

# Standing Strong and Immovable for Righteousness

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A Panel Discussion Given by Sisters Bonnie D. Parkin, Susan W. Tanner, and Cheryl C. Lant  
Spring 2007 Open House

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## Introduction

*Sister Susan W. Tanner:* It's so wonderful to be with you. We will introduce ourselves. I think maybe you know us. You know Sister Cheryl Lant, who is the Primary general president, and Sister Bonnie Parkin, the Relief Society general president. And I am Susan Tanner, the Young Women general president, and I will be moderating this panel discussion today.

If we truly introduced ourselves to you as to who we are, we would probably say we are three very busy, very blessed women. And if you were to stand and introduce yourselves to us, I think you would probably use those same adjectives. As we've met with women around the globe, we have come to have a sense of how really busy you are and what great purposes you have as you work in the auxiliaries. Now, in Young Women, we always say that our purpose is that we are trying to help young women come unto Christ. What is it in Primary, Sister Lant?

*Sister Cheryl C. Lant:* Well, of course, the purpose in Primary is to teach children the gospel of Jesus Christ and then help them learn to live it.

*Sister Tanner:* And Relief Society?

*Sister Bonnie D. Parkin:* The purpose of Relief Society is to assist the priesthood in helping women and families come unto Christ.

*Sister Lant:* It's the same.

*Sister Tanner:* We're all the same. I think we have a unified purpose. And if we were to ask each of you what your personal purpose is in life, I think you would say, "I'm striving to come unto Christ." And this is what we know about women. That is your purpose and that is your goal. But it's a busy existence, isn't it? And that's what we've come to learn about women, that they have challenges, responsibilities, and busyness. Let us introduce you to a woman who is similar to each of us.

*Sister Parkin:* We might call her our poster woman. Now if you look at her smile, it could be deceiving. Because that smile may mean that we need to look at someone else who has some burdens and some challenges.

*Sister Lant:* Now, this poster woman is covered, I mean really buried, in all of the things that she has to do. Each one of these little sticky notes represent something in her life that she is expected to do. All of the yellow notes represent the things in her personal life, her goals, her expectations, things that she expects to do. The pink represents things in her family. She has lots of responsibilities in her family, both for her children, her extended family, her parents. And the blue represent her responsibilities that have to do with her membership in the Church. Some of them go along with the callings that she carries and some of them are things that she knows she's supposed to be doing because of the words of the prophet and the commandments from the Lord. The green represents duties and challenges that she might have connected with employment, or education, other things like that in her life. So really, she is a very busy woman. Can you relate to her? Do you sometimes feel like this? I do.

*Sister Tanner:* My question, though, is, are all these sticky notes really helping us with our ultimate goal of coming unto Christ? Now, if we were to balance the sticky notes by color, would that help us any more? I actually think we sometimes talk about balance, but I think that's maybe not the word we are looking for. I think the word we are looking for is focus. How is it that, in spite of our busyness, we can keep a proper focus so that we are prioritizing and doing the right things for the right reasons? Of course, we always go back to President Hinckley. He's the one who helps us. And let's listen to what he says in the January 2004 worldwide leadership training session. He gives us an idea of how we as women can focus.

*President Gordon B. Hinckley:* It is so tremendously important that the women of the Church stand strong and immovable for that which is correct and proper under the plan of the Lord. I'm convinced there is no other organization anywhere to match the Relief Society of this Church. It has a membership of more than five million women across the earth. If they will be united and speak with one voice, their strength will be incalculable. We call upon the women of the Church to stand together for righteousness. They must begin in their own homes. They can teach it in their classes. They can voice it in their communities. They must be the teachers and the guardians of their daughters. Those daughters must be taught in the Primary and in the classes of the Young Women of the values of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When you save a girl, you save generations. She will grow in strength and righteousness. She will marry in the house of the Lord. She will teach her children the ways of truth. They will walk in her paths and will similarly teach their children. Wonderful grandmothers will be there to lend encouragement. I see this as the one bright shining hope in a world that is marching toward self-destruction.

*Sister Tanner:* I saw some of you taking notes on that. Isn't that great? What did we hear President Hinckley say?

*Sister Parkin:* Well, some of the things I heard him say was we need to stand strong and immovable for the Lord's plan. Then he talked about Relief Society being there for all women. That includes young single adults. I liked when he said we had to speak with one voice. That means all of us as women, one voice. And if we do that, our efforts can be limitless to bless the lives of others. I like when he said, begin in your own home; from there move to the Church, and then make a difference in your community.

*Sister Tanner:* I like that he reminded us that we are the teachers and the guardians of our daughters. And if you save a girl, you save generations.

*Sister Lant:* You know what I hear you saying and what I heard him say was that to stand strong and immovable for righteousness is to follow the plan that the Savior's given us to come back to Him.

*Sister Tanner:* I think President Hinckley was telling us how we can come unto Christ, and that is by being righteous women. So let's talk about that first. What does it mean to be a righteous woman?

*Sister Lant:* Maybe I'll go first.

*Sister Tanner:* Okay.

## What does it mean to be a righteous woman?

*Sister Lant:* I think that righteousness is a condition of the heart. It's who we really are deep down inside, not just what we do, but who we really are deep down. It's loving the Lord more than the things of the world, and it's based on our desire to serve the Lord in everything that we do. Now, in practice, everyday practice, it means that we are willing to sacrifice in order to keep our covenants. And I'm talking about sacrificing things like our time and our means and sometimes even our personal interests. Maybe it's taking off some of those sticky notes and refocusing. You know, becoming more willing to accept the words of the prophet and to follow. But, you know, I have a question that I think everybody has from time to time: Is a righteous woman a perfect woman?

*Sister Tanner:* I hope not.

*Sister Parkin:* I hope not either.

*Sister Lant:* Yeah, I hope not, either. I'm sure that she's not, but she's trying. She's trying every day and some days are better than others. I can't help but remember an experience I had as a young mother. I had several young children, six or seven, I don't know, but they were all really young. And those years are a blur. But I was trying to get them to bed one night. My husband was at the church and I was tired and I would just get one to bed and up they'd come. You know, I'd turn my attention to another child and up they'd come. And I finally just lost it. I started chasing those children, screaming at the top of my lungs, and I'm not a screamer. And they were laughing at me. It was terrible. And all of a sudden there was a knock at my door.

*Sister Parkin:* Oh, no.

*Sister Lant:* I went to the door and my neighbor was standing there. It was in the summer, my windows were open, and she had this huge smile on her face. She just looked at me and said, "I heard the whole thing. You made my day." And, you know, it was an awful day for me, but I never did that again.

*Sister Tanner:* So what you're saying, Sister Lant, is that a righteous woman is not always perfect?

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Tanner:* Okay.

*Sister Parkin:* Well, I think my definition of being righteous is pretty simple, standing for what's right. I always think of my mother, who used to say, "Do what is right; let the consequence follow." I also know that the words in Moroni 9, verse 6 talk about conquering the enemy of all righteousness. Well, who is that enemy of all righteousness? We know it's Satan. But then, you know, I think about my own life and I remember striving to be a righteous woman. And, it was the teenage years, four sons, industrious sons, and it was a Sunday evening and one of our sons came to my husband and said, "I'd like to go to the movie with my friends." And, Jim looked at him for a minute and he said again, "Well, can I go?" And Jim said, "I can't answer that for you. You need to decide." He said, "We know what the Sabbath day is. We try to keep it holy. You've been taught. You need to decide. You have agency." Well, he went to the movie.

*Sister Tanner:* He did?

*Sister Parkin:* He went to the movie, sisters. Am I a rotten mother?

*Sister Tanner:* No.

*Sister Lant:* No.

*Sister Parkin:* No, I don't even feel guilty about it anymore. I haven't failed, but this is what I do know. This I know for sure. Our son learned some things that evening that were very important, and I know that agency is a God-given gift to every one of us. And we as women need to stand for righteousness as we practice being agents unto ourselves. I know it works.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Tanner:* Well, you know, in that instance you were a righteous woman teaching your son righteous behavior but then allowing him agency. That's great.

*Sister Parkin:* It was hard, Susan.

*Sister Tanner:* I know. That's a righteous woman, though. You know, I found my definition for righteousness as I've looked at righteous societies in the scriptures, and I think about the people in 4th Nephi who were righteous for 200 years. There's a little phrase in there that gives me a clue as to how they did it. It says, "The love of God did dwell in their hearts." I think of that love as being love for God, love from God, and loving like God loves. And the perfect example of that to me is my own mother. She really exemplified those things. She always had a love for God which I think she showed me in her willingness to accept all callings that came to her. But I remember her telling me about an experience when I was very young and she had a house full of little children. She was serving in four different callings in the ward and the bishop called her in to ask her to do an additional thing, and she was like our poster woman. She explained to the bishop. She said, "I'm willing to do that if that is what you think I need to do; I always accept calls, but can I just tell you about my life?" And she told him some of the things and responsibilities she was facing and she told him about the four callings she already had. And he was kind of embarrassed. But he said, "I didn't realize you were serving in those four places. This is good information for me and I hereby rescind this fifth call."

*Sister Parkin:* Good information makes for good inspiration.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right.

*Sister Lant:* But she was a righteous woman. She was willing.

*Sister Tanner:* She was willing.

*Sister Lant:* She was willing.

*Sister Tanner:* And she was showing her love for God.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Tanner:* She also taught me to expect love from God. She said, "Notice the little miracles that happen every day in your life, the little blessings. Be careful what you pray for because Heavenly Father is good to you; He will answer your prayers." She was a good woman at reaching out to others and loving like God loves. And she loved her role as a wife and mother, and that was a focus for her, that was one of her focuses. When we were all school age, she decided to go back and finish her college education, and that only lasted one semester because she decided that was one of these notes that she could take off at that point. That was a very unselfish decision that she made in order to focus on strengthening her family at that time.

*Sister Parkin:* And life is long.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right; there are seasons. But she is now seeing the fruits of some of her righteousness as she looks at a little tiny granddaughter, great-granddaughters who are becoming little righteous women. And it's what President Hinckley said: "When you save a girl, you save generations."

*Sister Lant:* Aren't we all grateful for righteous mothers that set the example for us? And, you know, when I think of examples of righteous women, I think of the young women, young mothers. I think young mothers of today are amazing. They are so strong. In fact, there's one in particular that I'm thinking of who has several young children. Her husband's just been called to be a bishop, her children are very involved, and there's a lot going on in that household. And now she has to take care of it all basically because he's gone so much. But she has placed her focus on the Savior and she does the things she needs to do to make it possible for their family to still be strengthened. She paves the way so that when

her husband gets home, they have time to do family scripture study and family prayer and family home evening, and it takes extra effort, but she has made that decision. Does she get it all done? Does she do everything because she's doing that? No, she doesn't. Sometimes her house isn't absolutely perfectly clean, but she is doing the things that are most important. She has that focus and it's enabling her. And when you walk into that home, you feel the Spirit of the Lord, and it's a wonderful thing.

*Sister Tanner:* You know, your talking about a young bishop's wife reminds me of a bishop's wife who just spoke in our stake conference and she took some sticky notes off of herself. She said, "We decided to not be part of several soccer teams," and that was one of the ways they did it. And she said, "We also found that one of our teenage daughters wasn't coming to family scripture study and this was something that was important and a focus to us, so we ended up having family scripture study in the bathroom around the mirror while this daughter was getting ready." But they were making decisions with a focus.

*Sister Lant:* Yes.

*Sister Parkin:* I think of women in my life that have been righteous and have blessed me. Specifically, I think of some young adult Relief Society sisters that I've had opportunity to visit with. What I know when I watch them is they understand the Lord's plan, and their desire is to keep covenants and to feel the Lord's love, and then they share it. They're remarkable women. But I also remember moving into a new neighborhood with four little boys. They were interesting children. Within days of moving in, another woman moved in who was 30 years older than me. We were both trying to find our way in the neighborhood and she became my very best friend. She was a confidante to me. We talked about the scriptures, we shared insights, she nurtured me, she counseled me, and she listened to me. And I thought she only did that for me. But as I listened, she did it for many women. And as I think about our lives as women, we need to do that for each other, we need to be there for one another, we need to bless and listen and love. It makes a difference.

*Sister Tanner:* You know, if we encourage each other, we are encouraging righteousness.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Parkin:* It works that way, doesn't it? I want to share one more experience that I had in my office a bit ago. Seven single adult women gathered around the table in my office. They were all above 30 years of age. They talked about their challenges, but they also talked about what they wanted in life, what their focus was, how they wanted to be righteous. They were remarkable women. But what I saw happen for them was they heard each other's testimonies around that table. That was the strengthening part for them, verbalizing their testimony, hearing each other's testimonies. And they walked away with this sentence that they said, there's not a better place to be single than in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They are remarkable women that I love.

*Sister Tanner:* That's great. And I think we could say that at any age. I feel like we are sitting here among a group of righteous women. But as righteous women, here's our next question: How do we stay focused every single day on Jesus Christ? It's hard. We are busy, we are fragmented, and we are distracted. It's our poster woman. We each can relate to her. And sometimes we don't always stay focused and sometimes it's those mistakes that we make that actually can help us renew our commitment. And I know that because I had this brought out to me really in a very poignant way as I made a bad mistake. I hope I've learned from that mistake. I don't really want to tell, but these two women have encouraged me to tell.

*Sister Parkin:* We've encouraged her and she's going to share.

*Sister Tanner:* Anyway, one of the girls who was a former Laurel of mine announced her marriage in the temple in January. She was going to get married in March, and I happened to be her mother's visiting teacher. I went and visited her and was excited about the upcoming wedding plans, and I said, "Let me

help you. This is a busy time. Let me bring a really nice dinner to you and your family the night before Liz's wedding." She readily accepted; she knew that would be a very busy day, and then life went on. In February, I had a daughter who had kind of a surprise lung surgery and that was all encompassing for our family. Then, in March, I had my usual busyness, but the ward assigned me to be in charge of a great big humanitarian project. The day before Liz's wedding I was frantically running around to fabric stores trying to get things set up for the event in my house that night. In fact, I even told my family to go buy dinner somewhere because I didn't have time to fix dinner for them. And about 6:30 that evening, the telephone rang and it was Liz's mother. And she said, "Now, about that dinner, what time were you planning on bringing that?" And I thought, "What dinner?" It just completely had left my mind, completely. And I felt terrible about that. For days after, I agonized that I had made a very important promise, but I had let my busyness and my distractedness take over and I hadn't remembered. And the thing that I kept thinking is, we make important promises every week when we take the sacrament, and then do we walk away from that meeting and just go on with our busy, distracted lives, never thinking about that promise again? It's, I hope, taught me a lesson about how we need to focus and stay focused every day.

*Sister Lant:* Well, you know, just like you couldn't do it all, you know, you had that experience, I think all of us have got to come to the point where we realize that we cannot do it all, all of the time. No one can. No one does. We just think that each other does. But no one really does. And so that means that we have to constantly make choices about the things that we do. Sometimes those choices are even between good and good, good and better. What is the best thing? What is the thing that is going to strengthen me and strengthen my family and bring us closer to the Savior? And those kinds of choices are sometimes the hard ones to make. But we have to set those priorities and be determined that we're going to follow them. I know that as we focus on the Savior and keep that focus in mind, that we will be enabled to keep our priorities straight and to do the things that we need to do.

*Sister Parkin:* So how do we stay focused?

## How do we stay focused every day on coming unto Christ?

*Sister Tanner:* Well, those are the basic things. And you all know what they are. For me, it's prayers, it's scriptures, and it's also verbalizing my testimony on a daily basis. You know, if I begin my day with prayer and I begin with gratitude and keep going with gratitude no matter how I'm feeling, it allows me finally in that prayer to petition the Lord and to know that I can align my will with His.

*Sister Lant:* Susan, have you ever had the experience of having a prayer where you don't do anything but express gratitude?

*Sister Tanner:* Yeah, it's a great experience.

*Sister Lant:* It's a sweet experience, isn't it?

*Sister Tanner:* Yes.

*Sister Lant:* When I think about prayer, I think about a prayer in our hearts. Because when we have a prayer in our hearts, it's a reaching up all day long. Every hour of every day we are reaching to our Father in Heaven. I remember something a wise woman told me many years ago. She said: "Women pray in all kinds of places. They pray while they're doing the dishes, they pray while they're taking care of their children, they pray while they're walking." And I have to add, I pray while I'm driving.

*Sister Tanner:* So do I.

*Sister Lant:* My commute from Orem to Salt Lake every day is a great time to talk to my Heavenly Father.

*Sister Tanner:* A good long prayer.

*Sister Lant:* Yes, it is. And I barely get it all in then.

*Sister Parkin:* Well, I know that prayer really works for me, but what I've decided is the only way I know how to do it is that the first thing that hits the floor in the morning are my knees. Then I can remember, and it happens for me. I think we're pretty good about doing the morning prayers and the evening prayers, but what about that in-between time? In the morning when I do pray, I ask Heavenly Father to help me be guided by the Holy Ghost, that I can follow the promptings so that I can feel His love and I can reach to those people who need an extra touch that day. That's a help to me. It's the Holy Ghost that I keep seeking to prompt and guide me.

*Sister Tanner:* Well, I think the Holy Ghost gives us answers through the scriptures, and that's another one of our basics. The scriptures and the Holy Ghost speaking to us bring answers, bring us comfort, bring us strength during the day.

*Sister Lant:* Well, I absolutely agree, Susan. And all of you here know how I love the scriptures and how we've talked about anchoring our children in the scriptures. But I have found that the scriptures for me have actually become living. Because every time I have a need or a concern, I can go to them, and when I open them and read I find answers, I find comfort. And, in fact, many times I have read the very same scriptures, but because of what I bring to them I see something different.

*Sister Parkin:* Something different than what you're looking for.

*Sister Lant:* I receive more information. Right. Just the other day I was reading in Alma 34, you know the passage of scripture that talks about prayer and where it tells us that we pray over our flocks and over our fields and for mercy and for our families and talks about all these things and for years I've read those verses and been reminded that we're to pray for things both temporal and spiritual. But in verse 26 I learned something new that I had never seen. It says, "Pour out your souls in your closets, secret places, and in your wilderness." Well, to me, I'd always just read that as places that you pray. But the other day as I was reading it, something just touched my heart, and I understood it to mean the condition of my heart. My closet, my secret places, my wilderness means to pray for my secret weaknesses, my secret desires, my mistakes, my loneliness, my needs, and so I got something completely new from a passage that I had read and reread. And so they're living. I love them.

*Sister Parkin:* The blessing of the Holy Ghost.

*Sister Lant:* Yes, exactly.

*Sister Parkin:* You know, as I think about living water, I don't know how many of you had the wonderful opportunity to listen to Elder Bednar, at the February CES fireside, but he gave some great counsel about living water, and he talked about the scriptures being living water. He suggested some things. He said, "Read the scriptures from the beginning clear to the end." I think he meant 2nd Nephi also. He talked about studying by topic. He talked about searching for connections, for patterns, for themes, and seeing how that all works together. There's a couple of things I do know. When you are sporadic about scripture study, even when you do it in big hunks of time, it doesn't work the way being in the scriptures every day works. Even if it's a verse or two, it becomes habit, it becomes part of your heart and so it's the constant daily nourishment that we need from the scriptures.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Tanner:* Well, I agree. And I think as long as we are talking about daily things that need to happen, this is how I feel about verbalizing my testimony. And there are so many ways that we can do it. I

verbalize my testimony in my prayers to my Father in Heaven, I verbalize it in my journal, I verbalize it to my children. It's Elder Holland who says that we don't just assume that our children and others will somehow get the drift of our beliefs.

*Sister Parkin:* I love that thought on verbalizing testimonies. In this same talk by Elder Holland he also counseled parents to live the gospel so conspicuously that your children have no question what you believe in and keep the covenants your children know you have made. As we are conspicuous in living the gospel and keeping our covenants we are bearing testimony of our Savior Jesus Christ.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Parkin:* You know, one way that has helped me to focus on my Savior Jesus Christ is walking with other women in the mornings. I don't get there every morning, but we walk. And we've walked together for a number of years. When we first began, we talked about the hard things in our life, the things we sorted out with one another. We've grown up a bit. We started looking after a while for the miracles in our lives, and we watched for them, and then they happened, and then we talked about them together. I think the other thing we are doing now is we are talking about what we are finding in the scriptures. It's our personal study. It may be a word such as *hearken*, a question, and we talk about that together, we think about it and it changes our attitude, it changes our lift for the day, and what I know is it helps me stay focused on the Savior. It's because I'm thinking about it in my head. That's been my difference.

*Sister Tanner:* That's great.

*Sister Lant:* That's good.

## What can we do as auxiliary leaders to stand strong and immovable to strengthen families?

*Sister Tanner:* Up to this point we've been talking about each of us as individual sisters and how we can stay focused on Jesus Christ and how we can be righteous women in our lives, strengthening our families. I'd like us to make a little mental shift here now, and let's talk about who we are as auxiliary leaders. Each of you are here today as an auxiliary leader. How can we as auxiliary leaders stand strong and immovable in strengthening families?

*Sister Lant:* You know, our hope is that today as we sit here together and speak to you with one voice, that just seeing us will speak louder than our words, that we work together, that we sustain one another, that we help one another in the auxiliaries as well as helping one another as women. We can support one another, not add to one another's burdens by judging and competing. We can, through our callings and by our nature, help one another.

*Sister Tanner:* So in a way maybe you're saying that we need to focus on the people?

*Sister Lant:* Exactly.

*Sister Tanner:* Each other?

*Sister Lant:* Exactly.

*Sister Tanner:* Each other? I think that as auxiliaries if we can focus on people and principles rather than programs, we will strengthen the people, the families. Programs are wonderful tools to help us, but they're

not the end-all, and sometimes they might even be the cause of this fragmentation that we've been talking about.

*Sister Lant:* Yes.

*Sister Tanner:* Everything that we do in the auxiliaries we could think about with three basic principles. I'd like you to just make note of these. We gather. That's what we're doing here today. That's one of the things you do. You gather Primary children together. Why do we gather? Why are you here? Why do we gather in family home evening? What's the purpose of gathering? It's to strengthen. And that means to teach, to testify, to exemplify. So we gather to strengthen. That's the second principle, and we gather to minister, to love, to encourage. Let's think about those three principles: gathering, strengthening, ministering.

*Sister Parkin:* You know, as I think of what our focus needs to be in auxiliaries, it really needs to be how do we strengthen families? So it doesn't mean I'm going to create the best anniversary party for Relief Society ever. It doesn't have to be that. Or the best Young Women camp that ever happened in the world, and then an activity day that's to die for. That's not what it's about. That really isn't.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Parkin:* We need to break down all those borders that sit between auxiliaries. And we think, how do we strengthen a family in everything we do in our auxiliaries? You know, I experienced a strengthening experience in Relief Society just a bit ago, and it was actually my own ward. The Relief Society and the young women gathered together. It was a pretty remarkable experience, because it was mothers, daughters, shoulder to shoulder. It was a snug little environment that we sat around in this room. It was a sweet spirit that was there. The teacher was a young woman who was a Relief Society teacher now, but she knew the young women, so she had this ability to make sweet connections for them. Our lesson that day was on the 2007 Mutual theme, "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly." How does it go, Susan?

*Sister Tanner:* Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God.

*Sister Parkin:* Well, what happened that day as we were together was I listened to mothers and daughters share comments. I listened to a woman and her daughter whom I've never heard share any feelings or anything in Relief Society make a comment. There was a spirit. There was a visible, tangible feeling in that room. And for me it was that mother and daughter sitting together that made a difference that was going to strengthen a family. I also think that we have something to be excited about, and that's the First Presidency letter, February the 23rd, that went out to priesthood leaders. Susan, talk about that for a minute.

*Sister Tanner:* Well, it gave priesthood leaders the opportunity to allow for a once-a-month joint opening exercise for Relief Society and young women together. I think that some of what you're just talking about could happen in those meetings. The letter also emphasizes other ways that we can join together across auxiliaries to help strengthen. Think of an enrichment where young women, 11-year-old Primary girls could all join together with the older sisters in the ward and do service, and then they could come back and share the sweetness of that service. That's kind of verbalizing testimony, strengthening again.

*Sister Lant:* I'm just going to put one little word in for Primary leaders. Remember to always gather them in with these kinds of activities because Primary can be kind of a lonely place to serve. And we gather with children, but we need to gather and be strengthened by the women in our wards. And sometimes we don't have that opportunity as much. So remember to reach out to the Primary sisters and leaders and bring them in.

*Sister Parkin:* We could do a better job in Relief Society in getting that word out.

*Sister Lant:* Okay, good.

*Sister Parkin:* We'll work on it, Cheryl, I promise.

*Sister Lant:* Good, good.

*Sister Parkin:* You know, I also think what Elder Ballard said at the last general conference, and remember the title of his message was, "O, Be Wise." You'll remember that. Well, I think as all of us who have the opportunity to serve on the ward or the stake council need to go prepared, and that's so important, going prepared to relieve burdens and guilt from the mother that carries such a heavy load, or the woman that feels she's overloaded. In that setting we have a responsibility to work together as priesthood and auxiliary leaders in finding ways that will strengthen families so that we are not so fragmented.

*Sister Lant:* You know, I know of an experience that came out of a discussion in a ward council meeting. There was a young woman in the ward that was really struggling. In fact, she was at the point she'd closed off to her mother completely. And so the Young Women leader just really stepped up and built a relationship of trust, brought that young girl into her home for activities and just personal experience with her, and brought it to the point that she was really able to help this girl turn her life around. It made such a difference for the mother and the daughter.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right.

*Sister Parkin:* Well, I know this: Our most important relationships are in our own families. They are the eternal part of all this. And for sure in heaven, we will be organized by families, not by auxiliaries.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right.

*Sister Lant:* That's right.

*Sister Tanner:* You know, we've mentioned this before, but a ward council is a good place for us to talk about unified truths that we could teach, so that a family is getting the same message on all the different levels. I love that the emphasis in Primary is anchoring the children in the scriptures. When you do that, these young people come to the Young Women auxiliary ready to delve into Personal Progress and to continue their study of the scriptures, and then that happens with Relief Society lessons, women become scribes as they study the scriptures. Another thing that often falls to young women is the principle of modesty; it falls to us to teach it. But I thought, what if we discussed this in ward council and it happened on all the different levels, not just for the teenage girls?

*Sister Parkin:* And so everybody in that council brought their best thinking of how we were going to bless our ward family on just that principle of how to improve modesty. Well, what I do know is mothers are the pacesetters for modesty.

*Sister Tanner:* Yes.

*Sister Lant:* And what else I know is that it begins when they're very young. Those little girls need to be taught as well.

## Ministering

*Sister Tanner:* That's exactly right. As we minister to others, I think it gives us a chance to be Godlike. Ministering enables us to practice the things that we learn as we pray and as we read the scriptures, and the Holy Ghost kind of gives us hints and messages as to what we should be doing. And I love this idea of ministering because often we set out to bless someone else's life, but miraculously in the process our own burdens are lifted.

*Sister Parkin:* Yes. It's that cycle that goes round and round. Well, you know, sometimes they call ministering service, but I think of it with just one more word in front of it, *personal* ministry. What I do believe is that every one of us has a personal ministry, and we need to find out what that is. And then when we've found out what it is, we need to act upon it. And I know that as we minister to one another, we can bless women and families in ways that will bring eternal consequences. I spoke about the Holy Ghost earlier and about the need for the Holy Ghost in our lives to prompt and direct us for those little things. I think about that in the sense of when you have that kind of prompting, never suppress it. So I say to you, never suppress a generous thought. When you walk out of here today, you've got an opportunity to minister to somebody by you.

*Sister Lant:* I love that.

*Sister Parkin:* So never suppress a generous thought; it works.

*Sister Lant:* You know, I just have to tell you about one little experience I've had recently. And it has made me realize that ministering really happens woman to woman, doesn't it? My youngest daughter just had her first baby, but she lives clear over in Spain. And she had her baby C-section, and, of course, I just was dying to be there and help her; she was alone over there. And the people in her ward are very far spread; they weren't close by. But the mission president's wife lives fairly close to her and she offered to bring dinner the first night that they were home from the hospital. And so she came but she didn't just bring one dinner; she brought six meals.

*Sister Tanner:* Wow.

*Sister Parkin:* This is a generous woman.

*Sister Lant:* Yes. For the entire week prior, every time she'd prepared a meal for her family, she made a little tin foil package with portions for Jen and her husband and put them in the freezer. And that just touched my heart. And we did get to Spain to see that new baby. But when I got there, one of the first things I wanted to do was wrap my arms around that mission president's wife and tell her thank you. We have a connection. She ministered to me through my daughter.

*Sister Parkin:* Well, women are just the best.

*Sister Lant:* They are. They are.

*Sister Parkin:* They truly are. So this mission mom didn't suppress that generous mom, as busy as she was, and I know it can be busy.

*Sister Lant:* Yes, exactly.

*Sister Tanner:* That's right. You know, as we focus on Christ, I think it might help us, each of us in our lives, to maybe remove some of the sticky notes that might not be right in alignment with that focus. And as we keep that focus in mind, we'll be better able to strengthen our families individually and as

auxiliary leaders. Today we've shared some ideas with you about standing strong and immovable for righteousness, and we hope that you have felt inspired and lifted. And especially we hope that you know that you are so appreciated in the good work that you do. You might leave today kind of feeling a little bit heavy like you're this woman. We hope you leave feeling motivated. And, you know, you might be saying, "I'm motivated but just how exactly am I going to do this?" I love President Hinckley because he motivates us and then makes us feel like we can do it. He says, "Just do the very best you can."

*Sister Lant:* Yes.

*Sister Tanner:* And, in the general Relief Society meeting in 2003, he gave us a wonderful little formula with four do's and a promise. Let's just listen to him again.

*President Hinckley:* Now, my dear sisters, that is the way with you. You are doing the best you can, and that best results in good to yourself and to others. Do not nag yourself with a sense of failure. Get on your knees and ask for the blessings of the Lord, then stand on your feet and do what you're asked to do, and then leave the matter in the hands of the Lord. You will discover that you have accomplished something beyond price.

*Sister Tanner:* Okay, so what were President Hinckley's four do's? He said, "Don't nag yourself with feelings of failure."

*Sister Lant:* Then he said, "Get on your knees and plead with the Lord."

*Sister Parkin:* Third, "Stand on your feet and do what you're asked to do."

*Sister Lant:* And, fourth, "Leave the matter in the hands of the Lord."

*Sister Tanner:* And then what's the promise?

*Sister Parkin:* You will find you have accomplished much of great worth.

*Sister Lant:* Yes.

*Sister Tanner:* Sisters, we hope that you will be inspired and motivated to be the best righteous woman that you can be with your focus on Jesus Christ. We testify that President Gordon B. Hinckley is the prophet on the earth today, and that Jesus is our Savior, and that it is our desire for each of us that we will be able to be focused on Him, to come unto Him, and to help bring others unto Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

*Sister Parkin:* Amen.

*Sister Lant:* Amen.