

TALK—STAKE CONFERENCE BONNEVILLE STAKE, June 26, 2005 -- Suzan Lake

THE PLEASURE OF FINDING THINGS OUT by Richard Feynman.

Organ concert in someone's home

- Knew what it felt like to live in the NOW with no distractions. Savored the music.
- Often I don't focus or shut out the many voices of the world.

Special challenges to this period of time in history. Too many distractions.

Habits – can deaden yourself to your inner and outer world.

- Distraction can kill relationships or water them down
- Women who had 2 grown children addicted to computer games
- Addiction to comfort instead of seeking and making meaning
- Man at swimming pool with kids and his laptop
- Airplane – no one reading with TVs imbedded in each seatback
- TVs in cars. Kids are quiet and no one looks outside
- Wealth and material comfort

“Wealth (and we could substitute other words here: gossip, judging, not listening) is a pleasant and heady narcotic that give the addict an exhilarating sense of power, accompanied by a growing deadening of feeling for anything of real value. –Joseph Smith, TEACHING OF THE PROPHET J.S.

BE AWARE OF HOW INSTANT GRATIFICATION SUCKS THE LIFE OUT OF US

- Fast food
- iPods and mp3s
- cell phones – social status
- video games, game boys, play stations—Hours + all night with new game

“It is a difficult and challenging process to encourage and to motivate individuals to take on responsibility, to become **conscious**”

Some call how they are doing life—MULTI-TASKING.

- Watering down of concerns, focus, involvement
- Kids doing homework with music, cell phone, food, TV, while playing with the dog
- Therapist who cleaned out his day planner while claiming to listen to my concerns

Some are addicted to news, information that links to all the knowledge in the universe, to recording TV programs when they aren't home. Then have to watch them. New instant TV you can play, replay, edit. The world is yours, but YOU get lost.

The entertainment that demands greater and greater excitement in order to satisfy and technology that fills our minds are not inherently evil. **What they do to our characters deadens our ability to work spiritually.** All these breed

- limited attention span
- shallow thinking
- students cheating off the internet –justify that they are only learning and helping myself
- cheating with cell phones and text messaging during an exam

Before you think I am exempt—Solitaire—allowed myself 3 games before begin working

- Fast—It only takes a couple of minutes
- Feel like I'm really accomplishing because my mind is working
- Push myself to win. I have to. No game is going to get me. So I spend longer to triumph.

BUT all this comfort and ease and stimulating entertainment is about ME. Causes self-centeredness and selfishness.

I turn inward and want to satisfy my own needs. I forget what I can do for others or for the Lord. A definition I heard in a talk the other day said **selfishness is the keeping to one's self that which you have the power to give away.** ME centered. ME has lost the power to consider anyone else.

Our submission is all we have to place on God's altar. Then and only then are we really giving to Him and to his children.

Terry Warner in a discourse entitled "Honest, Simple, Solid, True" talks about himself and his discoveries, beginning with the story of the Prodigal Son:

My way, like the prodigal son's elder brother, was outwardly faithful but inwardly resentful when his brother received public honor he thought should be his. No matter how true the quest, when it is undertaken on one's own behalf, the voices say, "You're still in it for yourself. It's your own agenda that you care most about."

How then CAN a person come to be honest, simple, solid, true?

God himself submitted the tendencies of the flesh to the spirit or in other words to the will of the father. By dwelling in the flesh the Savior made himself subject to all these tendencies: our human disposition to be concerned too much about appearances, to take offense, to seek our own interest, to take advantage, to feel wounded, to retaliate. He had infinitely more reason than anyone has ever had to focus on his own self-protection and self-improvement and let the foolish and vicious devour each other. But he did none of these. Instead He suffered without taking any offense whatsoever, without becoming mistrustful, without either retaliating or withdrawing or concentrating on himself."

Dangerous thinking:

- Whatever I choose is right
- I am the most important person
- Expands to---the rules are for everyone except me.
 - Traffic and bad driving
 - Late to anything
 - Hand in late work because you are special
- TECHNOLOGY ENCOURAGES THESE BEHAVIORS on the negative side. The old paradox: much better world, much worse world

WHY DOES ALL THIS BOTHER ME? Because this is the curse of our world→ HAVE MORE AND BE LESS.

- Yes, the noise, the time lost in indulgence but not the worst.
- OUR OWN PERSONAL GROWTH AND SUSTAINING POWER IS BEING THREATENED. OUR HABITS OF INDULGENCE CREATE LIMITED ATTENTION SPAN, AN INABILITY TO SUSTAIN HARD WORK, AND TO ENDURE DIFFICULT TIMES WITH PATIENCE.
- Leads to shallow prayer, scripture study, attention span in meetings, distractions.

Sheri Dew reminds us: "Lucifer whispers that it doesn't matter what we do now; there is plenty of time later to get our spiritual act together. It is the Sin-Now-Pay-Later Plan. He feeds our vanity with promises of popularity, power, and prosperity. He tells us what we want to hear: that life is supposed to be easy and fun and that if we experience pain or undeserved difficulties, the gospel must not be working. He always promotes shortcuts, though no shortcuts to anywhere worth going exist."

So we rededicate ourselves to seek the Spirit.

"An attempt to master an understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ requires an immersion of all our senses, all our feelings, and all our intellect. It must be felt, internalized, not just analyzed. . . Our mortal lives are a constant struggle between choosing a oneness with God or a oneness with the world." –Tad Callister, Infinite Atonement

Must ask—WHO AM I? WHAT AM I BECOMING?

"Whereas the world teaches us to **know** something, the gospel teaches us to **become** something, and it is far more significant to **become** than to **know**." Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Joseph Smith **became**. The noises of the world did not deaden his character.

The mission of the gospel is not just to enlarge what we **know** but to change what we **are**. Become conscious and aware of the pattern that plagues us over and over. We have:

- Desire for comfort and ease at all costs
- Deadening
- Pain and difficult trials
- Repentance

WHAT, THEN, IS TRUE REPENTANCE AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE ATONEMENT?

- If is a burning resolve to make amends with God at any cost
- It is a new heart, a broken heart, a changed heart, a contrite heart.

The principal barrier to repentance is always self.

- We think we have no need to repent.
- We are not helpless victims. Do not despair. Slow down. Focus. Seek Christ.

Christ would have me:

- Repent of making him a second-class choice in my daily life
- Build relationships instead of isolating myself in a relationship with a piece of technology
- Learn to stop external entertainment so you can hear internal dialogues with self and God
- Be still and know that he is God.

"There are depths in the sea which the storms that lash the surface into fury never reach. They who reach down into the depth of life, where in **the stillness** the voice of God is heard, have the stabilizing power which carries them poised and serene through the hurricane of difficulties."

--President Spencer W. Kimball

3 Nephi 10:1 . . . All the people of the land did hear these [Christ's] sayings, and did witness of it. And after these sayings there was a **silence** in the land for the space of many hours

- To understand the words of Christ, we need **silence** and a time for **pondering**.
- To **seek to learn** in that silence.

- To realize that he gives us commandments because he loves us.

Book of Mormon reading. I repented and finished the Book of Mormon in three days. Learned to see the value of God's word these prophets had preserved. Like Dante's Inferno in scope because I saw the span of God's work with man. Instead of Satan being at the bottom of the journey, Christ was there. All meaning through the Book lead to Christ. Here are some scriptures I listed for myself:

Mosiah 4:10 And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things, see that ye do them.

Mosiah 8:20 (King Limhi speaking) O how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long doth he suffer with his people; yea, and **how blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men**; for they will not seek wisdom neither do they desire that wisdom should rule over them.

Alma 5:14 (Alma preaching) Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?

Alma 5:54 Will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another?

Helaman 14:30 And now, remember, remember my brethren, that whosoever perisheth, perisheth unto himself; and whosoever doeth iniquity, doeth it unto himself; for behold, ye are free; ye are permitted to act for yourselves; for behold, God hath given unto you a knowledge and he hath made you free.

After reflection on the words of Christ, the people's hearts were changed.

3 Nephi 4:33 And their hearts were swollen with joy, unto the gushing out of many tears, because of the great goodness of God in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; and they knew it was because of their repentance and their humility that they had been delivered from an everlasting destruction.

3 Nephi 17:3 Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.

Ether 4:15 Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you, yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.

So pain brings awareness to our lives, an awareness of our own weaknesses and of the love of Christ for us. We are awakened.

Again from the same Terry Warner talk, Brother Warner shows what can happen when this Spirit of Christ touches our hearts:

Several individuals I know were struggling to bring their teaching the right kind of heart. The challenges they faced were a lot like my challenges: They assumed that teaching meant adopting the role, the posture, the social position, and the mask of the teacher, and this kept them from being real to and reaching the hearts of their students. Like many in every walk of life—administrators and performers and counselors and artists and parents—they couldn't quite forget themselves. Given a change to teach their students, they could only manage to teach their subject. One of them, Brother Douglas, seemed unable to shed his particular burden of self-concern because of an unreconciled conflict with a man in his ward. He had tried for years to resolve their differences, but to no avail. "Still there remained between us a tension," he wrote, "a binding yet repelling force that affected not only both of us but our families." Preparing to relocate to another state, he knew he had to make reconciliation, but try as he might he could not discover where he had been at fault. How could he rectify a wrong he could not identify?

I will give you what happened then in his own words:

I had intended to go over to this man's house between church meetings, but was detained. Suddenly I saw this brother walk out of the church and cross the parking lot to his car. I cut short the conversation I was in and almost ran after him. When I caught up with him I put my hand on his shoulder from behind, turned him around, entwined our forearms, then pulled him close to me. When you pounce on someone like that it usually means that you have something important to say. But what was I supposed to say? I still wasn't sure what my offense was. It was not until the very moment I looked directly and deeply into this man's eye for the first time in years that I could see my sin. At that moment I no longer saw him, I saw myself reflected! Where there had been no words to say, I found myself asking this good man for his forgiveness. "Why?" he asked. I heard myself reply, "Because I have loved you less. That is my sin: I have loved you less." Tears filled our eyes as I told him then that I love him. He knew that I loved him. Whatever else I said after that really didn't matter much. I left him to return to the church. I glanced back once to see this good brother still standing where I had left him, his head down, and his shoulders gently rolling with his sobs.

We need to look into our own lives, see where we have allowed ourselves to become deadened, listen with the intent to DO not just HEAR—not just bask in the spirit, repent, and come unto Christ with full hearts.

Listen to one of my favorite scriptures when Jacob says:

2 Nephi 9:51 Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy. Hearken **diligently** unto me, and remember the words which I have spoken; and come unto the Holy One of Israel, and **feast** upon that which perisheth not, neither can be corrupted, and **let your soul delight in fatness**.

And how do we do that? Moroni tells us:

Moroni 10:32 Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and **deny yourselves of all ungodliness**; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

That we may awaken, take on the consciousness and awareness we need to find the Lord, I pray.