

Spiritual War Hero, James Stoddard

Highlights & Commentary on the 'Joseph
Smith Foundation' Founding Family &
Teachings of the Prophets on Social
Standards



R. Nathan Richardson

RichardsonStudies.com

This edition was updated 8.5.25.

Copyright Nate Richardson. This book may be shared for non-profit purposes. It is available as a free PDF at RichardsonStudies.com.

Nate Richardson is the editor of RichardsonStudies.com, a faith-based non-profit research organization. Nate is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If you would like to contribute or discuss material, contact Nate at RRNMailbox@gmail.com.

James wrote and made the following:

Books:

- *Seer Stone v. Urim & Thummim:
Book of Mormon Translation on Trial*
- *Faith Crisis 1: We Were NOT
Betrayed!*

- *Faith Crisis 2: Behind Closed Doors—Leonard Arrington & the Progressive Rewriting of Mormon History*

Documentary Films:

- *Nephites in Europe (Episodes 1 & 2, Quest for the Nephite Remnant) (2019)*
- *Hidden Bloodlines: The Grail & the Lost Tribes in the Lands of the North (2017)*
- *Unlocking the Mystery of the Two Prophets: Revelation 11 (2017)*
- *The Prophet Joseph: More than we know (2015)*
- *Statesmen & Symbols: Prelude to the Restoration (2014)*
- *For Our Day: Divinely Sanctioned Governments (2013)*

- *For Our Day: Covenant on the Land (2013)*
- *Creation and Evolution: A Witness of Prophets (2007)*



(James Stoddard, the late founder of the Joseph
Smith Foundation, see
JosephSmithFoundation.org)



(See
<https://josephsmithfoundation.org/memorial/>)

Highlights & Commentary on “Christ Centered Home” on The Stoddard Family

These notes are shared with permission of the author, but they do not represent all ideas of the text, and much more effective and thorough treatment is given in the full text, which can be found at JosephSmithFoundation.org.

Contents

Ch. 1 (Family Based Missions).....	9
Ch. 2 (Stand Alone)	9
Ch. 3 (Death).....	13
Ch. 4 (Make A Difference).....	14
Ch. 5 (Faith to do God’s Work).....	18
Ch. 6 (Youth Responsibility & Service)	20
Ch. 7 (Conversion to the Gospel & Family Vision by Hannah).....	27
Ch. 8 (Joy).....	31
Ch. 9 (Outdoor Work).....	37

Ch. 11 (Music).....	45
Ch. 12 (Movies).....	51
Ch. 13 (Be an Example).....	54
Ch. 14 (Change of Heart by Leah)	56
Ch. 15 (Forgiveness & Healing).....	64
Ch. 16 (Conversion, Testimony by Isaiah) ..	68
Ch. 17 (Finding Confidence Again).....	70
Ch. 18 (Miracles)	71
Ch. 19 (Keep the Faith).....	72
James' Final Testimony	76
Bonus: Torch Lighters Series Hero	
Highlights: A Generated List.....	89



Intro: This book highlights the life teachings and family of James Stoddard. It is a most compelling work for those who hunger and thirst after a righteous way to raise a family. I have scarcely heard of a family with this level of unity standards and productivity, the only comparable work that comes to mind is the biography of Apostle Elder Bruce R McConkie, which discusses some of the bold righteousness of that family. The works of these families will not be understood by the masses, but only by the spiritually minded. Their ways are not the world's ways. This book is a

refreshing help as we navigate the complexities of family life in these last days.

Ch. 1 (Family Based Missions)

Stand in the forefront in the cause of truth.

Overlook each other's mistakes and work together.

Joy comes from serving God with all the heart.

Never invest time into a hobby without involving your kids.

Your mission to change the world is with and through your family.

Ch. 2 (Stand Alone)

We must be willing to be a lone pilgrim.

Study the gospel so well that no matter who speaks, you will not be deceived.

Where to start in gospel studies? Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Doctrines of Salvation (J Fi. S), Mormon Doctrine, Answers to Gospel Questions (J Fi. S)

In his youth, James learned to study the gospel seriously, even multiple hours a day, and had read the scriptures and key texts by the brethren before his mission.

James became unpopular for being interested in the gospel, so he hid his interest, became popular again while studying in private, and later greatly regretted hiding his gospel interest, even being prompted that he had wasted much of his life as a youth.

Chariots of Fire is a movie about Eric Liddell, Olympic runner who wouldn't run on the Sabbath.

Life isn't about how much we study the scriptures, but about whether we have made a real difference

in the world, helping others experience a change of heart.

James discerned the difference between a mission and being home as that on the mission, you are serving.

America's Godly Heritage by David Barton was a presentation which stirred James to devote himself to showing God in history, etc. To bring God back into education.

James quit work at a video store due to pornographic video covers.

James quit professional basketball aspirations seeing better things to do.

At BYU studying the social sciences, James was taught socialism, evolution, communism, welfare state, etc., and all the professors and students took it in like gospel.

When their oldest daughter learned rebellious attitudes and progressive philosophies in kindergarten, they became homeschoolers.

Note: I recall James saying that many people told him he was too protective of his children by homeschooling them over the years. He has had to resist these voices which keep coming against what he was prompted to do.

Two bedrock principles for their home were 1. We follow God's laws and 2. We defend the truth and teach the Gospel.

They defined the purpose of their lives and schooling as to 1. Become like God and 2. Help others become like God.

In their family, they learned folk and country dances, creation science in line with scripture, and used the words of the prophets for their standards in relationships, music, etc.

Father's aren't just to pay the bills and go on occasional family outings. Their first priority should be family. Fathers' extra time should go toward family.

What is the purpose of life? To be tested, sure. But

the main purpose is to have joy.

When kids have questions, use scripture to show them the answers.

James put together a family website to share history of their family ancestors, holiday ideas, providential miracles from the past, wholesome family movies, etc.

Note: This is a great idea to have a family website. One might also include key family pictures, writings and interests and projects of each child, a family mission statement, family mission plans, etc.

Ch. 3 (Death)

They had never seen their dad cry until one of his sons died. All he could say to comfort his family was "it is better this way", though of course he did not wish it that way. This said, he did not allow himself to wallow in grief. They often looked at pictures, remembering the good times and the bad.

Kneeling prayer at meal time. Kneeling is a sign of submission to God, a reflection of humility, reverence, and soberness. An outward demonstration of a change of heart.

Ch. 4 (Make A Difference)

Film schools which professed standards still had degrading material, so James taught himself how to make films, feeling called to do so. These skills became a part of their homeschool curriculum.

Too many good parents set aside their family to chase their own dreams. Even if it's a worthy cause, if you leave your family behind, it is vanity.

Always bring your children along when engaged in a cause.

There should be more kids at the Book of Mormon Evidence Conferences.

When James was a county delegate, his kids were brought to all the events.

When James interviewed various authors etc., some kids were always brought.

The kids reviewed manuscripts of debates etc. their father was involved in.

As a young men's leader, James brought his small children. Some other leaders complained about this, James was persistent, "My kids will sit quietly, participate, and even help the older youth" he said, and they did. He was firm: If he was coming, they were coming.

Kids can do far more than we think.

Some apostacy of youth is inevitable like Laman and Lemuel, but most apostacy of youth is unnecessary, and stems from a lack of family mission.

At age 12, Hannah was brought to meetings of her dad's. She was disciplined to sit quietly, be respectful, and listen when adults were having

conversations. Just when she finished her schooling and chores and had only a few hours of play, she had to attend these meetings. Eventually she learned to appreciate them and pay attention at them.

From youth, the children learned to stand up for truth even in controversial topics such as polygamy, Adam God, gender roles, modern science, etc.

Testimonies are not gained through intellectual study, but by doing.

Joseph Smith taught that religion which doesn't require the sacrifice of all things does not have the power to save p49

The key is living the gospel. Don't focus on whether your kids are reading their scriptures, focus on whether they are living the teachings of scripture.

At one point, James felt called to make inspirational videos about gospel truths of the restoration, he moved and put his work on hold.

They had funds enough to work at this for a year, then they would run out. It was a great leap of faith. Everyone thought he was crazy.

The children were involved in James' research. They were "Family projects, not dad projects."

The children started making their own video slideshows and their own websites.

The kids wanted to be grown up like dad, doing what he did.

James "never worked on any project, wrote any article, researched any subject, made any video, or visited with any influential friend, without one or more of his kids right by his side." p54

One of his young daughters began learning computer programming (under age 10 from the looks of the picture on p55)

How can we come to know the Son of God? The answer came: I have sent my servant Joseph Smith.

"Your family is your team. Do not set them aside

and chase after strangers."

"When family choruses begin proclaiming truth throughout the world, that voice will never be silenced." p56

Ch. 5 (Faith to do God's Work)

As Jared collected stones for the Lord to touch, so must we make sacrifices, monetary and otherwise, for the Lord to bless our efforts beyond our abilities.

Their family could not make progress on any of their projects if there was contention in the home.

James saw that there was a need to have more frequent family prayers when contention occurred in the home.

The children would have extra chores, memorization of scripture verses, etc. as consequences for disrespect, etc.

When on his mission, James was locked out of his apartment while the oven was on. They tried to get in for two hours to no avail, and worried the home would burn down. His companion said "Elder Stoddard, you always do the right thing and always follow the rules. Why don't you just pray and open the door?" He did, and the door swung wide open, and the fish weren't burnt. p59

See "God's Smuggler", the story of Andrew van der Bijl who smuggled Bibles behind the Iron Curtain into Communist countries. He suffered and frequently wanted to give up but knew his life was not his own, following Jesus.

Shares stories of praying for help on difficult problems, and miraculous help coming just as needed, just in time, as they worked toward the solution.

Hannah began taking courses at age 14 in web development, audio and video editing, digital photography, etc. She journaled of God opening her mind to understand it.

Ch. 6 (Youth Responsibility & Service)

"Love to be real, it must cost - it must hurt - it must empty us to self." (Mother Teresa)

It is a lack of parenting when kids take multiple times of a parent speaking before the child will respond. This is not a loving attitude from a parent, and sets up children for failure and chaos. James' kids were expected to come immediately when called.

"True education trains in self-denial and self-mastery" (David O. McKay) p68 for more of the quote & reference.

The Stoddard's were raised not just to dream, but to accomplish goals competently. When James had to return to regular work rather than full-time documentary making, he gave the children assignments for while he was gone. He would call

on the phone during lunch break to check in on the assignments of the children. His coworkers overheard these conversations and would say, "What are you doing over there? Running a sweatshop?"

James did not tolerate slothfulness of his children, or disobedience, or irresponsibility, "so he required the tasks to be completed when he got home without exception." p68

James knew the Lord has a high standard of work ethic and was strict on his kids fulfilling commitments.

James told his coworkers about each of his kids. When his kids came to work on bring your kid to work day, they were surprised to see his coworkers knew who they all were.

At 6am the children's alarms rang. They were to go to the office, study scripture, study the day's schoolwork, and their dad's assigned projects.

While their peers were chasing around the neighborhood with friends and phones, they were

doing work. People thought their documentaries were from being gifted, but they were actually from putting in lots of blood, sweat, and tears.

The children were shown movies which demonstrated the suffering in the world in a non-traumatic way such as Mother Teresa, and presentations on history, Communism, social conflicts, science, and many other battle lines facing us in the 21st century to help them catch the vision of being service oriented, love oriented. They knew the details of torture methods in North Korea, emotional trauma following an abortion, and the reality of how hard life was outside their doors. These things reminded them why they were sacrificing their time to serve. The children were taught to focus out not in toward themselves and their own accomplishments, that joy does not come from living for yourself.

The children were taught that they have privilege's which others do not have, that they are accountable to God for what they did and did not do to lift others with these privilege's they were given. The world is starving for our help.

They learned of Mother Teresa, who chose a life of labor and exhaustion in the slums lifting others in need.

There are millions right now spiritually starving, even more than are physically starving. It's your responsibility to help. Your life is not your own. Your duty is to wear out your life helping others, consecrated to helping others, that is where true happiness comes from.

If a child's accomplishments become their cause everything becomes about them, their battle, their heroism, their talents. They become the hero. and pride becomes the driving motivation. Some even serve missions for the church just for their image.

David O McKay: it is the consistent parent who gains trust of the child. p72

James taught a "love lifestyle", namely to spend your time doing good. Mockers called him a dreamer.

He ensured his kids were raised in clean safe neighborhoods

See Movie Amazing Grace: The Story of William Wilberforce

James was driven by the recurring thought that every moment he wasted would cost someone blood or suffering in the future.

When asked what he wanted to do, James said "I never ask that question. My life isn't about what I want, but what the Lord wants done."

He treated everyone with compassion, but his trust level varied depending on the character of the individual.

One lady only attended the Book of Mormon conferences to talk to him as she saw him as one who truly cared.

One day he could not even walk due to pain, but still had others over because they needed help.

Siblings can learn to quietly lay their lives down for their siblings.

The real test of character is how one acts when no one is watching.

The home is the greatest, most difficult work.

Joseph Smith literally wept for Zion, for those who didn't have access to the Book of Mormon and gospel truths. Do we weep for this?

Video games are indolent.

Real love is sacrifice, surrendering comfort, dreams, wants, desires to bring hope to another without any personal reward or return.

The children gave up many opportunities to finish documentaries.

Almost every project involved pulling all-nighters to get things done on time.

They worked long days in the office even when sick.

The children learned to serve by knowing that there are many who needed their help, they learned to love those people even if they hadn't met them.

Real love tears you apart and requires laying down your dreams, but it's the only real way to make a difference in the world.

Joseph Smith said, "Happiness is the object and design of our existence; ad will be the end thereof,

if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping ALL the commandments of God."

(Joseph Smith Letter to Nancy Rigdon, Joseph Smith Papers circa Mid-April 1842)

People living the adventurous comfortable lives seem happy but ironically when you dig beneath the deceptive exteriors, not everything is as it appears, it's a mirage that can only last for so long.

God is the happiest being in the universe. We will have joy to the degree we live like Him.

Teaching at the MTC (missionary training center), James noticed a contrast between those youths and the youths of a similar age who he taught outside of the MTC. Those at the MTC were always happier and had more peace. Why? They didn't have free time, media, they just studied the gospel and had small breaks for physical recreation. They had a purpose. When asking the youths whether they were happier before or after entering the MTC, he never had anyone report being happier before the MTC.

James asked, "Are we losing the search for happiness because we are focused on ourselves-

only to discover that this journey ends in a dead end road of empty loneliness?"

See movie Bless You Prison and movie God's Outlaw, persecuted Christians who were happy despite being beaten in jails etc.

Pleasures of food movies and fun activities trigger dopamine, but deep down they leave us unhappy, irritable, and feeling low in self-worth. The more people serve God, serve their family, promote the gospel with the family, the more you'll feel pure joy, peace, contentment, and confidence levels. This is the tree of life with fruit which really satisfies.

James took the pledge which every endowed member takes to consecrate their time talents etc. to build God's kingdom, very seriously.

Ch. 7 (Conversion to the Gospel & Family Vision by Hannah)

Critics accused James of brainwashing his kids into a crazy lifestyle of consecration, service, and passion for defending the Restoration, as if it were cult-like to teach that we should lay down our lives for the cause of Christ.

Many kids read the Book of Mormon before being baptized. But even with this, kids have to surrender their lives to God. Even kids which seem like good kids fall far short of what they could be if they don't surrender to God, and this is evident in their relationships & how they chose to spend their free time.

At 13 in a difficult situation Hannah had to be primarily responsible for managing the home, maintaining the homeschool, caring for the little ones (including a few month old baby), preparing meals, etc. She was prepared by being trained to cook most meals from scratch by age 11. She was worn down and poured out her heart to God, and then had a marvelous conversion, feeling powerful love and comfort, compassion nobility and affection, and she learned that God knew exactly who she is and loved her with such a deep strong unwavering love that she couldn't have imagined. She felt power which was strong noble pure and

selfless. This taught her to love to serve God because of how much noble compassion God felt toward her. This taught her why her dad loved God so much, and why he would feast on the scriptures, preferring them to any other book. She started studying everything she could about the gospel not because she was smart or important, but because she wanted to know more, wanted to learn how to become a true Christian. God began to reveal to her how, often painfully, to do that, breaking her heart, tearing down her walls of self-importance bit by bit. God convicted her of how she treated her siblings. He challenged her to be more respectful to her parents even in moments of conflict. She began to recognize her slothfulness. She learned that no one could release her from those weaknesses but God. She didn't really want to change but prayed for God to soften her heart so she could feel remorse for her sins. Slowly day by day, sacrifice by sacrifice, God changed her heart.

Some told James his kids would grow to be rebellious and uneducated from putting them through homeschool and having them be involved in family gospel research projects and productions,

etc. However, his kids did become very smart, and gained their own testimonies, knowing that it was their own life, and they would have to live with the consequences of their own actions. The projects became things which the children owned, not just their dad's things they were working on. Hannah said, "This wasn't dad's project, this was my project."

Hannah started a girl's study group called "Maidens with a Mission" to ignite the fire of faith in others.

Hannah was distracted by good internet groups, conservative movements, and this often made God's priorities for her a second-place priority while she put first all the things she wanted to do. She learned that she couldn't rely on God if she hadn't done her part in the work he had asked her to do. She learned to give up her life and name and instead bear the name of Christ.

The Lord doesn't need wealth and talent and position for people do his work; he is searching for those who are willing to give Him their heart. He has all power; he can do anything.

Note: This goes against the popular attitude that we need to go around building wealth so we can 'someday' do good in the world. That is backwards!

Ch. 8 (Joy)

James loved buying toys for his kids, and they had playground equipment indoors for the kids during winter.

If he weren't helping with world issues James would have liked to spend more time playing with the kids, growing plants, making videos, writing songs, and relaxing.

For recreation, they asked: does this activity have purpose? Does this activity encourage family bonds or does it alienate us from one another? Does this activity allow us to develop hands on skills or strengthen our mind or is it a waste of valuable time? Does this activity cultivate Godlike attributes of nobility, kindness, refinement, honor, integrity and humility, or is does it promote

silliness, light-mindedness, pride, addiction, or even aggression and anxiety? Does this activity allow us to better serve others? Does this activity bring the spirit of God or does it drive it away?

Joseph F. Smith said of useful recreation, "We should train ourselves to find pleasure in that which invigorates, not stupefies and destroys the body; that which leads upward and not down; that which brightens, not dulls and stunts the intellect; that which elevates and exalts the spirit, not that clogs and depresses it. So shall we please the Lord, enhance our own enjoyment, and save ourselves and our children from impending sins..." (JFS Answers to Gospel Questions, vol. 1 (SLC Deseret Book 1957) p92.)

Joseph F. Smith said, "...we say again to the people that no kind of chance game, guessing contest, or raffling device can be approved in any entertainment under the auspices of our Church organizations. The desire to get something of value for little or nothing is pernicious...In reply to a question as to whether raffling and games of chance are justifiable when the purposes to be accomplished are good, this was said: 'We say

emphatically, No. Raffle is only a modified name of gamble.” (First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, Improvement Era, vol. 12, Dec. 1908, 143-144)

Note: This reminds me of an economics class I took at BYU. Professor James Kearl talked about when he was consulting with General Authorities on a matter, proposing a lottery. They said “raffle, ok, but no lottery.” The whole class laughed because we all knew that a raffle and lottery are exactly the same thing! We can see how standards have slipped in these regards.

Joseph Fielding Smith said, **“Nothing good comes out of card games or games of chance.** There are numerous ways in which we may obtain wholesome amusement and recreation which is beneficial to both body and mind. In games where cards are used usually ‘stakes’ are played for, and betting is done. Someone will obtain the ‘stakes,’ but no one really wins, for the one **who obtains the ‘stakes’ has lost part of his manhood which is difficult to regain.** There seems to be an urge in human nature which leads many men and women to seek to obtain something for nothing...There is

a lure in all games of chance which Satan laces before them, and in their greed or **selfish desire for gain** they take the uncertain bait far less innocently than does a fish which grabs the angler's hook.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, vol. 1 (SLC Deseret Book Co 1957) p92)

They don't watch movies which glorify magic, witches, violence, immorality, selfishness, or dysfunctional family life.

They avoid music with a rock beat due to counsel from President Harold B. Lee and Ezra Taft Benson (more quotes etc. in Ch. 11 of this text)

Joseph F. Smith said of character and amusement, “One's character may be determined in some measure by the quality of one's amusements.” And “Tell me what amusements you like best and whether your amusements have become a ruling passion in your life, and I will tell you what you are.” (“The Social Effects of Card Playing” in Juvenile Instructor, Vol. 38, Sept. 1, 1903, 528-529)

God clearly intended for food to taste good. They bought a Mongolian grill.

They made Hebrew letter shaped cookies and made uplifting messages with them.

They celebrated a Latter-day Saint version of Hanukkah with the traditional candles etc.

He wrote Christmas carols inspired by the Book of Mormon.

They put songs they liked into the family songbook, and edited the words of those songs as needed.

James took kids on walks and had 1:1 time with them as the others raced ahead.

They played “Scripture Charades”, a humorous way to test their knowledge of the scriptures.

They gathered for out loud reading of stories such as “In Freedom’s Cause”, “Sense and Sensibility”, “Emma”, “North and South”

Some nights they read aloud to the group, others they read quietly and journaled to music.

James had a balance of masculine traits like tools sports etc., but also of the delicate arts of writing poetry, feeling & expressing deep emotion,

dancing, classic literature, etc. He said “Real men appreciate Jane Austen and clean classic literature.”

They watched hundreds of movies & documentaries on Christian persecution, communism, the Holocaust, abortion, natural and conventional medicine, the Hungarian Revolution, education, the Constitution, etc. (Suggested movies on these topics on p.106 footnotes)

They have 400+ suggested movies (and movie reviews & clips) on ZionTube
(josephsmithfoundation.org/ziontube)

Movies have the power to change lives faster than a book.

Working on their homestead they had Happy Hour break for lunch and laughs. Friends came to work alongside them.

Activities with friends also included sword fighting, family dance (English country dance, square dance, Virginial Reel, waltz, etc.), etc.

Focus your activities on what brings everyone together. So many activities these days encourage children to divide into groups, segregate the

popular from the unpopular, discourage siblings from having common friends, etc.

Activities don't have to be silly or wasteful to be fun.

Recognize the difference between activities which contribute to family, good causes, etc., vs those which detract.

Choosing purposeful leisure is purposeful and brings one closer to God.

Ch. 9 (Outdoor Work)

James taught the kids to work hard in the sun with sweat and tools. He didn't want their experiences and skills limited to office work. He showed them the freedom and health of working directly with the soil.

They bought and worked 11.5 barren acres, using perennial plants etc. They installed pressurized irrigation including digging the trenches, wood chips etc. for the soil, and didn't use fertilizers or

artificial weed killers so they could heal the land naturally using Gods laws. They also laid sod and planted a garden. They planted thousands of plants, put in a septic system, etc. He made all of this a teaching tool for his family and didn't just do it himself.

They named their homestead "Highland Cathedral" after a Scottish song about being faithful and loyal to the land of their fathers, encouraging 'ancient prayer', being true, and strong, bearing standards, and petitioning God to restore peace joy and liberty.

Eliza R. Snow spoke of Nephite temples once existing throughout Utah ("A Journeying Song for the Camp of Israel", Eliza R Snow An Immortal (SLC: Nicholas G. Morgan, Sr., Foundation, 1957), 267)

He kept his tools very organized.

He built AR-15's with his boys.

He taught his kids housekeeping, types of pans, how to cook, how to tend babies and little kids, etc.

During the 19th and 20th centuries there developed stereotypes against farmers as dirty and uneducated, and kids became increasingly ashamed of growing up in small towns. In reality, working the soil requires thought, intelligence, creativity, and a thorough understanding of the laws of nature and science.

They made a point to not hire someone else to do the repairs, chores, landscaping, etc. Those were family projects.

Today it is a foreign idea that kids should be able to control their emotions tempers and impulses. Being in nature gives vigor, and teaches self-control, how to find joy in simple things, and temperance in habits.

The blood of Israel has always been a family culture including a natural agrarian lifestyle. Families had farms and estates with space for their children to run and play with animals, fresh air, and sunlight, the way God intended it.

Jesus grew up in little Galilea, in an honest manual labor economy. He often withdrew from the city to be in nature.

Standards deteriorate in the city lifestyle because that is unnatural living.

Young men shouldn't be cooped up in offices and bedrooms engaging in inefficient and unproductive schooling while being driven to make money, and chase the next party.

Gyms are a “complete counterfeit” of God’s system of fitness. When you just repeat trivial exercises you aren’t making the world any better. Do creative hard work in nature.

Eve labored alongside Adam (Moses 5:1)

We live in an idol society without discipline, which has counterfeit ways for food, love, relationships, exercise, success, etc. Some of the consequences are pornography addiction, and children being increasingly disrespectful to parents.

Brigham Young said, “We want men to labour in every mechanical pursuit that they can; for I believe that the time will come when we shall have to depend upon our own resources...” (BY, JD vol. 7 p67)

Heber C Kimball taught to lay up grain for troubling times upon the world which are coming. Ref p.120

Wilford Woodruff taught to make your own shoes clothing and food. Ref p.120

Spencer W Kimball said to have little gardens and trees for a time when there won't be a store. Ref p120-

Bruce R McConkie taught to prepare for a time when we won't be prosperous as we are now. That perils of the past are but a foretaste of what we will yet see, that we must prepare temporally and spiritually. Ref p120

Gordon B Hinckley taught that we ought to emphasize the obligation of members to become more independent and self-reliant. Ref p120

It is Godlike to create and establish order.

God inflicts pain out of love, like shearing goat horns so it doesn't get stuck in a fence, etc.

Self-pity and complaint are not fruits of the spirit of God. To become like God, we must eventually

suffer endure and overcome all things. **The path of a true Christian is marked with sacrifice and tribulation.**

Once they planted over 1000 trees, shrubs, herbs etc. in the space of a few weeks.

Once their irrigation water was dry and they had to carry water buckets for weeks. By mighty prayer, rain did come at an unprecedented time and amount.

Sometimes to repair farm machinery they would send pictures to a repairman and consult with him over the phone.

Joseph Smith said, "If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God...Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins." (Joseph Smith History 1836-1856, vol C-1 Addenda p62 The Joseph Smith Papers)

On his mission James saw Elders whose apartment had a little Jesus picture, and lots of rock band pictures, along with rock music being played. He said, "You know what Elder? I'm cool with this, but I just have one problem." He pointed to the

Jesus picture. “You can keep the rest, but that picture must come down.” He showed that these 2 are not compatible, that claiming they can is hypocrisy.

James taught that “The Lord has told us that we live at the most wicked time on the most wicked earth. In other words, if we feel comfortable or at ease with the modernist culture (movies, music, diet, fashion, language, literature, parenting, philosophies, schools, etc.), we must think again. This is not who you really are.”

Remember your true **identity**: 1. You are the blood of Israel, with the heritage of the culture of **refinement, beauty, purity, honor, and integrity**. Live up to this birthright. 2. Power comes from purity. You can't do the Lord's work without living righteously. The better you are, the more good you'll be able to do in the world. 3. Jesus Christ is the exemplar, the standard, seek to be like Him, don't look to the world. 4. Stand as a witness. Never be ashamed of who you are, spread the joy and light of pure living.

A story is told of a young prince exposed to all manner of temptation. He resisted it all, saying, “I

cannot do what you ask for I was born to be a king.” P130 for more of the story.

When you grow older you won’t care how many parties you attended, but how well you served the Lord and others.

The love of God cannot be comprehended by anything in this world.

Isaiah Stoddard said, “The gospel is about helping people have joy and allowing them to think for themselves – not turn them into micromanaged robots.”

Sin should be the abnormal, not the normal. It’s not about “do your best,” its about successfully resisting Satan. We can do it.

Real Christians are on Satan’s most wanted list.

Your standards and lifestyle will make all the difference in your life.

The Stoddards weren’t just lucky, any family can do what they did.

In giving priesthood blessings, James didn’t ramble on, but was thoughtful about each word, given

them slowly, and the blessings therein came to pass astonishingly.

It takes great responsibility to preside over a family. Revelation doesn't come easily.

It's not about the number of commandments, but about whether we are like Jesus Christ. If we are not like Him, we must repent. Memorized rules and customs aren't needed when we have correct principles.

Ch. 11 (Music)

It's not just the lyrics that can make music bad. The beat, rhythm, etc. can corrupt it.

David O McKay taught to avoid electronic bands and loud beats. He speaks favorably of waltz, fox trot, tango, rhumba, cha-cha, samba, swing, & most folk dances. He calls for good posture in dance, and to avoid fad dances. He says to shun the appearance of evil, to avoid dances which look bad. That most electronic bands have a loud beat

inconsistent with desired standards, that the loud beat is had by most fad dances. (Full Quote p140-2. Source: Daily Universe, Dec. 3, 1965, 1-2; Living Prophets for a Living Church, Church Educational System college student manual, 1974.)

In the 50s 60s and 70s, the music became continually harder and louder. BYU students rejected the prophetic counsel regarding music, and the next generation never had the chance to be taught a higher standard. Learning of the counsel of the prophets back in the day on these matters is like when Josiah found the forgotten Book of the Law. James saw that he need to throw out many albums, even those which many would consider most tame.

Ezra Taft Benson: Today's music is nerve-jamming, and deliberately promotes revolution, dope, immorality, **“and a gap between parent and child.”** Some of our church dances today are certainly not praiseworthy. (Full quote on p143-4; Source: Teachings of ETB p325)

Ezra Taft Benson: **It is modern Sodom to have short skirts, loud beat, strobe lights, and**

darkness. (Full quote on p143-4; Source: ETB God Family Country p229)

Boyd K Packer: Music itself has been corrupted by the tempo, beat, and intensity. It can dull the spiritual sensitivity of men. Bad music in churches is a sign of apostasy. Why put in sacred meetings the music of the drug hard rock culture? That is a repellent to the Spirit of God. Music isn't harmless in and of itself as some say. Its influence pours into the room and **repels the spirit** of God. **"...the breach between the world and the extremes of its music and the Church is wider in our day than ever in generations past."** (Full quote on p144; Source: "Inspiring Music – Worthy Thoughts" Ensign Oct. 1973)

Harold B Lee: Napoleon said "Music of all the liberal arts has the greatest influence over the passions and is that which the legislator ought to give the greatest encouragement." Be careful that music in the church doesn't invoke the wrong kinds of passions in our youth programs. (Full quote p145-6; Source: HBL Teachings p203)

Harold B Lee: Beware the hellholes of Satan which are everywhere. "...there's damnable rock music

that appeals to the lower senses of man, where the offbeat [rock beat] is just as vile and abrasive to human thought as it can be. We say it to you, we plead with you to listen to the beautiful things, if you want to be on the right side. But be careful you don't choose the wrong things; you shun those things just as the moths should have shunned the white flame." (Full quote p146; Source: HBL Teachings p104)

Spencer W Kimball: "Musical sounds can be put together in such a way that they can express feelings – from the most profoundly exalted to the most abjectly vulgar." (SWK Teachings p519)

The majority of the BYU student body has rejected the advice of the brethren on politics, education, birth-control, science, etc.

The music itself, not the words in the music, has influence. In pop rock there is expression of arrogance and pride. Modern music has a near universal influence on the mind and body to "just be free to do what it feels like"

Elder Gene R Cook spoke of the music in his home, that they use "church music, classical music, or other good general music, but no light or hard

rock or anything like unto it.” (Gene R Cook, Raising Up a Family to the Lord, p157)

Elder Gene R Cook recorded a conversation with Mich Jagger who said, “Our music is calculated to drive the kids to sex.” Jagger went on to say that was to free youth from their parents and enable them to do whatever they like without being controlled. He said he was thankful that the family as an entity was being destroyed.

Every feeling and emotion we can experience can be expressed by music.

Music is not amoral anymore than language is amoral.

Music is the language of the heart. It can lift you to heaven or sink you to hell.

Poetry is a mixture of mind and heart, blending rhythm and words. Music however is solely the language of the heart.

Ezra Taft Benson taught: “Music creates atmosphere. Atmosphere creates environment. Environment influences behavior.” Rhythm: you can still detect beat even when dulled by drugs.

Loudness: to the point of pain and violence to block thought and reason. Repetition to the extreme [Note: like a spell.] Gyration [sexual in nature]. Darkness which deadens conscience and loss of identity and responsibility. Strobe lights like the pendulum of a hypnotist. "The whole psychedelic design is a swinging door to drugs, sex, rebellion, and Godlessness." This music is the fruit of filth, and is very deceptive, and it denies evil to be an absolute. The leaders in the church must not endorse this music, even if they think they'll lose people. ...If you compromise with evil, evil always wins. ...**By reducing revealed religion to mythology, rock assumes the mangle of righteousness while rejecting the reality of sin.** (Full quote pgs149-151; Source: ETB "Satan's Thrust – Youth" Ensign Dec. 1971)

Ezra Taft Benson said, "Sometimes, from behind the pulpit, in our classrooms, in our council meetings, and **in our Church publications, we hear, read, or witness things that do not square with the truth...** Now, do not let this serve as an excuse for your own wrongdoing. The Lord is letting the wheat and the tares mature before He fully purges the Church. **He is also**

testing you to see if you will be misled. The devil is trying to deceive the very elect. Let me give you a crucial key to help you avoid being deceived. It is this - learn to keep your eye on the prophet. He is the Lord's mouthpiece and the only man who can speak for the Lord today. Let his inspired counsel take precedence. Let his inspired words be a basis for evaluating the counsel of all lesser authorities. Then live close to the Spirit so you may know the truth of all things." (ETB, Teachings p134, and ETB An Enemy Hath Done This p317)

Ch. 12 (Movies)

"The family is the simplest and smallest unit of society and the real fountain of culture. If this fountain remains pure, man's culture has promise. But if it becomes polluted, all the rest will turn to dust and ashes, since the home is the foundation of the entire social structure." -Henry R. Van Til

It's not enough to be good, we must be good for something.

As in Article of Faith 13, we seek virtuous lovely praiseworthy things.

The way to judge is plain with perfect knowledge (Moroni 7:15)

In 1930 the rating system was very different; today's 'family entertainment' wouldn't pass.

Don't just go by the world's telestial (at best) rating system.

Do you movies show suggestive material? Crudeness? Are large families being promoted or ridiculed?

Are Christian values showing the path to happiness or are they shown as out of date and ridiculed?

The bitter fountain can't bring good water (Moroni 7:11). If there is a bad scene in a movie, the entire movie will also contain the fruits of that producers character.

Show heroes as honest. Dishonest characters should always be villains and have undesired consequences.

Show righteousness as being rewarded in the end, and wickedness as bringing difficulty and sadness.

Show breaking the law of chastity as being evil and causing heartache, sorrow, depression, and bitter consequences. This is the sin next to murder (Alma 39:5). **Heroic characters will sacrifice their lives before allowing their virtue to be taken.** Seek movies which show families honoring their marital vows.

Show heroes sacrificing their lives for others in service and practicing great and simple deeds of benevolence. That service is the source of happiness. That greediness causes misery and regret. That heroes build humanity by doing good to all around them. Good characters are shown striving to change and become better with all their heart, might, mind, and strength.

Especially value movies which show characters who believe in and follow Christ, who perform righteous works through faith and diligence, enduring persecution.

Ensure sacred things are portrayed as sacred. Hymns should never be re-written in irreverent ways with loud music and tempos.

Ch. 13 (Be an Example)

It seems everyone is worried about being “too good.” The truth is, you can’t be “too good”. Elder Hartman Rector Jr. said, “when you get older and look back at your life, you are never going to regret having lived the highest standard you could. You will never say to yourself, ‘I wish I hadn’t been so careful in my media selection,’ or ‘I wish I hadn’t been so kind and charitable to my neighbors’ You will always look back and wish you had been better. Always live the best you can so you can live a life without regrets.”

Make every moment a missionary effort to share the gospel.

Make uplifting YouTube playlists and share them.

We don’t need to tear others down or condemn them. “We have no need to tear down the houses of other people [using this expression as a symbol]. We are perfectly willing that they should live in the homes they have erected for themselves, and we

will try to show them a better way. Show them a better way and build them a better house, and then invite them kindly, in the spirit of Christ, of true Christianity, to enter the better dwelling.” (Joseph F. Smith, Gospel Doctrine p256)

Enjoy having friends of different faiths. They may not apply principles in the same way we do, but they share the common goal of raising the bar, of trying to please a righteous God, whose children we all are.

Everyone who strives to live higher standards experiences mockery. It hurts to stand out and be different. But we can and must have high standards unapologetically.

Your ideals are reflected in your music, art, conversation, diet, etc.

Your children need a cause, and they need to be pure so their channel of revelation will not be hindered. A home can be transformed by changing the standards.

Ch. 14 (Change of Heart by Leah)

There's a big difference between participating because you should, and having your heart in something.

It's easy to do things behind your families back when your heart isn't in on the family vision.

A father can ask, "is there any part of you that wants this other way?" inviting the rebellious child to live the better standards and the gospel life.

Don't just learn about God, become like Him. Do you just know gospel trivia, or do you actually know who God is?

What changes people? Not prayer, etc. It's sacrifice. (Elsewhere in the text it is pointed out that the devil is more pleased about you not living the scriptures than not reading them.)

Note: This is not to undermine prayer. Prayer is the great source of revelation and spiritual power which inspires the saints and sinners to do good

and great things. But yes, it's actually getting up and doing something that will change you. You can't stop at prayer and scripture study, however helpful those things are.

One must make permanent commitment. Make a line in the sand. It's impossible to be neutral. The gospel will influence how you eat, talk, walk, sit, speak, think, which skills you pursue, etc. The choice to embrace the gospel is a big choice, and effects everything.

Know who you are. Your heritage will help you know how to act. You don't want to deny your heritage.

Note: I'm reminded of The Ten Commandments movie directed by Cecil DeMille. The Pharoah is deciding who will be the next ruler. His rebellious son wants the throne, and says it belongs to him due to his bloodline. The wise leader responds something to the effect of, "Whoever is most fit to rule will be the next Pharoah. I owe that to my fathers, not to my sons." He demonstrated the need to live up to what his forefathers had done before him, to not let the legacy of greatness die with him.

Before we are really converted, we will be emotionally blind to many of our faults. We will not hate sin.

See the free magazine “Voice of the Martyrs”

See book “God’s Double Agent”

Share your conversion story at
hereistandnow.com/Stoddard/refinersfire

Once converted, among your favorite stories may be those of Christian missionaries and martyrs.

Suggested Books: Christian Persecution

- The Heavenly Man by Brother Yun
- God's Smuggler by Andrew van der Bijl
- Tortured for Christ by Richard Wurmbrand
- Words of Joseph Smith, a collection of Nauvoo discourses by Joseph Smith
- The Pastor's Wife by Sabina Wurmbrand
- I Found God in Soviet Russia by John H. Noble

- These Are The Generations by Eric Foley
- Hearts of fire by The Voice of the Martyrs
- Into the Den of Infidels, a collection of Muslim conversion stories by Voice of the Martyrs
- Captive in Iran by Maryam Rostampour and Marziyeh Amirizadeh, and their experience in Evin Prison
- Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus by Nabeel Qureshi
- The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom
- I Dared to Call Him Father by Bilquis Sheikh
- Restricted Nations series by The Voice of the Martyrs
- Tortured for His Faith by Haralan Popov
- I Will Die Free by Humberto Noble Alexander
- The Persecutor by Sergei Kourdakov
- God's Double Agent by Bob Fu
- Vanya: A True Story by Myrna Grant
- The Voice of the Martyrs (Magazine, free monthly)

Suggested Movies: Christian Persecution

- China Cry (1990)
- For Greater Glory (2012)
- On Wings of Eagles (2016)
- The Printing (1990)
- Tortured for Christ (2018)
- Sabina: Tortured for Christ – The Nazi Years (2022)
- Bamboo in the Winter (1991)
- The Least of These (2019)
- Polycarp (2015)
- Bless You, Prison (2002)
- Behind the Sun (1995)
- Gold Through the Fire (1987)
- Flame in the Wind (1971)
- God's Outlaw (1986)
- The Radicals (1989)
- Sarah's Trail of Blood (2007)
- Free Burma Rangers (2020)
- The Insanity of God (2016)
- Messenger of the Truth (2013)

[End of suggested books & movies]

“Those who have read [the scriptures], and who have drunk of the stream of knowledge which they convey, know how to appreciate them.” -Joseph Smith

Memorizing long passages of scripture can become a comfort. Try Alma 5, Alma 7:14-15, Mormon 9:25-29, 1 John 3:13 1 Nephi 15:24.

Weekly fasts can be helpful

James went on walks all through the year with his kids where they could freely talk.

James suggested his daughter Leah read Words of Joseph Smith, which brought her a whole new level of wisdom clarity and power. She also began to listen to gospel audiobooks by Ezra Taft Benson and Joseph Fielding Smith. Her desires slowly changed for good as she **obeyed** the principles she was learning.

Ezra Taft Benson said “The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums.

Christ take the slums out of the people, and then they take themselves out of the slums.... Christ changes men, and changed men can change the world. Men changed for Christ will be captained by Christ. Like Paul they will be asking, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Peter stated they will “follow his steps.” John said they will “walk, even as he walked.” (ETB “Born of God” Ensign July 1989)

When Leah had various concerns (of gospel standards etc.), James spoke with her hours and hours, even late into the night, even when he had work early in the morning. He never complained about this.

James said that if you watch low standard movies etc., that **will affect you for years** to come, even if you clean it up. These films etc. effect our attitudes, perspective on authority, sensitivity to sin, etc. Those who watch us like younger siblings are also impacted by the negative/low standard times.

Wasted time results in great regret. Many have gone unhelped by our desires to have fun.

Joseph Smith said, “Our heavenly **father is more liberal** in his views, and **boundless** in his mercies and blessings, **than we are ready** to believe or receive, and at the same time is more terrible to the workers of iniquity, **more awful** in the executions of his punishments, and more ready to **detect every false** way than we are apt to suppose him to be.” (JS, Letter to Nancy Ridgon, circa mid-April 1842 p2, The Joseph Smith Papers)

Our taste for media can change dramatically by,
and only by, God’s grace

The rebel culture of our time is strong. Its on the billboards, cars, stickers, movies, music, books, etc. Entertainment can desensitize us, and make us “without feeling”.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Discernment is not knowing the difference between right and wrong. It is knowing the **difference between right and almost right.**”

See josephsmithfoundation.com/battlelines, which is a list of Gospel principles and Satanic counterfeits. [Note: I’ve done something similar, a great way to study. See RichardsonStudies.com writings on Awakening to The Great Divide.]

When we learn the solutions to life's problems, we had better share them, or it would have been better if we hadn't known them.



Ch. 15 (Forgiveness & Healing)

When we whitewash history or portray Christian life as smooth-sailing, we lose touch with reality, with the true meaning of discipleship. Try to be up front and tell the whole story.

Note: I don't think this means we need to dwell upon the bad, but yes retelling the grievances can sometimes serve an important purpose.

Most have experienced abuse in some form.

The free Gospel from God is the solution, not self-help books.

An abused person or an abuser can resort to a “survival of the fittest” mindset rather than a gospel mindset. Such as:

- Support yourself, punish your enemies VS forgive, don't seek vengeance, protect yourself in a loving way.
- Strong survive while weak die out VS strong lay down their lives for the weak (like Christ).
- Strong prey on and use the weak to survive VS strong building up the weak at their own expense, serving and sacrificing to the best of their ability.
- Driving emotion of fear VS love.
- Instinct appetite and urges VS principles laws and restraining urges.
- Victim due to environment and genetics VS overcoming genetics in any environment.
- Forever scarred vs complete healing.

- External rules and force VS God softening the heart and changing one's nature.

[End of "Survival of the Fittest" VS Gospel Solutions]

James didn't allow rude sarcasm or fighting. He would calm the situation, go on a walk and talk through the issue, etc. to help the tempers calm down. He could be very firm on these standards.

Learn to forgive, even when the persecutor continues to persecute.

Listening to the Book of Mormon while doing chores changed one's heart to no longer feel hatred toward a persecutor.

Remember: God has forgiven us, we can forgive others.

Only Charity the pure love of Christ can overcome enmity, it has real power.

The heart of the gospel is forgiveness.

Remember God is in charge, don't worry about false accusations, don't lose confidence in the Lord's deliverance for those in the right.

Ignore aggressive attackers and move on. [Note: This reminds me of something Elder Bedar recently said in a press conference, that the church has always been mischaracterized and put down, as was Christ, we don't focus on that, we press forward with the mission that we must accomplish.]

Build up the good, don't tear down.

James said, "There are **two kinds of people in this world. People who do good, and people who gossip about people who do good.**"

Try to help your persecutors, not to tear them down. Perhaps they don't care now, but they may in the future. When something clicks, when they are desperate for a friend, be there. Let them know by your actions that you are there to help when they are ready.

Going through hard persecution etc. can help you be a better person and better equip you to help others.

James never bashed on those who had injured him.

We can ask God “what is to become of my kids?” God said to James along these lines when things were hard, “[James,] what about MY kids?” In other words, we must not let our grief disable us from helping others.

Ch. 16 (Conversion, Testimony by Isaiah)

A begrudgingly given gift is the same as if it were never given (Moroni 7:8). At times we act because it's what we have to do, or it being the right thing to do, rather than out of a desire to follow the Savior. James taught it is important for each to receive their own testimony of the gospel. To not be sunshine patriots, but to be driven by one's own testimony.

Heber C Kimball prophesied, “The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by

the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand?...You will be left to the light within yourselves. If you don't have it you will not stand; therefore seek the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, hat when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall.” (Life of HCK p461)

They spent most weekends and several weekdays working the property, building fence and irrigation, a shop, etc.

Choosing to forgive is harder than a battle.

A testimony and witness comes from taking the harder road and sacrificing.

A sacrament we covenant to 1. Take upon us the name of Christ, meaning to commit to do exactly what he would do if he were here. 2. Always remember him, meaning to keep Christ on our minds, to build our lives around the gospel rather than just fitting in. 3. Keep his commandments, meaning all of them, so we can have the spirit of Christ with us.

Ch. 17 (Finding Confidence Again)

They were asked to write a book on the BFM translation and to have it done in a short time window of a few months.

In writing they would pause to care for small children, and return to work, getting a little in here and there.

Even when they were personally under attack and hurting in personal matters, they worked concecrating their time, and an amazing spirit came.

The small child (Mary) put off her chicken farming wishes to help the project move along.

Ezra 8-10 years old was his dad James' right hand man in editing. Other editors mistook him for an adult editor.

Young Mary 10-13 wrote this poem about wholesome music: "Oh, the melody is so sweet
When it doesn't have that backbeat All the

instruments playing, brings a peaceful feeling. My heart is always truly sad when sons turn that bad. But I am always greeting a song to praise our Lord and King”...

Family should become your best friends. God put you together for a reason. Ensure they can count on you. Forgive and love even in the hardest situations. Family brings out your real character more so than how you act around others, it is a measuring stick of where to improve.

Ch. 18 (Miracles)

When very sick James asked of how others were doing, and reminded them to take care of themselves. “Stop worrying about me.”

In the hospital James taught the hospital chaplain about Joseph Smith, the translation, and the traditionalist vs progressive history of the church.

Remember Paul and Silus sang in their prison in chains.

James continued to go walking even when he was supposed to be on bed rest.

James continued researching, gathering needed quotes etc. while hospitalized.

James held out as long as he could for his kids' sake.

We must taste the bitter if we are to be able to serve others.

James was able to ordain his kids in the hospital with miraculous timing.

Ch. 19 (Keep the Faith)

The New Jerusalem isn't a spiritual fairytale, it will be a real city with real people, real blood, real promises. Gather people with the scriptures.

James wrote a hymn "Faithful Footsteps" to the tune of "Come Thou Fount" to honor all of those who have stood for truth through the last many years without station, respect or honor. Those who

have quietly stood along and been ridiculed
tortured and persecuted. It reads thus:

Faithful footsteps of my father,s
Seeking ancient Truth once more.
Sacred scripture clasp'd in darkness,
Buring fire in mother-tongue.
Yoke of iron, tortured, trodden;
Dampness chills in murky gloom.
Yet a willing heart to suffer
Father's will 'till Morning's loom.

True and Faithful to His Calling
To be separate from the world.
Hunted, driven from the North land,
Joined in cov'nant for His Word.
Born of peril, storming tempest,
Sun, nor moon, nor star canst see.

Yet Lord thou canst surely save us,
Thou hast called us to be free.

Sacred honor, lives and fortunes,
Parchment's words must never die,
Declaration, rights unalienable,
Bleeding cause, yet choice of Heav'n.
First for God, then family, country,
Millions yet, methinks I see.
But for now a voice of duty,
And the gibbet to be free.

These two prophets, sacred witness
Why from youth the called revile?
Like pure lambs going to the slaughter
They are calm as summer's morn

Sacred names had by all nations

Good or evil they must judge.

As for me, I had this witness

I praise heaven's worthy sons.

James loved his Hebrew roots and identity as a son of Abraham, a son of Israel.

His life was built on the principle of work.

For his funeral, James' wishes were 1. An inexpensive white casket 2. Funeral talks should all bear testimony of Jesus Christ through personal experience, no bragging and no sermonizing 3. On his headstone to have two scriptures: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:4) and "...whosoever will save his life in this world, shall lose it in the world to come. And whosoever will ose his life in this world, for my sake, shall find it in the world to come." (JST Matthew 16:27-28)

James' Final Testimony

(July 2021)

From <https://josephsmithfoundation.org/james-stoddard-last-testimony-july-2021/>

James Franklin Stoddard III—beloved father of 10 children and the founder of the Joseph Smith Foundation—passed away with faith and peace after a courageous battle with stage 4 lung cancer on the morning of September 6, 2021 in Provo, Utah. This video was filmed by the Truthseekers Foundation during the recent Restoration Days event, only two months before he passed.

James' life was defined by his unparalleled love for his children and his devotion to the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Beginning at age 11, he would spend hours each day studying the scriptures and teachings of the prophets. After his mission, he directed his passion and focus into projects and missionary

work opportunities, eventually producing eight documentaries, publishing 3 books, frequently speaking at conferences and firesides, establishing the Joseph Smith Foundation, Latter-day Answers, and launching many other organizations and projects. He would receive thousands of emails and letters from individuals whose lives were changed by his work. This last testimony is his plea for Latter-day Saints to remain true to the Restoration.

[Video of the testimony:](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qaq69X1R2Fc)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qaq69X1R2Fc>

Transcript of the testimony:

James: So I do not know how many of you know, but; it has been going on for a lot of years, but, people are trying to undercut the foundations of what we believe, and the most fundamental and important part of that is scripture. Right now there are serious attacks on the Book of Mormon, and what you are going to hear; and if you have ever heard this, you are going to be hearing it a lot, and it is going to become prevalent, and it is going to be prevalent, even

among mainstream—it is getting that way—that the Book of Mormon has lots of errors—that it is—just—the idea is that prophets are extremely fallible, and the Book of Mormon—it has got all of these things, like racism in there, and all kinds of other issues. Mormon was a general, and we—we have got—in fact I have it on pretty good authority from the insiders, that BYU— that one half of the Religion Department at BYU does not believe that the Book of Mormon is historical. In other words, one half of the Religion Department does not believe that there was ever a Nephi, or a Mormon, or a Moroni; and that the Book of Mormon never really happened. That is pretty scary. And then, the idea that the Book of Mormon is filled with all these problems; something I would like you to think about is, Mormon, who compiled the Book of Mormon, also did the two-thirds that we do not have; and does anybody know why we do not have the two-thirds today—what is called the two-thirds of the Book of Mormon yet to come forth; why do we not have that?”

Audience member: We are not ready for it. (from unidentifiable person off camera, in audio background)

James: Because we are not ready for it, okay? And when is that going to come forth? During the Millennium, or whatever; in the future when we are righteous, okay? Now, one scholar of the Book of Mormon; he doesn't line up with us on most beliefs, but he is thinking, and some of the best research is showing that the Lost Pages, that we lost, might have been the same size as what we have today. In other words, we have about five hundred and something english pages today, and that lost portion, might have been around the same size. So that means that we'd have over a thousand pages if we had all of it. And if you take two-thirds more, okay; correct my math because, my brain does not work right now, but I'm thinking, it is easily at least two thousand english pages. Two thousand english pages were compiled by Mormon, and we are not worthy of it. And we are not, and we will not be worthy of it any time soon, and we won't be worthy of it until the Millennium, and that is going to be the scripture during the Millennium, or at least a large portion of it, and it is what is going to gather the strength of Israel, and you think about, that has already been written by Mormon, and we are not worthy of it. So, if what they are saying; that the Book of Mormon has all these

errors, see how that does not make a lot of sense? Mormon already wrote the scriptures that we are going to use during the Millennium, and I doubt he did not know what he was doing. And I, you know, just a little bit of logic on some of these matters, to help us know; now, I'm just going to- I do not want to take too much time but, another thing is, the Joseph Smith Translation is under attack. A lot of you know that. Basically, one of the researchers, bless her heart, at BYU; she was an undergraduate, and she was doing research on the JST with another professor, who doesn't have a lot of faith, and they started realizing, parts of the the JST, Joseph Smith took from a commentary that was very popular at the time, and so that rattled their faith; so she is obviously very antagonistic to the Church (the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) right now, and to the Restoration, and these kinds of things are getting people. Now let me talk about the JST for a second. It is easily explained because Joseph Smith was going in and using whatever resources he had at the time, and parts of it, came from somebody's commentary. But notice he did not use all of the parts, and he just picked out the parts that were inspired. Now, let me tell you how incredibly inspired the JST is! As I have

read the Bible through my life, I have said about certain things, 'Well that could not happen.'

Let me give you a 'for instance'. One for instance, is that the Pharisees in the days of Jesus; what were they like? They were, 'they sat in Moses' seat,' says the New Testament, right? And so they were the church leaders of the day, and they were not faithful. They did not keep the commandments, they did not live well, they did not teach good things. Now the New Testament that we have today says that Jesus said, 'They sit in Moses' seat, so all that they tell you to do, do. Just do not do after their works.' How does that feel? You got these apostate leaders, and the Lord is saying, 'yeah, go ahead and do what they tell you to do,' are you kidding? That should have red alarms going off all over the place. So, you read, and you are like, 'yeah, that can not be.' Well, lo, and behold, if you go back to the original Hebrew manuscripts, [in this] I am going to be earth shattering today, but the original manuscripts of the New Testament were not Greek. I know that is what everybody tried to promote for som many years, [and] that came from a Roman, Greek influence; people trying to Romanize the ancient church, but the original

manuscripts were Hebrew, and we kind of know that now, because there has been some new research that is bringing that forth, which is really, really cool! Well guess what? In that original Hebrew, it does not say, ‘Do what the Pharisees say to do,’ it says- it changes it, and it says, ‘They sit in Moses’ seat; do what Moses said to do.’ See that? Does that not feel a lot better? Now, let me bring the back to the Restoration. So, when we were studying these Hebrew manuscripts, and when we were seeing that mistake, that was introduced by people who were antagonistic against—you know, thousands of years—well, at least, you know—probably almost two thousand years ago, those changes were made. At least eighteen hundred or so. So those changes were made. When we were studying that, I was like, ‘Joseph Smith had to have caught that, because if he did not, he is not a true prophet, period,’ because anybody reading the New Testament knows, that the Lord would not have said that, right? So I flipped open the JST, and right there, Joseph Smith not only teaches—and this happens a lot—go back to the original Hebrew, that we have not had until the last couple of decades, you see that Joseph Smith

actually changed things to what the original Hebrew said.”

Audience member: Oh my g#sh, that is awesome! (from unidentifiable person off camera, in audio background)

James: Yeah, it is pretty cool! Now let me tell you, in addition to what the ancient Hebrew said, Joseph sSmith also added more; probably more than was originally even written down, and the stuff that he added fits perfect. It just makes everything work. So, I guess my two cents is, do not give up on—because, there is going to be a lot of mounting pressure in the future. Do not give up on the scriptures. ODes anybody know what Joseph Smith said about his revelations that he gave? He said, ‘there is no error in the revelations.’ So that is my witness to all of you. There is no error in the revelations. It does not mean that we do not find places where we misquoted Joseph Smith. I do not know if you know this, but one of the sections—sections 130 (Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants) talks about the Holy Ghost. Can anybody quote that part about the Holy Ghost in section 130? Hopefully my mind is right. It is in 130 still, right? Or did I move things around in my mind

lately? The Holy Ghost is what? ‘A personage of spirit. Were it not so,’ what does it say?”

Audience member: He could not dwell within you. (from unidentifiable person off camera, in audio background)

James: ‘He could not dwell within you.’ Now guess what? That is not what Joseph Smith ever said. That is what we thought he said; that is what we put in the scriptures; that is what we canonized. Guess what he said after that? Now we know. He said, ‘That is a sectarian notion. The idea that the Holy Ghost, or ahy being can dwell within another person, is false.’ So the Holy Ghost does not dwell in us. So there are little things like that, that creep in—that have crept in, but that is not what was in the original revelation. Does that make any sense? What Joseph Smith originally gave was always true, and does not ever need to be changed. The truth is, that no being should be dwelling inside another being, and if they are doing that, that is not appropriate. I’m not saying it does not happen. I am just saying it is not appropriate, and that is what Joseph Smith taught.

These are just a few things, and I am going to let other people talk, that are a lot stronger, and have a lot better brains than I do right now, but I just wanted to come down, at least, to make sure everybody knew, this might be the last time... (tears) this might be the last time I ever talk to a group. I am supposed to be dead a thousand times over. Every time I go in. The last surgery I had, the doctors were not going to do it, because they said, 'Why are you guys working on this guy? He is going to be dead in a few days, stop working on him!' And our cardiologist, God bless him; he is the only doctor in Utah that works in the conventional world that actually believes in some of the things we are trying to do, but, he told them—he said—he pulled some strings, so they did—they put a thing in that drains my heart so I can stay alive right now, but—so this might be my last time.

I just want everyone here—and if this gets filmed or recorded—my kids to know—and they know this. I have said it a thousand times, but, I know, independent of any other person, for myself, that Jesus Christ lives, and that, more important than that; it is one thing that He lives, but more important than that, is that He is the perfect

example. He is the perfect way. We talk a lot in modern circles about Jesus Christ dying for us. The important thing is He lived and gave the perfect example, and I know His example is perfect; I know that for myself. I know—I am almost hesitant to say this, because we got everybody going around having experiences where they believe that God is coming to them, and they believe they are being ordained them to this, or, all these crazy things that are not really happening, but I just want to say that I know that He lives, absolutely, with certainty, and I know it will not make any difference if I die in a few days.

I know just as much now as I will know then, the reality of this work. This is the work of God; this is the work of Jesus Christ. I also want to bear witness that Joseph Smith is the greatest prophet ever to live, excepting Jesus Christ, on this Earth. Joseph Smith was—is greater than even the ancient prophets; even Adam, and Enoch, and Noah, Elijah—in fact, all of those prophets—all of those prophets. Every one of them testified of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith; that he would come and prepare the way for the Son of God to return. This is reality; this is fact, and I

honestly—I cannot really share what I know about Joseph Smith.

A few years ago, I was being criticized by someone who had been my friend. He said, ‘look, you are teaching too much about Joseph Smith. You should not be saying those things.’ And so, after I got done with a big conference, I was home praying at night, and I was asking the Lord, ‘Have I gone too far? Because, I do not think I have but, I want to know.’ And the Lord—one of the most incredible experiences in my life—He showed me a lot more, and He said, ‘Everything you have taught is just fine, and everything that is in the scriptures, and is taught by the leaders, and the prophets—you can teach all of that about Joseph Smith. There is no problem—that is fine. It needs to be taught.’ Be He goes, ‘All of this other—if you teach it, you will be damned.’ But I will say my last words. Joseph Smith is greater than any of us can imagine. In fact, he said himself—he said ‘I cannot tell you who I am’, and he said, ‘No one will know me until I am weighed in the balance, at the judgment, and then you will all know me then.’ So we really cannot know—and that includes me—who he is. I am not saying that we

worship him, the way that we worship the Son of God, but I would like to say, those who are attacking his character right now, will regret it, and that each one of us—I beg you—I plead—I probably will not be here to do it—please, please defend the character and the teachings of the Restoration, and the Prophet Joseph Smith. Please! And I leave that with you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. “

Transcription of audio/video recording of the testimony of James F. Stoddard III at Restoration Days, on 07,24,21.

Note: One man present for this testimony commented in the video thread as follows: “I was there when he gave this testimony. The whole pavilion was filled with the Spirit. It is one of the most powerful testaments that I've ever heard. Amazing man, testimony, and family. His faith really blessed. my life. He definitely is a good and faithful servant.”

Bonus: Torch Lighters Series Hero Highlights: A Generated List

I include this list as it is a Stoddard family favorite, and as the Stoddards embody much of the traits of these heroes who sacrifice to promote the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This list highlighting heroes featured in the excellent Christian cartoon series “Torch Lighters” was generated by ChatGPT:

1. Jim Elliot

- **Mission:** Missionary to unreached tribes in Ecuador
- **Legacy:** Martyred while trying to reach the Auca (Waadani) people with the Gospel

- **Famous Quote:** “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

2. Gladys Aylward

- **Mission:** Missionary to China
- **Legacy:** Rescued over 100 children during the Sino-Japanese War
- **Key Traits:** Courage, compassion, and deep faith

3. Richard Wurmbrand

- **Mission:** Romanian pastor who stood against communism
- **Legacy:** Imprisoned and tortured for 14 years; founded Voice of the Martyrs
- **Theme:** Courage under persecution

4. Eric Liddell

- **Mission:** Olympic runner and missionary to China
- **Legacy:** Refused to run on Sunday; later died in a Japanese internment camp in China
- **Message:** Honor God above worldly success

5. William Tyndale

- **Mission:** Translating the Bible into English
- **Legacy:** Martyred for making Scripture accessible to ordinary people
- **Key Theme:** The power of God's Word

6. John Bunyan

- **Mission:** Preacher and author in England

- **Legacy:** Wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* while imprisoned for preaching
- **Theme:** Spiritual journey and perseverance

7. Perpetua

- **Mission:** Early Christian martyr in Roman Africa (c. 200 AD)
- **Legacy:** Refused to renounce her faith despite pressure from family and government
- **Message:** Loyalty to Christ above all

8. Amy Carmichael

- **Mission:** Missionary to India
- **Legacy:** Rescued children from temple slavery; founded the Dohnavur Fellowship

- **Virtues:** Love, service, and sacrifice

9. William Booth

- **Mission:** Founder of the Salvation Army
- **Legacy:** Brought the gospel and social reform to England's poorest
- **Message:** Faith in action

10. Samuel Morris

- **Mission:** African prince turned Christian witness
- **Legacy:** Walked hundreds of miles to learn about Christ and became a spiritual leader in the U.S.
- **Theme:** Hunger for truth and divine guidance

11. Augustine

- **Mission:** Theologian and bishop in early Christianity
- **Legacy:** One of the most influential Church Fathers; author of *Confessions* and *City of God*
- **Conversion:** From a wild youth to a devoted servant of God

12. Martin Luther

- **Mission:** Sparked the Protestant Reformation
- **Legacy:** Challenged Church corruption; translated the Bible into German
- **Famous Act:** Nailed the 95 Theses to the church door

13. Corrie ten Boom

- **Mission:** Dutch woman who hid Jews during WWII

- **Legacy:** Survived concentration camp; preached forgiveness and hope
- **Key Message:** Faith and forgiveness in suffering

14. John Wesley

- **Mission:** Founder of the Methodist movement
- **Legacy:** Preached across Britain and America, stressing personal holiness and social justice

15. George Müller

- **Mission:** Evangelist and orphanage director in England
- **Legacy:** Cared for over 10,000 orphans without ever asking for money—relied on prayer

- **Theme:** Radical faith and trust in God's provision

16. Adoniram and Ann Judson

- **Mission:** First American missionaries overseas (to Burma)
- **Legacy:** Endured great trials, translated the Bible into Burmese, and planted churches
- **Theme:** Endurance in suffering and cultural adaptation for the Gospel

17. Harriet Tubman

- **Mission:** Rescuer of slaves through the Underground Railroad
- **Legacy:** Escaped slavery and returned many times to lead others to freedom; deeply guided by faith

- **Key Theme:** God as deliverer and protector

18. Mary Slessor

- **Mission:** Missionary to Nigeria
- **Legacy:** Worked among tribes, protected vulnerable children, and stopped human sacrifice
- **Nickname:** “White Queen of Calabar”

19. Betsey Stockton

- **Mission:** Former slave turned missionary teacher to Hawaii
- **Legacy:** Opened the door for single Black women to serve as missionaries

20. Pandita Ramabai

- **Mission:** Social reformer and Christian convert in India

- **Legacy:** Advocated for women's education, rescued child widows, translated the Bible into Marathi
- **Theme:** Courage to challenge cultural injustice

21. St. Patrick

- **Mission:** Brought Christianity to Ireland
- **Legacy:** Former slave turned missionary; used creative evangelism to reach pagan tribes
- **Symbol:** Shamrock (to explain the Trinity)

22. Polycarp

- **Mission:** Early Church Bishop of Smyrna (disciple of the Apostle John)
- **Legacy:** Martyred for refusing to deny Christ under Roman rule

- **Famous Quote:** “Eighty and six years I have served Him and He has done me no wrong.”

Join the Fight!

The most important fight has always been spiritual warfare. The James Stoddard family shares with us their tremendous examples of living for Christ.

What's their secret? To go on the mission together as a family. Parents, involve your kids in your ministries. You were meant to do this together!

This is a family that takes seriously the oft ignored cultural standards from the prophets. Are you acquainted with standards from the prophets on movies, music, and recreation? The Stoddard family, along with quotes from the brethren in this volume, can help you learn correct principles for wholesome recreation, and a life well lived.

This is a family that values hard work, forgiveness, and knows how to sacrifice to make a difference in the world.

The Joseph Smith Foundation (JosephSmithFoundation.org) has published several books and documentaries defending the history and teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

While we need the courage to stand alone in our day to day lives, we can take comfort that there are many saints striving for excellence in the service of God.