

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“The prayer of every speaker, the hope of all who sing, the reverence of every guest – we are all dedicated to inviting the spirit of Him whose Church this is, the living Christ, the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace.”

Luke in the New Testament tells of a blind man on the road to Jericho who, when hearing the crowd’s commotions, learns of Jesus passing by as the reason for the clamor. The blind man persistently cries out above the crowd’s noise until he is taken to the Savior, Who in turn restores his sight and heals him.

“As in our New Testament story, those blessed with sight will recognize that, in spite of everything else this conference tradition may offer us, it will mean little or nothing unless we find Jesus at the center of it all.”

Similarly, Joseph Smith rose above his day’s confusion and cacophony of competing Christian witnesses, with his seeking served as the catalyst for the First Vision.

“I testify ... that surely the most thrilling sight and sound in life is that of Jesus not only passing by but His coming to us, stopping beside us and making His abode with us.”

“Through the incessant din and drumbeat of our day, may we strive to see Christ at the center of our lives, of our faith and of our service. This is where true meaning lies.”



Elder Terrence M. Vinson

Presidency of the Seventy

When the Savior and His gospel are the framework around which people build their lives, they can feel enduring joy.

In Australia, the term “fair dinkum” means people are what they say they are – essentially, they do what they mean and they go “all in” when they say they are committed.

In the game of rugby, players find the greatest enjoyment of the game when they play their hardest and give their all by playing their best. The same is true in life and with the gospel.

“Giving our all doesn’t mean that we will be continually enveloped in blessings or always have success. But it does mean that we will have joy.”

It is the sacrifices and efforts of each individual that matter most to the Lord, not their successes.

“So, the question for each of us is: Are we also fair dinkum about the gospel? Because being half-hearted is not being fair dinkum! And God is not known for showering praise on the lukewarm.”

Nothing on earth is more precious than eternal life. The Savior committed absolutely in His sacrifice to bring about eternal life for the children of the Lord. Don’t put off a total commitment to the Lord. “Get fair dinkum now and feel the joy!”



Brother Stephen W. Owen

Young Men general president

In a complex and contentious world with the bombardment of relentless messages from social media and news, individuals must deliberately take time each day to “disconnect from the world and connect with heaven.” Just as hay does not provide adequate nourishment for deer, the trending news does not offer true spiritual nourishment.

Church members must press forward on the covenant path and be truly converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Through His prophet, the Lord is preparing His people to face challenges with faith. President Russell M. Nelson’s recent call for a home-centered Church is designed to provide spiritual nutrition to “survive and thrive in the latter days.”

To further support spiritual nourishment in the home, curriculum for Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women will be aligned with “Come, Follow Me – For Individuals and Families” starting in January 2020. The Church also supports home-centered learning through the ordinance of the sacrament and providing the opportunity to gather: “Never underestimate the strength that comes from gathering with others who are also trying to be strong.”

Children and youth need to know they are not alone on the covenant path. They need more time from bishops, leaders and parents – not less. Helping connect a young person with heaven is another way to provide spiritual nourishment needed to “be faithful and not faithless.”



Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

“Saints are those who have entered into the gospel covenant through baptism and are striving to follow Christ as His disciples. Thus, the ‘joy of the saints’ denotes the joy of becoming Christlike.”

Joy comes from keeping God’s commandments, overcoming sorrow and weakness through Christ and serving as the Savior served.

Keeping the Lord’s commandments enables us more easily and more fully to feel His love, with the strait and narrow path of the commandments leading directly to the tree of life.

We can find joy in overcoming misery in whatever form – sin, trial, weakness or any other obstacle to happiness. “This is the joy of sensing progress in the path of discipleship; the joy of ‘having received a remission of sins and having peace of conscience’ (Mosiah 4:3); the joy of feeling one’s soul expand and grow through the grace of Christ.”

The fruits of our service to one another in the Church are part of the joy set before us. “Even in times of discouragement or stress, we can minister patiently if we are focused on the joy of pleasing God and bringing light, relief and happiness to His children, our brothers and sisters.”

The ultimate “joy of the saints” comes in knowing that the Savior pleads their cause, and no one can conceive of the joy which will fill our souls as we hear Jesus pray for us unto the Father (3 Nephi 17:17).



Sister Michelle Craig

First counselor in the Young Women general presidency

Following are four ways to increase one’s spiritual capacity to receive revelation and come to know the voice of the Spirit:

- “Be intentional about creating time and space to hear God’s voice.” The distractions of the world can often make it difficult to hear His voice, but taking time to seek His direction will help all draw closer to Him.

- “Act without delay.” Following the promptings of the Spirit when individuals receive them can help them become more familiar with the voice of the Spirit in their lives.

- “Get your errand from the Lord.” Heavenly Father is eager to answer prayers that allow His children to help one another. Pray and ask the Lord for an errand and He will “use your ordinary skills to accomplish His extraordinary work.”

- “Believe and trust.” When acting as a disciple of the Lord, individualized or tailored revelation will allow all to perform their unique roles or missions in life. The Lord will prepare a way for His children to accomplish the things He commands them, but His way may often differ from the expected way.

“Each one of us, regardless of age or circumstance can strive to seek, receive and act. As you follow this eternal pattern ordained for our day, you will draw nearer to Jesus Christ – His love, His light, His direction, His peace and His healing and enabling power. And you will increase your spiritual capacity to become an everyday instrument of His hands in accomplishing His great work.”



Elder Dale G. Renlund

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

More than a century ago, many in Congo worshiped inanimate objects. After their conversion to Christianity, some would intentionally make a pilgrimage to throw these objects into the churning waters of a massive waterfall, where the items became unrecognizable. “These actions were a token of a new, but unwavering, commitment to Jesus Christ.”

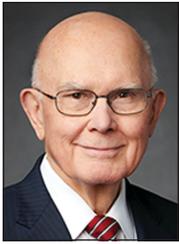
Similarly, in the Book of Mormon the Anti-Nephi-Lehies “laid down the weapons of their rebellion,” burying them “deep in the earth” as “a testimony to God ... that they never would use (their) weapons again.”

“Being ‘converted unto the Lord’ means leaving one course of action, directed by an old belief system, and adopting a new one based on faith in Heavenly Father’s plan and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.”

As faith in Jesus Christ grows, God invites individuals to make promises, or covenants, with Him. Covenants anchor individuals to the Savior and propel them along the path that leads to their heavenly home.

Commit to a lifelong process of discipleship. “Make and keep covenants. Throw your old ways into deep, churning waterfalls. Completely bury your weapons of rebellion with no handles sticking out. Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, making covenants with a real intent to reliably honor them will bless your life forever.”





President Dallin H. Oaks

First counselor in the First Presidency

There are many questions the Lord has yet to reveal answers to. Some of these questions may concern conditions or relationships in the spirit world or in the kingdoms of glory. In all circumstances, the best solution is to trust the Lord and move forward.

Truths that are known about the spirit world include

the following: spirits will live on after death, the righteous spirits will be divided from the wicked, and most important, the work of salvation continues there. The scriptures teach that resurrection is assured for all and will occur at different times for different groups.

Aside from these basics about the spirit world, “little else is revealed.” While several members of the Church have had visions or inspirations about the spirit world, such experiences should not be taught or understood as

official doctrine of the Church. Doing so “does not further the work of the Lord” and may draw others away from seeking personal revelation.

Doctrine is taught by all 15 members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Doctrine can also come from prophetic teachings of the president of the Church, reaffirmed by other prophets and apostles. For all questions with answers that have not been yet revealed, trust in God and His love for His children.

Saturday afternoon session

Elder David A. Bednar

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Watching for hours how a pair of cheetahs stalked a large group of topis on African grasslands led to discussing what was observed and identifying valuable lessons.



Three such lessons are to beware of evil’s beguiling disguises, to stay awake and be alert, and to understand the intent of the enemy.

Spiritually dangerous ideas and actions frequently can appear to be attractive, desirable or pleasurable. In our contemporary world, each needs to beware of beguiling bad that pretends to be good.

Spiritually speaking, individuals need to stay awake and be alert to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and to the signals that come from the Lord’s watchmen on the towers.

“I invite and encourage you to reflect on this episode with the cheetahs and the topis and identify additional lessons for you and your family. Please remember always that your home is the true center of gospel learning and living.

“As you respond in faith to this invitation, inspired thoughts will come to your mind, spiritual feelings will swell in your heart, and you will recognize actions that should be undertaken or continued ...

“I promise that the blessings of effective preparation and spiritual protection will flow into your life as you are watchful unto prayer vigilantly and continually.”

Elder Rubén V. Alliaud

General Authority Seventy

Just before Elder Rubén V. Alliaud of Argentina turned 15, his uncle invited him to stay with him in the United States. His mother agreed providing his uncle, who had joined the Church several years earlier, did not try to convince her son to do the same.



His uncle kept that promise. But upon coming across a copy of the Book of Mormon, Elder Alliaud discovered Moroni’s promise that if readers ask God if “these things are not true; ... he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

With that promise in mind, he secretly began reading the Book of Mormon. And soon after praying, “I came to know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon was true.”

In order to progress toward true personal conversion, all converts must “experience and be found by the power of the truths contained in the Book of Mormon.”

The Book of Mormon is imbued with the sacred purpose of teaching about Christ. “For this reason, any reader who commits to a sincere study of it, with the spirit of prayer, will not only learn about Christ, but they also will learn from Christ.”

“My invitation this afternoon to each of us, ... [is] to allow the power of the truths of the Book of Mormon to find us and embrace us once again, and day after day as we diligently seek for personal revelation. It will do so if we allow it.”

President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

Adjustments that pertain to youth and leaders are intended to help young men and young women develop their sacred personal potential. “We also want to strengthen Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes and provide support to bishops and other adult leaders as they serve this rising generation.”



“You will remember that I have invited the youth of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to enlist in the Lord’s youth battalion to participate in the greatest cause on earth today — the gathering of Israel. I issued this invitation to our youth because they are unusually gifted in reaching out to others and sharing what they believe in a convincing fashion. The cause of the gathering is an essential part of helping to prepare the world and its people for the Second Coming of the Lord.”

The First Presidency and the Twelve are united in endorsing these efforts to strengthen our youth. “We express our complete confidence in our youth and our gratitude for them.”

Changes announced during the general conference leadership session regarding who may serve as witnesses to baptism and sealing ordinances “are procedural. The underlying doctrine and covenants are unchanged and are equally efficacious in all ordinances. These changes should greatly enhance family participation in these ordinances.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Church has prepared organizational changes at ward and stake levels to make youth a more significant focus.



Young Men presidencies will be discontinued at the ward level. The bishop will continue to preside over the priests, and the first counselor will have specific responsibility for teachers and the second counselor for deacons. To assist the bishopric and quorum presidencies, Young Men advisers will be called.

As Relief Society and elders quorum presidents continue to shoulder important responsibilities of missionary work, temple and family history work, and ministering, the bishop will be able to make the youth his priority. To further emphasize the bishop’s role in caring for youth, ward Young Women presidents will now report directly to the bishop, rather than a counselor in the bishopric.

Young Men presidencies will continue at the general and stake levels. A high councilor will be the Young Men president at the stake level and will be part of the Aaronic Priesthood-Young Women Committee. A counselor to the stake president will now chair this committee. Another high councilor will serve as the stake Sunday School president and could also serve on this committee.



Brother Mark L. Pace

Sunday School general president

The freeze-thaw cycle and expansive soil conditions in Winnipeg, Canada, required specific materials and efforts to create a firm foundation for a new temple there. Latter-day Saints need a similar firm and sure foundation for their mortal journey back to a heavenly home, with that foundation established on the bedrock

of conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can the attacks of the adversary be increasing exponentially, while at the same time the influence of the adversary is actually decreasing?

“It can happen, and it is happening throughout the Church, because the Lord prepares His people against the attacks of the adversary. ‘Come, Follow Me’ is the Lord’s counterstrategy and proactive plan.”

A nine-month worldwide scripture study effort has

resulted in a growth of faith and devotion to the Lord, in improved gospel instruction in Sunday classes and greater family joy and unity.

With the “Come, Follow Me” resource, the Lord is preparing us for the perilous times that we now face.

“He is helping us establish that ‘sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall’ (Heman 5:12) — the foundation of a testimony anchored firmly in the bedrock of our conversion to the Lord.”

Elder L. Todd Budge

General Authority Seventy

Afflictions and sorrow prepare people to experience joy if they put trust in the Lord and His plan. “Our trials and afflictions make space for greater joy.”

The Jaredites’ journey to the promised land can be a metaphor for a journey through mortality.

The Lord promised the brother of Jared and his people that He would go before them to the promised land, then commanded them to build barges. As they began following the Lord’s instructions, the brother of Jared realized they would have no light or air in the barges. So he poured out his soul to God for answers. “The Lord made it clear that ultimately the Jaredites could not make it to the promised land without Him.”

While the Jaredites didn’t know how things would work out, they still got aboard the barges and commended themselves to the Lord. “Trusting in the Lord includes trusting in His timing and requires patience and endurance that outlasts the storms of life.”

Although the journey was difficult, when the Jaredites ultimately landed on the shore, they immediately thanked God.

“If we are faithful in keeping our covenants, we too will one day arrive safely home and will bow before the Lord and shed tears of joy for the multitude of His tender mercies in our lives, including the sorrows that made space for more joy.”



Elder Jorge M. Alvarado

General Authority Seventy

Trials in this life are inevitable. But no matter what obstacles occur, Jesus Christ will prepare the way through them as individuals exercise faith and follow Him. Instead of questioning why, the question should be asked: “What should we do to best meet the trials that come our way?”

Parents have a responsibility to teach their children to love the gospel. They can also play an essential role in helping children understand the “why” of gospel doctrine, or the meaning, purpose and blessings the gospel brings. God’s commandments are an expression of His love. He desires to bless His children. The example of righteous parents can help children to know for themselves that the gospel is true.

Youth should seek to understand gospel truths for themselves and follow the example of the Prophet Joseph Smith as he turned to God for answers. They, too, can become a strong link of faith in their family as they do so.

To parents with children who have strayed from the covenant path, “gently help them comprehend the gospel’s truths. Start now; it is never too late.” Families can also be blessed by parents’ righteous examples. Enos and the young stripling warriors are other examples of being strengthened by the faith of their parents.



Elder Ronald A. Rasband

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

To walk the covenant path back to Heavenly Father, each person must live true to his or her promises to the Lord and to others.

The youth theme for 2020 comes from 1 Nephi 3:7, which includes Nephi’s promise to “go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded.”

“To ‘go and do’ means rising above the ways of the world, receiving and acting on personal revelation, living righteously with hope and faith in the future, making and keeping covenants to follow Jesus Christ and thereby increasing our love for Him, the Savior of the world.”

Members of the Church make a covenant, or a two-way promise with the Lord, at baptism to take on the name of Jesus Christ and live as He lived. This includes ministering to others and standing as a witness of God.

“My question today is do we stand by our promises and covenants, or are they sometimes half-hearted commitments, casually made and hence, easily broken?”

The Savior’s power in each person’s life is increased when he or she makes sacred covenants and keeps them with precision. It’s also important to keep promises to other people, as it makes it more likely for a person to keep promises to the Lord.



Women’s session

Sister Reyna Isabel Aburto

Second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency

Dark clouds of “depression, anxiety and other forms of mental and emotional affliction” can often distort the way people perceive themselves, the world around them and even God.

“Like any part of the body, the brain is subject to illness, trauma and chemical imbalance. When our minds are suffering, it is appropriate to seek help from God, from those around us and from medical and mental health professionals.”

While sadness and anxiety are natural emotions, to experience them constantly can block one’s ability to feel the love of Heavenly Father and the influence of the Holy Ghost in one’s life — but hiding that pain or “thinking we need to be perfect now” can make such times even more difficult.

“In contrast, when we open up about our emotional challenges, admitting we are not perfect, we give others permission to share their struggles. Together we realize there is hope and we do not have to suffer alone.”

Many individuals suffer from depression or other emotional and mental challenges alone and in fear of not meeting the expectations of an imaginary mold. But “we can help them know and feel that they do indeed belong with us.” Depression is not necessarily a result of sin or weakness and it increases when one is left alone.



Sister Lisa Harkness

First counselor in the Primary general presidency

Those who have been baptized “have put on Christ ... For [we] are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:27-28). Through the covenant of baptism, “we promised to always remember Him, keep His commandments, and serve others. Our willingness to keep this covenant is renewed each Sabbath day when we partake of the sacrament and rejoice once again in the blessing of ‘walking in newness of life’” (Romans 6:4).

The promise to remember the Savior “gives us strength to stand for truth and righteousness — whether we are in a large crowd or in our solitary places, where no one knows our actions except for God. When we remember Him and His name we bear, we have no place for self-degrading comparisons or overbearing judgments. With our eyes on the Savior, we see ourselves for who we really are — a cherished child of God.”

Those who stumble in their progression on the covenant path have only to remember His name and loving kindness. “Surely, there is no sweeter sound than the name of Jesus to all those who, with a broken heart and contrite spirit, seek ‘to do better and be better.’”

The Savior’s atoning sacrifice should always be remembered. “Not only does He remember our names, but He remembers us always.”



Sister Bonnie H. Cordon

Young Women general president

Four adjustments were announced to help young women strengthen faith in Jesus Christ and develop their potential. First, a revised Young Women theme will be implemented. The language of the theme uses “I” instead of “we,” which allows a young woman to individually apply truths of her divine identity and purpose. Young women will gain a testimony of the truthfulness of these words as they study and ponder them.

To foster unity, friendship and belonging, young women will be organized according to a ward’s specific needs, rather than three classes. A ward with a small number of Young Women may have only one class, while wards with larger groups may have four to six classes. Additionally, class names such as Beehive, Mia Maid and Laurel have been retired, and all young women will be referred to as Young Women.

Class presidencies are vital to the work of salvation, “particularly in the areas of ministering, missionary work, activation, and temple and family history work.” This is how young women participate in the gathering of Israel.

Adult leaders should guide and mentor class presidencies, leading alongside them and never taking over, to allow young women to develop confidence and leadership skills. These adjustments should be implemented by Jan. 1, 2020, or earlier if stakes and wards are ready.



President Henry B. Eyring

Second counselor in the First Presidency

Covenant daughters and sons of God all share one important call: to serve others for Him.

"You cannot know when, or for what length of time, your personal mission will be focused on service in calls such as mother, leader or ministering sister. ... Yet you know from scripture and living prophets that all of these assignments will come, either in this life or in the next, to every daughter of God."

Each assignment is preparation for eternal life in loving families, and each assignment requires much of the same preparation.

Although the assignments appear to be different, "they all require the preparation of a powerful, loving heart, a fearless faith that the Lord gives no command save He prepares a way, and a desire to go and do for Him."

Similarly, daughters of God must prepare for the call to be a leader for the Lord when it comes. "It will require faith in Jesus Christ rooted in your deep love of the scriptures to lead people and to teach His word without fear."

It takes much the same preparation when the Lord calls His daughters to be a mother. "But it will also take an even more loving heart than you needed earlier. It will take faith in Jesus Christ beyond what has ever been in your heart."



President Dallin H. Oaks

First counselor in the First Presidency

God requires His children to obey His commandments because only through obedience, including repentance, can one return to live in His presence and become perfect as He is.

The Lord's apostles are commissioned to teach nothing but truth. They cannot modify divine law. "Thus, the leaders of the Church must always teach the unique importance of marriage between a man and a woman and the related law of chastity."

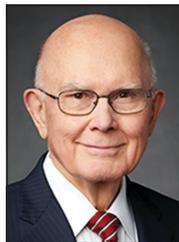
Exaltation is possible only through eternal marriage.

Those who follow lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender teachings and actions should be treated with the love Christ commanded all to show to "our neighbors." Never persecute those who do not share "our beliefs and commitments."

It's difficult to understand the challenges that one might face in mortality. But God helps His children overcome challenges if they sincerely seek His help.

"The ultimate and final judgement will be by the Lord, Who alone has the required knowledge, wisdom and grace to judge each of us."

The walk to follow God's two great commandments demands that one not compromise on commandments — "but show forth a full measure of understanding and love."



President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God.

"Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God's priesthood power by virtue of their covenant."

The heavens are just as open to women who are endowed with God's power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood.

Prayerfully read section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants. "Your personal, spiritual endeavor will bring you joy as you gain, understand, and use the power with which you have been endowed."

Satan will contrive roadblocks to prevent women from understanding all with which they have been and can be blessed. "I feel deep sorrow that any of you have felt side-lined, disrespected, or misjudged. Such offenses have no place in the kingdom of God."

In the holy temple, women are authorized to perform and officiate in priesthood ordinances every time they attend. "All our efforts to minister to each other, proclaim the gospel, perfect the Saints, and redeem the dead converge in the holy temple."



Sunday morning session

Elder Gerrit W. Gong

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"Covenant belonging is to make and keep solemn promises to God and each other, through sacred ordinances, that invite the power of godliness to be manifest in our lives."

Covenant belonging centers in Jesus Christ. Every promised blessing comes to those who remain faithful to the end.

"As we honor our covenants, we may sometimes feel we are in the company of angels." Loved ones on both sides of the veil will be those angels.

Even if one stumbles and falls or loses faith in God, He will always be there to help His children and invite them "to come or return to the covenants that mark His path."

The Book of Mormon is evidence of covenant belonging. It is the promised instrument for the gathering of God's children prophesied as a new covenant.

The Book of Mormon invites everyone to enter into a covenant with the Lord to serve Him and keep His commandments.

"When we want to change for the better ... we can become open to direction, help and strength. We can come by covenant to belong with God and a community of faithful believers, and receive the blessings promised in the doctrine of Christ — now."



Sister Cristina B. Franco

Second counselor in the Primary general presidency

Latter-day Saints know God's plan — they accepted His plan of happiness, redemption and salvation before coming to earth. Members also know that Jesus Christ is central to God's plan through His Atonement. Meanwhile, agency remains one of God's greatest gifts — allowing His children to choose whether to follow Jesus Christ or Satan. Those "simple truths" can be shared with others.

President Dallin H. Oaks has taught that members can do three things to help share the gospel.

First, pray for the desire to help with this vital part of the work of salvation. Second, keep the commandments to have the Savior's guiding Spirit. And third, pray for inspiration to know how to share the gospel — and for the commitment to act upon that inspiration.

Invite a friend who is not a Latter-day Saint to attend Church services. Share a copy of the Book of Mormon with a relative or friend. Help others find their ancestors on FamilySearch. Share what's being taught in "Come, Follow Me."

Become more like the Savior by sharing with others His gospel.

The work of salvation includes member/missionary work, convert retention, activation of less active members, temple and family history work and teaching the gospel.



Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Before anyone was born, God invited His children to embark on an adventure. It wouldn't be easy, and it meant leaving the comfort and security of God's presence. "But we also knew that we would gain precious treasures, including a physical body and experiencing the intense joys and sorrows of mortality."

Despite making mistakes, each person has the promise that "because of the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we could be cleansed of our transgressions, refined and purified in our spirits, and, one day, resurrected and reunited with those we love."

Trusting in the promises and power of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, each person who has come to earth accepted the challenge.

To begin on this journey, first, "you need to choose to incline your heart to God. Strive each day to find Him. Learn to love Him. And then let that love inspire you to learn, understand and follow His teachings and keep God's commandments."

The path of discipleship is to help others. "Faith, hope, love, compassion and service refine us as disciples." Help the poor and needy and reach out to those in distress.

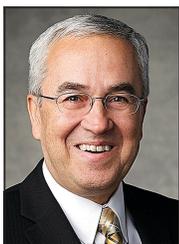
Do not be ashamed of being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ. Each member must take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ.



Elder Walter F. González

General Authority Seventy

Much as He cleansed the leper with His healing touch, the Savior is anxious to bless all who seek Him. Strength and comfort come by accepting His will and knowing that He wants to bless His followers.



The Savior knows that is best for His people. “He has an eternal perspective that we do not always have. We must come unto Christ with a sincere desire that our will be swallowed up in His. This will prepare us for eternal life.”

People’s actions or circumstances can leave them feeling broken. In such moments, “we can place our will in His hands.”

The leper who sought Jesus was prompted by hope. The world offered him no solutions.

“We too can feel the touch of the Savior’s loving, healing hand. What joy, hope and gratefulness come to our souls in knowing that He wants to help us to be clean.”

Christ knows what is best. When individuals feel a sincere desire that “His will be done,” they develop a faith not unlike the leper who knew he could be healed.

Christ can heal and lift because He has the ability to do it. He took upon Himself all the pains of body and spirit so that He could be filled with mercy for others.

Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

A pair of family anecdotes about “the 102nd Dalmatian” and “the striped kitty cat” can be likened to Satan, the father of lies and the great deceiver, who would have individuals question things as they really are and either ignore eternal truths or transform them into something that appears more pleasing.



“He has made a reputation for himself of convincing mortals that skunks are just kittens or that, with an application of paint, you can transform a Labrador into a Dalmatian.”

Consider Moses’s vision of God, speaking with Him face to face, followed by Lucifer’s appearance to and demand to be worshipped by Moses. “Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not,” Moses declared, with the adversary departing.

Moses’s resistance of the adversary is a vivid and enlightening example. “It is a powerful message for you personally — know what to do when he tries to deceive you. For you, like Moses, have been blessed with the gift of heavenly help.”

That help includes commandments, blessings and prophets. Obedience to commandments given to our prophet is a key not only in avoiding the influence of the deceiver but also in experiencing lasting joy and happiness.

President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

“Latter-day Saints, as with other followers of Jesus Christ, are always looking for ways to help, to lift and to love others. . . . They truly seek to live the first and second great commandments. When we love God with all our hearts, He turns our hearts to the well-being of others in a beautiful virtuous cycle.”



Church humanitarian outreach was launched in 1984 to help drought-stricken eastern Africa, with a single fast day raising \$6.4 million. Now under the “Latter-day Saint Charities” name, the Church has provided more than \$2 billion in global assistance. “This assistance is offered to recipients regardless of their Church affiliation, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender or political persuasion.”

This is beyond the fast-offering assistance offered to members. In 2018, the Church provided emergency supplies to refugees, as well as vision care, newborn care and wheelchairs. Also last year, the Church carried out more than 100 disaster-relief projects.

“Giving help to others — making a conscientious effort to care about others as much or more than we care about ourselves — is our joy. Especially, I might add, when it is not convenient and when it takes us out of our comfort zone. Living that second great commandment is the key to becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ.”

Sunday afternoon session

President Henry B. Eyring

Second counselor in the First Presidency

Lasting happiness is something all are eager to find, but such happiness can be found only through the plan of happiness that Heavenly Father has laid out for His children. As Alma taught in the Book of Mormon, “increasing in holiness (is) the only path to happiness.”



The scriptures teach that one becomes more holy by exercising faith in Christ, being obedient, repenting, sacrificing for Him, receiving ordinances and keeping covenants with God. “Qualifying for the gift of holiness requires humility, meekness and patience.”

The calming, quiet influence of the Holy Ghost can help individuals become more holy as they strive to continually be worthy of the Spirit’s guidance and presence.

Some may wonder, though, “Why do I not feel the peace and happiness promised to those who have been faithful? I have been faithful through terrible adversity, but I don’t feel happiness.”

In such instances, it is important to remember that change does not merely come by asking for it. “Greater holiness . . . will come by doing what is needed for God to change us,” and that often means through times of adversity.

Holiness is a gift from God that must be sought after each day through repentance and increasing people’s faith in the Savior, allowing Him to transform them.

Elder Hans T. Boom

General Authority Seventy

Heavenly Father invites everyone to walk the path of discipleship and return to Him. The way is “to help each other understand who we are by ministering to each other.



“To me, ministering is exercising divine love. In that way we create an environment where both the giver and receiver obtain a desire to repent. In other words, we change direction and come closer to and become more like our Savior Jesus Christ.”

There is no need to tell spouses or children how to improve. They already know. But by creating an environment of love, they will be empowered to make the changes they need to and become better people. This way, repentance becomes a daily process of refining, which can include apologizing for poor behavior.

Each person can discover his or her part by asking Heavenly Father to make that part known. “The answer will probably come gradually and then more clearly when we have set our feet more firmly on the covenant and ministering path.”

If the path of repentance appears difficult, know that “if we keep at it the burden will be taken from our shoulders and there will be light again. Heavenly Father will never leave us when we reach for Him.”

Charity, or the pure love of Christ, will be found in homes where parents minister to children and children to their parents.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Nobody escapes death in this life and, when thinking about what comes next, it is easy to question whether or not one is doing everything necessary to be reunited with their loved ones.



“Today, ‘living right’ can be a pretty confusing concept,” but members of the Church understand the gospel principles that help them to be better prepared when they die.

“It seems clear to me that one of the most important things we can learn in this life is how to emphasize our eternal spiritual nature and control our evil desires.”

In coming to earth from the premortal world, all people made the decision to accept Heavenly Father’s plan for their salvation. “You are — first and foremost and always — a spiritual being. And so when one chooses to put our carnal nature ahead of our spiritual nature, we are choosing something that is contrary to our real, true, authentic, spiritual selves.”

Repentance, then, is an indispensable weapon in the battle over one’s self. Through daily repentance, individuals can remind their spirit to remind their bodies who is in charge.

“I encourage you to slow down a bit and think about where you are now in subjugating your carnal nature and empowering your divine, spiritual nature, so when the time comes, you may pass into the spirit world to a joyful reunion with your loved ones.”

Elder Peter M. Johnson

General Authority Seventy

As taught in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” all human beings are created in God’s image. Each has a divine nature and destiny as a spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents. Knowing the divinity of Heavenly Father’s children, the adversary seeks to limit their earthly and heavenly potential.



He uses tactics of deception, distraction and discouragement, also known as “the three Ds of the adversary.”

Satan seeks to deceive individuals by influencing them to forget who they are. He attempted to do this with Moses by calling him a “son of man” and urging Moses to worship him. However, Moses resisted and remembered he was a son of God, the only God whom he would worship. If people do not understand who they are, it is difficult to recognize who they can become.

In addition to deception, the adversary seeks to distract individuals from following Jesus Christ. Technology can be a form of distraction if not used correctly. The adversary also desires for God’s children to be discouraged. Such feelings can come from comparison or thinking one is not meeting expectations. Discouragement can diminish one’s capacity to feel the love of Heavenly Father and His Son.

Elder Ulisses Soares

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

By applying the teachings shared at general conference, the Lord will help each of His followers “carry our cross and make our burdens light.”



Christ taught that all who follow Him must “deny themselves” and control their desires and appetites — and be willing to sacrifice everything in submission to the will of the Father, just as He did.

The scriptures teach that those who wish to take up their cross “deny themselves of all ungodliness” and keep His commandments.

Those who may be feeling lonely and helpless or abandoned and forgotten can accept the Savior’s invitation to “take up” his or her cross and follow Him in faith and hope. “The same principles apply to those of you who are experiencing same-gender attraction and feel discouraged and hopeless.”

There is always hope in God and in His plan of happiness — all made possible through Christ’s Atonement. Those who have committed serious sins can repent and draw closer to the Savior.

“Please never give up after subsequent failures and consider yourself incapable of abandoning sins and overcoming addictions. You cannot afford to stop trying.”

The Savior’s gift of grace is not necessarily limited to “after all we can do.” His grace is available before, during and after a person’s efforts to change.

Elder Neil L. Andersen

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

During His earthly ministry, the Savior compared good fruit — long considered a treasured delicacy — to things of eternal worth. And in a dream recorded in the Book of Mormon, the prophet Lehi came upon a beautiful tree full of fruit more desirable above all other fruit.



This fruit symbolizes the love of God and “the wondrous blessings of the Savior’s incomparable Atonement.”

Partaking of this fruit also symbolizes embracing ordinances and covenants of the restored gospel, such as baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. “Through the grace of Jesus Christ and by honoring our covenants, we receive the immeasurable promise of living with our righteous family throughout eternity.”

Even after savoring the fruit, staying faithful to Jesus Christ isn’t easily done. Each person will face distractions, deceptions, confusion and temptations. Lehi’s dream included the warning — a spacious building on the opposite side of a river full of people mocking followers of Jesus Christ.

“Let us remember Lehi’s words: ‘We heeded them not’” (1 Nephi 8:33).

Although there is no need to fear, everyone must be on guard. “Keep your eyes and your hearts centered on the Savior Jesus Christ and the eternal joy that comes only through Him.”

President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

All requirements to enter the temple relate to personal holiness. To assess that readiness, each person participates in temple recommend interviews and answers questions. Some of those questions have recently been edited for clarity.



“In addition to answering those questions honestly, it is understood that each adult temple patron will wear the sacred garment of the priesthood under their regular clothing. This is symbolic of an inner commitment to strive each day to become more like the Lord. It also reminds us to remain faithful to covenants made each day and to walk on the covenant path each day in a higher and holier way.”

Individual worthiness to enter the Lord’s house requires much individual spiritual preparation. “But with the Lord’s help, nothing is impossible. In some respects, it is easier to build a temple than it is to build a people prepared for a temple.”

“In the springtime of the year 2020, it will be exactly 200 years since Joseph Smith experienced the theophany that we know as the First Vision.”

The year 2020 will be designated as a bicentennial year. “General conference next April will be different from any previous conference. In the next six months, I hope that every member and every family will prepare for a unique conference that will commemorate the very foundations of the restored gospel.”



SPENSER HEAPS, DESERET NEWS

President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Sister Wendy Nelson, leave after the Saturday afternoon session of the 189th Semiannual General Conference in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City on Oct. 5.