

..... LESSON #4

**Purpose:** To teach the principles of daily, meaningful prayer; to provide information on how to store water; to discuss shelf life of stored foods, and to begin assessment of individual preparedness.

**Teacher Preparation:**

- (1) Prepare copies of handouts for each student:
    - “Why the Lord Ordained Prayer” by Bruce R. McConkie, *Ensign*, January, 1976, p. 7
    - “Improving Our Prayers” by Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, March 2004, p. 24
    - “Teaching Our Children to Pray” by Stephen R. And Sandra Covey, *Ensign*, January, 1976, p. 59
    - “Obstacles to Prayer” by Chauncey C. Riddle, *Ensign*, January, 1976, p. 27
    - “The Extra Blessings of Family Prayer” by Ann H. Banks, *Ensign*, January, 1976, p. 37
    - “Ten Ideas to Increase your Spirituality” by Joe J. Christensen, *Ensign*, March, 1999, p. 58
    - USU Extension Service publication: Water Storage
    - BYU Food Science Research Study Report: shelf lives of food storage
    - Price list from LDS Church dry-pack cannery (Magna)
    - Price list from Honeyville Grain
    - 72-hour Comfort Kits guide
  - (2) If desired, obtain a collection of books about learning to pray.
  - (3) If desired, obtain a variety of water-storage containers and a hand-pump for water barrels, for demonstration.
  - (4) Obtain a current price list from the LDS family drypack cannery.
  - (5) Read and prayerfully study John 17; 3 Nep. 17:15-17, 18:19; D&C 4:7, 20:47, 68:33; Alma 34:17-29.
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## **Suggestions for Lesson:**

### **Introduction:**

This less marks the mid-point in the provident living course. By next week you will have been tracking expenses for one month and will be ready to categorize and total your spending, to determine your actual spending patterns. Please be sure to be thorough and relatively detailed in this effort.

### **Spiritual:**

Explain that probably the most important factor in our spirituality is our ability to talk with our Heavenly Father, in prayer, to seek his help and guidance, comfort, and revelation for ourselves and our families.

- Our individual concept of the nature of God is based in part upon our perceptions of our fathers, giving fathers the tremendous responsibility to live the kind of lives that will encourage and enable their children to be able to turn to our Heavenly Father in prayer, and to trust Him.

Point out that prayer is the vehicle by which we invite the Lord's spirit to be with us.

One sister told of her learning about prayer as follows:

My personal experience was that I believed in God, but didn't believe that He loved me or cared about me, because of childhood abuse. I could talk to Him as I worked, but I had difficulty in kneeling to Him. But because I was obedient to the command to read the scriptures every day, I started feeling a real need to learn to pray; I wanted to open the channel.

I believe I was led to the book, *Receiving Answers To Our Prayers*, by Gene R. Cook; for several weeks I read it each evening before bedtime, and followed Elder Cook's instructions. Gradually I learned to pray in a more formal manner, and then more meaningfully. I have a testimony that prayer is the key to obtaining the spiritual gifts we wish to receive.

Explain that prayer and scripture study go hand in hand:

When we seek the guidance of the Lord, it is wise to start first with what the Lord has already had to say about life through others who have talked with him. Scripture study and the words of living oracles of God provide a good starting point for meditation. We seek the voice of God in prayer; we also seek the voice of God in the scriptures. The two are simply different facets of a common quest; each enhances the other, each is vital to

the function of the other. In the main, scripture emphasizes what the Lord has had to say to the Church or to the world in general; prayer emphasizes what the Lord has to say to us in particular.

Contemplation of the messages found in the scriptures often provides a good preface to prayer. The Prophet Joseph was led to the Sacred Grove in response to the words of James and to the waters of the Susquehanna and baptism by prophets of the Book of Mormon. We too may receive spiritual promptings from what prophets—past and present—have had to say.

Explain that answers to pray come in various ways and in the Lord's own time:

Even while writing this I am perplexed within by memories of several young people with serious problems—problems of vocation, of school, of friends, of marriage—good young members of the Church who have come to my office to seek counsel of me when they seemingly have been unable to obtain the same from the Lord, even after extended periods of fasting and prayer. Indeed, I have come to suspect that faith is sometimes developed in the true Christian *in spite of*, rather than *because of*, immediate answers to prayer—at least to that type of prayer which we are all too prone to offer, that which admonishes God to do our bidding, that which reduces his role to that of a cosmic servant.

However, I am also certain that there is one type of answer one can expect to receive in almost every instance of sincere prayer. When we have reached our ultimate human extremity, if we seek him earnestly, he will always be there to bestow peace upon a troubled soul—perhaps not with specific answers, but at least with the comfort to the soul that is found in that peace which surpasses all understanding. Though he agitates us when we get too complacent, he also comforts us in our moments of deep spiritual frustration. He works as he deems best, and we must learn to be willing to accept that fact.

Explain that Brigham Young, who learned much about prayer by listening to the Prophet, said repeatedly to the Saints that when someone prays in a congregation the rest of us should be saying *in our minds* what he is saying with his lips. We should repeat the very words in our minds. Then when we say “amen” we know what we are saying amen to. “Why?” Brigham asks. “So that Saints may be one.” The effectual, fervent power of united prayer cannot be overestimated. Powerful prayer unites the “Saints—unity expands the power of prayer.”

Explain that the packets contain one article on prayer for each day of the coming week. Ask the class members to read one each day, and pray about how it may apply to them and their families. Point out that the last article specifically addresses helping our children learn to pray in our families, one of our prime responsibilities as parents.

**Food storage:**

*Water Storage:*

Explain that the hardest item to store for our families is water, yet it may be the most important. We can live for weeks, even months, with inadequate food; we won't like it, but we can live, even if we're digging up flower bulbs and grass to eat. But we can only survive a very few days without water! Point out that it is not practical to store a year's supply of water for each family member--that would require much more space than most of us have available. Since it is so necessary for our lives, supplying clean drinking water is the number-one priority for civil authorities. Therefore we have been advised to store only an emergency supply, which has been defined as one gallon per person for two weeks (which we may round up to 15 gallons) for drinking and cooking. Additionally, if space is available, we should store another gallon per person for washing dishes and personal hygiene. Explain that some water is available in our homes already:

- in the tank at the back of the toilet,
- in the water heater,
- in the water pipes.

Caution that class that some nonprofessional sources will include water in waterbeds as an available water source, but the experts point out that this water is chemically treated, so should not be used water for human consumption. Point out Dr. Georgia Lauritzen's "water" article in the class packet.

Explain that an important point has come up since Dr. Lauritzen compiled this information: a couple of the mid-Western universities performed research on water purification and safety after the "flood of a century" a couple of years ago along the Ohio and Missouri Rivers. They learned that ordinary citizens were effective in determining the safety of water by using the human nose (the human nose has long been recognized as a more reliable perceptor of odor than any laboratory device yet invented): basically, when chlorine bleach is added to contaminated water, a molecule of chlorine combines with and "deactivates" a molecule of bacteria; therefore, more molecules of chlorine are needed than there are of bacteria.

Demonstrate that if you add a teaspoon of bleach to a gallon of water and then can't smell the chlorine, add another teaspoon and try again; if necessary, add a third, until you can smell the chlorine. Then you know the bacteria have been outnumbered.

Important: Because the chlorine will dissipate within a few hours time, this smell will not be present later; if you have adequately treated the water by adding the bleach as directed above, it's not a problem that you won't be able to smell the bleach later.

[Sr. Shepherd's note: The Air Force required us to use 1 tablespoon of bleach for each gallon of water when we lived in Tripoli, Libya--higher than what the home economists today suggest; this was for safety's sake. We would treat several bottles of water at night, refrigerate it, and by morning it tasted fine. We were there for two years, and this was never a problem.]

Explain that letting the treated water sit for several hours or overnight allows the chlorine to dissipate, and then it can't be tasted.

Point out that iodine treatment pills have a shelf life of less than a year, and it costs \$5 to treat 15 quarts--not a cost-efficient way to go. Water can also be boiled or distilled, but these methods depend upon having a source of heat, which may not be available in a disrupting emergency such as an earthquake. Demonstrate (if desire) that water with particulate matter in it can be "filtered" by placing a full bucket at a raised level, then draping a clean towel from this bucket to a second bucket placed at a lower level, below the first; the water will all be gradually siphoned into the lower bucket, but the particulates will remain in the towel. This water can then be treated with chlorine and will be safe for drinking.

#### *Food Storage:*

Point out that the First Presidency's letter of January 20, 2002 (included in packet) recommends the basic five items for food storage, wheat or other grains including legumes, sugar or honey, powdered milk, oil, and salt.

Explain that coming lessons will demonstrate how to use each of those items, but today's lesson will discuss suppliers shelf lives of the basic commodities. In Utah wheat is easy to obtain. The Church canneries sell it at about 19 cents per pound, with no tax added. Honeyville Grain sells it for slightly less, but when you add on the tax, they're about equal. I've compared other suppliers, such as Lehi Roller Mills and Emergency Essentials, and have found them to be much more expensive. Two sample pricelists, one for the Church cannery and one for Honeyville Grain, are included in the packets.

Remember in making your comparisons that you also have to allow for containers that will permit the wheat to be stored long term, free from bugs and free from rodents.

- The cheapest containers are plastic buckets (available in 4-, 5-, and 6-gallon sizes) and #10 cans. These also require a method to remove the oxygen so that bugs can't live in the grain. This can be done with dry ice or with oxygen-remover packets.
- The rule for dry ice is: 1 Tablespoon of dry ice per gallon of container capacity, so a 5-gallon bucket will require 5 Tablespoons of dry ice (5 ounces or 1/3 pound). Pour 3 to 4 inches of wheat in the bottom of the bucket (this is to keep the dry ice from cracking the plastic).

Place the dry ice on the bed of wheat. Fill the bucket up to the top. Place the lid loosely on the bucket and wait for half an hour for the CO<sub>2</sub> to dissipate. Fasten the lid more tightly, but leave the bucket in an area where you can inspect it within the next few hours or next day. Check for bulging and if any is noted, lift the lid to "burp" the container; then fasten it down securely.

- Dry ice (like freezing) will only kill any *adult* insects living in the grain; it will *not* kill eggs. If there are insect eggs in the grain, they will hatch within a week or two of the dry ice or freezing treatments. The grain should therefore be re-treated in two weeks.
- The easiest and surest method, therefore, is using the oxygen-absorber packets in the #10 cans, but the tradeoff is cost.

*Shelf Life:*

Point out that the packet contains a report of a recent study performed by the Food Science Department at BYU on samples provided by people all over the area, furnishing cans of food commodities that had been stored for up to 40 years, under varying conditions.

Explain that almost everything except powdered eggs was good for 20 years, but after that length of time, distinct deterioration was noted. The upshot is that food storage will last a long time, but if we learn to use it and rotate it, we'll live more providently, more healthfully, and more cheaply.

*Individual Family Preparedness:*

The packets contain a preparedness checklist, together with suggestions for 72-hour kits.

Point out that since Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, awareness of the need for personal preparedness has grown nationwide, and in many areas the Red Cross is now recommending that the minimum three-day supply be extended to seven days, as a precaution for the extra time it may take for services to be extended to all areas.

Explain that the Church did not address this matter of short-term preparedness in the early days, probably partly as a function of the fact that society was not so mobile, and it appeared wiser to shelter in place. In the past twenty years, however, we have been advised to maintain at least 72 hours of supplies for each member of our families at home, with additional supplies in our cars and at our places of employment.

The last article in the packet for this week's lesson is called "Sturdy Shoes and a Waterproof Tent." This interesting article points out lessons that we can learn from preparedness by studying our own church history. This article might form a basis for talks or Family Home Evening lessons or discussions on why and how we should prepare.

**Assignments:**

- (1) Keep tracking expenditures.
- (2) Read an article about prayer daily, and discuss it as a couple and perhaps as a family.
- (3) As a family, evaluate your level of preparedness. If you find areas that need improving, set up a plan for acquiring or gathering the needed items.
- (4) Pray together as a couple and/or as a family each day, for help in increasing your family's level of preparedness.

## Why the Lord Ordained Prayer

By Elder Bruce R. McConkie    Of the Council of the Twelve  
*Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 7

On the west wall of the Council of the Twelve room in the Salt Lake Temple hangs a picture of the Lord Jesus as he prays in Gethsemane to his Father.

In agony beyond compare, suffering both body and spirit, to an extent incomprehensible to man—the coming torture of the cross paling into insignificance—our Lord is here pleading with his Father for strength to work out the infinite and eternal atonement.

Of all the prayers ever uttered, in time or in eternity—by gods, angels, or mortal men—this one stands supreme, above and apart, preeminent over all others.

In this garden called Gethsemane, outside Jerusalem's wall, the greatest member of Adam's race, the One whose every thought and word were perfect, pled with his Father to come off triumphant in the most torturous ordeal ever imposed on man or God.

There, amid the olive trees—in the spirit of pure worship and perfect prayer—Mary's Son struggled under the most crushing burden ever born by mortal man.

There, in the quiet of the Judean night, while Peter, James, and John slept—with prayer on his lips—God's own Son took upon himself the sins of all men on conditions of repentance.

Upon his Suffering Servant, the great Elohim, there and then, placed the weight of all the sins of all men of all ages who believe in Christ and seek his face. And the Son, who bore the image of the Father, pled with his divine Progenitor for power to fulfill the chief purpose for which he had come to earth.

This was the hour when all eternity hung in the balance. So great was the sin-created agony—laid on him who knew no sin—that he sweat great drops of blood from every pore, and “would,” within himself, that he “might not drink the bitter cup.” (D&C 19:18.) From creation's dawn to this supreme hour, and from this atoning night through all the endless ages of eternity there neither had been nor would be again such a struggle as this.

“The Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity,” who had “come down from heaven among the children of men” (Mosiah 3:5); the Creator, Upholder, and Preserver of all things from the beginning, who had made clay his tabernacle; the one person born into the world who had God as his father; the very Son of God himself—in a way beyond mortal comprehension—did then and there work out the infinite and eternal atonement, whereby all men are raised in immortality, while those who believe and obey come forth also to an inheritance of eternal life. God the Redeemer ransomed men from the temporal and spiritual death brought upon them by Adam's fall.

And it was at this hour that he, who then bought us with his own blood, offered the most pleading and poignant personal prayer ever to fall from mortal lips. God the Son prayed to God the Father, that the will of the One might be swallowed up in the will of the Other, and that he might fulfill the promise made by him when he was chosen to be the Redeemer: “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.” (Moses 4:2.)

True, as an obedient son whose sole desire was to do the will of the Father who sent him, our Lord prayed always and often during his mortal probation. By natural inheritance, because God was his father, Jesus was endowed with greater powers of intellect and spiritual insight than anyone else has ever possessed. But in spite of his superlative natural powers and endowments—or, shall we not rather say, because of them (for truly the more spiritually perfected and intellectually gifted a person is, the more he recognizes his place in the infinite scheme of things and knows thereby his need for help and guidance from Him who truly is infinite)—and so by virtue of his superlative powers and endowments, Jesus above all men felt the need for constant communion with the Source of all power, all intelligence, and all goodness.

When the time came to choose the Twelve special witnesses who should bear record of him and his law unto the ends of the earth, and who should sit with him on twelve thrones judging the whole house of Israel, how did he make the choice? The inspired account says: “He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” Having thus come to know the mind and will of Him whose offspring he was, “when it was day, . . . he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.” (Luke 6:12–13.)

When the hour of his arrest and passion were at hand; when there remained one more great truth to be impressed on the Twelve—that if they were to succeed in the assigned work and merit eternal reward with him and his Father they must be one even as he and the Father were one—at this hour of supreme import, he taught the truth involved as part of his great intercessory prayer, fragments of which are preserved for us in John 17.

When he, after his resurrection—note it well: after his resurrection, he was still praying to the Father!—when he, glorified and perfected, sought to give the Nephites the most transcendent spiritual experience they were able to bear, he did it, not in a sermon, but in a prayer. “The things which he prayed cannot be written,” the record says, but those who heard bore this testimony:

“The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father;

“And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.” (3 Ne. 17:15–17.)

But here in Gethsemane—as a pattern for all suffering, burdened, agonizing men—he poured out his soul to his Father with pleadings never equaled. What petitions he made, what expressions of

doctrine he uttered, what words of glory and adoration he then spoke we do not know. Perhaps like his coming prayer among the Nephites the words could not be written, but could be understood only by the power of the Spirit. We do know that on three separate occasions in his prayer he said in substance and thought content: “Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matt. 26:39.)

Here in Gethsemane, as he said to his Father, “not my will, but thine, be done,” the inspired record says, “There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:42–44.)

Now here is a marvelous thing. Note it well. The Son of God “prayed more earnestly”! He who did all things well, whose every word was right, whose every emphasis was proper; he to whom the Father gave his Spirit without measure; he who was the only perfect being ever to walk the dusty paths of planet earth—the Son of God “prayed more earnestly,” teaching us, his brethren, that all prayers, his included, are not alike, and that a greater need calls forth more earnest and faith-filled pleadings before the throne of him to whom the prayers of the saints are a sweet savor.

In this setting, then, seeking to learn and live the law of prayer so that we, like him, can go where he and his Father are, let us summarize what is truly involved in the glorious privilege of approaching the throne of grace. Let us learn how to do so boldly and efficaciously, not in word only but in spirit and in power, so that we may pull down upon ourselves, even as he did upon himself, the very powers of heaven. Perhaps the following ten items will enable us to crystallize our thinking and will guide us in perfecting our own personal prayers.

### **1. What Prayer Is.**

Once we dwelt in our Father’s presence, saw his face, and knew his will. We spoke to him, heard his voice, and received counsel and direction from him. Such was our status as spirit children in the premortal life. We then walked by sight.

Now we are far removed from the divine presence; we no longer see his face and hear his voice as we then did. We now walk by faith. But we need his counsel and direction as much or more than we needed it when we mingled with all the seraphic hosts of heaven before the world was. In his infinite wisdom, knowing our needs, a gracious Father has provided prayer as the means of continuing to communicate with him. As I have written elsewhere:

“To pray is to speak with God, either vocally or by forming the thoughts involved in the mind. Prayers may properly include expressions of praise, thanksgiving, and adoration; they are the solemn occasions during which the children of God petition their Eternal Father for those things, both temporal and spiritual, which they feel are needed to sustain them in all the varied tests of this mortal probation. Prayers are occasions of confession—occasions when in humility and

contrition, having broken hearts and contrite spirits, the saints confess their sins to Deity and implore him to grant his cleansing forgiveness.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 581.)

## **2. Why We Pray.**

There are three basic and fundamental reasons why we pray:

a. *We are commanded to do so.* Prayer is not something of relative insignificance which we may choose to do if the fancy strikes us. Rather, it is an eternal decree of Deity. “Thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore,” was his word in the first dispensation. “And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to called upon God.” (Moses 5:8, 16.) In our day we are instructed: “Ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (D&C 4:7.) Home teachers are appointed in the Church to “visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret.” (D&C 20:47.) And speaking by way of “commandment” to his latter-day people, the Lord says: “He that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him be had in remembrance before the judge of my people.” (D&C 68:33.)

b. *Temporal and spiritual blessings follow proper prayer.* As all the revelations show, the portals of heaven swing wide open to those who pray in faith; the Lord rains down righteousness upon them; they are preserved in perilous circumstances; the earth yields her fruits to them; and the joys of the gospel dwell in their hearts.

c. *Prayer is essential to salvation.* No accountable person ever has or ever will gain celestial rest unless he learns to communicate with the Master of that realm. And, “how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?” (Mosiah 5:13.)

## **3. Pray to the Father.**

We are commanded to pray to the Father (Elohim) in the name of the Son (Jehovah). The revelations are perfectly clear on this. “Ye must always pray unto the Father in my name,” the Lord Jesus said to the Nephites. (3 Ne. 18:19.) And yet there is an amazing mass of false doctrine and false practice in the churches of Christendom and occasionally even among the true saints.

There are those who pray to so-called saints and plead with them to intercede with Christ on their behalf. The official prayer books of the various sects have some prayers addressed to the Father, others to the Son, and others to the Holy Spirit, and it is the exception rather than the rule in some quarters when prayers are offered in the name of Christ. There are those who feel they gain some special relationship with our Lord by addressing petitions directly to him.

It is true that when we pray to the Father, the answer comes from the Son, because “there is ... one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim. 2:5.) Joseph Smith, for instance, asked the Father, in the name of the Son, for answers to questions, and the answering voice was not that of the Father but of the Son, because Christ is our advocate, our intercessor, the God (under the Father) who rules and regulates this earth.

And it is true that sometimes in his answers, Christ assumes the prerogative of speaking by divine investiture of authority as though he were the Father; that is, he speaks in the first person and uses the name of the Father because the Father has placed his own name on the Son. For a full explanation of this see the official pronouncement, “The Father and The Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by The First Presidency and The Twelve,” beginning on page 465 of the *Articles of Faith* by Elder James E. Talmage.

It is also true that we and all the prophets can with propriety shout praises to the Lord Jehovah (Christ). We can properly sing unto his holy name, as in the cry, “Hallelujah,” which means praise Jah, or praise Jehovah. But what we must have perfectly clear is that we *always* pray to the Father, not the Son, and we *always* pray in the name of the Son.

#### **4. Ask for Temporal and Spiritual Blessings.**

We are entitled and expected to pray for all things properly needed whether temporal or spiritual. We do not have the right of unlimited petition; our requests must be based on righteousness. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (James 4:3.)

Amulek speaks of crops and herds, of fields and flocks, as well as of mercy and salvation, when he lists those things for which we should pray. (See Alma 34:17–29.) The Lord’s Prayer speaks of “our daily bread” (see Matt. 6:11), and James urges us to ask for wisdom (see James 1:5), which in principle means we should seek all of the attributes of godliness. Our revelation says, “Ye are commanded in all things to ask of God.” (D&C 46:7.) Nephi says, “Ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.” (2 Ne. 32:9.) And the Lord’s promise to all the faithful is: “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.” (D&C 42:61.)

It is clear that we should pray for all that in wisdom and righteousness we should have. Certainly we should seek for a testimony, for revelations, for all of the gifts of the Spirit, including the fulfillment of the promise in Doctrine and Covenants 93:1 [D&C 93:1] of seeing the face of the Lord. But above all our other petitions, we should plead for the companionship of the Holy Ghost in this life and for eternal life in the world to come. When the Nephite Twelve “did pray for that which they most desired,” the Book of Mormon account records, “they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.” (3 Ne. 19:9.) The greatest gift a man can receive in this life is the gift of the Holy Ghost, even as the greatest gift he can gain in eternity is eternal life.

#### **5. Pray for Others.**

Our prayers are neither selfish nor self-centered. We seek the spiritual well-being of all men. Some of our prayers are for the benefit and blessing of the Saints alone, others are for the enlightenment and benefit of all our Father’s children. “I pray not for the world,” Jesus said in his great intercessory prayer, “but for them which thou hast given me.” (John 17:9.) But he also

commanded: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44.)

And so, just as Christ “is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe” (1 Tim. 4:10), so we pray for all men, but especially for ourselves, our families, the saints in general, and those who seek to believe and know the truth. Of especial concern to us are the sick who belong to the household of faith and those who are investigating the restored gospel. “Pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” James says, with reference to church members, for “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16.) And as to those who attend our meetings and who seek to learn the truth, the Lord Jesus says: “Ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name,” in the hope that they will repent and be baptized. (3 Ne. 18:23. See also 3 Ne. 18:30.)

### **6. When and Where to Pray.**

“Pray always.” (See 2 Ne. 32:9.) So it is written—meaning: Pray regularly, consistently, day in and day out; and also, live with the spirit of prayer always in your heart, so that your thoughts, words, and acts are always such as will please Him who is Eternal. Amulek speaks of praying “both morning, mid-day, and evening,” and says we should pour out our souls to the Lord in our closets, in our secret places, and in the wilderness. (See Alma 34:17–29.) Jesus commanded both personal and family prayer: “Watch and pray always,” he said; and also, “Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.” (3 Ne. 18:15, 21.)

The practice of the Church in our day is to have family prayer twice daily, plus our daily personal prayers, plus a blessing on our food at meal times (except in those public or other circumstances where it would be ostentatious or inappropriate to do so), plus proper prayers in our meetings.

### **7. How to Pray.**

Always address the Father; give thanks for your blessings; petition him for just and proper needs; and do it in the name of Jesus Christ.

As occasion and circumstances require and permit, confess your sins; counsel with the Lord relative to your personal problems; praise him for his goodness and grace; and utter such expressions of worship and doctrine as will bring you to a state of oneness with Him whom you worship.

Two much overlooked, underworked, and greatly needed guidelines for approved prayer are:

a. *Pray earnestly, sincerely, with real intent, and with all the energy and strength of your soul.* Mere words do not suffice. Vain repetitions are not enough. Literary excellence is of little worth. Indeed, true eloquence is not in excellency of language (although this should be sought for), but in the feeling that accompanies the words, however poorly they are chosen or phrased. Mormon said: “Pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart.” (Moro. 7:48.) Also, it is “counted evil

unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.” (Moro. 7:9.)

b. *Pray by the power of the Holy Ghost.* This is the supreme and ultimate achievement in prayer. The promise is: “The Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith” (D&C 42:14), “and if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done” (D&C 50:29). Of the coming millennial era, when prayers shall be perfected, the scripture says: “And in that day whatsoever any man shall ask, it shall be given unto him.” (D&C 101:27.)

### **8. Use Both Agency and Prayer.**

It is not, never has been, and never will be the design and purpose of the Lord—however much we seek him in prayer—to answer all our problems and concerns without struggle and effort on our part. This mortality is a probationary estate. In it we have our agency. We are being tested to see how we will respond in various situations; how we will decide issues; what course we will pursue while we are here walking, not by sight, but by faith. Hence, we are to solve our own problems and then to counsel with the Lord in prayer and receive a spiritual confirmation that our decisions are correct.

As he set forth in his work of translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith did not simply ask the Lord what the characters on the plates meant, rather he was required to study the matter out in his mind, make a decision of his own, and then ask the Lord if his conclusions were correct. (See D&C 8 and D&C 9.) So it is with us in all that we are called upon to do. Prayer and works go together. If and when we have done all we can, then in consultation with the Lord, through mighty and effectual prayer, we have power to come up with the right conclusions.

### **9. Follow the Formalities of Prayer.**

These (though many) are simple and easy and contribute to the spirit of worship that attends sincere and effectual prayers. Our Father is glorified and exalted; he is an omnipotent being. We are as the dust of the earth in comparison, and yet we are his children with access, through prayer, to his presence. Any act of obeisance which gets us in the proper frame of mind when we pray is all to the good.

We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our prayers. We ponder the solemnities of eternity in our hearts. We approach Deity in the spirit of awe, reverence, and worship. We speak in hushed and solemn tones. We listen for his answer. We are at our best in prayer. We are in the divine presence.

Almost by instinct, therefore, we do such things as bow our heads and close our eyes; fold our arms, or kneel, or fall on our faces. We use the sacred language of prayer (that of the King James Version of the Bible—thee, thou, thine, not you and your). And we say Amen when others pray, thus making their utterances ours, their prayers our prayers.

### **10. Live as You Pray.**

There is an old saying to this effect: “If you can’t pray about a thing, don’t do it,” which is intended to tie our prayers and acts together. And true it is that our deeds, in large measure, are children of our prayers. Having prayed, we act; our proper petitions have the effect of charting a righteous course of conduct for us. The boy that prays (earnestly and devoutly and in faith) that he may go on a mission, will then prepare himself for his mission, and in fact receives his call to service. The young people who pray always, in faith, to marry in the temple, and then act accordingly, are never satisfied with worldly marriage. So intertwined are prayer and works that having recited the law of prayer in detail, Amulek then concludes:

“After ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.” (Alma 34:28.)

We have now spoken, briefly and in imperfect fashion, of prayer and some of the great and eternal principles which attend it. There remains now but one thing more—to testify that these doctrines are sound and that prayer is a living reality which leads to eternal life.

Prayer may be gibberish and nonsense to the carnal mind; but to the saints of God it is the avenue of communications with the Unseen.

To the unbelieving and rebellious it may seem as an act of senseless piety born of mental instability; but to those who have tasted its fruits it becomes an anchor to the soul through all the storms of life.

Prayer is of God—not the vain repetitions of the heathen, not the rhetoric of the prayer books, not the insincere lisps of lustful men—but that prayer which is born of knowledge, which is nurtured by faith in Christ, which is offered in spirit and in truth.

Prayer opens the door to peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come. Prayer is essential to salvation. Unless and until we make it a living part of us so that we speak to our Father and have his voice answer, by the power of his Spirit, we are yet in our sins.

Oh, thou by whom we come to God, The Life, the Truth, the Way! The path of prayer thyself hast trod; Lord, teach us how to pray. (*Hymns*, no. 220.)

Of all these things I testify, and pray to the Father in the name of the Son, that all of the Latter-day Saints, as well as all those in the world who will join with them, may—through prayer and that righteous living which results therefrom—gain peace and joy here and an eternal fullness of all good things hereafter. Even so. Amen.

*Gospel topic: prayer*

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**Improving Our Prayers**  
By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin      Of the Quorum of the Twelve

Apostles

*Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 24

*From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University—Provo  
on 21 January 2003.*

*Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul?  
Is there room for improvement?*

Every person on the earth today lived at one time in heavenly realms. We walked with our Heavenly Father. We knew Him. We heard His voice. We loved Him. And although we were eager to enter mortality and continue our progression, we must have regretted the separation that would accompany it. We must have sorrowed that a veil would cover our eyes and the bright memories of our lives would be cloaked in the forgetfulness of mortality. How we must have yearned to stay close to our Father in Heaven. How we must have covenanted to ever reach after Him and commune with Him.

Undoubtedly our separation from our Heavenly Father was softened when He promised that as we sought after Him in prayer, He would reach toward us.

Now we are here. Our memories of our premortal life are dim and dark. We have forgotten those things we supposed we could never forget. Unfortunately and tragically we sometimes even forget our Heavenly Father, whom we loved so dearly.

Have you considered the effectiveness of your prayers, your efforts to reach toward Him from this mortal life? How close do you feel to your Heavenly Father? Do you feel that your prayers are answered? Do you feel that the time you spend in prayer enriches and uplifts your soul? Is there room for improvement?

**Make Prayers Meaningful**

There are many reasons our prayers may lack power. Sometimes they become routine. Our prayers become hollow when we say similar words in similar ways over and over so often that the words become more of a recitation than a communication. This is what the Savior described as “vain repetitions” (see Matt. 6:7). Such prayers, He said, will not be heard.

Our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has observed:

“The trouble with most of our prayers is that we give them as if we were picking up the telephone and ordering groceries—we place our order and hang up. We need to meditate, contemplate, think of what we are praying about and for and then speak to the Lord as one man speaketh to another.”<sup>1</sup>

Do your prayers at times sound and feel the same? Have you ever said a prayer mechanically, the words pouring forth as though cut from a machine? Do you sometimes bore yourself as you pray?

Will prayers that do not demand much of your thought merit much attention from our Heavenly Father? When you find yourself getting into a routine with your prayers, step back and think. Meditate for a while on the things for which you really are grateful. Look for them. They don't have to be grand or glorious. Sometimes we should express our gratitude for the small and simple things like the scent of the rain, the taste of your favorite food, or the sound of a loved one's voice.

Thinking of things we are grateful for is a healing balm. It helps us get outside ourselves. It changes our focus from our pains and our trials to the abundance of this beautiful world we live in.

Think of those things you truly need. Bring your goals and your hopes and your dreams to the Lord and set them before Him. Heavenly Father wants us to approach Him and ask for His divine aid. Explain to Him the trials you are facing. Set before Him your righteous desires.

Our prayers can and should be focused on the practical, everyday struggles of life. If we should pray over our crops (see Alma 34:24), then why not over other important challenges we face?

Some believe that the more eloquent a prayer, the more effective. Too often these prayers are not so much meant for the ears of the Almighty as they are for the ears of the audience. Do you want to commune with the Infinite? Then approach Him with reverence and humility. Don't worry so much about whether your words are polished or not. Worry instead about speaking from your heart.

### **Pray with Faith**

Another reason many prayers have little power is that we lack faith. We approach our Heavenly Father like a child who asks something of his or her parents, knowing they will refuse. Without faith, our prayers are merely words. With faith, our prayers connect with the powers of heaven and can bring upon us increased understanding, hope, and power. If by faith the worlds were created, then by faith we can create and receive the righteous desires of our heart.

What is faith? Faith is absolute confidence in that which is in absolute conformity to the will of heaven. When we combine that confidence with absolute action on our part, we have faith.

Faith without works is dead. Sometimes we expect Heavenly Father to answer our prayers when all we have done is utter a prayer. The doors of heaven will ever be closed to those who hold out their hands, waiting for blessings to drop from heaven upon them.

The powers of faith are activated by action. We must do our part. We must prepare. We must do all that is in our power, and we will be blessed in our efforts.

Prayer is a private matter between you and Heavenly Father. Both He and you know when you have done what you can. Do not give a thought as to whether or not your best compares with others. In the eyes of Heavenly Father, that doesn't matter.

### **The Challenge of Prosperity**

Perhaps one of the great challenges the Church faces in our day is that of prosperity. President Brigham Young said:

“The worst fear that I have about this people is that they will get rich [and] forget God. . . . This people will stand mobbing, robbing, poverty, and all manner of persecution, and be true. But my greater fear for them is that they cannot stand wealth.” 2

Prosperity can deaden us to spiritual things. It can give us the illusion of power. When we are sick, we can go to a doctor and get healed. When we are hungry, we can feed ourselves. When we are cold, we can get warm. In short, most of the problems of life we can solve ourselves—we can answer many of our own prayers.

Because of the relative ease many have in acquiring their daily bread, they can become deceived into thinking they are saviors unto themselves. In their pride and foolishness they feel they have little need of a Heavenly Father. They think little of the power that created the universe or of Him who gave His life that they might live.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we are warned of these modern-day idolaters: “They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:16).

Those who worship the things of this world will one day cry to their riches and plead with them to save them. In that day they will learn the coldness of their god and realize the terrible error of their ways.

### **The Need for Charity**

Another reason our prayers have little power is that we fail to succor those in need around us. The Book of Mormon teaches, “If ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing” (Alma 34:28).

Our willingness to aid those in distress around us has ever been the benchmark of the disciples of Christ. Indeed, the Savior taught that our very salvation depends upon the level of our compassion for others (see Matt. 25:31–46). If we turn our backs upon the poor and the distressed, can we, in turn, suppose that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us? As we are to those in need, so our Heavenly Father will be to us in our time of need.

## **A Pattern for Prayer**

In Psalm 37 [Ps. 37] David revealed an inspired process for active prayer and faith. It is a step-by-step process that may serve as a pattern for us to follow as we seek to increase our faith and improve the efficacy of our prayers.

“Fret not” is the first step (see Ps. 37:1). To fret means to worry or to brood about something. The first thing we must do is stop worrying. When we worry about the future, we create unhappiness in the present. Righteous concern may lead us to take appropriate action, but worrying about things we cannot control can paralyze and demoralize us.

Instead of worrying, focus on doing all that you can, and then leave the worrying to your Heavenly Father. If your heart is right with Him, He will take care of the worry and the fear. We must learn to “fret not.”

The second step is to “trust in the Lord” (see Ps. 37:3). Why should we trust in Him? Because He is our loving and all-wise Father in Heaven. Because He is the giver of all good gifts. Because He knows us and wants us to be happy and successful and to return to Him. God is in His heaven. He is perfect. He loves us.

I remember the many times my dear mother trusted in our Heavenly Father for my safety. I played quarterback at East High School in Salt Lake City and running back at the University of Utah. During all that time I don't think my mother ever stopped praying for my safety. She trusted in our Father in Heaven, depending on Him to protect me from major injury during the games. Although I had my share of bumps and bruises, I never had a major injury.

I suppose my mother breathed a sigh of relief when I told her I was going to leave the football field for a season. I met with my beloved bishop, Marion G. Romney, to express a desire to serve a full-time mission. But that short, worry-free season soon ended when I was called to serve in the German-Austrian Mission. Three months after I arrived in Salzburg, the name of the mission was changed to the Swiss-Austrian Mission.

The year was 1937. I arrived in Salzburg, Austria, at the very time Hitler was amassing 300,000 troops on the border for the Anschluss, his invasion of Austria.

My mother and father gathered the family to kneel in prayer morning and night and pled for my safety. I know that I felt the influence of those prayers. I trusted my Heavenly Father would hear their prayers. I trusted in my prayers that He would preserve my life.

A month before Hitler invaded Austria, I was transferred to Switzerland. My testimony is that our prayers had been answered.

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding,” we read in the scriptures. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5–6).

The third step is “do good” (see Ps. 37:3). We do good because we are followers of Christ. We do good because we are members of His church. We do good because we have made solemn covenants to serve as a light unto the world. Our Heavenly Father expects our actions to serve as a living testimony to our words. As we do good, the Lord can bless our efforts.

This is not to say that we must never make a mistake, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). The Lord requires that we seek Him with a humble heart, that we repent of our sins, and that we continue to do the best we can. As we make mistakes, we should learn from them and strive not to repeat them. As we do so, we become ever more Christlike, ever more as men and women of God.

As our actions contradict our professions of faith, our prayers become weak. When we do good, the Lord can work through us and magnify our efforts.

The fourth step is to “delight thyself also in the Lord” (see Ps. 37:4). What a wonderful doctrine! Instead of worrying or grumbling that our prayers have gone unanswered, we should delight ourselves in the Lord. Be grateful. Be happy. Know that the Lord, in His time, will bring about all your righteous desires—sometimes in ways we predict, sometimes in ways we could not have possibly foreseen. What a wonderful recipe for happiness and peace.

The fifth step is to “commit thy way unto the Lord” (see Ps. 37:5). No matter what your worries are, commit yourself to keeping His commandments. Brethren, honor your priesthood. Sisters, cleave unto the principles of light and truth.

The sixth step is to “rest in the Lord” (see Ps. 37:7). Sometimes the hardest thing we can do is wait. The Lord has His own timetable, and although it may frustrate us, His timing is always perfect. When we rest in the Lord, we allow Him to work His will for us in His own time and in His own way.

### **Prayer Brings Light**

As we commune with our Father in humble prayer, our hearts receive the gentle outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Lord tells us, “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).

Those who do not have this light ever struggle with disbelief. They cannot understand the things of God because their souls have little light. On the other hand, as our souls become filled with light, we begin to understand clearly things that once were dark.

You recall the Prophet Joseph Smith’s experience with darkness and light in the Sacred Grove. President Lorenzo Snow (1814–98) wrote of an experience of his own:

“Some two or three weeks after I was baptized ... I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a *knowledge* of the truth of the work ... , and I began to feel very uneasy. I laid aside

my books, left the house, and wandered around through the fields under the oppressive influence of a gloomy, disconsolate spirit, while an indescribable cloud of darkness seemed to envelop me. I had been accustomed, at the close of the day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I concluded I would not forego my evening service, and, as a matter of formality, knelt as I was in the habit of doing, and in my accustomed retired place, but not feeling as I was wont to feel.

“I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the Spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, filling me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and O, the joy and happiness I felt! No language can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, as it was at that time imparted to my understanding. I then received a perfect knowledge that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the Gospel. ...

“... That night, as I retired to rest, the same wonderful manifestations were repeated, and continued to be for several successive nights. The sweet remembrance of those glorious experiences, from that time to the present, bring them fresh before me, imparting an inspiring influence which pervades my whole being, and I trust will to the close of my earthly existence.” 3

My brothers and sisters, spiritual experiences are available to all who come before their Eternal Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit. One of the things we must do in this mortality is chase away the darkness. We must fill our souls with the light of the Holy Spirit.

### **Blessings Available to All**

The rich blessings that can come into our lives through prayer are available to all. The poor have as much access as the rich. The movie star has no advantage over the laborer. We are all equal in our ability to approach the throne of our Heavenly King.

The Savior tells us, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Rev. 3:20).

As we approach our Heavenly Father in the name of Christ, we open the windows of heaven. We can receive from Him truth, light, and knowledge.

Prayer is the doorway through which we commence our discipleship to things heavenly and eternal. We will never be alone so long as we know how to pray.

It is my earnest desire that members of the Church will reexamine their own lives through the context of prayer. That we may ever lift up our voices to our Heavenly Father and fill our souls with celestial light is my prayer.

*Gospel topics:* charity, faith, gratitude, prayer, spirituality, wealth

**Notes**

1. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 469.
2. Quoted in James S. Brown, *Life of a Pioneer* (1971), 122–23.
3. Quoted in Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (1884), 7–9.

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## Teaching Our Children to Pray

By Stephen R. and Sandra Covey

Ensign, Jan. 1976, 59

*Sandra:* As a child, the most profound experience I ever had with prayer was kneeling together with my father and older sister and brother, pleading for the life of “little Linda,” one of our four-month-old twins.

Overnight she had become ill—severely dehydrated and burning up with fever. Mother was at the hospital with the twins; Dad had come home after an all-night vigil and wearily gathered us together for prayer.

We were all alarmed and a little insecure to see him so broken—so vulnerable—in the very depths of humility.

I remember how he begged and pleaded with the Lord for the life of that little baby, the tears streaming down his face. I also remember feeling that the heavens were opened—those pleadings were heard and received.

When little Linda died, I knew the Lord had said no. I didn’t understand why, but I knew somehow it would be all right.

Now as a mother of eight children, I wonder how often our own children experience a real communication and openness with the Lord through prayer.

I know we can’t expect them to have a profound experience every time they pray—but how can we teach them to have a broken heart and contrite spirit under ordinary, everyday circumstances? To feel that the heavens are opened and the Lord is listening? These are the concerns we are struggling with and trying to fulfill.

*Stephen and Sandra:* As parents we are convinced that no other single activity has such a determining influence on the whole of life as does effective prayer. It can and should determine everything else, including our actions and our attitudes or responses to all that happens to us.

If neglected, everything else in life is negatively affected. If honored, everything else in life is graced. It is no wonder God commands parents to teach their children “to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.” (D&C 68:28.)

We believe many of us in the Church are having problems and unhappiness because we are not properly teaching our children, and before we will be released from these plaguing problems, we will need to “set in order” our own homes. Most of us know in our hearts that this is true, even though we consciously focus on “outside” problems—work, finances, Church assignments, etc. Carefully study the eleven verses of counsel the Lord gave to the First Presidency (Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Ridgon, and Frederick G. Williams) and the Presiding Bishop (Newel K. Whitney)

along these lines. (D&C 93:40–50.) In these eleven verses the Lord declares, “What I say unto one I say unto all.”

*Sandra:* On one occasion Stephen was going out of town for a short business trip. It was late Friday afternoon and he was delayed at his office longer than had been expected. He dashed home and we frantically got him packed and organized.

He hadn't had time to see or visit with any of the children, and now with the pressure of that plane leaving, with or without him, he called for family prayer.

It was not the usual time for prayer, and the children were scattered all over the house and outside. I ran to the door and tried to get the boys in from playing football on the front lawn. Someone else was in the middle of a TV show and hated to leave. One was on the telephone, resenting the interruption; another was jumping on the trampoline with friends; and someone else was taking a nap.

Stephen was totally frustrated. He shouted at the boys on the lawn, “For heaven's sake, will you get in here—right now! When I call for family prayer that means to drop what you're doing and come. I've got a plane to catch.”

Then I started in. “What's the matter with you kids, anyway!” Our voices were rising higher and louder with each phrase.

By the time we were all kneeling together there was a dark cloud of gloom, bad feelings, guilt, and frustration hanging over us all. Nobody felt like praying. “Maria, will you pray?” A pause. “I really don't feel like it—could you call on someone else?”

Stephen glanced around at the wounded faces and realized what had happened. He began to apologize. “I'm sorry I yelled. It's just that I didn't want to leave without seeing all of you, having a prayer, asking for a blessing of safety in traveling, and feeling everything was in order.”

As he went on, we all started searching our hearts. He had such a good, sincere motive. Why couldn't I have been more cooperative and less selfish? Gradually all hearts were softened.

The prayer was short. All he asked for was forgiveness. He left immediately.

We all felt bad when he left. We all wanted a better ending to the situation, and now we really wished we could have knelt together and prayed fully and openly with a good spirit. Our hearts ached. It was too late. But we had learned something.

*Stephen and Sandra:* Teaching is *not* telling. Particularly is this true with children. Teaching is primarily modeling (example) and relating (love), and secondarily telling (precept). If our precept teaching is consistent with our modeling or example, it will be heard. If not, it probably

will not be heard. As Emerson put it, “What you are shouts so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say.”

The fundamental principle of teaching our children to pray, therefore, is to be truly praying people ourselves. We teach what we are. Are our prayers earnest, deep, meaningful, and two-way? Are our lives anchored and committed by them? Are we changed through them? We teach what we are.

We have concluded that it is supremely important to have both personal and husband-wife prayers before greeting the children in the morning. In those prayers we seek to get our own spirits in tune with the Lord’s Spirit so that we are at peace within ourselves and between ourselves. Once we feel the Spirit, we then attempt to walk through our day in our mind’s eye. We determine our attitudes and responses to unpleasant situations or a difficult child. To use computer language, we try to “program ourselves” with true principles and commitments while under the divine influence of the Holy Spirit.

For instance, if you have the tendency to yell at your children when they disobey or at your spouse when he or she doesn’t meet your expectations, even though you rationalize your actions while “in the heat of the battle,” you know within that such a belittling approach is foolish, futile, and self-perpetuating (the more you do it, the more you’ll have to do it). Yet you still do it. It becomes a habit and others develop habitual ways of defending themselves against it. Children become threat deaf. They (and spouses) yell back or walk out or “get back” in some other way.

Through deep, meaningful prayer we can “spiritually create” a far more effective response. We can “see” ourselves reacting on the basis of the Savior’s nature and principles. Through such an approach, “line upon line, precept upon precept,” we can become “partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Pet. 1:4.) “When a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. It is by words instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith.” (*Lectures on Faith*, 7:3.)

There is no doubt that such gospel living will have ten times more impact in teaching children to pray than any number of practical techniques.

Children’s first source of knowledge of God is human—their parents. The second source is divine—revelation from God. (Study Joseph Smith’s Second Lecture on Faith.) We have observed from missionaries, students, and investigators that if the first source is distorted (unkind, hypocritical), so also will be the concept of God in the minds of the people. They will then pray with this wrong conception of God. If they are fearful to be open and honest with their parents because of receiving overreacting, angry responses, they will learn to not be open and honest in prayer to God. Their divine communications will likely be as mechanical and protective and manipulative as their human communications.

We are persuaded that children's divine conceptions are largely a product of how their parents treat them, particularly under conditions of stress. Teaching by example and unconditional love, reinforced by precept, is again the key.

Children are constantly investigating our lives to see if the gospel is true. "I don't care how much you know about prayer until I know how much you care about me."

Just as there are different levels of human communication, there are different levels of divine communication. Perhaps it's more a matter of degree, but for purposes of analysis we arbitrarily select the following three levels:

1. Mechanical prayer
2. Meaningful one-way heartfelt expression
3. Genuine two-way communication.

As parents we need regular experiences at the third level in order to understand and appreciate the orderly sequential growth through these levels and also to develop the sensitivity and skill with our children to facilitate these growth processes. Consider each one.

1. *Mechanical prayer.* We teach our children to "say" their prayers. So they learn to "say" their prayers. They are acquiring a helpful discipline. They "say" their prayers when they get up and when they go to bed, perhaps at their parent's knee or side. They should see their parents call everyone together for family prayer and perhaps sense a higher level of prayer. They should see and hear a blessing offered on the food at each meal. In this home God is recognized, acknowledged. They sense this. This is good. It is a good beginning. They are acquiring the most basic habit and discipline of spiritual life. We need to teach our children what missionaries teach investigators—the four steps of prayer:

- a. "Our Father in heaven ..."
- b. "We thank thee ..."
- c. "We ask thee ..."
- d. "In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

2. *Meaningful one-way heartfelt expression.* If as parents we are kind and patient, open and grateful, we can teach a much higher level of prayer to our children. We essentially are teaching them to pray from their hearts rather than to say the same words again and again, like going down some kind of checklist.

We have found some of the following ideas or types of expressions helpful in teaching our children how to pray from the heart.

- a. When we call for prayer, we are interrupting the lives of many people involved in various tasks and projects. Everyone has his mind focused on what he was doing, and we need to take a

few minutes to prepare ourselves for prayer. Stephen may say to the children, “Let’s take a few moments to think about who we are praying to and why. Let’s quietly think about what we are doing—about the things we are grateful for.”

We need to pause, to become calm and still inside. Otherwise we bring the rush of life into our prayers, keeping us at the mechanical level.

b. Usually we sing a hymn before family prayer, such as “Sweet Hour of Prayer” or “I Need Thee Every Hour” or “Love at Home.” This gives the children time to gather around mentally as well as physically. It helps to bring some unity and harmony and order to the entire situation. The family seems to enjoy this, although we sometimes omit it if time pressures are too heavy.

c. Often we go around the prayer circle and ask each family member if he has any special needs or blessings he would like to have remembered in the prayer.

Cynthia may ask for a clear, alert mind in preparing for an exam in school; Maria might request that she be blessed to play well at a piano recital that evening; Stephen may need help in passing off a merit badge for Scouting; Michael Sean and David might ask that they give their best efforts in their Little League baseball game that day; Catherine could ask us to pray for our dog’s injured leg; and Colleen may want us to remember her chicken pox. Sandra might need guidance in preparing her Relief Society lesson and Stephen, inspiration in his Church assignment. This process helps us to be aware of everyone’s needs and to pray specifically.

d. We often guide the child right before the prayer: “Think about what is in your heart and say it to your Heavenly Father.”

“David, what are you really grateful for? How has the Lord blessed our family and answered our prayers? Let’s think about it and then just talk to your Heavenly Father as you talk to me. Don’t worry if you don’t say everything everyone else says. Say what you really feel in your heart. Heavenly Father loves and cares for you just as I do, even more so.”

e. In appropriate ways we commend them for spontaneous, heartfelt expression. Yet we are careful not to cause them to gear their expressions to our ears and for our reward. “Your Father in heaven is pleased when you tell him how you really feel.” “That was nice, honey. Your Heavenly Father loves to hear you pray to him in that way.” When we do this, we sense the children feel doubly appreciated. Most of them, most of the time, want to be voice in our family prayer.

f. Model praying with a specific purpose. We let our children see and hear how our own prayers are uniquely bent to a specific purpose or need or situation. Maybe some prayers are only expressions of gratitude, with no requests. Other prayers may focus on one special need. Some prayers may be just a few sentences long—or one, “Please help us, dear God.”

*Sandra:* I recall driving up the canyon with Colleen, our four-year-old. Suddenly, after being deep in thought, she asked me why our family didn't have a new baby.

I explained to her that we wanted one very much, but that we didn't always get what we wanted. I told her that it was Heavenly Father who sent the babies to families, and Mommy and Daddy had been praying to him and asking if he would let us have another one someday.

Her face lit up with understanding. "Well, let's pray some more. Let's pray for one right now." I pulled the car over to the side of the road and Colleen prayed, determined and loud, appealingly-positive that her request would be granted. She continued to pray, night and day, and reminded everyone else to do so. We were blessed with a baby in September. Our whole family feels like Colleen's faith and persistence brought it to us.

*g. Stephen and Sandra:* Sometimes we have found our children offering essentially the same mechanical prayer in every situation. We believe this is due in part to our own "vain repetitions" and also in part to their becoming tired and/or bored in listening too long to general prayers, however sincerely expressed.

When we notice mechanical prayers, we make a real effort to break them up. They can become so habitual and reinforcing as to work into people's consciences and make them feel guilty and uncomfortable if they are not "on their knees" or "in the right spirit" or "in the right place" or if they don't remember the entire checklist--loved ones, missionaries, leaders, etc., etc.

We try to teach by example and precept that you can pray anywhere, anytime—and that you should. "Pray always" to us means a constant, subconscious commitment to and awareness of the Lord, so that his purposes and principles govern our every action, word, and thought, plus a frequent conscious renewal of that relationship and commitment in prayer.

We generally find prayer is a golden teaching moment. On a one-to-one basis the children are very open to comments such as:

"Son, you can pray while you're walking." "You can pray with your eyes open." "You can pray out loud or silently within." "You can pray for help to get out of a bad mood."

"Son, learn to go alone at least once a day where no one else can see you or hear you except your Father in heaven. I do this, son. Sometimes I go. ..."

*h.* After family prayer it may be appropriate to remain kneeling for personal prayers, as is common among missionaries. Or you might say to your children, "Why don't each of us go to a very private place for personal private prayer for a few minutes?" The Savior taught his "children" (disciples) to do this. (See Matt. 6:5–8.)

We find praying alone, out loud, sometimes helps to discipline and focus our minds, but that it doesn't seem necessary once we're in the spirit. Words then seem to limit deeper-feeling expression.

i. We have often tried to teach our children to pray in terms of their needs, rather than their wants: "What is best for my character, my development, my spiritual growth, even if it's a hard experience for me?" The Lord knows what we need—we know what we want. This is one excellent reason for regular scripture study. The Lord is constantly dealing with his children in terms of their needs, not their wants.

This is pretty hard doctrine for any of us, and it was especially hard for our teenage daughter. Being elected cheerleader of her high school seemed to be the most important need in her life. She had worked for several months, practicing every day doing cartwheels, flips, splits, and cheers, till we were all relieved when the final cuts came. There were tears every time one of her close friends was eliminated and hope surged as she progressed to the final election assembly. "Oh, Mother, I'm praying so hard to win. The Lord says you can ask for any righteous desire of your heart and this is mine." It seemed a reasonable request to us, too. She was firm and solid in the Church and socially popular in a very sophisticated and large high school. We thought she would be a good influence for the Church.

At the final assembly tryouts things went beautifully. She was in great form, her cheer was original, she was well known and received as much or more applause than anyone else. She seemed a cinch to be one of the five winners.

She was absolutely crushed when she lost. It was only by a few votes, but she lost.

"Mother, you just don't know how important this was to me," she sobbed. "It's one of my lifetime goals. Why did the Lord let me down when I prayed so fervently? It wasn't just for myself. I was going to use this office as a good, solid influence for the Church. I study the scriptures every single night. I do missionary work constantly. I stand up for the Church in every situation; I work my head off in the ward and on the stake youth council and then one time I ask for help—what do I get? it isn't as if I didn't do my part. I practiced for six months. I couldn't have tried harder."

Sandra remembers, "I was a little disillusioned myself. So good. So faithful. So deserving. I didn't have too many answers, but I told her there must be a good reason and through prayer and study she would come to understand why."

The very next month she was asked to be one of the high school seminary officers. All of the seminary council had made personal sacrifices to serve. The seminary president had been asked to give up running for student body president; this was a hard decision for him. They said they really needed our daughter's creativity and missionary talents to draw people, and this year was a crucial one for gaining a positive stronghold.

That year she had many profound spiritual experiences. She developed deep, meaningful friendships and was a positive influence in helping several people come into Church activity.

Later she told me that she gradually came to an understanding of herself through fervent prayer and study of the scriptures. “I wanted to be cheerleader more than anything else, but the Lord knew I needed this other experience more. I needed more spiritual growth. It was a hard experience, but I know in my heart it was right.”

3. *Genuine two-way communication.* In two-way prayer we listen and respond to what we hear. In many of our one-way prayers we counsel the Lord, directing him around the heavens and the earth, telling him whom to bless and how.

We believe in two basic principles in teaching children this level: first, having them experience the satisfaction of two-way communication with us; and second, helping them understand how to listen to the voice of the Lord, and how to recognize it.

A person’s satisfaction with something is primarily a function of his expectation, over which he has control, and secondarily a product of his realization, over which he may not have control.

We need to create accurate expectations in our children’s minds regarding how the Lord speaks to us so they will recognize his voice and feel satisfied when they hear (sense, feel) it. Prayer will then become deeply meaningful and satisfying. Otherwise, if they expect something more dramatic and physical, something mysterious and strange, and don’t realize their expectations, they will pray only out of duty, not desire. Their prayers will become mechanical monologues. Talking to oneself, to the ceiling, or to the mattress is boring and unfulfilling.

We need to teach our children that the Lord speaks to us in many ways, but more particularly through his servants, the prophets, ancient (scriptures) and modern (conferences, writings), and through his still, small voice. We teach them that their heart is the ear of the spirit and that their conscience is His voice. President David O. McKay taught that for those in the Church in the line of their duty, the Holy Ghost normally speaks through the conscience. To a group of seminary and institute people, Elder Bruce McConkie of the Council of the Twelve once used a radio analogy, suggesting that the transmitter is the Holy Ghost, we are the receivers, and the Spirit of Christ represents the radio waves. Moroni taught that the gifts and powers of the Spirit come by and through the Spirit of Christ. (Moro. 10:7–17.)

*Stephen:* Once after I spoke on listening prayer at a Ricks College devotional, a coed approached me and asked, “Brother Covey, what’s the difference between a heartburn and a burning in the heart?” She was really asking what many of us have pondered: “How do I really know God is answering my prayer? Maybe it’s my own wish or want or psychological need that I warmly feel and project onto God, calling it his answer.”

I asked her if she had felt anything in her heart when we all paused during the speech to listen to our own consciences in response to the questions, “What do I need to do to draw closer to the Lord? to be a better family member? a better student?”

She answered, “Oh, yes. I know so many things I should do.”

“Well then, sister, I suggest you forget your question for now and just do those things. As you do you’ll become more acquainted with his voice and that will be the answer to your question.”

After a pause I sensed some disappointment and observed, “You didn’t like that answer, did you, Sister?”

She answered, “No, I didn’t. I have no excuse anymore.” She was escaping the confrontation of her real spiritual needs through intellectualizing about God and his ways.

A year later, after another devotional speech at Ricks, she came up and asked if I remembered her. I said I didn’t. She then identified herself as the one who was confused about “heartburns and burnings in the heart.”

“Oh, yes, whatever happened to you?”

She answered, “I am no longer confused. I know the difference. I did the things my conscience told me to and became acquainted with the voice.”

I pressed her regarding the things she did. She said she stopped procrastinating her studies and work, that she started to sincerely study the scriptures and to pray from her heart, that she was more cheerful and helpful at home, that she had “made up” with a couple of people she had become estranged from. She went on and on.

A year later, after a “Know Your Religion” speech in California, she came up and said, “Would you be interested in a third installment?” She went on to testify that “to listen to and obey my conscience was the most practical religious lesson I have ever learned. It has changed my life.”

One day I was teaching this lesson to my daughter Maria. “Honey, listen in your prayer to your conscience. Then respond to what you feel or sense.” She questioned how to do this. I suggested that whenever she asked for a particular blessing, she also ponder the law on which that blessing was predicated (D&C 130:20), and then the Lord would speak to her heart through her conscience. She did this and said nothing new was given, for “I already know what I should do.” I asked her where she got that knowledge. She answered, “In my Sunday School class.” I pointed out that Sunday School was part of the Lord’s kingdom, with the express purpose of teaching the gospel, and that the true principles she had learned there were lodged in her heart and mind. I told her that the Holy Ghost would bring those principles to her remembrance as she needed them to meet the demands of each situation. We studied together 2 Nephi 31:18–20 [2 Ne. 31:18–20] and 2 Ne. 32:1–5 and John 15:26, and she came to understand one of the central

processes of personal revelation. She was both disappointed and elated—disappointed to have the more dramatic mystery surrounding revelation eliminated and elated to sense the Lord was listening and speaking to her and that the process was very simple. She also felt she was responsible for doing the thing the Lord required. She had no escape.

*Stephen and Sandra:* The adversary would like to plant wrong conceptions in our minds regarding personal revelation, tempting us to look past the mark (Jacob 4:14) so we will deprecate ourselves, unconsciously deny the Spirit, and perhaps become sign seekers. Yet ministrations of the Holy Ghost are of a higher order of revelation than ministration of angels. Angels minister by the power of the Aaronic Priesthood (D&C 13). It takes the Melchizedek Priesthood to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. More blessed is he who believes and has not seen than he who believes because he has seen. Nephi was frequently directed by the Spirit. Laman and Lemuel were “past feeling” the Spirit and needed an angel to shake them into an awareness of what they should be doing. They were neither changed before the angel came nor after. Nephi was changed and had a spiritual mind and listening heart. He had learned mighty prayer. The divine dialogue was his daily meat.

We are trying to teach our children to run their actions and attitudes and plans by their consciences to see if they square up. We are trying to teach them to ask basic questions and listen to their consciences for the answers, such as, “What do I need to do to be closer to God?” “How can I be a better member of the Church?” “How can I better prepare for my mission?” “How can I do better in school?”

We encourage our children to first seek the Holy Spirit by asking for it and allowing it to guide their expressions and listening.

We are trying to teach them to continually educate their consciences through paying close attention at Church meetings and by studying the scriptures—really feasting on the words and the love of Jesus Christ. Then their consciences become repositories of divine principles that the Holy Ghost will bring to their remembrance to guide and direct their paths. We are encouraging them to memorize many key passages that are filled with wisdom pertaining to their present opportunities and challenges. We review these in family home evening.

We are trying to teach them that we do not receive more light and knowledge until we are true to the light and knowledge we already have. In other words, let’s just obey our consciences and if we need more, the Lord will give it to us in his way and in his time, not in our way and in our time.

Finally, we are encouraging them to respond to what they “hear” in prayer by committing themselves to obey the divine principle or directive given and then to “report back” on that commitment in a later prayer.

We find such a relationship based on communication requires infinitely more courage and humility, determination and self-honesty, than one-way prayers from the heart. Such true living and communication is also infinitely more satisfying, sanctifying, and empowering.

Once a person discovers the possibility of a dynamic, living relationship and communication, once he learns the special meaning of mighty prayer, he is never the same again. All things, including relationships, are changed and made infinitely more alive and beautiful.

“What is the most important thing you have ever learned in your life?” we quizzed Cynthia on her eighteenth birthday. Without hesitating she seriously answered, “To build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ. To put your faith and trust in him, to draw on his power, to depend on your relationship with him to pull you through collapsed dreams, disappointments, and disillusionments. It gives you the security you need. It helps you understand and know who you really are, not who other people say or think you are.”

“How did you learn this?”

“From the things you’ve taught me—but mostly through studying the scriptures and deep personal prayer. I know that people are often fickle. They will let you down and disappoint you—but you can always rely on the Lord. Depend on him. I feel I know him and have a real relationship through prayer.”

For those brief moments we felt well-rewarded, relieved, and somewhat astounded that, after all, some things were getting through.

But the final scores are not in yet. We experience disappointments also. It is not easy. It is a continual struggle, a constant effort. But we are very encouraged that law, not luck, governs, and that we can obey law if we so choose.

In sum, we find we are about as successful in our efforts to teach our children the genuine dialogue level as we are in *our* praying and living at this level.

We feel so thankful for the Lord’s patience and long-suffering and for our opportunities. We intend to continue to try to listen, to commit, to obey, and to teach.

*Gospel topics:* prayer, children

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## **The Extra Blessings of Family Prayer**

By Ann H. Banks

*Ensign*, Jan. 1976, 37

One father, a quiet, unassuming man, found it hard to express his love for his family. At his wife's prompting they began holding family prayer, and it became an opportunity to voice what was in his heart. To their daughter, who had misinterpreted her father's manner as indifference, the experience was a revelation. His prayers were simple and sometimes clumsily worded, but to hear him say "Bless my lovely daughter to do good" thrilled her.

A timid boy who thought of himself only as a "scaredy cat" felt new pride and self-esteem when his father and mother thanked God for their "kind, gentle son." And the boy's self-confidence continued to grow through prayer when even his little brother thanked Heavenly Father for his "big, strong brother."

In preparation for a family outing in our own family, my husband asked the Lord to bless our family to get along and to enjoy each other's company. The preaching we had done had gone unheard, but that reverent prayer brought cooperation.

Our teenage son was tense and sullen whenever we tried to discuss any problem with him. We decided it was important to plan the discussion when he would be most receptive, and that seemed to be at family prayer time in the mornings. It was then that the house was quiet and we shared a humble, sincere feeling. We found the tenseness eased when prayer preceded our discussions.

During these quiet moments of family prayer, we are keeping in touch with each other and with our Father in heaven.

*Gospel topics:* family, prayer

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# Ten Ideas to Increase Your Spirituality

By Elder Joe J. Christensen

Of the Presidency of the Seventy

From an address given on 23 January 1997 at BYU—Hawaii.

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Regardless of our age or stage in life, one of the genuine needs we all have in order to live happier and to be more successful is to increase our own spirituality. I will make you a promise. If you can respond more positively each time you ask yourself the following 10 questions, you will be increasing in spirituality. You will be happier, and in those things that matter most in life, you will be more successful. That is a promise.

Here are the 10 questions:

## 1. Do I read scriptures daily?

We are commanded to “feast upon the words of Christ” and not just nibble (2 Ne. 32:3).

Remember President Spencer W. Kimball’s statement: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns” (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 135).

How many times did President Ezra Taft Benson urge us to read from the Book of Mormon daily? There is no other book that provides us with so much opportunity to “feast on the words of Christ.” It really is another testament of Jesus Christ. Within its pages are 3,925 references to the Savior. On average, every 1.7 verses make reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is referred to by 101 different titles: Lord, Savior, Redeemer, the Only Begotten Son, the Good Shepherd, and so on.

If you were to start on January 1st reading just two pages a day, by the time you came to September 22nd, you would have read the entire book. Are you reading from the scriptures every day? If not, now, this very day, is a good time to repent.

## 2. Do I really pray and not just say prayers?

Am I really communicating and not just repeating trite expressions? (see Alma 34:17–27; Matt. 6:7). Some people really learn how to pray, and it is a goal that we all should strive for.

One young elder came to the Missionary Training Center in Provo. He was a very bright student. He was always at the top of his class in every subject while in high school. He was called on a mission where he needed to learn Spanish. He was assigned to his district of seven or eight missionaries and for the first time found that he was *not* at the top of his class in the area of pronunciation because he could not trill an *r*. He couldn’t pronounce words like *ferrocarril*. His tongue didn’t work that way. He struggled. He worked and he prayed. Then after seven weeks there he wrote a letter home to his parents, and the entire first page was filled with pure *rs*. He

had finally succeeded. He told me that if he hadn't learned another thing during his entire two-year mission than to learn how to *really* pray, his mission would have been worth it.

President Brigham Young said, "It matters not whether you or I feel like praying. . . . If we do not feel like it, we should pray till we do" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], 44).

### **3. Is my fasting meaningful?**

Do I do more than just get hungry? (see D&C 59:13–23). Sometimes that is all we do because our level of spirituality hasn't matured. When one of our sons was about seven years old, he asked, "Why do they call it fast Sunday when it goes so slow?"

Meaningful fasting is one sure method of cultivating spirituality in our lives. Here is a practical suggestion: Make the first Sunday of next month a very meaningful day of fasting. Choose something very specific—maybe one of your personal challenges or a condition with someone in your family or someone else. Focus, fast, and pray. It seems that every time the scriptures refer to fasting, prayer is also mentioned. They go together.

### **4. Do I go to bed early and get up early?**

Some of you may wonder what this has to do with spirituality. Remember the scripture "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).

Barbara, my wife, and I had the choice experience of being asked to be chauffeur for President and Sister Marion G. Romney and drove them from Provo to their home in Salt Lake City. Along the way, President Romney shared some of his personal experiences from when he was first called to serve as a General Authority in 1941. He had been serving as a stake president at the time and had gone to general conference. To his amazement, he was sustained as a new General Authority—an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve—without his prior knowledge; no one had talked to him about the calling before the session started. He was shocked and very nervous. He felt that he needed some advice, so he went to Elder Harold B. Lee, a relatively new member of the Quorum of the Twelve and a former contemporary as a stake president. Elder Romney asked him for advice about how to be successful as a General Authority.

Elder Lee spoke about the necessity of receiving personal revelation in order to be effective and said: "If you are to be successful as a General Authority, you will need to be inspired. You will need to receive revelation. 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 insight and inspiration 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.”

In my own life, I also know that is true.

## **5. Am I essentially a happy person?**

I want to ask you to do something right now—smile. Force it if you have to. Some people smile very naturally. Some may be happy but haven’t told their faces about it yet.

Your level of spirituality is also directly related to how well you fill the Lord’s commandments to “Be of good cheer” and “Lift up your heart and rejoice” (D&C 31:3). How many times in the scriptures did the Lord command us to be of good cheer? He didn’t say, “Be of good cheer if everything is going well, if you have enough money to pay all your bills, if your biorhythms are up,” or whatever. No. For us to be of good cheer is a commandment and not merely a suggestion.

Here is a practical suggestion that has helped me in the past. Take a sheet of paper and write on it a list of the blessings you consider to be important in whatever order they come to your mind. Then place them in order of priority. What is your most precious blessing? Probably somewhere near the top of your list will be the big “Four Fs”—your faith, family, freedom, and friends.

Note how many blessings you have at the top of the list for which you would hope to have the courage to give up your mortal lives to protect. Then note how far down the list you go before you come to any blessing that you can buy for money. The most precious blessings are without price; they are priceless.

On those days when you don’t feel like smiling, take out your list, read it, and then you can smile very naturally.

## **6. Do I work hard?**

Thrust in your sickle with all your heart, might, mind, and strength (see D&C 4:2; D&C 31:5).

I have asked mission presidents in many parts of the world this question: “How many missionaries do you have in your mission who are really spiritual and also lazy?” There isn’t one in all the world. Laziness and spirituality don’t go together. The most spiritual people I know are also some of the hardest-working people I have ever met.

So if you want to increase your level of spirituality, work hard. Magnify your callings within the Church. Really work!

## **7. Am I more concerned about *how* than *where* I serve?**

Some people get caught up with concern about position or status—something like the person who prayed, “Father, I want to serve; use me ... in an *executive* position.” Don’t be like the young, handsome, enthusiastic elder who asked me on the first day he arrived at the MTC in

Provo, “President, do you know what my major goal is in my mission?” Of course I didn’t know. He said, “My main goal is to become assistant to the president of my mission!”

How much better it would have been for him to have said something like this: “President, the main goal I have on my mission is to be a worthy representative of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to serve Him with all my heart, might, mind, and strength. I would be happy to serve in whatever part of the mission and in whatever assignment I am given. I just want to serve.”

Remember that even the Savior performed the humblest acts of service. If there ever comes a time when we get concerned about where we are serving or why someone else is called to do this or that, rather than us, think of the Savior in that Upper Room when He, as the greatest of all, the Creator of worlds without number, our Savior and Redeemer, took the basin, water, and towel and knelt before His disciples, performing that humble act of service by washing His disciples’ feet. After overcoming Peter’s reluctance and finishing the process, He asked them:

“Know ye what I have done to you?”

“Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:12–17).

## **8. Do I love everyone—even enemies—and keep romantic feelings in their proper perspective?**

People who love people have an easier time being spiritual. In that Upper Room, the Lord issued a new commandment: “That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

Love is a difficult word to understand in the English language. For example, I could say to someone that “I love you.” I used exactly those same words this morning speaking to my wife, Barbara, and I meant something very different. We need to know who is speaking to whom in what context. The Greeks don’t have the same problem because they have three different words for *love*. The first is *eros*, or romantic love. The English word *erotic* comes from that Greek root. The second is *philia*, or brotherly love. The U.S. “City of Brotherly Love,” Philadelphia, gets its name from that Greek root. The third is *agape*, or Godlike love, the kind of love that enables our Father in Heaven and the Lord to love us even though we are not perfect. I understand that each

time in the Greek text of the New Testament when the Lord commands us to love our enemies, it is *agape* that is used.

Here is a very important point for all of us to remember. If we want to cultivate spirituality, we should love everyone at the levels of *agape* or *philia*, but when it comes to *eros*, or romantic love, we are *not* commanded to love everyone. In fact, the full expression of romantic physical affection is intended by the Lord for two people inside the bonds of marriage. If we follow that counsel, our spirituality will increase. If we don't, we will lose the Spirit almost immediately.

It is interesting to note that at the age that the natural attraction toward members of the opposite sex is as high as it likely will ever be, what does the Lord do? He calls young men on missions and expects them to go two years with no more physical contact with a member of the opposite sex than shaking hands briefly. The miracle is that almost all of the missionaries rise to that challenge brilliantly. For the few who do not, it is a personal disaster. When an elder who has followed this guideline returns home and finds someone he can convince to become his eternal companion, he brings to her, his future wife, the great gift of a husband and future father of her children who has learned self-control. He is one who is not driven by every feeling that comes into his system. He is in control. The Church's marriages are stronger because of so many who have learned this self-control.

### **9. Do I strive for oneness with others as well as within myself, between my ideal and actual self?**

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord commanded us to become perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect. In the Book of Mormon the resurrected Lord asked the rhetorical question, "What manner of men ought ye to be?" and then he answered his own question, "Even as I am" (3 Ne. 27:27).

In the Upper Room, just before the Lord left to go to the Garden of Gethsemane, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and in the presence of His Apostles offered what has come to be called the intercessory prayer. The prayer is found in John, chapter 17. President David O. McKay said that there is no more important chapter in the Bible. In that unique setting, the Lord prayed over and over that His disciples would become one as He and His Father were one (see John 17:11, 21–22).

How are they one? They know perfectly what the ideal person ought to be, and that is exactly what they are. There is a perfect oneness or congruity between their ideal and actual lives. They are one. That is not always the case with us. We often do not actually measure up to what we know we ideally ought to be. Sometimes we are not "one" as we are commanded to become. In order to become one, we need to engage in the process of the "at-one-ment," or making the Atonement of Jesus Christ operative in our lives. We can grow toward that perfect oneness by applying those basic principles of faith in Christ unto repentance. Thus we can change, and our actual lives will come closer each day to becoming one with our ideal selves. If we are moving in that positive direction, the Spirit will be with us, but if we are going in the other direction, it will not. As the Lord said, "Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

## **10. Do I share my testimony with others?**

The Lord is pleased with us when we “open our mouths” and share with others the conviction we have of the truths of the restored gospel (see D&C 33:7–10; D&C 60:2). Among the most important functions of the Holy Ghost are to testify of the Father and the Son and to be a guide to truth. When we are bearing testimony of truth, the power of the Holy Ghost confirms that truth within our hearts. Even if others don’t choose to accept our testimonies of the truth, we are nevertheless helped spiritually. That is one of the reasons missionaries grow so much spiritually while they are on their missions. We are commanded to open our mouths and share our testimonies with others.

In summary, in order to increase in spirituality, we must:

1. Read scriptures daily.
2. Really pray and not just say prayers.
3. Fast meaningfully.
4. Go to bed early and get up early.
5. Be of good cheer.
6. Work hard.
7. Be more concerned about *how* than *where* we serve.
8. Love everyone, but keep romantic feelings in their proper place.
9. Become more nearly one between our ideal and actual selves.
10. Open our mouths and bear testimony of truth.

If you can respond more positively each time you ask yourself these 10 questions, you will be increasing in spirituality. You will be happier and, in those things that matter most in life, you will be more successful.

*Gospel topics:* fasting, love, prayer, scriptures, spirituality, testimony

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USU Extension Service publication: Water Storage

This publication is included in the folder for Lesson 4, or may be found at:

[http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN\\_176.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_176.pdf)

BYU Food Science Research Study Report: shelf lives of food storage

This report is included in the folder for Lesson 4.

Price list from LDS Church dry-pack cannery (Magna)

You will need to obtain a current cannery pricelist from your ward food-storage specialist.

Price list from Honeyville Grain

Current pricelists may be obtained by calling Honeyville Grain (at 801-972-2168) and requesting a faxed copy.

## 72-hour Comfort Kits guide

A copy of the .pdf file is included in the Lesson 4 Folder, or may be found at:

<http://www.seattle.gov/html/citizen/docs/72HourKit.pdf>

## Are You Prepared?

Can you answer YES to each of these questions or do you need to work on them for your home?

1. Has your family rehearsed fire escape routes from your home?
2. Does your family know what to do before, during and after an earthquake or other emergency situation?
3. Do you have heavy objects hanging over beds that can fall during an earthquake?
4. Do you have access to an operational flashlight in every occupied bedroom? (Use of candles is not recommended unless you are sure there is no leaking gas.)
5. Do you keep shoes near your bed to protect your feet against broken glass?
6. If a water line was ruptured during an earthquake, do you know how to shut off the main water line to your house?
7. Can this water valve be turned off by hand without the use of a tool? Do you have a tool if one is needed?
8. Do you know where the main gas shut-off valve to your house is located?
9. If you smell gas, do you know how and would you be able to shut off this valve?
10. Gas valves usually cannot be turned off by hand. Is there a tool near your valve?
11. Would you be able to safely restart your furnace when gas is safely available?
12. Do you have working smoke alarms in the proper places to warn you of fire? Carbon monoxide alarms?
13. In case of a minor fire, do you have a fire extinguisher that you know how to operate? (The fire department will test yours for free.)
14. Do you have duplicate keys and copies of important insurance and other papers stored outside your home?
15. Do you have a functional emergency radio to receive emergency information?
16. If you and your family had to evacuate your home, have you identified an outside meeting place?

### **If an emergency lasted for 3 days (72 hours) before help was available to you and your family . . .**

17. Would you have sufficient food?
18. Would you have the means to cook food without gas and electricity?
19. Would you have sufficient water for drinking, cooking, and sanitary needs?
20. Do you have access to a 72-hour evacuation kit?
21. Would you be able to carry or transport these kits?
22. Have you established an out-of-state contact?
23. Do you have a first-aid kit in your home and in each car?
24. So you have work gloves and some tools for minor rescue and cleanup?
25. Do you have emergency cash on hand? (During emergencies, banks and ATM machines are closed.)

26. Without electricity and gas, do you have means to heat at least part of your house?  
(Think of how to cover broken windows.)
27. If you need medications, do you have a month's supply on hand?
28. Do you have a plan for toilet facilities if there is an extended water shortage?
29. Do you have a supply of food, clothing, and fuel where appropriate: For six months? For a year?

## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Included in the Lesson 4 folder for the members' reference is a USU Extension Service publication called the "Use It or Lose It Food Storage Cooking School"—this contains a good overall summary of how to store the basic food-storage items, and many recipes for using them. This publication is available online at:  
[http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN\\_503.pdf](http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_503.pdf)

Also included here is a 2001 *Ensign* article called "Sturdy Shoes and a Waterproof Tent" that is a condensation of a presentation by William B. Hartley from the 1985 Sidney Sperry Symposium, called "Personal and Family Preparedness: Lessons from Church History," available in *Principles of the Gospel in Practice* (Randall Book Co., Salt Lake City, Utah, 1985), ISBN: 0-934126-76-3.

## **Sturdy Shoes and a Waterproof Tent**

By William G. Hartley

Church history teaches many lessons about personal preparedness.

*Ensign*, Oct. 2001, 38

“If men could learn from history, what lessons it might teach us!” wrote Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1831.<sup>(1)</sup> While it may sound surprising, a look at Church history can teach us about preparedness for our day.

### **Lessons from Crossing the Plains**

For more than 60,000 Saints who journeyed to Utah during the wagon train period (1846–69), outdoor trail realities tested their preparation and showed what worked and what didn’t.

*Lesson 1:* When we ignore preparedness counsel, we can expect unhappy consequences. Before leaving Nauvoo, members had Church-published lists of what to take with them. But when the first companies left in February 1846, several hundred members panicked and crossed the Mississippi River without proper clothes, food, or shelter. As a result, they brought suffering upon themselves, slowed down others, and drained resources from those properly prepared.

*Lesson 2:* Protect against nature. Trail death tolls reveal that the highest numbers of deaths were among infants and the elderly. Some pioneers became cold and wet because wagon covers and tents were not waterproof. Others suffered sunburns when they lost their hats. Their lips chapped from the dry air, wind, and sun. Many suffered diarrhea and lacked medicine to stop it. Some travelers, while dressed properly for summer heat, lacked coats and gloves for the cold mountain temperatures experienced before reaching the Salt Lake Valley. In addition, pioneers had to guard against wildlife, particularly snakes and wolves. In many campsites they suffered from swarms of mosquitoes that badly hurt children and angered horses and cattle.

*Lesson 3:* Be accident cautious. Accidents injured or killed many on the trail. Pioneers lamented their carelessness when they lost hats, binoculars, knives, axes, guns, watches, pans, shovels, and even horses and cattle. A few became so busy and distracted that even their children wandered away and became lost. When emergencies occur, we must be extra careful not to hurt ourselves by falls, burns, knife and axe cuts, or similar accidents. We need to be strict about putting things away.

*Lesson 4:* We should protect ourselves from uncaring or dishonest individuals. Pioneers learned to guard against potential theft, assault, and even kidnapping. Some were put in charge of enforcing basic rules of conduct and expelling those who would not cooperate. And, as happens in groups during major crises, pioneers had to tune out complainers, whiners, and even rabble-rousers and doomsayers.

*Lesson 5:* Protect against discouragement.

Our best protection against discouragement during a crisis is to maintain our health by not becoming overly exhausted, which can lead to sickness and bad judgment. Some unwise pioneers were afraid to ask for help when they needed it, thereby bringing suffering upon themselves and those they cared for. Most wagon train travelers, in order to keep up their spirits, made friends with fellow travelers, held dances, sang together, and helped those whose wagons broke down or who became ill.

*Lesson 6:* Be creative and adaptive in difficult times.

Pioneer women took advantage of the bumpiness of the wagons and filled tubs with soap, water, and dirty clothes. By day's end the clothes had been agitated clean. Some women also put cream into containers hung underneath the wagon and let the jostling churn the cream into butter.

### **Lessons from the Mormon Battalion's March**

In 1846–47, the majority of the Mormon Battalion, an infantry unit of nearly 500 men in the U.S. Army of the West during the Mexican War, marched about 2,000 miles from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to San Diego, California.(2) We learn several lessons from their experiences.

*Lesson 1:* During a crisis we may need to leave our family to meet community needs.

On 3 July 1846, President Brigham Young, Elder Heber C. Kimball, and Elder Willard Richards began recruiting men for the Mormon Battalion. Recruiting continued until 20 July. At noon on Tuesday, 21 July, the battalion began its historic march. All this took place in the midst of the members' migration across Iowa and left hundreds of women and children to cross the plains without these men to help them.

*Lesson 2:* Water-purifying pills or filters are essential.

Thirsty people will drink contaminated water, if necessary. Crossing a dry stretch in Kansas, the battalion suffered severely from heat and lack of water. So thirsty were they that they drove a herd of buffalo from an insect-infested pond and gladly drank the discolored and disgusting water. "No luxury was ever more thankfully received," Sergeant Daniel Tyler wrote. Afterwards, "many were attacked with summer complaint."(3)

*Lesson 3:* Writing materials and a camera are helpful resources.

About 20 soldiers kept diaries during the trek, using a strange assortment of notebooks and papers--whatever they could find to write on. In order to "show" what he was experiencing, one man drew sketches in his diary.

*Lesson 4:* Bread or other grain products are important.

In January 1847 at Warner's Ranch in southern California, previously famished battalion men received four pounds of beef a day as their ration. Beef, however, did not satisfy their hunger. The men craved bread, which was unavailable.

### **Lessons from the Saluda Disaster**

On Good Friday morning, 9 April 1852, the Missouri river-boat *Saluda* blew up near Lexington, Missouri, killing nearly two dozen Latter-day Saints traveling from St. Louis to Council Bluffs on their way west to Utah. Important lessons are learned from this tragedy.

*Lesson 1:* When the Spirit cautions us against something, we need to obey.

One passenger, William C. Dunbar, later admitted he had ignored warnings from the Holy Spirit to stay off the vessel. When Latter-day Saint agents chartered the old, slow *Saluda* to move Saints from St. Louis upriver to the wagon train camps, Brother Dunbar and his friend Duncan Campbell looked it over. Both felt strongly impressed that “something awful was going to happen,” such that each saw tears coursing down the other’s cheek. This was a warning that went unheeded. By contrast, Abraham O. Smoot was similarly prompted and refused to board the boat, even when offered free passage.

Despite his bad feelings about the *Saluda*, Brother Dunbar determined that he and his wife, Helen, and their two small children would go. But on departure morning the Dunbar family missed the boat because supplies they purchased did not show up on time. Brother Dunbar later reflected that “some friendly unseen power was at work in my behalf, trying to prevent me from going on board with my family.” Two days later they boarded another riverboat, but Brother Dunbar insisted that its captain put him aboard the slower *Saluda* if they caught up with it so they could rejoin the Latter-day Saint company. Before long they caught up with the *Saluda*, but river ice prevented the Dunbars from transferring. Upriver the passengers on the Dunbars’ boat disembarked, but Brother Dunbar made the captain drift their boat back to a dock where the *Saluda* was waiting for the ice to clear. There the Dunbars boarded the *Saluda* the night before it blew up. They joined about 175 passengers, 90 of them Latter-day Saints.

The Dunbars slept that night behind a canvas wall on the deck—directly over the boat’s boilers. Friday morning Brother Dunbar stepped briefly to another part of the deck to watch the crew working. Stokers fired up the boilers so the *Saluda* could start upriver. When pumps shot cold water into the red-hot boilers, they exploded. The blast was “heard and felt” throughout nearby Lexington. Two-thirds of the *Saluda*’s superstructure disintegrated in a cloud of smoke, flame, and dust. Passengers were blown ashore and into the river.

Brother Dunbar wrote, “I witnessed just two revolutions of the paddle wheels, when I remember nothing more till I found myself lying on the bank of the river within three yards of the water’s edge, with my clothes drenching wet, and my head all covered with blood.” When conscious, he found the lifeless body of his one-year-old boy. Then, in a temporary hospital, he saw his wife, Helen, breathe her last. Searching among the dead, he found the body of his five-year-old daughter. He lost his entire family. For the rest of his life he regretted that he ignored several voices of warning.(4)

*Lesson 2:* Up-to-date rosters of people are important, and parents need wills that specify who should have their children.

To this day, no one knows for certain how many members were aboard the *Saluda*, how many were lost, or how many reached Utah. Lexington townspeople, with charitable instincts but who also wanted to save children from Mormonism, took a number of Latter-day Saint orphans into their homes and raised them. Leaders had no list to check off to see how many children they needed to locate and claim.

### **Lessons from the Pioneer Famine of 1856**

Members in Utah suffered through a harsh famine in early 1856 caused by a drought, grasshopper plague, and severe winter. From April to October 1855 no rains fell. Grasshoppers cleaned county after county of grain and fruit. Dry forests burned that fall. Deep winter snows and cold killed thousands of cattle. By January 1856 the pioneers faced starvation. Their efforts to survive suggest lessons about food storage, food shortages, and food rationing.

*Lesson 1:* In times of dire food shortages, we should be willing to share our personal food storage with others.

By mid-March 1856, wards were taking inventories to determine how much food was left in the community. It became clear that everyone would need to share what they had. Presidents Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball of the First Presidency, as well as many others who had supplies, reduced rations in their own families and helped those who were suffering. “I sell none for money,” President Kimball wrote, “but let it go where people are truly destitute. Dollars and cents do not count now.” (5)

By July 1856 the Church’s tithing office and the people were running short of supplies. One city bishop “found 5 lbs of flour on three blocks and no meat.”(6)

One sister recalled that during the famine she gave away flour. As her supply dwindled, she gave away a loaf of bread. Finally, with little flour left, she gave away slices of bread. People picked up crumbs when she cut the slices. “Women would offer me their jewelry, fine clothing, anything they had for bread,” she remembered.(7) Some people paid speculators \$24 per hundred pounds of flour, when the normal price was \$6. Bishop Aaron Johnson of Springville, Utah, sold flour at the going price of \$6 and refused to raise his rates, even though people would pay four times that price.(8)

*Lesson 2:* During times of famine we might choose to fast more often to provide for the needy.

In 1856 fasting made more food available for others. In April, President Brigham Young said that his family saved a considerable amount “by frequent fastings,” which they gave to the poor. One bishop whose ward was “very poor” said he “had nothing to begin with, but he immediately called a fast and the brethren have done pretty liberally.”(9)

*Lesson 3:* When the course of our normal life is disrupted, it helps to fill free time with constructive activities.

A history about circumstances in Spanish Fork, Utah, in 1856 includes this description: “Having no crops to gather, the settlers built bridges, made fences, opened a road up the canyon for the purpose of getting out wood poles and all the men turned out for weeks on these public works, donating their labor.”(10)

### **Lessons from the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire**

The U.S. earthquake against which all earthquakes are still measured is the San Francisco earthquake of 18 April 1906. The great quake caused terrible damage to buildings, roads, water systems, law enforcement, communications, and transportation. Fires broke out and caused more damage than the quake. Separations were common. Food, water, and sanitation became terrible problems.

Some 120 Church members--branch members, missionaries, and city visitors were in the city at the time. Some wrote about how they survived the quake.(11) Their accounts identify several problems we could face if caught in a major earthquake or other catastrophes, such as hurricanes, cyclones, tornadoes, or fires, and they provide several preparedness ideas.

*Lesson 1:* Have sturdy shoes and durable clothing nearby in case of a sudden nighttime emergency, whether at home or away from home.

The 1906 quake struck before morning while people were sleeping. Frightened people ran into the streets in nightclothes and barefoot. Mission president Joseph Robinson hiked all over San Francisco trying to locate and help Church members. Broken bricks and glass quickly shredded his shoes.

*Lesson 2:* Have fire extinguishers in our homes.

Less than four blocks away from the Church’s mission home, a woman cooking breakfast accidentally started a fire. Firemen were too busy to respond to this “ham and eggs” fire. By the early afternoon, in order to keep the fire from spreading, firemen had to dynamite the area where the mission home stood.

*Lesson 3:* Have emergency water on hand in sturdy, non-glass containers.

Faucets went dry when the water mains broke. Thirsty people broke into stores and bars to find liquid. Thirsty members, who flocked to the mission home, were glad to be offered bottled fruit (fortunately the bottles had not broken).

*Lesson 4:* Have minimal cleaning items, such as moist towelettes, toothpaste, deodorant, face towels, and even small bags of detergent.

“It was a real trial,” said missionary Elder Leo Gardner, bound for the Pacific islands, “to endure our thirst and to go without washing our faces and hands which were getting blacker with the dust and smoke.”(12)

*Lesson 5:* Have emergency food as we have been taught.

San Franciscans rushed to local markets to buy up bread, creating panic buying. By noon, as fires spread through the city, martial law was declared, and anyone trying to enter stores, even

store owners, were shot on sight as looters. Within a day or two the city provided bread for people who stood in breadlines that were four people wide and blocks long.

*Lesson 6:* It is important to have two or three meeting places where family members can find each other in case disaster strikes and the family is scattered.

President Robinson's toughest task for about a week was reuniting families separated during the disaster. Evacuations had become necessary. With homes damaged and the Church's mission home dynamited to create a firebreak, members scattered. President Robinson tried to let members know where other members were camped out by posting in the mission home ashes a sign indicating where the main Latter-day Saint camp was located.

*Lesson 7:* Be prepared to leave cherished belongings.

Fleeing the fires, many families grabbed belongings and tried to haul them on foot. One trunk "weighed a ton," as Harold Jenson described it in his diary.<sup>(13)</sup> One family member pushed a wheeled sewing machine. Harold strapped family belongings to his bicycle. Too burdened, the family eventually left some of their belongings on the roadside.

*Lesson 8:* Ignore wild rumors that spread in panics and don't pass them on.

The earthquake severed the city's communications with the outside world, so rumors spread that Los Angeles was destroyed, New York was no more, and that the Great Salt Lake had inundated Salt Lake City!

## **One Final Lesson**

Along with all of the practical lessons history teaches, one more lesson comes through: maintain good attitudes during troubled times. A sense of humor is like salve on a wound.

On 6 April 1846 about 2,000 Saints with about 400 covered wagons were bogging down in Iowa rains and mud, trying to reach campsites beside Locust Creek. "I was in the rain all day," President Young noted in his diary, "arranging the wagons, pitching tents, chopping wood until all were comfortable." That dreary day most members had good excuses to feel miserable. However, Patty Sessions noted in her diary that "[Brother] Brigham came up with his company driving his team in the rain and mud up to his kne[e]s as happy as a king."<sup>(14)</sup>

We would do well to follow Brother Brigham's example, as well as that set by other Latter-day Saints who have had to deal with disasters and crises. By learning from the lessons of the past, we better prepare ourselves for the future.

## Self-reliance

“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.” **President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985)**, *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77.

## Be Prepared

“While it is sincerely hoped that members do not get caught up in any hysteria or obsessive preparations for disasters, the Church continues its long-standing practice of encouraging members to be self-reliant and reasonably prepared.” **Bishop H. David Burton, Presiding Bishop**, “Conversation,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1999, 78.

*Gospel topics:* preparation, self-reliance, obedience, courage, compassion

## Notes

1. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 3rd ed. (1979), 157.
2. See Daniel Tyler, *A Concise History of the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War, 1846–1847* (1881); John Frank George Yurtinus, “A Ram in the Thicket: The Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War,” 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1975); Norma Baldwin Ricketts, *The Mormon Battalion: U.S. Army of the West, 1846–1848* (1996).
3. Tyler, *Concise History*, 159, 161.
4. See Andrew Jenson, “Church Emigration,” *Contributor*, July 1892, 408–14; see also *Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 9 Apr. 1852, 2–10; 13 May 1852, 2; 12 June 1852, 5.
5. Quoted in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1888), 405.
6. In Presiding Bishopric, Minutes of Bishops Meetings 1851–1884, 1 July 1856, Historical Department Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; hereafter cited as Church Archives.
7. Comments of Marinda N. Hyde, in Seventeenth Ward, Salt Lake Stake, Relief Society Minutes and Records, 26 Nov. 1876, Church Archives.
8. See Don Carlos Johnson, *A Brief History of Springville, Utah* (1900), 33.
9. Letter of Brigham Young to George Q. Cannon, 3 Apr. 1856, Brigham Young Letterbook 2, Church Archives.
10. In Ira A. Markham, “Welfare—Church Plan Used in 1856,” *Deseret News*, 31 Aug. 1940, Church section, 1–2.
11. See William G. Hartley, “Saints and the San Francisco Earthquake,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, fall 1983, 431–59; “Latter-day Saints and the San Francisco Earthquake,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 22–29.
12. Quoted in Hartley, *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 27.
13. Quoted in Hartley, *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 27.

14. *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846–1847*, ed. Elden J. Watson (1971), 126; Donna Toland Smart, ed., *Mormon Midwife: The 1846–1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions* (1997), 41.

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