

Holiness to the Lord in Everyday Life

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Utakatifu kwa Bwana katika Maisha ya Kila Siku

Na Mzee Gerrit W. Gong
Wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

October 2024 general conference

Holiness to the Lord makes daily living sacred. It draws us closer and happier to the Lord and each other.

Our recent Gong family reunion included a fun talent show, complete with a dad jokes contest.

But this contest was unusual. On one team was Grandpa (me) and two of the grandchildren, ages 12 and 11. On the other team was an artificial intelligence (AI) program prompted by a cousin to tell dad jokes in the style of Gerrit W. Gong. Grandpa Gerrit Gong versus AI Gerrit Gong.

The grandchildren and I went first.

What do you call a dinosaur who crashes his car? Tyrannosaurus Wrecks.

AI Gerrit Gong was instructed—think like Gerrit W. Gong. Talk like him.

AI Gerrit Gong—“Here is a dad joke as if spoken by Gerrit W. Gong, embracing his warm, thoughtful, and uplifting style: Why did the humble tree make people smile? Because it was rooted in love and reached out with branches of kindness. Like that tree, we too can find strength in our roots and joy in extending kindness to others.”

Well, what do you think? That’s why they’re called dad jokes.

All around us are opportunities to laugh, delight, see with grateful eyes. Ours is a gospel of joy and holiness in everyday life. Holiness sets

Utakatifu kwa Bwana hufanya maisha yetu ya kila siku kuwa matakatifu. Unatuvuta sisi karibu zaidi na kuwa na furaha zaidi kwa Bwana na kila mmoja.

Kukutana tena kwa familia yote ya Gong hivi karibuni kulijumuisha burudani ya maonyesho ya vipaji na kukamilishwa na mashindano ya utani wa baba.

Lakini mashindano haya hayakuwa ya kawaida. Kwenye timu moja alikuwepo Babu (mimi) na wajukuu wawili, miaka 12 na 11. Kwenye timu nyingine ilikuwa programu ya akili mnemba (AI) ikiendeshwa na binamu kufanya utani wa baba katika mtindo wa Gerrit W. Gong. Babu Gerrit Gong dhidi ya akili mnemba ya Gerrit Gong.

Mimi na Wajukuu tulianza.

Je, unamwitaje dinosau anayegongesha gari yake? Migongano ya Dinosau.

Akili mnemba ya Gerrit Gong ilielekezwa—fikiri kama Gerrit W. Gong. Zungumza kama yeye.

Akili mnemba ya Gerrit Gong—“Hapa kuna utani wa baba kama ulivyosemwa na Gerrit W. Gong, akikumbatia mtindo wake wenye upendo, kujali na kuinua: Kwa nini mti huu mkunjufu unawafanya watu watabasamu? Kwa sababu ume-kuzwa katika upendo na kuchanua kwa matawi yenye ukarimu. Kama mti ule, sisi pia tunaweza kupata nguvu katika mizizi yetu na shangwe katika kusambaza ukarimu kwa wengine.”

Vyema, wewe unafikiria nini? Na hiyo ndiyo sababu ya kuitwa utani wa baba.

Kote kutuzunguka sisi kuna fursa za kuche-ka, kufurahia, kuona kwa macho ya shukrani. Yetu ni injili ya shangwe na utakatifu kila siku

things apart for sacred purpose. But holiness also invites us to infuse daily living with the sacred—to rejoice in daily bread amidst this world’s thistles and thorns. To walk with the Lord, we must become holy, for He is holy, and to help us become holy, the Lord invites us to walk with Him.

We each have a story. As Sister Gong and I meet you—Church members and friends in many places and circumstances—your stories of holiness to the Lord in everyday life inspire us. You live seven Cs: communion with God, community and compassion with each other, commitment and covenant with God, family, and friends—centered in Jesus Christ.

Growing evidence highlights this striking fact: religious believers are on average happier, healthier, and more fulfilled than those without spiritual commitment or connection. Happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, close social relationships, even financial and material stability—on each measure, religious practitioners flourish.

They enjoy better physical and mental health and greater life satisfaction across all ages and demographic groups.

What researchers call “religious structural stability” offers clarity, purpose, and inspiration amidst life’s twists and turns. The household of faith and community of Saints combat isolation and the lonely crowd. Holiness to the Lord says no to the profane, no to snarky cleverness at others’ expense, no to algorithms that monetize anger and polarization. Holiness to the Lord says yes to the sacred and reverent, yes to our becoming our freest, happiest, most authentic, best selves as we follow Him in faith.

What does holiness to the Lord in everyday life look like?

Holiness to the Lord in everyday life looks like two faithful young adults, married for a year, sharing with authenticity and vulnerability gospel covenants, sacrifice, and service in their unfolding lives.

She begins, “In high school, I was in a dark

ya maisha. Utakatifu hubainisha vitu kwa ajili ya dhumuni takatifu. Lakini utakatifu pia unatualika sisi kujaza maisha ya kila siku kwa utakatifu—kushangilia katika mkate wa kila siku katikati ya mibaruti na miiba ya ulimwengu. Ili kutembea na Bwana, lazima tuwe watakatifu, kwani Yeye ni mtakatifu; na ili kutusaidia sisi kuwa watakatifu, Bwana anatualika kutembea pamoja na Yeye.

Kila mmoja wetu anayo hadithi. Mimi na Dada Gong tunapokutana nanyi—waumini na marafiki wa Kanisa katika sehemu na hali nyinigi—hadithi zenu za utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku zinatusisimua. Mnaziishi K saba: kushirikiana na Mungu, kushiriakiana na jumuiya nakuhurumiana sisi kwa sisi, kuwa na dhamirakuagana na Mungu, familia na marafiki—kuwa na kiini katika Yesu Kristo.

Ushahidi unaoongezeka unaangazia ukweli huu wa kushangaza: Waaminio katika dini kwa wastani wanayo furaha, wana afya, na wameridhika zaidi kuliko wale wasio na msimamo au muunganiko wa kiroho. Furaha na kuridhika kimaisha, afya ya akili na kimwili, maana na dhumuni, tabia na wema, uhusiano wa karibu wa kijamii, hata uthabiti wa kifedha na rasilimali—kwenye kila nyanja, washika dini wanastawi.

Wanafurahia afya bora ya kimwili na kiakili na uridhikaji mkubwa zaidi katika maisha katika umri wote na makundi yote ya kijamii.

Kile watafiti wanachokiita “uthabiti wa muundo wa kidini” hutoa ufasaha, dhumuni na mwongozo wa kiungu katikati ya matatizo na mabadiliko ya maisha. Kaya ya watu wa imani na jumuiya ya Watakatifu zinaepukana na kutengwa na kuepuka umati mpweke. Utakatifu kwa Bwana unasema “hapana” kwenye lugha chafu, “hapana” kwenye ujanja wenye hila za kuhujumu wengine, “hapana” kwenye mambo ambayo huzalisha hasira na ubaguzi. Utakatifu kwa Bwana unasema “ndiyo” kwenye utakatifu na staha, “ndiyo” kwenye kuwa kwetu huru zaidi, wenye furaha zaidi, wakweli zaidi, toleo letu bora zaidi tunapomfuata Yeye katika imani.

Je, utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku unaonekanaje?

Utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku unaonekana kama vijana wawili wakubwa, waliooana kwa kipindi cha mwaka mmoja, wakishirikiana pasipo unafiki kuishi maagano ya injili, dhabihu na huduma katika maisha yao mapya.

Mke anaanza, “katika shule ya upili, nilikuwa

place. I felt like God wasn't there for me. One night, a text from a friend said, 'Hey, have you read Alma 36 ever?'

"As I started reading," she said, "I was overcome with peace and love. I felt like I was being given this big hug. When I read Alma 36:12, I knew Heavenly Father saw me and knew exactly how I was feeling."

She continues, "Before we got married, I was honest with my fiancé that I didn't have a great testimony of tithing. Why did God need us to give money when others had so much to give? My fiancé helped explain it's not about money but following a commandment asked of us. He challenged me to start paying tithing."

"I really saw my testimony grow," she said. "Sometimes money gets tight, but we saw so many blessings, and somehow paychecks were enough."

Also, "in my nursing class," she said, "I was the only member of the Church and the only one married. Many times I left class frustrated or crying because I felt classmates singled me out and made negative comments about my beliefs, my wearing my garments, or my being married so young."

Yet she continues, "This past semester I learned how to better voice my beliefs and be a good gospel example. My knowledge and testimony grew because I was tested in my ability to stand alone and be strong in what I believe."

The young husband adds, "Before my mission I had offers to play college baseball. Making the difficult decision, I put those offers aside and went to serve the Lord. I wouldn't trade those two years for anything."

"Returning home," he said, "I expected a difficult transition but found myself stronger, faster, and healthier. I was throwing harder than when I left. I had more offers to play than when I left, including my dream school. And, most importantly," he said, "I rely upon the Lord more than ever."

mahali pa giza. Nilihihi kama Mungu hakuwepo kwa ajili yangu. Usiku mmoja, ujumbe wa maandishi kutoka kwa rafiki ulisema, 'Habari umewahi kusoma Alma 36?'

"Nilipoanza kusoma," mke anasema "nilizid-iwa na amani na upendo. Nilihihi nilikuwa ninapewa kumbatio hili kubwa. Niliposoma Alma 36:12, nilijua Baba wa Mbinguni aliniona mimi na alijua kabisa jinsi gani nilivyokuwa ninahisi."

Mke anaendelea, "Kabla ya sisi kuoana, nilikuwa muwazi kwa mchumba wangu kwam-ba sikuwa na ushuhuda mkubwa juu ya zaka. Kwa nini Mungu alihitaji sisi tutoe fedha wakati wengine walikuwa na vingi vya kutoa? Mchumba wangu alinisaidia kuelezea kwamba hiyo siyo kuhusu fedha bali kufuata amri ambazo tume-takiwa tutii. Alinipa changamoto ya kuanza kulipa zaka."

"Hakika niliona ushuhuda wangu ukikua," mke anasema. "Wakati mwingine fedha inaku-wa haitoshi, lakini tuliona baraka nyingi na kwa namna fulani mapato yetu yalikuwa yanatoshele-za."

Pia, "katika darasa langu la uuguzi," anasema "nilikuwa muumini pekee wa Kanisa na mtu pe-kee aliyeolewa. Mara nyingi niliondoka darasani nikiwa nimekasirika au ninalia kwa sababu ni-lihisi kama wanafunzi wenzangu walinitenga na walitoa maoni hasi kuhusu imani yangu, kuvaa kwangu gamenti au kuolewa kwangu nikiwa kijana sana."

Lakini anaendelea kusema "Muhula huu uli-opita nilikuja kujua namna bora ya kutetea imani yangu na kuwa mfano mzuri wa injili. Ufahamu na ushuhuda wangu ulikua kwa sababu nilijarib-iwa katika uwezo wangu wa kusimama peke yan-gu na kuwa imara katika kitu ninachokiamini."

Mume kijana anaongeza, "Kabla ya misheni yangu nilipata ofa ya kucheza besiboli chuoni. Ili kufanya uamuzi huu mgumu, niliweka kando ofa hizo na kwenda kumtumikia Bwana. Nisingewe-za kubadilisha miaka hiyo miwili na kitu kingine chochote."

"Niliporudi nyumbani," anasema "nilitarajia kipindi kigumu cha mpito lakini nilijikuta nikiwa imara zaidi, mwepesi na mwenye afya zaidi. Nilikuwa nikirusha mipira vyema zaidi kuliko wakati nilipoondoka. Nilipata ofa nyingi zaidi za kucheza kuliko wakati nilipoondoka, ikijumuisha shule ya ndoto yangu. Na, cha muhimu zaidi," anasema "ninamtegemea Bwana zaidi kuliko nilivyowahi kuwa."

He concludes, “As a missionary I taught that Heavenly Father promises us power in our prayers, but sometimes I forget that for myself.”

Our treasury of missionary holiness-to-the-Lord blessings is rich and full. Finances, timing, and other circumstances are often not easy. But when missionaries of all ages and backgrounds consecrate holiness to the Lord, things can work out in the Lord’s time and way.

Now with a 48-year perspective, a senior missionary shares, “My dad wanted me to get a college education, not go on a mission. Shortly after that, he had a heart attack and died at age 47. I felt guilty. How could I make things right with my father?”

“Later,” he continues, “after I decided to serve a mission, I saw my father in a dream. Peaceful and contented, he was happy I would serve.”

This senior missionary continues, “As-Doctrine and Covenants section 138 teaches, I believe my father could serve as a missionary in the spirit world. I picture my father helping our great-grandfather, who left Germany at age 17 and was lost to the family, be found again.”

His wife adds, “Among the five brothers in my husband’s family, the four who served missions are the ones with college degrees.”

Holiness to the Lord in everyday life looks like a young returning missionary who learned to let God prevail in his life. Earlier, when asked to bless someone who was very sick, this missionary said, “I have faith; I will bless him to recover. Yet,” the returning missionary says, “I learned in that moment to pray not for what I wanted but for what the Lord knew the person needed. I blessed the brother with peace and comfort. He later passed away peacefully.”

Holiness to the Lord in everyday life feels like a spark arcing across the veil to connect, comfort, and strengthen. An administrator at a major university says he feels individuals he knows only by reputation praying for him. Those individuals devoted their lives to the university and continue

Mume anahitimisha, “Kama mmisionari nilifundisha kwamba Baba wa Mbinguni anatua-hidi uwezo katika sala zetu, lakini nyakati zingine ninasahau hilo kwa ajili yangu mwenyewe.”

Hazina yetu ya baraka za utakatifu wa umisionari kwa Bwana ni nyingi na zimejaa. Fedha, muda na hali nyinginezo mara kwa mara siyo rahisi. Lakini wakati wamisionari wa umri wote na asili yoyote wanapoweka wakfu utakatifu kwa Bwana, mambo yanaweza kufanyika katika wakati na njia ya Bwana.

Sasa akiwa na matarajio ya miaka 48, mmisionari mwandamizi anashiriki, “Baba yangu alitaka mimi nipate elimu ya chuo, na sio kwenenda misioni. Muda mfupi baada ya hilo, alipata mshtuko wa moyo na akafariki dunia akiwa na umri wa miaka 47. Nilihisi hatia. Je, ningewezaje kuweka mambo sawa na baba yangu?”

“Baadaye,” anaendelea “baada ya kutumikia misheni, nilimwona baba yangu katika ndoto. Kwa amani kabisa na aliyeridhika, alikuwa na furaha kwamba nimeweza kutumikia.”

Mmisionari huyu mwandamizi anaendelea, “Kama Mafundisho na Maagano 138 inavyofundisha, ninaamini baba yangu angeweza kutumikia kama mmisionari katika ulimwengu wa roho. Niliona kama baba yangu akimsaidia baba wa babu yangu, ambaye aliondoka Ujerumani akiwa na miaka 17 na alikuwa amepotea na familia, na akapatikana tena.”

Mke wake anaongeza, “Miongoni mwa kaka watano katika familia ya mume wangu, wale wanne ambao walitumikia misheni ndio wale walio na shahada za vyuo vikuu.”

Utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku, unaonekana kama kijana anayerudi kutoka misheni ambaye alijifunza kuacha Mungu ashinde katika maisha yake. Mapema, alipoombwa kumbariki mtu aliyekuwa mgonjwa sana, mmisionari huyu alisema, “Ninayo imani; nitambariki apate ahueni. Lakini tena,” yule mmisionari anasema, “nilijifunza katika wakati huo kusali siyo kwa ajili ya kitu ninachotaka, bali kwa ajili ya kitu Bwana anachojua mtu yule anahitaji. Nilimbariki kaka yule kwa amani na faraja. Baadaye mtu yule alifariki dunia kwa amani.”

Utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku unasikika kama cheche inayowaka kuto-ka upande mmoja hadi mwingine wa pazia ili kuunganisha, kufariji, kuimarisha. Msimamizi kwenye chuo kikuu kimoja anasema anahisi watu anaowajua tu kwa heshima ndio wanaosali kwa

to care about its mission and students.

A sister does her best each day, after her husband was unfaithful to her and the children. I deeply admire her and others like her. One day while folding laundry, her hand on a stack of garments, she sighed to herself, “What’s the point?” She felt a tender voice assure her, “Your covenants are with me.”

For 50 years, another sister yearned for a relationship with her father. “Growing up,” she says, “there were my brothers and my dad, and then there was me—the only daughter. All I ever wanted was to be ‘good enough’ for my dad.

“Then my mom passed away! She was my only liaison between my dad and me.

“One day,” the sister said, “I heard a voice say, ‘Invite your dad and take him to the temple with you.’ That was the beginning of a twice-a-month date with my daddy to the house of the Lord. I told my dad I loved him. He told me he loved me too.

“Spending time in the house of the Lord has healed us. My mom could not help us on earth. It took her being on the other side of the veil to help mend what was broken. The temple completed our journey to wholeness as an eternal family.”

The father says, “The temple dedication was a great spiritual experience for me and my only daughter. Now we attend together and feel our love strengthen.”

Holiness to the Lord in everyday life includes tender moments when loved ones pass. Earlier this year, my dear mother, Jean Gong, slipped into the next life days before her 98th birthday.

If you asked my mother, “Would you like rocky road, white chocolate ginger, or strawberry ice cream?” Mom would say, “Yes, please, may I taste each one?” Who could say no to your mother, especially when she loved all of life’s flavors?

I once asked Mom which decisions had most shaped her life.

She said, “Being baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and

ajili yake. Watu hao binafsi walijitolea maisha yao kwenye chuo na waliendelea kujali misheni ya chuo na wanafunzi wake.

Dada mmoja anafanya kila awezalo kila siku, baada ya mumewe kumwacha yeye na watoto. Ninampenda kwa dhati na wengine kama yeye. Siku moja wakati akikunja nguo zilizofuliwa, mkono wake ukiwa juu ya rundo la nguo, alishusha pumzi, “Ya nini yote haya?” Alihisi sauti nyororo ikimhakikishia, “Maagano yako yapo na mimi.”

Kwa miaka 50, dada mwingine alitamani uhusiano na baba yake. “Wakati nakua,” alisema, “kulikuwa na kaka zangu na baba yangu, na kisha kulikuwa na mimi—binti wa pekee. Yote niliyowahi kutaka ni kuwa “mwema kwa baba yangu.

“Kisha, mama yangu akafariki dunia! Yeye alikuwa kiungo cha pekee kati yangu na baba yangu.

“Siku moja,” dada huyo anasema “nilisikia sauti ikisema, ‘mwalike baba yako na uende naye hekaluni.’ Huo ukawa mwanzo wa miadi ya siku mbili kwa mwezi pamoja na baba yangu kwenye nyumba ya Bwana. Nilimwambia baba yangu kuwa ninampenda. Naye aliniambia kuwa ananipenda pia.

“Kutumia muda katika nyumba ya Bwana kumetuponya. Mama yangu asingeweza kutusaidia sisi huku duniani. Ilimchukua yeye kuwa upande mwingine wa pazia ili kurekebisha kile kilichovunjika. Hekalu lilikamilisha safari yetu ya uponyaji kama familia ya milele.”

Baba anasema, “Uwekaji wakfu wa hekalu lilikuwa tukio kuu la kiroho kwangu mimi na binti yangu wa pekee. Sasa tunahudhuria pamoja na kuhisi upendo wetu ukiimarishwa.

Utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha yetu ya kila siku unajumuisha nyakati nyororo pale wapendwa wetu wanapofariki dunia. Mapema mwaka huu, mpendwa mama yangu, Jean Gong, alifariki siku kadhaa kabla ya kumbukizi ya siku yake ya 98 ya kuzaliwa.

Kama ungemwuliza mama yangu, “Ungependa rocky road, chokoleti ya tangawizi nyeupe au aiskrimu ya stroberi?” Mama angesema, “Ndiyo, tafadhali, naweza kuonja kila moja?” Nani angeweza kusema “hapana” kwa mama yako, hususani pale anapopenda ladha zote za maisha?

Siku moja nilimwuliza Mama ni maamuzi gani yamechonga maisha yake zaidi.

Alisema, “Kuwa muumini wa Kanisa la Yesu Kristo la Watakatifu wa Siku za Mwisho na ku-

moving from Hawaii to the mainland, where I met your father.”

Baptized as a 15-year-old, the only member of her large family to join our Church, my mother had covenant faith and trust in the Lord that blessed her life and all our family generations. I miss my mother, as you miss members in your family. But I know my mother is not gone. She is just not here now. I honor her and all who pass as valiant examples of everyday holiness to the Lord.

Of course, holiness to the Lord in everyday life includes coming more often to the Lord in His holy house. This is true whether we are Church members or friends.

Three friends came to the Bangkok Thailand Temple open house.

“This is a place of super healing,” said one.

In the baptistry, another said, “When I am here, I want to be washed clean and never sin again.”

The third said, “Can you feel the spiritual power?”

With nine sacred words, our temples invite and proclaim:

“Holiness to the Lord.

“The House of the Lord.”

Holiness to the Lord makes daily living sacred. It draws us closer and happier to the Lord and each other and prepares us to live with God our Father, Jesus Christ, and our loved ones.

As did my friend, you may wonder if your Heavenly Father loves you. The answer is a resounding, absolute yes! We can feel His love as we make holiness to the Lord ours each day, happy and forever. May we do so, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

hama kutoka Hawaii kuja bara, mahali ambapo nilikutana na baba yako.”

Alibatizwa alipokuwa na umri wa miaka 15, muumini pekee katika familia yake kubwa kujiunga na Kanisa letu, mama yangu alikuwa na imani ya maagano na alitumainia katika Bwana ambaye aliyabariki maisha yake na vizazi vyote vya familia yetu. Ninamkumbuka mama yangu, kama unavyowakumbuka washiriki wa familia yako. Lakini ninajua mama yangu hajapotea. Ni kwamba tu hayupo hapa sasa. Ninamheshimu yeye na wote wanaofariki kama mifano iliyo jasi-ri ya utakatifu wa kila siku kwa Bwana.

Bila shaka, utakatifu kwa Bwana katika maisha ya kila siku unajumuisha kuja mara kwa mara zaidi kwa Bwana katika nyumba Yake takatifu. Hii ni kweli, iwe sisi ni waumini wa Kanisa au marafiki.

Marafiki watatu walikuja kwenye ziara ya kuzuru Hekalu la Bangkok Thailand.

“Hapa ni mahali pa uponyaji mkuu,” alisema mmoja wao.

Katika kisima cha ubatizo, mwingine alisema, “Niwapo hapa, nataka nioshwe niwe safi, na nisitende dhambi tena.”

Wa tatu alisema, “Je, unaweza kuhisi nguvu za kiroho?”

Kwa maneno sita matakatifu, mahekalu yetu yanatualika na kututangazia:

“Utakatifu kwa Bwana.”

“Nyumba ya Bwana.”

Utakatifu kwa Bwana hufanya maisha yetu ya kila siku kuwa matakatifu. Hutuleta karibu zaidi na kuwa wenye furaha zaidi kwa Bwana na kila mmoja na hutuandaa kuishi na Mungu Baba yetu, Yesu Kristo na wale tuwapendao.

Kama alivyofanya rafiki yangu, unaweza kujiuliza kama Baba wa Mbinguni anakupenda wewe. Jibu ni la hakikisho, ndiyo kabisa! Tunaweza kuhisi upendo Wake pale tunapofanya utakatifu kwa Bwana kila siku kuwa wetu, furaha na milele. Na tufanye hivyo, ninaomba katika jina takatifu la Yesu Kristo. amina.