

July 14, 2020

## “Call for Heroes!”

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Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brothers and sisters, dear friends, we live in interesting times! By and through the wonders of technology, I can meet with you all across the world.

A wise man once suggested that times of general peace and happiness comprise the empty pages of world history. The same could be said about The Book of Mormon – happy times are often summarized in a sentence or two. It is the times of trial, distress, and extraordinary events that shape history.

We live in times where the pages of history are anything but empty. Covid-19 is forcing us to find and use different ways of communication.

I am pleased to say the BYU-Pathway program is way ahead of its time! Most of the learning in BYU-Pathway Worldwide happens online and I hope that you will always find ways to connect.

I congratulate you for choosing BYU-Pathway for your education. For those of you who have not enrolled yet, I encourage you to take a serious look at the many advantages this program offers and consider joining in.

### **I Believe I Can Fly**

I feel a deep tenderness towards you. When I think of you, I see me!

As a young man, I stood at the fence of the Frankfurt Germany International Airport and watched the Magnificent Flying Machines.<sup>1</sup> The take-offs and landings were a miraculous sight. One that stirred my soul!

How I wanted to be in the cockpit of one of those impressive airplanes and feel the thrill of rising up from the ground, climbing above the clouds, and traveling unto new horizons.

But was that dream possible?

I was not born into wealth. My family had twice been refugees taking only what we could carry. Because of my background, I was considered by some to be an outsider.

While other children played with their friends, I had to spend my afternoons and weekends working in our family laundry business, often as a delivery boy.

I say this because some of you might also be wondering if your dreams will ever become reality.

I understand what you are feeling.

If I could go back in time and talk to that young boy who stood on the other side of the fence yearning for a better future, I would say, “Dieter, It’s not going to be easy, but you can do it. You will be all right.”

“The journey will be filled with challenges, but the struggle itself will transform you into the person you want to be. Work hard. Be consistent. Focus on the things you can change, not so much on the things you cannot change.

Have faith. Have hope. Trust in God. Know that if you do your part, things will work out.”

This is also my advice to you today.

## **You Are the Hero of Your Own Story**

My dear friends, from my earliest childhood I loved adventure stories.

Many of those stories start with a character who has a problem. Often, the bigger the problem, the more compelling the story. And what the character in the story doesn't know, is that things are going to get a lot worse! They get so bad, in fact, that the hero may start to feel that he or she will never overcome the challenges before him or her.

This is true until something special happens in their lives, like a trusted person or a source of wisdom appears to help them gain enough knowledge and insight to follow a new plan.

The rest of the story is about how the hero overcomes the difficulties that confront him or her.

In a past general conference, I spoke about Bilbo Baggins—a very ordinary hobbit who sets out on an adventure to slay a dragon. Gandalf was his source of wisdom and help.

Or think of Obi Wan Kenobi who helps Luke Skywalker learn how to master the Force and defeat the Death Star.

Anne of Green Gables has Marilla and Matthew who love her and guide her as she goes from being an unwanted orphan to an accomplished student and beloved friend.

Hermione Granger and Harry Potter have caring teachers at Hogwarts' school of wizardry to help them learn what they need to do to overcome *He Who Must Not Be Named*.

And now, I come to you.

Whether you feel like a hero or not, you are one! You are the hero of your own life's story!

Perhaps you are standing before a fence of your own, like I did at the Frankfurt Airport as a teenager, yearning for something you want to become.

At times, you may feel alone – but you are not.

You are a child of God. He is your Heavenly Father. He loves you and He is only a prayer away. You have Jesus Christ. The effects of His atonement or sacrifice are always available to you to take away the pain and loneliness of mistakes. You have caring bishops and other Church leaders. You have your ward family who will guide and help you.

And you have BYU-Pathway!

BYU-Pathway can be a wonderful and informed guide as you set out on your own grand adventure to slay your own dragon.

I invite you to see BYU-Pathway Worldwide for what it is: a guide that will help you find your way in your own great adventure.

No matter how far away your destination feels, or how high your goals may appear, know this: you may not get to where you want to go in a day or a week or even a year. But, if you continue to place one foot in front of the other and strive each day to follow your plan, things will work out and you will reach your goals.

You will certainly find surprises and unexpected challenges during your adventure, but those are really the things that make an interesting and successful story – your life story!

And, please remember, that if you trust in the Lord, learn of Him, have faith in Him, He will direct your path.<sup>2</sup>

My beloved friends. Brothers and sisters. Fellow travelers on the road of this great adventure of mortality. Do not be discouraged. Do not give up. The future is bright!

Someday you will look back on the person you are today with kindness and compassion.

And you will know then that the steps you took today molded you into the wonderful person you have yet to become.

I bless you to know that, no matter how hard the path may seem today, God will guide you as you draw near to Him.

Allow BYU-Pathway to be a guide and a help. Seek the advice and help of your advisors, church leaders, and ward family.

Have faith in God and choose His way.

And one day, you will look back and know that you were indeed watched over and loved by your Heavenly Father. God was, and always will be with you.

I bless you in your efforts to live up to your great potential as a child of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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<sup>1</sup> See Wikipedia. 2020. "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines." Last modified June 19, 2020. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Those\\_Magnificent\\_Men\\_in\\_their\\_Flying\\_Machines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Those_Magnificent_Men_in_their_Flying_Machines)

<sup>2</sup> See [Proverbs 3:5–6](#)