

If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments – Elder Robert D. Hales – May 2014

Topic: “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments” by Elder Robert D. Hales

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to **ponder this talk**, to **search the scriptures**, **pray** that I will share what will be of benefit to you from what I have learned.

Guiding Questions:

- 1) **What** does it **mean** to keep the commandments?
- 2) **Why** does He ask us to keep the commandments and why do we **choose poorly**? (Blessings)
- 3) **How** can we do something that is so hard?

What does it mean to keep the commandments?

(John 14:15) “If ye love me, **keep my commandments.**”

To follow the example of the Savior by **DOING** what the Savior does –

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

To accept and live truth –

(D&C 84:44-47) “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.” - **So keeping the commandments isn't so much to mark things off the checklist as it is to live by the Spirit**

A Process of Rejecting Evil; Increases Our Personal Power to Keep More Commandments Longer –

(D&C 98:11-12) “11 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall **forsake all evil and cleave unto all good,** that 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.”

“Obedience makes us progressively stronger, capable of faithfully enduring tests and trials in the future.

Obedience in Gethsemane prepared the Savior to obey and endure to the end on Golgotha” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2014, p. 38).

Why does He ask us to keep commandments?

Protection – Commandments provide safety and peace

(D&C 29:40) “Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein **he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.**”

Spiritual Welfare – Commandments ensure our happiness

(D&C 29:34-35) “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.” – **Spirituality is becoming harder and harder to attain as the world becomes more wicked, commandments help us**

Self-mastery – He promises to give us all that he has, so we must be worthy

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(D&C 84:38) “And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom; therefore **all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.**” – **Laser eyes example**

Why do we choose poorly?

We Want to be Happy – Ironic.

(Alma 41:10) “Do not suppose, because it has been spoken concerning restoration, that ye shall be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, **wickedness never was happiness.**”

Promises Prosperity - (Alma 37:13) “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.”

We Confuse Instant Gratification for Eternal Joy – Photo of black, rotted teeth or super smile; photo of run-down shack or mansion; photo of sickly body or healthy one

We Have to Give Things Up – (Psalms 4:5) “Offer **the sacrifices of righteousness**, and put your trust in the Lord.”

Pride – ***We trust our own or the world’s understanding more than Heavenly Father’s***

(Proverbs 3:5) “**Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.**”

(2 Nephi 28:31) “**Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man**, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

“To rationalize disobedience does not change spiritual law or its consequences but leads to confusion, instability, wandering in strange paths, being lost, and grief” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2014, p. 37).

Don't Want To B/C It Seems Too Hard – Savior didn't want to, but he did it anyway B/C he trusted H.F.

“As our understanding of obedience deepens, we recognize the essential role of agency. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed ***three times*** to His Father in Heaven, ‘O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as though wilt.’ God would not override the Savior’s agency, yet He mercifully ***sent an angel to strengthen His Beloved Son***...The Savior met another test on Golgotha, where He could have called upon legions of angels to take Him down from the cross, but ***He made His own choice to obediently endure to the end and complete His atoning sacrifice***, even though it meant great suffering, even death.... ***Spiritually mature obedience*** is ‘the Savior’s obedience.’” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2014, p. 36).

Endurance = hard, but suffering purifies, refines, and strengthens us so we can see with an eternal perspective

Increase of the Spirit –

(Mosiah 18:10) “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?***”

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

We Don't Trust Him b/c we Can't See the Blessings = we think the gospel doesn't work

(D&C 1:37) "Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful."

(John 6:39) "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of *all which he hath given me I should lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day."

"Obedience to law = blessings," but **can't choose the consequences OR the blessings**

Are we as quick to praise the Lord when things go well as we are to blame Him when they don't? **Do we ever blame Satan?**

Understanding Comes Line Upon Line

(2 Nephi 28:30) "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." – **Know exactly what to do (over time)**

Peer Pressure – We want to be accepted, liked, to fit in, to be “normal”

(1 Nephi 8:24-28) “24 And it came to pass that I beheld others pressing forward, and they came forth and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and **they did press forward through the mist of darkness**, clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree. 25 **And after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree** they did cast their eyes about as if they were ashamed. 26 And I also cast my eyes round about, and beheld, on the other side of the river of water, a great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth. 27 And it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those who had come at and were partaking of the fruit. 28 **And after they had tasted of the fruit they were ashamed, because of those that were scoffing at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths and were lost.**” - ([Dance friends YouTube video](#))

Persecution –

“And if any man lift his voice against you he shall be confounded in mine own due time” (Elder Robert D. Hales, *Ensign*, May 2014, p. 37).

(John 15:18-19) “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you....If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.”

We Don't Feel We Can Be Successful –

He Doesn't Require Perfect Performance –

(D&C 46:9) "...[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." – **He doesn't require perfect performance, he requires effort (that we try)**

Rely On One Another For Strength -

(Mosiah 18:8) "And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are **willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;**"

Mysteries –

(Alma 12:10) "...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."

We Feel We Are Too Far Gone to Be Saved

(Exodus 20:6) "And **showing mercy** unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." – **Our efforts will be enough**

(2 Nephi 28:32) "Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me; nevertheless, **I will be merciful unto them**, saith the Lord God, **if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long**, saith the Lord God of Hosts." – **It is NEVER too late to change our ways**

How can we do something that is so hard?

Requires a Shift in Perspective – From short-term to long-term; – **Knowledge gives us strength to endure; the more we know, the easier it is to see our circumstances from an eternal perspective, which makes hard things easier to endure (just like a parent knows why the child needs a shot)**

- Consequences of obedience – loneliness, but also blessings and safety

Come to Know & Remember Him – **“spirit move me till my trust is without borders”** – From the song **Oceans**

(2 Nephi 4:19) “And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, **I know in whom I have trusted.**”

(3 Nephi 18:11) “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.**”

Clear Focus on the Goal/Savior

Example of Peter Walking on the Water

(Matthew 14:31) - “28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, **he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.** 30 **But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink,** he cried, saying, Lord, **save me.** 31 And **immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him,** and said unto him, **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?**

Simplify: Reject Evil & Show Love

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

(John 15:12-13) “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” – **“lay down his life” could mean death, but what about simply “dropping everything” to serve when it is inconvenient?**

Repent (Change)

(Helaman 5:10) “And remember also the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, in the city of Ammonihah; for he said unto him that **the Lord surely should come to redeem his people, but that he should not come to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them from their sins.**”

(Helaman 5:11) “And he hath power given unto him from the Father to **redeem them from their sins because of repentance**; therefore he hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of **repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer**, unto the salvation of their souls.”

Partake of the Sacrament

“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).

- *Obedience and sacrament demonstrates willingness (humbly, submissive)*
 - *Man’s obedience – Hypocrisy, confuses others*
 - *Selective obedience – Doesn’t SEE reason, so picks and chooses*
 - *Savior’s obedience – Motivated by love of Heavenly Father – willingly obey and let the consequences follow and the blessings flow*
- *Sorrow for sins → Repentance (change)*
- *= Increases Spirit → Sanctifies/Transforms us → Seals us from Sin*
- *= Increases our capacity to change/endure*
- *= Increases our love for Him*

Follow Savior’s Example: What if the Savior had disregarded Heavenly Father’s Will? - His example shows us what to do, why we should do it (blesses others), and how – Family Reunion Story re: example blessing generations

(3 Nephi 15:9) “Behold, I am the law, and the light. **Look unto me**, and **endure to the end, and ye shall live**; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.” – **I suspect live doesn’t mean “survive” – means “live a life of abundance”**

Trust in the Promises

Truth –

(John 14:15-18) “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.**”

Abide in Love of Savior - (John 15:10) “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.”

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

(John 14:21) “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.**”

“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*](#)).”

Happiness – All good things come from righteousness –

(Helaman 5:12) “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.”