

Decision a test of character

Now back to where we began: with you, my young friends—and I'm speaking to you individually. Remember the incident of that September night in 1823? Moroni counseled the Prophet Joseph three times. The next day Joseph went into the field but was too exhausted to work. His father said, "Son, go back to the house and rest." Joseph climbed through the fence, and, you'll remember, fell to the ground. For the fourth time the message was repeated. I think Joseph Smith understood that world-moving message.

Do you understand what has happened in the past few minutes? Will you imagine you've had a sleepless night and that these six missionary principles have penetrated your mind three times? You figuratively go into the field to tell your father of this experience. He counsels you to return home and meditate, ponder, internalize these thoughts. You climb through the fence and fall to the ground. And these convictions cross your mind for the fourth time: I will fill a mission, and to prepare—

1. I will pray at least twice a day.
2. I will have my personal copies of the scriptures.
3. They will become worn and used and the teachings found therein will be invited into my very being.
4. I will support myself financially to the very limit of my ability, and then I'll stretch even a little more.
5. I will attend—no—I'll really *participate* in Sunday School, Scouting,

Aaronic Priesthood, seminary and institute, and other opportunities appropriate to my age.

6. I'll be grateful for the blessings of family home evening.

Now, young man, get up from that reclining position by the fence and move! What will be the result? You will be a better missionary. When our prophet-leader, President Spencer W. Kimball, says, "Every young man on a mission," he is looking far beyond the months spent in the mission field. Upon your return you will be a better bishop and a better stake president, a better husband, a better father, and a better whatever you will be both in this life and the one to come.

As you make your decision, will you remember this? The Lord lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His work in which we are engaged. In the final analysis, you must stand on your own decision. This decision will be a test of your character and obedience. May you be blessed to decide affirmatively and then prepare courageously and serve magnificently, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Elder J. Thomas Fyans, a President of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder G. Homer Durham, a new Seventy sustained today, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder James M. Paramore, also one of the new Seventies sustained today.

Elder G. Homer Durham

My dear brethren of the priesthood, I would like you to know that with deep humility I accept the call to service as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. I pledge to the Lord, to these brethren of the General

Authorities, and to you, my life, my labors, and whatever talents I possess. And my dear wife, Eudora, joins me in this covenant. We are grateful for the love and support we feel from you, my brethren, and from our family and

loved ones. And I am grateful that her life has been spared as my companion as we embark in this great service.

The privilege of serving

Like you, I am one of those who stood up tonight as a Scout, and I am grateful I was taught that a Scout is trustworthy. Tonight I want you to know, however, that I am more concerned in the way I feel: this Scout is very reverent tonight. And I bear witness to you that there is no greater privilege, no greater joy, no greater opportunity than service to our fellowmen in the name of our Lord and Savior. I bear witness to you, my brethren of the priesthood, that the offices we are blessed to hold are of eternal worth, that they are greater in their scope than those of us who fill them, that we are challenged moment by moment to measure up in loving kindness and in intelligence and in service to the model of the Master.

I love the words of King Benjamin as we find them in Mosiah: "And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:17.)

The love of God

The world needs to remember this and to know that it derives from the "love of God" which Nephi declared was "abroad in the hearts of the children of men" (1 Ne. 11:22), that all of us need to be awakened to its presence within us. And that, brethren, is part of our great mission.

Nephi said that this love of God is "the most desirable above all things," and the angel confirmed this to him in that great interview by saying, "Yea, and the most joyous, to the soul." (1 Ne. 11:23.) The world needs to know of this joy, and this is our great charge as priesthood bearers, to so strive to bless

the world. We may well begin in our own homes.

I am grateful for a home, for parents who taught me these principles, and for membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that teaches us that such knowledge must be used in the service of others, a church that teaches the true nature and character of God, a church that charges us to develop pure love as the crowning expression of intelligence, which is the glory of God.

Validity of gospel

I would bear witness to you of the goodness of our Father. I thank him for the gift of his Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He lives; he is real; he guides this Church today through his chosen prophet, President Spencer W. Kimball. May I humbly illustrate by an example, which I hope you will permit, how sincerely I feel the truth of this testimony of the gospel. I have to draw this example from my own experience, and I do it modestly.

In the world today are some 87,000 diplomas certifying to degrees, which many of you bear, conferred upon doctors, Ph.D.s, lawyers, engineers, masters, bachelors, associates from the various arts and sciences and the technologies. These documents contain, among others, my name, attesting to their validity. My name would not appear there unless I believed that they were valid, that these degrees were earned at ten universities and colleges in this and another state. The recipients, to my knowledge, have never questioned my humble warrant that these emanated from accredited institutions through authorized processes. I would say to these worthy people, humbly, as I say to you here, that I am even more profoundly convinced of the value of the everlasting gospel and its authenticity, and I so attest. I would hope that some of those will—when and if they ever recall my humble name on their diploma—that

they will also reflect on my testimony that God lives, that he is the loving Father of all, that the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ contains the fundamental power by which men and women, whatever their condition, may be blessed.

This gospel contains the saving principles which will help solve the ills of the world; and I testify that they are restored for this purpose by the Prophet Joseph Smith, whom I honor, and that the keys for the remission of sins and the salvation of mankind continue in the Church today under the leadership

of a true and living prophet. This I humbly witness to you and pledge my best efforts in fulfilling this call and being trustworthy in it, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

We have just heard from Elder G. Homer Durham, a newly sustained member of the First Quorum of Seventy.

We will now hear from Elder James M. Paramore, also newly sustained in the First Quorum of Seventy.

Elder James M. Paramore

My brothers and sisters—yes, I am nervous, but there *are* two sisters listening tonight: my sweetheart and my mother out in Sandy. I am grateful beyond almost all power of expression to tell you what a thrill and an honor it is to be here tonight with you.

I love the prophet. Unlike most of you, I have spent four years of my life by his side, and another three years with President Benson; and I have spent every Thursday in the temple with the Council of the Twelve Apostles. I want to leave you my testimony tonight that our Heavenly Father directs this work.

Tribute to parents

I would like to pay tribute to my angel mother, who for many years prayed that a husband would become active, that he would recognize his sonship to God, and that he would accept the priesthood. As a little boy, I walked through those many years with my mother's sustaining hand at church, finally seeing my father receive a testimony by the power of the Holy Ghost. I honor him tonight, and I love him and respect him. He has been my friend, for

he has taken me into his confidence. He has taught me how to work, and how to love, and how not to be judgmental. I am grateful for my father and my mother.

Support of wife

And I am grateful for my wife. I would like to tell you a little story. I have been to three or four thousand meetings, I guess, in the last twenty-five years; and every one of those times she has sustained me—except for one. When I was off to a Sunday School meeting one night, she asked, "Will you be home early?" I said, "Yes, I'll be home at 10:30." Eleven o'clock and 11:30 came, and I wasn't home. When I finally came home, I walked up to the door to walk in as usual, and it was locked. I rang the doorbell—and no answer. So I knocked on the door, and finally she came. She said, "I'm not going to let you in."

I said, "Oh, come on."

And she said, "No, it's one time too many."

In those days we had a Nash Rambler with a front seat that made out into