

Third, do we love Christ sufficiently that we will be true to our mates, casting out all our unclean thoughts and never betraying their sweet love for us?

Can we do too much for the Lord? Certainly we all love Him. Therefore, I implore us, keep His commandments and become more like Him. Come unto Christ, eat the bread of life, drink the living water, and feast on His limitless love. He is our Savior, our Master, of

whom I bear my humble witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder F. Melvin Hammond of the Seventy.

It will now be our pleasure to hear from Sister Ruth B. Wright, second counselor in the general Primary presidency, and she will be followed by Elder Hans B. Ringger of the Seventy.

Sister Ruth B. Wright

Focus on children

Sister Wilson carefully studied each young child as she entered the Primary classroom. *How they have grown and developed since January*, she thought. She gathered them around her and began her lesson. "You are each very special! You have learned so many things. You have learned to sit reverently and listen to our lessons. Why, you can even say your own prayers!"

"Well, of course," responded Clayton, "I've already been on this earth five years!"

Clayton's lifetime seemed a very long time to him, and he saw no limits to what he could learn. Brothers and sisters, our children are eager to learn. They want to be taught. They need to be taught.

The First Presidency has admonished all adult members of the Church to focus on children in an ongoing effort to help them learn to follow the teachings of the Savior. The purpose of "Focus on Children" is to direct the attention and efforts of adult members to care for children in a way that will enable them to have a strong foundation of testimony and faithfully live the gospel of Jesus Christ (see "Focus on Children, Guidelines and Suggestions"). When we consider all the eager young Claytons, we

realize that this is an important and exciting responsibility.

The First Presidency has suggested four goals to help us focus on children. The goals are one, to recognize the worth of our children; two, to activate children who are not participating in the blessings of the gospel; three, to teach children the gospel in such a way that they will understand and live it; and four, to ensure that children are prepared for and given the opportunity for baptism and ordination. I would like to focus my remarks on the third goal, teaching children the gospel in such a way that they will understand and live it.

Teach children to walk uprightly

The Lord, through revelation, has taught us in section 68 of the Doctrine and Covenants that parents have the responsibility to teach and train their children in righteousness. Parents have been instructed to "teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord" (v. 28).

What does it mean to walk uprightly before the Lord? The word *upright* is defined as honest, honorable, straightforward. Thus, to walk uprightly, our children need to choose to live in an honest, honorable, straightforward manner. Children who understand and live

the gospel today can walk with assurance and joy and someday will enter the presence of the Lord, walking uprightly.

Sometimes it isn't easy as parents to teach our children. Sometimes we make mistakes. Our children may react with opposition to what we are teaching them. As parents, we should keep our desire to do our best, constantly show our love, and not blame ourselves if our children choose another way.

In our efforts to help our children desire to walk uprightly before the Lord, we can ask ourselves three questions:

What to teach children?

One: What do we teach our children? It is essential that we teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). I believe the scriptures are the main source to help us teach our children to walk uprightly.

We need to help our children gain a sense of their relationship with Heavenly Father. They can know that each person is a literal child of God, that each is born with a divine birthright and unlimited potential. When my nephew was four years old, his father took great delight in asking him to repeat his name. Rich would ask, "Mark, what is your name?" Mark would stand up tall and answer with a happy grin, "My name is Mark Andrew Broadbent, Child of God." When our children understand that Heavenly Father is real and that He loves and cares about each of them, they will want to walk uprightly.

Our children need to learn how to pray so they can communicate with Heavenly Father. A mother I know has taught her children to pray from the moment they began to utter their first words. Not only did she teach each child to express sincere gratitude for his blessings but also to seek Heavenly Father's guidance by specifically asking Him to "help me choose the right."

Our children need to understand the principle of agency and the significance of the choices they make. I remember a time when I was in high school and wanted to drop out of a type class because it was too hard for me. I hated that class. I begged my parents to sign the form giving their permission for me to drop the class from my schedule. My father explained over and over all the reasons why he thought I should stay in the class. He said, "It's important to stay with something once you begin it, especially when it's hard. You need to work and try to do your best." Finally in desperation he said, "I've told you how I feel, and now, Ruth, the decision is up to you. I'll sign the paper if you want me to." After spending a sleepless night fighting off my desire to do what I wanted, I finally chose to stay in the class. Although I struggled with typing for the rest of the year, I'm glad I stayed, and I'm especially glad for the counsel of my father. He helped me to understand my options. He was clear on how he felt about the matter, but he didn't force me.

Where to teach children?

Question two: Where do we teach our children? The best place to teach our children the gospel is in our homes. A mother of eleven children once said to me, "The gospel needs to be in the air of our homes. Our children should almost be able to feel it. We can provide a safe, comfortable environment for them so they can feel free to learn and to develop their own personal testimonies."

We teach our children everywhere we are with them, and I believe we should have fun with them while we are doing it! We have opportunities many times a day to teach them as we walk together, drive in the car, work side by side, kneel in prayer, talk at the dinner table, and even when we change diapers. It didn't take me long to realize soon after our first child, Natalie, was born that changing diapers was not on my list of favorite

things to do. So to help me survive this recurring ordeal, I sang Primary songs to her to make it nicer for both of us. Soon the routine of changing diapers became second nature and didn't bother me anymore. However, I continued to sing to Natalie and the rest of our children as I performed this duty, because I realized I had an opportunity many times a day to teach my child.

How to teach children?

Question three: How do we teach our children? We teach by example. Our children will learn far more by observing us walk uprightly than any other way. Blair's parents showed him, by their example, the importance of prayer. He remembers many times as a child walking down the hall to his parents' bedroom and seeing them kneeling at the side of their bed, holding hands as they prayed to Heavenly Father.

We teach children to walk uprightly a step at a time, over and over again. I know of a mother who has her children repeat this simple yet powerful statement as they leave home: "The gospel is true, I love you, and I am a child of God, no matter what!" The words "Return with honor" written on a sign hung above the doorway of a home are a constant reminder to all who walk through the door how they should return.

Our children respond best when taught with respect and love. In the eighth chapter of Moroni, the prophet Mormon is deeply concerned about a dissension that has arisen among the members of the Church. He has written a letter giving counsel to his son, Moroni, regarding the matter. But before he addresses this problem, Mormon expresses his devotion to his son:

"My beloved son, Moroni, I rejoice exceedingly that your Lord Jesus Christ hath . . . called you to his ministry, and to his holy work.

"I am mindful of you always in my prayers, continually praying unto God

the Father in the name of his Holy Child, Jesus, that he, through . . . grace, will keep you through the endurance of faith on his name to the end" (vv. 2-3). First, Mormon reaffirmed his love for Moroni, and then he taught him. When our children first know they are loved, they are more likely to listen and be taught.

Clara's advice to her mother

Our children will be more able to survive the challenges that will come to them when they know and understand that keeping God's commandments can bring them peace and joy in their lives and enable them to walk uprightly. While traveling in the car with her mother and younger sister, five-year-old Clara sensed that her mother was deeply troubled about something. "Mommy, what's the matter? You seem so sad."

Not wanting to go into detail about her concerns, but feeling that she needed to acknowledge to her daughter that she was worried, Clara's mother asked, "Clara, what would you do if you felt sad and frustrated?"

"Well," responded Clara, and there was a long pause, "you need to take time out and think. Then you need to pray all the time and read the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. You need to bless other people. Just think about the good things people do for you and the good things in your life, not the bad." Young Clara is beginning to understand how to walk uprightly before the Lord.

To earthly parents God sends children

To guide and teach, protect and love.

Oh, let us keep the sacred trust
That he has placed with each of us
And help to guide them back to
God above.

["How Dear to God Are Little Children," *Children's Songbook*, pp. 180-81]

May God bless us as parents to teach our children to walk uprightly before the

Lord is my prayer in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Hans B. Ringger

“What shall we do?”

A few years ago the world was at a political turning point. People believed that nations would achieve a long-awaited peace. Many overlooked, however, that we live in societies and cultures in which norms and values are changing and where secular reforms often define the nature of men and women. One injustice is often replaced by another injustice. We live in a time of ambiguous mores and of little direction. We are confronted with the same question that the disciples were asked after the resurrection of Christ: “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

This is the question we ask in uncertain times or when confronted with new challenges. We may answer with unreflective action, hoping to find solutions merely through results. Fortunately the Lord understands us better than we understand ourselves. The gospel teaches us first to ponder and develop faith. Only after we have honestly decided in favor of good, based on the gospel, can we bring forth righteous deeds. Active faith leads to good works. We will receive the strength from above to strive toward what is right. However, great works and deeds are not sustained in themselves. Continuity of great deeds requires our obedient dedication and the dedication of future generations.

Gospel satisfies eternal needs

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only plan in which there are no calculated errors. After the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord warned His disciples of future adversities and the need for just works. He explained that they should not rely on their own strength when they

served but on His name and His calling. We too are disciples and live in a world of many needs, be they spiritual, material, or emotional. Through gospel service our eternal needs can be satisfied, and we will be able to serve in the world. Our needs cannot be met through searching for the unenduring but only in discovering the eternal. When we look for answers on an eternal plane, we will secure our relationship to God and gain a better understanding of our fellow beings. We will thus be capable of serving; such is the purpose of life.

The visible expression of doing God’s will often results in personal cheerfulness—a silent, sunny brightness and a joy for life, feelings which are sung about in Psalms. We live, however, not without adversity and possible moments of deep despair. Our surroundings entice us to the unenduring, to injustice and disobedience. If we want to prevail, we must act in accordance with gospel principles. We cannot ask for more than to find the true meaning of life. “He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39). We are promised that we will receive plentifully and gain eternal life when we give up those things the Lord requires of us.

We choose to accept or reject the gospel of Christ. Human life was created on the basis of freedom of choice. God wants free people and people who serve Him freely. It is therefore a challenge in everyone’s life to choose the straight and narrow path which avoids a life which lacks eternal direction. There are probably times in our lives when we wonder if there are other paths or shortcuts. The gospel gives us the answer, together with the promise of divine