

The Fruits of Obedience

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Whenever I approach this campus, there is something special that stirs within my soul. There is always a freshness, an air of growth and of development. A feeling of significant activity is in the air. There is almost an aroma of new beginnings, of goals made and in the process of being attained, of maturing careers, and of powerfully developing spirits. I have not visited Utah Valley Community College, but I imagine one would have similar feelings there.

I come to you as a friend with a sincere desire to help each of you obtain the greatest benefit from your investment of time and effort at Brigham Young University or Utah Valley Community College. My message results from much thought and prayer over an extended period of time. It has been prepared as if I were talking to a son or daughter or very close friend—communicating what I know will help provide increased, lasting benefit from this critical period of intense preparation for your future. I realize some of you are not currently students, but I feel the principles can be of equal value in your lives.

I pray that you can understand the intensity of my feeling and conviction regarding the principles I will discuss. May there come

promptings to you from the Lord through the Holy Ghost regarding their application in your life. I feel the spirit and environment are right for that to occur.

To You Who Are Automatic

In the honest candor I want to characterize the time we spend together, I recognize there is a considerable group of you that will more easily understand what I say because of decisions you have already made. I pray that others who have not made the same personal commitments will be prompted to do so tonight, for my counsel will have limited value until that foundation is established. Let me explain more specifically with an example.

Some years ago, I received an unexpected high school graduation present. It was a beautiful watch. Each night I carefully wound it and placed it in its case. During the day, I looked at it far more frequently than necessary because of the love I felt it communicated. As the years

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went by and there were more and more things to do, I often neglected to wind the watch. Consequently, it stopped running, often when I most needed it. Then it was of no value for its prime mission—that of telling time.

Like many of you today, I wear an automatic watch. It is consistent and helpful. It always tells me the correct time. When I am in a foreign country, it wakes me at the appointed hour and does a lot of other useful things. Most of all, it is totally dependable. I never need to worry whether I can count on it or not.

I realize that just as there are differences in watches, there are differences in students. Some need winding up, and many others are automatic because of important decisions they have already made.

Those of you who need continuing guidance and direction and a jump start early in the morning or help late at night I leave in the hands of the marvelous people who are here to help you. They are represented by President Rex Lee and President Kerry Romsberg and their wives, the faculties and staffs of BYU and UVCC, the priesthood brethren represented by these dear friends here on the stand, and other students who will reach out to you to wind you up when you need it. I know you are in good hands.

My message today is to the other group, those of you who are automatic, who have made those decisions in life to be true and faithful to the teachings of the Lord and to live your lives by faith when you cannot see the end from the beginning. I speak to you who, when faced with alternatives, unwaveringly choose to follow those that are consistent with the teachings of the Savior.

I speak to you who are automatic, who in your lives have decided that while you will work to obtain enough for the needs of a family, you will not set your hearts on the acquisition of wealth and power but will serve and be led by the Lord in all you do. I know the criticism you sometimes receive. I know of those

who would call you fanatical, who cannot understand why you don't do what everyone else in the world seems to do.

Yours is a future without limit because you have decided to be unwavering in obedience to the Lord. You cannot today fully imagine what you will accomplish in life. Yet your quiet, uncompromising determination to live a righteous life will couple you with inspiration and power beyond your imagination.

Before I speak of the principles I want to share to help you maximize the benefit of your effort and time as a student, I will point out some of the fruits of obedience that have or will assuredly come to you because of your determination to obey the Lord under all circumstances.

One is *peace*, peace in a world where that word is hardly understood, let alone experienced. When all the challenges pour down on you, you will have a quiet inner feeling of support. You will be prompted to know what to do. You can live in a world of turmoil and great challenge and be at peace.

A second fruit is *integrity*. Integrity is the hallmark of a righteous man or woman. It is the root of trust. It acts as cement in worthy human relationships and is the foundation of spiritual communication. Oh, how the world suffers today because of dwindling integrity. Within your sphere of influence you can build on the bulwark of your integrity.

Discipline is another fruit you harvest through obedience. To be disciplined is to provide order and consistency to your life. It will permit higher priority matters to rule over those that are of lesser consequence. Righteous discipline is the backbone of noble character. Your discipline will help you to consistently make correct choices in the use of your time and will facilitate the proper use of your agency. Self-discipline negates the need for forced discipline.

One of the most self-disciplined men I know is Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council

of the Twelve. Recently, during a missionary meeting in Nicaragua, he was asked by one of the elders what were some of the principle messages of the April general conference. Drawing from his meticulously disciplined mind, he began with President Hunter and summarized in order the content of the messages of each member of the Twelve and the counselors in the First Presidency. Would a disciplined mind like that help you as a student? His was not a gift. He has worked conscientiously to discipline his mind.

Another fruit is the *capacity to work* and to receive the joy that comes from productive work. President Hinckley once said to a group of missionaries, "The great accomplishments of the world are not reached by extraordinary individuals, but by common souls that work in an extraordinary way."

I was in a mission president's seminar where one of the Brethren stood to introduce the next speaker. He said, "I can present him with three words—*work, work, work.*" Humbly, Elder Spencer W. Kimball stood and said, "Oh, I know some of the Brethren say I work long hours, but I have to because I'm such a dull blade." His combination of great capacity and devoted, consistent hard work yielded a bounteous harvest of worthwhile results that continue to bless profoundly many lives throughout the world.

He once shared this precious counsel concerning both *discipline* and *work* with a group of missionaries. One missionary had said, "I don't like to work. I don't like to tract." This great leader responded:

Oh, is that so? I thought every missionary just loved to tract. . . . Didn't you know that the worthwhile things of life are not the things . . . you . . . want to do, they are the things you ought to do because they are right. Did you just love to study everything that was assigned at the University? . . . Isn't there anything in the world you do because you ought to do it? . . . My goodness, my boy,

you're headed for a total loss if you are only doing things you want to do.

Then Elder Kimball shared an experience from his early life. He said,

I wanted to go on a mission. I was scared to death, a little fellow coming from a country district.

I wondered if I could do it. I was quite sure I would have difficulty and yet I began to . . . remember specific friends that had done it. I thought, I can play basketball better than they can, . . . maybe I can do it. At any rate, I decided I wanted to go on a mission as I had been taught all my life.

I pause here to emphasize this great secret in his life so you may use it to bless your own. He made up his mind only once to resolve a particular challenge. From then on he used his energy to keep the resolve, not to reanalyze it repeatedly under every new circumstance.

Elder Kimball continued:

So when I got near the end of my high school, I went to Globe, Arizona, to get a job so I could begin to save money, because . . . my father was having a little problem with a large family to support. I had earned money for my school for my last . . . three years, and then I earned it for my mission.

He then described how he raised a black colt to become a handsome stallion. He sold it, putting every penny into his mission account. He then described his work at the dairy.

I found that the work at the dairy wasn't easy. I didn't like it. I would milk the cows and then go in and do the washing of the cans and bottles. We would use scalding water when our fingers would get somewhat used to it. Then when I would go out to milk the cows the next time, my fingers would crack and bleed.

I went . . . to the Globe Ward every Sunday night. I would walk about two miles down the railroad to get there. I would hold up my hands above

my head as we walked so that the weight of the blood in my fingers wouldn't crucify me. It hurt terribly . . . I guess people thought I was giving up, but . . . I wasn't surrendering, I was just on my way.

So my fingers bled every day, but every night I went back and milked . . . somewhere between twenty and twenty-eight cows . . . every night and every morning with my hands, not with machines. In between, we would turn the cows into the field, and we took a square-pointed shovel, and you know what we did with that shovel, we cleaned up after the cows. . . . It was about the filthiest job I ever had, but I had to do it . . . it was part of my job.

So then Elder Kimball said to this boy:

So you don't like to tract. Well, for heaven's sake, what do you like to do that will pay dividends? Think about that . . . If tracting is hard and other visits are hard and teaching the gospel is hard, and study is hard, so what? It pays big dividends.

Hard work is the secret of happiness, as well as of success. Working hard in your studies is important. Serving in the Church and with your friends is vital. Get up early and work hard through the day.

Another fruit of your resolve to be obedient is to be *demanding of yourself* and to be *charitable to others*, to look for personal improvements that are required and be forgiving with those around you. You will develop a *love of service*, of giving, of reaching out. Your first thought will not be of yourself as is so common in the world today, but of others around you.

Consider this example of the blessings that flow from giving of yourself. I know of a young man who came to BYU after having skipped his senior year at high school. He was younger than usual. You can understand why his parents were concerned. In the dorm there were returned missionaries and young men who had resolved to go on missions. They spent the early hours of the morning and late

hours of the evening talking together, reviewing the teachings of the Savior, singing hymns. They served one in need. His life will never be the same nor will ours, for he is our missionary son.

Many of you here have made the decision to be missionaries. You will bring back to this campus an influence and power that is most helpful. Others of you—I hope all of you, men and women alike—will prayerfully consider a mission. It was the turning point of my life. All that I treasure began to mature in the mission field.

You who have filled worthy missions can help others have that sacred, edifying experience. Explain to those who are undecided some of the harvest of blessings you have tasted because of your mission: the joy of service; an appreciation for integrity, discipline, and hard work; the value of worthy companionships; the strength and peace from prayer; the power of love; the ability to act on faith; a heightened capacity to discern the promptings of the Spirit; and a love for the Savior and appreciation for his atonement.

Other fruits you will receive when needed are *inspiration* to know what to do and the power or capacity to do it.

The Lord has said:

And ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power.
[D&C 43:16]

Noting President Harold B. Lee's explanation that the phrase "sanctify yourselves" means "keep my commandments," this verse reads: "And ye are to be taught from on high. Keep my commandments and ye shall be endowed with power."

That is a promise to you. For being consistently and unwaveringly obedient, you will know what to do. Moreover, by obeying the commandments of God, you will have the

power and capacity to accomplish what you are impressed to do.

There will grow within your being the fruit of *confidence in self*—not pride, but the assurance that as you continue to live worthily and continue to reach out to others, whatever you are asked to do in your life can be done. You will be *trustworthy*.

Many will say when you are given opportunities that are incredibly rich that you are lucky. Not so—you will have earned those opportunities because you are *trustworthy*. You will be *spiritual*. You will be used as an instrument in the hands of the Lord to do his work, beginning now.

Another fruit will mature through the years because of your consistency, your willingness to set aside the things of the world, and your determination to quietly walk the path marked by the Savior. There will distill in your being *noble character*. Character is not forged in the heat of battle when you are challenged. It comes quietly from decision after decision made with the proper use of agency. It is used when challenge is upon you.

One of the best examples I know of noble character is President Ezra Taft Benson. From his earliest memory to this day, he has had the resolve in his heart that you have in yours: to understand the teachings of the Lord and to live them, to be unwavering in that determination. From all of this there has distilled in his being noble character. He is in his ninety-first year, and his body is weakening. He can't do all of the things he used to do, but what he *is* has remained unchanged, unaffected. That is why he can be trusted as the prophet of the Lord.

The Lord Shall Lead Thee

I have been describing some of the precious fruits of a most important process for growth based upon eternal truth. With the foundation we have laid, I now introduce the first principle of learning that I would emphasize today. I

will describe how you can preserve and enhance the fruits of obedience we have discussed and show how you can receive more.

I pray to be understood. If you comprehend and use the principles we now review, they can change the course of your life for increased good.

This is the first principle: **Your life will be led by the Lord as in faith and humility you keep your resolution to be obedient to his commandments, no matter what the consequences.**

The Lord said:

Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers. [D&C 112:10]

The process of growth is iterative; that is, it occurs in cycles, each one building upon itself in an ascending spiral of capacity and understanding. Your resolves will take you through periods of testing and growth. They are often not easy, but they are always beneficial. You will discover latent talents and unknown capacities. The whole course of your life may be altered for the Lord's purposes.

This example will illustrate what I mean. A youth was taught by his uncles that he would be a great basketball player. He had been given a basketball when he was one-year-old. In grade and high school he became extremely good at the sport. He began to form visions of being a professional basketball player—but the Lord had other plans. While he was excited about the sport, he was also quietly making important decisions in his life, probably not realizing in any degree how significant they were. He, like you, had resolved to be obedient, no matter what.

In college he was not selected to be on the first string and sat on the bench. In the biggest game of the year his team won, and everyone carried the players off on their shoulders. He remained alone in the stadium. Later, as he was

walking home, a car drove by with some of the player heroes. They were all members of the Church. They stopped and picked him up, inviting him to celebrate with them. He began to be uneasy as they drove away from town. When he saw them unwrap a package of liquor he said, "You shouldn't do that. Let me out."

They responded, "Who are you to counsel us? We had pity on you. That's why we brought you along. You're not a man." They laughed and called him vile names as they drove off.

About the same time, in his favorite English class he received a grade far below what he deserved. He asked why and was told, "You've got greater capacity than this, and if you don't do your best, you will receive a low grade every time." His world seemed to be shrinking, *but not his resolve to live righteously*. He decided to excel in his English class and discovered powerful latent talents.

That man has given counsel from this pulpit. He has been a great influence for good throughout the world. Three of those boys who laughed and jeered were excommunicated later in life from the Church. Quietly, consistently, he has worked to bring them back. Two are now in full fellowship.

I first admired him for his extraordinary power of expression. Then I was lifted by the content of what his gifted mind expresses so eloquently. Now I can observe him more closely. I see that his life is a reflection of his love of the Master in whose footsteps he obediently walks. I strive to emulate that worthy example.

I've talked about an upward growth process and reviewed some of the results that will come as you continue your effort to be obedient. As you walk the path of righteousness, you will find that this cyclic process will help you become stronger, understand more, and more easily become what you want to be.

BYU and UVCC are prototypes for life where you can be schooled in a controlled environment. I will illustrate with an example.

Not far from here are some nuclear facilities that include prototypes for nuclear submarines. A nuclear prototype is a place that looks exactly like the real thing, only it is in a controlled environment so people can be taught without life-threatening danger. In those facilities, the individuals who man the nuclear fleet are trained to respond to emergencies automatically.

One day during the shakedown cruise of a real submarine, an accident occurred. The testing was almost over, and the ship was at full submergence depth at flank speed, the fastest it could advance in the water. The helmsman noticed they were at a slight up-angle, so he tilted the bow planes down. In that moment, the power went out. The boat locked in a down dive, and everyone knew that shortly they would be at a depth that would crush the hull. There was panic on board. But one engineer began to pull himself along the floor of the engine room to a compartment. He reached in, turned some switches, and reserve power came on. The emergency was over.

Later he was asked, "How did you know what to do? How did you know how to respond?"

The simple reply was, "I don't know. I just did it." Can you imagine him scrambling through the manual trying to find out what to do under that kind of pressure? He had learned in a prototype environment like your homes, like this campus with its classes and church environment. When the pressure came, he was ready. You will be ready because of the quiet resolve and determination in your life to live worthily as you learn from this prototype experience.

How can you keep your resolve? How can you be sure that that determination in your heart will not be eroded by the pressures around you?

First, choose good friends, those who have made similar decisions in their lives. Choose from among the student body, the faculty, and your priesthood leaders, from those like yourself who are wise enough to keep order and restraint and use time wisely. Students who go astray generally choose the other kind of friends. Be surrounded by those who are true friends, those who accept you the way you are and leave you better because of their association.

Remember the sound teachings you've gathered thus far in your life. Much of the disappointment and tragedy a young person encounters occurs when he or she experiences a release of all control and has complete freedom to do anything desired. At this time of transition where you have complete control of your life, you will make decisions wisely because of your unwavering determination to obey the Lord.

As you see, the fruits of your decision to "be automatic" in keeping the commandments of God are many. One of enormous worth is the greatly enhanced probability that you will find an eternal companion who will walk with you along the path you have chosen. I cannot describe what that means. I cannot convey what a blessing that is.

Three Avenues of Learning

Now, the second principle of learning I would like to emphasize: **Consistently use all three avenues of learning available to you within the classroom and out of it. Those three avenues are: 1. What you hear; 2. What you see; and 3. What you feel through the Holy Spirit.**

I will discuss each of these three learning methods. First, learn from *what you hear*.

Most students concentrate only upon what they hear formally delivered in the classroom and little else. Some students operate like vacuum cleaners. They sweep everything that is

said into their consciousness as though it were all of equal worth. That is a mistake.

I attended a large Eastern university and, at one point, served as president of its honorary scholarship society. All of its members qualified for substantive economic aid by reason of their organized capacity to learn. Often, in our private conversations, we discussed a very real paradox we observed at the university. We recognized that the majority of the scholarship students were not those with the greatest intellectual capacity or natural talent; they were individuals who had learned the techniques of study and had become proficient in their use.

We observed how others with greater potential had not learned to concentrate on the tasks at hand and, consequently, spent long hours attempting to learn concepts or to memorize information by staring at the page while their mind wandered elsewhere. If you are encountering that difficulty, seek help. You can sharpen your skills and learn to recognize and record the essentially important information, separating it from the supporting examples, explanations, and anecdotes that often accompany it. BYU and UVCC have excellent courses to teach you these skills. It would serve you well to investigate them, unless you are particularly adept at this important aspect of learning from what you hear.

I will now concentrate on the other avenues of learning that are not generally taught in the classroom—namely, *what you see* and *what you feel*. Carefully observe what goes on about you in the classroom and, especially, out of it. It is not likely that the most treasured truths you will carry away from this educational experience will be found at the feet of a master teacher; rather, they will be distilled from many careful observations and crucially important promptings that can pass unperceived or unrecorded in your consciousness unless you watch for them.

Of necessity, academic instruction is divided into separate categories so there can be

a formalized, logical presentation of important concepts and information. Some of the class-work is generalized, some is highly specialized and specific, but all of it is divided into compartmentalized treatments of the subject material.

Life, on the other hand, is not so conveniently parceled. When you are given a problem in mathematics, physics, or chemistry, discreet boundaries are identified. Generally, only the vital information you need to work toward a solution is presented. The challenges you will encounter the rest of your life are not so thoughtfully focused. Their solutions generally require an integration of capacities and techniques and information acquired from a wide variety of sources. You can enhance your ability to enjoy success in life by consciously trying to distill the experiences from both in and out of the classroom into definable principles or truths. You must separate them carefully and often with great effort from a mass of detail and extraneous backgrounds and input.

Identify Fundamental Principles

I now stress the third principle I would share. This to me is the essence of learning: **You must integrate information from all different fields of endeavor into a set of principles and standards that will serve you throughout eternity.**

The challenges of life are not thoughtfully sliced into discreet subject matter. There are no convenient answers in the back of the book. Don't cheat yourself by taking dishonest short-cuts in any phase of the learning process.

Anyone who has studied chemistry, physics, and mathematics knows that if a basic principle can be mastered, then the solutions to a full myriad of specific problems are assured. That truth applies to every walk of life. The challenge is to be able to identify fundamental principles. Like diamonds, they are generally buried in a mass of detail and dross that have no significant, lasting value. The successful

learner develops the capacity to identify fundamental principles and truths, to record them, and to apply them. The more fundamental they are, the more generally applicable they are to a wide variety of circumstances in life. Pondering and prayer are excellent ways to discover them.

Your objective is not to get through the university but to *absorb* and *use* the experiences that can be acquired here, the knowledge that can be obtained through righteous effort, and the lessons that can be learned from consistently facing and resolving the myriad of challenges you will encounter in your academic, social, and private life.

In a university or college you not only learn core knowledge essential to your chosen profession, but you can learn how to live life to its fullest. As you augment your learning by *what you observe* and by *what you perceive by the Spirit*, you will greatly increase your capacity to be successful in life. You will be led to establish goals and objectives for life that will likely be more enduring, more productive, and more satisfying than what you might otherwise select and achieve. Beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, or other core fundamentals of your profession, you can discover your real potential.

Don't be satisfied with memorizing or learning by rote so you can press a mental button and discharge memorized facts to pass an examination. Learn how to think. Learn how to link concepts and how to integrate facts from various disciplines and the everyday experiences of university life. Don't act like a robot. Create an atmosphere of freedom of thought through self-control. That action will allow you to sense the enormous capacity latent within you.

Through stirrings and promptings of the Spirit, you can live and rise to the great heights others have achieved and even go beyond them. Do you believe that? I know that it is true.

You can soar as eagles and fly to heights not reached by your parents or grandparents. You can discover truths that will ignite your vision. You can challenge yourself to rise to greater levels of achievement. As you combine academics with eternal doctrinal truths, you will discover what it means to be a divine child of a Father in Heaven with perfect attributes. You will live worthily to overcome the influences of the world. You will be inspired to have power beyond your own—power to do, power to serve, power to give. You can qualify through that divine power to be an instrument in the hands of God and can accomplish what alone would be impossible.

How we love you. How we need you. You are the instruments the Lord has provided to work miracles that are urgently needed. Please pray about what I have said to gain your own witness until you know that it can happen and, then, as you strive diligently, it will happen.

Other schools, as well meaning as they are, build on the individual and train his or her capacities. All the students have when they leave is acquired knowledge and trust in themselves. Here we teach that you are divine children of a Father in Heaven, capable in time of acquiring his perfect attributes. Your potential is unlimited through your correct application of true principles and a worthy life that qualifies you for inspiration and divine power.

Here you will learn how to make into reality your worthy dreams for the future. Here you will gain the capacity to create a vision of your true potential. Then, through the application of correct principles and eternal truths and the consistent, appropriate use of moral agency, you will begin to convert that potential into reality.

One of the most powerful sources of personal development will come through the urgent prayers you offer in faith for a foundation of righteousness. You will learn much as feelings distill in your mind and heart. Avoid prayers that appear to be a set of instructions

to the Lord—do this, bless that, change this, help me with that. Rather, be a compliant student to the Ultimate Teacher. He wants you to succeed even more than you do yourself.

This is a time to set your course for life, a time to establish fundamental priorities. One of the challenges of your learning experience here is to be able to differentiate among the smorgasbord of good and bad things that can be done and to select those that are righteous and truly essential.

Here you enjoy a personal freedom that likely you have never had before. That freedom can be a friend or an adversary, depending on how it is used. You will come to find that the restraints provided by the teachings of the Lord actually form a platform to greater freedom. When they are hurriedly dismantled in the euphoria of personal choice, there can result binding chains of transgression.

This is not an appeal to your emotions—rather, it is an effort to help you recognize the inevitable results of your having made correct choices and establishing the proper priorities in this critical phase of your life.

Some may be tempted to say, “I have so much to do I can’t take on anything more. The struggle I have just to meet minimum academic requirements is almost more than I can handle.” I am not suggesting that you work harder, unless you are not tugging at your limits of capacity already. I am encouraging you to work more intelligently.

Some cut a field of grain with a scythe or a sickle, bind the stalks into sheaves, and carry them to the threshing floor where the chaff and straw are separated from the grain. Others use a threshing machine to produce far greater yield per man hour of invested effort.

We all, I believe, have noble ideals and objectives. Test your daily thoughts and acts against those objectives. Are you making progress toward them, or have you begun to wander down paths that distract you or deflect you from meaningful purposes? The university

is a workshop—both in the classroom and out of it—where you can test the validity of the principles with which you will guide your life. Here is the prototype to set your path and the pattern for the rest of your life.

Not all lessons will be learned in the classroom. The most important ones will be learned as you are on your knees. Some will distill in your mind and heart as you seek to use this experience as one of establishing the right balance in your life. Here you will set the priorities of life. Will they be primarily material or spiritual? Do they continue to center on service, or are they drifting toward selfishness?

We all recognize how one who publicly imitates a high standard of performance and privately lives beneath it provides the temptation of justification for others to violate this standard as well. They are like a lightning rod drawing high potential to ground. More important, you must recognize that the reverse is true. As you live a high standard of performance, publicly and privately, and even under great pressure adhere to it, you raise the vision of others. Your example encourages others to realize more of their divine capacity. It generates high potential that lifts and motivates and, like a magnet, seeks out and attracts others to a higher, more noble standard of life.

The power of your worthy example is enhanced many fold when you reach out in understanding to others caught in the adversary's web of transgression and help them into a harbor of safety where there is parental strength and priesthood leadership and inspiration. There they can repair through repentance the strained and damaged parts of their character. Many yearn to overcome transgressions that bind them to a path they do not want. Although their public actions decry any desire to change, privately they know not how to begin. Be that saving influence in their lives.

Live in the Light

And now the last principle. It is simple, but it is extraordinarily important: **Happiness comes from what we are, not from what we have.**

Real joy comes from noble character, and that is built from a pattern of consistent, righteous decisions. Then the things we acquire are used as tools to help our own families and others. They should not become ends unto themselves. Our righteous decisions determine who we are and what is important to us. It becomes easier to do the right things. For happiness now and throughout your life, resolutely keep your determination to obey the Lord, no matter what pressure you feel to do otherwise.

I want you to know that I know the principles we have discussed are true. They have been proven in the crucible of my own personal life. With a lovely daughter of Father in Heaven, who surpasses me in every quality that is worthwhile, I have walked the path shared with you today. I know these truths are correct. I pray that somehow there will come a reinforcement through the Spirit to your mind and heart of their validity when you are challenged to disobey them in your life (see D&C 8:2–5).

I told you about an automatic watch. I would like to use that analogy in closing. The truth is that watches aren't really automatic, always. They either have a battery that has to be replaced periodically or they operate using light through a solar cell that has to be exposed to light continually to function. I had a watch like that, and it was left in a desk drawer for several weeks with no light. When I took it out, it looked like it would never work again. During an assignment in Acapulco, I put it in the brilliant sunlight for three days with no apparent result. Finally, it began to function again.

We are like that. We operate on light. We need a constant renewal of light. If we lead ourselves into a path where there is darkness,

it can be extraordinarily difficult to come back. If you stay in the light, you will not have that challenge. You will be fortified because you will live in light.

I mentioned some of the blessings that will come from your decision to obey. There is one more. It is by all considerations the most beautiful, but the most difficult to talk about. You will find in your being a love for your Father in Heaven and his son, Jesus Christ, that becomes stronger and stronger until all you truly want to do is determine what they would have you do and, with their help, accomplish it.

There is much I do not know in life, but I do know that the Father and the Son live. I do

know that they know each one of you personally. They know the struggles and the challenges you face. They appreciate that there are some moments of weakness for you. They love you and trust each of you. I know they live. I love them with all my heart. And I love you because of your resolve to follow their teachings and their example. As you continue to be obedient to their teachings, they will help you now, throughout your life, and always.

I solemnly bear that witness, and I know it is true. The Lord loves you. Jesus gave his life so that you can succeed in this part of your life. I bear that witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.