



FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

# Challenges Help Us Grow

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When I was 11 years old, I lived with my family in the attic of a farmhouse near Frankfurt, Germany. We were **refugees** in a new place, far away from our previous home. We were very poor.

Because I was a refugee, and because I spoke with an East German accent, other children often made fun of me and called me names that deeply hurt. Of all the times of my youth, I believe this may have been the most discouraging.

Even though I still remember the hurt I felt, I can see now that this was a time of great personal growth. During this time, our family bonded together. I watched and learned from my parents. I admired their determination and optimism.

From them I learned that

we can overcome **adversity** when we have faith and courage.

I think back on that 11-year-old boy in Frankfurt, Germany, who worried about his future and felt the lasting sting of unkind remarks. While I would not be eager to relive those days of trial and trouble, the lessons I learned then were a necessary preparation for future opportunity. Now, many years later, I know this for certain: it is often in adversity that we learn those most important lessons that form our character and shape our destiny. ♦

*Adapted from "Two Principles for Any Economy," Ensign, Nov. 2009, 55–58.*

**adversity:**  
something that  
is very difficult

**refugee:** one  
who flees to  
another place to  
escape danger

