



Hyrum Smith was a continuing source of strength and support to his brother Joseph. "Brother Hyrum," the Prophet declared, "what a faithful heart you have got!"



How Glorious Are Faithful, Just, and True Friends

“Friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism.’ . . . It unites the human family with its happy influence.”

From the Life of Joseph Smith

In August of 1842, civil authorities from Missouri were making repeated efforts to capture the Prophet Joseph Smith. Fearing he would be killed if he were arrested and taken to Missouri, the Prophet went into hiding. On August 11, he sent word to several loyal family members and friends to meet him on an island in the Mississippi River, not far from Nauvoo. That night, Emma Smith, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and others gathered near the edge of the river and traveled in a small boat to the appointed meeting place. Joyfully, the Prophet took each one by the hand, grateful for the aid and comfort of true friendship. He later wrote at length in his journal about his feelings of gratitude for his family members and friends. Some of these journal entries are included in this chapter. Several weeks later, the Prophet closed a letter to the Saints with words that expressed his feelings for them: “I am, as ever, your humble servant and never deviating friend, Joseph Smith” (D&C 128:25).

The Saints returned the Prophet’s feelings, considering him not only their Prophet but also their friend. A close friend and personal secretary of Joseph Smith, Benjamin F. Johnson, recalled: “‘Joseph the Prophet’—as a friend he was faithful, long-suffering, noble and true. . . . As a companion, socially, he was highly endowed—was kind, generous, mirth loving. . . . For amusement he would sometimes wrestle with a friend, or oftener would test strength with others by sitting upon the floor with feet together

and stick grasped between them. But he never found his match. Jokes, rebuses [using pictures to portray words], matching couplets in rhymes, etc., were not uncommon. But to call for the singing of one or more of his favorite songs was more frequent. . . . And yet, although so social and even convivial at times, he would allow no arrogance or undue liberties.”¹

Joseph Smith was as tenderhearted as he was sociable, as one young man remembered: “I was at Joseph’s house; he was there, and several men were sitting on the fence. Joseph came out and spoke to us all. Pretty soon a man came up and said that a poor brother who lived out some distance from town had had his house burned down the night before. Nearly all of the men said they felt sorry for the man. Joseph put his hand in his pocket, took out five dollars and said, ‘I feel sorry for this brother to the amount of five dollars; how much do you all feel sorry?’ ”²

Perhaps Joseph Smith’s great love for his friends made the betrayals of some of those friends especially hard to bear. In Nauvoo, friends whom the Prophet had taken into his confidence turned against him. However, many friends returned the Prophet’s loyalty, standing with him to the end.

One such friend was Willard Richards, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, who was jailed with Joseph and Hyrum Smith and John Taylor in Carthage, Illinois. While being held in the jail, the men were allowed to move from a cell on the first floor to a more comfortable bedroom on the second floor of the jailhouse. Then, shortly before the martyrdom, the jailer suggested that the prisoners would be safer in an iron-barred cell next to the bedroom. Joseph asked Elder Richards, who was called “doctor” by his friends because he had practiced medicine: “‘If we go into the cell, will you go in with us?’ The doctor answered, ‘Brother Joseph, you did not ask me to cross the river with you—you did not ask me to come to Carthage—you did not ask me to come to jail with you—and do you think I would forsake you now? But I will tell you what I will do; if you are condemned to be hung for treason, I will be hung in your stead, and you shall go free.’ Joseph said, ‘You cannot.’ The doctor replied, ‘I will.’ ”³

Teachings of Joseph Smith

True friends ease one another's sorrows and remain faithful even in times of adversity.

Joseph Smith wrote the following about the family members and friends who visited him on August 11, 1842, while he was in hiding: “How good and glorious it has seemed unto me, to find pure and holy friends, who are faithful, just, and true, and whose hearts fail not; and whose knees are confirmed and do not falter, while they wait upon the Lord, in administering to my necessities, in the day when the wrath of mine enemies was poured out upon me. . . .

“How glorious were my feelings when I met that faithful and friendly band, on the night of the eleventh, on Thursday, on the island at the mouth of the slough [swamp], between Zarahemla and Nauvoo: with what unspeakable delight, and what transports of joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand, on that night, my beloved Emma—she that was my wife, even the wife of my youth, and the choice of my heart. Many were the reverberations of my mind when I contemplated for a moment the many scenes we had been called to pass through, the fatigues and the toils, the sorrows and sufferings, and the joys and consolations, from time to time, which had strewed our paths and crowned our board. Oh, what a commingling of thought filled my mind for the moment, again she is here, . . . undaunted, firm, and unwavering—unchangeable, affectionate Emma!

“There was Brother Hyrum who next took me by the hand—a natural brother. Thought I to myself, Brother Hyrum, what a faithful heart you have got! Oh, may the Eternal Jehovah crown eternal blessings upon your head, as a reward for the care you have had for my soul! Oh, how many are the sorrows we have shared together; and again we find ourselves shackled with the unrelenting hand of oppression. Hyrum, thy name shall be written in the Book of the Law of the Lord, for those who come after thee to look upon, that they may pattern after thy works.

“Said I to myself, Here is Brother Newel K. Whitney also. How many scenes of sorrows have strewed our paths together; and

yet we meet once more to share again. Thou art a faithful friend in whom the afflicted sons of men can confide, with the most perfect safety. Let the blessings of the Eternal also be crowned upon his head. How warm that heart! how anxious that soul! for the welfare of one who has been cast out, and hated of almost all men. Brother Whitney, thou knowest not how strong those ties are that bind my soul and heart to thee. . . .

“I do not think to mention the particulars of the history of that sacred night, which shall forever be remembered by me; but the names of the faithful are what I wish to record in this place. These I have met in prosperity, and they were my friends; and I now meet them in adversity, and they are still my warmer friends. These love the God that I serve; they love the truths that I promulgate; they love those virtuous, and those holy doctrines that I cherish in my bosom with the warmest feelings of my heart, and with that zeal which cannot be denied. . . .

“. . . I hope I shall see [my friends] again, that I may toil for them, and administer to their comfort also. They shall not want a friend while I live; my heart shall love those, and my hands shall toil for those, who love and toil for me, and shall ever be found faithful to my friends. Shall I be ungrateful? Verily no! God forbid!”⁴

On August 23, 1842, the Prophet continued: “I find my feelings . . . towards my friends revived, while I contemplate the virtues and the good qualities and characteristics of the faithful few, which I am now recording in the Book of the Law of the Lord,—of such as have stood by me in every hour of peril, for these fifteen long years past,—say, for instance, my aged and beloved brother, Joseph Knight, Sen., who was among the number of the first to administer to my necessities, while I was laboring in the commencement of the bringing forth of the work of the Lord, and of laying the foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For fifteen years he has been faithful and true, and even-handed and exemplary, and virtuous and kind, never deviating to the right hand or to the left. Behold he is a righteous man, may God Almighty lengthen out the old man’s days; and may his trembling, tortured, and broken body be renewed, and

in the vigor of health turn upon him, if it be Thy will, consistently, O God; and it shall be said of him, by the sons of Zion, while there is one of them remaining, that this man was a faithful man in Israel; therefore his name shall never be forgotten. . . .

“. . . While I remember the faithful few who are now living, I would remember also the faithful of my friends who are dead, for they are many; and many are the acts of kindness—paternal and brotherly kindnesses—which they have bestowed upon me; and since I have been hunted by the Missourians, many are the scenes which have been called to my mind. . . .

“There are many souls whom I have loved stronger than death. To them I have proved faithful—to them I am determined to prove faithful, until God calls me to resign up my breath.”⁵

Friendship unites the human family, dispelling hatred and misunderstanding.

“I don’t care what a man’s character is; if he’s my friend—a true friend, I will be a friend to him, and preach the Gospel of salvation to him, and give him good counsel, helping him out of his difficulties.

“Friendship is one of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’; [it is designed] to revolutionize and civilize the world, and cause wars and contentions to cease and men to become friends and brothers. . . .

“. . . Friendship is like Brother [Theodore] Turley in his blacksmith shop welding iron to iron; it unites the human family with its happy influence.”⁶

“That friendship which intelligent beings would accept as sincere must arise from love, and that love grow out of virtue, which is as much a part of religion as light is a part of Jehovah. Hence the saying of Jesus, ‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ [John 15:13.]”⁷

In March 1839, while the Prophet Joseph Smith and several companions were imprisoned in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, the Prophet wrote to members of the Church: “We received some letters last evening—one from Emma, one from Don C. Smith [Joseph’s brother], and one from Bishop [Edward] Partridge—

all breathing a kind and consoling spirit. We were much gratified with their contents. We had been a long time without information; and when we read those letters they were to our souls as the gentle air is refreshing, but our joy was mingled with grief, because of the sufferings of the poor and much injured Saints. And we need not say to you that the floodgates of our hearts were lifted and our eyes were a fountain of tears, but those who have not been enclosed in the walls of prison without cause or provocation, can have but little idea how sweet the voice of a friend is; one token of friendship from any source whatever awakens and calls into action every sympathetic feeling; it brings up in an instant everything that is past; it seizes the present with the avidity [eagerness] of lightning; it grasps after the future with the fierceness of a tiger; it moves the mind backward and forward, from one thing to another, until finally all enmity, malice and hatred, and past differences, misunderstandings and mismanagements are slain victorious at the feet of hope.”⁸

Saints of God are true friends to one another.

The Prophet wrote the following note to a Church member in August 1835: “We remember your family, with all the first families of the Church, who first embraced the truth. We remember your losses and sorrows. Our first ties are not broken; we participate with you in the evil as well as the good, in the sorrows as well as the joys. Our union, we trust, is stronger than death, and shall never be severed.”⁹

The Prophet said about a feast he attended in January 1836 in Kirtland: “Attended a sumptuous feast at Bishop Newel K. Whitney’s. This feast was after the order of the Son of God—the lame, the halt, and the blind were invited, according to the instructions of the Savior [see Luke 14:12–13]. . . . The company was large, and before we partook we had some of the songs of Zion sung; and our hearts were made glad by a foretaste of those joys that will be poured upon the heads of the Saints when they are gathered together on Mount Zion, to enjoy one another’s society for evermore, even all the blessings of heaven, when there will be none to molest or make us afraid.”¹⁰



Many Saints arriving at the wharf in Nauvoo remembered the Prophet Joseph Smith coming to meet them as they disembarked, welcoming them to their new home.

Sister Presendia Huntington Buell tried to visit Joseph Smith while he was imprisoned in Liberty Jail in 1839, but she was turned away by the jailer. The Prophet later wrote to her: “Oh, what joy it would be to us to see our friends! It would have gladdened my heart to have had the privilege of conversing with you, but the hand of tyranny is upon us. . . . I want [your husband] and you to know that I am your true friend. . . . No tongue can tell what inexpressible joy it gives a man, after having been enclosed in the walls of a prison for five months, to see the face of one who has been a friend. It seems to me that my heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before. My heart bleeds continually when I contemplate the distress of the Church. Oh, that I could be with them! I would not shrink at toil and hardship to render them comfort and consolation. I want the blessing once more of lifting my voice in the midst of the Saints. I would pour out my soul to God for their instruction.”¹¹

Speaking in Nauvoo, Illinois, where many Church members had arrived with few worldly possessions, the Prophet taught: “We should cultivate sympathy for the afflicted among us. If there

is a place on earth where men should cultivate the spirit and pour in the oil and wine in the bosoms of the afflicted, it is in this place; and this spirit is manifest here; and although [a person is] a stranger and afflicted when he arrives, he finds a brother and a friend ready to administer to his necessities.

“I would esteem it one of the greatest blessings, if I am to be afflicted in this world, to have my lot cast where I can find brothers and friends all around me.”¹²

George A. Smith, the Prophet’s cousin, recalled: “At the close of the conversation, Joseph wrapped his arms around me, and squeezed me to his bosom and said, ‘George A., I love you as I do my own life.’ I felt so affected, I could hardly speak.”¹³

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages vii–xii.

- Review the first paragraph on page 459. Then turn to pages 461–63 and note the characteristics Joseph Smith appreciated in Emma Smith, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Joseph Knight Sr. Why do you think their friendship was such a comfort to him during difficult times? In what ways have you been supported by friends when you have faced adversity? What can we do to support others when they experience trials?
- Most of the stories in this chapter are about the value of true friendship in times of difficulty. But in the paragraph that begins on the bottom of page 459, Benjamin F. Johnson tells of Joseph Smith’s friendly ways in times of peace. What do you gain from this description? How do our friendships and family relationships benefit when we take time to laugh and play together?
- Study the fourth full paragraph on page 463. Why do you think Joseph Smith would say that friendship is “one of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’”? In what ways can the restored gospel help people see each other as friends? How have other Presidents of the Church been examples of friendship with all people?

- Review the fifth full paragraph on page 463. How is friendship like welding iron to iron?
- Read the paragraph that begins at the bottom of page 465 and the following paragraph. Note the reference to “oil and wine,” from the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:34). What are some specific things we can do to follow the Prophet’s counsel? to follow the example of the good Samaritan?

Related Scriptures: 1 Samuel 18:1; Proverbs 17:17; 2 Nephi 1:30; Mosiah 18:8–10; Alma 17:2; D&C 84:77; 88:133

Notes

1. Letter from Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, 1903, pp. 6–8; Benjamin Franklin Johnson, Papers, 1852–1911, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
2. Andrew J. Workman, in “Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith,” *Juvenile Instructor*, Oct. 15, 1892, p. 641.
3. *History of the Church*, 6:616; punctuation modernized; from a Willard Richards journal entry, June 27, 1844, Carthage, Illinois.
4. *History of the Church*, 5:107–9; spelling, punctuation, and capitalization modernized; from a Joseph Smith journal entry, Aug. 16, 1842, near Nauvoo, Illinois.
5. *History of the Church*, 5:124–25, 127; from a Joseph Smith journal entry, Aug. 23, 1842, near Nauvoo, Illinois; this entry is incorrectly dated Aug. 22, 1842, in *History of the Church*.
6. *History of the Church*, 5:517; first set of bracketed words in original; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on July 23, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Willard Richards; see also appendix, page 562, item 3.
7. *History of the Church*, 6:73; from a letter from Joseph Smith to James Arlington Bennet, Nov. 13, 1843, Nauvoo, Illinois; James Bennet’s last name is incorrectly spelled “Bennett” in *History of the Church*.
8. *History of the Church*, 3:293; spelling modernized; from a letter from Joseph Smith and others to Edward Partridge and the Church, Mar. 20, 1839, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.
9. Joseph Smith postscript in letter from Joseph Smith and others to Hezekiah Peck, Aug. 31, 1835, Kirtland, Ohio; in “The Book of John Whitmer,” pp. 80–81, Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Missouri; copy of “The Book of John Whitmer” in Church Archives.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:362–63; from a Joseph Smith journal entry, Jan. 7, 1836, Kirtland, Ohio.
11. *History of the Church*, 3:285–86; spelling modernized; from a letter from Joseph Smith to Presendia Huntington Buell, Mar. 15, 1839, Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri; Sister Buell’s last name is incorrectly spelled “Bull” in *History of the Church*.
12. *History of the Church*, 5:360–61; punctuation modernized; from a discourse given by Joseph Smith on Apr. 16, 1843, in Nauvoo, Illinois; reported by Wilford Woodruff and Willard Richards.
13. George A. Smith, quoted in *History of the Church*, 5:391; from George A. Smith, “History of George Albert Smith by Himself,” p. 1, George Albert Smith, Papers, 1834–75, Church Archives.