



OCTOBER 2026 GENERAL CONFERENCE · SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

Integrity and Virtue Lead to Happiness

Elder Quentin L. Cook · Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Words to remember

- *“The covenant path that will return us to our beloved Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, is not obscure; it is well marked.”*
- *“The ultimate reward of integrity and virtue is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.”*

In Elder Quentin L. Cook’s own words, from the talk.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles opened with his thesis: “Lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ best reflect the Savior’s teaching and direction when they joyfully live lives of integrity and virtue.” “The covenant path that will return us to our beloved Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, is not obscure; it is well marked.” And “The virtuous, Christlike life necessary to sustain us and propel us along the covenant path has never been more important or challenging.”

He and his wife, Mary, recently met with missionaries in the Scotland Ireland Mission. On one building’s grounds is a replica of a message that shaped President David O. McKay as a young missionary in Scotland. Passing a building, Elder McKay saw an inscription carved above the doorway: “Whate’er thou art, act well thy part.” It so affected him that he used it for inspiration as a missionary and for the rest of his life, determining to do his very best in whatever responsibility he had. President McKay was the prophet during Elder Cook’s youth, and Elder Cook has often referred to the message. He noted that one of President McKay’s purposes in telling it was to teach that something not inherently evil can still keep us from engaging in spiritual matters that bless us now and eternally, a principle essential if we are to be true, lifelong disciples.

Integrity is central. The Lord said of a servant in Nauvoo, “He may be trusted because of the integrity of his heart” (D&C 124:20). Preach My Gospel teaches that integrity includes being honest with God, yourself, your leaders, and others. President Spencer W. Kimball taught that integrity that the willingness and ability to live by our beliefs, is a foundation stone of good character, and without good character one cannot hope to enjoy God’s presence here or in eternity.

“In the Father’s plan, integrity, virtue, and happiness are intrinsically linked.” Living virtuously with integrity aligns us with God’s will, and true happiness is the actual outcome of that life. Virtue includes a strong personal moral compass plus cleanliness, modesty, goodness, holiness, and reverence for the sacred. Happiness is most people’s goal, but recent conduct and choices have not

produced it, and “The relationship between virtue and happiness is not as well understood today as it was in the past.” Marking the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, he noted that some scholars believe the founders understood the pursuit of happiness to mean living a virtuous life. In Liberty Jail the Lord counseled, “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly” (D&C 121:45). President McKay taught that happiness is the purpose and design of existence. Men are that they might have joy (2 Nephi 2:25), and “Virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping the commandments of God lead to a happy life.”

By contrast, much conduct and language in society and social media today is often coarse and crude and lacks virtue. It is destructive of civil discourse. He was blunt: “Any use of the internet to bully, destroy a reputation, or place a person in a bad light is reprehensible” contrary to the Savior’s teachings. Evil communications are not just a matter of bad manners (see 1 Corinthians 15:33). If Latter-day Saints practice them, they can harm people who don’t yet know God. Technology is inspired and marvelous when used wisely. The Church has faced physical and verbal attacks, and We cannot control the conduct of others, but we can be peaceable followers of Christ, as Presidents Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks have consistently taught about being righteous peacemakers. Daily time in scripture and spiritual renewal brings deep blessings. Youth at FSY and young single adult conferences often tell him the testimony meeting is the most memorable part.

He returned to the Savior: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” He had not come to condemn the world, but to save the world (John 3:16–17). He expects lives of virtue and integrity: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46); Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father (Matthew 7:21). Paul: “If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Philippians 4:8). “We show our integrity by living virtuous lives and caring for and serving others. The ultimate reward of integrity and virtue is the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.”

Integrity also means acknowledging our faults to the Lord and repenting. When repentance is a constant day-to-day part of our lives, we can approach the Lord with integrity. As a young missionary in the British Mission, Elder Cook taught a man who had served on a battleship in the European theater in World War II, 16 years before. Taught about repentance, he was overcome. He compared it to stepping off the battleship back in England and feeling the earth of his island home under his feet, which had so overwhelmed him that he fell to his knees in gratitude. Learning he could be forgiven through repentance, baptism, and confirmation, he was deeply touched. Just before his baptism he prayed that he might give others the same joy, “Especially my family.”

Elder Cook concluded: “Integrity, virtue, and ongoing repentance are the answer in a world where coarse language and serious challenges are so prevalent.” He expressed gratitude for the Father’s plan of happiness and testified of Jesus Christ’s eternity-shaping Atonement.

Let's talk about it

What did this talk teach us about the Savior? What is one small thing our family can do this week?

Kid-friendly summary in our own words · Read or watch the full talk: [churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/46cook](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2026/10/46cook)