

**WHY?**  
**Principles Behind the Practices**  
**Anthony Sweat and John Hilton III, Education Week 2008**

**Why Ask Why?**

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Of all the creations of the Almighty there is none more beautiful, none more inspiring than a lovely daughter of God who walks in virtue with an *understanding of why she should do so*” (Gordon B. Hinckley, “Words of the Prophet: Daughters of the Almighty,” *New Era*, Nov 2003, 4; *emphasis added*).

Elder David A. Bednar said, “It concerns me as I see young people in our Church who know all the correct things they should do and do not have a clue as to why...Do we understand why? If we do not understand the why, then the power available to us through the doctrine of Christ will not be evident in our lives” (“Teach Them to Understand,” <http://byui.edu/presentations> June 4, 1998).”

**Why should I honor the Sabbath?**

“Attendance at Church each week provides the opportunity to partake of the sacrament, as the Lord has commanded us. If we act with the right preparation and attitude, partaking of the sacrament renews the cleansing effect of our baptism and qualifies us for the promise that we will always have His Spirit to be with us” (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, *The Gospel in Our Lives*, *Ensign*, May 2002, p.33).

“Think for a moment how different our lives could be if through repentance we were made clean each and every Sabbath and could start each week absolutely pure, renewed, refreshed—totally confident of our standing before God” (Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, D&C Seminary Video, “Upon My Holy Day”).

“I would counsel all students, if they can, to arrange their schedules so that they do not study on the Sabbath. If students and other seekers after truth will do this, their minds will be quickened and the infinite Spirit will lead them to the verities they wish to learn” (President James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 34).

**Why should I fast?**

“Each time we fast, we gain a little more control over our worldly appetites and passions” (Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 2001, 73).

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy alight break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not (Isaiah 58:5-11).



**Does this remind  
you of the Sabbath?**

**It shouldn't!**

## Why Keep the Commandments?

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that God “never has – He never will – institute an ordinance or give a **commandment** to His people that is not **calculated** in its nature to promote that **happiness** which He has designed, and which will not end in the greatest amount of good and glory to those who become the recipients of his law and ordinances” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 256–7, emphasis added).

Commandments can be seen as an **irritant** like blurred vision or as a focused **quest**



## Why should I focus on parenthood?

“To be a righteous woman is a glorious thing in any age. To be a righteous woman during the winding up scenes on this earth, before the second coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman’s strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times. She has been placed here to help, to enrich, to protect, and to guard the home—which is society’s basic and most noble institution. Other institutions in society may falter and even fail, but the righteous woman can help to save the home, which may be the last and only sanctuary some mortals know in the midst of storm and strife” (President Spencer W. Kimball, “Privileges and Responsibilities of Sisters,” *New Era*, Jan 1979, 42).

## At times we should not ask why

“When you face adversity, you can be led to ask many questions. Some serve a useful purpose; others do not. To ask, Why does this have to happen to me? Why do I have to suffer this, now? What have I done to cause this? will lead you into blind alleys. It really does no good to ask questions that reflect opposition to the will of God. Rather ask, What am I to do? What am I to learn from this experience? What am I to change? Whom am I to help? How can I remember my many blessings in times of trial? Willing sacrifice of deeply held personal desires in favor of the will of God is very hard to do. Yet, when you pray with real conviction, ‘Please let me know Thy will’ and ‘May Thy will be done,’ you are in the strongest position to receive the maximum help from your loving Father” (Elder Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 1995, 16).

President Thomas S. Monson tells a story of driving down a road and feeling impressed to stop at a less-active member’s house. He didn’t know why, but he followed the prompting. When he knocked on the door, a woman answered and said, “All day long I have been hoping somebody would call. How did you know it was my birthday?” Knowing the reason why was not important to President Monson, he simply did what he was prompted to do. If we expect to be given a why for every prompting that comes we will be disappointed, and miss out on many tender blessings (*Inspiring Experiences That Build Faith: From the Life and Ministry of Thomas S. Monson*, 23-24).