

women, whose heart was aching for companionship and a more fulfilling life, asked, "Why don't you get a husband?" She replied in good humor, "Brother, I would love to, but I can't go pick one off a tree."

Reaching the one will involve reaching out in many ways. Recent research indicates that 40 percent of the 18- to 22-year-olds feel that they do not have a single friend they can rely upon. Gerald A. Speedy, commenting on this problem, said, "Think what it would be like not to have a single friend. It is almost impossible to comprehend. Without a friend, a person is in a state of potential crisis."

Personal testimony

I bear solemn witness to the divinity of this great and marvelous work and to the continuing inspiration that has come from the Lord through his chosen prophet, who has been far ahead of all of the thinking and the planning that has been done. Somehow, some way, we must reach the one, every single one, for they

are "chosen vessels" unto the Lord. President Lee's message to the single members is sublime: "To you, the words of the Master have a special meaning: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.'" (Matt. 10:39.) That this may be so, I pray humbly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

The congregation and chorus will now join in singing, "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling."

The song, "Israel, Israel, God Is Calling," was sung by the congregation.

President Lee

We will now be pleased to hear from President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency.

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brethren of the priesthood:

I encourage each of us and, if I had the power, I would inspire each of us to magnify our callings in the priesthood.

Covenant of priesthood bearers

When we accepted ordination to the priesthood, we covenanted with the Lord that we would magnify our callings. At the same time, he covenanted with us that if we do so, we shall be "sanctified by the Spirit unto

the renewing of [our] bodies" and "become the sons of . . . Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God," and unto us shall be given all that the "Father hath." (See D&C 84:33-38.)

The specified penalty for breaking our covenant and "altogether [turning] therefrom" is that we "shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come." (D&C 84:41.)

The Lord further said to the brethren assembled at the time he revealed the covenant:

"And I now give unto you a

commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

"For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:43-44.)

In order to magnify our callings in the priesthood, three things at least are necessary:

One is that we have a motivating desire to do so.

Another is that we search and ponder the words of eternal life.

And a third is that we pray.

Motivating desire

Over and over again the scriptures teach that men receive from the Lord according to their desires. Alma declared:

"... I know that [God] granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction." (Al. 29:4.)

Jesus acted on this principle. In John's parchment record, he wrote:

"... the Lord said unto me: John, my beloved, what desirest thou? ...

"And I said unto him: Lord, give unto me power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee.

"And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and people." (D&C 7:1-3.)

At the opening of this last dispensation, the Lord said to the Prophet's father: "... if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work." (D&C 4:3.)

And two months later he said to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: "... as you desire of me so it shall be unto you." (D&C 6:8.)

The importance of desire is dramatically pointed up in this quotation from the 18th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"And now, behold, there are others who are called to declare my gospel, both unto Gentile and unto Jew;

"Yea, even twelve; and the Twelve shall be my disciples, and they shall take upon them my name; and the Twelve are they who shall *desire* to take upon them my name with full purpose of heart.

"And if they *desire* to take upon them my name with full purpose of heart, they are called. . . .

"And now, behold, I give unto you, Oliver Cowdery, and also unto David Whitmer, that you shall search out the Twelve, who shall have the *desires* of which I have spoken;

"And by their *desires* and their works you shall know them." (D&C 18:26-28, 37-38. Italics added.)

The desire these men were to have was not a desire to be called to an office. It was a desire to take upon themselves the name of Christ "with full purpose of heart."

Self-serving ambition

I remember one occasion in the mission field when I was trying to stir an interest in a discouraged missionary. I finally asked him, "Isn't there anything that you desire?" He said, "Yes, Brother Romney, I desire to be an apostle."

No one should seek to be appointed to any particular office in the Church. Such an aspiration is not a righteous desire; it is a self-serving ambition. We should have a motivating desire to magnify our callings in the priesthood, whatever they may be. We should demonstrate that desire by living the gospel and diligently performing whatever service we are called upon to render. Holding a particular office in the

Church will never save a person. One's salvation depends upon how well he discharges the duties of the service to which he is called. The Prophet Joseph said:

"From a retrospect of the requirements of the servants of God to preach the Gospel, we find few qualified even to be Priests, and if a Priest understands his duty, his calling, and ministry, and preaches by the Holy Ghost, his enjoyment is as great as if he were one of the Presidency; and his services are necessary in the body, as are also those of Teachers and Deacons." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [Deseret Book Co., 1961], p. 112).

Motivating conviction

Nor is an effective desire a mere wish. It is not impassive; it is a motivating conviction which moves one to action. One of the things it impels a priesthood bearer to do is to search and ponder the words of eternal life.

Since we cannot "live by [the words which] proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" unless we know what they are, it is imperative that we study them. This the Lord has directed us to do.

As the Jews disputed with Jesus because he said that God was his Father, he pointedly responded: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39.)

In the Lord's preface to his Book of Commandments, he said: "Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled." (D&C 1:37.)

We are under divine instruction to "teach the principles of [the] gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon." (D&C 42:

12.) This we cannot do unless we know what they are.

To Joseph the Prophet, Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer, the Lord said: "Behold, I say unto you that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures. . . ." (D&C 26:1.)

To the Saints in Kirtland, he said, concerning the instruction he had given them, "Hearken ye to these words. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds." (D&C 43:34.)

Pondering the things of God

As I have read the scriptures, I have been challenged by the word *ponder*, so frequently used in the Book of Mormon. The dictionary says that *ponder* means "to weigh mentally, think deeply about, deliberate, meditate." Moroni thus used the term as he closed his record:

"Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things . . . that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men . . . and *ponder* it in your hearts." (Moro. 10:3. Italics added.)

Jesus said to the Nephites:

"I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words. . . .

"Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and *ponder* upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand. . . ." (3 Ne. 17:2-3. Italics added.)

Pondering is, in my feeling, a form of prayer. It has, at least, been an approach to the Spirit of the Lord on many occasions. Nephi tells us of one such occasion:

"For it came to pass," he wrote, "after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen, and

believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, as I sat *pondering* in mine heart I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain. . . ." (1 Ne. 11:1. Italics added.)

Then follows Nephi's account of the great vision he was given by the Spirit of the Lord, because he believed the words of his prophet father and had such a great desire to know more that he pondered and prayed about them.

Experience of Joseph F. Smith

President Joseph F. Smith tells us that "on the third of October, in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, I sat in my room *pondering* over the Scriptures. . . ." He had particular reference at this time to Peter's statement that Christ "went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19) while his body lay in the grave.

"As I *pondered* over these things which are written," President Smith continued, "the eyes of my understanding were opened, and the Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and I saw the hosts of the dead, both small and great. . . ." He then gives us an account of his great vision concerning missionary work among the spirits of the dead. (*Gospel Doctrine* [Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 472. Italics added.)

Prayer opens the door

Desiring, searching, and pondering over "the words of eternal life," all three of them together, as important as they are, would be inadequate without prayer.

Prayer is the catalyst with which we open the door to the Savior. "Behold," he says, "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.)

From the very beginning we have been instructed to pray. The Lord commanded Adam and Eve to "worship the Lord their God," and he later sent an angel to say to them, "thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore." (Moses 5:5, 8.)

Watch and pray

Jesus instructed the Nephites:

"Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

"Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

"Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." (3 Ne. 18:18-19, 21.)

In this dispensation, even before the Church was organized, the Lord said to the Prophet:

"Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work." (D&C 10:5.)

He instructed the priests to "visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret. . . ." (D&C 20:47, 51.)

Of Church members who went to build up Jackson County, Missouri, he said: ". . . 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.)

And finally, he said: ". . . pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place." (D&C 93:49.)

Nephi's exhortation

In conclusion, I ask you to listen

to Nephi's exhortation. I hope it moves you as deeply as it does me. He said:

"... behold, my beloved brethren, ...

"... I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

"Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

"But behold, I say unto you that

ye must pray always, and not faint; that 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. 32:1, 3-4, 8-9.)

That the Lord will help each of us bearers of the holy priesthood to acquire such a powerful motivating desire that we will, through searching and pondering upon the words of eternal life and praying about them, be led to magnify our callings in the priesthood, and that we may thereby qualify ourselves to receive the promised blessings of the "covenant which belongeth to the priesthood," I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

President N. Eldon Tanner will now speak to us.

President N. Eldon Tanner

First Counselor in the First Presidency

It is a great privilege, honor, and responsibility to stand before and speak to the priesthood assembled in this historic Tabernacle and in the 800 other buildings in the United States and Canada. This is the largest group of priesthood ever gathered to hear the voice of the Prophet, and when we think that they can hear this through closed circuit transmission as he speaks to them, it reminds me that we have an open conduit and a private closed circuit or wave length by which we can speak to our Heavenly Father and hear him, if we keep in tune and hear him, if we keep in tune and try to listen to him.

Appreciation of priesthood

I often wonder if we really appreciate what the priesthood means. President Romney, who is so close to the Lord, has given us some instructions tonight which, if we would follow, would help us to appreciate the priesthood and enjoy the blessings of those who magnify their callings in the priesthood. If I should say in my talk tonight to magnify the priesthood, I should like it to mean to be in complete harmony with President Romney, to magnify the priesthood in the office which you hold, because that is what we should do, my brethren. We have