

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 36: "Beloved of God, Called to Be Saints"

(Romans)

LESSON GOAL: Remember we are children of God and must strive to live worthy of our divine inheritance.

1. We are justified by faith in Jesus Christ.

Justification: To be reconciled to God, **pardoned** from punishment we deserve for sin, and **declared righteous** and **guiltless**, to become **clean** through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

WE CANNOT JUSTIFY OURSELVES.

Grace: Divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. It is through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they would not be able to maintain if left to their own means.

Paul showed that justification comes through the grace of Jesus Christ, not through "the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:20).

The Prophet Joseph Smith: "To be justified before God we must **love** one another: we must **overcome evil**; we must **visit the fatherless and the widow** in their affliction, and we must **keep ourselves unspotted** from the world: for such virtues flow from the great fountain of pure religion, strengthening our faith by adding every good quality that adorns the children of the blessed Jesus. We can **pray** in the season of prayer; we can **love our neighbor** as ourselves, and **be faithful in tribulation**, knowing that the reward of such is greater in the kingdom of heaven. What a consolation! What a joy!" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 76).

We cannot earn our salvation by our works, but that is the only way to let the Savior know that we want it.

Hugh Nibley: "A righteous person is one who is repenting; a wicked person is one who is not repenting. A righteous man is not one who is all good. There is no such person at all. We have all this mixture. And a wicked man is not one who is all bad. We don't have any of either. If you are repenting, it's like being on the stairway. A person at the bottom of the stairs facing up is better off than the person at the top of the stairs facing down, if it's the way of repentance. So this is what we are told. **It's never too late**, and that's a marvelous thing. But Satan wants to discourage you and say it is too late. Why not go through with it? "I am in blood stepped in so far that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er." In other words, "I might as well go on; a few more murders won't make that much difference. (Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 1, p.113)

Robert L. Millet: "To be justified by God is to be **made clean** in spite of one's inability to repay the Master, to be **made innocent** in spite of one's lack of moral perfection. It is to be **acquitted from sin through one's faith in Christ**, faith which manifests itself in the works of righteousness (Romans 2:6-7). The Lord **Jesus compensates** for the chasm between man's simple strivings and God's immutable standards of perfection, between where a man really is and where he must eventually be." (*Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series*, 518.)

Dallin H. Oaks: "A person is a true Latter-day Saint if he (or she) is **so inwardly**, if his conversion is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not from men for outward acts but from God for the inward desires of his heart. As we seek to determine whether we have become true Latter-day Saints—inwardly as well as outwardly—it soon becomes apparent that the **critical element is progress, not longevity**. The issue is not **what we have done but what we have become**. And what we have become is **the result of more than our actions. It is also the result of our attitudes, our motives, and our desires**. Each of these is an ingredient of the pure heart. (*Pure in Heart* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 138.)

APPLICATION: To realize Christ loves us and justifies our sins because of our faith AND works.

2. We can be reborn and become joint-heirs with Christ.

Bruce R. McConkie: "A joint-heir is one who inherits equally with all other heirs including the Chief Heir who is the Son. Each joint heir has an equal and undivided portion of the whole of everything. If one knows all things, so do all the others. If one has all power, so do all those who inherit jointly with him. If the universe belongs to one, so it does equally to the total of all upon whom the joint inheritances are bestowed.

Joint heirs are possessors of all things (D&C 50:26-28). All things are theirs for they have exaltation (D&C 88:107). They gain all power both in heaven and on earth and receive the fullness of the Father, and all knowledge and truth are theirs (D&C 93:15-30). They are gods (D&C 132:20). Celestial marriage is the gate to the high state of exaltation (E&C 131:1-4).

Baptism by immersion is a symbol of our spiritual rebirth. When we go under the water, it is a symbol that we are burying our old self in a grave. When we come out of the water, we are symbolically washed clean. We have become a new person who has covenanted to follow Christ.

Romans 8:5-8,13: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. . . For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Bruce R. McConkie: "Sometimes the spiritual struggle to slay sin, that the new convert may be free, is as savage a warfare as death by crucifixion. **But when sin is destroyed in our lives, it is no longer our master.** We are 'dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' (Rom. 6:3-11.)" (*The Promised Messiah*, 389).

Romans 8:35, 38-39: "**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Mark E. Petersen: "Then, being children of God, **we can see our true destiny.** And being thus related to him, as his children, we now see ourselves in an entirely new light—not as the descendants of ape-like creatures living an aimless existence, but as the descendants of Almighty God, with the possibility of becoming like him! Now we can understand the true place and dignity of man. Now we can see his infinite potential. As members of the family of God, we can know that **he has placed us here on earth in a type of school that will help us to become like him, if we are willing to follow the curriculum.**" (*Conference Report, October 1968, General Priesthood Meeting 100 - 101.*)

APPLICATION: How have you felt the Savior's love in your life and what difference has His love made?

3. We should live as becomes Saints.

Saint: A translation of a Greek word also rendered "holy," the fundamental idea being that of **consecration** or separation for a sacred purpose; but the word came to mean "**free from blemish,**" whether physical or moral. In the N.T. **the saints are all those who by baptism have entered into the Christian covenant.**

Romans 13:8-9: "Owe no man any thing, but **to love one another:** for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**"

Certain phrases from the last part of Romans speak with great power to our hearts. It is worth your time to take a look at these 25 **sentence sermons from Romans.** Rewrite them in your words and find the place they fit into your life.

1. 6:4 "We also should walk in **newness of life.**"
2. 6:5 "We shall be in **the likeness of his resurrection.**"
3. 6:12 "**Let not sin therefore reign** in your mortal body."
4. 6:13 "**Yield yourselves unto God.**"
5. 6:16 "**His servants ye are to whom ye obey.**"
6. 6:23 "For the **wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord."
7. 7:18 (JST) "I seek to **subdue that sin which dwelleth in me.**"
8. 8:6 "**For to be carnally minded is death . . .**"
9. 8:14 "For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**"
10. 8:17 "Heirs of God, and **joint-heirs with Christ . . .**"
11. 8:18 "The **sufferings** of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."
12. 8:28 "**All things work together for good** to them that love God."
13. 8:31 "**If God be for us, who can be against us?**"
14. 8:35 "**Who shall separate us** from the love of Christ?"
15. 9:6 "For **they are not all Israel,** which are of Israel . . ."
16. 9:20 "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, **Why hast thou made me thus?**"
17. 10:11 "**Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**"
18. 11:16 "If the **root be holy, so are the branches.**"
19. 12:1 " **Present your bodies a living sacrifice.**"
20. 12:2 "Be not conformed to **this world . . .**"
21. 12:20 " **If thine enemy hunger, feed him . . .**"
22. 13:10 "**Love is the fulfilling** of the law."
23. 14:12 "Every one of us shall **give account of himself to God.**"
24. 15:1 "We then that are **strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.**"
25. 16:17 "Mark them which **cause divisions and offences** contrary to the doctrine. . . and **avoid them.**"

APPLICATION: Ultimately, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. That is the test we must pass.

from ***The Power of Everyday Missionaries: The What and How of Sharing the Gospel***

by Clayton M. Christensen

Chapter 8

“Teach How to Study the Scriptures [The Book of Mormon] Prayerfully”

The experiences Clayton recounted in this chapter profoundly changed the way that he lead his friends toward conversion. **Clayton understood the need to teach people *how* to read and ponder the scriptures.** This became clear to him through some experiences with a business associate he had known for several years, Brian.

Brian sent Clayton an email in which he expressed curiosity about the church's views on several issues. Clayton invited him to his home to discuss these with the missionaries over dinner. Clayton said, “Rather than my telling you what I want you to know about our church, **would you please come with a list of questions about religion** that you've not been able to find satisfactory answers to? Then we can give our views on those issues. We just want to be sure we're responsive to what's on your mind.”

Brian came with a typed list of thoughtful questions about the concepts of original sin and infant baptism. When Clayton offered him a copy of the Book of Mormon, Brian pushed the book away, saying, “Somebody gave me one of these several years ago. I tried to read it into “Second Neffee,” but it's weird and I just couldn't get into it.” As Brian said those words, Clayton felt a strong impression that Brian might never have learned *how* to read the scriptures.”

The assignment Clayton gave Brian was this: **Read just two chapters** in the Book of Mormon: Mosiah 18:1-16 and Moroni 8. Then **write a two-paragraph answer to each of these three questions:**

- Why does it make God so angry when people baptize little children?
- Why does God want us to be baptized in the first place? What is the purpose of baptism?
- What is the process by which we come to be forgiven of our sins?

Clayton then described the process Brian needed to follow when doing this “homework. It entails seven steps.

Now, how does this scenario apply to us in this Gospel Doctrine class? Each week we have the possibility to deepen our knowledge and understanding of the gospel. I would submit to you that we can follow the same process of reading and studying the scriptures that Clayton Christensen proposed to his friend. **We could follow the same pattern in our own lives to increase our growth and insights into the gospel.**

You could experiment and explore this Clayton method:

A. Write down a **list of questions** you have about the gospel. These could be centered on the Gospel Doctrine lesson for the coming week or on the lesson today.

B. **Choose the scriptures** that you think would answer your questions. This week it is Romans.

Here is a sample of questions you could be dealing with from Romans:

- What is justification by faith?
- How do we increase in our faith?
- What is the relationship between our faith and the Lord's infinite Atonement?
- What role does the Holy Ghost play in our being justified?

C. **Follow the study-the-scriptures process entailing the seven steps:**

1. **Pray on your knees**, aloud, telling God that you got this homework assignment from your friend. Ask Him to help you understand the chapters as you read them.
2. **Read the chapters.**
3. **Write your answers**, in draft form, to the questions.
4. **Kneel again in verbal prayer** and **explain to God the answers you have written**, just as if you were talking to Him face-to-face. Then tell Him you're going to read the chapters one more time. **Ask Him again to please help you understand even more deeply** the answers that *HE* would want you to give to these questions as you read.
5. **Read the chapters again.**
6. **Revise your answers, based upon your deeper understanding.** These written answers are the “homework” you need to keep and discuss in the lesson concerning them.
7. **Then kneel again and pray a third time.** But the purpose of this prayer will be different. This time you need to **ask God if the things that you have written, and things that you have read, are true.**

(What does it mean to pray with *real intent*? Praying with *real intent* means that you need to tell God what you intend to do if He answers your prayer.)

Background to Romans:

Bruce R. McConkie: "The epistle to the Romans is a letter, not a treatise on gospel subjects. It is not written to the world, but to the saints, to people who already know and understand the doctrines of salvation. Paul's comments on gospel subjects presuppose an extensive prior knowledge on the part of the readers. He does not here expound doctrines as such; he simply comments about them, leaving unsaid the volumes of gospel understanding already possessed by the saints. Romans, hence, is not a source of gospel knowledge for the spiritually untutored; it is not the initial place to turn to learn of Christ and his laws." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 2:212).

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ

James E. Faust: "Some of us are naturally reserved and timid about bearing our testimony with words. Perhaps we should not be so timid. The Doctrine and Covenants tells us, 'But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man' (D&C 60:2) We should testify with a spirit of humility. . . All my life I have tried not to hide who I am and what I believe in. I cannot recall a single instance when it hurt my career or I lost valued friends by humbly acknowledging that I was a member of this Church." (James P. Bell, *In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust*, 445 - 446).

Romans 1:16 for it is the power of God unto salvation

Bruce R. McConkie: "What, then, is the gospel that is dispensed from heaven to men? **It is the great and eternal plan of salvation.** It is the way and the means provided by the Father whereby his spirit children-Christ included-can advance and progress and become like him...And because it is the power of God that saves men, it includes both what the Lord does for us and what we must do for ourselves to be saved. **On his part it is the atonement; on our part it is obedience to all that is given us of God.** Thus the gospel includes every truth, every principle, every law-all that men must believe and know. Thus it includes every ordinance, every rite, every performance-all that men must do to please their Maker." (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man*, 98).

Romans 2:28-29 he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly...But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart

Dallin H. Oaks: "To paraphrase, a person is a true Latter-day Saint if he is so inwardly, if his conversion is that of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not from men for outward acts but from God for the inward desires of his heart.

"As we seek to determine whether we have become true Latter-day Saints-inwardly as well as outwardly-it soon becomes apparent that the critical element is progress, not longevity. The question is not how much time we have logged, but how far we have progressed toward perfection. As **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** has said, 'Life is not lineal, but experiential, not chronological, but developmental' (*Ensign*, December 1986, p. 23). **The issue is not what we have done but what we have become.** And what we have become is the result of more than our actions. It is also the result of our attitudes, our motives, and our desires. Each of these is an ingredient of the pure heart.

"Some persons achieve great progress toward perfection with just a few of life's experiences. Others seem to pass through the same experiences again and again and yet remain relatively unchanged by them. The contrast is suggestive of the difference between the status of one person with four years' experience and another person with one year's experience repeated twenty times. **The question is not longevity but growth.** Growth is not measured by a clock or an odometer but by what has happened in the heart." (*Pure in Heart* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 138).

Romans 3:10-18 As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one

Robert L. Millet: "...as President Ezra Taft Benson observed, **people do not yearn for salvation in Christ until they know why they need Christ,** which thing they cannot know until they understand and acknowledge the Fall and its effects upon all mankind. The atonement of Jesus Christ is inextricably and eternally tied to the Fall of Adam and Eve. To attempt to offer the solution without a knowledge of the problem is to teach the Atonement in the abstract, to lessen its impact, to mitigate its transforming power in the lives of men and women. Thus it is that the Apostle Paul began at the beginning; he laid stress where it needed to be. Quoting the Psalmist, he affirmed: 'There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one' (Romans 3:10-12; see also Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3)." (Robert L. Millet, *Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars*, 70).

Romans 3:20 by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight

Bruce R. McConkie: "Does salvation come, then, by works? **No, not by the works of the law of Moses,** and for that matter, not even by the more perfect works of the gospel itself. **Salvation comes through Christ's atonement,** through the ransom he paid, the propitiation he made; without this no good works on the part of men could redeem them from temporal death, which redemption is resurrection, or redeem them from spiritual death, which redemption is eternal life." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 231.)

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God

Stephen E. Robinson: "Paul points out that any claim to righteousness based on one's own efforts to keep the commandments requires a perfect record. **One slip and you are no longer perfect...**In other words, since everyone has broken the law, no one can claim to be righteous by virtue of having kept the law. To make matters worse, the law itself pronounces the curse on anyone who is not perfect in keeping all the commandments. (Deut. 27:26.) Yet because of our fallen natures, it was frankly impossible for human beings to keep all the terms of the old covenant. Therefore, at least from the perspective of Paul in the first century, God in his mercy has provided a new covenant, an agreement with terms we can keep. **Jesus Christ is the one who redeems us** from the curse of the law-from the demand for perfect performance-by offering a new means of justification, not by law (keeping all the rules all the time), but by faith in Christ." (Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News*, 41).

Romans 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation

Propitiation means a sacrifice to bring favor with God or to restore harmony to one's relationship with God. In this sense, it is a synonym of "atonement."

Romans 3:25 through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins

Bruce C. Hafen: "Significantly, all of us, including those who learn from the pain of a wounded conscience, need the Savior's help in compensating for the effects of our mistakes as well as our deliberate sins. For that reason Paul could say, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' (Romans 3:23) For that reason the Lord told Adam, 'Wherefore teach it unto your children, that *all men, everywhere*, must repent [and be baptized], . . . for no unclean thing can dwell in his presence. . . .' (Moses 6:57) These statements are true not because of original sin or because all men are inherently evil by nature. They are true because the universal trial-and-error process of learning from experience means **all have erred**. It is part of the process. The process is good, if we learn from the errors. But learning alone is not enough, for **payment must be made to balance the scales of justice** after our errors have tipped them toward the negative side. That payment can be made by the Savior's Atonement, through application of the law of mercy, if we but repent by accepting him and by learning to live better through our experience." (*The Broken Heart*, 138).

Romans 3:28 a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law

Gerald N. Lund: "...Faith is the principle that activates the power of the Atonement in our lives, and we are put back into a proper relationship with God (justification) as faith activates that power. There are marvelous implications in this concept, and perhaps another analogy can help us see more clearly the role faith and works play in achieving salvation:

"We are like a powerhouse on a mighty river. The powerhouse has no power residing in itself; the potential power rests in the energy of the river. When that source of power flows through the generators of the power plant, power is transferred from the river to the power plant and sent out into the homes (lives) of others. So it is with faith. The power to achieve justification does not reside in man. Man requires the power of the atonement of Christ flowing into him. If no power is being generated, one does not--indeed, cannot--turn the generators by hand (justification by works); but rather, an effort is made to remove those things which have blocked the power from flowing into the generators (working righteousness as a result of faith). With this background then, one can understand why the scriptures clearly stress that faith includes works (James 2:17-26); that is, obedience, commitment, and repentance--these are the works of faith that open up the channels so that the power of the atoning sacrifice of Christ can flow into us, redeem us from sin, and bring us back into the presence of God. Disobedience and wickedness dam those channels. The righteous works in themselves do not save us. **The atoning power of God saves us.** But our righteous works, activated by our faith in the Savior, are the condition for the operation of that power." ("Salvation: By Grace or by Works?" *Ensign*, Apr. 1981, 22-23).

Romans 5:3 we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience

Richard Lloyd Anderson: "Paul says that determined faith subjected to such trials will bring about 'patience. Thus, Romans establishes a **progression for the full favor of God**: first **grace** and **justification** through faith, followed by **trials**, followed by **endurance**, followed by a **tested character**. It is fiction to say that people go through such processes without using their total resolve, resources, and powers of decision. As real Gethsemanes come, only prayer and inspiration from God will bring the victory. Only gratitude to the atoning Lord can give meaning to the constant struggle." (*Understanding Paul* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 183).

Neal A. Maxwell: "Patience permits us to cling to our faith in the Lord when we are tossed about by suffering as if by surf. When the undertow grasps us, we will realize that even as we tumble we are somehow being carried forward; we are actually being helped even as we cry for help!

"One of the functions of the tribulation of the righteous is that 'tribulation worketh patience' (Rom. 5:3). **What a vital attribute patience is, if tribulation is worth enduring to bring about its development!** Patience, in turn, allows us to have the needed experience, as noted in the stunning insight the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'All these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good' (D&C 122:7). Perhaps one can be forgiven if, in response to this sobering insight, his soul shivers just a bit. ("Patience," *Ensign*, Oct. 1980, 29-30)

Romans 5:5 the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost

Robert L. Millet: "Pure love comes from a pure source, from God. It begins with God, is extended by him to man, and sheds 'itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men.' (1 Nephi 11:22.) As we shall see, **we are able to love others purely only as we seek for and partake of the love of God ourselves.** As the **Prophet Joseph Smith** explained, 'Love is one of the chief characteristics of Deity, and ought to be manifested by those who aspire to be the sons of God.' (TPJS,174.)" (*Steadfast and Immovable: Striving for Spiritual Maturity*, 80).

Romans 5:10-11 We were reconciled to God by the death of his son, and we joy in God through Jesus Christ by whom we have received the Atonement.

Hugh Nibley: "The word atonement is only found once in the New Testament. It's found a number of times in the Old Testament, but only once in the New Testament. They use instead reconciliation. **Reconciliation means 'to return and sit down beside somebody again.'** ...You return and then you sit down. You sit down by the side of the Lord, and you sit down again because you've been there before. It's reconciliation. It's redemption. It's the redeeming. This means buying back something that he had before. We weren't just created out of nothing, you see. **We are returning to his presence.** We've been there before, and the whole thing is a sense of returning to his presence. That's what reconciliation is, which is the equivalent of atonement." (Hugh Nibley, *Semester 1: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class BYU, 1988--1990*, 214).

Bruce R. McConkie: "Nothing in the entire plan of salvation compares in any way in importance with that most transcendent of all events, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. **It is the most important single thing that has ever occurred in the entire history of created things;** it is the rock foundation upon which the gospel and all other things rest. Indeed, all 'things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it,' the Prophet said. (*Teachings*, 121).

"The atonement embraces, sustains, supports, and gives life and force to all other gospel doctrines. It is the foundation upon which all truth rests, and all things grow out of it and come because of it. Indeed, the atonement is the gospel...

"**Salvation comes because of the atonement.** Without it, the whole plan of salvation would be frustrated and the whole purpose behind the creating and populating of the earth would come to naught. With it, the eternal purposes of the Father will roll forth, the purpose of creation be preserved, the plan of salvation made efficacious, and men will be assured of a hope of the highest exaltation hereafter." (*Mormon Doctrine*, "Atonement", 60-61).

Romans 6:4-5 we are buried with him by baptism into death

Joseph Fielding Smith: "The ordinance of baptism is symbolic of death and rebirth in two ways; Christ's triumph over physical death and spiritual death are both represented. First, the natural man, the carnal man must die. He is an enemy to God. Baptism symbolizes that death as the body is laid in the water just as a corpse is laid in the tomb. **The result is the birth of a new man,** the man of Christ, a son or daughter of Christ. If one walks in 'a newness of life,' enduring to the end, he or she overcomes spiritual death. Joseph Fielding Smith said of Romans 6:6, "Here is a very definite statement that through baptism we have been transplanted from the life of sin to the life of faith and obedience to the kingdom of God. In other words obtained a spiritual resurrection, or transfer from the life of sin to the kingdom of God, where sin should no longer abound." (*Take Heed to Yourselves* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1966], 312).

Joseph Smith: "Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the Kingdom of God, except faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is in vain." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 198).

Romans 6:17-18 ye have obeyed from the heart, being made free from sin

Neal A. Maxwell: "We cannot obey, of course, unless we have faith. Paul said that 'by faith' Abraham obeyed. (Hebrews 11:8-9) There is an immense insight given by Paul in his epistle to the Romans in which he praised them and then said, 'But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' (Rom. 6:17) **Obeying 'from the heart' is one great key.** It is obedience because of the word and not because of imposed circumstances." (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, 45).

Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death

Elaine L. Jack: "There are some who are not satisfied with the peace that comes from the Lord. Seeking gratification in unholy places, they hang out-usually on a limb-and play into the hands of Satan and his evil designs. 'Stand ye in holy places,' we are told, for 'the wages of sin is death' (Rom. 6:23), and the road back from sin is a long one (D&C 87:8).

"Some break what they view as **the lesser commandments, hoping that such infractions will be only minor deductions in the final exam.** They don't keep the Sabbath day holy, they invite temptation, they seek release from the pressures of school with drugs or alcohol, they don't fulfill their callings. They lie-just a little; they cheat-just when they need to; and they miss Church meetings-only when they're tired. Never take no cutoffs' means to enter in at the strait gate and to stay on the straight and narrow path." ("Never Take No Cutoffs," *Ensign*, Aug. 1994, 65-66)

Romans 8:6 to be carnally minded is death

Brigham Young: "When we view the great object of our life, our being here upon the earth, being brought here expressly to receive that experience by which we can discover between right and wrong, between good and evil, between light and darkness, and obtain that experience that angels have, that the gods have, and that all exalted beings have, and remember that we are put in possession of those principles that make us wise unto salvation, that we should stoop to the sinful deeds and sinful reflections that many do, is marvelous and strange. When I think of these things, I am impressed with the great importance of this life and of exercising ourselves in the privileges that **God has granted to us to prepare our hearts through obedience to the Gospel** of the Son of God, for a high station, for a high exaltation in worlds to come, such as we cannot receive whilst clothed in this mortal tabernacle. But still, in this life we can receive little by little, and more and more, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth, until our minds are able to comprehend many of the great things of eternity; and thus prepare our hearts, **by overcoming sin and the weaknesses of humanity**, for that exaltation already awaiting the righteous." (*Journal of Discourses*, 19: 2-3).

Romans 8:6 to be spiritually minded is life and peace

Dallin H. Oaks: "To be spiritually minded is to view and evaluate our experiences in terms of the enlarged perspective of eternity.

"Each of us has a personal lens through which we view the world. Our lens gives its special tint to all we see. It can suppress some features and emphasize others. It can also reveal things otherwise invisible. Through the lens of spirituality, we can know 'the things of God' by 'the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2:11.) As the Apostle Paul taught, such things are 'foolishness' to the 'natural man.' He cannot see them 'because they are spiritually discerned.' (1 Cor. 2:14).

"How we interpret our experiences is also a function of our degree of spirituality. Some interpret mortality solely in terms of worldly accomplishments and possessions. **In contrast, we who have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ should interpret our experiences in terms of our knowledge of the purpose of life, the mission of our Savior, and the eternal destiny of the children of God.**

"**Spirituality is not a function of occupation or calling.** A scientist may be more spiritual than a theologian; a teacher may be more spiritual than an officer. Spirituality is determined by personal outlook and priorities. It is evident in our words and actions." ("Spirituality," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 61).

James E. Faust: "An important part of the spiritual being of all of us is the quiet and sacred part from which we may feel a sanctification in our lives. It is that part of us wherein no other soul intrudes. It is that part of us that permits us to come close to the divine, both in and out of this world. This portion of our beings is reserved only for ourselves and our Creator; we open the portals thereof when we pray. It is here that we retreat and meditate. It is possible for the Holy Ghost to abide in this special part of us. It is a place of special communion. It is the master cell of our spiritual battery. But this great energizer becomes dead when transgression creeps with stealth into our lives. The Romans were reminded: 'For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.' (Romans 8:6.)

"As we undertake to strengthen the inner soul, we move beyond concern for things that we can hold and possess. A wise man said: '**The wealth of a soul is measured by how much it can feel; its poverty, by how little.**' (William Rounseville Alger.)" (*To Reach Even unto You* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980], 16.)

Romans 8:7 the carnal mind is enmity against God

Neal A. Maxwell: "**Spiritual submissiveness is not blind faith but deliberate obedience.** It consists of proceeding on the basis of what we already know-proceeding to further subordination of the self within us. To begin to live with God in the world requires the expulsion of what is unacceptable in the old self-no minor adjustment. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' (Romans 8:7). 'They are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness' (Alma 41:11).

"**Sometimes we do not submit because we are preoccupied with the choking, consuming cares of the world.** 'And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful' (Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14; 21:34). Being preoccupied with the cares of the world, we have no time for God and for spiritual things." (*Not My Will, But Thine* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998], 100).

Romans 8:16 we are the children of God

Howard W. Hunter: "As children of God, we learn in our young years to know our Heavenly Father in a childlike way, and if we follow the right course, the time comes when we understand the larger meaning of this relationship to our Heavenly Parent. **We realize that we are made in his spiritual image** as well as his physical image. In our more spiritual maturity, a whole new vista of reality opens to us; and we commence to understand the statement of Paul, who said, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' (Rom. 8:16.)" (*Conference Report, October 1968, Afternoon Meeting* 139.)

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Romans 8:17 if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ

Delbert L. Stapley: "A joint-heir legally inherits and shares all equities and gifts in equal interest with all other heirs. Nothing is excluded nor adjusted in value between the participating joint-heirs. . . .

"If we are led by the Spirit of God in our lives, we are promised heirship with him and joint-heirship with Christ our Lord in the great estate of God's kingdom and glory. [Rom. 8:17.] We 'suffer with Christ' as we sacrifice the things of the world and yield complete obedience to every truth, principle, and ordinance of the gospel plan. Whatever we contribute in honest tithes and other contributions along with unselfish participation and service to our fellow men to build the kingdom of God on the earth, increases our personal joy and happiness in heirship with Christ the Lord. . . .

"The Father has promised his sons who receive the Holy Priesthood and faithfully abide by the conditions of its oath and covenant that they are to share in all that which the Father hath. The Father possesses kingdoms, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions, and exaltations. These the faithful will receive of him as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. This promise is a challenging encouragement for all to do his will. (CR, April 1961, 66-67).

Romans 8:24 we are saved by hope

Neal A. Maxwell: "Real hope, said Paul, is a hope for things that are not seen that are true. (Romans 8:24.)...Christ-centered hope, however, is a very specific and particularized hope. It is focused on **the great realities of the resurrection, eternal life, a better world,** and Christ's triumphant second coming 'things as they really will be.' (Jacob 4:13).

"Moroni asked rhetorically, 'What should we hope for?' and, responding, said: 'Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.' (Moroni 7:41.)" (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, 41).

Romans 8:26 the Spirit also helpeth...for we know not what we should pray for

Gene R. Cook: "When you are attempting to obtain answers to your prayers and to be directed by the Lord, you need to learn to **follow the promptings of the Spirit.** Those promptings will help you know what the Lord requires of you as you seek the blessing. They will help you know what to pray for and where to go from there. The Spirit's promptings will also tell you as you go along how much more faith you may need to exercise in order to accomplish your desire. You may have promptings telling you what you need to repent of, how to draw closer to the Lord, specific steps toward the blessing, and so forth. In sum, **the Lord will guide you through the experience if you will seek to follow the promptings he gives you.**" (*Receiving Answers to Our Prayers* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1996], 70.)

Romans 8:31 If God be for us, who can be [prevail] against us?

Jeffrey R. Holland: "Christ and His angels and His prophets forever labor to buoy up our spirits, steady our nerves, calm our hearts, send us forth with renewed strength and resolute hope. They wish all to know that 'if God be for us, who can be against us?' In the world we shall have tribulation, but we are to be of good cheer. Christ has overcome the world." ("The Peaceable Things of the Kingdom," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 83)

Romans 12:1 I beseech you...that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice

Bruce R. McConkie: "Sacrifices are of two kinds: living and dead, or in other words, temporal and spiritual. Under the law of Moses, animals were slain in similitude of the coming sacrifice of the Son of God; such were temporal sacrifices, sacrifices involving death. **But under the law of Christ, men are called upon to make living sacrifices, to sacrifice themselves by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.**" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 2: 292.)

Romans 12:2 but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind

M. Russell Ballard: "Listen to the language of the scriptures as they describe the level of sacrifice the Lord requires of us: '**Offer your whole souls as an offering unto [God]**' (Omni 1:26; Mosiah 2:24). 'Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God' (Rom. 12:1). The Lord Himself has said that we should keep our 'covenants by sacrifice-yea, every sacrifice which I, the Lord, shall command' (D&C 97:8). The sacrifice the Lord asks of us is **to wholly rid ourselves of the 'natural man'** (Mosiah 3:19) and all the ungodliness associated with it. When we completely surrender ourselves to the Lord, then **He will cause a mighty change in us** and we will become a new person, justified, sanctified, and born again with His image in our countenances (Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:14)." (*The Law of Sacrifice*, *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 13).

Romans 12:18 live peaceably with all men

Dallin H. Oaks: "The Savior and his Apostles had no program for world peace other than **individual righteousness.** They mounted no opposition to the rule of Rome or to the regime of its local tyrants. They preached individual righteousness and taught that **the children of God should love their enemies** and 'live peaceably with all men' (Rom. 12:18). Recent history reminds us that people who continue to hate one another after a war will have another war, whereas the victor and vanquished who forgive one another will share peace and prosperity." ("World Peace," *Ensign*, May 1990, 72)

Romans 12:8-21 A Great Admonition from Paul

Carlfred Broderick: "In the thirteenth article of faith, Joseph Smith references 'the admonition of Paul' found in Philip. 4:8. The Prophet said, 'we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul' (A of F 13). But in Romans 12, we find another admonition from Paul—one which may be even more important for us to follow. Herein, he describes the attributes of godliness which each latter-day saint should strive to develop. They are the qualities which separate the latter-day "saints" from the rest of the members of the church. Some have asked, "Are you a 'saint' or just a 'Mormon'?" The difference between the two can be seen in how well we follow this great admonition from Paul.

"Several years ago a husband and wife, both active members of the Church, came to me professionally with very serious marital problems. Both said, 'How could this be happening to us? **We have a temple marriage.** We have kept the commandments. We pay our tithing, keep the Word of Wisdom, attend the temple regularly, and serve the Lord faithfully in our Church callings. It just isn't fair! Why aren't we blessed with a happy marriage?'

"They admitted that contrary to Paul's counsel in Romans 12 their expectations of each other were all too 'conformed to this world' (Rom. 12:2); that each was given to **thinking of himself** and his own opinions 'more highly than he ought to think' (Rom. 12:3); that there was **insufficient positive appreciation** for the ways they were different (Rom. 12:4-6); that there was a **shortage in their home of mercy, cheerfulness, love, and kindly affection**, 'preferring one another' (Rom. 12:8-10). They acknowledged that they **had not always rejoiced** when their partner rejoiced or wept when he or she wept (Rom. 12:15), that they were often **not 'of the same mind one toward another'** (Rom. 12:16), and that they **did not strive** as much as they possibly could to 'live peaceably' with each other (Rom. 12:18). Finally, they confessed that they had never mastered the rule to 'avenge not yourselves' instead of giving 'place unto wrath' (Rom. 12:19), or to 'be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good' (Rom 12:21).

"In short, I told them, they were in some ways in the situation of those who 'pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought [they] to have done, and not [left] the other undone.' (Matt. 23:23.)

"...you can be assured of a rewarding, enduring heaven-bound marriage **if you obey the laws that govern this part of life.** They are among the highest and most challenging laws in all of the gospel; no other reward is so great as that promised by the Lord to those who keep them." ("I Have A Question," *Ensign*, July 1983, 45).

Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good

Gordon B. Hinckley: "Should we be surprised if we are called upon to endure a little criticism, to make some small sacrifice for our faith, when our forebears paid so great a price for theirs?"

"Without contention, without argument, without offense, let us pursue a steady course, moving forward to build the kingdom of God. If there is trouble, let us face it calmly. **Let us overcome evil with good.** This is God's work. It will continue to strengthen over the earth, touching for good the lives of countless thousands whose hearts will respond to the message of truth. No power under heaven can stop it. This is my faith and this is my testimony." (*CR*, April 1970).

Romans 12:19 avenge not yourselves...for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay

Spencer W. Kimball: "In the midst of discordant sounds of hate, bitterness and revenge expressed so often today, the soft note of forgiveness comes as a healing balm. Not least is its effect on the forgiver. Someone wisely said, 'He who has not forgiven a wrong or an injury has not yet tasted one of the sublime enjoyments of life. The human soul seldom rises to such heights of strength and nobility as when it removes all resentments and forgives errors and malice.'

"**Retaliation certainly is not repentance**, but the suffering of indignities, on the other hand, may be the way toward that goal. The Lord's matchless Sermon on the Mount provides for the better way, one without revenge or retaliation. And Paul said to the Romans: 'Recompense to no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.' (Rom. 12:17, 19.)

"Spinoza expresses it this way: 'He who wishes to revenge injuries by reciprocal hatred will live in misery. But, he who endeavors to drive away hatred by means of love, fights with pleasure and confidence. Those whom he conquers yield joyfully, not from want of force, but increase thereof.'" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 266-267).

Romans 13:10 love is the fulfilling of the law

Carlos E. Asay: "Other scriptural references remind us that to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbor as ourself 'is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices' (Mark 12:33). Moreover, 'love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom. 13:10). If love of God and one's fellowmen fulfills the law and is regarded as more than burnt offerings and sacrifices, how can we possibly ignore the woman on the street, the man in the gutter, and the abandoned urchin when we have precious, saving truths to share? John Taylor said: Our feelings towards the world of mankind, generally, ought to be the same as Jesus manifested to them. He sought to promote their welfare, and our motto ought to be the same as his was--Peace on earth and good will to men; **we should seek to promote the happiness and welfare of all Adam's race.**" (*The Seven M's of Missionary Service: Proclaiming the Gospel* Chap. 1).

Romans 15:1 we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak . . . and not to please ourselves

Gordon B. Hinckley: "There is a sad tendency in our world today for persons to cut one another down. Did you ever realize that it does not take very much in the way of brainpower to make remarks that may wound another? Try the opposite of that. **Try handing out compliments.**

"For a number of years, while I had responsibility for the work in Asia, I interviewed each missionary one-on-one. I asked each **what virtue he or she saw in his or her companion** and would like to put into his or her own life.

"When I raised that question, almost invariably the missionary, an elder for example, would stop with a surprised look on his face. He had never thought of his companion that way before. He had seen his faults and weaknesses but had not seen his virtues. I would tell him to pause and think about it for a minute. Then the answers would begin to come. Such answers as, 'He's a hard worker.' 'He gets up in the morning.' 'He dresses neatly.' 'He doesn't complain.'

"It was a remarkable thing, really. These young men and women, for the most part, had been oblivious to the virtues of their companions, although they were well aware of their companions' faults, and often felt discouraged because of them. **But when they began to turn their attitudes around, remarkable things began to happen.**" ("Strengthening Each Other," *Ensign*, Feb. 1985, 3-4)

Romans 15:1-2 not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good

Neal A. Maxwell: "'We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, *and not to please ourselves*. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' (Romans 15:1-2). **Even the service we render must be so selfless that it is not self-conscious!**

"The lessening of the load of another comes, in part, from our very expression of genuine concern transmitted to the burdened. **Empathy expressed can do much to lift the heart of another.** Objectively, in fact, the burden (the loss of health, a loved one) may remain, but the capacity to cope and to carry on is increased by our administering the adrenalin of affection." (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979], 67.)

"**When we truly love God, we are released from the cruel constraints of our own egos.** As our capacity to love increases, we go beyond the giving of time and talents and means-on to the full giving of self." (*Notwithstanding My Weakness* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981], 29).

Romans 15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us

Robert E. Wells: "Prejudice and ignorance lead to intolerance; biases and traditions are deep-seated and difficult to overcome. Nevertheless, **anyone with the desire to come unto Christ must overcome these tendencies**, not judge anyone in any way, and learn to love and accept each person as brother and sister truly, following the admonition of Paul: 'Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us.' (Romans 15:7.)

'Who am I to judge another When I walk imperfectly? In the quiet heart is hidden Sorrow that the eye can't see. Who am I to judge another? Lord, I would follow thee.' -*Hymns*, No. 220" (*The Mount and the Master*, 169.)

Romans 15:13 that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost

Dwan J. Young: "Our hope in Christ gives us an unchanging reason to rejoice. As Paul said to the Romans: 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope' (Rom. 15:13).

"**The Lord wants us to be filled with hope-not just because it points us to a brighter tomorrow, but because it changes the quality of our lives today.** Hopeless may be the saddest word in our language. Despair is the enemy of our souls. It can paralyze us, halt our progress, and cause us to lose our way. **But hope awakens us like a light shining in the darkness.**

"You remember that the thirteenth article of faith states: 'We believe all things, we *hope* all things, we have endured many things, and *hope* to be able to endure all things' (italics added).

"We can endure all things when our hope is centered in one who will never fail us-our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world." ("The Light of Hope," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 86).

WHAT IS THE MAIN MESSAGE OF ROMANS?

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation.

(from Romans 1—Chapter Heading)