

**Alma 57:26**

1 *Faith in that which they had been taught to believe.*

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 men and women is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a 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.

**2000 Stripling Warriors**

2  
 Born of covenant keepers  
 Covenant makers  
 Young (13-24 years old)  
 Valiant  
 Courageous—no one greater  
 Energetic—never lazy—hard workers  
 Sober—serious—not light-minded  
 Honest—completely  
 Strong  
 Kept commandments  
 Walked uprightly before God  
 True at all times—integrity  
 Inexperienced in battle  
 Did not doubt mothers  
 Did not fear death  
 Stood firm and undaunted  
 Obeyed and performed with exactness  
 Firm minds  
 Total unwavering trust in God—perfect faith  
 Not one died—wounded, but no death

**Parents of Warriors**

Former Lamanites--converts  
 Anti-Nephi-Lehites—People of Ammon  
 Covenant makers and keepers  
 Witnessed supreme sacrifice of men for covenant  
 Many were single-mothers--widows  
 Perfect examples  
 Great teachers  
 Used power of testimony  
 Completely committed—consecrated hearts

3 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)

4 In today’s gray world, we can and must make our homes a place of refuge. They can be places of light and peace and acceptance. In a publication called *The Family in America*, Bryce Christensen discusses the importance of this. He writes that the number of homeless people on the street “does not begin to reveal the scope of homelessness in America. For since when did the word home signify merely physical shelter, or homelessness merely the lack of such shelter?.... Home [signifies] not only shelter, but also emotional commitment, security, and belonging. Home has connoted not just a necessary roof and warm radiator, but a place sanctified by the abiding ties of wedlock, parenthood, and family obligation; a place demanding sacrifice and devotion, but promising loving care and warm acceptance” (“HomeLess America,”

5 It is critical to remember that home is not a synonym for house. Home is a place to recreate both body and soul. Like home plate in baseball, it’s the place where you can stop running. For too many people, coming home is like arriving at a second job. With all the chores to do, bills to pay, mail to answer, emails to answer and the rest, home can seem more like a pit stop than a sanctuary. Bring some domestic bliss—or at least a greater degree of domestic tranquility—into your home and your life by realizing:

Your home is 1% structure and contents, 99% living beings. Home is yourself, the people you live with, your pets, and your plants.

Your home needs to be a reflection of yourself, not of your decorator or a design magazine.

Home is the place where you are most thoroughly yourself, with no pretenses. It is the place where you feel most intensely and grow most prolifically. Seemingly thankless home-maintenance chore can be surprising teachers of humility, patience, and acceptance.

Balance between home and work, family and friends, interior pursuits and exterior endeavors is extremely personal.

We hear so many messages about what we’re supposed to do and be that it’s easy to tune into one of those voices and decide it’s ours. But this is your home we’re talking about; a place so sacred, so private, and so yours that you need a key to get into it. It’s the last place you want people who don’t even know you, much less love you, deciding how you should conduct your life...

From *Creating a Charmed Life* by Victoria Moran

- 6 “Whatever the era... whatever the times, one thing will never change, fathers and mothers, if you have children... they must come first. Your success as a family... our success as a society... depends not on what happens at the White House, but on what happens inside your house.”  
*Barbara Bush, A memoir, 540*

- 7 Most of us would not shirk from the task of defending our families if they were in physical danger—even giving up our own lives, if necessary. Yet are we as quick to make the less obvious sacrifices necessary to protect our families from spiritual dangers? Elder Neal A. Maxwell wondered, “Given the gravity of current conditions, would parents be willing to give up just one outside thing, giving that time and talent instead to the family? Parents and grandparents, please scrutinize your schedules and priorities in order to ensure that life’s prime relationships get more prime time!” Bishop H. David Burton further elaborated on the kinds of sacrifices parents need to make in our day: “Effective family leadership requires both quantity and quality time.... If giving your family quantity time means focusing less on providing the ‘wants’ in life or putting aside nonfamily involvement with fishing poles, golf clubs, boats, trips, and so on, those things should be done immediately.” Or perhaps protecting our families in our day requires us to give up certain career options so that we can be in our homes with our children, or certain entertainment choices so that the Spirit can be in our homes with our children. Just as the Nephites were required to defend their families from physical danger at great personal sacrifice, we are required to defend our families from spiritual danger at great personal sacrifice.  
 Robert Eaton, *Digging Deeper*, pp. 144-145.

- 8 “We are primarily for the nurture of our children.”  
 Nurture or nourish:
1. Sustain with food
  2. Supply what is necessary for life, health and growth
  3. Cherish
  4. Strengthen and promote
  5. Give warm affectionate physical and emotional support and care
  6. Bring up and train
  7. Educate

9 Jacob 5 is 6-1/2 pages all about nourishing a grove of olive trees (us).

Master Servant:

nourish	graft	stretched forth hand all day long	preserve
prune	watch	spare a little longer	lay up fruit
dig	labor	called more servants to help	obey
pluck	plant	cut down	rejoice
off	wept	transplant	
cast out	care	grieve	
burn	dung	balance root and top	

10 “The magic that happens at family dinners isn’t the food on the table, but the conversations around it,” reports a study from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. “Three in four teens report that they talk to their parents about what’s going on in their lives during dinner; and eight in 10 parents agree that by having family dinner they learn more about what’s going on in their teens’ lives. These conversations are key: Teens who say that they talk to their parents about what’s going on in their lives over dinner are less likely to smoke, drink and use marijuana than teens who don’t have such talks with their parents.”

The study continues: “Teens who have frequent family dinners are almost three times as likely to say they have an excellent relationship with their mother and three times likelier to say they have an excellent relationship with their father; they are also more than twice as likely to report that their parents are very good at listening to them.

“Teens themselves understand the value of family dinners: nearly three-quarters of teens think that eating dinner together with their parents is important. Most teens (60 percent) who have dinner with their parents fewer than five nights a week wish they could eat dinner with their parents more often. (“Importance of Family Dinner VI”).

Elaine Dalton, *A Return to Virtue*, p. 10.

11 **“Essential Ingredient**

By the end of the day, this typical Latter-day Saint family is just barely hanging on. One child is racing to soccer practice, another to piano lessons. A third has a school project due in the morning.

The dad, who is called to serve the youth in the Church, has only a few minutes after work before he needs to be to the meetinghouse.

And the mother is trying to help the younger child with homework in between driving the older children to their many activities.

Something has to give.

Let’s hope it is not family dinner.

Researchers at one of America's most prestigious universities have called family dinner an essential ingredient in the recipe for raising happy, healthy children. In addition, family dinner is a predictor in keeping children away from unhealthy behaviors.

More than a decade of research by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University has consistently found that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

"If I could wave a magic wand to make a dent in our nation's substance abuse problem, I would make sure that every child in America had dinner with his or her parents at least five times a week," said Joseph A. Califano, Jr., chairman and president of the center.

According to researchers, frequent family dinners are associated with lower teen substance abuse.

Compared to teens who have five to seven family dinners in a typical week, teens who dine with their families fewer than three nights in a typical week are two times more likely to have tried marijuana, more than twice as likely to have tried cigarettes and one and a half times more likely to have tried alcohol," according to the center's 2006 report, "The Importance of Family Dinners" (part 3).

The report also found that frequent family dinners are associated with higher academic performance.

Teens who have dinner with their families five to seven times in a typical week are more likely to get mostly A's and B's in school compared to teens who dine with their families fewer than three times per week.

Further, academic performance is associated with substance abuse risk; teens who report receiving grades of C or lower are at twice the risk of substance abuse as those who report receiving all A's or all A's and B's (Church News, "Family dinner," Sept. 8, 2007).

All in all, there are numerous benefits to family dinners.

Families that eat together have children who:

Eat healthier meals

Are less likely to become overweight or obese.

Are more likely to stay away from cigarettes.

Are less likely to drink alcohol.

Are less likely to try marijuana.

Are less likely to use illicit drugs.

Are less likely to have friends who abuse prescription drugs.

Will get better grades in school.

Will talk to their parents more.

Will be more likely to tell parents about serious problems.

Will be more likely to feel that their parents are proud of them.

Will live in a home where there is less stress and tension.

"Remember, the family is one of God's greatest fortresses against the evils of our day," said President Ezra Taft Benson during the April 1986 General Conference. "Help keep your family

strong and close and worthy of our Father in Heaven’s blessings. As you do, you will receive faith and strength which will bless your lives forever.”

President Spencer W. Kimball once compared activities associated “with the saving of the family” to an umbrella. “If the umbrella is not opened up, it is little more than a cane and can give little protection from the storms of nature. Likewise, God-given plans are of little value unless they are used” (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, p. 334).

The First Presidency declared, in a Feb. 11, 1999, letter, that “however worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.”

Family dinner is one of those things.

In a day when experts have warned against what they call overscheduled children, it seems the best thing parents can do for their children is to stay home and sit down for regular meals.

Research confirms it will do them more good than soccer and piano combined.

So when you are at the end of your wits, trying to meet the demanding daily needs of your family, it may be helpful to remember the catch promoted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse: “What your kids really want for dinner is you!”

Church News, Published Saturday, March 27, 2010.

### The Kitchen

12	<p>Familiar and strange the kitchen is a holy place-- alive with possibility.</p> <p>A place for the elements. Water in the tap, fire in the stove, earth in the food, air—between, around, above, and below.</p> <p>Behind the cupboard doors are the pots and pans, the bowls and the dishes, the measuring cups, and the measuring spoons—</p> <p>Gunilla Norris</p>	<p>holy things that lie ready for use, much like our dreams that lie waiting</p> <p>The kitchen is alchemical, a place where we cook--actually and spiritually. We come to it for nourishment and ease. We come to it as to a center—</p>	<p>the heart of the house, the heart of dwelling. in the kitchen we are one, linked by hunger— actual and spiritual hunger.</p> <p>We go to the kitchen to be nourished and revealed. It is a holy place.</p>
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## Mothers – Primary Responsible to Nurture

13 You faithful sisters, married or unmarried, who move daily (and with hardly a break) from the garden plot to the crucial minutiae of food labels to the cups and measures of cookery; you, who struggle and preside in the kitchen and keep vigil; you, who reach out to the perennial needs of your family and loved ones; you, who with artistry gather flowers and turn an ordinary table into an altar that summons prayer and thanksgiving; you, who by your presence, turn eating into a feast—into dining in the name of the Lord, and who, therefore, bring a bountiful measure of grace to your table—lend your faith to boys and sometimes inept men.

Truman G. Madsen

14 Yours is the grand tradition of Eve, the mother of all the human family, the one who understood that she and Adam had to fall in order that “men [and women] might be” and that there would be joy. Yours is the grand tradition of Sarah and Rebekah and Rachel, without whom there could not have been those magnificent patriarchal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob which bless us all. Yours is the grand tradition of Lois and Eunice and the mothers of the 2,000 stripling warriors. Yours is the grand tradition of Mary, chosen and foreordained from before this world was, to conceive, carry, and bear the Son of God Himself. We thank all of you, including our own mothers, and tell you there is nothing more important in this world than participating so directly in the work and glory of God, in bringing to pass the mortality and earthly life of His daughters and sons, so that immortality and eternal life can come in those celestial realms on high.

When you have come to the Lord in meekness and lowliness of heart and, as one mother said, “pounded on the doors of heaven to ask for, to plead for, to demand guidance and wisdom and help for this wondrous task,” that door is thrown open to provide you the influence and the help of all eternity. Claim the promises of the Savior of the world. Ask for the healing balm of the Atonement for whatever may be troubling you or your children. Know that in faith things will be made right in spite of you, or more correctly, because of you.

You can’t possibly do this alone, but you do have help. The Master of Heaven and Earth is there to bless you—He who resolutely goes after the lost sheep, sweeps thoroughly to find the lost coin, waits everlastingly for the return of the prodigal son. Yours is the work of salvation, and therefore you will be magnified, compensated, made more than you are and better than you have ever been as you try to make honest effort, however feeble you may sometimes feel that to be.

Remember, remember all the days of your motherhood: “Ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.”

Rely on Him. Rely on Him heavily. Rely on Him forever. And “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope.” You are doing God’s work. You are doing it wonderfully well. He is blessing you and He will bless you, even—no, especially—when your days and your nights may be the most challenging. Like the woman who

anonymously, meekly, perhaps even with hesitation and some embarrassment, fought her way through the crowd just to touch the hem of the Master's garment, so Christ will say to the women who worry and wonder and sometimes weep over their responsibility as mothers, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." And it will make your children whole as well.

In the sacred and holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

"Because She is a Mother," *Ensign*, May 1997.

15 The responsibility mothers have today has never required more vigilance. More than at any time in the history of the world, we need mothers who know. Children are being born into a world where they "wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesian 6:12). However, mothers need not fear. When mothers know who they are and who God is and have made covenants with Him, they will have great power and influence for good on their children.

Mothers who know do less. They permit less of what will not bear good fruit eternally. They allow less media in their homes, less distraction, less activity that draws their children away from their home. Mothers who know are willing to live on less and consume less of the world's goods in order to spend more time with their children—more time eating together, more time working together, more time reading together, more time talking, laughing, singing, and exemplifying. These mothers choose carefully and do not try to choose it all. Their goal is to prepare a rising generation of children who will take the gospel of Jesus Christ into the entire world. Their goal is to prepare future fathers and mothers who will be builders of the Lord's kingdom for the next 50 years. That is influence; that is power.

Julie B. Beck, "Mothers Who Know", Nov. 2007 *Ensign*.

16 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 by the 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 her mission of the house of Israel, she will prepare future missionaries to go out from her home. It is 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 of 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.

## **Fathers – Preside Provide Protect**

17 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 & Robert Clark, *Fathers and Sons in the Book of Mormon*, p. 8.

18 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 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, May 2010 *Ensign*, p. 6

19 Father that loved this Son so much, the Son that honored and revered His Father in every word and deed. For two who were one as these two were one, what must that embrace have been like? What must that divine companionship be yet? We can only wonder and admire. And we can, on an Easter weekend, yearn to live worthily of some portion of that relationship ourselves.

As a father, I wonder if I and all other fathers could do more to build a sweeter, stronger relationship with our sons and daughters here on earth. Dads, is it too bold to hope that our children might have small portion of the feeling for us that the Divine Son felt for His Father?

Might we earn more of that love by trying to be more of what God was th His child? In any case, we do know that a young person’s developing concept of God centers on chatacteristics observed in that child’s earthly parents.

For that reason and many others, I suppose no book I have read in recent months has alarmed me more than a work entitled *Fatherless America*. In this study the author speaks of “fatherlessness” as “the most harmful demographic trend of this generation,” the leading cause of damage to children. It is, he is convinced, the engine driving our most urgent social problems, from poverty to crime to adolescent pregnancy to child abuse to domestic violence. Among the principal social issues of our time is the flight of fathers from their children’s lives.

Of even greater concern than the physical absenteeism of some fathers is the spiritually or emotionally absent father. These are fatherly sins of omission that are probably more destructive than sins of commission. Why are we not surprised that when 2,000 children of all ages and backgrounds were asked what they appreciated most about their fathers, they answered universally, “He spends time with me”?

A young Laurel I met on a conference assignment not long ago wrote to me after our visit and said, “I wish my dad knew how much I need him spiritually and emotionally. I crave any kind comment, any warm personal gesture. I don’t think he knows how much it would mean to me to have him take an active interest in what is going on in my life, to offer to give me a blessing, or just spend some time together. I know he worries that he won’t do the right thing or won’t say the words well. But just to have him *try* would mean more than he could ever know. I don’t want to sound ungrateful because I know he loves me. He sent me a note once and signed it ‘Love, Dad.’ I treasure that note. I hold it among my dearest possessions.”

Well, as with that young woman, I don’t want this talk to sound ungrateful, nor is it meant to make fathers feel they have fallen short. Most fathers are wonderful. Most dads are terrific. I don’t know who wrote these little storybook verses remembered from my youth, but they go something like this:

*Only a dad with a tired face,  
Coming home from the daily race,  
Toiling and striving from day to day,  
Facing whatever may come his way,  
Glad in his heart that his own rejoice  
To see him come home and to hear his voice.*

*Only a dad, but he gives his all,  
Smoothing the way for his children small,  
Doing with courage so stern and grim  
The deeds that his father did for him.  
These are the lines that for him I pen,  
These are the lines that for him I pen,  
Only a dad—but the best of men.*

And brethren, even when we are not “the best of men,” even in our limitations and inadequacy, we can keep making our way in the right direction because of the encouraging teachings set forth by a Divine Father and demonstrated by a Divine Son. With a Heavenly Father’s help we can leave more of a parental legacy than we suppose.

Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Hands of the Father”, *Ensign*, May 1999, p. 15.

- 20 “Old Matthew Wheelock built a wall. A hundred years ago and more, he laid the stony necklace round his fields, from road to river....At first he stacked a few at random, stone on stone. But then the art of each reached out and caught him. He’d build to last a hundred years, a magic weaving, stone on stone... He turned his stones, studied them, until he knew one from another, like his sheep. The wall for him became a giant puzzle.... He set stones slanting inward and used smaller ones to fill the chinks between.... Old Matthew was a wizard with a wall.... And so his wall has stood more than a hundred years, stone hugging stone. He knew the small ones need the big, the big the small. So like the world is Matthew Wheelock’s wall.”

Frances Ward Weller, *Matthew Wheelock’s wall*

- 21 By bringing...spirits to earth, each father and each mother assume towards the tabernacle spirit and towards the Lord Himself... an obligation of the most sacred kind, because the fate of that spirit in the eternities to come, the blessings or punishments which shall await it in the hereafter, depend, in great part, upon the care, the teachings, the training which the parents shall give to that spirit.

No parent can escape that obligation and that responsibility, and for the proper meeting thereof, the Lord will hold us to a strict accountability. No loftier duty than this can be assumed by mortals.

Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, VI:178.

- 22 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.

### **Power of Parents Testimony**

- 23 We have now clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based which excited the inquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God; and we have seen that it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited the inquiry frequently terminated, indeed always terminated when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries and eternal certainty.

*Lectures on Faith 2:56.*

24 ...How often do we testify of the things we hold most precious and dear in this life? For some it may be occasionally--i.e., once a year or once in a while when we are called upon to speak or in a testimony meeting. We are true disciples of Christ; we ought to testify every day in every Latter-day Saint home to our wives/husbands, siblings, and children. These are the people we should love most on this earth. These are those we want to know the truth of this mighty work. Opportunities will come at school, in our work, and in the community to testify to our friends and neighbors not of our faith in a humble and sweet way, as well as to testify to each other and build greater faith.

For example, a son may say to us, "I sure think President Hinckley is a good man."

We could say, "Indeed, he is wonderful."

What if instead we said, "Son, I know he is a prophet of God, a seer, and a revelator. He may be one of the greatest prophets that ever lived."

Can you see the difference? Can you feel the difference?

A daughter might say, "We have a nice bishop."

We could respond, "Yes, sweetheart, he is."

What if we took this opportunity to say, "Sweetheart, he was called by God by revelation. He has the mantle upon him, and he is guided by inspiration in his calling."

Children need to hear their parents testify.

Vaughn J. Featherstone, BYU Devotional given February 13, 2001

25 I share with you an account described in a mother's letter to me relating to prayer. She wrote:

"Sometimes I wonder if I make a difference in my children's lives. Especially as a single mother working two jobs to make ends meet. I sometimes come home to confusion, but I never give up hope.

"My children and I were watching a television broadcast of general conference, and you were speaking about prayer. My son made the statement, 'Mother, you've already taught us that.' I said, 'What do you mean?' And he replied, 'Well, you've taught us to pray and showed us how, but the other night I came to your room to ask something and found you on your knees praying to Heavenly Father. If He's important to you, He'll be important to me.'"

The letter concluded, "I guess you never know what kind of influence you'll be until a child observes you doing yourself what you have tried to teach him to do."

Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 71-72.

26 . . . When we bear record of the good news of the gospel, our spoken testimony invites the Holy Ghost to bear His witness of the truth of the message. It is not our words that carry the power but rather the Spirit of God that accompanies our words and confirms them in the hearts of the listeners. Nephi explained in the Book of Mormon, "For when a man speaketh by the

power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Ne. 33:1).

When we declare where we stand and humbly give words to what we believe and feel, the Spirit also bears witness to our own souls that what we speak is true. President Boyd K. Packer said it simply, “A testimony is to be found in the bearing of it!” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54).

In a society of unstable values and confusing voices, testimony can be the means by which parents give children an anchor for their faith.

. . . When we share our feelings with our little ones and bear record of Him, we open the door for them to share their experiences and to give words to their own spiritual insights and feelings. And when we help children identify the divine source of those feelings, their understanding and love for the Savior will grow line upon line, precept upon precept.

. . . Who can measure the influence of simple, sacred words of testimony? Who can calculate the impact of the Spirit that confirms those words? The seeds of testimony that are planted in the hearts of children when they are young are nourished throughout their lives by hearing the testimonies of those who love them enough to bear witness of the truth.

Susan L. Warner, “Bear Record of Him,” *Ensign*, Nov 1998

27           They cut desire into short lengths  
               And fed it to the hungry fires of courage,  
               Long after, when the flames dies,  
               Molten gold gleamed in the ashes;  
               They gathered it into bruised palms  
               And handed it to their children  
               And their children's children.

*Vitale Raile*

28           I will cut my desires into short day-by-day lengths, and I will feed those lengths to the hungry fires of courage because I want nothing more than for my sacrifices to be accepted, my gold to be purified, even if my hands are bruised. I want you, my children's children, and your children, to know that no matter how hard it gets, it is worth it. It is worth everything, holding nothing back from each other nor from the Lord. Without each other, there is no real reason to build the fire. And without the fire, life falls cold and dark, without purpose, and without meaning.

I want to give you all the gold I have. I yearn to reach out to each of you and place the gold from my bruising but sanctifying experiences into your hands. If I choose well, if I always say yes to what He asks—by covenant—if I sacrifice with my whole heart, I will have purified gold to give to you.

What is the sacrifice? It is all my heart, might, mind, and strength placed on the altar and burnished by the fire of the covenant that refines the gold, the gold that is passed from generation to generation. Being true to the refined love you are handed and then answering back with your own love keeps the fire burning that makes your faces even lighter.

What is joy? The joy is in that love. Because I have felt and do feel that love for you, I have felt that joy. And I want you to feel that joy for yourselves.

*Covenant Hearts*, Marie K. Hafen, p. 270-273