

celestial law as it applies to men, human souls in mortality.

Obedience to this law is a prerequisite to resurrection with a celestial body. Great will be the glory of those who attain it, and sad indeed will be those who do not attain it. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in remarks at a funeral, said that "the disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful." (*History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6:51.)

Many of these laws have been presented and discussed at this conference and more will be. May we hearken to and obey them.

In conclusion now, I bear my personal witness to the truth of these things which I have uttered. I know by the spirit of the Holy Ghost that they are true. Jesus lives; he is the Son of God. He came to earth as the Only Begotten of the Father. He conquered death, raised his own body from the grave, and implemented the power of resurrection for all men.

I know that through his suffering in Gethsemane and during his crucifixion

he brought about the means by which, through repentance and obedience to the laws of his gospel, we may be raised not only to immortality but also to eternal life, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God. To this I bear solemn witness in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Arise, My Soul, Arise."

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### President N. Eldon Tanner

We have heard from President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Arise, My Soul, Arise."

To those of the television and radio audience who have just tuned in on this conference, we wish to extend our sincere greetings.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

## Elder Marvin J. Ashton

Of the Council of the Twelve

In response to a recent greeting of, "How are things going?" a long-time acquaintance responded with, "If I can just get through this month, I think things will be all right." This comment reminded me that over the years this has been a continuing attitude with this man. I have never heard him express any pleasure or satisfaction in now or today.

### Eternity is in process

This brief association brought to mind a notion commonly shared by many that the best of life is just ahead, over the next hill, a few years away, retirement, tomorrow, next month,

when I turn 16, or next summer. We become actively engaged in the pastime of conditioning ourselves to believe that happiness and achievement are always somewhere in the future. There is an attitude of tolerating today, even looking past today in anticipation of a better tomorrow.

To people so inclined, the better future may never come. The pleasant future belongs to those who properly use today. We need to find the abundant life as we go along. How can we be happy tomorrow if our "nows" are filled with self-inflicted unhappinesses and unwise delays? Generally speaking, those inclined to count their daily blessings have more to count be-

cause they help make more possible as they learn gratitude. A constant waiting for a brighter future may cause us to lose the beautiful today. Some spend so much time getting ready to live for an unknown future, too late they discover there is no time to live. Very often in our anxiousness for the joys of the future we run away from the very things we are wanting and needing today. An appropriate examination of the passing moment will prove it leads to eternity. We need to constantly remind ourselves eternity is in process now.

### **Do not delay repentance**

When the wise counsel "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27) was said, the time structure referred only to now, today, and without delay. How unwise are those who want to delay repentance until tomorrow. With each passing day the process becomes more difficult to pursue. Most of our hurts and misunderstandings could be cleared away if treated today instead of waiting for them to go away tomorrow.

To live more fully each hour and to glean the most from each day is wisdom. How unwise we are to waste our todays when they determine the significance of our tomorrows. We should wisely live a day at a time because that is all we have. While our families are available to us we should take time to develop oneness, unity, and character. Girls of today are the women of tomorrow. Boys of today are the men of tomorrow. The kind of men and women we produce for the future depends on how they are taught to use today. How fortunate a child is to be raised in a home where love, respect, honor, integrity, and commitment are appropriately displayed each day. Mothers and fathers, we invite you to enjoy the fruits of improved parent-child relationships beginning now. Mothers and fathers classified as truly

wonderful by appreciative children earn that rating by daily performance rather than by threat, procrastination, or purchase. We never give our children a lift when we give them a free ride.

If we have good health, we should enjoy it. If we do not have good health, we should begin now to anxiously try to improve it. What a thrill it is to see people all around achieving, conquering, and overcoming through proper daily action, self-discipline, and total commitment. Progression and achievement belong to those who have learned to use the opportunity of now. Our strides of today will determine our locations tomorrow. Let me share with you an example of the results of daily determination and performance.

### **Story of Olympic winner**

In 1960 the Olympics were held in Melbourne, Australia. There on the winner's platform in the spotlight one day stood a beautiful, tall, blonde American girl. She was being presented a gold medal, symbolic of first place in worldwide competition. As she stood there, some boys whistled and others were heard to say, "There's a gal who has everything."

Tears ran down her cheeks as she accepted the recognition. Many thought she was touched by the victory ceremony. The thing most of the audience did not know was the story of her determination, self-discipline, and daily action. At the age of five she had polio. When the disease left her body, she couldn't use her arms or legs. Her parents took her daily to a swimming pool where they hoped the water would help hold her arms up as she tried to use them again. When she could lift her arm out of the water with her own power, she cried for joy. Then her goal was to swim the width of the pool, then the length, then several lengths. She kept on trying, swimming, enduring, day after day after day, until she won the gold medal for the butterfly stroke—one of the most difficult of all

swimming strokes—in Melbourne, Australia.

What if Shelly Mann had not been encouraged to achieve at age five and to continue and overcome? What a tremendous asset were parents who assisted her in the importance of now and today in preparation for tomorrow.

### Importance of NOW

In recalling some of the Savior's well-known teachings, the word *now* can be appropriately added to emphasize their impact. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" . . . NOW. (See John 14:25.) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" . . . NOW. (See Mark 16:15.) "Come, follow me" . . . NOW. (See Luke 18:22.) Truly, if we love God, we will serve him . . . NOW.

There are those among us, though they would deny it, who are hungry for fellowship and activity in the Church today. They need us and we need them. It is our duty and blessing to help them find the way now. We and they are God's sheep, and we can best be fed and led together. Today is the time to let them know we care and that the Lord loves them. He stands anxious to forgive and welcome in the processes of repentance. God give us the courage to act now.

### Take time for God

There is an urgency today for all of us to take time for God. Wise are those who will use God's ways to insure his eternal companionship tomorrow. The time to become acquainted and know God is today. To achieve true abundance, life must be lived a day at a time in God's companionship.

#### *No Time for God*

*No time for God?*

*What fools we are, to clutter up*

*Our lives with common things*

*And leave without heart's gate*

*The Lord of life and Life itself—*

*Our God.*

#### *No time for God?*

*As soon to say, no time*

*To eat or sleep or love or die.*

*Take time for God*

*Or you shall dwarf your soul,*

*And when the angel death*

*Comes knocking at your door,*

*A poor mishapen [sic] thing you'll be*

*To step into eternity.*

Norman L. Trott, *Best Loved Religious Poems* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933), p. 65

As we take time for God, we will become more like him. Robert Louis Stevenson is credited with saying, "Saints are sinners who kept trying." It was our Savior Jesus Christ who said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31.)

### Now is time for action

Brothers and sisters, the message is loud and clear. If we work, serve, improve now—each hour, each day will lead us onward and upward to a significant tomorrow in his paths. Today is the time for decision. Now is the time for action. Believe me when I tell you God is well pleased when he sees us using our time wisely.

With some he is not well pleased because they fear being anxiously engaged in his paths. Some of us who are willing to listen to a prophet's voice, even President Spencer W. Kimball, are disappointing to God when we lack the courage and desire to apply the counsel now, even today. We make a big mistake when we allow ourselves to believe it will be easier to start back tomorrow rather than today.

One of the easiest ways back is to come back with others. Some of the greatest pleasures we can know are to render special human services on purpose today and let them be found out by accident some tomorrow. By adopting this way of life our friends will lift us each day as we see their new attitudes, accomplishments, and enjoy their associations.

**Start today***Just for Today*

*Lord, for tomorrow and its needs,  
I do not pray;  
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin,  
Just for today.  
Let me both diligently work,  
And duly pray.  
Let me be kind in word and deed,  
Just for today.  
Let me be slow to do my will,  
Prompt to obey;  
Oh keep me in Thy loving care,  
Just for today.  
Let me no wrong or idle word,  
Unthinking say,  
Set Thou a seal upon my lips,  
Just for today.  
So, for tomorrow and its needs,  
I do not pray;  
But keep me, guide and love me, Lord,  
Just for today.*

Sybil F. Partridge, "Just for Today" [song],  
(New York: Sam Fox Co.)

These choice words of Sybil F. Partridge should be an inspiration to all of us. What a blessing it would be in so many lives if "just for today" we could look to God instead of gold, if "just for today" the craze for power, possession, advantage, and worldly status could be replaced with eternal pursuits and treasures.

When we have plans or tendencies that are money-oriented and look forward to all the things that money will buy, it's a good time to stop and ask if in the pursuit we are losing the things money won't buy. In our daily commitments to money and the accumulation of worldly goods and acclaim "to insure a happy future," we may be passing by in our daily conduct the things we are trying to find. Some who are missing quality life as they go along may well miss it altogether.

Remember, tomorrow is connected with today, and what we do with today determines the tomorrow. I share from Alma, chapter 34, verses 32 and 33:

"For behold, this . . . is the time for

men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors . . . do not procrastinate the day of your repentance." The best of life is not just around the corner, when I go on a mission, after marriage, after the house is paid for, after the recession is over, or after the children are raised. The best of life is now. Today is the time to really start living. Today is the time to get a head start on tomorrow. The future belongs to those who know how to live now. There are no unimportant days in the lives of the anxiously engaged.

There is a tendency on the part of many today, worldwide, to postpone appropriate actions and commitments until international unrest settles. To those so inclined, may I suggest "His business" must and does roll forward. It knows no boundary. It knows no time barriers. The time and climate for action is now. There is an urgency for us to thrust in our sickles and prepare the earth for his purposes.

**Follow Him**

Brothers and sisters, listen again with me to his timeless invitation, yes, to his master's touch: "Now as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

"And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.

"And *straightway* they forsook their nets, and followed him." (Mark 1:16-18. Italics added.)

God help us to forsake our procrastinating ways and straightway follow him. Now is the time to serve the Lord. I bear witness to you that I know these truths better today than I did yesterday, and I leave you my testimony now in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, "Lo! The Mighty God Appearing," without announcement.