

You've Got to Have a Dream

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My dear fellow students, I feel that I can call you fellow students because we teach that the glory of God is intelligence and that we should be students throughout all eternity. I am happy to be here with you this evening and I commend you for attending such an outstanding educational institution. I am sure we will all agree that it is one of the greatest in the world.

The music tonight certainly has contributed greatly to the spirituality of this occasion. The Lord said that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (D&C 25:12). I'm sure that has been the case here tonight.

I have written a talk to give you tonight. I've been a General Authority now for nearly fourteen years, and the first eight or ten years of my tenure as a General Authority were under the direction of President McKay. In one of our temple meetings during that time, President McKay suggested that from that time on he would like the General Authorities of the Church speaking at each general conference to write their talks down so that the talks could be translated ahead of time and broadcast over the air in many different languages simultaneously with their delivery. Up to that time the Brethren had been extemporaneously delivering their messages at conference.

After President McKay's request, some of the Brethren felt that they would prefer to be guided by the Spirit at the moment they were delivering their talks. I can see President McKay turning to President Brown and saying to him, "President Brown, will you explain our views on this matter?"

President Brown got up and said, "Brethren, we feel that the Spirit can direct you two weeks ahead or a month ahead or two months ahead just as well or maybe better than at the moment that you're talking."

As I was looking out over this great audience at what we call a fireside (I know there must be a fire somewhere close because of the heat), I couldn't help but think of another fireside that Sister Richards and I attended in Tokyo about two years ago. The president of the stake had asked us if we would speak at a fireside Sunday night. We said yes and went over there. I had thought there might be fifty or a hundred people present, but actually there were more than nine hundred attending that

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fireside. (This fireside tonight, of course, is much larger than that.)

I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will direct me in the things that I say to you this night and that in turn your hearts and minds might likewise be in tune with the Spirit. Let me start out by saying that you are a choice young people. You are blessed with the blood of Israel. You are blessed with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and, in my judgment, the Lord has a special mission for each one of you.

A wise man has said, "If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail." We must prepare ourselves to succeed. Frequently we hear that the nation is at the crossroads of advancement or fall, and I think this statement could very well be a correct analysis of the present situation. Many have twisted moral values to suit themselves, scoffed at integrity, and become victims of feverish tension, lacking the one value they want most—inner peace. It seems to me that we should seek the success of the inner man now that our affluent society has furbished the outer man so extensively. We should search for paths to family harmony, more and better relatedness to God and to our fellowmen, and inner peace instead of inner tension.

Aspiration for Service and Achievement

Young people, I feel, want, and need a challenge—a great cause, an opportunity for expression. The Church furnishes these. Of course, we all have our free agency, as the writer of one of our favorite hymns so ably expressed:

*Know this, that every soul is free
To choose his life and what he'll be,
For this eternal truth is given
That God will force no man to heav'n.*

Each of us has the opportunity, and may I say responsibility, of deciding what we will do and what we will be. A line from the musical *South Pacific* says, "You've got to have a dream.

If you don't have a dream, how you going to have a dream come true?" How true this is. It is well for us to remind ourselves periodically that every human being is divinely endowed with talents, with dignity, and with worth. This faith—with its corollary that in order to grow people must dream and work—shapes the interests and aspirations of almost every person.

An unknown author describes an incident on a London street with its outdoor bookstalls. It was late on a summer afternoon, and a misty rain was beginning to fall. The booksellers were putting coverings over their stock. As a passerby stood at a bookstall that afternoon, he noticed another man searching with unusual concentration throughout a mass of books. Anyone who is a reader is interested in someone else's interests. They fell into conversation. The stranger stated that he was always looking for a new book about some far away Shangri-la. It was with him something more than a mood of escape. It was a pursuit of an ideal. Some such mood comes to almost everyone sometimes. It is a deep restlessness. It may become almost a compulsion. This human trait is undoubtedly due to our power of imagination and our capacity for dreaming and envisioning something better ahead. Human progress without this imaginative gift is unthinkable. We are constituted for receiving ideas just as radio sets are equipped for receiving music from the air. Some sets with more sensitive response pick up the finer shortwaves that are lost to other sets.

Most of us dream and have aspirations. They are very laudable things to have to spur us on to greater achievements. Let me cite some outstanding examples to illustrate my point. Thomas A. Edison and Henry Ford both had burning desires to serve their fellowmen. They held fast to the belief that there were better ways to provide artificial light and transportation, and it was their dream to find them. Edison dreamed of serving mankind by

developing a lamp that could be operated by electricity. Despite hundreds of failures before he perfected the incandescent electric light bulb, he persisted until he made it a physical reality. Henry Ford, poor and uneducated, dreamed of developing a horseless carriage at a price the average person could afford. He went to work with what tools he had, without waiting for opportunity to favor him, and served mankind well by providing good transportation for the average American. Again, these men were practical dreamers who had great desires to serve. They never quit until they made their dreams come true.

Prior to his martyrdom, the Prophet Joseph Smith envisioned taking the Saints to the western mountains, where, he stated, "We could have a government of our own, get up into the mountains where the devil cannot dig us out, and live in a healthful climate." The great western trek was a dream of the Prophet Joseph Smith, but the opportunity to make this dream come true fell upon his successor, Brigham Young. "The Word and Will of the Lord" (D&C 136:1) regarding this great migration was given through President Young and is contained in section 136 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Brigham Young then called upon the Saints to "shake themselves like mighty men."

The trip from Winter Quarters to the Salt Lake Valley took months filled with the most difficult experiences. En route, Jim Bridger, scout and frontiersman, met Brigham Young on the Wyoming wastes and advised him not to stop in Salt Lake Valley because nothing could be raised there. It is said that Bridger offered a thousand dollars for the first ear of corn grown in the valley. But Brigham Young and his loyal band of pioneers pressed on. The ox teams made straight for the Salt Lake Valley. Their prophetic leader pitched camp on the east bench of the valley and said, in words later to gain fame, "This is the place." The aspirations, dreams, and plans of the prophets Joseph

Smith and Brigham Young to bring the Saints to the Rocky Mountains matured through faith, prayer, sacrifice, and hard work. This is the way your aspirations, dreams, and plans will likewise become realities.

Nathan W. Tanner, father of President N. Eldon Tanner, once remarked, "If you want your dreams to come true, you must wake up and go to work." I appreciate the great power of faith. We know that faith without works is dead. Reflecting upon our pioneer history gives us a great appreciation of our wonderful heritage. I assume that a substantial number of you are interested in developing leadership qualities. This is a very worthy ambition, providing you have a real desire to serve and are willing to pay the price. To those of you who would like to further develop leadership qualities, let me suggest that you recognize two fundamental facts that will be helpful in accomplishing your objectives: first, always remember that you are a spirit child of God and are endowed with dignity, worth, and special talents; second, commit yourself to be a leader. Set goals and be willing to pay the price of reaching them.

The Worth of Souls

Now, let me examine with you some specific matters with reference to the two suggestions I just mentioned. First, always remember that you are a spirit child of God and are endowed with dignity, worth, and special talents. The doctrine that we are actually spirit children of God clearly defines our possibilities and should give each of us a real sense of dignity and worth. In modern revelation we are told that "the spirit and the body are the soul of man" (D&C 88:15) and that "to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God" (D&C 46:11). Being spirit children of God, we have been asked by our Savior to become perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. We know that, as man is, God once was, and as God is, man may become by obedience to the

laws and ordinances of the gospel. How then do we develop godlike qualities?

Today it is so common to hear people say, "What do I get out of it?" The law of survival is so ingrained in us that we frequently overlook the welfare of others. The Savior continually emphasized the doctrine of unselfishness: "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27), he said. He illustrated his point in the beautiful story of the good Samaritan. The entire gospel of Jesus Christ consists of unselfishness and sacrifice for a great cause. Joseph Smith said, "A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation. . . . It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life" (*Lectures on Faith*).

The Blessings of the Temple

I recently received a copy of a story written about a good friend of mine, Donald W. Cummings, former president of the first Australia state, concerning sacrifice bringing forth the blessings of heaven. Let me relate a portion of it.

What sacrifices would you be willing to make to go to the temple? Would you jeopardize your home, give up your job, sell your car? These thoughts nagged at the mind of the twenty-six-year-old district president as he weighed all that would be required of him and his family if he accepted the mission president's challenge to attend the house of the Lord. It was in 1958, and the New Zealand Temple dedication was just four months away. He sat pondering the difficulties he would have to face if he accepted this invitation, sweltering in the heat of the Australian summer; for it was January down under, and he lived in the city of Perth on the edge of the Indian Ocean.

The young man, President Donald W. Cummings, had joined the Church just ten years earlier and could remember well the small group of

Saints who used to worship together. Now, of course, the district had two vigorous congregations, big healthy branches, and he was their spiritual leader. It was proper that he should attend the temple dedication regardless of the vast distance, for New Zealand was over four thousand miles away.

The mission president's challenge kept ringing in his ears: "If you have a righteous goal and pray about it, the Lord will help you achieve it." President Cummings reviewed his finances. He was struggling to purchase a home for his growing family. He earned only a modest salary. He had no money in the bank. He drove an old car. The price of going to New Zealand was six hundred pounds, or twelve hundred United States dollars at the time. He set his jaw and picked up the paper, looking in the classified section for loans. His eye caught an advertisement for loans on furniture. He stared out the window at his well-worn family car, pondered a little longer, and then made the decision. The company lending money against furniture was trying a new idea which they were soon to stop, but not before he was granted their final loan. He sold the old car and started walking and riding buses and even hitchhiking. He was to walk and ride buses for the next eighteen months and, in all of that time, never missed his rotated visits to the branches each week. He recalls, "Yes, it was hard getting around, but my wife and I remember this as one of the happiest periods of our lives." He had discovered the joys of sacrifice for the Lord. "We appreciated walking all the more."

Even in selling the car and mortgaging both house and furniture, he was still two hundred dollars short, with no other funds in sight and just several weeks to go. President and Sister Cummings were becoming discouraged when a call from the mission president two thousand miles away in Melbourne gave them fresh courage for the final push: "Keep trying. You'll make it."

Determined, they finalized their plans. There would be no turning back. President Cummings had to serve notice on his company that he would be quitting, for they would not hold his job for this six weeks' trip. With less than a week to go and still

two hundred dollars shy, a relative who was not a member of the Church met him on the street and, after chatting about the intended trip, surprised him with a gift of a hundred dollars. With one day left, still another nonmember relative, having driven in from the country, pressed the final hundred dollars into his hand. Brother and Sister Cummings knew both gifts had been inspired.

“The Lord had intervened and he had touched the hearts of those closest to us. We were now on our way,” they recall. This was to be an eight-thousand-mile round trip which started with a two-thousand-mile train trip across the width of the Australian outback. They changed trains five times and took 4½ days to accomplish the journey. When the family finally arrived in Sidney, they delightedly met for the first time with other Saints who had also arranged for passage on a boat bound for Auckland. To their wrenching disappointment, however, they discovered the boat had recently been damaged in hitting the wharf. It required lengthy repairs and would now leave too late to get them to New Zealand on time.

They were billeted with Church members in Sidney while desperate arrangements were tried. They might still make the dedication if an airplane could be chartered. Remarkably this was done without excess cost. They all flew to the dedication and witnessed this sacred event as President David O. McKay presided and prayed. President Cummings was honored as a speaker in the spacious auditorium of the new Church college adjacent to the temple. After all their sacrifice, the Cummings family was gratified to attend the first day of endowments in the New Zealand Temple and was also the very first group to do work for the dead.

They were to have been placed in tents because their funds were so meager, but, again at the last minute, arrangements were made for hotel accommodations. Though the cost was doubled, it was agreed that they could pay later, though they never were to be billed and they never were able to discover whom to pay.

Too poor to tour, they rejoiced in working in the temple for several weeks. Then, filled with the spirit

of their new blessings and accomplishments, they traveled home ten days by boat and train with merely ten dollars left—no job, no car, and a mortgaged home and furniture. But they were rich in rewards only a temple can provide—family sealing for all time and eternity.

President Cummings went back to his old employer to see about work. To his astonishment, he was hired with both an increase in pay and a new title—sales manager. But though he started work immediately, he would not get paid until the end of the week. Now the money had run out completely. There was nothing to eat. Again, one of his wife’s country relatives paid a surprise visit and dropped off enough fresh garden produce to carry them until payday. When Elder Thomas S. Monson organized the Perth stake in 1968, Donald W. Cummings was its first stake president. He had seen the kingdom of God swell from a small handful to a big thriving stake, but he never forgot the promise of his mission president: “If you have a righteous goal and pray about it, the Lord will help you achieve it.” [See Richard J. Marshall, “Saga of Sacrifice,” *Ensign* 4 (August 1974): 66–67]

Is the spirit of unselfishness and sacrifice motivating your activity? Is this the spirit that prompts you when you’re asked to be a missionary, when you are paying your tithing, or when you are about to choose between attending priesthood or Relief Society meetings and going skiing or boating? Is this the spirit of sacrifice and unselfishness with you as you make your innumerable decisions every day? If so, you are developing god-like qualities. There is no genuine success or happiness in being self-centered and selfish.

Commitment to Achieve Established Goals

Now I should like to refer to the second point in developing leadership qualities—namely, commit yourself to be a leader, set goals, and be willing to pay the price. Each of us might well adopt the theme “Today’s preparation means tomorrow’s success.” Certainly

you must have that in mind in attending this great educational institution, and so each of us has the opportunity and responsibility of deciding what we will do and what we will be.

Goals and objectives in life are essential to worthwhile living. Once you adopt a worthwhile goal, let nothing interfere with your obtaining it. Set your goals early in life; then, when temptation arises, you have already made your decision and temptation will be easier to overcome. I would caution you, however, never to set your goal for a particular position in the Church, in the government, in our profession, or in other activities in life, but rather prepare yourself so that when the opportunity knocks at your door you will be ready. You can be sure that opportunity will knock when you are qualified.

You who are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have the Holy Ghost to quicken your minds and understandings and to magnify your wisdom, discernment, and judgment. Live in such a way that you'll be entitled to the whisperings of the Spirit; then have the courage to follow the inspiration you receive.

I recall that, when I was a young man, our congressman offered me an appointment to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. This was a great honor and a real temptation, but after careful and prayerful consideration, I declined the appointment. I had definitely decided that I would like to go on a mission, and I could see that accepting the Naval Academy appointment would probably preclude my serving as a missionary. This was one of the important decisions of my entire life. I know that the Lord guided me in making the decision to decline the appointment, continue my education, and go on a mission.

Each of us must make many decisions during a lifetime that can greatly affect our happiness and our growth and development. Our Father in heaven has blessed each one of us with talents. It is our responsibility to find out

what they are and to develop them that they might bring joy and happiness into the lives of others as well as our own.

Are you doing your best? Are you anxious to develop your talents to the greatest degree? Are you willing to put forth the time and effort to do this? If so, you are developing the leadership abilities and godlike qualities. You may say, as you see the accomplishments of a very talented person, "I could never do what he is doing." Possibly you couldn't. But I don't believe this criterion to be the true test of achievement. Real achievement relates to each individual achieving the best he is capable of, and each of us can do that. The measuring stick is, not someone else's accomplishments, but our own capabilities. Whatever you are, strive to be the best you possibly can, whether you are a carpenter, a teacher, a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, a missionary, a churchman, or a statesman. Each of us has his own problems to solve, but as we do our part, the Lord will make us equal to the task, whatever it may be.

Charles F. Kettering, onetime president of General Motors Corporation, frequently said to his associates, "Problems are the price of progress. Don't bring me anything but trouble. Good news weakens me." What a wonderful philosophy: bring me problems because they strengthen me. Problems viewed in this way, as opportunities, make men and women strong.

Activity in the Church

We frequently hear that the Church is a peculiar organization and that the people are peculiar people. An experience I had on a plane illustrates this point. Some time ago I was returning from New York to Salt Lake City. As I got on the plane, I sat down next to a young man, and before long we engaged in conversation. I asked him where he was from, and he said that he was from Minneapolis. He was in the investment business and had been to New York attending a seminar. He asked me where I was from and what my work was, and

I told him I was from Salt Lake City and that I was a Mormon missionary. I asked him what he knew about the Mormon Church, and he said, "Quite a bit." He informed me that he had been an ice skating instructor at Sun Valley a few years earlier and had met many Mormons while he was there. He had thought he would like to work in Salt Lake City, where he could become better acquainted with the Mormons. The next summer, he had secured work in Salt Lake, met many returned missionaries, and attended Mormon church meetings. He asked me if I would be interested in knowing what he thought was the most worthwhile thing in the Mormon Church. I told him that I would be delighted to get his impression, and he replied that it was the fact that the Church offered every person who was a member an opportunity to serve. That was the outstanding thing in the Church, as far as he could observe.

Thus, the Church is a peculiar church and has a tremendous appeal to young people because it has a dynamic yet realistic plan of life. Involvement and active participation are basic principles of Mormonism. Activities involve participation in religious services, dramatic arts, public speaking, sports, and other areas that contribute to the development of leadership qualities. The Church furnishes unlimited opportunities for sharing one's talents, time, and means. This generally requires personal sacrifice and hard work. Never forget that sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven.

Missionary work is such an opportunity. The young person planning missionary service dreams of being the instrument in the hands of the Lord in bringing many people into the Church, but he soon finds that doing so requires sacrifice and hard work. May I encourage you to accept every opportunity presented to you to serve with enthusiasm—not as a burden, but as a great blessing.

I am convinced that more opportunities await young leaders of today and tomorrow

than any generation heretofore. I am confident that you will successfully meet the great challenges ahead. Remember that walking into the unknown is required of all of us. This takes courage and strength, and so I am grateful for yours.

We are living in a remarkable age—the dispensation of the fullness of times. I am grateful for the knowledge that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. I bear witness to you that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness through the instrumentality of the great prophet Joseph Smith and that there is a prophet of God on the earth today, President Spencer W. Kimball. May the Lord bless and sustain him and may we have the courage to follow his counsel.

In conclusion, may we all appreciate that freedom of choice is a basic principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ and be truly thankful for our free agency. May we recognize that it is vital that we learn to make wise choices and to control ourselves rather than to live by chance. May we also develop the courage to execute these wise choices we make from day to day. Truly the poet-songwriter was inspired when he wrote:

*Choose the right, when a choice is placed before you;
In the right the Holy Spirit guides;
And its light is forever shining o'er you,
When in the right your heart confides.*

*Choose the right! let no spirit of digression
Overcome you in the evil hour;
There's the right and the wrong to every question,
Be safe through inspiration's power.*

*Choose the right! there is peace in righteous doing;
Choose the right! there's safety for the soul;
Choose the right in all labors you're pursuing;
Let God and heaven be your goal.*

Let me assure you that the maximum joy and satisfaction out of life, the maximum in

material rewards as well, will come almost automatically to those who choose the right and remember that success is a journey, not a destination. Therefore, never turn down an opportunity to serve in the Church, live the gospel principles, and follow the leaders of the Church.

Tragedy comes as a result of disobedience to the commandments of God, but peace, happiness, and success follow obedience. What are

your dreams and aspirations for tomorrow? I suggest that you make them challenging, worthwhile, and many of them Church-oriented.

May the knowledge and spirit you receive at this great University be helpful in making your dreams come true and may the choice blessings of our Father in heaven be with you. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.