

Teaching in the Savior's Way

By Jan E. Newman

The responsibility rests squarely upon each of us to follow the example of the Master and teach like Him.

I feel like this is a “losing battle before the fight even starts” scenario- teaching members of the responsibility resting on them to teach like the Master when most members don't believe there is any responsibility resting on them to teach period. It would be like teaching women or men their responsibility as wives and husbands if they don't believe they have the responsibility to get married! Many people will hear the start of this and go, “Oh, I'm not a Sunday school teacher, I'm not a missionary, therefore I don't have to listen to this because there is no responsibility on me to teach, period.” I go over in my paper *The Watchman* the necessity or better worded, the requirement, for members to open their mouth (i.e., teach) as a pre-requisite for exaltation in the highest degree of the Celestial kingdom. But just in case this is the only place you hear this and you don't check out the paper *The Watchman*, the following should lay to rest any contention on the subject:

Doctrine and Covenants 88:81–85

81 Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and *it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.*

82 Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads.

83 He that seeketh me early shall find me, and shall not be forsaken.

84 Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment which is to come;

85 That their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination which awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come. Verily, I say unto you, let those who are not the first elders continue in the vineyard until the mouth of the Lord shall call them, for their time is not yet come; *their garments are not clean from the blood of this generation.*

President George Albert Smith taught, “*We will attain our exaltation in the Celestial Kingdom only on the condition that we share with our Father's other children the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and observe the commandments that will enrich our lives here and hereafter*” (Sharing the Gospel with Others, 190 or PMG p.12)

Now that we have proved that opening your mouth/teaching is a part of Celestial Law, we need to prove that how we teach actually has an impact and therefore the responsibility rests squarely upon each of us to learn how to be better teachers.

In Preach My Gospel, Chapter 10, we read:

“People are better able to believe the message of the Restoration of the gospel when they understand the message. President James E. Faust said: “Study, ponder, and teach from the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon and the New Testament. Know the truth so well that you can state it clearly. B. H. Roberts wrote, ‘To be known, the truth must be stated and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better the opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true.’ [New Witnesses for God, 3 vols. (1909), 2:vii]. You cannot convert people beyond your own conversion” (“What I Want My Son to Know before He Leaves on His Mission,” Ensign, May 1996, 41).

You are commanded to reason with and expound the scriptures when you teach (see Doctrine and Covenants 68:1). Expound means to enlarge on and to explain clearly. Expounding the gospel means that you explain the meaning of the doctrine and scriptural passages simply and clearly, relying on the Spirit to guide what you say. Use dignified but conversational language to help people understand the doctrinal principles. Ask questions to help them think about the principles and to see if they understand and accept what you have taught.

*By studying, developing, and using the teaching skills in this chapter, you will become a more capable instrument in the hands of the Lord. The Spirit will draw upon the knowledge and skills you have developed to help you teach more powerfully. The quality and power of your teaching will help others understand and feel the importance the restored gospel has for them. **Their understanding will be influenced by your personal worthiness. Their understanding will also be influenced by** how well you focus your attention on them and listen and by how well you explain the gospel, use the scriptures, share your testimony, ask questions, and invite them to make and keep commitments.”*

It is not as simple as just “I speak the truth and the Holy Ghost does the rest”- that is a misunderstanding at best and a lie at worst. We have a lot more impact by our actions or lack of actions than most want to readily acknowledge. This is the duty resting upon members, a duty that Joseph Smith said, “After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 330).

President John Taylor taught, “It is time we were waking up to a sense of the position we occupy before God. ...If you do not magnify your callings, God will hold you responsible for those whom you might have saved had you done your duty. How many of you can say, My garments are clean from the blood of this generation? I speak in behalf of the nations and the people thereof, and the honest in heart who are ignorant of God and his laws. He has called upon us to enlighten them, and to spread forth the truth, and send forth the principles of the Gospel, and point out the way of life....But we are careless and thoughtless.” (Journal of Discourses (London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1880), 20:23.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie echoed that warning, “God’s servants must, at the peril of their own salvation, deliver the message entrusted to them. (D&C 4:2.) If they raise the warning voice as directed by the Lord (D&C 88:81), they are free from the blood and sins of those to whom they are sent. If they fail to warn the wicked, the Lord holds them accountable for the sins of the unrepentant. (Ezek. 3:17–21; 33:7–9.)” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 2:177.)

President Spencer W. Kimball said, *“If we do not do our duty in regard to missionary service, then I am convinced that God will hold us responsible for the people we might have saved had we done our duty. ... We must not slacken our hands in this work. Not only is our eternal welfare at stake, but also the eternal welfare of many of our brothers and sisters who are not now members of this Church.”* (‘It Becometh Every Man,’ Ensign, October 1977, 5, 7)

Exceptional Teachers

A few months ago, a former classmate from my hometown of Overton, Nevada, suggested we put together a Christmas gift for our beloved kindergarten teacher, who had recently celebrated her 98th birthday. She taught us to be kind, the importance of a good nap, the joy of milk and graham crackers, and to love one another. Thank you, Sister Davis, for being such a wonderful teacher.

I had another exceptional teacher while attending Ricks College many years ago. I was preparing to serve a mission and thought it would be helpful to attend a missionary preparation class. What I experienced changed my life.

From the first day of class, I realized I was in the presence of a master teacher. The teacher was Brother F. Melvin Hammond. I knew Brother Hammond loved the Lord and he loved me. I could see it in his face and hear it in his voice. When he taught, the Spirit enlightened my mind. He taught doctrine, ...

In here lies a correct doctrine that puts to bed a common fallacy spread in the Church.

“I felt the Spirit so strong when that person talked!”

“Oh? What did you learn?”

“Nothing, I can’t remember what he said, I just remember how I felt!”

In Preach My Gospel, under the section titled, “A Word of Caution”,

*“President Howard W. Hunter offered this counsel: “Let me offer a word of caution. ... I think if we are not careful ... , we may begin to try to counterfeit the true influence of the Spirit of the Lord by unworthy and manipulative means. I get concerned when it appears that strong emotion or free-flowing tears are equated with the presence of the Spirit. Certainly the Spirit of the Lord can bring strong emotional feelings, including tears, but that outward manifestation ought not to be confused with the presence of the Spirit itself” (The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter [1997], 184). **The Spirit of the Lord always edifies.**”*

To edify is to instruct for improvement; edification means intellectual, moral or spiritual improvement. The Holy Ghost is the great teacher, he is not the great therapist, masseuse, etc. Teaching the Lord’s way always leads to edification or enlightening of one’s mind through the teaching of doctrine.

Doctrine and Covenants 50:17-25

17 Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?

18 And if it be by some other way it is not of God.

19 And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?

20 If it be some other way it is not of God.

21 Therefore, why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?

22 Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.

23 And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness.

24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

25 And again, verily I say unto you, and I say it that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you;

D&C 50:22–24. How Can We Tell “That Which Is of God” from That Which Is of Satan?

The things of God edify: they spiritually support and lift us toward a better life. They bring us closer to our Father in Heaven. The things of Satan do the opposite. No spiritual growth occurs, no intelligence is communicated, we are not edified. The Prophet Joseph Smith observed: “Others frequently possess a spirit that will cause them to lie down, and during its operation, animation is frequently entirely suspended; they consider it to be the power of God, and a glorious manifestation from God—a manifestation of what? *Is there any intelligence communicated?* Are the curtains of heaven withdrawn, or the purposes of God developed? Have they seen and conversed with an angel—or have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No! but their body has been inanimate, the operation of their spirit suspended, and all the intelligence that can be obtained from them when they arise, is a shout of ‘glory,’ or ‘hallelujah,’ or some incoherent expression; but they have had ‘the power.’ “The Shaker will whirl around on his heel, impelled by a supernatural agency or spirit, and think that he is governed by the Spirit of God; and the Jumper will jump and enter into all kinds of extravagances. A Primitive Methodist will shout under the influence of that spirit, until he will rend the heavens with his cries; while the Quakers (or Friends) moved as they think, by the Spirit of God, will sit still and say nothing. Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does He recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Teachings, pp. 203–4.)

President Joseph Fielding Smith taught: “*There is no saying of greater truth than ‘that which doth not edify is not of God.’ And that which is not of God is darkness, it matters not whether*

it comes in the guise of religion, ethics, philosophy or revelation. No revelation from God will fail to edify.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:201–2.)

Now that we understand the Holy Ghost, the next prong of attack if “spirit-o-meters” fail is to claim miraculous visitations, displays of power, etc. Meaning, if Satan can’t confuse you with feelings that don’t edify (i.e. spirit-o-meter), Satan will use false displays of power, miraculous visitations etc.

D&C 50:13–21. How Can One Discern and Unmask Evil Spirits?

Some of the early Saints had fallen victim to excessive spiritual displays, “receiving them to be of God” (D&C 50:15). *The Lord indicated that these displays are not justified.* The Prophet Joseph Smith explained: “One great evil is, that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits; their power, laws, government, intelligence, etc., and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that it must be of God. . . . “. . . who can drag into daylight and develop the hidden mysteries of the false spirits that so frequently are made manifest among the Latter-day Saints? We answer that *no man can do this without the Priesthood, and having a knowledge of the laws by which spirits are governed*; for as ‘no man knows the things of God,’ but by the Spirit of God, so no man knows the spirit of the devil, and his power and influence, but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God, together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb, which are so characteristic of his proceedings and his mysterious windings. “A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors. . . . “. . . the great difficulty lies in the ignorance of the nature of spirits, of the laws by which they are governed, and the signs by which they may be known; . . . it requires the Spirit of God to know the things of God; and the spirit of the devil can only be unmasked through that medium.” (History of the Church, 4:572–74; see also Notes and Commentary for D&C 129.)

Alma 18:42. Dramatic Conversions Are the Exception

See the statement by President Ezra Taft Benson under the commentary for Mosiah 27:25 (see page 166).

Mosiah 27:14. An Angel Sent from God

One of the roles an angel fulfills is to call the wicked to repentance (see Moroni 7:29, 31). Note that the angel did not come to Alma and the four sons of Mosiah because of their righteousness but “that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith” (Mosiah 27:14).

The ministering of angels must be in harmony with the will of God and does not always occur according to the timetable of the petitioner. Speaking of a man who had prayed for the visitation of angels, President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) said:

Wilford Woodruff “*I said to him that if he were to pray a thousand years to the God of Israel for that gift, it would not be granted, unless the Lord had a motive in sending an angel to him. I told him that the Lord never did nor never will send an angel to anybody merely to gratify the desire of the individual to see an angel. If the Lord sends an angel to anyone, He sends him to perform a work that cannot be performed only by the administration of an angel.*” I said to him that those were my views. The Lord had sent angels to men from the creation of the world, at different times, but always with a message or with something to perform *that could not be performed without.* I rehearsed to him different times when angels appeared to men. Of course, I referred to the angel visiting Joseph Smith; The Revelator John said that in the last days an angel would fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwelt on the earth. The reason it required an angel to do this work was, the Gospel was not on the earth. The Gospel and the Priesthood had been taken from among men. Hence God had to restore it again.

“Now, I have always said, and I want to say it to you, that the Holy Ghost is what every Saint of God needs. It is far more important that a man should have that gift than he should have the ministrations of an angel, unless it is necessary for an angel to teach him something that he has not been taught” (“The Administration of Angels,” in Brian H. Stuy, comp. Collected Discourses, 5 vols. [1987–92], 5:233).

Mosiah 27:25. Being Born Again

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) gave us an important reminder as we seek to be born again and become like our Savior Jesus Christ:

“We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more godlike, that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. *Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible.* The scriptures record remarkable accounts of men whose lives changed dramatically, in an instant, as it were: Alma the Younger, Paul on the road to Damascus, Enos praying far into the night, King Lamoni. Such astonishing examples of the power to change even those steeped in sin give confidence that the Atonement can reach even those deepest in despair.

“But we must be cautious as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, *they are the exception more than the rule.* For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds *and thousands* of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said ‘were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.’ (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added.)” (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” Ensign, Oct. 1989, 5).

Now that we understand what the Holy Ghost can and can’t do, how to recognize it as well as false spirits and demons, the next key of insight is:

...but he also *invited me* to learn it on my own.

That invitation helped me clearly see my responsibility to learn the Lord's doctrine for myself. That experience changed me forever. Thank you, Brother Hammond, for teaching in the Savior's way.

We learn of this very clearly in Preach My Gospel Chapter 11, that is, the act of inviting and committing as a disciple of Jesus Christ and why it is required.

“Remember the following principles:

- *Every ... opportunity...should lead to an invitation to act...*
- *Rarely, if ever, should you talk to people or teach them without extending an invitation to do something that will strengthen their faith in Christ.*
- *If you do not invite people to make commitments, you are not asking them to repent and come to Christ.*
- *During a lesson you may be inspired to extend invitations other than those you planned. Always invite people to repent.*
- *Be bold and confident as you invite people to make commitments (see Alma 38:12). Boldness shows your faith that obedience to the Lord's commandments brings blessings.*
- *People will not likely change unless they are invited to do so.”*

Brothers and sisters, everyone deserves to have this kind of learning experience both at home and at church.

I don't like the word choice of “deserves” here applying to both parents and teachers at Church equally. The command for parents to teach their children correct principles supersedes keyless callings at Church i.e., Sunday School teacher. I also don't like the word “deserves”- did the Savior deserve the Atonement? As President Nelson warned us, “*some things will simply seem unfair*”. This is a problem of focusing on the other vs. focusing on self; Brothers and Sisters, everyone should strive to be this kind of teacher to bless everyone around us with these kind of learning experiences both at home and at church. This would be a better way of teaching and getting across this message.

The introduction to Come, Follow Me gives a vision of what Christlike teaching can accomplish. “The aim of all gospel learning and teaching,” it says, “is to deepen our conversion to Jesus Christ and help us become more like Him. ... The kind of gospel learning that strengthens our faith and leads to the miracle of conversion doesn't happen all at once. It extends beyond [the] classroom into an individual's heart and home.”¹

The quote that I have already shared from the Book of Mormon Student Manual above goes over this lifelong conversion process. This quote is reminiscent of a quote from President Nelson I share as a reason for why I believe the Lord had me share this work online, “*I hope that it (meaning “my” papers) helps you increase your testimony of the Savior by deepening your*

understanding of the doctrine taught in His restored Church” (April 2021 Ensign, Preparing the World for Savior’s Second Coming).

The scriptures indicate that the Savior’s ministry in ancient America was so impactful and widespread that “the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.”²

How can our teaching have a similar effect on those we love? How can we teach more like the Savior and help others become more deeply converted? Allow me to offer a few suggestions.

Before we get into these suggestions, to add a little confirmation, let us read,

Alma 31:5

5 And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—*yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword*, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.

The preaching of the word of God in power has a more powerful effect than anything else. Joseph Smith taught this in Lectures on Faith 2 and 3 that without human testimony even the Holy Ghost would be unable to testify of anything.

But it is important with this human testimony and “the convincing power of man” promised of the Lord has prerequisites:

D&C 11:21

21 Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men.

Nothing has more of an impact than the preaching of the word of God and the preaching of the word of God with the power of God unto the convincing of men is not obtained until after one obtains the word of God and has a desire for it. Thus saith the scriptures.

Emulate the Savior

First and foremost, take it upon yourself to learn all you can about the Master Teacher Himself. How did He show love for others? What did they feel when He taught? What did He teach? What were His expectations of those He taught? After you explore questions like these, evaluate and adjust your way of teaching to be more like His.

The Church provides many teaching resources in the Gospel Library app and on ChurchofJesusChrist.org. One such resource is titled Teaching in the Savior’s Way. I invite you to read and study its every word. Its principles will assist you in your efforts to be more Christlike in your teaching.

How did the Savior show love for others?

Who better to know the answer to this than those of the New Testament?

Hebrews 12:6-9

6 For whom the Lord *loveth* he *chasteneth*, and *scourgeth* every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But *if ye be without chastisement*, whereof all are partakers, *then are ye bastards, and not sons*.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For an example of this in action you can see the LDS Bible video linked below:

<https://youtu.be/JHsNsyxpxQc>

But the scriptures are found here:

Matthew 16:21-23

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan*: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Just to get an idea of what happened here, Peter was saying “oh no Lord, these horrible things won’t happen to you!” and Jesus’ response was to tell Peter, “get thee behind me Satan!”

What did He teach/What did they feel when He taught?

- Sell all that thou hast, give unto the poor and come follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, *he went away sorrowful*:... (Matthew 19:22)
- This day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, *were filled with wrath*, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, *that they might cast him down headlong* (Luke 4:28-29)
- And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said,

Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. *And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him* unto them. (Mark 14:4-7,10)

- I am the bread of life... Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, *This is an hard saying; who can hear it?* When Jesus knew in himself that *his disciples murmured* at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* Then said Jesus unto the twelve, *Will ye also go away?* Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. (John 6)

What were His expectations of those He taught?

3 Nephi 12:48

48 Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.

JST Matthew 16:25-29

25 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross and follow me.*

26 And now for a man to take up his cross, is to *deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.*

27 *Break not my commandments* for to save your lives; for whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come.

28 And whosoever will lose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come.

29 Therefore, *forsake the world, and save your souls*; for what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Matthew 7:21-23

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father* which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I say, Ye never knew me: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Matthew 7:24-29

24 ¶ *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

In summary, it would be a very good idea for people to study the Savior- most of us still have no idea who He is and worse some are now attempting to paint Him as literally the opposite of what He was.

Unleash the Power of Families

My next suggestion can be illustrated with an experience I had a few months ago when I stopped by to visit a dear friend. I could hear his wife in the background speaking with someone, so I quickly excused myself so he could get back to his family.

An hour or so later I received this text message from his sweet wife: “Brother Newman, thanks for coming over. We should have invited you in, but I want to share with you what we were doing. Since the pandemic we have been discussing Come, Follow Me with our adult children every Sunday over Zoom. It has literally been working miracles. I think it is the first time our daughter has read the Book of Mormon on her own. Today was the last lesson on the Book of Mormon, and we were just finishing when you came by. ... I thought you would be interested to hear how Come, Follow Me, Zoom, and a pandemic have provided the opportunity at the right time to change a heart. ... It makes me wonder how many little miracles have been taking place during this odd time.”

Side note: I think this is a terrible example- a woman is rude and then attempts to cover up her rudeness later by virtue signaling. That is what just happened. It also doesn't seem to be a very good example of what he is trying to teach. This is why role playing is something I constantly harp on- if you are role playing and you realize you don't have a testimony of a subject or a good personal example of it, get your companion to teach that principle. And if neither of you have a strong testimony of the principle or good examples of it blessing your life personally, what should you do? Bring a member who you know does.

This sounds to me like a fulfillment of the promise President Russell M. Nelson made in October 2018. He said that home-centered, Church-supported gospel learning “has the potential to unleash the power of families, as each family follows through conscientiously and carefully to transform their home into a sanctuary of faith. I promise that as you diligently work to remodel your home into a center of gospel learning, over time your Sabbath days will truly be a delight.

Your children will be excited to learn and to live the Savior's teachings. ... Changes in your family will be dramatic and sustaining."3 What a beautiful promise!

That is a beautiful promise and one should note the similarities between this and another quote from President Nelson. Transforming our homes as President Nelson is committing us to here will enable what President Nelson promised in this other very similar quote to take place:

"We live in the day that "our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation." We have front-row seats to witness live what the prophet Nephi saw only in vision, that "the power of the Lamb of God" would descend "upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory." You, my brothers and sisters, are among those men, women, and children whom Nephi saw. Think of that! (Hear Him, Apr 2020 Sunday Morning Session)

For those curious what this will look like, Elder Orson Pratt taught,

"That happy, peaceable time, so often predicted by Prophets, will come; that is the reason, my hearers, we want to build a house of the Lord in the top of the mountains; it is in order to fulfil ancient and modern prophecy, and the commandments which the Lord our God has given to us. There must be something wonderful, indeed, to attract the attention of all nations; unless there is to be a very great power manifested, it would not attract the attention of the people afar off; if only some few sick people were healed, it might, perhaps, not be heard of only for a few miles from the place where it happened. It must be some tremendous power among that people that build the house of the Lord. What kind of a city will this Zion be, and how will the dwellings of the people be lighted up? Isaiah has told us, in the fourth chapter, "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense." No wonder that the nations afar off flow to Zion. Did you ever hear tell of a whole city lighted up in that manner? You have heard of the invention of gaslights, but this does not attract the attention of the nations; but there is to be a city called Zion, and a house of the Lord in the top of the mountains, that are not to be lighted up with gas, but by the glory of the God of Israel—"I will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion," &c.; not on one house alone, but upon every dwelling place, "a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." The nations will be struck with wonder, and will say, "If that people have such great power, let us leave our own lands and countries; for it must be that those people are the people of God, for their houses are enveloped in a flame of fire every night, because of His glory: let us go up there, and know what His will is concerning us." (Journal of Discourses Volume 2 p. 284)

To be truly life-changing, conversion to Jesus Christ must involve our whole soul and permeate every aspect of our lives. This is why it must be focused at the center of our lives—our families and homes.

A number of quotes come to mind reading this- the Savior saying, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:21), the Savior teaching *"ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (Matthew 6:24), President David O McKay, *"The home is the first and most effective place to learn the lessons of life: truth, honor, virtue, self control, the value of education, honest*

work, and the purpose and privilege of life. Nothing can take the place of home in rearing and teaching children, and no other success can compensate for failure in the home.”, President Spencer W. Kimball, “When Satan is bound in a single home—when Satan is bound in a single life—the Millennium has already begun in that home, in that life” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 172), as well as this quote by President Brigham Young,

“When we conclude to make a Zion we will make it, and this work commences in the heart of each person. When the father of a family wishes to make a Zion in his own house, he must take the lead in this good work, which it is impossible for him to do unless he himself possesses the Spirit of Zion. Before he can produce the work of sanctification in his family, he must sanctify himself, and by this means God can help him to sanctify his family. There are many families in this community that have constantly with them the Spirit of Zion. Visit them when you will, and you find them dwelling in peace; a heavenly influence constantly broods over them and over everything they possess. But are they perfect? No. It would not do for them to be perfect because we have still to associate more or less with that which is evil.

We have all the material we need to build up Zion, and I wish the Spirit of Zion to extend from heart to heart, and from house to house. This good work must commence in each person; there must be instituted a watchful care over the passions to bring them under control, that an angry feeling may not arise, that an evil passion may not gain the mastery to the overthrow of wisdom and good, sound judgment, until the power of the enemy that is sown within us is entirely subdued to the will of Christ, for the purpose of the enemy of all righteousness is to destroy the human family, and make them what they were not intended to be.” (Young, Brigham. Discourses of Brigham Young. Selected by John A. Widtsoe. 1941, p.118)

Remember That Conversion Is Personal

My final suggestion is to remember that conversion must come from within. As illustrated in the parable of the ten virgins, we cannot give someone else the oil of our conversion, as much as we might want to. As Elder David A. Bednar taught: “This precious oil is acquired one drop at a time ... patiently and persistently. No shortcut is available; no last-minute flurry of preparation is possible.”⁴

It's important to note that Elder Bednar himself said that this interpretation of the ten virgins was “one of many possible interpretations”. He himself later in his talk, *We Will Prove Them* Herewith compared it to temporal preparation. I would also note there is only one primary interpretation and when Elder Bednar was giving his “oil = conversion” interpretation he said “this is one of many possibly interpretations” vs when he taught “oil = temporal preparation” he made no such clarifying statements. But what Brother Newman is teaching here is that desire which comes from conversion is a prerequisite for teaching (as we went over above in D&C 11) with power. We can increase or decrease our desire by what and who we surround ourselves with- conversion does have to come from within but the choices we make on what/who to surround ourselves with will directly impact that (see my breakdown of Elder Whiting’s talk *Becoming Like Him*).

Come, Follow Me is based on that truth. I compare it to the angel who helped Nephi learn about Jesus Christ by saying, “Look!”⁵ Like that angel, Come, Follow Me invites us to look in the scriptures and the words of the modern-day prophets in order to find the Savior and hear Him. Like Nephi, we will be personally tutored by the Spirit while reading and pondering the word of God.

“While reading and pondering the word of God” being crucial to being tutored by the Spirit and not by demons, devils, false spirits etc. As President Joseph Fielding Smith taught, “Our right to guidance from Holy Ghost. We have the right to the guidance of the Holy Ghost, but we cannot have that guidance, if we wilfully refuse to consider the revelations that have been given to help us to understand and to guide us in the light and truth of the everlasting gospel. We cannot hope to have that guidance when we refuse to consider these great revelations which mean so much to us both temporally and spiritually.

Now if we find ourselves in this condition of unbelief or unwillingness to seek for the light and the knowledge which the Lord has placed within our reach, then we are liable or in danger of being deceived by evil spirits, the doctrines of devils, and the teachings of men. And when these false influences are presented before us, we will not have the distinguishing understanding by which we can segregate them and know that they are not of the Lord. And so we may become prey unto the ungodly, to the vicious, to the cunning, to the craftiness of men.” (Doctrines of Salvation, p.43)

Come, Follow Me is the springboard that helps each of us to dive deeply into the living waters of the doctrine of Christ.

I’m going to have to “strongly disagree” with this comment- I would put Come, Follow Me as more “the kiddie pool” that helps us learn how to swim. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith, and even older Institute Manuals are more “diving boards” for the deep end of the pool.

A parent’s responsibility is similar in many ways. Children inherit many things from their parents, but a testimony is not one of them. We can’t give our children a testimony any more than we can make a seed grow. But we can provide a nourishing environment, with good soil, free of thorns that would “choke the word.” We can strive to create the ideal conditions so that our children—and others we love—can find place for the seed, “[hear] the word, and [understand] it”⁶ and discover for themselves “that the seed is good.”⁷

This is the environment for desire creation that we discussed above. Once again, I would highly recommend Elder Whiting’s *Becoming Like Him* talk. I would also recommend watching the “Train up a child” fireside on the responsibility of parents to teach their children.

Several years ago, my son Jack and I had the opportunity to play the Old Course at St. Andrews in Scotland, where the game of golf began. It was simply amazing! Upon my return I tried to convey to others the magnitude of the experience. But I couldn’t. Photos, videos, and my best descriptions were totally inadequate. I finally realized the only way for someone to know the grandeur of St. Andrews is to experience it—to see the vast fairways, breathe the air, feel the

wind in their face, and hit a few errant shots into the cavernous bunkers and burly gorse bushes, which we did with great efficiency.

So it is with the word of God. We can teach it, we can preach it, we can explain it. We can talk about it, we can describe it, we can even testify of it. But until a person feels the sacred word of God distill upon his or her soul like the dews from heaven through the power of the Spirit,⁸ it will be like looking at a postcard or someone else's vacation photos. You have to go there yourself. Conversion is a personal journey—a journey of gathering.

Whether or not he realizes it or not, he just taught the doctrine of “testify and move on”. There are many people who teach missionary work like it is indentured servitude where you lock onto one person and one person only and you serve and love them their entire life and eventually you will break through. This is not how the Savior taught and this is not how we should focus our efforts in the gathering of Israel. Conversion is a personal matter and if the person is not ready there is nothing you are going to do to convince them otherwise. If they are not willing to go to the Old Course at St. Andrews in Scotland and they will never understand it unless they experience it, that is what Brother Newman is teaching us, then there is nothing we can do to help them until they have a change in heart and we can never generate a change of heart in them.

Satan will give you something good (pleasure) to keep you from something great (joy), or another quote I'm sure you are familiar with, “Satan teaches truth/scriptures (good) mingled with lies.” The principle taught here is the same, and that is that “good” (i.e. scripture/truth/pleasure) are given in order to keep people from “great” (i.e. 100% truth, joy, etc.)

Nowhere is this more true than with the most important things pertaining to God's Kingdom, and President Nelson said, “*The gathering of Israel is the most important thing taking place on the earth today. Nothing else compares in magnitude, nothing else compares in importance, nothing else compares in majesty*” (Hope of Israel, 2018). Now if that is true and that is the most important thing going on right now, that would mean that stopping this work, slowing that, hindering that, would be Satan and his minion's top priority.

Let me here be so bold as to declare matter of fact that nothing is as effective at hindering the work of the Lord in this regard than getting good men and women to do nothing or waste their time on dead ends. If you have testified, invited and been rejected, move on. Don't hang around with doubters, don't spend all of your efforts on one family or one individual who is going nowhere- if they are not ready there is nothing you can do for them. Love them, be kind and nice to them, etc. but do not make your family or your branch or your ward or your stake's mission plan to be these individual's or these families' indentured servants forever. The Spirit will lead you personally to those who you can bless, it is still up to them whether or not they accept and when they reject ask the Lord for a new list and move forward. This is the difference between a disciple of Christ who brings many sheaves to the altar of Christ at judgment and the servant of Christ who brings one strand of wheat on its deathbed and on life support.

I teach the missionaries that when I was on my mission I learned to ask people “if God came down right now in this room and asked you to do 10 jumping jacks, would you do it?” It would shock people (or maybe not) that a large portion of people responded in the negative and even

more wanted further proof or understanding before they would be obedient. I would say that if there is nothing God can do to convince these people to do ten jumping jacks, there is nothing you as a missionary can do to convince them to make and keep even simpler commitments. If anybody thinks “no, that’s not accurate, I could convince somebody to do something like that”, they are in fact admitting to pride on such a level that they believe they could do something that God Himself can’t.

Everyone who teaches in the home and at church can offer to others the opportunity to have their own spiritual experiences. Through these experiences, they will come to “know the truth of all things” for themselves.⁹ President Nelson taught, “If you have sincere questions about the gospel or the Church, as you choose to let God prevail, you will be led to find and understand the absolute, eternal truths that will guide your life and help you stay firmly on the covenant path.”¹⁰

I can add my testimony to this, I know that once we have this willingness we will be led line upon line, precept upon precept, the Lord will lead you to further light and truth.

As always, I will end my paper with the commitment and testimony of the speaker and make them my own.

Dramatically Improve Teaching

I invite leaders and teachers in every organization of the Church to counsel together with parents and youth in order to dramatically improve teaching at every level—in stakes, in wards, and in homes. This will be achieved by teaching the doctrine and inviting Spirit-filled discussion about the truths the Holy Ghost has taught us in the quiet moments of our personal study

My dear friends in Christ, the responsibility rests squarely upon each of us to follow the example of the Master and teach like Him. His way is the true way! As we follow Him “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure.”¹¹ In the name of He who is risen, the Master Teacher Himself, Jesus Christ, amen.