

Pressing Forward As Parents – Principles and Promises That Will Pick Us Up, Guide Us, and Bring Us Peace

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I. Planting the Promises in Our Hearts as Parents

A. "There are no perfect families, either in the world or in the Church, but there are many good families." Elder Maxwell (*Ensign* May 1994 p. 119) Finding balance (see Mosiah 4:27)

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ... let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)

"I submit to you that may be one on the Savior's commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed..." Elder Holland (CES Fireside, Mar. 2, 1997)

"But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23)

B. The Tree of Life

1. *1 Nephi 8:24-28* This group were "clingers" (perhaps nervous or even panicked). They came to the tree and were ashamed. They heeded the people in the great and spacious building and fell away. The gospel was not internalized.

2. Compare I Nephi 8:30-33. This group pressed forward-- "continually holding fast." They arrived at the tree and immediately fell down in reverence and gratitude. They 'heeded not' those in the great and spacious building. The gospel was internalized.

C. Nephi 31:20--A pattern of principles to help us press forward.

1. Steadfast in Christ (see I Nephi 2: 12 and 16)

"Now, parents, there is substantial help for you if you will accept it. I add with emphasis that the help we propose is not easy, for the measures are equal to the seriousness of your problem. There is no patent medicine to effect an immediate cure. And parents, if you seek for a cure that ignores faith and religious doctrine, you look for a cure where it will never be found. When we talk of religious principles and doctrines and quote scripture, interesting isn't it, how many don't feel comfortable with talk like that? But when we talk about your problems with your family and offer a solution, then your interest is intense.

Know that you can't talk about one without the other and expect to solve your problems. Once parents know that there is a God and that we are His children, they can face problems like this and win. If you are helpless, He is not. If you are lost, He is not. If you don't know what to do next, He knows. It would take a miracle, you say? Well, if it takes a miracle, why not." Pres. Packer ("That All May Be Edified" SLC: Bookcraft 1982)

2. Brightness of Hope

(see Alma 5 8:8-12) - Facing an 'innumerable' host, embarrassments etc. they poured out their whole souls in prayer to be strengthened and delivered, "...God did visit us with assurances that He would deliver us ... He did speak peace to our souls ... grant unto us great faith..." which gave them hope and courage with a with a determination to conquer.

"There are some great spiritual promises which may help faithful parents in this church. Children of eternal sealings may have visited upon them the divine promises made to their valiant forebears who nobly kept their covenants. Covenants remembered by parents will be remembered by God. The children may thus become the beneficiaries an inheritors of these great covenants and promises. This is because they are the children of the Covenant." Pres. Faust (*Ensign*, Nov. 1990)

"The prophet Joseph Smith declared-and he never taught a more comforting doctrine-that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or the life to come, they will return." (Orson F. Whitney, in Conf. Report, April 1929, p. I 10.) (*Ensign*, May 1992)

3. Love of God and of all men

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God...and ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably ... (see Mosiah 4:10-15)

4. Feast Upon the Word of Christ

"Wherefore I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do." (2 Nephi 32:3)

5. Endure to the End

"If ye keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7)

"A successful parent is one who has loved, one who has sacrificed, and one who has cared for, taught, and ministered to the needs of a child. If you have done all of these and your child is still wayward or troublesome or worldly, it could well be that you are, nevertheless, a successful parent. Perhaps there are children who have come into the world that would challenge any set of parents under any set of circumstances. Likewise, perhaps there are others who would bless the lives of, and be a joy to, almost any father or mother. "My concern today is that there are parents who may be pronouncing harsh judgements upon themselves and may be allowing these feelings to destroy their lives, when, in fact they have done their best and should continue in faith. That all who are parents might find joy in their efforts with their children is my prayer..." Pres. Hunter (*Ensign*, Nov. 1983)

"...he (Lehi) began to be desirous that his family should partake of it (the fruit) also." (1 Nephi 8: 12)

II. Planting the Promises in the Hearts of Our Children

A. Malachi's Prophecy (Mal. 4.-5-6)

"Elijah will plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children will turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at the coming of the Lord. (D&C 2:2-3) ..seek diligently to turn hearts (see D&C 98: 16)

"...Moroni's adaptation of Malachi's prophecy extends the spirit of the fifth commandment [(Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.)] far beyond simply showing respect for parents, as important as that is. Moroni promised that the Spirit of Elijah (which is the priesthood power by which families may be scaled together) would actually plant in the hearts of the children a desire to realize the same promises the Lord gave to Abraham-and, for many Latter- Day Saint children, the promises made to their parents in the temple. And that blessing, if realized, will save not only them but also the 'whole earth' from being 'wasted.'

"How miraculous, literally, that a thirst, even a yearning, for these marvelous blessings might actually take root in our children's own hearts. I suspect that most all parents in Zion pray every night, as we do, that this inborn hunger will be planted in the hearts of their children, supplementing all we can do to help them be receptive to it." (Bruce C. and Marie K. Hafen

The Belonging Heart Deseret Book Co, 1994, SLC. Utah p. 188)

B. Teaching and Nourishing

"We cannot control what others choose to do, and so we cannot force our children to heaven, but we can determine what we will do. And we can decide that we will do all we can to bring down the powers of heaven into that family we want to have forever." Elder Eyring (*Ensign*, Feb. 1998. p. 18)

1. Family Gospel Living, Study, and Instruction-Family Home Evening, family prayer, Sunday time and teaching, routines, music, family activities etc. (see appendix "a Plan for Family Gospel Study" and First Presidency letter 11 Feb. 1999)

"...it is clear that no matter where a family lives, it is family life and gospel living, intimately intertwined, that most help teenagers become competent, spiritually strong, and faithful Latter-day Saints." Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong" (*Ensign*, March 1999)

"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...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." Pres. Hinckley (Satellite Broadcast Jan. 29, 1984)

"What can parents do to help youth internalize gospel principles? 1. Be a good example 2. Hold regular family home evening, family prayer, and scripture study 3. Teach practical applications of gospel principles 4. Provide settings for potential spiritual experiences 5. Encourage children to come to know for themselves" Brent L. Top and Bruce Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong," (*Ensign*, March 1999)

"We must build a consistent, planned, program of introducing the principles of the gospel... It rests solely upon the shoulders of parents to establish a gospel foundation in the lives of their children. Of course, there are other organizations that can help, but we want to be certain that we know what they are learning, and that we take the time and have the patience to determine carefully, and in a planned way, that they are growing up with a sure foundation on which to build their lives." Elder L. Tom Perry (*Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 74)

"True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior." Pres. Packer (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986)

"We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, and we prophecy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins." (11 Nephi 25:26)

"...the hearts of you fathers and mothers must be turned to your children right now, if you have the true spirit of Elijah, and not think that it applies merely to those who are beyond the veil. Let your hearts be turned to your children ... If you are neglecting your family home evening, you are neglecting the beginning of the mission of Elijah just as certainly as if you were neglecting your genealogy research work." Harold B. Lee Priesthood genealogy seminar, 1973; quoted in Leann G. Otten and C. Max Caldwell, *Sacred Truths of the Doctrine and Covenants* 2 Vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982]

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully

and regularly, both by themselves and with their children, the spirit of that great book will permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase- mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to the counsel of their parents. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity-the pure love of Christ-will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness. Marion G. Romney (Conf. Report, April 1980, pp. 90-91)

"There are those hours on Sunday and in a family home evening on Monday the opportunity to combine genuine caring, teaching the gospel, and the bearing of testimony. Across the earth there are families who love and understand their covenants who do that. There is a caution I would give and a promise I would offer about such choices of how to us family time. For a person not yet a member of the Church, to fail to provide such moments of love and faith is simply a lost opportunity. But for those under covenant, it is much more. There are few places where it can matter more for those for whom we are accountable. For members of the church, my caution is that to neglect those opportunities is a choice not to keep sacred covenants.

Because God always honors covenants, I can make a promise to those who in faith keep the covenant to create experiences of giving love and bearing testimony with their families. They will reap a harvest of hearts touched, faith in Jesus Christ exercised unto repentance, and the power to keep covenants strengthened.

I bear solemn testimony that this is the true Church of Jesus Christ, in which the ordinances and the covenants are offered, which if accepted and honored produce peace in this life and assure us eternal life in the world to come." Elder Eyring (*Ensign*, Nov. 1998 p. 30)

2. "One by One"-including parent-child interviews, parent-child "dates," keeping memory books and records, father's blessings, knowing, helping, and celebrating each child (see "What we want our children to have" interview forms, family information sheets, and related ideas in appendix)

The dedication of the book, *Cheaper By the Dozen*, by Frank B. Gilbreth Jr. And Ernestine Gilbreth Carey reads: "to Dad, who only reared twelve children, and to Mother, who reared twelve only children" (New York: Harper and Row, 1949)

Alma the Younger as a Father - (Alma 35-42)

Key time in history of church (country falling apart)

People offended by the strictness of the word

Alma calls his sons together

Corianton - (see also D&C 121:41-44)

Results (See Alma 49:30)

Compare Pahoran-contention in family (Helaman 1)

"A ride in the car, a special meal at a restaurant, or a friendly discussion late at night are good opportunities for parents to strengthen ties with youth." Brent L. Top and Bruce Chadwick "Helping Teens Stay Strong" (*Ensign*, March 1999 p. 32)

3. Strengthen Family Unity

a. Work as a team!

Family spirit-story, flag, symbol, motto, scripture, hymn, song, cheer, mission statement, etc.

Teamwork--Stewardships, Responsibilities, Councils (see appendix-Family Executive Committee Meeting, Family Council, Family Committees)

"We found that three family characteristics in particular were significant in fostering moral strength [in youth]: family connectedness, parental regulation, and intellectual autonomy (freedom to express opinions)." Brent L. Top and Bruce A. Chadwick, "Helping Teens Stay Strong" (*Ensign*, March 1999)

"My plea-and I wish I were more eloquent in voicing it-is a plea to save the children. Too many of them walk with pain and fear, in loneliness and despair. Children need sunlight. They need happiness. They need love and nurture. They need kindness and refreshment and affection. Every home, regardless of the cost of the house, can provide an environment of love which will be an environment of salvation." Pres. Gordon B. Hinckley, (*Ensign*, Nov. 1994)

"No success can compensate for failure in the home. The poorest shack in which love prevails over a united family is of greater value to God and future humanity than any other riches. In such a family God can work miracles and will work miracles." Pres. David O. McKay (April, 1964)

b. Build and maintain traditions of church and temple attendance, learning, reading, talking, laughing, planning, counseling, singing, working, playing, celebrating, traveling, eating, and serving together-- and supporting each other. (see appendix for tradition worksheets and the tradition of giving a gift to the Savior)

"Foster wonderful family traditions which will bind you together eternally. In doing so, we can create a bit of heaven right here on earth within individual families. After all, eternity will be but an extension of righteous family life." Ezra Taft Benson (*Ensign*, Nov. 1989)

"Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities." First Presidency (The Family: A Proclamation to the World)

"My counsel to you is to fill up your memory bank and your book of life with as many 'I'm glad I did' activities as you can possibly crowd into one lifetime." Elder L. Tom Perry (*Ensign* Aug. 1993)

"To have a time when the family meets at the kitchen table may take considerable adjustment and careful planning, but what could be of more importance to the unity of the family, the spiritual growth of the family, the bridges built between members of a family as they talk, listen, and respond, surrounded by love? Our major success is simply trying-over and over." Elder Le Grand R. Curtis, " A Table Encircled With Love," *Ensign*, May 1995)

See list of dinnertime conversation ideas, ideas for mealtime traditions and celebrations, and teaching the gospel around the table in the article "Mealtime, Family Time" Janene W. Baadsgaard (*Ensign*, Sep. 1998)

..... teach them to love one another and to serve one another. (Mosiah 4:15)

"Richer than I you could never be, For I had a mother who read to me." Strickland Gillian

"Read to your children. Read the story of the Son of God. Read to them from the New Testament. Read to them from the Book of Mormon. It will take time, and you are very busy, but it will prove to be a great blessing in your lives as well as in their lives. And there will grow in their hearts a great love for the Savior of the world, the only perfect man who walked the earth. He will become a very real living being, and His great atoning sacrifice as they grow to manhood and womanhood, will take on a new and more glorious meaning in their lives." Pres. Hinckley (quoted in Church News, 6 Dec. 1997)

"I hope that everyone gets to the temple on a regular basis. I hope your children over 12 years of age have the opportunity of going to the temple to be baptized for the dead. If we are a temple-going people, we will be a better people, we will be better fathers and husbands, we will be better wives and mothers. I know your lives are busy. I know that you have much to do. But I make you a promise that if you will go to the house of the Lord, you will be blessed, life will be better for you. Now, please, please, my beloved brethren and sisters, avail yourselves of the great opportunity to go to the Lord's house and thereby partake of all of the marvelous blessings that are yours to be received there." Pres. Hinckley (Fireside, Lima, Peru, 9 Nov. 1996)

c. Keep Records (see "Family Book" in appendix)

"And again, let all the records be had in order ... to be held in remembrance from generation to generation, saith the Lord of Hosts." D&C 127:9

d. Strengthen extended family connections

"For most ... life is not a matter of legislative battles, judicial decrees and executive decisions. It is a fabric of helping hands and good neighbors; bedtime stories and shared prayers; loving-packed lunchboxes and household budget balancing- tears wiped away and a precious heritage passed along.; it is hard work and a little put away for the future. In a healthy society, heroes are the men and women, [and] children who hold the world together one home at a time; the parents and grandparents who forgo pleasures, delay purchases, foreclose options, and commit most of their lives to the noblest undertaking of citizenship; raising children who, resting on the shoulders of the previous generation, will see farther than we and reach higher." (The White House Report on the Family, Nov. 1986, pp. 8-9; as quoted in Conference Report, April 1987, p. 103 by Pres. Faust.)

"The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation..." Pres. Packer (*Ensign*, May 1995)

"I would hope that our own children, as the generations go on, would know of their

heritage, to know that thy had fathers who believed and to know that they had fathers who had investigated and who had been out in the world declaring the truth ... feeling it in their hearts and souls that what we do is true." Elder David B. Haight (*Ensign*, May 1998 p. 8)

"One of the important skills [in making a person resilient] is the ability to be and feel connected to others." USA Weekend, (March 5-7,1999)

"Have You thought of something that made you feel connected? Perhaps it was the quilt you slept under ... I believe that these feelings of connection are symbolic of relationships that are eternal. I have great confidence in the spirit of Elijah. We must respond to that spirit. The turning of the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers will provide the power to keep us on course-to keep us connected." Janette Hales Beckham (Ricks College Education Week June 5, 1999) 0

"Enlarge the memory"-records, histories, journals, stories, scrapbooks, photographs, videos, song books, family trivia game, ancestor birthday parties, hero to dinner, keepsakes, heirlooms, memorabilia, remembering feelings and experiences, etc.

Foster ties and togetherness-gatherings, parties, family history and temple work, service, trips, reunions, talent shows, sing-ins, writing, oral histories, info sheets, videos, establishing family organizations, round-robin letters, Internet conversations, etc. (see also "Family History: A Work of Love" Mary Ellen Smoot *Ensign*, March 1999)

4. Stay on the Path and Never give up!

"And he did exhort them then with all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words, that perhaps the Lord 38 would be merciful to them, and not cast them off, yea, my father did preach unto them." (1 Nephi 8:37).

"Now parents, I desire to inspire you with hope. You who have heartache, you must never give up. No matter how dark it gets or no matter how far away of how far down your son or daughter has fallen, You must never give up. Never, never, never." Boyd K. Packer (Conf. Report Oct. 1970)

"Never forget that these little ones are the sons and daughters of God and that yours is a custodial relationship to them, that I was a parent before you were parents and that I has not relinquished His parental rights or interest in these His little ones. Now, love them, take care of them ... Welcome them into your homes, and nurture them with all of your hearts. They may do, in the years that come, some things you would not want them to do, but be patient, be patient. You have not failed as long as you have tried. Never forget that!" Pres. Hinckley, Salt Lake University Third Stake Conference, 3 Nov. 1996)

"A child, even one raised with great love and care and carefully taught, may choose, when an adult, not to follow those teachings for a variety of reasons ... we understand the principle of agency. We pray that life's experiences will help them regain their desire and ability to live

the gospel. They are still our children, and we will love and care about them always. We do not lock the doors of our house nor the doors to our hearts." Elder Robert D. Hales (*Ensign*, Nov. 1993, p. 10)

"The gospel is good news! Man is that he might have joy. Be happy! Let that happiness shine through your faces and speak through your testimonies. You can expect problems. There may be occasional tragedies. But shining through it all is the plea from the Lord: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light. (Matthew 11:28- 30). I enjoy these words of Jenkins Lloyd Jones which I clipped from a column some years ago:

Anyone who imagines that bliss is normal is going to waste a lot of time running around shouting that he's been robbed. The fact is that most putts don't drop, most beef is tough, most children grow up to be just people, most successful marriages require a high degree of mutual toleration, most jobs are more dull than otherwise. 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.'

"I repeat, my brothers and sisters, the trick is the thank the Lord for letting you have the ride; and really isn't it a wonderful ride? Enjoy it! Laugh about it! Sing about it! Remember the words of the writer of proverbs: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the bones." (Prov. 17:22) Pres. Hinckley (address to Religious Educators, Sept. 1978)

"If you're on the straight and narrow 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, and the reason is that this life is the time that is given to men to prepare for eternity ... so, if you're working zealously in this life-though you haven't fully overcome the world and you haven't done all you hoped you might do-you're still going to be saved. You don't have to live a life that's truer than true. You don't have to have an excessive zeal that becomes fanatical and becomes unbalancing. What you have to do is stay in the mainstream of the Church and live as upright and decent people live in the Church-keeping the commandments, paying your tithing, serving in the organizations of the Church, loving the Lord, staying on the straight and narrow path."

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Probatioiiary Test of mortality*, address given 10 Jan., 1982)