

The Gospel News

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How Do We Keep Our Focus on Christ and Avoid Distractions?

A Message from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Our world is becoming increasingly filled with distractions. Information moves faster and louder than ever before. Entertainment, social media, and marketing have never been so prevalent. They all beg for our attention and our focus and in so doing, we can find ourselves being drawn, intentionally or unintentionally, toward the less important things of life. Jesus said, ***"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light"*** (Matthew 6:20-22). Said another way, 'Stay focused on the things that are really important (having a strong faith and hope in Christ, possessing charity or the pure love of God, upholding the covenant made at the water's shore when baptized, raising children to know the Lord, valuing the love of our families, upholding marriage vows, etc.) and the Lord will bless your life.'

No doubt, this is why the Priesthood of The Church of Jesus Christ recently approved two revelations, cautioning us to not be distracted from our focus on Christ.

The challenge: How can all this be accomplished?

While there are many different types of distractions, one obvious example might be the amount of time spent checking social media, e-mail, watching television, or playing games on our phone. Most would agree that some amount of 'distraction' from the stresses and challenges of life is valuable—as it often helps to relax and calm us. However, when these distractions become our primary source of stress release, they actually become detrimental and impactful to our lives. Many of these distractions are subtle and they can easily and quietly surround us. In fact, they have become so commonplace that we hardly even notice their existence. These distractions take residence in our mind and draw our attention away from the important elements of our life. But what if there was a list of principles to adopt or practices to follow that would help us live less distracted lives? Wouldn't you give it a try? Broadly speaking, this is the advice the Apostle Paul gave the Thessalonians: ***"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil"*** (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

Consider the list of distractions below and ask yourself if any have taken residence in your heart. If any ring true, we encourage you to make intentional efforts to lessen their effect on your life and apply these words: "And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive" (Alma 7:23).

(Continued on page 4)



March 6-8!
GMBA Youth Camp!!
Camp Luz!!!
Near Canton, Ohio!!!!
Up!!!! Close!!!!!!
& Immovable!!!!!!
!!!!!!



Spring forward
on March 8th.
Daylight Saving Time
begins at 2am.
Set your clocks forward
on Sat. night
(or be extra early for church).

It's March,
and It's region conference
time, like AC and PC
on the 7th, GL and SW
and PMA on the 14th,
Midwest on the 28th.



First Friday of March
is the
World Day of Prayer.
Not to be confused with
the National Day of Prayer
which is in May.



March 27, National Joe Day,
created for people who
don't like their names to be
called Joe for the day.
Let's call it BroJoe Day and
pray for a Joe you know.



Lot's of mission trips
are happening or
being planned.
Please give of your best
to the Master's work.

St. Patrick's Day (17th)
falls on a Tuesday.
Have a bowl
of Lucky Charms
and contemplate
how blessed you are.



March comes in
like a lion,
and goes out like
an old logo.



BFTIP Blast From The Past

By Sister Kellie Speck

One hundred and eighty-five years ago this month, March 7, 1835, Sidney Rigdon blessed the faithful who labored on the Kirtland Temple in Kirtland, Ohio. Sidney Rigdon played a major part in making the Kirtland Temple a reality. Construction started in 1833 among the impoverished saints, and Sidney's preaching and zeal helped them to raise 40,000 dollars. He worked on the building when physically able and often wet the walls with his tears. Enemies threatened to destroy it, and guards were needed to protect their work. On March 7, 1835 Joseph Smith appointed Sidney Rigdon to lay hands and bestow blessings on those who diligently labored there. Rigdon was chosen to deliver the address when the temple was dedicated in March 1836. He spoke for two and a half hours, dwelling on the sacrifices of the Saints in erecting the temple, and according to witnesses drew tears from many eyes. After the closing prayer the congregation shouted in one accord, "Hosanna to God and the Lamb. Amen. Amen and Amen."

Kirtland Temple ►



Purpose Statement

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

Mission Statement

- The Church of Jesus Christ will teach the Gospel to all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things commanded by Jesus Christ.
- To draw Israel to Christ through an effort focused on the Native Americans of North and South America.

Vision Statement

- The full manifestations of God's Spirit and power among the Saints, resulting from living and worshipping in unity and righteousness, stimulate continuous growth of the Domestic Church—even at a rate of doubling over a five year period—while strengthening the International Church.

Wordup



“You Can Have It All By Giving God Your All!”

By Elder Doug Obradovich

“All these things will be added unto you”
(Matthew 6:33)

I'm at that life stage where walking into a room is often met with bewilderment; clarity hijacked by the smallest interruption. A simple distraction, “which doth so easily beset” me, can knock me off track. “Candace, I'm going to the store for some fruit ... reminds me of fruit trees in Florida ... I wonder how Mark is in Florida ... I have to mark the doctor's insurance form ... the doctor said I need to eat more fruit ... Candace, I'm going to the store for some fruit!” But I'm seeking more than just fruit in my life.

Seek, an active verb, is defined as: 1) an attempt to find something, 2) a desire to obtain or achieve something, 3) to ask for something from someone, and 4) to search for and find someone or something. If one has chosen to genuinely seek after something, they have readied themselves for a thorough undertaking.

What three things do you desire most? Stay with the first answers that came to you when you read that question (discard secondary “church talk” answers). Maybe you considered career, children, home, etc. Now that you've mentally articulated these, what are you ready to undertake in seeking (“an attempt to obtain or achieve”) them? Will you wait hopefully for them to materialize, or methodically work toward achieving them?

When Jesus told us not to worry about feeding or protecting ourselves, He understood that He was addressing our most basic needs*. He didn't

just suggest not worrying, He said to not even consider them (“Take no thought”). He promised if we would faithfully prioritize, God would do the same. “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:31-33).

King Solomon understood prioritization. God promised to grant His wish and Solomon chose correctly. “God said to Solomon, ‘Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked for riches, wealth or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked for wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king’ (II Chronicles 1:11). With mindful soberness, Solomon contemplated the opportunity to selfishly request personal wealth and gain, but instead selflessly chose “the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.” By requesting wisdom and knowledge, he received all he ever wanted and/or needed. Solomon sought singularly God's favor and by doing so, received everything.

Jesus told us to trust Him and put God before our most basic needs (food, drink, protection, survival). The result a Solomonlike reward: “Such as none of the kings have had.” But there's a trick; don't trick! We can't feign true desire if our intentions are on gaining God's rewards. He can't be fooled by our foolishness. When we seek God first we can truly have it all!

* Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs = 1) Physical survival, 2) physical safety, 3) love & belonging, 4) self-esteem, 5) self-fulfillment

Keep Our Focus Continued from cover

- **The Accumulation of Wealth and Possessions.** The things we own require our time, our energy, our money, and our attention. Often, increased possessions add the potential to increase stress in our lives. Money itself is not an interference in our walk with Christ—the love of money, however, is. ‘More’ can become a distraction if we are motivated to acquire ‘more wealth and things’ to be seen of others and become prideful, to fill an emptiness in our lives, or seek power to satisfy our ego. If we trust God, He will take care of us. That doesn’t mean we should quit our jobs, or not earn money—we just need to realize and accept that God is more important and is far more capable of taking care of us than we are. See Luke 12:15-31.
- **The Labor Associated with Our Work.** It’s so easy to get caught up in our natural work, job, or career because we rationalize it, saying to ourselves, ‘we need to provide for our families,’ or, ‘I find this work personally gratifying,’ etc. But the truth is, we can devote so much time to our work that we have no time for anything else, including a relationship with Christ, our families, etc. What we need to really be worrying about is asking ourselves if what I’m doing is what the Lord wants me to do. When we seek His direction and counsel, we can be confident, knowing that He’ll take care of the rest. See Luke 10:38-42.
- **The Pursuit of Perfection.** We should pursue excellence in all we do; however, when perfection becomes the only goal, it becomes the enemy of progress—and in this way, it often paralyzes and distracts us from moving forward. Doing our best and achieving perfection are rarely the same. Have you ever noticed, when standing at the water’s shore, no one is ever asked if they promise to be perfect in serving Christ? Why not? Because we can only achieve perfection in this life through the grace of God through Christ—achieving perfection, while in the flesh, is merely another concept placed in our minds to distract us. See Moroni 10:32 and John 17:23.
- **The Need for Notoriety and to be Seen by Others.** Those who live lives focused on the need to be recognized for it are usually the first to take shortcuts to get there. Pride and the thirst for personal recognition have an ugly way of slowly squeezing their way into our lives. Instead, we each need to find significance in the eyes and hearts of those who know you best—Jesus Christ, your family, your spouse, your friends, etc., because in the end, that is all that matters. See Matthew 6:1-6 and Alma 5:26-18.
- **The Desire to Compare.** It seems we feel compelled by nature at times to compare our lives to the people around us. We compare our belongings, our appearance, our families, and our successes. We’re often encouraged to compare products or merchandise before making purchases, but buying a refrigerator is very different from placing our focus and energy on ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ by comparing what others are doing, how they’re active or what they’re driving. Comparing yourself to others will always cause you to regret what you are not, rather than allow you to enjoy and grow who you are. Not an easy concept to grasp, but a distracting concept when we fail. See III Nephi 6:12-16 and I Timothy 6:6-9.
- **The Fascination with Relationships.** Every kind of relationship falls into this category; friends, parents, siblings, spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends, children, co-workers, bosses, etc. Our relationships are our connection with the world, and it is our human nature to have them, but when we allow any one of these relationships become more important to us than God, then they become a distraction. We need to give God ample time every day. One of the most complex relationships that can become a distraction from our walk with the Lord would be that of a boyfriend, girlfriend, or spouse. These relationships, by their very nature, demand the most time, and that is why it is extremely important that they are centered around God. If they aren’t, you will find your walk with God spiraling downward. Relationships are extremely important, but our relationship with Christ is of the utmost importance. See Mark 12:29-30.
- **The Attraction of the Media.** It’s so easy to get caught up in the media (Internet, TV, movies, music, video games, newspapers, magazines, etc.). Sadly, much of it is filled with violence and concepts that are opposite that of Christ’s teachings. TV commercials, advertisements on the Internet, visual enticements are all trying to convince us that we are missing something in our lives, and they can provide it. Women (and men) are bombarded with images of how they ‘should’ look and act. Movies, music, and TV can be horrible influences because they can subliminally tell us how to live, what’s right and wrong. Video games can become all-consuming as we hunt down the killer or steal a car and escape the police chase. Not all of it is bad, but it requires a discriminating eye, being wise in what we watch, read, play, etc., and in how much time we spend with it. A simple test to determine our level of attachment is whether we’d be willing to give it up. See Ephesians 5:1-17.
- **The Quest of Hobbies.** Not that hobbies are bad, but a potentially dangerous aspect of hobbies is that they can consume a lot of our time. A great way to keep them in check is to do them with God in mind! If music is your hobby, use it as means to worship God. Also, we can play video games or sports, etc. with people to develop relationships with others rather than become isolated. Having hobbies is a great way to

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By Elder Anthony Scolaro

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Without prompting from the editor, much of the material submitted for this month's issue treated the topic of Distractions in one way or another. The fact that this important subject has been discussed in our branches and missions the last few months likely contributed to the heightened interest in that theme, but perhaps something at a higher level played a part in it: Could it be that we are seeing, as the song says, that "God is leading by His Spirit, speaking to the minds of men"?

One of the fundamental tenets of the Everlasting Gospel is that our Creator continues to reveal Himself to mankind. The lines of communication to and from the Lord are always open, on His side at least. Whether or not we're sending or receiving messages has much more to do with us. As was the case with the prophet Samuel in his youth, we must be in tune with the Spirit of God and be listening for His voice.

The scriptures teach us that God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Further on we read, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). When we ask the Lord for wisdom, like Solomon of old, we can be sure we're not asking amiss. God has a way of speaking very clearly to us, with no confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33) when we are sincerely seeking His will.

This past year the assembled priesthood accepted two experiences presented at our General Conference, both delivering a message about Distractions, as revelations from the Lord. The scriptures teach that the truth is established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Our faith is bolstered when a second witness confirms the Lord's message, be it an inspired thought, an

unknown tongue, a call to service, or anything that edifies the body of Christ and unites us under His leadership.

While none of us individually may be perfect in diligently seeking the Lord's will 100 percent of the time, as a body, The Church of Jesus Christ is doing just that, and we know for a surety that He

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5)

is willing to lead us if we are willing to go. As long as we're united, we won't miss out on the message God has for His Church.

Over the years some have framed our latter-day expectations in terms of the Lord directing His people to move from "Point A to Point B" as it were, to pick up and leave everything behind just as Lehi did when told by God to flee Jerusalem with his family. He may at some point instruct us to physically relocate, but in the meantime can we see Him leading us to move in a different way? Charging us to leave our Distractions behind and make Him the most important part of our lives?

Jesus preached that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Today this statement is truer than ever. The scriptures show us enough to understand the urgency of drawing close to God and being open to His messages. As He continues to make His will known, let us be sure—individually and as a Church—that we're not distracted.



Rooted in Love: A Blessed Marriage Retreat

By Sister Michelle Watson

The Spirit of God made all the difference at the Southwest MBA Couples' Retreat, held November 2-3, 2019 in Prescott, Arizona. It was a weekend that the participants won't soon forget.

As with any Church event, the agenda can be perfectly planned, the meals can be carefully selected, and the seminar can be a well-researched wealth of wisdom. But, if God's Spirit isn't there, then all of that preparation will only take things so far. We can lay out all the ingredients, but it's the Lord that takes them and makes something really special.

The marriage retreat started off at the La Quinta hotel with a Saturday morning seminar presented by Brother Joe and Sister Darlene Ignagni. The theme was "Rooted," and it laid the foundation for the rest of the retreat, giving couples a lot to think about. Here are some of the discussion topics.

- The roots of our marriage relationship should be in Jesus Christ and His Gospel

- Pruning our relationship in a spirit of repentance and forgiveness
- Nurturing our relationship with quality communication and listening

After the morning session, couples had the opportunity to meet up at Watson Lake Park for some fun group activities, such as a photo scavenger hunt. Everyone got a chance to admire the scenic vista of Watson Lake. If you're ever in Prescott, it's worth a visit.

Couples met back at the hotel for a romantic, dressy dinner in the evening. Afterward, volunteers participated in a hilarious version of *The Newlywed Game*, led by Brother Mark and Sister Rachel Cotellesse. "Which of your habits would your wife like you to break?" "If your husband was home alone, what would he feed himself for dinner?" Laughing together helped foster the camaraderie that had been building all day.

Saturday evening concluded with a chance for each couple to take five minutes and share something—anything—about their

marriage. Some told funny stories; others described what they admire about their spouse. We chuckled. We gasped. We said, "Awwwww!" It was great to learn things about one another that we'd never known before.

Everything that happened on Saturday laid the groundwork for the Sunday service. Couples were comfortable enough by then to start sharing things that went beneath the surface. Two of the longest married couples in attendance—Brother Emmett and Sister Cindy Hood and Brother Tim and Sister Renée Scolaro—opened the meeting by sharing testimonies of God's goodness and lessons they'd learned over many years together.

After that, we had a truly blessed time of testimony, prayer, and anointing. Words can't convey the Spirit of God that we felt. We are so thankful to our Lord Jesus Christ for the institution of marriage and for giving us the best soil, the right nourishment, and the necessary care instructions to enjoy flourishing relationships.

Keep Our Focus Continued from page 4

get yourself into the world to be an influence rather than to simply satisfy yourself. See Matthew 5:16.

- **The Promise of Tomorrow.** While it's not foolish to look toward the future and plan accordingly, when we merely tolerate our days only for the sake of tomorrow (the weekend, the vacation, or the retirement), we miss out on the full beauty and potential of the present. See Alma 36:3 and Matthew 6:31-34.
- **The Regret of Yesterday.** Everyone experiences regret at one time or another during their life. We regret our actions, our decisions, and at times, even our motivations. But no amount of regret can ever change the past, and only those who have come to recognize their imperfections are able to move beyond them. Don't allow regret to negatively distract you from opportunity in the present. See Philippians 3:13-14.
- **The Obsession with Ourselves.** We are, by nature, sinful and selfish, and if we live by our nature, we will not be able to develop a closeness with Christ and the relationship that is needed to help us maintain a focus on what's important in this life. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul stated to the Romans, 'we need to die to ourselves and live in Christ.' But no matter what we do, there will be a constant battle within ourselves between spirit and flesh, which is why prayer and fasting, reading His Word, meditating on the blessing of God in our lives and giving thanks, meeting together as a Church, worshipping Him in song, enjoying the fellowship of the saints, etc., all provide what's needed to keep us focused and not distracted. That is why we need to constantly allow God to search our hearts and purify it, that we might focus on Him and not ourselves. See Psalms 51:9-10 and Psalms 139:23-24.

Although not a complete list of distractions, we hope you'll agree that any one of these can turn our focus away from the things of God if they are not kept in check. It is a constant struggle to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus but if we are aware of what can, and does, interfere with our walk with Christ, we can begin to take the necessary actions to prevent them. Remember Jesus said, "...seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

In the Love of God,

The Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Thank You

Thank you to all who responded to our request for donations to fund the Gospel News.

While we have exceeded our last year's contributions, we still are short of our ultimate goal. If you have not donated yet, please consider doing so today. You can mail your check to 5465 3rd Rd., Lake Worth, FL 33467, or pay online by going to thechurchofjesuschrist.org then clicking News, then Gospel News, and selecting your donation amount. Any amount is appreciated!

Know Your Worth *By Sister Kayla Smith*

When it comes to the world today, so many people are wrapped up in what is going on around them and not what is really important. So many young people are struggling to see what truly matters. In the world that we live in, everything is “worth” something. In the world of advertisements and stores, our value is in dollars. But to God, we are worth one Son. I don’t know about you, but to me, that’s priceless.

The year I was baptized, the key scripture of the Campout was Romans 12:1-2. I didn’t know at the time that these two verses were going to play such a big role in my life. The scripture is begging us to keep the understanding of what we are worth and not conform to the world around us. I was baptized at a young age—only 13—but looking back, I don’t think I would have ended up where I am now if I wasn’t.

I went through high school being the “weird girl,” and I have no doubt in my mind that it was due to those verses going through my mind. The more time passed on, the harder it was to not worry about what the world around me thought about me. When I went to college my first year and had a hard time, my roommate didn’t agree with some of the things I believed in, and she spread rumors about me to all her friends. Because of

this, I became depressed and started doubting my self-worth and stopped reading the scriptures. I started to see my value through the world’s eyes.

But like always, God had a plan. He picked me up, dusted me off, and placed me back on my feet. Since getting back to the scriptures and putting God back in the front of my life, I have prospered greatly. I have a full-time job that I love and He answered my prayers so that I don’t have to work on Sundays, so I can be where I truly belong.

Many people say that “hindsight is 20/20,” don’t let it be hindsight. Now is your chance to stand up for what is right and what you believe in. Learn from my mistakes, put God first and He will help you grow and prosper. You ARE worth more than you think you are. Jesus died on the cross for you, so that you could be a child of the Lord. Even if you don’t like reading, just start with listening to music. One of my favorite songs that helps to keep me positive is “Who You Say I Am” by Hillsong Worship. So, I am begging you, take a look at your life now. Is it worth what the world says it is or what God says it is? I am begging you, know your worth and do not let anyone tell you different. Remember that you are a child of the Lord. You’re worth one Son, which is worth more than anything on Earth

ATLANTIC COAST AREA MBA CAMPOUT - Camp Delanco

Are You Spiritually Fit? *By Sister Lydia Zaino*

The Atlantic Coast Area was very blessed at our annual campout. We’re thankful for the hard work Sister Lynda Sgro, camp director, and Brother Jason Rogolino, assistant camp director, put in to make this weekend a success.

The weekend started on Friday night with fellowship and snacks. We always have a fun time gathering together. This year, we were blessed with members from Pennsylvania and Maine in addition to all of our faithful Atlantic Coast members.

Saturday morning began with a fasting and prayer meeting which was well attended. As we opened our morning meeting, Brother Michael Zaino welcomed everyone and made some remarks. Then, Brother Darryl Onorato gave some wonderful words of life about our theme, “Are You Spiritually Fit?” using 1 Timothy 4:7-8. He spoke on how you can be naturally and spiritually fit, with spiritual fitness being most important. We are all striving to do our best

each day so at the end, we can say we gave our best. He also reminded us to stay focused on our spiritual goals more than anything else in this life.

Brother Ken Lombardo was our seminar director for the weekend. He created a “spiritual fitness training day” instead of traditional seminars. We were grouped in pairs and had five mini stations staged around the camp. We went to each station and learned about the natural and spiritual fitness of a particular item. It was a blessed time for all who attended.

The Saturday evening and Sunday morning meetings were beautiful. Brother Ken spoke of the wonderful spirit that was felt at our camp, and that there was no agenda except to lift up the name of the Lord. Sister Leah blessed us with the song, “Jesus Use Me,” and Brother Tom Goode sang, “Loving My Jesus.” There was also a selection from the children. Brother Rick Calabro spoke of his missionary trip to Colombia and reminded us that the Church

has a purpose. He spoke on the recent young people coming to Christ, and that the Church has much to offer. He told the young people to ask the Lord to use them now while they’re young. Brothers Bret Rozzelle and Andrew Tenorio, and Sister Elizabeth Tenorio gave their testimonies, which was a blessing. Finally, Brother Phil Arcuri spoke a few words and said it was good to see the young people heeding the call of the Lord. The young people need to step up and take over the work. If you desire to work for the Church, God will use you to help bring this Gospel to the four corners of the world. He reminded us that it’s also important to support your branch, your region, the MBA, and one another.

Sister Lynda Sgro came up to make some announcements before the meeting was closed. She thanked God for all of His help and for those who helped over the weekend. Everyone was truly blessed at our area camp, and we’re looking forward to the next time we can gather together in His name.

Great Faith *By Apostle Jerry Valenti*

In Hebrews 11:1, faith is defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The chapter goes on to recognize many examples of great faith from people throughout the scriptures. Here are 5 amazing facts about some of these examples of great faith.

1 Noah – Noah was told to build an ark after “being warned of God of things not seen as yet” (verse 7). What had not been seen by anybody on earth up to that point was – rain! While it took faith to believe that the earth would be flooded, it took great faith to believe that water would fall from the sky when it had never happened before. Yet, Noah acted on his faith, building the ark, and “became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

2 Abraham – Abraham’s life was about faith. First, he left his hometown and relocated to a land among ungodly people, solely because God told Him that would be the land of his inheritance. Then, he waited for his wife to have the son that God repeatedly promised to them until he was 100 years old. And finally, he was willing to sacrifice that son to obey the commandment of God, believing

that “God was able to raise him up, even from the dead,” if necessary, to fulfil His promise that Abraham’s descendants would be numerous.

3 Amram and Jochebed – In spite of the king’s edict that all newborn babies were to be killed, this couple risked their lives by hiding their baby for three months “because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment” (verse 23). Jochebed then put the baby in a small ark of bulrushes and floated him off on the water to an unseen destination, showing great faith by placing him in God’s hands. The baby was discovered by the king’s daughter – she named him Moses and the rest is history.

4 Moses – Multiple examples of great faith in the life of Moses are identified in this chapter. He walked away from a life of luxury

as part of the king’s family, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (verse 25). He followed an “invisible” God, contending with the king, putting blood on houses to save the lives of the firstborn, and finally, leading the people through the midst of the parted Red Sea, after which the Egyptians who followed them were all drowned.

5 Joshua – In Joshua 6, God instructed Joshua to lead the army around the city of Jericho once per day for six consecutive days and then seven times on the seventh day. Nothing happened for the first six days or for the first six times on the seventh day. Continuing on despite seeing nothing, with trumpets blaring, “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down” (verse 30) and the people of God took the city.



Ladies’ Uplift Circle News



Who Cares If One More Light Goes Out?

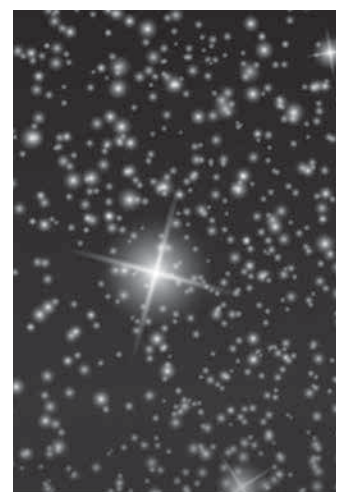
By Sisters LuAnn Carson

As I led the stretch at the end of a workout class, tears filled my eyes. The words of the song playing were, “Who cares if one more light goes out in a sky of a million stars?” (“One More Light” by Linkin Park). I felt sad for all those whose lights have been extinguished without anyone to care.

There are approximately 300 billion stars in our galaxy alone. It is estimated that in the universe about 110 billion die each year, which equates to about 275 million per day. Does it matter if one goes out? Statistics reveal that every second, 1.8 humans die. Does one human life have meaning among the almost 8 billion souls in the world?

We read the answer in Luke 15: 4-7 “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

As children we learn the song “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” One line says ‘like a diamond in the sky. To the



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The Followers of Moses Go Against God

But, time after time they turned against God.

These stubborn people turned against Moses and doubted God over and over. God's promise to them had been that He would bring them to a wonderful country. As they neared this place, Moses sent out one man from each tribe to spy out the land. What did it look like, who lived there, and what crops grew? They were gone for forty days.

They brought back huge bunches of grapes and told how rich the earth was. But only two faithful men, Joshua and Caleb, were excited and reported the land was great and not to fear the people living there now. God would be with them! (See Numbers 14th chapter.)

The other ten spies agreed it was a great land, but they were afraid. They talked about how many people there were and how huge some of the soldiers were! They were too scared to trust God. They forgot what God had done! They had no faith!

This made the other people begin to moan and complain. One group even said, "Let's appoint a captain to lead us back to Egypt!" God was not pleased that they doubted Him. He told Moses, let me destroy them and make a great nation of you. Moses and his brother Aaron fell upon their faces before God and begged him to forgive the people. They said, "You are a forgiving God. Don't do this or our enemies will say God was not able to bring us

to the land promised to us!"

God listened to their desires and said, "These evil people have seen my miracles and still rebel! For this, they will wander in the wilderness for forty years, a year for each day that the spies went out. They will die there. None of them over the age of twenty will even go into the new land. Only Joshua and Caleb, who were faithful. Then God struck down the unfaithful ten spies with a plague and they died.

Then the people were sorry. They said, "We'll go up to the place God has promised us because we have sinned."

Moses warned them not to go. "Why are you now going against what God has said? Do not go up to that land because you turned away from God and He is not with you!" And their battles went badly. They did not ask for forgiveness and then wait on the Lord and follow His guidance.

In the same way, when we make mistakes and ask for forgiveness, we often have to wait quietly and humbly to see what the Lord wants us to do. It is not our job to think of something showy and rush off to do it. It is our job today, as in Moses' day, to pray, trust in God, and ask to be forgiven. He cares for us. God loves us and will protect and guide us.

With love, your friend, *Sister Jan*

Dear Friends,

Sometimes when I make a mistake or think about doing something that I know God would not really approve of, I am so glad that my mother raised me to know God. By going to Church, listening to scriptures from the Bible and Book of Mormon, and listening to the testimony of others, I learn. I learn the right way to live. I learn to be grateful to God for all my blessings. I see the marvelous way God has blessed those who follow Him and want to do His will. I see how He guides and takes care of me. I learn to be sorry for mistakes and ask for forgiveness and guidance.

In the days that Moses led the twelve tribes, or families, of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to a new land, those people had a lot to learn. They had been raised in a country that worshipped statues, not God. When God told them He would bring them to a great new land, they doubted. It took ten terrible plagues that hit Egypt (but not God's people) before the ruler, Pharaoh, let them go. (See Exodus Chapters 6-11.) Then the Pharaoh changed his mind and sent chariots and armed warriors out to murder them. God hid them with a dust storm, then He sent a wild east wind, which made an incredible path across the Red Sea so they could pass over. When the Egyptian army chased them, God closed the path and their enemies were all drowned.

At night God put a pillar of fire in the sky, and during the day a huge cloud which guided them. But they still doubted God!

Now, wouldn't you see God's incredible power and truly believe God could save you from anything? As they trudged across the desert, God also sent them a special food, called manna, each day. He gave them water. Plus their clothes and shoes never wore out.

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ACTS OF KINDNESS

Share with us a time when you were on the giving or receiving end of an act of kindness, and how it affected you.

"Some years back when we attended the Columbus, Ohio Mission, I noticed that baby Josh Deramus was wrapped in the most beautiful crocheted blanket. I remember asking Sister Sandy Brown-Deramus where she purchased it. She smiled and humbly said, "I made it." I complimented her, telling her how I wished that I knew how to do that. The following month when we returned there again, Sister Sandy surprised me with the most beautiful crocheted baby blanket. She caught me off guard and I was simply speechless! I was and still am ever so grateful for what she did for me. I still have it draped over my bedroom chair and always reflect on her kindness towards me!" -*Sister Karen Pezzenti, Cincinnati-Morrow Mission*

"One time someone had held the door for me at my local grocery store and I didn't say thank you or anything. It made feel bad all day. Now

I always say thank you." -*Giovanni Lind, Lake Worth, FL Branch*

"When Jesus died for my sins, taking my punishment and then resurrected so I could spend eternity with Him. Thank you, Jesus." -*Brother Gary Thompson, Creekside, MI Branch*

"My husband lost his job in May 2019 due to several office closures by his employer's parent company, and from day one, the family of God has showered us with random acts of kindness which have felt like a blanket of love around us. It fills our heart with peace that God will see us through." -*Sister Diane Giannetti, McKees Rocks, PA Branch*

"I always saw this older man in a plaza where I would shop, and I wasn't sure if he was homeless. He would stand and wave to the cars and yell, "God bless you" as people drove by. One day, it was on my heart to stop and give him some money. So, I did. What started as me hoping I could be a blessing to him, turned out he was a blessing to me. Instead, he asked me what my needs were that day, and he held my hands and prayed out loud for me while we stood in the parking lot. Cars passed by us and nothing else mattered because it was the most heartfelt prayer

and thing a stranger ever did for me. I stood there with tears streaming down my face as he prayed. I was reminded that day of angels who walk among us." -*Sister Colleen Moore, Columbus, OH Branch*

"It was in 1994, my husband Pete and I were raising 3 small children and he found himself out of work. Not only was he out of work but his ex-employer stuck us with an American Express bill and the company car he was using. At that time, we lived pay to pay, and were in great financial need. One day, we heard a knock at the door. It was Brother Tom and Sister Josephine Ross from the Aliquippa Branch where we attended as well. They had come to visit. We chatted for a while and when they were getting ready to say goodbye, they handed us an envelope with money in it. We were so humbled and blessed. During that time, we visited the McKees Rocks Branch, and when I shook a Sister's hand, she placed money in my hand without saying a word about it. No words were needed because I felt her love and kindness. Others gave to us as well and we thank God for the kindness and love of the Saints that helped us through a tough time." -*Sister Wendy Giannetti, Mesa, AZ Branch.*

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Lord, we are like diamonds and jewels, valuable, beautiful, of great worth. Every soul is precious to The Lord.

We also read in Luke about a woman who loses one piece of silver. Although she has nine other coins, she searches diligently for the lost one. "And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:9&10).

The chapter then goes on to record the parable of the prodigal son. What a blessing to his father when the rebellious son returns home with a repentant heart. The father has a faithful son at home, yet rejoices tremendously over the return of the son he thought was lost forever.

"Who cares if one light more light goes out in a sky of a million stars?"
Who cares if one sheep, one silver piece, one child is lost?

In answer to that question, God answers, "I do."



"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth. Song of Solomon 2:11, 12

Blessing Bits

BB He Always Provides

I was getting ready to pay my bills and knew I had no money to pay them. I cried out to the Lord to help me. I knew it would have to be a miracle, because a few months before, I had gone through every drawer in my room and every old purse that I had, not finding anything. After praying, I went through every drawer again. In the front of one of my drawers was 100 dollars. I cried out to the Lord in praise! I still needed more and continued to look. While looking for a receipt, I opened my wallet and found another 100 dollars. At first I didn't want to tell anyone because then they would know I didn't have money and I would be embarrassed. Praise God for his mercy to me!- *Sister Mary Duncan, Mesa, AZ Branch*

BB God Is Faithful to His Promises

Instead of spending my weekend studying for my exam, I decided to attend a Youth Summit. The weekend was full of blessings, and I felt renewed and believed God could bless me on my exam, but even if He didn't, I was still glad I attended the Youth Summit. I realized that school and work don't matter enough to dictate how I spend my time. God alone merits that honor. On the day of the

midterm, things were not looking good. And yet, I got a perfect score. I don't believe that I "earned" God's favor in that situation by going to a Church event. I believe that God is faithful to His promises, and He will take care of me if I seek Him first. I thank God for being my strength through grad school, and I pray that I remember this lesson as I face new challenges.- *Brother Jared Scolaro, Mesa, AZ Branch*

BB He Strengthens Our Families

My sister struggled with an addiction for many years, which had caused a significant strain in our family. When my daughter was born, I made it clear to my sister that she would not be in my life if she continued to allow this addiction to consume her. I didn't want my daughter to be exposed to that. Fast forward four years later to the week of Thanksgiving, my sister decided to get help. Praise God, because she has been clean for a year and two months now. She now has a healthy and good relationship with my kids, and I am so grateful to God for that.- *Sister Vanessa Duvall, Irvine, CA Branch*

Send us your Blessing Bits [in approximately 150 words] and answer the Question of the Month by contacting us at gospelnews@thechurchofjesuschrist.org



Question for this month: It's Springtime! What excites you most about the Spring Season?



Answer from last month: Share with us a time when you were on the giving or receiving end of an Act of Kindness and how it affected you.

Turn back to page 11 for answers to this question.



"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth. Song of Solomon 2:11,12