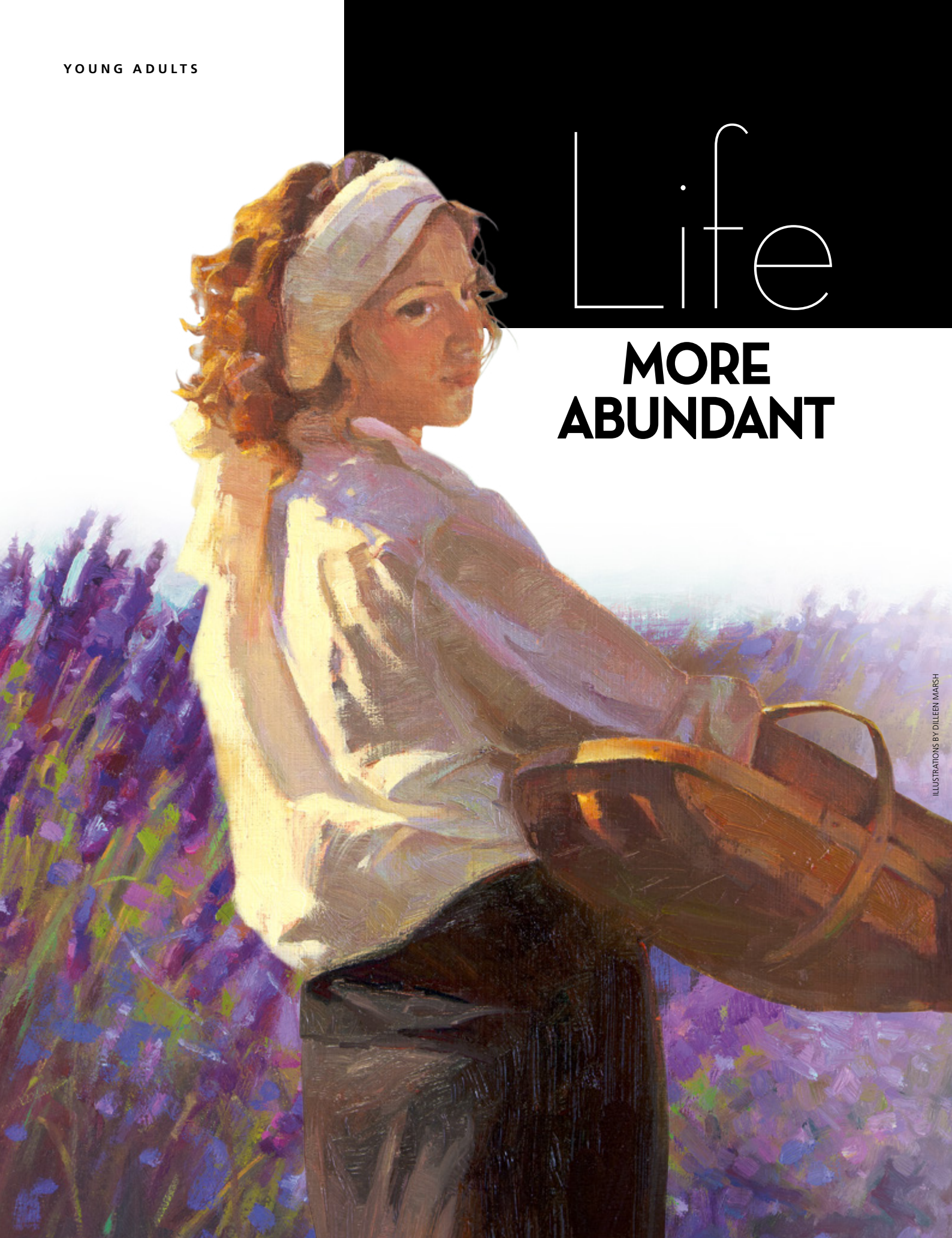


YOUNG ADULTS

# Life

**MORE  
ABUNDANT**



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEEN MARSH

# As a young adult, I have often felt myself selling my life short, but the Lord has promised us an abundant life if we follow the counsel of His servants.

By Mindy Anne Leavitt

Church Magazines

I still remember the overpowering scent of lavender hanging thick in the air and the omnipresent sound of buzzing bees. My friend and I were standing in the middle of a secluded lavender field in the south of France—one of the most beautiful sights I’ve ever seen. As we stood there trying to take in the splendor of our surroundings, I couldn’t help but think of the Savior teaching that, unlike “the thief [who] cometh . . . to destroy,” He Himself came “that [we] might have life, and . . . have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Soaking in the atmosphere of that lovely place, I felt that, despite the trials I faced, my life was amazingly abundant.

To those who obey His commandments the Savior promises life in abundance—not in the monetary sense but rather the abundance of a full, happy life that comes from being able to recognize the good in this

world, see the Lord’s hand in our lives, and know His will for us. Yet I know from experience that as a young adult in the Church, it can be easy to postpone experiencing this abundance as you wait your life away. I have been guilty of selling my life short—underestimating what my life could be—by telling myself that because I didn’t yet have a degree or a husband or a house or children, my life was somehow inferior to the lives of people who did have those things. However, our potential for happiness is not limited by things beyond our own control.

By following the counsel from the prophets and apostles regarding four aspects of life, we can find the fulfillment and happiness of a more abundant life.

## A Spiritual Life

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated that “the abundant life is a spiritual life.”<sup>1</sup> We all know the things we should be doing regularly: scripture study, prayer, church attendance, and temple worship. While doing these things is an important first step, going through the motions isn’t enough; developing a relationship with our Heavenly Father and allowing

the gospel to change us require more than a checklist state of mind.

The more we feast upon the words of Christ—the scriptures—and delve into developing our spirituality, the more we are able to see the goodness around us and recognize His role in our lives. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) pointed out that the scriptures are the “the words of life” (D&C 84:85) and that this is especially true of the Book of Mormon. He said, “When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance.”<sup>2</sup>

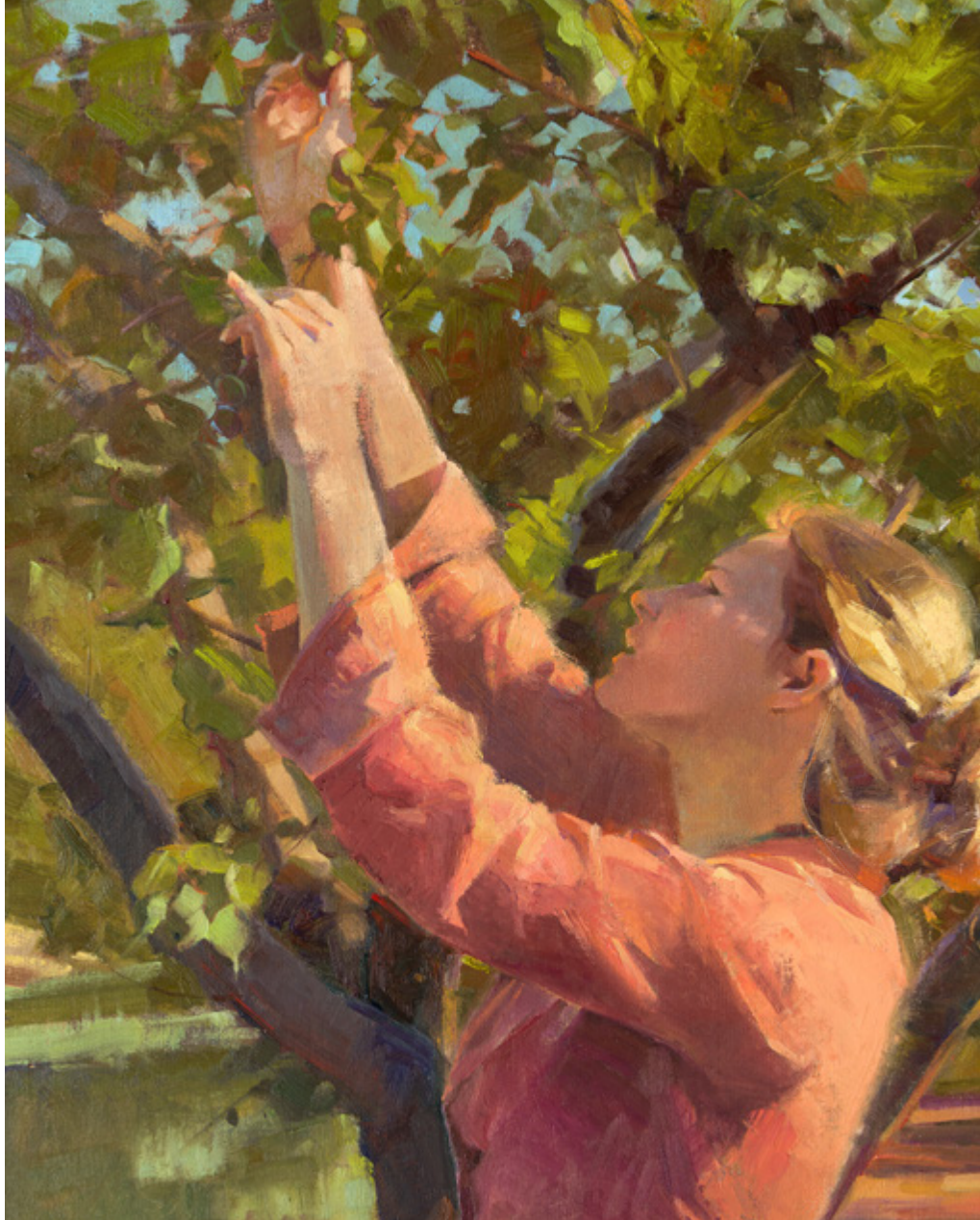
For me, “the words of life” came alive as I took institute and religion classes, studied the gospel in depth on my mission, made temple worship a priority, and turned to the scriptures for answers. As President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “The abundant life involves an endless search for knowledge, light, and truth.”<sup>3</sup>

## A “Today” Life

During the transient period known as young adulthood, it’s easy to fall into the trap of saying, “One day, when [insert far-off, life-changing event] happens, I will be able to [insert life goal or aspiration].” We can

miss many opportunities by trying to nail down plans for an unknown future instead of enjoying the possibilities of the present. But just as the Lord told the Saints who were arriving in Ohio and were unsure of how long they would be there, we need to “act upon this land as for years, and this shall turn unto [us] for [our] good” (D&C 51:17).

We ought to take advantage of opportunities that come our way to travel, serve a mission, accept a calling, increase our education, learn a new skill, or develop a talent, because the Lord requires us to do all in our power now to cultivate an abundant life. Elder Wirthlin declared, “No matter our age, circumstances, or abilities, each one of us can create something remarkable of his life.”<sup>4</sup> I have been able to create something remarkable of my own life through opportunities to travel around the world, learn a new language, serve the Lord and others, and explore different cultures. I have striven to follow the advice of Sister Kristen M. Oaks, wife of Elder Dallin H. Oaks, when she counseled young single adults to “depend on the Lord, enjoy every opportunity, and delight in the life you have.”<sup>5</sup>



### **A Loving Life**

As a young adult, relationships seem to be on my mind a lot. While it is often difficult to not spend my time lamenting over relationships that I don't yet have—a spouse and children—I have found fulfillment by cultivating the relationships I already have, especially the eternal ones.

Instead of becoming lonely when I see friends getting married before me, I have become best friends with my siblings. To offset my longing to be a mother, I have taken advantage of time with my nieces and nephews.

It's easy to culture loneliness or self-pity as you would bacteria in an isolated dish, becoming bitter

# The Lord would have us do all we can to cultivate an abundant life. He will help us make the most of our opportunities.

toward those who have relationships you long for, but Elder Wirthlin pointed out that “those who live abundant lives . . . fill their hearts with love.”<sup>6</sup> At times it requires a great deal of effort, humility, and prayer for hearts to be filled with this love, but charity is a gift of the Spirit available to all who seek it (see Moroni 7:48).

Acquiring this love helps us find happiness and fulfillment in the midst of what might otherwise be a lonely period of life. Elder Wirthlin noted, “We are happiest when our lives are connected to others through unselfish love and service.”<sup>7</sup> Service not only is an excellent way to develop worthwhile relationships but also has a way of enriching our own lives, allowing us to recognize our blessings and helping us see the goodness of the world. Because it is so easy as young adults to get caught up in our individual concerns, we need to take the time to lovingly consider others and their needs ahead of our own.

## A Healthy Life

We have also been given guidelines concerning the care of our mortal bodies. The Word of Wisdom instructs us to not use tobacco or alcohol and to avoid excess. We are encouraged to eat grains, fruits and vegetables in their season, and, in moderation, meat. (See D&C 89.)

While difficult physical challenges may limit what some of us can do with and for our bodies, we can each receive divine guidance for our individual situations. I have found that as I’ve prayed to Heavenly Father about how to best take care of my body, I have received specific revelation regarding how to do so. When my body is in good shape, I am better able to appreciate the world around me because I have more energy and feel better about myself. Mastering my physical body gives me confidence in all other aspects of my life, which in turn helps me to live more abundantly. President Thomas S. Monson has observed that “God gave man life and with it the power to think and reason and decide and love. With such power given to you and to me, mastery of self becomes a necessity if we are to have the abundant life.”<sup>8</sup>

## Promise of the Savior

As I look back on that precious afternoon in the lavender field, I still recall feeling Heavenly Father’s love surround me. He certainly knew that my life hadn’t gone according to my plans, yet He still blessed me to be able to find an abundance in life that I didn’t think existed beyond what I thought I lacked. By cultivating my spirituality, taking advantage of every opportunity, improving my relationships with others, and striving to take care of my body, I am able to live my life abundantly. As I place my trust in the Lord, I know that I can rise above the thief, Satan, who seeks “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (John 10:10) the fulfillment and happiness I strive for, and that I can enjoy the abundant life the Savior promises. ■

### NOTES

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 100.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.
3. James E. Faust, “The Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 7.
4. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Abundant Life,” 101.
5. Kristen M. Oaks, “To the Singles of the Church” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Sept. 11, 2011), [lds.org/broadcasts/archive/ces-devotionals/2011/01](http://lds.org/broadcasts/archive/ces-devotionals/2011/01).
6. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Abundant Life,” 100.
7. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Abundant Life,” 100.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “In Quest of the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 5.