

PERSONAL EVALUATION

DOCTRINE: Jesus Christ

<i>Question</i>	<i>My Answers</i>
1) What truths do I know about Jesus Christ and who He is?	
2) What do I understand about His roles and responsibilities?	
3) How has this understanding affected my perspective on life and who I am?	
4) How has this doctrine influenced how I act every day?	
5) What are some specific choices I have made because of this Doctrine?	
6) How has this doctrine affected my home?	
7) What are some specific things my family does because of what we know about Christ?	
8) What are some things I would like to better understand about Him?	

Child Evaluation

Baby to school age

Child: _____ Age: _____ Doctrine: **Jesus Christ**

<i>Question</i>	<i>My Answers</i>
1) Why is it important to us that they learn about Christ early in their lives?	
2) How will an understanding and testimony of Him affect their daily choices and how they act at home and with their friends?	
3) What are the 1 st five things we need to teach them about Christ?	
4) How can we do this effectively?	
5) What are some skills we may need to work on, as parents, in order to teach them as powerfully as possible?	
6) Who are some other people in their lives that can teach and influence them on this subject?	
7) What growth do I hope to observe in them as they grow in their testimony of this?	
8) How are we going to do this? What is our plan?	

Child Evaluation

School age and up

Child: _____ Age: _____ Doctrine: **Jesus Christ**

<i>Question</i>	<i>My Answers</i>
1) What truths am I certain they know about Jesus Christ	
2) How strongly to they believe those things?	
3) What growth have I observed in them as they have grown in their testimony of Him?	
4) How does their testimony of this affect their everyday choices?	
5) How does it affect how they act at home?	
6) How does it affect how they act with their friends and at school and work?	
7) What are we, as parents, doing to be an example of the power of having a testimony of Christ?	
8) What specific things do we still need to teach them?	
9) How are we going to do this? What is our plan?	
10) What are some skills that we, as parents, need to work on in order to be more effective?	

The Living Christ

“The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” Ensign, Apr 2000, 2

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary’s cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to “become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Cor. 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His “other sheep” (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised “dispensation of the fulness of times” (Eph. 1:10).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: “His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:3–4).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—“built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20).

We testify that He will someday return to earth. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Isa. 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

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JANUARY 1, 2000

Jesus the Perfect Mentor

Neal A. Maxwell, "Jesus, the Perfect Mentor," Ensign, Feb 2001, 8

From a talk given at a Church Educational System fireside at Brigham Young University on 6 February 2000.

He who is our Great Redeemer was fully qualified to become such, because He was and is the Great Emulator! We, in turn, have been asked to emulate Him.

Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). When we read this we usually think of Their physical appearances, but He was also speaking of seeing Their perfect examples and all the divine attributes embodied in Their majestic leadership.

Furthermore, the Master likewise told us who His own Exemplar is: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19).

He who is our Great Redeemer was fully qualified to become such, because He was and is the Great Emulator! We, in turn, have been asked to emulate Him: "What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am" (3 Ne. 27:27).

The ways that we can emulate Jesus, therefore, are many. I have selected only a few scriptures concerning our "great and true shepherd" (Hel. 15:13). These will focus on how Jesus tutors and mentors His disciples and followers. May we then do with these examples what Nephi did when studying the scriptures, namely, to "liken all scriptures" unto ourselves (1 Ne. 19:23). This is something that doesn't happen often enough in the Church. We read the scriptures, but often we do not "liken" them.

Each of us, from time to time, is mentored and has chances to mentor. In my experience, truthful and caring one-liners that occur within such nurturing relationships have a long shelf life! You can probably recount three or four examples of how people have said something—probably a sentence or clause—and you remember it still. It moves and touches you still. Such has been the case with me.

My own father joined the Church in 1922. Later he wrote in his personal history about how Bishop Arthur Shurtleff and the Young Men superintendent, Jesse Fox, taught him both before and after his baptism. These were busy men, but their teaching surely mattered to my father—and to all of us who constitute his posterity. How grateful we are to have had that particular convert retained and mentored!

Thus, giving encouragement and perspective to each other—including spiritual one-liners—occurs in life so often, as in the well-known case of the young man who accompanied Elisha on the mount that was surrounded with hostile horses and chariots. The anxious young man asked, "How shall we do?" (2 Kgs. 6:15). His eyes were then opened so that he too saw the reassuring horses and chariots of fire. Elisha counseled the young man, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kgs. 6:16). How vital that same truth is for all of us, especially when we may seem outnumbered or overwhelmed in life's varied circumstances.

I. Jesus' Questions

Jesus' mentoring and tutoring arose out of His divinity, of which I testify, and often occurred in the form of searching questions, sometimes even wrenching questions. For example, the tender, thrice-put query to Peter: "Simon Peter, ... lovest thou me?" (John 21:15; see also John 21:16–17).

Unlike some of our questions to others, Jesus' questions were not flippant, nor were they mere rejoinders. Instead, they were true invitations, though only the meek may actually respond. Nevertheless, deep insights are embedded in Christ's questions!

Lesson-laden, Jesus' questions are relevant for us too. Some are multidispensational, such as the question to the returning and healed leper about the forgetful ingratitude of his peers. Jesus asked the question, "Where are the [other] nine?" (Luke 17:17).

Some of the Master's queries require an entire shift in one's frame of reference. Consider the question asked the brilliant but as yet spiritually untamed Saul on the road to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). An entire frame of reference was changed by an inspired question.

There are tactical advantages as well as spiritual advantages that can accompany inspired questions. In a modern metaphor that you're familiar with, inspired questions put the ball on the other side of the net, leaving people free to respond without our being unduly pressing or aggressive. Others may not respond, of course. Nevertheless, the invitations are clearly there, for quality questions linger, especially if they are asked in love.

Moreover, we soon find in this process of tutoring and mentoring that chastening may be involved in both the Lord's questions and in His training of us. The Lord tells us that He chastens those whom He loves. In fact, the chastened may be the only individuals willing to learn (see Mosiah 23:21). After all, where could one get more profound, personal insights than from the Lord—and in the context of divine charity?

Consider these words of President Brigham Young as to how vital charity always is and what proceeds out of charity: "There is one virtue, attribute, or principle, which, if cherished and practiced by the Saints, would prove salvation to thousands upon thousands. I allude to charity, or love, from which proceed forgiveness, long suffering, kindness, and patience" (in Deseret News, 11 Jan. 1860, 353). That's where those virtues come from: the capacity to love.

Reflect on the next question, asked of the anxious parents who had searched for the missing, youthful Christ. What was His question to them? "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Even sincere anxiety, if we are not careful, can obscure what is really going on. Ironically, pointed questions can widen our perspectives. How long since you've asked such a question or been asked such a question? These can be part of the mentoring process.

Consider another example. To the devoted but sleepy disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Matt. 26:40). The question was not asked in self-pity or shoulder-shrugging fatigue. Rather, implicitly and

comparatively, the question underscored Jesus' unique bearing capacity, so essential to the accomplishing of the great Atonement of which the once slumbering Twelve would soon testify so devotedly and bravely.

Nephite leaders, otherwise very dedicated, were nevertheless reproved with a question concerning one matter: "How be it that ye have not written" the prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite? (3 Ne. 23:11). There were apparently "many" witnesses to the resurrection of "many saints" following Jesus' being the firstfruits of the Resurrection (see 3 Ne. 23:9–11). This scriptural affirmation was a Western Hemispheric match for what happened in the Holy Land (see Matt. 27:52–53). What had happened was so unprecedented and fundamental, hence it was vital to have the foretelling prophecy recorded. Though regarded as a foolish teaching by the world, prophets can know of things yet to come! Therefore, as in this episode in 3 Nephi, testifying of the reality of the Resurrection is vital, especially in our humanistic times, when some freshly assert, "For no man knoweth of . . . things to come" (Jacob 7:7).

II. Christ's Commendations

Christ's commendations are as specific as His questions, such as to Hyrum Smith, whom the Lord said He loved for the integrity of his heart (see D&C 124:15). Is your and my praise of others so deserved and specific?

Commendation was conveyed to a whole congregation on one occasion. In the book of Revelation, we read of a particular branch of the Church, imperfect but impressive: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first" (Rev. 2:19). A whole congregation is commended very specifically.

By its very nature, mentoring is an exercise filled with hope. It is instructive and inspirational, for instance, for us to know that the original Twelve, once chided for being unable to wait a mere hour, will one day stand at Jesus' "right hand at the day of [His] coming in a pillar of fire, being clothed with robes of righteousness, with crowns upon their heads, in glory even as [Christ is], to judge the whole house of Israel" (D&C 29:12).

It is the essence of developmental discipleship to move from difficulty—such as failing to wait one hour—on to that transcendent scene that lies ahead. It is the same developmental discipleship that should be the objective for all of us.

III. Christ's Correction

These next words show how Christ will often give us His diagnosis of a situation, but it is not necessarily a despairing diagnosis. It states the real deficiencies and invites us to work upon them successfully. He said, "My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened" (D&C 64:8).

The emancipation that can come with forgiveness is clearly part of the lubricant of love that the Lord wants to be pervasive in His Church. How long has it been since you may have forgiven someone—perhaps of something small—to emancipate them? How long has it been since someone emancipated you for some small misstep or miswording of a communication?

Ponder these next diagnostic comments given to Oliver Cowdery after his failed effort to translate: "You did not continue as you commenced" and "You took no thought save it was to ask" (D&C 9:5, 7). How often do you and I perform reasonably well in phase one, only to slacken in phase two or three? Or do we expect our effortless petitions to the Lord to be quickly and automatically rewarded? Christ often corrected before commending. To the woman from Samaria, and her people, He initially said, "Ye worship ye know not what" (John 4:22). Then, however, Jesus responded to her personal faith in the coming Messiah by saying to her that which, until then, He had not similarly disclosed: "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (John 4:26).

The brother of Jared experienced three hours involving divine correction. Yet this correction did not preclude the later and superb commendation to the brother of Jared: "Never has man come before me with such exceeding faith" (Ether 3:9). This is the Lord we worship, and His divinity is seen in His qualities, His work in our lives, and the mentoring and tutoring examples that are supplied.

Now, you are going to live out your lives in contemporary society. It is a society in which, instead of a rush to judgment, there is almost a rush to mercy, because people are so anxious to be nonjudgmental. Many have quite a confused understanding of mercy and justice. People tend to shy away from correction even when it might be helpful. Of this tendency, C. S. Lewis wrote: "The Humanitarian theory wants simply to abolish Justice and substitute Mercy for it. . . . Mercy, detached from Justice, grows unmerciful. That is the important paradox. As there are plants which will flourish only in mountain soil, so it appears that Mercy will flower only when it grows in the crannies of the rock of Justice: transplanted to the marshlands of mere Humanitarianism, it becomes a man-eating weed, all the more dangerous because it is still called by the same name as the mountain variety" (God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics [1970], 294).

Consider this. To the highly conscientious Brigham Young, who sacrificed so much so frequently, the tutoring counsel was "Take especial care of your family" (D&C 126:3). Is it not the case, brothers and sisters, that often the highly conscientious also need counsel, though perhaps of a different sort? Course corrections continue to be vital for us all.

To the mother of James and John, who wanted her sons to sit on Jesus' right and left hands, Jesus noted simply that the Father had already made that decision (see Matt. 20:21–23). Jesus understood perfectly the maternal instincts that were at play in this mother's questing for her sons. As always, His response was measured and appropriate. We sometimes ask, don't we, for things the implications of which we do not fully understand? Some of the most important prayers we have offered are those that were not answered as we hoped they might have been. There is mentoring in that process too. No wonder the scriptures teach that we are to ask in faith but we are also to strive to ask and to petition for that "which is right" (3 Ne. 18:20; see also 3 Ne. 26:9; D&C 88:64–65).

IV. Discipleship of Jesus

The eloquence of Jesus' example of long-suffering and patience with each of us is surely something we must emulate—more than we usually do—in our relationships with each other! Jesus reassured us in this connection that "mine arm is lengthened out all the day long" (2 Ne. 28:32). What marvelous and merciful imagery! The current Brethren have a saying, "How many tellings does it take?" It is a saying that is used in a kindly way, sometimes wistfully. Most of us shouldn't be surprised if some of life's hardest lessons require repetition. We recognize that we have taken the course before, and here we go again! It is a function of the long-suffering and the mercy of the Lord—until we get it right.

Real adoration of Jesus as our Savior but also as the perfect leader will lead us to emulation of Him. After all, He said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly” (Matt. 11:29). Brothers and sisters, we cannot really learn any deep or lasting things about Jesus unless we take His yoke upon us. Then, though on our small scales compared to His, the relevant experiences will teach us keenly and deeply about Him and His divine attributes. There is nothing abstract about it at all. It becomes a very personal thing for us. It is significant that He conjoined the word “learn” with “meek and lowly.” No spiritual infusion can really occur except we are sufficiently meek and lowly to let it sink into the marrow of our souls. Life has a way, doesn’t it, of giving us an adequate supply of such learning?

These experiences at the time may seem so micro, but they are often very, very significant in terms of the developmental discipleship with which we should be so concerned.

I share with you now, not hesitantly but with some anxiety because the words can be misunderstood, a revelation that has to do not only with the Lord’s timetable for all of the world but also with our individualized experiences. These too have been divinely foreseen, and they are included in these words of Jesus: “But all things must come to pass in their time” (D&C 64:32). Though tersely expressed, this insight is profoundly and reassuringly important to each of us personally. In the midst of today and the here and now, you and I may not see the marvelous pattern and divine design in our lives. One day as we look back, the pattern and the mosaic will be much more clear. For now, we are to have faith not only in the Lord and His overall macro-timetable but also in His timetable for each of us individually! In order for us to have that kind of faith and not be unnecessarily bruised and battered, we must allow, more than we do now, for the fact that the Lord’s timetable must take into account: (1) our agency and the agency of others, (2) His merciful long-suffering that He extends to us, and (3) the need for Christ to hold all things together.

In the comforting words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, God has, from the foundation of the world, made “ample provision” to bring all His purposes to pass, even though at times we may be puzzled and perplexed (see Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 220).

V. Our Clinical Material

Your lives, your friendships, your marriages, your families, your neighbors and coworkers currently constitute the sample of humanity which God has given you. We are each other’s clinical material, and we make a mistake when we disregard that sober fact. No wonder, therefore, we feel stress at times. The wise and insightful President Brigham Young said this: “There are no two faces alike, no two persons tempered alike; ... we are tried with each other, and large drafts are made upon our patience, forbearance, charity, and good will, in short, upon all the higher and Godlike qualities of our nature” (in Deseret News, 6 July 1862, 9). Now, you are going to have days when people make a large draft on your patience, when they lay claim to your long-suffering that you may feel they don’t quite deserve. This is part of the chemistry that goes on in discipleship if we are serious about it, as we constitute each other’s clinical material.

It is within these circles of influence that you can strive to carry out all the dimensions of the second great commandment, including giving praise, commendation, and occasional correction. It is good for us to develop further our relevant skills. Paul prescribed, however, “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). There is something about others’ knowing that we love them which conveys, accompanies, and helps something to get through. We may speak the truth to a person who doesn’t like compliments. We may speak the truth to a person who can’t stand any sort of suggestion or reproof. If we speak the truth in love, however, there is a much greater chance that what we say will find its mark in the hearts and the minds of other people.

You and I can sense when people speak to us in love. I never have any question, for instance, about my wife, Colleen, when she gives me suggestions, even when I do not regard them as convenient. Yet I never have to stop and question her motives or decode the communication. I know she loves me, and I let what she is telling me, however inconvenient it may be, come inside. So it is when we do as Paul says and speak the truth in love.

Isn’t it interesting that Jesus was the great praise giver, whether to the centurion (see Matt. 8:5–10) or, as already observed, to the woman of Samaria (see John 4:11–18), to Hyrum Smith (see D&C 124:15), or to the Saints at Thyatira? (see Rev. 2:18–19). Much more often, we too can give others “the garment of praise” (Isa. 61:3). There are so many people with no such clothing in their wardrobes—or only a T-shirt. They shiver for want of a little praise. Meanwhile, each of us has far more opportunities for bestowing deserved praise than we ever use! How long since you’ve done that? Perhaps today for many of you. Maybe too long for some of you. It is important for us to ask ourselves, Can we give and receive correction as well as giving and receiving commendation? We are cautioned by Paul, interestingly enough, not to reprove others too much, causing them to “be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (2 Cor. 2:7). President Brigham Young, ever practical as well as spiritual, said we should never reprove beyond the capacity of our healing balm to reach out to the person reproved (see Deseret News, 6 Mar. 1861, 1).

The context in which your discipleship is developing and is under way reminds me of what the Prophet Joseph Smith was told in connection with the impending Civil War in America: “Ye know not the hearts of men in your own land” (D&C 38:29). We can be pretty cloistered without realizing it. We can be unaware of larger and subtle trends that are developing. For instance, the time in which you live is one of moral decline in many respects. This decline has been deep, it has been steep, and it has occurred “in the space of not many years” (Hel. 4:26).

Meanwhile, today’s cultural gurus have you in their crosshairs as they promote in various ways the proclivities of the natural man and the natural woman. They will push, entice, and lure you accordingly, using all the secular caresses. Resist—for you are not only precious per se, but you also constitute the cadre of the kingdom of God!

VI. Aphorisms to Remember

I would like to share with you several aphorisms with some illustrations squeezed out of experience, containing, hopefully, some inspiration. You will appreciate, from your own experience, those lines from the Book of Mormon about how we sometimes “cannot say the smallest part which [we] feel” (Alma 26:16). I am going to try anyway!

1. In times of darkness, remember there is a difference between passing local cloud cover and general darkness. At the suggestion of my wife, may I illustrate?

When I was in action in the spring of 1945, as a not too effective and very frightened young infantryman in Okinawa, I sometimes sent home what were called “V-mails”—tiny little sheets of paper. They were really not much more than a postcard, but they were the best we could manage in foxholes. My father kindly saved all my letters from the service and all my letters from the mission field.

On one of those V-mails I noted recently that I had “blessed my own sacrament in a foxhole. . . . I certainly felt better. . . . I try to look at the big picture of life and everything seems OK.”

In another V-mail, “Please don’t worry, I’ll be OK. I am in Good Hands.”

In another little V-mail, “Today is Sunday. I have tried to make it a point to know so I can bless my sacrament, otherwise it is just another day.” In another, “I had a C-ration biscuit and rainwater for my sacrament. That proves it is not the ingredients, but the Spirit. It was wonderful. The mud is terrible here. . . . Many things have so strengthened my faith, but I can hardly wait to go on a mission.”

I was still 18. I have searched the letters carefully but in vain for anything profound or greatly wise in them. Nevertheless, I express my gratitude to the Lord and to my parents for training that caused me to want to partake of the sacrament and to begin to think firmly of a mission in my future.

2. Signs, if they are not supported by the righteous life and the continued influence of the Holy Ghost, have a short shelf life. Indeed, one of the repetitive ironies of religious history is that those who are the first to demand signs are usually the first to discount or to forget them! Such was the case with some ancient Nephites who demanded signs at the time of the birth of Jesus. The signs had to be on precise schedule, as you recall. The wonders and the signs finally came, and all the disbelievers fell to the earth (see 3 Ne. 1:17–18). Yet within two or no more than three years “the people began to forget those signs . . . and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen” (3 Ne. 2:1). Please cultivate the gift of the Holy Ghost and have it be constant with you.

3. Pure charity is most elegant when it is expressed personally and quietly and when it is not a ritual expression of an assignment.

4. Never mistake a fashionable tide for the sea itself. Though real and dangerous, the “gulf of misery” is not the entire ocean (see 2 Ne. 1:13). He who created the vast oceans will help us navigate all the tricky tides and gulfs. Besides, we must remember that the fashions of the world—whatever they may be, intellectually and otherwise—will pass away, as Paul has reassured us (see 1 Cor. 7:31). So many “trendies” who live in our time oscillate over the obsolescent without quite realizing it!

5. Firmly determine the direction in which you will face—toward the Lord—and then let the secular spinmeisters do their thing. Your hearts and your heads will not be turned by their ceaseless and clever spinning, however they may try. And try they will! You must determine the direction in which you face.

6. We cannot expect to live in a time when men’s hearts will fail them except the faithful experience a few fibrillations themselves. We won’t be entirely immune from feelings that go with these fibrillations.

7. Though our view of eternity is reasonably clear, it is often our view of the next mile which may be obscured! Hence the need for the constancy of the gift of the Holy Ghost. I think you will see this a number of times in your lives. You have cast your minds forward and are fixed on the things of eternity, and all of that is proper and good, but there is sometimes fog in the next hundred yards. You can make it through, but don’t be surprised when it is the short-term obscurity through which you must pass as a result of your faith in the long-term things.

8. How can we expect to overcome the world if we are too insulated from its trials and challenges? You will experience at times what might be called some redemptive turbulence. Think, for instance, of the Master and the roiling Sea of Galilee, tossed by the “wind boisterous” and “contrary,” and the anguished cry of His followers as in the lyrics we sing, “Master, the tempest is raging” (see Matt. 14:22–33; Hymns, no. 105). Yet that tempest actually occurred on a tiny little sea only 12 miles by 7 miles! Nevertheless, for that moment, Galilee constituted the real world for those anxious disciples!

So it is with the little sectors of our lives. The sea may be roiling at times with waves of emotion, such as when one is offended, or by billows of anger, or, more commonly, by self-pity that threatens to swallow us up. Then, for us too, the calming of the Master becomes crucial. Remember how it was: after Christ and Peter came back “into the ship, the wind ceased” (Matt. 14:32). He can do that for us if we will let Him. It doesn’t matter how small our Galilee may seem; the boisterousness and the tempest will at times rage, but the remedy is still the same.

9. Elder Mark E. Petersen (1900–1984) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once cautioned the General Authorities, “Adulation can be our ruination” (quoted in Neal A. Maxwell, “Popularity and Principle,” Ensign, Mar. 1995, 15). As one looks at Jesus again, the perfect example, there is no incident wherein He ever played to the gallery or curried favor or praise. Neither did He ever take an indulgent dip in the pool of self-pity. Nor did He ever know the intoxication that comes from recognition. Such tipling is not entirely unknown among us. Unlike Jesus, most of us are familiar with the fruit of that vine. This addicting nectar of recognition is not prohibited specifically in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, but it is elsewhere! We are most likely to imbibe that nectar, by the way, when we feel underwhelmed or unappreciated. It is then that we may frequent the saloon of self-pity. One of the great things that we can do for each other is to stay away from that place. Hence my stress on providing deserved commendation and the love that is so precious.

How wonderful it is (and we have all had these experiences) when we can gather in circles of friendship large or small with shared gospel values. Sharing is like gathering around conversational bonfires that grow warm and bright against the horizon. You will find the memories of these bonfires will achieve a lastingness—not of what you wore or of what the menu was, but rather because of the shared

expressions of love and testimony. Especially helpful are the memories of those individuals and friends who are exemplars for you and me by the manner in which they strive so steadily and unapologetically to wear the whole armor of God.

These special moments—one-on-one, in small groups, in corridors, hallways, or wherever—do something so subtle that we are scarcely aware that it is happening. Yet these help to further define our relationships with the Lord and with each other. It is often the one-liners that come from these special moments which have such a long shelf life and which help us long after the dispersal of those friends has occurred.

Meanwhile, we remain responsible to develop and to use our capacity to love. I turn to President Brigham Young again. He said, “The principle of love within us is an attribute of the Deity, and it is placed within us to be dispensed independently according to our own will” (in *Deseret News*, 4 Apr. 1860, 34). We decide how we express love. The Latter-day Saints “have got to learn that the interest of their brethren is their own interest, or they never can be saved in the Celestial Kingdom of God” (in *Deseret News*, 18 June 1856, 116). So profound, so powerful.

In the relationships of which I speak—the mentoring, the tutoring, the commending, and occasionally the correcting—every one of us has ample clinical opportunities to develop our capacity to love. Many of these opportunities, however, are like people. If we are not careful, they can pass us by unnoticed (see *Morm.* 8:39).

Fortunately, in addition to these bonfires there are blessed individual reveries that come to us in life. These are heartfelt moments when we are reflective, and they touch us deeply. But they are so fleeting. The day will come, brothers and sisters, when these reveries will not only be touching and heartfelt but everlasting in their splendor! For now they are exceedingly brief, and we are left to press forward. We need reflective leisure to ponder, but if there were too much of it, or if these moments were too prolonged, they would soon dissolve and lose their spiritual symmetry. So the reveries come, but they are brief, and then it is back to class in the curriculum the Lord has for each of us.

VII. Development of Discipleship

The tilt of your soul now can further shape all the days that follow! If you become too insulated, too encrusted, too self-contained, too self-concerned, those patterns will end up constraining you like invisible barriers and borders in the days and years ahead. Stretch. Reach for that kind of developmental discipleship that will take you beyond where you thought you could go.

Isn't it marvelous that, as happy as you have been in certain moments of your life, you know the happiest days lie ahead because of the hopefulness of the gospel? Isn't it interesting that in the moments when you have felt most illuminated, nevertheless the brightest days still lie ahead? The blessings of the Lord can take you far beyond where you thought you could go.

I should like to bear my testimony that the Restoration will push and even crowd you at times because of the rapidity of the events that come upon us. Never be reluctant to be part of the Restoration and its onrollingness, and you will find yourself wafted in your spiritual development far beyond where you thought you could go. Events will come along that will more sharply define the Restoration for the human family. The need will be even greater for mentors and tutors to help people understand the significance of what they have heard and what they have seen involving the Restoration.

Finally, we must have the awareness, as we worship God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, that God has all of the capacity He needs to save His children. In one sense you and I may say, What can we give God, who seems to have everything? The one thing we can give Him that He does not have and that He will not take is our wills. This is the act of spiritual submissiveness in which, like Jesus, the perfect mentor, we let our wills be swallowed up in the will of the Father. Such is a gift you can give that He desires from all of us. To that end I bear my witness not only that Jesus lives but, in my feeble way, of how He lives! I remind you of the great encouragement which is also a directive: “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Ne. 27:27). In that discipleship there is joy unbounded that lies ahead; therefore, we can and should tolerate such mentoring and tutoring as may be necessary to get us where we can and should go. This is the generation that can roll forth the borders of this kingdom and have influence for good in the world such as has never been before.

I have mentioned Okinawa, hoping you have forgiven that autobiographical addendum. There was a young man from Lynndyl, Utah, whom I met in World War II: Dean Nielson. He had been a student leader at Delta High School, as I recall. My memory of him is of a special young man who strove to put on the whole armor of God. I loved him for his sweetness and his innocence and was deeply saddened when he was killed on Okinawa, unwed. I learned later that his family was in doubt for 30 days about what had happened to him.

I then thought and I now say that since that very day of his death the Lord has used in the spirit world the abundant gifts and talents of Dean Nielson, just as surely as if he had been allowed to remain here. Therefore, one of the rendezvous to which I look forward is to see my friend again and to thank him for being part of the kind of warming bonfire which he, in his fundamental goodness, exemplified for me and others. We have not only “miles to go before [we] sleep” but also rendezvous to keep (Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”).

In the marvelous plan of salvation the mentoring Lord brings us along on each side of the veil, because He loves us. The sooner we can submit our wills to the Father as Jesus did, the greater will be the divine delight and the joy in us.