

October 26, 2003

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Next Weeks Lesson: "I Can Do All Things through Christ" ([Philippians](#); [Colossians](#); [Philemon](#))

Today's Lesson: "For the Perfecting of the Saints" ([Ephesians](#))

We are weak when we depend on ourselves. However, we can be stronger when we are united with others in faith and righteousness. In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul emphasized the importance of "perfecting ... the saints" and reaching a "unity of the faith" ([Ephesians 4:12-13](#)). This lesson discusses how as families and as a Church we can work toward perfection and unity by trusting in the Savior, following the apostles and prophets, developing strong families, and putting on the whole armor of God.

1. The dispensation of the fulness of times. ([Ephesians 1:9-10](#))

- A. In the first chapter of Ephesians, Paul spoke of "the dispensation of the fulness of times" ([Ephesians 1:10](#)). What is a dispensation of the gospel?
- B. What is the dispensation of the fulness of times? Why is our dispensation referred to as the fulness of times?

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "You and I are experiencing the profound and wonderful blessings of the dispensation of the fulness of times. In this day and time there have been restored to the earth all of the principles, powers, blessings, and keys of all previous dispensations" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 98; or [Ensign, May 1992, 70](#)).

- C. What did Paul say our Father in Heaven would do in this dispensation? (See [Ephesians 1:9-10](#).) What do you think it means to "gather together in one all things in Christ"? What are some things that are being gathered together in our day? How can we help in this gathering process?

2. Jesus Christ as our cornerstone. ([Ephesians 2:12-22](#) and [Ephesians 4:1-16](#))

- A. Compare [Ephesians 2:12](#) and [Ephesians 2:19](#). How did Paul describe the changes that took place in those who had accepted and followed the Savior? How have you seen these same changes in yourself or others? How has your association with other Church members as "fellow citizens" in the gospel blessed your life?
- B. What did Paul mean by teaching that Jesus Christ is the "chief corner stone" of the Church? ([Ephesians 2:20](#)). How has Jesus Christ been the cornerstone of your faith?
- C. What did Paul teach in [Ephesians 2:20](#) and [Ephesians 4:11-14](#) about the importance of apostles and prophets? Why are living apostles and prophets

essential to the true Church? What are some teachings from latter-day apostles and prophets that help us progress toward perfection and unity?

President Boyd K. Packer taught: “The ministry of the prophets and apostles leads them ever and always to the home and the family. ... The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage, linked to their generations, and assured of exaltation in the presence of our Heavenly Father” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 8; or [Ensign, May 1995, 8](#)).

- D. What did Paul mean by teaching that there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism”? ([Ephesians 4:5](#)). Why is it important that we be unified in our understanding and teaching of the basic doctrines of the Church?

3. Unity between husband and wife and between parents and children. ([Ephesians 5:22-29](#); [Ephesians 6:1-4](#)).

- A. What comparison did Paul use when he described the relationship between husband and wife? (See [Ephesians 5:22-29](#).) What can husbands and wives learn from this comparison to help them develop greater love and unity in their marriage?

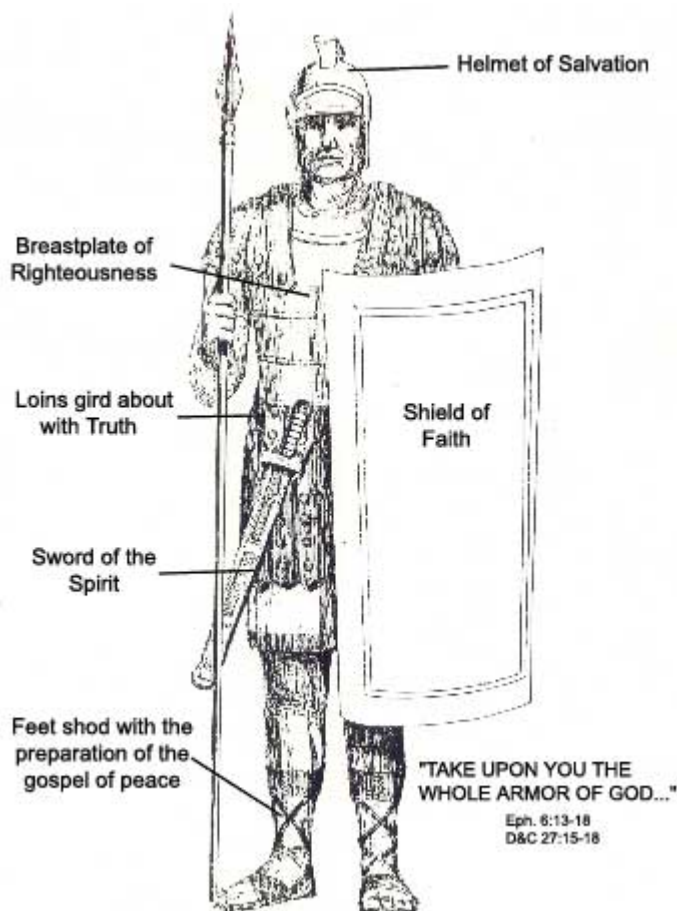
President Spencer W. Kimball taught: “Can you find in all the holy scriptures where the Lord Jesus Christ ever failed his church? ... Was he faithful? Was he true? Is there anything good and worthy that he did not give? Then that is what we ask—what he asks of a husband. ...

“... Can you think of how he loved the Church? Its every breath was important to him. Its every growth, its every individual, was precious to him. He gave to those people all his energy, all his power, all his interest. He gave his life—what more could one give?” (*Men of Example* [address delivered to religious educators, 12 Sept. 1975], 4-5).

- B. What is Paul’s counsel to children in [Ephesians 6:1-3](#)? Why is this counsel important today? How have you been blessed for honoring your parents?
- C. What did Paul mean when he counseled parents to bring up a child in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord”? ([Ephesians 6:4](#)). How can parents nurture children spiritually? How can parents follow the Lord’s example when admonishing children?
- D. How can Paul’s counsel to parents and children help strengthen family relationships and maintain unity in the home? What counsel have latter-day apostles and prophets given us regarding families? Invite class members to discuss recent counsel given in general conferences, in other meetings or firesides, and in Church magazine articles.

In “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities” ([Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102](#)).

4. Putting on “the new man” and “the whole armour of God”. ([Ephesians 4:21-32](#) and [Ephesians 6:10-18](#))



- A. What did Paul mean when he encouraged the Ephesians to “put on the new man”? ([Ephesians 4:24](#)). What are some characteristics of people who have become “new” through the Atonement of Jesus Christ? (See [Ephesians 4:21-32](#).)
- B. While exhorting the Saints to put on the armor of God, Paul warned them against many kinds of evil influences ([Ephesians 6:10-12](#)). What are some of the evil influences in this life?
- C. What are the different pieces of what Paul calls the armor of God? What does each piece represent? (See [Ephesians 6:13-18](#); [D&C 27:15-18](#)) How can each piece of the armor of God protect us against the

influence of Satan? What can we do to put on this armor each day?

The Lord established his Church, with apostles and prophets, to help us become like him and return to live with him. We must strive together for the “perfecting of the Saints” by following Paul’s teachings in [Ephesians](#).