

# *“This Is the Way; and There Is None Other Way”*

ROBERT D. HALES

**M**y brothers and sisters, I come to you this evening with the desire that I can talk to you with plainness. Six years ago, as a new General Authority, I was asked to come to BYU and speak at a fireside in a setting similar to this one. I can remember at that time just looking at the missionaries. We have fifteen hundred here tonight who will be serving all over the world, and I want to give you my love and the love of the Brethren for the great example of you elders and sisters who will soon go out from here.

About a week before that fireside six years ago I received a call from a young lady at BYU who asked where my typed talk was, and I, being new at this, said, “Well, I think that I’ll just come down and talk at the fireside. I would prefer not to have a prepared talk. That isn’t my style.”

My secretary, Sister Hansen, came to me just a few days before the date and said, “Elder Hales, you should have a talk. You really shouldn’t go down there without a talk.”

I said, “Well, if you think so.”

I received another call from the university, so I prepared a talk and decided that I would not worry about it anymore. Then they called and asked if my talk was ready. I said, “I’ve prepared a talk, but what I’d really like to do

when I come down is to talk informally, maybe just sit on a table and talk to the students.”

There was no reply on the phone. We came to the Marriott Center and went into the Cougar Club for our punch and cookies. I met the people who were there and thought, “My, isn’t this a nice group?” It was a sizable group, and I thought it was the fireside. We finished our punch and cookies, and I said a few words to those in attendance. It was the easiest fireside I’d ever had!

Then they led me through one corridor downstairs, past several doors, and through the entrance, and I faced what is affectionately called the arena—feeling what the Christians must have felt in similar circumstances. The young lady who had coordinated my visit walked beside me and, with a twinkle in her eye, asked, “Elder Hales, do you still want the table?”

I learned a lesson from that. I asked myself, “How did I get myself into this situation?” And that’s going to be the subject I want to

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talk to you about tonight. I'm not here to talk about the gospel of Jesus Christ in terms of the principles as though you do not know who you are. I know you know who you are, but I'm also aware that some of you have forgotten. Sometimes you make a few mistakes because you don't remember who you are. So this evening, despite the thousands assembled and the ever-present media, I want to talk to you informally—one to one—and let you judge for yourself. Have you forgotten who you are? And are you acting accordingly?

In this regard I'd like to ask the question, How do you feel the Lord would have you live? Please keep that one question in your mind as we talk. I haven't come to try to tell you how to live, but rather to have you question yourself. I do not want to give you external things; I want internal things to happen this evening. You are Latter-day Saints. You are sons and daughters of God. You are of an eternal nature. You know the mysteries of God: where you came from, why you are here, and where you're going. I needn't go over the details of that.

But, I do want to ask you one other question: "When you are in the company of others, are you their friend?" and I'm going to talk a little bit tonight about what a friend is. As we look at this I'd like to ask you, "With the knowledge you have, do you realize that you are different from any other people in the whole world?"

At the conclusion of this evening, I hope it will not be as it was for Alma and Amulek as Alma described in his fourteenth chapter.

*After he had made an end of speaking unto the people many of them did believe on his words, and began to repent, and to search the scriptures.*

*But the more part of them were desirous that they might destroy Alma and Amulek; for they were angry with Alma, because of the plainness of his words. [Alma 14:1–2]*

I want to talk plainly with you, and at the end of this evening would hope you will believe in my words and the words of the prophets which I am going to speak to you. I want you to know of my love and the love and concern of the Brethren for you. You will not realize your potential without prayer, study, obedience, and diligence. We'll also talk about that this evening.

### **Your Score Card**

Perhaps we can be helped by a story about Johnny Miller, who recently won \$500,000 in a one-million-dollar golf tournament, the first of its kind in the world. Several years ago he came to speak to the missionaries and youth in London. The year before that he was the British Open champion. He came as a champion; he spoke as a champion.

The next year Johnny Miller came to speak to us again. He had missed the cut on the second round of the tournament, and the headlines in the London papers and throughout the world revealed that the champion had not made it to the finals. Now he faced another group of missionaries and young people, and he had a hard time deciding whether he could make it. Like the champion he is, he decided to come. He stood and, gripping the sides of the podium, trembled all over. The first words he said were of great courage: "I don't know why you feel you can go through life without a score card." And then he proceeded to give his testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to talk about our score cards of life.

Many of you here tonight have a score card. It is the BYU Code of Honor. I'd like to review it with you to remind you once again who you are and that you should act accordingly.

First of all, when you came to this institution, you agreed that you were desirous to observe the following Code of Honor, and you made a contract saying that you would abide by these rules. Let's review them quickly.

First, you said you would abide by the standards of Christian living taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which means to love one another, to help one another. That Christian living is summarized by my sweetheart, my dear Mary, in teaching our family—her husband and her two boys—with a simple phrase, “Thee lift me, and I’ll lift thee, and we’ll ascend together.” I ask you this evening, “Are you lifting one another? Are you ascending? When people are down, do you pick them up?”

Second, be honest in all behavior.

Third, respect personal rights. I might say that means both mind and body and to be courteous and to remember who you are.

Fourth, respect personal property.

Fifth, obey, honor, and sustain the law.

Sixth, avoid drug abuse.

Seventh, comply with all college and university regulations.

Eighth, obey the Word of Wisdom.

Ninth, live the law of chastity. The reason you learn to live that law here is to prepare you to live the law of fidelity after marriage. It is the same law; it is the same principle. If you will learn it here, you will have eternal families and return to the presence of God the Father. Would you listen to the voice within you when it comes to living the law of chastity? You don’t need to be given a lot of details of what is proper in the dating relationship. But I can tell you this: if you have any doubts or questions in your mind of what the Lord expects of you, or if you are asking those kinds of questions, you probably already have your answer.

I can give you a very simple illustration on the law of chastity. Write down the word *compassion*. Compassion is of the Lord; it’s service given and rendered; it’s vicariously feeling the hurt and the suffering, the loneliness, the depression of others. When you draw a line down the word *compassion* so that *passion* is shown, remember that you will cross the line from compassion to passion when you touch

each other improperly, and you will know when you cross that line.

Passion is Satan’s way of deceiving us into crossing that line and touching someone improperly. You can also draw another line and you’ll see c-o-m-p, companion. Stay true to your companion—for those of you who are going into the mission field as elders and sisters—and you will not err. And those of us who have been married for time and all eternity, if we will listen to our companions, we will remain true and faithful. Remember that observing the law of chastity depends a great deal on not touching and not engaging in improper actions.

The next requirement of the code is to observe a high standard of taste and decency.

The eleventh, to observe prescribed standards of dress and grooming. Here, once again, ask yourselves, in terms of being dressed with taste and decency and within the prescribed standards, “For what purpose am I dressed this day?” If it is to attract someone else, then you have your answer.

Number twelve, help others fulfill their responsibilities under this code. These codes and ethics are going to remain constant. If I can give you a concept now which you can think about through the remainder of this talk, I think it will help you a great deal.

### **Constancy amid Change**

Thirty years ago, let’s say the Church was placed here, and the world was here [opposite sides of the podium], and there was a very short distance between where the world was and where the Church standards were. The world has gone far afield; it has proceeded way, way out, all the way out of this Marriott Center. We may have a tendency to remember where the world was and where the world is now and see the great gap or disparity and then want the Church to drift along and still keep a similar distance from where the world is. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints and its principles will remain constant in terms of temporal and spiritual and moral things. What we and our children and our grandchildren have to remember is that the Church will remain constant, and the world will keep moving—that gap is going to become wider and wider. The simple concept is true: the world will continue moving; the Church will remain constant. Therefore, be very careful. If you judge your actions and the standards of the Church on the basis of where the world is and where it's going, you will find that you are not where you should be.

### **Antichrist**

Now, to help you with this, I want to talk from the scriptures about antichrist. That's a hard word. It may help you if I give you a couple of examples of what I mean. Basically what I'm asking is this: "How do you identify those around you who appear faithful but will lead you astray?" How does John describe these people? (I also use the Bible dictionary.) *Antichrist* was a word used by the apostle John to describe one who assumes the guise of a Christian but in reality is opposed to Christ. That would be including nonmembers as well as members or priesthood holders. In a broader sense it is anyone or anything that counterfeits the true gospel or plan of salvation. Therefore, it means anyone who will prevent you from obtaining eternal life and who openly or secretly is set in opposition to Jesus Christ. The great antichrist is Lucifer, but he has many assistants, both spirit beings and mortals.

We sometimes think of Peter when he denied Christ, but he didn't deny him as the Savior; he merely denied his association with him because of fear of what he thought was going to happen to him with his peer group. And that's what happens with many of us. We are often afraid when we don't know what is going to happen, and it has always puzzled me that anyone can have more fear of man than of

God. We can learn from the scriptures as John recorded,

*Even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. [1 John 2:18]*

We will have many antichrists among us from within the Church. President Lee used to constantly tell us that the greatest danger to the Church was internal, not external.

The teachings of the prophets are very helpful. We can clearly understand the simple teaching given by Jacob to Sherem. Jacob dealt with Sherem who preached among the people that there would be no Christ. Sherem flattered the people; he was learned. This is true of all such men who take these positions. He had perfect knowledge of the language and the people. He spoke with much power of speech according to the power of the devil. Sherem sought out Jacob. Isn't it interesting how those who are faithful are always sought out? That's the challenge. The adversary wants every one of us in this assembly more than anyone else in the world, and don't ever forget it.

In the book of Job the Lord asked the devil when he came before him, "Where have you been?"

He said, "Going to and fro in the earth" (Job 1:7). Don't ever forget that. Sherem sought out Jacob because he preached the gospel and doctrine of Christ. Sherem told Jacob that no man knoweth what would transpire many hundreds of years hence; no man knoweth such things for he cannot tell or prophesy of things to come. Be careful of those who tell you there is no such thing as prophecy or revelation.

The Lord God poured his Spirit into Jacob, who bore his testimony, and it confounded Sherem. There's a lesson here: when in doubt, bear your testimony.

Jacob said:

*Deniest thou the Christ who shall come? And he said: If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him; but I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be.*

Then Jacob asked a simple question:

*Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yea.*

Jacob testified to him:

*Then ye do not understand them; for they truly testify of Christ. Behold, I say unto you that none of the prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ. . . . It has been made manifest to me, for I have heard and seen; and it also has been made manifest unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost. [Jacob 7:9–12]*

Do you understand what happens when one denies Christ and revelation? It takes away repentance; it takes away forgiveness. It means that once you have made a mistake, you can never come back into fellowship in the Church. There is no hope. Be careful of those around you who would take hope and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ away from you.

Sherem replied to Jacob's testimony—the next thing you'll be asked—"Show me a sign." He wanted a sign "by this power of the Holy Ghost," he said, "in the which you know so much." Jacob replied that he would not tempt God for a sign shown to Sherem. He said, "Thou wilt deny it because thou art of the devil." Nevertheless Jacob appealed to the Lord and said, "Thy will, O Lord, be done, and not mine." As Jacob concluded, the power of the Lord came upon Sherem, and he fell to the earth. He was nourished for many days, and he then wanted to repent. He gathered the people around him with the desire to speak to them before he died. This is what he said:

*He spoke plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them, and confessed the Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, and the ministering of angels.*

*And he spake plainly unto them, that he had been deceived by the power of the devil. And he spake of hell, and of eternity, and of eternal punishment.*

*And he said: I fear lest I have committed the unpardonable sin, for I have lied unto God; for I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they testify of him. And because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be awful; but I confess unto God.*

*And . . . when he had said these words he could say no more, and he gave up the ghost. [Jacob 7:17–20]*

I hope that our testimonies are much like that of Jacob talking to Sherem.

#### **Pilot Error—Loss of Perspective**

I've often wondered why we sometimes lose our eternal perspective. I read a survey by Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, which is called, "the Harvard of the air." They submitted a report to the Federal Aviation Administration, and in 1980 it was recorded in the *Stars and Stripes* so that the servicemen could learn from the results. The Embry-Riddle people did studies on seven hundred airplane accidents involving small private airplanes as well as large commercial ones. In 95 percent of the cases the accidents involving these aircraft had nothing to do with equipment failure or with lack of proper training and skills. Rather, they were caused by pilot error.

The accidents caused by pilot error were divided into five categories. If you can understand these, then you can understand what can happen in your life. The first, invulnerability. The pilot, the young man or woman, says, "I can do something dangerous and not get hurt." It's the equivalent of running down the football field to see how close to the sideline you can come and bring up just a little chalk dust.

Invulnerability: “I can go to the disco; I can associate with certain kinds of people; I can listen to certain kinds of music; I can read certain kinds of literature; I can go to certain kinds of movies; I can handle that.” You can’t. Be very careful with invulnerability. In the dating relationship how far do you go? What do you do? Be very careful with invulnerability, and it applies to Elder Hales as well as to everyone else who is here.

Second, macho. This is a pilot saying, “This is going to make a bigger guy of me.” The researchers told in this article of a pilot who buzzed a pickup truck, and the second time he hit the pickup truck and wiped out his airplane and the truck. Fortunately there were no lives lost in this particular accident, but the question was asked, “What would make a guy do something like this?” The idea is, “It’s going to make a bigger person out of me, in my peer group, or in my own eyes.” Not too smart, Embry-Riddle says, because it ends up in losing a life. I think in your case it can end up in your losing eternal life. Be careful of the macho image—that which makes you a bigger person because you challenge authority.

The third is antiauthority—not following the proper flight plans, not learning the proper procedures. This is a trait, Embry-Riddle said, found in people who hate being told what to do. I submit it’s a trait found in people who haven’t grown up. I sometimes wonder if you think, “Wouldn’t it be nice not to be told what to do? Wouldn’t it be nice to be President Kimball and be the President of the Church and not be told what to do?” Think about that one for a minute. He has pressure placed upon him by Jesus Christ. This is His church; He knows what He wants the prophet to do in this dispensation. You may wonder why that prophet gives all his heart, might, mind, and strength, as stated to us as a qualification for the ministry in the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, second verse. There is no halfway commitment. Be careful of

antiauthority because that mixed with the macho image will end up in a lot of heartache in this life.

The fourth, impulsivity—doing something impulsively without thinking. The tendency to do anything to correct a mistake rather than reasoning out the best solution is my definition. Then, once we’ve made a mistake, there’s the cover-up, and one thing leads to another, instead of just going in to see the bishop and saying, “I sinned. I want to get back on that straight and narrow path.”

The last, and probably the most important, when we’re talking of this idea of antichrist, or one who rejects the teachings known to be true and leads others astray, would be defined as follows. I learned this one as a jet fighter pilot. “Out of control,” we simply said, when we were training somebody, and the airplane got ahead of him. Many times your lives get ahead of you. You’re here at the university, and things are moving very fast. It’s like a jet fighter pilot in a single-seated plane—computers working, navigational aids, everything moving by hundreds of miles an hour, a thousand miles an hour and more, two and three times the speed of sound. You have to know where you’re going, file your flight plan, and be very careful where you fly.

When we were flying low-level flights, we’d be going three hundred miles an hour. It was always nice to do that because, when you divide sixty into it, you can mark off five miles every minute. You can go faster, but it’s a lot easier just to put your little marks on the map. And you know your guidelines along the way, water towers, reservoirs, different kinds of buildings. You’re flying at maybe a hundred feet, two hundred feet above the ground, flying from Georgia to Oklahoma or even farther, and you never come up, but you can do it if you pay attention to your guidelines.

Please remember that the mistakes you are going to make will not be because you haven’t been taught and you do not know what you

should be doing. It will not be the equipment and the training that fail.

### **Invulnerability**

Do you feel that you have invulnerability? Do you say, “I can handle that. It isn’t going to happen to me”? Think carefully. On one occasion when I spoke to a number of young ladies, questions were handed to me before the meeting. And one of the questions read something like this: “What happens when you’re going on a date with somebody, and you know”—underlined in red—“and you know there’s going to be trouble?”

Let’s think about that for a minute. The first time I received that question, I said, “Young lady, you’re going to wear a very comfortable pair of shoes, because when he goes by the dormitory and up the canyon road, you’re going to tell him to stop, and you’re going to get out and walk home.”

As I was driving home and feeling very good about myself and being very clever, my wife, as every sweetheart does, leaned over and put her head on my shoulder, and I expected her to tell me how well I’d done that night. But she said, speaking as a woman, “You know they expect more of you than that.”

The second time I got the question, I think I answered it better from a mother’s point of view, from a woman’s point of view, when I said, “You aren’t going to go on that date.”

I think that there are a lot of young ladies who could sit down and say, “I know your reputation. I know what you’re expecting.” As my sweetheart once said—when she was told by her father in a letter to date only returned missionaries, she wrote back and said, “Father, I don’t think you understand. Some of these fellows are octopuses with testimonies.”

How can we forget who we are?

And so I think a young lady ought to be able to say to a young man, “All right, I’ll go out with you, but if you lay one hand on me, Buster, that’s it.” And that’s what we would like

to have from the elders and sisters as they talk and discuss what their evening is going to be like, what their marriage is going to be like. I’d hope that most of you could date a few more than two or three times before everybody in your ward and stake feels you ought to be married.

Do you realize the problem we’re having? A very subtle thing happened this Christmas. I was watching television one evening, and I saw a commercial for a children’s cosmetic kit. There are a lot of mothers in this country and a lot of older sisters who this Christmas might have bought a little cosmetic kit for a six-year-old or an eight-year-old or a nine-year-old. Once you start having a young lady put on her eye makeup and her lipstick and start to attract those around her at an age when she literally does not know what she is doing, you are asking for trouble. Any young lady here who started dating heavily and going steady before the age of sixteen, be careful. I can give you a high correlation between early dating and immoral conduct. Dating only after age sixteen is the advice of the Brethren who have talked to you and of all the prophets in my lifetime. Listen to them. They say what they say for a reason. It’s for your protection because they love you.

“I can handle that,” you say. “I can put on the makeup. I can put on the nail polish. I can start dating. I can start going steady.” Invulnerability? Think about it.

### **Friends: What to Do with Them**

After the first small mistake is made in an airplane or in life, you rapidly have succeeding problems. And this is what happens when you start dating too young. Once a mistake is made, you ask yourself, “What can I do?” It’s difficult when you’re in a group. You don’t want to be lonely. I’ve had young people tell me, “I’d rather starve than not have a friend. I’ll do anything for a friend.” But there’s a simple phrase that will help us: “Choose you this

day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15). You must make a decision today whom you will serve. In 2 Timothy there is some great advice as Paul talks of those who are associating in his day with friends who lead them astray. A very simple phrase: “From such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:5).

Many of you are going to say, “Elder Hales, I can’t turn away from my friends. I can’t do that. I love them too much. I’m going to bring them into the Church.” So I’d like to define what I believe Paul meant when he said, “From such turn away.” The key is to turn away, not from your friends, but from the ways and the path your friends are taking.

You’ll say, “Is that Christian behavior? I want to save them. I know that if I associate with them, I can influence them for good.”

There’s an Indian saying that I was taught many years ago as a young man: “Before you judge someone, you should walk in his moccasins and go his way.”

I’d like to change that a little bit and say, “Turn away from the ways of your friends and the paths they are on. If you’ll go on the correct, straight, and narrow path that leads to eternal life, as spoken of by Nephi and many others, then, once you have your life straightened out, invite your friends to come over and walk in your moccasins on the correct path.” And I think you’ll begin to understand that you don’t have to reject your friends who are on the wrong path; you don’t have to give them up. But you do have to give up their ways and the path they’re taking, and it takes great courage. It’s probably the most difficult thing I’m going to ask you to do this evening. But you have to get on the correct path and then, by example, lead them.

Zeezrom, when Alma and Amulek were teaching him, trembled with fear and wanted to accept the gospel. He wanted to convert the people who made Alma and Amulek watch their followers being burned. Zeezrom went to them and said, “These men have the truth.”

He’d been taught the gospel; he was converted, but they didn’t listen to him. They cast him out.

Many of us turn around, go on a mission, and come to the university. I want to ask you a question, “What about the others, elders and sisters, who are still back dragging Main Street?” You’ve turned away. Do you have any responsibility? Think for a minute. What about your responsibility for your conduct in what happened behind the barn, or on a date? Have you repented and gone your way? Do you have any responsibility for those left behind? Have you left someone in the fire because of your actions? What kind of friend are you? Will you go back and lift them and write them and bear your testimony to them? I ask the Lord’s blessing to be with you as a friend.

### **What a Friend Is**

There’s a marvelous lesson to be taught by those who live in the islands. When they catch crabs, they place them in a small, flat basket. If you place one crab in the basket, it crawls right out. If you place two crabs in the basket, every time one crab starts to crawl out, it is pulled back in by the other crab. Does that tell you something about your friends? What is the definition of a friend? Friends are people who make it easier to live the gospel of Jesus Christ. If they deviate from the path and lead you away, it does not matter what kind of cars they drive, who their parents are, how effective they are on the football field or the basketball floor or the baseball diamond. You have to ask yourself, “Do they make living the gospel easier? Do they help me out of the basket? Will they go with me?”

I learned a great lesson as a young man. My father sent me out to work on a ranch. I worked with Uncle Frank Hatch in Skull Valley and with my cousin Jay and others that I loved very much. I learned a great deal about the gospel out there, as well as why I was sent. My father was from Idaho, and he told me I could never



learn how to work if I grew up in New York. As I went out to the ranch, I found that there were thousands and thousands of acres for the cattle to graze in. Why on earth did they go up to the fence and stick their heads through? As a boy from New York I could not understand that. I'd say, "Uncle Frank, they've got all those thousands and thousands of acres out there. Why do they push against the fence?"

That's often the way it is with us and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Within the principles of the gospel we can have such great times. We can laugh and enjoy life. What fun it is! Yet what do we do? We all push up against the fence sometimes. We keep going down the fence to try to find the hole in the south forty. Then when we find it, we romp on out and say, "Hey, isn't this great." We go out on Highway 90 and get hit by a semi truck. And we wonder what on earth happened to us. I'm sure we blame someone else, as those poor cattle who get hit blame the farmer for not keeping the fence mended.

I would hope that we could understand another lesson I learned that summer from my uncle. It was about coyotes and sheep. It's very clever. Mother and father coyote send those little coyote pups out to play and frolic. And the little lambs who are secure in the fold look over there and say, "Boy, doesn't that look like a lot of fun?" And they leave to go play with the coyote pups. Then the adult coyotes come down and kill them.

As you go out and see the things that are happening in the world, you may say, "Wouldn't it be fun to experience a little bit of that? In fact, I'd like to experience that. It'll make me a better person. I'll relate better to those who are sinning and to those who are transgressing."

I visited with a young man recently and asked him, "How is your testimony?"

He said, "Well, I want to go on a mission."

And I said, "Well, do you really feel you know the scriptures?"

He said, "No, I'm going to let my companion do that. I just want to go out. I think I can relate to all the people who have had some problems."

I said, "What happens when you have a companion who has the same viewpoint you have?"

He looked at me, and a broad grin came over his face. He said, "You have a point there, Elder." And so he went about studying the scriptures.

### **"Remember Who You Are"**

President Nathan Eldon Tanner told us a story in the temple one day. He was just a young lad, and his father left him to tend their cow. He did not come from a wealthy family, and the cow was the most prized possession they had. It gave them sustenance and food. Father Tanner was going into town and asked Nathan Eldon if he'd take care of the cow. Nathan Eldon had all of his friends over and they proceeded to have a rodeo. They rode that cow and kicked it (I can see smiles on the faces of many young men from Idaho.) Fortunately, his father came back early. There'd been no time to milk the cow, time for the second milking was approaching, and things were getting serious for that animal. Father didn't yell at Nathan Eldon; he didn't strike him, but sat him on a fencepost and said, "Nathan Eldon, remember who you are. You're a Tanner." He then proceeded to give him a little bit of his heritage and told him what he expected of him and reminded him that he was a priesthood holder. Then he told the boy what President Tanner repeatedly tells us, "Remember who you are and act accordingly."

I hope you haven't forgotten that you are children of God. He has sent you here, has given you parents kind and dear.

*Lead me, guide me, walk beside me,*

*Help me find the way.*

*Teach me all that I must do*

*To live with Him someday.*

[Naomi Randall, “I Am a Child of God,” *Sing with Me* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), no. B-76]

Sometimes I think we go through life in a speedboat. As we go through the harbors of life, we never look over our shoulders at the sailboats and the lifeboats and the dinghies that are swamped in the wake of our actions. I would hope that you’d start looking over your shoulder.

While you have been cruising main street back home, as I’ve said, and you’ve turned and left, what did you leave behind? You are the most chosen of all spirit children on earth. It is your responsibility and that of your posterity to lift, to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ. This responsibility has been placed upon you in this dispensation. You are not here by accident. You are here to lift. But you know how hard it is to lift somebody if you’re standing in the mud or, even more, how hard it is to lift somebody if you’re standing on their shoulders, weighing them down.

#### Four Steps

In closing, I’d like to give you my testimony. And in doing so I’d like to tell you how to have a good relationship with the Lord and talk just a little bit about repentance. There are four steps you have to take to have a close relationship with the Lord. First, prayer, individual prayer, companion prayer, and family prayer. Then after you’ve prayed to your Heavenly Father and thanked him for all that he’s given—and I’d like to ask each one of you, as you depart this evening and go home, to offer up a prayer of thanksgiving for all the things you have—you’ve got to study, individual study and companion study. If it’s in the family, you’ve got to have family study. Once you’ve had prayer and study, then you must become obedient. And after obedience,

diligence, working with all of your heart, mind, might, and strength to help others.

My sweetheart went to Relief Society conference, and on the wall was a sign that presented the theme of the day: “If you don’t go, you can’t get.” She understood that if you don’t go to Relief Society, you can’t get what is there, but the gospel of Jesus Christ is built on a different foundation. If you don’t go, you can’t *give*. There is a big difference between getting and giving. Many of us spend our time worrying about the gettings of life rather than the givings.

#### Repentance

As I close, may I ask you to think of repentance. As we think of the antichrists among us and remember Korihor, what did he say? “Religion? That’s the tradition of our fathers. Repentance or forgiveness? It is a derangement of the mind.” All hope is taken away.

We know when we’ve done wrong. We realize that we should not do it again because the scriptures say to us,

*By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them. [D&C 58:43]*

Restitution is a very interesting element of repentance. We all recognize the importance of forgiving others, but many of us forget the most difficult part—forgiving ourselves. That is one of the adversary’s greatest tools. We do not forgive ourselves. We do not allow the Spirit of the Lord to come into our lives and to guide us. After you have repented, the Lord forgives you long before you forgive yourself, but remember what the Savior said about putting your hand to the plough and not looking back (see Luke 9:62). You’ve made a mistake. You recognize you’ve done wrong. You don’t do it again. But then the most important part is that you forgive others, forgive yourself, and then you put your hand to the plough and never look back. You don’t even talk about it;

you leave it up to the Lord to let you know when it's behind you. Then you cannot have someone come to you and remind you that you made a mistake. When you go out on a mission, you won't say to yourself, "I'm a hypocrite. I really shouldn't be here. I've made a mistake." If you teach repentance and if you live it, you can bear testimony of it, and you can truly forgive yourselves and the Lord can forgive you.

### Testimony

Mary and I were traveling through Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Austria with the BYU A Cappella Choir, and we had one of the sweetest experiences we've ever had. As we went through Poland, everywhere they sang in the cathedrals—90 percent of the people are in the chapels and in the cathedrals on Sunday—and everywhere the choir sang, the Poles would place their hands or their fists over their hearts to say "We bear our testimony of what you sing." We were in Gdansk, Warsaw, Poznan, Czestochowa, where the Black Madonna was, and they sang in all the cathedrals there. The special occasion of which I speak happened in Spittal, Austria. Our choir had been singing in competition with a cappella choirs from many countries throughout Europe, the German Democratic Republic, which is East Germany, West Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and many others. When the competition was over and the judges were out the choirs had dispersed into the crowd. Our choir went to a fourth tier way above the platform where they had been performing in the castle. They really looked like angels. They sang from the words of Robert Cundick's *The Redeemer*, a very special song, "Behold, This Is the Way."

These are the words at the end of Nephi's great teachings about the first four principles of the gospel: How faith in the Lord Jesus Christ gives us the strength to repent and turn around; how, after turning around in

repentance, we go through the waters of baptism and are cleansed to receive the Holy Ghost and start on a straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life, as defined in the thirty-first chapter of 2 Nephi. And I want to tell you the moving experience that Mary and I had as we stood among those of the choir of Czechoslovakia. As the word *Behold* rang out, all of a sudden that palace and courtyard became a tabernacle. These are the words that have been penned, and I read them to you with my closing testimony from the twenty-first verse:

*And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end. Amen.*

I add my testimony to that of Nephi. I know that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ and that this is the way. He does love us, and if you and I are true and faithful, if we will go to the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity, if we will stay on that straight and narrow path, if we will love one another, if we will help one another, if we will lift one another, we will return to the presence of our Heavenly Father for time and for all eternity. But it all depends on what kind of friends we have. And I want you to know that if you in this assembly could realize who you are and act accordingly, you would understand, as recorded in the fifty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, that the power is in you to stand alone. You know that you have the power within you to do that which is right and which you came here to do to be prepared to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father.

I ask the Lord's blessings to be with you and express again my great love for you. I hope that you will ponder upon that which we have

talked plainly about this evening. As you leave this assembly with the resolve to do better, if you start to slip, please remember the many friends you have sitting on this stand who are ready to assist you.

May the Lord's choicest blessings be yours, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.