

# For the Sake of Your Posterity

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Don't be the weak link in this beautiful chain of faith you started, or you received, as a legacy. Be the strong one.

A few years ago, when I was serving in the South America Northwest Area and living in Peru, I had a beautiful experience that I would like to share with you.

It happened when I was returning home after a busy weekend of assignments. After finally completing the airport immigration process, I found a friendly taxi driver waiting for me from our usual taxi service. He took me to his car, and I sat in the back, ready to relax and enjoy a quiet trip home. After driving a few blocks, the driver received a phone call from his supervisor telling him I took the wrong taxi. A different car was reserved for me, and the supervisor asked him to take me back to the airport if I wanted to change cars. I told him it was not necessary, and we could keep going. After a few minutes of silence, he looked at me through the rearview mirror and asked, "You are a Mormon, aren't you?"

Well, after that inviting question, I knew my quiet moments were over. I could not resist exploring where his question would take us.

I learned that his name was Omar, his wife's name was Maria Teresa, and they had two children—Carolina, age 14, and Rodrigo, age 10. Omar had been a member of the Church since he was a child. His family was active, but at some point, his parents stopped going to church. Omar became completely inactive when he was 15. He was then 40 years old.

At that moment I realized I did *not* take the wrong taxi. *It was not a coincidence!* I told him who I was and that I was in his taxi because the Lord was calling him back to His fold.

We then talked about the time he and his family were active members of the Church. He had fond memories of sweet family home evening moments and some Primary songs. He then softly sang a few words of "I Am a Child of God."<sup>1</sup>

After getting his address, phone number, and permission to share with his bishop, I told him I would find a way to be in the chapel on his first day back to church. We finished our trip from the airport to my home, as well as our little trip to his past, and we went our separate ways.

A few weeks later his bishop called me, telling me Omar was planning to attend church on a certain Sunday. I told him I would be there. That Sunday, Omar was there with his son. His wife and daughter were not yet interested. A few months later, his bishop called me again, this time to tell me that Omar would be baptizing his wife and his two children, and he invited me to be there. Here is the picture of that Sunday where they were confirmed members of the Church.

That same Sunday, I told Omar and his family that if they were prepared, in one year I would be honored to perform their sealing in the Lima Peru Temple. Here is a picture of that memorable moment for all of us, taken one year later.

Why am I sharing this experience with you? I am sharing it for two purposes.

First, to address those good members who for some reason have fallen away from the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Second, to also address those participating members today who maybe are not being as faithful to their covenants as they should be. In both cases, generations ahead of them are impacted, and blessings and promises that were reserved for their posterities are at risk.

Let's start with the first scenario, good members who have left the covenant path, as happened with my Peruvian friend Omar. When I asked him why he decided to return, he said it was because he and his wife felt their children would be happier in life with the gospel of Jesus Christ. He felt it was about time to go back to church for the sake of their children.

It is so sad when we come across inactive members or nonmembers of the Church who at one time had the gospel within their families and lost it because of their parents' or grandparents' decision to take a break from the Church. That decision could have an impact on their posterity forever!

Their children and grandchildren have been precluded from the protection and the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their lives. Even more heartbreaking, they have lost the promises of an eternal family which were there one day. The decision of one has impacted a whole chain of descendants. A legacy of faith has been broken.

However, as we know, anything broken can be mended through Jesus Christ. For this reason, please consider this invitation from President Russell M. Nelson: "Now, if you have stepped off the path, may I invite you with all the hope in my heart to please come back. Whatever your concerns, whatever your challenges, there is a place for you in this, the Lord's Church. *You and generations yet unborn will be blessed by your actions now to return to the covenant path.*"<sup>2</sup>

Now, let's address the second scenario, today's participating members who maybe are not being as faithful as they should be. Just as yesterday's decisions impact today's realities, decisions of today will impact our future and the future of our family members.

President Dallin H. Oaks taught us:

"The restored gospel of Jesus Christ encourages us to think about the future. ... It teaches great ideas about the future to guide our actions today.

"In contrast, we all know persons who are concerned only with the present: spend it today, enjoy it today, and take no thought for the future.

"... As we make current decisions, we should always be asking, '*Where will this lead?*'"<sup>3</sup> Will our current decisions lead us to joy now and in eternity, or will they lead us to sorrow and tears?

Some may think, "We don't need to attend church every Sunday," or "We will pay tithing when things get better," or "I will not support the Church leaders in this subject."

"But," they say, "we know the Church is true, and we will never leave the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Those with thoughts like these do not realize the negative impact this “lukewarm” type of membership will have on their lives and on the lives of their posterity. The parents may remain active, but the risk of losing their children is high—in this life and in eternity.

Regarding those who will not inherit celestial glory with their families, the Lord says, “These are they who are not *valiant* in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God.”<sup>4</sup> Is that what we want for ourselves or our children? Shouldn’t we be more *valiant* and less *lukewarm* for our own sake and for the sake of our posterity?

President M. Russell Ballard also addressed a similar concern:

“For some, Christ’s invitation to believe and remain continues to be hard. ... Some disciples struggle to understand a specific Church policy or teaching. Others find concerns in our history or in the imperfections of some members and leaders, past and present. ...

“... The decision to ‘walk no more’ with Church members and the Lord’s chosen leaders will have a *long-term impact* that cannot always be seen right now.”<sup>5</sup>

What a sad legacy to pass along—and for what reason? Whatever it is, it isn’t enough to ignore the negative spiritual impact it will create for generations ahead.

My dear brothers and sisters, if you are going through one of these two situations I mentioned in my message, please reconsider your course of action. You know there is a plan for us in this life. You know that families can be eternal. Why put yours at risk? Don’t be the weak link in this beautiful chain of faith you started, or you received, as a legacy. Be the strong one. It is your turn to do it, and the Lord can help you.

From the bottom of my heart, I invite you to think about it, to look ahead and evaluate “where this will lead,” and, if necessary, to be valiant enough to reshape your path for the sake of your posterity. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. “I Am a Child of God,” *Hymns*, no. 301.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “As We Go Forward Together,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Apr. 2018, 7; emphasis added.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Where Will This Lead?,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2019, 60; emphasis added.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 76:79; emphasis added.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “To Whom Shall We Go?,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 90–91; emphasis added.