

# Value beyond Measure

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We can frequently savor the sweet whisperings of the Holy Ghost verifying the truth of our spiritual worth.

While visiting the country of Sierra Leone in West Africa, I participated in a meeting conducted by a stake Primary leader. Mariama led with such love, grace, and confidence that it was easy to assume she had long been a member of the Church. Mariama, however, was a fairly recent convert.

Her younger sister joined the Church and invited Mariama to attend a Church class with her. Mariama was deeply impressed by the message. The lesson was on the law of chastity. She asked to have the missionaries teach her more and soon received a testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. She was baptized in 2014, and her daughter was baptized last month. Imagine, the two fundamental teachings that led to Mariama's conversion were the law of chastity and the Prophet Joseph Smith, two points the world often sees as irrelevant, outdated, or inconvenient. But Mariama testified that she was like a moth attracted to the light. She said, "When I found the gospel, I found myself." She discovered her worth through divine principles. Her value as a daughter of God was revealed to her through the Holy Ghost.

Now let's meet the Singh sisters from India. Renu, on the far right, the first of five sisters to join the Church, shared these thoughts:

"Before I started investigating the Church, I didn't really feel that I was very special. I was just one of many people, and my society and culture didn't really teach me that I had any value as an individual. When I learned the gospel and learned that I was a daughter of our Heavenly Father, it changed me. Suddenly I felt so special—God had actually created me and had created my soul and my life with value and purpose.

"Before I had the gospel in my life, I was always trying to prove to others that I was someone special. But when I learned the truth, that I am a daughter of God, I didn't have to prove anything to anyone. I knew that I was special. ... Don't ever think that you are nothing."

President Thomas S. Monson said it perfectly when he quoted these words: "The worth of a soul is its capacity to become as God."<sup>1</sup>

I was recently blessed to meet another young woman who understands this same truth. Her name is Taiana. I met her at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. Taiana was a junior in high school when she was diagnosed with cancer. She fought a brave battle for 18 months before passing away a few short weeks ago. Taiana was full of light and love. She was known for her contagious smile and her trademark "double thumbs-up." When others asked, "Why you, Taiana?" her response was, "Why not me?" Taiana sought to become like her Savior, whom she so dearly loved. During our visits, I learned that Taiana understood her divine worth. Knowing she was a daughter of God gave her peace and courage to face her overwhelming trial in the positive way she did.

Mariama, Renu, and Taiana teach us that the Spirit will confirm to each of us individually our divine worth. Truly knowing that you are a daughter of God will affect every aspect of your life and guide you in the service you render each day. President Spencer W. Kimball explained in these glorious words:

"God is your Father. He loves you. He and your mother in heaven value you beyond any measure. ... You are unique. One of a kind, made of the eternal intelligence which gives you claim upon eternal life.

"Let there be no question in your mind about your value as an individual. The whole intent of the gospel plan is to provide an opportunity for each of you to reach your fullest potential, which is eternal progression and the possibility of godhood."<sup>2</sup>

Let me point out the need to differentiate between two critical words: *worth* and *worthiness*. They are not the same. Spiritual *worth* means to value ourselves the way Heavenly Father values us, not as the world values us. Our worth was determined before we ever came to this earth. "God's love is infinite and it will endure forever."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, *worthiness* is achieved through obedience. If we sin, we are less worthy, but we are never worth less! We continue to repent and strive to be like Jesus with our worth intact. As President Brigham Young taught: "The least, the most inferior spirit now upon the earth ... is worth worlds."<sup>4</sup> No matter what, we always have worth in the eyes of our Heavenly Father.

Despite this marvelous truth, how many of us struggle, from time to time, with negative thoughts or feelings about ourselves? I do. It's an easy trap. Satan is the father of all lies, especially when it comes to misrepresentations about our own divine nature and purpose. Thinking small about ourselves does not serve us well. Instead it holds us back. As we've often been taught, "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."<sup>5</sup> We can stop comparing our worst to someone else's best. "Comparison is the thief of joy."<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, the Lord assures us that when we have virtuous thoughts, He will bless us with confidence, even the confidence to know who we really are. There's never been a more crucial time to heed His words. "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly," He

said. "Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and ... the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion."<sup>7</sup>

The Lord revealed this additional truth to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "He that receiveth of God, let him account it of God; and let him rejoice that he is accounted of God worthy to receive."<sup>8</sup> When we feel the Spirit, as this verse explains, we recognize that what we feel comes from our Heavenly Father. We acknowledge Him and praise Him for blessing us. We then rejoice that we are counted worthy to receive.

Imagine that you are reading the scriptures one morning and the Spirit softly whispers to you that what you are reading is true. Can you recognize the Spirit and be happy that you felt His love and were worthy to receive?

Mothers, you might be kneeling next to your four-year-old as he says his bedtime prayer. A feeling flows over you as you listen. You feel warmth and peace. The feeling is brief, but you recognize that you, at that moment, are counted worthy to receive. We may seldom, if ever, receive huge spiritual manifestations in our lives; but we can frequently savor the sweet whisperings of the Holy Ghost verifying the truth of our spiritual worth.

The Lord explained the relationship between our worth and His great atoning sacrifice when He said:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him."<sup>9</sup>

Sisters, because of what He did for us, "we are bound to him by loving ties."<sup>10</sup> He said, "My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me."<sup>11</sup>

King Benjamin also explained this binding connection with our Savior: "And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people."<sup>12</sup> That suffering and the results of that suffering fill our hearts with love and gratitude. Elder Paul E. Koelliker taught, "As we remove the distractions that pull us toward the world and exercise our agency to seek Him, we open our hearts to a celestial force which draws us toward Him."<sup>13</sup> If the love we feel for the Savior and what He did for us is greater than the energy we give to weaknesses, self-doubts, or bad habits, then He will help us overcome the things which cause suffering in our lives. He saves us from ourselves.

Let me reemphasize: if the pull of the world is stronger than the faith and trust we have in the Savior, then the pull of the world will prevail every time. If we choose to

focus on our negative thoughts and doubt our worth instead of clinging to the Savior, it becomes more difficult to feel the impressions of the Holy Ghost.

Sisters, let's not be confused about who we are! While it is often easier to be spiritually passive than it is to put forth the spiritual effort to remember and embrace our divine identity, we cannot afford that indulgence in these latter days. May we, as sisters, "be faithful in Christ; ... may Christ lift [us] up, and may his sufferings and death, ... and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in [our minds] forever."<sup>14</sup> As the Savior lifts us to higher ground, we can see more clearly not only who we are but that we are closer to Him than we ever imagined. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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