

“The Will to Prepare”

*Elder D. Todd Christofferson
The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

I am pleased to be able to speak to you. I am pleased that you have enrolled in BYU-Pathway Worldwide. I don't know, of course, what led each of you individually to make the decision to be part of BYU-Pathway, but I applaud your desire to improve and your willingness to make the effort and the sacrifices that you are making.

Your continuing education is a preparation for a better quality of life for yourself and, perhaps more importantly, for those who depend on you or who look to your example to guide them in their own choices. It is a preparation for a lifetime of service. Education is even a preparation for eternity, for we know that “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.”ⁱ Consider the Savior's example. The first 30 years of His life were devoted to preparation for the crucial last three years of His life. We see how important and valuable that preparation was for the success of His ministry and mission.

Former BYU football coach LaVell Edwards used to say that in sports people often talk about the will to win. But even more important than the will to win, he said, is the will to prepare. Many players hope to win or want to win, but it is those who do the work and make the sacrifices to train and practice hour after hour and day after day who become the winners. You are demonstrating the will to prepare by pursuing further education and training, and I salute you for that.

I realize that, while you have made the decision to try, some of you are not entirely sure that you can succeed in this undertaking. You may feel self-doubt or even fear. You know that others have succeeded in BYU-Pathway, but you may not feel confident that you can do it. Perhaps you are here because someone you respect has told you that you need to do this, and you don't want to disappoint them, but you are worried.

I want to tell you first that it's all right to feel this kind of concern. You are not alone. In fact, there are not very many people who feel total confidence all the time, and if they do, it's probably because they are not smart enough to be worried when they should be. A little worry keeps us sharp and may stimulate us to work harder. But too much can paralyze us with fear, and that, of course, is not good.

You need to remember always that you are not alone in this. There are people who love and pray for you. Maybe there are some skeptics who tell you that you can't do it or who, for some reason, don't want you to succeed. But they can't stop you, and there are more who support you. Most importantly, your Heavenly Father and your Savior know you and can and will grant you heavenly help. Make God your partner in BYU-Pathway.

Years ago, I invested some money with a friend in a small business. The business began to fail, and I had to put more money into it to try to keep it alive. Things got worse, and I was afraid I might lose all my savings and, perhaps, even my home. I was worried about supporting my wife and children. I turned to my Heavenly Father in prayer for help. I wanted Him to solve my problem instantly, but He did not. I asked Him to help me recover the money that I had lost in the business, but He did not. Finally, I asked Him to help me resolve the situation one step at a time, and He did. As with Alma's people, rather than immediately remove the burden, He strengthened me to bear it.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ [Doctrine and Covenants 130:18](#)

ⁱⁱ [Mosiah 24:15](#)

It took several years, but through the Holy Spirit, He helped me know what to do. Sometimes, He gave me a helpful idea; sometimes He led me to someone who could help with a specific challenge; sometimes He helped me communicate effectively in a negotiation; and sometimes He simply gave me a feeling of peace that things would work out even though, at that moment, I couldn't see how. In the end, I was able to satisfy all my obligations, the challenge was over, I had not made any enemies, and I still had my integrity.

In that difficult time, I learned how to pray, really pray and get answers. I learned how to trust in the Lord. I learned how to work hard and, at the same time, to rely on Him. As President Gordon B. Hinckley used to say, "We should pray as if everything depends on the Lord, and then work as if everything depends on us." In a sense, the Lord became my partner. I might never have become as close to Him without that difficult trial in my life. As hard as it was, I am grateful that I could turn to Him when I had nowhere else to turn and draw close to Him when there was no one else who could help me.

Your Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son love you as much as They do me, and you are entitled to Their help just as much as I am. With Their help, you can succeed in BYU-Pathway and every other worthy endeavor in your life. You do not labor and study alone. I bless you that as you are humble and patient and diligent you will be given help and guidance through the Holy Spirit. Your faith in God and Christ will grow, and you will not disappoint those who trust in you and rely on you. I bless you with confidence and the will to prepare.