

10 December 2023

Trifle Not with Sacred Things

Dear Sisters and Elders,

In March of 1829, the Prophet Joseph was commanded to stop translating the Book of Mormon and wait for help (see Doctrine and Covenants 5:34) because without a regular scribe, the work progressed slowly. In early April, Oliver Cowdery, under the inspiration of heaven, arrived at the prophet's home and offered help. On April 7, 1829, the work of translation began in earnest. Later that month, the Prophet received the revelation known as Section 6 containing counsel for Oliver regarding his role in the Lord's work. As a part of this revelation to Oliver, he is counseled in verse 12 to *"Trifle not with sacred things"*.

Trifle is a word that only appears in the scriptures 4 times. Here are the references and the verses in which they appear.

Mosiah 2:9 *"And these are the words which he [King Benjamin] spake and caused to be written, saying: My brethren, all ye that have assembled yourselves together, you that can hear my words which I shall speak unto you this day; **for I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak**, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view."*

D&C 6:12 *"Make not thy gift known unto any save it be those who are of thy faith. **Trifle not with sacred things.**"*

D&C 8:10 *"Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. **Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not.**"*

D&C 32:5 *"**And they shall give heed unto these words and trifle not**, and I will bless them. Amen."*

I looked up the definition of "trifle" and found this: *"to treat flippantly or without seriousness. To act or speak with little seriousness or purpose."*

If I were to summarize the counsel in these four scriptures using the definition above, I would make this statement. **"The Lord has warned us that we should not treat lightly His words or other sacred things."** When I asked myself, what are the "other sacred things" mentioned in D&C 6:12, I did a search in the general conference talks for the word "trifle". I found 41 conference talks where the speaker referenced the word. 15 of the talks specifically referenced the importance of not trifling with the words of the Lord as highlighted above. The other 26 talks mention 17 distinct categories, listed below in no particular order.

1. The doctrines and the covenants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Elder Faust Oct 1992, Elder Kacher Oct 2014)

2. The Sabbath Day (Elder Peterson Apr 1975, Elder Perry Apr 2011)
3. Temple ordinances and covenants (Elder Komatsu Oct 1993, Elder Kendrick Apr 2001, President Hinckley April 1990)
4. The Book of Mormon (President Benson Oct 1986, Elder McConkie Oct 1983)
5. The promptings of the Spirit (Elder Wood Oct 1999)
6. Truth (Elder Mickelsen Oct 1990)
7. Obedience (Bishop McMullin Oct 2005)
8. Temple Marriage (President Benson Oct 1988, Elder Perry Oct 1975, President Lee Oct 1973)
9. Repentance (Elder Scott Apr 1995)
10. Prayer (Elder Brockbank Oct 1979)
11. Temptation and Evil (Elder Haight Oct 1986, Elder Faust Oct 1997, President Tanner Oct 1978)
12. Time (Elder Perry Apr 1976)
13. Morality (Elder Peterson Apr 1971)
14. Faith (Elder Scott Oct 1991)
15. Commandments of God (Elder Asay Oct 1985, Elder Peterson Oct 1979)
16. The Doctrine of Christ (Elder Brockbank Oct 1972)
17. The souls of men (Elder Eyring Apr 2009)

And that brings us to the question, *“Therefore, What?”*

It is clear in both the scriptures and in the general conference talks that we are not to trifle with sacred things. The list above is good and gives us good counsel on what prophets and apostles have taught about taking sacred things seriously. I have mentioned in a previous letter the origin of the word sacred; I will mention it again here. The word sacred comes from Latin and its root means “to sanctify” or “to make holy”. Other derivative words are “consecrate”, “dedicate”, “anoint”, “set apart”. What a wonderful way to think about what applying these gospel themes in our lives will do for us.

I also want to mention more about the “temptations and evil” that appear in this list as it is quite different from the others. Elder Haight, Elder Faust, and President Tanner all counseled that we must realize that evil and temptations are real, and that they are all around us. We must take seriously the challenges that these temptations and this evil creates for us and then act and protect ourselves accordingly.

I want to invite each of you to ask yourself the following three questions, using each of the 17 points above to fill in the blank. “Do I take _____ seriously?” “Do I allow _____ to make me holy and consecrated as a missionary?” Do I understand how important _____ is to the Lord?

I want to close with a scripture from D&C 63:64 *“Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation.”*

May we treat everything that is sacred with the utmost care, focus, and seriousness. May we become holy through these sacred gifts that the Lord has given us so that we might become as He is, so that we can live again with both the Father and the Son.

All My Love,

President Kunz