

“I Did Frankly Forgive Them”
Lolly S. and Russell T. Osguthorpe

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Elder Russell T. Osguthorpe: So when we were asked to speak on forgiveness, what was the first thing that came to your mind?

Sister Lolly S. Osguthorpe: Nothing. Then I thought—what is the Lord trying to teach me about forgiveness? What about you?

Elder Osguthorpe: I began thinking of our schedule and wondering if we would ever have time to prepare the talk.

Sister Osguthorpe: Especially if we could never find time to sit down together to do it!

Elder Osguthorpe: But somehow we found a little time. In fact, once we began thinking of the topic, something new seemed to happen every day related to forgiveness.

Sister Osguthorpe: That’s right. It seemed like we were constantly helping someone deal with an issue related to forgiveness.

Elder Osguthorpe: Yes, I recently attended a Sunday School class of youth where each class member was asked to prepare a short talk on the Atonement. I asked the young man sitting next to me if he could think of a personal experience when he drew upon the power of the Atonement. At first he hesitated, and then I asked, “Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt the Lord’s forgiveness?” He looked back at me and responded, “Well, yeah, when I broke a guy’s nose.” I asked him to explain. He said:

“I was in a soccer game, and a player on the other team made me really mad, so I punched him and broke his nose. After the game, I went home, and I laid down to take a rest, but all I could think about was that broken nose. So I got up and went to this guy’s house and told him I was sorry. He said it was okay and not to worry. I went back home and tried to rest again, but I knew I had to do something else. I got down on my knees and asked Heavenly Father for forgiveness too. After that, I felt good. I think that this is what the Atonement means to me,” he said.

Sister Osguthorpe: I like that story. It reminds me of the Book of Mormon account of Laman and Lemuel tying Nephi up and leaving him in the wilderness to die.

Elder Osguthorpe: There are lots of parallels. It's almost like there's a cycle of sin and forgiveness. Not that every situation is the same, but there are some phases we go through when forgiveness is necessary.

Sister Osguthorpe: And the cycle almost always begins with disobedience. When Lehi departed from Jerusalem and went into the wilderness, some of the members of his family were more supportive than others. The scriptures explain how "Laman and Lemuel, and two of the daughters of Ishmael, and two of the sons of Ishmael" rebelled against Lehi (1 Nephi 7:6). They wanted to return to the comforts of their home in Jerusalem. They wanted to *disobey* their father.

Elder Osguthorpe: Yes, and their disobedience caused Nephi to grieve "for the hardness of their hearts" (1 Nephi 7:8). So he tried to give them counsel and correction—another common phase in the cycle. At one point Nephi's correction became so strong he told them that if they went against their father and returned to Jerusalem, they would die (1 Nephi 7:15).

Sister Osguthorpe: Just as we all kill something spiritual inside us when we disobey God.

Elder Osguthorpe: Exactly. And after Nephi corrected his brothers, they became *angry*.

Sister Osguthorpe: So angry that they bound him with cords and left him to die and be "devoured by wild beasts" (1 Nephi 7:16).

Elder Osguthorpe: I'm always so fascinated by the role that anger plays in our worst moments. Anger is dangerous in every way because it almost always leads us to do something we're sorry for later.

Sister Osguthorpe: That's why the Savior taught that not only should we avoid *killing* someone, but "whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment" (3 Nephi 12:22).

Elder Osguthorpe: And Laman and Lemuel's anger did not end after they tied him up and left him to die. As soon as he was free, they became angry with Nephi again.

Sister Osguthorpe: But then something very important happened: "one of the daughters of Ishmael. . . and also her mother, and one of the sons of Ishmael, did plead with [Laman and Lemuel], insomuch that they did soften their hearts" (1 Nephi 7:19). We don't know exactly what they did to help Laman and Lemuel soften their hearts. But they did or said something that worked.

Elder Osguthorpe: Yes, it worked so well that Laman and Lemuel were "sorrowful, because of their wickedness, insomuch that they did bow down before [Nephi] and did plead with [him] that [he] would forgive them of the thing that they had done against [him]" (1 Nephi 7:20).

Sister Osguthorpe: Their *sorrow and pleading for forgiveness* are so important in the cycle.

Elder Osguthorpe: Without their sorrow and pleading, they would have remained angry with Nephi. They would have held onto their disobedience and rebellion.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is the beginning of the miracle of forgiveness—that moment when anger changed to remorse.

Elder Osguthorpe: I agree. It's truly a miracle. One minute they want to kill Nephi, and then their hearts soften and they plead for forgiveness.

Sister Osguthorpe: But for me, the even greater miracle was how Nephi responded. His brothers had just tried to kill him, and how did Nephi respond when his brothers asked him to forgive them? Did he become defensive? Did he remind them of how cruel they had been to him? Did he dig in his heels? Did he rub it in? No! He “frankly forgave them.”

Elder Osguthorpe: These three words are as powerful as any in scripture. His brothers had left him in the desert to be “devoured by wild beasts.” What greater wrong could they have done to their own brother? But when their hearts softened—when they recognized how evil their actions had been—Nephi frankly forgave them.

Sister Osguthorpe: The scriptures make it sound as if Nephi's forgiveness was instant. There is no mention that he had to go think it over, no indication that he had to release his anger before he could forgive them, no hint that he had to present them with a set of conditions before he could forgive them. He just forgave them, no questions asked.

Elder Osguthorpe: When I began studying these verses, I wondered about the word *frankly*. We use the word *frankly* today to mean *candidly* or *forthrightly*. But this is not the full meaning of the word when Nephi used it. The word *frank* originally meant “to be free—free from enslavement, free from anxiety, unburdened, unrestricted, unconditional” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In other words, Nephi forgave Laman and Lemuel totally, completely, nothing held back, no lingering resentment. He *freely* forgave them, just as the Lord *freely* forgives us of all of our sins and mistakes.

Sister Osguthorpe: Nephi freed his brothers from the burden of their sin. There is something liberating, amazingly liberating about such forgiveness. It frees the one who sinned, but it also frees the one who forgives. Forgiveness frees everyone involved when it is offered without restraint, with no conditions. I believe that it is one of the most exalted and exalting actions that anyone can experience in mortality.

Elder Osguthorpe: So in this brief account, we can see the elements of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Laman and Lemuel *rebelled*. Their rebellion caused Nephi to *grieve*. So he *corrected* Laman and Lemuel. Then they took offense at Nephi's correction and became *angry*. But then, when they recognized how wrong they had been, their *hearts softened*. They *pled* for forgiveness. Nephi *frankly forgave* them. Then they *prayed* to their Father in Heaven for forgiveness. And finally, they felt gratitude and *rejoiced*.

Sister Osguthorpe: The soccer player who broke his opponent's nose had a lot in common with Laman and Lemuel. His opponent did something that made him angry. Anger led to cruel behavior. Then in some way the soccer player's heart softened. He went and asked his opponent to forgive him. Then he returned home and prayed for forgiveness. And finally he felt the healing power of the Atonement and rejoiced. The sequence of these elements can change in each case, but the elements are usually present.

Elder Osguthorpe: Remember how we tried to teach our kids that anger was just unacceptable?

Sister Osguthorpe: Oh, I remember. We used to focus on a monthly scripture and help each of our children memorize the words. A child who could write made a simple, homemade chart for the refrigerator that we posted for all the family members to review. One scripture that we referred to often and memorized again and again was King Benjamin's words, "And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin. . ." (Mosiah 4:14).

Elder Osguthorpe: So whenever our children would fight or quarrel, we would recite "our family scripture" and separate the offending siblings. We continued to teach them that it was our job as parents to help them learn to master this law of God—to not fight or quarrel.

Sister Osguthorpe: They didn't have to like it, but we continued to teach this lesson until they learned to express their feelings in more appropriate ways. It was only when we separated them for a "cooling down" time that reason could prevail, that they could examine their choices, and then express genuine love to each other. As a family we certainly didn't want to "serve the devil, who is the master of sin."

Elder Osguthorpe: And it did not count if they said "sorry" but didn't really mean it. They had to be sincere.

Sister Osguthorpe: We were really teaching them about forgiveness. We were trying to teach them to follow the example of Nephi and *frankly forgive* each other—completely and freely forgive each other.

Elder Osguthorpe: I am coming to believe that the capacity to forgive is learned. That's why we tried to teach our kids as early as possible. We can't possibly do it perfectly the first time we try to forgive. In fact, it's probably not something we *do* at all. It's a way of being. It's not so much an act as it is a Christlike characteristic.

Sister Osguthorpe: The reason Nephi's forgiveness was so immediate was because he had already forgiven Laman and Lemuel in his heart. Somehow he had developed a *forgiving heart*. He held nothing against them, even though they tried to kill him. They pled for his forgiveness, but he had already forgiven them before they started pleading.

Elder Osguthorpe: It's astonishing that Nephi could do that, but this is the goal for anyone who is trying to become a true disciple of the Savior. We all need to develop a forgiving heart so that when someone wrongs us, we can frankly forgive them. No need to think it over. No need to make them feel bad for what they have done. No need to remind them how much they hurt us. Just forgive them. Then we can forget all the pain and move on.

Sister Osguthorpe: We might think that Nephi was able to develop a forgiving heart, but we wonder if we can be that forgiving ourselves. The story of Chris Williams shows that we can. It's a story of forgiveness that teaches me something new each time I see it.

[Video—*Forgiveness: My Burden was Made Light—Mormon Messages, YouTube*]

This video tells the story of Chris Williams, who while he was driving with his family was hit by a 17-year-old young man who had been drinking. Killed in the accident were Chris's wife Michelle, who was pregnant with their fifth child, his second oldest son, Benjamin, and his only daughter, Anna. As the story unfolds, Chris's stake president tells how Chris's first concern—even while lying injured in hospital—was the condition of the drunk teenage driver who had taken three of his family members from him. Forgiveness came instantly to Chris because he had been preparing himself to forgive others all of his life. Chris had developed a forgiving heart.

Elder Osguthorpe: There is so much power in that story.

Sister Osguthorpe: It touches me every time I see it.

Elder Osguthorpe: There are many reasons Chris Williams' story is so moving. We can't help watching it without asking ourselves: could I do that—could I actually do that? Or, more importantly, *would* I do that—would I forgive so instantly, so completely?

Sister Osguthorpe: And yet it's so similar to Nephi and his brothers. There was disobedience in the Chris Williams story—the young driver broke the law. There was grief, anger, remorse, forgiveness, and gratitude.

Elder Osguthorpe: There is something so sacred about the scene where Chris visits the young man, smiling at him—showing that he still loves him. And then, after hearing that Chris freely forgave him, the young man said, "It's an overwhelming feeling of thankfulness and gratitude."

Sister Osguthorpe: That scene is so like the moment that Nephi forgave his brothers, and then Laman and Lemuel gave thanks to the Lord for the forgiveness they felt.

Elder Osguthorpe: It's significant that the forgiveness Laman and Lemuel felt or that the young driver in the video felt first came from another person—the one they had wronged.

Sister Osguthorpe: For me the most powerful message in both stories is the way that Chris Williams and Nephi forgave the wrongdoer instantly. They didn't have to think it over.

Elder Osguthorpe: That's exactly how I felt as I watched it. Chris's stake president visits Chris in the hospital, and the first words out of Chris's mouth are, "How is the young man who was driving the other car?"

Sister Osguthorpe: It's as if Chris was more worried about the one who had just taken the lives of his family than he was about anything else.

Elder Osguthorpe: That's what makes this story so powerful. Chris's stake president explained it well when he said that Chris "had made the decision long ago" to forgive. Long before the accident, Chris had developed a forgiving heart. Forgiving the young man was not only something Chris *did*. It wasn't a discreet act that he planned out. It was a way of being. It was a natural outgrowth of the person Chris had become. This is like Elder Lynn G. Robbins in conference inviting us to make "to be" lists instead of "to do" lists (April 2011 conference).

Sister Osguthorpe: And that's where Nephi and Chris are so much the same. Nephi frankly forgave, and so did Chris. The young man's mother gets to me every time when I hear her say,

“Knowing that somebody like that could so freely forgive—it was freeing to me.” That’s why forgiveness frees everyone. It frees the person who forgives. And it frees the one who is forgiven.

Elder Osguthorpe: And it frees everyone around them. When someone wrongs another person, there are usually people on the side who are hurt. And the way for that hurt to go away is for the one who was wronged to freely forgive.

Sister Osguthorpe: So the real question for me is, how can I develop a forgiving heart? How can I be like Chris Williams? How can I be like Nephi—and just instantly forgive others who wrong me?

Elder Osguthorpe: For me this is the most important question of all. It’s not as if there’s some step-by-step formula. I can’t tell someone else, “Just follow these steps, and you’ll have a forgiving heart.”

Sister Osguthorpe: No, but there are some hints in the scriptures about how we can at least begin working on developing a forgiving heart. Pahoran is my favorite example. Moroni was frustrated with Pahoran, sent him a letter, “censured” him, but Pahoran said, “it mattereth not” (Alma 61:9). Pretty amazing! Someone sends a letter to you accusing you of thinking only of yourself, and you say to him, “No problem, you’re such a wonderful person—your words bring me a lot of ‘joy’.”

Elder Osguthorpe: Not a very typical response, do you think, when someone is attacking us.

Sister Osguthorpe: Not typical at all. And it’s because Pahoran was thinking more of Moroni and *his* needs than he was of his own needs.

Elder Osguthorpe: Just as Chris Williams was thinking more of the young man’s well-being than he was of his own injuries.

Sister Osguthorpe: So if we want to develop the Christlike characteristic of freely forgiving others, we need to think more of others and less of ourselves.

Elder Osguthorpe: And that’s not easy. Sometimes it’s difficult to see through another person’s eyes. Pahoran saw things through Moroni’s eyes, not his own. Nephi saw things through Laman and Lemuel’s eyes when they pled for forgiveness. And Chris Williams, he saw things through the young man’s eyes.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is the complete opposite of shifting blame to others. Those who wrong us may, in the world’s eyes, deserve blame. But we still can’t blame them, for it only poisons us. Pahoran could have blamed Moroni for his “censure.” But instead, Pahoran had only love for Moroni. Nephi could have blamed Laman and Lemuel. But instead, he loved his brothers. Chris Williams could have blamed the driver. But instead he loved him enough to forgive him.

Elder Osguthorpe: Each one could have been permanently offended, angry, or even vengeful. But they weren’t. And they didn’t need to attend an anger management seminar to get rid of their anger.

This is one of the most interesting moments in the Chris Williams story. He experienced anger but he said, “When I did get angry, I did not direct it at the person who had caused this.”

It's almost as if it never crossed Chris Williams' mind to direct his anger at the young man. It never seemed to cross the mind of Nephi to retaliate against his brothers for what they had done to him. And Moroni's letter actually made Pahoran happy. Not only did Pahoran fail to become angry at Moroni, Pahoran was actually strengthened by Moroni's letter.

Sister Osguthorpe: That's why I like Pahoran's example so much. He simply could not take offense. He was beyond it. He saw it from Moroni's viewpoint. This means listening to others—really listening—so we can understand them.

Elder Osguthorpe: As a teenager, one of my good friends would sometimes get upset at someone and say that he hated that person, and his mother would say, "You don't *hate* that person, you just don't understand him."

Sister Osguthorpe: I like that. His mother was trying to teach him to see things through the other person's eyes.

Elder Osguthorpe: We call it *perspective taking*. *Perspective taking* means that we listen to others and to the Lord. We see things not from our viewpoint but from theirs and from the Lord's. When we do that, love is inevitable. And forgiveness will come. The better we become at taking the other person's perspective, the more likely we are to develop a forgiving heart.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is so important in marriage. The more I can see things through your eyes, and you can see things through my eyes, the closer we become.

Elder Osguthorpe: That's right. And no matter how long we're together as husband and wife, and no matter how strong our relationship is, there might still be moments when I look over at you and I say, "You want to do *what*?"

Sister Osguthorpe: Sure, and even though you might surprise me or I might surprise you—even though one of us might not quite understand the other at the moment, that question can help us see it from the other's point of view.

Elder Osguthorpe: So this is something we can actually practice if we want to develop a forgiving heart. We can practice seeing through the other person's eyes.

Sister Osguthorpe: And there's another perspective we need to remember—the Lord's. The Lord sees us as His children. He sees us as eternal beings. He sees our potential, not just our weaknesses.

Elder Osguthorpe: That's so important. If I see you as a daughter of God, I'm going to see your gifts and your strengths. How could you hurt me or offend me if I'm seeing you as God sees you? By the way, you make it easy, because I've never been able to—I've never had to forgive you for a weakness you've ever had.

Sister Osguthorpe: Oh sure! Thanks for your vote of confidence, honey.

Elder Osguthorpe: It's true.

Sister Osguthorpe: Your ability to see me as God sees me strengthens me every day, but it's a goal that I'm working on, and one that we can all keep working on throughout our life.

Elder Osguthorpe: We've been talking a lot about God's mercy. But we probably need to mention justice too. The scriptures teach very clearly that "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men" (D&C 64:10). But forgiving everyone does not mean that we accept or tolerate evil.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is especially true when there is any kind of abuse present. Forgiveness does not mean that a wife accepts or tolerates any type of abuse by her husband or her or their children or by siblings of each other.

Elder Osguthorpe: A woman once came to me to counsel about her failing marriage. I asked if she was experiencing abuse in her home. She shook her head no, and then she looked at me and she says, "Well, I don't think I'd call it abuse." I responded, "You don't think you'd call *what* abuse?" "Well, you know what I mean," she said, "everybody fights a little bit." I said, "Everybody?" I said, "Let me read to you what the Church says about abuse."

The beginnings of both spouse and child abuse can be found in seemingly insignificant things, such as belittling the abilities and competency of another, constantly criticizing, being insulting or calling names, refusing to communicate, manipulating, causing guilt feelings, repeatedly making and breaking promises, intimidating, threatening physical harm, making unfounded accusations, or destroying property" (*Preventing and Responding to Spouse Abuse: Helps for Members* [pamphlet, 1997], p. 3).

I got through reading that list and then she said, "Oh, we have all those things in our marriage!" Yeah, this is not funny, really, but it's true.

Sister Osguthorpe: And we really cannot have any of these things in our relationships.

Elder Osguthorpe: We can't.

Sister Osguthorpe: If a husband or wife or mother or father is abusive, the abuse must stop. Forgiveness does not mean we ignore evil. Just as we taught our children not to fight, we cannot allow abusive behavior to become a pattern in our home. Otherwise, we are "serving the devil, the master of sin" (Mosiah 4:14). This is not an easy topic to address. We all wish it did not exist. But it does. And when we become aware of it, we must do what we can to end all abuse.

Elder Osguthorpe: So we forgive everyone, but we do what is needed to prevent others from committing evil acts against us or against those around us. When someone has wronged us or wronged someone we love, our ability to forgive draws us closer to the Savior as we experience a small part of the pain that He endured for all of us. This is an example of how our problems, as painful as they may be, can draw us closer to Him. Christ teaches us everything. The Savior showed us the way when he prayed these sacred words, "Father, forgive them."

Sister Osguthorpe: So is it possible to do both—to recognize evil for what it is and to forgive everyone. Is it possible, do you think?

Elder Osguthorpe: We know it's possible, but it's not easy at all. And for me personally, I find it easier to forgive others than to forgive myself.

Sister Osguthorpe: I have the same problem. If I know that I've offended someone else, I am pretty hard on myself. I rehearse the conversation in my mind and wonder what I might have said differently so that someone else did not take offense.

Elder Osguthorpe: In the Chris Williams story, we don't know a lot about the process that the young man went through to forgive himself. We know what he said when Chris visited him: "He wants me to let go of what happened. He wants me to pick a date and forget what happened and move on."

Sister Osguthorpe: I am pretty sure that that young man will always remember that he made a big mistake that took others' lives. But I know that he can forget the guilt and the pain associated with that mistake. I know that through the Atonement, he can forgive himself, as freely as Chris Williams forgave him. And I also know that he will be able to forgive himself much more easily because of the way Chris forgave him.

Elder Osguthorpe: The young man had to forgive himself for something wrong he had done. But it can also be difficult to forgive ourselves for *not* doing something good.

Sister Osguthorpe: The good deed left undone often haunts me. "I should have offered to provide a meal for Sister Anderson. I should have volunteered to watch her children while she went to take care of her mother. I should have done this or I should have said that. I should have. . . I should have. . . I should have. . ."

Elder Osguthorpe: When Ammon and the sons of Mosiah were reflecting on their mission to the Lamanites, they had an inappropriate thought. They thought about not doing the good thing—not fulfilling their calling as missionaries. Their hearts were depressed. They had tried to preach the gospel to the Lamanites, and they felt as if they had failed, so they considered going home. Had they yielded to their doubts and disappointment, they would have omitted an important righteous act.

Sister Osguthorpe: But then something remarkable happened. They listened to the Lord's voice for a moment instead of their own: and "the Lord comforted us, and said, go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

Elder Osguthorpe: Then the sons of Mosiah did not need to hammer themselves for entertaining an inappropriate thought. They did not need to say, "I should have, I should have, I should have. . ."

Sister Osguthorpe: Because they had made a decision. And after they made the decision to return and preach the gospel to the Lamanites, the Lord strengthened them so that they could endure being spit on, imprisoned, and attacked. But they did "bear with patience (their) afflictions" and because of that, they experienced more success in their missionary work than perhaps any other missionaries in recorded history.

Elder Osguthorpe: When their desire was sagging, when they began to doubt themselves, the Lord came to their rescue and promised them success if they would go back and fulfill their divinely appointed responsibilities.

Sister Osguthorpe: They took control of the situation. They exercised their agency. They rose above the persecution they had been experiencing. They moved beyond offense. They forgave themselves for thinking, “I should have said this or I should have done that.” They forgave the Lamanites for their cruelty toward them. Forgiveness was underneath everything they did.

Elder Osguthorpe: They could have become angry, but they didn’t. They could have let discouragement paralyze them. But they didn’t. They kept on going. They kept praying. They kept trying. They kept trusting—all the while forgiving themselves and others. It is a story of the power of will and determination.

Sister Osguthorpe: They forgave themselves for becoming discouraged. They forgave themselves for becoming frustrated with the Lamanites. They did something. They tried again. They made no excuse. I’m reminded of the story recorded in Mark of the sick man with the palsy who couldn’t reach the Savior. Instead of giving up, his four friends carried him on a litter and “uncovered the roof. . . and let down the bed” (Mark 2:4). However difficult, objectionable, unreasonable, incapable, improbable or impractical it seems for us to forgive or to be forgiven, remember: no excuse. Never give up.

Elder Osguthorpe: So forgiveness is a choice. But as we’ve already said, it’s a choice that leads to a personal characteristic—a way of being. It’s really a choice to follow the Savior. It’s a choice to do His will and not ours. It’s a self-forgetful choice. It’s a way of getting outside ourselves, going beyond our own weaknesses, and doing what God wants us to do.

Sister Osguthorpe: So if we want to forgive ourselves and others, we need to decide to follow the path that the Lord wants us to follow. We need to become determined to do what He wants us to do—just like Ammon and his brothers.

Elder Osguthorpe: Then our desire to forgive will increase. The desire to forget and move forward will become stronger. The desire to do what we’ve been called to do will grow. As Elder Oaks just taught us in conference, “Desires dictate our priorities, priorities shape our choices, and choices determine our actions. The desires we act on determine our changing, our achieving, and our becoming” (April 2011 conference). As difficult as it may be, first we must have a desire to forgive. And when our desire grows to forgive and forget and move forward—that’s when we develop a forgiving heart.

Sister Osguthorpe: We wrote a song for our grandchildren that says it best—“Desire, Decision, Determination, yes! These are the three D’s, the three D’s of success.” Forgiveness is not only about sin and repentance or grief and anger. It’s about success. It’s about moving beyond offense. It’s about the joy that comes when we decide to do what the Lord wants us to do. That is the definition of real success. This is a song about how to succeed at developing a forgiving heart.

[song video of “The Three D’s”]

The Three D’s of Success

Desire, decision, determination, YES!

These are the three D’s, the three D’s of success.

*So when you are discouraged and you don’t know what to do,
Remember Ammon’s three D’s, and the Lord will help you too.*

*When Ammon and his brothers were ready to turn back,
They prayed to know what they should do, they didn't want to slack.
God gave them strength and comfort, so they wanted to go on.
They lost their fear of failing and their sadness was all gone.*

*Desire, decision, determination, YES!
These are the three D's, the three D's of success.
So when you are discouraged and you don't know what to do,
Remember Ammon's three D's, and the Lord will help you too.*

Sister Osguthorpe: You won't forget those, will you? Desire, decision, determination. I love hearing our grandchildren sing that song!

Elder Osguthorpe: I do too! When we look at forgiveness this way, we don't focus so much on the feelings of guilt that lead us to forgiveness. We focus on deciding to move forward, deciding to leave the problem behind—whatever that problem was.

Sister Osguthorpe: It shows how repentance and forgiveness are all about changing. If we want a forgiving heart, we need to *learn* what it means to forgive by forgiving. We decide to forgive before we're required to do it.

Elder Osguthorpe: Each time we forgive, we learn. We give up anger. We give up revenge. And we change. We learn. Whether the sin is one of omission or commission, the very feeling to forgive changes us. Nothing can bring us closer to the Lord than forgiving as He forgives. We are learning our way back to the presence of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. We are learning our way back home.

Sister Osguthorpe: We may decide to read the scriptures or pray every day. We may become determined to do our visiting or home teaching every month. In each case, we are forgiving ourselves for past mistakes and pursuing a new pattern for our life. It's all about moving forward with determination—forgetting the problems that have held us back. It's about learning and growing and becoming. We are learning our way back home.

Elder Osguthorpe: We may give up an addiction. We may eliminate negative thoughts. Again, we are learning. We are learning a new way of interacting with our world, our family, our situation, and our relationships. We are learning our way back home.

Sister Osguthorpe: This is really how we develop a forgiving heart. It's by forgiving ourselves and others over and over again until our heart is so filled with forgiveness that no one can offend us. No one can hurt us. No one can “act upon us.”

Elder Osguthorpe: Elder Bednar has recently taught us so clearly that we must help each other act and not . . . be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26; October 2010 conference). And this particular act—the act of forgiving—is so powerful. When we have a forgiving heart, we cannot be acted upon.

Sister Osguthorpe: A forgiving heart literally turns hate into love. When Ammon and his brothers returned to preach the gospel to the Lamanites, they knew that the Lord would give them success, but they probably did not understand just how magnificent their success would be. It wasn't measured in number of baptisms. It was measured in love.

Elder Osguthorpe: Ammon and his brothers developed a love for the Lamanites—the very ones who had tried to kill them. And the Lamanites, as Ammon described them, “dearly beloved us” (Alma 26:9). This is one of the most astonishing turnabouts in all of scripture. Those who once hated did not only learn to tolerate each other, they became “dearly beloved.”

Sister Osguthorpe: And think of how forgiveness was at the center of this change of feeling. It's the same with us. Every time we forgive ourselves, our own capacity to love others increases. And every time we forgive others, our capacity and their capacity to love can increase. This is when we know that we are coming closer to the Lord.

Elder Osguthorpe: We learn our way back home to our Father in Heaven and his Son Jesus Christ by developing a forgiving heart.

Sister Osguthorpe: We become like the Savior. We forgive as He forgives. We love as He loves. A forgiving heart demands one of the most important types of learning we can experience in mortality.

Elder Osguthorpe: I want to keep learning in this way. I want to develop a forgiving heart.

Sister Osguthorpe: So do I. What could be more important in life than this?

Elder Osguthorpe: Nothing. A forgiving heart can change a marriage. It can change a family. When we no longer can be offended or hurt, everything gets better. Hate can be turned into love. Pain can disappear. All because of a forgiving heart.

Sister Osguthorpe: So we invite each of us to make some decisions. We can all decide to see things through the eyes of others. We can all decide to never shift blame. We can all decide to not take offense.

Elder Osguthorpe: And then we can become determined to move forward—to leave the mistake behind. And when we do that, success will come. It will come as surely as it came to Ammon and his brothers. They forgave themselves, and we can all forgive ourselves too.

Sister Osguthorpe: And when we experience success in our own efforts to forget the past and move forward, our desire grows, and we develop a forgiving heart. Each one of us can develop a forgiving heart. We know it because each of us is a child of God, the author of forgiveness, the One who forgets our sins and remembers them no more. Each of us can become more like Him. And the way to do that is to develop a forgiving heart.

Elder Osguthorpe: I know that God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ live. They love us. I know that the Savior came to earth not only so that we could be forgiven of every wrong that we commit, but He came to help us learn how to forgive as He forgives. His example is priceless. He showed us what it means to forgive. And He continues to show us what it means to feel forgiven. There's nothing better than this feeling. It is a feeling of joy—both for the one who's

forgiven and the one who forgives. I bear witness that this joy is available to all of us. This unspeakable, strength-giving joy is a free gift and a freeing gift. I know that we can experience this sacred gift every time we seek or offer forgiveness. I bear this witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.