

**LESSON 38**  
**“In Mine Own Way”**  
**D&C 38:30; 42:30-31, 42; 58:26-28; 104:13-18, Our Heritage 108-9, 111-14**

**OVERVIEW:**

Developing spiritual self-reliance. Developing temporal self-reliance. Caring for the needy. The Church welfare program.

Welfare assistance to Church members is not necessarily to maintain lifestyle, but to maintain life.

(President Ezra Taft Benson declared: "The revelation to produce and store food may be as essential to our temporal welfare today as boarding the ark was to the people in the days of Noah." Ensign, Nov. 1987, 49.)

(Gerald N. Lund: When we speak of being prepared temporally, food storage is an important part of that preparation, but it is only a part, one aspect of the greater principle of self-reliance. President Spencer W. Kimball explained that principle clearly: "The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof. "No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family's well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life." Conference Report, Oct. 1977, 124.)

**SCRIPTURES:**

**How do we become self reliant?**

D&C 38:30 - I tell you these things because of your prayers; wherefore, <sup>a</sup>treasure up <sup>b</sup>wisdom in your bosoms, lest the wickedness of men reveal these things unto you by their wickedness, in a manner which shall speak in your ears with a voice louder than that which shall shake the earth; but **if ye are prepared ye shall not fear**. (The Church Handbook of Instructions says: "Church leaders have not given an exact formula for what to store. Rather, they suggest that Church members begin by storing what would be required to keep them alive if they did not have anything else to eat... Through careful planning, most Church members can store a year's supply of the basic items needed to sustain life. However, some members do not have the money or space for such storage, and some are prohibited by law from storing a year's supply of food. These members should store as much as they can according to their circumstances. All members can provide themselves with added security by learning to produce and prepare basic food items. (Book 2, p. 258))

**What does it mean to be self reliant in temporal things?**

D&C 42:30-31, 42 - 30 And behold, thou wilt remember the <sup>a</sup>poor, (The Savior commanded the Saints to become one and to be "united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom" (D&C 105:4). "For if ye are not equal in earthly things," the Lord declared, "ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things" (D&C 78:6). Such equality and unity lead to becoming one with God and Christ. Those who live the law of consecration learn to esteem others as themselves. Consecrating temporal property is an outward manifestation of the innermost feelings of one's heart toward others. It tutors the soul in consecrating stores of spiritual knowledge to the building up of Zion and bringing "to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Similarly, the Saints of Alma's day "did

walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants" (Mosiah 18:29). The portion of the law of consecration revealed and restored at this time was limited to consecrating personal property. Like the Saints in the days of Enoch, Melchizedek, Peter, and Nephi after the visit of the risen Lord to the Americas, the Saints of the latter days were commanded to have all things in common and to see that there were no poor among them (Moses 7:18; JST Genesis 14:33-40; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-5:11; 4 Nephi 1:3; D&C 38:24-27). The laws regarding consecration and stewardship of property were revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, line upon line. The Saints of God in all ages consecrate their time, talents, strength, properties, and monies to establish the Lord's work and kingdom in their days. As circumstances require, these Saints are called to serve missions, colonize, build temples, and magnify their callings in a host of different ways. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 307) and <sup>b</sup>consecrate of thy properties (To consecrate property is to set it aside or devote it for sacred purposes. In this case the sacred work is to provide for the poor. Consecration of property teaches the Saints that they are stewards over the earth for the Lord. The foundational principle upon which this law rests is recognition that the Lord is the creator of the earth and, therefore, all property is his. "Behold, the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited," Nephi explained; "and he hath created his children that they should possess it" (1 Nephi 17:36). All worldly wealth, whether it be lands or gold, is provided for the benefit of God's children during their mortal sojourn. In commanding his Saints to consecrate their temporal earthly goods to the building up of his kingdom, the Lord is not interested in real estate, precious ores, jewels, or houses. Rather, consecration is a godly activity, and those who devote their property, time, and talents to blessing others become more godlike. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 307-8) for their <sup>c</sup>support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken. (To dramatize the seriousness of breaking this covenant the Lord said, "It had been better for him that he had been drowned in the depth of the sea" (D&C 54:5). The deed was a legally binding document, written and signed by both the member consecrating his property and by the bishop who received the property as the Lord's authorized agent. Thus, the covenant was binding according to both the laws of God and the laws of the land. Revelations of the Restoration, p.308) 31 And inasmuch as ye <sup>a</sup>impart of your <sup>b</sup>substance unto the <sup>c</sup>poor, ye will do it unto me; and they shall be <sup>d</sup>laid before the <sup>e</sup>bishop of my church and his <sup>f</sup>counselors, two of the elders, or high priests, such as he shall appoint or has appointed and <sup>g</sup>set apart for that purpose. 42 Thou shalt not be <sup>a</sup>idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the <sup>b</sup>bread nor wear the garments of the <sup>c</sup>laborer. (This principle has been a guiding light in the restored gospel. The welfare program, for which the Church is renowned, is based on the dignity of working for what is received. J. Reuben Clark testified, "From the foundation of the Church until now, idleness has been condemned as unworthy of Church members, as destructive of character, as violative of the true Christian life, as contrary to the command given to Adam as the law of this world 'In the sweat of thy brow, thou shalt eat bread'" (Conference Report, October 1936, 2-3). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 309-10) To become self-reliant in resource management, Church members should pay tithes and offerings, avoid unnecessary debt, save for the future, and satisfy all of their promised obligations. Members also should use their resources, including their time, frugally and avoid wasting them. Handbook of Instructions, 2:258 President Gordon B. Hinckley: I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your wives and children and peace in your hearts. CR, Oct 1998, p. 72)

D&C 56:17 - Wo unto you <sup>a</sup>poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of <sup>b</sup>greediness, and who will not <sup>c</sup>labor with your own hands! (The poor who have their hearts set upon the riches that they wish they possessed are also in danger of losing their

souls. King Benjamin taught, "I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give. And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received" (Mosiah 4:24-25). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 409)

D&C 58:26-28 -26 For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is <sup>a</sup>compelled in all things, the same is a <sup>b</sup>slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. (Ezra Taft Benson: Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded "in all things." This attitude prepares men for godhood. Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward. CR, Apr 1965, p. 121-22) 27 Verily I say, men should be <sup>a</sup>anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; (Marvin J. Ashton: When the wise counsel "men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27) was said, the time structure referred only to now, today, and without delay. How unwise are those who want to delay repentance until tomorrow. With each passing day the process becomes more difficult to pursue. Most of our hurts and misunderstandings could be cleared away if treated today instead of waiting for them to go away tomorrow. To live more fully each hour and to glean the most from each day is wisdom. How unwise we are to waste our todays when they determine the significance of our tomorrows. We should wisely live a day at a time because that is all we have. While our families are available to us we should take time to develop oneness, unity, and character. Girls of today are the women of tomorrow. Boys of today are the men of tomorrow. The kind of men and women we produce for the future depends on how they are taught to use today. How fortunate a child is to be raised in a home where love, respect, honor, integrity, and commitment are appropriately displayed each day. Mothers and fathers, we invite you to enjoy the fruits of improved parent-child relationships beginning now. Mothers and fathers classified as truly wonderful by appreciative children earn that rating by daily performance rather than by threat, procrastination, or purchase. We never give our children a lift when we give them a free ride. (CR, April 1975, p. 127.)) 28 For the power is in them, wherein they are <sup>a</sup>agents unto themselves. (As an agent unto yourself, you have the power of self-action. That is, you determine how you are going to act or what you are going to do. In the dictionary of Joseph Smith's day, agency was defined as "exerting power" or the "state of being in action." An "agent" was defined as one "entrusted with the concerns of another." The dictionary cited as examples an attorney or a minister (Webster, Dictionary, 1828, s.v. "agent"). There is no hint or intimation that the word has anything to do with choosing or the freedom of choice. Teaching this principle, Joseph Fielding Smith said: "I have heard people say, and members of the Church too, 'I have a right to do as I please.' My answer is: No, you do not. You haven't any right at all to do just as you please. There is only one right that you have, and that is to do just what I read to you: keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has a perfect right to tell us so. We have no right to refuse. I do not care who the man is; I do not care where he lives, or what he is— when the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to him, he has no right to refuse to receive it. He has the privilege. He is not compelled to receive it, because our Father in heaven has given to everyone of us, in the Church and out, the gift of free agency. That free agency gives us the privilege to accept and be loyal to our Lord's commandments,

but it has never given us the right to reject them. Every man who rejects the commandments of our Father in heaven is rebellious" (Conference Report, April 1967, 120-21). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 424) And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their <sup>b</sup>reward.

D&C 104:13-18 - 13 For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man <sup>a</sup>accountable, as a <sup>b</sup>steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures. 14 I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and <sup>a</sup>built the earth, my very <sup>b</sup>handiwork; and all things therein are mine. ("The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). All accountable souls are stewards of what the Lord chooses to give them during their mortal sojourn. Each of us will be called upon to give an accounting of what we did with the talents, abilities, opportunities, and earthly wealth given to us to bless others. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 760) 15 And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. 16 But it must needs be done in mine own <sup>a</sup>way; (The Lord's means of providing for his Saints was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith when he arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, in February 1831 and constitutes the "law of the Church" (History of the Church, 1:148). The Saints were commanded to consecrate all their property to the Lord and to receive stewardships from the bishop of the Church. The portion of the Lord's law governing earthly property is known as the law of consecration and stewardship. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 760) and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the <sup>b</sup>poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low. (Explaining this phrase, Elder Harold B. Lee observed that to be exalted, the poor have to be "stimulated to success and pride, and uplifted because the rich have been made low, or in other words, because the rich have been made humble and willing to give of their substance, their time, and their talent, and their wisdom, and their example that the poor might be thus guided and directed" (Conference Report, October 1941, 113). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 760) 17 For the <sup>a</sup>earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; (The earth was created by an all-knowing God who assures us that this world is rich enough to feed, clothe, and house all his children. Standing opposite this declaration are such notions as social Darwinism (survival of the fittest) and the prophets of doom who preach against our having more than one or two children. The testimony of heaven is that the earth is capable of providing the necessities of life for all its inhabitants. God holds his children responsible for their management and distribution of the earth's riches. Were this done according to gospel principles, there would be no poor or needy, except by choice, among all the nations of the earth. Having created the earth and placed Adam and Eve on it, the Lord blessed them and said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). To those of our dispensation the Lord said, "For, behold, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which cometh of the earth, is ordained for the use of man for food and for raiment, and that he might have in abundance. But it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin" (D&C 49:19-20). "The precepts of men would have you believe that by limiting the population of the world, we can have peace and plenty," Ezra Taft Benson observed. "That is the doctrine of the devil. Small numbers do not insure peace; only righteousness does. After all, there were only a handful of men on the earth when Cain interrupted the peace of Adam's household by slaying Abel. On the other hand, the whole city of Enoch was peaceful; and it was taken into heaven because it was made up of righteous people. . . . "A major reason why there is famine in some parts of the world is because evil men have used the vehicle of government to abridge the freedom that men need to produce abundantly. "True to form, many of the people who desire to frustrate God's purposes of giving mortal tabernacles to his spirit children through worldwide birth control are the very same people who support the kinds of government that perpetuate famine. They advocate an evil to cure the results of the wickedness they support" (Conference Report, April 1969, 12). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 760-61) yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be <sup>b</sup>agents unto themselves. 18 Therefore, if any man shall take of the <sup>a</sup>abundance which I have made, and impart not his

portion, according to the <sup>b</sup>law of my gospel, (Having admonished the Saints of his day to be generous with all who were in need, King Benjamin then cautioned that they do so "in wisdom and order" (Mosiah 4:27). The gospel plan requires all to labor according to their ability. Honest toil and labor are as much a part of the gospel as faith and repentance. Any system of giving to those who claim need that reinforces indolence or idleness stands contrary to the gospel plan and will result in evil. Part of the preparation given the Savior for his ministry was to learn a trade at the hand of his earthly father, Joseph. All men, in like manner, should learn to provide for their own, for many of life's greatest lessons will be learned in this process. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 761-62) unto the <sup>c</sup>poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in <sup>d</sup>hell, (The rich who covet their property and keep it from those in need are in danger of damnation. They misuse the trust God placed in them by granting them the riches of the earth. The language of this verse comes from the Savior's parable of Lazarus and the rich man. After his death, angels carried Lazarus to the bosom of Abraham. "The rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:22-23). For the rich, a great test of character is their willingness to give of their abundance to those in need. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 762) being in torment. (The Church designates one Sunday each month as a fast day. On this day Church members go without food and drink for two consecutive meals. They give to the Church a fast offering at least equal to the value of the food they would have eaten. If possible, members should be very generous and give much more than the value of two meals. Church Handbook of Instructions, 2:256)

Our Heritage, 108-9, 111-14:

President Grant was a wise and successful businessman whose skills helped him lead the Church through a worldwide financial depression and the personal problems that resulted from it. He firmly believed in being self-reliant and in depending on the Lord and his own hard work, not on the government. He blessed many needy people with the money he earned.

In the 1930s the Saints, like many other people in the world, were struggling with unemployment and poverty during the Great Depression. In 1936, as a result of revelation from the Lord, President Grant established the welfare program of the Church to assist those in need and help all members become self-reliant. The First Presidency said of this program: "Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self-respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves. Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership."

President J. Reuben Clark Jr., who served as a Counselor in the First Presidency for 28 years, emphasized, "The real long term objective of the Welfare Plan is the building of character in the members of the Church, givers and receivers, rescuing all that is finest down deep inside of them, and bringing to flower and fruitage the latent richness of the spirit."

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A General Welfare Committee was established in 1936 to oversee welfare efforts in the Church. Harold B. Lee, president of the Pioneer Stake, was made the committee's managing director. Later, Deseret

Industries stores were developed to help the unemployed and handicapped, and farms and production projects were established to help the needy. The welfare program continues to bless thousands of people today, both needy Church members and others in destitute circumstances throughout the world.

Also, efforts were organized for relief of the European Saints who had become destitute as a result of the war. Church members in the United States were encouraged to contribute clothing and other commodities. President Smith met with Harry S. Truman, president of the United States, to receive approval to send the collected food, clothing, and bedding to Europe. President Smith described the meeting in this way:

President Truman said: “‘What do you want to ship it over there for? Their money isn’t any good.’

‘I said, ‘We don’t want their money.’ He looked at me and asked: ‘You don’t mean you are going to give it to them?’

‘I said: ‘Of course, we would give it to them. They are our brothers and sisters and are in distress. God has blessed us with a surplus, and we will be glad to send it if we can have the co-operation of the government.’

‘He said: ‘You are on the right track,’ and added, ‘we will be glad to help you in any way we can.’ ”

While the donations were being sorted and packaged in Utah to ship overseas, President Smith came to observe the preparations. Tears ran down his face when he saw the great volume of commodities that had been so generously contributed. After a few minutes he removed his new overcoat and said, “Please ship this.” Although several people standing nearby told him that he needed his coat on the cold wintry day, he insisted that it be sent.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve was assigned to reopen the missions in Europe, see to the distribution of relief supplies, and administer to the spiritual needs of the Saints. One of Elder Benson’s early visits was to a conference of the Saints in Karlsruhe, a German city on the Rhine River. Elder Benson said of the experience:

“We finally found our way to the meeting place, a partially bombed-out building located in the interior of a block. The Saints had been in session for some two hours waiting for us, hoping that we would come because the word had reached them that we might be there for the conference. And then for the first time in my life I saw almost an entire audience in tears as we walked up onto the platform, and they realized that at last, after six or seven long years, representatives from Zion, as they put it, had finally come back to them. ... As I looked into their upturned faces, pale, thin, many of these Saints dressed in rags, some of them barefooted, I could see the light of faith in their eyes as they bore testimony to the divinity of this great latter-day work, and expressed their gratitude for the blessings of the Lord.”

Among his many responsibilities, Elder Benson supervised the distribution of 127 railroad carloads of food, clothing, bedding, and medicine throughout Europe. Years later when President Thomas S. Monson was dedicating a new chapel in Zwickau, Germany, an older brother came forward with tears in his eyes and asked to be remembered to President Ezra Taft Benson. He said to “tell him he saved my life, and those of scores of my brothers and sisters in my native land because of the food and clothing he brought to us from members of the Church in America.”

The Dutch Saints had the opportunity to give true Christian service to the starving Saints in Germany. The Dutch members had suffered much during the war and then had received welfare assistance from Church members in the United States. In the spring of 1947, they were asked to begin welfare projects of their own, which they enthusiastically did. They primarily planted potatoes and were expecting a large harvest.

During this time, President Walter Stover of the East German Mission came to Holland and, with tears in his eyes, told of the hunger and desolation of the Church members in Germany. President Cornelius Zappey, the president of the Netherlands Mission, asked his members whether they would supply their growing potatoes to the Germans, who had been their enemies during the war. The members willingly agreed and began to watch their potato crops with increased interest. The harvest was far greater than anyone had expected, and the Dutch Saints were able to send 75 tons of potatoes to their brothers and sisters in Germany. One year later, the Dutch Saints sent 90 tons of potatoes and 9 tons of herring to the Saints in Germany.

The outpouring of Christlike love shown by these Saints was typical of President George Albert Smith, who radiated the love of Christ to an extraordinary extent. He said, "I can say to you, my brethren and sisters, the happiest people in this world are those who love their neighbors as themselves and manifest their appreciation of God's blessings by their conduct in life."