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“The Lord Will Help You”

Elder Ronald A. Rasband, Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Sister Melanie Rasband

Student participants: Savanna Magtalas, Newton Bissombolo, Carolina Mazzaro

President Brian K. Ashton: Brothers and sisters, welcome. I’m here today with Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Prior to his call to full-time Church service, Elder Rasband was the president of Huntsman Corporation, a global chemical company. In this role, Elder Rasband traveled the globe and gained significant international business experience. In his current role, Elder Rasband supervises the Africa Central and Africa South Areas of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has seen the impact of BYU-Pathway in the lives of our students in Africa and elsewhere. Elder Rasband is also a trustee of the Church Board of Education and Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of the Church Board of Education where he supervises the work of BYU-Pathway and the other Church schools.

We’re also very pleased to have Sister Melanie Rasband with us, who with Elder Rasband have completed their 51st wedding anniversary. Congratulations! Together they have five children, plus their children’s spouses, and 29 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

I have the privilege to work closely with Elder Rasband. I testify that he is an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his calling as a special witness of Jesus Christ and his ecclesiastical assignments, Elder Rasband has been given a mantle to know what you and I need in our work and studies at BYU-Pathway. As I have followed his counsel, I have been blessed tremendously. Please listen carefully to Elder Rasband’s counsel in this devotional. I promise that as you do so, the Lord will speak to you through him.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband: Thank you very much, Brian, President Ashton. Sister Rasband and I are very happy to be here with you today, and we’re especially happy to know that we’re being broadcast to all of the students and faculty of BYU-Pathway throughout the entire world. We’re thrilled to be with you and look forward to interacting with our students. Let’s go!

President Ashton: Well, we have three students with us from all around the world today who have questions. Savanna Magtalas is from Sinaloa, Philippines, and she has our first question. Savanna.

Savanna Magtalas: Hello, Elder and Sister Rasband. So here’s my question. What did you learn from your international business career that could help us as students?

Elder Rasband: Well, thank you Savanna. It’s nice to be with you in the Philippines. Sister Rasband and I have been there several times, and we love the Saints and the people of the Philippines. So, thank you for representing them in our devotional here today. As I thought about your question, I think that the biggest thing I could say to all of you students is that the world is a very competitive place. And having done business all over the world in many different countries with many different peoples, I’ve learned that what really will distinguish you as Latter-day Saints is education, and experience, and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost. And today we’re talking to a crowd of students all over the world. President Ashton tells me there’s more than 70,000. So, I think if you remember the importance of education, the importance of your life’s experience, and then always follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost to guide you, you’ll do very well in getting through BYU-Pathway and launching into your career or whatever you choose to do. Now, I know Sister Rasband has an important view on this also. I’d like to invite her to share it with you.

Sister Rasband: Thank you. Well, I know that our Creator expects His children everywhere to educate themselves. He issued a commandment: “Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom. Yea, seek ye out of the

best books, words of wisdom. Seek learning even by study and also by faith.”¹ And He assures us that knowledge acquired here will be ours forever.² I am so grateful and just so thrilled that our Savior is allowing His Church on the earth to provide an opportunity worldwide for others to learn and to grow and better themselves in their opportunities for their futures personally and as well as for their own families.

Elder Rasband: Beautiful. Perfectly said.

President Ashton: Newton Bissombolo is from Brazzaville in the Republic of the Congo, and Newton, I understand you have a question for Elder Rasband.

Newton Bissombolo: Elder Rasband, why do you think learning English as a second language is important?

Elder Rasband: Newton, that’s a really important question. And as you may know, I’ve been to Brazzaville. I’ve been to Kinshasa. I supervised that part of the world for the Church. And I know how much English is necessary to help students, especially in the Church, especially maybe on their missions even, to begin to get a mastery of the English language. And I noticed, Newton, you are a perfect example of that. Where did you learn your English? Let me just ask you.

Newton: I learned English from books actually. I was reading a lot of books and watching a lot of movies.

Elder Rasband: Well, it’s going to be a great blessing to you because, as you know, going back to my first response, the world being as competitive as it is, it’s generally competitive in English. English is the language of the world in terms of business for sure. Not in all occupations — but in business, English is the language of the world. And so especially with BYU-Pathway now having this wonderful program of providing remote job opportunities, English is key to that. Now I used to do business in my professional career with Microsoft, as an example. And who would have thought that Microsoft would be looking for remote job students and occupations in the Congo? But that’s exactly what’s happening, isn’t it?

President Ashton: Yes, it is.

Elder Rasband: Don’t they have to have English as a prerequisite to do that?

President Ashton: Yes, and they have to be very clear in how they speak.

Elder Rasband: So, Newton, I noticed that you are very crisp in your language. You’re very careful to say your words correctly, and I just say to all of you students around the world, if you want to have an opportunity to progress, especially in a business career, especially with remote jobs, you’re going to have to learn English. And we’ve even made it an opportunity for missionaries to learn English during their language study time of their missions. So Newton, think of all the French missionaries in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Congo and Brazzaville. If those French-speaking missionaries could learn English or get started on English while they’re missionaries, they could be more prepared to move into BYU-Pathway and progress to learn English and get a degree. Now why is that important? It’s important because when you get these jobs you could have, what you call, a living wage.

President Ashton: Yes, a Church living wage.

Elder Rasband: Tell them what a Church living wage is, President.

President Ashton: So it’s a wage that allows you to serve as a bishop or Relief Society president, have one job, support your family, educate your children, and still get at least six hours of sleep a night.

Elder Rasband: So, a Church living wage not only will help you to provide for your families, if you’re married and have children, but it will allow you to be able to serve in the Church also. Now that’s of great interest to me. Because as we continue to have wonderful success in all of your countries and all of the countries where BYU-Pathway is, we need to have leaders trained how to bring them into the Church. I see you as Relief Society presidents, as Young Women presidents, as an elders quorum president, as a bishop, and on and on and on. And a BYU-Pathway education will help prepare you for having some prosperity in your life. And prosperity, as you may recall, was the most often offered blessing of the Book of Mormon. You remember the Lord said, “If ye keep my commandments, I will prosper you in this land.” That’s the Philippines, that’s Brazil, that’s the Congo. You keep the commandments of the Lord, you get as much education as you can, and as I said, you’ll begin to get experience in your life. You’ll follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost, and the Lord will help direct your paths and put you into opportunities where you can bless your families and you can bless the Church.

President Ashton: And if you don’t mind, I can testify that that’s true. It’s happened in my life, so thank you.

Elder Rasband: President, before you go to the third and last question, aren’t there literally thousands of our BYU-Pathway students now that are, because of their language skills in English, participating in remote jobs?

President Ashton: Yes, there’s multiple thousands that are doing that right now, and we see that growing pretty significantly over the next few years.

Elder Rasband: So, could we promise our young people that if they listen and take this challenge and learn English, for most of them as a second language, that the Lord will bless them and will help them find opportunities?

President Ashton: Absolutely! In fact, we’ve seen that — consistently. If they do what the Lord wants them to do, they follow those promptings you talked about, and they’re diligent and learn English, they almost always end up with much better jobs.

Elder Rasband: Perfect. Thank you.

President Ashton: Thank you. Carolina Mazzaro is from São Paulo, Brazil, and she has our third and final question.

Carolina Mazzaro: Hi, Elder Rasband. Hi, Sister Rasband. It’s a pleasure to be here. My question is, what does it mean to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ?

Elder Rasband: Thank you, Carolina. That’s perhaps the most important question that anybody could ask me. So I appreciate you speaking on behalf of all these students to ask me that question. It reminds me, Sister Rasband, after I was called to the Twelve and became an Apostle, people would ask you and they’d ask me, “Sister Rasband, Elder Rasband, what has changed in your life?” How would you and how have we responded to that question?

Sister Rasband: With a one-word answer: everything.

Elder Rasband: Everything has changed. And one of the reasons everything has changed is because when one becomes an Apostle of the Lord, our focus is on the Lord Jesus Christ for the rest of our lives. You know, when I was in business, I looked forward to the day that I would retire and could have lots of free time. That’s not going to happen now. Now we are honored and very pleased to be able to serve the Lord full-time. And I remember when President Monson ordained me an Apostle, he used these words, which specifically answer your question. He said, “Now Elder Rasband, we call you to be a special witness of the name of Jesus Christ in all the world — at every opportunity, in every place, in every circumstance, to bear witness of His sacred name.”

That’s the answer to your question. Whatever situation Sister Rasband and I are in, including how I will finish our devotional today, my responsibility, my privilege to all these wonderful students, to you three who’ve participated with us today, is to bear you my solemn witness that I know that Jesus Christ is the living Son of the living God. And I love Him. And I know He loves every one of you. You must remember, we love you, we thank you, and the Lord’s Church needs you. We need you today, and we need you all for the rest of your lives as devoted servants to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I promise you today, in the name of the Lord, that if you’ll follow the principles taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in BYU-Pathway that your lives will be blessed, and you will be instruments in the Lord’s hands of building up His Church and establishing it in every country that BYU-Pathway is in. And I leave you that testimony today on behalf of Sister Rasband and I and your President Brian Ashton, in the loving name of Jesus Christ, amen.

¹ [Doctrine and Covenants 88:118](#)

² See [Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19](#)