

LDS Business College Devotional  
Elder Jay E. Jensen  
February 14, 2007

**Elder Jensen:**

Before I begin—because it is Valentine’s Day—Happy Valentine’s Day. Reach out in love to someone. It is not often that I am able to have my sweetheart and companion with me, and since she’s always ready, we’ll hear a brief testimony from her and then I’ll proceed with what I have to share.

**Sister Jensen:**

I thought I was going to be able just to listen today, but it’s always a pleasure to stand before a group of Latter-day Saint youth and their leaders and bear my testimony, because of all the talents I have—which are few—the one I value the most is my testimony. I never tire of sharing it and bearing it. I know that the gospel of Jesus Christ is on the earth today in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know that the Prophet Joseph Smith was God’s prophet for the restoration of this gospel. I know that Gordon B. Hinckley is God’s prophet on the earth today, and that he directs this, the Lord’s church, through inspiration and revelation.

I know that my husband’s calling was an inspired calling, and that he is an inspired man. And I know you will enjoy hearing from him today. It’s such a joy to be active and involved in this wonderful, living, growing Church of the Savior. The Lord loves us. He loves each one of us individually. Each one of you He knows personally. I hope you know that. I suspect that you do. I’ve noticed throughout my life that the youth of the Church today are much further ahead in life than I was when I was your age. And it just thrills me to be in your presence and recognize your potential. I hope you’re happy in your heart and know of Heavenly Father’s love, and that you have someone to love.

There’s a saying that you’ve probably all heard—and I believe it—that in order to be happy you must have someone to love, something to look forward to, and an important work to do. You’re preparing for that important work, I suspect, being students here. I hope you know that it’s more important to have someone to love than it is to have someone to love you, because that’s what I’ve found in my life. I find that when I love others, I don’t want for someone to love me. It just fills me to be able to love others, and I hope that’s what you’re finding.

I love my Savior. He is my exemplar. I appreciate more and more every day of my life the sacrifice He made for every one of us, for the suffering he suffered for me and you that we might return to Him and our Father in Heaven. I’m so grateful for the gift of the Holy Ghost that has taught me all these truths.

I also, on this Valentine’s Day, want to tell you that I love my husband. He is a wonderful, inspired man, and it’s a privilege to stand at his side. And I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

**Elder Jensen:**

I love my wife and wish her, especially, a Happy Valentine’s Day. And any man, any husband—as we used to say in Mapleton, Utah where I was born and raised—any man

with a lick of sense is quick to acknowledge that we become what we become primarily because of the sweetheart by our side. Isn't that right, President? It really is a truism.

You've got the screens? And I'm going to begin. I can see a screen here, but I don't know if you can see anything on the screen. One of the things we learn in the Church is to be patient.

Last Saturday, a very significant meeting was held. By show of hands in this room, how many of you saw and participated in the Worldwide Satellite Broadcast on Teaching and Learning? Not too many. Your assignment is to find some stake that recorded it, because we're not going to send out a DVD right away. We will post it on the internet in the coming weeks in audio, video, and then we will print the transcript of what we did for most of it in the June Ensign.

The focus was on teaching and learning. Those two words are companions. They're inseparable. It reminds me of that one phrase from Matthew 23 where the Savior was chastising the people, the leaders particularly, the Jewish leaders: "These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone." (v. 23) We have spent a lot of time, sacred funds, and emphasis on teaching. We have not been as good on learning. And my message to you today is what you see on the screen. "Wherefore, now let every man [and woman] learn." (D&C 107:99)

I want to say some things today to help you become a more diligent learner, particularly by following the example of the Savior, who was the perfect diligent learner. To begin with Him—as I said, our satellite broadcast was on teaching and learning, with those two desired outcomes: to improve teaching, but especially to begin to improve learning, and to put more of the burden and make it a more shared—and here we are in an educational institution. Your teachers hope that you can acquire skills in becoming better learners, and that's what I'm going to talk about.

Elder Nelson gave a talk many years ago that had a very lasting impact on me. He pointed out that the Savior came to the earth primarily to do two things: 1) To work out the infinite and eternal Atonement, and 2) to set an example in all things, but especially how the Savior set an example of His love as a servant, how He served one another, and then He as a teacher and a learner. I should have inserted that in the visual, but I didn't.

Everything you are working on in Gospel Doctrine this year in the New Testament can be categorized under those—the way Elder Nelson has put this illustration together. I love the Savior. I am one of His witnesses, and I declare that He lives. He's real. And He truly is an example as a teacher and a learner.

Now in order to talk about us as teachers and as learners, I want to lay a foundation about who we really are as dual beings. And as dual beings, and in order to be true gospel learners, we have to do it through and by the power of the Holy Ghost. So who are we? This you know. Spirits are eternal. At the first organization in heaven we were all present and saw the Savior chosen and appointed and the plan of salvation made, and we sanctioned it.

In that premortal state—we learn this from the Doctrine and Covenants 138:56—“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 to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men.” When my wife and I do a mission tour, I like to stop with the missionaries and—if this were more informal I would do it

with you, but I know the clock marches on—and it's contrary to my nature to just talk. But I know the setting and time today.

You think about it. Let's suppose that you are seated now in the premortal life and I'm your teacher. But in heaven, it was your Heavenly Father, and I suppose, others. And you came to this class and you brought a manual, a manual of instruction to prepare you to come to earth. You'd open it up, and there would be a table of contents. What would be some of the lessons, or the titles to the lessons, that your spirit learned? What would they be? If we had some time, we'd make a list on the board, but obviously, the plan, agency, obedience, families, how to operate and run a body. Simple things like that. We there learned our first lessons.

And we really were prepared to come forth, so much so that President Joseph F. Smith made this comment: "All those salient truths which come home so forcibly to the head and heart seem but the awakening of the memories of the spirit. Can we know anything here that we did not know before we came? If Christ knew beforehand, so did we. And we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home."

How many of you are converts to the Church—were not born and raised? How many of you, by show of hands, when the missionaries first taught you, you began to nod your head this way and smile, and you began to say things like, "Elder, Sister, I have always believed that." Anyone? "You know, that really makes sense, Elder."

Those are the awakenings.

There's another one. President Hugh B. Brown: "Sometimes there in solitude I hear truth spoken with clarity and freshness. Uncolored and untranslated, it speaks from within myself in a language original but inarticulate"—that's an interesting concept, inarticulate. In Corinthians, there's a lot about that—"heard only with the soul, and I realize I brought it with me. Was never taught it, nor can I efficiently teach it to another. And why is that so? Because the Holy Ghost is our teacher."

He really is the teacher. I'll illustrate that in just a moment.

And this one, as we get into the idea of teacher and learner, in the Book of Mormon: "And the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner." (Alma 1:26)

Let me illustrate it. Here is a divine pattern from the Doctrine and Covenants, based on Section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants. But I'd like to introduce it with a statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith: "All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of the affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits"—now listen to this—"precisely as though our bodies had no spirit at all. Those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies." Although Joseph Smith did not say it, the corollary is true. When the adversary sends a revelation to you, he sends it directly to your body precisely as though you had no spirit. And those revelations from the adversary that will enslave the body will lead the spirit and the body down to hell.

But it is. God speaks to the spirit, and then...

In Section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 21 and 22, "Why is it that ye cannot understand and know, that he that receiveth the word by the Spirit of truth receiveth it as it is preached by the Spirit of truth?"

“Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together.”

Now, notice in my little illustration that the man off to the side is a little bit above. And notice he is not placed directly between God and the man. And any teacher who tries to place himself in that role is violating agency and the divine pattern. So you, the teacher, are off to the side and a little bit above. President Lee used to say so often, “We stand on higher ground, not only by example, but more by our assignments and callings.”

For example, near the end of my message today, I’m going to invite the student council, and they have a little assignment. And I will sit down as they teach. We move about and change places, learners and teachers, but never getting in the way or interfering with what God and his Holy Spirit do.

Now, a quote from Elder Scott. I referred to this in the satellite broadcast when Elder Holland invited me to participate. In Section 50, it talks about understanding and being edified. Down at the bottom, it shows “preach and receive.” That’s more horizontal. Edification and rejoicing are gifts of the Spirit. Now here’s what Elder Scott said: “The verb *understand* refers to that which is heard. It is the same message to all. *Edified* concerns that which is communicated by the Holy Ghost. The message can be different and tailored by the Spirit to the needs of each individual. Assure that there is abundant participation”—he’s talking to seminary and institute teachers—“that there is abundant participation, because that use of agency by a student authorizes the Holy Ghost to instruct. It also helps the student [the learner] retain your message.” As you, the learner, verbalize truths, they are confirmed in their souls and strengthen their personal testimonies.

Another illustration of this, in 2 Nephi 33:1. As I go through this, pay particular attention to a little preposition, “unto.” “Now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it”—notice the preposition—“carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men.” Notice it doesn’t say “into.” There are other verses where it does say “into,” but only if the following happens.

How many of you have seen this painting before? There isn’t anybody that hasn’t, I suppose. What is the peculiar characteristic about this painting that observers pointed out to the artist? What’s the problem? There’s no doorknob. To which he responded with: “That’s by design. I intentionally left off the doorknob, because it’s found on the other side.” The Savior stands at the door and knocks. The Holy Ghost stands at the door and knocks. And it is only opened from the inside, by your use of agency. And then the Holy Ghost will come *into*, as you invite him.

President David O. McKay has captured, in my judgment, one of the finest educational philosophical statements that I have ever found: “There are three things which must guide all teachers. First, get into the subject. Second, get that subject into you. Third, try to lead your pupils [your students, your learners] to get the subject into them, not pouring it into them, but doing these three things—by leading them to see what you see, to know what you know, and to feel what you feel.”

That is now foundational for what I’m going to invite the student council, if they’ll come in the sequence that...however you want to come forward, one at a time, because I want you to lay a foundation for me now with this doctrine, this understanding of who we

really are as dual beings. And I want to move on to the conclusion of what I really want to share with you about being a learner.

Here's what they are to speak to: (visual) I am becoming a diligent learner when I...

*Responses by student council members:*

- I am becoming a diligent learner when I submit to the will of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and the will of the church leaders and my priesthood leaders.
- I am becoming a diligent learner when I serve those around me and learn from them.
- I am becoming a diligent learner when I wait for answers to come as I diligently search for them.
- I become a diligent learner when I read my scriptures, ponder and pray.
- I am becoming a diligent learner when I am patient with Heavenly Father in the questions that I have for Him in my prayers.
- I am becoming a diligent learner when I plan and am consistent with my studies, and make sure that I study and research on a consistent basis. That way I can acquire more knowledge.

Thank you. You are good learners. I leave that for you, in your own journal and so forth, how you would respond to that. To return to the satellite broadcast which was last Saturday, there were three segments to it, those of you who did not see it. The first thirteen minutes consisted of an interview—Elder Perry interviewing President Packer. Embedded in those comments by President Packer are some of the most important principles this beautiful student council just taught, and that you, the choir sang to, to help lay a foundation to learn today, which I thank you sincerely.

If you'll look at those words of President Packer, I'm going to summarize some of them, not all. But these are I think what I heard President Packer tell us if President Packer were to finish that sentence. He said: "I am becoming a diligent learner when I want to learn, when I am teachable." Which one of you said being submissive and teachable? You're in synch. It's nice to be in synch with a member of the Twelve. And that you don't resent it.

If there's any one thing that President Woodhouse and I have learned, being around general authorities and members of the First Presidency and the Twelve, is that whenever they give correction, which they do, if you resent it in the slightest, what will happen, President? They stop giving it. They stop giving it. And that is painful. Of all the painful things we as general authorities worry about, is to never resent or resist counsel and instruction from our file leader.

Now that's also true in marriage. As you counsel and teach one another. And that's sometimes hard for us, particularly the male. I'm speaking for myself.

Number two is when—who said prayer? When you pray, pray in specifics, formally and informally, for yourself and for the teacher, and for me at this very moment. I may not say it quite right. I'm very weak and feeble in words and expression. But I know that the Holy Ghost is not, and if we will come, being teachable, and pray right now, "Oh, Father. Elder Jensen does not know the load and burden that I currently carry. Help him

to say it, or teach it to me directly.” When you start doing that as a learner, you start getting answers.

Study, search, ponder and apply the scriptures. Which one of you said that? Thank you. There is power. President Packer is a great student of the scriptures.

Number four is so significant. Learn to ask questions, and listen to both what is said and what is not said. They’re both important. And, as you have come here today, I see some of you making notes. Hopefully, in your notes, you are always sensitive to what is not said by the speaker, where the Holy Ghost will tailor the message to your particular need.

The next one—stay at it. President Packer was very emphatic in his interview. Stay at it. Don’t give up. And what did you say? Be persistent. Stay at it.

Here’s the remaining ones: Capture it, write, expand, organize. And if you really want to ensure that you’ve got it, find somebody to teach it. Until you can articulate it, you haven’t got it, generally speaking. Learn how to organize. All of you are taking notes in classes, you have to capture things. But learn how to organize it. As we watch missionaries in the field, if there’s any one thing we want to help the elders and sisters with, because they don’t do it very well, they have not come with a lot of discipline on how to organize learning. And I think we can do a lot to do that.

Now, be a good listener, said President Packer. And be a good observer. Especially—you remember his illustration, those of you who saw it—that he liked to walk Elder LeGrand Richards back to his office after the temple meeting because, he said, I’m selfish. I want to learn from my elders. They’ve been through some of these things. Be a good observer and listener, especially to the older people.

The next one, President Packer said to be a good, diligent learner: Arise early and retire early. I’ve just recently read a book called *Power Sleep*. As a general rule, and I’m looking over the audience, and some of you have the disease right now, we are a sleep-deprived society. And it’s evidenced—teachers, am I right?—by students not staying awake in class. Overall, we are a sleep-deprived society, and it impacts our ability to learn. Thus, arise early and retire early, and as President Packer pointed out, leave yourself open to revelation.

The next one—be punctual to your meetings, particularly sacrament meeting, that most spiritual meeting in the Church. And be reverent in it, and leave yourself open. Come and listen to the prelude. Don’t seek out somebody to talk to. Come as a diligent learner, and prepare yourself to get revelation.

And then finally, accept the responsibility for learning, irrespective of the quality of the message. I don’t know if you ever remember hearing or reading President Kimball saying he never heard a boring talk because he accepted the responsibility to be the learner, regardless of what the speaker said or did. Now that is very powerful.

Well, there are 144 scripture references about learning or its cognate.

- The Savior: “Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8)
- “Learn wisdom...learn in thy youth to keep the commandments.” (Alma 37:35)
- “Learn to be more wise than we.” (Mormon 9:31)
- “Learn of me...[and be] meek and lowly of heart.” (Matthew 11:29)
- “Seek learning, even by study, and also by faith.” (D&C 88:118)

- “Study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people.” (D&C 90:15)
- “[Seek] diligently to learn wisdom and to find truth.” (D&C 97:1)

I read an article many years ago, or heard the talk in person and I have a copy of it. It’s been one of my favorite talks, by Elder Marion D. Hanks. And in that, he talks about a Louis Agassiz, a distinguished naturalist. And he tells this story of an obscure spinster woman who insisted that she never had a chance to learn. He asked her, “What do you do?”

She said, “I’m single, and my sister and I run a boarding house.”

“What do you do?”

“I skin potatoes and chop onions.”

“Madame, where do you sit during those interesting but homely duties?”

“On the bottom step of the kitchen stairs.”

“Where do your feet rest?”

“On glazed brick.”

“What is glazed brick?”

“I don’t know, sir.”

He said, “How long have you been sitting there?”

“Fifteen years.”

“Madame, here is my personal card. Would you kindly write me a letter concerning the nature of glazed brick.”

She took him seriously. She went home, explored the dictionary, discovered that brick was a piece of baked clay, and so on and on and on. She went to a library, an encyclopedia. She didn’t know what vitrified kaolin hydrous aluminum silicate is, so she visited museums and then she went to a brickyard. And then she sat down and wrote 36 pages on the subject of glazed brick and tile to Dr. Agassiz.

“Dear Madame, this is the best article I’ve ever seen on the subject. If you’ll kindly change three words that I’ve marked with asterisks, I’ll have it published and pay you for it.”

Two hundred and fifty dollars came. But penciled at the bottom of the letter was this query: “What was under those bricks?”

And she had learned the value of time, and answered with a single word: “Ants.”

He wrote back and said, “Tell me about the ants.”

And so she began to study ants, wrote a treatise on it that was published by Dr. Agassiz, and which now she could travel the world to see the places where the ants lived.

Now there’s something very fundamental about that, to invite diligent learning and not be content—not be content with mediocrity.

In conclusion, this final scripture, which was my title, but I’ve extracted some words. It talks about “Wherefore let every man learn his duty.” I’ve taken that out and just captured the idea of learning. “Wherefore now, let every man [and woman] learn.” And learn “in all diligence.” And he or she that learns not “shall not be counted worthy to stand.” (D&C 107:99)

We can become better learners, and by being better learners we will be better teachers. I want to follow the example of the Savior, a master teacher. But what made Him a master teacher? He was first a learner, and did everything that President Packer

described in that interview. Of Him I bear witness, that He is real, that He lives and this is His Church and His holy work, and we are truly led by prophets, seers and revelators who hold all the keys of the kingdom. May the Lord bless us to become better learners is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.