

"I Have a Work for Thee"

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Every one of us has a meaningful role to play in furthering God's work.

To Moses, God declared, "I have a work for thee" (Moses 1:6). Have you ever wondered if Heavenly Father has a work for you? Are there important things He has prepared you—and specifically you—to accomplish? I testify the answer is yes!

Consider Girish Ghimire, who was born and raised in the country of Nepal. As a teenager, he studied in China, where a classmate introduced him to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Eventually, Girish came to Brigham Young University for graduate work and met his future wife. They settled in the Salt Lake Valley and adopted two children from Nepal.

Years later, when more than 1,500 refugees from camps in Nepal were relocated to Utah,¹ Girish felt inspired to help. With native-language fluency and cultural understanding, Girish served as an interpreter, teacher, and mentor. After resettling in the community, some of the Nepali refugees demonstrated interest in the gospel. A Nepali-speaking branch was organized, and Girish later served as its branch president. He was also instrumental in translating the Book of Mormon into Nepali.

Can you see how Heavenly Father prepared and is using Girish?

God Has a Work for Each of Us

Brothers and sisters, God has important work for each of us. Speaking to sisters but teaching truths that apply to all, President Spencer W. Kimball taught: "Before we came [to earth, we] were given certain assignments. ... While we do not now remember the particulars, this does not alter the glorious reality of what we once agreed to."² What an ennobling truth! Our Heavenly Father has specific and significant things for you and me to accomplish (see Ephesians 2:10).

These divine assignments are not reserved for a privileged few but are for all of us—regardless of gender, age, race, nationality, income level, social status, or Church calling. Every one of us has a meaningful role to play in furthering God's work (see Moses 1:39).

Some of us question whether Heavenly Father can use *us* to make important contributions. But remember, He has always used ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things (see 1 Corinthians 1:27–28; D&C 35:13; 124:1). “[We] are agents,” and “the power is in [us]” to “bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27–28).³

President Russell M. Nelson explained:

“The Lord has more in mind for you than you have in mind for yourself! You have been reserved and preserved for this time and place. ...

“The Lord needs you to change the world. As you accept and follow His will for you, you will find yourself accomplishing the impossible!”⁴

So how do we come to understand and perform the work God intends for us? Let me share four principles that will help.

Focus on Others

First, focus on others. We can follow Christ, “who went about doing good” (Acts 10:38; see also 2 Nephi 26:24).

After returning from a full-time mission, I missed the daily purpose I had enjoyed. Clearly, I needed to keep my covenants, get an education, start a family, and earn a living. But I wondered if there was something more, or even special, that the Lord wanted me to do. After pondering for several months, I came across this verse: “If you desire, you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation” (D&C 11:8). The Spirit helped me understand that the primary purpose of divine assignments is to bless others and to do “much good.”

We can approach decision points in our lives—like what to study, what to do for work, or where to live—in the context of helping others.

One family moved to a new city. Instead of finding a home in an affluent neighborhood, they felt impressed to locate to an area with considerable social and economic needs. Over the years, the Lord has worked through them to support many individuals and to build up their ward and stake.

A medical professional maintained a typical practice but felt guided to set aside one day each week to provide free care to individuals with no health insurance. Because of this man’s and his wife’s willingness to bless others, the Lord provided a way for them to support hundreds of patients in need while also raising their large family.

Discover and Develop Spiritual Gifts

Second, discover and develop spiritual gifts. Heavenly Father gave us these gifts to help us identify, perform, and enjoy the work He has for us.

Some of us wonder, "Do I have *any* gifts?" Again, the answer is yes! "To every man [and woman] is given a gift by the Spirit of God ... that all may be profited thereby" (D&C 46:11–12; emphasis added).⁵ A number of spiritual gifts are documented in scripture (see 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 31; Moroni 10:8–18; D&C 46:8–26), but there are many others.⁶ Some might include having compassion, expressing hope, relating well with people, organizing effectively, speaking or writing persuasively, teaching clearly, and working hard.

So how do we come to know our gifts? We can reference our patriarchal blessing, ask those who know us best, and personally identify what we are naturally good at and enjoy. Most important, we can ask God (see James 1:5; D&C 112:10). He knows our gifts, since He gave them to us (see D&C 46:26).

As we discover our gifts, we have a responsibility to develop them (see Matthew 25:14–30). Even Jesus Christ "received not of the fulness at first, but [developed] from grace to grace" (D&C 93:13).

One young man produced illustrations to promote religious values. My favorite is a portrait of the Savior, a copy of which hangs in our home. This brother developed and used his artistic gifts. Working through him, Heavenly Father has inspired others to improve their discipleship.

Sometimes we feel that we don't have any particularly important gifts. One day, a discouraged sister pleaded, "Lord, what is my personal ministry?" He answered, "Notice others." It was a spiritual gift! Since then, she has found joy in noticing those who are regularly forgotten, and God has worked through her to bless many. While some spiritual gifts may not be prominent by the world's standards, they are essential to God and His work.⁷

Make Use of Adversity

Third, make use of adversity. Our trials help us discover and prepare for the work Heavenly Father has for us. Alma explained, "After much tribulation, the Lord ... made me an instrument in his hands" (Mosiah 23:10).⁸ Like the Savior, whose atoning sacrifice enables Him to succor us (see Alma 7:11–12), we can use knowledge gained from difficult experiences to lift, strengthen, and bless others.

After a successful human resources executive was laid off, he read his patriarchal blessing and felt inspired to start a company to help other professionals find employment. (He even helped me find work when our family returned from serving a mission.) The Lord used his trial as a stepping-stone to bless others, while providing him with a more meaningful career.

A young couple experienced a stillbirth. With broken hearts, they decided to honor their daughter by providing counseling and material support to parents enduring similar situations. The Lord has worked through this couple because of their specialized empathy, developed through adversity.

Rely on God

And fourth, rely on God. When we ask Him in faith with real intent, He will reveal our divine assignments to us.⁹ Once we discover them, He will help us fulfill those assignments. "All things are present before [His] eyes" (D&C 38:2; see also Abraham 2:8), and at the right times, He will open the doors necessary for us (see Revelation 3:8). He even sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that we can depend on Him for strength beyond our natural abilities (see Philippians 4:13; Alma 26:12).

One brother, concerned with local government decisions, felt impressed to run for public office. Despite a daunting campaign process, he exercised faith and gathered the resources to run. Ultimately, he did not win but felt the Lord gave him guidance and strength to raise issues important to the community.

A single mother, raising children with developmental disabilities, questioned whether she could adequately meet her family's needs. Though it has been difficult, she feels strengthened by the Lord to fulfill her most important mission successfully.

A Word of Warning

At the same time God helps us fulfill divine assignments, the adversary works to distract and dissuade us from a life of meaning.

Sin is perhaps our greatest stumbling block, dulling our sensitivity to the Holy Ghost and restricting our access to spiritual power. To perform the work Heavenly Father has for us, we must strive to be clean (see 3 Nephi 8:1). Are we living in such a way that God can work through us?

Satan also seeks to distract us with less important matters. The Lord warned an early Church leader, "Your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me ... and the ministry whereunto you have been called" (D&C 30:2). Are we so preoccupied with worldly things that we are diverted from our divine assignments?

In addition, Satan discourages us with feelings of inadequacy. He makes our work appear too difficult or intimidating. However, we can trust God! He loves us. He wants us to succeed. He "doth go before [us]; he will be with [us], he will not fail [us]" (Deuteronomy 31:8; see also Psalm 32:8; Proverbs 3:5–6; Matthew 19:26; D&C 78:18).

Satan may also coax us to view our work as less valuable than the work assigned to others. But every assignment from God is important, and we will find fulfillment as we

"glory in that which the Lord hath commanded [us]" (Alma 29:9).

As God works through us, the adversary may tempt us to take credit for any accomplishments. However, we can emulate the Savior's humility by deflecting personal praise and glorifying the Father (see Matthew 5:16; Moses 4:2). When a reporter tried to recognize Mother Teresa for her life's mission to help the poor, she retorted: "It's [God's] work. I am like a ... pencil in his hand. ... He does the thinking. He does the writing. The pencil has nothing to do with it. The pencil has only to be allowed to be used."¹⁰

Conclusion

My beloved brothers and sisters, I invite each of us to "yield [ourselves] unto God ... as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13). Yielding ourselves involves letting Him know we want to be of use, seeking His direction, and accessing His strength.

As always, we can look to Jesus Christ, our perfect example. In the pre-earth life, Heavenly Father asked, "Whom shall I send?"

And Jesus answered, "Here am I, send me" (Abraham 3:27; see also Isaiah 6:8).

Jesus Christ accepted, prepared for, and performed His preordained role as our Savior and Redeemer. He did the Father's will (see John 5:30; 6:38; 3 Nephi 27:13) and completed His divine assignments.

As we follow Christ's example and yield ourselves to God, I testify that He will also use us to further His work and to bless others. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.