
A CHRIST-CENTERED MILITARY HOME

INVITATIONS AND DAILY QUOTES TO FOSTER RESILIENCY



ANTHONY A MOYA

A
CHRIST-CENTERED
MILITARY HOME



ANTHONY A MOYA

© All rights reserved, 2020

Authored by Anthony A. Moya

Brigham Young University

Contact at christcenteredmilitaryhome@gmail.com

Website: www.christcenteredmilitaryhome.com

*Dedicatated to my beloved
sweetheart Elise, my three
boys: Ezrom, AJ, & Ezekiel,
and my brother Luis.*

*“One of the greatest blessings we can offer to the world is the power of a **Christ-centered home** where the gospel is taught, covenants are kept , and love abounds.”*

Elder Richard G. Scott

INTRODUCTION

On October 5, 1943, Chaplain Israel Yost, a dedicated Lutheran military chaplain was assigned to the 100th Battalion. This battalion consisted of members largely from the Hawaiian Army National Guard.¹ Chaplain Yost's ministry among the 100th was incredible, especially as he served with the battalion during World War II, ministering to them in various locations throughout Europe. Along with the religious support that he provided to the 100th, made up primarily of Japanese Buddhist service members, Chaplain Yost also sought ways to strengthen his own family from afar during his time being trained and deployed as a Chaplain in the United States Army. His efforts revealed his character and his priorities. Before he joined the military, Chaplain Yost wrote in his journal:

I intended to keep busy as a good pastor, a good husband, and a good father. Then the world conflict began to impinge upon our comfortable world: ... My conscience began to bother me; I was unable to shake off the growing conviction that it was my duty to volunteer as a chaplain.... With the approval of my wife Peggy, I wrote to the army, asking about the procedure for getting a commission.²

His conviction to serve in the Army changed his life and the lives of his family members. The various difficulties Chaplain Yost's family faced together, due to his service in the military, did not stop them from striving to strengthen their family relationships.

On August 1943, when Chaplain Yost returned home for the birth of his child, he made a promise to his wife Peggy. Chaplain Yost recorded, "We also promised each other that until I returned from overseas each of us would read each day a chapter of the Bible, beginning in Genesis."³

1. Israel A. S. Yost, *Combat Chaplain: The Personal Story of the World War II Chaplain of the Japanese American 100th Battalion*, ed. Monica E. Yost and Michael Markrich (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 1.

2. Israel A. S. Yost, 31.

3. Israel A. S. Yost, 38.

This promise was kept diligently and was modified to fit the circumstances during deployment to best support his family. Chaplain Yost knew that his relationship with his spouse was vital in making sure his family was cared for. On August 22, 1943, he recorded in his journal about writing to his wife.

Even though no mail could be posted during the voyage, I began the practice of writing my wife daily, sharing with her my thoughts and commenting on my activities [and]...of the need for her to send two copies of all important letters in case some mail should be lost, of how much I loved her and needed her for my “balance wheel,” of which chapter of the Bible I was reading on a given date so that she could adjust her daily reading in order to keep our devotions the same.⁴

While Chaplain Yost was in Italy, he recorded in his journal about how his goal to read a chapter from the Bible daily changed to trying to do it at the same time.

Peggy and I had agreed to read a chapter of scripture daily, going straight through the Bible books and thus reading the same verses even though we were separated by thousands of miles. We even tried to coordinate the time, allowing for the six-hour difference between Italy and home.⁵

During his deployment, Chaplain Yost continued to be a good husband and father. He wanted the best for his family. He believed this consisted of creating a strong family relationship that was centered in Jesus Christ. The Bible was his means to center his family in Jesus Christ even when separated due to the obligations of his military service.

Like Chaplain Yost and his wife Peggy, all couples within the military face challenging situations, but can still stay strong. Karen Rose Blaisure explained that the military culture requires personal sacrifice and discipline. Blaisure described that “when civilians join the military, they voluntarily give up many privileges, much of their autonomy, and many rights that they had as civilians.”⁶ Furthermore, she identified various ways that a service member gives personal sacrifice to be obedient.

Service members can be required to spend weeks or months of training away from their homes and families to ensure that they can perform their jobs well in spite of intense pressure. Military units often conduct grueling military training in extreme, sometimes very uncomfortable,

4. Israel A. S. Yost, 39.

5. Israel A. S. Yost, 13.

6. Karen Rose Blaisure, *Serving Military Families: Theories, Research and Application* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 16.

conditions that approximate war and require that service members perform their jobs flawlessly. The military services place the accomplishments of their assigned missions before everything else, including individual needs and family concerns. Service members are required to accept and comply with this priority. They know they can be sent to new locations, either temporarily or permanently, to work or train with no advance notice to them or to their families. The instability they live can be very disruptive to their [them] or their family members' activities or personal goals.⁷

It can be hard for service members and their families to adjust to the demanding lifestyle of the military. The success of Chaplain Yost and his family's plan gives hope that even during times of war service members and their families can be resilient and by working together can strengthen their relationships.

Military families have to be prepared to be resilient against the pressures they face. Blaisure called some of these pressures normative stressors. There are "stressors that occur for most families and at expected times, such as life cycle changes (e.g. birth of a child, death of an aged grandparent) and developmental changes (e.g., children going to school)."⁸ Lorie T. DeCarvalho and Julia M. Whealin mentioned that the unique and common experiences that each military couple and family have are things that cause adverse reactions that must be dealt with to provide healing and resiliency. DeCarvalho and Whealin stated:

Following deployments, family members may struggle with being able to communicate with each other. [There] may be challenges by renegotiating their sense of trust in other family members. Members of the family have become used to functioning independently in separate contexts; as such, they must learn to function together as a unit again.⁹

As families work together, the separations and stresses of a military lifestyle can make a family stronger.

Even with family life changes, deployments, and separations, Chaplain Yost and his wife had one primary factor that provided aid and fostered resiliency throughout their time in the military. They read the Bible and centered their lives in Jesus Christ. We can see the successful example of Chaplain Yost and his family as they followed the guidance of Paul. In Colossians 2:6-8 the Apostle Paul reminded us

7. Karen Rose Blaisure, *Serving Military Families: Theories, Research and Application*, 16.

8. Karen Rose Blaisure, 18.

9. Lorie T. DeCarvalho and Julia M. Whealin, *Healing Stress in Military Families: Eight Steps to Wellness*, (Hoboken: New Jersey, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2012), 7.

to center our lives in Christ and to be “rooted and built up in him... [but] to be aware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints want to protect their families from the dangers of the world. In a First Presidency message given in the Principles of the Gospel military edition we read, “As you face the demands of military life, you can find comfort, strength, and assurance through daily prayer and scripture study and through the words of latter-day prophets.”¹⁰ President Henry B. Eyring stated, “You will find some of your greatest joys in your efforts to make your home a place of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a place that is permeated with love.”¹¹ This may take much effort but will be a blessing. When introducing “A Family: A Proclamation to the World” President Gordon B. Hinckley stated:

With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn.¹²

This document teaches key truths about the home, and how to center our families in Jesus Christ. President Hinckley also taught that the reason why we have the family proclamation is “because the family is under attack. All across the world families are falling apart. The place to begin to improve society is in the home.”^{13,14}

Others besides prophets and apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have mentioned the importance of the family proclamation. Brent D. Slife, Melinda J. Peterson, and Daniel K Judd in an article focused on a Christ-centered family, suggested that the “proclamation instructs us in how to discover... [joy] by centering our lives in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹⁵ The proclamation is indeed a document that can help strengthen the home. President Thomas S. Monson taught, “We are responsible for the home we build, we must build wisely for eternity is not a short voyage.”¹⁶ Therefore, families have the responsibility to build a home that is a Christ-centered sanctuary no matter how far apart family members may be.

10. Principles of the Gospel, (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003), 1.

11. Henry B. Eyring, “A Home Where the Spirit of the Lord Dwells,” Ensign, May 2019, 25.

12. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong against the Wires of the World,” Ensign, November 1995, 100.

13. Sheri L. Dew, Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1997), 209.

14. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign, November 1995, 102.

15. Brent D. Slife, Melinda J. Peterson, and Daniel K. Judd, “Faith and Prayer in a Christ-Centered Family,” in Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family, ed. David C. Dollahite. (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 142.

16. Thomas S. Monson, Teachings of Thomas S. Monson, compiled by Lynne F. Cannegieter, (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014), 137.

For Latter-day Saint families and especially Latter-day Saint military families, the proclamation is centered on Jesus Christ because it explains the doctrine about the family that prophets and apostles have taught for many years. David Ridge found that “the word ‘family’ appears in the Proclamation in one form or another, thirteen times.”¹⁷ This makes it clear that family is important to the Lord and his prophets. Latter-day Saints understand the family is central to the plan of God or the Plan of Salvation. In Moses 1:39, we read that the “work and glory of God is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” This is dependent on Jesus Christ. For the family to succeed, it must be centered on God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

A Christ-centered military home can make a difference. Unified actions of service member and their families can bring forth resiliency in the family during the struggles of military and life obligations. The Family: A Proclamation to the World is an important revelatory document for Latter-day Saints to help them center their families on Christ. The proclamation teaches the revealed doctrine of the family according to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The purpose of this project was to create a website full of quotes and invitations that can be used to strengthen families in finding happiness and making their homes refuges from the world.

17. David J. Ridges, *The Proclamation of the Family: The Word of the Lord on More than Thirty Current Issues* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 11.

THE FAMILY
PROCLAMATION &
RESILIENCY

In The Family: A Proclamation to the World there are 12 principles that can help military Latter-day Saint families build a Christ-centered home. When studying and researching the proclamation, the Lord directed prophets through revelation how to build strong and resilient families. Latter-day Saint families have used this proclamation as a source of strength and encouragement. Military Latter-day Saint families know that resiliency is necessary to be unified through the struggles of a military lifestyle. Elder Richard G. Scott expressed that one of the ways to receive “the greatest happiness and blessings from this earth experience” is to “learn the doctrinal foundation of the great plan of happiness by studying the scriptures, pondering their content, and praying to understand them. Carefully study and use the proclamation of the First Presidency and the Twelve on the family.”¹

Through the years, many have studied resilience and have defined it. Steven Southwick and Dennis Charney when defining resilience recognized The American Psychological Association description of resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats and even significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stresses.”² The Ensign of September 2019 focused on resilience. In one of the articles, Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy uses the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition to describe resilience as the “ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change.”³ Taken together, resilience is the ability to recover, bounce back, and adapt from the difficulties, challenges, trials, and adversities of life.

When the Army finished the Master Resilience Training course that would be taught to Noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) so that the NCO or another officer can then teach other soldiers, the training included four modules. In the fourth module, its primary focus is “on strengthening relationships among soldiers and between soldiers and their family members.”⁴ This resonates with the family proclamation in that it also stresses the importance of strengthening family relationships. Although the difference is that the proclamation is not dedicated to only a focus on the family as a whole but also focuses on each family member.

No matter the family or individual, the Lord has given the proclamation to declare precious and eternal truths. David Dickson stated, “No two families have the same mix of people, personalities, or preferences, but whatever your family situation,

1. Richard G. Scott, “The Joy of Living the Great Plan of Happiness,” Ensign, November 1996, 75.

2. Steven M. Southwick and Dennis S. Charney, *Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life's Greatest Challenges* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

3. Lynn G. Robbins, “Resilience—Spiritual Armor for Today's Youth,” Ensign, September 2019, 36.

4. Karen J. Reivich, Martin E.P. Seligman, and Sharon McBride, “Master Resilience Training in the U.S. Army,” *American Psychologist* 66, No. 1, (January 2011): 30, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021897>.

studying the scriptures together strengthens family bonds.”⁵ With this in mind, part of resilience is also the relationships in a family and their ability to bounce back, adapt, or recover from what they may face. Thus, the proclamation is a powerful source that can teach how this bond (resiliency) in Latter-day Saint military families can be built through doctrinal truths.

Learn, Act, and Become

Elder David A. Bednar, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote a series of books discussing spiritual patterns. The focus of the series was to teach people how to center their lives on Christ. There were three books in the series. Although each one is not an official statement of the Church, they provide a template that Latter-day Saint families can use. This model consists of Learning, Acting, and Becoming or in simple terms LAB. Elder Bednar taught “Three fundamental and interrelated gospel imperatives—learning, acting, and becoming are central to our spiritual development and happiness in mortality and our progress throughout eternity.”⁶ In this section each book will be summarized.

The first book was *Increase in Learning: Spiritual Patterns for Obtaining your own Answers*. Elder Bednar noted that the “book focuses upon concepts, patterns, and processes that can help you and me learn for ourselves the fundamental doctrines and principles of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.”⁷ Elder Bednar explained that the title of the book came from Proverbs 9:9-10 which states, “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”⁸ This is very applicable to a Latter-day military family, in order to gain wisdom, it is necessary to increase in learning. When Alma reunited with the sons of Mosiah after many years Alma wrote that they “had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God” (Alma 17:2). Latter-day Saint military families can follow the example of the sons of Mosiah and search the scriptures to gain a sound understanding of the truth and word of the Lord. In Doctrine and Covenants 88:118 the Lord taught, “Seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” Therefore, learning is the first element of the model. Latter-day Saint military families can start by learning through study in order to draw closer to Christ.

5. David Dickson, “Strengthening “the Body of Christ,” Ensign, September 2019, 16.

6. David A. Bednar, *Act in Doctrine: Spiritual Patterns for Turning From Self to the Savior* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2012), xi.

7. David A. Bednar, *Increase in Learning: Spiritual Patterns for Obtaining your Own Answers* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2011), xi.

8. David A. Bednar, *Increase in Learning: Spiritual Patterns for Obtaining your Own Answers*, xi.

The second book was called *Act in Doctrine: Spiritual Patterns for Turning from Self to the Savior*. The focus of this book came from the Doctrine and Covenants 101:78 where it emphasized “That every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him, that every man may be accountable for his own sins in the day of judgment.”⁹ This is the second step of the model. To act in doctrine means to apply what is being taught and what one discovers as learning occurs. Elder Bednar expressed, “The word act denotes performing, behaving, and living. The doctrine of Christ is revealed truth that pertains to our eternal progression and happiness. Thus, to ‘act in doctrine’ is to live according to and ‘in’ revealed truth.”¹⁰ Elder Bednar noted the meaning of the word act but brought attention to living the doctrine of Christ and its revealed truth. As a Latter-day Saint military family learns through study and prayer, it is important for them to act in the revealed truth of the scriptures, the words of the prophets, and in keeping the commandments of the Lord.

The third book of the series was called *Power to Become: Spiritual Patterns for Pressing Forward with a Steadfastness in Christ*. This is the final part of the model that Elder Bednar explained and taught. The title of the book is the final step in the model.¹¹ It came from a passage of scripture found in Doctrine and Covenants 11:28-30 that teaches the following:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world. I am the same who came unto mine own and mine own received me not; But verily, verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them I give power to become the sons [and daughters] of God, even to them that believe on my name. Amen

The passage of scripture becomes the final foundational piece in the model. To become takes time and is a process. Elder Bednar expressed the meaning and purpose of being a disciple of Christ:

The Primary purpose of devoted discipleship are to “awaken” unto God (Alma 5:7;7:22), to be “born again” (John 3:3; Mosiah 27:25; Alma 5:49; 7:14), to put off the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19), and to become “new” in Christ. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). We also are to “press forward with a steadfastness in

9. David A. Bednar, *Act in Doctrine: Spiritual patterns for turning form self to the Savior* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2012), xv-xvi.

10. David A. Bednar, *Act in Doctrine: Spiritual patterns for turning form self to the Savior*, 1.

11. David A. Bednar, *Power to Become: Spiritual patterns for pressing forward with a steadfastness in Christ* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2014), xi.

Christ (2 Nephi 31:20) and endure in faith on His name to the end (see Matthew 24:13; 2 Nephi 31:16; Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; 20:29). Ultimately, followers of Christ are to become like Him.¹²

The final part of the model that Latter-day Saint military families can follow is to become. Through learning and then through actions, we are to become like Christ.

The LAB model creates unity in Christ through learning, acting, and becoming. It is a model that never ceases. It is an upward spiral, always moving up and forward. Even as you finish one level of the model you will come around and up again. It is something Latter-day Saint military families can strive to implement in their daily lives.

SUMMARY

Therefore, 12 themes of the proclamation were examined. This book is organized by the 12 principles as the themes of each section. Each theme showed how resiliency can be built or reinforced within a military Latter-day Saint family through a Christ-centric home. Also, a descriptive model developed by Elder Bednar was utilized as an aide in strengthening family relationships according to the 12 themes. This model included the principles of learn, act, and become (LAB). The acronym reminds that homes are a lab where family relationships are constantly being strengthened and encouraged.

12. David A. Bednar, Power to Become: Spiritual patterns for pressing forward with a steadfastness in Christ, 1-2.

THEME 1: Faith

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
*“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of faith.”*

JANUARY: FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

In Gothic architecture, we find a tympanum which is described as a “vertical, triangular space enclosed by horizontal and raking cornices of a pediment; also the space between the square head or lintel of a door or window and the round or pointed discharging arch above it.”¹ Gothic tympana are “decorated with a representation of one or more key scenes from Christian salvation history, such as the Passion of Christ, the Last Judgement, or scenes from the Life of the Virgin [Mary].”² Gothic tympana have existed for some time, but there is one particular tympanum made in the early 1900s and placed at the front of the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City, Utah that is unique. On it the “key figure and center” is Jesus Christ, “as High Priest.”^{3, 4} All other parts of the sculpted work are found around Him. It is the first thing you see as your eyes pass up through the entrance doors of the Cathedral.

For Latter-day Saint military families, we have something similar to the tympana placed on the temples of the Church: an inscription that says, “Holiness to the Lord” and “The House of the Lord.” This inscription is on top of or on the side of the entrance doors to most temples. Gaye Strathearn stated, “Having the phrase ‘Holiness to the Lord’ indelibly imprinted upon our thoughts, we can become holy.”⁵ Strathearn was referring to temple worship, but also gives meaning to the inscription. Before entering the temple, people read, “Holiness to the Lord,” thus helps prepare their minds and thoughts to focus on the Lord. Furthermore, “The House of the Lord” is a reminder that the temple is the House of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. “Tympanum,” Oxford Art Online (2003), accessed September 5, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T086753>.

2. “Tympanum,” 2003.

3. In the tympana Christ is usually picture in the center of the mandorla which is an almond shaped form in the middle of two circles.

4. “Pictorial Tour: Tympanum,” The Cathedral of the Madeleine, accessed September 5, 2019, <https://utcotm.org/about/pictorial-tour>.

5. Gaye Strathearn, “‘Holiness to the Lord’ and Personal Temple Worship,” in *The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament*, The 38th Annual BYU Sidney B. Sperry Symposium (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 230.

In the dedication of the Kirkland Temple, the Prophet Joseph Smith prayed “that this house may be a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, even thy house” (Doctrine and Covenants 109:13). The inscriptions and tympana on temples and cathedrals show the need to center one’s thoughts on Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ can be the center for Latter-day Saint military homes in order to foster resiliency.

The proclamation states, “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith.”⁶ Elder Merrill J. Bateman stated, “The process of building a Christ-centered life must be based on and begin with the first principle of the gospel.”⁷ In the Book of Mormon, we read of Lehi who led his family into the wilderness. He was given a ball called the Liahona that guided them (see 1 Nephi 16). Lehi’s son, Nephi explained that the Liahona “did work according to... faith and diligence and heed” (1 Nephi 16:28). Thus, Nephi mentioned three important elements of discipleship and faith was the first. When preaching to the Zoramites, Alma taught, “Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21). Paul described faith in Hebrews 11:1 as being “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The Joseph Smith Translation of this verse changed the word substance to assurance. Faith is having a conviction and confidence of that which is true. Travis Larsen stated, “Saving faith can only be exercised in that which is true. Our faith must be centered in Jesus Christ.”⁸ In these first definitions we find that faith is a combination of the knowledge we obtain, what we hope for, and the evidence of what we may not see. The most important part is that it is centered in Christ.

Faith leads to action. Robert Millet taught, “The equation of faith as a principle of power is an important one. Faith thereby becomes more than a passive wish or even a strong longing or yearning for some eventuality to occur.”⁹ In Lectures on Faith, we read the following:

Faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also.... Faith is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeable to the will of God. Without

6. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

7. Merrill J. Bateman, “Living a Christ-centered Life,” Ensign, January 1999, 7.

8. Travis Larsen, “The Power of Faith That Comes through Sacrifice,” Selections from the Religious Education Student Symposium 2006 (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006), 43.

9. Robert Millet, Precept Upon Precept (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2016), 218–219.

it there is no power, and without power there could be no creation nor existence.¹⁰

Similarly, in Hebrews 11:3 we read, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Thus, faith is powerful not only for individuals but for families. President Russell M. Nelson explained in the April 2017 general conference, “Faith in Jesus Christ propels us to do things we otherwise would not do. Faith that motivates us to action gives us more access to His power.”¹¹

Latter-day Saint military families are encouraged to build their homes centered on Jesus Christ. This starts with faith in Him. A simple but powerful teaching about faith in Jesus Christ is described in Preach My Gospel:

When you have faith in Christ, you believe in Him as the Son of God, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. You accept Him as your Savior and Redeemer and follow His teachings. You believe that your sins can be forgiven through His Atonement. Faith in Him means that you trust Him and are confident that He loves you.¹²

This confidence is what will lay a foundation on which to build a successful home. President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of Christ as the cornerstone of our foundation:

Absolutely basic to our faith (as a Church) is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew in Nazareth as the carpenter’s son, within Him [were] the elements of both mortality and immortality received, respectively, from His earthly mother and His Heavenly Father.¹³

The base to our testimony as members of the Church is Jesus Christ and knowing that He is the living Son of God. He was not just a figure in history or a great leader. In Lectures on Faith we read the following:

For where faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things which pertain thereto—revelations, visions, dreams, as well as every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, and obtain salvation; for God must change, otherwise faith will prevail with him. And he who possesses it will, through it, obtain

10. Lectures on Faith (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 3,5.

11. Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” Ensign, May 2017, 41.

12. Preach My Gospel (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 116.

13. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Four Cornerstones of Faith,” Ensign, February 2004, 3.

all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has sent—whom to know is eternal life.¹⁴

For a Latter-day Saint military family, faith is a key within the home to build resilience against the attacks of the world and the challenges that military life may bring. President Nelson, in the 2011 general conference stated the following:

We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.¹⁵

The turmoil of which President Nelson speaks can include service-members being deployed. Many families are under attack from the pressures of military life when family members are separated due to trainings, long working hours, and deployed. Therefore, faith in Christ can give the family common ground despite distance.

We learn in Acts that early Christians made it known that “in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42). Early Christians knew the importance of having a home centered in the Redeemer and Savior of the world. This made it easier for them to get through the trials they faced, even when the trials came because of their belief in Christ. President Nelson, also added the following in his general conference talk:

Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord “shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). That every persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.¹⁶

Paul suffered persecution, but he had resilient faith. When addressing the Philippians Paul wrote, “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil 1:12). Even when Paul was almost crushed by the limits placed upon him, he did not let the limits of being incarcerated, accused, or persecuted bring him down. Paul knew that it could further the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The challenges turned out to be a blessing to him. Paul then wrote, “So that my bonds in Christ are

14. Lectures on Faith (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 83.

15. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” Ensign, May 2011, 34.

16. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” 35-36.

manifest in all the palace, and in all other places” (Phil 1:13). That is what faith in Jesus Christ can become in a Latter-day Saint military home. Building faith in Jesus Christ can lay the foundation and be a tympanum in front of the door reminding all whose house it is.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLE OF
FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

ACT:

STRENGTHEN YOUR TESTIMONY/
TESTIMONIES OF JESUS CHRIST

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT FAITH TO CENTER YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

The process of building a Christ-centered life must be based on and begin with the first principle of the gospel.¹

Day 2:

*“Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true”
(Alma 32:21).*

Day 3:

“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

Day 4:

Saving faith can only be exercised in that which is true. Our faith must be centered in Jesus Christ.²

Day 5:

The equation of faith as a principle of power is an important one. Faith thereby becomes more than a passive wish or even a strong longing or yearning for some eventuality to occur.³

Day 6:

Faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also...[then he adds] Faith is the first great governing principle which has power, dominion, and authority over all things; by it they exist, by it they are upheld, by it they are changed, or by it they remain, agreeable to the will of God. Without it there is no power, and without power there could be no creation nor existence.⁴

Day 7:

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrew 11:3).

Day 8:

Faith in Jesus Christ propels us to do things we otherwise would not do. Faith that motivates us to action gives us more access to His power.⁵

Day 9:

Absolutely basic to our faith (The Church) is our testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who under a divine plan was born in Bethlehem of Judea. He grew in Nazareth as the carpenter's son, within Him the elements of both mortality and immortality received, respectively, from His earthly mother and His Heavenly Father.⁶

Day 10:

For where faith is, there will the knowledge of God be also, with all things which pertain thereto—revelations, visions, dreams, as well as every necessary thing, in order that the possessors of faith may be perfected, and obtain salvation; for God must change, otherwise faith will prevail with him. And he who possesses it will, through it, obtain all necessary knowledge and wisdom, until he shall know God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has sent—whom to know is eternal life.⁷

Day 11:

We live in a time of turmoil. Earthquakes and tsunamis wreak devastation, governments collapse, economic stresses are severe, the family is under attack, and divorce rates are rising. We have great cause for concern. But we do not need to let our fears displace our faith. We can combat those fears by strengthening our faith.⁸

Day 12:

“...in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5:42).

Day 13:

Why do we need such resilient faith? Because difficult days are ahead. Rarely in the future will it be easy or popular to be a faithful Latter-day Saint. Each of us will be tested. The Apostle Paul warned that in the latter days, those who diligently follow the Lord “shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). That every persecution can either crush you into silent weakness or motivate you to be more exemplary and courageous in your daily lives.⁹

Day 14:

“But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel...So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places” (Phil 1:12-13).

Day 15:

If we do not have a deep foundation of faith and a solid testimony of truth, we may have difficulty withstanding the harsh storms and icy winds of adversity which inevitably come to each of us. Mortality is a period of testing, a time to prove ourselves worthy to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. In order for us to be tested, we must face challenges and difficulties. These can break us, and the surface of our souls may crack and crumble—that is, if our foundations of faith, our testimonies of truth are not deeply imbedded within us. We can rely on the faith and testimony of others only so long. Eventually we must have our own strong and deeply placed foundation, or we will be unable to withstand the storms of life, which will come.¹⁰

Day 16:

The size of your faith or the degree of your knowledge is not the issue—it is the integrity you demonstrate toward your faith you do have and the truth you already know.¹¹

Day 17:

Our Faith in Jesus Christ will provide power and a strong forward thrust; our unwavering and active hope will provide a powerful upward lift. Both faith and hope will carry us across oceans of temptations, over mountains of afflictions, and bring us safely back to our eternal home and destination.¹²

Day 18:

I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us. My beloved brothers and sisters, fear not. Be of good cheer. The future is as bright as your faith.¹³

Day 19:

Faithfully pursue the time-tested devotional practices that bring the Spirit of the Lord into your life. Seek the counsel of those who hold keys for your spiritual well-being. Ask for and cherish priesthood blessings. Take the sacrament every week, and hold fast to the perfecting promises of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹⁴

Day 20:

“Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you” (Alma 34:17).

Day 21:

“And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:6).

Day 22:

Faith in Him is more than mere acknowledgement that He lives. It is more than professing belief. Faith in Jesus Christ consists of complete reliance on Him. As God, He has infinite power, intelligence, and love. There is no human problem beyond His capacity to solve. Because He descended below all things, He knows how to help us rise above our daily activities. Faith in Him means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does. We, therefore, must look to Him “in every thought; doubt not, fear not.” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:36)¹⁵

Day 23:

The first characteristic, to which all the others are added, is faith. Faith is the foundation upon which a godlike character is built. It is a prerequisite for all other virtues.¹⁶

Day 24:

“For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith”
(Doctrine and Covenants 98:12).

Day 25:

Faith, like any other spiritual talent, grows gradually and is strengthened as it is used.¹⁷

Day 26:

Amid all this uncertainty, the foundation of Jesus Christ is the only secure anchor. Without the assurance that God exists and watches over us, our failures seem random, meaningless, and absolute. Our losses seem irreparable, and our calamities eventually overwhelm us with despair. With the assurance of Christ, we can stand

*firm in confidence that he will ultimately restore our losses more completely than we can even begin to comprehend. Courage and optimism will sustain us through the turbulent times, and joy will overwhelm the pain. Faith in Christ is the answer we need the most.*¹⁸

Day 27:

*As we attempt to build a bridge of faith, we need to build in our lives a firm testimony of the Father and the Son and His Atonement. This bridge of faith will make a difference between the reality of eternal reunion with our Heavenly Father or eternal separation from Him if we erect walls of sin that turn us away from His love and mercy.*¹⁹

Day 28:

*Our temples are testaments of our faith in the everlasting family.*²⁰

Day 29:

*The father must hunger and thirst and yearn to bless his family; he must go to the Lord, ponder the words of God, and live by the Spirit to know the mind and will of the Lord and what he must do to lead his family. It is soul-satisfying to know that God is mindful of us and ready to respond when we place our trust in Him and do that which is right. There is no place for fear among men and women who place their trust in the Almighty, who do not hesitate to humble themselves in seeking divine guidance through prayer. Though persecutions arise, though reverses come, in prayer we can find reassurance, for God will speak peace to the soul. That peace, that spirit of serenity, is a great blessing.*²¹

Day 30:

*We believe and come to know the Savior as we follow Him by receiving and faithfully honoring holy ordinances and thus increasingly have His image in our countenances...Believing Him is trusting that His bounteous blessings are available and applicable to us one by one in our individual lives and families. Believing Him is acknowledging that He knows our names and will provide the individual guidance and help we need.*²²

Day 31:

When faith is properly understood and used, it has dramatically far-reaching effects. Such faith can transform an individual's life from maudlin, common everyday activities to a symphony of joy and happiness. The exercise of faith is vital to Father in Heaven's plan of happiness. But true faith, faith unto salvation, is centered on the Lord

Jesus Christ, faith in His doctrines and teachings, faith in the prophetic guidance of the Lord's anointed, faith in the capacity to discover hidden characteristics and traits that can transform life. Truly, faith in the Savior is a principle of action and power. ²³

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Merrill J. Bateman, “Living a Christ-centered Life,” *Ensign*, January 1999, 7.
2. Travis Larsen, “The Power of Faith That Comes through Sacrifice,” Selections from the Religious Education Student Symposium 2006 (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006), 43.
3. Robert Millet, Precept Upon Precept (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2016), 218–219.
4. *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 3,5.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 41.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Four Cornerstones of Faith,” *Ensign*, February 2004, 3.
7. *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1985), 83.
8. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 34.
9. Russell M. Nelson, “Face the Future with Faith,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 35–36.
10. Thomas S. Monson, “How Firm a Foundation,” *Ensign*, November 2006, 62.
11. Jeffrey R. Holland, To My Friends: Messages of Counsel and Comfort (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2014), 57.
12. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, The Gospel at 30,000 Feet (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2017), 5.
13. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.
14. Jeffrey R. Holland, To My Friends: Messages of Counsel and Comfort (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2014), 190.
15. Ezra Taft Benson, Come Unto Christ (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 132.
16. Ezra Taft Benson, “Godly Characteristics of the Master,” *Ensign*, November 1986, 45.
17. Joseph Fielding McConkie, Seeking the Spirit (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1978), 46.
18. Deen Kemsley, Trust in the Lord: reflections of Jesus Christ (Springville, UT: Sweetwater Books, 2008), 4–5.
19. Charles Didier, “Building a Bridge of Faith,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 11.
20. James E. Faust, “Will I Be Happy,” *Ensign*, May 1987.
21. Ezra Taft Benson, The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1988), 68–69.
22. David A. Bednar, One by One (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2017), 23–24.
23. Richard G. Scott, “The Transforming Power of Faith and Character,” *Ensign*, November 2010, 43.

THEME 2: Love

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
*“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of...love”*

FEBRUARY: LOVE

In a Military OneSource article “How to Strengthen Your Relationship: 14 Ways” we read, “Whether your marriage is strong, rocky or somewhere in between, the fact is many could stand to strengthen their relationship. A loving, resilient marriage is a source of personal happiness and family joy.”¹ Love as well as faith is a key aspect in making a Christ-centered military home. President Gordon B. Hinckley shared the following:

Love is the very essence of life. It is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet it is more than the end of the rainbow. Love is at the beginning also, and from it springs the beauty that arches across the sky on a stormy day. Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning for youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death. How rich are those who enjoy it in their associations with family, friends, church, and neighbors. I am one who believes that love, like faith, is a gift of God.²

Thus, President Hinckley described love as the fiber that is woven within the very fabric of the home which provides the family with protection and resilience. Within “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” love is mentioned six times. First, it is used to describe that we are all “beloved spirit sons and daughters of heavenly parents.”³ When speaking about the responsibilities a husband and wife have in the family it explains that they have the “solemn responsibility to love and care for each

1. “How to Strengthen Your Relationship: 14 Ways,” U.S. Department of Defense Military OneSource Network, last modified September 10, 2019, accessed October 21, 2019, <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/keeping-your-relationship-strong/how-to-strengthen-your-relationship-14-ways?inheritRedirect=true>.

2. Gordon B. Hinckley, Faith, The Essence of True Religion (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 44.

3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

other and for their children,” and the “sacred duty to rear their children in love,” “to teach them to love,” and it describes that love is an essential principle for “successful marriages and families.”⁴ Finally, it shares that “fathers are to preside over their families in love.”⁵

The sacrifice of serving in the military can allow for multiple opportunities for families to build resilience by being sensitive in sharing love within the home. The armed forces lifestyle includes many outside factors that affect a home due to work and deployment obligations or other demands that may cause separation, inconsistency, and other unknown variables for a family. This can affect the love and resilience that is felt in the home in a positive or negative manner. When explaining the benefits of resiliency, Cheryl Lawhorne-Scott and Don Philpott stated, “It helps us adjust to a normal life after deployment and it provides the strength to overcome adversities and illness, especially when there is an accompanying strong and loving support group.”⁶ In the Church manual for helping build resilient military members and families it mentioned that “one of the most important factors in responding with resilience is learning to turn to others for support during difficult times.”⁷ As difficult as it can be for Latter-day Saint military families, there is peace in knowing that God our Heavenly Father and His Son Jesus Christ have made it clear how much they love us, but also how important love is within a Christ-centered home.

Many Latter-day Saint prophets, apostles, and general authorities have taught about love and its significance within the home. Elder Richard G. Scott in the April 2013 general conference taught the following:

Regardless of your circumstances, you can center your home and life on the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the source of true peace in this life . . . [thus] one of the greatest blessings we can offer to the world is the power of a Christ-centered home where the gospel is taught, covenants are kept, and love abounds.⁸

Elder Scott emphasized that the power of a Christ-centered home has three aspects and love is one. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf taught, “love is the defining characteristic of a disciple of Christ.”⁹ In addition, he said, “We have a vast capacity for love—it is

4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

5. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

6. Cheryl Lawhorne-Scott and Don Philpott, *Military Mental Health Care: A Guide for Service Members, Veterans, Families, and Community* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 180.

7. *Becoming a Self-Reliant and Resilient Family: a study guide for military members and others who face similar challenges* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 2-3.

8. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 29-30.

9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 22.

part of our spiritual heritage.”¹⁰ Similarly, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin spoke of love and discipleship:

Love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pathway of discipleship. It comforts, counsels, cures, and consoles. It leads us through valleys of darkness and through the veil of death. In the end love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal life.¹¹

Elder Wirthlin understood love is essential in the beginning and will be at the end goal of eternal life.

The importance of love has been taught using the Savior’s encounter with the lawyer who asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Mathew 22:36). The Lord responded by teaching the following:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:37-40).

The Lord was teaching the two greatest commandments that held all the law together. If love is powerful enough to hold the law together, it can also hold a military family together.

God loves his children. President Thomas S. Monson taught the following:

Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.¹²

Our Heavenly Father’s love is so great that it never ceases, and the most important demonstration of His love was sending His Son. In John we learn, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (3:16). How significant then is it for us to love our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ? In Ephesians 5:2 we learn to “walk in love, as

10. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” 22.

11. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Great Commandment,” Ensign, November 2007, 28-29.

12. Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” Ensign, November 2013, 123.

Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.” Christ’s love is infinite and through Him we can learn how to love. Christ’s example of ministering and caring is profound.

The second great commandment is to “love thy neighbor.” Elder Robert F. Orton, a former general authority, stated the following:

Most of us profess to love God. The challenge, I have observed, is loving our neighbor. The term neighbor includes family, people with whom we work, those whom we see in geographical proximity to our home and at church, and even the enemy, though we do not condone what the latter does. If we do not love all of these, our brothers and sisters, can we truly say that we love God? . . . Love of God and neighbor must therefore be inseparably connected.¹³

Elder Orton was making it clear that our neighbors include everyone. The scripture is not singling out the neighbor who lives on the floor above us or in the house next door. Neighbors include our family, friends, ward members, and even our enemies. Elder Orton also pointed out that both commandments are inseparable. Carole M. Stephens, former first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, taught, “God’s Commandments are a manifestation of His love for us, and our obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him.”¹⁴ Similarly, Elder David A. Bednar made this suggestion: “We can begin to become more diligent and concerned at home by telling the people we love that we love them. Such expressions do not need to be flowery or lengthy. We simply should sincerely and frequently express love.”¹⁵

Jesus Christ is always the example of how to love. Elder Claudio R. M. Costa, when serving in the Presidency of the Seventy stated the following:

Jesus Christ gave us the supreme example of love when He declared, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). He later atoned for all our sins and finally gave His life for all of us. We can lay down our lives for those we love not by physically dying for them but rather by living for them—giving of our time; always being present in their lives; serving them; being courteous, affectionate, and showing true love for those of our family and to all men—as the Savior taught.¹⁶

13. Robert F. Orton, “The First and Great Commandment,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 81.

14. Carole M. Stephens, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” *Ensign*, November 2015, 118.

15. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, November 2009, 17.

16. Claudio R.M. Costa, “Don’t leave for Tomorrow What You Can do Today,” *Ensign*, November 2007,

We too can follow Christ's example in our own lives. We may not be laying down our lives as Christ did, but we can give of our own time. When Nephi received an answer of the meaning of the tree of life he learned it was "the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore is the most desirable above all things . . . and the most joyous to the soul" (1 Nephi 11:22-23). In addition, Elder Paul E. Kolliker expressed that the "principle of having love one to another and developing our ability to be Christ-centered in how we think, speak, and act is fundamental in becoming disciples of Christ."¹⁷ Loving one another affects the way we think, speak, and act.

Love is a commandment that can also be a constant. President Hinckley in April 1989 general conference compared love with the Polar Star:

Love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world, love can be a constant. It is something that, when sincere, never moves. It is the very essence of the gospel [teachings of Christ]. It is the security of the home. It is the safeguard of community life. It is a beacon of home in a world of distress... It is not always easy to follow the Polar Star of love. It requires a discipline almost beyond the power of many to observe. I think it is the most difficult and also the most important of all commandments. But out of its observance comes a remarkable discipline and a refining influence that are wonderful to experience. It savors of the sweet, all-encompassing love of Christ. To those of you who live in troubled homes, may I suggest that you let love become the lodestar of your family life. There is too much of shouting, too much of recrimination, so many tears in the homes of some of our people. Love is the only remedy. It is the very basis of marriage. It can be nurtured and strengthened, or it can be starved and weakened. The power lies within ourselves. Bridle your tempers, husbands. Wives, hold your tongues. Revive the wondrous feeling that brought you to the marriage altar. Love is the very essence of family life.¹⁸

This comparison by President Hinckley creates a beautiful example of what a Christ-centered military home can obtain. Love can be a constant in the home as husband and wife are united and love is demonstrated. Love can heal, nurture, strengthen, as with center lives in Jesus Christ. President Hinckley reminded us that each member in a family can and must abide in love. Although it might be hard, there is beauty in knowing that it is better to hope for that love and to work for it than to give up and

17. Paul E. Kolliker, "He Truly Loves Us," *Ensign*, May 2012, 17.

18. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Let Love Be the Lodestar of Your Life," *Ensign*, May 1989, 66-67.

let negativity deteriorate the family. The Lord told his disciples, “Love one another” (John 13:34).

As families center in Christ, love can bring the hope of a resilient light in the home. Elder Richard G. Scott declared the following:

As you center your home on the Savior, it will naturally become a refuge not only to your own family but also to friends who live in more difficult circumstances. They will be drawn to the serenity they feel there. Welcome such friends into your home. They will blossom in that Christ-centered environment. Become friends with your children’s friends. Be a worthy example to them.¹⁹

Our love is not limited to our homes but can spread to our military communities, homes, churches, deployment sites, training sites, or any environment in which we find ourselves. Striving to have love in the home will bring peace in the home, even during times of deployment. Over time the “pure love of Christ” will fill the walls of the home because of the Christ-centered love that exists and can “endure forever” (Moroni 7:47).

19. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 30.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLE OF
LOVE

ACT:

FIND WAYS TO EXPRESS LOVE TO EACH
MEMBER OF THE HOME

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT LOVE TO CENTER YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

Love is the very essence of life. It is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet it is more than the end of the rainbow. Love is at the beginning also, and from it springs the beauty that arches across the sky on a stormy day. Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning for youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death. How rich are those who enjoy it in their associations with family, friends, church, and neighbors. I am one who believes that love, like faith, is a gift of God.¹

Day 2:

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (1 John 4:7-8)

Day 3:

It helps us adjust to a normal life after deployment and it provides the strength to overcome adversities and illness, especially when there is an accompanying strong and loving support group.²

Day 4:

Regardless of your circumstances, you can center your home and life on the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the source of true peace in this life...one of the greatest blessings we can offer to the world is the power of a Christ-centered home where the gospel is taught, covenants are kept, and love abounds.³

Day 5:

Love is the defining characteristic of a disciple of Christ.⁴

Day 6:

Love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pathway of discipleship. It comforts, counsels, cures, and consoles. It leads us through valleys of darkness and through the veil of death. In the end love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal

life.⁵

Day 7:

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

Day 8:

Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.⁶

Day 9:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Day 10:

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” (Ephesians 5:2)

Day 11:

But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandments in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matthew 26:36-40)

Day 12:

Most of us profess to love God. The challenge, I have observed, is loving our neighbor. The term neighbor includes family, people with whom we work, those whom we see in geographical proximity to our home and at church, and even the enemy, though we do not condone what the latter does. If we do not love all of these, our brothers and sisters, can we truly say that we love God?...Love of God and neighbor must therefore be inseparably connected.⁷

Day 13:

God's Commandments are a manifestation of His love for us, and our obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him.⁸

Day 14:

We can begin to become more diligent and concerned at home by telling the people we love that we love them. Such expressions do not need to be flowery or lengthy. We simply should sincerely and frequently express love.⁹

Day 15:

"Love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."
(Romans 13:8)

Day 16:

Because the Father and the Son love us with infinite, perfect love, and because They know we cannot see everything They see, They have given us laws that will guide and protect us.¹⁰

Day 17:

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34)

Day 18:

"We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."
(1 Corinthians 8:1)

Day 19:

This principle of having love one to another and developing our ability to be Christ-centered in how we think, speak, and act is fundamental in becoming disciples of Christ and teachers of His gospel.¹¹

Day 20:

Love is like the Polar Star. In a changing world, love can be a constant. It is something that, when sincere, never moves. It is the very essence of the teachings of Christ. It is the security of the home. It is the safeguard of community life. It is a beacon of home in a world of distress...It is not always easy to follow the Polar Star of love. It requires a discipline almost beyond the power of many to observe. I think it is the most difficult and also the most important of all commandments. But out of its

observance comes a remarkable discipline and a refining influence that are wonderful to experience. It savors of the sweet, all-encompassing love of Christ. To those of you who live in troubled homes, may I suggest that you let love become the lodestar of your family life. There is too much of shouting, too much of recrimination, so many tears in the homes of some of our people. Love is the only remedy. It is the very basis of marriage. It can be nurtured and strengthened, or it can be starved and weakened. The power lies within ourselves. Bridle your tempers, husbands. Wives, hold your tongues. Revive the wondrous feeling that brought you to the marriage altar. Love is the very essence of family life.¹²

Day 21:

“Thou shalt live together in love.” (Doctrine and Covenants 42:45)

Day 22:

Husbands and wives who love each other will find that love and loyalty are reciprocated. This love will provide a nurturing atmosphere for the emotional growth of children. Family life should be a time of happiness and joy that children can look back on with fond memories and associations.¹³

Day 23:

“Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.”
(Doctrine and Covenants 42:22)

Day 24:

Love at home is one of the basic needs in life, a spiritual law which, if violated brings harsh, irrevocable consequences...It is clear that we cannot have peace in the world without harmony in the home.¹⁴

Day 25:

The Savior's Love was not a love for the righteous only; it was not an abstract love; nor was it demonstrated by one dramatic sacrificial act and nothing more. To the contrary, it was a day-by-day, hour-by-hour, even moment-by-moment love! I was love that stretched from premortality into eternity.¹⁵

Day 26:

In commanding us to love, the Lord refers to something much deeper than infatuation, a love that is the most profound form of loyalty—a covenant.¹⁶

Day 27:

A loving Heavenly Father can prevent our hurts, but He may not always choose to do so for the same reason a loving earthly father will not forever run behind his child's bicycle. He knows there comes a point at which protecting the child from every fall, bruise, and scrape will stifle growth.¹⁷

Day 28:

The family proclamation helps us understand much of the love the Savior referred to when He told us we must “love one another.” (John 13:34) He gave us the supreme example of love when He declared, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) He later atoned for all our sins and finally gave His life for all of us. We can lay down our lives for those we love not by physically dying for them but rather by living for them—giving of our time; always being present in their lives; serving them; being courteous, affectionate, and showing true love for those of our family and to all men—as the Savior taught.¹⁸

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, Faith, The Essence of True Religion (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 44.
2. Cheryl Lawhorne-Scott and Don Philpott, Military Mental Health Care: A Guide for Service Members, Veterans, Families, and Community (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 180.
3. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” Ensign, May 2013, 29-30.
4. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Love of God,” Ensign, November 2009, 22.
5. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Great Commandment,” Ensign, November 2007, 28-29.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” Ensign, November 2013, 123.
7. Robert F. Orton, “The First and Great Commandment,” Ensign, November 2001, 81.
8. Carole M. Stephens, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” Ensign, November 2015, 118.
9. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” Ensign, November 2009, 17.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “The Love and Laws of God,” Brigham Young University, last modified 2019, accessed November 1, 2019, <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/russell-m-nelson/love-laws-god/>.
11. Paul E. Kolliker, “He Truly Loves Us,” Ensign, May 2012, 17.
12. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Let Love Be the Lodestar of Your Life,” Ensign, May 1989, (66-67).
13. Ezra Taft Benson, “Fundamentals of Enduring Family Relationships,” Ensign, November 1982, 59.
14. Ezra Taft Benson, This Nation Shall Endure (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1977), 58.
15. Tad R. Callister, The Infinite Atonement, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), 159.
16. Lynn G. Robbins, Love is a Choice: Making Your Marriage and Family Stronger (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2015), 15.
17. Brad Wilcox, Changed Through His Grace (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2017), 132.
18. Claudio R.M. Costa, “Don’t leave for Tomorrow What You Can do Today,” Ensign, November 2007, 74.

THEME 3: Divine Nature and Destiny

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such each has a divine nature and destiny.”

MARCH: DIVINE NATURE AND DESTINY

After Jesus Christ “went up straightway out of the water” the “Spirit of God descended like a dove” (Matt. 3:16). In addition, “a voice from heaven” said “this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). Jesus Christ was baptized and “being holy” was able to “fulfill all righteousness” (2 Nephi 31:5). Furthermore, He was able to hear the voice of His Father from the heavens. After the baptism, Jesus Christ was “led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Matthew 4:1). In the wilderness He fasted for forty days and forty nights which led Him to be “hungered” (See Matthew 4:2). After He fasted, He then was tempted by the devil three times. As we read in Matthew 4 there is something in common in the first two temptations. The devil said, “If thou be the Son of God” (Matt. 4:3, 6). These words of the devil cast doubt on the word of God when Jesus Christ was baptized. Jesus Christ was declared to be “my beloved Son” but the devil was attempting to make Jesus Christ question His divine identity. In the last temptation on a high mountain, Satan demanded that Jesus “fall down and worship him” (Matt. 4:9). Although Jesus Christ was tempted and experienced extreme physical hunger and thirst, He was still able to withstand Satan as He remembered He is a child of God, even the spiritual and physical Son of God.

When we are tempted, we must remember our divine natures and destinies. The proclamation states, “All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny.”¹ Barbara Day Lockhart and Shirley E. Cox emphasized the importance of knowing who we are:

Recognizing that we are literal sons and daughters of heavenly parents
is one of the most sacred truths we can know. Knowing this truth has a

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” Ensign, November 1995, 102.

profound impact on how we regard ourselves and others as well as on how we choose to live.²

In Acts 17:28-29, Paul taught and expresses that “for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God.” Paul reminded the Athenians that they were literal offspring of God, our Heavenly Father. David J. Ridges has written the following:

For whatever reasons, most Christians churches in our day do not teach that there was a premortal life, nor do they teach that we are literally children of God. They teach instead that we are God’s creations and that there is no potential for our becoming remotely like Him. Additionally, some teach that very few will continue to live after this life. Believing such false doctrines can destroy the basic worth of each individual because it does away with the eternal nature of people. It does away with our worth as literal children of God.³

Latter-day Saints believe that we are literal spirit children of God. Elder Tad R. Callister, when he was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, gave a devotional address in the 2012 Education Week and stated what it means to be a literal child of God:

What difference does this doctrinal distinction make? The difference is monumental in its consequence because our identity determines in large measure our destiny. For example, can a mere creation ever become like its creator? Can a building ever become an architect? A painting a painter? Or an invention an inventor? If not, then those who believe we are creations of God, rather than His spirit offspring, reach the inevitable conclusion that we do not have the capacity to become like our creator, God. In essence, their doctrine of identity has defined and dictated a diminished destiny. On the other hand, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we believe that we are the spirit offspring of God with inherited spiritual traits that give us the divine potential to become like our parent, God the Father.⁴

2. Barbara Day Lockhart and Shirley E. Cox, “The Divine Nature of Each Individual,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite. (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 218.

3. David J. Ridges, *The Proclamation of the Family: The Word of the Lord on More than Thirty Current Issues* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 23.

4. Tad R. Callister, “Our Identity and Our Destiny,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 2.

Elder Callister reminded because of our “inherited spiritual traits,” we have the capacity to be as God the Father. Elder Boyd K. Packer emphasized the same doctrine:

No greater ideal has been revealed than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and we differ, by virtue of our creation, from all other living things. (See Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59). No idea has been more destructive of happiness, no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak and mischief; no idea has done more to destroy the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, only advanced animals, compelled to yield to every carnal urge.⁵

Elder Packer expressed the power of knowing our divine natures as children of God and the negative effects in a family if we fall into the belief that we are but animals with carnal desires. In Doctrine and Covenants 18:10 Joseph Smith was told, “Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” This similar doctrine is taught in Jacob 2:21 where we read, “And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other.” Our divine worth is great, and we are precious to God.

The proclamation also speaks of how “gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.”⁶ As written in Moses 2:27 it states, “And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them.” Males and females have individual characteristics. This message in society today and some consider gender to be “socially constructed.”⁷ However, President James E. Faust stated, “Our designation as men or women began before this world was.”⁸

In Doctrine and Covenants 93:24 teaches, “Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.” In the proclamation we read the following:

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize his or her divine destiny as an heir of eternal life.⁹

5. Boyd K. Packer, “Our Moral Environment,” Ensign, May 1992, 67.

6. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

7. Barbara Day Lockhart and Shirley E. Cox, “The Divine Nature of Each Individual,” in Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family, ed. David C. Dollahite. (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 223.

8. James E. Faust, “Serving the Lord and Resisting the Devil,” Ensign, September 1995, 5.

9. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

God's purpose is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). President Dallin H. Oaks taught the following:

The purpose of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to help all of the children of God understand their potential and achieve their highest destiny. This church exists to provide the sons and daughters of God with the means of entrance into and exaltation in the celestial kingdom. This is a family-centered church in doctrine and practices. Our understanding of the nature and purpose of God the Eternal Father explains our destiny and our relationship in his eternal family. Our theology begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them.¹⁰

It is our final goal is to be heirs of eternal life. Christ knew that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). He knew His role was at the center of the plan of salvation. He understood His destiny, we also have the capacity to understand our divine destiny.

10. Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 87.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER ABOUT YOUR
DIVINE NATURE AND DESTINY

ACT:

HAVE EACH MEMBER F THE FAMILY
WORK ON A CHRIST-LIKE ATTRIBUTE

BECOME:

STRENGTHEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING
OF DIVINE NATURE AND DESTINY TO
CENTER YOUR MILITARY HOME IN
JESUS CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

Recognizing that we are literal sons and daughters of heavenly parents is one of the most sacred truths we can know. Knowing this truth has a profound impact on how we regard ourselves and others as well as on how we choose to live.¹

Day 2:

For whatever reasons, most Christians churches in our day do not teach that there was a premortal life, nor do they teach that we are literally children of God. They teach instead that we are God's creations and that there is no potential for our becoming remotely like Him. Additionally, some teach that very few will continue to live after this life. Believing such false doctrines can destroy the basic worth of each individual because it does away with the eternal nature of people. It does away with our worth as literal children of God.²

Day 3:

What difference does this doctrinal distinction make? The difference is monumental in its consequence because our identity determines in large measure our destiny. For example, can a mere creation ever become like its creator? Can a building ever become an architect? A painting a painter? Or an invention an inventor? If not, then those who believe we are creations of God, rather than His spirit offspring, reach the inevitable conclusion that we do not have the capacity to become like our creator, God. In essence, their doctrine of identity has defined and dictated a diminished destiny. On the other hand, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we believe that we are the spirit offspring of God with inherited spiritual traits that give us the divine potential to become like our parent, God the Father.³

Day 4:

No greater ideal has been revealed than the supernal truth that we are the children of God, and we differ, by virtue of our creation, from all other living things. (See Moses 6:8–10, 22, 59). No idea has been more destructive of happiness, no philosophy has produced more sorrow, more heartbreak and mischief; no idea has done more to destroy the family than the idea that we are not the offspring of God, only advanced animals, compelled to yield to every carnal urge.⁴

Day 5:

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 18:10)

Day 6:

Our designation as men or women began before this world was.⁵

Day 7:

The purpose of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to help all of the children of God understand their potential and achieve their highest destiny. This church exists to provide the sons and daughters of God with the means of entrance into and exaltation in the celestial kingdom. This is a family-centered church in doctrine and practices. Our understanding of the nature and purpose of God the Eternal Father explains our destiny and our relationship in his eternal family. Our theology begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them.⁶

Day 8:

Man is one of the eternal, imperishable realities of the universe. His story begins in the infinite past, before the earth was made. His eternity reaches into the yesterdays as into the tomorrows. He belongs to the endless ages. In The beginning, man was with God, a child of God, begotten by Him. He has a divine pedigree. In the pre-existent, spiritual domain, as a son or daughter of the divine Father, he increased in knowledge and power and grew in spiritual stature. At length he was prepared for the earth career and willing to accept its conditions. Man is not an accidental or transient invader of earth. Instead, he is a creature of plan and progress. As a child of God, man partakes of the divine nature of his Father. Within him lie germs of infinite development. Potentially he is a God-like being. Therefore he may rise eternally toward the likeness of his Father in heaven. Upward, divine, unending, is man's high destiny.⁷

Day 9:

One title that defines all of us in the most fundamental way is son (daughter) of Heavenly Father. No matter what else we are or do in life, we must never forget that we are God's Literal spirit children. We were His children before we came to this world, and we will be His children forevermore. This basic truth should change the way we look at ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and life itself. Unfortunately, none of us quite lives up to everything that this title implies, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23)...Satan would rather that you define yourself by your sins instead of your divine potential...don't listen to him.⁸

Day 10:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” (Genesis 1:26-27)

Day 11:

While you have made mistakes, these sins do not describe who you are. Your identity is not defined by the sins of this world, but by the righteousness of another. Finding yourself here with the sins and failings of this difficult probationary state, your soul cries out for divine help. Deep in your soul, you yearn for a Redeemer, a Savior, to find your way back to your heavenly home [Deuteronomy 4:29-31]. The Fall does not define you; it helps to refine you. In understanding the Fall, we must always remember who we really are. We are divine, literal spirit children of Heavenly Parents.⁹

Day 12:

Because this doctrine [the Fall] is so basic to the plan of salvation and also because it is so susceptible to misunderstanding, we must note that these references to ‘natural’ evil emphatically do not mean that men and women are ‘inherently’ evil. There is a crucial difference. As spirit sons and daughters of God, all mortal men and women are divine in origin and divine in their potential destiny...But it is also true that as a result of the Fall they are now in a ‘natural’ (fallen) world where the devil ‘taketh away light’ and where some elements of nature—including temporal human nature—need discipline, restraint, and refinement.¹⁰

Day 13:

“I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.” (Psalm 82:6)

Day 14:

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)

Day 15:

The teaching that human beings have a divine nature and future shapes the way Latter-day Saints view fundamental doctrine. Perhaps most significantly, belief in divine nature helps us more deeply appreciate the Atonement of Jesus Christ. While many Christian theologians have expressed the magnitude of the Savior’s Atonement

by emphasizing human depravity, Latter-day Saints understand the magnitude of the Atonement of Christ in terms of the vast human potential it makes possible.¹¹

Day 16:

You are elect sons and daughters of God. You have the power to overcome the adversary. The adversary, however, is aware of who you are. He knows of your divine heritage and seeks to limit your earthly and heavenly potential.¹²

Day 17:

It is left to each of us to balance contentment regarding that God has allotted to us in life with some divine discontent resulting from what we are compared to what we have the power to become.¹³

Day 18:

Each of us, if we are honest, feels a gap between where and who we are, and where and who we want to become. We yearn for greater personal capacity. We have these feelings because we are daughters and sons of God, born with the Light of Christ yet living in a fallen world. These feelings are God given and create an urgency to act... Of course, all of us fall short of our divine potential, and there is some truth in the realization that alone we are not enough. But the good news of the gospel is that with the grace of God, we are enough.¹⁴

Day 19:

Take time to think prayerfully about these facts: You are an elect son or daughter of God. You are created in His Image. You were taught in the spirit world to prepare you for anything and everything you would encounter during this latter part of these latter days (see D&C 138:56). That teaching endures within you.¹⁵

Day 20:

“Whereby are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” (2 Peter 1:4-7)

Day 21:

Never forget...that you really are a child of God who has inherited something of His

divine nature, one whom He loves and desires to help and bless.¹⁶

Day 22:

You must know, as you've been told, that you are not alone in this world. There are hundreds of thousands of you. You live in many lands. You speak various languages. And every one of you has something divine within you... There has come to you as your birthright something beautiful and sacred and divine. Never forget that. Your Eternal Father is the great Master of the Universe.¹⁷

Day 23:

As we come to know and feel who we really are, we are enabled to recognize the difference between good and evil and are empowered to resist temptation.¹⁸

Day 24:

As covenant sons and daughters, do we have faith in our Heavenly Father and His eternal plan for us? Do we have faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement? Do we believe that we have a divine nature and destiny?¹⁹

Day 25:

In families, friendships, dating, and marriage, we should value not just beauty and résumés, but rather character, good values, and each other's inherited divine natures.²⁰

Day 26:

We are beloved spirit sons and daughters of heavenly parents with a divine nature and destiny. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, loved us enough to give His life for us.²¹

Day 27:

There exists today a great need for men and women to cultivate respect for each other as sons and daughters of God and reverence for our father in Heaven and His priesthood—His power and authority. He has a plan for us, and when we exercise our faith and trust in His plan, our reverence for Him and for His power and authority will be strengthened.²²

Day 28:

I testify of that grand destiny, made available to us by the Atonement of the Lord

Jesus Christ, who himself continued “from grace to grace” [Doctrine and Covenants 93:32] until in His immortality [see Luke 13:32] He received a perfect fullness of celestial glory. I testify that in this and every hour He is, with nail-scarred hands, extending to us that same grace, holding on to us and encouraging us, refusing to let us go until we are safely home in the embrace of Heavenly Parents. For such a perfect moment, I continue to strive, however clumsily. For such a perfect gift, I continue to give thanks, however inadequately. I do so in the very name of perfection itself, of Him who has never been clumsy or inadequate but who loves all of us who are, even the Lord Jesus Christ.²³

Day 29:

If you really know that you are a child of God, you will also know that He expects much of you, His child. He will expect you to follow His teachings and the teachings of His dear Son, Jesus. He will expect you to be generous and kind to others. He will be offended if you swear or use foul language. We will be offended if you are dishonest in any way, if you should cheat or steal in the slightest. He will be happy if you remember the less fortunate in your prayers to Him. He will watch over you and guide you and protect you.²⁴

Day 30:

If you really know that you are a child of God, you will also know that He expects much of you, His child. He will expect you to follow His teachings and the teachings of His dear Son, Jesus. He will expect you to be generous and kind to others. He will be offended if you swear or use foul language. We will be offended if you are dishonest in any way, if you should cheat or steal in the slightest. He will be happy if you remember the less fortunate in your prayers to Him. He will watch over you and guide you and protect you.²⁵

Day 31:

My Friends, I promise that as we strive to love God with all our heart, pray in the name of Jesus Christ, study the Book of Mormon, and prayerfully partake of the sacrament, we will have the ability, with the strength of the Lord, to overcome the deceptive practices of the adversary, to minimize distractions that limit our divine potential, and to resist the discouragement that diminishes our capacity to feel the love of our Heavenly Father and His Son. We will come to fully understand who we are as sons and daughters of God.²⁶

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Barbara Day Lockhart and Shirley E. Cox, "The Divine Nature of Each Individual," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite. (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 218.
2. David J. Ridges, *The Proclamation of the Family: The Word of the Lord on More than Thirty Current Issues* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2003), 23.
3. Tad R. Callister, "Our Identity and Our Destiny," *Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 2.
4. Boyd K. Packer, "Our Moral Environment," *Ensign*, May 1992, 67.
5. James E. Faust, "Serving the Lord and Resisting the Devil," *Ensign*, September 1995, 5.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 87.
7. John A. Widstoe, Conference Report, October 1936, 97.
8. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Four Titles," *Ensign*, May 2013, 58.
9. Neil L. Anderson, *The Divine Gift of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2019), 68–69.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1997), 207.
11. "Gospel Topics Essays: Becoming Like God," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed February 11, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics-essays/becoming-like-god?lang=eng>.
12. Peter M. Johnson, "Power to Overcome the Adversary," *Ensign*, November 2019, 110.
13. Neal A. Maxwell, "Becoming a Disciple," *Ensign*, June 1996, 18.
14. Michelle D. Craig, "Divine Discontent," *Ensign*, November 2018, 53, 54.
15. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, October 2016, 26.
16. Gordon B. Hinckley, "You Are a Child of God," *Ensign*, May 2003, 119.
17. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stay on the High Road," *Ensign*, May 2004, 112.
18. Susan W. Tanner, "Daughters of Heavenly Father," *Ensign*, May 2007, 107.
19. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," *Ensign*, November 2013, 14.
20. Susan W. Tanner, "Daughters of Heavenly Father," 108.
21. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," *Ensign*, November 2013, 14.
22. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," *Ensign*, November 2013, 13.
23. Peter M. Johnson, "Power to Overcome the Adversary," 110.
24. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Be Ye Therefore Perfect—Eventually," *Ensign*, November 2017, 42.
25. Gordon B. Hinckley, "You Are a Child of God," *Ensign*, May 2003, 119.
26. Peter M. Johnson, "Power to Overcome the Adversary," 112.

THEME 4: Repentance and Forgiveness

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of...repentance,
forgiveness”

APRIL: REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

Repentance is the second principle of the doctrine of Christ. Moroni the last prophet of the Book of Mormon said, “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness (Moroni 10:32).” President Ezra Taft Benson explained this scripture:

To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to come to Christ by ordinances and covenants, to repent of any sins which prevent the Spirit of the Lord from taking precedence in our lives (Moroni 10:32). To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to “offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” (D&C 59:8).¹

President Benson shared that it is the ability to change and work toward having a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This is only accomplished through Christ and thus we must center our lives in Him. In addition, through repentance, joy can be found. Elder Dale G. Renlund stated, “Joy is one of the inherent results of repentance.”² Therefore, real joy comes from real repentance. The proclamation teaches, “Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of ... repentance, forgiveness.”³ Perhaps the following questions can be asked. What would make repentance part of a successful Latter-day Saint military marriage and family? What connections do repentance and resiliency have to each other?

Repentance in a Christ-centered home can change the perspective of life as a family and as individuals. It can teach the importance of change and resiliency. In

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “This is a Day of Sacrifice,” *Ensign*, May 1979, 32.

2. Dale G. Renlund, “Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” *Ensign*, November 2016, 122.

3. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

True to the Faith we are taught about repentance:

It is essential to your happiness in this life and throughout eternity. Repentance is much more than just acknowledging wrongdoings. It is a change of mind and heart that gives you a fresh view about God, about yourself, and about the world. It includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It is motivated by love for God and the sincere desire to obey His commandments.⁴

This description of repentance conveys it is not only of one's wrongdoings but also about the change that occurs in the "mind and heart" and the "desire" to follow God in all things. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler stated, "Repentance is change of behavior and change of heart."⁵ In King Benjamin's sermon to the families and individuals of Zarahemla, he taught about the importance of submitting to the will of God. King Benjamin in Mosiah 3:19 tells his people how to obtain a change of heart that is contrary to the natural man.

The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.

King Benjamin used the metaphor of a child and his or her characteristics to help us understand that we must live the same.

Our greatest example of submission and being like a child is Jesus Christ. Even though he was the Only Begotten of the Father, He still demonstrated the importance of following the will of the Lord. While Jesus Christ was here on Earth, He always acknowledged that He did what the Father does.⁶ As a result, Jesus Christ's greatest example was submitting to the greatest pain anybody would feel, spiritually and physically. Harper and Butler have stated:

In our heavenly family our elder brother Jesus Christ elected to suffer beyond imagination to prevent the rest of us from having to suffer and

4. True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 132.

5. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler, "Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 155.

6. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise (John 5:19)."

to offer us the opportunity for exaltation in God's kingdom. Heavenly Father stood by, allowing Jesus to make that choice just as an earthly father might allow his son or daughter to sacrifice, even take risks if need be, to help other children in the family.⁷

Heavenly Father in His eternal love sent His Son Jesus Christ to pay the ultimate price. Although it was completely the choice of Jesus Christ to take upon himself our pain, and sufferings (See Alma 7:11), this was a risk necessary to save His Heavenly Father's children and His heavenly brothers and sisters. In Doctrine and Covenants 122:8, Joseph Smith while in Liberty Jail was taught by the Lord that "the Son of Man hath descended below them all." The Lord was teaching Joseph Smith that whatever he experienced was not greater than the pain and suffering the Lord felt when taking upon Himself all the sins, pain, suffering that the world felt, is feeling, and would feel.

Therefore, the purpose of the Atonement was to bring all families (men, women, and children) unto Christ. The Atonement is the center of God's great and eternal plan. The Atonement of Jesus Christ is necessary for any salvation to exist. It is the link to repentance and forgiveness. It is the way that our families can find peace, comfort, and joy. In Doctrine and Covenants 189:10-13 we are taught:

Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth.

We are all children of God and we all have a divine nature and destiny. As we come unto Christ we desire to be transformed into "new creatures."⁸ In addition, this means our families can be transformed as well through the Atonement. Mark Butler and Shelly Butler wrote, "We are moved as we contemplate the magnitude of His infinite love and atoning sacrifice and consider the emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges that we will face as we follow in His footsteps."⁹ Christ let us know that centering our lives in Him would not be easy. In a certain occasion when Jesus talked to His disciples He said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). He would love all of us to take up our cross and follow Him in order to be transformed through Him. The change comes through Christ, and military families who are centered in Christ can experience the

7. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler, "Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families," 154.

8. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

9. Mark Butler and Shelly Butler, "Healing Wounds of Infidelity," in *Helping and Healing our Families*:

change as a family and as individuals.

Thus, the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a fountain of everlasting blessings. As Latter-day Saint military families focus on repentance these blessings can be part of their lives. Tad R. Callister spoke of the blessings of Christ's Atonement:

One of the significant blessings of the Atonement emerges from Christ's power to redeem spiritually dead. Spiritual death is a form of spiritual alienation or dissolution of the divine relationship. But it is more than a geographic banishment from God's presence. Just as the physical body weakens with the onslaught of disease, it seems that in the same way we weaken spiritually as we embrace each new sin. Perhaps we lose our capacity or will to absorb light and truth. Perhaps, like an injured muscle, we lose strength and resiliency to confront each new temptation. Whatever the mechanics, spiritual death seems to result in a form of spiritual degeneration or entropy. As with physical death. There needs to be some power to reverse the decaying process, to heal our spiritual wounds, to strengthen our spiritual fiber. Again, the Atonement is the source of that reversing power, that fount to which men "may look for a remission of their sins" (2 Nephi 25:26).¹⁰

Callister makes the connection that sin separates us from God's presence which makes it necessary for us to desire a reconciliation with God. Repentance is the blessing that exists to reverse spiritual death or the separation from God.

Repentance can be an essential tool or principle that builds strong relationships, helps families or individuals with the challenges presented by a military lifestyle, and helps one reconcile with God. Thus, there are spiritual and physical changes that can occur when repentance is fostered. President Russell M. Nelson reminded us that the Lord is inviting us to change.

Thus, when Jesus asks you and me to "repent," [Luke 13:3,5] He is inviting us to change our mind, our knowledge, our spirit—even the way we breathe. He is asking us to change the way we love, think, serve, spend our time, treat our wives, teach our children, and even care for our bodies.¹¹

The Lord's invitation to repent is to make a complete change. In addition, Harper and Principles and Practices Inspired by "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," ed. Craig H. Hart et al. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 109.

10. Tad R. Callister, *The Infinite Atonement* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), 175.

11. Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," *Ensign*, May 2019, 67.

Butler noted that the “Spiritual perspective on repentance . . . leads us to understand that we change for the ones we love as well as for ourselves.”¹² Harper and Butler recognized that repentance is the desire to change for others and as a result it becomes one’s desire to change.

In military life there are things that servicemembers want to change that may affect the spirituality and resiliency of a family member. This may be the effects of war or the environment of a military lifestyle: separation, trauma, effects of deployments, etc. In addition, Harper and Butler wrote of repentance:

Repentance, forgiveness, and progression each occur within a specific context that must be understood and experience before our practice of these principles attains its redemptive power. The context in which repentance occurs is justice—the eternal justice of God and the justice requisite in human relationships. The enabling spiritual context of forgiveness is our own experience of repentance and forgiven-ness—through the Father’s and Christ’s infinite mercy and atoning sacrifice. In turn, progression is enabled through repentance, forgiveness, and grace—both God’s grace and the help we offer to and receive from one other.¹³

Harper and Butler recognized that repentance, forgiveness, and progression are all linked to the redemptive power that comes from the justice made from the sin merciful and atoning sacrifice which then enables progression. The enabling power of grace can come from God and through the help of others. Service members can feel change or transformation through the assistance of God and those that love and care for them.

Repentance is powerful in all its application. Latter-day Saint military families are taught that repentance requires effort which includes certain elements.¹⁴ President Russell M. Nelson taught how repentance leads to happiness:

12. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler, “Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families,” 154-155.

13. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler, “Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families,” 154.

14. Repentance includes certain elements that is part of the process. First, Faith in our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is a way to turn to them to receive forgiveness. “Repentance is an act of Faith.” Faith is what acknowledges that the through the atonement you repent. Another element is sorrow for sin. This is acknowledging that you have sinned, and which leads to feel “godly sorrow.” Afterwards and part of the process is confession. One must confess to the Father the wrong that has been committed. Once the confession is made one must strive to abandon the sin that was committed, and as one abandons the sin then they are also making sure restitution is being made. (See “Repentance,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/repentance?lang=eng>.)

Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind.¹⁵

The elements that are associated with repentance lead to forgiveness. In a revelation given to Joseph Smith in August 1, 1831 the Lord stated, “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42-43). The Lord taught that as someone shows a real desire to confess and forsake the Lord will not remember his or her sins.

In order for a family to progress, unity has to be built. Repentance and forgiveness can generate this progression. In Doctrine and Covenants 64:10 the Lord said, “I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.” The Lord taught we must forgive. When a Latter-day Saint military family is built on repentance and forgiveness, unity is strengthened. The struggles of humbling oneself to those you love is what makes the bond stronger. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that we all need forgiveness:

Is there someone in your life who perhaps needs forgiveness? Is there someone in your home, someone in your family, someone in your neighborhood who has done an unjust or an unkind or an unchristian thing? All of us are guilty of such transgressions, so there surely must be someone who yet needs your forgiveness.¹⁶

Elder Holland taught that everybody needs forgiveness, and everybody needs forgiveness from others. President Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

Don’t treasure up past wrongs, reprocessing them again and again. In a marriage relationship, festering is destructive; forgiving is divine (see D&C 64:9-10). Plead for the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord to forgive wrongs . . . , to overcome faults, and to strengthen relationships.¹⁷

Latter-day Saint military families can learn daily to forgive and feel the power of forgiveness within a Christ-centered home.

As Latter-day Saint military families strive to work toward repentance, they

15. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” 67.

16. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Amazed at the Love Jesus Offers Me,” Liahona, December 2008, 32.

17. Dallin H. Oaks, “Divorce,” Ensign, May 2007, 72.

can then better forgive. As a result, the family then begins to progress toward a more Christ-centered home. This Latter-day Saint military family then can make a home filled with the desire to change for the better and draw closer to Christ.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLES OF
REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

ACT:

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER TO
REPENT AND FORGIVE YOURSELF/
OTHERS

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT REPENTANCE AND
FORGIVENESS TO CENTER YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness.” (Moroni 10:32)

Day 2:

To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to come to Christ by ordinances and covenants, to repent of any sins which prevent the Spirit of the Lord from taking precedence in our lives (Moroni 10:32). To deny oneself of all ungodliness is to “offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit” (D&C 59:8).¹

Day 3:

Joy is one of the inherent results of repentance.²

Day 4:

It is essential to your happiness in this life and throughout eternity. Repentance is much more than just acknowledging wrongdoings. It is a change of mind and heart that gives you a fresh view about God, about yourself, and about the world. It includes turning away from sin and turning to God for forgiveness. It is motivated by love for God and the sincere desire to obey His commandments.³

Day 5:

Repentance is change of behavior and change of heart.⁴

Day 6:

“The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

Day 7:

“The Son of Man hath descended below them all.” (Doctrine and Covenants 122:8)

Day 8:

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God. For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all conditions of repentance. And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth.” (Doctrine and Covenants 189:10–13)

Day 9:

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Day 10:

We are moved as we contemplate the magnitude of His infinite love and atoning sacrifice and consider the emotional, physical, and spiritual challenges that we will face as we follow in His footsteps.⁵

Day 11:

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24)

Day 12:

One of the significant blessings of the Atonement emerges from Christ’s power to redeem spiritually dead. Spiritual death is a form of spiritual alienation or dissolution of the divine relationship. But it is more than a geographic banishment from God’s presence. Just as the physical body weakens with the onslaught of disease, it seems that in the same way we weaken spiritually as we embrace each new sin. Perhaps we lose our capacity or will to absorb light and truth. Perhaps, like an injured muscle, we lose strength and resiliency to confront each new temptation. Whatever the mechanics, spiritual death seems to result in a form of spiritual degeneration or entropy. As with physical death. There needs to be some power to reverse the decaying process, to heal our spiritual wounds, to strengthen our spiritual fiber. Again, the Atonement is the source of that reversing power, that fount to which men “may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).⁶

Day 13:

Thus, when Jesus asks you and me to “repent,” [Luke 13:3,5] He is inviting us to change our mind, our knowledge, our spirit—even the way we breathe. He is asking us to change the way we love, think, serve, spend our time, treat our wives, teach our

children, and even care for our bodies.⁷

Day 14:

Spiritual perspective on repentance...leads us to understand that we change for the ones we love as well as for ourselves.⁸

Day 15:

Repentance, forgiveness, and progression each occur within a specific context that must be understood and experienced before our practice of these principles attains its redemptive power. The context in which repentance occurs is justice--the eternal justice of God and the justice requisite in human relationships. The enabling spiritual context of forgiveness is our own experience of repentance and forgiveness--through the Father's and Christ's infinite mercy and atoning sacrifice. In turn, progression is enabled through repentance, forgiveness, and grace--both God's grace and the help we offer to and receive from one other.⁹

Day 16:

Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. Repentance is not an event; it is a process. It is the key to happiness and peace of mind.¹⁰

Day 17:

"Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins--behold, he will confess them and forsake them." (Doctrine and Covenants 58:42-43)

Day 18:

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." (Doctrine and Covenants 64:10)

Day 19:

Is there someone in your life who perhaps needs forgiveness? Is there someone in your home, someone in your family, someone in your neighborhood who has done an unjust or an unkind or an unchristian thing? All of us are guilty of such transgressions, so there surely must be someone who yet needs your forgiveness.¹¹

Day 20:

Don't treasure up past wrongs, reprocessing them again and again. In a marriage relationship, festering is destructive; forgiving is divine (see D&C 64:9-10). Plead for the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord to forgive wrongs..., to overcome faults, and to strengthen relationships.¹²

Day 21:

“And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses; for verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation.” (Mosiah 26:31)

Day 22:

As a priesthood leader, I have worked with sin-sick souls who had replaced the light of righteousness in their countenances with the darkness of transgression and guilt. Gratefully, through the process of sincere repentance, many of those individuals were touched by the finger of the Lord and changed by the power of His infinite and eternal Atonement. The light in their souls gradually returned, “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). And as we serve in our families and minister to the sons and daughters of God with all of our heart, might, mind, and strength, we also are blessed to see the “evidence of things not seen” (Hebrew 11:1). We may not see the literal finger of the Lord touch the hearts of the people we serve. But we do see repentant souls partake of the precious white fruit and relish the delicious taste of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in their lives. They are touched, healed, and blessed one by one. What once was dark because of sin is light again because of the Savior's Atonement. Jesus indeed is “the light which shineth in darkness” (Doctrine and Covenants 6:21).¹³

Day 23:

Forgiveness is not excusing accountability or failing to protect ourselves, our families, and other innocent victims. Forgiveness is not continuing in a relationship with someone who is not trustworthy. Forgiveness is not condoning injustice. Forgiveness is not dismissing the hurt or disgust we feel because of the actions of others. Forgiveness is not forgetting but remembering in peace. Forgiveness is putting more faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. In His time and in His way, His love and sacrifice for us will take away our pain and heal our souls.¹⁴

Day 24:

As our faith in Jesus Christ grows, and as we understand His incalculable gift to us, our ability to forgive others and our ability to feel forgiven increases. We realize that

our lives here upon the earth are but a short part of eternity and, to truly progress, we must clear our spirits of anger, hate, and any desire for retribution toward those who have hurt us or hurt those we love.¹⁵

Day 25:

“Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence.” (Mosiah 4:2)

Day 26:

Through the marvelous power of the atonement of Jesus Christ, a power activated by our obedience to His commandments, we can be cleansed of our sins. His infinite “mercy can satisfy the demands of justice” (Alma 34:16; see also Mosiah 15:9; Alma 42) for every one who will. One of the great truths restored to the earth through modern revelation is that the atonement of Jesus Christ is universal! The saving power of the gospel spans all generations of time and extends to all nations, kindred, tongues, and peoples. Through humble repentance, we offer the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit that the Lord requires of us before we can enter the waters of baptism (see D&C 20:37).¹⁶

Day 27:

We are sure you will overcome mortal death. You will be resurrected because of what Christ did for us. Whether or not you overcome spiritual death – that separation from the presence of our Heavenly Father – will depend a great deal on you. When Jesus Christ was living on the earth He taught His gospel and organized His church. If we live the gospel, we will remain spiritually clean. Even when we make mistakes, there is a way to become clean again. That is what repentance is.¹⁷

Day 28:

Being righteous doesn’t mean being perfect or never making mistakes. It means developing an inner connection with God, repenting or our sins and mistakes, and freely helping others.¹⁸

Day 29:

Repentance includes certain elements that is part of the process. First, Faith in our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is a way to turn to them to receive forgiveness. “Repentance is an act of Faith.” Faith is what acknowledges that the through the atonement you repent. Another element is sorrow for sin. This is acknowledging that you have sinned, and which leads to feel “godly sorrow.” Afterwards and part

*of the process is confession. One must confess to the Father the wrong that has been committed. Once the confession is made one must strive to abandon the sin that was committed, and as one abandons the sin then they are also making sure restitution is being made.*¹⁹

Day 30:

*There are those who feel that their own neglect, their bad habits, their shunning of the righteous life have caused God to abandon to abandon them, that He will no longer hear their pleadings, nor see their plight, nor feel compassion towards them. Such feelings are not compatible with the word of the Lord....Should there be anyone who feels he is too weak to change the onward and downward moving course of his life, or should there be those who fail to resolve to do better because of that greatest of fears, the fear of failure, there is no more comforting assurance to be had than the words of the Lord: "My grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27).*²⁰

Day 31:

I absolutely know that repentance is necessary for all of us, and for all of our lives. Our faith in Christ and our willingness to follow Him bring hope, peace, and love of God and for His children. We need not feel discouraged when we sense our spiritual progress seems too slow or when we continue to see the weaknesses in our character. We must never become "weary in well doing" (Doctrine and Covenants 64:33). "Be faithful in Christ; and may not the things which I have written grieve thee, to weigh thee down unto death; but may Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind forever" (Moroni 9:25). Jesus said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).²¹

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “This is a Day of Sacrifice,” Ensign, May 1979, 32.
2. Dale G. Renlund, “Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” Ensign, November 2016, 122.
3. True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 132.
4. James M. Harper and Mark H. Butler, “Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families,” in Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 155.
5. Mark Butler and Shelly Butler, “Healing Wounds of Infidelity,” in Helping and Healing our Families: Principles and Practices Inspired by “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” ed. Craig H. Hart et al. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 109.
6. Tad R. Callister, The Infinite Atonement (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2000), 175.
7. Russell M. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” Ensign, May 2019, 67.
8. Harper and Butler, “Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families,” 154-155.
9. Harper and Butler, “Repentance, Forgiveness, and Progression in Marriages and Families,” 154.
10. Nelson, “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” 67.
11. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Amazed at the Love Jesus Offers Me,” Liahona, December 2008, 32.
12. Dallin H. Oaks, “Divorce,” Ensign, May 2007, 72.
13. David A. Bednar, One by One (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2017), 91.
14. Neil L. Anderson, The Divine Gift of Forgiveness (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2019), 225.
15. Neil L. Anderson, The Divine Gift of Forgiveness, 234.
16. Joseph B. Wirthlin, Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 24.
17. Boyd K. Packer, Teach Ye Diligently, revised edition (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1991), 278–279.
18. Sharon Eubank, “Turn On Your Light,” Ensign, November 2017, 6.
19. “Repentance,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 16, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/repentance?lang=eng>.
20. Thomas S. Monson, “The Precious Gift of Sight,” Conference Report, April 1965, 47–48.
21. Neil L. Anderson, The Divine Gift of Forgiveness, 71.

THEME 5:
Sacred Ordinances and
Covenants

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”

MAY: SACRED ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS

When a servicemember enlists or is commissioned within a branch of service there is always an oath associated with it. Whether it is the oath of enlistment or oath of commissioned officers both are a promise. For those enlisted they “solemnly swear (or affirm) that...[they] will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that...[they] will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.”¹ Commissioned officers make the same promise. The only difference in each oath is that those enlisted swear to “obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over” them “according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.”² As for officers, they swear “that . . . [they] take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that . . . [they] will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which . . . [they are] about to enter.”³ These oaths are vital in entering the military and provide a sense of responsibility. It is a way to help protect those who enlist and commission as they also protect the United States.

Similar to these oaths, Latter-day Saint military families make covenants through the ordinances they receive. In Doctrine and Covenants it states, “And this shall be our covenant—that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord” (136:4). Thus, in the proclamation we read the following:

The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence

1. “Oath of Enlistment,” United States Army, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/oath.html>.

2. “Oath of Enlistment,” United States Army.

3. “Oath of Commissioned Officers,” United States Army, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/officers.html>.

of God and for families to be united eternally.⁴

The purpose of the ordinances and covenants enable us to return with God not only as individuals but as a family. Ardeth G. Kapp in the April 1992 General Conference stated:

It is our faith in the importance of making covenants with God and coming to understand our immense possibilities that the temple, the house of the Lord, becomes the focus for all that really matters. In the temple we participate in ordinances and covenants that span the distance between heaven and earth. They prepare us to one day return to God's presence and enjoy the blessings of eternal families and eternal life.⁵

Latter-day Saint military families can through these ordinances and covenants, work together toward an eternal family and eternal life.

To further understand a covenant, one needs to know what it is and what it means. President Nelson gives a definition of a covenant which identifies its meaning:

One of the most important concepts of revealed religion is that of a sacred covenant. In legal language, a covenant generally denotes an agreement between two or more parties. But in a religious context, a covenant is much more significant. It is a sacred promise with God. He fixes the terms. Each person may choose to accept those terms. If one accepts the terms of the covenant and obeys God's law, he or she receives the blessings associated with the covenant. We know that "when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated (Doctrine and Covenants 130:21)."⁶

The agreement with God gives us more than any other agreement. Latter-day Saint military families are blessed as long as they strive to keep the covenants they have made. These covenants bring everlasting blessings.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson recognized that there is strength received by the blessings of God given to those obedient to the commandments.

4. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 102.

5. Ardeth G. Kapp, "A Mighty Force for Righteousness," *Ensign*, May 1992, 79.

6. Russell M. Nelson, "Covenants," *Ensign*, November 2011, 86.

First, as we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us . . . Furthermore, they lead to a generally more healthy life and freedom from destructive addictions. Obedience gives us greater control over our lives, greater capacity to come and go, to work and create. Of course, age, accident, and illnesses inevitably take their toll, but even so, our obedience to this gospel law enhances our capacity to deal with these challenges.⁷

Elder Christofferson was sharing the power given through the obedience of the commandments, which in turn are also the covenants made with God. There is power in the covenants that Latter-day Saint military families make. President Nelson made them a promise:

We...increase the Savior's power in our lives when we make sacred covenants and keep those covenants with precision. Our covenants bind us to Him and give us godly power. As Faithful disciples, we repent and follow Him into the waters of baptism. We walk along the covenant path to receive other essential ordinances. And gratefully, God's plan provides for those blessings to be extended to ancestors who died without an opportunity to obtain them during their mortal lives.⁸

Covenants allow the Savior's power to increase in our lives as we are obedient to the covenants. As well, President Nelson added that the covenants can give us godly power. This blessing of godly power is not only extended to us but reaches even to those that have died, and whom may need it to receive the necessary blessings of the ordinances of salvation.

One of the blessings that comes from covenants and ordinances is something that Latter-day Saints military families need. President Nelson said the following:

With each ordinance is a covenant—a promise. A covenant made with god is not restrictive, but protective. Such a concept is not new. For example, if our water supply is not clean, we filter the water to screen out harmful ingredients. Divine covenants help us to filter out or our minds impurities that could harm us. When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness (see Moroni 10:32), we lose nothing of value and gain the glory of eternal life. Covenants do not hold us down; they elevate

7. D. Todd Christofferson, "The Power of Covenants," *Ensign*, May 2009, 21.

8. Russell M. Nelson, "Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives," *Ensign*, May 2017, 41.

us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective.⁹

God for His children and made covenants protective.

Covenants and ordinances are made through the power of the priesthood that is given to man from God.¹⁰ Although men hold the priesthood offices, women are still able to have all the blessings associated with priesthood power. President Nelson taught the following in the 2019 October General Conference:

Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God. Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God's priesthood power by virtue of their covenant, along with a gift of knowledge to know how to draw upon that power.¹¹

The priesthood blesses the lives of all the children of God, both men and women. Therefore, these covenants and ordinances are done with authority of God and offered to all His children for their salvation.

As a result, covenants and ordinances are blessings in the lives of Latter-day Saint military families. The promises, when kept, can bring forth power, strength, and even protection. In the struggles faced within the homes of Latter-day Saint military family they can turn to the promises made with God. In turn, God will bless them as they remember and strive to be obedient to the commandments and their covenants.

9. Russell M. Nelson, "Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2001, 34.

10. "The word priesthood has two meanings. First, priesthood is the power and authority of God. It has always existed and will continue to exist without end (see Alma 13:7-8; Doctrine and Covenants 84:17-18). Through the priesthood, God created and governs the heavens and the earth. Through this power, He exalts His obedient children, bringing to pass "the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39; see also Doctrine and Covenants 84:34-35). Second, in mortality, priesthood is the power and authority that God gives to man to act in all things necessary for the salvation of God's children." "Priesthood," *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, accessed January 24, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/priesthood?lang=eng>.

11. Russell M. Nelson, "Spiritual Treasures," *Ensign*, November 2019, 77.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER SACRED
ORDINANCES AND COVENANTS

ACT:

ATTEND THE TEMPLE WHEN ABLE
OR WORK ON FAMILY HISTORY
TOGETHER TO HELP VICARIOUSLY
BRING THE BLESSINGS OF SACRED
ORDINANCES TO PAST FAMILY
MEMBERS

BECOME:

STRENGTHEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING
OF SACRED COVENANTS TO CENTER
YOUR MILITARY HOME IN JESUS
CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

It is our faith in the importance of making covenants with God and coming to understand our immense possibilities that the temple, the house of the Lord, becomes the focus for all that really matters. In the temple we participate in ordinances and covenants that span the distance between heaven and earth. They prepare us to one day return to God's presence and enjoy the blessings of eternal families and eternal life.¹

Day 2:

*“And this shall be our covenant—that we will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord.”
(Doctrine and Covenants 136:4)*

Day 3:

One of the most important concepts of revealed religion is that of a sacred covenant. In legal language, a covenant generally denotes an agreement between two or more parties. But in a religious context, a covenant is much more significant. It is a sacred promise with God. He fixes the terms. Each person may choose to accept those terms. If one accepts the terms of the covenant and obeys God's law, he or she receives the blessings associated with the covenant. We know that “when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated (Doctrine and Covenants 130:21).”²

Day 4:

First, as we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us...Furthermore, they lead to a generally more healthy life and freedom from destructive addictions. Obedience gives us greater control over our lives, greater capacity to come and go, to work and create. Of course, age, accident, and illnesses inevitably take their toll, but even so, our obedience to this gospel law enhances our capacity to deal with these challenges.³

Day 5:

We...increase the Savior's power in our lives when we make sacred covenants and keep those covenants with precision. Our covenants bind us to Him and give us godly

power. As Faithful disciples, we repent and follow Him into the waters of baptism. We walk along the covenant path to receive other essential ordinances. And gratefully, God's plan provides for those blessings to be extended to ancestors who died without an opportunity to obtain them during their mortal lives.⁴

Day 6:

With each ordinance is a covenant—a promise. A covenant made with god is not restrictive, but protective. Such a concept is not new. For example, if our water supply is not clean, we filter the water to screen out harmful ingredients. Divine covenants help us to filter out or our minds impurities that could harm us. When we choose to deny ourselves of all ungodliness (see Moroni 10:32), we lose nothing of value and gain the glory of eternal life. Covenants do not hold us down; they elevate us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective.⁵

Day 7:

Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God. Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God's priesthood power by virtue of their covenant, along with a gift of knowledge to know how to draw upon that power.⁶

Day 8:

Windows must be washed regularly to clean away dust and dirt. If left to accumulate without regular cleaning, thickening grime can block our light and darken the window. Just as earthly windows need consistent, thorough cleaning, so do the windows of our spirituality. Weekly sacrament meeting attendance helps us keep our personal windows of heaven free from the obscuring haze of earthly distractions and temptations. By partaking of the sacrament worthily to renew our baptismal covenants, we clarify our view of life's eternal purpose and divine priorities. The sacrament prayers invite personal introspection, repentance, and rededication as we pledge our willingness to remember our Savior, Jesus the Christ. This commitment to become like Christ, repeated weekly, defines the supreme aspiration of Latter-day Saint life. Frequent temple Attendance, as our circumstances allow, is another way to keep our spiritual windows clean. Worship in the house of the Lord will keep our view of what matters most clear and sharp, focused crisply, and free from the dust of the world.⁷

Day 9:

One of the great blessings of the restored gospel is the privilege of entering into sacred covenants with our Father in Heaven—covenants with our Father in Heaven—

covenants made binding by virtue of the holy priesthood. When we are baptized and confirmed, when brethren are ordained in the offices of the priesthood, when we go to the temple and receive our endowments, when we enter into the new and everlasting covenant of eternal marriage—in all these sacred ordinances, we solemn commitments to keep God’s commandments. We covenant that we will show our love for our Heavenly Father through humble service and diligent obedience and thereby prove ourselves to be “good and faithful servant[s]” (Matthew 25:21,23).⁸

Day 10:

The ordinances of salvation and exaltation administered in the Lord’s restored Church are far more than rituals or symbolic performances. Rather, they constitute authorized channels through which the blessings and powers of heaven can flow into our individual lives.⁹

Day 11:

Understanding that adversity is a part of life, and that mortal life is simply a small part of our existence, helps us to better bear our burdens. That understanding comes over time as we learn more about God’s plan of happiness...In the temple, we learn of eternal things that help to broaden our perspective on life. In the holy temple, we learn how to be like God. Within its walls, we feel His spirit and His love as we make the sacred covenants that will help prepare us to live with Him again one day...As we prepare to enter to the temple, sometimes making both temporal and spiritual sacrifices to do so, we strengthen our faith and enhance our temple experience. When the whirlwinds of life descend, the temple can be a refuge in the storm. Death comes to all of us. But we learn through the gospel of Jesus Christ that mortal death is not the end. Through ordinances only performed in the temple, family relationships can last forever.¹⁰

Day 12:

His Atonement provides the way for us to progress on the path to our heavenly home, through sacred priesthood ordinances and covenants. These priesthood ordinances and covenants were restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith.¹¹

Day 13:

Temple ordinances lead to the greatest blessings available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. They are those ordinances necessary for our exaltation in the celestial kingdom. As we strive to keep our covenants, our feelings of inadequacy and imperfection begin to fade, while the ordinances and the covenants of the temple come alive. Everyone is welcome to walk that path to eternal life.¹²

Day 14:

*Keeping covenants protects us, prepares us, and empowers us.*¹³

Day 15:

*We prepare by obeying the commandments and seeking to do God's will. If you have not gone to the temple, start preparing now, for when the opportunity presents itself you will be ready and worthy.*¹⁴

Day 16:

*If we are true to our covenants, our Father in Heaven will grant us the blessing of "eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God" (D&C 14:7). "All that [the] Father hath" (D&C 84:38) is promised to those who walk the path of faith and remain true to their covenants. Those "who [do] the works of righteousness shall receive [their] reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23).*¹⁵

Day 17:

*The covenants we make with the associated ordinances we receive in the temple become our credentials for admission into God's presence. These covenants elevate us beyond the limits of our own power and perspective we make covenants to show our devotion to build up the kingdom. We become covenant people as we are placed under covenant to God. All the promised blessings are ours through our faithfulness to these covenants.*¹⁶

Day 18:

*The temple is a house of learning. Much of the instruction imparted in the temple is symbolic and learned by the Spirit. This means we are taught from on high. Temple covenants and ordinances are a powerful symbol of Christ and His Atonement. We all receive the same instruction, but our understanding of the meaning of the ordinances and covenants will increase as we return to the temple often with the attitude of learning and contemplating the eternal truths taught.*¹⁷

Day 19:

"Wherefore he that prayeth, whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me if he obey mine ordinances. He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances." (Doctrine and Covenants 52:15–16)

Day 20:

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, is our great Exemplar when it comes to making and keeping promises and covenants. He came to earth promising to do the will of the Father. He taught gospel principles in word and in deed. He atoned for our sins that we might live again. He has honored every one of His promises.¹⁸

Day 21:

“And, inasmuch as it shall be expedient, ye must keep the performances and ordinances of God until the law shall be fulfilled which was given unto Moses.”
(2 Nephi 25:30)

Day 22:

“And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses; but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.” (4 Nephi 1:12)

Day 23:

Can the same be said of each of us? What are the dangers if we cheat a little, slip a little, or do not quite follow through with our commitments? What if we walk away from our covenants? Will others come unto Christ in light of our example? Is your word your bond? Keeping promises is not a habit; it is a characteristic of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Ever mindful of our frailties in mortal life, the Lord promised, “Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you.” [Doctrine and Covenants 68:6] I have felt His presence when needing reassurance, comfort, or greater spiritual insight or strength, and I have been deeply humbled and am grateful for His divine companionship.¹⁹

Day 24:

These priesthood ordinances and covenants provide access to the fulness of the blessings promised to us by God, which are made possible by the Savior’s Atonement. They arm sons and daughters of God with power, God’s power, [see Doctrine and Covenants 109:22] and provide us with the opportunity to receive eternal life—to return to God’s presence and live with Him in His eternal family.²⁰

Day 25:

Marriage and family are an essential part of God's plan for our happiness...through temple ordinances and covenants, our cherished family relationships can endure eternally.²¹

Day 26:

"We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." (Articles of Faith 1:3)

Day 27:

"But, said he, notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord." (2 Nephi 1:5)

Day 28:

There are some great spiritual promises that parents may have visited upon them; these are the same divine promises made to their valiant forbears who nobly kept their covenants. Covenants remembered by parents will be remembered by God. The children may thus become the beneficiaries and inheritors of these great covenants and promises.²²

Day 29:

When you came out of the water, you had accepted another call to serve...you made a promise and received an assignment in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, of which you were then confirmed a member. You covenanted with God to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ, to keep His commandments, and to serve Him. For each one who makes these covenants, the service that the Lord calls him or her to do will be suited perfectly to that person. The covenant daughter and sons of God, however, all share one important and joyful call. It is to serve others for Him.²³

Day 30:

Our families are our highest responsibility as well as our greatest blessing...If we keep our covenants, the promises we receive in return are great.²⁴

Day 31:

The best way to strengthen a home, current or future, is to keep covenants, promises we've made to each other and to God.²⁵

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Ardeth G. Kapp, “A Mighty Force for Righteousness,” Ensign, May 1992, 79.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Covenants,” Ensign, November 2011, 86.
3. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” Ensign, May 2009, 21.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” Ensign, May 2017, 41.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” Ensign, May 2001, 34.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures,” Ensign, November 2019, 77.
7. Joseph B. Wirthlin, Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 145.
8. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “True to the Truth,” Ensign, May 1997, 16.
9. David A. Bednar, One by One (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2017), 116.
10. Irinna Danielson, “Five Ways the Temple Provides Individuals the Power to Cope,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, last modified November 27, 2014, accessed February 12, 2020, <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/ways-temple-individuals-power-cope/>.
11. Carole M Stephens, “Do We Know What We Have?,” Ensign, November 2013, 14.
12. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Keeping Covenants Protects Us, Prepares Us, and Empowers Us,” Ensign, May 2014, 117.
13. Rosemary M. Wixom, “Keeping Covenants Protects Us, Prepares Us, and Empowers Us,” 116.
14. Silvia H. Allred, “Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants,” Ensign, November 2008, 113.
15. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “True to the Truth,” Ensign, May 1997, 16.
16. Silvia H. Allred, “Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants,” Ensign, November 2008, 113.
17. Silvia H. Allred, “Holy Temples, Sacred Covenants,” Ensign, November 2008, 113.
18. Ronald A. Rasband, “Standing by Our Promises and Covenants,” Ensign, November 2019, 53.
19. Ronald A. Rasband, “Standing by Our Promises and Covenants,” 53.
20. Carole M Stephens, “Do We Know What We Have?,” Ensign, November 2013, 12.
21. Craig C. Christensen, “‘A Choice Seer Will I Raise up,’” Ensign, November 2016, 29–30.
22. James E. Faust, Finding Light in a Dark World (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 95.
23. Henry B. Eyring, “Covenant Women in Partnership with God,” Ensign, November 2019, 70–71.
24. Kathleen H. Hughes, “Blessing Our Families Through Our Covenants,” Ensign, November 2002, 107.
25. Linda K. Burton, “Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work,” Ensign, May 2014, 123.

THEME 6: Solemn Responsibility

The Family: A Proclamation to the World

“Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children...By devine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”

JUNE: SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITY

One of the key points of the proclamation is that “The family is ordained of God.”¹ In Doctrine and Covenants 49:15 the Lord reveals “that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.” In some cases, Latter-day Saint military families may forget that God has ordained the family and thus has given set responsibilities that help families to be unified and grow in their family relationships and obligations. Therefore, the proclamation does not only help teach about the family, but it is reminder of what matters most. It is vital for wives/mothers and husbands/fathers to learn their solemn responsibilities to create a foundation in the lives of children in the homes.

The proclamation clearly states that “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”² This is the first solemn responsibility that is stated in the proclamation and it is the greatest responsibility couples and parents have. In the previous principle of love (Theme 2), we learned the importance of love in the lives of family members, but also of the love of the Eternal Father and of Jesus Christ. This phrase talks about the unity that a marriage can obtain through love. President Hinckley spoke about these solemn responsibilities:

Now, I believe that most marriages in the Church are happy that both husbands and wives in those marriages experience a sense of security and love, of mutual dependence, and an equal sharing of burdens. I am confident that the children in those homes, at least in the vast majority of them, are growing up with a sense of peace and security, knowing that they are appreciated and loved by both of their parents, who, they feel, love one another.³

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Our Solemn Responsibility,” *Ensign*, November 1991, 50.

Love brings security in the home and, when expressed, all members of the home benefit. When husband and wife love one another they are able to share their appreciation for each other, they then are better equipped to share that appreciation with their children.

Thus, love continues to be part of the responsibility parents have. In the proclamation it we read the importance of love for children:

Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live.⁴

Latter-day Saint parents are taught through the proclamation that it is their responsibility to rear their children in “love and righteousness.” James stated, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:19). In this verse, James expressed the importance of listening with real intent and being slow to anger. For example, President Nelson shared an experience:

When our youngest daughter was about four years of age, I came home from hospital duties quite late one evening. I found my dear wife to be very weary. I don’t know why. She only had nine children underfoot all day. So I offered to get our four-year-old ready for bed. I began to give the orders: “Take off your clothes; hang them up; put on your pajamas; brush your teeth; say your prayers” and so on, commanding in a manner befitting a tough sergeant in the army. Suddenly she cocked her head to one side, looked at me with a wistful eye, and said, “Daddy, do you own me?” She taught me an important lesson. I was using coercive methods on this sweet soul. To rule children by force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. No, we don’t own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go.⁵

President Nelson taught the importance to rear children in love and righteousness. It is the example of Christ that parents can follow. In addition, it is through Christ’s love that they then learn to serve each other and obey the commandments of God. In addition, the proclamation warns that “Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.”⁶

4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

5. Russell M. Nelson, “Listen to Learn,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 22.

6. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

Although the proclamation gives responsibilities that are both for husbands and wives--mothers and fathers--it does not end. Fathers have specific responsibilities in caring for their families. "By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families."⁷ One of the key factors in the responsibilities of a father is that the proclamation declares that it is by "divine design." Fathers, by divine design, have the duty and responsibility to preside. As pointed out by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church" (Ephesians 5:23). This model is exemplified by Christ, but is a model from God, the Eternal Father. Jesus taught, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). Therefore, a father's duty is to preside as the Father and as His Son Jesus Christ have exemplified, which is love and righteousness. Fathers also provide for their families by giving them the "necessities of life and protection."

One of the blessings that can be part of a Latter-day Saint military family is if the father is a worthy priesthood holder. In order for a father to become as the Father is, the priesthood helps him be worthy of God's help and direction to care for his family as the Father does for all His children. President Howard W. Hunter explained the importance of a man holding the priesthood and its role of helping him be a righteous father and husband.

I wish to speak of the relationship that a man holding the priesthood should have with his wife and children. With a knowledge of the plan of salvation as a foundation, a man who holds the priesthood looks upon marriage as a sacred privilege and obligation . . . A man who holds the priesthood shows perfect moral fidelity to his wife and gives her no reason to doubt his faithfulness . . . A man who holds the priesthood has reverence for motherhood . . . Honor your wife's unique and divinely appointed role as a mother in Israel and her special capacity to bear and nurture children . . . A man who holds the priesthood regards the family as ordained of God. Your leadership of the family is your most important and sacred responsibility. The family is the most important unit in time and in eternity and, as such, transcends every other interest in life . . . A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto . . . A man who holds the priesthood leads his family in Church participation so they

7. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 102.

will know the gospel and be under the protection of the covenants and ordinances.⁸

A father has the great responsibility to help his family. President Hunter acknowledged that the Church is a source that can teach a man what it means to not only hold the priesthood but to be worthy to create a home governed by its righteous principles and be blessed by it. In Doctrine and Covenants 84:35 the Lord stated, “They who receive this priesthood receive me.” As a Latter-day Saint father works toward understanding his priesthood responsibilities, he will receive guidance and nurture a home centered in Christ. Therefore, he will become more as the Father, filled with love and righteousness.

The father is not the only one who has sacred responsibilities in the home. The proclamation declares, “Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.”⁹ Many prophets and apostles have spoken of the God-ordained and divine office of motherhood. President Ezra Taft Benson taught that “A mother’s role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train.”¹⁰ President Heber J. Grant taught about a mother’s role:

There seems to be a power which the mother possesses in shaping the life of the child that is far superior, in my judgement, to the power of the father, and this almost without exception . . . After all it is by love, real genuine love of our fellows, that we accomplish the most. A mother’s love seems to be the most perfect and the most sincere, the strongest of any love we know anything about. I, for me, rejoice in it because of its wonderful example to me.¹¹

President Grant shared his testimony of the power that exists in being a mother. In addition, he shared the power of the genuine love of a mother. President David O. McKay taught that motherhood has three primary attributes:

Motherhood consists of three principal attributes or qualities: namely, (1) the power to bear, (2) the ability to rear, (3) the gift of love . . . This ability and willingness properly to rear children, the gift of love, and eagerness, yes, longing to express it in soul development, make motherhood the noblest office or calling in the world. She who can paint a masterpiece or write a book that will influence millions deserves the admiration and the plaudits of mankind; but she who rears successfully

8. Howard W. Hunter, “Being a Righteous Husband and Father,” *Ensign*, November 1994, 49.

9. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

10. Ezra Taft Benson, “Counsel to the Saints,” *Ensign*, May 1984, 6.

11. Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Heber J. Grant*, compiled by G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1941), 152.

a family of healthy, beautiful sons and daughters, whose influence will be felt through generations to come, whose immortal souls will exert an influence throughout the ages long after paintings shall have faded, and books and statues shall have decayed or shall have been destroyed, deserves the highest honor that man can give, and the choicest blessings of God. In her high duty and service to humanity, endowing with immortality eternal spirits, she is co-partner with the Creator himself.¹²

Motherhood is the noblest of callings and President McKay expressed it in a way that paints the picture of the sacred responsibility this office holds. Its attributes are divinely appointed to those mothers who strive to nurture their children in righteousness. The sacredness and the significances mothers have in this grand plan of the Father and of the Son cannot be overstated.

It is important to note that Latter-day Saint mothers should not forget that they can draw on the power of God through the priesthood covenants they have made. President Nelson reminded the sisters of the Church of the power they can obtain from Jesus Christ through their priesthood covenants.

The heavens are just as open to women who are endowed with God's power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood. I pray that truth will register upon each of your hearts because I believe it will change your life. Sisters, you have the right to draw liberally upon the Savior's power to help your family and others you love.¹³

Mothers can find help and assistance through the power of God. President Nelson noted that as women take this into account and into their hearts it will change their lives. Drawing from the power of God is part of how a wife and mother can find guidance to help and love her family.

The proclamation declares that "In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation."¹⁴ Although, in some cases a father and mother may not be part of the family unit. These and other unique circumstances can affect the way responsibilities are handled. This then can make it hard to equally split responsibilities. It may be that a single parent has to take on more of these responsibilities. The Church teaches the following about single-parent

12. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City, UT: An Improvement Era Publication, 1953), 453–454.

13. Russell M. Nelson, "Spiritual Treasures," *Ensign*, November 2019, 77.

14. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 102.

families:

While this family unit (marriage between a man and a woman) is the ideal, many Church members find themselves in a variety of other circumstances, including in single-parenting families. The gospel of Jesus Christ was given by God to bless all His Children, without exception, regardless of the family situations in which they find themselves. Because of a variety of circumstances, including death, divorce, and separation, many Church members find themselves in single-parent families. Regardless of their family situation, all Church members are entitled to receive all the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The structure and fellowship of the Church provide many people who are willing and ready to help parents and children and to strengthen them in the gospel.¹⁵

The Church expresses that there are members within the Church who are willing to help. The devastating task then can be shared by others. President Gordon B. Hinckley taught the following:

Now a word to the single parents among us . . . This is a lonely duty. But you need not be entirely alone. There are many, ever so many in this Church who would reach out to you with sensitivity and understanding. They do not wish to intrude where they are not wanted. But their interest is genuine and sincere, and they bless their own lives as they bless your lives and those of your children. Welcome their help. They to give it for their own sakes as well as for your sake. We have thousands of good bishops in this Church. We have thousands of good quorum officers. We have thousands of wonderful Relief Society women . . . They are your friends, put in place by the Lord to give of their strength to help you. And never forget that the Lord Himself is a source of strength greater than any other.¹⁶

Knowing the circumstances that would arise, the Lord has structured His Church to provide the means to care for those in need. Although some family units do not always fit the ideal situation, the same blessings can be poured upon a family whose unit has been hit by the circumstances of life. Latter-day Saint military families in those cases or even in times of separation because of deployment may need that extra help from others to make their homes strong and centered in Christ.

15. "Single-Parenting Families," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed February 2, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/single-parent-families?lang=eng>.

16. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To Single Adults," *Ensign*, June 1989, 74.

The sacred and solemn responsibilities that husband/fathers, wives/mothers, and single-parent families have in the family are given to help strengthen the family relationship through love and righteousness. It is a way to foster the resiliency that is needed when certain circumstances appear in the lives of family members. Therefore, these responsibilities can be shared when service members are deployed, attending training, or experiencing any type of stressor on the family. Understanding the solemn responsibilities of a husband, father, wife, mother, and single parent can result in a stronger family relationship.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY AND PONDER THE SOLEMN
RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FAMILY

ACT:

HAVE WEEKLY FAMILY COUNCILS
TO DISCUSS HOW TO BEST SUPPORT
THE ROLES OF EACH MEMBER OF THE
FAMILY

BECOME:

STRENGTHEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SOLEMN RESPONSIBILITIES
WITHIN THE FAMILY TO CENTER
YOUR MILITARY HOME IN JESUS
CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

QUOTE: The family is ordained of God.¹

Day 2:

“And again, verily I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man.” (Doctrine and Covenants 49:15)

Day 3:

Now, I believe that most marriages in the Church are happy that both husbands and wives in those marriages experience a sense of security and love, of mutual dependence, and an equal sharing of burdens. I am confident that the children in those homes, at least in the vast majority of them, are growing up with a sense of peace and security, knowing that they are appreciated and loved by both of their parents, who, they feel, love one another.²

Day 4:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19)

Day 5:

When our youngest daughter was about four years of age, I came home from hospital duties quite late one evening. I found my dear wife to be very weary. I don’t know why. She only had nine children underfoot all day. So I offered to get our four-year-old ready for bed. I began to give the orders: “Take off your clothes; hang them up; put on your pajamas; brush your teeth; say your prayers” and so on, commanding in a manner befitting a tough sergeant in the army. Suddenly she cocked her head to one side, looked at me with a wistful eye, and said, “Daddy, do you own me?” She taught me an important lesson. I was using coercive methods on this sweet soul. To rule children by force is the technique of Satan, not of the Savior. No, we don’t own our children. Our parental privilege is to love them, to lead them, and to let them go.³

Day 6:

All families need strengthening, from the ideal to the most troubled. That strengthening can come from you. In fact, in some families you may be the only source of spiritual strength. The Lord is depending on you to bring the blessings of the gospel to your family.⁴

Day 7:

It is important to establish patterns of righteousness in your own life, which will enable you to set a good example for your family, whatever form your family may take.⁵

Day 8:

“The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.”
(Ephesians 5:23)

Day 9:

“The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19).

Day 10:

I wish to speak of the relationship that a man holding the priesthood should have with his wife and children. With a knowledge of the plan of salvation as a foundation, a man who holds the priesthood looks upon marriage as a sacred privilege and obligation...A man who holds the priesthood shows perfect moral fidelity to his wife and gives her no reason to doubt his faithfulness...A man who holds the priesthood has reverence for motherhood...Honor your wife's unique and divinely appointed role as a mother in Israel and her special capacity to bear and nurture children...A man who holds the priesthood regards the family as ordained of God.⁶

Day 11:

Your leadership of the family is your most important and sacred responsibility. The family is the most important unit in time and in eternity and, as such, transcends every other interest in life...A man who holds the priesthood accepts his wife as a partner in the leadership of the home and family with full knowledge of and full participation in all decisions relating thereto....A man who holds the priesthood leads his family in Church participation so they will know the gospel and be under the protection of the covenants and ordinances.⁷

Day 12:

“And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:35)

Day 13:

I am convinced that a husband is never more attractive to his wife than when he is serving in his God-given roles as a worthy priesthood holder—most important in the home.⁸

Day 14:

Sons of God, do you know who you are? Do you know what you have? Are you worthy to exercise the priesthood and receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? Do you embrace your roles and responsibilities to strengthen homes as fathers, grandfathers, sons, brothers, and uncles? Do you show respect for women, womanhood, and motherhood?⁹

Day 15:

A mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, bear, nourish, love, and train.¹⁰

Day 16:

There seems to be a power which the mother possesses in shaping the life of the child that is far superior, in my judgement, to the power of the father, and this almost without exception. ...After all it is by love, real genuine love of our fellows, that we accomplish the most. A mother's love seems to be the most perfect and the most sincere, the strongest of any love we know anything about. I, for me, rejoice in it because of its wonderful example to me.¹¹

Day 17:

Motherhood consists of three principal attributes or qualities: namely, (1) the power to bear, (2) the ability to rear, (3) the gift of love. ...This ability and willingness properly to rear children, the gift of love, and eagerness, yes, longing to express it in soul development, make motherhood the noblest office or calling in the world. She who can paint a masterpiece or write a book that will influence millions deserves the admiration and the plaudits of mankind; but she who rears successfully a family of healthy, beautiful sons and daughters, whose influence will be felt through generations to come, whose immortal souls will exert an influence throughout the ages long after paintings shall have faded, and books and statues shall have decayed

or shall have been destroyed, deserves the highest honor that man can give, and the choicest blessings of God. In her high duty and service to humanity, endowing with immortality eternal spirits, she is co-partner with the Creator himself.¹²

Day 18:

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.¹³

Day 19:

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.¹⁴

Day 20:

The heavens are just as open to women who are endowed with God's power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood. I pray that truth will register upon each of your hearts because I believe it will change your life. Sisters, you have the right to draw liberally upon the Savior's power to help your family and others you love.¹⁵

Day 21:

Daughters of God, do we know who we are? Do we know what we have? Are we worthy to receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? Do we receive the gifts given to us with gratitude, grace, and dignity? Do we embrace our roles and responsibilities to strengthen homes as mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts? Do we show respect for men, manhood, and fatherhood?¹⁶

Day 22:

While this family unit (marriage between a man and a woman) is the ideal, many Church members find themselves in a variety of other circumstances, including in single-parenting families. The gospel of Jesus Christ was given by God to bless all

His Children, without exception, regardless of the family situations in which they find themselves. Because of a variety of circumstances, including death, divorce, and separation, many Church members find themselves in single-parent families. Regardless of their family situation, all Church members are entitled to receive all the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The structure and fellowship of the Church provide many people who are willing and ready to help parents and children and to strengthen them in the gospel.¹⁷

Day 23:

Now a word to the single parents among us...This is a lonely duty. But you need not be entirely alone. There are many, ever so many in this Church who would reach out to you with sensitivity and understanding. They do not wish to intrude where they are not wanted. But their interest is genuine and sincere, and they bless their own lives as they bless your lives and those of your children. Welcome their help. They to give it for their own sakes as well as for your sake. We have thousands of good bishops in this Church. We have thousands of good quorum officers. We have thousands of wonderful Relief Society women...They are your friends, put in place by the Lord to give of their strength to help you. And never forget that the Lord Himself is a source of strength greater than any other.¹⁸

Day 24:

It's important for us to realize that there is no one way that a righteous family looks. Some righteous families have two parents; but sometimes, through death or divorce, there is only one. Some righteous families have many children, and other families, at least for the moment, have none. Most members are single for part of their lives,... In some righteous families only the father works outside the home, and other times, both adults must work. So, though we may differ, what righteous families have in common are the covenants that they hold sacred.¹⁹

Day 25:

We all need each other. Sons of God need daughters of God, and daughters of God need sons of God. We have different gifts and different strengths. First Corinthians chapter 12 emphasizes the need for sons and daughters of God, each one of us, to fulfill our individual roles and responsibilities according to the Lord's plan, that all may benefit [see Doctrine and Covenants 46:9,12].²⁰

Day 26:

Oh, husbands and fathers in Israel, you can do so much for the salvation and exaltation of your families! ...Remember your sacred calling as a father in Israel—your most important calling in time and eternity—a calling from which you will never be

released. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide.²¹

Day 27:

*Brothers and sisters, we need each other! As covenant-keeping women and men, we need to lift each other and help each other become the people the Lord would have us become. And we need to work together to lift the rising generation and help them reach their divine potential as heirs of eternal life.*²²

Day 28:

*The whole purpose of the creation of the earth was to provide a dwelling place where the spirit children of God might come....The whole purpose of mothers and fathers should be to live worthily of this blessing and to assist God the Father and his son Jesus Christ in their work.*²³

Day 29:

*Parents are commanded to bring up their children in light and truth (see D&C 93:40), teaching them to understand the principles of the gospel, to pray and walk uprightly before the Lord (see D&C 68:25, 28), and to love one another and serve one another (see Mosiah 4:14–15).*²⁴

Day 30:

*Finally, our Father's great plan of happiness is crowned with this glorious truth: The Family can Become an Eternal Unit through the Power of God. The doctrine of the Church is unique in this regard, for we alone teach that God lives in an eternal marriage relationship and that we may obtain like status. Through the sealing ordinance and by honoring our covenants, we can enjoy the blessings of eternal life. The Lord has assured the obedient that they "shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things,... Which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue" (D&C 132:19–20)....We must teach these foundation principles in more of our meetings Eternal family life is the work and the glory of our Heavenly Father.*²⁵

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," Ensign, November 1995, 102.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Our Solemn Responsibility," Ensign, November 1991, 50.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Listen to Learn," Ensign, May 1991, 22.
4. Mary N. Cook, "Strengthen Home and Family," Ensign, November 2007, 11.
5. Mary N. Cook, "Strengthen Home and Family," 11.
6. Howard W. Hunter, "Being a Righteous Husband and Father," Ensign, November 1994, 49.
7. Howard W. Hunter, "Being a Righteous Husband and Father," 49.
8. Linda K. Burton, "We'll Ascend Together," Ensign, May 2015, 29.
9. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," Ensign, November 2013, 14.
10. Ezra Taft Benson, "Counsel to the Saints," Ensign, May 1984, 6.
11. Heber J. Grant, *Gospel Standards: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Heber J. Grant*, compiled by G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1941), 152.
12. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City, UT: An Improvement Era Publication, 1953), 453–454.
13. Julie B. Beck, "Mothers Who Know," Ensign, November 2007, 77.
14. Julie B. Beck, "Mothers Who Know," 78.
15. Russell M. Nelson, "Spiritual Treasures," Ensign, November 2019, 77.
16. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," Ensign, November 2013, 14.
17. "Single-Parenting Families," *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, accessed February 2, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/single-parent-families?lang=eng>.
18. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To Single Adults," Ensign, June 1989, 74.
19. Kathleen H. Hughes, "Blessing Our Families Through Our Covenants," Ensign, November 2002, 106.
20. Carole M Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?," Ensign, November 2013, 14.
21. Ezra Taft Benson, "To the Fathers in Israel," Ensign, November 1987, 51, 50.
22. Linda K. Burton, "We'll Ascend Together," Ensign, May 2015, 30.
23. N. Eldon Tanner, "The Role of Womanhood," Conference Report, October 1973, 126.
24. Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 240.
25. Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin*, 241–242.

THEME 7:
Work - Serving Your
Country

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of...work”

JULY: WORK – SERVING YOUR COUNTRY

One of the greatest contributions of the military is the work that is provided by the selfless servicemembers and their families. The servicemembers willingness to fight for the freedom of others is an honorable attribute. President Ezra Taft Benson stated, “Freedom, a willingness to work, and the desire to serve your God through service to your fellowmen—these are the sources of true wealth. Cling fast to these truths, and you must inevitably increase in favor with man.”¹ Work that is provided in military training is one of the hardships of military life, but work can build a resilient Latter-day Saint military family. The proclamation recognizes that one of the principles of “successful marriages and families” is work.² The principle of work when embedded into the family can provide endless blessings. One of the traits found in many servicemembers is being hard workers. It is expected for work to be part of the servicemembers’ lives. The tasks that are given in the military can be demanding and sometimes overwhelming. Work gives purpose and determination by providing a vision. Therefore, the principle of work when applied and taught in the home can foster growth and unity within the family and its members.

Work is a principle that has been taught since Adam and Eve. President Howard W. Hunter once taught the following:

It is interesting that the first recorded instruction given to Adam after the Fall dealt with the eternal principle of work. The Lord said: “In the sweat of they face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Our Heavenly Father loves us so completely that he has given us a commandment to work. This is one of the keys to eternal life. He knew that we will learn more, grow more, achieve more, serve more, and benefit more from a

1. Ezra Taft Benson, *So Shall Ye Reap* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1960), 175.

2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

President Hunter's mention of the instruction given to Adam by God to work helps us further understand the need for a family to be focused on work as a principle within the home. It was also recognized that work is an eternal principle. Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ exercise this principle. The principle of work is a manner for Latter-day Saint military families to center their lives in Christ. Kathleen Slaugh Bahr and other scholars wrote about the meaning and blessings of work:

When Adam and Eve left the Garden, they exchanged an existence where life was sustained without effort for a life of work and trials. Traditionally, Christians think of such labor as a curse, but a close reading of the scriptures reveals otherwise. God cursed the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles, which in turn forced Adam to labor. And yet Adam was told, "Cursed shall be the ground for thy sake" (Moses 4:23; emphasis added). In other words, the hard work of eating bread "By the sweat of thy face" (Moses 4:25) was meant to be a blessing.⁴

When Adam and Eve lived in the garden, their life was effortless but as they left the garden, they found themselves having to put in the effort to care for their family. The labor that Adam accomplish was a blessing. As a consequence of the fall, Latter-day Saint military families do not enjoy the effortless life that existed in the Garden of Eden. They receive a greater blessing that is derived through their work. President Ezra Taft Benson acknowledged, "All we obtain in life of a material nature comes as a product of labor and the providence of God. Work produces life's necessities."⁵

It is important to note that the work that service members provided for their country requires much of their time. The work can be compared as a thorn or a thistle in their daily life when it interferes with other tasks. Each servicemember has the obligation to accomplish his or her tasks no matter the circumstance. In the United States Army duty is considered one of the core values. Work and duty are very much related. The Army describes duty in the following manner:

[Duty is to] Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish task as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks and responsibilities—all in constant

3. Howard W. Hunter, "Prepare for Honorable Employment," *Ensign*, November 1975, 122.

4. Kathleen Slaugh Bahr et al., "The Meaning and Blessings of Family Work," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 177-178.

5. Ezra Taft Benson, "Prepare for the Days of Tribulation," *Ensign*, November 1980, 32.

motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.⁶

While duty is one of the core values of the Army, the other branches such as the Navy and the Airforce would still accept the above description. When the description of duty is viewed closely, a Latter-day Saint military family can also accept it as a way to understand how to be more resilient. For example, the description denotes that duty is the means to accomplish the obligations given individually and as being part of a team. The servicemember must avoid shortcuts because then the integrity of the work can be affected.

The home is very similar. The family is the team and members must work together. There are tasks that need to be completed. In the *Strength of Youth*, the Church added that “Learning to work begins in the home.”⁷ Doctrine and Covenants 60:13, “Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent.” Thus, work is essential in the home. There is no way that one person can do everything. President Hunter has recognized that there are “three major reasons” why work is needed:

There are several principles which undergird the significance of work in the Lord’s plan. First, as the covenant people we must be as self-sufficient as possible. We are to be free from dependence upon a dole or any program that might endanger our free agency. Second, we must work to support our families with which the Lord has blessed us. Every true son of God wants to care for his own, and many a noble mother, from whom a husband has been taken, struggles to support her children, both as breadwinner and a single parent. Finally, we work so we may have the necessities of life, conserving time and energy left over for service in the Lord’s work. Sometimes it seems that the men who work the hardest at their occupations are the men most willing to devote time to church service.⁸

Being self-sufficient, supporting the family, and providing the necessities of life are all blessings that come from hard work. Work can provide the means to accomplish all three goals.

6. “The Army Values,” United States Army, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/>.

7. For the *Strength of Youth* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 40.

8. Howard W. Hunter, “Prepare for Honorable Employment,” *Ensign*, November 1975, 122.

The example of a servicemember can teach his or her children much about sacrifice. Work is sacrificing for the right reasons to accomplish the goals or tasks needed to be met. A great example with which military families can resonant is the story about the people of Ammon found in the Book of Mormon. The people of Ammon were Lamanites who “by the power and word of God . . . [were] converted unto the Lord” but moved and ended up living in Zarahemla and were “protected by the Nephites” (Alma 53:10). Because of Ammon they were able to have a change of heart and made an oath to not “take up arms against their brethren; for they had taken an oath that they never would shed blood more; and according to their oath they would have perished” (Alma 53:11). Because of this oath made with God, they could not help in the war against the Lamanites. Although their sons knowing the oath their parents had taken; “they did assemble themselves together . . . as many as were able to take up arms, and they called themselves Nephites . . . they entered into a covenant to fight for the liberty of the Nephites” (Alma 53:17).

This story is a great example of work and sacrifice. Work is spiritual and temporal. The example of the parents is what caused their children to take up arms. As a community and as families, they were united. Therefore, the effort that the people of Ammon demonstrated to not take up arms gave them the blessing of their children to take up arms for them in order to support the promise of their parents and protect their people. Bahr and other scholars have spoken of the power of work:

Why does such ordinary, family-centered work have to do with salvation? The answer is so obvious in common experience that it has become obscure: Family work links people. It does so by providing endless opportunities to recognize and fill the needs of others . . . Thus family work is a link to one another, a link to the Lord, a stepping-stone toward salvation that is always available. This daily work of feeding, clothing, and sheltering each other has the power to transform us spiritually as we transform others physically.⁹

The two thousand stripling warriors or children of the people of Ammon were blessed by the fact that they were linked with the same purpose as the parents. Helaman, their military leader and their prophet, wrote about their example:

And now I say unto you, my beloved brother Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites. For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not

9. Kathleen Slaugh Bahr et al., “The Meaning and Blessings of Family Work,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 178-179.

suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go lest they should overpower the army of Antipus. Now they never had fought yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them (Alma 56:45-47).

These two thousand sons of the people of Ammon showed the courage and effort to keep their promises. If their mothers had not taught them of God, the outcome of Helaman's words would have been different. Their spiritual growth was presented by their own faith in Christ. Their temporal growth came as they were taught how to defend themselves from the enemy.

It is important to add that work in the military means to serve. It is to serve your country with dedication and be devoted to a cause. The example of the two thousand stripling warriors is an act of selfless service. In the U.S. Army there are values that are taught, that a soldier must uphold. One of them is selfless service which is defined as follows:

Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain. The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.¹⁰

Serving your country is the work that you do for the military, but in return you bless the lives of many. As servicemembers do their best to serve their country with full purpose of mind, the Lord will bless them and their families.

One of the blessings of work is found in the effort that one makes to accomplish tasks, goals, and fulfill responsibilities. President Thomas S. Monson spoke of effort:

It is not enough to want to make [an] effort and to say we'll make the effort. We must actually make the effort. It's in the doing, not just the thinking, that we accomplish our goals. If we constantly put our goals off, we will never see them fulfilled.¹¹

10. "The Army Values," United States Army, accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/>.

11. Thomas S. Monson, "A Royal Priesthood," *Ensign*, November 2007, 59.

Latter-day Saint military family goals can be met when they are focused and put forth the effort needed to accomplish them. The blessing of work and its principles in military training, home, school, work, or any occasion is the accomplishments achieved. No matter the circumstance, work enables change.

Work is an eternal principle that centers in Christ. Work is essential in the lives of Latter-day Saint military families in order to grow spiritually and temporally. Work is not only the servicemember's military obligation, but it includes family work inside the home as well. Therefore, work is the effort that is put forth in the duties that are given whether they be spiritual or temporal. Afterall, "without hard work, nothing grows but weeds."¹²

12. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Farewell to a Prophet," *Ensign*, July 1994, 37.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLES OF
WORK

ACT:

FIND WAYS TO SERVE WITHIN THE
MILITARY COMMUNITY

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT CENTERING YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST
THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF WORK
TO FOSTER RESILIENCY WHILE
SERVING YOUR COUNTRY

QUOTES

Day 1:

Freedom, a willingness to work, and the desire to serve your God through service to your fellowmen—these are the sources of true wealth. Cling fast to these truths, and you must inevitably increase in favor with man.¹

Day 2:

It is interesting that the first recorded instruction given to Adam after the Fall dealt with the eternal principle of work. The Lord said: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Our Heavenly Father loves us so completely that he has given us a commandment to work. This is one of the keys to eternal life. He knew that we will learn more, grow more, achieve more, serve more, and benefit more from a life of industry than from life of ease.²

Day 3:

When Adam and Eve left the Garden, they exchanged an existence where life was sustained without effort for a life of work and trials. Traditionally, Christians think of such labor as a curse, but a close reading of the scriptures reveals otherwise. God cursed the ground to bring forth thorns and thistles, which in turn forced Adam to labor. And yet Adam was told, “Cursed shall be the ground for thy sake” (Moses 4:23; emphasis added). In other words, the hard work of eating bread “By the sweat of thy face” (Moses 4:25) was meant to be a blessing.³

Day 4:

All we obtain in life of a material nature comes as a product of labor and the providence of God. Work produces life’s necessities.⁴

Day 5:

[Duty is to] Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish task as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks and responsibilities – all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.⁵

Day 6:

Learning to work begins in the home.⁶

Day 7:

“Thou shalt not idle away thy time, neither shalt thou bury thy talent.”
(Doctrine and Covenants 60:13)

Day 8:

There are several principles which undergird the significance of work in the Lord’s plan. First, as the covenant people we must be as self-sufficient as possible. We are to be free from dependence upon a dole or any program that might endanger our free agency. Second, we must work to support our families with which the Lord has blessed us. Every true son of God wants to care for his own, and many a noble mother, from whom a husband has been taken, struggles to support her children, both as breadwinner and a single parent. Finally, we work so we may have the necessities of life, conserving time and energy left over for service in the Lord’s work. Sometimes it seems that the men who work the hardest at their occupations are the men most willing to devote time to church service.⁷

Day 9:

Why does such ordinary, family-centered work have to do with salvation? The answer is so obvious in common experience that it has become obscure: Family work links people. It does so by providing endless opportunities to recognize and fill the needs of others... Thus family work is a link to one another, a link to the Lord, a stepping-stone toward salvation that is always available. This daily work of feeding, clothing, and sheltering each other has the power to transform us spiritually as we transform others physically.⁸

Day 10:

“And now I say unto you, my beloved brother Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites. For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go lest they should overpower the army of Antipus. Now they never had fought yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.” (Alma 56:45-47)

Day 11:

[Selfless service is defined as] Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain. The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.⁹

Day 12:

It is not enough to want to make [an] effort and to say we'll make the effort. We must actually make the effort. It's in the doing, not just the thinking, that we accomplish our goals. If we constantly put our goals off, we will never see them fulfilled.¹⁰

Day 13:

Let us realize that the privilege to work is a gift, that power to work is a blessing, that love of work is success.¹¹

Day 14:

“And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes;” (Alma 37:7)

Day 15:

I testify that the God of heaven sent some of His choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this government, and He has now sent other choice spirits to help preserve it.¹²

Day 16:

We salute our great armed forces for their tremendous victory, and the faith and confidence they have restored for us in the great country we are privileged to live in.¹³

Day 17:

One of the highest duties of citizenship is to defend one's country. This is because in wartime, military service often demands the ultimate sacrifice—life itself.¹⁴

Day 18:

“And again, the Lord has said that: Ye shall defend your families even unto bloodshed. Therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with the Lamanites, to defend

themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion.” (Alma 43:47)

Day 19:

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”
(2 Corinthians 3:17)

Day 20:

I have worn the uniform of my native land in the time of total conflict. I have smelled the stench of human dead and wept tears for slaughtered comrades. I have climbed amid the rubble of ravaged cities and contemplated in horror the ashes of a civilization sacrificed to Moloch (Amos 5:26); yet knowing this, with the issues as they are, were I called again to military service, I could not conscientiously object! To you who have answered that call, we say: Serve honorably and well. Keep your faith, your character, your virtue.¹⁵

Day 21:

Who among us will ever forget the touching and vivid pictures of husbands and fathers bidding good-bye to weeping wives and wondering children as fond farewells dominated every newscast and printed story. The children cried but did not know why. Wives wept because they did know the danger, the loneliness, the fear that awaited. With the wave of a hand and a somewhat forced smile, the men and the women of the military went off to war. Their farewell expressions even now ring the conviction of their hearts: “I love my country”; “I’m proud to serve”; “I’ll be home soon”; “Try not to worry.”¹⁶

Day 22:

One of the reasons the men of Easy Company volunteered for hazardous duty was that when they went into combat, they wanted to be next to someone they could trust—someone who wouldn’t do something foolish that could get them killed. They didn’t want to be next to someone who was lazy or who hadn’t paid attention during training or who wasn’t physically capable of what was required. These men had worked to the limits of human capacity.¹⁷

Day 23:

A diligent attitude is not sufficient; however, it is a beginning, not the end. Attitudes, feelings, and beliefs must lead to action, or nothing will be accomplished.... Sometimes your work will be painstaking. It requires having patience and fortitude. It requires courage.¹⁸

Day 24:

Work is basic to all we do. God's first direction to Adam in the Garden of Eden as recorded in scripture was to dress the garden and take care of it. After the fall of Adam, God cursed the earth for Adam's sake saying, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." (Gen. 3:19.) Today, many have forgotten the value of work. Some falsely believe that the highest goal in life is to achieve a condition in which one no longer needs to work.¹⁹

Day 25:

We have always dignified work and reproved idleness. Our books, our sermons, our leaders, including particularly our present President, have glorified industry. The busy hive of the honeybee Deseret—has been our emblem. Work with faith is a cardinal point of our theological doctrine, and our future state—our heaven—is envisioned in terms of eternal progression through constant labor.²⁰

Day 26:

Our Heavenly Father has commanded that we work. Work is the foundation of success and creation. It is the secret of every successful enterprise. Even so, there are some who go to great lengths to avoid work. In fact, a few people I have known have worked exceptionally hard to get out of work. This is something I have never understood. My father was a hard worker, and he taught me to be the same. Some of the most fulfilling moments of our lives are when we establish worthwhile goals and work to achieve them.²¹

Day 27:

Give your best effort. Settle into the harness and work with all your might. As you do so, you will find joy in your service.²²

Day 28:

Since the days of Adam, man has by the sweat of his brow earned his daily bread. But when our work consumes us to the point where the spiritual dimensions of life are neglected, work can also be an entangling net....It is impossible to list the many nets that can ensnare us and keep us from following the Savior. But if we are sincere in our desire to follow Him, we must straightway leave the world's entangling nets and follow Him.²³

Day 29:

Forget yourself and go to work.²⁴

Day 30:

No great cause ever succeeded without great effort.²⁵

Day 31:

Without hard work, nothing grows but weeds.²⁶

QUOTES ENDNOTES



1. Ezra Taft Benson, *So Shall Ye Reap* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1960), 175.
2. Howard W. Hunter, "Prepare for Honorable Employment," *Ensign*, November 1975, 122.
3. Kathleen Slaugh Bahr et al., "The Meaning and Blessings of Family Work," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 177-178.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, "Prepare for the Days of Tribulation," *Ensign*, November 1980, 32.
5. "The Army Values," United States Army, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/>.
6. *For the Strength of Youth* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 40.
7. Howard W. Hunter, "Prepare for Honorable Employment," 122.
8. Kathleen Slaugh Bahr et al., "The Meaning and Blessings of Family Work," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 178-179.
9. "The Army Values," United States Army, accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.army.mil/values/>.
10. Thomas S. Monson, "A Royal Priesthood," *Ensign*, November 2007, 59.
11. David O. McKay, *Pathways to Happiness* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1957), 381.
12. Ezra Taft Benson, "Our Divine Constitution," *Ensign*, November 1987, 7.
13. L. Tom Perry, "First in War, First in Peace, First in the Hearts of His Countrymen," in *The Spirit of America* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1998), 69.
14. James E. Faust, "The Integrity of Obeying the Law," in *The Spirit of America* (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1998), 127.
15. Boyd K. Packer, "The Member and the Military," Conference Report, April 1968, 35.
16. Thomas S. Monson, "Never Alone," *Ensign*, May 1991, 59.
17. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Band of Brothers," *Ensign*, February 2008, 32.
18. Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 123.
19. Thomas S. Monson, "Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare," *Ensign*, September 1986, 3.
20. Stephen L. Richards, Conference Report, October 1939, 65.
21. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Band of Brothers," 32.
22. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Band of Brothers," 32.
23. Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin*, 5.
24. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Sweet Is the Work: Gordon B. Hinckley, 15th President of the Church," *The New Era*, May 1995, 8.
25. Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Press On: Messages on Faith, Hope, and Charity from Joseph B. Wirthlin*, 210.
26. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Farewell to a Prophet," *Ensign*, July 1994, 37.

THEME 8: Prayer

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of...work”

AUGUST: PRAYER

The proclamation teaches that “successful marriages and families are established and maintained on the principle of prayer.”¹ We learn in the Book of Mormon that it is necessary to “hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray” and to “know that ye must pray (2 Nephi 32:8).” John Bytheway compiled a book that shared stories of Latter-day Saint pilots who have served in the armed forces. One of those stories is of Leonard Moon who shared a situation in which the “North Vietnamese regular army was trying to breach the walls of the city with ladders, and the United States Marines were trying to hold them off.”² The Marines were receiving “intense fire” and thus needed help.³ Moon was called to provide combat air support to the Marines and while refueling his Jet he was guided to pray:

This was all I needed two days before going home. I had time to think about my situation and to discuss with my Heavenly Father how much I needed his guidance and protection on this most dangerous mission. As we flew northeast my mind returned to when I left home almost a year earlier. I left a beautiful pregnant wife, two little boys, and only the foundation completed on our new home. Since then, my wife had finished our home and given birth to our first daughter. I told the Lord of my need to return home. Then my thoughts turned to my cousin Jay C. Hess, who was a prisoner of war (POW) somewhere in North Vietnam. He had been there more than four years, and I hoped that I would not meet the same fate that he had.⁴

Moon’s prayer and thoughts are reflected in this account. The situation he experienced and the assistance that he was sent helped him reflect on, the need for guidance,

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

2. Leonard Moon, “Almost Shot Down,” in *Supersonic Saints: Thrilling Stories of LDS Pilots*, comp. John Bytheway (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 2007), 88.

3. Leonard Moon, “Almost Shot Down,” 88.

4. Leonard Moon, “Almost Shot Down,” 88-89.

protection, his wife and family, his need to return home, and his cousin who had become a POW:

After what seemed like an eternity, we arrived at our air base, and I made an emergency landing . . . When I learned from my wingman that I had been hit, I almost felt that my previous prayer had not been answered. Once I landed and found out how very fortunate I really was, I realized that my prayer had been answered, and I again thanked the Lord. The next day I flew my last mission without incident, and the following day I was on the “Freedom Bird,” heading home to my family.⁵

All these thoughts racing through Moon’s mind are what goes on in the minds of many Latter-day Saint service members. When they are involved in extreme missions, trainings, and as they serve their country, prayer becomes an important and powerful tool to find peace in their lives. Prayer provided a means to communicate with their Father in Heaven.

In this day and age, there are a variety of ways to communicate with family, friends, and others. Some of these methods are by email, phones, apps, internet, radios, and many other blessings of advanced modern technologies. Prayer on the other hand has been a means to communicate even before any of these came about. President Ezra Taft Benson wrote the following:

Prayer is man’s means of communicating with his Heavenly Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Only the deceived and the fool refuse to pray. An urgent need today is for more prayer—secret, individual prayer; family prayer; prayer in organizations, association, and meetings generally, and in schools, and in government bodies.

People of all nations need more prayer. We need to be on our knees.⁶

No other means of communication gives us the opportunity to communicate with our Father in Heaven. Prayer is essential for our families. President Thomas S. Monson taught, “Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.”⁷ The spiritual power received from prayer enables service members and their families to learn the significance of their communication and strengthen their relationships with God as individuals and as a family.

President Russell M. Nelson taught, “Prayer helps us to face trials in life. Prayer centers our attitudes precisely. With that focus, we do not wander in the right

5. Leonard Moon, “Almost Shot Down,” 91-92.

6. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1974), 114.

7. Thomas S. Monson, “Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” *Ensign*, November 1988, 70.

or left through land mined with traps of temptations.”⁸ For service members and their families, prayer is a tool that fosters resiliency in the trials faced. Therefore, it is a privilege to have prayer. It strengthens communication not only with God, but also with the family. It allows the family to build a trust in Christ through communicating the needs of the family and its members. In Psalm 55:17 we read, “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.” The Lord is always listening for the needs of His people. Latter-day Saint families can take comfort in knowing that their prayers whether apart or together are being listened to.

One of the greatest examples of Christ is being unified with God. In John 17, the Lord’s Intercessory Prayer, teaches how prayer can be used to unify the family. Christ in His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was, “I come to thee” (v. 11). The Lord identified His need to speak to God, His Father. Latter-day Saint military families feel the same need in many situations.

This is not the only thing that Christ teaches through his prayer. This prayer expresses the unity that the Son and the Father have in all things. In John 17, Christ prayed to God “that they (his disciples) may be one, as we are (v. 11); that they may be one, even as we are (v. 22); that they may be made perfect in one (v. 23).” Christ shared that we can also be unified with the Father through prayer.

Latter-day Saint military families can follow the Savior’s example. Elder Donald L. Staheli, while serving as a Seventy, stated the following:

Some of the most effective teaching in our homes comes from the family’s kneeling together and feeling the spirit of what is said in daily family prayer. Asking the Lord for forgiveness, while also petitioning His help in unifying the family in love and righteous purposes, can have a lasting influence on our children as they grow together in the family. Sincere prayers soften contentious thoughts. It is absolutely imperative that we teach and encourage our children to be consistent and sincere in offering their personal prayers. As children pray daily, they will feel the Lord’s personal direction in their lives. As they learn to seek His blessings and guidance, the family will find the joy and happiness that come from striving to be a righteous family.⁹

Elder Staheli expressed that prayer is a tool to unify the family as each member grows but also to help in contentious situations. It is how the Lord gives direction, blessings, and guidance. President Monson taught about the universal application of prayer:

8. Russell M. Nelson, “Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods,” Ensign, May 1996, 16.

9. Donald L. Staheli, “Lessons from the New Testament: Striving for Family Unity,” Ensign, September 2007, 13.

So universal is its application, so beneficial its result, that prayer qualifies as the number-one hallmark of a happy home. As parents listen to the prayer of a child, they too draw close to God. These little ones, who so recently have been with their Heavenly Father, have no inhibitions in expressing to Him their feelings, their wishes, their thanks. Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: “The family that prays together stays together.”¹⁰

Prayer used to unify the family is also a tool to protect the family from sin and is a source of joy and happiness that brings spiritual power within the home. Rachel A. Sullivan acknowledged that prayer can be more than just a tool:

Fervent prayers show our children what it is in our hearts, what our hopes are, and where our faith lies. Family prayer provides a way for parents to demonstrate faith, love, and expectations. When family prayer is a firm daily ritual, those expectations, love, and faith can become deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of children.¹¹

Prayer within the home allows parents to communicate what they expect, and helps children know those expectations. It also allows parents to express their desires for their family and their faith in Christ.

Although prayer is important for everyone, military families can take extra comfort in the blessings brought about by prayer when dealing with the effects of war. Prayer is a blessing in the lives of many service members. One of the most known examples of prayer being used in a war situation is Patton’s (General Patton) Prayer. On December 8, 1944, General Patton, commander of the Third Army, called Chaplain James O’Neill by phone and said, “This is General Patton; do you have a good prayer for weather? We must do something about these rains if we are to win the war.”¹² Chaplain O’Neill got to work and wrote a prayer, but what astonished him most is how much he learned about prayer from General Patton after he told him that he believed that there was not much prayer going on in the Third Army.¹³ Patton told him:

I am a strong believer in prayer. There are three ways that men get what

10. Thomas S. Monson, “Hallmarks of a Happy Home,” 69.

11. Rachel A. Sullivan, *Creating Your Forever Family* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communication, Inc., 2018), 49.

12. William T. Evans Jr., “Battle and Prayer: A Real Life Story from WWII,” *The Combat Edge*, 2010, 9.

13. William T. Evans Jr., “Battle and Prayer: A Real Life Story from WWII,” 9-11.

they want; by planning, by working, and by praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning or thinking. Then you must have well trained troops to carry it out: that's working. But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat or victory, success or failure . . . That's where prayer comes in. Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, and no epidemics. This is because a lot of people at home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy, simply because people prayed. But we must pray for ourselves too.¹⁴

General Patton believed in the importance of prayer. He knew that remembering God and praying to Him would help them through the treacherous war. In order to do what is right and win against the enemy prayer needed to be implemented in the Third Army. That is exactly what was done. The prayer was published and distributed to every soldier and General Patton's prayer was answered with good weather which "changed the course of the Battle."¹⁵

This story of prayer is a wonderful reminder for Latter-day Saint military families, because it shares the importance of prayer. When a service member is deployed and apart from the family it is still essential for a family to pray together. Even though it won't be possible to physically pray together, there is still a spiritual connection that can exist through the use of prayer. General Patton shared that there were a lot of people praying for them and that they must pray for themselves too. Prayers bring unity in purpose and enable us to communicate the desires of our hearts. President Monson said, "As we pray, let us really communicate with our Father in Heaven."¹⁶ By communicating with God Latter-day Saint military families can center in Christ.

Separation in the military can be a tough thing to handle. Military OneSource included an article that stated, "Deployment and separation can be tough on relationships—there's no way around that."¹⁷ Separation is real. It is raw and emotional. It is something military families deal with all the time because of trainings, deployments, exercises, missions, leadership, and many other responsibilities. This not only affects the families as a whole, but also affects the individuals in the home. Children as well as the parents have to be resilient in this situation. In 2009 a study

14. William T. Evans Jr., "Battle and Prayer: A Real Life Story from WWII," 11.

15. William T. Evans Jr., "Battle and Prayer: A Real Life Story from WWII," 11-12.

16. Thomas S. Monson, "How Firm a Foundation," Ensign, November 2006, 67.

17. "Managing Deployments and Separations the Essentials," Military OneSource, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/relationships/managing-deployments-and-separations/managing-deployments-and-separations-the-essentials>.

was done concerning the effects of parental deployments on children, Anita Chandra and other scholars found that military children at the beginning of a deployment are less resilient; however, through time, these children become more and more resilient, but still suffer from the effects of reintegration.¹⁸

A difficult period for most families is reintegration, when the service member returns home. Although students generally expressed excitement to have their parent return, these returns were often challenging to the new family dynamics that had been created in that parent's absence. Students had to contend with relating to the deployed parent again as well as with any physical, mental, or emotional changes that had occurred, and determine which adult was now setting household rules . . . They [students] also expect more attention when the parent returns, but if they don't get it, then they don't understand what is happening. They're confused, and they come to school, and don't know how to express their confusion. That's when you get defiance.¹⁹

Concerning resiliency, when the home is not a safe place, these children start finding other sanctuaries that are not the home, such as schools.²⁰ The foundation of what is being taught at home is key in helping children become resilient. One of the teachers that participated in the study stated, "If there is a strong foundation from the beginning, then it pretty much stays that way even when the parent is gone. You can take one component out and it still works."²¹

In another study, they found that military parents struggle with communicating with their family when service members suffer from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It affects family unity and how people collaborate within each other.²² Even with struggles similar to those stated, when praying is part of the foundation in the home it becomes a source of strength the family can lean on. The consequence of pray are never negative but can be a source of light and a place where burdens and pains can be lifted.

18. Anita Chandra et al., "The Impact of Parental Deployments on Child Social and Emotional Functioning: Perspectives of School Staff," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 46, no. 3 (March 2010): 221, accessed January 1, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.10.009>.

19. Chandra et al., "The Impact of Parental Deployments on Child Social and Emotional Functioning: Perspectives of School," 221.

20. Chandra et al., "The Impact of Parental Deployments on Child Social and Emotional Functioning: Perspectives of School," 221.

21. Chandra et al., "The Impact of Parental Deployments on Child Social and Emotional Functioning: Perspectives of School," 221.

22. Michelle D. Sherman, et al., "Veteran-Child Communication About Parental PTSD: A Mixed Methods Pilot Study," *Journal of Family Psychology* 29, no. 4 (2015): 601, accessed January 1, 2020, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/fam0000124>.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, “Pray to the Father in His [Jesus Christ’s] name. None of us can really make it alone. We need help, the kind of help that can come in answer to prayer.”²³ It may be easy to forget but the Lord always has invited us to pray. The Lord has stated, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matt. 7:7). He knows our struggles, desires, and wants us to have peace in our minds that can come only as Latter-day Saint military families accept this invitation in their lives. Elder Robert D. Hales recognized, “Our faith is acquired through prayer with a sincere desire to draw close to God and trust Him to bear our burdens.”²⁴

Therefore, the need for us to communicate with God becomes essential in order to create a place where feelings, words, and desires of a family can be shared. Thus, prayer can help a Latter-day Saint military family know how to communicate with each other, unify the family, and invite the blessings of heaven to be poured upon them as they go through the experiences of the military. Prayer can be taught in the home. Latter-day Saint military families then will recognize the truth of what Mary K. Dollahite stated: “We have recognized that prayer creates a bonding with others, especially family, that can only come through joint prayer and the presence of the Holy Ghost.”²⁵ As a result, prayer for a Latter-day Saint military family will create a more Christ-centered and resilient home through the efforts to communicate with God as a family and as individuals.

23. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand True and Faithful,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 94.

24. Robert D. Hales, “Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” *Liahona*, November 2004, 73.

25. Mary K Dollahite, “Let Us Gather in a Circle and Join in Family Prayer,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 152.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLES OF
PRAYER

ACT:

HAVE MORNING AND NIGHT
INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY PRAYERS

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT PRAYER TO CENTER YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

“And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.”

(2 Nephi 32:8)

Day 2:

We long to know our Heavenly Father and have a meaningful relationship with Him. We can build this relationship through prayer. This type of relationship requires sincere, sustained effort. To help build this relationship, we faithfully pray in the morning, by ourselves and also with family members when possible, charting a purposeful course for the day and asking for guidance and protection. At night we counsel earnestly with God, reflecting on the day’s events and creating a meaningful, personal connection. Consistent, sincere prayer helps us to grow spiritually, shape our character, and strengthen our love for our Father in Heaven.¹

Day 3:

Meaningful prayer requires both holy communication and consecrated work.²

Day 4:

Prayer is man’s means of communicating with his Heavenly Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Only the deceived and the fool refuse to pray. An urgent need today is for more prayer -- secret, individual prayer; family prayer; prayer in organizations, association, and meetings generally, and in schools, and in government bodies. People of all nations need more prayer. We need to be on our knees.³

Day 5:

Prayer is the passport to spiritual power.⁴

Day 6:

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.” (Psalm 55:17)

Day 7:

(John 17)

Day 8:

Some of the most effective teaching in our homes comes from the family's kneeling together and feeling the spirit of what is said in daily family prayer. Asking the Lord for forgiveness, while also petitioning His help in unifying the family in love and righteous purposes, can have a lasting influence on our children as they grow together in the family. Sincere prayers soften contentious thoughts. It is absolutely imperative that we teach and encourage our children to be consistent and sincere in offering their personal prayers. As children pray daily, they will feel the Lord's personal direction in their lives. As they learn to seek His blessings and guidance, the family will find the joy and happiness that come from striving to be a righteous family.⁵

Day 9:

So universal is its application, so beneficial its result, that prayer qualifies as the number-one hallmark of a happy home. As parents listen to the prayer of a child, they too draw close to God. These little ones, who so recently have been with their Heavenly Father, have no inhibitions in expressing to Him their feelings, their wishes, their thanks. Family prayer is the greatest deterrent to sin, and hence the most beneficent provider of joy and happiness. The old saying is yet true: "The family that prays together stays together."⁶

Day 10:

Fervent prayers show our children what it is in our hearts, what our hopes are, and where our faith lies. Family prayer provides a way for parents to demonstrate faith, love, and expectations. When family prayer is a firm daily ritual, those expectations, love, and faith can become deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of children.⁷

Day 11:

I am a strong believer in prayer. There are three ways that men get what they want; by planning, by working, and by praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning or thinking. Then you must have well trained troops to carry it out: that's working. But between the plan and the operation there is always an unknown. That unknown spells defeat or victory, success or failure...that's where prayer comes in. Up to now, in the Third Army, God has been very good to us. We have never retreated; we have suffered no defeats, no famine, and no epidemics. This is because a lot of people at home are praying for us. We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily, and in Italy, simply because people prayed. But we must pray for ourselves too.⁸

Day 12:

As we pray, let us really communicate with our Father in Heaven.⁹

Day 13:

Pray to the Father in His [Jesus Christ] name. None of us can really make it alone. We need help, the kind of help that can come in answer to prayer.¹⁰

Day 14:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” (Matthew 7:7)

Day 15:

Our Faith is acquired through prayer with a sincere desire to draw close to God and trust Him to bear our burdens.¹¹

Day 16:

We have recognized that prayer creates a bonding with others, especially family, that can only come through joint prayer and the presence of the Holy Ghost.¹²

Day 17:

“For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

Day 18:

Those who submit like a child do it because they know that the Father wants only the happiness of His children and that only He knows the way. That is the testimony we must have to keep praying like a submissive child, in the good times as well as the times of trouble.¹³

Day 19:

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.”
(James 1:5–6)

Day 20:

If you ponder the scriptures and begin to do what you covenanted with God to do, I can promise you that you will feel more love for God and more of His love for you. And with that, your prayers will come from the heart, full of thanks and of pleading. You will feel a greater dependence on God. You will find the courage and the determination to act in His service, without fear and with peace in your heart. You will pray always. And you will not forget Him, no matter what the future brings.¹⁴

Day 21:

“Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.” (3 Nephi 18:21)

Day 22:

Choose to converse with your Father in Heaven often. Make time every day to share your thoughts and feelings with Him. Tell Him everything that concerns you. He is interested in the most important as well as the most mundane facets of your life. Share with Him your full range of feelings and experiences.¹⁵

Day 23:

Think of the power for good as you gather your family together and thank God for all of his blessings. Think of the eternal significance of daily thanking him for each member of your family and asking him to guide and bless and protect each one. Think of the strength that will come to your family as, daily, one member or another pours out his or her soul in love to God for other family members.¹⁶

Day 24:

Parents, help safeguard your children by arming them morning and night with the power of family prayer. Children are bombarded every day with the evils of lust, greed, pride, and a host of other sinful behaviors. Protect your children from daily worldly influences by fortifying them with the powerful blessings that result from family prayer. Family prayer should be a nonnegotiable priority in your daily life.¹⁷

Day 25:

The efficacy of our prayers depends on how we care for one another.¹⁸

Day 26:

Family prayer is fully effective, then, only as we rise from our knees and, with increased love and understanding, take better care of each other. We all want more love and unity in our families. We all need more help with some who may be wayward or in special need. We all desire more assurance of divine guidance and direction.¹⁹

Day 27:

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.²⁰

Day 28:

A fervent, sincere prayer is a two-way communication which will do much to bring His Spirit flowing like healing water to help with the trials, hardships, aches, and pains we all face.²¹

Day 29:

Prayer is one of the stepping-stones on the path that leads us to eternal life with our Father in Heaven.²²

Day 30:

As we offer unto the Lord our Family and our personal prayers, let us do so with faith and trust in him....If any of us has been slow to hearken to the counsel to pray always, there is no finer hour to begin than now.²³

Day 31:

It doesn't matter whether it is a little boy with a simple request, or a medical doctor with a critical, life-threatening challenge before him: Heavenly Father will hear our humble prayer and will give us the comfort and guidance we seek.²⁴

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. "Prayer," The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed February 13, 2020, <https://www.comeuntochrist.org/beliefs/prayer>.
2. David B. Bednar, "Ask In Faith," Ensign, May 2008, 95.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1974), 114.
4. Thomas S. Monson, "Hallmarks of a Happy Home," Ensign, November 1988, 70.
5. Donald L. Staheli, "Lessons from the New Testament: Striving for Family Unity," Ensign, September 2007, 13.
6. Thomas S. Monson, "Hallmarks of a Happy Home," Ensign, November 1988, 69.
7. Rachel A. Sullivan, *Creating Your Forever Family* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communication, Inc., 2018), 49.
8. William T. Evans Jr., "Battle and Prayer: A Real Life Story from WWII," 11.
9. Thomas S. Monson, "How Firm a Foundation," Ensign, November 2006, 67.
10. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stand True and Faithful," Ensign, May 1996, 94.
11. Robert D. Hales, "Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," Liahona, November 2004, 73.
12. Mary K. Dollahite, "Let Us Gather in a Circle and Join in Family Prayer," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 152.
13. Henry B. Eyring, "Prayer," Ensign, November 2001, 16.
14. Henry B. Eyring, "Prayer," 17.
15. Richard G. Scott, "Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," Ensign, November 2014, 93.
16. John H. Groberg, "The Power of Family Prayer," Ensign, May 1982, 50.
17. Richard G. Scott, "Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," Ensign, November 2014, 93.
18. Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," Ensign, November 1980, 93.
19. John H. Groberg, "The Power of Family Prayer," 50.
20. David A. Bednar, "Ask In Faith," Ensign, May 2008, 97.
21. James E. Faust, "A Personal Relationship with the Savior," Ensign, November 1976, 58.
22. H. Bruce Stucki, "Prayer, Faith, and Family: Stepping-Stones to Eternal Happiness," Ensign, May 2006, 97.
23. Thomas S. Monson, "Come Unto Me," Ensign, June 1964, 509.
24. H. Bruce Stucki, "Prayer, Faith, and Family: Stepping-Stones to Eternal Happiness," 98.

THEME 9:
Happiness Found in the
Teachings of Jesus Christ

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Happiness in family life is most likely to be
achieved when founded upon the teachings of the
Lord Jesus Christ.”

SEPTEMBER: HAPPINESS FOUND IN THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST

Happiness is one of the deepest of human desires. Most strive to achieve or obtain it. Elder W. Eugene Hansen, a former Seventy indicated that “From the beginning of recorded history, mankind has been constantly searching for happiness.”¹ Families as well are always looking for happiness within their homes. In a world filled with many different philosophical views or even a variety of teachings it can be hard to find what is true and what brings an everlasting happiness. Lehi in the Book of Mormon taught that “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy (2 Nephi 2:25).” Lehi explained that we are able to obtain joy.

Happiness can be obtained and be part of our lives. How then is happiness truly found? Where does joy come from? On the Church website we read the following:

Heavenly Father desires that we find true lasting happiness. Our happiness is the design of all the blessings He give us—gospel teachings, commandments, priesthood ordinances, family relationships, prophets, temples, the beauties of creation, and even the opportunity to experience adversity. His plan for our salvation is often called “the great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). He sent His beloved Son to carry out the Atonement so we can be happy in this life and receive a fulness of joy in the eternities...Many people try to find happiness and fulfillment in activities that are contrary to the Lord’s commandments. Ignoring God’s plan for them, they reject the only source of real happi-

1. E. Eugene Hansen, “The Search for Happiness,” Ensign, November 1993, 81.

ness...As we seek to be happy, we should remember that the only way to real happiness is to live the gospel.²

Happiness is truly found by living the gospel of Jesus Christ. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf stated, “The foundational principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ can affect our life’s direction for good, if only we will apply them.”³

In the proclamation it declares, “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴ Christ is the center of each principle. It is through Him that we can find true happiness. If Latter-day Saint military families truly want to find happiness then as the proclamation proclaims, it is through the teachings of Jesus Christ. Brent D. Slife, Melinda J. Peterson, and Daniel K Judd wrote:

We all want to experience such joy. The Proclamation instructs us in how to discover this type of happiness by centering our lives in the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we place Christ at the center of our families, happiness should follow . . . Not surprisingly, there are many philosophies and secular understandings that are available to replace Christ as the center of our families . . . These philosophies are powerful, yet can be deceptively subtle because they are so much a part of the society we live in. But subtle or not, they can color even our well-meaning understanding of gospel principles and carry us away from Christ and His teachings . . . Ultimately, what we will find is that only when the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of our families can we be happy in the way that Heavenly Father wants us to be happy (see Hel. 5:12).⁵

Slife, Peterson, and Judd attest happiness is found in and through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus, the truth is plain and simple but in turn may be difficult with all the struggles that can exist in a military family life. Christ needs to be the center and as a result of setting Him as the center, happiness will be achieved.

For example, after the death of Lehi, Laman and Lemuel sought “to take away” Nephi’s life (2 Nephi 5:2). Laman and Lemuel, did not want Nephi to be their ruler and as a result Nephi was directed by the Lord to “depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with” him (2 Nephi 5:3–5). All

2. “Happiness,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 29, 2020, [https:// www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/happiness?lang=eng](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/happiness?lang=eng).

3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” Ensign, November 2012, 21.

4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

5. Brent D. Slife, Melinda J. Petersen, and Daniel K. Judd, “Faith and Prayer in a Christ-Centered Family,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dolahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 142–143.

those who did not go were the ones who followed Laman and Lemuel. Even with the persecution of his brothers, Nephi found the way for his family to find happiness. Nephi wrote that they “lived after the manner of happiness (2 Nephi 5:27). The manner in which they achieved happiness was by observing and keeping “the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the Law of Moses (2 Nephi 5:10).” Nephi and his people were able to live the commandments of the Lord, because of the scriptures. They would not have known the manner of happiness if Nephi did not obtain the plates of brass (1 Nephi 3:2-4). The Lord blessed them for their obedience. Even though we all suffer hardships, their hardships did not stop them from feeling happiness and centering their lives in the teachings of Christ. Happiness comes as we acknowledge not only for what we have to be happy but what we can become from what is given to us.

Another example of how the scriptures or teachings of Jesus Christ lead us to happiness is found in Lehi’s dream. Lehi’s dream as previously noted in other themes teaches of God’s eternal love. As Lehi explains his dream to his family, he describes that there was a fruit on a tree that “was white, to exceed all the whiteness” (1 Nephi 8:11):

And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit (1 Nephi 8:12).

Lehi desired for his family to partake of this “exceedingly great joy.” Lehi explained that he then saw (after some of his family partook of the fruit) a rod of iron (See 1 Nephi 8:19). In this dream, Lehi saw the tree of life, but also a path that led to the tree and thus to happiness. Lehi saw a rod of iron and a strait and narrow path. Nephi desired to know the meaning of what his father saw. Nephi asked and received the meanings found in the dream. After Nephi was taught, he explained to his brothers that the rod of iron was the word of God and as long as you “hold fast unto it, they would never perish: neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary over power them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24). The rod of iron was geared toward happiness and thus happiness is found in the word of God. Elder Francisco J. Viñas taught that the “word can be found in the scriptures and in the messages from our leaders, bringing us hope and comfort in the darkness of affliction.”⁶ As Latter-day Saint military families hold on to the rod of iron they then can find happiness and joy.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson has taught that keeping the commandments

6. Francisco J. Viñas, “The Pleasing Word of God,” *Ensign*, November 2015, 36.

of God are as steps to reach happiness:

At times, some people get confused, thinking that the commandments are restrictions or limitations that complicate life, that take away opportunities or happiness or the pleasures of life. In reality, the commandments protect us and guide us to happiness. They are not to restrict but rather to make possible—to allow us to achieve in this life and in the next—what we truly desire and what our Heavenly Father, who loves us, wants for us.⁷

At first, Elder Christofferson makes mention the fact that commandments are what enable happiness to be reachable. In addition, Elder Christofferson mentioned that the commandments are part of the plan of God and it is His desire, and because of His love that we can obtain it through His plan:

Each step may represent one commandment, and with each commandment that we obey, we can move upward. Then, if we understand the essence of the commandments, we want more. We don't feel resentment regarding commandments; we want more in order to be able to progress more. And a Heavenly Father who loves us gives unto us according to our desires. If we desire it, He is going to give us more commandments in order to facilitate our progress.⁸

Elder Christofferson illustrated the commandments of God as steps that draw one near to God as long as there is a desire to progress. Our desires help us step by step to reach happiness.

As a result, as Latter-day Saint military families learn of these commandments, they can take one step at a time to get nearer to God. It will help them find and develop a happiness only found through the teachings of Jesus Christ. Sister Jean B. Bingham taught the following:

As we learn more about Jesus Christ, we develop great faith in Him and we naturally want to follow His example. Keeping His commandments becomes our greatest desire. Our hearts yearn to relieve others' sufferings, as He did, and we want them to experience the peace and happiness we have found.⁹

Learning about Jesus Christ can bring us peace and happiness. Our desires to keep the commandments then becomes part of us. Sister Bingham continued by teach-

7. D. Todd Christofferson, "Steps to Happiness," New Era, September 2013, 23.

8. D. Todd Christofferson, "Steps to Happiness," 23.

9. Jean B. Bingham, "That Your Joy Might Be Full," Ensign, November 2017, 87.

ing that it is through Jesus Christ and our foundation in Him that we can find true happiness:

Are our testimonies built on the bedrock foundation of Jesus Christ and His gospel? When the storms of life press upon us, do we frantically look for a how-to book or an internet post for help? Taking the time to build and strengthen our knowledge and testimony of Jesus Christ will yield rich dividends in times of trial and adversity. Daily reading of scriptures and pondering the words of living prophets, engaging in meaningful personal prayer, mindfully partaking of the sacrament each week, giving service as the Savior would—each of these simple activities becomes a building block for a joyful life.¹⁰

There is no other way to true happiness except through the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles” the Apostles testify of Christ:

We bear testimony, as His duty ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.¹¹

In the gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ one can find the only true path to happiness that is fully and only centered in Jesus Christ.

10. Jean B. Bingham, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” 87.

11. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” Ensign, Apr. 2000, 2.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE TEACHINGS OF
JESUS CHRIST

ACT:

HAVE EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY
CHOOSE A TEACHING OF JESUS
CHRIST TO APPLY IN THEIR LIVES

BECOME:

STRENGTHEN YOUR
UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE
TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST TO
CREATE HAPPINESS IN YOUR MILITARY
HOME

QUOTES

Day 1:

Sisters and brothers, through the incessant din and drumbeat of our day, may we strive to see Christ at the center of our lives, of our faith, and of our service. That is where true meaning lies.¹

Day 2:

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” (2 Nephi 2:25)

Day 3:

Although “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Ne. 2:25), this does not mean that our lives will be filled only with joy, “for it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Ne. 2:11). Happiness is not given to us in a package that we can just open up and consume. Nobody is ever happy 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Rather than thinking in terms of a day, we perhaps need to snatch happiness in little pieces, learning to recognize the elements of happiness and then treasuring them while they last.²

Day 4:

The foundational principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ can affect our life’s direction for good, if only we will apply them.³

Day 5:

We all want to experience such joy. The Proclamation instructs us in how to discover this type of happiness by centering our lives in the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we place Christ at the center of our families, happiness should follow...Not surprisingly, there are many philosophies and secular understandings that are available to replace Christ as the center of our families...These philosophies are powerful, yet can be deceptively subtle because they are so much a part of the society we live in. But subtle or not, they can color even our well-meaning understanding of gospel principles and carry us away from Christ and His teachings...Ultimately, what we will find is that only when the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation of our families can we be happy in the way that Heavenly Father wants us to be happy (see Hel. 5:12).⁴

Day 6:

“And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses... And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness.” (2 Nephi 5:10, 27)

Day 7:

“And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit.” (1 Nephi 8:12)

Day 8:

“And they said unto me: What meaneth the rod of iron which our father saw, that led to the tree? And I said unto them that it was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction.” (1 Nephi 15:24)

Day 9:

Word can be found in the scriptures and in the messages from our leaders, bringing us hope and comfort in the darkness of affliction.⁵

Day 10:

At times, some people get confused, thinking that the commandments are restrictions or limitations that complicate life, that take away opportunities or happiness or the pleasures of life. In reality, the commandments protect us and guide us to happiness. They are not to restrict but rather to make possible—to allow us to achieve in this life and in the next—what we truly desire and what our Heavenly Father, who loves us, wants for us.⁶

Day 11:

Each step may represent one commandment, and with each commandment that we obey, we can move upward. Then, if we understand the essence of the commandments, we want more. We don't feel resentment regarding commandments; we want more in order to be able to progress more. And a Heavenly Father who loves us gives unto us according to our desires. If we desire it, He is going to give us more commandments in order to facilitate our progress.⁷

Day 12:

As we learn more about Jesus Christ, we develop great faith in Him and we naturally want to follow His example. Keeping His commandments becomes our greatest desire. Our hearts yearn to relieve others' sufferings, as He did, and we want them to experience the peace and happiness we have found.⁸

Day 13:

Are our testimonies built on the bedrock foundation of Jesus Christ and His gospel? When the storms of life press upon us, do we frantically look for a how-to book or an internet post for help? Taking the time to build and strengthen our knowledge and testimony of Jesus Christ will yield rich dividends in times of trial and adversity. Daily reading of scriptures and pondering the words of living prophets, engaging in meaningful personal prayer, mindfully partaking of the sacrament each week, giving service as the Savior would—each of these simple activities becomes a building block for a joyful life.⁹

Day 14:

We bear testimony, as His duty ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.¹⁰

Day 15:

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.¹¹

Day 16:

Heavenly Father desires that we find true lasting happiness. Our happiness is the design of all the blessings He give us—gospel teachings, commandments, priesthood ordinances, family relationships, prophets, temples, the beauties of creation, and even the opportunity to experience adversity. His plan for our salvation is often called “the great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8). He sent His beloved Son to carry out the Atonement so we can be happy in this life and receive a fulness of joy in the eternities...Many people try to find happiness and fulfillment in activities that are contrary to the Lord's commandments. Ignoring God's plan for them, they reject the only source of real happiness...As we seek to be happy, we should remember that the only way to real happiness is to live the gospel.¹²

Day 17:

You may get that transitory pleasure, yes, but you cannot find joy, you cannot find happiness. Happiness is found only along that well beaten track, narrow as it is, though straight, which leads to life eternal.¹³

Day 18:

The ultimate end of all activity in the Church is to see a husband and his wife and their children happy at home, protected by the principles and laws of the gospel, sealed safely in the covenants of the everlasting priesthood.¹⁴

Day 19:

Strength comes not from frantic activity but from being settled on a firm foundation of truth and light. It comes from placing our attention and efforts on the basics of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes from paying attention to the divine things that matter most. Let us simplify our lives a little. Let us make the changes necessary to refocus our lives on the sublime beauty of the simple, humble path of Christian discipleship—the path that leads always toward a life of meaning, gladness, and peace.¹⁵

Day 20:

I wonder if having casual and infrequent family home evenings will be enough in the future to fortify our children with sufficient moral strength. In the future, infrequent family scripture study may be inadequate to arm our children with the virtue necessary to withstand the moral decay of the environment in which they will live. Where in the world will the children learn chastity, integrity, honesty, and basic human decency if not at home? These values will, of course, be reinforced at church, but parental teaching is more constant.¹⁶

Day 21:

From the beginning of recorded history, mankind has been constantly searching for happiness.¹⁷

Day 22:

As we obey the commandments and live the gospel fully, we will be protected and blessed.¹⁸

Day 23:

To be a good father and mother requires that the parents defer many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequences of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Savior himself.¹⁹

Day 24:

We live in a critical time in the world's history. Satan and his forces are busy. His temptations are relentless, deceiving many, sometimes even the very elect. He would lead us to believe that gospel standards which we know to be good—virtue, honesty, morality, courtesy, industry, cleanliness of mind and body—are no longer important. Let me reaffirm that the Lord's eternal values are still true. The ways of the world may have changed, but the commandments of our Heavenly Father, given for our welfare, are still in force, and true joy comes only from doing his will.²⁰

Day 25:

You will better understand why the Church is as it is and why the family is the basic organization in time and in eternity. I bear witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that the plan of redemption, which has been called the plan of happiness, is a plan for families.²¹

Day 26:

My dear brothers and sisters, the joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives.²²

Day 27:

While few human challenges are greater than that of being good parents, few opportunities offer greater potential for joy. Surely no more important work is to be done in this world than preparing our children to be God-fearing, happy, honorable, and productive adults. Parents will find no more fulfilling happiness than to have their children honor them and their teachings. That blessing is the glory of parenthood. John testified, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4).²³

Day 28:

Joy, it seems, is not only happiness, but the resultant feeling of the Holy Ghost manifest within us.²⁴

Day 29:

As we diligently focus on the Savior and then follow His pattern of focusing on joy, we need to avoid those things that can interrupt our joy....Anything that opposes Christ or His doctrine will interrupt our joy. That includes the philosophies of men,... Joy is a gift for the faithful [2 Nephi 9:18]. It is the gift that comes from intentionally trying to live a righteous life, as taught by Jesus Christ [2 Nephi 27:30; Alma 27:16–18]. He taught us how to have joy. When we choose Heavenly Father to be our God [1 Nephi 17:40] and when we can feel the Savior's Atonement working in our lives, we will be filled with joy [Mosiah 4:2–3]. Every time we nurture our spouse and guide our children, every time we forgive someone or ask for forgiveness, we can feel joy.²⁵

Day 30:

Essential to the plan is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God's laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.²⁶

QUOTES ENDNOTES



1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Message, the Meaning, and the Multitude,” Ensign, November 2019, 8.
2. James E. Faust, “Our Search for Happiness,” Ensign, October 2000, 2.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” Ensign, November 2012, 21.
4. Brent D. Slife, Melinda J. Petersen, and Daniel K. Judd, “Faith and Prayer in a Christ-Centered Family,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 142–143.
5. Francisco J. Viñas, “The Pleasing Word of God,” Ensign, November 2015, 36.
6. D. Todd Christofferson, “Steps to Happiness,” New Era, September 2013, 23.
7. D. Todd Christofferson, “Steps to Happiness,” 23.
8. Jean B. Bingham, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” Ensign, November 2017, 87.
9. Bingham, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” 87.
10. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” Ensign, Apr. 2000, 2.
11. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith. 255-256
12. “Happiness,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/happiness?lang=eng>.
13. David O. McKay, Conference Report, October 1919, 180.
14. Boyd K. Packer, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” Ensign, May 2012, 8.
15. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” Ensign, November 2010, 22.
16. James E. Faust, *Finding Light in a Dark World* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 91.
17. E. Eugene Hansen, “The Search for Happiness,” Ensign, November 1993, 81.
18. Boyd K. Packer, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” Ensign, May 2012, 9.
19. James E. Faust, *Finding Light in a Dark World* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 90–91.
20. Barbara W. Winder, “Finding Joy in Life,” Ensign, November 1987, 95.
21. Boyd K. Packer, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them,” Ensign, May 2012, 9.
22. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” Ensign, November 2016, 82.
23. James E. Faust, *Finding Light in a Dark World* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1995), 89–90.
24. Barbara W. Winder, “Finding Joy in Life,” 96.
25. Russell M. Nelson, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” Ensign, November 2016, 83–84.
26. Thomas S. Monson, “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” Ensign, November 2016, 80–81.

THEME 10:
Wholesome
Recreational Activities-
Quality Time

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Successful marriages and families are established
and maintained on principles of...wholesome
recreational activities”

OCTOBER: WHOLESOME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES— QUALITY TIME

Military life is filled with vigorous responsibilities that can cause much uncertainty when it comes to family time. A service member doesn't always work from 8-5 like average civilians. They often are found working late into the night, attending field exercises that requires them to stay days or even weeks away from home, and fulfilling various other duty obligations that keep them away from their loved ones. Military life is not an easy lifestyle. In many occasions the service member's time is dedicated to fulfilling his or her military responsibilities before attending to the family. In a Military OneSource resource article, we read the following:

Dealing with frequent moves, long deployments and major transitions requires stamina and strength. Some families seem to handle the ups and downs better than others. Building resilience—the ability to recover in the face of stress—can help your family deal with the demands of military life.¹

In response to strengthening and fostering resiliency Latter-day Saint military families can look toward the proclamation to find a simple principle which in turn can help create stamina and strength while building resiliency in the home.

In the proclamation it teaches that “successful marriages and families are

1. “Keeping Your Family Strong – Essentials,” U.S. Department of Defense Military OneSource Network, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/family-life/keeping-your-family-strong/keeping-your-family-strong-essentials?redirect=%2Ffamily-relationships%2Ffamily-life>.

established and maintained on principles of . . . wholesome recreational activities.”² Wholesome recreational activities are significant in creating a successful marriage and family. Mark A. Widmer, David J. Cherrington, E. Jeffrey Hill, and Brian J. Hill have also taught this principle:

Recreational opportunities have expanded dramatically during the past century and these changes have important implications for developing personal values and creating happy families. Learning to find meaning and enjoyment in our free time requires both forethought and spontaneity, both careful planning and the willingness to modify plans to enjoy the moment. Couples who take time for recreation renew their marriages. Parents who provide opportunities for wholesome recreational activity lay a foundation on which their children can build virtuous, happy lives.³

Widmer and the other scholars noted that recreational activities are opportunities to help the family grow and become happier. They also mentioned that “wholesome recreation serves a crucial role in rearing moral children and building successful families.”⁴ Wholesome recreational activities can provide quality time for Latter-day Saint military families.

The Church has constantly endorsed the importance of wholesome recreational activities. Many prophets have encouraged fathers and mothers and their families to plan and participate in activities that would provide quality time with each other. President Ezra Taft Benson stated, “Wholesome recreation is part of our religion and is a necessary change of pace; even its anticipation can lift the spirit.”⁵ President Benson acknowledged that these recreational activities are first part of the Church and thus a way to create a different pace in the lives that we live. In Psalm 149:5 it states, “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.” Psalm 150:

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him

2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 102.

3. Mark A. Widmer, David J. Cherrington, E. Jeffrey Hill, and Brian J. Hill, “Wholesome Family Recreation,” in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 190.

4. Widmer, Cherrington, Hill, and Hill, “Wholesome Family Recreation,” 193.

5. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, October 1986, 4.

upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

These scriptures found in the Old Testament express that in different occasions the Lord was praised through singing, dancing, and music. These activities enabled the spirits to be lifted. In modern scripture, Brigham Young received Doctrine and Covenants 136:28 which reads “If thou are merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.” These activities are not only to relax but to edify us spiritually and physically. Therefore, Latter-day Saint military families can find solace, peace, happiness, thanksgiving, and many more through the centering their wholesome recreational activities in things that will build strength and foster resiliency in Christ.

In addition, there are quotes by Latter-day Saint prophets and apostles about these activities. Elder D. Todd Christofferson in the 2010 General Conference explained of the importance of consecrating our lives to “holy purposes” and thus stated, “True success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is our time and choices—to God’s purposes.”⁶ These activities are wholesome because they enrich the lives of others:

Music, literature, art, dance, drama, athletics—all can provide entertainment to enrich one’s life and further consecrate it. At the same time, it hardly needs to be said that much of what passes for entertainment today is coarse, degrading, violent, mind-numbing, and time wasting. Ironically, it sometimes takes hard work to find wholesome leisure. When entertainment turns from virtue to vice, it becomes a destroyer of the consecrated life.⁷

There are many activities that can be wholesome in the life a Latter-day Saint military family. It is all in the matter of finding something that is not just a leisure with no purpose.

In the October 2005 General conference, Elder M. Russell Ballard talked about what matters most. Elder Ballard at the beginning of his talk communicated what we should care most about in times of crisis.

Crisis or transition of any kind reminds us of what matters most. In the routine of life, we often take our families—our parents and children and siblings—for granted. But in times of danger and need and change, there

6. D. Todd Christofferson, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” *Ensign*, November 2010, 16.

7. D. Todd Christofferson, “Reflections on a Consecrated Life,” 17.

is no question that what we are about most is our families! . . . I believe the mission statement for mortality might be “build an eternal family.”⁸

Family is what matters most and it is what Latter-day Saint military families can strive to build, even eternal families. Families that can be bonded by righteousness and the efforts of making quality time for each member:

Create meaningful family bonds that give your children an identity stronger than what they can find with their peer group or at school or anyplace else. This can be done through family traditions for birthdays, for holidays, for dinnertime, and for Sundays.⁹

Wholesome recreational activities provide a means to understand what matters most. They are moments to recognize the importance of the family. Latter-day Saint military families can use these activities to bond. Elder Robert D. Hales also recognized the importance of family activities. Elder Hales stated, “Build family traditions. Plan and carry out meaningful vacations together, considering our children’s needs, talents, and abilities. Help them create happy memories, improve their talents, and build their feelings of self-worth.”¹⁰

In addition, we must recognize the example of Jesus Christ when thinking about what wholesome recreational activities a family should plan. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf stated the following:

I think of our Lord and Exemplar, Jesus Christ and his short life among the people of Galilee and Jerusalem. I have tried to imagine Him bustling between meetings or multitasking to get a list of urgent things accomplished. I can’t see it. I see the compassionate and caring Son of God purposefully living each day. When He interacted with those around Him, they felt important and loved. He knew the infinite value of the people He met. He blessed them, ministered to them. He lifted them up, healed them. He gave them the precious gift of His time.¹¹

The Savior was an example of giving others of His precious time. Thus, it was the quality of His time that enabled those around Him to feel loved, blessed, healed, lifted, and ministered to. Wholesome recreational activities can be times when love, blessing, healing, and elevating others can occur:

8. M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most is What Lasts Longest,” *Ensign*, November 2005, 41.

9. M. Russell Ballard, “What Matters Most is What Lasts Longest,” 41.

10. Robert D. Hales, “Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 33.

11. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” 22.

Sometimes in life, we become so focused on the finish line that we fail to find joy in the journey. I don't go cycling with my wife because I'm excited about finishing. I go because the experience of being with her is sweet and enjoyable.¹²

Therefore, these activities are meant to create enjoyable moments in which time does not become a burden, and cherished moments are precious moments. Elder Uchtdorf suggested, "Let us resolve to cherish those we love by spending meaningful time with them, doing things together, and cultivating treasured memories."¹³

Wholesome recreational activities allow Latter-day Saint military families to strengthen their families. Time might not be certain in a military home, but quality time used correctly can strengthen a Latter-day Saint military family in Christ. Elder Robert D. Hales stated, "Strengthening families is our sacred duty as parents, children, extended family members, leaders, teachers, and individual members of the Church."¹⁴ Wholesome activities enable the members of a family to fulfill their duty. Although the one significant factor that Elder Hales mentions is "the key to strengthening families is having the Spirit of the Lord come into our homes."¹⁵ Therefore our homes should be areas where wholesome recreational activities can occur.

12. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," 23.

13. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," 22.

14. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," 32.

15. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," 33.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER HOW WHOLESOME
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES CAN
STRENGTHEN A FAMILY

ACT:

PLAN A WHOLESOME RECREATIONAL
ACTIVITY AS A FAMILY EACH WEEK

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT WHOLESOME
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO
CREATE QUALITY TIME TO CENTER
YOUR MILITARY HOME IN JESUS
CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

Recreational opportunities have expanded dramatically during the past century and these changes have important implications for developing personal values and creating happy families. Learning to find meaning and enjoyment in our free time requires both forethought and spontaneity, both careful planning and the willingness to modify plans to enjoy the moment. Couples who take time for recreation renew their marriages. Parents who provide opportunities for wholesome recreational activity lay a foundation on which their children can build virtuous, happy lives.¹

Day 2:

Wholesome recreation serves a crucial role in rearing moral children and building successful families.²

Day 3:

Wholesome recreation is part of our religion and is a necessary change of pace; even its anticipation can lift the spirit.³

Day 4:

*“Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.”
(Psalms 149:5)*

Day 5:

*“Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.”
(Psalm 150)*

Day 6:

“If thou are merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving.” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:28)

Day 7:

True success in this life comes in consecrating our lives—that is our time and choices—to God’s purposes.⁴

Day 8:

Music, literature, art, dance, drama, athletics—all can provide entertainment to enrich one’s life and further consecrate it. At the same time, it hardly needs to be said that much of what passes for entertainment today is coarse, degrading, violent, mind-numbing, and time wasting. Ironically, it sometimes takes hard work to find wholesome leisure. When entertainment turns from virtue to vice, it becomes a destroyer of the consecrated life.⁵

Day 9:

Crisis or transition of any kind reminds us of what matters most. In the routine of life, we often take our families—our parents and children and siblings—for granted. But in times of danger and need and change, there is no question that what we are about most is our families! ... I believe the mission statement for mortality might be “build an eternal family.”⁶

Day 10:

Create meaningful family bonds that give your children an identity stronger than what they can find with their peer group or at school or anyplace else. This can be done through family traditions for birthdays, for holidays, for dinnertime, and for Sundays.⁷

Day 11:

Build family traditions. Plan and carry out meaningful vacations together, considering our children’s needs, talents, and abilities. Help them create happy memories, improve their talents, and build their feelings of self-worth.⁸

Day 12:

I think of our Lord and Exemplar, Jesus Christ and his short life among the people of Galilee and Jerusalem. I have tried to imagine Him bustling between meetings or multitasking to get a list of urgent things accomplished. I can’t see it. I see the compassionate and caring Son of God purposefully living each day. When He interacted with those around Him, they felt important and loved. He knew the infinite value of the people He met. He blessed them, ministered to them. He lifted them up, healed them. He gave them the precious gift of His time.⁹

Day 13:

Sometimes in life, we become so focused on the finish line that we fail to find joy in the journey. I don't go cycling with my wife because I'm excited about finishing. I go because the experience of being with her is sweet and enjoyable.¹⁰

Day 14:

Let us resolve to cherish those we love by spending meaningful time with them, doing things together, and cultivating treasured memories.¹¹

Day 15:

Strengthening families is our sacred duty as parents, children, extended family members, leaders, teachers, and individual members of the Church.¹²

Day 16:

The key to strengthening families is having the Spirit of the Lord come into our homes.¹³

Day 17:

Husbands and wives should understand that their first calling—from which they will never be released—is to one another and then to their children. One of the great discoveries of parenthood is that we learn far more about what really matters from our children than we ever did from our parents. We come to recognize the truth in Isaiah's prophecy that "a little child shall lead them" [Isaiah 11:6].¹⁴

Day 18:

In a world of turmoil and uncertainty, it is more important than ever to make our families the center of our lives and the top of our priorities. Families lie at the center of our Heavenly Father's plan.¹⁵

Day 19:

As we turn to our Heavenly Father and seek His wisdom regarding the things that matter most, we learn over and over again the importance of four key relationships: with our God, with our families, with our fellowman, and with ourselves. As we evaluate our own lives with a willing mind, we will see where we have drifted from the more excellent way. The eyes of our understanding will be opened, and we will recognize what needs to be done to purify our heart and refocus our life.¹⁶

Day 20:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16)

Day 21:

We need to put more quality time and effort into strengthening family relationships.¹⁷

Day 22:

Family time is sacred time and should be protected and respected. We urge our members to show devotion to their families.¹⁸

Day 23:

Some uses of individual and family time are better, and others are best. We have to forego some good things in order to choose others that are better or best because they develop faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthen our families.¹⁹

Day 24:

We build deep and loving family relationships by doing simple things together, like family dinner and family home evening and by just having fun together. In family relationships love is really spelled t-i-m-e, time. Taking time for each other is the key for harmony at home. We talk with, rather than about, each other. We learn from each other, and we appreciate our differences as well as our commonalities. We establish a divine bond with each other as we approach God together through family prayer, gospel study, and Sunday worship.²⁰

Day 25:

How we preserve time for family is one of the most significant issues we face in most cultures.²¹

Day 26:

Stresses in our lives come regardless of our circumstances. We must deal with them the best we can. But we should not let them get in the way of what is most important—and what is most important almost always involves the people around us.²²

Day 27:

It is important to remember that all larger units of society depend on the smallest and most fundamental unit, the family. No matter who or what we are, we help ourselves when we help families.²³

Day 28:

You do not find the happy life ... you make it.²⁴

Day 29:

Time passes quickly. Many parents say that it seems like yesterday that their children were born. Now those children are grown, perhaps with children of their own. "Where did the years go?" they ask. We cannot call back time that is past, we cannot stop time that now is, and we cannot experience the future in our present state. Time is a gift, a treasure not to be put aside for the future but to be used wisely in the present.²⁵

Day 30:

The Church has established two special times for families to be together. The first is centered around the proper observance of the Sabbath day. This is the time we are to attend our regular meetings together, study the life and teachings of the Savior and of the prophets.²⁶

Day 31:

If we fail to give our best personal self and undivided time to those who are truly important to us, one day we will regret it.²⁷

QUOTES ENDNOTES



1. Mark A. Widmer, David J. Cherrington, E. Jeffrey Hill, and Brian J. Hill, "Wholesome Family Recreation," in *Strengthening Our Families: An In-Depth Look at the Proclamation on the Family*, ed. David C. Dollahite (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 2000), 190.
2. Widmer, Cherrington, Hill, and Hill, "Wholesome Family Recreation," 193.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, "Do Not Despair," *Ensign*, October 1986, 4.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, "Reflections on a Consecrated Life," *Ensign*, November 2010, 16.
5. D. Todd Christofferson, "Reflections on a Consecrated Life," 17.
6. M. Russell Ballard, "What Matters Most is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign*, November 2005, 41.
7. M. Russell Ballard, "What Matters Most is What Lasts Longest," 41.
8. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," *Ensign*, May 1999, 33.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," *Ensign*, November 2012, 22.
10. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," 23.
11. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," 22.
12. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," 32.
13. Robert D. Hales, "Strengthening Families: Our Sacred Duty," 33.
14. Boyd K. Packer, "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them," *Ensign*, May 2012, 8.
15. L. Tom Perry, "The Importance of the Family," *Ensign*, May 2003, 40.
16. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign*, November 2010, 21.
17. Michael John U. Teh, "Where Your Treasure Is," *Ensign*, May 2014, 107.
18. Boyd K. Packer, "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them," *Ensign*, May 2012, 9.
19. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, November 2007, 107.
20. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign*, November 2010, 21–22.
21. Quentin L. Cook, "Lamentations of Jeremiah: Beware of Bondage," *Ensign*, November 2013, 89.
22. Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign*, November 2008, 86.
23. M. Russell Ballard, "What Matters Most is What Lasts Longest," *Ensign*, November 2005, 44.
24. Thomas S. Monson, "Faces and Attitudes," *The New Era*, September 1977, 49.
25. Thomas S. Monson, "Dedication Day," *Ensign*, November 2000, 66.
26. L. Tom Perry, "The Importance of the Family," *Ensign*, May 2003, 42.
27. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Regrets and Resolutions," *Ensign*, November 2012, 22.

THEME 11:

Gratitude

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for
his mercy endureth for ever.”
-Psalm 136:1

NOVEMBER: GRATITUDE

The 1995 declaration “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” is considered a wonderful blessing and prophetic message to the world today. Even though it is not stated within the proclamation, gratitude is alluded to. Latter-day Saint military families can know of its importance and role in our growth through feeling gratitude for its revelatory message. In the Book of Mormon, Alma teaches “live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you” (Alma 34:38). Lehi’s desire when he tasted of the fruit of the tree of life was to share it.

And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit (1 Nephi 8:12).

Lehi was an example of gratitude. President Monson posed the question, “Do material possessions make us happy and grateful?”¹ He answered with the notion that material possessions “momentarily” give happiness and gratitude.² “However, those things which provide deep and lasting happiness and gratitude are the things which money cannot buy: our families, the gospel, good friends, our health, our abilities, the love we receive from those around us.”³ Therefore, the proclamation when understood gives a deeper outlook of that there is to be grateful for.

A Latter-day Saint military family can take these testimonies and words in the proclamation and feel gratitude. President Joseph F. Smith shared that a “grateful man sees so much more in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil.”⁴ With gratitude we are able to see what is good and thus makes us grateful. In addition, it draws us closer to the Lord as we notice his ever guiding hands in our lives.

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine gift of Gratitude,” Ensign, November 2010, 88.

2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine gift of Gratitude,” 88.

3. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine gift of Gratitude,” 88.

4. Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith (Salt

In order to understand how gratitude effects the focus and resiliency of students, a study was conducted in which 110 students participated.⁵ There were 50 students who received a reminder to “engage in gratitude practices related to learning” and then there were 60 who received no reminders.⁶ Results showed “that only the participants who received gratitude reminders in the form of text messages and self-identified that they intentionally practiced gratitude 3-5 times weekly experienced the benefits of increased focus and resilience in learning.”⁷ The study showed that those filled with gratitude become more resilient and able to focus.

Gratitude is a formidable characteristic to have. Robert A. Emmons stated, “For centuries, gratitude has been portrayed by theologians, moral philosophers, and writers as an indispensable manifestation of virtue—an excellence of character.”⁸ President Benson taught that Gratitude is a characteristic someone can foster:

We need to be more grateful. I think there is no true character without gratitude. It is one of the marks of a real strong character to have a feeling of thanksgiving and gratitude for blessings. We need more of that spirit in our homes, in our daily associations, in the Church, everywhere. It doesn’t cost anything, and it is so easy to cultivate.⁹

The spirit of gratitude is needed in the home. President Monson expressed that we can all find reasons to be thankful:

Regardless of our circumstances, each of us has much for which to be grateful if we will but pause and contemplate our blessings. This is a wonderful time to be on earth. While there is much that is wrong in the world today, there are many things that are right and good. There are marriages that make it, parents who love their children and sacrifice for them, friends who care about us and help us, teachers who teach. Our lives are blessed in countless ways.¹⁰

Military families face many circumstances. As they continue to worship God in a spirit of gratitude it will help them stay positive. President Joseph F. Smith explained that the “spirit of gratitude is always pleasant and satisfying because it carries with it a sense of helpfulness to others; it begets love and friendship, and engenders divine

Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1986), 263.

5. Jane Taylor Wilson, “Brightening the Mind: The Impact of Practicing Gratitude on Focus and Resilience Learning,” *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 16, no. 4 (August 2016): 1, accessed November 2, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v16i4.19998>.

6. Jane Taylor Wilson, “Brightening the Mind: The Impact of Practicing Gratitude on Focus and Resilience Learning,” 1.

7. Jane Taylor Wilson, “Brightening the Mind: The Impact of Practicing Gratitude on Focus and Resilience Learning,” 9.

8. Robert A. Emmons, “The Psychology of Gratitude: An Introduction,” in *The Psychology of Gratitude*, ed. Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.

9. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country*, 202.

10. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine gift of Gratitude,” 88.

influence. Gratitude is said to be the memory of the heart.”¹¹ On the other hand, Elder Steven E. Snow, a former seventy, expressed the following:

It is human nature, I suppose, to seek elsewhere for our happiness. Pursuit of career goals, wealth, and material rewards can cloud our perspective and often leads to a lack of appreciation for the bounteous blessings of our present circumstances.¹²

Success can make one less grateful because it can cloud our minds. With the spirit of gratitude in the home it permits all members of the family to be appreciative, for what has been received. It can direct a military home in the right direction when searching for happiness. The spirit of gratitude in a Christ-centered military home can help bring resiliency in tiring times. John R. DeMartini in his book *Count your Blessings* shared a metaphor of silver lining found on clouds.

Every cloud has a silver lining and finding it is one of the most reliable ways to turn an apparent problem into a blessing! True wisdom is the ability to see the equal benefit or blessing hidden in every challenge, situation, sickness, or crisis. The silver lining is always as bright as the cloud is dark. And when we see its shining light, we are grateful for the gift of our challenge.¹³

DeMartini expressed that the silver lining of a cloud is a symbolic light that we discover when we realize the blessings of our challenges:

When life is flowing smoothly, we enjoy taking credit for its many opportunities. When we encounter what looks like a problem, we tend to look for reasons outside ourselves. But when we look deeper, we discover that what looked like a problem is actually an opportunity. The way for us to see the opportunity is to lift ourselves to a higher point of view. We learn to accept – not deny – responsibility for the way we think and feel about daily experiences, we can open our minds to the guidance of our heart and soul.¹⁴

Gratitude can be a way to find the opportunities an individual or even a military family has had. It makes one appreciate all that has been given through the experiences received.

In *True to the Faith* it states, “Gratitude is an uplifting, exalting attitude. You can probably say from experience that you are happier when you have gratitude in

11. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1986), 262.

12. Steven E. Snow, “Gratitude,” *Ensign*, November 2001, 43.

13. John F. DeMartini, *Count Your Blessings: The Healing Power of Gratitude and Love* (Great Britain: Elements, 2003), 84.

14. John F. DeMartini, *Count Your Blessings: The Healing Power of Gratitude and Love*, 84–85.

your heart. You cannot be bitter, resentful, or mean-spirited when you are grateful.”¹⁵ Robert Emmons stated the following:

A decade’s worth of research on gratitude has shown me that when life is going well, gratitude allows us to celebrate and magnify the goodness. But what about when life goes badly? In the midst of the economic maelstrom that has gripped our country, I have often been asked if people can—or even should—feel grateful under such dire circumstances. My response is that not only will grateful attitude help—it is essential. In fact, it is precisely under crisis conditions when we have the most to gain by a grateful perspective on life. In the face of demoralization, gratitude has the power to energize. In the face of brokenness, gratitude has the power to heal. In the face of despair, gratitude has the power to bring hope. In other words, gratitude can help us cope with hard times.¹⁶

Emmons noted that it is essential to have a grateful perspective during hardships. Gratitude in its essence has the power to energize, heal, and bring hope. One of the most common phrases heard in the military is hurry up and wait which is the example of “the military’s propensity to perform tasks quickly, and then sit idly for long periods of time.”¹⁷ This is not only in their tasks but in the military life. The tasks can include the communication, orders, and many other things. Making it difficult and stressful in many cases for not only the service member but also their family. Emmons addresses the following:

Consciously cultivating an attitude of gratitude builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can cushion us when we fall. There is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient to stress, whether minor everyday hassles or major personal upheavals.¹⁸

Emmons made the connection between resiliency and gratitude. Being grateful enables an individual and in this case a Latter-day Saint military family to be more resilient in the stresses of military life. As a result, those stresses become opportunities and blessings. Thus, gratitude is essential to building a resilient Christ-centered military home.

15. True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 78-79.

16. Robert Emmons, “How Gratitude Can Help You Through Hard Times,” Greater Good Science Center at University of California Berkeley, May 13, 2013, accessed January 1, 2020, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_can_help_you_through_hard_times.

17. Geoffrey Ingersoll and Jeremy Bender, “41 Phrases Only People in the Military Will Understand,” Business Insider, November 1, 2014, accessed January 1, 2020, <https://www.businessinsider.com/phrases-only-people-in-the-military-know-2014-10>.

18. Geoffrey Ingersoll and Jeremy Bender, “41 Phrases Only People in the Military Will Understand,” 2014.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLE OF
GRATITUDE

ACT:

CREATE AND ADD TO A DAILY
GRATITUDE JOURNAL, ABOUT THE
PRINCIPLES FOUND IN THE FAMILY
PROCLAMATION

BECOME:

IMPLEMENT GRATITUDE TO CENTER
YOUR MILITARY HOME IN JESUS
CHRIST

QUOTES

Day 1:

Live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you.” Alma 34:38

Day 2:

Do material possessions make us happy and grateful? Perhaps momentarily. However, those things which provide deep and lasting happiness and gratitude are the things which money cannot buy: our families, the gospel, good friends, our health, our abilities, the love we receive from those around us.¹

Day 3:

Grateful man sees so much more in the world to be thankful for, and with him the good outweighs the evil.²

Day 4:

For centuries, gratitude has been portrayed by theologians, moral philosophers, and writers as an indispensable manifestation of virtue—an excellence of character.³

Day 5:

We need to be more grateful. I think there is no true character without gratitude. It is one of the marks of a real strong character to have a feeling of thanksgiving and gratitude for blessings. We need more of that spirit in our homes, in our daily associations, in the Church, everywhere. It doesn't cost anything, and it is so easy to cultivate.⁴

Day 6:

Regardless of our circumstances, each of us has much for which to be grateful if we will but pause and contemplate our blessings. This is a wonderful time to be on earth. While there is much that is wrong in the world today, there are many things that are right and good. There are marriages that make it, parents who love their children and sacrifice for them, friends who care about us and help us, teachers who teach. Our lives are blessed in countless ways.⁵

Day 7:

Spirit of gratitude is always pleasant and satisfying because it carries with it a sense of helpfulness to others; it begets love and friendship, and engenders divine influence. Gratitude is said to be the memory of the heart.⁶

Day 8:

It is human nature, I suppose, to seek elsewhere for our happiness. Pursuit of career goals, wealth, and material rewards can cloud our perspective and often leads to a lack of appreciation for the bounteous blessings of our present circumstances.⁷

Day 9:

Every cloud has a silver lining and finding it is one of the most reliable ways to turn an apparent problem into a blessing! True wisdom is the ability to see the equal benefit or blessing hidden in every challenge, situation, sickness, or crisis. The silver lining is always as bright as the cloud is dark. And when we see its shining light, we are grateful for the gift of our challenge.⁸

Day 10:

When life is flowing smoothly, we enjoy taking credit for its many opportunities. When we encounter what looks like a problem, we tend to look for reasons outside ourselves. But when we look deeper, we discover that what looked like a problem is actually an opportunity. The way for us to see the opportunity is to lift ourselves to a higher point of view. We learn to accept – not deny – responsibility for the way we think and feel about daily experiences, we can open our minds to the guidance of our heart and soul.⁹

Day 11:

Gratitude is an uplifting, exalting attitude. You can probably say from experience that you are happier when you have gratitude in your heart. You cannot be bitter, resentful, or mean-spirited when you are grateful.¹⁰

Day 12:

A decade's worth of research on gratitude has shown me that when life is going well, gratitude allows us to celebrate and magnify the goodness. But what about when life goes badly? In the midst of the economic maelstrom that has gripped our country, I have often been asked if people can--or even should--feel grateful under such dire circumstances. My response is that not only will grateful attitude help--it is essential. In fact, it is precisely under crisis conditions when we have the most to gain by a

grateful perspective on life. In the face of demoralization, gratitude has the power to energize. In the face of brokenness, gratitude has the power to heal. In the face of despair, gratitude has the power to bring hope. In other words, gratitude can help us cope with hard times.¹¹

Day 13:

Consciously cultivating an attitude of gratitude builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can cushion us when we fall. There is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient to stress, whether minor everyday hassles or major personal upheavals.¹²

Day 14:

Experiencing and expressing gratitude can help all of us – whatever our situation – lead fuller, richer lives.¹³

Day 15:

“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

Day 16:

Our obedience to the laws, ordinances, and commandments is the greatest expression of love and gratitude that we can bestow upon him. Gratitude is also the foundation upon which repentance is built....In some quiet way, the expression and feelings of gratitude have a wonderful cleansing or healing nature. Gratitude brings warmth to the giver and the receiver alike.¹⁴

Day 17:

Gratitude is a Spirit-filled principle. It opens our minds to a universe permeated with the richness of God. Through it, we become spiritually aware of the wonder of the smallest things, which gladden our hearts with their messages of God’s love. This grateful awareness heightens our sensitivity to divine direction.¹⁵

Day 18:

“Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last days.” (Alma 37:37)

Day 19:

You show your trust in Him when you listen with the intent to learn and repent and then you go and do whatever He asks. If you trust God enough to listen for His message in every sermon, song, and prayer in this conference, you will find it. And if you then go and do what He would have you do, your power to trust Him will grow, and in time you will be overwhelmed with gratitude to find that He has come to trust you.¹⁶

Day 20:

When we give thanks in all things, we see hardships and adversities in the context of the purpose of life. We are sent here to be tested. There must be opposition, through meeting our challenges, and through teaching others to do the same.¹⁷

Day 21:

“Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Day 22:

Gratitude inspires happiness and carries divine influence.¹⁸

Day 23:

You could have an experience with the gift of the Holy Ghost today. You could begin a private prayer with thanks. You could start to count your blessings, and then pause for a moment. If you exercise faith, and with the gift of the Holy Ghost, you will find that memories of other blessings will flood into your mind. If you begin to express gratitude for each of them, your prayer may take a little longer than usual. Remembrance will come. And so will gratitude.¹⁹

Day 24:

Might it be well for us to remember to give thanks to our Heavenly Father prior to asking for his help in solving our problems?²⁰

Day 25:

Brothers and sisters, please do not miss an opportunity to look into the eyes of your family members with love. Children and parents, reach out to each other and express your love and appreciation. Like me, some of you may wake up one day to discover that the time for such important communication has passed. Live each day together with hearts filled with gratitude, good memories, service, and much love.²¹

Day 26:

Gratitude is a positive experience that comes from recognizing gifts or blessings and feelings thankful. It is also an attitude, a way to perceiving life, in which individuals are willing to receive and acknowledge the beneficial actions of others on their behalf. Those who consistently display such an attitude are said to have a grateful disposition. Gratitude is also a habit that can be cultivated, causing one to focus on the blessings of life. Finally, gratitude can be defined as a coping response to challenging or difficult circumstances.²²

Day 27:

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father in him.” (Colossians 3:17)

Day 28:

When we understand this principle, that God offers us opportunities for blessings and blesses us through our own adversities and the adversities of others, we can understand why He has commanded us again and again to “thank the Lord thy God in all things” (D&C 59:7).²³

Day 29:

“And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.” (Alma 7:23)

Day 30:

Often their grief is caused by what seems to them as an ending. Some are facing the end of a cherished relationship, such as the death of a loved one or estrangement from a family member. Others feel they are facing the end of hope—the hope of being married or bearing children or overcoming an illness. Others may be facing the end of their faith, as confusing and conflicting voices in the world tempt them to question, even abandon, what they once knew to be true. Sooner or later, I believe that all of us experience times when the very fabric of our world tears at the seams, leaving us feeling alone, frustrated, and adrift. It can happen to anyone. No one is immune. Everyone’s situation is different, and the details of each life are unique. Nevertheless, I have learned that there is something that would take away the bitterness that may come into our lives. There is one thing we can do to make life sweeter, more joyful, even glorious. We can be grateful!²⁴

Day 31:

The Lord compensates the faithful for every loss. That which is taken away from those who love the Lord will be added unto them in His own way. While it may not come at the time we desire, the faithful will know that every tear today will eventually be returned a hundredfold with tears of rejoicing and gratitude.²⁵

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Thomas S. Monson, "The Divine gift of Gratitude," Ensign, November 2010, 88.
2. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1986), 263.
3. Robert A. Emmons, "The Psychology of Gratitude: An Introduction," in *The Psychology of Gratitude*, ed. Robert A. Emmons and Michael E. McCullough (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3.
4. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1974), 202.
5. Thomas S. Monson, "The Divine gift of Gratitude," Ensign, November 2010, 88.
6. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1986), 262.
7. Steven E. Snow, "Gratitude," Ensign, November 2001, 43.
8. John F. DeMartini, *Count Your Blessings: The Healing Power of Gratitude and Love* (Great Britain: Elements, 2003), 84.
9. John F. DeMartini, *Count Your Blessings: The Healing Power of Gratitude and Love*, 84–85.
10. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 78–79.
11. Robert Emmons, "How Gratitude Can Help You Through Hard Times," Greater Good Science Center at University of California Berkeley, May 13, 2013, accessed January 1, 2020, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_can_help_you_through_hard_times.
12. Geoffrey Ingersoll and Jeremy Bender, "41 Phrases Only People in the Military Will Understand," 2014.
13. Vaughn R. Worthen, "The Value of Experiencing and Expressing Gratitude," Ensign, March 2010, 45.
14. Robert D. Hales, "Gratitude for the Goodness of God," Ensign, May 1992, 63, 65.
15. Bonnie D. Parkin, "Gratitude: A Path to Happiness," Ensign, May 2007, 35.
16. Henry B. Eyring, "Trust in God, Then Go and Do," Ensign, November 2010, 73.
17. Dallin H. Oaks, "Give Thanks in All Things," Ensign, May 2003, 97.
18. Bonnie D. Parkin, "Gratitude: A Path to Happiness," Ensign, May 2007, 35.
19. Henry B. Eyring, "Remembrance and Gratitude," Ensign, November 1989, 13.
20. Robert D. Hales, "Gratitude for the Goodness of God," Ensign, May 1992, 64.
21. M. Russell Ballard, "Giving Our Spirits Control over Our Bodies," Ensign, November 2019, 107.
22. Vaughn R. Worthen, "The Value of Experiencing and Expressing Gratitude," Ensign, March 2010, 45.
23. Dallin H. Oaks, "Give Thanks in All Things," Ensign, May 2003, 98.
24. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Grateful in Any Circumstance," Ensign, May 2014, 70.
25. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Come What May, and Love It," Ensign, November 2008, 28.

THEME 12:
Endure to the End

The Family: A Proclamation to the World
“Disability, death, or other circumstances may
necessitate individual adaptation.”

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a
steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness
of hope, and a love of God and of all men.
Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon
the word of Christ, and endure to the end behold,
thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

-2 Nephi 31:20

DECEMBER: ENDURE TO THE END

The military life comes with many difficulties, but it is important to identify that every service member and his or her family's circumstances are different. In an article by Lydia Kautz she noted that military "families have their own battles to fight, whether their soldiers are home or not."¹ The battles of military families can be many. Some military families may have easier or harder difficulties than others. Kautz noted some of those difficulties:

Being part of a military family means operating as a single parent a lot of the time—whenever a spouse is deployed. It means learning to parent children alone, to do all the household work and repairs a spouse might otherwise be responsible for.²

Most military families struggle with having the service member's spouse become as a single parent when the service member is not around. Military OneSource stated, "Dual-military couples have the benefit of a shared experience, a basis of strength for some military marriages. But these couples also can face some unique challenges as well when it comes to careers."³ In another article, Julie Bogen mentioned that military families are experiencing stress because of the financial situations that they encounter while living a military life and the "main reason for that difficulty is that the family's nonmilitary partner had struggled with unemployment or underemployment"⁴ Bogen recognized that financial difficulty is one of the many challenges military families can face. It can create even more challenges within the family.

The proclamation teaches about the sacred responsibilities of mothers and

1. Lydia Kautz, "Military Struggles Open Up About Their Struggles," Military.com, Last modified January 23, 2018, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.military.com/spouse/military-life/military-spouses-open-about-their-struggles.html>.

2. Lydia Kautz, "Military Struggles Open Up About Their Struggles," 2018.

3. "Military Couples: When Both Spouses Are Service Members," Military OneSource, last modified November 5, 2019, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/family-relationships/spouse/getting-married-in-the-military/military-couples-when-both-spouses-are-ser>.

4. Julie Bogen, "The Dismal Career Opportunities for Military Spouses," The Atlantic, last modified March 28, 2019, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/03/majority-military-spouses-are-underemployed/585586/>.

fathers and then states, “Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation.” Whether it be a single parent while a service member is gone, loss of career opportunities, unemployment, underemployment, or even financial situations; military life has been shown to be in some cases difficult for military families but filled with many blessings. Elder Richard J. Maynes stated the following:

Every morning when we wake up, we face a new day filled with the challenges of life. These challenges come in many forms: physical challenges, financial setbacks, difficulties with relationships, emotional trials, and even struggles with one’s faith. Many of the challenges we face in life can be solved and overcome; however, others may be difficult to understand and impossible to overcome and will be with us until we pass on to the next life. As we temporarily endure the challenges we cannot solve, it is important to remember that the spiritual strength we develop will help us successfully endure all the challenges we face in life.⁵

Elder Maynes recognized that there are many challenges that we will face in life and some may not be overcome, but these challenges when endured will spiritually strengthen us in order to help us face them. There are many challenges that Latter-day Saints military families will face but they will be significant and a blessing for them as they endure to the end.

Although the principle of endure to the end is not written in the proclamation, the mention of adaptation brings forth the principle. Dr. Stephen Sideroff stated the following:

At the heart of resilience is your ability to adapt. This refers to making adjustments—physical emotional and mental—based on new circumstances and information. Adjustments can be in your behavior, perception, beliefs or judgements. The more effective you are in adjusting and changing, the healthier and more resilient you will be.⁶

When adapting to life’s challenges in a healthy manner, resiliency is an important component in building and changing one’s life. Latter-day Saint military families know the difficulties they are facing and know that there is a way to adapt and become even more resilient. As they follow the principle of enduring to the end it becomes easier to withstand the challenges placed before them. The Church’s definition of endure is found in the Guide to the Scriptures which describes it as “To remain firm in a commitment to be true to the commandments of God despite temptation,

5. Richard J. Maynes, “The Strength to Endure,” Ensign, November 2013, 79.

6. Stephen Sideroff, “Resilience and Restoring your Ability to Adapt,” Psychology Today, last modified October 19, 2015, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/path-optimal-living/201510/resilience-and-restoring-your-ability-adapt>.

opposition, and adversity.”⁷ President Monson taught of endurance:

The world around you is not equipped to provide the help you need to make through this often-treacherous journey. So many in our society today seem to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace. Permissiveness, immorality, pornography, drugs, the power of peer pressure—all these and more—cause many to be tossed about on a sea of sin and crushed on the jagged reefs of lost opportunities, forfeited blessings, and shattered dreams. Is there a way to safety? Is there an escape from threatened destruction? The answer is a resounding yes! I counsel you to look to the lighthouse of the Lord. I have said it before; I will say it again: there is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what the lighthouse of the Lord can rescue. It beckons through the storms of life. It calls, “This way to safety. This way to home.” It sends forth signals of light easily seen and never failing. If followed, those signals will guide you back to your heavenly home.⁸

President Monson taught of the oppositions, temptations, and adversity that can be encountered. Enduring to the end is to be committed to Christ and His commandments.

Enduring to the end can be better learned when understood through the words of the prophets and other leaders in the Church. In these latter days there is much temptation, opposition, and adversity. The words found in the scriptures teach the importance to endure to the end. When Jesus Christ taught about the calamities that will precede His second coming. He mentioned various examples such as: people deceiving others by saying they are Christ, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, sorrows, wars and rumours of wars, being killed and hated because of taking the name of Christ, false prophets, and many others (see Matthew 24:3-12). Jesus then taught after mentioning these great calamities that “...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13). Nephi also wrote, “And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved” (2 Nephi 31:16). In modern revelation, Joseph Smith received a revelation for Sidney Gilbert that stated, “And again, I would that ye should learn that he only is saved who endureth unto the end” (Doctrine and Covenants 53:7). Therefore, we learn through the scriptures that the trials placed before us must be endured.

In addition, some prophets, apostles, and leaders have testified of the principle to endure to the end and the blessings and the consequences of not enduring. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught of enduring:

7. “Endure,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 29, 2020, [https:// www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/endure?lang=eng](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/endure?lang=eng).

8. Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, and Endure,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 126-127.

First, because God has repeatedly said He would structure mortality to be a proving and testing experience. (See Abr. 3:25; Mosiah 23:21.) Brothers and sisters, he has certainly kept His promise. He has carried out His divine intent, hasn't He? Thus, even our fiery trials, said Peter, should not be thought of as "some strange things." (1 Pet. 4:12.) Hence, enduring is vital, and those who so last will be first spiritually! By taking Jesus' yoke upon us and enduring, we learn most deeply of Him and especially how to be like Him. (See Matt. 11:29.) Even though our experiences are micro compared to His, the process is the same.⁹

Elder Maxwell recognized that enduring enables us to be more like Jesus Christ. It helps us through our journey through mortality. In addition, Elder Maxwell continued by teaching that enduring is an attribute:

Thus, enduring is one of the cardinal attributes; it simply cannot be developed without the laboratory time in this second estate. Even the best lectures about the theory of enduring are not enough. All the other cardinal virtues—love, patience, humility, mercy, purity, submissiveness, justice—they all require endurance for their full development.¹⁰

Enduring to the end is something that is required in order to gain these virtues. Elder Claudio D. Zivic taught about endurance:

Even those who have had powerful spiritual experiences and have given faithful service could one day go astray or fall into inactivity if they do not endure to the end. May we always and emphatically keep in our minds and hearts the phrase "This will not happen to me." . . . Let us be faithful to what we have believed and know. If we have not been living according to our knowledge, let us change. Sinners who persist in their sins, and do not repent, sink deeper and deeper into filthiness, until Satan claims them for himself, significantly jeopardizing their opportunity to repent, to be forgiven, and to be blessed with all the blessings of eternity.¹¹

Elder Zivic gave a powerful message of how not enduring to the end can allow Satan the opportunity to claim us. Similarly, Elder L. Tom Perry testified of the following:

I love the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it defines the way we can partake of the fruits of the gospel, experience the "exceedingly great joy" (1 Nephi 8:12) that only it can bring, and endure to the end through all of

9. Neal A. Maxwell, "Endure it Well," Ensign, May 1990, 33.

10. Neal A. Maxwell, "Endure it Well," 34.

11. Claudio E. Zivic, "He That Shall Endure unto the End, the Same Shall Be Saved," Ensign, May 2018, 84.

the challenges of mortal life. The gospel teaches us all we need to know to return to live with our Father in Heaven as resurrected and glorified beings. May all of us maintain in our minds the vision of eternal life. May we be diligent in following the recipe for eternal life that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. May we endure to the end.¹²

Elder Perry's testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ taught how enduring to the end is very much connected to what we learn. It is what we learn that brings joy and the ability to endure to the end.

Enduring to the end is a principle and, as Elder Maxwell stated, an attribute. Through the challenges found in military life, enduring to the end can empower Latter-day Saint military families. Furthermore, as Latter-day Saint military families adapt to those difficulties they may struggle or receive here on this mortal journey, with the guidance of the Lord, they will be able to withstand any opposition, temptation, and adversity that may come their way.

12. L. Tom Perry, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, May 2008, 46.

INVITATIONS
&
QUOTES
S

INVITATIONS

LEARN:

STUDY & PONDER THE PRINCIPLE OF
ENDURING TO THE END

ACT:

SHARE HOW RESILIENCY HAS BLESSED
YOUR MILITARY FAMILY THROUGH
FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE
PROCLAMATION AND CENTERING
THE HOME IN JESUS CHRIST

BECOME:

CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT AND
STRENGTHEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING
OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE FAMILY
PROCLAMATION TO CENTER YOUR
MILITARY HOME IN JESUS CHRIST IN
ORDER TO ENDURE TO THE END

QUOTES

Day 1:

We are all subject to sorrow and suffering, to disease and death. Through times good and bad, the Lord expects each of us to endure to the end.¹

Day 2:

Every morning when we wake up, we face a new day filled with the challenges of life. These challenges come in many forms: physical challenges, financial setbacks, difficulties with relationships, emotional trials, and even struggles with one's faith. Many of the challenges we face in life can be solved and overcome; however, others may be difficult to understand and impossible to overcome and will be with us until we pass on to the next life. As we temporarily endure the challenges we cannot solve, it is important to remember that the spiritual strength we develop will help us successfully endure all the challenges we face in life.²

Day 3:

At the heart of resilience is your ability to adapt. This refers to making adjustments – physical emotional and mental – based on new circumstances and information. Adjustments can be in your behavior, perception, beliefs or judgements. The more effective you are in adjusting and changing, the healthier and more resilient you will be.³

Day 4:

To remain firm in a commitment to be true to the commandments of God despite temptation, opposition, and adversity.⁴

Day 5:

The world around you is not equipped to provide the help you need to make through this often-treacherous journey. So many in our society today seem to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace. Permissiveness, immorality, pornography, drugs, the power of peer pressure – all these and more – cause many to be tossed about on a sea of sin and crushed on the jagged reefs of lost opportunities, forfeited blessings, and shattered dreams. Is there a way to safety? Is there an escape from threatened destruction? The answer is a resounding yes! I counsel you to look to the lighthouse of the Lord. I have said it before; I will say it

again: there is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what the lighthouse of the Lord can rescue. It beckons through the storms of life. It calls, “This way to safety. This way to home.” It sends forth signals of light easily seen and never failing. If followed, those signals will guide you back to your heavenly home.⁵

Day 6:

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

Day 7:

“And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved.”
(2 Nephi 31:16)

Day 8:

“And again, I would that ye should learn that he only is saved who endureth unto the end.” (Doctrine and Covenants 53:7)

Day 9:

First, because God has repeatedly said He would structure mortality to be a proving and testing experience. (See Abr. 3:25; Mosiah 23:21.) Brothers and sisters, he has certainly kept His promise. He has carried out His divine intent, hasn't He? Thus, even our fiery trials, said Peter, should not be thought of as “some strange things.” (1 Pet. 4:12.) Hence, enduring is vital, and those who so last will be first spiritually! By taking Jesus' yoke upon us and enduring, we learn most deeply of Him and especially how to be like Him. (See Matt. 11:29.) Even though our experiences are micro compared to His, the process is the same.⁶

Day 10:

Thus, enduring is one of the cardinal attributes; it simply cannot be developed without the laboratory time in this second estate. Even the best lectures about the theory of enduring are not enough. All the other cardinal virtues—love, patience, humility, mercy, purity, submissiveness, justice—they all require endurance for their full development.⁷

Day 11:

Even those who have had powerful spiritual experiences and have given faithful service could one day go astray or fall into inactivity if they do not endure to the end.

May we always and emphatically keep in our minds and hearts the phrase “This will not happen to me.” ...Let us be faithful to what we have believed and know. If we have not been living according to our knowledge, let us change. Sinners who persist in their sins, and do not repent, sink deeper and deeper into filthiness, until Satan claims them for himself, significantly jeopardizing their opportunity to repent, to be forgiven, and to be blessed with all the blessings of eternity.⁸

Day 12:

I love the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it defines the way we can partake of the fruits of the gospel, experience the “exceedingly great joy” (1 Nephi 8:12) that only it can bring, and endure to the end through all of the challenges of mortal life. The gospel teaches us all we need to know to return to live with our Father in Heaven as resurrected and glorified beings. May all of us maintain in our minds the vision of eternal life. May we be diligent in following the recipe for eternal life that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. May we endure to the end.⁹

Day 13:

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (2 Nephi 31:20)

Day 14:

When the challenges of mortality come, and they come for all of us, it may seem hard to have faith and hard to believe. At these times only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement can bring us peace, hope, and understanding. Only faith that He suffered for our sakes will give us the strength to endure to the end.¹⁰

Day 15:

We live in a troubled world, a world of many challenges. We are here on this earth to deal with our individual challenges to the best of our ability, to learn from them, and to overcome them. Endure to the end we must, for our goal is eternal life in the presence of our Father in Heaven. He loves us and wants nothing more than for us to succeed in this goal. He will help us and bless us as we call upon Him in our prayers, as we study His words, and as we obey His commandments. Therein is found safety; therein is found peace.¹¹

Day 16:

We also need the light and knowledge of the Savior’s life and teachings to guide us on the covenant pathway, including the sacred ordinances of the temple. We must be steadfast in Christ, feast upon His word, and endure to the end [2 Nephi 31:20–21].¹²

Day 17:

Wonderful, glorious things are in store for you if you will only believe, obey, and endure.¹³

Day 18:

Enduring to the end is a hallmark of true discipleship and is essential to eternal life. But when trials and challenges come our way, we are often told to simply “hang in there.” Let me be clear: to “hang in there” is not a principle of the gospel. Enduring to the end means constantly coming unto Christ and being perfected in Him.¹⁴

Day 19:

From the very beginning to the present time, a fundamental question remains to be answered by each who runs the race of life. Shall I falter or shall I finish? On the answer await the blessings of joy and happiness here in mortality and eternal life in the world to come.¹⁵

Day 20:

Our destiny is not determined by the number of times we stumble but by the number of times we rise up, dust ourselves off, and move forward.¹⁶

Day 21:

If you endure to the end, and if you are valiant in the testimony of Jesus, you will achieve true greatness and will live in the presence of our Father in Heaven.¹⁷

Day 22:

He is perfectly positioned to lift us and give us the strength we need to endure our afflictions. We have only to ask.¹⁸

Day 23:

Whatever your challenges may be, wherever you live on this earth, your faithful membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the divine powers of the gospel of Jesus Christ will bless you to endure joyfully to the end.¹⁹

Day 24:

“And, if ye keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life,

which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 14:7)

Day 25:

If enduring to the end is essential to eternal life, why do we struggle to be faithful? We struggle when we are caught between competing priorities. Casual obedience and lukewarm commitment weaken faith. Enduring to the end requires total commitment to the Savior and to our covenants.²⁰

Day 26:

Enduring to the end, or remaining faithful to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout our life, is a fundamental requirement for salvation in the kingdom of God.²¹

Day 27:

Enduring to the end is definitely not a do-it-yourself project.²²

Day 28:

Enduring to the end is a process filling every minute of our life, every hour, every day, from sunrise to sunrise. It is accomplished through personal discipline following the commandments of God.²³

Day 29:

*“And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved.”
(Omni 1:26)*

Day 30:

Therefore, enduring to the end is not just a matter of passively tolerating life’s difficult circumstances or “hanging in there.” Ours is an active religion, helping God’s children along the strait and narrow path to develop their full potential during this life and return to Him one day. Viewed from this perspective, enduring to the end is exalting and glorious, not grim and gloomy. This is a joyful religion, one of hope, strength, and deliverance.²⁴

Day 31:

“Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.”

(3 Nephi 15:9)

QUOTES ENDNOTES

gf

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Jesus Christ—the Master Healer,” Ensign, November 2005, 85.
2. Richard J. Maynes, “The Strength to Endure,” Ensign, November 2013, 79.
3. Stephen Sideroff, “Resilience and Restoring your Ability to Adapt,” Psychology Today, last modified October 19, 2015, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/path-optimal-living/201510/resilience-and-restoring-your-ability-adapt>.
4. “Endure,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/gs/endure?lang=eng>.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, and Endure,” Ensign, May 2012, 126-127.
6. Neal A. Maxwell, “Endure it Well,” Ensign, May 1990, 33.
7. Maxwell, “Endure it Well,” 34.
8. Claudio D. Zivic, “He That Shall Endure unto the End, the Same Shall be Saved,” Ensign, May 2018, 84.
9. L. Tom Perry, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ,” Ensign, May 2008, 46.
10. Robert D. Hales, “Finding Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” Ensign, November 2004, 73.
11. Thomas S. Monson, “Till We Meet Again,” Ensign, November 2010, 112.
12. Quentin L. Cook, “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” Ensign, November 2016, 43.
13. Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, and Endure,” Ensign, May 2012, 129.
14. Kevin W. Pearson, “Stay by the Tree,” Ensign, May 2015, 114.
15. Thomas S. Monson, “Finishers Wanted,” Ensign, June 1989, 2.
16. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now,” Ensign, November 2013, 55.
17. Howard W. Hunter, “True Greatness,” Ensign, May 1982, 20.
18. Dallin H. Oaks, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” Ensign, November 2015, 64.
19. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Have We Not Reason to Rejoice?,” Ensign, November 2007, 21.
20. Kevin W. Pearson, “Stay by the Tree,” Ensign, May 2015, 114.
21. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Enduring to the End,” New Era, July 2016, 3.
22. L. Tom Perry, “How to Endure to the End,” New Era, June 2012, 48.
23. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Enduring to the End,” New Era, July 2016, 4.
24. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Enduring to the End,” New Era, July 2016, 3-4.

CONCLUSION

A CHRIST-CENTERED MILITARY HOME

When Chaplain Israel Yost was deployed during WWII, he set an example and model that Latter-day Saint military families can follow. Chaplain Yost would read a chapter from the Bible with his wife daily to create a Christ-centered home even at a distance. Since the declaration of the proclamation in 1995, it became known in the Church as a revelatory document that teaches the Latter-day Saint doctrinal perspective on the family. Within the proclamation there are various themes that touch upon specific principles and doctrines of the Church. These themes are principles that can be woven within the daily lives of a family, especially a military family.

There are many challenges that a Latter-day Saint military family face. These can include deployments, separations, financial struggles, spousal unemployment, health, etc. Since military life brings trials, there is a necessity for Latter-day Saint military families to develop resiliency. The proclamation can be a resource for a Latter-day Saint military family can learn from its precepts, act on its doctrine, and become even more steadfast in a Christ-centered home.

It is hoped this book will help Latter-day Saint military families create a Christ-centered military home through themes and principles found in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” in order to assist them in fostering resiliency daily against the challenges they may experience in military life.

