

Joseph Smith in response to his prayers. The restoration of the priesthood is real and eternal. It is the binding force for such divine ordinances as baptisms and sealings as administered by the Church today. The First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder David E. Sorensen of the Seventy.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Our great missionary program

For a few hours nearly every week I have an experience that leaves me profoundly touched with gratitude, awe, and confidence in the future. As a step in the pattern used by the First Presidency to call, through inspiration, full-time missionaries, each week some of the Twelve review from five hundred to eight hundred recommendations from all over the world. Each call and assignment is made by the Spirit through the Lord's Apostles. Each candidate's history is a vignette of sacrifice, devotion, testimony, and faith.

Some who do not understand our spiritual roots are baffled by our missionary program. They cannot believe young women are willing to devote one and one-half years and young men two years to teach religious principles under a rigorous daily schedule with the highest standards of personal discipline while forgoing dating and all other private interests. Nor can they fathom why such youth work to finance their missions, at times with the help of family or friends, when they cannot choose where or with whom they will serve.

Such youth are joined by couples who leave comfortable homes, grandchildren, and recreation, often multiple times, for distant parts of the world to live under the most humble circumstances. A few learn a foreign language; many experience vastly different cultures, accepting challenges they are not sure they can cope

with. Yet these youth and couples return from service given at great personal sacrifice, thanking the Lord for the privilege. There is nothing like it in the world.

The power of correct principles

What creates this valiant force of over 48,000 missionaries voluntarily serving others? Whence cometh their strength? The answer lies in the *power of correct principles*. I will explain.

Man has always benefited from obedience to true principles. The fearless Polynesians in precarious craft crossed an immense ocean for destinations thousands of miles away. That feat was accomplished not by chance but by adherence to sound principles of celestial navigation. They prepared carefully and did not succumb to temptations to deviate from their course or delay en route. In like manner, you and I can be assured of reaching worthy objectives in life by understanding and consistently following correct principles rooted in revealed truth.

Principles are anchors of safety. They are like the steel anchors a mountaineer uses to conquer otherwise impossible cliffs. They will help you have confidence in new and unfamiliar circumstances. They will provide you protection in life's storms of adversity.

All of the self-inflicted tragedy that occurs today from violation of the Lord's commandments could be avoided by careful, consistent observance of revealed

truth. The productive power of correct principles can make your life a joyous, satisfying experience.

Mothers' nurturing influence

We can understand what motivates missionaries to sacrifice to serve others by examining their early youth. Proverbs records this principle: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

When, as mothers, you are consistently in the home, at least during the hours the children are predominantly there, you can detect the individual needs of each child and provide ways to satisfy them. Your divinely given instincts help sense a child's special talents and unique capacities so you can nurture and strengthen them. Consider these examples of how the compassionate love and sensitivity of parents, particularly mothers, bless children's lives:

A mother overheard her son, four, tell his brother, six, "I don't believe in Jesus." The brother responded, "You have really hurt my feelings." Sensing a need, the mother reinforced the younger boy's understanding of the Savior. She placed a picture of the Redeemer in his room and continued to teach all of her children more about the Master. Sometime later, the younger son commented, "Mom, you're my best friend—next to Jesus."

Another lovely mother has consistently read scriptures to her children to teach them truth. While overseas with no satisfactory schools, she spent much time and energy painstakingly tutoring them—with amazing results. Once the father went to help their five-year-old daughter with evening prayer. He found her kneeling, sharing her tender feelings with her Heavenly Father. Sensing his presence, she looked up. He said, "Do you know how wonderful it makes Father in Heaven feel when you talk to Him?" She responded, "Oh, Daddy, I will always talk to my Father in Heaven." Such is the pure

heart of a five-year-old who has been carefully, spiritually nurtured.

Another mother read gospel stories to her children from a young, formative age. Once, as she read of the crucifixion of the Savior, her two-and-one-half-year-old son sobbed. She realized that he was a spiritually sensitive child. Through the years that child has become a righteous, disciplined young man who loves the Lord and keeps His commandments. Profanity, so prevalent today, is particularly offensive to him. As he shuns it and other evils, he is criticized for being too "churchy." While it is difficult now, as he continues his resolve to be righteous, he will become a powerfully strong husband, father, and leader.

When two-year-old Clayton overheard the family sharing feelings about his grandmother serving in Swaziland, Africa, his little heart was touched. Often he would fold his arms, bow his head, and say, "Gam-ma on mission. Jesus. Amen." When she returned, he did not recognize her until she said, "This is your missionary grandma." Instantly he broke into a smile, ran, and threw his arms around her. Each grandchild now wants to be a missionary.

Honor to mothers who remain home

What enduring fruits will result from seeds of truth you carefully plant and thoughtfully cultivate in the fertile soil of your child's trusting mind and heart? Recently I reviewed the history of many missionaries and found a powerful correlation between exceptional missionaries and mothers who chose to remain home, often at great financial and personal sacrifice. With the names changed, I share excerpts of bishops' and stake presidents' comments about real missionaries. It is but a fraction of the many thousands of examples available. They reflect honor to mothers who sacrificed to remain home for their children's benefit.

"Kevin is one of the finest young men I have known. He is a natural leader,

gifted, intelligent, and multitalented, with whom people feel comfortable. He has read the Book of Mormon six times and has a strong testimony acquired through study, service, trial, and sacrifice. He currently has a full scholarship to medical school."

"Lorraine is one of the most remarkable young women in the Church. She will be a delight to any mission president."

"Roy is the type of young man I would hope for my daughter someday."

"Brad is one of the finest young men I have ever known. He is honest and true, bright, well organized, and a hard worker. He handles challenges as if the Lord were speaking in his ear."

"Carol has kept herself worthy while a cheerleader in high school and college. She is one of the most loved and looked-up-to among her peers. She is strong, and her love for the Lord is evidenced in her '1,000-watt' glow."

"Pierre comes from a strong family. He is not swayed by peer pressure, has always been a leader, prays regularly, studies the scriptures, is close to family and the principles of the gospel. He does the uncomfortable things first."

"Mark is possibly the best-prepared young man I have ever recommended. He has taken many under his arm and stabilized their lives because of his testimony and love. One of eleven children, he indicated he would be fasting and praying during the week his mission is being considered."

"Marie is strong, motivated, smart, dedicated, and knows where she is going. She comes from a strong home where gospel-centered ideals and values were successfully transferred to her. During her entire life she has been an outstanding example of service and righteous living."

"Dale has a strong foundation in the gospel from his own study and the influence of a very supportive family. The eldest of five children, he has always done the right things. He had a driver's license,

but when insurance rates increased, he voluntarily turned it in."

"Rodney is a very impressive young man. He spent a short time in the military and got his whole platoon to pray with him before tests; several went to church with him."

"Sonya is almost too good to be true!"

"Mac is on athletic scholarship and is close to attaining his goal of representing his country in the Olympics this fall, yet he has decided it's time to serve his mission."

"Marco is a pure vessel, not demonstrative but steady. One of eight, he recently earned his Eagle rank, delayed not by apathy but because he has worked hard since thirteen to help support his large family."

"Layne is a gentle giant, predisposed to set a good example. A fine student, he delayed higher education to earn money for his mission. He sold the horses he loves to help with family finances."

"Lee is completely dependable and responsible. To illustrate his faith, his mother at this moment is hovering between life and death, yet he is anxious to serve. He said, 'That is what the Lord wants and my parents want.'"

There are many thousands of youth like those I have just described, and more just keep coming.

How grateful you mothers of youth like these must feel as you see some of the fruits of your sacrifice. You have a vision of the power of obediently, patiently teaching truth because you look beyond the peanut butter sandwiches, soiled clothing, tedious hours of routine, struggles with homework, and long hours by a sickbed.

President Benson has taught that a mother with children should be in the home. He also said, "We realize . . . that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work

for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule" (Ezra Taft Benson, *To the Mothers in Zion* [pamphlet, 1987], pp. 5–6). You in these unusual circumstances qualify for additional inspiration and strength from the Lord. Those who leave the home for lesser reasons will not.

Dealing with disobedience

Parents, don't make the mistake of purposefully intervening to soften or eliminate the natural consequences of your child's deliberate decisions to violate the commandments. Such acts reinforce false principles, open the door for more serious sin, and lessen the likelihood of repentance.

Some of you have children who do not respond to you, choosing entirely different paths. Father in Heaven has repeatedly had that same experience. While some of His children have used His gift of agency to make choices against His counsel, He continues to love them. Yet, I am sure, He has never blamed Himself for their unwise choices.

Focus on the family

As a mother or father, are you in trouble because the pressures of the world lead you from effectively fulfilling your divine role? Is your life unconsciously fueled with the burning desire for more things that could compromise eternal relationships and the molding of a child's developing character? You must be willing to forgo personal pleasure and self-interest for family-centered activity, and not turn over to church, school, or society the principal role of fostering a child's well-rounded development. It takes time, great effort, and significant personal sacrifice to "train up a child in the way he should go." But where can you find greater rewards for a job well done?

You may not have the blessing of being raised in an understanding family, yet your use of correct principles will

mold, strengthen, and give purpose to your lives.

Find and follow correct principles

Joseph Smith's inspired statement, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves," still applies (quoted by John Taylor, in *Millennial Star*, 15 Nov. 1851, p. 339). The Lord uses that pattern with us. You will find correct principles in the teachings of the Savior, His prophets, and the scriptures—especially the Book of Mormon.

While easy to find, true principles are not easy to live until they become an established pattern of life. They will require you to dislodge false ideas. They can cause you wrenching battles within the secret chambers of your heart and decisive encounters to overcome temptation, peer pressure, and the false allure of the "easy way out." Yet as you resolutely follow correct principles, you will forge strength of character available to you in times of urgent need. Your consistent adherence to principle overcomes the alluring yet false lifestyles that surround you. Your faithful compliance to correct principles will generate criticism and ridicule from others, yet the results are so eternally worthwhile that they warrant your every sacrifice.

Anchor your life in Christ

Now, the most important principle I can share: Anchor your life in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life—more important than life itself, more important than a beloved companion or children or anyone on earth. Make their will your central desire. Then all that you need for happiness will come to you.

I solemnly testify that your Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son live, that they know you, that they love you, that they want to help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.