

The Lord's Way

By Elder Stanley G. Ellis
Of the Seventy



The Lord's way is that we hearken to our leaders' teachings, understand correct principles, and govern ourselves.

Seventy

I serve as a Seventy. The Seventy are called to be messengers—to share the word of the Lord as we receive it from the apostles and prophets and from the Spirit and to be especial witnesses of the name of Christ in preaching the gospel in all the world, in building up the Church and regulating its affairs (see D&C 107:25, 34).

Farm Boy

I grew up on a farm near Burley, Idaho—a real “Idaho farm boy!” As such I learned:

1. To work—if you don't plant, you don't harvest.
2. To work smart—if you irrigate and fertilize, you harvest more.
3. The importance of timing—if you don't plant at the right time, an early frost can destroy the harvest.
4. To do what is needed or ought to be done regardless of what is enjoyable, preferable, or convenient—you milk the cow when she needs to be milked, not when you want to.
5. To be direct—with livestock and machinery involved, you don't have time to “beat around the bush” or to worry about being politically correct. (In this respect, as I have served throughout the Church, I have often asked, “Do you want me to speak directly or with sugar?” As a rule the Saints have chosen “direct!” I will be direct today.)
6. Finally, as an Idaho farm boy, I learned to stick to the basics.

Nothing is more basic to all of us, and our doctrine, than the truths of the first article of faith: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:1).

Further, He is *our* Heavenly Father, who knows us, loves us, and wants us to return to Him. Jesus is *our* Savior and Redeemer, who through the Atonement made it certain *we* will overcome death and live again and possible for *us* to be exalted and have eternal life. The Holy Ghost is *our* comforter, revelator, teacher, testifier, and guide.

Think of it, brothers and sisters—we are not spiritual orphans! We are not alone.

What are the advantages of having parents—of not being an orphan? We can learn from them, benefit from their experience, avoid pitfalls they warn us about, and understand better because of their perspective. We don't have to be lost, confused, deceived, or less effective. This is especially true in the case of our Heavenly Father, who has taught us and shown us not just a way but *the* way.

God Has the Way

In fact, God has the way to live,¹ to love,² to help,³ to pray,⁴ to talk,⁵ to interact with each other,⁶ to lead,⁷ to marry,⁸ to raise children,⁹ to learn,¹⁰ to know the truth,¹¹ to share the gospel,¹² to choose wisely what we eat,¹³ etc.

Along with the scriptures, some great sources for finding the Lord's way are *True to the Faith, For the Strength of Youth*, and other teachings of the living apostles and prophets.

1. For example, the Lord has taught us in the scriptures:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

2. One of the evils of these last days is that “every man walketh in his own way” (D&C 1:16). In Proverbs we are warned to “be not wise in thine own eyes” and to “lean not unto thine own understanding” (see Proverbs 3:5–7).

3. We are taught that if we do things the Lord's way, He is bound to bless us and we have claim to His promises; and if not His way, we have no promise (see D&C 82:10).

4. The Lord contrasted His way with our way in His training of the prophet Samuel, who was sent to find a new king: “But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

5. Even with the universally accepted desire to help the poor and needy, the Lord concurs in our goal but warns, “But it must needs be done in mine own way” (D&C 104:16). Otherwise, in our efforts to help, we may actually hurt them. The Lord has taught us the need to promote self-reliance. Even if we are able to help, we should not give or provide what they can and should do for themselves. Every where it is tried, the world learns the evils of the dole. Truly God knows best.

Let's consider some other examples. The Lord has the way to do missionary work. It is codified in the scriptures and in *Preach My Gospel* and implemented as guided by the Spirit.

The Lord has His way, or *the* way, to love. Those of the world say that what really matters is that two people love each other. Our Father in Heaven teaches that this is important, but He teaches us more: that there is an authorized way and time to express that love.

Governing Ourselves

Joseph Smith was taught from his youth the ways of the Lord. When asked how he led the Church, he explained

that he taught correct principles and the members governed themselves.¹⁴ Brothers and sisters, our living apostles and prophets are still teaching correct principles. The question is “Are we using these principles to govern ourselves?”

One thing we have often been taught is to bloom where we are planted. Yet sometimes we are tempted to migrate to some new area, thinking our children will have more friends and therefore better youth programs.

Brothers and sisters, do we really think the critical factor in the salvation of our children is the neighborhood where we live? The apostles and prophets have often taught that what happens inside the home is far more important than what our children encounter outside. *How* we raise our children is more important than *where* we raise them.

Certainly there are other factors involved in deciding where to live, and thankfully, the Lord will guide us if we seek His confirmation.

Another question is “Where are we needed?” For 16 years I served in the presidency of the Houston Texas North Stake. Many moved to our area during those years. We would often receive a phone call announcing someone moving in and asking which was the best ward. Only once in 16 years did I receive a call asking, “Which ward needs a good family? Where can we help?”

In the early years of the Church, President Brigham Young and others would call members to go to a certain place to build up the Church there. The irony is that even now we have faithful Church members everywhere who would go anywhere the prophet asked them to go. Do we really expect President Monson to individually tell more than 14 million of us where our family is needed? The Lord’s way is that we hearken to our leaders’ teachings, understand correct principles, and govern ourselves.

Especially Important

With all that is happening in the Church today, and as the Lord is hastening His work on every side, it is even more critically important that we do all we do in His way!

Especially in the work of salvation, we learn that “in the gift of his Son hath God prepared a more excellent way” (Ether 12:11). The doctrine of Christ “is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God” (2 Nephi 31:21).

Conclusion

As we see so many in the world today living in confusion or, worse, wandering in forbidden paths and suffering unnecessarily the consequences of poor choices, it makes me want to exclaim as did Alma:

“O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!

“Yea, I would declare unto every soul ... the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God [and His ways], that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth” (Alma 29:1–2).

Again, I witness the Lord has the way! Our Heavenly Father knows us, loves us, and wants to help. He knows best

how to help. We are not spiritual orphans!

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6; see also Alma 38:9). His way is based on eternal truth and leads us to “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. See 2 Nephi 5:27; Mosiah 4:27; Alma 7:23–25.
2. See Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 6:5; John 13:34–35; Romans 1:24–32; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Alma 39:3–5.
3. See Mosiah 4:21–27; Doctrine and Covenants 104:15–18.
4. See Matthew 6:5–13; 2 Nephi 32:8–9; 3 Nephi 18:21; Doctrine and Covenants 10:5.
5. See Proverbs 15:1; Colossians 4:6; James 5:12; 3 Nephi 11:29–30.
6. See Doctrine and Covenants 64:10–11; 121:41–46.
7. See Matthew 25:14–30; John 10:1–14; Doctrine and Covenants 50:26; 107:99–100; 121:34–40.
8. See Genesis 2:24; Jacob 2:27; Doctrine and Covenants 42:22; 132:19.
9. See Mosiah 4:14–15; Doctrine and Covenants 68:25–28.
10. See Doctrine and Covenants 43:8–9; 88:77–79, 118.
11. See Moroni 7:15–19; 10:3–5; Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9.

12. See Doctrine and Covenants 33:8–10; 100:3–8.

13. See Doctrine and Covenants 89.

14. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.

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