

“In the Strength of the Lord”

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Brothers and sisters, I’m so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this BYU-Pathway Worldwide devotional and share a few thoughts with you. I serve in the Presiding Bishopric, and we work closely with the First Presidency to administer the temporal affairs of the Church. I’m particularly grateful for this assignment because I believe that the Presiding Bishopric and BYU-Pathway Worldwide students have two key elements in common.

First, we are both focused on what can be referred to as “temporal matters.” In the Doctrine and Covenants, speaking of the office of the Presiding Bishop, we are taught that “the office of a bishop is in administering all temporal things.”¹ As for you, as students of BYU-Pathway, getting an education shows your focus on improving the temporal aspects of life, which will be a tremendous blessing throughout your life.

Second, since all things are spiritual to the Lord “and not at any time” has He given us “a law which was temporal,”² we clearly need the influence of the Spirit in our lives to accomplish our goals and pursuits. Therefore, a key to our success, in addition to all that we can do with an appropriate effort, depends on our ability to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit. Always remember that we can accomplish so much more *with* the Spirit than we can on our own.

A wonderful example from the scriptures is found in the 17th chapter of Alma, in the Book of Mormon, in the familiar account of Ammon, who was assigned by the king of the Lamanites to help guard the king’s flocks from getting scattered. In this passage, we see the influence of the Spirit in helping Ammon accomplish a temporal assignment.

As the sheep were scattered, Ammon declared, “I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants,” but then he corrects himself by saying, “or the power which is in me.” With that power he proceeded to successfully protect and defend the king’s flocks and his fellow servants. After his heroic efforts, when asked by the king to explain “by what power” he had been able to do what he did, Ammon answered by describing the source of his power, when he said, referring to the Holy Ghost, “... that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God.”³

Sisters and brothers, it wasn’t Ammon’s personal power, alone, that allowed him to accomplish his very temporal task, but rather the “power” that was in him. In other words, because of the influence of the Spirit in his life, Ammon was able to face his difficult task “in the strength of the Lord,”⁴ making it possible for him to successfully handle a very challenging situation.

Why would the Lord want this account to be included in the Book of Mormon? I believe it is because the Book of Mormon was written for our day to provide direction and counsel to assist us along life’s journey.

Knowing what Ammon was able to do with the influence of the Spirit should give us hope that, we too, with the help of that same Spirit, can successfully overcome the challenges of life, continue on the covenant path, and accomplish our worthy goals.

¹ [Doctrine and Covenants 107:68](#)

² [Doctrine and Covenants 29:34](#)

³ See [Alma 17:26–39](#)

⁴ [Mosiah 10:10](#)

President Dallin H. Oaks provided some comfort for those of you who feel overwhelmed with just meeting your temporal needs while trying to do well with your BYU-Pathway courses. President Oaks taught that “small and simple” practices “over time ... result in powerful spiritual uplift and growth. This occurs because each of these small and simple things invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost.”⁵ It is that very companionship that allows us to go forward “in the strength of the Lord!”

President Oaks mentioned a few of those “small and simple practices,” including scripture study, personal prayers, and attendance at seminary or institute classes.⁶ I would add to that list worthily partaking of the sacrament each week, paying an honest tithe, and keeping the covenants you made at baptism and in the temple.

As busy as you may be with life, never allow yourself to be so busy that you stop doing the things that will allow you to enjoy the companionship of the Spirit and to go forward “in the strength of the Lord.”

In closing, please know that each of you is an inspiration to everyone that has questions about BYU-Pathway and improving the temporal aspects of their lives, such as:

- Is it too late for me?
- Am I capable of this?
- Isn't it for other people?

You are real life examples of diligence, hope, effort, and faith, and I congratulate you for your strength and determination. My prayer and desire for each of you is that you would embrace the small and simple practices that will invite the Spirit into your daily lives, allowing you to go forward “in the strength of the Lord” and accomplish every worthy goal. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

⁵ Dallin H. Oaks, “[Small and Simple Things](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2018

⁶ IBID