

Yielding Our Hearts to God

By Neill F. Marriott

Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency



When we open ourselves to the Spirit, we learn God's way and feel His will.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, in April general conference, spoke of the need “to reform our personal lives.”¹ I submit that personal reformation begins with a change of heart—no matter your life experiences or your place of birth.

I come from the Deep South of the United States, and in my youth the words of old Protestant hymns taught me of a true disciple's heart—one that has been changed. Consider these lyrics, so dear to me:

Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter;
I am the clay.
Mould me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.²

How do we, a modern, busy, competitive people, become yielded and still? How do we make the Lord's ways our ways? I believe we begin by learning of Him and praying for understanding. As our trust in Him grows, we open our hearts, seek to do His will, and wait for answers that will help us understand.

My own change of heart started when, as a 12-year-old, I began to search for God. Other than saying the Lord's Prayer,³ I didn't really know how to pray. I remember kneeling, hoping I could feel His love, and asking, “Where are You, Heavenly Father? I know You must be out there somewhere, but where?” All through my teen years, I asked. I did have glimpses of the reality of Jesus Christ, but Heavenly Father, in His wisdom, let me seek and wait for 10 years.

In 1970, when the missionaries taught me about the Father's plan of salvation and of the Savior's Atonement, my waiting ended. I embraced these truths and was baptized.

Based on this knowledge of the Lord's mercy and power, my husband, children, and I chose this family motto: "It will all work out." Yet how can we say those words to one another when deep troubles come and answers aren't readily available?

When our delightful, worthy, 21-year-old daughter, Georgia, was hospitalized in critical condition following a bike accident, our family said, "It will all work out." As I flew immediately from our mission in Brazil to Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, to be with her, I clung to our family motto. However, our lovely daughter passed into the spirit world just hours before my plane landed. With grief and shock running through our family like a current, how could we look at one another and *still* say, "It will all work out"?

Following Georgia's mortal death, our feelings were raw, we struggled, and still today we have moments of great sorrow, but we hold to the understanding that no one ever really dies. Despite our anguish when Georgia's physical body stopped functioning, we had faith that she went right on living as a spirit, and we believe we will live with her eternally if we adhere to our temple covenants. Faith in our Redeemer and His Resurrection, faith in His priesthood power, and faith in eternal sealings let us state our motto with conviction.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "If you do your best, it will all work out. Put your trust in God. ... The Lord will not forsake us."⁴

Our family motto doesn't say, "It will all work out *now*." It speaks of our hope in the eternal outcome—not necessarily of present results. Scripture says, "Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good."⁵ This doesn't mean all things *are* good, but for the meek and faithful, things—both positive and negative—work *together* for good, and the timing is the Lord's. We wait on Him, sometimes like Job in his suffering, knowing that God "maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."⁶ A meek heart accepts the trial and the waiting for that time of healing and wholeness to come.

When we open ourselves to the Spirit, we learn God's way and feel His will. During the sacrament, which I call the heart of the Sabbath, I have found that after I pray for forgiveness of sins, it is instructive for me to ask Heavenly Father, "Father, is there more?" When we are yielded and still, our minds can be directed to *something more* we may need to change—something that is limiting our capacity to receive spiritual guidance or even healing and help.

For example, perhaps I have a carefully guarded resentment toward someone. When I ask if there is more to confess, that "secret" comes clearly to my memory. In essence, the Holy Ghost is whispering, "You honestly asked if there was more, and here it is. Your resentment diminishes your progress and damages your ability to have healthy relationships. You can let this go." Oh, it is hard work—we may feel quite justified in our animosity—but yielding to the Lord's way is the only way to lasting happiness.

In time and by degrees, we receive His gracious strength and direction—perhaps leading us to frequent the temple or to study more deeply the Savior's Atonement or to consult with a

friend, a bishop, a professional counselor, or even a doctor. The healing of our heart begins when we submit to and worship God.

True worship begins when our hearts are right before the Father and the Son. What is our heart condition today? Paradoxically, in order to have a healed and faithful heart, we must first allow it to break before the Lord. “Ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit,”⁷ the Lord declares. The result of sacrificing our heart, or our will, to the Lord is that we receive the spiritual guidance we need.

With a growing understanding of the Lord’s grace and mercy, we will find that our self-willed hearts begin to crack and break in gratitude. Then we reach for Him, yearning to yoke ourselves to the Only Begotten Son of God. In our brokenhearted reaching and yoking, we receive new hope and fresh guidance through the Holy Ghost.

I have struggled to banish the mortal desire to have things *my* way, eventually realizing that my way is oh so lacking, limited, and inferior to the way of Jesus Christ. “*His* way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”⁸ Can we love Jesus Christ and His way more than we love ourselves and our own agenda?

Some may think they have failed too many times and feel too weak to change sinful acts or worldly desires of the heart. However, as covenant Israel, we don’t just try and try on our own to change. If we earnestly appeal to God, He takes us as we are—and makes us more than we ever imagined. Noted theologian Robert L. Millet writes of “a healthy longing to improve,” balanced with the spiritual “assurance that in and through Jesus Christ we are going to make it.”⁹ With such an understanding, we can honestly say to Heavenly Father:

So trusting my all to thy tender care,
And knowing thou lovest me,
I’ll do thy will with a heart sincere:
I’ll be what you want me to be.¹⁰

When we offer our broken heart to Jesus Christ, He accepts our offering. He takes us back. No matter what losses, wounds, and rejection we have suffered, His grace and healing are mightier than all. Truly yoked to the Savior, we can say with confidence, “It will all work out.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Parable of the Sower,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 32.

2. “Have Thine Own Way, Lord,” *The Cokesbury Worship Hymnal*, no. 72.

3. See Matthew 6:9–13.

4. Gordon B. Hinckley, Jordan Utah South regional conference, priesthood session, Mar. 1, 1997; see also “Excerpts from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2000, 73.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 90:24.
6. Job 5:18.
7. 3 Nephi 9:20.
8. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2000, 3; emphasis added.
9. Robert L. Millet, *After All We Can Do: Grace Works* (2003), 133.
10. “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” *Hymns*, no. 270.