

“Lift with Love”

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I am excited to share a message of love and hope with you, the students of BYU-Pathway Worldwide. A few years ago, I read an article about a high school (also known as secondary school) player of American football who made a simple mistake in the last few seconds of a game that resulted in his team losing the state championship. His team was ahead and had possession of the ball. All he needed to do when he received the ball was kneel down, and his team would have won the game. However, in his excitement, when he got the ball, he began celebrating and threw the ball on the ground. The other team then picked up the ball, ran for a touchdown, and won the championship.

My heart broke for this player as I imagined his devastation and embarrassment at his mistake. For some reason I was drawn to read the comments written by various readers of the article, and I was horrified that they were full of insulting and critical remarks toward this poor player. At a time when he was heartbroken and needed compassion and support, hundreds of strangers chose instead to insult and demean him.

This type of behavior seems to have become the norm in recent years, both online and in our public discourse. Unfortunately, it seems to be pervasive across many countries and cultures, and it is even often a problem among members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Savior taught, “[L]ove one another; as I have loved you.... By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹ Further, He said, “[T]here shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; ... For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention....”²

We do not have to agree with everything another person believes or does to love him or her. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love all our neighbors. When asked “which is the great commandment...?” the Savior replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ... And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”³ The Savior did not say, “Love those that share your beliefs or that are like you.” Rather, He said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven....”⁴

So why is love so important? Love changes almost everything. As we seek to love those around us, it softens our hearts and increases our desire to serve and lift others. We are blessed with an increased ability to see others the way our Heavenly Father sees them. We can set aside judgments that are accompanied by negative feelings and experience the joy of seeing others feel accepted and understood. We can enjoy closer, more fulfilling relationships. We can “[cast] out fear”⁵ as we recognize that differing opinions and experiences are not a threat, but rather an opportunity to explore and increase our understanding of others and the world around us. And we can “stand as [a witness] of God at all times and in all things, and in all places”⁶ as we strive to emulate Him and

¹ [John 13:34–35](#)

² [3 Nephi 11:28–29](#)

³ [Matthew 22:36–37, 39](#)

⁴ [Matthew 5:44–45](#)

⁵ [1 John 4:18](#)

⁶ [Mosiah 18:9](#)

share His love. Our ability to feel the Spirit and God's love for us and for those around us will increase, and we will come to know God better. We will be better able to have a positive influence in the world as those we seek to love will recognize that we are trustworthy and have pure motives.

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf said:

Because love is the great commandment, it ought to be at the *center* of all and everything we do in our own family, in our Church callings, and in our livelihood. Love is the healing balm that repairs rifts in personal and family relationships. It is the bond that unites families, communities, and nations. Love is the power that initiates friendship, tolerance, civility, and respect. It is the source that overcomes divisiveness and hate. Love is the fire that warms our lives with unparalleled joy and divine hope.⁷

At times we may find it difficult to love, but as disciples of Christ we need to work to overcome those difficulties. Here are a few things that we can do to feel and show more love:

- We can pray to be blessed with charity.
- We can create opportunities to serve those we are struggling to love.
- We can take time to listen to and understand the stories and feelings of those we seek to love.
- We can remember that since we are all God's children, we are spiritually brothers and sisters, and each person is beloved of God.
- We can acknowledge that we are here on earth to learn, and that we all have had different experiences that have influenced our perceptions and understanding.
- We can have faith in God's plan and our Savior and trust Them to lead, teach, and guide others along their personalized path.
- We can recognize that the vast majority of us are trying to do and be our best.
- We can remember that we all need love.

When I was young, my dad taught me a principle that has blessed me all my life. He taught that, with only our limited understanding, we should never judge another person because we do not know all that he or she may have experienced. Nor do we know if we had had the same experiences, how we would have responded. We are all in the process of learning how to become like our Heavenly Father, and each of us has much more to learn.

How much more effective it is to walk with those around us, encouraging and learning from each other, rather than trying to push others out of the way because they are different than we are.

Can you imagine how different it would have been if all those who chose to comment upon the actions of the young American football player had chosen to offer words of encouragement and understanding? He still would have suffered because his mistake cost his team the championship, but rather than his burden being added to and his feelings of self-worth diminished, his burdens would have been made lighter. What's more, it would have been easier for him to recognize that this one mistake was not life-defining or really that important.

It is my prayer that as disciples of Christ we can all become like Moroni who, at the end of the Book of Mormon, had charity for those who sought to kill him. Writing about the Lamanites, Moroni said, "[B]ecause of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ. And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life. ... [B]ut I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day, according to the will of the Lord."⁸

⁷ Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "[The Love of God](#)," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009

⁸ [Moroni 1:2-4](#)

Elder Uchtdorf taught, “[W]e have a vast capacity for love — it is part of our spiritual heritage. ... [I]f we truly learn to love our Heavenly Father and our fellowman with all our heart, soul, and mind — all else will fall into place.”⁹

It is my testimony that as we seek to love those around us, our lives will improve — we will be happier, we will come to know God better, and we will bless the lives of those we love. As we strive to be Christlike and treat others with loving kindness, they will feel God’s love, experience more hope in Jesus Christ, and have a greater desire to strive to understand and fulfill their divine potential. May your lives be filled with love, joy, and peace, as you strive to be disciples of Jesus Christ, is my prayer. In the name of our loving Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

⁹ Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “[The Love of God](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009