

Ensign



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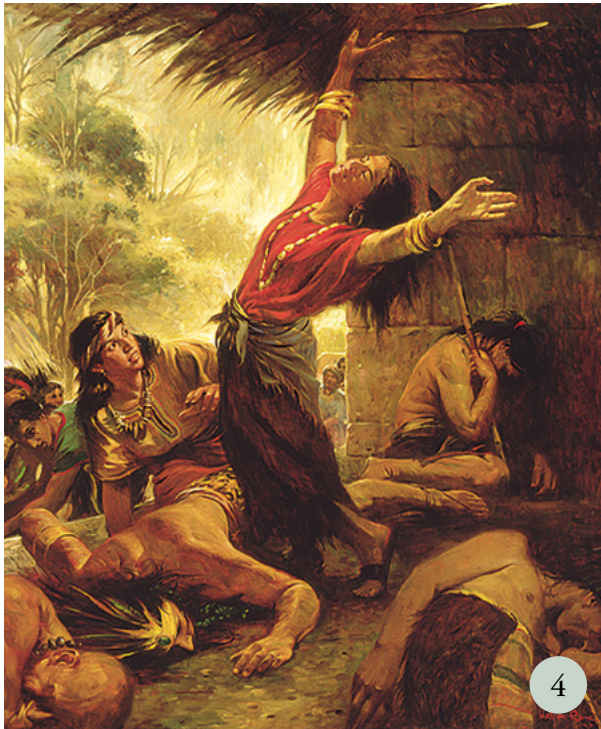


*"And why take ye
thought for raiment?
Consider the lilies of
the field, how they
grow; they toil not,
neither do they spin:
"And yet I say unto
you, That even
Solomon in all his
glory was not arrayed
like one of these.
"Wherefore, if God
so clothe the grass
of the field, which
to day is, and
to morrow is cast
into the oven, shall
he not much more
clothe you, O ye
of little faith?"*

Matthew 6:28-30

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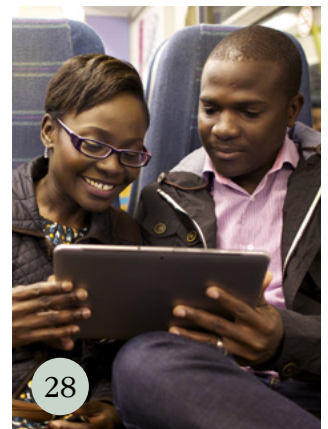


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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 707.4.12.5). **NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES:** Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431.

Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Reaching Out to Those with Disabilities—and Their Families,” p. 48: Before family home evening, read about a

disability you would like your family to know more about, perhaps one that affects someone in your ward or neighborhood. You could use the resources at disabilities.lds.org to prepare. Teach your family about what you learned, and discuss ways in which each of you can be a true friend to those around you, particularly those affected by the disability you learned about. You might share examples from the article. Consider closing by bearing your testimony that God loves all His children and singing together “I’ll Walk with You” (*Children’s Songbook*, 140).

Scripture Heroes Night

For one of our family home evenings we decided to plan a “Scripture Heroes Night.” Each of us chose someone from the scriptures to learn more about, and we gave ourselves two weeks to prepare presentations on our selected heroes. Preparations included studying the scriptures and searching LDS.org for pictures, videos, and other resources. When the highly anticipated night arrived, each of us shared what we had learned, and each presentation proved to be unique, colorful, and insightful. At the end we each shared a brief testimony of what our heroes meant to us and how we could become more like them. Our love of the scriptures grew as we got to know individuals from the scriptures more deeply.

Kathryn Fielding, Utah, USA

“True Love,” page 80: At some point during the week, ask a family member to look for simple acts of kindness that happen

each day. During family home evening, ask that family member to share what he or she observed throughout the week. As Elder Wirthlin says in his message, “Love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pathway of discipleship.” Consider making a simple drawing that shows a path divided into many small segments. Explain that for every act of kindness they perform—whether great or small—family members can color in a segment of the path. As your family strives to show love to others, you will move along the path of discipleship.

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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Please submit articles through ensign.lds.org. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor
in the First Presidency

TESTIMONY AND Conversion

There is a difference between receiving a testimony of truth and being truly converted. For instance, the great Apostle Peter bore his witness to the Savior that he knew that Jesus was the Son of God.

“[Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:15–17).

And yet later, in His injunction to Peter, the Lord gave him and us a guide to become truly converted and to extend that conversion for a lifetime. Jesus said it this way: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32).

Jesus taught Peter that there was still a great change that must go beyond having a testimony to being able to think, feel, and act as truly converted disciples of Jesus Christ. That is the mighty change we all seek. Once we obtain it, we need that change to continue until the end of our mortal probation (see Alma 5:13–14).

We know from our own experience and from observing others that having a few great moments of spiritual power will not be enough. Peter denied he knew the Savior even after he had received a witness by the Spirit that Jesus was the Christ. The Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon had direct testimony given to them that

the Book of Mormon was the word of God, and yet later they faltered in their ability to sustain Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the Lord’s Church.

We need a change in our hearts, as described in the book of Alma: “And they did all declare unto the people the selfsame thing—that their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil” (Alma 19:33; see also Mosiah 5:2).

The Lord taught us that when we are truly converted to His gospel, our hearts will be turned from selfish

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles used the “parable of the pickle” to teach that conversion is an ongoing process rather than a one-time event: “Line upon line and precept upon precept, gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God” (“Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 19). Consider reviewing the parable of the pickle with those you teach. What can each of us do to move forward steadily in the gradual process of conversion that President Eyring and Elder Bednar both discuss?

concerns and turned toward service to lift others as they move upward to eternal life. To obtain that conversion, we can pray and work in faith to become the new creature made possible by the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

We can start by praying for the faith to repent of selfishness and for the gift of caring for others more than ourselves. We can pray for the power to lay aside pride and envy.

Prayer will be the key as well for receiving the gift of a love for the word of God and for the love of Christ (see Moroni 7:47–48). The two come together. As we read, ponder, and pray over the word of God, we will come to love it. The Lord puts it in our hearts. As we feel that love, we will begin to love the Lord more and more. With that will come the love for others that we need in order to strengthen those whom God puts in our path.

For instance, we can pray to recognize those the Lord would have His missionaries teach. Full-time



We need a change in our hearts like the one experienced by the people of Lamoni in Alma chapter 19.

missionaries can pray in faith to know by the Spirit what to teach and testify. They can pray in faith that the Lord will let them feel His love for everyone they meet. The missionaries will not bring everyone they meet to the waters of baptism and to the gift of the Holy Ghost. But they can have the Holy Ghost as a companion. Through their service and with the help of the Holy Ghost, missionaries will then, in time, be changed in their hearts.

That change will be renewed again and again as they and we unselfishly continue over a lifetime to act in faith

to strengthen others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Conversion will not be a single event or something that will last for just one season of life but will be a continuing process. Life can become brighter until the perfect day, when we will see the Savior and find that we have become like Him. The Lord described the journey this way: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).

I promise you that is possible for each of us. ■

My Change of Heart

By Dante Bairado

When I first learned about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, I felt the Spirit testify of its truthfulness. Through prayer, my testimony became even more certain, and I decided to be baptized.

Soon after my baptism, people in my ward began asking me how I felt about serving a mission. To be honest, I didn't know exactly what to say. The idea of leaving my family and school to serve a mission seemed absurd.

Then one day I started thinking about my conversion. I remembered the missionaries who had taught me, who

had patiently answered my questions and helped me understand the gospel. I realized that without their help, I never would have discovered the true Church. As soon as I made that realization, the desire to serve blossomed in my heart. I could feel the Spirit telling me that I should serve a full-time mission.

I know that missionary work is the work of our Heavenly Father and that we can help bring souls to the wonderful knowledge of the restored gospel.

The author lives in Fortaleza, Brazil.

CHILDREN

Let Your Testimony Burn Bright

Gaining a testimony is like building a fire. Just as we have to add wood to keep a fire burning, we must pray, repent, serve others, study the scriptures, and keep the commandments to help our testimonies grow.

To learn more about how to build your testimony, read each of the scriptures listed below. Color the part of the flame that matches each scripture you read. The more scriptures you read, the brighter the fire—and your testimony!

- A. Mosiah 2:17
- B. Alma 5:46
- C. Alma 32:27
- D. 3 Nephi 15:10
- E. John 5:39



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.

The Attributes of Jesus Christ: Without Sin

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

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, was the only one capable of making an atonement for mankind. “Jesus Christ, the Lamb without blemish, willingly laid Himself on the altar of sacrifice and paid the price for our sins,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.¹ Understanding that Jesus Christ was without sin can help us increase our faith in Him and strive to keep His commandments, repent, and become pure.

“Jesus was . . . a being of flesh and spirit, but He yielded not to temptation (see Mosiah 15:5),” said Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We can turn to Him . . . because He understands. He understands the struggle, and He also understands how to win the struggle. . . . The power of His Atonement can erase the effects of sin



in us. When we repent, His atoning grace justifies and cleanses us (see 3 Nephi 27:16–20). It is as if we had not succumbed, as if we had not yielded to temptation. As we endeavor day by day and week by week to follow the path of Christ, our spirit asserts its preeminence, the battle within subsides, and temptations cease to trouble.”²

Additional Scriptures

Matthew 5:48; John 8:7; Hebrews 4:15; 2 Nephi 2:5–6

Consider This

How does being pure differ from being perfect?

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 56.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “That They May Be One in Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 71.



Faith, Family, Relief

From the Scriptures

The Savior paid the price of our sins through His divine Sonship, His sinless life, His suffering and the shedding of His blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, His death on the cross and His Resurrection from the grave. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can become clean again as we repent of our sins.

King Benjamin taught his people of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and then asked if they believed his words. “They all cried with one voice, saying: . . . the Spirit . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. . . .

“And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things” (Mosiah 5:1–2, 5).

We too can have a “mighty change” like the people of King Benjamin, who “had no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).

OCTOBER 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 October 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



Follow the Golden Rule

"Followers of Christ should be examples of civility. We should love all people, be good listeners, and show concern for their sincere beliefs. Though we may disagree, we should not be disagreeable. Our stands and communications on controversial topics should not be contentious. We should be wise in explaining and pursuing our positions and in exercising

our influence. In doing so, we ask that others not be offended by our sincere religious beliefs and the free exercise of our religion. We encourage all of us to practice the Savior's Golden Rule: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them' (Matthew 7:12)."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Loving Others and Living with Differences," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 27.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Revelation

"'Revelation continues in the Church: the prophet receiving it for the Church; the president for his stake, his mission, or his quorum; the bishop for his ward; the father [and mother for their] family; the individual for himself.'"

"I bear you my witness that is true. . . .

"God pours out revelation, through the Holy Ghost, on His children. He speaks to His prophet on the earth, who today is Thomas S. Monson. I witness that he holds and exercises all the keys of the priesthood on earth."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Continuing Revelation," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 73.

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, "We Believe All That God Has Revealed," *Ensign*, May 1974, 95.



GO AND DO

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested two ways youth can “gain

a personal witness of the Prophet Joseph Smith”:

“First, find scriptures in the Book of Mormon that you feel and know are

absolutely true. Then share them with family and friends . . . , acknowledging that Joseph was an instrument in God’s hands. Next, read the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price. . . . Consider recording the testimony of Joseph Smith in your own voice, listening to it regularly, and sharing it with friends.”

From “Joseph Smith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 30.

Answers for You

Each conference, prophets and leaders give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. You can use your November 2014 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- How can we better understand the significance of the sacrament? See Cheryl A. Esplin, “The Sacrament—a Renewal for the Soul,” 12.
- What is the relationship between agency, justice, mercy, repentance, and the Savior’s Atonement? See D. Todd Christofferson, “Free Forever, to Act for Themselves,” 16.
- Why is the home the ideal forum for teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ? See Tad R. Callister, “Parents: The Prime Gospel Teachers of Their Children,” 32.
- How do parents work together to build an eternal family? See L. Tom Perry, “Finding Lasting Peace and Building Eternal Families,” 43.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

Come and See



Why do Latter-day Saints want to share the gospel?

“Devoted disciples of Jesus Christ always have been and always will be valiant missionaries,” Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said. “A missionary is a follower of Christ who testifies of Him as the Redeemer and proclaims the truths of His gospel.

“The Church of Jesus Christ always has been and always will be a missionary church. . . .

“ . . . Sharing with other people

things that are most meaningful to us or have helped us is not unusual at all.

“This same pattern is especially evident in matters of great spiritual importance and consequence.”

What can we do when people express interest in the gospel and in the Church? Elder Bednar said we can follow the Savior’s example by inviting them to “come and see” (John 1:39).

From “Come and See,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 107, 109.

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS: INSPIRED GUIDANCE FOR YOUR LIFE

In the Church there are two kinds of patriarchs: (1) fathers and (2) men who are ordained to the office of patriarch in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Fathers who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood can give blessings to their family members, but these blessings are not recorded by the Church, although they may be recorded by the family. On the other hand, blessings given to worthy Church members by an ordained patriarch are recorded by the Church; these blessings are called “patriarchal blessings.”

Patriarchs give blessings according to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Your patriarchal blessing may contain

warnings and promises, and it may reveal what the Lord expects of you and what your potential is. The promised blessings will be fulfilled in the Lord’s time—subject to your faithfulness. Only by following the counsel in the blessing will you receive the promised blessings. Some of the blessings may even occur in the next life. Your patriarchal blessing will not give complete details of your life. If it does not mention a full-time mission or temple marriage, for example, that does not mean that you won’t have that opportunity.

Your patriarchal blessing will also declare your lineage in the house of

Israel—you could be from the tribe of Ephraim, Judah, Manasseh, or one of the other tribes.¹ This lineage is important because of the Abrahamic covenant, which includes the Lord’s promise to Abraham that through his posterity “shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel” (Abraham 2:11). All Church members belong to the house of Israel, either by literal descent or by spiritual adoption. As such, we have a role to play in carrying the gospel to the world.

To receive a patriarchal blessing, speak with your bishop or branch president, who can give you a recommendation to receive one. You can enhance the experience of receiving a blessing if you fast and pray beforehand. Close family members may be present when you receive your patriarchal blessing.

After receiving your blessing, a printed copy of it will be sent to you. Keep it confidential; its counsel and promises are personal to you and should not be shared casually with others. Study it often; it will provide guidance, comfort, and protection. ■

A PRICELESS PERSONAL TREASURE



“The same Lord who provided a Liahona for Lehi provides for you and for me today a rare and valuable gift to give direction to our lives, to mark

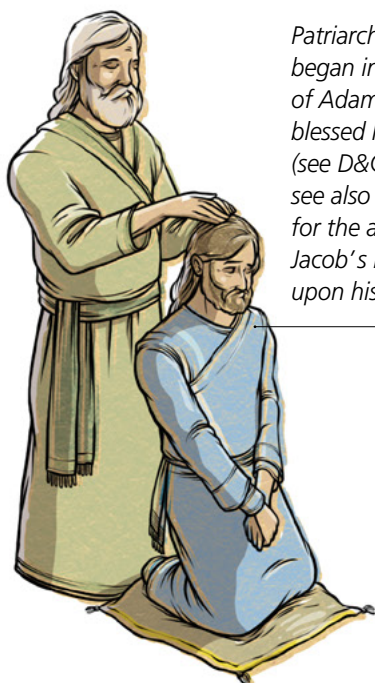
the hazards to our safety, and to chart the way, even safe passage—not to a

promised land, but to our heavenly home. The gift to which I refer is known as your patriarchal blessing. Every worthy member of the Church is entitled to receive such a precious and priceless personal treasure.”

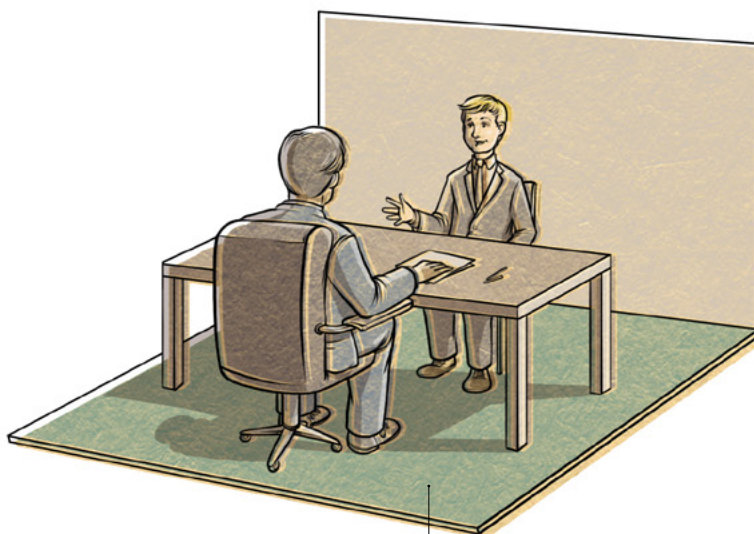
President Thomas S. Monson, “Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 65.

NOTE

1. See Guide to the Scriptures, “Israel,” scriptures.lds.org to learn about the twelve tribes of Israel.



Patriarchal blessings began in the days of Adam, when he blessed his posterity (see D&C 107:53; see also Genesis 49 for the account of Jacob's blessing upon his posterity).

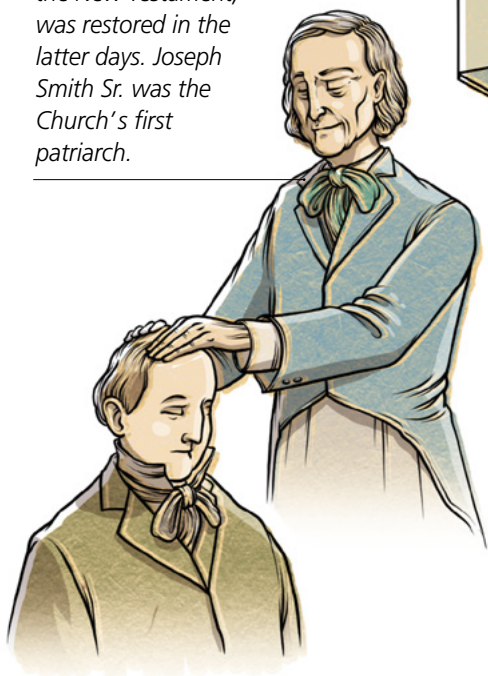


Talk with your bishop or branch president to determine if you are ready to receive a patriarchal blessing.



After you receive a patriarchal blessing, study it often and try to follow its counsel. It can bring comfort and help strengthen your faith.

The office of patriarch, called "evangelist" in the New Testament, was restored in the latter days. Joseph Smith Sr. was the Church's first patriarch.



All patriarchal blessings are stored at Church headquarters. If you lose your copy, you can request another through [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org).

GRATEFUL FOR TEMPLE COVENANTS

By Cari Florence

How could anything alleviate my sorrow when my unborn son was dying?

When I was just 14 weeks pregnant with our third child, doctors informed us that the baby would miscarry due to complications with his lungs. That news was devastating: I felt heartbroken, terrified, and uncertain of the future. That evening, my husband and I went to the temple with heavy hearts and eyes full of tears. We needed answers, guidance, and strength, and we knew that in the serenity of the temple we could draw close to the Lord. We were astonished at the peace we felt in the celestial room. I knew that even if this baby was not supposed to stay on earth, all would be made right.

Later, on my knees I poured out my soul to Heavenly Father. I told Him I understood that our son wasn't supposed to linger but that I desired some specific blessings, if possible. I also promised that if my desires weren't granted, I would not lose faith. I asked that this child might stay with me longer—that he might live, even just a short while, until all our family could hold him. The doctors

had said that if by some miracle our baby went full term, he would be born purple, but I prayed that he would be born pink so that our other little boys wouldn't be afraid to hold their brother. I asked the Lord to let us remember our eternal bond after the baby, whom we decided to name Brycen, was gone.

As the weeks went on, doctors professed shock at baby Brycen's progression but warned of his certain passing after birth. I felt indescribable heartache, knowing that we would lose him, yet I was also ecstatic that he was still growing. Carrying this son who would not live was a continuous burden; I felt pain whenever others asked about our baby's gender or due date and I had to pretend that everything was normal. We bought a monitor so we could check his heartbeat daily, always anxious to hear that precious sound. My grief was severe. The Savior's Atonement gained new meaning for me: I finally understood from experience that Jesus Christ not only suffered for my sins but also felt every

sadness, every pain. As my Savior, He truly carried the weight with me so I would never be alone.



COMFORT FOR PARENTS

"Joseph Smith taught the doctrine that the infant child that was laid

away in death would come up in the resurrection as a child; and, pointing to the mother of a lifeless child, he said to her: 'You will have the joy, the pleasure, and satisfaction of nurturing this child, after its resurrection, until it reaches the full stature of its spirit.' There is restitution, there is growth, there is development, after the resurrection from death. I love this truth. It speaks volumes of happiness, of joy and gratitude to my soul."

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918),
*Teachings of Presidents of the Church:
Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 132.



Brycen lived only 72 minutes, just long enough for each of us to hold and love him. It was the only time we were all together as a family on this earth, but it was everything we had dreamed.

At 37 weeks I checked into the hospital, knowing I was officially starting the time clock on Brycen's life. It was both terrifying and beautiful. The doctors reported that he might live anywhere from 10 minutes to several days. Despite my fears, I felt the Lord's reassurance. Brycen Cade Florence was born on January 27, 2012. I sobbed the moment he was born—pink, so handsome, so perfect.

Our boys rushed into the room to see and hold their brother; we brought a photographer to capture the moment. Brycen lived only 72 minutes, literally just long enough for each of us to hold and love him. It was the only time we were all together as a family on this earth, but it was everything we had dreamed.

The boys couldn't get enough of their brother, kissing him, singing him songs, and begging to hold him. He even remained long enough to receive a blessing from his father, something my husband had hoped and prayed for.

As a family we have a testimony that "the divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave" and that temple ordinances and covenants allow "families to be united eternally" ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129). To us, having an eternal family is *everything*. The most beautiful part of the gospel is that death will never separate us; we will continue our journeys together.

Through this trial, I have come to know that God is in the details. He cares about us individually. While trials and difficulties will come, God can make them easier to bear. I am now more grateful than ever for my temple sealing to my husband and that our children were born in the covenant. Because of God's beautiful plan for our families, including the Savior's infinite sacrifice, we can be together again. I often wonder how I would have withstood this difficult trial without knowing that eternal truth. I am beyond grateful for the testimony I have gained because of Brycen's short life—God has opened my eyes and heart more fully to His blessings. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

LOVING THOSE

WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US

By Ryan Kelly

A man I've never met has recently shaped my life. His name is Jerry Kelly, and he's my great-uncle. Jerry served as an American pilot in World War II. On October 20, 1944, he was flying a close-support mission over Germany when his plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire. After he radioed that he had smoke in the cockpit, his plane began losing altitude and was last seen disappearing into a cloud.

Sixty-nine years later, as I was reading the 19th-century journal of my great-great-great-grandfather, I came across an entry in which he expressed the hope that his descendants would "not forget the dead." As I pondered these words, I thought of Jerry, because in many ways he had been forgotten. Our family knew a few details about him, but only one story

Our lives are changed as we come to know and love family members who have passed on.

about Jerry had been passed down: during the time he was listed as missing in action, his mother sometimes cooked a plate of food and left it on the kitchen table, just in case Jerry returned while the family was out.

Jerry Looked Just like Me

As I thought about how Jerry was only 20 years old when he died, I realized that he had no direct descendants

to pass on the story of his life to future generations. A strong spiritual impression came to my mind: Jerry's story needs to be preserved. He deserves to be remembered.

I had never seen a photo of Jerry, so the first step in my journey was to find one. I called the Granite School District in Utah, where Jerry had attended high school. They had old yearbooks in a basement vault, so I visited them the next day. On page 96 of the 1942 Granite High School yearbook, I saw Jerry for the first time. Something happened inside me when I saw his photo. He suddenly became a real person, with familiar family features and an entire life ahead of him. When I shared the photo with my family, my aunt said, "Ryan, he looks just like you." That day I determined to learn as much as I could about Jerry.

Jerry Kelly, spring 1944 ►



I searched newspaper articles and military records and found several important documents. A 1942 newspaper article showed a picture of Jerry presenting the senior class gift at his high school graduation. The Missing Air Crew Report for Jerry's plane included details about where the plane was shot down in Germany. Another newspaper article, written in 1949, announced Jerry's memorial service and revealed that his body wasn't returned to his home in Salt Lake City until five years after his death. Information on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) indicated that also during 1949, Jerry received his temple endowment by proxy and was sealed to his parents.

But there was yet more for me to learn about Jerry. I wrote a brief essay for my family in which I shared what I had learned. My mom and dad were touched while reading the essay and suggested that I send it to my great-aunt Ruth, Jerry's only sister, who lives in California. She wrote back:

"Ryan, your essay touched my heart. You have found details that I did not know. Jerry was a special person. He was smart, a straight-A student, very funny, and life-loving. At our 50th high school reunion, we were asked what event at Granite High we remembered most. One woman said, 'The day we learned that Jerry Kelly was missing in action.'

Jerry made an impression on a lot of people."

My dad and I later visited Ruth in California. She shared stories about Jerry and also about my grandfather, who died nine years before I was born. During our visit, Ruth revealed that she had saved all the letters Jerry



***The "Three Musketeers":
(left to right) Jerry Kelly, Don Evans,
and Bob Sharp***

wrote to his family during the war—150 letters full of memories written in his beautiful handwriting. The last letter was written only seven days before his death.

Ruth was kind enough to let me borrow the letters. Through them, I came to know and admire Jerry. The letters were a window into his life as a fighter pilot. They were also a window into his soul. In a letter dated July 20, 1943, Jerry wrote the following in response to his grandmother, who had written to remind him to live gospel standards:

"If ever there was a place where a fellow could lose his ideals, this is it. But I'm trying hard and succeeding too, I think. I'm not letting these fellows around here lower my standards. I know what is right and wrong and I'll stick by it no matter what."

In his letters, Jerry showed special love and concern for his mom. In one letter to her, he wrote: "I'm a pretty dog-gone lucky guy to have a family like I've got. That old stuff of absence makes the heart grow fonder is just about right. You did real well with my brother and sister, Mom, and I only hope I can be worthy of them and you and Pop. I'm mighty proud of Gene and Ruth.

I wish we could all be together again, if only for just a little while."

A Forgotten Journal and the "Three Musketeers"

The letters opened another door in my journey. They revealed that Jerry had three close friends: Cliff Lawrence, Bob Sharp, and Don Evans. I had no idea if they were still alive. If they were, they'd be over 90 years old.

I found the address of a Cliff Lawrence living in Bountiful, Utah. After writing him a letter, I was thrilled to receive a phone call confirming that he was the same Cliff mentioned in Jerry's letters. I visited Cliff and his wife in their home, and he told me about

the day he and Jerry went together to volunteer for military service.

And then something amazing happened. Cliff's wife handed me a small journal and asked me to open it. As I did, I saw the name "Jerry Kelly" written on the cover page. I was holding a journal written by Jerry in 1942. She had stumbled across the journal only a few days earlier while cleaning out a drawer. She and Cliff had no memory of ever seeing the journal before, but somehow it had been preserved for more than 70 years. It seemed to me that the Spirit—and perhaps Jerry himself (from the other side of the veil)—was guiding me in my efforts.

After much research and persistence, I made contact with Bob Sharp, who lives in California. I flew to California and had a wonderful visit with Bob and his wife. He showed me photos of Jerry and shared inspiring stories that demonstrated Jerry's Christlike character.

Bob flew in another plane on Jerry's final mission. As they taxied next to each other on the runway, their eyes met and Jerry waved goodbye to Bob. It was the last time they would see each other in this life. He told me not a day has passed when he hasn't thought about Jerry.

At the end of our visit, Bob made us some root beer floats. I remembered that Jerry wrote about how he and Bob would finish each day at flight school by drinking root beer floats together. Tears filled my eyes,

and I had the feeling that Jerry was there with us.

Bob told me about Don Evans, who served with Bob and Jerry in the same flight squadron. The three of them were all Mormons from Utah and were known as the "Three Musketeers." Bob said that Don had passed away in 1999 but that his son Ken was writing a book on his dad's service in World War II and would love to talk to a member of Jerry's family. Ken and I have become good friends as we have worked together to learn more about the "Three Musketeers." Ken told me that when his dad served as a stake president, he would share stories about Jerry in Church talks. The stories showed that Jerry was an example of following the Savior rather than the crowd.

Jerry's Name Lives On

From these meetings, I learned another fact that increased my respect for my great-uncle. Cliff and Bob had each named a son after Jerry, as did my own grandfather. All three men did this to ensure they would never forget him.

The author visits Jerry's grave.



I will always be grateful for my journey that led me to my great-uncle Jerry. This journey was not just about learning details of a person's life. It was about learning to know and love a family member—and the journey has changed me.

Those who have gone before us can still greatly bless our lives, but only if we don't forget them. My great-uncle Jerry has now become one of my most powerful role models.

Like Jerry, many people who lived on this earth never married or never had children. They have no direct descendants to honor their memory. We need to learn their stories so they can be told. Like those who have descendants, they too deserve to be remembered.

Coming to know and love this member of my family has given new meaning to the scriptural promise, "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6).

On July 16, 2014, our family visited Jerry's grave in the Salt Lake City cemetery to celebrate his 90th birthday. We talked about how we've been shaped by this family member we've never met. Jerry may be gone, but he is not forgotten.

I believe he is grateful to be remembered. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Use the "Memories" feature on [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) to preserve stories, photos, letters, journals, and other items related to those who have gone before you.

Strong Paddles, Strong Testimonies in French Polynesia

By Mindy Anne Leavitt

Church Magazines

In the middle of the Pacific Ocean lie 118 islands created from underground volcanoes or coral atolls. Filled with palm trees, black pearls, and Tiaré flowers, these islands are home to about 275,000 Tahitians (as inhabitants of French Polynesia are commonly called).

Gerry Huuti, a 29-year-old convert, is one of those people. He relishes the national sport, *va'a*, or outrigger canoeing, which has been an important part of his life since age 16. Five years after he began racing, he met Laydreane—a champion paddler and a member of the Church. Thanks to her example, Gerry was baptized and served a mission in New Caledonia while Laydreane served in Tahiti. They married six weeks after Gerry returned home.

Now, several years and one son later, Gerry still participates in *va'a* tournaments—but he supports his family by creating paddles for *va'a* outriggers. “My business is right next to my house,” he explains. “I go out

and look for wood to cut up and glue together to create paddles.” It sounds simple, but each of these beautiful wooden paddles takes five full days to make. And with about 20,000 paddlers on the Huutis’ island of Tahiti, paddles are always in demand.

Though Gerry and Laydreane are both busy with Church callings, they still make time to go to the temple. “Because of our temple attendance, we have a better relationship,” says Gerry. “We are also blessed on the work side of things. Selling paddles by yourself might work well enough, but if you do it with the Lord, it’s better.” That divine aid is vital to the Huutis. Gerry and his wife also have a strong testimony of tithing. “We never worry that Heavenly Father is going to bless us,” Gerry says. “If you pay your tithing, you’ll end up with more than what you have.”

For the Huutis, *va'a* is more than just a sport. The principles of dedication and commitment necessary to be good paddlers have helped both Gerry and Laydreane be more

One young couple in French Polynesia finds that the gospel and their favorite sport have several things in common.

dedicated to the gospel. “In *va'a*, the physical counts for a lot,” Gerry says, “but it’s not the most important thing. What’s more important is the mental—being determined to finish your race. When you have to paddle for four and a half hours, your body can tell you that you can’t make it, but your mind tells you that you can. In the gospel, determination is very important. Sometimes you get discouraged, but faith can help you succeed by following God’s plan for your life. We can always learn something from *va'a* that applies to the gospel.” ■



MORE ABOUT GERRY

What's your favorite traditional Tahitian dish?

Kaku. It's made from crushing breadfruit into dough and eating it with coconut milk and *poisson cru* (raw fish that is a Tahitian specialty).

What do you do for fun?

Our family likes to go to the ocean, gather leaves, and play together.

What is a cultural practice unique to French Polynesia?

Tahitian dancing is part of the Polynesian culture. The annual Heiva dance festival has been going on since 1881.

THE CHURCH IN FRENCH POLYNESIA

22,659 Latter-day Saints

8 stakes

83 wards and branches

16 family history centers

1 mission

1 temple (Papeete)

BY THE NUMBERS

100 million U.S. dollars' worth of black pearls exported annually

French Polynesia covers 1,930,500 square miles (3,106,839 km²) of ocean, but only 1,544 square miles (2,485 km²) of land

79° F/26° C is the average temperature; water temperature averages 80° F/27° C

13 letters in the Tahitian alphabet

FACTS ABOUT TAHITI

Capital: Papeete, on the island of Tahiti
Languages: French, Tahitian

YOUNG ADULTS



By Larry M. Gibson

First Counselor in
the Young Men
General Presidency

Heavenly Father's plan
provides the eternal
companionship of a
loving spouse and the
divine companionship
of the Holy Ghost.



Fulfilling Our Eternal Destiny

More than 100 years ago, 18-year-old Robert Orson Gibson, who would become my grandfather, wrote the following for a college class:

“Some people want to become noble, others want to become wealthy, still others wise, and there are those who wish to become good. It would be very well to be any of these, but I would prefer, most of all, being known as good.”

This was the foundation for his plan for life. He truly was “known as good,” always striving to fulfill the will of Heavenly Father and treasuring his family.

The Plan

Some of us may not have a life plan, as did my grandfather, or we may have a plan that differs from Heavenly Father’s plan for us. His plan is known as the “plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8, 16) because it is designed to bring us happiness in this

life and fulness of joy in the next life. It includes:

- The creation of a world on which we would live.
- A fall that would allow spirit children to be born into mortal families.
- A Savior who would break the bands of death and atone for all sin.
- Immortality for all of God’s children through the miracle of the Resurrection.
- The opportunity for families to return to our heavenly parents, prepared for exaltation and eternal life.

This plan was presented while we lived as spirit children with our heavenly parents. How we must have loved Them and wanted to be just like Them! Their perfect love for each other and for us is eternal, and They want us to have *all* They have.

Do you understand why “marriage

between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children”?¹ We are here to experience in a mortal and imperfect way what we may one day receive in a perfected and immortal realm! Family life prepares us for eternal life.

Our beloved Father is not just interested in our return. He also desires that we return prepared to be exalted. He knows we cannot achieve this supreme goal on our own. Let me highlight two vital companionships His plan provides to help us fulfill our eternal destiny: the eternal companionship of a loving spouse and the divine companionship of the Holy Ghost.

An Eternal Companion

I vividly remember the night my eternal companion, Shirley, proposed to me. She might remember the conversation differently, but as I recall, she asked, “Larry, do you know why I love you?”

She had never used the word *love* before, so to me it was a proposal. I knew I must answer carefully.

“No, why do you love me?”

“I love you because I know you love the Lord more than you love me,” she said. “And with that love we can make it back to our heavenly home.”

That answer struck my heart. I could not imagine a girl of 19 wanting her future husband to love anything more than her. But she had a deep spiritual maturity.

I did not fully comprehend what she said that evening, but I wanted her to always feel that I loved the Lord above all else. I remember going home that night and pleading with the Lord to allow me to stand at her side as her eternal companion and promising that I would always strive to be the kind of man she hoped I was.

I believe that as we faithfully keep our sacred covenants, one day we will stand in awe of the great man or woman our eternal companion really is. In our marriage, Shirley and I have strived for a pattern of oneness and unity in all we do. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles beautifully described this pattern:

“The natures of male and female spirits complete and perfect each other, and therefore men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation. . . .

“ . . . The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness. . . .

“ . . . The man and the woman contribute differently but equally to a oneness and a unity that can be achieved in no other way.”²

If we are true and faithful to our covenants, keep the commandments, and love each other as Father loves us, one day we will be together eternally as one. We need to hasten this greatest “work of salvation” by forming our eternal family in the temple and then striving to bring about Father’s plan for each family member.

As husbands and wives, as mothers and fathers, as singles and siblings, we are working to bring to pass salvation for Heavenly Father’s spirit children and eternal life for our whole family. If we live worthily, this blessing will be afforded each of us in His due time.

A Divine Companion

We cannot accomplish this work without revelation from God—to us individually and as companions in marriage. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “No man [or woman] can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations.”³

The Holy Ghost is necessary for revelation, and revelation is necessary

for Father’s plan to be fulfilled for us. Having this divine companion bestowed upon us is not enough. We must learn to *retain* the Holy Ghost, *rely* on Him, and appropriately *respond* to His promptings.

1. Retaining the Holy Ghost

We must be worthy vessels in order to have this companionship. If we do not keep our covenant to “always remember [the Savior] and keep his commandments,” we cannot expect Heavenly Father to keep His part of the covenant whereby we “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77; Moroni 4:3). If we sincerely try to keep our covenants, we are entitled to this miraculous blessing.

The Holy Ghost is sensitive to the environment in which we place ourselves. Clearly the Spirit cannot remain with us while we are reading, listening to, or viewing anything that contains violence, inappropriate language, or any kind of immodest, vile, or immoral content. If we engage in any of these things, we withdraw from Him.

How often do we want the Holy Ghost to be with us? The Lord says always. Our worthiness to have this constant companionship is an excellent indicator of how well we are following Heavenly Father’s plan.

2. Relying on the Holy Ghost

Sometimes we may not rely as we should on the Holy Ghost as our



guide. For example, do we remember that the Holy Ghost is a teacher? The Savior promised that “the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26). This is contingent, however, on our preparation and effort—He will not do our work for us.

The Holy Ghost is also a comforter. Occasionally we want things we should not have. We pray and then agonize when what seems to us to be a righteous desire is not realized or when the Lord says “no” or “not right now.” In these situations, if we submit ourselves to God’s will, the Holy Ghost can soften that answer.

If you develop the discipline to always rely on the Holy Ghost, you will find that when urgent moments arise, you will feel His comfort more readily and more deeply. No one can successfully fulfill Father’s plan, individually or in marriage, without relying consistently on the Holy Ghost.

3. Responding to the Holy Ghost

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled:

“If you are slipping into things that you should not slip into or if you are associating with people who are pulling you away in the wrong direction, that is the time to assert your independence, your agency. Listen to the voice of the Spirit, and you will not be led astray.

“. . . I promise that you will be protected and shielded from the attacks of the adversary *if* you will heed the promptings that come from the Holy Spirit.”⁴

The Holy Ghost prompts us to do good works. When impressions to serve come, do not push them aside. I have found that immediately acting on these impressions increases my ability to feel them more completely and helps Father change my life and the lives of those I love. Respond promptly to promptings.

I know that Heavenly Father is concerned about each of us. He is the great architect of the magnificent plan of salvation and happiness. In addition to giving us a Savior, He has provided a witness, companion, guide, and comforter in the Holy Ghost. And He has made eternal marriage essential to His plan for His sons and daughters so that we may work together to achieve our eternal destiny: the continuation of the family into eternity and the glory and power that our heavenly parents enjoy.

May we live and work to qualify for the promise of these blessings in this life and their fulness in the life to come. ■

From a devotional address, “Following Heavenly Father’s Plan,” given at Brigham Young University on March 11, 2014. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 83–84.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “Counsel to Youth,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 18.

Blessed by the Sabbath Day

By Emmaline R. Wilson

Keeping the Sabbath day holy became a challenge for Annabelle Hyatt when she was hired for an internship with an amusement-park company. Growing up in Texas, USA, Annabelle was taught to worship, rest, and serve others on the Sabbath. But when she moved to Florida to start her internship, she had to work on Sundays.

She explains, “At first I dutifully went to work, just as everyone else did. After a few weeks, I started to notice how sad I was feeling during the week without taking the sacrament or hearing inspiring words that I needed more than ever.”

One day she prayed for help and mustered the courage to talk to her

Keeping the Sabbath day holy is ultimately a matter of obedience, attitude, and choice.

supervisor about her desire to attend church and not work on Sundays. Her supervisor didn’t understand why it was so important to her. But Annabelle persisted. Every time she saw her manager or scheduling supervisor, she mentioned that she needed Sundays off and was willing to work extra hard other days in order to make it happen.

“Eventually, by a miracle it happened!” she says. “My days off work became Saturday and Sunday, which is unheard of for a seasonal intern who was barely a month into the program. The privilege of having the weekends off was normally reserved for those with seniority status.”

She testifies of the blessings: “Being able to bring the light of going to church back into my life, I could see and feel a dramatic difference. When my co-workers asked why I go to church or why it’s so important, I would tell them to come with me. I started bringing some of my co-workers to church. I know without a doubt that the gospel of Jesus Christ is worth standing up for. Sabbath day observance is a



necessity to have the Spirit in your life and become a better person.”

Annabelle, like many young adults, was blessed as she remained committed to keeping the Sabbath day holy. Although it can be a challenge to withstand pressure to work or participate in activities we normally enjoy during the week, keeping the Sabbath day holy is ultimately a matter of obedience, attitude, and choice. Great blessings will come. These three young adults share their testimonies that the Lord helps His children keep His day holy.

The Lord Provided a Way

When Katrin Schulze of Germany went to college far away from home, she was suddenly tested in her resolve to keep the Sabbath day holy. “My parents had taught me and my siblings about the importance of keeping the Sabbath day holy,” she said. “For us, that meant no working, shopping, or playing sports on Sunday. I cannot remember any exceptions.

“My college required that I participate in a seminar that always

occupied a full weekend—both Saturday and Sunday. I had a terrible dilemma—unless I participated, I could not graduate; on the other hand, I wanted to keep all the Lord’s commandments. As I studied the situation, I realized this wasn’t a problem I could solve on my own. I pleaded with the Lord and asked Him to show me the way to be obedient *and* complete my studies. I felt peace inside after that prayer.

“As the date of the seminar grew closer, I felt nervous but remained confident that He could prepare a way. One day I stood at the board where the seminar schedules were listed. Most were over the weekend, but there was one section scheduled over three days, not including a Sunday. I realized the Lord was helping me keep the Sabbath day holy. Never before and never again has there been that seminar on any day but Sunday, but the year I needed it so badly, the Lord made it possible for me. I am so grateful the Lord provided a way to help me keep His commandments.”

Prepare to Worship on Sunday

Katherine Wilkinson, from Utah, often stayed out late on Saturday nights. She said of one weekend, “My friends and I had gone to dinner, watched a movie, and stayed up talking well into the morning. It was probably after 2:00 a.m. when I finally went to sleep.

“On Sunday morning, I fumbled in the darkness to turn off my alarm at 7:30 a.m. but since church didn’t begin until 8:30 a.m., my sleepy self reasoned that I could reset my alarm for 8:00 a.m. When I finally got up, I had to rush to get ready on time. A two-minute shower and no breakfast later, I rushed out the door.

“Church seemed long. I could hardly stay awake during the meetings. I watched the clock, counting down the minutes until I would be napping at home. Not until Sunday School began did I realize that, in my rush, I had forgotten both my scriptures and the manual.”

Eventually Katherine decided she wanted to change so that she could enjoy the Sabbath day and keep it



REMEMBERING CHRIST ON THE SABBATH

“Sunday is a day to slow down, pause, and remember. We attend our Church meetings; reflect on our blessings, strengths, and shortcomings; seek forgiveness; partake of the sacrament;

and ponder the Savior’s suffering on our behalf. We try not to be distracted by anything that would prevent us from worshipping Him . . . Any activity we participate in during the Sabbath should be in keeping with the Spirit of

remembering Christ. If anything we are doing on any part of the Sabbath takes us away from remembering the Savior and ministering on the Sabbath as He would minister, then perhaps we should reconsider what we are doing. . . .

“Spend some time today creating a thoughtful plan of things that you will do to really make the Sabbath day a sacred and holy day in your life. Then act on your plan.”

Larry M. Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, “I Do Always Remember Him,” *New Era*, Jan. 2014, 36.



holy. “I pondered on my Sabbath day,” she said. “I’d gotten up too late, rushed to church only halfway ready, endured three hours of meetings (without a good attitude), and come back home to sleep. And that was hardly the first time my Sunday had gone that way. I realized I was depriving myself of the full blessings of Sabbath-day worship, especially the sacrament and what it offered me.

“Observing the Sabbath includes more than physically attending Church meetings; it means being there mentally and spiritually. I want to do that. President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985) taught, “The Sabbath calls for constructive thoughts and acts, and if one merely lounges about doing nothing on the Sabbath, he is breaking it. To observe it, one will be on his knees in prayer, preparing lessons, studying the gospel, meditating, visiting the ill and distressed, sleeping, reading wholesome material, and attending all the meetings of that day to which he is expected’ (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [1969], 96–97). As I’ve begun to change and honor this sacred day, I have felt greater blessings in my life.” ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SABBATH DAY OBSERVANCE

- Attend church to worship the Lord, renew covenants, and strengthen yourself and others in your ward or branch.
- Make scripture study a priority by “feasting upon the word of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20).
- Do something for your calling. Even if you’re “just” a backup pianist, you can still practice.
- Minister to the one through home or visiting teaching. If you don’t have an assignment yet, prayerfully select someone who can use your spirit and reach out.
- Spend time communicating with family and doing reverent, wholesome activities together.
- Consider the *why* of what you’re doing: does it help you serve the Lord and do His work? Is it unifying your family or ward?
- Pray for guidance in how you can honor the Lord on His day.



**By Elder
Neil L. Andersen**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

“My Days” of Temples and Technology

*These are your days to more fully turn
your hearts to your ancestors and bring saving
ordinances to millions within your families.*

Have you ever wondered why you were sent to earth now rather than at a different time in history? What would it have been like to stand by the side of Moses or to be a friend of Mary, the mother of Jesus? How about living in Nauvoo when the Prophet Joseph walked the streets, or joining other teenagers as they pulled and pushed their handcarts a thousand miles to a new home in the Salt Lake Valley?

Sometimes we look at former days or different places and ask, “Why not me? Why am I here in this place, and why now?”





I want to challenge each of you to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.

You are not the first to wonder about the time and place of your life. A prophet living in the Americas asked the same questions. His name was Nephi—not the Nephi in the beginning of the Book of Mormon but Nephi the son of Helaman the second and the great-grandson of the prophet Alma the Younger.

In the world in which Nephi lived, money, power, and popularity were more important than what was right. Many of the people openly disregarded the commandments. They lied, took what was not theirs, and ignored the law of chastity. Those who kept the commandments were ridiculed and mistreated (see Helaman 7:4–5, 21; 8:2, 5, 7–8).

“When Nephi saw [these things], his heart was swollen with sorrow . . . and he [exclaimed] in the agony of his soul:

“Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have joyed with him in the promised land; then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments of God, and slow to be led to do iniquity; and they were quick to

hearken unto the words of the Lord—

“Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren” (Helaman 7:6–8).

Nephi was an amazing prophet of God, yet for a moment he wondered why he was living on the earth during *his* time. He knew that the Savior was to come to earth in the not-too-distant future, but for the moment, it appears that the beautiful events just around the corner seemed to elude him.

In only 20 years from the time he spoke, a night would pass without darkness and Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Within 55 years, the Savior, resurrected and glorified, would descend out of heaven to the Saints in the land Bountiful. Nephi’s son would be there, and the Savior would address him personally and ordain him as one of the twelve disciples selected in the Western Hemisphere. We could suppose that Nephi’s daughters and sons and granddaughters and grandsons were among the 2,500 Saints whom Christ invited one by one to come forward and personally feel the

prints of the nails in His hands and feet. It would not be difficult to believe that Nephi's great-grandchildren were among those little children that the Savior blessed one by one and who were encircled with fire and ministered to by angels. Had Nephi clearly seen the future of his righteous family and friends, surely he would not have wanted to alter the time of his mortality.

Gratefully, Nephi remained righteous, taught the people with courage, worked mighty miracles, and along with the prophet Samuel prophesied of the imminent coming of the Savior. The Lord with His own words promised He would bless Nephi forever (see Helaman 10–11; 16).

Although he had wondered about his time and place, he concluded with very powerful words: “Behold, . . . these are my days” (Helaman 7:9).

My beloved young brothers and sisters, these are your days. You have been chosen to live in the final years preceding the Savior's

return to earth. We do not know the exact day or year of His coming, but we can readily see the signs that precede His coming.¹

One day, just as Nephi came to see his vital place in preparing for the Savior's coming to the Nephites, we will look back and see the glorious blessing that was ours to live in our time as we prepare the world for the Savior's return. Let us see beyond the difficulties and the obstacles confronting us to our important purposes and to the glorious days ahead. Let us each echo Nephi's words: “These are my days.”

With these being your days, what is the Lord asking of you? First, you are to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ. Learn of Him and of His love and unspeakable goodness to you and determine that you will always keep His commandments. You are to follow the Savior, love God, and serve those around you. All of us can have the privilege of living our lives as disciples of Christ, being led by His Spirit and lifting those around us.



A Sacred Duty

Some experiences are saved for specific generations. I want to talk about one of your sacred duties that has never quite been the same for any previous generation.

It has been only a few years that temples have become available throughout the world. With the dedication of the Phoenix Arizona Temple on November 16, 2014, we now have 144 operating temples in the world. When I was young, there were 13 temples in the world.

My wife, Sister Kathy Andersen, grew up in the state of Florida, USA. When she was five years old, her parents brought their family to the temple to be sealed together forever. The trip required a six-day, 2,500-mile (4,023 km) drive across the United States to the Salt Lake Temple. Today there are 47 temples that are closer to her Florida home than the Salt Lake Temple.

President Thomas S. Monson has encouraged the youth of the Church to visit the temples often to do baptisms for the dead.

He said: “Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there. I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.”²

You have responded to the Lord’s prophet, and each year millions on the other side of the veil are given the opportunity to accept their baptism. No generation that has ever lived on this earth has had so great a privilege as you have to enter the doors of the Lord’s house and assist in the salvation of those who have come before.

As you well know, there is a vital *first* step that allows us to accomplish the sacred work of the temple. We are to search out and find those members of our families who came before us.

The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of this work as a “welding link” connecting families together from one generation to another (D&C 128:18).





In Moroni's first visit to the Prophet Joseph Smith, he instructed Joseph that "the hearts of the children [would] turn to their fathers" (D&C 2:2). The Prophet Joseph later explained that Church members were to become "saviors on Mount Zion. . . . But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion?" he asked. "By building their temples . . . and going forth and receiving all the ordinances . . . in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, . . . and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers."³

The Prophet Joseph spoke of this work as "a welding link" connecting families together from one generation to another (D&C 128:18). The physical welding link in Joseph's day was created by softening and melting two pieces of metal in a fiery oven, joining them together while they were still malleable, and then letting them cool and harden into an unbreakable chain. The importance of the powerful, spiritual welding that binds us all together forever is stated clearly in the scriptures: "We without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they

without us be made perfect" (D&C 128:18).

In the past this work of finding family names, documenting them, and bringing them to the temple was principally the work of older members of the Church. Why was that? Because it required enormous time and effort. It would often begin with large reels containing microfilmed records. It meant painstaking attention to dates and places, thick historical books with limited availability, and at times remote country cemeteries.

Our ability to find our ancestors online has emerged only in the past few years, with tremendous advancements in the past few months. The months ahead will bring even more availability.

While your generation has become extremely devoted to visiting the temple, in the months and years ahead you will be just as outstanding in finding and bringing names to the temple with you.

I want to challenge each of you to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple. (To begin the challenge, visit



When we see ourselves in perspective of our family, those who came before us and those who come after us, we realize how we are part of a wonderful link that connects us all together.

templechallenge.lds.org.) There is something powerful in searching out those who need temple ordinances, learning who they are, and then being part of their receiving these sacred ordinances. This is how you become “saviors on Mount Zion” (see Obadiah 1:21 and D&C 103:9). There is a joy and satisfaction that is understood only through spiritual feelings. We are linked to our ancestors forever.

Some of our families have been in the Church for many generations, and much of our direct ancestors’ work in the temple has been done. In 2013, for the first time, I could see my ancestors in a fan chart online, including my great-grandfather Niels Andersen, after whom I was named, and my great-great-grandfather Moroni Stocks, the first family member to be named for a Book of Mormon prophet. I was able to see photos of dozens of my family members online. Do you know what your great-grandparents looked like?

Finding Our Cousins

If your chart is not as complete as mine, your first responsibility is to fill it in as best

you can. More and more information is becoming available each month.

If your chart is as complete as mine, there is still very important work for you to do. This work goes on and on. It will not be complete even when the Savior returns. When our chart appears complete, we help others find those in their lines and we find those closely related to those on our family tree. We call it “finding our cousins.”

How do we find our cousins? In two ways.

First, we go to our chart, and we find those closely related to our great-great-great-grandmothers or grandfathers. For example, I might go up my chart to Grandma Frances Bowen Evans and then look at the families of Grandma Evans’s brothers and sisters. She had five sisters and two brothers. In this way, I can find my cousins.

The second way to find our cousins is to help those around us. We begin with the special booklet *My Family*. If your family is new to family history, fill out the booklet. Or if your tree looks like mine, take the booklet to a new member or someone who hasn’t

been quite as involved in the Church as your family has been and help them search out their family. As you do so, you will help them bring others to the temple. These are your brothers and sisters, but we also like to call them your “cousins.”

We are all brothers and sisters in our Father’s family. Our own families are not randomly thrown together. President Monson has said, “We discover something about ourselves when we learn about our ancestors.”⁴

When we see ourselves in perspective of our family, those who came before us and those who come after us, we realize how we are part of a wonderful link that connects us all together. As we search them out and take their names to the temple, we bring to them something they cannot obtain without us. In doing so, we are connected to them, and the Lord through His Spirit confirms to our soul the eternal importance of what we are doing.

President Monson said, “Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings.”⁵

I add to his words that blessings and power from on high await our family members who have gone before us as they accept the ordinances we perform for them in the holy temples. They have finished their mortality, but they continue to live. We become “saviors on Mount Zion” and are bound together with them forever.

You were born in a time of temples and technology. These are your days to more fully turn your hearts to your fathers.

As you contribute to this sacred work, your knowledge and faith in the Savior will

increase and you will receive a more certain witness that life continues beyond the veil. You will receive protection against the temptations that surround you, and you will prepare yourself and the world you live in for the Second Coming of the Savior.

I know that life continues beyond the veil. I testify that Jesus is the Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He lives. His glorious Atonement allows these ordinances in the temple to last forever. ■

From an address, “Find Our Cousins,” delivered at the Family Discovery Day devotional for youth in conjunction with the RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Feb. 8, 2014. To learn more, visit lds.org/go/Andersen215. To watch this year’s addresses on February 14, visit lds.org/discoverfamily.

NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 7–10.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 473.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 21.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” 92.

FINDING YOUR COUSINS

Does your family tree appear full? Find more cousins by following these steps: (1) Sign in to [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org) and click “Family Tree.” Select the “Fan Chart” view. (2) Hover your mouse over a family member’s name on the outer ring of the fan and click the small fan icon, placing that person in the center. (3) Change the view to descendency and then click to show four generations. (4) Look for temple icons that indicate ordinances may be needed for the displayed cousin. If prompted by FamilySearch, check for duplicate names. (5) Work your way around the outer ring of your fan chart and, when finished, move back one generation and repeat the previous steps.

VITAL TO THE KINGDOM: Single Adult Sisters

Single adult sisters called to leadership positions discover their gifts and potential as they bless others.



Widow Marie Brown (far left), who was in her 70s when she was called as ward Young Women president, has developed close friendships with the young women.



Having served as Primary president, Sister MarLyn Williams (right) is now the ward's early-morning seminary teacher.



By Alissa Voss

At first, Sister MarLyn Williams wasn't sure she had heard her bishop right. She had entered the bishop's office unsure of which new calling might be extended to her, but she had never anticipated this. Had he really just called her to serve as the Owego Ward Primary president?

Sister Williams considered her situation for a moment. In her mid-30s, she had yet to marry and have children of her own. Surely, she thought, there must be others in the ward more qualified for this position.

Walter Knudsen, bishop of the Owego Ward in New York, USA, remembers that day well. He says, "We discussed how Sister Williams could help the children over whom she would have responsibility. She came to see her potential in meeting their needs."

Sister Williams discovered the truth of his words firsthand when she accepted the calling of Primary president. As she began to serve the approximately 20 children in Primary, she grew to love each of them. Through her calling, she found herself developing friendships with families in the ward—families she otherwise might never have come to know. The association with the children, their

families, and her counselors helped Sister Williams feel more a part of the Owego Ward family.

Sister Williams quickly gained a testimony that the call to serve she had initially feared was inspired. As she opened her heart to serve the children, the worries surrounding her personal circumstances faded away and her own spirit grew stronger. Her confidence to interact with the children and youth of the ward grew, and she now serves devotedly as the ward's early-morning seminary teacher.

Calling the Right Person

In a Church that places a strong emphasis on eternal families, some members—including sisters who have never married, have never had children, or are divorced or widowed—may wonder how they fit in. But the Church benefits from the talents and skills of all its members, and single sisters called to leadership positions have the opportunity to bless not only the lives of those they serve but their own lives as well. The Church is exactly the place for these sisters to share their gifts.

Bishop Knudsen never excluded single sisters when calling people to serve in the ward. Nor were they chosen

merely because they weren't married. He says, "These sisters were not called because they were single but because we, as a bishopric, felt that they were the right people for the callings. After prayer, consultation with my counselors, and confirmation by the Spirit, I extended calls to these sisters and helped them see their own potential." He adds, "We discussed their individual circumstances and the time commitment that would be required to fulfill their callings and whether they could make that work in their lives. They all agreed that they would make the time necessary to serve as called. They, and the ward, have been blessed for their service."

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), former Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, "Remember that we have all been single, are now single, or at some time may again be single; so being single in the Church is not extraordinary."¹ He also said, "Many faithful, righteous sisters have not had the opportunity for marriage, yet they have always been a vital and necessary part of this sacred work. These wonderful women have a distinct errand of influence. . . . In the Church there are endless opportunities to love and nurture."²



CALLING SINGLE ADULT SISTERS TO LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

"We see wise bishops and stake presidents calling you single adult sisters to leadership responsibilities in wards and stakes. We see you in the presidencies of Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary organizations, where your talents and abilities are being fully utilized.

"We see you as a vital part of the mainstream body of the Church. We pray that the emphasis we naturally place on families will not make you feel less needed or less valuable to the Lord or to His Church. The sacred bonds of Church membership go far beyond marital status, age, or present circumstance. Your individual worth as a daughter of God transcends all."

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "To the Single Adult Sisters of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 96.

Serving across Generations

A call to serve may be daunting if we are called to serve those of a different age. Sister Marie Brown was in her 70s and recently widowed when she was called to serve as Young Women president in the Owego Ward. Though some might imagine that an older widow and a group of seven teenage girls would not have much in common, Sister Brown has developed close friendships with the young women she serves.

One of her favorite parts of the calling is sharing her life experiences with the young women during her lessons. In

an era marked by electronic communication, Sister Brown has taught the girls that there can still be value in old-fashioned letter writing. Each month the young women make approximately 30 cards for less-active ward members, widows and widowers, missionaries serving from the ward, and young women who have left for college. These cards, which include messages written by the young women, are touching and meaningful to those who receive them.

Sister Brown also loves attending the temple. Three times a year she drives the young women the 95 miles to the Palmyra New York Temple to

Sister Judy Woodard, who lives alone, finds joy in the company of children as she serves as the new Primary president.





Sister Susan Brandt (center) enjoys the sisterhood of other women as she serves as Relief Society president.

demonstrate her love for them and for temple ordinances. The drive is two hours each way, but it seems a short time as they get to know each other and share in their love for temple service.

Sister Brown and the young women quickly discovered that the difference in their ages and life experiences is no barrier to having a wonderful time together. This friendship across the generations has come to bless and enrich all their lives, thanks to Sister Brown's willingness to accept the call to serve.

Serving after Divorce

Sister Susan Brandt is another sister who has blessed many lives through her service. Sister Brandt was divorced later in life, after raising five children with her former husband, and continued to serve in many capacities, including as a missionary in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. She currently serves as Relief Society president in the Owego Ward.

Sister Brandt loves reaching out to find the sisters in her ward who may feel lonely or distant during activities. She knows what it is like to be alone, so she goes out of her way to pay special attention to those who do not have a companion who is active in the Church. One way she does this is through an activity on the first Thursday of every month, when Sister Brandt and her counselors meet with other sisters at a local restaurant and spend time getting to

know each other in a non-Church environment (pictured left). Her natural love and compassion for the sisters in the ward have helped many feel more included.

Now that Sister Williams is serving as a seminary teacher, Sister Judy Woodard has become Primary president in the Owego Ward. After raising four children, Sister Woodard and her husband divorced. Though Sister Woodard now lives alone, she diligently serves the children in Primary and blesses many of their lives with her kindness and love.

All Here to Help Each Other

Bishop Knudsen has seen many blessings come to these sisters and the ward as they have served in their callings. He says, "Our ward has a large percentage of single members as well as part-member and less-active families, and these sister leaders are here to help participate in the rescue and reach all of our members. We are all on a pathway back to our Heavenly Father, and we are all here to help each other, no matter what our circumstances in life."

Whatever our personal situations may be, we can take comfort in knowing that we have a caring ward family and loving Father in Heaven to help us through. President Thomas S. Monson has said: "We were not placed on this earth to walk alone. 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 . . . has assured us that He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask."³

The single adult sisters serving in the Owego Ward have certainly found this to be true. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. James E. Faust, "Welcoming Every Single One," *Ensign*, Aug. 2007, 5.
2. James E. Faust, "You Are All Heaven Sent," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 112.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 121.

CALL FOR EXPERIENCES FROM SINGLE ADULT BROTHERS

Please send us your experiences as a single adult brother in a family ward. To submit, go to the "Submit Your Work" section at ensign.lds.org.

CHANGING OUR HEARTS THROUGH Charity

Name withheld

Some time ago, while serving in the Primary presidency in my ward, I was approached by a dedicated and capable Primary teacher. She was from another country, and though her English was not perfect, the children could understand her, and she was well loved because of her spiritual lessons. That day, however, she was not happy. With great sadness she explained that a parent had asked her why someone who didn't speak English well could be called to teach children. Though the teacher loved the children in her class, she tearfully wondered if perhaps they would benefit from a different teacher who spoke better English. I assured her that she was called of God and that He wanted her with those many students who loved her and were benefiting from her spiritual preparedness.



As I pondered the incident, I wasn't upset with the parent. I realized that he or she had misunderstood the situation and made a mistake in judgment. Yet I was sad that it had happened, especially when this good teacher already felt different and perhaps excluded in a ward full of native English speakers.

Then I began to remember the times when I had inadvertently hurt someone's feelings or made thoughtless statements to people who were different from me. My heart began to ache for those who, like this teacher, felt different, judged, or excluded because of things I might have said

without thinking. I wondered how we in the Church could increase in love and sensitivity and be able to reach out as the Savior did to all people in all circumstances so that no one would ever feel alone. The answer, I realized through study and with the help of the Spirit, was to invite the pure love of Christ to change our hearts through seeking the gift of charity.



*Through study
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Charity Is a Gift

When Christ was on the earth He loved all people with a perfect love. Even after wicked men scourged Him and nailed Him to the cross, He pleaded, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

Sometimes we as imperfect beings find it difficult to love others. Because we are human and encumbered by the natural man, it is not always easy to see other people as the Savior does. But as we fervently pray and follow the Savior’s example of performing acts of love toward others, we are given the gift of charity. Through this gift we are changed by the power of the Holy Ghost to become more like the Savior, and we then receive the power to see others through His eyes.¹

We learn from Mormon that prayer is one of the acts that can help us experience this change (see Moroni 7:48). And in 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul further explains this gift from God.

Charity Suffereth Long and Is Kind

Jesus, who in the midst of a demanding crowd said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me” (Matthew 19:14), taught us that no one is too small or unworthy of our patient care, no matter how important our tasks may be.

Chad (names have been changed) learned about the rewards of patience with others who were different when he received a calling to work alongside a couple with slight mental and physical disabilities. Chad worked with the husband over a period of years to teach him how to speak in front of others and conduct a meeting. He also helped gently guide the wife toward positive social interactions. “I’ve found joy in seeing this couple, who have a hard life due to mental and physical issues, be part of something successful and feel that it was a result of their work,” says Chad. “As I have worked with them, my love for them has grown. I am able to look past their challenges and see the strengths and talents they have.”



Charity Envieth Not and Is Not Puffed Up

Sometimes feelings of pride prevent us from reaching out to others who need our friendship. Miranda found this to be the case when a new sister moved into her ward. The woman dressed and talked differently than most people in the ward, and consequently, many sisters didn’t associate with her. When Miranda’s husband noticed, he suggested they invite this sister and her family to dinner. Miranda was nervous about the idea, but she decided to follow her husband’s suggestion. She says, “Even though I thought there was no way I could connect with this sister at any level because we were so different, I knew it was the right thing to do.”

To Miranda’s surprise, when the new family came over, the two families had a lot of fun. The husbands formed a lasting friendship, and Miranda developed a love and respect for the sister, who, Miranda learned, had spent part of her childhood being homeless. She says, “Because I got to know this sister, I was able to better understand her. When we take the time to find out where people are coming from, it is easier to understand why they do the things they do.”

Charity Doth Not Behave Itself Unseemly

Through His example of quiet dignity during times of stress, the Savior taught us that we have the power to control our thoughts and our tongues. One sister who went through a divorce appreciated her ward family's Christlike refusal to gossip about or judge her situation. "It was nice to feel like I was safe when the sisters in the ward reached out to help me," she says. "It meant so much when they withheld their judgment. They just reached out in love and kindness to help where help was needed."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: "Our wards and branches should be places where the Golden Rule always guides our words and actions toward each other. By treating each other kindly, speaking words of support and encouragement, and being sensitive to each other's needs, we can create loving unity among ward members. Where charity exists, there is no place for gossip or unkind words."²

Charity Seeketh Not Her Own

The Savior sacrificed Himself freely as a gift to us (see John 10:17–18). Because He understood our pain, He wanted to help us be restored to joy with our Heavenly Father.

We too can give gifts of empathy and selflessness. When we try to feel others' pain, we see them as the Savior does and will have an increased desire to help them. One single sister found she was able to empathize with those who sat by themselves at church after all her children had moved away. Rather than focus on her own loneliness, she searched for opportunities to serve others who might be lonely. She said,

"I began to look around and found others sitting alone at church. I sat with them, befriended and served them, and shared their burdens, and in return, I found mine were lightened."

Charity Never Faileth

Through the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus expressed His great concern for those who might feel alone, different, or excluded: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40).

We show our love for the Savior and assist Him in His great work when we seek the gift of charity through fervent prayer and acts of kindness. As we do this we will be transformed, little by little, to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ. Our sensitivity and concern for those who might need our love will increase, and we will have the power to see beauty and goodness in the hearts of all people in all circumstances, as He does.

President Thomas S. Monson taught: "We are all spirit children of our Heavenly Father and, as such, are brothers and sisters. As we keep this truth in mind, loving all of God's children will become easier."³

May we increasingly think and act like Christ in reaching out and being sensitive to the needs of our brothers and sisters who may feel different or alone. Our joy will grow as we experience the gift of charity, the pure love of Christ. ■

NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34.
2. M. Russell Ballard, "Finding Joy through Loving Service," *Ensign*, May 2011, 47.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Love—the Essence of the Gospel," *Ensign*, May 2014, 91.



SMALL GIFTS OF CHARITY

"Those who wholeheartedly turn their lives over to our Savior and serve God and fellowman discover a richness and fulness to life that the selfish or egotistic will never experience. The unselfish give of themselves. These may be small gifts of charity that have a grand impact for good: a smile, a handshake, a hug, time spent in listening, a soft word of encouragement, or a gesture of caring. All these acts of kindness can change hearts and lives. When we take advantage of the unlimited opportunities to love and serve our fellowmen, including our spouse and family, our capacity to love God and to serve others will greatly increase."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Are You Sleeping through the Restoration?" *Ensign*, May 2014, 59.



By Elder J. Devn Cornish
Of the Seventy





THE GATE CALLED BAPTISM

I pray that each of us may obtain a fuller understanding of our need for baptism, of the gateway it provides us to the lifelong process of conversion, and of the merciful atoning love of our Savior.

Glen (not his real name) had led a life marked by chaos and conflict. As a teen he had become involved in gangs, crime, and violence. When he met the missionaries, he felt that the things they believed were too good to be true. But in time he came to know that they were indeed true and that they were of greater worth than anything else he had ever known.

After putting his life in order, and with sincere repentance and gospel living, Glen entered the waters of baptism. He had found a new life filled with light and peace and joy. He was clean before the Lord.

Nephi said:

“Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

“And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate” (2 Nephi 31:17–18).

These verses clearly teach that baptism, a holy sign of a covenant between God and His children, is required

for our salvation (see also Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 2 Nephi 9:23–24). Indeed, so important and indispensable is this ordinance that Jesus Himself was baptized “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

It is difficult to misunderstand Nephi’s explanation of this point: “And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water!” (2 Nephi 31:5).

When we are baptized, we witness to the Father that we are willing to enter into a covenant “to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life” (Mosiah 18:8–9).

We renew this covenant every Sunday as we partake of the sacrament. The words of the covenant, as stated in the sacrament prayers, invite Heavenly Father’s children to witness “that they are willing to take upon them the name



of [his] Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them" (D&C 20:77).

An Introductory Ordinance

Besides witnessing our willingness to obey God, baptism allows us to enter into the kingdom of God, which is the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. The Guide to the Scriptures tells us, "Baptism by immersion in water by one having authority is the introductory ordinance of the gospel and is necessary to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."¹

The Savior clearly defined the purpose of baptism when he told Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Authorized baptism is required for us to dwell in the presence of the Father and the Son, but I rejoice that baptism has another fundamental purpose. Baptism is not just the gate through which we enter the Lord's Church and subsequently the celestial kingdom; it is also the gateway to the precious, indispensable, and ongoing process of becoming "perfect in Christ" (Moroni 10:32, 33) that each of us needs and wants. This process, as described in the fourth article of faith, begins with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, followed by repentance, then "baptism by immersion for the remission of sins," and subsequently the reception of the Holy Ghost.

In simple terms, we may call this ongoing process *conversion*. Jesus referred to it in His

initial comment to Nicodemus. As the Master Teacher, He addressed Nicodemus's underlying question about what he must do to be saved, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).


Being born again requires more than baptism, explained Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

"The spiritual rebirth described in [the scriptures] typically does not occur quickly or all at once; it is an ongoing process—not a single event. . . .

"We *begin* the process of being born again through exercising faith in Christ, repenting of our sins, and being baptized by immersion for the remission of sins by one having priesthood authority." But other "essential steps in the process of being born again" include "total immersion in and saturation with the Savior's gospel."²

Being "born again" is another name for conversion. It is having "a broken heart and a contrite spirit," which the Savior described as the only offering He will accept (see 3 Nephi 9:19–20). Surely, none of us will be able to "see" the kingdom of God until we have "experienced this mighty change in [our] hearts" (Alma 5:14; see also Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:26).

This process, which leads to a remission of our sins, begins with faith sufficient to repent and to be baptized. Mormon explained this point when he taught, "And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins" (Moroni 8:25).



Like many members of the Church, I did not have the dramatic conversion experience that Glen and others have had. I was “born of goodly parents” (1 Nephi 1:1; see also Enos 1:1) and was baptized at age eight. How can such a person experience the same conversion as those who join the Church at a later age?

A Gate to Lasting Conversion

This is one of the most wonderful things that each of us can come to understand about the gate called baptism. Baptism is not the destination, not even when accompanied by the essential element of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Baptism is the gate to the ongoing, life-long process of true and enduring conversion.

As with any new member, the process begins with a sincere desire in faith to do the will of the Father by being baptized. It continues with a searching inventory of all our past sins and an unreserved effort to cease them, confess them, make restitution where possible, and never return to them. After baptism, we receive the right to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, contingent upon our always remembering the Savior in all we think, do, and are. And thus we are made clean (see 2 Nephi 31:17).

But what if we commit another sin after being baptized? Is all lost? Mercifully, our Father has made provision for our human frailties. We can once again pursue the process of faith and hope in Christ and sincere repentance. But this time and in subsequent times, the ordinance of baptism is not necessary, as a rule. The Lord has instead provided the ordinance of the sacrament. It gives us the

weekly opportunity to examine ourselves (see 1 Corinthians 11:28) and to symbolically place our sins on the Lord’s altar as we sincerely repent, again seek His forgiveness, and then go forward in a newness of life.

This is the process King Benjamin spoke of when he talked about “[putting] off the natural man and [becoming] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19). It is the unburdening and literally the exalting process to which Paul referred when he spoke of being “buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. . . .

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:4, 6).

This is the ongoing and cumulative process that allows us to rejoice with the angels in the mercy and merits of Christ (see Alma 5:26). It includes the spiritual growth available as we receive the ordinances and keep the associated covenants offered in priesthood ordinations and in the temple.

I pray that each of us may obtain a fuller understanding of our need for baptism, of the gateway it provides us to the lifelong process of conversion, and of the merciful atoning love of our Savior, who stands “at the door” (Revelation 3:20) and bids us enter and dwell with Him and the Father forever. ■

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Baptism, Baptize,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. David A. Bednar, “Ye Must Be Born Again,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 21; emphasis added.



Reaching Out

TO THOSE WITH DISABILITIES—AND THEIR FAMILIES

*Everyone needs a friend, a responsibility,
and nurturing by the good word of God.*

By Lynn Parsons

PhD Candidate in Special Education

A Primary teacher helps a little girl position her walker before sharing time. Another teacher makes sure a boy with a hearing loss looks at her before speaking. Members around the world extend themselves to those with physical disabilities every day. However, knowing how to help those with less-visible disabilities can be a challenge.

What can we do to help these families who deal daily with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, or other such challenges? These members and their families often feel alone. They may not be comfortable asking for help, or they simply don't know how to do so.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “Every one . . . needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with ‘the good word of God’ (Moro. 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things.”¹ While this statement was made in reference to new members of the Church, Latter-day Saints who apply these three principles to members with disabilities and their families can help strengthen them and help them meet the different challenges they face.

Friendship

Sometimes the best way to help members with disabilities and their families not feel alone or isolated is by being a friend. These individuals and families may feel burdened by the additional physical and financial demands that

often accompany disabilities. Having a friend is important and can add a new perspective to a life that seems laden with stress. Association with members may be the link that encourages them to keep active despite challenges.

How can you start? Begin by greeting the members of your ward with disabilities and their families. A sincere offer of friendship may include learning alternative communication methods, such as sign language, or investigating the individual's particular interests. You will demonstrate interest and Christlike love when you make an effort to discuss a favorite animal with a child with autism, greet with a warm smile a teen with an intellectual disability, or spend time listening to understand an adult with a speech problem.

Consider making an additional effort to acknowledge anyone who may appear or act differently. A teen with autism may struggle to carry on a conversation, or a child with emotional challenges may appear constantly angry. As members look below the surface to recognize the spirit underneath, it will be easier to see these individuals as the Savior does.

A personal visit to the home is a great way to encourage family members to share their needs and concerns. Think about using this time to start a conversation about how things are going generally within the family. Most people

Consider making an additional effort to acknowledge anyone who may appear or act differently.



aren't comfortable requesting assistance when the person offering isn't a close friend. Rather than making a general offer, try making specific suggestions about how you can help. You might offer to do one of the following:

- Stay with the family member who has the disability so that the caretaker can run errands, go to doctor visits, or take a break.
- Help with laundry, meals, cleaning, or other specific chores.
- Volunteer to drive family members to appointments.
- Help a child with homework in a specific subject.
- Give a listening ear during times of trial.
- Give the caretaker a chance to talk about topics outside of disability. Remember that the person has other interests and concerns and may yearn for everyday conversation.

Take time to consider what else you can do to help. The continual crying of a baby at church can be very upsetting to a child with autism or emotional challenges. Taking your infant into the hall may help a child with a disability avoid a meltdown. Strong scents can make someone with sensory problems feel ill, so limiting your perfume or cologne use can optimize how the person feels at church. Making an effort not to stare when a ward member with a disability does something unusual can also help the individual feel more welcome. Inviting someone with a challenge to help with an activity can boost self-esteem and create friendships. Work with the family to understand how you can help.

Sometimes these small gestures are all it takes to make those with disabilities and their loved ones feel part of the ward family. After all, as King Benjamin taught, "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

A Responsibility

It's difficult to feel part of a ward without a calling. Leaders may feel that a certain family is already overwhelmed, and so they hesitate to give the family additional



Those who have a disability also need a chance to learn and grow through service.

responsibilities. But people with disabilities and their loved ones may need the involvement and relationship-building that naturally happen through a Church assignment.

Finding a calling for a family member can be a delicate balancing act. Ward leaders will want to take into consideration any special needs when making assignments. A mother who needs to be available during Primary in case of meltdowns might help with weeknight Relief Society meetings. A father who needs to hold his daughter to keep her calm during sacrament meeting could teach Sunday School. A more flexible calling, such as editing the ward newsletter or serving as part of a committee, may be more appropriate for other members. Talking with the members themselves is generally the best way to understand how and where they would be able to serve.

Those who have a disability also need a chance to learn and grow through service. A visit with family members will help identify strengths that could be used to benefit all ward members. Focus on what they can do rather than what they may be unable or struggle to do. A young woman with an intellectual disability might be a class greeter. A young adult with Down syndrome might help teach a class or make copies in the library. Others could take roll, set up for activities, or welcome visitors to meetings.²

Nurturing with the Good Word of God

We all need regular opportunities to recharge our spiritual batteries. Parents of children with disabilities need respite time to learn and to strengthen their testimonies. Additionally, members with disabilities need exposure to the gospel to feel Heavenly Father's love.

Having parents serve as teachers or helpers in classes where their children with disabilities attend may seem like a perfect solution. They are, after all, the experts on their children. But these members may need to spend time in priesthood and Relief Society meetings to be buoyed up by their brothers and sisters. Giving others the chance to serve and spend time with a child with disabilities also offers members the blessings of knowing that child.

Associations of this kind allow members to develop patience and love as they find new ways to teach and learn. Members also have the opportunity to feel the strong spirits of individuals with disabilities, which can fill them with peace and love. As members make this effort, the Holy Ghost will confirm to them that Heavenly Father is pleased with their efforts in behalf of His beloved children.

The individual with a disability also needs to be in a class learning the gospel. President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), who served as a counselor in the First Presidency, stated that the youth are “hungry for things of the spirit; they are eager to learn the Gospel, and they want it straight, undiluted.”³ Teens with disabilities should be included with same-age peers when possible. Their spirits can be

touched by the truths taught as they participate with their friends. Others in the class will be blessed to feel the love and emotions expressed by members with disabilities as hearts are turned towards the Savior.

As ward members work together to make sure that the needs President Hinckley outlined—a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing by the word of God—are met for members with disabilities and their families, all members will grow closer to Christ and be strengthened by an increase in love and unity within the ward. ■

ONLINE RESOURCES

For additional information, including ideas for leaders and teachers, visit disability.lds.org.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Converts and Young Men,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 21.1.26.
3. J. Reuben Clark Jr., quoted in Boyd K. Packer, “Ye Are the Temple of God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 72.

AN INVITATION TO ALL

“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized by God to assist in His work to bring to pass the salvation and exaltation of His children. The Church invites *all* to ‘come unto Christ, and be perfected in him’ (Moroni 10:32; see also D&C 20:59). The invitation to come unto Christ pertains to *all* who have lived, or will ever live, on the earth.”

Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 2.2; emphasis added.



Members with disabilities need exposure to the gospel to feel Heavenly Father's love.

OF COVENANTS AND ADHD

With Heavenly Father's help, I accomplished the impossible.

By Todd Pennington

I have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD. When I was in my teens, I spent so much energy trying to read a sentence that by the end I couldn't remember what I had just read. Placement tests showed that I was three to four years behind in my reading and comprehension. I had a hard time focusing in school. My mind raced, and then I daydreamed throughout the school day.

During grade school I played any sport I could and watched any sporting event involving Brigham Young University (BYU) that I could find. I was an average athlete, but I still dreamed of attending BYU and playing sports.

As I entered high school, I told my counselor I wanted to go to BYU. His response broke my heart. "Do you understand that based on your current abilities, that is not possible?" he said as kindly as he could. "Let's pick a trade that you might enjoy so you can prepare for a trade school."

The Power of Covenants

The evening after I met with the counselor I knelt and shared my heartache with my Heavenly Father. As I prayed, a portion of the oath and covenant of the priesthood came to my mind. I found a set of scriptures and read it. "For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies" (D&C 84:33).

That night I promised my Heavenly Father that I would keep the oath and covenant of the priesthood. I was beginning to understand the power of covenants—a power that has been described by Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. After declaring the need for spiritually strong Christians in our day, he said: "What is the source of such moral and spiritual power, and how do we obtain it? The source is God. Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him. A covenant is an agreement between God and man, an accord whose terms are set by God. . . . In these divine agreements, God binds Himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments."¹

I wanted to go to BYU. The scripture said that those who are faithful in obtaining the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods and who magnify their calling "are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies." I knew that Heavenly Father had a plan for my life and that the scripture didn't guarantee that I would be able to go and achieve some of my dreams, but I had hope.

Working with the Lord

Then I went to work. My parents never discouraged me from my dream of attending BYU and tried to support me in my learning challenges. They told me, "You have



a different way of learning.” They worked with me, hired tutors, and sent me to summer school.

That first year of high school I started remedial classes. I worked my way into the industrial arts classes, and finally, my senior year, I started taking college preparation classes. I probably worked as hard in the first three years of high school as I later did in graduate school.

I had other challenges to overcome. When I started taking remedial classes, I lost many of my friends. I recall many long nights asking my Heavenly Father for strength and for the acceptance of my peers. My two close friends in my ward began to make some poor choices, but I knew that joining them could result in violating the promises I had made to my Heavenly Father. At times they made fun of me for the choices I was making to be a worthy priesthood holder. It tested my desire to honor my covenants.

It was during this time that my testimony of my Heavenly Father and the Savior began to grow significantly. As Elder Christofferson said, “In offering whatever sacrifice God may require of us, we obtain the witness of the Spirit that our course is right and pleasing to God. . . . With that knowledge, our faith becomes unbounded, having the assurance that God will in due time turn every affliction to our gain.”²

When you have chosen the right path, it doesn’t mean it’s easy, but the Lord will assure you it’s right. He comforted me during those times. Finally I took a college entrance exam and applied to BYU. Then I waited.

I arrived home from school one afternoon and went to check the mailbox. There was an envelope addressed to me from the BYU admissions office. My heart began to pound. I stood quietly by myself in the driveway and offered one last prayer and opened the letter.

“Congratulations. This letter is your official certificate of admission,” the letter read. Heavenly Father had blessed me in my efforts, and I began school in the fall.

Challenges of Higher Learning

BYU was all I had dreamed of. However, I quickly learned that school was much more difficult than I had



anticipated. The amount of reading and the comprehension it required provided a significant challenge. I was on the verge of academic probation. I took fewer credits and prepared to serve a mission. It was a relief to get away from school and serve in Cleveland, Ohio, USA.

During my mission, President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) spoke in general conference about the Book of Mormon. He said: “There is a power in the [Book of Mormon] which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (see D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance.”³

My companion and I committed to read the Book of Mormon 30 extra minutes a day in our personal study. After a month or two I realized that I could get to the end of a chapter of the Book of Mormon and still remember what I had read. This was amazing to me, and I began to remember more and more of the information I was reading. I began to recognize that one of the blessings promised by

President Benson of finding life in “greater and greater abundance” was happening to me as a missionary.

Back to BYU

As my mission was almost over, I was nervous about returning to school. I wondered if this blessing of being able to read and comprehend would continue. About two weeks after returning home from my mission, I began school again at BYU. I had decided that I would read the Book of Mormon 30 minutes a day because of the love I had gained for its teachings.

The Lord blessed my academic efforts, and I was able to successfully graduate from BYU and attend graduate school. I have maintained my daily reading of the Book of Mormon, and the blessings of doing so continue to assist me in my day-to-day life and in my role as a professor.

Heavenly Father blessed me with the brain he gave me. With His help, I have learned how best to use it. In my efforts to honor my covenants, the Lord has blessed me immensely but not always in the ways I anticipated. As I have tried to overcome my learning challenges, I have found that with His guidance I have learned coping strategies. I use not only spiritual principles to manage ADHD but also the physical and medical principles that God has blessed me to learn.

I have learned the truth of Elder Christofferson’s words: “Our covenant commitment to Him permits our Heavenly Father to let His divine influence, ‘the power of godliness’ (D&C 84:20), flow into our lives.”⁴

I am grateful that my covenant relationship with Heavenly Father has allowed me to pursue the dreams of my youth and ultimately achieve what once seemed impossible. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 20.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” 21.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” 22.

TIPS FOR THOSE WITH ADHD

- *Do not be ashamed.* You are a son or daughter of God! He created you and has the “owner’s manual” for your success. Seek His guidance in identifying the path for meeting your specific challenges.
- *Seek professional help.* Those trained to both diagnose and treat ADHD or other learning challenges can advise you.
- *Use available resources.* Once your condition has been properly diagnosed, be proactive in identifying the resources available to you.
- *Be humble and teachable.* Identify the answers to your prayers and have the courage to implement them.
- *Embrace your strengths.* Just because you may learn differently from others does not make you any less intelligent.
- *Stay connected to others.* This can come through your relationships with Heavenly Father, family, and friends. Participating in family history and meaningful service can also contribute to a sense of belonging.
- *Practice good nutrition.* Eat food that helps rather than hurts the brain. Avoid sugars and processed foods.
- *Exercise.* Try to include a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.
- *Maintain a schedule.* Follow weekly and daily routines. People with ADHD need structure and some form of accountability with someone who understands but is not judgmental.
- *Identify “closers” who can help you.* Find people who understand your challenge with ADHD, have skills related to what you’re working on, and can help you finish what you’ve started.



One New Temple, THREE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The lives of these three families were changed by visiting the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple open house.

By Don L. Searle

Senior Missionary, Central America Area, 2012–14

The Beginning of a New Life

In the summer of 2011, the Wundram family was ready to move from Guatemala to the United States so that Carlos Wundram, a doctor, could pursue advanced studies.

“When we were ready to go,” he recalls, “something stopped me.” His wife, Adriana, experienced the same feelings, so together they prayed and received a confirmation in their hearts that they should not go.

They canceled their plans—and were left wondering what God had in mind for them. Four months later they would find out.

Carlos had been a member of the Church since he was 14 but had dropped out of activity around the time he began his university studies at age 21.

Adriana, although not a member herself, had long wanted to marry a Latter-day Saint. A good friend of hers, a Church member, had married a returned missionary who was tender, loving, and attentive. Adriana wanted a husband like that.

When they first started going out, Adriana and Carlos did not talk of his religion, but he demonstrated many of the qualities of her friend’s husband. He did not act superior to her. After they got married and had children, she appreciated that he bathed the babies and changed diapers!

As their three children began to grow up, “we began to think that we should get closer to God,” Carlos says. They did not find what they were looking for in the Christian church they attended for a time, but the feelings that they needed to get nearer to God persisted.

After canceling their plans to move to the United States, the Wundrams decided to make some improvements to their home, including buying new windows. They immediately liked the man who came to do the installation, José Mena. One day a discussion with him touched on religion. He said he was a member of The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Carlos replied that he was also but had not attended for some time.

The next time Brother Mena came to work on the windows, he brought a Book of Mormon and a copy of the *Liahona* for each family member. Reading the magazine, Carlos began to experience familiar spiritual feelings. Then Brother Mena invited them to attend the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple open house.

When they entered the temple, the Wundram children began to ask, “Dad, what can we do to be members of this Church?” As they left, their youngest son, Rodrigo, age 10, lingered behind and, with the help of his mother, filled out a card requesting a visit from the missionaries.

The family met with the missionaries. “I did not want to pressure my family to be baptized,” Carlos says. “But they really felt the Spirit for themselves.”

Adriana and the children were baptized in December 2011, a few days before the dedication of the Quetzaltenango Temple. “The great blessing that God gave me is that I baptized them,” Carlos says. Just over one year later, the family was sealed in the temple, a joyous occasion for all of them.



The Opportunity to Be Sealed

When Ana Victoria Hernández, who was not a member of the Church, married Belbin Calderón, he was a member but wasn't attending because he worked on Sundays. Belbin says a strong feeling brought him back. He recalls, "I gave up my job because I wanted to go back to church." After he became active again, his wife noticed that he was becoming more humble, and there was more unity in their home.

Belbin hoped his wife might gain an interest in the gospel, but he never tried to push her. One Sunday while dusting the bookcase, Ana Victoria discovered one of Belbin's books about the history of the Church. Curious, she began to read. The stories of the sacrifices of the pioneers touched her deeply.

A few weeks later, the October 2011 *Liahona* came, a special issue about the Book of Mormon. Again out of curiosity, Ana Victoria began to read the Book of Mormon. She soon realized it contained not just a history but also the words of prophets. She began to attend sacrament meeting with her husband and children.

Then she and her family visited the Quetzaltenango Temple open house. Ana Victoria was touched when she learned that her family could be sealed for eternity. "That had a great impact on me. I felt the need to be sealed to them," she recalls. She began taking the missionary lessons and was baptized on December 7, 2011. She attended the temple dedication four days later.

Brother and Sister Calderón were sealed in the temple with their children in December 2012. Ana Victoria says she cannot describe her happiness at "knowing I can be with my family forever." Belbin calls the certainty of their sealing "the greatest blessing I could possibly imagine."



The Temple Touched His Spirit

The construction of a temple in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, fulfilled a dream for Mónica Elena Fuentes Álvarez de Méndez. She is the daughter of a pioneer in the Church who instilled in her a love of the gospel and all its blessings. Her mother, Magda Ester Álvarez, was baptized in 1953, six years after Latter-day Saint missionaries first arrived in Guatemala.

Mónica grew up in the Church and eventually married a good man, Enio Méndez, who was not a member. He supported his wife and daughter in Church activities and admired its members, but he showed no interest in being baptized. Nevertheless, Mónica remembers her mother telling her that one day her husband would become a member. "I never lost faith," she says, even though she had no idea what could bring about his conversion.

Her mother enjoyed the blessings of periodic visits to the temple in Guatemala City and was filled with joy in 2006 when a temple was announced for Quetzaltenango. But Magda Álvarez suffered from a terminal illness and passed away in 2008, before the temple in Quetzaltenango could be built.

Mónica and her young adult daughter, Mónica Esther Méndez Fuentes, served together as guides during the open house for the Quetzaltenango Temple. Enio attended the open house with them, and unbeknownst to them, he went back two more times.

Leaving the temple together on the last day of the open house, Mónica and her daughter wondered if Magda Álvarez's prediction about Enio could ever come true.

Enio had always believed it was acceptable for him to be a member of his church and his wife and daughter to be members of theirs so long as they respected each other's beliefs. But his experiences at the temple open house gave him much to think about. "I began to fast, without saying anything to them, and to pray," he recalls. He went into the mountains, where he likes to go to ponder. "I asked the Lord, 'What should I do, then?'" In fact, he already knew what was right, but he needed to resolve doubts.

Enio was baptized in April 2012—a deeply moving occasion for both his wife and his daughter.

The Méndez family was sealed in the Quetzaltenango Temple in October 2013. Sister Méndez expressed their joy at an eternal goal achieved and their hope to be faithful until the end of their lives. ■



SHINING LIKE A JEWEL

At the cornerstone ceremony before the dedication of the Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, promised, "This temple will bring eternal families to this place and country."¹ Among "the sons and daughters of Lehi,"² as President Uchtdorf described them, the temple has become a beacon of hope. He also commented on the beauty of the temple, saying, "It has a glowing shine like a jewel, and it is a jewel for this area."³

THE QUETZALTENANGO GUATEMALA TEMPLE

Announced on December 16, 2006, by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

Dedicated on December 11, 2011, by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

126,000 visitors attended the open house, held in November 2011

136th temple operating worldwide

Second temple in Guatemala (after the Guatemala City Guatemala Temple, dedicated by President Hinckley in 1984)

Size of temple: 21,085 square feet (1,959 m²)

Temple district: 60,000 members in 15 stakes and 7 districts

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, in Jason Swensen, "Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple: 'This Temple Will Bring Eternal Families to This Place and Country,'" *Church News*, Dec. 11, 2011, ldschurchnews.com.
2. "Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple: Dedicatory Prayer," ldschurchtemples.com/quetzaltenango.
3. "Dedication Held for Quetzaltenango Guatemala Temple," Church Newsroom, Dec. 11, 2011, mormonnewsroom.org.

BEFORE OUR Journey's Through

By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

I never have to worry about where to find my 92-year-old father, Paul Romney, on a Sunday afternoon. He's in his ward in Salt Lake City, Utah, tidying up the chapel. It takes him a little over an hour.

He leans on his walker as he goes up the aisle. Then he leans on the benches as he moves from row to row, picking up stray papers, arranging hymnbooks, and gathering cereal or breadcrumbs that have fallen on the carpet. It is a task he has been doing every Sunday, with few exceptions, since he was ordained a deacon in 1934.


Preparing for Worship

"I do it to show that I love the Lord," he says. "Having a clean chapel helps us to worship Him."

As a deacon, Paul Romney learned that his duties included caring for the temporal needs of the ward. "I figured one way to do that was to tidy up after meetings," he says. "So I just started doing it, and I've been doing it ever since." It has never been an official assignment or calling, although occasionally he has come on Saturdays to

Paul Romney demonstrates his love for the Lord by tidying up the chapel.





*For those who
endure well, faith
deepens with the
passage of time.*

help others assigned to clean the meetinghouse. Sometimes his children have helped him. Years ago when he was in the bishopric, he encouraged the deacons to join in.

But most of the time he simply waits until the last meeting of the day is finished. Then, without fanfare, he contributes his small part to maintaining a house of order. And he does it faithfully, every Sunday.

My father's example has shown me that no matter our circumstances, we can always find a way to serve. It has taught me about reverence and preparing to worship. And it has helped me to see that there is much we all can learn from those who are ahead of us on their journey through this life.

Changing Roles

I have learned similar lessons from my neighbors down the street. Larry Morgan, 97, and his wife, Elizabeth, 94, have successfully filled various roles in their lives together: husband and wife, father and mother, senior missionary companions in Holland. When Larry was 72, he was called as

a counselor in the bishopric. At that time there were 79 widows in our neighborhood, and by assignment from the bishop, Larry and Elizabeth visited every one of them.

For more than 40 years, on fast Sundays, Larry and Elizabeth's children, and now their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, have gathered in the evening to end their fast. "We wanted our family to enjoy being together, and everyone likes to eat," he says. "We had lots of wheat in storage, so we'd grind our own flour and make waffles. Then we'd eat until everyone was filled." That simple, shared meal has fostered enduring feelings of family togetherness.

Today, children and grandchildren do the cooking. Elizabeth has dementia but knows the family is near. To each person present, she repeats over and over again, "I love you."

When the meal is finished and everyone is gone, she enjoys listening to Larry read scriptures and Church magazine articles out loud and finds reassurance in just knowing he is there.

About two years ago, Larry fell and damaged his spine. As a result, he can no longer walk. "I don't waste time asking, 'Why



Larry and Elizabeth Morgan show continual commitment to each other.



me?” he says. “I received a priesthood blessing. I was told I will walk again, even though it will not be in this life. Because of the Atonement and the Resurrection, I know that it will happen. I’ve learned that our Father in Heaven is in charge. When we accept His will, then we can count on His help.”

Growing Perspective

I met Merle Christensen for the first time in an assisted living center in Brigham City, Utah. The grandmother of a friend of our

family, she was about to celebrate her 101st birthday. In her room, Merle sat surrounded by souvenir books and photographs. Two photos she shared particularly impressed me.

The first, taken many years ago, was of a group of seminary students, including Merle’s daughters. “They’re on the front row with their teacher, Boyd K. Packer,” Merle says. “He looks really young, but he was a good teacher.” Today he’s the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

When Merle was young, she was stricken with polio. “It wasn’t easy to deal with that as a teenage girl,” she says. “My faith had to grow to keep up. But the Lord helped me then, and He is helping me now.” Those who suffered polio in their youth often struggle with post-polio syndrome as they advance in years, dealing with symptoms like muscle weakness and overall fatigue. Such is the case for Merle.



When she feels tired, she remembers the scripture in Alma 7:11–12 that tells how the Savior “will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people . . . that he may know . . . how to succor his people according to their infirmities.” Then, she says, “you trust that the Lord knows what you’re going through. Take it day by day, pray, go to church, and be kind to others. It’s the little things that help you to get through.”

The second photo Merle showed me is in a scrapbook—a picture of three of her five daughters. All of her children were girls, and three were born as



AN INHERITANCE OF HOPE

“Wherever you are on the path to inherit the gift of eternal

life, you have the opportunity to show many people the way to greater happiness. When you choose whether to make or keep a covenant with God, you choose whether you will leave an inheritance of hope to those who might follow your example.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “A Priceless Heritage of Hope,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 22.

Merle Christensen rejoices in the knowledge that she will be able to see loved ones again.

triplets in 1936, the first triplets born in Brigham City. “Having triplets was rare back then,” Merle says. Medicine wasn’t as advanced, and two of the girls were born with heart problems. Sharon died in 1958 and Diane in 1972. Janice, who had no heart condition, passed away from cancer in 1992.

“I love all of my children, their husbands, my grandchildren, and great-grandchildren,” Merle says. But she misses her husband, DeVere, who’s been gone for 26 years, and she misses her triplets, who would be turning 79 this April.

Again she reads in Alma: “And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people” (Alma 7:12).

“I know that the Savior overcame death,” Merle says. “Because of that, I know that I will see my husband and my triplets and all of my family again.” That conviction, she says, grows stronger every day.

Sister Christensen passed away in September 2014, after this article was written.

Walking Together

Alph and Lucette Passeraub of Lausanne, Switzerland, love to go walking together. One of their favorite strolls is along the shore of Lake Geneva, where the Alps tower over the inland sea. A couple of years ago on such a walk, the Passeraubs spent the evening reminiscing.



Lucette and Alph Passeraub reminisce about their life together in the Church.

“Even as an adolescent, I was searching for the truth,” Alph, 78, said. “I always said to myself, If God exists, He must have a living prophet on the earth. I was preoccupied with that thought all the time.”

As Alph began his post-high school studies, a friend encouraged him to attend a free English class taught by LDS missionaries. After one of the classes, the missionaries invited him to church.

“The first time I attended, the Sunday School lesson was about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as three distinct beings,” Alph recalled. “The teacher said we know much about God thanks to the teachings of a modern-day prophet, Joseph Smith, and that there are living prophets today. I was amazed. They were talking about what had been in my heart for so long.” He soon joined the Church, “and every day since then, I rejoice that there are prophets on the earth.”

Lucette, 80, grew up as a child of World War II. “I had to go to work at 14 and never got to complete my

education,” she says. “But I found that the Church gave me opportunities to keep learning.”

After serving a full-time mission, she started dating Alph. They married in the temple, raised a family, and now look back at their journey that includes Lucette’s 14 years as ward Primary president, Alph’s 32 years on the stake high council, regular trips to the temple, visits with children and grandchildren, and always, always, gratitude for the truth they embraced when they were young.

“We have been blessed to walk side by side,” Lucette says. “And with each step, our faith has grown stronger.”

I learn a lot from these friends who are older than I am. Larry and Elizabeth teach me to play the changing roles of life with dignity and with assistance from the Lord. Merle shows that faith to endure to the end must be built on faith in the Savior today. And the Passeraubs rejoice in the gospel every day. All of those are lessons that will strengthen me before my journey is through. ■



HOW FAMILY HISTORY CHANGES OUR Hearts and Minds

Researching our family history and providing temple ordinances for our ancestors help us see the vastness but also intimacy of God's plan.

By Amy Harris

Professor of History and Genealogy,
Brigham Young University

For years, every time I attended the temple, I thought of my great-great-grandmother Hannah Mariah Eagles Harris (1817–88), but not because I needed to perform proxy temple work on her behalf.

Mariah (as she preferred to be called) is one of the reasons my family is even in the Church. She was baptized in 1840 in England, was endowed in Nauvoo, Illinois, was sealed to her husband in Winter Quarters, Nebraska, and died in Utah. My thoughts about her while I was in the temple were not about her need to have ordinances performed but about how those ordinances bound her and me together across time and space.

As a child I lived in the same Utah town she had lived in, and eventually I visited Winter Quarters, Nauvoo, and the small English village where she was born. I was struck by the vast distances she had traveled and by the vast differences between her life and mine.

Despite the span of time, space, and circumstance that separates us, however, I feel connected to my great-great-grandmother both through the sealing covenant and by knowing about her life. That connection illuminates the reasons behind family history work specifically and temple worship more generally.



Engaging in family history research teaches us of the vastness and grand scope of God's creation and underscores the individual and merciful reach of Christ's Atonement.

Greater Love through Family History

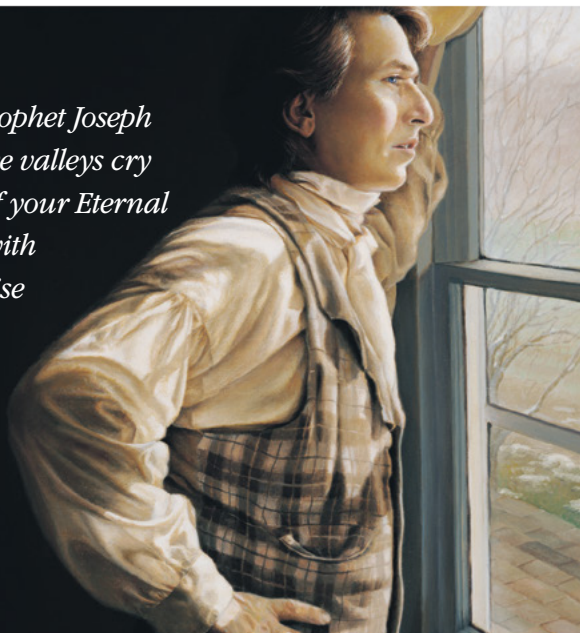
The Lord has taught that though the worlds He has created for His children are “innumerable . . . unto man; . . . all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them” (Moses 1:35). Family history and temple work offer us an opportunity to join in Jesus Christ's work of salvation.¹ Doing so can

help us learn how to love and be merciful to our families, to our neighbors, to everyone we meet, for they are all our brothers and sisters.²

In remembering our own ancestors, we recognize the scope of Heavenly Father's plan and creation. The Lord created a place for us to be tested and to have faith, but because very few people get the chance to receive the fulness of God's covenants while in mortality, the mercy of proxy work reminds us that the Lord loves *all* His children and has provided a way that all may choose to accept the full blessings of the gospel regardless of their circumstances in mortality (see 2 Nephi 26:20–28, 32–33).

In addition, learning about our ancestors' lives can remind us that not everything in life will work easily, that there will be disappointments and inequalities in this fallen

Regarding the doctrine of salvation for the dead, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: “Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever!” (D&C 128:23).



world. But learning about their lives and performing ordinances for them can also remind us that no one is outside the reach of God's love (see Romans 8:38–39).

My grandmother Mariah was energized by this truth when she first heard it preached. In 1840–41, during the first wave of proxy baptisms done in the Mississippi River and the partially completed Nauvoo Temple, she seized the opportunity to be baptized for her deceased sister, who had died before missionaries arrived in England.³ Though I've never met Mariah, I share with her a love of siblings and a knowledge that this love can continue beyond death because of temple ordinances. Sharing in that knowledge with her inspires a love for her as well.

It is not surprising that the Prophet Joseph Smith was nearly overcome with the beautiful and merciful doctrine of salvation for the dead, which he described as the “most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel” (D&C 128:17): “Let the mountains shout for joy, and all ye valleys cry aloud; and all ye seas and dry lands tell the wonders of your Eternal King! And ye rivers, and brooks, and rills, flow down with gladness. Let the woods and all the trees of the field praise the Lord; and ye solid rocks weep for joy! And let

the sun, moon, and the morning stars sing together, and let all the sons of God shout for joy! And let the eternal creations declare his name forever and ever!” (D&C 128:23).⁴

Like Mariah, who enthusiastically went to be baptized for her sister, other early Saints were equally joyful. One of those early Saints, Sally Carlisle, wrote: “What a glorious thing it is that we believe and . . . now can be baptized for all our dead friends and save them as far back as we can get any knowledge of them.”⁵

For All—and for the One

As these reflections show, the vastness of family history is tempered by the personal. We learn of not only the scale but also the depth of the Lord's love, for He cares for the individual. The Lord who sees the falling of the sparrow and seeks after the one lost lamb out of a hundred (see Matthew 10:29; Luke 15:4) does not redeem us en masse, but one by one, just as He administered to the people during His earthly ministry and just as He blessed the people gathered at the temple in Bountiful (see 3 Nephi 17).

Similarly, the Lord taught the early Saints a meticulous standard of record keeping for proxy work done for each

individual (see D&C 128:1–5, 24). Thus, we undertake painstaking work to identify individual ancestors, not just catalogs of names. Through this work we glimpse God's mercy, His compassion, and the worth of an individual soul.

In addition, learning the stories of our ancestors' lives helps us learn to love them, no matter their flaws and shortcomings. As we learn how the vicissitudes of mortality shaped our ancestors' choices, we feel compassion for them. This process should refine our ability to develop the same kind of love for the living, both within our families and for all of God's children. Feeling more deeply that all people, even the majority who came to earth without an opportunity to receive the covenants and ordinances, are children of heavenly parents helps us appreciate that life is a test of faith and fortitude for everyone who ever lived, "according to the use they made of the light which [God] gives them."⁶

The refining influence of family history work can increase our own capacity for love. If we grow to love people long since dead, who lived very differently from us, then will we not come to realize how loving and merciful God is toward us? And can we not then love our families and neighbors and be compassionate with their shortcomings?

When others see the only known photograph of my grandmother Mariah, they often comment on how grim or unpleasant she appears to them. I immediately defend her because I know her. I know the person that walked along the River Severn as a young girl and as a mother with small children. I know the person who sailed across an ocean, giving birth to her fourth child during the journey. I know the person who sent a husband to war and lost an infant

child during his absence. I know the person who walked 1,000 miles (1,609 km) to a new home in the western American desert. I know the person who worked and covenanted and farmed and loved. And in knowing her, I get a taste of our heavenly parents' love for her and for each of their children.

Family History—the Grand Scope and the Merciful Reach

The heart of family history is not about using a computer; it is not about reading old handwriting or making scrupulous notations and citations. Those are tools or functions of family history, but they are not the heart of family history, nor do they grasp the significance of why Latter-day Saints seek after their ancestors. Family history, in its essence, teaches us the grand scope of creation and redemption and simultaneously reminds us of the personal and merciful reach of Christ's Atonement.

Searching after our ancestors can have a similar effect on our hearts and minds when we realize that all of those people—"numberless as the sand upon the sea shore" (Moses 1:28)—are children of heavenly parents and are loved and known by them. No wonder Joseph described entrance into the celestial kingdom as passing through a gate of "transcendent beauty" (D&C 137:2), for what could be more transcendently beautiful than to be saved with those we know and love, who have, like us, also been redeemed by God's expansive and personal love? I look forward to meeting with grandmother Mariah at that gate. ■

NOTES

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 473.

2. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that one function of the spirit of Elijah—a special manifestation of the Holy Ghost—is to "bear witness of the divine nature of the family." This can mean both the divine nature of our mortal familial relationships and also the divinity and potential of all of God's children. See Russell M. Nelson, "A New

Harvest Time," *Ensign*, May 1998, 34. See also Richard G. Scott, "The Joy of Redeeming the Dead," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 93.

3. Mariah Harris baptized for sister Edith Eagles, 1841, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Nauvoo Proxy Baptism Records, 1840–1845, Family History Library US/Canada film 485753, item 2, volume A, page 42.

4. For an in-depth discussion of how Smith family deaths influenced Joseph Smith's search for answers about salvation for the

dead, see Richard E. Turley Jr., "The Latter-day Saint Doctrine of Baptism for the Dead" (BYU family history fireside, Nov. 9, 2001), familyhistory.byu.edu.

5. Sally Carlisle, in Steven Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelations* (2008), 470–71.

6. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 405; see also Deuteronomy 8:2; Moroni 7:16; Doctrine and Covenants 76:41–42; 127; 137:7–9; Abraham 3.



**By Elder
Lawrence E.
Corbridge**

Of the Seventy

The Most

On February 12, 2003, my wife and I, along with two of our sons, are careening down a canyon river. The dark river roars in our ears as we straddle either side of our raft and paddle with our might at the command of our guide. The wet suits we wear protect us from the splash of the numbing cold water.

Our river guide has run this particular stretch of the river hundreds of times without mishap. We think it safe enough, and so here we are. The worst of the rapids are behind us, and we are loving life as we approach the take-out point.

Then it happens.

Suddenly, the right side of the raft rises straight into the sky. Our sons are launched over our heads into the water, and the large raft flips over, dumping us all into the raging river.

It is dark and incredibly cold. Above I hear muted sounds of the river mixed with the chaos of people kicking and thrashing about, trying to reach the surface. I expect to surface, but the river holds me down. I think of my wife, Jacque, and of our sons, Chase and Zach, more than my need for air. I know we are in death's grasp, and I feel it squeezing life from me. I also feel profound regret for putting my family at such risk.

Then I hear the full roar of the river. I am finally above water. I gasp for air, desperately looking for my wife and sons, but I don't see them.

In seconds I am pulled under the water again but not before I see that I am headed toward a large rock where the force of the current turns the river back onto itself in a hydraulic roller. I try to get my legs in front of me to take the brunt of the impact, but before I hit the rock, the roller turns me back, over, and under and then spits me out to the side into an eddy. I see Chase and Zach in the same eddy, but where is Jacque?

I end the story here because there is not space to tell it all. It includes the miraculous rescue of my wife, who was saved by a kayaker and the powers of heaven.

I am not advocating high-adventure risk and certainly not recklessness; rather, I want you to understand what the river taught me that day.

Important Things

A group of people are white-water rafting in a purple inflatable raft. The raft is navigating through turbulent rapids, with large splashes of white water. The rafters are wearing helmets and life jackets. One person in the foreground is wearing a red life jacket and a white helmet. Another person is wearing a green helmet. The background shows dark, rocky riverbanks.

*Seek after those things
that are monumentally
important and equally
available to everyone.*

The question is not how much you can get away with or how close to the line you can walk and still be good; rather, the question is, "Who are you, and who are you in the process of becoming?"

Difficulties, inconveniences, and disappointments come and go. Even life comes and goes. There isn't much that matters greatly in life, but a few things are monumentally important, even more important than life. I want to talk about some of those things. I also want you to understand that the few things that are most important are equally available to all, whatever your circumstances or past.

What Do You Want?

So, *what do you want?* Hopefully you can identify one or two things that occupy most of your thoughts and are your predominant desires.



The Lord said:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. . . .

"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).

While this may be understood as a declaration that we cannot comprehend the thoughts and ways of God, I think rather it is an invitation to think differently, to elevate our thoughts and, consequently, our ways to

coincide with the thoughts and ways of God. He is inviting us to think as He thinks.

So what are the thoughts and ways of the Lord? What are the most important things to which we should aspire? I will mention four.

The Most Important Thing

If there is something more important than all other things, would it be important to learn it, remember it, and give it the highest priority in our lives? Alma says there is something that is most important.

"For behold, I say unto you there be many things to come; and behold, *there is one thing which is of more importance than they all*—for behold, the time is not far distant that the Redeemer liveth and cometh among his people. . . .

"And behold, he shall be born of Mary, . . . [and] she . . . shall . . . bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.

"And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

"And he will take upon him death. . . .

". . . [He will] take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance. . . .

"Now I say unto you that ye must repent, and be born again; for the Spirit saith if ye are not born again ye cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. . . .

"And whosoever doeth this, and keepeth the commandments of God from thenceforth, . . . shall have eternal life" (Alma 7:7, 10–14, 16; emphasis added).

Do you remember the ultimate objective of



What Martha was doing was good, but she was distracted by a good thing at the expense of a best thing.

all that father Lehi saw in his visionary dream? It was a tree “whose fruit is most precious and most desirable above all other fruits; yea, and it is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (1 Nephi 15:36).

The tree represents the love of God manifested through Jesus Christ, and its fruit is the blessings of His Atonement. The most important thing is to partake of the fruit of the tree of life—to be *forgiven of your sins and be endowed with the power of the Holy Ghost*. These gifts of the Atonement, along with the gift of eternal life, are the greatest of all the gifts of God.

We should want to receive these gifts more than anything else.

Follow the Word of the Lord

Next, we should want to hear and follow the word of the Lord. On one occasion Jesus “entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

“And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.

“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

“But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:38–42).

This was not a question of right and wrong but rather of good, better, and best. What Martha was doing was good, but she was distracted by a good thing at the expense of

a best thing. In response to her complaint, the Lord made this astonishing statement: “One thing is needful”—that is, to hear and follow the word of the Lord.

Think about this statement in the book of Alma: “The preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, *it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else*” (Alma 31:5; emphasis added).

This is a profoundly important truth. The Lord says that your thoughts are not His thoughts, but the holy scriptures, the teachings of living prophets, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost *are* the thoughts of God, and they are more powerful than fear of death, addiction, pornography, or anything else. It stands to reason, therefore, that the Lord would say, “Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85).

He is not talking about just reading the scriptures but rather about adopting His words to govern your life so that they become the standard works—the standard for *your* works. As you do so, His thoughts will become your thoughts, and His ways will become your ways.

Develop a Godly Character

Third, we should want to become like the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, “And behold, all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written shall the world be judged” (3 Nephi 27:26). Then He poses the ultimate question: “Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

As you hear and follow the word of the Lord, you become more like Him. Little by little the qualities and



By the power of the Holy Ghost we become a “good tree” and make a difference in the lives of others, especially by helping them partake of the fruit of the tree of life—the most important thing.

attributes of His character become a part of your character, a part of who you are.

The question is not how much you can get away with or how close to the line you can walk and still be good; rather, the question is, “Who are you, and who are you in the process of becoming?”

Be Fruitful

Finally, we should want to make a difference; we should want to be fruitful.

The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest sermon ever given. It is not a random collection of truths but rather a carefully orchestrated sermon that leads to an important conclusion.

The Lord describes a process beginning with the recognition that we are poor in spirit, which in turn may cause us to mourn for our sins, focus on things of eternal value, be filled with the Holy Ghost, avoid all that would offend the Spirit, and stand firm against adversity to the end, that we become “the salt of the earth,” “the light of the world,” and “a city that is set on an hill” (Matthew 5:13–14). He said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

At the end of the sermon, the Savior returns to this same conclusion to be fruitful:

“Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . .

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:17, 20).

The purpose of the Father’s plan is not only that we be redeemed from sin and endowed with power from on high but also that by the power of the Holy Ghost we become a “good tree” and make a difference in the lives of others, especially by helping them partake of the fruit of the tree of life—the most important thing.

The Greatest Gifts Are Available to All

Regarding the few things that matter most in life, no one is disadvantaged or privileged. Everyone is on equal footing. This is surprising because there is otherwise so much inequality in life.

In the end it does not matter how well liked you are or how much money you acquire or how beautiful you may be. The greatest gifts are equally available to everyone.

Conclusion

Seek the best things in life and work tirelessly to achieve them. You can. We all can. Elevate your thoughts to coincide with the Lord’s thoughts, that His ways become your ways. Don’t drift or become distracted by the things of the world or the honors of men.

Your future is bright. “Be of good cheer, and do not fear” (D&C 68:6).

Seek after those things that are *monumentally important and equally available to everyone*. Everything is before you. *All you have to do is choose the best.*

I testify that Jesus is the Christ and that He invites “all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him . . . ; and all are alike unto God” (2 Nephi 26:33). ■

From a devotional address, “The Best of Times,” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on June 18, 2013. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

6 WAYS TO Strengthen Family Love

**1**

LEARN together



During scripture time and everyday teaching moments, discover the gospel together.

2

PRAY together



As you call on Heavenly Father, you will find that He loves each of you.

3

Hold FAMILY HOME EVENING



Set aside a time each week when you can count on being together.

4

Make WISE MEDIA choices



Ensure that what enters your home is edifying.

5

SERVE side by side



Grow closer together through service, such as helping a neighbor, sharing the gospel, or doing family history.

6

Express LOVE daily



In word and deed, show Christlike kindness.

What are the most important things you could do to strengthen the love in your family? The six above are among the best. Find more about strengthening your family at

FAMILY.LDS.ORG

FROM FAMILY HISTORY TO THE TEMPLE

By Kimberly Johnson

My dad didn't want to be baptized," says nine-year-old Hannah Hurtado, "but I begged him, and I prayed for him." Joe Hurtado, and his wife, Connie, had tried several different religions, but their children preferred the activities at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "Getting Joe baptized was a long road," Connie says. "We attended for a long time, but he just wasn't ready." Hannah kept praying. As the missionaries taught Joe the gospel of Jesus Christ, his heart softened. "It was the hope I saw in the eyes of my children," he says. "A feeling came over me that said it was the right thing to do."

Now that all her family had been baptized, Hannah started praying for them to be sealed in the temple. Connie says, "Hannah's efforts blossomed, and her brothers started praying for the same thing."

The Hurtados began doing their family history after their stake president invited every family in the Rio Rancho New Mexico Stake to begin the "family history to temple experience" together. President Jared Rounsville says, "When people identify their ancestors and

understand that they need their temple ordinances, the natural feelings will be to go to the temple for them."

Family history consultants met with the Hurtados in their home, and while they easily gleaned information about Connie's family, Joe's Japanese and Mexican heritage proved more difficult. "But we persevered," Joe says.

"We like getting our children involved, and our family was strengthened."

Taking family names to the temple for the first time was unforgettable for Joe. "I did the baptism for my grandfather in the temple, and I felt a wave of emotion come over me. I could feel him there. As we have these spiritual experiences, I keep thinking that I have so much farther



ALBUQUERQUE NEW MEXICO TEMPLE

LOOK FOR TEMPLE OPPORTUNITIES

To discover what temple work may need to be done for your ancestors, sign in at [FamilySearch.org](https://familysearch.org) and select "Temple," then "Opportunities."

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The Turning of Our Hearts: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, U.S.



The Turning of Our Hearts: Rio Rancho, New Mexico, U.S.

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Members of the Rio Rancho New Mexico Stake are blessed in ways they never imagined when they accept an invitation to do family history and temple work.

(33:22)

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RESPONDING TO THE INVITATION

Watch a video recounting how the Hurtado family and other members of their stake responded to the invitation to do family history and temple work: lds.org/go/templeE215.

to go, that I'm just starting. The kids in Primary know more than I do because they've grown up with it. I have a long ways to go before I feel worthy enough to return to Heavenly Father. Doing this work and going to the temple has taught me that Heavenly Father really wants all His children back, not just the ones who have grown up in the Church. He

wants them all. He wants his whole family—including me."

With tears in her eyes, Hannah says, "Prayer is powerful. If you pray with all your heart, and you pray lots of times, it'll come true." And it did when Hannah and her family were sealed in the Albuquerque New Mexico Temple. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



A FAMILY ACTIVITY

"Temple and family history work is part of living the gospel at home. It should

be a family activity."

Elder Allan F. Packer of the Seventy, "The Book," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 100.

DOCTOR OR ELDER?

When I finished high school, I knew I had to wait at least two years before serving a mission. I decided to start my college education, calculating that I could be done with medical school in about six years if I invested myself fully. I planned to serve a full-time mission afterward.

After completing medical school at age 24, I started a clinical apprenticeship, which furthered my career opportunities. During this time a dilemma unfolded: should I really serve a mission, or should I keep working? My parents, my older brother (who had recently returned from his mission), my bishop, and a counselor in the local mission presidency all exhorted me to serve.

I believed they were right, but it was difficult to delay my promising medical career. I prayed and fasted for inspiration. I also consulted my patriarchal blessing, which recommended that I serve a full-time mission and promised blessings as a result.

One day, as I was taking public transport home from my apprenticeship, I ran into the stake patriarch. We got off at the same stop and, curiously, started walking in the same direction. He recognized me as a member of the Church.

As we walked together, he asked me what I was planning to do with my life. I explained that I was a doctor and was troubled about deciding between my career and a mission. He told me in

a firm voice to serve the Lord by going on a mission, adding that I would be blessed as a result. To me, his response seemed to come from the Lord.

Immediately the following scripture entered my mind: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (3 Nephi 13:33).

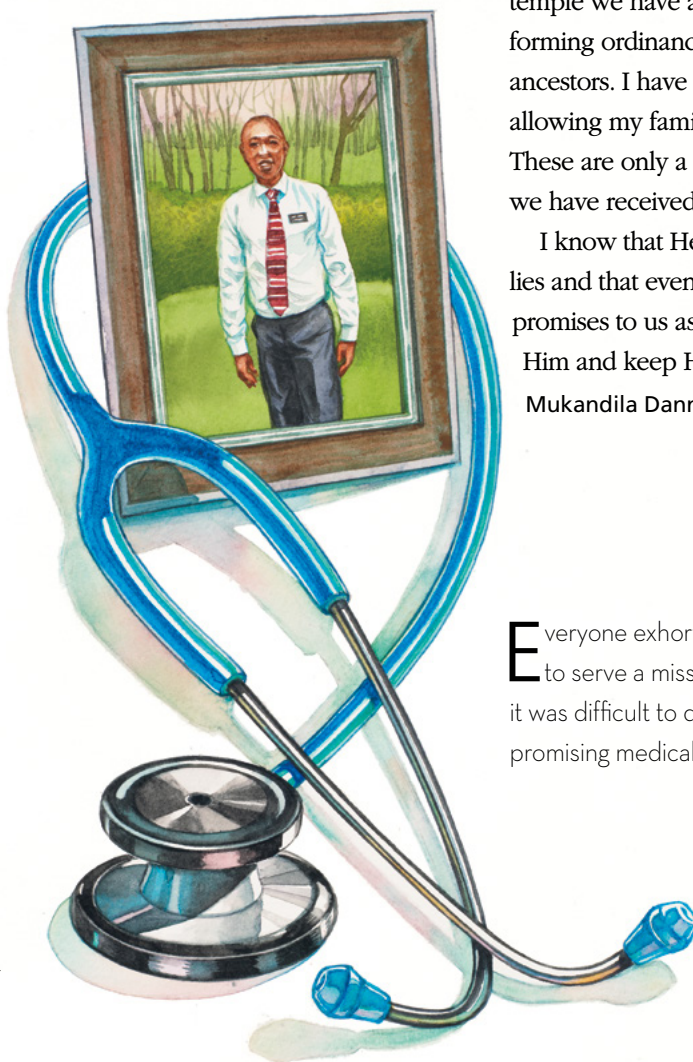
I was certain the Lord had answered me. Without further hesitation, I decided to delay my professional career and serve a full-time mission.

My fellow doctors thought I would forget medical practices after being away for two years. They harassed me, but I held firm to my decision.

Leaving behind my “Dr.” title, I served two years in the Democratic Republic of Congo Kinshasa Mission.

Five years later, I made a list of the major blessings that followed my service. Foremost, I found a wife—a faithful Church member and my crowning joy. We have two children so far. Our family is sealed for eternity. In the temple we have acted as proxies in performing ordinances for our deceased ancestors. I have secure employment, allowing my family to be self-reliant. These are only a few of the blessings we have received from the Lord.

I know that Heavenly Father never lies and that eventually He fulfills all His promises to us as we put our trust in Him and keep His commandments. ■
Mukandila Danny Kalala, Liberia



Everyone exhorted me to serve a mission, but it was difficult to delay my promising medical career.

I CAME TO KNOW THE SAVIOR

In my first year of high school, I made a commitment to read the New Testament from beginning to end. After school and on weekends, I retreated to the upper story of our house and read the Savior's words and of His miracles and life.

Though my young mind often did not understand the language of the Bible, I came to know Jesus Christ. I learned that He is the Son of God and that He was sent to atone for our sins. I learned that He walked with, spoke to, and blessed ordinary, weak people—people like me.

I was sometimes confused while reading complex passages in Paul's epistles and John's writings in the book of Revelation, but I could always feel the truth of their teachings. I found that reading the scriptures helped me through hard days at school and gave me guidance in making important decisions.

Years later, as I prepared for a mission, I found myself questioning my motives for serving. I felt that there was nothing particularly special about my testimony or about me. I wondered if I was preparing for a mission out of obligation to my parents and my leaders, who had worked hard to teach me the gospel. I even thought the Lord might be better off without my service.

One day while I was reading the Book of Mormon, Abinadi's words touched my heart:

"He shall be led, crucified, and slain. . . .

"And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death. . . .

"And now I say unto you, *who shall declare his generation?*" (Mosiah 15:7–8, 10; emphasis added).

I read that last line over and over, wondering if it had been there before. By reading the New Testament, I knew of the Savior's life and of the generation of those who had walked with Him. But those of the Savior's generation cannot visit people today

to teach of His love, His Atonement, and His Church. So how could I justify *not* sharing my testimony of Him?

The Lord wanted me to share the good news of the gospel I had received. I knew the gospel to be true, and I wanted to share the truths I had learned while reading the scriptures.

Soon after this experience I left on my mission. Today I can attribute the desire I had to serve to what I had learned about the Savior as a young student reading the scriptures. ■

Brian Knox, Arizona, USA

As I prepared for a mission, I found myself questioning my motives for serving.





Nieves had readily received the restored gospel, but when we invited her to be baptized, she hesitated.

I'M GRATEFUL FOR YOUR FEET

There was nothing particularly interesting about my feet, so I was a little confused when Nieves, a recent convert in Bolivia, said she was thankful for them.

"I'm so grateful for your feet," she would tell us in the weeks following her baptism.

Nieves had readily received the restored gospel, but when we invited her to be baptized, she hesitated.

She explained that she suffered from a painful skin condition. When her skin touched cold water, it felt as if a thousand needles were piercing her pores. This condition prevented her from doing even ordinary tasks, such as washing vegetables or scrubbing clothing by hand.

We explained that the baptismal font could be heated, and we assured Nieves that she would be baptized in warm water. Her face brightened, and she chose to be baptized on Christmas Day. My companion and I told the branch

president about her skin condition, and he said the font would be heated in time for the afternoon baptism.

When we arrived at the chapel for the baptism, however, the font had just been filled with extremely cold water! The frantic branch president explained that because of a miscommunication, the water would not be ready until much later.

My companion and I knew that Nieves wanted to be baptized that day, and we believed that the Lord desired the same thing. We found an empty room and prayed that He would help Nieves to be baptized.

We felt comforted after the prayer and decided to proceed with the service. Those who spoke before the baptism taught beautifully, but I was suddenly nervous when I heard, "Elder Nelson will now baptize Sister Nieves."

I tried to hide my discomfort as I stepped gingerly into the frigid water. Nieves took my hand and lowered her

foot toward the water. I braced myself for the worst, but Nieves did not shriek or even wince. She stepped calmly down the stairs and smiled up at me.

After the baptismal prayer, she lay back into the cold water. When I lifted her, she emerged grinning. I was filled with gratitude. To me, her baptism was a miracle.

The last time I saw Nieves, she said something that cleared up my confusion about her interest in my feet. She said, "I'm so grateful for your feet, which walked to my door and brought me the truth."

I think of Nieves and her simple faith and gratitude whenever I hear these words of Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7; see also Mosiah 12:21). ■

Nicholas Nelson, Texas, USA

FOOTPRINTS OF FAITHFULNESS

For some time I had wanted to take pictures of Temple Square in Salt Lake City—including the reflection pool, the fountains, and the sidewalks—covered with freshly fallen snow void of any footprints. To get a picture of fresh snow without footprints, I knew I had to arrive at Temple Square early in the morning following a nighttime snowstorm.

One evening after a forecast of snow overnight, I prepared myself. Because Temple Square grounds-keepers start plowing the sidewalks at 5:00 a.m., I set my alarm for 3:00 a.m. and got my gear together.

Driving on unplowed roads the next morning, I arrived at Temple Square at 4:15 a.m. while it was still snowing. Then I proceeded to drive around the square, looking for someplace to park that would give me easy access to take pictures.

On my first pass around Temple Square, I noticed that the walkway to the entrance of the Salt Lake Temple was covered in fresh snow—without any footprints! I knew I was going to get my perfect photo. Excited, I drove around the block again to find a parking spot.

As I proceeded east on North Temple Street, I thought I would find a spot close to the walkway. Before I realized it, however, I had run out of parking spots and was again near the sidewalk to the temple entrance.

As I sat at a red light, I looked to my right at the fresh, undisturbed snow. When I looked to my left toward the Conference Center, I noticed an elderly woman dressed in her Sunday best, her head tilted into the falling snow as she headed toward the temple.

“Oh, no,” I thought. “I’m not going to get my shot!”

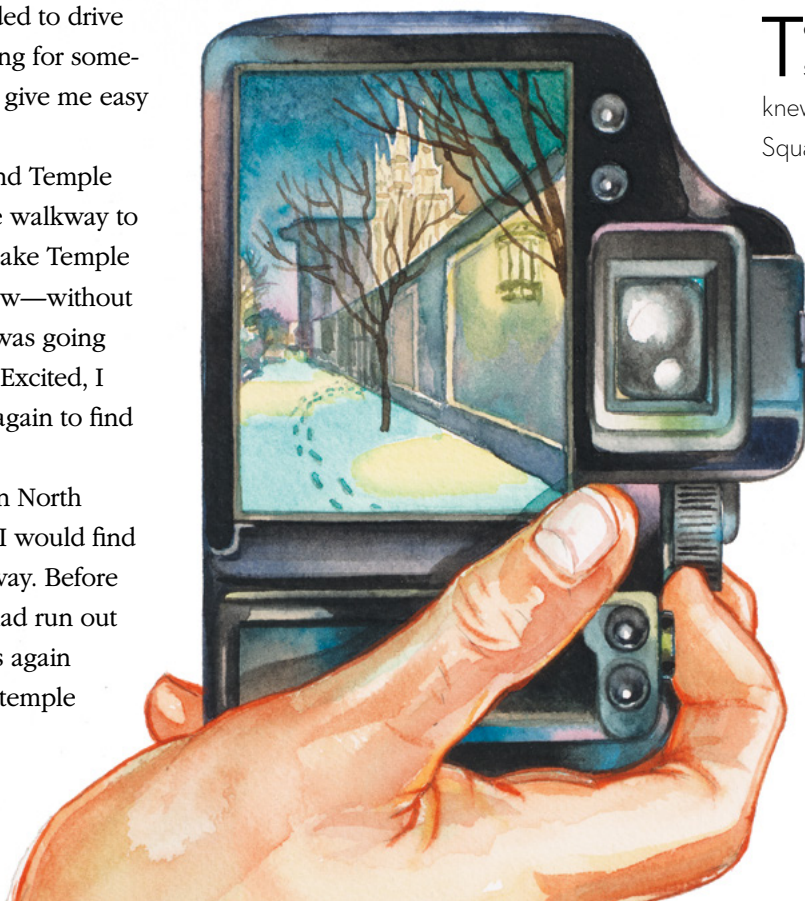
As the woman crossed in front of me, I turned and looked toward the soon-to-be-ruined walkway and saw that another sister had already gone down the walkway and was turning into the temple entrance. Then I looked back to the first sister now walking down the walkway. With

snow clumped around her shoes and ankles, and following the footsteps of the first, she walked slowly but surely down the walkway, through the gates, and into the entrance to the temple.

As I contemplated what I was seeing, I looked at the clock in my car: 4:20 a.m. Sitting in my warm car and looking at the footsteps in the freshly fallen snow, I was humbled by the faithfulness of these two sisters on their way to perform their appointed duties.

I drove around the block again, parked, grabbed my camera, and took a picture of footprints in the snow—a far greater picture than the one I had envisioned. ■

Randolph Shankula, Utah, USA



To get a picture of fresh snow without footprints, I knew I had to arrive at Temple Square early in the morning.



By Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

TRUE LOVE

Love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal life.

Love is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the pathway of discipleship. It comforts, counsels, cures, and consoles. It leads us through valleys of darkness and through the veil of death. In the end, love leads us to the glory and grandeur of eternal life.

For me, the Prophet Joseph Smith has always exemplified the pure love of Christ. Many asked why he gained so many followers and retained them. His answer: “It is because I possess the principle of love.”¹

The story is told of a 14-year-old boy who had come to Nauvoo in search of his brother who lived near there. The young boy had arrived in winter with no money and no friends. When he inquired about his brother, the boy was taken to a large house that looked like a hotel. There he met a man who said, “Come in, son, we’ll take care of you.”

The boy accepted and was brought into the house, where he was fed, warmed, and given a bed to sleep in.

The next day it was bitter cold, but in spite of that, the boy prepared himself to walk the eight miles to where his brother was staying.



When the man of the house saw this, he told the young boy to stay for a while. He said there would be a team coming soon and that he could ride back with them.

When the boy protested, saying that he had no money, the man told him not to worry about that, that they would take care of him.

Later the boy learned that the man of the house was none other than Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. This boy remembered this act of charity for the rest of his life.²

In a message of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s *Music and the Spoken Word*, a story was told about an elderly man and woman who had been married for many decades. Because the wife was slowly losing her sight, she could no longer take care of herself the way she had done

for so many years. Without being asked, the husband began to paint her fingernails for her.

“He knew that she could see her fingernails when she held them close to her eyes, at just the right angle, and they made her smile. He liked to see her happy, so he kept painting her nails for more than five years before she passed away.”³

That is an example of the pure love of Christ. Sometimes the greatest love is not found in the dramatic scenes that poets and writers immortalize. Often, the greatest manifestations of love are the simple acts of kindness and caring we extend to those we meet along the path of life.

True love lasts forever. It is eternally patient and forgiving. It believes, hopes, and endures all things. That is the love our Heavenly Father bears for us. ■

From “The Great Commandment,” Ensign, Nov. 2007, 28–29.

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 5:498.
2. Mark L. McConkie, *Remembering Joseph: Personal Recollections of Those Who Knew the Prophet Joseph Smith* (2003), 57.
3. “Selflessness,” Sept. 23, 2007, broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*; available at musicandthespokenword.com/messages.

Family Discovery Day



Family History Blesses You Too!

Live
February 14
with Portions
Streamed Online



Of course family history work blesses those whose saving ordinances are performed for them in the temple. But the living are blessed too, and in some surprising ways. You can find out how on February 14 at Family Discovery Day, a free event that is part of the RootsTech conference hosted by FamilySearch in Salt Lake City, Utah. Speakers include Elder Neil L. Andersen and Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. To learn more about this event, please visit rootstech.org/FamilyDiscoveryDay. You can also watch parts of Family Discovery Day online, see highlight videos, and read articles. For online options and to watch the live stream, visit lds.org/DiscoverFamily.

rootstech 

 FamilySearch



In Church Magazines

Ensign: Meet a young French Polynesian couple who have found that living the gospel successfully depends on the same principles that help them succeed in their favorite sport. See p. 18.

New Era: This month's issue includes articles about good friends, faltering friends, fake friends, family friends, and more (pages 16–27). Youth will also learn about “Wet Cement and Real Womanhood” (page 28) and “Power Flexing, Being Polite, and Other Manly Behaviors” (page 32).

Friend: Help your children learn about friendship by building a “friend ship”! That activity, on page 24, goes along with the articles on pages 11, 16, and 46. Make it a friendly month!



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS