

D&C LESSON #10

“THIS IS MY VOICE UNTO ALL”

By Ted L. Gibbons

INTRODUCTION: There is an economy in revelation. The Lord does not seem to waste anything, including his words, and expects that his disciples will be of the same inclination. Thus we need not expect that he will reveal things to us personally that he has already revealed to others and that are available in the Standard Works or the words of the Living Prophets.

Thus the Lord said, “What I say unto one I say unto all.” (D&C 61:36) He also said,

And verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my voice unto all.
Amen. (D&C 25:16)

Therefore, what I say unto one I say unto all: Watch, for the adversary spreadeth his dominions, and darkness reigneth . . .
(D&C 82:5)

What I say unto one I say unto all. (D&C 92:1)

What I say unto one I say unto all; pray always lest that wicked one have power in you, and remove you out of your place.
(D&C 93:49)

I knew a member of many years in the Church in a country in South America who had tried unsuccessfully to abandon her cigarettes since before her baptism. Her lack of success in giving up tobacco finally caused her to petition the Lord for permission to smoke. I believe she sincerely hoped that he would make an exception in her case because of the difficulty she had experienced in trying to adhere to the commandment of D&C 89. The verses cited above ought to have been sufficient incentive for her to desist from prayers for permission to ignore one of the commandments, but they were not. She continued to pray, and finally announced that she had received her answer. “Joseph Smith appeared to me,” she testified, “and told me that it was all right if I smoked.”

It was in part a lack of understanding the scriptures that led her into difficulty. The Lord had made his will on this matter known clearly. It is not likely that he would reverse himself in such a way or on such a matter as this.

The principle of *general application* of specific lessons taught to particular individuals is one that first appears in a revelation given to Emma Smith—D&C 25. And even though the revelation came through the prophet Joseph Smith to his wife, with specific instructions for her in her unique problems, the Lord concluded his counsel to this daughter with the injunction: “This is my voice unto all.” (D&C 25:16)

This lesson will explore what he said to all of us in D&C 25. The lesson manual divides the material in this section into three headings.

- 1. HUSBANDS AND WIVES SHOULD SUPPORT AND COMFORT EACH OTHER.**
- 2. WE SHOULD BE MEEK AND AVOID PRIDE**
- 3. WE SHOULD REJOICE AND BE OF GOOD CHEER**

Even though we do not understand perfectly what God intended with the division of responsibility between men and women, we do understand much of what God expects of men and women in their marriage relationships. I have gone through this revelation and marked 17 qualities the Lord expected of Emma. Generally these are qualities of an elect lady, for the Lord said to Emma,

Behold, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou art an elect lady, whom I have called. (D&C 25:3)

But many of them are equally applicable to men, and all of them apply to women.

1. (25:2) “If thou are faithful . . .” The Lord promises in this verse that faithfulness and virtue (see #2) will allow the Lord to preserve the life of Emma and to grant her an inheritance in Zion.

2. (25:2) “if thou . . . walk in the paths of virtue . . .” The Lord commanded all priesthood bearers about this matter:”let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly . . .” (D&C 121:45) This is no small matter in the environment in which we live. We are assailed on every side at almost every moment with images that are anything but virtuous. A great discipline will be required of us to walk in the paths of virtue and to have our minds *garnished unceasingly* with the beauty of virtue. But if we are successful, our marriages will be strengthened. “and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love . . .” Alma taught Shiblón.

3. (25:4) Murmur not because of the things which thou hast not seen, for they are withheld from thee and from the world . . .” This seems to be a reference to the gold plates. The eleven witness had seen them. Mary Whitmer had evidently seen them. But no one had suffered more as a result of those ancient records than Emma. But she had not seen them. Why would the Lord give blessings to some and not to others equally deserving. If priesthood were, for example, simply a matter of worthiness, then I am confident that more women than men would have it. But there is another issue here, one that we may not understand clearly. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught:

We know so little, brothers and sisters, about the reasons for the division of duties between womanhood and manhood as well as between motherhood and priesthood. These were divinely determined in another time and another place. We are accustomed to focusing on the men of God because theirs is the priesthood and leadership line. But paralleling that authority line is a stream of righteous influence reflecting the remarkable women of God who have existed in all ages and dispensations, including our own. Greatness is not measured by coverage in column inches, either in newspapers or in the scriptures. The story of the women of God, therefore, is, for now, an untold drama within a drama. . . .

When the real history of mankind is fully disclosed, will it feature the echoes of gunfire or the shaping sound of lullabies? The great armistices made by military men or the peacemaking of women in homes and in neighborhoods? Will what happened in cradles and kitchens prove to be more controlling than what happened in congresses? When the surf of the centuries has made the great pyramids so much sand, the everlasting family will still be standing, because it is a celestial institution, formed outside Telestial time. The women of God know this. (*Ensign*, May 1978, pp. 10,11)

We must not murmur because we do not have all the opportunities that others have. God is on the job and he knows what he is doing. Read D&C 101:16 and Psalm 46:10.

4. (25:5) “And the office of thy calling shall be for a comfort unto . . . thy husband, in his afflictions, with consoling words, in the spirit of meekness.” I have a feeling that women are much better than men at this. But even so, it is a duty that each partner in a relationship owes to the other. My wife has come to me often, troubled and weighed down and telling me her difficulties, and has then said, “Say something to make me feel better.” I don’t know that I have always done a very good job at this, but I have tried. I have a divine duty to try to comfort my wife in her afflictions with consoling words. And I ought to do it meekly. When she is heavy-laden, I must resist the urge to preach and prescribe. And she must do the same for me. It is in this way that we truly become one.
5. (25:6) “And thou shalt go with him at the time of his going . . .” I have taken my wife to twelve different homes. They have all, every one of them, been related to *my* work. School and the army and more school and employment with the Church Education System have required me to move from state to state and from coast to coast. And Lydia has come with me. I have never heard a word of resentment or complaint. When it has been time for me to go, she has gone with me. But I must also go with her. When the office of her calling takes her to

places unknown or uncomfortable—to the hospital to have a baby or to the school to meet with a disagreeable teacher, I have gone with her. We are and have agreed to be a package. Many things we do alone, but when we need support, we lean first on each other. What a blessing that has been.

6. (25:7) “thou shalt be ordained under his hand to expound scriptures . . .” What a blessing scriptural knowledge is for anyone. This is not a man’s responsibility, and with or without ordination, we ought to pay the price to know and expound the scriptures.
7. (25:7) “and to exhort the church . . .” As callings [and ordinations] come, we can exhort the members of the Church for whom we have stewardship. It is a delight to listen to my wife teach my children out of the scriptures. In addition she has taught frequently in the auxiliaries of the church. She is a superb teacher and a fine scriptorian, and her teachings are fortified by her spirituality and her Christianity.
8. (25:8) “thy time shall be given to writing, and to learning much.” Writing what? The prophets have given some interesting counsel about writing to the members of the Church. For example:

Any Latter-day Saint family that has searched genealogical and historical records has fervently wished their ancestors had kept better and more complete records. On the other hand, some families possess some spiritual treasures because ancestors have recorded the events surrounding their conversion to the gospel and other happenings of interest, including many miraculous blessings and spiritual experiences. People often use the excuse that their lives are uneventful and nobody would be [page 61] interested in what they have done. But I promise you that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, to your children, your grandchildren, and others, on through the generations. (Spencer W. Kimball, “President

Kimball Speaks Out on Personal Journals," *Ensign*,
Dec. 1980, 60–61)

A member of the twelve gave this advice:

Knowledge carefully recorded is knowledge available in time of need. Spiritually sensitive information should be kept in a sacred place that communicates to the Lord how you treasure it. That practice enhances the likelihood of your receiving further light. (Richard G. Scott, "Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 88)

Another apostle wrote this:

We should learn, too, that the prompting that goes unresponded to may not be repeated. Writing down what we have been prompted with is vital. A special thought can also be lost later in the day in the rough and tumble of life. God should not, and may not, choose to repeat the prompting if we assign what was given such a low priority as to put it aside. (Neal A. Maxwell, *Wherefore Ye Must Press Forward*, p.122)

I think the message is clear enough. The Lord expects all of us to do some writing. I remember years ago hearing Elder Marion D. Hanks say something like this in a CES meeting: "The palest ink is better than the brightest memory." When the Lord cares about us and about a principle enough to give inspiration, we ought to care enough about it to write it down in a sacred place.

With regard to education—the command to give our time to learning, Pres. Hinckley taught:

"It is so important that you young men and you young women get all of the education that you can. The Lord has said very plainly that His people are to

gain knowledge of countries and kingdoms and of things of the world through the process of education, even by study and by faith. Education is the key which will unlock the door of opportunity for you. It is worth sacrificing for. It is worth working at, and if you educate your mind and your hands, you will be able to make a great contribution to the society of which you are a part, and you will be able to reflect honorably on the Church of which you are a member. My dear young brothers and sisters, take advantage of every educational opportunity that you can possibly afford, and you fathers and mothers, encourage your sons and daughters to gain an education which will bless their lives” (meeting, Hermosillo, Mexico, 9 Mar. 1998. Quoted in “Inspirational Thoughts” from Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, June 1999, 4)

9. (25:9) “And thou neediest not fear . . .” No woman should have to. The man has the duty to support his family, and if he becomes unable or unwilling, then the righteous woman, after doing what she can do, has every right to turn to the priesthood of God for the necessary assistance. When I was a teenager living in northern Utah, a young woman in our ward with four little children was left a widow by an unfortunate airplane accident at an Air Force base. The ward built her a house. Someone donated land. A construction company owned by a ward member dug the foundation and poured the footings. Priesthood holders came with hammers and nails. Appliances were purchased and donated. Painters painted. Carpenters carpented. Workers worked. I was young and contributed little but I remember. We could not do much about the loneliness, but we could turn away the fear.
10. “And verily I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world . . .” In an ode to W.H. Channing, Emerson wrote, “Things are in the saddle and ride mankind.” If that was true in Emerson’s day, it is certainly true now. We seem to be obsessed with **stuff**. We seek to acquire more and more stuff. The Lord gave solemn warning to

those whose hearts are set “so much upon the things of this world . . .” When we focus too much on the material things that enrich our lives, we become much like those people in the days of Enoch of whom It was written, “their eyes cannot see afar off.” (Moses 6:27) We are blinded by our bank accounts and our credit card payments and our regular pay checks. The things of the world are necessary to get through this world, but none of them should be so important to us that we are unable to lay them aside if the Lord requires it of us.

11. (25:10) “And verily I say unto thee that thou shalt lay aside the things of this world, and ***seek for the things of a better.***” This is what we ought to seek. As we distance ourselves from the things of this world, our efforts and focus will turn unerringly to the things of a better world. I think the oft-repeated scriptural counsel to “be sober” is based on this attitude. The Lord commanded:

Hearken ye to these words. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds.

Be sober. Keep all my commandments. Even so.
Amen. (D&C 43:34,35)

12. (25:13) “Wherefore, lift up thy heart and rejoice . . .” We have been directed on several occasions to be of good cheer.

D&C 61:36--And now, verily I say unto you, and what I say unto one I say unto all, be of good cheer, little children; for I am in your midst, and I have not forsaken you;

D&C 68:6--Wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come.

D&C 78:18--And ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. The kingdom is yours and the blessings thereof are yours, and the riches of eternity are yours.

D&C 112:4--Let thy heart be of good cheer before my face; and thou shalt bear record of my name, not only unto the Gentiles, but also unto the Jews; and thou shalt send forth my word unto the ends of the earth.

13. (25:13) "Cleave unto the covenants which thou hast made." Agreements with a God are not to be taken lightly. We have made covenants and we must hold on to them. It by means of our covenants and what we do with them that our fitness for heaven will be determined.

Therefore, be not afraid of your enemies, for I have decreed in my heart, saith the Lord, that I will prove you in all things, whether you will abide in my covenant, even unto death, that you may be found worthy. For if ye will not abide in my covenant ye are not worthy of me. (D&C 98:14,15)

Robert E. Wells taught that

One of the principal purposes of this life is to find out if the Lord can trust us. One of our familiar scriptures says, "And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abr. 3:25). We are destined to be tried, tested, and proven during our sojourn on earth to see if we are trustworthy.

The Prophet Joseph Smith indicated that to attain the highest blessing of this life, we will first be tested and proved thoroughly until the Lord is certain that

he can trust us in all things, regardless of the personal hazard or sacrifice involved. (Robert E. Wells, "The Cs of Spirituality," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 24)

14. (25:14) "continue in a spirit of meekness . . ." John Taylor taught,

Let us continue to live in humility and meekness before God, seeking in faith and good works to get an increased portion of his Holy Spirit, that we may comprehend the laws of God and live according to the principles of eternal truth.... (JD, 18:334-335, December 31, 1876)

I sense that this quality of meekness is another of those divine attributes at which women may be more proficient than men. The whole text of this verse suggests that Emma's glory and renown will come, in some measure from her husband. A willingness to stand in the background while someone else is revered shows a purity of meekness. And it is this that Emma is asked to do for her husband.

15. (25:13) "Beware of pride."

Be not ashamed, neither confounded; but be admonished in all your high-mindedness and pride, for it bringeth a snare upon your souls. (D&C 90:17)

This language is interesting. Hunters from the Arctic to Zimbabwe have used snares to trap unsuspecting animals. Size is not an issue. If you want to trap a bigger animal, you construct a bigger snare, and pride can be fashioned in any shape and size. It is a trap that only the most cautious and spiritually sensitive can avoid. It is a trap used by Lucifer with more success than almost any other device to entangle the souls of men. Beware indeed! The word *beware* suggest a sobriety, a vigilance as we regularly examine our lives and our souls for traces of this condition.

16. (25:14) “Let thy soul delight in thy husband, and in the glory which shall come upon him.” This is great medicine for pride. If we are able to delight in the successes---the *glory*—that comes to others, we are well-insulated against pride.

In the words of C. S. Lewis:

Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone. (*Mere Christianity*, New York: Macmillan 1952, pp. 109-10)

We learn to rejoice in the accomplishments of others better in families than anywhere else in our lives. We seem to be able to delight in the achievements of our children and spouses. And when we learn to expand that feeling to all around us, we will have made great progress. For, it seems to me, humility is not the attitude of belittling our own achievements, but of regarding them with the no greater sense of satisfaction we would feel if they had been performed by another.

17. (25:15) “Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive.”

CONCLUSION: We have been promised that as we read the words of the Doctrine and Covenants by the Spirit, we are hearing the voice of the Lord. D&C 84:60 tells us:

Verily, verily, I say unto you who now hear my words, which are my voice, blessed are ye inasmuch as you receive these things.

Have you heard his voice in this remarkable revelation given to Emma Smith. For it was not given to her alone, but to all those children and disciples inclined to serve God and keep his commandments.

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