

3 Nephi 12:1-2*Commission of Apostles*

1 While in every instance the Nephite twelve are spoken of as disciples, the fact remains that they had been endowed with divine authority to be special witnesses for Christ among their own people. Therefore, they were... apostles.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:122.

2 Paul taught the Ephesians that Christ gave apostles and prophets to the Church “for the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith... that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:11-14). The Twelve are a unifying channel of light as Jesus had proclaimed. Immaturity in the gospel and shallowness of soul can create a lack of unity with the Twelve. In the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “And Jesus dwells in the Father, because they are one; the Twelve dwell in Jesus, because they are one; and all the saints dwell in the Twelve, because the same perfect unity prevails in their hearts. “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deuteronomy 6:4), and his command to all his disciples is: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27)” (*Mortal Messiah* 4:115)

Kenneth W. Anderson, *The Twelve – A Light Unto the People*.

3 I wish now to say a few words about the men who are members of the Quorum of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles... I am confident that no one of them ever aspired to office. No one campaigned for it. I think none ever thought himself worthy of it. This is a singular and remarkable thing... I say for each and all that we have no personal agenda. We have only the Lord’s agenda. There are those who criticize when we issue a statement of counsel or warning. Please know that our pleadings are not motivated by any selfish desire. Please know that our warnings are not without substance and reason. Please know that the decisions to speak out on various matters are not reached without deliberation, discussion, and prayer. Please know that our only ambition is to help each or you with your problems, your struggles, your families, your lives... I know that there is no desire to teach anything other than what the Lord would have taught.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, General Conference, October, 1992.

4 Remember how, with Pharaoh’s angry army in hot pursuit, ancient Israel aligned themselves with the Lord’s instructions? Moses stretched forth his hand the Red Sea parted. With towering walls of water on each side, Israel walked through the narrow passage obediently, and no doubt quickly! There were no warnings about conforming on that day! There are passages ahead which will require similar obedience, as prophets lead the “men [and women] of Christ” in a straight and narrow course. (67)

Neal A Maxwell, General Conference, 1992

5 The apostolic and prophetic foundation of the Church was to bless in all times, but *especially* in times of adversity or danger, times when we might feel like children, confused or disoriented, perhaps a little fearful, times in which the devious hand of men or the maliciousness of the devil would attempt to unsettle or mislead. Against such times as come in our modern day, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve are commissioned by God and sustained by you as prophets, seers, and revelators...

... Such a foundation in Christ was and is always to be a protection ... In such days as we are now in—and will more or less always be in—the storms of life “shall have no power over you...” (Helaman 5:12)”

Jeffrey R. Holland, Conference Report, Oct 2004, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 7.

3 Nephi 12:1-2

6 *Blessed*

The word *blessed* means a condition of happiness or spiritual well-being.

Robert J. Matthews, *A Symposium on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 52-53.

7 Blessedness is defined as being higher than happiness. “Happiness comes from without and is dependent on circumstances; blessedness is an inward fountain of joy in the soul itself, which no outward circumstances can seriously affect” (Drummelow’s Commentary).

Harold

B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 56-57.

3 Nephi 12: 1-12

8 *Sermon on the Mount*

The Savior’s transcendent message in the Sermon on the Mount is of burning-bush importance to all of us: “But seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God and to establish his righteousness” [Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38; see also Matthew 6:33]. This message needs to penetrate into our hearts and souls. As we accept this message, we are taking our personal stand in this life.

James E. Faust, Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 68; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 67.

9 Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be “an autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds,” and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives.

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [1973], 55-56.

10 The sermon to the Nephites was given to a mixture of people. There was a multitude of believers, and among them there were also twelve special disciples who had been called to be the Lord’s personal representatives. The biblical Sermon on the Mount, on the other hand, was

given to a small number of believers, primarily the twelve Apostles whom Jesus had chosen in the Holy Land.

The Jewish Sermon on the Mount was a missionary-oriented discourse preparatory to sending forth the Twelve to preach. The Nephites sermon was directed to the multitudes, with only portions of it being specifically pointed to the twelve Nephite disciples.

The Sermon on the Mount was given *prior* to the Lord’s atonement and fulfilled the law of Moses; the Nephite sermon was *after* the Atonement and fulfillment of the law of Moses.

Robert J. Matthews, *A Symposium on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 52.

Sermon at the Temple in Bountiful

11

The Constitution of Christianity (A Guide to Celestial Living)

A Audience = baptized, covenant followers and especially the 12 disciples (3 Nephi 12:1-2)

B Beatitudes = “blessings” for those who believe and follow Christ (vv 3-12; Luke 6:20-26)

Pre-condition: <i>Blessed</i> are these Saints -	Divine Promises: they shall -
1.The repentant and baptized	be visited with fire and the Holy Ghost
2.The poor in spirit [who have come unto Him]	receive the kingdom of heaven
3.They that mourn	be comforted
4.The meek	inherit the earth
5.They who hunger and thirst after righteousness	be filled [with the Holy Ghost]
6.The merciful	obtain mercy
7.The pure in heart	see God
8.The peacemakers	be called the children of God
9.They who are persecuted for my name’s sake	receive the kingdom of heaven

Victor L. Ludlow, Campus Education Week, 2004

12

The Beatitudes deal first with a person’s relationship with God.... The emphasis then shifts to a person’s feelings about, or that spring within himself. For example: Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Then the emphasis shifts again to one’s attitude toward others. For example: Blessed are the peacemakers. And finally a fourth emphasis appears, dealing with how one should handle other people’s attitudes toward himself: Blessed are all they who are persecuted for righteousness sake, or who are reviled and persecuted falsely...

In the incomplete way that the Beatitudes are listed in the King James Version, the first category (a person’s relationship to God) is missing. It was, therefore, quite essential that the Joseph Smith Translation add two beatitudes about faith, repentance, baptism, and the Holy Ghost. It was equally significant that these were placed at the beginning of the list in their proper doctrinal sequence.

Robert J. Matthews, CES *Book of Mormon Symposium*, 1982, 53 as quoted in *Latter-day commentary on the New Testament*, Ed J. Pinegar, K. Douglas Bassett, and Ted L. Earl [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 86.

13 The LDS Bible Dictionary explains that the Beatitudes “describe certain elements that go to form the refined and spiritual character, and all of which will be present whenever that character exists in its perfection. Rather than being isolated statements, the Beatitudes are interrelated and progressive in their arrangement” (“Beatitudes,” 620). The Guide to the Scriptures adds, “The Beatitudes are arranged in such a way that each statement builds upon the one that precedes it” (Beatitudes”)

14 President Harold B. Lee taught that the Beatitudes embody the “constitution for a perfect life”: “Four of them have to do with our individual selves,” and four “have to do with man’s social relations with others” (*Decisions for Successful Living* [1973], 57, 60). The following chart illustrates that relationship:

With Self	With Others
Blessed are the poor in spirit.	Blessed are the meek.
Blessed are all they that mourn.	Blessed are the merciful.
Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness.	Blessed are the peacemakers
Blessed are all the pure in heart.	Blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name’s sake.

15 In an April 1992 General Conference sermon, President Gordon B. Hinckley, then first counselor in the First Presidency, spoke of the beatitudes as part of a broader code of conduct that comes to bear upon Latter-day Saints. He said:

“As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, you have been taught many values of divine origin. These values are based on the commandments which the finger of the Lord wrote upon the tables of stone when Moses spoke with Jehovah upon the mountain. You know them. You are familiar with them.

“The values you have been taught likewise are based upon the beatitudes which Jesus spoke to the multitude. These with others of His divine teachings, constitute a code of ethics, a code of values, a code of divine doctrine familiar to you and binding upon you.

“To these have been added the precepts and commandments of modern revelation.

“Combined together these basic, divinely given principles, laws and commandments must constitute your value system. You cannot escape the consequences of their observance. If you will shape your lives according to their pattern, I do not hesitate to promise that you will know much of peace and happiness, of growth and achievement. To the degree that you fail to observe them, I regretfully say that the fruits will be disappointment, sadness, misery, and even tragedy.”

The Church News, September 16, 2000.

16 Giovanni Papini, an Italian atheist, decided at about age sixteen to write a life of Christ for the purpose of debunking Him. In the process he became converted to Christianity and has given to us one of our good lives of the Master. In his book, *The Life of Jesus*, he evaluates Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as "The master work of the Spirit at the height of its power."

The Sermon on the Mount, [he wrote] is the greatest proof of the right of men to exist in this infinite universe. It is our sufficient justification, the patent of our soul's worthiness, the pledge that we can lift ourselves above ourselves to be more than men, the promise of that supreme possibility, the hope of our rising above the beast.

If an angel come down to us from the world above should ask us what our most priceless possession is, the master-work of the Spirit at the height of its power, we would not show him the great and wonderful oiled machines of which we foolishly boast, ... but we would offer him the Sermon on the Mount.

Who has read it, even once, and has not felt at least in that brief moment while he read, a thrill of grateful tenderness, and an ache in his throat, a passion of love and remorse, a confused but urgent longing to act – so that those words shall not be words alone, nor this Sermon mere sounds and signs, but so that they shall be imminent hope, life, alive in all those who live, present truth for always and for everyone? He who has read it, if only once, and has not felt all this, he deserves our love beyond all other men, because all the love of men can never make up to him for what he has lost.

Papini, *Life of Christ*, pp. 85, 86.

17 To walk in the steps of Jesus is to emulate His life and to look unto Him as our source of truth and example. Each of us would do well to periodically review His teachings in the Sermon on the Mount so that we are totally familiar with His way. In that sermon, one of the greatest of all sermons, we are told to be a light to others, to control our anger, to reconcile bad feelings with others before bringing gifts to the Lord, to love our enemy, to refrain from unholy and unvirtuous practices, to not allow lust to conceive in our hearts. We are further instructed how to pray, how to fast, and how to regulate our priorities. When these teachings are applied, Jesus said, we are like the wise man who built his house on a firm, solid foundation.

We, His disciples, must follow the way of the Master. He is our guide to happiness here and eternal life hereafter. Our success in life will be determined by how closely we learn to walk in His steps.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Come Unto Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 37.

3 Nephi 12:3

18 *Poor in Spirit*

Poor in spirit are those who are fully and painfully aware of their own spiritual poverty, of the faultiness of their own souls, of the smallness of the good that is in us all, or the moral indigence of most men... Those complacent people on the other hand who drape themselves in self-satisfaction, taking no heed of the foulness accumulated and hidden under their vain glory, will not enter the kingdom.

Giovanni Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 88.

19 The Master said “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3) The poor in spirit, of course, means those who are spiritually needy, who feel so impoverished spiritually that they reach out with great yearning for help...

Every one of us, if we would reach perfection, must one time ask ourselves this question, “What lack I yet?” if we would commence our climb upward on the highway to perfection. Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 210.

20 Obviously in the 3 Nephi rendering, being poor in spirit is not in itself a virtue, but it will be so if such humility brings one to claim the blessings of the kingdom through the waters of baptism, making covenants, and moving toward all the promises given to covenant-making disciples. It is significant that the phrase “come unto me” is used at least four more times in the twenty or so verses that follow this one.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 262-263.

21 To be poor in spirit is to feel yourselves as also spiritually needy, ever dependent upon the Lord for your clothes, your food and the air you breathe, your health, your life, realizing that no day should pass without fervent prayer of thanksgiving, for guidance and forgiveness and strength sufficient for each day’s need.

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 57.

22 Come unto Christ through proclaiming the gospel, perfecting our lives, and redeeming our dead. As we come unto Christ, we bless our own lives, those of our families, and our Father in Heaven’s children, both living and dead.

Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 98; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 85.

3 Nephi 12:4

Mourn

23 “Those who bear their sorrows patiently grow in patience; those who sorrow for others grow in sympathy; those who sorrow for their own sin deepen their penitence; those who intercede for the sins of the world grow in the likeness of the great Sin-bearer and intercessor.” The comfort comes from the exercise of the spiritual faculty and from the consciousness of growing more like God.

Dummelow’s *Biblical Commentary*, p. 639.

24 The afflicted, the weeping, those who feel disgust for themselves and pity for the world, who do not live in the supine stupidity of everyday life, who mourn over their own unhappiness and that of their brothers, who grieve over failures, over the blindness which delays the victory of light – because light for men cannot come from the sky if their own eyes do not reflect it – who grieve over the remoteness of that righteousness dreamed-of again and again, promised a thousand times, and yet always further away through our fault and everyone’s fault; those who mourn over an offense receive instead of increasing the wrong by revenge, and who weep over the wrong they have done and over the good they might have done and did not; those who care

little about the loss of a visible treasure but strain after an invisible treasure; those who mourn, hasten with their tears the day of grace, and it is right that they shall some day be comforted.

Giovanni Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 89

- 25 The gardener moves like God amidst
 The garden's adolescent life,
 And flowers he loves he chasteneth
 With stake and pruning knife.
 He nips them in the hopeful bud,
 Puts inhibitions on their seed.
 The flower that is not disciplined
 Will soon become a weed.
 Marjorie Greenbie, *Personality*, p. 235.

- 26 The scriptures have many examples of people, who were saved after showing great faith...
 But the scriptures also have many examples of devout people who did not get divine intervention during a crisis. Abinadi was burned at the stake; John the Baptist was beheaded; Alma and Amulek's followers were cast into the flames. To do well does not mean everything will always turn out well. The key is to remember that faith and obedience are still the answers—even when things go wrong, perhaps especially when things go wrong.

Remember the Lord has promised that He will help us as we face adversity. He has particular compassion for those who suffer. It was He who said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4)...

The world sees peace as the absence of conflict or pain, but Jesus offers us solace despite our suffering...

He will strengthen us and bring us peace in the time of our trials.

David E. Sorensen, *Ensign*, May 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 73-74.

3 Nephi 12:5

- 27 *Meek*

If the Lord was meek and lowly and humble, then to become humble one must do what he did in boldly denouncing evil, bravely advancing righteous works, courageously meeting every problem, becoming the master of himself and the situations about him and being near oblivious to personal credit.

Humility is not pretentious, presumptuous, nor proud. It is not weak, vacillating, nor servile. Humble and meek properly suggest virtues, not weaknesses...

How does one get humble? To me, one must constantly be reminded of his dependence...on the Lord. How remind one's self? By real, constant, worshipful, grateful prayer.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings*, 232-33.

28 George McDonald observed, “Meekness alone makes the spiritual retina pure to receive God’s things as they are.”

29 It takes self-control, self-discipline to conquer anger, hatred, and revenge. Meekness calls for self-mastery. It is a strong virtue. A meek man is like water, which when it meets an obstacle, rises slowly and patiently and ultimately runs over the obstruction and wears it away.

The meek man is submissive only in the sense that he accepts the inevitable; he accommodates himself to the decrees of destiny. Because he submits to the will of God, he gains new strength, a new power.

Leland S. Monson, *Look to the Mount*.

30 In conclusion, the submission of one’s will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God’s altar. The many other things we “give,” brothers and sisters, are actually the things He has already given or loaned us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God’s will, then we are really giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give! Consecration thus constitutes the only unconditional surrender which is also a total victory!

Neal A. Maxwell

31 The meek and the humble are those who are teachable. They are willing to learn. They are willing to listen to the whisperings of the still, small voice for guidance in their lives. They place the wisdom of the Lord above their own wisdom.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Stand a Little Taller* [Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2001], 18.

32 I believe there is perhaps a distinction between humility and meekness. It may be said that meekness is a condition of voluntary humility... (Alma 32:14-16).

Alvin R. Dyer, *Improvement Era*, Dec. 1970, 125; as quoted in *Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament*, Ed J. Pinegar, K. Douglas Bassett, and Ted L. Earl [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 90.

33 A meek man is defined as one who is not easily provoked or irritated and forbearing under injury or annoyance. Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. The meek man is the strong, the mighty, the man of complete self-mastery. He is the one who has the courage of his moral convictions, despite the pressure of the gang or the club. In controversy his judgment is the court of last-resort and his sobered counsel quells the rashness of the mob. He is humble-minded; he does not bluster. “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty” (Proverbs 16:320). He is a natural leader and is the chosen of army and navy, business and church, to lead where other men follow. He is the “salt” of the earth and shall inherit it.

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 60.

34 **3 Nephi 12:6**
Hunger and thirst after Righteousness

James A. Talmage defines righteousness by substituting the word “truth” for “righteousness.”
Jesus the Christ, p. 231

35 Jesus' admonition to hunger and thirst after righteousness is a comparison of a spiritual need with a physical need. When a man has physical hunger or thirst, his body drives him to satisfy those appetites. Those who are attuned to the Spirit can receive a similar drive to satisfy their spiritual needs. However, without the Spirit, the desire for spiritual needs is diminished and people suffer spiritual malnutrition with recognition of their condition. Their suffering from the lack of the Spirit must be drawn to their attention through others' teachings, or they remain spiritually deficient. They will be filled spiritually to the degree that they seek after righteousness.

Monte S. Nyman, *Divine Ministry – The First Gospel*, p. 158.

36 A new convert to the Church recently shared this story. "I was in and out of enforced confinement most of my teen years. It wasn't so bad being there... But it did get boring, so when anyone had any reading material, funny books, magazines, or anything, we would trade our food for a chance to borrow those items. One day I saw a fellow with a nice, thick book. I knew it would take a long time to read, so I offered him my main course food items for a week. He accepted my offer and loaned me the book. As I read it, I knew I was reading something very special and very true. The book for which I had sacrificed my food was titled the Book of Mormon. When I had a chance, I found a new way of life. I love that book for which I traded my food."

Marvin J. Ashton, Conference Report, Apr. 1981 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1

37 [A] subtle and... dangerous enemy is self-righteousness, supposing that what pleases us will be good for others.

Perhaps the great divider between the seekers of righteousness and the self-righteous is that those who hunger and thirst after true righteousness cannot rest until satisfaction and happiness come to those whom they strive to help. They hurt when others hurt. The self-righteous are often deed-conscious rather than people-conscious. They seem to glory in forms and traditions, formulas and standards. They cast alms to the poor without loving them or stopping to discern what the real problem might be.

Those who seek true righteousness quickly learn one thing—their own impotence.

Chauncey C. Riddle; in *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 140.

38 Our ability to hear spiritually is linked to our willingness to work at it. President Hinckley has often said that the only way he knows to get anything done is to get on his knees and plead for help and then get on his feet and go to work. That combination of faith and hard work is the consummate curriculum for learning the language of the Spirit. The Savior taught, "Blessed are all they who do *hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Ne. 12:6; emphasis added). Hungering and thirsting translate to sheer spiritual labor. Worshipping in the temple, repenting to become increasingly pure, forgiving and seeking forgiveness, and earnest fasting and prayer all increase our receptivity to the Spirit. Spiritual work *works* and is the key to learning to hear the voice of the Lord.

Sheri L. Dew, "We Are Not Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 96.

39 Let us then labor for an inward stillness, an inward stillness and an inward healing, that perfect silence when the lips and heart are still, and we no longer entertain our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions, but God alone speaks in us and we wait in singleness of heart, that we may know His will, and in the silence of our spirits that we may do that only.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

40 An intelligent being, in the image of God, possesses every organ, attribute, sense, sympathy, affection that is possessed by God himself.

But these are possessed by man, in his rudimental state, in a subordinate sense of the word. Or, in other words, these attributes are in embryo, and are to be gradually developed. They resemble a bud, a germ, which gradually develops into bloom, and then, by progress, produces the mature fruit after its own kind.

The gift of the Holy Ghost adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions, and affections, and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates and matures all the fine toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness and charity. It develops beauty of person, form and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation and social feeling. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole things.

Parley P. Pratt, *Key to Theology*, pp. 95-96.

41 “If in the end we have not chosen Jesus Christ it will matter little what we have chosen instead.”
Neal A. Maxwell

3 Nephi 12:7

42 *Merciful*

How godlike a quality is mercy? It cannot be legislated. It must come from the heart... I am convinced that there comes a time, possibly many times, within our lives when we might cry out for mercy on the part of others. How can we expect it, unless we have been merciful ourselves?...

Mercy is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The degree to which each of us is able to extend it becomes an expression of the reality of our discipleship under Him who is our Lord and Master.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1990 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1990], 68-69.

43 Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th' quick,
 Yet with my nobler reason against my fury
 Do I take part. The rarer action
 In virtue than in vengeance, they being penitent,
 The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
 Not a frown further. Go release then, Ariel.
 Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act V, scene 1, lines 27-30.

44 What is mercy? The question brings the Red Cross to mind. Rightly, for mercy is the Red Cross spirit in the world. Mercy lays claim on us whenever and wherever there is suffering. It pities and succors every creature, not man alone. It refrains from cruel sport as well as from cruel speech. It adjures cruelty even in cases of deserved punishment. It has mitigated the harshness of our penal systems and must still further transform them. It lays hands, this “quality of mercy,” on the injustices of trade and on the vast cruelty of war, and resolves to erase them. But mercy has deeper movements than those usually assigned to the Red Cross, for it is no true mercy to restore a man’s body and neglect his spirit. This resolute prayer is part of mercy. See, for an instance, the conversation in Tennyson’s “in the Children’s Hospital,” between a doctor and a nurse. Thus sacrificial love is part of mercy. What of the morally crippled? What of those poor in honor, however they may be rich in money? What of those diseased by greed? What of the wicked in the world? We are “to give for alms those things which are within.” (Luke 11:41) – and that is costly business, requiring our tiny cavalry within his Calvary.
The Interpreter’s Bible, VII, p. 284.

45 It is impressive to watch those who with a compelling spirit of kindness reach out to those in distress, to help and assist, to feed and provide for, to nurture and to bless. As these extend mercy, I am confident that the God of Heaven will bless them, and their posterity after them, with His own mercy. Those who impart so generously will not lack in their own store and in their own homes, but there will be food on their tables and a roof over their heads. One cannot be merciful to others without receiving a harvest of mercy in return.
 Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 77.

46 Our salvation rests upon the mercy we show to others. Unkind and cruel words, or wanton acts of cruelty toward man or beast, even though in seeming retaliation, disqualify the perpetrator in his claims for mercy when he has need of mercy in the day of judgment before earthly or heavenly tribunals. Is there one who has never been wounded by the slander of another whom he thought to be his friend? Do you remember the struggle you had to refrain from retribution? Blessed are all you who are merciful for you shall obtain mercy!
 Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 60.

47 The quality of mercy is not strain'd
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd
 It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown;
 His scepter shows his force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
 But mercy is above the scepter'd sway;
 It is an attribute of God himself;
 And earthly power doth then show likest God's
 When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
 Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
 That, in the course of justice, none of us
 Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy,
 And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
 The deeds of mercy.

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, scene 1, lines 184-202.

3 Nephi 12:8

48 *Pure in Heart*

It is more important that a surgeon's medical instruments be clean than that they be sharp. So it is with man. It is more important that his mind be clean than that it be keen.

Leo J. Muir, *Flashes from the Eternal Semaphore*.

49 The pure in heart are those who have no other wish than perfection, no other joys than victory over the evil which hunts us down at every side. He who has his heart crammed with furious desires, with earthly ambitions, with carnal pride, and with all the lusts which convulse this ant-heap of the earth, can never see God face to face, will never know the sweetness of His magnificent felicity.

Giovanni Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 90.

50 We have the power so to live, that becoming pure in heart, we shall see the face of God while we yet dwell as mortals.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Conference Report*, October 1977, p. 52.

51 Who are the pure in heart? Those who let no selfishness or hatred or vile thought becloud their spiritual vision.

David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1935, 102; as quoted in *Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament*, Ed J. Pinegar, K. Douglas Bassett, and Ted L. Earl [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 95.

52 “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Sometimes we say, “Oh, that isn’t possible.” But the Savior does not deal with idle words....

Now, there are many approaches toward this experience. There are dreams and visions and actual sight... Every one of you here tonight can perfect your lives so that you may see God....

We will not seek to see our Heavenly Father to satisfy our curiosity, but only to have the great satisfaction of knowing that he is our Father.

The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 74.

53 If you would see God, you must be pure. There is in Jewish writings the story of a man who saw an object in the distance, an object that he thought was a beast. As it drew nearer he could perceive it was a man and as it came still closer he saw it was his friend. You can see only that which you have eyes to see. Some of the associates of Jesus saw him only as a son of Joseph the carpenter. Others thought him to be a winebibber or a drunkard because of his words. Still others thought he was possessed of devils. Only the righteous saw him as the Son of God. Only if you are the pure in heart will you see God, and also in a lesser degree will you be able to see the “God” or good in man and love him because of the goodness you see in him. Mark well that person who criticizes and maligns the man of God or the Lord’s anointed leaders in his Church. Such a one speaks from an impure heart.

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 59.

3 Nephi 12:9

Peacemakers

54 Peacemakers in the full sense, only those who believe and spread the fulness of the gospel are peacemakers within the perfect meaning of this Beatitude. The gospel is the message of peace to all mankind. Children of God: Those who have been adopted into the family of God as a result of their devotion to the truth. By such a course they become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 3:26-29; 4:1-7.)

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1971-73], 1:216.

55 Never will peace and hatred be able to abide in the same soul. Permanent peace will elude those individuals or groups whose objective is to condemn, discredit, rail at, or tear down.... True Christians have no time for contention. Lasting peace cannot be built while we are reviling or hating others. Those who preach hate, ridicule.... cannot be classified as peacemakers.

If I do not have peace within me, others around me will suffer.

Marvin J. Ashton, Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 87, 89.

56 Let us bind up the wounds—oh, the many wounds that have been caused by cutting words, by stubbornly cultivated grievances, by scheming plans to “get even” with those who may have wronged us. We all have a little of this spirit of revenge in us. Fortunately we all have the power to rise above it...

There is no peace in harboring old grudges. There is no peace in reflecting on the pain of old wounds. There is peace only in repentance and forgiveness. This is the sweet peace of the

Christ, who said, “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Be Thou an Example* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981], 52.

57 Peacemakers shall be called the children of God. The trouble-maker, the striker against law and order, the leader of the mob, the law-breaker are prompted by motives of evil and unless they desist will be known as the children of Satan rather than God... That one who is quarrelsome or contentious... is violating a fundamental principle laid down by the Master as an essential in the building of a full rich life. “Peace and goodwill to men on earth” was the angel song that heralded the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 61.

58 His perfected philosophy teaches also that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong, and pray for our enemies and for those who despitefully use us. There are no other gospels or systems of philosophy that bear these marks of divinity and immortality. You may hunt the philosophies of the world in vain for any code of ethics that insures the peace and rest that may be found in His comprehensive, yet simple, gospel.

Joseph F. Smith

59 There are thousands of plans which the enemy of all righteousness employes to decoy the hearts of the people away from righteousness...

Some say, “Brother Brigham, you slide along and the devil lets you alone.” If I have battles with him, I can overcome him single-handed quicker than to call in my neighbors to help me. If I am tempted to speak an evil word, I will keep my lips locked together. Says one, “I do not know about that, that would be smothering up bad feelings. I am wonderfully tried about my neighbor, he has done wrong, he has abused me and I feel dreadful bad about it. Had I not better let it out than to keep it rankling within me? No. I will keep bad feelings under and actually smother them to death, then they are gone. But as sure as I let them out they will live and afflict me. If I smother them in myself, if I actually choke them to death, destroy the life, the power, and vigor thereof, they will pass off and leave me clear of fault, and pure,... and no man or woman on earth knows that I have ever been tempted to indulge in wicked feelings...

If you feel evil, keep it to yourselves until you overcome that evil principle. This is what I call resisting the devil, and he flees from me...

While we have the privilege of speaking to each other, let us speak words of comfort and consolation. When you are influenced by the Spirit of holiness and purity, let your light shine; but if you are tried and tempted and buffeted by Satan, keep your thoughts to yourselves—keep your mouths closed; for speaking produces fruit, either of a good or evil character.

If persons think they have greater sorrow and affliction than any others, when they reveal that sorrow and affliction, it produces fruit. You frequently hear brethren and sisters say that they feel so tried and tempted, and have so many cares, and are so buffeted, that they must give vent to their feelings; and they yield to the temptation, and deal out their unpleasant sensations to their families and neighbors. Make up your minds thoroughly, once for all, that if we have trials,

the Lord has suffered them to be brought upon us, and he will give us grace to bear them; and that they do not concern our families, friends, and neighbors, we can bear them off alone. But if we have light or intelligence—that which will do good, we will impart it... Let that be the determination of every individual for spirit begets spirit—likeness, likeness; feelings beget their likeness... If, then, we give vent to all bad feelings and disagreeable sensations, how quickly we beget same in others, and load each other down with our troubles, and become sunk in darkness and despair!

In all your social communications... let all the dark, discontented, murmuring, unhappy, miserable feelings—all the evil fruit of the mind, fall from the tree in silence and unnoticed; and so let it perish, without taking it up to present to your neighbors. But when you have joy and happiness, light and intelligence, truth and virtue, offer that fruit abundantly to your neighbors, and it will do them good, and so strengthen the hands of your fellow-beings.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* (27 January 1856), 3:194-5.

60 Life is too brief
 Between the budding and the falling leaf.
 Between the seed time and the golden sheaf,
 For hate and spite.
 We have no time for malice and for greed;
 Therefore, with love make beautiful the deed;
 Fast speeds the night.

Life is too swift
 Between the blossom and the white snow's drift.
 Between the silence and the lark's uplift,
 For bitter words.
 In kindness and in gentleness our speech
 Must carry messages of hope, and reach
 The sweetest chords.

Life is too great
 Between the infant's and the man's estate
 Between the clashing of earth's strife and fate,
 For petty things.
 Lo! We shall yet who creep with cumbered feet
 Walk glorious over heaven's golden street,
 Or soar on wings!

W. M. Vories

3 Nephi 12: 10-12**61** *Persecuted*

In the trial where Pilate knew very well that the man before him was not guilty, he, for political reasons, had to bring in a verdict of guilty. And in this, Jesus was silent. We learn a good deal from this in our lives when enemies contend against us and when we are falsely accused. There are times when it is best to follow the Lord's example and not attempt to answer every accusation made against us.

Robert D. Hales, Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 25.

62 Draw comfort from the words of the Master when we as a church are spoken of by those whose lives are torn with hate. They lash out at one thing and another. They manufacture and spread vile falsehoods behind which there is not a shred of truth. There is nothing new about this. But we shall go forward, returning good for evil, being helpful and kind and generous. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Stand a Little Taller* [Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2001], 23.

63 The great harm that may come from persecution is not from the persecution itself but from the possible effect it may have upon the persecuted who may thereby be deterred in their zeal for the righteousness of their cause... Persecution seems to be so universal against those engaged in a righteous cause that the Master warns us, "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26)...

If you stand firmly for the right despite the jeers of the crowd or even physical violence, you shall be crowned with the blessedness of eternal joy. Who knows but that again in our day some of the saints or even apostles, as in former days, may be required to give their lives in defense of the truth?

Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 61-62.

64 You must expect insult and calumny. They will condemn you because you wish to change bestial men into saints. Wallowing in the foulness of the bestiality, they detest the idea of leaving their filth. But they will not be satisfied to strike only at your body, they will strike also at your soul. They will accuse you of all crimes, they will stone you with slander and contumely. Hogs will say that you are filthy, asses will swear that you are ignorant, ravens will accuse you of eating carrion, rams will drive you away as ill-smelling, the dissolute will cry out upon the scandal of your corruptness and thieves will denounce you for theft. But you must always rejoice because the insult of evil men is the consecration of your goodness, and the mud thrown at you by the impure is the pledge of your purity. This is, as St. Francis says, "the perfect joy." Beyond all the graces which Christ gives to His friends is the grace of conquering oneself and willingly enduring injury, opprobrium, pains, discomforts.

Giovanni Papini, *Life of Christ*, p. 92.

65 The enemies of this people will never get weary of their persecution against the Church, until they are overcome. I expect they will array every thing against me that is in their power to control, and that we shall have a long and tremendous warfare. He that will war the true

Christian warfare against the corruptions of these last days will have wicked men and angels of devils, and all the infernal powers of darkness continually arrayed against him. When wicked and corrupt men oppose, it is a criterion to judge if a man is warring the Christian warfare. When all men speak evil of you falsely, blessed are ye. Shall a man be considered bad, when men speak evil of him? No. If a man stands and opposes the world of sin, he may expect to have all wicked and corrupt spirits arrayed against him. But it will be but a little season, and all these afflictions will be turned away from us, inasmuch as we are faithful, and are not overcome by these evils. By seeing the blessings of the endowment rolling on, and the kingdom increasing and spreading from sea to sea, we shall rejoice that we were not overcome by these foolish things.

TPJS, p. 259

66 In the early days of the Southern States Mission, men of heroic mold were required to face persecutions and persist in their endeavors to reach the honest in heart. Many instances of heroism could be chronicled, but one of the most interesting was when a mother's letter played a very important part in saving a young elder from being cruelly whipped and possibly from being killed.

Elder Frank Croft was a missionary in the state of Alabama... He was forcefully taken into a secluded spot of the backwoods for the purpose of receiving lashings across his bare back at the hands of armed and vicious men... Elder Croft was commanded to remove his coat, shirt, and garments, and bare his body to his waist. Then he was stood against a nearby tree to which his arms and body were tied to prevent his moving while being lashed across the back until the blood would flow.

Having no alternative, he complied with the demands of the mob, but in so doing, there fell from his pocket a letter he had recently received from his mother... Elder Croft, a short time before, had written his parents and in this letter had seriously condemned mob violence, the Ku Klux Klan, and others for their cowardly treatment of the elders.

The letter that had fallen from his coat was an answer from his mother. In it she counseled, "My beloved son, you must remember the words of the Savior when He said, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven..."

Surely, my boy, they who are mistreating you elders know not what they do, or they would not do it. Sometime, somewhere, they will understand and then they will regret their action and they will honor you for the glorious work you are doing. So, be patient, my son, love those who mistreat you and say all manner of evil against you, and the Lord will bless you and magnify you in their eyes and your mission will be gloriously successful. Remember also, my son, that day and night, your mother is praying for you always."

Elder Croft, tied to the tree, was so situated that he could see that the leader of the mob had picked up the fallen letter and evidently had decided to read it before giving the word to his men to start the lashing... He closed his eyes in resignation to his fate...

Opening his eyes a moment or two later, and feeling that the leader had had time to finish reading the letter, he was amazed to see that the man had retired to a nearby tree stump and,

having seated himself, was apparently reading the letter; but what was more amazing to the elder was the change in the man's countenance. Much of the hardness and cruelty in his face was gone; his eyes were slightly dimmed by moisture. His whole personality appeared to have changed. He would read a line or two or a paragraph and sit and ponder...

To Elder Croft, it seemed that an interminable time had elapsed before the mob leader arose and, approaching the helpless elder, said: "Feller, you must have a wonderful mother. You see, I once had one, too." Then, addressing the other members of the mob, he said, "Men, after reading this Mormon's mother's letter, I just can't go ahead with the job. Maybe we had better let him go." Elder Croft was released and went his way, and the loving influence of his mother seemed very neat.

Bryant S. Hinckley, *Best-Loved Stories of the LDS People*, ed. by Jay A. Parry, Jack M. Lyon, and Linda Ririe Gundry [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 2:322-324.

3 Nephi 12:13

67 *Salt*

To perform our covenant duty as the salt of the earth, we must be different from those around us...

This requires us to make some changes from our family culture, our ethnic culture, or our national culture. We must change all elements of our behavior that are in conflict with gospel commandments, covenants, and culture.

Dallin H. Oaks, Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 41

68

Among the ancient Hebrews *salt* was an indispensable element having both temporal and spiritual uses. It was used as a preservative, in seasoning food, and in all animal sacrifices (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24; Mark 9:49-50). So essential was it to the sacrificial ordinance that it was the symbol of the covenant made between God and his people in connection with that sacred performance (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5)....

They had power, in other words, to be the seasoning, savoring, preserving influence in in the world, the influence which would bring peace and blessings to all others....

Only the saints of God who keep the commandments are the salt of the earth.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Second Edition [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 667-668.

69

Salt has two basic uses, as a seasoning and as a preservative. Both uses are for food. In comparing salt to people, Jesus was saying that they were to season the world with his teachings. They were to take the gospel throughout the land as salt is sprinkled in food for flavor. The Lord used the same comparison with the Latter-day Saints: "When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and *the savor of men*" (D&C 101: 39; italics added). To savor is to add to, to improve the taste. Those who are members of the Church enter into "a new and an everlasting covenant" (D&C 22:1). and are thereby commissioned to spread the gospel to the world. Since most of the world to whom the gospel was taken first in this dispensation were already Christian, they were

not to give them a totally new diet, but were to savor their belief in Christ and make it palatable for celestial living.

As a preservative, salt was used as a brine to enable food to be kept without spoiling (before refrigeration). In the gospel sense, he that believeth and was baptized would be saved from the spoils of the world. The Lord also used this analogy with the Latter-day Saints: “For they were set to be a light unto the world, and to be *the saviors* of men” (D&C 103:9; italics added). Through the performing of ordinances for those who accept the teachings of Jesus, the doors of salvation and even exaltation in the celestial kingdom are opened. Through the saving ordinances of the gospel, for both the living and the dead, all the inhabitants of the earth will have the opportunity to be preserved from the spoiling effects of Satan and his followers.

Jesus attached a warning to his analogy: “If the salt shall lose its savor... the salt shall be thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men” (v.13). Salt does not decompose. However, it loses its usability when it is mixed with impurities such as dirt or other foreign elements. Therefore, the Savior is warning the people against their mixing foreign cultures, the philosophies of men, or the revelations of the devil with the doctrine of Christ. To do so loses the savor of the gospel. The Lord attached this same warning to both of the revelations to the Latter-day Saints concerning their being salt (D&C 101:40; 103:10 quoted above). If the gospel is perverted, or the ordinances are changed or performed without authority the savoring influence of the gospel and saving ordinances of the gospel are no more efficacious. As salt was cast out and used in Jesus’ day for rooftops or walkways when it had lost its savor, those members of the Church who perverted the gospel were to be cast out into the worldly element with which they had mixed.

Monte S. Nyman, *Divine Ministry – The First Gospel*, p. 168-169.

70 When men are called into mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth, and the savor of men; “*They are called to be the savor of men*” (D&C 101:39-40; italics added).

The word savor (*s-a-v-o-r*) denotes taste, pleasing flavor, interesting quality, and high repute....

A world renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it too, is lost through mixture and contamination.

Flavor and quality flee a man when he contaminates his mind with unclean thoughts, desecrates his mouth by speaking less than the truth, and misapplies his strength in performing evil acts...

I would offer these simple guidelines, especially to the young men, as the means to preserve one’s savor: If it is not *clean*, do not think it; if it is not true, do not speak it; if it is not good, do not do it (see Marcus Aurelius, “The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius,” in *The Harvard Classics*, Charles W. Eliot, ed. New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1909, p. 211)

Carlos E. Asay, Conference Report, Apr. 1980, 60-61; or *Ensign*, May 1980, 42-43.

3 Nephi 12:14-1671 *Light*

Growing up on Long Island, in New York, I understood how vital light was to those traveling in the darkness on the open sea. How dangerous is a fallen lighthouse! How devastating is a lighthouse whose light has failed?

We who have the gift of the Holy Ghost must be true to its promptings so we can be a light to others.

“Let your light so shine before men,” said the Lord, “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” [Matthew 5: 15-16].

We never know who may be depending on us. And, as the Savior said, “we know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them” [3 Nephi 18:32].

Robert D. Hales, Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 82; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 71.

72 You have to contribute to an ideal home by your character, controlling your passion, your temper, guarding your speech, because those things will make your home what it is and what it will radiate to the neighborhood....

A father visited his son’s new home. The son was proud to show him the new bedroom, the new installations in the kitchen. After they were through with their visit, the father said, “Yes, it is beautiful, but I see no signs of God in y our home.” And the son said, “I went back , and as I looked through the rooms, I noticed I had nothing suggestive of the presence of the Redeemer or the Savior.”

What I am saying is, we [have a]greater responsibility than ever before, as men of the priesthood, as women of the Church, to make our homes such as will radiate to our neighbors harmony, love, community duties, loyalty. Let our neighbors see it and hear it. Never must there be expressed in a Latter-day Saint home an oath, a condemnatory term, an expression of anger or jealousy or hatred. Control it! Do not express it!...

The Savior set us the example, always calm, always controlled, radiating something which people could feel as they passed.... God help us to radiate strength, control, love, charity, which is another name for love, consideration, best wishes for all human beings.

Teachings of Presidents of the Church—David O. McKay [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 228-229.

73 The Lord calls us to point the way. In a word which is too often shrouded in uncertainty and doubt, the Light of Life bids us to let our light shine, to stand as beacons in the storm of the night, and to certify our discipleship by preachment and practice. Discipleship entails example. Discipleship involves standing out from the generality of mankind and standing up for what is true and right and good. We come to make a difference only when we are different, and that difference must be substantive enough to be witnessed and then acknowledged by others...

We allow our light to shine—our testimonies, our witness of the truthfulness of the work in which we are engaged, and our deeds of Christian service—not that observers might commend and praise us but that they might turn their lives toward him who is the source of conviction and

the personification of goodness. “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye should hold up—that which ye have seen me do” (3 Nephi 18:24). Christ is the Light. We are at best lamps, dim reflections of him. But to the degree that the light of his Spirit shines in our souls, to the degree that his image is in our countenances, to the degree that our good works motivate others to sing the song of redeeming love and glorify God, we are in the line of our duty as disciples.

Truly, the Lord is our light. As we bask in that which emanates from him, we prepare ourselves to go where his glorious light shall shine everlastingly. In speaking of the holy city, the celestialized earth, John said: “The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof... And [the inhabitants of the city] shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light and they shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 21:23; 22:4-5).

Robert Millet, *Eye Single to the Glory of God*, pp.43-49.

74 One summer evening I sat musing studiously and withal restfully in the open air outside the door of the room in which I lodged and studied. A stranger approached. I noticed that he carried a satchel. He was affable and entertaining. I brought another chair from within, and we chatted together till the twilight had deepened into dusk, the dusk into darkness.

Then he said: “You are a student and doubtless have much work to do o’ nights. What kind of lamp do you see?” And without waiting for a reply he continued: “I have a superior lamp I should like to show you, a lamp designed and constructed according to the latest achievements of applied science, far surpassing anything heretofore produced as a means of artificial lighting.”

I replied with confidence...: “My friend, I have a lamp, one that has been tested and proved. It has been to me a companion through many a long night... I have trimmed and cleaned it today; it is ready for the lighting. Step inside; I will show you my lamp, then you may tell me whether yours can possibly be better.”

We entered my study room, and with a feeling which I assume is akin to that of the athlete about to enter a contest with one whom he regards as a pitiably inferior opponent, I put the match to my well-trimmed Argand.

My visitor was voluble in his praise. It was the best lamp of its kind he said. He averred that he had never seen a lamp in better trim. He turned the wick up and down and pronounced the adjustment perfect...

“Now,” said he, “with your permission I’ll light *my* lamp.” He took from his satchel a lamp then known as the “Rochester.” It had a chimney which compared with mine, was a factory smoke-stack alongside a house flue. Its hollow wick was wide enough to admit my four fingers. Its light made bright the remotest corner of my room. In its brilliant blaze my own little Argand wick burned a weak, pale yellow. Until that moment of convincing demonstration I had never known the dim obscurity in which I had lived and labored, studied and struggled.

“I’ll buy your lamp,” said I; “you need neither explain nor argue further.” I took my new acquisition to the laboratory that same night, and {found that it burned} fully four times the intensity of my student lamp.

Two days after purchasing, I met the lamp-peddler on the street, about noontime. To my inquiry he replied that business was good; the demand for his lamps was greater than the factory supply. “But,” said I, “you are not working today?” His rejoinder was a lesson. “Do you think that I would be foolish as to go around trying to sell lamps in the daytime? Would you have bought one if I had lighted it for you when the sun was shining? I chose the time to show the superiority of my lamp over yours; and you were eager to own the better one I offered, were you not?”

Such is the story. Now consider the application of a part, a very small part, thereof.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.”

The man who would sell me a lamp did not disparage mine. He placed his greater light alongside my feebler flame, and I hastened to obtain the better.

The missionary servants of The Church of Jesus Christ today are sent forth, not to assail or ridicule the beliefs of men, but to set before the world a superior light, by which the smoky dimness of the flickering flames of man-made creeds shall be apparent. The work of the Church is constructive, not destructive.

James E. Talmage, *The Parables of James E. Talmage*, 3-6; as quoted in *Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament*, Ed J. Pinegar, K. Douglas Bassett, and Ted L. Earl [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 102-104.

3 Nephi 12:17-20, 46-47

75 *Law of Moses fulfilled*

When did Jesus Christ fulfill the law of Moses?

“The Law of Moses... continued until the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when this carnal law was fulfilled and was replaced by the fulness of the gospel.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:84.

76 Beginning with 3 Nephi 12:19 is a series of commandments and sayings that Jesus uses to typify the difference between the old covenant of the Mosaic law and new covenant of the gospel. These verses begin the section of the sermon that culminates in the commandment to be perfect. Jesus employs a definite pattern in these verses. First, he quotes the law (or in some cases, the proverb) and the old understanding of it. Then he says, in essence, that is how the law has been understood or obeyed, but listen, this is how he wants and has always wanted us to obey it. Through the contrast of the old and the new, Jesus reveals truth.

In all of the contrasts, the interpretation and application that Jesus makes is characterized by one new thing—love. The Jews had developed a system of laws. They were strict and unbending because they were designed to protect the “holiness” of the individual performing the act. However, this kind of holiness often ignored other people and even God. This can be illustrated by briefly looking at the teachings of the Savior in the following cases.

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to Be Perfect*, p. 108

77 By the time of the Savior’s mortal ministry, the law of Moses had been at the foundation of Israelite religious and social life for over a thousand years. The Nephites possessed written records of the law on the brass plates, and the Nephite prophets taught and observed the law. When the Savior visited the Nephites, He taught them that the law had been completely fulfilled in Him. However, they were not to think of the law of Moses as “destroyed” or having “passed away” (3 Nephi 12:17-18). How is it that the Savior “fulfilled” but did not “destroy” the law of Moses? The law of Moses included both *moral* and *ritual* aspects.

The *moral* aspects included such commandments as “Thou shalt not kill” and “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Jesus Christ taught the Nephites that not only were they to avoid murder and adultery, but also anger and lust—conditions of the heart that lead to murder and adultery (see 3 Nephi 12:21-30). Thus the gospel of Jesus Christ fulfilled the law in the sense that it expanded the moral aspects of the law of Moses by being a higher law; it included the moral imperatives of the law of Moses and placed them in the context of broader gospel principles that require a change of heart.

The *ritual* aspects of the law of Moses included commandments about animal sacrifice and burnt offerings—what Abinadi called “performances” and “ordinances” (Mosiah 13:30). The Nephite prophets understood that these parts of the law of Moses were meant to help people look forward to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 25:24; Jacob 4:5; Mosiah 16:14-15). Therefore, when the Savior’s mortal mission was completed, these forward-looking ordinances could no longer look ahead to a future event—the event had happened, and the ordinances were fulfilled in the sense that it concluded. Thus the Savior taught the Nephites that animal sacrifices and burnt offerings were to be “done away,” and that His followers were to offer instead the “sacrifice” of “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (3 Nephi 9:19-20). In place of ordinances that looked forward to the Atonement, the Savior instituted the sacrament, an ordinance of remembrance, to look back to the Savior’s atoning sacrifice (see 3 Nephi 18:1-11).

BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual 2003, pp. 305-306.

78 Jesus came to restore that gospel fulness which men had enjoyed before the day of Moses, before the time of the lesser order. Obviously he did not come to destroy what he himself had revealed to Moses anymore than a college professor destroys arithmetic by revealing the principles of integral calculus to his students. Jesus came to build on the foundation Moses laid. By restoring the fulness of the gospel he fulfilled the need of adherence to the terms and conditions of the preparatory gospel. No one any longer needed to walk by the light of the moon, for the sun had risen in all its splendor.

Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:219-20; see also Stephen E. Robinson, “The Law after Christ,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1983, 68-73.

3 Nephi 12:18*Jot or tittle*

- 79 “Jot” refers to the *yodh*,... the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet;... “tittle” is an *apex* or *little horn*, and refers to the horn-like points which are seen on Hebrew letters.

James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, [Plainfield, New Jersey: Logan International, 1972], 337.

3 Nephi 12:19

- 80 *Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*

I witness that “redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah;... unto all those who have *a broken heart and a contrite spirit*; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered” [2 Nephi 2:6-7; italics added]. This absolute requisite of “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” prescribes the need to be submissive, compliant, humble (that is, teachable), and willingly obedient.

Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 53

I am like a broken vessel. Psalm 31:12

- 81 *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalm 34:18*

Create in me a clean heart, I God; and renew a right spirit within me...

The sacrifices of God are a broken heart: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Psalm 51:19, 17

- 82 Sometimes the events of life can damage our highest hopes and dreams. Some of our sweetest possessions and most cherished ideals end up be bruised, and sometimes they are broken. In the world of items we treasure we may break a lovely piece of china or a pocket watch handed down from an ancestor. Sometimes even bones break, even more painfully, marriages or family ties are broken. In several circumstances we truly feel “like a broken vessel”; we are certain that, as with Humpty Dumpty, all the king’s horses and all the king’s men will never be able to put us together again.

But someone wrote once that God apparently loves—and turns to our benefit—broken things. It takes broken clouds to nourish the earth, it takes broken earth to grow grain, it takes broken grain to make bread, it takes broken bread to nourish us, and so are the circles of life. This divine sequence is akin to the Savior’s parable that no kernel of corn can grow to fruition until it is first thrown away and, in effect, lost in the earth before its bounty can come back to us.

So it is with broken hearts and contrite spirits. We must remember that the children of God are still under covenant to sacrifice. However, we do not offer the firstlings of the flock or the initial harvest from the vineyard anymore. No, with the coming of Christ, that kind of sacrifice was put to an end and we were commanded to offer newer symbols of Christ’s Atonement: “Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

In may be that among all the broken things God loves, He loves a broken heart most of all. So when our day of sacrifice comes—and perhaps sorrow will come with it—be trusting and be believing. Know that God will accept your offering and that, through the great miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, He will give your heart back to you healed and whole. That is the ultimate truth taught by the Resurrection. Christ, the Great Healer, will make recompense for us in time and in eternity. By His grace and the goodness of God, all broken vessels are fully repaired.

Jeffrey Holland, *For Times of Trouble*, pp. 69-70.

3 Nephi 12:22

83 *Anger*

Subdue anger and control all its children: hatred, revenge, envy, and jealousy.

Leland S. Monson, *Look to the Mount*

84

[Comparing Matt: 5:22] “How interesting that the phrase ‘without a cause’ is not found in the inspired Joseph Smith Translation (see Matt: 5:24), nor in the 3 Nephi 12:22 version. When the Lord eliminates the phrase ‘with a cause,’ He leaves us without an excuse... Understanding the connection between agency and anger is the first step in eliminating it from our lives. We can choose not to become angry. And we can make that choice today, right now; ‘I will never become angry again.’ Ponder this resolution.”

Lynn Robbins, *Ensign*, May 1998, pp. 80-81.

85

A violent temper is such a terrible corrosive thing. And tragedy is that it accomplishes no good; it only feeds evil with resentment and rebellion and pain. To any man or boy within the sound of my voice who has trouble controlling his tongue, may I suggest that you plead with the Lord for the strength to overcome your weakness, that you apologize to those you have offended, and that you marshal within yourselves the power to discipline your tongue...

Anger is not an expression of strength. It is an indication of one’s inability to control his thoughts, words, his emotions. Of course it is easy to get angry. When the weakness of anger takes over, the strength of reason leaves. Cultivate within yourselves the mighty power of self-discipline.

Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 25.

86

Any man who is a tyrant in his own home is unworthy of the priesthood. He cannot be a fit instrument in the hands of the Lord when he does not show respect and kindness and love toward the companion of his choice.

Likewise, any man who is a bad example for his children, who cannot control his temper, or who is involved in dishonest or immoral practices will find the power of his priesthood nullified. Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Oct. 2001 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], 65.

87 During the eighth grade, our small country school had a great fast-pitch softball team, and as the pitcher and captain, I was determined to lead our team to the league championship. Our season went well, and ultimately we found ourselves playing for the title... The game was tight from the opening pitch, but as we went into the final inning we were ahead 2-1...

First, I walked the lead-off batter. Then, the next hitter popped a fly ball to the shortstop, who dropped it. The third batter grounded to the third baseman, who let the ball get past her. The bases were loaded. The next batter hit a line drive right at the first baseman—who ducked. Two runners scored, and my vision of trophies began to evaporate. Then the next hitter whacked the ball deep, and as the left fielder chased it into the corner of the outfield, all of the runners scored...

From the mound, I began shouting at my teammates. Unfortunately, these weren't the "come-on-you-can-do-it" words of encouragement you would expect and hope to hear from a team captain. This was a good, old-fashioned tongue-lashing in which I basically chewed out the entire infield. This scene had gone on for perhaps a minute when suddenly I realized that I was not alone on the mound.

For there stood Mother, who had seen enough. Taking me by the arm, she escorted me off the field and motioned me into a nearby school bus. Action of the field stopped. The umpire and coaches looked back and forth at each other and then at the school bus where, with her index finger waving in a steady beat, Mother was issuing an imperative that became indelibly etched in my heart and mind: "*You* are out of control. You have forgotten *who* you are, *where* you are, and what is really important. And if you would *ever* like to play ball again, I suggest that you correct this mistake right now."

Suddenly horrified at the realization of what I had done, and humbled by Mother's chastening, I walked sheepishly off the bus. With hundreds of pairs of eyes watching me, I walked to the umpire and apologized. Then to my coach and apologized. Then to my teammates and apologized. And then back to the mound to play out the final inning.

We lost the game.

But worse, I lost the opportunity to accept defeat graciously, to support my teammates in a time of disappointment, to lose with honor and self-respect.

Mother was right. I had been out of control. I had forgotten who I was and what standard of behavior was expected of me; where I was and what was appropriate on a ball diamond and during a game; and what was important—which was not only to play well but to behave well. Sheri Dew, *No Doubt About It* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2001], 5-7.

3 Nephi 12: 22

88 *Raca, Fool*

What is the meaning of the word "Raca"?

"In the original Semite tongue *raca* means vain or empty. Thus, the Savior is telling us not to call other people by such derogatory titles."

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, p. 265 (emphasis in original)

89 “Profane and vulgar epithets and expressions – for such, in the Jewish culture, were the nature of the words here recited [Raca] – when hurled at our fellowmen lead to damnation... Profane, vulgar, contemptuous, and unholy expressions degrade their author more than they taint the soul of the hearer.”

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 2:136.

90 A “gossip” is a person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do the damage.
Anonymous.

91 Look for the good in those about you, and emphasize that good. Never go around gossiping about your associates or speaking unkind words concerning them. Such words will only backfire to hurt you. Jehovah has commanded. “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (Ex. 20:16).

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1996 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996], 92.

92 While driving through a small town in Mexico, a man ran over and killed a dog that darted in front of him. From that day on he was known in the village as *mata-perros*. No consideration or thought was given to the origin of the name; he was simple the “dog-killer.” For those who came along later, not knowing the circumstances, their minds conjured up a terrible image of what he had done.

Reputations built on rumor or reality or established by nickname can be virtually impossible to overcome. The adage “Do not wash your dirty linen in public” is wise counsel. It is not necessary, appropriate, or healthy to expose our private or family mistakes and sins for public scrutiny.

Lynn A. Mickelsen, Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 8-9.

93 We are too prone to listen to, accept, and repeat... criticism... without stopping to realize the harm we may be doing to some noble person; and as is done so often, we excuse and justify ourselves by saying, “Well, where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire,” whereas in reality we are adding to the smoke, when the fire referred to may be only the fire of malice started by some envious person.

Sometimes even when our friends are accused of wrongdoing or gossip is started about them we disloyally accept and repeat what we hear without knowing the facts. It is sad indeed that sometimes friendships are destroyed and enmity created on the basis of misinformation...

Only by suspending judgment do we exhibit real charity.

N. Eldon Tanner His Life and Service, G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 331-332.

94 A man told a story once that he afterwards found was not true and it worried him very much, so he went to his pastor and told him the story he had related which could lead to dire consequences. He said, “Now I have found that the story which I have spread is not true; what shall I do?”

The pastor said “Go home and bring me a bag of feathers.” The man thought that was an add request, but he did as he was told and brought back a bag of feathers to the pastor, who then said,

”Now, you take these feathers, and put one on the doorstep of each of those to whom you told the story.”

The man did as directed and came back and said, “I have done as you said.”

“Now,” said the pastor, “go back and gather all those feathers.”

“But,” the man said, “I cannot do that. There is a strong wind and they have all blown away.”

And the pastor said, “That is just as your words are. Once they are out in the air, you can never get them back again.”

David O. McKay, *Secrets of a Happy Life*, comp. by Llewelyn R. McKay [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], 134.

95 Snide remarks or racial slurs, hateful epithets, malicious gossip, and mean and vicious rumor-mongering have no place among us...

None of us needs someone who only points out our areas of weakness and the ways in which we have fallen short. We need someone who encourages us to go forward, to try again, to reach a little higher this time. Excellence is difficult to achieve in a vacuum....

Imagine how our own families... would change if we... strengthen one another, look for and accentuate the virtues in one another, and speak graciously concerning one another. Imagine the cumulative effect if we treated each other with respect and acceptance, if we willingly provided support.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000] 49-50.

“Keep each person’s name safe in your home”...

96 What a blessing it would be if all of us could follow that counsel, if each of our names truly could be safe in the home of others... All too often we seek to be excused from the very behavior we condemn in others. Mercy for me, justice for everyone else is a much too common addiction. When we deal with the name and reputation of another, we deal with something sacred in the sight of the Lord.

There are those among us who would recoil in horror at the thought of stealing another person’s money or property but who don’t give a second thought to stealing another person’s good name or reputation...

May I pose two simple questions: (1) How can you say you love your fellowman when behind his back you seek to diminish his good name and reputation? (2) How can you say you love your God when you cannot even love your neighbor? ...

I would like to say a few words to the Primary children...

Do you remember the story of Bambi, the little deer, and all of his friends in the forest? If you do, you will remember that one of Bambi’s good friends was a rabbit named Thumper. Thumper was about your age. He was a neat rabbit, but he had one problem. He kept saying bad things about people. One day Bambi was in the forest learning how to walk, and he fell down. Thumper just couldn’t resist the temptation. “He doesn’t walk very good, does he? Thumper blurted out. His mother felt very bad and said, “What did your father tell you this morning?” And then Thumper, looking down at his feet and kind of shifting his weight, said, “If you can’t say somethin’ nice, don’t say nothin’ at all.” That’s a good piece of advice that all of us need to

follow. What I need you to do, young people, is this. If you hear anyone in your family start to say something bad about someone else, will you please just stamp your foot and say in a loud voice, “If you can’t say somethin’ nice, don’t say nothin’ at all.”

Cree-L Kofford, *Ensign*, May 1999 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1999], 82-83.

3 Nephi 12:23-24

97 *Reconciled to thy brother*

We should not permit ourselves to go about from day to day with a spirit of murmuring and fault-finding in our hearts... If we have anything in our hearts against any of these brethren, it is our duty, as conscientious members of the Church, first, as the Spirit may direct, to go to them alone and make known to them our feeling toward them and show them the cause of such feeling; not with a desire in our hearts to widen or increase the difficulty, but we should go to them in the spirit of reconciliation and brotherly love, in a true Christian spirit, so that if any feeling of bitterness exists within us it may be absolutely removed.... We should seek to love one another and to sustain one another as children of God and as brothers and sisters in the cause.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975], 223-224.

98 Christ taught that peace comes from within—not from without—the result of what a man thinketh. He emphasized more than He did the outward ritual that which is within the heart of men.

He put even before worship the principle of reconciliation. “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar; and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar; and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Matt. 5:23, 24).

Harboring an evil thought injures the person who harbors it more than the man against whom he holds ill feeling. Modern psychology emphasizes that truth. If we would have peace, we should banish our enmity for others. Bearing enmity in our hearts injures us and drives peace from our hearts (David O. McKay, *The Instructor*, Dec.. 1957, 353).

As quoted in *Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament*, Ed. J. Pinegar, K. Douglas Bassett, and Ted L. Earl [American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2002], 110-111.

3 Nephi 12:25-26

99 *Avoid legal entanglements*

I consider it is a disgrace to the community, and in the eyes of the Lord, and of Angels, and in the eyes of all the Prophets and Revelators that have ever lived upon the earth, when a community will descend to the low, degraded state of contention with each other; this little bickering, jarring, fault-finding.... Suppose every heart would say. If my neighbor does wrong to me, I will not complain, the Lord will take care of him. Let every heart be firm, and every one say, I will never contend any more with a man for property, I will not be cruel to my fellow-creature, but I will do all the good I can, and as little evil as possible. Now, where would be the wrong of taking this course? This is the way to approximate toward a celestial state.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855], 1:32.

Be reconciled to each other. Do not go to the courts of the Church nor to the courts of the land for litigation. Settle your own troubles and difficulties;... there is only one way in which a difficulty existing between man and man can be truly settled, and that is when they get together and settle it between them. The courts cannot settle troubles between me and my brother.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975], 257.

3 Nephi 12:27-30

Lust and Adultery

100 Was there ever adultery without dishonesty? In the vernacular, the evil is described as “cheating.” And cheating it is, for it robs virtue, it robs loyalty, it robs sacred promises, it robs self-respect, it robs truth. It involves deception. It is personal dishonesty of the worst kind, for it becomes a betrayal of the most sacred of human relationships and a denial of covenants and promises entered into before God and man. It is the sordid violation of a trust. It is a selfish casting aside of the law of God, and like other forms of dishonesty its fruits are sorrow, bitterness, heartbroken companions, and betrayed children.

Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 5

101 Love, as defined by the Lord, elevates, protects, respects, and enriches another. It motivates one to make sacrifices for another. Satan promotes counterfeit love, which is lust. It is driven by a hunger to appease personal appetite. One who practices this deception cares little for the pain and destruction caused another. While often camouflaged by flattering words, its motivation is self-gratification.

Richard G. Scott, Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 43-44; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 35.

102 Not committing adultery would bring one to a terrestrial plateau; but only by eradicating lust could one come to harmony with celestial law.

Byron R. Merrill, *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni from Zion to Destruction*, ed. by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University Press, 1995], 171.

103 Sometimes we limit our own progress by thinking of minimum expectations as maximum goals. “Thou shalt not commit adultery” is the minimum expectation the Lord has of our conduct towards each other. The highest, celestial law is: “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out” (D&C 42:22-23; 63:16).

W. Jeffrey Marsh, *Ensign*, July 1994, p. 47.

104 Many years ago a young man came to me... and made a confession of a wrong and sinful act. He justified himself by saying that he happened to be in a bookstore at the closing hour, and when the door was locked he yielded to temptation. He rather blamed the circumstances for his fall.

But I said, “It wasn’t the circumstances; it wasn’t the locked door, nor the enticement. You had thought of that before you went to that bookstore. If you had never thought of that act, there would have been no circumstance strong enough to entice or to tempt you, a missionary, to fall. The thought always precedes the act.

David O. McKay, *Man May Know for Himself*, p. 133

105 “The greatest battles in life are fought within the silent chambers of the soul.”
David O. McKay

3 Nephi 12:30

106 *Take Up Your Cross*

The *daily* taking up of the cross means *daily* denying ourselves the appetites of the flesh.

By emulating the Master, who endured temptations but “gave no heed unto them,” we, too, can live in a world filled with temptations “such as [are] common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Of course Jesus noticed the tremendous temptations that came to Him, but He did not process and reprocess them. Instead, He rejected them promptly. If we entertain temptations, soon they begin entertaining us! Turning these unwanted lodgers away at the doorstep of the mind is one way of giving “no heed.” Besides, these would-be lodgers are actually barbarians who, if admitted, can be evicted only with great trauma.

Neal A. Maxwell, Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 88; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 71.

107 Taking up the cross first requires denying ourselves the lusts and appetites of the flesh. “And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself of *all* ungodliness, and *every* worldly lust, and keep my commandments” (JST Matthew 16:26 emphasis added)...

Yet “deny yourselves” is not a popular message in today’s world of “me,” “more,” and “now.” Self-indulgence is seen as permissible if an individual contributes positively in another way.

Nevertheless, *denying* ourselves the appetites of the flesh daily makes possible the *daily taking up of the cross*....

Given the array of temptations “common to man,” the best way of denying them is by giving them “no heed,” by turning them away decisively at the doorstep of the mind (1 Corinthians 10:13; D&C 20:22). Otherwise, if we entertain temptations, very soon they begin entertaining us!

Neal A. Maxwell, *Whom the Lord Loveth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 29-30.

3 Nephi 12:31-32

108 *Writing of Divorcement*

It should be remembered that the “putting away of a wife” referred to by Jesus was not equal to a legal divorce....

If a man “puts away his wife” but does not give her a legal divorce, he causes both her and any subsequent husband she might marry to commit adultery.... In this regard, it is well to remember that the word *divorce* as used by the Savior in 3 Nephi 12:32 is not a legal term; it

simply implies a separation or “putting away.” The legal term used by the Savior is “writing of divorcement” (3 Nephi 12:31).

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1976], 266-267.

109 This strict law governing divorce was not given to the Pharisees, nor to the world in general, but to the disciples only, “in the house,” at a later time as Mark explains. Further, Jesus expressly limited its application. All men could not live such a high standard, it applied only to those “to whom it is given.”

...It may have been in force at various times and among various people, but the Church is not bound by it today. At this time divorces are permitted in the Church for a number of reasons other than sex immorality, and divorced persons are permitted to marry again and enjoy the blessings of the gospel.

Bruce R. McConkie, *New Testament Commentary*, 1:548-49.

110 “There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary or righteousness and peace and truth.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1991, p. 74.

111 “There are too many broken homes among our own. The love that led to marriage somehow evaporates, and hatred fills its place. Hearts are broken, children weep. Can we not do better? Of course, we can. It is selfishness that brings about most of these tragedies. If there is forbearance, if there is forgiveness, if there is an anxious looking after the happiness of one’s companion, then love will flourish and blossom... There are good families everywhere. But there are too many who are in trouble. This is a malady with a cure. The prescription is simple and wonderfully effective. It is love. It is plain, simple, everyday love and respect. It is a tender plant that needs nurturing. But it is worth all of the effort we can put into it.”

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November 1997, p. 69.

112 “Those marriages performed in our temples, meant to be eternal relationships, then, become the most sacred covenants we can make... What, then, might be ‘just cause’ for breaking the covenants of marriage?... In my opinion, ‘just cause’ should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship which is destructive of a person’s dignity as a human being. At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simple ‘mental distress,’ nor ‘having grown apart,’ nor having ‘fallen out of love.’ This is especially so where there are children. It is a tender plant that needs nurturing. But it is worth all of the effort we can put into it.”

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 1993, p. 36

113 The greatest factor in a happy marriage is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. In most cases selfishness is the leading factor that causes argument, separation, divorce, and broken hearts...

Never forget that it was you who selected your companion. It was you who felt that there was no one else in all the world quite like her. It was you who wished to have her forever. But in too many cases the image of the temple experience fades. A lustful desire may be the cause. Faultfinding replaces praise. When we look for the worst in anyone, we will find it. But if we will concentrate on the best, that element will grow until it sparkles.

Gordon B. Hinckley, conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 64.

114 We men of the priesthood who have knelt at the sacred altar and on that altar clasped the hand of a sainted companion and have entered an eternal triangle, not a companionship of two, but of three—the husband, the wife, and God—the most sacred triangle man and woman can become a part of. But my heart sinks to despair when I witness so many who have withdrawn and are withdrawing that hand from one another. They don't do that until they first divorce God from that triangle, and after divorcing God it is practically impossible for them to stay together side by side...

I thank God that when my hand maybe has tended to slip away, that the grip of my companion has been as strong as bands of steel, and I have been brought back.

I was in a home recently in one of our stakes where a man was lying upon his bed. The only part of his body that he could move were his eyes and his tongue. He could speak and he could see, but that was all; no life in his arms; no life in his legs. The home was immaculate; his bed linen was immaculate; he was immaculate. Maybe there was no life in his hand, but his companion held that hand in a grasp as strong as life itself. The clasp of the hand, brothers and sisters—it has meaning! And when you are away from one another, if you don't feel a spiritual clasp stronger than the physical clasp, rush back to one another as quickly as you can. You know true love is not looking at each other in one of those old-fashioned loveseats—looking into each other's eyes. That isn't true love. True love is that love which comes into your heart and motivates your life when you arise from the altar and both of you look in the same direction, down through eternity. That is true love, where both are looking in the same direction.

Matthew Cowley Speaks [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 12-14.

115 The current philosophy—get a divorce if it doesn't work out—handicaps a marriage from the beginning.

The ever-increasing rise in divorce is simple evidence of how acceptable divorce has become as the popular solution to unhappy or “not-quite-up-to-expectation” Marriages.

But no matter how acceptable divorce has become—how quick and easy to obtain—divorce is tragic and painful, not only at the outset, but also in the years to come.

Divorce can never really be final. How can mothers and fathers really divorce themselves from their own flesh and blood children, or from the memories of days and years of shared experiences which have become part of their lives?

Divorce rarely occurs without immense emotional, social, and financial upheaval. Most people underestimate the alienation, bitterness, disruption, and frustration between a divorcing

couple, and among their children, friends, and relatives. Some never adjust to the resulting emotional consequences.

Perhaps most tragic of all is that more than 60 percent of all divorces involve children under eighteen years of age. Children of divorce all too often have a higher delinquency rate and less self-confidence, and tend to be more promiscuous and themselves more likely to have unhappy marriages... Every divorce is the result of selfishness on the part of one or both... A wise man explained, “When the satisfaction or the security of another person becomes as significant to one as one’s own satisfaction and security then the state of love exists” (Harry Stack Sullivan, *Concepts of Modern Psychiatry*, 2d ed. [New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1961], 42)...

Latter-day Saints need not divorce—there are solutions to marriage problems. If, as husband and wife, you are having serious misunderstandings or if you feel some strain or tension building up in your marriage, you should humbly get on your knees together and ask God our Father, with a sincere heart and real intent, to lift the darkness that is over your relationship, that you may receive the needed light, see your errors, repent of your wrongs, forgive each other, and receive each unto yourselves as you did in the beginning, I solemnly assure you that God... will answer your humble pleas.

David B. Haight, Conference Report, Apr. 1984 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984], 15-17.

116 A few years ago, my wife, Dorthea, and I were walking across the grounds of a temple in a foreign land when we met a very radiant, cheerful, silver-haired sister... I felt inclined to ask her to explain why she looked so happy and content with life.

“Well,” she said with a smile, “several years ago I was in a hurry to get married, and quite frankly, after a few months I realized I had married the wrong man.” She continued, “He had no interest in the Church as he had initially led me to believe, and he began to treat me very unkindly for several years. One day I reached the point where I felt I could go on no longer in this situation, and so in desperation I knelt down to pray, to ask Heavenly Father if He would approve of my divorcing my husband.

“I had a very remarkable experience,” she said. “After I prayed fervently, the Spirit revealed a number of insights to me of which I had been previously unaware. For the first time in my life, I realized that, just like my husband, I am not perfect either. I began to work on my intolerance and my impatience with his lack of spirituality.

“I began to strive to become more compassionate and loving and understanding. And do you know what happened? As I started to change, *my husband* started to change. Instead of my nagging him about going to church, he gradually decided to come with me on his own initiative.

“Recently we were sealed in the temple, and now we spend one day each week in the temple together. Oh, he’s still not perfect, but I am so happy that the Lord loves us enough to help us resolve our problems.”

Spencer J. Condie, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], 17.

117 Except in cases of infidelity or other extreme conditions, the Church frowns upon divorce...
 A man who has entered into sacred covenants in the house of the Lord to remain true to the marriage vow is a traitor to that covenant if he separates himself from his wife and family just because he has permitted himself to become infatuated with a pretty face and comely form of some young girl who flattered him with a smile. Even though a loose interpretation of the law of the land would grant such a man a bill of divorcement, I think he is unworthy of a recommend to have his second marriage solemnized in the temple. And any woman who will break up her home because of some selfish desire, or who has been untrue to her husband, is also untrue to the covenants she has made in the house of the Lord.

David O. McKay, Conference Report, Apr. 1969 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969], 8.

118 The saddest duty I have... is judging the cases that come before us of people who want a cancellation of their temple sealings because they haven't made it. Do you know why? In nearly every case it's selfishness. It's thinking only of themselves instead of the well-being of their companions. Marriage, I've concluded, isn't so much a matter of romance as it is a matter of an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one's companion. When you plan on marriage, you plan on putting your companion's comfort and well-being first, ahead of yours; and if you do, you'll be happy.

Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, 1995-99 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 1:384-385.

119 The Savior taught the extra mile (see Matt. 5:41), which means unselfishness. By just going the extra mile almost every couple could make their marriage relationship successful. But an extra effort on just one side of the boat means imbalance, and a capsized marriage is likely. Unselfishness must come from both sides...

We are all still imperfect, and these unresolved differences, allowed to accumulate day after day, add up to a possible breakdown in the marital relationship—all for the want of better communication, and too often because of foolish pride...

Unselfishness is the key to successful marriage, for, you see, unselfishness invites reasoning together.

Unselfishness insists on an extra-mile effort.

Unselfishness paves the way for family financial security.

Unselfishness stops divorce.

And don't you agree that perhaps the most important questions that will need to be answered by a divorced person in the hereafter will be these:

1. "Did you do everything possible to save your marriage?"
2. "Were gospel truths applied to the fullest?"
3. "Did you seek out, listen to, and abide by priesthood counsel?"

Robert L. Simpson, Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 30, 32.

120 There seems to be a superstition among many thousands of our youth who hold hands and smooch in the drive-ins that marriage is a cottage surrounded by perpetual hollyhocks to which a perpetually young and handsome husband comes home to a perpetually young and ravishing wife. When the hollyhocks wither and boredom and bills appear the divorce courts are jammed..

Anyone who imagines that bliss is normal is going to waste a lot of time running around shouting that he has been robbed (“Big Rock Candy Mountains” *Deseret News*, 12 June 1973, p. A4)....

Among the greatest of tragedies, and I think the most common, is divorce. It has become as a great scourge. The most recent issue of the *World Almanac* says that in the United States during the twelve months ending with March 1990, an estimated 2,423,000 couples married. During this same period, an estimated 1,177,000 couples divorced. (see *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1991* [New York: World Almanac, 1990], p. 834.)

This means that in the United States almost one divorce occurred for every two marriages... Selfishness so often is the basis of ... problems...

Too many who come to marriage have been coddled and spoiled and somehow led to feel that everything must be precisely right at all times, that life is a series of entertainments, that appetites are to be satisfied without regard to principle. How tragic the consequences of such hollow and unreasonable thinking!...

...The remedy for most marriage stress is not in divorce, it is in repentance. It is not in separation, it is in simple integrity that leads a man to square up his shoulders and meet his obligations. It is found in the Golden Rule.

There must be a willingness to overlook small faults, to forgive, and then to forget.

There must be a holding of one’s tongue. Temper is a vicious and corrosive thing that destroys affection and cast out love.

There must be self-discipline that constrains against abuse...

There may be now and again a legitimate cause for divorce. I am not one to say that it is never justified. But I say without hesitation that this plague among us, which seems to be growing everywhere, is not of God, but rather is the work of the adversary of righteousness and peace and truth.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 94-98; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 72-74.

121 With divorce rates escalating throughout the world today, it is apparent that many spouses are failing to endure to the end of their commitments to each other... An enduring [temple] marriage results when both husband and wife regard their union as one of the two most important commitments they will ever make. [The other commitment is membership in the Lord’s Church.] Without a strong commitment to the Lord, an individual is more prone to have a low level of commitment to a spouse... If Satan can get you to love anything—fun, flirtation, fame, or fortune—more than a spouse or the Lord with whom you have made sacred covenants to endure, the adversary begins to triumph... When priorities are proper... they will protect you from cheating—in marriage, in the Church, and in life.

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, May 1997 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 71-72.

3 Nephi 12: 33-37*Oaths*

122 It shouldn't be necessary to swear an oath in order to tell the truth. Truth ought to be what we say all the time. "Under the perfect law of Christ every man's word is his bond. And all spoken statements are as true as though an oath attended each spoken word."

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 2:140.

123 Forswear—To make and then break an oath; to purge or falsify.

Webster's Dictionary

124 The point that Jesus was making is that we must be careful to speak only that which is truth or by the Spirit. What the Spirit provides is sacred and must be cared for in wisdom and holiness. Therefore, if we speak or make an oath under any influence other than the Spirit of God, it is sin. The wise will not multiply many words, but will open their mouths only as the Spirit gives them utterance (see D&C 88:137). If we speak by any other means, these things will judge us at the last day.

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to be Perfect*, p. 109

125 The Pharisees taught that there were two kinds of oaths—the violation of one being perjury, and that of the other an innocent matter, or at most but a slight offense. If the name of God was in the oath it was binding; this the Saviour refers to in... [Matt. 5:33]. If the name of God was not in the oath it need not be kept. Jesus, on the other hand, objects to this distinction; and further teaches that it is wrong to indulge in profanity.

James M. Freeman, *Manners and Customs of the Bible* [Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1972], 338.

3 Nephi 12:39*Cheek*

126 If someone hit you in the face, you hit him back. If someone cursed you, you cursed back at him. But charity does not think evil and is long suffering (Moroni 7:45). Christ taught that if a man hits you on the side of the face, turn to him the other, and do not revile again (3 Nephi 12:39). Jesus also applied this to our response regarding lawsuits and borrowing (3 Nephi 12:40-42). The unspoken side of this law is that if we have charity we will not envy (want to steal or sue) and we will not think evil or rejoice in iniquity (no need to strike anyone or compel them to do anything).

Why does the Lord ask us to suffer these things? Because the disciples of Jesus, by demonstrating charity when evil is shown to them, bring a witness of the glory of God to those bringing the evil. This witness may turn a heart to love God, as it did for Saul (Acts 7:58; 9:4-5), or it may only serve as a witness of judgment against the offender (D&C 98:26-27). It shows that God really is Lord in our life because we submit the whole case to him and trust him to settle it fairly. God promises to execute vengeance against those to whom vengeance is due (Romans 12:19), and we have shown love and have not done injury to one who is loved by God as deeply as we ourselves are loved by him.

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to be Perfect*, p. 111

3 Nephi 12:40*Coat*

127

The outer garment which the Palestinian villager wears, is a large cloak which would serve the purpose of a Westerner's overcoat... It serves as a shelter from the wind and rain, and as a blanket at night...

The Law of Moses contained an explicit commandment regarding this outer garment. This is the way the law reads:

If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious (Exod. 22:26, 27).

The need for this commandment is easily understood when it is known how the mantle is used at night. Going to bed at night is a very simple matter for the Bedouins or peasants. Mats, rugs, or mattresses are used to lie upon, but the host does not provide any covering. Each person provides his own which consists of his mantle. Being closely woven, it is warm, and if he sleeps out-of-doors, this covering is even water-proof.

It was because this outer garment was a man's covering by night that the law did not allow anybody taking this as a pledge or security, for this would deprive him of his means of keeping warm while sleeping. Such a garment if taken at all had to be returned by sunset.

A knowledge of this law and its purpose is an aid in understanding certain statements of Christ. On one occasion He said: "Do not keep back your undergarment from one who robs you of your outer one" (Luke 6:29, translation of A. T. Robertson). This order is understood easily, because the outer garment would be the one most easily seized by a robber. But on another occasion He said. "If any one wishes to go to law with you and deprive you of your undergarment, let him take your outer one also" (Matt. 5:40, Weymouth). A Jewish court would not award an outer garment as judgment, because of the rule of the Law of Moses already referred to, but could award an undergarment. In such a case Jesus advocated going the "second mile" by giving the outer garment also.

Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1953], 96.

3 Nephi 12:41-42*Go a mile*

128

Invite the healing power of Christ.

Jesus said: "I say unto you, 'That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also... And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain'" (Matthew 5:39-41).

The application of this principle, difficult to live but wondrous in its curative powers, would have a miraculous effect on our troubled homes. It is selfishness that is the cause of most of our misery. It is as a cankering disease. The healing power of Christ, found in the doctrine of going the second mile, would do wonders to still argument and accusation, fault-finding and evil speaking.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Stand a Little Taller*, [Salt Lake City: Eagle Gate, 2001], 352.

129 The Lord requires sacrifice, meaning something above and beyond the minimum. The Master spoke of the “second mile” and told us to go there (see Matt. 5:41). Why? Because he wants to bless us. So he put all the blessings in the second mile, but we must go where they are before we get them.

Hartman Rector Jr., Conference Report, Mar/Apr. 1979 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979], 42.

130 The telestial law is one of revenge... The celestial law is one of mercy, rather than revenge.
Monte S. Nyman

3 Nephi 12:43-45

Love your Enemy

131 Why did Jesus come into the world? To save sinners from the curse of the law. Are not disciples supposed to follow their Master? Yes! Those who do evil towards us are deceived by the devil into sinning as we were before we turned to Jesus. Such people need Jesus also, and to revile against them or return evil for evil will drive them farther from the truth than they were before. How shall they know the love of God if they do not see it in those who profess to know God? Some, like Saul of Tarsus, will only first see the love of God in the response of Christians to persecution. Therefore, we must pray for and love our enemies. Yes, it will help us, but even more importantly, it may help save a lost soul.

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to be Perfect*, p. 112.

132 The true greatness of a person, in my view, is evident in the way he or she treats those where courtesy and kindness are not required... When we subordinate personal interests out of love and give of ourselves with no thought of receiving in return, we are moving toward becoming true disciples.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1992, pp. 86-87.

133 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. (3 Nephi 12:44). Think what this admonition alone would do in your neighborhood and mine, the communities in which you and your children live, in the nations which make up our 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. How are we supposed to act when we are offended, misunderstood, unfairly or unkindly treated, or sinned against? What are we supposed to do if we are hurt by those we love, or passed over for promotion, or are falsely accused, or have our motives unfairly assailed? Do we fight back? Do we send in an ever-larger battalion? Do we revert to an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, or as Tevye says in *Fiddler on the Roof*, do we come to the realization that this finally leaves us blind and toothless? ... We can all be a little more forgiving.

Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, November 1992, p. 18.

134 Let us also love our neighbors. Let us banish from our lives any elements of self-righteousness... Let us be friendly. Let us be helpful. Let us live the Golden Rule. Let us be neighbors of whom it might be said, “He or she was the best neighbor I ever had.”
Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, November, 1997, p. 69.

135 It would appear that all the people in our lives are there for important reasons. We stand in a sacred relationship to them because we and they cannot be made perfect without each other (D&C 128:18 – the Prophet speaks of a welding link that must be established). Nevertheless, we remember that seldom are they given to us to satisfy us. Rather, they are given to us to make possible a much greater love than we would have been capable of in a situation where everybody agreed with us, everybody loved us, everybody saw everything the way we do. These abrasive people in our lives are friends in disguise. They are there to teach us to perfect love in ourselves, not to perfect them. We don’t need ideal relationships in order to be happy; we can live happily with less than the ideal because each precious relationship can be made more tender and sweet and can be enriched with that spirit of at-one-ment that changes everything around us.
Selected writings of Catherine M. Thomas.

136 I always remember President George Albert Smith’s last words to me, as he held my hand and said, “My boy,” and he could hardly speak, “Always remember that you can find good in everybody, if you will just look for it.” My, there’s a lot of truth in that.
Matthew Cowley Speaks [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 155.

137 From December 11 to 13, 1862, the Union forces attacked Marye’s Heights, a large hill overlooking the town of Fredericksburg, Virginia, where six thousand Rebels awaited them...
The Union troops—over forty thousand strong—launched a series of suicidal attacks across open ground. They were mowed down by a scythe of shot; none got closer than forty yards from the stone wall.

Soon the ground in front of the Confederate positions was littered with hundreds, then thousands, of fallen Union soldiers in their blue uniforms—over twelve thousand before sunset....

As the morning fog lifted, the agonized cries of the wounded could still be heard. Finally, a young Confederate soldier... had all he could take. The young man’s name was Richard Rowland Kirkland. To his commanding officer, Kirkland exclaimed, “All night and all day I have heard those poor people crying for water, and I can stand it no longer. I... ask permission to go and give them water.” His request was initially denied on the grounds that it was too dangerous. Finally, however, permission was granted... With several canteens draped around his neck, [he climbed] over the wall and [walked] to the nearest wounded Union soldier. He raised the stricken man’s head, gently gave him a drink, and covered him with his own overcoat. Then he moved to the next of the wounded—and the next and the next. As Kirkland’s purpose became clear, fresh cries of “Water, water, for God’s sake water” arose all over the field.

The Union soldiers were at first too surprised to shoot. Soon they began to cheer the young Southerner as they saw what he was doing...

Kirkland's Christlike compassion made his name synonymous with mercy for a post-Civil War generation, both North and South. He became known by soldiers on both sides of the conflict as "the angel of Marye's Height."

Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, May 1995 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995], 54.

138 Abraham Lincoln was criticized by one of his associates because he went out of his way to make friends of his enemies. His associates asked President Lincoln, "Why don't you destroy your enemies rather than make friends of them?" Lincoln answered, "Don't I destroy my enemies when I make friends of them?"

As quoted in Dr. Glen I. Latham, *Christlike Parenting*, [Seattle, Washington: Gold Leaf Press, 1999], 79.

139 [Joseph F. Smith] was repeatedly harassed by those who opposed the work of the Lord and His Church, and he suffered greatly at their hands. Despite this abuse, he went about his affairs peaceably, not fearing and rarely responding to his enemies...

His daughter Edith Eleanor recalled a time from her youth when "the news media was really persecuting my father. Some of the people at school had in their possession false reports and lies about Father. I went home from school furious one day. As soon as Father came in that evening I said to him, 'Papa, why don't you do something? You're not doing one thing, and these mean men are taking advantage of you, printing all these lies, and you don't do one thing about it!'" Her father looked at her and smiled and said, "Baby, don't get upset. They are not hurting me one bit; they are only hurting themselves. Don't you know, Baby, that when someone tells a lie they are only hurting themselves more than anyone else?"

President Smith was intent on returning good for evil and was so determined to do good that if he learned he had offended another, he could not rest until the wounds were healed. He once said, "Have I done or said anything to hurt you? If I have, I want to say it has been unintentional. I never in my life intentionally hurt the feelings of an individual... All ye that have been injured by me, all ye whom I have wronged, if there are any such, let me know wherein I have wronged you, and I will do all in my power to make it right with you. I have no malice in my heart toward my brethren; I have only love, charity and an earnest desire to do good."

Teachings of Presidents of the Church—Joseph F. Smith [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998], 257-258.

140 When we hate our enemies, we are giving them power over us: power over our sleep, our appetites, our blood pressure, our health, and our happiness.... Our hate is not hurting them at all, but our hate is turning our own days and nights into a hellish turmoil...

According to *Life Magazine*, it may even wreck your health. "The chief personality characteristic of persons with hypertension [high blood pressure] is resentment..."

So you see that when Jesus said, "Love your enemies," He was not only preaching sound ethics, He was also preaching twentieth-century medicine... Jesus was telling you and me how to keep from having high blood pressure, heart trouble, stomach ulcers, and many other ailments...

One sure way to forgive and forget our enemies is to become absorbed in some cause infinitely bigger than ourselves.

Dale Carnegie, *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944], 1001-102, 105.

141 Brothers and sisters, pray for the critics of the Church; love your enemies... Use wisdom and judgment in what you do and say, so that we do not give cause to others to hold the Church or its people in disrepute.

Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 4.

3 Nephi 12: 45

Be children of your Father

142 I challenge every one of you who can hear me to rise to the divinity within you. Do we really realize what it means to be a child of God... We must be good people, for we will be generous and kind, thoughtful and tolerant, helpful and outreaching to those in distress....

We do not need to wear our religion on our sleeves. We certainly do not need to be boastful about it or to be arrogant in any way. Such becomes a negation of the Spirit of the Christ... That Spirit finds expression in the heart and the soul, in the quiet and unboastful manner of our lives.

All of us have seen those we almost envy because they have cultivated a manner that, without even mentioning it, speaks of the beauty of the gospel they have incorporated in their behavior.

We can lower our voices a few decibels. We can return good for evil. We can smile when anger might be so much easier. We can exercise self-control and self-discipline and dismiss any affront levied against us.

Let us be a happy people.... The way will be lighter, the worries will be fewer, the confrontations will be less difficult if we cultivate a spirit of happiness.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 109.

3 Nephi 12:45

Sun to rise on evil and good.

143 You must not persecute your neighbors, but must mind your own business, and let your neighbors alone, and let them worship the sun, moon, and white dog, or anything else they please.... You may then go and worship what you please, or do what you please, if you do not infringe upon your neighbors.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1855], 2:317.

144 Too many of us seem to expect that life will flow ever smoothly, featuring an unbroken chain of green lights with empty parking places just in front of our destinations... How can it rain on the just and the unjust alike without occasionally raining on our personal parades? (see Matthew 5:45)...

In the midst of this mortal experience we will even see the unrighteous succeed—at least temporarily and in world terms. On occasion we might be tempted to complain, as some did anciently, that the wicked seem to get away with it (see Malachi 3).

Such conditions in our days thus call for spiritual spunk in each of us.

Neal A. Maxwell, *One More Strain of Praise* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999], 26-27.

3 Nephi 12: 46-48

Be ye perfect

145

The law taught people to be perfect in their outward acts and appearances, but Jesus had just said that that was done away. So what did Jesus mean when he said that we are to be perfect? He had been speaking about how to behave in love towards others in many situations. Apparently, the commandment that Jesus gave was not to be perfect in performance and outward acts, but to have perfect love. Perfect love is the same love that Jesus and his Father have. This is charity, and it is defined as “the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.” (Moroni 7:47)

Gary R. Whiting, *The Commandment to be Perfect*, p. 113.

146

Everyone in the Church who is on the straight and narrow path, who is striving and struggling and desiring to do what is right, though he is far from perfect in this life: if he passes out of this life while he’s on the straight and narrow, he’s going to go on to eternal reward in his Father’s kingdom... If you’re on that path and pressing forward, and you die, you’ll never get off the path. There is no such thing as falling off the straight and narrow path in the life to come.

Bruce R. McConkie, “The Probationary Test of Mortality,” Address at U of U Institute, 10 Jan 1982, p. 12

147

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith commented on how one achieves this perfection:

“Those who receive exaltation in the celestial kingdom are promised the fulness thereof. ‘All things are theirs, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come.’ [D&C 76:59.] Our Father in heaven is infinite; he is perfect; he possesses all knowledge and wisdom. However, he is not jealous of his wisdom and perfection, but glories in the fact that it is possible for his children who obey him in all things and endure to the end to become like him.

“Man has within him the power, which the Father bestowed upon him, so to develop in truth, faith, wisdom, and all the virtues, that eventually he shall become like the Father and the Son, this virtue, wisdom, and knowledge on the part of the faithful does not rob the Father and the Son, but adds to their glory and dominion. Thus it is destined that those who are worthy to become his sons and joint-heirs with our Redeemer, would be heirs of the Father’s kingdom, possessing the same attributes in their perfection, as the Father and the Son now possess.”

Doctrines of Salvation, 2:35

In both His Old and New World ministries, the Savior commanded, “Be ye therefore perfect”
 148 A footnote explains that the Greek word translated as *perfect* means “complete, finished, fully developed.” Our Heavenly Father wants us to use this mortal probation to “fully develop” ourselves, to make the most of our talents and abilities.
 Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 1998, p. 14.

I am ... convinced of the fact that the speed with which we head along the straight and narrow
 149 path isn't as important as the direction in which we are traveling.
 Marvin J. Ashton, *Ensign*, May 1989, p. 21.

Notice the difference in this verse and Matthew 5:48. Jesus did not include himself as
 150 perfect until after he was resurrected. “Begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them... It will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.”
 Joseph Smith, *Teachings*, p. 348

Sinless and flawless as Jesus was in mortality, we should remember that He viewed His own
 151 state of physical perfection as being yet in the future (see Luke 13:32). Even He had to endure to the end. Can you and I be expected to do any less?

When the crucified and resurrected Lord appeared to the people in ancient America, He again stressed the importance of His example. But now He included Himself as a perfected personage: “I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Nephi 12:48).

Are you vexed by your own imperfections? For example, have you ever locked your keys inside the car? Or to accomplish a task, have you ever moved from one room to another only to find you had forgotten what you wanted to do? (Incidentally, troubles of that nature don't disappear as you grow older.) Meanwhile, please do not be discouraged by the Lord's expression of hope for your perfection. You should have faith to know that He would not require development beyond your capacity. Of course you should strive to correct habits or thoughts which are improper. Conquering of weakness bring great joy. You can attain a certain degree of perfection in some things in this life. And you can become perfect in keeping various commandments. But the Lord was not necessarily asking for your errorless and perfect behavior in all things. He was pleading for more than that. His hopes are for your full potential to be realized—to become as He is! That includes the perfection of your physical body, when it will be changed to an immortal state that cannot deteriorate or die.

So while you earnestly strive for continuing improvement in your life here, remember your resurrection, exaltation, and perfection await you in the life to come. That precious promise of perfection could not have been possible without the Lord's Atonement and His example.
 Russell M. Nelson, *A Book of Mormon Treasury-Gospel Insights from General Authorities and Religious Educators* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 29-30.

152 In closing a major part of the Sermon on the Mount on the eastern continent, the Savior said: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). To the Nephites, the Savior makes a significant addition: “Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Nephi 12:48). When the Savior delivered this sermon on the eastern continent, he was just beginning his ministry; he had not yet brought about the atonement in the Garden of Gethsemane nor had he been resurrected from the dead. Thus, at that time he was not perfect in every sense. However, when he appeared to the Nephites as a glorified, resurrected God of glory, then he could rightfully counsel them to be perfect “even as I.”

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 267.

153 Being perfect means to triumph over sin... Perfection therefore is an achievable goal.
Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 209.

154 None of us will become perfect in a day or a month or a year. We will not accomplish it in a lifetime, but we can begin now, starting with our more obvious weaknesses and gradually converting them to strengths as we go forward with our lives. This quest may be a long one; in fact, it will be lifelong. It may be fraught with many mistakes, with falling down and getting back up again. And it will take much effort. But we must not sell ourselves short. We must make a little extra effort. We would be wise to kneel before our God in supplication. He will help us. He will bless us. He will comfort and sustain us. He will help us do more, and be more, than we can ever accomplish or become on our own.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something* [New York: Times Books, 2000], 178.

155 There are some who I think struggle with despair and discouragement because they struggle with a feeling of never measuring up, feeling like they can never fulfill that mandate to be perfect. They wrestle with this idea of perfectionism... That word “perfect” has the idea in the original language of be complete. What the Lord is inviting us to do is to eventually arrive at the measure of our creation or potential, which is to become like He is. Is that going to happen in this life? Never!...

I think people who struggle with perfectionism who may think that they are trying to fill the Lord’s mandate to be ye therefore perfect, aren’t struggling really because of trying to fulfill what God wants, but are really trying to fulfill what they think others are expecting of them. In other words, their quest for perfectionism isn’t about pleasing God. It’s about trying to maintain an image for other people.

Grant C. Anderson, “Discouragement and Depression,” Orem Institute Friday Forum, 24 Feb. 2006, 4-5.

156 Interestingly, the admonition to “be ye therefore perfect” is immediately preceded by counsel about how we should act in response to wrong-doing and offense. Clearly, the rigorous requirements that lead to the perfecting of the Saints include assignments that test and challenge us.

David A. Bednar, *Ensign*, Nov. 2006 {Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006}, 91-92

157 Someone recently told me, “My fifteen-year-old just came home and said, ‘Dad, in seminary they keep telling me that I have got to be perfect, and there is no way I’m going to make it.’” Most of us feel that way. But we needn’t. Perfection is not a mortal possibility. It is an eternal goal.

Let me defend that with a statement by Joseph Fielding Smith: “We are commanded to be perfect even as our Father in Heaven is perfect. I believe that the Lord meant just what he said—that we should be perfect—but that will not come all at once but line upon line, precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God” (*Doctrines of Salvation* 2:18)...

The goal is perfection and we strive for it constantly. But what we need to remember is that we will never make it in this life.

Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 379.

158 As members of the Church, if we chart a course leading to eternal life; if we begin the process of spiritual rebirth, and are going in the right direction; if we chart a course of sanctifying our souls, and degree by degree are going that direction; and if we chart a course of becoming perfect, and, step by step and phase by phase, are perfecting our souls by overcoming the world, then it is absolutely guaranteed there is no question whatever about it – we shall gain eternal life. Even though we have spiritual rebirth ahead of us, perfection ahead of us, the full degree of sanctification ahead of us, if we chart a course and follow it to the best of our ability in this life, then when we go out of this life we’ll continue in exactly the same course.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Sermons and Writings*, p. 54.

159 C. S. Lewis... had this to say ... “The command ‘Be ye perfect is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. He [Christ] is going to make us creatures that can obey that command. He said (in the Bible) that we were ‘Gods’ and He is going to make good His words. If we let Him – for we can prevent Him, if we choose – He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful; but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.” (*Mere Christianity*, p. 172). The command “Be ye... perfect” (Matt. 5:48) is not one that can be executed overnight, or even by the end of mortality. It takes much, much longer to overcome all our mortal weaknesses... Even if we subscribed to the possibility of becoming perfect in mortality... the pathway to perfection is just too long, the time to walk it exceeding whatever our allotted years in mortality may be.

Alexander B. Morrison, *Ensign*, April 11995, p. 42.

160 We begin to keep the commandments today, and we keep more of them tomorrow, and we go from grace to grace, up the steps of the ladder, and we thus improve and perfect our souls. We can become perfect in some minor things. We can be perfect in the payment of tithing. If we

pay one-tenth of our interest annually into the tithing funds of the Church, if we do it year in and year out, and desire to do it, and have no intent to withhold, and if we would do it regardless of what arose in our lives, then in that thing we are perfect. And in that thing and to that extent we are living the law as well as Moroni or the angels from heaven could live it. And so degree by degree and step by step we start out on the course to perfection with the objective of becoming perfect as Gods our Heavenly Father is perfect, in which eventually we become inheritors of eternal life in his kingdom.

As members of the Church, is we chart a course leading to eternal life; if we begin the process of spiritual rebirth, and are going in the right direction; if we chart a course of sanctifying our souls, and degree by degree are going in that direction; and if we chart a course of becoming perfect, and, step by step and phase by phase, are perfecting our souls by overcoming the world, then it is absolutely guaranteed – there is no question whatever about it – we shall gain eternal life. Even though we have spiritual rebirth ahead of us, perfection ahead of us, the full degree of sanctification ahead of us, if we chart a course and follow it to the best of our ability in this life, then when we go out of this life we'll continue in exactly that same course. We'll no longer be subject to the passions and the appetites of the flesh. We will have passed successfully the tests of this mortal probation and in due course we'll get the fulness of our father's kingdom – and that means eternal life in his everlasting presence.

The Prophet told us that there are many things that people have to do, even after the grave, to work out their salvation. We're not going to be perfect the minute we die. But if we've charted a course, if our desires are right, if our appetites are curtailed and bridled, and if we believe in the Lord and are doing to the very best of our abilities what we ought to do, we'll go on to everlasting salvation, which is the fulness of eternal reward in our Father's kingdom.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Jesus Christ and Him Crucified*.