

Cooper Mountain Relief Society Home Enrichment

Self Reliance

Mike Baird, April 8, 2003

Self Reliance – Associated Doctrine & Principle

- I'm not going to talk so much about *what is* self reliance but as to **why** we should be self reliant.
- Man given agency in Pre-Existence
 - Moses 4:1-3
 - "Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him. . ."
 - D&C 29:36
 - "also a third part of the hosts of heaven turned he away from me because of their agency"
- Life is test – How we use that agency
 - Abraham 3:24
 - "We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell"
 - 2 Nephi 2:11, 16
 - "opposition in all things"
 - "He should act for himself"
 - Grow by overcoming
- What we learn and become is what is important
 - D&C 130:19:20
 - "if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come"

- Agents unto ourselves (D&C 29:35)
 - I am responsible for who I am
- Once I accept this then I understand my welfare is my responsibility
 Spencer W Kimball:
 “No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family’s well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will work to the extent of his ability to supply himself and his family with the *spiritual* and *temporal* necessities of life. (See Gen. 3:19, I Tim. 5:8, and Philip. 2:12.)” (Ensign, May 1978, p. 79.)
- Accepting this responsibility is enabling

"When we accept the responsibility for our own and our family's well-being, we are better able to sustain ourselves in our everyday lives. We are better prepared to endure times of adversity without becoming dependent upon others and are better able to serve others." (Provident living website, <http://www.providentliving.org/content/display/0,11666,2591-1-1099-1,00.html>)

Look at the essence of this life and self-reliance

A Poem

Yes, my fretting,
Frowning child,
I could cross
The room to you
More easily.
But I've already
Learned to walk,
So I make you
Come to me.

Let go now—
There!
You see?

Oh, remember
This simple lesson,
Child,
And when
In later years
You cry out
With tight fists
And tears—
“Oh, help me,
God—please.”—
Just listen
And you'll hear
A silent voice:

“I would, child,
I would.
But it's you,
Not I,
Who needs to try
Godhood.”

(Carol Lynn Pearson, *Beginnings*, Provo: Trilogy Arts, 1967, p. 18.)

An Example

- Let me give an example to help with the vision
- Lessons learned about self reliance from 6½ years as a Scout Master camping with scouts
- New scouts – enthusiastic, excited, don't know anything
 - Have to teach them
- Week nights and Campouts are great teaching skills etc.
- Campouts are also great for teaching self reliance or not!
- Rules for Leaders & Dads
 - "Never do for a boy what he can do for himself" or "Always teach, never do"
 - Very hard for most Dads
 - At times it seemed a little harsh or maybe calloused
 - Relate experiences
 - Tents
 - Cooking food
 - I've seen some awful stuff cooked and ate!
 - Apply the rule with Love
- Rules for boys
 - "Did you look before asking me?"
 - Newer scout 1st time camping – very predictable
 - Assigned to be a cook by his patrol leader
 - "Mike, where is the <fill in the blank>?"
 - "How do I make this?"
 - "Did you try before asking me?"
 - "Did you ask the other patrol members?"
 - "Did you ask your patrol leader?"
 - Observer may wonder:
 - Why is the Scout Master just sitting there, why isn't he over there helping the boys <fill in the blank with activity>
- Rule for all - let them try it themselves first
 - Made sure they were safe
 - Made sure they learned from their mistakes
 - Made sure they worked together
 - Made sure they had fun
- The result

- The change I saw in those young men's lives was worth every moment I spent "not doing for them"

Do we "always teach and never do" in our families

- I am grateful for a Heavenly Father
 - Gave us agency
 - Created a world for us that we might live on
 - Teaches and doesn't do

What is Self Reliance?

- As we plan and work toward self-reliance, we should prepare ourselves in the areas of:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Home Storage
 - Resource Management
 - Social and Emotional Strength
- All commandments are Spiritual
 - D&C 29:34-35
 - "for my commandments are spiritual"
 - Have you wondered how that is?
 - Let's look at the commandment to be self-reliant to see how it is Spiritual

David O. McKay:

“It is something to supply clothing to the [poorly] clad, to furnish ample food to those whose table is thinly spread, to give activity to those who are fighting desperately the despair that comes from enforced idleness, but after all is said and done, the greatest blessings that will accrue from the Church [welfare program] are spiritual. Outwardly, every act seems to be directed toward the physical: remaking of dresses and suits of clothes, canning fruits and vegetables, storing foodstuffs, choosing fertile fields for settlement—all seem strictly temporal, but permeating all these acts, inspiring and sanctifying them, is the element of spirituality.” (In Conference Report, Oct. 1936, p. 103.)

- It is not spiritual if self reliance is the "end" and not the means.

Marion G Romney:

" Now, I wish speak of a very important truth: self-reliance is not the end, but a means to an end. It is very possible for a person to be completely independent and lack every other desirable attribute. One may become wealthy and never have to ask anyone for anything, but unless there is some spiritual goal attached to this independence, it can canker his soul." ("The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," Ensign, June 1984, 3)

- We make it spiritual by obeying the commandment to take care of ourselves and to give to those who can not

Marion G Romney:

" The key to making self-reliance spiritual is in using the freedom to comply with God's commandments. The scriptures are very clear in their command that it is the duty of those who have, to give to those who are in need." ("The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," Ensign, June 1984, 3)

Marion G Romney:

"Can we see how critical self-reliance becomes when looked upon as the prerequisite to service, when we also know service is what godhood is all about? Without self-reliance one cannot exercise these innate desires to serve. How can we give if there is nothing there? Food for the hungry cannot come from empty shelves. Money to assist the needy cannot come from an empty purse. Support and understanding cannot come from the emotionally starved. Teaching cannot come from the unlearned. And most important of all, spiritual guidance cannot come from the spiritually weak" ("The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance," Ensign, June 1984, 6).

- What is the principle then when there is a problem/issue?
 - Solve it with my own resources
 - Solve it with my family resources
 - Then turn to the church
- This includes spiritual matters
 - Elder Boyd K Packer:

"I have been concerned that we may be on the verge of doing to ourselves emotionally (and therefore spiritually) what we have been working so hard for generations to avoid materially. If we lose our emotional and spiritual self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially. On one hand, we counsel bishops

to avoid abuses in the Church welfare program. On the other hand, we seem to dole out counsel and advice without the slightest thought that the member should solve the problem himself or turn to his family. Only when those resources are inadequate should he turn to the Church." ("Self-Reliance," Ensign, Aug. 1975, 85)

Summary

- God gave us our agency so that we might grow and become like him
 - We are agents unto ourselves
- The commandment to be self reliant is spiritual
- We should prepare ourselves in the areas of:
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Health
 - Home Storage
 - Resource Management
 - Social and Emotional Strength
- Principle for when I have a problem
 - Solve it with my own resources
 - Solve it with my family resources
 - Then turn to the church
- If we do for others what they can do for themselves we are not teaching correct principles

Testimony