

FOUNDATIONS FOR ETERNAL MARRIAGE

Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life.

—Elder Richard G. Scott

SELECTED TEACHINGS

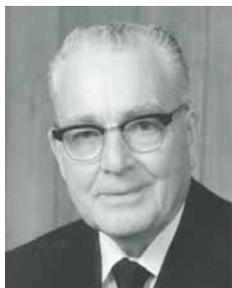
The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).

Elder Richard G. Scott

“The most important principle I can share: Anchor your life in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life—more important than life itself, more important than a beloved companion or children or anyone on earth. Make their will your central desire. Then all that you need for happiness will come to you” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 43; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 34).

THE CONSTITUTION FOR A PERFECT LIFE



President Harold B. Lee

President of the Church

Stand Ye in Holy Places:
Selected Sermons and
Writings of President
Harold B. Lee, 341–48

You want to know the “steps” by which one can have his life patterned to that fulness which makes him a worthy citizen or “saint” in God’s kingdom. The best answer may be found by a study of the life of Jesus in the scriptures, for it has been said that “our gospels are not merely the record of oral teachings; they are the portraits of a living man.”

(Dean Inge.) 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. Anyone clearly understanding the true import of His words comes to the realization that an unworthy member of the Church, although he might be in the kingdom of God, yet would not be of the kingdom because of his unworthiness.

You may know you are living a full, rich life when you have the real joy of living, for “men are, that they might have joy.” (2 Nephi 2:25.) What is it, then, that gives you that high emotional ecstasy called joy? Does it come from the unusual or does it come from common things? He who is moved thus only by the unusual is as one who must flag a failing appetite with strong spices and flavorings that destroy the true sense of taste. You are making a serious error if you mistake an emotional thrill that passes with the moment for the upsurge of deep feelings that is the joy of living. If one feels strong surges of happiness and desire from the quiet of a happy home, from the unfolding of a beautiful life, from the revelation of divine wisdom, or from a love for the beautiful, the true and good, he is having a taste of the fulness of the joy that the living of a rich, full life only can bring.

In that matchless Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given us eight distinct ways by which we might receive this kind of joy. Each of His declarations is begun by the word “blessed.” 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.” (*Dummelow’s Commentary*.) These declarations of the Master are known in the literature of the Christian world as the Beatitudes and have been referred to by Bible commentators as the preparation necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. For the purposes of this discussion may I speak of them as something more than that as they are applied to you and me. They embody, in fact, the constitution for a perfect life.

Let us consider them for a few moments. Four of them have to do with our individual selves, the living of our own inner, personal lives, if we would be perfect and find the blessedness of that inward joy.

Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Blessed are they that mourn.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Blessed are the pure in heart.

To be poor in spirit is to feel yourselves as the spiritually needy, even dependent upon the Lord for your clothes, your food, 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. If a youth realizes his spiritual need, when in dangerous places where his very life is at stake, he may be drawn close to the fountain of truth and be prompted by the Spirit of the Lord in his hour of greatest trial. It is indeed a sad thing for one, because of his wealth or learning or worldly position, to think himself independent of this spiritual need. It is the opposite of pride or self-conceit. To the worldly rich it is that "he must possess his wealth as if he possessed it not" and be willing to say without regret, if he were suddenly to meet financial disaster, as did Job, "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21.) Thus, if in your humility you sense your spiritual need, you are made ready for adoption into the "church of the Firstborn," and to become "the elect of God."

To mourn, as the Master's lesson here would teach, one must show that "godly sorrow that worketh repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:10) and wins for the penitent a forgiveness of sins and forbids a return to the deeds of which he mourns. It is to see, as did the Apostle Paul, "glory in tribulations . . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope." (Romans 5:3-4.) You must be willing "to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light." (Mosiah 18:8.) You must be willing to mourn with those that mourn, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort. (Mosiah 18:9.) When a mother mourns in her loneliness for the return of a wayward daughter, you with compassion must forbid the casting of the first stone. It is the kind of mourning portrayed in the deep feelings of the marine on Saipan who wrote to us during World War II when his buddy was killed, "As I lay in my foxhole that night I wept bitterly." Your mourning

with the aged, the widow, and the orphan should lead you to bring the succor they require. In a word, you must be as the publican and not as the Pharisee. "God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13.) Your reward for so doing is the blessedness of comfort for your own soul through a forgiveness of your own sins.

Did you ever hunger for food or thirst for water when just a crust of stale bread or a sip of tepid water to ease the pangs that distressed you would seem to be the most prized of all possessions? If you have so hungered, then you may begin to understand how the Master meant we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. It's that hungering and thirsting that leads Latter-day Saints away from home to seek the fellowship with Saints in sacrament services and that induces worship on the Lord's day. It is that which prompts fervent prayers and leads our feet to holy temples and bids us be reverent therein. One who keeps the Sabbath Day will be filled with a lasting joy far more to be desired than the fleeting pleasures derived from activities indulged in contrary to God's commandments. If you ask with "a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest . . . truth . . . unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost," and by its power you "may know the truth of all things." (Moroni 10:4-5.) Build "each new temple nobler than the last . . . till thou at length are free," then "your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you. . . ." (D&C 88:67.)

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; 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. But in order to gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven we must not only be good, but we are also

required to do good and be good for something. So if you would walk daily toward that goal of perfection and fulness of life, you must be schooled by the remaining four articles in the Master's constitution for a perfect life. These beatitudes have to do with man's social relations with others:

Blessed are the meek.

Blessed are the merciful.

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Blessed are they which are persecuted.

A meek man is defined as one who is not easily provoked or irritated and is forbearing under injury or annoyance. 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 16:32.) 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.

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!

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, they will be known as the children of Satan rather than God. Withhold yourselves from him who would cause disquieting doubts by making light of sacred things, for he seeks not for peace but to spread confusion. That one who is quarrelsome or contentious, and whose arguments are for other purposes than to

resolve the truth, 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.

To be persecuted for righteousness' sake in a great cause where truth and virtue and honor are at stake is God-like. Always there have been martyrs to every great cause. 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. Much of that persecution comes from lack of understanding, for men are prone to oppose that which they do not comprehend. Some of it comes from men intent upon evil. But from whatever 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.)

May youth everywhere remember that warning when you are hissed and scoffed at because you refuse to compromise your standards of abstinence, honesty, and morality in order to win the applause of the crowd. 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. If that time should come, God grant they will not fail.

Gradually as we ponder prayerfully all these teachings, we will make what may be to some the startling discovery that after all, God's measure of our worth in His kingdom will not be the high positions we have held here among man, nor in His church, nor the honors we have won, but rather the lives we have led and the good we have done, according to the "constitution for a perfect life" revealed in the life of the Son of God.

May you make the Beatitudes the constitution of your own lives and thus receive the blessedness promised therein.

CORNERSTONES OF A HAPPY HOME



President Gordon B. Hinckley

*Second Counselor
in the First Presidency*

*Satellite broadcast fireside
for husbands and wives,
29 Jan. 1984*

More than half a century has passed, but I have never forgotten my father's tenderness toward my mother. She died when she was fifty, a relatively young woman. During the months of her illness he was constantly solicitous for her comfort. But this attitude was not expressed only after she became ill. It had been evident to us, their children, throughout our lives. In the happy home of our childhood, we knew—and that came of a feeling and not of any declaration—that they loved, respected, and honored one another. What a blessing that image has been. When we were children we felt a certain security because of it. As we grew older our thoughts and our actions were colored by that remembered example.

My own beloved companion and I have now been married for nearly half a century—forty-seven years to be exact. She too was blessed to come from a home where there was an environment of companionship, love, and trust. I know that most of you have come out of such homes; further, I know that most of you live in happiness and love in your own homes. But there are many, very many, who do otherwise.

Troubled Marriages

It is difficult for me to understand the tragic accounts of troubled marriages that come to me. They speak of abuse. They speak of dictatorial attitudes and of some husbands who are bullies in their own homes. They speak of violations of trust and of broken covenants. They speak of divorce and tears and heartache. Only the other day a letter came to my desk from a woman who wrote at length of her troubles. In a spirit of desperation she asked, "Does a woman have any promise of some day being a first class member of the human race? Will she always be a piece of chattel wrapped in a chuddar acting only by the permission of the man who stands at her head?" (A chuddar, incidentally, is a very simple shawl worn by women in India.) She then continued,

"To me the answers to these questions are no longer important, but I have daughters. If it is possible for a woman to look forward to an eternity of anything other than being barefoot and pregnant, I would like to be able to teach them this."

There is bitter tragedy in the lines of that letter. I fear there are many others who may feel that way. The situation is tragic because it is so extremely different from what our Father in Heaven would have for his daughters. Behind this woman's words I see the picture of a wife who is discouraged, starved for appreciation, ready to give up, and not knowing which way to turn. I see a husband who has defaulted on his sacred obligations, who is calloused in his feelings and warped in his perceptions, and who denies through his manner of living the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not doubt that there has been fault on her part as well as his, but I am inclined to think that his is the more serious.

Equality in Marriage

To men within the sound of my voice, wherever you may be, I say, if you are guilty of demeaning behavior toward your wife, if you are prone to dictate and exercise authority over her, if you are selfish and brutal in your actions in the home, then stop it! Repent! Repent now while you have the opportunity to do so.

To you wives who are constantly complaining and see only the dark side of life, and feel that you are unloved and unwanted, look into your own hearts and minds. If there is something wrong, turn about. Put a smile on your faces. Make yourselves attractive. Brighten your outlook. You deny yourselves happiness and court misery if you constantly complain and do nothing to rectify your own faults. Rise above the shrill clamor over rights and prerogatives, and walk in the quiet dignity of a daughter of God.

The time has come for all of us to put the past behind us in a spirit of repentance and live the gospel with new dedication. The time is now for husbands and wives who may have offended one another to ask forgiveness and resolve to cultivate respect and affection one for another, standing before the Creator as sons and daughters worthy of his smile upon us.

I should like to read words of the Lord, with a slight modification that does not alter the meaning. Said he: "He which made them at the beginning made

them male and female, . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be *one*. . . . Wherefore they are no more twain, but *one*” (Matthew 19:4–6). God our Eternal Father ordained that we should be companions. That implies equality. Marriage is a joint venture. Of course, there are hazards and problems, but these are secondary to the greater opportunities and greater satisfactions that come of sublimating selfish interests to the good of the partnership.

Some years ago I clipped from the *Deseret News* a column by Jenkin Lloyd Jones, who said, in part: “There seems to be a superstition among many thousands of our young who hold hands . . . 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 beautiful wife. When the hollyhocks wither and boredom and bills appear, the divorce courts are jammed. . . . Life is like an old-time rail journey—delays, sidetracks, smoke, dust, cinders, and jolts interspersed only occasionally by beautiful vistas and thrilling bursts of speed. The trick is to thank the Lord for letting you have the ride.”

The trick, my brethren and sisters is to enjoy the journey, traveling hand in hand, in sunshine and storm, as companions who love one another. Anyone can do it with a disciplined effort to live the gospel. Remember, “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Psalm 127:1).

Four Cornerstones

At the risk of repeating some things I have said before, I should like to suggest four cornerstones on which to establish and nurture your homes. I do not hesitate to promise that if you will do so, your lives will be enriched and be fruitful of great good, and your joy will be everlasting.

1. Mutual Respect

The first of these I choose to call mutual respect.

Each of us is an individual. Each of us is different. There must be respect for those differences, and while it is important and necessary that both the husband and the wife strive to ameliorate those differences, there must be some recognition that they

exist and that they are not necessarily undesirable. There must be respect one for another, notwithstanding such differences. In fact, the differences may make the companionship more interesting.

I have long felt that happiness in marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. That involves a willingness to overlook weaknesses and mistakes.

One man has said, “Love is not blind—it sees more, not less. But because it sees more, it is willing to see less” (Julius Gordon, *Treasure Chest*, ed. Charles L. Wallis [New York: Harper and Row, 1965], p. 168).

Many of us need to stop looking for faults and begin to look for virtues. Booth Tarkington once remarked that “an ideal wife is any woman who has an ideal husband” (*Looking Forward and Others* [Garden City, N.Y.: Page and Co., 1926], p. 97). Unfortunately, some women want to remake their husbands after their own design. Some husbands regard it as their prerogative to compel their wives to fit their standards of what they think to be the ideal. It never works. It only leads to contention, misunderstanding, and sorrow.

There must be respect for the interests of one another. There must be opportunities and encouragement for the development and expression of individual talent. Any man who denies his wife the time and the encouragement to develop her talents, denies himself and his children a blessing which could grace their home and bless their posterity.

It is commonplace with us to say that we are sons and daughters of God. There is no basis in the gospel for inferiority or superiority as between the

husband and wife. Do you think that God our Eternal Father loves his daughters less than he loves his sons? No man can demean or belittle his wife as a daughter of God without giving offense to her Father in Heaven.

I am offended by the sophistry that the only lot of the Latter-day Saint woman is to be barefoot and pregnant. It’s a clever phrase, but it’s false. Of course we believe in children. The Lord has told us to multiply and replenish the earth that we might have joy in our posterity, and there is no greater joy than the joy that comes of happy children in good families. But he did not designate the number, nor has the Church. That is a sacred matter left to the couple

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and the Lord. The official statement of the Church includes this language: "Husbands must be considerate of their wives, who have the greater responsibility not only of bearing children but of caring for them through childhood, and should help them conserve their health and strength. Married couples should exercise self-control in all of their relationships. They should seek inspiration from the Lord in meeting their marital challenges and rearing their children according to the teachings of the gospel" (*General Handbook of Instructions* [1983], p. 77).

Husbands, wives, respect one another. Live worthy of the respect of one another. Cultivate that kind of respect which expresses itself in kindness, forbearance, patience, forgiveness, true affection, without officiousness and without show of authority.

2. The Soft Answer

I pass now to the second cornerstone. For want of a better name I call it the soft answer.

The writer of Proverbs long ago declared, "A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).

I hear so many complaints from men and women that they cannot communicate with one another. Perhaps I am naive, but I do not understand this. Communication is essentially a matter of conversation. They must have communicated when they were courting. Can they not continue to speak together after marriage? Can they not discuss with one another in an open and frank and candid and happy way their interests, their problems, their challenges, their desires?

It seems to me that communication is essentially a matter of talking with one another. Let that talk be quiet for quiet talk is the language of love. It is the language of peace. It is the language of God. It is when we raise our voices that tiny mole hills of difference become mountains of conflict.

It seems to me that there is something significant in the description of Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal: "A great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks." That is a rather vivid description of some of the arguments that take place between husbands and wives but, notes the writer of the scripture, "The Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a

fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-12). The voice of heaven is a still small voice. The voice of peace in the home is a quiet voice.

There is need for much discipline in marriage, not of one's companion but of one's self. Husbands, wives, remember, "He [or she] that is slow to anger is better than the mighty" (Proverbs 16:32). Cultivate the art of the soft answer. It will bless your homes, it will bless your lives, it will bless your companionships, it will bless your children.

3. Financial Honesty

Cornerstone number three is financial honesty. I am satisfied that money is the root of more trouble in marriage than all other causes combined.

I am confident that there is no better discipline nor one more fruitful with blessings in the handling of our resources than obedience to the commandment given to ancient Israel through the Prophet Malachi, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:10). Those who live honestly with God are more likely to live honestly with one another and their associates. Further, as they budget for their tithes and offerings they will cultivate a discipline in the handling of their resources.

We live in an age of persuasive advertising and of skillful salesmanship, all designed to entice us to spend. An extravagant husband or wife can jeopardize any marriage. I think it is a good principle that each have some freedom and independence with everyday, necessary expenditures, while at the same time always discussing and consulting and agreeing on large expenditures. There would be fewer rash decisions, fewer unwise investments, fewer consequent losses, fewer bankruptcies if husbands and wives would counsel together on such matters and unitedly seek counsel from others.

Live honestly with the Lord. Live honestly with one another as companions. Live honestly with others. Make timely payment of obligations a cardinal principle of your lives. Consult with one another and be united in your decisions. The Lord will bless you as you do so.

4. Family Prayer

The final cornerstone on which to build your home is family prayer.

I know of no other practice that will have so salutary an effect upon your lives as will the practice of kneeling together in prayer. The very words, Our Father in Heaven, have a tremendous effect. You cannot speak them with sincerity and with recognition without having some feeling of accountability to God. The little storms that seem to afflict every marriage become of small consequence while kneeling before the Lord and addressing him as a suppliant son and daughter.

Your daily conversations with him will bring peace into your hearts and a joy into your lives that can come from no other source. Your companionship will sweeten through the years. Your love will strengthen. Your appreciation one for another will grow.

Your children will be blessed with a sense of security that comes of living in a home where dwells the Spirit of God. They will know and love parents who respect one another, and a spirit of respect will grow in their own hearts. They will experience the security of kind words quietly spoken. They will be sheltered by a father and mother who, living honestly with God, live honestly with one another and with their fellowmen. They will mature with a sense of appreciation, having heard their parents in prayer express gratitude for blessings great and small. They will grow with faith in the living God.

Your companionship will be one that will sweeten and strengthen through the years and that will endure through eternity. Your love and appreciation for one another will increase. . . .

God bless you, my brethren and sisters, husbands and wives, joined together as appreciative companions in sacred covenants of marriage, for time and eternity, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

CULTIVATING DIVINE ATTRIBUTES



Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

*Of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles*

*In Conference Report,
Oct. 1998, 31–34;
or Ensign, Nov. 1998,
25–28*

As Latter-day Saints, “we believe all things, we hope all things. . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.”⁶ What do we believe that will motivate us to move forward? What do we hope for? What are the virtuous, lovely, or praiseworthy things we should seek after? I believe we should strive to develop within ourselves the traits of the character of the Savior.

Faith, Hope, and Charity

The words of the Apostle Paul come to mind: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”⁷ These divine attributes should become fixed in our hearts and minds to guide us in all of our actions. We read in Moroni: “Cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all. . . . Whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him.”⁸ Charity can be the outward expression of faith and hope. If sought and obtained, these three foundation elements of celestial character will abide with us in this life and beyond the veil into the next life. Remember that the “same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that [you] go out of this life . . . will have power to possess your body in [the] eternal world.”⁹ We should not wait a single day to intensify our personal efforts to strengthen these virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy attributes.

When we keep the Lord’s commandments, faith, hope, and charity abide with us. These virtues “distil upon [our] soul as the dew from heaven,”¹⁰ and we prepare ourselves to stand with confidence before our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, “without blemish and without spot.”¹¹

As I read and ponder the scriptures, I see that developing faith, hope, and charity within ourselves is a step-by-step process. Faith begets hope, and together they foster charity. We read in Moroni,

“Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity.”¹² These three virtues may be sequential initially, but once obtained, they become interdependent. Each one is incomplete without the others. They support and reinforce each other. Moroni explained, “And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope.”¹³

These are the virtuous, lovely, praiseworthy characteristics we seek. We all are familiar with Paul’s teaching that “charity never faileth.”¹⁴ Certainly we need unflinching spiritual strength in our lives. Moroni recorded the revelation “that faith, hope and charity bringeth [us] unto [the Lord]—the fountain of all righteousness.”¹⁵

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the restored Church of the Lord on the earth today, guides us to the Savior and helps us develop, nurture, and strengthen these divine attributes. In fact, He revealed the qualifications required to labor in His service in these words: “No one can assist in this work except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity.”¹⁶

Mormon taught that “charity is the pure love of Christ” and exhorted us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ.”¹⁷ Note that charity is given only to those who seek it, only to those who earnestly pray for it, only to those who are disciples of Christ. Before we can be filled with this pure love, we must start at the beginning with the first principle of the gospel. We must have “first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁸

Faith

“Now *faith* is the substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things not seen.”¹⁹ “Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if [we] have faith [we] hope for things which are not seen, which are true.”²⁰ Latter-day Saints can rejoice in the strength of our faith because we have the fulness of the gospel. If we study, ponder, and pray, our faith in the unseen but true things of God will grow. Even if we start with only “a particle of faith, . . . even if [we] can no more than desire to believe,”²¹ with nurturing attention a tiny seed of faith can grow into a vibrant, strong, fruitful tree of testimony.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ motivates us to repent. Through repentance, made possible by the Lord’s Atonement, we can feel the calming peace of forgiveness for our sins, weaknesses, and mistakes. With faith in a spiritual rebirth, we are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

We strive to keep the commandments of God with faith that obedience will help us become like Him. By virtue of the Resurrection of our Savior, we have faith that death is not the end of life. We have faith that we once again will know the pleasant company and warm embrace of loved ones who have departed from mortality.

Hope

Mormon asked the Saints of his day, “And what is it that ye shall hope for?” He gave them this answer: “Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.”²² In Ether we learn that “whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, [and] maketh an anchor to the souls of men.”²³

Even when the winds of adversity blow, our Father keeps us anchored to our hope. The Lord has promised, “I will not leave you comfortless,”²⁴ and He will “consecrate [our] afflictions for [our] gain.”²⁵ Even when our trials seem overwhelming, we can draw strength and hope from the sure promise of the Lord: “Be not afraid nor dismayed . . . ; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”²⁶

Charity

Once faith grows into a firm, abiding testimony, giving us hope in our Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness; once we see through the eye of faith that we are children of a loving Father, who has given us the gift of His Son to redeem us, we experience a mighty change in our hearts.²⁷ We feel “to sing the song of redeeming love,”²⁸ and our hearts overflow with charity. Knowing that the love of God “is the most desirable [of] all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul,”²⁹ we want to share our joy with others. We want to serve them and bless them.

Family

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” states clearly the sacredness of the family and that a “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”³⁰ Children should be taught at an early age of the sacredness of temples, and that their ultimate goal should be to go to the temple to enjoy the blessings that our Heavenly Father has in store for them. Even the tapestry of this sacred goal is given to children that will, in due time, realize this is the greatest blessing that could come to them in this life. . . .

I testify to you as a special witness that Jesus is the Christ and that through His prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, the Savior presides over His Church. May we cultivate, in preparation of His returning to this earth, His divine attributes is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes . . .

6. Articles of Faith 1:13.
7. 1 Corinthians 13:13.
8. Moroni 7:46–47.
9. Alma 34:34.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45.
11. 1 Peter 1:19.
12. Moroni 10:20.
13. Moroni 10:21.
14. 1 Corinthians 13:8.
15. Ether 12:28.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 12:8.
17. Moroni 7:47–48.
18. Articles of Faith 1:4.
19. Hebrews 11:1; italics added.
20. Alma 32:21.
21. Alma 32:27; see also verses 28–43.
22. Moroni 7:41.
23. Ether 12:4.
24. John 14:18.
25. 2 Nephi 2:2.
26. 2 Chronicles 20:15.
27. See Alma 5:14.
28. Alma 5:26.
29. 1 Nephi 11:22–23.
30. *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.