

understanding. “Let Thy will be done” was now the manner of his pleadings.

Soon his daughter was in a coma, and the father knew her hours on earth were few. Fortified with understanding, trust, and power beyond their own, the young parents prayed again, asking for the opportunity to hold her close once more while she was awake. The daughter’s eyes opened, and her frail arms reached out to her parents for one final embrace. And then she was gone. This father knew their prayers had been answered—a kind, compassionate Father in Heaven had comforted their hearts. God’s will had been done, and they had gained understanding. (Adapted from H. Burke Peterson, “Adversity and Prayer,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, 18.)

Discerning and accepting the will of God in our lives are fundamental elements of asking in faith in meaningful prayer. However, simply saying the words “Thy will be done” is not enough. Each of us needs God’s help in surrendering our will to Him.

“Prayer is the act by which the will of the Father and the will of the child are brought into correspondence with each other” (Bible Dictionary, “Prayer,” 752–53). Humble, earnest, and persistent prayer enables us to recognize and align ourselves with the will of our Heavenly Father. And in this the Savior provided the perfect example as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “saying, Father,

if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. . . . And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22:42, 44).

The object of our prayers should not be to present a wish list or a series of requests but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is eager to bestow, according to His will and timing. Every sincere prayer is heard and answered by our Heavenly Father, but the answers we receive may not be what we expect or come to us when we want or in the way we anticipate. This truth is evident in the three examples I have presented today.

Moving beyond routine prayers

Prayer is a privilege and the soul’s sincere desire. We can move beyond routine and “checklist” prayers and engage in meaningful prayer as we appropriately ask in faith and act, as we patiently persevere through the trial of our faith, and as we humbly acknowledge and accept “not my will, but thine, be done.”

I witness the reality and divinity of our Eternal Father, of His Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. I testify that our Father hears and answers our prayers. May each of us strive with greater resolve to ask in faith and thereby make our prayers truly meaningful. I so pray in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder W. Craig Zwick

With each of you, I gratefully sustain God’s will for His people. Thank you, President Monson, for the purity of your heart.

Live by your standards

When young Joseph Smith told the truth about his sacred experience in the grove, he was persecuted and mistreated. The adversary used ridicule as a weapon

against him. “I was an obscure boy, . . . yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution.”¹

Joseph grew in patience, temperance, and faith, notwithstanding the presence of enemies on every front. In Joseph’s own words: “Evil and designing men have combined to destroy the innocent, . . . yet the glorious Gospel in its fullness is

spreading.”² “No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing.”³

Even today there are those who misunderstand our doctrine and challenge the unchanging values by which we are invited to live.

Ethan, a young friend of mine, approached his mother with a weighty question. Like most teenagers, Ethan wants to be independent, self-sufficient, and surrounded by good friends. He is trying to make good choices on his own. He is exceedingly valiant, works hard on his grades, and studies the scriptures daily. Like all young people, Ethan faces tremendous temptations. It comes in the halls of his school, on the Internet, in the movies and music. It can be heard in bad language and seen in provocative clothing. That which is wrong is often made to look right. Anxiety and fear of rejection are common among teenagers. Peer pressure is often overpowering. Ethan was feeling bombarded with opposing values.

This is the question he asked his mother: “Mom, do I need to lower my standards to keep my friends?”

It is a profound question for each of us to consider at all stages of life. Are we lowering our standards to fit into our neighborhoods? Are we altering our values to suit the situation in the workplace or to be popular at school?

Ethan’s loving mother answered him with a resounding no.

I, too, unequivocally answer, “Don’t do it, Ethan. Never forget that you are a son of God. He loves you. Live by your standards. Stand up for what you believe in. Sometimes it is not easy, and you may be standing alone for a while. Look for friends with integrity and character, and then go to them and express appreciation for their examples. You might even find someone who has been feeling as lonely as you. Pray for guidance and protection from the Lord. He will sustain you. He will become a trusted friend, and you will discover that your example will attract

many friends who will take courage from your strength of character.”

“We will not yield; we cannot yield”

Nephi taught us a powerfully simple principle in recounting his father’s dream of the tree of life. He described a strait and narrow path leading to a tree and a great and spacious building. This building was filled with people who were dressed in exceedingly fine and fashionable clothing. They were all in an attitude of mocking and pointing fingers toward those who were partaking of the fruit. They were trying to get people off the path and into the building. From all appearances, the people inside seemed to be having a great time. What an indelible image of temptation. In Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s words, “The laughter of the world is merely loneliness pathetically trying to reassure itself.”⁴

“And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. . . . They did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; *but we heeded them not.*”⁵

There at the end of the verse is Nephi’s powerful principle, an answer to unwanted peer pressure: “But we heeded them not.”

President Boyd K. Packer has recently emphasized this guiding principle: “However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield; we cannot yield.”⁶

Do we recognize temptation when it is so well camouflaged?

Are we willing to fight the unpopular battle?

Paul clearly warned that we should not be “men-pleasers; but [be] the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”⁷

The time has come when we must take an unyielding stand. We must shore up our spiritual underpinnings, listen to

the prophets of God, and follow their counsel.

Said Paul to Timothy: “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord.”⁸

It requires courage to make good choices, even when others around us choose differently. As we make righteous choices day by day in little things, the Lord will strengthen us and help us choose the right during more difficult times.

The teachings and values we cherish the most are not embraced by a secular world. To maintain a firm stance for ourselves and our children, the message of the restored gospel must be firmly planted in our hearts and taught in our homes.

Abinadi’s example of courage

Abinadi, a Nephite prophet, as recorded in just a few powerful pages in Mosiah, teaches us timeless lessons that perfectly meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Abinadi was a man of unwavering courage who stood for truth when it was unpopular to do so. As he courageously called the people to repentance, he knew his own life was in jeopardy. In your mind’s eye, you can see the riveting scene of Abinadi, who has just had the death sentence pronounced upon him. He had an opportunity to save himself by denying his faith and testimony, but instead he fearlessly proclaimed, “I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true.”⁹

We may not have to lose our lives in defense of truth, but we can, just like Abinadi, draw ourselves to full stature and with full heart and energy valiantly proclaim that Jesus Christ is our Savior. He

was and is the Son of the Almighty. He lives and He loves us.

As we follow Him, we will be able to make sacrifices and keep our sacred covenants. The Lord has said to us:

“Therefore, fear not, little flock; do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.”¹⁰

We must fortify ourselves. That sure spiritual fortification is found in two words—Jesus Christ. Of Him I humbly testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:22.
2. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 2:22.
3. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:540.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, “Cleanse Us from All Unrighteousness,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1986, 19.
5. 1 Nephi 8:33; italics added.
6. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 27; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 26.
7. Ephesians 6:6.
8. 2 Timothy 1:7–8.
9. Mosiah 17:9.
10. Doctrine and Covenants 6:34, 36.

President Uchtdorf

Thank you, brethren.

The choir and congregation will now sing “Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah.” Elders Robert R. Steuer and Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy will then address us.

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