Believe and Follow Christ to the End – Press Forward

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"Stand Forever" Episode 40

When I purchased my mountain bike, it came with encouraging words stenciled across the frame. It says, "pedal, damn it." While not expressed most elegantly, it has frequently reminded me of an important truth: many obstacles you first think you can't get over, you do get over if you just keep pedaling, keep going. Don't stop. Hello, I am Larry Corbridge, and this is Episode 40 of the *Stand Forever Series*.

Press Forward

One of the most vivid images of Lehi's dream of the tree of life is "multitudes *pressing forward … continually holding fast* to the rod of iron [the word of God] until they came forth and fell down, and partook of the fruit of the tree."

In contrast we also see "other multitudes *feeling their way* towards the great and spacious building. And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads."[1]

There is a big difference between "pressing forward, continually holding fast" and "feeling your way" along. The path to the tree of life requires tenacity, the exertion of consistent, but not superhuman, effort to a glorious end. Again, the dream revealed that those who pressed forward to the tree "fell down, and partook of the fruit." The falling down part would either be out of devotion or exhaustion. I am guessing, the latter. In any event, it is not strolling and certainly not wandering or feeling your way along.

As for the path, the Lord said, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The way to the great and spacious building and other strange roads, however, requires no effort, merely feeling your way along to a dead end. As for that approach, the Lord said, "wide is the gate, and broad the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."[2]

The choice is clear: either get on the path and press forward continually holding fast to the word of God and fall down at the destination of light and life, or go any other way, whatever other way, every other way into chaos, darkness, and death. *The natural state*

[1] I Nephi 8:30-31

[2] Matthew 7:13-14

of things works to the advantage of Satan. He doesn't have to get you to choose evil, only to not wholly choose God, leaving you vulnerable to the forces of the natural state of chaos, darkness, and death.

"Pressing forward" seems to be uphill all the way, but some stretches are harder and steeper than others. We usually think we are on the hardest stretch now only to later encounter much greater challenges. On the steepest stretches, you may think, "I can't keep going. It isn't that I don't want to. I just don't know how I can take another step." And then you take another step, and then another, and with the Lord's help you keep going, one step and then another and another.

On the steeper stretches, you may need to make an exception to the look-down-the-trail rule. Sometimes the summit seems beyond, maybe way beyond your strength, much too far, and you think to turn around or at least stop to rest. On those stretches you may need to focus only on the trail or road immediately in front of you and "pedal ...."

Go and Do

Like "pressing forward," there is a scriptural pattern with the word "go" and the Lord's calling of prophets, servants, and saints to His work. The call is often associated with the simple command to "go." That's the pattern: Don't worry, don't doubt, don't wait for detailed instruction, don't over think, just "go." This is often in response to expressions of doubt and disbelief regarding one's ability to do as the Lord commands. Nothing happens unless you go.

<u>The Lord told Moses to go</u>. After Moses listed his weaknesses (which the Lord knew better than he), the Lord replied: "Who hath made man's mouth? … have not I the LORD? Now therefore **go**, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."[3]

<u>The Lord told Joshua to go</u>. After the death of Moses, the Lord simply said to Joshua, "Now therefore arise, **go** over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Israel."[4]

<u>The Lord told Gideon to go.</u> For seven years, Israel had suffered under the heavy hand of Midian, "and the LORD looked upon (Gideon), and said, **Go** in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he

[3] Exodus 4:11–12, emphasis added
[4] Joshua 1:2, emphasis added

said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."[5]

The Lord told Isaiah to go. Isaiah recorded: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, … Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and **who will go for us**? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, **Go,** and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but they understood not; and see ye indeed, but they perceived not."[6]

Isaiah then asked how long he should go and teach the people to hear and see. "Then said I: Lord, how long? And he said: Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." In other words, go until rivers run dry and the sun doesn't shine, until there is no one left to teach.

The Lord told Jeremiah to go. "Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt **go to all that I shall send thee**, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."[7] "MOREOVER the word of the LORD came to me, saying, **Go** and cry in the ears of Jerusalem."[8]

The Lord told Ezekiel to go. "MOREOVER he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll (scroll), and **go** speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat *it;* and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, **go**, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."[9]

The Lord told Jonah to go. "NOW the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, **go** to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me."[10] "AND the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the

[5] Judges 6:14-16, emphasis added
[6] 2 Nephi 16:5-9, emphasis added; Compare Isaiah 6:5-9
[7] Jeremiah 1:4-8, emphasis added
[8] Jeremiah 2:1-2, emphasis added
[9] Ezekiel 3:1-4, emphasis added
[10] Jonah 1:1-2, emphasis added

second time, saying, Arise, **go** unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."[11]

The Lord told His disciples to go. "And he said unto them, **Go** ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[12]

The Lord told Paul to go. "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and **go** into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."[13]

The Lord told Alma to go. "Therefore I say unto you, **Go**; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also. … Now I say unto you, **Go**; and whosoever will not repent of his sins the same shall not be numbered among my people; and this shall be observed from this time forward."[14]

The Lord told Alma the Younger to go. "Now I say unto thee: **Go**, and remember the captivity of thy fathers in the land of Helam, and in the land of Nephi; and remember how great things he has done for them; for they were in bondage, and he has delivered them."[15]

The Lord told Alma and Amulek to go. "And the word came to Alma, saying: **Go**; and also say unto my servant Amulek, **go** forth and prophesy unto this people, saying—Repent ye, for thus saith the Lord, except ye repent I will visit this people in mine anger; yea, and I will not turn my fierce anger away."[16]

The Lord told the Sons of Mosiah to go. "And the Lord said unto them also: **Go** forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls."[17] "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the

[11] Jonah 3:1-2, emphasis added
[12] Mark 16:15-16, emphasis added
[13] Acts 9:4-6, emphasis added
[14] Mosiah 26:29-32, emphasis added
[15] Mosiah 27:16, emphasis added
[16] Alma 8:29, emphasis added
[17] Alma 17:11, emphasis added

Lord comforted us, and said: **Go** amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success."[18]

The Lord told His Nephite disciples to go. "Therefore, **go** forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth."[19]

The Lord told Enoch to go. "And the Lord said unto Enoch: **Go** forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good."[20]

One of the most consistent and simple of the Lord's instructions to His servants is a two-letter word, "go." You may question your capacity and abilities as others have done and do, and rightly so, because we are all weak and incapable on our own. Whatever your talents and abilities they are not sufficient, but the Lord says, "Don't forget me; I will be with you if you walk in my paths." When you say or wonder how to do as the Lord commands, the Lord replies, "Just go and you will see; I will be with you."

We all would like to see from the beginning to the end, but often we must go and do our best, trusting the Lord will prepare the way, providing guidance and inspiration along the way as we press forward.

The Lord said to some of the early elders in the Church: "Wherefore, **go** ye preach my gospel, whether to the north or to the south, to the east, or to the west, it mattereth not, for ye cannot go amiss."[21]

In August 1831, Joseph Smith recorded: "In these infant days of the Church, there was a great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation."[22] During that month, the Lord said on at least four occasions "it mattereth not to me" in regard to whether a boat should be made or purchased, whether to go by water or land, whether to travel in a group or in pairs, or how much money should be sent to "the land of Zion."[23] The greater concern is to go and do.

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[18] Alma 26:27, emphasis added
[19] 3 Nephi 11:41, emphasis added
[20] Moses 6:32, emphasis added
[21] Doctrine and Covenants 80:3
[22] Doctrine and Covenants 63, Preface
[23] Doctrine and Covenants 60:5; 61:22; 62:5; 63:40

Hopefully, we may say with Nephi, "**I will go and do** the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he hath commandeth them."[24]

Too often we dither about while life and opportunities to make a difference pass by never again to return all because we simply don't go. Get on the path, press forward, holding fast to the rod of iron and don't quit. Go and do.

Does God Carry Us?

There is a common and comforting notion that if we jump through all the hoops, do all we should do, and come to the end of our rope, God will take over and carry us through to the safe harbor. There is a beautiful poem "Footprints in the Sand"[25] that conveys this sweet sentiment. It tells of a person who looks back at the difficult times of life and sees only one set of footprints when the Lord carried him along. It is a lovely thought.

There is scriptural support for the idea of God carrying us.[26] "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows … he was wounded for our transgressions."[27] He atoned for our sins, and His grace is sufficient to make us strong wherein we are weak.[28] He gives us strength, light, knowledge, capacity to go on. And yet, we must put one foot in front of the other on this side of the veil, through the veil and then on from there. We must go and do and yes, with strength from the Lord we press forward, and maybe in that sense he carries us.

But even when all the stars align, we must choose to align with the stars and muster the will to stay on course. Even when you know where you are going, how to get there, and are blessed with power sufficient to finish the course, you still must exercise the will to stay on course and keep on going.

The idea that God will carry us is like the personal genie idea, that God's job is to be at our beck and call to fulfill all our dreams and wishes. In both instances we are absolved

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[24] 1 Nephi 3:7, emphasis added
[25] Mary Stevenson, "Footprints in the Sand"
[26] There are scriptures that talk about the Lord carrying His people, e.g., Isa 63:9 ("In His love and in his pity he redeemed them; and He bare them and carried them all the days of old."). If the Lord gives us strength, then one might say that is a form of being carried. See also Isaiah 46:4
[27] Isaiah 53:4-5
[28] Ether 12:27

of responsibility because if things don't work out well, then it's God's fault not our own.

God gets blamed for a lot of our own nonsense. He doesn't complain. He understands our folly; He puts up with a lot of it, but it is folly, nonetheless. A woman becomes angry with God for placing her in a bad marriage. Truth is, God probably didn't do that—she did.

We learn early on in life to duck responsibility: "It's not my fault," "I didn't do it," "It's not my job," or "How could God let this happen?" It is futile to blame God for our mistakes or the actions of others. The responsibility for your life rests squarely on your shoulders. Yes, it is a heavy burden, heavier than what you can shoulder very far or long, but the Lord will help you carry it. He will strengthen you against the weight of your burden and help you press forward if you will let Him.

Whatever your circumstances (rich or poor, sick or healthy, whole or disabled, married or single, black or white, straight or gay) life is bigger than any one of us alone and its full weight is too heavy to bear up alone, at least for very long. Without help, your knees eventually buckle, and the weight slowly grinds you down to dust. There is an "opposition in all things," and life is hard everywhere, for everyone. The plan never has been to go alone, rather acknowledge your weakness and rely on the Lord, but go and keep going.

Strength is a quality to be admired to be sure, but the Lord does not just say "be strong." Rather He says, as to Joshua, "**Be strong** and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: **for the Lord thy God is with thee** whithersoever thou goest."[29] That is ABC, a predominant message God has endeavored to instill in His children from the beginning of time as explained in Episode 4.

I may be the person in the poem unaware in the moment of the sustaining strength the Lord provides in our lives. In May 2010 I was that guy as I presided over a stake reorganization conference in the Chile Santiago San Miguel Stake while suffering from severe back pain that had plagued me for many months. I could not stand for longer than a few minutes. Standing always aggravated the pain unless I stood to teach. Whenever I was teaching the pain went away.

Here is what I recorded in my journal the next day:

[29] Joshua 1:9, emphasis added

> While driving home that I night I made a comment to Jacque essentially as follows: "This is not a complaint, but it is interesting that while I was blessed without pain whenever I was teaching in the various meetings today, throughout the rest of the day of interviews and in all other activities I was not. I don't know why. It is all the work of the Lord." I was astounded that almost immediately after making this comment, both the pain intensified greatly beyond anything I had suffered during the day and within minutes I had no voice. The next morning, I was able to speak sufficiently well to be understood in the conference session but as we were walking out into the parking lot after the conference was over my voice totally disappeared to no more than a whisper.
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> It is clear to me that the Lord demonstrated very quickly and dramatically following my comment that I had been sustained much more than only when I rose to speak, and that I had been blessed and made sufficiently able to do what I was called to do but no more. I was reminded again as I have heard on another occasion (May, 2001), "You will never be in control. I am."

It is folly to overestimate your strength or trust in the arm of flesh. The truth is, alone we are weak, but the Lord is strong, and He can strengthen us more than we realize to not only bear up the burdens of life but be sanctified by them, and, in that sense, He carries us. God is the source of strength. Without Him we are weak.

After a long, difficult marriage one woman said:

> I now know that we are all given far more than we can handle on our own. I realize that the Lord allows for this so that we will have the opportunity to turn to our Savior and learn of His atonement, and that he will ease our burdens and make them light. I came to realize that the Lord does not want for us to suffer in misery, but the Lord wants us to have joy, both in mortality as well as in eternity. I feel His love and bask in His light.

She may be right; we may all be given more than what we can bear alone, to encourage us to turn to God. You can't do it alone, at least as Heavenly Father intends, but He will help you and give you strength if you walk with His Son.

When you look back on life, hopefully you will always see two sets of footprints. If you only see one, it may be when you turned away to walk alone. The question is not whether the Lord will walk by your side, rather will you walk by His?

In the end we choose. We decide. We cannot fairly blame God or anyone else. No matter what happens to us, we decide. We are responsible. Look to God and go.

The Dream of the Blackfoot River Ranch

On July 19, 2008, shortly after having been called to serve as a General Authority, I had a dream:

> The dream involved a long journey beginning at our ranch, the Blackfoot River Ranch. I was given the task to leave the ranch, travel some distance away, pick up something and return to the ranch 27 miles away.
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> The item that I was to deliver to the ranch was a two-man canoe. I knew if I didn't carry it back to the ranch someone else would come get it, but I didn't hesitate. I picked it up in the middle and put it laterally across my shoulders and began to walk back to the ranch. It was not only heavy but because I carried it laterally it extended into the road impeding any traffic that might pass by.
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> I walked and walked and walked at first down roads until I decided to leave the roads and go across country. I walked down and over beautiful grass-covered hills and all different kinds of terrain. I remember three or four horses running down a hill and turning in front of me and running away.
>
> I remember being absolutely alone, except for the sense of a constant companion, a friend, who did not carry the load but who was present throughout most, if not all, of the journey. I never saw Him, but His presence was unmistakable and undeniable. I was always aware He was there. I never saw Him, but I knew He was there.
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> At some point the thing that I was carrying changed. It seemed to be a large roll of carpet that was doubled over in the middle. It was not as awkward to carry as the canoe had been, but it was still very heavy.
>
> At some point there were others who were chasing me, whose purpose was to stop me. It seemed they posed great danger. They were angry and seemed a threat to my life as well as to the object of my journey. As a result, I had to run and run and run. At the end I was climbing over and in what seemed to be a large building under construction. I came into it at ground level and ran from one passage to another, ascending as I went. I was moving toward an exit in the uppermost reaches of the building that led to what seemed to be a light-filled

entrance into another realm. When I reached the highest level in the building I was jumping from one ceiling joist to another, up open staircases, ducking and dodging as I went.

The dream ended before there was any conclusion to my journey, before the task was completed and the burden was delivered again to the ranch. Maybe someday I will be given the sequel dream, Canoe II, but for now that is what I have.

The four predominant impressions I had from the dream were these: the presence of an unseen Friend, strength, pressing forward, and crawling through mud without getting dirty.

As for the presence of the unseen Friend, I cannot adequately express what I perceived about Him, except to say His presence was real, unmistakable, constant and undeniable and He was a friend, which is counterintuitive and still foreign to me. I have never been one to feel, think, or say Jesus Christ is "my best friend" or even "my Elder Brother." He is to me now and, as far as I can remember, always has been, and I think, will ever be, "My Lord and My God."

If I were to have composed this dream, I would have described His presence as sacred and sustaining, but I would not have presumed to cast His presence as a friend, and yet that was the unmistakable reality of what I experienced. This is less a commentary on me than it is of Him. Although He will always be "My Lord and My God," He condescends to include and accompany me and us as His friends. That is for Him to do, and not for me (us) to claim/assume/presume.

The second impression from the dream is strength. While I was astounded by the unusual strength I was given, I never felt strong. There was no moment when I was consciously aware of an infusion of strength. I never felt strong, and the load was always heavy. But the strength was nonetheless undeniable because I never tired to the point of failure. I never rested. I had strength always, always to keep on going.

I never felt strong, but there was always sufficient strength for my needs, strength to go on, but not in the sense of pushing myself to the limits and beyond or exerting the last ounce of energy, rather in the sense of strength to bear the burden and not tire. Although I did not feel strong, after a while I began to realize the strength to go on was inexhaustible.

I was aware strength was linked to the presence of the Friend, provided I not stop. This leads me to the third impression: I just kept going. I didn't ever stop. I never stopped. I just kept going. I knew it was a very long way and if I didn't haul the canoe back to the ranch some else would drive out in a truck, throw it in the back and return to the ranch.

But I picked up the burden anyway and started to walk and once walking I never stopped. I just kept on going. No matter the terrain, no matter the difficulty, no matter the threat, no matter the risk, no matter the weight, no matter the distance, I kept going.

The final insight from the dream has to do with crawling through the swamp which was at least partially fulfilled by two assignments as a general authority previously mentioned: as a member of the Strengthening Church Members Committee reading material online adverse to the Church, its teachings and history, and as a member of the Restoration and Cancellations Committee, continually witnessing the broad panorama of human drama, including the devastation, despair, destruction, depravity and suffering people endure. Although much of it was crawling through the mud, I didn't get dirty.

This Is a Wonderful Time to be Living

If you could choose when to come to earth, and if you chose this time, you chose well. There is no better or more crucial time than now.

Life is not a level playing field. Everything is stacked in your favor to succeed. That doesn't mean it is easy, but everything is stacked in your favor to succeed.

You were prepared before this life to come to earth and succeed. You live in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. Elder Gary E. Stevenson said, "The Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ offsets perilous times with the fulness of times."[30] This is the time to which others before looked forward with hope and envy, with the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and scriptures far beyond any people at any other time ever dreamed of having, a time in which prophets and apostles reveal the will of God for His children, a time of revelation poured out on the heads of Latter-day Saints everywhere and a time in which the kingdom of God will stand forever.

You live in a day of technological, scientific, and engineering advances and inventions along with a flood of information unimaginable only a decade or two ago.

[30] Gary E. Stevenson, *Deceive Me Not,* General Conference, October 2019

You live in a day of promise when as foretold:

- The work of God is progressing; the Gospel and Church of Jesus Christ are extending and gathering scattered Israel from the far reaches of the earth;
- The Lord will make Israel "plenteous in every work of thine hand … for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers;"[31]
- All nations will flow unto the Lord's house;[32]
- The Lord continues to unfold the "marvelous work and a wonder" of the restoration, and the deaf will hear the words of the book and the blind shall see out of darkness; the meek and poor will rejoice in the Lord;[33]
- Blessings are poured out on gathered Israel;[34]
- The kingdom of God will roll forth, fill the earth, transcending national borders and stand forever;[35]
- The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord;[36]
- The Lord will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, sons and daughters will prophesy, old men dream dreams and young men see visions;[37]
- God the Father will gather together in one all things in Christ;[38]
- Faithful saints "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more … for the Lamb … shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;"[39]
- The Lord shall manifest himself unto all nations, in word, power and deed;[40]
- The Lord shall appear and we may be like Him;[41]
- The Lord will return in glory and usher in a millennium of righteousness and peace.

You have the light of Christ, and the gift and power of the Holy Ghost that will teach you all things, reveal the truth of all things, show you all things you should do and provide strength, clarity, guidance, love, joy, peace, and every other good thing. God offers you His greatest gifts, the gift of His Son, the gift of His Spirit and the gift of His life that you may succeed. God invites you to engage in His work and glory which is your success and the success of all His children.

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[31] Deuteronomy 30:9
[32] Isaiah 2:2
[33] Isaiah 29:14,18-19
[34] Jeremiah 31:11-14
[35] Daniel 3:34-44
[36] Habakkuk 2:14
[37] Joel 2:28
[38] Ephesians 1:10
[39] Revelation 7:16,17
[40] 1 Nephi 13:42; 14:1
[41] 1 John 3:2-3

If you chose this time to live, you chose well. There is no better or more crucial time than now.

The Big Picture

Puzzles always pose a challenge; that's why we call them "puzzles." The difficulty increases with the number of pieces, but imagine a box full of puzzle pieces with no picture. All you have is a pile of pieces, but you don't know if you have all the pieces, or if they are for one or more puzzles, and you don't know what it's supposed to look like when completed, if it ever is completed (pieced together).

The primary assertions of *Stand Forever* (the talk) about **cutting through the fog of deception** and the conclusion to **believe** are critical pieces of a larger puzzle. The intent of this series is to piece together the complete picture.

It's good to live in the present moment, to pay attention to now. The Lord said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."[42] While that is an important principle, it is also a good example of why one should not build an entire life philosophy on a single verse of scripture or a single principle.

As we step back and read more broadly, we hear the Lord also say in the same sermon "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" which speaks of the broader, eternal view of things, looking beyond the present. Both perspectives are necessary to know where to go (Point B, the long view), get a fix on where you are now (Point A, the present view), and chart a course between the two.

Here is a woman who took the long view of her repeatedly unfaithful but repentant husband. She said:

> These last few years have been emotional. At times I have felt heartbroken, angry, sad, confused and bitter. I have wondered why I deserved this to happen to me. I have second-guessed my choice to marry him …. I have questioned my choice to stay with him after he had been unfaithful to me. I have felt stuck in a situation where I now have children with this man. I have felt unsure if I even want to be with this man for eternity, this man who is capable of hurting me more than anyone has ever hurt me before. But my doubts are erased when I

[42] Matthew 6:34

> consider these simple facts: I have observed him go through each step of the repentance process; I have seen him change for the better; He is supporting me in teaching our sons the gospel of Jesus Christ; I love him; I know he loves me; and I know he wants to be the man I see he is capable of being.
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> The very moment that my husband came clean to me was a turning point in his life. Since that night, my husband has made enormous changes and improvements in his behavior. He is more Christ-like, more tender, more honest, more loving, more patient, more humble. I truly admire how he has gone through the refiner's fire without complaining and without wanting to give up. One word that describes my husband well is 'potential'. I try viewing him through the lenses of our Heavenly Father and I see that he is packed full of potential. He is far from perfect. I view him as a diamond in the rough. There is so much beauty in him that has yet to be uncovered. I feel that as husband and wife, we are able to help one another reach our full potential.

She understood where they were (Point A, the present) and it wasn't good, they were in dangerous waters, but she also looked to the destination (Point B, the long view) and worked with her husband to make the corrections necessary to get on course again. The big picture, looking beyond present cares and troubles, enabled her to help and work with her husband to redeem their marriage, family, their love for one another, and recover the Spirit and the hope of eternal life. She is like so many—a Savior on mount Zion.[43]

The big picture is a big deal—the whole map. Few things provide greater comfort, confidence, and clarity than looking up and beyond present cares to see and remember the big picture. Don't lose sight of the big picture.

You are at the helm of the ship of your life. You chart the course, and you steer your ship. No one else does that. Keep checking the map. Always remember where you are headed (Point B) and continually take your bearings to ensure you are on course.

The essential problem in life is separation from God our Father, and so the destination is reunion with God, receiving the gift of God's Son, God's Spirit, and God's life and helping others do the same. More concisely, it is to partake of the fruit of the tree of life and help others do the same. That's the destination; that's Point B.

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[43] Obadiah 1:21

The course is first faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, ordinances beginning with baptism for the remission of sins, receiving the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end, building up the kingdom of God as an active, contributing member of His Church—that's the course that leads to God's Son, His Spirit, and His life. It is the course to order out of chaos, light over darkness, and life over death.

Getting a fix on where you are (Point A) is easy. There are only two places in the world, the course of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and everywhere else. You are either on course or you're not. If you are, "perfect."[44] If you aren't, make corrections to get on course.

Look beyond the worries of the day, see where you want to go, and deliberately move in that direction. Focus on better things than the problems alone. Lift your sights and want more, much more than merely freedom from problems. Look to God your Father, choose Him, and receive His Son, and His Spirit, and His life. You go where you look, so keep checking the map.

The essential problem in life is separation from God Our Father who alone can bless you. His supreme blessings are His Son, His Spirit and His life. Without Him chaos, darkness, and death prevail. Life is about reunion with God.

Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life; He alone bridges the gap if you will believe and follow Him to the end. God will bless you, especially with His Spirit and His life if you receive the gift of His Son by taking His name and always remember Him to keep His commandments that you may always have His Spirit to be with you. That is the One Thing you can do while doing everything else that will make everything else easier and better.

Therefore, cross the bridge and close the gap. Believe and follow Christ to the end (remember Him always to keep His commandments). Choose best. Choose life. Choose Christ. Partake of the fruit of the tree of life and help others do the same. Stand forever, and help others do the same.

[44] Matthew 5:48