

Do What Mattereth Most

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As we center our lives on Jesus Christ, we will be blessed with spiritual strength, contentment, and joy.

Not long ago, a dear friend had an impression to visit a woman in her ward. She brushed off the prompting because she hardly knew her—it just didn't make sense. But since the thought kept coming to her, she decided to act on the prompting. Because she was already feeling uncomfortable about the impending visit, she determined that taking something to the sister would help ease her anxiety. Certainly she couldn't go empty-handed! So she bought a container of ice cream, and off she went to begin what she worried might be an awkward visit.

She knocked on the woman's door, and shortly the sister answered. My friend handed her the ice cream in a brown paper bag, and the conversation began. It didn't take long for my friend to realize why the visit was needed. As they sat together on the front porch, the woman unveiled a host of challenges she was facing. After an hour of talking in the warm summer weather, my friend noticed the ice cream melting through the brown paper bag.

She exclaimed, "I am so sorry that your ice cream melted!"

The woman sweetly responded, "It's OK! I'm lactose intolerant!"

In a dream, the Lord told the prophet Lehi, "Blessed art thou Lehi, because of the things which thou hast *done*."¹

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves more than just hoping or believing. It calls for effort, movement, and commitment. It requires that we do something, being "doers of the word, and not hearers only."²

In the case of the melted ice cream, what mattered most? The ice cream? Or that my friend simply did something?

I had a sweet experience with a darling young woman who asked a very sincere question: "Sister Craven, how do you know that anything about the Church is true? Because I feel nothing."

Before jumping to an answer, I first asked her some questions. “Tell me about your personal scripture study.”

She replied, “I don’t read the scriptures.”

I asked, “What about with your family? Do you study *Come, Follow Me* together?”

She said, “No.”

I asked about her prayers: “What do you feel when you pray?”

Her answer: “I don’t pray.”

My response to her was simple: “If you want to know anything, you will have to do something.”

Isn’t that true with anything we want to learn or know? I invited my new friend to start *doing* the gospel of Jesus Christ: praying, studying, serving others, and trusting in the Lord. Conversion won’t come while doing nothing. It comes through the power of the Holy Ghost as we intentionally make an effort to know by asking, seeking, and knocking. It comes by doing.³

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord occasionally says, “It mattereth not.”⁴ It makes me ponder that if some things matter not, or matter less, there must be things that matter most. In our efforts to *do something* or *do anything*, we might ask ourselves, “What mattereth most?”

Advertisers often use slogans such as “Essential” or “Must Have” in the hope of luring us to believe the product they are selling is necessary for our happiness or well-being. But is what they are selling *really* essential? Must we *really* have it? Does it *really* matter?

Here are some thoughts to consider. What mattereth most?

- How many “likes” we get on our social media posts? Or how much we are loved and valued by our Heavenly Father?
- Wearing the latest trend in clothing? Or showing respect for our bodies by dressing modestly?
- Finding answers through an internet search? Or receiving answers from God through the Holy Ghost?
- Wanting more? Or being content with what we have been given?

President Russell M. Nelson teaches:

“With the Holy Ghost as your companion, you can see right through the celebrity culture that has smitten our society. You can be smarter than previous generations have ever been. ...

“Set a standard for the rest of the world!”⁵

It takes effort to stay focused on what is *truly essential* for lasting joy. Satan would love nothing more than for us to misplace our eternal values, leading us to waste precious time, talents, or spiritual strength on things that matter not. I invite each of us to prayerfully consider those things that distract us from doing what mattereth most.

Our oldest son's third-grade teacher taught her class to "boss your brain." It was a reminder to her young students that they were in control of their thoughts and could therefore control what they do. I remind myself to "boss *my* brain" when I find myself drifting toward things that matter less.

A high school student recently told me that it has become popular among some youth of the Church to disregard the commandments with a calculated plan to repent later. "It's sort of a badge of honor," I was told. Certainly the Lord will continue to forgive those who humbly repent "with real intent."⁶ But the Savior's merciful Atonement should never be used in such a mocking way. We know the parable of the one lost sheep. Of course, a shepherd will leave the other 99 sheep to find the one who has strayed. But can you imagine the joy that those who choose to be the 99 bring to the Good Shepherd? The ones who stick together and help each other live their covenants? Can you visualize what the world or your school or your work or your home would be like if being obedient was the popular thing to do? It's not about *doing* life perfectly—it's about finding joy while *doing our best* to live the covenants we have made with the Lord.

With the world expressing more doubt about God and confusion and pressures increasing, this is the time we must stay closest to the prophet. As he is the Lord's mouthpiece, we can trust that what he urges, counsels, and pleads with us to do are things that matter most.

Although it may not be easy, there is always a way to do the right thing. While talking with a group of friends at school, a young woman felt her heart drop when the conversation turned to criticizing the standards of the Church. She realized she couldn't stay silent—she had to do something. Respectfully, she spoke of the love of Heavenly Father and how the commandments He set are to bless and protect His children. It would have been much easier for her to do nothing. But what mattered most? Blending in with the crowd? Or standing *out* as a witness of God at "all times and in all things, and in all places"?⁷

If the restored Church of Jesus Christ is going to come out of obscurity, we must come out of obscurity. As covenant-keeping women, we must shine our gospel light all over the world by stepping up and standing out. We do this together as daughters of God—a force of 8.2 million women ages 11 and beyond, whose work is exactly the same. We are gathering Israel as we participate in the work of salvation and exaltation: striving to live the gospel of Jesus Christ, caring for others in need, inviting all to receive the gospel, and uniting families for eternity.⁸ The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of action and a gospel of joy! Let us not underestimate our capacity to do those things that matter most. Our divine heritage gives us courage and confidence to do and be all that our loving Heavenly Father knows we can be.

The youth theme for this year is from Proverbs 3:5–6:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

A key component of trusting in the Lord is moving forward, believing He will guide us even when we don’t have all the answers.

Sisters, it’s not about the ice cream. And it’s not about doing more. It’s about doing what matters. It’s applying the doctrine of Christ in our lives as we strive to become more like Him.

The more we do to stay firmly on the covenant path, the more our faith in Jesus Christ will grow. The more our faith grows, the more we will desire to repent. And the more we repent, the more we will strengthen our covenant relationship with God. That covenant relationship draws us to the temple because keeping temple covenants is how we endure to the end.

As we center our lives on Jesus Christ, we will be guided to do what mattereth most. And we will be blessed with spiritual strength, contentment, and with *joy!* In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. 1 Nephi 2:1; emphasis added.
2. James 1:22.
3. See Alma 5:45–46; Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 39–42.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 27:2; 80:3.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Hope of Israel” (worldwide youth devotional, June 3, 2018), [HopeofIsrael.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
6. Moroni 6:8.
7. Mosiah 18:9; see also “Young Women Theme,” [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).
8. See *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1.2, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org).