

Julie B. Beck

Mothers who know

In the Book of Mormon we read about 2,000 exemplary young men who were exceedingly valiant, courageous, and strong. “Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him” (Alma 53:21). These faithful young men paid tribute to their mothers. They said, “Our mothers knew it” (Alma 56:48). I would suspect that the mothers of Captain Moroni, Mosiah, Mormon, and other great leaders also knew.

The responsibility mothers have today has never required more vigilance. More than at any time in the history of the world, we need mothers who know. Children are being born into a world where they “wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).¹ However, mothers need not fear. When mothers know who they are and who God is and have made covenants with Him, they will have great power and influence for good on their children.

Mothers who know bear children

Mothers who know desire to bear children. Whereas in many cultures in the world children are “becoming less valued,”² in the culture of the gospel we still believe in having children. Prophets, seers, and revelators who were sustained at this conference have declared that “God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force.”³ President Ezra Taft Benson taught that young couples should not postpone having children and that “in the eternal perspective, children—not posses-

sions, not position, not prestige—are our greatest jewels.”⁴

Faithful daughters of God desire children. In the scriptures we read of Eve (see Moses 4:26), Sarah (see Genesis 17:16), Rebekah (see Genesis 24:60), and Mary (see 1 Nephi 11:13–20), who were foreordained to be mothers before children were born to them. Some women are not given the responsibility of bearing children in mortality, but just as Hannah of the Old Testament prayed fervently for her child (see 1 Samuel 1:11), the value women place on motherhood in this life and the attributes of motherhood they attain here will rise with them in the Resurrection (see D&C 130:18). Women who desire and work toward that blessing in this life are promised they will receive it for all eternity, and eternity is much, much longer than mortality. There is eternal influence and power in motherhood.

Mothers who know honor sacred ordinances and covenants

Mothers who know honor sacred ordinances and covenants. I have visited sacrament meetings in some of the poorest places on the earth where mothers have dressed with great care in their Sunday best despite walking for miles on dusty streets and using worn-out public transportation. They bring daughters in clean and ironed dresses with hair brushed to perfection; their sons wear white shirts and ties and have missionary haircuts. These mothers know they are going to sacrament meeting, where covenants are renewed. These mothers have made and honor temple covenants. They know that if they are not pointing their children to the temple, they are not pointing them toward desired eternal goals. These mothers have influence and power.

Mothers who know are nurturers

Mothers who know are nurturers. This is their special assignment and role under the plan of happiness.⁵ To nurture means to cultivate, care for, and make grow. Therefore, mothers who know create a climate for spiritual and temporal growth in their homes. Another word for *nurturing* is *homemaking*. Homemaking includes cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and keeping an orderly home. Home is where women have the most power and influence; therefore, Latter-day Saint women should be the best homemakers in the world. Working beside children in homemaking tasks creates opportunities to teach and model qualities children should emulate. Nurturing mothers are knowledgeable, but all the education women attain will avail them nothing if they do not have the skill to make a home that creates a climate for spiritual growth. Growth occurs best in a “house of order,” and women should pattern their homes after the Lord’s house (see D&C 109). Nurturing requires organization, patience, love, and work. Helping growth occur through nurturing is truly a powerful and influential role bestowed on women.

Mothers who know are leaders

Mothers who know are leaders. In equal partnership with their husbands, they lead a great and eternal organization. These mothers plan for the future of their organization. They plan for missions, temple marriages, and education. They plan for prayer, scripture study, and family home evening. Mothers who know build children into future leaders and are the primary examples of what leaders look like. They do not abandon their plan by succumbing to social pressure and worldly models of parenting. These wise

mothers who know are selective about their own activities and involvement to conserve their limited strength in order to maximize their influence where it matters most.

Mothers who know are teachers

Mothers who know are always teachers. Since they are not baby-sitters, they are never off duty. A well-taught friend told me that he did not learn anything at church that he had not already learned at home. His parents used family scripture study, prayer, family home evening, mealtimes, and other gatherings to teach. Think of the power of our future missionary force if mothers considered their homes as a pre-missionary training center. Then the doctrines of the gospel taught in the MTC would be a review and not a revelation. That is influence; that is power.

Mothers who know do less

Mothers who know do less. They permit less of what will not bear good fruit eternally. They allow less media in their homes, less distraction, less activity that draws their children away from their home. Mothers who know are willing to live on less and consume less of the world’s goods in order to spend more time with their children—more time eating together, more time working together, more time reading together, more time talking, laughing, singing, and exemplifying. These mothers choose carefully and do not try to choose it all. Their goal is to prepare a rising generation of children who will take the gospel of Jesus Christ into the entire world. Their goal is to prepare future fathers and mothers who will be builders of the Lord’s kingdom for the next 50 years. That is influence; that is power.

Mothers who know stand strong and immovable

Who will prepare this righteous generation of sons and daughters? Latter-day Saint women will do this—women who know and love the Lord and bear testimony of Him, women who are strong and immovable and who do not give up during difficult and discouraging times. We are led by an inspired prophet of God who has called upon the women of the Church to “stand strong and immovable for that which is correct and proper under the plan of the Lord.”⁶ He has asked us to “begin in [our] own homes”⁷ to teach children the ways of truth. Latter-day Saint women should be the very best in the world at upholding, nurturing, and protecting families. I have every confidence that our women will do this and will come to be known as mothers who “knew” (Alma 56:48). In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “Standing Strong and Immovable,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 21.
2. James E. Faust, “Challenges Facing the Family,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 2.
3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102.
4. *To the Mothers in Zion* (pamphlet, 1987), 3.
5. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 20.
7. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 20.

The choir and congregation sang
“I Am a Child of God.”

Elder Christoffel Golden Jr.

Small and simple things

Everyone who will live the gospel of Jesus Christ daily and endure to the end will gain eternal life—this is the promise of the Lord.¹ In its essentials, the gospel is simple and easy to understand and adapted to the capacity of the weakest.² Alma, the Book of Mormon prophet, aptly remarked, “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but . . . by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; . . . and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.”³

A man’s journey back to fellowship

Quite recently I was privileged to observe this process in the life of a brother

named Stan, who had been less active for some 45 years. He had lived a good life and supported both his wife and son in their activity as faithful members in the Church. Yet for personal reasons he chose to remain outside the fellowship of the Church. Even so, each month he welcomed the home teachers.

Power of the Book of Mormon

During February 2006, Stan received new home teachers. Their first visit was pleasant enough, although Stan showed no real interest in the gospel or in any matters remotely associated with spiritual things. Their next visit did little to alter their initial observations, even though Stan was a little warmer and friendlier. On their third visit, however, there was a visible change in Stan’s countenance