

STEADFAST AND IMMOVABLE

2008 Summer Camp Devotional Material

INSTRUCTIONS

Devotionals are intended to be done by each troop or each stake at the end of each day while at camp. Most of the material comes from the scriptures and teaching from General Authorities. If weather permits, sit around a campfire before retiring each night. If it is raining gather in a pavilion or tent. Ideally, each young man should have some scriptures to read along. Have them take turns reading.

Devotionals should be presided over by an adult but they may be conducted by a young man. If you plan to have devotionals taught by the young men, give them advance notice to prepare. The devotionals in this packet are written so as to be easily read by any instructor. Leaders can always pause for questions and discussion as they see fit.

It is always a good idea to build upon the devotional material by including personal experiences, mission stories, etc. You might consider asking a young man in advance to bear testimony or share an experience.

You are encouraged to review the material and seek the guidance of the spirit regarding your young men. You may be prompted to delete or add to portions of the devotionals.

It is recommended that the last evening of camp be a testimony meeting. Let the young men know at the beginning of the week that you look forward to hearing their testimonies. Because of the closing campfire, the testimony meeting will start late (about 11:00 PM), but it is well worth doing.

It is the goal of this program to help each young man have a significant spiritual experience while at camp.

During the opening devotional, there is an assignment for each young man to find a quiet moment to read Joseph Smith History 1:8-20 and to pray for a personal knowledge that Joseph was prophet of God. This might best be done by having the verses printed out and a copy given to each young man. This would help those who don't have their own scriptures with them.

This packet contains an opening and 5 devotionals. If the last devotional of camp (Friday) is a testimony meeting, this packet provides something for each night starting on Saturday and ending on Thursday.

Devotional No. 2 is a portion of an article in the Jan 2008 New Era written by David A. Bednar. As an alternative to the reduced version contained herein, you might wish to bring the magazine and read the entire article.

If you arrive at camp on Saturday, you also need to provide for church services on Sunday. If you wish to cover related subjects without duplicating any material from the devotionals, consider lessons on Teancum, Abinadi or Nephi. You could also retell the story of the missionary stricken with cancer that he told in the Priesthood Session of the April 2008 General Conference.

For troops arriving on Saturday, you are encouraged to do all that you can to make sure the scouts observe the Sabbath properly while at camp. Discourage non-appropriate activities like swimming, fishing, or sports and encourage them to read, write in their journals, write letters to parents or other family, etc.

Time on Sunday can also be used to work on Duty to God Requirements. Sunday afternoon is also a great time for them to do the assignment from the opening devotional to read JSH 1:8-20 and spend some time alone in personal prayer. Inform them that the week will be very busy and there won't be a lot of personal time once the official BSA program begins.

Brethren, it is no small sacrifice for you to take vacation time to be at Summer Camp. The Lord will bless you for your diligence. The work you are doing can have a profound influence on the lives of the young men in your camp. Always conduct yourself in a manner appropriate for the Priesthood you bear.

By all means, have fun with the boys. Joseph Smith loved to play sports and wrestle with the youth. You can be both playful and spiritual. Prepare yourselves spiritually for camp. If you follow the spirit and take advantages of opportunities to teach and inspire, you can help these boys reach their true potential as sons of God.

This week is about more than helping scouts change their rank; it is helping young men change their lives. God bless you in this noble effort.

OPENING

(Welcome the young men to camp and give them a brief overview of some of the activities planned for the week.)

(Explain that in addition to these activities, they will have a special opportunity to strengthen their testimonies. Announce that the theme for this campout is “Steadfast and Immovable”. If you are using the patches and T-shirts, display a t-shirt. Challenge the young men to participate in the devotionals and firesides provided. Promise them that their testimonies will grow if they do so.)

(Read Alma 34:19-26)

Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

(Explain that they will spend a week in the wilderness and this will give them an opportunity to pour out their souls to God in the wilderness. This unique opportunity to worship can result in powerful experiences.)

(Tell the story of Joseph Smith’s first vision or ask a youth to do so. Ask the young men to consider how many options Joseph had when considering where he would go to pray - his room, cellar, church, barn, etc. Why did he choose to pray in the woods? Perhaps, he felt closest to God in that grove of trees.)

(Encourage the young men to plan on some personal time where they can be alone and “pour out their souls” to their Heavenly Father. This personal worship event could begin with one or more songs, but most of the time should be spent on the knees in vocal prayer. Promise the young men that special experiences await them.)

(Read the following lyrics by Janice Kapp Perry):

*As a child, I learned at my Mother’s knee
What a prayer of faith to a child could be
As she told of a boy with a troubled mind
Whose prayer was answered for all mankind*

*As I go through life with its good and bad
I will try to think of the faith he had
I can pray to the Father to comfort me
As Joseph did in that grove of trees*

*A young boy prayed
And opened up the heavens with his faith
Because he prayed
He heard and saw the Father face to face*

*This simple truth helps me in all I do
Because I know that I can pray too.*

(Give an assignment for each young man to find a quiet moment to read Joseph Smith History 1:8-20 and to pray for a personal knowledge that Joseph was a prophet of God.)

(Explain that their Father in Heaven loves each of them and while their experience might not be like Joseph's, promise them that they can each feel God's love for them if they will seek him out in prayer.)

Devotional No. 1 THE GREATEST SERMON

(Ask the young men to open their scriptures to Mosiah 5:15. Have someone read this scripture.)

(Explain that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles have declared the YM/YW Theme for 2008 to the beginning of this verse.)

“...be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works...”

It is easy to see why the Prophets want us to be steadfast and immovable, look again at the blessings promised in the verse:

“...that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life...”

This promise was first uttered by King Benjamin in what could arguably be considered, the greatest sermon of all time. It was 124 B.C. on this continent and the reigning King was old and about to step down. He was a righteous King named Benjamin and he desired to speak to the people one last time. He sent word throughout the land among the people of Nephi asking them to gather at the temple in Zarahemla (Mosiah 1:18).

A large crowd assembled for the historic address. The King had a tower erected to stand on. The people gathered around the temples and pitched their tents with the opening towards the tower. There were too many for them to hear the King so he had scribes record the sermon and then the notes were taken among the people and read to them so all could hear the King's words (Mosiah 2:1-8).

The thousands who had gathered listened from their tents and King Benjamin taught plain and precious truths of the gospel. The discourse is recorded in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of Mosiah. From these chapters come many verses you may already be familiar with; such as:

“And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.” (Mosiah 2:17)

“For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (Mosiah 3:19)

“For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?”
(Mosiah 4:19)

The highlight of his sermon, however, was his prophecy regarding the Savior. He described the atonement and resurrection and declared, “...*there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.*” (Mosiah 3:17).

The impact of this sermon was remarkable:

“And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, desiring to know of his people if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them. And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things.” (Mosiah 5:1-3)

Hearing about this great change of heart, King Benjamin was pleased and spoke to the multitude a few last words of farewell including those that make up 2008 YM/YW theme.

“Therefore, I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all. Amen.”
(Mosiah 5:15)

(Ask the young men to consider specific ways that they can be steadfast and immovable as they retire to bed. This will be discussed in the next devotional.)

Devotional No. 2 – ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR

STEADFAST AND IMMOVABLE – ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN GOODS WORKS
Elder David A. Bednar
New Era, January 2008

Following the example of Nephi, let us “liken [this scripture] unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” ([1 Nephi 19:23](#)) by considering three basic questions.

1. What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?
2. How can we become steadfast and immovable?
3. What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

What does it mean to be steadfast and immovable?

The word “steadfast” is used to suggest fixed in position, solid and firm, unshaken and resolute (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed. [1989], “Steadfast”). The word “immovable” is used to indicate that a person or thing is unalterable, firmly secured, and not subject to change. It also signifies the quality of being unyielding and incapable of being diverted from one’s purpose (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, “Immovable”). Thus, a person who is steadfast and immovable is solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from a primary purpose or mission....

How do we become steadfast and immovable?

A building or structure that is stable and immovable must be built upon a strong foundation. If you and I desire to become steadfast and immovable disciples of the Master, we must build appropriately and effectively upon Him as our foundation.

“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](#); emphasis added).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sure foundation, and you and I cannot and will not fall if we build upon Him as our foundation. This is a truly remarkable and faith-promoting promise.

The steps we must follow in building our devotion to and our character upon the foundation of Christ are identified simply and clearly in [Helaman 15](#):

“And behold, ye do know of yourselves, for ye have witnessed it, that as many of them as are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to know of the wicked and abominable traditions of their fathers, and are led to believe the holy scriptures, yea, the prophecies of the holy prophets, which are written, which leadeth them to faith on the Lord, and unto repentance, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them—

“Therefore, as many as have come to this, ye know of yourselves are *firm and steadfast in the faith*, and in the thing wherewith they have been made free” ([vv. 7–8](#); emphasis added).

Please notice the specific steps outlined in these two verses. The first step is (1) *belief in the teachings and prophecies of the holy prophets as recorded in the scriptures*. Such belief (2) *fosters faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*. Faith in the Savior leads to (3) *repentance*. Faith in Christ and repentance bring about (4) *the mighty change of heart*. As many as have diligently and faithfully followed these steps are (5) *firm and steadfast in the faith*. That is the Lord’s blueprint for becoming steadfast and immovable. I testify that as we ponder and follow in faith the building blocks described in these verses, we will be strengthened and blessed to become steadfast and immovable.

What blessings are associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior?

As we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we focus upon and strive to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Disciples who are steadfast and immovable do not become fanatics or extremists, are not overzealous, and are not preoccupied with misguided gospel hobbies.

President Joseph F. Smith emphasized: “We frequently look about us and see people who incline to extremes, who are fanatical. We may be sure that this class of people do not understand the gospel. They have forgotten, if they ever knew, that it is very unwise to take a fragment of truth and treat it as if it were the whole thing” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 122).

Let me repeat and reinforce this first great blessing associated with being a steadfast and immovable disciple of the Savior: such a follower of Christ

consistently is focused upon and striving to understand the fundamental and foundational doctrines of the restored gospel.

Second, as we become more spiritually mature and increasingly steadfast and immovable, we are less prone to zealous and exaggerated spurts of spirituality followed by extended periods of slackness.

In order to better understand this principle, please consider Aesop's fable "The Hare and the Tortoise." After being taunted repeatedly for being slow, the Tortoise challenged the Hare to a race. As the race began, the two started off together. However, the Hare ran rapidly towards the goal and, seeing that he could easily win, lay down and fell asleep a short distance in front of the finish line. The Tortoise maintained a slow but steady and consistent pace toward the finish line. When the Hare awoke from his nap, he started running as fast as he could, only to find that the Tortoise had won the race. The Tortoise is a classic illustration of steadiness and persistence. The Hare, on the other hand, is an example of a "spurter"—one who is given to short bursts of spectacular effort followed by frequent and lengthy periods of rest.

A spurt may appear to be impressive in the short run, but steadiness over time is far more effective, far less dangerous, and produces far better results. Consecutive days of fasting, ultimately, may not be as spiritually edifying as successive months of appropriate fasting and worship on the designated fast Sunday. An attempt to pray one time for several hours likely will not produce the same spiritual results as meaningful morning and evening prayer offered consistently over several weeks. And a single scripture-reading marathon cannot produce the spiritual growth of steady scripture study across many months...

...You and I can also learn much about steady spiritual development from the technique of drip irrigation that is used in many agricultural areas throughout the world. Drip irrigation is sometimes called trickle irrigation and involves dripping water onto the soil at very low rates from a system of small plastic pipes fitted with outlets called emitters or drippers. Unlike surface and sprinkler irrigation, which involves flooding, gushing, or spraying large quantities of water where it may not be needed, drip irrigation applies water close to a plant so that only part of the soil in which the roots grow is wetted. With drip irrigation, applications of water are more focused and more frequent than with the other methods. The steady drips of water sink deep into the ground and provide a high moisture level in the soil wherein plants can flourish.

In like manner, if you and I are focused on receiving consistent drops of spiritual nourishment, then gospel roots can sink deep into our souls, can become firmly established and grounded, and can produce extraordinary and delicious fruit. In a gospel sense, you and I need to implement constant spiritual drip saturation and avoid sporadic and shallow spiritual spurting. Sturdy gospel roots that go deep into rich spiritual soil strengthen and steady us in times of trial and difficulty.

I testify and witness that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ. May you and I build our lives upon the foundation of Christ. May we apply correct principles to become steadfast and immovable—solid, firm, resolute, firmly secured, and incapable of being diverted from the path of righteousness—keeping and honoring our covenants and commitments, living worthy and pure lives, and becoming valiant disciples of the Savior.

Devotional No. 3 - STEADFAST IN GOSPEL STANDARDS

You are likely to encounter temptation. It is a tool of Satan to lead you astray. If you are steadfast you will not yield. If you falter, it may lead to your destruction. Consider the examples of Samson and Joseph from the Old Testament.

Joseph was servant of the Egyptian officer Potiphar, who was captain of Pharaoh's guard. However, Potiphar's wife was interested in Joseph and tried to seduce him.

"And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master... hath committed all that he hath to my hand...because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Notice his reasons for resisting her charms. His loyalty to God and his Master were more important to him than physical pleasures. But Potiphar's wife did not give up.

"And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out." (Genesis 39:7-12)

"Day after day" he resisted her. This took great commitment. A daily strengthening of his resolve was undoubtedly needed. How might he have prepared himself to face her each day?

(Have young men suggest ways – you might remind them about the steady drip example from Elder Bednar.)

In the end, she tried to force him but he fled. He was truly steadfast and immovable.

A modern example of such steadfastness is Elder John H. Groberg. Elder Groberg served as a young missionary in the Tahitian Islands. One family in Tahiti fancied Elder Groberg and wanted him to join their family. They had a daughter who was fond of the American visitor and her parents wanted her to have an American baby.

The family came up with a plan to separate Elder Groberg from his companion. They invited the Elders for a picnic. As they walked through the jungle, the daughter pretended to injure her ankle. She claimed she could not walk. The

parents pleaded for Elder Groberg to stay with her while his companion went with the parents for help.

Finally, the girl was alone with Elder Groberg and she removed her clothes and tried to entice him. Elder Groberg refused her but escorted her out of the jungle safely. When her parents learned that Elder Groberg had refused their daughter, they were furious. The mother scolded him and wanted to know why he denied their family the honor of an American baby.

Elder Groberg replied, "in our Church we believe in the law of chastity which states that there should be no sexual relations outside the bonds of marriage." John Groberg was true to his girlfriend waiting for him at home. More importantly, he was true to the Lord whom he represented. (The Other Side of Heaven, Bookcraft, 1993).

If only all of the Lord's servants could be so steadfast. Samson was not. You'll recall that Samson was blessed by the lord to have great power. He killed a lion with his bear hands a slew 1000 men in hand to hand combat using only a jawbone as a weapon. There was none more powerful. His only real weakness was a beautiful woman named Delilah. She did not return his love and was offered lots of money to find out the secret of Samson's strength.

Three times she enticed him to the point he could not resist her. He made up lies as to the source of his strength. Each time, he woke up surrounded by the enemy. There could have been no doubt what she was trying to do. The fact that he would not tell her the truth, shows he knew he couldn't trust her. In the end, she finally made him confess his secret.

"And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth. And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death; That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man."

"And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once...And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And...the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass..." (Judges 16:15-21)

There are few temptations more powerful than an attractive woman. However, there is also great power in purity and obedience. Indeed the very powers of heaven are open to young men who bear the priesthood in righteousness.

Devotional No. 4 - STEADFAST IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM

In 74 BC a great war began between when a vast army of Lamanites invaded the land of the Nephites. The Nephite defenses were led by Moroni who was the Chief Captain in command of all the armies of the Nephites. Moroni was a brilliant military commander. He designed body armor for his soldiers and fortifications for his cities that revolutionized warfare.

When the Lamanites first saw the Nephite armor, they were instantly aware of their strategic disadvantage.

“And when the armies of the Lamanites saw that the people of Nephi, or that Moroni, had prepared his people with breastplates and with arm-shields, yea, and also shields to defend their heads, and also they were dressed with thick clothing— Now the army of Zerahemnah...were not armed with breastplates, nor shields—therefore, they were exceedingly afraid of the armies of the Nephites because of their armor, notwithstanding their number being so much greater than the Nephites.” (Alma 43:19-21)

General Moroni made cities into forts by causing a deep trench to be dug around the city. The dirt from the trench was used to build up a large earthen berm inside the trench. At the top of the berm, a wall was erected. Towers were also built so that defenders could fire arrows and throws stones at attackers climbing the berm. The efforts were very effective.

“Now behold, the Lamanites could not get into their forts of security by any other way save by the entrance, because of the highness of the bank which had been thrown up, and the depth of the ditch which had been dug round about, save it were by the entrance. And thus were the Nephites prepared to destroy all such as should attempt to climb up to enter the fort...”

“And it came to pass that the... Lamanites ...were driven back from time to time, insomuch that they were slain with an immense slaughter. Now when they found that they could not obtain power over the Nephites by the pass, they began to dig down their banks of earth that they might obtain a pass to their armies, that they might have an equal chance to fight; but behold, in these attempts they were swept off by the stones and arrows which were thrown at them; and instead of filling up their ditches by pulling down the banks of earth, they were filled up in a measure with their dead and wounded bodies.”

“Thus the Nephites had all power over their enemies... and more than a thousand of the Lamanites were slain; while, on the other hand, there was not a single soul of the Nephites which was slain.” (Alma 49:18-23)

Moroni was also a great leader who inspired many Nephites to join his armies. His unique approach is found in Alma 46:

“And it came to pass that he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it—In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children—and he fastened it upon the end of a pole....he went forth among the people, waving the rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part, and crying with a loud voice, saying: Behold, whosoever will maintain this title upon the land, let them come forth in the strength of the Lord, and enter into a covenant that they will maintain their rights, and their religion, that the Lord God may bless them. And it came to pass that when Moroni had proclaimed these words, behold, the people came running together with their armor girded about their loins...” (Alma 46:12-13, 19-21)

Mormon had this to say about Captain Moroni;

“And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man... and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion, even to the loss of his blood. Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been, and were, and ever would be, like unto Moroni behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea, the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men.” (Alma 48:11-13,17)

No wonder, Mormon named his own son Moroni.

Also, in this war we read about an army of young men who took up arms and asked Helaman to lead them into battle.

“And they entered into a covenant to fight for the liberty of the Nephites..., Now behold, there were two thousand of those young men, who entered into this covenant and took their weapons of war to defend their country.”

“And they were all young men, and they were exceedingly valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all—they were men who were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted. Yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God and to walk uprightly before him.” (Alma 53:17-18,20-21)

When they first faced battle, the young soldiers served as bait to draw a large force of Lamanites out of the City of Antiparah. A larger force of Nephites was to follow the Lamanites and attack them from behind. They were chased for two days before the Lamanites stopped. Not sure why they stopped, Helaman asked his young warriors if they should attack.

“Therefore what say ye, my sons, will ye go against them to battle?” (Alma 56:44)

Imagine how they felt. Suppose the Aaronic Priesthood from your stake had organized a small force to defend against an invading army of skilled ninjas. These ninjas are experienced soldiers with years of training. They are strong and skillful with their weapons. Your young group has all the ninja weapons you can carry – but you’ve never used them before. The enemy is at hand; you are outnumbered. Would you fight?

Helaman wrote to Moroni about the battle saying:

“And now I say unto you, my beloved brother Moroni, that never had I seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites. For as I had ever called them my sons (for they were all of them very young) even so they said unto me: Father, behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; we would not slay our brethren if they would let us alone; therefore let us go, lest they should overpower the army of Antipus.”

“Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.”
(Alma 56:45-47)

The battle was won and the City of Antiparah was retaken. Miraculously, not one of the young warriors was killed. Next to be retaken was the City of Cumeni. Once it was reoccupied by the Nephites, a fierce attack was launched against the city by a fresh army of Lamanites during which the stripling warriors proved to be a powerful fighting force.

“But behold, my little band of two thousand and sixty fought most desperately; yea, they were firm before the Lamanites, and did administer death unto all those who opposed them. And as the remainder of our army were about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted.”

“Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them. And now behold, it was these my sons, and those men who had been selected to convey the prisoners, to whom we owe this great victory; for it was they who did beat the Lamanites; therefore they were driven back to the city of Manti.”

“And we retained our city Cumeni, and were not all destroyed by the sword; nevertheless, we had suffered great loss.” (Alma 57:19-23)

After the Lamanites retreated, Helaman looked for his soldiers to see how many had survived:

“And it came to pass that there were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish; yea, and neither was there one soul among them who had not received many wounds.”

“And now, their preservation was astonishing to our whole army, yea, that they should be spared while there was a thousand of our brethren who were slain. And we do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God, because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe—that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power. Now this was the faith of these of whom I have spoken; they are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually.” (Alma 57:25-27)

This army went on to retake the City on Manti after which the Lamanites retreated out of that part of the land. While every one of the stripling warriors was wounded (most more than once), not one of them was killed. Before their first battle they declared *“behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall.”*

Consider what manner of wounds would be suffered in such a battle.

(Have young men to discuss i.e. deep gashes from swords, punctures from arrows and spears, concussions from stones, etc.) Remind then that there were no such thing as pain killers back then. Ask the young men to consider how much pain would result from many of these wounds. How long would it take for such wounds to heal? Could any of them have been left with permanent damage or disability?)

The Lord spared the lives of the Sons of Mosiah but they were not spared from pain and suffering. Each of them had received many wounds and hundreds fainted from loss of blood. As you serve the Lord, he will attend you but there will be pain and suffering. It is part of our experience on earth. Do not be discouraged but believe and the Lord will be with you.

Devotional No. 5 - STEADFAST AGAINST EVIL

In the days when Nebuchadnezzar was King of Babel, he had conquered Israel but the prophet Daniel had found favor with the King by interpreting his dream. Daniel was appointed a sub-ruler and he had three fellow Israelites installed as officers in Babel. They were named Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

King Nebuchadnezzar built a large gold idol and declared that when music was played, all in the kingdom would bow down and worship the idol. Failure to do so would result in death by fire. It was not long before the King was notified that three of his officers refused to bow down and worship the idol. Their story is found in Daniel Chapter 3:

“...Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye...fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar...If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

These three faced execution but were steadfast and immovable in their commitment to keep the Law of Moses, which forbade worshipping idols. Rather than sin, they were willing to die. Notice, they expressed hope that they might be saved but conceded it might not happen. Surely, they knew God had the power to save them. Perhaps, they were unsure if God was willing to save them. Either way, they were resolved to be thrown into the furnace. What happened next was up to the Lord.

“Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.”

“Therefore because the king’s commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.”

“Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire.”

“And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king’s counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.”

These three men had unshakable faith and courage. Surely there is no better example of steadfastness.

A latter-day example is the Hilbert family who lived in Berlin when World War II began. Paul Hilbert was the President of the LDS branch in Berlin. Years earlier, he had refused to join the Nazi Party saying, “I have chosen whom I will serve, and his name is not Adolph Hitler, but Jesus Christ.” The family knew that his refusal could win them a trip to a concentration camp.

The Hilberts had two sons and four daughters. Both sons were drafted and left for war. Brother Hilbert was forced into civilian service and had to leave Berlin leaving Sister Hilbert and her four daughters. During this difficult period, they spent much time on their knees in prayer believing the Lord would deliver them. Even as they were thrown into the furnace of war, they were not alone.

On one occasion, Sister Hilbert and her girls were on a train when the air raid sirens began to wail. As people scrambled into bomb shelters, Sister Hilbert told her daughters, “The bombs will not fall on our part of the city tonight. They will

fall over there, and there, and there,” as she pointed to three distinct areas of Berlin.

The family calmly walked home surrounded by the sounds of explosions. When they reached their apartment building, the girls went to the roof and saw the three areas that Sister Hilbert indicated were burning. The girls asked their Mother how she knew where the bombs would fall. “Girls,” she replied, “From now on I will not be afraid. The Lord took the veil off my eyes for a split second and I saw the angels of destruction taking their places. They guided the bombs to their destinations. Now I know, if we live or have to die, it will be in the Lord.”

(We Were Not Alone; How an LDS Family Survived World War II Berlin, Deseret Books, 2003)

Horst Hilbert was one of the sons who had been drafted. He was blessed to spend much of his time doing training and construction work. However, he saw combat in Russia and on the night of January 6, 1942 Horst was under fire from a Russian machine gunner. Unable to abandon his post, he was paralyzed with fear and found himself unable to pray. Instead, he wished aloud that his Mother could pray for him since he was sure the Lord would hear the prayers of a righteous mother. As he thought this, he turned towards home and immediately felt the need to turn towards the north. As he did so, a bullet from his right grazed his coat against his stomach. Had he not turned, he would have been hit.

The next letter Horst received from home explained what happened in Berlin the night he was almost shot. On the night of January 6th Sister Hilbert awoke to the sound of her son calling “Mama.” She also heard gunfire. Horst explained, “She got up quickly, woke up my four sisters and said that they needed to pray fast, that I was in mortal danger, and needed their prayer. The five women knelt down, and my mother pleaded with the Lord to keep His protecting hand over me. After the prayer my mother told my sisters to go back to sleep and be of good cheer. I had been in danger, but the Lord helped me.”(Saints at War; Experiences of Latter-Day Saints in World War II, Covenant Communications, 2001).

The entire Hilbert Family survived the war. Their apartment building on Oppelner Street was one of few that were still standing after hundreds of bombing raids. Not only were they spared from the bombing, but all five women successfully hid from marauding Russian soldiers who ravaged any German women they could find. Even though they endured serious trials and suffering, they emerged from the furnace having been saved by miraculous power.