

Strength to forebear

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: "The truth of Christ's teaching seems to be this: In our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and pardon all; it is our cheek we are to turn and our coat we are to give to the man who has taken our cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will become us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured and stand by, is not conceivable and surely not desirable."

So there are times when, in defense of others and principle, we must act. But of ourselves, if we suffer injury or unkindness, we must pray for the strength to forebear.

Christ gave his life on a cross; and on that cross he fully, freely forgave. It is a worthy goal to seek to qualify for the friendship of such a one.

Addison's comment

More than 250 years ago Joseph Addison printed in *The Spectator* a paragraph of sobering thoughtfulness:

"When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tombs

of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great Day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together."

God help us to rid ourselves of resentment and pettiness and foolish pride; to love, and to forgive, in order that we may be friends with ourselves, with others, and with the Lord.

"... even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. 3:13.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Marion D. Hanks, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. Here is a man who has been a friend to so many of our youth. The Lord bless his name to be always in their minds.

Elder James E. Faust, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve.

Elder James E. Faust

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends: Because of a great desire to be understood, I have humbly prayed for the Spirit of the Lord, and I also earnestly seek your sustaining spirit in what I have to say.

A dad who cares

Recently a father of a family of six children, who has had the sole responsibility for raising the family, beginning when the youngest was in

diapers, told of the struggles in raising the family alone. One night he came home from work, faced with the problems of being both father and mother and felt unusually burdened with his responsibilities. One of his appreciative little girls, age 12 years, approached him eagerly, after having laid a rock on his dresser, which she had painted at school. On the flat portion of the rock she had written, "Happiness is having a dad who cares." This painted rock and its sublime message instantly and permanently lightened the burden of this father.

Head of the family

Some years ago, from this pulpit, President Stephen L. Richards quoted Judge Samuel S. Liebowitz, to both of whom I give full acknowledgement, in an article appearing in the *Reader's Digest* entitled "Nine Words That Can Stop Juvenile Delinquency." The nine words suggested by the judge were, "Put father back at the head of the family." President Richards concluded from the article "that the primary reasons for reduced percentages of juvenile delinquency in certain European countries, was a respect for authority in the home, which normally reposes in the father as head of the family." President Richards continued: "For generations in the Church, we have been endeavoring to do just what the Judge advocates, to put and keep the father at the head of the family, and with all our might, we have been trying to make him fit for that high and heavy responsibility." Since the primary purpose of the Church is to help the family and its members, how well the father functions in his responsibility is of utmost importance.

In urging that the fathers be put back at the head of their homes, we wish to take nothing away from mothers. In all the world, there is no higher or greater honor or responsibility than motherhood. It is to be hoped that they too will have their powerful influence

extended to even a greater degree within the home and beyond the home.

Strengthening the father

In order to strengthen the father in his position, I make two simple suggestions: first, sustain and respect the father in his position; second, give him love, understanding, and some appreciation for his efforts.

There are some voices in our society who would demean some of the attributes of masculinity. A few of these are women who mistakenly believe that they build their own feminine causes by tearing down the image of manhood. This has serious social overtones, because a primary problem in the insecurity of both sons and daughters can be the diminution of the role of the father image.

Let every mother understand that if she does anything to diminish her children's father or the father's image in the eyes of the children, it may injure and do irreparable damage to the self-esteem and personal security of the children themselves. How infinitely more productive and satisfying it is for a woman to build up her husband rather than tear him down. You women are so superior to men in so many ways that you demean yourselves by posturing or belittling masculinity and manhood.

In terms of giving to fathers love and understanding, it should be remembered that fathers also have times of insecurity and doubt. Everyone knows fathers make mistakes—especially they themselves. Fathers are in need of all the help they can get; mostly they need love, support, and understanding from their own.

Priorities to guide

President Harold B. Lee has said, "Most men do not set priorities to guide them in allocating their time and most men forget that the first priority should be to maintain their own spiri-

tual and physical strength; then comes their family; then the Church and then their professions, and all need time." (*Bishop's Training Course and Self-Help Guide*, sec. 2, p. 7.) In giving time to his children, a father should be able to demonstrate that he has enough love for his children to command as well as discipline them. Children want and need discipline. As they approach some dangers, they are silently pleading, "Don't let me do it." President [David O.] McKay said that if we do not adequately discipline our children, society will discipline them in a way we may not like. Wise discipline reinforces the dimensions of eternal love. This reinforcement will bring great security and stability into their lives.

Interest in families

All society, including the adult single members, for whom I have special concern, have a vested interest in fathers and mothers and families. Recently, Elder Boyd K. Packer said to the single members of the Church, "We talk a lot about families. Sometimes in bitterness, you will want to say 'all this talk about families, but I don't have a family, and . . .,' stop there! Don't add that extra phrase, 'I wish they would stop talking so much about families.' You pray that we do keep talking about families; about fathers and mothers and children and family home evening, temple marriage and companionship and all of the rest, because all of that will be yours. If we stop talking about it, then you, among all others, will be the losers." (Melchizedek Priesthood MIA Conference, June 1973.)

Relationship with bishop

In this Church we have another fatherlike relationship with our bishops who are the spiritual fathers of the wards. Recently I set apart the chief of police of a large city to serve as bishop for the second time. One of the women

who was in the room at the time commented afterwards that she found it a little strange for the chief of police to be a bishop. The next morning in a conference meeting, the bishop responded by saying that he found nothing incompatible as chief of police with being bishop. He said that as chief of police he needed all of the help and guidance he could get from his ecclesiastical office as a spiritual father. He further said that he recommended the same source of help for all police chiefs.

Pride of a father

The exalted position of a father was well stated by General Douglas MacArthur who said, "By profession, I am a soldier and take pride in that fact, but I am prouder, infinitely prouder, to be a father. A soldier destroys in order to build. A father only builds, never destroys. The one has the potentiality of death; the other embodies creation and life. And while the hordes of death are mighty, the battalions of life are mightier still. It is my hope that my son, when I am gone, will remember me, not for the battle, but in the home repeating with him, our simple, daily prayer, 'Our Father Who art in Heaven.'" (Emerson Roy West, *Vital Quotations*, Bookcraft, Inc., 1968.)

Priesthood of God

It is important to remember that in this Church, the husbands and fathers, and members of the family through them, enjoy a power and influence in their lives, far beyond the natural gifts of intellect and character of the father. I refer to the priesthood of God, which every worthy man and boy over 12 years of age enjoys.

A prominent Church and business leader in this community was born without life. His father, exercising his priesthood, made a promise that if his firstborn could live, that he, the father, would do all in his power to provide the

proper example and teachings for his son. After a few minutes his infant son began to breathe and is well and vigorous to this day.

It is through the power of the priesthood that marriage and the family unit can extend into and continue throughout all eternity. The conscientious women of this Church wish to have such a righteous influence in abundance in their homes.

Just a few weeks ago, in a stake conference, one gracious mother joyously recounted a marvelous experience of being in one of the temples with her husband and with all of her children but one and being sealed together as husband and wife and family for time and all eternity. Her husband, newly involved in the priesthood, sat in the conference audience a few rows back. For a moment she seemed to forget all of the rest of us and spoke only to him. Over the pulpit, and through the loudspeaker, with over 1,000 people in tears watching and listening, she said, "John, the children and I don't know how to tell you what you mean to us. Until you honored the priesthood, the greatest blessings of eternity would not open up for us. Now they have. We all love you very much and we thank you with all our hearts for what you have made possible for us."

You may recall the story about a child being trapped in a hole in the ground, who could only be extricated by sending another smaller child into the tunnel. One little fellow was approached to see if he would be willing to go down and rescue the one who was lodged. The lad said, "I am scared to go in that hole, but I will go if my father will hold the rope."

What fathers are for

Elder Richard L. Evans gave the proper dimension for all fathers in this faith when he said, "First of all, fathers are for giving a name and a heritage to their children—clean and honorable. Fathers are for long, hard work. Mostly

their own kind of work. For not being home so much as mothers; for seeming to be pretty busy; and for trying to give their children the things their fathers never had. Fathers are for talking with, for encouraging; for putting arms around; for understanding mistakes, but not condoning them; for disciplining when needed, then loving all the more; for being strong and forceful, and for being tender and gentle." (Emerson Roy West, *Vital Quotations*.)

It is always appropriate in all family relationships to ask, "What would Jesus do?" Having turned to the scriptures for the answer to this question, President [Marion G.] Romney testifies, "There in the gospel as recorded by St. John, I found the clear and certain answer: Jesus would always do the will of his Father. 'For I do always those things that please him.'" (John 8:29.)

Blessing

God bless you children to have listening ears and understanding hearts.

God bless you mothers for the endless dimension of your love and for all of the help you give the fathers of your children.

God bless you fathers to be equal to your overwhelming responsibilities and to have a father's special caring for each one under your protective arms. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

That this may be so; I pray, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir rendered the song, "God So Loved the World," without announcement following which Alexander Schreiner played an organ interlude.
