

“The Transformative Blessings of Education”

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I am grateful to be here, for this new opportunity for our family, and to be able to speak to you tonight. I'm overwhelmed and thankful for the support we feel from all of you. I am blessed to have grown up in a family that valued education. Both of my grandmothers received university degrees and became teachers. My mother has a PhD in organic chemistry, and my father is a dentist. I graduated from Brigham Young University and later attended Northwestern Medical School.

As I grew up, when my parents taught the importance of education, they never discussed it as a means to an end to enter the workforce. Rather, they always talked about the attributes and characteristics it would help develop. They taught me that education is an important part of my eternal progression.

We have been taught that “the glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth”¹ and that “truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.”² Further, in 3 Nephi, we read, “[W]hat manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.”³ God knows and understands all things. To become like Him, we must eventually know and understand all things too, and we accelerate our learning through education.

Education blesses us in many important ways beyond the actual learning and understanding of a particular discipline. It is not just the acquisition of facts. It changes the way we think and experience the world.

We just heard from Edna Mafavuke, a student in Zimbabwe. She has said that one of the reasons she's so grateful for her BYU-Pathway education is it helped her realize the sky is the limit — that life and her Heavenly Father have a lot more in store for her than she originally thought. Education opens new perspectives and expands possibilities.

Becoming more like Christ

In addition, earning an education helps us develop Christlike attributes. Think back on your own educational experience. As you struggled through long hours of study, the pain of working to understand difficult concepts or formulating your thoughts into a coherent essay, and the stress and sometimes disappointment of the examination process, you were building and influencing who you are today.

Education helps in many ways:

- We develop patience, discipline, and the ability to sacrifice.
- We increase our ability to focus for long periods and work through exhaustion.
- We develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.
- We become more humble as we recognize how little we know, and, at the same time, we learn from experience that we can continually learn and grow.
- We develop the ability to pray for help and guidance.
- We increase in understanding, which leads to empathy.
- We gain confidence that we can do hard things and that we have value.
- We grow in assurance that we can have a positive influence in the world.

¹ [Doctrine and Covenants 93:36](#)

² [Doctrine and Covenants 93:24](#)

³ [3 Nephi 27:27](#)

It is difficult to articulate the powerful influence education has on one's being. In Doctrine and Covenants 121:42, the Lord says that "pure knowledge ... greatly enlarge[s] the soul." We become new beings with expanded understanding, desires, and conviction. We feel our potential and realize that we have the ability to share our light and knowledge to lift others.

Education also increases our ability to serve in God's kingdom. Not only are we better prepared to serve because of the Christlike attributes we have developed but we can use the information and abilities we have gained to bless others.

I remember multiple times when my mother happily tutored youth in our ward in chemistry. She did not do this for gain but because she saw the need and had the skills to help. This tutoring did increase each youth's understanding of chemistry. But more importantly, the youth felt valued and loved as my mother patiently worked with them. What's more, these youth grew in confidence as they discovered that they were bright enough to understand a subject that had previously seemed impossible to them. As a mother, wife, Relief Society president, youth camp director, Young Women's advisor, and friend, she blessed lives as she used the skills she'd gained from her education to solve problems, work through challenging circumstances, explore gospel questions, and help others.

Education prepares us to receive revelation. In 2 Nephi 31:3, we read, "For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men [and women] according to their language, unto their understanding." As we grow in understanding and knowledge, we increase our ability to hear the Lord speak to us.

President Russell M. Nelson shared how during a surgery to repair a leaky heart valve he was given revelation — through a vivid picture in his mind — on exactly how to do the repair.⁴ President Nelson's education had prepared him to receive that revelation because he understood the context surrounding how heart valves function.

Changing generations

You heard Edna say that education is not only helping her but helping her whole family to become self-reliant. Gaining an education changes the trajectory of a family. It raises expectations and influences plans and choices.

Because my parents and grandmothers had all received university degrees, I thought it was normal and natural for me to receive one as well. I never had to agonize over the decision of whether I was capable of obtaining a degree or determine if it was worth the cost. When it came time to apply for college, I had people to ask for help and guidance. In addition, I recognized that my parents' education blessed me in many ways, and I desired to continue to receive those blessings and to share them with my future family. My grandmothers' decision to obtain an education changed the future of our family. That is the lasting impact of education and one reason why the work we do at BYU-Pathway is so important. It changes generations.

Seek learning by study and by faith

Finally, receiving an education through BYU-Pathway Worldwide and the other Church universities allows students to develop the ability to "seek learning even by study and also by faith."⁵ Combining study and faith allows our learning to be accelerated. The Holy Ghost can increase our capacity and quicken our understanding.⁶ Both study and faith are essential to finding and recognizing truth.

I am so very thankful for the educational opportunities I have had and for parents who taught me to seek truth by being a life-long learner. The foundation they provided was enhanced as my university professors assured me that both the secular and the spiritual pursuit of truth would bless my life. When they seem to conflict, it is just an

⁴ Russell M. Nelson "[Sweet Power of Prayer](#)," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003

⁵ [Doctrine and Covenants 88:118](#)

⁶ See [Doctrine and Covenants 88:11](#)

indication that more searching and understanding is needed. I am thankful for an all-knowing Heavenly Father who loves unconditionally, who patiently allows me to learn at my own pace, and who gifts me pieces of knowledge as I seek to understand His will for me and my loved ones.

It is my hope that those who desire to pursue their education through BYU-Pathway Worldwide, and those who are in a position to help and support them, will recognize the gift that education is in their lives and will feel its power lifting them closer to their Heavenly Father and Savior. I hope they will know that their sacrifice and struggle to gain an education will not only bless their life but will impact generations to come. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.