

What is that inheritance? It is all that he has, even eternal life. This blessed and promised gift will be ours only if we keep the covenants, particularly the covenant of the priesthood, and remain faithful to the end.

I pray that we will do so, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Carlos E. Asay of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry

A special chat

I have invited a special young man to assist me with my presentation tonight. I would like to introduce Terry Haws, my oldest grandson.

Terry, how old are you?

Terry: Twelve.

What special event has happened in your life this year?

Terry: I received the Aaronic Priesthood and was ordained a deacon.

Terry, again I would like to congratulate you on the preparation you have made in your life to be worthy of receiving this great gift. As I stood in the circle on that special occasion and listened to the blessing you received from your father as he conferred the Aaronic Priesthood upon you and ordained you a deacon, I was impressed with the special privilege this is in your young life.

I wanted to have a little grandfather-to-grandson chat right afterward, but unfortunately I had an appointment with an airplane. So I'm taking advantage of this assignment to have our little visit. Let's make it public just in case what we talk about might be of benefit to other young bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood listening to us tonight. All right?

Terry: Okay.

Conditions in the world today

Terry, I am not overly pleased with worldly conditions that you and

other young men are inheriting as you assume your role in moving toward manhood. While those of us who are older have been of an age and position to influence the world, I believe we've greatly failed you in what we have allowed the conditions in the world to become. This places you in a position where many of those with whom you must associate have not been reared with an understanding of or respect for traditional values. Thus, peer pressure becomes much more difficult and extreme.

We have brought into our homes radios, record players, and television sets. While each has the potential of providing wholesome entertainment, so much of what has been produced for our listening and watching pleasure is not of the caliber to inspire and encourage young men. In fact, most of what is produced is degrading. The flip of a switch right in your own home has the potential of destroying within you a sense of what is right and what is wrong.

Some athletes today who are the heroes of many young men like you have lowered themselves to endorsing products that can only destroy your body. Recently some of these celebrated athletes have found themselves on trial for violating laws governing the distribution and use of drugs.

Apply scriptures to actual happenings

However, Terry, there is still one place where you can turn to find heroes with the right set of values, which, if followed, will bring you the greatest joy and happiness in life. Of course, these heroes can be found in the stories contained in the holy scriptures. They tell of events recorded by prophets of old, which are timeless in their application. The principles they proclaim to the world are right and true and will never change.

There's an exciting way to read the scriptures to make them come alive. Read them as though the events were occurring today. The great lessons taught by the prophets of old can be applied to actual happenings in this modern era. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

Story of Daniel in the Old Testament

One of the heroes I have always enjoyed reading about is Daniel in the Old Testament. During the period of time in which he lived, Israel was not faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord. Because of this she lost her power and was not able to defend herself against her enemies. Strategically, she was in an awkward position. The powerful nations of Egypt and Syria bordered her on the south and on the north. Instead of doing battle on their own lands, these two nations took turns overrunning Israel and making her their battleground.

It was under these conditions that Daniel was born. When he was just a child, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem. As part of the spoils of his conquest, he went into the holy temple and took the sacred vessels back as trophies. Then, to make his nation even stronger, he took hostage all of the bright and promising children of the Israelites. As the scriptures record, the king took those "children in whom was no blemish, but well fa-

voured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 1:4).

Daniel was one of those who was taken back to the palace as a slave of Nebuchadnezzar, to be trained in the king's ways in order that Nebuchadnezzar might use him and his knowledge to make his empire stronger.

First test: followed the Lord's way

It was not long after Daniel had been taken from his home in Jerusalem that he faced his first test. The young men of Israel had been apportioned a daily amount of the king's food, consisting of meat and wine.

Daniel knew in his heart, because of the training he had received, that the food and the wine provided by the king would not be good for him. He knew it would defile his body. So he went to the prince who was over them and pleaded with him that he not be required to eat the meat and drink the wine of the king.

The prince was astonished at this request. He did not dare allow Daniel the privilege of eating anything other than what the king had ordered. He was afraid he would lose his position, or perhaps his life, if the king found out. Daniel understood this, but he had been taught correct principles. He bargained with the prince this way: He would eat only the foods he had been taught were good for him for just ten days. If after ten days his countenance was not fairer and his appearance more healthy than all the rest, he would then eat the king's portion of meat and drink the wine.

Of course, because Daniel followed the Lord's way, at the end of the tenth day he was the strongest of all who were taken before the king. (See Daniel 1.)

The Lord's laws are eternal

Terry, many times in your life you will be tested, tried, and tempted to use things that you have been taught are not good for your body. You may be ridiculed and laughed at when you refuse to partake of them. But just as Daniel of old received strength by obeying the Lord's commandments, you too will be blessed in the same way.

The Lord's laws are eternal. Just as surely as we follow them, we will receive His blessings. He has promised us that "all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health, . . . wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures; And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:18–20). Daniel passed the first test and was blessed by the Lord.

Second: a test by the king

At the end of the three-year training period, these young men were brought before the king to be judged. Daniel had not wasted his time and had studied hard. His efforts had blessed him with "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (Daniel 1:17). He was now prepared for the test to be given him by the king.

As the king met with them, he found none to be like Daniel. In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of him, Daniel was found to be ten times better than all of the king's wise men.

Prepare for this life and the life to come

Terry, you have been blessed with a great mind. Sometimes you may be tempted not to study as hard as you could, thinking you do not need to. No doubt conditions may not always be the best in all the schools you will attend, but still the power is within you to grow and to gain knowledge and understand-

ing. You can achieve if you will apply yourself!

Seek wisdom out of the best books. Challenge this great mind of yours with diligent study. The Lord has promised that what you learn here will rise with you in the resurrection and be to your eternal good. Your mind has such great power and ability. Prepare yourself for this life and for the life to come.

Daniel passed his second test. He prepared himself better than any of the others and was selected to be one of the king's wise men.

Third test: interpret writings for the king

The third challenge which came to Daniel resulted from a change in administration. Nebuchadnezzar died, and a new king came to rule Babylon. The new king was drunk with his wealth and power. After he was crowned king, he held a grand party and invited the heads of state from the lands round about to be his guests. It was a very worldly affair with much drinking, dancing girls, rich foods, and other attractions of the world.

In his drunken state the king sent for the sacred vessels which had been taken from the holy temple by Nebuchadnezzar. He desecrated these vessels by drinking wine from them. His actions so displeased God that the Lord wrote some words on the wall with His finger. This frightened the king, and he trembled so much that his knees knocked together in front of his royal guests.

When not one of all the noble and wise men present could interpret the writings on the wall, they sent for Daniel who, of course, with the power of the Lord, could interpret what was written there. Daniel let the king know that the Lord's displeasure with him was so great that his life would be taken. (See Daniel 5.)

Distance yourself from evil practices and places

This story has always been interesting to me because those at the party had to send for Daniel. Even though he was one of the most prestigious of all the wise men, he did not attend such an event. He would not permit himself to be present in such evil and worldly surroundings. He had met the third test. He had separated himself from the evil environment which could only fill his mind with unrighteous thoughts and actions.

Terry, be as strong as Daniel in keeping distance between yourself and the evil practices and places of the world. Don't let the wrong kinds of books, pictures, and other reading material be near you to tempt you to take even the slightest glance. Such materials can intoxicate and destroy your mind just as surely as liquor and drugs can intoxicate and destroy your body.

Have the courage to turn off unfit television programs, and stay away from movies and videotapes that would fill your mind with thoughts of evil and violence. Remember, the scripture has said, "For as [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

Fourth challenge: Daniel's faith in the living God

The fourth challenge which came to Daniel was far, far more important to him than life itself. The king had selected 120 princes to preside over his entire kingdom. Over the princes he placed three presidents to be their leaders. Daniel was selected to be the first president. You see, he did not have to go along with their riotous, unrighteous living to be recognized and sought after as a person of great worth.

The other princes and presidents were envious of the power given to Daniel, and they sought to find ways to discredit him in the eyes of the king. The scriptures record how frustrated they were, for they found him to be faithful in all things and without error

or fault. When attempts to find him in error failed, they had to devise another plan. By observation they knew that three times a day Daniel went into his chambers to pray and give thanks to his God. The only plot they could devise against Daniel was to make prayer unlawful, thus subjecting him to their laws. They were successful in obtaining a royal statute outlawing any petition to anyone, save it be the king, for thirty days. The king signed the statute, making it law, and anyone violating this law would be cast into the lions' den.

Daniel's faith in the living God was strong and vigorous. He continued his prayers, and of course was quickly discovered and brought before the king. The king was bound by law, and even though it grieved him greatly, he was required to sentence Daniel to the lions' den.

After the sentence was passed, the king was so troubled that he could not sleep all night. Early in the morning he rushed to the lions' den to see if Daniel's God had protected him from the lions. His joy was exceedingly great when he found Daniel had been protected by the Lord and was alive and unharmed. The king was in awe over this great miracle and declared that Daniel's God was the living God and steadfast forever. (See Daniel 6.)

Terry, this story of Daniel teaches us of the great blessings in store for those who place their trust in the Lord, even the protection of life itself.

Scripture stories teach faith, courage, love, confidence, and trust

These stories in the scriptures will never grow old. They will be just as exciting for you when you are reading them as a deacon, a teacher, a priest, a missionary, a home teacher, an elders quorum president, or whatever the Lord calls on you to do. They will teach you to have faith, courage, love for your fellowmen, confidence, and trust in the Lord.

Build your life on a foundation of truth and righteousness. It is the only foundation that will stand the pressures of this life and endure through the eternities. The priesthood you bear is a special gift, for the giver is the Lord Himself. Use it, magnify it, live worthy of it. I want you to know that I have a direct testimony of its power. It has blessed my life in so many ways.

We love you and ask the Lord's blessings to continually be with you. I bear witness of His work, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

That was Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve with his

grandson. He has given good instruction for every boy who is here tonight.

Before I give my closing remarks, I should like to remind you that the Tabernacle Choir broadcast will emanate from this hall at 9:30 tomorrow morning, and that those who wish to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

The music for this session has been furnished by the combined Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth men. We thank you very much for your wonderful music.

They will conclude this service after my remarks by singing "The Priesthood of Our Lord," after which Elder F. Enzo Busche of the First Quorum of the Seventy will offer the benediction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Brethren, I have appreciated this meeting and all that has been said. I pray for the Spirit of the Lord to guide me in that which I say in conclusion.

Questions and answers

Notwithstanding our repeated requests that members of the Church discuss their questions and problems with their bishops and stake presidents, a vast amount of mail constantly comes to the office of the First Presidency. Many of these letters are fraught with sadness. They tell of personal tragedies, of families in distress, of broken homes and broken hearts. In reading them, I am at times almost overwhelmed by the great burdens that many people carry. Some also ask questions of fact concerning the Church and its operations; others ask questions on policy and doctrine.

Rather than speak in the usual way tonight, I have thought that I might conduct an interview with myself based on some of these questions, as well as on questions we frequently receive when the media confront us. I will ask

the question, and then attempt an answer, as time permits.

1. How is President Kimball?

Wherever we go, this question is invariably asked, particularly by members of the Church who feel a deep love for this remarkable man. My answer is candid. President Kimball is not very strong. He suffers from the infirmities of age. He is now in his ninety-first year. He has endured much of serious illness during his lifetime. There has been a cumulative effect from these adversities. He has been preserved by the power of the Lord. Of that I am convinced.

What a great and wonderful leader he has been. He has been the epitome of kindness and forbearance. He has reached down to help those in distress. At the same time, he has been immovable in his allegiance to the Lord and in his determination to carry forward the work of the Church as that work has come to us through revelation. During the period he has served as President, there has been a tremendous expansion of the work in many fields, in many