

# **Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith**

## **June 27<sup>th</sup> Fireside**

### 1. Duties of Elders (p. 86-88)

I now proceed, at the close of my letter, to make a few remarks on the duty of elders with regard to their teaching parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and slaves, or servants, as I said I would in my former letter.

And first, it becomes an Elder when he is traveling through the world, warning the inhabitants of the earth to gather together, that they may be built up an holy city unto the Lord instead of commencing with children, or those who look up to parents or guardians to influence their minds, thereby drawing them from their duties, which they rightfully owe these legal guardians, they should commence their labors with parents, or guardians; and their teachings should be such as are calculated to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to the fathers; and no influence should be used with children contrary to the consent of their parents or guardians; but all such as can be persuaded in a lawful and righteous manner, and with common consent, we should feel it our duty to influence them to gather with the people of God. But otherwise let the responsibility rest upon the heads of parents or guardians, and all condemnation or consequences be upon their heads, according to the dispensation which he hath committed unto us; for God hath so ordained, that His work shall be cut short in righteousness, in the last days; therefore, first teach the parents, and then, with their consent, persuade the children to embrace the Gospel also. And if children embrace the Gospel, and their parents or guardians are unbelievers, teach them to stay at home and be obedient to their parents or guardians, if they require it; but if they consent to let them gather with the people of God, let them do so, and there shall be no wrong; and let all things be done carefully and righteously and God will extend to all such His guardian care.

And secondly, it is the duty of Elders, when they enter into any house, to let their labors and warning voice be unto the master of that house; and if he receive the Gospel, then he may extend his influence to his wife also, with consent, that peradventure she may receive the Gospel: but if a man receive not the Gospel, but gives his consent that his wife may receive it, and she believes, then let her receive it. But if a man forbid his wife, or his children, before they are of age, to receive the Gospel, then it should be the duty of the Elder to go his way, and use no influence against him, and let the responsibility be upon his head; shake off the dust of thy feet as a testimony against him, and thy skirts shall then be clear of their souls. Their sins are not to be answered upon such as God hath sent to warn them to flee the wrath to come, and save themselves from this untoward generation. The servants of God will not have gone over the nations of the Gentiles, with a warning voice, until the destroying angel will commence to waste the inhabitants of the earth, and as the prophet hath said, "It shall be a vexation to hear the report." I speak thus because I feel for my fellow men; I do it in then name of the Lord, being moved upon by the Holy Spirit. Oh, that I could snatch them from the vortex of misery, into which I behold them plunging themselves, by their sins; that I might be enabled by the warning

voice, to be an instrument of bringing them to unfeigned repentance, that they might have faith to stand in the evil day!

Thirdly, it should be the duty of an Elder, when he enters into a house, to salute the master of that house, and if he gain his consent, then he may preach to all that are in that house, but if he gain not his consent, let him not go unto his slaves or servants, but let the responsibility be upon the head of the master of that house, and the consequences thereof, and the guilt of that house is no longer upon his skirts, he is free; therefore, let him shake off the dust of his feet, and go his way. But if the master of that house give consent, the Elder may preach to his family, his wife, his children and his servants, his man-servants, or his maid-servants, or his slaves; then it should be the duty of the elder to stand up boldly for the cause of Christ, and warn that people with one accord to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and for the Holy Ghost, always commanding them in the name of the Lord, in the spirit of meekness, to be kindly affectionate one toward another, that the fathers should be kind to their children, husbands to their wives, masters to their slaves or servants, children obedient to their parents, wives to their husbands, and slaves or servants to their masters.

[Jordan Reed's Thoughts:](#)

When explaining the very first duty of the Elders in the church, Joseph Smith suggests that duty is to build up a holy city unto the Lord. He then goes on to give us the recipe by which this is accomplished. It seems that recipe has everything to do with the fundamental and most important unit of a function society: The Family.

Notice how he first brings up temple work by referencing Malachi 4:6, which reads “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” So, we can deduce that the way we build up holy cities unto the Lord is through the New and Everlasting Covenant (i.e. Celestial Marriage). Heavenly Father knows this and we know this. Satan also knows this. Therefore, is it a coincidence that in June 2021 that the family is under an absolute assault from the adversary. No, it is not. Satan knows that if he can tear down the family, he can prevent members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints from building up Holy Cities.

The proclamation states “Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.”

Is it necessary to go into complete detail as to how Satan is trying to tear apart the family? I don't think so, but I think we could list at least a million ways in which this is currently happening. For now, all I will say is at least June is almost over ;)

Now that we've covered celestial marriage in the temple, Joseph Smith also goes on to describe characteristics of righteous families, and thus the attributes of Holy Cities.

First, we see that the responsibility for raising a righteous generation falls squarely upon the parents. This is supported in The Family Proclamation:

*“Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers— will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”*

According to Joseph Smith, another duty which rests upon the Elders is to proclaim the gospel to the head of the household (i.e. the man). By this teaching, the church most certainly respects the order of the Patriarch, so much so that the Elders must gain permission from the husband if the Mother of the household desires to be baptized on her own.

I would like to add my own experience with this very principle just mentioned. While on my mission in Campinas Brazil, I felt inspired to do the most thorough weekly planning session I had ever conducted throughout the whole two years of my mission. I was in my final transfer before going home and I was desperate for at least one more baptism. Upon thoroughly studying our area book, we came across a woman who had been encountered by my mission trainer. I had an immense amount of respect for my mission trainer, because I knew the type of missionary he was. So, I thought this must be a sign from the Lord pointing me in the direction to go and seek out this woman. The Portuguese word “Eleita,” meaning elect lady (not Emma Smith), was written down beside her name. However, if this lady was so elect, why was she not yet baptized? The next day, or at least I assume it must had been, my companion and I arrived at her address. Something funny happened during that first lesson. Usually it is customary for missionaries to teaching about the Restoration during the first visit. However, the spirit impressed me to talk about Baptisms for the Dead. Normally, that would-be taboo for something “so deep” to be brought up during a first visit. I’m grateful I listened to the spirit instead of the opinions of men. This lady was so deeply touched that we felt the need to invite her to be baptized during that same visit. She accepted. What followed next could only be described by the works of the devil to prevent this woman from receiving ALL the ordinances needed for eternal salvation. This woman was baptized. The same woman was never confirmed, and thus she never received the gift of the Holy Ghost. But why was she never confirmed? Because her husband interfered. What did Joseph Smith just have to say above about this exact scenario? Allow me to repeat:

“But if a man forbid his wife, or his children, before they are of age, to receive the Gospel, then it should be the duty of the Elder to go his way, and use no influence against him, and let the responsibility be upon his head; shake off the dust of thy feet as a testimony against him, and thy skirts shall then be clear of their souls.” So, there was nothing else we could do except to shake the dust of our feet as a testimony against him, and go our own separate ways. I have no doubt in my mind the God absolutely wanted us to find and baptize that woman. I do not know what will become of her eternal fate, but I do know her husband must stand accountable before God one day for his evil doing.

Kelly and Ryan:

**Warn the inhabitants of the Earth to gather to the Holy City.**

Who am I as an Elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints called to teach?

**Doctrine and Covenants 134:12**

We believe it just to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world; but we do not believe it right to interfere with bond-servants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men; such interference we believe to be unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace of every government allowing human beings to be held in servitude.

**Doctrine and Covenants 58:64-65**

For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature, with signs following them that believe.

And behold the Son of Man cometh. Amen.

**Doctrine and Covenants 112:5**

Contend thou, therefore, morning by morning; and day after day let thy warning voice go forth; and when the night cometh let not the inhabitants of the earth slumber, because of thy speech.

President Benson April 1985

As members of the Lord’s Church, we must take missionary work more seriously. The Lord’s commission to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) will never change in our dispensation. We have been greatly blessed with the material means, the technology, and an inspired message to bring the gospel to all men. More is expected of us than any previous generation. Where “much is given much is required.” (D&C 82:3.)

What am I supposed to be teaching?

**Doctrine and Covenants 19:37**

37 And speak freely to all; yea, preach, exhort, declare the truth, even with a loud voice, with a sound of rejoicing, crying—Hosanna, hosanna, blessed be the name of the Lord God!

**Doctrine and Covenants 58:47**

47 Let them preach by the way, and bear testimony of the truth in all places, and call upon the rich, the high and the low, and the poor to repent.

**Doctrine and Covenants 68:8**

8 Go ye into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature, acting in the authority which I have given you, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

## Doctrine and Covenants 71:7

7 Wherefore, confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest.

What are my responsibilities as a parent?

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.

Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

## 2. Modern Sons of Sceva (p.99)

We also would notice one of the modern sons of Sceva, who would fain have made people believe that he could cast out devils, by a certain pamphlet, the Millennial Harbinger, that went the rounds through our country; who felt so fully authorized to brand "Jo" Smith with the appellation of Elymas the sorcerer, and to say with Paul, "O full of all subtlety, and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" We should reply to this gentleman, Paul we know, and Christ we know, but who are ye? And with the best of feeling would say to him, in the language of Paul to those who said they were John's disciples, but had not so much as heard there was a Holy Ghost--to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, by those who have legal authority, and under their hands you shall receive the Holy Ghost, according to the Scriptures:

"Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17). "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). "Of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:2). "How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Romans 10:14, 15). But if this man will not take our admonition, but will persist in his wicked course, we hope that he will continue trying to cast out devils, that we may have the clearer proof that the kingdom of Satan is divided against itself, and consequently cannot stand; for a kingdom divided against itself, speedily hath an end.

Jordan Reed's Thoughts:

Here, I just wanted to bare my testimony of the priesthood and the power obtained that allows us to cast out devils. Later in this fireside, you'll understand better why there was a time in my life in which the devil was raging against me because I left his side. For this reason, he sought to destroy me. Without getting too specific, I will say that I was visited by evil spirits. I called my mission president not knowing what to do. I was terrified. These spirits wouldn't leave me alone.

I was worried I might die. My companion offered me a priesthood blessings to “cast out the devil.” It didn’t work. These visitations continued. Weeks later, I showed up to a district meeting in complete desperation. I pulled aside the Zone Leader, in whom I deeply trusted. He was a giant of a missionary. I started bawling in front of him as I explained what was going on. He proceeded to give me a blessing by the laying on of hands. Then, we immediately left the district meeting and caught a bus back to my apartment where the visitations kept occurring. We went into the building and he offered a blessing in which he cast out the evil spirits. Never again was I visited by those spirits. So why did the first priesthood blessing I received fail to work, while the second was successful? I have one word as my answer. Worthiness.

Kelly and Ryan:

### How then shall we know and follow Christ?

Elder Bednar “If Ye Had known me”

Sacred ordinances performed by proper priesthood authority are essential to believing the Savior, coming to know Him, and ultimately, believing what we know.

“And [the Melchizedek] priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

“Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.”

We believe and come to know the Lord as the key of the knowledge of God administered through the Melchizedek Priesthood unlocks the door and makes it possible for each of us to receive the power of godliness in our lives.

We believe and come to know the Savior as we follow Him by receiving and faithfully honoring holy ordinances and increasingly have His image in our countenances.

We believe and come to know Christ as we experience personally the transforming, healing, strengthening, and sanctifying power of His Atonement. We believe and come to know the Master as “the power of his word [takes root] in us” and is written in our minds and hearts and as we “give away all [our] sins to know [Him].”

### **Doctrine and Covenants 110:16**

16 Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.

President Spencer W. Kimball “Our Great Potential” April 1977

President Brigham Young, the second president of this dispensation, said: “It is supposed by this people that we have all the ordinances in our possession for life and salvation, and exaltation, and that we are administering in those ordinances. This is not the case. We are in possession of all the ordinances that can be administered in the flesh; but there are other ordinances and administrations that must be administered beyond this world. I know you would like to ask what they are. I will mention one. We have not, neither can we receive here, the ordinance and the keys of resurrection.” (Journal of Discourses, 15:137.)

“[The keys] will be given to those who have passed off this stage of action and have received their bodies again. ... They will be ordained, by those who hold the keys of the resurrection, to go forth and resurrect the Saints, just as we receive the ordinance of baptism then receive the keys of authority to baptize others for the remission of their sins. This is one of the ordinances we can not receive here [on the earth], and there are many more.” (JD, 15:137.)

We talk about the gospel in its fullness; yet we realize that a large part is still available to us as we prepare, as we perfect our lives, and as we become more like our God.

Are we ready for it?

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read of Abraham, who has already attained godhood. He has received many powers, undoubtedly, that we would like to have and will eventually get if we continue faithful and perfect our lives.

**Are you ready for the gospel in its fullness? Are you ready for Zion?**

### **3. Not Sent to Be Taught (p.156)**

Then, O ye Twelve! notice this Key, and be wise for Christ's sake, and your own soul's sake. Ye are not sent out to be taught, but to teach. Let every word be seasoned with grace. Be vigilant; be sober. It is a day of warning, and not of many words. Act honestly before God and man. Beware of Gentile sophistry; such as bowing and scraping unto men in whom you have no confidence. Be honest, open, and frank in all your intercourse with mankind.

Jordan Reed's Thoughts:

This was a short paragraph, but there were many principles listed which were directed towards the responsibilities of the Elders. The first principle is to be wise. Joseph Smith then talks about the importance of teaching and not being taught. Where do we see this principle in action? Well hopefully in our own home wards or branches with the assigned missionaries. Often, I found on my mission that there was a tendency for members to puff themselves up above the missionaries in attempt to teach them. It's important for us to remember that these missionaries were specifically set apart to go out into the world to preach the gospel "two by two." This looks a little different today because it seems that companionships are only trios now. At least that is the case in the mission here in Pittsburgh, PA. While serving as the Ward Mission Leader, I have had the spirit whisper to me of the importance of respecting their holy calling by not overstepping boundaries and telling them the ways I think things should be done. After all, they are the ones who are entitled to revelation for the missionary work in their area. I am only to serve as a resource to the missionaries and help aid them in the work. In other words, it is not my responsibility to teach, it is theirs. However, I received personal revelation as to what I can do to help them. Just yesterday I felt prompted to text them and offer to give a ride to any potential investigator who may not have transportation to church.

Next, Joseph talks about "words seasoned with grace." My thoughts here are that grace comes to all of God's children independent of personal worthiness. This makes me think of James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." The words "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" is another

way of saying God is not a respecter of persons. In the context of “words seasoned with grace,” I believe this means that the gospel should be preached to all of God’s children, without any exception. God doesn’t care if William makes \$20,000 a year and rides a horse to work, while Carl makes \$500,000 a year and drives a Mercedes. Both are entitled to be taught the gospel through words seasoned with grace.

Next mentioned is to preach the gospel with vigilance and soberness. What does it mean to be vigilant and what does it mean to be sober? Though difficult to trust modern dictionaries due to a constantly evolving language to satisfy today’s progressive culture, allow me to read you the Oxford dictionary definition of vigilance. It says vigilance is the action or state of keeping careful watch for possible danger or difficulties. I think this definition fits in well in terms of missionary work. The whole purpose of missionary work is to build up God’s kingdom by keeping careful watch of his children. I don’t think the word “soberness” here is referring to simply not being intoxicated, but someone let me know if I’m wrong. After doing a quick internet search, I found that the Bible use of this word is translated from the Greek word that means “to be sober, calm, and collected, to have a good sense, good judgement, wisdom, and level-headed in times of stress.”

Moving on, Joseph Smith talks about a “Day of Warning and Not many words.” Here, what comes to mind for me is the scripture found in D&C 6:2, which reads “Behold, I am God; give heed unto my word, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore give heed unto my words.” It’s not important to the Lord to use an endless arrangement of well-scripted and elegant language to convince others of the truthfulness of the gospel. If we are direct and teach true principles, the Holy Ghost can confirm those truths within the hearts of men without many words.

I wanted to mention the warning to “Beware of Gentile Sophistry”, which Joseph Smith further explains as bowing and scraping unto men **in whom you have no confidence**, before arriving at the final principle, which is honesty.

Honesty has been a BIG ONE for me. In my personal experience, I have found honesty to be the number one attribute of Christ that has helped turned my life into one of discipleship. I testify of the truthfulness of the scripture in Ether 12:27 which reads “And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.” Before serving a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, I struggled immensely with honesty. Ever since I was a kid I had felt immense pressure to serve a mission. This pressure came in all forms, but mainly from my parents. I really didn’t have much of a desire to serve a mission, but I dreaded the day in which I might possibly have to break that news to my parents. At that time, the worst thing I could ever imagine doing is disappointing them. As a teenager, I caved into the common peer pressures of those times. This was a rabbit hole for me that nearly led me to spiritual destruction. I was an 18-year-old freshman at Penn State-Altoona when the announcement was made by the Church lowering the mission age to 18 for Elders. I was immediately met by great pressure from my Mom to fill out my papers. I still wasn’t ready to tell her I didn’t want to go. To this point in my life it seemed

like others kept making my own spiritual decisions for me. Even my bishop scheduled me to meet with the Patriarch for my blessing, even though I had expressed to him that I wasn't ready. Unable to muster the courage to tell my parents and ward leaders no, I filled out my mission papers and was assigned to the Campinas, Brazil Mission. How I wished I could go back and do things different so that I could feel worthy of this call, but the reality was that I felt like a giant fraud. Although completely unworthy to serve a mission having participated heavily in Babylon, I could never deny the church was true, for I knew the witness I had received of the Book of Mormon just 4 years prior to my mission call. Because I knew the church was true, I too knew that in my current spiritual state that I was damned. The devil had led me to accept that I would never be worthy of entering the Celestial Kingdom. It was as though repentance wasn't possible for me, because I felt it impossible to confess to my doings.

My visa to Brazil never came in on time, so I was reassigned to go to the Provo MTC. I entered those doors of the Missionary Training Center having never told the truth. It didn't take but 2 seconds for the spirit to work on me so strongly that I knew there was no way I could remain there without confessing my sins. It was maybe the second or third day at the MTC when I looked at the righteous example for my companion and felt complete love and admiration for him. He had done everything to prepare and remain worthy to be a missionary, and I hadn't. Because of my love and respect for Elder Welch, I pulled him aside and admitted my unworthiness to him. Though I could see the shock and sadness in his face, he remained by my side as I made my way over to the MTC administration offices. I finally arrived at the point in my life where I was done being deceitful. Knowing that there was no possible way in which I would be allowed continue serving a mission if I confessed my sins, I was ready to finally choose the right. I'll never forget the Christ-like love President Seamons showed for me, for I was truly broken. Eventually, I was informed that they weren't authorized to make a decision on my behalf regarding whether I could continue as a missionary, but that the decision would have to come from an authority in Salt Lake. However, because it was a holiday weekend, they were out of their offices and I would have to wait another few days to await my status. I was shocked. How could there possibly be any decision making to be made? I even knew that there was no way I should be allowed to serve a mission without first going home.

As mentioned in Alma 38:8, "And it came to pass that I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul," I too experienced this same pain and agony as I struggled to obtain a remission of my sins. Monday finally came and I was called back into President Seamons office. He told me a decision had finally come from Salt Lake. I was all but awaiting to go back to my room and pack my bags when President Seamons asked me "Would you like to stay on your mission?" My head dropped and I began to sob as I truly experienced what it must have been like for the woman taken in adultery to hear from the Savior in John 8:10-11 "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" to which the woman responded, "No man, Lord." And then the Lord said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

I knew not why the Lord would have permitted that I remain on my mission, as other missionaries had been sent home for committing far less severe sins, but that day I made a promise to the Lord that I would remain true and faithful. I promised him that I wasn't only going to stay on my mission, but that I was going to be a great missionary. That day was truly the hinge point in my life, as I have remained true and faithful ever since. Not only have I remained true and faithful, but honesty has truly become my strength. Though at the time I considered myself one of the most unworthy to have ever entered the mission field, today I look around at my own home ward and I am the only active millennial man. I served a faithful mission. Approximately a year after returning from my mission, I married in the temple. Today, my wife and I have two beautiful children. We both actively serve in the church and I was recently called to be Elders Quorum 1<sup>st</sup> Counselor and Ward Mission Leader. I do not share all of this to boast of my own strengths. I share this as a testimony that God truly can take our weaknesses and turn them into strengths. Those strengths can then lead us to perform a great and marvelous work for the Lord. The atonement is real and extends to all of us, so long as we are willing to reach out to him, our Savior.

Kelly and Ryan:

#### **Jacob 4:6**

Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our **faith becometh unshaken**, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

What does it mean to have faith become unshaken? How do we gain that in our lives to righteously use the name of Jesus and command?

According to Jacob the first step in Unshaken faith is to SEARCH the prophets. I wanted to organize this by theme and really look for connections between The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. As I studied, I was struck over and over again that each of them was connected and testified of the Second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the restoration of the Gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Have you as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints searched the prophets as though they were decrees and Commandments of God?

Do they guide your prayers of gratitude for our Heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ in the final days? Do you seek to teach rather than be taught?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie October 1981 conference "Who hath believed Our Report?"

Now, as Isaiah expressed it, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1.) Also read Mosiah 14:1-2.

Who will believe our words, and who will hear our message? Who will honor the name of Joseph Smith and accept the gospel restored through his instrumentality?

We answer: the same people who would have believed the words of the Lord Jesus and the ancient Apostles and prophets had they lived in their day.

If you believe the words of Joseph Smith, you would have believed what Jesus and the ancients said.

If you reject Joseph Smith and his message, you would have rejected Peter and Paul and their message.

If you accept the prophets whom the Lord sends in your day, you also accept that Lord who sent them.

If you reject the restored gospel and find fault with the plan of salvation taught by those whom God hath sent in these last days, you would have rejected those same teachings as they fell from the lips of the prophets and Apostles of old.

I have spoken plainly of our obligation as the servants of the Lord to proclaim the message of the Restoration to the world. This we are now doing as far as our time and talents and means permit.

But what of those to whom the message is sent? What of our Father's other children who have not yet accepted Christ and his gospel as they have been revealed by Joseph Smith? Does not every man on earth have personal obligation to seek the truth, to believe the truth, to live the truth?

We invite all men of all sects, parties, and denominations to ponder such questions as these:

Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness as did the Saints of old? (See Matt. 5:6.)

Do I have an open mind and a willingness to prove all things and hold fast to that which is good? (See 1 Thes. 5:21.)

Am I willing to receive new light and truth from heaven, light and truth that comes from a gracious God in whose sight a soul is just as precious now as it ever was?

Do I have the moral courage to learn whether Joseph Smith was called of God, whether he and his successors have the same keys of the kingdom of God that Peter, James, and John had anciently?

Am I willing to pay the price of investigation and gain a personal revelation that tells me what I must do to gain peace in this world and be an inheritor of eternal life in the world to come?

We testify that God has given to us his everlasting gospel, and we invite all men to come and partake of its blessings with us.

The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

- In humility, we declare that in answer to his prayer, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph and inaugurated the "restitution of all things" (ACTS 3:21) as foretold in the Bible.

- In this vision, he learned that following the death of the original Apostles, Christ's New Testament Church was lost from the earth. Joseph would be instrumental in its return.

We encourage anyone who is willing to pay the price to turn to the Lord and know Him.

#### **4. Priesthood and Church Organization (p.109)**

While waiting, [i.e., for preparations for the observance of the Sacrament] I made the following remarks: that the time that we were required to tarry in Kirtland to be endowed, would be fulfilled in a few days, and then the Elders would go forth, and each must stand for himself, as it was not necessary for them to be sent out, two by two, as in former times, but to go in all meekness, in sobriety, and preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith, or systems of religion, but pursue a steady course. This I delivered by way of commandment; and all who observe it not, will pull down persecution upon their heads, while those who do, shall always be filled with the Holy Ghost; this I pronounced as a prophecy, and sealed with hosanna and amen. Also that the Seventies are not called to serve tables, or preside over churches, to settle difficulties, but are to preach the Gospel and build them up, and set others, who do not belong to these quorums, to preside over them, who are High Priests. The Twelve also are not to serve tables, but to bear the keys of the Kingdom to all nations, and unlock the door of the Gospel to them, and call upon the Seventies to follow after them, and assist them. The Twelve are at liberty to go wheresoever they will, and if any one will say, I wish to go to such a place, let all the rest say amen.

#### **Jordan Reed's Thoughts:**

What does it mean that each Elder must stand for himself? Joseph Smith explains this to be the act of serving a mission without a companion. While I was temporarily reassigned to the Pocatello Idaho Mission before going to Brazil, I obtained a copy of a missionary journal from the member we were living with. This missionary journal was an example of each standing for himself. To my astonishment, this missionary served in the very area I grew up in. Without a companion or a stipend from church headquarters, this missionary was completely sent out on his mission carrying neither purse nor script. This missionary left behind his child and pregnant wife. Little did he or his family know that he would never return, as he was overtaken by a deadly sickness while serving the Lord. After reading this story, I knew I could never again complain about how hard my mission was.

Joseph Smith also mentions the importance of preaching the gospel in a manner which to avoid contention or debates. While it is fun to go on YouTube and see examples of members putting preachers back in their place through words of convincement, it is only by the Power of the Holy Ghost in which true conversion can be achieved.

I said a lot in the previous question, so I'm going to defer the remaining breakdown of this section to Micah and RTstarry.

#### **Kelly and Ryan:**

We Preach and look to Christ for an endowment of power.

The fifth article of Faith: “We believe that a man must **be called of God**, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.”

Doctrine and Covenants 95:8

8Yea, verily I say unto you, I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house I design **to endow those whom I have chosen** with power from on high;

The Restoration of the Fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

We testify that those who prayerfully study the message of the Restoration and act in faith will be blessed to gain their own witness of its divinity and of its purpose to prepare the world for the promised Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

President Joseph Fielding Smith Jr said the following about the **value of the endowment** in our daily lives:

“If we go into the temple we raise our hands and covenant that we will serve the Lord and observe his commandments and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. If we realize what we are doing then the endowment will be a protection to us all our lives—a protection which a man [or woman] who does not go to the temple does not have.

“I have heard my father say that in the hour of trial, in the hour of temptation, he would think of the promises, the covenants that he made in the House of the Lord, and they were a protection to him. ... This protection is what these ceremonies are for, in part. They save us now and they exalt us hereafter, if we will honor them. I know that this protection is given for I, too, have realized it, as have thousands of others who have remembered their obligations” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith [2013], 235–36).

## **5. No Peace But in Zion (p.161)**

Whatever you may hear about me or Kirtland, take no notice of it; for if it be a place of refuge, the devil will use his greatest efforts to trap the Saints. You must make yourselves acquainted with men who like Daniel pray three times a day toward the House of the Lord. Look to the Presidency and receive instruction. Every man who is afraid, covetous, will be taken in a snare. The time is soon coming, when no man will have any peace but in Zion and her stakes.

I saw men hunting the lives of their own sons, and brother murdering brother, women killing their own daughters, and daughters seeking the lives of their mothers. I saw armies arrayed against armies. I saw blood, desolation, fires. The Son of man has said that the mother shall be against the daughters, and the daughter against the mother. These things are at our doors. They will follow the Saints of God from city to city. Satan will rage, and the spirit of the devil is now enraged. I know not how soon these things will take place; but with a view of them, shall I cry peace? No; I will lift up my voice and testify of them. How long you will have good crops, and the famine be kept off, I do not know; when the fig tree leaves, know then that the summer is nigh at hand.

Jordan Reed's Thoughts:

Here Joseph Smith is teaching us of the importance to continually call upon the Lord in prayer so that we may remain faithful. I am reminded of the scripture in Alma 13:28, which reads "But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering."

I wanted to share an excerpt from a talk given by James E. Faust in April 1997 titled *Power of the Priesthood*:

"In the early days of the Church, many fell away because they would not sustain Joseph Smith as the Lord's anointed. In fact, the Prophet Joseph said of some of the leaders in Kirtland that "there have been but two but what have lifted their heel against me—namely Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball." Because of their faithful loyalty, the Lord called Brigham Young to lead the Church west, and when the First Presidency was reorganized, Heber C. Kimball was called as First Counselor to Brigham Young."

Thus, we see that even among the Lord's most elect in the early pioneer days of the church, there were many who would deviate from the teachings of Joseph Smith, except Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball. The Lord rejoiced in those who will love, serve, and remain faithful to him through the thick and the thin. Let us follow the example of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball when the craftiness of the devil comes knowing on our door in attempt to get us to turn our backs on the Prophet.

Kelly and Ryan:

How do we become like Daniel?

### **Daniel 2:17–19**

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 ¶ Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

President Harold B. Lee: "By faith in God you can be attuned to the Infinite and by power and wisdom obtained from your Heavenly Father harness the powers of the universe to serve you in your hour of need in the solution of problems too great for your human strength or intelligence" (in Church News, 15 Aug. 1970, p. 2).

President Spencer W. Kimball summarized the qualities that Daniel possessed and the blessings his obedience to God brought him: "The gospel was Daniel's life. . . . In the king's court, he could be little criticized, but even for a ruler he would not drink the king's wine nor gorge himself with meat and rich foods. His moderation and his purity of faith brought him health and

wisdom and knowledge and skill and understanding, and his faith linked him closely to his Father in heaven, and revelations came to him as often as required. His revealing of the dreams of the king and the interpretations thereof brought him honor and acclaim and gifts and high position such as many men would sell their souls to get.” (In Conference Report, Mexico and Central America Area Conference 1972, p. 31.)

In general conference 25 years ago, President Spencer W. Kimball warned:

Many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.

Elder L Tom Perry:

One of our most important priesthood callings, one that requires our constant attention, is in our families and our homes. Brethren, as fathers and patriarchs in our families, we are “by divine design ... to preside over [our] families in love and righteousness and are ... to provide the necessities of life and protection for [our] families. ...

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ... Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, to observe the commandments of God and to be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”

## **6. Records a Protection Against Evil (p.72-73)**

Here is another important item. If you assemble from time to time, and proceed to discuss important questions, and pass decisions upon the same, and fail to note them down, by and by you will be driven to straits from which you will not be able to extricate yourselves, because you may be in a situation not to bring your faith to bear with sufficient perfection or power to obtain the desired information; or, perhaps, for neglecting to write these things when God had revealed them, not esteeming them of sufficient worth, the Spirit may withdraw, and God may be angry; and there is, or was, a vast knowledge, of infinite importance, which is now lost. What was the cause of this? It came in consequence of slothfulness, or a neglect to appoint a man to occupy a few moments in writing all these decisions.

Here let me prophesy. The time will come, when, if you neglect to do this thing, you will fall by the hands of unrighteous men. Were you to be brought before the authorities, and be accused of any crime or misdemeanor, and be as innocent as the angels of God, unless you can prove yourselves to have been somewhere else, your enemies will prevail against you; but if you can bring twelve men to testify that you were in a certain place, at that time, you will escape their hands. Now, if you will be careful to keep minutes of these things, as I have said, it will be one of the most important records ever seen: for all such decisions will ever after remain as items of

doctrine and covenants. (From minutes of Instruction to the Council of the Twelve, Feb. 27, 1835. DHC 2:198-199.)

#### Jordan Reed's Thoughts:

Here, Joseph Smith is teaching of the importance of keeping our own personal journals and recording our own spiritual experiences. When reading this teaching from Joseph Smith, my mind was drawn to the Book of Life. In the Guide to the Scriptures, it is stated "In one sense the Book of Life is the total of a person's thoughts and actions- the record of his life. However, the scriptures also indicate that a heavenly record is kept of the faithful, including their names and accounts of their righteous deeds."

Exodus 32:33 reads "The Lord will blot sinners out of his book."

Revelations 3:5 reads "He that overcomes will not be blotted out of the book of life."

Alma 5:58 tells us "The names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life." Oh how I hope all of our names are being written in that book as we gather weekly for these firesides and continually strive to put our faith into action throughout the week.

Finally, D&C 88:2 says that our prayers are included in this book.

#### Kelly and Ryan:

In the last days the only way to remain on the correct path is by noting our revelations so that we be not deceived. When we treat our spiritual revelations as gift and instruction than we are blessed with more light.

#### Who are unrighteous men?

"The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon **are similar to the type we have today.** God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time" (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson [2014], 132).

#### **2 Nephi 28: 3-9**

3 For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—

4 And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.

5 And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men;

6 Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work.

7 Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us.

8 And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

9 Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, false and vain and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark.

## **2 Nephi 26:29**

29 He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.

“Let us beware of false prophets and false teachers, both men and women, who are self-appointed declarers of the doctrines of the Church and who seek to spread their false gospel and attract followers by sponsoring symposia, books, and journals whose contents challenge fundamental doctrines of the Church. Beware of those who speak and publish in opposition to God’s true prophets and who actively proselyte others with reckless disregard for the eternal well-being of those whom they seduce” (“Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 63).

President Ezra Taft Benson:

“May I suggest three short tests to avoid being deceived. ...

“1. What do the standard works have to say about it? ...

“2. The second guide is: what do the latter-day Presidents of the Church have to say on the subject—particularly the living President? ...

“3. The third and final test is the Holy Ghost—the test of the Spirit. ... This test can only be fully effective if one’s channels of communication with God are clean and virtuous and uncluttered with sin” (in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1963, 16–17).