

The Gospel News

Heroic Mothers

By Brother Anthony Scolaro

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*Happy
Mother's
Day!*



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When Helaman led his 2,000 young soldiers into battle (Alma chapters 53 & 56), they said to him that it was their mothers who told them if they believed, the Lord would save them. Alma 56:47 & 48 state, "[T]hey had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. And they rehearsed [...] the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it." It's a touching story that has no doubt played into many a Mothers' Day sermon.

Recently, I heard it suggested that the reason these young men attributed this teaching to their mothers was that their fathers had been among those killed in the confrontation recorded in Alma 24. Having buried their weapons in a covenant never to kill again, the converted Lamanites in this account went out unarmed to face their attacking enemies. I had never thought to connect the two narratives, separated as they are by some 30 chapters, but the timeframe cited makes it completely plausible for Helaman's young army to have consisted largely of fatherless sons.

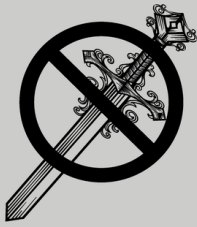
His epistle in Alma 56 tells us that these young men marched into battle under Helaman's leadership in the 26th year of the reign of the judges. Assuming they ranged in age between 16 and 21 years at that time, they would have been born between the 5th and 10th years of the judges' reign, i.e., during the sons of Mosiah's mission to the Lamanites. Year numbers were not logged in the record of their odyssey (Alma chapters 17-25); however, the beginning verses of that passage indicate that the entire episode – during which the massacre of the 1,005 who had buried their weapons took place – concluded at the end of the 14th year.

Given the documented years, if Helaman's young warriors were 16-21 when they fought with him in the 26th year, any of them who might have lost their fathers in the Alma 24 conflict would have been between five and ten years old at that time, possibly even younger. That Helaman refers to them in Alma 56:10 as his "sons" lends further credence to the idea that a father figure might have been missing from their lives.

So, what is the point of all this? My real intent is to focus not on these stripling soldiers but on their mothers, as alluded to in chapter 56. While I had always taken this account to be a powerful witness of the crucial role a mother plays in shaping her children's faith, this closer look at their circumstances put them in a whole new light. I hadn't fully realized the degree of spiritual maturity and fortitude these women must have possessed.

As part of a group who were convicted by God's power to bury their weapons forever, they shared with their husbands in a decision of extreme obedience to face the attacking enemy unprotected. Left as a result to raise their children alone, these same women later watched as their young sons marched into battle with Helaman, equipped with the confidence their mothers had instilled in them that the Lord would spare them if they believed.

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...yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.
Alma 56:47

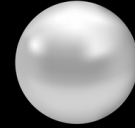


HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY
SUNDAY, MAY 14th.

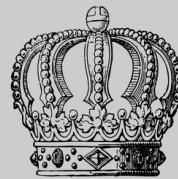
Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.
Psalm 31:28



Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.
Matthew 13:46



Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.
Proverbs 31:10



A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband...
Proverbs 12:4

Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.
Proverbs 23:25



My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.
Proverbs 1:8,9



BFTP Blast From The Past



Seventy years ago this month on May 21, 1953, a historic F-4 tornado spared the Maness family on the Sarnia Reservation in Ontario, Canada. Two years earlier, Sister Elvira Maness had a dream in which she saw herself standing at the river shore with many other native people. Suddenly a storm arose from the United States side of the St. Clair River that was about to besiege the Sarnia Reservation. As she stood there, a voice spoke to her saying, "Pray so that your people might be spared." Two years later, on May 21, 1953 a great tornado ravaged the cities of Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario. As Sister Maness was looking out her window towards the St. Clair River and Port Huron, she saw a tornado coming closer to her home and she remembered her dream. She quickly took her children into the living room and knelt in prayer, asking God to have mercy upon her home and people. She felt peace and knew while still on her knees that God had answered her prayers.

Photo: Aftermath of 1953 Sarnia tornado

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Purpose Statement

- To fulfill the plan of God by bringing salvation through Christ to all people.

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ, while working to draw Israel to Christ through efforts focused on the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America



Vision Statement

- Living and worshipping in unity and righteousness will result in the fullness of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, culminating in continuous growth of the Church and fulfillment of Christ's promises concerning His Kingdom on Earth.



"It's Just a Stage"

By Brother Doug Obradovich

"These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17)

brains release chemicals that create an addiction-like behavior that carries us forward into The Romance Stage.

As the effects wear off, we see clearer, and conflict manifests within The Power Struggle Stage. Most relationships end in break-up during these first two stages. Survival can occur, but nothing improves until we accept accountability and work towards improvements. Success results in The Stability Stage, and once secured, we are catapulted into the period most appropriate for marriage, The Commitment Stage. Here we are able to find genuine enjoyment by accepting each other and discovering solutions to our differences in The Co-Creation or Bliss Stage. We travel into these stages through cyclical, and not linear, movement, so we visit and revisit them throughout the relationship.

"Love one another" is God's directive, but love requires more work than most anticipate. The Word of God defines and refines love, as Paul points out, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up" (1 Corinthians 13:4). A key component in any relationship is patience ("suffereth long"), as uncovered differences need to be addressed, but through our caring attention. This behavior is the offspring of

humility ("vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up").

And so it is with our spiritual love. It begins similarly, with an opposite attraction, as Jesus Christ epitomizes confliction to our natural spirits. Applying these same 5 stages to our spiritual relationship, we often make our commitment during the Romance Stage, getting baptized before most challenges are even manifested. When they do appear during The Power Struggle Stage, we can be drawn away, discouraged, and even "break up" with Christ. If we instead accept responsibility for our actions, submit to God's direction, work through the challenges, triumph over our weaknesses, and overcome our temptations, we successfully transition to The Stability Stage. By leveling off and discovering the beauty of balance, we are ready for full engagement found in The Commitment Stage. Having been tested and tried, we are resolute in our dedication to the Lord, and move joyfully into The Co-Creation Stage, with full realization of all Jesus Christ offers. It's in this stage where we can be best utilized for God's glory, side-by-side with our Savior.

As it is with any healthy relationship, the process spirals upward and no one phase is a permanent destination. Really, it's just like Mom said years ago: "It's just a stage!"

Long ago, when our firstborn (Courtney) was being a bit challenging, Candace took her frustrations to my mother for counsel. Mom offered comfort through patience, telling Candace, "Remember, it's just a stage. Children go through stages, but they're temporary. This soon will pass."

More than 30 years later, it still applies: "It's just a stage." There are said to be 5 stages in our relationships, which normally arrive in order:

- 1) The Romance Stage (aka Addiction Stage)
- 2) The Power Struggle Stage (aka Love Hangover Stage)
- 3) The Stability Stage
- 4) The Commitment Stage
- 5) The Co-Creation Stage (aka Bliss Stage)

Relationships can begin in strange pairings, as opposites truly do attract. These seemingly destined-to-fail undertakings succeed because our

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The faith of those widowed mothers and the heroism they shared with their husbands had led them to teach their sons to exercise that same great faith in God. Any hint of fear in these women's hearts, or regret about the earlier sacrifice of their husbands' lives, would have fostered unbelief and resentment in their sons' hearts, bringing about a tragic outcome rather than the victorious one Helaman writes about. These women overcame; they eschewed the bitterness that the enemy of righteousness no doubt tempted them with, and instead raised sons who valued their fathers' freedom and honored their memory.

More often than we would like, we see mothers today called upon for various reasons to perform double duty when it comes to raising their children. As if the demands of running a household and furnishing emotional support are not enough, single mothers are compelled also to provide the resources to supply their children's material needs, frequently carrying a load that sometimes seems insurmountable. Taking a fresh look at this account in the Book of Mormon gives us occasion to pay tribute to this very special breed of mothers who, through one circumstance or another, have been tasked to raise a family absent the elements that a husband and father would normally contribute.

Part of James's definition of pure religion is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (James 1:27). Interestingly, he uses the singular form of "affliction" here – not referring to a variety or assortment of conditions; but rather, a common, shared malady. While those of us who have never been in that situation may not be able to fully relate to the fatherless and widows (and by extension, single mothers), perhaps James's words can prompt us to acknowledge their "affliction," exercise more compassion and understanding, and look for ways we can assist those who have little help, if any, in raising their children.

Without minimizing the difficulty, we are encouraged by many examples of how God provided what was lacking, even in these situations, to enable mothers to successfully raise children who love and trust in Him. One sister whose husband endured a period of debilitating illness shared, "God filled in where my abilities, courage, and strength ended." The situation those mothers in the Book of Alma found themselves in proves that He can and will take care of us, even when we make extreme sacrifices to keep our commitment to Him and follow His commandments.

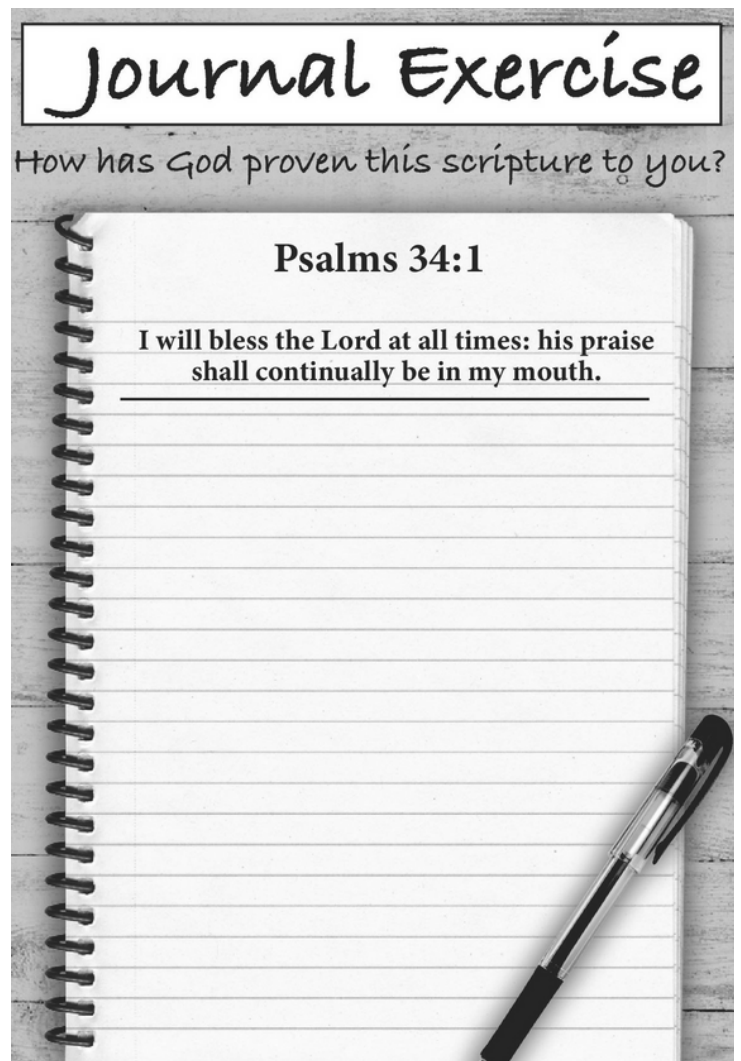
(Originally published May 2018)

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She looked out the window again and saw the tornado heading north. Later they sang hymns of praise for several hours at Brother Loyalvo's home. The tornado was recorded as being 1.5 miles wide at its peak, and on the ground for a lengthy 2 hours and 39 minutes, starting at 4:20 in the afternoon and dissipating around 7 pm. Large sections of both cities were damaged. It destroyed or damaged over 400 homes and killed 2 in the US before crossing the river into Canada, producing golf ball-sized hail. As it moved through Sarnia, over 100 businesses and 150 homes were damaged, killing 5, leaving 48 injured, and 500 homeless. **"God in his heavens makes the whirlwind pass by, and He laid the foundations of the earth and the sky...He's the Master Creator, He's the Father of all."** (#78 *The Master Creator, The Songs of Zion*).

**Sources: Volume 2 of The History of The Church of Jesus Christ pages 468-9
The Songs of Zion #79, The Master Creator**

Photo: The Maness Family



God is Speaking. Are We Listening? Are We Doing?

By Brother Mark Kovacic

An old hymnal had a song titled "I'll be somewhere listening." Are we? Another old hymn says "Speak, my Lord, and I'll be quick to answer thee." Are we quick? And, more importantly, are we doing?

First, let's note the difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is the physical act of receiving words from another person. Whereas listening includes the reception of, and reaction to, information. The Apostle James spoke on this subject but with a certain twist. He indicated that being a hearer of the Word is like a person who looks at themselves in the mirror, and the moment they walk away they forget what they look like. So he instructed us to look into the "perfect law of liberty" and act upon it, that would make us a true doer of the word of God (James 1:22-25). (Also see Lehi's comment to his son Jacob in 2 Nephi 2.)

There was a motivational speaker who had an activity for his audience where he asked them to guess the design of the face of their watches without looking. Many were surprised to find that they didn't know, or were wrong. But that wasn't the end of the activity. He then asked them what time it was, without looking at their watches. Only a few knew. They were so focused on the task that they didn't notice the time. As God is speaking to us, we want to be vigilant in receiving his messages.

Second, what should we be listening for; i.e., what message is God sending us? It seems to me (and I think I have the ministry behind me on this point) that God has been telling us to prepare. And maybe that's why the Lord has repeated "prepare" many times in His messages. Based on my review of General Church minutes, revelations, and other sources, "prepare" appears over 300 times, including five mentions in the Songs of Zion, with one song totally dedicated to the theme.

But how many reminders do we need? God is a preparer, so we should emulate Him. Notice what is recorded in the Book of Mormon: "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7). Another place it says: "But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men" (1 Nephi 9:6).

Now that we have looked at hearing and listening, let's look at the "doing" side of this equation. Jacob wrote: "Prepare your souls for that glorious day when justice shall be administered unto the righteous..." (2 Nephi 9:46). When Alma, Jr. was preaching to the people of Zarahemla (Alma 5) he stirred up their faith by asking them a series of questions. (I call that sermon the "Interrogation of Faith.") I would like to draw your attention to a sample of these questions (paraphrased).

Behold, are ye stripped of pride... Are you stripped of envy? I say unto you, if ye are not ye are not prepared to meet God. Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared, and the time is at hand that he must repent or he cannot be saved. Behold ye must prepare quickly; for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life! (Alma 5:29-30)

King Benjamin ended his address to his people by stating: "And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them. But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:29-30)

Among the experiences accepted as revelations from God, there were several that said we must be purified, with the removal of all uncleanness and sin. Preparation begins with asking forgiveness and humbly seeking God. Besides the Scriptures, the Church has many pamphlets, such as Drawing Closer to God, as well as modern media outlets. There are plenty of opportunities to show the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

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Being doers of the Word of God is required, both within the Church and to those who are outside and need Jesus Christ in their lives!

In 1943, a sister in the Church had the following dream. "God told me in a dream to warn the people of The Church of Jesus Christ to prepare, for that destruction is coming upon our land. He said to be faithful and true to the Church and to broadcast to all that would hear the glad tidings of the restored Gospel. We are to live

righteously on this earth, be kind and good, to set examples for all the world to see and know that our way is the only way, and our church the only church."

And they cry, "Ah, we knew the day would come,"
And "Praise the Lord, He kept us thru the night."
And "God is good. He brought us thru the wilderness."
And "Let's all thank the Lord that we're alive to see the morning light."
(Songs of Zion, #59)

GMBA GMBA News

Trust in the Lord *By Sister Riley Paxon*

The story behind my favorite scripture is such a small testimony, but it is definitely one that means the most to me. My favorite scripture is Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." The story behind this verse is small, but little did I know that it would mean a lot more to me in the future.

At the 2018 GMBA Campout in California, my sister, Sister Kacy Paxon, and I went to In-N-Out Burger after a night meeting. I remember hearing something about how they put Bible verses at the bottom of the cups, so I thought I would see if it was true. After we got our food and sat down, I looked at the bottom of my cup and it said, "Proverbs 3:5." I meant to look up that verse during Camp, but I never did.

The week after Camp, Kacy and I attended the Bell, CA Branch with my family. After feeling such a spiritual high from Campout, I was very excited to visit the Bell Branch and continue to receive more blessings. After the morning service, I went to the kitchen to get some water and as I was walking to

look for my family afterwards, I saw a ceramic bowl that said, "Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." At first, I didn't know why I recognized that verse, but once I realized that it was the same one from my In-N-Out cup, I instantly ran and grabbed Kacy to explain what just happened.

When I first had this experience, I thought it was just a small reminder to always trust in the Lord. However, I have discovered that this verse would mean even more to me as time passed. There have been many challenges in my life since that Campout that have shown me to always trust in the Lord. When I felt discouraged or that life was way too hard for me to handle, I would pray and turn it over to Him. To finish up, if there is any kind of advice I would give to other young people, it would be to always trust in the Lord. I know it sounds so simple, but it can be easy to rely on your own understanding and not God's. Even if life isn't going the way you would like it to, just know that the Lord is preparing a beautiful path for you. He is always there to guide you through every challenge.

PROVERBS 3:5

"TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART; AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING."

A Weekend Of Light: SE Region Youth Weekend, January 13-15, 2023 *By Brother Connor Griffith*

The Spirit we have felt amongst this rising generation of leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ seems to be recurring and congruent every time we gather, whether that be at our last GMBA Campout themed "More Than," or, more recently, the Southeast Region's most recent youth weekend titled "Get In, Reach Out."

The weekend's theme was based on the last verses of Matthew 28: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

We were instructed that before we can reach out to others as Christ commanded, we must first get into Christ's teachings ourselves.

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Before we had even arrived at the venue, a sister received a revelation from God that proved essential in describing the Spirit we felt throughout our time together:

“This generation is mine. They are full of My Spirit and they move by it. They all have My Spirit. They have My light, even those who have not entered the waters. I have My hands upon them always. I repeat, they are Mine and I am very jealous; they will grow spiritually, I will give them gifts, and they will take My word to all who they can.” We thank God that He was ready to start blessing us even before we had arrived.

As most Church events usually begin, the region’s fourth youth weekend in the past decade began with some activities led by the youth Friday evening to connect with each other.

Saturday was filled with blessings. We began with a discussion on prayer, followed by a session of prayer that split the group of about fifty into four groups led by young members who had shared thoughts and encouragement about prayer beforehand. Two of the group leaders shared the same scripture to their respective groups without prior discussion:

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:6-7.

From that prayer service Saturday morning throughout the weekend, we shared this peace that Christ promised more profoundly.

Saturday’s prayer session was followed by a series of three workshops. The first was called “Uniting to Christ and the Church.” One discussed The Church of Jesus Christ’s Great and Divine Commissions and understanding the focus of the Church today. The third discussed having a Christ-centered mindset and holding our standards high in all aspects of our lives.

Christ showed himself through much revelation, most profoundly during our Saturday night meeting. There were three witnesses to Christ’s presence and all shared a common description of light shining from Christ to the young people. There are, of course, barriers the evil one tries to put between this generation and their calling, but the Lord reminded us through preaching under the inspiration of His Spirit that the darkness of our earthly trials cannot overshadow the Light of Christ.

Hearing the testimony of the Church is always inspiring. Most memorable from the testimonies shared that Saturday night were those that related to the realization that Christ has already borne the load for us, and we do not have to carry the burdens of life if we just accept His aid in our own personal struggles. One way to think of it was this: Christ already won the battle—we just have to put on the uniform of the winning side.

Anointings after the service seemed to leave each individual who sought with a “find,” including the revealing of the gift of tongues to one young man, confirming to him that God would provide the courage he needed to step forward in what the Lord was asking him to do. For another, the gift of tongues and interpretation was given to answer their respective request. Saturday evening was concluded over a bonfire, enjoying the fellowship.

Sunday morning began with a session where the region’s young people set mission statements for their lives, tied mostly to growing in the Lord and establishing lives of positive influence to others. We also were asked to decide a way in which we would accomplish such missions. It was shared that when we surrendered our lives to Him, we each were given the Great and Divine commissions as our own mission statements from the mouth of Christ Himself.

As Christ had fish waiting for His disciples on a fire, He also had fish on the fire for each of us, in particular, the two who accepted Him as their Redeemer this weekend. Naiyima Warner asked for her baptism while discussing some things with other young brothers over a campfire we held after the Saturday evening service. Isabella Ortega asked for her lot in the kingdom the afternoon after our Sunday service. Within weeks of our gathering, God also called Mia Difede, Cecelia Murphy, and Kailee Horn.

On behalf of the weekend’s attendants, we must praise our Lord for His immeasurable blessings in just the weekend we shared together. We are also thankful for the region’s support to make these events possible.

The Lord promised, right before He left the disciples, that he would leave the Holy Spirit with us, and we truly felt that as we sought to “get in” to the Lord’s path. We also felt the Savior’s commission to spread this gift of salvation with those around us, as He left the disciples with “Go” and “Teach,” as recorded in the last two verses of the Gospel of Matthew, to confirm the second part of the weekend’s theme, “reach out.”



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

JOY

Faith PEACE **GOODNESS**
MEEKNESS *Love* TEMPERANCE
LONGSUFFERING GENTLENESS

Fruit of the Spirit: Joy

By Sister Christine Martorana

Each weekday morning, my daughter Sofia and I get into the car and make our way to her preschool. Anyone who has tried to get a 5-year-old out of the house in the morning knows the struggle of the morning routine with a preschooler. In my house, at least, mornings are often rushed and frantic as we throw off pajamas, put on school clothes, negotiate what she will eat for breakfast, and persuade her to brush her teeth—all before asking her sixteen different times to put on her socks and shoes.

Although her preschool is only 10 minutes from our house, I know that after dropping her off, I will have to continue my commute down to Miami where I teach. And so, when we finally get into the car and start driving, I mentally calculate the amount of time I will spend in the middle of South Florida morning rush hour after dropping her off, and I feel stressed.

Last Thursday was no exception. After we scrambled into the car, we said a quick (and admittedly rushed) prayer before I backed out of the driveway. About a mile down the road, Sofia and I are sitting at a red light with cars around us. I glance to my right and notice that the driver in the car next to us is dressed in a suit and tie. I imagine he's on his way to work, and although I don't know the morning he's had, the look on his face suggests he is not particularly happy.

I can relate, I think as I glance down at the clock for the twentieth time and quietly beg the light to turn green. Then, I hear a little giggle from the back seat. I look in the rearview mirror to see Sofia waving at the man in the car next to us. To my surprise, he waves back, a huge smile spreading across his face. The light turns green, and I can see the smile stays on his face as he begins driving away.

There have been many times in Sofia's short life when she has shown me why Christ tells us to be like children, and this was one of those times. I realized that in my frantic rush to get from home to school to work, I was missing what really

matters: joy. In that moment, we were sitting at a red light, and no matter how many times I looked at the clock or how worried I felt about upcoming traffic, we would be sitting at that red light until it turned green and my worrying was not going to lessen the traffic. There, in that moment in traffic on our way to school, was an opportunity for joy—one that Sofia seized with a wave and I wasted with worry.

2 Nephi 2:25 tells us, "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." This is a beautiful reminder to us that we are made for joy. Joy is not something that God wants us to have every now and then. It is the reason He created us: so that we could have joy.

And, as Sofia showed me that day, not only should we have joy, but we should also share that joy with others. I don't know what the rest of the day held for that man, but I like to think that his morning was made a bit brighter because a 5-year-old in the car next to him took a moment to spread joy in his direction.

At the next red light, I snapped this photo of Sofia as a reminder to me to hold tighter to joy. My personal challenge, and one that I offer to you, is to remember that joy is our birthright. We are designed by God to be joyful.



Charity

By Apostle Jerry Valenti

Also referred to as the pure love of Christ, charity is described in 1 Corinthians 13, which is known as the “love chapter.” The 5 amazing facts about charity that are listed below come from 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 and are reiterated in Moroni 7: 45 as part of the chapter on “Faith, Hope and Charity.” Based on these verses, we learn that charity is:

1 Kind - Just the simple act of being kind to one another is a way to demonstrate love. The alternative is to act rudely (behave unseemly) to others which would hardly be the type of behavior to accompany the words saying that they are loved.

2 Gives the Benefit of the Doubt - How often do we assume the worst about someone? Believing/spreading rumors, attributing good deeds to selfish motives or expecting people to eventually hurt or disappoint us are hardly ways to cultivate loving relationships. Rather, charity encourages us to “think no evil” and “rejoice in the truth.”

3 Selfless – Jesus said, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his

friends” (John 15:13). Just as the reason for Christ to give His life was to help others (like us), true charity should be motivated purely by a desire to help others. If the motivation is to boast (vaunt) about what we have done or to be recognized in some way (being prideful or puffed up) or to receive something in return, that is not true charity.

4 Not Envious – Whether we want to admit it or not, most of us are envious of others who have something we want and they have. Whether it’s money, possessions, a desirable job/position in an organization, a spouse, a loving family, or whatever, human nature makes it difficult to be truly happy for someone else who has it if we don’t. Only true love/charity for another person can

allow us to be truly happy for them and even celebrate their blessing with them, even if we haven’t been blessed with the same thing.

5 Patient – Even as the Lord is patient with us, forgiving our transgressions and allowing us time to grow, so should we treat others. In the scriptures, “suffer” means to tolerate or allow so suffering long would be to put up with an admittedly imperfect situation, even over a long period of time. The opposite of this is to be “easily provoked” which is to quickly get angry or annoyed. This type of reaction can potentially alter loving relationships, so let’s do our best to be patient with each other and exhibit the charity that can be described as the true love of Christ.

(Originally published May 2018)

Ladies' Uplift Circle News

Chosen to Make a Difference

By Sister Ruth Gehly

The Midwest Region is comprised of branches and missions that span six states: Ohio (Cincinnati-Morrow, Columbus, Kinsman, Liberty, Lorain, Perry, Youngstown); Pennsylvania (Erie); Indiana (South Bend); Kentucky (Oldham County); Tennessee (Middle Tennessee Mission); and Nebraska (Omaha). While we are spread out, our goal as a Region is to be united in love as we actively work towards upholding and spreading the restored gospel in these latter days.

Not every branch or mission has an established Ladies' Circle, but I can assure you that our Region is filled with sisters who sincerely love the Lord with their whole hearts and who are filled with a great desire to help make a difference.

In March 2022 the Midwest Area Ladies' Uplift Circle met in person for the first time in two years. Our reunion was joyous and sweet as we shared a meal, fellowshiped, and conducted

business which included the distribution of more than \$2,000 in funds to various works of the Church. PRAISE GOD! The outgoing president, Sis. Cindy Giovannone, was honored for her love and commitment to the MWALUC, especially in serving two years beyond her term (resulting from COVID). Newly elected officers are Sister Ruth Gehly, President; Sister Rebecca Wilcoxson, Vice President; and Sis. Rachel Gensburg, Secretary.

Planning for the coming year, the Area officers were completely unified in our desire to stir up greater connectivity between our circles; also, the need to challenge and nurture ourselves spiritually through the beneficial study of God's Word. While the goal was to host our annual Fellowship Day in August, COVID restrictions dictated that we postpone. Undeterred by the interruption, we rescheduled for October, utilizing Zoom technology and break-out rooms to meet our objective for a blessed gathering.

(Continued on page 11)



Let God Take Control

Maybe it is even truly scary, like when someone is hurt or needs help right away! So what can we do?

The Bible gives us the answer. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding." This means, don't just think you have all the answers. "In all thy ways (everything you do) acknowledge Him." Include God and give Him credit for what He has done. (See Proverbs 3: 5 & 6)

Then God is like a dear member of your family; Jesus is your friend and you can ask Him right away for help.

He just helped me find my lost, dead cell phone that had slid out of my purse and fallen along the car seat.

God will show you what to do in every emergency or send you help. He can inspire your teacher and your boss to get along better with you. He can guide you on what to do in every scary decision, large or small. You can have peace and joy instead of fear and shame.

Let Jesus help you. Let God take control of your decisions and show you what to do. He cares for you. You are loved. With the Lord, when we make mistakes, big or small, we can be forgiven and things can be made right.

With love
Your friend and Sister in Christ,

Sister Jan

Dear Friends,

Do you ever have times when you feel like your life is out of control? Like when you have lost something so important that there will be a big problem? Or when people expect you to do so many things that you do not know how you can get them done, or do them correctly? Are you ever afraid that the person in charge—a coach, teacher, older brother or sister, or person in charge will be mad at you?

Years ago at Church, I heard a little four-year-old come up to another child and she said to him in a worried voice, "My Daddy is mad at me and I don't know why!" Since I was standing there and heard her fear I was able to get a little involved. I said a small prayer to God to help me figure out what to say. Then I asked her young dad if I could help. He said that he was not mad. He was just busy and sounded mad. Everything got better for her.

Sometimes we all are stuck in places like that. Maybe we just need to wait a minute and find out what is really going on. And what we can do is pray in our hearts. We can ask God for the right words to help. We can ask God what to say or do. Or maybe we just need to be quiet and leave the upset person. If we ask God, in our hearts, in the name of Jesus, we will know what is best. Yes, God will guide us.

The truth is that God is not a stranger. He created us; He knows us and what we are going through. He truly loves each of us and wants to help us. All we need to do is ask Him for help. Be sorry for whatever you have done wrong. Thank God for all He does for you and pray!

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(continued from page 9)

Based on the inspired theme "You Are Chosen," we delved into the characteristics of three lesser-known women in the scriptures: the widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17); Abish (Alma 19); and Rahab (Joshua). All too often we perceive life based on our weaknesses and shortcomings, or based on what our circumstances seem to dictate. However, God sees beyond what is known and examines the hearts of women like us, using individual life experiences (the good, the bad, and the ugly) to bring about mighty change—in unimagined ways—for the purpose of His Kingdom on earth. AMAZING!

Our numbers in the MWALUC are small. Sadly, for us, many sisters have been called to their heavenly reward; some are weathering great affliction and trial; a number of young moms

are trying to hold fast to truth while navigating a world that cries for tolerance and acceptance; some of our branches have sold their buildings; some are recovering from the passing of ministry and trying to hold fast. As the Area officers consider all these circumstances, we continue to move forward with understanding gleaned from our lesson: God sees and knows all, especially what is in our hearts. He knows every circumstance and He is working in each of our lives for our own good and for the good of His Kingdom. And we remain encouraged that the good desire of one person (or one small group like us) can be used by the Lord to make a huge difference in ways that we cannot begin to see or comprehend.

HOW GOOD IS OUR GOD!

(continued from page 12)

"I recite the song, "More Like the Master," and replace Master with Mother!" -Brother Mark Kovacic, North Georgia Mission.

"Love of God, humility and self-sacrifice. If I could be half the woman she was, I will consider my life well spent." -Sister Kathy Pastorelli, Lake Worth, FL Branch

"My mom always put God and Church first and foremost in her life. She is the ultimate example of generosity and a giving, loving heart. My mom has always been diligent in giving her testimony to anyone who will listen." -Sister LuAnn Carson, Monongahela, PA Branch

"Patient, Understanding, and great example in parenting." - Brother George Kovacic, Middle Tennessee Mission.

"She always shows kindness to everyone she comes in contact with, she always puts her family and friends first before doing anything for herself. She loves the Lord and the Church with all of her heart!" -Sister Kim Morle, Atlanta, GA Branch

"My mom always sees things through a spiritual lens, she has a caring heart for others, and she makes the best chocolate chip cookies (and many other tasty treats)." -Brother Chuck Maddox Jr., Forest Hills, FL Branch

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BB **I Live to Tell The Story** - I recently experienced a health challenge, and I desire to thank the Lord that He brought me through. I got up on a typical day and went to work feeling good, but by the time my workday was over, my circumstances had changed significantly. I found myself at the grocery store, close to home, unable to catch my breath. I called my wife, Shirley, to come to get me so that I could get home to rest. When she arrived and saw my condition, she called 911. The paramedics transported me to the nearest hospital and determined that my lungs had filled with blood clots and my heart was straining to pump blood through my body—I was having a heart attack. Immediately, they transferred me to a heart hospital an hour from our location to perform delicate surgery.

We returned to the doctor recently, post-heart attack, and he reported that there had been no heart damage—only that the remaining clots would dissolve in time. I thank God for his goodness and mercy in extending my life. - Brother Malcolm Paxon - Forest Hills, FL Branch

BB **Miracle in Progress** - I want to praise God for the miracle He's working in my life. I have been going for regular chemotherapy treatments for the last several months. As of this writing I had completed my 6th session out of twelve. During my consultation with the oncologist, he happily reported my cancer markers were

down from 1,246 to 145! As a result, the colon cancer trace was gone, and the pancreatic cancer size was reduced by 20 percent, after only going through half of the treatment sessions. Praise God! Hallelujah! God is so good! I know this wouldn't have been possible if not for the rally prayers from the saints from all over the country, including Mexico. I am very grateful, and my faith is stronger. Please continue to pray as our ultimate hope is for the total eradication of this cancer, all for the honor and glory of God!- Brother Mike Balilo - Simi Valley, CA Mission

BB **Blessings in Zambia** - I want to share an experience of a man from Zambia who had cancer in his leg. His leg was swollen to the size of a ball, he was taken to the hospital and the doctors conducted tests and they confirmed it was cancer. The doctors said that in order to save his life, they would need to amputate. The man and his family refused, and asked the doctor if they could take this man for prayers. They brought this man to our Church, The Church of Jesus Christ, where we anointed him and offered a prayer for God's healing. After a month, the leg started to heal! When the family saw this they went back to the hospital and doctors ran more tests which showed that the man no longer had cancer and confirmed that his leg was healing. The family of this man came back to our Church thanking God. The whole family has asked to be baptized. - Brother Joe Perri, International Missionary Operating Committee

Send us your Blessing Bits by contacting Sister Elizabeth McDonnell at eksanchor@gmail.com. [in approximately 150 words]. Answers to Question of the Month to gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org.



Question for this month: Turn the word "DADS" into an acronym. What does each letter stand for when you think of your dad or the dad you aspire to be?



Answer from last month: Name three things that your mother did that you try to emulate.

"1. She cares for her family with excellence and faithfulness. 2. She's not afraid of anything. 3. She makes an amazing Christmas nut roll." -Sister Michelle Watson, Lakeside, AZ Branch

Turn to page 11 for more answers.



"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels...." Malachi 3:17