

President Monson

Thank you, brethren. The choir and congregation will now sing “Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah.” At the conclusion of the singing, Elders Craig C. Christensen and James M. Dunn of the Seventy

will address us. They will be followed by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

The choir and congregation sang “Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah.”

Elder Craig C. Christensen

Seek, and ye shall find

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that I may be guided by the Spirit of the Lord as I share with you my personal feelings and testimony.

One of the most compelling invitations and profound promises given by the Savior is found in the simple phrase “seek, and ye shall find.”¹

Although the process of seeking includes prayer and supplication, it goes much deeper than that. Seeking is more of a journey than a single event. I liken it to taking a long, cross-country vacation. Although we know what our ultimate destination is, the rich experiences and real learning come day by day as we progress toward our goal.

The pattern for seeking answers from God

As we seek the things of God, we must humble ourselves before Him, remembering that it is by His grace that we receive them, and focus our thoughts and our prayers, our faith and our desires, even all of the energy of our hearts that we might receive light and understanding directly from a loving Heavenly Father.

The pattern for seeking answers from God is simple to explain yet much more personal when applied. To begin, we are invited to study in our minds and ponder in our hearts those things that we most desire of Him.² This process of reflection brings clarity and inspiration to our souls. We are then instructed to present our thoughts

and desires directly to Heavenly Father in humble prayer with the promise that, if we ask Him, in the name of Christ, if what we are seeking is right, and if we “ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost,” for it is “by the power of the Holy Ghost” that we “know the truth of all things.”³

Seek the best gifts and shun evil

And what should we seek?

The scriptures teach us that we should “seek . . . earnestly the [very] best gifts”⁴ and that we should seek wisdom and understanding and “prepare every needful thing.”⁵ We are admonished to lose ourselves in the service of others⁶ and to seek those things that are “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy.”⁷

At the same time, we are cautioned not to seek the unclean things of the world.⁸ President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “There is so much evil, enticing evil, in the world. Shun it, my brothers and sisters. Avoid it. It is as a dangerous disease. It is as a poison that will destroy you. Stay away from it.”⁹ In the book of Amos we read, “Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you.”¹⁰

Seek to know God and Jesus Christ

What we seek first and foremost, above all other things, is “the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.”¹¹ We seek

to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He has] sent.”¹²

In a very personal version of the invitation to seek and find, the Savior said, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me.”¹³

And what does it mean to find Him?

As we engage our faith and commit our energy to draw closer to Jesus Christ, we begin to understand more fully who He really is. As we seek Him diligently, we gain a deep and abiding testimony of His matchless love, His perfect life and example, and the blessings of His great atoning sacrifice. As we draw nearer to Him, we truly begin to find Him and to recognize Him as the Creator of the earth, the Redeemer of mankind, the Only Begotten of the Father, the King of kings, the Prince of Peace.

The deeper we seek, the more we begin to appreciate His role as the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Holy Messiah of the New Testament. We begin to understand more fully His eternal message of salvation and exaltation. We find that He continues to beckon us to come and follow Him, that His teachings are certain and are as applicable today as they were throughout all previous generations of time. We begin to know, with more profound appreciation, what occurred in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Although He was erroneously convicted and sentenced, He gave His life willingly; and in fulfillment of His own prophetic words He was resurrected on the third day. This priceless gift brings immortality to all and eternal life to the obedient and faithful.

As we begin to realize that His message was and is for all mankind everywhere, we accept, with great enthusiasm, the scriptural account of His visit to the ancient inhabitants of the American continent. We delight in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a second witness—indeed another testament—of His messianic

mission as the Savior and the Redeemer of the world. We acknowledge that a man can get closer to Him by searching and praying about the Book of Mormon than by studying any other book.¹⁴

Blessings that come from seeking Him

As we seek to find Him, we receive a witness of His personal visit, together with His Father, to the boy prophet, Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-awaited “dispensation of the fulness of times.”¹⁵

As we seek Him, we recognize that He has restored His Church to the earth, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and that within His Church He has bestowed the power and authority to provide essential ordinances that will permit us to return and live with Him once again.

As we seek Him, we find that He continues to guide His Church through His living prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and that the organization of His Church is built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, “Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”¹⁶

As we seek Him diligently, we feel His love for us and understand more clearly the answers to our prayers. We acknowledge that through His Spirit we “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures”¹⁷ and gain a greater desire to live our lives in accordance with His commandments and direction.

As we seek Him, we find that He is “the light and the life of the world.”¹⁸ As we seek Him, brothers and sisters, we shall indeed find Him and experience the inner peace He has promised us. I so testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Matthew 7:7; 3 Nephi 14:7.
2. See Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–8; Moroni 10:3.
3. Moroni 10:4–5.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 46:8.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 109:7–8.

6. See Luke 17:33.
7. Articles of Faith 1:13.
8. See 3 Nephi 20:41; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38.
9. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 709.
10. Amos 5:14.
11. Matthew 6:33.
12. John 17:3.
13. Doctrine and Covenants 88:63.
14. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 194.
15. Ephesians 1:10.
16. Ephesians 2:20.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 89:19.
18. Mosiah 16:9.

Elder James M. Dunn

Words to live by

The world is full of words. Many are shrill and accusatory, and many are sarcastic. Together they are a noise, a blur, and we do not listen to or seriously consider them. Then, once in a while, through the din as it were, we hear precious words, such as in this conference, words to live by.

President Thomas S. Monson, in the April 1988 general conference, stated:

“We treasure the inspired thought:

“God is a Father.

Man is a brother.

Life is a mission

And not a career.”

(Quoting Stephen L. Richards, in Conference Report, Apr. 1988, 62; or *Ensign*, May 1988, 54.)

These are words to live by.

We are all children of God

God is our Heavenly Father. We are His spiritually begotten children. Knowing our relationship to God helps us better understand where we came from and what our eternal possibilities are. Knowing Him, we learn better how to approach Him and how we ought to live in order to please Him. Our earthly sojourn is part of a divine plan of happiness designed by Him, which beckons us to live by faith, to gain mortal experiences, and to become qualified through obedience and the power of the Atonement to return to His presence forever.

We live in a world marked by great diversity: different lands, cultures, races, and languages. To some degree, at least, one must believe that this is the way God intended it to be. The gospel teaches us that, notwithstanding these differences, we are all children of the same Heavenly Father. The human race is one family, and we are all, therefore, brothers and sisters.

As siblings we must see that Heavenly Father loves His children equally, as any good earthly father would. Courtesy, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness are all elements of proper conduct among family members. Imagine the disappointment of a perfect, loving Father who sees His children treating each other badly.

Keep focused on life's true purposes

Life is short. “It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). In the precious time that we have in mortality, there are many things to be done. Some of these things are more important than others, and we must make wise decisions. Some things are obviously wrong. Some are good. But some are vital if we are to meet the expectations of our Father and succeed in our mortal probation.

The expectations of the Father exceed merely devising a way to make a living or indulging ourselves in the beauties and pleasures of this earth, even though the Lord has assured us, “It pleaseth God that