . . . there wasn't a sugar beet on the whole field. Then it dawned upon him what Jasper Rolfe meant when he called out: 'That's all of 'em, Uncle George!' . . .

"Then father sat down on a pile of beet tops—this man who brought four of his loved ones home for burial in the course of only six days; made caskets, dug graves, and even helped with the burial clothing— . . . and sobbed like a little child.

"Then he arose, wiped his eyes with his big, red bandanna handkerchief, looked up at the sky, and said: 'Thanks, Father, for the elders of our ward.'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 46–48; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 36–37).

- Why do you think Brother Goates was so touched by the service given to him?

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- What can you learn from the fact that the elders did not wait for the Goates family to ask for help with the beets?

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## POINTS TO PONDER

- How are understanding and empathy a form of service?
- What opportunities for service are available to members of the Church?
- What acts of service can you do apart from the Church organization?
- In what ways can you determine whom to serve?

## NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS:





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## THE FAMILY

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# A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

### THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**WE**, THE FIRST PRESIDENCY and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

**ALL** HUMAN BEINGS—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

**IN** THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshiped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

**THE** FIRST COMMANDMENT that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

**WE** DECLARE the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

**HUSBAND** AND **WIFE** have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a

sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

**THE** FAMILY is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

**WE** WARN that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

**WE** CALL UPON responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

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*This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.*

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