

## ***“Strength from Grace: Faithful LDS Women”***

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I have learned from a young wife and mother of four beautiful children that through the grace of a loving God, we can receive spiritual light—the answers to sincere questions, the wisdom and understanding that come through the Spirit of the Lord.

Like most mothers, this young mother loves her children dearly, but she often struggles to be patient through long days of noisy, sometimes unruly children who whine and bicker, even in a sacrament meeting; a house not as clean as she would like it to be; and a minivan filled with crumbs and wrappers. She also struggles with chronic headaches, fatigue, and flu-like symptoms when exposed to certain common substances. She often feels guilty about not having the stamina of her pioneer ancestors.

In addition, this sweet mother has not always considered herself great mother material. She writes, “As a youth, I wasn’t very patient and didn’t especially like little kids. As the oldest of six children, I selfishly resented the service I was expected to do for my younger siblings. I was influenced by the worldly idea that having children and caring for them is nothing but drudgery, and all the important accomplishments in life are found elsewhere. During college, I remember wondering why the Lord had given me so many opportunities to grow, be educated, and develop my talents. I thought He must have some great mission for me to accomplish, but couldn’t imagine what it might be” (personal letter to Carol McConkie).

Married a few years later, this same girl had the faith to have a child.

One day while rocking her newborn baby, the question of her heart came back to her mind. In that moment, the Spirit of the Lord filled her soul with the answer: The Lord had invested so much into her growth and personal preparation for her eternally significant mission—to be *a mother of children*.

Over succeeding years and with the addition of three more children, my young friend has often sought divine wisdom. Relying upon the grace of God, she has learned that keeping covenants scrubs out selfishness and helps her feel faith, hope, and charity. She is able to see things from an eternal perspective. When she asks, her questions are answered, and her challenges become opportunities to learn and grow.

Recently my friend was recovering from surgery and complications that left her unable to sit up straight for months. During this time, her wonderful husband injured his toe while trying to teach their daughter to ride a bicycle. At his frustration with this injury, she could not muster much sympathy. And again, she wondered why so many of the sacrifices of parenting seem to fall heavily on mothers.

She wondered why women who choose motherhood often sacrifice physical and emotional strength and social and financial independence. Even women who do not have children in this life must experience the burdens of a body capable of bearing children. She turned to the words of the Savior in Gethsemane: “And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:35–36). She realized that the Savior’s sacrifice and suffering exceeded anything she had experienced. And then my young friend asked another question: What did she need to know and understand to enable her to sacrifice willingly, as Jesus did?

She read the answer in the words of the Apostle John: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso ... seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:16–17). She realized that love is the reason Jesus willingly suffered and that we cannot understand His love without knowing something of sacrifice. She has learned the eternal truth that “sacrifice brings forth the blessings of heaven” (“Praise to the Man,” *Hymns*, no. 27). The sacrifices of motherhood bring divine blessings to mothers and families.

About the gift of spiritual sight, my friend writes: “He does not mind my questions when I come ready to listen to the answers. In fact, I feel that he welcomes these conversations and the chance to teach me through the Spirit.” She says, “The Lord God is a sun—a sun that gives light so that we can see.”

Sisters, the Lord extends His grace to those who honor and serve Him in truth and righteousness. To them He promises wisdom and understanding that reaches to heaven, a great reward, and eternal glory (see D&C 76:5-9). May we ever seek the light of the Son of God.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.