

# *Bound Securely to the Savior*

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**O**n December 3, 2021, only two states in the United States had blizzard warnings: they were Alaska and Hawaii. Yes, Hawaii had a blizzard warning.

The winter weather system known as a Kona low prompted emergency alerts throughout the Hawaiian Islands. There were strong winds with gusts up to eighty miles per hour recorded atop Mauna Kea, a 14,000-foot peak on which a foot of snow fell, making “it technically possible to ski and surf in the same hour” on the Big Island.<sup>1</sup> Lower elevations saw winds of more than fifty miles per hour. And the rains were heavy. Maui reported rain at a pace of one inch per hour. The Kona low brought “near-shore waves of up to 30 feet.”<sup>2</sup>

Imagine yourself the owner of a boat moored just off the coast of Maui on December 3—there are a few clouds in the sky, but you know the storm is coming. What would you do to secure and protect your boat to keep it firmly attached to the mooring or to a dock so that it doesn’t sink or run aground?

Of course you would check to make sure that your boat was securely attached to the mooring buoy, which is secured to an anchor on the sea bottom, with appropriate swivels on the chain so that the boat can move in the wind. Or in the case of a dock, you would be certain your boat was secured at several points with ropes in good repair and with stable cleats.

Also very important to protecting your boat is to remove windage. Experts say that removing windage is critical to protecting a boat in a storm. What does it mean to “remove windage”? Essentially it is removing anything that the wind can grab. And its importance is paramount because it reduces the load on whatever is keeping you safe—in this case, the mooring lines or the ropes and cleats.

Reducing windage is key to lessening the stress on the boat itself and also on its attachment points so that the boat remains secure to the mooring and anchor or to the dock. So sails must be secured, bimini tops removed, and inflatable

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*Camille N. Johnson, Primary general president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, delivered this devotional address on January 11, 2022.*

dinghies deflated and tied down. Flags, cushions, lights—everything that can be removed or lashed down should be to reduce windage and protect the boat through the storm.

These pictures were taken after the Kona low hit Maui. [Several photos of a wrecked boat were shown.] This grand boat lost its connection to its mooring and was carried ashore by the wind and the waves, slamming into the rocky coastline. Can you see the windage? If you look carefully, it appears there were sails and flags still on the boat.

Perhaps you have heard the phrase “batten down the hatches,” which is a nautical phrase from the early nineteenth century. When a storm is coming, the captain orders the crew to nail thin strips of wood, known as battens, to hold the waterproof tarps in place to protect the hatchways and doorways of the ship.<sup>3</sup> Battening down the hatches has come to mean preparing for a storm or preparing for trouble. And of course one of the ways we do that is to reduce windage—to reduce the resistance that may jeopardize our attachment point to the dock or the mooring buoy.

Dear friends, students, and faculty, do you have windage you need to remove? Do you need to reduce resistance so that you may weather the storms that are inevitably coming or bearing down on you now? Removing your personal windage will help keep you safe. Windage adds load. Eliminating windage reduces load; it reduces load on the attachment point, which will keep you safe.

And to what should you be attached so that you will be safe? What is your dock, your mooring, your anchor? It is your relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ.

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has so beautifully expressed:

*When life is in commotion and nothing seems sure or stable, when people and things are driven about by every wind of doctrine and every wave of society’s whims, when nothing seems deep-rooted or solid or permanent, how dearly we need something firm, steadfast, and immovable. How dearly we need a rock to hold on to. Jesus is that Rock.*<sup>4</sup>

The Savior is steady, sure, and rock solid. He is an anchor that is never displaced. He is a mooring

buoy that doesn’t dislodge. He is an immovable dock. It is we who detach from the rock, the anchor, the buoy, or the dock when we let windage take us and carry us away.

Recall that when the Savior was on the ship with His disciples, “a great storm of wind” arose, “and the waves beat into the ship.”<sup>5</sup> The Savior, who was sleeping, was awakened by His disciples, who naively asked:

*Master, carest thou not that we perish?*

*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

*And he said unto [His disciples], Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*<sup>6</sup>

Brothers and sisters, I have faith and testify that the Savior *is* the “refuge from the storm.”<sup>7</sup> He is the anchor of our souls.<sup>8</sup>

Are there things on your metaphorical boat creating windage—creating resistance to your attachment to Him? What, if anything, is keeping you from being bound securely to the Savior?

I don’t know the answer for you. But He knows. And I trust that all of us have something we can work on to improve our relationship with the Savior. If you sincerely ask your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ to know what windage is creating a strain on that connection, I know that the Holy Ghost will communicate it to you. But you must ask and then be willing to accept and act upon the answer you receive. Perhaps with a prayer in your heart, something will come to you today, and you will know just how to batten down your hatches in preparation for life’s storms.

I will start by telling you about the dinghies I am trying to deflate, the sails I am trying to secure, and the cushions I am tossing off my personal ship to stay securely bound to the Savior. Perhaps as I work through these, some inspired ideas will come to you.

### **Trust in the Lord**

First, *worrying about the future instead of trusting in the Lord or waiting too long to turn things over to Him* can be a source of windage that strains our connection to the Savior.

I get it. I promise I do. You want to have everything mapped out—education, spouse, career. I am a consummate planner: I keep a planner with me. I love a good calendar with big boxes that I can write in, and I keep an electronic calendar too.

When I was sixteen, I received my patriarchal blessing. It was a beautiful and sacred opportunity, a blessing specific to me upon which I have relied and trusted for more than forty years now. I had hoped, and frankly at age sixteen expected, to have some specifics revealed to me, just as had my mother, who was told in her patriarchal blessing that she had the natural attributes of a nurse and should pursue that educational and professional path. My blessing, however, didn't say anything about what I might study or if I should pursue a professional path. And so I studied what came naturally to me, and I graduated with a degree in English. And then I wondered what to do next.

Of course, given my personality, I wanted a plan; I wanted to have "next steps." But nothing came to me clearly, so I took a step forward in faith and accepted a job in Washington, DC, working for a congressman from California. I hatched a plan to take the LSAT while I was back there—frankly knowing very little about what it would be like to be a lawyer. I was accepted to law school and met my husband while I was in my first year, and we were sealed in the Salt Lake Temple. He had his degree and was working. I kept studying and graduated from law school in 1989, and I started working as a lawyer at a well-established Salt Lake City firm.

During the course of my professional life, I had three sons—the bright lights in my life! Family always was, and is, my priority. My husband and I served in many Church callings. We raised our family in the gospel. We worked hard. We loved each other. We worked through personal storms together as a family. And for many reasons, I kept practicing law until Doug and I were called to be mission leaders in the Peru Arequipa Mission in 2016. I took a leave of absence during our service and then returned to practicing law and being a grammy when we came back to Salt Lake City in 2019. With my present calling, I have rolled up my shingle and have retired from the practice of law—at least for the next five years.

Why give you my bio? To express my testimony that my life plan was rolled out for me as I lived it, keeping my eye on the prize of eternal life. My patriarchal blessing didn't tell me what to study, no angel suggested the practice of law, and no vision told me Doug Johnson was who I should marry. (In fact, my confirmation that he was the man for me came after he had proposed and I had prepared a pros-and-cons list.) Yes, I would have liked for it all to have been spelled out for me. But it wasn't. Instead, the Lord trusted me, and, what is more important, I trusted in the Lord and just kept taking steps forward, believing that if I was off course, the Lord would redirect me.

This was a bit contrary to my nature. I want things on the calendar so I can plan for them. But, brothers and sisters, the Savior, who is the author and finisher of my story, has done a far better job than I ever could have!

Perhaps now you know why I gave the talk I did in general conference last October. The natural woman in me "is resistant to turning things *completely* over to the Lord and trusting Him *entirely*."<sup>9</sup> That resistance, that windage, is something I am working to reduce and to eliminate altogether.

I stand before you today and testify that I have felt the hand of the Master writing my story with me. And as it turns out, there has been joy in the journey as I have gained confidence in my Savior, Jesus Christ, to write my story. As I trust more and resist less, I feel bound more securely to the Savior. My faith and confidence in the Savior increase as I place my faith and confidence in Him. Because He knows my potential perfectly, He has taken me to places I never had imagined myself.

As was so poetically stated by Isaiah and quoted by Nephi, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also [has] become my salvation."<sup>10</sup>

### Repent Daily

A second potential source of windage is *failure to employ the joyful gift of daily repentance*.

Sin, as it turns out, puts an undesirable load on your connection to the Savior, but only if you fail to employ the timeless gift of repentance.

Remember, the Savior stands at the door knocking. He wants a relationship with you. Don't let sin be your windage.

President Russell M. Nelson has counseled us:

*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. When coupled with faith, repentance opens our access to the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.*

*Whether you are diligently moving along the covenant path, have slipped or stepped from the covenant path, or can't even see the path from where you are now, I plead with you to repent. Experience the strengthening power of daily repentance—of doing and being a little better each day.*

*When we choose to repent, we choose to change!*<sup>11</sup>

Yes, the process of repentance is one of changing and becoming more like the Savior, which naturally secures your connection to Him.

I love what Elder Gary B. Sabin has said: “No one has sinned tomorrow.”<sup>12</sup> It's true! Make good choices today. Plan to avoid poor choices tomorrow. And know that the Savior, through His infinite and intimate Atonement, has provided a way for all of us to be clean and changed to be more like Him. Know that it requires effort, as our prophet has pleaded with us to employ.

### **Avoid Procrastination**

Perhaps here we should identify another source of windage: *procrastination*.

“Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today,” says an old proverb. We should work at repenting daily as President Nelson has counseled us to do, identifying changes we can make “to *do* better and *be* better.”<sup>13</sup> “This life is the time for men to prepare to meet God. . . . Do not procrastinate the day of your repentance.”<sup>14</sup>

President Henry B. Eyring put it this way, which I find so simple:

*One of the questions we must ask of our Heavenly Father in private prayer is this: “What have I done today, or not done, which displeases Thee? If I can only know, I will repent with all my heart without delay.”*

*That humble prayer will be answered. And the answers will surely include the assurance that asking today was better than waiting to ask tomorrow.*<sup>15</sup>

What else do we procrastinate? Sometimes we procrastinate joy, gratitude, and the beauty of today.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton taught:

*A notion commonly shared by many [is] that the best of life is just ahead, over the next hill, a few years away, . . . [at graduation, when I marry], tomorrow, next month, when I turn [whatever age], or next summer. We become actively engaged in the pastime of conditioning ourselves to believe that happiness and achievement are always somewhere in the future. There is an attitude of tolerating today, even looking past today in anticipation of a better tomorrow.*

*. . . Those inclined to count their daily blessings have more to count because they help make more possible as they learn gratitude. A constant waiting for a brighter future may cause us to lose the beautiful today.*<sup>16</sup>

So don't procrastinate a recognition of your blessings in the moment, right now. Finding joy in your journey and offering gratitude to your Heavenly Father and the Savior for those blessings is a way to batten down the hatches, prepare for storms, and secure your relationship with Jesus Christ.

### **Keep Good Company**

Another potential source of windage is *the company we keep*. *Who do you surround yourself with? Who is good company?* I choose to spend time with people who respect what I believe and who encourage me to live in a moral way. For me, that is choosing good company, and it is neither exclusive nor exclusionary. President Spencer W. Kimball said, “Always keep good company. Never waste an hour with anyone who doesn't lift you up and encourage you.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Seek the Right Sources of Validation**

And what about *looking for validation and affirmation from unreliable sources*? Could that create windage and put a strain on your connection to the Savior?

Value and pay heed to the opinions of people who you truly respect. I was taught that lesson by my parents—decades before social media created influencers. When an unkind thing was said about me, my mom or dad would counsel, “Do you really care what they think?” And as it turned out, I usually didn’t. And if I did, then perhaps the comment was not misplaced and I had some self-correction to make. Value and pay heed to your relationship with the Savior. Seek validation and affirmation from Him first.

### **Eliminate Distractions**

Are there *distractions* in your life that are windage—literal distractions from your relationship with the Savior? Personally, I have to be constantly vigilant to avoid distractions. For all the benefits associated with our smartphones and the information available at our fingertips, can the bells, dings, and whistles become distractions? “Well, no,” I tell myself, “they are important notifications.” And some of them are. But many of them are superfluous. And they can wait until my scripture study is complete or until I finish a conversation with someone I love. The battle with distractions wages on and will continue to wage on as we seek to focus our hearts and minds on the Savior and stay firmly connected to Him.

Elder Alvin F. Meredith III counseled about distractions in his October general conference talk. He taught:

*The devil is the great distractor. We learn from Lehi’s dream that voices from the great and spacious building seek to lure us to things that will take us off the course of preparing to return to live with God.*

*But there are other less-obvious distractions that can be just as dangerous. As the saying goes, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” The adversary seems determined to get good people to do nothing, or at least to waste their time on things that will distract them from their lofty purposes and goals. For example, some things that are healthy diversions in moderation can become unhealthy distractions without discipline. The adversary understands that distractions do not have to be bad or immoral to be effective.<sup>18</sup>*

Brothers and sisters, keep your eyes on the prize of eternal relationships—an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father and the Savior and the opportunity to return to your heavenly home to be with the people who are most dear to you. That focus on your ultimate objective will help you avoid unhealthy distractions.

And remember that goal setting is an effective way to stay focused and keep distractions at bay. So record your goals—on paper or electronically. Set aside time to review and evaluate your progress. Adjust your goals when necessary. Be self-evaluative and honestly identify your weaknesses so that you know what to work on. Plan. Act. Reflect. Discover. And then do it all over again. This pattern of goal setting, acting, evaluating, and then setting additional goals is one way to roll up the flags and sails that are distractions and that are creating windage on your boat.

This statement from *Preach My Gospel* should sound familiar to many of you: “Carefully considered goals will give you clear direction. . . . Challenging goals will help you work effectively and lead you to stretch and grow”<sup>19</sup> and, I would like to add, keep distractions at bay.

What were the five virgins doing who failed to bring sufficient oil for their lamps in preparation for the bridegroom, who they knew was coming? I don’t know for certain, but my guess is that they were distracted by things that didn’t matter a whole lot. They might have been engaged in something good only to have neglected that which was better and best. Their goal of being at the wedding was dashed when they didn’t prepare a plan and act on it, putting that which was needful first.

### **Make Time an Asset**

So let’s think about how we use our time. *Are we using our time to secure our attachment to the Savior, or are the choices we make for our time a reason we are flapping around in the wind? Is time an asset, or has it become windage?*

I am trying to batten down and get a handle on my use of time. There is no time to be wasted! I don’t spend time on bad things, but do I spend my time on the best of things?

In teaching the principle of good, better, and best, President Dallin H. Oaks said:

*We should begin by recognizing the reality that just because something is **good** is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives. . . .*

*Consider how we use our time in the choices we make in viewing television, playing video games, surfing the Internet, or reading books or magazines. Of course it is good to view wholesome entertainment or to obtain interesting information. But not everything of that sort is worth the portion of our life we give to obtain it. Some things are better, and others are best.<sup>20</sup>*

President M. Russell Ballard recently posed to us the question that the Savior posed to Peter: “Lovest thou me more than these?”<sup>21</sup> In what way can we apply Jesus’s question to ourselves? President Ballard explained:

*The Lord may be asking us about how busy we are and about the many positive and negative influences competing for our attention and our time. He may be asking each of us if we love Him more than the things of this world.<sup>22</sup>*

Just last October our dear prophet said this:

*I plead with you to make time for the Lord! Make your own spiritual foundation firm and able to stand the test of time by doing those things that allow the Holy Ghost to be with you **always**.<sup>23</sup>*

My friends, he used the word *plead*. Will you respond to the prophet’s plea and make time for the Lord?

What does that look like for me?

It means more time in the temple.

It means that above and beyond my regular scripture study and prayer, I need to give the Holy Ghost the chance to communicate to me by being still and by pondering on the things I read, hear, and feel.

To eliminate my windage and to stay bound securely to the Savior, I will choose to spend my time on that which is better and best, not just good.

I will work to keep my eyes on the prize of eternal relationships and eliminate distractions.

I will seek the Savior’s approval and not the world’s.

I will choose good company who reflect the light of the Savior.

I will not wait to count my blessings, nor will I wait to repent of my sins.

I will put my trust in Him.

Brothers and sisters, I have been quite forthcoming with you about my areas of weakness and need for improvement. Will you be candid with yourselves? What windage do you need to remove to stay bound securely to the Savior?

### **Moor Yourself to Christ**

Some years ago my family had the opportunity to vacation at Lake Powell on a houseboat in which my brother-in-law held an interest. We had enjoyed wonderful days on the lake, and in anticipation of returning home the next day, we had piloted the houseboat back near the marina and had secured it to a mooring buoy. Our motorboat was secured with ropes to the side of the houseboat for the night.

We all took our sleeping bags to the roof of the houseboat—our favorite thing—to fall asleep under that umbrella of endless stars. We were awakened in the middle of the night to what we believed was a rumbling storm. The houseboat was violently rocking side to side, and the motorboat was slamming into the houseboat. The little buoys we had placed between the motorboat and the houseboat were useless in protecting them from crashing into one another. We were all running about, trying to stay upright, and trying to secure things that were flying everywhere. But as I looked at the night sky, I realized it was actually clear. And as I studied the other boats moored in the marina, I realized that our fellow sailors were not trying to batten down the hatches like we were. They weren’t rocking and rolling like we were. They were bobbing a bit in the water with the wind, but they weren’t experiencing anything like what was happening to our houseboat. Something wasn’t right, but in a night lit only by stars, we could not adequately evaluate our situation.

By morning it was clear what had happened. The line from our mooring buoy had been wrapped around another buoy, and our houseboat had been caught perpendicular to the wind. We were moored to two points rather than one, and the whole houseboat had become windage, creating resistance. By the light of morning, we were able to untangle our ropes and reattach cleanly to the mooring buoy.

My dear friends, it doesn't work to be moored at two competing points. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other."<sup>24</sup> We must be secured to the Savior, our Rock and Redeemer.

And yes, sometimes our mooring lines get tangled and perhaps our ship even breaks loose from its mooring buoy in a storm when windage puts a strain on our attachment point. And then, thankfully and joyfully, I testify that our Savior, Jesus Christ, stands as the lighthouse leading us back to safety if we will just follow His light. "Brightly beams our Father's mercy From his lighthouse evermore."<sup>25</sup>

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

#### Notes

1. Matthew Cappucci, "Storm Brings Serious Flash Flooding to Hawaii Along with Mountain Snow," *Capital Weather Gang, Washington Post*, 6 December 2021, [washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/12/06/hawaii-flooding-snow-blizzard](https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2021/12/06/hawaii-flooding-snow-blizzard/).

2. Cappucci, "Storm Brings to Hawaii."

3. See Admiral W. H. Smyth, *The Sailor's Word-Book: An Alphabetical Digest of Nautical Terms* (London: Blackie and Son, 1867), s.v. "battening the hatches" and "battens," 85.

4. Jeffrey R. Holland, *Witness for His Names* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019), 130.

5. Mark 4:37.

6. Mark 4:38–40.

7. Isaiah 25:4.

8. See Hebrews 6:19.

9. Camille N. Johnson, "Invite Christ to Author Your Story," *Liahona*, November 2021; emphasis in original.

10. Isaiah 12:2; see also 2 Nephi 22:2.

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

12. Gary B. Sabin, "Stand Up Inside and Be All In," *Ensign*, May 2017.

13. Nelson, "We Can Do Better"; emphasis in original.

14. Alma 34:32–33.

15. Henry B. Eyring, "Do Not Delay," *Ensign*, November 1999.

16. Marvin J. Ashton, "The Time Is Now," *Ensign*, May 1975.

17. TSWK, 262.

18. Alvin F. Meredith III, "Look down the Road," *Liahona*, November 2021.

19. PMG, 2019, 148.

20. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, November 2007; emphasis in original.

21. John 21:15; see M. Russell Ballard, "Lovest Thou Me More Than These?" *Liahona*, November 2021.

22. Ballard, "Lovest Thou Me?"

23. Russell M. Nelson, "Make Time for the Lord," *Liahona*, November 2021; emphasis in original.

24. 3 Nephi 13:24.

25. "Brightly Beams Our Father's Mercy," *Hymns*, 2002, no. 335.