Focus on Jesus Christ and His Gospel

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Mifantoha amin'i Jesoa Kristy sy ny filazantsarany

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When we ignore the distractions of the world and focus on Christ and His gospel, we are guaranteed success.

Rehefa tsy miraharaha ireo fanelingelenan'izao tontolo izao isika ary mifantoka amin'i Kristy sy ny filazantsarany, dia azo antoka ny fahombiazana.

In 1996 the Nigerian men's football team won gold at the Olympic Games held in Atlanta in the United States. As the final ended, jubilant crowds poured onto the streets of every city and town in Nigeria; this country of 200 million people was instantly transformed into a massive celebration at two o'clock in the morning! There was infectious joy, happiness, and excitement as people ate, sang, and danced. In that moment, Nigeria was united and every Nigerian was content being Nigerian.

Tamin'ny 1996, ny ekipa mpilalao baolina kitra lehilahy Nizeriana dia nahazo medaly volamena tamin'ny lalao Ôlympika natao tany Atlanta, any Etazonia. Rehefa hifarana ny lalao famaranana dia feno vahoaka faly nirohotra nanerana ny araben'ireo tanàna tsirairay tao Nizerià. Ity firenena misy mponina 200 tapitrisa ity dia niova ho fankalazana makotrokotroka tampoka teo tamin'ny andro amin'ny roa ora maraina! Nisy hafaliana sy fahasambarana ary fientanentanana nihanaka rehefa nihinana sy nihira ary nandihy ny olona. Tamin'izay fotoana izay dia niray saina i Nizerià ary faly tamin'ny naha Nizeriana azy ny Nizeriana rehetra.

Before the Olympics, this team faced numerous challenges. As the tournament began, their financial support ended. The team competed without proper kits, training venues, food, or laundry services.

Talohan'ilay lalao Ôlympika dia niatrika fanamby maro io ekipa io. Rehefa nanomboka ny fifanintsanana dia tapaka ny fanohanana an'izy ireo ara-bola. Nanao ny fifanintsanana tsy nisy kojakoja na toeram-piofanana na sakafo na fikarakarana ny fanasan-damba ara-dalàna ilay ekipa.

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At one point, they were minutes away from being eliminated from competition, but the Nigerian team triumphed against all odds. This pivotal moment changed how they saw themselves. With newfound confidence, and with individual and team hard work and dogged determination, they unitedly ignored distractions and focused on winning. This focus earned them gold medals, and Nigerians christened them the "Dream Team." The Dream Team at the 1996 Olympics

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Nisy fotoana efa minitra vitsy monja sisa no tsy nanesorana azy ireo tamin'ny fifaninana, saingy nandresy ny ekipa Nizeriana na dia tsy nampoizina aza izany. Nanova ny fomba fijerin'izy ireo ny tenany io fotoana manan-danja io. Niaraka tamin'ny fahatokian-tena vaovao sy niaraka tamin'ny asa mafy nataon'ny tsirairay sy ny ekipa sy ny fahavononana tsy tapaka, dia niaraka tsy niraharaha ireo fanelingelenana izy ireo ary nifantoka tamin'ny fandresena. Io fifantohana

continues to be referenced in Nigerian sports.

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Once the football team learned to ignore the many distractions facing them and focused on their goal, they succeeded beyond what they thought possible and experienced great joy. (As did the rest of us in Nigeria!)

In a similar way, when we ignore the distractions of the world and focus on Christ and His gospel, we are guaranteed success beyond what we can fully imagine and can feel great joy. President Russell M. Nelson taught: "When the focus of our lives is on … Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives."

I pray that the Holy Ghost will help each of us to heed President Nelson's invitation to focus our lives on "Jesus Christ and His gospel" so we can experience joy in Christ "regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives."

Several accounts in the Book of Mormon describe individuals who turned their lives around by focusing on Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Consider Alma the Younger. He rebelled and fought against the Church. His father, Alma, prayed and fasted. An angel appeared and called Alma the Younger to repentance. In that moment, Alma began to suffer "the pains of a damned soul."In his darkest hours, he remembered his father teaching that Christ would come to atone for the sins of the world. As his mind caught hold on this thought, he pled with God for mercy. Joy was the result, a joy he described as exquisite!Mercy and joy came to Alma because he and his father focused on the Savior.

For parents with children who have strayed,

io no nahazoan'izy ireo medaly volamena, ary nomen'ny Nizeriana anarana miavaka izy ireo hoe "Dream Team" (Ekipa tonga lafatra). Ilay Dream Team tamin'ny lalao Ôlympika 1996 dia mbola voaresaka hatrany amin'ny fanatanjahantena Nizeriana.

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Raha vao nianatra tsy niraharaha ireo fanelingelenana maro natrehany sy nifantoka tamin'ny tanjony ilay ekipa mpilalao baolina kitra, dia nahomby mihoatra noho izay noheveriny ho azo atao izy ireo, ary niaina fifaliana lehibe. (Ary niaina izany koa izahay rehetra tao Nizerià!)

Toy izany koa, rehefa tsy miraharaha ireo fanelingelenan'izao tontolo izao isika ary mifantoka amin'i Kristy sy ny filazantsarany, dia azo antoka ny fahombiazana mihoatra noho izay azontsika eritreretina ary afaka hahatsapa fifaliana lehibe isika. Nampianatra ny Filoha Russell M. Nelson hoe: "Rehefa … i Jesoa Kristy sy ny filazantsarany no fifantohan'ny fiainantsika dia afaka mahatsapa fifaliana isika na inona na inona zava-mitranga—na tsy mitranga—eo amin'ny fiainantsika."

Mivavaka aho mba hanampy antsika tsirairay avy ny Fanahy Masina hihaino ny fanasan'ny Filoha Nelson mba hampifantoka ny fiainantsika amin'i "Jesoa Kristy sy ny filazantsarany" mba ahafahantsika miaina fifaliana ao amin'i Kristy "na inona na inona zava-mitranga—na tsy mitranga—eo amin'ny fiainantsika."

Tantara maromaro ao amin'ny Bokin'i Môrmôna no milazalaza an'ireo olona izay nanova ny fiainany ho tsara tamin'ny fifantohana tamin'i Jesoa Kristy sy ny filazantsarany.

Eritrereto i Almà Zanany. Nikomy ary nanohitra ny Fiangonana izy. Nivavaka sy nifady hanina i Almà Rainy. Nisy anjely niseho ary niantso an'i Almà Zanany mba hibebaka. Tamin'izay fotoana izay dia nanomboka nijaly "tamin'ny fanaintainan'ny fanahy voaozona"i Almà. Tao anatin'ny ora maloka indrindra nolalovany dia nahatsiaro ny fampianaran-drainy izy fa ho avy i Kristy mba hanonitra ny fahotan'izao tontolo izao. Raha nifantoka tamin'izany eritreritra izany ny sainy, dia nitalaho famindram-po tamin' Andriamanitra izy. Fifaliana no vokatr'izany, fifaliana izay nofaritany ho mahafinaritra!Tonga tamin'i Almà ny famindram-po sy ny fifaliana satria nifantoka tamin'ny Mpamonjy izy sy ny rainy.

Ho an'ireo ray aman-dreny manan-janaka

take heart! Instead of wondering why an angel does not come to help your child repent, know that the Lord has placed a mortal angel in his or her path: the bishop, another Church leader, or a ministering brother or sister. If you keep fasting and praying, if you do not set a timetable or a deadline for God, and if you trust that He is stretching forth His hand to help, then—sooner or later—you find God touching the heart of your child when your child chooses to listen. This is so because Christ is joy—Christ is hope;He is the promise "of good things to come."So trust Jesus Christ with your child, for He is the strength of every parentand every child.

nivily lalana dia mahereza hatrany! Raha tokony hanontany tena hoe nahoana ny anjely no tsy tonga hanampy ny zanakao hibebaka, dia fantaro fa ny Tompo dia nametraka anjely olombelona eo amin'ny lalany, dia ny eveka na mpitarika hafa ao amin'ny Fiangonana na rahalahy na rahavavy mpanompo. Raha manohy mifady hanina sy mivavaka hatrany ianao, raha toa ka tsy mametraka fandaharam-potoana na fe-potoana ho an' Andriamanitra ianao, ary raha matoky ianao fa maninjitra ny tanany Izy mba hanampy, dia ho hitanao, na ho ela na ho haingana, fa Andriamanitra dia hikasika ny fon'ny zanakao rehefa misafidy ny hihaino ny zanakao. Izany dia satria Kristy no fifaliana, Kristy no fanantenana;Izy ilay fampanantenana "ny amin'ny zavatra tsara ho avy."Koa matokia an'i Jesoa Kristy ny amin'ny zanakao, fa Izy no manome hery ny ray amandreny,sy ny zanaka rehetra.

Once he experienced joy in Christ, Alma the Younger lived with that joy. But how did he maintain such joy even through difficulty and trial? He states:

"From that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, [to] bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste. …

"… And … the Lord doth give me exceedingly great joy in the fruit of my labors. …

"And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind."

Joy in Christ began for Alma when he exercised faith in Him and cried for mercy. Then Alma exercised his faith in Christ by laboring to help others taste of the same joy. These continuous labors produced great joy in Alma even in trials and troubles of every kind. You see, "the Lord loves effort," and effort focused on Him brings blessings.Even severe trials can be "swallowed up in the joy of Christ."

Niaina niaraka tamin'izany fifaliana izany i Almà Zanany raha vao nahatsapa fifaliana tao amin'i Kristy izy. Saingy ahoana no nihazonany fifaliana toy izany na dia tao anatin'ny fahasahiranana sy fitsapana aza? Hoy izy:

"Hatramin'izay fotoana izay ka mandrak'ankehitriny, dia efa niasa tsy nitsahatra aho mba hahazoako mitondra fanahy hankamin'ny fibebahana; mba hahazoako mitondra azy ireny hanandrana ny fifaliana mihoa-pampana izay nandramako. …

"… Eny … ny Tompo dia manome ahy fifaliana lehibe fatratra tokoa noho ny vokatry ny asako. …

"Ary efa notohanana aho tamin'ny fizahan-toetra sy ny fahasahiranana isan-karazany".

Nanomboka ny fifaliana ao amin'i Kristy ho an'i Almà rehefa naneho finoana sy nitalaho famindram-po Taminy izy. Avy eo dia nampihatra ny finoany an'i Kristy i Almà tamin'ny alalan'ny asa ka nanampy ny hafa hiaina izany fifaliana izany. Ireo asa tsy nisy fitsaharana ireo dia niteraka fifaliana lehibe tao amin'i Almà, na dia tao anatin'ireo fitsapana sy olana isan-karazany aza. Hitanareo fa "tian'ny Tompo ny fanaovana ezaka," ary ny ezaka mifantoka Aminy dia mitondra fitahiana maro.Na ireo fitsapana lehibe indrindra aza dia afaka ny ho "voatelina ao amin'ny fifalian'i Kristy"

Another group in the Book of Mormon who made Jesus Christ and His gospel the focus of their lives and found joy are those who founded the city Helam—a place where they could

Ny vondron'olona iray hafa ao amin'ny Bokin'i Môrmôna izay nanao an'i Jesoa Kristy sy ny filazantsarany ho fifantohan'ny fiainany ary nahita fifaliana dia ireo izay nanorina ny

raise their children and enjoy the free exercise of their religion. This righteous people living good lives were enslaved by a marauding group and stripped of the fundamental human right to exercise religion. Sometimes bad things happen to good people:

"The Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.

"Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day. Yea, and thus it was with this people."

How did this people endure through their trials and suffering? By focusing on Christ and His gospel. Their troubles did not define them; rather, each of them turned to God, likely defining themselves as a child of God, a child of the covenant, and a disciple of Jesus Christ.As they remembered who they were and called upon God, they received peace, strength, and ultimately joy in Christ:

"Alma and his people did … pour out their hearts to [God]; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

"And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage."

In response, the Lord did "ease the burdens … upon [their] shoulders. … Yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and withpatience to all the will of the Lord."Note that these Saints let their troubles, suffering, and trials be swallowed up in the joy of Christ! Then in due time, He showed Alma the way for escape, and Alma—a prophet of God—led them to safety.

As we focus on Christ and follow His prophet, we too will be led to Christ and the joy of His

tanànan'i Helama, toerana iray izay ahafahan'izy ireo mitaiza ny zanany sy misitraka ny fampiasana malalaka ny fivavahany. Ireo olona marina niaina fiainana tsara ireo dia nandevozin'ny andiana mpandroba ary nesorina ny zo maha olombelona hampiasa ny fivavahana. Indraindray dia mitranga amin'ireo olona tsara ny zavatra ratsy.

"Ny Tompo dia mahita fa mety ny hamaizana ny olony; eny, mizaha toetra ny faharetany sy ny finoany Izy.

"Kanefa—na zovy na zovy no mametraka ny fitokiany Aminy, dia izy no hasandratra amin'ny andro farany. Eny, dia toy izany no nitranga tamin'ity vahoaka ity."

Ahoana ny nahatonga ity vahoaka ity naharitra nandritra ny fitsapany sy ny fijaliany? Tamin'ny alalan'ny fifantohana tamin'i Kristy sy ny filazantsarany. Tsy namaritra ny momba azy ireo ny fahasahiranany fa nitodika tany amin' Andriamanitra kosa ny tsirairay tamin'izy ireo, namaritra ny tenany ho zanak' Andriamanitra, zanaky ny fanekempihavanana, ary mpanaradia an'i Jesoa Kristy.Rehefa nahatsiaro hoe iza izy ireo ary nangataka fanampiana tamin' Andriamanitra dia nahazo fiadanana sy hery ary fifaliana tao amin'i Kristy izy ireo tamin'ny farany:

"I Almà sy ny olony dia … namboraka ny tao am-pony tamin[' Andriamanitra], ary Izy dia nahalala ny fihevitry ny fony.

"Ary ny zava-nitranga dia tonga taminy tao amin'ny fahoriany ny feon'ny Tompo, nanao hoe: Atrakao ny lohanareo ary manàna fahatokiana, satria fantatro ny fanekempihavanana izay efa nataonareo Tamiko; ary Izaho hanao fanekempihavanana amin'ny oloko sy hanafaka azy hiala amin'ny famatorana."

Ho setrin'izany, ny Tompo dia "[nanamaivana] ny enta-mavesatra [t]eo an-tsorok['izy ireo]. … Eny, nampahatanjaka azy ny Tompo mba hahafahany mitondra mora foana ny enta-mavesany, ary izy dia nanaiky tamim-pifaliana sytamim-paharetana ny sitrapon'ny Tompo rehetra."Mariho fa ireo Olomasina ireo dia namela ny fahasahiranana sy ny fijaliana ary ny fitsapany ho voatelina ao amin'ny fifaliana ao amin'i Kristy! Avy eo, tamin'ny fotoana voatondro, dia nasehony an'i Almà ny lalana handosirana, ary i Almà, izay mpaminanin' Andriamanitra dia nitarika azy ireo ho any amin'ny toerana azo antoka.

Isika koa dia ho voatarika ho any amin'i Kristy sy ny fifalian'ny filazantsarany, rehefa

gospel. President Nelson has taught: "Joy is powerful, and focusing on joy brings God's power into our lives. As in all things, Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, 'who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross' [Hebrews 12:2]."

mifantoka amin'i Kristy sy manaraka ny mpaminaniny. Nampianatra ny Filoha Nelson hoe: "Mahery vaika ny fifaliana, ary mitondra ny herin' Andriamanitra eo amin'ny fiainantsika ny fifantohana amin'ny fifaliana. I Jesoa Kristy no ohatra lafatra indrindra ho antsika amin'ny zavatra rehetra, -izay naharitra ny hazo fijaliana mba hahazoana ny fifaliana napetraka teo anoloany- [Hebreo 12:2]".

My mother recently passed away; it was a shock. I love my mother and did not plan on losing her so young. But through her passing, my family and I have experienced both sorrow and joy. I know because of Him, she is not dead—she lives! And I know because of Christ and the priesthood keys restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, I will be with her again. The sorrow of losing my mom has been swallowed up in the joy of Christ! I am learning that to "think celestial"and "let God prevail"includes focusing on the joy available in Christ.

Nodimandry vao haingana ny reniko; tena nahataitra izany. Tiako ny reniko ary tsy nanampo azy ho faty mbola tanora aho. Saingy tamin'ny alalan'ny fahafatesany dia niaina alahelo sy fifaliana izaho sy ny fianakaviako. Fantatro fa noho Izy dia tsy maty izy, fa velona! Fantatro fa noho i Kristy sy ny fanalahidin'ny fisoronana naverina tamin'ny laoniny tamin'ny alalan'ny Mpaminany Joseph Smith, dia mbola hiaraka aminy indray aho. Voatelina ao amin'ny fifaliana ao amin'i Kristy ny alaheloko tamin'ny fandaozana ny reniko! Mianatra aho fa ny hoe: "saino amin'ny fomba selestialy"sy ny hoe: "Aoka Andriamanitra no hanjaka"dia ahitana ny fifantohana amin'ny fifaliana izay hita ao amin'i Kristy.

He lovingly invites, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Manasa antsika am-pitiavana Izy hoe: "Mankanesa aty amiko, ianareo rehetra izay miasa fatratra sy mavesatra entana, fa Izaho hanome anareo fitsaharana."Amin'ny anaran'i Jesoa Kristy, amena.