

AKRON OHIO STAKE

Stake Presidency Message

What is the First Principle of the Gospel? (or “are we smarter than a 5th grade primary child”)

What is the First Principle of the Gospel?

I am sure we all recall answering this question many times. But were our answers correct?

I, for one, am guilty of answering incorrectly many times. For many years I would simply answer that the first principle of the gospel was “faith.”

Then, one day I was listening to a talk by Dallin H. Oaks where he made a point that I will never forget when he emphatically stated, “The first principle of the Gospel is not ‘faith.’ The first principle of the gospel is *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.”

While I actually did know this, I was deeply struck at that time by the power of this distinction and by the fact that I had not previously been careful to make that distinction.

Why is this distinction so important?

As I pondered this, what I realized was that when I thought of “having faith,” I was focused on myself.

“I” needed to have faith. “I” needed to believe. “I” needed to be strong. What I learned (at least for myself) was that my focus needed to be on “in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

This was a beautiful paradigm shift for me personally.

There are many ways to have faith and many things to have faith in. Faith means to have confidence in, to trust in, to believe in. We can have confidence in ourselves. We can trust others. We can have our own beliefs. These are all good to do. But, because we

live in an imperfect world, and because we are imperfect people, and because we do not have a perfect understanding of all things, we can never have perfect faith in these things. At some point, we will fall short. At some point, others will fail us. At some point, we will find that we did not understand something correctly.

Perfect Faith

However, “the Lord Jesus Christ” is perfect. Therefore, we can have perfect faith, perfect confidence, perfect trust, and perfect belief in Him.

And as we gain a testimony and assurance of the divinity of our Savior Jesus Christ, we are able to more easily and fully have that perfect faith and trust in Him.

President Oaks has taught, “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a conviction and trust that God knows us and loves us and will hear our prayers and answer them with what is best for us” (*Ensign*, May 1994, 98).

“In the Lord Jesus Christ”

I am very grateful for the first principle of the gospel. Focusing on “in the Lord Jesus Christ” has brought me great peace for which I am truly thankful. I add my testimony that He is our Savior, He is perfect, and we can have perfect faith in Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.



President Coburn

Gospel Light

I love light! When my husband asked if I liked the higher or lower watt bulbs in our basement lights, I replied, “Higher, I like it bright like the sun!” While I enjoy bright visual light, the light that uplifts us all is the gospel light of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. This is shown in

by Lisa Kay, Stake Relief Society 1st Counselor

our actions as we uplift those around us with kind words and deeds, scattering sunshine to those we serve.

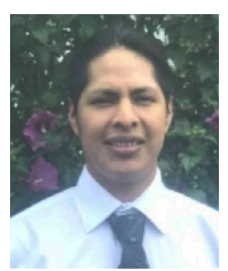
I memorized Matthew 5:14-16 when I was a youth at a Young Women’s Camp. It says, “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

I love this scripture because we are reminded that when we serve others uplift them as well as show that we love our Heavenly Father. Our good works can encourage others to let their light shine.

Cathy Barry was our YW Camp Director who had chosen this scripture as the camp theme. I knew her well. She was in my ward and served in our Young Women’s presidency for much of my youth. Cathy always had kind, encouraging

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MISSIONARY UPDATE



**JUAN JOSUÉ
LOPEZ VICENTE**

Leaving February 2022

**Tennessee Knoxville
Mission**

RELIEF SOCIETY MESSAGE

by Sister Kris Center, Stake Relief Society President

I have two little hands, folded snugly and tight.
They are tiny and weak, yet they know what is right.
During all the long hours till daylight is through,
There is plenty indeed for my two hands to do.
Kind Father, I thank thee for two little hands
And ask thee to bless them till each understands
That children can only be happy all day
When two little hands have learned how to obey.

(Children's Songbook, pg. 272)

Hands. What marvelous creations.

I remember singing that primary song as a child when my hands were small, learning "to obey" and do "what is right." Hands with little experience. Now my hands are bigger, spotted with brown age marks, and more experienced.

We shake hands, wave hands, hold hands, fist bump, and high five with the same hands we raise to the square to sustain officers and leaders in the Church; hands that pray and hands that turn the pages of scripture as we study the word of God.

The same hands that wash dishes, fold laundry, cradle a

frightened child, write the checks that pay the bills may also perform lifesaving surgeries or paint masterpieces.

Our hands carry out seemingly mundane tasks all day long and then perform life-changing ordinances of eternal significance. By the "laying on of hands" the Priesthood of God is conferred. Hands placed on someone's head and under the authority of the priesthood are vehicles of healing and comfort.

We are "the workmanship" of God's hands. His mighty hands. In Abraham we are taught that God will "lead thee by the hand" and that His "hand shall be over thee." -- Those capable, strong, tender, loving hands of our Father. And Christ has "graven thee upon the palms of my hands; ..." is an unforgettable image of sacrifice and charity.

Around the campfire, we sing, "He's got the whole world in His hands..." and there is no place I would rather be or where I would be safer.

Our hands can be instruments to do so much great good - to serve and to bless. Hands that extend the love of God to all of our Father's children. What will your hands do today?

Gospel Light *continued from page 1*

words for a frustrated Young Woman. She taught us how to plan youth activities that were fun and at the same time taught gospel principles. She even took the time to take us, her rambunctious Laurels, three hours away to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco for a memorable day of sightseeing and laughter. Cathy let her light shine!

Four years ago, my mom had a major stroke, and I went to California to help. One morning, I headed to the hospital to spend the day with my mom. When I arrived, I found Cathy there talking with my mom. Her smile and kind words brought light that both my mom and I needed in this difficult time.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "The candle that the Lord has lighted in this dispensation can become as a light unto the whole world, and others seeing our good works can be led to glorify our Father in Heaven and emulate in their own lives the examples they have observed in ours.

"Beginning with you and me, there can be an entire people who, by the virtue of our lives in our homes, in our vocations, even in our amusements, can become as a city upon a hill to which men may look and learn, and an ensign to the nations from with the people of the earth may gather strength." "A City upon a Hill," *Ensign*, July 1990.

In our stake, there are many examples of people who are a light. We have members who volunteer at their local food banks. There are parents who coach their children's (and other people's children's) youth sports teams. A brother

that was recovering from surgery and couldn't return to work chose to spend the time working in his son's elementary classroom. We have members working at the Bishop's storehouse, some as volunteers and others serving as missionaries there. Some people volunteer at schools or hospitals. Members in our stake donate blood, and others donate time to organize or volunteer at blood drives. Some shovel driveways or mow grass to help.

Members of our stake index records on Familysearch.org so that others looking into their family history can have more information available. We have members who, when their bishop or Relief Society or elders quorum president identify a need, step forward to take care of it. Members who enthusiastically fellowship investigators and new members.

Some who drive the carless to appointments and church. Others who help with childcare, meals, or household chores when there is a need. Members who gather to help with a move by packing boxes, cleaning, or bringing boxes in from the moving truck. Many call or text kind words to encourage and uplift. We have youth reaching out to minister to others, and sometimes they bring cookies!

We can share light in so many ways. The little kind deeds can illuminate the lives around us. I invite you to join me in looking for ways to let your light shine. Together we can bring more happiness and joy into our lives and the lives of those around us.

Akron and New Portage Ward Daddy Daughter/Granddaughter-Grandfather Dance

by Shauna Jones, Akron Ward (wife of Darryl Jones, EQ President)

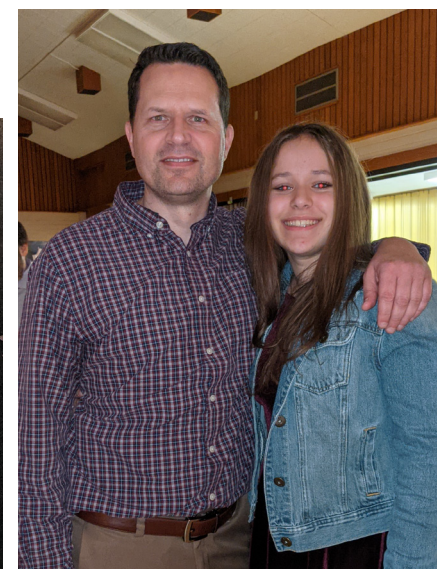


On January 21st, the Akron and New Portage Wards elders quorums sponsored a Daddy-Daughter/Grandfather-Granddaughter dance. It was well attended by about 60 people. We chose to invite girls of all ages ranging from ages 3 to 32. We held a winter-themed dance with snowflakes (handmade by some of the Activity Day girls of both wards), white lights, a photo booth, and a hot cocoa station with cookies. We also provided some crafts, including self-made silk corsages and coloring pages. The night was enjoyed by all, both young and old(er). We broke up the dancing with line dance instruction by Sister Judy Porter and two of our Laurels, Eliza Lee and Halle Wilkenson, who taught the girls some fun songs, including "Run Away and Scream" (this was a favorite for all the girls to just run around ... and scream). The music ranged from Disney songs to the *Hokey Pokey* and songs from the '80s. We also had the families fill in a questionnaire to find out who knew each other the best.

It was very fulfilling to see everyone from Sunbeams to our youth (and older) enjoy the night together. There was a lot of dancing, eating, socializing, giggling, and well ... screaming.

Many also chose to "dress up," and some came in their "Belle" and princess dresses, up-dos, and fancy dresses and heels. At one point, I truly felt the Spirit testify that this was a wonderful thing for the fathers/grandfathers to have this time with their daughters and granddaughters. It was a fun way to enjoy a winter evening!

We hope to do this again and maybe start a tradition.



Self-Reliance Corner

Self-Reliance Resources - What is Self-Reliance

From the Church Handbook 22.0:

Members of the Church covenant to “bear one another’s burdens, ... mourn with those that mourn ... , and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:8–9). Caring for those who have temporal needs is part of the work of salvation and exaltation (see 1.2). This responsibility applies to all members of the Church as they minister to one another.

Church members are also counseled to strengthen their own self-reliance through diligent work and with the help of the Lord. Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family. As members become more self-reliant, they are also better able to serve others.

We build self-reliance in the following ways:

- *Develop spiritual, physical, and emotional strength.*
- *Gain education and employment.*
- *Improve temporal preparedness.*

Whether for yourself and your family or as you serve your fellow brothers and sisters, we can all do something more to build self-reliance in our wards and stake.

To get some ideas and assistance, visit the Church’s website for self-reliance - <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/self-reliance?lang=eng> and the Life Help section - <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/families-and-individuals/life-challenges/hope-and-help?lang=eng>

Contact your ward Self-Reliance Specialist, or myself, for more information. If you have any other questions or concerns, please let me know.

The Lord has declared, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15).

Diane Burgoon, Stake Self-Reliance Group Coordinator
330-430-9912 diane.burgoon@yahoo.com

Family History Corner

by Sister Jeanne Peugh, Director



Family History Research Tool

You can attach “unconnected persons” to your family tree. If you are searching census records and come across the same last name in the same area, you might consider adding them to your tree. Especially if it is not a common last name, select the person you want to attach the unconnected persons to. On the menu bar to the left is the word “Recents” Click on that and at the bottom is Add Unconnected Person – add the information for that person and click next.

Indexing

Members of the Akron Ohio Stake, we have an opportunity to participate in indexing the 1950 census that will be

available in April. It’s really a small and simple thing to do some indexing, and the rewards when this is completed will be amazing. Think about what we would do if we did not have the census through the years and how it has helped us connect families together in our family history research. There will be many organizations helping with this indexing, and it is an opportunity that only comes every decade. Because of the volume of people working on this, it may be advisable to do it at the ward/branch level.

Some suggestions:

- RS/EQ Activity
- Branch/Ward Activity
- Stake Family History Center Activity
- YM/YW Activity

Choose a day or week that your unit will participate in indexing that can be done from home. If too many people are indexing at the same time, there may be delays in participating.

The Akron Ohio Family History will be open between the morning/afternoon sessions of General Conference on Saturday, April 2, and Sunday, April 3 to help anyone who would like to learn how to index or would like to participate at the FHC.

BRECKSVILLE HOME STORAGE CENTER

6900 Southpointe Pkwy, Brecksville, OH 44141
440-526-4057 (Home Storage Center)

HOURS: Wednesday & Thursday 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Saturday, November 13 from 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.

A food storage list is available at
www.providentliving.org.