

Armed with Righteousness? To What End?

by Leah Marie | Mar 3, 2017 | faith crisis, Featured, Gospel Topics, Righteousness | 6 comments

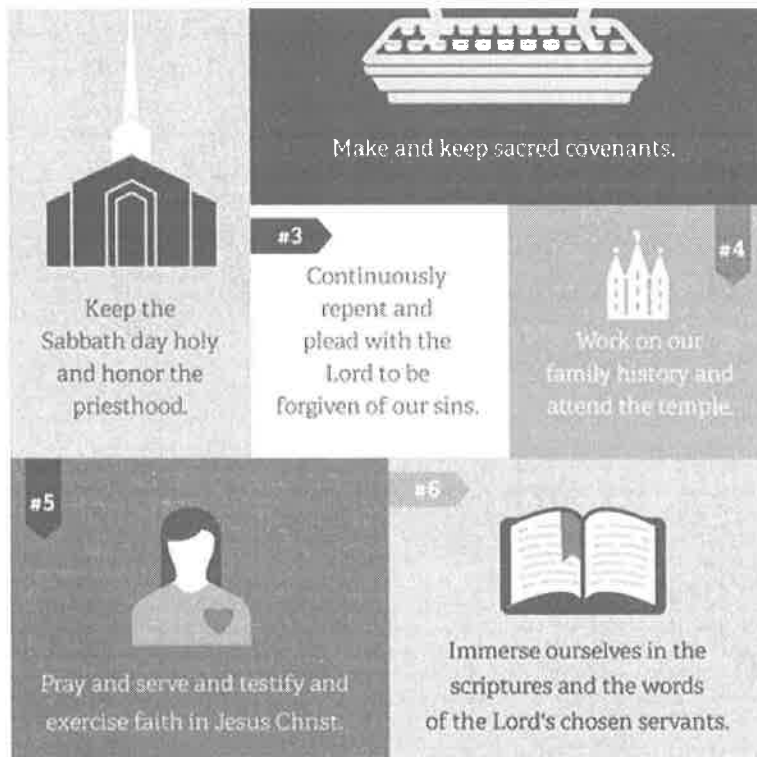


This month's First Presidency Message in the Ensign is an instructional essay by Eyring on remaining faithful and spiritually strong.

They are:



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
about a month ago



LDS.ORG

Six steps to spiritual strength. A message from Henry B Eyring,
<http://bit.ly/2mEhgKW>

8.9K

68

3.6K

I struggle with this narrative because it... isn't true. At least, not for me.

I did all of these things. I was the Molliest of Mormons. I had some unorthodox beliefs, for sure. I have for a long time. But those beliefs were shelved most of the time, and to combat them I dug into the Mormon life with gusto. I didn't watch TV on Sundays, and I only read church books. I journaled and focused on magnifying my callings while listening to Kenneth Cope and Janice Kapp Perry. I never missed church, ever. Even when I was ill. Taking the sacrament was too important. I was obsessed with knowing the Lord's will for me and whether I was doing it. I took constant inventory of the ways I messed up and prayed about them all. I wanted to be better. Before I was endowed, I did weekly baptisms in the temple, and after I was endowed, I did weekly sessions and went through initiatory at least once a month. I took constant inventory of the ways I messed up and prayed about them all. I wanted to be better. I bore my testimony every Fast Sunday. If not in sacrament meeting, then in Relief Society. I read my scriptures *at least* half an hour a day, and I read every book about the scriptures and the gospel that I could get my hands on.

Eyring says all this should have armed me with righteousness. And maybe it did. But, it was while I was doing all of this that my faith in the church fell apart. None of those behaviors protected me from that.

The thing that changed was that I took my unorthodox beliefs off of the shelf. The shelf was heavy with inauthenticity, and I couldn't hold it up anymore. I started to think about these unorthodox beliefs and talk about them and share them with others. And it was in doing this that I realized that church is not a welcome place for people with unorthodox beliefs. Even though I was doing all of the other things right, it didn't matter if I wasn't willing to sacrifice my authenticity by leaving those things on that shelf any longer.

After this realization, even if I had wanted to put those things back on the shelf, I could not have. It was too late, and they didn't fit anymore. Because the truth is that *my* problem was never those unorthodox beliefs. My problem was that I was trying to squeeze into a mold that wasn't made for me.

Maybe doing these things did keep me spiritually strong. But my outcome is not what Eyring predicts.

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Leah Marie

Leah Marie earned a BA in Political Science, and a Masters in Public Administration. She is currently working towards her PhD in Public Policy. She is wife to an English professor, and mother to 3 beautiful boys.

All posts by Leah Marie

6 Comments



Shawn Tucker on March 3, 2017 at 6:29 am

Leah—this sounds very, very painful. I'm so sorry to hear this. I'm sorry that so much talk in the church seems to indicate that if you do certain things then certain clear, predictable outcomes will inevitably result. It seems to give unreliable expectations, causing pain, confusion, and guilt. It can seem to discredit everything that is said.

All the best to you in your faith journey.

Reply



Adrienne on March 3, 2017 at 7:08 am

Wow. This is so powerful. And was exactly my experience. I could not have been any Mollier.

Reply



Jack Naneek on March 3, 2017 at 7:39 am

Hi Leah Marie. Excellent post. Loved it and loved your candor. It made me think: Nothing's as easy as described in any of the proverbial "ten step to..." kinda of articles. Even the best guideposts are only that: guideposts. You've found a lot of good guideposts doing what you're doing. Just keep doing it and seeking. I hope you keep sharing what you learn along the way.

Reply



mario zullo on March 3, 2017 at 9:30 am

Only Satan thought that he was righteous and powerful enough to go against God. I totally agree that President Eyring is totally wrong and way out in left field. I know that he has to say these things about the prophet of this church and other leaders otherwise he could be considered an "apostate" and be taken out of the "club". Romans 3:10 states that there is no one righteous, not even one. Ecclesiastes 7:20 states that For there is not one truly righteous person on the earth who continually does good. Another scripture states certainly, you have the teaching that God almighty himself is the only righteous one. Jesus is called the righteous one. I imagine that there are more scriptures that mean the same thing. The other thing that I completely disagree with his "to do" list is that it is all about what we can do to become righteous but he forgets to mention the most important thing and that is "to put our trust in the Lord" it is not about our glory but about His. We all know what Mormons think that they can become and this is why I think that he purposely left Him out of the 10 things that we need to do to protect ourselves.

Reply



Gwen Hutchings on March 14, 2017 at 5:52 pm

This post resonates with me so deeply! I have kept it in my inbox for days to re-read it. You have described my life to a T. It was while I was a seminary teacher that my shelf got too heavy...

Reply



Raymond Tsao on March 26, 2017 at 1:57 am

Elder Robert D. Hales, "Come, Follow Me" by Practicing Christian Love and Service, October 2016, General Conference

Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel was in the hospital recovering from open-heart surgery when he was visited by his five-year-old grandson. As the little boy looked into his grandfather's eyes, he saw his pain. "Grandpa," he asked, "if I loved you more, would you [hurt less]?" (In Elie Wiesel, *Open Heart*, trans. Marion Wiesel (2012), 70). Today I ask a similar question of each of us: "If we love the Savior more, will we suffer less?"...

...As the Savior's latter-day disciples, we come unto Him by loving and serving God's children. As we do, we may not be able to avoid tribulation, affliction, and suffering in the flesh, but we will suffer less spiritually. Even in our trials we can experience joy and peace.

When the Savior called His disciples to follow Him, they were living the law of Moses, including seeking "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"(Matthew 5:38), but the Savior came to fulfill that law with His Atonement. He taught a new doctrine: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"(Matthew 5:44; see also 3 Nephi 12:44).

The disciples were taught to turn from the ways of the natural man to the loving and caring ways of the Savior by replacing contention with forgiveness, kindness, and compassion. The "new commandment" to "love one another"(John 13:34) was not always easy to keep. When the disciples worried about associating with sinners and certain classes of people, the Savior patiently taught, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Or, as a Book of Mormon prophet explained, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God"(Mosiah 2:17).

As the Savior's latter-day disciples, we come unto Him by loving and serving God's children. As we do, we may not be able to avoid tribulation, affliction, and suffering in the flesh, but we will suffer less spiritually. Even in our trials we can experience joy and peace.

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