

Chapter 3

Faith — the Principle of Action and Power for Ethical Decision Making

If men were duly to consider themselves, and turn their thoughts and reflections to the operations of their own minds, they would readily discover that it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them. (Lecture 1:10)

Faith is not a theological platitude. It is a fact of life. Faith can become the very wellspring of purposeful living. There is no more compelling motivation to worthwhile endeavor than the knowledge that we are children of God, the Creator of the universe, our all-wise Heavenly Father! Gordon B. Hinckley¹

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. Joseph Smith²

When faced with a tough, ethical dilemma, it is our actions that others use to assess our commitment to a philosophy of ethics. So what forms the basis for our actions? Joseph Smith in the *Lectures on Faith* taught that faith is *the moving principle of all action*. Paul defines faith as:

the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
(Hebrews 11:1)

Consider the future as being *things not seen*. We hope that certain things will happen, e.g., that the next paycheck will come, that the car will start and we will be able to drive to our destination, that there will be air to breathe for our next breath, etc. Faith is the *assurance* of all of these things for which we hope. We rely on faith to act as if the things for which we have hoped will come to pass. All actions are preceded by faith and, therefore, it becomes *the moving principle of all action*.

When our faith is based upon God, it *can become the very wellspring of purposeful living*. This kind of living will greatly assist us in our ethical decision making. Lehi, the great Book of Mormon prophet, defined our ultimate purpose when he said:

Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi 2:25)

Only by making correct ethical decisions will we achieve *the object and design of our existence* — happiness.

In order to have faith, however, there must be knowledge upon which faith is based. Jerry Wilson, in *The Great Plan of Happiness - Insights from the Lectures on Faith* wrote the following:

So often in the Church we talk of faith not only in relation to hope but also in relation to belief and knowledge. We speak of the development from belief to hope, to faith, and then to knowledge. Although there is nothing incorrect about this notion, it essentially hides from our thinking the idea that faith really begins with knowledge, as well as leads to knowledge. Faith has to have an object, has to have a beginning knowledge.³

For instance, consider freshmen as they enter college. Most new students possess a little information concerning a major. Acting on faith based on that limited knowledge, they sign up for classes believing that new knowledge will help them learn about their major and prepare them for a career. Knowledge preceded faith. As they apply their faith and take more classes, their knowledge about their major will continue to grow. Their faith will lead to more knowledge.

Recently the city of Orem requested volunteers to assist with a service project which included the planting of 150 trees and the laying of sod and a sprinkling system along a main street in Orem. Several hundred people took part in the project. It is safe to say that most, if not all, of these volunteers had some previous experience with the planting of trees and knew that when a tree is planted and properly nourished it will grow into a mature tree. Because of this knowledge, they had faith that the service project would yield trees that would beautify the city in the future. Their knowledge served as a basis for their faith which in turn motivated them to take part in the project.

The *Lectures on Faith* also teach us that faith applies to spiritual matters as well as physical actions.

And as faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual.
(Lecture 1:12)

Knowledge must precede faith in spiritual matters also. A good example of knowledge preceding faith that led to an action in a spiritual matter is the account of Joseph Smith's first vision. He read in the bible the following passage from James:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (James 1:5-6)

In describing his feelings and thoughts as he read that verse, Joseph recorded:

Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible. At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to “ask of God,” concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture. (Pearl of Great Price -Joseph Smith History: 12-13).

This revelation from James provided knowledge for Joseph to apply his faith and ask of God in order for him to receive more knowledge concerning how he should act when it came to religion and what church to attend.

When faced with an ethical dilemma, we must act out a decision of our choice. The action that we choose will be a product of our knowledge and faith that certain outcomes will result. Our faith then becomes a critical ingredient when confronted with a dilemma. Will our faith motivate us to correct or incorrect actions? The answer to that question lies in part upon what our faith is based and how committed we are to the basis. The *Lectures on Faith* help us understand the principles upon which our faith should be based to move us to the correct action regarding spiritual matters which in turn will lead us to life unto salvation.

Faith is also a principle of power.

But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth. (Lecture 1:13)

This power is not sought by those that are given it but is a result of the development of the proper principles and faith. It is best defined by considering a few examples from the scriptures.

- A man brought his son to Jesus to be healed after first taking him to the disciples. The disciples were not able to heal the boy. When they asked Jesus why they could not heal the boy, he told them: *Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (Matthew 17:14-21)*

- The brother of Jared was in need of a method to light the eight barges which had been built to take his family overseas to a new land. He asked the Lord to touch sixteen small, white and clear stones which he had molted out of a rock. As the Lord stretched forth his finger to do so, the brother of Jared saw the Lord's finger and noted that it was of flesh and blood. The Lord told him that it was *Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger.* (Ether 3:9)
- The Lord warned Lehi that Jerusalem was about to be destroyed. Lehi, in a faithful response to the Lord's warning, gathered his family and prepared to leave the comfort of his home and nearly all of his possessions. The subsequent journey would lead he and his family through wilderness areas, over the ocean, and to a strange and unknown land. His and his family's faith led to their survival, since Jerusalem was indeed destroyed, and to the founding of a great nation in a land of bounteous resources. (1 Nephi)
- After being converted, Ammon and his brethren desired to share their new found knowledge of the Lord's atonement with a people who were their sworn enemies. Their father, Mosiah, *inquired of the Lord if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word* (Mosiah 28:6). He was told to *Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites* (Mosiah 28:7). As a result of his and his sons' faith and of the Lord's goodness, many thousands of Lamanites were converted and Ammon and his brethren returned safely to their homeland after their mission.
- Nephi and Lehi, sons of Helaman, on a mission to the Lamanites, spoke with such great power and authority that a change was wrought on over 8000 Lamanites and they entered into the Kingdom of God. Preaching in another area, they were arrested and cast into prison. While being approached by their captors for execution, a miraculous experience happened due to their faith in the Lord. Their captors *saw that they were encircled about with a pillar of fire, and that it burned them not and stood as if they were struck dumb with amazement* (Helaman 5:24-25). Their captors were addressed by the Lord in *a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul* (Helaman 5:30). Their faith led to this marvelous experience and the conversion of their captors.

Nephi, son of Helaman, developed his faith by studying the scriptures and by listening at the feet of his prophet father to a point that he had implicit trust in the Lord. Early in his own calling as prophet of the Nephite people, he was sent on a mission to preach to the people in the land northward (Helaman 7:1-3). He was rejected by them and returned to his home in Zarahemla feeling depressed and sorry for the people. He didn't find things at home any more pleasant as the following reference describes:

And seeing the people in a state of such awful wickedness, and those Gadianton robbers filling the judgment-seats—having usurped the power and authority of the land; laying aside the commandments of God, and not in the least aright before him; doing no justice unto the children of men; Condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money; and moreover to be held in office at the head of government, to rule and do according to their wills, that they might get gain and glory of the world, and, moreover, that they might the more easily commit adultery, and steal, and kill, and do according to their own wills— Now this great iniquity had come upon the Nephites, in the space of not many years; and when Nephi saw it, his heart was swollen with sorrow within his breast; and he did exclaim in the agony of his soul: Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have joyed with him in the promised land; then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity; and they were quick to hearken unto the words of the Lord— Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren. But behold, I am consigned that these are my days, and that my soul shall be filled with sorrow because of this the wickedness of my brethren. (Helaman 7:4-9)

Nephi felt very discouraged and probably somewhat apprehensive to preach the gospel in the environment that existed in Zarahemla. But he remained faithful and obedient to the Lord's instructions and continued to preach. After another life threatening situation, in which Nephi disclosed the killer of the chief judge, Nephi again was 'much cast down' because of the wickedness of the people. The voice of the Lord came to him and said,

Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unwearyingness 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. And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, 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. 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. 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. And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done. And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass. (Helaman 10:4-10)

Because Nephi had developed his faith to the point that he was completely obedient and always sought to do the Lord's will, he was given the sealing power. Nephi used this power, which is controlled by the righteousness of the person upon whom it is given, to bring a famine to the land.

He hoped that it would humble the people and cause them to turn to the Lord. Eventually it did but the people soon turned away again by becoming prideful and ignoring the Lord's contributions to their welfare. Nephi was an example of someone who developed his faith and gained spiritual power in his life to accomplish the work of the Lord.

Alma described the process of building faith in the following passage:

But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words. Now, we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place, that a seed may be planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true seed, or a good seed, if ye do not cast it out by your unbelief, that ye will resist the Spirit of the Lord, behold, it will begin to swell within your breasts; and when you feel these swelling motions, ye will begin to say within yourselves—It must needs be that this is a good seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth to enlarge my soul; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me. Now behold, would not this increase your faith? I say unto you, Yea; nevertheless it hath not grown up to a perfect knowledge. But behold, as the seed swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then you must needs say that the seed is good; for behold it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow. And now behold, will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith: for ye will say I know that this is a good seed; for behold it sprouteth and beginneth to grow. And now, behold, are ye sure that this is a good seed? I say unto you, Yea; for every seed bringeth forth unto its own likeness. (Alma 32:27-31)

To further illustrate this process, consider the following experience concerning gaining a testimony of the principle of tithing which happened to one of the authors (RET).

I joined the church during my freshman year in college. At the time, I was a student at Oregon State University. I had been told about the principle of tithing and, wanting to be obedient, began paying a tenth of my increase. I could not say that I had a testimony of the principle of tithing but acted out of faith on a knowledge base provided for me by missionaries, friends, and members of my ward. Later, after marrying and completing my undergraduate degree, my wife and I moved to Provo where I began a graduate program in Chemical Engineering. My wife had graduated from Ricks College with a nursing degree but we both decided that she would not work out of the home after I graduated with my B.S. degree. We struggled financially on a graduate student research fellowship during my years of graduate school but continued to pay our tithing. About midway through my program, we learned that she was expecting our third child which was to be born during the next fall. The timing was good for us financially since I would be able to work during the summer and save enough to pay all of the upcoming expenses surrounding the birth of the baby. We were excited. My program was going well and we were happy being surrounded by many friends going to school and in the same circumstances. Life was good. Soon our world was complicated by an unexpected miscarriage. Not only did we lose a precious baby that we were waiting for with great enthusiasm and expectation, but the timing of the miscarriage was not good for us financially. We simply did not have the money in the bank to pay the doctor and hospital fees. We prayed to the Lord for help.

The miscarriage occurred on a weekend. On Tuesday, I was to bring her home from the

hospital. On Monday, we received a letter from my department in the mail. The letter informed us that I was going to be given a tuition scholarship for the remainder of my schooling beginning with summer term. The scholarship was unexpected and more than made up for the costs of the miscarriage. I firmly believe that our faith and action of paying tithing allowed that blessing to happen in our lives. From a knowledge base, our faith grew into a faith that literally became a principle of power in providing a way for the Lord to bless us with the ability to pay for the miscarriage.

Certain knowledge appears to be more valuable than other knowledge for developing the kind of faith that will result in a principle of power. As an example, consider the assignment to teach the concept of reverence for God. We can approach this by simply listing ways to be reverent. One way is to suggest that people be quiet in sacrament meeting. However, since being quiet can have different meanings, it will need to be defined which may take us far from our goal of talking about reverence for God. We can also approach the assignment by teaching about the nature of God and what we worship. If we talk about how much He loves His children and the sacrifice that He has made for each of us by sending His son to work out the atonement, then we grow in our appreciation and love for Him. As this love grows, reverence will be a natural consequence of our actions.

Elder Boyd K. Packer has said, “The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”⁴ John Taylor once overheard the Prophet Joseph Smith say in response to a question about how he was able to govern so many people and to preserve such perfect order, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”⁵ When our faith is founded on a correct understanding of the doctrines or principles of the gospel, it will grow until it becomes a powerful source for good in our lives.

Examples of Faith as a Principle of Power

In his book, *How Good People Make Tough Choices*, Rush Kidder describes a story involving a former chief executive officer of Bath Iron Works (BIW).⁶ BIW is, among other things, a shipbuilder. Since the end of World War II, the number of shipbuilders in the United States has shrunk to 2, BIW and another firm located in Mississippi, Ingalls Shipbuilding. Both BIW and Ingalls Shipbuilding are their respective states largest private employers and carry much prominence and significant influence. These two shipbuilders have stayed in business largely due to contracts that they have received from the federal government to build ships for the U.S. Navy. When a request for bid is made to build a destroyer or some other ship, the bidding is intense between the two competitors. In May of 1991, personnel from the U.S. Navy met with personnel from BIW and an independent consultant. They met to review the existing contract that the government had let to BIW for the construction of the destroyer *Arleigh Burke*. The review was significant for BIW for the government was soon to award contracts for the construction of 5 more destroyers, each worth about \$250 million to the awardee.

The review proceeded normally but, the next morning a maintenance worker found a document left behind by the consultant. The document was found to contain highly confidential economic analyses of the cost estimates of both shipbuilders for the construction of the destroyers. It was information that fell under the protection of the Procurement Integrity Act. This act is a federal law that requires that contractors state that they have never been in possession of proprietary information belonging to competitors. That morning, the document eventually ended up in the office of the CEO of BIW, William Haggett. Haggett had been with BIW for 28 years and was highly respected in both his own state of Maine and in Washington D.C. He was considered by some to be a gubernatorial candidate in the future. Haggett quickly went through the document and, as he rushed off to a meeting in a nearby city, ordered that a photocopy be made and the original returned to the meeting room where the consultant had left it.

In his absence, BIW personnel placed some of the economic data in their computers and began an analysis and comparison of the data. Later in the day, the president of the company, Duane D. Fitzgerald, was informed of the finding of the document, the photocopying, and the subsequent analysis of the data by BIW personnel. He realized that it was not right what had been done and ordered that the photocopy be destroyed and the information and analysis in the computers be erased. Upon his return, Haggett discussed the matter with Fitzgerald and agreed with his assessment of the situation and his actions.

After a thorough investigation by the navy after having found out what had transpired at BIW, the navy concluded that Ingalls Shipbuilding had not been hurt by BIW's actions and absolved both BIW and Haggett of any possible error as long as those familiar with the data in the document were not allowed to participate in BIW's subsequent bid.

This, however, was not the end. Shortly, thereafter, Haggett resigned as CEO of BIW at the suggestion of, not the navy, but his own colleagues. The colleagues were concerned about the reputation in the community that BIW had forged through years of diligent efforts of developing trust and building relationships of integrity.

In this case, the power and honorable influence that one man had created by living a life of integrity was lost in one moment of poor decision followed by questionable acts. His colleagues lost their trust, or faith, in his ability to lead them.

A second example involves Elder H. Burke Peterson, former member of the Quorum of Seventy and Presiding Bishopric and an emeritus general authority. He was a practicing professional, civil engineer in Arizona before receiving his call to serve full time for the church. Early in his professional career, he formed an engineering company which focused on the designing of roads and highways. The company experienced some early success and was growing rapidly in the state of Arizona and gaining a good reputation. At this time, Elder Peterson was a partner in the company and had been given the responsibility to find new business. There were 50 employees in the company that depended upon him to perform his task. He and his partners decided that for the company to continue to grow, they needed to expand their work base outside of the state of Arizona. He began to look for ways to do that.

Elder Peterson soon learned of a funding project by the Interstate Highway Department in a nearby state. He and his partners decided to make a bid on the project. After submitting the bid, he visited the nearby state highway department and began talking to a representative. He told of his company, discussed his company's qualifications, and explained how they would really like to expand their business. One of the state officials took him into a room where the two of them were all alone. The state official told him that his company was successful with the bid and would be awarded a very lucrative contract. The official then indicated that it was policy for the bid awardee to make a contribution back to the state officials. This kickback was made to seem routine. Elder Peterson knew his company needed the work and that all of the employees were depending upon him to bring back the contract. However, he also knew that kickbacks were not appropriate. He decided to refuse the contract and told the official that he and his partners did not do business that included kickbacks. The contract was soon let to another firm.

Unknown to Elder Peterson and these state officials, a congressional committee, that had oversight for interstate highway funds, had been investigating the use of these funds and the contracts that had been awarded to engineering firms. The committee made public their review which had uncovered corrupt practices being conducted by several states' highway departments, including the state highway department where Elder Peterson's company had made their bid. State officials were reprimanded and collaborating engineering firms lost respect. Elder Peterson's company gained respect during the process and he personally was grateful that he had made the right decision.

On another occasion, his company participated in a conference where funding agencies, state highway departments, and engineering firms were in attendance. He and his partners decided to conduct an open house in which they could entertain and inform people about their firm's qualifications in hopes that it would create interest in their firm. At the time, it was popular for companies hosting open houses at conferences to provide alcohol as part of the refreshments. Because of his commitment to the church's belief in the word of wisdom (see D&C 89), Elder Peterson did not believe that it was right to serve alcohol at the open house. He also knew that people would expect it and might not judge his firm as positively as other firms that did provide alcohol for people to drink. He decided to take the 'risk'. He laid out a lavish display of vegetables, fruit, chips, and soft drinks that met with approval of all that visited his firm's open house. He received many compliments and expressions of gratitude for not having alcohol available. Once again, he chose wisely.

With these kinds of choices, people came to know of Elder Peterson's and his firm's commitment to integrity and honor. As his company became recognized for these qualities, it grew in respect and influence. This led to the awarding of many contracts and subsequent financial growth.

We have discussed two examples of individuals acting on their respective knowledge bases and faith. Their actions led to differing results with respect to power. This power is not the power that Satan would have people pursue. His definition of power might also include terms such as

influence and growth but it would also include words such as manipulation and abuse. An example of his type of power was exhibited by Amalickiah in the Book of Mormon as he sought for power to rule over both the Nephite and Lamanite peoples. Hugh Nibley described Amalickiah's quest for power in a commencement address at Brigham Young University.

The *Lamanite brethren* he (Moroni) fought were the reluctant auxiliaries of Zoramites and Amalickiahites, his own countrymen. They *grew proud . . . because of their exceedingly great riches*, and sought to seize power for themselves (Alma 45:23). Enlisting the aid of *those who were in favor of kings . . . those of high birth . . . supported by those who sought power and authority over the people* (Alma 51:8), they were further joined by important judges who had many friends and kindreds (the right connections are everything) plus *almost all the lawyers and high priests*, to which were added *the lower judges of the land, and they were seeking for power* (Alma 46:4). All these Amalickiah welded together with immense managerial skill to form a single ultraconservative coalition who agreed to *support him and establish him to be their king*, expecting that *he would make them rulers over the people* (Alma 46:5). Many in the church were won over by Amalickiah's skillful oratory, for he was a charming (*flattering* is the Book of Mormon word) and persuasive communicator. He made war the cornerstone of his policy and power, using a systematic and carefully planned communication system of towers and trained speakers to stir up the people to fight for their rights, meaning Amalickiah's career. For while Moroni had kind feelings for the enemy, Amalickiah *did not care for the blood of his people* (Alma 49:10). His object in life was to become king of both the Nephite and Lamanites, using the one to subdue the other (see Alma 46:5). He was a master of dirty tricks, to which he owed some of his most brilliant achievements as he maintained his upward mobility by clever murders, high-powered public relations, and great executive ability.⁷

Contrast the power sought for by Amalickiah and his methods of obtaining it with the power earned by Nephi and his internalized principles by which he lived. Faith is a principle of power that is recognized in both heaven and earth. This kind of power can only come when faith moves us to correct actions and when that faith is founded upon the correct knowledge base.

The End Result of Our Faith

We have discussed the fact that 'faith is the assurance which men have of the existence of things which they have not seen, and the principle of action in all intelligent beings'. Faith moves us to act toward some end, some purpose which we have as a goal for the future. In the short term, the goal may be simple like obtaining food at the grocery store. Our faith prompts us to drive to the store to purchase food for some future meals. What about in the long term? What should be the goal, or the end, of our faith and our actions? As discussed at the first of this chapter, Lehi said that:

. . . . *men are, that they might have joy* (2 Nephi 2:25)

and Joseph Smith said, “Happiness is the object and design of our existence”.² Dennis Rasmussen, after reviewing the works of many of the world’s great thinkers throughout history, has summarized their thoughts in the following statement:

Faith prompts them (all intelligent beings) to plan, to prepare, and then to act so as to obtain some purpose or end which lies yet in the future. But what end? . . . There is an ultimate end for which all men naturally search. Its name is happiness.⁸

However, a few questions remain, such as:

- If faith is the moving principle of all action, how do we know that our faith is founded upon correct principles which will cause us to act properly to obtain our goal of happiness?
- How do we measure our faith?
- How do we know if we are on the right path?
- How do we know when we are happy?

The answers to these questions are found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets as they present the great plan of happiness. Elder Boyd K. Packer has summarized this plan in his book, *Our Father’s Plan*.⁹ Making sound ethical decisions helps us stay on the plan of happiness.

In the 7th Lecture on Faith, the following question is asked and answered:

What are we to understand by a man’s working by faith? We answer: we understand that when a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. (Lecture 7:3)

This suggests that there is an inner source of all of our outward actions, i.e., everything we do outwardly is first thought of in our minds or felt in our hearts. The scripture from Proverbs 23:7, that as a man *thinketh in his heart, so is he* reflects this same idea. In commenting on this Rasmussen wrote,

Faith as the principle of outer action is first of all the principle of inner action that provides the basis for the outer one. This fact needs to be remembered and constantly emphasized in an age such as ours, which tends so much to prize tangible results and observable consequences. The point is not that these are unimportant but that in order to have real worth they must follow from a virtuous inward action of the soul that intended them.⁸

Relating this to our goal of happiness, we find that in order for us to be truly happy with ourselves, we must have our outer actions consistent with our inner thoughts and feelings. To help accomplish this, we frequently make promises with ourselves to do certain things. By analyzing the results of our actions and comparing them with these promises, we can measure the consistency of our inner and outer actions.

Consider the following examples which illustrate the concept that true happiness comes when our outer actions are consistent with our inner thoughts and feelings which are founded upon correct principles.

- Near the end of the play *A Man for All Seasons*, Thomas More sat in an English prison waiting a day in court and certain beheading. More was in this position because he was unwilling to swear an oath of loyalty to Henry the King of England. Henry had asked for this oath because he needed More's support for his wedding to Anne Boleyn for which the Catholic church had previously denied permission. More, an intensely religious man and possessing great integrity, had sided with the Pope on the matter. More's daughter visited him in prison and asked him to swear the oath outwardly to the king but retain the oath inwardly in his heart, "Then say the words of the oath and in your heart think otherwise." More responded, "What is an oath then but words we say to God? . . . When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his hands. Like water. And if he opens his finger then -- he needn't hope to find himself again. Some men aren't capable of this, but I'd be loathe to think your father one of them."¹⁰ More believed it was better for a man to remain happy with himself and choose to die than for his outer actions to be inconsistent with his inner thoughts and feelings.
- The Prophet Joseph Smith on his way to Carthage shortly before he suffered martyrdom voiced these words, *I am going like a lamb to the slaughter; but I am calm as a summer's morning; I have a conscience void of offense towards God, and towards all men* (D&C 135: 4). Joseph was able to say this because he lived a life of consistency, where, to the best of his ability, his inner and outer actions were in harmony, and because he tried to be obedient to God's will.
- David in the Old Testament was an example of someone who did not live a life of consistency. He felt torment the remainder of his life after his act of adultery with Bathsheba. In Psalms 51, he wrote,

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin [is] ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done [this] evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, [and] be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden [part] thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; [that] the bones [which] thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me [with thy] free spirit. [Then] will I teach transgressors

thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: [and] my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar. (Psalm 51:1-19)

- Victor Frankl described an experience during his imprisonment in a World War II German concentration camp in which he came to feel the inner peace that comes with this consistency. Toward the end of his stay in Auschwitz, he had an opportunity to escape with another prisoner. As he and his friend gathered the provisions and awaited the moment where they would make their escape, he made a quick last round of his patients. He came to an old friend, a fellow countryman, who was dying. Frankl had made it a goal to save this man's life.

I had to keep my intention to escape to myself, but my comrade seemed to guess that something was wrong (perhaps I showed a little nervousness). In a tired voice he asked me, "You, too, are getting out?" I denied it, but I found it difficult to avoid his sad look. After my round I returned to him. Again a hopeless look greeted me and somehow I felt it to be an accusation. The unpleasant feeling that had gripped me as soon as I had told my friend I would escape with him became more intense. Suddenly I decided to take fate into my own hands for once. I ran out of the hut and told my friend that I could not go with him. As soon as I had told him with finality that I had made up my mind to stay with my patients, the unhappy feeling left me. I did not know what the following days would bring, but I had gained an inward peace that I had never experienced before. I returned to the hut, sat down on the boards at my countryman's feet and tried to comfort him; then I chatted with the others, trying to quiet them in their delirium.¹¹

These examples illustrate the joy and happiness that can be obtained by living a life of consistency. Even though we may have obtained some measure of consistency and we are happy with ourselves, it does not necessarily follow that our behavior is in obedience to God's will. Thus, we see the importance of making and keeping sacred covenants with God as a measure of our devotion to him and our willingness to be on the correct path toward true happiness. This is illustrated vividly by the above examples of Joseph Smith and David.

If our lives are found to be agreeable to God, we will qualify for the ultimate joy as expressed in the following scripture.

And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life. (Doctrine and Covenants 51:19)

Enos qualified for this joy and wrote the following at the end of his mortal life:

And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. (Enos 1:27)

When we are living the kind of life that would lead to this joy, we will be making correct choices when faced with difficult ethical dilemmas. To help us develop the type of faith that will lead us to this end, we need to learn about the true character of God and how He would act if given the same dilemmas.

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