

Section Seven

Relationships - Family - Service

- 253. There's No Place Like Home
- 254. Live By the Golden Rule
- 255. A Friend
- 256. Make a Living, Make a Life
- 257. Treat a Man As He Is
- 258. Moses My Son, Sariah My Daughter
- 259. Many of the Noble and Great Ones
- 260. Relationships- Vertical and Horizontal
- 261. Children Learn What They Live
- 262. You Are Needed
- 263. Don't Take It For Granted
- 264. Avoid Distractions
- 265. You Are- I Am
- 266. Take My Hand
- 267. What Two Married People Owe to One Another
- 268. Fifteen Minutes a Day
- 269. Family First
- 270. Give Them Your Best, Give Them Your Time
- 271. Finding Balance In Our Lives
- 272. Special Moments
- 273. Communication
- 274. The Three Selves
- 275. Leave Things Better Than You Find Them
- 276. Teach Them to Spread Their Wings and Fly
- 277. Date Night
- 278. Money Matters
- 279. Mother
- 280. Mothers Day
- 281. The Glory of Womanhood
- 282. Family Traditions
- 283. Go Hike, Go Camp, Go Read
- 284. Learn How to Say No
- 285. Say Something
- 286. Never Again!
- 287. Never Measure Life By Your Possessions
- 288. My House Is a House of Order
- 289. Anxious to Bless the Whole Human Race
- 290. The Ammon Principle
- 291. Go Visit the Lonely
- 292. Lose Yourself to Find Yourself
- 293. Debtors Prison

253. There's No Place Like Home

In the movie classic, "The Wizard of Oz" young Dorothy feels unwanted and unloved in her home and she decides to run away. Once she gets carried away in a fantasyland her desire soon becomes to find her way home. Too often we take for granted those closest to us, including our own family members. Which relationships will we still have fifty years from now? The chances are pretty high that most of your classmate relationships will have become a distant memory but your family relationships will hopefully remain and should strengthen through the years. A question we need to ask ourselves is, how do we act at home compared to how we act in public? The invitation is to be our best selves at home; we will probably then not have any major worries about our conduct outside the home. If we start at home to develop positive relationships then positive relationships outside the home will naturally follow. The story was recently told of a young boy who mercilessly teased his sister. He was given a challenge to see if he could go one day without teasing her. At the end of the day he was asked by his father how the day had gone. He proudly reported that he had gone the entire day without teasing her and she agreed. He was then asked if he could go three days and not tease her, and a major positive change of relationship was noted. Why don't you try an experiment? Try to do something nice for at least one but hopefully all the members of your family for one day and then see how you feel about it. As we progress throughout our lives, hopefully each of us can say: "There's No Place Like Home."

254. Live By the Golden Rule

We live in a reactionary world. It seems like if someone pushes you then you should push them back. The Savior did not teach us that we should do unto others as they have done unto us; rather, He signaled a higher law for us to follow. He taught that we should do unto others as we would have others do unto us. He taught in the Sermon on the Mount that if someone were to take away our coat we should let him have our cloak also; if someone smites us on one cheek we should turn the other as well. He taught us to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us and to do good to them that hate us. He taught us to choose to **ACT, NOT REACT** when the choice is placed before us. The gold standard of conduct is if we treat others in a way that we would be pleased to be treated, we are living that Golden Rule. The Savior gave a wonderful progression of living in the Sermon on the Mount. That pattern will serve as a guide to us throughout our sojourn here on this earth and to indeed let our light so shine that others will see our good works and glorify our Father who is in Heaven. The basis for the Golden Rule is found in Matthew 7:12, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

255. A Friend

How important is a friend? On some occasions friendship may save a life as Jonathan did in warning his friend David about the evil desires of his father, Saul. Friends help us make it through the crises of life and bring a smile and a positive outlook on the circumstances we face. Friends share experiences with us and give us a sense of purpose and commitment to see the beauty in life and feel the deep feelings of kinship with one another. **Having a friend is one of the great gifts of life and is something that we should each treasure and take the time to develop and nourish as we walk along the pathway of life.**

A Friend

What is a friend in this world today? Who can you count on in every way?

A friend is one who's there for you when times be good or bad.

A friend is one who knows your faults, but brushes them aside.

A friend does not just offer help, a friend lifts up your hand.

A true friend is worth more than gold, yes, more than wealth untold.

Who is your friend in whom you confide? Who'll take the time to stand by you?

A friend you love to be around, a friend can make you smile.

A friend is one who teaches you to stop and sit a while.

A friend will knit their heart with yours, a friend gives of his soul.

A friend will make you feel alive and warm your heart inside.

Chorus:

Friends bring joy and happiness to life.

Friends bring a smile and a sparkle to the eye.

In this whole world a better gift you'll never find

Than a true friend, who's faithful to the end.

Go be a friend and you'll find a friend. Give of yourself and you will find

A friend who's there to pick you up when you are feeling down.

A friend who'll help you start again, when you have run aground.

A friend will bring the sunshine in to brighten up your day.

A friend will put your hands in theirs and chase your fears away. RTS

256. Make a Living, Make a Life

John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach and motivational speaker shared this thought: **"Do not let making a living prevent you from making a life."** What a profound statement! During our lives we wear many hats and certainly making a living is one of the important ones. With that in mind we might ask ourselves this question: Where am I at my best? We may find that at the end of the workday we are too tired to give the same effort and attention at home as we do at work. When you think about it, someday your days of work will be concluded and what are you left with? Hopefully, those things of most value. For those that are married you may have heard the saying, "Happy wife, happy life." Hopefully we can find the balance, to work and provide for the needs that we have and then spend our best efforts in relationships with those that we love and care about. It has been said that when most people come to the end of their lives, in retrospect, that very few of them say, "I wish I had spent more time at the office." You only have one life to live and you are the architect of that life. Make sure that in the end you are happy with the priorities and the focus of your life. Remember this lesson: "Do not let making a living prevent you from making a life."

257. Treat a Man as He Is

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can be and should be and he will become as he can and should be.” (Stephen R. Covey). We do have the ability to lift others by the way we treat them. If we show others we do believe in them, it can inspire them to lift their level of performance and actions. We all need someone to believe in us and hopefully it starts with those closest to us. We all have circles of influence. May we always strive to ensure that the influence we have is one of lifting and encouraging, rather than tearing down. May we treat each person as the person we hope they will become, and that belief in them can inspire them to reach to a higher plane of ennobling virtues.

258. Moses My Son, Sariah My Daughter

In Moses, Chapter one the Lord speaks to Moses and three times uses the term, “Moses, my Son.” (Moses 1:4,6,8). In the scriptures something repeated three times was of extreme importance. Likewise, as the scriptures are applied to us the same observation is made. We can put our name in place of Moses or Sariah; Trevor my son or Angie my daughter. The Lord told Moses He had a work for him to do and He also has a work for us to do. That work can be found in our patriarchal blessing as we ponder on what God would have us to do. As Heavenly Father calls us His son or daughter, He truly loves us and wants us to become like Him. **Truly we are children of God, made in His image, and His great work and glory is to help us to become like Him. Sariah, Abraham’s wife, became the mother as part of the Abrahamic covenant and was promised that her seed would be as the sands of the seashore, that the blessings of the priesthood would come through her line, joined with her good husband Abraham with the promise of Eternal Life as she and as each of us are true and faithful in our stewardships here on the earth.**

259. Many of the Noble and Great Ones

As the Lord spoke to Abraham about the creation of the earth He spoke of many “Noble and great ones.” We are blessed to count family members among the noble and great children of our Heavenly Father. We live in such a wonderful yet challenging time in the history of the world. There are seeds of greatness in each of us. We have great potential for good and are of immeasurable worth as individuals and as families. We know that noble spirits have been reserved for special missions and for these last days before the second coming of the Savior. **You brought that greatness with you and will develop that even further as you lift and serve wherever you are. May you sense the infinite potential that lies within each of you as you sojourn here upon the earth throughout your mortal probation.** There are those who suffer from lifelong infirmities such as cerebral palsy but eternally they will be whole and complete in every way. Know that you are a child of royal birth and your Father is King of heaven and earth.

260. Relationships- Vertical and Horizontal

As we walk throughout our lives we recognize relationships, parents and children, adults and youth and many others. There are kings and princes around the world that we hold in high esteem and there are uneducated and impoverished people throughout the world, but how different are they from us? As we come to understand relationships we need to understand that we are not above or beneath any human being. We are all on an equal plane as children of Heavenly Father and are of infinite worth. These relationships are all horizontal. Even if we are in the presence of a king or ruler we should not feel that we are beneath them. We, each and every one of us, are of infinite worth as a son or daughter of God. The relationship that is vertical is between us and our Heavenly Father and our Beloved Savior. They have given us all, even the air that we breathe, the earth on which we dwell and all that we have. We revere and worship Them, as we should, in all things as we strive to become like Them; worthy to someday return to Their presence. That is our mission, to discover our infinite worth and become more like our Heavenly Father as we walk along the journey of life back to His presence.

261. Children Learn What They Live

Dorothy Law Nolte wrote a marvelous poem about what and how children learn. It goes as follows:

If children learn with criticism, they learn to condemn.

If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.

If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.

If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.

If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.

If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.

If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.

If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.

If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those around them.

If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.

(Dorothy Law Nolte)

262. You Are Needed

Sometimes we may think that our efforts don't make a difference and that we are not needed, but we are! There are some individuals that only you can reach through spirit to spirit communication. We all have different abilities and attributes, and contributions we can make. We are needed in our families, in our communities, and in the gospel. James Stewart played the part of George Bailey in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life." He was given a vision, so to speak, of what the world would be like if he had never been born, and he came to see what a difference he made to so many. So it is with each of us. We have an influence for good as we use our agency wisely to affect many lives as instruments in the hands of God. Indeed, we do affect eternity! We affect eternity not only for ourselves but for our families and posterity. We affect eternity for those that we have a stewardship to serve. We affect so many in ways that we will never comprehend. **As the Lord said, we will be blessed if we only offer a piece of bread to one in need. You can and will make a difference for good or evil throughout eternity. Make it a good one!**

263. Don't Take it for Granted

It is easy to take things for granted: that we will always have a good job, a strong family, good health and happiness, but these can be fleeting. Sometimes in a single moment, lives are altered drastically never to be the same. Sometimes these changes are due to choices we make and due to circumstances beyond our control. We need to learn to appreciate each moment, each day and treasure each experience that adds meaning and depth to our lives. When changes do come, which eventually they will, we need to not dwell on the past and what might have been, but move forward in the present and future to adapt and grow from each experience. If relationships change we can strive to make them better. If health is lost we can keep our spirit in tune and pass through those trials becoming ever closer to the Lord. Each day well lived becomes its own reward. May we open our spiritual eyes to see and recognize the great blessings we enjoy and take time to thank Heavenly Father for all He has given us. Take time today to give a hug and sweet embrace to those you hold so dear.

264. Avoid Distractions

One of the great lessons of life is to learn to avoid distractions. When Peter walked on water he was able to do so as long as he kept his eyes on the Savior. He became distracted by the waves and started to sink. When he called out to the Savior, he was raised back up and learned an important lesson. When David was looking out over the palace walls he was distracted by the attractive Bathseba. This distraction led him into grievous sins which affected the rest of his life. Distractions can stop us from accomplishing great things, but even more it can destroy relationships if we persist in following distractions. Although it is important, work can become a distraction when it becomes the focus of our lives in place of family and other eternal pursuits. If we are not careful distractions can lead us away from those things we hold most dear; our family, our temple covenants, and our relationship with the Savior. The Lord counseled: "Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not." (D&C 6:33). As we keep our eyes and hearts focused on the Savior will see all things in the proper perspective, including our family and all other relationships. If we have become distracted it is time to once again focus on our Savior and our families; then everything else will fall into its proper place and restore balance in our lives.

265. You Are- I Am

You Are

You Are Loved

You Are Needed

You Are Important

You Are Beautiful

You Are Talented

You Are Smart

You Are My Friend

You Are a Miracle

You Are a Child of God

You Are of Infinite Worth

Yes, You are all of these things as recognized and reinforced by others. There needs to come a time of self acceptance, when we come to understand that even though we are not perfect, we are still lovable, needed and of priceless value. Look at the list below and see if it applies to you.

I Am

I Am Loved

I Am Needed

I Am Important

I Am Beautiful

I Am Talented

I Am Smart

I Am a Friend and I Have a Friend

I Am A Miracle

I Am A Child of God

I AM of Infinite Worth

Yes, You Are of Infinite worth, A child of God, A Miracle, A Friend, Smart, Talented, Beautiful, Important, Needed and Loved. Be Yourself and Be Your Best! RTS.

266. Take My Hand

(A wedding song)

We are here on the earth to have joy, and a major part of that joy is found in marriage and family. Some never have that opportunity in this life and some find themselves alone later in life after divorce or other unforeseen circumstances. Know that a loving Heavenly Father will not leave you alone forever and that He has provided a way for each of His sons and daughters to someday, either in this life or the next, to enter into the sacred covenant of marriage. The invitation to or from a son or daughter of God to be your eternal companion is a decision that should not be taken lightly and should be prepared for carefully. We are all invited to strengthen our marriages, our families, and our relationships as we walk along the covenant path. "Take My Hand," refers to marriage and commitment to walk hand in hand with God. It goes as follows:

Take My Hand

This day I'll take your hand forever to love and to cherish through all.

I see in your eyes a sparkle to whisper you love me too.

This ring I give unto you; a symbol of endless love.

I'll love you now and forever, please come and take my hand.

Through tears of joy and pain and sorrow I promise I'll stand by you.

A kiss I will give each morning, my heart I give to you.

I'll walk with you beside me each step that I take through life.

I'll love you now and forever, please come and take my hand.

Let's hold these feelings now forever, these feelings of love and joy.

With hopes, dreams, and trials before us may our eyes now see as one.

I promise I'll be faithful to guard and hold close our love.

I'll love you now and forever, please come and take my hand.

Chorus:

This day is our day, the day new life begins.

Come help me build a castle; where all our dreams we'll share.

Let's learn to live together in love and harmony.

I give my heart, my soul to you, please come and take my hand.

(Final) I give my heart, my soul to you, please come and take my hand. RTS

267. What Two Married People Owe to One Another

There is a marvelous thought expressed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He said: **“The sum which two married people owe to one another defies calculation. It is an infinite debt, which can only be discharged through all eternity.”** Instead of debt one could use the words commitment or covenant to describe the importance of the obligation between husband and wife. Certainly in marriage two lives become intertwined, hopefully forever to share the great responsibilities of family, fidelity, and growth in understanding, love and service as they walk the pathway of life together. I feel that Johann was speaking of eternal or everlasting commitments and covenants which last through eternity as side by side eternal companions help to support and sustain one another through all the joys, sorrows, challenges and refining moments of life. Two people, bound in marriage, realize that in the eternal view of things, devotion to one another and obedience to God are the foundations of an eternal relationship which will grow and flourish even beyond this mortal existence. Take a moment to consider the love and the devotion that builds with time and experience through mortality, which is one small chapter in a bond of Eternal Marriage.

268. Fifteen Minutes a Day

A couple was experiencing marriage problems and a counselor suggested that they spend fifteen minutes a day of uninterrupted time together. They said it helped bring them closer together and got them communicating again. I love to see when our married couples go on walks together to have some alone time. Many years ago Robert L. Simpson talked about “pillow talk” at the end of the day, a time to make sure that no one ever went to bed angry, and a time of understanding and drawing closer together. The same principle applies to parents and children to take some time one on one to go get a milkshake or just talk about the things going on in each other’s lives. Fifteen minutes a day may save a lot of counseling, and is one of those secrets to keep a marriage and family relationships close and strong. Can we afford to not take fifteen minutes a day to strengthen cherished relationships?

269. Family First

When we think of priorities in life we think of God, family, and so on down the line. The experience is related about a young son who wanted to do something with his father but the father was busy with something else. The father gave him a puzzle and said, “As soon as the puzzle is put together I will go play with you.” In just a few minutes the young son came back with the puzzle put together. The father was startled and said, “How did you do it that fast?” The young boy replied, “On the back side of the puzzle was a picture of a family. I put the family together and the puzzle took care of itself!” So often in life if we have love and peace in the home things do come together. Historians have noted many times that the breakdown of civilizations begins with the breakdown of the family. If we take the larger view of family we realize that we are all part of the family of God. Even as the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane asked “Abba Father,” or in familiar terms “Daddy,” we need to feel closer to our Heavenly Father and realize that we are each one an important part of His family and He wants us to come home. He has ordained families as the pattern to develop our learning, love, service and unity that will help us stand against the trials, pitfalls and challenges of life. As we think, “Family First” we will think of our Heavenly Father indeed as our Father, who is so close to us and always willing to help us along the path which we should follow leading home to Him.

270. Give Them Your Best, Give Them Your Time

Time is such a precious commodity. We all have 24 hours in a day, but it seems to pass so quickly and there are so many things vying for our time and efforts. When we prioritize it makes things easier but still not easy. Hopefully when we are home we are home and take the time to develop and deepen relationships. Hopefully each day there can be uninterrupted time to communicate, to express love, to learn and to cherish moments with those we love. It has been said, "Don't be so busy making a living that you forget to make a life." It has also been said that when we look back on our lives very few of us will wish that we had spent more time working. Each of us has choices to make each day in our lives. Where do we spend our time, our resources, and our energies? **The best we can do is to give our time and talents to our families and to build the kingdom of God here upon the earth.**

271. Finding Balance In Our Lives

Several years ago I attended a meeting at the local institute with Elder David A. Bednar. He counseled us on many things and answered several questions. One question he was asked was, "How do you keep a proper balance in your life with all the obligations that you have?" He responded by saying that the only true way to find balance is to always listen to the spirit. He said that when he was a Stake President he found that on some occasions he would have to tell his son that he could not go to his ballgame because he had a meeting. He said on another night he told a counselor, "You take care of the meeting tonight because I need to go to my son's ballgame." There are many choices to make in life and following the spirit is the best way to keep our lives in balance. The experience is related about a bishop who was being released after several years of service. He remarked that he had never missed a Sunday meeting in the ward since he had been bishop. The authority who released him said, "Shame on you. There should have been a time that you went with family or with your wife to spend that time with them. Your counselors can help on occasion." Make sure that you still take the time for family; that is your eternal calling.

272. Special Moments

It has been said that the richness of our lives should not be measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the number of moments that take our breath away. To search for those treasured moments that enrich our lives forever should be the goal for each of us. There are so many voices competing for our time, our efforts, and our resources that we cannot choose all of them. In our lives when it comes right down to it there are priorities which must reach a higher level: God, family, country, and service to our fellow man that will bless the lives of all. Reflect on those moments that have taken your breath away; the birth of a child, a special feeling in the temple, a cherished experience with a friend, or finally accomplishing the seemingly impossible. Do not let those special moments pass you by, but experience them to the fullest, for that is a measure of the true value and meaning of life. This is another song, written in free verse that encourages us to look for and experience those special moments in our lives.

Special Moments

Special moments now and then, cross our lives as sons of men
And we feel God's presence there,
A kindly word, a sweet caress, the sparkle of an eye.
A wedding ring, a newborn babe, reunions sweet and dear;
Yes, special moments now and then bring back those dreams so dear.

Special moments in our lives lift us up into the skies
Life's great majesty to see.
A rainbow clear, a quiet stream, a mountain peak to climb.
With feelings deep a teardrop falls, the memories linger near.
Yes, special moments we all need to bless our lives each day.

Special moments we can find hidden midst our troubled mind
If we'll reach with all our might.
A place to go, a friend to see, a special gift to share.
A choice to make that must not wait for happiness to find.
Yes, special moments we can have, don't let them pass you by.

Chorus:

Then capture those moments and hold them close
We will not pass this way again.
Just close your eyes and remember those wonderful feelings you felt.
Now search in your heart for those feelings deep, for those special moments you'd have;
Then go and do while it's not too late, those special moments to share.
Final (Yes, go and do while it's not too late, those special moments to share). RTS

273. Communication

"In times of war the enemy's first effort is focused on destroying the communication center. In families as well as in nations, when the communication breaks down the war rages." (Ardeth Green Kapp). Communication relies on a two way exchange of ideas to come to greater understanding. Usually there are two different viewpoints when issues are considered and often both sides of the issue have something of benefit. We need to learn how to disagree without becoming disagreeable if we want to achieve the greatest good. Communication between spouses in marriage is an indispensable part of achieving growth and harmony in the marriage relationship. Communication between parents and children is vital to maintain open pathways and a positive environment in the home setting. We are all different in our interests, perceptions, and abilities, but it is through recognizing those differences and utilizing the strengths of each person that we become complete. When communication is lost relationships become strained and feelings of love and support can be diminished. Communication with God is also vital in our efforts to achieve all that we were sent to the earth to accomplish. Learn to communicate without being judgemental and you will be well on your way to achieving greater happiness, joy and fulfillment as you journey along the pathway of life.

274. The Three Selves

In our lives we have three different selves that are seen by ourselves and others. First, we have the public self that is seen by those outside of our closest circle. We have our work and church associations, the people we meet as we come and go each day. Sometimes we act differently in different situations whether it be at church, work or on a ballfield. Second we have our more private self that is known only to our family members and very closest friends and confidants. This is usually a truer representation of who we really are; the way we act when we are not on stage, so to speak, and where we feel more comfortable. We are invited to be our best self when we are in the company of our closest family and loved ones; to not act one way in public and another in private. Third is our individual self known only to us and to God. We must remember that we are judged not only according to our works but also by our thoughts and the desires of our hearts. Alma described in chapter 5 that we will have a "perfect remembrance" as we stand before God. If we think of our actions and think that no one is watching, all we have to do is "look up" and we will know nothing is hidden from our Father in Heaven. Our mission in this life is to come to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," to make our behavior in all settings, times and places be one that our Heavenly Father approves of. Truly let us be our best self at home and feel comfortable knowing that our Father is aware of all that we do. Let us act without having to worry whether or not there is a tape recorder or video recording of our actions and then we will return home with great joy to our Father as our lives on earth are completed.

275. Leave Things Better Than You Find Them

One of the great servants of the world, Mother Teresa, offered some good counsel for each of us to follow: **“Never let anyone come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness, kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”** What wonderful counsel for all aspects of our lives. When we have gone camping it has always been a goal to leave things better than we have found them, even if we have to pick up old beer cans or candy wrappers. In our callings it is our opportunity to use our unique talents and abilities to leave things better than we find them. When we go to people’s homes we can strive to leave a message or spirit that will help them to feel renewed and uplifted. As we teach in a class or work in our designated job responsibilities may we always strive to lift and make things a little better, a little happier, and with a little more of a spirit of acceptance and love. If you can adopt that motto, **“Leave Things Better Than You Find Them,”** the world will be a better place and those positive waves will spread like ripples from a skipping rock for not only now but also for eternity.

276. Teach Them to Spread Their Wings and Fly

Life is a balancing act between providing too much or too little support for those in our care. When the newborn chick breaks out of its shell, it is fighting a necessary battle to gain the strength needed to survive; otherwise the baby chick may die if it does not gain strength through that initial adversity. As children grow older parents are striving to teach their children independence but oftentimes do not give sufficient freedom for them to understand the relationship between choices and consequences. Wise is the mother who places the chick initially in a place of safety, but also where the young chick can practice spreading its wings, first a little and then more and more until it is ready to successfully leave the nest. Someone once asked the prophet Joseph Smith how the saints were so well behaved. He said, “I teach them correct principles and they govern themselves.” It has been said that it is good for young men or young women to spend a little time away from home to learn independence and self-reliance. What a great accomplishment to raise youth who are responsible, mature and able to make wise choices even without the presence of a parent or leader. Someday we each have to fly, and let those we love to fly as well. May that be a joyous time of growth and fulfillment for both parties involved. Sometimes you have to let them go to help them transform from a cocoon to a glorious butterfly.

277. Date Night

Before marriage, dating is a wonderful way to get to know potential future companions and to determine those qualities that will contribute to having a successful marriage and family. It has been said about marriage that it is more about being the right person than finding the right person, for we usually marry someone that has similar values and characteristics as ourselves. After marriage a regular date night is a wonderful way to keep one's marriage strong and vibrant. As children come into our homes, it has been said that one of the greatest things that a father can do for his children is to show love to their mother (his wife). Dating helps keep things into perspective, and cultivating important relationships is one of the most important things in life. It places a higher priority on how we use our time and efforts. No one wants to feel that they are a "second fiddle" to some other desire or commitment. Date nights can be simple and inexpensive, but they are important. Regular date night can be just as important as family home evening, regular scripture study and personal prayer. It clears our vision of where our efforts and truly our destinies lie together with those we love and cherish.

278. Money Matters

In considering family relationships and relationships in general, a note about financial matters is appropriate. Some studies have shown that as high as 89% of divorces come about because of disagreements over money matters. Marvin J. Ashton once presented 12 points to follow in money management: 1. Pay an honest tithing. 2. Learn to manage money before it manages you. 3. Learn self-discipline and self-restraint in money matters. (In other words learn to distinguish between needs and wants). 4. Use a budget. 5. Teach family members early the importance of working and earning. 6. Teach children to make money decisions in keeping with their capacities to understand. 7. Teach each family member to contribute to the total family welfare. 8. Make education a continuing process. For those growing up, strive to develop abilities, talents and scholarships that will improve their possibilities to defray part of educational expenses. 9. Work toward home ownership. 10. Appropriately involve yourself in an insurance program. 11. Understand the influence of external forces on family finances and investments. 12. Appropriately involve yourself in a food storage and emergency preparedness program. In terms of finances it truly helps to begin with the end in mind and to follow a plan that will lead you to your dreams and to independence and self-reliance in this life. **Learn to manage money before it manages you and you will avoid many of the headaches of life.**

279. Mother

We owe so much to our mothers. They have gone to the brink of death to bring us into the world. They are on call twenty four hours a day and give of themselves in so many ways. My mother was my greatest teacher, example, and supporter. She led by love and she led by example. She believed in me when most others did not, and her encouragement was always felt. Once the great Albert Einstein was a young boy doing poorly in school. One day he was sent home with instructions to give a note only to his mother. He asked her what it said. "Oh, it says you have great potential and will one day accomplish great things." She took about teaching him herself until he advanced to university studies where he became one of the greatest scientists of our time. Years later he found the old note, opened it, and it read, "Your son is mentally deficient and will never accomplish anything. He is no longer invited to attend this school." What a difference love, support and encouragement make in our lives and we owe so much of it to our mothers. This song attempts to pay tribute to mothers everywhere for all that they have given to us individually.

Mother

Mother, may I tell you of my love for you?
Love that grows deeper each time I think of you.
Thank you for my life and thank you for your strength,
Thank you for your struggle to bring me here on earth.
Thank you for your teachings, thank you for your love.
Thanks for your example, thanks for all you've done.

Mother, I remember sitting at your knee,
As you told me stories of God and family.
I remember working and playing at your side.
I remember hoping that you would be my guide.
Time has flown so quickly, days, they glide away.
Mother, I remember the days of yesterday.

Mother, how I love you and have felt your love.
May I take this moment to thank the Lord above.
May I teach my children the lessons you taught me.
May I ever live that honored you may be.
I would now embrace you, hold you close to me.
Mother, I will love you through eternity.

Conclusion:

Mother, my dear mother, walk this day with me.
Take my hand in your hand, the way things used to be.
Mother, may heav'ns treasures now be yours eternally.
Your station stands exalted, a queen of heaven you'll be.
RTS

280. Mothers Day

Dear Mom,
Words truly cannot express the gratitude I feel for what you have done for me.
You have risked your life and gone to the edge of death to bring me life.
You have sacrificed your body, that it may never be the same, that I might have health.
You have spent weeks or years without a full night's sleep that my needs may be met.
You have been to countless ballgames, cooked countless meals and washed countless clothes.
You have offered countless prayers for me and those around me.
You have worked and sweat, and toiled that we may know the comforts of life.
You have been my advocate when no one else would stand up for me.
My pains were your pains and my sorrows were your sorrows.
You made our home a sanctuary from the trials and challenges of the world,
You helped me prepare to meet and overcome the challenges that I would face.
You gave me hope when hope was gone, you gave me strength to carry on.
You were my exemplar, my confidant, my friend and my protector.
You taught me how to love, how to serve, how to work and how to live.
You brought sunshine into my life and chased away the demons of the night.
You showed me the example of how to persevere, how to not give up and how to climb.
You showed me how the cycle of life should continue from one generation to the next.
You have taught me to experience the happiness and joy of life each day.
You have shown me how to come to know God and shown me the way.
You have taught me what is right and what is wrong that I may see,
You have taught me truths that will last for all eternity.
If I told you, "thank you" a million times over it would not be enough.
All I can do is to try to be half the person you think I am.
I'll love you now and forever.

Happy Mothers Today and Each Day of Your Life RTS

281. The Glory of Womanhood

In the formation of the world and its inhabitants, what was it that God created last? Was it not woman, created with beauty, sensitivity, intelligence and a great ability to love and nurture? God entrusted women with the essential role of participating in the creation of life, to teach, to care for and to help children grow to achieve their magnificent potential. Women are blessed with a sensitivity to the spirit and a natural disposition to serve and to see things grow. Women are blessed with an instinctive recognition of beauty and to create and organize a home where peace can abide. Women are blessed (and sometimes cursed) to feel deeply the emotions of life; to love, to cherish, to appreciate, to long for peace and tranquility, to protect and to help others to grow in each individual's sphere of existence. It was Eve who first recognized the need to partake of the fruit to allow mortality to become a reality. It was mother Eve who "heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient." (Moses 5:11). **There is a great glory and distinction in the role of womanhood which brings completeness and full meaning to life and the hope of eternal life.**

282. Family Traditions

Family traditions are a great way to keep families close together and to create an atmosphere of love and closeness. It starts in the home with a tradition of family prayer and scripture study, of family home evening and regular Sabbath day observance. It continues with regular family events to share and support. It is wonderful when family and extended family attend birthdays, baptisms, weddings and regular family gatherings. Some families like to go to the water for boating, swimming or sliding. Others go to the mountains for hiking, fishing or RZR riding. Some play games and others go to shows. Many families have talent shows to add a little humor and expression of talents to share with others. **There are so many ways to build family traditions. Hopefully you already have your traditions established; if not start today to build memories and traditions that will last a lifetime.**

283. Go Hike, Go Camp, Go Read

We have many stressors in our lives, those things we worry about that eat away at us. At times each of us needs a break from the humdrum problems of life. We need to have a positive outlet, a change of pace that takes our minds off from the problems and unresolved issues of life. One of the great ways to find perspective is to get outdoors and explore the wonderful creations Heavenly Father has provided for us. There are beautiful places to hike and camp and fish and to experience the wonders of nature. Others find relaxation in reading a good book or soaking in hot pools. Everyone needs to have a hobby that they enjoy doing and will take their mind off the pressures they face each day. It becomes a breath of fresh air and a time of renewal that each of us need. It has been said that we should each take a moment and write our problems on the sands of the seashore and let the ocean wash them away. Athletes quite often will be involved in cross-training. It is a way of working different muscles in different ways. Before Roger Bannister broke the four minute mile he changed his training strategy and took to hill climbing and running over different terrain with a wonderful result. Sometimes taking a break from the routine helps one find a new, fresh and different approach to solving our problems. Find what works for you. **Go Hike! Go Camp! Go Read a Book!** Go on a vacation and come back refreshed, renewed and ready to face life with vigor and confidence!

284. Learn How to Say No!

Have you ever noticed that sometimes two year olds say no just because they can. It is a way of finding their independence. It is frustrating for parents but part of a process of learning that we really can choose. Later as we grow and develop a desire to please others we sometimes find it difficult to say no, even when we should. **Sometimes others expect us to do what they are doing even if it is not right. In those moments we need to remember that we said, “yes” to God first and it is more important to please God than man. We need to be like Ammon speaking to King Lamoni, “Whatsoever thou desirest WHICH IS RIGHT, that will I do.”** Sometimes we feel alone in those moments, but we will have the strength and companionship of the Holy Ghost to guide us. Sometimes we may even have to stand alone, but when we choose to follow the right we will quickly learn that others will stand with us; they were just waiting for a leader to show the right way. Everyone is asked at times to do or say or view or participate in things that are not right. That is part of life, choosing to prize the good and to discard the bad. We must allow others to choose what path they will follow and let them know that we are still their friend, but to be a true friend we must follow the path of righteousness. That is the way of happiness, peace of conscience and our duty. Decide in advance what choice you will make in certain situations, and then to follow through on that right choice will be so much easier.

285. Say Something!

The experience is related several years ago about a vicious beating that took place in New York City that was witnessed by over one hundred people, but no one called the police. Everyone thought that someone else would do it, but no one did. **It seems that in larger groups everyone becomes more reluctant to step forward and speak out; but the voice of reason and conscience dictates that there is a time and place to let our voices be heard. Such was the voice of the early reformers, Tyndale, Luther and others who recognized that things needed to be changed.** Such were the voices of our early patriots who had lived under the rule of the British Empire. The signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the cause of freedom. Many of them did indeed lose their fortunes, their health, and their lives, but they were willing to make those great sacrifices for which we thank them today. Now it is our turn to be a voice of reason, a voice of patriotism, a voice of conviction in a world that is drifting in its standards and morals. We need to not step back to anonymity but step forward to stand for truth and justice, for honor and virtue, and to stand for the right amidst the forces of evil who clamor that anything goes. There is a time to be silent, but there is also a time to speak out for the welfare of our loved ones, our friends and neighbors and all those who share in this wonderful country of ours.

286. Never Again !!

One of the saddest tragedies in the history of our world was the attempt by Hitler and his allies to systematically exterminate the Jews prior to and during World War II through genocide. About six million men, women and children were tortured and killed over several years. Many were placed in concentration camps until they were sent to gas chambers or lined up and executed. The terrible scars of war and of attempted genocide is an ugly reminder of man's inhumanity to man; a reminder that life, which is so precious, can be accounted as meaning so little. Fortunately, there were those who stood up for good and risked their lives to prevent these atrocities, while others stood by in silence because the soldiers were not looking for them. We have an obligation to respect and revere the precious worth of a soul and to protect those who are helpless and in need of our help and support. We must vow that **NEVER AGAIN** will those atrocities be ignored and condoned. It is our opportunity to treasure life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. May we learn from the mistakes of others to be kinder and more loving, recognizing the worth of each soul, regardless of what race, religion or ethnicity they come from. May we honor the memory of those who suffered and died by living in a world which is made better by our lives and actions and service to all mankind.

287. Never Measure Life By Your Possessions.

In the Sermon on the Mount the Savior taught: **“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt 6:21).** A simple question is: “What do we treasure most?” There is an interesting quotation by an unknown author which states: “Never measure life by your possessions, measure it by the hearts you touched, the smiles you created, and the love you shared.” When asked how we measure our lives do we think of our possessions or do we think of our relationships? **Do we want to give or do we want to take? If we think of love, love must be given, it cannot be bought with possessions.** The Savior taught that the desires of our heart determine what treasure we will seek for. The thought speaks of touching hearts, creating smiles and sharing love. That is a perfect formula for creating joyful and fulfilling relationships and peace in a troubled world. May our treasures be found in showing love, bringing a ray of sunshine to others, and lifting others through service without the hope of financial reward.

288. My House Is a House of Order

The Lord’s house is a house of order and not of confusion. The Lord speaks clearly through living prophets and His ordinances are clear and provide an opportunity for all of His children to return to His presence. In a world that clamors with so many voices, the Lord has defined the way which is straight and narrow that leads back to Him. The Lord has ordained the covenants and ordinances of exaltation. He showed us great love through sending His Only Begotten Son to extend to us mercy through the atonement to bring to pass His great and eternal purposes. The gospel principles are simple and achievable by all. He knew that we would make mistakes but provided a way for us to overcome them. He is the same yesterday, today and forever and His course is one eternal round. He has provided the scriptures and His Holy Spirit as a guide in a troubled world. There is great order in the universe displaying the handiwork of God. **May we look to His house, even the Holy Temple, as a pattern to follow in our lives. May we establish a house of order in our lives and walk along the path that will lead us safely home.**

289. Anxious to Bless the Whole Human Race

In an insightful talk in April 1999 Ensign Neil Newell quoted the prophet Joseph Smith: **“A man filled with the spirit of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race.”** He related the experience of Dorcas Commey of Odoben Ghana who rose from poverty to become an influential teacher. Sensing the needs of so many who were caught in a cycle of poverty and misery she started a school of vocational training for young women ages 16-20. Over a two year period the young ladies would learn vocational skills such as cooking, dressmaking, hairdressing and catering, and to develop their own businesses or work in conjunction with others. Through the efforts of sister Commey thousands of lives have been and will continue to be touched for good. The seeds of opportunity lie within each of us to bless the whole human race whether it be in our own homes and schools, or communities and nations as we are filled with the spirit of God. May our hearts catch the vision of blessing the lives of others, and through those efforts our souls will expand as we assist our Father in Heaven to carry out his great work here on the earth through time and eternity.

290. The Ammon Principle

A good friend of ours liked to speak of service as the “Ammon Principle.” Service truly does open hearts and generate good will as demonstrated by the church’s emphasis on humanitarian endeavors. When we perform service we should not think of it as a precursor to a reward. We should perform service simply because it is needed. As we do we develop charity, the natural fruit of Christlike service. Ammon knew that his mission was to share the gospel, but first he had to open the door. Taking an interest in others and their efforts is a small act of service, but it opens windows of understanding and shared experiences. A natural outgrowth of service is also friendship; and who can have too many friends? If we can develop habits of looking for and performing service, the Lord will know that He can call on us when our efforts are needed. Because Ammon first served, it led to many miraculous experiences and incomprehensible joy. **Service is not a grudging duty, it is a glorious opportunity to bless not only our own lives but the lives of those around us.**

291. Go Visit the Lonely

There is a great need for service in the world today. There is much need and want, and sometimes there is little relief. There are those who mourn and those who are downtrodden, defeated by the trials and circumstances of life. There are countless opportunities to serve others if we will but open our eyes and then take action to bless the lives of those around us. Sometimes the world seems dark around us, but we can indeed make the world a brighter place by our gentle and thoughtful deeds. Mrs. Frank A. Breck penned the words to a simple poem many years ago that carries the message of hope and service as we bless the lives of others. It goes like this:

Go visit the lonely, the dreary,
Go comfort the weeping, the weary;
Go scatter kind deeds on your way.
Oh, make the world brighter today! Mrs. Frank A. Breck

Go scatter sunshine all along your way, make this world a better place each and every day!

292. Lose Yourself to Find Yourself

The Savior, instructing His disciples gave them this counsel: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt. 10:39). When it comes down to it the choice becomes: Do I want to do what I want to do or do I want to do what the Savior would have me do? When we seek to do our own will, at the conclusion of our lives our fruit becomes as the chaff of the wind, to blow away into oblivion. If, on the other hand, we have chosen to do the Savior’s will we become in a sense as president Spencer W. Kimball said: “My life is like a pair of old shoes, to be worn out in the service of the Master.” Service, love, charity, and placing the needs of others before the needs of ourselves becomes the recipe to find ourselves. My mother gave some wonderful counsel: “The only things we ever keep are what we give away. The more we share, the more we have.” (Gwen Sutton). It has been repeatedly stated that the Lord can make far more out of us than we can make of ourselves. Let us say, as did the Savior in Gethsemane: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42).

293. Debtor's Prison

George Frideric Handel composed one of the most famous and influential musical works ever created during the months of August and September 1741. The work was well received and he, along with some of his musical companions, decided to perform a benefit performance on behalf of those in debtor's prison. Debtor's prisons were common for those who were unable to pay their debts at that time. Some people were locked up in chains for long periods of time because they owed a small debt of 2-4 guineas. As a result of that benefit performance 152 people were released from debtor's prison to be reunited with family and loved ones. President Russell M. Nelson taught that the release of these prisoners from debtor's prison beautifully symbolizes our redemption through the Savior, Jesus Christ. He stated, **"Our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, came to pay a debt he did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay."** Our Savior ransomed us through his great atoning sacrifice. May we always remember Him, have faith in Him, and truly strive to follow Him, that His sacrifice for us may cleanse us of our sins and weaknesses and enable us to walk along the pathway back to the presence of our Heavenly Father.