

[New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970], p. 575).

"I Would Be Worthy"

To reinforce the importance of the word *worthy* and of worthy processes, I would like to share part of a poem by Elder Hugh B. Brown, "I Would Be Worthy."

I thank thee, Lord, that thou hast
called me "son,"
And fired my soul with the
astounding thought
That there is something of thee
in me.

May the prophecy of this
relationship—
Impel me to be worthy.

I am grateful for a covenant birth;
For noble parents and an ancestry
who beckon me
To heights beyond my grasp, but still
attainable
If with stamina and effort I cultivate
their seed—
And prove that I am worthy.

I am grateful for a companion on this
Eternal Quest,
Whose roots and birth and vision
match my own;
Whose never-failing faith and loyalty
have furnished light in darkness,
And re-steered fortitude. May her
faith in me
Inspire me to be worthy.

I am grateful for the cleansing power
of parenthood,
With its self-denial and sacrifice—
prerequisites to filial and parent
love;
For each child entrusted to our care,
I humbly thank thee;

If I would associate with them
eternally,
I know I must be worthy. . . .

I am grateful for the lifting power of
the gospel of thy Son;
For the knowledge thou hast given
me of its beauty, truth and worth.
To attain its promised glory, may I
to the end endure,
And then, forgiven, let charity tip the
scales and allow me
To be considered worthy.

(*Eternal Quest*, sel. Charles Manley
Brown [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft,
1956], p. 13)

It is my hope and prayer that we will learn individually and collectively the importance of the process of becoming worthy. We are entitled to the help of others not only in assessing our worthiness but also in making the classification of "worthy" available to each of us. As we measure our worthiness, let us no longer put limitations upon ourselves. Rather, let us use those strengths and powers that are available to make us worthy to gain great heights in personal development. Thus we will reap the joy that comes to those who desire to improve and move forward with determination and effectiveness as they practice self-discipline and refuse to judge themselves as unworthy.

I leave my love, blessings, and testimony of these truths in the worthy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy will now address us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

Adversity in the lives of the obedient

"Happiness," in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "is the object and

design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (*History of the Church*, 5:134). Often that path includes afflic-

tion, trials, and suffering—physically, mentally, and even spiritually.

Adversity, or what we perceive to be adversity, enters into the life of every individual at various times and in various forms. Adversity may be the consequence of willful disobedience to the laws of God. However, my remarks are directed to those who with righteous desire seek earnestly to learn and strive diligently to do God's will, yet nevertheless experience adversity. Much about this subject we do not understand, but let us consider some of what the Lord has revealed.

Adversity in the lives of the obedient and faithful may be the consequence of disease, accidental injury, ignorance, or the influence of the adversary. To preserve free agency, the Lord also at times permits the righteous to suffer the consequences of evil acts by others (see 1 Nephi 18:16).

Some may respond to such innocent suffering with resentment, anger, bitterness, doubt, or fear (see 1 Nephi 17:20). Others, with a knowledge and testimony of the divine plan of salvation, often respond with faith, patience, and hope born of that "peace . . . which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7).

Values of adversity

The plan of salvation presented to and accepted by us in our premortal state includes a probationary period on earth, during which we experience opposites, make choices, learn the consequences thereof, and prepare to return to the presence of God. Experiencing adversity is an essential part of the process. Knowing this, we elected to come into mortality. (See 2 Nephi 2:11-16.)

The Savior himself "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Prophets and Apostles, ancient and modern, have struggled with adversity in their own lives, as well as with trials associated with their divine callings. No one is exempt.

However, Paul teaches "that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). Similarly, the

prophet Lehi assured his son Jacob with these words:

"Jacob, . . . in thy childhood thou hast suffered afflictions and much sorrow because of [others].

"Nevertheless, . . . thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain" (2 Nephi 2:1-2).

Responding positively to adversity

How, then, shall we respond to undeserved adversity in our own lives? How may our responses to affliction and suffering draw us closer to the Savior, to our Heavenly Father, and to the realization of our own celestial potential? May I suggest some examples and role models found in the scriptures.

The sons of Mosiah, in the course of their missionary labors, "had many afflictions . . . both in body and in mind . . . and also much labor in the spirit" (Alma 17:5). Partly because of such experiences, they became "strong in the knowledge of the truth; . . . men of a sound understanding . . . [who] searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. . . .

"They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation" (Alma 17:2-3). Through their positive response to adversity, they grew spiritually.

In the time of Nephi, son of Helaman, "the more humble part of the people . . . [suffered] much affliction"; but they fasted and prayed frequently and became "stronger in their humility, and . . . firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation" (Helaman 3:34, 35).

From their example, we learn some positive responses to our own undeserved adversity.

Look to the Savior

As they did, we should look to the Savior for divine assistance. Paul reminds us that "we have a great high priest, . . .

Jesus the Son of God, . . . [who is] touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:14-15). We are invited to seek his "help in time of need" (4:16).

Because the Savior suffered "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . [taking] upon him the pains and the sickness of his people . . . [and taking] upon him their infirmities, . . . [he knows] according to the flesh how to [help] his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12). Therefore, we should follow the counsel of Amulek: "Let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you" (Alma 34:27).

Study the scriptures daily

Next, our prayers should be accompanied with daily scripture study. The eternal perspective attained thereby reminds us of who we are, what the true purpose of this mortal experience is, and who placed us here. The availability of divine help is repeatedly reconfirmed. Daily scripture study also makes us continuously conscious of covenants we have made with the Lord and of his promised blessings.

Fulfill the baptismal covenant

As we fulfill our baptismal covenant, we "bear one another's burdens, that they may be light" (Mosiah 18:8), and our own burdens are lightened. We "comfort those that stand in need of comfort" (18:9), and we receive comfort. When we "stand as witnesses of God . . . in all things" (18:9), we feel his redeeming love and see our present circumstances more clearly in the perspective of eternal life. In a sense, we are thereby accepting the Savior's invitation:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Is it not probable that bearing his yoke and his burden includes forgetting self in service to others?

Bear afflictions patiently

Patience must also be part of our response to adversity. Ammon, son of Mosiah, recalling personal challenges, acknowledged, "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back [or, in other words, give up], . . . the Lord comforted us, and said: . . . bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

In our day, the Lord has counseled: "Fear not, let your hearts be comforted; . . . rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks; waiting patiently on the Lord. . . . And all things wherewith you have been afflicted shall work together for your good" (D&C 98:1-3).

Blessings of positive responses to adversity

Repeated assurances have been given regarding the benefits and blessings of positive responses to adversity, however undeserved. The witness of the Spirit and the manifestation of greater things often follow the trial of one's faith (see Ether 12:6; 3 Nephi 26:7-9). Spiritual refinement may be realized in the "furnace of affliction" (1 Nephi 20:10). Thereby we may be prepared to experience personal and direct contact with God.

In modern revelation we are instructed, "Sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68). Ancient prophets teach us that "when he shall appear . . . we shall see him as he is . . . [and] be purified even as he is pure" (Moroni 7:48; see also 1 John 3:2).

The Lord's own way of preparing us to see him as he is may well include the refining furnace of affliction, that we may

“offer a sacrifice [to him] . . . of a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” the promised reward being “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:8, 23).

Each of us is the spiritual offspring of God. We came to this earth to prepare to return to his presence, there to share a fulness—that is, eternal life. Without adversity, we may tend to forget the divine purpose of mortality and live our lives focused on the transitory things of the world.

Should we therefore desire or seek to experience adversity and suffering? No! May we appropriately try to avoid it? Yes! Is it proper to ask for relief? Yes, always adding, in accordance with the Savior’s example, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

The trials of Alma and his people

There is encouragement and comfort in knowing that we will not be tested beyond our capacity to endure, that we will benefit from our adversities, and that the resources and circumstances necessary for us to do so will be provided (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). From the Book of Mormon comes another illustration:

Those with whom Alma shared the inspired teachings of Abinadi entered into the baptismal covenant and began to live the gospel fully. There was no contention among them; they were knit together in unity and in love one toward another, caring for the poor and needy and for one another temporally and spiritually. Because of their industry and the harmony among them, they prospered. (See Mosiah 23:15–20). Certainly they did not deserve adversity. However, they were provided with the opportunity for further spiritual growth.

The scriptural account continues with these words: “Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith” (Mosiah 23:21). Notwithstanding their righteousness, these faithful people suffered much affliction. Understandably, they pleaded with the Lord for relief, per-

haps hoping that the burdens would be removed. In response to their pleadings, the Lord comforted them and assured them of his help. (See Mosiah 24:8–14). Then he strengthened them “that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:15). Eventually, because of their faith and patience, they were delivered from their afflictions. Having been further refined spiritually, and with increased faith, “they gave thanks to God” (Mosiah 24:22; see also 24:16–21).

“May Christ lift thee up”

In the final days of the Nephite civilization, the prophet Mormon wrote a letter to his son, Moroni, describing the wickedness, cruelty, and depravity which caused innocent people to suffer. Then he added these words of admonition and comfort:

“My son, be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down . . . ; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, . . . his mercy . . . and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever.

“And may the grace of God the Father . . . and our Lord Jesus Christ . . . be, and abide with you forever” (Moroni 9:25–26), which is also my prayer for each of us, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy has just addressed us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing “Hope of Israel.” Following this, we shall be pleased to hear remarks from Bishop Glenn L. Pace, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

The choir and congregation sang “Hope of Israel.”
