

Alma 27.9

1 He who would be no slave must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves.

Abraham Lincoln, *Lincoln's Life Stories and Speeches*, Selby, p. 258

Alma 27:10

2 *Obedience to God's Instructions*

Obedience is the first law of heaven.... There is nothing in all eternity more important than to keep the commandments of God.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, 126

3 Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet.

Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, October 1970, 152.

Alma 27:11

4 *Inquire of the Lord*

We should let our prayers ascend before the Lord. I have more faith in prayer before the Lord than almost any other principle on earth.... We should pray unto the Lord, asking him for what we want... and the Lord will not turn them away, but they will be heard and answered.

Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses*, 17:250.

Alma 27:16-19

5 *Joy*

Joy is characteristic of the presence of the Holy Ghost, from whom it comes. It is experienced only when the Spirit is present, and that most acutely in the manifestation that our sins have been remitted, in the knowledge that our path is pleasing to and approved by God, and in our helping others find the way to light and salvation (see Mosiah 4:3; D&C 18:13).

Millet & McConkie, Vol. 3, p. 188

Alma 27:22

6 *What is the Meaning of the Word Jershon?*

Following a vote by the Nephites to permit the converted Lamanites to settle in the land of Zarahemla, the decision was made for them to have the land of Jershon. The word is taken from the Hebrew language.

Jershon means the Land of the expelled, or of the strangers. We think it altogether probable that this significant name was given it at the time it was set off for the habitation of these expatriated Lamanites, as it defines their conditions as exiles, and their relation to the Nephites as strangers. The name is not mentioned before this event, and would possibly be the only local name by which it was known to the compiler of the Book of Mormon. Before the date of the exodus of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies, it was, we think, considered a part of the Land of Zarahemla.

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 4:42

7 In Hebrew, *Jershon* means "a place of inheritance." Joseph Smith simply would not have known this in the late 1820s.

Daniel C. Peterson, *Ensign*, Jan. 2000 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2000], 22.

8 *Forgiving our enemies*

Who shall stand in his holy place? May there be extended a helping hand to those who have wavered in their faith or who have transgressed, to bring them back. After fully repenting, they will have a special need for the redemptive portion of the endowment. May they know that their sins will no more be remembered.

James E. Faust, "Who Shall Ascend into the Hill of the Lord?" *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 5.

9 Consider, for example, this instruction from Christ to his disciples. He said, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you' (Matthew 5:44).

Think what this admonition alone would do in your neighborhood and mine, in the communities in which you and your children live, in the nations which make up our great global family. I realize this doctrine poses a significant challenge, but surely it is a more agreeable challenge than the terrible tasks posed for us by the war and poverty and pain the world continues to face....

We all have significant opportunity to practice Christianity, and we should try it at every opportunity. For example, we can all be a little more forgiving.

Howard W. Hunter, Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 22-23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 18.

10 **Alma 27:22***Forgiving our enemies*

It was a lovely Sunday morning, but clouds of despair and discouragement had gathered within me. For weeks, I had felt increasingly unable to cope with numerous personal commitments and still give my family the quality time they needed. The harder I tried to foster a spirit of love and harmony, the more contention increased.

My challenges seemed insurmountably great, and it was with a heavy heart that I sat through the opening exercises of Relief Society. The lesson was on fellowshipping members—the new sister, the inactive sister, the active sister. "Remember," read the manual, "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God." (D&C 18:10) I thought of the few sisters in our small community, many of them inactive. Once I had felt close to all of them, but after recent rebuffs by two or three sisters, I felt estranged from all of them—even those who were once close friends. I felt drained, empty. Why should I press my friendship on those who didn't want it?

"Right now," I thought bleakly, "I'm one of those active sisters who needs fellowship. I can't even cope with my own family. What makes me think I have anything to offer anybody else?"

When the teacher challenged us to fellowship one sister during the week, I dutifully wrote down a name. "How can I expect the Lord to help me," I thought, "if I'm not doing my share?" But a wave of hopelessness and guilt washed over me as I stuffed the name into my purse. "I know I'm not going to do anything with this. I have nothing to give. Who would want anything from me, anyway?"

Then the lesson was over. Before I could slip silently out the door, a sister from a neighboring community walked back and sat beside me. "Hey, I know this may sound crazy," she smiled, "but I've had the strongest feeling lately that I need to get better acquainted with you. How about getting together one day this week?"

Before I could answer, a second sister, one from my own community, was at my side. "Are you feeling okay, Kathy?"

I looked at her through rapidly brimming eyes. She put her hand on mine. The tears I had fought back all morning now began to fall, but my spirit soared, and I nodded in answer to her question.

I had not felt able to cope, not worthy to ask the Lord for help. Yet he had known my anguish, and these sisters had answered his call. How could I not cope, I realized, with him on my side!

Kathleen Pederson Whitworth, "He Knew My Need," *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, 14

Alma 27:27**11** *Zeal towards God*

We cannot stand idly by, being merely an interested spectator, rather than a participating member, and still receive the blessing of eternal life.

Delbert Stapley, *Ensign*, January 1974, 45

12 *Perfectly honest*

Perhaps if we analyze some of the reasons people lie, we can avoid or overcome this vicious snare.

Sometimes we deceive and lie to avoid personal embarrassment. I recently heard of a young woman who had been released from her employment because of dishonesty. When she applied for another job, she told the prospective employer that her former boss had a family member he wanted to put in her place. She probably told her friends and family members the same story to avoid mortification.

Financial setbacks may be explained to others with untruths. Or have you ever heard someone say, “I was just too busy to get the job done,” when, in truth, he had forgotten? Others use dishonesty to delay, to gain advantage, to impress, to flatter, or to destroy.

Consciously or unconsciously some people lie to destroy others. Jealousy or feelings of inferiority may cause us to degrade another’s habits or character. Have you watched an overly ambitious person turn on false flattery for his own gain?

Lies are often excuses for lack of courage. Sometimes lies are nothing more than excuses for poor performance. Usually one lie or deception has to be covered by another. Lies cannot stand alone. Each one must continually be supported by more and more of its own kind.

Marvin J. Ashton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 11

13 In our day, those found in dishonesty aren’t put to death, but something within them dies. Conscience chokes, character withers, self-respect vanishes, integrity dies. How cheaply some men and women sell their good names!..

It is surely neither coincidence or happenstance that five of the Ten Commandments deal essentially with honesty in its broadest sense. “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13)... “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15)... “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14)... “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour” (Exodus 20:16)... “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s” (Exodus 20:17....

Why is honesty so vital? Because where honesty and integrity are present, other virtues follow. And conversely, where there are serious breaches of integrity, they are almost always accompanied by other moral lapses.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 13, 20-21, 23, 25

14 In 1955, after my freshman year of college, I spent the summer working at the newly opened Jackson Lake Lodge, located in Moran, Wyoming. My mode of transportation was a 14-year-old 1941 Hudson automobile that should have received its burial 10 years earlier. Among the car’s other identifying traits, the floorboards had rusted so badly that, if not for a piece of plywood, I could have literally dragged my feet on the highway. The positive is that unlike most 14-year-old cars in this time period, it used no oil—lots of water in the radiator, but no oil. I could never figure out where the water went and why the oil continually got thinner and thinner and clearer and clearer.

In preparation for the 185-mile (298-km) drive home at the end of the summer, I took the car to the only mechanic in Moran. After a quick analysis, the mechanic explained that the engine block was cracked and was leaking water into the oil. That explained the water and oil mystery. I wondered if I could get the water to leak into the gas tank; I would get better gasoline mileage.

Now the confession: after the miracle of arriving home, my father came out and happily greeted me. After a hug and a few pleasantries, he looked into the backseat of the car and saw three Jackson Lake Lodge towels—the kind

you cannot buy. With a disappointed look he merely said, “I expected more of you.” I hadn’t thought that what I had done was all that wrong. To me these towels were but a symbol of a full summer’s work at a luxury hotel, a rite of passage. Nevertheless, by taking them I felt I had lost the trust and confidence of my father, and I was devastated.

The following weekend I adjusted the plywood floorboard in my car, filled the radiator with water, and began the 370-mile (595 km) round trip back to Jackson Lake Lodge to return three towels. My father never asked why I was returning to the lodge, and I never explained. It just didn’t need to be said. This was an expensive and painful lesson on honesty that has stayed with me throughout my life...

Some 30 years ago, while working in the corporate world, some business associates and I were passing through O’Hare Airport in Chicago, Illinois. One of these men had just sold his company for tens of millions of dollars—in other words, he was not poor.

As we were passing a newspaper vending machine, this individual put a quarter in the machine, opened the door to the stack of papers inside the machine, and began dispersing unpaid-for newspapers to each of us. When he handed me a newspaper, I put a quarter in the machine and, trying not to offend but to make a point, jokingly said, “Jim, for 25 cents I can maintain my integrity. A dollar, questionable, but 25 cents—no, not for 25 cents.” You see, I remembered well the experience of three towels and a broken-down 1941 Hudson. A few minutes later we passed the same newspaper vending machine. I noticed that Jim had broken away from our group and was stuffing quarters in the vending machine....

My prayer is that as Latter-day Saints, we will be known as among the most honest people in the world. And it might be said of us as it was of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi that we are “perfectly honest and upright in all things; and... firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end” (Alma 27:27).

Richard C. Edgley, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 72-74

Conclusion

Joseph Smith:

- 15 Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth’s sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain.

Lectures on Faith delivered to the School of the Prophets, 1834-35, LOF6:7

- 16 I shall now set forth some of the principles of sacrifice and consecration to which the true saints must conform if they are ever to go where God and Christ are and have an inheritance with the faithful saints of ages past.

It is written: “He who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.” (D&C 88:22). The law of sacrifice is a celestial law; so also is the law of consecration. Thus to gain that celestial reward which we so devoutly desire, we must be able to live these two laws.

Sacrifice and consecration are inseparably intertwined. The law of consecration is that we consecrate our time, our talents, and our money and property to the cause of the Church: such are to be available to the extent they are needed to further the Lord’s interests on earth.

The law of sacrifice is that we are willing to sacrifice all that we have for the truth’s sake—our character and reputation; our honor and applause; our good name among men; our houses, lands, and families: all things, even our very lives if need be.

Joseph Smith said, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary [to lead] unto life and salvation” (Lectures on Faith, p. 58).

We are not always called upon to live the whole law of consecration and give all of our time, talents, and means to the building up of the Lord’s earthly kingdom. Few of us are called upon to sacrifice much of what we possess, and at the moment there is only an occasional martyr in the cause of revealed religion.

But what the scriptural account means is that to gain celestial salvation we must be able to live these laws to the full if we are called upon to do so. Implicit in this is the reality that we must in fact live them to the extent we are called upon so to do . . .

Now I think it is perfectly clear that the Lord expects far more of us than we sometimes render in response. We are not as other men. We are the saints of God and have the revelations of heaven. Where much is given much is expected. We are to put first in our lives the things of his kingdom. . . .

We have made covenants so to do—solemn, sacred, holy covenants, pledging ourselves before gods and angels.

We are under covenant to live the law of obedience.

We are under covenant to live the law of sacrifice.

We are under covenant to live the law of consecration. . . .

It is our privilege to consecrate our time, talents, and means to build up his kingdom. We are called upon to sacrifice, in one degree or another, for the furtherance of his work. Obedience is essential to salvation; so, also, is service; and so, also, are consecration and sacrifice.

Taken from “Obedience, Consecration and Sacrifice,” Elder Bruce R. McConkie, *Ensign*, May 1975