

is more critical to our well-being in this life and the next. All scriptures teach obedience, and no apostle or prophet has ever lived who has not taught the principle of obedience.

Sometimes it is necessary to be obedient even when we do not understand the reason for the law. It takes faith to be obedient. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in teaching obedience, said that whatever God requires is right, though we may not know the reason until much later (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 256).

I am grateful that we had on our life jackets that summer day on the ocean. I am thankful we were able to avoid the tragedy that came to others from that sneaker wave. It is my prayer that we will continue to wear our life jackets of obedience in order to avoid the tragedy that will surely come if we are deceived and follow the enticings of the adversary.

I witness to you that our Father in Heaven lives, that He loves us, and that by being unquestioningly obedient to His commandments, we can once again dwell with Him and His Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Faust

The choir and congregation will now sing "Come, O Thou King of Kings." Following the singing, Elder Robert R. Steuer of the Seventy will address us. We will then be pleased to hear from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

Elder Robert R. Steuer

Being teachable

True disciples of the Master are teachable. In just a few words, Abraham gives us much insight into why he was so greatly blessed. He lived a life "desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God."¹ "Desiring to receive instructions" is more than a willingness to listen. When our desire to receive instruction is a greater force than our comfort in remaining as we are, we become teachable.

President Brigham Young taught that our "first and foremost duty [is] to seek the Lord until we open the path of communication from God to our own soul."² Shortly after his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith appeared in a dream to Brigham Young and instructed him:

"Tell the people to be humble and faithful, and be sure to keep the spirit of

the Lord and it will lead them right. Be careful and not turn away the small still voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the Kingdom."³

Be willing to receive instruction

How do we ignite this power of divine instruction in our lives? First, we need to start with a willingness to be instructed. While many naturally hunger and thirst after righteousness, others may be compelled to be humble.⁴ Some of us, rather than follow instructions or change ourselves, would simply like to change the rules.

Naaman certainly wanted to be rid of his leprous flesh but went away in a rage when told by the prophet's messenger to simply wash seven times in the river Jordan. It was inconvenient, a little thing,

and he felt that the rivers in his land were better than the Jordan. But his leprosy was cured as he listened to his servants, changed his mind, and did "according to the saying of the man of God."⁵ He was dramatically shown that there was a prophet and a God in Israel. We too must realize that God has governing laws⁶ and that His wisdom is greater than our own. Even Moses observed, after seeing God's majesty and workmanship, "Man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed."⁷

Labor to receive instruction

Second, we need to put ourselves into a proper frame of mind and heart. This comes by prayerful pondering and laboring in the Spirit.⁸ This labor is real labor. It includes the very active steps of seeking, hearkening, and studying the scriptures. When humbled and stripped of pride, our hearts are softened and we can focus on heavenly counsel and instruction. Laman's father, the powerful Lamanite king, made just that change in focus, even prostrating himself to the earth, demonstrating his great commitment to know God. He declared, "I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day."⁹

ObeY the instruction received

Third, we must be obedient to the instruction we receive. Alma said, "Experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith."¹⁰ Nephi simply said, "I will go and do."¹¹ What a wonderful attitude of submission and obedience as he accepted his father's counsel in getting the brass plates and in being told where to hunt, and the Lord's counsel in building a ship.¹² In each case he proceeded with trust, moving forward, "not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" or the outcome.¹³ But since we are free agents, life can sometimes be a difficult journey of applying our hearts and minds

to the truths of God. Nevertheless, as President Thomas S. Monson said, "The Lord expects our thinking. He expects our action. He expects our labors."¹⁴

Becoming teachable is a process of learning line upon line. In this process we convert thoughts and feelings into actions. But what a reward for this exercise of our faith as we open the path of communication with the Lord. The Lord said, "Blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom."¹⁵ And He also said, "Every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father."¹⁶

Some years ago I remember asking my father-in-law, a seasoned bishop, about a three-by-five-inch card he always carried in his shirt pocket. He replied that at times he felt impressions or promptings. He then liked to pull out that card and write down those feelings whenever they came. And then he tried to act upon them as quickly as possible. It is humbling to consider that the still, small voice is always there for us, teaching us what to do and where to go. The Lord tells us that when the promptings are heeded, often more are given. If we do not follow them, the promptings eventually diminish.

Being teachable draws us to Christ

As a result of being teachable, we gain an even greater testimony of our Heavenly Father's care for us. We gain the security and certainty that our course in life is according to His will.¹⁷ We even have reasons to be good, reasons to be moral, and reasons to change our behavior. By being teachable, we activate the full force and blessings of the Atonement in our lives. We become sensitive to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit so that the righteous principles taught by the prophets and the truths from the earth can place Christ deeply into our lives.¹⁸ We become His true disciples.

It is by loving these truths with all our hearts that an affinity develops between us and the Source of truth itself, “for intelligence cleaveth unto intelligence; wisdom receiveth wisdom; truth embraceth truth; [and] virtue loveth virtue.”¹⁹ Hence, we shall discover that the things we value and appreciate the most are those that we personally learned *from* the Lord.

I testify that through the Prophet Joseph Smith we have received countless revelations of truth, bearing testimony of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When we are teachable, we will more clearly see, hear, and adhere to those revelations continuing even today through our living apostles, prophets, seers, and revelators. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Abraham 1:2.

2. *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (1997), 41.
3. Quoted by Brigham Young, in *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young*, 41.
4. See Matthew 5:6; Alma 32:13.
5. See 2 Kings 5:1–14.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 93:30.
7. Moses 1:10.
8. See Alma 17:5.
9. See Alma 22:17–18.
10. Alma 32:27.
11. 1 Nephi 3:7.
12. See 1 Nephi 3:4; 16:23–32; 17:8–11.
13. 1 Nephi 4:6.
14. In Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 64; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 49.
15. 2 Nephi 28:30.
16. Doctrine and Covenants 84:47.
17. See *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 38.
18. See Moses 7:62.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 88:40.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Becoming full participants in the Church

Some years ago I enjoyed a newspaper cartoon that showed a clergyman in conversation with a hippie-dressed couple astride a motorcycle. “We *are* church goers,” one was saying to the clergyman. “We’ve been going for years . . . we just haven’t got there yet.”¹

Many of our extended family and friends haven’t yet gotten to church either. They may attend sporadically, but they are not yet enjoying the full blessings of Church participation and service. Others may attend regularly but refrain from commitments and from seeking the personal spiritual rebirth that comes from yielding our hearts to God. Both kinds are missing some unique blessings in this life. And both are in jeopardy of missing the most glorious blessings in the life to come.

Paul taught that the Lord gave prophets and apostles for “the perfecting of the saints, . . . the work of the ministry, [and]

the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). Persons who are not fully participating in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and also seeking a personal spiritual conversion are missing out on experiences that are essential under the divinely established great plan of happiness. The teachings and the work of the Church are essential to bring to pass the eternal life of man (see Moses 1:39).

I pray that many within the sound of my voice will have a spiritual witness of the importance of the Church’s mission to edify and exalt the children of God. I pray especially that some who are not yet enjoying the blessings of full Church participation and commitment will seek and obtain that witness and act upon it.

Some have mistaken expectations

About a decade ago, while I was at a stake conference in the United States, I was introduced to a member who had not