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Susan Easton Black

Father Lehi: A Visionary Man

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Summary:

Lehi's dream of the tree of life, recorded in 1 Nephi 8, was a familial dream as father Lehi was primarily concerned for the eternal salvation of his posterity. Susan Easton Black discusses Lehi's role as patriarch in his family—his counsel and leadership, his love for his family, and his heartache for Laman and Lemuel who chose not to partake of the fruit—and compares his life with that of Joseph Smith Sr.

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Father Lehi: A Visionary Man

Susan Easton Black

Today we will be talking about father Lehi and his family as they dwelt in the valley of Lemuel. Our focus will be on 1 Nephi 8. We will be focusing on father Lehi and the dream that he had. As we begin, you'll notice (as you start in the first verse) that the family "had gathered together all manner of seeds of every kind, both of grain . . . and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind" (1 Nephi 8:1). As they did so, it appears that father Lehi was reflecting not only on the seeds that would bring temporal salvation to his family and help them as they crossed into more of the wilderness and then eventually to the promised land, but he was also thinking of the seeds as relating to future posterity. His sons had just recently married. With this in mind, we'll now look at a familial dream.

Father Lehi spoke to his family and said, "Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision" (1 Nephi 8:2). This was not the first dream that father Lehi had had. Notice that each time he has had a dream, it has greatly impacted the family. It was not a casual comment when he said that he had had a dream. In the first dream, recall that the family was asked by the Lord to leave the area of Jerusalem and their lands of inheritance and to journey and to camp in the wilderness. In another dream, father Lehi sent his sons back to Jerusalem to get the plates of brass, which resulted in the death of an important individual in the town.

So, when father Lehi said he has dreamed a dream, what would be the reaction of the family? Recall that Sariah had complained that her husband was a visionary man. Recall that Nephi had pondered the words of his father, and Laman and

Lemuel had disputed them. What would this dream mean for the family? Would² it mean a dramatic change? This dream, perhaps more than others, shows the patriarchal role of father Lehi. It also shows the roles of the children in the family, and it shows a definite personality trend in each one.

Since father Lehi had their attention, he began to tell the dream. But rather than start with the beginning of the dream, he focused on the end. In other words, he told the end result of the dream—much like if you and I were reading a mystery book or a novel, and we read the last page so that we wouldn't have to read it twice to know who did it.

Father Lehi, as he told the end result, indicated that he had great cause to rejoice because of his sons Nephi and Sam (see 1 Nephi 8:3). (Notice that he mentioned Nephi first, even though it's obvious that Sam was the oldest.) As you look at father Lehi and his children, it's obvious, as the years come and go, that we know much about Nephi, but not much about Sam—except that he followed Nephi. It is the same with Laman and Lemuel; we know as much about the dominant brothers as we do about Jacob and Joseph. So, it's as if Lehi had three sons whose words we have recorded in holy writ.

Lehi talked about his great cause to rejoice because of Nephi and Sam. The reason he felt [this cause for rejoicing], as a result of his dream, is that he supposed that many of their seed will be saved. For father Lehi, a patriarch, he seemed very concerned about the seeds that would result in eternal salvation for his posterity. Contrast that with his reaction from the dream about Laman and Lemuel. He wrote, "I fear exceedingly because of you" (1 Nephi 8:4). He then went on to describe

the dream. Although he feared for these two sons, as he explained, as the patriarch,³ he focused on himself, for he was the exemplar for his family.

Lehi described himself as seeing a dark and dreary wilderness, not like the wilderness they were currently in where they were able to see and to gather seeds. It was a dark and dreary wilderness. As he described this scene, he said, "And it came to pass that I saw a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me" (1 Nephi 8:5). Notice the contrast then. Father Lehi, in a dark and dreary wilderness, then had a choice to make. Would he focus on the man dressed in white? The answer would be obvious. The contrast is definitely noticeable. The man dressed in white spoke to father Lehi. We don't know the words that he said, nor do we know who he was. But we do know what he asked father Lehi to do, and that was to follow him.

Now, father Lehi did follow him. Notice, we have no accounting that he pondered, or wavered, or tried to decide what to do. In obedience he followed the man who was dressed in a white robe. In fact, he followed him for hours as they traveled through the dark and dreary wilderness. But it is obvious that father Lehi wanted his agency; in other words, he wanted a right to make a bigger choice, a more difficult choice than white and black—perhaps to make choices in what you might call "gray areas." As a result, in 1 Nephi 8:8, he wrote: "I began to pray unto the Lord that he would have mercy on me, according to the multitude of his tender mercies."

Now, no one needs to pray for mercy unless he or she is concerned of having made, or of making, a mistake. It does not appear, from his obedience in following,

that Lehi had made any mistake before, but he wanted his right of agency to choose. In other words, mercy has everything to do with forgiveness, with putting the plan of salvation into effect into one's own personal life. When Lehi prayed for mercy, his prayer was answered by the Lord. As he prayed, he noticed the large and spacious field.

As he noticed the spacious field, father Lehi, with his child-like faith—his obedience was so perfect—he only saw one thing in the field: a tree. He saw, then, the culmination of the seed: a tree with fruit. He also noticed that this fruit was different from any of the seeds that were being acquired by the family to help them as they continued temporally in their own sense of wilderness. This seed that he saw had grown to a tree that produced a fruit to make one happy. In other words, what's another name for the "plan of salvation"? It's the "plan of happiness."

And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen. (1 Nephi 8:11)

Father Lehi wished to partake of this happiness; he came forward and partook of the fruit. It not only filled him with happiness, but he described it as being filled with "exceedingly great joy" (1 Nephi 8:12). Now, he described also that he was "filled *in his soul* with exceedingly great joy" (1 Nephi 8:12). *Soul* means "both body and spirit." Notice how different this fruit is from any of the fruit that he had previously acquired—or at least from the seeds thereof. Now, when you and I partake of something that is joyous—perhaps, for us, it's the gospel or an exciting event in our lives—it always seems much more joyful, perhaps, if we can share it.

Father Lehi, who was definitely the patriarch of his family, had significant others with whom he wished to share the fruit in his dream. Notice, in the dream he did not hark back to business colleagues that he may have had in Jerusalem, or to old friends with whom he might have grown up in a neighborhood. He had his priorities right. The people with whom he wished to share this greatest joy, this exceedingly great joy, were family members.

At this point he looked out to see where his family members were, and as his eyes were opened, he could see this spacious field. As he looked around for the first time, the field started to fill in. In other words, father Lehi was so riveted on the tree that he hadn't noticed, in his efforts to get to the great joy, the spacious building, the river of water, the rod of iron. He was exceedingly obedient and as a result, was filled with exceedingly great joy. However, as he began to look for family members, he noticed that for them, it was not the same experience. He searched to find his family, but notice, he stayed at the tree, and merrily gazed. We go now to 1 Nephi 8:14: "And I looked to behold from whence it came [speaking of the river]; "and I saw the head thereof a little way off"—in other words, the head of the river. Father Lehi did not describe the filth of the water. He was looking for his family members.

Notice who he saw first. He saw his wife, Sariah. As he saw his wife, very appropriately, she was in a family setting. She was with her sons Sam and Nephi standing at the head of the water, and yet, "they knew not whither they should go" (1 Nephi 8:14). As they stood there, notice, they were not progressing forward; they were not going backwards; they were not choosing to fall off the precipice into the water; but they were waiting, as if for directions. What did the wife and two of her

children need? They needed a strong patriarch who could guide them safely to the tree.

As they looked, father Lehi beckoned them—much as he himself had been beckoned by the man in the white robe. He also related that that he said “with a loud voice that they should come unto [him], and partake of the fruit, which was desirable above all other fruit” (1 Nephi 8:15). Notice the reaction, then, of his wife and two of his children. His wife, Sariah, hearkened to the voice of her righteous companion. She obediently heeded his counsel and came unto him. Notice that Nephi and Sam followed the example that the righteous patriarch and their mother set. They also came to the tree and partook of the fruit.

Father Lehi had more family members, however, in his family. Notice, he was not satisfied to just have two of his sons and his wife come and partake of the fruit of the tree. He was anxious that all family members come and partake of the love of Christ. So, he began to search after the older children, Laman and Lemuel. He was desirous that they should also come and partake of the fruit. He cast his eyes to the head of the river, to the same place where he found his wife and his children just moments before. He looked, and eventually, he saw them; however, no matter what he did, they would not come to partake of the fruit. In other words, they had seen things within that spacious field that were more enticing for them, more desirable than a righteous patriarch’s example or bidding.

As a result, father Lehi searched through the field for anything else that would assist his sons to come unto the tree. When they refused to come to him, the first thing Lehi saw was a rod of iron, which represented the word of God. Notice where

the rod of iron was located as we look at 1 Nephi 8:19: "And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood."

Lehi then realized that the rod of iron was close for those individuals who seemed to choose to live on the edge, those who almost flirted with the dangers of the filthy water.

He recognized that the word of God was something that if his sons would merely reach for and grasp, it would help bring them to the tree and to the family circle. He also noticed that there was a blessing out there for those sons, [a blessing] that would assist them. Notice, in verse 20 it reads: "And I also beheld a strait and narrow path, which came along by the rod of iron." Notice the spelling of the word *strait*. It was like a Strait of Magellan and the Strait of Gibraltar. In other words, it didn't mean a straight line. It curved, much as a river curves. The banks of the river hugged next to the water. That strait and narrow path was along that river to help guide so that the people would not fall into dangerous waters.

Father Lehi also saw a large and spacious building. Amidst all of this he saw the mists of darkness—that is, the temptations of Satan—that blinded his posterity from reaching for the word of God and from staying on the strait and narrow path. As father Lehi saw this, he wondered, would these sons reach for life eternal or would they be blinded by Lucifer's snares, which included the spacious building, the mists of darkness, and the walking off and wandering into forbidden paths? Father Lehi saw much. He saw concourses of people. I can remember a time in my life when I lost one of my sons at a rodeo. He was a small boy, and I saw literally thousands of people pass by me. Even though they were wonderful-looking and many had

smiles on their faces, there was not a smile on my face until this son was found.

Father Lehi saw multitudes who entered on this [strait and narrow] path. Some of the people held to the rod of iron momentarily, but they were distracted. Others held to the rod of iron long enough to make it to the tree. Still others, as they were moving forward, got lost in the mists of darkness. Others fell into the dangerous waters and were drowned. Some of them made it to the spacious building. Notice, they made it to a building that had no foundation; it had no firm standing. It was made up of pride and vain imaginations. What was it? It was almost like a temple built to honor Lucifer. These people went in there, were attired with beautiful clothing, and what was their main activity? They seemed to be mocking those people who had made it to the tree. So, their main activity seemed to be mocking the righteous. As they did so, many of the righteous who felt persecuted moved from the tree and joined them. Others, however, were able to cling to the tree, were able to cling to the words of Christ, to follow those who were righteous, like father Lehi.

We turn now to Nephi's record where he indicated that despite all of the people who had entered the spacious building, all of the people who had been lost wandering on strange paths, and those who had been lost in the depths of the fountain, father Lehi described the reactions of his family unit. Did any of them who had made it to the tree—did Sariah? did Nephi? did Sam? did even father Lehi himself?—bend to the mocking and scoffing that was so prevalent and so noisy?

Nephi wrote of his family in 1 Nephi 34: "These are the words of my father: For as many as heeded them, had fallen away" (1 Nephi 8:34), but he previously wrote, "we heeded them not" (1 Nephi 8:33). Now, that was a wonderful thing to say. No wonder father Lehi rejoiced exceedingly because of Sariah and Nephi and Sam. They did not heed the temptations of Satan in the form of the mists of darkness, nor did they heed the mocking that might have caused them to change their course. They were solid. They were sure. They had maintained their integrity, and they had arrived at the tree. They had partaken throughout their lives—by listening to their father with great obedience—of the goodness, the joy, that comes through the love of God.

Father Lehi then indicated to his sons, as he closed his family dream, that "Laman and Lemuel partook not of the fruit" (1 Nephi 8:35). Could there be sadder words in scripture for a father who loved his sons? I think not. In other words, thousands had passed by. As they had passed by, father Lehi had seen them. He had seen those who pretended to be righteous but had fallen away. But in all of his seeing, he never saw his two eldest sons come to the tree to partake of the fruit.

Well, as father Lehi finished reiterating "all the words of his dream or vision, which were many"—only a portion of them are recorded here—he exceeded his fear as he talked again to Laman and Lemuel. His greatest fear for these sons was that "they should be cast off from the presence of the Lord" (1 Nephi 8:36). The fear that father Lehi felt was real. The greatest fear that a righteous parent can experience is to be given a knowledge that his or her children will not have an opportunity to return back to the presence of our Father in Heaven. In other words, through their

actions, their thoughts, and their words, these children choose another path, one other than that shown by Jesus Christ, the only name by which you and I can return back to our Father in Heaven. The only path is through righteous living—through faith, words, action, belief, and the salvation and atonement of Jesus Christ.

It was apparent to father Lehi that his sons Laman and Lemuel had rejected the tree of life. They had rejected the love of the Lord while embracing all falsehood. The question then comes, What should father Lehi do? Should he shout? Should he coerce them? Should he manipulate them to make a better choice? Notice his reaction in 1 Nephi 8:37. Notice what he had to say to these sons. He spent the rest of the verses [in 1 Nephi 8] talking to Laman and Lemuel. Nephi wrote:

And he [Lehi] did exhort them then with all the feeling of a tender parent, that they would hearken to his words, that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to them, and not cast them off; yea, my father did preach unto them.

Notice that in the dream, father Lehi himself at one point had prayed for mercy—for the fulness of tender mercies—to be applied to his life. He knew that repentance was possible. He knew of the Atonement and salvation, and he ultimately partook of the fruit, or the love of God. Here, he felt that perhaps the Lord would be merciful to these rebellious sons who willfully chose, in the dream, not to follow a righteous father and not to partake of the fruit of Christ. Notice, he didn't yell, but he spoke "with all the feelings of a tender parent." In other words, he spoke with caring, heart-felt words. Also, as he spoke, he preached unto them. He not only preached, but "he prophesied unto them of many things"; he told them the value of "keeping the commandments of the Lord"; and then "he ceased

speaking unto them" (1 Nephi 8:38).

Nothing in the Book of Mormon indicates that Laman and Lemuel stood true or kept the commandments of the Lord, but instead showed that they not only rebelled against their father time and time again, but they also rebelled against their righteous brothers Nephi and Sam. The question then comes, Was Lehi a failure as a parent? We've all been taught that "no other success can compensate for failure in the home."¹ The first question to address, then, as we attempt to analyze this most prophetic dream that father Lehi received, is, Was he a failure as a parent?

Obviously, the sons grew up in the same household. They had the same parents. They grew up with righteous brothers. Why did they choose evil paths? Was it because father Lehi was not a good example? No one could say that was the answer. Was it because father Lehi failed to share with them gospel truths? No, that is not true. Was it because father Lehi was angry with these sons and rejected them? No, recall that he spoke "with all the feelings of a tender parent." So, the question is, Was father Lehi a failure? I would have to conclude no.

Well then, why would these sons reject his teachings and reject the Lord? Notice, as father Lehi, in the dream, had prayed for mercy—meaning, "I'd like the agency to choose"—it appears that these sons had a right to be born in his family. But at the same time, they had a right to choose what they would do with the lives they were given. Will father Lehi be blessed throughout the eternities for his teachings and his attempts to bring these sons back to the Lord? The answer is yes.

¹ David O. McKay, "Blessed Are They Who Do His Commandments," *The Improvement Era* (June 1964), 445.

Will Nephi, their brother, be blessed because of his attempts also to help these sons see the light? The answer is yes. The answer then leads to an important concept in the plan of salvation—agency. As Nephi and Sariah and Lehi chose the tree, the other brothers, then, had the right not to choose the tree.

Let us look at another concept we can learn. As father Lehi started out in a dark and dreary wilderness and had the man dressed in white showing him the way, perhaps, to some extent, it represents all of us. Perhaps it shows that all of us began on the right path. All of us have been given the light of Christ, then. All of us are born and proceed through life as innocent children. However, the time will come when we will be accountable for our own actions. Which way will we choose?

To illustrate this in another way, I'd like to focus on a song that I learned as a child. It was "I Am A Child of God." So, according to the song, I've come into this world with the light of Christ. We used to sing, "Teach me all that I must know, so I can dwell with him some day." Perhaps Laman and Lemuel had the opportunity to know. In other words, their father was preaching to them, prophesying to them. They knew that their father had gone out into the wilderness. They knew of the importance of the plates of brass. Yet, time and time again, they rejected.

Notice, in order to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, there had to be an action on everyone's part. Father Lehi had to move towards the tree; his wife, Sariah, and his sons Nephi and Sam also had to move towards the tree—an action. But Laman and Lemuel, through free agency, despite the fact they were called, did not come. Now, for many of us, why we do what we do may not always be magnanimous.

The song was eventually changed by President Kimball. President Kimball said, "Naomi Randall and I wrote the song. She wrote all the words but one. I wrote, 'Teach me all that I must do, so I can live with him some day.'" Perhaps for this hour we should change the song to: "Teach me all that I must be." A form of the word *be* is *am*. Recall when Christ appeared to Moses, Moses asked, "When I return to the children of Israel, who shall I say sent me?" And Christ then said, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Now, when you think of this concept, I AM is a constant; I AM is enduring. I AM are those people, the "we," of whom Lehi said, "We heeded them not"—the "them" being the people at the spacious building who were encouraging those at the tree to leave. I AM are constant. It is an integrity-type, a Job-like person, who can withstand the refiner's fire, the fuller's soap (see D&C 128:24), and remain constant in endurance.

Now, for many of us, the big question is, Does anybody really care? And the answer is yes. Priesthood leaders and, hopefully, parents care. Notice that the mists of darkness prevent Laman and Lemuel [from following righteous counsel]. They got lost and were not able to follow their priesthood leader to the tree. They failed to follow. Notice what happened. One of Satan's greatest ploys is to split apart the youth, to break them away from honoring and obeying their priesthood leader, whether it is a leader in the Church or the father in the home. How did they fall away? It was temptation—the mists of darkness, the spacious building. As we look at it, what can we learn from this? We must teach our children not just to know the gospel, not just to do the actions of a Latter-day Saint, or a Christian, a Christ-like person, but they must become, they must be "I AM"—literally Christ-like.

For example, perhaps all of us could define *honesty*. If you were asked, "You know what *honesty* means, but do you do acts of honesty?" perhaps you would describe picking up a dime and returning it to a clerk or something like that. But the big question is, Are you honest? Are you honest Monday? Tuesday? Saturday night? Now, notice that a person *becomes* "I AM" when that person has learned to keep the commandments of the Lord in every situation in every time. Those I AMs are the people that are able to cling to that tree. Now, the Lord realized, because of our strengths and weaknesses and because we are all individuals and have agency, that he must provide a way to help us get to the tree, but it is our responsibility to cling to it. The way he provides is a rod of iron. He provides a strait and narrow path that leads along the righteous course. The tools are there. Priesthood leaders are at the tree. Righteous families are at the tree. There is no question that father Lehi was a patriarch, [a priesthood leader]. (The word *patriarch* means "father that blesses." Not all fathers or dads or parents are patriarchal in nature.) He was a patriarch. He was a blessing to his family. He not only set the example by clinging to the tree, but he encouraged others to come. This great patriarch, who was literally an "I AM," who was a constant, was perhaps a perfect man in his generation.

I've had several moments and hours to lament that we don't have the book of Lehi. Truly it was a great tragedy when the 116 manuscript pages were lost through the carelessness of Martin Harris and his extended family. Martin, at the time, proved not to be a righteous patriarch, as his wife Lucy and his children never appeared to unite at the tree. Contrast his actions with say the actions of Joseph Smith Sr.

In 1811, Joseph Smith Sr. had a dream very similar to father Lehi's. At the time the Smith family were living in place called Lebanon, New Hampshire. In this dream—or, as father Lehi saw, this prophetic vision. (Notice the similarities. Father Lehi was taken by a messenger dressed in white; notice the darkness, the dark and dreary world of 1 Nephi 8. And now compare it with father Smith's experience.) As father Smith was taken by a messenger dressed in white, he too saw a very low but pleasant valley in which stood a tree. He, like father Lehi, went to the tree, and partook of it as he saw this prophetic dream. He, like father Lehi, wanted his family to join there also. (And notice, both men were patriarchs in their dispensations, and both men gave patriarchal blessings to their sons.) Both men saw the tree, and both partook. For father Smith described that when he arrived at the tree, it was covered with fruit, but the fruit had on it a type of shell, much like a chestnut burr. When the chestnut burr shell came off, it revealed to him a fruit of whiteness. (Then notice the similarity with father Lehi's account.) He partook of it, then he wanted his family (as father Lehi did) to join him at the tree. In contrast with father Lehi, all father Smith's family members came.

Now which was greater blessed? Obviously, it would appear to us that father Smith was greatly blessed, as all members of the family came to partake. At that time, he did not see in his family anyone who was Laman-like or Lemuel-like; all his children came. But notice that father Lehi and father Smith each needed to learn. Perhaps, sometimes we learn more humility, more patience, or more kindness from the children who are not faithful than we could ever learn from those who are obedient. The patriarch of the Smith family described that all family

members partook of the fruit—in fact, he said they *feasted* upon it. They did not nibble or snack, but each feasted, much like a Thanksgiving feast; it was a thanksgiving for the love of God. He then described that their feast was so great that they even got down upon their knees and began scooping the fruit up in double handfuls.

Now notice, the righteous Joseph Smith Sr. had a prophetic son named Joseph Smith Jr. who was indeed a prophet of God. We have just a few of father Smith's writings, just as we have little record left of father Lehi's. For the most part, we have Joseph Smith Sr.'s scribed patriarchal blessings. We have also the scribed patriarchal blessings that father Lehi gave to his sons, particularly and in more detail, those of the sons named Jacob and Joseph.

Notice the importance of these two great patriarchs. One was the father of Joseph Smith Jr., a prophet in our dispensation, and the other great patriarch, Lehi, was the father of whom? The father of Nephi, someone who was asked by the Lord to make these small plates and to rewrite the dream of father Lehi. As we look at this, I can express gratitude for these wonderful sons—sons who did honor their parents. Truly they lived the fifth commandment, which says that if they would honor their parents, then their days would be long upon the land. And truly their works have been long upon the land.

As I look at 1 Nephi 8, I learn important things that I can implement in my family. I learn that I need to be willing to listen to my husband, to follow his counsel in righteousness, to know when he is truly leading me in a direction that will take me to my Father in Heaven. I also need to recognize him as the patriarch

in our home, for truly he is a blessing. I learn to encourage my sons to follow his counsel so that they too can partake of the fruit. President Benson has said to his family that he wanted no empty chairs in the celestial kingdom, and that's how it should be in my family too. When family members, including myself and my sons, make choices that are not pleasing to our Father in Heaven, then what should be the response of my husband and me? We should be "tender parents." We should be kind. We should be loving. We should be charitable. We should be more patient. As President Howard W. Hunter indicated, we should face these sons, and ourselves in the direction of the temple so that sacred covenants that we have made will continue to bind us in an enduring love of the Savior, to bind us to that tree of life that we might always be found partaking of the delicious fruit.

As I close, I would like to bear my testimony. I know that the love of Christ is found at the tree of life. I also know that the great plan of salvation, as Lehi symbolized in this familial dream, needs to be heeded by all of us. All of us need to pray for mercy, to be more forgiving of ourselves and of others, and to be more forgiving of families and of those who, perhaps inadvertently, may have hurt us. I also know that our Father in Heaven lives, that he was mindful of father Lehi and his family, that he was mindful of a great patriarch who tried all he could and yet, it appears, lost two sons. Will it be made up to father Lehi and his family? I trust it will, for truly he was a righteous man.

I also testify of the greatness of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I am always amazed and stand in awe of his ability to be so pure and so refined. I am amazed that he could be the translator of this great Book of Mormon—that because of his efforts, we

can now read in 1 Nephi 8 to learn how to be better parents and better children, to learn how to be more righteous. I testify that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true church upon the earth, and that the Savior is definitely the head. I am so grateful that there are living prophets, and I am grateful for this opportunity to share with you things that I have learned—and have tried to incorporate in my life and in my family—from the important scripture found in 1 Nephi 8.

Truly this chapter tells of a familial dream that affected not only the life of Lehi and his sons throughout time and all eternity, but also affects each one of us as we struggle to make choices that will be right so that we will not be cast off, as it was prophesied Laman and Lemuel would be, but we will unite together at the tree in a circle of love. Truly the strength of the family is a strength in the blend. May we be faithful and return individually and as families to our Father in Heaven. I say this in Jesus' name, Amen.