

**“Love One Another, As I Have Loved You”
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You are an exquisite sight. I hope you know that and feel that—that you are extraordinary, and that God has brought us here for such as time as this. It is good for us to be here.

I’d like to start out and tell you about a recent trip to the grocery store. Our favorite thing, of course. As I was driving to the store I called my husband to unload. I was feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, and spent. One more demand on my time and I was going to snap. We were out of everything: money, groceries, and time. But I needed to feed my family and I had 30 free minutes, so the grocery store it was. My two-year-old boy and I headed there together and started a very deliberate shopping trip. I started to feel myself calm down just a little as I started to engage with him, my son, narrating everything for him and asking him questions. Nelson, where is the bread? How about the peas? How about the soy sauce—why can’t we find the soy sauce? Seemed like we had been looking forever—why was the soy sauce so hard to find? We had been looking forever for the soy sauce, and as we began to turn the aisle, a woman approached me. She said, “The soy sauce is right there.” It was just around the corner in the next aisle. And then she looked at me—I think she was probably a little embarrassed because she thought, how would I know she needed soy sauce—she said, “I heard you ask where it was.”

I felt so grateful. It was truly a moving experience for me. Such a simple gesture. Did she know I was rushed and frenzied and anxious to get this task done? “Thank you!” I said. And as we left the soy sauce aisle, we saw a man giving out sample cookies. Now, I don’t care how big of a hurry you’re in, there is always time for a sample cookie! So we stopped and we indulged and my adorable little boy said “thank you” in the sweetest little voice you ever did hear and then we headed straight to the cheese. Well, as we got to the cheese section the cookie man approached me and I’m thinking, “Great, what does he want?” He said, “I’m about to end my shift.” Oh no, he needs a ride. I don’t have time for this. Thirty minutes, that’s all I’ve got, and I’ve got to get out of here, and by that time, I didn’t even have that. I was not in a charitable state of mind. I couldn’t manage one more thing, not one more request. Now imagine my embarrassment when he looked at me instead, “These cookies are paid for. My shift is ending, I’m not going to

get rid of all of them. Can I give you a package?" Of course, they're Mother's Cookies, right? My eyes filled with tears. "Of course I'll take your cookies. Thank you!" (And you better believe I'm going to eat every one of them!) We followed him back to his little display table so he could put a smiley face sticker on it to prove I didn't steal them. I was in that state of mind. And as he handed me the package, I had the presence of mind to feel this impression, an invitation to stop. "My name is Jennifer," I said to him, "and it's been a rough day." "I'm George, and I thought so." "Thank you, George, for lightening my burden in such a simple way." Then he told me something really important about himself. "You know, he began, my dad taught me to do things like this. Growing up we always had extra kids living in our house. My Dad was always finding someone that he noticed who needed a kindness, that's just the kind of person he was. He died recently and I want to honor him." I hugged George and left for the milk, and thanked him for doing things in remembrance of his father.

In a matter of seconds I was transformed. Changed. Filled with hope, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I had found the love of Jesus Christ in the grocery store.

In a small way, I feel I have come to know you through this process. I've come to know a bit of your heaviness. Your burdens. The weight you carry and the hope you're seeking. The Spirit we desire. Not because I know each of you individually, but because I know Jesus Christ. He's shown you to me these past months as I've prepared for this moment. We need the Spirit. We need Jesus Christ. His invitation is to come unto Him and to join him in His work. I plead for the gift and power of the Holy Ghost for each one of us today, to know and understand his role as a special ministering messenger and to also know our own purpose. My hope is that each of us will feel custom messages just for us. That these messages will give us clarity on our own personal ministries and teach us how to love one another as Jesus Christ loves us. I pray that we will have the courage to act on what we receive today.

Jesus Christ's entire life: pre-mortal, mortal and post-mortal is a ministry of love. Pure love. Charity. We experience and understand His love in so many ways. Perhaps few scriptural accounts more sacredly illustrate His love than what we find in the Gospel of John, particularly during His final days. Will you come with me to a sacred space? To an upper room. A space elevated and separate from the noise of the world. Let's leave behind the busyness of the city preparing for a passover feast. Come with Christ, who knows heavy burdens, "Father," He says, "save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name..."ⁱ And so we gather, you and I as His disciples. Imagine, if you can, the Lord, kneeling before you. He's laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Maybe we feel like Peter:

"Thou needest not to wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that has washed his hands and his head, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean."ⁱⁱ

We like Peter desire to be clean, every whit. Together we partake of the emblems of His flesh. Bread. Each piece unique and different, just like you and me. Wine.ⁱⁱⁱ The symbol

of the blood he was about to shed.

We feel the power of the symbols. Unity. Purification. Spiritual power. And like the disciples He has tutored and trusted, we need the Holy Ghost. Because Christ is not with us right now. Yet He has prepared his trusted friends. They are qualified, these 11 men, who would suffer in remembrance of him in their apostolic mortal ministries.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”^{iv}

Even Peter struggled with figuring out how to pursue this higher, holier command. Christ cautioned him:

“...behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”^v

There is a pattern in this. None of us are exempt from Satan and his desire to deceive us. He wants sifting to destroy us. Christ, however, wants sifting to convert and refine us. Think about it. Do you ever have a recipe that calls for sifted flour? If you're like me, you skip the step. You don't have time, or you don't have a sifter, or you don't care. Or you don't really understand why it matters. Yet sifting refines and purifies, and breaks down coarseness—or natural man tendencies—to produce a better quality bread. Even living bread. We become converted, or changed as we experience the siftings of the adversary, and we can trust that Christ continues to pray for us.

“I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.”^{vi}

You and I can learn to resist evil by following Christ's pattern. This pattern includes trying to love one another as he loves us. This is a process of unity—becoming ONE with Jesus Christ and the Father as we seek to minister to others one by one, just as He does.

Today, I want to share with you a few observations of Christ's pattern of love. I'll focus on three principles. The first is this, Christ makes the ordinary sacred, and so can we. Two, Christ teaches us to understand doctrine. And three, He prepares us to receive the Holy Ghost.

Now let's begin by focusing on this first point, the ordinary becoming sacred. I want to teach you something that has helped me to learn to love others as Christ does. It helps me get out of the monotony and find possibilities even in grocery stores. This is something I learned in my doctoral studies while I was working in Ethiopia. Now I was drawn to Ethiopia when I was 13 years old. If you're old enough, you might remember the desperate situation that we saw on television. In fact, there was a lot of fundraising that happened in the '80s. Do you remember *We Are the World*? I'm not going to sing it, but now it's in all of your heads, isn't it? There was also a fast in 1985 under the direction of President Spencer W. Kimball. That fast was amazing, there were so many

offerings that the prophet asked [Bishop] Glen Pace and [President M.] Russell Ballard to travel to the country and figure out how to distribute \$6 million dollars donated by members of the Church. Their experiences were remarkable and they sought to offer relief to those suffering.^{vii}

Well, something about all of this appealed to my little girl soul. Even more so, I think that the Holy Ghost was preparing me for some eventual work in this glorious country. I really do believe that each of us has a specific mission and ministry to perform on this earth. It's unique to each of us and discovered over and over throughout our lifetime in revelatory bursts and quiet whisperings.

Well, fast forward from 1985 to 2008. I was drawn to earn a PhD—God calls us to do specific things, and sometimes they're hard and scary, but when we know they are from Him we can do anything. When we tune our hearts to hear His voice, He'll speak. And direct. And lead us in paths that we know not save he commandeth. In the summer of 2009 I landed myself in Ethiopia to initiate doctoral studies. I used the coolest methodology. It was so neat. I gave people cameras and said, "I want you to show me what it looks like to live your life." Take photos from the moment you wake up, until you go to bed at night. Then come back and bring them to me and let's see and look for some patterns. Well, as I would comb through all of these photographs every one of them showed me one event: Ethiopian coffee ceremony.^{viii} This became the focus of my research. I wanted to understand how the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, or Buna, helped to shape female identity. Little did I know that this would shape the rest of my life. Every. Single. Day.

My Ethiopian friends laugh at me every time I tell them how passionate I am about coffee because they say, "you've never even tasted it." But imagine this. What would it be like for you to gather with your closest friends and neighbors every day, sometimes more than once a day, just to love each other? Everything stops for Buna.

And most every day my mind wanders to a dusty village in Ethiopia, Dera. I catch myself longing to be surrounded by my beautiful friends. I can smell the smoke of incense and fire, roasting beans—coffee, I do like the smell quite a lot. Buna. I long to be in a sacred circle of sisters. They gather to talk. To escape life. To drink coffee. To love.

When my heart wants to be there, I imagine watching them. Listening. Learning. I see them prepare. One woman, the hostess, takes the lead in preparing the coffee. Grinding, boiling, then serving. They participate in a variety of ways. Many women have brought their babies or young children with them. They tend to them while participating. Others have brought work to do. Handwork or sewing. And some have just taken a break. Each woman is welcome. Safe. Included. Loved. They eat popcorn or other snacks, trying to prolong their Buna experience, and eventually the Jebena pot is empty and they go back to work, whatever that work is. Filled. Content. Buoyed up. Remembering their time together. Thinking about each other. Wishing for the next Buna circle to come quickly.

When I asked the women about their ritual, they would say to me, "Well, this is just something that we do. Our mothers did it. Our daughters will do it. Buna is part of our

lives.” An Ethiopian friend of mine who now lives in the United States tells me—you’ll love this—“If I have a problem, we don’t have those psychiatry or something to tell us what to do, so that’s the way we treat each other, you know? If I have a problem, we just talk about it and the other ladies tell you a solution.”^{ix} Isn’t that great? In a natural, organic way, my Ethiopian friends just take care of each other. There is no need for an appointment, an invitation, they gather, and they minister.

Like my Ethiopian friends, I think a lot of times we do good and important things that feel ordinary and routine. As an outsider, it was easy for me to see how special and unique this context is. And truly, if you know an Ethiopian woman, she really does value her Buna time. But here’s what was so transforming to me: I realized that when we do the things we claim to value with the intent of making them sacred, we feel the love of the Lord in our lives. Buna is a ritual. An act performed with great intention. Looking at the lives of someone so different from me helped me to see that I likewise do ordinary things but often get caught in the monotony of them, forgetting that we—you and me—can live really intentional, focused lives without adding to our already busy schedules. Rather we can simply do them on purpose. We can ritualize our lives.^x

Here’s how I have learned to define ritual—it’s really pretty simple—it’s making something sacred or holy. If I were to make a study of your life, the things you do from the time you wake in the morning until you go to bed at night, what one or two things would I observe that you consistently do? Make your bed, I hope—or not? Drive the carpool? Go to work?

What would it look like to make that one thing sacred? Holy? Dedicated or consecrated to God? So let’s use my trip to the grocery store as an example. I was in a bad state of mind. But, with the help of my kind husband and the Holy Ghost, I realized I could ritualize the experience.

Now, it’s important to note that there are three simple components to ritualizing something—you may even have noticed them as I was describing Buna. There are these three things: first, we prepare, then we participate, and then we remember. It’s that simple. It’s just a matter of doing it. And trust me, choosing to ritualize the ordinary things we do really does help us to not only feel the Savior’s love for us but to extend it to others.

I prepared for the grocery store by making a list. But I also decided to get present with my son. I wanted to really focus on him. We had this half hour, just the two of us to be alone, so I wanted to engage with him. I was also hoping being present with him would be a much-needed break from the craziness of the day.

Then I participated in the shopping process. I not only wanted to but I needed to feel Christ’s love for me. OK, now I know that may sound odd to you. Gee, I think I’ll go to the grocery store so I can feel loved. I needed to feel love so badly in those moments and I wanted to hope I’d feel it by simply being with other people. Getting groceries was all I had time for. The shopping needed to be done. You may not have felt the Holy Ghost the last time someone helped you find soy sauce on aisle 10. Or while sampling a cookie. Those experiences may not have affected you the way they did me. But they were impactful because I needed them to be. I was participating in my process.

Christ speaks love to us through the Holy Ghost whenever we ask for it. And it is absolutely in the ordinary. This is Christ's pattern. His whole life was spent in loving people where they are, and you better believe He didn't leave them there, He lifted and elevated to a higher, holier place. He used bread, fish, and lilies to teach profound doctrines. He healed while walking through streets and He loved always.

And so we participate in our lives with great intention, focusing on Him.

The last part then of the ritual process, after we've prepared and participated, is to remember. Sometimes it's simply evaluating what happened and what would I do differently? Or like today, it's remembering how good it felt. Is there something you'd like to ritualize in your life? The way you drive to work? Or the way you make your bed? How about your prayers? I really believe that we can feel the power of loving as He loves by laying our hearts on the altar, making a whole soul offering to Christ as we pray.

"And now, my beloved [sisters], I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption. Yea, come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in fasting and prayer, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved."^{xi}

How then do we make a whole soul offering? We give Him our heart, might, mind and strength—we hold nothing back. And I really do believe it begins with prayer. Earnest, intentional, sacred prayer that takes so much work. We prepare for prayer by thinking and pondering about our desires. This includes blessings we desire for ourselves and others. We may even write these things down. We prepare by finding a sacred, secret place. What else do you do to prepare yourself to pray? I hope you'll think about it and start to make a plan to be ready to pray.

Then we kneel and participate as we unite ourselves with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Isn't that extraordinary and significant? To commune with the Godhead? We seek His will, just like Christ in his great intercessory prayer, we account for our stewardships.

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."^{xii}

We aren't finished yet, so we ask for help. Is it acceptable? What would thou have me do? What if, like Jesus, we asked to have a sense for who we were pre-mortally, who we've always been?

"O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."^{xiii}

In prayer, we can seek for truth

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."^{xiv}

We seek for unity.

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”^{xv}

Make us one, we plead. We plead for the power of His redemption and we seek to make a whole soul offering.

And then we remember. We remember the promptings, the feelings, the ideas that all come to us in the act of prayer. And then we act in faith. We pray always, hoping to feel the Holy Ghost with us guiding us as we grow, stretch, and act in His love.

A friend of mine shared with me her experience in this kind of prayer. Listen to her words as she expresses a whole soul offering.

"My largest experience with feeling God's love came not in a moment when I felt the most stable in my faith. No, it came when I accepted who I was and stopped pretending to be someone I was not. Growing up and knowing that I was gay and Mormon caused a lot of anxiety, shame, and fear. Fear that there really was something wrong with me, that I really was evil, a monster even. That I didn't have a plan of salvation. Like many, I prayed countless times that if God would just take this away, I would do anything. However, my attraction grew and solidified, and the years went on, and I started to believe that maybe God hated me. I did not believe I was worthy of love or happiness.

One night, I was exhausted and felt I had hit rock bottom. I knelt beside my bed, shaking. I remembered Joseph Smith kneeling in the grove. He asked a simple question. Why couldn't I?

So I knelt—a final effort to see if someone was really there. I prayed, 'Dear Father, I'm gay. Are you okay with that?' As I paused, an overwhelming peace covered me, such as I had not felt in many, many years. It almost felt as if someone was hugging me. Then, crystal clear in my mind these powerfully calm words came, "I know. And I love you."

In that moment, with incredible clarity I realized that God had never abandoned me. God never hated me. In hiding myself and allowing shame to overcome me, there was no room to feel God's love. In that moment when I accepted who I was, I could feel God's love again and I started to recognize the Spirit more readily. I felt joy for the first time in years and, most importantly, I felt compassion and love for those around me too. No matter how difficult or complicated life gets, we are always worthy of happiness and love—especially the love of the Good Shepherd."^{xvi}

I love my friend. I love her courage and the way she offers her whole soul to the Lord, not just in mighty prayer, but in the way she lives. That mighty prayer has led her to the temple where she has made covenants with our God. She knows her divine identity and her worth.

When we try to make an offering to the Lord, we shouldn't hold anything back. After all, He already knows. And somehow in our expression of our deepest desires, hurts, fears, joys, we feel more sure of how He feels. I know that the Holy Ghost bears powerful witness to each of our broken and malleable hearts that we are absolutely exquisite in

His eyes. We are divine. And He needs us to know it and own it. We are loved and cherished and absolutely adored by the creator of heaven and earth. And when we know that, we love others as He does. Getting really purposeful in our lives helps us to love one another as He loves us. That's Christ's way to take care of the ordinary.

Now, here's another idea, the second point. Another thing that helps us to love others as He does, Christ wants us to seek to understand his love doctrinally. What is the doctrine of love? Rather than just state what others have taught the doctrine of love to be, I'm going to teach you an approach to discover for yourself. We need to do this by differentiating between DOCTRINES, PRINCIPLES, and APPLICATIONS. Now, let me pause for a moment and I want to witness to you the power that comes to our lives when we learn to not only understand doctrine, but to act in it. The doctrine of Christ is so pure, so obtainable, and so necessary to us becoming who He needs us to be. Further, we live in a world that claims a Christ that is permissible and accepting of all behaviors. While Christ's love is "perfect, infinite, enduring, and universal"^{xxvii} his laws and standards cannot be violated if we really want to experience and understand divine love.

After all, we know that "when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."^{xxviii} "I the Lord am bound when you do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."^{xxix} And we know that the Lord has said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."^{xxx}

Any effort we make to understand divine love for ourselves empowers us against false ideologies about Christ. When we understand His doctrine, we know how to love each other and come to Him to be refined and perfected.

So to illustrate this, I want to use a methodology that Elder David A. Bednar^{xxi} has laid out. It's distinguishing doctrines, principles, and applications. They really are different from one another. And while we may talk or teach that they are the same thing, they're not. So let's get clear.

DOCTRINE

Doctrine is an eternal truth. It is given to us from God, through prophets. These eternal truths point us to Jesus Christ. Doctrines are unchanging and relatively few in number. Doctrines answer the question of WHY. Some examples of doctrine—and these will be familiar I hope—should be the Godhead, the plan of salvation, Jesus Christ and His atonement, prophets and revelation, ordinances and covenants, the family, and commandments. These are the basic doctrines of our youth curriculum. It's worth our every effort to study and know these doctrines.

Now, consider how principles, then, are different from doctrines. Principles are also eternal truths but they guide us to know HOW to use doctrine. Like doctrine, they are unchanging and they answer the question WHAT. What should I do to act in doctrine?

Often, we hear principles stated in IF–THEN statements.^{xxii} The classic being "Inasmuch as ye keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land."^{xxiii} Obedience becomes an important principle for living the doctrine of Commandments. Likewise the Word of

Wisdom is a principle with a promise which helps us to honor our bodies. The doctrine of the body is central to the plan of salvation. We utilize our agency to live the principle so that we can be healthy and free from bad habits and addiction. Honoring our body helps us to feel and experience the doctrine of the Holy Ghost more profoundly in our lives. The Spirit helps us to prepare to live with God again. OK, was that amazing? How many doctrines did you hear in living that one principle of the Word of Wisdom? It's not a test. Don't worry.

Applications, then, vary as broadly as the women and men in this room. They are received individually and through the Spirit. Applications help us to know HOW we should act in doctrine.

OK, did I mention that applications are very personal and customized—unique to individuals? Understanding this is so important because we often compare how we live. But, if we really understand the distinction between doctrine, principles and application, then we will work to focus more on the doctrine—the WHY of our behaviors. Focusing on application or HOW we live is divisive, because I shouldn't judge you for what the Holy Ghost is telling you to do. I may not understand your approach, but if we are one in doctrine, in the WHY, then it doesn't matter how we pursue it.

Observing the Sabbath day is a great example. Remember when Christ healed a man on the Sabbath day. The Jews were concerned and even persecuted—Jesus—they had sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day even. “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”^{xxiv}

See, the Jews were caught up in HOW the Sabbath was observed, not WHY. From start to finish of his mortal life, Christ was always focused on the Father and being one with Him:

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”^{xxv}

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”^{xxvi}

Continually pointing ourselves to the doctrine helps us to be one in Christ as He is one with the Father. Think of the love we extend to each other when instead of judging HOW another person is living, we assume the very best, that they are pursuing doctrine. Look for and trust the WHY of other's behaviors. Teach and testify of WHY we do what we do. This gives us entrance into the sacred spaces of one another's hearts where there is hidden sorrow that the eye can't see. We also learn to pursue our questions differently and find peace with the ambiguity associated with mortality.

It takes a lot of work, patience, and time to train ourselves to be doctrinally focused. But we can use this simple rubric. DOCTRINE answers the WHY, PRINCIPLES answer WHAT, and APPLICATION teaches HOW to press forward in this glorious cause.

Now, do you recognize this statement from President Boyd K. Packer?

“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviors. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. Preoccupation with unworthy behavior can lead to unworthy behavior. That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel.”^{xxvii}

Or, stated another way: The study of the WHY of the gospel will improve HOW we live the gospel quicker than studying HOW we live the gospel. Say that 10 times fast.

So, what behavior do you want to change so you can love others the way Christ does?

Think about it. What holds you back from loving fully? Maybe it's needing to forgive someone who has wronged you? Repenting of a favorite little sin? Or learning to really own and embrace our divine identity. Rather than focusing on behaviors that might change those ideas, we study the doctrine, learn the WHY behind what we're trying to change, then patiently pursue it. We can discover and understand the doctrine, then be really intentional in watching for the miracles that follow.

I invite you to practice this today. That as you attend sessions, listen to the doctrine that the presenters are teaching. Look for the WHY in the message. And when you identify the doctrine, look for the principles. WHAT should we do to live that doctrine?

The Holy Ghost will tell you HOW you should act. With a little time and effort, you'll start to see doctrines everywhere. When we find ourselves in a sticky, or confusing, or uncertain situation, go to the doctrine. Ask yourself: WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE I need to understand to help me to get to the WHY of this situation?

Do you see how this helps us to get past checklists, reports or task-oriented mentality to really living an intentional life? Doctrine helps us to see a higher and holier way to live in this mortal realm so we can live with Jesus Christ and the Father again. To live with them once more should be an ultimate WHY for each of us.

I think this leads me to the energy we're feeling in this conference, in general conference, in talking about the changes, and the new approaches and invitations, the changes in quorums, inclusion of Young Women in holy ministering work. But WHY? WHY is President Nelson receiving this revelation for the Church right now?

He needs us to be ready for Christ's return. He's coming back. President Nelson invited the men of the Church to literally stand up, rise with him and commit to be united as men of God. President Nelson said:

"Think of your duty as God's mighty army to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. This is our charge. This is our privilege."^{xxviii}

Sisters, it is our charge and it is our privilege to arise! Look to Jesus Christ and respond to the plea of a prophet to have a bedrock understanding of Christ's doctrine.

"Attacks against the Church, its doctrine, and our way of life are going to increase.

Because of this, we need women who have a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ and who will use that understanding to teach and help raise a sin-resistant generation. We need women who can detect deception in all of its forms. We need women who know how to access the power that God makes available to covenant keepers and who express their beliefs with confidence and charity. We need women who have the courage and vision of our Mother Eve.

My dear sisters, nothing is more crucial to your eternal life than your own conversion. It is converted, covenant-keeping women—and I include my dear wife Wendy—whose righteous lives will increasingly stand out in a deteriorating world and who will thus be seen as different and distinct in the happiest of ways."^{xxix}

We can do this! We are doing this, responding to the plea of our prophet. We can align ourselves with President Nelson, acting in doctrine as we minister one by one. We are promised miracles. Think of the doctrine of prophets and revelation as taught by Ammon in the Book of Mormon:

"...a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can. Yet a man may have great power given him from God."

"But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed... Thus God has provided a means that [wo]men, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings."^{xxx}

President Nelson is a great benefit to us. We can experience mighty miracles by standing with him and doing our part. And don't worry if what you do looks different from someone else. Remember, that's focusing on the HOW of acting in doctrine. Use your gifts and talents and abilities to build the kingdom right where you are. We don't have to be the president of anything to do good things. In fact, the least among us can become the greatest ministers.

When I served as my ward Primary president a few years ago, I suggested that we call Virginia as a Primary worker. The Bishopric was hesitant. Though nearly 50 years old, Virginia had never had a Church calling. Would this be the right one or time?

I persisted. Virginia was called as a Primary worker, and her specific calling was to love the children. In a letter to her and then later in a simple orientation, I explained that I felt the Lord had called her to love, whatever that meant to her. Some Sundays she would sit with different children and sing her heart out. Other Sundays she would stand with me at the door to greet the children as they entered. I would often say the name of the child to welcome them so she would know their names.

"Hello Susan. Welcome to Primary today," I would say.

Then Virginia would often compliment the child or take their face in her hands and draw them near and say, "Hello Susan. I love you."

There was a purity she brought to us as she nurtured and ministered one by one not just to the children, but to all of us. I'll never forget the day when Virginia took a nearly 8 year old boy's face in her hands, looked into his eyes and said: "I LOVE YOU." After a few seconds, He turned back to me and said: "Sister Platt, What am I feeling?"

This is the Holy Ghost, borne to you through love.

I miss Virginia every single Sunday. Especially when we sing her favorite songs. I long for her to hold me tight and tell me, "I love you!"

You see, the WHY for her was clear. She was a special messenger from Jesus Christ on this earth. We were all blessed to know this miraculous and pure soul. And I'd like to believe she's with us here today. Virginia, I love you.

What's your WHY? What's your WHY? Can you ritualize it by preparing, participating and remembering in such a way that you make it sacred and holy to you? Try to make it matter by being intentional and purposeful. Acting in remembrance of our Savior Jesus Christ. I was so moved by George the cookie guy, at the grocery store, and his expression to me, that he tries to serve others in remembrance of his Father. He wants to remember his dad, and so he thinks about him and tries to do the kind of good that he saw his dad do.

When we come to know Jesus Christ, not just socially or culturally but doctrinally, we know how to love as he loves. We are protected because we aren't worrying about how other people live but want to be unified in WHY we press forward. What will this look like in your life today? Tomorrow? In the coming weeks or months? What commitments is the Holy Ghost asking you to make so that together we can act in doctrine in a unified sisterhood? Christ wants us to know his doctrine.

THE HOLY GHOST

My third point, one last thing I'd like to share with you today. In the upper room, Peter asked "Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake."^{xxxix}

To lay down our life for Christ's sake is to surrender our will. It's learning to want what he wants us to want. And being willing to be inconvenienced or stretched when there doesn't seem to be anything more to give. It's the Holy Ghost saying: stop and talk to the cookie guy. And it's the miracle of the two fish and loaves that continues for each of us everyday when we give him our heart and our will. Laying down our lives looks like planning the day and then being open to the disruptions of others knocking at the door and needing you right now even though you are diligently trying to work your list.

But we can only lay down our lives under the direction of the Holy Ghost. Our covenant promise of the Holy Ghost as a constant companion should be taken at face value. Learning to recognize and receive the Holy Ghost is vital. And so what does that look like for you? How does the Holy Ghost talk to you? What does it feel like? What have been the patterns of revelation throughout your life? When do you notice a void of the Spirit in your life? I think it's really important to make a study of these things and be

clear on how the Holy Ghost communicates with us.

Christ taught his disciples and us: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”^{xxxii}

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”^{xxxiii}

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”^{xxxiv}

We can commit to seeking to understand, feel, and act on the promptings of the Holy Ghost. And we can experience peace in Christ. He will lead us to do things in small and simple ways. We can commit to love as Christ loves by leaving others filled with the Spirit because they have been with us. This can happen by simply learning to hold our souls still and observe.

My friend Cori tells a wonderful family story that illustrates how we can lift and elevate others in the simplest of ways. This is her story and you’re going to love it. Ready? OK.

“One Sunday afternoon our family gathered around our big oak table for dinner. Soon my daughter Kate’s laughter rose above the talk. “Gram, you’re silly!” she said. We all turned to see my mom delicately lifting to her mouth a small strand of peas on the blade of her knife. All but one pea made it, and everyone clapped. Then Mom told us the story behind her unorthodox technique:

“When I was little we didn’t have much. It was the Depression. But we did have a table full of food because my father grew wonderful vegetables. Lots of hobos who had jumped onto the train wandered into our property, looking for a meal. More often than not an extra seat was pulled up to our dinner table.

“One summer afternoon I was sweeping the kitchen floor when my father’s voice came through the screen door: ‘Lizzy, set another plate. We have company tonight.’ Our guest paused in the doorway, and dipped his head in a gesture of gratitude. ‘Looks like he doesn’t speak much English,’ Dad said, ‘but he’s hungry like we are, and his name is Henry.’

“When dinner was ready Henry stood until we were all seated, then gently perched on the edge of his chair, his head bowed and his hat in his lap. The blessing was said and dishes were passed from hand to hand.

“We all waited, as was proper, for our guest to take the first bite. Henry must have been so hungry he didn’t notice us watching him as he grabbed his knife. Carefully he slid the blade into the pile of peas before him, and then lifted a quivering row to his mouth without spilling a single pea. He was eating with his knife! I looked at my sister May and we covered our mouths to muffle our snickers. Henry took another knife-full, and then

another.

“My father, taking note of the glances we were exchanging, firmly set down his fork. He looked me in the eye, then took his knife and thrust it into the peas on his plate. Most of them fell off as he attempted to lift them to his mouth, but he continued until all the peas were gone.

“Dad never did use his fork that night, because Henry didn’t. It was one of my father’s silent lessons in acceptance. He understood the need of this man to maintain his dignity, to feel comfortable in a strange place with people of different customs. Even at my young age I understood the greatness of my father’s simple act of brotherhood.”

“Mom paused, looked at her grandchildren, and winked as she plowed her knife into a mountain of peas.”

The Holy Ghost will help us to see how we can extend Christ-like love in the ordinary. We feel peace, clarity, and joy when we respond to the nudges of the Spirit. It isn’t always easy or comfortable to act, but the results are always joy.

Today we’ve been to the grocery store, to an upper room, a Buna circle, a Primary classroom, a dinner table. We’ve seen how Christ is in the ordinary, everyday events of our lives, loving intentionally, doctrinally, and laying down His life for us. We can be filled in our longing to love as he loves.

Just a few days ago as I was wishing for my Buna circle, needing and wanting a break from my long list of to-dos and my restless children, I prayed. I prayed that someone might remember me. I prayed that I wouldn’t have to ask someone to do something and that the Holy Ghost might deliver a message to the right person. As I finished the prayer, I walked outside to see my children talking to our friend Rae. There she was with her big dog and a circle of children, including mine. Just the day before Rae had shared with our Relief Society sisters that she wanted to be more available to the Lord. She wanted to set aside her own troubles and be the answer to another sister. As I looked at her and watched her talking to my children the Spirit whispered to me: here’s your Buna.

We sat on the porch and watched kids on scooters. She asked about my day. I said it is exactly as it should be because you are the answer to my prayer. Thanks for always being the answer, Rae.

We are like a mighty army, we move the Church of God; Sisters, we are treading where the Saints have trod. We are not divided; All one body we: One in hope and doctrine, One in charity.

We can love one another as Jesus loves us in ordinary and extraordinary ways. I bear my witness of Jesus Christ as the center of my world. He lives and He loves us, and He needs us to arise and do our part in simple and extraordinary ways. May we all feel the courage to go forward in faith and to do our part, to love one another as He loves us in my prayer, in the sacred and holy name of Jesus Christ, amen.

ⁱ John 12:27–28

ⁱⁱ JST John 12:8–10

ⁱⁱⁱ Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Introductory Message” (address given at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 25, 2017), 2. As quoted by Elder D. Todd Christofferson in “The Living Bread Which Came Down from Heaven” (General Conference, October 2017).

^{iv} John 13:34

^v Luke 22:31–32

^{vi} John 17:15

^{vii} See <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2003/06/news-of-the-church/church-sends-aid-to-ethiopia?lang=eng> and <https://www.ldschurchnews.com/archive/2010-02-06/fast-for-ethiopia-accelerated-work-35072> and Glenn L. Pace’s book “Safe Journey: An African Adventure”

^{viii} Jennifer A. Brinkerhoff Doctoral Dissertation “Being A Good Ethiopian Woman: Participation in the “Buna” (Coffee) Ceremony and Identity.”

^{ix} *ibid*, Brinkerhoff

^x For more on ritualizing your life, see Jennifer A. Platt “Living Your Covenants Every Day” Deseret Book 2013.

^{xi} Omni 1:26

^{xii} John 17:4

^{xiii} John 17:5

^{xiv} John 17:17

^{xv} John 17:21

^{xvi} Personal Correspondence

^{xvii} Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Divine Love” (*Ensign*, February 2003)

^{xviii} Doctrine and Covenants 130:21

^{xix} Doctrine and Covenants 82:10

^{xx} John 14:15

^{xxi} For more on distinguishing between doctrines, principles, and application, see Elder David A. Bednar’s book “to Act in Doctrine.”

^{xxii} Elder Richard G. Scott spoke on several occasions about distinguishing principles. See for instance *Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge*, Oct 1993

^{xxiii} This statement is used throughout the Book of Mormon, it is first stated in 1 Nephi 2:20.

^{xxiv} John 5:17-18

^{xxv} John 17:3

^{xxvi} John 17:4-5

^{xxvii} President Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children” General Conference Oct 1986

^{xxviii} President Russell M. Nelson “Ministering with the Power and Authority of God” April 2018”

^{xxix} President Russell M. Nelson “A Plea to My Sisters” October 2015”

^{xxx} Mosiah 8:15-18

xxxⁱ John 13:36-37

xxxⁱⁱ John 14:16-17

xxxⁱⁱⁱ John 14:26

xxx^{iv} John 14:27