

The 12 Keys to Build Faith unto Power

1. Stop complaining and murmuring
2. Commit to Complete Obedience
3. Prayer
4. Work
5. Eliminate doubt
6. Obey the promptings of the Spirit every minute
7. Receive and obey revelation in your decisions and work
8. Be an instrument in the Lord's hands
9. Keep your mind out of the world
10. Obey those called to lead you
11. Do things for the right reason
12. Show the Lord He can trust you

Introduction

Faith is the governing principle and power of the universe. If we acknowledge those things that we know about faith, we could list many. For example, we know that there are three levels of faith: Hope, Action, and Power.

We know that without faith, the universe would cease to be held in its perfect order. Without faith, God can do no miracle (Ether 12:6). Without faith, our prayers cannot be answered (D&C 67:1-3). Without faith, the work in which we are engaged becomes our work, and not the Lord's, and our fruits, if they exist at all, are small. We know that our success comes by the power of faith through the miracles God performs (Alma 26:22).

We know that by faith, Moses parted the Red Sea. Peter walked on water until he began to doubt. Nephi, son of Helaman, taught with such power that the wicked people could not disbelieve his words (3 Nephi 7:18). It was the faith of Alma the younger and the four sons of Mosiah that caused thousands of Lamanites to be freed from their chains of darkness and embrace the light of the gospel after many years of hard work and after suffering afflictions of every kind.

The Lord promises us that if we have faith in Him, He will give us the power to do whatever He asks us to do...

Moroni 7:33 And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.

This principle is either true, or it isn't. I testify to you that it is true. If we have faith in the Lord, He will give us the faith and power to do whatsoever He desires us to do. This is the power of faith.

In missionary work, the faith to see miracles is essential if we seek the success the Lord is willing to give us. We all want the faith of power. We know we need it to succeed.

But we do not all have it yet. Why? What must we do to acquire such faith? What are the steps we must follow to see in our own lives the miracles that Alma and Nephi saw?

I will share with you Twelve Keys of Power that the Lord wants us to learn about faith.

During the next few months, I challenge each of you to focus all your energies to acquiring these Twelve Keys of Power. By acquiring each of them, you will see amazing miracles and reap the success He is waiting to give you. I give unto you a personal challenge... to focus on developing one of these Twelve Keys of Power each week for the rest of your mission –

even for the rest of your life. I challenge you to develop a calendar that shows which of these Twelve Keys of Power you will focus on each week. With daily and weekly goals, you will find the power of faith you seek and will thereby see the fruit of your labors multiply. One key per week for the rest of your mission.

1. Stop Complaining and Murmuring!

Joseph Smith taught that “*where doubt is, there faith has no power*” (Lectures on Faith, 3:20). As it applies to faith, fear and doubt are the same. If we wish to acquire power through faith, doubt is our enemy. Doubt is the great weapon our adversary uses against us. To eliminate doubt from our lives, we must first eliminate any element of complaining or murmuring from our lives. Complaining to the Lord, complaining to our leaders, complaining to our companions, complaining to ourselves, demonstrates that we do not accept our trials or burdens that “the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us]” (Mosiah 3:19). Complaining is often an expression of pride and arrogance. It is how we express that we do not approve of how the Lord is dealing with us. A person with faith is “willing to submit to all things the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him” (Mosiah 3:19).

Faith requires the soil of a positive mental attitude for it to grow. A positive mental attitude reflects how we choose to respond to our environment, to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, which are often exactly where the Lord has placed us. If we choose to respond negatively to our circumstances, we find ourselves complaining and murmuring like the faithless brothers of Nephi, Laman and Lemuel.

1 Nephi 2:11 ... behold they did murmur in many things against their father, because he was a visionary man, and had led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance, and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things, to perish in the wilderness. And this they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. 12 And thus Laman and Lemuel, being the eldest, did murmur against their father. And they did murmur because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them.

Laman and Lemuel chose to murmur. Note that their murmuring came because of their doubts, “because they knew not the dealings” of God. So, they complained. They murmured, not accepting their circumstances and trials. They were without faith.

Their younger brother, Nephi, was a man of faith and, therefore, did not murmur or complain. To him, the Lord said:

1 Nephi 2:19 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Blessed art thou, Nephi, because of thy faith, for thou hast sought me diligently, with lowliness of heart.

Nephi developed his faith by choosing to accept the situation the Lord placed him in. He used his agency to show the Lord that he would submit to all things the Lord saw fit to inflict upon him. He did not complain. He did not doubt. His faith grew as a result.

Do we have the self-mastery to choose how we respond to our circumstances, our trials, and our challenges? Or do we allow our natural man, the enemy to God, to take over whenever the going gets rough or when something negative happens to us? How do we choose to respond when the weather becomes difficult to bear? Or when door after door, the people reject our message? Or when a person is rude to us? Or when a person yells at us or threatens us?

How we choose to respond to situations such as these is a measure of our faith. It is a measure of our willingness to sacrifice for the Lord. We see, therefore, that our faith is dependent on how we choose to react – either negatively by complaining and murmuring as Laman and Lemuel, or positively, by looking upward to the Lord for strength and guidance, accepting our trials and persecutions “for Christ’s sake”.

The best medicine we can use to cure our complaining and murmuring, is to fill our hearts with gratitude. Antibiotics kill the germs and bacteria that make us sick. In a similar manner, gratitude kills the deadly germs of pride. Gratitude demonstrates our willingness to submit to His will, including our trials and afflictions. Gratitude helps us to respond to our circumstances in a way that pleases the Lord and increases our faith. While we may find it difficult to be thankful for the 100 doors of rejection we've had this morning, or the rude person who shouted at us a few minutes ago, we can be thankful that the Lord has strengthened us to bear it. We can be thankful for the privilege of enduring persecution for Christ's sake. We can be thankful for the blessings He will give us if we endure the discouragement. Indeed, with faith, we can find in each and every situation, much to be thankful for, no matter how difficult our circumstances. We must choose how we respond to our circumstances in a positive way, demonstrating our faith, never complaining or murmuring.

Some years ago Trent Kunz, a dear young friend of ours in our ward, became a quadriplegic playing high school football. During a football game, a tragic injury severed his spinal cord so that he lost virtually all movement below his neck. A few years later, I saw him in his wheelchair, happy and smiling. He was engaged to be married. He was about to graduate from law school. I asked him how he was and he replied with enthusiasm that he was doing great – the Lord had blessed him so very, very much. He was filled with gratitude – not one word of complaint came from his lips. Trent had learned about the power of faith. He had chosen how to respond to his circumstances in a positive way. He had shown to the Lord that he was willing to submit to all things that the Lord saw fit to inflict upon him. The Lord blessed him in many ways to bear his burdens and enjoy his life despite his challenges.

If you want to increase your faith, stop complaining. Stop murmuring. Do not be as Laman and Lemuel, even in the smallest degree. Be like Nephi. Discipline yourself to respond positively to every circumstance and situation, no matter how difficult to bear. Fill your heart with gratitude in every situation, no matter how difficult, no matter how challenging. As you do, you will find your faith growing stronger.

Eliminating our complaining and murmuring is the first key to obtaining power through faith.

2. Commit to Complete Obedience

In D&C 1:31, we read:

For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

If we are 95% obedient, does the Lord bless us with 95% of the blessings He could give us?

In 1 Samuel 15, we read of Saul, the first king of Israel, who was 95% obedient to the commandment of the Lord.

The Lord commanded Saul and his people to utterly destroy the Amalekites – every man, woman, child, and animal. They didn't do it. They did most of it, but saved the best animals to sacrifice (v9, 15). When Samuel, the prophet met Saul, the king, Saul reported that "I have performed the commandment of the Lord". In his mind, he had rationalized his 95% obedience. Perhaps a few thoughts in his mind were:

- I did it well enough
- I did the important thing the Lord wanted me to do – destroy the Amalekites
- The little things don't really matter to the Lord
- I did the hard part. The rest is not as important

When confronted with his lack of 100% obedience, his excuse was that his people had done it, not him (v15, 20, 21). In essence, it wasn't my fault. It was them. I did what the Lord commanded... mostly.

To this, Samuel taught him a great lesson:

1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

In the eyes of the Lord, obedience comes first. Not mediocre obedience. Complete obedience. For us, it means that no amount of hard work or enduring of persecution and trial, is going to compensate for a lack of complete obedience. We can work all day long without rest, we can knock on 500 doors in one day, but if we fail to be completely obedient, we will be as Saul, the king of Israel. But when we are completely obedient, the heavens open:

D&C 82:10 I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.

The Lord does not say here that He is bound when we do most of what He asks us, when we are 95% obedient, as was Saul. Instead, He expects complete and total obedience from us – 100%.

In the end of the story of Saul, he finally confesses what really happened:

1 Samuel 15:24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

The real truth was that he feared what others would think of him, so he obeyed 95% of what the Lord commanded. The 5% disobedience cost him his crown – the Lord rejected him from being king. To some, that may seem harsh or severe. But the Lord, being perfect, cannot tolerate sin with the least degree of allowance. 95% is not good enough for the Lord. Saul lost his crown because he was almost completely obedient.

As a missionary, do you ever fear what others will think of you if you are completely obedient? Are you satisfied if you think you're more obedient than the other missionaries? If they're at 90%, are you happy with 95%? If so, you have not yet learned the lesson of Saul.

I challenge each of you to strive for 100% obedience in ALL things for the rest of your lives.

King Benjamin gave this same challenge to his people centuries ago to which they replied:

Mosiah 5:5 And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days...

As you strive for 100% obedience in all things, your faith will grow unto power, for...

Faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness. It is always given when righteousness is present, and the greater the measure of obedience to God's laws the greater will be the endowment of faith...

BRM, Mormon Doctrine, Faith

If you want power through faith, don't be as Saul. Be as Nephi and the other prophets – be 100% obedient in all things, for the rest of your lives.

Listen carefully to the words of the Lord to those sent forth to proclaim His word:

D&C 50:26 He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all.

27 Wherefore, he is possessor of all things; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth, the life and the light, the Spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son.

28 But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin.

29 And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done.

30 But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask; and as ye are appointed to the head, the spirits shall be subject unto you.

How are we purified and cleansed from all sin? It is by faith, repentance, and 100% obedience. Anything less is insufficient to purify and cleanse us from all sin. Complete obedience is the second key to obtaining power through faith.

3. Prayer

How did Nephi gain his faith? Or any of the ancients? How did Joseph Smith gain his faith? They first, had purged every tendency to murmur or complain from their nature. They showed their willingness to submit to all things the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon them. Second, they were willing to be 100% obedient to God's will. By doing these two essential steps, they demonstrated their faith to God – and their trustworthiness. God was then able to endow them with yet a much stronger faith – unto power, through prayer.

With the beginnings of a pure faith, they approached God in prayer. Joseph Smith, Nephi, Enos, Alma, Helaman, Mormon, and Moroni... every one of the prophets. And so do we in our day. As God answers our prayers, sometimes miraculously, our faith grows and grows.

[my MTC experience with prayer – receiving a witness of the Spirit]

We see, therefore, that once we demonstrate our faith and trustworthiness to the Lord, prayer becomes a powerful means He uses to strengthen our faith even more. Indeed, faith is a gift of God and is given to us as a gift. Did Nephi's faith grow as He learned to commune with God? Did the Brother Of Jared always speak with God face-to-face or did his faith grow, like Nephi's? In every case, we find that the Lord grants us greater faith through prayer after we demonstrate our faith. And thus, through prayer and receiving God's answers, we grow in faith unto power, line upon line, step-by-step.

I have yet to find a scripture that suggests that God will give us the things we desire even if we do not ask. Instead, the scriptures teach us to ask and then shall we receive. In fact, the phrase, *ask and ye shall receive*, is found 233 times in the scriptures. One of the reasons God requires us to ask is so that our faith will grow as a consequence of His answers.

The prophet Moroni observed that:

Ether 12:6 ...ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith.

Surely the Lord wants to give us a witness by the power of the Holy Ghost of all things. By so doing, our faith grows even stronger. But it will always be through prayer that we receive such things. We must ask for faith in prayer. We must plead for it. We must hunger and thirst for it. As we do, this great gift will be given to us, and by our faith we will be surrounded by miracles.

Prayer is the third key to obtaining power through faith.

4. Work

Nephi, son of Helaman, was a man of faith. He was given the power to change the weather and caused a great famine to occur in the land so the people would humble themselves. He caused the famine to cease when the people repented. God gave him this power:

Helaman 10:7 Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people.

8 And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done.

9 And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done.

10 And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass.

Why did God give him this sealing power? What did Nephi do to merit this gift of power?

Helaman 10:4 Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unweariness declared the word, which I have

given unto thee, unto this people. And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.
5 *And now, because thou hast done this with such unweariness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.*

What happened here? Because of his working with “unwearingness”...

- God makes Nephi mighty in word, in deed (results of his work), in faith, and in works
- He receives, by his faith, the power of God to do whatever he wishes
- God acknowledges that He trusts Nephi with this power to not ask or do anything contrary to His will

Why? “*because thou hast done this with such unweariness*”. What did he do with such unweariness? He declared the word unto the people that God had given him.

In verse 4, God declares that He has “*beheld how thou has with unweariness declared the word which I have given unto thee, unto this people*”. Is it that Nephi never became tired? Did he never feel exhausted? Or, did he become tired and exhausted, but keep going?

Clearly, that is the sacrifice that God beheld. God saw how Nephi had labored with all his strength to declare the word. Nephi was exhausted like you are at the end of the day. When it was hot and humid, Nephi was declaring the word. When it was cold and wet, Nephi was declaring the word. When he was tired, he continued to declare the word. God accepted Nephi’s sacrifice because he worked hard despite his being tired.

Notice also that Nephi did not work only a few weeks to then have the Lord endow him with this power. Nor did he labor only a few months and then expect the Lord to make it easy for him. He no doubt worked this way for many years before this power was granted to him. Even after he received the power, he labored for a long time with little success because of the hardness of the hearts of the Nephites (Helaman 10:15-17).

We see, however, that his laboring with unweariness did not depend on whether he had success or not. It depended on his commitment to the Lord, not on how the people responded to his message. That is what the Lord noticed. That is why the Lord trusted him – his sacrifice was not given to God on the condition of success – I’ll work hard as long as I see the fruits – instead, Nephi worked with unweariness because he was committed. He loved the Lord and his people and nothing would stop him from serving with all his heart, might, mind, and strength, with an eye single to the glory of God. Even when he was tired, he kept going. Laboring with unweariness, as Nephi, is the fourth Key to the power of faith.

5. Eliminate Doubt

Joseph Smith taught:

“for where doubt is, there faith has no power” (Lectures on Faith, 3:20)

After Peter leapt over the side of the boat to walk on water toward the Savior, he began to sink. We read of this account in Matthew 14:27-31:

Matthew 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 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?

Peter had actually walked on water... until he began to doubt. While on the boat, he saw the Master walk on water, and having faith, believed that he, too, could do what the Lord was doing... until he began to doubt.

So it is with us. We experience many great things on our mission... countless miracles, answers to prayer, being led by the power of the Holy Ghost. Yet, at times many of us are like Peter. We allow doubt to enter our minds and chase away the light of faith that was burning so brightly in our hearts.

Why do we do that? Let me propose a few answers and suggestions to overcome this...

- Too often, we do not chase away doubts from our minds. Instead, we allow them to stay. This problem is overcome by managing our thoughts. Just as we should keep our thoughts clean, we must also keep our thoughts filled with faith. It is a choice. If we can chase away unclean thoughts, we can also chase away negative doubts that destroy our faith.
- At times, our weaknesses cause us to have doubt about our worthiness to be who we are, doing what we are doing. Our concerns for our weaknesses affect our faith with the same results as Peter had on the water.

To deal with this, we can follow Nephi's example known as the Psalm of Nephi, found in 2 Nephi, chapter 4:17-35:

[read and discuss key points]

- 19: He places his trust in God
- 21: Filled with love
- 23,24: Mighty prayer – acknowledges that He answers his prayers
- 26: Is grateful for God's mercy and knows it is available to him
- 28: Resolves to go on and do better
- 29: Does not let his afflictions reduce his commitment (strength)
- 30: Praises God and rejoices
- 32: Broken heart, contrite spirit
- 34: Avoids trusting in the arm of flesh

Can we be as Nephi and go on despite our weaknesses? Can we accept ourselves, despite our shortcomings, and realize that God will have mercy on us as we call upon Him in mighty prayer, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit?

If we are worthy of our temple recommends, if we are worthy to renew our covenants each Sabbath day as we partake of the sacred tokens of the sacrament, why should we doubt? We must not. We are worthy of the faith unto power. We are worthy to receive the miracles if we will push away those poisonous doubts.

May we follow the commandment the Lord has given us in this regard:

D&C 6:36 Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not.

Eliminating doubts is the fifth key to the power of faith.

6. Obey the Promptings of the Spirit Every Moment

To quote from Elder Marion G. Romney in his conference address in April, 1944:

In February, 1847, [Brigham Young] had a dream in which the Prophet Joseph Smith appeared to him. It was a glorious dream. You will find it in the history of the Church written by Brother Cannon. Brigham Young expressed his sorrow that he was

separated from the companionship of President Smith, the Prophet, and asked him why he could not come with him. The Prophet told him he would have to wait awhile. Then Brigham Young asked him if he had a message for them, and the Prophet stepped toward him, looking very earnestly, yet patiently, and said (I quote the words of the Prophet in that dream of Brigham Young's):

"Tell the brethren to be humble and faithful and be sure to keep the Spirit of the Lord, that it will lead them aright. Be careful and not turn away the still, small voice; it will teach them what to do and where to go; it will yield the fruits of the kingdom. Tell the brethren to keep their hearts open to conviction, so that when the Holy Ghost comes to them, their hearts will be ready to receive it. . . .

"They can tell the Spirit of the Lord from all other spirits—it will whisper peace and joy to their souls; it will take malice, hatred, strife and all evil from their hearts, and their whole desire will be to do good, bring forth righteousness, and build up the kingdom of God."

The greatest gift God has given us on the earth is the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Why? Because it is how He guides us, leads us, instructs us, protects us, comforts us, and perfects us.

By obeying the promptings of the still, small, voice, we demonstrate to the Lord that He can trust us. He then gives us more light and knowledge, which perfects our faith:

D&C 50:24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

D&C 93:28 He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.

39 And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers.

If we fail to obey the promptings of the Spirit, we are disobedient, and our light and faith diminishes.

The sixth key to power is to always obey the promptings of the Spirit – every moment of our lives.

7. Receive and Obey Revelation in Our Decisions and Our Work

As we grow in our faith, we learn to involve the Lord in our work – in our daily lives. Those that do, rely on Him. Those that do not, find themselves trying to do the work by the strength of their own arms. Instead of relying on the Lord, they rely on their own wisdom, experience, knowledge, and strength.

A few months after the church was organized in 1830, one of the three witnesses, David Whitmer, who had been called to serve a mission, was chastised by the Lord for not relying on Him:

D&C 30:1 Behold, I say unto you, David, that you have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought. 2 But your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, your Maker, and the ministry whereunto you have been called; and you have not given heed unto my Spirit...

David had not put his trust in the Lord. How do we put trust in the Lord? How do we show Him that we trust Him?

- We seek revelation from Him – guidance and direction in our decisions and work
- We obey those revelations and inspiration He gives us

- We realize that we cannot do our work by ourselves with our limited wisdom, knowledge, and strength. We are not smarter than God. We must depend on Him for our success.

Nephi understood this great principle so very well:

2 Nephi 4:34 O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh. Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.

The seventh key is to rely on the Lord in your work, in your daily life, by involving Him more in your life, receiving inspiration, revelation, and then obeying it in every way.

8. Be an Instrument in the Lord's Hands

How does one become an instrument in the Lord's hands?

Alma taught his converts:

Mosiah 23:10 Nevertheless, after much tribulation, the Lord did hear my cries, and did answer my prayers, and has made me an instrument in his hands in bringing so many of you to a knowledge of his truth.

To be an instrument in the hands of the Lord means that we are engaged in His work, for His glory – not ours. Everything we seek is for Him. If we are serving in this mission for any other reason, we cease to be an instrument in His hands.

It means that we are constantly, every moment of every day, striving to follow His promptings, to rely upon Him for guidance, direction, and strength. We ask Him where He wants us to go. We ask Him what He wants us to teach. And when we teach, we follow the promptings that come to us by the power of the Holy Ghost. Then, we are instruments in His hands. By becoming instruments in the hands of God, our faith is perfected. We witness the many miracles in our work and find our faith growing like the faith of the brother of Jared, step by step, line upon line, until it is perfected.

Many years ago, my Bishop looked me in the eyes and asked me if I would serve a mission for the Lord. Before then, as a new convert, I had never imagined I would serve a mission. He was an instrument in the hands of God that day.

When my son, Michael, was only five years old, he was sleeping in the upper bed of some bunk beds I had built for him and his brother, Brian. One night, I awakened in the middle of the night. This never happens to me – I sleep like a rock – nothing wakes me up. As I lay in bed for a few moments, I heard a soft sound coming from the boys' downstairs bedroom. In our two-story home, the boys slept in the room beneath our bedroom. I felt impressed to see if the boys were okay. I left our bedroom, descended the stairs, turned down the small hallway to the boys room, and found that Michael, with his little body, had slipped between the safety railing and the bed frame. His head was too large to go through the gap and so his legs were dangling in the air, caught only by his head and his little arms holding on to the bed with all his might. Brian, his older brother, was sound asleep in the bottom bed. I quickly grabbed him and pushed him back through the railings and then held him tight to comfort him. I was an instrument in the hands of the Lord that night to save a little boy's life, thanks to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. Michael, today, is a righteous young husband and father. He served a valiant mission for the Lord and was, himself, an instrument in the hands of the Lord to saving many souls. I have no doubt that he will yet have many assignments of the Lord for the rest of his life.

But what if I had not been worthy to feel the still, small, voice? Or what if I had felt the promptings and not followed them? That night, there was a very grateful young father whose

faith grew just a little more, knowing that the Lord had spared the life of his precious son, using him as an instrument in His hands.

To be an instrument in the hands of God, we must learn to discern and follow the promptings of the Spirit. We must learn the language of the Spirit. He will lead us. He will use us. We will be tools in His hands. By becoming instruments in the hands of God, our faith becomes perfected. We become the means of countless miracles in our work and in our lives. These miracles and blessings perfect our faith.

The eighth key to power is to constantly seek to be an instrument in the hands of God.

9. Keep your mind out of the world

We learn, once again, by the Lord's chastisement to David Whitmer because he allowed himself to be distracted from the work the Lord had given him to do:

D&C 30:1 Behold, I say unto you, David, that you have feared man and have not relied on me for strength as you ought. 2 But your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, your Maker, and the ministry whereunto you have been called...

This is what NOT to do as a missionary. The Lord expects us, as His servants, to focus on our work. We are to “lock our hearts” and not worry about girlfriends, boyfriends, school, or careers. He wants us to keep our minds on “the ministry whereunto [we] have been called”.

How do we do this? Once again, mental discipline is required. We push out the thoughts that distract us from our ministry. We do this by replacing them with the thoughts of our work.

We pray to the father, in faith, for help that we can do this. We ask for forgiveness when our thoughts are “on the things of the earth more than on the things of [Him, our] Maker”.

Nephi, son of Helaman, was focused on his ministry. After prophesying of the death of the chief judge and revealing, by revelation, who his murderer was, after a great ordeal that must have been exhausting to him, the record says:

Helaman 10:2 And it came to pass that Nephi went his way towards his own house, pondering upon the things which the Lord had shown unto him. 3 And it came to pass as he was thus pondering—being much cast down because of the wickedness of the people of the Nephites, their secret works of darkness, and their murderings, and their plunderings, and all manner of iniquities—and it came to pass as he was thus pondering in his heart, behold, a voice came unto him saying: 4 Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done...

Even after the Lord gave him the sealing power, a few verses later the record says:

Helaman 10:12 And behold, now it came to pass that when the Lord had spoken these words unto Nephi, he did stop and did not go unto his own house, but did return unto the multitudes who were scattered about upon the face of the land, and began to declare unto them the word of the Lord which had been spoken unto him, concerning their destruction if they did not repent.

He was not concerned about what he would eat for dinner, though he was probably quite hungry by now. He was not concerned about his house, or his family, or his possessions. He was not concerned about rest or recreation, despite his being exhausted. His mind was focused on his ministry. The Lord endowed him with the faith to do whatever he said, whenever he wanted, including the changing of the weather. The Lord had learned to trust Nephi.

The ninth key to power is to keep our minds focused on our ministry, to keep our minds out of the world.

10. Obey Those Who Lead You

We can refer once again to the chastisement by the Lord to David Whitmer:

D&C 30:1 Behold, I say unto you, David, ... you have not given heed unto my Spirit, and to those who were set over you, but have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded.

For some of us, being obedient to God is not a great challenge, but to be obedient to imperfect leaders and learning from them is much more difficult, especially when they are of our own age, or younger. Our district and zone leaders are caught, at times, in moments of immaturity, doing things that older leaders may not ever consider doing. Yet, these district and zone leaders are our leaders. If the church is true, then they have been called by God to serve in their current callings. It's that simple.

In the early days of the church, there were some who left the church after seeing the Prophet Joseph Smith play games with small children.

Joseph also had to endure petty criticism from Saints who had their own ideas as to how a prophet should act or what he should be. His cousin, George A. Smith, said that one reason a certain family left the Church was "that they had actually seen the Prophet come down out of the translating room and play with his children." And at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, he said, "when the dedication prayer was read by Joseph, it was read from a printed copy. This was a great trial of faith to many. 'How can it be that the prophet should read a prayer?' What an awful trial it was, for the Prophet to read a prayer!"

(Karl Ricks Anderson, Joseph Smith's Kirtland [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1989], 227.)

If we are to be obedient to the Lord, we must also be obedient to His servants, despite their being imperfect like us. If we ask the Lord to endow us with faith, our obedience must not only include being obedient to those things we know come from the Lord, but also to those the Lord has called to lead us.

Despite calling the weak, the simple, the unlearned, and the despised to be His servants in the Kingdom, the Lord revealed to His prophet:

D&C 68:4 And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation. 5 Behold, this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants.

If our leaders are called of God, then God expects us to follow them, even though they are far from perfect. The only real issue is whether they are worthy of the Holy Ghost. If they are not, then we must discern for ourselves if their unworthiness is leading them astray. If they are worthy, and we do not follow them, then we cut ourselves off by our disobedience.

But if we follow our leaders, as they follow the Lord, then the Lord endows us with the gift of faith, according to our obedience. For *faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness.*

The tenth key to power is to obey and learn from your leaders.

11. Do Right Things for the Right Reasons

In the eyes of the Lord, it is not only what we do that counts, but also why we do it. Indeed, at times the “why” of what we do is even more important than the “what”.

Genesis 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his

offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Both Cain and Abel offered sacrifice unto the Lord, but only the sacrifice of Abel was accepted. Abel offered his sacrifice out of love and obedience. Cain did not. It was not what they did, but why they did it that made the difference.

Many centuries later, while Jesus was near the temple, another great example of this principle was taught:

Mark 12:41 And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: 44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Whose sacrifice did God respect? The widow's or the rich people? Both made offerings. The rich people offered more than the poor widow. But it was the spirit by which the offering was made that Jesus was emphasizing to his disciples. With the Lord, why we do something is often more important than the act itself.

God endows with faith those who serve Him for the right reasons. Abel's faith grew because of his accepted offering. The faith of the poor widow was empowered because of her sacrifice – it was real and done in faith, so God rewards with greater faith.

In our day, God warns us to serve Him for the right reasons:

D&C 121:34 Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? 35 Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men...

Those who serve for the honors of men or their vain ambition serve for the wrong reason. Here, the Lord teaches that while such persons may be called, they are not chosen. As they serve for the wrong reason, their faith is not rewarded. In the history of the church, we read of many tragic stories of great men who, in their pride and vain ambition, served for the wrong reason: Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, William E. McLellin, Thomas B Marsh, Sidney Rigdon, and a host of others. Did their faith grow from their service? No, it diminished until they fell into apostasy.

Then we read of great and valiant men who served with honor: Brigham Young, Hyrum Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, Orson Hyde, and many, many others. Their service, their offering, like Abels, was accepted of the Lord, and their faith was rewarded because they served with an eye single to the glory of God – they served for the right reason. Their faith grew and grew and became perfected like the faith of the ancient prophets.

Is there any wonder why God commands us to serve Him with our “heart, might, mind, and strength”? We are not only called, but also chosen if we serve with an eye single to the glory of God. By so doing, we serve Him for the right reason and our offering is accepted by Him. He then endows us with greater faith.

The eleventh key to power is to serve God for the right reasons.

12. Show the Lord He Can Trust You

If we return to the story of Nephi, son of Helaman, we find yet another great key of power:

Helaman 10:5 And now, because thou hast done this with such unweariness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will.

As Nephi is given the power to do all things, even the sealing power, the Lord describes why he is granting him this gift: because He knows that Nephi will never ask for that which is contrary to His will. The Lord trusts Nephi completely. He has proven him in trial after trial to see what he's made of. Nephi has earned the trust of God, so God empowers him with the ultimate power He can grant unto mortal man.

Helaman 10:6 Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people.

7 Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people.

8 And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done.

9 And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done.

10 And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass.

What kind of faith would it take to cast down a mountain? Or change the weather? God granted unto Nephi that kind of faith. He trusted him. Nephi was a man who earned that trust.

So it is with us. Eons of time ago, before we came to this earth, we demonstrated to our Father in Heaven that He could trust us through our “exceedingly great faith” (Alma 13:3). He blessed us with opportunity on this earth to embrace His gospel, obtain the Priesthood, be born in the covenant, to be sealed in His Holy House, to build His Kingdom upon the earth. How do we show our trustworthiness today? What do we do to demonstrate that He can trust us, not just every now and then, but every minute of every day?

- First, we stay true to our covenants.
- Second, we strive to always have His Spirit to be with us – every minute. We do nothing that offends the Spirit. Nothing that drives it away. Instead, everything we do invites the Spirit so we have His constant reassuring companionship.
- Third, we obey the promptings we receive through the Spirit. By so doing, we show our commitment to obey and He endows us with greater faith.
- Fourth, we develop our honor.

In Section 29, we read about honor:

D&C 29:36 ...for, behold, the devil was before Adam, for he rebelled against me, saying, Give me thine honor, which is my power...

If we are to connect to the power of God, which is His honor, we can only do so by developing and demonstrating our own honor. Honor is something that we develop from within. It is not something I can give to you, or you can give to another. Each of us must do it on our own, with the help of our Father in Heaven.

A man of great honor, Karl G. Maeser, President of BYU many years ago, said:

Place me behind prison walls-walls of stone ever so high, ever so thick, reaching ever so far into the ground - there is a possibility that in some way or another I may be able

to escape; but stand me on the floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of that circle? No, never! I'd die first!

As faith is a gift of God bestowed as a reward for personal righteousness, our honor will always be rewarded with the gift of faith.

The twelfth key to power is to show the Lord He can trust you, to develop a sense of honor in your life that allows the Lord to trust you with power. He endows you with power by endowing you with great faith.

Conclusion

Faith is truly a gift from God and we will acquire it unto power if we permit God to grant us this gift. As we seek each day to develop these twelve keys to build the power of faith, we will see our faith grow. It will grow as a mustard seed into a great tree that the fiercest winds of the adversary can never destroy.

The Twelve Keys to Build Faith unto Power are:

1. Stop complaining and murmuring. Replace it with gratitude.
2. Commit to Complete Obedience
3. Prayer
4. Work
5. Eliminate doubt
6. Obey the promptings of the Spirit every minute
7. Receive and obey revelation in your decisions and work
8. Be an instrument in the Lord's hands
9. Keep your mind out of the world
10. Obey those called to lead you
11. Do right things for the right reason
12. Show the Lord He can trust you

I challenge each of you to focus on one of these twelve keys each week for the rest of your mission, and even the rest of your lives. It will change your life. It will result in the faith to move mountains. It will bring to your lives, and through you to those you serve, great miracles from God.

To close, I wish to read the words of Jacob who acquired the power we speak of through faith:

Jacob 4:6-7 Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

7 Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.

Mission Fast?

