

## President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

Every message given during general conference is the result of earnest prayer and spiritual preparation. Never in the history of the world has the knowledge of the Savior been more personally vital and relevant to every human soul. Devastating conflicts in the world and in individual lives would be quickly resolved if all chose to follow Jesus Christ and heed His teachings.

“In that spirit, I invite you to listen for three things during this conference: pure truth, the pure doctrine of Christ and pure revelation.”

There really is such a thing as right and wrong and absolute truth — eternal truth. The pure doctrine of Christ changes the life of everyone who understands it and seeks to implement it. And pure revelation for the questions in one’s heart “will make this conference rewarding and unforgettable.”

For those who have not yet sought the ministering of the Holy Ghost for the questions in one’s heart, “I invite you do so now.”

“Please make this conference a time of feasting on messages from the Lord through His servants. Learn how to apply them in your life. ... I invoke a blessing upon all who are seeking greater light, knowledge and truth.”



## Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In response to the rich young ruler’s question “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” Jesus told him to sell all his belongings, take up his cross and follow Him. With or without riches, all are to come unto Christ with the same uncompromised commitment to His gospel.

Divine help is available at any moment one feels to make a change. The people in the Book of Mormon chapter of 4 Nephi had no contention because “the love of God ... did dwell in the hearts of the people.”

“When the love of God sets the tone for our own lives, our relationship to each other and ultimately our feeling for all humankind, then old distinctions, limiting labels and artificial divisions begin to pass away, and peace increases.”

For those who love God enough to try to be faithful to Him, He will give the ability, capacity, will and way to love one’s neighbors and themselves. “I pray we will succeed where that rich young man failed, that we will take up the cross of Christ however demanding it may be regardless of the issue and regardless of the cost.”



## President Bonnie H. Cordon

Young Women general president

In a recent letter, a young woman wrote: “I am stuck. ... I’m not sure who I am, but I feel I’m here for something grand.”

President Cordon pointed to two truths that are foundational to a young man or young woman’s “grand and glorious work” that were shared with her by President Russell M. Nelson.

The first is for a person to know his or her divine destiny as a “beloved and cherished child of Heavenly Father” who loves them. Studying a patriarchal blessing can help discover the Lord’s guidance.

The second is for individuals to know their purpose and to not get distracted. “One of Satan’s most powerful weapons is to distract us with good and better causes which, in times of need, may blind and bind us away from the best cause, from the very work that called us into this world.”

“Our eternal purpose is to come unto Christ and actively join Him in His great work.” This includes anytime a person does anything to help make and keep covenants with God. These can be simple things that can also help a youth’s parents or families.

“The gospel of Jesus Christ is not just nice, it is essential for all.”



## Elder Ulisses Soares

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Compassion was one of the most striking principles taught by the Savior during His earthly ministry. Christ’s example offers a perfect model of how to interact with compassion with others.

“The compassionate attitude of Jesus is rooted in charity, namely in His pure and perfect love, which is the essence of His atoning sacrifice. Compassion is a fundamental characteristic of those who strive for sanctification, and this divine quality intertwines with other Christian traits, such as mourning with those who mourn and having empathy, mercy and kindness.”

Compassion for others is, in fact, the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Striving to incorporate a compassionate attitude will foster sensitivity to people’s needs. “With that increased sensitivity, feelings of genuine interest and love will permeate our every action.

“The Lord will recognize our efforts, and we will surely be blessed with opportunities to be instruments in His hands in softening hearts and bringing relief to those whose hands hang down.”

All are in need of God’s understanding and mercy.

“Perhaps it would be better if we sit at Jesus’ feet and plead for mercy for our own imperfections ... and not spend so much time and energy fixating on the perceived imperfections of others.”



**Elder D. Todd Christofferson**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each individual perfectly and profoundly. Because God's love is all-embracing, some may project that thought to mean that God's blessings or salvation are unconditional. "They are not. Some are wont to say, 'the Savior loves me just as I am,' and that is certainly true. But He cannot take any of us into His kingdom just as we are, 'for no unclean thing can dwell there'" (Moses 6:57).

The love of the prophets of God is reflected in their warnings against sin. "They are not motivated by a desire to condemn. Their true desire mirrors the love of God; in fact, it is the love of God."

The love of the Father and the Son includes expectations. "Because They love you, They do not want to leave you 'just as you are.' They want you to have joy and success. Because They love you, They want you to repent because that is the path to happiness. But it is your choice — They honor your agency. You must choose to love Them, to serve Them, to keep Their commandments. Then They can more abundantly bless you as well as love you."

In acknowledging that God loves perfectly, each might ask, "How well do I love God?"

**Elder Clark G. Gilbert**

General Authority Seventy

Just like the mathematical formula for a line, all have different intercepts, or starting points, in life — some are born with high intercepts, full of opportunity. Others face challenges that can seem unfair. However, "our future will be determined far less by our starting point and much more by our slope."

To those facing difficult starting circumstances: "First, focus on where you are headed and not where you began." Don't ignore circumstances "but overfocusing on a difficult starting point can cause it to define you and even constrain your ability to choose."

Also, "involve the Lord in the process of lifting your slope."

To those with elevated starting points: "First, can we show some humility for circumstances we may not have created ourselves?"

Second, don't focus on a high starting point and let the slope go stagnant. "Even when things appear to be going well, we must seek out opportunities to improve through prayerful petition."

One of the miracles of the Lord's Church is that each can become something more in Christ. "Whether we start in difficult or abundant spiritual circumstances, let us keep our sights and our slopes pointed heavenward. As we do, Christ will lift us to a higher place."

**Elder Patricio M. Giuffra**

General Authority Seventy

At age 14, Elder Giuffra and his mother were taught by Latter-day Saint missionaries about Christ, the Apostasy and Joseph Smith's First Vision. "The Spirit confirmed to me several truths."

- God listens to all His children's sincere prayers, and heaven is open to all — not just a few.
- God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings, united in purpose "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."
- Man is created in the image of God. Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus have bodies of flesh and bones, but They are glorified and perfected. The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit.
- Through Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ restored His gospel and true Church to the earth. The priesthood authority conferred on Christ's ancient Apostles is the same priesthood conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery by Peter, James and John.
- The Book of Mormon teaches how ancient inhabitants of the Americas knew, loved and worshipped Christ, who appeared as the resurrected Savior.

"I invite us all to continually increase our faith in Christ, who has changed the lives of my beloved mother and me and continues to change the lives of all who seek Him."

**President Dallin H. Oaks**

Of the First Presidency

Many good, religious-minded people have stopped participating in their churches. "If we cease valuing our churches, for any reason, we threaten our personal spiritual life, and significant numbers separating themselves from God reduces His blessings to our nations."

Church attendance can open hearts and sanctify souls.

With the Lord's direction and authority, the restored Church of Jesus Christ was established to teach the fullness of His doctrine and to officiate with His priesthood authority to perform the ordinances necessary to enter the kingdom of God.

Latter-day Saints who forgo attendance and rely only on individual spirituality separate themselves from gospel essentials — the priesthood's power and blessings, the fullness of restored doctrine, the motivations and opportunities to apply that doctrine, and the opportunity to qualify for an eternal perpetuation of their family.

"Despite the good works that can be accomplished without a church, the fullness of doctrine and its saving and exalting ordinances are available only in the restored Church. In addition, Church attendance gives us the strength and enhancement of faith that comes from associating with other believers and worshipping together with those who are also striving to stay on the covenant path and be better disciples of Christ."



**Elder David A. Bednar**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Missionary work and temple and family history work are complementary, interrelated aspects of one great work focusing upon the sacred covenants and ordinances that enable Latter-day Saints to receive the power of godliness and return to the presence of Heavenly Father.

"We take the Savior's yoke upon us as we learn about, worthily receive and honor sacred covenants and ordinances. We are bound securely to and with the Savior as we faithfully remember and do our best to live in accordance with the obligations we have accepted."

The Lord's covenant people are armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory, as seen by Nephi (1 Nephi 14:14). "I have witnessed faithfulness, courage, perspective, persistence and joy that extend far beyond mortal capacity — and that only God could provide."

Covenant promises and blessings are possible only because of the Savior Jesus Christ. "He invites us to look to Him, come unto Him, learn of Him and bind ourselves to Him through the covenants and ordinances of His restored gospel. I testify and promise that honoring covenants arms us with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory."

**Elder Ciro Schmeil**

General Authority Seventy

President Russell M. Nelson has invited all to become more like the Savior and strengthen their faith by asking, acting and studying.

"Asking through prayer is one of the keys to know how to become a better disciple of Jesus Christ." Ask to know the Lord's will — then accept that the Lord knows best.

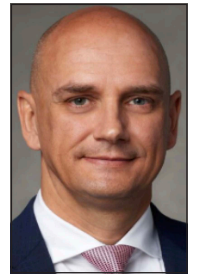
Acting is essential to becoming a better disciple of the Savior. "As we act, He will guide and direct us along the way."

The Lord also teaches His disciples to find guidance and answers by studying the scriptures. "We too must seek guidance from the scriptures for our journey, and we must teach from them in our homes and church callings."

Answers to prayers will not always come right away.

"Through prayer and scripture studying, the Lord has always given me the strength to act and endure one more day, one more week, and try again. Many times, the answers did not come right away. I have questions that have not been answered yet, but I keep asking and studying, and I am happy that the Lord continues to give me the strength to act as I wait for answers."

Discipleship is not a competition. "We are here to love and help each other."

**Sister Susan H. Porter**

Of the Primary general presidency

Knowing and feeling the love of Heavenly Father has the power to change many aspects of life — including how "you feel when difficult things happen" and "your view of God's commandments."

"When you know and understand how completely you are loved as a child of God, it changes everything."

When Nephi was shown the tree of life, he asked to see the interpretation. The angel showed Nephi the city of Nazareth, Mary and baby Jesus. The angel declared: "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!"

"At that sacred moment, Nephi understood that in the birth of the Savior, God was showing forth His pure and complete love."

God's love isn't just felt by those who have followed the iron rod and partake of the fruit.

"God's love, however, is not only received by those who come to the tree but is the very power that motivates us to seek that tree."

At times, it can be difficult to feel God's love. Prayer can help people to see His hand in their lives.

"God's love is not found in the circumstances of our lives, but in His presence in our lives."

**Elder Erich W. Kopischke**

General Authority Seventy

Many people worldwide have been affected by mental health struggles. Church members are not immune; too many suffer silently and believe they have no place in the Church.

"To combat such deception, it is important to remember that the Savior loves each of His Father's children. ... Challenges often indicate a need for additional tools and support and are not a character defect."

It can be difficult for parents to identify their children's mental health struggles, but they must educate themselves. "We ... need to care for our children by helping them learn to be content with their sincere efforts as they strive to meet appropriate expectations."

There is not a simple cure-all for emotional and mental wellness. Focusing on growth is healthier than obsessing about shortcomings.

Study the topic of "mental health" in the Life Help section of the Gospel Library app. "Learning will lead to more understanding, more acceptance, more compassion, more love."

Constantly watch over each other. "We must love one another and be less judgmental — especially when our expectations are not immediately met."

Those personally affected by mental illness need to "hold fast to your covenants, even if you might not feel God's love at this time."





**Elder Ronald A. Rasband**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Things of the soul are clarified and deepened by asking questions, preparing to hear promptings, lifting sights beyond the ways of the world and giving purpose to work in the gospel and life.

These are some things of the soul: Love God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Savior. Love neighbors. Love one's self. Keep the commandments. Always be temple worthy. Be joyful and cheerful. Follow God's living prophet.

"When we are heavy laden with mistakes, heartaches, feelings of inadequacy, disappointment, anger or sin, the power of the Savior's Atonement is, by divine design, one of the things that lifts the soul."

The Church is distinguished by being led by prophets, seers and revelators called of God.

The voice of the Lord speaks through His prophet, President Russell M. Nelson, to calm fears and lift the sights of His children. Apart from general conference twice a year, "President Nelson is speaking much more often in forums, social media, devotionals and even press briefings."

The most important words "we can hear, ponder and follow are those revealed through our living Prophet."

**Elder Christoffel Golden**

General Authority Seventy

The scriptures record instances of nations rejecting signs and prophecies of the Savior. No teaching, miracle or angelic visitation appears to have the persuasive power to convince some individuals to alter their beliefs.

The knowledge and prowess of today's world "too often" camouflage the unsteady foundation upon which they are built. Consequently, they do not lead to real truth nor to develop faith in Jesus Christ.

"We are required to confront the reality that we are getting ever closer to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. True, great difficulties yet await those on the earth at His return, but in this regard, the faithful need not fear."

God is real and miracles occur in the everyday life of countless people. Many sacred experiences are rarely spoken of, "in part because of their divine origin and the resulting possibility of ridicule by some who do not know better."

The prophet Moroni taught that those who deny the revelations and gifts of God "knoweth not the gospel of Christ."

Joseph Smith said: "Shall we not go on in so great a cause? ... Courage, brethren (and may I add, sisters); and on, on to the victory."

**Elder Moisés Villanueva**

General Authority Seventy

The pain of losing a loved one in mortality is felt and understood by the Lord.

"The Savior has perfect compassion for us. He doesn't fault us for our shortsightedness, nor for being limited in visualizing our eternal journey. Rather, He has compassion for our sadness and suffering."

Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, want all to have joy. As President Russell M. Nelson has taught, joy can be felt regardless of life's circumstances.

By His example, the Savior provides direction on how to react to afflictions and avoid murmuring. "Our Savior, Jesus Christ, gave us the example during His earthly ministry. In moments of difficulty and trial, there are few things that bring us greater peace and satisfaction than serving our fellow man."

As latter-day prophets have taught, the best medicine for despair is service. The Lord's infinite love can offer illuminating hope during even the darkest days.

"Our Savior Jesus Christ understands our pains and our afflictions. He wants to ease our burdens and comfort us. We must follow His example, by serving and ministering to those with even greater burdens than our own."

**Elder Gary E. Stevenson**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Two elements of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are (1) God's work of salvation and exaltation, which "focuses on divinely appointed responsibilities," and (2) "The gospel is plain, precious and simple."

"To receive eternal life, we must come unto Christ, and be perfected in Him. As we come unto Christ, and help others do the same, we participate in God's work of salvation and exaltation, which focuses on divinely appointed responsibilities."

These responsibilities are simple, inspirational, motivating and doable. They are:

- Living the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Caring for those in need.
- Inviting all to receive the gospel.
- Uniting families for eternity.

"You might view them as I do: as a road map to return back to our loving Heavenly Father."

"It has been said that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is simply beautiful, and beautifully simple. The world is not. ... We should all strive to keep the gospel simple, in our lives, in our families, in our classes and quorums and in our wards and stakes."

"Much can be learned from miraculous outcomes brought through the simple application of simple gospel principles."

Keeping the gospel simple while fulfilling divinely appointed responsibilities "will surely bring joy and peace."



## President M. Russell Ballard

Acting President, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In the New Testament, John records the account after the Savior's Resurrection where Peter and the other disciples' fishing net was miraculously filled. After they had all dined on the shore, Jesus asks Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?"

In relating this question to individuals today, the Lord may be asking about the influences competing for time and attention. "He may be asking each of us if we love Him more than the things of this world. This may be a question about what we really value in life, who we follow and how we view our relationships with family members and neighbors. Or, maybe He is asking what really brings us joy and happiness."

Only He can bring true joy, happiness and peace. "How would we answer the question 'Lovest thou me more than these?'"

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love each individual, evidenced by the Savior's atoning sacrifice. "We cannot lose our love for and hope in Jesus, even if we face seemingly overwhelming challenges. Heavenly Father and Jesus will never forget us. They love us."

True happiness depends on one's relationship with God, Jesus Christ and others. "What things can you do within your own life to show that you love the Lord first?"



## Sister Sharon Eubank

Of the Relief Society general presidency

The Church of Jesus Christ is under divine mandate to care for the poor. The Church responds to this charge in a wide variety of ways, organized through the priesthood, where small efforts collectively make a big impact through individual efforts made by disciples of Jesus Christ.

The First Presidency has instructed to increase humanitarian outreach in a significant way and is interested in "the largest trends and the smallest details." At President Nelson's direction, Sister Eubank reported about how the Church is responding to a variety of global needs, and she shared four examples to illustrate the efforts: COVID-19 relief in South Africa, the sewing of head coverings for refugees from Afghanistan, a young woman in Haiti lifting others after the earthquake, and missionaries in Germany answering a Catholic shopkeeper's prayers after flooding.

Baptized members of the Church are under covenant to care for those in need. Efforts to do so require the guidance of the Holy Spirit and a willing heart to say to the Lord: "Here am I, send me."

"Jesus Christ asked Peter: 'Do you love me?' The essence of the gospel is contained in how we answer that question."



## Elder Brent H. Nielson

Presidency of the Seventy

"The Old Testament teaches of an aromatic spice or ointment used for healing wounds that was made from a bush grown in Gilead.... Through literature, music and art, the Savior Jesus Christ has often been referred to as the Balm of Gilead because of His remarkable healing power."

Sometimes, fasting and prayer does not bring about the miracle being sought.

The reason requires an understanding of the Savior's Atonement as taught throughout the scriptures, but specifically in Jeremiah, Mark, 3 Nephi and Moroni.

"The Savior's Atonement, which makes available both His redeeming and His enabling power, is the ultimate blessing that Jesus Christ offers to all.... As we cheerfully submit our will to the Father, even in the most difficult of circumstances, the Savior will lift our burdens and make them light."

The power of the Savior covers sins, wounds and trials of all sizes, regardless of their complexities. And, as happened when the Savior fed the 5,000, there will be more than enough for those in need.

"We can move forward with faith knowing that when difficult times come, and they surely will, or when sin encompasses our lives, the Savior stands with 'healing in His wings' inviting us to come unto Him."



## Elder Arnulfo Valenzuela

General Authority Seventy

Studying the scriptures is an important part of understanding the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.

"Delighting in the scriptures is more than hungering and thirsting for knowledge."

Study of the scriptures provides both knowledge of and context to God's plan of salvation. Through this understanding, individuals build trust in His promises made in the scriptures, as well as in the promises and blessings of modern prophets.

"The scriptures and our knowledge of God are gifts. Gifts that we too often take for granted. Let us cherish these blessings."

To "cherish" the scriptures involves more than "seeking new information," he said. In studying the gospel, "we are seeking to become a 'new creature' (2 Corinthians 5:17)."

Teaching from the scriptures transforms people. The power of the Holy Ghost is manifest through them to positively change lives.

"The Holy Ghost guides us toward truth and testifies to us of the truth," he said. "We should seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost. This goal should govern our decisions and guide our thoughts and actions. We must seek everything that invites the influence of the Spirit and reject anything that deviates from this influence."



**Brother Bradley R. Wilcox**

Of the Young Men general presidency

God's message is that repentance and change are necessary. He wants His children to improve and become all they are capable of becoming.

"God loves us as we are, but He also loves us too much to leave us this way. Growing up unto the Lord is what mortality is all about. Change is what Christ's Atonement is all about. Not only can Christ resurrect, cleanse, console and heal us, but through it all, He can transform us to become more like Him."

Life is like a cross-country road trip, and one's "tank" must be frequently refilled.

"Taking the sacrament is like pulling into the gas station. As we repent and renew our covenants, we pledge our willingness to keep the commandments and God and Christ bless us with the holy Spirit.

"In short, we promise to press forward on our journey and God and Christ promise to refill the tank."

Worthiness is not flawlessness.

"Worthiness is being honest and trying. We must be honest with God, priesthood leaders and others who love us and we must strive to keep God's commandments and never give up just because we slip up."

God's blessings are within reach for those who keep all the commandment and "him that seeketh so to do."

**Elder Alfred Kyungu**

General Authority Seventy

What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? It is to acquire His virtues. One can try to imitate four of His many qualities.

First, humility. Jesus Christ taught humility and humbled Himself to glorify His Father. Living in humility brings peace.

Second, courage. Teaching in the temple at age 12, Christ demonstrated early in His life a good sense of courage. The words of the Prophet Joseph Smith reflect Lord's encouragement: "Brethren, shall we not go on in so great a cause? ... Courage, brethren; and on, on to the victory!" (Doctrine and Covenants 128:22).

Third, forgiveness. President Russell M. Nelson taught that one gift the Savior offers all is the ability to forgive through His Atonement. "Let us sincerely forgive each other to obtain the forgiveness of the Father. ... Forgiveness is required of us to be truly disciples of Jesus Christ."

Fourth, sacrifice. As President M. Russell Ballard taught, sacrifice is the demonstration of pure love. "My prayer is that by following Jesus Christ and drawing upon the blessings of His Atonement, we become more and more humble, we are more courageous, we forgive more and more, and we sacrifice more for His kingdom."

**Elder Marcus B. Nash**

General Authority Seventy

While on a flight to Peru, Elder Nash invited an atheist to read the Book of Mormon, and while in an airport in Nigeria, he invited a young man to meet with the missionaries.

"For both, my responsibility — my opportunity — was the same: Hold up the gospel light — to love, share and invite each of them in a normal, natural way."

To know the truths of the gospel is life-changing. "When a person learns the glorious purpose of life, comes to understand that Christ forgives and succors those who follow Him, and then chooses to follow Christ into the waters of baptism, life changes for the better — even when the circumstances of life do not."

Sharing the gospel can bring joy, hope, access to God's power, protection from temptation and healing into one's life. "All of these — and more (including forgiveness of sins) — distill upon us from heaven as we share the gospel."

Many are only kept from the truth because "they know not where to find it" (Doctrine and Covenants 123:12).

"My invitation today is simple: Share the gospel. Be you and hold up the light. Pray for heaven's help and follow spiritual promptings."

**President Henry B. Eyring**

Of the First Presidency

The method to receiving revelation has not changed since the days of Adam and Eve — it is always done by exercising faith.

"I know from experience that answers will come to fit your needs and your spiritual preparation. If you need an answer that is important to your eternal welfare or that of others, the answer is more likely to come. Yet, even then, you may receive — as did Joseph Smith — the answer to be patient."

Revelation comes in proportion to the degree in which one has sought to take the doctrine of Christ into his or her heart and implement that doctrine into one's life.

"As our faith in Jesus Christ will have led us to ask the Father for answers, that faith will also have brought the Savior's softening touch enough for us to hear His direction and be determined and excited to obey."

The more the doctrine of Christ is in one's life, the more he or she will feel greater love and sympathy for those who have never had the blessing of faith in Jesus Christ or are struggling to maintain it.

"Opposition and trials have long been a seedbed for the growth of faith."





**Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Scientists have confirmed that people walk in circles when they do not have reliable clues to direct them. Without landmarks, it is human nature to drift off course. Small, seemingly insignificant factors can make a major difference — physically and spiritually.

“No matter how strong our spiritual experiences have been in the past, as human beings we tend to wander. That has been the pattern from the days of Adam until now.”

Spiritual landmarks like daily prayer, scripture study and approaching God in humility and honesty can help keep one on the path. “This time of introspection is an opportunity for recalibration. ... Think of it as your personal, daily restoration.”

When darkness creeps in, as it often does, daily restoration opens one’s heart to heavenly light, which illuminates the soul, chasing away shadows, fears and doubts. This takes steady effort. “Minutes and hours well spent are the building blocks of a life well lived.”

“We can navigate our way through the darkness and trials of this life and find our way back to our loving Heavenly Father if we seek and accept the spiritual landmarks He has provided, embrace personal revelation and strive for daily restoration.”

**President Camille N. Johnson**

Primary general president

Although it is generally unwise for a trial lawyer to ask a witness a question the lawyer doesn’t know the answer to, the opposite is true for God’s children. The witness who answers questions of God is the Holy Ghost, who testifies of truth.

Perhaps the natural man or woman is resistant to ask a question of God and trust Him entirely, instead choosing to stick with the narrative they have written for themselves — “a comfortable version of our story unedited by the Master Author.”

David defeated Goliath by mustering the courage to let God prevail and write his story. As Esther exercised faith to save her people, she, too, was willing to let God write her story.

In April, President Russell M. Nelson asked all to consider what they would do with more faith in Jesus Christ. “Why do we want the Savior to be the author and finisher of our stories? Because He knows our potential perfectly. He will take us to places we never imagined ourselves. ... The things we will achieve as we act with more faith will increase our faith in Jesus Christ.”

“Will you let God be the author and finisher of your story?”

**Elder Dale G. Renlund**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The pandemic has been a spiritual stress test for the Church and its members. The results are mixed, sometimes with tendencies toward contention and divisiveness.

“This suggests that we have work to do, to change our hearts and to become unified as the Savior’s true disciples.”

Contention causes two concerns: “First, contention weakens our collective witness to the world of Jesus Christ and the redemption that comes through His ‘merits, ... mercy, and grace.’ (2 Nephi 2:8)”

Second, contention is spiritually unhealthy for individuals. “We are robbed of peace, joy and rest, and our ability to feel the Spirit is compromised.”

Being quick to take offense or respond to differences by becoming angry or judgmental is failing the spiritual stress test. It does not mean one is hopeless; rather it identifies a need to change.

Unity requires effort. “If we are unable to place our discipleship to Jesus Christ above personal interests and viewpoints, we should reexamine our priorities and change.”

“My invitation is to be valiant in putting our love of God and discipleship of the Savior above all other considerations. Let us uphold the covenant inherent in our discipleship — the covenant to be one.”

**Elder Vaiangina Sikahema**

General Authority Seventy

When choosing to live life out of sequence, one will find life more difficult and chaotic.

“I’ve had a fascination with ‘sequential order.’ I developed a habit of looking for sequential patterns in life and in the gospel.”

One observation is that sequential order is a simple, natural and effective way for the Lord to teach His children important principles.

“We’ve come to earth to learn and gain experience we would not otherwise have. Our growth is unique to each of us individually and a vital component of Heavenly Father’s plan. Our physical and spiritual growth begins in stages and develops slowly as we gain experience sequentially.”

Many principles, ordinances and efforts are sequential, beginning with faith and learning “line upon line, precept upon precept.”

“Miracles operate according to sequential order. Miracles occur when we first exercise faith. Faith precedes the miracle.”

Other sequential patterns are found in the first four principles of the gospel, Aaronic Priesthood offices, the sacrament ordinance, the ordinances of salvation and exaltation, and the ordinances of the temple.

We will be blessed as we look for and follow the patterns and the sequence in which the Lord teaches what’s most important to Him.



## Elder Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

In Liberty Jail in Missouri, where the Prophet Joseph Smith and others were imprisoned when the Saints were being persecuted, Joseph asked: “O, God, where art thou?”

The answer from the Lord: “My son, peace be unto thy soul.”

“It is clear that opposition can refine us for an eternal, celestial destiny.”

While universal peace is elusive, personal peace can be achieved. All of Jesus Christ’s teachings point to finding peace. Here are several:

- Love God, live His commandments and forgive everyone. In October 1945, following World War II, President George Albert Smith reminded the Saints of the invitation to love their neighbors and forgive enemies.
- Seek the fruits of the Spirit. “We should be willing to compromise and eliminate strife with respect to matters that do not involve righteousness to have peaceful relationships.”
- Exercise agency to choose righteousness. Let go of pride and control to choose the Savior to have His light and His peace.
- Build Zion in our hearts and homes. “The institution of the family is the foundation for both happiness and peace.”
- Follow the current admonitions of the Prophet. President Russell M. Nelson has taught how to “feel enduring peace and joy even during turbulent times.”



## President Russell M. Nelson

President of the Church

Just like major renovations are needed to reinforce the foundation of the Salt Lake Temple to withstand the forces of nature, it is now time to implement extraordinary measures to strengthen personal spiritual foundations.

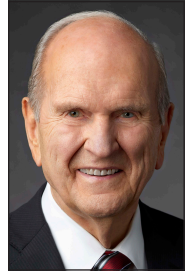
If individuals are going to withstand the forthcoming perils and pressures, they must have a firm spiritual foundation built upon the rock of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

“So, I ask each of you: ‘How firm is your foundation? And what reinforcement to your testimony and understanding of the gospel is needed?’”

The temple lies at the center of strengthening faith and spiritual fortitude because everything taught in the temple increases understanding of Jesus Christ.

When renovations on the Salt Lake Temple are completed, there will be no safer place during an earthquake in the Salt Lake Valley than inside the temple. Likewise, “the safest place to be spiritually is living inside your temple covenants.”

When an individual’s spiritual foundation is built solidly upon Jesus Christ, he or she will have no need to fear. “As you are true to your covenants made in the temple, you will be strengthened by His power. Then, when spiritual earthquakes occur, you will be able to stand strong because your spiritual foundation is solid and immovable.”





**Elder Gerrit W. Gong**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Through God, one can find faith, courage, wisdom, discernment and trust.

“Likewise, He asks us to keep the light on for each other, to be more forgiving and less judgmental of ourselves and each other, so His Church can be a place we feel at home, whether we are coming for the first time or returning.”

Joy on the Lord’s covenant path and callings to serve in His Church are invitations to feel God’s trust and love.

Trust becomes real when a person does hard things with faith. Service and sacrifice increase capacity and refine hearts. Trust in God and each other brings heaven’s blessings.

“We can always trust God. The Lord knows us better and loves us more than we know or love ourselves. His infinite love and perfect knowledge of past, present and future make His covenants and promises constant and sure.”

Trust God’s inspiration to discern wisely.

“Our life journeys are individual, but we can come again to God our Father and His Beloved Son through trust in God, each other and ourselves. Jesus beckons, ‘Be not afraid, only believe.’ ... Please look again for faith and trust — a miracle He promises you today.”

**Bishop L. Todd Budge**

Of the Presiding Bishopric

Sacrifice means to make something or someone holy, and “is a process of becoming holy and coming to know God, not an event or ritualistic ‘giving up’ of things for the Lord.”

The Lord wants each person to become holy, be possessed of charity and come to know Him. “Ultimately, the Lord wants our hearts; He wants us to become new creatures in Christ.”

“Holiness to the Lord” is engraved on each temple. “As we observe our covenants by sacrifice, we are made holy through the grace of Jesus Christ, and at the altars of the holy temple, with broken hearts and contrite spirits, we give our holiness to the Lord.”

Viewing sacrifices on behalf of others as giving up things can cause discouragement. “However, when viewed from the perspective of ‘giving to’ the Lord, our sacrifices on behalf of others become gifts, and the joy of generously giving becomes its own reward.”

Lives, possessions, time and talents are made holy by consecrating them to the Lord. “The humanitarian work of the Church is such a gift.”

Each person’s contribution is small, “but together as we hasten to give to God and our fellowmen, wherever we go, lives are enriched and blessed.”

**Elder Anthony D. Perkins**

General Authority Seventy

Physical or emotional suffering from trials or mortal weaknesses is part of everyone’s lives. Hope is found in Christ’s gospel.

Suffering doesn’t mean God is displeased with someone. “Whatever the cause of your sufferings, Heavenly Father can direct them to refine your soul. Refined souls can bear others’ burdens with true empathy.”

Heavenly Father is intimately aware of each person’s suffering. “While in the midst of trials, we can mistakenly think that God is far away and unconcerned with our pain. ... I witness that our Heavenly Father, who notes the fall of even a single sparrow, is aware of your suffering.”

Jesus Christ offers His enabling power, made possible through His Atonement, to help one have strength to endure suffering. “I fear that too many Church members think if they are just a little tougher they can get through any suffering on their own. ... Your temporary moment of strength can never compare to the Savior’s infinite supply of power to fortify your soul.”

Choose to find joy each day. It is OK to weep. “Yet if you find yourself in dark nights of suffering, by choosing faith you can awake to bright mornings of rejoicing.”

**Elder Michael A. Dunn**

General Authority Seventy

The strategy that helped change the British cycling team from perpetually losing to consistently winning wasn’t a dramatic, overnight turnaround. The strategy coach Dave Brailsford referred to as “the aggregation of marginal gains” entailed implementing small improvements in everything.

Said Brailsford, “The whole principle came from the idea that if you broke down everything you could think of that goes into riding a bike, and then improve it by just 1%, you will get a significant increase when you put them all together.”

How could this 1% principle apply to a principle like repentance?

“Rather than being stymied by the churn and dramatic swings between sin and repentance, what if our approach was to narrow our focus — even as we broadened it? Instead of trying to perfect everything, what if we tackled just one thing?”

For this approach to work, “there must be a consistent, day in and day out effort.” Look at what is stagnating or blocking the covenant pathway, and then look broader to “seek modest but makeable fixes.”

“Because every effort to change we make — no matter how tiny it seems to us — just might make the biggest difference in your life.”

**Elder Sean Douglas**

General Authority Seventy

Physical hurricanes are massive storms that leave behind tremendous damage. They are governed by natural laws as they form under specific conditions and weaken when they meet land.

“Each of us has weathered, and will weather, spiritual hurricanes that threaten our peace and try our faith.”

Through living the gospel of Jesus Christ, people can joyfully overcome these challenges.

“Just as natural laws govern physical hurricanes, divine laws govern how to feel joy during our spiritual hurricanes.”

President Russell M. Nelson has shared: “It becomes a rather simple formula: If you want to be happy, keep the commandments.”

The enemy of faith and joy is doubt, and doubt is the breeding ground for spiritual hurricanes. Satan wants to lead people to this breeding ground of doubt and harden people’s hearts and tempt them to relax their spiritual vigilance.

“Just as hurricanes weaken over land, doubt is replaced with faith as we build our foundation on Christ.”

Then, when spiritual hurricanes are seen in their proper perspective, a person’s capacity to overcome them is enlarged.

Perfect faith or knowledge isn’t required; however, people are asked to believe.

“We face our spiritual hurricanes best by believing in Christ and keeping His commandments.”



**Elder Carlos G. Revillo Jr.**

General Authority Seventy

By living and obeying the principles and ordinances of the gospel, people are blessed, changed and converted to become more like Jesus Christ. “The gospel is truly the way to a happy, abundant life.”

The first principle of the gospel is faith. The Lord provides and takes care of those who demonstrate their faith in Him.

The second principle of the gospel is repentance. Through repentance, one can draw upon the sanctifying power of Jesus Christ. “Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It is a change of mind and heart.”

Repentance prompts a person to make and keep covenants through sacred ordinances. The first ordinance of salvation and exaltation is baptism by immersion for the remission of sins.

“Baptism allows us to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and enter into a covenant with the Lord. We can renew this baptismal covenant every week as we take the sacrament. This, too, is a miracle.”

Come unto Jesus Christ and choose to exercise faith in Him. Repent and make and keep the covenants found in the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.

“This will allow you to be yoked with Christ and receive the power and blessings of godliness.”

**Elder Alvin F. Meredith III**

General Authority Seventy

Focusing on the things that are most important — the things of eternity — is key to safely maneuvering through life.

First, focus on Christ.

“Focusing on Christ requires discipline, especially about the small and simple spiritual habits that help us become better disciples. There is no discipleship without discipline.”

Second, beware of distractions. The devil is the great distractor.

“Some things that are healthy diversions in moderation can become unhealthy distractions without discipline. The adversary understands distractions do not have to be bad or immoral to be effective.”

Third, people can be rescued.

“When we find ourselves sinking, when we face affliction, or when we falter, we too can be rescued by Him.”

The scriptures are full of stories of people who were once fallen and flawed but who repented and became firm in the faith of Christ.

“I think those stories are in the scriptures to remind us that the Savior’s love for us and His power to redeem us are infinite. Not only does the Savior have joy when we repent, but we receive great joy as well.”

Increase focus on the things that really matter — and keep Christ at the center of that focus.

**Elder Neil L. Andersen**

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

For the last three years, President Russell M. Nelson has encouraged the proper use of the full name of the Church.

“Now is our time, and we are reestablishing the revealed name of the Church. The destiny of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints requires that we be called by His name.”

The Prophet Joseph Smith once prophesied, “This Church will fill North and South America — it will fill the world.”

When the Savior returns in majesty and glory, “Christians, who are not among our membership, will welcome our role and our sure witness of Christ. Even those Christians who have viewed us with skepticism, will one day embrace us as friends. In these coming days, we will be called by the name of Jesus Christ.”

“The Lord always keeps His promise, He opens the way for us as we do His work.”

“We appreciate the many good and gracious people who have honored our desire to be called by our correct name.”

As individuals willingly follow the counsel of the Lord as revealed through living prophets, “especially if it runs counter to our initial thinking, requiring humility and sacrifice, the Lord blesses us with additional spiritual power, and sends His angels to support us and stand by us.”

**President Russell M. Nelson**

President of the Church

With two days of instruction by servants of the Lord, “we have been given our charge for the next six months. Now, the question is, how will we be different because of what we have heard and felt?”

If most of the information one gets comes from social or other media, the ability to hear the whisperings of the Spirit will be diminished.

“My brothers and sisters, I plead with you to make time for the Lord! Make your own spiritual foundation firm and able to stand the test of time by doing those things that allow the Holy Ghost to be with you always.”

Nothing invites the Spirit more than fixing one’s focus on Jesus Christ.

Also, please make time for the Lord in His holy house. “Nothing will strengthen your spiritual foundation like temple service and temple worship.”

“The Lord knows you and loves you. He is your Savior and your Redeemer. He leads and guides His Church. He will lead and guide you in your personal life if you will make time for Him in your life — each and every day.”

Plans are announced to build 13 temples at or near the following locations: Kaohsiung, Taiwan; Tacloban City, Philippines; Monrovia, Liberia; Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Antananarivo, Madagascar; Culiacán, México; Vitória, Brazil; La Paz, Bolivia; Santiago West, Chile; Fort Worth, Texas; Cody, Wyoming; Rexburg North, Idaho; and Heber Valley, Utah.

The Provo Utah Temple will be renovated after the Orem Utah Temple is finished.

