

Hold Up Your Light

By Elder Marcus B. Nash
Of the Seventy

My invitation today is simple: share the gospel. Be you and hold up the light.

While on a flight to Peru a few years ago, I was seated next to a self-proclaimed atheist. He asked me why I believe in God. In the delightful conversation that ensued, I told him that I believed in God because Joseph Smith saw Him—and then I added that my knowledge of God also came from personal, real spiritual experience. I shared my belief that “all things denote there is a God”¹ and asked him how he believed the earth—this oasis of life in the vacuum of space—came into existence. He replied that, in his words, “the accident” could have happened over eons of time. When I explained how highly improbable it would be for an “accident” to produce such beauty and order, he was quiet for a time and then good-naturedly said, “You got me.” I asked if he would read the Book of Mormon. He said he would, so I sent him a copy.

Years later I made a new friend while in an airport in Lagos, Nigeria. We became acquainted as he checked my passport. I asked him about his religious beliefs, and he expressed strong faith in God. I shared the joy and vibrancy of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and asked if he would like to learn more from the missionaries. He said yes, was taught, and was baptized. A year or two later, as I walked through the airport in Liberia, I heard a voice call out my name. I turned, and that same young man approached with a big smile. We joyfully embraced, and he let me know that he was active in the Church and working with the missionaries to teach his girlfriend.

Now, I do not know whether my atheist friend ever read the Book of Mormon or joined the Church. My second friend did. For both of them, my responsibility²—my opportunity—was the same: hold up the gospel light—to love, share, and invite each of them in a normal, natural way.³

Brothers and sisters, I have experienced the blessings of sharing the gospel, and they are remarkable. Here are a few of them:

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to receive eternal life—which is God’s life.⁵ Heavenly Father knew we would suffer and sin on earth, so He sent His Son, whose “matchless life”⁶ and infinite atoning sacrifice⁷ make it possible for us to be forgiven, healed, and made whole.⁸

To know these truths is life changing! When a person learns the glorious purpose of life, comes to understand that Christ forgives and succors those who follow Him, and then chooses to follow Christ into the waters of baptism, life changes for the better—even when the external circumstances of life do not.

A radiantly happy sister I met in Onitsha, Nigeria, told me that from the time she learned the gospel and was baptized (and now I use her words), “everything is good for me. I am happy. I am in heaven.”⁹ Sharing the gospel kindles joy and hope in the souls of both giver and receiver. Truly, “how great shall be your joy”¹⁰ as you share the gospel! Sharing the gospel is joy upon joy, hope upon hope.¹¹

Sharing the Gospel Brings God’s Power into Our Lives

When we were baptized, each of us entered into a perpetual¹² covenant with God to “serve him and keep his commandments,”¹³ which includes “to stand as witnesses of [Him] at all times and in all things, and in all places.”¹⁴ As we “abide in” Him by keeping this covenant, the enlivening, sustaining, sanctifying power of godliness flows into our lives from Christ, just as a branch receives nourishment from the vine.¹⁵

Sharing the Gospel Protects Us from Temptation

The Lord commands:

“Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. ...

“... I have commanded that ... ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world; and whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation.”¹⁶

Choosing to not hold up the gospel light moves us to the shadows, where we are susceptible to temptation. Importantly, the converse is true: choosing to hold up the gospel light brings us more fully into that light and the protection it provides against temptation. What a tremendous blessing in today’s world!

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told me that supporting the missionaries has renewed her faith and sense of well-being. In her words, “Missionary work is so healing.”¹⁷

Joy. Hope. Sustaining power from God. Protection from temptation. Healing. All of these—and more (including forgiveness of sins)¹⁸—distill upon us from heaven as we share the gospel.

Now, Turning to Our Great Opportunity

Brothers and sisters, “there are many ... among all ... parties, [sects,] and denominations ... who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”¹⁹ The need to hold up our light has never been greater in all human history. And the truth has never been more accessible.

Jimmy Ton, who grew up Buddhist, was impressed by a family who shared their life on YouTube. When he learned that they were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he studied the gospel online by himself, read the Book of Mormon using the app, and was baptized after meeting with the missionaries in college.²⁰ Elder Ton is now a full-time missionary himself.

He and his fellow missionaries around the world are the Lord’s battalion—to quote our prophet.²¹ These missionaries buck the trend of the world: while surveys report that Gen Z is turning *away* from God,²² our stripling warrior²³ elders and sisters are turning people *to* God. And increasing numbers of members of the Church are uniting with the missionaries in sharing the gospel, helping more and more friends to come unto Christ and His Church.

Our Latter-day Saints in Liberia helped 507 friends enter the waters of baptism during the 10 months there were no full-time missionaries serving in their country. When one of our wonderful stake presidents there heard that the full-time missionaries may be returning, he remarked, “Oh good, now they can help us with *our* work.”

He is correct: the gathering of Israel—the greatest cause on this earth²⁴—*is our* covenant responsibility. And this is *our* time! My invitation today is simple: share the gospel. Be you and hold up the light. Pray for heaven’s help and follow spiritual promptings. Share your life normally and naturally; invite another person to come and see, to come and help, and to come and belong.²⁵ And then rejoice as you and those you love receive the promised blessings.

I know that in Christ these good tidings are preached to the meek; in Christ are the brokenhearted bound up; in Christ is liberty proclaimed to the captives; and in

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gospel light. He will work miracles in our lives and in the lives of all He gathers, for He is a God of miracles.²⁹ In the wondrous name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. 1. Alma 30:44.
2. 2. See Ether 12:36–37.
3. 3. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, chapter 23, to learn doctrine and principles and to view videos showing examples of ways to hold up the light and share the gospel.
4. 4. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org; see also Job 38:4–7; Acts 17:29; Romans 8:16–17; Hebrews 12:9; Abraham 3:18–25.
5. 5. See Alma 12:30; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; Moses 1:39; Abraham 3:22–25.
6. 6. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
7. 7. See 2 Nephi 9:7.
8. 8. See Luke 22:39–46; 1 Nephi 15:34; Alma 7:11–12; Abraham 3:27.
9. 9. Video interview, Nov. 23, 2019.
10. 10. See Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16; see also Alma 36:24–28.
11. 11. See Alma 26:11, 13, 35; Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16.
12. 12. See Jeremiah 50:4–6.
13. 13. Mosiah 18:10.
14. 14. Mosiah 18:9; see also verses 8–13.
15. 15. See John 15:4–5.
16. 16. 3 Nephi 18:24–25.
17. 17. Personal correspondence.
18. 18. See Doctrine and Covenants 62:3.
19. 19. Doctrine and Covenants 123:12; see also 1 Corinthians 14:8.
20. 20. Personal correspondence.

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23. 23. See Alma 53:20–21; 56:46–47; 57:19–27.
24. 24. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel.”
25. 25. See share.ChurchofJesusChrist.org for apostolic teaching and video examples showing what fellow Saints across the world are doing to love, share, and invite other individuals to enjoy the blessings of the Church and gospel of Jesus Christ.
26. 26. See Isaiah 61:1–3.
27. 27. See 2 Nephi 2:8.
28. 28. See Moroni 6:4.
29. 29. See Mormon 9:18–21.

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