

**Alma 17:2****1** *Searched the Scriptures*

"May I suggest... a formula [in missionary work] that will insure your success: Search the scriptures with diligence! ... Your confidence will be directly related to your knowledge of God's word. Oh, I am sure you have heard of some missionaries who were lazy, less than effective, and anxious for their mission to conclude. A careful examination of such instances will reveal that the actual culprit is not laziness, nor disinterest, but is the foe known as fear. Our Father chastised such: '...with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given them, because of the fear of man (D&C 60:2).' Had not this same loving Heavenly Father provided a prescription to overcome this malady.... In a revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, January 2, 1831, the Lord declared: "...if ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). This is the key. Will you use it? Let me provide but one reference that has immediate application to our lives. In the Book of Mormon, the seventeenth chapter of Alma, we read the account of Alma's joy as he once more saw the sons of Mosiah and noted their steadfastness in the cause of truth...[Alma 17:2-3]."

Thomas S. Monson (Conference Report, Oct. 1969, pp. 93-94)

**2** "I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns. I find myself loving more intensely those whom I must love with all my heart and mind and strength, and loving them more, I find it easier to abide their counsel."

*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 135

**3** "It is not enough to read the scriptures. Random reading results in reduced retention.... Our spirits should never be deprived of the much-needed spiritual nourishment which comes from scripture study. Without this spiritual food our spirits become starved and weakened to temptation. President Kimball taught the principle that 'no father, no son, no mother, no daughter should get so busy that he or she does not have time to study the scriptures and the words of modern prophets.' (Ensign, May 1976, p. 47)."

L. Lionel Kendrick (*Ensign*, May 1993, p. 14)

**4** "When individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently... other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow."

Ezra Taft Benson (*Ensign*, May 1986, p.81)

**5** "We should make daily study of the scriptures a lifetime pursuit.... The most important [thing] you can do... is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently.... Learn the doctrine. Master the principles.... You must... see that...searching the scriptures is not a burden laid upon [us] by the Lord, but a marvelous blessing and opportunity."

Ezra Taft Benson (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p.47)

**6** To understand requires more than casual reading or perusal—there must be concentrated study.... Not only should we study each day, but there should be a regular time set aside when we can concentrate without interference.... The important thing is to allow nothing else to ever interfere with our study.... There are some who read to a schedule of a number of pages or a set number of chapters each day or week.... It is better to have a set

amount of time to give scriptural study each day that to have a set amount of chapters to read. Sometimes we find that the study of single verse will occupy the whole time.

Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, Nov. 1979 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979], 64-65

- 7 "True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel."  
Boyd K. Packer (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p.17)

- 8 "Some may think that the language of the scriptures is too difficult for children, but... [we] need to remember that the Lord has given children faculties for learning language even greater than those of adults.... It is good for children to hear their favorite passages of scripture, and their other favorite stories, too, over and over.... We should not bring up our children to respond to the exciting, the thrilling.... They are a titillation of the nerves. To be moved is one thing; to be excited or titillated, a very different thing. If we bring up our children always to be wanting something new,... they will have to have a stronger [and stronger] stimulus each time until finally [burst]. But if we inure our children to stability, to repetition, to normal life..., then they will live decent lives."  
Arthur Henry King (as quoted by Janette Hales Beckham, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, p.76)

- 9 "Your gospel study is most effective when you are taught by the Holy Ghost. Always begin your gospel study by praying for the Holy Ghost to help you learn. He will bring knowledge and conviction that will bless your life and allow you to bless the lives of others. Your faith in Jesus Christ will increase. Your desire to repent and improve will grow.

"This kind of study prepares you for service, offers solace, resolves problems, and gives you the strength to endure to the end. Successful gospel study requires desire and action. 'For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well as in these times as in times of old' (1 Nephi 10:19). Like Enos, as you hunger to know the words of eternal life and as you allow these words to '[sink] deep into [your] heart' (Enos 1:3), the Holy Ghost will open your mind and heart to greater light and understanding.

"Learning the gospel is also a process of receiving revelation (see Jacob 4:8)"

*Preach My Gospel*, p.18

- 10 "A study journal [can] help you understand, clarify, and remember what you are learning. Elder Richard G. Scott taught, 'Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in time of need. Spiritually sensitive information should be kept in a sacred place that communicates to the Lord how you treasure it. This practice enhances the likelihood of your receiving further light.' ('Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,' *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 86). Review your study journal to recall spiritual experiences, see new insights, and recognize your growth.

"Your study journal may be a bound journal, a notebook, or a binder. Record and organize your thoughts and impressions in a way that fits how you learn. Develop your own system to easily access key information in the future. Use it often to review, access, and apply what you have learned. Use your study journal to take notes and record impressions" (p. x).

*Preach My Gospel*, p. x

### **Alma 17:3**

- 11 *Prayer and Fasting*

Their pleadings were earnest. Their requests to God were sincere. They demonstrated this through fasting. Fasting is a principle of power. As one fasts and as the body grows weaker, one becomes ever more aware of the need for physical and spiritual sustenance, for those things which both strengthen the body and enliven the soul.

Fasting leads to a consciousness of victory over self, victory over the flesh, victory over the appetites, and thus to that quiet confidence which we know as spirituality.

Millet and McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 124

- 12 "... according to Alma, they gave themselves to much fasting and prayer. You see there are certain blessings that can only be fulfilled as we conform to a particular law.... Too many Latter-day Saint parents today are depriving themselves and their children of one of the sweetest spiritual experiences that the Father has made available to them."

Robert L. Simpson (Conference Report, Oct. 1967, pp.17-18)

- 13 "Failing to fast is a sin. In the 58<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah, rich promises are made by the Lord to those who fast and assist the needy. Freedom from frustrations, freedom from thralldom, and the blessing of peace are promised. Inspiration and spiritual guidance will come with righteousness and closeness to our Heavenly Father. To omit to do this righteous act of fasting would deprive us of these blessings."

Spencer W. Kimball (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 98)

- 14 "Some years ago a faithful convert, Brother George McLaughlin, was called to preside over a small branch of 20 members in Farmingdale, Maine. He was a humble man who drove a milk delivery truck for a living. Through his fasting and earnest prayer, the Spirit taught him what he and the members of his branch needed to do to help the Church grow in their area. Through his great faith, constant prayer, and powerful example, he taught his members how to share the gospel. It's a marvelous story—one of the great missionary stories of this dispensation. In just one year there were 450 convert baptisms in the branch. The next year there were an additional 200 converts."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, (Conference Report, Apr. 2003, 39; *Ensign*, May 2003, 38-39).

- 15 A few years ago, I was afforded the privilege to serve as a mission president.... We had one young missionary who was very ill. After weeks of hospitalization, as the doctor prepared to undertake extremely serious and complicated surgery, he asked that we send for the missionary's mother and father. He advised there was a possibility the patient would not survive the surgery.

The parents came. Late one evening, the father and I entered a hospital room in Toronto, Canada, placed our hands upon the head of the young missionary, and gave him a blessing. What happened following that blessing was a testimony to me.

The missionary was in a six-bed ward in the hospital. The other beds were occupied by five men with a variety of illnesses. The morning of his surgery, the missionary's bed was empty. The nurse came into the room with the breakfast these men normally ate. She took a tray over to the patient in bed number one and said, "Fried eggs this morning, and I have an extra portion for you!"

The occupant of bed number one had suffered an accident with his lawn mower. Other than an injured toe, he was well physically. He said to the nurse, "I'll not be eating this morning."

"All right, we shall give your breakfast to your partner in Bed number two."

As she approached that patient, he said, "I think I'll not eat this morning."

Each of the five men declined breakfast. The young lady exclaimed, "Other mornings you eat us out of house and home, and today not one of you wants to eat! What is the reason?"

Then the man who occupied bed number six answered: "You see, bed number three is empty. Our friend is in the operating room under the surgeon's hands. He needs all the help he can get. He is a missionary for his church, and while we have been patients in this ward, he has talked to us about the principles of his church—principles of prayer, of faith, of fasting wherein we call upon the Lord for blessings." He continued, "We don't know much about the Mormon Church, but we have learned a great deal about our friend; and we are fasting for him today."

The operation was a success. When I attempted to pay the doctor, he countered, "Why, it would be dishonest for me to accept a fee. I have never before performed surgery when my hands seemed to be guided by a Power which was other than my own. No," he said, "I wouldn't take a fee for the surgery which Someone on high literally helped me to perform."

Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1984 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints], 22-23

16 Self-mastery comes when you are old enough to observe the law of fast.... Through your spirit, you develop personal power over your body's drives of hunger and thirst. Fasting gives you confidence to know that your spirit can master appetite.

Some time ago... Mother and I visited a Third World country where sanitary conditions were much poorer than ours. We joined with a delegation of other doctors from all over the world. The president of our group, an experienced traveler, warned of risks. In order to avoid water that might be contaminated, we were even counseled to brush our teeth with an alcoholic beverage. We chose not to follow counsel, but simply did what we had learned to do once a month. We fasted that first day, thinking we could introduce simple food and fluids gradually thereafter. Later, we were the only ones in our group without disabling illness.

Fasting fortifies discipline over appetite and helps to protect against later uncontrolled cravings and gnawing habits.

Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 39

17 If all we do is abstain from food and drink for 24 hours and pay our fast offerings, we have missed a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth. On the other hand, if we have a special purpose in our fasting, the fast will have much more meaning....

Fasting can help us overcome our weaknesses—help them become strengths. Fasting can help us become more humble, less prideful, less selfish, and more concerned about the needs of others. It can help us see more clearly our own mistakes and weaknesses and help us be less prone to criticize others. Or our fast may have a focus on a family challenge. A family fast might help increase love and appreciation among family members and reduce the amount of contention in the family, or we might fast as a couple to strengthen our marriage bonds. A purpose of our fast as priesthood holders might be to seek the Lord's guidance in our callings, as President Hinckley has demonstrated, or we might fast with our home teaching companion to know how to help one of our families.... Fasting without prayer is just going hungry for 24 hours. But fasting combined with prayer brings increased spiritual power.

Carl B. Pratt, in Conference Report, Oct. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 50-51

18 All the principles associated with fasting seem to point to the fact that it produces (1) physical benefits; (2) intellectual activity; and (3) spiritual strength....

The greatest of all the benefit—the spiritual strength derived by the subjection of physical appetite to the will of the individual. "He, who reigns within himself, and rules passions, desires, and fears, is more than a king"....

It was with the thought in mind of gaining spiritual strength that James, the psychologist, made this suggestion: "To do each day something which you do not like to do." If there were no other virtue in fasting but gaining strength of character, that alone would be sufficient justification for its universal acceptance.

(*Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay*, sel. By G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], 209-210)

19 Alma 17:3*Spirit of Prophecy, Spirit of Revelation*

Chiefly the gift of prophecy is to know by revelation from the Holy Ghost of the divine Sonship of our Lord.... [It is] the greatest of all the gifts of the Spirit. Prophecy is revelation; it is testimony; it is Spirit speaking to spirit.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970], 2:384-86

## 20

All saving truths are manifest and must be learned by the spirit of revelation. In turn, they are to be taught by the spirit of prophecy. In many ways the spirit of revelation is the spirit of prophecy. The spirit of revelation is that spirit which manifests things to the hearts and souls of men. It is the spirit that enlightens the mind of both the spokesman and the listener. It is the spirit by which all gospel truths must be learned. When the teacher or preacher of the word so attunes himself with the Spirit of the Lord that what he says and does is what the Lord would say and do in the same circumstance, he has obtained the spirit or revelation and of prophecy. Most generally, the spirit of prophecy is the spirit of forth-telling rather than the spirit of foretelling. It is by the spirit of prophecy that the scriptures are properly interpreted and appropriately applied in a given situation. To have the spirit of prophecy is to preach by the power of the Holy Ghost; it is to speak "with the tongue of angels," to speak "the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:2-3), to declare the mind, will, voice, and word of the Lord. The manifestation of future events may be associated with either spirit, but the unfolding of the past is generally associated with the spirit of revelation.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, pp. 12-125

## 21

The blessings of fasting and prayer are having the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation (v.3). "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). The spirit of revelation is the Lord telling "you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 8:2-3). To know in your mind is to know intellectually. To know in your heart is to have testimony borne to your spirit. The intellect without the Spirit may be deceived, and the spirit of the individual may be deceived by the emotion if the intellect does not also receive a witness. When these two witnesses go hand and hand, the result is being able to teach "with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:3).

Monte S. Nyman, *Record of Alma*, p.233

## 22

Alma 17:2-5*Missionary Work*

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "After all that has been said, the greatest and the most important duty is to preach the Gospel" (TPJS, 113).

## 23

"God does not begin by asking us about our ability, but only about our availability, and if we then prove our dependability, he will increase our capability!"

(*The Neal A. Maxwell Quote Book*, ed. Cory H. Maxwell [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 1).

## 24

*"I believe... with all my heart that the field is white ready to harvest.... I think the answer to an increased number of converts does not lie particularly in our methods—effective as those methods are...."*

*"I think every member of the Church has the capacity to teach the gospel to nonmembers.... We need an awareness, an everyday awareness of the great power that we have to do this thing."*

*"Second, a desire. I think many of us realize that we could do it, but we lack the desire. Let every man single out another, a friend. I am satisfied as I am of anything that with that kind of prayerful, conscientious, directed effort, there isn't a man in this Church who could not convert another...."*

*"Third, the faith to try. It is so simple...."*

*"Let us prepare ourselves more diligently for the great assignment which God has laid upon us to carry this work to the children of the earth wherever we may be permitted to go."*

Gordon B Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 365-367.

- 25 "What we need now is the greatest generation of missionaries in the history of the Church.... We don't need spiritually weak and semi-committed young men.... We cannot send you on a mission to be reactivated, reformed or to receive a testimony.... We need your whole heart and soul."  
M. Russell Ballard, "The greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, November 2002, p. 47.
- 26 And I say to you... Elders, Awaken up! God has placed the priesthood upon you, and he expects you to magnify it.... We want some manhood, and some priesthood and power of God to be manifested in Israel.... And I pray God, the Eternal Father, to waken up these Elders, that the spirit of their mission may rest upon them, and that they may comprehend their true position before God.  
Brigham Young (*Journal of Discourses* 20:23)
- 27 In addition to the need for more young men and women to serve, there is an urgent need for couples. Each time we visit a mission, the universal request is for more couples. The need is great for mature couples who are financially able, possessing strong testimonies, and with reasonably good health. Their entry into the mission field adds strength and maturity to our missionary effort.... Is this not the special time of decision for all of you... special mature older couples? Have you ever sat down and contemplated what kind of entries you will prepare for your life's history? Will yours be one comprised of slides and videos of worldly acquisitions of boats and motor homes, of travel and entertainment for personal gratification and amusement? Or will your history express the joy you have experienced in preaching and teaching the message of our Lord and Savior to all who would hear your voice?  
Angel Abrea (*Ensign*, May 1992, pp. 24-25)
- 28 The cause to which I speak is of missionary work as couples.... There is a need, not to leave homes forever, but for a time—then return and reap the rich harvest of the faithful labor. Your children and grandchildren will be blessed.... President Harold B. Lee taught the principle that only as we make ourselves totally available are we worthy disciples of Christ and obtain another promise that reaches beyond us. We worry and ache and pain over family members who have erred. The thirty-first section of the Doctrine and Covenants provides a great key in verse five: "Therefore, thrust in your sickle with all your soul, and your sins are forgiven you, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your back, for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Wherefore, your family shall live."... The promise is sure, "Wherefore, your family shall live." Blessings will come to our wayward or wandering children, even those who are married and have children of their own.... As we come to the latter years of life, we come to a mature spiritual understanding. What better way have we to prepare to meet our God than to serve a mission when the autumn and winter of life is upon us?  
Vaughn J. Featherstone (*Ensign*, May 1992, pp. 42-44)
- 29 An acquaintance of mine grew up not far from here.... Many universities offered him scholarships to play basketball. After his first year playing at a university, he told his coach that he would like to be excused for two years to go on a mission. The coach said, "If you leave, you can be sure of one thing: you will never again wear one of our basketball uniforms!" Many thought that his "mission" ought to be playing basketball. Even some family members including his parents, tried to convince him not to serve a mission. But he was totally committed.... He was called, and he served an honorable mission. When he returned,... his coach decided to repent.... In his senior year, his team not only won the conference championship but went on to the finals in national competition.... Modern prophets have taught that every young man who is physically and mentally able should prepare himself to serve an honorable mission. The Lord did not say, "Go on a mission if it fits your schedule, or if

you happen to feel like it, or if it doesn't interfere with your scholarship, your romance, or your educational plans." Preaching the gospel is a commandment and not merely a suggestion.... Even though for some of you there may be very tempting reasons for you not to serve a full-time mission, the Lord and his prophets are counting on you.

Joe J. Christensen (*Ensign* Nov. 1996, pp. 40-41)

30 One young man, when called on a mission, replied that he didn't have much talent for that kind of thing. What he was good at was keeping his powerful new automobile in top condition. He enjoyed the sense of power and acceleration, and when he was driving, the continual motion gave him the illusion that he was really getting somewhere. All along, his father had been content with saying, "He likes to do things with his hands. That's good enough for him." Good enough for a son of God? This young man didn't realize that the power of his automobile is infinitesimally small in comparison with the... priesthood power that he could have been developing in the service of the Lord. He settled for a pitiful god, a composite of steel and rubber and shiny chrome.

An older couple retired from the world of work and purchased a pickup truck and camper and separating themselves from all obligations, set out to see the world and simply enjoy what little they had accumulated the rest of their days. They had not time... for missionary service.... Their experience and leadership were sorely needed...but, unable to "endure to the end," they were not available.

Spencer W. Kimball (*Ensign*, June 1976, p.5)

31 I have a vision of thousands of missionaries going into the mission field with hundreds of passages memorized from the Book of Mormon so that they might feed the needs of a spiritually famished world. I have a vision of the whole Church getting nearer to God by abiding by the precepts of the Book of Mormon. Indeed, I have a vision of flooding the earth with the Book of Mormon.

Ezra Taft Benson (*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, pp. 4-6)

32 I throw out a challenge to every young man within this vast congregation tonight. Prepare yourself now to be worthy to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary.... Prepare to consecrate two years of your lives to this sacred service. That will in effect constitute a tithe on the first twenty years of your lives.... I promise you that the time you spend in the mission field, if those years are spent in dedicated service, will yield a greater return on investment than any other two years of your lives.... You will develop powers of persuasion which will bless your entire life. Your timidity, your fears, your shyness will gradually disappear as you go forth with boldness and conviction. You will learn to work with others.... The cankering evil of selfishness will be supplanted by a sense of service to others. You will draw nearer to the Lord that you likely will in any other set of circumstances. You will come to know that without His help you are indeed weak and simple, but with His help you can accomplish miracles. You will establish habits of industry. You will develop a talent for the establishment of goals of effort. You will learn to work with singleness of purpose.... If you serve a mission faithfully and well, you will be a better husband, you will be a better father, you will be a better student, a better worker in your chosen vocation.

Gordon B. Hinckley (*Ensign*, May 1995, pp. 51-52)

33 Prepare now to go on a mission. It will not be a burden. It will not be a waste of time. It will be a great opportunity and a great challenge. It will do something for you that nothing else will do for you. It will sharpen your **skills. It will train you in leadership. It will bring testimony and conviction into your heart. You will bless the lives of others as you bless your own.** It will bring you nearer to God and to His Divine Son as you bear witness and testimony of Him. Your knowledge of the gospel will strengthen and deepen. Your love for your fellowman will increase. Your fears will fade as you stand boldly in testimony of the truth.

Gordon B. Hinckley (*Ensign*, May 1997, p.50)

34

What I Want My Son to Know Before He Leaves on His Mission

1. Your call comes from the Lord.
2. Respect and obey your mission president.
3. Hard work is important.
4. Forget yourself in the Lord's service.
5. Never permit contention.
6. Keep clean, healthy and neat.
7. Love and serve the people.
8. Study and teach from the scriptures.
9. Be prepared for Lucifer's opposition.
10. Your testimony is your strongest arrow.

James E. Faust (*Ensign*, May 1996, p. 40-42)

35

[To the young men of the Church] You have missions to perform. Each of you should plan for missionary service. You may have some doubts. You may have some fears. Face your doubts and your fears with faith. Prepare yourselves to go. You have not only the opportunity; you have the responsibility.... Is it too much to ask that you give two years totally immersed in His service?... You know what is right. You know what is wrong. You know when and how to make the choice. You know that there is a power in heaven on which you can call in your time of extremity or need.... Stand up and walk as becomes the sons of God.

[Speaking of the sister missionaries] They perform a remarkable work. They can get in homes where the elders cannot.... Now having made that confession, I wish to say that the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve are united in saying to our young sisters that they are not under obligation to go on missions.... Some of them will very much wish to go. If the idea persists, the bishop will know what to do.... Missionary work is essentially a priesthood responsibility. As such, our young men must carry the major burden. This is their responsibility and their obligation. We do not ask the young women to consider a mission as an essential part of their life's program. Over a period of many years, we have held the age level higher for them in an effort to keep the number going relatively small. Again to the sisters I say that you will be as highly respected, you will be considered as being as much in the line of duty, your efforts will be as acceptable to the Lord and to the Church whether you go on a mission or do not go on a mission.... I certainly do not wish to say or imply that their services are not wanted. I simply say that a mission is not necessary as a part of their lives.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1997 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 52

36

The question is frequently asked, Should every young man fill a Mission? The answer to this inquiry has been given by the Lord. It is yes. Every young man should fill a mission. While every young man should serve a mission, we realize that every young man is not physically, emotionally, nor morally prepared. As a consequence, some may be deprived of missionary opportunities. But all should prepare to go—to be worthy to serve the Lord.... Some young men, because of transgression, say they are not interested in serving a mission. The real reason, of course, is feelings of unworthiness. If such young men would go to their bishop, confide to him their problem, and sincerely repent, they may yet fill honorable missions.

*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 182-183

37 The Lord wants every young man to serve a full-time mission. Presently only a third of the eligible young men in the Church are serving missions. This is not pleasing to the Lord. We can do better. We must do better. Not only should a mission be regarded as a priesthood duty, but every young man should look forward to this experience with great joy and anticipation. A young man can do nothing more important. School can wait. Scholarships can be deferred. Occupational goals can be postponed. Yes, even temple marriage should wait until after a young man has served an honorable full-time mission for the Lord.... Remember, young women, you may also have the opportunity to serve a full-time mission. I am grateful my own eternal companion served a mission in Hawaii before we were married in the Salt Lake Temple, and I am pleased that I have had three grand-daughters serve full-time missions. Some of our finest missionaries are young sisters.

*Ibid.* 190, 194

38 A mother and father were in my office accompanied by a 265-pound BYU sophomore All-WAC tackle. They had asked for an appointment to help resolve a confusing family situation. After we greeted the mother and the father and their son, Lance Reynolds, we had a few words of friendly conversation. I knew why they had come. The trying decision was does Lance go on a mission or does he stay and play football? I looked at the mother and said, "What do you think your son should do?" She said, "I think he can render a special service and example to the Church if he maintains his standards and continues to play football and hopefully help in bringing football fame to BYU and the Church. I think his football playing can be his mission." I looked at the father, and I was, "What do you think Lance should do?" He was smart enough not to disagree in that setting with his wife, so he merely said, "I'm not quite certain." I looked at Lance and I said, "Lance, what do you want to do?" He said, "I want to go on a mission." I responded with, "Why don't you?" He said, "I will." Our interview was over. Lance went on his mission, was an outstanding missionary, came back and reaped all-conference honors, and is now on BYU's football coaching staff. He is a special friend of mine today.

(Marvin J. Ashton, BYU Devotional, 24 Aug 1992)

39 A story written by Karen Nolen, which appeared in the *New Era* in 1974, tells of a Benjamin Landart who, in 1888, was 15 years old, and an accomplished violinist. Living on a farm in northern Utah with his mother and seven brothers and sisters was sometimes a challenge to Benjamin, as he had less time than he would have liked to play his violin. Occasionally his mother would lock up the violin until he had his farm chores done, so great was the temptation for Benjamin to play it.

In late 1892, Benjamin was asked to travel to Salt Lake to audition for a place with the territorial orchestra. For him, this was a dream come true. After several weeks of practicing and prayers, he went to Salt Lake in March of 1893 for the much anticipated audition. When he heard Benjamin play, the conductor, a Mr. Dean, told Benjamin he was the most accomplished violinist he had heard west of Denver. He was told to report to Denver for rehearsals in the fall and learned that he would be earning enough to keep himself, with some left over to send home.

A week after Benjamin received the good news, however, his bishop called him into his office and asked if he couldn't put off playing with the orchestra for a couple of years. He told Benjamin that before he started earning money there was something he owed the Lord. He then asked Benjamin to accept a mission call.

Benjamin felt that giving up his chance to play in the territorial orchestra would be almost more than he could bear, but he knew what his decision should be. He promised the bishop that if there were any way to raise the money for him to serve, he would accept the call.

When Benjamin told his mother about the call, she was overjoyed. She told him that his father had always wanted to serve a mission but had been killed before that opportunity had come to him. However, when they

discussed the financing of the mission, her face clouded over. Benjamin told her he would not allow her to sell any more of their land. She studied his face for a moment and then said, "Ben, there is a way we can raise the money. This family [has] one thing that is of great enough value to send you on your mission. You will have to sell your violin."

Ten days later, on March 23, 1893, Benjamin wrote in his journal: "I awoke this morning and took my violin from its case. All day long I played the music I love. In the evening when the light grew dim and I could see to play no longer, I placed the instrument in its case. It will be enough. Tomorrow I leave [for my mission]."

Forty-five years later, on June 23, 1938, Benjamin wrote in his journal: "The greatest decision I ever made in my life was to give up something I dearly loved to the God I loved even more. He has never forgotten me for it."

Learn from the past.

(Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 19)

40 Some young men have had the notion that they can break the commandments, confess to their bishops one year before they plan to go on a mission, and then be worthy to serve. The repentance process is far more than planned confession followed by a waiting period. We often hear this question of one who has transgressed: "How long will I have to wait before I can go on my mission?" Keep in mind that repentance is not simply a waiting game...

We now understand from the First Presidency's statement on missionary work that there are transgressions that will disqualify young men and women from missionary service (see "Statement on Missionary Work" attached to First Presidency letter, 11 Dec. 2002).

Daryl H. Garn, in Conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 50-51

41 Why is Floriano Oliveira, a member of the high council in a stake in Brazil, so successful as a missionary? Because he *obeyed* the Lord's counsel to open his mouth and share the gospel. One day as he was driving through the congested traffic of Sao Paulo he took his eyes off the road for but a second and crashed into the car in front of him. He jumped out of the vehicle, hurried up to the car he had hit, opened the door and said, "I am so sorry I hit you. It was all my fault. I accept the full blame and will pay the total costs. I had no intention to do this, so please forgive me. Yet if I hadn't hit you, you wouldn't have received this message I have for you, the message that you have waited for all your life." He then explained the restoration of the gospel to this man, who was a medical doctor, and the man joined the Church two weeks later. Why has Brother Oliveira had so much success in baptizing more than two hundred people? Obedience—*obedience to the request of the Lord*.

Teddy E. Brewerton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1981 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981], 93

42 I was in South America on one occasion with some missionaries who were going home. They were out shopping to buy things to take home—souvenirs—and I thought of the souvenirs that we ought to take home with us from our missions. There are 10 of these:

1. A testimony of the living reality of God....
2. A greatly enlarged understanding of the gospel....
3. A love for the people among whom you labor. If you don't love the people here, it isn't because there is something wrong with them. It is because there is something wrong with you. I hope and pray that for as long as you live you will never lose your love for the people among whom you served as a missionary...
4. A greater love and appreciation for your parents. Somehow, selfish, arrogant, conceited young men, when they get into the mission field, begin no longer to take their parents for granted but have come into their hearts a greater love for them. I hope you are not ashamed to write and tell your mother that you love her. And I hope you are not embarrassed even to tell your father that you love him. He might faint when he reads it, but he will appreciate it.

5. An understanding of the meaning of hard work... You are learning how to work here, to get up every morning, to get out and work in the face of discouragement. The harder you work, the more you love the work.... This will bless your lives all of your days—this habit of work which you cultivate as a missionary in the field.

6. An enlarged understanding of the meaning and true worth and value of personal virtue... Said the Lord through Prophet Joseph Smith, "Let virtue garnish thy thought unceasingly" (D&C 121:45). And then He says the Holy Ghost shall distill upon you as the dews from heaven. That is a commandment with a promise. You ought to develop while you are on a mission....

7. Increased poise, the ability to meet people, to converse with them, to talk with them.... You take on cleanliness and orderliness and neatness. I hope you won't go home and revert to the grubby ways of your lives that some of you knew before you came, but that you will take back with you that refinement which comes of service to the Lord in the mission field.

8. The courage to act.... When I finished my mission, I wasn't afraid to go talk to anybody.

9. The faith to do. The faith to try.

10. And finally, the humility to pray....

Those are 10 gifts which I'd like to suggest to each of you to take home with you from the mission field.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:42

43 There is something about a mission that is different from all the other experiences of our lives... You grow so fast, for one thing....

[1.] Your fears leave you. You're not afraid to go up and knock on a door. That is a terrible thing the first time you try it, but your fears leave you. You are able to stand at a street meeting, if that is the practice of the mission to which you go. There comes into your heart a new assurance and a new boldness to do that which you ought to do...

[2.] Don't get discouraged. That is easy to say, but you don't get discouraged in the mission field. You don't get offended. Brother Sterling Sill, who was an insurance man, once said, "I've been spit on. I've been sworn at. I've been kicked out the front door and right onto the ground. But I've never been insulted." That's the kind of attitude that we use when we are in the mission field. We may be spit on. We may be sworn at. We may be kicked off the front porch. But we'll never be insulted....

[3.] I want to urge you missionaries to guard your health. Be careful of what you eat and what you do. Live in a sanitary, hygienic way....

Now, missionaries are careless. My, you are careless. You are just terribly careless. Your mothers have taken care of you all your lives now, and you are going out to care for yourselves, and you don't know how to do it. Be careful. Guard your health. Eat good food—not rich food but good food. Observe good hygiene, good sanitation. Stay away from sickness. Keep your apartments tidy. Clean them up. Make your beds.... Make your bed, every day, and live orderly lives.... Live lives that will preserve your health as much as it is possible.... Guard your health, and be careful and clean in your ways of doing things....

[4.] Keep the rules. Every mission has some rules.... Observe them. There is safety in observing those rules. Be careful. Be wise....

[5.] Keep your tempers. People will swear at you a little. Don't swear back. Return good for evil. Don't be like that missionary who was walking down the street and a man was sprinkling his lawn. As the missionary came along, the man turned the hose on him and said, "I understand you believe in baptism." The missionary turned around and grabbed him and said, "Yes, and we also believe in the laying on of hands." Don't get involved in that kind of thing....

[6.] I want to plead with you to keep your thoughts clean.... Get out of the gutter, and stand tall and clean, and keep yourselves aloof from those things. They will only destroy you. They are just like a terrible poison. They will tear you down and utterly ruin your lives. Stay above them. If you are busy with your missionary work, you won't be troubled with those things. If you are not busy, you're likely to be troubled with those things. Keep your thoughts clean, and speak clean words....

[7.] Write regularly to your parents.... Your letters need not be long, but they ought to be *informative*. *Tell them* of what is going on, of what you are doing, of your work as a missionary, of your companion, of the ward or branch in which you are laboring, and of the great happiness that you find in the work. They will appreciate it. They are praying for you. They are sacrificing for you. They are doing everything they know how to do to back you up at home, and they are deserving of a letter at least once a week....

[8.] Be happy.... You can't bring anybody into the Church while you are scowling. Have a smile on your face. You look better with a smile on your face. It doesn't cost you a thing. Be happy about it. Let that happiness shine through you as a radiance from your countenance....

[9.] Listen to the promptings of the Spirit. Be humble. You may be led to someone by the hand of the Lord because of your spirit, your attitude, your feeling, your humility....

I remember when Brother Lee set me apart as a stake president. He said, "Listen for the whisperings of the Spirit in the stillness of the night." Now I believe in that. I have seen that in my experience, and I think I can testify that the Lord has spoken quietly. I didn't hear any words, but in the middle of the night ideas have come into my head which, I think, have been prophetic in their nature....

[10.] You are not going to the mission to fall in love. You're not going on a mission to find a wife or a husband. You are going on a mission to serve the Lord—no other consideration in your lives....

We know that if you are prayerful, if you are obedient, if you do what is expected of you, if you get up and go to work, if you are not lazy, the Lord will bless you and bring to you some measure of harvest for which you will be grateful all the days of your lives.

*Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:531, 534-539, 541.

44 There are certain standards by which [bishops and stake presidents] should be guided in calling our missionaries. First, call no [missionary] for the purpose of saving him or her. The young man is getting wayward and you think a mission would do him good. It would. But that is not why you are sending him out. Choose [missionaries] who are worthy to represent the Church, see that they are sufficiently mature, and above all, that they have character....

In choosing a missionary it is well to keep in mind questions as follows:

Is he worthy to represent the Church?

Has he sufficient will power to resist temptation?

Has he kept himself clean while he has been home and by that standard proved himself capable of resisting possible temptations in the field?

Has he taken active part in Church organizations at home?

Does he at least glimpse what the Church has to offer the world?

Every elder... must... have a conviction in his heart that he is preaching the truth....

Every elder should be a Christian gentleman always. A gentleman—who is he? "Whoever is open"—nothing to hide, no downcast look because of the consciousness of guilt; "whoever is loyal"—loyal to the truth, to virtue, to the Word of Wisdom—"...honorable himself and in his judgment of others, faithful to his word as to law, and faithful alike to God and to man—such a man is a true gentleman."...

There is no double standard of chastity, that every young man, as well as every young woman is to keep himself free from sexual impurity....

These young men... must possess at least one outstanding quality, and that is: trustworthiness. He was right who said, "To be trusted is a greater compliment than to be loved." And whom do these missionaries represent? First, they represent their parents, carrying the responsibility of keeping their good name unsullied. Second, they represent the Church, specifically the ward in which they live. And third, they represent the Lord Jesus Christ, whose authorized servants they are.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 54-56.

45 [A missionary] couple tells of blessings that come from missionary service. They wrote: "Good people replaced our parenting functions better than we.... If a family problem has not yielded to prayer and fasting, a mission might be considered."

No senior missionary finds it convenient to leave. Neither did Joseph or Brigham or John or Wilford. They had children and grandchildren too. They loved their families not one whit less, but they also loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him. Someday we may meet these stalwarts who helped to establish this dispensation. Then will we rejoice that we did not seek the shadows when a call to missionary service came from the prophet, even in the autumn years of our lives.

Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Oct. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 82-8

- 46 I will speak on the urgent need for more mature couples to serve in the mission field...  
 If we are willing to leave our loved ones for service in the mission field, we will bless them with a heritage that will teach and inspire them for generations to come...  
 As we serve in the mission field, our children and grandchildren will be blessed in ways that would not have been possible had we stayed at home. Talk to couples who have served missions and they will tell you of blessings poured out: inactive children activated, family members baptized, and testimonies strengthened because of their service.  
 One missionary couple left a farm at home for their son to manage. During the somewhat dry year that followed, their farm had two hay cuttings while the neighbor's had only one. The neighbor asked their son why he had two cuttings compared to their one. The young man replied, "You need to send your folks on a mission."  
 Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2001 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], 25
- 47 I would like to commend the missionaries who are here.... They all look very sober. Now, smile a little, you missionaries! That looks better. You are preaching the gospel of good news. The things you have to teach are good. They are designed to make people happy and live a better life. You ought to put a smile on your face and go forth to do the work which the Lord has outlined for you, and He will bless you. And the missionary's experiences which you have will become a great part of your lives, a great period in your lives to which you will look back all of your days with appreciation and gratitude. You are only on missions for a short time; make the most of it. I know that those who have just arrived think that it is a very long time. It will look like a long time for the first three months, and then suddenly it will get very short and look very brief, so enjoy it, and live it up, and be happy in the great opportunity that is yours.  
*Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:511-512
- 48 Now, my dear young friends, I hope all of you are pointed in the direction of missionary service. I cannot promise you fun. I cannot promise you ease and comfort. I cannot promise you freedom from discouragement, from fear, from downright misery at times. But I can promise you that you will grow as you have never grown in a similar period during your entire lives. I can promise you a happiness that will be unique and wonderful and lasting. I can promise you that you will reevaluate your lives, that you will establish new priorities, that you will live closer to the Lord, that prayer will become a real and wonderful experience, that you will walk with faith in the outcome of the good things you do.  
 Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 52.
- 49 We must raise the bar on the worthiness and qualifications of those who go into the world as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ...  
 How can you possibly think that you can become involved in immoral practices and then go into the mission field as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ?...  
 Stay away from the erotic stuff of the Internet. It can only pull you down. It can lead to your destruction.  
 Gordon B. Hinckley, in conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 63,65
- 50 Obedience Is the Price  
 Faith Is the Power.  
 Love Is the Motive.  
 The Spirit Is the Key.  
 Christ Is the Reason.  
 Cyril Figuerres, former president of the Japan Fukuoka Mission.
- 51 **Alma 17:9**  
*Journeyed many days*  
 We must be willing to journey. The sons of Mosiah were willing to step outside their surroundings and do that which was uncomfortable. Had Ammon not been willing to journey into a foreign land, inhabited by a wild and a hardened and a ferocious people, he never would have found and helped Lamoni and his father, and many

Lamanites may have never learned about Jesus Christ. God has asked us to journey, go on missions, accept callings, invite someone to church, or help someone in need.

Don R. Clarke, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 98.

52 **Alma 17:9**

*Instrument on God's hands*

Let there be cultivated an awareness in every member's heart of his own potential for bringing others to a knowledge of the truth. Let him work at it. Let him pray with great earnestness about it.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 106

53

In gospel-sharing homes we pray for guidance for ourselves and we pray for the physical and spiritual well-being of others. We pray for the people the missionaries are teaching, for our acquaintances, and for those not of our faith. In the gospel-sharing homes of Alma's time, the people would "join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God" Alma 6:6).

M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Apr. 2006, 88; or *Ensign*, May 2006, 85.

54

I desire to say that no man of himself can lead this church. It is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; he is at the head. The Church bears his name, has his priesthood, administers his gospel, preaches his doctrine, and does his work.

He chooses men and calls them to be instruments in his hands to accomplish his purposes, and he guides and directs them in their labors. But men are only instruments in the Lord's hands, and the honor and glory for all that his servants accomplish is and should be ascribed unto him forever.

If this were the work of a man, it would fail, but it is the work of the Lord, and he does not fail. And we have the assurance that if we keep the commandments and are valiant in the testimony of Jesus and are true to every trust, the Lord will guide and direct us and his church in the paths of righteousness, for the accomplishment of all his purposes.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, CRT, April 1970. P. 113.

55 **Alma 17:9**

*Incorrect traditions*

Righteous traditions are the sanctuary of memory. They preserve purpose and meaning. They protect the sacred and virtuous. They hallow strength, courage, and honor. They bind generations in a common cause. They have been a source of inspiration and direction to countless souls. By contrast, evil and false traditions have filled the world with confusion and have become "the very mainspring of all corruption," causing the earth to groan under the weight of their iniquity. They are "an iron yoke," a "strong band," the "very handcuffs, and chains, and shackles, and fetters of hell" (D&C 123:7-8). They are a system whereby depravity, corruption, and darkness of all forms are and have been passed from generation to generation. False traditions blind the eyes and minds of otherwise good and well-intentioned people. It may be that more people have rejected the restored gospel—or, having accepted it, have subsequently refused the counsel of living prophets—because of the effects of false traditions that for any other reason.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, p. 127

56 **Alma 17:11**

*Patient and good examples*

We must have patience in order to withstand pain and grief without complaint or discouragement, which detract from the Spirit. It's necessary to have patience in the face of tribulation and persecution for the cause of truth which sets an example because the manner in which we bear our cross will be an influence to others to help lighten their load.

Angel Abrea, *Ensign*, May 1992, 25.

57 It is easy enough to be pleasant,  
 When life flows by like a song.  
 But the man worthwhile is the one who will smile,  
 When everything goes dead wrong.  
 For the test of the heart is trouble,  
 And it always comes with the years,  
 And the smile that is worth the praises of earth  
 Is the smile that shines through tears.  
 Ella Wheeler Wilcox

58 Suffering can make Saints of people as they learn patience, long suffering and self-mastery. The sufferings of our Savior were part of his education.  
 Spencer W. Kimball (1995 *Speeches of the Year*, p.9)

59 First, get to know your neighbors. Learn about their families, their work, their views. Get together with them, if they are willing, and do so without being pushy and without any ulterior motives. Friendship should never be offered as a means to an end; it can and should be an end unto itself....

...Let us cultivate meaningful relationships of mutual trust and understanding with people from different backgrounds and beliefs.

Second, I believe it would be good if we eliminated a couple of phrases from our vocabulary: *nonmember and non-Mormon*. Such phrases can be demeaning and even belittling. Personally, I don't consider myself to be a "non-Catholic" or a "non-Jew." I am a Christian. I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That is how I prefer to be identified—for who and what I am, as opposed to be identified for what I am not. Let us extend that same courtesy to those who live among us. If a collective description is needed, then "neighbors" seems to work well in most cases.

And third, if neighbors become testy or frustrated because of some disagreement with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or with some law we support for moral reasons, please don't suggest to them—even in a humorous way—that they consider moving someplace else. I cannot comprehend how any member of our Church can even think such a thing! Our pioneer ancestors were driven from place to place by uninformed and intolerant neighbors. They experienced extraordinary hardship and persecution because they thought, acted, and believed differently from others. If our history teaches us nothing else, it should teach us to respect the rights of all people to peacefully coexist with one another.

M. Russell Ballard, Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 45; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 37-38

60 A nineteen-year-old missionary...would never forget his first day in the mission field, for it taught him a great lesson about using his talents to teach the gospel.

He and his senior companion were assigned to open a new city some distance from the mission headquarters. As they arrived in this new city and walked down the street, they passed a church with a minister standing at the front door. As they walked by the church, the minister went in and called to his whole congregation to follow him out into the street. There they followed the missionaries and started calling them names; then they became more violent and started to throw rocks at them.

The young elder was excited about the experience—his first day in the mission field and already he was being stoned, he thought. Then a big rock suddenly hit him squarely in the middle of the back, and his feeling changed to anger. Before entering the mission field he had been quite a baseball pitcher; and in the flush of anger he wheeled around, grabbed the first rock he could find on the ground, reared back in his famous pitching pose, and was just ready to let the rock fly at the crowd when suddenly he realized why he was there. He had not been sent all the way to Brazil to throw rocks at people; he was there to teach them the gospel. But what was he to do with the rock in his hand? If he dropped it to the ground, they would think it a sign of weakness and probably continue to throw rocks at them. Yet he could not throw it at the crowd. Then he saw a telephone post some distance away. That was the way to save face! He reared back and let the rock fly directly at the telephone post, hitting it squarely in the middle. The

people in the crowd took a couple of steps back. They suddenly realized that that rock probably could have hit any one of them right between the eyes. Their mood changed; instead of throwing rocks at the missionaries, they began to throw them at the telephone post. After this incident, every time the elder went down that street he was challenged to a rock-throwing contest. The rock-throwing contests led to discussions of the gospel, which led to conversions, which led to the establishment of a branch of the Church in that community.

L. Tom Perry, "Prophecies, Visions, and Dreams," in 1979 *Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1980], 3.

### Alma 17:13

#### 61 *Great Work*

One of the *greatest secrets of missionary work is work!* If a missionary *works*, he will get the Spirit; if he gets the Spirit, he will teach by the Spirit; and if he teaches by the Spirit, he will touch the hearts of the people and he will be happy. There will be no homesickness, no worrying about families, for all time and talents and interests are centered on the *work* of the ministry. *Work, work, work*—there is no satisfactory substitute, especially in missionary work.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Teachings*, 200; emphasis in original.

### Alma 17:18

#### 62 *Service*

(In a letter to Brother Edward Hunter, under date of January 5, 1842, the Prophet shows his humility and the love of his heart in these words): The store has been filled to overflowing and I have stood behind the counter all day, distributing goods as steadily as any clerk you ever saw, to oblige those who were compelled to go without their Christmas and New Year's dinners for the want of a little sugar, molasses, raisins, etc.; and to please myself also, for I love to wait upon the Saints and to be a servant to all, hoping that I may be exalted in the due time of the Lord.

George Q Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972], 386

#### 63 The more we obey God, the more we desire to help others. The more we help others, the more we love God, and on and on. Conversely, the more we disobey God and the more selfish we are, the less love we feel.

Trying to find lasting love without obeying God is like trying to quench thirst by drinking from an empty cup—you can go through the motions, but the thirst remains. Similarly, trying to find love without helping and sacrificing for others is like trying to live without eating—it is against the laws of nature and cannot succeed.

John H. Groberg in Conference Report, Oct. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 8.

#### 64 Young people are being hit on all sides by open and subtle attacks on their faith, their ideals, their morality, their self-confidence, even their identity. The typical teenager is pictured as being of the "ME" generation: self-centered, turned inward, unfeeling toward others, seeking immediate self-gratification....

As a boy I sought happiness as the world measures it. I wanted acceptance, position, fame (particularly as an athlete), and wealth. I had none of these. I was very unhappy. I thought happiness was as elusive as a shadow.

It was not until I was called on a mission that I discovered the real key to happiness. To my surprise, despite the discouragement, the disappointments, and the plain hard work associated with my missionary labors, I was happy. It was then I learned that happiness is really a by-product of service. As I forgot my own desires, my own weaknesses and frailties in my missionary service, I began to understand King Benjamin's profound counsel to his people ... (Mosiah 2:17).

That is why a missionary can return from the toughest experiences of his life and report, "These have been the happiest two years of my life!"

A life can never be happy that is focused inward. So if you are miserable now, forget your troubles. March right out your door, and find someone who needs you.

You want happiness? Find ways to serve. Your happiness will be commensurate with the service you render. Robert L. Backman, in Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 14-15.

#### 65 I am grateful for the Book of Mormon which explains how we can repay Jesus Christ for his great mercy to us. His sacrifice atoned even for our personal sins and makes his mercy available to you and to me. King Benjamin may have explained how repayment is possible: "Behold, I tell you these things that he may learn wisdom: that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17)....

What this scripture then means, is that you can repay Jesus for his mercy to you by being kind, thoughtful, considerate, and helpful to those around you. By such service to others, you can gradually pay back your indebtedness to your Savior....

Instead of being filled with vain regrets over past deeds which are already done and which events you are powerless to change, you will now be so busy doing good deeds to others that you will not have a desire to sin or disobey, nor to recall past sin or disobedience....

It stands to reason that the more serious the sin, the longer it takes to complete that repayment. If you work at repayment daily over the years, even very great sins you may have committed can eventually be repaid and you can then stand blameless before your Savior,

Theodore M. Burton, "The Meaning of Repentance," *BYU Speeches of the Year, 26 Mar. 1985* [Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1985], 5-6

66 "Thousands of times every day, members of the Church are watched... by people curious to know something about our lives. Because we are under covenant to be witnesses, we try to tell them how the gospel has brought us happiness. What they think of what we say may depend largely on how much they sense we care for them. Those we meet will feel the love.... It may not be in hours or days as it was for King Lamoni, but they will feel our love after testing our hearts. And when they find our concern sincere, the Holy Spirit can more easily touch them to allow us to teach and to testify, as it did for Ammon."

"Witnesses for God," *Ensign*, November 1996, p. 32.

67 D. Brent Collette told a stirring story:

"Ronny was not just shy; he was downright backward. As a 17-year-old high school senior, Ronny had never really had a close friend or done anything that included other people. He was famous for his shyness. He never said anything to anybody, not even a teacher. One look at him told you a great deal of the story—inferiority complex. He slumped over as if to hide his face and seemed to be always looking at his feet. He always sat in the back of the class and would never participate....

"It was because of Ronny's shyness that I was so astonished when he started coming to my Sunday School class....

"His attendance in my class was the result of the personal efforts of a class member, Brandon Craig, who had recently befriended Ronny. Boy, if there had ever been a mismatch, this was it. Brandon was 'Mr. Social.' A good head taller than Ronny, he was undisputedly the number one star of our high school athletics program. Brandon was involved in everything and successful at everything....

"Well, Brandon took to little Ronny like glue. Class was obviously painful for Ronny, but Brandon protected him like the king's guard.... I was so shocked when Brian, the class president, stood before our Sunday School class on Sunday afternoon and boldly announced that Ronny would offer the opening prayer.

"There was a moment of hesitation: then Ronny slowly came to his feet. Still looking at his shoes, he walked to the front of the room. He folded his arms (his head was already bowed). The class was frozen solid....

"Then almost at a whisper I heard, 'Our Father in Heaven, thank you for our Sunday School class.' Then silence—long, loud silence! I could feel poor Ronny suffering. Then came a few sniffles and muffled sob....

"I hurt for him; we all did. I opened an eye and looked up to make my way to Ronny. But Brandon beat me to it. With an eye still open I watched six-foot-four Brandon put his arm around his friend, bend down and put his chin on Ronny's shoulder, then whisper the words of a short, sweet prayer. Ronny struggled for composure, then repeated the prayer.

"But when the prayer was over, Ronny kept his head bowed and added: 'Thank you for Brandon, amen.' He then turned and looked up at his big buddy and said clear enough for all to hear, 'I love you, Brandon.'

"Brandon, who still had his arm around him, responded, 'I love you too, Ronny. And that was fun.'

"And it was, for all of us."

*New Era*, May 1983, 18; as quoted in Robert L. Backman, in Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 16-17

68 Alma 17:27-29  
*Power of One*

What are we to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative... to carry the Gospel to our enemies, that they might no longer be our enemies.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, June 1976 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976], 6

69 What did Ammon say? "Be of good cheer" (Alma 17:31). Now we may read this as a story about some shepherds trying to round up some missing sheep, but the message is much more powerful and significant than that. Ammon was a missionary with noble intentions to bring the king and his kingdom back to the fold of righteousness, to the well of living water. The challenge looked daunting to those who could see only, in everyday terms, sheep strung out on hillsides and not enough manpower to round them up, they were discouraged and fearful that the king would discover their loss. Ammon not only led the force to recapture the sheep, he drove away the evil men who caused the problems; and his heroic efforts persuaded the king to follow him and to follow the Savior. Ammon teaches us that no matter our circumstances, we can be an example to others, we can lift them, we can inspire them to seek righteousness, and we can bear testimony to all of the power of Jesus Christ.

Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 1997 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 82

70 In 1830 John Taylor's parents and other family members emigrated to Toronto, Canada, leaving him behind in England to sell the family farm and settle other family business. When finished, he left England on a ship bound for New York City. During the voyage, the ship encountered a severe storm that had already damaged several ships in the area. The captain and officers of the ship expected that they would sink, but the voice of the Spirit testified to John Taylor, "You must yet go to America and preach the gospel." President Taylor recalled: "So confident was I of my destiny, that I went on deck at midnight, and amidst the raging elements felt as calm as though I was sitting in a parlor at home. I believed I should reach America and perform my work." He arrived safely in New York, and after a few months rejoined his parents in Toronto.

*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—John Taylor* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], xiii

71 I've seen courage in the military. I've witnessed courage in the classrooms of learning and the factories of industry. Never have I observed its beauty more radiant than reflected from the service of a missionary. As a member of the Missionary Executive Committee of the Church, I often interview prospective missionaries who have physical impairments or other shortcomings. In considering the recommendation of one such candidate, the bishop of the ward had written: "Brother \_\_\_\_\_ is badly scarred due to an automobile accident. However, if courage will help, he'll lead the lot." I made an appointment to visit with the lad. My initial reaction upon meeting him was one of mixed surprise and pity. His face was badly scarred. He had been trapped in a burning automobile. Gone were his eyebrows, eyelashes, portions of his nose and face. "Son," I responded, "if you were in the mission field, there would be those who would reject your message and you may feel that they were rejecting you. This would be unbearable."

"Brother Monson," he replied, "I have become accustomed to that challenge. It doesn't bother me anymore. I so much want to serve the Lord and to preach the gospel. Please let me be called." The courage of his spirit bore witness to me of his faith. He received a call. After two years of outstanding missionary activity, his president wrote upon the occasion of his honorable release:

"The bearer of this letter has served in this mission for two years. He has been one of the finest missionaries in our mission over the whole time that he has been here. He has been effective as a leader, as a proselyting missionary, as a liaison between the mission office and the several stakes in which he has served, and in all respects his performance has been without flaw.

"He has handled his personal problem, his severe scarring, in a way which has discouraged or affronted no one. It has been on a basis that "this is my problem; don't worry about it."

"We love him dearly. We are grateful for his services; and if you have any more just like him, send them along."  
Thomas S. Monson, *Pathways to Perfection*, pp. 145-6.

72 **Alma 17:35**  
*"They knew not that the Lord had promised... he would deliver" his servants.*

[A vision the Prophet Joseph Smith had:]

"I saw Elder Brigham Young standing in a strange land, in the far south and west, in a desert place, upon a rock in the midst of about a dozen men of color, who appeared hostile. He was preaching to them in their own tongue, and the angel of God standing above his head, with a drawn sword in his hand, protecting him, but he did not see it." Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, 108.

73 **Alma 17:39**  
*"bearing the arms"*

The servant of King Lamoni took the bloody stumps of the attackers' arms cut off by Ammon to the king "for a testimony of the things which they had done" (Alma 17:39). This practice finds direct analogues in the archaeology of Egypt and Syria....

The practice of cutting off the arms, hands, feet, or other body parts of vanquished enemies served several functions; to obtain an accurate count of the dead, to afford a basis for paying mercenary soldiers, or to identify the casualties.

John W. Welsh, *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. By Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990], 20, 23.