

“How Education Has Blessed Our Family”

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Introduction

President Gilbert: Christine and I are the parents of eight children.

Sister Gilbert: With eight energetic children, it gets a little busy at the Gilbert home. Right now we're in the thick of things. We have children in preschool, grade school, junior high, high school, and one in college.

Pres. Gilbert: Long before it was just the 10 of us, Christine and I met and were married while we were both in school at BYU. It is amazing for us to reflect on how our early education continues to bless our family and the home we are building together.

Sis. Gilbert: Today we would like to talk to you about how education can bless you in your home, in your marriages, and in your role as parents.

Pres. Gilbert: We will outline three areas where education has blessed our family and our home: 1) it has helped us create a learning environment in our own home, 2) our education has helped us develop planning and time management skills that help us lead our family, and 3) we have learned how to ask more inspired questions about our children and their needs.

Creating a Learning Environment in the Home

Sis. Gilbert: As a mother, I have a responsibility to nurture and develop our children. In *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* it says, “Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. ‘Children are an heritage of the Lord’ (Psalm 127:3). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another...”¹ So much of that is tied to the learning environment we try to establish in our home. President Russell M. Nelson has taught us that we need a home-centered, Church-supported effort for our gospel study.² For President Gilbert and me, that starts with our pattern of nightly scripture study. We gather in our family room each night and read for 10-15 minutes individually before inviting each family member to teach something they learned with the rest of the family. It's like the BYU-Idaho learning model of prepare, teach one another, and ponder and prove, applied in our family. And it's a pattern of learning we first established during our university studies.

Pres. Gilbert: There are other patterns we developed as students that continue to help us create a learning environment in our home. One of those patterns is an effort to avoid distractions when our children are studying. For example, we have decided to keep all cell phones off or at the charging stations while the children are doing their homework. Research shows that when a student stops his or her studies to check a text or email, it takes considerably longer before the brain has recalibrated back to before the interruption. Similarly, we try to avoid television, video games, or other distractions on school nights. All of this helps us provide a clean, consistent, and uninterrupted environment for our children to study and learn.

¹ “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129

² Russell M. Nelson, “Becoming Exemplary Latter-day Saints,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 113

Planning and Time Management

Sis. Gilbert: One of the things BYU-Pathway students learn from their first semester is the importance of planning and time management. It's hard to be parents of eight children in a busy household with school, Church assignments, and my husband's work responsibilities. I learned planning and time management as a young student and, while I don't turn in exams and write papers on deadline any more, I do manage our household, plan for Church responsibilities, and schedule ahead to write and seek inspiration for responsibilities for BYU-Pathway. I am so grateful for the time management skills I learned as a student that still bless us today in the work of our family.

Pres. Gilbert: Christine and I had to learn early on when we were students how to prioritize and plan our time. Very early in our marriage, we developed a pattern of sitting down together every Sunday night and looking ahead at the week. That started as young students in planning for homework and assignments, but it has been a fundamental resource in the development of my career, of the leadership in our home, and in our service in the Church. It carries through still to this day, 25 years later, as we look at the needs and commitments for our children and our family overall.

Also, remember that it's important to keep the Lord in your planning. As President Henry B. Eyring has taught: "A morning prayer and an early search in the scriptures to know what we should do for the Lord can set the course of a day. We can know which task, of all those we might choose, matters most to God and therefore to us."³

Asking Inspired Questions

Sis. Gilbert: One additional way we have been blessed in our home because of our education is the ability to observe and ask inspired questions. That's something I always need, every single day, as I observe our children and think about them and the things they might need. Not only do I need to know how to ask effective questions, I need to know how to go to the Lord with those questions and seek His direction for our family. One final thing I would add is that in learning to ask questions during my schooling, I also learned to ask questions in a way that invited the Spirit. As BYU-Pathway students, you have the opportunity, even the responsibility, to seek the Spirit in a way that will help you understand your assignments in school. That pattern will also become a resource in all of your efforts—at work, in the home, and in your Church service.

Pres. Gilbert: I love this idea that learning to ask questions and to take them to the Lord allows the Lord to teach you through the Spirit. Those questions can be about where to apply to work, how to improve your ability to provide for a family, how to serve more effectively in the Church, and how to be a better spouse or parent. I have also found that our ability to frame questions opens up dialogue with our children in a way that connects us as a family. Each Sunday after Church we gather with our children around the dining room table. We visit and enjoy the meal, but we also have what we like to call "Dinner Table Conversations." Learning how to ask inspired questions has been a blessing not only as we seek answers in prayer but also as we engage our children in meaningful family discussion.

Conclusion

Sis. Gilbert: I'm grateful for the way education has blessed our family and me as a mother. Both Clark and I have been strengthened in our role as parents as we've tried to create a learning environment in our home, apply time management skills, observe our children, and ask inspired questions.

Pres. Gilbert: As you continue your education through BYU-Pathway, we hope that you will continue to develop each of these abilities, you will have the right to receive direction and instruction from the Holy Spirit. This will be a blessing in your studies, and it will also be a blessing in your family and in your home both now and in the future. Please know how much we love you and are praying for you. We know it will be a wonderful new semester in BYU-Pathway.

³ Henry B. Eyring, "This Day," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 89