

*By Small and Simple Things*  
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As I've been sitting here on the stand I've had a flood of memories flash through my mind. I've been thinking about the lessons, both simple and great, that I learned while I was a student at BYU—lessons about leaving home, the influence of an incredible family and wonderful friends, and the importance of education. I've remembered the significant lessons etched in my soul about life and death, love and marriage, covenants and testimony, and parenthood.

In fact, I can tell you where I was in Provo on this very day exactly 35 years ago. Elder Bednar and I were at the hospital holding our newborn son. You should have seen the big, blue sign Elder Bednar made to hang in our window at married student housing, announcing in big, huge letters, "It's a boy!" I recall my feelings of inadequacy that set in as I thought seriously about the prospects of being a mother and realized that I wasn't totally prepared or sure what to do or how to do it. I just knew that being a parent was a part of God's plan, and I knew my mother would arrive soon to help me.

I've also been thinking about that day, 16 months later, when my husband and I packed all of our belongings in a Ryder truck and headed to Indiana so he could attend graduate school. Feelings of sadness tugged at our hearts, but we each had the distinct impression and assurance that we would be back in Provo someday. It's a good thing we didn't know then what the term "be back in Provo" actually meant.

Today, I've felt that I should share a simple yet great lesson learned during our time spent in Indiana that has continued to bless my life in countless ways. Come with me to my busy life as a young wife and mother. Elder Bednar was enrolled in a demanding doctoral program at Purdue University, far away from our families. We had an energetic two-year-old—energetic's kind of a mild word for the way he was—and a very young baby, very little money, and hardly any time to spend together as a family. As we struggled to balance family responsibilities, the rigors of school, and Church callings, I became more and more overwhelmed with my duties as a stay-at-home mother and wife. Many of you may have experienced some of these same emotions and frustrations.

After considerable pondering about my situation, I asked my husband for a priesthood blessing. I was promised in the blessing that if I would exercise, get more sleep, eat regular meals, have meaningful prayer morning and night, and engage in more purposeful and consistent scripture study, I would receive the physical and spiritual tools to better cope with my circumstances and the discouragement I was feeling. The reason I remember this blessing so clearly is because afterwards I thought: “Doing this is going to solve my problems? These are typical ‘Sunday School’ answers.”

In my prideful state of mind, I rationalized why I didn’t need any more exercise because chasing little boys around all day was exercise enough, why I couldn’t get in more sleep because of their young ages, and why I couldn’t eat properly every single day because I was just too busy taking care of their needs, and frankly, I forgot to eat breakfast sometimes, and then macaroni and cheese didn’t sound very good for lunch. Since I was already saying my prayers and reading my scriptures most of the time, that part of the blessing was not even applicable to me.

I suppose you could say I was like Naaman in the Old Testament, who was sent to the king of Israel to be healed of his leprosy but instead was told by a messenger sent by the prophet Elisha to “wash in Jordan seven times” (2 Kings 5:10). Naaman was a bit angry and refused to comply with the simple, prophetic injunction until his servants questioned his motives. “And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?” (2 Kings 5:13.)

I’m sure if I had been directed to do some great thing like go on a relaxing Hawaiian cruise, or enroll in an evening art or music class, or pamper myself with a new hairdo and a pedicure, I would have seen the wisdom in responding to that kind of inspiration. But the small and simple steps that were required to receive the promised blessings seemed so mundane to me.

Thankfully, humility took root. Over time I had to decide if I would continue on the path of just going through the motions, or if I would accept and incorporate this guidance in a more steadfast and heartfelt way, having faith that doing these things really could make a difference.

Over the years, I have found that retiring earlier at night and arising earlier in the morning invigorates the mind and the body (D&C 88:124). Regular exercise lifts my spirit, clears my mind, and gives me added energy to meet the demands of my busy schedule. I can “run and not be weary, and ... walk and not faint” (D&C 89:20). Proper physical nourishment is an important key to unlocking spiritual “treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

I’m so grateful for the lessons I have learned about asking in faith through meaningful prayer, not just saying prayers. “Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers” (D&C 112:10).

I know and testify that I have heard the voice of the Lord speaking to me through the scriptures as I have paid the price of more diligent, meaningful, and consistent gospel study (D&C 18:34–36). I have felt the power and the strength of Christ’s word in me as I have faced the challenges and vicissitudes of life (Alma 26:12–13).

I know by sad experience how easy it is to nudge off our plate of daily responsibilities these small and simple things that can make such a great difference. I know as we apply these powerful principles, the blessings come. “By small and simple things are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6).

It was a small yet grand desire in the heart of a young boy, the courage to ask in faith an inspired question, and the resolve to do what God instructed him to do that has brought about this great gathering of faithful women today. Sisters, I know that Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son in the Sacred Grove. I know that through him the true gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored. I witness that God continues to speak today to living prophets and apostles. And lastly, I testify that my husband, Elder David Bednar, has been called of God, by prophecy, and has been ordained to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.