

Nourishing and Bearing Your Testimony

By Elder Gary E. Stevenson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

I invite you to seek opportunities to bear your testimony in word and in deed.

Section I

Introduction

Defining moments in life come often and unexpectedly, even when you are still young. Allow me to share a story about a high school student, Kevin, chosen to travel out of state for a student leader event, as told in his own words.

“My turn in line came, and the official-looking registration clerk asked for my name. She looked at her list and said, ‘So you’re the young man from Utah.’

“‘You mean I’m the only one?’ I asked.

“‘Yes, the only one.’ She handed me my name tag with ‘Utah’ printed below my name. As I clipped it on, I felt like I was being branded.

“I crowded into the hotel elevator with five other high school students with name tags like mine. ‘Hey, you’re from Utah. Are you a Mormon?’ asked one student.

“I felt out of place with all these student leaders from all over the country. ‘Yes,’ I hesitantly admitted.

“‘You’re the guys who believe in Joseph Smith, who said he saw angels. You don’t actually believe that, do you?’

“I didn’t know what to say. The students in the elevator were all staring at me. I had just arrived, and already everyone thought I was different. I became a little defensive but then said, ‘I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.’

“‘Where had that come from?’ I wondered. I didn’t know I had it in me. But the words felt true.

“‘Yeah, I was told that you were all just religious nuts,’ he said.

“With that, there was an uncomfortable pause as the elevator door opened. As we gathered our luggage, he walked down the hall laughing.

“Then, a voice behind me asked, ‘Hey, don’t Mormons have some sort of another Bible?’

“Oh no. Not again. I turned to see another student who had been in the elevator with me, Christopher.

“‘It’s called the Book of Mormon,’ I said, wanting to drop the subject. I picked up my bags and started walking down the hall.

“‘Is that the book Joseph Smith translated?’ he asked.

“‘Yeah, it is,’ I answered. I kept on walking, hoping to avoid embarrassment.

“‘Well, do you know how I could get one?’

“A scripture I learned in seminary suddenly came to me. ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.’¹ As this entered my mind, I felt ashamed I had been so embarrassed.

“For the rest of the week that scripture wouldn’t leave me. I answered as many questions about the Church as I could, and I made many friends.

“I discovered I was proud of my religion.

“I gave Christopher a Book of Mormon. He later wrote me, telling me he had invited the missionaries to his home.

“I learned not to be embarrassed to share my testimony.”²

I am inspired by Kevin’s courage in sharing his testimony. It is a courage repeated every day by faithful members of the Church throughout the world. As I share my thoughts, I invite you to reflect upon these four questions:

1. Do I know and understand what a testimony is?
2. Do I know how to bear my testimony?
3. What are the obstacles in sharing my testimony?
4. How do I keep my testimony?

Do I Know and Understand What a Testimony Is?

Your testimony is a most precious possession, often associated with deep spiritual feelings. These feelings are usually communicated quietly and described as a “still small voice.”³ It is your belief or knowledge of truth given as a spiritual witness through the influence of the Holy Ghost. Acquiring this witness will change what you say and how you act. Key elements of your testimony, confirmed by the Holy Ghost, include:

- God is your Heavenly Father; you are His child. He loves you.
- Jesus Christ lives. He is the Son of the living God and your Savior and Redeemer.
- Joseph Smith is a prophet of God called to restore the Church of Jesus Christ.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God’s restored Church on the earth.
- The restored Church of Jesus Christ is led by a living prophet today.

Elisha's Thoughts:

Do I Know and Understand What a Testimony Is?

Your testimony is a most precious possession, often associated with deep spiritual feelings. These feelings are usually communicated quietly and described as a “still small voice.”³ It is your belief or knowledge of truth given as a spiritual witness through the influence of the Holy Ghost. Acquiring this witness will change what you say and how you act. Key elements of your testimony, confirmed by the Holy Ghost, include:

- God is your Heavenly Father; you are His child. He loves you.
- Jesus Christ lives. He is the Son of the living God and your Savior and Redeemer.
- Joseph Smith is a prophet of God called to restore the Church of Jesus Christ.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's restored Church on the earth.
- The restored Church of Jesus Christ is led by a living prophet today.

These are the foundation blocks of our church.

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.”

- **President Joseph Fielding Smith** (Doctrines of Salvation, p.43)

We must study, ponder, pray about these truths. We are so blessed with 200 years since the restoration of knowledge that we can study and learn. We are expected to especially with the technology we have that gives us an advantage like no other generation.

Elder Bednar lays down a perfect simplified definition of faith taken directly from Joseph Smith Jr, in his 2008 talk Ask in Faith:

“True faith is focused in and on the Lord Jesus Christ and always leads to righteous action. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “faith [is] the first principle in revealed religion, and the

foundation of all righteousness” and that it is also “the principle of action in all intelligent beings” (Lectures on Faith [1985], 1). Action alone is not faith in the Savior, but acting in accordance with correct principles is a central component of faith. Thus, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:20)

The Prophet Joseph further explained that “faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth” (Lectures on Faith, 3). Thus, faith in Christ leads to righteous action, which increases our spiritual capacity and power. Understanding that faith is a principle of action and of power inspires us to exercise our moral agency in compliance with gospel truth, invites the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Savior’s Atonement into our lives, and enlarges the power within us whereby we are agents unto ourselves (see D&C 58:28)”

In Elder Stevens talk he shows how Kevin put his faith into action by bearing the true testimony of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has taught us many things. I am so grateful for such great knowledge. I know President Nelson challenged

“First, what would your life be like *without* the Book of Mormon? Second, what would you *not know*? And third, what would you *not have*?” 2017 General conference. I have taken this further, Without the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restoration of the Gospel principles and ordinances what would you not know? What would you not have?

Could I ever unlearn what knowledge I have gained while studying the word of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He has taught us so many truths. Example, Trnity Preexistence, Child of God ect...

“Regardless of where you live or what your circumstances are, the Lord Jesus Christ is *your* Savior, and God’s prophet, Joseph Smith, is *your* prophet” ([“Hear Him”](#) [*Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 88]).

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.” (D&C 135:3.)

Story of Brigham Young ..

Sometimes we may not like what our Prophet says to us or not fully understand what he is trying to tell us or ask us to do. It may be against what we thought before. We cannot harden our hearts, they need to remain open that “Prophets can see around Corners” – Sherry Dew 2022 BYU Hawaii devotional ‘Sustaining prophets in today’s world takes faith — but not faith in them, faith in Jesus Christ, who called them’ “Because even the prophet is not the head of this Church. Jesus Christ is, and

He is perfect. Prophets take their instructions from Him who knows all, sees all, and understands all things.”

Members of the Church are never dependent solely upon mortal men. “When we follow the prophet, we are actually following and placing our trust in Jesus Christ. For He has promised that His words will all be fulfilled, ‘whether by [His] own voice or by the voice of [His] servants, it is the same’” (Doctrine and Covenants 1:38).

I have a testimony of our Prophet Joseph Smith it is so strong I can never deny this is knowledge to me. He suffered so much to bring me these truths and I hope I can be standing in the last day to be one if his chosen to further the work of the Kingdom of God on this Earth and build Zion. And I know Jesus Christ is my Savior he is the truth and the light he is the straight and narrow path and only by his Atoning sacrifice may we see our father in Heaven again.

Micah’s Thoughts:

I believe to truly “understand what a testimony is” and expand upon what was taught in this first section, we have to have at least a basic understanding of “what is the Light of Christ and what is The Holy Ghost, and how are they different?” A real testimony is born of The Holy Ghost, not of The Light of Christ, so if we do not ever receive the Holy Ghost and receive it’s witness we don’t actually have a testimony even though we might think we do- and when tribulation or trial come upon us we will be scorched in the heat “because we have not depth of root”... And if we don’t even understand the difference, how can we properly seek? So... let’s start with the reference that was provided in that section and get some basic definitions and understandings:

1 Kings 19

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

(and the next verse is equally important though never quoted with it)

13 And ... Elijah *heard it*

Did Elijah *feel* this voice or did Elijah *hear* this voice? He heard the voice...

The Two Comforters (TPJS 149-150)

There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost,¹⁵ the same as given on the day of Pentecost,¹⁶ and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism.¹⁷ This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding,¹⁸ and storing the intellect with present knowledge,¹⁹ of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham,²⁰ than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon²¹ one of the literal seed of Abraham,¹ it is calm and serene; and his whole soul² and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a

Gentile, is to purge out the old blood,³ and make him actually of the seed of Abraham.⁴ That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence.

The Spirit of Revelation (TPJS 151)

The Spirit of Revelation¹⁵ is in connection with these blessings. A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God,¹⁶ will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.¹⁷

Preach My Gospel

Chapter 4

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.

Bible Dictionary

Light of Christ

The phrase “light of Christ” does not appear in the Bible, although the principles that apply to it are frequently mentioned therein. The precise phrase is found in Alma 28:14, Moro. 7:18, and D&C 88:7. Biblical phrases that are sometimes synonymous to the term “light of Christ” are “spirit of the Lord” and “light of life” (see, for example, John 1:4; 8:12). The “spirit of the Lord,” however, sometimes is used with reference to the Holy Ghost and so must not be taken in every case as having reference to the light of Christ.

The light of Christ should not be confused with the personage of the Holy Ghost, for the light of Christ is not a personage at all. Its influence is preliminary to and preparatory to one’s receiving the Holy Ghost. The light of Christ will lead the honest soul who “hearkeneth to the voice” to find the true gospel and the true Church and thereby receive the Holy Ghost (see D&C 84:46–48). Additional references are Alma 19:6; 26:3; D&C 20:27.

Galatians 5

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Holy Ghost: Pure intelligence, thoughts, voice, edification, etc.

The Light of Christ: Feelings, persuasions, conscious, etc.

It is true as President Hunter pointed out, the Holy Ghost can activate the Light of Christ within us, but that outward manifestation ought not be confused with the Holy Ghost, for the Holy Ghost always edifies- if there is no intelligence relayed, if there is no edification etc. than there is no Holy Ghost, period.

The last key of insight into “hearing the voice” and the difference between the Light of Christ and the Holy Ghost I’ll go over for the sake of time:

Doctrine and Covenants 18

32 And, behold, you are they who are ordained of me to ordain priests and teachers; to declare my gospel, *according to the power of the Holy Ghost* which is in you, and according to the callings and gifts of God unto men;

33 And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have *spoken it*.

34 *These words* are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

35 *For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;*

36 *Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.*

Doctrine and Covenants 84

43 And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to *the words of eternal life*.

44 For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

45 For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

46 And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to *the voice of the Spirit*.

47 And every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father.

48 And the Father teacheth him of the covenant which he has renewed and confirmed upon you, which is confirmed upon you for your sakes, and not for your sakes only, but for the sake of the whole world.

49 And the whole world lieth in sin, and groaneth under darkness and under the bondage of sin.

50 And by this you may know they are under the bondage of sin, because they come not unto me.

51 For whoso cometh not unto me is under the bondage of sin.

52 And whoso receiveth not my voice is not acquainted with my voice, and is not of me.

53 And by this you may know the righteous from the wicked, and that the whole world groaneth under sin and darkness even now.

Doctrine and Covenants 124

45 And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

46 But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest, because they pollute mine holy grounds, and mine holy ordinances, and charters, and my holy words which I give unto them.

2 Nephi 32

2 Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost?

3 Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

Section II

Do I Know How to Bear My Testimony?

You bear your testimony when you share spiritual feelings with others. As a member of the Church, you have opportunities to bear your spoken testimony in formal Church meetings or in less formal, one-on-one conversations with family, friends, and others.

Another way you share your testimony is through righteous behavior. Your testimony in Jesus Christ isn't just what you say—it's who you are.

Each time you bear vocal witness or demonstrate through your actions your commitment to follow Jesus Christ, you invite others to “come unto Christ.”⁴

Members of the Church stand as witnesses of God at all times, in all things, and in all places.⁵ Opportunities to do this in the digital universe using inspiring content of our own or sharing uplifting content prepared by others are endless. We testify when we love, share, and invite, even online. Your tweets, direct messages, and posts will take on a higher, holier purpose when you also use social media to show how the gospel of Jesus Christ shapes your life.

What Are the Obstacles in Sharing My Testimony?

Obstacles to sharing your testimony may include uncertainty about what to say. Matthew Cowley, an early Apostle, shared this experience as he departed on a five-year mission at age 17 to New Zealand:

“I will never forget the prayers of my father the day that I left. I have never heard a more beautiful blessing in all my life. Then his last words to me at the railroad station, ‘My boy, you will go out on that mission; you will study; you will try to prepare your sermons; and sometimes when you are called upon, you will think you are wonderfully prepared, but when you stand up, your mind will go completely blank.’ I have had that experience more than once.

“I said, ‘What do you do when your mind goes blank?’

“He said, ‘You stand up there and with all the fervor of your soul, you bear witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God, and thoughts will flood into your mind and words to your mouth ... to the heart of everyone who listens.’ And so my mind, being mostly blank during my ... mission ... , gave me the opportunity to bear testimony to the greatest event in the history of the world since the crucifixion of the Master. Try it sometime, fellows and girls. If you don’t have anything else to say, testify that Joseph Smith was the prophet of God, and the whole history of the Church will flood into your mind.”⁶

Likewise, President Dallin H. Oaks shared, “Some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.”⁷ The Spirit bears witness to the speaker and listener alike.

Another obstacle, as Kevin’s story emphasized, is fear. As Paul wrote to Timothy:

“God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love. ...

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”⁸

Feelings of fear don’t come from the Lord but most often from the adversary. Having faith, as Kevin did, will allow you to overcome these feelings and freely share what is in your heart.

Angie’s Thoughts:

Talk, Insights, Scriptures, Talks, Misc.

“Do I Know How to Bear My Testimony?”

You bear your testimony when you share spiritual feelings with others. As a member of the Church, you have opportunities to bear your spoken testimony in formal Church meetings or in less formal, one-on-one conversations with family, friends, and others.

Another way you share your testimony is through righteous behavior. Your testimony in Jesus Christ isn’t just what you say—it’s who you are. “

Our testimony is something precious that we have the privilege to bear as the world is getting darker. Think of how much good Saints in the church can do when every fibre of our being is bearing a testimony of our Saviour. We understand that when we are bearing our testimony, it is usually simple but with a deep underlying vastness of wisdom and knowledge we’ve worked

with God to build. Here's what a couple general authorities have said about little things we may forget to consider as we bear our testimony:

-Dallin H Oaks "Testimony" 2008:

"A testimony of the gospel is not a travelogue, a health log, or an expression of love for family members. It is not a sermon. President Kimball taught that the moment we begin preaching to others, our testimony is ended."

-Elder Charles Didier "Testimony" Oct 1991:

"If the measure of strength and the stability or true foundation of an individual and his subsequent conduct lies in a testimony and we do not fully recognize its importance, or do not understand what it really means, or cannot or will not bear it or share it with others, and if we cannot teach it or explain it to others, maybe we ought to explore the deep, spiritual meaning of it and the blessing of obtaining, maintaining, and sharing a personal, individual testimony."

-Dallin H Oaks "Testimony" 2008:

"In all of our testifying we must avoid arrogance and pride. We should remember the Book of Mormon rebuke to a people who had such pride in the greater things God had given them that they afflicted their neighbors (see Jacob 2:20). Jacob said this was "abominable unto him who created all flesh" because "the one being is as precious in his sight as the other" (Jacob 2:21). Later, Alma cautioned that "ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another" (Mosiah 23:7)."

We learn that bearing our testimony is a simple act of love we can share just as the Savior does, and makes an uplifting impact on those whose hearts are open to receive it. The testimony may be accompanied by a story or experience that we have personally that the Holy Ghost was present to testify to us the truth of the gospel, but not the testimony itself. If we feel that our testimony is too weak to bear, the way that I've noticed to overcome that is to do exactly what we would be afraid to do, to simply bear it. The power that vocally expressing our testimony is an act of faith and is an important part of strengthening the testimony. There may be some lack of faith that we have that may be holding us back to do something simple that is required of us, perhaps some sins of omission that prevent us from accessing His Spirit constantly. We will explore other obstacles that Saints may face when learning about the bearing of their testimony later on.

Elder Stevenson continues:

"Each time you bear vocal witness or demonstrate through your actions, your commitment to follow Jesus Christ, you invite others to "come unto Christ." Members of the Church stand as witnesses of God at all times, in all things, and in all places. Opportunities to do this in the digital universe using inspiring content of our own or sharing uplifting content prepared by others are endless. We testify when we love, share, and invite, even online. Your tweets, direct messages, and posts will take on a higher, holier purpose when you also use social media to show how the gospel of Jesus Christ shapes your life."

-James E. Faust "The Importance of Bearing Testimony":

"Some of us are naturally reserved and timid about bearing our testimony with words. Perhaps we should not be so timid. The Doctrine and Covenants tells us, "But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto

them, because of the fear of man” (D&C 60:2). When we do bear testimony, we should testify with a spirit of humility. Section 38 of the Doctrine and Covenants reminds us, “And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbor, in mildness and in meekness” (D&C 38:41).

Perhaps we do not always remember that it is the power of the Spirit that carries our testimony into the hearts of others. Our testimony is our own. It cannot be challenged by someone else. It is personal and real to us. But it is the Holy Spirit that gives a similar witness to another.”

-Dallin H Oaks “Testimony” 2008:

“Those who have a testimony of the restored gospel also have a duty to share it. The Book of Mormon teaches that we should “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in” (Mosiah 18:9).

“...even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—”
(Mosiah 18:9)

...

Those who have the gift to know have an obvious duty to bear their witness so that those who have the gift to believe on their words might also have eternal life.

...

We must be valiant in our testimony of Jesus. Each of us has many opportunities to proclaim our spiritual convictions to friends and neighbors, to fellow workers, and to casual acquaintances. We should use these opportunities to express our love for our Savior, our witness of His divine mission, and our determination to serve Him. Our children should also hear us bear our testimonies frequently. We should also strengthen our children by encouraging them to define themselves by their growing testimonies, not just by their recognitions in scholarship, sports, or other school activities.”

Living out our testimony is part of becoming holier and keeps us in tune with the Spirit to understand ways to use the resources we have for a higher and holier purpose to build the Lord’s kingdom with all we do. Elder Stevenson recognises the strong use of social media in our Babilonian society that the Saints may infiltrate these spaces to spread the word of God. This applies to every aspect of our lives with our interactions with family and friends, and the effort that we put into our work and talents. We covenant to this in the temple and through our baptism when we commit to serving all our purpose and work toward building up God’s kingdom. James E. Faust summarises in list format for us to easily remember the importance of bearing and living our testimonies:

-James E. Faust “The Importance of Bearing Testimony”:

1. We must “not [be] ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16).
2. We bear testimony with our words and also with our lives.
3. The Lord has said “with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths” (D&C 60:2).
4. When we bear testimony we are to do so “in mildness and in meekness” (D&C 38:41).

5. It is the power of the Spirit that carries our testimony into the hearts of others.
6. It is always appropriate to bear testimony that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world, that Joseph Smith was a prophet and reestablished Christ's church on earth with power and authority, that all Presidents of the Church since Joseph Smith have been successors in that power and authority, and that the living President of the Church is the prophet of God on earth, holding all the keys, power, and authority of the Church today.

It's crucial to ask for strength to purge our fear of man/worldly fear in order to understand that we are fearing the Lord when we bear our testimony to others. We desire to uplift those we love (God) and show them we fear to hurt/disappoint them. We understand that a toxic relationship with someone includes neglecting their needs and quality time spent with them, we must make sure we are not being toxic with God and our Saviour by denying Him in fear of not seeming cool to others that deny Him, choosing to not bear testimony of Him, disrespecting sacred things, etc.

“What Are the Obstacles in Sharing My Testimony?”

Everyone deals with a unique set of obstacles that prevent us from bearing our testimony and living it. One obstacle I've found was getting complacent and neglecting to maintain the testimony we have and constantly progressing and improving after we get to a certain point of understanding, we fall into our comfort zone.

-Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin “Spiritual Bonfires of Testimony” Oct 1992:

“Some people are weak in their faith and testimonies but are not even aware of how precarious their situation is. Many of them likely would be offended at the suggestion. They raise their right hand to sustain Church leaders and then murmur and complain when a decision does not square with their way of thinking. They claim to be obedient to God's commandments but do not feel at all uncomfortable about purchasing food at the store on Sunday and then asking the Lord to bless it. Some say they would give their lives for the Lord, yet they refuse to serve in the nursery.

The Savior spoke very explicitly about people who “draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.” (Isa. 29:13.) His words were: “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.

“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?

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:21–23.)

None would want to hear the Lord speak such disappointing words of you. That is why you need to do everything in your power to be absolutely certain that your spiritual bonfire of testimony is burning brightly enough to keep the wolves of darkness away. You can always use more dry kindling. As the Apostle Paul taught, each of us has “come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23.) None of us has progressed so far in this life that we do not need to continually fortify our testimonies.”

Obstacles to sharing your testimony may include uncertainty about what to say. Matthew Cowley, an early Apostle, shared this experience as he departed on a five-year mission at age 17 to New Zealand:

“I will never forget the prayers of my father the day that I left. I have never heard a more beautiful blessing in all my life. Then his last words to me at the railroad station, ‘My boy, you will go out on that mission; you will study; you will try to prepare your sermons; and sometimes when you are called upon, you will think you are wonderfully prepared, but when you stand up, your mind will go completely blank.’ I have had that experience more than once.

“I said, ‘What do you do when your mind goes blank?’

“He said, ‘You stand up there and with all the fervor of your soul, you bear witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the living God, and thoughts will flood into your mind and words to your mouth ... to the heart of everyone who listens.’ And so my mind, being mostly blank during my ... mission ... , gave me the opportunity to bear testimony to the greatest event in the history of the world since the crucifixion of the Master. Try it sometime, fellows and girls. If you don’t have anything else to say, testify that Joseph Smith was the prophet of God, and the whole history of the Church will flood into your mind.”

Likewise, President Dallin H. Oaks shared, “Some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.” The Spirit bears witness to the speaker and listener alike.”

-Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin “Spiritual Bonfires of Testimony” Oct 1992:

“Unfortunately, some in the Church may believe sincerely that their testimony is a raging bonfire when it really is little more than the faint flickering of a candle. Their faithfulness has more to do with habit than holiness, and their pursuit of personal righteousness almost always takes a back seat to their pursuit of personal interests and pleasure. With such a feeble light of testimony for protection, these travellers on life’s highways are easy prey for the wolves of the adversary.

...

Knowing what would be required of Peter after the Ascension, the Lord said: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31–32; emphasis added.)”

-Cecil O. Samuelson Jr. “Testimony” 2011:

“...we must do the little but necessary things daily and regularly. Prayers, scripture and gospel study, attendance at Church meetings, temple worship, fulfilling visiting teaching, home teaching, and other assignments all strengthen our faith and invite the Spirit into our lives. When we neglect any of these privileges, we place our testimonies in jeopardy.”

-Elder Charles Didier “Testimony” Oct 1991:

“Unfortunately, there are those who gain testimonies and then deny them and lose them. How does this happen? If you follow the steps to obtain a testimony, you do exactly the opposite to deny it or lose it: {Do not pray; the door to revelation will be closed. Do not be humble but listen to your own superior voice. Do not participate in the ordinances of the gospel but follow the

practices of the world. Do not follow Church leaders but be critical of them. Do not listen to prophets and follow their counsel but interpret their declarations according to your own desires. Do not obey the commandments but live according to your own appetites and desires.}

These are only a few of the most evident problems leading to a loss of testimony. As ashes represent the evidence of a dying fire, the demise of a testimony is characterized by spiritual ashes, such as a lack of gospel appetite, charity, and purpose, as well as having feelings of apathy, bitterness, and emptiness. Spiritual ashes might be all that are left of what was once a burning, loving, meaningful, and uplifting testimony.

To maintain and strengthen a testimony, prophets have always reminded us to bear it and share it. Elder Spencer W. Kimball stated, "To hold his testimony one must bear it often and live worthy of it." (In Conference Report, Oct. 1944, p. 45.) Make it known after you know, make its power evident after you know, and live accordingly after you know.

To have a testimony and to share it provides a firm foundation for us to stand on and a way to control our lives in this constantly changing world."

"Another obstacle, as Kevin's story emphasized, is fear [of man] . As Paul wrote to Timothy:

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear [of man] ; but of power, and of love. ...

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord."

2 Timothy 1

7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of clove, and of a sound mind.

8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

13 Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

"Feelings of fear [of man] don't come from the Lord but most often from the adversary. Having faith, as Kevin did, will allow you to overcome these feelings and freely share what is in your heart."

-Dallin H Oaks "Testimony" 2008:

"When we know spiritual truths by spiritual means, we can be just as sure of that knowledge as scholars and scientists are of the different kinds of knowledge they have acquired by different methods.

...

The Prophet Joseph Smith provided a wonderful example of this. When he was persecuted for telling people about his vision, ... "But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision," Joseph said. "He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise. ... So it was with me," Joseph continued. "I had actually seen a light, and in

the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me. ... I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I" (Joseph Smith—History 1:24–25)."

Joseph Smith-History 1:24-25 cont'd

"...I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation."

-Elder Charles Didier "Testimony" Oct 1991

"When Joseph Smith received his vision, he also knew. It was an indelible testimony."

-Dallin H Oaks "Testimony" 2008

"We live in a time when some misrepresent the beliefs of those they call Mormons and even revile us because of them. When we encounter such misrepresentations, we have a duty to speak out to clarify our doctrine and what we believe. We should be the ones to state our beliefs rather than allowing others the final word in misrepresenting them.

...

Anyone can disagree with our personal testimony, but no one can refute it."

Moroni 10

31 And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

A.K.A. pick up your boots Saints, it's going to be rough but it'll be worth it. Our testimonies will be what's keeping us alive as we fight for Zion's redemption. We must keep improving it and bearing it to all we interact with and bearing with all we do.

Micah's Thoughts:

Influence/Gathering Israel/Examples vs Invitations

President Russell M. Nelson

"Anytime you do anything that helps anyone—on either side of the veil—take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel. It is as simple as that" (Russell M. Nelson, "Hope of Israel)

President David O McKay

“Every man and every person who lives in this world wields an influence, whether for good or for evil. It is not what he says alone; it is not alone what he does. It is what he is. Every man, every person radiates what he or she really is. . . . It is what we are and what we radiate that affects the people around us.

“As individuals, we must think nobler thoughts. We must not encourage vile thoughts or low aspirations. We shall radiate them if we do. If we think noble thoughts; if we encourage and cherish noble aspirations, there will be that radiation when we meet people, especially when we associate with them.’ (President David O McKay; *May Know for Himself*, p.108.)(Establishment of Zion; Old Testament Student manual)

Preach My Gospel

Chapter 11

Ask Direct Questions

An invitation often takes the form of a “will you” question, which requires a yes or no response. Invitations should be specific, direct, and clear. They invite or lead people to decide on a course of action. They require them to make a commitment and to exercise active faith in the principles you have taught them.

Extend Invitations

As a missionary, you desire the salvation of souls (see Mosiah 28:3). You know that people can come unto Christ and be saved only on conditions of repentance (see Doctrine and Covenants 18:10–16). One way to fulfill your desires is to cry repentance (see Alma 5:49; Doctrine and Covenants 15:6; 16:6) and boldly invite people to exercise faith unto repentance, to be baptized by water and the Spirit, and to endure faithfully to the end (see 3 Nephi 27:16–20; Mormon 7:10)...

When you ask for commitments as part of your teaching, you are inviting people to repent....

One of the best ways to help people make and keep commitments is to extend an invitation. Extending and following up on invitations is vital...

Be constantly aware of the need to invite people to do things that will strengthen their faith in Christ. Remember the following principles:

- Every finding opportunity—with members, referrals, or personal contacting—should lead to an invitation to act, usually to learn more about the message of the Restoration.
- 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.
- Focus on one or more invitations when you teach. If you do not invite people to make commitments, you are not asking them to repent and come to Christ.
- As you prepare in companion study to teach a lesson, consider the needs and progress of each person and include one or more invitations in your lesson plan.

- 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.

Once again, as Preach My Gospel clearly teaches us, when we bear our testimonies and fail to invite others, we fail to ask people to come unto Christ...

1. I know that ____
2. Will you ____?
3. I know that as you ____ that ____

This is how we should testify and commit, and commit and testify!

Doctrine and Covenants 50

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.

Doctrine and Covenants 30

11 And your whole labor shall be in Zion, with all your soul, from henceforth; yea, you shall ever open your mouth in my cause, not fearing what man can do, for I am with you. Amen.

I echo the challenge given here- “If you don’t have anything else to say, testify that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, who stands at the head of this last and greatest dispensation”. I know that every time I speak those words the Spirit witnesses to me afresh that that is true, and it doesn’t matter how blank my mind was, it is filled with the “promises made to the Fathers” and my heart is drawn out to them, to Zion, and I know as you do so, the Spirit will likewise speak to you!

Section III

How Do I Keep My Testimony?

I believe a testimony is innate within us, yet, in order to keep it and more fully develop it, Alma taught that we must nourish our testimony with much care.⁹ As we do so, “it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.”¹⁰ Without this, “it withers away.”¹¹ Each beloved member of the First Presidency has provided us with direction on how to keep a testimony.

President Henry B. Eyring lovingly taught us that “feasting on the word of God, heartfelt prayer, and obedience to the Lord’s commandments must be applied evenly and continually for your testimony to grow and prosper.”¹²

President Dallin H. Oaks reminded us that to retain our testimony, “we need to partake of the sacrament each week (see [D&C 59:9](#)) to qualify for the precious promise that we will ‘always have his Spirit to be with [us]’ ([D&C 20:77](#)).”¹³

And President Russell M. Nelson kindly counseled recently:

“Feed [your testimony] truth. ...

“... Nourish yourself in the words of ancient and modern prophets. Ask the Lord to teach you how to hear Him better. Spend more time in the temple and in family history work.

“... Make your testimony your highest priority.”¹⁴

Conclusion

My beloved brothers and sisters, I promise that as you more fully understand what a testimony is, and as you share it, you will overcome obstacles of uncertainty and fear, enabling you to nurture and keep this most precious possession, your testimony.

We are blessed to have countless examples of ancient and modern-day prophets who have boldly borne their testimonies.

Following Christ’s death, Peter stood and testified:

“Be it known unto you all ... that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, ... doth this man stand here before you. ...

“... For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”¹⁵

Amulek, following Alma’s sermon on faith, stated powerfully: “I will testify unto you of myself that these things are true. Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, ... and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it.”¹⁶

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, upon witnessing a glorious vision of the resurrected Savior, testified:

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father.”¹⁷

Brothers and sisters, I invite you to seek opportunities to bear your testimony in word and in deed. Such an opportunity came to me recently, at the end of a meeting with the mayor of a capital city in South America, in his chambers with a number of his cabinet officials. As we concluded with very cordial feelings, I hesitantly thought I should share my testimony. Following the prompting, I offered a witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and the Savior of the world. Everything changed at that moment. The Spirit in the room was undeniable. It seemed everyone was touched. “The Comforter . . . beareth record of the Father and of the Son.”¹⁸ I am so grateful I summoned the courage to bear my testimony. When a moment like this comes, grab it and embrace it. You will feel the warmth of the Comforter inside you when you do.

I offer my testimony and witness to you—God is our Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ lives, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God’s Church on the earth today led by our dear prophet, President Russell M. Nelson. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. See [Romans 1:16](#).
2. Personal conversation and correspondence with Kevin Mumford, Sept. 2022; see also Kevin Mumford, “[How I Know: I’m Not Ashamed](#),” *New Era*, Jan. 1999, 26–27.
3. [1 Kings 19:12](#).
4. [Moroni 10:32](#).
5. See [Mosiah 18:9](#).
6. Matthew Cowley, in Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Here We Stand* (1995), 189.
7. Dallin H. Oaks, “[Testimony](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 27.
8. [2 Timothy 1:7–8](#).
9. See [Alma 32:37](#).
10. [Alma 32:37](#).
11. [Alma 32:38](#).
12. Henry B. Eyring, “[A Living Testimony](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 126.
13. Dallin H. Oaks, “[Testimony](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2008, 27.
14. Russell M. Nelson, “[Choices for Eternity](#)” (worldwide devotional for young adults, May 15, 2022), broadcasts.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.
15. [Acts 4:10, 12](#).
16. [Alma 34:8](#).
17. [Doctrine and Covenants 76:22–23](#).
18. [Doctrine and Covenants 42:17](#).

Antonia’s Thoughts:

1952–O:63, Thorpe B. Isaacson, A Testimony—Our Most Priceless Possession Yes, the object of all gospel teachings is to promote faith and build a testimony. Without a personal conviction or without a personal testimony, our teaching may lack warmth and light. Testimony inspires testimony; conviction begets conviction. A personal testimony after we have received it, I have learned, and I am grateful that I have learned it, needs to be constantly reinforced. We may have had some faith-promoting experience in our lives, and many of us have; we may have even witnessed a miracle, and some of us have. Someone has said our testimony may be a dynamic concept based upon evidence, proof, and revelation. It may have been acquired through study and prayer, but if our testimony ceases to grow, it may finally cease to be.

Therefore, it requires each of us daily to try to improve our lives, strive to discipline ourselves and properly to conduct our behavior. Our testimony needs to be constantly cultivated and strengthened to remain forceful and alive. A testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a testimony a to the mission of the Prophet Joseph is a blessing earnestly to be desired, to be prayed for, and to be lived for. When once obtained, that testimony will shine as a beacon to others, and its flame will burn that other torches might be lighted but if our testimony ceases to glow, it may be lost. In the New Testament, we read of the experience of Saul of Tarsus. He was contending against the truth; he was persecuting the saints. He denied the divinity of Jesus, and then as he was en route to apprehend them and imprison them, he was suddenly confronted by the Master. He saw a blinding light, and he heard the Master say "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?" And Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (see Acts 9:4-5 Saul was stricken blind and led away, but later he was miraculously healed of that blindness. Surely, if any man had had a testimony to justify the feeling of having arrived, if any one experience would seem sufficient to entitle anyone to say, "This is enough, I need no more," Saul had that experience. He had been made to see, but if he had been content to relate his experience to his friends or if he had stopped growing, he would never have become the great Paul the Apostle. Saul of Tarsus was the acorn, and Paul the Apostle was the oak. During the balance of his life he taught as a great missionary. In bonds he bore his testimony to kings, and on the ship, and in the dungeons. He was inspired by his testimony, and he bore that testimony the rest of his life. The youth of the Church may sometimes wonder if they have a testimony. They may ask how it may be obtained. Some young people may be discouraged and they may compare their knowledge and testimony with that of others, but let me plead with the young people never to become discouraged. Always remember that the full-bloom rose was once an unopened bud and that the ripened fruit was once just a blossom and that all great things came from small beginnings. Yes, it is our individual problem, and probably a continual one, for all of us to make sure as best we can that our lives are such that we can hear the promptings of the Holy Ghost which we have received, that great Comforter, the whisperings of the still, small voice. The Lord once said, But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good. And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am; and he that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father, I am the light and the life, and the truth of the world. Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief. Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief Ether 4:11-14 Prayerful, humble seeking will give you the answer, young people. I would say to all of you whenever you are in doubt, you need never hesitate to know where you can go and get the answer. The Lord will hear you; he will remove those doubts from your mind. Oh, a testimony does not all come at once, but if continually developed and cultivated, it is a power and a strength that will be felt forever. As Latter-day Saints our own personal testimony is not alone sufficient. Once acquired and reinforced, it is our duty as individual members of the Church to bear that testimony constantly to the world, to preach the gospel, and to bring salvation to the souls of men. The Savior said: And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father! D&C 18:15 Oh, the Master must have placed great value on every soul; precious are they in his sight. An ancient

philosopher once said: Unless you bear with the faults of a friend, you thereby betray your own. Young people, do not lose your testimony. You may discover sometimes that you are in doubt. I think we all have. You may sometimes wonder if your testimony is waning, but let that be a signal to you, let that be the time that you come to one of your brethren, one of your friends; that is the signal for you quickly to associate yourself with the Church and become very active in the Church, that is the time that you must confide in God your Eternal Father. The person whose fate is most distressing is he who has lost his faith and his testimony. He may live near you or me—he may go about performing his daily work, yet he is very much alone. He is unhappy, and he lacks a sense of belonging. Life seems to have no purpose to him; he is the man who having had a testimony has now lost it, but faith and prayer can return him to us and bring about a renewal of that testimony. It has happened to many, and it will happen again. I want to plead with my friends and my associates, my brothers, my acquaintances, and with all men, to put aside those things which may be keeping you inactive in the Church. I would say to all men, repent of that which you have done that is wrong, go to your Father in heaven, go to your brethren whom you love. There is no reason you cannot go to your brethren. We love you; your bishops love you; you can come to us about anything; and we will treat you truly as our brothers. Do not live longer on the outside, no matter what is keeping you inactive in the Church, whether it be your profession, whether it be your habits, whether it be that somebody has hurt your feelings; no matter what it is, put it aside. Come back into the pales of the Church, and receive those blessings that the Lord has in store for you. Great will be your joy; great will be your happiness. It ought not to be hard for us to repent. None of us feel good when we do wrong. All of us feel better when we can go to the Lord and ask his forgiveness and when we can go to our brethren and put our hands in theirs and tell them of our shortcomings. Surely no man will take advantage of that kind of confidence. That is the feeling that exists in this Church. That is the brotherhood that is intended between us as brethren in the priesthood and brothers and sisters in the Church. God grant that we can each have a strong testimony to pull us over those rough spots in life. I am satisfied the happiest men I know of are these men, and I know why they are happy and you know why they are happy, because of the great testimony they have, because of their living close to the Lord and partaking of his wonderful and sweet spirit. May God grant that we may always have that brotherhood that President Stephen L Richards often talks about. Just the other day I heard him say something like this: "All great men are engaged in some great cause," and what greater cause is there than the cause that we are engaged in, the cause of bringing salvation to the souls of men, and eternal life? God grant that we may be strong, that we may stay close to the Lord, and when he says, "If you will draw near unto me, I will draw near unto you" (see D&C 88:63 may that be our happy lot, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. What is it that gives us a testimony and a desire to serve the Lord "with all [our] heart, might, mind and strength" D&C 4:2 and to "be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord"? 1 Ne. 4:34 As I have pondered this and prayed about it, I have concluded that the problem lies in a lack of conversion and commitment: conversion to Christ, His gospel, and His Church; and, subsequently, commitment to the covenants and individual callings one may have received to serve and strengthen others. In this regard, it is of interest to consider Christ's words to Peter: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" Luke 22:32 Thus, commitment seems to be an outgrowth or fruit of conversion. In order to receive a fulness of promised blessings in our lives, and to be fully effective in our callings, we must become converted. Would any of us truly do any less than our very best in keeping a covenant or commandment, fulfilling an assignment, or in following Christ if we were truly converted in our hearts? A truly converted follower of Christ—one who merits the designation of disciple or Saint—could not be casual or complacent in his or her approach to service in the Church nor

in keeping covenants and commandments. Such a one would surely follow the Lord's admonition to "learn his [or her] duty, and to act ... in all diligence" D&C 107:99 What does it mean to be converted? President Harold B. Lee said, "Conversion must mean more than just being a 'card carrying' member of the church with a tithing receipt ... [or] a temple recommend." One who is converted "strive[s] continually to improve inward weaknesses and not merely the outward appearances" (Church News, 25 May 1974, 2). One who is converted and committed will not simply "go through the motions" in fulfilling a Church service assignment. A converted home teacher will not be satisfied with just making a visit to one of his assigned families so he can report to his quorum leader that his home teaching is "completed" or "done." A converted Primary teacher would not be content to merely "give" a lesson but would want to teach by the Spirit, thereby making a real difference in the impressionable lives of the children entrusted to his or her care. Truly converted Latter-day Saints do not go to the temple because of a quota they are expected to fulfill, but out of a sincere desire to perform sacred and saving ordinances in behalf of deceased ancestors—or even complete strangers—who cannot do the work for themselves. We do not serve others or fulfill assignments for statistical or reporting purposes, but in a spirit of love and a commitment to Christ and our Father in Heaven. 1996–A:74, W. Mack Lawrence, Conversion and Commitment In this respect, consider the counsel of President Hinckley, given in a leadership training meeting: "There is much more to be achieved than statistical improvement," President Hinckley said. "More importantly, we should be concerned with the spiritual dimension of our people and the enlargement of this dimension. There is a tendency in all of us to ask for better statistical performance. There is a tendency to impose quotas behind which usually lies imposition of pressure to achieve improved statistics. In the work of the Lord there is a more appropriate motivation than pressure. There is the motivation that comes of true conversion. When there throbs in the heart of an individual Latter-day Saint a great and vital testimony of the truth of this work, he [meaning, of course, men and women] will be found doing his duty in the Church. He will be found in his sacrament meetings. He will be found in his priesthood meetings. He will be found paying his honest tithes and offerings. He will be doing his home teaching. He will be found in attendance at the temple as frequently as his circumstances will permit. He will have within him a great desire to share the Gospel with others. He will be found strengthening and lifting his brethren and sisters. [In other words, he will be committed.] It is conversion that makes the difference" (Regional Representatives' seminar, 6 Apr. 1984; emphasis added). Brothers and sisters, if you are not presently enjoying the blessings that come from conversion and commitment, I urge you to take the necessary steps to bring about this change in your heart. Perhaps my appeal is much the same as that extended by the prophet Alma when he said to the people of his day: "And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren [and sisters] of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" Alma 5:14 This "mighty change in your hearts" is what conversion is all about. President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "People are converted by their hearts being penetrated by the Spirit of the Lord when they humbly hearken to the testimonies of the Lord's servants" (Church History and Modern Revelation, 2 vols. [1953], 1:40). I emphasize again what I stated at the commencement of my remarks: it is insufficient to hear the word of God as declared in this conference or in other places of worship. In order to make it effective—to receive the promised blessings—we must follow it; or, as President Smith noted, we must "hearken to the testimonies of the Lord's servants." May I humbly admonish each of you to evaluate your present state of conversion and commitment. I invite you to have a personal interview with yourself in which you ask how effective you are in your present calling to serve. Consider how fully you are keeping the commandments and acting upon the counsel given you by the prophets

and other divinely called leaders of the Church, yes, including your stake president and bishop. Do you have to be reminded of your duty, or are you a committed self-starter and finisher? Let us return to Alma's question: "Have ye spiritually been born of God?" It is noteworthy that Alma concluded his admonition to the people of his day by bearing testimony of how his personal conversion was obtained: "Behold, I testify unto you that I do know that these things whereof I have spoken are true. And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? "Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me" Alma 5:45–46 emphasis added). That same spirit of revelation—the spirit of conversion, if you will—is available to each of us as we diligently seek for it through fasting, prayer, obedience, and searching the scriptures (see Alma 17:2–3 May we go from this conference with a renewed desire to be more fully converted and committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. May we follow the admonition of the Apostle James to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" James 1:22 I believe in Jesus Christ with all my soul. May we understand and follow His teachings as found in the holy scriptures. This is His divine Church. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord ushered in the fulness of the gospel in this last dispensation of time. President Gordon B. Hinckley is our true and living prophet. This is my testimony to you in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. I believe Jesus Christ is the only begotten son of The Father and is central to his plan of happiness. I believe the Father's plan of happiness involves redemption and restoration. . I believe The Father called Joseph Smith to be the dispensation head of this last dispensation. I believe Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the power of God. I believe that the Kingdom of God is on the earth today and it is represented by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I believe that Russell M. Nelson is our current Prophet and President of said church. I believe that Jesus Christ is the head of this church and our beloved Prophet RMN receives revelation for this church. I love this gospel and know that my redeemer lives, in His Sacred Holy Name Jesus Christ AMEN

Micah's Thoughts:

In conclusion, the only thing I'd like to add is

Moroni 9

4 Behold, I am laboring with them continually; and when I speak the word of God with sharpness they tremble and anger against me; and when I use no sharpness they harden their hearts against it; wherefore, I fear lest the Spirit of the Lord hath ceased striving with them.

5 For so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth me that they have no fear of death; and they have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually.

6 And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God.

2 Nephi 25

20 And now, my brethren, I have spoken plainly that ye cannot err. And as the Lord God liveth that brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, and gave unto Moses power that he should heal the nations after they had been bitten by the poisonous serpents, if they would cast their eyes unto the serpent which he did raise up before them, and also gave him power that he should smite the rock and the water should come forth; yea, behold I say unto you, that as these things are true, and as the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ, of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved.

21 Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand.

22 Wherefore, these things shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; and they shall go according to the will and pleasure of God; and the nations who shall possess them shall be judged of them according to the words which are written.

23 For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.