

that our very purpose for being upon this earth will be successfully accomplished, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 112:10.
2. James 1:5–6.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1976, 83; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1976, 58.
4. 3 Nephi 18:20.

5. Moroni 7:33.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 2003, 79; or *Ensign*, May 2003, 76.
7. In Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 75; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 73.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1964, 130; or *Improvement Era*, June 1964, 509.
9. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 206.
10. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 205.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

The story of a horse called Snowman

Harry de Leyer was late to the auction on that snowy day in 1956, and all of the good horses had already been sold. The few that remained were old and spent and had been bought by a company that would salvage them.

Harry, the riding master at a girls' school in New York, was about to leave when one of these horses—an uncared-for gray gelding with ugly-looking wounds on its legs—caught his eye. The animal still bore the marks that had been made by a heavy work harness, evidence to the hard life he had led. But something about him captured Harry's attention, so he offered \$80 for him.

It was snowing when Harry's children saw the horse for the first time, and because of the coat of snow on the horse's back, the children named him "Snowman."

Harry took good care of the horse, which turned out to be a gentle and reliable friend—a horse the girls liked to ride because he was steady and didn't startle like some of the others. In fact, Snowman made such rapid improvement that a neighbor purchased him for twice what Harry had originally paid.

But Snowman kept disappearing from the neighbor's pasture—sometimes ending up in adjoining potato fields, other times back at Harry's. It appeared that the horse

must have jumped over the fences between the properties, but that seemed impossible—Harry had never seen Snowman jump over anything much higher than a fallen log.

But eventually, the neighbor's patience came to an end, and he insisted Harry take back the horse.

For years, Harry's great dream had been to produce a champion jumping horse. He'd had moderate success in the past, but in order to compete at the highest levels, he knew he would have to buy a pedigreed horse that had been specifically bred to jump. And that kind of pedigree would cost far more than he could afford.

Snowman was already getting old—he was eight when Harry had purchased him—and he had been badly treated. But, apparently, Snowman wanted to jump, so Harry decided to see what the horse could do.

What Harry saw made him think that maybe his horse had a chance to compete.

In 1958, Harry entered Snowman in his first competition. Snowman stood among the beautifully bred champion horses, looking very much out of place. Other horse breeders called Snowman a "flea-bitten gray."

But a wonderful, unbelievable thing happened that day.

Snowman won!

Harry continued to enter Snowman in other competitions, and Snowman continued to win.

Audiences cheered every time Snowman won an event. He became a symbol of how extraordinary an ordinary horse could be. He appeared on television. Stories and books were written about him.

As Snowman continued to win, one buyer offered \$100,000 for the old plow horse, but Harry would not sell. In 1958 and 1959, Snowman was named “Horse of the Year.” Eventually, the gray gelding—who had once been marked for sale to a low bidder—was inducted into the show jumping Hall of Fame.¹

For many, Snowman was much more than a horse. He became an example of the hidden, untapped potential that lies within each of us.

Qualities of those who live abundant lives

I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with many wonderful people from many walks of life. I have known rich and poor, famous and modest, wise and otherwise.

Some were burdened with heavy sorrows; others radiated a confident inner peace. Some smoldered with unquenchable bitterness, while others glowed with irrepressible joy. Some appeared defeated, while others—in spite of adversity—overcame discouragement and despair.

I have heard some claim, perhaps only partly in jest, that the only happy people are those who simply don’t have a firm grasp of what is happening around them.

But I believe otherwise.

I have known many who walk in joy and radiate happiness.

I have known many who live lives of abundance.

And I believe I know why.

Today, I want to list a few of the characteristics that the happiest people I know have in common. They are qualities that

can transform ordinary existence into a life of excitement and abundance.

They drink deeply of living waters

First, they drink deeply of living waters.

The Savior taught that “whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give . . . shall never thirst; [for it] shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”²

Fully understood and embraced, the gospel of Jesus Christ heals broken hearts, infuses meaning into lives, binds loved ones together with ties that transcend mortality, and brings to life a sublime joy.

President Lorenzo Snow said, “The Lord has not given us the gospel that we may go around mourning all the days of our lives.”³

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not a religion of mourning and gloom. The faith of our fathers is one of hope and joy. It is not a gospel of chains but a gospel of wings.

To embrace it fully is to be filled with wonder and to walk with an inner fire. Our Savior proclaimed, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”⁴

Do you seek peace of mind?

Drink deeply of living waters.

Do you seek forgiveness? peace? understanding? joy?

Drink deeply of living waters.

The abundant life is a spiritual life. Too many sit at the banquet table of the gospel of Jesus Christ and merely nibble at the feast placed before them. They go through the motions—attending their meetings perhaps, glancing at scriptures, repeating familiar prayers—but their hearts are far away. If they are honest, they would admit to being more interested in the latest neighborhood rumors, stock market trends, and their favorite TV show than they are in the supernal wonders and sweet ministrings of the Holy Spirit.

Do you wish to partake of this living water and experience that divine well springing up within you to everlasting life?

Then be not afraid. Believe with all your hearts. Develop an unshakable faith in the Son of God. Let your hearts reach out in earnest prayer. Fill your minds with knowledge of Him. Forsake your weaknesses. Walk in holiness and harmony with the commandments.

Drink deeply of the living waters of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

They fill their hearts with love

The second quality of those who live abundant lives is that they fill their hearts with love.

Love is the essence of the gospel and the greatest of all the commandments. The Savior taught that every other commandment and prophetic teaching hangs upon it.⁵ The Apostle Paul wrote that “all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”⁶

We often don’t know the reach of a simple act of kindness. The Prophet Joseph Smith was a model of compassion and love. One day, a group of eight African Americans arrived at the Prophet’s home in Nauvoo. They had traveled from their home in Buffalo, New York, some 800 miles away, so they could be with the prophet of God and with the Saints. Although they were free, they were forced to hide from those who might mistake them for runaway slaves. They endured cold and hardship, wearing out shoes and then socks until they walked on bare feet all the way to the City of Joseph. When they arrived in Nauvoo, the Prophet welcomed them into his home and helped each of them find a place to stay.

But there was one, a girl named Jane, who did not have a place to go, and she wept, not knowing what to do.

“We won’t have tears here,” Joseph said to her. He turned to Emma and said,

“Here’s a girl who says she [doesn’t have a] home. Don’t you think she has a home here?”

Emma agreed. From that day on, Jane lived as a member of the family.

Years after the Prophet’s martyrdom and after she had joined the pioneers and made the long trek to Utah, Jane said that sometimes she would still “wake up in the middle of the night, and just think about Brother Joseph and Sister Emma and how good they [were] to me. Joseph Smith,” she said, “was the finest man I ever saw on Earth.”⁷

President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that those who reach out to lift and serve others “will come to know a happiness . . . never known before. . . . Heaven knows there are so very, very, very many people in this world who need help. Oh, so very . . . many. Let’s get the cankering, selfish attitude out of our lives, my brothers and sisters, and stand a little taller and reach a little higher in the service of others.”⁸

We are all busy. It’s easy to find excuses for not reaching out to others, but I imagine they will sound as hollow to our Heavenly Father as the elementary school boy who gave his teacher a note asking that he be excused from school March 30th through the 34th.

Those who devote their lives in pursuit of their own selfish desires at the exclusion of others will discover that, in the end, their joy is shallow and their lives have little meaning.

On a tombstone of one such person was carved the following epitaph:

Here lies a miser who lived for himself,
And cared for nothing but gathering pelf,
Now, where he is, or how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares.⁹

We are happiest when our lives are connected to others through unselfish love

and service. President J. Reuben Clark taught that “there is no greater blessing, no greater joy and happiness than comes to us from relieving the distress of others.”¹⁰

They create a masterpiece of their lives

The third quality of those who live abundant lives is that they, with the help of their Heavenly Father, create a masterpiece of their lives.

No matter our age, circumstances, or abilities, each one of us can create something remarkable of his life.

David saw himself as a shepherd, but the Lord saw him as a king of Israel. Joseph of Egypt served as a slave, but the Lord saw him as a seer. Mormon wore the armor of a soldier, but the Lord saw him as a prophet.

We are sons and daughters of an immortal, loving, and all-powerful Father in Heaven. We are created as much from the dust of eternity as we are from the dust of the earth. Every one of us has potential we can scarcely imagine.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”¹¹

How is it possible, then, that so many see themselves merely as an old gray horse that isn’t good for much? There is a spark of greatness within every one of us—a gift from our loving and eternal Heavenly Father. What we do with that gift is up to us.

Love the Lord with all your heart, might, mind, and strength. Enlist in great and noble causes. Create of your homes sanctuaries of holiness and strength. Magnify your callings in the Church. Fill your minds with learning. Strengthen your testimonies. Reach out to others.

Create of your life a masterpiece.

The abundant life is a journey

Brothers and sisters, the abundant life does not come to us packaged and ready-made. It’s not something we can order and expect to find delivered with the afternoon mail. It does not come without hardship or sorrow.

It comes through faith, hope, and charity. And it comes to those who, in spite of hardship and sorrow, understand the words of one writer who said, “In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.”¹²

The abundant life isn’t something we arrive at. Rather, it is a magnificent journey that began long, long ages ago and will never, never end.

One of the great comforts of the gospel of Jesus Christ is our knowledge that this earthly existence is merely a twinkle in the eye of eternity. Whether we are at the beginning of our mortal journey or at the end, this life is merely one step—one small step.

Our search for the abundant life is cloaked not only in the robes of this mortal clay; its true end can only be comprehended from the perspective of the eternities that stretch infinitely before us.

Brothers and sisters, it is in the quest of the abundant life that we find our destiny.

As illustrated in the story of an old, discarded horse that had within him the soul of a champion, there is within each of us a divine spark of greatness. Who knows of what we are capable if we only try? The abundant life is within our reach if only we will drink deeply of living water, fill our hearts with love, and create of our lives a masterpiece.

That we may do so is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Rutherford George Montgomery, *Snowman* (1962).

2. John 4:14.
3. *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 61.
4. John 10:10.
5. See Matthew 22:40.
6. Galatians 5:14.
7. Neil K. Newell, "Joseph Smith Moments: Stranger in Nauvoo," *Church News*, Dec. 31, 2005, 16.
8. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 597.
9. In Obert C. Tanner, *Christ's Ideals for Living* (Sunday School manual, 1955), 266.
10. "Fundamentals of the Church Welfare Plan," *Church News*, Mar. 2, 1946, 9.
11. 1 Corinthians 2:9.
12. Albert Camus, in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 16th ed. (1980), 732.

President Faust

As we conclude the conference, we express appreciation to the Tabernacle Choir, the combined choir from Brigham Young University, the priesthood choir from the Orem and Salt Lake institutes, and their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music. We also extend thanks to all who have participated in any way in these proceedings.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, our beloved prophet, will be our concluding speaker at this session. Following President Hinckley's remarks, the choir will sing "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide." After the choir has sung, the benediction will be offered by Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy. This conference will then be adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Until again we meet

Just a word in conclusion, my brothers and sisters, bringing to a close this great conference. The music has been magnificent, the prayers have been inspired, and the talks and testimonies have touched our hearts, lifted our spirits, and confirmed our faith.

Now, as we return to our homes and our vocational labors, may we remember and constantly express in our lives the counsel we have received. May we remain fortified against the wiles of the adversary. May our labors in our many Church responsibilities be not burdensome, but rather may they bring joy and satisfaction. May we live together as husbands and

wives, as parents and children, with love and kindness and respect for one another.

God bless you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I leave my love and my testimony and my blessing with you and pray that the Lord will be with us each and every one until again we meet. May heaven's blessings rest upon you, I humbly pray in the sacred and holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me; 'Tis Eventide."

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander offered the benediction.
