

What blessings does Heavenly Father promise if I obey the commandments?

Pilgrim's Landing 2nd Ward, September 2018 (10-12 minutes)

Introduction:

Cherice Montgomery. I moved into the **townhomes** about **8 years ago**. I am **not married** and have **no children**. I currently serve in **Primary**, which is why many of you may not know me. I taught **high school Spanish** for a long time, and now work with language teachers in the **Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese at BYU**, as well as in other parts of the country.

Topic:

I have been asked to speak about the **blessings that Heavenly Father promises us if we obey the commandments**. I have a love/hate relationship with the commandments, meaning that I have a testimony of them, but I get tired of always feeling like I'm failing at keeping them perfectly.

Guiding Questions:

- 1) **What** is a commandment and how do we keep the commandments?
- 2) **Why** does Heavenly Father ask us to keep commandments?
- 3) **How** does He bless us when we do?

What is a commandment?

Have you ever wished you had superpowers?

Well, we are all children of God. This means that we have inherited some of His divine superpowers! We receive these powers in the form of both physical and spiritual gifts and talents, but we have to develop them in order to be able to use them at full capacity.

As the world becomes more wicked, it is getting harder for us to access our divine superpowers.

As I have studied the gospel, I have learned that Heavenly Father gives us commandments because **He wants to give us "superpowers!"**

A commandment is **something Heavenly Father asks us to do, or not to do to help us receive, develop, and use His power in our lives.**

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All commandments are both spiritual and temporal (i.e., they affect both our bodies and our spirits and determine how much physical and spiritual power we have).

“34 Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

35 Behold, I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual; they are not natural nor temporal, neither carnal nor sensual” (Doctrine & Covenants 29:34-35).

In addition to general commandments, we also receive **personal commandments** from the Lord in our **patriarchal blessings**, through **priesthood blessings**, and through **personal revelation** about things we need to do, to do differently, or to change. These might be spiritual (such as the prompting to do more family history and temple work) or temporal (such as changing jobs or moving).

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Why does Heavenly Father give us commandments?

Heavenly Father gives us commandments b/c He loves us and wants us to be happy.

When parents love their children, they ask their children to do things (like **brushing their teeth or eating their vegetables**) to help them grow up **healthy and happy**.

When they tell their children not to do things, like **play in the street or touch the hot stove**, they do so because they love them and want to **keep them safe**. They can **see dangers** that children do not. They know what their children do not fully understand, and they have the **experience to guide and direct them**. This means that like our parents here on earth, **Heavenly Father** asks us to do things or tells us not to do things because he **wants us to be safe and happy too**.

Heavenly Father gives us commandments because He wants to give us His power.

“For **whom the Lord loveth he correcteth**; even as a father the son in whom he **delighteth**” (Proverbs 3:12).

What I like about this scripture is that it shows me that Heavenly Father isn't giving us commandments because He is mean or wants to punish us. He loves us, “**delights**” in us, and wants us to be happy!

Just like Spiderman got his superpowers from a small, simple spider, the scriptures teach us that we can get spiritual (and temporal) superpowers by doing small and simple things, like going to church, reading our scriptures, saying our prayers, attending the temple, and so forth.

“**Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but** behold I say unto you, that **by small and simple things are great things brought to pass**; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise” (Alma 37:6).

We have to be willing to RECEIVE the power Heavenly Father wants to give us (i.e., by “receiving” the Holy Ghost).

If you have ever watched a superhero movie, you know that their **superpowers only work under certain conditions**. When superheroes powers are working well, they are able to keep themselves and others **safe from the bad guys**. Like those superheroes, **when we keep the commandments, Heavenly Father gives us more personal power** to do hard things, like keeping ourselves and others safe from Satan and from other things in our lives that will hurt us. But, just like Superman, if we choose to spend time around **negative influences**, they **weaken us like Kryptonite**, and we lose some of our “superpowers.”

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RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST:

When I was younger, I used to think that “**receiving the Holy Ghost**” just meant having someone with priesthood authority **lay their hands on your head** and bless you to receive it. While that is true, I now understand that “**receiving the Holy Ghost**” is a **daily process** that we have to work on our whole lives. The **commandments are the conditions we must obey in order to receive the power** of Heavenly Father & Jesus Christ in our lives each day **through the presence of the Holy Ghost**.

DOUBT:

But **because these things are small and simple** (or sometimes not so simple) for us to do, **sometimes we don't believe they will really make a difference**. That is what happened to the children of Israel.

BRASS SERPENT EXAMPLE:

The Lord had just helped them to win a **big battle** with the Canaanites. Then they went on a **long trip** and because it took so long, they got **discouraged**. They started **complaining** that they didn't have “the good bread” to eat and that they were running out of water. So the Lord allowed “**fiery serpents**” to bite them and people died. The people realized they had **forgotten the Lord's help** and should be more grateful, so they **repented** and asked Moses to ask the Lord to take away the serpents. **Moses prayed** and the Lord told him to **make a serpent and put it on a pole** and that anyone who **got bit just had to look at it** and then they would be **healed**. (Paraphrased from Numbers 21:1-9).

SMALL & SIMPLE THINGS: But guess what? In the Book of Mormon, we learn that **because the solution was so simple, a lot of people didn't believe it would work and so they died**.

“...he **prepared a way that they might be healed**; and **the labor which they had to perform was to look**, and **because of the simpleness** of the way, **or the easiness** of it, there were **many who perished**” (1 Nephi 17:41).

Sometimes we are like the children of Israel. We forget what the Lord has done in our lives, and **we stop keeping the commandments because we believe that they are so simple and unrelated that they couldn't possibly help us to solve our problems, or we convince ourselves that not keeping them won't really weaken or hurt us**. But **Satan knows he can't get most of us to make big mistakes or commit big sins, so he tempts us with little ones, until bit by bit, we find ourselves in big trouble**.

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What does it mean to keep the commandments (i.e., how can we develop our superpowers)?

DOING WHAT THE SAVIOR DOES (which is how we become like Him)

"He that believeth on me, **the works that I do**, shall he do also;" (John 14:12)

RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST (i.e., accepting and living truth)

"44 **For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.** 45 For the **word of the Lord is truth**, and **whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.**

46 And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and **the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.** 47 And **every one that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father**" (Doctrine & Covenants 84:44-47).

FIGHTING EVIL (i.e., a process of avoiding negative influences & rejecting what's not good for us increases our personal power to keep more commandments longer)

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you**" (James 4:7)

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How does Heavenly Father promise to bless us if we keep the commandments?

Heavenly Father follows His own rules, which say that he can bless us more when we obey His laws, or commandments.

“20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

21 And **when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated**” (Doctrine & Covenants 130:20-21).

Heavenly Father promises to bless us when we keep the commandments.

“I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (Doctrine & Covenants 82:10).

President Schulte, a member of the Wichita Kansas Stake Presidency, used to tell us that if we really wanted something, to “bind the Lord” by being so faithful and obedient that he had to bless us with it. ;-)

We do not get to choose the blessings, the consequences, or the timing.

It can be really, really hard when we feel like we are doing all we can to go to church, partake of the sacrament, read our scriptures, say our prayers, fast, pay our tithing and offerings, attend the temple, and so forth, but things in our lives don't seem to get better. Faith means that we keep doing those things anyway, and trust the Lord enough to believe that He will bless us at the time and in the ways that will be best for us. We want the trial to be over, but He isn't as concerned about the situational outcome as He is about our learning process and the people we are becoming. We don't get to decide the reward or its timing.

Heavenly Father loves ALL of His children and blesses them as much as possible.

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: **for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust**” (Matthew 5:45).

It is also important not to compare our circumstances with what we can see of others. None of us keep the commandments perfectly. We all do good things, and we all do things that we know we shouldn't. A good friend of mine once said to me, “We all commit the same sins, just to a greater or lesser degree.” At first I thought, but that's not true at all! I don't (insert a whatever your idea of a big sin is here). Then I realized she was right. All wrong things fall on a continuum or spectrum. Just because we aren't

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doing things at one end of the spectrum doesn't mean we aren't guilty of a few mistakes along the way.

What are some of the specific blessings Heavenly Father has promised to give us if we keep the “small and simple” commandments?

Reading scriptures provides guidance and direction in every aspect of our lives

Guidance & Direction: “...Wherefore, I said unto you, **feast upon the words of Christ**; for behold, **the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do**” (2 Nephi 32:3).

There was a time in my life where I was trying to decide whether I should go get a Ph.D. or go on a mission. I thought a lot about it, and I prayed and asked Heavenly Father what I should do, but I didn't feel like I got a clear answer. I counseled with my family, friends, and church leaders, and continued to think about it. One day, as I was reading my scriptures, the answer literally leaped off the page. That had never happened to me before, and has only happened one time since.

Answers/revelation usually comes a little bit at a time from different sources.

“11...ye shall *live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God*.
12 **For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept**; and I will try you and prove you herewith” (Doctrine & Covenants 98:11-12)

“For behold, thus saith the Lord God: **I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little**; and **blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom**; for **unto him that receiveth I will give more**; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have” (2 Nephi 28:30).

However, I have learned that as I try to live gospel truths and study the scriptures, the answers I need will often slowly unfold a bit at a time, and are often distributed across different passages in the scriptures. To truly know and understand the promises, we have to study the gospel and our scriptures.

Mysteries of God: “...and he that will not harden his heart, **to him is given the greater portion of the word**, until it is given unto him to know the **mysteries of God** until he know them in full” (Alma 12:10).

This promise applies to temporal things too—much of my professional knowledge is based on things I was taught or inspired to do by the Spirit.

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Praying: "...and pray one for another, **that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much**" (James 5:16).

"9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: **how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**" (Luke 11:9-13).

My mother is an incredible example of this. She prays for each of my family members continuously and I have felt the influence of her prayers. My friend, Suzanne, once mentioned in a talk that prayer was a form of spiritual work, a type of sacrifice, and that according to Elder Bednar, when we pray in the morning, we are spiritually creating our day and influencing other people's lives.

Keep the Sabbath Day Holy:

"If thou **turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight**, the Holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 58:13-14).

A few years ago, after planning a Primary Sharing Time on keeping the Sabbath Day Holy, I realized that although I generally refrained from doing things I shouldn't on Sunday, I hadn't really come to the point where I viewed the Sabbath as "a delight." I decided to make a list of things I enjoyed doing that I felt were appropriate Sunday activities. I also set a few goals based on talks given in General Conference. As a result, I decided to try to strengthen my relationships on Sundays. I called family members on Sunday, I practiced the piano, I tried to serve others by delivering treats or visiting people, I began indexing several batches each Sunday while listening to hymns, and I started writing one-page letters to missionaries and to my family that talked about what

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the Lord had taught me that week. Those letters became a “spiritual treasure chest” (as my friend Donna Purcella would call it) for me and for people I love, and the indexing brought a tangible spirit into my home. The Sabbath truly became a delight for me, filled my life with the Spirit, and I have been blessed with many wonderful professional opportunities as well.

Keeping the commandments doesn't remove the trials from our lives, but it can help us to face them with peace, and even joy.

Partaking of the Sacrament:

“And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And **if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you**” (3 Nephi 18:11).

The most powerful examples of this blessing in my life have centered around people I love. One day, as I was driving to work, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace. I found it puzzling because I couldn't think of anything specific that I had done that would be likely to have produced such an outpouring of the Spirit. I didn't know what to make of it, but thanked the Lord for it and then went to teach a class in the basement of BYU, where I do not get cell phone service. When I finished class, I started up the stairs toward my office and all of a sudden, a stream of text message notifications dinging. There were so many, that I knew something must be wrong. I stopped on a landing, looked at my phone, and saw that my Dad had been in a serious motorcycle accident. However, before I read any of the other messages, I knew with absolute assurance that I didn't need to worry and that everything was okay. My Dad had to have reconstructive surgery on his shoulder and undergo a lot of other physical therapy, but he is okay. I experienced peace during that difficult time and was able to reassure him just prior to his surgery as a result of the powerful personal revelation that I had received about that situation. I had similar experiences when my relationship with someone I had been dating seriously suddenly dissolved, and again recently when my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer.

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Attend Church, Partake of the Sacrament, & Keep the Sabbath Day Holy:

“8 Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a **broken heart and a contrite spirit**.

9 And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt **go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day;**

10 For verily this is a day appointed unto you to **rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High;**

11 Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times;

12 But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.

13 And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, **that thy joy may be full.**

14 Verily, this is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer.

15 And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance—

16 Verily I say, that **inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours**, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth;

17 Yea, and the herb, and **the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards;**

18 Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both **to please the eye and to gladden the heart;**

19 Yea, for food and for raiment, **for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul.** (D&C 59: 8-19)

Keeping the Sabbath day holy is like fasting from the world, and it helps our spirits find joy and peace.

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I try to attend church and take the sacrament whenever I travel for work or vacation. It is never easy to get up early, find out where the closest church is, and arrange transportation. However, I am always blessed by it. When I was working in Hawai'i, I met a family at church who learned I was there alone. They invited me to their home for dinner, and then once they learned that I would be alone on the 4th of July, they invited me to spend the weekend with them. They took me to do amazing things—swimming with turtles, fireworks, and so forth. They also really strengthened my testimony of the gospel.

Earlier this month, I was at a dance convention in Arizona, where social dancing normally lasts until late into the night. I had been having a great time, so I stayed out late on Saturday night. When my alarm went off on Sunday morning, I really didn't want to get up to go to church. I decided to do it anyway, but prayed as I left the hotel that the Lord would help me to know that it actually mattered that I chose to go to church. After Sacrament meeting, I left the chapel and stood in the lobby, where I pulled out my phone to call an Uber so that I could get back to the hotel in time to check out and catch my flight home. A girl came up behind me, asked if I was a dancer, and mentioned that she asked because she'd seen me in the lobby of the hotel where the dance convention was occurring. We chatted happily about the convention for a few minutes, and then decided to share an Uber back to the hotel. The driver who picked us up asked us how we had enjoyed church, then revealed that he was a member of the church, had served a mission, had gotten married, but had then stopped attending church a long time ago when his marriage fell apart. My new friend and I had the opportunity to listen, to let him know that we understood that it was hard to keep trying when things got hard, to let him know that Christ was still there for him, and to encourage him that he could turn to the Lord whenever he felt ready to do so. I realized that the Lord used the girl I met in the hotel and this amazing missionary experience to answer the prayer I had offered before, while also using us to help one of His children who was struggling.

While at a conference in San Diego, I found the church just in time to take the sacrament. At the end of the meeting, the woman sitting behind me tapped me on the shoulder and proceeded to welcome me. I assumed she was a ward missionary, but later found out that she was just a regular church member who hadn't felt like coming to church that day. We got into a deep gospel discussion, and ended up having our own private Sunday School and Relief Society in the foyer that day. At the end of our conversation, she talked about how much she was struggling in her life, and explained that she wasn't really reading her scriptures, praying, or doing any of the other things she knew she should do because they were so hard for her. When I asked her why she had decided to come to church that day (and why she kept coming), she said, "Because I know it's true." What stands out to me now about this experience is that I think this woman was doing much better than she thought she was. Even though things in her life were hard, and even though she wasn't doing everything perfectly, she was doing the most important things—showing love to others (me!). She had gained a personal

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testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, she partook of the sacrament regularly, and by doing so, she showed that she accepted Jesus Christ and His sacrifice in her life.

“When we obey, we accept His sacrifice, for we believe that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws, ordinances, and commandments given in the gospel” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2014, p. 35).

She was also following the principle of “When thou art converted, strengthen they brethren” (inspire others to keep the commandments through your testimony and example).

Fast:

6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

(Isaiah 58: 6-7)

8 ¶Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.

9 Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

11 And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12 And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

MI Apartment Story: I have a testimony of the principle of fasting. When I first moved to Michigan, I flew out and stayed with a friend for a week while I looked for a place to live. We had driven all over the area, but after a week of searching, everything we had found was dirty and rundown, far away from campus, unsafe, or had already rented out. I fasted and sincerely prayed for help. Shortly after that, I tried calling someone from the Relief Society who directed me to a single sister named Amy. Amy happened to live in a basement apartment in a privately owned building that only had 12 apartments next to another single member of the church named Suzanne who was also “coincidentally” enrolled in the doctoral program that I would soon begin. The building

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was conveniently located in a beautiful, safe, upscale neighborhood only 10 minutes from campus and several shopping centers. Additionally, someone had just moved out of a beautiful, 2-bedroom apartment on the 2nd floor and although the landlady had decided to raise the rent to \$650, it was much nicer than any of the other apartments I had looked at and the price was just within range of my budget. I knew that this was an answer to my prayer. Several other single sisters from the Church who later joined my program also found apartments within that building so that at one point, there were four of us living there.

MI Car Crash Story: I had been worried about my finances because the assistantships I had only paid \$13,000 per year (or was it per semester?). I was also worried about my car. It had been acting up and since my previous Grand Am had had electrical problems, I was concerned that would be the case with my current Grand Am as well. I had also been praying that the Lord would help me have enough money to get through the program. One week after I moved to Michigan, I was driving up a hill and someone making a left-hand turn out of the driveway of a car dealership pulled out without looking and hit me, totaling my car. My airbag deployed, leaving me alive, but with a very bruised chin and arms. I was devastated. I only had one friend, no money, and was starting a new chapter in my life all alone. However, I again fasted and prayed for help and my friend lent me her car for a few weeks until I could find one. A single brother in my ward (Doug Neil) who worked as a Professor of Psychology at MSU, agreed to come with me to help me find a car and negotiate the price. I found a Toyota Corolla that was only 2 years old and had been leased. It had fewer than 10,000 miles, was in pristine condition, and was only \$10,500. I found myself wondering why the Lord had allowed the accident. In hindsight, I can see that the \$4,000 insurance settlement the answer to my prayers about financial concerns and my worries about the safety and reliability of my car. I also wondered why the Lord had given me such a good car with such low miles. In hindsight after I moved to Utah, I learned why. I was assigned to supervise student teachers, a job that required me to drive many, many miles all around the state. Again, this experience strengthened my testimony of fasting, prayer, and of the Lord's foreknowledge of our needs.

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Tithing:

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not **open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.**

11 And I will **rebuke the devourer for your sakes**, and he shall **not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time** in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 And **all nations shall call you blessed**: for **ye shall be a delightsome land**, saith the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:10-12)

Tithing:

23 Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for **he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.**

24 For after today cometh the burning—this is speaking after the manner of the Lord—for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.

25 Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today.

(Doctrine & Covenants 64:23-25)

I did not have enough publications to qualify for tenure. However, instead of being fired, the Lord “opened the windows of heaven” and “poured me out a blessing”—I was granted a year and a half extension to produce enough publications, given a sabbatical so that I would have time to do so, and also received a large salary raise—all evidence that instead of “burning” me for my shortcomings, the Lord “rebuked the devourer” for my sake. One reason I think Heavenly Father blessed me so abundantly is because I consistently paid a generous fast offering, a full tithing, and other offerings (such as for humanitarian aid and missionary work).

Temple worship can help us to become more sensitive to the Spirit.

Temple Worship:

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Heavenly Father cares more about our effort than He does about perfection.

Spiritual Gifts: "...[spiritual gifts] they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, ***and him that seeketh so to do***; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts" (D&C 46:9).

Heavenly Father doesn't require perfect performance, he requires effort (that we try). We just need to focus on figuring out what our very next step is and on taking one step at a time, even if that is just five minutes at a time. "I want to live the gospel, To know that it's teachings are true, To follow the plan of my Savior And live as He wants me to do. I will try in all I do and say To live the gospel more each day" (Primary Children's Songbook, p. 148).

In summary, all of the commandments boil down to love. Heavenly Father wants us to learn to love ourselves, the people around us, and Him, and in doing so, to learn how much He loves us.

Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: [Mathew 22:37-40](#)

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**

40 **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

There Is No Greater Commandment: [Mark 12:30-31](#)

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **There is none other commandment greater than these.**

We can know what to do, but not do it. We can know what to do, and do it, but still not allow it to change us so that we become the person we were meant to be.

Keeping the commandments is a process of learning, understanding, doing, until we eventually become like Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. You don't have to do it all at once, and you are probably doing better than you think!

What blessings does Heavenly Father promise if I obey the commandments?

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Keeping the commandments brings blessings, but the most important ones depend on developing charity toward the weaknesses and mistakes of others even as we become better.

“1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And although I have the gift of **prophecy**, and **understand all mysteries, and all knowledge**; and **though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.**

3 And **though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing**” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

Trust in the promises and in the process! Keeping the commandments helps us to receive the Holy Ghost, and eventually, the presence of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Prosperity: “O remember, remember, my son Helaman, how strict are the commandments of God. And he said: **If ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land**—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence” (Alma 37:13).

Increase of the Spirit: “Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, **that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?**” (Mosiah 18:10)

Truth: “And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

Comfort: “15 ¶If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the **Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 **I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you**” (John 14:15-18).

Abide in Love of Savior: “If ye keep my commandments, **ye shall abide in my love**; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

What blessings does Heavenly Father promise if I obey the commandments?

Pilgrim's Landing 2nd Ward, September 2018 (10-12 minutes)

“Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and **I will encircle thee in the arms of my love**” (D&C 6:20).

Appearance of the Savior: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, **and will manifest myself to him**” (John 14:21).

“The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God ... then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints. ... Now **what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself**” ([Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 150–51](#)).”

Peace & Protection: “And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that **when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo**, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

“The skeptic or gospel novice might inquire: “Why seek the Holy Ghost? Why strive for his companionship? What is in it for me?” Answers to these questions are abundant if we are receptive to the testimonies of those who know and have associated with the Spirit of the Lord. Some of these testimonies help to answer questions about the value of association with the Holy Ghost.

Would you like to possess perfect foresight, perfected anticipatory powers? If so, you must do as Nephi directed: “Enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, [for] it will show unto you all things what ye should do.” ([2 Ne. 32:5](#).)

Finally, would you like the power to perform beyond your natural abilities? Would you like the help of unseen powers in all that you do? I refer to the power to speak with convincing authority—even the power to receive promptings that enable you to say things that you had not planned. I speak of the power to receive impressions, which, if heeded, bring blessings to you and others.

What blessings does Heavenly Father promise if I obey the commandments?

Pilgrim's Landing 2nd Ward, September 2018 (10-12 minutes)

Mortal men and women are endowed with marvelous abilities and potential. But however great these mortal powers may be, they are only a shadow of those powers that can be claimed through a linkage with the Holy Spirit.

I hope you do not say to yourself that these words about a companionship with the Spirit are for someone else, not you. God is no respecter of persons. His blessings and gifts are not reserved for a precious few. It matters not whether you are an Apostle or a deacon, a Relief Society officer or a Primary teacher. All of us have the promise of gifts of the Spirit if we place ourselves in a position to claim them...

Isn't it significant that the process of receiving the Holy Ghost is inextricably connected with everything we do in the gospel of Jesus Christ?" [Elder Carlos E. Asay, 1st Quorum of the 70. (1988, Apr.). The companionship of the Holy Ghost. *Ensign*.]