

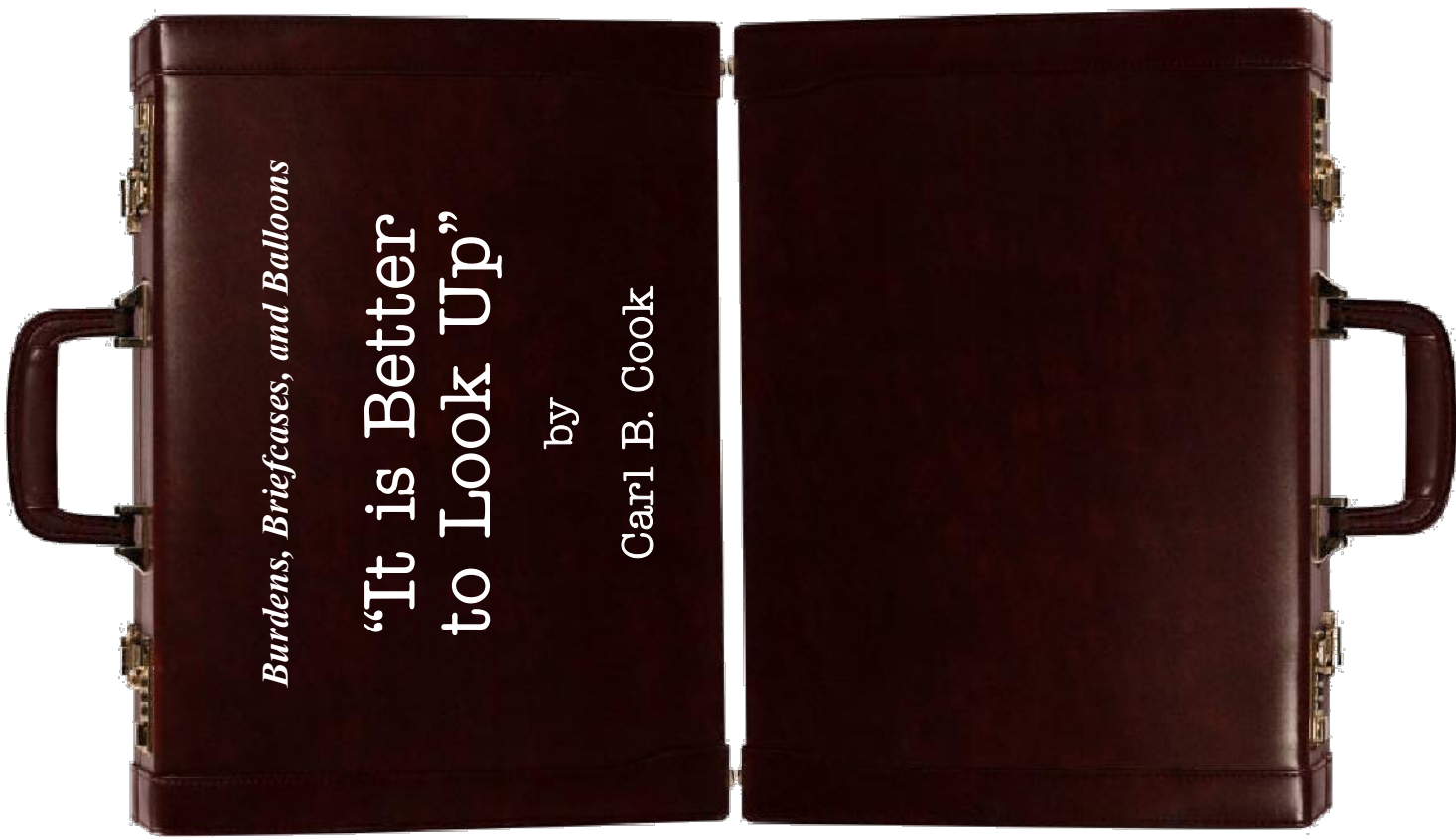


Burdens, Briefcases, and Balloons

“It is Better
to Look Up”

by

Carl B. Cook



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The Faith Files

- “At the end of a particularly tiring day toward the end of my first week as a General Authority, my briefcase was overloaded and my mind was preoccupied with the question “How can I possibly do this?” I left the office of the Seventy and entered the elevator of the Church Administration Building. As the elevator descended, my head was down and I stared blankly at the floor.
The door opened and someone entered, but I didn’t look up. As the door closed, I heard someone ask, “What are you looking at down there?” I recognized that voice—it was President Thomas S. Monson. I quickly looked up and responded, “Oh, nothing.” (I’m sure that clever response inspired confidence in my abilities!)
But he had seen my subdued countenance and my heavy briefcase. He smiled and lovingly suggested, while pointing heavenward, “It is better to look up!” As we traveled down one more level, he cheerfully explained that he was on his way to the temple. When he bid me farewell, his parting glance spoke again to my heart, “Now, remember, it is better to look up.”
- Experience has taught me that if we, like President Monson, exercise our faith and look to God for help, we will not be overwhelmed with the burdens of life. We will not feel incapable of doing what we are called to do or need to do. We will be strengthened, and our lives will be filled with peace and joy.³ We will come to realize that most of what we worry about is not of eternal significance—and if it is, the Lord will help us. But we must have the faith to look up and the courage to follow His direction.
- Recently Sister Cook and I attended a women’s conference in South Africa. After we listened to some inspiring messages on applying the Atonement in our lives, the stake Relief Society president invited everyone outside. We were each given a helium balloon. She explained that our balloon represented whatever burden, trial, or hardship was holding us back in our lives. On the count of three, we released our balloons, or our “burdens.” As we looked up and watched our burdens float away, there was an audible “Ahhhh.” That simple act of releasing our balloons provided a marvelous reminder of the indescribable joy that comes from looking up and thinking of Christ.”

-Carl B. Cook, General Conference Oct. 2011

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