Finding Joy in the Journey:
Living Up to Our Privilege through Charity, Service and True Faith

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While all of God’s children will experience aging, suffer disease, sorrow or grief we have been challenged to find joy in the journey! How we find joy helps us to become more charitable and to become better servants of our loving Heavenly Father. It allows us to learn to live up to our privilege. As women we have innate feelings of charity and love that allow us to live up to our divine potential. Recognizing this potential gives us the courage, strength and opportunity to offer help to those who need it.

I have been blessed to observe very special women; who have not only found joy in their journey but have opened the hearts and minds of those around them to also find joy in their journey here on earth. Great women, who love the Lord, follow His example and find joy in small acts of service.

My sweet mother has experienced some of the most horrible forms of abuse, hardship and illness but found joy in her testimony of the gospel and giving service. After becoming converted to the gospel she served the ward in many ways as Relief Society President, Young Women organization and in the Primary. She served 3 full time missions after becoming a widow, and felt secure in her sense of purpose. She was vibrant and active, joyful and compassionate. She loved the ways in which she could serve, then she suffered a traumatic brain injury and my mother was gone; not physically but the woman I once knew was gone!

I am so grateful that mom is surrounded by love in her family and in her WARD FAMILY. Love, faith and kind service has helped mom to get through this challenge. We can always find ways of supporting others as they age. Mom is loved and cared for by her daughters and has found joy in service once more through her sweet Visiting teaching companion who treats her like a precious china doll when she comes to pick her up to visit teach. Mom has found great joy as Compassionate service leader, and loves the feelings of gratitude that come over her as she helps those bereaved families at funerals. Mom finds pleasure in attending the Temple when she can get a ride there. It reminds her of her days as missionary in the Guayaquil Ecuador Temple! Helping older sisters or sisters with health challenges can be daunting, but mom has shown me that all things are possible through our love for the Savior and opening our hearts to providing small acts of service to those who can no longer do for themselves. She is a great example of someone who enjoys serving others to her family and her ward.

I have been blessed with the opportunity to be visit taught and visit teach sisters who are quite bit younger than me. That can be awkward, what do you have in common? We have the Lord in common! We can provide stimulating conversation and give different points view of gospel teachings. I have loved my younger visiting teachers and have learned from their
examples of love and service. I watch them as they visit older sisters and offer them rides to social events, doctor's appointments, and the temple and to Stake conference. There are so many ways to give service if we look for the opportunity.

Addressing the sisters of the church, Elder Russell M. Ballard said “We believe in and are counting on your goodness and your strength, your propensity for virtue and valor, your kindness and courage, your strength and resilience. We believe in your mission as women of God... we believe that the church simply will not accomplish what it must without your faith and your faithfulness, your innate tendency to put the well-being of others ahead of your own, and your strength and tenacity. And we believe that God's plan is for you to become queens and to receive the highest blessings any woman can receive in time or eternity.”

We can find joy in our journey at any age, regardless of circumstance and lift and comfort those who are finding their way through their own journey! Offering kind and gentle service can make a difference in someone's life. We are asked to do the Lord's work here on earth. Everything we have is because our Heavenly Father's kindness and love. We are not asked to carry more than our fair share. His mercy and grace give us the strength to lift each other and burdens are made light. I think my sister’s mother-in-law says it best; “being grateful for His fairness in all our trials and hardships and acknowledging His hand in all things helps me to know that no matter what I go through in life sickness, hardship grief, I can get through it and I can help others get through it too! After all we can do He makes up the difference and knows how to succor his people!” We all face hardship, loss grief, sorrow, sickness, sadness, loneliness. Joy comes to all when we follow a prompting to call someone who has been sick, offer a ride to an aging sister who doesn’t get out much, or we take the time to stop by and see someone who is older. I’m reminded of Pres. Thomas S. Monson’s stories of visiting the widows in his ward and remembering every single one of their names, how these visits made a difference to each one! We are blessed through our unselfish acts of kindness and charity towards others; we can and should make a difference in our communities and wards. I am grateful for the good examples of great women all over the world and in my family, which have taught me how to offer service. I'm happy for how this has changed my life and the lives of those that have received service and can continue to find joy in their journeys regardless of their age or where they are in life!