

had given this sweet young girl a recommend to receive a patriarchal blessing.

An appointment was made. The blessing was given and gratefully received. Her lineage was given. She received a blessing suited to her needs and unique situation. Lives, focus, and attitudes were changed. She was told that through her cheerful acceptance of the efforts and sacrifices of those who loved and cared for her, she would be blessing their lives, and to accept their offerings graciously and willingly.

Live worthy of the revealed blessings

The Lord loves His children and wants to bless them and wants all of them to return to Him and dwell in His presence for time and all eternity (see Moses 1:39). The Lord is willing to pronounce His blessing upon those who love Him and keep His commandments.

It is my sincere prayer that all who desire a blessing at the Lord's hand may

live worthy so as to obtain it, and that we who have received a patriarchal blessing may so live as to always be worthy of the blessings that have been revealed to us through the Lord's servant, the patriarch, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Neal A. Maxwell and Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Elder Richard D. Allred of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "True to the Faith." Elder Eran A. Call, followed by Elder Richard J. Maynes, both of the Seventy, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "True to the Faith."

Elder Eran A. Call

I humbly pray that the Spirit of truth might be with us that we might understand one another, be edified, and rejoice together.¹

Gratitude for faithful parents

As Nephi, I, too, was "born of goodly parents; therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father" and have been "highly favored of the Lord in all my days."²

My father was a marvelous example of faith, integrity, and commitment to the gospel. My mother died when I was seven, but in my tender youth she taught me the truths of the gospel. She was a woman of great faith; because of her faith and prayers and a miraculous healing, I have sight in my left eye today. Fa-

ther was out of town. I severely burned the pupil of my eye with a hot metal lid lifter from our wood-burning stove. Mother exercised her faith and prayed fervently to Heavenly Father as she held me lovingly in her arms. Her prayers were heard and my eye was healed. I am very grateful to have been raised in a loving home by goodly parents.

Modern challenges to the home

The home is being threatened and challenged more today than ever before. Today less than half of the children born in the United States, and in many countries in the world, will spend their entire childhood in an intact family.³ Infidelity, divorce, abortion, and abandoned homes are on the increase. The father is rapidly

losing his traditional role as caregiver, breadwinner, protector, moral educator, and head of the family.

During 1960 to 1990, a 30-year period, births outside of marriage in the United States increased 500 percent and divorce increased 400 percent.⁴ As Church members, we are not free from these sinful practices.

The home and the family are the fundamental unit of society: as the homes are and families are, so will be the community, the city, the state, and the nation. There is no public morality without private virtue. I repeat, there is no public morality without private virtue. As Latter-day Saints, we have been given much and much is expected of us. We have been taught what is right and true. Let us, therefore, be "doers of the word, . . . not hearers only,"⁵ deceiving ourselves.

Suggestions for parents

As husbands, wives, and parents, how can we avoid the pitfalls and temptations of the troubled world we live in? I offer a few time-tested and proven ways that we can be doers, and not hearers only:

- Parents and family members should love, honor, and respect each other.
- Attend Church meetings together regularly.
- Read the scriptures and pray together daily.
- Hold family home evening and have fun together.
- Live lives of virtue and integrity so you can sleep at night, knowing you have done your best with a conscience void of offense to anyone. A virtuous life is built step by step, brick by brick. Beware of small sins that erode integrity.
- Communicate, talk, take time for each other. A teenager comes home from a date and seems to be concerned—

what a marvelous opportunity for loving parents to listen and help.

- Faithfully pay your tithes and offerings.
- Avoid unnecessary debt.
- Never make major purchases nor decisions without prayer and mutual agreement as equal partners as husband and wife.

Counsel from ancient and modern prophets

We have been taught by ancient and modern prophets that "the establishment of a home is not only a privilege, but marriage and . . . proper training of children is a duty of the highest order."⁶

The prophets of Israel taught, "Ye shall teach . . . your children [the commandments] when thou sittest in thine house."⁷

Isaiah taught, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."⁸

"I give unto you a commandment, to teach . . . your children."⁹

Lehi did exhort his family with all the love of a tender parent.¹⁰

President Harold B. Lee said, "The greatest of the Lord's work you brethren will ever do as fathers will be within the walls of your own home."¹¹

We should always remember President David O. McKay's warning from this pulpit 33 years ago: "No other success can compensate for failure in the home. The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a home God can work miracles and will work miracles."¹²

The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators, two years ago solemnly proclaimed to the world our beliefs concerning marriage, parents, and the family. I challenge each of you to read, study, and live by this inspired proclamation. May it become the

guideline and standard by which we live in our homes and raise our children.

Our homes should be a sanctuary

Our homes can be, and should be, a refuge and a sanctuary from the troubled world we live in; may we make them such by striving daily to keep sacred the holy covenants we have made.

May we join with John of old who said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth,"¹³ I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See D&C 50:22.
2. 1 Nephi 1:1.

3. Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Dan Quayle Was Right," *Atlantic Monthly*, Apr. 1993, 47.
4. See David Blankenhorn, *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem* (1995), cited in Alexander B. Morrison, *Zion: A Light in the Darkness* (1997), 15.
5. See James 1:22.
6. Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (1988), 496.
7. Deuteronomy 11:19.
8. Isaiah 54:13.
9. Moses 6:58.
10. See 1 Nephi 8:37.
11. In Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 130.
12. Quoting J. E. McCulloch, *Home: The Savior of Civilization* (1924), 42; in Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 5.
13. 3 John 1:4.

Elder Richard J. Maynes

Celestial goals and everyday life

Brothers and sisters, this afternoon I would like to direct my message toward the young men and young women who are growing up in these troubled times. Many of you young people have established, at least in the back of your minds, lofty goals which probably include missions, education, temple marriage, successful careers, and, of course, the safe return to your Heavenly Father's presence in the celestial kingdom.

One of the great challenges of being a teenager is successfully connecting these celestial goals with your everyday life. This is difficult because our lives are jammed so full of worldly stuff. You're involved with schoolwork; dozens of activities which include music, dance, sports, various clubs; and, of course, many throughout the world work part-time jobs as well. Mixed in with this hectic schedule are weekend activities

such as games, dances, Scouting activities, and parties. Everywhere you go you're bombarded with temptation from peers, television, movies, and music. Wow! What an adventure!

The real trick is trying to balance the importance of what is happening next Friday night with what's going to be happening 2, 5, or 10 years from now. You might be asking, "What does Friday night have to do with two years from now?" Well, it could have a lot to do with it, depending on where you are and what you are doing.

If you want to reach your potential in the future, if you want to become the person the Lord wants you to be, you had better work on it today, because it is a true principle that we become what we do. If we want to be a successful university student, we had better be successful in high school. If we want to live a celestial life in the hereafter, we had better