

And so, even though the tasks of life become heavy, and although sorrow thrusts a drooping burden upon us, the light that emanates from our Savior beckons us on, undismayed. A righteous self-discipline can and will rule our lives.

In closing, brothers and sisters, I want to say that this is the way we tried to represent the Church in Europe. I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that President Ezra Taft Benson is our prophet, seer, and revelator, and that he bears the keys of the kingdom. I love this church with all my heart and

will do my best to serve, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

I was so overcome by Brother Wirthlin's testimony that I forgot that I was conducting.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a new member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Wirthlin, I too add my welcome to a most unique body of men. You'll find men with dark hair and grey hair, some even with wider parts than others. And their personalities are just as varied as their hairstyles. That's the great blessing of belonging to the Council of the Twelve. For out of these divergent personalities comes a sweet unity under the inspiration of the Lord. It's most unique. Welcome, welcome, Brother Joseph.

Teach children the joy of honest labor

In Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6).

One of the great challenges of life for parents from the very beginning has been succeeding in the very important task of rearing children. This great responsibility seems destined to bring the greatest joys and some of the greatest sorrows life has in store for us here in mortality.

Every child, of course, is different, and what works for one may not elicit the correct response from another. However, I believe that second only to ensuring that every child receives an understanding of the gospel

of our Lord and Savior is teaching them the joy of honest labor.

I was taught this by goodly parents. How grateful I am for a father who had the patience to teach me how to work. I remember as a lad, when I was only seven years old, we were remodeling our house and tearing out some of the walls. In those days two-by-sixes were used as studding. To the studs was nailed the lath, and over the lath came the plaster. When tearing out walls, the slats and the plaster were easy to knock off, but, of course, that left the nails in the two-by-sixes.

Lessons learned while stacking wood and straightening nails

Each night after the workers had finished, I had the responsibility of gathering up the two-by-sixes and taking them out to the back lawn, where there stood two sawhorses. There I was to make a pile of the two-by-sixes and then, one at a time, put them on the sawhorses, and with a crowbar remove the nails. After the nails had been pulled out of the studs, I was told to straighten them. Finally, I threw the straightened nails into a large green bucket and stacked the two-by-sixes in a neat pile.

Be productive in all labors

There was so much in this project that was of value to me in my young life. First, I was taught to be productive, to work, to be busily engaged, and not to waste my time in idleness.

From the very beginning, the Lord commanded Adam to till the earth and have dominion over the beasts of the field, to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. I have always been interested in how often the scriptures have admonished us to cease to be idle and to be productive in all of our labors. King Benjamin in his final address noted his example before the people by saying:

"I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you; . . .

"And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne — and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day" (Mosiah 2:12, 14).

Teaching children the joy of honest labor is one of the greatest of all gifts you can bestow upon them. I am convinced that one of the reasons for the breakup of so many couples today is the failure of parents to teach and train sons in their responsibility to provide and care for their families and to enjoy the challenge this responsibility brings. Many of us also have fallen short in instilling within our daughters the desire of bringing beauty and order into their homes through homemaking.

Oh, how essential it is that children be taught early in life the joy that comes from starting and fashioning a job that is the workmanship of their own hands. Teach children the joy of honest labor. Provide a foundation for life that builds confidence and fulfillment in each life. "Happy is the man who has work he loves to

do. . . Happy is the man who loves the work he has to do" (Anonymous).

Conserve resources

Second, as a lad doing the job my father had assigned to me, I was taught not to waste, to conserve resources where possible. When the nails were pulled from them, the two-by-sixes could be used again — and we did use them.

I have always enjoyed reading some of the counsel Brigham Young used to give to the Saints. His counsel was so practical. Listen to what he said about waste:

"Pick up everything. . . .

"Never consider that you have bread enough around you to suffer your children to waste a crust or a crumb of it. . . . Remember it, do not waste anything, but take care of everything. . . .

"If you wish to get rich, save what you get. A fool can earn money; but it takes a wise man to save and dispose of it to his own advantage" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 292).

I wonder what kind of signals we are sending to our children when we purchase homes that are status symbols. We waste space and resources when we buy a larger home than is needed, a larger home than is practical for us to afford. We encumber ourselves with mortgages so large that they require the income of both husband and wife to make payments. Then we build consumer debt to the point of absorbing completely all of our disposable income, leaving no margin of safety for the rainy days that come into everyone's life. Do not such signals from heads of households only feed the philosophy of "I want it now" in the lives of our children?

Some even have the mistaken belief that after turning their ears away from the counsel of the prophets to avoid unnecessary debt, they can then turn to their bishops to bail them out of

their foolishness. About all the poor bishops can do is weep with them and help them move to more affordable housing, and then counsel them on how they can cut their losses.

As I remember events in my life, I do not believe there was any degree of difference in the happiness that I enjoyed when my two brothers and I shared a single bedroom than when we had a home large enough that each of us enjoyed a bedroom. Let us teach our children the art of conservation and the elimination of waste.

Work builds discipline and character

Third, I will never forget my consternation as I watched the workmen using new nails as they built the walls back up and completed remodeling our home. The pile of nails that I had straightened and put in the green bucket grew and grew and was never used. I went to my father and said, "Wouldn't it be better to save the new nails and use the ones I have straightened?" I was proud of the work I had accomplished.

My father showed me something very important. He took a new nail and, using an odd angle, drove it into a board. He was able to drive it straight and true. Then he took one of the nails I had straightened so carefully, and, using the same odd angle, hit it again and again. It soon bent and was impossible to drive into the board. So I learned that a used or bent nail is never as strong as a new one. But then why had my father asked me to straighten those nails?

As a boy, I never remembered receiving a satisfactory answer. It was not until I had a son of my own that I started to understand. When my son was about three years old, I took him out to the garden to help me weed. I assumed that he, being low to the ground at the time, would have a real advantage at weeding. Unfortunately for my garden, he had a difficult time distinguishing between the weeds and the young plants.

I then tried Lee at milking a cow we owned together with a neighbor. He quickly developed the hand action of a fine milker, but, sadly, his aim was not very good. Whenever I checked on him, he was always surrounded by a white puddle, and the milk bucket was nearly empty. He would look up at me and smile proudly, and my initial inclination to be angry would quickly dissipate — but I was frustrated. I expected him to help me, but he only seemed to create more work.

It was in such moments of frustration that I remembered straightening the nails for my father, and I began to understand. Work is something more than the final end result. It is a *discipline*. We must learn to do, and do well, before we can expect to receive tangible rewards for our labors. My father must have known that if he focused on the outcome of my labors, he would only become frustrated with how inadequately I did things then. So he found tasks that were difficult and would challenge me, to teach me the discipline of hard work. He was using the straightened nails not to rebuild our home but to build my character.

Finish each task and take pride in accomplishments

Finally, I was instructed to stack the used two-by-sixes in a neat pile so the workmen could use them the next day. My work was never finished until this was done and the tools were put away.

Let us also teach our children to see that the work assigned is carried to its completion, to take pride in what they accomplish. There is a real satisfaction that comes from finishing a task, especially when it is the best work we know how to do.

Value of childhood lessons learned about work

These lessons instilled in me a joy and appreciation for honest labor and prepared me for that time in my life

when I would have the responsibility of providing for a family. The principles I was taught by my wise father of honest labor, of not wasting, of discipline, and of seeing a task to its completion were basic to my success in any profession I might choose to follow. These lessons placed me in a position to face with confidence the challenges of an ever-changing world.

Is this not the same lesson that Paul was preaching when he declared: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

"Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us" (2 Thessalonians 3:8-9).

A Primary teacher's influence

An event occurred in my life about a month ago which impressed upon me the blessings that accrue to one over the years from good, early childhood training. I was delivered a note as I arrived at the airport that one of my very best friends had passed away and her funeral was in just an hour and a half in a community fifty miles from the airport. I made a quick change from air to surface transportation and started the drive to the funeral.

This great soul who had just passed away had been my Primary teacher for three years during my days as a Trail Builder when I was eight, nine, and ten years old. As I drove to Sister Call's funeral that morning, my mind was flooded with pleasant memories of my early childhood.

I especially remembered the powerful example of early childhood training — goodly parents who were always there to teach, inspire, love, and

give strong encouragement to help me chart the right course in my life. I remembered a kind aunt who lived next door, who fortified and provided a second witness to the teachings of my parents.

Then I remembered dear Sister Call, a Primary teacher who extended herself much beyond her classroom call. Her lessons included many field trips to teach us of life, labor, and the joy of association. Her special way of weaving her lessons into our lives gave us an understanding of our personal worth.

As I drove along the highway, my heart was filled with overwhelming gratitude for parents, extended family, and Church leaders who had the patience, love, and concern to build a foundation in the life of a child during those very critical years.

Should not *all* children receive such a blessing early in their lives? This is the Lord's work in which we are engaged. He has charted the course and revealed the fundamental principles that will lead us back to His presence. May we have the strength and the courage to follow Him is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "How Wondrous and Great" without announcement.

President Benson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just addressed us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "How Wondrous and Great."

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will now address us. He will be our concluding speaker.