

# Steer a Steady Course

W. EUGENE HANSEN

It hardly seems possible, but this June it will be forty-five years since I walked across the podium at Utah State—then the Agricultural College, now a university—and took my place beside approximately two thousand others. It was the largest graduating class in our history as many of those who had served their country during the Great War were also finishing their degrees.

Many of the graduates were concerned about being able to find jobs, with such large numbers flooding the market. But then as now, things work out if approached with preparation, faith, and a will to work.

I trust you are genuinely enjoying your experience here. Since I realize what it takes to meet the admission requirements, I know I'm with a group with impressive credentials. I commend you for your preparation and for your accomplishments to this point. You notice I say *to this point*, and I do so advisedly because, as we know, life is a continual growing experience.

We read in Ecclesiastes, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Ecclesiastes 9:11); and in Matthew, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

Well, I don't think any of us feel we "have it made," so to speak. If you are like most, you will have many happy and wonderful times. But you will also have temptations, discouragements, and disappointments. You will have challenges, sometimes to a degree you may not feel you're quite up to. But you will find that you are—unless, of course, you are trying to do something that is not right or that just isn't feasible for you to do.

So my counsel to you is to steer a steady course, as many a brave sea captain has prescribed when storms and rough seas are encountered and the fainthearted become anxious to turn back. By adopting this resolve you will not be distracted when the winds of temptation or adversity come upon you and threaten to blow you off course or tempt you to turn back.

We read in Proverbs:

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

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*W. Eugene Hansen was a member of the Presidency of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this devotional address was given at Brigham Young University on 14 March 1995.*

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* [Proverbs 3:5–6]

This, I would say, has been the key to the success and happiness I have had in my life. I feel I was blessed early on with a deep and abiding faith in the Lord. As far back as I can remember, I have known that he was there and that he loves his children. He stands ready to help us.

As a young married couple, my wife and I felt that trust and direction as we pled for the life of our firstborn, who lay in a coma with serious head injuries following an automobile-bicycle accident. Physicians later shook their heads when that young boy indeed recovered after having been diagnosed as having fatal injuries. We knew we had witnessed a miracle. You can imagine the joy that Sister Hansen and I felt earlier this year when I was able to ordain that boy—now a man—as a bishop.

That trust and promise again stood the test when two of our five sons were called home to live with Heavenly Father—one as the result of a mid afternoon automobile accident while on his way to a state debate meet, the other some twelve years after he contracted multiple sclerosis during the eighteenth month of his mission in Sweden. Throughout those difficult times, we unquestionably received the strength and direction to see us through.

I love my Heavenly Father. I love my Savior, Jesus Christ. I love his gospel, and I will be ever grateful for the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

*In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* [Proverbs 3:5–6]

As I think back on my college experience, I remember an inscription above the main library desk at Utah State. Each time I stood

there my attention would focus on some other words taken from Proverbs.

Here I must confess that even though I stood there quite often, it wasn't always to check out a book. But I did have valid business there. You see, a certain striking coed from Idaho spent several hours a day on the other side of the desk working her way through college.

I felt a responsibility to look after her since she was a freshman and I was an upperclassman. She, of course, needed the attention, guidance, and tutoring that only an upperclassman could provide.

Often as I waited nonchalantly for Jeanine to appear, I pondered the statement "And with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7). I believe it was Elder Sterling W. Sill who later modified that somewhat to read, "And with all thy getting, get going." I tried to follow both admonitions, and I commend them to you.

Over the years we have had a great relationship with BYU. In fact, while here I need to check on some property that we assumed—back in October 1948—was merely going to be here occasionally. However, it has been in Logan for only three of the last twenty years. I am referring to the old wagon wheel that we jointly selected back in 1948 as the symbol of football supremacy between the two schools. It has been here so long that we haven't been able to inspect it. (It must be that training we gave LaVell up in Logan before he signed on down here.)

Well, since the three wheels that match it are on the Hansen family farm in East Garland, up in northern Utah, and since we may need to borrow the wheel long enough to move the old wagon that it came from in out of the weather, I received instructions from my ninety-year-old father to check it out while I'm here. We just want to make sure you have been taking good care of it and that it's still sound.

It was while I was a junior at Utah State that the two chapters of Blue Key inaugurated the traditional exchange of the old wagon wheel. So now the next time you see it you'll know where it came from.

We are living in a wonderful era of time. We may not always realize it since there are so many challenges and problems in the world today, but as Latter-day Saints we know what a great blessing it is to have the restored gospel of Jesus Christ on the earth. This is the period the Lord has designated as the last dispensation of the fullness of times.

The apostle Paul, in an epistle to the Ephesians, foretold this era. He wrote:

*That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. [Ephesians 1:10]*

The Prophet Joseph indicated that in this dispensation there would be marvelous things revealed, and indeed there have been.

The message of a beloved latter-day prophet, President Howard W. Hunter, reminds us of a very important blessing of this dispensation: the blessing of temples and the sealing power. This makes possible the opportunity to partake of the greatest of all the gifts of God, the gift of eternal life and exaltation. With this blessing comes eternal marriage and the opportunity to be together as families for the eternities.

As we speak of temples, let us not take lightly President Hunter's charge to make the holy temples the supernal setting of our most sacred covenants, to become worthy or maintain our worthiness to hold a temple recommend, and to attend the temple as often as time and circumstances permit.

The significance of this charge becomes more meaningful when we realize that as of 1982 there were twenty operating temples in the Church. Now, a little more than a decade

later, we have forty-seven operating temples. Thirteen more have been announced by the First Presidency.

Incidentally, you might be interested to know that our new prophet, President Gordon B. Hinckley, has been very involved with temples over the years. In fact, he has dedicated twenty-two of our forty-seven operating temples. He has attended and been involved in the dedications or rededications of all but five of the forty-seven temples. I know President Hinckley believes deeply in the importance of temples.

I hope during your experience here you will gain much. I also hope it will be a time when you will achieve not only in academic pursuits but spiritually as well.

If you find yourself in a spiritual slump, I encourage you to take counsel from President Spencer W. Kimball, who said, while speaking on this campus in 1966:

*I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns. [Quoted by Ezra Taft Benson, "Seek the Spirit of the Lord," *Ensign*, April 1988, p. 4]*

I trust you will be constantly striving to be a better, less selfish person, one who has genuine concern for others.

While we're on the subject of being better persons, let me read the words of Solomon Bennett Freehof:

*Years ago I preferred clever people. There was a joy in beholding . . . a mind . . . bearing thoughts quickly translated into words, or ideas expressed in a new way. I find now that my taste has changed. Verbal fireworks often bore me. They seem motivated by self-assertion and self-display. I now prefer another type of person; one who is considerate, understanding of others, careful not to break down*

*another person's self-respect. . . . My preferred person today is one who is always aware of the needs of others, or their pain and fear and unhappiness, and their search for self-respect. . . . I once liked clever people. Now I like good people. [Richard Evans' Quote Book (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971), p. 166]*

An important part of your training here will be to develop mental and physical discipline. As you improve your ability to master yourself, you will experience the thrill and exhilaration of accomplishment, of getting more done in a day than you thought was possible, of feeling the satisfaction of the realization of your daily goals, of feeling the pure joy that comes from understanding a concept or developing a skill.

You will need to be alert and sensitive to the facilities and resources that are available at this fine institution to assist you in what you are trying to accomplish.

A word of caution. Sometimes we make things harder than they need to be. We fail to see opportunities or helps that are right there for us. We fail to recognize them.

Sister Hansen and I had an experience some years ago that illustrates the point I want to make. We were serving as chaperons to a young adult group from our stake on an overnight retreat to a cabin in Huntsville located in the mountains east of Ogden.

This retreat we were chaperoning was in January, and it was a particularly cold January. When we were given the details, no one mentioned that the large log cabin we would be staying in was heated by a single fireplace in the living room.

Well, as the time came for retiring—the young women upstairs, the young men downstairs with their sleeping bags laid out on the plank floors—Jeanine and I were given the privacy of the bedroom and the luxury of a bed. There were no blinds on the windows, so with

the lights out we removed our street clothes and quickly jumped into bed.

We were surprised to feel such a light set of covers, but we thought with the help of the bedspread we might make it through. We quickly dropped off to sleep, but as we did, the temperature dropped, too.

As we awakened shivering, we could tell that the young man assigned to keep the fire going had dropped off to sleep also and not one Btu could be felt radiating under the door into our room. What to do? We hurriedly got up and put on our clothing—but even with all our clothes, including the light jackets we had worn in the car, we spent the next four hours literally in a slow freeze. I am sure the temperature went down to twenty or twenty-five below zero outside, and it wasn't much warmer inside. We were reluctant to turn on the lights and try and get a fire going and wake everyone up, so we just toughed it out.

Without a doubt that was as uncomfortable as any night we have ever spent. As daylight broke, we couldn't wait to get out of bed and start moving. Then, as we removed the pillows to make the bed, to our great surprise there were the controls for the electric blanket we had unknowingly slept under during that miserable night.

Unfortunately, we oftentimes have similar experiences, though not necessarily involving an electric blanket. But we make things harder than they need to be as we fail to recognize or take advantage of facilities or resources that would make our lives or our work more enjoyable and more effective or even more bearable in some cases.

Too often I sense we fail to draw on spiritual strengths and resources that are available for the asking—provided, of course, we are doing our part and that we are living in such a way as to be worthy of the blessings that are available to us.

I have always considered that the spiritual strength and help I receive from living the

gospel to the best of my ability and from rendering Christian service is one of my greatest assets. For as long as I can remember, I have had a calling in the Church. This was so even during the years of greatest academic demands while I was in law school.

I felt the Lord knew what was best for me and what I could handle. And so as the calls came, I accepted them, and I can truthfully say that I can't think of a class that suffered because of accepting a call. To the contrary, I seemed to do better in my courses.

We may consider it an honor and a privilege to accept a call and to serve the Lord, but I realize there are some who cannot understand why we in the Church are so willing to accept calls.

I am reminded of an actual case involving a young executive who received a call from President Kimball to serve as a mission president. As he went in to break the news to his two senior nonmember partners, they were totally flabbergasted. They immediately began to ask such questions as "Aren't you satisfied with your work here? Aren't we paying you enough? Would you leave a six-figure job to go and live in some third-world country for three years?"

The young executive tried desperately to explain that the income he was making or the position he held had nothing to do with his accepting a call from a prophet.

The eldest of the partners asked who the call had come from. The young man explained that it had come from a prophet in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints named Spencer W. Kimball. Immediately the older of the two partners turned to the other and said, "Get this man Kimball on the phone and find out what it will take to have him withdraw the call. You are authorized to go as much as a hundred thousand dollars, if necessary. But tell him to keep his hands off our man."

Of course, the young executive refused to allow that, and as his partners realized he was

serious in his resolve to accept the call, he was informed that he would be terminated and would have no further opportunity with the company upon his return. He was disappointed in the way the partners had taken his call, but he left and served honorably.

When the three years were up and he returned, it took some time for him to find employment, but this in no way dampened his spirit or interfered with the joy that he felt after he accepted the call and finished his course with a "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" result.

The Lord tells us in section 52 of the Doctrine and Covenants that he will provide a pattern for us.

*And again, I will give unto you a pattern in all things, that ye may not be deceived; for Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations. [D&C 52:14]*

That pattern is the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness. By keeping the commandments, studying the scriptures, and listening to the prophets, we have the benefit of these great resources.

Another word of caution, if I may. Let me emphasize "listening to the prophets." I believe it was President Romney who once said words to this effect: "Many people want to serve the Lord, but only in an advisory capacity." Be careful that you don't ever slip into that category. Yes, we believe in the blessing of personal inspiration for ourselves and our families and with respect to specific callings and assignments. But when it comes to receiving revelation for the Church, that should be left to those who have been duly called and sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators.

A quote from a former member of the Twelve is instructive here.

*It is not important that a prophet should say those things with which you and I are in full accord.*

*But it is important that you and I should bring ourselves into full accord with those things which a prophet speaks by virtue of his office and calling.*

[Richard L. Evans, “On Being A Prophet,” *Improvement Era*, November 1939, p. 672]

Now a word about our responsibility to be an example.

William George Jordan, in his book *The Majesty of Calmness*, succinctly reminds us of the importance of our example:

*The only responsibility that a man cannot evade in this life is the one he thinks of least, his personal influence. Man’s conscious influence, when he is on dress parade, when he is posing to impress those around him, is woefully small. But his unconscious influence, the silent, subtle radiation of his personality, the effect of his words and acts, the trifles he never considers, is tremendous. Every moment of life he is changing to a degree the life of the whole world. Every [person] has an atmosphere which is affecting every other. So silent and unconsciously is this influence working, that [one] may forget that it exists. . . .*

*Into the hands of every individual is given a marvelous power for good or for evil, the silent, unconscious, unseen influence of his life. This is simply the constant radiation of what a [person] really is, not what he pretends to be. Every person, by his [or her] mere living, is radiating sympathy, or sorrow, or morbidness, or cynicism, or happiness, or hope, or any of a hundred other qualities. Life is a state of constant radiation and absorption; to exist is to radiate; to exist is to be the recipient of radiations.* [William George Jordan, *The Majesty of Calmness* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1900), pp. 18–19; emphasis in original]

One of the great blessings of life is the opportunity to make choices. A respected philosopher once said, “Choose well; your choice is brief, and yet endless” (Goethe).

President Kimball effectively capsulized the thought that I feel is instructive here. I quote from his writings:

*Life gives to all the choice. You can satisfy yourself with mediocrity if you wish. You can be common, ordinary, dull, colorless; or you can channel your life so that it will be clean, vibrant, progressive, useful, colorful, rich. You can soil your record, defile your soul, trample underfoot virtue, honor, and goodness, and thus forfeit an exaltation in the kingdom of God. Or you can be righteous, commanding the respect and admiration of your associates in all walks of life, and enjoying the love of the Lord. Your destiny is in your hands and your all-important decisions are your own to make.* [Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), p. 235]

Making good choices is nothing new to us. In fact, as we go to the scriptures we realize that we were making choices even before we were born. We were part of the Council in Heaven. We heard opposing views. Fortunately we had the good judgment to make the right decision—the result of which is that we are here today in mortality, blessed with bodies. We have the opportunity to gain experience and to continue making choices that are of no small consequence with respect to our future peace of mind and happiness.

Every day of our lives we all make scores of decisions. Some, of course, are merely minor or routine that have little or no lasting effect. However, others are of much more serious consequence. Some—in fact, many—even have eternal consequences.

It was Carlyle who said, “The greatest of faults . . . is to be conscious of none” (*Heroes and Hero Worship* [1841], *The Hero as Prophet*). We should be constantly analyzing ourselves and taking notice of the consequences of our bad choices. We can also learn much as we observe others. I’m reminded of a sign I saw on an office wall. It read, “Learn from the mistakes

of others. You'll never live long enough to make them all yourself."

Strive constantly to keep your thoughts in check. Remember thoughts have a way of developing into action. Keep yourself morally clean. The scriptures warn us, "To be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6) and "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10). Some years ago President Harold B. Lee, then Elder Lee, counseled a group of LDS servicemen in Korea, of whom I was one. Said President Lee, "He who seeks the rapture of the moment will lose the peace of years."

One of the most important decisions you will ever make on this earth will be choosing an eternal companion. It will be helpful to have thoughtfully considered and to have in mind what is most important to you as you are making that decision. I was pleased as I asked one of my sons about the girl he was becoming quite serious with. After some rather general responses, I was impressed when he said, "Dad, she's the kind that would make a good mom."

The longer I live, the more grateful I am for a patient and loving wife who is a wonderful mom. I am thankful for the blessings of the temple with the glorious promise of eternal life. And I am grateful for the direction and focus that we receive as we attend the Lord's house.

It naturally follows that with agency and choice must come accountability. There are various forms and types of accountability.

The community holds its members accountable to obey the laws in effect. A violation may result in fines, forfeitures, or even in being removed from living in society.

Schools and universities hold their students accountable to learn the subjects that are taught. If the student fails, he or she is held back or is denied credentials.

Most employees must account for their time and efforts, and if they do poorly or fail, they are terminated or denied advancement.

We believe that we are also accountable to the Lord for our actions and that one day the book of life will be opened and what we have done with our agency will determine what we do and where we will be for a long time.

In the examples I have given you, I have indicated situations where someone else initiates the accountability process. But what I would like to refer to this morning is the situation where we individually commence and operate the accountability process.

In discussing personal accountability, I specifically direct your attention to those situations where probably no one—save yourself and perhaps one other, but a mighty important other—would even be aware of what you were doing or thinking.

Perhaps it is (1) staying in bed longer than is needful; or (2) consciously leaving work for someone else to do that you should have done yourself; (3) preparing poorly for a given responsibility; (4) thinking thoughts that are unwholesome or improper; (5) taking longer to do a project than is really necessary; (6) bearing false witness against someone; (7) consciously failing to give help and assistance in an appropriate situation—in other words, failing to be charitable; (8) being insensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others; (9) failing to set personal goals for achievement; (10) failing to put forth the effort to overcome bad habits or practices; (11) wasting time (I was taught at home that there is nothing so boring as loafing because you can't stop and rest); (12) failing to accept responsibility for our mistakes or failures; (13) bending or breaking applicable rules; (14) enjoying it when misfortunes come to a rival; (15) failing to make prayer a regular part of your daily life. I could go on indefinitely with a list that is virtually inexhaustible.

These are the types of things that can slow or stall our progress and cause us to constantly rely on excuses.

Admittedly, these may all sound like little things, but I'm reminded of President McKay's

observation on one occasion in the Tabernacle. He counseled that huge trees in the forest often withstand strong winds and harsh elements only to succumb to insects so small that it takes a microscope to see them.

In closing let me share an experience that I had while still quite young. To the best of my recollection, it was while I was a student in the sixth grade at the Garland Elementary School. I had not quite turned twelve. It was spring, and I was anxious to join the scores of other boys who had signed up to compete in the *Deseret News* Pentathlon.

As you may know, *penta* comes from the Greek word meaning “five.” Thus, the pentathlon consisted of five track and field events that all of the boys in the state could compete in. The pentathlon, as I indicated, was sponsored by the *Deseret News* and was conducted throughout the grade schools across the state. The scores that you attained in the various events were computed by applying a factor for age and height and weight. They were then added together and sent to Salt Lake City, where winners in various categories were selected. Winners received recognition and, among other things, an expense-paid trip to Salt Lake City, where they spent a day as special guests of the newspaper.

The five events consisted of the high jump, broad jump, shot put, basketball free throw, and fifty-yard dash.

The pentathlon was the talk of the school. Most all of the boys who were old enough were suited up for the event. At age eleven I was a ninety-eight-pound weakling; but more troublesome than that, I had marginal coordination. But how I wanted to do well in that athletic event. I suppose in that respect I was not much different than anyone else as I imagined the thrill that would accompany one to the winner’s circle. I knew that I wasn’t what you would call a coach’s dream. But I had studied the rules carefully. I was hopeful that the

factors for height, weight, and age might give me a chance.

Well, I really got into it. I found a round rock that weighed within an ounce or two of the regulation five-pound shot put. I spent considerable time in the evenings when the chores were done throwing the shot put around the backyard.

I also dug a broad-jump pit that I used to practice my broad jump and high jump. I nailed some old flooring boards together for a backboard, installed a hoop, and secured it to the end of the barn. Though it was not fancy, it provided a facility with which to practice my foul shots.

The big day finally came. All who were participating were excused from school for the afternoon. We began with the shot put. I did exceptionally well for my size. This was understandable because of my experience with the round rock at home. My practice shooting foul shots paid off, and I scored well in that event. The high jump didn’t go quite as well. Here again, my lack of coordination worked against me.

Then it was time for the fifty-yard dash. We lined up by the starter and were off. It almost instantly became obvious that I would view the race from the rear of the pack. But how I tried! I gave it all the effort I had. As I passed where the coach was standing, I noticed him turn and say something—then there was a burst of laughter from those who stood around him.

We crossed the finish line. I was fifth of five runners. I resigned myself to the fact that there would be no trip to Salt Lake for me that year. But the worst was yet to come. As I approached the place where the coach had been standing, one of the more arrogant boys couldn’t wait to call out, “Hey, Hansen, the coach says you run like a duck.” And there was more laughter. As you picture that characterization in your mind, you’ll have to agree it was quite descriptive and probably an accurate evaluation of how I looked.



Well, of course, I laughed too, but many thoughts went through my mind. I was angry, I was hurt, and I was embarrassed. When I went to bed that night it was still on my mind. When I awakened the next morning, those pointed words came back, “Hey, Hansen, the coach says you run like a duck.”

I struggled with that situation for quite some time. I admit I had thoughts of never getting on the athletic field again. But then some Danish determination must have come out in me. I resolved I would learn to run. And I was going to show the coach and my friends, but I suppose most of all myself, that I could do it.

From that moment forward, every time I had some distance to go, I ran. When coming in from the fields at noon, I ran. When the grain bin on the harvester was full and I had to get the truck to empty it, I ran. When I went to the pasture to get the horses, I ran. As I had spare time while on army duty in Korea, I practiced my running. And after returning home, I kept it up.

Though I realized I had made some substantial progress, it was not until a particular stake fathers and sons’ outing that I had a chance to evaluate those twenty-plus years of determination.

It was shortly after we had moved into our current stake. We were at a campground in the Uintas for the Saturday morning games. All of the youth had run their races, and then the call came for “everyone over twenty-one.” As I lined up with the dads and others, I noticed a young man in the group who had made a name for himself at East High School in the 440-yard run. I knew he would be the challenge.

Again the starting gun sounded, but this time, instead of bringing up the rear, I was in front. I remained there as we crossed the finish line. Of course, the coach wasn’t there to see it, neither were my grade school friends, and particularly the arrogant little guy with the loud

voice. But this I know, winning the pentathlon could not have resulted in the self-satisfaction I felt as I shared the first prize—a giant candy bar—with my two little sons that day.

What a lesson in life I gained from that experience. I learned humility, as I was humbled. I learned tolerance, as I successfully fought back the urge to slug the boy who shouted out the characterization the coach had used to describe my athletic prowess. I learned patience, as I found that some things take several years of determination to accomplish. And I experienced the sweet feeling that comes from successfully accomplishing a goal.

Someone once wrote, “Life is not having or getting. It’s being or becoming.”

Perhaps you have some particular challenge in your life at this time. Whether you run like a duck, have trouble concentrating or controlling your temper, or have the need to develop charity and compassion or whether you need to break a bad habit or raise your level of spirituality or whatever it is, there are very few things that you cannot master if you but set your mind to it and then pay the price with determination and hard work.

Remember also that the only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary. Remember too that many times we learn more from a defeat or a disappointment than we gain from a success or a win.

Now, in closing, could I leave a couple of my favorite scriptures with you. From 1 John:

*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

*And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. [1 John 2:15–17]*

And last of all, here is King Benjamin's instruction for becoming a saint, found in Mosiah:

*For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. [Mosiah 3:19]*

May you put off the natural man and become a saint through the atonement of

Christ the Lord. May you "hold up your light that it may shine unto the world" (3 Nephi 18:24).

May you steer a steady course as you go through life, remembering the commitments and covenants you have made—striving to live a little better each day, keeping the commandments, loving the Lord and your neighbor.

As you do, you will not only store up treasure in heaven, but you will realize a special peace, now, in this life, a "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

I leave you my witness that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, our Master and Redeemer. This is his Church. May the Lord bless and be with you, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.