

# *Obedience Brings Happiness*

HARTMAN RECTOR, JR.

Good morning, my brothers and sisters; it is a great honor and privilege to greet you here this morning in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are met in his name, it is because of him that we are here, and I presume that everything in this life that is really worthwhile comes through the Lord. He has a special program for you and me. It is vitally important that we understand the Lord's program, for it is calculated to make us happy, which is, of course, the object and design of our existence. "Men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). That is a collective term—it means woman, too.

We are here upon the earth, you and I, to be happy; but if we are not careful we look for happiness in the wrong places. There are those who think that it has to do with accumulation of material wealth, power, or position—and yet these do not make people happy. Happiness has to do with living in obedience to the Lord's commandments and being thankful for what one has. It does not make any difference how much one has, for he will not be happy unless he is thankful for it. It is, like wealth, very relative. One man who has hardly anything considers himself wealthy, while another man with many material possessions is not happy because he does not think he has anything. It is all in the mind

The Lord Jesus Christ has taken upon himself the responsibility to save everyone who will ever be born on this earth. That is a great task, and he has done everything godly possible to bring that to pass, even to taking upon himself the sins of everyone who has ever been born or will be born. And he has broken the bands of death, which means that everyone is going to be resurrected. It will not make any difference whether they want to be or not; they are going to be resurrected anyway. There are going to be a lot of these people resurrected that will not want to be but they are going to get it. So you are going to get it whether you want it or not. You do not have to be good; it is a free gift from the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this particular day and time he has given us a program by which we can prepare ourselves for that which is to come, and there are great and momentous occasions ahead of us. In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord outlined, "Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon

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the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments” (D&C 1:17)—because of the calamities that were coming. Prophets in all ages have known that there were going to be calamities coming in this particular day and time. We need to be aware of the fact that we are living in a time of calamity, and we have to be ready for it. There is a great and dreadful day of the Lord ahead. It always seemed to be a little incongruous to call it “great” and “dreadful” at the same time, but as we think about it, it is very simple: It will be great if we are ready and dreadful if we are not.

Paul, in a letter to his friend Timothy (in verses 1 to 7 and 10 to 12 of 2 Timothy, third chapter), wrote telling him that there were going to be perilous times ahead. He said, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves”—I am not exactly sure what he means by that. President Kimball came here to the BYU assembly and told the student body the same thing he has been telling everybody all over the world; the prophet tells everybody the same thing. In the first speech he gave to a general conference of the Church after he became president of the Church, he made this statement: “We say again, we members of the Church marry. All normal people should marry” (*Ensign*, November 1974, p. 8). He’s saying this because there are a lot of people today who are going along with the program that comes from the other side, which says, “It’s not necessary to get married; you can live together without having to be married. In fact, trial marriages are recommended.” Not so with the Lord.

President Kimball’s remarks generated a number of letters from the student body here at BYU, saying, in essence, “President, are you saying that because we’re not married we’re not normal?” And as he rehearsed this to us he said, “I had to write them back and say, ‘Yes,

that’s what I’m saying.’” He expects all young people to marry.

A letter came to the office shortly thereafter from a little girl here at BYU. She said, “I know I’m supposed to be married and I’m willing, but there are a lot of these returned missionaries here at BYU who don’t seem to be as willing. As a matter of fact, they draw near unto me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” I think that that is what Paul was talking about. He said, “Men shall be lovers of their own selves.” They do not want to take upon themselves the responsibility of a family, which, of course, is the first commandment given on this earth to our first parents. They were told to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Why? So that they would be happy, “that they might have joy and rejoicing in their posterity.” Everything the Lord has done is calculated to make his children happy. President Kimball says also that you should not get out of your twenties before you are married, and that gives you a goal.

Paul continues, “Men shall be . . . covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection. . . .” I saw in the paper not long ago that two men got married. That’s right—they performed a ceremony to marry two men. That is not natural—that is not natural affection. And they wanted to adopt a child. Thank heaven they had enough sense not to let them do that. Paul said there will be

*trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

*Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. [2 Timothy 3:2–5]*

It does make a difference whom you associate with. I have interviewed many young men who have had problems—they had violated the

laws of chastity and been involved in the drug scene, yet they came from good families. I ask them, "Just how did you get so involved?" Many times their answer is: "Well, Elder Rector, I started running around with the wrong crowd, and I found myself doing the things that they were doing." It is important that you "run around" or associate with good people. And as for those who are running around with the wrong crowd, those who know the Lord and delight in keeping his commandments should go and bring them back. You can do that; and that is part of the responsibility of membership in this Church.

"Of this sort," Paul continued, "are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts." I am not exactly sure what he is talking about there, but I do know that here in the Salt Lake Valley there are over six thousand people trying to practice polygamy. There are many lovely sisters who would like to get married and have a family, who want to, but who have never had the opportunity; and so to one of these sisters will come a character who says he knows more about the revelations of the Lord than the prophet does. The Lord has "revealed" to him that he is supposed to have this one and this one and this one and this one as his wives. Now, sisters, if you get involved in this, the very least we are going to call you is silly. Paul continues: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Now I am skipping a bit to where he said to Timothy,

*But thou has fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,*

*Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*

*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecutions. [2 Timothy 3:7, 10-12]*

You may expect it. If you live the gospel today you must expect to be persecuted. Yes, it will come in many different forms because there is much false information abroad in the land today as to what we are supposed to do and what our responsibilities are. If you insist on having a family, which is your basic responsibility here upon the earth, people are going to say that you are selfish. I cut a piece out of the paper recently, dateline Singapore. It says:

*Parents who insist on having more than two children will lose tax benefits, face discrimination in public housing, and pay more maternity costs, the government announced. Earlier the Health Ministry said that some discriminatory measures would be taken against new additions to large families in nine and a half months. [They figured that would be fair warning, I guess.] For the Singapore of the 1970s, the third child is luxury, the fourth and fifth are antisocial acts. The new measures include vigorous family planning campaigns coupled with sterilization and abortion programs. The government hopes to reduce the natural increase in the birth rate to less than one percent by 1980. ["Family Size Labels a Guy," Deseret News, October 25, 1972]*

That is a plot against the Lord's children. Part of the plan of salvation said that we would come to this earth and take a body of flesh and bone, that we would have earthly parents who would provide that opportunity for us. And we agreed to do it too. We must have agreed to do it or we would not be here. And we agreed to provide opportunities for others to come to this earth; that is the only way the Lord can send his children. This business of birth control, which is so rampant throughout the land today, is contrary to the will of the Lord. That is not his program. To give you a couple of paragraphs from a statement from the president of the Church, dated April 14, 1969:

*Where husband and wife enjoy health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity [I assume that would be physical or mental defects] it is contrary to the teachings of the Church artificially to curtail or prevent the birth of children. We believe that those who practice birth control will reap disappointment by and by. However, we feel that men must be considerate of their wives, who bear the greater responsibility not only of bearing children, but also of caring for them through childhood.*

That makes it very plain that there is a division of responsibility in raising a family. The brethren are to provide for the family members. They have to feed them, clothe them, shelter them, educate them, send them on missions—that is very expensive; it costs a lot of money. So young men need a good education to do that, and need to be willing to hold a good job and work hard and bring home everything they make and give it to their wife. That is called sacrifice. Of course, sacrifice does not go one way; she will make a burnt offering over the stove from time to time. She also has to cook the food and wash the dishes—over and over again—and bear the children and care for them through childhood. Sisters, this does not mean that you cannot have some help from your husband. Get all that you can—insist on it—but do not expect too much because you will probably not get it. You see, he has a different responsibility.

“To this end,” the statement continues, “the mother’s health and strength should be conserved, and the husband’s consideration for his wife is his first duty and self-control a dominant factor in all their relationship” (Statement from the First Presidency, April 14, 1969). I think that is very plain. It says you ought to have your family when you can; and you will find that you cannot make a decision as to when to have children anyway. Any couple that has ever had children knows that they did not make that decision. The Lord decides when

you are going to have children. You can only decide that you are not going to have them, and you cannot afford that. So have your family when you can, but not so fast that you destroy the health of the mother. The mother’s health is the only real criterion of judgement. It is not a convenience consideration; it is not an education; it is not an economic consideration. The health of the mother is the *only* consideration.

It is vitally important that you raise a family unto the Lord. Do not be taken in by all this misinformation about birth control—and make no mistake about it, it is affecting the Church. There was a birth rate study done not long ago that covered the twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970; as I recall, two young men here at BYU did it. They found that in 1950 the average number of births per thousand in the Church was thirty-eight and in the United States as a whole was twenty-six. In 1970, twenty years later, the average births per thousand for the Church was twenty-six, while the average for the United States was eighteen. In other words, births have dropped by almost the same percentage in the Church as in the country. They also figured out that out of every one hundred births there are fifty-two boys and forty-eight girls. (Yes, sisters, there are more boys than girls, contrary to what you may think.) What we have lost through the reduction in birth rate in the Church would amount to twenty-two thousand missionaries today. That would be enough missionaries to take care of the needs of India if we could freely enter. It makes a difference.

About this business of abortion: I presume that there will be a million of them in the United States this year; there were a million last year. It is destruction of the Lord’s children at a horrendous rate. I cut an article out of the *Washington Post* recently; it says:

*For the first time the number of legal abortions obtained by Washington residents exceeded the*

*number of live births, according to the figure for last year compiled by the District of Columbia Department of Human Resources. The department said that eighty-five percent of the abortions were paid for by the government, either at private hospitals and clinics through the Medicaid program or the country's free public hospital, D.C. General. Officials of Planned Parenthood said Washington was the first major American city to report that abortions outnumbered births, ["Capital Reports More Abortions than Births," Los Angeles Times, November 17, 1976]*

which they applauded. That is wrong. That is so wrong. If you would like to know how the Lord feels about abortion, here is a statement from President Lee. President Lee had a way of saying things so plainly that you could not misunderstand them. He said here:

*May I say here that we in the Church are unalterably opposed to abortion. The only exception would be in cases where doctors found it necessary to perform an abortion to save the life of the mother [mother's health again]. We reaffirm that the first purpose of marriage is to bring children into the world. They ought to be welcome. [Harold B. Lee, Strengthening the Home (motion picture), 1973]*

President Kimball has added that abortion could be considered if conception took place because of criminal rape and there is a traumatic effect on the mother. He said that, even then, you would only want to consider it after you have had counsel with the competent medical authority, had interviews and consultation with your priesthood leaders, and made it a matter of fasting and prayer and had a confirmation of the Spirit. No, abortion is not the Lord's program. His program is to provide opportunities for his children to come to this earth. We need to help him in this.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus," said Paul, "shall suffer persecution." No doubt

about that. It is important that you take a stand on these questions in this day and time, because it is up to you. You are the Lord's people—if you do not, who will? The Master, when some were offended in him and left him, asked the apostles, "Will ye also go away?" and Peter replied, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6:67–69). The words of eternal life and salvation are in the Church and kingdom of God and we must follow the living prophet of God. Yes, you are going to be persecuted if you do, but do not worry about it. Paul continues,

*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.*

*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;*

*And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. [He makes it plain that we ought to stick with the scriptures, and then this is what Paul says about the scriptures:]*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

*That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. [2 Timothy 3:13–17]*

We need to look to the scriptures. The scriptures have the answer; they come from the Lord.

Not all scripture is contained in what we call the standard works of the Church, but everything that we talk about ought to be found in the scriptures. A quote from President Lee:

*All that we teach in this Church ought to be couched in the scriptures. It ought to be found in the scriptures. We ought to choose our texts from the scriptures. If we want to measure truth, we*

*should measure it by the four standard works, regardless of who writes it. If it is not in the standard works, we may well assume that it is speculation, man's own personal opinion; and if it contradicts what is in the scriptures, it is not true. This is the standard by which we measure all truth, [Improvement Era, January 1969, p. 13]*

the standard works of the Church. He also said:

*Through these generations [meaning the generations from the beginning of man down to this time] the messages from our Father have been safeguarded and carefully protected and mark you likewise that in this day the scriptures are the purest at their source, just as the waters [are] purest at the mountain source; the purest word of God, and that least apt to be polluted, is that which comes from the lips of the living prophets who are set up to guide Israel in our own day and time. [Harold B. Lee, Ye Are the Light of the World, pp. 55–56]*

So we look to the standard works of the Church and we look to this type of publication, *The Ensign*— and it is *ensign*. I had a letter the other day from a sister who said, “Elder Rector, I wish you’d learn how to say *ensign*. It’s not *ensun*. It’s not like a naval officer.” And I have to admit that I have made that mistake a few times, but she has corrected me now. (It was interesting, though—the letter was addressed to Hartford Rector, H-a-r-t-f-o-r-d.)

This *Ensign* of November 1974 contains the first talk that the prophet gave in general conference after he became President of the Church. There are twenty-two commandments in here—twenty-two. That is a few more than the Lord gave to Moses on Mount Sinai, but we have things to put up with today that Moses did not have to put up with in his day. After all, we have television today, and X-rated and R-rated movies, and numerous other Satan-inspired things. President Kimball is so specific in enunciating the Lord’s program today that

it is very difficult to misunderstand. The first thing he said he wanted us to do was to clean up around our own homes. “Broken fences should be mended, or removed. Unused barns should be roofed and repaired and painted, or removed. Sheds and corrals should be repaired and painted, or removed. Weedy ditchbanks should probably be cleared. Abandoned homes should be razed. We are looking forward to the day when in all of our communities, both urban and rural, there will be a universal contingent movement to clean and repair and paint barns and sheds, build side walls, clean ditchbanks, and make our properties a thing of beauty to behold.” He says clean it up—that includes your garage too. It also includes your room here at BYU. That includes the missionaries’ quarters too. (I don’t see them here today—they’re not here, are they?)

He is very specific. He said,

*We call attention . . . to the habit in which many buy their commodities on the Sabbath. [That is counter to a commandment of the Lord: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Genesis 20:8).] Many employed people would be released for rest and worship on the Sabbath if we did not shop on that day. Numerous excuses and rationalizations are presented to justify the Sunday buying. We call upon all of you to keep the Sabbath holy and make no Sunday purchases. [Ensign, November 1974, p. 6]*

Now, that is rather specific. And he said, “We hope that faithful Latter-day Saints will not use playing cards which are used for gambling. . . .” That means spades, hearts, diamonds, and clubs. (I have a friend who said: “You know, you can play bridge with a set of Rook cards if you know what you’re doing.” I guess the prophet can’t cover everything, right?) “. . . Either with or without the gambling,” he added. “As for gambling in connection with horse racing or games or sports, we firmly discourage such things.” What the Lord has

given us through a living prophet is very specific, and it is for our benefit; so we ought to follow the scriptures.

The program the Lord has outlined for us to follow today first deals with literacy and education. It is important that you put it up here in the head. Studying the scriptures is the most important thing you can do. It means you should all have a set of the scriptures. You can pay almost anything you want for a set of scriptures. I was looking today at a quadruple combination, large print edition, bound in leather and indexed; it sells for about seventy-five dollars. But the seminary department sent me a copy of the triple combination they are going to use for next year; it is going to sell for two dollars and a half, and it is adequate. Couple with that a Bible priced at about two dollars and fifty cents, and one can get a set of the scriptures for five dollars. Everybody should have his own set of scriptures and ought to be using them on a regular basis, fifteen minutes a day at least. If we read the scriptures fifteen minutes a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, we can read all the standard works of the Church in one year. But it is not enough just to read the scriptures; we ought to put into practice what we find in the scriptures. It is the Lord's handbook for our day and time, and for every day and time.

There are other books to read. I read a book recently called *Life after Life*. I would recommend it to you. It contains a hundred and fifty case histories of people who have had a near-death experience—so near death, in fact, that they all left their body, but they all came back again. They all reported essentially the same thing. Among other things they said they were met by a being of light. The atheists call it a being of light, but among the Christians some called it God, some said it was Christ, and some said it was an angel. But all agreed it was a being of light. He came to them and in his presence they felt complete peace and contentment. He asked them questions, such as,

“What have you done with your life that would make it important to other people?” That question called an immediate panoramic replay of everything they had done in their life. They saw themselves and their whole life pass in review; and, of course, they saw themselves doing some very selfish things. He was watching it with them and it seemed he commented on it; in fact, he made excuses for some of the things they did. He said, “Now, when you did this you hadn't learned; you were still learning.” Does that sound like you may have an advocate with the Father? You know, we may need an advocate with the Father one day. Some said that he laughed about some of the things that he saw there, that he had a sense of humor. That is nice to know too, isn't it?

After they had had this panoramic replay of their life, they moved on to an area where there was a barrier erected. Some said it was a curtain, some a screen, some a line; but all agreed it was a line of demarcation. They were given to understand that if they crossed that line they could never return to their mortal body again. None of them crossed it. They all came back to their body, every one of them. No one really wanted to return, but they came back. Each of them came back for some completely unselfish reason. One woman came back because she had five small children and wanted to take care of them. Another had aged parents she wanted to take care of. One woman came back to do her genealogy—no doubt a Latter-day Saint. (It may take that kind of an experience to get genealogy done, too.)

When they came back, once again they had basically the same experience. Number one, no one had any fear of death anymore; in fact, they were looking forward to it. Well, I will take that back. Five of the people had tried to commit suicide, and they had a completely different experience. One man's wife had died; he was distraught with grief and wanted to join her. So he tried to take his own life. He said he knew immediately that he had done a horrible thing.

As a matter of fact, he was given to understand that he had done the second worst thing he could do on this earth by taking his own life. The worst thing he could do would be to take someone else's life. He said, "I didn't go where she was. I went to an awful place" (Raymond A. Moody, *Life after Life*, afterword). There was nothing but moaning and groaning and weeping and wailing there, and he was delighted to get out of it. The rest of them, however, when they returned, had no fear of death; they knew that they were going to die and they were looking forward to it but not rushing it. The attempted suicides were even more glad to get back into their bodies.

Number two, there were no atheists anymore. Some were before their experience, but not when it had finished. Number three, they all got involved in some sort of philanthropic-type activity trying to help other people. And four, none of them could tell his experiences because people thought him crazy.

I do not see that these experiences are in disagreement with what Alma said:

*Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—Behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life. [Alma 40:11]*

I have heard speculated about Alma's statement: "God rules in the spirit world, and if you go back in the spirit world you'll be in the presence of God." Not so; that is not what Alma says, and that is not what these hundred and fifty people said either. However, they did not cross that line, the point of no return. If they had crossed that line, I am sure they would have found that verses twelve through fourteen would be true too.

*And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace; where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow. [You are going to rest if you are righteous. It does not mean that you have nothing to do; it just means that you will not get tired. That is rest of a sort. We call Sunday a day of rest, don't we? Do you have anything to do on Sunday?]*

*And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.*

*Now this is the state of the souls of the wicked, yea, in darkness, and a state of awful, fearful looking for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God upon them [that does not sound very good, but it is a good description of what the attempted suicides reported]; thus they remain in this state, as well as the righteous in paradise, until the time of their resurrection.*

I think there are a lot of truths that we could get out of good books; but check it against the scriptures and make sure it does not contradict what you find there. It is important that you improve your mind.

The second area in which the Lord would like to have you prepared we call career development. That means you ought to have a skill. You ought to have an education, but you ought to learn how to do something with that education. I do not think it makes much difference what you do. A lot of young people have asked me, "What shall I do with my life?" They are going to school here, but they do not know what they want to do. I do not think it makes any difference what you do, as long as you do



something that you like. If you do something you like, you will do it better. The better you do it, the more compensation you will receive for it. It is important that you do something that allows you to earn a good living, because you have to provide for a family; and that is what education is all about, in my opinion.

As I travel around the Church, I frequently look at tithing records. I was in a stake not long ago where the stake president was a Ph.D., a college professor; a smart man, excellent man as a matter of fact. His first counselor was a plumber. Would you believe that the plumber paid twice the tithing that the stake president paid? I heard a story recently that illustrates this circumstance. A dentist had a leak in his pipes, so he called the plumber. The plumber fixed the leak and gave him a bill, and when the dentist saw the bill he just about dropped his uppers. "Well, I've never seen such fees!" he said. "I don't even charge my patients fees like this."

And the plumber said, "When I was a dentist, I didn't either."

It is important that you learn a trade and get yourself qualified to do something and do it well. And you ought to go where your trade can be performed. I visited with a stake president down in Miami, Florida, some years ago. In the conversation, I asked him how he happened to be in Miami, because he was from Idaho. He said he had come down with the space agency, and when he got down there the space agency finished their business and he lost his job. They offered him a job up in Portland, Oregon, as I recall, at the same salary he was receiving down in Florida, but he said, "I didn't go, even though I suffered a severe reduction in salary, because I knew the Lord wanted me here. I was the stake president."

And I said, "I think you may have made a serious mistake. How do you know the Lord wasn't trying to get you to go to Portland, Oregon?" Do you know what it took to get the Smith family from Sharon, Windsor County,

Vermont, over to Palmyra, New York, where they had to be? President Joseph Fielding Smith said in his *Essentials in Church History* that it took three crop failures and an impending drought—then they moved of their own accord. It is just as President Tanner said one time: "The Latter-day Saints came to the Rocky Mountains of their own free will, because they had to." We know the Lord could have sent an angel to Brother Smith. He did just a few years later. He could have said, "Brother Smith, I'd like you to move your family over to Palmyra, New York, for there is something we want Joseph to do over there." But he did not. He just made it untenable for them to stay in Vermont, so they moved to New York.

I heard of another case of a bishop who was called in Idaho. I think he was a bishop for about two months; then he lost his job. They offered him a job in Seattle, Washington. He went. Three months later he was a stake president. The Lord can move you around; he will if you let him. You ought to go where your opportunities are because you have to provide for your family. Yes, President Lee has said, "The most important of the Lord's work you'll ever do will be the work you do within the walls of your own home." President David O. McKay said, "No success can compensate for failure in the home." Provide for your family. That has to do with your career.

Under the heading of financial and resource management, you need to be prepared financially for that which is to come. The most important thing you could do in this area would be to pay your tithing. That is the Lord's financial plan. When you pay your tithing you have a promise from the Lord that you will always have sufficient for your needs; you will be able to provide for all the choice spirits the Lord will see fit to send you. You will be active, you will be happy, and you will be a great success. He also said, "He that is tithed shall not be burned at my coming" (D&C 64:23). It is great fire insurance.

But you ought to pay your tithing when you get it, with the first tenth going to the Lord. It belongs to him. If you pay it as soon as you get it, you get by with paying ten percent; if you wait until you have spent ninety percent, it will cost you a hundred percent to pay it. It is much easier to pay it when you can pay a tenth than it is when you must pay everything. It is also important that you budget your money and live within your income and not get involved in a bunch of credit cards. Save your money. Pay cash. Yes, you can do that. You still get a cash discount.

I recommend that you never buy a new car. You pay entirely too much for the smell of a new car. If you drive a new car out of the showroom, drive it around the block, and bring it straight back, they will not offer you within a thousand dollars of what you paid for it. That is too much to pay for the smell of a new car. You should buy a car that someone else bought on time and cannot pay for. You will get a great discount that way.

It is also vitally important that, after you give the Lord his tenth, you take the second tenth and put it away in a savings account under your own name. Do not give it to your wife or husband, as the case may be; do not give it to your children, do not give it to your in-laws, do not give it to your bishop, do not give it to your stake president, do not give it to anybody in this world—except the president of the Church; if he asks you for it, you can give it to him. Let it draw interest. If you will do that, if you will save one-tenth of what you earn throughout your working life, when you get to be sixty—retirement age—you will be ready to go on your second mission. That is what we are going to expect of you: go not only when you are nineteen, but again when you get your family raised, with your companion—eternal this time. You will have enough for your mission. In fact, you will be independently wealthy, because it will be drawing interest all the time. President Grant said, “Those who

understand interest collect it. Those who do not pay it.” You should learn to understand it.

Take better care of your possessions, that which you have right now. Wipe your car off. Wipe off your washing machine when you get through using it, and do not let it rust out. It is important that you take care of what you have.

Under the heading of home production and storage, let me give you one little statement on that; I guess I do not have to say much about it. The Lord has been saying for over forty years that you ought to have a year’s supply of food. That is all; just about forty-one years. It will not do any good to go stand before the bar, slightly scorched, and say, “Lord, you really didn’t give us enough time; you know, it wasn’t fair. You only gave us forty years of warning and you know you gave Noah a hundred and ten years. It’s not fair.” This is what the prophet said, at the dedication of the Kaysville elevator back on June 10 of 1976:

*And I hope—and this is my brief message to you today—that no one ever reads one word about the terrible flood, the sadness that it brought, the loss of life, the loss of livestock, destruction of farms, the suffering that has come to those good people [that was the Teton Dam disaster]; I say again, I hope that no one here will ever read another word about that disaster, without saying quietly to himself again, “No moment will ever pass when I will not be prepared as the Brethren tell me to do.” One year’s supply of commodities well cared, well selected, is a minimum. It is the minimum, and no family, if they’ve been married for only a day or a week, they should begin to have their year’s supply. Now that’s basic and we mean it. [When a prophet says, “We mean it,” can you disregard that? Not without suffering.] And there should be no family under the sound of my voice who is not already prepared for whatever eventuality may come.*

When you are prepared you shall not fear.

Under the heading of physical health, it is important that you be healthy. You ought to take care of yourself. Of course, the Word of Wisdom is given to you for that particular purpose. We do not know all the reasons why we have the Word of Wisdom. I know that you can live the Word of Wisdom all your life and die of lung cancer. It has happened. It does not mean that you will not die of cancer, but it does mean that you will feel better while you are alive. I know that—I have had experience on both sides of this commandment. Living the Word of Wisdom will make you feel better, and you have to feel good if you are going to live the gospel. You know you have to love people—not just those that love you; that is too easy, you see—you have to love everybody, and you have to treat them with love and kindness and respect. It is easier to do that when you feel good. If you get up in the morning with a headache and someone says something cross to you, what do you say? “Lord bless you”? No; if you are not careful you will resort to the Law of Moses. You cannot be saved in this dispensation by living the Law of Moses. Not an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth—you have to live the Law of the Gospel that says you have to do good to those that spitefully use you, turn the other cheek, and go the second mile. You will feel better if you live the Word of Wisdom.

President McKay, back in April of 1968, also said that if we will live the Word of Wisdom we will learn something about self-control that will allow us to control our passions and desires when we need to (*Improvement Era*, June 1968, p. 4). I know it is true. Since he made that statement, I have interviewed probably five thousand or more young men and women, some not so young, who have violated the laws of chastity. I have never found one that had not broken the Word of Wisdom first. I made that statement some time ago at a stake conference, and as I was leaving the meeting, a young man followed me to the door, and he grabbed me by

the hand and jerked me back inside and said, “Elder Rector, I want you to know that I’ve violated the laws of chastity, and I didn’t break the Word of Wisdom first.”

I said, “Oh, is that right? Why not?”

And he said, “I never did like the taste of the stuff.”

I told him, “I’m not going to change my testament on the basis of your story. How did you know you didn’t like the taste of the stuff?”

“Oh,” he said, “I tasted it.”

And I said, “That’s just what I said.”

It is also important that you maintain proper weight control. When I came home from a mission down in Florida, five years ago now, I was thirty pounds overweight. So I got up at 5:30 every morning and went to the Deseret Gym at 6:00 for about an hour and fifteen minutes of racquetball. I lost that thirty pounds. I feel great. We need to take care of ourselves, and it is important that we do.

Practice preventive measures to preserve good health. Everybody should know how to take care of a burn, or a cut artery or vein. You learn this at church, in Relief Society, Primary, Scouts, Mutual. (Yes, Mutual, that is what it is going to be; we have returned to the name *Mutual*. Isn’t that great? Because no one knew what to call it.)

Under the heading of social and emotional strength—and this is the last area we will consider—it is important that you read the scriptures, as we said before, but it is also important that you have personal and family prayer. Brethren, each of you should always kneel with your wife in prayer before you retire in the evening. If some problems have developed during the day, the best way to smooth them out, President Lee said, is as you kneel together in the evening in prayer and when you finish that prayer you ought to kiss your wife and tell her you love her. That is the minimum—once a day for all eternity. And if you will follow that simple rule, you will never have so many

problems during the day that you cannot handle them in the evening.

Repent of wrongdoings. You can repent of anything, except murder where you shed innocent blood, or the sin against the Holy Ghost. Anything else you can repent of; it takes time, but you can do it, because we have a gracious and kind Elder Brother that made it possible. He did not have any sins of his own. He took upon himself our sins. We caused him to suffer; but he did it because he loves us, and he says, "If you'll come unto me and confess your sins and forsake them and follow me, you will go free." We would be silly not to take advantage of that offer.

It is important to attend church meetings regularly and participate, hold family home evening on a regular basis, and perform frequent acts of service for family members and others. As a matter of fact, that is how we are going to be judged at the last day, on the basis of what we have done for other people. This is made very plain in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, where Jesus said,

*When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angles with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:*

*And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

*And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

*For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

*Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.*

*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying: Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

*When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

*Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?* [I don't ever remember us seeing you like that. You must have us mixed up with someone else. People do look a lot alike, you know.]

*And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* [Matthew 25:31-40]

That is the way we are going to be judged. John said,

*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* [Revelation 20:12-13]

That is how it is going to be. We are going to be judged on the basis of what we do for other people. But we must do it with love; that is the only way they will accept it. If you really want to help somebody, then you have to love them. If you do not they will not listen.

So the Lord wants us prepared both personally and as a family. We have to be prepared, if we do not want to be afraid; "[when] ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30), because there will be a crown of righteousness laid up for you that cannot pass away. James told us what will happen if we get involved in helping somebody else. The last two verses of the book of James make it very plain. He said:

*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;*

*Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from*

*death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.* [James 5:19–20]

We know what hides the sins of the person that comes into the Church, don't we? Yes, it costs you something to join this Church; it costs you your sins. That is one reason it is hard to bring people in. After all, their sins belong to them, and they want to hold on to them. But they cannot. They have to leave them on the outside. So it hides the sins of the person that comes into the Church, but the inference is very plain that it also hides the sins of the missionary or the member who brings them in. I would not dare give you that interpretation of that scripture if I had not heard Harold B. Lee say that is what it means. If you would like to get more evidence on it, you will find it in *The Miracle of Forgiveness* by Spencer W. Kimball; but when you bring somebody into the Church it will hide your sins at the last day.

May the Lord bless you to be prepared, yes, and to enjoy this probation where you are

being prepared to meet God. It is important that you be happy, but "wickedness never was happiness" (Alma 41:10), and the Master said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17). I bear witness to you that God our Heavenly Father is our Father, that he knows us all by our first name—he could call you by your first name—and that he hears and answers prayers. I know he does. He has heard and answered mine. I bear witness to you that Jesus is the Christ and that he lives. I know that he lives—yes, and that he has reestablished this, his true Church, on earth. You are a product of it, and this University is a product of it. It is through the great prophet Joseph Smith that we have a living prophet of God on earth today. That is Spencer W. Kimball—follow him and you will never go wrong, for he leads us in the path of righteousness as he communes with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose Church it really is, and whose plan we must follow if we would be happy. May you be happy, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.