

Ten Directives to Strengthen Our Lives

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Brothers and sisters, it's good to be with you. As Sister Bateman mentioned, we have a tender spot for LDS Business College because three of our daughters went to school here.

You don't look a lot different than the people in Asia or Asia north. I find I need to run through these countries because we've gone a few places and someone will come up and say you didn't mention where I live. So in Asia North we served in Japan, Korea and Eastern Russia. In Asia we served in Mongolia, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Singapore. Any of you that might have served or are from any of those countries have a great and wonderful heritage.

Brothers and sisters, I don't know whether you realize who you are and the importance that you are in the great plan that our Father has for His children of the world. I want to talk about some of the things that are happening and some of the things that will happen. Elder Boyd K. Packer said, "We live in troubled times, very troubled times. We hope and we pray for better days, but that is not to be.... No one will be spared the trials to come. No one will be spared the trials common to home and family, work, disappointment, grief, health, aging, ultimately death." We'll probably all go through that. Some of us are going through it in different stages now. (Boyd K. Packer, "The Cloven Tongues of Fire," *Ensign*, May 2000, 7). He went on to quote out of 2nd Nephi, chapter 32, the 2nd to 5th verses. I'm not going to take the time to do that because of the amount of time we have. These verses are to remind us who we are and that we have the Holy Ghost to direct us, to help us, and to guide us, that we should know what we should be doing and be able to gain the inspiration the Holy Ghost will give to us.

The fourth and fifth verses in 2nd Nephi, chapter 32, say, "Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

"For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do."

Now I want to use another scripture from the 138th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The 56th verse says, "Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord."

That's us. We were prepared, and I don't know whether you've ever done this, but sometime you will question yourself with Why was I born now? Why am I here now? Why wasn't I one of those members that had to cross the big plains with a wagon or hand cart, or Why wasn't I during the dark ages, or Why wasn't I during the time of Noah

when everybody said that crazy old man is out in the back yard building a boat and there isn't even any water around. Why are you born now? Then that scripture goes on to say, the due time of the Lord is "to labor in his vineyard, for the salvation of the souls of men." That's who you are. Now the most important salvation you will gain is that of your salvation, what you're going to do.

Now 30 percent of you are married; that's wonderful. If you are married, work at your marriage because it's the most important thing you will ever have and your companion is the most important person you will ever have. For you who are not married, seek out a companion that is worthy to make your marriage an eternal marriage because that's very important and the things that you are going to do are important.

I am going to share with you about ten things I feel are pertinent and important to you as an individual and as a member of the Church. As Sister Bateman mentioned, she was not a member of the Church. There are some of you who may not be members of the Church. You should gain great friendship from those around who are, because you are a child of God as we all are, and none of us are exempt from that. We are all children of our Father in Heaven and He teaches us and has taught us and will continue to do so.

Now this world that we live in is in a tough state. I've heard President Hinckley say and I've heard President Faust say, among others, that the only difference between Sodom and Gomorrah and today is that Sodom and Gomorrah were two cities. Today wickedness is all over the entire world and we are a part of the world. But we do not have to be part of the world. We need to set ourselves different standards. Some of you have children, some of you don't. But you are children not only of our Father in Heaven but of earthly parents. I hope that your parents taught you. If they did, that's wonderful. If they didn't, then you set the resolve that you will teach your children.

Brother Packer said on a different occasion this: "If all your children know about the gospel is what you have taught them at home, how safe will they be? Will they reject evil because they choose to reject it?" (Boyd K. Packer, "Agency and Control," *Ensign*, May 1983, 66). If you want your children to grow spiritually teach them the doctrines of the gospel.

What we are to learn is the doctrines of the gospel, and we learn them from the teachings that we gain from the scriptures—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price. We learn by reading them and studying them.

Make sure that you have a personal testimony and witness of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon's teachings are mainly a father teaching his children. Father Lehi teaches Nephi and Laman, Lemuel, Sam and all of his children. Mosiah teaches his sons and the sons of Mosiah. Alma teaches Alma the Younger. Helaman, son of Alma, teaches Helaman, his son. And of course, Mormon teaches Moroni. Throughout the scriptures they are teaching. I'm going to use a couple of scriptures. You don't have to look them up because I'm going through them quickly but I'll tell you what they are. You can write them down and if you want to look them up later, that's fine. Alma 37th chapter, 13th verse says, "O remember, remember, my son Helaman, how strict are the commandments of God....If ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence." Let me come back to that scripture and use it a little bit more. Alma was teaching his sons in all of that part of the Book of Mormon and he wanted them to know of the things that they should know. He

referred back to the Liahona that Father Lehi had when they came to the promised land in this part of the world. And he said this: "For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better promised land." (Alma 37:45). In Alma 37:46 it says: "O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way.

We really do have it easy. When you travel you get into an air-conditioned car, then you get out and go into an air-conditioned building, and you have these wonderful accommodations that you are able to study in and it is very easy. We are promised great blessings and we have received great blessings. But he goes on to tell us to not be slothful because the easiness of the way is prepared, that if we will look we may live forever, that we will take care of these sacred things, that we will look to God and live.

Now my brothers and sisters, follow what Christ's teachings are, and what we are taught in the scriptures. If you follow their course they will lead you and guide you.

Now I want to use another example. When you read the Book of Mormon you pick up things that are taught and you will find that a great, great grandson will teach the same things that his great, great grandfather taught. In the book of Helaman it's the same thing. In the 9th and 12th verses of Helaman, chapter 5, he says, "O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake... that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.... And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation;... a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall."

Make sure your foundation is firm wherever you build it and it is based upon the gospel. I want to share ten things that will help all of us. I don't care what station of life you're in, whether you're already married, whether you're planning on getting married, or whether you're just going to school to try get an education or whether you're grandparents.

1-Share the gospel: You are always teaching the gospel. You know when a prophet says something we should always listen to what he says. When you get another prophet that says the same thing, we'd better listen intently. When we get a third prophet that says basically the same thing, we better well know that we ought to do that. Now in my lifetime I remember President David O McKay saying "Every member a missionary." I remember President Spencer W. Kimball saying the same thing, "Do it! Share the Gospel." He challenged us as members of the Church to bring one person each year into the gospel. Now President Hinckley is saying the same thing. They were all missionaries and we need to look to bring souls unto Christ. Pray earnestly as President Hinckley says to bring people unto Christ. When I came home from my mission, I didn't know who I was going to marry. I met a wonderful young lady who was not a member of the Church and didn't know a lot about it. After studying, she joined the church and is now my eternal companion. Let the Lord guide you as to where you need to be to gain that.

2-Attend your sacrament meetings every week: Be where you ought to be when you ought to be there. In Jarom 1:5 it says that they observed to keep the Sabbath day holy unto the Lord. The Savior said in 3rd Nephi 18:10: "Blessed are ye for this thing which ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness unto the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you." Attend your

sacrament meetings wherever you are. You can go throughout this world and you are not far from a sacrament meeting being held. Always remember to do that.

3-Have your daily personal and family prayers: If you're married, kneel down with your companion, hand in hand, and talk to the Lord, taking turns doing it. I will add one little thing Sister Bateman and I do that you ought to do. When we get through our prayers we look at each other eye to eye and say "I love you" Love your companion and treat your companion as who they are—a son or daughter of God.

Now I'm going to skip over a couple of scriptures here, but 2nd Nephi 32 in the eighth verse says: "For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray." If you find yourself in a situation where you say, "Well I'm tired, I won't pray today, tonight or in the morning," you are following the evil spirit which teaches a man not to pray. Don't! Just make sure that you pray always so that you cannot get into bed at night without saying your prayers. You just have the "guilties" if you do. When you pray, don't pray and then "amen," and into bed. Listen to what the Lord will say to you. He will answer your prayers. He will give you the inspiration. Listen for the direction that He will give to you.

4-Personal and family scripture study: Study the scriptures, read the scriptures every day. You who have been on missions, you had two hours every day to study the scriptures. That was wonderful. You don't have that much time now, but you have enough time to read something in the scriptures every day. Do that, and then ponder and think about that which you read. I will give you a reference that you can look up later: 1st Nephi 19:22-23. Now I will use this one scripture in Acts 17 where the Apostle Paul is teaching. In the 11th verse he says, "They received the word...and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Brothers and sisters, do you know that it's true. Do you know that the gospel of Jesus Christ was here upon the earth when He was here? Do you know that it has been restored in its fullness today? Search the scriptures so that you will know that it is so and that it is true.

5-Pay your tithes and your offerings: "Will a man rob God? yet you have robbed me." (Malachi 3:8) Paying your tithing is not a matter of money, it is a matter of faith. Do you have enough faith to pay your tithing? I'll promise you that you will be able to make all your commitments and make all your ends meet if you pay your tithing. The Lord is promising that either in Malachi 3:8-11, or in 3 Nephi 24: 8-11 also, it says He will open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it, and that he will rebuke the devourer, and He will make you prosperous if you pay your tithing.

6-Families can be eternal: Now those of you who are married, I hope you married in the temple, because it is the only place you can make a marriage eternal. If you're married and haven't been to the temple then put your life in order and go. Always look for a companion that is worthy to go to the temple because there is something that is very special about having an eternal companion rather than somebody that will not be yours when they die or you die, "Until death do you part." So make sure that your family is eternal because that's our Father's plan. I hope that all of you have a Family Proclamation with you. Read the Family Proclamation, study it. Let us have it on our walls, take it off the wall and read it and look at it because it teaches great truths and

principles. Hold your family home evenings, be at family home evenings, and talk to each other to get the ideas that other people have.

7-Temple and Family History: Have you been to the temple? Go back as often as you can. As close as it is you ought to go quite often. We all have the responsibility to seek out our ancestors, because we cannot be saved and exalted without them and they cannot be saved without us. So we need to do that to teach our families. Elder Packer wrote in the Shield of Faith, “The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father.” (Boyd K. Packer, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 7). That is the ultimate goal. As the Father said in Moses, “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” (Moses 1:39).

8-Sing the hymns of Zion: There is nothing nicer than to sing the hymns. When we were in Korea, the Koreans had beautiful voices, just naturally beautiful voices. I won’t take the time to tell you about the stories there. Just sing the hymns; they’re wonderful.

9-The service of the Lord: When you are in the service of the Lord, when you are in the service of your fellow beings as King Benjamin said in Mosiah, “You are only in the service of your God.” (Mosiah 2:17). You serve. Be willing, no matter what the calling comes, that you will say, yea Lord, I will go and do. It doesn’t matter what the calling is. What matters is whether or not you are willing to do it. So be willing to serve wherever the Lord will call you to serve. And understand that you will be released. Accept the release with the same graciousness that you accepted the call. At October Conference I will be released as one of the general authorities of the Church, and people say, “Well, what are you going to do next?” I said to my stake president, “Well it would be nice to be a primary teacher.” It doesn’t matter, whatever the Lord calls us to do.

10-The Strength of Youth; Keeping the Standards: I will refer to the 37th chapter of Alma, the 32nd verse to the 37th verse. These verses have seventeen things that we need to do. I’m going to run through these seventeen things. “And now, my son, remember the words which I have spoken unto you; trust not those secret plans unto this people, but teach them an everlasting” number one, “hatred against sin and iniquity. Preach unto them,” number two, “repentance, and,” number three, “faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to,” number four, “humble themselves and to be,” number five, “meek and,” number six, “lowly in heart; teach them to,” number seven, “withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach them to,” number eight, “never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart; for such shall find rest to their souls.”

The 35th verse goes on to say, “O, remember, my son, and,” number nine, “learn wisdom in thy youth; yea,” number ten, “learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.” Verse 36, “Yea, and, number eleven, “cry unto God for all thy support; yea,” number twelve, “let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea,” number 13, “let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea,” number 14, “let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.” In the 37th verse, number 15 “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will,” and here’s a promise, “direct thee for good.” And He will direct you. Number sixteen, “Lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep;” number 17, “and when thou risest in

the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things," then the final promise, "ye shall be lifted up at the last day."

Now brothers and sisters remember these things. Oh remember, remember the gospel of Jesus Christ is true; it is restored in its fullness. Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. He lives! Joseph Smith is His prophet; Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet as well as ours. Listen intently to what they teach. Every six months we receive instructions from the prophets of God. Follow what they teach. Know that it is all true. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.