

**Alma 49:1-4****1** *At the place of entrance – Our Homes*

President Gordon B. Hinckley: “It is so obvious that the great good and the terrible evil in the world today are the sweet and the bitter fruits of the rearing of yesterday’s children. As we train a new generation, so will the world be in a few years. If you are worried about the future, then look to the upbringing of your children. Wisely did the writer of Proverbs declare, Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. “Children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psalms 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

*The Family: A Proclamation to the World*

**2** The family unit is most is important organization in time and eternity.  
Bruce R. McConkie, *Improvement Era*, June 1970.1

**3** According to President Benson, “Good fathers teach their sons, and good sons listen and obey.” Nephi’s tenacious following of his father’s example also reflects the principle that a modern expert on childhood education tells parents, “What tiny children want *is to be you.*” And could this natural inclination of children to become like their parents be what we are most meant to recapture when the Savior emphatically and repeatedly commands us to “become as a little child” in order to be saved? Perhaps only those who become as little children will have the necessary desire to become fully like their Father in Heaven.  
E. Douglas Clark and Robert Clark, Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon, p. 8

**4** President Monson also spoke of Gideon, a hero in the Old Testament. Gideon was chosen to lead the armies of Israel, thousands strong. But of them all, he chose only 300 men (Judges 7:4-8).

Gideon had an interesting way of selecting his recruits. When the men drank water at a stream most “bowed down... to drink.” Those he passed over. A few scooped up water in their hands and drank, remaining completely alert. They were the ones chosen.

We live in a day of “wars [and] rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places.” As prophesied, “the whole earth [is] in commotion and Satan is abroad in the land.” He seeks to destroy all that is good and righteous. He is Lucifer, who was cast out of the presence of God. Against all of that, we have very positive feelings about what lies ahead.

Gideon’s small force succeeded because, as the record states, “they stood every man in his place.”... We must go forward confident of the supernal power of the priesthood. It is a source of strength and encouragement to know who we are and what we have and what we must do in the work of the Almighty.... That the work of the Lord will prevail is not a question. That we must marshal all of our efforts and unify ourselves are givens...

Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, May 2010, p. 6

- 5 After all, to do well those things which God ordained to be the common lot of all man-kind, is the truest greatness. To be a successful father or a successful mother is greater than to be a successful general or a successful statesman. One is universal and eternal greatness, the other ephemeral... Let us not be trying to substitute an artificial life for the true one.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 285-286.

Fathers – Preside Provide Protect

- 6 Mothers in Zion, your God-given roles are so vital to your own exaltation and to the salvation and exaltation of your family. A child needs a mother more than all the things money can buy. Spending time with your children is the greatest gift of all.

With love in my heart for the mothers in Zion, I would like to suggest ten specific ways our mothers may spend effective time with their children.

First, take time to always be at the crossroads when your children are either coming or going—when they leave and return from dates—when they bring friends home. Be there at the crossroads whether your children are six or sixteen. In Proverbs we read: “A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame” (Proverbs 29:15). Among the greatest concerns in our society are the millions of latchkey children who come home daily to empty houses unsupervised by working parents.

Second, mothers, take time to be a real friend to your children. Listen to your children, really listen. Talk with them, laugh and joke with them, sing with them, play with them, cry with them, hug them, honestly praise them. Yes, regularly spend unrushed one-on-one time with each child. Be a real friend to your children.

Third, mothers, take time to read to your children. Starting from the cradle, read to your sons and daughters. Remember what the poet said, “You may have tangible wealth untold; Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be—I had a mother who read to me.” (Strickland Gillilan, “The Reading Mother.”) You will plant a love for good literature and a real love for the scriptures if you will read to your children regularly.

Fourth, take time to pray with your children. Family prayers, under the direction of the father, should be held morning and night. Have your children feel of your faith as you call down the blessings of heaven upon them. Paraphrasing the word of James: "The . . . fervent prayer of a righteous [mother] availeth much" (James 5:16). Have your children participate in family and personal prayers and rejoice in their sweet utterances to their Father in Heaven.

Fifth, take time to have a meaningful weekly home evening. With your husband presiding, participate in a spiritual and an uplifting home evening each week. Have your children actively involved. Teach them correct principles. Make this one of your great family traditions. Remember the marvelous promise made by President Joseph F. Smith when home evenings were first introduced to the Church: "If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them." This wonderful promise is still in effect today.

Sixth, take time to be together at mealtimes as often as possible. This is a challenge as the children get older and lives get busier. But happy conversation, sharing of the day's plans and activities, and special teaching moments occur at mealtime because mothers and fathers and children work at it.

Seventh, take time daily to read the scriptures together as a family. Individual scripture reading is important, but family scripture reading is vital. Reading the Book of Mormon together as a family will especially bring increased spirituality into your home and will give both parents and children the power to resist temptation and to have the Holy Ghost as their constant companion. I promise you that the Book of Mormon will change the lives of your family.

Eighth, take time to do things as a family. Make family outings and picnics and birthday celebrations and trips special times and memory builders. Whenever possible attend as a family events where one of the family members is involved, such as a school play, a ball game, a talk, a recital. Attend Church meetings together and sit together as a family when you can. Mothers who help families pray and play together will stay together and will bless children's lives forever.

Ninth, mothers, take time to teach your children. Catch the teaching moments. This can be done anytime during the day—at mealtime, in casual settings or at special sit-down times together, at the foot of the bed at the end of the day, or during an early-morning walk together. Mothers, you are your children's best teacher. Don't shift this precious responsibility to day-care centers or baby-sitters. A mother's love and prayerful concern for her children are her most important ingredients in teaching her own.

Teach children gospel principles. Teach them it pays to be good. Teach them there is no safety in sin. Teach them a love for the gospel of Jesus Christ and a testimony of its divinity. Teach your sons and daughters modesty and teach them to respect manhood and womanhood. Teach your children sexual purity, proper dating standards, temple marriage, missionary service, and the importance of accepting and magnifying Church callings. Teach them a love for work and the value of a good education. Teach them the importance of the right kind of entertainment, including appropriate movies, videos, music, books, and magazines. Discuss the evils of pornography and drugs and teach them the value of living the clean life.

Yes, mothers, teach your children the gospel in your home, at your own fireside. This is the most effective teaching that your children will ever receive. This is the Lord's way of teaching. The Church cannot teach like you can. The school cannot. The day-care center cannot. But you can, and the Lord will sustain you. Your children will remember your teachings forever, and when they are old, they will not depart from them. They will call you blessed-their truly angel mother. Mothers, this kind of heavenly, motherly teaching takes time-lots of time. It cannot be done effectively part-time. It must be done all the time in order to save and exalt your children. This is your divine calling.

Tenth, and finally, mothers, take the time to truly love your children. A mother's unqualified love approaches Christlike love. ("To the Mothers in Zion," Parents' Fireside, Salt Lake City, Utah, 22 February 1987.)

Ezra Taft Benson, *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 515

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I have said that women are like lionesses at the gate of the home. Whatever happens in a woman's home and family happens because she cares about it and it matters to her. She guards that gate, and if something matters to her, it matters to her family. For example, if the lioness at the gate believes in the law of tithing, tithing will be paid in her family. If her family has a humble little income of ten pesos, the lioness will safeguard the one peso if tithing is important to her. If the lioness at the gate knows about renewing her baptismal covenants with God, she will be in sacrament meeting on Sunday, and she will prepare her children to be there. They will be washed, cleaned, combed, and taught about that meeting and what happens there. It isn't a casual event; it is serious to her, and it will be serious to them. The lioness at the gate ensures that temple worship is a high priority in her family. She encourages that participation. She cares about seeking after her ancestors. If the lioness at the gate knows about and understands missions, missionaries, and the mission of the house of Israel, she will prepare future missionaries to go out from that home. It is very difficult to get a lion cub away from a lioness who doesn't believe in missions, but if the lioness believes in a mission, she will devote her life to preparing her cub to go out and serve the Lord. That's how important she is. Service happens if she cares about it.

Sisters, you are each the lioness at the gate for your homes. This means that you have to have priorities. I was taught years ago that when our priorities are out of order, we lose power. If we need power and influence to carry out our mission, then our priorities have to be aligned with the Lord.

Julie B. Beck, BYU Women's Conference, 2010

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### **Alma 49:1-4**

#### *Dedicating Your Home*

Next to the Lord's temples, our homes stand as the most sacred buildings on earth. Think about it., the second most sacred place on earth is your home. It's no wonder that throughout the ages, prophets and apostles have admonished the saints to dedicate their homes. President Spencer W. Kimball taught "I remember from my infancy that the Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, when they came to our stake, they would say ... dedicate your own home" (10/9/76).

In the Old Testament Joshua of old admonishes the saints to “choose ye this day whom ye will serve... but for *me and my house*, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Joshua had dedicated his house and his life unto the Lord.

In the Book of Mormon the Prophet Alma exhorted members “to humble yourselves in prayer... and cry unto him in *your houses, yea, over all your household...* yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness” (Alma 34:19-23).

In modern times, President Spencer W. Kimball asked, “I was just wondering, how many of you folks have your homes dedicated? I remember when... we called all the family together and invited the youngest son who had just filled his mission to offer the *dedicatory prayer on our home*. So we feel that home is blessed, and it has special significance. It belongs to the Lord, and we have the opportunity of using it”(10/9/76).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie instructs us that “the essential part of any dedication service is the formal prayer of dedication. In general the purpose is to hallow and consecrate the building for the particular purpose for which it was constructed. Dedication of private homes normally includes petitions for special blessing upon the members of the family and covenants on their part to serve the Lord and use the means at their disposal for the rolling forth of his work” (*Mormon Doctrine*, pg. 188).

It is our prayer that each household might evaluate the purpose for which it was built and then dedicate it to that purpose. Such purpose may include a place of teaching and preparation for the Lord’s service and a shield against evil. It would be appropriate to dedicate our homes to prayer, learning, obedience and against any evil influence such as inappropriate TV, music videos, or internet. Our homes should be dedicated as a haven of peace, love and refuge for our children and all that enter therein. At the same time, we should dedicate our lives to the Lord and promise the Lord that we will do all in our power to serve Him and keep evil from our homes and from our lives.

As your Bishopric, we too are “*just wondering, how many of you folks have your homes dedicated?* We would encourage fathers to gather your families around you and kneel in prayer in dedicating your home. If some are single-parent households it would be appropriate to invite your home teachers and/or family members to participate.

We promise you, that if you’ll prayerfully dedicate your homes and lives, that you’ll feel the Spirit of the Lord come into your homes like never before. Also, we promise you that more love and peace will abide in your homes and in your lives that has been before. Lastly, a guard against evil will be set to protect the second most sacred place on earth – your home.

The Alpine Cove Ward Bishopric, Oct. 2001

### **Alma 49:8**

#### **9 Personal Revelation=Best Military Intelligence**

I believe the condemnation that rests upon the Latter-day Saints is a loss of spiritual power, a loss of blessings, a loss of perspective about eternal possibilities. Perhaps we have not enjoyed the revelations, the divine direction, the sweet promptings of the Spirit that might have been ours. We have not been the recipients of the fruit of the Spirit—“love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23)—as we could have been. Surely we have not enjoyed the understanding, the light and truth, the lens of pure intelligence that is so readily accessible.

Robert Millet, *The Power of the Word*, p. 304

10 With simple, traditional, tried-and-true principles, such as earnest prayer, serious scriptural study, devoted fasting, compassionate service, and patient forbearance, the blessings of heaven distill upon us even to include the personal manifestations of the Son of God himself.

Patricia Holland, *On Earth as it is in Heaven*, p. 18

11 “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things *as fast as he is able to bear them.*”

TRJS, p. 149

12 By faith in God you can be attuned to the Infinite and by power and wisdom obtained from your Heavenly Father harness the power of the universe to serve you in your hour of need in the solution of problems too great for your human strength or intelligence.

Harold B. Lee

13 Always live in such a way that when you need the Lord’s blessings, you can call upon Him and receive them because you are worthy. There will come times in your life when you will need immediate blessings. You will need to live in such a way that they will be granted—not out of mercy but because you are worthy. We have called upon our Father in Heaven for many “immediate blessings.” Daily, these holy habits and righteous routines have helped steady us on the path that leads back into our Father’s presence.

Elaine Dalton, Conference report, Nov. 2006

14 Elder McConkie also explained that “there is no limit to the revelations each member of the Church may receive. It is within the power of *every person* who has received the gift of the Holy Ghost to see visions, entertain angels, learn the deep and hidden mysteries of the kingdom, and even see the face of God.”

*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 490.

15 **Alma 49:22**  
*More language evidences point to authenticity of the Book of Mormon.*

One interesting observation was that the Hebrew idiom for “shooting” an arrow literally also means “throwing”; thus Alma 49:22 refers to arrows “thrown” at the Lamanites.

John W. Walsh, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, 199.

**Alma 49:27**

<b>Captain Moroni</b>	<b>Amalickiah</b>
Was appointed by “the voice of the people” and the judges as chief captain of the armies (Alma 46:34; see also 43:16).	Obtain power by fraud and deceit (see Alma 47:1-35; 48:7).
Rallied the people to righteousness and taught them to be faithful to God and their covenants (see Alma 46:12-21; 48:7).	Incited the people through hatred and propaganda (see Alma 46:10).
Rejoiced in the liberty and freedom of his country and the people (see Alma 48:11).	Sought to destroy the liberty of the people (see Alma 46:10).
Loved his brethren and labored “exceedingly for the welfare and safety of his people” (see Alma 48:12).	“Did care not for the blood of his people” and worked to promote his own selfishness (Alma 49:10).
A man governed by righteous principles who taught the Nephites to never raise the sword, except to defend one’s family, life, or freedoms (see Alma 48:10, 14).	A man governed by passion who taught the people to aggressively conquer and make oaths to destroy (see Alma 49:13, 26-27).
Humbly sought God’s help in preserving life (see Alma 48:16).	Cursed God and swore to kill (see Alma 49:27).
Worked to put an end to contention and dissension (see Alma 51:16).	Worked to create contention and dissension (see Alma 46:6, 10).

BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual, 2009, p. 252.

**Alma 49:28**

**17** *Why Would Satan Like an Unthankful People?*

*Because he knows an absence of appreciation on the part of anyone causes personal stagnation.*

*Marvin J. Ashton, What Is Your Destination? 99*

**18**

Elder James E. Faust taught, “A grateful heart is a beginning of greatness. It is an expression of humility. It is a foundation for the development of such virtues as prayer, faith, courage, contentment, happiness, love, and well-being. But there is a truism associated with all types of human strength: ‘Use it or lose it.’ When not used, muscles waken, skills deteriorate, and faith disappears...

“Gratitude is not only an expression of faith; it is a saving principle. The Lord has said, ‘And in nothing doth man offend God or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments’ (D&C 59:21). It is clear to me from this scripture that to ‘thank the Lord thy God in all things’ (D&C 59:7) is more than a social courtesy; it is a binding commandment.”

“The Message: An attitude of Gratitude,” *New Era*, November 1993, p. 6

- 19 It's clear to me...that to "thank the Lord thy God in all things" (D&C 59:7) is more than a social courtesy; it is a binding commandment.  
James E. Faust, *Ensign*, December 1996, 2

- 20 Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more, it turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.  
Melody Beattie