

“Let Us Run with Patience the Race That Is Set Before Us”

BRADLEY P. OWENS

Good morning, brothers and sisters. It is so wonderful to be with you. Thank you for attending this campus devotional. As I look out at the audience here, I see family members, friends, and colleagues, as well as past students. I am so deeply thankful for each of you. Your examples of service, faith, and kindness have deepened my desire to follow Jesus Christ because I can see reflections of Him in you. Thank you for being here. I am grateful for you. I love you. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with us today to bless us with the inspiration and the comfort and the healing that we may individually need.

One of the greatest blessings I have received because of BYU is to have found my wonderful wife, Cathy, while I was an undergraduate here. She had just returned home from her mission to Switzerland and had moved into our single adult ward. I was trying to get up the courage to ask her out, but for some reason I was unusually nervous.

Around that time our single adult ward activities committee started a blind-date box in which ward members could put the names of two people who they thought would make a good match. Then the activities committee would contact the two and say, “You’ve got a blind date. Meet on the corner on Thursday at six.”

However, the catch was that you weren’t really supposed to use the blind-date box for your own romantic escapades. But I felt that there was a higher purpose that needed to be served. So I put my name and Cathy’s name in the box and then played the role of a surprised and delighted blind-date partner. We had a great time, got engaged six months later, and were married. On our wedding day, the activities committee gifted the blind-date box to us as their greatest success story. So, though things turned out well, our relationship began on the pretense of deception and rule breaking; I teach business ethics here at BYU.

Bradley P. Owens, a BYU professor of business ethics in the Marriott School of Business, delivered this devotional address on June 11, 2024.

In my role as a business ethics professor, I have the blessing of teaching about 350 students a year, and I absolutely love it. One of my core goals is to help my students prepare to thrive throughout their lives by increasing their ability to make gospel- and principle-based decisions about work and life. Because the course is so focused on decision-making, I have met with many students one-on-one to talk about major life choices. I have learned that some students feel that life isn't turning out quite like they had anticipated and that life has been a lot harder than they thought it would be. Some feel that the pace of life is way too fast and that they can't keep up. Some have questions they can't currently answer and others feel frustrated because they have waited a lot longer than they had anticipated for righteous desires to be fulfilled.

These life concerns can seem all the more overwhelming during the young adult years—what Elder Robert D. Hales called “the decade of decision”¹—during which the choices a young adult makes will have a significant impact on how the remaining decades will unfold.

I have prayerfully thought about how to help my students—and anyone else who feels weary in their mortal journey—to find the renewed strength they need to keep going with faith and patience. To frame some key principles, I want to relate a true story I heard a few years ago that still surprises me to this day.

The Cliff Young Story

In 1983 a sixty-one-year-old farmer contacted the organizers of a 544-mile ultramarathon from Sydney to Melbourne, Australia, and asked to be registered for the race.² Since the other entrants were well-known and proven ultrarunners—with some holding records³ and others bearing sports sponsorships—this farmer's request was met with skepticism.

“Do you know how long this race is?” the race officials asked. “What makes you think you can complete it?”⁴

The farmer insisted that he understood how long the race was and that he believed he could finish it because, being from a poor farm family

who couldn't afford horses or four-wheelers, he had often run in his knee-high gumboots to round up nearly 2,000 sheep over a very large area in advance of a storm, sometimes running for three days to round up the entire flock. He figured that if he could run for three days, he could also do it for five or six days and complete the race.

The race officials reluctantly allowed the farmer to register. On the morning of the race, the other runners showed up with experienced support teams in mobile homes with showers and nice beds for their runners. In contrast, this farmer drove up in a rusty old van, with an inexperienced road crew and one pair of running shoes.⁵ The starting gun went off, and the runners tore through the streets. Observers noted that this farmer's stride looked more like a shuffle than a run, his pace being much slower than that of the others.⁶ The newspapers viewed this farmer who trained in gumboots as a novelty in the race,⁷ and almost no one took him seriously as a contender.

However, to the shock of the entire nation and the global racing world, this sixty-one-year-old farmer named Cliff Young not only won the ultramarathon but beat the previous record by two days, finishing the 544 miles in five days and fifteen hours.

How did this happen?

Based on my reading of Cliff's biography and other articles detailing this astonishing result,⁸ a key reason Cliff Young won was that almost nothing went right for him the first day of the race.

So what went wrong?

First, during the initial hours of the race, due to a poorly marked section of the course, he got lost following another runner who didn't know the way.⁹ This experience galvanized Cliff's resolve not to mimic what other racers were doing, including their pacing and strategy, but rather to run this race by doing what *felt right* to him.

Second, to make up for getting lost and running slower than his competitors, Cliff ran a couple more hours on the first night than he had originally planned. When he finally finished running around midnight, certain members of his road crew had fallen asleep and didn't do the one job they had been given: to have a warm dinner

ready for him. Though frustrated, Cliff just ate something cold out of a can and then collapsed in exhausted sleep.¹⁰

At the time, it was common wisdom among racers that you had to sleep at least six hours a night during these multiday marathons in order to maintain enough energy to make it to the end, so Cliff's crew chief, Wally, was responsible for waking Cliff up at six in the morning to get an early start.

But the third problem for Cliff and his team occurred when the alarm went off and Wally nodded back to sleep. He then awoke with a start and, without putting on his glasses, ran to the vehicle where Cliff was sleeping and said, "Cliff, get up. I've slept in. It's past six!"

Cliff bolted upright, put on his shoes, and tore down the road, thinking his competitors were already running. But when the sun didn't come up for what seemed like hours, Cliff finally asked Wally what time it was.

Embarrassed, Wally said it was four in the morning. He had accidentally set the alarm for two thirty rather than six. Cliff had barely slept two hours that night.¹¹ But instead of getting upset or calling it quits, he just kept moving forward one step at a time. He found that he could run all day just fine with two to three hours of sleep while eating very simple food out of a can. Doing so helped maximize his running time each day, which drastically changed the outcome of the race. The unanticipated difficulties he experienced during the first part of the race actually worked together for his good. His resilient response to unexpected challenges led to unexpected advantages.

On the fifth and final day of the race, it seemed that the courage and determination of this unlikely hero pulsed through the hearts of millions of Australians with every step Cliff took toward the finish line, uniting the country in a national celebration. That day Cliff became a symbol of Aussie grit and determination.

In a very real way, our lives are like an ultramarathon that tests the limits of our spiritual endurance. The apostle Paul taught, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."¹² This mortal experience, which has been carefully

designed as part of our loving Heavenly Father's plan, is meant to help us develop as disciples of His Son and reach our fullest potential. However, this experience can feel overwhelming at times. We can grow weary and may wonder if we can actually make it.

Just as no one believed Cliff Young could finish—let alone win—the race, we may also have doubters who try to get us to believe we cannot make it successfully through life. These doubters may be other people, the adversary, and sometimes ourselves. But through scripture, the Spirit, and patriarchal blessings, you know you are a child of God. Heavenly Father believes in you. You have made the wise choice to come to this earth to run this all-important race, and you have made many good choices since then that have brought you to where you are today. This can give you growing confidence that you can not only complete this mortal race but do so in a magnificently successful way. Regardless of the current challenges or disadvantages that you may think you have, you can silence sources of doubt to do and become more than you can imagine.

The key for all of us is to fully yoke ourselves to the Savior. Speaking of this vital key and some themes from the heroic story of Cliff Young, I want to invite us all to consider four essential decisions we can make—especially those of you in your decade of decision—that I know will help us to continue to run with patience this mortal RACE that is set before us.

Repent and Realign Regularly

First, decide to repent and realign with the path regularly. Like Cliff Young, we can sometimes get lost, veer off course, or follow someone who doesn't know the way.

This principle of repenting and realigning continually is emphasized first because much more important than our speed or pace in this race is whether our current direction is aligned with our desired final destination. Frequent course corrections are needed because life can be a distracting, misdirecting, and detour-enticing experience.

President Russell M. Nelson has taught us to embrace repentance as a joyful daily habit, emphasizing that

*nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance. . . . 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.*¹³

I also love the perspective Elder Weatherford T. Clayton shared in a BYU devotional several years ago on the realignment aspect of repenting:

*Every time we turn more to Christ, we are repenting. . . . When we sincerely pray to the Father, in a very real sense we are repenting. When we read the scriptures and ponder them, we are repenting. As we make changes because of what we are learning about Christ and His gospel, we are repenting. When we do things that make us better, kinder, gentler, more sensitive, more spiritual, more virtuous, and truer, we are repenting. . . . Though we all repent of things that are sinful in our lives, most of our repenting comes from hearing His words and doing them—from turning [or returning] to Him.*¹⁴

A few months after I returned home from my mission, someone who I knew well and who was older and more educated than I was at the time took me aside and tried for hours to fill me with doubts about my faith. The experience left me in a place of spiritual darkness for a period. Though I felt as if I were in a spiritual cloud, I continued my habit of reading the Book of Mormon and praying daily. Though I was struggling spiritually, it didn't feel right to me to stop these daily habits—even if during this period it was harder to feel heaven's light—because I knew they had brought answers and blessings to me in the past.

A few weeks after this experience, while reading the Book of Mormon, I had a strong impression to open my mission journal and read some of my mission experiences. This had a profound impact on me during this difficult time. I read about multiple experiences when I had felt enveloped in God's love during especially difficult times; when I had experienced significant increases in my ability to learn the language of Cantonese; when I had had impressions about where to go and what to say that proved to be

inspired after the fact; when I had felt an overwhelming calmness while being threatened with danger; and when I had experienced the powerful spiritual light that flooded the room each time my companion and I testified of the First Vision.

As I read through my record of these past experiences, I felt the spiritual cloud begin to lift. The cumulative effect of reliving these very real experiences was resounding evidence of the hand of a loving God in my life. Great peace and clarity returned as the power of my own witness from my own experiences reaffirmed the truth of the restored gospel as I allowed the Spirit to teach me from what Elder Neal A. Maxwell called "the pulpit of memory."¹⁵

This experience reflects the following inspired teaching by Elder Neil L. Andersen:

*With constant prayer, a determination to keep our covenants, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we navigate our way through life. When personal difficulty, doubt, or discouragement darken our path, or when world conditions beyond our control lead us to wonder about the future, the spiritually defining memories from our book of life are like luminous stones that help brighten the road ahead, assuring us that God knows us, loves us, and has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to help us return home.*¹⁶

I will be forever grateful that I wrote down these "spiritually defining memories" so that the Spirit could lead me back to them when my path became darkened. I hope and pray that we may all heed the inspired counsel from Elder Andersen to continue to record and review our spiritually defining memories and thereby continually realign our minds and our hearts with the Lord.¹⁷

Embracing the role of joyful repentance and constant realignment to the covenant path will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Anticipate and Accept Adversity

Second, decide to anticipate and accept adversity. One of my core goals as an ethics professor is to keep my students out of jail. I know that goal may sound like a pretty low bar, but this is true. Every Friday morning at the Central Utah

Correctional Facility, inmates file into a small chapel for a devotional. On occasions when I have visited them as a guest speaker, I have routinely asked them, "If I could take you with me to my ethics classes and have you share the most important lesson you've learned from your life's journey, what would it be?"

One by one they would stand up and, sometimes through tears, share sobering lessons learned through great heartache.

One said, "Develop positive coping habits. After my divorce, I turned to things I shouldn't have to deal with my loneliness."

Another said, "Diligently cultivate your core significant relationships. I didn't, and when life went south, I didn't have the support structure that I needed."

Another mentioned honoring covenants and said, "I treated my Church membership like a mess of pottage, and I really regret it."

Another said, "Keep your eyes wide open about rationalizations. It wasn't until the door slammed on my cell that the blinders finally came off and I realized how numb I had become and how many rationalizations I had fallen prey to."

The thing that unifies their stories is that most of these inmates acknowledged they had not responded well to some significant form of adversity.

Related to this, while an undergraduate here at BYU, I was given an assignment in a human development class. I randomly drew three numbers that correlated with a long list of major life reversals such as bankruptcy, divorce, chronic illness, and the untimely death of a loved one. I was asked to write about how I hoped I would deal with these specific trials. Though it was not the most cheerful assignment, it was a significant and valuable eye opener.

The instructor emphasized that while we can't know in advance the specific challenges we will face, we know that each of us will experience significant forms of adversity in life. We can prepare now by accepting this reality, building positive coping mechanisms and resilience, and setting our hearts on eternal things that do not change. In

our lives, just as in Cliff Young's race, unexpected adversity can lead to unexpected advantages, providing us with insight and greater self-awareness that can positively change our habits, direct our course of action, and help speed our progression on the covenant path.

The Savior Himself promised, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."¹⁸

One day early in our marriage, we had a terrible morning in which nothing went right. I broke the pipes under the kitchen sink. I crashed the car into a pole on the way to the hardware store. I lost the keys while at the store. And then I scared my wife when she didn't hear me come home from the hardware store. In my twenty-three-year-old underdeveloped man brain, I thought that jumping out from behind a corner to surprise her would lighten the mood of a stressful day and would be funny. It wasn't. She collapsed to the ground crying. And I wanted to join her.

To my wife's credit, she suggested instead that we kneel and say a prayer. As we did, a measure of peace began to return. After the prayer we both had the impression that we should go to the temple. So in our mangled little car, we drove to the Provo Utah Temple for what was one of the most spiritually edifying and emotionally healing sealing sessions I had ever experienced. The difficulty of the day and the potency of our problems seemed to fade and were replaced with peace, assurance, and hope.

Our sense of adversity is closely tied to our perception of the degree to which our *experiences align with our expectations*. One way to "think celestial"¹⁹ about the future is to try to replace expectations with hopes. It has been said that "expectations are premeditated resentments,"²⁰ but hopes entail a future-oriented sense of gratitude. While hopes lead to grateful yearning and proactive flexibility, expectations are often associated with discontented entitlement and rigid resistance. While hopes are centered in God and eternal promises, expectations are based on people and circumstances. While hopes are tied to an eternal identity, expectations are tied to mortal roles and identities.²¹

Hopes

- Grateful yearning
- Proactive flexibility
- Centered in God and eternal promises
- Tied to an eternal identity

Expectations

- Discontented entitlement
- Rigid resistance
- Based on people and circumstances
- Tied to a mortal role or identity

By seeing our lives and the adversity we face through this lens of hope, we are more able to anticipate and accept adversity as a vital, meaningful part of the journey, which will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Cleave unto Christ and Covenants

Third, and most importantly, decide to cleave to Christ and to the covenants He makes possible. In contrast to Cliff Young’s inexperienced road crew, Jesus Christ has been leading and empowering souls to successfully complete this mortal race for a very long time. When the scriptures say He is “mighty to save,”²² it means He is very, very good at it. In a way that we don’t fully understand, through the process of His Atonement the Savior generated an infinite supply of spiritual power. The covenant path is lined with this power in a degree and intensity that is not found anywhere else.²³

Elder Dale G. Renlund taught, “Multiple covenants draw us closer to Christ and connect us more strongly to Him. Through these covenants, we have greater access to His power.”²⁴ We have also been taught that we can be endowed with this Christ-centered covenant power through the temple.²⁵ I learned this lesson in a very compelling way during one of the most difficult periods of my life when I, like some of my students, felt weary and totally overwhelmed.

When I began my PhD in organizational behavior at the University of Washington twenty years ago, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. The stack of academic articles we were assigned to read each week seemed to be written in a language I didn’t understand, and then there was pressure to try to sound smart in discussing these articles

with professors and other doctoral students. During that first year I often felt like I had no idea what anyone was talking about. Other doctoral students in my class were working seven days a week and drinking coffee so they could read long into the night. Though I was working harder than I ever had in my life, I worried that I couldn’t keep up. Though I was praying for help and guidance, I started to feel a crushing sense of inadequacy and quiet desperation that lasted for months.

“I can’t do this,” I said to Cathy. “I can’t keep up. This is way harder than I thought it would be.”

Around the time that these self-doubts and my weariness were at a peak, I had an impression that said, “I can help you if you spend more time with me.”

I felt that the best way to spend more time with Him—with the Lord—was in His house. Initially I pushed these feelings away because it seemed that adding frequent temple trips to my busy schedule was impossible; time was the critical resource I thought I didn’t have. But I knew that what I was currently doing wasn’t working, and I felt assurance that blessings would follow if I tried to fulfill my covenants to put the Lord and His work first. So I made a personal commitment to attend the temple several times a month.

As I began spending more time in the temple, things started to change significantly. My intense fears about my ability and the future began to melt away. The peace I felt in the temple began to spill into other areas of my life. I started to see my path more clearly and to feel hope. In gentle ways, like Lehi’s family, I felt as if I were being led in a more direct course through my graduate school wilderness.

While most of the time this added strength manifested itself in subtle ways, there were some blessings that were very obvious. One huge blessing was a dissertation sample that fell miraculously into my lap.

When I had told my dissertation advisor I wanted to study the role of humility in leadership, he said, “That’s fine, Brad, but I have no idea where you’d find a real-life sample to gather data about that.”

However, a couple of weeks later he called me into his office and, with a confused look on his

face, said, “Brad, this has never happened to me before. Yesterday a local leadership coach contacted me and said he was interested in having a scholar examine his approach to leadership training. He said that his main goal was to teach leaders to embrace humility.”

My advisor, being a very well-known scholar and an agnostic, looked at me and said, “Brad, what’s going on? This doesn’t just happen.”

Then he kind of squinted, pointed at me, and said, “Have you been . . . praying?”

It was rather humorous to see him try to make sense of this miraculous provision of a sample, which was a huge tender mercy for a struggling doctoral student. This sample formed the foundation of the research I have been doing for fifteen years. Despite my slow start in my PhD program, I finished one year ahead of the rest of my class, and *I know* I could not have done this without the added strength that comes through Christ and temple covenants.

Regarding attending the temple, President Nelson recently taught in general conference:

*Nothing will protect you more as you encounter the world’s mists of darkness. Nothing will bolster your testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement or help you understand God’s magnificent plan more. Nothing will soothe your spirit more during times of pain. Nothing will open the heavens more. Nothing!*²⁶

I know that this is true.

Cleaving to Christ and covenants, especially through seeking Him in His holy house, will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Endure to the End

Fourth, decide that you will *never, ever give up*, that you will endure to the end.

When asked about his strategy for the race, Cliff Young simply said it was “to run to the finish line.”²⁷ He told his crew that if he began this race, there was no way he was going to stop until he reached the end.²⁸

Taking steps—one foot in front of the other, over and over—in a race seems rather simple and repetitive, yet these steps accrue across long distances and lead to impressive and inspiring

accomplishments, such as those of Cliff Young. Similarly, making continual spiritual progress in our mortal marathon happens through simple and repeatable steps that include heartfelt prayer, scripture study, joyful repentance, service, and renewing and striving to live covenants. And in contrast to the physical steps that are *energy depleting*, these spiritual steps or habits are *energy renewing*. Any one of these steps enacted in isolation results in spiritual momentum. But when we combine all these steps together, our strength and our momentum really begin to build, and we begin *to love the race*. We gain growing clarity and even certainty that because of Christ we can successfully reach the celestial finish line.²⁹

These sanctifying steps and holy habits help us endure or survive spiritually and represent the individual work President Nelson has pled for us to do in order to have the Spirit with us in our daily lives.³⁰ The word for *spirit* comes from the Latin word *spirare*, which means “to breathe.”³¹ Just as runners are able to increase their lung capacity over time to enhance their physical endurance, in effect, President Nelson is asking us to get ourselves in spiritual shape for what is coming by increasing our spiritual lung capacity to receive the divine breath of the Spirit in a daily, ongoing way. As we do so, we will be less winded and weary on our journey. Taking the Spirit as our guide is also vital for enduring to the end because it enables us to have the oil in our lamps to see and realign with the path in a world that is ever darkening prior to the coming of the Bridegroom.³²

Resolving to endure to the end by daily embracing the renewing power of the gospel’s sanctifying steps that invite the Spirit’s daily companionship will help us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Conclusion

In closing, I bear witness that because of Jesus Christ we can not only complete this mortal marathon but can do so with magnificent success: with joy, with meaning, with growth, and with service to others. Resolutely making the decision in our own hearts to repent and realign regularly, to anticipate and accept the role of adversity, to

cleave to Christ and covenants, and to endure to the end will yoke us to Christ in a relationship of continual renewal. Regardless of perceived disadvantages, limited experience, past mistakes, people we have trusted who have let us down, or the fact that life hasn't been going well lately, we can all successfully make it because of Jesus Christ, for we are promised that those who center their hope on Him "shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."³³ And so "let us run with patience [and with Jesus] the race that is set before us" and let Him, who is "the author and finisher of our faith,"³⁴ help and renew us every step of the way. I testify that He lives. I testify that He loves each and every one of us. And I testify that this is His work. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. Robert D. Hales, "To the Aaronic Priesthood: Preparing for the Decade of Decision," *Ensign*, May 2007.
2. See Julietta Jameson, *Cliffy: The Cliff Young Story* (Melbourne, Australia: Text Publishing, 2013).
3. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 60.
4. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 57. This conversation is inferred from documentation that organizers John Toleman and Martin Noonan originally viewed Cliff as "some old geriatric" (p. 57) who could cause grief and ruin the whole event by dying during the race. Noonan even arranged a time to do a test run alongside Cliff Young on a hilly course. At sixty-one, Cliff easily kept up with twenty-seven-year-old Noonan, talking the whole time (see p. 57).
5. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 89.
6. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 100–101.
7. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 60, 87, 100.
8. See Jameson, *Cliffy*; Terrell Johnson, "Cliff Young Gave Us a Whole New Way to Run Long Distances," *Half Marathoner*, 10 October 2023 (reposted from 2021), www.thehalfmarathoner.com/p/cliff-young-gave-us-a-whole-new-way; Genevieve Carlton, "The Incredible Story of Cliff Young, the Potato Farmer Who Miraculously Won a 544-Mile Marathon at Age 61," *All That's Interesting*, 2 July 2023 (updated 23 February 2024, edited by Maggie Donahue), allthatsinteresting.com/cliff-young.
9. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 96.
10. See Jameson, *Cliffy*, 103, 105.
11. Jameson, *Cliffy*, 106–12.
12. Hebrews 12:1.
13. Russell M. Nelson, "We Can Do Better and Be Better," *Ensign*, May 2019; emphasis added; see 2 Nephi 9:23; Mosiah 4:6; 3 Nephi 9:22; 27:19. President Nelson has taught us that repentance is a joyful daily habit because repentance entails recentering our lives on Jesus Christ, who is the source of our joy (see Nelson, "Joy and Spiritual Survival," *Ensign*, November 2016).
14. Weatherford T. Clayton, "Rock of Our Redeemer," BYU devotional address, 14 March 2017. See also Thomas S. Monson, "Choices," *Ensign*, May 2016; Dale G. Renlund, "Repentance: A Joyful Choice," *Ensign*, November 2016.
15. Neal A. Maxwell, "Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ," *Ensign*, November 1997. Another vital lesson learned from this experience reflects what Jared M. Halverson, my friend and mentor, has taught: "Just like those who lost their taste while sick with COVID still needed to eat, our spirits still need continual nourishment—even during times when the fruit is harder to taste" (personal correspondence).
16. Neil L. Andersen, "Spiritually Defining Memories," *Ensign*, May 2020.
17. When Nephi struggled with thoughts about his own weaknesses and fallen condition, he reviewed "the things of [his] soul" (2 Nephi 4:15)—his spiritually defining memories—to help him reawaken his hope and faith in Christ. See 2 Nephi 4:15–35.
18. John 16:33; emphasis added. Realizing that deep, soul-level refinement requires deep, soul-level heat helps us not to think it strange that fiery trials will come along to test us (see 1 Peter 4:12). Put another way:

No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. . . . All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, . . . and it is

through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire.

[Orson F. Whitney; quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 98]

19. Russell M. Nelson, “Think Celestial!” *Liahona*, November 2023. President Nelson taught:

*When life or loved ones let you down, think celestial!
When someone dies prematurely, think celestial. . . .
When the pressures of life crowd in upon you, think celestial! . . .*

As you think celestial, your heart will gradually change. . . .

As you think celestial, you will view trials and opposition in a new light. . . .

As you think celestial, your faith will increase.
[Nelson, “Think Celestial!”]

20. Saying quoted in Holly Hudson, “Managing Unrealistic Expectations,” *Life Skills, YA Weekly*, Week 2, April 2021, churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ya-weekly/2021/04/managing-unrealistic-expectations. See also Neil Strauss, *The Truth: An Uncomfortable Book About Relationships* (New York: Dey Street Books, 2015), 255: “Unspoken expectations are premeditated resentments.”

21. For example, Nephi saw his journey through the lens of hope while Laman and Lemuel viewed it through the lens of expectation. Their lenses fundamentally changed their perceptions about the adversity they experienced on their journey through the wilderness. Nephi’s lens of hope enabled him to see the Lord’s blessings and tender mercies while Laman and Lemuel saw only the difficulty (see 1 Nephi 17:2–3, 20–21). As another example, Joseph of Egypt’s life went about as wrong as life could go. It is safe to assume that he did not expect to be sold into slavery and then wrongfully imprisoned during his decade of decision. Yet he continued to move forward in hope. He did the best he could with his circumstances, he stayed faithful to God, and he was rewarded

with extraordinary blessings (see Genesis 37:20–27; see also chapters 39–41).

22. For example, Isaiah 63:1; 2 Nephi 31:19. See also Zephaniah 3:17.

23. We are taught that as opposition increases in the latter days, the intensity of power flowing from the Savior along the covenant path will increase to compensate for the growing darkness (see Neil L. Andersen, “A Compensatory Spiritual Power for the Righteous,” BYU devotional address, 18 August 2015).

24. Dale G. Renlund, “The Powerful, Virtuous Cycle of the Doctrine of Christ,” *Liahona*, May 2024. See also Renlund, “Stronger and Closer Connection to God Through Multiple Covenants,” BYU devotional address, 5 March 2024.

25. See Anthony Sweat, “We Need An Endowment,” BYU devotional address, 5 April 2022.

26. Russell M. Nelson, “Rejoice in the Gift of Priesthood Keys,” *Liahona*, May 2024; emphasis in original.

27. Paddy Upton, “Slow and Steady Wins the Race,” *Sports Coaching*, 27 January 2020, paddyupton.com/2020/01/27/slow-and-steady-wins-the-race.

28. Cliff Young had firm resolve. On the first night of the race, he fell and injured his shoulder to the point that he couldn’t lift his arm to put on a rain jacket. When this happened, he still had more than 400 miles to run—yet he stayed in the race (see Jameson, *Cliffy*, 101–2, 111, 151).

29. See Doctrine and Covenants 88:3–4.

30. See Russell M. Nelson, “Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2018.

31. This insight was brought to my attention by my friend and mentor Barry Rellaford; see Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “spirit” (n.), etymonline.com/word/spirit.

32. See Doctrine and Covenants 45:56–57; see also Matthew 25:1–13.

33. Isaiah 40:31; see footnote a.

34. Hebrews 12:2.