

Do your best each day

Not long ago, one of my children said, "Dad, sometimes I wonder if I will ever make it." The answer I gave to her is the same as I would give to you if you have had similar feelings. Just do the very best you can each day. Do the basic things and, before you realize it, your life will be full of spiritual understanding that will confirm to you that your Heavenly Father loves you. When a person knows this, then life will be full of purpose and meaning, making balance easier to maintain.

Live every day with joy in your heart, brothers and sisters. I humbly

testify that life can be wonderful, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, following which the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah."

President Howard W. Hunter, Acting President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

President Howard W. Hunter

Stand firm in the battle for the souls of men

At a critical moment in the battle of Waterloo, when everything depended on the steadiness of the soldiery, an anxious courier dashed into the presence of the Duke of Wellington, announcing that unless the troops were immediately relieved or withdrawn, they must yield before the impending assault of the French army. The Duke replied, "Stand firm!"

"But we shall perish!" remonstrated the officer.

"Stand firm!" again was the answer of the ironhearted Duke.

"You'll find us there!" rejoined the courier, as he galloped away.

And, of course, the British were victorious that day as a result of such loyalty and determination (see Walter Baxendale, ed., *Dictionary of Anecdote, Incident, Illustrative Fact* [New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1889] p. 225).

Today another battle of far more serious consequence is being waged. It is a battle being fought for the souls of men. Its outcome likewise depends on the steadiness of the soldiery. The clar-

ion call of the chieftain is heard above the fierce artillery of the archenemy, "Stand firm! Be true!"

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful that most within the sound of my voice are standing firm and remaining true to the kingdom of God. Like Helaman's stripling warriors, "they stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has made them free; and they are strict to remember the Lord their God from day to day; yea, they do observe to keep his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually; and their faith is strong in the prophecies concerning that which is to come" (Alma 58:40). I am referring to those members of the Church who live their Christian beliefs in the quiet commonplace of their daily lives.

"Am I a true and living member?"

On November 1, 1831, at a conference of the Church in Hiram, Ohio, the Lord revealed in the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants that this is the "only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth." Then he added, "with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church

collectively and not individually" (D&C 1:30). This should raise a question in our minds of eternal significance: We know that this is the true and living church institutionally, but am I a true and living member individually?

This question may appear as a play on the words of the Lord when he said this is the true and living church. When I ask, "Am I a true and living member?" my question is, am I deeply and fully dedicated to keeping the covenants I have made with the Lord? Am I totally committed to live the gospel and be a doer of the word and not a hearer only? Do I live my religion? Will I remain true? Do I stand firm against Satan's temptations? He is seeking to cause us to lose our way in a storm of derision and a tide of sophistry. We can have victory, however, by responding to that inner voice calling, "stand firm!"

To answer affirmatively the question, "Am I a living member?" confirms our commitment. It means that we now and always will love God and our neighbors as ourselves. It means our actions will reflect who we are and what we believe. It means that we are every day Christians, walking as Christ would have us walk.

Press forward and stay committed

Living members are those who strive to have a total commitment. They follow the admonition of Nephi, who wrote:

"And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the

Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:19-20).

Living members recognize their duty to press forward. They are baptized as a first step of their living journey. It is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that they will follow God's will. We especially welcome those of you throughout the world who have recently taken upon yourselves these covenants. We express our love for you and want you to know of our concern for you and all members everywhere. We welcome you into the brotherhood and sisterhood of the Latter-day Saints. The word *saint* does not mean that any of us is perfect. What it does mean is that we are all trying, all serving, and all vowing to stand firm in the faith.

A living member never strays from the path of his commitment. On one occasion a certain man came to the Savior and said unto him:

"Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

"And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:61-62).

To dig a straight furrow, the plowman needs to keep his eyes on a fixed point ahead of him. That keeps him on a true course. If, however, he happens to look back to see where he has been, his chances of straying are increased. The results are crooked and irregular furrows. We invite those of you who are new members to fix your attention on your new goal and never look back on your earlier problems or transgressions except as a reminder of your growth and your worth and your blessings from God. If our energies are focused not behind us but ahead of us—on eternal life and the joy of salvation—we assuredly will obtain it.

Heed the Spirit and put Christ first

Living members give heed to the Spirit, which quickens the inner life. They constantly seek its direction.

They pray for strength and overcome difficulties. Their hearts are not set upon the things of this world but upon the infinite. Spiritual renewal is not sacrificed for physical gratification.

Living members put Christ first in their lives, knowing from what source their lives and progress come. There is a tendency for man to put himself in the center of the universe and expect others to conform to his wants and needs and desires. Yet nature does not honor that erroneous assumption. The central role in life belongs to God. Instead of asking him to do our bidding, we should seek to bring ourselves in harmony with his will, and thus continue our progress as a living member.

The first great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). In order to love him we need to do the things he has asked us to do. We need to show that we are willing to become like him.

Strengthen others

Living members, once they are converted, fulfill the commandment to strengthen their brothers and sisters. They are anxious to share their joy with others, and they never lose this desire. Patrick Henry said at the closing scene of his life: "I have now disposed of all my property to my family. . . . There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian religion. . . . If they had that, and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich, and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor" (*The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, comp. Tyron Edwards [Garden City, New York: Standard Book Co., 1961], p. 561).

Work anxiously to forward God's work

Living members recognize the need to put into action their beliefs. These Saints are anxiously engaged in bringing to pass many good and noble

works of their own free will and accord. President Heber J. Grant once observed that "the power is in us wherein we are agents unto ourselves, and that we should not wait to be commanded in all things, and he that is compelled in all things is a slothful and not a wise servant. We should have the ambition, we should have the desire, we should make up our minds that, so far as the Lord Almighty has given to us talent, we will do our full share in the battle of life. It should be a matter of pride that no man shall do more than you will do, in proportion to your ability, in forwarding the work of God here upon the earth" ("The Reward of Doing," *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1939, p. 585).

Love one another and believe in God

Living members love one another. They visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions. They keep themselves unspotted from the world.

As members of the living church we have a belief in the living God. Prior to crossing the Jordan River, Joshua summoned the children of Israel, saying, "Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God.

" . . . Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you" (Joshua 3:9-10).

Young David, in response to Goliath's challenge, courageously spoke to the men near him, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26). Jeremiah likewise referred to the Lord as the true and living God (see Jeremiah 10:10).

We have a firm belief in the statement that this is the true and living church of the true and living God. The question we have yet to answer is, Am I dedicated and committed, a true and living member?

May we stand firm and be true and living members of the Church and receive the promised reward to be among those spoken of in the Doctrine and Covenants "who are come unto Mount

Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all" (D&C 76:66). This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

President Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us.

We are grateful to the managers and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this

conference to a large audience throughout many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing "How Great Thou Art." The benediction will then be given by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone of the First Quorum of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon

The chorus sang "How Great Thou Art."

Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone offered the benediction.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 157th Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 4, 1987, at 2:00 P.M. President Ezra Taft Benson presided, and President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by the Kearns Region mixed choir with Jane K. Poulsen conducting and Robert Cundick at the organ.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Gordon B. Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, President Ezra Taft Benson has asked that I conduct this, the second general session of the 157th Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

We welcome all who are in attendance or who are participating by means of television, cable, or radio, and the very many who are watching in stake centers throughout the United States,

Canada, and Puerto Rico, to which the conference is being carried by satellite transmission. We express our appreciation to the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems for their cooperation in making these proceedings available to members and friends of the Church in many countries.

We note that Elders Carlos E. Asay and Russell C. Taylor are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by the Kearns Region mixed choir, under the direction of Sister Jane K. Poulsen, with Brother Robert Cundick at the organ.

The choir will begin this session by singing "O Love That Glorifies the Son." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Jack H. Goaslind of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The choir sang "O Love That Glorifies the Son."

Elder Jack H. Goaslind offered the invocation.
