

Lesson 23: The Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

Reading Preparation:

- Proverbs 1-3; 12-18
- Ecclesiastes 1-3

Outline:

1. Sources of Instruction for Israel
2. The Book of Proverbs
3. Excerpts from Proverbs
4. The Book of Ecclesiastes
5. Excerpts from Ecclesiastes
6. Conclusions

Lesson Notes:

1. Sources of Instruction for Israel

Through the scriptures we are able to hear the ancient prophets speaking the words of God today. The words of the priest, like this commentary, were focused on the interpretation of the words of God. Next, we also have the words of “wise men” which, in addition to the words of the priest, are designed to bring clarity to our understanding of the words of God.

Victor L. Ludlow stated,

“Three sources of instruction were recognized by the Israelites: (1) the prophets (speaking for God), (2) the priests (teaching God’s word), and (3) the wise men (understanding God’s works)” (Unlocking the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 138).

Sidney B. Sperry provides further clarity,

*“The so-called Wisdom literature of the Old Testament includes Koheleth (Ecclesiastes), Proverbs, Job, and the following from the Book of Psalms: 1; 19:7-14; 32:8-11; 34:12-23; 37; 49; 73; 94-8f.; 111; 112; 119; 127; 128; 133) [as well as several other books outside of the Old Testament. [*see reference for list]” (The Spirit of the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980, [Classic edition. Second Printing, 1982], 70).*

In this chapter, we will concentrate our attention on the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

2. The Book of Proverbs

Ellis T. Rasmussen observes,

The book of Proverbs “contains less material accredited as divine revelation and more attributed to human observation than do the books of the Prophets; but some inspired advice is included, and ways of thought, speech, and action pleasing to the Lord are commended.” (An Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 470).

Dana M. Pike states,

“...wise men or sages, were active and important in ancient societies. These sages are usually thought to have been the scribes who were employed by royal courts and temples, the two major institutions in the ancient Near Eastern world... The content of most ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature does not generally emphasize religious, or theological themes but rather practical, social, and ethical ones... They came primarily from observation: what worked and what did not... Although many of the proverbs in the book of Proverb may have originated with Solomon, it is certain that he is not the source of all of them” (“The Proverbs,” in Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 4. Edited Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 448-449, 451).

The Book of Proverbs

| Focus | Prologue | | Proverbs | | | | Precepts | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Divisions | Judgment on Judah 1 | Judgment on Judah's Neighbors 2 | Judgment on All the Earth 10 | Historical Interlude 21 | Deliverance of God's People 22 | Deliverance for God's People 24 | Future of God's Delivered People 25 | |
| Topics | Person of Wisdom 1 | | Principles of Wisdom 2 | | | | Practice of Wisdom 9 | |
| Place | Judah 10 | | | | | | Unknown 31 | |
| Time | C. 950-700 B.C. 21 | | | | | | | |
| Author | King Solomon, Agur & Lemuel 24 | | | | | | | |

(Reference: The Book of Proverbs, Charts of the Books of the Bible, www.swartzentrover.com/ (www.holypig.com), www.swartzentrover.com/cotor/bible/Bible/Bible%20Charts/Charts%20of%20the%20Books%20of%20the%20Bible.htm)

Ellis T. Rasmussen offers the following outline:

The book of Proverbs is divided into five parts:

"I. The Proverbs of Solomon [Proverbs 1-9]

Contains didactic poems longer than the two-line couplets that make up the body of Proverbs proper. The poems are largely advice from father to son; they include some dissertations on wisdom. Examples include: 2:21-22; 3:9-10; 3:11-12; 8:17.

"II. The [formal] Proverbs of Solomon [Proverbs 10-24]

Contains formal, pithy, poetic couplets. There is no evident organization of most of the subjects of the verses and chapters of this section; but there is a collection of short aphorisms [def. a concise statement of a principle], one or more verses in length, that is introduced by an explanatory admonition and covers a variety of moral and social matters (see Proverbs 22:17-24:34).

"III. Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out [Proverbs 25-29].

It contains proverbs, maxims, and other aphorisms.

"IV. The Words of Agur [Proverb 30]

Contains a variety of moral and religious observations and admonitions.

"V. The Words of King Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him [Proverbs 31]

It is a renowned poetic summary of the virtues of a good woman and wife." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 470-471).

3. Excerpts from Proverbs

The following are selections I have chosen as I felt they were most meaningful with the accompanying lesson to be learned.

Proverbs 1:7

7 The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Lesson: To be learned is good if we also listen to the counsel of the Lord (see B/M, 2 Nephi 9:29).

Proverbs 2:2-5

2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply
thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy
voice for understanding;
4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as
for hid treasures;
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and
find the knowledge of God.

Lesson: Only as we seek after spiritual understanding with the same vigor and energy that we seek after worldly treasure, will we truly come to know the will of the Lord (see Matthew 6:33).

Proverbs 3:5-7

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not
unto thine own understanding.
6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct
thy paths.
7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and
depart from evil.

Lesson: The man/woman who is truly wise will seek to know the direction of the Lord for their lives and will acknowledge Him as the source of their strength and knowledge.

Proverbs 3:13-14

13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that
getteth understanding.
14 For the merchandise of it is better than the
merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine
gold.

Lesson: Wisdom and understanding are qualities of a truly educated person for in their application they benefit the lives of others as well as their own.

Proverbs 4:7

7 Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom:
and with all thy getting get understanding.

Lesson: The words, "with all thy getting get understanding," greet students as they enter the library at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. These words served to remind me it was the application of learning that was to be the focus of my education, not just the gaining of information.

Proverbs 6:16-19

16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an
abomination unto him:
17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed
innocent blood,
18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that
be swift in running to mischief,
19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth
discord among brethren.

Lesson: In the eyes of the Lord, it is important how we treat others. It is in our treatment of others where we create our greatest offences toward Him.

Proverbs 12:1

1 Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that
hateth reproof is brutish [def. lack of understanding].

Lesson: It is important to desire knowledge, but it equally important to be able to benefit from criticism.

Proverbs 13:24

24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that
loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Lesson: There are times when we fail to provide the reproof children need because we are afraid of offending them and risk losing their affection. However, reproof, at times is necessary. It must always be done with our focus upon their misbehavior, not upon their worth. Afterward we then show an increase of love and forgiveness toward the child. The adage, "Never reprimand in anger" is critical in all our actions.

Proverbs 15:1

1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Lesson: When we speak softly we are more apt to decrease the tension of the moment. However, when our voices elevate and our words become more forceful and critical, our actions then serve to heighten an already tense situation.

Brigham Young admonished,

"In all our daily pursuits in life, or whatever nature and kind, Latter-day Saints, and especially those who hold important positions in the kingdom of God, should maintain a uniform and even temper, both when at home and when abroad... anger should never be permitted to rise in our bosoms, and words suggested by angry feelings should never be permitted to pass our lips." (Journal of Discourses, Vol. 11. London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1867, 136).

Marvin J. Ashton added,

"When we are inclined to give up in despair in our efforts to communicate because other family members have failed to respond, perhaps we would do well not to give up, but rather to give and take in our conversations. How important it is to know how to disagree with another's point of view without being disagreeable. How important it is to have discussion periods ahead of decisions." ("Family Communications" in Ensign, May, 1976, 52).

Proverbs 15:31-32

31 The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.

32 He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

Lesson: It is a challenge to receive correction without becoming defensive in our response. The individual who has achieved this level of control will be able to benefit from increased understanding, even when it is not being served in a pleasing manner. It is our response to the reproof that makes it adversarial or conversational.

Truman G. Madsen reports,

"...the following story is still carried in the family lore of Brigham Young's descendants but, so far as I know, never recorded. It says that in a meeting the Prophet [Joseph Smith] rebuked Brigham Young from his head to his feet for something he had done, or something he was supposed to have done but hadn't—the detail is unclear. And it may well have been that the Prophet was deliberately putting Brigham Young to a test. When he had finished the rebuke, everyone in the room waited for the response. Brigham Young rose to his feet. He was a strong man. He could have responded: 'Now, look, haven't you read that you're not supposed to rebuke in public, but only in private?' Or, 'Brother Joseph, doesn't it say something in the revelations about persuasion, and long-suffering, and gentleness and meekness?' Or, 'You're dead wrong. It's not so.' But he said none of the above. In a voice everyone could tell was sincere, he said simply, 'Joseph, what do you want me to do?' And the story says that the Prophet burst into tears, came down from the stand, threw his arms around Brigham, and said, in effect, 'Brother Brigham, you passed.'" (Joseph Smith The Prophet. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989, 87-88).

Proverbs 17:6

6 Children's children [grandchildren] are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

Lesson: True joy in the life of a parent comes especially when they see the attributes they value and taught their children exemplified in the lives of their children and grandchildren. In fact, nothing brings greater satisfaction to any parent than knowing their children love them. It makes being a parent worth it.

Proverbs 18:22

22 Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

This is the one verse in Proverbs where Joseph Smith provided a substantive change as part of his inspired revision of the Bible:

JST, Proverbs 18:22

22 Who so findeth a good wife hath obtained favor of the Lord.

(The Holy Scriptures Inspired Version. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1974, 659).

The emphasis of the proverb is the restoration of "good" as an adjective to describe one's wife and the omitting of the word "thing" in referencing one's spouse. "Good" is a term that is used to quantify, and, therefore, to set apart from others, qualities that are especially desirable to a husband. "thing" as used in this sentence seems to decrease the value of the noun "wife" as if she were just an object, rather than one of God's most prized creations. It may be for this reason that when it was corrected "good" was used to designate her value and the word "thing" omitted.

Proverbs 21:23

23 Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.

Lesson: This is excellent advice to anyone who has even said something for which they later were sorry. One is reminded of the caution from James 3:5 “Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

Proverbs 22:6

6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Lesson: It is important children be taught when they are still young the important values of life. It is in our beginning years the foundation of our life is established. These early precepts give the individual a solid foundation upon which to contrast and compare new ideas as they increase in years.

[4. The Book of Ecclesiastes](#)

As noted previously, the book of Ecclesiastes or Koheleth is grouped with the “Wisdom Literature” of the Old Testament.

Ellis T. Rasmussen states,

“Preacher is used to translate Koheleth, whose root kahal means ‘to gather, convoke, or call together.’ Ecclesiastes is a Greek word meaning ‘assemblyman.’ Why the author of these lifetime experiments so identified himself is not known.” (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 487).

David Rolph Seely observes,

“...there existed a great deal of dissension among the early rabbis whether [Ecclesiastes] should be considered part of the scriptures at all... While the book of Proverbs suggests that correct behavior will bring results—stated in terms of health, wealth, prosperity, and success in life, Ecclesiastes is written by one who in the course of his life has come to the conclusion that such a connection between righteousness, wisdom, and worldly success is an abuse of religion and an oversimplified view of life. The Preacher’s tone is often bitter and cynical [regarding life].” (“Ecclesiastes,” in Studies in Scripture , Vol. 4. Edited by Keith P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 463).

The tone of bitterness and cynicism, as noted, may be one reason why many chose to avoid the observations found in Ecclesiastes.

David Rolph Seely continues,

“[You will note that Job was to learn through his own experiences that] “righteousness provides no escape from the trials and vicissitudes of mortality and vehemently protested his innocence to the Lord, seeking an understanding of his suffering.” (“Ecclesiastes,” in Studies in Scripture, Vol. 4. Edited by Kent P. Jackson. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 464).

Part of the writer’s cynicism and bitterness may be similar to many who believe that religion provides no protection from many of the vicissitudes and calamities of life and, therefore, is of little or no value. As the book of Job, and other prophetic scripture exemplify, making the choice to follow the example of the Lord does not stop the preverbal rain from pouring down on our heads. It does, however, provide an umbrella to assist one to get through the present storm and to make them stronger when the next storm comes. As Matthew recorded, “... your Father which is in heaven:... sendth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matthew 5:45). With an umbrella or without, that is our choice; not if and when the rain will come in our lives; Believer, Non-believer alike, for that is how God strengthens and prepares us as His children to reach our real potential.

The Book of Ecclesiastes

| Focus | Exploration | | | | | Exhortation | | | | | |
|-----------|--|---|-----------------|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------|----|----|
| Divisions | All is Vanity | | Vanity of Doing | | Vanity of Having | Vanity of Being | Using Life Well | | Source of True Living | | |
| | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Topics | Exploring Life's Inconsistencies | | | | | Explaining Life's Inconsistencies | | | | | |
| | Fickleness of life vs. Fear of the Lord | | | | | | | | | | |
| Place | Under the Sun | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time | Decades of Searching (in the Days of King Solomon) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Author | King Solomon | | | | | | | | | | |

(Reference: The Book of Ecclesiastes, Charts of the Books of the Bible, www.swartzentrover.com/ (www.holypig.com/), www.swartzentrover.com/cotor/bible/Bible/Bible%20Charts/Charts%20of%20the%20Books%20of%20the%20Bible.htm)

5. Excerpts from Ecclesiastes

It is important as we begin our readings from Ecclesiastes we understand the writer is trying to learn the source of man's achieving happiness in their lives. He seems to have written his thoughts during the latter years of his life wherein he had experienced much disappointment. He begins his search from a point of elimination, meaning to define what does not or has not brought him happiness.

Ecclesiastes 1:2-3

2 ...all is vanity [def. emptiness, uselessness, transitory].
3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?

The Preacher or author continually reminds us of the transitory nature of mortality and warns us against trusting too much in the things of the flesh.

Looking back upon his life, he shares his search for fulfillment in life. He first devoted himself to pleasure and laughter. Like many, he did not understand the joy initially found in pleasure and self-centered activities is often fleeting, rather than long-lasting.

Ecclesiastes 2:1-3

1 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.
2 I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it?
3 I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.

Looking for the meaning of happiness by adding wine [alcohol] to self-centered activities provides only temporary relief, but often leaves the individual feeling nauseas and with a throbbing headache. In severe cases, one also suffers from loss of memory. No lasting happiness there.

Next our writer turns to gaining wealth.

Ecclesiastes 2:4-11

4 I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:
5 I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits:
6 I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees:
7 I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I have great possessions...
8 I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasures of kings... .
9 So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me... also my wisdom remained with me.
10 And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy;...
11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.

Why, we may ask, did the gaining of wealth not bring him lasting happiness? I would again offer the obtaining of money only brings temporary happiness, not the lasting happiness that he is seeking? Why? Because his purpose for gaining wealth is not so that he can share his good fortune with others, but is only focused on his own self-pleasure. It is all about him!

Next, he turns to gaining wisdom.

Ecclesiastes 2:12-15

12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which hath been already done.
13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly,...
14 The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness:... .
15 Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.

Our friend thought that if he gained further education and knowledge he would also find the lasting happiness he was seeking. In the end, he may have known more, even obtaining advanced degrees, but what was his purpose in gaining further education? Was it to benefit only himself? If so, then the gaining of wisdom would not have brought him any further along his journey to finding happiness than any of his earlier adventures had done.

His ultimate conclusion is that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

As I reflect upon the writer's experience, I am not surprised by his conclusion. It has been my experience that true joy and happiness in this life does not come from devoting one's life to personal pleasure or the accumulation of wealth or even the acquiring of knowledge. Those who are truly happy are those who have given of themselves in service to others. The secret to happiness is found only as we truly lift another do we also feel lifted. It is only then do we find that our own joy and happiness has increased as we have blessed the life of another person. If we seek wealth or knowledge only to meet our own self-seeking desire for a pleasurable life, at the conclusion of our life, we will be most miserable and probably all alone. Those who humbly spend their lives in lifting others and perform anonymous acts of kindness and service that bring joy to another are those who, at the end of their lives, know true happiness. It is when we lose our lives in the service of others that we truly find ourselves. The giving, however, must be anonymous for if it is done for the purpose of self-aggrandizement it will benefit only the one who is served, not the giver of the service. To be of unselfish service to another, I have found, is the secret of true joy and lasting happiness.

Hugh B. Brown shares his experience with a friend,

"As I was returning from my first trip overseas in World War I where I was serving with the Canadian Army, I arrived in New York and while there learned of the presence in the hospital of an aged man whom I had known. As I had some time before the train left for the West, I called on him in the hospital. He was a wealthy man, had racing stables in Cuba, in the Northwest, and in California, had millions invested in various places, but at the age of eighty he was lying at death's door.

"As I stood by his bedside and thought over various parts of his life as I had known it, as I thought of his divorced wife, of his five children, all of whom were estranged, and none of whom cared enough to come to the hospital to see him,

as I thought of the things he had lost which money could not buy and noted his tragic situation and the depth of his misery, I asked him what he could do if he had the privilege of living his life over again and could start it with the wisdom which had come through the years, what he considered the real values in life as he stood near the end of it. I asked him what he considered the most important things in life, and if he would tell me as a young man how I could get the greatest riches and then enjoy them when I grew old.

"This old gentleman, who died a few days later, said to me, 'As I think back over life the most important and valuable asset which might have had but which I lost in the process of accumulating millions, was the simple faith my mother had in God and in the immortality of the soul.

"The old gentleman asked me to get a little book out of his briefcase and gave me the page on which he had marked a poem, and then he said, 'You asked me what is the most valuable thing in life. I cannot answer you in better words than those used by the poet. Will you read them to me?' And as I read the following lines I thought it was he, not the poet, that was speaking, and I read:

"I'm an Alien"

*"I'm an alien, to the faith my mother taught me.
I'm a stranger to the God that heard my mother when she cried.
I'm an alien to the comfort that, 'Now I lay me,' brought me.
To the everlasting arms that held my father when he died.
When the great world came and called me, I deserted all to follow.
Never noting in my blindness I had slipped my hand from His,
Never dreaming in my dazedness that the bubble fame is hollow.
That the wealth of gold is tinsel, as I since have learned it is.
I have spent a lifetime seeking things I spurned when I found them.
I have fought and been rewarded in many a winning cause,
But I'd give it all, fame and fortune and the pleasures that surround them,
If I only had the faith that made my mother what she was.'*

"That was the dying testimony of a man who was born in the Church but had drifted far from it. That was the brokenhearted cry of a lonely man who could have anything money could buy, but who had lost the most important things of life in order to accumulate this world's goods. He realized as he lay upon his deathbed that he could not take any of it with him." (Continuing the Quest. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1961, 32-34).

Ecclesiastes 2:24

**24 There is nothing better for a man, than that he should
eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy
good in his labour...**

How tragic that his cynicism had brought him to the point that he came to believe all there was to life was to eat, drink and be merry!

Ellis T. Rasmussen underlines,

"... his lack of information about life after death and the perpetuation of knowledge and wisdom, and the fruit thereof, is evident... he perceived simply that there is not any perpetuation of these in the grave—in the dead body." (A Latter-Day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1993, 488).

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

**1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every
purpose under the heaven:
2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant,
and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break
down, and a time to build up;
4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn,
and a time to dance;
5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones
together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from
embracing;
6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and
a time to cast away;
7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep
silence, and a time to speak;
8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and
a time of peace.**

In an agrarian society, awareness of the seasons of the year was extremely important to the success or failure of the nation's food supply. When to prepare the field and when to plant the crop were important dates if the harvest was to be productive. Everyone understood that if you did not sow, you could not expect to reap a bountiful harvest. Timing was almost as important as the time of the seasonal rains. Without taking the time to prepare the field or plant the crop meant disaster.

The writer of Ecclesiastes in the above verses reminds each of us that just as there are seasons for the grower, there are also seasons in our lives. In fact, between our birth and death, we will experience many seasons in our lives. As he notes, there will be times when we will weep and mourn, but they should not overshadow the times when we will laugh and dance. Likewise there will be times when we will experience hurt and anger, but we should seek to renew the emotions of love and peace, not only for ourselves, but also for those around us.

An important element in our joy and happiness will be our tongue. We must learn to exercise control of our tongue so we may know when to speak and when to be silent as we interact with others.

We must also learn what matters most in our lives is our relationship with others. We should concentrate on embracing and building relationships and to cast away that which is not necessary or important in our lives. When we let our daily tasks become more important than our relationships, in the end we will reap disappointment.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear [reverence] God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

In these simple words, the Preacher finally comes to himself and states the whole purpose of mortality which is to develop our individual faith and to keep the Lord's commandments. It is sad that he did not also understand the importance of giving service to others, rather than remaining focused on self. As Gale Sayers, one of the greatest running backs in the history of football, stated, "The Lord is first, my friends are second, and I am third." (www.anchornew.org/youth-columnists/frank_lucca/april_16_2010.php).

Boyd K. Packer observed,

"... the choice of life is not between fame and obscurity, nor is the choice between wealth and poverty. The choice is between good and evil, and that is a very different matter indeed.

"When we fully understand this lesson, thereafter our happiness will not be determined by material things. We may be happy without them or successful in spite of them." ("The Choice" in Ensign, November 1980, 21).

6. Conclusions

As we come to the conclusion of this chapter, we might reflect upon another voice.

Henry D. Taylor stated,

"If we keep all of God's commandments, we will enjoy a feeling of calmness, serenity, and strength. This will serve as a bulwark to protect us against the winds and storms created by the tensions and uncertainties of present chaotic world conditions. We need not wait until we get to heaven to obtain peace and happiness. We can have heaven on earth, here and now." ("Fear God and Keep His Commandments" in Conference Report, October 1961, 103).

True happiness is not found in pursuing riches, fame, pleasure, or even wisdom. It is found in our keeping the commandments of God and serving our fellowman. Only if we seek to be like Our Savior, Jesus Christ, in every aspect of our lives, will we ever find true and lasting happiness, now and forever. An excellent question to ask ourselves is "What would Jesus do?" If we ask and then follow the promptings of the spirit, we will come to know true happiness.