

## Endure to the end

An obvious parallel between life and a marathon is the necessity to run diligently and endure to the end. Among his final words to his people, Nephi told them: "And now, . . . after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; . . . Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ . . . and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:19-20). I think of this promise of the Lord: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31). You have that promise.

My dear young friends, I pray that the Lord will guide and strengthen each of you in running your personal marathon. Then you can say, as Paul wrote to Timothy, "I have fought a good fight, I have

finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). I know that you *can* live righteous lives and, with the help of the Lord, *do* all that you should do. I bear testimony that our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each of you and want you to be happy. Joseph Smith is the prophet of the restoration of the gospel in these latter days, and President Ezra Taft Benson is the prophet today. This is the Church of our Lord and Savior; I am one of His witnesses. I bear this humble testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Victor L. Brown, who will speak as one who has received emeritus status in this conference.

## Elder Victor L. Brown

### Serving with prophets of God

Twenty-eight years ago today, to my total surprise, my professional life took a completely different direction. I had spent twenty-one years in the commercial aviation industry, and I enjoyed it. We had just moved into a new home in Chicago when a call came from Church headquarters inviting me to come to Salt Lake City for an interview with President David O. McKay. All my prior plans were discarded as I was called to be a Counselor to the new Presiding Bishop, John H. Vandenberg. I had never thought nor aspired to become a General Authority, but there was only one answer possible when President McKay, a prophet of God, called me to this work.

These twenty-eight years following that experience in October of 1961 have provided opportunities for service I never could have dreamed of. I have been blessed with dedicated associates in many countries and at headquarters who have worked faithfully to help build the kingdom of God, often at great personal sacrifice.

I was privileged to serve very closely under four Presidents of the Church — Presidents David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball. As a member of the Presiding Bishopric for twenty-four years, I sat in weekly meetings with the First Presidency and was privileged to be taught by these prophets of God. Prior to President Ezra Taft Benson's call to be the President of the Church, I was released from the Presiding Bishopric. Although I have not had regular opportunities to meet with him, I have appreciated his leadership and have greatly benefited from his challenge to each member of the Church to study and ponder the truths of the Book of Mormon. Each of these five Presidents under whom I have served as a General Authority has had his own personality and style; yet I testify each is a prophet of God. Through my association with them, I have come to understand why we sustain them as prophets, seers, and revelators.

## Look at how people treat others

In my experience with these Brethren and with other men and women in many parts of the world, I have found that the measure of a man is not necessarily his title or his position but rather how he treats others — his peers, his supervisor, the cab driver, or the airline clerk after he has missed an important connecting flight. This is particularly true in how a man treats those closest to him — his wife and children.

I once overheard a conversation between two friends of mine who are somewhat older than I and very successful in their professional pursuits. One said to the other, quietly, not realizing I could hear his comment, "You may think you love your wife, but I love Elizabeth twice as much as you do Rachel." Each had been married over fifty years. Their greatest success, in my opinion, is the love and respect they have for their companions.

I pay tribute to my wife, Lois, who had the major responsibility in rearing our children, as my assignments have caused me to travel very extensively throughout the world. Because of her wonderful influence, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).

## People who have walked in truth

I have been blessed to meet many young Church members who "walk in truth" and who have taught me so much through their quiet obedience to the Lord's commandments. Let me share with you a few examples:

- A fifteen-year-old Korean boy, a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, used his allowance each week to buy newspapers. Then he and his friends sold them on street corners in Seoul, giving the money to a classmate who couldn't remain in school without this financial help. He wanted to know how it felt to be a Good Samaritan rather than having just an intellectual understanding of the lesson he had studied in the scriptures.

- Another teacher, a fourteen-year-old Tongan boy, had the same faith the Prophet Joseph Smith did at fourteen. He

thought, If, at my age, Joseph Smith could pray to God and get an answer to his prayers, why can't I? He prayed that he might somehow obtain an education to prepare him to help his people. The answer came when he received a full scholarship to the Church college of Hawaii without having applied for it. Since then he has used his education to bless his people.

- An eight-year-old girl, reared in a good home with parents who did not believe in God, on her own initiative learned the Lord's Prayer and recited that prayer privately every day. Eventually she added her own words and finally began offering her personal prayers to her Heavenly Father. She knew He lived, even though her parents did not. A few days ago I had the honor of officiating at her marriage and sealing in the temple. Her mother was with her — the result of her daughter's example.

- A deacons quorum president startled his adult leaders by asking a boy who hadn't been coming to church to offer the prayer in quorum meeting. When asked afterward if it really was wise to ask a boy to pray who had only been in church the second time, he responded, "But I just spent three days this week teaching him how to pray."

- A young woman whose understanding of eternal life was far beyond her years said that the only gift she wanted for her twelfth birthday was to be able to go to the temple and be baptized for the dead.

These wonderful young Latter-day Saints, whom I love very dearly as I do all young people, are some of my heroes of the past twenty-eight years. They cause me to have great faith in the future even though there is much to concern us today.

## Blessings of temple service

The capstone of all the experiences I have had in Church service was the blessing of serving in the Salt Lake Temple. There, Sister Brown and I, with the wonderful, devoted temple workers, had the privilege of associating daily with faithful members who came to the house

of the Lord to perform sacred service. I had always intellectually understood and accepted the purposes and the ordinances of the temple, but now I know to the depths of my being the joyous, peaceful spirit of that service.

When we go to the temple because we want to go and not because it is an obligation; when we go with an attitude of worship and a reverence for God and for His son Jesus Christ, and with gratitude for the Savior's sacrifice; when we spend sufficient time to leave the cares of the world outside, wonderful things happen which cannot be described. The Spirit of the Lord distills upon one's soul in these holy houses, truly the most sacred places on earth. A new perception comes into focus of who we are, of what this life is really about, of the opportunities of eternal life, and of our relationship with the Savior.

A young medical student in Italy, a friend of mine who is now a cardiovascular surgeon, expressed his feelings about the temple this way:

"Doing temple work, especially for your loved ones, is an edifying and spiritual thing. You feel the gospel in action; you feel the love of God and the sense of the wonderful plan He made just for us, His children.

"Two days ago, I was at the hospital working when an eighteen-year-old boy came to me, asking for news of his father, who was undergoing coronary bypass surgery. At 5:00 P.M. came the news: his father's heart ceased to beat. I'll remember for the rest of my life how miserable and void of hope is a life without the comfort of the certainty of resurrection, of being eternally sealed as a family, of having the opportunity again to be with Heavenly Father."

The Lord invites all to come unto Christ through the ordinances and covenants of the temple, that we might receive the greatest of all God's gifts to His children, the blessing of eternal life and exaltation.

## Testimony

At the conclusion of these twenty-eight years, I testify of our Heavenly Father's love for us. The unconditional love the Father and the Son have for us is so real. The Savior continually invites us to "come unto him and partake of his goodness" (2 Nephi 26:33).

The whole message of the gospel is found in one short scripture which speaks to all of us: "And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved" (Omni 1:26).

I bear witness that He lives, that He loves each one of His children — and that means every human being — every man, every woman, every girl, every boy, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

## President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Victor L. Brown, whom all of us knew for so many years as Bishop Victor L. Brown, who served with great distinction first as a Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, then for a long period of time as Presiding Bishop of the Church and more recently as president of the Salt Lake Temple. Bishop Brown lost his beloved companion, Lois Kjar Brown, only a few days ago. I'm confident that the hearts of members of the Church throughout the world reach out to him in love and understanding and comfort.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." Following this, Sister Jayne B. Malan, First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, will speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

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