

children are taught that there are special times, not only in church but also at home, when we learn of our Heavenly Father and when everyone needs to be on his best behavior. Behavior learned at home determines behavior in church meetings. A child who has learned to pray at home understands that he must be quiet and still during prayers in worship services.

Serve God reverently

One Sunday, my granddaughter Diana, who is four years old, was sitting next to her father at church. Diana sat reverently, enjoying the comfort of her father's arm holding her close to him. However, when the bishop stood up and announced the sacrament hymn, Diana gently lifted her father's arm from off her shoulder and placed it in his lap. Then she sat up straight and folded her arms. She looked over at her father and encouraged him to do the same.

Diana's message to her father was perfectly clear. She was telling him to turn his complete and total attention to

the Savior. This is the message a reverent attitude always conveys, and when reverent attitudes abound, reverent behavior will always flourish. I pray that, like Diana, we may all strive to develop reverent attitudes so that we may serve God reverently and with godly fear (see Hebrews 12:28).

Let us never depreciate the value of our own personal example of being a living witness of the love and respect we have for Him whom we call "Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (2 Nephi 19:6), is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson, also a member of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Hartman Rector, Jr., of the Seventy.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Choices

Not long ago a beautiful young mother asked me for guidance with a very difficult decision she was facing. It pertained to an important surgical operation that was being considered. Consequences of her choice would affect her husband and her family as well. She said, "Decisions are really hard for me. I even have trouble choosing what to wear each morning."

"You are not so different," I replied. "Each of us must make choices. That is one of life's great privileges."

I told this lovely mother that my fellow physicians are regularly asked questions about the human body. Some questions relate to surgical intervention to save a life or to save a part of the body. Other questions relate to elective procedures to alter the body's structure

or function. In recent years, many questions relate to the "choice" to abort the life of a newly forming human being. Ironically, such "choice" would deny that developing individual both life and choice.

I reminded her that questions regarding our bodies represent only an important fraction of life's most challenging choices. Others include Where shall I live? What shall I do with my life? To which cause should I commit my effort and my good name? These are but a few of the many choices that we must make each day.

I will not disclose the name of the sister, nor the specific operation she was contemplating. To do so might divert our attention to a specific topic and away from those fundamental principles that pertain to important decisions generally.

Because challenging choices face all of us from time to time, I invite others to join with us as I extend my conversation with this young mother.

I would suggest three questions you might ask yourself as you consider your options. Whether they are once-in-a-lifetime or routine daily decisions, serious reflection on these three questions will help clarify your thinking. You might wish to review these questions first alone and then with your husband. They are:

1. *Who am I?*
2. *Why am I here?*
3. *Where am I going?*

Truthful answers to these three questions will remind you of important anchors and unchanging principles.

As you consider these fundamental questions, it will become clear that decisions you first thought to be purely personal virtually always impact the lives of others. In answering these questions, then, you must be mindful of the broader circle of family and friends who will be affected by the consequences of your choice. This self-evaluation will be a silent examination. No one else will hear your replies. Though I will suggest some answers, the ultimate responses must be uniquely yours.

Who am I?

Remember, you are a daughter of God, just as your husband is a son of God. Our Heavenly Father loves you. He has created you to be successful and to have joy.

“He created man, male and female, after his own image and in his own likeness” (D&C 20:18; see also Genesis 1:26–27; Mosiah 7:27; Alma 18:34; 22:12; Ether 3:15; Moses 2:27).

These bodies, created in God’s image, are to be preserved, protected, and well cared for. I feel as did the Apostle Paul, who likened the human body to a temple:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16–17).

You are one of God’s noble and great spirits, held in reserve to come to earth at this time (see D&C 86:8–11). In your premortal life you were appointed to help prepare the world for the great gathering of souls that will precede the Lord’s second coming. You are one of a covenant people. You are an heir to the promise that all the earth will be blessed by the seed of Abraham and that God’s covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled through his lineage in these latter days (see 1 Nephi 15:18; 3 Nephi 20:25).

As a member of the Church, you have made sacred covenants with the Lord. You have taken upon yourself the name of Christ (see D&C 18:28; 20:29, 37). You have promised to always remember Him and to keep His commandments. In return, He has agreed to grant His Spirit to be with you (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77).

Having briefly considered some answers to question number one, let us turn our attention to question number two.

Why am I here?

This question is one I have often asked myself. Well do I remember doing so many years ago while in military service, separated from family and friends, surrounded by the horrible devastation of war. On another unforgettable occasion, I was stranded in a cold, remote area, far from transportation, food, or shelter. No doubt you have had similar anxious moments. But those experiences are the exceptions. I’d like to discuss the greater question.

Why are you here on planet earth?

One of the most important reasons is to receive a mortal body. Another is to be tested—to experience mortality—to determine what you will do with life’s challenging opportunities. Those opportunities require you to make

choices, and choices depend on agency. A major reason for your mortal existence, therefore, is to test how you will exercise your agency (see 2 Nephi 2:15, 25).

Agency is a divine gift to you. You are free to choose what you will be and what you will do. And you are not without help. Counsel with your parents is a privilege at any age. Prayer provides communication with your Heavenly Father and invites the promptings of personal revelation. And in certain circumstances, consultation with professional advisers and with your local leaders in the Church may be highly advisable, especially when very difficult decisions must be made.

That is precisely the pattern chosen by President Spencer W. Kimball. In 1972, Elder Kimball, then a member of the Council of the Twelve, knew that his mortal life was slipping away because of heart disease. He obtained competent medical counsel and prayerfully consulted with the Lord and with his file leaders in the Church. Elder and Sister Kimball and the First Presidency carefully weighed available alternatives. Then President Harold B. Lee, speaking for the First Presidency, counseled Elder Kimball. With great conviction, President Lee said: "Spencer, you have been called! You are not to die! You must do everything you need to do to care for yourself and continue to live" ("Spencer W. Kimball: Man of Faith," *Ensign*, Dec. 1985, p. 40).

President Kimball chose to have an operation performed upon his heart that was known to carry a high risk. He was blessed with a successful result. He lived thirteen more years, eventually to succeed President Lee as President of the Church.

That precious privilege of choice—man's agency—was decreed before the world was created (see D&C 93:29–31). It is a moral agency (see D&C 101:78). Thus, it was opposed by Satan (see Moses 4:3) but affirmed by the Lord (see Moses 4:2) and reaffirmed through prophets in ancient and in modern

times (see D&C 58:26–28; Moses 6:56; 7:32).

The proper exercise of moral agency requires faith. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel (see Articles of Faith 1:4). Because of Him, you have your agency. He must be the very foundation of your faith, and the testing of that faith is a fundamental reason for your freedom to choose.

You are free to develop and exercise faith in God and in His divine Son, faith in His word, faith in His church, faith in His servants, and faith in His commandments.

Facing difficult challenges is neither new nor unique. Centuries ago, Joshua spoke of a choice his family faced. He declared,

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15; see also Moses 6:33).

Cultivation of that faith will entitle you to the companionship of the Holy Ghost, who will help you make wise decisions (see 2 Nephi 2:27–28; D&C 14:8).

Many may profess a measure of faith in God, but without sincere repentance, faith cannot be fully operative. This concept was made known to the Nephites:

"Many of them . . . are brought to the knowledge of the truth, . . . and are led to believe the holy scriptures, . . . which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them" (Helaman 15:7).

Faith, repentance, and obedience will qualify you for sublime gifts of justice and mercy, which are bestowed upon those worthy of the blessings of the Atonement (see Alma 34:16–17).

Yes, every test, every trial, every challenge and hardship you endure is an opportunity to further develop your faith (see D&C 63:11; 101:4).

Faith can be fortified through prayer. Prayer is the powerful key to making decisions, not only concerning

your physical body, but concerning all other important aspects of your life. Humbly seek the Lord in prayer with a sincere heart and real intent, and He will help you (see Alma 33:23; Moroni 7:9, 10:4; D&C 9:7-9).

Remember that faith and prayer alone are seldom sufficient. Personal effort is usually necessary to accomplish your heart's desire. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17; see also 2:18, 20, 26; Alma 26:22).

The answers to question number two emphasize that you are here to exercise faith, to pray, and to work hard.

Now let's turn our attention to question number three.

Where am I going?

This question reminds us that eventually you (and I) are going to die, be resurrected, be judged, and be awarded a place in eternal realms (see 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 12:24; 21:9; Helaman 14:16-17; D&C 138:19). With each passing sunset, you are closer to that inevitable day of judgment. Then you will be asked to account for your faith, your hopes, and your works. The Lord said,

"Every man may act in doctrine and principle . . . according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment" (D&C 101:78; see also Mosiah 3:24).

As all will be resurrected, your physical body will then be restored to its proper and perfect frame (see Alma 11:43; 40:23). The day of your resurrection will be a day of judgment that will determine the kind of life you shall have hereafter.

That judgment will consider not only your actions, but also your innermost intent and heartfelt desires. Your everyday thoughts have not been lost. Scriptures speak of the "bright recollection" (Alma 11:43) and "perfect remembrance" (Alma 5:18) that your mind will provide in times of divine judgment.

The Lord knows the desires of our hearts. At the time of judgment, surely the special yearnings of single sisters and childless couples, for example, will be given compassionate consideration by Him who said,

"I, the Lord, will judge all . . . according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts" (D&C 137:9; see also Hebrews 4:12; Alma 18:32; D&C 6:16; 33:1; 88:109).

He will know of your longings as a wife and mother who tried diligently to serve your family and society properly.

As I listen to those who argue for causes contrary to the commandments of God and observe individuals who revel in the pleasures of the world with apparent disregard for eventual judgment, I think of this divine description of their folly:

"They despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, . . . for their heart went after their idols" (Ezekiel 20:16).

Interviews, as for temple recommends, with your bishop and members of your stake presidency are precious experiences. And, in a way, they could be considered meaningful "dress rehearsals" for that grand colloquy when you will stand before the Great Judge.

After the Resurrection and Judgment, you will be assigned to your everlasting home on high. The revelations liken the glory of those dwelling places to the differing lights of heavenly bodies. Paul said,

"There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars" (1 Corinthians 15:41).

The Lord revealed more to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who wrote of the *terrestrial* glory, where those will ultimately abide "who received not the gospel of Christ, neither the testimony of Jesus" while in this life (D&C 76:82).

The Prophet taught of the *terrestrial* glory as the abode for the "honorable . . . of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men," who rejected

the gospel while on the earth (D&C 76:75).

And then he wrote of the *celestial* glory, which “glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all” (D&C 76:70). There the faithful will dwell together with their families, enjoying exaltation with our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son. With them will be those who have been obedient to ordinances and covenants made in holy temples, where they were sealed to predecessors and posterity.

Elder Hartman Rector, Jr.

The Resurrection

Brothers and sisters, I would like to visit with you for a few moments this afternoon about the Resurrection and the importance of going home to our Heavenly Father in a clean condition. Surely there is not much known by the living about the Resurrection because neither prophets nor resurrected persons have explained the process to mortals. Only this much: that the atonement of Jesus Christ “bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead” (Alma 42:23), death being the separation of the spirit from the body.

The Resurrection has to do with the restoration of the spirit to the body and the body to the spirit. In the words of Alma, “Yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame” (Alma 40:23). And why is this done? Again in the words of Alma, “The resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice” (Alma 42:23).

Jacob gives us some idea of what resurrection will be like:

“O how great the plan of our God! For . . . the paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the right-

eous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us in the flesh, save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect.

May each of us choose wisely and with faith in Him who created us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

teous; and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us in the flesh, save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect.

“Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness. . . .

“And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, . . . they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels” (2 Nephi 9:13–14, 16).

Repentance

It seems, then, there is good news and bad news about the Resurrection. The good news is that everyone will be resurrected. All will live again! And all who have been righteous (have repented) will still be righteous. The bad news is that he that is filthy (which means the devil and those who have chosen to associate with him) shall be filthy still. Others will receive a lesser glory than the celestial because they have not repented while in the flesh.