

President Faust

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has spoken to us, followed by Elder W. Mack Lawrence of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Praise to the Man." El-

der Rulon G. Craven of the Seventy will then address us.

The choir and congregation sang "Praise to the Man."

Elder Rulon G. Craven

Meeting with repentant members

My brothers and sisters, it has been a wonderful experience to work with the Saints who love their Heavenly Father and love one another. We have witnessed their valiancy and their challenges as they face the trials of life.

During the past years I have at times been asked by the Brethren to meet with repentant members of the Church and interview them for the restoration of their temple blessings. This has always been a spiritually moving experience to restore the blessings of those wonderful people who have repented. I have asked some of them the question, "What happened in your life that caused you to temporarily lose your membership in the Church?" With tear-filled eyes they answered, "I didn't obey the basic principles of the gospel: prayer, attending church regularly, serving in the Church, and studying the gospel. I then gave in to temptations and lost the guidance of the Holy Spirit." It is always a special experience for me to meet these repentant souls and to feel with them the miracle of forgiveness and the joy of being reunited with the Saints and the Holy Spirit.

Turn away from temptation

Temptation is a necessary part of our earthly experience. The Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith explains the

reason why we are tempted: "It must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet" (D&C 29:39).

In the Book of Mormon, Nephi explains the consequences of yielding to temptation: "The temptations of the devil . . . blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost" (1 Nephi 12:17).

To blind the eyes is *not* to see or acknowledge the consequences of our actions. To harden the heart is to *ignore* or not be willing to accept counsel. To be led into the broad roads is to give in to worldly enticements and lose the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Brigham Young stated: "Many think that the Devil has rule and power over both body and spirit. Now, I want to tell you that he does not hold any power over man, only so far as the body overcomes the spirit that is in a man, through yielding to the spirit of evil. . . . The spirit is influenced by the body, and the body by the spirit" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 69-70).

Temptation is like a magnetic force which holds a metal object in its power. It loses its magnetic force and power when you turn away from it. So we must

turn away from temptation; then it will lose its power.

Road signs for dealing with temptation

Our minds, throughout the day, are continually active. We choose the avenues of thought that our mind travels. Allowing worldly thoughts to enter your mind can lead to unrighteous acts. As we travel the highways of life, our physical senses are continually bombarded with billboards, posters, magazines, videos, movies, et cetera, that entice and tempt the mind and, if allowed, create mental pictures that are not becoming to a Latter-day Saint.

When evil thoughts arise—Stop! Think! Control your mind! Visualize a large EXIT sign in your mind's eye. Immediately change your thoughts. Get off of that avenue of thinking.

When unrighteous feelings and desires well up inside of you, the Holy Ghost will prompt NO. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Stop! Think! Visualize a WRONG WAY sign in your mind. Immediately change or erase those thoughts leading to wrong, unrighteous feelings and evil fantasies that can become addictive to mind and body.

When tempted to choose an unrighteous act or entertain unrighteous thoughts, look down the road ahead and contemplate the inevitable consequences of that act. Stop! Think! Visualize a STOP sign in your mind. Put on your mental brakes. Immediately change your thinking to something different and something uplifting.

To overcome temptation, you and I must control our thoughts. *Exit* from your mind bad thoughts. Avoid the *wrong way* of unrighteous thoughts. *Stop* thoughts that lead to behavior unbecoming to a Latter-day Saint. You do not have to yield to temptation! Discipline what you allow your eyes to see, your ears to hear, your mouth to speak, and your hands to touch.

Consequences of yielding to temptation

Yielding to temptation can lead to the addiction of both body and spirit. Addiction can be overpowering and lead to enslavement, and enslavement leads to loss of freedom and inner peace.

When persons allow themselves to succumb to temptation, they are acting against counsel—the counsel of the Holy Ghost, the counsel of our prophet leaders, the counsel of sound doctrine, the counsel of covenants, and often the counsel of those who love them most. They then separate themselves from the friendship and love of others and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Overcoming temptation develops strength

As eternal beings living this earthly experience, we will not be free from temptation. Temptation implies an inner struggle to do that which is right. The person who thinks continually in a sensual and carnal manner cannot undergo inner spiritual development. His or her sensual thinking prevents spiritual growth.

Elder George Q. Cannon said: "Unless [individuals] were exposed to temptation they never could know themselves, their own powers, their own weaknesses nor the power of God. If Satan had no power to tempt mankind, they would be in a state where they could neither know good nor evil; they could not know happiness nor misery. All their powers would lie dormant, for there would be nothing to arouse them. They would be destitute of that experience which prepares men to become like God, their Eternal Father" (*Gospel Truth*, sel. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. in 1 [1987], 109).

Through our obedience to gospel principles, the enticements of the world lessen in our lives. With each right choice we make, we spiritually empower ourselves. The accumulation of right choices

builds inner spiritual strength and divine character. We should expect temptation, for without temptations there would be little education and little character improvement.

How to overcome temptation

It is a frightening realization that the powers of evil will increase in the world. This brings us to the questions, What can we do? Is there a way to escape from the powers of evil? Yes, there is.

Members of the Church can overcome temptation by (1) obedience to the guiding principles and doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) following the counsel of our prophets and leaders, and (3) living in such a way that our lives are constantly influenced by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Train your mind to obey gospel principles and covenants. Stay on the highway of daily personal and family prayer, the avenue of studying the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets, the road of serving in the Church, and be willing

to get off the wrong road daily and on the right road leading to eternal life. Your greatest protection against temptation is an active and vibrant testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which binds us to our Heavenly Father. Our greatest example of overcoming temptation is the Savior. "He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them" (D&C 20:22).

My brothers and sisters, I know this work is true. I know prophets travel the earth today. I know that Jesus is the Christ and that God does live in the heavens. As we draw near to our Heavenly Father in obedience and righteousness, He will draw near to us. He will bless us, perfect us, and protect us. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

We have just listened to Elder Rulon G. Craven of the Seventy.

Sister Susan L. Warner, second counselor in the Primary general presidency, will now speak to us.

Sister Susan L. Warner

Memories of spiritual feelings

My dear brothers and sisters, I remember as a little girl driving across the Nevada desert with my family to attend general conference in this Tabernacle. Automobiles did not have air-conditioning, so we traveled at night with a canvas water bag tied to the front of the car in case the radiator boiled over. I remember standing outside this building, singing the hymns of Zion in the darkness of the morning, waiting for the large wooden doors to open. I remember secretly hoping that I wouldn't be seated behind one of the wide, round pillars, or worse, a lady wearing a large hat. Though I was scarcely tall enough to see, I remember the feel-

ings that came over me as everyone rose when the prophet entered. Those feelings of excited reverence are spiritual feelings that return each time I enter this building or hear our leaders speak in general conference. I remember what I have received and heard. I remember what I know and what I have felt.

Each of us has memories of spiritual feelings. Some of us remember spiritual feelings from our earliest childhood. Some of us may have memories of feelings when we first discovered the Lord's true Church. Almost all have spiritual feelings connected with the love of mother, father, brothers, and sisters. We may remember feelings of love and belonging that have come while serving