

“Go Forward and Not Backward”

L. Todd Budge

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

It’s an honor to speak to you BYU-Pathway students from all around the world. Your educational journey, both secular and spiritual, will bless your lives forever and help you discern between true and false principles. Let me begin with a little story.

Drill Story

My father and I set out to build a wooden play structure for my children when they were young. The play structure was complete with swings, a slide, and a two-level fort. Well, this was an ambitious undertaking for two men who did not have much experience with building! Things were progressing smoothly with the project until we got to the part where we had to drill bolt holes through wooden posts like this. This is the actual drill that my father and I used that day. And I remember how difficult it was to bore these holes.

We just weren’t making much progress! You could see the smoke coming up, and the room filled with the smell of smoke, and burning wood filled the room, causing our throats and eyes to burn. Donning goggles and N95 masks, we doggedly carried on.

After hours of effort, we had actually managed to drill one hole, but with several more holes yet to drill, we knew we had to do something differently. Discouraged and exhausted, we returned to the hardware store to return the drill bit. So we took the drill bit out, took it back to the store, and told them, “We think we got a bad drill bit, because it’s really hard to get through this wood.” The store manager said that he had never had a drill bit returned before, and it looked perfectly good to him. Confused, he took the bit, put it in his drill, and effortlessly drilled a hole through a similar piece of wood.

He then looked up at us quizzically and asked, “You wouldn’t happen to have your drill in reverse, would you?” My face immediately turned red, and not wanting to admit that I had no idea that drills had a reverse setting, I said hesitantly, “I don’t think so.” He then patiently showed me how a drill can be easily toggled between forward and reverse.

My father and I could not get back to the car fast enough, and then we broke out in laughter. Sure enough, we had been drilling for hours with the drill in reverse. We got back home, we took the same drill bit that wasn’t working before, put it back in the drill, and then, following the store manager’s directions, we saw that there was a toggle here. I toggled it to the forward position, and, *voila!* You can see how much easier it was.

Application

Satan wants us to go through life with our drills in reverse, so to speak. His clever deceptions, referred to as “mists of darkness,”¹ twist true principles and reverse our understanding and, ultimately, our progress down the covenant path.

The Lord warns: “Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”²

And, I might add, that put forward for reverse and reverse for forward.

¹ [1 Nephi 12:17](#)

² [2 Nephi 15:20](#)

Believe me, it makes a big difference when you get things going in the right direction. I commend each of you for enrolling in BYU-Pathway and striving to better your lives and circumstances. Your ambition to learn and grow is a part of your divine nature and will bless you and your loved ones if your ambition is aligned with a correct understanding of true principles.

For example, Christ's singular ambition in life was to do the will of the Father and to glorify Him. Christ said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."³ He taught that submitting our wills to God's will is the only true pathway to happiness. Conversely, Satan would have us believe the reverse: that our greatest ambition in life should be to pursue our own selfish self-interest in pursuit of our own glory. Contrast the words that Christ and Satan spoke to God in the premortal world. Christ said, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever."⁴ Satan said, "[H]ere am I, send me, ... I will redeem all mankind; ... wherefore give me thine honor."⁵ Both Christ and Satan were ambitious. What was the difference?

Christ was content to do the will of the Father no matter the cost. His ambition was selfless and not selfish. Satan's ambition was vain — it was to glorify himself. He was not content to do the will of the Father — he would not be content until his own will prevailed. Satan had his "drill" in reverse.

And so I ask you, do you have your drill in forward or reverse? Are you pursuing your education to enable you to build a life of service to God and others or merely to achieve your own selfish and vain ambitions? Now there is nothing wrong with studying hard to get a good-paying job and to improve one's circumstances in life. We've all been on that journey. However, those things alone will not bring lasting happiness and joy unless they are consecrated to the Lord for His glory.

I promise that when your greatest ambition, your greatest desire, is to love God and your fellow man and you are content to do God's will, you will find that life is easier, and more joyful, and hopeful. You will find rest to your soul and learn for yourself that His yoke is indeed easy, and His burden is light.⁶

Do not try to navigate this life with true principles in reverse. Do not be confused with Satan's subtle misdirection. As President Russell M. Nelson teaches, "Let God prevail in your lives."⁷

If you struggle to align your desires with God's will for you, take solace in the fact that God can educate your desires⁸ and enlighten, even reverse, your understanding.⁹ To be taught by the Spirit is perhaps the greatest education of all. Heed the Spirit of God, "for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not."¹⁰ (Remember, it's Satan who is called "the father of all lies."¹¹) "Wherefore, [the Spirit] speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls."¹²

I testify that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life. May God bless you in all your righteous ambitions. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

³ [John 6:38](#)

⁴ [Moses 4:2](#)

⁵ [Moses 4:1](#)

⁶ See [Matthew 11:28–30](#)

⁷ Russell M. Nelson, "[Let God Prevail](#)," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2020

⁸ See Neal A. Maxwell, "[According to the Desire of \[Our\] Hearts](#)," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996

⁹ See [Alma 32:28](#)

¹⁰ [Jacob 4:13](#)

¹¹ [Moses 4:4](#)

¹² [Jacob 4:13](#)