

“The Royal Road to Happiness”

J. RICHARD CLARKE

I am honored to be here, but I must confess that it does not get any easier. I hope that all of you will remember as you attend Brigham Young University that your parents have been undergoing a very liberal education in how to be parents. I hope too that as you gain greater knowledge you gain some compassion for the process of that liberal education which they have been experiencing.

Not too long ago I read a speech by Max Isaacson. He talked about his frustration as a parent in this educational process. He said that someone has reported that

*by the time the average person dies, he has spent two years of his life in the bathroom, three years in the car, and five years eating. That describes my teen-age son perfectly and he isn't even seventeen yet. . . . He says you should see his bedroom. It is a real disaster area. My son is an accident looking for a place to happen. He spends so much time in the family car that his rear end ought to be checked every five thousand miles. His friends are really something, too. His friends have tee-peed our yard so many times that we haven't had to buy toilet paper for over a year. [Max D. Isaacson, “After You Get Where You're Going, Where Will You Be?” in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 44, no. 7 (January 15, 1978): 204]*

I love BYU and I am proud of you. I am proud to be identified and associated with this great University. I am proud of the work that you do around the world and the impact that you are making on so many lives in so many places. I hope that each of you appreciates that you are here at this University when there are many other members of the Church throughout the world who are not able, nor will they be able, to attend here. Perhaps most of them will never even be able to see BYU. So I hope that you appreciate that this is a great blessing and an opportunity.

Many people are concerned about you. They have great faith in you, but they are also very concerned that you represent yourselves well in the years to come. I think about you when I remember a story about Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. He was on a train and, when the conductor came by to pick up his ticket, he started to rustle through his coat and could not find it. Recognizing who he was, the

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conductor thought that he would make it a little easier for him, and he said, "Well, I'm sure, Mr. Holmes, that you'll be able to find your ticket when you return home. I'm certainly sure that the Pennsylvania Railroad can get by without that ticket until you find it. Why don't you just mail it to us?"

"Young man, you don't understand at all," he said. "The problem is not where is my ticket; it's where am I going?"

Each of us has a challenge to identify where he or she is going, and those who attend Brigham Young University have a great opportunity to prepare themselves well for the journey. This is a unique University, perhaps the most unique in all the world. It sees itself and its mission in a very broad educational perspective, and others share this view. President Smith of Swarthmore College once wrote,

We have no intention of relinquishing our academic excellence. . . . But it is not enough for us to be training ground for scholars. It is not enough to develop intellect, for intellect by itself is essentially amoral, capable of evil as well as good. We must develop the character which makes intellect constructive, and the personality which makes it effective. [Quotes by Robert P. Lisensky, "Competence and Conscience," in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 34, no. 12 (April 1, 1968): 383]

Someone has said that education is the process of leading an individual to full maturity. We believe that, with the balance of the educational curricula here, this is being accomplished. Part of the reason is the wonderful gathering place that this is—the bringing together of youth from all over the world who have the same ideals and the same commitment to education—and the dedicated faculty who could, I am sure, receive elsewhere many more times the income they receive here but who are dedicated to preparing a unique people for their world mission.

We are indebted to all those who have attended here who have touched our lives. I think back with great pride to the friends that I made here, as well as to the faculty members, and the contribution they made to enrich my life. Granville Kleiser once said, "Nothing touches the soul but leaves its impress and thus, little by little, we are fashioned into the image of all we have seen and heard, known and mediated; and if we learn to live with all that is fairest and purest and best, the love of it all will in the end become our very life" (quoted from Bishop Clarke's personal file).

I am proud of President Oaks. I am proud of him for many reasons, but especially because he stands up and is counted on issues that are important to the future of this University—important in maintaining our integrity, which is based upon sound principles of freedom and election, and he is known throughout the country for the contribution he is making as someone who is willing to stand firm in defense of these principles, as are other members of the faculty who teach these correct principles.

You recall from the Book of Abraham that when the gods were preparing the plan for the spirit children to come forward and continue their education they said,

We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; . . . and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever. [Abraham 3:25–26]

We are here today because we were faithful in our first estate. We learned to keep the laws that magnified us for future opportunity. We were indeed added upon and have entered our second estate with a successful record of performance. Just as our advance from high school to university has shown us, the pace of the second estate is quicker than that of the first. We

are learning to achieve the promised glories and we must, to quote the prophet, “lengthen our strides.” Now that we have the desires of the flesh to subdue, we must once again master the laws that bring us joy in this life and the glories of eternity. Once again, we must be proven in all things.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that “happiness is the object and design of our existence” (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938], p. 255). Much has been said about the pursuit of happiness, but not quite so much about the happiness of pursuit. That has a lot of applications. I see some girls’ face lighting up—that is not exactly what I had in mind. Rather, we must vigorously pursue that which enlarges our vision. We must, in fact, get on the offensive. Phillips Brooks once wrote, “Bad will be the day for every man when he becomes absolutely contented with the life that he is living, with the thoughts that he is thinking, with the deeds that he is doing; when there is not forever beating at the door of his soul some great desire to do something larger” (quoted from Bishop Clarke’s personal file). To the Philippians Paul said,

This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

I press toward the mark. . . . [Philippians 3:13–14]

If happiness is the object and design of our existence, it seems to me that we must set some criteria for achieving it. One of the great souls of this generation was a philosopher by the name of William George Jordan, whose son, David Starr Jordan, was formerly president of the Stanford University. He wrote an impressive essay which he titled “The Royal Road to Happiness” and in which he said,

*There is a royal road to happiness; it lies in Consecration, Concentration, Conscience, and Conquest. Consecration is a dedicating the individual life to the service of others, to some noble mission, to realize some unselfish ideal. Concentration makes the individual life simpler and deeper. It cuts away the shams and the pretenses of modern living and limits life to its truest essentials. Worry, fear, useless regret—all the great wastes that sap mental, moral or physical energy must be sacrificed, or the individual needlessly destroys half the possibilities of living. Conscience, as the mentor, the guide and compass of every act, leads ever to Happiness. When the individual can stay alone with his conscience and get its approval, without using force or specious logic, then he begins to know what real Happiness is. Conquest is the overcoming of an evil habit, the rising superior to opposition and attack, the spiritual exaltation that comes from resisting the invasion of the groveling material side of life. [William George Jordan, *The Majesty of Calmness* (Old Tappan, N.J.: F.H. Revell, n.d.), pp. 51–53]*

It is not possible, in the time I have, to elaborate on each of these points in the formula. I leave it up to you to fill in some of the blanks about which you perhaps might be stimulated to think, but I would like to just touch briefly on each one.

First, *consecration*. As you know, President Kimball has indicated that probably the number one problem we all face in our lives is that of selfishness. The happiest people I know are those who have developed an acute sensitivity to the feelings and needs of other people. I think that President Kimball is a personification of those great impulses.

Karl Menninger, the psychologist, was once asked by a lady, “If you knew for a certainty that you were going to have a nervous breakdown, what would you do?”

He said, “I would close my house; I would move over onto the other side of the tracks; I would knock on doors until I had an opportunity to meet somebody who had more

problems than I did; and then I'd spend my time helping them solve those problems." (Quoted from Bishop Clarke's personal file.)

We read about bread being cast upon the water. There is a great multiplier effect in people's willingness to give of themselves that others might be blessed. In 1978 Brother Jeff Holland spoke to the faculty here and referred to an interesting account that I would like to share. It has to do with a lovely mother in the nineteenth-century frontier of Kentucky. Life was pretty rough for Sally Bush Johnston. She was left a widow with three children. She was getting older before she wanted to, and certainly hers was a much more difficult existence than she had ever imagined. Then she saw a chance for an easier life when an old friend of hers, a suitor that she had known before she married and who was now a widower, came courting. He was dressed in a fine suit and a new pair of boots. He spoke of prosperity, of farming. He spoke of servants and of a way of life that seemed to be an improvement over that which she was experiencing. So she went with him.

When she got there, she found the "prosperous" farm to be a ramshackle, rundown farm covered with wild blackberry bushes and sumac. The house was a floorless hut—a log cabin, in fact, without windows. The only evidence of servants was two small children, a boy and a girl.

Her first thought was an obvious one: "I can't stay. I've got to return." She knew that she had been duped. But as she turned to leave, she looked at the children, especially the younger—a boy whose thin face and melancholy gaze made upon her soul an impression as deep as it was instantaneous. At that moment a great spirit subdued her disappointment. She slipped off her sweater and began to straighten and clean the house. In determined words which she felt deeply within her, she said quietly, "I'll stay for the sake of this boy."

A neighbor was to write sometime later, "Oh, Sally Bush, what a treasure trembled in the balance that day." But Sally Bush could not have known that her stepson, this young boy whose melancholy eyes had penetrated her heart, was to become the president of these United States, states remaining "united" through a tragic civil war which would claim his life among the numbered dead. Sally Bush Lincoln, discouraged and tired and disappointed, looked into the eyes of a ten-year-old boy and said, "I'll stay for the sake of this boy."

In another place and another time, a wealthy family in England, spending the weekend with another wealthy family, had a near-tragic occurrence. Their son, playing with the children, fell into a swimming pool and was in the process of drowning when the screams of the children attracted the attention of a gardener who came, plunged into the pool, and saved the boy.

The boy's name was Winston Churchill. His parents, deeply gratified, attempted to reward the gardener who had saved their son. At first he hesitated, but as they insisted he said, "I have a son whose lifetime dream is to be a doctor, and I don't know how we can provide that opportunity for him."

Mr. Churchill said, "We will see him through and pay for his education."

Later on, when Winston became prime minister of Great Britain, he contracted a severe case of pneumonia. The king sent word out that they wanted the finest physician they could find to attend him. Sir Alexander Fleming, the developer of penicillin, was called and selected to care for the prime minister; he was the son of the gardener. After he was healed, Churchill was to say: "Rarely has one man owed his life twice to the same person." (*Bits and Pieces*, August 1979.)

Many people, I suppose, fantasize that if they were blessed with great wealth they would generously share with those who are in need. That is not probable unless they have

already developed a generous spirit and give of themselves to those with whom they serve while living from day to day.

Concentration. The ability to concentrate is really a mark of genius, I believe. Certainly we ought to focus our lives on the essentials. We ought to set high goals and meet high standards of performance. We ought to live with anticipation.

One of the sweetest people I know is lovely Margaret Wells, who has been widowed for over forty-five years, the wife of John Wells who was formerly second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric. We had the privilege of picking her up at one time to take her to a social activity for the General Authorities and their wives. At that time she was eighty-four years old, and we were impressed at how bouncy she was and what a marvelous, positive attitude she had. As we talked about it she said, "I never go to bed at night until I can think of at least one good reason for waking up in the morning, at least one important job that I have to do. Even if it's only one thing, I wake up with anticipation. I look forward to getting up. If I waited until morning to plan my work, I'm afraid I'd just lie there and not put forth much effort."

I would suggest, young brothers and sisters, that you learn to wait to worry. Just about every time that you get some bad news, chances are that it has either already happened and you can not do anything about it or else it was not worth worrying about in the first place. Psychologists have said that probably fourteen percent of all the bad news we initially hear is even worth the worry at all. I think that we would do well to wait to worry.

I am impressed with how important attitude is in our lives. No matter how old we are or how educated we are, we are still mightily affected, both positively and negatively, by what we allow our attitude to be. I remember reading of a Russian psychologist who told the story of a Russian railway worker who worked

with refrigerator cars. One day he got himself locked inside of a refrigerator car. Of course, understanding as he did what usually happens, he began to prepare himself to freeze to death. As he felt his body becoming numb, he recorded the story of his approaching death on the walls of the refrigerator car. This he scribbled: "I'm becoming colder. . . . Still colder now. . . . Nothing to do but wait. . . . I am slowly freezing to death. . . . Half asleep now, I can hardly write. . . . [And finally,] these may be my last words."

And they were. He died; and yet, when they came and opened the car, they found that at no time was it ever colder than 56 degrees. The refrigeration apparatus had not worked; it was malfunctioning. This man was the victim of his own illusion. All his conclusions were wrong. He knew about refrigeration; he knew what happened. He just failed to understand that, in this particular case, the refrigeration apparatus was not working. The mind has great power and produces magical effects on our bodies.

Conscience is our contact with the Spirit. Spiritual power is the greatest form of energy that I know. Spiritual power alone can sustain us in a time of crisis. Ethics are not enough. Spiritual power comes from God and is administered and controlled upon principles of righteousness. Our goal, as Peter advises us, is to be "partakers of the divine nature of Christ," and one way is by "escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Jesus warned about those who might destroy our bodies but said that the real problem is he who can destroy both body and spirit. The adversary has ever been with us to try to tempt us and to destroy our lives and to convince us of incorrect and unsound and untrue principles that so often take us off course.

Every time I think of the processes of withstanding the adversary, I thrill as I remember the encounter which Moses had as recorded in

the first chapter of Moses. As you remember, he had just completed a marvelous spiritual experience. It had taken much out of him physically, but it had built him up tremendously and deeply in the spirit. The scripture says, in verses twelve, thirteen, and sixteen of the first chapter:

Satan came tempting him saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.

And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? . . .

Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not; for God said unto me: Thou art after the similitude of my Only Begotten.

So many times, if we would simply run those words through our minds: "Satan, why should we worship you? Where is your glory? I am a son of God created in the image and likeness of Him who saved the world," we could banish his influence from our lives. I am impressed by the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants where it says in the twenty-second verse of Jesus, "He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them."

In one of the Sunday programs of Richard L. Evans, he quoted Heber J. Grant, former President of the Church, who said:

We have no right to go near temptation, or in fact to do or say a thing that we cannot honestly ask the blessings of the Lord upon, neither to visit any place where we would be ashamed to take our sister or sweetheart. The good spirit will not go with us on the devil's ground, and if we are standing alone upon the ground belonging to the adversary of men's souls, he may have the power to trip us up and destroy us. . . . Virtue is more valuable than life. Never allow yourself to go out of curiosity to see any of the undercrust in this world. We can't handle dirty things and keep our hands clean. [Bruce B.

Clark, Richard Evans' Quote Book (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971), p. 201]

Another great soul was the mother of John and Charles Wesley. In counseling them she said, "Would you judge the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure? Take this rule: . . . Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your spirit, obscures your sense of God, takes off your relish for spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may seem in itself." (Quoted from Bishop Clarke's personal file.)

A number of years ago I was attending a management training seminar in New York, and they had a coffee break where everyone in the room left but the instructor and myself. In conversation with him I inquired, "Don't you drink coffee?"

"No," he said.

"Well, that's interesting," I said. "You'd better be careful, or they'll be accusing you of being a Mormon."

"No, I'm a Baptist; but," he said, "years ago I made a decision about my life, and it was that I will do nothing which will take away from me my freedom. And therefore, as of that time, I quit smoking, drinking, and taking any kind of intoxicants or anything that's addictive."

I thought, "What a marvelous reason to abstain from anything that might be of harm to us! It takes away our freedom."

Another trainer of salesmen, Zig Zeigler, wrote in his book *See You at the Top*:

*To build a healthy self-image, there are some things you must avoid. Pornography is the primary one. Literally everything that goes into your mind has an effect and is permanently recorded. It either builds and prepares you for the future or it tears down and reduces your accomplishment possibilities for the future. Psychologists say that three viewings of *Deep Throat*, *The Last Tango in Paris*, *The Exorcist*, or any of the "X-rated" films or*

television programs have the same psychological, emotional, destructive impact on your minds as one physical experience. The people who have seen these "shows" are in agreement; they were sexually stimulated and viewed themselves with less respect. The reason is simple. These films or programs present mankind at its worst and when you see your fellow man degraded, you, in effect, see yourself degraded. It is impossible to view mankind at its worst and not feel that your own value has diminished and you can neither be nor do any better than you think you can or are. Ironically most X-rated films are advertised as "adult" entertainment for "mature" audiences. Most psychologists agree that they are juvenile entertainment for immature and insecure audiences. [Quoted from Bishop Clarke's personal file]

What is the harmful effect of sin upon the soul? Sin places us in bondage. Sin enslaves the sinner by making him love sinful things. Karl Menninger says:

The wrongness of the sinful act lies not merely in its nonconformity, its departure from the accepted, appropriate way of behavior, but in an implicitly aggressive quality—a ruthlessness, a hurting, a breaking away from God and from the rest of humanity, a partial alienation, or act of rebellion.

*Standing on one's head is nonconforming, and it is neither aesthetic nor congenial behavior nor expressive of a moral ideal, but it is not likely to be considered sinful. Sin has a willful, defiant, or disloyal quality; someone is defied or offended or hurt. The willful disregard or sacrifice of the welfare of others for the welfare or satisfaction of the self is an essential quality of the concept of sin. . . . And sin is thus, at heart, a refusal of the love of others. [Karl Menninger, *Whatever became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1973), p. 19]*

Finally, *conquest*. Habits are an enemy to progress. Confucius said that the nature of men is always the same; it is their habits that

separate them. The power to change, the power to banish the desire for evil practices or the fierceness from our hearts comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. We must learn as we read and reread the thirty-sixth chapter of Alma that we must experience a godly sorrow if we are to be forgiven of the sins which we would like blotted from our memory and from our heart. We must come to terms with the Lord's anointed, our bishops, and through proper confession obtain a full and lasting forgiveness.

I was interested in the psychologist's point of view of the need for confession. He said, "Confession must include a recognition of the aggression of the sins committed. 'So long as a person lives under the shadow of real, unacknowledged, and unexpiated guilt, . . . he . . . will continue to hate himself and to suffer the inevitable consequences of self-hatred. But the moment he . . . begins to accept his guilt and his sinfulness, the possibility of radical reformation opens up; and . . . a new freedom of self-respect and peace.'" (O. Hobart Mowrer, quoted by Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?*, p. 195.)

So all habits, then, are a challenge. Elder Stapley once said that we are not born into this life with fixed habits any more than we are born with noble character, and that when anybody boasts about their bad habits one can be sure that they are the best he has. The only way we can pay the price is to be motivated to have the blessing that accompanies the change. Remember: If bulls had no horns, anybody could be a matador.

We are so fortunate as members of the Church to understand the great power of redemption. Through the Lord Jesus Christ we can be and are redeemed. We are able to enjoy peace of mind and the beauties of the hope and the fulfillment of lives in harmony with sound and basic principles and values. Is it worth it?

Recently I was reading in the third chapter of Malachi the scripture to which we often refer

as an explanation of the Lord's law of tithing. Malachi continues:

Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?

And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. [In other words, "How come everybody else who doesn't keep these commandments gets along so well?]

[And then the Lord says:] *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.*

And they shall be mine, sayeth the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. [Malachi 3:14–18]

In conclusion, I would bear my testimony, through the words of King Benjamin, that if we would in fact be happy and enjoy the blessings of eternal life we must remember these words: "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 hath spoken it." To this I would add my testimony, humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.