

Likewise, we should follow this admonition in relationships between parents and children. We must never take our children for granted and always keep our relationships sacred, honorable, and holy.

In 1986 while speaking to the men of the Church in a priesthood session of conference, President Ezra Taft Benson, our prophet, gave them the following directives. Even though he was speaking specifically to the young priesthood brethren, the same directives apply to young women as well. He said:

"My young brethren [and sisters], I counsel each of you to draw close to your own mother. Respect her. Honor her. Receive your mother's counsel as she loves and instructs you in righteousness. And honor and obey your father as he stands as the head of the home, emulating his manly qualities.

"Young men [and young women], the family unit is forever, and you should do everything in your power to strengthen that unit. In your own family, encourage family home evenings and be an active participant. Encourage family prayer and be on your knees with your family in that sacred circle. Do your part to develop real family unity and solidarity. In such homes, there is no generation gap" (in Conference Re-

port, Apr. 1986, pp. 55-56; or *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 43).

Testimony of truth

I am grateful for many opportunities I've had to bear my testimony of the truth of the gospel to many people in many parts of the world during my years of service in the Church. We have made many friends and acquaintances in different parts of the world, and their friendship is very sacred and dear to us. Friendship is something you cannot buy for money. You work for it, honor it, and it becomes important and sacred in our lives. Once more I bear you my witness that I know the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fullness. Our loving Heavenly Father sent his Only Begotten Son into the world to bring about an understanding of sacrifice and blessings. Through the Resurrection, the sting of death was conquered, and Jesus Christ became the firstfruits of the Resurrection to show us there is life hereafter.

Let us all be diligent and obedient in keeping the commandments of the Lord, that we may be worthy to receive the blessings he has in store for the faithful, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Jacob de Jager

The Happy Dutchman

My dear brothers and sisters and friends all over the world, as you heard from a very reliable source in the first session of this general conference, and again it was confirmed this afternoon, I was given emeritus status as a Seventy. As far as I was able to determine this morning, the vote of thanks was unanimous in the affirmative. For this I express my gratitude to all of you who were present here.

When I was called to the Quorum of the Seventy in April 1976, Elder LeGrand Richards, who, as many of you will recall, was a Dutchman by adoption, used to call me the "Happy Dutchman." After seventeen and one-half years, I want you to know that I am still the Happy Dutchman, and I will tell you why: because these years of service in the Quorum have brought great joy and countless blessings to my life and the life of Bea, my eternal companion.

Blessings of Church service

I had the privilege to be assigned to stakes from Punta Arenas in South America to Anchorage, Alaska; and from Hobart, Australia, to Japan. I worked closely with faithful Regional Representatives and dedicated stake presidencies—always teaching them correct principles so that they would learn to govern themselves.

What a blessing it was to visit missions of the Church in many parts of the world and teach the missionaries what missionary work is really all about: transferring sacred knowledge by the Spirit to people who live in ignorance but who all are entitled to hear the message of the restored gospel. This message enables them to learn that the most important part of their lives is making sacred covenants that will bring them back to their Father in Heaven.

I am still as happy as when I was called to the Quorum, and, in good western American tradition, I will now ride off into the sunset. But I know there is a loving priesthood leader waiting at the roadside to call me, under inspiration, to another meaningful calling.

My first calling in the Church, three days after my baptism in Toronto, Canada, was to be in charge of the hymnbooks in the ward. I really would not mind at all to quickly go back to the hymnbooks again because I can truly testify that this is a church of workers and *not* a museum of Saints. Those who think differently have not fully understood the real purpose of the divine organization to which we all belong.

Maintaining a cheerful disposition

Yes, I have maintained a cheerful disposition, and I will gladly share with you some positive ideas:

- Learn to *love* the calling that you have in the Church. You can learn to love it so much it becomes invigorating.

- Learn to be satisfied. It is just as easy as being dissatisfied—and much more pleasant.

- Learn to accept adversity. No matter who you are or where you serve, you are going to have some. But do not fear the winds of adversity. Remember, a kite rises against the wind rather than with it!

- Get in the habit of saying *pleasant* things rather than making negative remarks.

- Live the present moment to the hilt, and do not live in the past or in the future. Success is a journey, *not* a destination.

- Live and honor the covenants that you made at the time of your baptism and in the temple.

- And when you have reached the age of seventy, you must resist the urge to straighten out everybody's affairs and admit occasionally that you might be mistaken.

Staying young through service

Not long ago I had the privilege of attending a mission presidents' seminar in San Francisco with Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve. He shared with us some thoughts from an author about growing old.

"Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old only by deserting their ideals. . . . There is [always] the love of wonder, [a] child-like appetite for what [is] next, and the joy . . . of life. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear [or] despair. In the [center] of every heart there is a recording chamber; so long as it receives messages of beauty, hope, cheer, and courage, so long are you young" (Douglas MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, ed. Vorin E. Whan, Jr. [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965], p. 313).

How blessed are we to be part of a rapidly expanding church that teaches

beauty, hope, cheer, courage, faith, and happiness that enable us to stay young at heart through faithful service in whatever calling we may have.

Happiness: the object of our existence

President Thomas S. Monson's First Presidency message entitled "Happiness, the Universal Quest" in the October 1993 issue of the *Ensign* magazine, shares five important ways to obtain lasting happiness in this life and the life to come, based on the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it" (p. 2).

Therefore, let us all walk in these clearly defined paths to increase our happiness.

In closing, I bear solemn witness that God, our Eternal Father, lives; that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Father born in the flesh, the Savior and Redeemer of all mankind; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God; and that every man who has succeeded him as President of

the Church has been a living prophet, including President Ezra Taft Benson in our day and time. This is my personal, eternal testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elders Adney Y. Komatsu and Jacob de Jager, emeritus members of the Seventy.

I must take a moment and say how happy I am that the de Jager family became members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the time I had the opportunity to preside over the Canadian Mission, headquartered in Toronto, and that my beloved Frances was the person in Toronto who took the telephone call from a nonmember at that time, Jacob de Jager, who then became our beloved Jack, now an emeritus member of the Quorums of the Seventy. God speed the blessings and the lives of Adney Komatsu, Jacob de Jager, and, of course, Burke Peterson, who are now emeritus.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Russell M. Nelson

I echo President Monson's compliments to Brother Peterson, Brother Komatsu, and Brother de Jager. They have earned our greatest commendation. And I too join with others who feel a debt of gratitude to this wonderful chorus of youth from Brigham Young University.

Constancy amid change

Our youth are wonderful and especially able to ask thoughtful questions. Recently I had a conversation with "Ruth" and "John." Ruth opened the discussion. With a sigh, she lamented,

"Our world is constantly changing, isn't it?"

"Yes," I replied, "ever since its creation—geologically and geographically. And its populations are changing—politically and spiritually. You might ask your grandparents about life when they were your age and discover their thoughts."

"Oh, I already have," Ruth continued. "My grandpa summarized his opinion with a clever quip: 'Give me the good old days—plus penicillin.'"

Then John expressed deep concern. "Continually changing conditions make the future shaky for us," he said.