

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (3 Nephi 14:24-27).

Did you note, brothers and sisters, that the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew upon *both* houses? Just because we follow the word of the Lord does not mean we will suffer no ill winds; it does mean that we will spiritually survive them!

The prophet Mormon counseled us in great power on the subject of prophets when he said, "Wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost!" (3 Nephi 29:6).

Priesthood leaders, do you want to raise the spiritual level of your stewardship? Follow the Brethren.

Husbands, do you want your wives to have more confidence in you and your leadership? Follow the Brethren.

Parents, do you want your children to feel your love and more

willingly accept your direction? Love the Brethren.

We have in this conference heard what the Lord would have us know. What has been said and what will yet be said should be studied and pondered and prayed over and followed. Leave no question in anyone's mind where you stand. Declare in quiet tones that you love the Brethren and that you are going to follow them. Add exclamation marks to your words as you quietly and faithfully follow the Brethren.

You will find that you will "enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (Moses 6:59). I am a witness that this is the work of God. There is a prophet in our midst, even President Ezra Taft Benson, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Hinckley

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

It will now be our privilege to listen to Elder William R. Bradford, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder William R. Bradford

### Some things are interesting; other things are important

The young people of a certain ward had worked to earn the large sum of money needed to go on an adventure trip.

I had had some acquaintance with their bishop. He called and asked if I would help him get some news publicity so these young people would be recognized for the fine things they were doing.

I said I would not help him. He was surprised and asked why. I answered that although it was commendable that the young people had worked hard to earn this money, some things are interesting while other things are

important, and that there may be a higher purpose for the funds they had obtained from all the energy they had expended.

He was even more surprised and asked what I meant. I explained that my ministry takes me into countries where the people are less privileged than where he lives. I know of their challenges and sacrifices. I told him of the struggles of young people in those areas to obtain the needed funds to support themselves on missions. For the family to have enough food is often a challenge. Clothing is shared and worn out. Fashion is whatever is available, and in many cases that is not much. I explained that the amount of money these

fine young people had earned would keep several of these missionaries in the field for their entire missions. We talked about the relative value of an adventure trip as compared to that of missionary service.

He said, "Are you asking me to have these young people donate these funds to the general missionary fund of the Church?" I said, "No, I have not asked you to do that. I have just said that there are finer things to do." I explained that I was not against the kind of project they were planning, but there must be a balance, and, by comparison, some things are interesting and enticing while other things are important.

### **A higher law of recognition**

Later, the bishop said he had talked to the young people and they had caught the vision and spirit of our previous conversation. They wanted to sacrifice their adventure trip and donate all the money to the general missionary fund. They asked if they could come and bring the check and have their picture taken with me as they made the donation, and could they have the picture and an article put into the news?

I surprised him again. I said no. Then I said, "You might consider helping your young people learn a higher law of recognition. Recognition from on high is silent. It is carefully and quietly recorded there. Let them feel the joy and gain the treasure in their heart and soul that come from silent, selfless service."

They did this, and now, as a reward, each has a memory and a pride which they recognize as one of the finer and more important things that they have ever done.

### **The nature of selfless service**

In a refugee camp in Bataan, Philippines, I watched as one of our lovely lady missionaries sat down on the dirty floor beside an old woman who was weeping and confused and afraid. She gently pulled this woman's head over

onto her shoulder and smoothed her hair with one hand as she put her other arm around her to comfort her.

I learned that this woman had been driven from her home. Some of her family members had been killed. She had been abused and driven through the forests and jungles and finally out of her own country. She could not even speak the language of her present benefactors.

Later, as we talked of the work she was doing, the lady missionary said, with tears running down her face, "This is the finest thing I have ever done." Many things are only interesting and enticing, while other things are important.

Sometimes, because of the pressures of the world around us, our service projects become *self* service projects rather than *selfless* service projects.

Selfless service projects are the projects of the gospel. They have continuity. They are not one-time special events based on entertainment and fun and games. They need not be regimented nor regulated. Selfless service projects are people-to-people projects. They are face-to-face, eye-to-eye, voice-to-ear, heart-to-heart, spirit-to-spirit, and hand-in-hand, people-to-people projects.

### **The desire to be recognized**

We must remember that we are social beings. Our eternal destiny is welded to the destiny of our fellows. Within this social system, there is always a desire for recognition, and this is as it should be, if that desire is kept within its bounds.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton once related that during a meeting a woman seated behind him passed him a note. It simply said, "Would you please turn around and look at me?" Then he said, "Everyone needs to be looked at."

Within each of us there is an intense need to feel that we belong. This feeling of unity and togetherness comes through the warmth of a smile, a hand-

shake, or a hug, through laughter and unspoken demonstrations of love. It comes in the quiet, reverent moments of soft conversation, and in listening. It comes from a still, small voice reminding us that we are brothers and sisters, the children of a Heavenly Father.

### **Dangers of the praise of men**

To get recognition and the praise of men can become an obsessive goal in one's life. It can lead from one act to another until life is filled with egotism and selfishness. The momentary pleasure that recognition and the praise of men bring almost always causes people to want more. If they can't get it in one way, they will try another. If it can't be obtained by being one's natural self, they will try to get it acting out a life that is unnatural. The longing to be popular, to be praised by one's peers, and to receive the recognition of men is a very powerful force.

It is vain to seek the praise or recognition of men. This vanity comes of evil because it springs forth out of selfishness. Christ clearly taught this as he spoke of those who "set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

"Behold, the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing. Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.

"But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29-31).

### **Selfless service sanctifies**

Selflessness is righteousness. It embraces the true spirit of companionship. It is the very essence of friendship. It is the portrayer of true love and oneness in humanity. Its reward is the freeing of the soul, a nearness to divinity, a worthiness for the companionship

of the Spirit. Every requirement that God's plan for our salvation places upon us is based on the giving of one's self.

The only way under the heavens whereby a person can be sanctified is in selfless service.

### **Selfishness**

Where the proper focus on gospel-centered, selfless service is not developed, selfishness takes over. Of all influences that cause men to choose wrong, selfishness is undoubtedly the strongest. Where it is, the Spirit is not. Talents go unshared, the needs of the poor unrequited, the weak unstrengthened, the ignorant untaught, and the lost unrecovered.

Selfishness, viewed in its true sense, is the absence of empathy and compassion, the abandonment of brotherhood, the rejection of God's plan, the isolation of one's soul.

### **Guidelines for setting priorities**

As I have said, many things, in fact most, are interesting, and many are enticing. But some things are important. The limits of time dictate that we must prioritize what we do. The divinely given and heaven-protected gift of agency allows us to determine to what degree we will serve others and allow them to serve us. The depth of involvement in that which is important, rather than just interesting, is our own choice.

As we make these choices, we might consider that the glitter and excitement of festive, fun-filled projects are interesting, but the shut-ins, the lonely, the handicapped, the homeless, the latchkey kids, and the abandoned aged are important.

Worldly magazines, tabloids, and much of the multi-mass media mess of fast-track information we are receiving is interesting and enticing, but the scriptures are important.

The RVs and the TVs and retirement ease make it interesting to wander and play, but people's needs for selfless deeds are important. There is concern that "wander and play" have replaced "ponder and pray."

A focus on fashion and getting and spending and the accumulation of things for our enjoyment and comfort is interesting and enticing, but a focus on devoting one's means and time and one's very self to the cause of proclaiming the gospel is important.

The meetings and materials and planning are all interesting, but the doing is important.

### **Come unto Christ through service**

With the constant exhortation to come unto Christ is the promise that we can be perfected in him. If we do all that we can do by loving and serving God with all of our might, mind, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for us. By his grace, after all that we can do, we may become perfect in Christ.

## **Elder Lynn A. Sorensen**

### **Memory of conference**

I can remember as if it were yesterday the first time that I attended general conference. I was just a young boy, and my wonderful parents brought me to the Tabernacle so that I could have a special, spiritual experience early in my life. We sat in the balcony here at the left of the podium, where I could look down directly at the General Authorities.

It was a great thrill for me to see President Heber J. Grant for the first time. I particularly remember how President Grant joined in the congregational singing with such fervor and how uncomfortable the hard, wooden benches seemed to me even at that young age. I remember looking at the upholstered, individual seats occupied by the Tabernacle Choir and deciding that someday I would sing in the choir and have a comfortable, reserved seat for

Shall we not then strive for the recognition of that Almighty God who is our Father, through our selfless service?

"And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

"Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:34-37).

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Elder William R. Bradford has just spoken to us, and Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now speak to us.

conference. Well, somehow the lines of communication got mixed up. This was not what I had in mind at all.

### **The Lord prepares a way**

I have been so humbled by this unexpected calling, and I do not have the vocabulary to express how I felt when President Thomas S. Monson issued my call. Certainly the words of Nephi took on a significance for me that I had never before felt:

"I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).

I feel that scripture has great significance for everyone in the Church, no