

“Be Not Weary in Well-Doing”



Recently, I came across the following statement on a blog of a woman whom I do not know:¹

I am weary in well-doing. If I [were] not a woman of faith and did not know better ... existing on only emotions ... and could truly leave all troubles behind ... I would take the first train to anywhere — somewhere beautiful and balmy where everyone lives happily ever after

I am wrestling in restoring my relationship with one of my ... sons ... who has brought grief upon the family once again. It seems this is a pattern. Just as I truly began to feel back upon my feet, facing a brightening horizon, another incident occurs ... leaving me floundering all over again Could you pray for me, my dear family and friends?



Anticipating the fact that weariness would become a chronic companion to many of the best of souls in the latter-days, the Lord spoke these comforting words to a very weary Joseph Smith following his return from a difficult trip to Missouri, and as he prepared to move his family for the umpteenth time:²

Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

In preparing this message, I have felt to have a personal word with any of you who, in this era of hastening the work, may feel weary in well-doing. As anyone who has experienced weariness knows, it is different than being tired. A change in scenery or a good night's sleep is often enough to cure tiredness. Weariness, however, goes bone-deep. It can build up over long periods of time and may continue to drain us, even when we are getting plenty of rest. It is a mental, emotional, and spiritual condition, not merely a physical one.

While recognizing the wise counsel of scripture that we should do all things “in wisdom and order” and “not run faster than [we have] strength,”³ I believe that, in the most common situations, the cure for weariness in well-doing is the *opposite* of the cure for tiredness. The cure for weariness in well-doing does not come when we kick back and take a break, but rather, paradoxically, when we press forward and dig in deeper. The additional increment of spiritual work that is required to overcome weariness in well-doing is born of an *intensification* of our “devotion and loyalty and integrity, and above and beyond everything else, [our *increased*] faith in the Brethren and in God’s power and goodness.”⁴ With the redoubling of our effort in this spiritual work comes a supernal spiritual gift, a gift that lifts and strengthens, a renewed vigor and enabling power that comes “in and through of the atonement”⁵ of Jesus Christ.

As I study scripture and reflect on my own experience, I find that the spiritual work that conquers weariness in well-doing comes in three main ways — first, in *turning outward*; second, in *looking upward*; and, third, in *enduring to the end*.

Turn Outward

First, let's talk about *turning outward*. In his book entitled *Act in Doctrine: Spiritual Patterns for Turning from Self to the Savior*,⁶ Elder David A. Bednar writes about the importance of learning for ourselves about the character of Christ.⁷ And what is the mainspring of Christ's character? It is, writes Elder Bednar,⁸ in the difference between the Redeemer and "you and I as fallen, natural men and women [who] would likely turn *inward* with self-absorption, self-pity, and selfishness [when faced with weariness and suffering]. But the character of Christ [is rooted in] the consistent capacity to turn *outward* and minister to others in the midst of affliction."



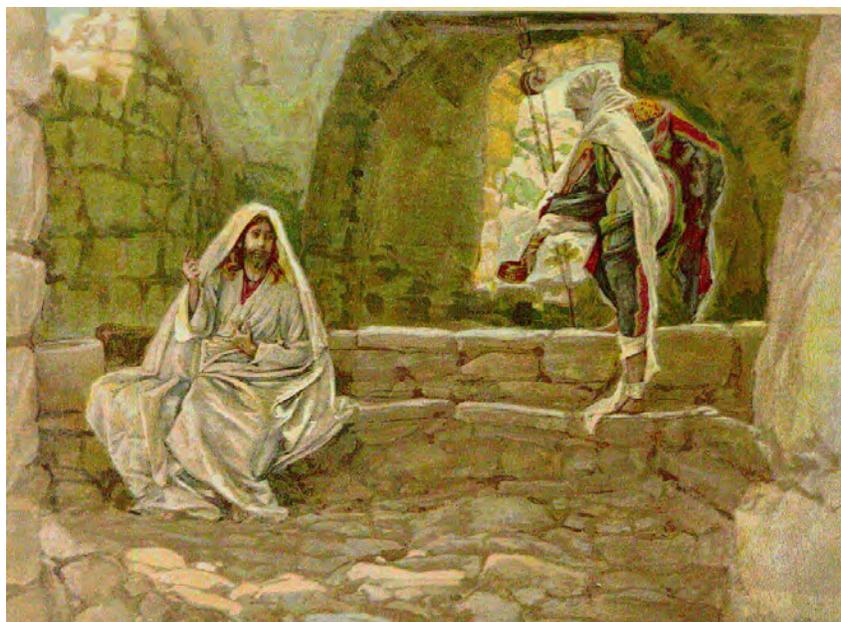
As an example, Elder Bednar writes of the forty days of fasting and trial by Satan that Jesus experienced in the Judaeian wilderness following his baptism.⁹ Against the backdrop of the physical and spiritual draining that Jesus must have felt after His encounter with the adversary, Matthew 4:11 records the following:

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Elder Bednar observes that Jesus certainly "would have benefited from and been blessed by such a heavenly ministrations in a time of [His own] physical and spiritual need."¹⁰ However, he then points our attention to the Joseph Smith Translation of the same verse, which reads:¹¹

Then the devil leaveth him, and now Jesus knew that John was cast into prison, and he sent angels, and, behold, they came and ministered unto him (John).

In the Joseph Smith Translation of this verse, Elder Bednar finds keys that “significantly enhance our understanding of this event and reveal the character of Christ ... Angels did not come and minister to the Lord; rather, in His own state of spiritual, mental, and physical distress, He sent angels to minister to John the Baptist. Note that Jesus in the midst of His own challenge recognized and appropriately responded to John — who was experiencing a lesser challenge than that of the Savior.”¹²



Another example is Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, as found in the gospel of John chapter 4. It is a story to which each of us, in our overburdened lives, can relate. Scripture tells us that: “Jesus ..., being wearied with his journey, sat ... on the well.”¹³

What did Jesus do when He was weary by the well? Did He sit back, close His eyes, and rest for a while? No, He leaned forward, looked deep into the soul of the approaching woman, and engaged her earnestly in gospel conversation.

The Master utilized an occasion as it arose, though He was weary with his journey, and it was the noon-hour, and she was a Samaritan and a woman, and sinful. There were several reasons why [one of us] might have let this occasion slip, but [He] not so.¹⁴

To a Jew this was an amazing story. Here was the Son of God, tired and weary and thirsty. Here was the holiest of men, listening with understanding to a sorry story ... Here is ... God so loving the world, not in theory, but in action.¹⁵

When the disciples returned from their journey to the city to buy food,¹⁶ they pressed the Lord to eat something:¹⁷

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

By these words, Jesus wanted His disciples to know that His weariness and hunger had been refreshed by His missionary service to the Samaritan woman and her people. His meat and His drink was not of the earthly kind that they brought him, but rather of the spiritual kind that would bring both them and Him lasting joy: “And he that reapeth ... gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”¹⁸



Nowhere, of course, was the capacity of Jesus Christ to turn outward toward others rather than inward toward self shown more completely than in the culminating hours of His sacrifice in Gethsemane and Calvary.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote:¹⁹

Jesus' character necessarily underwrote His remarkable atonement. Without Jesus' sublime character there could have been no sublime atonement!

Elder Bednar puts it this way: “Jesus, who suffered the most, has the most compassion for all of us who suffer so much less.”²⁰ Though the unbearable agonies of death on the cross or its excruciating equivalents in physical torture have been experienced by an untold number of human victims,²¹ no other individual has ever had to endure the crushing load of all griefs, all sorrows, all transgressions, and all sin.²² Of the nature, magnitude, and scope of the portion of the Atonement that Christ willingly took upon Himself in Gethsemane, Elder James E. Talmage²³ writes:

Christ's agony in the garden is unfathomable by the finite mind, both as to intensity and cause. The thought that He suffered through fear of death is untenable. Death to Him was preliminary to resurrection and triumphal return to the Father from whom He had come, and to a state of glory even beyond what He had before possessed; and, moreover, it was within His power to lay down His life voluntarily.²⁴ He struggled and groaned under a burden such as no other being who has lived on earth might even conceive as possible. It was not physical pain, nor mental anguish alone, that caused Him to suffer such torture as to produce an extrusion of blood from every pore; but a spiritual agony of soul such as only God was capable of experiencing. No other man, however great his powers of physical or mental endurance, could have suffered so;²⁵ for his human organism would have succumbed, and syncope²⁶ would have produced unconsciousness and welcome oblivion. In that hour of anguish Christ met and overcame all the horrors that Satan, "the prince of this world"²⁷ could inflict...

In some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world.



In His agonizing Atonement, Jesus trod "the wine-press alone, ... and none were with [Him]."²⁸ Yet, He was with *us, fully with us* in that moment — turning outward to relieve us from our suffering at the time of His own greatest suffering.²⁹ Thanks be to our Lord that He pressed forward on our behalf in the agony of His compassion, not permitting Himself to become weary in well-doing!

May I emphasize here that for the Savior to accomplish His "infinite and eternal"³⁰ sacrifice, His consecration of self had to be whole and complete. Had there been but one particle of selfishness in His soul, it would have been sufficient to undermine the purity of integrity and the totality of commitment needed to sustain the completion of His mission to save us through His suffering. And here is why God gives *us* the opportunity to learn the meaning of sacrifice in mortality: It is because someday, if we are to follow the Son back to the presence of the Father, each of us must likewise extinguish the last crumb of selfishness from our souls, being willing to submit to the Father in *all* things He may require of us,³¹ "yea, every sacrifice which ... the Lord, shall command,"³² even if it be a sacrifice like that of Abraham.³³

Look Upward

The second cure for weariness in well-doing is to *look upward*. When the Tempter invited Jesus to transform the stones of the desert wilderness into something that would satisfy His hunger, He answered: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”³⁴ Thus we see that being “nourished by the good word of God”³⁵ was a second source of the Savior’s ability to endure weariness and temptation.



Elder Neal A. Maxwell shared the following about the effectiveness of the word of God as an antidote to spiritual weariness:³⁶

[The] staying power [that prevents weariness in well-doing] requires strength, and that strength is to be achieved by feasting upon the gospel of Jesus Christ regularly, deeply, and perceptively. If you and I go undernourished by the gospel feast [that] God has generously spread before us, we’re vulnerable, instead of durable. As Paul ... warned, we then become “wearied and faint in our minds.”³⁷

Said President Spencer W. Kimball:³⁸

I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns. I find myself loving more intensely those whom I must love with all my heart and mind and strength.



Note that to receive the spiritual nourishment described by Elder Maxwell and President Kimball requires “*feasting* on the pleasing word of Christ.”³⁹ Weariness in well-doing will not be assuaged through the kind of gospel study that is born of grudging obedience to duty, like that of a small child glumly forcing down a tiny bite of a hated vegetable because his mother made him do it. Rather, it is like Joseph Smith, Sr.’s account of his dream of the sweet fruit of the love of God: “The more we [ate], the more we seemed to desire,⁴⁰ until we even got down upon our knees, and scooped it up, eating it by double handfuls.”⁴¹

Does the description of scooping it up and “eating it by double handfuls” resemble a baby drinking milk or an adult eating solid food? While scripture sanctions scriptural milk for new members of the Church,⁴² the author of Hebrews bluntly rebukes longtime saints for their inability to understand anything beyond the milk contained in the “first principles”⁴³ of the Gospel, reminding them that “strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.”⁴⁴

To obtain the spiritual nourishment we need to prevent or cure weariness in well-doing we will need to do something more than sit back and casually sip a steady diet of our favorite scripture stories through a straw. To survive the trials of the last days, both we and our families will finally have to get serious about digging in and feasting on the soul-nourishing prophecies of Isaiah, especially those that have been specially selected and commented upon for us in the Book of Mormon. We will need to drink the restoring waters of the Psalms; to consume generous portions of the bone-building elements of eternal truth in the Doctrine and Covenants; to thoroughly chew, swallow, and digest Jesus’ hard words against Pharisees and hypocrites in the New Testament; and to return again and again for more helpings of the temple-saturated teachings of the Pearl of Great Price and the book of Genesis.



Then when, through diligent effort in study and prayer, we have finally prepared our stomachs for “strong meat”⁴⁵ the Lord Himself will be our teacher. Then, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we who “walk, and are sad”⁴⁶ will be worthy to have the Lord to “tarry with [us]”⁴⁷ and be our companion. Then, when He sits at meat *with us*,⁴⁸ our eyes will be opened⁴⁹ and our “hearts [will] burn within us” as he talks with us, and opens the God’s word to us,⁵⁰ and we will know and recognize our Lord with perfect certainty.⁵¹

Meanwhile, as we await the moment when we shall see Him face-to-face,⁵² we know what is required of us in order to “run and not be weary, and ... walk and not faint”⁵³ — we must look upward to God through feasting on His word.

Endure to the End

Third, we must *endure to the end*. As a prisoner in Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith cried out to the Lord to know when He would relieve the trials of the saints in Missouri. The Lord replied:⁵⁴

My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

And then, *if thou endure it well*, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes.

Not only must each of us “endure it well,”⁵⁵ we must also “endure to the end”⁵⁶ or, as it says more specifically elsewhere in scripture, we must “endure in faith on his name to the end.”⁵⁷



Sometimes the idea of “enduring to the end” presents a miserable prospect, something like hanging on for dear life with your fingernails to the edge of a cliff, hoping you will be rescued before it is too late. It is true that the Lord sometimes requires us to experience such high-adventure discipleship,⁵⁸ but generally the routine though no-less-crucial tests of our daily walk are nothing near so dramatic and terrifying. The Savior taught and served “by the way”⁵⁹ countless times but was called on to suffer “in the garden”⁶⁰ only once.



For most of us, most of the time, “enduring to the end” can be part of a joyful journey like the one portrayed in 2 Nephi 31:30: “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.” While, especially in moments of discouragement, we might be tempted focus our hopes for relief solely on the glorious “end” promised for the faithful, we should not forget the richness of the journey itself.

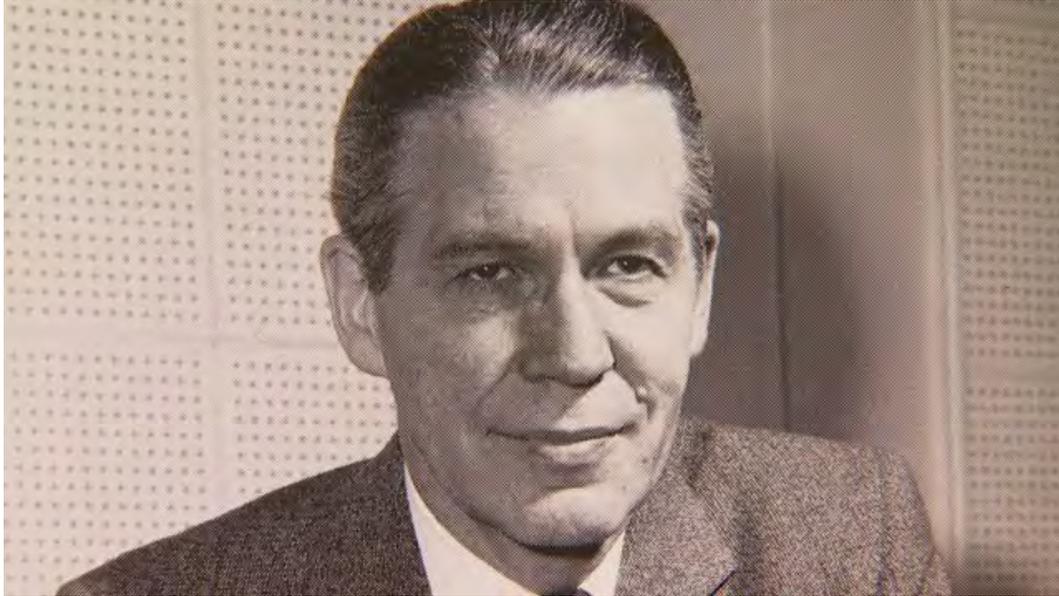


I like the way Bill Hensley, a cherished friend from my stake in Pensacola, Florida, expresses the concept of “enduring to the end.” He says: “*Enjoy to the end.*”

Enjoying to the End



The full-time missionaries face constant obstacles, challenges, and disappointments in their work, yet it rarely gets them down for long. They are buoyed up by a power beyond their own. Why is that? The missionaries are constantly turning outward to others rather than turning inward to self. They are “nourished by the good word of God”⁶¹ as they study the scriptures and pray frequently and fervently for others. And, as they serve with their whole “heart, might, mind, and strength”⁶² they learn what it means to “enjoy to the end.”



A story is told about former First Presidency member N. Eldon Tanner, while he was president of the West European Mission.⁶³ As he talked with a group of missionaries from Germany one day, he closed by saying: "Have a good time!" Surprised by his remark, one of the missionaries came up to him afterward and said in exasperation, "President Tanner, I don't think that it is quite fair for you to tell the missionaries to have a good time. You know, the only way they can have a good time is to do their work." He said, "Well, go and have a good time."

Summary

In summary, we can conquer weariness in well-doing by *turning outward to others rather than turning inward to self, looking upward to feast upon the word of God, and enjoying to the end.* As Elder Maxwell wrote:

The urgings for us not to weary in well-doing contain prescriptions to avoid such weariness. We are to work steadily, but realistically, and only expect to reap "in due season." We are to serve while being "meek and lowly," avoiding thereby the wearying burdens of self-pity and hypocrisy. We are to pray always so that we will not faint, so that our performance will actually be for the welfare of our souls, which is so much more than just going through the motions.⁶⁴

Paradoxical as it sounds, more diligence actually brings more relief.⁶⁵

Weariness ... arises out of struggling to perform in a lackluster way because of a lack of commitment. Trying to do the Lord's work with a slothful heart brings its own special buildup of blockage in arteries and valves. There are no aerobics in apathy. Merely going through the motions of Church membership without the renewing emotions of discipleship can be very fatiguing.⁶⁶

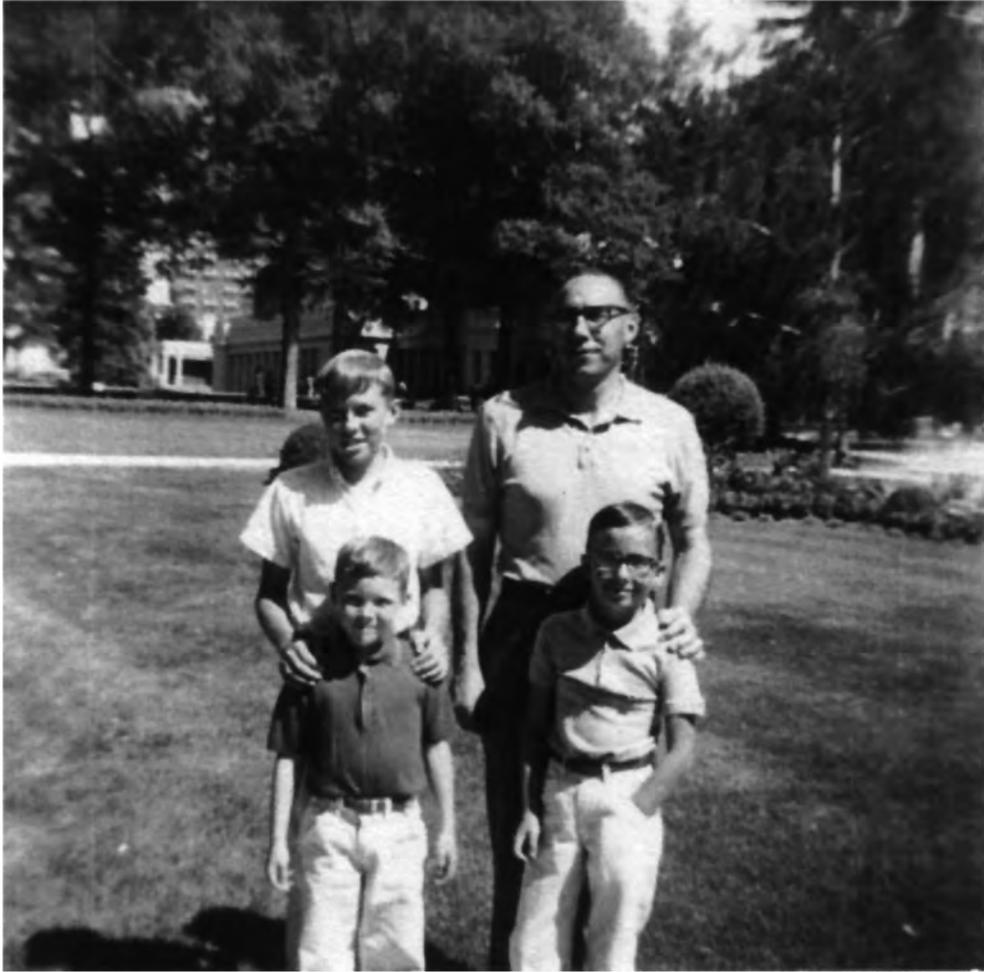
Selfishness not only shrinks the quantity of service we render but also provides none of the needed renewal, no "rest to [our] souls."⁶⁷



I like what Brigham Young has to say on the subject:

I have heard a great many tell about what they have suffered for Christ's sake. I am happy to say I never had occasion to. I have enjoyed a great deal, but so far as suffering goes I have compared it a great many times, in my feelings and before congregations, to a man wearing an old, worn-out, tattered and dirty coat, and somebody comes along and gives him one that is new, whole and beautiful. This is the comparison I draw when I think of what I have suffered for the Gospel's sake — I have thrown away an old coat and have put on a new one.⁶⁸

As to trials, why bless your hearts, the man or woman who enjoys the spirit of our religion has no trials; but the man or woman who tries to live according to the Gospel of the Son of God, and at the same time clings to the spirit of the world, has trials and sorrows acute and keen, and that, too, continually. Cast off the yoke of the enemy, and put on the yoke of Christ, and you will say that his yoke is easy and his burden is light. This I know by experience.⁶⁹



This is my experience, too — of which I testify, some fifty years after my own baptism. Though I am far from fit for the kingdom of heaven, I, like you was comforted by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s recent reminder that the gifts of God “are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep ... my commandments, and [for them] that *seeketh* so to do.”⁷⁰ I am glad to know that God knows that I *want* to become a better follower of the Savior in “well-doing.” Seriously trying to do so brings me greater joy than I ever could have imagined. It keeps the intensity of my spiritual life balanced with the insanity of my personal and professional life; it strengthens my testimony and my faith, which otherwise might have become dangerously weak and ineffective; and most of all, it provides me some tangible means of showing love to my Father in Heaven and His Son, who have given me their all.

This article was adapted from a talk given at the Pensacola Florida Stake Conference on 14 June 2014.

Figure Credits

Figure 1. Train Schedule, Weary in Well-Doing, Handful of Quietness.

<http://www.handfulofquietness.com/2013/04/24/weary-in-well-doing/> (accessed 9 June 2014).

Figure 2. Joseph Smith praying during Zion's Camp.

<http://history.lds.org/bc/content/images/historic-sites/390x390/a-description-of-the-journey-of-zions-camp.jpg> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 3. Ivan Kramskoi (1837-1887): *Christ in the Desert*, 1872, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_in_the_Desert (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 4. J. James Tissot: *The Woman at the Well*, <http://sacredartmeditations.com/life/detail/21> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 5. Perov. Vasily Perov (1833-1882): *Christ in Gethsemane*, 1878.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/waitingfortheword/5602449417> (21 September 2016).

Figure 6. J. James Tissot: *The First Nail*, <http://365rosaries.blogspot.com/2010/04/fifth-sorrowful-mystery-crucifixion-of.html> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 7. Spencer W. Kimball and Neal A. Maxwell. <http://oneclimbs.com/2011/01/16/the-gospel-vision-of-the-arts-by-spencer-w-kimball/> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1998/09/the-pathway-of-discipleship?lang=eng> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 8. Jerry Thompson, *Lehi and the Tree of Life* (detail), <https://www.lds.org/manual/new-testament-student-manual/revelation/chapter-53-revelation-1-3.p81?lang=eng&clang=pes&country=nz> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 9. From *Christ Appears on the Road to Emmaus, Life of Jesus Videos, Bible Videos*,

<https://www.lds.org/bible-videos/videos/christ-appears-on-the-road-to-emmaus?lang=eng> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 10. Cliff. PJ's Verse o' the Week, Is God strong enough to save you?

<https://verseotheweek.wordpress.com/2014/04/14/is-god-strong-enough-to-save-you/> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 11. Iron rod. <http://ldsmag.com/article-1-13137/> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 12. Bill Hensley at the Pensacola Florida Stake Youth Trek, 31 December 2010.

Photograph: Jeffrey M. Bradshaw. Image reference: DSC01247-trim.jpg.

Figure 13. From Elder Spencer Tingey's blog.

<http://elderspencertingey.blogspot.com/2012/09/new-motto-let-us-not-be-weary-in-well.html> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 14. President N. Eldon Tanner,

http://s3.amazonaws.com/byutv/content/Images/INSLV/INSLV-1-13_Large.jpg (accessed 9 June 2016).

Figure 15. Kenneth Corbett, *Brigham Young*. <https://history.lds.org/bc/content/images/joseph-smith-net/Artwork/390x520/corbett-brigham-portrait.jpg> (accessed 21 September 2016).

Figure 16. Baptism of Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Salt Lake City Utah Tabernacle, 11 July 1964. Front:

Scott and Jeff Bradshaw. Back: Jonathan and Mark J. Bradshaw.

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Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.handfulofquietness.com/2013/04/24/weary-in-well-doing/> (9 June 2014).
- 2 D&C 64:33. Cf. Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13.
- 3 Mosiah 4:27. Cf. D&C 10:4.
- 4 J. R. Clark, Jr., *Last Wagon*.
- 5 Alma 13:5.
- 6 D. A. Bednar, *Act*.
- 7 Elder Bednar quotes President Brigham Young, who said: “Every man and woman who wishes to obtain salvation through [the Savior] ... must have faith in His name, *character*, and atonement” (President Brigham Young, *Deseret News [Weekly]*, July 28, 1869, p. 293, cited in *ibid.*, p. 5, emphasis added).
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 10, emphasis added.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 13 John 4:6. Barclay elaborates (W. Barclay, *Gospel* (Vol. 1), pp. 148-149):

Jesus was weary with the journey, and He sat by the side of the well exhausted. It is very significant that John who stresses the sheer deity of Jesus Christ more than any other of the gospel writers also stresses His humanity to the full. John does not show us a figure freed from the tiredness and struggle of our humanity. He shows us One for whom life was an effort as it is for us; he shows us One who also was tired and had to go on.
- 14 H. H. Horne, *Teaching*, pp. 4-5.
- 15 W. Barclay, *Gospel* (Vol. 1), p. 151.
- 16 See John 4:8, 30.
- 17 John 4:31-36.
- 18 John 4:36.
- 19 N. A. Maxwell, *O How Great*, p. 6, cited in D. A. Bednar, *Act*, p. 12.
- 20 D. A. Bednar, *Act*, p. 12. Elder Bednar gives modern day examples of such compassion in *ibid.*, pp. 14-18.
- 21 See J. Wallis, *The Passion*, pp. 111-112; S. Thistlewaite, *Mel*, p. 137.
- 22 See Isaiah 53:4-5.
- 23 J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 568-569.
- 24 John 5:26-27; 10:17-18.
- 25 See Mosiah 3:7.
- 26 I.e., a “temporary loss of consciousness caused by a fall in blood pressure” (Oxford English Reference Dictionary, <http://www.wordswarm.net/dictionary/syncope.html> (accessed 24 March 2010)).
- 27 John 14:30.
- 28 D&C 133:50. Cf. D&C 76:107; 88:106. We get a glimpse of what Christ suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane in the intimate firsthand account of D&C 19. “There is something curious about

the narrative. Verse 18 ends with a dash” (T. B. Griffith, Root, p. 430) immediately following the word “shrink”—perhaps the longest and most poignant dash in all the written word. When “Christ drank from the cup of suffering,” it was so painful that He, “the greatest of all,” “shrank from doing it. The cut-off sentence suggests that the suffering was beyond what Christ here wishes to reveal, which makes it all the more forbidding” (D. Packard et al., *Feasting*, p. 139):

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

Those preparations were so painful that even when He recalled them as the resurrected Lord—so many hundreds of years later—He could not speak of them to us. Might that pregnant pause between “shrink” and “nevertheless” represent the culminating moment of the Atonement, when He trod “the wine-press alone, . . . and none were with [Him]”? (See E. England, Easter, pp. 52-53.)

29 See Isaiah 53:4-5; Mosiah 3:7; Alma 7:11-13; N. A. Maxwell, Plow. One thinks also of Joseph Smith, who found relief from the oppressing darkness and seeming destruction that overcame him by “exerting all [his] powers to call upon God” (Joseph Smith-History 1:16). God relieved him, but only after the Prophet had given all he had in the struggle. Citing the experience of Stephen, who saw the Lord “in the agonies of death,” Elder Orson Hyde taught (O. Hyde, 6 October 1853, p. 125):

True it is, that in the most trying hour, the servants of God may then be permitted to see their Father, and elder Brother. “But,” says one, “I wish to see the Father, and the Savior, and an angel now.” Before you can see the Father, and the Savior, or an angel, you have to be brought into close places in order to enjoy this manifestation. The fact is, your very life must be suspended on a thread, as it were. If you want to see your Savior, be willing to come to that point where no mortal arm can rescue, no earthly power save! When all other things fail, when everything else proves futile and fruitless, then perhaps your Savior and your Redeemer may appear; His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear; and when help on all sides appears to fail, My arm shall save, My power shall rescue, and you shall hear My voice, saith the Lord.

30 Alma 34:10, 14.

31 See Mosiah 3:19.

32 D&C 97:8.

33 See D&C 101:4-5. Elder Neal A. Maxwell has emphasized the connection between weariness in well-doing and “holding back” (see Acts 5:1-3) in some respect that which should have been offered in entirety to the Lord:

I refer to our hesitancy and our holding back in submitting fully to the Lord and His purposes for us.

This holding back is like leaving Egypt without journeying all the way to the Holy Land, or waiting in Nauvoo for the railroad to come through, or staying permanently at Winter Quarters (N. A. Maxwell, Willingness).

There’s an almost infinite variety in the number of ways you and I can hold back a portion. One, for instance, might be very giving as to money, or in even serving as to time, and yet hold back a portion of himself or herself. One might share many talents, but hold back, for instance, a pet grievance, keeping himself from surrendering that grievance where resolution might occur. A few may hold back a portion of themselves so as to please a particular gallery of

peers. Some might hold back a spiritual insight through which many could profit, simply because they wish to have their ownership established. Some may even hold back by not allowing themselves to appear totally and fully committed to the Kingdom, lest they incur the disapproval of a particular group wherein their consecration might be disdained. So it is in the Church that some give of themselves significantly, but not fully and unreservedly.

While withholding is obviously a function of selfishness, I'm rather inclined to think, brothers and sisters, that some of the holding back I see here and there in the Church, somehow gets mistakenly regarded as having to do with our individuality. Some presume that we will lose our individuality if we are totally swallowed up, when actually our individuality is enhanced by submissiveness and by righteousness and by being swallowed up in the will of the Father. It's sin that grinds us down to a single plane, down to sameness and to monotony. There is no lasting place in the Kingdom, the ultimate ranges of that Kingdom, for one who is unsubmitive, or for unanchored brilliance. It too must be swallowed up. And our obvious model is always Jesus himself, who allowed his will to be swallowed up in the will of the Father (D. C. Peterson, Elder Neal A. Maxwell on Consecration, pp. xvi-xvii).

Elder Maxwell, John W. Welch spoke of the need to "love ... God ... with all thy mind" (J. W. Welch, *Thy Mind*; see Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27): "'All things [including our minds] really ought to be put on the altar' (N. A. Maxwell, *Discipleship and Scholarship*, p. 7). Minds must bend, as well as knees."

34 Matthew 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 8:3.

35 Moroni 6:4; cf. Jacob 6:7.

36 N. A. Maxwell, *If Thou Endure It Well*. Cf. N. A. Maxwell, *Endure*, p. 112.

37 Hebrews 12:3.

38 S. W. Kimball, *Teachings 1982*, 11 July 1966, p. 135.

39 Jacob 2:9; cf. 2 Nephi 31:20.

40 Speaking of the scriptures, the Prophet Joseph Smith stated that: "he who reads [them] oftenest will like [them] best" (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1834, p. 56).

41 L. M. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, p. 298. Spelling and punctuation modernized.

42 See D&C 19:21-22. Moreover, it should be remembered in this connection that, as a general rule, watered-down scripture is not any better for new members than is watered-down milk for an infant. Wrote Arthur Henry King: "There is no substitute for the scriptures ... Reading about the scriptures, instead of reading from them, will not do; reading "simpler" versions will not provide scriptural milk, but merely someone else's milk and water" (cited in D. Packard et al., *Feasting*, p. ix).

43 Hebrews 5:12.

44 Hebrews 5:14; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.

45 Hebrews 5:14.

46 Luke 24:17.

47 Luke 24:29.

48 See Luke 24:30.

49 See Luke 24:31.

50 Luke 24:32.

51 See Luke 24:35.

52 See, e.g., 1 John 3:2; D&C 84:18-24; 88:68; 93:1.

53 Isaiah 40:31; cf. D&C 89:20.

54 D&C 121:7-8, emphasis added.

55 D&C 121:8.

56 E.g., 1 Nephi 13:37; 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 31:16, 20; 33:4; Omni 1:26; 3 Nephi 15:9; Mormon 9:29; D&C 14:7; 18:22.

57 D&C 20:22; cf. D&C 20:29; 101:35.

58 With respect to these crushing crucibles of faith, Sister Linda S. Reeves has said (L. S. Reeves, Worthy of our promised blessings, p. 11):

I do not know why we have the many trials that we have, but it is my personal feeling that the reward is so great, so eternal and everlasting, so joyful and beyond our understanding that in that day of reward, we may feel to say to our merciful loving Father, "Was that all that was required? ... What will it matter ... what we suffered her, if, in the end, those trials are the very things which qualify us for eternal life?"

59 E.g., Matthew 20:30; Mark 8:27; 9:33-34; Luke 18:35; 24:32.

60 John 18:26; 19:41.

61 Jacob 6:7; Moroni 6:4.

62 D&C 4:2.

63 There are several versions of this story. For example:

That is what I would like to leave for you to think about. Have a good time. That was the slogan we had in the West European Mission: "Have a good time. I would like you all to have a good time."

I said this to a group of missionaries in Germany one day. After the meeting, one of the missionaries came up to me and he said, "President Tanner, I don't think that it is quite fair for you to tell the missionaries to have a good time. You know, the only way they can have a good time is to do their work." I said, "Well, go and have a good time" (N. E. Tanner, Raise Your Actions, p. 14).

Another version of this story reads as follows:

I have a little story that I have told all over the Church; probably most of you have heard it. My daughter and her girl friend were at our house, and they were going to a party; then two young men came and called for them. I sat and talked to them. I love young people. As I was talking to them, talking about different things, I enjoyed my visit with them, and just before they were ready to go, I said, "Now, have a good time, kids." But just as they were going out of the door, I stepped over to my daughter and said, "Now, behave yourself."

And she said, "Well, Dad, make up your mind."

And I said to those young people so they could all hear me, "Have a good time, kids, the best time you will ever have in your lives, really have a good time tonight, but have the kind of time, such a good time, that tomorrow, next week, a month from now or a year from now, ten years from now, you can look back on tonight and say, 'I had a good time,' and have nothing to regret or be sorry about."

And I think they went and had a good time.

And that was my slogan for our missionaries in the West European Mission — to have a good time. One young man, after I had been talking to a group of missionaries over in Germany, came up to me and said, "President Tanner, I don't think it's right for you to tell these missionaries to have a good time because the only way they can do it is to do their work."

I said, “Go, and have a good time.” He was right. (N. E. Tanner, *Seek Ye First* (1964). Reprinted in N. E. Tanner, *Seek Ye First* (1973), pp. 3-4).

Sister Patricia Holland tells the story as follows (J. R. Holland et al., *In the Thick*):

Several years ago we were in a small group with President and Sister N. Eldon Tanner. They have always been so kind to us ever since Jeff served under his direction while President Tanner lived in England as president of the West European Mission. In this social setting they asked us how our children were doing and I said something foolish like, “They’re just fine — they’re not old enough yet to get into any difficulty.”

President Tanner laughed and said, “That reminds me of what I used to say to my girls when they were old enough to get into difficulty. As their dates came for them and as they were about to leave the house, I would see them out the door and say, ‘Goodnight kids. Have fun and be good.’ They said that always perturbed them and that I should make up my mind one way or the other whether I wanted them to have fun or be good.”

Elsewhere, President Tanner wrote: “We have all learned from our childhood that we are happier when we are doing right” (G. H. Durham, N. Eldon Tanner, p. 329). “Man is that he might have joy. Have a good time. Enjoy life by doing those things which are right” (N. E. Tanner, *Priesthood and Presidency*).

64 N. A. Maxwell, *Repent of Selfishness*. Cf. N. A. Maxwell, *Settle*.

65 N. A. Maxwell, *Endure*, p. 113.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 113. See Alma 37:34.

68 B. Young, 11 July 1869, p. 147; B. Young, *Discourses*, p. 348.

69 B. Young, 29 June 1873, p. 123; B. Young, *Discourses*, p. 348.

70 D&C 46:9, emphasis added. See J. R. Holland, *Tomorrow*.