

or too hard, no climate too hot or too cold, no food too different or language so strange that they are unwilling to serve Him. No sacrifice is too great to serve the Master, who sacrificed His all to provide the way for His brothers and sisters to return home to their Heavenly Father. And because they are faithful to their callings, thousands will revere their names throughout the eternities.

I testify there is no more majestic call than to be in the full-time service of our Redeemer, to help to bring our Heavenly Father's children to the knowledge of Him who has made eternal life possible. I pray that every able young man—and every able couple—will join those who have paid the price to serve a full-time mission. And this I pray in the name of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

## Bishop H. David Burton

Brethren, I am honored and humbled to share this historic podium with others of the General Authorities, particularly the fifteen prophets, seers, and revelators seated behind me, whom I love and revere. I bear witness that these mighty men of God, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, have been prepared, refined, tested, and called to preside over and to give direction to this expansive priesthood labor.

### An “I will” attitude

There is a sign prominently displayed in a shopping mall in Manila, the Philippines, that reads, “Your ‘I will’ is more important than your ‘IQ.’” As I ponder the meaning of that short phrase, there comes to mind the chorus of the great Primary song based on 1 Nephi 3:7: “I will go; I will do the thing the Lord commands. I know the Lord provides a way; he wants me to obey” (“Nephi’s Courage,” *Children’s Songbook*, pp. 120–21). I also find myself humming and whistling the refrain from the celebrated hymn of the Restoration: “I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord . . . ; I’ll say what you want me to say . . . ; I’ll be what you want me to be” (“I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” *Hymns*, no. 270).

Far too many who have been blessed with great ability and exceptional intellect fail to have an “I will” attitude when

it comes to going, doing, saying, and being what the Lord commands.

*I will go, I will do, I will say, and I will be* all convey determined obedience. Our third article of faith states, “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.” Certainly the most magnificent act of obedience was accomplished in Gethsemane. You may recall the heartfelt plea of the Savior: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

### “I wills” for priesthood holders

For us who bear the priesthood of God, there are many important “I wills”: *I will* be loyal to the oath and covenant of the priesthood; *I will* be responsive to my quorum president; *I will* exhibit perfect fidelity to the covenants made in holy places; and, *I will* serve with excellence in my Aaronic Priesthood ministry, preparing myself for further priesthood service. Possibly the most significant “I will” we all could commit to this night is *I will* follow the living prophets.

### Commit to follow the living prophet

Brigham Young said, “You cannot destroy the appointment of a prophet of

God, but you can cut the thread that binds you to the prophet of God, and sink yourselves to hell" (quoted by Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Apr. 1963, p. 81; or *Improvement Era*, June 1963, p. 501).

Elder John A. Widtsoe said: "The most important prophet in any age is the living prophet. . . . To follow the living prophet, the interpreter of the past, is the essence of wisdom. The very strength of the Church lies in the doctrine of continuous revelation through a living prophet" (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, 3 vols. in 1, arr. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960], p. 352).

President Wilford Woodruff recalled a meeting at which the Prophet Joseph Smith said to Brigham Young, "Brother Brigham I want you to take the stand and tell us your views with regard to the written oracles and the written word of God." Brigham Young is reported to have laid the scriptures, one by one, before him and then indicated he felt the words of the living prophet were more important than the writings before him because the words of the living oracles convey the word of God to us in our day. President Woodruff went on to say, "When he was through, Brother Joseph said to the congregation: 'Brother Brigham has told you the word of the Lord, and he has told you the truth'" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1897, pp. 22-23).

How are we doing in obeying the living prophets? Do you recall their counsel just six months ago in the last general priesthood meeting? For example, do you remember President Faust saying: "There is no greater responsibility than that of being a husband and a father, from which there is no release. . . . 'Love thy wife with all thy heart, and . . . cleave unto her and none else' [D&C 42:22]"? (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, p. 63; or *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 46).

Can you remember President Monson's fervent request: "Brethren of the priesthood, the world is in need of your

help. There are feet to steady, hands to grasp, minds to encourage, hearts to inspire, and souls to save. . . . Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service"? (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, p. 67; or *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 49).

Young men, oh, I hope the magnificent counsel of President Hinckley continues to ring in your ears: "You cannot indulge in any unbecoming behavior without injury to the beauty of the fabric of your lives. Immoral acts of any kind will introduce an ugly thread. Dishonesty of any kind will create a blemish. Foul and profane language will rob the pattern of its beauty" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, p. 73; or *Ensign*, May 1995, p. 53).

### Become acquainted with Nephi

Young men who hold the priesthood of Aaron, may I offer an "I will" for your serious consideration? It is *I will* become very well acquainted with the noble prophet Nephi through studying, pondering, and feasting upon the first two books of the Book of Mormon. My young friends, I promise that when you come to really know Nephi, you will be so impressed with his determination, courage, and desire to be obedient to the "things the Lord commands" that you will have a strong desire to incorporate his attributes into your own lives. Then when you are tempted by the adversary, as you may be nearly every day, to deviate from the counsel of the prophets, the wishes of your parents, or what "the Lord commands," you can immediately have the words of stalwart Nephi automatically come to your mind: "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). And when someone with whom you associate suggests you participate in something that is not as "the Lord commands," you can think of the courageous plea Nephi made to his elder brothers: "Let us be faithful

in keeping the commandments of the Lord" (v. 16).

### **Young athletes honor the Sabbath**

I am aware of a group of courageous young men who followed the example of Nephi. After winning a baseball state championship for their age-group, their team, made up mostly of Aaronic Priesthood holders, was invited to represent their state in a tournament to be held in a distant location. Upon arriving at the tournament site, they learned that some of the games were scheduled to be played on the Sabbath day. Each of these young men had to make a difficult personal decision: would he support the team, including several nonmember team members; or if scheduled on Sunday, would he follow what "the Lord commands" in keeping the Sabbath day holy? Their honoring the Sabbath day could mean the team would forfeit their chances of winning the tournament. One by one they quietly approached the coaches, and following the example of Nephi they independently chose to decline participation on the Sabbath day. As it turned out, when Sunday arrived the team's record, coupled with adverse weather conditions, interrupted the schedule. I have had occasion to closely follow these young men over the years. They have continued to pattern their lives after the sterling example of Nephi. They have gone on missions, and they continue to strive to do and say what the Lord has commanded.

### **A baseball player's perseverance**

A few weeks ago I, like perhaps many of you, witnessed on television a long-standing baseball record broken—a record once thought unbreakable. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I watched this fine athlete who broke the record stand on the field with his family and receive accolades of the public and his team. Although I am impressed with this young

man's ability to hit and field a baseball, I am far more impressed with the attributes he displayed in achieving that feat. He demonstrated great perseverance, constancy, sacrifice, courage, and determination in reaching his goal. These are some of the attributes we need to help us be successful in going, doing, and saying as "the Lord commands."

### **Make family leadership top priority**

You adult brethren, may I suggest an "I will" for us which has been repeatedly emphasized by modern prophets? It is of critical importance in today's world, where the influence of the adversary is intensifying and the foundation of our society, the family, is disintegrating. It is *I will* resolve that the leadership of my family will be my most important and sacred responsibility; and *I will* not leave the teaching and governance of my family to society, to the school, or to the Church. We are reminded in the Doctrine and Covenants that fathers and mothers are held accountable by the Lord to teach their children about faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and the need to pray and walk uprightly before the Lord (see D&C 68:25, 28).

Perhaps you have heard some say, "I am so busy with living and providing that I have little time to devote to my family, but I make an effort to see that my limited time is quality time." Brethren, this type of rationalization is severely flawed. Effective family leadership requires both quantity and quality time.

When I was called to be bishop of our ward, our young four-year-old son inquired of me, "Are you the guy they give those envelopes of money to?" I answered, "Yes, I am the one," realizing that we needed a little lesson on tithing. Brandon clapped his hands and exclaimed, "Oh goody, we're going to be rich!" We later learned he was thinking that Dad no longer would have to work

and would therefore have lots more time for him!

If giving your family quantity time means focusing less on providing the "wants" in life or putting aside nonfamily involvement with fishing poles, golf clubs, boats, trips, and so on, those things should be done immediately. Brethren, we need desperately to recommit to this extremely important "I will." May we never be too busy to do the things that matter most: to preside in righteousness in our homes and follow, unconditionally, the counsel of living prophets.

#### **Align our wills with God's will**

Brethren, I pray we may often recall, and perhaps even hum and sing, that simple but infectious Primary song: "I will go; I will do the thing the Lord commands. I know the Lord provides a way; he wants me to obey." May we focus and align our "I wills" with His will. I testify

that the Lord wants us to obey the living prophets. I further testify that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ lives. He is our Savior and our Redeemer. He has, upon the principles of our repentance, atoned for our sins. I testify that this is so, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### **President Hinckley**

Elder Harold G. Hillam of the Presidency of the Seventy has addressed us, followed by Bishop H. David Burton, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will then speak to us.

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The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

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## **President James E. Faust**

#### **Dangers of living on the edge**

It is always a sacred responsibility to address the great body of the priesthood of this church. This evening I wish to speak primarily to the splendid young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. I do so because I recognize that the future of the Church and even the world depends upon how you young men regard and honor your priesthood.

Recently I asked some special young people what I should know about your generation. One young man spoke for the group and said, "We live on the edge." Since that time I have thought a lot about what it means to live on the edge. Of course it can mean many things. I think my fine young friend was referring to hazardous motorcycling, cliff climbing, and other forms of recreation

which may involve taking unnecessary risks to produce a challenge or a thrill.

Some years ago Elder Marion D. Hanks told about a group of Boy Scouts who went cave exploring. The narrow trail was marked with white stones and lighted in sections as they went. After about an hour they came to a huge, high dome. Below it lay an area called the Bottomless Pit, so called because the floor of the cave had collapsed into a deep, gaping hole. It was hard not to jostle each other on that narrow path. Pretty soon one of the bigger boys accidentally pushed a smaller boy into a muddy area away from the light. Terrified as he lost his footing, he screamed in the darkness. The ranger heard his cry of terror and came quickly. The boy let out another cry as the beam of the ranger's light showed that he was right on the very edge of the pit.<sup>1</sup>