

## Is it Hard to Live the Gospel?

A speaker in the last General Conference quoted a youth as saying “It's just too hard. Living the standards in my world is not realistic. It's just too hard.”<sup>1</sup> I have heard others talk about the challenge of living the gospel, or even the burden of discipleship. We sometimes seem to present the gospel as if it were some sort of endurance course that we must withstand in order to arrive at eternal exaltation.

In contrast, Elder Larry Gibbons in the same Conference said:

Commandments are not given to burden or restrict us. Rather, they are guideposts from an all-wise Heavenly Father to keep us out of trouble, to bring us a fullness of happiness in this life, and to bring us safely back home to Him.<sup>2</sup>

I wonder if sometimes we make the gospel hard to live because we don't look at it in the proper light. As a very simple illustration, if I were to fall into a deep hole I could claim that climbing out is “too hard.” However, in that case, what are the alternatives? Climbing out may not be easy, but in the long run might not starving to death in that hole be somewhat harder?

The gospel has been designed by a loving father to be the easiest way to live this life. Living the gospel does not guarantee freedom from the pains and trials of mortality. On the other hand, living after the fashion of the world does not either guarantee freedom from those same problems. Is it not easier to face such trials with the gospel to guide and protect us? Reflecting on the experience of the friend whose son died on his mission<sup>3</sup>, that has certainly been – and continues to be – a very hard experience. But the sure knowledge of the gospel allows my friend to see the whole situation in the light of something more than mortality, and allows him and his family to find comfort.

Referring back to the youth quoted at the beginning of this article, often when we say that living the gospel is hard we may well be referring to situations where we want to “serve the Lord without offending the Devil.”<sup>4</sup> In that case, yes, it is hard to live the gospel

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1 Elaine S. Dalton, “Look toward Eternity!”

<http://www.lds.org/conference/talk/display/0,5232,49-1-646-12,00.html>

2 Elder Larry W. Gibbons, “Wherefore, Settle This in Your Hearts”

<http://www.lds.org/conference/talk/display/0,5232,49-1-646-37,00.html>

3 “What Is Faith?” <http://bookofmormonmusings.info/WhatIsFaith.pdf>

4 Elder Marion G. Romney, Brigham Young University devotional in 1955, quoted by

while trying to fit in with the world. This is because it is a fundamental contradiction of terms to attempt that.

The gospel is the easiest course once we settle in our hearts that we are going to follow the Lord without compromise and without reservation. Until we make that decision we will find that there are hard decisions to make. Even in this there is a warning and a lesson. If we find that living the gospel is hard it should be a sign to us that there is still something in our lives that we have not completely committed to the Lord. If the gospel is hard the fault is not in the gospel, but in our own hearts.

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James E. Faust in Ensign Sept 1995 "Serving the Lord and Resisting the Devil"