

last few years. I hope that these indications are real, that they show a real determination on our part to live closer to God and serve him better.

STRIVE FOR PERFECTION

I love this service; I love the people. I am always encouraged when I see these signs of faith on their part. We're never perfect—we will never be perfect—but we should strive for perfection, and the development of faith is the thing that will bring it. My faith prompts me to believe that God has a design for the world that he expects us to realize. And the best way for us to do that is to pay attention to today. Yesterday has gone. It will never come back. Today is always with us so long as we live. Tomorrow is a hope only, so today we must look to ourselves, to our behavior, look to our faith in ourselves and in God. If we are satisfied with it, all well and good! If we are not, let's increase it. Let's make such changes in our program and in our attitudes that will increase that faith. I have said we should have faith in each other. We should have faith in our leadership, in the ward, in the stake, in the general officers of the Church. I stand here to bear testimony to you that in all my associations with the leadership of the Church above me, I have seen nothing but honest purpose. Let's try and develop that type of faith. Let's develop a loyalty to the organization that will prompt us to live its standards. Overcoming the temptations of the world and living the standards of the Church should be a matter of loyalty to us, a matter of self-discipline. We should take pride in ourselves that we can live the will of the Church, whether we always know the reason for it or not. It is my feeling and my testimony that out of the inspiration of God which comes to these brethren, comes a policy for the Church that is wise and well-designed, that will be for the welfare and the progress of every man and every woman that will follow it.

May God give us this faith in ourselves, faith in those who lead us, faith in our ultimate destiny that will enable us to carry on, without misgivings and without fear, into the future; that will enable us to carve out our destiny; that will ultimately bring us back to the presence of God in exaltation, I pray, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

I have paid particular attention in this conference to the prayers that have been offered. They have been indeed a good example for all of us to follow. I hope that I will receive in turn my full share of prayers asked in behalf of those who take part here in this conference as I am sure those who have preceded me have received.

In the beginning, as Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, they were shut out from the presence of the Lord, but the Lord did not expect them to be without some contact with him. That one avenue he left open for man to reach God while in this life of mortality was prayer; so Adam called upon God, and he received guidance in all things. Neither does God expect us to get along without his help. Throughout the Old and New Testaments and the Book of Mormon the Lord gave instructions to pray constantly. The Doctrine and Covenants is filled with like exhortations. The disciples asked the Savior on one occasion, "Lord, teach us to pray."

PRAY TO FATHER

Among other things the Lord said, "Pray to our *Father in heaven*." And herein, I think that we need to be careful, because very often we open our prayer with the expression of praying to our Father in heaven, then during the prayer we use the term "Lord," and before we are through it is hard to tell whether we are addressing the Father or his Son, Jesus Christ. We should pray to our Father in heaven, for he is indeed the Father of all mankind on the earth, and because he is our Father, he wants us to come to him often with our joys and our sorrows and thank him for all that he has given us. Then the Savior gave us a good suggestive sample of the things to pray for and how to pray. (See Luke 11:1-2.)

As Jesus told his Disciples, our Father in heaven knows what we are in need of before we start; yet he has commanded us to pray. He wants us to be thoughtful of others as we are of ourselves. "Forgive us as we forgive our debtors." He did not intend that we should always use the exact words that he gave in the sample or to use pre-written prayers. In so doing we would become as those Christ referred to when he said, "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." Do you think Joseph Smith would have received that wonderful manifestation if he had simply read a prayer? How much of our heart goes into a prayer of that nature? How much faith can we exercise with words and thoughts that are not our own? Prayer without faith is dead, and if we add to the faith which President Ivins has just spoken to us about, that prayer, I'm sure will have results, and we'll have an increase of the statistics President Ivins has referred to in actual fact and continue as such.

BE IN TUNE

We do not read our prayers in this Church, but some of us get in almost as bad a rut. We are so bound by set words and phrases at times that we hardly remember what we are saying. We must have a spirit of deep humility, of repentance, an open mind, to

receive the will of God. We must not be hampered by any anger or meanness or hardness of heart, or any selfish desires. We must tune our minds and our hearts to the Spirit of God just as we tune our radio to receive the program from the broadcasting station. We want no interfering static from outside influences. In the attitude of true repentance we should seek forgiveness of our past mistakes and guidance for improvement. I like the little poem used so much in our home:

To say my prayer is not to pray,
Unless I mean the words I say,
Unless I think to whom I speak,
And with my heart his favor seek.

Then let me, when I come to pray,
Not only mean the words I say,
But let me strive with earnest care,
To have my heart go with my prayer.

SINCERITY OF CHILDREN

Unless our whole heart is in what we are doing, we are not really praying. A child is naturally sincere and can be taught to pray almost with its first words. His own private prayer should become a habit never to be broken. If he greets the day with a prayer for guidance and help, if he goes to sleep with a prayer of thanksgiving, more than half the battle is won in trying to do right. The Lord tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants, sixty-eighth section, twenty-eighth verse:

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord.

Children will learn more from observation than they ever will from just being told. If parents have a prayerful attitude, the children are more than likely to have the same. Family prayer cannot be too highly praised. In no other way can we obtain such a spirit of unity, nor is there any better place for the child to learn to pray in public. The Lord also tells us in the Doctrine and Covenants, nineteenth section and twenty-eighth verse:

And again, I command thee that thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private."

FAMILY PRAYER

It is surprising how soon a child can take his turn in family prayer, and just think of the good that comes to the family. If we kneel down together and unitedly thank God for his many blessings; pray for guidance, for peace and love in our hearts; if we pray for others who are in need; for the advancement of God's work here; can it help but make our home a better place? Can we help but

be more thoughtful of others, more kind and loving? A man and wife who will pray together and pray vocally will have more love and contentment in their home. If we would learn to call upon God more often, we should not have to call upon the divorce courts so much. Teach your children the one source of strength that will never fail them. Help them to realize that they have an everlasting friend, one that they can call upon when their hearts are filled with joy as well as when they are filled with doubt or sadness or despair. Then when they have grown up and are on their own, living at home, away at school, or in the far-flung battlefields of war, they have God as their partner; they are not afraid. This would bring peace, happiness, and joy. A sin-sick world could be lifted from its depths if we could only turn to the Lord in prayer. What more could we do for our children? I pronounce the blessings of God upon all who humbly seek him in prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MILTON R. HUNTER

Of the First Council of the Seventy

This is indeed a humbling experience—to occupy this position. I do, therefore, ask an interest in your faith and prayers and that the Spirit of God might rest down upon me.

More than two thousand years ago an ancient Hebrew prophet, speaking for the Lord, said,

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. (Malachi 3:8.)

FAITH EXHIBITED

During the past five and one-half years since I was made a member of the First Council of the Seventy, I have had the wonderful experience and opportunity to travel throughout the stakes of Zion and in the mission fields, I have observed with much joy the great amount of faith expressed and exhibited by the Latter-day Saints. Thousands and thousands of them are paying their full tithes and offerings to the Lord, contributing in the welfare programs, sending their sons and daughters into the mission fields, and in practically all respects living the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are doing all of those things and much more because they know that God lives; they know that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior of the world; they know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and that the true gospel has been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith in our day.

I have ofttimes felt that I am sure God is pleased with the Church in general and with many of the Latter-day Saints in particular.