

Earning the Trust of the Lord and Your Family

October 2017 General Conference

By Elder Richard J. Maynes
Of the Seventy

Men who have “integrity of heart” are men to be trusted—because trust is built on integrity.

Brethren, perhaps there is no greater compliment we could receive from the Lord than to know He trusts us to be worthy priesthood holders and great husbands and fathers.

One thing is for certain: earning the Lord’s trust is a blessing that comes through great effort on our part. Trust is a blessing based on obedience to God’s laws. Earning the Lord’s trust comes as a result of being true to the covenants we have made in the waters of baptism and in the holy temple. When we keep our promises to the Lord, His trust in us grows.

I love both ancient and modern-day scriptures that use the phrase “integrity of heart” when describing a righteous person’s character.¹ Integrity or the lack of integrity is a fundamental element of one’s character. Men who have “integrity of heart” are men to be trusted—because trust is built on integrity.

Being a man of integrity simply means your intentions, as well as your actions, are pure and righteous in all aspects of your life, both in public and in private. With each decision we make, we either merit more of God’s trust or diminish His trust. This principle is perhaps most clearly manifest in our divinely appointed responsibilities as husbands and fathers.

As husbands and fathers, we have received a divine charge from modern-day prophets, seers, and revelators in the document “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” This document teaches us that (1) “fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness,” (2) fathers “are responsible to provide the necessities of life,” and (3) fathers are responsible to protect their families.²

For us to earn God’s trust, we will need to accomplish these three divinely appointed responsibilities to our families in the Lord’s way. As further stated in the family proclamation, the Lord’s way is to fulfill these responsibilities together with our wives “as equal partners.”³ To me, this means we do not move forward with any significant decision regarding these three responsibilities without total unity with our wives.

The first step in our quest to earn the Lord's trust is to place our trust in Him. The prophet Nephi exemplified this type of commitment when he prayed: "O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh."⁴ Nephi was fully committed to doing the Lord's will. In addition to *saying* he would "do the things which the Lord hath commanded," Nephi was unwavering in his commitment to *accomplishing* his assignments, as illustrated in this statement: "As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us."⁵

Because Nephi first trusted in God, God put great trust in Nephi. The Lord blessed him with great outpourings of the Spirit that blessed his life, the lives of his family, and the lives of his people. Because Nephi presided in love and righteousness and provided for and protected his family and people, he records, "We lived after the manner of happiness."⁶

In order to represent a woman's perspective on this subject, I asked my two married daughters to help me. I asked if they would provide a sentence or two on how they viewed the importance of trust as it affects their marriage and family life. Here are the thoughts of Lara Harris and Christina Hansen.

First, Lara: "One of the most important things to me is knowing that as my husband goes about his day, he is making choices that show respect and love toward me. When we can trust each other in this way, it brings peace to our home, where we can enjoy raising our family together."

Now Christina's thoughts: "Having trust in someone is similar to having faith in someone. Without that trust and faith, there's fear and doubt. For me, one of the greatest blessings that come from being able to fully trust my husband is peace—peace of mind knowing that he actually does what he says he will do. Trust brings peace, love, and an environment where that love can grow."

Lara and Christina never saw what the other had written. It is so interesting to me that both of them independently considered the blessing of peace in the home to be a direct consequence of having a husband they could trust. As illustrated by my daughters' examples, the principle of trust plays an extremely important role in the development of a Christ-centered home.

I was also able to enjoy that same Christ-centered culture growing up in a home where my father honored his priesthood and gained the trust of the entire family due to "the integrity of his heart."⁷ Let me share with you an experience from my youth that illustrates the lasting positive impact that a father who understands and lives the principle of trust built on integrity can have on his family.

When I was very young, my father founded a company that specialized in factory automation. This business engineered, fabricated, and installed automated production lines worldwide.

When I was in middle school, my father wanted me to learn how to work. He also wanted me to learn the business from the ground up. My first job included maintaining the grounds and painting areas of the facility not visible to the general public.

When I entered high school, I was promoted to work on the factory floor. I started to learn how to read blueprints and run heavy steel fabrication machinery. After high school graduation, I attended university and then entered the mission field. Returning home from my mission, I went straight back to work. I needed to earn money for the next year's school expenses.

One day soon after my mission, I was working in the factory when my father called me into his office and asked if I would like to go with him on a business trip to Los Angeles. This was the first time my father invited me to accompany him on a business trip. He was actually letting me go out in public to help represent the company.

Before we left on the trip, he prepared me with a few details about this potential new client. First, the client was a multinational corporation. Second, they were upgrading their production lines worldwide with the latest in automation technology. Third, our company had never previously supplied them with engineering services or technology. And finally, their top corporate officer in charge of purchasing had called this meeting to review our bid on a new project. This meeting represented a new and potentially important opportunity for our company.

After arriving in Los Angeles, my father and I went to the executive's hotel for the meeting. The first order of business was to discuss and analyze the engineering design specifications of the project. The next discussion item concerned operational details, including logistics and delivery dates. The concluding agenda item focused on pricing, terms, and conditions. This is where things got interesting.

This corporate officer explained to us that our price proposal was the lowest of those who had submitted bids on the project. He then, curiously, told us the price of the second-lowest bid. He then asked us if we would be willing to take our proposal back and resubmit it. He stated that our new price should come in just below the next highest bid. He then explained that we would split the newly added dollars 50–50 with him. He rationalized this by saying that everyone would win. Our company would win because we would be making considerably more money than our original bid provided. His company would win because they would still be doing business with the lowest bidder. And, of course, he would win by taking his cut because he put this great deal together.

He then gave us a post office box number where we could send the money he requested. After all of this, he looked at my father and asked, "So, do we have a deal?" Much to my surprise, my father stood up, shook his hand, and told him we would get back to him.

After leaving the meeting, we got into the rental car, and my father turned to me and asked, "Well, what do you think we should do?"

I responded by saying I didn't think we should accept this offer.

My father then asked, "Don't you think we have a responsibility to all of our employees to maintain a good backlog of work?"

While I was contemplating his question and before I could answer, he answered his own question. He said, "Listen, Rick, once you take a bribe or compromise your integrity, it is very difficult to ever get it back. Don't ever do it, not even once."

The fact that I'm sharing this experience means that I have never forgotten what my father taught me on that first business trip with him. I share this experience to illustrate the lasting influence we have as fathers. You can imagine the trust I had in my father due to the integrity of his heart. He lived these same principles in his private life with my mother, his children, and all with whom he associated.

Brethren, it is my prayer this evening that we might all first place our trust in the Lord, as Nephi exemplified, and then, through the integrity of our hearts, earn the trust of the Lord, as well as the trust of our wives and children. As we understand and apply this sacred principle of trust built on integrity, we will be true to our sacred covenants. We will also succeed in presiding in our families with love and righteousness, providing the necessities of life, and protecting our families from the evils of the world. Of these truths I humbly testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

© 2017 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved.