

Everything Money Cannot Buy

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I am humbled by the opportunity to speak to each of you this evening. Thank you for your righteousness, for your valiant stand against the forces that would pull you under, and for your desire to be the person our Father in Heaven would have you be. I believe you are some of the most outstanding young people who have ever lived on this earth. You were truly sent “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14). I love you and pray for you and have confidence in you.

I have a good friend whose car was vandalized just a few days before Christmas. Among other things, the thieves took her attaché, which contained everything from her cell phone and PalmPilot to a personal journal, some other sensitive papers, and her passport. By nearly miraculous circumstances, a few days later her briefcase was recovered. Everything that was valuable by the world’s standards—the money, the credit cards, and anything else that could be hocked—was gone. But to her delight and relief, all of her personal papers and passport had been undisturbed. Though it was inconvenient and costly, she was able to replace everything the thieves took. Ironically, those things that were of greatest value to her—things that money could not buy—were returned.

A scripture we have read many, many times in 3 Nephi says:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal;

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
[3 Nephi 13:19–20]

Today I want to talk about what those treasures are, why we seek them, and how we can obtain them. In other words, the whats, whys, and hows.

Would you begin to ponder in your minds those things that are most precious to you and see if you reach the same conclusion as my friend—that the things of greatest worth are things that money cannot buy.

I began to learn this when I was just 14 and earned my first paycheck. I remember thinking I would be able to do so much with all of that money. Maybe you have learned the same—that money never goes as far as you want it to, that you just cannot get enough of what you

Mary Ellen Smoot was the Relief Society general president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 3 February 2002.

do not need, and that it is not possible to buy happiness at a store or through a catalog.

It has been my experience that periodically life's circumstances force us to stop and think about just what we *do* need to be happy. We have all had occasion to evaluate and reevaluate priorities. When my husband and I were your age, money was a real concern for us. But during our five decades together, we have learned that when push comes to shove, aside from necessities like food, clothing, and shelter, what we have needed most are things that money cannot buy.

I know that finances are a real concern for most of you. But for our next few minutes together, will you set those thoughts aside and allow the Spirit to “renew your mind” so that you can gain vital perspective? I love the Apostle Paul's counsel to the Saints in Romans 12:2: “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Renewed perspective can set in motion a transformation. As we set worldly concerns aside and focus on eternal needs, we will come to know the will of God in our individual lives. We will come to appreciate those things that cannot be bought or sold.

When President Harold B. Lee was growing up in Clifton, Idaho, “money was dreadfully scarce” for his family. Their “farm produced generously, but grain and potatoes brought little” monetary return. Their “father augmented the family income by contracting for custom grain cutting, drilling wells, and building irrigation canals.” And so they had sufficient for their needs. “The Church provided entertainment opportunities” for the family.

“The Lee children did not know they were poor.” Their home was filled with love and laughter, reading, and music. Their mother was a skilled homemaker who made a very little go a very long way. Her children were always dressed appropriately for church. As

an adult, President Lee recounted, “We had everything money could not buy.” (Excerpts from Gordon B. Hinckley, “President Harold B. Lee: An Appreciation,” *Ensign*, November 1972, 2–4.) That is my prayer for each of you—that you, like President Lee, might have the most important things, the most enduring things, those things of greatest worth that cannot be purchased with money. What are they?

Eternal Family Ties

One of the most important, valuable qualities is love. You simply cannot buy the love created in eternal family ties.

In September our first granddaughter was married in the Salt Lake Temple. All of the aunts and uncles (and some of the older cousins) came together for the sealing. You have heard it said before, but I want to say it again: Nothing compares to the joy of being surrounded by your family in a sealing room. At times like these, when earth communes with heaven, all material concerns, worries, and pressures vanish. You realize just how priceless an eternal family unit can be.

Late that afternoon the whole family gathered to help prepare for the reception and take family photos. All of the family worked together decorating for the special event. Joy and excitement filled the room! As a wife, mother, and grandmother, I stood back watching the love, respect, and unity in our family, and my heart filled with deep joy and appreciation for the blessings of family.

We all tasted a bit of heaven that day. Everything that you take with you into the next life is everything that money cannot buy. Covenants that seal husbands and wives, parents and children, are of inestimable worth. Love that spans the generations and binds hearts together is nothing less than divine.

If your family of origin is not ideal, please do not despair. You can set in motion a new pattern of behavior. You can be a transitional figure whose love and light will ripple through

the generations. Hold on to gospel truths and begin a transformation in your own life and then in your own family when you marry and raise your children.

As young mothers put their pen to paper and evaluate the cost of working outside the home, I deeply hope they will not sell themselves short. I am so proud of those who clearly see the importance of their role. Mothers who make the choice to stay home with their children, teaching by precept and example, make lasting investments in eternal accounts. Their preparation and education does so much more than draw a paycheck. It enriches the whole family and shapes the lives of their children. Such mothers become refined by their righteous choice. They love and serve and sacrifice, and they are blessed in ways that they could not otherwise be. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.

As I watch young fathers work hard to provide a living for their families, “to preside over their families in love and righteousness,” I applaud their noble efforts (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, November 1995, 102). Oftentimes they shoulder these responsibilities while they are still receiving their education. As difficult as it may seem at the time, such fathers will look back at this stage with satisfaction. Someday they will recall the sacrifices they have made and the eternal bonds that were forged, and they will feel grateful that they put first things first. They brought children into the world when, by worldly standards, they could not afford to. They took care of their families even while they were still learning how to provide for them.

I love the story our prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, related about a conversation he had with his wife, Marjorie, on the eve of their wedding. He was anxious about the economic realities of their marriage. He had totaled his assets and realized that he had less than \$150 and, even more alarming, that he made only \$185 a month. Marjorie put his

fears to rest. She replied that “she had hoped for a husband and now she found out she was getting \$150 too. ‘This will work out wonderfully,’ she told him. ‘If you’ve got \$150, we’re set.’” And, as you well know, they were. (In Sheri L. Dew, *Go Forward with Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996], 115–16.)

Knowledge and Intelligence

Another thing that money cannot buy is knowledge. Yes, it usually takes money to pay for an education, but it also takes desire and diligence to acquire knowledge. And I speak here not only of formal education but of a lifelong quest to live and learn. You have to read and study. You have to put forth the effort if you want to learn. And when you do, when you really learn something, it can stay with you forever. In Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19 we read:

Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.

Learning is a lifelong process that neither begins nor ends in the classroom.

All around the world some people feel helpless because they lack the means to improve themselves. Recently in Abomoso, Ghana, a 40-foot container of books was being unloaded, and all the leaders of the community were there to receive it. These books were being distributed to 52 schools. Standing next to our LDS charities leader was a little girl about eight years old. She had bare feet and a torn dress and eyes as deep as her desire to learn. She had no uniform and could not respond to English. Her mother lived in Accra, and she lived with her grandmother in Abomoso. They had no money for school fees—which were \$1.85 in

U.S. money—or for the required uniform—which was an additional \$7 to \$10. The most she could do was wish to read. So money was left for this little child to attend school. That kind act could impact the little girl’s life forever.

We may have to pay for our own education, but in most cases we can work and save and enroll in school. We can “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). Money purchases the opportunity to take a class, but real education comes only through diligent study.

As you enroll in religion and institute of religion classes, afford yourself the opportunity to immerse yourself in the word of God. Learn the gospel, know its doctrines and teachings, and study the history of the restored Church. Take time for religion classes; take time for eternity.

The Restored Gospel

If you will study the gospel with a humble heart, you will come to treasure its truths above all worldly wealth. Everything that money cannot buy is contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In his autobiography, Parley P. Pratt told of his conversion and then of his compelling desire to share the gospel with others. Parley’s brother William, however, was more impressed by Parley’s material success and could not understand why he would give it all up to teach the gospel.

William asked Parley, “This is your all; you have toiled for years to obtain it, and why not now continue to enjoy it?”

Parley responded, “I see plainly you know but little of my circumstances—of the changes which have taken place with me since we parted five years ago, nor how vastly wealthy I have become within that time. Why, sir, I have bank bills enough, on the very best institutions in the world, to sustain myself and family while we live.”

Again William questioned, “Well, I should like to see some of them; I hope they are genuine.”

Parley replied, “There is no doubt of that. They are true bills and founded on capital that will never fail, though heaven and earth should pass away.”

Parley then unlocked his treasury and took out a large pocketbook full of promissory notes like the following: “Whosoever shall forsake father or mother, brethren or sisters, houses or lands, wife or children, for my sake and the gospel’s, shall receive an hundred fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.” Parley explained to William that the words of Jesus Christ will not fail, and then he said, “I feel called upon by the Holy Ghost to forsake my house and home for the gospel’s sake; and I will do it, placing both feet firm on these promises with nothing else to rely upon.” (Adapted from *PPP*, 1985, 16–17.)

Still not fully convinced, William left to do his business, and Parley made preparations for a mission that would be lifelong. Parley was not “conformed to this world.” With all his heart he sought to both obtain and share those treasures that money cannot buy.

Have you ever noticed how much more you prize something you have worked for? Sometimes when things are just given to us without any effort on our part, we do not appreciate their full value. The same principle applies to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you were just handed the gospel and if you have never taken the time to ask yourself why it is so important, I challenge you to do so now. Ask yourself: Why can the gospel of Jesus Christ bring us lasting peace? Why is there no other way to experience true joy? Why is it the source of those things of greatest worth?

My dear brothers and sisters, the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. No one will force us to accept this gift of inestimable value. Why? It is up to us to determine why it is important and give it the highest priority in our lives.

All of us, whether a new convert or a lifetime member, have had to think through these things before. We may not remember the details, but we all participated in the Council in Heaven during our premortal life. The plan of happiness was presented by our Father in Heaven. The Savior accepted His plan, and our agency was preserved. We were given a choice.

Choice is a big word in our society today. People insist on the right to make a choice. We are determined to choose what we will do each hour of the day. Choices without responsibility, however, can bring heartache and adversity into our lives.

The Savior believes in agency, and so must we. We are here today working out His plan of salvation. Do not let that which is most valuable slip away from you because you have not made a conscious choice to safeguard it. The Savior will not force us to seek for everything that money cannot buy. But He will lovingly guide us.

Napoleon Bonaparte drew some interesting conclusions about how the Savior leads with love. While in exile at St. Helena, Napoleon asked another man in his suite, "Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?" Then Napoleon went on to say: "I will tell you." Napoleon compared himself and other heroes of antiquity with Christ and then showed how far Jesus surpassed them all. "I think I understand somewhat of human nature," said Napoleon, "and I tell you all these were men, and I am a man, but not one is like Him. Jesus Christ was more than man. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself, founded great empires; but upon what did the creation of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love and to this very day millions would die for Him." (In Charles E. Sargent, *Our Home: Or Influences Emanating from the Hearthstone* [Springfield, Massachusetts: King-Richardson, 1900, c1899], 325.)

Most of us sitting here today would say we are among those willing to die for the Savior. Would we not have defended Him if we had

been there that night He was sentenced to death? We would not have denied Him. The Lord, however, does not ask us to die for Him. He asks us to live for Him. We certainly chose, in the premortal world, to live for Him—meaning to devote our lives here to Him. He asks us to choose to follow His example to love and serve one another. To the degree we accomplish this, we are valiant in our testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught us that when we were baptized we left neutral ground, and we can never get back to it. If we choose not to follow the Savior's example, we are choosing to follow Satan. The promise of glory in the life to come is too great a gift to foolishly squander. President Harold B. Lee taught that we must remember that we are here today to earn our eternal salvation, and we do not want to

be like those foolhardy ones on the river above the Niagara Falls who were approaching the dangerous rapids. . . . Despite warnings of the river guards to go toward safety before it was too late, and in complete disregard of the warnings, they laughed, they danced, they drank, they mocked, and they perished. [CR, October 1970, 117]

Webster's dictionary gives us a clear definition of the word *strategy*: "A careful plan or method . . . toward a goal" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. "strategy," 1162). We each need strategies in our life.

How do we acquire these strategies or "careful plans" and make them a part of our lives? In Deuteronomy 5:27 we read that after Moses had received the Ten Commandments, the Israelites said, "We will hear it [the word of God], and *do it*" (emphasis added).

Not in some distant future when life gets easier, but now, tonight, as we leave this meeting, I hope each of us can begin to make deposits in our spiritual bank accounts. If we are not continually building these assets of most worth, they soon become overdrawn. And we are left feeling helpless and hopeless.

Money cannot buy love, health, or happiness, or even what it bought last year. Money may be used as a universal passport everywhere except in heaven. If I asked you how to receive the best returns on your spiritual investments, I am sure you would know the answers. Unfortunately, common sense is not always common practice. So let me be a grandmother for a minute and whisper a few words of experience in your ear. Since I have been balancing my spiritual checkbook just a little longer than most of you, allow me to offer four tried and true strategies for obtaining a life of lasting worth. This list is not intended to be complete, but it will give you a place to start.

Determine Your Plans for Spiritual Growth

The first strategy: Determine your plans for spiritual growth. Remember to say your prayers—morning and night. In Alma 37:37, Alma instructed his son Helaman:

Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God.

When you pray, have you ever considered not only pleading for help but also reporting for duty? Ask for the Spirit to guide you. If you will pray for direction and listen for promptings, you will become familiar with those promptings and learn to act on them. The gospel will come alive in your life. You will have more of those “aha” experiences that help you see what really matters.

Also, do not forget to read your scriptures. For the past two years my husband and I have discovered one of the best spiritual investment programs we have ever undertaken. We determined to read two chapters of the scriptures together every day. It is not a matter of how busy we are; it is simply placing a high priority on reading the word of the Lord on a daily basis.

And what a difference doing this together has made! Greater harmony, peace, and insight have come into our marriage.

We are all given 24 hours a day. Each of us can choose what we will do with them. Decide now to read your scriptures every day. I think we all can budget 10 to 15 minutes a day to find out what the Lord wants us to know. By committing to read just two chapters a day, you can read the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the New Testament in one year. It works! If you are reading as a couple, it is a great bonding experience. If you are reading alone, it is a great time to commune with the Holy Ghost.

All investments in our spiritual growth lead to the keeping of covenants. More than a hundred years ago the prophet Brigham Young counseled the Saints: “Now is the time for labor. Let the fire of the covenant . . . burn in your hearts, like flame unquenchable” (The Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 28 September 1846, Church Archives, Salt Lake City, 5). More recently, Elder M. Russell Ballard has said: “Sometimes we are tempted to let our lives be governed more by convenience than by covenant. . . . But there is no spiritual power in living by convenience. The power comes as we keep our covenants” (CR, April 1999, 113; or “Like a Flame Unquenchable,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 86).

As I have met and been inspired by Saints the world over, I have seen what happens to people who keep their covenants. I have seen what happens when they take time to invest in their spiritual well-being. I have watched their lives change and their testimonies grow.

Four years ago I was in Kiev, Ukraine, and the mission president’s wife took me to the home of Katya Sarduk, a lovely young woman with two children. Katya had just joined the Church, and her eyes sparkled as she told about her conversion. She loved her new faith and was committed to living the gospel. As I left her home that day, I prayed that the fire

of the covenant would continue to burn in her heart. I prayed that her children and her children's children would embrace the truth.

I returned to Kiev just two months ago and wondered if I would see her again. I arrived for Church meetings on Sunday. Soon I was introduced to my interpreter, a lovely blonde woman with sparkling eyes who said, "Do you remember me?" Her countenance was even brighter than before. Katya Sarduk had grown in the gospel. She had invested in her spiritual well-being, and her joy was overflowing.

I cannot help but wonder about the missionaries who taught her. Does the fire of the covenant still burn in their hearts? My dear brothers and sisters who have returned from missions, if the people you helped bring into the Church were to see you today, would they recognize you? Would they see a bright countenance when they look into your eyes? Are you praying, reading the scriptures, going to the temple, and otherwise investing in your spiritual well-being? With all of my heart, I hope so. I hope that worldly concerns have not kept you from investing in eternity.

Serve Others

The second strategy: Serve others. Make unselfish investments that will produce spiritual dividends. In my personal life I have found that what you give to others always pays dividends. Service to others is a wise investment. In Matthew 10:39 we are told, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

One wise young couple determined soon after their marriage that with every paycheck they would delegate a portion to help others. Over the years their ability to give enlarged with their ability to produce, and now they are among the most generous, charitable, and successful people I know.

Service to others is the very essence of the gospel. Service brings joy as nothing else can. It develops our inner strength and helps us feel

more grateful. Service brings us closer to our Father in Heaven. In Matthew 25:40, the Savior taught: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

In our families, in our ward, in our own communities, we find countless opportunities for meaningful service.

Recently another financier was asked about his extraordinary success in life. His reply was: "Study the tree and put your basket where the apples will fall" ("James L. Sorenson's Primer for Success, or How to Become a Billionaire," *Deseret News*, 29 August 1999, M1). The Lord provided the organizations of the Church for the purposes of filling our spiritual baskets, and as we serve others, blessings come into our own lives. We don't need to start a new program, establish a foundation, or enlist in all kinds of causes. But we do need to fulfill our callings as visiting teachers and home teachers and reach out to others in our own ward. We need to be kind to roommates and family members. More than an activity or a project, service is a way of life. It is a way of being! Priesthood holders serve. Members of the Relief Society serve.

The Relief Society declaration makes this clear. It says that we "delight in service and good works," and we do! (Mary Ellen Smoot, "Rejoice, Daughters of Zion," *Ensign*, November 1999, 93). We want to fill our baskets and partake of the fruit of the tree of life.

One group of young people from a college ward and a stake institute class determined to spend a Super Saturday serving those in need. They started in the morning with baptisms for the dead, and those who were endowed did an endowment session. There were 113 who turned out, and they spent the rest of the day making hygiene kits for Humanitarian Services. They produced 3,500 kits. Each kit contained two unbreakable combs, two toothbrushes, one tube of toothpaste, a bar of soap, one bottle of shampoo, one travel sewing kit, and one hand

towel. These kits are sent out to orphanages, women's shelters, and homeless shelters. They are also used for emergency relief efforts. After this activity the consensus of this youth group was that with every future activity they needed to include a service project.

If you have a Humanitarian Service Center in your area, you can call ahead and make arrangements for a time you would be able to assist. There are needs to be met everywhere. There are bishops' storehouses, canneries, and welfare farms. If you do not have these facilities in your area, look for ways you can be of service in your own communities. Organize your young people and check out orphanages, hospitals, and homeless shelters for possible ways you may be of service. Present a proposal to priesthood leaders for their counsel and direction.

An organization has been formed in which students have an opportunity to help in an orphanage in Quito, Ecuador. They help care for and love the children, prepare food, and will often spend nights with a child who is in the hospital in need of medical attention.

In Bucharest, Romania, an estimated 65 young single adults gathered for a conference, studying the gospel and participating in community service. They donated blood to the local blood bank and spent time at a local orphanage. Participants at the blood drive received food credits that were used to purchase food to help a home for the elderly.

More than 180 young single adults from Ontario, Montreal, Ottawa, New York, Michigan, and Ohio gathered to paint the fence surrounding the Toronto Ontario Temple grounds.

From countries in what was formerly known as Yugoslavia, youth and young adults gathered in Slovenia for a three-day conference. The conference included a pizza party, "secret friend" assignments, dancing, and a service project.

Be examples. Look for needs. Make the world a better place. It will pay dividends in the future.

Cultivate Humility

The third strategy: Cultivate humility. Remember your indebtedness to the Lord and never become indebted to the things of the world. No person can fully and completely discharge his debt to our Savior for what He has done for us, but we can make regular payments. As we give our will to Him and do what He would have us do, we are showing appreciation for His gift of the Atonement.

One mission president I know talks about the obedient missionaries in his mission. He never indicates that he hopes his missionaries are obedient. He always speaks in the affirmative: "Our missionaries are obedient." If for some reason he finds one doing something that is not appropriate, he corrects him or her immediately, reminds him of his expectations and the Lord's expectations of him, and then becomes his friend.

Our Father in Heaven will do the same. We can go to Him and pour out our hearts, ask for forgiveness, and promise to do better. He will again become our personal friend. We never need to live outside His influence if we will be obedient and listen to His promptings.

It is always best to avoid sin. None of us can avoid it altogether; we all draw upon the powers of the Atonement. Sin can be compared to debt, which has been said to be like quicksand and just about as hard to get out of.

President Hinckley was speaking to missionaries, and he reminded them of what Sir Galahad said:

What was it that Sir Galahad said? "My strength is as the strength of ten, because my heart is pure."

What was it the Lord said? "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." That's the commandment of the Lord through modern revelation. [TGBH, 359]

Recently a professor on this campus told me about two different students who came to him with confessions of cheating. Each had lied about completing reading assignments in order to

receive a higher grade. As the days passed, both realized that they had cheated themselves. This incident plagued the conscience of one student, and she decided she must set things straight. The other was preparing for a mission and could not feel good about teaching others to keep the commandments and be honest. And so they sought for forgiveness, and inner peace was restored.

Repentance is a priceless gift, bought with our Savior's sinless blood. No amount of money can buy the sweet peace that forgiveness brings or the hope that we can change. We can overcome. Our lives can be rich, purposeful, happy, and hopeful.

Evaluate Your Priorities

The fourth strategy: Evaluate your priorities. Examine your life's portfolio. What kind of returns are you receiving on your investments? Have you invested in that which you value most? The Lord has provided us with parents, leaders, and organizations of the Church to assist us in developing standards to guide our lives. Almost without our knowing it we can be trapped by worldly lures and lose sight of eternal goals. All through the ages prophets have sounded the warning: "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Periodically we need to examine our life's portfolio and evaluate the kind of returns we are receiving. In other words, we need to evaluate the direction we are going and make adjustments where necessary. Do we feel good about who we are and have confidence in the decisions we are making? Do we have joy and peace in our hearts?

Along with renewing our minds, spending more time on our knees, and reading the scriptures, we also go to places where we know we will be taught truth, and then we act upon the truths we are taught. That link many times is missing, the link of acting on what we hear or on what we learn. It is only as we act on those promptings that come to us as we attend meet-

ings or read and study that we can feel real joy. Blessings will come into our lives through obedience. Putting off renewing our minds or seeking the perfect will of God brings regret and many times great heartache.

We live in a unique period of history. Here we are in a new millennium. You are beloved youth. Our Father in Heaven is depending on each of us to do our part. The Relief Society declaration says:

We are beloved spirit daughters of God, and our lives have meaning, purpose, and direction. . . . We are women . . . who: . . .

Dedicate ourselves to strengthening [that includes preparation for] marriages, families, and homes.

Find nobility in motherhood and joy in womanhood. . . .

Rejoice in the blessings of the temple, understand our divine destiny, and strive for exaltation. [Smoot, "Rejoice, Daughters of Zion," 92–93]

We know who we are, and we have total truth to guide us.

We can change. We can overcome. We have the Savior to assist us, and He proved so many times that He can change people's lives. Look how He changed Peter. Look how He changed Mary Magdalene. He gave sight to those who could not see. He healed the lame, and He can heal us too. He can make our lives rich and purposeful if we will give our will to Him.

Evil multiplies by the response it seeks to provoke, and when I return evil for evil, I engender corruption myself. The chain of evil is broken for good when a pure and loving heart absorbs a hurt and forbears to hurt in return. The forgiveness of Christ bears no grudge. The love of Christ allows no offense to endure. The compassion of Christ embraces all things and draws them toward himself. Deep within every child of God the Light of Christ resides, guiding, comforting, purifying the heart that turns to him. [Dennis Rasmussen, *The Lord's Question: Thoughts on the*

Life of Response [Provo, Utah: Keter Foundation, 1985], 63–64]

President Harold B. Lee told this great story

In a . . . meeting I listened to a young girl's heartwarming testimony. Her father was afflicted with what the doctors had pronounced was an incurable malady. To his wife one morning, this stricken father, after a night of pain and suffering, had said with great feeling, "I am so thankful today." "For what?" she asked. He replied, "For God's giving me the privilege of one more day with you."

Today I . . . desire with all my heart that all within the sound of this broadcast would likewise thank God for one more day! For what? For the opportunity to take care of some unfinished business. To repent; to right some wrongs; to influence for good some wayward child; to reach out to someone who cries for help—in short, to thank God for one more day to prepare to meet [Him]. [CR, October 1970, 117]

Can we each find something for which we need to repent? Are we working on overcoming that weakness? Do we need to correct some wrongs or misunderstandings? Can we influence some person who we see making wrong choices? Are we grateful for this day—one more day to prepare in every way to meet God?

Conclusion

I believe that each of us can be renewed in mind and spirit as we sincerely seek for those things that money cannot buy. We must want

to do God's will and gain the knowledge necessary to act accordingly. In other words, we need to put Him first in all the decisions we make. We each need to ask ourselves, "Are we ready? Are we ready to have the kind of experiences that are life changing and exhilarating? Are our hearts and minds pure?" The way we choose to spend each day of our lives will dictate the direction we will go and the joys that will fulfill our lives now and for all eternity.

September 11, 2001, will be a date forever chiseled in the stone recesses of our memory. At the last October general conference President Hinckley lamented the state of the world. A prophet of God essentially said to us that these are perilous, precarious, fragile, and dangerous times. (See CR, October 2001, 87–91; or "The Times in Which We Live," *Ensign*, November 2001, 72–74.) But are we without hope? Absolutely not. As President Hinckley stated: "Our safety lies in repentance. Our strength comes of obedience to the commandments of God" (CR, October 2001, 91; or "The Times in Which We Live," *Ensign*, November 2001, 74).

My dear brothers and sisters, "Lay up for yourselves a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away; yea, that ye may have that precious gift of eternal life" (Helaman 5:8). No other gift is greater. Of this I humbly bear testimony with grateful heart and with confidence in each of you to accomplish this, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.