

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

"And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

"And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

"And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16-21).

A modern illustration of that principle is suggested in the apocryphal story of two men standing before the casket of a wealthy friend. Asked one, "How much property did he leave?" Replied the other, "He left all of it."

President Lorenzo Snow taught that "the law of tithing is one of the most important ever revealed to man" (quoted in Le Roi C. Snow, "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," *Improvement Era*, July 1938, p. 442). Faithful adherence to this law opens the windows of heaven for blessings temporal and spiritual. As a lifelong recipient of those blessings, I testify to the goodness of our God and his bounteous blessings to his children.

I pray that each member of this church will qualify for the blessings promised and bestowed on those who bring all their tithes into the storehouse. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have just heard Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us, and he will be our concluding speaker.

Elder L. Tom Perry

Elder Hales, we welcome you as a member of the Council of the Twelve. Our friendship goes back, I guess, over three decades. Of course, I've always wondered why when I moved to New York, you moved to Boston. And then when I moved to Boston, you moved back to New York. No longer can you escape! You join the greatest quorum that you can possibly belong to because of the brotherhood and fellowship that are there. Welcome, Elder Hales!

Goodly parents

The Book of Mormon begins with these words: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" (1 Nephi 1:1). What a differ-

ent world this would be if the personal journals of each of our Father in Heaven's children could begin with a similar phrase—having goodly parents and being taught by them.

We live in such a special time in history, a time when the Lord's gospel has been restored in its fulness. Our missionary force is increasing in quality and quantity; thus, the gospel is being taught in more languages to more nations and to greater numbers of listening ears than ever before. As wards and stakes are being established in most parts of the world, creative minds have been inspired to develop communication instruments which are capable of bringing the instructions of the prophets to the ears of many, many more people. The good news of the gospel can now spread more rapidly

to bring the hope of everlasting peace to the hearts of mankind.

Family life in crisis

One of the great messages of the gospel is the doctrine of the eternal nature of the family unit. We declare to the world the value and importance of family life, but much of the confusion and difficulty we find existing in the world today is being traced to the deterioration of the family. Home experiences where children are taught and trained by loving parents are diminishing.

Family life where children and parents communicate together in study, play, and work has been replaced by a quick, individual, microwaved dinner and an evening in front of the TV set. In 1991 the National Association of Counties, meeting in Salt Lake City, thought that the lack of home influence had reached such a point of becoming a crisis in our nation and spent time in their meetings discussing their concerns. They identified five basic concepts that could increase every family's chances for success.

First, strengthen relationships through family activities; second, establish reasonable rules and expectations; third, build self-esteem; fourth, set achievable goals; and fifth, periodically evaluate family strengths and needs.

Suddenly the urgent and warning voice of our prophets from the very beginning of time has special relevance. As we have been counseled and encouraged, we must be attentive to our own families and accelerate our missionary effort to bring others to a knowledge of the truth and the importance of the family unit.

Adam and Eve learn parental duties

In the very beginning, the Lord's instructions to Adam and Eve made clear their responsibilities as parents. Their

roles were well defined. After they had received instructions from the Lord, we find them following His counsel and saying this:

"And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

"And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

"And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters" (Moses 5:10-12).

Teach and train children

Yes, from the very beginning the responsibility of parents teaching their children was among the instructions the Lord gave to our first earthly parents.

Revelations received as the Church has been restored in this day again admonish parents in their obligation to teach and train their children. In the ninety-third section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we find the Lord chastising some of the brethren for not paying attention to their family responsibilities. The scriptures read:

"But I have commanded you to bring up your children in light and truth.

"You have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments; and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction.

"And now a commandment I give unto you—if you will be delivered you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house" (D&C 93:40, 42-43).

Importance of family home evening

Years ago the Church admonished all parents to hold weekly family home evenings. Today that admonition has been institutionalized in the homes of Church members. Monday night has been set aside as an evening for families to be together. No Church activities or social appointments should be sponsored on this night. We have been promised great blessings if our families would be faithful in this regard.

President Lee once counseled us:

"Now keep in mind this; that when the full measure of Elijah's mission is understood, that the hearts of the children will be turned to the fathers, and the fathers to the children. It applies just as much on this side of the veil as it does on the other side of the veil. If we neglect our families here in having family home night and we fail in our responsibility here, how would heaven look if we lost some of those through our own neglect? Heaven would not be heaven until we have done everything we can to save those whom the Lord has sent through our lineage" (in *Relief Society Courses of Study, 1977-78* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1977], p. 2).

Then he continued:

"So, the hearts of you fathers and mothers must be turned to your children *right now*, if you have the true spirit of Elijah, and not think that it applies merely to those who are beyond the veil. Let your hearts be turned to your children, and teach your children; but you must do it when they are young enough to be properly schooled. And if you are neglecting your family home evening, you are neglecting the beginning of the mission of Elijah just as certainly as if you were neglecting your research work of genealogy" (p. 2; italics added).

I've often thought of the happy times we had when our family was young and our children were at home. I have

made a mental review of those days and considered the changes I would make in our family organization and administration if we had the opportunity to live that period over again. There are two areas I would determine to improve if that privilege were granted to me to have young children in our home once again.

The first would be to spend more time as husband and wife in a family executive committee meeting learning, communicating, planning, and organizing to better fulfill our roles as parents.

The second wish I would like, if I could have those years over, would be to spend more family time. This includes more consistent, meaningful family home evenings.

Youth contribute to success

The full burden of planning and preparing for family home evenings should not be left to parents alone. The most successful ones I have witnessed are when the youth of the family take an active part.

I call on you great deacons, teachers, and priests, you Beehive girls, Mia Maids, and Laurels to make a major contribution in the success of your family home evenings. In many homes you can be the conscience of the family. After all, you have the most to gain from this experience. If you want to live in a world of peace, security, and opportunity, the family you contribute to can add to the well-being, yes, even of the whole world.

I remember an example of this that occurred over the Christmas holidays one year when we had the grandchildren on an outing with us. In order to have a real togetherness experience, we had arranged for a van to travel together. In the van were Grandpa and Grandma and my son and his three older children. My son's wife had stayed at home with the younger members of the family. I was taking my turn at the wheel, and

my wife was seated next to me acting as our navigator. From the back end of the van, I heard Audrey, the eldest child, counseling with her father. She was saying, "Dad, one of our goals this year was to finish the Book of Mormon in our family study. This is the last day of the year. Why don't we complete it now so that we will be on schedule?"

What a special experience it was to listen to my son and his three children, each taking turns reading aloud the final chapters of Moroni and completing their goal of reading the entire Book of Mormon. Remember, it was a young woman who made this suggestion, not one of the parents.

Challenge to youth

You are a chosen generation—saved for this special time in the history of mankind. You have so much to give to add to the growth and development of the families to which you belong. I challenge you to step forward in your family units with that special, enthusiastic spirit of your youth to make the gospel really live in your homes. Remember the counsel of President Joseph F. Smith when he said:

"I would like my children, and all the children in Zion, to know that there is nothing in this world that is of so much value to them as the knowledge of the gospel as it has been restored to the earth in these latter days through the Prophet Joseph Smith. There is nothing that can compensate for its loss. There is nothing on earth that can compare with the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let, therefore, all the parents in Zion look after their children, and teach them the principles of the gospel, and strive as far as possible to get them to do their duty—not mechanically, because they are urged to do it, but try to instill into the hearts of the children the spirit of truth and an abiding love for the gospel, that they may not only do their duty because it is pleas-

ing to their parents, but because it is pleasing also to themselves" (*Masterpieces of Latter-day Saint Leaders*, comp. N. B. Lundwall [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953], p. 78).

Revitalize family home evening

Family home evenings are for everyone, whether it be in a two-parent home, a single-parent home, or in a single-member family unit. Home teachers, we call upon you in your regular visits to encourage and revitalize the holding of family home evenings.

Our present prophet, President Ezra Taft Benson, has reminded us again of the necessity of holding family home evenings and the ingredients which constitute a successful one. He has said:

"Designed to strengthen and safeguard the family, the Church's [family] home evening program establishes one night each week that is to be set apart for fathers and mothers to gather their sons and daughters around them in the home. Prayer is offered, hymns and other songs are sung, scriptures are read, family topics are discussed, talent is displayed, principles of the gospel are taught, and often games are played and homemade refreshments served" (in Conference Report, Philippine Islands Area Conference 1975, p. 10).

It is our hope that each of you might write down each of those suggestions made by the prophet on what a family home evening should contain.

Then he continues: "Now, here are the blessings promised by a prophet of God for those who will hold weekly [family] home evenings: 'If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them'" (p. 10; see also *Improvement Era*, June 1915, p. 734).

We encourage each of you to follow the counsel of our prophet. In all the family units throughout the Church, evaluate again the progress you are making in holding regular family home evenings. The application of this program will be a shield and a protection to you against the evils of our time and will bring you, individually and collectively, greater and abundant joy now and in the eternities hereafter.

May God bless us that we may revitalize and strengthen this tremendously important program as we counsel together as family members is my prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Perry. Elder Perry has been our concluding speaker for this session.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting, which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at

6:00 P.M. mountain standard time. We call your attention to the need to move your clocks ahead one hour before retiring tonight because of the change to daylight saving time.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. daylight saving time. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session, which follows immediately after it, must be in their seats no later than 9:15 A.M.

We express appreciation to the stirring music of the Mormon Youth Chorus and thank them for the effort they have made to be with us this afternoon. They will sing in conclusion "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning," following which the benediction will be offered by Elder Julio E. Dávila of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "The Spirit of God." Elder Julio E. Dávila offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 164th Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 2, 1994. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by a Melchizedek Priesthood choir from the University Utah Region. Edgar J. Thompson directed the choir and Richard L. Elliott was the organist.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks.

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, we welcome you this evening to the general priesthood session.

We excuse President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching these proceedings in his apartment.

These services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, the BYU Marriott Center, and in locations in many countries throughout the world.

We note that Elders David B. Haight, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, and Glenn L. Pace are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall; Elders Rex D. Pinegar and Eduardo Ayala are in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building; and Elders Alexander B. Morrison and Harold G. Hillam are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.