

# CAREER, FAMILY & CHURCH

## Scripture References

- Exodus 20:17  
(thou shalt not covet)
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8  
(season, time, purpose)
- Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33  
(treasures, two masters)
- Matthew 10:39  
(findeth life, lose it)
- Matthew 25:14-30  
(parable of the talents)
- Matthew 25:35-40  
(done unto least, done unto me)
- 2 Nephi 9:28-29  
(learned, wise, foolishness)
- Mosiah 2:17-22  
(service to fellow beings, God)
- Alma 37:36-37  
(thoughts to Lord, counsel with Lord)
- 3 Nephi 27:27  
(what manner of men, even as I am)
- Doctrine & Covenants 10:5  
(pray always, conquer, escape)
- Doctrine & Covenants 58:26-28  
(anxiously engaged, power is in them)
- Doctrine & Covenants 89:18-21  
(Word of Wisdom promises)
- Doctrine & Covenants 121:1-10  
(long suffer, peace, small moment)
- Doctrine & Covenants 122  
(shall give experience, for your good)
- Abraham 3:22-26  
(noble & great, thou art one of them)

## Selected Reading Materials

Robert L. Backman, "Balance," *Life in the Law: Answering God's Interrogatories*, (BYU Press 2002) 11.

M. Russell Ballard, "Keeping Life's Demands in Balance" *Ensign* May 1987, 13.

Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989, 4.

Robert H. Daines, "Making It to the Top: When Is the Price Too High?," *Ensign*, Jan. 1985, 46.

Donald L. Hallstrom, "Seeking a Balanced Life," *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 52.

Rex E. Lee, *Marathon of Faith*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996)

Michael W. Mosman, "First Things First," *Life in the Law: Answering God's Interrogatories*, (BYU Press 2002) 43.

Russell M. Nelson, "Identity, Priority, and Blessings," *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 6.

Jan Underwood Pinborough, "Keeping Mentally Well," *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, 48.

G. G. Vandagriff, "Escaping My Valley of Sorrow," *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 65.

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## Notes and Commentary

### Section A: Career Stresses – "PIB"

An LDS attorney relates the following experience: "Fifteen years ago, I represented the target defendant in a \$100 million civil suit, brought by a team of lawyers on behalf of a large group of plaintiffs. The court deadlines required grueling travel and work 24/7, with weeks on the road away from family, and regular church activity was virtually impossible. The case was extremely contentious, and did not seem to be going well for my client. The opposing attorneys treated me like an enemy, and I felt isolated, lonely, and discouraged, with no change in sight. After one particularly difficult day, I stood on the balcony of a hotel room, thirty floors above the ground, and contemplated what I thought might be a quick and easy escape from the pressure and trauma of my seemingly hopeless situation. A step off the balcony appeared to be a reasonably desirable alternative to my unhappy state.

"I don't precisely remember why I decided not to jump, but as I look back from my current perspective, I shudder at the thought of how close I came to a disastrous choice that would have caused unspeakable misery to myself and everyone close to me. I now can see the countless joys and blessings of the past fifteen years that I would have thrown away, had I stepped off that balcony. But at the time, I had become so consumed with my "project" that I was "blind" to everything important in my life – my true identity, my relationships with family and friends, my purpose for being on earth, and my future filled with unlimited opportunities for happiness and fulfillment. I coined a phrase for this – 'Project Induced Blindness' – PIB."

### What are the symptoms of "Project Induced Blindness"?

Overwhelmed  
Out of control  
Too many commitments  
Feelings of incompetence  
Feelings of failure  
Unhappy  
Discouraged  
Isolated  
See no future  
Fatigued  
Hopeless  
Desire to escape

### **How can a healthy, prosperous, active LDS attorney with a beautiful family and a bright future become “blind” to everything positive that the future holds?**

Is there something about the legal profession makes attorneys particularly susceptible to PIB?

Is there something about *LDS* attorneys that makes them particularly susceptible to PIB?

Consider Matthew 25:14-30  
(the parable of the talents).

Consider 2 Nephi 9:28-29  
(learned / wise / foolishness)

How does the legal profession compare to the medical profession? See, Russell M. Nelson, “Identity, Priority, and Blessings,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 6.

### **What character attributes contribute to professional success?**

Doctrine & Covenants 58:26-28  
(anxiously engaged, power is in them)  
Hard working  
Dedicated  
Focused  
Committed  
High priority to work  
Desire for Success

### **How might these *positive* attributes subtly become *negative* causes of PIB?**

2 Nephi 9:28-29 (learned, wise, foolishness)  
Hard working -- Manic  
Dedicated – Obsessed  
Focused – Tunnel Vision  
Committed – Neglect All Else  
High Priority – Misplaced Priority  
Desire for Success – Prideful of Honors

## **The Importance of Balance**

“How vital such balance is was shown by the man who was driving a huge truck full of lumber. The truck had a powerful motor with plenty of horsepower, the frame was well built, and it held all the lumber that could be stacked on its mighty bed. But a strange thing happened to that truck as it pulled out toward the street. Just as the rear wheel dipped into the gutter, the entire front end of the truck reared up off the ground. The heavy load of lumber on the truck bed teetered slowly toward the ground. It was an odd sight to see the driver sitting in the cab frantically turning the front wheels back and forth but unable to steer his vehicle. The power was still there, but he couldn’t do anything with it. He lost control, not because of the size of the load of lumber or the lack of power in the vehicle, but because the load was misplaced.

“Sometimes, like the load of lumber, our lives get out of balance. Before we know it, our load controls us. We lose the ability to steer and to direct our lives.” Robert L. Backman, “Balance,” *Life in the Law: Answering God’s Interrogatories*, 12 (BYU Press 2002).

## **Section B: What are Concepts, Strategies and Activities that can help counteract “Project Induced Blindness”?**

### **Identity**

Abraham 3:22-26  
(noble & great, thou art one of them)

To what extent was the PIB experience related in the introduction the result of the attorney forgetting his true identity?

When you look in the mirror, who do you see?  
-- A lawyer?  
-- A whole person?  
-- The person you are becoming?

“It is important to know who you are and who you may become. It is more important that what you do, vital as your work is. You pursue an education to prepare for life’s work, but you also need to prepare for life – eternal life. I emphasize this because some people on life’s journey forget who they really are and what is really important. Without sure identity and priority, blessings that matter most are at the mercy of things that matter least.” Russell M. Nelson, “Identity, Priority, and Blessings,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2001, 6.

## **Eternal Perspective**

Doctrine & Covenants 121:1-10  
Doctrine & Covenants 122  
(adversity, Joseph in Liberty Jail)

To what extent was the PIB experience related in the introduction the result of the attorney losing perspective?

How can the following assist in keeping life's challenges in proper perspective?

- Church Attendance
- Temple Attendance
- Initiatory Ordinances
- Patriarchal Blessing
- Visualizing your future

## Times & Seasons

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

In law, medicine and many other careers, there will be "times and seasons" when professional commitments temporarily overshadow everything else. How can we remember that this is "temporary"?

What am I to learn from this?

I will look back on this and think . . .

## Family Activity

Matthew 6:19-21  
(treasure on earth, heaven)

How can family activities counteract PIB?

How do you respond to the question, Why am I working?

How can family involvement be a sufficient part of the life of a busy professional?

- Flexible work hours
- After dinner work at home
- Family involvement in work
  - Office visits
  - Court visits
  - Business trips

"How do you determine your *priority*? Ask yourself, What do I really want most of all? Compare your answer with the high standard revealed by your Creator. He said you are to "seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness; and all . . . things shall be added unto you" (JST, Matt. 6:38; see KJV, Matt. 6:33, footnote a). You build up the kingdom of God as you place your family first." Russell M. Nelson, "Identity, Priority, and Blessings," *Ensign*, Aug. 2001 9.

## Friendship / Fellowship

Doctrine & Covenants 121:9  
(friends stand by you)

Alma 17:1-3  
(Alma & sons of Mosiah reunited)

Ephesians 2:19  
(no more strangers, fellow citizens)

To what extent was the PIB experience related in the introduction the result of the attorney feeling isolated from people who would understand?

How valuable and strengthening is a true friend and confidant who understands you?

Consider Joseph & Hyrum Smith.

How can you build such friendships?

## Personal Religious Devotion

How can faithful obedience to the principles of the gospel protect against PIB?

Doctrine & Covenants 10:5  
(pray always, conquer, escape)

Doctrine & Covenants 19:38  
(pray always, blessings, treasure)

Alma 37:36-37  
(thoughts to Lord, counsel with Lord)

Matthew 18:20  
(2 or 3 gathered, there am I)

John 5:39  
(search scriptures, eternal life)

3 Nephi 27:27  
(what manner of men? even as I am)

## Accepting / Fulfilling Church Callings

Mosiah 2:17  
(service to fellow beings, God)

Matthew 25:35-40  
(done unto least, done unto me)

Doctrine & Covenants 58:26-28  
(anxiously engaged, power is in them)

Do church callings increase or lessen PIB?

Two edged sword  
additional stress / additional satisfaction

Random Acts of Kindness  
--anxiously engaged, much righteousness

"[W]hether you're heading for private practice, government service, or an in-house position in business, I believe you will find your greatest professional fulfillment in doing for others what they cannot do for themselves. Charles Dickens once wrote that "any Christian spirit working kindly in its little sphere . . . will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness." That truth applies as fully

to the practice of law as it did to Scrooge's counting house." David G. Campbell, "Satisfaction in the Law," *Life in the Law: Answering God's Interrogatories* (BYU Press 2002) 66, quoting Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963) 51.

## Pro Bono Work

How can pro bono work be an antidote to PIB?

"Lawyers do much work without a fee, and rightly so. Once I asked President John K. Edmunds, who presided over the Chicago Stake while practicing law, how he handled Church members who had no idea of the value of cost of his legal services. He told me of doing hours of legal work for a sister who had no idea of its value. Though he decided to do it freely, she insisted on paying the fair value of his services. He agreed to accept what she felt was fair. When she reached in her purse and handed him a 50-cent piece, he gravely reached in his pocket and handed her a quarter in change." John K. Carmack, "Unmeasured Factors of Success," *Life in the Law: Answering God's Interrogatories*, (BYU Press 2002) 31.

## Physical Activity

Doctrine & Covenants 89:18-21  
(Word of Wisdom promises)

How can physical exercise be an antidote to PIB?

- Stress relief
- Meditation
- Empowerment
- Self Image
- Perspective

"I am now deeply grateful for the fact that I had fifty-two years of virtually perfect health, with hardly a day of sickness during all that time. During those fifty-two years, my energy supply was virtually inexhaustible. I was able to run thirteen marathons, including two at Boston and one that I finished in under three hours." Rex E. Lee, *Marathon of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996) 165.

## Hobbies / Fun

2 Nephi 2:25  
(men are that they might have joy)

How can recreational activities counteract PIB?

How can those same recreational activities increase PIB, if out of balance?

"For Elder Nelson, skiing is not just a valuable source of recreation and physical exercise; skiing also provides an opportunity to meditate in the serene

surroundings of snow-bedecked pines. High on each mountain top, he revels in the beauties of nature and returns home rejuvenated in mind, body, and spirit." Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003) 366.

Many attorneys keep track of their professional lives in tenths of an hour. How can you prevent the "six minute" curse of time sheets from making you feel guilty about leisure time?

## Count Your Blessings

Doctrine & Covenants 78:17-19  
(great blessings, riches of eternity)  
*Hymns* 241

Why is it therapeutic to take inventory of your blessings?

- Alive
- Health
- Gospel knowledge
- Family
- Friends
- Education
- Passed bar
- Employed
- 99% of world wants your "problems"
- Enjoy art and music
- Appreciate nature
- Visualize your future

## Avoid Destructive Comparisons

Exodus 20:17  
(thou shalt not covet)  
Proverbs 23:4-5  
(labor not to be rich, riches fly away)  
Proverbs 16:18-19  
(pride goeth before a fall)  
Isaiah 5:21  
(Woe to wise in their own eyes)

How might comparison to others' success make an attorney more susceptible to PIB?

"The proud make every man their adversary by pitting their intellects, opinions, works, wealth, talents, or any other worldly measuring device against others. In the words of C. S. Lewis: 'Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. ... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone.' (*Mere Christianity*, New York: Macmillan, 1952, pp. 109-10.) . . . The proud depend upon the world to tell them whether they have value or not. Their self-esteem is determined by where they are judged to be on the ladders of worldly success. They feel worthwhile as individuals if the numbers beneath

them in achievement, talent, beauty, or intellect are large enough. Pride is ugly. It says, 'If you succeed, I am a failure.' " Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989, 5, 6.

How can we avoid judging our life and our legal practice by comparison to others?

- Financial
- Prestigious
- Glamorous

What are the differences between healthy, positive ambition, and negative, destructive competition?

### How do you define "success"?

Matthew 10:39  
(findeth life, lose it)

How does your definition of "success" affect your susceptibility to PIB?

"Don't aim at success – the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself. Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it. I want you to listen to what your conscience commands you to do and go on the carry it out to the best of your knowledge. Then you will live to see in the long run – in the long run, I say – success will follow you precisely because you had forgotten to think about it." Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1985) 16.

Have you ever felt the truth of the phrase, "For my happiness, it is not enough that I succeed, but also that my friends fail."

### The Power of A Positive Attitude

Proverbs 23:7  
(as thinketh in heart, so is he)

"Of course there are times of sorrow. Of course there are hours of concern and anxiety. We all worry. But the Lord has told us to lift our hearts and rejoice. I see so many people . . . who seem never to see the sunshine, but who constantly walk with storms under cloudy skies. Cultivate an attitude of happiness. Cultivate a spirit of optimism. Walk with faith, rejoicing in the beauties of nature, in the goodness of those you love, in the testimony which you carry in your heart concerning things divine." Gordon B. Hinckley, "If Thou Art Faithful," *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 92.

## Recognizing Clinical Depression

Jan Underwood Pinborough, "Keeping Mentally Well," *Ensign*, Sept. 1990, 48.

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### Section C: Conclusion -- Even Nephi faced stress and depression at times. Like him, we can overcome it, and can find joy and rejoicing in the Lord

"Notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me. And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; *nevertheless*, I know in whom I have trusted. My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep. He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh. He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me. Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime. . . . O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions? . . . Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul. Do not anger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions. Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation. 2 Nephi 4:17-30.

G. G. Vandagriff, "Escaping My Valley of Sorrow," *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 65.

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