

**Alma 62:40****1** *Prayers of righteous*

There are many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, June 1971 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1971], 16.

**Alma 62:41****2** *Hardened, Softened*

The same testing in troubled times can have quite opposite effects on individuals...

Surely you know some whose lives have been filled with adversity who have been mellowed and strengthened and refined by it, while others have come away from the same test bitter and unhappy.

Boyd K. Packer, *Memorable Stories and Parables*, 93-94.

**3** These people all had basically the same experience. The war was the same length for all people; yet out of the same experience some were hardened and some were softened. What made the difference? It was what they thought of God and his Son.

C. Max Caldwell, "What Think Ye of Christ?" *Ensign*, February 1984, p. 18

**4** It's not so much what happens to us but how we deal with what happens to us. That reminds me of a passage from Alma. After a long war, "many had become hardened," while "many were softened because of their afflictions" (Alma 62:41). The same circumstances produced opposite responses...

Thomas Giles, a Welsh convert who joined the Church in 1844, also suffered much in his lifetime. He was a miner, and while he was digging coal in the mine, a large piece of coal hit him on the head and inflicted a wound nine inches long. The doctor who examined him said the injured man would not live longer than 24 hours. But then the elders came and administered to him. He was promised that he would get well, and that "even if he would never see again, he would live to do much good in the Church." Brother Giles did indeed live but was blind the rest of his life. Within a month of his injury, "he was out traveling through the country attending to his ecclesiastical duties."

In 1856 Brother Giles and his family immigrated to Utah, but before he left his homeland, the Welsh Saints presented him with a harp, which he learned to play skillfully. At Council Bluffs he joined a handcart company and headed west. "Though blind he pulled a handcart from Council Bluffs to Salt Lake City." While crossing the plains his wife and two children died. "His sorrow was great and his heart almost broken, but his faith did not fail him. In the midst of his grief he said as did one of old, 'The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:210)." When Brother Giles arrived in Salt Lake City, President Brigham Young, who had heard his story, loaned Brother Giles a valuable harp until his own arrived from Wales. Brother Giles "traveled from settlement to settlement in Utah,... gladdening

the hearts of the people with his sweet music” (see Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (1901-36), 2:507-8).

James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Oct. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 19-20.

5 Such large-scale adversities as natural disasters and wars seem to be inherent in the mortal experience. We cannot entirely prevent them, but we can determine how we will react to them. For example, the adversities of war and military service, which have been the spiritual destruction of some, have been the spiritual awakening of others. The Book of Mormon describes the contrast:

“But behold, because of the exceedingly great length of the war between the Nephites and the Lamanites many had become hardened, because of the exceedingly great length of the war; and many were softened because of their afflictions, insomuch that they did humble themselves before God, even in the depth of humility” (Alma 62:41).

I read of a similar contrast after the devastating hurricane that destroyed thousands of homes in Florida some years ago. A news account quoted two different persons who had suffered the same tragedy and received the same blessing: each of their homes had been totally destroyed, but each of their family members had been spared death or injury. One said that this tragedy had destroyed his faith; how, he asked, could God allow this to happen? The other said that the experience had strengthened his faith. God had been good to him, he said. Though the family’s home and possessions were lost, their lives were spared and they could rebuild the home. For one, the glass was half empty. For the other, the glass was half full. The gift of moral agency empowers each of us to choose how we will act when we suffer adversity.

Dallin H. Oaks, “Adversity,” *Ensign*, July 1998, 7-8.

### **Alma 62:49-51**

6 “*Not lifted up in pride*”

In the hour of trial, temptation, and when we feel the least like praying then is the time for us to go to our secret chamber and kneel before the Lord.... We cannot begin to pray too early.... When we neglect this and other duties we do not have the same claim on the blessings of the Lord... The Lord was slow to hearken to the Nephites in their rebellion until they were humbled. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2:135.

### **Conclusion to War Chapters**

7 Governments Survive Only If They Honor the Commandments of God

There are principles that may bring us back into heaven’s favor again. These principles are embodied in the Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments. They came from God Himself to Moses, and form the foundation of civilized society. Designed by the Almighty, these laws plumb the depths of human motives and urges, and, if adhered to, will regulate the baser passions of mankind. No nation has ever perished that has kept the commandments of God.

Neither permanent government nor civilization will long endure that violates these laws. The conscience of all right-thinking people declares this to be so. (Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, p. 105)

### What, Then, Is Our Charge?

I have been asked the question, “How does a good Church member honor and sustain the law of the land in whatever country he may live?” . . .

We all know that the governments of the different countries vary greatly. They range from a despotic form of government under a dictator—where the people have no voice in the government; where they are deprived of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, the right to own and deal in property; where they are not permitted to choose their vocations nor to come and go at will—to a completely democratic government where the citizens enjoy complete freedom.

Our Twelfth Article of Faith states, “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”

Also, the fifth verse of the 134<sup>th</sup> section of the Doctrine and Covenants reads:

“We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments . . . and that all governments have a right to enact such laws as in their own judgments are best calculated to secure the public interest; at the same time, however, holding sacred the freedom of conscience.”

A member of the Church can honor and sustain the law and make the greatest contribution to his country and to the welfare of mankind by:

1. Obeying strictly all the laws of the land and teaching his children by precept and by example to honor and sustain the law and those in authority in the home, in the community, in the Church, and in the organizations of the wards and stakes of the Church.
2. Using his best influence to improve the laws by all legal means at his disposal.
3. Striving to elect good, honorable men to office and actively supporting them.
4. Being prepared to accept office and serve diligently in the best interests of his community or country.
5. Observing and keeping the laws of God.

Though the laws of the land vary from place to place and from time to time, the laws of nature and the laws of God are the same in all countries. One can more fully and completely honor and sustain the law of the land by keeping the laws of God.

We are instructed in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:21, 22.) (N. Eldon Tanner, “Submission to Secular Authority,” *Instructor*, Oct. 1963, p. 352.)

Book of Mormon Student Manual, p. 343