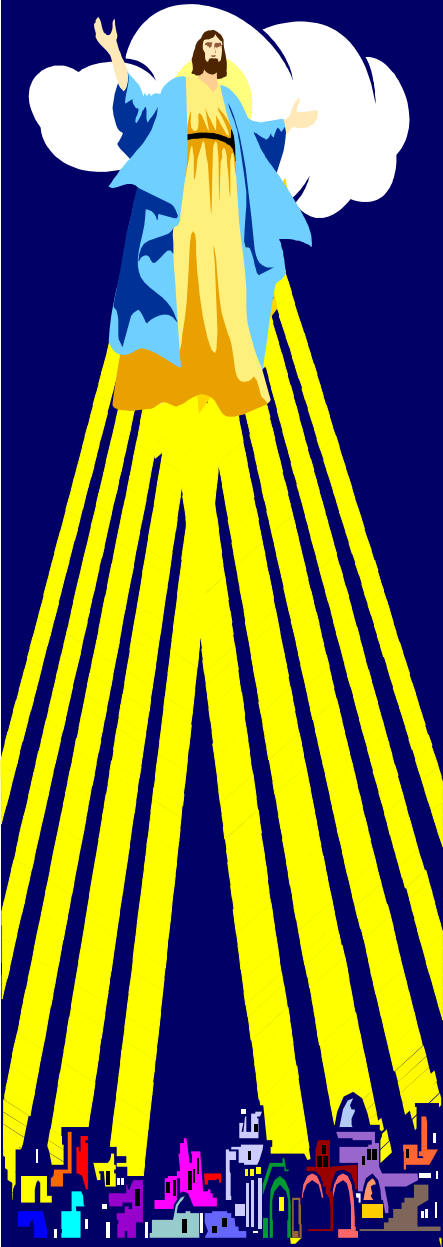


**“And the city had no
need of the sun,
neither of the moon,
to shine in it;**



**for the glory of God
did lighten it, and the
Lamb is the light
thereof.” Rev.21:23**

A Study Guide

Preparing To Be Endowed

**The Conference of Restoration Elders
July 2001**

A Study Guide

Preparing To Be Endowed

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PREFACE

INVOCATION by Steve Kropp

“Our Father who art in heaven, in thanksgiving and praise we bow before you. Father, we recognize and confess your hand in all things. Dear Lord, as we meet at this time during this week of conference we ask that those men who present, those who hear, those who ponder and contemplate the things which they hear, that all might sense the truth, that all might feel the building urgency of the time in which we live, that we all might prepare ourselves for endowment. Inasmuch as we are faithful and keep Your commandments Lord, we seek Your blessings this day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

“Teach One Another the Doctrine of Christ’s Kingdom. And I give unto you a commandment, that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom; teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that is expedient for you to understand.” (Doctrine and Covenants 85:21b)

The Scriptures are replete with commandments and corresponding promises. One of those commandments, particularly for priesthood, is to teach one another the doctrine of the Kingdom. God promised, that if we are diligent in our teaching, that His grace will attend us and we will be instructed more perfectly in all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

“...I give unto you a commandment, that when ye are assembled together, ye shall instruct and edify each other, that ye may know how to act and direct my Church how to act upon the points of my law and commandments, which I have given; and thus ye shall become instructed in the law of my Church, and be sanctified by that which ye have received, and ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me, that inasmuch as ye do this, glory shall be added to the kingdom which ye have received. Inasmuch as ye do it not, it shall be taken; even that which ye have received.” (Doctrine and Covenants 43:3a-c)

God has commanded that when we gather, we must organize ourselves, prepare ourselves, and sanctify ourselves. He has commanded that we should make preparation that He might make us clean, that He might fulfill his promises to us.

The week of the 2001 Conference of Restoration Elders was dedicated to keeping the above commandments of assembling together and instructing and

edifying one another for the purpose of receiving the promises of God. And receive His promises we did.

From the outset of the week, the presence of the sweet and gentle Spirit could be felt working amongst the priesthood and the people. As the week continued, the awareness or the intensity of that sweet and gentle Spirit grew and continued to grow, until it permeated all that we did. The Lord blessed us with a measure of the Holy Spirit that knit the hearts and minds of those present into one. Trust in the Lord abounded, and a renewed trust in His Priesthood and each other was evidenced. We were blessed with inspired preaching and enlightened teaching. We departed from one another invigorated with the knowledge that through our covenant relation with Christ we are one body, one Church, and we are His people. The experience of the week was similar to the one conveyed in the *Herald* for April 30, 1887. “One of the best sessions of conference we ever attended was held in Kirtland from April 6 to 14 inclusive. Unity, with but slight exceptions, prevailed from first to last, and the peace and love of Christ seemed to pervade every heart. The topics treated by those who preached were timely, and were delivered with divine grace and wisdom. The prayer and testimony meetings were seasons of gladness, and were marked by a large endowment of the Holy Spirit. The council meetings proved fruitful of good results and tended largely to expedite conference business. The Saints and friends vied with each other in making the occasion most pleasant to all.”

The heart of the week of Conference was the presentation of principles on “Preparing to be Endowed.” Doctrine and Covenants 102:2 speaks of the need for preparation. It says, *“...Were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the Church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now; but, behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I require at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh Saints, to the poor and afflicted among them, and are not united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom; and Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself; and my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.”* The condemnation spoken of above, in some measure, can be applied to us today.

The remedy, or God’s plan concerning the redemption of His afflicted people, lies in our being

united according to the law of the celestial kingdom. The Lord states that His people will continue to be chastened until we learn to be obedient. What the Lord shared next is of particular importance to the elders. He states in verse 3c that the redemption of Zion will wait for a little season while the elders prepare themselves that they in turn may teach the people more perfectly to know and experience more perfectly their duty and the things required at their hands. In other words, the perfecting of the people hangs on the faithful preparation of the priesthood.

In Ephesians chapter 4 we find that the priesthood is given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ. In Doctrine and Covenants 43 the elders are commanded to sanctify themselves that they might be endowed with power. *“Again I say, hearken ye elders of my Church whom I have appointed: ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit; and ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken.”* (Doctrine and Covenants 43:4a-d) This endowment, as indicated in Doctrine and Covenants 102:3, is necessary if the priesthood are to ultimately teach the people a more perfect way.

With this understanding, the importance for priesthood to prepare and assemble together, to teach one another and to be taught from on high in all things pertaining to the Kingdom, becomes apparent. If the elders are faithful and humble, God promises in Doctrine and Covenants 102:3e-f that He has prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, and He will fight the battles for the redemption of Zion. The task of the elders then is to prepare themselves through faithfully humbling themselves, gathering to be taught, being endowed, and in turn teaching the Saints the doctrine of Christ’s Kingdom.

This Study Guide contains the written presentations presented during the week of Conference along with selected comments from the presenters and those attending. By way of clarification and elaboration, additional scriptures and readings pertaining to the respective principles have been added. There are twelve principles for preparation contained in this study guide. They are somewhat reflective of principles that Brother Earl Curry identified in his booklet, *The Endowment*, and incorporate concepts that Brother Arthur Oakman shared in his lectures entitled, *The Endowment Series*. There is nothing special about having twelve principles. The number of principles could probably be expanded signific-

antly, or could be collapsed down to six or seven. In this instance, the number of principles just happens to be twelve.

There are a number of testimonies associated with the selection of the priesthood who contributed to this effort. During the week of Conference, the following testimony was shared as an example of how the Lord’s hand directed this effort.

A couple of weeks prior to Conference, Brother Doug Patterson and Brother Doug Hart were both up front at Waldo Restoration Branch sharing in an all-branch worship service. I had one principle that I did not have a presenter for. At the start of the service, I prayed for the Lord’s guidance in finding someone to present the last remaining principle. As I sat under the ministry of first Brother Doug Hart and then Brother Doug Patterson, the Spirit placed both of their names on my heart and in my mind. So, for the rest of the service I sat there and tried to discern which one of these brethren I needed to approach. I felt the Spirit very strongly concerning both of them. After the service was over, I sought out Doug Hart and greeted him. We started talking about the upcoming Conference and some of the things that were going to take place. I shared that one of the things we were going to be doing was to talk about how to prepare to be endowed. And he said, “Oh, my. Look.” And he pulled out a book and said, “I’m teaching a class on the endowment.” I thought, “There’s my answer, Lord. I know now who it is. You want to present this principle.” And so I asked Doug Hart to do it, and he accepted the responsibility.

With Doug’s acceptance, the matter should have been finished. However, I still had a strong sense that Doug Patterson ought to be involved, but I didn’t know why since I had presenters for all 12 principles. The reason why came two days later. The brother that was to present principle number five had something come up and was unable to do it. That is when I understood why the Spirit was still prompting me concerning Brother Doug. That evening I called him, and Doug accepted the responsibility.

Saints, the Lord’s hand is directing, as He has down through the annals of history, His work in sometimes spectacular, but more often, quiet ways. He extends to each of us the privilege to participate in His great and marvelous work. If we accept His invitation, His call, our response must begin with serious and faithful preparation. Take this precious opportunity to prepare your lives, and experience the faithfulness of our Lord as He bestows His blessings upon you and empowers you to accomplish His will.

INTRODUCTION

The subject matter of this study guide, preparing to be endowed, has been a topic of discussion within the Restoration since shortly after its inception in 1830. Many different perspectives on endowment have been shared, and a number of significant endowment experiences have been recorded in the brief history of the restored Church of Jesus Christ. By way of introduction and for the purpose of establishing a common frame of reference, let us briefly consider some of the more significant experiences and concepts.

The first significant mention of endowment within the Restoration came through a revelation given at Fayette, New York on January 2, 1831. This revelation, now Section 38 in the Doctrine and Covenants, directed the Church to go to Ohio. This direction was given that the Saints might escape their enemies, be gathered as righteous people, receive the Lord's law, and *"be endowed with power from on high, and from thence, whosoever I will, shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do."* (Doctrine and Covenants 38:7c) Of note is that endowment in this early mention is associated with righteousness, and being responsive to doing God's will. This association is consistent in all instances where the endowment of God's Holy Spirit is involved.

One month later, in February, the elders were again instructed, through revelation. This revelation, now Doctrine and Covenants 43, directed the elders to assemble, to instruct one another on the points of God's law and commandments, to bind themselves to act in holiness before God, and through what they received, to be sanctified. In verse 4, the Lord's message reflects the associations acknowledged above when He tells them to *"sanctify yourselves,"* be set apart by becoming righteous, by purging out iniquity, and then *"ye shall be endowed with power,"* so that they might respond, *"give even as I have spoken."* In the beginning of this verse though, the Lord adds another aspect associated with endowment to the two previously identified.

The Lord clearly acknowledges that He is speaking to those who are appointed by Him. They are His chosen and have been selected by Him. Consequently, these elders are in a different position. They are not to be taught, but to teach those things that the Lord reveals to them from on high. They have been selected to be endowed with an under-

standing of spiritual things that need to be taught, and they have been endowed with power to teach them.

This does not mean that the elders are to learn only from on high. For in verse three it clearly demonstrates that they are to edify and instruct one another in the ways of the Lord and His Church. It simply means, that there are times, and there will be a time, when selected elders will be endowed to accomplish God's holy purposes, and this endowment can only come from on high.

In 1833 and '34 the Saints were being persecuted and driven out of Independence, Missouri. The reasons for this persecution, are generally attributed in historical accounts and revelation, to the disobedience and unrighteousness of the Saints. Word of the conditions of the Saints in Independence reached Church leaders in Kirtland in February of 1834. Two days later Joseph received a revelation directing a delegation of 500, or minimally 100, to be formed to set things right and provide relief to the beleaguered Saints. The revelation concludes with the understanding that, *"All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith."* (Doctrine and Covenants 100:7a)

Arthur Oakman, in his *Endowment Series*, speaks of this time. "...[T]he early Saints were driven out of Independence, part of it was their own fault. They were unwise. But I rather think the part that was their fault was minor. And word went to Joseph in Kirtland,...and he was told to gather 500 young men from the eastern states and go on a journey from Kirtland to Jackson County, Zion's Camp it was called. Instead of 500 responding to the call, 198 responded; 302 men said, we'll wait and see if this venture prospers before we venture our wealth and our lives in it." As history records, this venture, and the one in Independence did not succeed, partly due to the lack of *diligence and faithfulness* of those involved.

In June 1834, while the Saints were encamped at Fishing River, a revelation was given which became Section 102 in the Doctrine and Covenants. Several extremely significant messages concerning endowment were shared through this revelation.

In Doctrine and Covenants 102 verse 10 we find the Lord's direction that the, *"...[F]irst elders of my Church should receive their endowment from on high, in my house, ...in the land of Kirtland."* It goes on to say, *"There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy; and it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the*

voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen, and they shall be sanctified; and inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion.” This passage defines some additional aspects associated with endowment and confirms those several already identified. First, it establishes that endowments from on high can be personal and specific. Second, it defines that endowment can be associated with a place, specifically here, Kirtland. Finally, it reestablishes that those who are to receive an endowment are chosen; they must have made preparation and remain faithful to be worthy to receive, or they will have no power to accomplish anything; and they are to use the endowment for God’s purposes.

On June 23, the following day, a council of high priests assembled, and Joseph Smith under the direction of the Holy Spirit identified 15 brethren of the priesthood who were called to receive their endowment. In each of these instances, these brethren were told they were chosen, that they needed to receive the endowment in Kirtland, and that they had an assignment to fulfill or were told that they would receive their assignment.

By way of review, the following conditions seem to be associated with the receiving of an endowment.

1. Those receiving an endowment must be chosen.
2. Those chosen to receive an endowment must have made faithful and righteous preparation.
3. Those receiving an endowment must respond by using it to accomplish God’s intended purposes.
4. Endowment can be either person specific or for a group, a people.
5. Endowment may at times be associated with a place, but it does not have to be.

Early on in the history of the Restoration, the Lord revealed His purposes for endowment. In Doctrine and Covenants 43 the Lord directed the elders to sanctify themselves to be endowed with power that they might accomplish His purposes. In verse 5 the elders were told to pay attention, *“For the day cometh that the Lord shall utter His voice out of heaven; the heavens shall shake and the earth shall tremble, and the trump of God shall sound both long and loud, and shall say to the sleeping nations; ye Saints arise and live: ye sinners stay and sleep until I shall call again: wherefore gird up your loins, lest ye be found among the wicked. Lift up your voices and spare not. Call upon the nations to repent, both old and young, both bond and free; saying, prepare yourselves for the great*

day of the Lord: for if I, who am a man, do lift up my voice and call upon you to repent, and ye hate me, what will ye say when the day cometh when the thunders shall utter their voices from the ends of the earth, speaking to the ears of all that live, saying: Repent, and prepare for the great day of the Lord....” The elders, in part, were to be endowed with power for the purpose of warning the nations to repent, and prepare themselves for the great day of the Lord.

Saints, if the great day of the Lord was *“...nigh at hand”* then, then we are on the threshold of the great day of the Lord now. And so the call that must go forth, to repent and prepare, is one that can no longer be abdicated to future times and future generations. It is our responsibility to embrace that challenge and to share in it in such a way that those around us might be impacted by that call which is ours. The elders are to prepare themselves to be endowed that they might declare God’s warning with power to a sleeping and dying world, that all might have an opportunity to repent, accept Christ and prepare for the great day of the Lord.

In Doctrine and Covenants 85:23a-b, the following understanding is shared, *“Therefore, tarry ye, and labor diligently, that you may be perfected in your ministry, to go forth among the Gentiles for the last time, as many as the mouth of the Lord shall name, to bind up the law, and seal up the testimony, and to prepare the saints for the hour of judgment, which is to come; that their souls may escape the wrath of God, the desolation of abomination, which await the wicked, both in this world, and in the world to come.”* While Section 85 does not specifically use the term “endowment,” it does allude to it and provides some foundational understanding concerning the purpose of endowment as well as direction to the elders on the need to be perfected in their ministry. Since perfection can come only from a perfect source, the phrase, “that you may be perfected in your ministry,” can only be interpreted as the elders being endowed from on high. The perfecting of their ministry, or being endowed, is for two purposes. The first purpose is a call for the elders to go forth to the Gentiles for the last time. The second purpose is to prepare the Saints that they might escape the judgment that is to come.

The first purpose is primarily a missionary one. In *RLDS Church History*, Volume 1, page 545 we find recorded, “Remember you are not to go to other nations till you receive your endowment. Tarry at Kirtland until you are endowed with power from on high. You need a fountain of wisdom, knowledge, and intelligence, such as you never had ... He can endow you without worldly pomp or great parade. He can give you that

wisdom, that intelligence, and that power, which characterized the ancient saints, and now characterizes the inhabitants of the upper world. The greatness of your commission consists in this: you are to hold the keys of this ministry; you are to go to the nations afar off, nations that sit in darkness. The day is coming when the work of God must be done. Israel shall be gathered. The seed of Jacob shall be gathered from their long dispersion. There will be a feast to Israel the elect of God. It is a sorrowful tale, but the gospel must be preached, and God's ministers be rejected."

The second purpose for endowment is for the perfecting of the Saints. In Doctrine and Covenants 102 we find the second purpose elaborated on. In the first verse, it says that an assembly has gathered to learn God's will concerning how His people are to be redeemed. The Lord tells them that their redemption has not occurred because of their transgression. He makes a point that the transgression lies with His people collectively, the Church, and not the righteousness of individuals. The Lord shares with them that the transgression of the collective people is that they are not doing what He has commanded; they are full of evil, they are selfish, and they are not united according to God's pattern because of their being self-centered. Consequently, Zion cannot be built up and the people are to be chastened until they learn obedience. As indicated in the preface, since Zion is not yet here, we may deduce that we, as a collective people, are still in need of learning to be obedient.

This understanding becomes particularly poignant when considering the Lord's warning in Doctrine and Covenants 105:9-10 where He shares that, "...vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth," and "...upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth...."

In Doctrine and Covenants 102, verse 3, the Lord makes the point that He is not talking to Joseph and those in leadership, but to those people who are not close to the leadership. He goes on to describe the attitude of the people in verse 3b, "...there are many who will say, Where is their God? Behold, he will deliver in time of trouble; otherwise we will not go up unto Zion, and will keep our moneys." This brief passage expresses the extent of the people's transgression—they are without faith, they demand a sign, and they presume to keep that which is not theirs. Contrast this with 4 Nephi 1:3-4: "And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly

one with another; And they had all things common among them, therefore they were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift." The account goes on to share how the people were blessed because of their faithfulness. In verse 19 we find the declaration that, "...surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."

As is the case in all disobedience, there are consequences to transgressions. In Doctrine and Covenants 102, verse 3c, we find that His elders must wait for the redemption of Zion. So, they/we are in a time of waiting, of preparation. This is a time of preparation for the elders to teach the people more perfectly; and a time of preparation for the Saints to be taught and experience more perfectly concerning their duties and responsibilities. In verse 3c the Lord has described what needs to take place for the redemption of His people. In verse 3d-e He describes that this can only be done by elders who are endowed with power from on high. The Lord says that the great endowment that He has prepared will come about only by the faithfulness and humility of His elders. The teaching of the people waits on His elders. It waits on their preparation, their commitment, their faithfulness and their humility before God. The Lord will fight the battles for the redemption of Zion. It is the responsibility of the elders to prepare the people for redemption. It is for this reason we must prepare to become an endowed priesthood, and in turn, a redeemed and blessed people.

In the early Church we find recorded descriptions of specific preparations being performed by the priesthood for endowment. Doctrine and Covenants 85:20a, 45-46 clearly reveals that the washing of feet, administered by the presiding elder of the Church according to the manner described in John 13, is an ordinance associated with preparation for endowment. In the *Kirtland Elders' Quorum Record* of 1836-41, the *History of the Church*, the *Messenger and Advocate*, as well as *The Diary of Joseph Smith*, we find referenced specific physical preparations that were made. These preparations included such actions as the washing of feet, the washing of the body with cinnamon-perfumed whiskey and perfumed pure water, and the anointing of oil. Additionally, other specific instructions in preparation for endowment were given to the respective priesthood quorums gathered in Kirtland and at the newly constructed Temple. All of these outward, physical preparations were to be done in conjunction with inward, spiritual ones.

By way of illustration concerning these historical preparations, consider the following thoughts that Joseph Smith shared with the Council of Twelve while gathered in Kirtland in 1835. Reflect on the importance placed on the outward preparation of the washing of feet, as well as some inward preparations and general thoughts about endowment.

"The item to which I wish the more particularly to call your attention tonight, is the ordinance of washing of feet. This we have not done as yet, but it is necessary now, as much as it was in the days of the Savior; and we must have a place prepared that we may attend to this ordinance aside from the world.

"...We must have all things prepared, and call our solemn assembly as the Lord has commanded us, that we may be able to accomplish His great work, and it must be done in God's own way. The house of the Lord must be prepared, and the solemn assembly called and organized in it, according to the order of the house of God; and in it we must attend to the ordinance of washing of feet. It was never intended for any but official members. It is calculated to unite our hearts, that we may be one in feeling and sentiment, and that our faith may be strong, so that Satan cannot overthrow us, nor have any power over us.

"The endowment you are so anxious about, you cannot comprehend now, nor could Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds. But strive to be prepared in your hearts; be faithful in all things, that when we meet in the solemn assembly, that is, such as God shall name out of all the official members will meet, and we must be clean every whit. Let us be faithful and silent, brethren, and if God gives you a manifestation, keep it to yourselves; be watchful and prayerful, and you shall have a prelude of those joys that God will pour out on that day. Do not watch for iniquity in each other. If you do, you will not get an endowment, for God will not bestow it on such. But if we are faithful, and live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God, I will venture to prophesy that we shall get a blessing that will be worth remembering, if we should live as long as John the Revelator; our blessings will be such as we have not realized before, nor in this generation. The order of the house of God has been, and ever will be, the same, even after Christ comes; and after the termination of the thousand years it will be the same; and we shall finally roll into the celestial Kingdom of God, and enjoy it forever.

"You need an endowment, brethren, in order that you may be prepared and able to overcome all things; and those that reject your testimony will be damned. The sick will be healed, the lame made to walk, the deaf to

hear, and the blind to see, through your instrumentality. But let me tell you, that you will not have power, after the endowment, to heal those that have not faith, nor to benefit them, for you might as well expect to benefit a devil in hell as such who are possessed of his spirit, and are willing to keep it; for they are habitations for devils, and only fit for his society. But when you are endowed and prepared to preach the gospel to all nations, kindred, and tongues, in their own languages, you must faithfully warn all, and bind up the testimony, and seal up the law, and the destroying angel will follow close at your heels, and exercise his tremendous mission upon the children of disobedience, and destroy the workers of iniquity, while the saints will be gathered out from among them, and stand in holy places ready to meet the Bridegroom when he comes." (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 1, pp. 602-3)

This statement certainly illustrates the importance that Joseph Smith placed on the ordinance of the washing of feet, as well as some other preparations, relative to endowment.

The preparation made by the priesthood and the people at Kirtland during this time was met with great and marvelous manifestations of the Spirit, particularly around the time of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Most Latter Day Saints are familiar with some of what took place at that time. However, for some who are not, two accounts from *RLDS Church History* have been included in the notes section following this introduction. Note 1 describes an event prior to the dedication and Note 2 describes one immediately following.

The above-mentioned manifestations were of such a magnitude, that immediately following them the Church enjoyed an exceptional increase in missionary outreach and growth. The beginning of this outreach, or response to having been endowed, is simply acknowledged in *RLDS Church History* with the phrase, "Monday, the 4th. The elders began to spread abroad in all parts of the land, preaching the word." (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 2, p. 17)

The priesthood and the Saints at Kirtland were greatly moved by what they had experienced, and the Church experienced an initial increase in missionary outreach. Unfortunately, the Church was unable to sustain this initial zeal. Dissension and lack of trust by some in the leadership of the Church, stemming in part from problems that began during the period at Zion's Camp, resurfaced as difficulties and challenges were experienced at Kirtland over the next couple of years. Brother Earl Curry describes the situation as follows:

"More than a century ago, in these very rooms in which this word of prophetic insight and foresight is written, the priesthood of that day enjoyed, in small part only, that which is possible for a loving Father to bestow. They were new to such experiences, and human notions and lusts and selfishness still marred their lives. They had not as yet traveled very far up to the mountain of the Lord's House. Their eyes as yet were holden and blinded to the deeper and finer things of the Spirit. The larger vision the great Father desired to open up to them was as yet too bright, too far above, too noble in concept for them to see. God could only manifest to them on the level of their concern. Nevertheless, it was a great day for them.

"This great day, however, does not even begin to compare with that which is before you." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 20)

Priesthood and Saints alike, the call goes out to us today. It is our time to respond. It is our time to prepare. There is no greater need before us at this time than for the priesthood to make serious preparation for the endowment. While outward, physical, temporal preparations, such as the washing of feet, are important—and we look to the day when they can once again be instituted in the manner ordained of God—the Restoration is currently not in a position to administer them. The question then before us as priesthood and as a people is, "What form can and should our preparation take?" The content of this study guide, in part, is an attempt to address this question.

However, before specifically addressing the question through the principles contained in the study guide, it might prove useful to provide some conceptual context concerning preparation and endowment.

While much of the preparation in the early Church involved outward or temporal activities, they were all done with spiritual intent. Often this preparation has been thought of in mystical or ceremonial terms, causing the simple and plain spiritual intent to be obscured. This preparation in the early Church, while somewhat ceremonial, was not mystical at all but simply an outward expression of faithfulness and obedience.

Joseph Smith puts any mystical concerns associated with the washing of feet (and, by extension, other cleansing activities) to rest when he states, "The house of the Lord must be prepared, and the solemn assembly called and organized in it, according to the order of the house of God; and in it we must attend to the ordinance of washing of feet. It was never intended for any but official members. **It is calculated to unite**

our hearts, that we may be one in feeling and sentiment, and that our faith may be strong, so that Satan cannot overthrow us, nor have any power over us." The intent of the ordinance of washing of feet, as it was in the time of our Lord, is simply to unite the hearts of those who have come together for a common purpose in response to their common covenant with the Lord. Christ used this ordinance to convey to His disciples the importance of humility and service in their association with each other and their preparation to provide ministry to the faithful and those who did not know Christ.

At its roots, our preparation directly involves the condition of our hearts. Brother Joseph acknowledges this as he continues with, "The endowment you are so anxious about, you cannot comprehend now, nor could Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds. **But strive to be prepared in your hearts; be faithful in all things....**" Humility, the sacrifice of personal pride, the sacrifice of self, is primarily a condition of our hearts, which is fundamental to faithfulness and being in a frame of mind to be washed clean by the cleansing blood of our Lord and Savior.

In the early history of the Reorganization, Church officials, as a means of distancing the Reorganization from the Utah Mormon Church practice of ceremonial endowment, adopted the position that "We shall teach that the true 'endowment' under the gospel of Christ, is that of the Holy Spirit in all spiritual grace and gifts; in all spiritual peace, and comfort, and love; and in all spiritual power, and knowledge, and wisdom; and that it is, and is to be effected, not by robings, scenic display, grips, covenants, and oaths, nor in secrecy; **but that it is wrought solely, and only, by the Spirit of God upon the heart and in the soul of those who come into right relations with God**, as in the case of Moses and the seventy elders at Sinai; of the apostles and saints on Pentecost, at Jerusalem; of the Nephites on this continent (Nephi, chapter 9); and that of Joseph the Seer and Saints at Kirtland, Ohio, in the winter of 1836, described in the *Mess-enger and Advocate* and in the 15th volume *Millennial Star*." (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 4, p. 292)

Apostle Edmund Briggs in his history records the following: "The brethren seemed to be rather abashed and confounded at our bold and plain setting forth of our faith and views upon the law governing Church organization. And when we showed that all endowments that consisted in ceremonies, secret covenants and oaths, were the inventions of men or devils, in contrast and in opposition to the endowments of the gifts and

powers of the Holy Ghost, as was enjoyed on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, and as was expected by the Saints in the event the temple was built in Nauvoo, it seemed to produce a hush all over the audience, and a feeling of surprise pervaded. We felt comforted in our spirits and rejoiced in our hearts, for we know we have the truth as it is in Christ our Heavenly Master." (*Early History of the Reorganization* by Edmund C. Briggs, p. 292)

Clearly, in the above two statements any association of true endowment to elaborate ceremonial or mystical practices is minimized or discredited, and conditions of righteousness and the heart are promoted. Saints, our preparation today is a call for unequivocal and unconditional righteousness.

In Doctrine and Covenants 85:20, while the Lord speaks of the need to cleanse our hands and feet, He also very specifically identifies the need for us to prepare ourselves and purify our hearts so that He might make us clean. Our preparation, our righteousness, are only indicative of the desires of our heart. It is only when our desire is pure, and we have faithfully prepared to whatever extent we can, that the Lord will represent us to the Father for the endowment we need to accomplish His holy purposes. Certainly, in Doctrine and Covenants 85:21 we find clear direction on steps we can take as part of our preparation for being endowed. *"Also, I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth. And I give unto you a commandment, that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom; teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that is expedient for you to understand; of things both in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; things which have been; things which are; things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home; things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations; and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries, and of kingdoms, that ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again, to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you."*

Endowment from a conceptual perspective can be viewed as an event in time, "The Great Endowment," and as a continual process of empowerment that occurs as the Holy Spirit works within us as we faithfully embrace the love of Jesus Christ and respond to His word. It is the Lord's timetable which will address the great endowment that is talked about

in Section 102, not ours—although we have a role and a relationship to it in our preparation. For the purpose of this study, no distinction is made between these two perspectives. The reason for not making a distinction here is that our preparation for endowment for either perspective is the same. At whatever level, or whatever time we are, the promise of endowment is ever before us, and waits, in some measure, upon our preparation.

We must have a more serious and dedicated response to righteousness in our daily walk with our Savior and with one another. The endowment can come only when we position our lives in such a way that the power and authority of the Holy Ghost can find residence within us and through us. God will not endow us—in fact there is no need to endow us, if we are not already extending ourselves in His service to our fullest capacities. He has given us so much, and we have responded so little that a great deal of our preparation for greater endowment involves utilizing that which we have already been given.

The priesthood are to prepare themselves to minister and teach, and to prepare the people to be taught. If we faithfully respond to that which we have been given, He will honor His promises, and He will endow us with greater understanding and power to accomplish His purposes.

By way of summarizing this introduction and the need for us to prepare to be endowed by God's Holy Spirit, consider these words by Brother Curry. "The finest blessings, the most gracious bestowal of more than pentecostal power, cannot come to men whose trust is in worldly wisdom and the arm of flesh; neither can it come to such men as are self-centered, or arrogant, or proud, or overcome with surfeiting, or whose lives are filled with a multitude of interests which are of little lasting value; nor can it come to any whose hearts are hardened and insensitive to spiritual guidance or whose spiritual perceptions are of low order, or are as mere crumbs from the bounteous table of the Lord. It will not come to any number or set of ministers who in their own wisdom and counsel bring the ways and means and methods of the great and abominable Church or any of her worldly daughters and seek to substitute these for the simple, the unpretentious, but yet...deeply spiritual ways of the Lord. It cannot come to those whose hearts are impure and whose lives are stained, sometimes very deeply with the sins of negligence or extreme preoccupation with the affairs of the world or failure to make the great concerns of the Lord their great concerns, or are light-minded, or are ignorant of the word of God, or know not the word of the prophets, nor see the starkly clear signs of approaching

catastrophic crises. It is impossible for it to come to men who, in this day—when the long foretold judgments of the Almighty are about to sweep over the earth—are concerned with little more than the Churches of the world....Yet, all who will, all who see, may now prepare themselves. Blessed are all such as shall draw close to the Lord in lowliness of heart, in great love, sacrificially, and in great faith. Such will be pillars of strength to God's people, and they shall be instruments of power in His hands...If you are filled with a Godly concern, if you become of great faith, if you will call on Him in mighty prayer, if you will prepare yourselves, if you will go apart into the quietness of the woods or hills or desert places, or best of all, into the solemnities of holy sanctuaries—into places where you can listen for the still small voice—behold, He shall wondrously show you what lies ahead. He will show it to the spiritually awake among you, be they aged or young. God would make you strong for these times. He would have you take such steps in preparation as only He can show you." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 6-8)

INTRODUCTION NOTES

Note 1.—“On the evening of the 21st of January, 1836, the First Presidency met in the west schoolroom of the Kirtland Temple, at which time they ordained Joseph Smith, Sr., Patriarch of the Church, and also received their patriarchal blessings under his hands. Joseph [Jr.] states concerning this meeting and other matters as follows: The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother Alvin, that has long since slept, and marveled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.

“Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying: ‘All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it,

who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts.’

“And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven. . .

“Many of my brethren who received the ordinance with me saw glorious visions also. Angels ministered unto them as well as myself, and the power of the Highest rested upon us, the house was filled with the glory of God, and we shouted, Hosanna to God and the Lamb.” (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 2, p. 16)

Note 2.—“Of a meeting held in the temple on April 3, 1836, and other items, Joseph writes:

“Sunday, 3d. Attended meeting in the Lord's house, and assisted the other presidents of the Church in seating the congregation, and then became an attentive listener to the preaching from the stand. Thomas B. Marsh and David W. Patten spoke in the forenoon to an attentive audience of about one thousand persons. In the afternoon, I assisted the other presidents in distributing the elements of the Lord's supper to the Church, receiving them from the Twelve, whose privilege it was to officiate in the sacred desk this day. After having performed this service to my brethren, I retired to the pulpit, the veils [veils] being dropped, and bowed myself, with Oliver Cowdery, in solemn and silent prayer. After rising from prayer, the following vision was opened to both of us:

“The veil [veil] was taken from our minds, and the eyes of our understanding were opened. We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit before us, and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold in color like amber. His eyes were as a flame of fire, the hair of his head was white like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth; I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father. Behold, your sins are forgiven you, you are clean before me, therefore lift up your heads and rejoice, let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name, for behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here, and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house; yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house; yea,

the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands shall greatly rejoice in consequence of the blessings which shall be poured out, and the endowment with which my servants have been endowed in this house; and the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen.'

"After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us, and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the Ten Tribes from the land of the north.

"After this Elias appeared, and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying, that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed.

"After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon us, for Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before us, and said:-

"Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse. Therefore the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands, and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.'" (*RLDS Church History*, Vol. 2, p. 16)

Possible Study Questions:

What is "endowment"? How would you define it?

What is the purpose for "endowment"? Why do we need it?

What is the distinction between the "great endowment" and "endowment" available to us at any time?

What were some of the early preparations associated with being endowed?

Why do you suppose the physical preparations, such as the washing of feet, were done? How do these preparations relate to us today?

What were the results of the preparation made by the saints and priesthood at Kirtland?

What was their response to the endowment they received?

What conditions seem to be associated with "endowment"?

What is the primary issue associated with our preparation for "endowment"?

PRINCIPLES



PRINCIPLE 1

Preparing to be endowed will require us to become aware of what we are missing –

To be aware of the power and possibilities of our ministry

“And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them, and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command. And the rivers of water were turned out of their course, and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness. And all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him.”
(Genesis 7:15-17)

“Is it not written of Enoch that wicked people could not stand in his presence and they trembled? That the enemies of righteousness were affrighted because the earth trembled and the mountains fled at His word? That even rivers were turned out of their course by the word of the Almighty? Is it not written concerning the Melchisedec priesthood that the Creator of heaven and earth intended and still intends that man after this order shall, thru strong and mighty faith in Him, and thru the power of the Holy Ghost which He in response shall share with them—that these men shall, if it glorify God, if it be necessary, and if it will save His people, shall break mountains, divide the seas, dry up waters, or turn them out of their course, put at defiance powerful armies of any nation regardless of the destructiveness or deadliness of their instruments of war? That they may break restraining bonds with which evil men and evil forces would thwart the Almighty and stand in the very presence of God—understanding His will and therefore doing all things according to His will and His command, thus subduing principalities and powers, and doing many mighty things in the name and power of the eternal Father? (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 31)

By Elder Howard Parker

After a particularly difficult priesthood meeting, I returned home to spend some time in prayer, asking the Lord when His priesthood would be able to better fulfill their calling. I thus labored for some time, praying for an answer—that God would somehow reassure me that He was still in control of His Church and willing to bless His priesthood. At 3:00 in the morning, I was awakened by a voice that penetrated my whole being. The words were given me: “Tell my priesthood that the endowment is now at hand.” I then understood that the Lord was about to move upon His servants, and that the necessary preparation must be made.

Over time, my studies and preparation for the upcoming endowment began to be centered on the question, “What must change in my life to be prepared?” I recognized the need to rid myself of the sin that inhibited His Spirit from fully using me, while, also realizing that I had no hope of doing this in my own strength. It became evident that what I must do is to empty myself, so that the Lord could fill me and make me whole. I decided to dedicate myself to pray for the understanding of that which I needed to change to allow the Lord to use me more effectively.

One night I was given a spiritual dream. I saw a large gathering of the Saints (several hundred) in a reunion setting. They were all gathered outside and were standing in a group, obviously downtrodden and displaying little hope. As I continued to view this scene, several men (men of influence) began to stand and speak to the crowd. They cried to the people that their efforts were in vain and to cease the fight; that if God were with them, they would have been victorious. As one would finish, another would stand and reaffirm the same message of hopelessness. To my right a messenger of the Lord appeared, telling me to stand and speak to the people in the name of Jesus Christ. As I spoke, the messenger would give me what I should say. The message to the people was that they were to continue the fight, but that the

reason they were not having success was because their hearts were not right before the Lord. If they would humble themselves as a body, and repent before God, He would give them the victory.

I am convinced that the most important area in our lives to focus on, is the perfecting of our hearts and becoming as a little child. Too often we get caught up in some “work” or some “sin,” when the Lord would have us begin at the foundation—our hearts.

In Matthew 5:50 we are *“...commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”* At first, I understood that no one had attained perfection in the flesh, except for Christ. But after further study, I found that many reached this status of perfection, but it was in their hearts—Asa (I Kings 15:14), Noah (Genesis 8:16), Job (Job 1:8), to name just a few. In II Kings 20:1-6 we read of King Hezekiah, whom the Lord told through the prophet Isaiah that he would soon die. In verse 3, we read Hezekiah’s prayer to the Lord: *“I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.”* Because of this prayer, and the confidence of his walk before God, the Lord added 15 years to his life. In this prayer we find the two steps that are needed to perfect our hearts before God: 1) walking in truth with a perfect heart—an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, and, 2) doing that which is good in His sight—complete dedication to His work.

The intimate relationship is the first step in the perfecting process because only then are we given the greater portion of the Spirit that enables us to become truly dedicated. Hebrews 13: 20-21 reads, *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ...”* This reaffirms that only God has the power to perfect us; it is not within our grasp. Again, in Philippians 3:12-15: *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.”* In this scripture, Paul is telling us

that he is not yet perfected, yet in his heart he is perfect. So must we be perfect in our hearts. We must become like a young child who, out of love for you, does your dishes. As you inspect the job, you realize that the “works” are not perfect, but the heart of this child is. When the Lord sees our hearts are perfect, then He can bring about the perfection of our works, as only He can.

The dedication of our lives is the outward expression of the inward perfection—the fruit of an intimate relationship with Christ. Often, this is where we fall short. Many times we as priesthood grow to the point of peace, but seldom grow unto the power that awaits His servants or, in other words, the endowment. Part of the reason for this is because of the enlightenment we receive of our own condition that accompanies our growth in Christ. As we draw closer to the Lord, our awareness of the gap between Him and ourselves actually widens; this is because as we draw close to the Lord and begin to grasp His holiness, we become aware of our own wretchedness. But, in this vision lies the greatest revelation of the grace and love of God. It is through this grace and love that we are not only given the desire, but also the ability to dedicate our lives in full. It is through this grace and love that Christ sacrificed His life on our behalf and makes the sacrifice of our lives now possible.

Let us now cease being hearers of the word only. Let us become doers of the word. The Lord desires to reason and commune with us, rather than us having only a listening ear. Romans 2:13 reads: *“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”*

By applying these principles in faith, our hearts can then be touched by the mighty appeal of what the Father can do through us. As we empty ourselves of the sins of this world, the Lord will fill us with His power, perfecting us in the process. Only then will we be able to answer the lifelong question, “Are you, or are you not, God’s man?” This is when all doubt over true authority will cease, because the world will see the undisputable power of heaven made manifest through ordinary men. Such authority was seen in Christ Jesus. Those around Him understood what He meant because they saw in Him the living revelation of the meaning of His own message. In Matthew 11:1-5 we read the story of John the Baptist in jail, questioning whether Christ was who He claimed He was. John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask of Him this question. Jesus could have quoted scriptures or berated John on account of his doubt. But in His loving way, Jesus answered and said unto them, *“Go and tell John again of those things which ye do hear and*

see; How the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." (John 14:12) The time for greater works is now at hand for all those that humble themselves before God. The Kingdom looks on, and Heaven watches and waits for our response. Let us not settle for the "things of lesser good," but seek the Kingdom to be here on earth, even as it is in heaven. This is the vision Christ left with His disciples when He spoke in John 3:36: "And he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life..." He wants more from us than just living a good life, dying, and then going to heaven. "Hath" is a present tense word. The Lord's desire for us is that we might begin to live the "heavenly" life here, now, and continue with Him throughout eternity. This is fulfilling the measure of our creation. This is what we as priesthood have been called to establish and partake in. This is why we need to prepare to be endowed.

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- "Arthur Oakman once said that, 'Jesus Christ is Zion in the individual mode.' As we look at Him, it is easy to say, as Matthew 5:50 tells us, *"...Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect."* The true meaning of perfection, the true meaning of holiness represented in Jesus Christ, is that His life was in perfect conformity with the will of His Father. That is what the Lord has called us to do. Many men, as I describe in the article, were called perfect in the scriptures. They were called perfect in heart.
- A while back, I was really laboring in the spirit and was considering the things of the Lord and why we continue to struggle. Why do we have the desire within our hearts to be perfect, but still something holds us back? I remember in my prayer that night I began to compare myself to Paul and to Alma the Younger. I thought, "Here are two men that were viciously against the Church. All their energies were spent in opposition to the Church, and yet the Lord in His tender mercies, went before these men to explain the gospel." These men were changed, and they became the two greatest writers [respectively] of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. I sat there in my own pity and I thought, "Lord, what is the difference between me and them? I'm striving for my heart to be perfect. Why would You come to them and give

them this grand experience and they turn around and become men of God?" I labored in the spirit for a while on this matter. The Lord then spoke to me and calmed my heart; and the answer that came was very simple. This is something I had been praying about for years. The Lord made it known, that the difference between me and these men was my **dedication**.

The difference was my dedication. These men had dedicated everything they were to the destruction of the Church; and when the Lord intervened in their lives and they were brought to the truth—the knowledge that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior—they were able to take that dedication and swing it around dramatically. All the energy they had put into destroying the Church was refocused on building up the Church and proclaiming Jesus Christ.

To explain again, the dedication that we are talking about is the outward expression of an inward change that is brought about in our hearts. The reason why it has to be this way is because...you cannot keep a spiritual principle without expressing it in a temporal way.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"...For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will; yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:2d)

"For thus saith the Lord, I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end; great shall be their reward, and eternal shall be their glory; and to them will I reveal all mysteries; yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old; and for ages to come will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom; yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations; their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:2a-c)

"Words can scarcely describe how immensely important it is that a generation of deeply spiritual ministers and saints shall arise, who by earnest and sacrificial effort have come up, as it were, to the Mount

of Transfiguration. Men who know of God's special outreach in the past; men who know and treasure all the promises of extraordinary Spiritual outpouring ere the end shall come. Furthermore, this generation of ministry must not only know those things, but they must particularly be men of increasing, demonstrated Spiritual power, men whose Christly nobility and very evident heavenly enrichment mark them as very special instruments of divine outpouring.

"As these inspired ministers increasingly arise, no matter whether they be men of high position or humble men who are relatively unknown, no matter whether they come from the shop, the office, or the farm, they shall be the fore-runners of an immense wave of vast spiritual outpouring. In that day when God works mightily with His ministers, and with His sons and daughters, then can be brought to pass speedily all that the scriptures have foretold. No weapon can withstand, no power can overthrow when God thus moves in majesty and in mighty demonstration and in power." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 5)

Additional Scriptural References:

Matthew 16:20&18:18

Mark 16:16-19

Luke 17:6

John 14:12-13

I Peter 2:5, 9

Hebrews 11

Alma 19:4-23

III Nephi 3:56-65; 13:17-37

Doctrine and Covenants 10:3-7; 83:3-5, 6; 104:9a-10

Possible Study Questions:

Why do the saints continue to struggle and not receive many of the blessings God has promised?

What are we missing? Why are we missing it?

What is perfection?

How was Jesus Christ perfect?

How have some been able to reach perfection while in the flesh?

What part does the condition of our hearts play in perfection?

What two steps for perfecting our hearts are found in King Hezekiah's prayer? (II Kings 20:1-6)

Why is having an intimate relationship with Christ the first step in the perfecting process?

In what ways did Enoch "please God"? How did this enable Him to be endowed with power from on high?

What characteristic or quality in Paul and Alma allowed them to become instruments in God's hands?

What does the "dedication of our lives" represent?

What keeps His servants in a state of "receiving" and not in the state of "doing"?

Are you or are you not God's man? woman? child?

How will all doubt over who has "true authority" cease?

PRINCIPLE 2

Preparing to be endowed will require us to not be content with our current situation –

To be stirred to accomplish God's purposes

"For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger and perish: For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good; And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well; And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them, I am no devil, for there is none: And thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. Yea, they are grasped with death and hell; and death, and hell, and the devil, and all that have been seized therewith, must stand before the throne of God and be judged according to their works, from whence they must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment. Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion. Wo be unto him that crieth, All is well; yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Yea, wo be unto him that saith, We have received, and we need no more. And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God. For behold, he that is built upon the rock, receiveth it with gladness: and he that is built upon a sandy foundation, trembleth, lest he shall fall. Wo be unto him that shall say, We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough. For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little: And blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and

lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom." (II Nephi 12:23-37)

"Oh, ye who handle the vessels of the Lord, beware lest you come under strong condemnation in that so many of you neither prepare yourselves nor your people for those things that are coming on the earth. In the face of the marvelous possibilities of God's endowment, will you choose to blunder along as a Church insufficiently in touch with God, and that you perish because He cannot use you as His instruments of power, the bearers of His way of life and as the demonstrators of the fact that only His ways can save the world from destruction, and raise all who will truly believe to glorious and even miraculous accomplishments?" (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 3)

Discontent: The Heart To Change *By Elder Gary Metzger*

How long shall we see the pain of those without Christ, and not lift a hand or a prayer to assist them? How long shall we allow the compassion of our Lord Jesus to receive wrath from those He created, crucifixion in turn for healing, How long shall our hearts be as stone?

It is difficult for us to realize the great need there is for not being content with how we are, or where we are spiritually. When we consider the compassion of Christ: that *"...if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:32), we must be drawn. He left the glory with His Father (Philippians 2:5-8; John 17:5) to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). There must be a change that comes over us. *"For the love of Christ constraineth us...if one died for all, then are all dead."* (II Corinthians 5:14) We must surrender all.

Consider when Jesus came to the Nephites and was about to leave (III Nephi 8:2-11). When He saw their desire that He should stay, He remained and healed their sick. How many more blessings and light would there be in the Church if we would desire that He stay a little longer with us, or rather, us with Him? He would not send away the 4,000 hungering souls who had been with Him three days, and He fed them (Matthew 15:30). Do we not wish to stay with Him?

He would not stone the woman caught in adultery, preferring to take upon Himself her sin (John 8:11-12) that she might be freed by His blood to go and sin no more. He is the good shepherd that layeth down His life for the sheep (John 10:11). What shall our response be to Him?

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman, *"...If thou knewest...who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink...he would have given thee living water."* (John 4:12) Do we realize who is asking for our service? Do we realize we are refusing living water, if we serve Him not?

King David said, *"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation....Then will I teach transgressors thy way...."* (Psalm 51:12,13) If we are not teaching the lost, is it because we have lost the joy of our salvation? Have we forgotten the bondage of sin, and the cost of our liberty: His blood? If we desire, we shall be the means of doing much good in this generation (Doctrine and Covenants 6:4a).

When a couple becomes engaged, by custom, the man grants the woman a diamond ring. Does she then hide the pledge of his love? Or is it the first thing mentioned upon seeing a friend? Shall we, the Church, hide the gift of His love? Or will the good news in us be the first thing seen by men?

Let us also investigate the testimony of our fathers. We know we are compassed about with a great a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1) of those who have been faithful unto death; who have fought a good fight and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7); who have sealed the testimony of Christ in their lives with their own blood (Mosiah 9:27). They have passed the baton on to us. Will we run as they? Will we lay down our lives for the brethren (1John 3:16)? So may it be written of us.

What strength fills our souls as we recall the words of Peter, *"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:20) With the threat of prison and death, the disciples would not keep silent. They had seen and heard. May we seek the same testimony.

Ammon and his brethren were so desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature that the very thought of any soul enduring endless torment caused them to quake and tremble. Thus they fasted and prayed, they left their houses, they walked in the wilderness, and they found God at their side. (Alma 12:5-26)

We shall have the same joy and testimony as we sacrifice for the Kingdom. An all-night prayer vigil in Choluteca, Honduras, brought the presence of an angel, the ministry of healing, and a prophetic dream to the congregation that night. Various weeks of men rising at 4:00 a.m. to pray in El Ocote, Honduras, brought an angel visitor to their prayer circle. The first day in Siguatepeque, Honduras, some saints gathered at the Church at 6:00 a.m. to pray. An angel had come before them, opened the door and later entered and sat down on the bench during their

prayers. These testimonies are for all—all who will sense the discontent of the spiritual desert. Who will hear the call to the mountain, as did Moses, Nephi and the brother of Jared? Come and hear the Master's voice. Enjoy the communion of the Saints gone by. "...Whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might...." (Doctrine and Covenants 6:2a)

Consider the world's great need. They walk in darkness. Have they seen the great light? The scriptures testify that they are as if, "...having no hope, and without God in the world." (Ephesians 2:12) Those who reject the Lord, they are in hell, in torment, being in flames (Luke 16:24-30). In Doctrine and Covenants 43:5-6, we are told to call upon the nations to repent. Lightning shall streak forth...the great day of the Lord is at hand. How often would Christ have gathered them together as a hen gathereth her chickens, and they would not? They must be snatched from the fire (Jude 23). They walk in loneliness, strife, jealousies, fears, addictions—without purpose. Let us not sit idle.

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...." (Amos 6:1) The work of the adversary is evident. Nephi testifies: "...Others will he (the devil) pacify, and lull them away into carnal security...." (II Nephi 12:25) We look at our world around us and forget our God. We substitute a material kingdom for a spiritual one. It is as written in verse 26: "...Thus the devil cheateth their souls...."

When we listen more to men, and less to God, the powers of heaven are denied, and His gifts are lost. If we say we have much revelation, we will have no more. "Wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost...We have received, and we need no more." (II Nephi 12:31-32) All this happens when we feel all is well in Zion.

We must see the world's great peril. In Nephi 12:23 it says, "For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains...."

We have been told to prepare a city of refuge, a place of safety; a place where we can work and worship in the Spirit of God; a banquet to invite all nations. But the temptation is to sit and wonder how. We must let the Spirit of the Almighty create a fire that brings life to us. Or it shall be as the prophet Moroni said in Mormon 4:47-48, & 54: "...Jesus Christ hath shewn you unto me, and I know your doing; and I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts;

And there are none, save a few only, who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquity...Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick, and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?" Let not this prophecy be said of us.

Let us seek first to build up the Kingdom of God and establish His righteousness (Matthew 6:38) in our lives, and those around us. Let us hunger for the endowment, not the status quo. "...The day soon cometh that ye shall see me and know that I am; for the veil of darkness shall soon be rent, and he that is not purified shall not abide the day: wherefore, gird up your loins and be prepared." (Doctrine and Covenants 38:2b)

In 1981, I hungered to see the Master. I had been in the Church for only two months and found the promise in Doctrine and Covenants 90:1 that I could see His face. Thus one night at 2:00 a.m., with fervor in my prayers, I asked the Lord to come and knock on the door of the second floor apartment where I lived. At that precise moment, there was a knock! I was frozen in fear. He was there, and I was unprepared. I could not abide the day.

Let us heed His voice and not harden our hearts. The promise is given us in Doctrine and Covenants 38:4d-e: "And I have made the earth rich, and, behold, it is my footstool: wherefore, again I will stand upon it; and I hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise; a land flowing with milk and honey, upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh; and I will give it unto you for the land of your inheritance, if you seek it with all your hearts."

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- First of all, we think about what it is to be hungry—a driving, compelling force that does not permit us to stay where we are. Think about what Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, that, "...blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." He is asking us if we can feel within us a hunger to not stay where we are.

- It [having a heart to change] begins when you have firmly focused in your mind the two ends of the spectrum. On the one hand, there is the glory, power and dominion of the Lamb. On the other hand, we

find the chains of hell and the pain and the woe and the loneliness of being without Him. If we have these two ends, and our hearts are touched, we cannot stay the same. [We will either choose to follow the Lamb, which is life, or choose to go to the other end of the spectrum, which is death.]

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Question–Will the endowment come when we are ready for it, or is it going to come in spite of our lack of readiness?

Response–From my perspective, it is not an either/or. I think there will be a time when the great endowment that it speaks of, in terms of a particular time when the Lord will perform that act, is coming. There is a time when that will occur. I also think that at any particular time, any particular people that prepare themselves in such a way as to avail themselves of the Holy Spirit, can be endowed with the measure of the Holy Spirit that the Lord would choose to put on them. Doctrine and Covenants 43:4d talks about that. It says, “Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power...” That is the response needed on our part. That is the preparation that has to be made. I do think there is this time in history when a group of people or elders, whether it be five or 5000, will experience the great endowment. The Lord is very aware of when the endowment spoken of in Section 102, and other places, will occur and move in great power. So I think the answer is yes to both.

Response–We know that Abraham sought the city whose builder and maker was God. It was his seeking that was important, not whether it was going to be in his time or not. He needed in his time, and in his life, to qualify through purity to be in that city. To receive this pure and precious gift we must desire it; for the Lord gives us the desires of our hearts. The endowment has to be, in my mind, a precious and holy gift. If we do not seek it, then, of course, it will not be given to us.

Response–The special promise in paragraph one and two of Section 85, talks about the Holy Spirit that was promised, even the endowment. In April 1950 a message was brought to the Church, recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 142:4a-b. It talks about the Church as a whole being commended for the spiritual conditions, growth, and the preparation of the priesthood during that conference period, and all that the work might proceed. It goes on to say in verse 4b, “It will be profitable for my servants of the eldership to meet often for study...at such times and places as may be practicable, in preparation for the greater endowment

of spiritual power which has been promised and which awaits a time when they can receive it.” Who is waiting on whom?

Comment–About eight years ago...the Spirit said, “The redemption of Zion draweth nigh. It shall come with great power and great judgments, even the judgment of the Holy Spirit.” That was all that was said at that time. This is what was said at a recent prayer service, “I will soon close many mouths and I will soon open many mouths.” In the spirit of that which was shared (I was the elder that shared that experience) I perceived the fulfillment of the Doctrine and Covenants where it indicates that those who profess to bear my name and who claim to be my apostles shall be known whether they are or not (Doctrine and Covenants 64:7d). I also knew that the Lord was going to open many mouths relevant to this endowment we are talking about. Those who think they can’t speak well or those who are not blessed, seemingly, will find that by the touch of His hand, and by the power of His Spirit, they will be mighty men amongst us.

Comment–The Lord wishes me to just say two very short things. I was impressed to say this, and I know I must say it. On the things that were presented, they are the truth, and also, that this is a historical moment in time.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...” (Amos 6:1)

“How shall you seek, and ask, and knock? God can only open up unto you that which you prepare yourselves to receive. How can He open up immense vistas of heavenly enlightenment if you concern yourselves only with the low or ordinary or that which only originates in the minds of men? ... What your marvelous heavenly Father can show you must inevitably hinge upon your interests, your efforts, your concerns, your ideals, your outreach toward invisionment, your outreach of love toward Him and mankind, your growing faith and experience.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 14)

“Endowment could come to the Church surely within ten years, and even less, if God's people will make themselves aware of the world's great need, if they will become aware of the Church's desperate need for mighty spiritual power, if they will go up to the mountain of the Lord's House! Will you stop your ears and let the cry of despair arising from tens of thousands of men and

women lost in this wilderness of sin, commotion and of fear? Will you let these cries be in vain?" (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 3)

"You are not endowed. You trust so much in the wisdom of men. Not very often do you speak in prophetic depth and power. The voice you raise is so feeble in the face of the world's need. So little do you lift a warning voice concerning what lies ahead. A clear cry of repentance does not resound thru the world nor scarcely in the areas where you live. You are so concerned with worldly things. Small affairs and activities of little permanent importance take so much of your time. So little of your time, your means, your resources and your powers are dedicated to Zion. You need the broad, sweeping, mighty powers of the endowment much more than most of you even begin to understand." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 28-29)

Additional Scriptural References:

Isaiah 32:9-20
Amos 6:1-8
Malachi 3:1-3
II Peter 3:9-13
Philippians 4:11-13
Helaman 4:48-57 & 66-73
Doctrine and Covenants 38:2a-c; 43:5a-6c; 83:6c, 7-8; 142:4

Possible Study Questions:

Why shouldn't we be content with our current condition?
What is one of the greatest tools the adversary uses to keep us from doing the Lord's work?
What change must come over us to be endowed?
What is required for a changed heart?
What does it mean to be content? Discontent?
What are some of the consequences of being too content? Too discontented?
In Philippians 4:11-13 the Apostle Paul speaks of being content in whatever state he is in. How does this form of contentment differ from the contentment spoken of in Amos 6:1?
What will it take to stir up God's people? For us to become discontent enough to change?
What will it take for us to continually seek, or have an abiding hunger to accomplish the Lord's work?

PRINCIPLE 3

Preparing to be endowed will require us to have an understanding and vision of things to come –

The vision of Zion

"If we have no apprehending vision we will not seek comprehensive understanding.

"You ought to be aware of the signs of the times, and of the needs of both yourselves and the world, for much more of the Heavenly light to shine upon you than is ordinarily yours." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 4)

Lehi had a vision and he honored the vision.

"And it had come to pass that my father spake unto her, saying, I know that I am a visionary man; for if I had not seen the things of God in a vision, I should not have known the goodness of God, but had tarried at Jerusalem, and had perished with my brethren. But behold I have obtained a land of promise, in the which things I do rejoice" (1 Nephi 1:149-150)

By Raymond Treat

Let's talk about "understanding" first. Doctrine and Covenants 85:21b is a key reference for enhancing our understanding:

...teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom
...that you may be instructed more perfectly
 in theory
 in principle
 in doctrine
 in the law of the gospel
 in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God,
 that is expedient for you to understand.

This is a five-part Hebrew poetry list that emphasizes the message of "all things" in part five. A five-part list refers to the full range of a subject. Our five senses are the full range of our senses. One thing that is expedient and even essential for us to understand is that the "theory" in part one is best explained by the parable of the sower. In this case, the "theory" is God's theory. Therefore, it will never change as scientific theories do.

The parable of the sower is the key to understanding the kingdom (Mark 4:12). We are told that if we understand the parable of the sower we will understand all parables. The kingdom of God is in parable form. Therefore the sower will allow us to



understand the kingdom of God or Zion. What is it about the sower that makes it the key to Zion? The sower tells us that there are four responses to the word of God, and only level one, the top response, will lead us to Zion.

Level one response: The top level is where the seed falls upon good ground. This is when the word of God is not only accepted but there is total commitment to it. Those committed have an eye single to the glory of God and are fruitful.

Level two response: The word is accepted, but those accepting it remain entangled with the world. They are double minded and their fruitfulness is eventually choked by their worldly desires.

Level three response: There is initial interest in the word, but little commitment to allow it to grow or even sustain it over time. These have shallow roots and wither away.

Level four response: This is where the word of God is rejected and tossed aside to be devoured.

Only the top response, total commitment (Omni 1:47; III Nephi 9:23, 30), bears fruit. This is the covenant relationship. This is the real Zion. Zion is brought *“by the faith and covenant of their fathers.”* (Doctrine and Covenants 83:17a) The other three responses ultimately fail (Hebrews 6:8; Alma 3:58-59; John 15:1-6).

There are four responses for any given spiritual concept. Each response represents a life style with its own distinct definition. This means that there are four responses and corresponding definitions to the concept of Zion, but only the top response fits the Lord’s definition. It is primarily the level two response to Zion that has been responsible for sidetracking the Restoration Movement since it was put on hold in 1834 (Doctrine and Covenants 102). We were warned one year and nine months earlier (Doctrine and Covenants 83:8) that we were treating the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments lightly. Level two does not have a covenant (which is the purpose of the Restoration Movement, II Nephi 12:42) and therefore does not have any power.

The covenant relationship is a prerequisite for the endowment. The second step of the ancient Hebrew covenant-making process was the exchange of belts. The weapons hung on the belts. Through the exchange of belts, each party was pledging to protect the other even at the loss of his own life. This is what gives the covenant power. It is stronger than life itself. Spiritually, we exchange belts with the Lord. We die to self in total commitment to Him. He is then able to share His weapons with us, which is

the endowment. *The Endowment* by Earl Curry is a call for us to move up to a higher level—the top response of the sower.

Although *The Endowment* was written in 1957 it is a revelation to us now. It holds up a vision to us that we are to ponder and put into action. Here are only a few thoughts from “The Endowment” that describe this vision:

1. God will share marvelous things with us (if we reach out and up).
2. He wants us to appreciate the possible glories of His friendship.
3. He wants us to have a vision of the very extraordinary works and miracles that shall grace our work and life when we are endowed. Are there not almost unnumbered testimonies in the scriptures that help to build up and disclose this vision?
4. Who among us has plumbed the depths of the Lord’s great wells of living water and has had God show us even part of what He would do through us. We are told by Jesus Christ that we will be able to do greater works than He did (John 14:12).
5. We are to ascend the mountains of exaltation so that Jesus, the Son of God, might speak to us face to face that we might be mighty in spiritual power. We are told again to go up to the mountain of the Lord’s House!
6. We are to be caught up by the vision of grand spiritual endowment by purifying our lives and purposes, becoming increasingly spiritual and growing into a profound love for the Eternal Father and all He stands for.
7. The Lord wants to shine upon us much more of the Heavenly light than is ordinarily ours but it will involve us being aware of the signs of the times and of our need and the worlds. Any delay in this process will involve heavy penalties.
8. In ways we cannot yet understand, even more is possible for those of mighty faith than has yet been disclosed. The Lord will richly reward any who try to prepare through desire, study, vision, revelation, perception of needs, mighty prayer and great faith.
9. The Eternal Father is anxious to have us share from His immense reservoir of truth all that we need to have intelligent perception. In so doing, we will see what we must do to grow in spiritual power and to receive, enjoy, and use that great light that radiates out from the dwelling place of the Almighty.
10. If we prepare, we shall be forerunners of an immense wave of vast spiritual outpourings.
11. As covenant people we will receive the larger power, the heavenly splendor and the glowing radiance of our Great Father’s spiritual outpouring if

we will enlarge our vision until we come to a much fuller realization of these things.

12. If we will put all of our trust in the Lord, we will receive the finest blessing, the most gracious bestowal of more than Pentecostal power.

13. Trials will come and we, in general, learn obedience by what we suffer. If we prepare ourselves, if we draw close to the Lord, we will not be dismayed because of trials—because out of these will come a new nearness to spiritual things. Out of the downfall of cherished, but mistaken, ways and notions shall come a new willingness to consider the high way of God.

14. If we will prepare and become spiritually awake, the Lord will wondrously show us what lies ahead. We will be made strong for these times. The Lord will have us take such steps in preparation as only He can show us.

15. “You have not even begun to dream of that which I the Lord had in mind in the erection of the Temple—things which have, as yet, been but slightly realized; but in the years of the future will be realized. When ‘they are,’ their effect and influence shall be felt over the entire world.”

16. Who among you can delineate all that can thus arise out of this His great institution for the discovery of truth, even His long delayed School of the Prophets? Only out of this great school, and the endowment to which it ministers and leads, can there come power to fully envision and to establish Zion. Only out of it can come the great works to be done that shall usher in the world’s Golden Age, the Millennium.

17. Stand in the high places of the Lord and come up unto the mountain of the Lord’s house or how can you even survive?

18. There is a vastness you do not yet comprehend to the promise that, in the process of endowment, God shall richly minister to you by His angels.

19. In the great work of the Eternal, God is your Father in a deeper sense than you know. Jesus Christ is your elder brother. All ye He would have as sons and brothers and friends. Come, let us reason together, for though your sins be as scarlet, if you will come close to the great Father so that He may reason with you, and you talk to Him, then shall your personalities become white as the driven snow; though your sins be like crimson, through this exalted association with Him, ye shall become as the finest and whitest wool.

Proverbs 29:18 says: *“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”* This is the same message as Doctrine and Covenants 45:13: have the vision of Zion

(through reason) or perish (through war and murder). In closing, the vision of “The Endowment” just described is generally above our present level of response. If we are to resolve these differences we must set aside contention or backbiting and step up our response to that of “reason.” The four responses to resolving differences are: 1. through reason; 2. through contention, spreading rumors, backbiting; 3. through blows, smiting; and 4. through war, murder. Doctrine and Covenants 45:13 tells us the time is coming when there will be war everywhere except Zion, which will have reason. Backbiting disqualifies us for Zion. (Psalms 15; Romans 1:29-31) If we choose to reason, our vision and understanding shall reach to heaven and we shall be endowed.

Excerpts from Author’s Presentation:

- One brother was praying at the Kirtland Temple after Earl Curry had passed away: Earl Curry appeared to him and said, “When I was alive and working here I firmly believed that great things were going to happen in the Temple—that its purpose hadn’t been fulfilled yet, but now I know great things will happen.”

- We know that the Endowment paper by Earl Curry was written in the Kirtland Temple. Even though it was written in 1957, it is a revelation for us now. Now is the time for that paper. About a month ago I picked up a copy of it. I spent three days with it; and the Lord allowed me to see that understanding, that it is a revelation for us right now. And the more I study it, the more I get out of it. It is that type of a thing. There needs to be topical studies of the Endowment paper. There needs to be a lot more done with it. As you read it and begin to get an understanding of it and have your vision enlightened, you are told to share that Endowment paper with whomsoever you can in as many ways as you can. That’s on the last page. So, we all have that responsibility.

- The Lord is preparing the rest of the Christian world to receive the Book of Mormon and I want to read two brief quotes from Rick Joyner’s latest book which make the point. The book is called *Shadows of Things to Come*. (p.19) “Many Christians have a basic knowledge of the plan of salvation but very little understanding of the Lord’s ultimate plan to establish His kingdom on earth. Conflicting and confusing doctrines have filled the void as we see in Matthew 24:14...‘the gospel of the Kingdom’...not the gospel of salvation must be preached throughout the world before the end comes.” And then, on page

63, "How many Christians today even know what the Melchisedec priesthood is?" I would like to paraphrase that, "How many Melchisedec priesthood members know what the Melchisedec priesthood is?" Okay, now let's go on with the quote so there will be less controversy, "...that is the priesthood to which we are called in Christ." Now this was a protestant minister saying this. So isn't it time that we get weaned from milk and go on to solid food?

Additional Scriptures And Readings:

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; And if they endure unto the end, they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; And whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be." (I Nephi 3:187-189)

"Very few understood that which the Lord has caused to be written concerning the last days. Very few even ask to be shown what lies ahead. And so, the warning voice that you lift is feeble indeed. You are fearful of wild and extreme interpretations. You seem to have lost confidence that your Lord and your God knew what He was talking about when He inspired His prophets to place His warning word in the scriptures. All this can rapidly change when you will come together and ask to see truly that which was in the heart of your Lord when He caused His words concerning these last days to shine forth. This you ought to do." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 16)

"Ask the great Father to let you see somewhat of the glorious experience that shall be in these climaxing days of endowment, that you may be entreated by that which you see, that you may be inspired and filled with a great desire to be one of those servants who shall then stand in His presence, that you shall see these things, and that you may be commissioned with a great commission and that you may labor together with Him who endows you in the greatest harvest of the world. From all this shall you go forth in strong testimony that Jesus is, for you have seen Him, that you have been taught of Him, that you have been sent by Him to bind up the law and to seal up the testimony ere the end shall come." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 29-30)

Additional Scriptural References:

Genesis 9:21
II Peter 3:13-18
I Nephi 3:187
II Nephi 2:19-24; 5:30-40; 7:17-20; 11:106, 109, 118; 12:1-21
III Nephi 9:85-88, 98; 10:1, 2, 4
Doctrine and Covenants 36:12c-13b; 38:4; 45:12-13; 64:8; 94:5; 98:4; 100:3; 103:2

Possible Study Questions:

Why is having a vision of things to come so important in our preparation for endowment?
Why is understanding the parable of the sower the key to Zion?
How is Zion brought?
How has the level 2 response to Zion sidetracked us?
What is the purpose of the Restoration Movement?
What is probably the most important prerequisite for endowment?
What are the four responses to resolving differences?
How do they relate to our preparation to receive an endowment?
What will lead us to the endowment?
Is it possible that we have lost the "vision" of the "marvelous work and a wonder"? If so, how do we regain it?



PRINCIPLE 4

Preparing to be endowed will require us to have a great faith and trust in God's promises

"For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will shew unto the world that I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith." (II Nephi 11:145)

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (I Corinthians 3:18-23)

"Therefore, let the problems of life wherein God may help and let the needs of the Church and of Zion be upon your minds; increasingly seek to understand all that concerns God's great coming Kingdom; more and more plead and try to perceive and understand the deep things that are your great Father's interests, such as have been called the mysteries of the Kingdom. Do these things and the promises of the scriptures will be wonderfully fulfilled to you and in you. Your marvelous Father, whom one of old called the 'Father of Light' was not speaking idly when He caused His servant and prophet to write that the Aaronic priesthood holds the keys to the ministering of angels, and that the Melchisedec priesthood 'have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: to have the heavens opened unto them; to commune with the general assembly and Church of the First born; and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.'" (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 14-15)

By Elder Doug Hart

In his book *The Endowment*, Earl Curry reminds us to "...seek learning even by study, and also by faith." (Doctrine and Covenants 85:36a) In my life, I can testify that this precept is true. Even though I am largely an infant in my spiritual development, a "Christian under construction" if you will, as I review those moments in my life of spiritual growth or learned truth, this enlightenment has generally come from seeking the will and truth of the Lord through study and prayer or through life experiences as governed by His sovereign hand. In both cases, faith has been a cornerstone requirement.

As we consider the principles of the gospel, where faith is the first tenet, I am reminded of a day in my life some 27 years ago when, at the age of 12, I experimented upon His word. For the first time in my young life, I knowingly moved out in faith. I found myself seated in the Excelsior Springs RLDS Church on a beautiful Sunday morning in early May, confronted with a decision: should I be baptized with my mother and younger brother, or should I continue in my rebellion as a young adolescent, whose parents had divorced when I was six, and had been "wandering" without a sense of purpose or direction ever since.

My mother had recently remarried and my stepfather had a long heritage in the Church. We had been active attendees at the congregation for almost a

year when I was informed that the date had been set when they were to be baptized, and the invitation was extended to me to join them in this service of covenants as well. I remember sitting there thinking that I could do this or I could not do this—the decision was mine. Even though I had, in a very small way, sought for some assurances that this was the true Church, the Lord was not going to take away my agency. I could accept this invitation or reject it. Coming from the world, so to speak, I knew I had sinned and that the first thing I would have to do if I wanted to be baptized was to repent. Then it hit me. A voice from within me encouraged me to experiment upon His words. I did not know then that this was the voice of my Creator or that these words were taken from the 16th chapter of Alma—a book from which I would later seek a testimony, yet had already received.

As you might guess, I meekly accepted that invitation to enter into a covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father and have been richly blessed since. As I've come to realize, "faith" is required before repentance is even necessary, and then comes baptism. In this I see a pattern established for us pertaining to receiving an endowment. Must we first not have faith, and seek to repent and to submit before Him as righteous servants before He will baptize us with the endowment of His Holy Spirit in marvelous power?

Being endowed will require us to stop placing our faith and trust in the wisdom of the world.

In many ways I believe that faith is an outward reflection of an inward submission. How many times do we get caught up in the things of this world? We must offer Him pure hearts, which are convicted of our dependency upon Him. And this is a very difficult process, for men in particular. We live in a society that screams at us to be independent and self-sufficient. Yet He simply desires us to cast our cares upon Him and yield that spirit of man.

One of my favorite passages of scripture is found in Helaman 2:31: "...firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ...which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God." I would like to share another covenant experience, which took place after I struggled with submitting in faith and yielding my heart that I might experience a measure of that joy and sanctification as promised in the scriptures.

During my first year at Graceland College, I received word from Richard Neill—who was serving as district president on the East Coast and was my branch's pastor—that I was called to serve in the

priesthood. Although I had great respect for Richard and some of the other men who called or wrote me to confirm that this calling was true, I was caught off guard and struggled with accepting the call. Since the time of my baptism, I had been blessed to attend two congregations both of which had very active and spiritual priesthood members. I had witnessed many miracles through these men as the Holy Spirit worked with them. As I began to consider this call, I was very aware of my inadequacies.

After struggling for two to three weeks in prayer and feeling a lot of anxiety about my deficiencies, I found myself on the eve of when I needed to call home and give my answer. (The plan was to hold the ordination service when I was home for spring break in two weeks.) Words are incapable of expressing the turmoil I was feeling inside. On one hand, I knew myself very well; although I was not doing necessarily bad things, I knew I was not “walking with the Lord.” I did not have an active prayer life at that time. I had not been nearly as studious of the scriptures as I should have been. And I also knew that if I were to provide any kind of ministry, that I would need my Heavenly Father to provide that ministry and, dare I say it, the endowment of His Holy Spirit to be with me.

On the other hand, I did not want the men who testified of their assurance of the validity of this call to think I did not respect them. Above all, I did not want to deny the Lord. I just wanted a testimony that would assure me that He would be with me if I accepted this. The night before I was to call home, I was overcome with a feeling of desperation and anxiety. I did not want to deny the call, but I could not accept it without the knowledge that He would be there. I had to know that He would provide His ministry to those bruised and brokenhearted I would find myself in front of. In search for peace, I found myself at the doors of the Cheville Chapel on campus. Not feeling worthy to even enter into the sanctuary area, I found myself in a side room that was dark and full of folding chairs. I was on my knees, weeping and just pouring out my heart to God, when it hit me. Rather than continuing to seek for signs, I half-challengingly promised my Creator that if He would be with me and allow His ministry to touch the lives of the people, then I would accept this calling. But I reminded Him that He would have to be there for me and to show me those things that I should say and do. He had to help me see the needs of the people through His eyes and to provide loving and truthful counsel and encouragement to them.

Attempting to regain some composure from this exhaustive, heartfelt prayer, I began to gather myself

together to leave. Wiping the tears from my eyes, I remember pushing open the doors of the chapel to leave. As I looked up, I encountered a group of students walking up the sidewalk from the library heading towards me on their way to the dorms. I can only describe what happened next by saying that for several moments I was permitted to see His creation with “spiritual eyes.” Not only could I look upon these fellow students, whom I did not know, and bring to mind trivial things—their names, their majors, where they were from—but I was permitted to look deep within them—upon their hearts. I could sense their needs and their pains; I was overwhelmed with the feelings of love and compassion and care that their Heavenly Father held for them. And so it was then that I knew—after attempting to move out in the meekest amount of faith—that He would indeed be with me.

Being endowed will require us to acknowledge that we cannot bring to pass the redemption of Zion—we can only seek to bring it forth by preparing ourselves, and the people, to be of one heart and one mind.

Our Savior desires to communicate His love to each and every one of His creation. He desires that none should be lost. May we move out in an ever-increasing and united faith that, through His gracious promises, He has provided us with the understanding that a great endowment will take place. Doctrine and Covenants 38:7 speaks of the Saints moving to Ohio and receiving the endowment of power from on high. The closing words proclaim, “...and no power shall stay my hand.” The closing words of the next paragraph communicate this great promise “...and when [not if] men are endowed with power...”

May we prepare ourselves individually to be a part of this collective experience as we consider that one of our stewardships is to bring to pass this great cause. And as is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 98:4, may we become faithful watchmen on the tower, for as brother Arthur Oakman has said, “He requires of us a full devotion of heart and mind.”

Excerpts From Author’s Presentation:

- My message to you this morning is that God desires for us to obtain more than “head knowledge,” more than an intellectual understanding of this precious gospel and this precious subject on the endowment that we are to participate in, but that we obtain a heart knowledge of them.

- I feel that too often we try to rationalize or use too much head knowledge in this gospel, but He has given us experiences, and He desires to grant us more experiences, that our hearts might be convicted.

- For a few moments, I was endowed with spiritual eyes. Not only is that a testimony of the endowment—that it is going to take place and what we can look forward to—but moreover, for all of my spiritual life, my growth, my development, it has been an encouragement, a testimony to me. And I hope it is to you—that if we simply move out in just the smallest amount of faith, that He is gracious; He is there waiting to bless us. That head knowledge can then become heart knowledge, and we can with true conviction, love and sincerity seek to become the people that He desires us to be—that we might be with Him for all eternity.

Additional Scriptures And Readings:

“And now I give unto you a word concerning Zion: Zion shall be redeemed, although she is chastened for a little season. Therefore, let your hearts be comforted, for all things shall work together for good to them that walk uprightly, and to the sanctification of the Church; for I will raise up unto myself a pure people, that will serve me in righteousness; and all that call on the name of the Lord and keep his commandments, shall be saved. Even so. Amen.” (Doctrine and Covenants 97:4a,c-d)

“Nevertheless, they fasted and prayed often and waxed stronger and stronger in their humility and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, to the filling of their souls with joy and consolation, even to the purifying and the sanctifying of their hearts, which sanctification comes because of their yielding their hearts to God.” (Helaman 2:31)

“Ye men of God, in the light of these great promises, and of many others equally great written in the record of the everlasting Father’s association with men, how can you do otherwise than reach out and up to that which God would do for you, for He would share marvelous things with you!

“When shall these things be? They shall be when and as those who minister for Him cease placing much too great faith in the wisdom of the world; and when they shall learn that the arm of flesh cannot bring to pass the high purposes of the Lord. When this ceasing and this learning comes, then shall be fulfilled the word of the prophet that those who are weak and humble in the sight

of this world shall thresh the nations by the power of God’s Spirit.

“It shall come when the servants of the Lord appreciate the possible glories of His friendship, when there shall come to them a vision of the very extraordinary works and miracles that shall grace the work and life of those whom God has endowed.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 2)

“Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion, for all flesh is in mine hands: be still, and know that I am God. Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion...” (Doctrine and Covenants 98:4f-g)

Additional Scriptural References:

I Corinthians 2:4-9
I Nephi 3:91-94
II Nephi 3:61-66; 11:91, 106, 145; 12:39-41
Mosiah 5:48-52
Alma 17:25-27; 26: 94-104
Mormon 4:81-82

Possible Study Questions:

How has the Lord been faithful in your life? What part did your faith play in these processes?
How have you “experimented on the word of God”?
What was the result of your “experiment”?
What does it mean to “trust”? How have you trusted the Lord? What were some of the results of your trust?
What was the Lord’s promise to Abraham and Sarai? When Abraham took Hagar for His wife, who was he trusting? What were the results of his trust? How did the Lord deal with Abraham’s trust?
How is the pattern associated with baptism related to receiving God’s endowing spirit?
What is the difference between “head knowledge” and “heart knowledge”?
What are some of God’s promises concerning Zion? When shall God’s great promises be fulfilled?
How does having faith and trust in God’s promises prepare us for receiving His endowing spirit?



PRINCIPLE 5

Preparing to be endowed will require us to honor our covenant

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation..." (Exodus 19:5-6)

The Church of Jesus Christ is the Body of Christ, that body of people who are brought together by the gift of His Spirit, and who share in the community of the Spirit by reason of their rebirth. Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances, the ordinances of God's house. Those ordinances are designed in their form and in the manner of their performance specifically to bequeath to men a certain spirit. Thus, when a person comes into the Church of Jesus Christ he acknowledges death to the old way of life that he might rise to a new way of life and in the waters of baptism he seals his covenant with God. Then he receives through the laying on of hands the gifts of the Spirit, which is the sign and seal of Divine acceptance. In the early Church there were only a couple of means by which one could identify a Christian, one is, if you confessed that the Lord Jesus Christ was Lord and if you had the Spirit. Both these are just obverse and reverse side of the same coin of the realm. To confess that Jesus Christ was the Son of God was to manifest the fact that one had received the Spirit, for this knowledge can only come by the operation of the Spirit. (Lecture 4—"Gifts of the Spirit" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

By Elder Doug Patterson

"For thus saith the Lord, I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end." (Doctrine and Covenants 76:2a)

"Thou shalt have none other gods before me." (Deuteronomy 5:7)

He is to be the only Lord in our life.

"For they themselves had entered into a covenant with God, to serve him, and keep his commandments." (Mosiah 9:174)

We must be willing to serve Him.

"Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus said unto him, Feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17)

We must be willing to commit ourselves to serve His people.

To understand how we are to prepare ourselves for this endowment, we first must understand our covenant and how to honor it. Doctrine and Covenants 43:3b, *"...and ye shall bind yourselves to act in all holiness before me, that inasmuch as ye do this, glory shall be added to the kingdom which ye have received."* To bind ourselves is to make a covenant.

Understanding the covenant relationship between God and His people is one of the keys to unlocking some of the mysteries of the Kingdom. They are mysteries because of our lack of study, prayer, and fasting and because of our disobedience to His laws. Spiritual things are withheld from us because of sin, and will continue to be withheld until we repent and *"...remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon..."* (Doctrine and Covenants 83:8b) Even after our repentance and obedience, our faith shall continue to be tried. *"...which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things, then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them."* (3 Nephi 12:3)

God has made covenants with mankind since the beginning—with Enoch, Noah, Abraham and many others. But the promises are the same. There are several symbolic aspects of the covenant. In Abraham's experience we find that the Lord exchanges names with him—Abram now becomes Abraham and God now becomes known as the God of Abraham. Later He is also known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all of whom were under the covenant. Abraham became known as the friend of God. *"...and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever."* (11 Chronicles 20:7) *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God."* (James 2:22) Christ many times referred to others as His friends. If we look to the Greek interpretation of **friend**, it means "one with whom you have covenanted." This reflects quite a different light on the word **friend**. The hymn "What a friend we have in Jesus" could be interpreted to say, *"what a covenant we have in Jesus."*

When we enter into a covenant, there are always tokens exchanged to seal it, to show that we will honor it. They are things of value that we sacrifice to each other. Abraham's token was circumcision.

(Genesis 17:16) If we look at the marriage covenant, we find the token of virginity. Christ has offered to all a covenant. His token was the shedding of His blood. All three of these examples were tokens of flesh and blood, symbolic of the baptismal covenant that we make that as long as we are flesh and blood we shall love and serve Him. The tokens we offer are the fruits of repentance, a broken heart, and a contrite spirit. This is what Christ (the Bridegroom) requires of us as a Church—the bride, the woman and the virgin (Revelation 12:1, Matthew 25:1-12)—to give unto Him the token of virginity or of purity which comes by repentance and obedience. Then we will be washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. *“For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified.”* (Genesis 6:63)

Consider the covenant made with Enoch, *“And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.”* (Genesis 9:22-23) The Lord called it the everlasting covenant—everlasting because the blessings of it will continue into eternity. Also Everlasting is His name, so it shall be called after His name. Enoch was told that when his posterity (meaning the last generation) shall embrace the truth (hold fast to the Rod of Iron, [I Nephi 2:62-69]) and look upward (to look to the heavenly things not the things of this world, to see eye to eye, and to have our eye single to His Glory), then the general assembly of the Church of the Firstborn shall be able to return.

In our covenant with God, we will exchange robes. He will take our filthy rags (sins) and clothe us with His countenance, *“...and his countenance did smile upon them, and the light of His countenance did shine upon them, and behold, they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus.”* (III Nephi 9:25) We will also exchange weapon belts (see *Recent Book of Mormon Developments*, Page 35). *“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...”* (Ephesians 6:11-18) We are being told to prepare for battle. But to be able to overcome our adversary, we must be well-armed, so we exchange our weapon belts with God. We give Him our heart, might, mind, and strength (Doctrine and Covenants 59:2a). He in turn girds our loins about with truth; and the truth

will set us free. The truth is the fullness of the word. The word is Christ. In Christ there is power. So, God girds our loins about with the power of the truth which is in Christ Jesus.

“And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood...” (Genesis 7:70) Righteousness represents the power and the authority of Jesus Christ. Righteousness shall come down from heaven.

The truth represents the fullness of the gospel, which shall come forth out of the earth. The Book of Mormon was hidden in the earth for many years. Also the records of the lost tribes are hidden in the earth—all of which will testify of Jesus Christ, Who is the New Covenant.

To sweep the earth is to clean, glean, separate or gather together (Matthew 13:22-29). Think of the parable of the wheat and tares. We find in the flood of Noah’s day the earth was completely immersed within 40 days—a time of purification. Moses fasted 40 days, Christ fasted 40 days, and the Israelites wandered in the wilderness 40 years. We find within the story of the flood that the heavens and the fountains of the “great deep” were opened, and that water came from above and from beneath. Thus the earth was baptized with water. The Lord will once again flood the earth, but this time with the power of His Spirit to purify the earth. The Lord shall immerse the earth with His Spirit. It will be as great and terrible as the former flood was, and it will divide the good from the bad. It will be a day of choosing for many because His Spirit shall flow as swift as raging floodwaters. There shall be no place left on earth untouched, no person left without excuse. This all shall be done through the power of the endowment. It will be as in the days Noah. They were *“eating and drinking, and marrying and given in marriage...and they hearkened not unto the words of Noah.”* (Genesis 8:9) Those who will be endowed shall be chosen because they chose Christ. They will have repented from all unrighteousness and become obedient to all His laws and commandments. They will have cleansed themselves that they might be sanctified and they will serve God by serving His people. *“And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light...Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God...”* (Doctrine and Covenants 85:18a, b)

This is honoring our covenant. Then shall we have His Spirit to pour out over us with such great power as man has never known, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit of Promise—all this that the promises made in the covenants unto our fathers Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob might be fulfilled. *“And*

then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth, and then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel.” (Ill Nephi 7:29) He will gather together His covenant people unto their land of inheritance. And for our inheritance, the Lord has promised a land that will be called “Zion”, a “New Jerusalem”.

“And again, I say unto you, I give unto you a new commandment, that you may understand my will concerning you, or in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation. I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.” (Doctrine and Covenants. 81:3a, b)

The endowment shall come to pass, and it shall be given as a gift unto those who use wisdom in exercising authority to gather together His own elect—the elect because of the covenant. The holy priesthood shall receive the power of Christ to bring to pass the fulfillment of the covenant, and the authority to exercise this power in righteousness.

Excerpts from Author’s Presentation:

- Understanding our covenant is one of the keys in which we have power to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom. If we look at just the word “keys,” we find in our lives that we have many keys and many places of authority. Christ has the same. He has things that are most precious—things which He locks up and hides and holds until He finds those in whom He can trust, who will obey, to whom He can entrust the keys—that they might use those keys with wisdom and with love and with the power that only comes from Him.
- Doctrine and Covenants 83:8b says, “...repent, and even remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon...” And I would like to take that a little farther and suggest to you that the new covenant is more than just the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is the word of God and the word of God is Christ. In essence, we are to remember the new covenant, even Jesus Christ. The Lord has made covenants with man ever since the beginning; and I would suggest to you that those things are yet unfulfilled, even the promises He made with Enoch and Noah and Abraham. They will be fulfilled in our day. That is what this endowment is all about.
- I would also suggest to you that you look at the word “endowment” and what it really means. For me, the word “endowment” means, an empowerment—to

receive power—to have the power of Jesus Christ. This is available for every man, woman and child—to have Jesus Christ within them. We had a city on this earth and the inhabitants walked with God. Each one of those persons inside that city was endowed because they had the power with them, even Jesus Christ. They honored their covenant.

- I would also suggest to you that the endowment is here and has been ever since hands were laid upon the first elder of this Church. It has continued to be so, as those who would be ordained and serve with righteousness and truth would also be endowed or empowered. But that is not the “Great Endowment.” We sit back, and we wait, and we don’t use the endowment that we have because we are waiting for the great endowment. That is reserved for a very specific purpose, and we are not ready for that yet, because we are naked. Where is our armor? Where is the exchange of our weapons? Where is the sword in our hand, and the shield to protect us? It is time that we made that exchange—that we might find ourselves worthy—for this is the time of preparation. It is a time for us to honor our covenant and, at the right time, the Lord will honor all the covenants He has made with the House of Israel.
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Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—Doug, could you relate just a few more insights into the study of how we are to emerge with our covenant, making it a part of our lives—and being prepared for the great endowment?

Response—Doug Patterson: I can picture Christ sitting there with His disciples. At one time or another we all have probably asked in our minds, “Who among us is the greatest?” And we have contended one against the other; and have sought for positions of authority and of power. Christ said that he that is the servant of all shall be the greatest. In our covenant, the Lord calls us to love Him and to serve Him. We love Him and serve Him by loving and serving each other. Then the power comes, which is Jesus Christ in our life, and the authority comes. These two are different. The power is Jesus Christ. The authority is the ability to have that power and to use it righteously. Many times that is abused.

Comment—Doug, I am hearing you use the example of Moses and Jesus and of fasting 40 days, and I am hearing that that is a part of sanctification. Could you talk a little bit more about that in terms of our getting ready for the endowment? Being a convert to this Church, and not really having heard much about

fasting from my background or in the early years of my being in this Church, I would like a little more understanding about that.

Response—Doug Patterson: I had an experience at a reunion. I was the camp director of it. I was pretty nervous about it and had a lot of anticipation. In choosing different speakers to come, I didn't want to call on just anybody; so I prayed for the Lord to lead me to those that would feed the people. I began fasting the week before camp that the people would be nourished and fed. After camp began, I continued my fast. Every mealtime would come around and my wife would come up and ask, "Are you going to eat?" and I'd say, "No." I chose not to. It was a decision that I made at every meal. And that lasted for about ten days. Never once in that ten days did I have a hunger pain or even a desire for food.

The speaker for Sunday shared the scripture in which Christ stopped at a well and sent His disciple into town. They went and got meat and brought it back and desired Him to eat: He said, "I've eaten that which you know not of." I understood what that was about.

As soon as we left camp, no more than half way to the highway, my body was filled with hunger. So, I ate and was nourished. My hunger was satisfied.

That is the beginning of the steps that can lead us to sanctification. Sanctification is not something that we can bring on ourselves. We can cleanse ourselves, we can pray, and we can fast, but we can not sanctify ourselves. Even though Section 85 says to sanctify yourself, it is really the blood of Jesus Christ that sanctifies us. It is the blood of the Lamb that cleanses us. We allow it to flow over us by our repentance and obedience. These things will have to be in place before the great endowment will happen.

Comment—I have been stirred this morning within my soul by the words that I have heard shared. For a lot of years I have been very frustrated as an elder in this Church. I have carried a pain in my heart because our people have been unwilling to succumb to the word of God, and I am at the top of that list. Quite a few years ago, I had a dream one night. In that dream I was allowed to see on the steps of the Kirtland Temple—what was given to me to understand—an army of young men who were being prepared to be sent forth that this gospel might be given to all of the corners of the earth. The thing that was unique was these young men were not young in stature. Some were very young and some were very old. But they were young in the power that almighty God was giving them, that they were being endowed with. To make this testimony very short, I have seen several of

those young men, some that I did not know at that time because they were not born yet. I have ordained two of them and I've seen others ordained from other places.

Very simply, I am excited because of something that Doug said, not of his mind. That is, we *are* being endowed, *but we have not yet been endowed as we will be*. I just recently returned from Belize and was given an opportunity that has really affected my life. Without going into a lot of experiences that took place there, I would just bear witness to you, my brothers and sisters, that our God is still performing miracles far beyond what we are willing to understand. We understand blessings; but I would bear witness to you that I have seen my heavenly Father perform miracles and it was in our nothingness that He did those things. When we recognize our nothingness and are willing to accept that, then almighty God can mold us and prepare us and endow us from on high.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"Now they would have gladly joined with them, for they themselves had entered into a covenant with God, to serve him, and keep his commandments." (Mosiah 9:174)

"You have a record of the Everlasting Covenant which was made by God to Enoch and to his posterity, and reaffirmed to Noah, '...when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the Church of the Firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come....' (Genesis 9:22-23). All these plain and precious parts which were taken away from the Bible, which have come to us from the mouth of the Jew, have been restored in these the latter days in the Inspired Version." (Lecture 5—"Angelic Ministry" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"He was a High Priest, ordained after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, this self same everlasting covenant...And men who come up under this Order, and who are ordained under this order, it is decreed that they should have faith. By faith they should have power to work righteousness, to subdue kingdoms and principalities, to set at defiance the armies of the earth. Can you imagine us doing it? Listen, to break every band and to stand in the presence of God."

(Lecture 5—"Angelic Ministry" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"Elijah has appeared to the men of this generation and in their priesthood has been bestowed the longing and the promise of Zion and the power and the capacity to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the fathers to their children. This we received from above, it didn't originate upon the earth or amongst men. And if I were to ask you brethren what is the covenant which God has made with us in these the last days, I wonder what the response would be? Do you know what it is? Section 38, paragraph 4, "...I [the Lord] hold forth and deign to give unto you greater riches, even a land of promise...upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh...and this shall be my covenant with you, Ye shall have it for the Land of your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children...if you seek it with all your hearts." Brethren, there has to be an economic basis for the demonstration of righteousness in a social way in these the latter days. There has to be means of the earth by which the City of Zion is sustained, and not only that, by which the means of the earth themselves, by that fact, are sanctified." (Lecture 5—"Angelic Ministry" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"Where would we be had it not been for the intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ? And what He has endeavored for us, He has called us to endeavor for other people—to stand in their lives for what they cannot stand for themselves, to do for them what they are unable to do, to bear their sins and carry their infirmities. And, gentlemen, with all the emphasis of which I am capable, let me say quietly that the man that refuses to minister to his fellow men after having received the covenant of this priesthood, or the man that fails to minister to his fellow men—either case is disobedience, whether he refuses or whether he fails—that man will find in the day of judgment that the sins those people commit because of a lack of his ministry, [are] on his shoulders...." (Lecture 6—"Spiritual Endowment" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

Additional Scriptural References:

Genesis 9:22

Exodus 19:5, 6

Psalms 25:10; 50:5

Isaiah 42:6; 59:20-21

Jeremiah 31:33

Hebrews 9:1, 15-17; 10:15-17, 19, 20, 22, 28, 29

Doctrine and Covenants 34:6; 38:4-5b; 76:5; 83:6

Possible Study Questions:

What does it mean to "bind themselves to act in all holiness before God"?

How does one "remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon?"

What are some of the "symbolic aspects" associated with covenant making?

How is the exchanging of "names" significant to our covenant and endowment? In this exchange, what do we give and what do we receive?

How is the exchanging of "robes" significant to our covenant and endowment? In this exchange, what do we give and what do we receive?

How is the exchanging of "weapon belts" significant to our covenant and endowment? In this exchange, what do we give and what do we receive?

In order for a "token" to have significance in the sealing of a covenant, it must have what?

Name three flesh and blood "tokens", and how they might pertain to the baptismal covenant?

What tokens must we offer in the baptismal covenant?

How do we honor our covenant? And, how does honoring our covenant prepare us for endowment?

Do you feel the endowment is here and has been since the early 1830's? Why?

Have you had a real "covenant exchange" with the Lord?



PRINCIPLE 6

Preparing to be endowed will require us to sacrifice

"Verily I say unto you, All among them who know their hearts are honest, and are broken, and their spirits contrite, and are willing to observe their covenants by sacrifice; yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command, they are all accepted of me, for I, the Lord, will cause them to bring forth as a very fruitful tree which is planted in a goodly land, by a pure stream, that yieldeth much precious fruit." (Doctrine and Covenants 94:2f-g)

"Christ rules the moral world from the cross and sacrifice is at the heart of creation. Sacrifice is at the heart of redemption. Sacrifice is one of the prime conditions of endowment. For sacrifice is the instrument of love. In fact, sacrifice is its only instrument. The only way love knows how to accomplish its purpose is to sacrifice itself, to give itself. And, gentlemen, sacrifice is

the discovery of yourself in the act of giving yourself to other people.

"... 'What greater sacrifice can you bring than the investment of your life in the lives of My children.' This is the only sacrifice that you can bring that is adequate to answer My love. And gentlemen, that is a principle which is true. The only sacrifice you can bring is the investment of your life in the lives of those to whom you are called to minister.

"This is the secret of ministry: any ministry that reaches to heaven has a broad base of sacrifice below. Like a triangle, based upon sacrifice. The willing use of your life, the intelligent laying down of your life, not throwing it away, not impetuously, but intelligently and deliberately with skill, laying your life down so that others might find life...

"I commend to you the spirit and the principle of sacrifice, the discovery of yourself in the act of ministry to other people. It is not that this Church is an organization of people banded together to finish or find or realize some ideal. That is not our calling. We are members one of another. This is an organism, a living body, so definitively wrought together as to be inseparable. And we've very often lost sight of that in our ministrations abroad. So, gentlemen, remember if we are to proceed towards endowment, it must be through sacrifice. This is the day of tithing and sacrifice of my people. Psalm 50:5 'Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'" (Lecture Six – "Spiritual Endowment" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

By Elder George Allen

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is." (Romans 12:1-2)

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13)

The following scriptures contain examples of preparing for endowment through sacrifice—sacrifice being not what we give up, but what we are willing to give.

Book of Mormon:

1 Nephi 1:26-29 Lehi left all of his worldly possessions to follow the instructions of the Lord.

Mosiah 9:21-27 Abinadi gave his life for the testimony of Christ.

Mosiah 9:44 Alma and Helam entered into covenant to serve their God until death—through baptism.

Alma 10:40 Zeezrom was converted and baptized through the teachings of Alma and Amulek and was willing to give his life to save them.

Alma 12:1-9 The sons of Mosiah gave up the kingdom to take the gospel to the Lamanites.

Bible:

Daniel 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to worship idols, even if it cost them their lives.

Daniel 6:16 Daniel was willing to give his life for his testimony of God.

Genesis 22:1-17 Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac to please the Lord.

Acts 7 Stephen gave his life for the testimony of Christ.

Acts 9:1-20 After his conversion, Paul gave his all, including his life for Christ.

Acts 21:13 Paul's willingness to die for the gospel.

Romans 9:35 Paul speaking, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

Galatians 2:20 Paul tells us that he is crucified with Christ as he seeks to obey and follow him.

In 1979 I was in a terrible auto accident. I was told that I would never walk again. Between the time of the accident and 1982 I had five major operations. In 1982, I again had surgery on my back to remove a calcium spur which had lodged in my spinal cord, which was very painful. In 1985 I began to have the pain lower in my back and was sent to Boise, Idaho, for surgery. I was X-rayed, and the doctors could not locate the problem. The pain was excruciating, and I could sleep but very little. The only relief I could get was to take a pillow to the window sill and kneel there with my head on the pillow. The doctors kept running tests every day. I was administered to several times, but received no relief. Finally, I told my companion, "If this is all I have to live for, I don't want to live anymore." On the eighth day, Barb had to go home to the ranch, which was about ninety miles from Boise, to check on the cattle and horses.

About 1:00 a.m., as I lay there in bed praying, the Lord Jesus spoke to me. This is what he said, "I am sending two servants; and when they lay their hands upon you, you shall be healed." I felt their presence as they came in through the window of the sixth

floor. The minute they laid their hands on me the pain left. I did not see them; I only felt their presence. I lay there on the bed a few minutes hardly daring to move, but I had no pain. I jumped out of bed, trotted around the room pushing my I.V. stand and jumped back in bed. Still no pain.

I began to pray and thank God. I then asked Jesus, “Why did you heal me?” And His answer was kind and clear. “I desire that you be among the first of Mine elders to receive that great spiritual endowment, that you might go forth in mighty power to gather in My people and bring about the redemption of Zion.”

When the doctor came in the next morning I had my clothes on. He said, “Where are you going?” I said, “home.” He asked if I would stay long enough to get the results of the last test. I said I would because Barb wouldn't be down for a couple of hours. A few minutes later Barb called and told me she had an experience in the night and that I was not to have any more tests. I said I wouldn't and was ready to go home.

This was the beginning of many spiritual experiences. I was shown in spiritual dreams that God wanted us to gather to the land of Zion. We put our ranch on the market, but it was right at the time in 1985 when the bottom dropped out of property in Idaho. We finally set a date of April 15, 1987; if we had not sold by then, we would lease the ranch and leave. The next day on Sunday we were at Church. As I was sitting up front, the Lord spoke to me and said, “I am sending a buyer for your property. Do what is necessary and trust me.”

The next day the real estate man came with the buyer. It was a ridiculous offer. I looked at Barb, and she just smiled and nodded her head yes. It cost us many thousands of dollars to sell at that time, but God blessed us and continues to bless us as we go about our ministry. He said He would show us where He wanted us to be and even gave us the name for our property, “Celestial Acres.” We have experienced portions of the endowment many times as we travel about, including miracles of healing, both physically and spiritually.

May God bless each and every one of us as we continue to work toward being qualified for that great endowment is my prayer.

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- Preparing for the endowment through sacrifice. What is sacrifice? What is the first thing that comes to your mind? I've had a lot of people come up and

say, “You know, I'm going to turn off my television set and not watch these games all during the playoffs. I'm going to sacrifice that time.” That isn't sacrifice, brothers and sisters. That is not what the Lord is talking about when He asks us to sacrifice.

- The Apostle Paul, I think, put it about as plain as it can be said: *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...”* This is what sacrificing is all about. It isn't to set aside this or that. These are little sacrifices. The big sacrifice is we are willing—even as Jesus Christ did when He came down out of the heavens and left all that glory that He had up there and took upon Himself the flesh of men—to become a servant to all the people? Sacrificing is being willing to give ourselves in service to God and Jesus Christ in the lives of other people.

- To me, sacrifice and suffering go hand in hand. I mean the ultimate sacrifice.

- Then, He spoke to me when I asked Him, “Why did you do this?” He spoke to me, and His words are embedded in my heart forever because I knew I wasn't worthy to receive the instruction that He gave me. He said, “I desire,” Notice “I desire”—not that you're going to do this or you're going to do that—“I desire that you be among the first of mine elders to receive of this great spiritual endowment.” This is the endowment that we are talking about, “That you might go forth in mighty power, to gather in my children and bring about the redemption of Zion.” There is not a day that goes by that I do not remember this.

- Anything that we did as we left our ranch and left the mountains that we loved was not a sacrifice. It was given out of willingness. To me sacrifice is our willingness to give up the things of this world, and even our lives if necessary. Sacrifice is the greatest testimony that we can have of Jesus Christ in our lives. Think about this. Sacrifice is the greatest testimony you can have, and you can share, of your love for Jesus Christ. It took a lot of spiritual growth and it takes a lot of spiritual growth, to be able to do those things that the Lord has in store for each one of us.

- Sacrifice. Are we willing to sacrifice things in our lives that we hold near and dear to us? Every time we give up something and eliminate it—call it sacrifice if you will—God replaces it with something better than we have ever had in our lives before. We have to be willing to give up these things. If you

haven't had a spiritual experience, brothers and sisters, if you do not intimately know Jesus Christ, and only know of Him, then be like Peter, James and John. One of the greatest experiences they had was when Jesus took them with Him up on the Mount of Transfiguration. Why did they get to go? The Scriptures tell us because they asked many questions. Are we asking many questions? Are we communing with Jesus and are we asking many questions? Jesus, what is it that is still displeasing in my life that I could get out and sacrifice? What else can I do to become a prisoner of Yours, and to become a new creature in Christ Jesus? This is what it is going to take.

- Examine your lives. I challenge you. Is there anything in your life—I don't know what it could be because I don't know you that well—but is there anything that would keep you from having a personal experience with Jesus Christ? Come to know Him not through anyone else's testimony, but through your own testimony. Pray, "Lord, I want to know You better than I know You now. Please help me." He will do it. All things are possible. He has opened doors of ministry and nothing that I have ever given up has been a sacrifice, because anything I have eliminated from my life, He has filled with things so much more important.

I put my guitar away for about ten years because I had been playing in a western band before Christ came back into my life and converted me. I didn't want to be tempted anymore. Then, suddenly, He gave me the ability to write songs of praise to Him. I neither read nor write music. They just come to me. I thank Him for this gift. It is so much better than playing in the nightclub. I would not trade that gift for anything in this world. God will do this for each one of us, because He loves each one of us. He loves you as much as He loves me. When we decide to examine our lives and say, "Lord, here am I, send me," then our lives are going to be richly endowed. Even as my brother said, we don't have to wait for an endowment—it is here. Anytime we prepare ourselves, and He has a mission for us to go on, He will endow us. I'm not talking about that great endowment that is going to come when He comes, but the power He is going to give us to go out and bear a positive testimony of Jesus Christ and to bring people unto Him. May God bless us in my prayer.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—This morning I feel the confirmation of what the Lord told me yesterday when we sat in the

pastors' meeting. The Lord spoke to me because we were talking about being one Church, one body in Jesus Christ. The Lord spoke to me, and the pastors of the Churches of the Restoration branches, to encourage the branch membership to sacrifice through fasting and prayer. I feel very strongly today to invite everyone to sacrifice through fasting and prayer, and that we use the Elders' Conference as a medium to communicate this invitation to all the branches around the world—in Africa, Nepal, and everywhere, to every people and member of the Church. Sacrifice and give some time to fasting and prayer together. In this way we are going to become one body again. The Lord is going to unify our lives, our hearts, and our minds to be one again. This is my feeling this morning as a result of the message that was given to us by the Lord through this brother this morning. I feel very strongly about inviting everyone—every pastor, every elder or teacher or deacon—to sacrifice their bodies to fasting and prayer one day per month.

Comment—I would just like to refer this body of people to the sixth Lecture on Faith that Brother Joseph gave. It talks about the necessity of sacrifice. In that he quotes one scripture, Psalm 50:5, "Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice."

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"What shall this day be like when He shall suddenly come to His temple? Let inspired imaginations attempt to envision this day, aided by the word of the prophets and the spiritual guidance and experience you can yourself have. Truly, in that day, only those who have sacrificially made themselves holy may abide in His presence." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 29)

"How shall the Lord of Hosts accomplish all this purification, seeing that men's hearts are so often as the made of stone, and seeing also that so often they trust so greatly in themselves, and are content with things as they are?

"This purification must first come through trial, even a great trial which shall engulf the nations of men. The people of the Church and the covenant people shall inevitably be affected by that day of trial. By these trials shall the heart of the world be humbled, and by them also shall even the heart of the chosen people be humbled.

"This purification will be from the lusts of the flesh, from the temptation of the devil, from evil ways and

thoughts, from selfishness, from personal glorification. from narrow and unholy purposes, and the like. Out of the grand experiences of these days will come liberation from the sins of the flesh. which as men give way to them bind them as with chains.

“Out of the glory of these days shall arise a brotherhood of extraordinary ministers and people whom God can and shall wondrously use to achieve His purposes, in the noblest of all possible associations -- even God working with man and man with God—both doing so sacrificially and with glorious ends in view. By all these things, as you shall individually and collectively carry them out, shall the ministry of this day be made ready for the crowning experiences of the Endowment.” (The Endowment by Earl R. Curry, pp. 25-26)

Additional Scriptural References:

Genesis 4:5-9
Psalms 4:4-5; 50:5; 51:17-18
Matthew 5:31-34; 10:32-34, 37-39; 16:25-26; 19:21
Luke 5:11; 14:33; 18:19-30; 21:2-4
John 3:16; 15:12-13
I Corinthians 8:12-13; 10:24
II Corinthians 8:9
Philippians 2:16-18
I Peter 2:1-5
Titus 2:11-14
II Nephi 1:71-73
III Nephi 4:49-50
Doctrine and Covenants 59:2; 81:4

Possible Study Questions:

What is your understanding of what “sacrifice” means?
What is meant by the phrase, “that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable... which is your reasonable service”?
How is sacrificing by giving something up, different from sacrificing by giving something?
How did the poor widows response (Mark 13), compare with the response of the rich young ruler (Mark 10)?
How do you make a covenant by sacrifice? How does this free you to be endowed?
In what ways have you “sacrificed” recently?
How did the Lord honor your sacrifice?
What is the Lord calling you to sacrifice for His work?



PRINCIPLE 7

Preparing to be endowed will require us to look honestly at ourselves -

To judge ourselves

To allow the Lord’s revealing light to shine on our lives

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves... Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” (2 Corinthians 13:5, 7-8)

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” (Proverbs 20:27)

By Elder Steve Kropp

Let a Man Examine Himself, Confess His Faults, and Come Forth in the Marvelous Light of the Lord.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” (2 Corinthians 13:5) Paul’s counsel to those in Corinth represents some of the hard sayings of the Scriptures and places a great deal of responsibility on those who desire to follow him in the path of the Savior. His challenge should be looked at individually, as families, and as unified families in the branch setting. Our dilemma often rises from the anticipated discomfort we know we will experience when the Lord reveals those inward parts with His all searching eye.

Self Examination:

King David asked the Lord on several different occasions to SEARCH him or EXAMINE him in order for the Lord to know his heart. He also asked to be tried that the Lord would know his thoughts. (Psalms 26:2; 139:23) How is it that we can truly know ourselves and the faults we have locked up inside of our lives? My feeble efforts to run a systems analysis on my personal life produces at best a marginal report of the faulty programming I have allowed to take place. There is a part of me doing the analysis that I cannot see. I cannot examine my entire life objectively due to the fact that a part of me is doing the looking.

Our plight in the Restoration and the Christian life in general is that we are always ready and willing to slide our brother or sister under the microscope and point out the smallest infractions in their lives while we stand hypocritically ready to correct them. We make this choice because we use each other—and not the Christ—as an example. Jesus did not soften His message in the least, and He—like a surgeon—cut quickly to the heart of the scribes and Pharisees and priests and Levites. (Matthew 7:5) We all are afraid to admit our errors. We shrink from an honest evaluation of ourselves. Jesus' words cut the religious leaders of His day like a knife when He was able to perceive their thoughts and reveal the inner secrets of their hearts. Proverbs tells us, *"The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly."* (Proverbs 20:27)

When we study the history of the Church after the assassination of Joseph Smith, Jr., we read into the story that all the bad guys went west to Salt Lake and all the good guys stayed in Illinois. Could our analysis be oversimplified? Could it be that we have made mistakes too? It is impossible for a man to learn from past mistakes if he does not acknowledge making any. Our self-examination should produce repentance and confession every time instead of a comparison with those around us. It is not our job to judge the sins of people and organizations around us, but rather to confess and repent of our own sins and faults that the Lord might have sway in our hearts. Our duty is to embrace the truth and look upward, the Zionic look; not outward, the look of the world. We are to use the Christ—and not our brother or sister—as our standard. (Genesis 9:22)

There was once a commercial advertising an auto repair chain, and the mechanic made the statement, "Pay me now or pay me later." We can either invite the Lord to search us and examine us now and show unto us the error of our ways while in this probationary period, or we can wait until this time passes. Then we, like Alma, will wish that we could shrink from the presence of the Lord. (Alma 17:10-22)

Our efforts to bring about the Kingdom must be precipitated by a hungering and thirsting for individual righteousness.

Confessing Our Faults:

Oftentimes at the moment of administration, there is much talk about the illness or situation prompting the elders to come and perform this blessed ordinance in His work. There is much talk about the symptoms and the result of visits to the doctor and the needs the person has recognized in his

or her life. In reading the Scriptures we find a very simple part of the equation of administration, *"Confess your faults one to another..."* (James 5:16)

This simple principle is packed with all manner of power in these last days and we so very seldom find it in action. Our prayer meetings are elevated from time to time when a brother or sister stands and confesses an addiction to tobacco or alcohol and the whole congregation rallies behind him or her in support of the decision to quit. How much closer can we come to Christ's bodily presence if we confessed our pride, selfishness, greed, indifference, lethargy, gossip, etc.?

I believe our hearts can truly be cleansed if we were to allow these words to become flesh in our lives. Our desire for the Kingdom must grow out of our desire for righteousness in our everyday living. The promise is for those who keep His commandments. *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:8-9)

In the eleventh chapter of Mosiah, Alma was given a revelation starting in verse 121. In verse 138 Alma is told that if a man *"...confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also."* The text continues and states that whosoever repented of their sins and did confess them, he would be numbered among the people of the Church.

Confession is so important that names were blotted out from among the people of the Church of those who would not confess their sins and repent (Mosiah 11:145). We wonder in ourselves why the Lord's hand is stayed in these last days, and yet our own decision to retain the secret places in our lives is the restraining order on His mercy. **Examination + Confession = Forgiveness**

Judging Ourselves:

The text in Matthew 7 is very clear pertaining to our responsibility in judgment. We all should be aware of the counsel that we will be judged with the same judgment we exercise. Christ exhibited compassion on all those around Him regardless of being justified in His condemnation of their lifestyle. As latter-day Israel, we have the counsel of Mormon in Moroni 7 telling us that it is given unto us to judge that we may know good from evil. *"...For everything which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ...But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the*

devil...Wherefore I beseech of you, brethren, that ye should search diligently in the light of Christ, that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, and condemn it not, ye certainly will be a child of Christ.” (Moroni 7:14-15, 18)

Excerpts from Author’s Presentation:

- Just like the Pharisees we need to hear Jesus’ counsel, reprimand, correction, and chastisement, that, *first*—my brother, son or daughter—look at your own eye and pull out the beam before you look for a mote. King David realized in his lifetime that a man could not fully examine himself. He realized that as we look to examine ourselves, when we look to provide that introspection, that we can’t fully see all that there is because there is a part of us that is doing the looking. That part we cannot see. This is just like the blind spot that I have because of the way that my eye has been created, that where my retinal nerve attaches there is a blind spot. But in my life I compensate for it. David knew that he had portions in his life that he could not see. He pleaded with the Lord to search him, to examine him, to try him, that the Lord might know his thoughts, to see if there be any iniquity in him. I know that a prerequisite to our endowment, to our receiving of power, is that we examine ourselves. Examination is at the threshold of all that we are about as a Christian people, as followers and believers in Jesus Christ. The most difficult part in preparing for this presentation was that I have realized in my own life how few times I really take the time to examine myself. I can petition the Lord and ask Him to show me those areas, to open those doors that I’ve locked, and allow His light to shine in.

- The Lord does not allow any of His creation to be unaccountable. Every one of us are accountable for our actions, our thoughts, and our words. The twentieth chapter of Proverbs, verse 27 tells us, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.” I can recall in my life the times where that candle searched my inward parts, and it caused my heart to hurt and ache because of the sin that was present there, and not necessarily the sin of drinking or smoking or other outward professions. But those inward sins, sins such as hypocrisy, greed, and selfishness. Those are the things that we need to be able to look at—to examine ourselves with a level of introspection that reveals and sheds light on those things that we harbor—the doors that we have locked up that we don’t want anyone to enter.

- We see that in James 5:16 there is a real key principle, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The very first words of this verse, [confess your faults] are very seldom heard at the time of an administration. I believe that as a Church, that is one of the things that hinders us as elders, and hinders us as people from receiving blessings. We don’t follow the equation that the Lord has laid out for us to receive the spiritual power and the gifts of healing that He has in store for us, His people.

- Someone tell me, what is the greatest blessing that comes through the power of the administration? By far and above, the greatest power, the greatest blessing that comes, is the forgiveness of sins. That cannot take place, brothers and sisters, without the equation being the examination, the realization that I have faults and sins and that I carry that burden, and the wages thereof constitutes my spiritual death. Once that is realized, the confession of those sins, which I tie with repentance, the confession equals forgiveness.

- When we examine ourselves and confess before Him, and before those of our brothers and sisters, we create a chemistry within us that sets us free—that frees us to do a work. To be used by Him in a way that speaks power, that speaks authority, that speaks freedom.

- As a man who has taken upon my life and my path the responsibility and the mantle of priesthood, I am charged to magnify that calling. That magnification is limited if I blunder through life without examining myself regularly and petitioning the Lord to search my inward parts. Try me, so that you will know my thoughts, Lord. I was reading and thinking about King David, and wondered if when he penned those words, “Lord, try me so that you will know my thoughts,” if somehow he knew about Bath-sheba, if somehow he knew about the temptations and trials that were there. How do you respond? When we pray that prayer that we be tried, that we be searched, know for a surety that through the trials and the tests that are happening right now in the Restoration, He is searching us, He is trying us—searching and trying us that He might know our thoughts, that He might know the way that we will react when we become discouraged, that He might know the way we will react when we are faced with an opposition, that He might know how we will react when it seems that faith no longer abides on the earth,

to see if we will hold fast to the covenants and the commandments that are given.

- I will end with the same statement that I began. Ultimately, it is not the relationship I have with you as a brother; ultimately, it is the relationship I have with Jesus Christ. And if we both have that same relationship with Him, you and I will be of one heart and one mind. My favorite scripture is II Nephi 6:42: "...behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel; they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it; they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world: and their joy shall be full for ever." That is the joy I want. That is the joy I hope and desire for you. But it cannot come unless we are a people who hunger and thirst after individual righteousness.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—I just have to say that my spirit is soaring—I have been pondering these things for so long. I went to the Lord and I asked Him what is the truth? Because I had read in Genesis, "If thy posterity will embrace the truth..." and I kept looking and saying, where is the truth? There are so many groups, there are so many different understandings, there are so many different beliefs, where is the truth? What is it? He took me to the book of John, and I read there that it said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." And it hit me, we have to embrace the truth which is Jesus Christ. Like Steve said, once we take Him in and make Him flesh, that is what unites us, that is what brings us together as one. It isn't anything that any man is going to do. I just wanted to give my testimony about that because I feel like this is the beginning of the way. Thank you.

Comment—The truth that has just come to me is the fact that it is our guilt that binds us. Sin we can do something about. We can confess that. That is what we do through the initiative we have in our relationship with the Lord that causes Godly sorrow. But the reason why we are bound up is because there is only One that can take away guilt, only the blood of Christ can do that. Guilt is what shames us and unless our guilt is removed we are going to continue to be an accuser because we haven't found the security that we need in Christ.

Comment—I have been associated with this Church ever since I was five years old, and one of the things that I remember so well is that before partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, a time was allotted for confession of sins. For many years that was done. Then somehow or other that part of our beliefs fell away. I think, as some of the missionaries expressed it, it was embarrassing to stand up and confess your sins before your brothers and sisters; and so it was subdued. But in our Hawaiian culture, we have what is called "ho-o-pono-pono," and that means to make things right. Once a month families used to meet, and they would confess to each other their faults.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"Each man can do this for himself. And let no man judge another on this, because this is sin. The worst sin Latter Day Saints commit, do you know what it is? They achieve a standard of righteousness and they draw a line. And if you don't come up to their standard of righteousness, God pity you. Their righteousness becomes God's righteousness, and they condemn everyone else who does not conform to their way of thinking. This is a sin to which Latter Day Saints are peculiarly subject. Let no man then judge another, but let him examine his own life and his own heart and seek to function at the maximum capacity physically and spiritually." (Lecture 6—"Spiritual Endowment" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur Oakman)

"If we are His, Christ will rule supreme in our lives. We will follow His voice and will gladly submit our will to His. We will gladly accept and obey His truth..."

"[If you are His, you will have access to spiritual gifts. In I Corinthians we find a number of these gifts identified, including the gift of discerning of spirits]..."

"God has admonished us to be discerning, to exercise judgment in all things. We are told to ascertain those things that are of the Lord and are consistent with His revelation in the past. Discernment means to divide, to distinguish, and to separate, good from evil—the chaff from the wheat—His will from ours. Scripture verifies that discernment is a necessary activity in the life of every believer. Romans 12:2 says, 'And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is.' 1 Thessalonians 5:21 says, 'Prove all things; hold fast (to) that which is good.'"

"Even while we are told to exercise judgment, we are cautioned to exercise proper judgment—judgment has different meanings: it can refer to "discernment" or it

can refer to "criticizing". For our purposes here, we will refer to discernment as Godly judgment and criticizing as inappropriate judgment.

"If we are expected to be discerning, why is there a lack of discernment on our part? We can point to many reasons: the world, the flesh, or the devil. However, the root of the matter lies with faulty diagnosis. If we start with faulty assumptions, we will reach faulty conclusions. If we start with correct assumptions but apply false information, we end up with faulty conclusions. Only when we begin with right assumptions—the right foundation—and apply true information, will we end up with right conclusions, right decisions, and learn the will of God on the particular matter at hand. So spiritual discernment pertains to determining truth—God's truth for our lives.

We must guard against trying to accomplish this process of discernment for our lives by ourselves—our minds have the ability to clothe that which is wrong with the appearance of that which is right. This is one of the most common failures within us as Christians. At times we need to bring decisions affecting our lives before the priesthood and the body so that together we might discern God's will on a particular matter." ("A Discerning People" by William (Vim) Horn, *Tidings of Zion*, Issue 37, 1999, p. 6)

Additional Scriptural References:

Job 12:22; 24:13, 15-17
Isaiah 29:27-28
Psalm 90:8; 139:7-12
Proverbs 28:13
Daniel 2:22
Matthew 7:4
Mark 4:9
Luke 18:13-14
John 3:19-21
Acts 19:18
Romans 13:12-14
I Corinthians 4:5
II Corinthians 4:2-6; 13:5-8
Ephesians 5:8-14
James 5:16, 19-20
I John 1:8-9

Possible Study Questions:

How do you "examine yourself"?
Why is it impossible for us to examine ourselves accurately without God's revealing light?
If we continue in a sin, how does this affect our ability to examine yourself?

How does the "Zionist look" differ from the "worldly look"? How does each of these looks affect our self-examination?

If you stood to be judged by the Lord today, what might He say to you, and how would you feel?

How specific do you get when "confessing" your faults or sins? How specific do you need to be?

Do you know when you have committed a sin? How? How do you deal with committed sin or sins of omission?

What is God's equation for receiving spiritual power and the gifts of healing? How has it worked in your life?

How vital is confession to our spiritual growth?

How do personal examination and confession prepare us to obtain His endowing spirit?



PRINCIPLE 8

Preparing to be endowed will require us to discipline ourselves –

To purify our lives

To become more righteous

To come out of Babylon

"Be not faithless but be believing. Cast aside your doubts and your fears. And, gentlemen, the power and the ability to do this depends on discipline—discipline to eschew that which you know is opposed to and inimical to the growth and development of your gift. Do not indulge yourself when you know. Look who is talking, but I speak to myself as well as to you. Listen, gentlemen. God has put into your hearts by the power of His Spirit, as you know as well as I do that there are things you are doing that you ought not to do, and things you are not doing you know you ought to do. Thank God for the revelation that leads men to repentance. It shows that you're still living and that He has not forsaken you. And you ought not to resent the chastening from within, that comes to you by the power of the Spirit. Do the things He prompts you in your heart to do—even if you can't rationalize them at the moment—and you'll discover that that Spirit will grow in you and you will find yourself growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. Gentlemen, you can only know the truth that you do—truth does not come by thinking nor philosophizing—truth comes by doing. If any man shall do, he shall know. 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and

the truth shall make you free.' (John 8:31-32)" (Lecture 4—"Gifts of the Spirit" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"Ordinary men could not be trusted with the great powers that shall arise out of the endowment because of their narrow self-centeredness that is so much a part of ordinary life. These great powers can only be delegated or placed upon His servants and His people as they are extraordinarily purified in body, mind, spirit, and purpose..."

"Now, in this day—when the mighty Lord of Hosts is about to send this His great messenger for that which He has to do, in this His day of preparation, ere the great Father shall make bare His arm in extraordinary power—whosoever will, let himself be purified. The dross of whatever is evil, or worldly, or narrow and shortsighted, or selfish, or hateful, or ignoble or base—all these must be burned out, and in their place be established goodness, high spirituality, mountain-top breadth of vision and understanding of what is possible for life, great love and finest motives of brotherhood, Christlike nobility of character, and utter purification of mind and spirit and purpose." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 24-25)

By Elder Gary Wilson

It is an eternal desire of those who have found the gospel of Jesus Christ to follow its principles and allow it to do its work in bringing us back into the presence of our God and His Son, Jesus Christ. The gulf that separates us from that blessing is one that we, as members of the human family, have been trying to cross since the time of our separation from God in the experience of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. The spirit of the world, which is the spirit of Satan, has been the rule of that gulf.

We have sought ways to break it, and—praise God—the answers have been given. The beauty of the words found in Genesis 5:1-2 (Inspired Version) give such hope to all God's children of the path to pursue in our return to God. The key ingredient is, and ever will be, the admonition stated: "*as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins.*" This challenge is one that has been followed and found successful by many of God's children. Some have written testimony of how they have followed the commandment of believing and repenting to prepare for the reunion promised. David states in Psalm 51:10, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me,*" and also in Psalm 139:23-24,

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." David realized that in order for him to fulfill his desire to come before the Lord, he needed to discipline his life and constantly examine the purpose for which he was living.

Is it any different for us in the Latter Day Movement? Are we not still admonished to prepare through discipline to come back to God's presence? It has been our belief that in all ages God has called His children to the same responsibilities, and challenged them with the eternal nature of the gospel. This has been the basis for the Restoration Movement. We have the testimony that God never changes and that His purposes fail not. It then becomes a fact that if it is our desire to make preparation to meet God, we must follow the way of all those who have preceded us and turn to Him with full purpose of heart.

As we consider the promise given to the latter-day Church that God would endow His people through the power of His Spirit, it behooves us to recognize the fact that it can and will be done only when we make such preparation as was seen in the earlier scripture, to ask God to know our heart and our thoughts, to get inside that inner self where no man can see and truly become right with God, to hide nothing from Him that would separate us from Him or from each other. We have been admonished in Doctrine and Covenants 122:17b, "*Let nothing separate you from each other and the work whereunto you have been called; and I will be with you by my Spirit and presence of power unto the end. Amen.*"

It is evident that God is calling us, His servants, to a unity of endeavor as we seek the great endowment promised us. We are challenged once again to discipline our lives for the purpose of the right to have His Spirit to bless us with its very presence. We have been warned to come out of the world and not be partakers of its evil ways. We know, through faith, that these words are true—for if it is our desire to attempt to have the world of man and the world of God, it will not work. 1 John 2:15 says, "*Love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*" Does not this emphasize the fact that, as we seek for the endowment, we must discipline ourselves and put our priorities in order? God calls us, His people, to listen to His voice. We have the evidence of the ages and the promise of the future. Will it be our desire to heed His call to discipline our lives, and gain the joy of His

presence—or reject His admonition, seek the voice of the world, and lose out on the greatest blessings known to man? May God bless us in our choice.

Excerpts from Author’s Presentation:

- I’m thinking of the role models that I have looked at in my study of the Scriptures. How I appreciate the Apostle Paul. How I appreciate the fact that in his life he had to discipline himself, he had to come out of Babylon. He had to come out of the world and take upon him the identity of Jesus Christ. He had to discipline his life from one in which he walked in the ways of the world to become a pure witness, even though he was human as we are human. I believe that there were times in his life that he found the purity of the Gospel, and it must have radiated out of his life into the lives of others so that they could see the power of Jesus Christ within him. It was more than just a beautiful story that was being witnessed. Paul excelled because he chose to discipline his life, to be that servant that Jesus Christ had called him to be. In the Book of Mormon, we have the testimony of Alma, and the testimony of the sons of Mosiah. In the early chapters of the Book of Genesis we have the testimony of Enoch. All were men, as you and I—elders of the Church of Jesus Christ—who lived in the world and understood the needs of the physical body as you and I understand those needs. Yet, they were willing to step beyond this world into the realms of the eternal nature of our Savior, and discipline their lives. Through the discipline of those lives, ladies and gentlemen, we have the testimony of the power of their ministry—it was not their ministry—it was the ministry of Jesus Christ living within them.

- To understand discipline is to understand the very nature of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I would remind you that our Lord and Savior had to make choices. I would remind you that in the opening scriptures of the book of Genesis, and I speak of the Inspired Version, in the third verse of the third chapter, Jesus Christ set an example that we need to look at. He stood before His heavenly Father and said, “Father, thy will be done and the glory be thine forever.” That took discipline. He had, as all of God’s creation have, the right to His own agency. I think one of the most beautiful examples of the challenge of discipline for our lives is the example of our Savior as found in the testimony of Luke. Jesus realized that His time was nigh at hand, when it was getting nearer the time that He was to be sacrificed. He knew from the day that He left the courts of glory

above that He was coming to this earth for one purpose, and that was to open the doors so we as His people could walk back into his presence—that we could be endowed with the power of His spirit. Luke must have seen the countenance of our Savior when he said, “And Jesus set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.” Jesus knew what it was to discipline His life. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane we can hear the words of our Savior as He says, “...Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me...” (Matthew 26:36) but then He reaffirmed the purpose for His life, “...nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” (Mark 14:40)

- Saints, and most especially brethren of the high priesthood of our Lord and Savior, is it our desire to tell our heavenly Father this day that not His will be done but ours? Is it our desire to discipline our lives through sacrifice, through understanding the relationship we have in our covenant, through those avenues that our Lord and Savior has called us to? Can we say, “God use me and fill me. May I become Your servant? May I rejoice? May I have the joy of serving you under that great endowment?” It can only happen when we look at the perfect example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—when we respond to the invitation that he gives to all of his children, male and female, to come unto Him and to learn of His ways and to judge whether or not we, through our agency, want to be part of that people.

- Yes, Jesus was the great example, but in those examples that I alluded to just prior to getting into the life of Christ, we have the examples of men that have sensed their opportunity. That’s all it was, an opportunity to be somebody special, to be God’s chosen servants. I do not see Paul in this audience today. I do not see Enoch here, nor do I see Mosiah here. But I see you, my brethren. Are we any different? Is it not our eternal call to be as others have been and to be for Jesus Christ what He is asking us to be? Indeed, the call for the great endowment is a call for men that are willing to sacrifice, that are willing to step out of this world, that are willing to recognize that we are human. But more than that, we are God’s men and have been called to be His servants. We have been given the privilege of having His Holy Spirit to bless us.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—I thank you for bringing the challenge to us and I would only add that when Christ sent His disciples out on this land, as recorded in the third

book of Nephi, the thirteenth chapter, He says, "And know ye that ye shall be judges of this people, according to the judgment which I shall give unto you, which shall be just; therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, Even as I am. And now I go unto the Father."

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to gratify the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:12-14)

"But this is not all: they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting, therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority, even as with the power and authority of God." (Alma 12:5)

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

"You ought to be strongly motivated by the fact that neither divine patience nor the imperative needs of this hour can long permit delay, and that delay involves heavy penalties.

"You must have and make use of mighty prayer, remembering that the Lord desires to reason together and bestow communion, rather than that you just have a listening ear.

"You must be men of strong faith, not only cherishing such gifts of faith as may be part of your gracious spiritual blessing, but also faith achieved by intelligent, earnest, long continued effort on your part.

"How shall you individually prepare? Desire, study, vision, revelation, perception of needs, mighty prayer, great faith—all these will richly reward any who try." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 4)

Additional Scriptural References:

Proverbs 28:13
Matthew 5:10
Mark 9:25-26
Luke 6:45
Romans 6:11-14
Galatians 5:16-25

Philippians 4:8
II Timothy 2:22
II Peter 1:3-11
I Nephi 3:230-231; 7:57-62
Jacob 2:50
Alma 12:5
III Nephi 12:14-15
IV Nephi 1:13
Doctrine and Covenants 11:4; 56:6; 85:36b-38c; 94:5

Possible Study Questions:

What part does discipline play in our preparation to be endowed?

How did discipline work in Paul's life? Alma's life? Enoch's life? How does it work in your life?

What was at the heart of the "discipline" exhibited by Jesus Christ?

Why can't "ordinary men" be trusted with the great powers associated with endowment?

What needs to occur for "ordinary" men and women to not be "ordinary"?

The call for the great endowment is a call for men that are...?

What kinds of personal discipline and preparation will provide the way for God's endowing powers?



PRINCIPLE 9

**Preparing to be endowed will require us to be aware of our personal calling –
The Lord's plan for our lives**

"Inasmuch as your personalities vary widely, making each personality strong in some aspects of his life and weak in others, it therefore is wisdom that each striving minister shall build up a list of qualities such as apply to all, but particularly to him. Consequently, there is this imperative, that you shall set out on a journey of understanding." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 5)

"Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, and that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple this day, that I might declare unto you the word of God; And ye yourselves know, that I have hitherto been diligent in the office of my calling; but I this day am weighed down with much more desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls, than I have hitherto been. But,

notwithstanding the greatness of the task, I must do according to the strict commands of God, and tell you concerning your wickedness and abominations, in the presence of the pure in heart, and the broken heart, and under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God. Wherefore, I must tell you the truth, according to the plainness of the word of God. For behold, as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying, Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee, unto this people.” (Jacob 2:2-3; 11-13)

By Elder Kreg Levengood

“After all, brethren, what validates your calling? Seeing an angel when you were called? Hearing a voice when you were called? Having someone stand up in a prayer meeting and tell you, ‘Thus saith the Lord, you are called to this office’? That does not validate your calling at all. The only thing that ultimately validates your calling, is as the Spirit of God moves with you in your ministry. What you do is a reflection of the work of that Spirit, and built into the lives of other people is the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Lecture 3—“The Holy Spirit and the Church” of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

When I was living near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, I had an interesting conversation with our neighbor. She was raised in the Catholic faith and had the perception of a “priesthood member” as someone who was to be revered, honored, and essentially placed on a pedestal. I discussed with her the Scriptures about being called to the priesthood (Hebrews 5:4) and began to open her eyes as to the purpose of the priesthood. The part that she found most revealing was that when a man was called to the priesthood, he was called to be a servant for others. In fact, Jesus told His apostles that those who would be the greatest in the kingdom should be the servant of all (Matthew 20:26-28, Luke 9:48, Luke 22:24-27). In these passages of scripture, Jesus Himself made it known that He came to serve and to minister, not to be ministered unto.

This was so revealing to my neighbor. She had always been taught and believed that the priesthood member was to be served by the people, not that the priesthood member was to serve. There is a great lesson for all of us in this concept. I believe that King Benjamin had a full comprehension of this.

“I have not commanded you to come up hither, that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I, of

myself, am more than a mortal man; But I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of infirmities in body and mind; Yet, as I have been chosen by this people, and was consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler, and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve thee with all the might, mind, and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me; I say unto you, that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver, nor any manner of riches of you; Neither have I suffered that ye should be confined in dungeons, nor that ye should make slaves one of another, or that ye should murder, or plunder, or steal, or commit adultery, Or even I have not suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you; And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands, that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne, and of all these things which I have spoken, ye yourselves are witnesses this day.” (Mosiah 1:40-46)

Alma 10:9-10 states that all the ordinances were given to point the people unto Christ and it is the responsibility of the priesthood member to perform the ordinances. By simple logic, it is reasonable to conclude that the priesthood member should point the people unto Christ. Jesus set the example for us to follow. He lived a sin-free life and always did those things that pleased the heavenly Father. He not only sacrificed His life on the cross, but He also sacrificed His life daily by giving up those things that would only please and benefit him to focus on the needs of others. We have been challenged in the Scriptures to walk even as He walked (1 John 2:6). I feel this requires us to also daily sacrifice our own wills and look for opportunities to serve. Opportunities to serve are all around us, but we are not always in tune with the Spirit of God to recognize them because we are busy doing those things that benefit or please us. (Refer to the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 for the different ways we respond to God’s word. *Editor’s Note—See Principle #3 for a description of this parable*)

We often focus on how difficult it is to lead a sin-free life. It has been my experience that human nature causes us to focus on what we give up or what we can not do, and we do not focus on those things we can do. Jesus focused on what He could do to serve God and mankind, and did not think of those things that He was giving up or couldn’t do. Our wills and desires must be swallowed up in the will of

our heavenly Father, just like Jesus (John 8:29). John the Baptist said, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* (John 3:31) This is also true in our own lives. Our own will and desires must decrease, and the will of God must increase in us.

This principle is most notably exhibited by the sons of Mosiah. They all gave up the opportunity to be the king of the land. It was their desire to go and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their lost brethren, the Lamanites. They knew of the hatred that the Lamanites had for them, and that they would probably have great hardships and perhaps even be killed. However, the thought of others not knowing the Gospel of Jesus Christ stirred their souls to action. These men truly sacrificed their lives by leaving all to serve others, even those who hated them. After they left the land of Zarahemla, the Lord visited them with His Spirit, comforted them, and told them to go forth among the Lamanites and establish His Word. Because these men were willing to give all they had, thousands were brought to the knowledge of Christ and were joined to the Church of God. There were great miracles performed by these men because they prepared themselves for 14 years through study, prayer, fasting, and teaching among the Nephites and then moved out with faith to preach to a hostile people (Alma 12:1-20).

God often directs His servants (friends) to perform very specific tasks. He has asked some to prophesy to cities or to individuals, to perform miracles, healings, and many other wonderful things. However, God has given all of us the task of ministering to the everyday needs of those around us, just as the sons of Mosiah. It gives Him great joy to see His people caring for one another and meeting the physical and spiritual needs of others. Through this type of preparation, the servants of God validate their calling and prepare themselves to perform any task that would confront them. This is made apparent in the following passage of scripture:

"Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in; or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto

you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, '...Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.'" (Matthew 25:35-46)

Those of us who have accepted a call to the ministry must never lose sight of the fact that we are called to service. The Lord has given us many tasks to perform, and we should not wait for Him to direct every aspect of our lives. For example, we have been told to visit the fatherless, clothe the naked, and feed the hungry (Doctrine and Covenants 52:9c). Do you think the Lord wants to tell us again when we see someone naked that we should clothe them? Or when we see someone hungry, that we should feed them? God expects us to perform these tasks without speaking to us about it. These are just small, obvious examples that I feel express the intent of the scripture in Section 58:6c-d, *"For, behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things, for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves."* God has called all of us to action. The more we focus our lives on Him and performing His work, the closer we will walk with Jesus, and the sooner Zion and all of the marvelous events that are before us will come to pass.

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- Last year we went back to reunion in Pennsylvania. Our former neighbor came up for two days with her young children because she said, "I miss you guys so much. I never had neighbors like you." It is not me and it is not my wife, and it is not my children that moved her to come—it is the Spirit of God that we allow to be present with us. You see, that is the calling to every one of us—a calling to righteousness. A calling that we would have the presence of God in our hearts, and that we would act out of love to our neighbors, our co-workers and to those around us.

That we would live as the Christ lived. He lived a life of sacrifice, and not just when He gave His life on the cross. He sacrificed His living life. His whole life was dedicated to always doing those things that pleased the Father. That is our calling also, to always do those things that please the Father.

- The call of a man to the priesthood is a call to service. It is a call to loneliness. It is not a call to aggrandizement of the individual.

- Last night, when I went to bed, I couldn't sleep. I was just absolutely wide awake and the Lord began to share with me in spirit. I began to ponder on some things—how that priesthood members are to act out of love for the people, just as Christ acted out of love for His people. I started to think about the two great commandments that are recorded in Mark. I might as well read that: *“And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments: is Hearken and hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”* (Mark 12:34-35) Christ kept those two commandments—this may seem obvious but I hadn't really thought about it. He didn't just keep those two commandments—He lived those two commandments—He “was” those two commandments. I pondered and thought some more about it and said, “Lord, is this a condition of the heart? How can I love somebody without having an emotional response within me; without having serious concern, care and genuine affection of some sort towards that person?” And the Lord shared that it is part of it, but the love is not perfected until you do something about it. This blew me away. So, love is not only an emotion, a feeling, but it is an action. And it is not either one or the other. Love is not just the emotion and love is not just the action. It is both, and one without the other is meaningless—The Lord brought this to my mind.

- I have always thought that when I received a calling from God, it would be to do something great. To be as an Enoch and move a mountain; or maybe as Nephi said (paraphrasing), “If the Lord wanted that I should say unto this water, Be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done. But He wants me to build a ship, so I'm going to build a ship.” I was thinking, “Lord, call us to do these monumental things.” And he said, “Why, when I have called you to do simple things and you haven't

responded. I have called you, as a people, to love one another, and you haven't responded perfectly yet.” How can we love one another? How can we love the Lord without loving one another, I should say? How can we say, “Lord, we love You, I love You,” and not do what He says, and not look after His people? In this way, I am not a good shepherd.

- He calls us to love one another. This is the calling to this Church today, to have the charity that we are to have. Then we could move all of the mountains in the world and build all the cities in the world that you could think of. We could do the most monumental tasks in the world, and yet, as the scriptures tell us, we are as tinkling brass and sounding cymbals if we do not have the charity and the love of Christ within us. They are meaningless events, totally meaningless. He wants us to love one another—that is our calling.

- When we respond to the calling of the Lord in our lives, when we begin to have that genuine love for His people, His spirit will begin to move within us. We will have those powerful experiences that seem so minor and insignificant—as being awakened to call a friend or to call a brother or sister.

- These are the mountaintops for me, brothers and sisters. It doesn't matter to me now if I can turn a river out of its course by the power of God. It doesn't matter if I can move a mountain by the power of God. What's important is that the lives of the Saints are touched by my ministry—and it is not my ministry, it is His. When we respond to the calling of God to do those things He has asked us to do, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to relieve the needs of the poor and the afflicted, then I believe the mountaintop experiences will come to pass. But if they come to pass, it is to the glory of God and to the establishment of His kingdom.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—What Kreg has said about serving and meeting the needs of people where they are is very true. I want to share an experience that points this out. I was an elementary school principal; school had been dismissed and I was out watching the kids get into their cars. Traffic was coming and going. A lady pulled up in her car right in the middle of the road. I went out to talk to her and she began to tell me some of the problems that she was having with a daughter that had run away. She said, “Would you pray for me?” Like a stupid idiot, I said, “You mean, now?”

She said, “Yes, now.” And so I prayed for her and for her daughter, right there in the middle of the street with the cars and everything going all around us. You don’t have to worry about anything else; when the call comes, you’d better answer it.

Comment—I was listening to my brother talk about rivers being moved out of their course and mountains being removed, and as he spoke about the despair that his sister, our sister, was in, the Lord impressed this upon me. It is sorrow and grief and impassable ways, and other things that are in our lives—they are the rivers and mountains the priesthood have the power and authority to move—the course of the lives of those whom they serve.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

“There will be an endowment resulting from His servants and His people, under divine guidance, finding the places where they may best work. It is only through this kind of endowment that there shall come an inspired and inspiring organization of brotherly cooperation which will make possible holy and sacred communities of gathering.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p.17)

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are chosen; For God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are mighty; That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Corinthians 1:26-30)

Additional Scriptural References:

Doctrine and Covenants 21:1b-5b; 23:4c-5c; 35:2a-3a; 53:1-3c; 85:21a-e; 102:10c-d

Possible Study Questions:

Who and what are the priesthood called to point the people to?
What is the difference between a “duty” and a “calling”? What is the difference between “authority” and “power”?

What is a “personal calling”?

What is your “personal calling”? What is God “calling” you to do?

What are the “mountains” and “river courses” in the lives of the saints that the priesthood are called to move?

Why is an active love for God’s people imperative in our preparation for His endowing spirit to work in our lives?

What is meant by the phrase, “He must increase, but I must decrease”?

How does this concept relate to our lives, our personal calling and being endowed?

When we faithfully respond to the Lord’s “calling” for our lives, what will happen?

What is meant by the phrase, “Our call to greatness, is directly related to our faithful response?”



PRINCIPLE 10

Preparing to be endowed will require us to understand and apply that which has already been given –

To fully use the talents and gifts already given

“Wherefore, beware, lest ye are deceived, and that ye may not be deceived, seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given; for verily I say unto you, They are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do, that all may be benefited, that seeketh or that asketh of me, that asketh and not for a sign that he may consume it upon his lusts. And again, verily I say unto you, I would that ye should always remember, and always retain in your minds what those gifts are, that are given unto the Church, for all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God; to some it is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby; to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world; to others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life, if they continue faithful. And again, to some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know the differences of administration, as it will be pleasing unto the same Lord, according as the Lord will, suiting his mercies according to the conditions of the children of men. And again, it is

given by the Holy Ghost to some to know the diversities of operations, whether it be of God, that the manifestations of the Spirit may be given to every man to profit withal. And again, verily I say unto you, To some it is given, by the Spirit of God, the word of wisdom; to another it is given the word of knowledge, that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge. And again, to some it is given to have faith to be healed, and to others it is given to have faith to heal. And again, to some it is given the workings of miracles; and to others it is given to prophesy, and to others the discerning of spirits. And again, it is given to some to speak with tongues, and to another it is given the interpretation of tongues: and all these gifts come from God, for the benefit of the children of God.” (Doctrine and Covenants 46:4a-7f)

“Every man has a gift of the spirit. To some it is given one, and to others it is given another. And it is your business to find out what your gift is. If it is only to believe, then you have a gift. And you know you have a gift even if it is only the gift to believe. You must know that a gift that is unused atrophies.” (Lecture 4—“Gifts of the Spirit” of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

“Now, in view of all this, the wise minister will earnestly seek to understand, develop, and use with increasing wisdom and depth such gifts as are given unto him. If you do this, then shall you become one among many in this day of outpouring of profoundly intelligent spiritual gifts that shall come. And this time will come.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 21)

“Just as it is written that Jesus will come to those who are watching for Him, even so, in the day of God’s power shall the richest of experiences and blessings and opportunities of usefulness as instruments in His hands come to those who are not looking for Him but are preparing themselves in body, mind, and spirit.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 36)

By High Priest Francis Harper Jr.

The endowment we seek, and that God wants to bestow, will be given to those who are fully aligned and committed to His purposes. Until we understand our mission, and are completely dedicated to the accomplishment of it, we will not be endowed with Pentecostal power.

Our Mission

The purpose of God, to which we have been called to assist, has been stated: *“This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.”* (Doctrine and Covenants 22:23)

The mission statement that Jesus gave to His disciples long ago has never been changed or rescinded:

“All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore [not forgetting that he has the power to accomplish the task through us], 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, unto the end of the world [even until the day of His Second Coming].” (Matthew 28:17-19)

This mission statement was repeated again in these latter days: *“Prosecute the missionary work in this land [the U.S.A.] and abroad [in all nations] so far and so widely as you may. All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and to the intent that all may labor together...with God for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all.”* (Doctrine and Covenants 119:8)

“Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God; for behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.” (Doctrine and Covenants 16:3)

Jesus came to bring people to God. *“For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened [resurrected] by the Spirit, that he might bring us to God. For which cause also [to bring us to God], he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; some of whom were disobedient in the days of Noah.”* (1 Peter 3:18-20)

The work of bringing souls to God continues even after the death of our mortal bodies! Our mission is to bring people to Jesus that He might bring them to God. *“...No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6)

Qualifying for Endowment

Simply knowing our mission will not qualify us for an endowment of spiritual power. The lukewarm servant will not be endowed. Only those who willingly take up their cross and who eagerly follow the Lord will be endowed with an increased measure of the Holy Spirit. *“And now for a man to take up his cross, is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments.”* (Matthew 16:26)

The day of our willingness will be the day of God’s power. *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of*

thy power...." (Psalm 110:3) It has been said that it does not take much of a man (in talent and ability) to be a servant of God, but it takes all of him (a total commitment). As always, we can expect that the Lord will test our willingness to expend every ounce of strength and talent we have before He endows us with more, as in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:13-31).

I have wondered why Nephi and his brothers were so severely tested before God finally intervened to help them fulfill their mission. It was Nephi, who persisted in the accomplishment of their difficult assignment, who said, *"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 1:65)

Similarly God chose to put Abraham to an ultimate test when He asked him to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, *"...whom thou lovest..."* (Genesis 22:2) After Abraham had proven his willingness to obey, God gave him the promise of an abundant blessing that is still being fulfilled today. *"....Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only Isaac from me; that in blessing I will bless thee...and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."* (Genesis 22:20-22)

Our Hopeful Situation

Our task is formidable and the laborers are few. As we survey our present situation and consider what we are and what we are called to accomplish, we may be tempted to say with the faithless of the past, *"...We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."* (Numbers 13:33)

We may become as depressed and discouraged as Elijah who tried to run away from his task, *"And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away....And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?... And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way [return to your place of duty] I have left me seven thousand in Israel [faithful ones]...which have not bowed unto Baal....So he departed thence [returned to his task]."* (1 Kings 19:10-19)

In the eyes of men we are confronted with a hopeless situation, but with God as our ally and commander, nothing is impossible or hopeless. *"The Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."* (Joel 3:16)

Man's extremity is God's opportunity. The armies of Israel were in a seemingly hopeless situation when Jonathan, son of King Saul, said to his armor bearer, *"...Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison...it may be that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."* (1 Samuel 14:1, 6) Through the efforts of these two men, supplemented by the power of God, Israel was delivered that day.

A day of Pentecostal power is coming. The first Pentecost and the day of dedication at Kirtland were only shadows of things to come. A people will come forth in the full image of Christ, out of a dying religious order, who will be God's revelation to a confused Church and to a world in need. They will be a people with eternity in their hearts, prepared to wait for the Lord to do what He has purposed from the beginning. They will not stagger at the overwhelming odds, for they know the task is not their own, but is the Lord's. Their only desire will be to move in complete accord with God's perfect plan and timing. In the hour of human failure, God will move to fulfill His almighty plan.

God does not need men of great intellect and abilities to accomplish His purposes. He needs a people of faith, with willing hearts. God's power will be seen in men's weaknesses made strong.

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- I think it can all be kind of summed up in the final scripture here where Jesus says, *"For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the spirit that it might bring us to God."* And that is it, that He might bring us to God; that is why He came. That is why we are here as priesthood members—that's why all of us are here. Our mission is to help bring people back to God.

- We sat around the kitchen table yesterday morning with the Shorts, the family that befriended us this week. We talked about our children running away from home and we laughed about it. They usually went about a mile down the road and then came back in time for supper. But isn't that true of all of us. We kind of run away from God. Man ran away. He was out of the garden, and now the work of the Lord is to bring us back, bring us back to God. He's not going to rest as long as there is one lost soul out there—neither should we. We should be out bringing in people to the Lord. This is our calling. This is our mission. You know, we are all in it over

our heads, aren't we? We talked about that this week. We talked about living on the edge. Whenever we are in the ministry of the Lord in bringing people back to God, we are in it over our heads. It is beyond us; we need help. That is what we are talking about this week—qualifying for this extra help.

- The Lord cannot really endow us unless we surrender to Him—until we recognize our need for His help and surrender willingly. We must be willing to be endowed. We must go to the end of our strength; then He will step in to help us. He cannot endow us ahead of time. That would be violating our agency. It is as simple as that. We have to surrender and exercise our agency and prove it by what we are trying to do, and then He will step in where we fall short. We need to prove to Him that we are willing. I remember an old bishop in our district by the name of W. R. Adams, that always would end up his testimony by saying, “In the day of our willingness will be the day of God’s power.” He said that over and over again, so that it is still ringing in my ears this morning. The day of our willingness will be the day of God’s power. So many times we are not willing. Brother McFarland talked about sitting in the easy chair. We can’t do that. We must be anxiously engaged in this cause of bringing people back to God, not forgetting our mission or what we are here for.

- We should repent and be broken in our hearts and spirits for the times we have not exercised our agency to bring us to the point where God can endow us to do more than we have ever thought possible. We must be willing and broken and anxious to do His will.

- We are in it over our heads. The responsibilities are heavy upon each of us. I realize that. I am privileged to have at home a pre-baptismal class. It is getting too big, almost too big. It’s a problem. We have about a dozen teenagers in the class. We have a young man from Siberia, Alex, and he is there every time. He understands and he can communicate and it is wonderful. Every time he comes, (his father has died) he comes up and wants a hug after the class. We have an older couple about my age, or a little younger than I am, Roman Catholic. They are there every time. They want to learn about the Gospel. The woman has already said she wants to be baptized and the husband is still there. So, I’m in it over my head. Every time I get there before class starts, I go into the sanctuary and I just thank God for the privilege I have of sharing. I share with Him that I’m

in it over my head, and I need His help to speak that word in season that is going to move those young people to follow Jesus Christ. I know He will help.

- We have a gigantic task. We are not equal to it. But Jesus told Peter get out of the boat and walk on water. Launch out into the deep and cast your nets. Live on the edge. Go to that place where you can’t do it on your own, and He will be there to help you.

- What’s new from the Lord? We need to have an answer to that. We need to be so close to the Lord that we all have a message, a current message for that particular person we are talking to—a word in season.

- This week I dreamed one night, and I saw a spring. We have a spring on our reunion grounds and its beautiful. About 125 to 130 gallons a minute comes out of that spring day and night, week after week, year after year. That living, flowing, wonderful spring has watered people for generations. They would come from miles around during the days of drought and receive water. I saw in my dream this spring drying up. It dried up, and I thought, “This can’t be.” Then the scene changed, and I saw it beginning to flow again, and it began to flow more and more and more. This is a message, new from the Lord, that He is ready to pour out a blessing that you can hardly receive—it will flow through you and out of you, rivers of living water. The scriptures say that in that day, living waters would flow out of Jerusalem and out of Zion. It’s not far away. It’s a hopeful situation we have. How blessed we are to be a part of that process—living in the day when the fulfillment of the prophets and all of the good things that they have said are beginning to happen.

- Recently we had a Sunday morning prayer service. We have a lot of foster children in our congregation. The pastor and I were sitting up front. When the prayer service started the people began to testify. However, it was the young people that were testifying—an eight year old got up or an eleven year old got up and then some of these foster children began to get up to testify. All the older people just sat around. I usually carry a little of the burden for the service like a lot of you priesthood members. If it gets a little quiet, maybe you feel like stepping in. We didn’t need to this time. I finally turned around to the pastor and said, “We’re not doing this.” He said, “Do we ever?” The spirit was at work and it was that spring beginning to flow.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—This week as we have associated with one another, and I've gotten to know some of you, and sat under the ministry of many others, I've become aware of the many gifts and talents that the Lord has given to His people to accomplish His purposes. I've also been made aware that we extend ourselves and use those gifts and talents for our own purposes all of the time, but often forget to use them for the Lord's purposes.

Additional Scriptures And Readings:

"In what ways will you be prepared for this sharing? There are particular gifts and ministries of the Spirit that shall bring to you part of the mind of the Lord. There is the gift of inspiration in the acquiring and perception and imparting of knowledge. There is the gift of heaven-blessed wisdom, the evaluation of knowledge, how and where to use knowledge, and an exalted common sense as a possessor of knowledge. There are the gifts of visions and dreams, of instruction which comes from the Lord. There are the gifts of inspired study and inspired preaching in which illumination comes from outside yourself. There are the gifts of prophetic insight and foresight. There is the ministry of angels. There are many gifts and ways, even beyond these, by which a gracious, and anxious, and pleading Heavenly Father can manifest Himself to you. Try Him and see if He will not, bit by bit open the windows of Heaven unto you!" (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 14)

"Verily I say, Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good, they shall in nowise lose their reward. But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded, and receiveth a commandment with doubtful heart, and keepeth it with slothfulness, the same is damned." (Doctrine and Covenants 58:6d-6f)

"Behold, now, how divinely humble and graciously considerate is the Lord of light, intelligence and power, in that He does not seek nor even slightly desires to overwhelm you with His glory. Rather, He wants you to go as far as you can under His gracious spiritual illumination. He wants you to wrestle with your problems, your difficulties, your needs, even as Jacob of old wrestled with the angel. Then, when you cannot succeed, because of the vastness and the complexity of that which is before you, if you then will call upon your Heavenly Father for help, seeking in great faith and

mighty prayer, verily, He holds himself bound to share with you the glories of His supreme powers of comprehension, analysis, and solution. How full of gratitude should be your hearts, that the Lord of Hosts, notwithstanding His majesty, His exaltation, His power, thus respects your personality and individuality...The Holy One of Israel delights to reveal truth to His servants, particularly when that truth will be used." (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 16-17)

"I admonish the Church, and particularly those of the priesthood, that the hastening time being upon us there is great necessity for confidence in the men of the Church chosen for positions of great responsibility, and all should consecrate of their talents, abilities, and substance for the prosecution of the great work intrusted to us. Everywhere the demand for great activity exists, and for the accomplishment of our work the great essential is fraternal cooperation in service to man and devoted consecration to God and his work." (Doctrine and Covenants 132:3-4)

Additional Scriptural References:

Romans 12:6-8

James 1:22-26

II Nephi 12:35-38

Moroni 10:9-14

Doctrine and Covenants 81:1c-d, 3a-b; 83:6c; 85:7

Possible Study Questions:

What is the "mission"?

What servant will not be endowed? What servant will?

How has God tested the readiness of His servants?

What is meant by the phrase, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity"?

What talents and gifts has God given you?

How are you magnifying these talents and gifts for the Lord's purposes?

Why do we need to magnify and use the gifts and talents God has given us before he will endow us with more? (Consider the parable of the Talents)

What is meant by the phrases, "The Lord cannot really endow us unless we surrender to Him" and, "The day of our willingness, will be the day of God's power"?

What is Doctrine and Covenants 58:6d-f communicating to us in light of Principle 10? How does it pertain to our preparation?



PRINCIPLE 11

Preparing to be endowed will require us to stop compartmentalizing our lives-

To not separate the temporal from the spiritual, the secular from the sacred, for all things are spiritual and sacred to God

“Wherefore, verily I say unto you, that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal, neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam your father, whom I created.” (Doctrine and Covenants 28:9a)

“The universe is spiritual, it is designed to minister to men. It is designed to minister the life of God to men and it does this because wrapped up in each part of it, in each facet of it, wrapped up in every man, there is just that aspect of the Divine, which it is God's good pleasure to give him. You know in nothing is Joseph Smith more prophetic than when he said, it is designed that we should use the things of this world in the manner designed of God (DC 128:8c). And as we do, so much of the life of God as is wrapped up in what we use passes over into us.” (Lecture 1—“Our Spiritual Universe” of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

“Brethren, don't draw a line down the middle of your lives and say this is secular and this is sacred. When you do that, you sin, you miss the mark. For your daily work is your chief opportunity to serve your fellow men.” (Lecture 6—“Spiritual Endowment” of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

By Elder Ken Johnson

All of us have a tendency to compartmentalize our lives—“It's time to go to Church now.” “We had better rush home so we can watch the Chiefs' game.” “Tomorrow I've got to get that job done at work.” “I wonder what we are going to be able to do for vacation this year. Sure hope it is more relaxing than last year.” “I wonder when the kids will be through with school this year—they had so much time off for snow and ice days.” This is just part of our normal thought processes. The Apostle Paul instructs us to have a “renewing of the mind.”

The endowing process requires us to stop compartmentalizing our lives. God created all of us in the same spiritual creative moment, so that we are the same spiritual age. He declares unto us that to Him all things are spiritual. It is you and I who think in the dual terms of spiritual and temporal, or sacred and secular. Being endowed demands that we change our thought processes to recognize everything as spiritual so that we may view it in the same perspective as God, the loving Father. All of our time and activities need to be considered in light of the spiritual rather than the dual terms.

Awakening in the morning, we might greet the day with, “Good morning, Lord. What thing of beauty and righteousness might we create this day?” The endowment brings us into a greater awareness of our companionship with the Father. He invites all of us to become His friends. Also, we become more sensitized to the creative nature within us and to the fact that all things are spiritual. This may require our having to reorder all of our activities and choose only those that will benefit God and His Kingdom. Those activities that survive this reordering then become a part of our pattern of righteous living. Daily consultation with the Holy Ghost becomes a way of life instead of a rare and unique experience. When we discover that the Holy Ghost is the source of all truth and is able and willing to impart it upon inquiry, our lives become richer and more spiritual.

We are encouraged to bring all of our parts into submission to our minds, and then bring our minds into obedience to the will of the Father. This is what the Apostle Paul had reference to when he instructed us to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind.” (Romans 12:2) By so doing, everything becomes spiritual to us—but the process requires great effort and discipline. Our lives are not just made up of separate, unrelated events. The totality of our lives is the composite of each action as related to God and His Kingdom. We cannot divorce ourselves from the spiritual nature of that which we are, for we were firstly created spiritually and secondly created temporally. Therefore, our very natures are spiritual from the basic beginnings of our spiritual creation. To endeavor to separate events in our lives as to some being temporal and others spiritual is to try to tear parts of ourselves from the very core. It just tends to destroy the whole of that which we are, spiritual beings created by God.

On the other hand, to consider that all events and actions of our beings are spiritual is to put them within the proper perspective and framework to accomplish the tasks given us by the Father and His Only Begotten Son. Preparing to be endowed

requires some extremely new thinking on our part. It may indeed be somewhat easier for those of us who are retired because the stress of earning a daily living is removed and we can concentrate on the spiritual more easily. However, this does not dismiss the requirement to realign our thinking processes so that we view everything as connected and as being spiritual in nature. To hold all things as sacred we must change our viewpoint and begin to view everything from the same perspective as God. We then work to bring spiritual blessings into the lives of others and to assist in creating products or services that will do so. Our activities outside of the work environment create righteous responses to others and spiritual responses within us. As each day progresses, we become more aware of the spirituality of people we come in contact with and see in their lives how God is working to perfect them in His love.

The very nature of how God created us requires us to bear record of Him. This cannot be accomplished by compartmentalizing our lives. We tend to forget to bear record of God when we exclude our spiritual nature from our daily activities. All things must bear record of Him, or we are not fulfilling that for which we were created. The Scriptures bear record of this: *"And, behold, all things have their likeness; and all things are created and made to bear record of me."* (Genesis 6:66) To bear record is to bring Him into all of our activities and within our thinking, the very place where all deliberate action begins.

Bearing record is more than just talking about God or His Son. It is acting with a righteous nature and Godly countenance. When we come into someone's presence, he should see God reflected in our very person. Jesus should be the reflection of what is seen in our actions. Love should be the motivating force of all that we do. To accomplish this requires being coupled with the divinity. The nature of our actions must be centered upon this, bearing record of the Father and Son. To do this requires that we see with new spiritual eyes into everything that we do, say, and are.

You and I must become literally new creatures in Jesus Christ. We must think spiritually, act spiritually, and live spiritually. All that we are and do must be spiritual and sacred. Can we do this? Yes, when we ask the Father to make us new in His Son, Jesus. This is not just rhetoric, it is actual and basic to becoming renewed in Jesus Christ.

I cannot stress more emphatically the requirement to think and act differently as we are preparing to be endowed. To be endowed from on high and to become new creatures is the greatest enterprise ever

given to mankind. We are then enabled to envision Zion as a detailed reality, and then with divine resources plan its detailed accomplishment.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18) We have heard this read from the Scriptures for years. Now it becomes more of a reality when we put it into these words: "Without a vision of Zion, we perish." Zion will be—with or without us. God's work will not be frustrated. Our work, when not aligned with God's will, perishes for lack of divinely endowed direction. If all of the varied parts of our lives are brought into one harmonious entity through Jesus Christ, then God will bless all of our efforts and we will have fulfilled the purpose for which we were created. We must learn to access the vast heavenly resources of the loving God who created us.

Also, we must learn to become men and women of extraordinary spiritual sensitivity and perception of what is the will and wisdom of the eternal Father. Then, and only then, will we see clearly that the whole of our lives is but one experience of deep sacrifice for others that they might see most clearly the beautiful, loving, deeply intelligent God, Who waits for their response to His entreaty through our joint ministry.

At no time has He ever given direction or commandments that are temporal, but all His entreaties to us have been and are spiritual. As we view His precious instruction and commandments, we see His loving nature unfolding before our spiritual eyes. Then comparing our daily living with these same directions and commandments, we discover that our lives are not harmoniously connected in all areas, but are fragmented by our thought processes so that we create small compartments for each subject and area of interest in our lives.

The changing of this thought process is the beginning of the preparation for our endowing experience. Visualizing every area of our lives as Godly and righteous is the starting point to decompartmentalization. By increasing our spirituality through reading and studying His Word, we begin to understand that we are truly spiritual creatures and that our lives are sacrificial in nature. Our thinking changes as these eternal truths become evident and are made a part of our own spiritual nature. We are changed into a responsive, loving, sensitive human being filled with the love of God. Our outward thrust is toward the assistance of our fellow man to come to enjoy the divine friendship of God and His Only Begotten Son. This is the process, in brief, of preparing for the endowing experience.

You and I have the ongoing need of searching diligently for the common spiritual thread of our lives in order to tie each day and each event into its proper spiritual position. By changing the way we think, the way we view events, and the values we place on everything, we become clearly able to adjust our daily living patterns until they become harmonious with the mind and will of God. This is the sacrifice required of us all and is within the capabilities of each one of us to accomplish.

May we all be thus engaged.

Excerpts from Author's Presentation:

- God has declared that all things are spiritual. Has it registered? Is it part of our thinking process that all things are spiritual? It is you and I that think in the dual terms of spiritual and temporal, or of being sacred and secular. God does not think that way. We do. You and I do. Being endowed will demand that we change our thought processes to recognize everything as spiritual so that we may view them in the same perspective as God does. This means that all of our time, our activities, need to be considered in light of spiritual, rather than in dual terms.

- The endowment, and preparing for the endowment, is the situation in which you and I become more sensitized. I like that word because everything that is happening to us today is focused on desensitizing us. In becoming endowed, and preparing for that endowment, we become more sensitized to the creative nature within us and the fact that we are spiritual. Preparing for the endowment requires us to stop compartmentalizing our lives. That requires something of you and me. It is essential for us to reorder our lives, to reorder our thinking processes, to come to the point where everything that we do and think and every action is centered on being spiritual.

- We are encouraged to bring all of our parts into submission to our minds, and then bring our minds in obedience to the will of the Father. What do you mean by all parts? We've got parts to our body haven't we? They all need to be submissive to our minds. But there are some other parts which just aren't always under control. They are not submissive at all times. Our five senses for example—where do our eyes rove? What are our ears hearing? What are our smell and taste experiencing? What is our touch bringing into our mind? All five senses must be submissive to our minds. Every appetite that we have must be submissive to our mind. Our thinking processes themselves must also become submissive.

When everything is submissive to our minds and we have become centered on the spiritual, then, and only at that point, do we have what Paul describes as a renewing of our minds. We have to understand the renewing of our minds. We must not divorce ourselves from our spiritual nature, that which we are. For we were firstly created spiritual, and secondly created temporally. So what was first? The very first is what our natures are—spiritual.

- To endeavor to separate events in our lives, saying some are temporal and others are spiritual, tears us apart. It causes us to reach a point where we really don't understand what we were created as in the first place. It destroys the whole of that which we are. And what is that whole? We are spiritual beings created by God. That is what we are.

- Preparing to be endowed requires extremely new thinking on our part. We have the need to bring about some extremely new thinking in our processes, in our minds. That thinking process is the change that is essential for the preparation for being endowed. We're not ready for an endowment if we have not changed our thought processes.

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment: Jesus said unto His disciples, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. And now for a man to take up his cross is to deny himself all ungodliness, and every worldly lust, and keep my commandments." (Matthew 16:25-26) That is describing what it takes to deny yourself of all worldly lusts. But it is not describing what it takes to deny ourselves. That is what the scripture says. We deny ourselves. And as Brother Johnson just said, we should be to the point where people don't see Brother Johnson, or us as individuals, they see the Father and Jesus Christ. That is denying ourselves.

Additional Scriptures and Readings:

"And, behold, all things have their likeness; and all things are created and made to bear record of me; both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath, all things bear record of me." (Genesis 6:66)

"And as we do this much of the life of God that is in the universe which we describe through the Spirit of

Truth is given to us. Every search for knowledge is an enticement of the Holy Spirit. It does not matter in what field it is, truth when it is made manifest brings with it a certain uplift of spirit. And there is no truth that man can acquire but what does not require of him some physical effort and spiritual effort. Every truth that you apprehend has come to you because of some realization of yourself in the act of knowing." (Lecture 3—"The Holy Spirit and The Church" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"The gathering of the Jews will be to Jerusalem. When the gospel goes to the house of Israel there will be great spiritual activity among those who have accepted the gospel. During this period of time, the Church will become sanctified in preparation for Christ's coming in glory. We must become like the Church in Enoch's day before they were taken from the earth a perfect people. Before we can reach those spiritual heights we must keep all the commandments of God, including the law of stewardship by covenant; without it Zion cannot become sanctified. (Doctrine and Covenants 106:2).

"Not until we make our covenant in the order of Enoch (Doctrine and Covenants 77) can we receive the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the greatest promise of all. Not until we are sealed by that Spirit can we become the Church of the Firstborn, neither can we receive the quickening of our bodies necessary to stand in the presence of God and Christ in glory. Therefore, the Church must receive the Holy Spirit of Promise before Christ can come in His glory to accept it." (*Three Visitations of Christ and His Coming in Glory* by Adolph W. Lundeen)

"Read Section 108, the elders came to Joseph Smith and wanted to know about preaching. What should they preach? Read section 108. It is the Lord's answer to their query, what they should preach. It is altogether unlike what we are doing today, almost as daylight is from dark. Our Church faces the dilemma. Shall we be secularized? Shall we abandon the principle of power which comes from above? Shall we rely on the wisdom of men or upon the power of God? You know the answer to that. The Apostle Paul states it quite plainly, "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man." He might as well have said, "cannot stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." These powers are yours, brethren. When you are committed to the work of God, and when there's no turning back for you, and when there is no way that the Almighty can reach you through His servants which are upon the earth, then you may rest assured you shall be reached by His

servants which are in Heaven. There are many of you who can testify that that is true I am sure." (Lecture 5—"Angelic Ministry" of *The Endowment Series* by Arthur A. Oakman)

"And now, behold, I say unto you, Never at any time, have I declared from my own mouth that they should return, for where I am they cannot come, for they have no power; but remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth, even so shall they be fulfilled; that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first in all things, whatsoever I have created by the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit; for by the power of my Spirit, created I them; yea, all things both spiritual and temporal: firstly spiritual, secondly temporal, which is the beginning of my work; and again, firstly temporal, and secondly spiritual, which is the last of my work; speaking unto you that you may naturally understand, but unto myself my works have no end, neither beginning; but it is given unto you that ye may understand, because ye have asked it of me and are agreed." (Doctrine and Covenants 28:8a-e)

Additional Scriptural References:

Genesis 1:1-2, 2:7
Isaiah 42:5
Matthew 6:21-22
Luke 16:10-12
Colossians 1:16
Hebrews 11:3
James 4:5-10
I John 3:16-24
2 Nephi 1:65-73
Alma 19:87-90
Doctrine and Covenants 51:5; 59:2a, f; 67:3a-c;
70:3d-4b; 72:1; 85:4; 90:4-5; 101:2

Possible Study Questions:

What is meant by, "...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"? How does this relate to Principle 11?
How do we compartmentalize our lives?
What are the effects of living compartmentalized lives?
How does living a compartmentalized life affect our ability to receive the Lord's endowing spirit?
Why is it important for us to stop viewing the world in the dual terms—spiritual and temporal?
Were we created to be spiritual, temporal or both?

How do you begin to think spiritually about all aspects of your life?
What is the key to holding all things sacred?
What does it mean, “to bear record of Him”?
Are you a new creature in Christ? How?
How do you interpret Matthew 16:25-27?



PRINCIPLE 12

Preparing to be endowed will require us to come together to be one

The endowment will come to His priesthood first and His people second. If there is one Church of Jesus Christ, then there is one priesthood; to be one priesthood we must respond to one voice and charity must abound.

“And again, verily I say unto you, that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent, and you shall see me and know that I am...wherefore continue in patience until ye are perfected.” (Doctrine and Covenants 67:3a,3c)

“The force and influence of this day of endowment must inevitably spread out. Just as no one can come under the influence of a great personality without being somewhat made over by that influence, even much more shall all who come within the circle of association of these spiritually radiant men of the endowment be transformed by the spiritual power, the glorious experiences, the Heavenly wisdom, the keen vision, the marvelous testimonies, the Christ-inspired grasp of issues, and all else that has come to these highly blessed servants of the Lord.

“These men will move out into the body of the Church. They will share that which has lifted them up with other ministry, both Melchisedec and Aaronic, the good people, and boys and girls. The hearts of God's people will be touched, as they have not yet been touched, by the power that shall go with these men.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, pp. 35-36)

“I admonish the Church, and particularly those of the priesthood, that the hastening time being upon us there is great necessity for confidence in the men of the

Church chosen for positions of great responsibility, and all should consecrate of their talents, abilities, and substance for the prosecution of the great work intrusted to us. Everywhere the demand for great activity exists, and for the accomplishment of our work the great essential is fraternal cooperation in service to man and devoted consecration to God and his work.” (Doctrine and Covenants 132:3-4)

“Therefore, hearken once again unto the voice of inspiration, in warning and instruction, and conform to that which is given and receive what is awaiting the upright and the pure in heart. The Spirit saith further unto the Church: The Lord is well pleased with the advancement which has been made in approaching unity during the conference year; and though there may have been differences of opinion, these differences have been held in unity of purpose and desire for the good of my people, and will result in helping to bring to pass a unity of understanding. So be ye encouraged and press on to the consummation designed of God for his people—unity, honor, sanctification, and glory. Amen.” (Doctrine and Covenants 129:8h, 9a-c)

“In the great work of the Eternal, God is your Father in a deeper sense than you know. Jesus Christ is your elder brother. All ye He would have as sons and brothers and friends. The great Father's highest method of procedure in His communion, His uplifting, His guiding, His leadership of His sons and friends who are the servants of His great purpose is not that there shall be one high and lifted up to whom all shall abjectly give heed. Rather, it is a noble association of deeply consecrated, inspired and gifted minds, humble to know the truth, anxious to glorify His high purpose and name, and deeply concerned as is He with the achievement of this His high purpose for life.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 10)

“Yet, notwithstanding this, the way will be fraught with difficulty, for the placing of men and women in the working out of God's great projects will require great wisdom, not only bringing the right person to the right task, but also thus in the spirit of brotherhood and under the finest concepts of human agency.” (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 19)

By Evangelist/Patriarch Vernon Darling

“...IF YE ARE NOT ONE, YE ARE NOT MINE.” (Doctrine and Covenants 38:6a) *“The hastening time is here and greater unity than ever before is necessary if*

the forces of opposition are to be met; and such unity will prevail if those holding the priesthood will remember their commission to preach the gospel, and each officer will strive to discharge his own duty and magnify his calling. The promise has been given that no power shall stay the hand of God in the accomplishment of his purposes among his people.” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:2b-3a.)

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1) Jesus Christ alone is our unity. “He is our peace. Through Him alone do we have access to one another, joy in one another, and fellowship with one another...our community with one another consists solely in what Christ has done in both of us.”—Bonhoffer

The Church of Jesus Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit creates in His Church a place for each person who takes his rightful place in the Body of Christ. The only certain fact in life is that Christ’s atonement guarantees the Spirit is a constant presence in our lives, from conception through death and on into eternity. As we place our faith in the gospel, the Lord gives us hope.

If we can build our branches into spiritual communities where people relate as sons and daughters, communities that include all who want to come—safe places, where people can be open and vulnerable, people can disagree gracefully, each person is of equal worth, and common consent is the goal—then God’s Spirit will bring us together under the banner of His Son.

Zion is the highest goal of mankind and it will be the result of our efforts to work together and abide in Him. We are called to become the answer to our Lord’s prayer in John 17, that of becoming one the way He and the Father are one.

It is time we paid whatever price must be paid to become part of a spiritual movement toward Christ and receive a spiritual endowment. It is time we turned toward each other and learned to talk and listen to each other in ways that encourage us to know that the way to live in this world is to focus on the spiritual life—our life with God and others. It will not be easy, but it will be worth it.

We are told we must come with broken hearts and contrite spirits. We must long for the place where people feel safe enough to be broken, where we can truly connect with others, where the vision determines the way we are going. “He works on us in all sorts of ways. But above all, He works on us through each other. Men are carriers of Christ to each other. Usually it is those who know him that bring him to others. The Church exists for no other purpose but to draw men

unto Christ. It is even doubtful whether the whole universe was created for any other purpose.” —C. S. Lewis

The True Meaning Of Zionie Unity

Zionie unity “is demonstrated by a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other; whose relationship goes deeper than their outward appearance. They have developed some significant commitment to one another. They listen to each other and understand each other. They hear one another with an open mind and a loving heart. Each person is different, but they have a common vision.” —Larry Crabb

Requirements for unity:

1. Everyone is committed to the integrity and value of the group.
2. There is openness on everyone’s part to new information.
3. A willingness to acknowledge feelings and resolve conflict.
4. There is honesty to discover what is best for the group.
5. Be patient—common consent takes longer than majority vote.
6. Have courage to consider even an unpopular position.
7. A facilitator with experience and knowledge in gaining consensus.

Practice active listening. Listen with your whole self. Look people in the eyes as they speak. Give them your interest. If you don’t agree, acknowledge what has been said. Then make your point. Don’t build up to your point.

The challenge is to establish a fellowship together in which true Zionie unity is lived out. The goal of spiritual unity building seeks to raise awareness to differences in people but should not threaten the sense of self and sense of security found in our religious community.

Barriers to Unity:

1. The need to control or dominate the group.
2. The need to fix or convert others. (We don’t need this.)
3. Preconceptions, trying to fit others into your mold.
4. Dependency on leader. (Unity must be achieved by the total group.)
5. Exclusivity is the great enemy of unity and growth.

6. Tension between the “thinkers” and the “doers.”

7. Tendency to avoid our “task” by polarizing, or dependency.

We have been called to the great cause of Zion, whose hallmarks are *“the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom....Inasmuch as there are those who have hearkened unto my words, I have prepared a blessing and an endowment for them, if they continue faithful...Be very faithful, and prayerful, and humble before me.”* (Doctrine and Covenants 102:2b,5b,7a)

Excerpts from Author’s Presentation:

• We have been talking about unity forever, right? Every time we turn around, we talk about how bad we need that, and it is true. Not too long ago, someone called me to come to their congregation, and I wanted to know what was happening there. I said, “How are you doing?” They said, “We’re doing a lot better now that we got rid of the troublemakers.” I hate to quote our last president, but he did say, “There is no them and us, there is only us.” We have a tendency to give the impression that we are being exclusive, that we are willing for the troublemakers to leave so that we can be our own little group. The only problem with that is that soon in that little group you have some more troublemakers. Someone has said that exclusivity is the enemy to our work. It keeps us from growing. It keeps us from growing spiritually and growing numerically. We can’t afford to be exclusive. There may be times, and Paul wrote about this, that you need to distance yourself from someone who is creating problems in your congregation. Give him an opportunity to change or to leave. But there is not one person in this room, if we explored closely enough, that you and I wouldn’t have some difference with. Every one of you is different, and you say, “Thank the Lord for that.” The Lord does not want a whole bunch of robots, clones, I guess is the proper word now isn’t it? Thank the Lord for the differences in us. However, we are called to be one, in the same sense and spirit that Jesus was saying that He and the Father could be one. And that those who were His followers, His disciples, might discover what that oneness is and means, so they could be one like He and the Father are. That is our calling also—to be one like the Lord and His Father are one. Perhaps we can’t understand it, that is true. But somehow we know that there is a relationship here that is so precious to the Lord that He constantly prayed for it.

• To grow close together, we need people in our groups who are different from each other. When you have different perspectives on things you begin to see things a little more clearly. If the only eyes that you see things through are yours, you sometimes don’t see. You only have a piece of the picture. But together, when you put all of the pieces together, you begin to see in better ways.

• Zionism is demonstrated by a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other; whose relationship goes deeper than their outward appearance. They have developed some significant commitment to one another. They listen to each other with an open mind and a loving heart. Each person is different, but each one shares a common vision.

• A few months ago we had a meeting of the patriarchs. Brother Mike was asked to bring some words of worship to the group. As I looked about the table, I realized that all of us were looking down at the table as we listened to him. I decided, wait, this didn’t seem to be right. So, I arranged my chair so that I could look right directly at him. I began to interact a little bit with him—just listening to him. We don’t listen to each other—truly, honestly listen. There are so many things that go on in our head while we are apparently listening. In the sermon we think about the meal or just about anything else. We’re not looking the person in the eye and interacting with him so that we can truly be one body. So my advice is, “Listen, listen, listen!”

• We are a bunch of healers and fixers and converters and solvers of everybody else’s problems. Isn’t that true? Discovering how to relate in our congregations is an important thing for us, a very, very important thing. I tried to be somewhat practical and put some things in the article that would focus your attention on it. There are some requirements for unity. Everyone is committed to the integrity and value of the group. There is openness for new information, a willingness to acknowledge and resolve conflict, an honesty to discover what is best for the group. Be patient. Common consent, or consensus, takes a longer time than a majority vote. Have the courage to consider even an unpopular position, and have a facilitator with experience and knowledge in gaining consensus.

• There is a longer list of things that I could have put in here, but I’m trying to challenge you to discover how it is a congregation could truly work—

truly become conscious of itself and the ministry which it is called to bring. Is it a place of safety? Let me tell you what I believe about this place of safety. As I was reading and searching, I remembered the scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants that says that someday you will have to flee to Zion because it will be a place of safety. Our young brother this morning got up and shared his prayer because he felt it was safe enough to do it. How many of you keep things to yourself in your congregation because you are afraid to share it with others? There have to be centers or places where it is safe to be who God has called you to be. To get rid of those things that keep you stirred up, by which you are bothered.

- If we are going to be centers of power, there has to be a Zion effort. It will have to start someplace. Someone is going to have to show us what that is. What it will involve first of all though, is how we deal with one with another, our relationships. It means more than being congenial or just being able to get along. They call that a “pseudo community.” You think you’ve got it and all you have is cordiality. We need something that goes deep, something that goes to the very center—something that is Christlike.

- Here are some barriers to unity: The need to control or dominate, the need to heal or fix or convert or solve, trying to fit others into your idea of what he ought to be. In the raising of my children, I wanted them each to be what God meant them to be, but I didn’t know what that was. They had to discover it. A relationship with God is something that they have to have—not something that they can achieve based on my beliefs or experiences. And when they have that, then they’ll be solid persons.

There is also tension between the thinkers and the doers. You have to have those who are full of plans, and those who get out and do the things that they say. Often, there ends up being a split between the two, a kind of antagonism. When we realize that we need both of these, then we can work together to resolve “anything.”

Selected Audience Questions/Comments:

Comment—I really do appreciate so much what you’ve said and it brought to my mind something I want to say. I think it takes seven words: “We are not to be isolated, but insulated.”

Comment—I so appreciate the words that my brother made and I have a real simple description of unity. Just suppose you had a room with twelve pianos in it

and they needed to be tuned. So, you brought in an individual and he tuned piano #1, and then all of the other pianos were to be tuned one to another. And by the time you got down to piano #12, trying to tune them one to another, it just didn’t work. But then, just suppose, you took in a tuning fork and then tuned all twelve pianos to that tuning fork, then you would have unity, you would have harmony. Just suppose, as those twelve pianos were focused on the tuning fork, that we all focus on the Lord Jesus and tune ourselves to Him—there would be unity.

Comment—I have a short poem that I feel was inspired. It talks about what we are talking about today.

Come Holy Ghost,
Teach from above,
Lead us down the path of life
That our Savior trod,
Help us behold the cross that He died upon,
May we not forget He died that we may live.
So, as we walk this path may we share His love,
Help us see others as our Savior does.

Quicken our minds,
That we may share His words with others.
As we walk this path,
May we be humble and in tune with Thee,
Help us to rid our lives of things not of Thee.
We long for Zion, for we need it so.
Help us prepare our lives that it may come.
So led along this path may we united be,
And I pray, Dear Lord,
We’ll be found always praising Thee.

Additional Scriptures And Readings:

“The Spirit saith further, that the spirit of distrust and want of confidence in those who are called and ordained to act in the various responsible positions in the priesthood and in authority in the Church is unbecoming those professing faith in God, Jesus Christ his Son, and the Holy Spirit of truth, and evinces a serious lack of that charity which Paul, an apostle of Christ, declared to be the quality of Christian virtue which thinketh no evil. Those who go out from the assemblies and solemn conclaves of the Church should exercise great care in their ministration abroad both to the branches where they may officiate and in their preaching the gospel to those outside, to avoid sowing seeds of distrust and suspicion either in public ministration or in private conversation. The Church has been admonished heretofore in this respect and the Spirit saith again, It is

unbecoming to the character and calling of those who administer in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.” (Doctrine and Covenants 131:4)

The Spirit saith further: That the elders and delegates assembled in business capacity are counseled to cease permitting the spirit of recrimination and accusation to find place in their discourse, either public or private, as it tends to destroy confidence and create distrust not only in those present at councils where they occur, but to those to whom the knowledge of such a course of procedure comes by the voice of those who are present and witness what is said and done. There should be harmony, and the Spirit enjoins it upon all, that the Master may be remembered as in meekness and due sobriety he carried on the great work to which he was called.” (Doctrine and Covenants 130:8)

“Let the church again be admonished that the task of establishing Zion presses heavily upon us. Barriers and hindrances to the achievement of this goal should be removed as speedily as possible and practicable. To lay securely the foundations for Zion and her buildings the work should be accomplished in peace and harmony. Unity should prevail. To this end all the Saints should work together in the rich fraternity which can and will prevail among them when they keep faithfully the commandments. Great blessings are in store for the church if it will in faith and saintly devotion go forward in its tasks.” (Doctrine and Covenants 138:3)

“The movements toward better understanding of ministerial responsibilities, duties, and goals, and toward unity of endeavor in teaching, preaching, evangelizing, and the perfecting of the Saints, are pleasing to the Lord. Contentions, bickerings, and strife are unseemly, hinder the work of the church, and should not find place among the Saints. Only in the peace of fraternity and the unity of those caught up in the spirit of Zion can the work of the Lord be accomplished. To this task let the church devote its energies.” (Doctrine and Covenants 136:3a-c)

“What will it take for us to be able to discern His will as His People? ...

“We must make proper preparation for coming together. We must be avid students of the scriptures. God’s word contains His will for His people down through the ages. The Spirit which was resident and guiding those people then is the same Spirit which we have access to today—the same Spirit which stands ever ready to guide us. Knowing how the Spirit has

directed in the past is invaluable in recognizing and evaluating the leadings of the Spirit today. A discerning people will come together to agree upon His word, which will require each of us to make the necessary preparation to know His word.

“We must come in the right Spirit. Our Spirit must be ready to participate with others and the Lord. We really have no hope of discerning God’s will together if we come with a spirit of pride, rebellion, and hate. If we have “aught” with anyone; we must first reconcile with them if we hope to have a chance of coming together to hear what God is saying.

“We must come together in an attitude of prayer and must continue in that attitude throughout our deliberations. Prayer is what keeps us connected to the head.

“We cannot come together with our minds made up. When we do, we circumvent the work of the spirit. We must trust that as we come together to deliberate on important matters that God has a great desire to make His will known to us—Not my will, Not yours, but His. The issue with discerning God’s will is not that He won’t speak to us—it is that we as a people aren’t listening to Him.

“We must be willing to submit to one another. We must come together, recognizing that the Lord at any time may be speaking through another individual. We must make it safe for everyone to express what he thinks, even when it is unpopular—that perspective may be the very thing the Lord is wanting us to consider.

“Recognizing that the Lord may be speaking through any one of us will require each of us to listen to one another with an open mind. When we assume we know what someone is going to say before that person says it, we interfere with an essential element of the discernment process. This is a form of disrespect for all. We must treat each other with respect and dignity. We must be honest with one another in a spirit of love. We must be patient with one another—not quick to criticize and judge. We must not assume others have bad motives. We must be charitable with each other. *‘Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.’ (Ephesians 4:31-32)*

“When we disagree, we must engage in Christian disagreement. This type of disagreement requires us to recognize that we are all on the same side, collectively seeking to know God’s truth, His will, and being obedient to it. All disagreements must be conducted in a spirit of humility. In Philippians 2:2-5 we are reminded to, *‘Fulfill*

ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.'

"When disagreements arise and offenses are given or taken, we must be quick to forgive and reconcile. We cannot afford to harbor ill feelings, secreting them away in the deep recesses of our souls where they can fester and taint our lives and the workings of the body. We must be willing to reconcile with one another even as God has commanded." (A Discerning People, by William (Vim) Horn, Tidings of Zion, Issue 37, 1999, p.7)

"There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy; and it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen, and they shall be sanctified; and inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion." (Doctrine and Covenants 102:10c-d)

Additional Scriptural References:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Doctrine and Covenants 42:1a-c; 43:3a-5a; 117:13-14; 119:2a-3a; 140:5c-d

Possible Study Questions:

Why will endowment come to His priesthood first and His people second?

What will it take for us to be the body of Christ? To be a people of one heart and one mind?

What is a "broken heart"? A "contrite spirit"?

Are you able to "submit" to God? To each other? To those who offend you?

What does it mean to be "long suffering"?

How does "being one" facilitate the endowment process?

How can we assist our "branches" to become "spiritual communities"?

How can we promote unity within our "branches"? Between "branches"?

What are some things we as a people can do to prepare to collectively discern His Spirit?

SUMMARY

Our preparing for the endowment of God's Holy Spirit has been the focus of this Study Guide. This guide has endeavored to provide some direction on how priesthood members and Saints can begin to prepare to be endowed with understanding, direction, and power.

The Study Guide began with the idea that fundamental to people wanting to change is their having an awareness that something is not right, or is missing. If we are not aware that we are missing something, we will never know, or be motivated, to seek after something else. One thing, as a people, we must be cognizant of missing, is the constant companionship, or fellowship with the Holy Spirit that has been promised us. We experience this companionship for short periods of time, such as at reunions or during the past Conference when the Spirit was evident within the faces and interaction of those attending, but are promised so much more.

The other aspect of endowment that we are missing pertains to the tremendous power that is available through the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's intended purposes. When considering what God has done and promised in His record, we must acknowledge that we are missing many possibilities

of ministry. This understanding of what our ministry could be must compel us to make the needed preparation for receiving God's empowering endowment.

There is no time for complacency or being content with lesser blessings. Not being content, to some extent, requires us to be stirred up. It is common knowledge, that if you let oil and water sit long enough they will separate from each other. The oil floats to the top and the water sinks to the bottom. If you never disturb this situation, that separation will always exist. We need to be stirred—stirred to action. We need to be mixed up together through the impress of the Holy Spirit, in such a way that we are not content with our situation and that we move out and allow the Spirit to resonate within us; to empower and embolden us to go forth to work towards accomplishing the vision of things to come. We must be a vision driven people.

If you look at the scriptures, it does not say that we are the cause of Zion. It says, "*Seek ye, to establish the cause of Zion.*" The implication is that we need to desire it, have a hunger for it. When we finally hunger for Zion to be, for the fulfillment of things to come to such a degree that this desire is

reflected in our lives in all that we do, then the Lord will bring it about.

Trusting God to bring about His promises will require us to have an implicit faith in Him. Through personal experience and our exposure to the scriptures, each of us has become aware that God's promises are sure and true, and that He is faithful in keeping His promises. Our preparation then, must involve an increase in our understanding and trust in those promises, which simply means trusting God to do what He has said He will do.

The Lord never promised that things would be easy. He promises, though, that He will be there with us. Preparing to be endowed will require sacrifice. It will require not just part of us, but it will require all of us.

This sacrifice will challenge each of us. It will require us to look honestly at ourselves, at our individual walk with our heavenly Father. We must evaluate and be honest with ourselves. Honest judgment can occur only when we allow the illuminating light of Jesus Christ to shine upon our lives in such a way that all our sins become apparent. Only after our sins become apparent, and we see who we really are, will we be ashamed enough to repent of them. It is then that the saving grace of our Lord and Savior can wash us clean. Only then can our Lord represent us as an advocate before the Father. So, judging ourselves, allowing His light to shine on us, and confessing and repenting of our sins are all foundational activities in our preparation for endowment.

Being receptive to God's endowing Spirit requires discipline. Each one of us, as we look at our lives and see the things that are causing us to be separated from our Lord and Savior—and also causing us to be separated from one another—must discipline our lives to overcome those things. We must become the most disciplined people in the world. That discipline will come only when we surrender and allow the Lord Jesus Christ to reign in our lives in such a way that the covenant that we have made with Him becomes paramount. The report in IV Nephi, establishes clearly what it was that caused and enabled the people then to accomplish all that they accomplished. It says, *"...the people were all converted unto Christ,"* and then, *"...there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another."* Then they had all things common, *"And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, ... And all manner of miracles did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus."* We must allow our covenant

relationship with our Lord to reign supreme in our lives if we are to experience a greater measure of God's endowing power.

Our lives have become so busy, often with good activities, that we find little time to approach our Lord and listen to what He wants us to do with our lives. As part of our preparation for endowment it is imperative that we become aware and actively pursue the accomplishment of our individual calling. If we do not do this, we are faced with seemingly insurmountable walls, such as go and "cry repentance to all the nations of the world" or *"seek to establish the cause of Zion."* Each of us ought to sense a great measure of relief with the understanding that the Lord does not expect us, as individuals, to scale these walls. What He does expect is that each of us will faithfully respond to our individual callings. Through our individual responses the work will go forward, and collectively, His work will be accomplished. If we are faithful in this, He will endow us with His enabling Spirit to accomplish all things. Zion will be.

Preparing to be endowed involves our utilizing the talents and gifts that have been given to us. The Lord is very clear that there is no reason for Him to give us more if we are not using what He has already given us. So if we desire to be empowered with more, if we desire a greater measure of the endowment, does it not stand to reason that we need to be exercising the gifts and talents that we have to their fullest potential? It is only when we extend ourselves, exercise our gifts and talents to their fullest potential, and still fall short, that He promises to magnify our abilities through His endowing power. Part of our preparation in this regard will require us to apply our gifts and talents for the Lord's purposes in all aspects of our lives.

As citizens of the kingdom, living in this world as ambassadors, we must be firmly grounded in the interest of the kingdom and represent that interest in this world in which we reside. We need to stop compartmentalizing our lives. We cannot afford to have divided interests, divided allegiances. This seemingly simple concept is one of the most challenging things for us to accomplish.

While our covenant, expressed in the waters of baptism and sealed through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, establishes us as new creatures, the influence of the world and our natures continue to drive us to temporal considerations. It is only when we avail ourselves of the Holy Ghost, the gift that has been given to us, that we will see things as the Lord sees them, spiritually. Armed with this insight, we must discipline our natures and manage the influence of the world on our lives.

Finally, our preparation for endowment must result in there being unity amongst God's priesthood and His people. This is particularly poignant when considering the effect of not having a unified priesthood. "*The Spirit saith further: That the elders and delegates assembled in business capacity are counseled to cease permitting the spirit of recrimination and accusation to find place in their discourse, either public or private, as it tends to destroy confidence and create distrust not only in those present at councils where they occur, but to those to whom the knowledge of such a course of procedure comes by the voice of those who are present and witness what is said and done. There should be harmony, and the Spirit enjoins it upon all, that the Master may be remembered as in meekness and due sobriety he carried on the great work to which he was called.*" (Doctrine and Covenants 130:8a-c)

When unity exists, then the presence of the Holy Spirit will be experienced in power and clarity. Over the years, many within the Restoration have accepted disunity and our fractionalized state as our normal condition. Saints, this represents a lack of understanding and trust in God. It is true that it is impossible for God to carry out His work with a people who are not one, but it is entirely possible for Him to bring about that oneness if each of us would submit our wills to His. We can be a people of one heart and one mind.

His desire is that we would be one. "*Now I beseech you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Do we desire this type of oneness? Do we hunger for it? We must find a way to function as the body of Christ, collectively discerning His will. We are the body, but He is the head; and the head rules the body. The head can only guide and signal the body when the proper connections are there to allow information to flow to and from the rest of the body. The head, through these connections, provides for the various members of the body to fulfill their function as well as work in concert with one another.

When we have made the proper preparation to gather together; when together we have sought His will prayerfully; when we have carefully submitted our understanding to the authority of scripture; when we have discerned the presence of His loving Spirit; when we have dealt justly one with another and listened to one another; when together we come to a common agreement and unity abounds; when we as a

people are of one heart and one mind on any particular matter; when we have gone through this process as a people and are able to agree and act upon His word—then we will know that we have collectively discerned God's will; then we will be endowed with power from on high—then we will be able to bear witness to the world that we are His People, **for His people hear and respond to His voice.**

"And they all cried with one voice, saying, Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; And also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things." (Mosiah 3:2-4)

In closing, consider Brother Curry's commission to each of us:

"Yet, the Eternal Father will neither compel anyone nor take away their agency. He can only endow those who behold a vision of what He can and would gladly do for the world, and who will discipline themselves, and prepare themselves for the coming day of endowment. How many there shall be must depend on how many hearts shall be inspired with a very great desire and faith, and on how many will become instruments in the Lord's hands in the inspring of this desire and faith. The answer is in your hands, My servants and My people. Yet be reminded that the adversary of all that is good is pushing the conflict. The day of opportunity is passing! Time will not wait! Oh, how can anyone turn away from this so great salvation the day of endowment shall bring?" (*The Endowment* by Earl R. Curry, p. 35)

BENEDICTION by George Mefferd

"Our heavenly Father, there are those who have come to this conference prepared to lead. There are those who have come with great anticipation. There are those who have come with doubt. But Father, I believe we all leave with a spirit of unity, a desire to serve.

"I thank You, Father, that we have been so richly blessed by Your Spirit and that You have prompted those who have taken leadership to prepare those things that are on their heart, that their experiences and things you prompted for them to share have so richly fed us.

"Father, this day we are also extremely grateful that you brought into being the Restoration, and for Joseph's willingness to accept his responsibility and

opportunity; and Father, we are grateful for our forefathers who so diligently put forth an effort to preserve this gospel. Father, it is even in the name of Jesus Christ that I pray, that we as a body will be able to do everything within our power to preserve this Gospel, and prepare ourselves that you can lead us in any direction that you wish us to go.

“Father, I thank you for this week. I pray that somehow our branches will recognize how important it is to reach beyond themselves, to become part of a body, to become unified for the accomplishing of your goals and purposes....Father, I thank You for this time, and I pray a blessing upon our gathering—and as those gathered travel back to their homes, that they will be richly motivated and not forget this week, but will do everything within their power to not only change their lives, but to change the lives of those in their branches—that they will reach out and witness to those who are still hungering and thirsting and seeking after truth. I pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.”

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