

Self-Reliance

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I think I should alert you to the fact that the talk I have prepared is not really very interesting. That, I must claim, is not because I have not spent time in preparing it, for I have—a good deal more than usual. I want very much to be informative, and if you find that the talk is not interesting—and you may—be patient with the thought that in this case I would rather teach a few of you than entertain all of you.

For a long time I have had a subject on my mind that I have wanted to discuss with the young adults of the Church. I have set it aside time after time because it is very difficult to explain. Although the subject is very commonplace, I have never heard anyone else talk about it.

Before I’m through, perhaps some of you may be like the student who attended a lecture and then wrote,

“I don’t like the teacher.
The subject’s too deep.
I’d cut this class,
But I need the sleep.”

Now, if you find yourself in that situation—and you may—be my guest. But no snoring please. We’ll try to awaken you somewhere near the end.

There is a principle of education known as transfer, and I should like to make use of it by talking about a familiar program of the Church and then transfer the fundamental principle of it to another part of our lives. First, let me review for you some of the basic

principles of the Church welfare program. Church welfare, however, is not the subject of my sermon. I'm only going to use it to illustrate a point.

The Church was two years old when the Lord revealed that, “the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways.” (**D&C 75:29.**) President Marion G. Romney in our last conference explained this principle with his characteristic simple directness: “The obligation to sustain one’s self was divinely imposed upon the human race at its beginning. ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.’ (**Gen. 3:19.**)”

The welfare handbook instructs, “(We must) earnestly teach and urge members to be self-sustaining to the fullest extent of their power. No Latter-day Saint will ... voluntarily shift from himself the burden of his own support. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Almighty and with his own labors, he will supply himself with the necessities of life.” (1952, p. 2.)

We have succeeded fairly well in establishing in the minds of Latter-day Saints that they should take care of their own material needs and then contribute to the welfare of those who cannot provide the necessities of life. If a member is unable to sustain himself, then he is to call upon his own family, and then upon the Church, in that order, and not upon the government at all.

We have counseled bishops and stake presidents to be very careful to avoid abuses in the welfare program. When people are *able* but are *unwilling* to take care of themselves, we are responsible to employ the dictum of the Lord, that the idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer. The simple rule has been, to the fullest extent possible, to take care of one’s self. This couplet of truth has been something of a model:

“Eat it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without.”

It’s not an unkind or an unfeeling bishop who requires a member of the Church to work to the fullest extent he can for what he receives from Church welfare. It is not a quick handout system merely for the asking. It requires a careful inventory of all personal resources, all of which must be committed before anything is added from the outside. There should not be the slightest embarrassment on the part of any member of the Church to be assisted by the Church welfare program—provided, that is, that he has contributed all that he can contribute. Every personal resource of his own must be called upon first.

Some of you are struggling to get through school and you’re suffering from some financial pressure, perhaps even some deprivation for a season while you’re preparing so that you can be self-sustaining all the rest of your lives. If you’re in need, it is quite in order for you to turn *first* to your family, and then to the Church.

Because of the probability that some may join the Church for the material security they think they will find here, missionaries are counseled not to emphasize the Church welfare program in their proselyting. I met an investigator once in New Hampshire who was

joining the Church for just that reason. He told me how impressed he was with the welfare program and how much he wanted that security. I told him, “Yes, by all means, if you know about the welfare program, join the Church for that reason. We need all of the help we can get, and you shall be called upon continually to contribute to the welfare of others.” His enthusiasm for baptism faded immediately.

When the Church welfare program was first announced in 1936, the First Presidency made this statement:

“Our primary purpose was to set up, insofar as possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of the dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift, and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. *The aim of the Church is to help people to help themselves.* Work is to be re-enthroned as a ruling principle in the lives of our Church membership.” (Conference Report, October 1936, p. 3; italics added.)

President Romney has emphasized, “to care for people on any other basis is to do them more harm than good. The purpose of Church welfare is *not* to relieve a Church member from taking care of himself.” (Welfare Services Meeting, October 5, 1974.)

I accept the principles of the welfare program. I endorse them. In too many places, in too many ways, we’re getting away from them. The principle of self-reliance is fundamental to the happy life.

Now to the point. The substance of what I want to say here tonight to you students of Brigham Young University is this: That same principle, self-reliance, has application in emotional and in spiritual things.

I have become very anxious over the amount of counseling that we seem to need in the Church, and the network of counseling services that we keep building up—without once emphasizing the principle of self-reliance as it is understood in the welfare program. There are too many in the Church who seem to be totally dependent, emotionally and spiritually, upon others. They subsist on some kind of emotional welfare. They are unwilling to sustain themselves. They become so dependent that they endlessly need to be shored up, lifted up, endlessly need encouragement, and they contribute little of their own.

I have been concerned that we may be on the verge of doing to ourselves emotionally (and therefore spiritually) what we have been working so hard for generations to avoid materially. If we lose our emotional and spiritual self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially. On one hand, we counsel bishops to avoid abuses in the Church welfare program. On the other hand, we seem to dole out counsel and advice without the slightest thought that the member should solve the problem himself or turn to his family. Only when those resources are inadequate should he turn to the Church.

We recognize at once that it would be folly to develop welfare production projects to totally sustain all of the members of the Church in every material need. We ought likewise to be very thoughtful before we develop a vast network of counseling programs with all of the bishops and branch presidents and everyone else doling out counsel in an effort to totally sustain our members in every emotional need.

If we are not careful we can lose the power of individual revelation. The Lord said to Oliver Cowdery, and it has meaning for all of us:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

“But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong.” (D&C 9:7-9.)

Has it occurred to you that many problems can be solved by reading the scriptures? We should all personally be familiar with the revelations. As part of your emotional self-reliance, read the scriptures.

I fear that leaders, both in the stakes and in the University, may be doling out counsel and advice without first requiring you to call on every personal resource and every family resource before seeking a solution of your problems from the Church.

When we mention family, you may say, “Well, my parents are not here.” I simply respond that your university admission presupposes that you can write. And should it be an emergency, there’s the telephone.

Some may say that “my parents are not members of the Church.” I say, “Well, that may be, but they are your parents. We expect you to turn to them in times of financial reverses. The same principle has great merit in times of emotional and spiritual stress.”

I had one student come to my office. I knew him personally. He had a very difficult problem. He was trying to decide should he or should he not marry. I asked him, “You’ve come for counsel?”

“Yes, indeed,” he said.

“Are you going to follow it when I give it to you?” I asked.

That was a surprise to him. Finally he consented, “Yes.”

I happened to know his father, a patriarch in the Church, and as wonderful a man as there is. I said, "This is my counsel. Go home this weekend. Talk to your father, get him in a bedroom or some private place, tell him your dilemma, ask him for his counsel, and do what he tells you to do. That is my counsel."

I think an emotional dole system can be as dangerous as a material dole system, and we can become so dependent that we stand around waiting for the Church to do everything for us.

A few years ago I received a telephone call from a bishop whose son had been inducted into the military service and was at an army basic training center. The father said, "He's been there for three weeks and he hasn't been to church yet." Then he described his son as being an active Latter-day Saint, faithful in his duties. He had received his Duty to God award and was typical of the fine young men in the Church. "He's never missed a church meeting before," his father said. "Isn't there something you can do to help?" The boy had telephoned and said that no one had come yet to invite him to go to church.

I made an investigation of the circumstances. Can you picture the following: In the barracks a few feet from his bunk was a bulletin board. On it was an 8 1/2 x 11 bulletin with a picture of the Salt Lake Temple on it, and a listing of the meeting times at the base chapel. He had been to an orientation for all new inductees, conducted by one of the base chaplains. While in this case it was not a Latter-day Saint chaplain, there was a Latter-day Saint chaplain at that installation. This fact had been noted in the lecture, incidentally. He had been told that if he wanted to know about church services to talk to the sergeant on duty, or he could contact any chaplain's office and that information would readily be given him.

He, however, had been told before he left home that the Church had a wonderful program to help young men in the military service. He was assured that the Church was doing everything to take care of our men and that we would find them and look after them and bring the full Church program to them. He had, therefore, laid back on his bunk, propped up his feet, put his head on the pillow, and waited for the Church to do everything for him. He waited three weeks and was disappointed enough that he called his father, the bishop, to say that the Church had failed him.

Now this was not malicious. It was just that he had been brought up with the idea that the whole effort and duty of the Church was to look after him. (He had missed the very point that the whole effort of the Church is to give him the opportunity to serve someone else.) Surely, since he was away from home and in a strange place and needing attention more than he had ever needed it in his life, all of that help, he was sure, would be forthcoming immediately without any effort on his part. He had been weakened by a dole system and was now in mortal spiritual jeopardy because he would not act for himself.

That experience had a great effect on me, and when we reorganized the military relations program, it was entirely changed in its emphasis from what it had been before over the years.

This change can be illustrated by one thing. The old program urged the ward or the quorum to subscribe to the Church magazine for every man entering the military service. It was the duty of the bishop to see that the subscription was renewed during the time of his enlistment.

Now we have changed all of that. Now we counsel the young man to subscribe to the magazine himself and to pay for it out of his own money. He ordinarily has money to spend on less useful things, and he should learn to take care of himself at the very beginning. If he cannot, for one reason or another, then his family should supply it. If they cannot, or if in some cases they will not, then and only then would it be the responsibility of the ward or the quorum to step in and see that this important Church publication is sent to him.

We found that our men would not bother to file change-of-address cards for the magazines if the subscriptions had been doled out to them. They had done nothing to earn them, and they didn't appreciate them. On one occasion we had a communication from the commanding general at Fort Ord asking us to please cease and desist from sending subscriptions of Church magazines to men in basic training. They were there for only a few weeks and then they moved on. He advised, "We literally have a roomful of what now must be termed 'junk mail.' Under military regulations we cannot forward it and therefore must destroy it."

It is interesting to see what has happened in that military relations program. It used to be that every week there would be many letters, "My boy is somewhere. Please, won't you get all of the Church working to find him." We have put the shoe on the other foot. He's finding himself now. He is more self-reliant.

In virtually every ward or branch there are chronic cases of individuals who endlessly seek counsel but never follow the counsel that is given. That, some may assume, is not serious. I think it is very serious! Like the common cold, it drains more strength out of humanity than any other disease. We seem to be developing an epidemic of "counselitis" which drains spiritual strength from the Church. Spiritual self-reliance is the sustaining power in the Church. If we rob you of that, how can you get the revelation that there is a prophet of God? How can you get answers to prayer? How can you *know*? If we move so quickly to answer all your questions and provide so many ways to solve all of your problems, we may end up weakening you, not strengthening you.

Now, I say here that I know quite well that some counselors are apt to say, "My counseling does not rob one of his self-reliance because I use the nondirective counseling approach. I am scrupulously careful not to take a position. I merely reflect back comments and feelings of the individual so that he will make the decision totally himself. I do my counseling by nondirection and never make a value judgment."

While I have respect for that procedure of counseling as a method, I think that if that's all they do, nondirection, very often that's precisely what we get from the counseling—no direction. When counselors schedule interminable sessions to say as little as possible

while the student is struggling to try to decide if something's right or wrong, and the counselor already knows, that's a waste of time. So is the fussing around trying to determine whether it is right for you under the circumstances or wrong for you under the circumstances, when anyone with any moral sense would know that if a course is wrong, it's wrong for *anybody* and it's wrong for *everybody*.

In the Church, the directive pattern of counseling is at least as respectable and decent and desirable and needed as the nondirective approach to counseling. Unfortunately, we see very little of it anymore. How sweet and refreshing for a branch president or a bishop or a counselor to say clearly to a student, "This course is right and this course is wrong. Now, you go make the decision." The student ought to know what is right and what is wrong by the quickest method possible, and that may be very directive. There is a crying need for counselors who will say pointedly and plainly, "This is wrong. It's evil. It's bad. It will bring you unhappiness. This course is right. It is good. It is desirable. It will bring you happiness." Then the agency comes when the individual determines for himself whether or not he will follow the right course.

In the world, this preoccupation with counseling has led to a number of experiments from which we are not entirely free in the Church. There are those counselors who want to delve deeper into the lives of subjects than is emotionally or spiritually healthy. I think I should explain here that when I use the word *counselor* I'm not just talking about professional counselors. I'm talking about *all* of us who are responsible for counseling. There are those who want to draw out and analyze and take apart and dissect. While a certain amount of catharsis is healthy and essential, overmuch of it can be degenerating. It is seldom as easy to put something back together as it is to take it apart.

There have been developed several procedures for group therapy. They are promoted under a number of titles: sensitivity training, self-actualization, training groups or T-groups, simulation, transactional analysis, encounter groups, marathon counseling sessions. Some even function under such titles as value clarification, one or two under the title of character education, and so on. Although they differ in some respects (none of them is exactly alike), one or more of the following elements is apparent in all of them: They recognize no ultimate source for truth. All values are those established by the individuals or by the group. There is no reference to God. They encourage a free and full expression, something of a confession, before the group of every intimate and personal feeling and experience. They encourage an openness, a touching, and a closeness among the members of the group, and they attempt to resolve problems simply by finding a comfortable interaction. Above all, they avoid any feeling of guilt.

There are major emotional and spiritual dangers involved in such procedures, and members of the Church would do well to be very cautious—perhaps best to leave them alone.

There is a question at times whether or not the sessions are for the good of the counselee or for the curiosity and amusement of the counselor. Young people, you should know that

when you're dealing with things of the mind and of the spirit it's so easy to cause the very thing you're trying to prevent.

I remember years ago, on the island of Kauai, seeing a little sign in a photographer's shop that said,

“If there is beauty, we will take it.
If there is none, we will make it.”

I fear that some of us, in our overmuch counseling, seem to be saying,

“If there are problems, we'll abate them.
If there are none, we'll create them.”

That, incidentally, is my first poem. Now, I know it isn't Carol Lynn Pearson, but it has a thought to it.

I want to emphasize this point: I am fully aware that there are times when deep-seated emotional problems will respond to the procedures we have been talking about. They can have therapeutic value. There is, however, no justification to employ them in the absence of deep-seated emotional problems. There is no more justification for doing that than there is justification for a medical doctor to perform unnecessary surgery. When someone is just experimenting or riding the crest of the wave of a new counseling theory, I would no more encourage you to submit to such counseling procedures than I would recommend that you submit to brain surgery under the hands of a nurse or an intern or a ward attendant.

I think you've probably heard the account of the parents who were leaving their children untended for a few hours. They had gone out the door. Then the mother opened the door again and said, “Now, children, while we're gone, whatever you do, don't take the stool and go into the pantry and climb up and reach up on the second shelf and move the cracker box to reach back and get that sack of beans and put one up your nose, will you?”

I say again, it's very easy when you're dealing with things of the mind and the spirit to cause the very thing you're trying so desperately to prevent. When you go for counseling, remember this from the Book of Mormon:

“Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost”
(2 Ne. 28:31.)

The Lord also gave this warning:

“O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside,

supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

“But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.” (2 Ne. 9:28–29.)

Now, if you are willing to agree that the basic principles underlying the Church welfare program have application in your emotional and spiritual life—specifically, that independence, industry, thrift, self-reliance, and self-respect should be developed; that work be enthroned as a ruling principle in your life; that the evils of an emotional or spiritual dole should be avoided; and that the aim of the Church is to help the members to help themselves—then I have some principles and some suggestions for you.

We mentioned earlier that there should not be the slightest embarrassment for any member of the Church to receive welfare assistance, provided he has exhausted his own personal resources first, and those available in his family. Likewise, there should not be the slightest embarrassment on the part of any member of the Church who needs counsel to receive that counsel. At times it may be crucial that you seek and that you accept counsel.

When you are discouraged and feel that you cannot solve a problem on your own, you may be right, but at least you are obligated to try. Every personal resource available to you should be committed before you take another step, and you have powerful resources. The Book of Mormon declares this one, which is often overlooked:

“... for the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free.

“And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.” (2 Ne. 2:4–5; italics added.)

It is critically important that you understand that you already know right from wrong, that you’re innately, inherently, and intuitively good. When you say, “I can’t! I can’t solve my problems!” I want to thunder out, “Don’t you realize who you are? Haven’t you learned yet that you are a son or a daughter of Almighty God? Do you not know that there are powerful resources inherited from Him that you can call upon to give you steadiness and courage and great power?”

Most of you have been taught the gospel all your lives. All of you know the difference between good and evil, between right and wrong. Isn’t it time then that you decide that you’re going to do right? In so doing you’re making a choice. Not just *a* choice, but you’re making *the* choice. Once you’ve decided that, with no fingers crossed, no counterfeiting, no reservations or hesitancy, the rest will all fall into place.

Most people who come for counsel to the stake presidents, branch presidents, bishops, and others, and to us as General Authorities, don’t come because they are confused and they are not able to see the difference between right and wrong. They come because

they're tempted to do something that deep down they know is wrong, and they want that decision ratified.

When you have a problem, work it out in your own mind first. Ponder on it and analyze it and meditate on it. Read the scriptures. Pray about it. I've come to learn that major decisions can't be forced. You must look ahead and have vision. What was it the prophet said in the Old Testament? "Where there is no vision, the people perish." (**Prov. 29:18.**)

Ponder on things a little each day and don't always be in the crisis of making major decisions on the spur of the moment. If you're looking ahead in life, you can see major problems coming down the road toward you from some considerable distance. By the time you meet one another, you are able at the very beginning to take charge of the conversation. Once in a while a major decision will jump out at you from the side of the road and startle the wits out of you, but not very often. If you've already decided that you're going to do what is right and let all of the consequences follow, even those encounters won't hurt you.

I have learned that the best time to wrestle with major problems is early in the morning. Your mind is then fresh and alert. The blackboard of your mind has been erased by a good night's rest. The accumulated distractions of the day are not in your way. Your body has been rested also. That's the time to think something through very carefully and to receive personal revelation.

I've heard President Harold B. Lee begin many a statement about matters involving revelation with an expression something like this: "In the early hours of the morning, while I was pondering upon that subject," and so on. He made it a practice to work on the problems that required revelation in the fresh, alert hours of the early morning.

The Lord knew something when He directed in the Doctrine and Covenants,

"Cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated." (**D&C 88:124.**)

I have a friend who bought a business. A short time later he suffered catastrophic reverses. There just didn't seem to be any way out for him, and finally it got so bad that he couldn't sleep. So, for a period of time he followed the practice of getting up about three o'clock in the morning and going to the office. There, with a paper and a pen he would ponder and pray and write down every idea that came to him as a possible solution or a contribution to the solution of his problem. It wasn't long before he had several possible directions that he could go, and it was not much longer than that until he had chosen the best of them. But he had earned an extra bonus. His notes showed, after going over them, that he had discovered many hidden resources that he had never noticed before. He came away more independent and successful than ever he would have been if he hadn't suffered those reverses.

There's a lesson in that. A year or two later he was called to preside over a mission in one of the foreign lands. His business was so independent and well set-up that when he came back he didn't return to it. He just has someone else managing it, and he is able to give virtually all of his time now to the blessing of others.

I counsel our children to do their critical studying in the early hours of the morning when they're fresh and alert, rather than to fight physical weariness and mental exhaustion at night. I've learned that the dictum, "Early to bed, early to rise" is powerful. When under pressure—for instance, when I was preparing this talk—you wouldn't find me burning the midnight oil. Much rather I'd be early to bed and getting up in the wee hours of the morning, when I could be close to Him who guides this work.

Now, about revelation. We have all been taught that revelation is available to each of us individually. The question I'm most often asked about revelation is, "How do I know when I have received it? I've prayed about it and fasted over this problem and prayed about it and prayed about it, and I still don't quite know what to do. How can I really tell whether I'm being inspired so I won't make a mistake?"

First, do you go to the Lord with a problem and ask Him to make your decision for you? Or do you work, read the revelations, and meditate and pray and then make a decision yourself? Measure the problem against what you know to be right and wrong, and then make the decision. Then ask Him if the decision is right or if it is wrong. Remember what He said to Oliver Cowdery about working it out in your mind.

Listen to this sentence if you don't hear anything else: If we foolishly ask our bishop or branch president or the Lord to make a decision for us, there's precious little self-reliance in that. Think what it costs every time you have somebody else make a decision for you.

I think I should mention one other thing, and I hope this won't be misunderstood. We often find young people who will pray with great exertion over matters that they are free to decide for themselves. Suppose, if you will, that a couple had money available to build a house. Suppose they had prayed endlessly over whether they should build an Early American style, a ranch style, modern style architecture, or perhaps a Mediterranean style. Has it ever occurred to you that perhaps the Lord just plain doesn't care? Let them build what they want to build. It's their choice. In many things we can do just what we want.

Now, there *are* some things he cares about very much. If you're going to build that house, then be honest and pay for the material that goes into it and do a decent job of building it. When you move into it, live righteously in it. Those are the things that count.

On occasions I've had to counsel people that the Lord would probably quite willingly approve the thing they intend to do even when they want to. It's strange when they come and almost feel guilty about doing something because they want to, even when it's righteous. The Lord is very generous with the freedom He gives us. The more we learn to follow the right, the more we are spiritually self-reliant, the more our freedom and our

independence are affirmed. “If ye continue in my word,” he said, “then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (**John 8:31–32.**)

There is great meaning in these words from Carol Lynn Pearson, entitled, “The Lesson”:

Yes, my fretting,
Frowning child,
I could cross
The room to you
More easily.
But I’ve already
Learned to walk,
So I make you
Come to me.

Let go now—
There!
You see?

Oh, remember
This simple lesson,
Child,
And when
In later years
You cry out
With tight fists
And tears—
“Oh, help me,
God—please.”—
Just listen
And you’ll hear
A silent voice:

“I would, child,
I would.
But it’s you,
Not I,
Who needs to try
Godhood.”

(Carol Lynn Pearson, *Beginnings*, Provo: Trilogy Arts, 1967, p. 18.)

Laman and Lemuel complained to Nephi, “Behold, we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken.”

“Have ye inquired of the Lord?” Nephi asked them.

And think of this answer. They said to him, “We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known to us.”

“How is it,” he answered, “that ye do not keep the commandments of the Lord? How is it that ye will perish, because of the hardness of your hearts? Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.” (See **1 Ne. 15:7–11.**)

In conclusion, if we lose the spirit and power of individual revelation, we have lost much in this Church. You have great and powerful resources. You, through prayer, can solve your problems without endlessly going to those who are trying so hard to help others.

Now, if you start receiving revelations for anyone else’s jurisdiction, you know immediately that you’re out of order, that they come from the wrong source. You will not receive revelation to counsel your bishop or to correct the leaders of the Church.

If you become so dependent and insecure about prayer and the answer to prayer that you are hesitant on them, then you are weak.

If we follow a course where, on one hand, we would carefully scrutinize an order for welfare products and yet, on the other hand, dole out counsel and advice without sending you to your own storehouse of knowledge and inspiration, then we have done you a disservice.

This Church relies on individual testimony. Each must earn his own testimony. It is then that you can stand and say, as I can say, that I know that God lives, that He is our Father, that we have a child-parent relationship with Him. I know that He is close, that we can go to Him and appeal, and then, if we will be obedient and listen and use every resource, we will have an answer to our prayers.

This is His church. God lives. Jesus is the Christ. We have a prophet presiding over this Church. Every one of us and every other soul on this earth can know that. I bear witness of that. I know that He lives and affirm this witness to you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Gospel topic: self-reliance