

# *Peace and Happiness*

FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

**I** consider it a real privilege and honor to meet with you young people in this hour of worship, and I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will direct your minds and thoughts. I commend you for your desire to increase your knowledge and understanding of the gospel.

You are choice young people, blessed with the blood of Israel, and blessed with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I feel to say to you that the Lord has a special mission for each one of you, and as you live in accordance with gospel principles, the Lord will open up the way before you and assist you in solving your problems and making the right decisions throughout your life.

We are, however, living in a period where there is much hatred, conflict, and contention. People everywhere are praying for peace and happiness. Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace, and his message is a message of peace to the individual and to the world. It is peace that makes us really appreciate mortal life and enables us to bear heartbreaking situations and tribulations.

## **Joseph Smith**

In considering the purpose of life, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will

be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God" (HC 5:134–35).

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of life that will restore peace to the world, remove inner tensions and troubles, and bring happiness to the human soul. It is the greatest philosophy of life ever given to man. The mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to establish this peace and happiness in the hearts and homes of the people.

I would like to discuss with you today four principles that can assist you in securing peace and happiness in your lives.

These principles are *prayer*, *patience*, *preparedness*, and *pacing*.

First, let us consider the great principle of prayer.

## **Prayer**

Implanted in the heart of every person born on this earth, regardless of his or her race or

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color, is the desire to worship in some manner a divine being. Really, the true meaning of prayer is fellowship with God. Prayer opened the heavens to the Prophet Joseph Smith and, likewise, opened the dispensation of the fullness of times. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a monument to prayer.

The Lord has repeatedly told us to pray always and that he will pour out his Spirit upon us and bless us greatly (see D&C 19:38). The Prophet Joseph Smith observed that, “It is the first principle of the gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with Him as one man converses with another” (HC 6:305).

Prayer is the “simplest form of speech”; it is the “soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed” (James Montgomery, “Prayer Is the Soul’s Sincere Desire,” *Hymns*, no. 220).

Brigham Young in his realistic manner stated, “You know that it is one peculiarity of our faith and religion never to ask the Lord to do a thing without being willing to help him all that we are able; and then the Lord will do the rest” (HC 5:293).

“Please, Lord, help me to help myself.” I am convinced that this prayer for increased personal powers—spiritual strength, greater inspiration, and greater confidence—is one that God always answers. We can learn to solve our own problems with God’s help, making him our partner.

### **Some Practical Suggestions**

This being the case, what can we do to supplement prayer? What is our part? Let me suggest a few examples:

As we pray for wisdom and knowledge, our part can be to study and apply ourselves.

As we ask for health and strength of body and of mind, we can supplement prayer by living the Word of Wisdom.

As we ask for protection in our travels, our part would be to use good judgment, such as driving carefully if we are going by car.

When we pray for inspiration, we should live close to the Lord by keeping his commandments. The Savior said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

When we pray for direction, let us remember the counsel the Lord gave Oliver Cowdery in the ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants: study our problems out in our own mind, make a decision, and then ask the Lord if our decision is right. If it is, we will receive a burning of our bosom, or a good feeling. If not, we will receive a stupor of thought or a questionable feeling (see D&C 9:8, 9). Then, whatever the feeling, let us have the courage to follow it. This is doing our part.

When we pray for patience, our part could be to persevere and remember the Lord has counseled us to “be not weary in well doing . . . for out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33).

### **What to Pray For**

The question is frequently asked, What should one pray for? Well, prayer being the “soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed,” pray for you soul’s sincere desire. But never forget that whatever our prayer is for, we can supplement our heavenly request with some positive action on our part. How comforting this is and how beautifully this truth is made known in the hymn:

*When sailing on life’s stormy sea,*

*Mid billows of despair,*

*’Tis solace to my soul to know*

*God hears my secret prayer.*

(H.H. Peterson, “There Is an Hour of Peace and Rest,” *Hymns*, no. 172)

The Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking on this subject, stated:

*We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields.*

*Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and*

*pray over, and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in" (Teachings, p. 247).*

I suggest this day we commit ourselves to so live that we may go before the Lord with a clear conscience and ask for his divine guidance and assistance. As we do this, we can truthfully say:

*O how praying rests the weary!  
Prayer will change the night to day;  
So when life gets dark and dreary,  
Don't forget to pray.*  
(Mrs. M.A. Kidder, "Ere You Left Your Room This Morning," *Hymns*, no. 31)

I have, throughout my life, had my prayers answered very directly many times. Prayer has been a great blessing to me and my family and has been the means of bringing peace of mind and happiness to our lives.

### **Patience**

Now let us consider the great principle of patience as a means of bringing peace and happiness into our lives.

A great revelation was given in February 1829, through the Prophet Joseph Smith to his father, and is recorded in section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this section qualities necessary for success in the Lord's service are given and include patience. (see D&C 4:6).

In today's world of uncertainty, pressures, strains, and tribulations, patience is an essential virtue.

### **The Purpose of Patience**

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Roman Saints, said: "We glory in tribulations . . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3-4).

And so our trials and tribulations, as we meet them with patience, give us valuable experiences and prepare us for challenges that lie ahead.

In 1828, the Lord, in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength" (D&C 10:4).

By exercising patience, we will not be inclined to run faster or labor more than our strength justifies.

Some might construe patience to be a negative force, resulting in resignation and discouragement. However, patience is a great stabilizing influence in our lives while impatience frequently brings fear, tensions, discouragement, and failure.

In a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph Smith to his brother, Hyrum in May 1829, the Lord counseled Hyrum in regard to his assignment saying, "Be patient until you shall accomplish it" (D&C 11:19). Here patience is identified as a positive force and as a requisite to accomplishment. It is important to realize that patience can be a tremendous positive force when combined with prayer, faith, and works.

### **How Can We Develop Patience?**

In this light, let us further consider the great value of patience and how it can be developed.

Patience means persevering, and persevering means work—mental and physical.

President Grant used to say: "That which we try to do, and persist in doing, becomes easy to do, not because its nature is changed, but because our power to do is developed" (Josiah Gilbert Holland [Timothy Titcomb, pseud.], *Gold-Foil: Hammered from Popular Proverbs* [New York: Charles Scribner, 1859], 291).

Then to develop patience: "Don't expect too much too soon." Make the most out of what you have. For instance, exercise patience in the matter of buying a new home, a new car, furniture, or other important things. Get out

of debt and stay out of debt. Here patience will reward you with peace of mind, happiness, and success. A young person should plan and patiently prepare for a mission years ahead of the time he leaves, providing he wants to perform an outstanding mission.

Planning and obtaining one's education are especially important in this day and age, and, of course, planning and preparing for one's vocation become significant parts of planning and obtaining one's education. Faith and patience are vital to accomplish these desired objectives. Hasty courtships tend to create unhappy marriages and often result in divorce. Be patient in the selection of a husband or wife. Be patient and take sufficient time to prepare for a temple marriage. Here is one place that your patience will be rewarded with eternal blessings.

Our greatest need for continual patience is with our loved ones, our family. Here is where we may be the most impatient, but here is where patience pays the greatest dividends. Nothing is sweeter than to watch a loving parent patiently teach his child correctly. A father stood by his small son in a swimming pool. The boy wanted so much to learn to swim. The father patiently showed him how. Day after day, they returned to the pool, the father always evidencing patience and appreciation for the boy's efforts.

This same method is used by truly successful parents in teaching their children the lessons of life: social, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, as well as physical—telling and showing, over and over until the lesson is learned, always with patience, love, and appreciation of every evidence of progress, no matter how small.

As one reviews the various areas of life's activities and appreciates the many human inadequacies, the great value of patience becomes more and more evident.

Sometimes we are misunderstood, even by those who are closest to us. Under such

circumstances, patience will develop within us the capacity to accept criticism if warranted or not. This ability to exercise forbearance under provocation means that we are following the Savior's teachings, to do good to those that spitefully use us and to turn the other cheek (see Matthew 5:44, 39).

Patience is truly a mighty virtue and can be developed as we recognize its importance and make up our minds to be patient within our own lives as well as with others.

### **Our Heavenly Father's Patience**

I am grateful for my knowledge of the gospel and that the gospel incorporates the remarkable principle of patience. I am most thankful for the patience of my Father in Heaven has evidenced with me in my life.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Hebrew Saints, said to them: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Yes, as we incorporate the mighty virtue of patience in our lives, it will be a great help in obtaining the desired peace and happiness.

### **Personal and Family Financial Preparedness**

Now, the third point I would like to discuss in developing peace and happiness is personal and family financial preparedness.

Throughout the history of the Church, the doctrine of personal and family preparedness has been emphasized by the leaders of the Church. Regardless of the difficulties existing in the world today, we as a people must recognize that financial problems are the reason for much unhappiness and are certainly a major factor in family difficulties and divorce. The Lord has told us that if we are prepared, we shall not fear (see D&C 38:30). What a blessing it is to be free from financial fear!

I would like to suggest a three-point formula to attain and maintain financial preparedness.

1. Pay your tithes and offerings.
2. Get out of debt and stay out of debt.
3. Use your surplus funds wisely.

This formula is equally applicable to young and old. Let me discuss each of these three points briefly.

### **First, Pay Your Tithes and Offerings**

The Lord has said,

*Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. . . .*

*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse . . . and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it. [Malachi 3:8, 10]*

In this dispensation, the Lord has revealed to us that this “is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people” (D&C 64:23).

Compliance with the law of tithing opens the windows of heaven, bringing material and spiritual blessings through sacrifice and obedience. It is truly the first step toward personal and family financial preparedness.

When men, women, and children are honest with the Lord and pay their tithes and offerings, the Lord gives them wisdom whereby they can do as much with the remainder as they could if they had not been honest with the Lord—and often they can do more. They are blessed and prospered in various ways—spiritually, physically, and mentally, as well as materially. I know this to be true, and I am sure many of you can bear such a testimony. Always remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

As long as one is honest with the Lord, the amount of tithing paid is not material. The widow’s or the child’s mite is as important and acceptable as the rich man’s offerings.

Yes, compliance with the law of tithing truly is the first step toward personal and family financial preparedness.

### **Get Out Of Debt**

Now, the *second* point of the formula—*get out of debt and stay out of debt*. In modern revelation, the Lord has given us these commandments: “Verily I say unto you, concerning your debts, behold it is my will that you shall pay all your debts” (D&C 104:78). And again, “Pay the debt thou has contracted. . . . Release thyself from bondage” (D&C 19:35).

President Joseph F. Smith advised the Saints to “get out of debt and keep out of debt, and then you will be financially, as well as spiritually free.”

In getting out of debt and staying out of debt, there are certain basic principles that we, as individuals and families, can apply; such as:

- Live within your income.

- Prepare and use short- and long-term budgets.

- Regularly save a part of your income.

- Use your credit wisely if it is necessary to use it at all. For example, a reasonable debt may be justified for the acquisition of a home or education.

- Preserve and utilize your assets through appropriate tax and estate planning.

I know that by following these simple, basic principles, it is possible to get out of debt and stay out of debt.

What will this mean to us as individuals and families?

President Heber J. Grant said, “If there is any one thing that will bring peace and contentment into the human heart, and into the family, it is to live within our means, and if there is one thing that is grinding and discouraging and disheartening, it is to have debts and obligations that one cannot meet” (GS, p. 111). I can personally bear witness that this is true.

### **Use Surplus Funds Wisely**

Let me also suggest that you *use your surplus funds wisely*. In many respects, the real test of a man is his attitude toward his earthly

possessions. A person who places earthly possessions of this world in the scales against the things of God evidences little understanding of eternal values.

President Brigham Young had this to say about this matter:

*When this people are prepared to properly use the riches of this world for the building up of the kingdom of God, he is ready and willing to bestow them upon us. . . .*

*I like to see men get rich by their industry, prudence, management and economy, and then devote it to the building up of the kingdom of God upon the earth. [JD 11:114–15]*

I bear you my testimony that personal and family preparedness is vital to the development of peace and happiness. Yes, it is important to be strong financially, as well as spiritually, mentally, and physically.

### **Pacing Oneself**

Now let me discuss the fourth principle in order to have peace and happiness: *pace yourself*.

Frequently we find ourselves under pressure and inner tension builds up.

When I first entered public life, I was under considerable pressure and suffered from migraine headaches. Inner tension contributed to this condition, and by learning how to relax mentally and physically, I overcame my problem. When I became exercised over a matter, I reminded myself that I must take it easy, that it would probably all be the same one hundred years from now, and that there were many persons in the cemetery who had thought that they were indispensable.

As I came across pictures that would remind me to take it easy, I would cut them out and paste them in my work books and other places where I could have ready access to them when I sensed I was becoming tense. When such occasions arose, I would glance at

one of these pictures, relax a second, and go on benefited by this change of pace.

For example, I found a magazine photograph of some pigs sleeping in the sun. One had a particularly blissful expression on his face. The caption read, “Life is a dream.” I have carried this picture with me for years. I never look at it without feeling relaxed.

In order to maintain maximum efficiency, I feel that one must learn to change the tempo—or shall we say “pace” oneself.

Some years ago, I was assigned to supervise the missions of the east coast. One was the New England Mission, of which Dr. Truman Madsen was president. After one of my tours, President Madsen published the following article in the mission’s monthly periodical:

#### *The Power of Pacing*

*Nothing impresses me more about President Richards than the way he paces himself. He came here after touring three missions in a row, without rest. He was fixed in purpose, and as steady in performance. He ate, slept with absolute regularity. When he was carrying out a plan he was undeviating. When he let go, shifting to a caramel, a lifesaver, or a respite to get the spring back in his bow, then he planned. Then he started in again with quiet efficiency . . . I commend his example to you. Pace. . . .*

### **Change Tempo**

If the task cannot be changed, then change the tempo. If sitting, stand up and stretch each hour. Start the difficult or disliked tasks first. Alternate the hard and easy tasks. Plan the specialized tasks together. Change tasks about every two hours if practical. Decrease the backtracking, and, finally, learn the relaxed approach to every task.

### **Survey Large Fields**

An axiom that has been an influence in my life is, “Survey large fields, but cultivate small ones.”

Too often in life one tries to cultivate fields beyond his physical, mental, and economic ability. When the grass over the fence looks greener, people are apt to overestimate their capacity.

One of the principle reasons for failure is overextending oneself. This is evident in every phase of life. I have frequently said that I would rather be small and strong than large and weak.

As stated before, these concepts incorporate basic gospel principles and will bring peace and happiness to those who apply them in their lives.

And remember that no one can cheat you out of ultimate peace and happiness but yourself.

As we apply the eternal principles of prayer, patience, preparedness, and pacing in our lives, we not only receive the rewards of peace and happiness, but we also make ourselves available to be peacemakers.

### **Be a Peacemaker**

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest messages given by our Lord and Savior was the Sermon on the Mount. This message contained the Savior's plan for the abundant life. In it he admonished all to be peacemakers as he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9).

Have you ever wondered how you can be a peacemaker? Really, our opportunities are unlimited.

Certainly in our homes we can all be peacemakers by exhibiting love and goodwill, thus offsetting the evil of contention, envy, and jealousy. Where misunderstandings exist between children and parents, we can encourage adjustments on the part of both. We can pray together for the spirit of peace.

We can become peacemakers by avoiding criticism. Remember that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said, "Judge not, that ye be not

judged. For with that judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matthew 7:1-2).

We can be peacemakers by practicing and teaching forgiveness. Jesus was asked how many times one should be forgiven, and he replied that we should forgive without limit. Forgive him "seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22).

An important part of forgiving is forgetting. In some ways, being able to forget is almost as valuable as being able to remember.

Possibly there is a greater need for peacemakers today than ever before. If this world had no need of peacemakers, our Savior never would have said, "*Blessed* are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The *blessed* part of being a peacemaker is that those who are peacemakers and who live the gospel principles receive a testimony born of the Holy Ghost. They enjoy the peace that surpasseth all understanding, relief from inner tensions, joy and happiness, contentment, and growth and development. I personally know this to be true.

Many people are filled with fears about what will become of them as they grow older. I met a lovely lady in her eighties working in the temple. The spirit of peace and tranquility radiated from her. She was so busy helping others that she had little concern for herself. Her needs were not great, and as she said, "The Lord is taking care of my needs."

The Lord tells us, "But learn that he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).

Yes, the Lord will take care of our needs, and help us overcome those things that worry us, when we do our part, put our faith and trust in him, and concern ourselves with serving him by serving our fellowmen. I've seen this in my own life, in the lives of those close to me, and in the lives of hundreds of others all over the world. It is the only way to personal peace, that peace that is not of this world

and is beyond our understanding and comprehension, but so sweet to us.

I bear you my witness that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ live and that through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power to act in the name of God have been restored to this earth, and further that President Spencer W. Kimball is a living prophet guiding and directing the affairs of

The Church of Jesus Christ on the earth today. May the Lord's choicest blessings be with him, and may we have the courage and good judgment to follow the counsel and advice he has given us.

May each of us in our daily lives enjoy the peace and happiness that surpasseth all understanding, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.