

Respect the title you hold

There are few men in the Church who are referred to as Elder, but one is you—a full-time missionary. Respect that title, Brad; refer to it with reverence. Many men have brought honor to it, including your brothers. You do the same.

Keep a proper perspective

The real success of a mission is not measured on a chart—it is etched in your heart and in the hearts of those whose lives are eternally changed because of you. Share your testimony often. I have seen nothing in a missionary that exerts more power and positive influence than the bearing of pure and simple testimony. Your testimony is the first step in the conversion of those whom you teach. Have courage to invite others to change their lives and come to Christ through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel.

The Lord taught the Nephites: “Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may

stand spotless before me at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:20–21).

Bless the lives of others with your priesthood and your presence.

Brad, love every minute of your service to those wonderful Polish people. Love their country, their food, customs, language, and heritage. They will enrich your life and understanding.

The work in which you are engaged is true. You are teaching the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the promise of salvation to all who will listen and accept your message. Of this I bear my witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Dennis B. Neuenchwander of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will join in singing “How Firm a Foundation,” following which we shall hear from Elder Jorge A. Rojas, who was also sustained as one of the Seventy at the April conference.

The choir and congregation sang “How Firm a Foundation.”

Elder Jorge A. Rojas

I see there are many fathers and sons together. May I ask you to join me in something we all do at home very often? Thank you.

Preparing for a bishop's interview

Hello, my son. How are you? How was your day at school? Good. Any calls? The bishop? An interview with you? Well, that's OK. Bishops have interviews all the time with young boys—just like the ones we have. We talk, we

listen, we learn from each other, we have a great time. No. It's the same thing. Don't worry. It's going to be all right.

Let's see, you'll be twelve next month, and he wants to have an interview with you. I wouldn't miss this for anything. Yes, he'll ask you questions about school and friends, the Word of Wisdom. Do you make your bed every morning? Do you take a shower every day? No, I'm not kidding you. He'll talk about those things. I'm serious. He'll

ask: "Are you praying to your Heavenly Father every day? Are you reading the scriptures? Do you love the Lord?" Do you? Do you, my son? That's good.

Covenants and ordinances

He'll talk about covenants and ordinances. No, no—*cov-e-nants*, covenants and ordinances. That's a good question. I knew you'd ask me that. Oh, they are like, you know, covenants and ordinances. Come over here.

You just told me you love Heavenly Father. I do too, my son. Now, Father in Heaven loves us. He knows you and your brothers and sisters. He knows all of us by name. And He loves us so much that He is waiting for us. He wants us to go back to Him.

In order to go back, we need to love and have faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord said a very important thing to all of us: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Now, that's a very, very important thing to know. *No one goes back without His help.* Very important.

But then He said something else: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). So we love Him by keeping His commandments. And He loves us by helping us go back. Now that's an agreement between Him and us. It's a very sacred agreement. Sacred agreements between Him and us are called covenants.

Remember your baptism? You first agreed to have faith in Him, repent of your sins, and live a good, righteous life. And He agreed to help you go back. That was the agreement; that was a covenant you both made.

But then you had to make the agreement official—just like you do when you write down an agreement on paper. But to make it official, to make it stand, you both sign your name on

that written agreement. When you want to make an agreement with the Lord official, you don't sign a document—you perform an ordinance. Ordinances are also very sacred.

Living up to the agreement

After the covenant, or agreement, is made and after the ordinance is performed, there is yet a third, vital element. You must live up to the agreement. This third element is also very sacred because the other two now depend entirely on your performance. What good will a covenant do (I agree to do something) or an ordinance (I hereby sign the agreement) if you ultimately *don't comply with it?* Understand?

The first covenant and ordinance the Lord requires is baptism. Baptism puts us on the starting line—the starting line of that road that will take us back to His presence. As we walk along this road, there are other covenants we must accept and other ordinances we must receive. But remember the third important element for each one of them: *We must live up to each new covenant we make.*

The priesthood covenant and ordinance

I think the bishop wants to talk to you about another covenant and ordinance you now need to make with the Lord. It is called priesthood. Son, the priesthood will bless your life. The bishop will make sure you understand so you'll be able to make the priesthood covenant with the Lord. Once you make the covenant, you will need to receive the ordinance. I will then be so happy, my son, to perform the ordinance and ordain you a deacon.

This will help you stay on that road that will take you back to His presence. It will be necessary for you to

keep growing and moving forward on that road. Two years later, you will need additional help. If you remain worthy, you take another step; you'll then be ready to become a teacher in the priesthood. That will require that you make another covenant, and then I will again perform the ordinance and ordain you a teacher. Two years later, if everything is well, again another step, and I will ordain you a priest.

Soon after that, you will be ready to now receive the higher priesthood, or the Melchizedek Priesthood, and be ordained an elder. My son, when you receive the higher priesthood, you will have all the priesthood there is. You will then be ready to do what you've always wanted to do: be a missionary for the Lord Jesus Christ.

By then you will better understand and be grateful to the Lord for all those steps you have taken, the preparation you've received, and for the help He has given you all along the way to finally be able to come to the house of the Lord, the temple. There, my son, you will be able to accept the highest covenants and receive the most sacred ordinances. There, too, you will be reminded of the third element. Remember? After you accept covenants and receive ordinances, *you must live up to the covenants you made*. That is how we love our Lord: by keeping His commandments.

Are you ready for that interview with the bishop? Good.

A review

We now need to review the things we talked about today and express our gratitude to Heavenly Father. Do you want to review it or offer a prayer?

All right. You review it, and I'll pray.

Yes. We must love the Lord. *If we love Him, we keep His commandments*. Very good. His commandments are that we first, accept covenants; second, receive ordinances; and third, live up to the things we promised Him. That was excellent. Son, I love you.

Let's fold our arms, bow our heads, close our eyes, and pray.

Our dear Father in Heaven, we thank thee for thy many blessings—for the restoration of the gospel, which makes possible that we have the Book of Mormon, thy holy priesthood, and living prophets to guide us. We are grateful for the atonement of Jesus Christ, for immortality and the possibility of eternal life. Help us to make it a real probability as we come unto Christ through sacred covenants and ordinances. Please forgive our sins. And help us always recognize thy hand all around us and always, always keep thy commandments, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Jorge A. Rojas of the Seventy has spoken to us.

It will now be our pleasure to listen to President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

President Thomas S. Monson

One cannot gaze into the faces of this vast congregation of men assembled in the historic Tabernacle and envision the unseen audiences meeting

in other locations throughout the world without feeling your strength, recognizing your faith, and knowing of your spiritual power, even the power of the priesthood.