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So many timely subjects have been discussed today, beginning with the great address by President Lee, that I have been edified and I am sure that you have been as well. Now I humbly pray that I may not detract from but may add a little bit to your thinking and doing as we consider the second great principle of the gospel. I feel there is need for it.

A pattern for living

The primary purpose of the gospel and of the Church is to provide a pattern for living and a prescription for happiness and success—here and hereafter. President McKay declared on many occasions that next in importance to life itself is the privilege of directing that life. To direct one's life is a privilege. It is also a real personal responsibility.

Speaking to his sons, Lehi explained this by saying: "Wherefore, men are free. . . . They are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great mediation of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

"And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;

"And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom." (2 Ne. 2:27-29.)

Principle of repentance

Because sin is such a devastating, destructive force, the great principle

of repentance was provided by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to extricate ourselves from the clutches of sin. Without the blessed privilege of repentance, we would have but little incentive to improve our lives.

Repentance isn't easy. It takes ability. It takes self-discipline and humility.

Repentance is not a negative teaching, but rather it is a positive process of building good character.

Repentance could become a remedy for most spiritual ills. However, it is not a mere superficial, shallow-rooted expression of regret.

True repentance

What, then, is true repentance?

President Joseph F. Smith declared that: "True repentance is not only sorrow for sins, and humble penitence and contrition before God, but it involves the necessity of turning away from them [sins], a discontinuance of all evil practices and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light. Not only so, but to make restitution, so far as it is possible, for all the wrongs we have done, to pay our debts, and restore to God and man their rights—that which is due to them from us. This is true repentance, and the exercise of the will and all the powers of body and mind is demanded, to complete this glorious work of repentance; [only] then God will accept it." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 123.)

If one truly repents, it will be manifested by his works, for, "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them." (D&C 58:43.)

Thus repentance calls for a heartfelt sorrow for sin resulting not only in a cessation thereof but also in

reformation of life. That's the important thing—a reformation of life!

Goal of perfection

To repent isn't exactly popular these days. Yet the Lord expects each of us to repent, to improve, and to conscientiously reform our lives. In fact, he set for us a lofty goal, saying:

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

Admittedly, this is an imperfect world. Nevertheless, each of us should be constantly striving toward perfection.

1. "Let him that stole steal no more. . . ." (Eph. 4:28.)
2. ". . . let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly. . . ." (D&C 121:45.)
3. ". . . pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44.) Destroy your enemies by making them your friends.
4. Let the unkind among us become considerate.
5. Let the truth be spoken always, no matter what the consequences may be.

I would like to add Brother Packer's recommendation that we rid ourselves of the unmusical music and adopt some that does the soul and the heart good and which is pleasing to the Lord. We can at least do that in our own homes.

To practice such virtues as these gives evidence of forsaking wrong. We ought not to let personal faults, bad habits, and moral weaknesses persist. They should be overcome and corrected without delay. I have often said: "You can't repent too soon because you don't know how soon it will be too late."

Story of convert

One of my distant Scandinavian relatives who was thriving financially in Denmark came with his family as

converts to the Church to America and his family was directed to settle in Sanpete County. He was quite well-to-do, as I said, and he sold his lands, herds, and flocks for what he could and came without complaint. For a while he did well as far as the Church and his activities were concerned; and amazingly, even without the abundant rainfall and the water and the resources, he began to thrive again. He accumulated wealth again. He became so interested and involved in his possessions that he forgot about the purpose of his coming to America. They waited upon him as ward teachers. The bishop would call upon him and implore him to become active as he used to be, and he would promise them that in the future when he got certain things settled that he would do it. Finally he was growing old, and they came and said to him, "Now, Lars, the Lord was good to you when you were in Denmark. He has been good to you since you have come here. See all of the things that you possess. We think now, since you are growing a little older, that it would be well for you to spend some of your time in the interests of the Church. After all, you can't take these things with you when you go."

He stopped. He was shocked, and he said, "Vell, den, I vill not go." But he did. And so will we. It is time today to begin the program and process of repenting!

Power of the destroyer

Brothers and sisters, you know and I know that the power of the destroyer is persistently, relentlessly operating upon the minds and hearts of the children of men, young and old, in the Church and out of the Church, and too many are yielding to his evil enticements.

We have been warned by the Lord and by our leaders through the years to repent. President Lee this morning urged us to begin with ourselves and develop self-respect, and beginning

there, set out on the real purpose of life.

We have been supplied with heaven-sent programs such as the family home evening program, to keep families secure and our homes intact. It has been predicted that in the last days men shall become "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." (2 Tim. 3:4.)

"For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell." (2 Ne. 28:20-21.)

I like that word *carefully* because that is the way he operates. He never jerks. He never pulls—just misleads us gradually, step by step. Now in this situation and in the world today, let us remember the admonition of James:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:7-8, 10.)

May we all repent and place our lives and our homes in order and in perfect harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ, I pray, testifying to the truthfulness of the restored gospel and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We rejoice in the strength of Brother Christiansen as manifested here today.

The congregation and the chorus will now join in singing "How Firm A Foundation." After the singing, Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will address us.

"How Firm a Foundation" was sung by the congregation.

President Lee

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder O. Leslie Stone, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

Elder Henry D. Taylor

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

After the Lord had created Adam, he made it crystal clear that he did not intend that Adam should go through life without a companion, when he said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18.) So Eve was created and given to Adam to be his wife and companion.

Period of courtship

Many of you young people in the Church have reached an age where you are old enough to look for a companion and mate. As you commence dating on a steady basis, you will enter a period known as courtship. This will be a thrilling and important time in your