

I Will Go



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Brothers and Sisters, Aloha:

Well, with an introduction like that, I feel like I'm attending my own funeral – I'm already dressed up, I got the lei's. Thank you, Diedra, Janeen and Molia for the beautiful flowers and the setup. Your group always does an excellent job. I'm grateful for Dee and Monique. They chased me all over creation just to get my photo for the program, which my kids loved. They teased me because they didn't think I had teeth until they saw that photo.

I'm glad that my wife and children got to hear those nice words. Elder Settle, during that eulogy, my life literally flashed before my eyes. Everything I've ever done or become was summarized in 2 glorious minutes. Isn't that interesting, I actually hoped that there would be enough "doing" in there to last at least another 28 minutes. As you were going along the track of my life, I was beginning to think that I was really something special, but then it all ended so abruptly.

In a talk to BYU Students in 1984, Pres. Nelson said:

“. . . Track stars don't begin a race without knowing the location of the finish line.

So, in your important race, I would plead for you to begin with the end in mind. To assist you in defining that end, I would ask you this simple question: What would you like said about you at your funeral? Or, if you were to write your own eulogy and you could have only three sentences (no big flowery speeches, please), what would you want to say?

If it's fair for me to ask that of you, it's fair for you to ask that of me. If I were to write what I hope might be said about me, those three sentences would include:

I was able to render service of worth to my fellowmen.

I had a fine family.

I evidenced unshakable faith in God and lived accordingly. . .”[\[i\]](#)

Think on that for a second. In a nutshell, these are the 3 things that our Prophet hopes that people recognize about him and his life: He served well, he had a fine family and that he lived his faith. These are the objectives for his race.

President Nelson goes on to say, “*One of the most remarkable things about these three objectives is that they all have one requirement in common. That requirement is education. The educational process is crucial for success in each objective and is never ending.*”[\[ii\]](#)

I’ll repeat for emphasis. The educational process is crucial and never-ending. What does your educational process look like?

I took some time to think about my “educational process,” and I’m glad that the Lord God gives to the “children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. . .”[\[iii\]](#) because we all learn at our own pace. This is part of the Lord’s plan.

Let me illustrate with a few personal experiences:

Da Rock

When I was in elementary school, I made some life-long friends, brothers, if you will, some of which are here today. And as is customary in many of our familial, loving relationships, I will now proceed to throw them under the bus.

As it is with most relationships, there is a period of time where you are trying to figure each other out. This band of brothers was no different. At this particular stage in our childhood, I think we were just trying to figure out which house would be best to play at, which house had the best food, and which house gave us the best opportunity to do whatever we wanted.

So, we planned a day to play at my house after school. I don't remember what we did but I know I had a good time; and when my mother called me to come in, I didn't want to listen. So, I told her no.

Have you ever told a Samoan mother no? Well, I'm about to explain what happens to you when you do.

She looked around for something to reprimand me with and finding nothing nearby, she picked up a rock. She raised her hand up behind her head and looked at me, waiting for a response.

So, I gave her one. I started dancing around like a boxer, "float like a butterfly, sting like a bee," and said to her, "Go ahead!"

Like a quarterback watching the tendency of a Defensive Back, she did a double-pump... and I bit. She got me in the air before she let the rock go. It hit me square on the ankle and I started howling.

I looked around for my band of brothers for help and they had disappeared.

Would it have been easier for me to listen? At that stage of my educational process, I would have to say no. So, the Lord sent me to the back of the "line upon line, upon line, upon line. . . until I learned.

Did the consequences of my actions teach me anything? At that stage of my educational process, I would have to say no. So, the Lord sent me to the back of the “line upon line, upon line, upon line. . . until I learned.

Hula Car

For my 17th birthday, my band of brothers decided to take me out to dinner and a movie. The only problem was that we didn't have a vehicle and our repeated attempts to procure one ended with rejection after rejection. So, we waited until one of our friend's parents went to bed and we put the car in neutral and pushed it to the highway. We started it up and we were on our way.

This particular car, we affectionately called the Hula Car, because when you drove it, it swayed from side-to-side. However, the faster you went, the less sway you felt. So, we drove it fast. On this particular night, we ran into a little problem and our evening in Waikiki was cut short. This was a good thing because Church started at 8 o'clock in the morning. So, we drove home . . . fast!

We arrived at the house with a few hours to spare before Church. We put the car in neutral and pushed it up the road and into the garage. A few hours later, my friend's dad knocked on the bedroom door to let us know that it was time to get ready to go to Church.

We got dressed and piled into the car. We drove about a hundred feet, when the back of the car dropped to the right. We looked outside the backdoor window and the car tire rolled by and into the ditch. When we retrieved the tire, my friend's father said, “Wow, there was only one lug nut on the tire.”

Would it have been easier for us to listen to our parents? At that stage in our educational lives, I would have to say no. So, the Lord sent us to the back of the “line upon line, upon line, upon line. . . until we learned.”

Did we understand the potential consequences of our choice to take the Hula car? At that stage in our educational lives, we were invincible. We thought about it but nothing happened, so we weren't worried about it. Once again, the Lord sent us to the back of the proverbial “line upon line, upon line, upon line. . . until we learned that he was preserving us.

Bishop Keo

David Keo was the bishop of my late teen-aged years. He was quite formidable. He came to our house one Saturday morning to see me. Mom let him in and he knocked on my bedroom door. He said, “Boy, this is Bishop.” I opened the door and he motioned for me to come and sit at the dining room table. When I sat down, he said, “You are going on a mission. This Sunday you will start your paperwork. I will sustain you as the 2nd Counselor in the Young Men’s Presidency and an Assistant Scout Master to Larry Nihipali. You will also be the Deacon’s Quorum advisor. Any questions?”

I said, “No.” And so, it was. And so, I served, in the Ward, and in The Santa Rosa California Mission; the best mission in the world.

Would I have served a mission if Bishop Keo hadn’t come to the house? At that stage in my educational life, maybe, maybe not.

Did I understand what I was getting into by accepting those callings? At that stage in my educational life, No, but I learned quickly that I had to be an example to those 12-year-olds and oddly enough, it kept me in line upon line, upon line, upon line, until I learned.

Obedience

How long will it take us to learn that “*Obedience* is the first law of heaven, the cornerstone upon which all righteousness and progression rest. It consists in compliance with divine law, in conformity to the mind and will of Deity, in complete subjection to God and his commands”[\[iv\]](#)

And speaking of commandments, Cecil B. DeMille, director of the epic biblical film, *The Ten Commandments*, told the student body at Brigham Young University:

“We are too inclined to think of law as something merely restrictive?—something hemming us in. We sometimes think of law as the opposite of liberty. But that is a false conception. That is not the way that God’s inspired prophets and lawgivers looked upon the law. Law has a twofold purpose. It is meant to govern. It is also meant to educate. ...”

“... And so it is with all the Commandments.

We must look beneath the literal, the surface meaning of the words. We must take the trouble to understand them; for how can we obey commands that we do not understand? But the commandments too have an educative function?—which you can see in the life of anyone who keeps them. They produce good character. The Ten Commandments are not rules to obey as a personal favor to God. They are the fundamental principles without which mankind could not live together. They make of those who keep them faithful, strong, wholesome, confident, dedicated men and women. This is so because the commandments come from the same Divine Hand that fashioned our human nature.

God does not contradict Himself. He did not create man and then, as an afterthought, impose upon him a set of arbitrary, irritating, restrictive rules. He made man free?—and then gave him the commandments to keep him free”[\[v\]](#)

The scriptures say, “To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of lambs”[\[vi\]](#)

Father Lehi, in the book of Mormon reminds us that we “are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil. . .”[\[vii\]](#)

God has given us agency and in regard to that agency, I ask, why do some of us have a tendency to choose “the great Mediator of all men” and why do some of us have a tendency to choose “the devil?” And further, are our problems generally that simple of a choice – “light and darkness? Perhaps not, but in many cases, we complicate the decisions and sometimes we don’t even realize it.

For example, if we engage in an act of self-gratification or indulgence, chances are that we’ve made many little decisions that pushed us to the big decision that put us over the edge. Then it becomes easier to go to that edge. Interestingly, the decision-making process is the same for acts of kindness, love, and service.

So, what is the solution to helping us make the best life decisions? Stay on the covenant path. Elder Holland said, “When those moments come and issues surface, the resolution of which is not immediately forthcoming, *hold fast to what you already know and stand strong until additional knowledge comes.*”[\[viii\]](#)

The Lord tells us: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”[\[ix\]](#)

So why go at it alone, make a life changing mistake, and suffer?

Christ told the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“. . . I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent **they must suffer even as I;**

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit. . .”[\[x\]](#)

Let’s save ourselves the heartache and suffering by staying on the covenant path.

Now some of you may be wondering – what does this all have to do with the topic, “I WILL GO.”

The first and great commandment is to love God and the second is to love thy neighbor.[\[xi\]](#)

If we love God, we listen to Him, even when we don’t want to.

If Nephi didn’t love his earthly Father, he would not have said, “I will go and do. . .”[\[xii\]](#)

Ruth, would not have said to her mother-in-law Naomi, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go. . .”[\[xiii\]](#)

And our Savior, who understood our Fathers’ will, would not have said, Here am I, send me. . .”[\[xiv\]](#)

A word of caution – Following the prophet, keeping the commandments, and listening to the spirit is not necessarily an easy road. It can be terribly taxing but the underlying peace that comes from your love of the Father and your conscious decision to stay the course will bring peace in the journey.

The Savior said: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”[\[xv\]](#)

In 2006, our family moved to Hawaii. It was a painful move. We didn’t want to come but we did. The transition was difficult. I wanted to start a business but was relegated to running projects for other people. I did well and moved up the ladder, but it wasn’t what I wanted to do. A position opened up at BYU-Hawaii in 2010 and my wife and I felt impressed to apply and I was hired. In 2014, we were offered a job at PCC and went there.

In every instance the Lord has guided our decision making and I have been a happy grump. I have an incredible, supportive wife and a wonderful family that I love very much. I have time to spend with them. I eat well, as you can plainly see. I have friends all around me. I have an incredible support network. I have spiritual experiences at work, at home, and in the community that strengthen my testimony of the Savior, of the Priesthood, and of the Plan of Salvation. I associate with students of promise and am so excited to see and hear of their success abroad. I have bosses that kneel in prayer with me. I have co-workers that celebrate and mourn with me. We have family in the same Cemetery.

Our family enjoys these blessings because we went where the Lord directed us to go. We acknowledge His hand in all things. When we follow Him, we are blessed. When I recounted my blessings I felt of His love for me and for you.

At the beginning of devotional, I had t-shirts handed out to the first 150 BYU-Hawaii students to come in the doors. Those of you students who took those t-shirts please put them ON and STAND. You probably thought, yes, a free shirt. You thought wrong. You will now have an opportunity to earn it. You are representing the student body as I review with you what we’ve learned and issue us a challenge:

1. Education is a never-ending process.
2. We educate ourselves line upon line, upon line, upon line. Don’t be afraid of failure.
3. God made us free, then gave us commandments to keep us free
4. When in doubt, stay on the covenant path.

5. And the challenge to us all: Go where the Lord tells you to go!

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen. (You may be seated, thank you)

[\[i\]](#) Nelson, R. M. (1984, September 30). Begin with the End in Mind.

[\[ii\]](#) Nelson, R. M. (1984, September 30). Begin with the End in Mind

[\[iii\]](#) 2 Nephi 28:30

[\[iv\]](#) McConkie, B. R. (1966). *Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, Inc.

[\[v\]](#) DeMille, C. B. (1957). The Ten Commandments and You. *Commencement Address, in Commencement Exercises, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year*.

[\[vi\]](#) 1 Samuel 15:22

[\[vii\]](#) 2 Nephi 2:27

[\[viii\]](#) Holland, J. R. (2013, April). Lord, I Believe.

[\[ix\]](#) Isaiah 55:8-9

[\[x\]](#) D&C 19:16-18

[\[xi\]](#) (Matthew 22:35-40)

[\[xii\]](#) 1 Nephi 3:7

[\[xiii\]](#) Ruth 1:16

[\[xiv\]](#) Abraham 3:27

[\[xv\]](#) Matthew 11:28-30