

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Two individuals approaching the marriage altar must realize that to attain the happy marriage which they hope for they must know that marriage . . . means sacrifice, sharing, and even a reduction of some personal liberties. It means long, hard economizing. It means children who bring with them financial burdens, service burdens, care and worry burdens; but also it means the deepest and sweetest emotions of all.”<sup>7</sup>

From personal experience, I testify to the sweetness of the marriage and family life that the family proclamation describes as founded upon a husband and wife’s “solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children” and “upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup> I testify of Him as our Savior and pray in His name for all who strive for the supreme blessings of an eternal family, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. See Bruce C. Hafen, *Covenant Hearts* (2005), 37–39; Allan Carlson, *Fractured Generations* (2005), 1–13; Bryce Christensen, *Divided We Fall* (2006), 44–45.
2. David O. McKay, in Conference Report, Apr. 1969, 8–9; or *Improvement Era*, June 1969, 5.
3. See Richard E. Lucas, “Adaptation and the Set-Point Model of Subjective Well-Being: Does Happiness Change after Major Life Events?” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, Apr. 2007, 75–79.
4. See Jean Bethke Elshtain and David Popenoe, *Marriage in America* (1995), quoted in Bruce C. Hafen, “Marriage and the State’s Legal Posture toward the Family,” *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Oct. 15, 1995, 18; see also *Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles* (Witherspoon Institute, 2006), 24.
5. James E. Faust, “Enriching Your Marriage,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 4–8; *Liahona*, Apr. 2007, 2–6.
6. Linda J. Waite and others, *Does Divorce Make People Happy? Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages* (Institute for American Values, 2002), 6; see also scholarly studies cited in *Marriage and the Law: A Statement of Principles* (Institute for American Values, 2006), 21.
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 194.
8. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.

## Elder Neil L. Andersen

### A naval officer’s testimony

I take as my subject today something President Hinckley said in general conference in April of 1973.

I had just returned home from my mission. So much seemed ahead of me. Would I be able to consistently make the right choices throughout my life?

At that conference, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of meeting a young naval officer from Asia. The officer had not been a Christian, but during training in the United States, he had learned about the Church and was baptized. He was now preparing to return to his native land.

President Hinckley asked the officer: “Your people are not Christians. . . . What will happen when you return home a Christian and, more particularly, a Mormon Christian?”

The officer’s face clouded, and he replied: “My family will be disappointed. . . . As for my future and my career, . . . all opportunity [may] be foreclosed against me.”

President Hinckley asked, “Are you willing to pay so great a price for the gospel?”

With his dark eyes moistened by tears, he answered with a question: “It’s true, isn’t it?”

President Hinckley responded, “Yes, it’s true.”

To which the officer replied, “Then what else matters?”<sup>1</sup>

### Putting things in proper perspective

Through the years, I have reflected on these words: “It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?” These questions have helped me put difficult issues in proper perspective.

The cause in which we are laboring is true. We respect the beliefs of our friends and neighbors. We are all sons and daughters of God. We can learn much from other men and women of faith and goodness, as President Faust taught us so well.

Yet we know that Jesus is the Christ. He is resurrected. In our day, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the priesthood of God has been restored. We have the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Book of Mormon is what we claim it to be. The promises of the temple are certain. The Lord Himself has declared the unique and singular mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be “a light to the world” and “a messenger . . . to prepare the way before [Him]”<sup>2</sup> even as “the gospel roll[s] forth unto the ends of the earth.”<sup>3</sup>

It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?

Of course, for all of us, there *are* other things that matter. When I heard President Hinckley’s talk as a 21-year-old, I needed to be serious about my studies; I needed employment to keep me in school; somehow I had to figure out how to convince a special young lady that she should take a chance on me; and I enjoyed other worthy activities.

How do we find our way through the many things that matter? We simplify and purify our perspective. Some things are evil and must be avoided; some things are nice; some things are important; and some things are absolutely essential. The Savior said, “This is life eternal, that they

might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”<sup>4</sup>

### The lens of faith

Faith is not only a feeling; it is a decision. With prayer, study, obedience, and covenants, we build and fortify our faith. Our conviction of the Savior and His latter-day work becomes the powerful lens through which we judge all else. Then, as we find ourselves in the crucible of life, as Elder Oaks explained, we have the strength to take the right course.

President Hinckley said it this way: “When [an individual] is motivated by great and powerful convictions of truth, then he disciplines himself, not because of demands made . . . by the Church but because of the knowledge within his heart.”<sup>5</sup>

Are we sufficiently motivated by “great and powerful convictions of truth”? Do our choices reflect this motivation? Are we becoming who we want to become? It’s true, isn’t it? Then what else matters?

We know what is right. A few years ago my wife, Kathy, was with our grandchildren while their parents were away. Our four-year-old grandson gave his little brother a strong push. After consoling the crying child, she turned to the four-year-old and thoughtfully asked, “Why would you push your little brother?” He looked at his grandmother and responded, “Mimi, I’m sorry. I lost my CTR ring, and I cannot choose the right.” We need to be careful because excuses can impede our progress.

### Examples of faith and conviction

“Great and powerful convictions of truth” are found in the hearts of Latter-day Saints in nations across the world. This strength of faith carries the work of the kingdom forward.

Many years ago my wife and I stood by a courageous sister in France as her husband, still in his 30s, passed through the veil. The responsibility to righteously

teach and guide her four young children alone seemed overwhelming. Yet 16 years later, her three sons have returned from missions, and her daughter is sealed in the temple.

I know a brother in Brazil who joined the Church as a 16-year-old, the only member in his family. When it was time for his mission, his parents objected. He heard nothing from them during his mission and returned home to his bishop's house. The story, however, has a happy ending, as he now has a beautiful family and works as a dental surgeon, and his parents wish he could interest his brothers in the Church.

I know a brother in a Latin American country who, after his baptism, determined he would not only be honest in his tithing but would also fully pay his taxes, something his competitors did not do. The Lord blessed him for his honesty.

Many sacrifices are quietly accomplished: returned missionaries not delaying the responsibility of finding their eternal companion; righteous women desiring children and investing their lives in rearing them in love and truth; families carefully restricting the media and Internet influences that would tarnish their spirits; husbands and wives finding more time to be in the temple together.

Children can also develop this lens of faith. I recently met youth in Seoul, Korea, who, because of a rigorous school schedule, do not arrive home until very late each night yet attend early-morning seminary at 6:00 a.m. five days a week. I know an eight-year-old baseball player, a star of the team, who on his own explained to his coach that he could not participate in the final playoff game because it was to be held on Sunday.

Many of the quiet acts of deep faith are known only to God. But they are recorded in heaven. It's true, isn't it? Then what else matters?

The Savior said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."<sup>6</sup>

I testify that it is true and that it does matter. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### NOTES

1. In Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 72; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 48.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 45:9.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 65:2.
4. John 17:3.
5. In Conference Report, Apr. 1973, 73; or *Ensign*, July 1973, 49.
6. Matthew 6:33.

## Vicki F. Matsumori

### A message for first-generation members

I love the Book of Mormon. It has wonderful stories for children of all ages, but more importantly it teaches timeless lessons, which are often retold in Primary songs.

For example, a great lesson can be found in the song about the army of Helaman. We sing: "We are as the army of Helaman. We have been taught in our youth." There are many of us who also feel like "we have been born, as Nephi of old, to goodly parents."<sup>1</sup>

My message today is for you first-generation members who may have been born to goodly parents and yet were not taught the gospel in your homes. Instead of being like the army of Helaman, who "had been taught by their mothers [that] God would deliver them" (Alma 56:47), you may be like their parents, the people of Ammon, who grew up as nonbelievers.

It may be helpful to review the story about the people of Ammon. They were Lamanites who had been taught the gospel by Ammon, Aaron, and others (see