

iChoose to Remember

My favorite part of Nephi's declaration in 1 Nephi 3:7 is, "I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall *prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them*" (emphasis added). I love this principle of the gospel that God will bless us as we strive to keep His commandments and do His will.

A story that illustrates this for me is from my ancestor, Philemon Merrill. This story takes place in the summer of 1843 when Philemon was 23 years old. Philemon was a member of the rescue party who retrieved the Prophet Joseph from those who were trying to bring him back to Missouri. The following is from an autobiography of Philemon Merrill's.

At this point there was a thing demanded of me by the Prophet that is already in History, but I will with delicacy insert here. There was a lawyer in the company, that was against Joseph, who gave a banter that he could throw any man in the State of Illinois at side hold. Brother Stephen Markham, being a man that was a great wrestler at that hold, took the banter and the man threw Markham. Then Brother Joseph arose to his feet and said to me, to get up, as I was lying on the ground, and throw the man. I was about to say that it was not my hold to wrestle, but before I could say a word, he commanded me to throw him, with a power that I never felt in my life before or since, I rose to my feet and told the man to choose his side. Holding up my arms he approached me with his right arm under my left. When his one man said it was not a fair hold I said, "I gave him his choice and it made it fair." (Footnote: This wrestling hold was considered "not fair", as the lawyer there by would have a double advantage. However, Merrill felt such confidence in the Prophet that it made no difference to him how much advantage his opponent had, and he allowed the hold.)

Brother Joseph said, "When I count three, throw him" When the number three was said, I threw the man over my left shoulder, as if he was a child. When Joseph said, "What do you think of that? He is not my best wrestler."

I love how this story echoes the principle that Nephi taught: God will provide a way to accomplish His commands. The "For the Strength of Youth" pamphlet says, "The Holy Ghost will give you strength to make correct choices" (pg. 13). As we listen to the Spirit we will have strength to do things we could not otherwise do. As General Conference approaches I would hope that each and every one of us would listen to the council of the Prophets and to act according to their words. God will give us strength to do so as He did when Philemon Merrill obeyed Joseph Smith. Let's follow the Prophet.

-Joshua Crockett

Philippians 4:13; 1 Nephi 17:50

Please submit your favorite family history story to me so that I can share it in an iChoose to Remember issue. Email your story to me at joshcrockett0101@gmail.com. I hope to get more stories than I can use! Feel free to explain the gospel principle your story demonstrates or to just send it to me on its own.