



LET US BE **SELF-RELIANT** AND INDEPENDENT

As Latter-day Saints throughout the world embrace the principles and doctrines of the Church's self-reliance initiative, they are reaping the blessings of "greater hope, peace, and progress."

Before he became a member of the Church, Peter Uglow had spent most of his adult life chasing financial success. By all outward appearances, he seemed to have found it. After all, he had owned and run several businesses.

When a local Church leader in West Midlands, England, asked Peter to join a personal finances group offered through the Church's self-reliance initiative, he doubted that the course could teach him anything. Once Peter started attending the group, however, he quickly realized how much he still had to learn.

"The course is not just about finances; that is only half of the story," he says. "The most important thing for me was learning to have faith in Heavenly Father—how He provides us all temporal blessings and opens the door to true self-reliance if we follow His spiritual guidance."

As a member of a personal finances group, Peter learned practical skills such as tracking family spending, creating and living on a budget, reducing debt, and saving for the future. Using these skills, along with exercising faith in Jesus Christ and working hard, Peter and his wife repaid a large debt.

"I am feeling significantly lighter and freer without the fear associated with debt and financial disorganization," he says. "I am feeling the abundant blessings of Heavenly Father in a way I have never felt before. I have learned how to petition Him and listen to His answers when I need help with my temporal affairs."

Self-Reliance Initiative

Self-reliance is more than having a good job, food storage, or money in the bank. Rather, it is "the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family. As [Church] members become self-



reliant, they are also better able to serve and care for others”¹ as they enthrone work as a ruling principle in their lives.

President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “*Self-reliance* is a product of our work and undergirds all other welfare practices. It is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being. . . . ‘Let us work for what we need. Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle. Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation in temporal as well as in spiritual things.’”²

Under the direction of local priesthood leaders, more than 500,000 Latter-day Saints in more than 100 nations have participated in the self-reliance initiative since 2014. The Church is now introducing the initiative throughout North America.

The initiative includes courses and resources “to help members of the Church learn and put into practice principles of faith, education, hard work, and trust in the Lord.

Accepting and living these principles,” the First Presidency says, “will better enable [us] to receive the temporal blessings promised by the Lord.”³

Happy and Hopeful

Maria Edilene Romão had lost hope. She couldn’t find a job, she was a single mother, and she had several children to feed.

That’s when two members of her ward in Santa Catarina, Brazil, invited her to a self-reliance devotional. At the end of the devotional, Maria joined a group to help her find a job.

“For the first time in my life, I believed in a future where I could take care of my family,” she remembers. “I believed that the self-reliance group was going to help me change my life.”

It did.

YOU'RE INVITED

The path to greater self-reliance starts with an invitation to a My Path to Self-Reliance devotional. At the devotional, you'll be encouraged to evaluate your current situation, establish a plan for moving forward, and then take your plan to the Lord. At the end of the devotional, you'll be invited to choose a self-reliance group that can help you:

- Find a job or improve your employment situation.
- Better manage your personal and family finances.
- Choose an education path and succeed in school.
- Start or grow your small business.

In your self-reliance group, you will:

- Attend a weekly two-hour group meeting for three months.
- Develop and act on personal commitments to achieve self-reliance goals.
- Learn from, counsel with, and support other group members.
- Gain greater faith in Jesus Christ and in His power to help you help yourself become self-reliant.

A self-reliance group functions like a council.

Participants help each other and are accountable to each other. Group facilitators invite interaction, encourage participation, show training videos, and help self-reliance groups follow the process as outlined in related materials.

Members can find videos and materials used in self-reliance training at srs.lds.org or on the Gospel Library mobile app.



During the next 12 weeks, Maria dedicated herself to her group, her studies, and her commitments. She worked with newfound energy toward her goals. She practiced job-interviewing techniques. Within two weeks, she secured a promising job interview. That interview landed her a job.

“My life is changed forever,” says Maria, who no longer struggles to feed her family. “Now I am happy, excited, patient, and hopeful. I believe that Heavenly Father lives and loves me. I know that when I exercise my faith in Jesus Christ, I am blessed.”

“The Most Fantastic Tool”

Self-reliance is a means to a higher end, said Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance.”

Only when we become self-sufficient, Elder Hales added, “can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others.”⁴

Sergio Galbuchi learned that truth for himself when he started his own business shortly after the stake presidency called him as a stake self-reliance specialist. Armed with faith, skills, and knowledge he had gained as a member of the committee, Sergio and his wife, Silvia, opened a shop in Buenos Aires featuring “crafts and flavors” of Argentina.

“I think becoming self-reliant is a way to apply faith,” says Sergio. Early on, he and Silvia did not enjoy the success they had hoped for, so faith remained central to their endeavor. But while they waited on financial fruits, they worked hard and blessed customers with their products *and* their missionary efforts.

“We get to know many people,” Sergio says. “And we’ve had the chance to give away copies of the Book of Mormon.”

Initially, the stake self-reliance committee identified 10 members in Sergio’s stake who needed help with self-reliance. But then the bishops got involved.





REVELATION AND SELF-RELIANCE

Stake and district presidencies implement, direct, and guide the Church's self-reliance initiative. They do this by working closely with the Relief Society and by organizing a self-reliance committee.

The committee includes a member of the stake high council, a member of the stake Relief Society presidency, the chairman of the bishops' welfare council, and stake self-reliance specialists. The committee trains and encourages ward councils to pray about and invite members to participate in the initiative. They organize self-reliance groups and work with the local Self-Reliance Services manager to gather and share community resources.

"The aim of the Church's self-reliance initiative is to help individuals receive personal revelation through obedience to key gospel principles. Facilitators are called to create an environment [through interactive discussion] where such revelation can occur, because it is the Holy Ghost, not a teacher, who can teach someone 'all things what ye should do' (2 Nephi 31:3; 32:5)."⁵

Priesthood leaders and members can find out more information at srs.lds.org.

"Now we know of 35 individuals in need," said Sergio as the effort grew. "Their bishops invited them individually to participate in groups."

Their faith blossomed, they made needed changes, and they employed new skills.

"Every time I talk with priesthood leaders, I try to express to them that this is the most fantastic tool we've ever received from the First Presidency," Sergio adds. "It's better than any money that could be given to aid someone, and its teachings are clearer than much of the material that I learned when I was a university student."

Most important, those who complete their 12-week self-reliance courses become better disciples of Jesus Christ and learn how to use their skills to build the kingdom of God.



SELF-RELIANT AND INDEPENDENT

"The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13–14.)

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof."

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 116.



“This [self-reliance] group doesn’t just focus on our business; it focuses on our relationship with God and others,” Sergio says. “We become better disciples of Jesus Christ during our three months spent in this group. After all, maybe a business will help us become more self-reliant, but the ultimate purpose is to serve.”

Growth and Action

“It has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints,” said President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), “that a religion which has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here, cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually, to exalt them in the life to come.”⁶

We should not be surprised, then, that by strengthening the temporal, we also strengthen the spiritual. Elder David and Sister Theresa Nish, who served as self-reliance missionaries in the Solomon Islands, saw that correlation firsthand among members of the Church there.

“Spiritual growth and temple attendance are clearly attributed to the principles, skills, and habits taught in *My Foundation* and to the comprehensive explanation in *My Path to Self-Reliance*,” they say of the initiative’s booklets. “[They] are helping people make spiritual as well

as temporal progress, leading to spiritual and temporal self-reliance.”

Cheryl Redd, a self-reliance facilitator in Utah, USA, explains how the initiative’s spiritual principles have helped her progress temporally: “I realized that these principles and foundations can apply to all aspects of our lives. These workshops have helped me become more focused on my responsibilities as a wife and mother. I now have the tools to better understand family finances. I see how working together with our spouses to manage finances is, in a way, a business. We need these tools for our families to succeed.”

Throughout the Church, this increased vision is translating into increased faithfulness and spiritual strength. As a result, members have increased their commitments to attend church, pay tithes, and remain temple worthy.

“It caught my attention,” says new member George Echevarría of the self-reliance initiative. George, who drives a taxi in Peru, says the initiative helped him gain a testimony of the gospel while filling him with a desire to improve himself. Now he hopes to become an electrician, fixing the small moto-taxis he has driven for years.

“We shouldn’t sit and wait for things to happen to us,” he says. “We should be proactive.”

“Your Life Will Be Blessed”

Latter-day Saints throughout the world are reaping the Lord’s promised blessings as they diligently learn, live, and apply the principles of spiritual and temporal self-reliance. While everyone can benefit, the initiative has especially blessed those who either lack or need strengthening in temporal and spiritual self-reliance. The Perpetual Education Fund supports the self-reliance initiative by helping those who have a plan for educational training to access necessary resources.

The scriptures promise the Lord’s help as we work toward self-reliance. He has said, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15).

Commenting on that purpose, the First Presidency has declared: “This revelation is a promise from the Lord that He will provide temporal blessings and open the door of self-reliance, which is the ability for us to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family members.”

As we study, apply, and teach these principles to family members, the First Presidency promises, “your life will be



THE ESSENCE OF OUR RELIGION

“Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable. . . .

“This work of providing in the Lord’s way is not simply another item in the catalog of programs of the Church.

It cannot be neglected or set aside. It is central to our doctrine; it is the essence of our religion.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Providing in the Lord’s Way,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 53, 55–56.

blessed. You will learn how to act on your path toward greater self-reliance. You will be blessed with greater hope, peace, and progress.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.1.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3; see also Marion G. Romney, in Welfare Services Meeting Report, Oct. 2, 1976, 13.
3. First Presidency, in *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (booklet, 2015), 2.
4. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 2.
5. *You’re Invited: An Overview of Self-Reliance Services for Priesthood Leaders* (booklet, 2016), 11.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 164.
7. First Presidency, in *My Foundation*, 2.

