

communicate with God and with one another. Hold family prayer each morning and evening; have individual prayer. Teach your children to "listen" when they pray. Learn to listen to your children. It is often true that 90 percent of our help comes from listening only. Learn to ponder. Take time to meditate.

Eliminate more of the worldly commercial entertainment now channeled into your home. In its place, learn the simple arts and develop individual skills. There is great virtue in training your boys to use building tools and your girls to use homemaking tools. This develops creativity, talent, and initiative. It gives expression to individual talents and encourages thrift and industry.

Work and play together

Train your children to work. I believe in the gospel of work. Train them to assume responsibility. Provide opportunity for service to one another and to their parents. Chores are blessings in overalls. Their value remains long after the duty is done.

Organize activities that bring parents and children together. Working together is more fun than working alone. Learn also to play. Play together as families. Make your family a strong, united unit of the Church.

We had better be organized as families. We had better be able to meet trouble. There will no doubt be plenty of it ahead of us. We had better be prepared—so that we need not fear!

Be prepared

All of this prepares us against the days foretold in the scriptures.

When I was a little boy, I used to go from our house up to Halls' to get milk each morning. I had heard about the "burning" predicted in the scriptures. I once wondered how we could be burned. I could understand how New York City or even Salt Lake City could burn up—with its buildings close together. But, I was sure that fire would never touch us. Fire couldn't possibly jump from Halls' barn across our garden to our house—not even the biggest fire I had ever seen. I felt safe in Manti.

These were a little boy's thoughts. Since then, I've learned about things that can burn without having to have buildings close together.

The Lord has said: "My people will I preserve." And, ". . . if ye are prepared, ye need not fear."

I testify that he lives to fulfill his promise. Jesus is the Christ. He will come one day. President Joseph Fielding Smith is a living prophet, and I love him and sustain him and his counselors with all my heart, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

We have just listened to Elder A. Theodore Tuttle. Bishop Robert L. Simpson, first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, will be the next speaker. He will be followed by the congregation and choir joining in singing, "O Say What Is Truth."

Bishop Robert L. Simpson

Of the Presiding Bishopric

● My dear brethren and sisters: I am grateful to my Heavenly Father for this opportunity. I want each of you to know the strength that we feel in your presence. I am sure you come to conference to receive, but I want to promise you that you also give as you come to general conference, because we are the recipients of that giving. As we

look at you and as we feel your unity and your strength and your combined faith, we feel built up, and we are better able to carry out our assignments. Without that feeling, we couldn't do it, I promise you.

Fatherhood of God

May I bear you my witness that I

Sunday, April 5

Second Day

know that God lives. I know it just as surely as I stand here, and I know that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Fielding Smith is a prophet of God. And because he is a prophet, those things that he says are true. Just yesterday he gave two great discourses, and one of the things that he said I shall ever remember, for it was something that was taught me even as a child at the knee of my mother. He said, "God is our Father, and we are his children." O that the world, three billion people, could listen to a prophet of God and have this firm thought, this basic and fundamental concept, as an anchor to their lives.

Not too long ago a schoolteacher, anxious to extract some participation from her class of third graders on the subject of modern-day progress, asked her little ones a simple question:

"Can anyone here name one important thing in this world that was not here ten years ago?" After a few moments of thinking, an eager and confident eight-year-old boy near the back raised his hand. His answer: "Yes—me." As humorous as this incident might sound on the surface, I am certain that Heavenly Father smiled approvingly at the boy's response, a response that was made in all seriousness.

Father-to-son relationship

This lad, in my mind, is a modern-day David, for it was he who declared centuries ago:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

"For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." (Ps. 8:3-6.)

If the world could but learn and have feelings about this one basic concept of God to man, of father-to-

son relationship, many of our mortal frustrations and contentions could be greatly diminished.

Just a couple of days ago in Primary conference, we were reminded once again by the little children: "I am a child of God, and he has sent me here." This is a basic doctrine, and all mankind needs to believe it.

Basic family relationships

We seem so inclined to forget that there are certain basic and fundamental relationships within the human family that do not alter as the scene changes from one side of the veil to the other. One of those concepts, in my opinion, is the right that every child has to communicate with and obtain assistance from his father, mortal and heavenly. Each of us has two fathers—a spiritual father and an earthly father. Not only that, but I have also been taught that every parent has the right and the capacity to know and be concerned about the welfare of his children. It is an eternal commission and right shared by the father of your physical body and the father of your spirit.

God knows his offspring

Why must we continually limit God, our Eternal Father, and his abilities by our own mortal incapacities, immaturities, and our earthbound, physical restrictions? Should he who has the ability to create worlds and father billions of children be denied the right to know his offspring? Of course not. Every father has that privilege. To think otherwise is inconsistent with all that we hold as basic and fundamental in life—life here, life before, and life hereafter.

May I be bold enough to suggest that your Heavenly Father knows you personally and can call you by name—yes, you plus three billion other children who share this world with you. And you can add to that family circle the billions upon billions who have lived and died since Father Adam. This thought itself is admittedly almost beyond the comprehension of mortal

understanding, but please, let us not limit the Creator of heaven and earth in any way, for his powers are limitless, and the basic concept must hold that a father knows his children.

Prayer is heard

As a child of God kneels to pray, that individual must believe implicitly that his prayer is being heard by him to whom the prayer is addressed. The thought that our Heavenly Father is too busy or that our message is being recorded by celestial computers for possible future consideration is unthinkable and inconsistent with all we have been taught by his holy prophets.

It was thrilling to listen to a father relate this story about his three-year-old youngster recently, as they knelt by the crib in the usual manner for the little fellow to say his simple bedtime prayer. Eyes closed—heads bowed—seconds passed, and there were no words spoken by the child. Just about the time Dad was going to open his eyes to check the lengthy delay, little Tommy was on his feet and climbing into bed. "How about your prayers?" asked Dad. "I said my prayers," came the reply. "But son, Daddy didn't hear you." Then followed the child's classic statement: "But Daddy, I wasn't talking to you."

Communication not in vain

Even three-year-olds have personal, private matters to discuss with Heavenly Father from time to time. But most important of all is the implicit faith that the communication is not in vain. Each word is finding its way to a Father who is not too busy, a Father who has the ability to hear, to judge, and to act for our benefit. This must be the personal faith of us all regardless of our age, regardless of our station in life, regardless of how long it has been, regardless of how grievous the confidence might be.

"... this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) His total purpose and plan is involved in our success. It's natural for a father to want success for his offspring. A son or daughter should want to please his

parents and to help guarantee an eternal relationship with them.

The vine and the branches

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" A loving Father in heaven, concerned for the welfare of his child, might well answer: "Why, you are my son, you are my daughter. I love you very much. I listen carefully each day, hoping to hear from you. I want so to one day have you back where you belong. Please share with me your innermost thoughts, your hopes, yes, and particularly your problems. I know I can help, but listen carefully, child—don't close the door when I give you the answer. I need you very much, just as you need me." And I suppose that a fitting climax to such comments that a loving Heavenly Father might conceivably utter to any one of his children could well be couched in the same language that the Savior used as he spoke tenderly through John:

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:5, 7.) What a promise!

We are children of God. He is our Father in very deed. May we revere that relationship. Without this lofty concept as the foundation of our lives, our chances for temporal happiness and true success are extremely limited; our possibility for eternal joy and exaltation is nonexistent. But with it in sharp focus and meaningful on a daily basis, we will best be able to comprehend and realize the great statement that "men are, that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25.) I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Bishop Robert L. Simpson of the Presiding Bishopric has just spoken to us.

The congregation and choir will now join in singing, "O Say What Is Truth."