

Episode 12

Stories from General Young Women Meetings

PERSEVERANCE

NARRATOR:

This is Stories from the General Young Women Meetings, a topical collection of stories from various General Young Women Meetings. This collection is on perseverance. In the Book of Mormon, Second Nephi chapter 31, verse 20 we read: “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of god and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the father: ye shall have eternal life.”

Stories from the lives of the pioneers provide examples of some who persevered with faith until the end of their journey. In the 1999 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Margaret D. Nadauld shares a story about one such pioneer woman.

(Margaret D. Nadauld, April 1999 General Young Women Meeting)

Jane Allgood Bailey wasn't about to give up the light of her new religion. She would not be defeated by the cold, starvation, and sickness on the plains of Wyoming. She grasped hands with other women to wade through icy streams. They came out on the other side with their clothes frozen to them, but they carried on. On the trek, her 18-year-old son, Langley, became ill and was so weak that he had to be pushed on the handcart much of the way. One morning he rose from his bed on the cart, which had frozen canvas for bedding, and he went ahead of the company and lay down under a sagebrush to die, feeling that he was too much of a burden. When his faithful mother found him, she scolded him and told him: "Get on the cart. I'll help you, but you're not giving up!" Then the family moved on with what was left of the Martin-Willey Handcart Company.

Upon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley, Langley was still alive! He was 18 years old and he weighed only 60 pounds. That 18-year-old boy was my great-grandfather. I'm grateful for the preservation of his young life and for the fortitude and stamina of his noble, courageous mother, who was a light to her family and kept her son going in spite of deathly odds.

NARRATOR:

In the 1997 General Young Women Meeting, President Thomas S. Monson shares a story about two more faithful pioneers.

(President Thomas S. Monson, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

Two of my own great-grandparents fit the mold of many. Gibson and Cecelia Sharp Condie lived in Clackmannan, Scotland. Their families were engaged in coal mining--at peace with the world, surrounded by relatives and friends, and housed in fairly comfortable quarters in a land they loved. They listened to the message of the missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and were converted to the depths of their very souls. They heard the call to journey to Zion and knew they must answer that call.

They sold their possessions and prepared for a hazardous voyage across the mighty Atlantic Ocean. With five children, they boarded a sailing vessel, all their worldly possessions in a tiny trunk. They traveled 3,000 miles across the waters, eight long, weary weeks on a treacherous sea--night and day nothing but water--eight weeks of watching and waiting, with poor food, poor water, and no help beyond the length and breadth of that small sailing vessel.

In the midst of this soul-trying situation, their son, Nathaniel, sickened and died. My great-grandparents loved that son just as much as your parents love you; and when his eyes were closed in death, their hearts were torn asunder. To add to their grief, the law of the sea must be obeyed. Wrapped in a canvas weighed down with iron, his body was consigned to a watery grave. As they sailed away, only those parents knew the crushing blow dealt to wounded hearts. Gibson Condie and his good wife were comforted by the words "Not my will, but Thy will, O Father."

That first trek of 1847, organized and led by Brigham Young, is described by historians as one of the great epics of United States history. Mormon pioneers by the hundreds suffered and died from disease, exposure, or starvation. There were some who, lacking wagons and teams, literally walked the 1,300 miles across the plains and through the mountains, pushing and pulling handcarts.

As the long, painful struggle approached its welcome end, a jubilant spirit filled each heart. Tired feet and weary bodies somehow found new strength.

Time-marked pages of a dusty pioneer journal speak movingly to us: "We bowed ourselves down in humble prayer to Almighty God with hearts full of thanksgiving to Him, and dedicated this land unto Him for the dwelling place of His people."

We honor those who endured incredible hardships. We praise their names and reflect on their sacrifices. What about our time? Are there pioneering experiences for us? Will future generations reflect with gratitude on our efforts, our examples? You young women, wherever you are this night, can indeed be pioneers in courage, in faith, in charity, in determination.

NARRATOR:

A well-known hymn come of the church, "Come Ye Saints" was written by William Clayton during the pioneer trek west. The first verse provides these words of encouragement: "Come, come ye saints, no toil nor labor fear; but with joy wend your way. Though hard to you, this journey may appear, grace shall be as your day. 'Tis better far for us to strive our useless cares from us to drive; do this, and joy your hearts will swell—all is well! All is well!" In the 2006 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Elaine S. Dalton tells about a young pioneer woman who persevered through trials and learned that, indeed, "all is well"

(Elaine S. Dalton, April 2006, General Young Women Meeting)

In 1856, at age 13, Mary joined the Church with her family in England, traveled to America, and joined the Martin handcart company. In her personal history she recounts the difficulty of the journey—the loss of her baby brother and older brother, the freezing of her own feet, and finally the death of an infant sister and her mother. When she arrived

in the Salt Lake Valley, the doctor amputated her toes, but she was promised by the prophet, Brigham Young, that she would not have to have any more of her feet cut off. She recounts: "One day I sat . . . crying. My feet were hurting me so—when a little old woman knocked at the door. She said she had felt someone needed her there for a number of days. . . . I showed her my feet. . . . She said, 'Yes, and with the help of the Lord we will save them yet.' She made a poultice and put on my feet and every day after the doctor had gone she would come and change the poultice. At the end of three months my feet were well."

But Mary had sat in her chair so long that the cords of her legs had become stiff and she could not straighten them. When her father saw her condition, he cried. He rubbed her legs with oil and tried to straighten them, but it was of no use. One day he said, "Mary I have thought of a plan to help you. I will nail a shelf on the wall and while I am away to work you try to reach it." She said that she tried all day for several days and at last she could reach the shelf. Then her father put the shelf a little higher. This went on for another three months, and through her daily diligence her legs were straightened and she learned to walk again.

I believe that you are learning, like Mary Goble, to reach just a little higher to the shelf our leaders have raised for us, and that if you will reach higher as those ideals are raised, you will become able to walk into the future with confidence.

NARRATOR:

You're listening to Stories from the General Young Women Meetings on the Mormon Channel. The topic is perseverance. Sometimes we may be given trials to aid in our progress. Sister Virginia H. Pearce explains this principle with an example from nature. This is from the 1997 General Young Women Meeting.

(Virginia H. Pearce, April 1997 General Young Women Meeting)

The Indra swallowtail butterfly is one of nature's most spectacular specimens. Laboratory scientists have carefully chronicled its life cycle. An egg is laid at just the right spot on the food plant. Within five days it hatches and grows into a black caterpillar with yellow-orange dots. When mature, the caterpillar creates its own chrysalis. Most emerge after two years. But some--and this is the interesting observation--have been known to remain in the chrysalis for up to seven years. Then, unexpectedly, within a few short hours the once-spotted caterpillar emerges as a gorgeous black butterfly and takes flight. Did this caterpillar become a butterfly in a few short hours or in seven years?

Observers who understand Indra swallowtail growth are willing to patiently continue their work and give time a chance. Those who understand their own personal growth patiently continue to pray, do their daily work, and give time a chance.

NARRATOR:

Some problems need a lot of perseverance because they take a long time to solve. In the 2003 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Elaine S. Dalton explains the importance of constant efforts by relating a personal experience.

(Elaine S. Dalton, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)

Several years ago, my husband and I qualified to run the Boston Marathon. The night before the marathon, in an effort to visualize what it would be like to complete the race, we went to downtown Boston about a mile from the finish line. There in the quiet of the evening we laced up our running shoes and ran that last mile to the finish. As we crossed the line we held our hands victoriously high in the air and pretended that we had won the race! We imagined thousands of observers in the stands cheering for us. The next day we ran the race. Twenty-six point two miles (41.3 km) is a challenging distance. There are hills that are called “Heartbreak” for a very good reason. The entire time I was running those hills, I kept in mind that finish line and what it had felt like the night before to cross the line victorious. That vision of the finish line helped me to finish that marathon in a pelting, cold New England storm.

Your vision of your future will help you press forward. Take a few minutes to envision where you want to be in one year or two or five. Then take action to prepare yourselves. People don’t just run a marathon when they decide to do it. They must train daily, slowly building stamina and endurance to run the 26.2-mile distance. So it is with life. It is daily diligence with prayer and scripture study that will help you reach your goals. Your daily decisions will influence generations.

NARRATOR:

In the 2004 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Julie B. Beck also spoke about the importance of perseverance in reaching worthwhile goals.

(Julie B. Beck, April 2004 General Young Women Meeting)

When I was a new bride, I asked my mother-in-law, who is a very good cook, if she would teach me how to make her delicious dinner rolls. With a sparkle in her eye, she replied that it took 25 years to learn to make a good roll! Then she added, "You had better start making some." I followed her advice, and we have enjoyed many good dinner rolls at our house.

At about that same time, I was invited to a lunch for all of the Relief Society sisters in my ward who had read either the Book of Mormon or a short Church history book. I had become casual in my scripture reading, so I qualified to attend the luncheon by reading the short book because it was easier and took less time. As I was eating my lunch, I had a powerful feeling that though the history book was a good one, I should have read the Book of Mormon. The Holy Ghost was prompting me to change my scripture reading habits. That very day I began to read the Book of Mormon, and I have never stopped reading it. Though I do not consider myself to be an expert, I truly love reading all the scriptures, and I am grateful I started the lifetime habit of reading them. It would be impossible to learn the lessons the scriptures contain by reading them only one time through or studying selected verses in a class.

Roll making is a great homemaking skill. As I bake them, a sweet aroma fills the house. I am able to show my love for my family by sharing something I created. When I study the scriptures, the Spirit of the Lord fills my home. I gain important understanding, which I then share with my family, and my love for them increases. The Lord has told us that our time should "be devoted to the studying of the scriptures" (D&C 26:1) and that "the Book of Mormon and the Holy Scriptures are given . . . for [our] instruction" (D&C 33:16).

Every woman can be a gospel doctrine instructor in her home, and every sister in the Church needs gospel knowledge as a leader and teacher. If you have not already developed the habit of daily scripture study, start now and keep studying in order to be prepared for your responsibilities in this life and in the eternities.

My early attempts at making rolls and scripture reading were not always successful, but over time it got easier. For both pursuits I needed to learn proper techniques and gain an understanding of the ingredients. The key was starting and doing it again and again.

NARRATOR:

In the 2003 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Elaine S. Dalton gives an example that illustrates how good habits and perseverance... can pay off...even at a young age!

(Elaine S. Dalton, April 2003 General Young Women Meeting)

When our daughter Emi was 15, she made a decision. One morning I noticed her Book of Mormon opened to Alma, chapter 48. She had marked the verses that describe Captain Moroni: “Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of a perfect understanding. . . . Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ” (vv. 11, 13).

In the margin she had written, “I want to marry a man like Moroni.” Seven years later, she did! Emi gained her vision for her future husband as she read the scriptures and listened to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. She also came to know and understand the Savior and His “great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8).

NARRATOR:

God does not intend for us to make the journey through life alone. We must learn to rely on his help. In the 1999 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Margaret D. Nadauld provided an analogy from her own life that illustrates how slow and steady perseverance can help us reach our goals.

(Margaret D. Nadauld, April 1999 General Young Women Meeting)

Have you ever stumbled around in the dark and stubbed your toe and said, “Ouch, that hurts!”? What if the lights went out in this building tonight? We would have mass confusion! Darkness can be hazardous to our health—our physical and our spiritual health! It is a great blessing to have light in our lives—a light that helps us see things as they really are, light that illuminates our understanding, light we can follow with confidence and perfect trust. Let me share with you a story to illustrate what I mean.

It was just a few days before Christmas, and we were newlyweds traveling home for the holidays. It was a 42-hour drive by car, but that didn’t discourage us at all because we were so excited to be home with our families again! We had been on the road all day and most of the night when we came upon a terrible snowstorm. We found ourselves in a blinding blizzard, and the snow was growing deeper on the highway with each passing moment. The night was pure black. We couldn’t see where we were going, and because of the deep snow we couldn’t see the lines on the road. This was a frightening situation!

Suddenly in front of us we began to see a huge semi truck going slowly and steadily ahead. We could barely make out his taillights, but seeing them gave us hope. My

husband, who was driving, fixed his eyes on the lights from the truck, and we drove along in the tracks it made through the deepening snow. Our panic subsided somewhat with that guide up ahead, because he knew the route, he sat up higher than we and could have a better view, and surely he had communication equipment if it was needed.

With prayers on our lips and white-knuckled hands holding on, we followed that light through the storm. We passed many cars off both sides of the road before we sensed that the truck was slowing down and pulling off the highway. In an act of faith, we followed him and soon found ourselves, to our great relief, in a place of safety, a place of refuge. We were so very thankful! We could hardly wait to tell the driver of the truck how grateful we were for his help—for leading the way.

We are each one on a road going toward home, but we're not trying to get there for Christmas. We're trying to get there for eternity. We want to arrive home safely to our loving Father in Heaven. He wants us to make it safely there, so He has sent a guiding light for us to follow: a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect example. He knows the way. He lights our path in the dark of night, in storms, at crossroads, and in the daylight. He is always ready to show the way back home.

NARRATOR:

We should remember that perseverance with an improper goal can be counterproductive. In the Book of Mormon, the savior counseled the Nephites, "Behold, I am the law and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life." In the 2004 General Young Women Meeting, Sister Elaine S. Dalton tells us about two young women in Mexico who do their best to follow that counsel.

(Elaine S. Dalton, April 2004 General Young Women Meeting)

As you strive to be an example of the believers, you may feel that you are standing alone. You may feel that you are the only one who is trying so hard to be righteous and pure. You may feel you are the only one striving to be modest in your actions, speech, and appearance. *But you are not alone.* There are thousands of young women like you all over the world who are striving to be an example of the believers.

Carmelita and Rosario, two young women in Jalapa, Mexico, are among those believers. They are the only members of the Church in their family, and they are living alone. When I visited their small home, they said they knew Heavenly Father loved them very much because He sent the missionaries to teach them the gospel. Although things are hard, each day they rely on their Heavenly Father's loving care and guidance.

To Carmelita and Rosario and to each of you, I testify that you are not alone. The Lord has promised: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up" (D&C 84:88).

NARRATOR:

We are here on earth to learn proper goals, pursue them and endure to the end. The reward is beyond our imagination. Thanks for joining us for this episode of Stories from the Young Women Meetings on the Mormon Channel. Go to radio.lds.org for more information. Tell your family and friends about us!