

His Daily Guiding Hand

April 2017 General Conference

By M. Joseph Brough
Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

Heavenly Father knows what you and I need better than anyone else.

One of Heavenly Father's most beloved tools in guiding His children is righteous grandparents. My father's mother was such a woman. On an occasion that took place when I was too young to remember, my father was disciplining me. Observing this correction, my grandmother said, "Monte, I believe you are correcting him too harshly."

My father replied, "Mother, I will correct my children as I want."

And my wise grandmother softly stated, "And so will I."

I'm pretty sure my father heard the wise guidance of his mother that day.

When thinking of guidance, we might think of a hymn we all know and love—"I Am a Child of God." In the chorus we find the words "Lead me, guide me, walk beside me, help me find the way."¹

Until recently, I understood that chorus to be divine direction to parents. While pondering these words, I realized that while they contain that direction, there exists a far greater meaning. Individually, we each plead daily that Heavenly Father will guide us, lead us, and walk beside us.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf explained: "Our Father in Heaven knows His children's needs better than anyone else. It is His work and glory to help us at every turn, giving us marvelous temporal and spiritual resources to help us on our path to return to Him."²

Listen to those words: Heavenly Father knows what you and I need better than anyone else. As a result, He has developed a personal care package suited to each one of us. It has many components. It includes His Son and the Atonement, the Holy Ghost, commandments, scriptures, prayer, prophets, apostles, parents, grandparents, local Church leaders, and many others—all to help us return to live with Him someday.

May I share today just a few of the components of the care package that have made me recognize that a loving Father is leading, guiding, and walking beside me and my family? My prayer is that each of you will recognize in your experiences that Heavenly Father is leading, guiding, and walking beside you and, with that knowledge, you will proceed with confidence, knowing you are never really alone.

Heavenly Father's commandments are key components of the care package. Alma declared, "Wickedness never was happiness."³ Tolerating improper behavior without loving correction is false compassion and reinforces the common notion that wickedness might in fact be happiness. Samuel the Lamanite clearly countered this notion: "Ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head."⁴

Through His prophets, Heavenly Father constantly reminds us that righteousness is happiness. King Benjamin, for example, taught that Heavenly Father "doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you."⁵ From another hymn comes the similar reminder:

*Keep the commandments; keep the commandments!
In this there is safety; in this there is peace.
He will send blessings.*⁶

Around my 14th birthday, I learned about some of these blessings. I noticed different behavior on the part of my parents. Considering what I observed, I asked, "Are we going on a mission?" The shock on my mother's face confirmed my suspicion. Later, in a family council, my siblings and I learned that our parents had been called to preside over a mission.

We lived on a beautiful ranch in Wyoming. From my perspective, life was perfect. I could come home from school, complete my chores, and be off hunting, fishing, or exploring with my dog.

Shortly after learning of the calling, I realized that I would have to give up my dog, Blue. I confronted my father, asking what I should do with Blue. I wanted to emphasize the unfairness of what God was requiring. I will never forget this response. He said, "I'm not sure. He probably cannot go with us, so you had better ask Heavenly Father." That was not the response I had anticipated.

I began reading the Book of Mormon. I earnestly prayed to know if I had to give my dog away. My answer did not come in a moment; rather, a specific thought kept penetrating my mind: "Don't be a burden to your parents. Don't be a burden. I have called your parents."

I knew what Heavenly Father required. That knowledge did not reduce the pain of giving my dog away. However, through that small sacrifice, my heart softened and I found peace in seeking Heavenly Father's will.

I thank my Heavenly Father for the blessings and happiness I found through the scriptures, prayer, the Holy Ghost, and a worthy earthly father who embraced his role as the principal gospel teacher of his children. They were leading me, guiding me, and even walking beside me to help me find the way—especially when I had to do something difficult.

In addition to having the care package components I've mentioned, we are each blessed with a priesthood leader to lead and guide us.

President Boyd K. Packer said: "Bishops are inspired! Each of us has agency to accept or reject counsel from our leaders, but never disregard the counsel of your bishop, whether given over the pulpit or individually."⁷

These men strive to represent the Lord. Whether we are old or young, when Satan wants us to think all is lost, bishops are there to guide us. When speaking with bishops, I have found a common theme regarding confessions of disobedience or the innocent suffering from terrible wrongs. Bishops instantly want to express Heavenly Father's love for the individual and a desire to walk beside him or her as he or she finds the way home.

Perhaps Heavenly Father's greatest care package component is described in these words: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."⁸

To teach us all that we must do, Jesus Christ led the way by giving the perfect example that we must try to emulate. He pleads with us with arms outstretched to come, follow Him.⁹ And when we fail, which we all do, He reminds us, "For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent."¹⁰

What a wonderful gift! Repentance is not a punishment; it is a privilege. It is a privilege that leads and guides us. No wonder the scriptures declare that we should teach nothing save repentance.¹¹

Heavenly Father has many resources, but often He uses another person to assist Him. Daily He gives us opportunities to lead, guide, and walk beside one in need. We must follow the example of the Savior. We too must be about Heavenly Father's work.

As the Young Men General Presidency, we know that youth are blessed when they have parents and leaders who act for Heavenly Father in leading, guiding, and walking beside them. Three principles¹² that will help us become part of Heavenly Father's care package for others are:

First, be with the youth. President Henry B. Eyring emphasized this point: "There are some things we can do that could matter most. Even more powerful than using words in our teaching the doctrine will be our examples of living the doctrine."¹³ To lead youth requires being with them. Devoted time is an expression of love that allows us to teach by word and example.

Second, to truly guide youth, we must connect them with heaven. The time always comes when each must stand alone. Only Heavenly Father can be there to guide at all times and in all places. Our youth must know how to seek Heavenly Father's guidance.

Third, we must let youth lead. Like the loving parent who holds the hand of a toddler learning to walk, we must let go in order for youth to progress. Letting youth lead

requires patience and love. It is harder and takes more time than doing it ourselves. They may stumble along the way, but we walk beside them.

Brothers and sisters, there will be times in our lives when the blessings of guidance seem distant or lacking. For such times of distress, Elder D. Todd Christofferson promised: "Let your covenants be paramount and let your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer. He will sustain you as you work and watch. In His own time and way He will stretch forth His hand to you, saying, 'Here am I.'"¹⁴

At one such time, I sought Heavenly Father's counsel through constant and heartfelt prayer for more than a year to find the solution to a difficult situation. I knew logically that Heavenly Father answers all sincere prayers. Yet I reached such desperation one day that I attended the temple with one question: "Heavenly Father, do You really care?"

I was sitting near the back of the Logan Utah Temple waiting room when, to my surprise, entering the room that day was the temple president, Vaughn J. Featherstone, a close family friend. He stood at the front of the congregation and welcomed all of us. When he noticed me among the temple patrons, he stopped speaking, looked me in the eyes, and then said, "Brother Brough, it is good to see you in the temple today."

I will never forget the feeling of that simple moment. It was as if—in that greeting—Heavenly Father was stretching forth His hand and saying, "Here am I."

Heavenly Father really does care and listen to and answer every child's prayer.¹⁵ As one of His children, I know the answer to my prayers came in the Lord's time. And through that experience, I understood more than ever that we are children of God and that He has sent us here so that we can feel His presence now and return to live with Him someday.

I testify that Heavenly Father does lead us, guide us, and walk beside us. As we follow His Son and give heed to His servants, the apostles and prophets, we will find the way to eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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