

# Ensign



**The Why of Our  
Missionary Work, p. 34**

**Pioneers in the Pacific, p. 50**

**HOME** the Heart  
of Learning p. 28



*"All are born with the Light of Christ, a guiding influence which permits each person to recognize right from wrong. What we do with that light and how we respond to those promptings to live righteously is part of the test of mortality."*

President Boyd K. Packer,  
President of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles, "These Things  
I Know," *Ensign*, May 2013, 8.

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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF  
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## Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening.  
The following are some examples.



**“Why We Share the Gospel,” page 34:**  
Consider reading as a family the missionary  
purpose statement quoted from *Preach My  
Gospel* on page 35 of the article. Suggest that

each family member select  
a word or phrase in the  
statement that is espe-  
cially meaningful to them  
and share why. You could  
then discuss one or more  
of Elder Christofferson’s  
five examples of what  
happens when we under-  
stand our missionary pur-  
pose. Consider selecting a  
video from the “Members  
and Missionaries” section  
of hasteningthework.lds.  
org to watch together.  
Afterward, have each  
family member choose  
one way to keep the  
missionary spirit during  
the next week. You could  
conclude by singing “I  
Want to Be a Missionary  
Now” (*Children’s  
Songbook*, 168).

**“Technicolor Isaiah,” page 60:** Prior  
to family home evening, select a chapter of  
Isaiah to study and share with your family  
(you may want to use the study aids listed on  
page 62 or others). When  
your family meets, read  
the chapter together and  
identify its major themes.  
Consider marking these  
themes in different colors  
as described in the article.  
Then talk about what  
you’ve learned. You may  
want to provide coloring  
materials for younger  
children to draw pictures  
of some of the symbols  
or images used in the  
chapter. Close by discuss-  
ing ideas about studying  
Isaiah and ways your  
family can make scripture  
study more meaningful  
and enjoyable.

### Building Strong Walls

One of our favorite family home  
evening lessons was one my hus-  
band based on the story of the  
Nephites building strong walls to  
defend their cities against their  
enemies, the Lamanites (see  
Alma 48:7–10). After he read  
the story to us, we talked about  
the need to make our home  
a place of safety from worldly  
influences. We identified some  
“stones” to use in building a  
strong wall of protection: prayer,  
scripture study, obedience to the  
commandments, family home  
evening, attending church and  
the temple, and so on. Our  
children loved the lesson and still  
talk about defending our home  
from the influences of the world.

**Wendee Packard Valentine, Utah, USA**

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showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at  
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whose work is selected for publication  
will be notified.



By President  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor  
in the First Presidency

# GOD'S Harvest

A woman named Christa once worked for a small seed company. She loved her job. It was a source of immense wonder that each tiny seed she sold had the capacity to transform itself into something quite miraculous—a carrot, a cabbage, or even a mighty oak tree.

Christa loved sitting at her computer taking orders and answering questions. But one day she received a complaint that puzzled her.

“The seeds don’t work,” the customer said. “I bought them two months ago and still nothing.”

“Did you plant them in good soil and give them enough water and sunlight?” Christa asked.

“No, but I did my part,” the customer replied. “I bought the seeds. After all, they are *guaranteed* to grow.”

“But you didn’t plant them?”

“Heavens no. That would mean getting my hands dirty.”

Christa thought about this and decided that planting guidelines would have to be written. She resolved what the first guideline would be: “You must follow planting instructions for the seeds to sprout. You can’t set them on the shelf and expect them to grow.”

It wasn’t long before another complaint puzzled her.

“The seeds aren’t producing,” a customer claimed.

“Did you plant them in good soil?” Christa responded.

“Did you give them the appropriate amount of water and sunlight?”

“Oh, yes,” the customer insisted. “I did all that—exactly as it says on the package. But they don’t work.”

“Did anything happen at all? Did they sprout?”

“Nothing happened,” the customer said. “I planted them just as directed. I was hoping to have tomatoes for dinner. Now I am very disappointed.”

“Wait,” Christa replied. “Are you saying you planted the seeds today?”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” the customer replied. “I planted them a week ago. I was not expecting to see tomatoes on the first day; I was patient. Let me tell you, there has been a lot of watering and waiting between then and now.”

Christa knew she would have to add another guideline: “These seeds conform to the laws of biology. If you plant the seeds in the morning and expect to eat tomatoes later that week, you will be disappointed. You must be patient and wait for the work of nature to unfold before you.”

All went well until Christa received another complaint.

“I’m very disappointed in your seeds,” the customer began. “I planted them just as the package recommended. I gave them water, made sure they had sunshine, and waited until finally they produced their harvest.”

“Sounds like you did everything right,” Christa said.

“That’s all very fine,” the customer replied. “But what I got was zucchini!”



“My records show that those were the seeds you ordered,” Christa said.

“But I don’t want zucchini; I want pumpkins!”

“I’m not following.”

“I planted the seeds in my pumpkin patch—the very same soil that produced pumpkins last year. I praised the plants every day, telling them what beautiful pumpkins they would become. But instead of large, round, orange pumpkins, I got long, green zucchini. Tons of them!”

Christa knew then that guidelines might not be enough and that it was necessary to state a principle: “The seed you plant and the time of the planting determine the harvest.”

### The Law of the Harvest

The Apostle Paul taught about God’s harvest:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

“For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but

he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:7–9).

In recent times, the Lord has given us additional wisdom and insight into this immutable law:

### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**D**iscuss with those you visit how the law of God’s harvest applies to relationships, conversion and testimony, or career and educational goals. You could read and consider scriptures related to this law, such as Proverbs 11:18; 2 Corinthians 9:6; and Alma 32. Encourage them to review previous goals and set new goals to achieve righteous outcomes. Help them develop a plan to act consistently in order to reach their long-term purpose.

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

“And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21).

What we sow, we reap.

God’s harvest is unimaginably glorious. To those who honor Him, His bountiful blessings come in “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. . . . For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

Just as earthly seeds require effort and patience, so do many of the blessings of heaven. We cannot put our religion on a shelf and expect to harvest spiritual blessings. But if we plant and nurture gospel standards in the daily life of our family, there is a high probability that our children will grow up to produce spiritual fruit of great value to them and to future generations.

God’s answers to our prayers do not always come immediately—sometimes they do not appear to come at all—but God knows what is best for His children. Assuredly, one day we will see more clearly; and on that day we will recognize the goodness and generosity of heaven.

In the meantime, our goal and great joy is to walk in the footsteps of our Master and Savior and to live good and refined lives so that the promised and precious harvest of God’s priceless blessings can be ours.

What we sow, we reap.

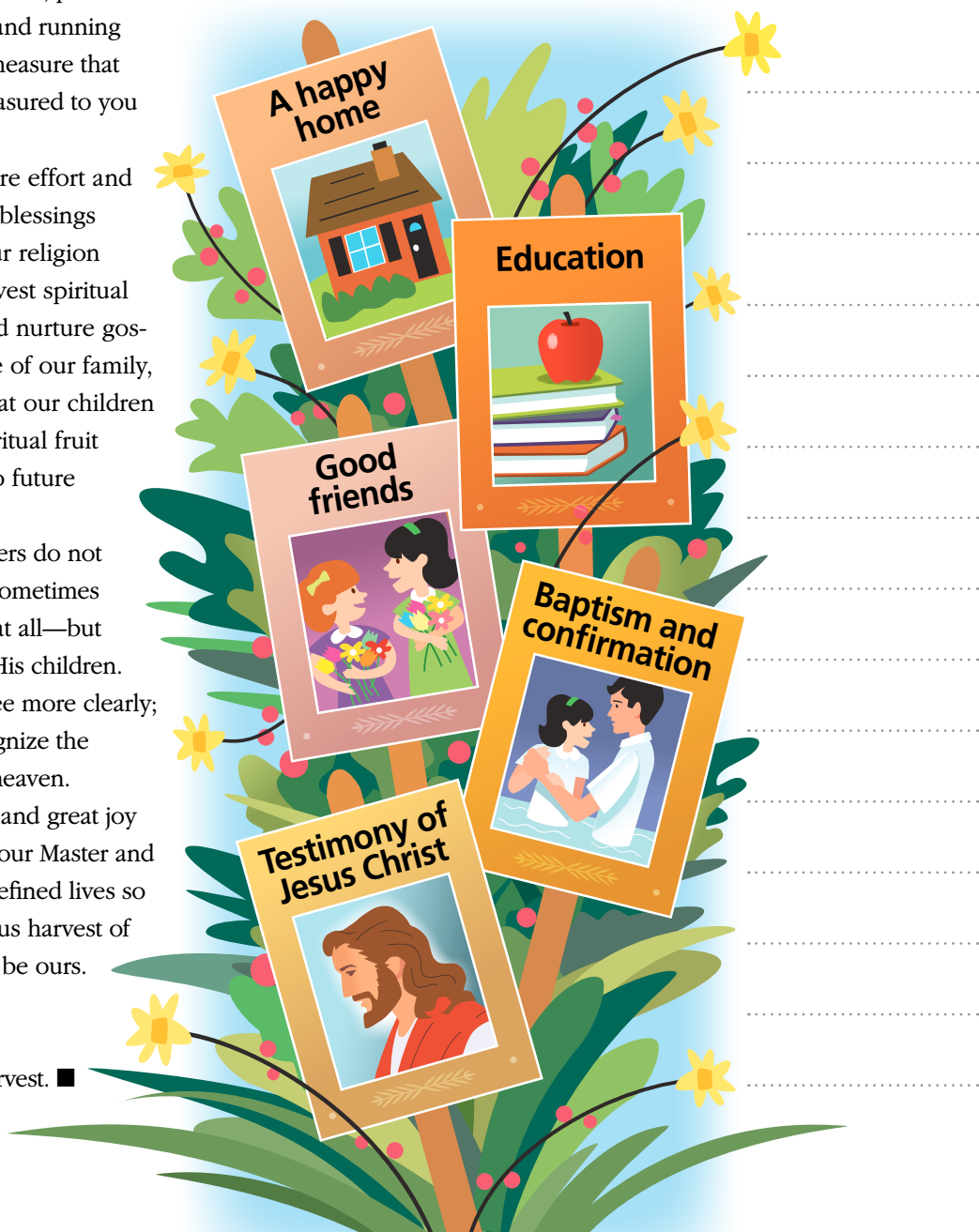
That is the law of heaven.

That is the law of God’s harvest. ■

## Plan Your Harvest

**G**od’s law of the harvest is that if we want something later, we have to work for it now. If we want to grow a garden, we need to plant the seeds, water them, and protect them from weeds. If we don’t do this, we won’t have any harvest later!

This garden shows some good “fruit” you may want in your life. On the lines below, write some things you can do this month to help you receive these blessings.





Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and roles of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

## The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ: Messiah

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring aspects of the mission of the Savior.

The scriptures teach that we can dwell in the presence of God “through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8). *Messiah* is “an Aramaic and Hebrew word meaning ‘the anointed.’ . . . In the New Testament Jesus is called the Christ, which is the Greek equivalent of *Messiah*. It means the anointed Prophet, Priest, King, and Deliverer.”<sup>1</sup>

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified: “I know [Jesus Christ] is the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah who will one day come again in final glory, to reign on earth as Lord of lords and King of kings. I know that there is no other name given under heaven whereby a man [or woman] can be saved.”<sup>2</sup>

“[Jesus Christ] is the Savior and Redeemer of the world,” said President



Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “He is the promised Messiah. He lived a perfect life and atoned for our sins. He will ever be at our side. He will fight our battles. He is our hope; He is our salvation; He is the way.”<sup>3</sup>

### Additional Scriptures

John 1:38–41; 4:25–26, 40–42; 2 Nephi 6:13; 25:16–17

### NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Messiah,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 42.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Way of the Disciple,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 78.

### Consider This

Why is it important to understand the Savior’s role as the Messiah?

Faith, Family, Relief



### From the Scriptures

Female disciples of Christ have been witnesses of His role as the Messiah. Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus Christ. She was the first to see “the stone taken away from the sepulchre” on the morning of Christ’s Resurrection. She “stood without at the sepulchre weeping” after discovering that His body was no longer in the tomb.

Then “she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.” Mary recognized that He was not the gardener but Jesus Christ, the Messiah. (See John 20:1–17.)

# APRIL 2014 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

*“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).*

*As you review the April 2014 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.*

## DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



## Put God’s Laws First

“The word *religion* literally means . . . ‘to tie back’ to God. The question we might ask ourselves is, are we securely tied to God so that our faith shows, or are we actually tied to something else? . . . Many put other priorities ahead of God. . . . God’s laws must ever be our standard. In dealing with controversial issues, we should first search for God’s guidance. . . .

“The temptation to be popular may prioritize public opinion above the word of God. . . . Even if ‘everyone is doing it,’ wrong is never right. . . . I pray that you will be securely tied back to God, that His eternal truths will be etched on your heart forever.”

**Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Let Your Faith Show,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 29, 30, 31.**

Get ideas for evaluating your priorities at [lds.org/go/prioritiesE814](http://lds.org/go/prioritiesE814).

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



## Hope

“I suggest that you take both the short and the long view as you try to give the inheritance of hope to your family. . . . There are things you can do early, when those you love are young. Remember that daily family prayer, family scripture study, and sharing our testimony in sacrament meeting are easier and more effective when children are young. . . . After all we can do in faith, the Lord will justify our hopes for greater blessings for our families than we can imagine.”

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Priceless Heritage of Hope,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 25.**

Find ways to leave a legacy for your family at [lds.org/go/legacyE814](http://lds.org/go/legacyE814).



### GO AND DO

President Thomas S. Monson asked us to “take the time to read the conference messages when they . . . are printed in coming issues of the *Ensign* and *Liahona* magazines, for they are deserving of our careful review and study.”

From “Until We Meet Again,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 115.



### FILL IN THE BLANK

1. “Coupled with prayer, \_\_\_\_\_ carries the power to protect families.” See [lds.org/go/reevesE814](http://lds.org/go/reevesE814) or Linda S. Reeves, “Protection from Pornography— a Christ-Focused Home,” 17.
2. “Knowledge . . . comes only through personal \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.” See [lds.org/go/packerE814](http://lds.org/go/packerE814) or President Boyd K. Packer, “The Witness,” 94.
3. “The gospel ‘is not weight; it is \_\_\_\_\_.’ It carries us.” See [lds.org/go/stevensE814](http://lds.org/go/stevensE814) or Jean A. Stevens, “Fear Not; I Am With Thee,” 83.
4. “Obedience . . . is a choice between \_\_\_\_\_ and God’s unlimited wisdom and omnipotence.” Find out at [lds.org/go/perryE814](http://lds.org/go/perryE814) or see Elder L. Tom Perry, “Obedience through Our Faithfulness,” 103.

Answers: 1. the Book of Mormon; 2. prayer, pondering; 3. wings; 4. our own limited knowledge and power

### DRAWING PARALLELS



### Love

Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what three speakers said about love:

- To youth: “Take heart. Pure Christlike love flowing from true righteousness can change the world.” —Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Cost—and Blessings—of Discipleship,” 8.
- To women: “As we look beyond our differences in age, culture, and circumstance . . . , we will be filled with the pure love of Christ.” —Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Sisterhood: Oh, How We Need Each Other,” 121.
- To men: “We . . . have committed to be a people who love God and our neighbor and who are willing to demonstrate that love through word and deed. That is the essence of who we are as disciples of Jesus Christ.” —President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?” 61.

Learn about what President Monson and others had to say about expressing love to all at [lds.org/go/loveE814](http://lds.org/go/loveE814).

# THE PROMISE OF OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

By Jarolyn Ballard Stout

*When my husband was diagnosed with cancer, I felt like our world came crashing down. With eight children to care for, how would I ever do it alone?*

It was a cloudy Sunday morning as I stood at the kitchen sink finishing the breakfast dishes. My two youngest children were watching a scripture video in the family room by the kitchen. I was lost in thought, and my cheeks were wet from tears. I couldn't get my mind off the cancer that had invaded our home. My husband had been fighting it for several years, but now it had spread. My faith seemed to be wavering. My mind was crowded with "what if?" thoughts.

Suddenly the scripture video interrupted my thoughts with words from a calming voice: "Peace, be still. . . .

"Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:39–40).

I dropped the dishrag and turned to look at the TV. The video was about the Savior calming the storm. It was as if the words had been spoken to me by the Savior Himself. A feeling of warmth and peace flooded over me. It was a reminder to stick to the faith I had learned so much about through the years of cancer. It was a faith buttressed by words in my patriarchal blessing.

I received my patriarchal blessing when I was 15. One sentence that then seemed just to describe a part of my temple marriage now held great promise for me. It spoke of the righteous priesthood holder I would marry and said that he would "help thee, guide thee and aid thee, not only in thy youth but clear into thy later years."

As I read and reread my patriarchal blessing during the years of battling cancer, that sentence gave me great hope. Each time, I found renewed faith in the promise of our future together. I remembered the great comfort that the Spirit had given me when my husband was first diagnosed. I memorized that part of my patriarchal

blessing, and when cancer tests came back with poor results, I remembered that promise.

I learned to let the Savior carry us, I learned that I must keep my faith constant, and I learned to combat mounting fears with faith. The video that morning reminded me to rely on the Lord.

Having faith gives me the ability to let Jesus Christ carry my burden. Just as the people of Alma who were in bondage did not feel the burden on their backs (see Mosiah 24:14), so it is for our family with fighting cancer. Our family has been able to face cancer without feeling the burdens it could bring.



## LEARNING THE PAINFUL LESSONS

"Difficulties come into our lives, problems we do not anticipate and which we would never choose. None of us is immune. The purpose of mortality is to learn and to grow to be more like our Father, and it is often during the difficult times that we learn the most, as painful as the lessons may be."

President Thomas S. Monson, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 111.



My husband still undergoes tests to track the cancer cells or to find possible tumors. We still have medical bills and the remaining side effects of treatments. And I still pray every day that my husband will have no more cancer. I pray that we will both live to old age. I also say to Heavenly Father, “Thy will be done.”

I do not know when the “later years” spoken of in my blessing will come. I hope the words in my blessing mean that my husband and I will be able to go on a mission when our children are raised. I hope they

mean that my husband will lead our horse while giving rides to our grandchildren and will bounce our grandchildren on his knee. But I know that whenever God takes him from this earth, it will be in His time.

I no longer worry about when those “later years” are. It does not matter. I trust that the Lord will honor that promise made to me in my patriarchal blessing. He has taken care of us through these years, and He will take care of us in the future. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

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***If you have not received your patriarchal blessing, consider talking to your bishop or branch president about receiving one. If you have a patriarchal blessing, do you read and ponder it often? Do you have faith in the Lord's promises?***

## WE KNOW WHERE HE IS

By Hernando Basto

*Our focus as an eternal family will always be centered on God.*

When the faces of two young men appeared in the upper portion of the door to our home in Colombia, we thought they were standing on something in order to see through the door. They were not; they were just very tall! Our three-year-old son, Pablo Ezequiel, looked up at them with astonishment. Within days they were his best friends.

Our family—Ludy, my wife; Erika; Yesica; and little Ezequiel—was looking for the Lord. We were living some gospel principles already: we prayed at mealtime, we prayed as a family, and we did family activities. Our lives were based on our family union. The appearance of those two “large angels,” as Ezequiel called the elders, confirmed our practices of strengthening the family and focusing on God.

Using the scriptures as their guide, Elders Fa and Fields taught us the path. We had been asking the Lord where we should worship. The Book of Mormon and the restored gospel gave the answers to each of the questions we had over the years in our family discussions. The answers fit perfectly, and we soon became members of the Church. One year later we made

covenants and were sealed together as an eternal family in the Bogotá Colombia Temple.

We felt such joy knowing that we had started our children on the gospel path. The Spirit was present in our lives and home, and Ezequiel, then four, offered a prayer that we will never forget. He said, “Dear Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this beautiful little boy that I am, amen.” We all said amen and hugged amid smiles. That little boy was our joy.

In the following years, we made it a habit to go to the temple regularly and were able to go two or three times each year. We live 420 km (260 miles) from the temple, but that has never seemed far to us. Preparing to go to the temple was always fun for us. Family history work is a priority for our kids, and they loved doing baptisms for the dead. There was always reverent preparation and then a celestial experience in the house of the Lord.

Ezequiel grew in spirit and in faith. His mother was his most prized treasure. He always had a special compliment for her. One day he told his mother, “Mama, I love you more than dinosaur bones!” We all laughed



because looking for dinosaur bones was his favorite activity.

Our precious son Ezequiel shared 14 years of his life with us in the gospel that unites us. He was always quick to obey. His love radiated through our home. His sisters and the



emptiness that his passing has left is filled by the knowledge that he was called by the Lord to serve a mission elsewhere. Ezequiel's funeral service was so special that many people felt prompted to investigate the Church. I always hoped he would serve a mission, and now he is. Because of the plan of salvation, we know where Ezequiel is and whom he is with.

Our focus is still on our family and on God. It is our testimony that God lives and has a plan for our lives. We must continue in faith. The absence of a loved one reminds us of the divine plan.

Some of the most comforting words we have found are from the Prophet Joseph Smith. In our hearts we recognize their truthfulness: "The Lord takes many away, even in infancy, that they may escape the envy of man, and the sorrows and evils of this present world; they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth; therefore, if rightly considered, instead of mourning we have reason to rejoice as they are delivered from evil, and we shall soon have them again" (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 176).

The hope of seeing Ezequiel again on the morning of the Resurrection gives courage to our souls and helps us endure the dark days. ■

*The author lives in Colombia.*

*To watch an inspiring video about the effect of the Savior's Atonement and Resurrection on our lives, visit [easter.mormon.org](http://easter.mormon.org).*

Saints in the scriptures were his role models. He was full of life and activity. He never missed his seminary classes. He filled our home with happiness. He was reverent when he passed the sacrament. But our life together changed when Ezequiel was called

home to our Heavenly Father. We miss him more than we can describe.

A rare infection took him from us. Despite the intense pain of his departure, we are certain that we will be with him again. We have the promise made in our temple sealing. The

# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more Church news and events.

## New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments, effective on August 1, 2014. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The Seventy are called by revelation, under the direction of the First Presidency, to assist the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in their ministry throughout the world.

“The history of the Seventies really goes back to the Old Testament,” said President Boyd K. Packer of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup> The first reference to the Seventy is found in Exodus 24:1, and they are later referred to in Numbers 11:16–17, 25, when they are gathered to assist Moses.

During Christ’s mortal ministry, He called the Seventy, instructed them in a manner similar to the Twelve Apostles, and sent them out “before his face,” explaining that those who heard their voices would hear His voice (see Matthew 10:1, 16–17; Luke 10).

“We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive Church,” President Packer said. “And it included Seventies.” (See Articles of Faith 1:6.) In today’s rapidly growing Church, the Seventy play an important role in assisting the Twelve. “Seventies by delegation can do anything the Twelve tell them to do,” President Packer said.<sup>2</sup> ■

### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy, Part One: Revelation and the Role of the Seventy” (video), LDS.org.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy.”

### Presidency of the Seventy



Ronald A. Rasband

**Assists in all areas**



L. Whitney Clayton

**Utah North  
Utah Salt Lake City  
Utah South**



Donald L. Hallstrom

**North America Northeast**



Richard J. Maynes

**North America Northwest  
North America West**



Craig C. Christensen

**Idaho  
North America Central**



Ulisses Soares

**North America Southeast**



Lynn G. Robbins

**North America Southwest**

### Africa Southeast



Stanley G. Ellis

**First Counselor**



Carl B. Cook

**President**



Kevin S. Hamilton

**Second Counselor**

### Africa West



Terence M. Vinson

**First Counselor**



LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.

**President**



Edward Dube

**Second Counselor**

### Asia



Randy D. Funk

**First Counselor**



Gerrit W. Gong

**President**



Chi Hong (Sam) Wong

**Second Counselor**



## Asia North



Koichi  
Aoyagi  
**First  
Counselor**



Michael T.  
Ringwood  
**President**



Scott D.  
Whiting  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Brazil



Jairo  
Mazzagardi  
**First  
Counselor**



Claudio R. M.  
Costa  
**President**



Marcos A.  
Aidukaitis  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Caribbean



Claudio D.  
Zivic  
**First  
Counselor**



J. Devn  
Cornish  
**President**



Hugo E.  
Martinez  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Central America



Adrián  
Ochoa  
**First  
Counselor**



Kevin R.  
Duncan  
**President**



Jose L.  
Alonso  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Europe



Patrick  
Kearon  
**First  
Counselor**



José A.  
Teixeira  
**President**



Timothy J.  
Dyches  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Europe East



Randall K.  
Bennett  
**First  
Counselor**



Bruce D.  
Porter  
**President**



Jörg  
Klebingat  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Mexico



Paul B.  
Pieper  
**First  
Counselor**



Benjamín  
De Hoyos  
**President**



Arnulfo  
Valenzuela  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Middle East/Africa North



Bruce A.  
Carlson



Larry S.  
Kacher

**Administered from Church  
headquarters**

## Pacific



O. Vincent  
Haleck  
**First  
Counselor**



Kevin W.  
Pearson  
**President**



S. Gifford  
Nielsen  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Philippines



Shayne M.  
Bowen  
**First  
Counselor**



Ian S.  
Ardern  
**President**



Larry J.  
Echo Hawk  
**Second  
Counselor**

## South America Northwest



W. Christopher  
Waddell  
**First  
Counselor**



Juan A.  
Uceda  
**President**



C. Scott  
Grow  
**Second  
Counselor**

## South America South



Jorge F.  
Zeballos  
**First  
Counselor**



Walter F.  
González  
**President**



Francisco J.  
Viñas  
**Second  
Counselor**

## CHURCH MATERIALS— IN PRINT OR DIGITAL?

The man looked down at his hands. He flexed his fingers. Those hands could do so many things. Repair a leaky faucet. Build a table. Lead his wife across the dance floor with rhythm and style.

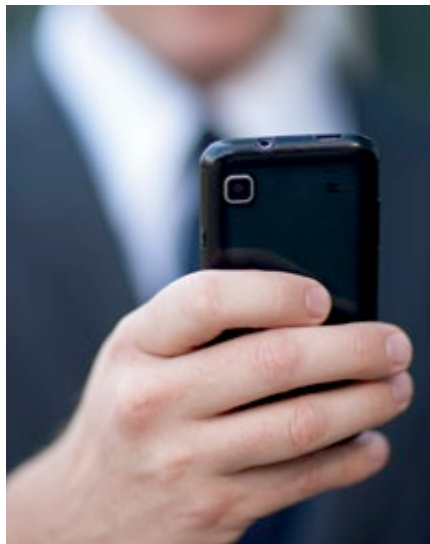
Then he glanced at the smartphone he'd recently acquired. His hands could do so many things. But could his thumbs do . . . *that*?

His Sunday School manual and well-worn scriptures rested next to the device. How he loved those scriptures! He loved the feel of the paper in his hand. All the handwritten notes. The simple weight of them.

And yet he remembered Elder Richard G. Scott teaching that with technology you could carry the standard works and much more in your pocket.<sup>1</sup> He touched the faded leather scriptures. He had to admit he didn't often carry them throughout the week.

But just the other day his grandson used his phone to share a line from one of his favorite recent conference talks. At the time, they'd been out for a Friday-night stroll.

The man didn't have long chunks of time in his day to study. However, he could easily fit in 5 minutes here, 10 minutes there. He also wanted to access everything the Church had to offer digitally.



A knock sounded at the front door. "Hey, Grandpa!" his grandson said. "Ready to get started?"

The man grabbed his smartphone. His thumbs might not ever fly like those of his children and grandchildren. But maybe they didn't have to.

"You bet," the man said. "Teach me!"

As the weeks unfolded, the man discovered more about what his grandson taught him: that the digital world is . . .

- Versatile. "There are some things, like video and audio, that you can't have in print. Digital has everything in one place. You can also take and preserve notes along the way."

- Comprehensive. "It's like a huge library. You can carry the Church publications in one hand and study them anywhere."
- Searchable. "Search features can help you quickly find what you're after."
- Shareable. "If you like something, you can share it. It's an easy way to share the gospel."
- Efficient. "You don't have to wait for shipping. And you don't have to find a place to put everything."
- Affordable. "It costs you nothing to access digital Church materials; and the more people choose digital, the more the Church saves on printing, mailing, and inventory costs."

So what does this story have to do with you?

Nearly all printed materials from the Church are also available on LDS.org or in the Gospel Library mobile app. Going digital doesn't mean giving up your printed materials completely—both may have their time and place in your life, but as you get ready for the coming curriculum year, consider evaluating which digital resources make sense for you.

Above all, don't be afraid to take the digital plunge. There will always be someone around to show you the way. ■

#### NOTE

1. See Richard G. Scott, "For Peace at Home," *Ensign*, May 2013, 30.

# JOB

*“I do not know of anything that members of the Church need more than they need the conviction and perseverance of Job.”<sup>1</sup> —Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

I was known as a man who feared God and avoided evil.<sup>2</sup> The Lord blessed me with seven sons and three daughters, and He granted me great material wealth, including “seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred [donkeys], and a very great household.”<sup>3</sup>

Satan believed that I would cease to be righteous and that I would curse the Lord if I no longer prospered temporarily. The Lord allowed Satan to test me but would not allow him to harm me physically. Satan caused my livestock to be stolen or destroyed and sent a strong wind to knock down my house, killing my 10 children inside. Rather than cursing the Lord, I “rent [my] mantle, and shaved [my] head,

and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped” the Lord.<sup>4</sup>

When Satan saw that I would not curse God, he wanted to test me with physical trials. The Lord allowed Satan to do so but would not allow him to take my life. Satan afflicted me with “sore boils from the sole of [my feet] unto [my] crown.”<sup>5</sup> Still I retained my integrity, refusing to curse the Lord. My friends mourned with me.

My friends told me that my suffering was caused by my own wickedness and that I must repent, but I knew that I was a righteous man.<sup>6</sup> The Lord later commanded my friends to repent. They were told to make a burnt offering and to have me pray for them.<sup>7</sup>

After seeing my faithfulness, the Lord caused my great

suffering to cease, and He blessed me with “twice as much as [I] had before.”<sup>8</sup> I now had “fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand [donkeys],” as well as seven more sons and three more daughters.<sup>9</sup> The Lord truly rewarded me richly for my faith and patience.

I have seen the hand of the Lord in my life, both in my afflictions and in my prosperity. I boldly testified: “I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”<sup>10</sup> ■

*Although Job was not a prophet, his life, testimony, and endurance during trials can be an inspiration to us.*

## NOTES

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Never Give Up,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 8.
2. See Job 1:1.
3. See Job 1:2–3.
4. See Job 1:7–22.
5. Job 2:7.
6. See Job 22–27.
7. See Job 42:7–9.
8. Job 42:10.
9. See Job 42:12–13.
10. Job 19:25–26.



# When I Followed the Prophets,

**Prophets are called by God**, and “by the Spirit are all things made known unto [them]” (1 Nephi 22:2). They—the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—speak for God. How has following the prophets personally blessed your life? We asked young adults to share their experiences.



## I Found . . .

### JOY IN PUTTING THE LORD FIRST

When I was a child, a picture of the temple hung in our home with the following words of President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994): “When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives.”<sup>1</sup> During my university studies, my district president called me to teach seminary. The idea of getting up early, going to sleep early, and using afternoons to prepare lessons concerned me. When would I study for school or have time for a social life? The memory from my childhood of the picture of the temple suddenly came into my mind. A beautiful feeling confirmed that if I put the Lord first, everything else would fall into place. I accepted the calling and spent an inspiring year with my seminary students. A week after seminary graduation, I met my future husband. I learned that when I put the Lord first, other things do indeed fall into place.

Eliana Martorana, Vercelli, Italy



## RIGHTEOUS EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS

I am preparing for a career that may put me at risk of becoming prideful, so I have noticed with interest the righteous example of our prophets and apostles. Many have held prestigious professional positions, yet they still serve Jesus Christ with sincere devotion. I desire to follow their example.



President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, spoke on pride in the October 2010 general conference. It provided me with increased motivation to be humble and with excellent instruction on how to identify and resist pride. Especially meaningful for me was President Uchtdorf's testimony of how to avoid pride: "It is almost impossible to be lifted up in pride when our hearts are filled with charity."<sup>2</sup> He also shared some counsel that President James E. Faust (1920–2007) gave him when President Uchtdorf first became a General Authority. "[Church members] will treat you very kindly. They will say nice things about you," said President Faust. "Dieter, be thankful for this. But don't you ever inhale it."<sup>3</sup> I know this advice from the prophets applies to my own concerns.

Eric Reuben Smith, Utah, USA



## TRUST IN GOD'S TIMETABLE

From the time I was a young girl, I have been a meticulous planner. So when the time came for me to make a decision about whether to go on a mission, I desperately wanted to know what to do and make a plan. After months of trying to decide, I was at a loss.

Then I found the following insights that President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, shared in the October 2012 general conference: "We can't insist on *our* timetable when the Lord has His own. . . . Sometimes our insistence on acting according to our own timetable can obscure His will for us."<sup>4</sup> I realized I should put my trust in God's timetable. Yes, I can make plans and chase my dreams. But through it all, I need to realize that when something isn't working out, it may be that God has a different path for me.

I don't know yet when I might go on a mission. But I do know that whatever happens, it will be on God's timetable.

Samantha Dodson, Utah, USA

## FAITH TO ALIGN MY WILL WITH GOD'S WILL

When I was a child, I didn't understand how faith worked. Since then I've learned that the purpose of faith isn't to change the world to match what I want; rather, the purpose of faith is to change my heart. As Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, our faith "is bolstered by our knowledge that the fulness of the gospel has been restored to the earth, that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, and that prophets and apostles today hold the keys of the priesthood."<sup>5</sup> It is our faith that allows us to recognize the blessings all around us, whether our prayers are answered the way we want or not. Our faith in Jesus Christ allows us to align our will with that of our Heavenly Father. We can put our trust in Their eternal perspective. As a result, we gain stability and constancy in our ever-changing lives.

Jennifer Taylor, California, USA



## TIME TO FOCUS ON THE SAVIOR

I grew up close to a temple, so I was impressed as a missionary in Mexico when members rode a bus for five hours to attend the temple. I wondered how I could develop the same attitude about temple worship. Then in the April 2009 general conference, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles offered suggestions for improving temple worship. Among them was to "remove your watch when you enter a house of the Lord."<sup>6</sup> I gave Elder Scott's suggestion

a try. Doing so has improved my temple experience. Instead of wondering every so often how much time is left or when it will be meal-time, I center my thoughts on Christ and my covenants. I'm grateful for the Lord's prophets, who are truly inspired of God. As we follow their counsel, even in small things, blessings will follow.

Dallin Rowley,  
Maryland, USA





## AN EDUCATION AND A GOOD JOB

As a youth growing up in Ecuador, I often heard President Gordon B. Hinckley talk about the importance of gaining an education. He said we need education not only to make our way in the world but also to progress spiritually.<sup>8</sup> I believed what President Hinckley taught, so I spent time studying—not only my scriptures but also accounting. I obtained a master of business administration degree in international finance. Education has given me the opportunity to have a good job and to be able to help my brothers and sisters. I know that a good education is vital because I heard it from a prophet.

Kelly Avila Saquipay, Guayas, Ecuador

## REALIZATION OF MY DIVINE POTENTIAL

In the April 2013 general conference, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, talked about four titles of a priesthood holder—son of Heavenly Father, disciple of Jesus Christ, healer of souls, and heir of eternal life. When I pondered these four titles, I realized that I am more than a son of man; I am a son of God. When I feel I can't accomplish my purpose, the words of President Uchtdorf come so strongly into my heart:

“Do you not know that ‘God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to [put to shame] the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to [put to shame] the things which are mighty’? [1 Corinthians 1:27].

“Perhaps it is true that we are weak. . . . But when God works through us, no one and nothing can stand against us.”<sup>7</sup>

This changed my life. I now know that I am able to do what God wants me to do. I realize how great it is to have revelations to act upon from the prophets in our day.

Agenor Sohou, Île-de-France, France



### NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Great Commandment—Love the Lord,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 4.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 58.
3. James E. Faust, in Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood,” 56.
4. Henry B. Eyring, “Where Is the Pavilion?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 73.
5. Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 39.
6. Richard G. Scott, “Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 43.
7. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Four Titles,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 60–61.
8. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “Seek Learning,” *New Era*, Sept. 2007, 2–5.

# Heavenly Father Said No *and* Yes

**I thought Heavenly Father said no, but He was really saying yes to a greater plan for my life.**



**By Angelica Hagman**

In Sweden, during my last year of high school, I decided to apply to Brigham Young University in Utah. There was only one problem: no matter how fervently I prayed for God to confirm my decision, it just never felt right. I thought, “The answer couldn’t possibly be no, could it? In so many ways, BYU seems like it should be the right decision, especially because I want a temple marriage and my prospects at BYU are so much better than in Sweden.” Except it wasn’t right. Not for me. Not at that time.

Disappointed, I discarded my plans to attend BYU and applied to a university in Sweden. At about the same time that I would have left for my BYU adventure, I fell in love with Jonas—a recently returned missionary. Although we must have attended several youth activities together before Jonas left on his mission, I had never noticed him. How his charisma and infectious laugh escaped me remains a mystery!

Early in our relationship, Jonas told me that he had applied to BYU and hoped to attend the following semester. After his first semester in Provo, we married in the temple and began attending BYU together, graduating on the same day.

Now I look back and see why Heavenly Father initially said no—or really, “not yet”—to my fervent prayer about attending BYU. Although He said no to my desire at that particular time, He was actually saying yes to a much more important desire. As a young girl, I had often prayed that my future husband and I would find each other when the time was right. We might have met at BYU, but I am convinced that, as part of a greater plan, Jonas and I needed to find each other in Sweden. Perhaps many of Heavenly Father’s “no” answers to our prayers are integral parts of his “yes” answers to greater plans for our lives.

## **Thy Will Be Done**

In Gethsemane, Jesus Christ prayed with great fervor, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” Then He added, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus Christ chose to drink of the bitter cup because He knew it was part of God’s greater plan to provide a Savior, who would atone for the sins of mankind (see 3 Nephi 11:11).

LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF ANGELICA HAGMAN; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF ANGELICA AND JONAS BY BRIGITTE GRENFELDT



Likewise, we know that our Heavenly Father has a plan for our life. While we may not know the details of God's plan for us, we can trust Heavenly Father's answers to our prayers and say, "Thy will be done."

Christ aligned His will with God's, and the great plan that included the

Savior's Atonement for all mankind unfolded. Similarly, as we align our will with God's, Heavenly Father can reveal a greater plan for us.

As our life unfolds, we can receive the blessings Jesus Christ pled for in His Intercessory Prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou,

Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21).

How grateful I am that our Heavenly Father lovingly whispers no to some prayers so that He can give a resounding yes to others. ■

*The author now lives in California, USA.*



### **GOD SEES THE LARGER PICTURE**

"What an amazing source of power, of strength, and of comfort is available to each of us. He who knows us better than we know ourselves, He who sees the larger picture and who knows the end from the beginning, has assured us that He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask. We have the promise: 'Pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good' [D&C 90:24]."

**President Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 121.**

**Like the currents of the sea, God's divine influence can guide us toward His plan for our life.**

# ACT UPON THIS LAND as for Years

By Dennis C. Gaunt

Like many children, I dreamed of what I would be when I grew up. In my case, I was *convinced* I would become a firefighter on the moon. In my five-year-old mind, there wasn't any other way my life could possibly turn out. I suspect most of us had childhood dreams about what our life would be like when we grew up. I also suspect that most of us have, at one point, looked back at our lives and exclaimed, "This isn't what I thought would happen!"

Two scriptures help us keep our lives in perspective. First:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Second: "[God] doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world;



for he loveth the world" (2 Nephi 26:24).

These scriptures teach us that everything Heavenly Father does is ultimately for our benefit, even if we cannot understand why. And since God's thoughts and ways are higher than ours, we need to elevate our lives to be more in harmony with His plan for us.

### Wondering while Wandering

We sometimes talk about the children of Israel wandering in the

wilderness for 40 years before being allowed to enter the promised land. A cloud or pillar of fire rested above the tabernacle when they were to stop, and when it moved, the camp followed (see Numbers 9:15–18, 21–23). I suspect that they also spent 40 years "wondering" in the wilderness—wondering when they were going to move, when and where they would stop, and when they would eventually reach the promised land.

This story is richly symbolic. As we each journey through our own mortal wilderness, we want to reach the "promised land" of living with God eternally. He has promised to lead us there. Yet while each person needs to wander along the same route—be obedient, repent, receive priesthood ordinances, and endure faithfully—each person's life is unique.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "The Lord has placed currents of



divine influence in your life that will lead you along the individual plan He would have you fulfill here on earth. Seek through the Spirit to identify it and carefully follow that direction that the Lord has put in your life. Align yourself with it. Choose, willingly, to exercise your agency to follow it.”<sup>1</sup>

Consider which was harder for the camp of Israel to endure: spending a year in an unpleasant place or leaving a nice place after two days? I think both scenarios tested their faith.

So it is with us. We may not be satisfied with our circumstances and thus spend time wondering when things will change. Or we may experience an unanticipated change to our pleasant routine. How we choose to respond to these experiences determines, in a large part, our happiness. And if we spend our lives wondering while we wander, we may miss out on wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth.

### Go and Do Something Today

In the spring of 1831, the Saints began to gather to Kirtland, Ohio. A member named Lemam Copley agreed to allow a group from Colesville, New York, to stay on his farm in Thompson, a short distance from Kirtland. In May 1831 the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“And I consecrate unto them this land for a little season, until I, the Lord,

shall provide for them otherwise, and command them to go hence;

“And the hour and the day is not given unto them, wherefore let them *act upon this land as for years*, and this shall turn unto them for their good” (D&C 51:16–17; emphasis added).

Much like the children of Israel following the cloud in the wilderness, these Saints knew they wouldn’t be permanent residents on the Copley farm. At some point they would move

**We may not be satisfied with our circumstances and thus spend time wondering when things will change. If we do this, we miss out on wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth.**

on. Yet no matter how long their stay would be, they were to act as if they would be there for years.

So why would the Lord give them this counsel? Some may have become discouraged living in a wagon or tent in a muddy field as they saw others living in better circumstances. The Lord’s counsel likely changed their perspective from discouragement to hope.

Likewise, when we see others who have things we dream of—a nice

family, home, job, and a clear direction in life—we may become discouraged. For instance, if we know we won’t be in a ward or branch for long, we may think, “Why bother accepting a calling? Why get to know anyone?” We may still attend church, but we aren’t getting all we could out of the experience. If we spend our lives focusing on what we *don’t* have, we may fail to be truly grateful for what we *do* have.

As we sing in one of our hymns, there *are* “chances for work all around just now, opportunities right in our way. Do not let them pass by, saying, ‘Sometime I’ll try,’ but go and do something today.”<sup>2</sup>

When we “act upon this land as for years,” we begin to recognize opportunities we may not have seen before. We may also see that some of these opportunities may never come our way again. Then we think, “As long as I’m here, I’m going to get involved, do the best I can, and choose to be happy. I’ll continue to hope for the future, but in the meantime, let me do some good here.” It’s the difference between treading water and actually swimming.

As it turned out, the Saints in Thompson didn’t stay very long. Lemam Copley broke his promise to let the Saints stay on his land. The Lord eventually sent these Saints to Missouri, but they did their best while they lived in that farmer’s field, and the Lord blessed them for it.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “Often the deep valleys of our present will be understood only by looking back on them from the mountains of our future experience. Often we can’t see the Lord’s hand in our lives until long after trials have passed. Often the most difficult times of our lives are essential building blocks that form the foundation of our character and



pave the way to future opportunity, understanding, and happiness.”<sup>3</sup>

### Let Not Your Minds Turn Back

We sometimes get into trouble when we insist on doing things according to our own timetable, rather than trusting in the Lord’s.

Consider the story of Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem from Laman and Lemuel’s perspective. Their comfortable life was suddenly interrupted when Lehi said the family

had to flee because Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. Off they go into the wilderness—only to have to return soon to get the brass plates from Laban. All that time slogging through the harsh desert only to have Laban steal their precious things and try to kill them? I would be upset too!

On top of that, seeing Jerusalem look the same probably added to Laman and Lemuel’s anger. I don’t know if they expected to see a smoking crater when they returned, but I can imagine their thoughts: “Wasn’t Jerusalem supposed to be destroyed? Why are we wasting our time in the wilderness when things are totally normal here?” In any case, all these things quickly resulted in them beating Nephi and Sam (see 1 Nephi 3:29).

When things don’t happen the way we think they ought to; when we think that pillar of fire is never going to move fast enough; when we look around and see only a farmer’s field, we too might become discouraged to the point that, like Laman and Lemuel, we beat up our faith and take out our frustrations with God.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “When we are unduly impatient with an omniscient God’s timing, we really are suggesting that we know what is best. Strange, isn’t it—we who wear wristwatches seek to counsel

Him who oversees cosmic clocks and calendars.”<sup>4</sup>

Of course life isn’t always easy, and I don’t know of anyone—myself included—who would say that life has turned out exactly the way they imagined. But I also know many people who would say that despite it all, they are happy with their life now—even if they didn’t grow up to be a firefighter on the moon!

That positive perspective comes when we faithfully follow the Lord with optimism through our own wildernesses. As we do, we will one day discover that our wilderness experience wasn’t nearly as bad as we thought. We may even admit that it was totally worth it. To each of us the Lord says:

“Continue in patience until ye are perfected.

“Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy, in mine own due time, ye shall see and know” (D&C 67:13–14). ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

*To learn how to be grateful regardless of your circumstances, see President Dieter F. Uchtdorf’s April general conference talk “Grateful in Any Circumstances” in the May issue or at [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).*

#### NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “He Lives,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 87.
2. “Have I Done Any Good?” *Hymns*, no. 223.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Continue in Patience,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 58.
4. Neal A. Maxwell, “Hope through the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 63.



# HOMIE

## the Heart of Learning

When learning at church supports learning at home, you build a strong foundation of gospel living.

Please be sure to do the assigned reading for next week's lesson." Do those words sound familiar? They often come from a pleading teacher at the end of a Church class.

And while it's definitely important to be prepared for your Sunday lessons, do you sometimes feel like your main goal in studying and pondering is so that you can be fully ready for Sunday?

Actually, it should be the other way around. All of the Church's "teaching, programs, and activities [are] home centered and Church supported."<sup>1</sup> That means our Church meetings are really meant to support individual and family learning. As Presiding Bishop Gary E. Stevenson taught, "The primary place of teaching and learning is the home."<sup>2</sup> When learning and teaching are centered in the home, they carry power that can lead to conversion.

That's the message of the 2014 annual auxiliary training, *Learning and Teaching in the Home and the Church*, available online at [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org). "None of us are minimizing the in-chapel, in-meetinghouse teaching," says Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "We've all done that all of our lives, but we'd like it to be 24/7 out in the lives that we're living."<sup>3</sup> As you incorporate that 24/7 learning into everyday moments in your family's life, you can establish a strong foundation for a "house of learning" (D&C 88:119) that will provide you and your family with spiritual shelter and protection.





## LEARNING AT HOME

You may not always see immediate results, but when you take advantage of simple moments for learning and teaching in your daily routine, it can have a powerful effect. Here's how several families have noticed that influence in their lives.

### Simple Moments

“There are times when we may feel awkward having formal conversations about some gospel-related topics. Informal teaching moments have truly blessed us to teach important lessons to our children. Also, there are far

more informal teaching moments in a day than formal teaching moments, so we really grab these opportunities to teach our children important principles. For example, I teach about honesty while grocery shopping. My

children learn principles easier when they see how to apply them.”

*Mona Villanueva, Philippines*



See another example at [lds.org/go/informal](https://lds.org/go/informal).







## Bonding at Snack Time

“Informal teaching moments have helped me have a better relationship with my children. When we are sitting at the kitchen table having an after-school snack, we discuss what happened during their school day. Often one of them will say something that a friend said or how he or she felt when someone said or did something. I’m then able to share a personalized testimony and discuss how my child felt about the situation. I think by having open discussions when children are relaxed, they are more willing to discuss items of importance when the need arises because they have a level of trust, knowing that their parents will listen.”

*Alyson Frost, Greece*

## Commutes and Conversations

“I drop my daughters off to school by bus every morning, so we have many opportunities to talk. On one recent occasion, we noticed a husband and wife having a disagreement. My daughters quickly turned to me and waited for me to comment. Instead I asked them how they felt about what had happened. They told me they thought a man should never talk to his wife that way. After that, we had a conversation about marriage and relationships. Our 30-minute bus trip ended up being very edifying and uplifting.”

*Mario Lorenz, Guatemala*

See more examples at [lds.org/go/everyday](https://lds.org/go/everyday) (at 4:56–5:39).





## A Circle of Caring

“My wife and I realize that it’s first our responsibility to teach our children and not the leaders’ responsibility, but we are grateful for what they do and we assist where we can. Our ward has great leaders who really focus on the youth and the children and do as much as they can to help them see their full potential based on what the parents have done. I’ve met with the bishop on a few occasions, and I have good communication with the youth leaders and often ask about my children and their progress. The fact that we communicate frequently about the progress of our children helps us all to understand how to help each of them.”

*Jesse N. Arumugam, South Africa*





## CHRIST TAUGHT ON HILLSIDES AND IN HOMES

“The Savior [was] the

Master Teacher. . . . We would see most of His ministry being teaching. And yet almost none of that teaching was done in a church building. His teaching was out where the people were. It was in highways and byways and hillsides and seashores and in homes.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in “Learning and Teaching in the Home and the Church—the Home” (2014 auxiliary training video), [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org).

## Strength in the Scriptures

“Scripture study helps me learn of Christ and His attributes so that I can become like Him. It also gives me a greater abundance of the Spirit, which guides me and teaches me how I can apply those things I have learned so that I may be prepared to face the challenges of life and the temptations Satan throws at me. Without this blessing in my life I know that I will fall short of my potential as a son of God.”

*Nathan Woodward, England*

# LEARNING AT CHURCH

## 10 Principles Every Teacher Should Know

In addition to strengthening the power of learning and teaching in the home, we can also strengthen the classroom experience at church. As teachers apply these 10 principles, they will foster conversion in the lives of those they teach.

1. Counsel with parents, who have the primary role as teachers, to identify needs of class members, and then teach to those needs.
2. Prepare and teach by the Spirit. Identify questions and learning activities that will provide Spirit-led discussions and nurture class members spiritually.
3. Teach people, not lessons.
4. Focus on the core doctrines of the gospel.
5. Teach one or two key principles in depth rather than trying to cover all the lesson material.
6. Invite the Spirit by letting everyone participate (see D&C 88:122).
7. Include a powerful invitation to act—not just something to go home and read but something to go home and live.
8. Bear your testimony about the doctrine—at the end of the class and whenever the Spirit prompts you.
9. Live the gospel, and “set in order” your own home (see D&C 93:43–44, 50).
10. Find ways to let the teaching continue through informal moments in everyday life.

Learn more about these principles by watching the annual auxiliary training at [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org).

### NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.4.
2. Gary E. Stevenson, in “The Ward Council—We’re All in This Together” (2014 auxiliary training video), [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org).
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, in “Learning and Teaching in the Home and the Church—the Home” (2014 auxiliary training video), [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org).

### RESOURCES FOR EVERY HOME

Use the 2014 annual auxiliary training videos at [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org) to:

- **Strengthen yourself and your family.** As you watch these short videos, prayerfully consider how the principles they teach apply to your family situation.
- **Strengthen your ward.** You might watch this training in an upcoming stake leadership meeting, a ward fifth-Sunday

discussion, or a council meeting, according to the direction of your stake and ward leaders.

- **Strengthen your auxiliary.** The training resources also include auxiliary-specific training that stake or ward priesthood and auxiliary leaders can use to help you fulfill your calling in the Church.



Access these videos, along with related discussion documents, at [annualtraining.lds.org](http://annualtraining.lds.org).



By Elder D. Todd  
Christofferson

Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles



# Why We Share the Gospel

*As Latter-day Saints, we each have a missionary purpose—  
to invite others to come unto Christ.*

**T**he first chapter of *Preach My Gospel* asks a question that applies to every member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: “What is my purpose as a missionary?”

The answer, summarized in one sentence, is given there as follows: “Invite others to come unto Christ by helping them receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Members As Missionaries**

We are all asked to be missionaries. And to be effective in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must have this purpose in our mind, feel it in our heart, accept it in our soul, and act upon it. When we do, it both inspires and guides us in sharing the gospel. We must keep clear the distinction between the purpose of sharing the gospel, on the one hand, and the means of achieving that purpose, on the other hand.

It is not our purpose just to participate in discussions about the gospel or to talk to anyone and everyone we can about the Church or merely to set goals and make plans. These things are important, but they are a means to an end, and that end is bringing people to Christ.



## BE READY TO SHARE

“Your exemplary lives will attract the interest of your friends and neighbors. Be ready to give an answer to those who ask why you live as you do. Be ready to give a reason for the hope and joy that they see in you [see 1 Peter 3:15]. When such questions come, you might respond by saying, ‘Let’s ask the missionaries! They can help us!’ ”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Catch the Wave,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 45.

## Centered in Missionary Purpose

Consider some examples of what happens when our efforts to share the gospel are centered in missionary purpose:

1. We will teach people in a way that helps them truly understand the gospel and why and how they should repent. We will listen to and respond to what is in the investigator’s mind and heart.
2. We will seek and listen to the Holy Ghost to discern who is feeling the Spirit as we talk.
3. Planning—as families, in ward councils, and with full-time missionaries—will become a tool for ensuring that the things that need to happen to bring about conversion and baptism are, in fact, identified, remembered, and followed through for each individual investigator.
4. We will rejoice in our opportunity to feast upon the word of God because our study will have purpose. We will be searching for answers to our investigators’ questions of the soul as well as our own.
5. We will invite people to attend Church meetings, not simply because we believe that is what we are supposed to do but also because we understand that participation in church is essential for the investigator to develop a stronger desire for baptism and to establish a foundation for enduring to the end in the gospel covenant. With that ultimate purpose in mind, the invitation to attend church will have greater urgency, the explanation of the importance of Sabbath worship and what to expect in a Latter-day Saint Sunday service will be

different, and the spirit that attends our words will have a persuasive power that would not otherwise be present.

## Internalize and Understand

Please do not ignore chapter 1 of *Preach My Gospel* and its question “What is my purpose as a missionary?” Internalize the purpose of bringing people to Christ through the principles and ordinances of the restored gospel, and you will understand that sharing the gospel is not a program; it is a cause—the cause of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Internalize the purpose of inviting people to come unto Christ, and you will understand that the world has no access to atoning grace and salvation but through The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. You will understand what sharing the gospel is all about, and you will be up and about your Father’s business. You will know that the full-time missionaries, as did the sons of Mosiah, teach “with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3), and you will invite them to teach the gospel to those to whom you have already extended the invitation to “come and see” (John 1:39).

## Our Invitation—Come unto Christ

For me, the missionary purpose captures the majesty of the work and the glory of God (see Moses 1:39). What endeavor is more magnificent than bringing the children of God to ultimate salvation through the grace of their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ? Remember that our missionary purpose is not only to warn others but also to save them, not only to teach but also to baptize, not only to bring others unto Christ but also to make them steadfast in Christ to the end.

Our invitation to the world is to come unto Christ. Coming unto Christ is an abbreviation, a way of describing in three words the plan of salvation. It means to obtain the fruits of His Atonement and Resurrection—ultimately eternal life. Eternal life depends on the exercise of our moral agency, but it is possible only through the grace of Jesus Christ. To come unto Him means to do what is required to lay hold upon that grace—the pardoning, sanctifying, transforming, redeeming power of His infinite, atoning sacrifice.

This good news, the gospel, is best expressed by Jesus Himself in the Book of Mormon:

“Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

“And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works” (3 Nephi 27:13–15).

### Glad Tidings and Good News

Thus, at its foundation, the gospel, or good news, is that we have a Father in Heaven who, because of His love for us, sent His Only Begotten Son to redeem us from sin and death. The Son, in perfect obedience to the Father, to whom He gives the glory, offered His life to that end. He purchased us with His blood, and we answer to Him for our lives (see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20). He is now our Judge. He is justice personified.

The gospel message of glad tidings further declares that because of His atoning sacrifice, Jesus is also mercy personified. His mercy, merits, and grace are sufficient to pardon and cleanse us so that in the Day of Judgment we may stand holy and without spot before Him. (See 2 Nephi 2:8; Moroni 10:32–33.)



The missionary purpose in *Preach My Gospel* explains what must be done for this to happen. As it states, being pardoned and cleansed requires “faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”<sup>2</sup>

Further in 3 Nephi 27, the Savior finishes His statement of what constitutes His gospel:

“And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled [with the Holy Ghost]; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world. . . .

“And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

“Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel” (3 Nephi 27:16, 19–21).

## Faith and Commitment

As we share testimony of the gospel by the Spirit, those who are willing to hear will receive sufficient witness to begin to have faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. That faith will give them the will to repent. Members and full-time missionaries can, again by the Spirit, teach them what changes they need to make and invite and commit them to act. The ultimate commitment we invite the investigator to accept and act upon is baptism in water. This baptism is followed by, or better said, completed by, the reception of the Holy Ghost, which brings a remission of sins as well as sanctification (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

This condition of standing justified and spotless before the Lord can be preserved throughout life if one continues to live by faith, repenting as needed and reinvigorating the baptismal promises. We call that enduring to the end. Those who endure to the end will have no fear of being judged according to their works, for they

### JOIN IN THE WORK OF SALVATION

Learn how you can personally help with conversion, retention, and activation at [hasteningthework.lds.org](http://hasteningthework.lds.org).

You can find additional information about the joy of sharing the gospel at [lds.org/topics/missionary-work/change](http://lds.org/topics/missionary-work/change), and you can learn how to share the gospel online at [lds.org/church/share](http://lds.org/church/share).

will have been the works of faith and repentance and baptism of water and of the Spirit.

## First Principles First

Hyrum Smith's statement captured in *Preach My Gospel* is profound: "Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly. You will then be able to make them more plainly understood by those [you] teach."<sup>3</sup>

In this statement, Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, is explaining that these first principles, the heart of the gospel, are not fully comprehended in one review. Added light and deeper understanding will come over time in multiple revelatory experiences.

As members bear their testimonies and ask the full-time missionaries to assist them by teaching the gospel, remember that a growing comprehension of the gospel comes not only from study but also as we participate in sharing the gospel. If we study, prepare, and share gospel principles by the Spirit, we will "be able to make them more plainly understood," and the Spirit will instruct and bear witness to all who participate—members, missionaries, and investigators alike.

## The Why, What, and How

The why, the what, and the how of missionary work are more compellingly proclaimed in the Book of Mormon than anywhere else. It is filled with examples of those who understood and labored to fulfill the missionary purpose. It contains the clearest expositions anywhere in scripture of the fundamental doctrines we should teach. It carries a converting spirit and a witness of the truth of these same doctrines. It will convert all who read it and pray about it with a sincere heart and with real intent (see Moroni 10:3–5).

The Book of Mormon establishes Jesus Christ in His true character as the Son of God and the Holy Messiah.





It inspires faith in Him. It brings people to Christ. We are eternally indebted to its authors and to the Prophet Joseph Smith for translating it by the gift and power of God.

I bear my witness that, as the Lord lives, the Book of Mormon is true. Its testimony of Jesus Christ is true. Its translator, Joseph Smith, is the great Prophet of the Restoration. Learn from the Book of Mormon, study it, teach from it, love it, and act upon it, and you will learn why we share the gospel and that it is our privilege and duty to invite and help others to come unto Christ. ■

*From an address delivered at the seminar for new mission presidents at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 22, 2008.*

#### NOTES

1. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
2. *Preach My Gospel*, 1.
3. *Preach My Gospel*, 6.

#### WORKING AS ONE

**M**embers and missionaries can see themselves in the work of salvation as they live the gospel joyfully and as they invite others to participate in activities, Church services, and other events.

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “We are all in this together. With fellow ward members and missionaries, we plan and pray and help one another. Please keep the full-time missionaries in your thoughts and prayers. Trust them with your family and friends. The Lord trusts them and has called them to teach and bless those who seek Him” (“It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 79).

# Taming THE Media

*Media and technology can be dangerous when left to run unchecked; however, like wild horses, when tamed they can become valuable tools.*

By Starla Averkamp Butler

Jocelyn Christensen, a blog writer and mother of four living in Pennsylvania, USA, knows the difficulties that many parents experience with today's media and technology. "We purchased a tablet for the family to use for educational benefits, but we quickly realized that we hadn't given enough thought about how to regulate what games our kids could play and for how long. We came to the conclusion that our children were just too young to have so much access to this device, because we preferred to see them playing outside after school and we didn't like where the road of 'gaming' might lead them. However, we were worried about how our eight-year-old son would react to a rule change."

Parents can sometimes feel trampled by the stampede of tablets and smartphones and overwhelmed by the

accessibility of media on the Internet. It's true that media and technology can be dangerous when left to run unchecked in our families; however, like wild horses, when tamed they can become valuable tools—tools our children can use to become a strong influence for good in the world.

Although it is certainly wise to use Internet filters, Sister Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, has taught that "the greatest filter in the world, the only one that will ultimately work, is the personal internal filter that comes from a deep and abiding testimony of our Heavenly Father's love and our Savior's atoning sacrifice for each one of us."<sup>1</sup>

As families, we can tame the "wild horses" of media and technology as we and our children understand good media standards, learn to follow the Spirit, formulate a





plan for good media use, and consistently emphasize excellent content in our media choices.

### Understanding Media Standards

We can ensure that our families understand the Lord's standards for media by reviewing together the words that the General Authorities and other Church leaders have spoken about this topic. For example, Randall L. Ridd, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency, recently gave this counsel to the young men of the Church: "There are countless ways technology can distract you from what is most important. Follow the adage 'Be where you are when you are there.' When you are driving, drive. When you are in class, focus on the lesson. When you are with your friends, give them the gift of your attention."<sup>2</sup>

As a follow-up to this counsel, you could ask your children how spending too much time on electronic devices can hurt their relationships with other people and with Heavenly Father and discuss positive uses for electronic devices. As we discuss these and other inspired words together with our children, we can determine if we are following our leaders' guidance in our families.

No matter our age or the age of our children, the principles in *For the Strength of Youth* are applicable: "Do not attend, view, or participate in anything that is vulgar, immoral, violent, or pornographic in any way. Do not participate in anything that presents immorality or violence as acceptable."<sup>3</sup> You could discuss with your children what these words mean and how media content that is degrading can damage our spirits. Study together the



words of the thirteenth article of faith: “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” Talk about how good media can uplift and strengthen us.

### **Following the Spirit**

One of the most important things we can teach our children is to follow the Spirit. As the prophet Mormon said, “The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16). Help children pay attention to how they feel when they watch, listen to, or read something. Talk about how to recognize which feelings may be promptings of the Spirit.

Like many mothers, Sister Christensen is trying to teach her children to recognize the Spirit with regard

to their media choices. “When my son was seven, his schoolteacher started reading a book in class that was a little disturbing to him and probably too mature for his age-group. He started complaining of having a stomach-ache every day. His teacher told me, and I asked him what was wrong. He finally admitted that whenever she read the book, it made his ‘stomach hurt.’ I was able to help him see that this was the Spirit alerting him that the book wasn’t the best choice for him. I talked to the teacher, and we decided to let my son choose what to do. He decided to spend the reading time reading his own book at his desk.”

As our children learn to recognize promptings of the Spirit, they will be able to avoid inappropriate media in their lives.

### **Creating a Plan Together**

As your children understand the doctrine behind staying worthy of the Holy Ghost and making good media and technology choices, they will understand the need to set limits to help your family stay spiritually safe. You can then sit down together and create a family media plan.

A family media plan is specific to the situation of every family that creates one. It can be a set of guidelines, strategies, and principles to help respond to your family's needs as they make media and technology choices. Here are some ideas to consider with your children as your family creates a media plan.

### **Prevention and Protection**

Movies, TV Shows, Books, Music

- Discuss strategies for checking the rating and content of movies and other media by using appropriate websites. Remember that sometimes media with an “okay” rating still has inappropriate material because the world's standards are not the Lord's standards.
- Establish specific standards, such as not using media content that is violent, immoral, vulgar, or degrading.
- Create procedures for discussing TV shows or movies you want to see. “Determine as a family what

shows are appropriate for viewing, then turn the television [or internet TV] on for those programs only.”<sup>4</sup> Help children learn how to weigh the merits of the material they watch.

Internet, Computers, Mobile Devices

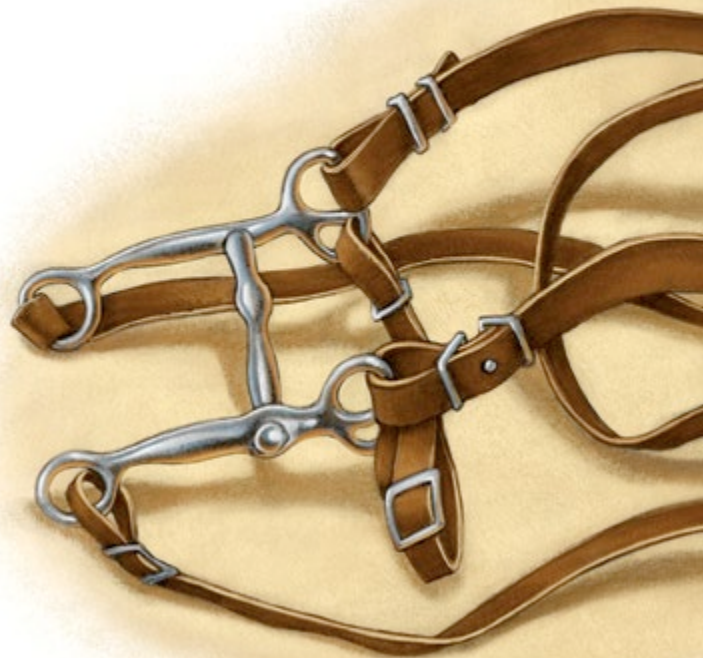
- Discuss together the location of computers in the house and when and where it is appropriate to use mobile devices.
- Decide on guidelines for mobile devices, such as what kinds of apps are appropriate and what media use is appropriate.
- For younger children, you may want to establish Internet rules such as what websites they can visit.

### **Time and Technology Management**

- For all members of the family, decide how much time can be spent on the Internet, playing electronic games, or watching TV or movies.
- Decide what media and technology use is appropriate for Sundays, both at church and at home. For example, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has suggested putting phones and tablets in airplane mode during church so that

### **ONLINE HELP AND SAFETY TIPS**

- Websites like [kidsinmind.com](http://kidsinmind.com), [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org), and [ok.com](http://ok.com) have content reviews of movies, TV shows, video games, and more.
- Sites like Google and YouTube have safe-search options that you can use and teach to your children. For Google, this feature is under the advanced-search options, and for YouTube it's at the bottom of the page.
- Many popular websites have filter options. For example, music website Pandora has a filter to block songs with strong profanity, and Facebook lets you label ads and posts as offensive so that you don't see material of that kind again.
- Your children's favorite sites likely have safety options. Research them and teach your children how to use them.



digital scriptures may still be used without the distraction of incoming messages.<sup>5</sup>

- Decide what media and technology use is appropriate when you are with other people.

### **Responding to Problems**

- Decide how to respond when you or your children come across something inappropriate in your media use. What will you do? Whom will children tell? Whom will parents tell? What measures will you take to avoid such material in the future?

Work together to follow your family media plan consistently, and revise it if needed. As children grow older and technology changes, you can periodically review your media plan and make any necessary adjustments. You could also make time during family home evening to talk about the blessings your family has received as you've striven to follow your plan.

### **Emphasizing the Excellent**

As they establish standards, many parents realize the need to examine their own media use. "When I started studying this topic, I felt prompted to raise the bar on my own media consumption," Sister Christensen says. "Think about the shows you watch when your children aren't around. It takes humility to make an honest assessment

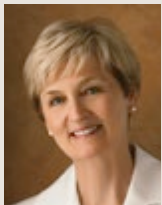
of your own media choices, and keeping the standards yourself will give you the moral authority to teach your children."

One of the most important things you can do as a parent to help your children follow a media plan is to follow it yourself and emphasize the excellent in your media use. Set an example, and consider this counsel given by the Savior to an early Church member: "Govern your house in meekness, and be steadfast" (D&C 31:9).

Making a concerted effort to bring good media into your home will help your children avoid the bad. Here are some ideas:

- Visit the Church websites with your children and watch the Church videos together.
- Take advantage of the free music downloads on youth.lds.org and encourage your youth to do the same.
- Talk about good books you've read and seek out uplifting music and movies.
- Encourage your children to make positive uses of their time on the Internet.
- Follow Elder Ballard's counsel: "Take time to watch appropriate media with [your] children and discuss with them how to make choices that will uplift and build rather than degrade and destroy."<sup>6</sup>

Many families are striving to emphasize good media in their homes. "We encourage our children to use technology for good whenever possible," Sister Christensen writes. "At times, we've had a laptop in the kitchen where children can play games on the *Friend* website, and now our son is encouraged to help me with FamilySearch indexing. He also likes to explore the FamilySearch website and dabble in family history. I believe it is important that we show our children how to 'stand in holy places' online as well as in real life. They need to know the power for good that they have when they use technology correctly."



#### **HEARTFELT UNDERSTANDING**

"Teaching our children to understand is more than just imparting information. It's helping our children get the doctrine into their hearts in a way that it becomes part of their very being and is reflected in their attitudes and behavior throughout their lives."

Cheryl A. Esplin, second counselor in the Primary general presidency, "Teaching Our Children to Understand," *Ensign*, May 2012, 10.



## Conclusion

As we and our children understand the principles of good media and plan together, our families will find the strength to make good decisions. We won't need to fear the wild horses, for we can find the way to tame them for our family's benefit.

Sister Christensen and her husband found that this approach was the solution to their tablet problem. "During family home evening we carefully outlined the principles behind why we needed to make this rule change in our home. Some weeks previously, we had studied as a family Elder Quentin L. Cook's talk 'Lamentations of Jeremiah: Beware of Bondage' [*Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 88–91]. We reviewed the four ways we can be in bondage, and our children knew that some things, while not inherently bad, can put us into bondage because they use up our time and keep us from doing other things. It was easy for them to apply this principle to playing electronic games and to

accept our rule change. We were surprised and delighted at the mature reaction of our son, who even went so far as to delete the games off of the tablet himself."

The Lord will bless us as we help our children make good media choices and as we seek to bring uplifting media into our homes. Not only will we feel the satisfaction of knowing that our families are making good media choices, but more important, we will be giving our children the opportunity to feel the Spirit more strongly in our homes.

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## NOTES

1. Linda S. Reeves, "Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home," *Ensign*, May 2014, 16.
2. Randall L. Ridd, "The Choice Generation," *Ensign*, May 2014, 58.
3. "Entertainment and Media" section, *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 11.
4. Carla Dalton, "Setting Family Standards for Entertainment," *Ensign*, June 2001, 27.
5. See M. Russell Ballard, "Be Still, and Know That I Am God" (Church Educational System devotional, May 4, 2014), [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).
6. M. Russell Ballard, "Let Our Voices Be Heard," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 19.

# GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT



What we refer to as the Abrahamic covenant is in reality the new and everlasting covenant as it was given to Abraham and his posterity. It was new to Abraham because he received it as part of a new dispensation of the gospel, but it is everlasting in that the same covenant is extended to all of God's children in all gospel dispensations, beginning with Adam.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained what this covenant entails: "The new and everlasting covenant is the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, the doctrines and commandments of the gospel constitute the substance of an everlasting covenant between God and man that is newly restored in each dispensation" ("The Power of Covenants," *Ensign*, May 2009, 20).

This chart provides an overview of God's everlasting covenant as it was renewed in Jesus's day and again in our own. It shows how the Lord has fulfilled and continues to fulfill His covenant promises to us, including those promises He made to Abraham.

**51** Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem in the land of Canaan. Through His Atonement and ministry, He fulfilled many of the promises made to Abraham and the ancient prophets.  
**Luke 1:68-75; 2:4-7**

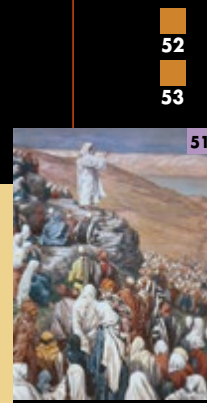
**52 PROPHECY**  
 In the latter days and during the Millennium, the Lord will fulfill all the promises He made to the house of Israel.  
**Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 3:4-11 (in Bible appendix)**

**53 PROPHECY**  
 The leaders of the Jews would reject the Messiah. He would be crucified and rise from the dead on the third day. He will return to the earth later in power and glory.  
**Luke 9:22, 26-27**

<b>DISPENSATION:</b>	<b>Eastern Hemisphere</b>
<b>THE MERIDIAN OF TIME</b>	<b>Western Hemisphere</b>
<b>* A.D. 1</b>	<b>30</b>



**TRIBE OF JUDAH**



**TRIBE OF JOSEPH**

(Joseph's descendants include the Nephites and Lamanites)



## LOST TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL

**61 PROPHECY**  
 The coming forth of the Book of Mormon would be a sign that God had begun to fulfill His covenant with His people.  
**3 Nephi 21:1-7; 29:1-4**

**62 PROPHECY**  
 Jesus Christ will establish His covenant among all those who receive the gospel.  
**3 Nephi 21:20-25**

**63** The Apostle Peter was told in a vision that Gentiles may receive the ordinances and blessings of the gospel. See prophecy 62.  
**Acts 10; Galatians 3:26-29**

ILLUSTRATION OF OLIVE BRANCH BY LAURENT RENALTI/HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

\* Early dates are approximate, and spacing is not proportional.



**54** Moses and Elijah gave priesthood keys to Peter, James, and John.

**Matthew 17:1-8;**  
**Guide to the Scriptures,**  
**"Transfiguration";**  
**scriptures.lds.org**

**55 PROPHECY**  
 The city of Jerusalem will be destroyed and its people killed and scattered.

**Joseph Smith—Matthew**  
**1:4-20**

**56 PROPHECY**  
 The world will kill the Apostles and fall into apostasy. God will restore all things in the latter days.

**Matthew 17:11;**  
**John 15:18-16:3**

**57** The Son of God suffered and died for the sins of the world and was resurrected from the dead. See prophecies 41 and 53.

**Mark 14:32-65; 15:1-38;**  
**16:6-14**

**58** The Apostles were commanded to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations.

**Matthew 28:16-20**

**59** After His Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to "other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land."

**3 Nephi 15:15; 16:1-3**

**60 PROPHECY**  
 God will gather His people throughout the earth and fulfill all His promises.

**3 Nephi 16:5; 20:10-13;**  
**21:26-29**

**Jesus Christ—Twelve Apostles**

**Jesus Christ—Twelve Disciples**

**35**

**100**

**500**

**THE GREAT APOSTASY**

54 55 56

57 58 59 60 62  
61

63 64 65 67 69  
66 68

70



54



58



57

**PROPHECY: ALLEGORY OF ZENOS**

(ABOUT 400 B.C.—A.D. 100)

After some time, the master of the vineyard and his servant returned to the vineyard and found good fruit on all trees. The tame olive tree roots caused the wild branches to bring forth good fruit. The branches from the tame olive tree—scattered throughout the vineyard—prospered, even when they were planted in poor locations. One branch planted in a good location had both good and bad fruit. (See Jacob 5:15-28.)

**ALLEGORY OF ZENOS** (ABOUT A.D. 100-1400)

After the master and his servant nourished the trees of the vineyard, they found much fruit on the trees, but all of it was bad. The tame olive tree had all sorts of bad fruit because the wild branches had overcome the strength of the roots. The fruit of the branches from the tame olive tree were all corrupt. Even the one branch with good and bad fruit had died. The Lord of the vineyard wept and asked, "Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?" The servant said, "Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard?" The Lord of the vineyard decided to try one more time to save his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:29-51.)



70

**64** The Jews in Jerusalem were killed and scattered by the Romans. See prophecy 55.

**Guide to the Scriptures,**  
**"Jerusalem";**  
**scriptures.lds.org**

**65 PROPHECY**  
 The gospel of Jesus Christ will be restored in the latter days by angelic ministry.

**Revelation 14:6-7**

**66 PROPHECY**  
 The Lord will gather His Saints in a great latter-day missionary work.

**Revelation 14:14-16**

**67 PROPHECY**  
 Satan will be bound for a thousand years, and Christ will reign upon the earth.

**Revelation 20:1-6**

**68 PROPHECY**  
 There will be a new heaven and a new earth, and the city of New Jerusalem will come down from heaven.

**Revelation 21:1-10,**  
**22-27**

**69** The original Apostles were rejected and killed. The ordinances of the gospel were lost. See prophecy 56.

**2 Thessalonians 2:3;**  
**Revelation 12:1-6**

**70** Lehi's descendants became wicked and rejected the gospel.

**Mormon 8:1-10;**  
**Moroni 1**

**71** Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith, preparing the way to restore the new and everlasting covenant. See prophecy 33.

**Joseph Smith—History 1:14–20; Doctrine and Covenants 1:17–23**

**72** The angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon was later translated and published. See prophecies 33 and 61.

**Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54**

**73** John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, restoring the priesthood of God to the earth. See prophecy 65.

**Joseph Smith—History 1:68–73**

**74** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in Fayette, New York, USA. See prophecies 42 and 62.

**Doctrine and Covenants 20–21**

**75 PROPHECY**  
The servants of the Lord from all dispensations will partake of the sacrament together.

**Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–14**

**76 PROPHECY**  
The Lord Jesus Christ will dwell on the earth for a thousand years during the Millennium. See also prophecy 44.

**Doctrine and Covenants 29:10–11**

**77 PROPHECY**  
Satan will be loosed again and will reign for a short time, and then the end of the earth will come.

**Doctrine and Covenants 43:29–33**

**DISPENSATION:  
THE FULNESS OF TIMES**

**Prophet Joseph Smith**

**1830**

**1900**

**2000**

**71** **72** **73**

**74** **75** **77** **79** **81** **82** **83**  
**76** **78** **80**

**84** **85**

**86**



**71**



**74**



**81**



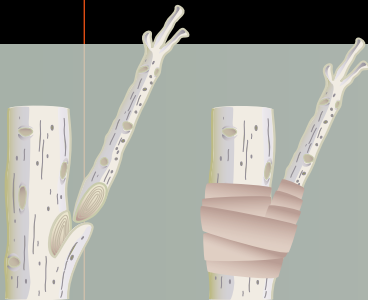
**82**



**84**



**86**



**ALLEGORY OF ZENOS (ABOUT 1800–MILLENNIUM)**

The Lord of the vineyard asked his servants to graft the natural branches back into the tame olive tree and to graft the wild branches back into their original trees. He asked them to carefully graft the branches “according as the good shall grow.” Other servants were brought to help, but they were few. He promised the faithful servants joy in the fruit of his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:52–73.)

**79 PROPHECY**

All faithful Saints will be caught up to meet Christ when He returns.

**Doctrine and Covenants 88:95–98**

**80 PROPHECY**

The devil and his armies will be defeated by Michael the archangel and the hosts of heaven in a great, last battle after the Millennium.

**Doctrine and Covenants 88:110–116**

**81** Moses, Elias, and Elijah conferred the priesthood keys needed to restore the everlasting covenant. See prophecy 65.

**Doctrine and Covenants 110:11–16**

**82** The Saints in Nauvoo built a temple, and ordinances for the dead were restored.

**Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–34**

**83** The headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was established in the western part of North America. See prophecies 42, 60, and 62.

**Isaiah 2:2–3**

**84** The gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached throughout the world. Every person will have the opportunity to accept the gospel. See prophecies 60 and 62.

**85** The blessings of the priesthood were extended to every worthy person without regard for race. See prophecy 62.

**Official Declaration 2**

### 78 PROPHECY

Jesus Christ will stand on Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives, the continents will become one land, and the twelve tribes will receive their inheritances.

**Doctrine and Covenants 133:17–35; Articles of Faith 1:10**

**1** Jesus Christ appears at Jerusalem (in the Holy Land) and the New Jerusalem (in North America). See prophecy 78.

**2** Jesus Christ returns to the earth in power and glory at His Second Coming. The lost tribes of Israel and the city of Enoch are restored. See prophecies 52, 53, and 78.

**3** The disciples of Christ are resurrected. See prophecy 79.

**4** The sons of Levi present an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.

**5** A great sacrament meeting is held with all the disciples of Christ from all dispensations. See prophecy 75.

## JESUS CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN

### ALLEGORY OF ZENOS

All the trees of the vineyard began to bring forth good fruit. They became "like unto one body; and the fruits were equal." The Lord of the vineyard blessed his servants for their diligent efforts and gloried in the fruit of his vineyard. (See Jacob 5:74–76.)



### ALLEGORY OF ZENOS

Evil fruit again came to the vineyard. The Lord separated the good from the bad fruit. The bad fruit was cast away, and the vineyard was burned. (See Jacob 5:77.)

**86** Temples are being built across the world, making the ordinances of the gospel available to all people—living and dead.

**Doctrine and Covenants 124:37–42**

**6** The Millennium ushers in peace for a thousand years. The earth is renewed. See prophecies 44, 52, 53, and 76.

**7** Satan is loosed. See prophecy 77.

**8** The great and final battle takes place. Satan and his armies are defeated. See prophecy 80.

**9** After all people have been resurrected, they will come to the Final Judgment and either inherit a kingdom of glory or be cast out. Satan is banished forever.

**10** Earth becomes sanctified and glorified. See prophecy 68.

"Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fulness of my gospel, sent forth unto the children of men, that they might have life and be made partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days, as it was written by the prophets and apostles in days of old" (D&C 66:2).



# Tonga

## A LAND DEDICATED TO GOD

**By Harvalene K. Sekona**

Principal of Liahona Middle School, Tonga

Less than a decade after The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in New York, USA, an island kingdom thousands of miles away in the vast Pacific Ocean turned toward Christianity. In 1839 King George Tupou I of Tonga committed his country, his people, and his posterity to God's protection. The king's proclamation "God and Tonga are my inheritance" became Tonga's motto. Religion plays a great role in Tonga because of this legacy; to this day, every Tongan observes the Sabbath as a day of worship.

### **The First Missionaries**

While serving in the Samoa Mission, Elders Brigham Smoot and Alva Butler were assigned to take the restored gospel to the islands of Tonga. Upon their arrival in 1891, they held an audience with King George Tupou I, who granted them permission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. With encouraging prospects, more missionaries were called to the islands and were anxiously engaged in spreading the gospel. Unfortunately, the growth of the Church was not as fruitful in Tonga as in the other Polynesian islands of Tahiti, Hawaii, New Zealand, and Samoa. In 1897 the missionaries were ordered to



In 1891, Elders Brigham Smoot and Alva Butler met with King George Tupou I and received permission to preach the gospel among his people.

### Building Up a Christian Civilization

As the gospel spread throughout the islands, various Church schools were established. In 1947 the Church leased a large piece of land and began building a new school, Liahona College, now known as Liahona High School.

Dedicated in 1953 by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, it was to become a “guiding light” to all who would enter, and it was to prepare young people to become leaders and to influence others for good. Present also at the dedication was Queen Salote Tupou III, who endorsed the school as an instrument for building a “Christian civilization” that

TIME LINE

► 1839: King George Tupou I commits Tonga to Christianity.



1891: First Latter-day Saint missionaries are sent to Tonga.

1892: First convert, Alipate, is baptized and confirmed.

1897: The mission is closed and the missionaries return to Samoa.



◀ 1907: Missionary work resumes; the Church opens a school in Neiafu.

return to Samoa, and the few converts in Tonga were left without Church leadership for a time.

### A People Remembered

*“Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, . . . remember those who are upon the isles of the sea?” (2 Nephi 29: 7).*

The Lord did not forget the Saints in the island kingdom of Tonga. In 1907, Elders Heber J. McKay and W. O. Facer arrived in Neiafu, Vava’u, where they started a branch and a small school. Soon missionary work began to prosper, and several branches and Church schools were established throughout the islands over the next few years.

As in other parts of the world, the Church in Tonga had its share of opposition, but this time the gospel was here to stay. As missionary work flourished, Church leaders were called from among the local Tongan members so that when foreigners were evacuated, as during World War II, the Church could continue to thrive.

unites people of all walks of life. Since the school’s establishment, thousands of Liahona High School graduates have served as missionaries, Church leaders, and prominent community leaders.

Today there are two Church-sponsored high schools in Tonga: Liahona High School, on the main island of Tongatapu, and Saineha High School, on the island of Vava’u. There are also five Church-sponsored middle schools: three in Tongatapu, one in ‘Eua, and one in Ha’apai.

### A Prophecy Fulfilled

When President David O. McKay (1873–1970) and his wife, Emma Ray, visited Tonga in 1955, the Saints treated them like royalty. This was the first visit of a Church President to the islands. During their short visits to Tongatapu and Vava’u, they held meetings with the members and felt of their love and devotion as Tongans performed music and dances and gave speeches and feasts.

During President McKay’s visit to the Saints in Vava’u, he was inspired to reveal that he had seen a vision of “a temple on one of these islands, where the members of the Church may go and receive the blessings of the temple of God.” One member recorded the Tongans’ response: “The entire congregation burst into tears.”<sup>1</sup>

Nearly 30 years later, in August 1983, the Nuku’alofa Tonga Temple was dedicated by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), then a counselor in the First Presidency. I remember as a teenage girl how Latter-day Saints from the outer islands and Tongans from overseas came for the auspicious occasion. I was privileged to attend one of the dedicatory sessions and be part of the

from the stakes in Tongatapu and to come up with a presentation that would spiritually prepare the Saints for the temple dedication the next day. The event would be broadcast and televised live to the outer islands as well as to Tongan stakes around the globe, so this was a mighty task.

The production was titled “The Treasure That Lasts.” It consisted of cultural dances from Tonga, Hawaii, Tahiti, New Zealand, Fiji, and Samoa. The story line was that of a couple who, having lost their young child, searched the many Polynesian islands for a treasure that would appease their loss. Although they found gifts at each island, none could soothe their pain. When they returned to Tonga,

1916: *The Tongan Mission is organized.*

1922: *An exclusion law prohibits foreign missionaries from entering Tonga.*



◀ 1924: *The exclusion law is repealed due to efforts from local members and mission president M. Vernon Coombs.*

1926: *The Church opens a school called The Makeke, meaning “arise and awake.”*



◀ 1946: *The Book of Mormon is published in Tongan.*

choir. I remember the warm feeling I felt when I heard President Hinckley speak, and I knew then that he was called of God. When we sang “Hosanna Anthem,” I understood too how much the Lord loves His children.

The Savior has always remembered the people on the isles of the sea, and on that day President McKay’s prophecy was fulfilled.

### Rededication of the House of the Lord

Because of the increasing Church growth in Tonga, the temple was closed for about two years for renovation. Among other work, rooms were enlarged, a sealing room was added, and Polynesian motifs were added to walls and ceilings.

At the beginning of 2007, my husband and I were called to produce a cultural celebration for the rededication of the temple. The event was to be held on November 3, a day before the rededication sessions.

Our aim was to involve as many youth as possible



*As a young Apostle, President Thomas S. Monson (center) visited Tonga in 1965. With him are the mission president and his wife, Patrick and Lela Dalton.*



they were introduced to the gospel by missionaries and learned of “the treasure that lasts”—eternal families and the blessing of someday being reunited with their child who had passed away.

During the week of the rededication, it rained heavily. At our final rehearsal, on November 2, the skies were overcast. I asked the youth to return to their homes and pray for good weather so they would be able to perform for Tonga and for those who would be watching via satellite, especially the prophet. That night it rained hard,

that eternal families are the treasure that lasts and that temples are built to bring such blessings to pass.

### A People Dedicated to the Lord

Today the Church continues to grow in Tonga, and leadership positions are held by native members. Chapels dot the islands, and the increase of missionaries is hastening the work. The Church schools are firmly established and continue to prepare valiant missionaries, future leaders, and worthy mothers and fathers.

► 1953: Elder LeGrand Richards dedicates Liahona High School; it becomes one of the largest and most successful schools in Tonga.



► 1955: President David O. McKay visits Tonga.



1960: *The Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price* are translated into Tongan.

1968: Tonga's first stake, the Nuku'alofa Stake, is created.



and the next morning the weather was still foreboding.

On Saturday evening, 3,000 young people gathered at Teufaiva Stadium to hear from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who had been sent to rededicate the temple due to President Hinckley's frail health. I will never forget the performance. Everything fell into place. The weather was perfect, the sound system that had malfunctioned earlier was excellent, and those young men and young women danced their hearts out.

We had witnessed a miracle. Heavenly Father heard the prayers of His children and kept the rain away. At the same time, we were able to set the tone for the temple dedication the next day, reminding members



Missionaries help load relief supplies that were sent from Tongatapu to Ha'apai after a cyclone hit Tonga's northern islands in January.





The Saints are no longer required to make that long journey by boat to the main island for general conference. Instead, technology has enabled members to remain within their stakes to watch general conference and the area conferences broadcast from New Zealand.

Amid the turmoil of changes arriving on Tonga's shores, the Saints continue their legacy of faith. They are a people who were committed to God 175 years ago. They are a people who today continue to dedicate their lives and all that they have to the Lord. ■

**NOTE**

1. R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (1986), 472.

**GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN TONGA \***

15	517	1,185	2,975	15,842	35,227	46,623	61,470	Temples: 1
1897	1917	1930	1950	1970	1990	2000	2013	Stakes: 19
								Districts: 2
								Missions: 1



\* As of January 2014



◀ 1976: President Spencer W. Kimball visits Tonga and speaks to 10,600 members at an area conference in Nuku'alofa.

▶ 1983: The Nuku'alofa Temple is dedicated.



1991: 3,000 LDS youth perform for King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in a Church centennial celebration.

1997: President Gordon B. Hinckley visits Nuku'alofa, speaks to some 11,400 people, and meets with the king.

2007: The Nuku'alofa Temple is rededicated.

**THE FAITH OF HIS FATHERS**

Since the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries, many great miracles have come to pass in the Lord's work in Tonga. One such miracle occurred on June 13, 2010, when Lord Fulivai and his family were baptized. Lord Fulivai is the first Noble of the Realm to join the Church. He is a great-great-grandson of 'lki Fulivai, a noble from Vava'u, who invited the Latter-day Saint missionaries to return to Tonga in 1907.

Lord Fulivai was baptized along with his wife, Lady Helen, and their two older children; the youngest was not yet eight. Attending this historic event were the temple, mission, and stake presidents, along with

prominent government leaders, other nobles, and family members.

One year later, on June 16, 2011, the Fulivai family was sealed for time and all eternity in the Nuku'alofa Tonga Temple.

I had the privilege of talking with the Fulivai family recently. When asked to identify the greatest blessing of joining the Church, Lady Fulivai replied without hesitation that it is the eternal blessings for families. Lord Fulivai expressed that the gospel provided him with answers to lifelong questions. He believes the gospel is the doorway for his posterity to partake of God's greatest blessings.



By Elder  
Yoon Hwan Choi  
Of the Seventy

# Be Strong AND OF A Good Courage

“The head of the presidential guard has announced that we are going to have a big party because our performance was so great!” shouted one of the guards.

I should have been happy, but as soon as I heard the news, I started to pray. I knew that our celebration would become a drinking party. I was spiritually strong enough not to drink, but I did not want my fellow guards to have a hard time because of me.

Military duty is mandatory for all South Korean young men, so I joined the army right after I finished my full-time mission. I was assigned to the presidential guard. My fellow guardsmen knew that I would never drink any alcoholic beverage because I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When the party was announced, they started to become nervous because they would be in trouble if I did not drink when our commanding officer gave the order to do so at the party.

There was a tradition that at celebrations the commander would stand before each guard, one at a time, and fill the guard’s glass with liquor. Then the guard would hold up the glass and say, “Thank you, sir!” and drink the liquor at once.

In military life, disobeying any order from a senior officer is insubordination and can cause big trouble not only for the person disobeying but also for the members of his corps. In the worst case, insubordination could even result in being sent to jail, and this made my fellow guards nervous.

The day of the party arrived, and we 10 guards sat around the table. Each had an empty glass in front of him. I was sitting in the third chair. Our commander entered and filled the first glass. The guard held up his glass and said, “Thank you, sir!” Then he drank.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL S. PARKER

Our commander moved to the second guard and did the same. Then it was my turn. I was ready to keep the Word of Wisdom, and I kept praying in my heart for the sake of my fellow guards. When our commanding officer filled my glass, with a loud voice I said, “Thank you, sir!” Then I was going to say I was sorry and could not drink.

At that moment, his secretary entered and said, “Sir, you have a phone call.” Our commander turned to him and said, “I’m busy.”

I was still holding the glass when the secretary added, “Sir, it’s the president.” Our commander replied, “Oh, OK,” and then he immediately left.

Suddenly the second guard switched his empty glass with mine and quickly drank the liquor. Soon afterward our commander returned, saw my empty glass, and said, “Oh, you finished already!” Then he moved to the fourth guard. Everyone took a deep breath and relaxed.

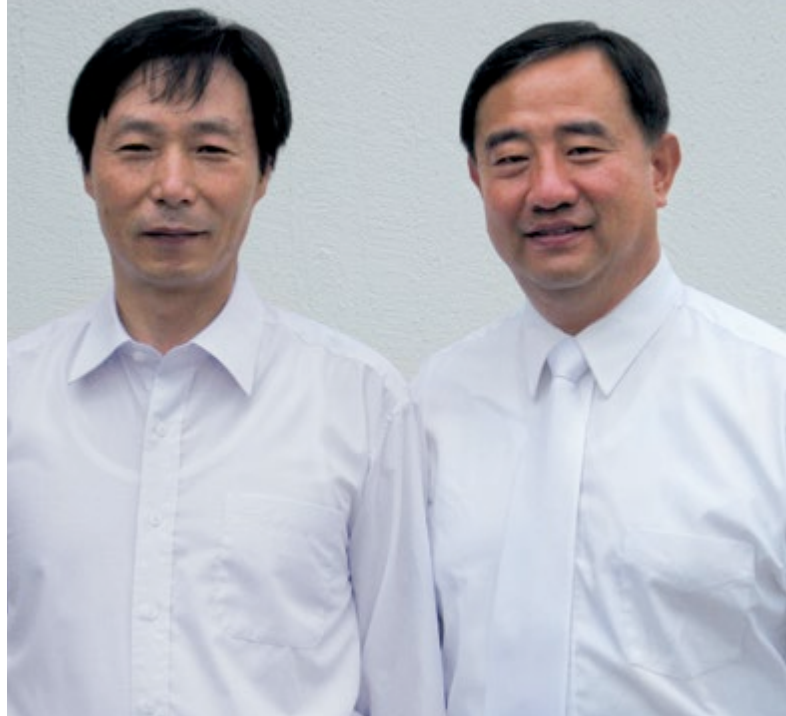
Thirty-five years later, long after I had finished my military duty, I received a phone call from a branch president of the Church in South Korea. He asked me if I remembered a Mr. Park from my military service.

“Of course I do,” I answered. I had served with Mr. Park, and he had respected my beliefs and had often protected me in difficult situations.

The branch president gave me Mr. Park’s phone number, and I called him right away. As I spoke with him, Mr. Park told me that during our time together as presidential guards, he had seen a light emanating from me and had felt that he should help me. Afterward, whenever he had a hard time, he said he thought about me.

Mr. Park told me that he had two sons he wanted to be like me. He had even taken his sons to church at a Latter-day Saint chapel. One of them had been baptized, though Mr. Park had not. That son, however, was now less active. Mr. Park wanted my help and advice.

I went to see Mr. Park a week later. We had a nice visit, and I soon began to meet with his son and encourage him to return to the Church. He humbly accepted my counsel, became active, and served a full-time mission.



***Thirty-five years after Mr. Park saw me exercise my faith while we were serving together in the military, I baptized him a member of the Church.***

Through his letters home while serving a mission, he motivated his father and helped prepare him for baptism. On a summer day the year following our first visit, I baptized Mr. Park a member of the Church.

What a great miracle! Their lives had been changed because of the faith exercised by a young man 35 years before.

### **Avoiding Snares and Traps**

In the Old Testament, Joshua taught the children of Israel about the snares and traps they would encounter while living in a wicked world:

“Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you” (Joshua 23:13).

For me, anticipating the trouble I could have caused my fellow guardsmen was a trap that could have tempted me to drink alcohol. However, I chose the right and was ready to obey the Word of Wisdom regardless of the consequences.

I learned from my experiences in the military that the Lord will bless and protect His children if we are “strong and of a good courage” (Joshua 1:6). For example, He

protected the Israelites when they crossed the River Jordan. But first, the priests who carried the ark of the covenant showed their faith and courage by stepping into the overflowing river. Only then did the Lord “cut off . . . the waters” and make the river “stand upon an heap” (see Joshua 3:13–17).

To “be strong and of a good courage,” we need to “cleave unto the Lord” (Joshua 1:6; 23:8). We cleave unto the Lord as we hold personal and family scripture study, personal and family prayer, and family home evening. We also cleave unto Him as we partake of the sacrament, magnify our callings, worship in the temple often, obey the commandments, and repent when we fall short. These practices allow the Holy Ghost to abide with us and help us recognize and avoid snares and traps.

“Beginning when we are very young, those responsible for our care set forth guidelines and rules to ensure our safety,” President Thomas S. Monson has said. “Life would be simpler for all of us if we would obey such rules completely. . . .

“Obedience is a hallmark of prophets; it has provided strength and knowledge to them throughout the ages. It is essential for us to realize that we, as well, are entitled to this source of strength and knowledge. It is readily available to each of us today as we obey God’s commandments.”<sup>1</sup>

### Moving Forward in Faith

Shortly after President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, was called as a General Authority, he went to Elder Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) for counsel. President Packer recalled:

“He listened very carefully to my problem and suggested that I see President David O. McKay [1873–1970]. President McKay counseled me as to the direction I should go. I was very willing to be obedient but saw no way possible for me to do as he counseled me to do.

“I returned to Elder Lee and told him that I saw no way to move in the direction I was counseled to go.



### COURAGE TO STAND FOR PRINCIPLE

“We will all face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God’s approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully but also as the determination to live decently.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Strong and of a Good Courage,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 69.

He said, ‘The trouble with you is you want to see the end from the beginning.’ I replied that I would like to see at least a step or two ahead. Then came the lesson of a lifetime: ‘You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.’”<sup>2</sup>

As children of our Heavenly Father, we sometimes want to understand in detail the things that we must accept or accomplish in faith. However, we don’t need to understand all things. We just need to step forward as the Lord has asked us to do and as the priests of the Israelites did in entering the overflowing River Jordan. Although we cannot see or understand all things, the Lord will help us walk on dry ground if we are “strong and of a good courage.”

We will have the power to stand strong as we live by His words—seeking and following His guidance in the scriptures and from His servants. Yes, we live “in enemy territory,”<sup>3</sup> but the enemy cannot conquer the Lord, our Savior, who was sent to help us and to save us.

I know we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ by “standing obedient and strong on the doctrine of our God.”<sup>4</sup> As we exercise the courage to do so, we stand in holy places, no matter where we are. ■

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 89, 90.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “The Edge of the Light,” *BYU Today*, Mar. 1991, 22–23; see also *Old Testament: Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual* (1996), 84.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 16.
4. Robert D. Hales, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 51.

# TECHNICOLO R



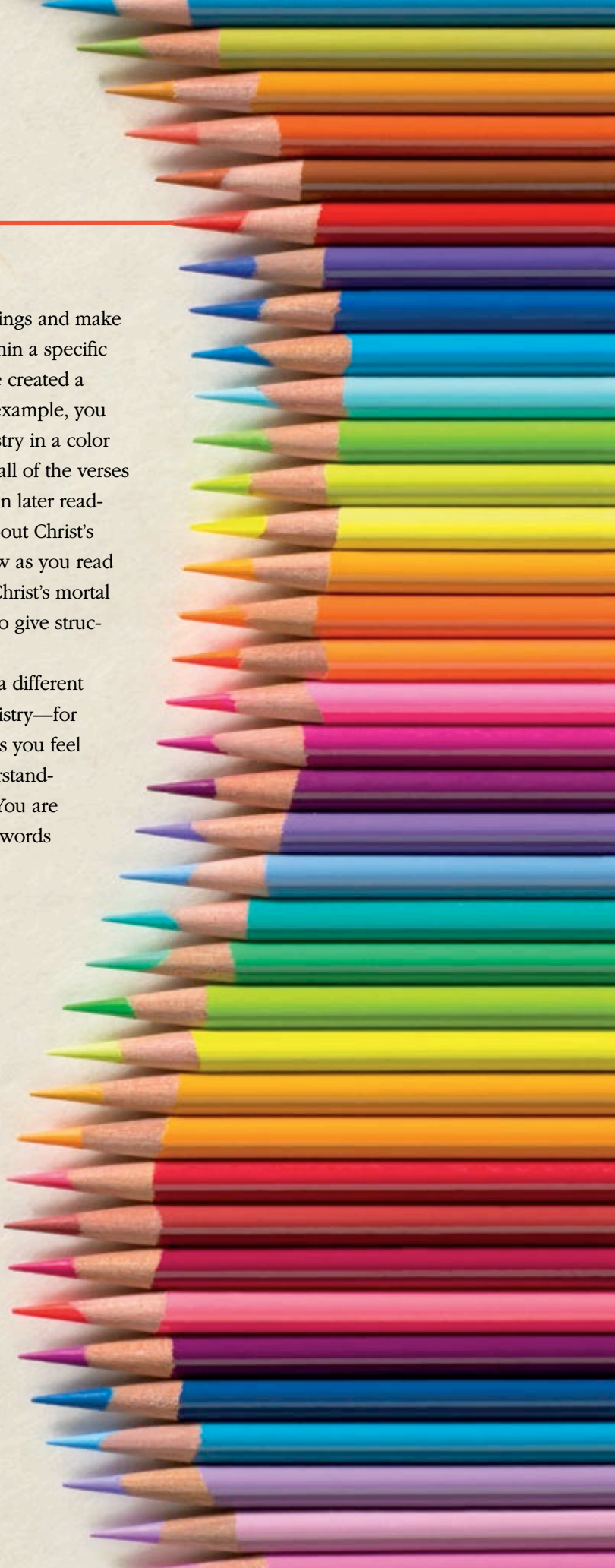
*Jesus commanded us to search the words of Isaiah (see 3 Nephi 23:1). Following is one suggestion on how we can do this—identify themes in Isaiah and mark each one in a different color.*

**By LaRene Porter Gaunt**  
Church Magazines



hen it comes to the scriptures, we love the stories because they make the scriptures easier to understand. The Book of Mormon, for example, is filled with stories of epic proportion covering more than two thousand years. They tell of cycles of war and peace, of conflicts between prophets and anti-Christ, and of consequences of good and evil.

But when it comes to the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament—even though it is filled with far-reaching prophecies, such as those regarding the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ and His Second Coming—its lack of a story line, coupled with Isaiah's use of symbolism and his poetic writing style, leaves many readers struggling to understand it.



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## Marking Themes

There is, however, a way to give structure to Isaiah's writings and make them easier to understand—mark the verses you feel fit within a specific theme in one color. Once you have done this, you will have created a thread of color linking verses on one topic into a unit. For example, you could highlight prophecies about Jesus Christ's mortal ministry in a color of your choosing—perhaps red. Don't worry about finding all of the verses that may contain this theme. This is a gradual process, and in later readings of Isaiah you may discover other verses you feel are about Christ's mortal ministry. Simply mark the verses you find in red. Now as you read the thread of verses marked in red, your understanding of Christ's mortal ministry will blossom. Repeating this pattern will continue to give structure to the book of Isaiah.

Next, highlight prophecies of Christ's Second Coming in a different color from the one you used in marking Christ's mortal ministry—for example, blue. Read through Isaiah again, looking for verses you feel are about Christ's Second Coming. Don't worry about understanding all of the verses you read as you search for this theme. You are simply reading to create a thread of color that links Isaiah's words about Christ's Second Coming together in a unit.

Two other prominent themes in Isaiah are the gathering of Israel and the Restoration of the gospel. Using different colors, follow the same process to mark these two themes that you used for Christ's mortal ministry and the Second Coming. As you progress in your "precept upon precept" study of Isaiah (see Isaiah 28:10), you may discover additional themes you would like to mark.

You will be blessed as you take the time to immerse yourself in the writings of Isaiah, but it requires commitment. Gradually you will become comfortable with Isaiah's poetic Hebrew writing style. You will begin to see order and structure within this great book of scripture. You will feel the witness of the Holy Ghost bearing testimony to you that Isaiah's words are true (see 1 Nephi 15:11).



## SAMPLES OF MARKED THEMES

### 1. Prophecies about Jesus Christ's Mortal Ministry

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14; see also 9:6; 11:1–2; 53; 61:1–3).

### 2. Christ's Second Coming and Millennial Reign

"Who is this that cometh . . . traveling in the greatness of his strength? . . ."

"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

"I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me" (Isaiah 63:1–3; see also 12–14; 34; 63–66).

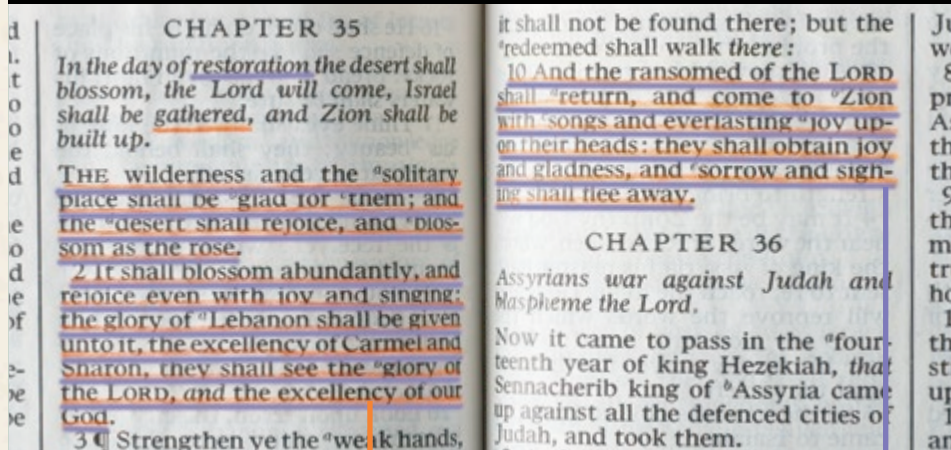


## STUDY AIDS

The following sources can help you as you study Isaiah (all of them are also available online):

1. Chapter headings
2. Footnotes
3. Bible Dictionary
4. Topical Guide or Guide to the Scriptures
5. Book of Mormon (especially 2 Nephi)
6. *Old Testament Student Manual: 1 Kings–Malachi*, 3rd ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2003), 131–210.
7. *Book of Mormon Student Manual* (2009), 43–46, 72–91.
8. James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (1890).
9. Bruce R. McConkie, "Ten Keys to Understanding Isaiah," *Ensign*, Oct. 1973, 78–83.

**Some verses can have more than one theme and be marked with more than one color. These verses simply show the complex relationship of themes in Isaiah.**



### 3. Gathering of Israel

"The remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, . . . shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

"The remnant shall return. . . ."

"For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return" (Isaiah 10:20–22; see also 5:26; 11:11; 54:7).

### 4. Restoration of the Gospel

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2; see also 11:12; 29:14; 49:20–22).







## THE SAVIOR AND OTHERS QUOTED ISAIAH

- In scripture, Isaiah is the most frequently quoted of all the ancient prophets.
- Because Isaiah lived about 100 years before Lehi left Jerusalem, the writings of Isaiah were on the brass plates that Lehi's family carried with them (see 1 Nephi 4–5).
- The Book of Mormon quotes more than 400 verses (32 percent) of Isaiah and paraphrases more than 30 verses (3 percent). Nephi and other prophets often interpret passages of Isaiah.
- In the New Testament, Isaiah is quoted 137 times—at least 7 times by Jesus Christ and at least 40 times by the Apostles.
- Isaiah is quoted 106 times in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 113 interprets Isaiah 11 and 52; section 101 holds the key to understanding Isaiah 65; and section 133 helps to clarify Isaiah 35, 51, 63, and 64.
- Moroni appeared as an angel to Joseph Smith on September 21, 1823, and quoted Isaiah chapter 11, "saying that it was about to be fulfilled" (Joseph Smith—History 1:40).

## NEPHI'S KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING ISAIAH

One of our greatest resources for understanding Isaiah is the Book of Mormon, particularly Nephi's writings. He wrote, "For I know that [Isaiah's prophecies] shall be of great worth unto them in the last days" (2 Nephi 25:8). Here are some of Nephi's keys to understanding Isaiah:

1. Liken the words of Isaiah to yourself (see 2 Nephi 11:8).
2. Understand "the manner of prophesying among the Jews" (2 Nephi 25:1).
3. Study with the spirit of prophecy (see 2 Nephi 25:4), which is the testimony of Jesus (see Revelation 19:10).
4. Know concerning the regions of the Holy Land (see 2 Nephi 25:6).
5. Live in the days that the prophecies are fulfilled (see 2 Nephi 25:7).

## THREE LITERARY FORMS TO LOOK FOR

- **Poetic Parallelism:** About 1,100 examples of poetic parallelism are found in Isaiah's writings.<sup>1</sup> The first line features words that are paralleled by words in a following line. The two lines rarely rhyme but rather present two parallel expressions. For example: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6).
- **Dualism:** When a symbol has a dual meaning—one fulfilled in its current context as well as in a past or future

context—it is called dualism or a type and shadow. For example, Isaiah wrote: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah's faithful response to the Lord's call echoes, or is a type and shadow of, the Savior's response when asked by His Father in the pre-mortal council to be our Redeemer (see Abraham 3:27).

- **Symbolic Language:** Isaiah often used symbols in his writing. For example, the plural phrase "daughters of Zion" often refers to cities and villages in Israel, but the singular "daughter of Zion" refers to Jerusalem. "Daughters of Zion" can also refer to future generations of the house of Israel and is another example of dualism.

### NOTE

1. See Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, and Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* (1998), 603.



**By Elder  
Craig C. Christensen**  
Of the Presidency of  
the Seventy

From the New Testament writings of Paul we read:

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others. . . .

“For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

“But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thessalonians 5:5–8).

Several years ago, Sister Christensen and I returned home from our weekly date night to find our teenage children watching a movie they had rented. As we walked into our family room and sat down with our children, Sister Christensen started to feel uncomfortable with what they were watching. It wasn’t necessarily the content; it was the feeling she had while watching.

After a few minutes she asked our children if they saw light in this particular movie. She was not referring to the cinematography or even the elements of the plot but to the feelings she was experiencing when exposed to something rather dark and somewhat eerie.

*To become children of light means to reject the power of the adversary and to choose daily to follow the Light of Christ.*

# BECOMING

Over the years we have adopted, as part of our regular family dialogue, that simple, penetrating question: “Do you see any light in that?” We ask this question frequently as we seek after things that are “virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy” (Articles of Faith 1:13) or as we are bombarded with worldly influences. Simply by being on guard and by using this somewhat obvious filter, we have learned that it is quite easy to differentiate between what is light and what is dark—between things that inspire us and bring us closer to the Spirit and things that do not.



# CHILDREN OF LIGHT



## The Doctrine of Light

The *doctrine of light* is the very essence of the gospel, which is centered in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. To understand light means to understand the nature and divine character of the Savior Himself. He unequivocally declared, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi explained that Jesus Christ “is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened” (Mosiah 16:9). This light is in each of us, and it helps us discern between good and evil. It is called the Light of Christ, which the prophet Mormon said “is given to every man, that he may know good from evil” (Moroni 7:16). In section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants (one of the most profound sections in all of scripture on the doctrine of light), the Savior said, “I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world; . . . I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one” (verses 2–3). So when we talk about light, we are really talking about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Consider what we learn about light—and darkness—from the experience of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove.

“I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was *seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me*, and had such an astonishing influence over me as *to bind my tongue so that I could not speak*. Thick *darkness* gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were *doomed to sudden destruction*.

“But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of *the power of this enemy which had seized upon me*, . . . *I saw a pillar of light* exactly over my head, above the *brightness of the sun*, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“. . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, *whose brightness and glory defy all description*,

standing above me in the air” (Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17; emphasis added).

From Joseph’s experience, we learn that the concept of light is much broader and much deeper than a simple description of luminosity or radiance—and that darkness is more than the mere absence of light. What Joseph witnessed was a battle between two forces—the ongoing conflict between the powers of good and the powers of evil. As Joseph described what he saw, he used terms such as *brightness*, *power*, and *glory*. To understand the doctrine of light, we need to understand the depths of this spiritual power, which comes from the Savior Himself.

***The doctrine of light is the very essence of the gospel, which is centered in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.***

Again from section 93 we read, “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (verse 36). Here the Savior equates light and truth with “intelligence” and “the glory of God.” In a similar verse we read, “The word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (D&C 84:45).

If intelligence equals light and truth, and light and truth equal Spirit, then intelligence must equal Spirit. In fact, all of these terms could be considered interchangeable and in many cases can be substituted for one another elsewhere in the scriptures:

“Whatever principle of *intelligence* [substitute one of the other words—*glory, truth, light, Spirit*] we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

“And if a person gains more knowledge and *intelligence* [*glory, truth, light, Spirit*] in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18–19; emphasis added).



Here's another example:

“And the *light [Spirit, glory, intelligence, truth]* which shineth, which giveth you *light [Spirit, glory, intelligence, truth]*, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same *light [Spirit, glory, intelligence, truth]* that quickeneth your understandings;

“Which *light [Spirit, glory, intelligence, truth]* proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space” (D&C 88:11–12; emphasis added).

Because light proceeds from the presence of God and is synonymous with the Spirit of the Lord, it is that same Spirit that enlightens and quickens us. It is the Light of

Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, that “giveth light to every man that cometh into the world” (D&C 84:46). It is the Spirit of Christ that is “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed” (D&C 88:13).

As you and I follow the Savior and embrace the light, we become His children, “children of light” (1 Thessalonians 5:5), His sons and His daughters. As we continue on this path, we learn and grow and gain even more light (see D&C 50:24).

### “Children of Light”

We have been given the light of the gospel through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We know what God expects from us, His beloved children. We have His Spirit to guide and direct us. To become children of light means to reject the power of the adversary and to choose daily to follow the Light of Christ.

The phrase “children of light” describes a people in whom the light of the gospel shines brightly. It describes a people who seek the light and are drawn to that

which is virtuous, clean, and pure. There is an expectation that children of light are alert and watchful—not sleeping, in a spiritual sense, when they should be awake (see 2 Nephi 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:5–8). Children of light do not sit passively in darkness; they have the courage to stand up and stand out. When the adversary comes looming, children of light know when to fight back, when to say no, and when to simply walk away.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught:

“Jesus cautioned that Satan desires to sift us like wheat (see Luke 22:31; 3 Nephi 18:18), which means to make us

common like all those around us. But Jesus taught that we who follow Him should be precious and unique, ‘the salt of the earth’ (Matthew 5:13) and ‘the light of the world,’ to shine forth to all men (Matthew 5:14, 16; see also 3 Nephi 18:24).

“We do not serve our Savior well if we fear man more than God. . . . We are called to establish the Lord’s standards, not to follow the world’s. Elder John A. Widtsoe declared, ‘We cannot walk as other men, or talk as other men, or do as other men, for we have a different destiny, obligation, and responsibility placed upon us, and we must fit ourselves [to it]’ [in Conference Report, Apr. 1940, 36].”<sup>1</sup>

Children of light let their light shine so that others may see their good works and glorify our Father in Heaven (see Matthew 5:16). They “arise and shine forth, that [their] light may be a standard for the nations” (D&C 115:5). What does it mean to be a standard to the nations? A standard is a model used in comparative analyses. If we let our light shine, our friends in the world (who have the Light of Christ) will measure their light against what they see in us.

The Savior said to Nicodemus:

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

“For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:19–21).

As you let your light shine, others who are sensitive to the light will be inspired by you to seek greater light.

To be filled with light means more than simply obeying the commandments; it means to “live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God” (D&C 84:44), including following the teachings of His chosen prophets. This is a defining characteristic of those whom Abinadi called Christ’s “seed.” As he bore powerful testimony of the Savior’s Atonement in the court of the wicked king Noah, Abinadi declared, “Whosoever has

heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, . . . these are his seed” (Mosiah 15:11). Children of light exercise great faith as they listen to and follow the words of the prophets.

### **Counsel from President Monson**

And what is our living prophet saying to us today? In the past few sessions of general conference, President Thomas S. Monson has given several powerful and closely related messages on topics such as “Stand in Holy Places,”<sup>2</sup> “Dare to Stand Alone,”<sup>3</sup> and “See Others as They May Become.”<sup>4</sup>

In these messages he invites us to strengthen our commitment to live the gospel and to reach out to, rescue, and strengthen those around us. He has taught that in order to be strong “in a world which has moved so far from that which is spiritual,” we must develop strong testimonies.<sup>5</sup> He has promised that “absolutely nothing in this world . . . will provide more comfort and happiness than a testimony of the truth.” And he has pleaded with us to consider the “countless individuals who have little or no testimony right now, those who could and would receive such a testimony if we would be willing to make the effort to share ours and to help them change.”<sup>6</sup>

### ***Children of light exercise great faith as they listen to and follow the words of the prophets.***

As children of light, we heed this counsel from a prophet of God and share our light with those around us.

At times we may consider all that is expected of children of light to be beyond our reach and abilities. Painfully aware of our own shortcomings, we may wonder why anyone would look to us for light and inspiration—particularly when we are in need of such help ourselves. If you ever feel this way, remember that your



Heavenly Father knows all about you—your strengths and your weaknesses. He knows perfectly who you are, but He also knows who you can become. And with that knowledge, He has placed you here, now—at the exact place and time in which you can do the most good with the talents and gifts He has given you.

You don't have to wait until you are perfect before you can be a light to the world. Becoming children of light is a process, much like the process of conversion, which Elder Oaks described as "a profound change of nature." He explained that we have the gospel of Jesus Christ to help us "become what children of God are supposed to become. This spotless and perfected state will result from a steady succession of . . . right choices, and from continuing repentance."<sup>7</sup>

As children of light, we have the obligation of making this world a holier and happier place for our having lived in it. Heavenly Father relies on our influence to help bring all of His children home to Him. We should become an influence for good wherever we go (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

As we cultivate the Lord's light by following the promptings of His Spirit, He will use us as instruments to bring about much righteousness. Continually ask yourselves the question our family asks, "Do you see any light in that?" Be vigilant in seeking for and following the true light of the gospel, which is the Savior Himself, and you will receive more light, becoming brighter and brighter every day.

Yes, the powers of the adversary are strong in the world today, but our collective influence, as true disciples of the living Savior, is even stronger. May we continually let our light—His light, which is in us—shine. ■

*From a devotional address, "Children of the Light," given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on March 19, 2013. For the full address, visit [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

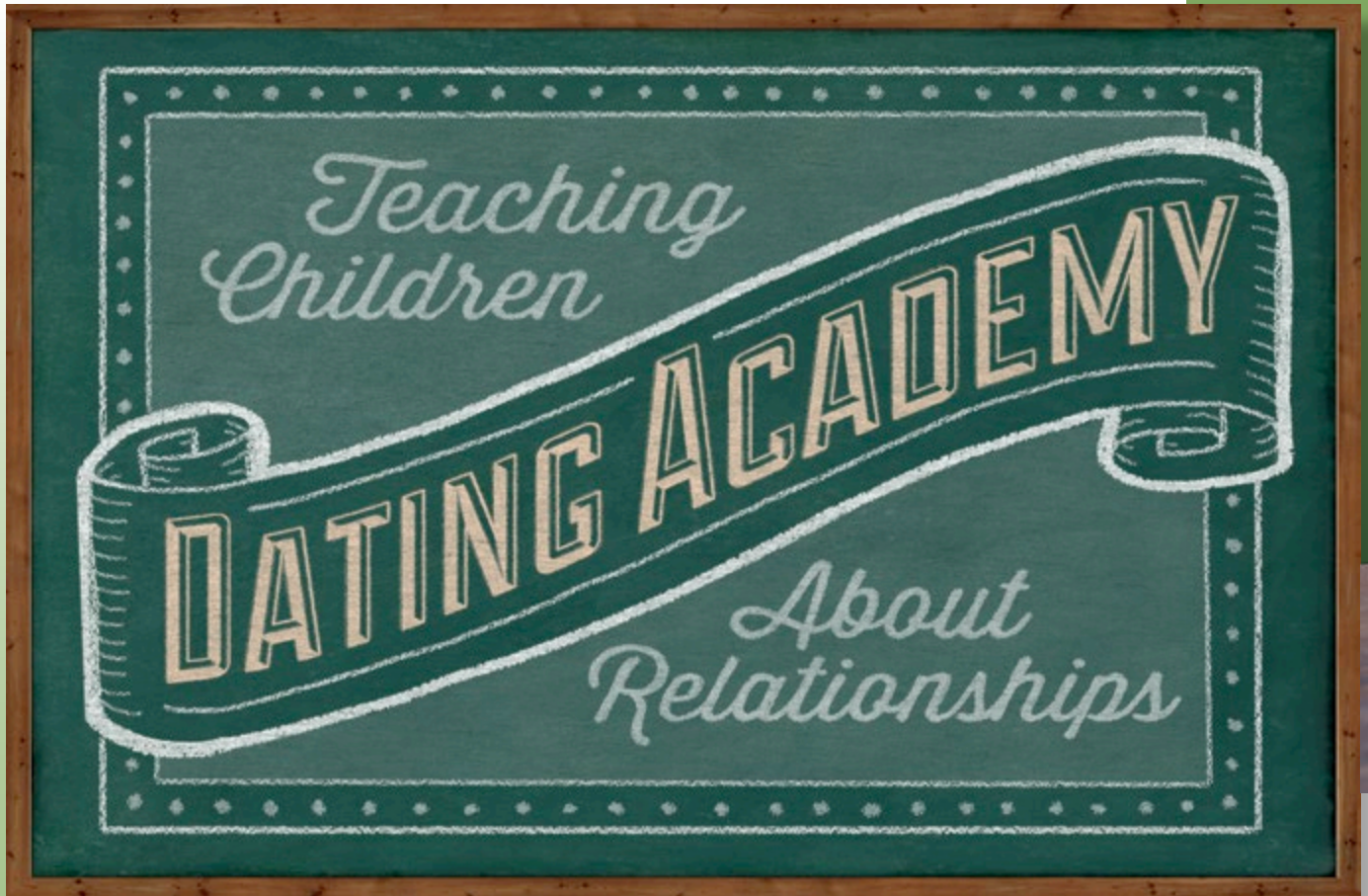
#### NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Unselfish Service," *Ensign*, May 2009, 94–95.
2. See Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 82–86.
3. See Thomas S. Monson, "Dare to Stand Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 60–62, 67.
4. See Thomas S. Monson, "See Others as They May Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 68–71.
5. See Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," 83–84, 86.
6. Thomas S. Monson, "See Others as They May Become," 68.
7. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32, 33.



**By Matthew O. Richardson**

Served as second counselor in the Sunday School general presidency from 2009 to 2014



My wife and I wanted to give our children the skills to successfully navigate growing relationships.

While serving as bishop in a young single adult ward, I couldn't help but notice how young people handled their emerging relationships. I was increasingly worried about those who approached dating with very little purpose, understanding, or direction. Some were apathetic, while others were much too zealous. Often they didn't know how to treat each other properly.

My biggest concern was their future. I desperately wanted them to experience the joys and fulfillment of a happy marriage and family

life. The statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) that “clearly, right marriage begins with right dating”<sup>1</sup> seemed to occupy my thoughts during this time.

I remember driving home with my wife from a ward social activity feeling particularly frustrated at what I'd seen. “This shouldn't be happening,” I blurted out. “After all, they know better!”





# TIPS FOR PARENTS: CREATING YOUR OWN DATING ACADEMY

Know & teach proper standards early.  
Be a good example & use good manners.

TEACH  
MODESTY BY  
EXAMPLE.



Talk with your  
children - A LOT!

Talk about  
appropriate affection.  
See FTSOY booklet.

Jot down new  
lesson ideas &  
discuss them  
together.



After a few moments my wife said, “Maybe they *don’t* know better.”

We began talking in earnest about whether the process of developing good relationships was inherent in people or learned. In the end, my wife and I concluded that the skill of developing worthwhile relationships is something a person indeed learns, whether from peers, family, a course or book, culture, traditions, or religious beliefs and practices. We immediately thought of our own children and wondered if we were

adequately preparing them for their future relationships.

We began exploring ideas on how we could best teach our children to develop appropriate relationships. We wanted to take an intentional approach. We wanted to convey the importance and purpose of relationships. We also wanted to teach realistic, proper, and practical behaviors that would empower self-confidence, engender confidence in others, and lay a foundation for healthy relationships.

In all of this we felt that we needed to start early—long before

our children began dating—and we wanted our experience to be filled with learning and teaching that were natural and hopefully fun. We fully understood, too, that we would be competing with the way the media portray relationships.

Our efforts resulted in the “Richardson Dating Academy,” which you can read about in more detail in this month’s issue of the *New Era*. What follows here is a list of tips and ideas we learned along the way that all parents can use to help teach their children about forming positive relationships.

Limit distractions. Turn off your phones!

At restaurants, point out and observe "good behavior" in others.

Observe & discuss with children how couples interact.

Teach children to look people in the eye when talking to them.



Teach children to focus on the OTHER PERSON. Forget yourself!

Share experiences that illustrate treating others with courtesy & kindness.

Teach children how to calculate a tip & how to pay the bill.



## Preparing to Teach

The more my wife and I counseled together, the more we realized this wasn't just a good idea; it was our parental responsibility. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught that parents "have not only the right but the sacred obligation, and they are under counsel from the leaders of the Church, to concern themselves with [their children's] dating habits."<sup>2</sup> While we were emboldened, we were still unsure of exactly how we could fulfill our goals.

We felt that no matter how we

prepared our children, we needed to ensure that what we taught would be founded on solid gospel principles and standards and not just our own experience or bias. We began searching for pertinent gospel doctrines, Church guidelines, materials (such as *For the Strength of Youth*), and teachings of prophets, seers, and revelators.

We then counseled together about how we could best teach our children about the purposes and practices of dating and developing appropriate relationships. We specifically wanted our children to learn through discovery,

observation, counseling together, and especially practicing relationship skills.

## Launching the Academy

Our "curriculum" was based on our outline of gospel doctrines, Church standards and guidelines, skills, activities, and objectives that we wanted our children to know and practice before they started dating. We then informed our children that they needed to graduate from this academy before their first date. You can imagine the funny looks we received at this announcement!



*Involve family in talking, role-playing, offering suggestions.*

*Teaching moments can happen anytime.*

*Teach children to plan their dates and always have a backup plan!*

The Richardson Dating Academy—or RDA, as our children called it—officially started for each of our children when he or she turned 13 years old. Using our curriculum outline as a guide, we intentionally made time to talk with our children about the purpose and timing of dating, courting, engagement, and even marriage. We often read together and discussed Church standards on how to develop relationships.

We found that it was a good idea to mix up the settings for our various discussions. We used family home evenings, the dinner table, father's

interviews, and even driving in the car. The more natural the setting, the better.

Conversation topics included whom to date, what to do or not to do on a date, common courtesies, ideas for good activities, and how to act in mixed company. We also covered practical considerations: how to appropriately plan a date or what to do if plans go awry (such as when someone gets sick or if an emergency arises). Your own curriculum can develop naturally as you study, ponder, and pray concerning what to teach your children.

### **Practicing the Concepts**

We found that showing and practicing were typically far more effective than just talking or telling. For example, we discovered that going out to dinner was the best way to expose our children to a variety of foods, help them practice good old-fashioned table manners in a public setting, and teach them how to order, use utensils, and appropriately tip a server.

When going over how to invite a person on a date, we first gave the child some practical instruction and then had him or her practice by calling older siblings or family members of the

Let your children plan some family activities.

Practice being "with" family. Pay attention to them. LISTEN!

Expose children to a variety of activities, foods, & experiences.

Let them plan, pay, & participate.



opposite sex (all were prepped beforehand) to invite them to an activity.

A favorite family home evening memory is the time we watched an older sister give her nearly 16-year-old brother advice and warnings about what to do at the end of a date—at the doorstep. We laughed (and marveled at her wisdom) as she shared her own experiences and they role-played possible scenarios for success. As you can imagine, family members loved role-playing during this part of the dating academy!

Repeating these types of activities for each child over the course of three years helped deepen understanding and build confidence through practice more than a single conversation about relationships ever could.

### Observing and Learning

We also discovered that it was incredibly helpful to provide as many opportunities as possible for our children to observe real-life relationships. For example, we would take them to a variety of social events and ask them to observe other couples. After inviting our child to watch a particular couple or group, we might ask, "What did you notice about this couple?"

Our children's responses to such questions were not always what we expected. Sometimes they would say something like, "He likes her but she doesn't like him." We always asked additional questions like, "How can you tell?" These experiences led to wonderful discussions about real-life relationships.

On a different occasion, while watching a couple at a restaurant, one

son observed, "She had her phone under the table and was texting almost the entire dinner."

"How do you feel about that?" we asked.

He said, "I think if you are going to be with a person, then you should actually *be with that person!*" This was a perfect opportunity to talk about the importance of paying attention to others. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Dating involves commitments, if only for a few hours."<sup>3</sup>

### Involving Friends

We wondered how our children's friends would react when hearing about the dating academy. We were pleasantly surprised when some of their friends asked to learn more and to be included in some of the

Make your practice lessons fun. Always look for opportunities to learn.

Include your children's friends.



Be positive.

Build confidence.

Raise expectations.

Teach children to be committed.

activities. Others said they expected to be treated in positive ways when they were with one of our children because they knew they were with a “graduate” of the dating academy.

Graduation from the RDA came at the end of three years of learning, observing, counseling together, and practicing, followed by successful completion of the “final exam.” This happened as the boys in our family demonstrated what they learned by asking and taking their mother on their very first date, a date they had planned and prepared themselves. The girls had to implement the lessons they learned by accepting and going on their first date with me—their father.

At the conclusion of their first date, we presented our “graduates” with a diploma.

### Learning Continually

Contrary to what some might assume, we have continued working with our children on the principles and practices of successful relationships long after their graduation from the academy. We talk with them, make observations, and offer gentle reminders. Teaching our children is a lifelong process for all of us.

My wife and I present our children with a framed “graduate degree” from the dating academy for “Outstanding Application of Academy Principles” when they marry. Over the years, we have been blessed to witness the lessons learned that impacted our children’s experiences with dating, courting, engagement, and especially their marriages.

Originally, the intended outcome of the dating academy was that

our children would “know better” as they developed and navigated their relationships. In hindsight, we can see it produced so much more. For example, one daughter reflected on how the RDA instilled self-confidence during a very self-conscious stage of life. Another son said he learned to respect and value others. My wife and I believe that perhaps the best outcome of the dating academy was the endearing relationships forged with our children as we taught them and all of us learned together during those meaningful experiences. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

### NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (1969), 241.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in Conference Report, Apr. 1965, 70.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Dating versus Hanging Out,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 12.

## A FLOOD OF HAPPY MEMORIES

Because of old plumbing and an unsound foundation, my childhood home flooded whenever a storm produced enough rain. Because storms in Virginia, USA, can last for hours, water invaded frequently.

We lived in that home during most of my growing-up years, so I thought flooding was normal.

After several storms, we improved our flood-fighting tactics and learned to

work together. Storms often hit in the middle of the night, and my parents would wake us all up to work at our posts as the water encroached through the basement like slow-moving lava. My brother and father would bucket out the stairwell while my sister and I quickly sopped up water with towels to save the carpet.

We giggled as we jumped and danced on those towels, feeling the

squishy wetness between our toes and through our pajama legs. Mom hurriedly wrung out the drenched towels, hurled them into the dryer, and brought new ones fresh for stomping. When we were satisfied the house was safe, we went to the kitchen to dry off and enjoy hot cocoa and cookies for our labors. Then, if it wasn't yet time for school, we would try to go back to sleep.

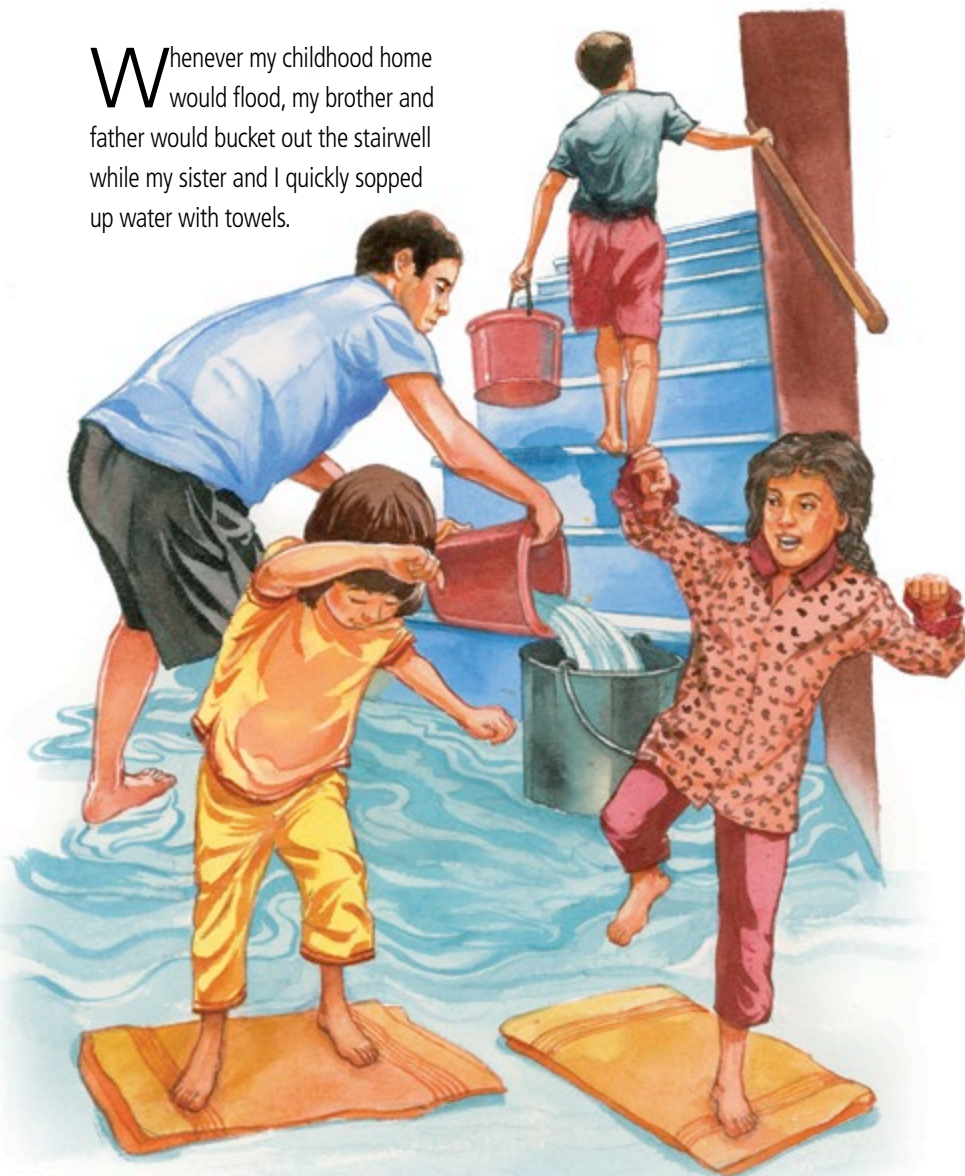
These floods must have given my parents great anxiety, but I remember them as some of the happiest moments of my childhood, even with the booming thunder and the flashing lightning. In fact, the smell of wet carpet still makes me nostalgic for family time.

My parents could have fought the flooding alone, but I'm so glad they employed all of us in defense of our home. Fighting the water was a joyous event because we were together and we each played a part.

Now that I am grown, I think about those days and wonder how I can create the same joy of working together in my own children. Though grateful that my home does not flood, I know that something unwanted will inevitably encroach upon our family.

No matter what trouble my family may deal with in the future, I hope we stay together and work together in defending our values, our faith, and each other. Then perhaps, even in adversity, we can laugh, smile, and feel happy as we labor side by side. ■

Gina Sconiers, Utah, USA



# PRIESTHOOD BLESSINGS GIVEN AND RETURNED

Some years ago while our family was eating dinner with another couple from our ward, we received a phone call from the emergency department of our local hospital. An official asked my husband, who was serving as stake president at the time, if someone from our Church could come see a 17-year-old youth who had suffered a serious head injury.

Upon arriving, my husband learned that the young man had fallen from a balcony onto a cement sidewalk 30 feet (9 m) below. He was unconscious and not expected to live.

My husband and the brother who ate dinner with us gave the young man a blessing. His family, who lived a thousand miles (1,610 km) away, was contacted and apprised of his condition.

Miraculously, after a few days of intensive care, the young man regained consciousness and began to heal. For four weeks his parents visited him daily in the hospital. Then they flew him home to Arizona, USA, so he could complete his recovery.

How marvelous it was to witness the healing power of the priesthood work in a way to give this young man a second chance at a healthy future. And how grateful I was for a husband and other ward members who are prepared to perform priesthood service and act with divine authority.

I felt deeply for the young man's parents, who were so far from their son

during his crisis. I was glad, however, to know that they felt somewhat reassured when they learned that their son had received a priesthood blessing and that Church members were glad to help.

My empathy for those parents greatly increased a few years later when I received a phone call informing me that my own son, living 2,000 miles (3,220 km) away, had been hit by a car while riding his bicycle to the university where he was working and studying. Though I felt powerless to help him, I was thankful and comforted to know that the full-time missionaries were called to give him a priesthood blessing and that a ward in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA, had responded to his family's needs. Ward members brought meals to his home and helped his wife, who had given birth just the day before the accident, care for their other three children.

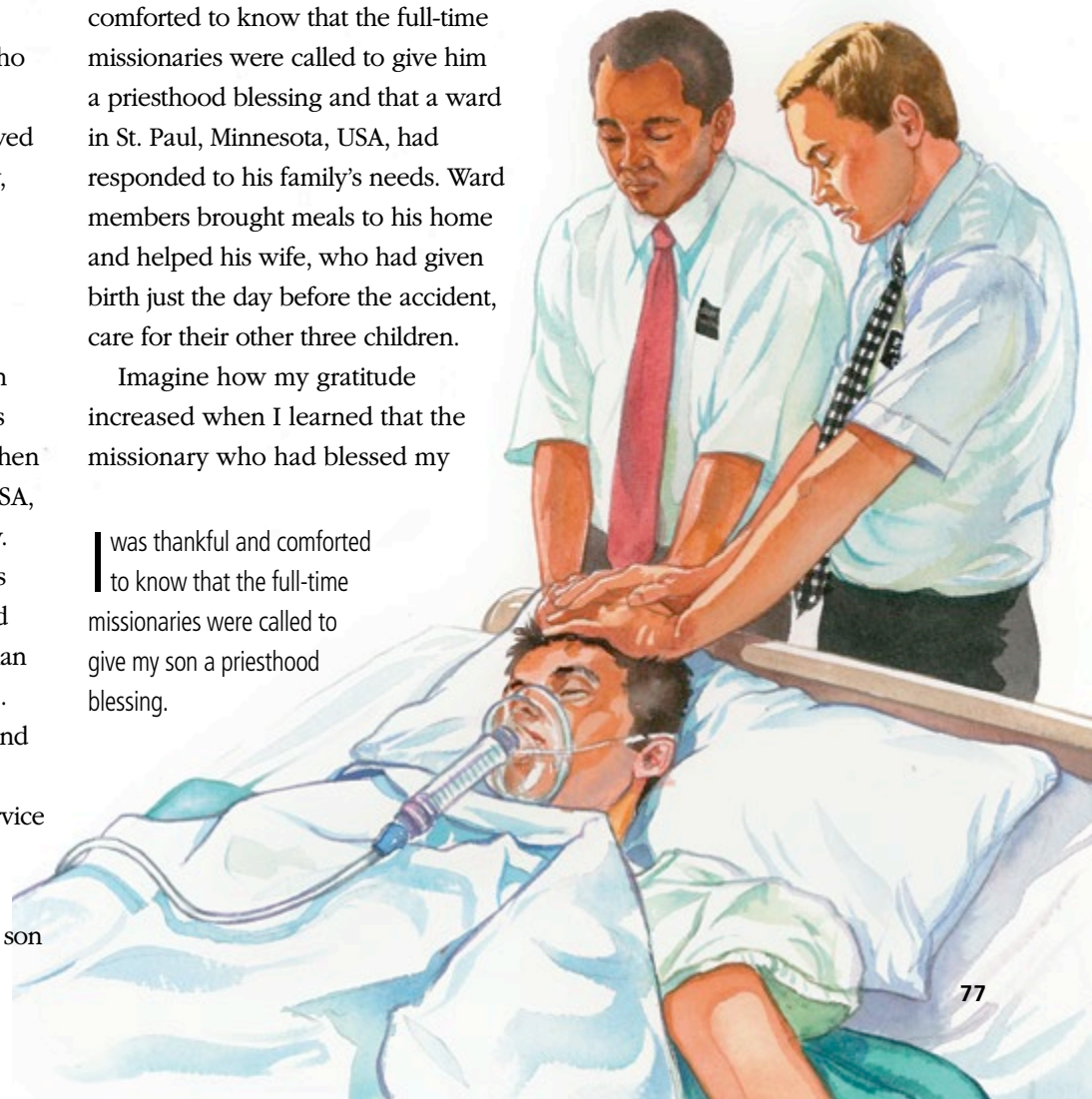
Imagine how my gratitude increased when I learned that the missionary who had blessed my

I was thankful and comforted to know that the full-time missionaries were called to give my son a priesthood blessing.

son was the same young man who had received a blessing from my husband five years before. I was amazed that the service given had returned in full measure!

My faith in and prayers of gratitude to my loving Heavenly Father have continued to increase as I contemplate that He knows all of us and what we will need. I believe that this young missionary was there so we could see the foreknowledge of God in a very personal way. ■

Julie Keyes, British Columbia, Canada



# I KNEW GOD WOULD PROVIDE

Before I joined the Church, my husband became seriously ill. I prayed hard, asking God to let my husband live for the sake of our five children and the baby I was expecting. But my prayers were in vain.

When my husband died, my love for God and my faith and trust in Him died as well. I was overwhelmed with the responsibilities now on my shoulders. Fortunately, my parents were there to help.

One day a few years later, I heard a knock at my door. Two strangers stood there with friendly smiles and a book in their hands. They introduced themselves as missionaries from The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had never heard of their church. They left when I told them I was busy, but I continued to think about them.

The next day I saw them showing their book to a neighbor. Curious, I came closer. The missionaries noticed me and asked again if they could visit me. I was surprised by my answer: “Yes, anytime!”

As I listened to the missionary lessons and studied the Book of Mormon, I realized the mistakes I had made in life, repented of my sins, and grew closer to God. When my parents heard that the elders were teaching

The day of my baptism I was nervous, but I entered the water and was baptized.

me, however, they were upset. They threatened to disown my children and me. The missionaries invited me to be baptized, but I refused because we couldn’t live without my parents’ help.

Before the elders left, they asked me to read 3 Nephi 13:31–34. When I read “seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (verse 33), I knew that Heavenly Father would provide if I put Him first and obeyed His commandments. When the missionaries returned, we scheduled my baptism.

The day of my baptism, my mother’s angry voice flashed into my mind. I was nervous, but I entered the water and was baptized. Afterward I was so happy, and when I was confirmed a member of the Church and given the gift of the Holy Ghost, I felt that my burdens had been lifted.

When my parents heard that I had joined the Church, they disowned me. But we reconciled a year later, after which my two sisters were baptized with our parents’ consent.

Three of my children eventually served full-time missions, and soon I will celebrate 40 years as a member of the Church. What great blessings I have—all thanks to two missionaries who knocked on my door, introduced me to the Book of Mormon, and helped restore my love for God and my faith and trust in Him. ■

Abethemia Trujillo, Albay, Philippines





## WHAT WOULD I SING?

During my service as a full-time missionary nearly 40 years ago in the town of Levin, New Zealand, I played the piano each Tuesday for the Primary children. I remember well the wonderful feelings I had for these children as we sang together the gospel-rich Primary songs.

In February 2013, I returned to New Zealand on vacation. Being an avid hiker, I booked a four-day hiking excursion of the famous Milford Track in Fiordland National Park on the South Island.

I was joined by three Americans and 37 other hikers from around the world, including Australia, Brazil, England, Finland, Germany, Israel, and Uruguay. During our adventure, we shared thoughts, experiences, and opinions as best we could given our language barriers. It didn't take long for our cultural differences and preconceived opinions to melt away under our growing bonds.

At the end of our third day of hiking, one of the hikers wanted to build upon

our growing friendships and sprang to his feet, announcing that we should hold a talent show. He said he would begin the show. He chose to share his storytelling talent, which he had been practicing at his business office in Caesarea, Israel. His story went well, so he announced that he would tell another one. But as he shared some off-color remarks, I realized that the evening could easily turn out to be something less than uplifting.

During his story, I felt a strong impression to sing for the group. But what would I sing to my newfound friends from all over the world? The answer came to me forcefully: "I Am a Child of God" (*Hymns*, no. 301).

I was anxious but drew upon my memories of and love for the Primary children of New Zealand. I rose to my feet and explained that I would sing a special song that I had sung nearly 40 years ago with children in New Zealand. I explained that I had been a missionary, had taught these children, and had grown to love them. I then said

a silent prayer, asking for help to sing in a manner that would bless the group.

The song went well, and afterward I could feel the Spirit. My new friends smiled, and the song seemed to open their hearts. It wasn't long before others rose and began sharing their musical talents. A group of four ladies, previously reluctant to participate, sang selections from their church choir. Another hiker taught us a Jewish folk song.

At the end of the talent show, a beautiful young woman from Australia sang three songs in Maori, her native tongue. Truly the Spirit of our Heavenly Father had distilled upon us and helped us realize that we were all children of God, not just "strangers and foreigners" (Ephesians 2:19) from various lands.

I am thankful for those Primary children in the small town of Levin who helped instill in me the truth that we are all children of our Heavenly Father. I am also glad those memories gave me the courage to share that testimony through song. ■

David M. Flitton, Utah, USA

I felt a strong impression to sing for the group. But what would I sing to my newfound friends from all over the world?



# REPLACING MY FEAR WITH FAITH

By Katherine Nelson

When she saw me, my best friend knew immediately that something was wrong. “We broke up,” I told her quietly. I was coming home after a long conversation with the young man I had been dating. Although we were sad to part, we both agreed that it was right for us.

But as the weeks went by, I started to feel unsure about my decision. What if I never found anyone else to date and never married? What if I had made too big a deal out of our incompatibility?

I felt so lonely and unsure that I even considered seeing whether he was willing to give our relationship another try. I was, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described, “dissatisfied with present circumstances and [had] only dismal views of the future.”<sup>1</sup>

One evening a few weeks after our breakup, I was reading about the Savior’s Resurrection. The Gospel of Luke recounts that on the third day after the Savior had been laid to rest, faithful followers went to anoint His body with spices. But they found that the stone covering the tomb had been rolled away and the body was gone. Two angels then appeared to



*What if I never found anyone else to date and never married?*

them and said, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen” (Luke 24:5–6).

The angels’ question struck me suddenly with powerful force. I had never thought about how the visitors to Jesus’s grave might have felt, realizing they were looking in the wrong place for their Savior. I had never thought about what a challenge it must have been for them to believe that Jesus had left behind the decay of the tomb and had risen in glory.

The scripture spoke a gentle rebuke. I realized that, like the Savior’s friends, I was looking in the wrong place for comfort. Wallowing in the past and “yearn[ing] vainly for yesterdays”<sup>2</sup> was not consoling me or motivating me to fruitful action. I realized I needed to stop looking in the tomb of past experiences. I needed to replace my fear with faith and trust that the Savior could create life from the experiences of my past.

I think of that scripture often when I find myself regretting choices I’ve made or yearning to return to moments left behind. Because of the Savior, we can begin again. Because of the Savior, we can “look back to claim the embers from glowing experiences but not the ashes,” knowing that “the past is to be learned from but not lived in.”<sup>3</sup> Rather than wasting time in regret, we can look to the future with faith. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

## NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 13, 2009), 3, [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife,” 2.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Remember Lot’s Wife,” 2.

# INSIGHTS



## **What is the significance of this life?**

"[For Noelle Pikus-Pace] years of preparation would be considered either a success or a disappointment based on what happened in the space of four intense 60-second runs [at the 2014 Winter Olympics]. . . . Four minutes total. She spent years preparing for those four minutes and would spend a lifetime afterward reflecting on them. . . . You are an eternal being. Before you were born, you existed as a spirit. In the presence of a loving Heavenly Father, you trained and prepared to come to earth for a brief moment and, well, perform. This life is your four minutes. While you are here, your actions will determine whether you win the prize of eternal life. . . . Do you sense the urgency? . . . This is your moment to perform."

**Bishop Gary E. Stevenson**, Presiding Bishop, "Your Four Minutes," *Ensign*, May 2014, 84, 85, 86.

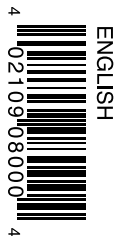


## In Church Magazines

**Ensign:** Life can change rapidly, but we can still make the best of our circumstances. See “Act upon This Land as for Years” on page 24.

**New Era:** Many media messages today downplay the importance of marriage and parenthood. This month’s *New Era* reminds youth of the blessings they can look forward to and plan for in the divine roles of wife, husband, mother, and father (see pages 32–39).

**Friend:** This month’s *Friend* is all about spending time together as families. Turn to pages 21–28 for a “Family Fun” package—a story, activities, boredom busters, and more! What new things can you do with your family?



THE CHURCH OF  
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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS