

To Receive, to Covenant, and to Minister

LIZ DARGER

I love Brigham Young University. Working here allows me to combine my love for higher education, my love for athletics, and my love for the gospel of Jesus Christ in meaningful ways. I believe wholeheartedly in the unique mission of BYU and feel it a great privilege to be a part of this campus community. While my remarks today were prayerfully prepared with the BYU campus community in mind, I believe the principles I will discuss are universal to all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A year into my service as a member of the Young Women general advisory council, a revision to the Young Women theme was introduced by Sister Bonnie H. Cordon, Young Women general president. It states:

I am a beloved daughter of heavenly parents, with a divine nature and eternal destiny.

As a disciple of Jesus Christ, I strive to become like Him. I seek and act upon personal revelation and minister to others in His holy name.

I will stand as a witness of God at all times and in all things and in all places.

As I strive to qualify for exaltation, I cherish the gift of repentance and seek to improve each day. With faith, I will strengthen my home and family, make and keep sacred covenants, and receive the ordinances and blessings of the holy temple.¹

I love this new theme and the truths it exhibits about our identity and purpose. Today I would like to focus on three topics from the Young Women theme: receive, covenant, and minister.

To Receive Is an Active Role

Previous to my time in college athletics, I worked as a guidance counselor and high school basketball coach. I loved helping young people in their academic and athletic pursuits. One of the wonderful student-athletes I was privileged to counsel and coach was Morgan Bailey. When I first met Morgan, she was a shy ninth grader who was tall but not particularly athletic or skilled. As

Liz Darger, BYU senior associate athletic director and member of the Young Women general advisory council, delivered this devotional address on May 18, 2021.

I started coaching her, it was clear that she had the potential to play the post position and the desire and work ethic to be great.

One of the first skills Morgan and I worked on developing was how to effectively post up and receive all sorts of post entry passes. It is natural to think of receiving as something passive and dismiss its importance. We may envision passively sticking out our arms and letting someone else do the active work of providing us something. But *receiving* is an action word. And it is a skill that can and should be developed.

Morgan practiced getting to the right spot with her knees bent, her elbows wide, and her hands up to create a big target. She learned how to hold off the defense and confidently call for the ball to communicate to her teammate that she was willing and ready to receive the pass. Morgan struggled to catch the ball at first, which was frustrating to her. But with repetition after repetition, she practiced meeting the pass and seeing the ball into her hands. With consistent and continual practice, Morgan developed the skill of receiving and became a trusted target in the post.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we can become trusted receivers as we consistently and continually prepare and practice. Think of all we can receive as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! We can receive ordinances, including baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost. We can receive a remission of our sins. We can receive spiritual gifts. We can receive blessings. We can receive a witness of truth. We can receive personal revelation. We can receive temple ordinances. We can receive “all that [the] Father hath.”²

Receive the Holy Ghost; Receive Personal Revelation

President Russell M. Nelson has taught that among all the blessings and gifts we can receive, “the privilege of receiving revelation is one of the greatest gifts of God to His children.”³ After baptism, we are confirmed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and given the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Elder David A. Bednar taught:

The simplicity of this ordinance may cause us to overlook its significance. These four words—“Receive the Holy Ghost”—are not a passive pronouncement; rather, they constitute a priesthood injunction—an authoritative admonition to act and not simply to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26). The Holy Ghost does not become operative in our lives merely because hands are placed upon our heads and those four important words are spoken. As we receive this ordinance, each of us accepts a sacred and ongoing responsibility to desire, to seek, to work, and to so live that we indeed “receive the Holy Ghost” and its attendant spiritual gifts. “For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift? Behold, he rejoices not in that which is given unto him, neither rejoices in him who is the giver of the gift” (D&C 88:33).⁴

We continually receive the Holy Ghost as we make choices—righteous choices—that qualify our souls and soften our hearts to hear and recognize the promptings of the Spirit. Other voices, louder and more constant—if we allow them—will always be there, packaged to drown out and inhibit our ability to understand.⁵ But if we tune our hearts, pay attention, and act on the promptings that come to us, we will grow into the principle of revelation and receive more and more Spirit-driven insight and direction.⁶ President Nelson counseled, “If we will truly receive the Holy Ghost and learn to discern and understand His promptings, we will be guided in matters large and small.”⁷

Karl G. Maeser—often referred to as the spiritual architect of Brigham Young University—gave the following object lesson regarding the importance of preparing to receive revelation:

If I take a lot of sand, shavings, saw dust and iron filings, and spread them out upon a sheet of paper and then take a magnet and draw it over them, the sand would not move, the shavings would not be affected by it, the saw dust would lie still, but the iron filings would straighten up and fly to the magnet. It is the same with the Spirit of God. Every soul in a congregation is not affected by the Holy Ghost. Only the heart that is prepared will receive the word gladly and profit by it.⁸

Is your heart prepared to receive? Is it prepared to receive personal revelation? Is it prepared to receive a challenging calling or assignment? Is your heart prepared to receive correction when necessary? A prepared heart is a humble heart, recognizing the promise in Ether that our weakness can become strength.⁹ A prepared heart is a grateful heart, acknowledging the giver of all gifts.¹⁰

We may feel clumsy or awkward in receiving revelation. But remember, as we practice, with a humble and grateful heart, we gain confidence in our ability to “hear Him.”¹¹

Receive Prophetic Counsel

Recently, as part of my personal *Come, Follow Me* study, I learned how I can prepare my heart to receive prophetic counsel.

In the revelation recorded in section 21 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which was given on the day the restored Church of Jesus Christ was formally organized, the Lord reaffirmed Joseph Smith’s calling as a prophet:

Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory.¹²

Did you catch that? We are to receive prophetic counsel as if from the Savior’s own mouth, in patience and faith. And what will happen if we do? The Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before us. When I read those verses a few months ago, I was taken aback. It is an absolutely incredible promise! And it is a promise and blessing we can all obtain as we receive prophetic counsel in patience and faith. This revelation may change the way you prepare for general conference. It has for me.

Covenant to Receive

Morgan Bailey, the shy ninth grader who couldn’t receive a pass, went on to play basketball here at BYU, eventually earning West Coast Conference Player of the Year and honorable mention All-America recognition. We have stayed in close touch, and I was thrilled when she told me she was preparing to receive her temple endowment last year. I texted her, asking what she had been learning during her preparation that stood out to her. She responded with the following:

It feels like every talk I’ve read lately and every conversation I have about the gospel is, “Don’t wait; get to the temple.” I’ve learned so much, but something that has stuck out through this whole process is the realization and my testimony that I am a child of God and that I am working to become more like Him so that I can return to His presence one day. The temple is where I need to be, especially in this craziness, to get me a step closer by making sacred covenants and receiving my endowment and the blessings it can bring as I keep those covenants. Through my preparation, I have gained a strong understanding and testimony of God’s plan and the Savior’s Atonement. I have an overwhelming love for our Savior, and I feel His love every day.

Morgan prepared to receive her temple endowment with the same focus and drive that she used in her basketball career. Through study, prayer, and keeping her baptismal covenants, she showed the Lord that she was prepared to receive more. It was a sacred privilege to accompany Morgan to the Provo Utah Temple last fall. My heart was full, knowing how well she had prepared to receive temple ordinances and make further covenants with God.

As we make and keep sacred covenants, great blessings are in store. In the Book of Mormon, King Benjamin taught:

And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of

*never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it.*¹³

As we make and keep sacred covenants, God’s power becomes available to us to help us continue on the covenant path. President Nelson stated:

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.

*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.*¹⁴

What an exciting, empowering proclamation from the prophet! And indeed, it has changed my life. I have come to better understand my identity as a daughter of heavenly parents and my purpose as a disciple of Jesus Christ who has been endowed with the right to access God’s priesthood power as I keep my covenants with Him.¹⁵ I have felt an increased desire to stand as a willing witness of Jesus Christ. I have felt remarkable confidence in teaching and testifying of truth. The confidence I feel is real because God is real. And His power is real.¹⁶

Sisters, our unique gifts and talents are needed in extra measure as we prepare the world for the Savior’s Second Coming. As righteous, covenant women, we have the right to draw liberally upon His power to aid us in these efforts.

Brethren, please support the covenant women who surround you as they seek to better understand how to access God’s power in their lives.¹⁷ Encourage them in their prayerful study. Ask them to share what they are learning. Study alongside them. Sisters, please support the covenant men who surround you in the same way.¹⁸ A great place to start is to review President Nelson’s talk “Spiritual Treasures”¹⁹ with a heart prepared to receive revelation.

We are witnessing the continuing restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. What a blessing and privilege it is to be on the earth at this time, assisting God in His great work of salvation and exaltation as we live the gospel of Jesus Christ, care for those in need, invite all to receive the gospel, and unite families for eternity.²⁰ This is our charge. This is our purpose. There is no greater work on the earth today.

Creating a Home-Court Advantage

Like Nephi, I truly was “born of goodly parents.”²¹ My mom and dad were very intentional in their parenting, including creating a Darger family mission statement; insisting on early-morning family scripture study, family prayer, and weekly family home evenings; and providing endless private moments of mentoring. One family home evening lesson I’ll never forget was taught by my mother about the importance of creating a “home-court advantage” in our home for every member of our family. We discussed things like the importance of celebrating each other’s success; how to be patient with a sibling when they were struggling; why we decorated our home with pictures of our family, the temple, and the Savior; and how to protect our home from influences that drive away the Spirit.²²

The Darger family has grown over the years. While it has grown, endearing nicknames, family songs, matching outfits, and coordinated chants and cheers have all remained an important part of the Darger home-court advantage.

The strength that comes through this home-court advantage has been particularly needed and noticed during this past year. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many families, including mine, to adjust and virtually create a family-gathering atmosphere. During these weekly Zoom calls, the cheers and encouragement continued. One memorable Zoom call ended in a cheering session for my brother and his MBA graduation.

Here at BYU, thanks to the ROC (Roar of Cougars student section) and the most incredible, loyal fan base in the country, we know all about home-court and home-field advantage. During the 2020–2021 season, our football, women’s soccer, men’s and women’s basketball, and men’s and

women's volleyball teams went a combined 51–4 at home. Mark Few, the men's basketball coach at Gonzaga University, once commented, "There are 20,000 people that roll [into the Marriott Center], and they're as dedicated to the cause of cheering for their Cougars as any place I've ever been. . . . Unbelievable home court."²³

Creating a "Home-Campus" Advantage: Organizational Efforts

How can we create a home-court advantage, not just for our athletic teams but for each member of our BYU campus community? How can we minister to others in ways that help create a sense of belonging? Success will require organizational efforts and individual efforts.

BYU has a long history of organizational efforts designed to watch over and care for individual students—or, in other words, to minister. As early as 1878, Karl G. Maeser organized the Domestic Department, which assigned seniors as mentors to underclassmen, checking on their welfare through biweekly visits.²⁴ Today we have organizational efforts such as the First-Year Mentoring Program, Multicultural Student Services, academic advisement centers, Counseling and Psychological Services, the University Accessibility Center, International Student and Scholar Services, the Office for Student Success and Inclusion, Women's Services and Resources, and Career Services.

Organizational efforts will continue, including initiatives that develop from the recommendations of the Committee on Race, Equity, and Belonging (CoREB). As President Kevin J. Worthen stated:

From its beginning in June 2020, the Committee established as its mission the call from leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the NAACP that educational institutions "review processes, [policies], and organizational attitudes regarding racism and root them out."²⁵

I join the many who applaud the dedicated work of CoREB and pledge my support for increased efforts to "root out racism"²⁶ and meet the needs of our Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities at BYU.

Last month, at the BYU President's Leadership Retreat, Elder David A. Bednar stated the following:

We should not simply follow the established or emerging patterns of other universities to address the challenges we do now and will yet face. We can, we should, and we must look unto the Savior in every thought to find every solution and to make every decision. At BYU we can truly focus on the spiritual and practical substance of solutions and not just on superficial symbolism. We should be unique in striking at the root of important and timely issues and not merely one of the thousands hacking at the branches. By looking unto the Lord, we can fulfill our remarkable role and responsibility "in a manner which never [has] been known."²⁷

How blessed we are to have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, the ability to receive personal revelation, and prophetic counsel that directs us toward the Savior in every organizational and individual effort.

We Need Real Fans: Individual Efforts

In athletics, we have an entire unit of our department devoted to uniting our fans in support of our teams. (And they do a fantastic job.) Much of what they do could be considered organizational efforts: they organize pep rallies, produce media that helps the fans get to know our student-athletes, coordinate cheers, and produce the most incredible game atmosphere in the country. But none of these organizational efforts have their intended impact if fans don't show up. Organizational efforts aren't enough without the individual effort of each individual fan.

We felt this to an extent this year as our attendance was severely limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Without fans, our staff was tasked with re-creating a mostly virtual home-court advantage. They brought in virtual fan video boards and pumped in artificial crowd noise. They hosted Zoom pep rallies and delivered game-day fan packs to the dorms and apartments. The cheer squad created the "cheer-up" program, a traveling personal cheer section designed to surprise someone at home or at work who needed a boost.

Under the circumstances, our staff did a remarkable job. They created the best virtual home-court advantage in the country. But ask anyone involved and they will tell you that it wasn't as effective as the real thing. All the planning and organization and coordinated efforts only work when individual fans are involved and invested. We need everyone to do their part.

To create a home-court advantage for every member of the campus community, organizational efforts must be matched by individual efforts. It is our covenant responsibility to have our "hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another."²⁸ We need real people who will reach out to other real people. This is a one-on-one, personal, individual ministry, and we need everyone!

No experience has witnessed this principle of individual ministry more than my involvement with the NCAA Common Ground initiative, which seeks to establish inclusive and respectful athletic environments for participants of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and religious beliefs.²⁹ We had the opportunity to host Common Ground IV here on our campus in 2018.³⁰ While the organizational efforts of Common Ground are significant, they would not have the intended impact without the individual efforts and relationships among members of the Common Ground Leadership Team.³¹ Through powerful experiences of dialoguing across difference, I have learned that as we sincerely express love and listen, we can build strong relationships of trust that yield opportunities to share our perspectives in an environment of respect. But more important, the relationships themselves change hearts—ours and theirs—and enrich all of us.³² Despite fundamental differences in religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity, we were strangers who became colleagues who became dear friends. I treasure these people more than I can express.

Aligning Our Actions with Our Beliefs

Here on campus, "the mission of Brigham Young University—founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life."³³

Our efforts to create a home-court advantage within the BYU community should be guided by the following principles from the BYU mission statement:

*All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved. Certainly all relationships within the BYU community should reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor.*³⁴

May I invite each of us to do a self-assessment of our individual efforts to support those around us? As you listen to the following questions, please take note of what thoughts and feelings come into your mind and heart:

- How do I treat other members of the BYU campus community?
- Do I cheer for others, encouraging their success?
- Am I patient with others when they make a mistake or offend me?
- Do I invest in relationships with those whom I perceive as different than me?
- When I disagree with others, do I do so in a respectful manner?
- Do all of my relationships within the BYU community reflect devout love of God and a genuine concern for the welfare of my neighbor?

The answers to these questions are guided by our understanding of individual worth. I am hopeful that each of us has sought and received a testimony of our divine identity as a child of God. After receiving a testimony of our divinity, the next important step is to seek to gain a testimony of the divinity of everyone on this earth: that they are all children of God too and that their souls are just as precious to God as are ours. In receiving a testimony of the divinity of each person and then aligning our actions with that testimony as we minister to others, we help create a home-court advantage and a sense of belonging for all.

A Personal Ministry

Romans 15:7 states, “Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.” What if each of us as members of the BYU campus community considered it a responsibility to personally minister to every other member of the campus community?³⁵ How might our interactions change, especially with those whom we perceive as being different than us? How might our prayers and focus change? As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have made sacred covenants to personally minister to others. With a humble and grateful heart, as we ask in faith, we will receive revelation to guide us in our ministering efforts.

Lessons from National Champions

A whole devotional address could be devoted to lessons learned from national champions. I would like to share three simple principles about ministering from the experiences of our 2020–2021 national champions.

The first principle is to give and receive encouragement and help. All cross country courses are brutal, but the hilly, 10,000-meter championship course in Stillwater, Oklahoma, is considered by many athletes to be one of the most difficult cross country courses they have ever experienced. In a performance that Coach Ed Eyestone called “otherworldly,”³⁶ Conner Mantz won this year’s National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) individual men’s cross country national championship. In a postrace interview, Conner described a powerful experience during the race:

During the race, Adriaan Wildschutt from Florida State came up next to me, and we ran together. When he came up next to me, he said, “Hey, man, we can catch these guys up ahead. Let’s work together.” At first I was like, “You know what, by all means you take the lead right now for me, because I am dying in this heavy headwind.” He took it for a couple hundred meters. Then I was able to bounce back and take it for about the next thousand meters.³⁷

Conner’s experience stands out to me for two reasons. First, he was encouraged by his opponent in the middle of a championship race, which is a

wonderful reminder that there are good people everywhere who are seeking to work together. Second, Conner had the eyes to see and the humility to receive the help he was offered.³⁸ He could have brushed off his opponent and continued the race alone. But Conner accepted his opponent’s offer to work together. The two ran together to overtake the lead, ultimately taking first and second.

The second principle is to instill confidence in others. For most BYU students, college is an “away-from-home” experience. In athletics, coaches do all they can to help their athletes feel confident while competing away from home. I saw this firsthand when our Cougarettes dance team recently competed at the National Dance Alliance (NDA) college nationals in Daytona, Florida. Teams were not permitted to warm up or practice on the competition floor, causing Coaches Stacy Bills and Morgan St. Pierre to get creative. Using a tape measure and bright masking tape, they taped down lines on the carpet of a large meeting room at the team hotel, mimicking the dimensions of the markings on the competition floor. This helped the Cougarettes feel confident in their final hours of practice, knowing they could trust that the spacing would be similar when they competed. The Cougarettes went on to win their twentieth national title.³⁹

Do we instill confidence in others, especially those who are new, on the margins, or feeling out of place? Our concerted ministering efforts can provide to those around us the needed confidence to fully engage in the best the BYU experience has to offer.

The third principle is to celebrate the success of others. This year, at the NCAA indoor track and field championships in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Diljeet Taylor coached four of our women’s distance runners to national titles in the 3,000-meter race and the distance medley relay.⁴⁰ Two days later, she coached a team of seven different runners to the NCAA women’s cross country national championship.⁴¹ In a postrace interview from the windy course in Stillwater, Oklahoma, Coach Taylor described one of the keys to success that she has instilled in the women she coaches:

One of the things that I think is super crucial—and we did this early on, years ago—is teaching women how to be happy for their teammates’ success. I think sometimes that can be hard. So all season long, as I separated the teams back in January between our indoor team and our cross country team (they didn’t practice together the entire time), they were celebrating each other’s successes and actually getting momentum from the other team. I think what we did in Fayetteville a couple days ago, our women’s team was so pumped for it. I think it just set the tone for the weekend, like, okay we’re a part of this sisterhood too, and we’re now going to go out and do great things.⁴²

Coach Taylor leads by example in celebrating the success of others. She is often the first to congratulate her BYU coaching colleagues when they land an important recruit or win a big game. She knows that celebrating the success of others doesn’t diminish her own accomplishments but instead creates a feeling of excitement and unity in the shared vision of success.

A Community of Covenant Keepers

When I think of my ongoing BYU experience, so many people come to mind who have helped create a home-court advantage for me along the way. Included are my freshman dorm sisters from Taylor Hall, wise and patient professors, my graduate school cohorts, supportive mentors, remarkable student-athletes, our BYU Athletics family, and students and colleagues all across campus who lift, encourage, and include those around them, including me.

To my fellow BYU Cougars, now is the time for us to commit to be season-ticket holders and loyal fans of those around us, including those whom we perceive to be different. Organizational efforts are important, but they are not enough. Look for the good. Show up early and often. And cheer hard. As we commit to personally minister to others, we can create a home-court advantage for every member of our BYU campus community.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf gave this inspired encouragement:

I hope that we welcome and love all of God’s children, including those who might dress, look, speak, or

just do things differently. It is not good to make others feel as though they are deficient. Let us lift those around us. Let us extend a welcoming hand. Let us bestow upon our brothers and sisters in the Church a special measure of humanity, compassion, and charity so that they feel, at long last, they have finally found home. . . .

With this in mind, let our hearts and hands be stretched out in compassion toward others, for everyone is walking his or her own difficult path. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our Master, we are called to support and heal rather than condemn. We are commanded “to mourn with those that mourn” and “comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”⁴³

I pray that we may feel the intense love that our Father in Heaven has for each one of His precious children. As we strive to actively receive and personally minister, we can truly become a community of covenant keepers.

I know that the Father and His Son live. May we look to the Savior⁴⁴ with every effort we make to receive, to covenant, and to minister. I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Young Women theme, *New Era*, November 2019.
2. D&C 84:38; see also verses 33–40.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018.
4. David A. Bednar, “Receive the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, November 2010.
5. See Ronald A. Rasband, “Let the Holy Spirit Guide,” *Ensign*, May 2017.
6. See 2 Nephi 28:30.
7. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church.”
8. Karl G. Maeser, “Stake Conference: The Proceedings of the Second Day,” *Utah Enquirer*, 3 September 1889, 2; quoted in A. LeGrand Richards, *Called to Teach: The Legacy of Karl G. Maeser* (Provo and Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2014), 401.
9. See Ether 12:27.
10. See D&C 88:33.
11. See Russell M. Nelson, “Hear Him,” *Ensign*, May 2020.

12. D&C 21:4–6.

13. Mosiah 2:41.

14. Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures,” *Ensign*, November 2019; emphasis in original.

15. See D&C 121:34–46.

16. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Melchizedek Priesthood and the Keys,” *Ensign*, May 2020.

17. President Russell M. Nelson stated:

You won't find this process spelled out in any manual. The Holy Ghost will be your personal tutor as you seek to understand what the Lord would have you know and do. This process is neither quick nor easy, but it is spiritually invigorating. What could possibly be more exciting than to labor with the Spirit to understand God's power—priesthood power?

What I can tell you is that accessing the power of God in your life requires the same things that the Lord instructed Emma and each of you to do.

*So, I invite you to study prayerfully section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants and discover what the Holy Ghost will teach **you**. Your personal spiritual endeavor will bring you joy as you gain, understand, and use the power with which you have been endowed. . . .*

*I entreat you to study prayerfully **all** the truths you can find about priesthood power. You might begin with Doctrine and Covenants sections 84 and 107. Those sections will lead you to other passages. The scriptures and teachings by modern prophets, seers, and revelators are filled with these truths. As your understanding increases and as you exercise faith in the Lord and His priesthood power, your ability to draw upon this spiritual treasure that the Lord has made available will increase. As you do so, you will find yourselves better able to help create eternal families that are united, sealed in the temple of the Lord, and full of love for our Heavenly Father and for Jesus Christ. [“Spiritual Treasures”; emphasis in original]*

18. Relief Society general president Jean B. Bingham stated:

So what does that mean for you and me? How does understanding priesthood authority and power change our lives? One of the keys is to understand that when women and men work together, we accomplish a great deal more than we do working separately. Our roles are complementary rather than competitive. Although

women are not ordained to a priesthood office, as noted previously women are blessed with priesthood power as they keep their covenants, and they operate with priesthood authority when they are set apart to a calling. . . .

We are taught that “priesthood blesses the lives of God's children in innumerable ways. . . . In [Church] callings, temple ordinances, family relationships, and quiet, individual ministry, Latter-day Saint women and men go forward with priesthood power and authority. This interdependence of men and women in accomplishing God's work through His power is central to the gospel of Jesus Christ restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith.”

*Unity is essential to the divine work we are privileged and called to do, but it doesn't just happen. It takes effort and time to really counsel together—to listen to one another, understand others' viewpoints, and share experiences—but the process results in more inspired decisions. Whether at home or in our Church responsibilities, the most effective way to fulfill our divine potential is to work together, blessed by the power and authority of the priesthood in our differing yet complementary roles. [“United in Accomplishing God's Work,” *Ensign*, May 2020; quoting Gospel Topics page, “Joseph Smith's Teachings About Priesthood, Temple, and Women,” churchofjesuschrist.org]*

19. See Nelson, “Spiritual Treasures.”

20. See “The Work of Salvation and Exaltation,” *General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, July 2020 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ, 2020), 1.2 (p. 2), churchofjesuschrist.org.

21. 1 Nephi 1:1.

22. See Ronald A. Rasband, “Build a Fortress of Spirituality and Protection,” *Ensign*, May 2019.

23. Mark Few, quoted in “Basketball Facilities,” *BYU Cougars*, byucougars.com/page/facilities/basketball.

24. See Richards, *Called to Teach*, 420–22.

25. Kevin J Worthen, quoted in “BYU Releases Key Findings on Race, Equity, and Belonging,” *Announcements*, *BYU News*, 26 February 2021, news.byu.edu/announcements/report-race-equity-belonging; quoting Russell M. Nelson, Derrick Johnson, Leon Russell, and Amos C. Brown, “Locking Arms for Racial Harmony in America:

What the NAACP and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Are Doing Together,” Church of Jesus Christ, Medium.com, 8 June 2020, medium.com/@Ch_JesusChrist/locking-arms-for-racial-harmony-in-america-2f62180abf37.

26. Dallin H. Oaks, “Love Your Enemies,” *Ensign*, November 2020.

27. David A. Bednar, “Look unto Me in Every Thought; Doubt Not, Fear Not,” BYU leadership meeting address, 16 April 2021; quoting Alma 49:8.

28. Mosiah 18:21.

29. See “Common Ground,” National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/common-ground.

30. See Rachel Stark-Mason, “Breaking Ground,” *Champion Magazine*, Winter 2019, NCAA, ncaa.org/static/champion/breaking-ground.

31. See Rachel Stark, “An Uncommon Conversation,” *Champion Magazine*, Winter 2018, NCAA, ncaa.org/static/champion/an-uncommon-conversation.

32. See Elizabeth J. Darger, “A Common Humanity,” Commentary, *BYU Magazine*, Summer 2017, magazine.byu.edu/article/a-common-humanity.

33. The Mission of Brigham Young University (4 November 1981).

34. Mission of BYU.

35. Elder Gary E. Stevenson stated:

*Every man, woman, and child in the kingdom of God is a shepherd. No calling is required. From the moment we emerge from the waters of baptism, we are commissioned to this work. We reach out in love to others because it is what our Savior commanded us to do. [“Shepherding Souls,” *Ensign*, November 2018]*

36. Ed Eyestone, quoted in Braden Taylor, “Mantz Wins Individual National Title at 2020 NCAA Cross Country Championships,” Game Recap, Men’s Cross Country, BYU Cougars, 15 March 2021, byucougars.com/story/m-cross-country/1295835/mantz-wins-individual-national-title-2020-ncaa-cross-country.

37. See Conner Mantz interview in “2020* DI Men’s NCAA Cross Country Championship—Full Race,” NCAA Championships, 15 March 2021, YouTube video, 35:00–35:35, youtube.com/watch?v=vWSbBeXBlrc.

38. See Romans 15:7.

39. See Jennifer Weaver, “BYU Cougarettes Defend National Hip Hop Title with 20th Championship Victory,” KUTV, 11 April 2021, kutv.com/news/local/byu-cougarettes-defend-national-hip-hop-title-with-20th-victory.

40. See Braden Taylor, “Wayment Wins National Title in 3000M,” Game Recap, Women’s Track and Field, BYU Cougars, 13 March 2021, byucougars.com/story/w-track-field/1295820/wayment-wins-national-title-3000m.

41. See Braden Taylor, “BYU Women’s Cross Country Wins National Title,” Game Recap, Women’s Cross Country, BYU Cougars, 15 March 2021, byucougars.com/story/w-cross-country/1295836/byu-womens-cross-country-wins-national-title.

42. Diljeet Taylor, interviewed in “Diljeet Taylor Reacts to BYU Winning NCAA XC Team Title,” FloTrack Podcast, 15 March 2021, YouTube video, 2:00–2:40, youtube.com/watch?v=em4YTSqy0ts.

43. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Are My Hands,” *Ensign*, May 2010; quoting Mosiah 18:9.

44. See D&C 6:36.