

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

and demeanor. To their utmost surprise and even before they were able to present their message, Stan interrupted them with a number of thoughtful questions. In the ensuing discussion he also recounted his experiences during the past month, in which he and his wife had commenced reading one chapter a day from the Book of Mormon.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie eloquently described the type of reawakening Stan experienced: “Here is a man who gains a copy of this blessed book, begins to read it, and continues . . . until, having read it all, his famished soul is filled with the bread of life. He cannot lay it aside or ignore its teachings. It is as though the waters of life are flowing into the barren deserts of his soul, quenching the arid, empty feeling that theretofore separated him from his God.”⁴

The home teachers were reminded of the remarkable power of the Book of Mormon and how very real the influence of the Spirit of the Lord is when we turn to its sacred pages. They also more fully understood the Prophet Joseph Smith’s declaration “that the Book of Mormon [is] the most correct of any book on earth, . . . and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”⁵

Soul-searching, fervent prayer

Stan’s thirst for learning and rediscovery of the restored gospel soon expanded his reading beyond one chapter a day, accompanied by deep soul-searching and fervent prayer. To those who sometimes are concerned whether the Lord will actually hear their prayers, the Savior reminds us:

“If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? . . .

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father

give good gifts, through the Holy Spirit, to them that ask him?”⁶

Our beloved prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, also counseled:

“You can’t do it alone. . . . You need the help of the Lord . . . and the marvelous thing is that you have the opportunity to pray, with the expectation that your prayers will be heard and answered. . . . He stands ready to help.”⁷

Partaking of the sacrament

During August of 2006, Stan ventured alongside his ever-faithful wife into his ward sacrament meeting—his first in 45 years. There, with a humble and prayerful heart, he listened to the simple sacramental prayers offered by the youthful priests. Feeling unworthy and sensing something of the depth and the meaning of this most holy ordinance, he reflected deeply and painfully without partaking of the bread or the water for a number of weeks.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, in a tender testimony many years ago, said: “In my judgment the sacrament meeting is the most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church. When I reflect upon the gathering of the Savior and his apostles on that memorable night when he introduced the sacrament . . . my heart is filled with wonderment and my feelings are touched. I consider that gathering one of the most solemn and wonderful since the beginning of time.”⁸

Stan continued studying, praying, attending church, and receiving appropriate counsel and encouragement from his home teachers. Then the day arrived when, joyfully, he felt he was ready to put forth his hand to partake of the precious sacrament. When we partake worthily, thoughtfully, and reverently of the holy sacrament, we are enabled to become “partakers of the divine nature”⁹ because of the Atonement of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost.

As Stan returned to activity in the Church, he received a calling and, some months later, was ordained an elder. In July 2007, Stan and his wife knelt across the altar in a house of the Lord and, by the authority and eternal law of God, were married for time and for all eternity.¹⁰

The power of small and simple things

Brothers and sisters, may we discover anew the divine power of daily prayer and the convincing influence of the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures. On Sundays, when partaking of the sacrament, may we do so in the spirit of true devotion to Him who is the giver of all things.¹¹

In the wake of our best and very limited efforts and because of the Lord's infinite goodness, "great things [are] brought to pass" by the "small and simple things."

Finally, as to these sacred things, may I add my personal witness and assurance in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See 3 Nephi 27:13–18; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7.
2. See Matthew 11:28–30; Jacob 4:14; Alma 37:44; Doctrine and Covenants 133:57–58.
3. Alma 37:6–7.
4. *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (1985), 414.
5. *History of the Church*, 4:461.
6. Luke 11:11, 13; see Joseph Smith Translation in footnote 13a.
7. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 468.
8. In Conference Report, Oct. 1929, 60–61.
9. 2 Peter 1:4; see also 3 Nephi 18:1–14.
10. See Matthew 19:3–6; Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4.
11. See Moroni 6.

Elder David A. Bednar

Clean hands and a pure heart

I have fond childhood memories of my mother reading Book of Mormon stories to me. She had a way of making the scriptural episodes come alive in my youthful imagination, and I did not doubt that my mother had a witness of the truthfulness of that sacred record. I especially remember her description of the Savior's visit to the American continent following His resurrection and of His teachings to the people in the land of Bountiful. Through the simple consistency of her example and testimony, my mother kindled in me the first flames of faith in the Savior and in His latter-day Church. I came to know for myself that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ and

contains the fulness of His everlasting gospel (see D&C 27:5).

Today I want to review with you one of my favorite Book of Mormon events, the Savior's appearance in the New World, and discuss His instruction to the multitude about the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. I pray for the guidance of the Spirit for me and for you.

The Savior's ministry in the New World

During the Lord's three-day ministry in the New World, He taught His doctrine, authorized His disciples to perform priesthood ordinances, healed the sick, prayed for the people, and lovingly blessed the children. As the Savior's time with the people was drawing to a close,