

quorum and prepare well for the day when you will hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, the priesthood after the order of the Son of God.

Of deepest concern in all of your activities is whether you have private prayer, whether you read the scriptures daily as the prophet, President Benson, has asked you to do, and whether you agree with your parents and leaders about important spiritual matters. These are the kinds of things that really determine whether or not you have a testimony and the spiritual stamina to finish the game of life.

Now, my young friends, there will be other points you can make for righteousness, too; but I ask you, can you make these five points? Do you have the determination to do your best, to live by the rules, to strengthen your courage and testimony? I know you can. But please, wake up! You are the youth of the noble birthright.

### **The Lord will help when we err**

There may be some among you who have fouled out. You've broken the rules, gotten offside, moved before the snap,

fumbled the ball. The ball — the gospel — is in your hands. Know that a loving Heavenly Father understands your weaknesses and wants you back on his team. Talk to your bishop. He will help you come back. You are needed and loved.

Now, young men, I speak as your friend, not as your judge. Practice these five points in your life. Write them down. Put them where you can see them daily. Check your progress frequently. There are points to win and blessings to obtain.

You priesthood leaders and fathers, you are the home-field coaches. Review these points with these, your sons. Discuss them in depth. Help these young men work on them. Making these points will help lead them to joy and happiness and exaltation. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Monson**

Elder Russell C. Taylor, a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

President Benson has asked that I take the opportunity to address you at this time.

## **President Thomas S. Monson**

### **Great expectations**

Brethren, you are an inspiring sight to behold. It is awesome to realize that in thousands of chapels throughout the world at this hour, your fellow holders of the priesthood of God are receiving this broadcast by way of satellite transmission. Your nationalities vary, and your languages are many, but a common thread binds us together. We have been entrusted to bear the priesthood and to act in the name of God. We are the recipients of a sacred trust. Much is expected of us.

Long ago, the renowned author Charles Dickens wrote of opportunities that await. In his classic volume entitled *Great Expectations*, Dickens described a boy by the name of Philip Pirrip, more commonly known as "Pip." Pip was born

in unusual circumstances. He was an orphan. He never met his mother or father. He never saw a picture of them. Yet he had all the normal desires of a boy. He wished with all his heart that he were a scholar. He wished that he were a gentleman. He wished that he were less ignorant. Yet all of his ambitions and all of his hopes seemed doomed to failure. Do you young men sometimes feel that way? Do those of us who are older entertain these same thoughts?

Then one day a London lawyer by the name of Jaggers approached little Pip and told him that an unknown benefactor had bequeathed to him a fortune. The lawyer put his arm around the shoulder of Pip and said to him, "My boy, you have great expectations."

Tonight, as I look at you young men and realize who you are and what you may become, I say to you, as that lawyer said to Pip, "My boy, you have great expectations"—not as the result of an unknown benefactor, but as the result of a known Benefactor, even our Heavenly Father, and great things are expected of you.

### Remember from whence you came

All of us, before the period known as mortality, lived as spirit children of our Heavenly Father. In His wisdom, He has given us a record, in the book of Abraham, which tells us something of that existence:

"Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; . . .

"And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him: We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3:22, 24–26).

As we journey through mortality, let us remember from whence we came; let us be true to the trust vested in us. Let us remember who we are and what God expects us to become.

### Children of promise, men of might

Ned Winder, a lifelong friend and formerly the executive secretary of the Missionary Department, tells of an amusing and humbling encounter which he experienced.

Two of the General Authorities, accompanied by Brother Winder, were

walking down a staircase in view of a mother and her son, who were sitting on a couch facing the staircase. Seeing the brethren approach, the boy said to his mother, "Who is that first man?"

She replied, "He is Elder Marvin J. Ashton, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles."

The boy continued, "Who is the man next to him?"

Mother replied, "He is Elder Loren Dunn of the First Quorum of the Seventy."

Then the boy concluded, "Who is the other man?"

The mother spoke more softly, yet she was still audible to Brother Winder: "Oh, he's nobody."

Remember, my young friends, you are somebody! You are a child of promise. You are a man of might. You are a son of God, endowed with faith, gifted with courage, and guided by prayer. Your eternal destiny is before you. The Apostle Paul speaks to you today as he spoke to Timothy long years ago: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee. . . . O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Timothy 4:14; 6:20).

### Overcome the enemy of self-defeat

As you define your goals and plan for their achievement, ponder the thought: The past is behind—learn from it; the future is ahead—prepare for it; the present is here—live in it.

At times, all of us let that enemy of achievement—even the culprit, self-defeat—dwarf our aspirations, smother our dreams, cloud our vision, and wreck our lives. The enemy's voice whispers in our ears, "I can't do it." "I'm too little." "Everyone is watching." "I'm nobody." This is when we need to reflect on the counsel of Maxwell Maltz, who declared that "the most . . . realistic self-image of all is to conceive of yourself as 'made in the image of God.'" You cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power (*Psycho-Cybernetics* [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960], p. 245).

This is good medicine for all of us — young and old. After all, men are but boys grown older. One wife said of her husband, as he admiringly gazed at his new boat, “The bigger the boy, the bigger the toy!”

Life was never intended to consist of a glut of luxury, to be an easy course or filled only with success. There are those games which we lose, those races in which we finish last, and those promotions which never come. Such experiences provide an opportunity for us to show our determination and to rise above disappointment.

I read the other day about an athlete who is a member of LaSalle University’s wrestling team. Due to a shooting accident which occurred many years ago, he has but one leg. Does he complain? Does he curse God? Does he withdraw from the match? On the contrary, he competes with the best of them. His record this year is ten wins and eight losses. A teammate said of him, “He inspires us.”

Like some of you, I know what it is to face disappointment and youthful humiliation. As a boy, I played team softball in elementary and junior high school. Two captains were chosen, and then they, in turn, selected the players they desired on their teams. Of course, the best players were chosen first, then second and third. To be selected fourth or fifth was not too bad, but to be chosen last and relegated to a remote position in the outfield was downright awful. I know. I was there.

How I hoped that the ball would never be hit in my direction, for surely I would drop it, runners would score, and teammates would laugh.

As though it were just yesterday, I remember the moment when all that changed in my life. The game started out as I have described: I was chosen last. I made my sorrowful way to the deep pocket of right field and watched as the other team filled the bases with runners. Two batters then went down on strikes. Suddenly, the next batter hit a mighty drive. The ball was coming in my direction. Was it beyond my reach? I raced for the spot where I thought the ball would drop, uttered a silent prayer as I ran, and

stretched forth my cupped hands. I surprised myself. I caught the ball! My team won the game.

This one experience bolstered my confidence, inspired my desire to practice, and led me from that last-to-be-chosen place to become a real contributor to the team.

We can experience that burst of confidence. We can feel that pride of performance. A three-word formula will help us: *Never give up.*

### Choose the right

Opposition is ever with us. The temptation to detour from our chosen path is at times a daily confrontation. Joseph L. Townsend wrote the words of a hymn which we sing frequently:

Choose the right when a choice is placed before you.  
In the right the Holy Spirit guides;  
And its light is forever shining o’er you,  
When in the right your heart confides.  
(“Choose the Right,” *Hymns*, no. 239)

A wise father, speaking to his son, placed the question of choice in a direct setting. He counseled, “Son, if you ever find yourself in a place you shouldn’t ought to be — *get out!*” Good advice for a son. Good advice for a father, too.

Altogether too frequently we are prone to place the blame on Lucifer for every temptation we encounter or every sin we commit. The words of the Apostle Paul place in perspective such thinking. To the Corinthians, Paul counseled,

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

### Importance of prayer

As priesthood holders, we have a responsibility to “stand up and be counted.” Some years back, when David Kennedy was appointed as secretary of the trea-

sury, a reporter attempted to entrap him with the question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you believe in prayer?"

The response was, "I do."

Then the clever question, "Mr. Kennedy, do you pray?"

Came the firm reply, "I believe in prayer, and I pray!"

Just this past month, a mammoth 747 jetliner, while flying over the Pacific, sustained a gigantic tear in its side, ejecting nine passengers to their deaths and threatening the lives of all. When the pilot, Captain David Cronin, was interviewed, having brought the craft back safely to Honolulu, he was asked, "What did you do when the plane ripped open? How did you cope?"

Captain Cronin replied, "I prayed, then went to work."

My brethren, this is an inspired plan for each of us to follow: Pray, and then go to work.

### The commitment to serve

In the helter-skelter competitiveness of life, there is a tendency to think only of ourselves. To succumb to this philosophy narrows one's vision and distorts a proper view of life. When concern for others replaces concern for self, our own progress is enhanced.

Tonight we have witnessed the highest honor Scouting is able to bestow, conferred upon our President, Ezra Taft Benson. This recognition is not a response to a single deed or a temporary commitment to service. Rather, it recognizes a lifetime of constant and selfless service to youth. It was said of our Lord, "He went about doing good." President Ezra Taft Benson daily exemplifies this example of the Lord.

At the February meeting of the National Executive Board of Scouting, young men were recognized who had saved the lives of others during the past year. One of those so honored was an Aaronic Priesthood bearer — fifteen-year-old Thomas T. Nelson from Lacey, Washington. Tom had rescued two boys from a raging river which could have carried them to their deaths. I love his

humble-yet-powerful response to the recognition: "I jumped in and pulled them out!"

Thousands of Scouts became heroes by blessing the lives of others during the campaign noted as "Scouting for Food." On a given Saturday, with the campaign having been previously publicized, the homemakers of America were asked to contribute canned food to feed the hungry. Scouts became the facilitators of this objective. Hundreds of tons of food were collected, stored, and distributed. Those who gave were blessed. Those who received were fed. Those Scouts who helped to achieve the objective will never again be the same. They went about doing good.

Serving throughout the world is a great missionary force going about doing good. Missionaries teach truth. They dispel darkness. They spread joy. They bring precious souls to Christ.

### A modern miracle

Just a few weeks ago, in Guatemala City, Guatemala, I witnessed a modern miracle — even the result of God's guidance given to His servants and the blessing of His people.

At a regional conference, almost twelve thousand members filled the Estadio del Ejercito, the local soccer stadium. The sun bathed with its rays the large gathering, while the Spirit of the Lord filled every heart. This was a day of thanksgiving, marking the forty-second anniversary of the arrival of the first missionaries to that land. John Forbes O'Donnal spoke to the vast throng. He it was who, in 1946, stood alone as the only member of the Church in that nation. Personally importuning then President George Albert Smith, Brother O'Donnal facilitated the entry of the first missionaries. His wife, Carmen Galvez de O'Donnal, became the first convert and was baptized on November 13, 1948. This day of conference, as throughout the years of their marriage, she sat by her husband's side.

While President O'Donnal spoke, my thoughts drifted back to the many

missionaries who had come to this land and the hardships they endured, the sacrifices they made, and the lives they blessed. The experience of one describes the devotion of all. While I have, on a previous occasion, mentioned the experience of this missionary, following my recent visit to Guatemala I felt impressed to share it with you once again.

While serving in Guatemala as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Randall Ellsworth survived a devastating earthquake, which hurled a beam down on his back, paralyzing his legs and severely damaging his kidneys. He was the only American injured in the quake, which claimed the lives of some eighteen thousand persons.

After receiving emergency medical treatment, Elder Ellsworth was flown to a large hospital near his home in Rockville, Maryland. While he was confined there, a newscaster conducted with him an interview that I witnessed through the miracle of television. The reporter asked, "Can you walk?"

The answer, "Not yet, but I will."

"Do you think you will be able to complete your mission?"

Came the reply: "Others think not, but I will. With the President of my church praying for me, and through the prayers of my family, my friends, and my missionary companions, I will walk, and I will return to Guatemala. The Lord wanted me to preach the gospel there for two years, and that's what I intend to do."

There followed a lengthy period of therapy, punctuated by silent yet heroic courage. Little by little, the feeling began to return to the almost lifeless limbs. More therapy, more courage, more prayer.

At last Randall Ellsworth walked aboard the plane that carried him back to the mission to which he had been called, back to the people whom he loved. He left behind a trail of skeptics and a host of doubters, but also hundreds amazed at the power of God, the miracle of faith, and the reward of determination.

In Guatemala, Randall pursued his responsibilities. He walked with the use of two canes. His walk was slow and de-

liberate. Then one day, as he stood before his mission president, Randall Ellsworth heard him speak the almost unbelievable words, "You have been the recipient of a miracle. Your faith has been rewarded. If you have the necessary confidence, if you have abiding faith, if you have supreme courage, place those two canes on my desk — and walk."

Slowly, Randall placed one cane and then the other on the mission president's desk, turned toward the door and toward his future — and walked.

Today, Randall Ellsworth is a practicing physician. He is a stalwart husband and a loving father. His mission president was none other than John Forbes O'Donnal — the man who helped bring to Guatemala the word of the Lord, the leader who on Sunday, March 5, 1989, addressed the throng assembled for regional conference.

Forres O'Donnal visited my office not long ago and, in his modest manner, recounted his experience with Randall Ellsworth. He then said to me, "Together we have witnessed a miracle. I have kept one of the two canes placed upon my desk that day when I challenged Elder Ellsworth to walk without them. I would like you to have the other." With a friendly smile, he departed the office and returned home to Guatemala.

This is the cane given to me. It serves as a silent witness of our Heavenly Father's ability to hear our prayers and to bless our lives. It is a symbol of faith. It is a reminder of courage.

### **Strive to attain eternal life**

Brethren of the priesthood, like the Charles Dickens character Philip Pirrip, we have great expectations. The goal of eternal life awaits. May we strive unflinchingly to attain it. In the language of the young men assembled tonight, "Let's go for it!" In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

We shall now be privileged to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be our concluding speaker.

Before President Hinckley speaks, we note that the nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

Because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tonight, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to you young men of the Ricks College centen-

nial priesthood choir for your beautiful presentation of the music this evening. President Benson turned to President Hinckley and then to me and said, "This is a powerful choir." I said, "President, they are from Idaho." He said, "I know it!"

Following President Hinckley's closing remarks, the choir will sing "Rise Up, O Men of God." The benediction will be offered by Elder Lynn A. Sorensen of the Second Quorum of the Seventy.

## President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren, this has been a great meeting. I add my congratulations to our beloved President, Ezra Taft Benson, on the recognition he has received. It is an honor well deserved, and it compliments not only him but also the entire Church.

It is a great tribute to the consistency of his life. I congratulate the Scout organizations in selecting a man whose entire life has been a shining example of the finest teachings of Scouting. He is now in his ninetieth year, and as I think of his life, I see an undeviating pattern of adherence to principle. He has kept the faith. He has lived the commandments. He has been persuasive with all of us in his urging that we do likewise.

### Reflection on Scout meetings

It has been a long time since I have been in a Scout troop meeting. I am not familiar with the present agenda for those meetings. But I do have vivid recollections of the way in which they were conducted when I was a boy. I became a Scout in 1922, nearly sixty-seven years ago. At that time there was no Cub program. A boy had to be twelve before he could enroll in Scouting. We met in our troop meeting on Tuesday evening. We were a noisy group as we assembled. Our

Scoutmaster, Charlie Robinson, would blow his whistle, and we would all fall in line. We would raise our right arm to the square and repeat together the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

It was something of a ritual each Tuesday. We did not think about it very deeply, but the words of that oath became fixed in our minds. They have remained with me through all of these years.

### Pledge to magnify the priesthood

Now, this is not a Scout meeting tonight, although some wonderful things have been said about Scouting. It is a priesthood meeting. For the purposes of this meeting, I should like to suggest another pledge for every man and boy assembled in this great gathering wherever you may be: "On my honor I will do my best to magnify the priesthood of God which has been conferred upon me."

That word *magnify* is interesting. As I interpret it, it means to enlarge, to make more clear, to bring closer, and to strengthen.