

It is the opinion of many who are wise and learned that woman's mission upon the earth is maternity, with its minor details, its accompanying cares and anxieties, and needful exigencies; that these fill the measure of her creation; and when this is done, she should with becoming matronly dignity, retire from the sphere of active life and gracefully welcome old age. ... That motherhood brings into a woman's life a richness, zest and tone that nothing else ever can I gladly grant you, but that her usefulness ends there, or that she has no other individual interests to serve I cannot so readily concede.

Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society President

*"Life Lessons." Women's Exponent, October 1, 1875, p.
70*

Words of Wisdom

A Collection of Quotes
for LDS Women

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Are women included in those who shall partake of such [celestial] glory? Most assuredly. As a matter of fact, in attaining the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom, the man cannot enter without the woman, neither can the woman enter without the man. The two are inseparable as husband and wife in eligibility for that highest degree of glory. If she lives worthy of it, hers will be a glory as celestial and eternal as his. Never doubt it. ... Only live to be worthy of that glory which is available to you as well as to your brothers.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Daughters of God." Ensign, November 1991

We believe that women are useful, not only to sweep houses, wipe dishes, make beds, and raise babies, but they should stand behind the counter, study law or physic, or become good bookkeepers and be able to do the business in any counting house, and all this to enlarge their sphere of usefulness for the benefit of society at large. In following these things they but answer the design of their creation

Brigham Young, Prophet
"Discourses of Brigham Young." 1941, p. 217

God will hold us accountable if we neglect His daughters

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Our Responsibility to Our Young Women." Ensign, September 1988

I believe in women. I desire to do all in my power to help elevate the condition of my people, especially women...to do those things that would advance women in moral and spiritual, as well as educational work and tend to the rolling on of the work of God upon the earth.

*Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society President
Diary, January 4, 1878. Cited in "Faith, Hope, and
Charity: Inspiration from the Lives of General Relief
Society Presidents." 2008.*

Just as certain men were foreordained from before the foundations of the world, so were certain women appointed to certain tasks. ... When we would measure loving loyalty in a human relationship, do we not speak of Ruth and Naomi even more than David and Jonathan? And no wonder God with His perfect regard for women is so insistent about our obligations to widows. A widow with her mite taught us how to tithe. An impoverished and starving widow with her hungry son taught us how to share, as she gave her meal and oil to Elijah. ... Does it not tell us much about the intrinsic intelligence of women to read of the crucifixion scene at Calvary, "And many women were there beholding afar off." (Matt. 27:55.) Their presence was a prayer; their lingering was like a litany. And who came first to the empty tomb of the risen Christ? Two women. Who was the first mortal to see the resurrected Savior? Mary of Magdala. Special spiritual sensitivity keeps the women of God hoping long after many others have ceased.

*Neal A. Maxwell, Apostle
"The Women of God." Ensign, May 1978*

Introduction

Throughout Relief Society's history we have had remarkable women leading and teaching us. Recently, General Relief Society President Julie Beck encouraged us to learn more about our history and get to know the words of women who came before us. To this end, we started searching for the voices of women, about women, and for women. Unfortunately, it can be hard to find their voices in Church curriculum and manuals, which inspired us to compile quotes on a variety of gospel subjects. By making these quotes accessible in this booklet, we can better follow our leaders and learn from our history.

In this booklet, you will find quotes that speak to our hearts the good news of the gospel. They uplift and encourage us on our sometimes difficult paths. We hope you will find the Spirit here as we have. This quote book is intended for private use. It can also be used to prepare talks, lessons and Family Home Evenings or in personal study.

We'd like to thank Galen Dara Smith for her beautiful cover art, "Sisters." We feel it embodies the love and sisterhood that we share in the Relief Society and that you will find in the pages of this booklet. We also thank the volunteers who responded to our Call to Action and contributed many of these quotes. Please continue to submit quotes for further editions to wordsofwisdom@ldswave.org.

Sincerely,

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Women and Women's Roles

Tremendous changes...have taken place in the social, economic, industrial, and educational life of most countries in the world since Relief Society was founded. And I don't think any change in the world has been more significant than the change in the status of women. At the time the Relief Society was founded, a woman's world was her home, her family, and perhaps a little community service. Today a woman's world is as broad as the universe. There's scarcely an area of human endeavor that a woman cannot enter if she has the will and preparation to do so.

Belle Smith Spafford, Relief Society President

"Relief Society: A Conversation with Belle S. Spafford."

Ensign, June 1974

Sisters, I wish I could place my hands on both sides of your faces, look deeply into your eyes, and impart to you a clear vision of your vital role as beloved daughters of God whose "lives have meaning, purpose, and direction." We are women who "increase our testimonies of Jesus Christ through prayer and scripture study," who "seek spiritual strength by following the promptings of the Holy Ghost." We "dedicate ourselves to strengthening marriages, families, and homes" and "find nobility in motherhood and joy in womanhood." We are women of the Relief Society organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society President "Steadfast and Immovable." Ensign, November 2001

For three-fourths of my life I felt threatened to the core because I hated to sew. Now, I can sew; if it is absolutely necessary, I will sew—but I hate it. Can you imagine my burden over the last twenty-five or thirty years, “faking it” in Relief Society sessions. ... I have ceased feeling guilty that sewing is not particularly rewarding to me. The point is, we simply cannot call ourselves Christian and continue to judge one another—or ourselves—so harshly. No mason jar of bing cherries is worth a confrontation that robs us of our compassion and our sisterhood.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith
in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

In our diversity and individuality, my prayer is that we will be united—united in seeking our specific, foreordained mission, united in asking...“How can I fulfill the measure of my creation? In my circumstances and with my challenges and my faith, where is my full realization of the godly image in which I was created?” With faith in God, his prophets, his church, and ourselves—with faith in our own divine creation—may we be peaceful and let go of our cares and troubles over so many things. May we believe—nothing doubting—in the light that shines, even in a dark place.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith
in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

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[L]et us be accepting and supportive as sisters. Let us trust the Lord, trust ourselves, and trust each other that we are trying to do the best we can. We need all the strength we can find for our daily trials. Let us not add our disapproval to a sister's burdens. And as we struggle with our own burdens, let us not diminish our strength by accepting the perhaps thoughtless judgments of others. Let our Relief Societies be supportive and sharing. We are all in the Relief Society boat, and it needs all of us to paddle just as hard as we can. Let us value everyone's contributions. Let us not exclude a sister, whatever her life choices and whatever her circumstances. Let us express trust that she used both study and prayer in making her decisions, and provide a supportive environment in which she can carry out those decisions, evaluate them for their success, and modify them if necessary. If change is necessary or desirable, it will be easier in a nurturing, supportive atmosphere.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Rowing Your Boat." Ensign, November 1994*

Such a circle of support has no end, because there is no end to the good works of righteous men and women who respect each other and who thrust in their sickles and reap, side by side, in the Lord's vineyard. If we are going to build the kingdom of God, we as men and women of God must build each other. There is no challenge—with activation, retention, families, or anything—that we can't solve when we counsel together in councils and help each other lift the load.

*Sheri L. Dew, Relief Society Presidency
"It is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone." Ensign,
November 2001*

Sometimes we get discouraged because the needs in the world around us seem so great and our resources seem so few. We think, "We're not doing enough. We can't do enough. Nobody could do enough." When we think like that, we focus on what is left undone, and we lose the joy that comes with service. I want to tell you that we don't need to compare ourselves to anyone else, either collectively or as individuals...We can do great good when we work as a united sisterhood, as long as we don't burden ourselves with unrealistic expectations that rob us of the joy of achievement.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p. 21*

Obviously the Lord has created us with different personalities, as well as differing degrees of energy, interest, health, talent, and opportunity. So long as we are committed to righteousness and living a life of faithful devotion, we should celebrate these divine differences, knowing they are a gift from God. We must not feel so frightened, so threatened and insecure; we must not need to find exact replicas of ourselves in order to feel validated as women of worth. There are many things over which we can be divided, but one thing is needful for our unity—the empathy and compassion of the living Son of God.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

Agency, Progression and Growth

Every one of us has privileges and blessings, and every one of us has fears and trials. It seems bold to say, but common sense suggests that never before in the history of the world have women, including LDS women, been faced with greater complexity in their concerns. I am very appreciative of the added awareness that the women's movement has given to a gospel principle we have had since Mother Eve and before—that of agency, the right to choose.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency "One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

Personal decision making is one of the sources of the growth we are meant to experience in mortality. Persons who try to shift all decision making to the Lord and plead for revelation in every choice will soon find circumstances where they pray for guidance and don't receive it. ... We should study things out in our minds, using the reasoning powers our Creator has placed within us. Then we should pray for guidance and act upon it if we receive it, and upon our own best judgment if we do not.

*Dallin H. Oaks, Apostle
"Our Strength Can Become Our Downfall." Fireside of BYU Stakes, 7 June 1992, pp. 3–4*

[Joseph Smith] said he did not care how fast we run in the path of virtue. Resist evil, and there is no danger; God, men, and angels will not condemn those that resist everything that is evil, and devils cannot; as well might the devil seek to dethrone Jehovah, as overthrow an innocent soul that resists everything which is evil.

Eliza R. Snow, Relief Society President
"Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith." 2007, p. 214

When we are honest in all things, big and small, we experience peace of mind and a clear conscience. Our relationships are enriched because they are based on trust. And the greatest blessing that comes from being honest is that we are able to have the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Ann M. Dibb, Young Women Presidency
"I Believe in Being Honest and True." Ensign, May 2011

Each individual is entitled to determine the ultimate destiny of his or her life. We can choose to use the powers within to have a happy life of continual growth and development that leads to eternal progression, or we can choose to follow the crowd of other people struggling to a top that leads to nowhere.

Barbara B. Smith, Relief Society President
"The Powers within Us." Ensign, February 1983

It is a new time, it is a change of direction, it is a time to heal, a time to bond women to women and women to men. We can have unity in diversity and diversity in unity. We don't have to be like one another to enjoy sisterhood. One of the important things we must do is to help the daughters of God know who they are and that they have had an important part in building His kingdom throughout all generations of time. Another of the most important things we can do is to learn to be accepting of one another and overcome judging one another, to learn to love each other and build each other more. That's what women are traditionally so good at doing. I recognize that we are all imperfect, but we can be there to help each other and to have understanding. If we don't do that, we're not going to be ready for His coming. We won't be able to tolerate His coming until we can learn some of those kinds of things. We have a lot of work to do.

Barbara W. Winder, Relief Society President
"Faith, Hope, and Charity: Inspiration from the Lives of General Relief Society Presidents." 2008.

Unity of purpose, thought, and feeling are exalting qualities. When we can put aside our differences and value each others' strengths, great things happen. The Prophet Joseph Smith admonished, "Don't be limited in your views with regard to your neighbor's virtue. ... You must enlarge your souls towards each other." Such generosity of spirit invites greater unity.

Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society President
"Developing Inner Strength." Ensign, May 2002

Amidst the danger, our love waxes cold, and we may seek a defense in the very weapons that threaten us. Worse yet, we may be turned by fear to looking for protection from one another rather than keeping our promise to be a light and a protection for one another... He said, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee" (Matt. 18:8). He was not suggesting our mutilation, but rather showing his awareness of how painful clearing ourselves of such offenses could be.

*Aileen H. Clyde, Relief Society Presidency
"Covenant of Love." Ensign, May 1995*

I am not typical of the ideal of Latter-day Saint womanhood. For example, I teach at a Catholic girls' school; I was single until I was thirty-eight years old; I have no children of my own. ... But paradoxically, I serve an important purpose by not fitting the traditional image. It would be difficult for someone in my stake to look me in the eye and say, "I just don't think I fit the Relief Society mold!" I'm a daily reminder to our stake, for the time I'm serving in my present calling [as stake Relief Society president], that the umbrella of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is large and welcoming. It is not made to shelter one kind of woman only. I may lack some of the usual powers, but I may have some that are unique to me. There's room for all of us, and what happiness we can find as we use our individual powers to teach, bless, and strengthen one another!

*Karen Lynn Davidson
1990 Women's Conference Address in "Women and the Power Within."*

We must have the courage to be imperfect while striving for perfection.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

Charity

Some of our greatest learning experiences will come as we give compassionately of ourselves. We may forget to be compassionate, but God never will. It is important for us to remember that this is a significant part of our human experience. In fact, it seems to be that, of all our learning, that which we obtain by way of giving compassionately is the most significant learning we ever do. ... The work of compassion in Relief Society has been both consistent and adaptable over the years. As new needs arise among our people, the work of the Relief Society is modified to meet those needs. So today, as a worldwide organization, our purpose exists as it always has: to encourage us as women in the compassionate work characterized by the Prophet Joseph Smith as “according to your natures.”

Barbara B. Smith, Relief Society President
“1978 BYU Devotional Speeches of the Year,” p. 17

The work of Relief Society is focused on the pure and simple part of the gospel, to develop faith and bear testimony; to render compassionate service as we care for the needy; to strengthen our families here and in eternity; and to work with our “hearts knit together in unity and love one towards another.” (Mosiah 18:21.)

Barbara W. Winder, Relief Society President
“Instruments to Accomplish His Purposes.” Ensign, May 1990

... one of the most unfortunate side effects we have faced in this matter of agency is that, because of the increasing diversity of life-styles for women of today, we seem even more uncertain and less secure with each other. We are not getting closer, but further away from that sense of community and sisterhood that has sustained us and given us strength for generations. There seems to be an increase in our competitiveness and a decrease in our generosity with one another. Those who have the time and energy to can their fruit and vegetables develop a skill that will serve them well in time of need—and in our uncertain economy, that could be almost any time. But they shouldn’t look down their noses at those who buy their peaches or who don’t like zucchini in any of the thirty-five ways there are to disguise it, or who have simply made a conscious choice to use their time and energy in some other purposeful way.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
“One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ.” Ensign, October 1987

No marriage or family, no ward or stake is likely to reach its full potential until husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, men and women work together in unity of purpose, respecting and relying upon each other's strengths.

Sheri L. Dew, Relief Society Presidency
“It is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone.” Ensign, November 2001

Unity

[A]ll of us are Eve's daughters, whether we are married or single, maternal or barren. We are created in the image of the Gods to become gods and goddesses. And we can provide something of that divine pattern, that maternal prototype, for each other and for those who come after us. Whatever our circumstance, we can reach out, touch, hold, lift, and nurture—but we cannot do it in isolation. We need a community of sisters stilling the soul and binding the wounds of fragmentation.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

I'm grateful that our Father in Heaven instructs us to prove our worthiness not by living as hermits in holy isolation but by forming communities through our branches, wards, stakes, Relief Society organization. In this way, our individual powers can supplement the powers that may be missing in someone else. ... Sometimes in our ward the events on a typical Sunday are not perfectly predictable, but I realized long ago that efficiency is not usually the highest priority of our Father in Heaven.

Karen Lynn Davidson
1990 Women's Conference Address in "Women and the Power Within."

In exercising charity, we come to know a sister's heart. When we know a sister's heart, we are different. We won't judge her. We will simply love her. I invite you to not only love each other more but love each other better. As we do this we will come to know with a surety that "charity never faileth."

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"Choosing Charity: That Good Part." Ensign, November 2003

This great trust which the Prophet Joseph Smith gave to women eighty years ago, has been a great blessing, not only to the Relief Society women but to the communities in which they have lived. Through our organization the gospel has been preached, the needy have been looked after, the sick have been comforted, the downhearted have been cheered, a message of love and of blessing has ever emanated from Relief Society workers. ... The greatest thing in the world is love. And if we keep that always in our hearts, and give it as a message to those about us, we will be blessed and will be instruments in blessing those with whom we associate.

Clarissa Smith Williams, Relief Society President
Relief Society Magazine, June 1922, p. 312

We must cherish one another, watch over one another, comfort one another and gain instruction that we may all sit down in heaven together.

Lucy Mack Smith
Relief Society Minutes, 24 March 1842

Father, Mother, help me piece together the contradictions of my life:

White cotton, red satin, brown polka dot; torn Sunday dress, Navajo rug, frayed baby blanket.

Make me insistent on every lonely shred, willing to sacrifice no one.

Where there is no pattern, God, give me courage to organize a fearsome beauty.

Where there is unraveling, let me draw broad blanket stitches of sturdy blue yarn.

Mother, Father, give me vision.

Give me strength to work hours past my daughters' bedtime.

Give me an incandescent all-night garage with a quorum of thimble-thumbed grandmothers sitting on borrowed folding chairs.

We will gather all the lost scraps and stitch them together:

A quilt big enough to warm all our generations: all the lost, found, rich, poor, good, bad, in, out, old, new, country, city, dusty, shiny ones;

A quilt big enough to cover all the alfalfa fields in the Great Basin.

Bigger. We are piecing together a quilt with no edges.

God, make me brave enough to love my people.

How wonderful it is to have a people to love.

Joanna Brooks

"Invocation/Benediction." Exponent II, Winter 2010, Vol. 30, Issue 3

No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted.

It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God...and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven.

Orson F. Whitney, Apostle

"Faith Precedes the Miracle." Spencer W. Kimball, p. 98

That we may finish gloriously, that we may focus our energies on those things of first importance, and that we may yet meet on the other side of the veil and embrace each other with the triumphant knowledge that we have remained steadfast and immovable is my hope and prayer for you, dear sisters.

Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society President

"Steadfast and Immovable." Ensign, November 2001

Discouragement, sorrow, pain, and grief may beset us and try us. But my beloved sisters in the gospel, while it is too late to turn back, we can stand firm and steadfast and leave footprints on the hearts of those whose lives we touch. We can smile at the rage of the tempest and ride triumphantly across the boisterous ocean of circumstance.

*Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society President
"Steadfast and Immovable." Ensign, November 2001*

How did Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Hannah feel as they bore the stigma of being barren, when in those days it was interpreted as a sign of God's displeasure? How did Lehi and Sariah feel as they fled from their home and friends in Jerusalem to live in the wilderness? ... In each of these cases as we observe the lives of men and women in scripture, it is easy to see that people can triumph over adversity. But in our own everyday lives, it is often difficult to see beyond our own frustrations, to remain focused, or to see the end from the beginning.

Janet G. Lee. "Choices and Challenges." Ensign, February 1995

Adversity is frequently a call to do something great with our lives.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p. 154*

The year 1842 was extremely difficult for the Prophet Joseph Smith. Former friends had turned on him. Other enemies wanted to abduct him from Nauvoo and blunt the growth of the Church. That same year he organized the Relief Society to care for the poor and needy and "to save souls." President J. Reuben Clark Jr. observed that amidst these trials, Joseph Smith "turned to the sisters for the consolation, for the uplift of which he stood in such sad need at that time." This is a moving and humbling thought: a prophet of God seeking the solace of his sisters—women to whom he had given the charge "charity never faileth." To me this has echoes of those women who mourned with the Savior on Golgotha.

*Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"How Has Relief Society Blessed Your Life?" Ensign,
November 2004*

Families are not an end, but a means to an end, which is the transcendent principle of love: As mothers, as fathers. ... [w]e may set aside our interests time and again; we may practice watching the interests of others. But if that sacrificial love starts with our children, and stops there, we will have lost our opportunity to fulfill Christ's commandment, and so have everything that He has promised. Christ's commandment is that we love, not just our children, but one another! Having loved our own, we now can love the world. Now we rise to the task for which parenting prepared us.

*Susan Harriss
"More Life, More Life" in The Book of Women's Sermons,
p. 138*

Satan has enticed all humanity to engage almost all of their energies in the pursuit of romantic love or thing-love or excessive self-love. In so doing, we forget that appropriate self-love and self-esteem are the promised reward for putting others first. "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." (Luke 17:33.)

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

I've learned that the best way to reclaim charity is to encumber myself and simply love and serve the Lord. How do we do that? We start each day kneeling in prayer to our Father in Heaven, we hear His words through daily scripture study, and we follow the guidance we receive. We put Christ first, restoring charity's circular love. "We love him, because he first loved us." This is the reciprocating cycle of charity. Sisters, "charity never faileth."

Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"Choosing Charity: That Good Part." Ensign, November 2003

Adversity is an important part of the preparation for at least three reasons. One, God knows whom he can trust and who, like Job, will stand firm and love him unconditionally. Second, adversity well handled can increase our understanding and compassion. And we will be more effective in helping others when we've had a few challenges of our own. We just may need to be an answer to somebody else's prayer. And third, we draw closer to our Heavenly Father when we are in deep need. Our prayers of thanksgiving and joy of course should be part, and are a part, of our worship, but I guess there isn't anybody here who won't admit that we pray more fervently when we're under the press of problems. Attitude in adversity turns hopeless to hopeful.

Elaine A. Cannon, Young Women General President
"Reach for Joy." Ensign, May 1982

As we pass through the seasons of adversity in our lives, when the rains have lasted so long that the fountains of the deep seem to be broken up and the entire world as we know it is drowning in its despairing depths, may we remember that our task is to do our duty every day with humility and love and courage. May we remain focused on the present moment, acknowledging the sorrow that it may bring but also finding the joy. Let's seize every opportunity we have to lighten up and to see our situation truly, in the light of Christ who is the light of the world.

Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p. 168

Trials and Adversity

I don't believe that faith means God will remove all tragedies from our path or solve all of our problems for us. I believe it means that he will be with us, suffering with us and grieving with us and working with us as we deal with our own tragedies and work our way through our problems.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p.119*

Life is full of frustrations and challenges, and often we feel inadequate to deal with them. It is important that we recognize where help lies. A courageous divorced sister with the responsibility of raising six children wrote, "Gradually I am coming to realize that God is as close or closer to us when we don't feel good as when we do. ... He relates to each of us intimately, personally, and with unvarying attention. We only need to ask. He is unchanging, eternal, and immovable in His tenderness, His forgiveness, His absolute love. ... We can call on Him for guidance, comfort, and support. We can feel His arms about us, His smiling eyes encouraging us, at any moment, no matter how stupid or inept or impatient or selfish we may have been." (Frances Warden, Single Sheet, Utah Valley Single Adults, Jan. 1987.) He will be there.

*Barbara W. Winder, Relief Society President
"No Joy without the Struggle." Ensign, June 1988*

Confidence and Power

Let woman speak for herself; she has the right of freedom of speech. Women are too slow in moving forward, afraid of criticism, of being called unwomanly, of being thought masculine. What of it? If men are so much superior to women, the nearer we come up to the manly standard the higher we elevate ourselves.

*Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society President
Woman's Exponent, 1875*

The sisters and brothers who find the power within to perform amazing feats of courage, ingenuity, and faith have usually started out as ordinary people, probably unaware of their power until a challenge brought it forth. Each of us is entitled to the comfort and pride of knowing we have those powers within.

*Karen Lynn Davidson, 1990 Women's Conference
Address in "Women and the Power Within."*

In order "to grow in wisdom and knowledge" and to become like God, who is omnipotent, all-powerful, we are told that each of us—man and woman—must grow in power.

*Rex E. Lee, BYU President
1990 Women's Conference Address in "Women and the Power Within."*

Sisters, we're not a social club, though deep friendships form from our sisterhood. We are not, as I heard a young woman say, "the old women who meet on Sunday." We have power when we use it: power given to us through God to accomplish His purposes. We are the world's largest women's organization. As we reach into our communities with the knowledge and inspiration the Lord has granted us, we can help lead a world that needs our guidance. It's what the Prophet Joseph expected; it's what President Hinckley expects of us today.

*Kathleen H. Hughes, Relief Society Presidency
"In Covenant with Him." Ensign, November 2003*

The object of the Society ... [is] to seek out and relieve the distressed—that each member should be ambitious to do good.

*Emma Smith, Relief Society President
Relief Society Minutes, 17 March 1842*

It is [my] strongest desire that our young women of today be made to comprehend the work of the early members who, without the facilities of the present time, comforted the sad and distressed, visited the widow and fatherless, and were like ministering angels going hither and thither on their errands of mercy and compassion. The Lord must have been very near to the women at that early period and braced them up for the new duty which had been given them of such great value to humanity.

*Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society President
Relief Society Bulletin, May 1914, p. 3.*

When we united serve each other and all of our Father's children, we can be instruments in the hands of God, not only to relieve physical suffering but, more importantly, to succor those who are in need spiritually.

*Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society President
"We Are Instruments in the Hands of God." Ensign,
November 2000*

I am convinced that it were better to be faithful and enduring to the end showing worthiness in overmastering self and upholding the standard of truth, than to rest in apathy and ease, forgetful of God and unmindful of the weak, the weary and desolate.

*Bathsheba W. Smith, Relief Society President
Woman's Exponent, January 1906, p. 1.*

We have many talented women among us, and we wish their help in the matter. ... You will find that the sisters will be the mainspring of the movement. ... Let a sister appeal for the relief of the suffering and poverty, and she is almost sure to be successful. If you take this course you will relieve the wants of the poor.

*Brigham Young, Prophet
"Journal of Discourses 12." December 8, 1867*

Let your first business be to perform your duties at home. Inasmuch as you are wise stewards, you will find time for social duties, because these are incumbent upon us as daughters and mothers in Zion. By seeking to perform every duty, you will find that your capacity will increase, and you will be astonished at what you can accomplish.

*Eliza R. Snow, Relief Society President
"The Nauvoo Generation." Ensign, December 1977*

Covenants

Covenants—or binding promises between us and Heavenly Father—are essential for our eternal progression. Step-by-step, He tutors us to become like Him by enlisting us in His work. At baptism we covenant to love Him with all our hearts and love our sisters and brothers as ourselves. In the temple we further covenant to be obedient, selfless, faithful, honorable, charitable. We covenant to make sacrifices and consecrate all that we have. Forged through priesthood authority, our kept covenants bring blessings to fill our cups to overflowing. How often do you reflect that your covenants reach beyond mortality and connect you to the Divine? Making covenants is the expression of a willing heart; keeping covenants, the expression of a faithful heart.

*Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"With Holiness of Heart." Ensign, November 2002*

Covenants not only coax us out of comfort zones and into new growth but lead others to do the same. Jesus said, "The works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do." His covenant keeping encourages ours.

*Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"With Holiness of Heart." Ensign, November 2002*

Every man and woman who is willing to serve the Lord and can qualify for a temple recommend makes covenants of obedience and sacrifice. Each is endowed "with power from on high."

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society President

"An Outpouring of Blessings." Ensign, May 2006

Covenants are deceptively simple, clear symbols that we can all grasp intellectually with ease. But only as we live with them and return to them often for meaning in the joyous and sorrowful passages of our lives do we begin to understand how deep their roots go. ... The many levels on which we can understand our covenants suggests two things to me. First, we cannot judge other people. We do not know where they are in their spiritual journey. There may be parts of the gospel that are a great joy and strength to us but that seem mysterious and uncertain to someone else who is involved in learning about other aspects of the gospel. And second, all experience is for our good because we learn in no other way.

Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency

"Aloha." 1995, p. 164-165

Service and Callings

Surely God is well balanced, so perhaps we are just that much closer to Him when we are.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency

"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

I look over the topics for this conference—relationships with aging parents, self-esteem for children, providing aid for abuse victims, and dimensions of service. ... These are not women's issues. They are people's issues. Women are making gigantic efforts to find solutions to these concerns, but they should not be expected to do it alone.

Rex E. Lee, BYU President

1990 Women's Conference Address in "Women and the Power Within."

Prevention of poverty, disease, and crime is much better and much cheaper than relief or cure. ... The suggestive steps in family welfare are relief of existing distress, prevention of new distress, and the raising of human life to its highest level.

Amy Brown Lyman, Relief Society President

"Amy Brown Lyman, In Retrospect: Autobiography of Amy Brown Lyman." 1945, p. 18.

the glory of God is intelligence, then learning, especially learning from the scriptures, stretches us toward him.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

The manuals and the Ensign and other commentaries and sermons and essays are meaningful and perceptive; but if we read only them and don't study the scriptures for ourselves, we still have only a secondhand relationship with the scriptures.

Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p. 83

Diversity

Let us be sensitive to the unchanging and powerful core principles of the gospel. Let us understand that they matter most. Let us build firm foundations on these principles. Then when the rains fall and the floods come, our house will be "founded upon a rock" and it will not fall (Matt. 7:25). Then, building on that firm foundation, let us rejoice with each other, listen to each other, learn from each other, and help each other apply those principles as we deal with our different circumstances, different cultures, different generations, and different geographies. For six years now, I have been listening to the Relief Society women of the Church. I have learned from all of them. ... Not many of these women thought they were giving me a gift. Most of them thought they were asking for help. But all of them blessed me as I listened and learned from them.

Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Baskets and Bottles." Ensign, May 1996

The perspective I have gained over these many years of listening to the worries of women is that no one woman or group of women—single, married, divorced, widowed, homemakers, or professionals—have cornered the market on concerns. There seem to be plenty of challenges to go around. But, I hasten to add, there are marvelous blessings as well.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

Reasons to stay: the value of diversity: If you experience the pain of exclusion at church from someone who is frightened at your difference, please don't leave [or] become inactive. You may think you are voting with your feet, that you are making a statement by leaving. [Some may] see your diversity as a problem to be fixed, as a flaw to be corrected or erased. If you are gone, they don't have to deal with you anymore. I want you to know that your diversity is a more valuable statement.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Cat's Cradle." 1993.*

The experiences of women in Nauvoo and in every Relief Society throughout the Church prove that women individually can be a great force. Alma described the value of our contribution, stating, "By small and simple things are great things brought to pass." (Alma 37:6) Women's lives are full of small and simple things. ... Small and simple things that define relationships and build testimonies. Small and simple things that grow strong men and women. ... We are part of a grand whole. We need each other to make our sisterhood complete. When we reach out to clasp the hands of our sisters, we reach to every continent, for we are of every nation. We are bonded as we try to understand what the Lord has to say to us, what He will make of us. We speak in different tongues, yet we are a family who can still be of one heart. We work, play, give birth, nurture, dream dreams; we cry, pray, laugh, sometimes clap for joy, and find that mortality teaches us our need for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Elaine S. Jack, Relief Society President
"Charity Never Faileth." Ensign, May 1992*

Scriptures

[A]s you become more and more familiar with the truths of the scriptures, you will be more and more effective in keeping the second great commandment, to love your neighbor as yourself. Become scholars of the scriptures—not to put others down, but to lift them up! After all, who has any greater need to "treasure up" the truths of the gospel (on which they may call in their moments of need) than do women and mothers who do so much nurturing and teaching?

*Spencer W. Kimball, Prophet
"The Role of Righteous Women." Ensign, November 1979*

There have been challenges in my life that would have completely destroyed me had I not had the scriptures both on my bed stand and in my purse so that I could partake of them day and night at a moment's notice. Meeting God in scripture has been like a divine intravenous feeding for me—a celestial IV that my son once described as an angelical cord.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

We must turn to the scriptures for God's long-recorded teachings about our souls. We must learn. Surely every woman in this church is under divine obligation to learn and grow and develop. We are God's diverse array of unburnished talents, and we must not bury these gifts or hide our light. If

President Spencer W. Kimball lamented that there was a power in Relief Society that had not “yet been fully exercised to ... build the Kingdom of God”

Spencer W. Kimball, Prophet
"Relief Society—Its Promise and Potential." Ensign,
March 1976

All of us women have an image of the ideal family—a marriage in the temple to an active priesthood holder, and children who are obedient and faithful. But President Ezra Taft Benson has pointed out that only 14 percent of American households in 1980 match the traditional image of a family—working husband, full-time mother with children still in the home. Reliable statistics indicate that only one out of five LDS families in the United States has a husband and wife married in the temple with children in their home.

As Elder M. Russell Ballard has already reminded us, there is great diversity in LDS homes. But all of these homes can be righteous homes where individuals love each other, love the Lord, and strengthen each other.

Let me give you an example. Here are two quilts. Both are handmade, beautiful, and delightful to snuggle down in or wrap around a grandchild. Now look at this quilt. It's a Hawaiian quilt with a strong, predictable pattern. We can look at half of the quilt and predict what the other half looks like. Sometimes our lives seem patterned, predictable in happy ways, in order.

Now look at this second quilt. This style is called a crazy quilt. Some pieces are the same color, but no two pieces are the same size. They're odd shapes. They come together at odd angles. This is an unpredictable quilt. Sometimes our lives are unpredictable, unpatterned, not neat or well-ordered.

Well, there's not one right way to be a quilt as long as the pieces are stitched together firmly. Both of these quilts will keep us warm and cozy. Both are beautiful and made with love. There's not just one right way to be a Mormon woman,

either, as long as we are firmly grounded in faith in the Savior, make and keep covenants, live the commandments, and work together in charity.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Strength in the Savior." Ensign, November 1993*

Truly, we may each be an instrument in the hands of God. Happily, we need not all be the same kind of instrument. Just as the instruments in an orchestra differ in size, shape, and sound, we too are different from one another. We have different talents and inclinations, but just as the French horn cannot duplicate the sound of the piccolo, neither is it necessary for us to all serve the Lord in the same way. Sister Eliza R. Snow said that "there is no sister so isolated and her sphere so narrow but what she can do a great deal towards establishing the Kingdom of God upon the earth" (Woman's Exponent, 15 Sept. 1873, 62; emphasis added). Our privilege and our responsibility as daughters of God and as sisters of Relief Society, then, is to become the most effective instruments we can be.

*Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society President
"We Are Instruments in the Hands of God." Ensign,
November 2000*

The Prophet Joseph, who organized the Relief Society in 1842, made it clear that the purpose of this divinely inspired organization was to not only "relieve the poor, but to save souls" (History of the Church, 5:25). Since its earliest days Relief Society has done incalculable good. The Relief Society provided the first carload of flour that reached survivors of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and later provided wheat to the United States government during World Wars I and II. Last year our sisters donated more than 140,000 quilts to help those in distress. We have championed motherhood and the family, waged war against illiteracy, and rendered untold hours of service throughout the world.

*Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society President
"We Are Instruments in the Hands of God." Ensign,
November 2000*

The history of Relief Society teaches us that our Heavenly Father knows His daughters. He loves them, He has given them specific responsibilities, and He has spoken to and guided them during their mortal missions. Additionally, the history of Relief Society elevates and validates the standing of women and demonstrates how they work in companionship with faithful priesthood leaders.... The history of Relief Society is a Spirit-filled story of strong, faithful, purposeful women

*Julie B. Beck, Relief Society President
"Daughters in My Kingdom: the History and Work of
Relief Society." Ensign, November 2010*

Relief Society is only on the threshold of its divine mission.

*Belle Smith Spafford, Relief Society President
History of Relief Society. 1966, p. 140*

[In the late 19th century] under the leadership of women of great vision and capacity, the Relief Society took the lead in starting charitable services which did not exist on the frontier for those in need. They created a small hospital. They supported women in going to the East to get medical training to staff it. That was the beginning of one of the great hospital systems in the United States. They began programs which became over the years the worldwide LDS Family Services programs. They created a grain storage system so effective that they could respond to a request for help from the federal government in a time of war and crisis. They began what became the Primary and what became the organization for young women in the Church. They created their own magazine for women. They became one of the largest organizations for women in the world. They were also in the leadership of organizations for women in the United States. The Relief Society was at the heart of the beginning of the Church's power to give humanitarian aid across the world. Leaders of nations, when they visit Utah, express awe and admiration for what the Church is doing for the poor and the victims of war and natural disaster across the world. Those remarkable gifts to the children of God are part of the enduring legacy of Relief Society.

*Henry B. Eyring, Apostle
"The Enduring Legacy of Relief Society." Ensign,
November 2009*

Obviously the Lord has created us with different personalities, as well as differing degrees of energy, interest, health, talent, and opportunity. So long as we are committed to righteousness and living a life of faithful devotion, we should celebrate these divine differences, knowing they are a gift from God. We must not feel so frightened; we must not be so threatened and insecure; we must not need to find exact replicas of ourselves in order to feel validated as women of worth. There are many things over which we can be divided, but one thing is needful for our unity – the empathy and compassion of the living Son of God.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

Again, look around the room you are in. Do you see women of different ages, races, or different backgrounds in the Church? Of different educational, marital, and professional experiences? Women with children? Women without children? Women of vigorous health and those who are limited by chronic illness or handicaps? Rejoice in the diversity of our sisterhood! It is the diversity of colors in a spectrum that makes a rainbow. It is the diversity in our circumstances that gives us compassionate hearts. It is the diversity of our spiritual gifts that benefits the Church.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Rejoice in Every Good Thing." Ensign, November 1991*

I was married in 1963, the very year Betty Friedan published her society-shaking book, *The Feminine Mystique*, so as an adult woman I can only look back with childhood memories of the gentler 1940s and 50s. But it must have been much more comfortable to have a life-style already prepared for you, and neighbors on either side whose lives gave you role models for your own. However, it must have been even that much more painful for those who, through no fault of their own, were single then, or had to work, or struggled with a broken family.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency

"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

Relief Society

At the marriage of each of our daughters and granddaughters, my wife has presented a special gift. It is not a vacuum cleaner or dishes or anything utilitarian. It is a seven-generation family chart of her maternal line, beautifully framed. It is made up of photographs of her maternal great-great-grandmother, of her great-grandmother, of her grandmother, her mother, herself, her daughter, and her newly married granddaughter.

Every woman in that picture for seven generations has been a Relief Society worker. This beautiful family history chart becomes an ever-present reminder to the younger ones of this generation of the great responsibility they carry, of the great obligation they have to move forward this work in the tradition of their mothers and grandmothers in service in the Relief Society.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet

"Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley, Volume 1: 1995-1999" 2005, p. 230

Although our records are well kept, there is no human power which can give an account of the deeds of loving kindness performed by our Relief Society members.

Louise Yates Robison, Relief Society President
Relief Society Magazine. March 1931, p. 143.

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

Joel 2:28-29

Divine Nature

Often we fail to consider the glorious possibility within our own souls. We need to remember that divine promise, "The Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21.) Perhaps we forget that the kingdom of God is within us because too much attention is given to this outer shell, this human body of ours, and the frail, too-flimsy world in which it moves.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

We must be patient with ourselves as we overcome weaknesses, and we must remember to rejoice over all that is good in us. This will strengthen our inner selves and leave us less dependent on outward acclaim. When our souls pay less attention to public praise, they then also care very little about public disapproval. Competition and jealousy and envy now begin to have no meaning. Just imagine the powerful spirit that would exist in our female society if we finally arrived at the point where, like our Savior, our real desire was to be counted as the least among our sisters. The rewards here are of such profound strength and quiet triumph of faith that we are carried into an even brighter sphere.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

... as I attended the endowment session, I asked myself if I were the Lord and could give my children on earth only a simplified but powerfully symbolic example of their roles and missions, how much would I give and where would I start? I listened to every word. I watched for patterns and prototypes. I quote to you from Abraham 4:27 [Abr. 4:27]: "So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female, to form they them." They formed male and they formed female—in the image of the Gods, in their own image.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

We can become so sidetracked in our compulsive search for identity and self-esteem that we really believe it can be found in having perfect figures or academic degrees or professional status or even absolute motherly success. Yet, in so searching externally, we can be torn from our true internal, eternal selves. We often worry so much about pleasing and performing for others that we lose our uniqueness—that full and relaxed acceptance of one's self as a person of worth and individuality. We become so frightened and insecure that we cannot be generous toward the diversity and individuality, and yes, problems, of our neighbors.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

My mother...was a woman of great faith; because of her faith and prayers and a miraculous healing, I have sight in my left eye today. Father was out of town. I severely burned the pupil of my eye with a hot metal lid lifter from our wood-burning stove. Mother exercised her faith and prayed fervently to Heavenly Father as she held me lovingly in her arms. Her prayers were heard and my eye was healed. I am very grateful to have been raised in a loving home by goodly parents.

*Eran A. Call, Quorum of the Seventy
"The Home: A Refuge and Sanctuary." Ensign, November 1997*

We are women now, not children, and we are expected to pray with maturity. The words most often used to describe urgent, prayerful labor are wrestle, plead, cry, and hunger. In some sense, prayer may be the hardest work we ever will engage in, and perhaps it should be. It is pivotal protection against becoming so involved with worldly possessions and honors and status that we no longer desire to undertake the search for our soul.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

We each have to say to ourselves, What will I create of my life? My time? My future? First, go where the Spirit directs. Be still and listen. Your Heavenly Father will guide you as you draw near to Him. Immerse yourself in the holy word of the prophets, both ancient and modern, and the Spirit will speak to you. Be patient, ask in faith, and you will receive guidance in your creative efforts. Second, don't be paralyzed from fear of making mistakes. Thrust your hands into the clay of your lives and begin. I love how Rebekkah of old responded to Abraham's servant who came in search of a wife for Isaac. Her answer was simple and direct, "I will go," she said. ... Third, support others along the way. Every person on this earth is unique. We all have varied interests, abilities, and skills. We are each at different levels physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Finally, rejoice. Creation isn't drudgery. Creation flows from love. When we do what we love, we rejoice along the way.

*Mary Ellen Smoot, Relief Society President
"We Are Creators." Ensign, May 2000*

Although the Lord has promised to grant our righteous desires, I recently learned to look at prayer in a new way. "The miracle of prayer does not reside in the ability to manipulate situations and events." Rather, the miracle is that we have a relationship with God and have the knowledge that He is there, that He loves us and desires to bless us.

*Mary Jane Woodger, Professor at BYU
"What I Have Learned About Mighty Prayer." Ensign,
December 2006*

You do have a divine purpose, indeed you do. There is that same element of divinity in you and your sisters as there is in your brothers. All of us are here as part of a divine plan made by a loving Father who is concerned with our immortality and eternal life. The mortal sphere in which we live is preparatory to that which will follow when we return to dwell with God our Father, provided we live worthy of that privilege.

*Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Daughters of God." Ensign, November 1991*

I believe we can find our steady footing and stilling of the soul by turning away from physical preoccupations, superwoman accomplishments, and endless popularity contests, and returning instead to the wholeness of our soul, that unity in our very being that balances the demanding and inevitable diversity of life.

*Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith
in Christ." Ensign, October 1987*

Equality

Strong and able women today fill responsible posts in industry, government, education, and the professions. ... It is wonderful to witness this great renaissance. I think it will continue to grow for the blessing of people everywhere. The Church has been in the forefront in training the daughters of Zion and in giving them responsibility. ... There are tremendous responsibilities for women in the Church as well as in the community consistent with and in total harmony with marriage, motherhood, and the rearing of good and able children.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet

"Our Responsibility to Our Young Women." Ensign, September 1988

You ask whether men are more important than women. I am going to turn that question back to you. Would any of us be here, either men or women, without the other? The scripture states that God created man in His own image, male and female created He them. He commanded them together to multiply and replenish the earth. Each is a creation of the Almighty, mutually dependent and equally necessary for the continuation of the race. Every new generation in the history of mankind is a testimony of the necessity for both man and woman.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet

"Daughters of God." Ensign, November 1991

When I was a little girl, I often experienced serious illness. My father was always willing and worthy to use the priesthood power he held to bless me. But I have also felt that my mother's special gifts contributed to my healing. She was truly gifted in her ability to minister to my needs and help me get well. Her great faith that the Lord would lead her to answers about medical treatment was a comfort to me. How blessed I was to have two parents who lovingly used their spiritual gifts.

Julie B. Beck, Relief Society President

"An Outpouring of Blessings." Ensign, May 2006

... These signs, such as healing the sick, casting out devils, etc., should follow all that believe, whether male or female. [Joseph Smith] asked the Society if they could not see by this sweeping promise, that wherein they are ordained, if it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority, which is conferred on them; and if the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues, and let everything roll on."

Joseph Smith, Prophet

"Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith." 1976, p. 224

And now, he imparteth his word by angels unto men, yea, not only men but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned.

Alma 32:23

Prayer, Spiritual Gifts and Revelation

It is disturbing that so many, especially women, have self-doubts and question their ability to succeed. Addressing female students studying math, science, and engineering in March 2005, BYU president Elder Cecil O. Samuelson Jr. of the Seventy said: "One of your professors has commented to me ... that some of you have less confidence in your abilities and prospects than do your male peers, even when the evidence may suggest that this is not justified. You do need to recognize your talents, skills, aptitudes, and strengths and not be confused about the gifts that God has given you.

Dallin H. and Kristen M. Oaks
"Learning and Latter-day Saints." Liahona, April 2009

I wonder if you sisters can fully appreciate the innate gifts, blessings, and endowments you have simply because you are daughters of God. It is a mistake for women to think that life begins only with marriage. A woman can and must have an identity and feel useful, valued, and needed whether she is single or married. She must feel that she can do something for someone else that no one else ever born can do.

James E. Faust, Apostle
"What it Means to be a Daughter of God." Ensign, November 1999

There is not a president and a vice president in a family. We have co-presidents working together eternally for the good of their family. ... They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward.

L. Tom Perry, Apostle
"Fatherhood, an Eternal Calling." Ensign, May 2004

The priesthood is the power of God used to bless all of His children, male and female. Some of our abbreviated expressions, like "the women and the priesthood," convey an erroneous idea. Men are not "the priesthood." Priesthood meeting is a meeting of those who hold and exercise the priesthood. The blessings of the priesthood, such as baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost, the temple endowment, and eternal marriage, are available to men and women alike.

Dallin H. Oaks, Apostle
"Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church." Ensign, November 2005

I left [the initiatory session] with greater revelatory light on something I had always known in my heart to be so—that men and women are joint heirs of the blessings of the priesthood, and even though men bear the greater burden of administering it, women are not without their priesthood-related responsibilities.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency
"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

The place of woman in the Church is to walk beside the man, not in front of him nor behind him. In the Church there is full equality between man and woman. The gospel, which is the only concern of the Church, was devised by the Lord for men and women alike

*John A. Widstoe, Apostle
Improvement Era, March 1942, p. 161*

Because of this divine heritage you, along with all of your spiritual sisters and brothers, have full equality in His sight. ... Everything Christ taught He taught to women as well as men.

*Jeffrey R. Holland, Apostle
"To Young Women." Ensign, November 2005*

Eve set the pattern. In addition to bearing children, she mothered all of mankind when she made the most courageous decision any woman has ever made and with Adam opened the way for us to progress. She set an example of womanhood for men to respect and women to follow, modeling the characteristics with which we as women have been endowed: heroic faith, a keen sensitivity to the Spirit, an abhorrence of evil, and complete selflessness. Like the Savior, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross," Eve, for the joy of helping initiate the human family, endured the Fall. She loved us enough to help lead us.

*Sheri L. Dew, Relief Society Presidency
"Are We Not All Mothers." Ensign, November 2001*

If you will marry a virtuous woman who can hear the voice of the Lord, she will bless your life every day of your life. Consider Eve. She was the first to see that the fruit of the tree was good, and after partaking, she "gave unto her husband..., and he did eat." Were it not for Eve, our progression would have ceased. Elder Dallin H. Oaks stated that her act was "a glorious necessity [that opened] the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same."

Sheri L. Dew, Relief Society Presidency

"It is Not Good for Man or Woman to Be Alone." Ensign, November 2001

[U]nder the plan of the Lord women carry tremendous responsibilities and they are accountable for the fulfillment of those responsibilities. They head their own organizations, and those organizations are strong and viable and are significant forces for good in the world. They stand in an associate role to the priesthood, all striving together to build the kingdom of God in the earth. We honor and respect you for your capacity. We expect leadership, and strength, and impressive results from your management of the organizations for which you are responsible. We uphold and sustain you as daughters of God, working in a great partnership to assist him in bringing to pass the immortality and the eternal life of all of the sons and daughters of God.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet

"If Thou Art Faithful." Ensign, October 1984

Faith and Testimony

There are great blessings and opportunities available—personal blessings that come through unshakable faith and opportunities that come through giving Christian service. I have confidence that our Latter-day Saint sisters will continue in their enthusiasm to promote righteousness, both in themselves and in others. Women internationally can share faith, values, experiences, and ideas. I have respect for the diversity among women and acknowledge the strengths, abilities, and talents they possess. We can relate to all women through the Spirit.

Elaine S. Jack, Relief Society President

"Faith, Hope, and Charity: Inspiration from the Lives of General Relief Society Presidents." 2008.

On a visit to the Holy Land once, I stepped into the tomb thought to be the place where Jesus Christ was laid after His Crucifixion. As I stepped into the tomb, it occurred to me that it was not important if this was the exact place where His Resurrection transpired. What was important was that Jesus Christ had risen. He had conquered death. And because He was "the firstfruits of them that slept," all mankind would "be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:20, 22).

Vicki F. Matsumori, Primary Presidency

"Believe." Ensign, July 2007

I will go forward. ... I will smile at the rage of the tempest, and ride fearlessly and triumphantly across the boisterous ocean of circumstance. ... And the "testimony of Jesus" will light up a lamp that will guide my vision through the portals of immortality, and communicate to my understanding the glories of the Celestial kingdom.

*Eliza R. Snow, Relief Society President
Poems, Religious, Historical, and Political, vol. 1 (1856),
p. 148-49*

Seek for a testimony, as you would, my dear sisters, for a diamond concealed. If someone told you by digging long enough in a certain spot you would find a diamond of unmeasured wealth, do you think you would begrudge time or strength or means spent to obtain that treasure? Then I will tell you that if you will dig in the depths of your own hearts you will find with the aid of the Spirit of the Lord, the pearl of great price, the testimony of the truth of this work.

*Zina Diantha Huntington Young, Relief Society President
Young Woman's Journal, April 1892, p. 319.*

Leadership and Examples

During [a] training session I...gave to the bishop a theoretical problem about a less-active family and asked him to use the ward council to develop a plan to activate this family. [T]he bishop took charge of the situation immediately and said, "Here's the problem, and here's what I think we should do to solve it." Then he made assignments to the various ward council members. ... Eventually I asked the bishop to try again, only this time to solicit ideas and recommendations from his council members before making any assignments. I especially encouraged him to ask the sisters for their ideas. When the bishop opened the meeting to council members and invited them to counsel together, the effect was like opening the floodgates of heaven. A reservoir of insight and inspiration suddenly began to flow between council members as they planned for fellowshiping the less-active family.

*M. Russell Ballard, Apostle
"Counseling with Our Counsels." Ensign, May 1994*

All manner of violence is depicted in arcade games, and we even see horrifying violent acts in our own neighborhoods. [W]e may be turned by fear to looking for protection from one another rather than keeping our promise to be a light and a protection for one another.

*Aileen H. Clyde, Relief Society Presidency
"Covenant of Love." Ensign, May 1995*

Rise to the great potential within you. I do not ask that you reach beyond your capacity. I hope you will not nag yourselves with thoughts of failure. I hope you will not try to set goals far beyond your capacity to achieve. I hope you will simply do what you can do in the best way you know. If you do so, you will witness miracles come to pass.

*Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
Motherhood: A Heritage of Faith (1995)*

Family and Motherhood

For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:12-13

We have faith in our prophets. They have counseled us that mothers with young children are especially needed at home. They remind us of the great needs of our children and their vulnerabilities during their growing years. The importance of the mother in building a secure, loving, stimulating environment in which children can grow up as healthy and self-reliant individuals is very important. ... But not all situations are ideal. Not all women are mothers, and not all mothers have children at home. Furthermore, not all mothers can make the choice to be home with their children all of the time. Often circumstances constrain their choices. At other times, other responsibilities and opportunities require that difficult decisions be made. Women and families will be happier with these decisions if they are made using both study and faith.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Rowing Your Boat." Ensign, November 1994*

If I were to ask most any faithful Latter-day Saint mother what were the two dearest things on earth to her, I think she would unhesitatingly reply, "The restored Gospel and my family." The Gospel gives to Latter-day Saint mothers the loftiest concept of home and family life known to mankind.

*Belle Smith Spafford, Relief Society President
Church News, 11 Oct. 1958, pp. 6–7*

I am offended by the sophistry that the only lot of the Latter-day Saint woman is to be barefoot and pregnant. It's a clever phrase, but it is false. Of course we believe in children. The Lord has told us to multiply and replenish the earth that we might have joy in our posterity, and there is no greater joy than the joy that comes of happy children in good families. But he did not designate the number, nor has the church. That is a sacred matter left to the couple and the Lord.

*Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
1983 BYU Devotional*

Genesis 3:16 states that Adam is to "rule over" Eve, but... over in "rule over" uses the Hebrew "bet," which means ruling with, not ruling over.... The concept of interdependent equal partners is well-grounded in the doctrine of the restored gospel.

*Bruce C. Hafen, Quorum of the Seventy
"Crossing Thresholds and Becoming Equal Partners."
Liahona, August 2007*

[W]e find ourselves here—one of the ones Moses saw—part of a great panorama, and yet struggling as individuals to find the identity we once knew, as well as the sense of purpose and belonging we once had. As we gain our gospel knowledge here on earth, where we have to learn it all over again, we see this precious truth—that in our premortal life we exercised our agency when we chose Christ as our leader. He does his part and each of us can do ours to make covenants and build a partnership with him. (See Mosiah 5: 7–8).

*Aileen H. Clyde, Relief Society Presidency
"Confidence Through Conversion." Ensign, November 1992*

Ideals are stars to steer by; they are not sticks to beat ourselves with.

*Barbara B. Smith, Relief Society President
Ensign, March 1976*

Relief Society stands for education. It is the obligation of every woman of this Church to get all the education she can. It will enlarge her life and increase her opportunities.

*Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"In the Arms of his Love." Ensign, November 2006*

I believe in women, especially thinking women.

*Emmeline B. Wells, Relief Society President
Utah History Encyclopedia*

In those early meetings of Relief Society, Joseph Smith advised the sisters to teach one another the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said, "The ... Society is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls." He further said, "I now turn the key to you in the name of God, and this Society shall rejoice, and knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time." ... Relief Society women have always sought to learn and grow. We know that "the glory of God is intelligence." In 1830, in a revelation given through the Prophet Joseph to his wife, Emma, the Lord declared that she should "expound scriptures, and ... exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit." This charge was given not only to Emma, but Joseph clarified that all of the sisters should seek after this gift. Women taught the gospel of Jesus Christ and followed the Savior in word and in deed.

*Barbara Thompson, Relief Society Presidency
"Now Let Us Rejoice." Ensign, November 2008*

The whole gamut of human endeavor is now open to women. There is not anything that you cannot do if you will set your mind to it. I am grateful that women today are afforded the same opportunity to study for science, for the professions, and for every other facet of human knowledge. You are as entitled as are men to the Spirit of Christ, which enlightens every man and woman who comes into the world (see D&C 84:46).

*Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Words of the Prophet: Seek Learning." New Era,
September 2007*

There is no one perfect way to be a good mother. Each situation is unique. Each mother has different challenges, different skills and abilities, and certainly different children. The choice is different and unique for each mother and each family. Many are able to be "full-time moms," at least during the most formative years of their children's lives, and many others would like to be. Some may have to work part- or full-time; some may work at home; some may divide their lives into periods of home and family and work. What matters is that a mother loves her children deeply and, in keeping with the devotion she has for God and her husband, prioritizes them above all.

*M. Russell Ballard, Apostle
"Daughters of God." Ensign, May 2008*

In that most important of places, our homes, we learn best how it is that "out of small things proceedeth that which is great," for life at home is a series of small things that combine to create an eternal family. Perhaps because creating strong relationships with the Lord and each other is so incremental, or because teaching and encouraging and leading are sometimes thankless, it is easy to become distracted, even discouraged. The adversary would like to confuse us and divert our attention from what matters most. But we are blessed, for we know that faith and family matter most. The women who have touched my heart and motivated me to lead a better life are those who put the Lord and family first.

*Virginia U. Jensen, Relief Society Presidency
"Ripples." Ensign, November 2000*

Heavenly Parents

It was Eliza R. Snow who wrote the words: "Truth is reason; truth eternal / Tells me I've a mother there." (Hymns, 1985, no. 292.) It has been said that the Prophet Joseph Smith made no correction to what Sister Snow had written. Therefore, we have a Mother in Heaven ... Logic and reason would certainly suggest that if we have a Father in Heaven, we have a Mother in Heaven. That doctrine rests well with me.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Daughters of God." Ensign, November 1991

That we know less than we would like of these marvelous women of God should fill us with anticipation for the day when there will be a fullness of their record before us, a part of all that God will yet reveal. Service less reported is service still. Contributions are never really measured in column inches of coverage in newspapers or even in the scriptures. Indeed, their deferred recognition only mirrors faintly the quiet queenliness of One we shall meet and greet when we leave "this frail existence."

Neal A. Maxwell, Apostle
"Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward," p. 80-81

It is important, therefore, that girls in the Church have opportunity for and motivation to move forward in programs designed to improve their skills, to enhance their estimation of their own self-worth, and to broaden their knowledge of the gospel with consequent increase of faith.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet
"Youth Is the Season." New Era, September 1988

As women in the Church, we have knowledge many others lack; consequently we remind ourselves our work is not dedicated to triviality or entertainment. We have all been blessed with the truths we feel when we sing "I Am a Child of God" (Hymns, no. 301), but we need to remember in our hearts that our experiences here require us also to be adults of God. Again, the scripture verifies the maturing required of us: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became [an adult], I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). We do not seek to lose the fresh teachableness of children; we seek to claim steadfastness and the courage to act on our hard-won convictions.

Aileen H. Clyde, Relief Society Presidency
"Confirmed in Faith." Ensign, November 1996

Knowing is a process, not an arrival.

Emma Lou Thayne
"On Learning to Leave: Reflections of a Mormon Poet"
Huffington Post

Knowledge, Education and Goals

You can include in the dream of the woman you would like to be a picture of one qualified to serve society and make a significant contribution to the world of which she will be a part. Set your priorities in terms of marriage and family, but also pursue educational programs which will lead to satisfying work and productive employment in case you do not marry, or to a sense of security and fulfillment in the event you do marry. Education will increase your appreciation and refine your talent.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Prophet

"Words of the Prophet: Seek Learning." New Era, September 2007

Each individual is entitled to determine the ultimate destiny of his or her life. We can choose to use the powers within to have a happy life of continual growth and development that leads to eternal progression, or we can choose to follow the crowd of other people struggling to a top that leads to nowhere. Knowledge builds upon knowledge. There is no end to the capacity of men and women to learn. The great vision of the gospel is that we grow in wisdom, in knowledge, and in favor with God and man. We must put ourselves to that task because we have the power.

Barbara B. Smith, Relief Society President

"The Powers within Us." Ensign, February 1983

I know that God loves us individually and collectively as women, and that he has a mission for every one of us. As I learned on my Galilean hillside, I testify that if our desires are righteous, God overrules for our good and that heavenly parents will tenderly attend to our needs.

Patricia T. Holland, Young Women Presidency

"One Thing Needful: Becoming Women of Greater Faith in Christ." Ensign, October 1987

You are daughters of God. ... You are made in the image of our heavenly mother. ... Your body is sacred to you and precious.

Spencer W. Kimball, Prophet

Conference Report Mexico City and Central America Area Conference 1973, p. 108

Finally, remember: When we return to our real home, it will be with the "mutual approbation" of those who reign in the "royal courts on high." There we will find beauty such as mortal "eye hath not seen"; we will hear sounds of surpassing music which mortal "ear hath not heard." Could such a regal homecoming be possible without the anticipatory arrangements of a Heavenly Mother? Meanwhile, there are no separate paths back to that heavenly home.

Neal A. Maxwell, Apostle

"The Women of God." Ensign, May 1978

This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) when, in speaking of pre-existence and the origin of man, they said that “man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father,” that man is the “offspring of celestial parentage,” and that “all men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity.”

Bruce R. McConkie, Apostle
"Mormon Doctrine." 1966, p. 516

Christ's promise is simple and sublime: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Brothers and sisters, turmoil is raging all about us. Economies are in distress; families are struggling; we are living in, as President Hinckley has said, "perilous times." But the living waters still offer peace and joy. When we live righteously, when we have done all we can do, one of the gifts we receive is confidence. The Lord tells us, "Be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16). In the midst of chaos, we must pause. We must listen for the Spirit that tells us, "All is well!" just as the early Saints had to do. There is cause to be concerned, but there is greater reason to be at peace.

Kathleen H. Hughes, Relief Society Presidency
"Blessed by Living Water." Ensign, May 2003

And he cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.

2 Nephi 9:21

...My dear sisters, the gospel is the good news that can free us from guilt. We know that Jesus experienced the totality of mortal existence in Gethsemane. It's our faith that he experienced everything—absolutely everything...That means he knows what it felt like when your mother died of cancer—how it was for your mother, how it still is for you. He knows what it felt like to lose the student body election. He knows that moment when the brakes locked and the car started to skid. He experienced the slave ship sailing from Ghana toward Virginia. He experienced the gas chambers at Dachau. He experienced napalm in Vietnam. He knows about drug addiction and alcoholism. Let me go further: there is nothing you have experienced as a woman that he does not also know and recognize. On a profound level, he understands about the hunger to hold your baby that sustains you through pregnancy. He understands both the physical pain of giving birth and the immense joy. He knows about PMS and cramps and menopause. He understands about rape and infertility and abortion. His last recorded words to his disciples were, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Lighten Up." 1993, p. 174*

Jesus Christ and the Atonement

The greatest champion of woman and womanhood is Jesus the Christ.

*James E. Talmage, Apostle
"Jesus the Christ." 1916, p. 475*

The living water also nourishes. I testify to you that just as He promises, Christ comes to all who are heavy laden; He gives us rest (see Matthew 11:28). He sustains us when we are weary. A wellspring is a flowing well, offering continual refreshment—if we drink of it. Pride can destroy its effects, as can mere inattention. But those who drink deeply not only become whole themselves, but they become a fountain to others, as one spirit nurtures and feeds another.

*Kathleen H. Hughes, Relief Society Presidency
"Blessed by Living Water." Ensign, May 2003*

Jesus is the light of the world. We know that this world is a dark place sometimes, but we need not walk in darkness. The people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, and the people who walk in darkness can have a bright companion. We need him, and He is ready to come to us, if we'll open the door and let him.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Lighten Up." 1993, p. 174*

The love Christ commands requires a mighty change and great humility. It requires us to forsake pride and to be stripped of envy. It requires that we neither mock our sisters and brothers nor persecute anyone. Christ knew that for us to find any of those characteristics in ourselves would be onerous and would demand our great effort just to look. He said, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee" (Matt. 18:8). He was not suggesting our mutilation, but rather showing his awareness of how painful clearing ourselves of such offenses could be. When we have made the changes that only we can make, then, by the atoning blood of Christ, we may receive the forgiveness that only he can bring. The reciprocal nature of those actions suggests the high trust and respect the Lord has for our abilities. Anyone who has had experience with the Lord's love knows of the sure courage that comes when we keep our part of that trust and honor him by seeking his Spirit and by living the best we can.

*Aileen H. Clyde, Relief Society Presidency
"Covenant of Love." Ensign, May 1995*

Dear sisters, one thing is needful, to follow Him each day. Choose ye therefore Christ the Lord. Choose to feast upon His word. Choose to trust in Him above. Choose to wait upon His love. Choose to give Him all your heart. Choose ye therefore that good part.

*Bonnie D. Parkin, Relief Society President
"Choosing Charity: That Good Part." Ensign, November 2003*

As a young priest traveling in Italy in 1833, Englishman John Henry Newman encountered emotional and physical darkness when illness detained him there for several weeks. He became deeply discouraged, and a nurse who saw his tears asked what troubled him. All he could reply was that he was sure God had work for him to do in England. Aching to return home, he finally found passage on a small boat. Not long after the ship set sail, thick fog descended and obscured the hazardous cliffs surrounding them. Trapped for a week in the damp, gray darkness, the ship unable to travel forward or back, Newman pled for his Savior's help as he penned the words we now know as the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light." This hymn echoes a truth our hearts confirm: though trials may extinguish other sources of light, Christ will illuminate our path, "keep our feet," and show us the way home. For as the Savior has promised, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness" (John 8:12).

*Virginia U. Jensen, Relief Society Presidency
"Lead, Kindly Light." Ensign, November 2000*

Perfect people don't need a Savior. He came to save his people in their imperfections. He is the Lord of the living, and the living make mistakes. He's not embarrassed by us, angry at us, or shocked. He wants us in our brokenness, in our unhappiness, in our guilt and our grief.

*Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Lighten Up." 1993, p. 174*

As I have met with many women this last year—and their priesthood leaders—I have heard numerous accounts of Christ's healing power. There is so much suffering in mortality, so many causes for pain. I know people who have sent loved ones into harm's way and who daily pray for their safety in battle. I talk to parents who are frightened for their children, aware of the temptations they face. I have dear friends who are suffering from the ravaging effects of chemotherapy. I know single parents, abandoned by spouses, who are rearing children alone. I have dealt myself with the debilitating effects of depression. But I have learned from my own experience, and I learn from those I meet, that we are never left to our own resources. We are never abandoned. A wellspring of goodness, of strength and confidence is within us, and when we listen with a feeling of trust, we are raised up. We are healed. We not only survive, but we love life. We laugh; we enjoy; we go forward with faith.

*Kathleen H. Hughes, Relief Society Presidency
"Blessed by Living Water." Ensign, May 2003*

We cannot abandon our faith when challenges come our way. We will not turn away; we will not retreat; we will not be discouraged. ... Being steadfast and immovable is a personal quest that has eternal rewards, for if we do so, "Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life."

*Ellen W. Smoot, Relief Society President
"Steadfast and Immovable." Ensign, November 2001*

Perhaps one of Rigmor's most far-reaching contributions has been compiling and editing a book on comparative religions called This We Believe, published in 1994. Rigmor heads a group made up of representatives from 37 faiths; she assigned a representative of each of the religious groups to write a chapter about their religion for the book. "They appreciated very much the opportunity to write about what they believed in," says Sister Heistø. "Like me, they were saddened by all the misinformation in print regarding their respective churches."

Then she refers to a picture hanging in her sitting room, a picture of Christ wearing a crown of thorns. "Self-pity is a feeling I do not allow to come into my home," she says. "When I feel it start, I just look at my picture of Christ. 'Excuse me,' I say. 'You have hurt much more for me than I do for you.'"

And so, at age 80, Rigmor Heistø continues on, steadfastly doing what lies in her power to do, cheerfully helping the Lord bring about His purposes in Norway.

Jan U. Pinborough and Marvin K. Gardner, "The Power of One" Ensign, February 2000

The Lord has promised us that He will not forget us because He has "graven [us] upon the palms of [His] hands." (Isaiah 49:16). And our promise to Him is that we will not forget Him, for we have engraven Him in our hearts.

*Susan W. Tanner, Young Women General President
"Steadfast in Our Covenants." Ensign, May 2003*

The cause of Christ—to redeem all souls—needs your strength, time, and talents in your homes and in your communities. ... Like those “noble and great” women who came before us, we cannot be ordinary women. We cannot be women who seem too much like women of the world. We must speak up for righteousness without apology. We, like Mary, Eve, Sarah, and Emma, are unique. We have ripples to make and water to share. Given our eternal heritage, we must remember how powerfully our simple, righteous actions can ripple through the hearts and homes of those around us. We have such a great opportunity to do so much good, and, most important, we know where and how to “draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

Virginia U. Jensen, Relief Society Presidency
"Ripples." Ensign, November 2000

As the light of Jesus Christ and His gospel grows brighter within our countenances and our hearts, it becomes easier for us to discern what is truly valuable from the counterfeits the world offers. Knowledge that Christ loved us enough to willingly bear the weight of our sins removes the need for pride and an unwarranted trust in the arm of flesh. Belief that the Atonement restores to us all we lose to sin and missteps along life's path creates a hope greater than any temporal pleasure or momentary mortal thrill.

Virginia U. Jensen, Relief Society Presidency
"Lead, Kindly Light." Ensign, November 2000

The loss of my beloved husband is the hardest thing that has ever happened to me. I am a triple cancer survivor. I have been near death three times from other causes. Those were testing times. Sometimes I thought I had been tested to the point of breaking. But none of them compares with the testing following Ed's death. There have been times when I literally could not turn the doorknob and leave the house without praying for strength and imploring the Lord for his Spirit to accompany me as I went out to perform my duties. All of us must face death – our own deaths and the deaths of loved ones. I feel that I am learning something about the way of the disciple that leads through the valley of the shadow of death, but even there – even there – I know I am following the Savior, and I can feel his hand upholding me and his voice promising me, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” (Hebrews 13:5).

Chieko N. Okazaki, Relief Society Presidency
"Aloha." 1995, p. 101

The Samaritan woman looked into the face of Christ, listened to His voice, and recognized Him at a time when most others rejected all He taught. We know Him too, or we can, if we allow His healing power, His nourishing strength, His peace and joy, to flow through us like "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Kathleen H. Hughes, Relief Society Presidency
"Blessed by Living Water." Ensign, May 2003