

the Holy Ghost. As you prayerfully study the scriptures and "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102), listen and respond to the promptings of the Spirit. Be aware of Satan's influences. Where do the feelings come from that make you feel that your efforts in the home are not fulfilling or important? Where do the feelings come from that make you feel unappreciated? Rejoice in this preparation for godhood. Rejoice in the opportunity to teach your children the truths of the kingdom, and help them experience the peace and joy that come from following these truths.

Young people should prepare

May I say something to the young men and women of the Church. Look to parenthood; prepare and plan for it. Prepare to be worthy fathers and mothers. The thoughts of your future children can keep you in the right way. If this blessing isn't yours in this earth life, your preparation and desire will prepare you to love and nurture all of God's children as the Savior did. Your eternal reward can be an eternal family.

The prophet's counsel

In a recent stake conference, our prophet counseled parents:

"Never forget that these little ones are the sons and daughters of God and that yours is a custodial relationship to them, that He was a parent before you were parents and that He has not relinquished His parental rights or interest in these . . . little ones. Now, love them, take care of them. Fathers, control your tempers, now and in all the years to come. Mothers, control your voices, keep them down. Rear your children in love, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Take care of your little ones, welcome them into your homes and nurture and love them with all of your hearts" (Gordon B. Hinckley, Salt Lake University Third Stake conference, 3 Nov. 1996; in *Church News*, 1 Mar. 1997, 2).

My prayer, my brothers and sisters, is that all of us will rejoice in the opportunities we have in caring for the souls of children, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Sister Pinegar. Sister Patricia P. Pinegar, Primary general president, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

We are all impressed with Elder Neal A. Maxwell's beautiful talk. I might add, he now joins the ranks of those, especially Brother Oaks and me, with illuminated heads. But most of all, we remember him for his wisdom, inspiration, and great leadership in the kingdom. What a miracle it is to have him here today. The Lord has blessed him and heard our prayers.

Great things are happening

General conference is an inspiring time of the year for the entire membership of the Church. Our purpose is to "instruct and edify each other, that [we] may know how to . . . act upon the points of [God's] law and commandments."¹ I humbly pray that we may continue to have that same spirit with us that we have enjoyed so much during this morning's session.

In our day, great things are happening in the kingdom! The Church is moving forward throughout the world as never before. It is a privilege for us to witness in our lifetimes such exciting progress toward fulfillment of the great prophecy that “the kingdom . . . may become a great mountain and fill the whole earth!”¹²

Great things are happening because so many of you are faithfully “act[ing] upon the points of [God’s] law and commandments.” As leaders of the Lord’s Church, we are thrilled to see so much good being done by many righteous and faithful Latter-day Saints. Please know that we pray often that our Heavenly Father will help you to be true to the covenants that you have made with Him.

“Walk the path of faith”

In a recent message, President Gordon B. Hinckley issued both an invitation and a challenge: “I invite you,” he said, “to walk the path of faith with me. I challenge you to stand for that which is right and true and good.”³ Our prophet exemplifies an unwavering commitment to and example of walking in this path of faith and diligence. In our everyday lives, are we following his inspired example? As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, are we rising to his challenge “to stand for that which is right and true and good”? Echoing a favorite hymn, President Hinckley admonished, “Let us be [true,] ‘true to the faith that our parents have cherished, *true to the truth* for which martyrs have perished.”⁴

Brothers and sisters, are we “true to the truth”?

The thirteenth article of faith states that “we believe in being . . . true.” The truth of the restored gospel, as this hymn highlights, is “the fairest gem, . . . the brightest prize / To which mortals or Gods can aspire. . . . Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the worst, / Eternal, unchanged, evermore.”⁵

Yes, the fulness of the gospel is a pearl of great price worth any effort.

While we are taught to develop our talents and provide for our families, nevertheless we must be careful not to let the pursuit of our career path divert us from the gospel path.

We must be “true to the truth” and stay on the “strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.”⁶ Remember Alma’s counsel to his son Corianton: “Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing.”⁷

“Keep the commandments. In this there is safety and peace.”⁸ Nothing this world has to offer can surpass the joy of living the gospel! No worldly wealth or possession, no degree of fame or recognition can supplant the satisfaction of feeling the warmth and peace of the Spirit of the Lord in our hearts and in our homes. “Sweet is the peace the gospel brings.”⁹ As we strive for success, we cannot allow “any vain or foolish thing” to divert us from the path of faith and lead us away from being *true* to our covenants.

“True to the faith”

I like the word *true*. It powerfully explains basic gospel principles with insightful clarity.

True means “steadfast, loyal, . . . honest, just”¹⁰—all virtues that we should cultivate in our lives.

“No hypocrisy and no deception”

Truth can also describe “that which is [actually] the case rather than what is manifest or assumed,” as in the true dimensions of a problem or the true nature of an individual.

Do we, indeed, actually live the gospel, or do we just *manifest* the appearance of righteousness so that those around us *assume* we are faithful when, in reality, our hearts and unseen actions are *not* true to the Lord’s teachings?

Do we take on only the “form of godliness” while denying the “power thereof”?¹¹

Are we righteous in fact, or do we feign obedience only when we think others are watching?

The Lord has made it clear that He will not be fooled by appearances, and He has warned us not to be false to Him or to others. He has cautioned us to be wary of those who project a false front, who put on a bright pretense that hides a darker reality. We know that the Lord “looketh on the heart” and *not* on the “outward appearance.”¹²

The Savior taught us to “judge not according to the appearance”¹³ and warned us against wolves who “come to [us] in sheep’s clothing” and whose deception can only be discovered “by [examining] their fruits.”¹⁴

Nephi taught that we must walk the path of faith “with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God.”¹⁵

We know that “a double minded man is unstable in all his ways”¹⁶ and that we cannot “serve two masters.”¹⁷ President Marion G. Romney wisely observed that there are too many of us “who try to serve the Lord without offending the devil.”¹⁸

“The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.”¹⁹ Hence, the first of the Ten Commandments is, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,”²⁰ and the Savior declared that the first and great commandment is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind.”²¹ Only when we give our all and overcome our pride and walk the path of faith without deviation can we honestly sing, “Lord, accept our *true* devotion.”²²

Faith in every footstep

The valiant pioneer Saints who sacrificed so much “to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion”²³ walked a

path of faith through great physical hardship that forged and tempered their souls. With genuine commitment to the cause of truth, they held fast to the iron rod in spite of opposition or challenge. They were “true to the truth” and gave their all in strengthening and living the restored gospel.

Be true to your covenants

One of the great blessings of the restored gospel is the privilege of entering into sacred covenants with our Father in Heaven—covenants made binding by virtue of the holy priesthood. When we are baptized and confirmed, when brethren are ordained to the priesthood, when we go to the temple and receive our endowment, when we enter into the new and everlasting covenant of eternal marriage—in all these sacred ordinances, we make solemn commitments to keep God’s commandments.

We covenant that we will show our love for our Heavenly Father through humble service and diligent obedience and prove ourselves to be “good and faithful servant[s].”²⁴

If we are true to our covenants, our Father in Heaven will grant us the blessing of “eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.”²⁵ “All that [the] Father hath”²⁶ is promised to those who walk the path of faith and remain true to their covenants. Those “who [do] the works of righteousness shall receive [their] reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.”²⁷

An eternal calling

Each of you has an eternal calling from which no Church officer has authority to release you. This is a calling given you by our Heavenly Father Himself. In this eternal calling, as with all other callings, you have a stewardship, and “it is required of the Lord, at the

hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity."²⁸ This most important stewardship is the glorious responsibility your Father in Heaven has given you to watch over and care for your own soul.

At some future day, you and I will each hear the voice of the Lord calling us forward to render an account of our mortal stewardship. This accounting will occur when we are called up to "stand before [the Lord] at the great and judgment day."²⁹

Each day on this earth is but a small part of eternity. The day of resurrection and final judgment will surely come for each one of us.

Then our Father in Heaven's great and noble heart will be saddened for those of His children who, because they chose evil, will be cast out, unworthy to return to His presence. But He will welcome with loving arms and with indescribable joy those who have chosen to be "true to the truth." Righteous living, combined with the grace of the Atonement, will qualify us to stand before Him with clean hearts and clear consciences.

As leaders of the Church, as servants of a compassionate Father in Heaven, we likewise want each of you to return to His presence. We love you and desire with all our hearts to see you rejoice with your Father in Heaven and with your parents, your children, and other loved ones in that great day of judgment. So we ask you, "Are you true?" And, therefore, we admonish you, as did Jacob, to "prepare your souls for that glorious day when justice shall be administered unto the righteous, even the day of judgment, that ye may not shrink with awful fear; that ye may not remember your awful guilt in perfectness."³⁰

Five suggestions

What can help us to strengthen our resolve to keep on the narrow path of

righteousness and truth so our souls will welcome our day of judgment as a glorious day? May I offer five suggestions.

First, the fundamental reason why the Lord has instructed us to conduct worthiness interviews in His Church is to teach us to keep the commitments we make. In short, we are to be trained during this season of mortal probation to master ourselves,³¹ to live with integrity and be true to our covenants. Worthiness interviews are conducted in a spirit of loving concern for each son and daughter of a loving God. These interviews represent the rehearsal stage for final judgment. Such interviews are a blessing, a choice opportunity to account to the Lord through His authorized servants for the sacred stewardship we all have to "watch [ourselves], and [our] thoughts, and [our] words, and [our] deeds."³²

Second, in the Lord's Church, we are reminded of our sacred covenants every time we partake of the sacrament.

Third, each time we return to the temple, we are reminded of the covenants we make when we receive our endowment.

Fourth, in our home teaching and visiting teaching, do we remember our promise to serve others?³³

Fifth, the Savior Himself knew, as we should also know, that He was accountable to His Father. He taught that His sacred stewardship was "to do the will of him [who] sent me."³⁴ In His great intercessory prayer, the Lord reported to the Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."³⁵

When we are living righteously, we rejoice that we can report positively our worthiness and our preparation for continued blessings, whether they be the honor of receiving the priesthood, the blessings of temple attendance, the satisfaction of the Young Women Personal Progress achievements, or the blessings of service in whatever our calling might be.

Such mortal experiences give us the opportunity to assess what we are doing with our lives. All help us school our souls and strengthen our characters in preparation for that final interview.

And "if [we] are prepared [we] shall not fear."³⁶

When we have need to repent, interviews are not always easy. Thank goodness the Lord has called wonderful bishops, stake presidents, and other priesthood leaders who can provide loving guidance to help us repent and cleanse ourselves "that [we] may stand blameless before God at the last day."³⁷

Value of regular spiritual checkups

Worthiness interviews, sacrament meetings, temple attendance, and other Church meetings are all part of the plan that the Lord provides to educate our souls, to help us develop the healthy habit of constantly checking our bearings to stay on the path of faith. Regular spiritual checkups help us navigate life's highways and byways.

In quiet moments of personal reflecting and pondering, I have benefited from humbly asking myself the simple question, "Am I true?"

May I suggest that we can all similarly benefit by looking deep inside our hearts during reverent moments of worship and prayer and asking ourselves this simple question, "Am I true?"

The question becomes more powerfully useful if we are completely honest with our answers and if it motivates us to make repentant course corrections that keep us on the path of faith.

I testify that our Father in Heaven loves each one of us.

If we will be true to the truth, accept the invitation to walk with President Gordon B. Hinckley in the path of faith, and keep our covenants, we will find "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come."³⁸ I testify that our Heavenly Father lives and that His

Beloved Son is our Redeemer and that President Gordon B. Hinckley is indeed our prophet, seer, and revelator during this inspiring time of our mortal lives. May we be blessed in our efforts to prepare for that great day when, with our loved ones, we can return rejoicing into the presence of our Father in Heaven. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 43:8.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 109:72; see also Daniel 2:31-45.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "'True to the Faith,'" *Ensign*, June 1996, 4.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "'True to the Faith,'" 8; italics added.
5. "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" *Hymns*, no. 272.
6. 2 Nephi 31:18.
7. Alma 39:11.
8. "Keep the Commandments," *Hymns*, no. 303.
9. "Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings," *Hymns*, no. 14.
10. Definitions in this and the following paragraph are from *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed. [1993], "true," 1268.
11. Joseph Smith—History 1:19.
12. 1 Samuel 16:7.
13. John 7:24.
14. Matthew 7:15-16.
15. 2 Nephi 31:13; see also Jacob 6:5; Mosiah 7:33; 3 Nephi 10:6; Doctrine and Covenants 18:27-28.
16. James 1:8.
17. Matthew 6:24; see also Luke 16:13; 3 Nephi 13:24.
18. Marion G. Romney, "The Price of Peace," *Ensign*, Oct. 1983, 6.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 64:34.
20. Exodus 20:3.
21. Matthew 22:37-38; italics added; see also verses 36-40.
22. "Lord, Accept Our True Devotion," *Hymns*, no. 107; italics added.
23. Doctrine and Covenants 6:6.
24. Matthew 25:21, 23.

25. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
26. Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.
27. Doctrine and Covenants 59:23.
28. Doctrine and Covenants 72:3.
29. 2 Nephi 9:22.
30. 2 Nephi 9:46.
31. See Alma 34:33–37.
32. Mosiah 4:30.
33. See Mosiah 18:8–10.
34. John 4:34.
35. John 17:4.
36. Doctrine and Covenants 38:30.
37. Doctrine and Covenants 4:2.
38. Doctrine and Covenants 59:23.

The chorus sang "Sweet Is the Work."

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve has spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Sweet Is the Work."

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

President James E. Faust

My dear brothers and sisters and friends, I am humbled by the responsibility of addressing you. I would be grateful for your spiritual understanding as I speak of the greatest blessings that can be received in mortality.

Temple blessings in Nauvoo

On February 3, 1846, it was a bitter cold day in Nauvoo, Illinois. That day, President Brigham Young recorded in his diary:

"Notwithstanding that I had announced that we would not attend to the administration of the ordinances, the House of the Lord was thronged all day. . . . I also informed the brethren that I was going to get my wagons started and be off. I walked some distance from the Temple supposing the crowd would disperse, but on returning I found the house filled to overflowing.

"Looking upon the multitude and knowing their anxiety, as they were thirsting and hungering for the word, we continued at work diligently in the House of the Lord."¹

And so the temple work continued until 1:30 A.M.

The first two names that appear on the fourth company of the Nauvoo Tem-

ple register for that very day, February 3, 1846, are John and Jane Akerley, who received their endowments in the Nauvoo Temple that evening. They were humble, new converts to the Church, without wealth or position. Their temple work was their final concern as they were leaving their home in Nauvoo to come west. It was fortunate that President Young granted the wish of the Saints to receive their temple blessings because John Akerley died at Winter Quarters, Nebraska. He, along with over 4,000 others, never made it to the valleys of the Rocky Mountains. William Clayton's classic Mormon hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," captures well their faith: "And should we die before our journey's through, Happy day! / All is well!"²

Temple building in the Salt Lake Valley

A temple was announced on July 26, 1847, the second day after the arrival of President Brigham Young in the Great Salt Lake Valley. President Young made this great proclamation before the Saints even had a roof over their heads and while they were still living in wagons or sleeping on the ground. He drove his cane into the ground and said, "Here we