



February 2020

Spiritual Preparedness

President Russell M. Nelson said in one of his first addresses as the Lord's Prophet: "In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost." In this same talk (April 2018 General Conference) he taught how to have that constant influence. These are the things he shared:

- Increased purity
- Exact obedience
- Earnest seeking
- Daily feasting on the words of Christ and the Book of Mormon
- Regular time committed to family history and temple work

He also shared the steps to receiving revelation:

- Be clear about what you need to know
- Seek a quiet spot
- Humble yourself
- Take the problem to God in the name of Jesus
- Pour your heart out
- Listen
- Write down what you receive

In this message there are things each of us can work on. If you do not know what the Lord would have you do, following the above steps and asking Him would be a good place to start.

How Can You Prepare Spiritually?

I have never forgotten one of the lessons demonstrated in the movie *17 Miracles* about the Willie and Martin Handcart Companies and their experience. While they were certainly not the only pioneers or handcart companies, and not the only ones to experience trials, their stories are unique because of the extreme hardships they faced and how they faced them. What made their experiences so different from the Donner Party, caught in similar circumstances, was their faith and reliance on the Lord. I believe that as we face trials in our own lives it is imperative for us to be prepared spiritually to turn to the Lord.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints we have been taught the right things that we should do. Now, more than ever, the focus is on preparing ourselves and our homes spiritually. It is as important to feed our spirit during times of trial and hardship as it is to feed our bodies. Just as it is important to nourish and care for your body daily, it is also important to care for your spirit daily if you want it to be healthy. Neglecting any part of ourselves can cause weakness, illness, and death. You can look back at the 2019 Preparedness Guide (Prov. Papers) for ideas, but the best thing to do is probably to decide what you need to work on in this area this month.

Emotional and Mental Preparedness

Either emotional or mental difficulties can make it difficult to be spiritually prepared or in tune. If you or a loved one face serious problems in this area it may be wise to seek professional help. However, all of us have hills and dips in our lives, and it is important to find ways of recognizing and dealing with emotions in acceptable and productive ways.

The way we interact with other people makes more difference than most people realize. For many years I have loved the following quote by Edwin Markham:

“There is a destiny that makes us brothers: None goes his (or her) way alone: All that we send into the lives of others, Comes back into our own.” (Markham, Edwin. “A Creed,” *Lincoln & Other Poems*. New York: McClure, Phillips & Company, 1901.)

Psychological studies are showing that karma is more than an ancient superstition or belief. Apparently the human brain processes an individual’s words and actions toward others as if they were being directed toward self. In other words, if we are critical to others even in thought we will most likely feel criticized. If we ignore others we are more apt to feel isolated or ignored. If we seek to serve and lift others we will feel more loved and cared about. In this way we truly do get back whatever we dish out. Can you see how much difference it may make in your life to work on words and thoughts if you want a healthy emotional state?

Mental Health and Nutrition

Nutrition actually does play a vital role in mental health. While it is not the only factor to be considered, it does matter. One of the problems in the Japanese POW camps during WWII was a lack of protein that supplies needed B vitamins and amino acids. Because many of the B vitamins feed tissue, nerve, and brain function, it was common for the prisoners to develop weak bodies and mental illness.

Similarly, in the Southern United States and Europe, where corn was not processed correctly using lime (calcium hydroxide) and just eaten as corn meal, there was an epidemic of pellagra, a disease that causes dermatitis, diarrhea, and dementia. In 1937 the cause was discovered as a lack of Niacin (another B vitamin).

In a world of “eat this, not that” did you ever stop to think about whether you are getting balanced nutrition and the nutrients your body needs? Did you ever think that what you choose to keep in your food storage could have a large impact on your mental as well as physical health in a crisis?

At the Root

While it is important to follow our prophet and do all that we can to become spiritually prepared, there can be times for some people when they just can’t seem to “feel it.” Sometimes there is a root cause that needs to be corrected to progress. If you ever find yourself in this situation here are a few things to check:

- Is there anything like music, media, or associates that may negatively affect you or block the Spirit?
- Do you have loose ends that need to be put back together? This can be unfinished tasks, unpaid bills, untidy surroundings, damaged or dangling relationships.
- Are your thoughts too often turned inward because you don’t feel well or happy? If you are feeling sorry for self or just plain focused on yourself the Spirit of the Holy Ghost will withdraw.
- Could you take better care of your body? When it is sick through neglect or abuse, your spirit can also be weakened.

Goal for the Month

As you read through this paper, you will get ideas of things that you can improve on. Write them all down. Then pick one to focus on for the month. Spiritual, emotional, social, and mental preparedness can be a very private and personal matters.

As an extra credit-It is a good idea to make sure you have at least a copy of the Book of Mormon in each family member’s emergency supplies (72-hr kit).

Notes from Red Hen

Dear Journal,

I am loving life and getting along better than ever with all of the animals on this farm. The farmer has moved and his oldest son has taken over. There is a general attitude of helping each other instead of just taking care of our own needs and worries. I hope it never changes!

