

D&C#14 The Law of Consecration

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- III. The Law of Consecration is an Eternal Law
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I. Introduction

PGP, Moses 7:18

18 And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them.

Throughout the history of the world, the Lord's desire has been to have a covenant people. A group of people who are obedient to all the commandments; who are pure in mind and action; who serve because they love and care for those around them, and who willingly assist the poor and needy. Only when our individual focus is upon our being obedient to the Lord and manifesting a sincere concern for others, will we be prepared to enter into the Holy City of God or the city of Zion on earth.

David O. McKay states,

"I...beheld in vision something infinitely sublime. In the distance I beheld a beautiful white city. Though far away, yet I seemed to realize that trees with luscious fruit, shrubbery with gorgeously-tinted leaves, and flowers in perfect bloom abounded everywhere. The clear sky above seemed to reflect these beautiful shades of color. I then saw a great concourse of people approaching the city. Each one wore a white flowing robe and a white headdress. Instantly my attention seemed centered upon their Leader, and though I could see only the profile of his features and his body, I recognized him at once as my Savior! The tint and radiance of his countenance were glorious to behold! There was a peace about him which seemed sublime--it was divine!

"The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness.

"But who were they?

"As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words:

"These Are They Who Have Overcome The World--Who Have Truly Been Born Again!"

"When I awoke, it was breaking day over Apia harbor. Taken from President McKay's world tour diary, May 10, 1921." (*Cherished Experiences from the Writings of President David O. McKay*. Compiled by Clare Middlemiss. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1955, 102).

The scriptures record only two groups of individuals who were able to achieve a lasting covenant relationship with God to the degree that they were unable to remain on the earth. One city is well known, the other is not. Most are familiar with the City of Enoch (PGP, Moses 7:69), fewer are familiar with the City of Melchizedek (JST, Genesis 14:33-34). The citizens of both cities reached a level of personal and collective righteousness during mortality to the degree that both cities were translated. Their citizens stand as an example to each of us to the degree of righteousness that can be obtained on earth.

II. The Lord Revealed the Law of Consecration to the Saints

Church History in the Fulness of Times states,

"Now settled in Kirtland, the Prophet was eager to know the Lord's will concerning the economic salvation of the Saints, many of whom were impoverished, particularly those who had left their homes in New York...

"Revenue was required to finance various Church undertakings, such as publishing revelations and missionary tracts. The Prophet was without a home for his family. Sidney Rigdom had lost his pastoral home and the economic support he had previously received from his congregation. Money, goods, and property were needed to help the poor and

to assist immigrants who were sacrificing much to gather to Ohio, so Joseph inquired of the Lord. The result was Section 41 calling Edward Partridge to serve as the first bishop of the Church, and Section 42...outlining the new economic system." (*Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 95-96).

The following outline provides an Overview of the Law of Consecration and the United Order.

Chart 1. Significant Revelations about the Law of Consecration and the United Order

Date	Place	Reference	Content
4 Feb. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 41:9	Edward Partridge called as first bishop.
9 Feb. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 42:30-34	Law of consecration explained.
Feb. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 44:6	Saints to administer to the poor according to law.
7 Mar. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 45:64-75	Call to gather Zion: prospect of New Jerusalem.
Mar. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 48	Saints who settled in Ohio to save money for inheritance in Zion.
May 1831	Thompson, Ohio	D&C 51:3ff	Bishop Partridge to appoint portions (stewardships) according to family size, circumstances, want, and needs. Storehouse to be established.
June 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 56:16-20	Rich and poor commanded to repent.
20 July 1831	Jackson County, Mo	D&C 57	Missouri appointed and consecrated as the land of inheritance and center place for Zion.
1 Aug 1831	Jackson County, Mo	D&C 58:1-9, 50-57	Zion to come after much tribulation. Early immigrants honored to lay foundation of Zion. Lands to be purchased in Independence.
Aug. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 63:27-31	Saints commanded to purchase

			lands with money and forbidden to obtain lands by blood.
12 Nov. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 70:1-8	Elders appointed stewards over revelations. Surpluses to be consecrated to the Church.
4 Dec. 1831	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 72	Newel K. Whitney appointed as second bishop of the Church in Kirtland. Further duties of bishop made known.
Mar. 1832	Hiram, Ohio	D&C 78	Saints commanded to establish storehouses in Zion and to further organize so Church program in Missouri would be independent (from program in Ohio).
26 Apr. 1832	Jackson Country, Mo	D&C 82:11-12	United order to be established to manage affairs in Zion and Kirtland.
30 Apr. 1832	Independence, Mo.	D&C 83	Widows and orphans to be provided for by consecration of the Church to storehouses.
27 Nov. 1832	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 85	To receive an inheritance in Zion a person must be willing to live the law of consecration.
25 June 1833	Kirtland, Ohio	History of Church 1:364-65	Letter from the Prophet to Bishop Edward Partridge on the size of a member's stewardship.
2 Aug 1833	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 97:10-21	House in Zion (Jackson Country) commanded. Zion is pure in heart.
6 Aug 1833	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 98	Saints commanded to follow the Constitution. Law of war and law of forgiveness given to Saints.
12 Oct. 1833	Perrysburg, New York	D&C 100:13-17	Chastened Zion to be redeemed.
10 Dec. 1833	Kirtland, Ohio	History of Church 1:453-56	Letter from the Prophet to retain lands: petition to God to return Saints to land of inheritance.
16 Dec. 1833	Kirtland, Ohio	D&C 101	Reasons given for Saints

		expulsion from Jackson County. Zion not to be moved out of her place. Saints to rely on constitutional process.
24 Feb. 1834	Kirtland, Ohio D&C 103	Saints to redeem Zion after tribulation. Zion to be redeemed by power.
23 Apr. 1834	Kirtland, Ohio D&C 104:47-66	Separation of united order in Kirtland and Zion. Sacred treasury provided for.
22 June 1834	Fishing River, Mo D&C 105	Redemption of Zion postponed until Saints are prepared, endowed, and numerous. United order dissolved until after Zion's redemption.
1 Sept. 1835	Kirtland, Ohio History of Church 2:254	Prophet's letter to elders of the Church relating his June 1831 vision to go to western Missouri.

Reference: *Church History In The Fulness Of Times*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989, 98; also adapted from William O. Nelson, *Ensign*, January 1979, 23.

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"The Lord established the United Order, or, the Order of Enoch, when it had been demonstrated that the Saints were not able to practice the celestial law of consecration. This Order was to be permanent, but when the Saints also proved themselves unequal to its requirements, the Lord again released them, temporarily, and gave them the law of tithing." (*The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 668-669).

We will now examine some of the various sections referenced as we seek to better understand the law of consecration as given by the Lord.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30 [underline added]

30 And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that

which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

Section 42, according to the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was given at Kirtland, Ohio, February 9 and 23, 1831. "The first part, consisting of verses 1 through 72, were received in the presence of twelve elders and in fulfillment of the Lord's promise previously made that the 'law would be given in Ohio (see section 38:32)..." (Heading: Section 42. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 69).

With this revelation given in Kirtland, Ohio, February 1831, the Lord revealed the law of consecration. The saints were directed that they should begin to live this law.

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"What does *consecrate* mean? (It means to set apart or dedicate something to the service of the Lord.)

"What is the law of consecration? (It is an organized way in which individuals consecrate their time, talents, and possessions to the Church to build up the Lord's kingdom and serve His children.)" (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 76).

The fulness of the law of consecration has only been lived at certain times [Ohio, Missouri, Utah] since the restoration of the Church, but as the members as a whole failed to live it, it was suspended by the Lord. Later, the law of tithing was given in order to help prepare the church membership to, in the future, live the fulness of the law.

It is important that we understand the law of consecration as revealed by the Lord so that we may be prepared in the future to live the law fully.

Four Aspects of the Law of Consecration include:

"1. Consecration of Possessions

"Under the law of consecration, Church members voluntarily consecrated their possessions to the Church by legal deed.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30

30 And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

"2. Receiving a Stewardship

"After Church members consecrated their possessions, the bishop granted them stewardships, or portions, from all the properties received. The size of the stewardship depended on the circumstances and needs of the family, as determined by the bishop in consultation with the member who received it.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:32

32 And it shall come to pass, that after they are laid before the bishop of the church, and after that he has received these testimonies concerning the consecration of the properties of my church, that they cannot be taken from the church, agreeable to my commandments, every man shall be made accountable unto me, a steward over his own property, or that which he has received by consecration, as much as is sufficient for himself and family.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:3

3 Wherefore, let my servant Edward Partridge, and those whom he has chosen, in whom I am well pleased, appoint unto this people their portions, every man equal according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 51 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Thompson, Ohio, May 20, 1831. At the time the Saints migrating from the eastern states began to arrive in Ohio, and it became necessary to make definite arrangements for their settlement. As this undertaking belonged particularly to the bishop's office,

Bishop Edward Partridge sought instruction on the matter, and the Prophet inquired of the Lord." (Heading: Section 51. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 94).

"The stewardship was given with a deed of ownership so each member would be fully responsible and accountable for managing it. (see D&C 51:4; 72:3-4; 104:11-13).

Doctrine and Covenants 51:4

4 And let my servant Edward Partridge, when he shall appoint a man his portion, give unto him a writing that shall secure unto him his portion, that he shall hold it, even this right and this inheritance in the church, until he transgresses and is not accounted worthy by the voice of the church, according to the laws and covenants of the church, to belong to the church.

Doctrine and Covenants 72:3-4

3 And verily in this thing ye have done wisely, for it is required of the Lord, at the hand of every steward, to render an account of his stewardship, both in time and in eternity.

4 For he who is faithful and wise in time is accounted worthy to inherit the mansions prepared for him of my Father.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 72 states, "Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, December 4, 1831. Several elders and members had assembled to learn their duty and to be further edified in the teaching of the Church. This section is a compilation of three revelations received on the same day. Verses 1 through 8 make known the calling of Newel K. Whitney as a bishop. He was then called and ordained, after which verses 9 through 23 were received, giving additional information as to a bishop's duties. Thereafter, verses 24 through 26 were given, providing instructions concerning the gathering of Zion." (Heading: Section 72. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 131).

Doctrine and Covenants 104:11-13

11 It is wisdom in me; therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves and appoint every man his stewardship;

12 That every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him.

13 For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 104 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at or near Kirtland, Ohio, April 23, 1834, concerning the United Firm (see headings to sections 78 and 82). The occasion was likely that of a council meeting of members of the United Firm, which discussed the pressing temporal needs of the Church. An earlier meeting of the firm on April 10 had resolved that the organization be dissolved. This revelation directs that the firm instead be reorganized; its properties were to be divided among members of the firm as their stewardships. Under Joseph Smith's direction, the phrase, 'United Firm' was later replaced with 'United Order' in the revelation." (Heading: Section 104. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 206).

"The stewardship, then, was treated as private property, not common or communal property, even though all property ultimately belongs to God.

"3. Surpluses

"If members produced a surplus from their stewardship beyond what was necessary for their families, at the end of the year they gave it to the bishop to put in the bishop's storehouse.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:33

33 And again, if there shall be properties in the hands of the church, or any individuals in it, more

than is necessary for their support after this first consecration, which is a residue to be consecrated unto the bishop, it shall be kept to administer to those who have not, for time to time, that every man who has need may be amply supplied and receive according to his wants.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:13

13 And again, let the bishop appoint a storehouse unto this church; and let all things both in money and in meat, which are more than is needful for the wants of this people, be kept in the hands of the bishop.

"The bishop used the surplus to care for the poor, to build houses of worship, and for other worthy purposes.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:34-35

34 Therefore, the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy, as shall be appointed by the high council of the church, and the bishop and his council;
35 And for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the church, and building houses of worship, and building up of the New Jerusalem which is hereafter to be revealed--

"4. United Order

"In March 1832, the Lord revealed that there must be an organization to regulate and administer the law of consecration among His people.

Doctrine and Covenants 78:3

3 For verily I say unto you, the time has come, and is now at hand; and behold, and lo, it must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the poor of my people, both in this place [Ohio] and in the land of Zion [Missouri]--

"He called this organization the 'United Order.'

Doctrine and Covenants 92:1

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord, I give unto the united order, organized agreeable to the commandment previously given, a revelation and commandment concerning my servant Fredrick G. Williams, that ye shall receive him into the order. What I say unto one I say unto all.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 92 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, March 15, 1833. The revelation instructs Fredrick G. Williams, who had recently been appointed a counselor to Joseph Smith, on his his duties in the United Firm (see headings to section 78 and 82)." (Heading: Section 92. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 179).

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"In the Revelation given on April 26th, 1832 (sec. 82, given in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord [had] instructed the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney and a few others (v. 11) to unite their temporal interests under the rule of the Order of Enoch. In this revelation [sec. 92, Kirtland, Ohio, March 15, 1833], the brethren in that organization are commanded to receive, as a member, Fredrick G. Williams, whom the Lord had declared to be the equal of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in holding the keys of the kingdom (Sec. 90:6). (*The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951, [Revised Edition, 1962], 586-587).

"In subsequent revelations the Lord gave further instructions concerning the united order (see, for example D&C 104)." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saint, 1999, 76).

Purposes of the Law of Consecration:

*What are the purposes of the law of consecration?

"a. D&C 42:30. To care for the poor and needy.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:30

30 And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.

*How is caring for the poor and needy accomplished through the law of consecration?

Following the agreed upon reallocation of property to the individual and families in the form of a stewardship by the bishop, the residue "shall be kept to administer to those who have not, from time to time, that every man who has need may be amply supplied and receive according to his wants" (D&C 42:33).

"b. D&C 42:35. To purchase lands, build houses of worship, and build the New Jerusalem.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:35

35 And for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the church, and building houses of worship, and building up of the New Jerusalem which is hereafter to be revealed--

"c. D&C 42:40. To help the Lord's people overcome pride.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:40

40 And again, thou shalt not be proud in thy heart; let all thy garments be plain, and their beauty the beauty of the work of thine own hands;

*How can living the law of consecration help members overcome personal pride or greed?

One of the factors that brought about the conclusion of the 200 year period of "Oneness" as experienced by the people of Nephi, was pride.

4 Nephi 1:24

24 And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.

"d. D&C 42:42. To help the Lord's people be industrious and avoid idleness.

Doctrine and Covenants 42:42

42 Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer.

As the individual or family successfully managed their stewardship, they gave their increase to the bishop. He then distributed the residue to the worthy needy and poor. Those who were idle, or refused to better themselves, were not considered to receive care, other than receiving the necessities of life.

"e. D&C 51:9. To help the Lord's people be one.

Doctrine and Covenants 51:9

9 And let every man deal honestly, and be alike among this people, and receive alike, that ye may be one, even as I have commanded you.

*In what ways does the Lord expect us to be one?

*How can the law of consecration help the Saints be one?

"f. D&C 78:3-7. To make the Lord's people equal in earthly things and help them receive a place in the celestial kingdom.

Doctrine and Covenants 78:3-7

3 For verily I say unto you, the time has come, and is now at hand; and behold, and lo, it must needs be that there be an organization of my people, in regulating and establishing the affairs of the storehouse for the

poor of my people, both in this place [Ohio] and in the land of Zion [Missouri]--

4 For a permanent and everlasting establishment and order unto my church, to advance the cause, which ye have espoused, to the salvation of man, and to the glory of your Father who is in heaven;

5 That you may be equal in the bonds of heavenly things, yea, and earthly things also, for the obtaining of heavenly things.

6 For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things;

7 For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and required of you.

"g. D&C 78:14. To help the Church 'stand independent above all other creatures."

Doctrine and Covenants 78:14

14 That through my providence, notwithstanding the tribulation which shall descend upon you, that the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world;

"h. D&C 82:17-19. To help the Lord's people improve their talents for the good of all, seek the interest of their neighbor, and do all things with an eye single to God's glory.

Doctrine and Covenants 82:17-19 [underline added]

17 And you are to be equal, or in other words, you are to have equal claims on the properties, for the benefit of managing the concerns of your stewardships, every man according to his wants and needs, inasmuch as his wants are just--

18 And all this for the benefit of the church of the living God, that every man may improve upon his talent, that every man may gain other talents, yea, even an hundred fold, to be cast into the Lord's storehouse, to become the common property of the whole church--

19 Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.

In the 2013 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, the heading for Section 82 states, "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, April 26, 1832. The occasion was a council of high priests and elders of the Church. At the council, Joseph Smith was sustained as the President of the High Priesthood, to which office he had previously been ordained at a conference of high priests, elders, and members, at Amherst, Ohio, January 25, 1832 (see heading to section 75). This revelation reiterates instructions given in an earlier revelation (section 78) to establish a firm—known as the United Firm (under Joseph Smith's direction, the term 'order' later replaced 'firm')—to govern the Church's mercantile and publishing endeavors." (Heading: Section 82. *The Doctrine and Covenants*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981, [2013], 150).

Doctrine and Covenants 29:34-35

34 Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; neither any man, nor the children of men; neither Adam, your father, whom I created.

35 Behold, I gave unto him that he should be an agent unto himself; and I gave unto him commandment, but no temporal commandment gave I unto him, for my commandments are spiritual; they are not natural nor temporal; neither carnal nor sensual.

The law of consecration is not just a temporal or economic program. It is also a spiritual law that helps members grow spiritually and prepare for eternal life.

III. The Law of Consecration is an Eternal Law

As noted in the Introduction, the Law of Consecration is an eternal law revealed again in this dispensation. Previous accounts of the Lord's people being given this law and their efforts to live this law have been recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, New Testament, and Book of Mormon. Only the people of Enoch and Melchizedek were able to live

this law to the point that they were, as a city,
translated. Two other attempts have been recorded.

Acts 4:32, 34-35 [The Saints after the Savior's Resurrection]

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

B/M, 4 Nephi 1:1-3, 12-13, 15 [Nephites after the Savior's visit to them]

1 And it came to pass that the thirty and fourth year passed away, and also the thirty and fifth, and behold the disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And as many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.

2 And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

3 And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

12 And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses; but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

13 And it came to pass that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land; but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus.

15 And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

As recorded in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, on two occasions, the members of Christ's Church, after the Savior's Resurrection and in ancient America following the Savior's visit to them, were able to live the law of consecration for a period of time. Unfortunately, in both incidences, pride and the desire for the things of the world overcame their humility and charity toward others, resulted in their inability to continue to live the law.

*What do you think would be some of the blessings of living in a community where people lived the law of consecration?

An individual increase in their concern for the needs of others, especially those less fortunate; a decrease in selfishness towards others; a decrease in the importance of material possessions; a feeling of being of one heart and one mind with our fellowman, are just a few of the blessings.

IV. We Can Consecrate Our lives to the Lord Now

Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual states,

"As Saints [members] of God, we must be prepared and willing to live the law of consecration in its fulness. But we do not need to wait for a future day to consecrate our lives to the Lord [and the building of his Kingdom on earth]. As we do all we can to live the law of consecration today, we will be better prepared to live the fulness of the law when the Lord asks us to do so." (*Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 77).

*In what ways can we live the law of consecration in our lives today?

"1. *Realize that everything we have belongs to the Lord*

Doctrine and Covenants 104:13-14

13 For it is expedient that I, the Lord, should make every man accountable, as a steward over earthly blessings, which I have made and prepared for my creatures.

14 I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

Psalm 24:1

1 The earth is the LORD'S and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

*What can we learn from these verses?

*What does it mean to be a steward over our possessions?

Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition states,

"steward. a person put in charge... 2. one who acts as a supervisor or administrator,...for another or others."
(*Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition.* New York: Prentice Hall, 1988, [1994], 1315).

A steward is one who is in charge or acts on behalf of another who is the actual owner. By assignment, he/she is accountable to the owner for the manner in which the estate or company is operated.

*How should this knowledge affect our attitude toward our possessions?

While the possessions are not ours, as stewards, we are, however, responsible for their care and use.

*Why is it important to understand that everything belongs to the Lord?

As stewards, we are to act as the owner would act if he were present. Knowing the qualities of mercy and charity of

the Lord, we should act with generosity and kindness to all.

*What does the Lord promise if we are faithful stewards over what He has given us?

Doctrine and Covenants 51:19

19 And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life.

Doctrine and Covenants 78:22

22 And he that is a faithful and wise steward shall inherit all things. Amen.

As we exercise wise and faithful judgment regarding the areas of our stewardship, one day we will be given greater responsibility in the kingdom of God.

Victor L. Brown states,

"...until we 'feel in total harmony' with the principle that everything we have belongs to the Lord, 'it will be difficult if not impossible, for us to accept the law of consecration. As we prepare to live this law, we will look forward with great anticipation to the day when the call will come. If, on the other hand, we hope it can be delayed so we can have the pleasure of accumulating material things, we are on the wrong path.'" ("The Law of Consecration," in *1976 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1977], 439).

Doctrine and Covenants 19:26 [Martin Harris]

26 And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God--

*What warning did the Lord give Martin Harris in this verse?

Not to covet [want ardently, envy, be possessive] our property.

*Why must we overcome covetousness if we are to consecrate our lives to the Lord?

Our being possessive makes it extremely difficult to share with others. Some of us are like the rich man who came to the Savior inquiring what he must do to obtain eternal life. He had kept the commandments since his childhood, but was unable to give up his possessions which he coveted. He went away sorrowfully when the Lord asked him to go and sell all and give to the poor and come and follow me. (see Matthew 19:16-22.)

*How can we overcome covetous feelings?

One suggestion is to begin now to share some of your possessions with those in need. As you do so, you will experience a peace and kindness you have not felt before. This will motivate you to be even more generous. Before long, your kindness will not be prompted by anything other than the feelings you have within.

Brigham Young states,

"I am more afraid of covetousness in our Elders than I am of the hordes of hell...All our enemies...in the world, and all hell with them marshaled against us, could not do us the injury that covetousness in the hearts of this people could do us; for it idolatry." (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5. London: Latter-Day Saint's Book Depot, 1880, [Eighth Reprint, 1974], 353).

"2. *Make the sacrifices the Lord requires [of us] now*

"We must be willing to make the sacrifices the Lord requires of us at the present time. These include sacrifices of time, talents, and possessions. Those who are unable to make these sacrifices now may have difficulty making the greater ones required by the full implementation of the law of consecration.

King Benjamin spoke to the rich [B/M, Mosiah 4:16-13], and admonished them to be generous with their means with the poor. He also addressed the poor with these words: "I would that ye say in your hearts that I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give" (B/M, Mosiah 4:24). None

are exempt from sharing with their means, either now or in the future.

*How can we consecrate our time, talents, and possessions to help build the kingdom of God today?

"a. Pay tithing and fast offerings and give generously in other ways to those in need. By doing these things, we can help the Church care for the poor and carry on the important activities necessary to build the kingdom of God on earth.

Marion G. Romney states,

"What prohibits us from giving as much in fast offerings as we would have given in surplus under the United Order? Nothing but our own limitations." (*Conference Report*, April 1966, 100; or *Improvement Era*, June 1966, 537).

"b. Serve willingly in the Church. The Lord has admonished each person to 'learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence' (D&C 107:99).' We should fulfill the callings we received to the best of our ability. In addition to specific Church callings, we can share the gospel with others, do temple work, and seek to strengthen the testimonies of those who are new or weak in the faith.

"c. Serve as a full-time missionary.

Robert D. Hales states,

"Going on a mission teaches you to live the law of consecration. It may be the only time in your life when you can give to the Lord all your time, talents, and resources. In return, the Lord will bless you with His Spirit to be with you. He will be close to you and strengthen you" ("If Thou Wilt Enter into Life, Keep the Commandments," in *Conference Report*, April 1996; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 36).

"3. *Develop Christlike love for others*

Doctrine and Covenants 82:19

19 Every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God.

B/M, Jacob 2:17

17 Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

*What does the Lord teach in these scriptures about how we are to show our love for others?

The words are reminiscent of the Golden Rule that admonished us "To do unto others as we would have others do unto us." When we treat others the way we would like to be treated, it increases our acts of kindness and generosity, and decreases our feelings of selfishness and envy toward others. Acts of kindness to others invites the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, while our selfishness and envy causes Him to depart.

*Why is developing Christlike love for others necessary if we are to live the law of consecration?

If our attitude is one of selfishness and envy towards others, we will not be inclined to share with others, never mind even being aware there are others around us in need. As we become more like Christ in our thoughts and actions, we will be more thoughtful and considerate of those around us and more willing to assist them.

The ability to have Christlike love for others is the foundation of the law of consecration. As we grow in love, our ability to live this law will also grow.

Thomas S. Monson states,

"I have many memories of my boyhood. Anticipating Sunday dinner was one of them. Just as we children...sat anxiously at the table, with the aroma of roast beef filling the room, Mother would say to me, 'Tommy, before we eat, take this plate I've prepared down the street to Old Bob and hurry back.'

"I could never understand why we couldn't first eat and later deliver his plate of food. I never questioned aloud but would run down to his house and then wait anxiously as Bob's aged feet brought him eventually to the door. Then I would hand him the plate of food. He would present to me the clean plate from the previous Sunday and offer me a dime as pay for my services. My answer was always the same: 'I can't accept money. My mother would tan my hide.' He would then run his wrinkled hand through my blond hair and say, 'My boy, you have a wonderful mother. Tell her thank you.'...Sunday dinner always seemed to taste a bit better after I had returned from my errand." ("The Long Line of the Lonely," in *Ensign*, Feb. 1992, 4).

"4. *Strive to consecrate all aspects of our lives to the Lord*

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"We tend to think of consecration only in terms of property and money. But there are so many ways of keeping back part." ("Settle This in Your Hearts," in *Ensign*, November 1992, 66).

*What are some ways in which we might be 'keeping back part' when we could achieve greater consecration in the service of God and His children?

Doctrine and Covenants 64:34

34 Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

"a. An unwillingness to be completely submissive to the Lord's will.

Neal A. Maxwell continues,

"The submission of one's will is really the only uniquely personal thing we have to place on God's altar. The many other things we 'give'...are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when you and I finally submit ourselves, by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God's will, then we are really giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly

ours to give!" (*Conference Report*, October 1995, 30; or "Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 24).

- "b. An unwillingness to give up selfish things, such as 'our roles, our time, our preeminence, and our possessions.'" ("Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 23).
- "c. Letting hobbies and preoccupations with less important things become too consuming.
- "d. Giving commendable civic service but remaining 'a comparative stranger to Jesus' holy temples and His holy scriptures.'" ("Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 23).
- "e. Being dutiful in family responsibilities but not emulating Jesus' example of gentleness with some family members.
- "f. Building up ourselves first rather than the kingdom of God.
- "g. Sharing talents publicly while privately retaining a particular pride.
- "h. Accepting a Church calling while having a heart more set on maintaining a certain role in the world.

*For reference to a-h, see Neal A. Maxwell talks in *Ensign*, November, 1992, 65-67, and November 1995, 22-24.

All quotes, unless otherwise noted, are from *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 75-80).

*How are we blessed as we strive for more complete consecration?

V. Conclusions

Obedience to the law of consecration often serves as a great separator regarding the faithfulness of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ. It requires more than just

attendance at meetings or even the acceptance of a call to serve. It literally requires a change in our nature. It means to be less self-centered and more other focused on others. It means being willing to give our all to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints for the building up of the kingdom of God on earth. As we do so, we become "born again." We become worthy to receive all the blessings the Lord has for the righteous, including eternal life. (see D&C 51:19.)

Four aspects of the Law of Consecration include:

(1) Consecration of our possessions; (2) Receiving a stewardship; (3) Giving of our surplus to the Bishop for the care of the poor and needy; and, (4) Supporting the United Order as they implement the law of consecration.

The purpose of the Law of Consecration includes:

(a) To care for the poor and needy; (b) To purchase lands, build houses of worship, and build the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of God on earth; (c) To help the Lord's people overcome pride; (d) To help the Lord's people be industrious and avoid idleness; (e) To help the Lord's people to be One; (f) To make the Lord's people equal in earthly things and help them receive a place in the celestial kingdom; (g) To help the Church 'stand independent' above all other creatures; and, (h) To help the Lord's people improve their talents for the good of all, seeking the interest of their neighbor, and do all things with a eye single to God's glory.

Living the Law of Consecration today requires: (1) Realize that everything we have belongs to the Lord; (2) Make the sacrifices the Lord requires [of us] now by (a) Paying a full-tithe and fast offerings, and give generously in other ways to those in need; (b) Serve willingly in the Church; (c) Be willing to serve as a full-time missionary or assist missionary work by inviting our friends and neighbors to meet with the missionaries; (3) Develop a Christlike love for others; and, (4) Strive to consecrate all aspects of our lives to the Lord.

The following aspects cause us to hold back our offering to the Lord: (a) Unwilling to be completely submissive to the Lord's will; (b) Unwilling to give up selfish things; (c) Letting hobbies and preoccupations with less important things become too consuming; (d) Giving commendable civic

service, but remaining 'a comparative stranger to Jesus' holy temples and His holy scriptures' (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1995, 24); (e) Being dutiful in family responsibilities but not emulating Jesus' example of gentleness with some family members; (f) Building up ourselves first rather than the kingdom of God; (g) Sharing talents publicly while privately retaining a particular pride; (h) Accepting a Church calling while having a heart more set on maintaining a certain role in the world.

We have our spiritual work cut out for us if we are to be able to fully live the Law of Consecration. It is today that we need to make the necessary steps to qualify us to live this law of the Lord.

Our next lesson [D&C#15] addresses the importance of our seeking after the gifts of the Spirit, that the Lord has available for us through the Holy Ghost, and then use them in the service of others.