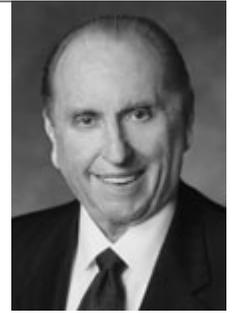


By President
Thomas S. Monson



Living the Abundant Life

At the advent of a new year, I challenge Latter-day Saints everywhere to undertake a personal, diligent, significant quest for what I call the abundant life—a life filled with an abundance of success, goodness, and blessings. Just as we learned the ABCs in school, I offer my own ABCs to help us all gain the abundant life.

Have a Positive Attitude

A in my ABCs refers to attitude. William James, a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher, wrote, “The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”¹

So much in life depends on our attitude. The way we choose to see things and respond to others makes all the difference. To do the best we can and then to choose to be happy about our circumstances, whatever they may be, can bring peace and contentment.

Charles Swindoll—author, educator, and Christian pastor—said: “Attitude, to me, is more important than . . . the past, . . . than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance,

giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.”²

We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude.

Believe in Yourself

B is for believe—in yourself, in those around you, and in eternal principles.

Be honest with yourself, with others, and with your Heavenly Father. One who was not honest with God until it was too late was Cardinal Wolsey who, according to Shakespeare, spent a long life in service to three sovereigns and enjoyed wealth and power. Finally, he was shorn of his power and possessions by an impatient king. Cardinal Wolsey cried:

*Had I but served my God with half the zeal
I served my king, He would not in mine age
Have left me naked to mine enemies.*³

Thomas Fuller, an English churchman and historian who lived in the 17th century, penned this truth: “He

does not believe that does not live according to his belief.”⁴

Don’t limit yourself and don’t let others convince you that you are limited in what you can do. Believe in yourself and then live so as to reach your possibilities.

You can achieve what you believe you can. Trust and believe and have faith.

Face Challenges with Courage

Courage becomes a worthwhile and meaningful virtue when it is regarded not so much as a willingness to die manfully but as a determination to live decently.

Said the American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide on, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.”⁵

There will be times when you will be frightened and discouraged. You may feel that you are defeated. The odds of obtaining victory may appear overwhelming. At times you may feel like David trying to fight Goliath. But remember—David *did* win!

Courage is required to make an initial thrust toward one’s coveted goal, but even greater courage is called for when one stumbles and must make a second effort to achieve.

Have the determination to make the effort, the single-mindedness to work toward a worthy goal, and the courage not only to face the challenges that inevitably come but also to make a second effort, should such be required. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says, “I’ll try again tomorrow.”

May we remember these ABCs as we begin our journey into the new year, cultivating a positive attitude, a belief that we can achieve our goals and resolutions, and the courage to face whatever challenges may come our way. Then the abundant life will be ours.

NOTES

1. William James, in Lloyd Albert Johnson, comp., *A Toolbox for Humanity: More Than 9000 Years of Thought* (2003), 127.
2. Charles Swindoll, in Daniel H. Johnston, *Lessons for Living* (2001), 29.
3. William Shakespeare, *King Henry the Eighth*, act 3, scene 2, lines 456–58.

4. Thomas Fuller, in H. L. Mencken, ed., *A New Dictionary of Quotations* (1942), 96.

5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in Roy B. Zuck, *The Speaker’s Quote Book* (2009), 113.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider inviting family members to share personal experiences when a positive attitude, belief in themselves, or courage helped them. Or invite them to find examples of these three principles in the scriptures. You might prepare to teach by prayerfully thinking of scriptures or experiences of your own.

YOUTH

Courage to Weather the Storm

By Maddison Morley

On the second night of my stake’s Young Women camp, we had a big rainstorm and tornado.

My ward had about 24 young women attending the camp with two leaders, and we all had to fit into one small cabin for protection. The rain was falling hard, and the wind was getting worse. I had to continually remind myself of the prayer for safety our stake president had offered earlier. Our ward also said our own group prayer in our cabin, and I said my own personal prayers.

A lot of girls were scared, and it was easy to see why. Our cabin was not very sturdy, and we were right by a river. In about 20 minutes the storm got so bad that the whole stake had to run from their ward cabins to the counselors’ cabins, which were on higher ground. My stake president said another prayer, and we sang hymns, Primary songs, and camp songs in an attempt to comfort ourselves. Yes, we were scared, but we felt that everything would be all right. Half an hour later it was OK to go back to our ward cabins.

We later found out what had happened to the tornado that night. It had split into two storms. One of them went around us to the right and the other to the left. What we got wasn’t even the worst of it!

I know that God heard our prayers that night and that He protected us from the worst of the storm. Why would a tornado split unless God needed it to? I know that in the storms of life, we can always pray to

Heavenly Father and He will hear and answer us, giving us the courage and protection we need to make it safely through.

CHILDREN

Captain Moroni

Captain Moroni had courage as he faced challenges. He loved truth, liberty, and faith. He devoted his life

to helping the Nephites preserve their freedom. You can be like Captain Moroni by facing your challenges with courage. You can even make your own title of liberty by writing the things that are important to you and your family.

Where to Find Out More

Alma 46:11–27: The title of liberty

Alma 48:11–13, 16–17: Moroni's qualities



Faith, Family, Relief

Watchcare and Ministering through Visiting Teaching

Study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

“Charity [means] far more than a feeling of benevolence,” taught President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency. “Charity is born of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and is an effect of His Atonement.”¹ For Relief Society sisters, visiting teaching can be charity in action, an important way to exercise our faith in the Savior.

Through visiting teaching, we provide watchcare by contacting each sister, sharing a gospel message, and seeking to know her and her family’s needs. “Visiting teaching becomes the Lord’s work when our focus is on people rather than percentages,” explains Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president. “In reality, visiting teaching is never finished. It is more a way of life than a task. Faithfully serving as a visiting teacher is evidence of our discipleship.”²

As we provide consistent and prayerful watchcare, we learn how to best minister to and meet the needs of each sister and her family. Ministering can take many forms—some large and some not so large. “Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another: a question concerning a person’s family, quick words of encouragement, a sincere compliment, a small note of thanks, a brief

telephone call,” taught President Thomas S. Monson. “If we are observant and aware, and if we act on the promptings which come to us, we can accomplish much good. . . . Countless are the acts of service provided by the vast army of Relief Society visiting teachers.”³

From Our History

In 1843, Church members in Nauvoo, Illinois, were divided into four wards. In July of that year, Relief Society leaders appointed a visiting committee of four sisters for each ward. The visiting committees’ responsibilities included assessing needs and collecting donations. The Relief Society used these donations to provide for the needy.⁴

While visiting teachers no longer collect donations, they do retain the responsibility to assess needs—spiritual and temporal—and to work to meet those needs. Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), second Relief Society general president, explained: “A teacher . . . should surely have so much of the Spirit of the Lord, as she enters a house to know what spirit she meets in there. . . . Plead before God and the Holy Ghost to get [the Spirit] so that you will be able to meet that spirit that prevails in that house . . . and you may feel to talk words of peace and comfort,

and if you find a sister feeling cold, take her to your heart as you would a child to your bosom and warm [her] up.”⁵

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “The Enduring Legacy of Relief Society,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 121.
2. Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 114.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 120–21.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 105.
5. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 108.

From the Scriptures

John 13:15, 34–35; 21:15; Mosiah 2:17; Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; Moses 1:39

What Can I Do?

1. What am I doing to help my sisters feel that I am a friend who loves and cares for them?
2. How can I become better at watching over and caring for others?

For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

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