As I prayed about and pondered what I should say today, I turned to a study of our Savior’s life, beginning with the first recorded knowledge we have of Him. In Abraham 3:22 we read about the premortal Grand Council that was held in heaven. There God the Father laid out the plan whereby the world would be created, and we would be sent to prove ourselves.

Then the Lord asked that simple but critical question:

*Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man: Here am I send me. And another answered and said: Here am I, send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first.*[Abraham 3:27]

As I contemplate this scripture, I am impressed by the fact that Jehovah’s act of stepping forward and proclaiming, “Here am I,” was completely voluntary. He was not coerced, for that would have been contrary to God’s will and the eternal law of agency. Rather, God asked the simple question, “Whom shall I send?” In response, our Savior took the initiative to step forward to take upon Himself our sins.

In taking this initiative, the Savior committed Himself to be personally involved in our lives. He knew that He couldn’t pay or entice someone else to do the task. Only His own personal involvement—His sacrifice—was sufficient to pay the price.
Jesus Christ stepped forward because of His infinite love and His devotion to His Father. He and His Father were One because of His faithfulness and steadfast devotion to do His Father’s will, no matter the circumstances.

Initiative

We are all familiar with D&C 58:26–28, which states:

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

This is a very powerful scripture, but it is also one that causes us consternation and feelings of guilt. Just how do we take the initiative to do good, especially when we’re so pressured with our studies, our jobs, and our families? We rationalize that perhaps now is not the time. Perhaps we should take the initiative to do good tomorrow. Yet the scripture doesn’t exempt students, faculty, or other people from its direction. President Gordon B. Hinckley has stated:

You want to be happy? Forget yourself and get lost in this great cause, and bend your efforts to helping people. Cultivate a spirit of forgiveness in your heart against any who might have offended you. Look to the Lord and live, and work and lift and serve His sons and daughters. You will come to know happiness as you’ve never known it before. I don’t care how old you are, how young you are. You can lift people and help them. Heaven knows there are so very, very many people in this world who need help. [Mike Cannon, “Missionary Theme Was Pervasive During Visit of President Hinckley,” Liverpool England Fireside, August 31, 1995, in Church News, 9 September 9 1995, 4]

In this quote President Hinckley tells us all to take the initiative to get involved. He does not say that we must do something big and overwhelming. We are to do now what we have the power to do. If we do, the world will be better, and we will be happier.
Involvement

The second principle that the Savior demonstrated in that Grand Council was personal involvement. He volunteered to take upon Himself our sins. His involvement required a caring, loving attitude. It meant getting involved for the right reason. Without this attitude and reason, all efforts would have been meaningless.

I believe the concept of involvement encompasses even more than merely going through the motions. I think this is the concept that my dad was trying to teach me and my brothers when we were growing up in a small farming community in southeastern Arizona. At the time the Church in Duncan owned a large cotton farm. Because the weeds always seemed to grow faster than the cotton, the priesthood brethren were often called to hoe out the weeds. For a young boy, in the hot Arizona sun, that was no small task. Every time the request came, Dad would work shoulder-to-shoulder with his sons as we moved slowly up and down the rows of cotton.

When I got older I asked Dad why he just didn’t hire someone to fulfill his obligation. After all, his personal time was much more valuable than what it would have cost to hire a farmhand. Dad simply smiled and replied, “Son, it is because the welfare farm needs us, and we need the welfare farm.” I learned that service rendered with personal involvement becomes much more beneficial, both to the recipient and to the giver. When we render service with the proper attitude and for the right reasons, we benefit from being involved because we are expanding and developing our love and charity for others.

Certainly throughout our lives we repeatedly have opportunities to step forward and declare, “Here am I!” Some of these times are formal, such as when we receive a mission call, have a temple recommend interview with our bishop, or receive a calling in the Church. As we’re reminded in the hymn “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief,” other times may come to us unexpectedly (Hymns, No. 29). Of course, the time will come for all of us when we ultimately must present ourselves before our Maker, stripped of any pretense, and simply declare, “Here am I.” The outcome of that experience is largely dependent upon how well we follow our Redeemer’s example as He stepped forward with initiative, involvement, and integrity.

May we all do as He has done is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Website: Get Involved / Volunteer

Explore how you can get involved and/or volunteer at BYU-Idaho through the Get Involved website.
• Get-Involved at BYU-Idaho
At this long-awaited and very important rite of passage in your life, Sister Clark and I extend to you our congratulations and our love.

Brothers and sisters, it is your destiny to live in a remarkable time. It is a time of turmoil and great wickedness, but also a time of miracles and heavenly blessings. With your future in mind, we have sought to prepare you to become disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and leaders in your families, in the Church, and in the world around you.

The Savior described the kind of leader we hope you will become in these words:

. . . Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.¹

The call to be a disciple-leader is a call to minister and to serve. It is a call to lead as Christ leads. It is leadership with a small “L”—the kind of leadership that builds and lifts and inspires through kindness and love and unselfish devotion to the Lord and His work. It is the kind of leadership that we need at every level of every kind of organization in the world and in every ward and stake in the Church. It is the kind of leadership you will need to build an eternal family.

The Savior’s life is full of wonderful examples and powerful principles of just this kind of leadership. I would like to share with you today three principles of leadership that are important in any place you will work, but are especially powerful in leading
a family. I know that all of you will need these principles in your lives.

**Principle #1: Lead by Example**
The Savior established this principle when He said, “what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.” One of the most important things that leaders do is what they do. In your family, your most powerful influence on your children will be the example of your life. That example includes the actions that you take and the principles and values that guide you. Your children will watch you very, very closely. They will learn from you and follow your example—(eventually!).

This is wonderful news! It means that you can lead your children in the paths of righteousness. I know you all want your children to be obedient and faithful, to love the Lord, to have the Spirit in their lives, to receive their temple blessings, to build an eternal family, and to bless you with grandchildren! The best way to lead them in that path is to be in that path yourselves.

You teach your children to obey the commandments of God by keeping the commandments of God. It is important to talk with them and tell them what you are doing and why. But it is in the doing that there is real power to shape their lives. If you want to teach them to love the temple and to see its power and importance, put pictures of the temples on your walls, have lessons about the temple in family home evening, and go to the temple often. In this, and every other gospel principle, your life can be a living model of what you want your children to be.

**Principle #2: Lead with Vision**
The Savior used this principle all throughout His ministry on earth, and He uses it now. On many, many occasions he prefaced a parable with the words, “The kingdom of heaven is like . . .” and then He would connect a principle from familiar day-to-day life with salvation in His kingdom. He always held before His disciples, and holds before us, the ultimate purpose of our work and our lives. He gives us the vision of what we should do in our daily lives and what we might accomplish eternally if we will follow Him. One of the most important things that leaders do is to help the people they lead understand the larger meaning and purpose of their daily work.

In your family this means teaching your children how cleaning their rooms, doing their homework, keeping the commandments, and learning to love each other is connected to exaltation in the celestial kingdom as an eternal family. It means filling your home with the Spirit. It means putting pictures of the Savior on the wall along with pictures of your family and teaching your children the connection between them and the Savior. But it may also mean leading your family through times of grief and pain caused by death or illness. It may mean teaching them and showing them that staying the course, moving forward despite the pain, is deeply connected to your family’s eternal destiny.

**Principle #3: Lead with Love**
The Savior’s life, suffering, and death are testimony of His perfect love for us. Everything He has done for us, He has done because of His great love for His Father and His perfect love for us. There is a powerful principle of leadership in John’s words about the Savior’s love: “We love him, because he first loved us.” Effective small “L” leaders learn to energize the people around them through love in action.

To you mothers and fathers and prospective mothers and fathers, the very most important thing you can do for your children is to love each other and support each other and help each other become everything Heavenly Father wants you to be. You stand before God and your children as husband and wife, father and mother, equal partners in the sacred responsibility of creating an eternal family.
As the leaders of your family and faithful disciples of Christ, you will put love into action. You will care for your children and nurture them. Every week in family home evening you will teach them to love and serve one another and to keep the commandments God. You will support them and encourage them and love them enough to put structure and discipline in their lives. You will pray with them and read the scriptures with them every day. You will lead them with love.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with a request and my testimony. Here is the request: When you leave here today, please take the Spirit of Ricks with you. Please take BYU–Idaho and what it means and what it stands for with you. You now represent the university. I hope and pray that wherever you go, whatever you do, the people around you will see in you the principles and the purposes of BYU–Idaho and will feel the Spirit that is on this campus.

My dear brothers and sisters, I bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He lives. He is the great Exemplar of leadership. He leads us today. I bear witness that this is His work, His church, and His kingdom, restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Gordon B. Hinckley stands today where Joseph stood. He is the prophet of the Lord. You have a marvelous destiny and a great work to do in the kingdom. I pray that no matter where you go, no matter what you do, you will always be disciples of the Savior and lead by example with vision and love. In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

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1 Matthew 20:25-28
2 3 Nephi 27:27
3 See, for example, Matthew 13:24, 44, 47.
4 1 John 4:19