

# *Have No Regrets*

RICHARD G. SCOTT

I am deeply humbled to be in communication with you tonight. You are some of the most choice, righteous, and devoted of Father in Heaven's children on earth. I have had the personal privilege of being with many of you in different locations throughout the world. I am most grateful for this opportunity to share another experience with you tonight.

You represent the flower of the youth of the Church. I feel that as a body you are better prepared and are more valiant in confronting the challenges of the world in your determination to obey the Master than any other generation in the history of the Church. The challenges you face are also more numerous and more intensely focused. Yet never was there a more exciting, stimulating, potentially productive time to live on earth.

Some of you are ending a summer vacation and beginning a new experience in formal education. Others are nearing completion of that education. Some are doing other important things. All face vitally important decisions. From whatever background or whatever activity you come, I welcome you.

## **Making Decisions**

Inasmuch as this assignment has been known for some time, I have pondered and

prayed, weighed different alternative subjects, and finally felt to select one intended to help you make well those decisions that vitally affect your happiness now and forever. Those decisions include: who will be your eternal companion, what will be your profession, how will you sustain your family, and how to live worthily in a world that is ever more difficult. I have read and pondered scriptures and some works of the prophets, seeking to identify principles that will help you make the right choices and follow them to a successful conclusion.

Because you are an exceptionally select audience, I believe that, regarding most important things in life, you already know what to do; you have made those decisions. But perhaps there are some who find, as do I, that at times it's hard to complete all of the important decisions made. I don't mean that one is necessarily doing the wrong things, just that not enough of the right ones are being accomplished. I feel deeply the responsibility of

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sharing truths with you tonight in a way that is acceptable to the Lord and helpful to each of you personally to make and keep correct decisions.

### **Trust and Deceit**

I would like to begin with two visual aids to illustrate the two potent influences that constantly surround you. I will then use a third illustration to help you confirm which of these influences you may be following at a given moment in your life.

Would those individuals who were selected to help me quickly come up to the stand? I need to explain what we are going to do. I am going to ask you to form a circle. As I describe what we are going to do, I want to explain that this may look like it will be dangerous to you—but if you trust me, I promise it won't be. I'm going to ask you to follow exactly what I tell you to do. If you don't, I'm not going to feel responsible.

As I explain what we are going to do, if anybody wants to back out, I'll understand. [Elder Scott held up a lightbulb with two cords.] I'm going to cut off this extra plug that we won't need, and then I am going to bare the wires. What I'm going to ask you to do is to grasp your hands. Elder Eyring, you are Commissioner of Education, you ought to have some fun with this. Would you wrap that bare wire around your finger? Now grasp hands. Does somebody want to hold this other bare wire? Please hold it very carefully. Anyone want to leave? Do you know what I am going to do now? I am going to plug this in. Now don't go up in flames.

[He plugged in the cord and the lightbulb lit up, but nothing happened to those holding the wires.] Thank you. Nothing happened. But before I go on, I want to tell you: Don't *ever* try to do that yourself. Because I knew they would trust me, I made it so that there was no way that second wire could be connected to the current. In a few minutes I'm going to explain the

purpose of that. First, I have another test to run.

I have a block of wood here, and I'm going to show you a demonstration of the power of mind over matter. All right? Now I have never done this publicly, so if I fail, will you please forgive me? I am going to concentrate so hard on that block that I am going to see if I can make it move. Now just bear with me for a second. [He concentrated on the block for a moment, and it moved.] Now with that encouragement, I am going to see if I can make it fall over. [He concentrated again and, with some exertion, it fell over.]

The purpose of these examples is to demonstrate that one of the forces in your life is trust; the other is deceit. That was deceit. I don't have the power to move anything with my mind, and I don't think anybody else has. There is a radio-controlled device inside of it that made it possible for me to move that over. Now let me explain what we have just done and why.

Although we have had some fun, these examples I have shared were not intended for entertainment. They are to provide a hook in your mind where you can securely tie eternal principles that will help you identify, choose, and fulfill correct decisions so as to receive the blessings the Lord wants you to obtain.

The first example embodies many of the challenges in life. I asked a group of trusting youth to do something their own experience would indicate would bring them difficulty. Yet I also said, "If you will follow my instructions carefully, I promise you that nothing unpleasant will happen to you. You have my promise. But please follow carefully the instructions I give you or I cannot be responsible." They trusted me, and because of that trust we were able to carry out a useful illustration.

In another place in the world, with a small group of youth, I tried this same demonstration. As I explained to the young men and women in the circle that nothing would happen to them, I noticed that one of the girls,

whom I had intended to hold the bare wire, carefully moved her fingers down the cable until it reached the insulation. She did not trust me. I was greatly disappointed. Yet this is an example of how some in the world today meet challenges. They want to have it both ways. They want to appear to be doing the right things, but they also want to earn the friendship of those who are not.

### **Trust the Lord**

Do not play games with the Lord. When you trust Him fully, He is able to bless you richly. He knows what is best for you. Sometimes a very clever person can deceive a human being, but none of us can do that with the Lord. Trust Him. Live so that He can trust you. He then can guide and bless you more abundantly. I am confident that the Lord expects each of you exceptional youth to do the right things. He expects you to be pillars of strength in His kingdom.

What of my mind over matter example? I explained that it was based on deceit. Did that remind you of so many things you see in the world around you? One who follows the pattern of deceit tries to appear to have influence and capabilities that he does not possess.

Satan is the epitome of this model of life. Lucifer does not have power over a righteous individual because the Lord strengthens that person. Be assured that were he to have such capacity he would use it. God's constant protection of our moral agency assures that he cannot have such power. Satan can have no influence over a righteous individual unless that person yields to temptation or allows fear to overcome faith.

The devil does have great influence in this world, because individuals make the wrong choices. He is the father of lies. Nothing he tempts you to do will have a beneficial outcome—absolutely nothing. The hook may be baited by seemingly attractive promises and outcomes, but he is the master of deceit and his

agents are powerfully effective in his cause. As a servant of Jesus Christ, I bear solemn witness that as you trust the Lord, are obedient to His commandments, and follow the directions of the Spirit, Satan will not have power over you.

The heavenly light that sheds forth from God has power to overcome the darkness of unwholesome influences around you. That is as certain to occur as does a brilliant light overpower the darkness in a room. How can you get the brilliant light of the Lord into your life more abundantly? By making consistently the right choices and fulfilling them.

### **Discerning Between Good and Evil**

Now I would like to illustrate how you can determine when an influence for good or evil is operating in your life.

I have asked Camille Call to help me if she will. Do you know what we are going to do?

*Camille:* I have no idea.

Great. That means it's going to work. I have arranged this box so that one part of it has a very powerful attraction to good, and another part has a very strong rejection. Can you pass your hand over the box and see whether you can tell me where either one is? You can't do it; I could not do it.

Now let me give you a sensor. [He handed her a green magnet.] That is a sensor that is attracted to good. Can you find where the attraction is on the box? [Camille placed the magnet on the "good" side, and it was attracted to it.] Now, it should be rejected from the bad part. Can you move it around until something happens? There it is; you found it.

I am going to give you a sensor that represents evil. [He handed her a red magnet.] Show me what happens with it when you try those same places. It is rejected from good and attracted to evil.

Okay, now let me put another box representing transgression on top of that one. With the good sensor, see if you can sense the good. Can you feel it there? Is it weaker? Look for the

evil. Try it; see if it is stronger. It is much stronger, isn't it?

Let's do it again with more transgression. [He placed another box on top of the other two.] See if you can even detect any of the good. No? How about the evil? It is rejecting it. Try the other sensor, the evil one. Is it stronger? Yes. Thanks, Camille. Now let's explain the meaning of that example.

Did you notice how Camille was able to discern invariably, without error, the influence representing good and the influence representing evil with the sensing tool that was provided, when there was no barrier in the way? As I added the barriers representing transgression, detection of good was more difficult and finally impossible, whereas the influence of evil grew stronger.

We also observed that when an evil-seeking tool was used, evil appeared to be good and good appeared evil. That is what occurs when an individual begins to rationalize departures from truth and proper behavior. It may begin with a small thing and then grow and grow into major difficulties.

You have observed in the lives of others how particularly serious transgressions become increasingly compelling. Finally the person is consumed by such appetites and does things that seem to be totally unreasonable and illogical. One cannot understand why a growing array of commandments are broken through a pattern of life that cannot bring happiness. It is because sin is addictive. Once begun, serious sin is hard to restrain and most difficult to overcome.

You have the capacity to develop an incredibly sensitive instrument within your own being to discern righteous and evil influences around you. It is done by cultivating the gift of the Holy Ghost. That is accomplished by consistent, righteous living so that the correct choices are made and followed to completion. As you enhance your capacity to sense the direction of that infallible influence in your life,

you will avoid disappointment, discouragement, and even tragedy. May this simple example help you remember to trust the Lord, His servants, and those who are living exemplary lives, who you know have no ulterior motive in the counsel they give.

### **Currents of Divine Influence**

In the October 1974 semiannual general conference, President Spencer W. Kimball gave a message that has repeatedly blessed my life. He spoke of how icebergs are quietly moved through the ocean by immense currents that guide them. He taught that we are more like ships than icebergs, for we have our own motive power to give us the advantage. He said:

*The icebergs spawned by the Greenland ice sheet followed a highly predictable course. As the silent Labrador Current ceaselessly moves to the south through Baffin Bay and Davis Strait, it takes with it these mountainous icebergs, even against the force of the winds and the waves and the tides. Currents have much more power to control its course than the surface winds. [CR, October 1974, 159; or "Ocean Currents and Family Influences," *Ensign*, November 1974, 110]*

President Kimball continued:

*Youth . . . are subjected to so many swirling winds that we sometimes wonder if they can survive. The winds of fashion push those about who are insecure and who require the feeling that they are in step with the crowd. The winds of sexual temptation drive some to . . . dash bright prospects or to degrade themselves. Bad companions, addicting drugs, the arrogance of profanity, the slough of pornography—all these and more act as influences pushing us, if we are not being carried forward by a strong, steady current toward the righteous life. [CR, October 1974, 160; or "Ocean Currents," *Ensign*, November 1974, 110–11]*

This example has taught me that there are currents of divine influence in our lives that will lead each of us along the individual plan the Lord would have us fulfill here on earth. Seek, through the Spirit, to identify and carefully follow the current of direction that the Lord has placed in your life. Align yourself with it. Choose, willingly, to exercise your agency to follow it. Do not be overcome by concentrating solely on today and its challenges, difficulties, and opportunities. President Kimball called those things the relatively insignificant surface winds and waves of today. They are the preoccupations that must not capture your interest and attention so as to consume your life.

Oh, how I would encourage you to weave deeply into the fabric of your soul the recognition that your life now is a part of a much bigger plan the Lord has for you. You lived part of it in the premortal existence. You were valiant there and came here because you wanted to grow more and enjoy greater happiness. What you decide to do now will affect how well that divine plan He has for you is fulfilled. More than that, your decisions today can powerfully affect your children and grandchildren. Think carefully about the preparation of the parents of your own children. Of course, I mean you and the eternal companion you will be sealed to in the temple.

The more closely you follow the current of divine guidance, the greater will be your happiness here and for eternity—moreover, the more abundant will be your progress and capacity to serve. I do not fully understand how it is done, but this current in your life does not take away your agency. That right of moral agency is so important to our Father in Heaven that He was willing to lose one-third of His spirit children that it might be preserved.

You can make the decisions you choose to make. A disposition to do right brings peace of mind and heart. Should choices be wrong, there is a path back: repentance. When its

conditions are fully met, the Atonement of the Savior provides a release from the demands of justice for the errors made. You can again follow the plan the Lord has for you here on earth. It is wondrously simple, and so incomparably beautiful.

As you continue to live righteously, you will always know what to do. Sometimes the discovery of that may require significant effort and trust on your part. Yet you will recognize what to do as you meet the conditions for such divine guidance: obedience to the commandments of the Lord, trust in His plan, and avoidance of anything that is contrary to it.

### **Distractions**

Have you noticed that when you have determined to accomplish a very important task, many other good ideas for other things to do seem to come to your mind? If they are allowed to interfere, they will distract you from the more important objective. I have found help by writing down those thoughts as they come, promising myself that as soon as I finish the important task, I will attend to them in priority. That practice helps me stay focused on those matters which are essential.

I believe there are times in your life when, because of your righteousness and your determination to do what is right, Satan will not be able to deflect you into serious transgression. He will switch then to the strategy of placing before you a banquet of good and worthwhile things to do, meant to distract you from those that are the most important and essential to accomplish in your life.

Fortunately, as you pray for guidance, the Holy Ghost will help you identify those matters that are vital and necessary to accomplish above others. That means that at times you may have to set aside things that would be worthwhile and enjoyable to pursue—for those that are most vitally important for that period of your life.

Have you discovered that detailed instructions on how to make choices, or how to live your life based on someone else's experiences, are not nearly as helpful as is personal guidance from the Holy Ghost? Such divine guidance comes from pondering and living the doctrines of the Lord, understanding His plan of happiness, and obtaining the ordinances and keeping the covenants central to that plan. Such a foundation allows the Holy Ghost to give you guidance and direction, taking into consideration your personal strengths and needs. The promptings of the Holy Ghost will tell you how you stand before God, if you are progressing or retrogressing, what you need to improve on, and how to do it.

### **Do What Is Right**

The principles we have discussed I know are true. They have blessed my life many times. One vivid example is when I was called to be a mission president. At the time I was working as a civilian for an admiral in charge of a program essential to the national defense of our country. When I told the admiral of the call, he was most upset because he did not understand how it had come and what it meant. He concluded a tense conversation with these words: "You are a traitor to your country. I'll see that you never have success in this industry. I will not speak to you again. You are finished here. If that's the way Mormons are, I'm going to get rid of all that work for me."

I said, "Admiral, I will carefully turn my assignment over to a replacement unless you prevent me from continuing in this office."

I knew what was right for me to do, but I was very concerned that my decision could cause a loss of work for innocent people who were honorably supporting their families in the program. As I struggled with that thought, there came into my mind the words of the song "Do what is right; let the consequence follow" ("Do What Is Right," *Hymns*, 1985, no. 237). I could not see how that challenge could possibly

be worked out, but I felt a peace and a calmness as I proceeded to do my best to instruct a replacement.

I can see now that the Lord guided me each step of the way in what to do and what to say. My replacement was a very capable, experienced individual who learned rapidly. I was impressed to identify those things that needed to be done and even was able to outline some suggestions for important future improvements in the program.

On my last day at work I met with the admiral again. The experience was totally different. That conversation ended with a much deeper appreciation for each other and for my beliefs. No other Church member was adversely affected because of my decision.

As we close this experience together, think of what the words of the song "Do What Is Right" mean in your life. May the doctrinal message it contains be as helpful to you as it has been to me.

### **Live to Have No Regrets**

Unless you have already done so, make this decision now: "I will live to have no regrets." I cannot tell you how immensely important it is for your life here on earth and throughout eternity to be able to say, regarding those serious sins of immorality that could be committed on earth, "I have no regrets; I have not participated."

I know that through the process of repentance even egregious sins can be forgiven. Yet, in quiet moments of deep pondering, there must remain a disturbing memory when those boundaries have been crossed, even when full forgiveness has been given by the Savior. How much more serenely pleasant it is to live never having done those things. I testify that such a life brings immense joy, peace, and tranquility. Live to have no regrets.

There are many ways to be motivated to do good in life. Perhaps setting goals is one that helps you, or establishing a way to report

progress toward those goals with a trusted parent, friend, or priesthood leader.

You may have discovered that an even stronger motivating force to do right is to study, ponder, and distill truths from the doctrines of the Church as the very foundation of your life. Doctrine, understood and applied, is a mighty, sustaining, supporting force when we have determined to do what is right.

I have found another extremely potent motivating influence. I am sure many of you have discovered it. It is the love of a cherished, eternal companion and a compelling desire not to disappoint her. With that there is the powerful motivating force of the love of children and parents.

Yet there is another, even more significant, motivating influence than these. It is the profound love of Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son Jesus Christ and of the Holy

Ghost. This divine Godhead is the very foundation of all that we experience and enjoy for good. It is our Father's plan of happiness that provides the way. It is the love of our Savior for us and His capacities earned from His willing Atonement that give us the power to grow and overcome mistakes. It is the direction of the Holy Ghost that leads us to make the right choices and warns us of dangers in our path. These, my dear friends, provide the basis upon which you can build a secure life. They are absolutely trustworthy, They are perfect in love and compassion, and They want your success more than you could ever desire. They will help you *live to have no regrets*.

I solemnly testify that this Being we refer to as our Master and Redeemer is a glorified being of incomparable capacity to express love. I bear a solemn witness that He lives and will guide you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.