

# “That All May Be Edified”

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Sister Jensen and I are pleased to be here, along with members of our family. I acknowledge my total dependence upon the Lord, and I have prayed and do pray now that during this devotional we will allow the Holy Ghost to be the true teacher that He is—about which I will say more in my message.

The theme of this Campus Education Week and the title to my remarks is “That All May Be Edified,” coming from Doctrine and Covenants 88:122:

*Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.*

## **Definition of Edify**

The word *edify* comes from the French *edifier* and from the Latin *aedificare* and means to “improve spiritually” and to “instruct” (Robert K. Barnhart, *The Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology* [New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1988], s.v. “edify,” 315). The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives this meaning: “In religious use: To build up (the church, the soul) in faith and holiness; to benefit spiritually; to strengthen, support” (2nd ed., s.v. “edify,” 5:71).

Thus, to edify is to instruct and improve the soul in knowledge generally, and in particular to increase in moral and religious knowledge, in faith and holiness.

To edify is part of a revelatory process. The word *revelatory* refers to the supernal gifts of the Spirit, the source of all light and truth. I witness to you that the Holy Ghost is the true teacher in this work. Teaching and learning that lead to edification and heavenly confirmation are fundamental to the Father’s plan and require five principles gleaned from verse 122:

1. A teacher is appointed and recognized as such by the learners.
2. Teaching and discussion are governed by order and reverence.
3. What is discussed or said revolves around divine doctrines or truths.
4. Those who are not speaking have a duty to actively listen.
5. Both teacher and listener—or the learner—participate respectfully to invite the Spirit.

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*Jay E. Jensen was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional was delivered on 16 August 2011 during Campus Education Week.*

Fundamental to my message and the theme is the word *that* preceding the words “all may be edified.” The placement of the word *that* sets up what some call a cause-and-effect relationship often emphasized using the words “in order that” or “so that.” For edification to occur, it is necessary to have an appointed teacher, order and reverence, divine doctrine and truths, listeners, and respectful participation.

It is instructive to note that the word *edify* and the word *edifice* come from the same root. Building an edifice that will pass the test of time requires the right plan and the right materials. Similarly, to be edified and to have heavenly confirmation of your spiritual growth, a foundation has to be in place, and it has to be right. The need for a right foundation is made more relevant from a lesson learned during the building of the Salt Lake Temple.

In February 1853 President Brigham Young presided over the groundbreaking services. Work proceeded on the excavations and foundation stones for the temple until Johnston’s army arrived in 1857. To protect the work, Brigham Young instructed the Saints to fill in the temple trenches with dirt, resulting in a vacant lot that looked like a plowed field when the soldiers walked past it. Following their departure the dirt was removed and the work continued. A few years later, President Young, along with others, made an inspection of the foundation and discovered faulty foundation stones. The faulty stones were replaced with the large granite stones you know today.

Brigham Young declared:

*I want to see the Temple built in a manner that it will endure through the Millennium. . . .*

*. . . We want to build that temple as it should be built. [JD 10:254]*

His relevant words “as it should be built” serve my purpose to emphasize foundational principles that must be right so “that all may be edified.”

Let us now examine more carefully these five essential principles from Doctrine and Covenants 88:122 that lead to edification.

### **An Appointed Teacher**

The appointment of a teacher in the Church denotes someone with authority to appoint another. In other words, all true authority in this restored Church is under the direction of or submissive to a higher authority—ultimately God’s authority. Today this is done under the direction of ecclesiastical leaders—such as bishops or priesthood presidents with priesthood keys—affirmed by this truth from the Book of Mormon: “And it came to pass that none received authority to preach or to teach except it were by him from God” (Mosiah 23:17). It is clear that worthiness is essential: “[They] had appointed just men to be their teachers” (Mosiah 2:4). Being a “just person” is to be guided by truth, divine doctrine, and reason or correct principle. In the Bible the word *just* means to be righteous or to conform to the laws of God. Alma taught: “Trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments” (Mosiah 23:14).

At home, an appointment to teach comes from or by the presiding authority of the father:

*The father presides over the family and is responsible to teach the children. . . .*

*The mother is an equal partner and counselor to her husband. She helps him teach their children the laws of God. If there is no father in the home, the mother presides. [“Organization and Purpose of the Family,” *Family Guidebook* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006), 2–3]*

### **Order and Reverence**

As a people and as a Church we need to improve our attitudes toward and performance of order and reverence, both at home and in our places of worship. In our society today we

see more and more evidences of a drift toward casualness in speech, dress, and appearance. I heard President Hinckley say that there is a distressing lack of reverence in the Church. I have often heard one of the Twelve say that we need not point the finger at others; rather, he lovingly and candidly says, “You fix you!”

That this was a concern in the early days of the Church is evidenced by this statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

*But to return to the subject of order; in ancient days councils were conducted with such strict propriety, that no one was allowed to whisper, be weary, leave the room, or get uneasy in the least, until the voice of the Lord, by revelation, or the voice of the council by the Spirit, was obtained, which has not been observed in this Church to the present time. It was understood in ancient days, that if one man could stay in council, another could; and if the president could spend his time, the members could also; but in our councils, generally, one will be uneasy, another asleep; one praying, another not; one’s mind on the business of the council, and another thinking on something else. [HC 2:25–26]*

### **Divine Doctrines or Truths**

Everything taught in this Church may fit under three headings:

1. Doctrine
2. Principles
3. Applications or Commandments

Imagine a pyramid divided horizontally into three sections. At the top is the heading “Doctrine: The Why”; in the middle section is the heading “Principles: The What”; and heading the bottom or largest portion of the pyramid is “Applications/Commandments: The How.”

As a listener to sayings that come from the pulpit, the classroom, and the home, I have observed that speakers often devote more time and attention to applications and keeping of

the commandments—or the how. Less effort is given to the doctrine—or the grand why—and the principle—or the what. As parents and teachers, we should provide our learners with a balance of all three, for, as the Savior taught, “these [things, commandments and applications] ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other [doctrine and principles] undone” (Matthew 23:23).

As President Boyd K. Packer has taught and re-taught:

*True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.*

*The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. [“Little Children,” Ensign, November 1986, 17]*

### **Listeners**

About fifteen years ago a committee was formed to improve teaching in the Church. The Sunday School program “Teacher Development” was rewritten and called “Teacher Improvement.” I remember Elder Holland counseling the writing committee members to remember the example of the Savior, who was “a teacher come from God” (John 3:2).

A few years later, after the implementation of “Teacher Improvement,” those at Church headquarters responsible for this emphasis in teaching felt an important element was missing. The concept of learning had been relegated to the backseat of teaching. To place learning in its proper role, the February 2007 Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: Learning and Teaching satellite broadcast was developed. The general presidency of the Sunday School has since made a concerted effort to improve both learning and teaching in the Church.

As part of the effort to improve learning and teaching, the excellent publication *Teaching, No Greater Call* was refreshed. I pause to make a comment about this manual. With what I know about education and with the many

books written on the subject, I consider it one of the finest books on education anywhere, and I commend it to you for your personal and family use and home library. I encourage you to pay careful attention to “Invite Diligent Learning,” section 4 of “Part B: Basic Principles of Gospel Teaching.” Stake and ward leaders are encouraged to make use of these materials and this emphasis.

Thus, in the Church *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), the word *learning* is given an emphasis not seen in earlier Church manuals. For example, the stated purpose of Sunday School is to “strengthen individuals’ and families’ faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through teaching, learning, and fellowshiping” (*Handbook 2*, 12.1). In that same chapter, under the heading “Improving Learning and Teaching in the Ward,” we read:

*Members of the ward Sunday School presidency serve as specialists in the ward’s efforts to improve learning and teaching. . . . They help leaders orient newly called teachers and improve gospel learning and teaching in their organizations. [Handbook 2, 12.5]*

The scriptures themselves are our best sources on learning and teaching—the Savior being the perfect model of a learner/teacher. In addition to the scriptures, an extremely valuable source is the interview Elder L. Tom Perry conducted with President Boyd K. Packer published in the June 2007 *Ensign*—the printed version of the February 10, 2007, Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting: Learning and Teaching satellite broadcast. In the following list I draw upon President Packer’s wise counsel and add one or two thoughts of my own. Each is introduced with “I am becoming a diligent learner”:

- when I am teachable and want to learn.
- when I study, search, ponder, and liken the scriptures to myself and my circumstances.

- when I ask questions and listen to both what is said by the teacher and not said verbally by others but by the Spirit to me.
- when I do not resent correction or instruction.
- when I stay at it and demonstrate persistence.
- when I observe others, especially the example and counsel of older people.
- when I pray in specifics for myself and for the teacher.
- when I retire early and arise early (see D&C 88:124).
- when I write impressions.
- when I am a punctual, reverent listener in Church meetings and at home.

### **Respectful Participation**

It is important to remember that there are basically two kinds of meetings held in this Church: one is formal and the other is informal. Examples of formal meetings in the Church are sacrament meetings, Sunday sessions of stake conference, and general conference. The Saturday evening session of a stake conference could be a formal meeting, or the presiding officer may make it an informal meeting with audience participation—something we of the Seventy and the Twelve are doing more and more. You have seen or will see that the Campus Education Week presenters determine whether their presentations are formal or informal. Because I will use visuals in my message, this formal devotional will have an element of informality.

In a formal meeting, audience participation by way of discussion or comments is not encouraged. For example, in a sacrament meeting the speaker should not invite the congregation to open their scriptures and follow along. Of course I may choose to do so on my own and listen attentively, take notes of impressions, and pray for myself, for others, and for the speaker. In a sacrament meeting, as per the instructions in *Handbooks 1* and *2*, the use of object lessons or other visuals is not approved.

On the other hand, in informal meetings such as quorum and classroom instruction, Primary, seminary and institute classes, and especially Church councils (ward and stake—and these include presidency and bishopric councils), listener participation is vital for edification to occur. At home, generally the most effective teaching is achieved when it is informal.

When I was a young boy attending the old white church in Mapleton, about ten miles south of here, I never carried my own set of scriptures to junior Sunday school or the evening sacrament meeting. Frankly, we did not have personal scriptures. It has only been since 1979 and 1981, the years the current English LDS scriptures were published, that we have obtained our own sets of scriptures and have become a scripture-carrying people. That we should carry them is implied in the Book of Mormon:

*Wherefore, it was wisdom in the Lord that we should carry them [the brass plates] with us, as we journeyed in the wilderness towards the land of promise. [1 Nephi 5:22]*

Edification for me is facilitated when I participate in informal instruction, having my scriptures with me as I travel through the wildernesses of life toward my promised land. Of course I must do more than carry them in my hands; I must open them and carry them in my head, in my heart, and in my life.

All are encouraged to bring their own set of scriptures to informal instructional settings so they may open them and follow along, make comments, and share insights. In connection with that approach, parents and teachers should provide opportunities for others to participate, discuss, ask questions, and share insights and experiences. Remember, inspired questions lead to inspired participation and revelatory experiences. Orson Hyde recorded that the Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

*Each should speak in his turn and in his place, and in his time and season, that there may be perfect order in all things; and that every man . . . should be sure that he can throw light upon the subject rather than spread darkness . . . , which may be done by men applying themselves closely to study the mind and will of the Lord, whose Spirit always makes manifest and demonstrates the truth to the understanding of all who are in possession of the Spirit. [HC 2:370]*

When a husband and wife understand these principles and truths, they are better prepared to lead their children so that they may be edified through gospel learning. Common settings for learning and teaching are family scripture study, family home evening, and mealtime discussions. Church research shows that these settings are more successful when parents make them relaxed, inclusive, expressive, and engaging. Gospel learning that leads to edification at home is more effective when it is more like a conversation than another meeting.

This learning is not limited to family home evenings, however. Our children are edified when we daily model correct learning, teaching, and leading. Spontaneous conversations at mealtime discussions, upon arrival from school, at bedtime, on a walk, or while working together provide brief moments suited to each child's attention span that are often one-on-one and relevant with real-life experiences.

My emphasis thus far has been on these five principles in formal and informal settings such as Church sacrament meetings, classrooms, and the home. Other significant settings in which these five principles are applied so that edification may occur are ward and stake councils, including presidency and bishopric meetings or councils.

The November 2010 and February 2011 worldwide satellite broadcasts on the Church handbooks and on councils include excellent role-plays based on doctrines, principles, and

applications found in *Handbook 2*. The DVDs illustrate and emphasize what a council meeting should do, be, and accomplish. It is hoped that these excellent instructions will give leaders and parents a greater vision of how they should conduct councils.

In summary, here are the five principles leading to edification:

1. A teacher is appointed and recognized as such by the learners.
2. Teaching and discussion are governed by order and reverence.
3. What is discussed or said revolves around divine doctrines or truths.
4. Those who are not speaking have a duty to actively listen.
5. Both teacher and listener participate respectfully to invite the Spirit.

### Edifying Leadership

Like teachers, leaders in the Church should strive to edify those whom they lead. Having served here in the heart of Zion as well as having lived and traveled abroad, I have witnessed different teaching and leadership styles. Elder Richard G. Scott articulated these styles for me as follows:

1. The general or commander
2. The egalitarian or three commanders
3. The phantom—meaning the self-reliant
4. The decision maker
5. The Lord’s leader

I recognize that there are elements of stereotyping in the following descriptions, but there is much to be learned:

1. *The general or commander*: Here, the presiding officer, such as a bishop or a president, either implicitly or explicitly communicates that he presides. Like a military officer, he gives orders to his subordinates, and each one dutifully obeys.

2. *The egalitarian or three commanders*: In this case the presiding officer divides the responsibilities so that each has a third of what is to be accomplished—each clearly understanding the lines and limits for which he is responsible, and therefore working to accomplish them.

3. *The phantom*: A good description for this leader is he does not delegate. He has two worthy, able counselors but does not know how to use them or does not have confidence in them and does most things himself.

4. *The decision maker*: This model has two counselors or advisors and one decision maker. It is based on the Old Testament account in which Moses, as the presiding officer, sat in judgment over all cases, being the “decision maker” (see Exodus 18). I believe that the decision-making leader is more common than the first three mentioned. For example, a very good bishop may ask each counselor to suggest a name to fill a calling in the ward. They discuss it openly, and then the bishop announces either verbally or by his actions, “Thank you for your good counsel, and, as I hold the keys, I will now make the decision and ask you to sustain me in it.”

5. *The Lord’s Leader*: This presiding officer understands and implements the principles of the theme of this Campus Education Week. He understands

- the source of his authority and what it is to be an appointed teacher,
- that order and reverence must prevail in the council meeting,
- that sayings or divine doctrines and truths will govern all decisions,
- that listening to each other and to the whisperings of the Spirit of inspiration is fundamental to revelation, and
- that respectful participation by all will lead to our theme today: “That All May Be Edified of All.”

To summarize the role of the appointed teacher in our Campus Education Week theme, I quote from cherished notes in my personal files from a talk given by Elder Spencer W. Kimball to missionaries that I heard as a young missionary fifty years ago:

*Brother Lee is my senior, and I am Brother Mark E. Petersen's senior. When we go to work together, he never says, "You do this, and you can't do this." Brother Lee always says, "Now, Brother Kimball, what do you think about this? Shall we proceed along this line; shall we go here; and what shall we do there?" Always. He never tells me what I must do. When Brother Petersen and I go, I try to do the same: "Brother Petersen, shall we move in this direction? What shall we do? How do you feel about this?" It works out perfectly, and everyone is happy. But there is the senior element. When one of us is senior, someone has to take the responsibility; someone has to lead out. And that is all that it is! Sometimes I use "stick men" to show what I mean. I've seen places in missions where the senior companion is the big "stick man" about six feet tall and the little junior companion is way down here. That is not how it should be. We should have two "stick men" the same size. The one has a little more training, and he has been out in the field a little longer, but that doesn't give him any dictatorial rights. They are both the same size; the one leads out in suggesting. [Personal journal of Jay E. Jensen, from a talk given by Spencer W. Kimball, 2 January 1959]*

The phrase "one leads out in suggesting" has become central to my life and ministry as a husband, father, grandfather, teacher, and Church leader.

Everything we have been saying about leadership in Church councils, meetings, and classrooms applies equally to marriage, the home, and the family.

We see in marriages the following:

- A husband who is the general, or the commander, giving orders to his wife, whom he views as his subordinate, and she dutifully obeys him.
- A husband and wife who see their marriage as a fifty-fifty arrangement, having equally divided their responsibilities.
- A husband who seeks to manage things himself.
- A husband who sees himself as the decision maker, always seeking input from his wife on important decisions and then exercising his authority to decide and asking her to support him.
- A united couple with a husband who understands his role from the example of the Savior and temple covenants. He leads out in suggesting—not demanding, not commanding, and not insisting. He understands this humorous anecdote about listening: The Lord gave us two ears and one mouth so we may hear twice as much as we say.

Having served in the Presidency of the Seventy, and with regular meetings with the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, as well as traveling with them and their spouses, I have seen and experienced how the Lord's leaders work in unity and harmony in presidency meetings, Church councils, and in their marriages.

In the meetings of the Presidency of the Seventy, each expresses his views openly, we listen carefully to each other, we weigh all available information, we discuss, we ponder, we pray, and we always reach a consensus as guided by the Spirit. Our decisions are described in the Doctrine and Covenants:

*The decisions of these quorums . . . are to be made in all righteousness, in holiness, and lowliness of heart, meekness and long suffering, and in faith, and virtue, and knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity;*

*Because the promise is, if these things abound in them they shall not be unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord. [D&C 107:30–31]*

The idea of being fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord is captured by the Apostle Paul with these words: “But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

### **The Role of the Holy Ghost in Edification**

Let me be very clear about this. Edification will occur only through and by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is the true teacher in all spiritual learning and teaching. Although this is a very large classroom, let’s illustrate these verses with the following description. Imagine at the top that I write the word *God*, and at the bottom I draw a few stick figures of us—the people, the learners. Then I draw a vertical line representing revelation or communication connecting God to man and man to God, showing two-way communication of prayer and revelation. To the side and a little bit above the learners I draw a stick figure of me, the teacher, and draw a line from me to God, connecting us by prayer and revelation. Then I finally draw a line from me to the people, showing a connection or a relationship or role with the people, the learners. This illustrates that God is the true Teacher, and He does so by and through the Holy Ghost, who “was sent forth to teach” (D&C 50:14).

The importance of being off to the side and a little above is confirmed by President Harold B. Lee: “You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is” (“Stand Ye in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 123). Being on higher ground comes by an assignment to be a teacher and, in informal settings, the invitation to be a spokesman. Thus in informal settings we regularly rotate our position on higher ground happily and willingly as we surrender our place the instant someone else becomes spokesman, allowing

all to have an equal privilege—that all may be edified of all.

Thus, for edification to occur, we have different but not superior roles. Alma taught: “The priest [did] not [esteem] himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner” (Alma 1:26).

I will give a caution. No wise parent, teacher, leader, or missionary would ever want to place himself or herself between the Father and the people, thinking that his or her role is to edify, for their primary role is to turn people to the Lord, to allow them to act, rather than be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:13–14; D&C 93:30). In particular, parents will pray to be wise as they raise children—to know when to answer their children and when to turn them to the Lord to obtain answers.

Let me share with you a common example. Most missionaries, if not all, have what we call “eternal investigators.” An eternal investigator is one who is edified through the love, care, teaching, and testimonies of the missionaries rather than through the Holy Ghost and His role to teach. They have, in effect, placed themselves between the investigator and light and truth from God through the Holy Ghost. The investigator-learner is dependent upon these wonderful missionaries. Some call this living on borrowed light.

Having been a full-time seminary teacher and early-morning seminary coordinator in daily informal learning settings, I can witness to the truth of Elder Richard G. Scott’s wise counsel when he taught:

*Never, and I mean never, give a lecture [or a lesson] where there is no student participation. A “talking head” is the weakest form of class instruction. The following passage from the Doctrine and Covenants reveals a principle much worth using:*

*“He that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth[.]”*

*“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, **understand one another, and both are edified** and rejoice together” (D&C 50:21–22; [emphasis] added).*

*The verb[s] preach] and understand [refer] to that which is [said and] heard. It is the same message to all. Edified [and rejoice concern] that which is communicated by the Holy Ghost. The message can be different and tailored by the Spirit to the needs of each individual. Assure that there is abundant participation because that use of agency by a student authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct. It also helps the student retain your message. As students verbalize truths, they are confirmed in their souls and strengthen their personal testimonies. [An Evening with Elder Richard G. Scott, “To Understand and Live Truth,” address to CES religious educators, Jordan Institute of Religion, 4 February 2005, 3]*

Elder Scott’s wise counsel should help teachers, leaders, and parents to avoid the pitfall of teaching lessons and not people, evidenced by either the comment or the action that “we must hurry on and cover all the material.” Those who teach in this way do not allow us to act; rather, we are being acted upon. Increasing our exercise of agency as teachable learners increases our spiritual growth.

Agency is central to authorizing the Holy Ghost to edify or instruct:

*And now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men. [2 Nephi 33:1]*

Please note the preposition *unto*. Only when we exercise our agency will the Holy Ghost edify and carry it *into* the heart. The Savior said, “I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will

come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). In this way we see fulfillment of the promise that “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26).

In conclusion, edification will occur only when teachers and learners direct all their efforts in a shared responsibility to establish a climate where the converting power of the Spirit is present. The atmosphere or climate must be spiritual, warm, open, and reciprocal. Leaders, teachers, and parents will be more successful as they become more Christlike and adapt and respond to needs without being coercive or manipulative. By assignment, the appointed teacher is to lead out in suggesting ways to promote learning, in teaching divine doctrine, and in doing all in his or her power to create an atmosphere or setting that will invite the Holy Ghost to come and do what He alone may do so “that all may be edified of all.”

### Testimony

I witness that God our Heavenly Father lives and that He loves us and knows us by name; that Jesus Christ is His only Begotten Son, the Savior and Redeemer of mankind; that in all teaching and learning the Holy Ghost is the true teacher, the revelator of all truth, the testator of the Father and the Son and the restored gospel, which is the doctrine of Christ; that Joseph Smith conversed with the Father and the Son; that the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and it is true; and that Thomas S. Monson is God’s prophet today, and he and fourteen other men are truly prophets, seers, and revelators. May we become better learners and teachers so “that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege,” I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.