

tle children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.”⁹

Referring to this occasion, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “There is no more tender and beautiful picture in all of sacred writing than this simple language describing the love of the Savior for little children.”¹⁰

Invite the Spirit for teaching to be effective

The key to accomplishing effective gospel teaching in the home is to invite the Spirit of the Lord to be with us. Some of the best counsel my husband and I received during some turbulent times of raising our children was to do all that is possible to invite and keep the Spirit in our home. Children cannot learn spiritual things and have spiritual feelings without the guidance of the Spirit.

As parents, we can share our testimony of Jesus Christ with our children often. The bearing of testimony, whether during family home evening or in a teaching moment, will invite the Spirit. President Boyd K. Packer also instructs us to “teach our young people to bear testimony—to bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, that the Book of Mormon is true.”¹¹

President Hinckley reassures us: “Of all the joys of life, none other equals that of happy parenthood. Of all the responsi-

bilities with which we struggle, none other is so serious. To rear children in an atmosphere of love, security, and faith is the most rewarding of all challenges.”¹²

I know—with an exclamation mark—that children can receive a witness by the Spirit that brings conviction and commitment to their hearts! I bear witness that this is our charge, this is our opportunity: to diligently teach and testify to our children of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that they might also hear the “voice of gladness.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 128:19, 23; see also verses 20–22.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 93:40.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 68:28.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 68:25.
5. Enos 1:1.
6. Enos 1:3.
7. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
8. First Presidency letter, 11 Feb. 1999; quoted in *Ensign*, June 1999, 80.
9. 3 Nephi 17:21.
10. In Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 74; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 54.
11. *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* (1991), 154.
12. In Conference Report, Oct. 1994, 74; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 54.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

True disciples maintain faith

In the churn of crises and the sinister swirl of global events, true disciples will maintain faith in a revealing, loving God and in His plan for redeeming His children, which plan is the *why* of *all* that God does! (see Moses 1:39). Furthermore, God’s character, as revealed to us, tells us that He has the cosmic capacity to ensure

that He really is “able” to do His immense work (see 2 Nephi 27:20–21; Joseph Smith Translation, Isaiah 29:22–23).

True disciples will also maintain faith in His atoning Son, Jesus Christ, and, by being “converted unto the Lord” (3 Nephi 1:22), will be steadily undergoing a happy and “mighty change” (Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:12–14).

Actually, brothers and sisters, Jesus is already victorious in the greatest battle anyway: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; *I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33; italics added). The Atonement was accomplished, bringing a universal resurrection to billions and billions, lifting all from the grave—regardless of how and when we got there! Therefore, on a clear night, though we see stars of incomprehensible longevity, they are not immortal. But, thankfully, we are!

Likewise, “true believers” (4 Nephi 1:36) will maintain faith in the latter-day Restoration with its empowering visitations, its prophets and apostles, and its “plain and precious” scriptures (1 Nephi 13:29). The gospel’s first principles surely fit the last days.

Ironically, as the restored Church comes “out of obscurity,” what seem to be stern challenges will actually disclose further the distinctiveness of the Church (D&C 1:30). Nevertheless, matching our behavior more closely with our beliefs will bring relentless reminders about the ongoing duties of discipleship.

The gospel edifies and lifts us

The restored gospel is buoyant, wide, and deep—beyond our comprehension. It edifies, whether concerning divine design in the universe or stressing the importance of personal chastity and fidelity. Only meek disciples can safely handle such a bold theology.

With scriptures to anchor and reassure us, we too can “look unto God . . . and he will *console [us]* in [our] afflictions” (Jacob 3:1; italics added).

We too can be “*supported under trials and troubles of every kind, yea, . . . he will still deliver [us]*” (Alma 36:27; italics added; see also verse 3).

For the Lord has said, “I will be in your midst” (D&C 49:27). “I will lead you along” (D&C 78:18).

Furthermore, God will give us priceless, personal assurances through the Holy Ghost (see John 14:26; D&C 36:2). Whether in tranquil or turbulent times, our best source of comfort is the Comforter.

Enoch wept over the wickedness in his time, and at first he “[refused] to be comforted” (Moses 7:44; see also verse 41). But then came revelations, successively showing Jesus redeeming the world, the latter-day Restoration, and the Second Coming. Enoch was told to “lift up [his] heart, and be glad” (Moses 7:44). The doctrines and revelations can likewise lift us—even amid “wars and rumours of wars” (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; see also 1 Nephi 12:2; Mormon 8:30; D&C 45:26). Thus we need not grow weary in our minds (see Hebrews 12:3; D&C 84:80).

Trials can increase our capacity

Our discipleship need not be dried out by discouragement or the heat of the day, nor should dismaying societal symptoms “weigh [us] down” (Moroni 9:25), including “in-your-face” carnal confrontiveness (see Alma 32:38).

We may shrink from some things in the current human scene, but Jesus did not shrink in Gethsemane nor on Calvary. Instead, He “finished [His] preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:19).

Regarding trials, including of our faith and patience, there are no exemptions—only variations (see Mosiah 23:21). These calisthenics are designed to increase our capacity for happiness and service. Yet the faithful will not be totally immune from the events on this planet. Thus the courageous attitudes of imperiled Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are worthy of emulation. They knew that God could rescue them. “But if not,” they vowed, they would still serve God anyway (see Daniel 3:16–18). Similarly, keeping the unfashionable but imperative first and seventh

commandments can reflect the courage which three young women displayed anciently; they said no with their lives (see Abraham 1:11).

Therefore, we can be troubled on every side, but nothing can really separate us from the love of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 4:8; Romans 8:35–39); worldly anxieties are not part of being “anxiously engaged” (D&C 58:27). Even so, as Peter urged, we can and should cast our cares upon the Lord because He surely cares for us! (see 1 Peter 5:7). Oh, brothers and sisters, the awaiting emancipation of such trusting surrender!

Repent to remedy mistakes

As to remedying our personal mistakes, we face no hindering traffic jams on the road of repentance. It is a toll road, not a freeway, and applying Christ's Atonement will speed us along.

There may need to be plain-speaking Jethros in our lives to stretch us (see Exodus 18:14–24) or moments of stark realization, as with the original Twelve, who rightly concluded: “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Besides, unless we are filled with resolve, what will we say to the heroes and heroines of Martin's Cove and the Sweetwater? That “we admire you, but we are reluctant to wade through our own rivers of chilling adversity”?

God oversees vast work, knows each of us

Brothers and sisters, by divine appointment, “these are [our] days” (Helaman 7:9), since “all things must come to pass in their time” (D&C 64:32). Moreover, though we live in a failing world, we have not been sent here to fail.

Recall the new star that announced the birth at Bethlehem? It was in its precise orbit long before it so shone. We are likewise placed in human orbits to illumi-

nate. Divine correlation functions not only in the cosmos but on this planet too. After all, the Book of Mormon plates were not buried in Belgium, only to have Joseph Smith born centuries later in distant Bombay.

The raising up of that constellation of “wise” Founding Fathers to produce America's remarkable Constitution, whose rights and protection belong to “every man,” was not a random thing either (see D&C 101:77–78, 80). One historian called our Founding Fathers “the most remarkable generation of public men in the history of the United States or perhaps of any other nation” (Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Birth of the Nation* [1968], 245). Another historian added, “It would be invaluable if we could know what produced this burst of talent from a base of only two and a half million inhabitants” (Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* [1984], 18).

Yet some still settle for an inconsistent or incapable god. Laman and Lemuel, for instance, were aware of ancient Israel's miraculous rescue from Pharaoh's mighty armies, but they murmured and were intimidated by a mere local Laban. We can be so provincial and so self-concerned. God, who oversees the interlacings of galaxies, stars, and worlds, asks us to confess His hand in our personal lives too (see D&C 59:21). Have we not been reassured about the fall of one sparrow and that the very hairs of our heads are numbered? (see Matthew 10:29–30; D&C 84:80). God is in the details! Just as the Lord knows all of His vast creations, He also knows and loves each in any crowd—indeed, He knows and loves each and all of mankind! (see 1 Nephi 11:17).

Consider His tender salutations to Moses—“I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight” (Exodus 33:12)—and to Joseph: “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!” (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).

Be fully persuaded of God's capacity

No wonder King Benjamin pleads with us to believe that we do not comprehend all that God comprehends (see Mosiah 4:9). Ignoring the revelations about God's astounding capacity is like playing aimlessly and contentedly with wooden blocks featuring the letters of the alphabet, without realizing that Shakespearean sonnets were created using that same alphabet.

Father Abraham "staggered not" at the divine promise of posterity, because he was "fully persuaded that, what [God] had promised, he was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21). May we be "fully persuaded."

These words of Anselm are thus such good counsel: "Believe in order to understand," rather than "understand [in order to] believe" (*St. Anselm*, trans. Sidney Norton Deane [1903], 7).

Despite troubles, we can have peace

Brothers and sisters, though living in a time of commotion, we can stand in holy places and not be moved (see D&C 45:32; 87:8). Though living in a time of violence, we can have that inner peace that passeth understanding (see Philippians 4:7). Perplexing things will still happen, but, like Nephi, we can still know that God loves us, a felicitous and fundamental fact which can and will sustain us through so much! (see 1 Nephi 11:17).

How can we know that God is aware of us and loves us? He tells us by the scriptures—likewise, by our honestly counting the blessings and bestowals of His grace in our lives. Most of all, He tells us by the still, small voice of the Spirit! (see Alma 34:38; D&C 78:17-19).

Soaring revelations and the mighty change

The "mighty change" required by discipleship may seem roller-coaster-like, as soaring revelations bring the gravity of humbling perspective. It was so with

Moses, who "fell unto the earth" and exclaimed, "Man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:9-10). Then came, however, the divine, reassuring disclosure:

"For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

"Mighty" changing, however, is mighty hard work, a labor made more difficult by heeding the unflattering urges of the natural man. Too often our possibilities have been muted by the mundane. We are scarcely ready for the vaulting revelations. Imagine—a spirit portion of each of us is actually eternal, and we were with God in the beginning! (see D&C 93:29, 33).

Encircled in the arms of His love

Of course we cannot fully comprehend all this *right now!* Of course we cannot know the meaning of all things *right now.* But we can know, *right now,* that God knows us and loves us individually!

But, brothers and sisters, what keeps us from knowing and loving Him more? Our reluctance to give away all our sins, thinking instead that a down payment will do. Likewise, our reluctance to let our wills be swallowed up in His will, thinking instead that merely acknowledging His will is sufficient! (see Mosiah 15:7).

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that God, "before [the earth] rolled into existence, . . . contemplated the whole of the events connected with the earth. . . . [God] knew . . . the depth of iniquity that would be connected with the human family, their weakness and strength, . . . the situation of all nations and . . . their destiny, . . . and [He] has made ample provision [for mankind's] redemption" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 220).

Part of God's "ample provision" consists of imperfect people like you and me, committed to shining and serving in our appointed orbits, knowing all the while

that we are encircled “in the arms of [His] love” (D&C 6:20).

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang “There Is Sunshine in My Soul Today.”

President Monson

Brothers and sisters, there surely is sunshine in our souls today. As you leave the conference, we ask you to obey traffic

rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our appreciation to this wonderful Tabernacle Choir for the beautiful music they provided this morning.

President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker at this session. Following President Faust’s remarks, the choir will sing “I Believe in Christ” and the benediction will be offered by Elder Richard D. Allred of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until 2:00 this afternoon.

President James E. Faust

What’s in it for me?

I humbly pray that the same spirit which has attended the other speakers this morning will continue as I address you.

Many years ago I was in a professional association with two older, more experienced men. We had been friends for many years and found it mutually beneficial to help one another. One day, one associate sought our help on a complex matter. As soon as the issue had been explained, the first thing the other associate said was, “What’s in it for me?” When his old friend responded so selfishly, I saw the look of pain and disappointment on the face of the one who had invited our help. The relationship between the two was never quite the same after that. Our self-serving friend did not prosper, as his selfishness soon eclipsed his considerable gifts, talents, and qualities. Unfortunately, one of the curses of the world today is encapsulated in this selfish response: “What’s in it for me?”

During my professional career I helped the heirs of a noble couple settle their estate. The estate was not large, but it was the fruit of many years of hard work and sacrifice. Their children were all decent, God-fearing people who had been

taught to live the saving principles of the Savior. But when it came to dividing up the property, a dispute developed about who should get what. Even though there was nothing of great value to fight about, feelings of selfishness and greed caused a rift among some of the family members that never healed and continued into the next generation. How tragic that the legacy offered by these wonderful parents turned out to be so destructive of family unity and love among their children. I learned from this that selfishness and greed bring bitterness and contention; on the other hand, sacrifice and giving bring peace and contentment.

Satan is the father of selfishness

In the Grand Council in Heaven, when the great plan of salvation for God’s children was presented, Jesus responded, “Here am I, send me,”¹ and “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.”² And thus He became our Savior. In contrast, Satan, who had been highly regarded as “a son of the morning,”³ countered that he would come and “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost.”⁴ Satan had two conditions: the first was the denial of agency, and the second, that he