

## Full Time Mission Message #3

Elder / Sister xxxxxxxx,

We thought this month we would share with you some of my thoughts on journals. Are you keeping a written journal? In the talk President Eyring gave in the October 2007 conference when he first became a member of the First Presidency he asked us to keep a journal. He asked us to write at the top of the page each day these words, "WHERE I HAVE SEEN THE HAND OF GOD IN MY LIFE TODAY". He then said to write down all the experiences that you have had that day where you have felt the promptings of the Holy Ghost or seen a miracle or felt the hand of God guiding you. He promised us if we would do that, that those journals would do more to convert our children, grandchildren (and family members) than anything else that we can do. So I started doing that. Some days have more experiences than other days. Many times when I sit down to write it is more than a full page to write down those experiences. I have those kinds of spiritual experiences every day. I start to do something and the Holy Ghost will remind me that I forgot to do something or he will show me how to do what I was starting to do, or help me learn something. WE EXPERIENCE THIS EVERY DAY BUT AFTER A FEW DAYS IF FORGET THAT EXPERIENCE....

One time Janice and I decided we needed to write down on a paper all the spiritual experiences we had experienced together since we were married just to make sure they were all in our journals. But there were so many we knew we could not do it all in one setting. So we took a paper and just wrote one liners on the paper as a reminder of that experience so we could then take each one of them and write them out later. We decided we would try to write out one each Sunday. We spent a couple of hours that day writing our one lines on the paper. We ended up filling 3 pages full of them. We wrote things like, "The time Janice opened the neighbors door with a butter knife to save the baby left in the bath tub" , "The time the wheel fell off the car in traffic and the policeman said it was a miracle Janice was not killed", "The time we were lost on our vacation and the Holy Ghost told us which way to go to get back"... etc , etc... Three pages full of them. But then we got busy and just never got around to writing very many of them out. After a few weeks we got too busy and stopped doing it all together. Interestingly, we found those 3 pages of one liners four years later. We were so disappointed as we read down the list and realized that we already could not remember some of the experiences we had written as a one liner. It was too late. We already had already forgotten the experience even though we had written it as a one liner on the page. It was just a little experience that happened at the time or shortly before we wrote the one liners down. We knew the story then but four years later we did not remember what the story was behind the one liner. Since then we have both tried to be very diligent in writing down our spiritual experiences before we forget them. We have found that the key to keeping a journal is to do it at the same time in the same place. If you just do it when you get up you will not likely keep much of a journal history of your life. If you do it every morning as soon as you get up or every day as you eat lunch, or even just ever Sunday night before you go to bed, then you will be successful.

When I first graduated from college, I run a travel business for genealogy. Most of the people who came were not members of our church. They came from all over the United States to do genealogical research at the Salt Lake Genealogy Library. They paid me to help them find their ancestors. At the end of each tour I took them all to the Lion House in Salt Lake for a special dinner in Brigham Young's historic house. After the dinner, there in that setting, I gave them a special seminar on journals. One of the things I used to do in every seminar to help them understand the value of keeping a journal was to ask them these two questions: "How many of you ever met your great grandparents"? Normally out of the 30 or 40 people there in the room only 2 or 3 of them would raise their hands. Then I would ask them a second question: "How many of you knew the names of your great grandparents before you started doing genealogy". Again only 2 or 3 of them would raise their hands and normally that was the same ones who had met them. Then I said something to them that seemed to have a great impact on them. I said, "You are now going to be the great parents for the children of your grandchildren. Think about that. That is just four generations. Isn't it interesting to realize now that the children of your little grand children won't even remember

your name or know who you were UNLESS YOU KEEP A JOURNAL". I don't know how many 100's of people started keeping a journal after those many seminars I gave but I hope it has been a lot. That is why President Eyring's promise to us is so significant to me. He promised us that it will be the one of the thing that will have more influence on converting our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren than anything else we can do.

Here is a picture of the journals I have kept since 1961. The grey one on the top shelf on the right is 2018



Years ago a man owed me a lot of money and could not pay me. His profession was making 3 ring binders for journal keeping. So he paid me in 3 ring binders. That has been such a blessing to me. I put them all on a shelf and put a year on each one starting with the year I graduated from High School (1961). Now when I find a picture like I did the other day of my office when I lived in Seattle in 1996, I had a place to put it. I have tried to record all of the spiritual experiences that I have had more than just my day to day activities. I so love to go back now and sit and read the journals I kept on my mission. It took so little time each night to just write down what happened that day. Interestingly the things I love reading most are not that sister so and so will be baptized next Saturday but rather things like Elder Stephens and I were impressed to go to an apartment building that we had already been to and found a new person who said they were praying to find the truth. Follow Nephi's advice in the Book of Mormon and record more of your spiritual experiences than your day to day activities.

We hope all is going well on your mission. We send our love and our prayers to you.

Brother and Sister Vail