

My hope today is that you are enjoying this lovely autumn as much as I have. In all my years, and believe me there are many, I have never been more content to sit on my patio reading a book and enjoying a cup of coffee while enjoying the peace and quiet. Then I read the newspaper or listen to the news and realize things are not quite so peaceful.

Returning from Tampa Bay where the National Convention was held in August, many hours were spent on issues that needed to be ironed out. Through all the discussions, I marveled at the ability of people to discuss and state opinions and still be civil. No one left the convention center in anger and went home. Our Auxiliary was a shining star as an example of how to deliberate. Even if we disagree about everything, we can still be kind to each other. Disagreements are an inevitable part of life, a testament to the diversity of thought and experience that enriches our world. But even when our beliefs clash, even when our perspectives diverge, we can still choose to treat each other with kindness and respect. Kindness is not a sign of weakness but a testament to strength, a recognition that our shared humanity transcends our differences. By extending compassion to those who hold opposing views, we create bridges instead of walls, fostering dialogue instead of division. May we remember that kindness is a universal language, a powerful force that can soften hearts and build bridges even in the face of disagreement.

Winter Conference is coming up in January. There will no doubt be issues to discuss that likely will have a multitude of opinions. That's just fine. We can practice deliberation, discourse and parley, and go away loving one another and perhaps being educated by the process.

I often revert to a song by Tim McGraw entitled "Always be Humble and Kind." Included in the verses is a message saying "Hold the door, say please, say thank you, Don't steal, don't cheat, and don't lie. I know you got mountains to climb but always stay humble and kind. When those dreams you're dreamin' come to you, when the work you put in is realized. Let yourself feel the pride but always stay humble and kind. Don't take for granted the love this life gives you when you get where you're going don't forget to turn back around and help the next one in line. Always stay humble and kind."

There is so much value in that song that I challenge you to research.

*Matthew 5:44-48*

*But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even scoundrels do that much. If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathen do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

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