

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • AUGUST 2013

Liahona

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"All things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator."

Alma 30:44

A massive young star cluster, NGC 3603, in the Carina spiral arm of the Milky Way.



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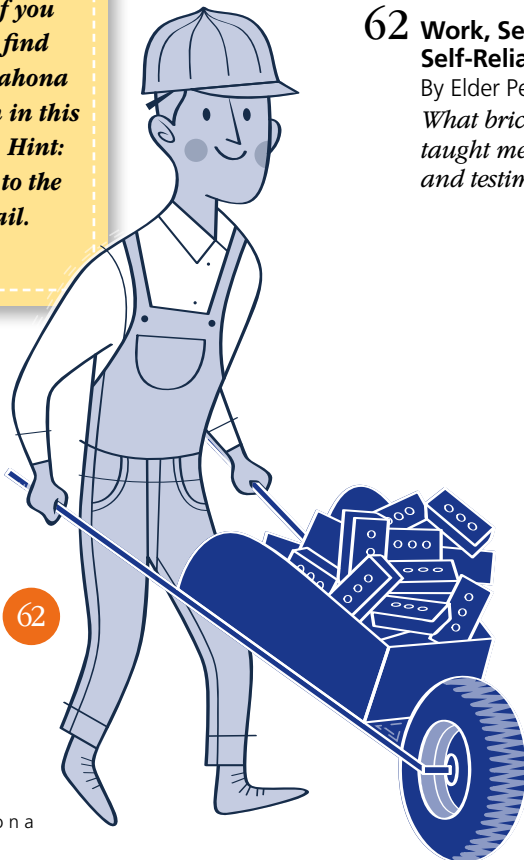
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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL © IRI

"Choosing Not to Gossip," page 59: Consider reading this article and the section on language in *For the Strength of Youth* (page 20). Discuss ways to judge whether something you hear is worth passing on or not. The following questions might be part of that discussion: Is the information true? Is retelling this information necessary? Is sharing what you've heard kind? For an activity, you could take a sheet of paper for each member of the family and write his or her name at the top of the paper. Then pass the papers around and have members of the family write down the things they appreciate and love about each person.

"Alpacas on the Loose!" page 67, **"Heavenly Father Hears and Answers My Prayers,"** page 70, and **"Our Answer,"** page 75: Review these stories and discuss some reasons we pray. If prompted, share an experience you have had with prayer. Have you received help, as Romney did? Have you ever wanted to know the truth, as Tatiana did? After reading the stories, you could share some scriptures about prayer, such as 2 Nephi 32:8–9 and Doctrine and Covenants 10:5. Invite each family member to make goals to improve his or her personal prayers. You could end by singing a hymn about prayer, such as "Sweet Hour of Prayer" (*Hymns*, no. 142).

IN YOUR LANGUAGE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at languages.lds.org.

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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in the
First Presidency

RECOGNIZE, REMEMBER, AND Give Thanks

God asks that we give thanks to Him for whatever blessings we receive from Him. It is easy for us to become mechanical in our prayers of gratitude, often repeating the same words but without the intent to give our thanks as a gift of the heart to God. We are to “give thanks . . . in the Spirit” (D&C 46:32) so we can feel real gratitude for what God has given us.

How can we remember even a part of all God has done for us? The Apostle John recorded what the Savior taught us about a gift of remembrance that comes through the gift of the Holy Ghost: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost brings back memories of what God has taught us. And one of the ways God teaches us is with His blessings; and so, if we choose to exercise faith, the Holy Ghost will bring God’s kindnesses to our remembrance.

You could test that in prayer today. You could follow the command “Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things” (D&C 59:7).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) suggested that prayer creates time to do that. He said: “The Prophet Joseph said at one time that one of the greatest sins of

which the Latter-day Saints would be guilty is the sin of ingratitude. I presume most of us have not thought of that as a great sin. There is a great tendency for us in our prayers and in our pleadings with the Lord to ask for additional blessings. But sometimes I feel we need to devote more of our prayers to expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving for blessings already received. We enjoy so much.”¹

You could have such an experience with the gift of the Holy Ghost today. You could begin a private prayer with thanks. You could start to count your blessings and then pause for a moment. If you exercise faith, with the gift of the Holy Ghost, you will find that memories of other blessings will flood into your mind. If you begin to express gratitude for each of them, your prayer may take a little longer than usual. Remembrance will come, and so will gratitude.

You could try the same thing as you write an entry in your journal. The Holy Ghost has helped people with that since the beginning of time. You remember that the book of Moses says, “And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration” (Moses 6:5).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) described that process of inspired writing: “Those who keep a



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

In his message, President Eyring invites us to remember Heavenly Father's kindnesses in our prayers. Discuss with those you teach how praying with gratitude can help us recognize God's hand in our lives. Consider kneeling to pray with those you teach and suggest to whoever says the prayer that he or she express only thanks.

You could also study the importance of gratitude by reading these verses in addition to the verses that President Eyring mentioned: Psalm 100; Mosiah 2:19–22; Alma 26:8; 34:38; Doctrine and Covenants 59:21; 78:19; 136:28.

book of remembrance are more likely to keep the Lord in remembrance in their daily lives. Journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity.”²

As you start to write, you could ask yourself, “How did God bless me and those I love today?” If you do that often enough and with faith, you will find yourself remembering blessings. And sometimes you will have gifts brought to your mind that you failed to notice

during the day but that you will then know were a touch of God's hand in your life.

I pray that we may make a continuing effort in faith to recognize, remember, and give thanks for what our Heavenly Father and our Savior have done and are doing to open the way home to Them. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* (1974), 199.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, “Listen to the Prophets,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 77.

Take Inventory



President Eyring quotes President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) as saying that “journals are a way of counting our blessings and of leaving an inventory of these blessings for our posterity.” In general conference in October 2012, President Thomas S. Monson gave his testimony of journal writing. He shared some experiences from his life, adding, “My daily journal, kept over all these

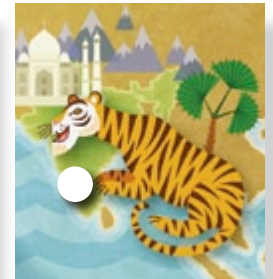
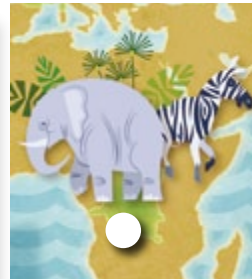
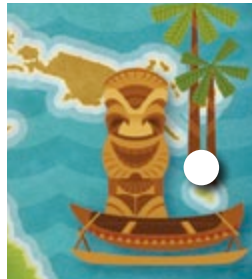
years, has helped provide some specifics which I most likely would not otherwise be able to recount.” He counseled, “Take an inventory of your life and look specifically for the blessings, large and small, you have received” (“Consider the Blessings,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 86). Work at following the counsel of these prophets and set goals to write in your journal.

CHILDREN

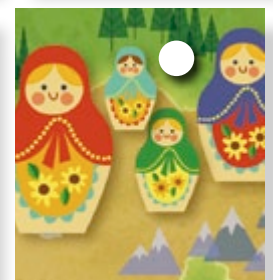
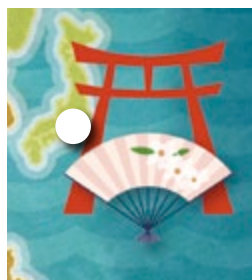
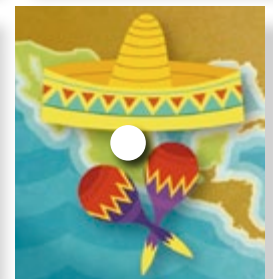
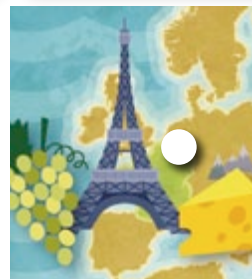
Many Ways to Say Thank You

*“All over the world at the end of day,
Heav’nly Father’s children kneel down and pray,
Each saying thank you in his own special way.”*
(“Children All Over the World,” *Children’s Songbook*, 16.)

Match the different ways of saying thank you with the countries of the world where those languages are spoken. Some of these languages are spoken in more than one country!



- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. gracias (Spanish) | 5. spasiba (Russian) |
| 2. malo (Tongan) | 6. arigatō (Japanese) |
| 3. thank you (English) | 7. asante (Swahili) |
| 4. shukriyaa (Hindi) | 8. merci (French) |



VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life. For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Welfare

The purposes of Church welfare are to help members become self-reliant, to care for the poor and needy, and to give service. Welfare is central to the work of Relief Society. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught:

“[The Lord] has from the beginning of time provided ways for His disciples to help. He has invited His children to consecrate their time, their means, and themselves to join with Him in serving others. . . .

“He has invited and commanded us to participate in His work to lift up those in need. We make a covenant to do that in the waters of baptism and in the holy temples of God. We renew the covenant on Sundays when we partake of the sacrament.”¹

Under the direction of the bishop or branch president, local leaders assist with spiritual and temporal welfare. Opportunities to serve often



begin with visiting teachers who seek inspiration to know how to respond to the needs of each sister they visit.

From the Scriptures

Luke 10:25–37; James 1:27; Mosiah 4:26; 18:8–11; Doctrine and Covenants 104:18

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “Opportunities to Do Good,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2011, 22.
2. Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 63.
3. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 63.

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

On June 9, 1842, the Prophet Joseph Smith charged the sisters in Relief Society to “relieve the poor” and to “save souls.”² These goals are still at the heart of Relief Society and are expressed in our motto, “Charity never faileth” (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Our fifth Relief Society general president, Emmeline B. Wells, and her counselors launched this motto in 1913 as a reminder of our founding principles: “We do declare it our purpose to . . . [hold] fast to the inspired teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he revealed the plan by which women were to be empowered through the calling of the priesthood to be grouped into suitable organizations for the purpose of ministering to the sick, assisting the needy, comforting the aged, warning the unwary, and succoring the orphans.”³

Today the Relief Society has a worldwide reach as sisters extend charity, the pure love of Christ, to their neighbors (see Moroni 7:46–47).

What Can I Do?

1. How am I preparing to care for myself and for my family spiritually and temporally?
2. How can I follow the Savior’s example as I help meet the needs of the sisters I watch over?

APRIL 2013 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the April 2013 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.

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE



Teaching the Honest in Heart

By President Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency

In 1955 I became an officer in the United States Air Force. My bishop at home gave me a blessing just before I left for my first station, which was in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

In his blessing he said that my time in the air force would be missionary service. I arrived in church on my first Sunday at the Albuquerque First Branch. A man walked up to me, introduced himself as the district president, and told me that he was

going to call me to serve as a district missionary.

I told him that I would be there for training for only a few weeks and then I would be assigned somewhere else in the world. He said, “I don’t know about that, but we are to call you to serve.” In the middle of my military training, by what appeared to be chance, I was chosen from hundreds of officers being trained to take the place in headquarters of an officer who had died suddenly.

So, for the two years I was there, I worked in my office. On most

evenings and every weekend, I taught the gospel of Jesus Christ to people the members brought to us.

My companions and I averaged more than 40 hours a month in our missionary service without once having to knock on doors to find someone to teach. The members filled our plates so full that we often taught two families in an evening. I saw for myself the power and the blessing in the repeated call of prophets for every member to be a missionary.

On the last Sunday before I left Albuquerque, the first stake was organized in that city. There is now a sacred temple there, a house of the Lord, in a city where we once met in a single chapel with Saints who brought friends to us to be taught and to feel the witness of the Spirit. Those friends felt a welcoming home in the Lord’s true Church.

From “We Are One,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*,
May 2013, 62–63.

THE GENERAL MISSIONARY FUND

In the April 2013 general conference, President Thomas S. Monson talked of the remarkable and inspiring response of young people to serve missions. He said, "To help maintain this missionary force, and because many of our missionaries come from modest circumstances, we invite you, as you are able, to contribute generously to the General Missionary Fund of the Church."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 5.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- How has your life been blessed by your missionary service or the missionary service of another?
- Why do you think prophets ask for the gospel to be taken to all the world?
- How can you help those in your area who are no longer active in the Church to feel the witness of the Spirit?

Consider writing your thoughts in your journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: *Gospel Principles* (2009), "Missionary Work," 189–195; "Missionary Work," in *Gospel Topics* on LDS.org; and Jeffrey R. Holland, "We Are All Enlisted," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 44–46.

PROPHETIC WORDS ON MORAL ABSOLUTES

"God reveals to His prophets that there are moral absolutes. Sin will always be sin. Disobedience to the Lord's commandments will always deprive us of His blessings. The world changes constantly and dramatically, but God, His commandments, and promised blessings do not change. . . . We must not pick and choose which commandments we think are important to keep but acknowledge all of God's commandments. We must stand firm and steadfast, having perfect confidence in the Lord's consistency and perfect trust in His promises."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Obedience to Law Is Liberty," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 88.

MISSIONARY INVITATION: CATCH THE WAVE

- "You teenagers, embrace your new curriculum and teach one another the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Now is your time to prepare to teach others about the goodness of God.
- "Young men and women, your education is ever important. . . . We encourage you to apply to your institution of choice *before* beginning your mission.
- "You parents, teachers, and others, catch the wave as you prepare our rising generation to be worthy of missionary service. Meanwhile, your exemplary lives will attract the interest of your friends and neighbors.
- "You adults, catch the wave with help for the spiritual, physical, and financial preparation of future missionaries.
- "You senior couples, you plan for the day when you can go on your mission.
- "Stake presidents and bishops . . . hold keys of responsibility for missionary work in their units.
- "You ward mission leaders . . . are the connecting link between members and missionaries in this sacred work of rescuing God's children."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Catch the Wave," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 45, 46.



FILL IN THE BLANK

1. "Darkness will not gain victory over the _____ of Christ" (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Hope of God's Light," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 77).
2. "The Church is a _____ where followers of Christ attain peace" (Quentin L. Cook, "Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 34).
3. "We who have mortal bodies have the _____ over the beings who do not" (Boyd K. Packer, "These Things I Know," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 8).
4. "As we give up commitment and fidelity to our _____, we remove the glue that holds our society together" (L. Tom Perry, "Obedience to Law Is Liberty," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 87).
5. "If you're not a full-time missionary with a missionary badge pinned on your coat, now is the time to paint one on your _____" (Neil L. Andersen, "It's a Miracle," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 78).

Answers: 1. light; 2. refuge; 3. power; 4. marriage partners; 5. heart.

BE WISE IN HOW YOU EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

- "To share the gospel, young members in Boston started several blogs. Those who joined the Church began their learning online, followed by discussions with the missionaries. . . . One of [the bloggers] said, 'This isn't missionary work. This is missionary fun.'"¹
- "Why not choose a time each day to disconnect from technology and reconnect with each other? Simply turn everything off."²
- "Mark important scriptures on your device and refer back to them frequently. . . . You could soon have hundreds of passages of scripture memorized. Those passages would prove to be a powerful source of inspiration and guidance by the Holy Ghost in times of need."³

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, "It's a Miracle," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 79.
2. Rosemary M. Wixom, "The Words We Speak," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 82.
3. Richard G. Scott, "For Peace at Home," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 30.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DENISE RENEE BIRD

HELPING THE POOR AND THE NEEDY

"Using funds donated by generous members, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sends food, clothing, and other essentials to relieve the suffering of adults and children all over the world. These humanitarian donations, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars in the last decade, are made without any consideration of religion, race, or nationality. . . . During the last quarter century we have assisted nearly 30 million people in 179 countries."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Followers of Christ," *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2013, 98.

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

WHOLESOME LANGUAGE

The words we use can testify of Christ, comfort the needy, compliment a friend, or express love to a family member. We can also say words that inflict emotional pain, spread gossip, profane, or belittle. Helping your children use wholesome language will bring peace and encouragement into your home. In this month's issue on pages 60–61, Larry M. Gibson of the Young Men general presidency discusses the importance of clean language:

“What we feel in our hearts is what we think about, and what we think about is what we speak about. Thus, it is true that the words we use reflect the feelings of our heart and who we really are. . . .

“Each of us can enjoy the blessings of having the Spirit *always* with us, as promised when we partake of the sacrament each Sabbath day. It will depend on us—on how we act, what we do, and, yes, even what we say.”

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

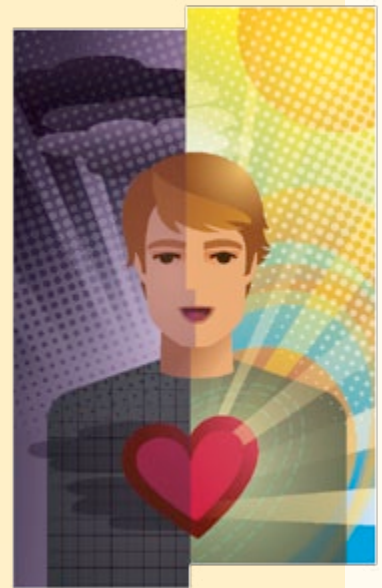
- You could read with your family the section on language in *For the Strength of Youth* (pages 20–21). Discuss what to do

when those around you use bad language.

- Read Brother Gibson's article on pages 60–61. Use his article to set goals to help each other use wholesome language.
- Study and discuss the scriptures listed to the right.
- Read “Choosing Not to Gossip” on page 59 of this issue and talk about the dangers of gossip. Discuss why gossip happens and how to avoid it.
- Watch videos and read youth articles on the power of language. Go to youth.lds.org and click on the “For the Strength of Youth” tab. Click on “Language.” To the right of the page is a “Related” section that features videos such as “No Cussing Club” and youth articles about not putting others down.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

- Consider reading “The Words We Speak” (Rosemary M. Wixom, *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2013, 81); “Those Words” (*Liahona*, Dec. 2011, 60; *Friend*, Dec. 2011, 44); or “A Soft Answer” (*Liahona*, June 2011, 70; *Friend*, June 2011, 32).



SCRIPTURES ON LANGUAGE

Psalm 34:13–14

Proverbs 10:11

Isaiah 50:4

Matthew 15:11

Ephesians 4:29, 31

2 Nephi 32:2–3; 33:1

Doctrine and Covenants
20:54; 52:16; 100:5–6;
136:23

Talk about how we feel when we say nice things to each other.

- Discuss things you don't say in your home. Set goals to say “please” and “thank you” and give compliments more.
- Talk about how everyone is happier when we say kind things to one another. Sing “Kindness Begins with Me” (*Children's Songbook*, 145) or another song about kindness. ■

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

How one great love story finally reached the temple—in a surprising way.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

As Vinca Gilman gazes pensively into the Alaskan forest beyond her home, she thinks fondly of her husband, now long since passed away. Ward Kepler Gilman was a strong, striking man, a World War II veteran, a doctor, and a faithful husband. But it took a journey of faith and a new chance at the gospel for Vinca and Ward to be united eternally.

Vinca Helen Gilman's story begins in Denmark. She was born near Vordingborg, a town on the same island as Copenhagen. She was raised in a family with seven children, including three adopted boys.

Then came World War II. Through the mercy of God, she and her parents survived the Holocaust and three years of prison camps, an experience she would now rather forget.

After the war, her family rebuilt their lives. One day, Vinca and her parents were staying in a summer home in Aarhus in Jutland. There they happened to meet a pair of missionaries, who were seeking a place to stay. The young men were so kind and friendly, Vinca's parents agreed to

let them board in the guest quarters.

"I attended church with them for a short time," Vinca recalls, "but my family wasn't really into religion at all. My father was of Jewish descent, and my mother was Lutheran, but we weren't raised in a religion. And then I had to return to school."

The missionaries later visited her briefly in Copenhagen. Although Vinca enjoyed the visit, she was not yet ready to accept the gospel.

"I moved to Salt Lake City around 1950," Vinca says. "I was a nurse, but I had to renew my certificate to practice in the U.S."

The move gave her a chance to learn English better. It also gave her another opportunity to learn about the Church. She lived in the Beehive House and worked at a doctor's office across the street. She also played the cello in the Utah Symphony and made a number of good friends.

"I attended church with them too. And I walked on Temple Square during my lunch hour every day. But I still thought of religion as something you could decide to make a

part of your life as you liked."

After two years in Salt Lake, Vinca moved to Sacramento, California, USA, and lived for a short time with the family of one of the missionaries who had taught her in Denmark. When she made enough money as a surgical nurse to support herself, she moved out on her own. She and the missionary dated and eventually became engaged.

"Things didn't work out," Vinca recalls, and when they broke off their engagement, she moved on, losing touch with Church members.

Not long after, Vinca met Ward, a dentist and oral surgeon who was born and raised in Sacramento. He was a strong, handsome man who had served as a navy officer during the war. Though 11 years older than Vinca, he swept her off her feet, and the two were married in 1954.

They bought a home not far from his practice. Though they could not have children, they had a wonderful, loving marriage. They worked, they traveled, he painted, and she continued to play her music. Life was good for many years.



Ward passed away in 1985. Vinca lived on in their home until about 1999, when she started feeling anxious to move. Her home was large, more than she needed, and she felt a desire for change. She discovered a small town that suited her in Haines, Alaska. She retired there, and so things would have ended if the missionaries had not come knocking on her door once more in 2006.

At last, after many chances and many years, the timing was right.

“I never really had known much about religion,” Vinca says, “but I knew some things that made me ask questions, things that disappointed me or seemed strange.

“When I learned about this gospel, everything just made sense: the plan of salvation, what is expected of us, the promises made, the Book of

Mormon. I like especially the Church doctrine of temple work for those who pass away who have not been introduced to the gospel. I felt at ease about it; it was something I could accept because it was clear and open to me, like coming home.

“I finally did what I should have done a long time ago. I don’t know why it took me so long. I had met a lot of wonderful people, and they all had some influence in my decision to join the Church. It did take years, but getting baptized was the best thing I ever did.”

Vinca was baptized on October 14, 2006—on her husband’s birthday. Just a year later, she attended the temple for the first time and was sealed to Ward (by proxy) for time and all eternity. For Vinca, the experience of attending the temple and of being

sealed to the love of her life “was unbelievable, beautiful.”

Having gained this supernal blessing of being sealed to her beloved husband, Vinca desires now to share temple blessings with her relatives. Though she is 86 years old and suffers from kidney failure, she is motivated.

“I hope my husband and his parents and my parents and my own brothers and sisters will accept the gospel. I have a lot of temple work to get done.

“One of my main projects in life now is to do as much temple work as I can, as much genealogy as possible. I feel I have a reason for living here. Even if I live to be 100, it’s all right. I have things to do now. It feels good, really, to be able to do it.”

As Vinca turns her gaze back to her house to head inside, she is filled with the hope that comes from the gospel of Jesus Christ. Being a member of this Church “has been a blessing in so many countless ways. You feel peace of mind. You feel stronger. When things are absolutely gorgeous, you feel, ‘Oh boy, this is heaven.’ It makes you feel grateful for living.”

Vinca lives with a grateful heart—because the fire of the gospel and the hope of eternities with her loving husband burn bright within her. ■

For more on strengthening your marriage, see L. Whitney Clayton, “Marriage: Watch and Learn,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2013, 83.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced the following changes in area leadership assignments effective on August 1, 2013. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorums of the Seventy. ■

Presidency of the Seventy



Ronald A. Rasband
Assists in All Areas



L. Whitney Clayton
Utah North
Utah Salt Lake City
Utah South



Donald L. Hallstrom
North America Northeast



Tad R. Callister
North America Southwest



Richard J. Maynes
North America Northwest
North America West



Craig C. Christensen
Idaho North America Central



Ulisses Soares
North America Southeast

Africa Southeast



Carl B. Cook
First Counselor



Dale G. Renlund
President



Kevin S. Hamilton
Second Counselor

Africa West



Terence M. Vinson
First Counselor



LeGrand R. Curtis Jr.
President



Edward Dube
Second Counselor

Asia



Larry Y. Wilson
First Counselor



Gerrit W. Gong
President



Randy D. Funk
Second Counselor

Asia North



Koichi Aoyagi
First Counselor



Michael T. Ringwood
President



Scott D. Whiting
Second Counselor

Brazil



Jairo Mazzagardi
First Counselor



Claudio R. M. Costa
President



Eduardo Gavarret
Second Counselor

Caribbean



J. Devn Cornish
First Counselor



Wilford W. Andersen
President



Claudio D. Zivic
Second Counselor

Central America



Kevin R.
Duncan
**First
Counselor**



Carlos H.
Amado
President



Adrián
Ochoa
**Second
Counselor**

Europe



Patrick
Kearon
**First
Counselor**



José A.
Teixeira
President



Timothy J.
Dyches
**Second
Counselor**

Europe East



Randall K.
Bennett
**First
Counselor**



Larry R.
Lawrence
President



Per G.
Malm
**Second
Counselor**

Mexico



Benjamín
De Hoyos
**First
Counselor**



Daniel L.
Johnson
President



Arnulfo
Valenzuela
**Second
Counselor**

Middle East/Africa North



Bruce D.
Porter



Bruce A.
Carlson

**Administered from Church
Headquarters**

Pacific



Kevin W.
Pearson
**First
Counselor**



James J.
Hamula
President



O. Vincent
Haleck
**Second
Counselor**

Philippines



Ian S.
Ardern
**First
Counselor**



Brent H.
Nielson
President



Larry J.
Echo Hawk
**Second
Counselor**

South America Northwest



W. Christopher
Waddell
**First
Counselor**



Juan A.
Uceda
President



C. Scott
Grow
**Second
Counselor**

South America South



Jorge F.
Zeballos
**First
Counselor**



Walter F.
González
President



Francisco J.
Viñas
**Second
Counselor**



By Elder
F. Michael Watson
Of the Seventy

Obedience

THE HALLMARK OF FAITH

*May we strive to live in obedience to the commandments,
following divine direction from the Lord's chosen servants and
receiving promised blessings from His hand.*

Obedience to the laws and commandments of God has been and ever will be necessary for those searching to become recipients of the Savior's promised blessings.

In May 1833 the Prophet Joseph Smith received a revelation in which the Lord declared:

"Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come. . . .

"And no man receiveth a fulness unless he *keepeth [God's] commandments*.

"He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things" (D&C 93:24, 27–28; emphasis added).

By studying and obeying the truths found in the laws and ordinances of the gospel, we learn of and receive the gospel's promised blessings. In accordance with Heavenly Father's wisdom and timing, the truths that guide Latter-day Saints are becoming available to all of God's children.

For, as He declared, "this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Our beloved prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has counseled: "Obey the laws of God. They are given to us by a loving Heavenly Father. When they are obeyed, our lives will be more fulfilling, less complicated. Our challenges and problems will be easier to bear. We will receive the Lord's promised blessings. He has said, "The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days."¹

The words of President Monson ring true to an earlier time, when Nephi declared to his father, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them" (1 Nephi 3:7).





Often, those wishing to be counted among the believers already have a desire to become obedient followers of truth. Such was the case with 42 individuals who attended a district conference in Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Obedient to the promptings of the Spirit and with faith in every footstep, they had walked six days so they could attend the conference.

A children’s hymn reminds us of our duty and direction:

I will go; I will do the thing the Lord commands.

I know the Lord provides a way; he wants me to obey.²

As we remember the counsel of our prophet to faithfully keep the commandments and as we recall Nephi’s response to his father, we will become a blessed people.

Following direction from the angel Moroni, the Prophet Joseph told his earthly father what had transpired. Joseph Smith’s father, upon learning that his son would be entrusted with the gold plates, said “that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger” (Joseph Smith—History 1:50). Anything short of obedience to the counsel Joseph had received from both heaven and earth would have changed the course of history.

When Can We Be Baptized?

Our missionaries pray and go and do, trusting that the Lord will give no commandment unto them save He will prepare a way that they may be successful through

their obedience and willingness to serve. They trust in His promise: “Whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

Many individuals who seek the truth willingly follow the teachings of our missionaries. Often, those wishing to be counted among the believers already have a desire to become obedient followers of truth. They likewise are willing to go and do.

Such was the case with 42 individuals who attended a district conference in Kananga, Democratic Republic of the Congo. They came willingly because they had read and heard the truths of the Restoration, they had begun living associated principles, and they had desires to become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.³

Obedient to the promptings of the Spirit and with faith in every footstep, they had walked six days so they could attend the conference. Their first question to the presiding authority after arriving was, “When can we be baptized?”

They understood that the Lord would eventually make it possible for the missionaries to teach them in their homes and to bring them the truth they had sought for so long. About 200 others who could not make the six-day journey waited for the word that the missionaries would soon seek them out.

A Prayer of Faith

In the country of Angola, opposition threatened to thwart the desire of faithful and obedient Saints to see the gospel take root in their land. The Lord had sent His servants to

open the door to missionary work, but on the eve of their scheduled travel, visas still had not been granted. When Church representatives visited immigration officials about the delay, they were turned away.

With approval from the First Presidency to dedicate Angola for missionary work, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and others awaited word in Johannesburg, South Africa. At the same time, faithful member Paulina Lassalette da Cunha Gonçalves tried to open what seemed to be a closing door. She hoped to obtain letters of invitation that would grant permission for the Church party to enter Angola. Once there, they could then obtain necessary visas.

Within minutes of government offices closing in Angola, Elder Christofferson assembled with those waiting in the Africa Southeast Area offices. Then, kneeling in prayer, he asked Heavenly Father to intervene. In that same hour, immediately following his prayer of faith, the letters of invitation were signed.

A loving Father in Heaven had prepared the way for the day of dedication. At the request of Elder Christofferson, a humble prayer of thanks was offered for the granted miracle.⁴

The words of a Primary song ring sweet and unmistakable:

*Heavenly Father, are you
really there?
And do you hear and
answer ev'ry child's
prayer?⁵*

Yes, He is there, and yes, He does answer the prayers of His obedient children.

Obedience has been the hallmark of the prophets, and this source of spiritual strength is available to everyone who faithfully follows the servants of God. President Monson has impressed upon the Saints the need for obedience to the commandments, for “in this there is safety; in this there is peace.”⁶

May we strive to live in obedience to the commandments, following divine direction from the Lord’s chosen servants and receiving promised blessings from His hand. ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Believe, Obey, Endure,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2012, 128.
2. “Nephi’s Courage,” *Children’s Songbook*, 121.
3. I was present at the district conference in Kananga attended by the 42 investigators.
4. I had the blessing of witnessing firsthand the events in Johannesburg and of traveling with Elder Christofferson to Angola; for a news report on his and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s visit to Africa, see “Apostles Bless Two African Nations,” *Church News*, Nov. 6, 2010, 8–10.
5. “A Child’s Prayer,” *Children’s Songbook*, 12.
6. “Keep the Commandments,” *Children’s Songbook*, 146.

Obedience has been the hallmark of the prophets, and this source of spiritual strength is available to everyone who faithfully follows the servants of God.



Finding Sanctuary

IN THE GOSPEL

*Members in Kenya stand out as they live the gospel
and form refuges from the world.*

By Matthew D. Flitton
Church Magazines

With a population over three million, Nairobi, Kenya, is the most populous city in East Africa. It is a busy place full of cars, trucks, and *mutatus*—vans that serve as a private bus system—rushing through the streets. It's a city of railways, tourism, and manufacturing and is home to the second oldest stock exchange on the continent.

But to the south, less than five miles (7 km) from the heart of Kenya's capital city, is a quiet countryside. In Nairobi National Park the land is protected and looks as it has for hundreds of years. Against the city's skyline, giraffes, water buffalo, wildebeests, zebras, hippos, hartebeests, eland, and rhinos browse and graze. Lions sleep under acacia trees. The park offers these animals a refuge from the press of civilization.

Throughout Kenya there are smaller sanctuaries of another kind. Members of the Church have created havens from the pressures of the world. By living the gospel, they are making holy places to stand in (see D&C 45:32; 87:8).

Gaining Strength through Values

Opra Ouma says that remembering the Young Women values gives her the strength to live the gospel. “Even if I’m not with the LDS young single adults, when I’m out in the world, I can apply the Young Women values and still be safe,” she says.

Opra first learned these values before she was baptized. When she was 17, Opra saw the missionaries on the street one day and wondered who they were. She studied the gospel for a year and was baptized after she turned 18. The community of Latter-day Saints fortifies her spiritually.

“When I’m at the church with fellow young single adults, I feel safe, but when I’m outside there, I don’t feel very safe because most of the time I’m the only Latter-day Saint among the group,” she says. “Sometimes it’s challenging because the standards of the world and the standards of the Church are totally different.”



Opra Ouma

Holding to the Rod

Scripture study has helped Stephen Odhiambo Mayembe to find answers that he says we can’t find by ourselves. “By studying the scriptures, we can find the answers to some of the problems we have in our day-to-day lives,” he says. “And also by studying the scriptures, it gives us that courage to endure to the end because the scriptures will always be there to teach us and tell us what to do.”

Studying the Book of Mormon helped Stephen gain a testimony of the Church. During a visit to his aunt who was a member, she invited him to go to church. After he started reading the Book of Mormon, he prayed to know if it is true and received an answer.

He says that reading the scriptures regularly helps him keep Church standards even when those around





KEEP THE STANDARDS OF THE GOSPEL

“We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God. The storms will still beat at our doors from time to time, for they are an inescapable part of our existence in mortality. We, however, will be far better equipped to deal with them, to learn from them, and to overcome them if we have the gospel at our core and the love of the Savior in our hearts.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Stand in Holy Places,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 83–84.



Stephen Odhiambo Mayembe

him question his beliefs. “By being a member of the Church, my faith has been strengthened, and through that I can say that I cannot be shaken [see Jacob 7:5],” he says.

Waiting on the Lord

Sharon Poche has found that deciding to be different makes it easier to live the gospel. She is committed to keeping the commandments, and her friends respect that choice. She chooses to keep herself out of situations that would make it difficult to live righteously.

“When you decide to play on that line, that really thin line, then it gets hard because you can fall over anytime,” she says of the line between good and evil.

Sharon found the Church as a 14-year-old

when her mom decided to be baptized. Reading the Book of Mormon took a lot of effort because Sharon, who is a member of the Nandi tribe, speaks Kalenjin as her native language. Despite difficulties, she began studying the Book of Mormon in English. “I had this feeling that this was a good thing, and I had a warm feeling, so I continued. I prayed until I knew it was true,” she says.

Sharon wanted to get baptized, but her father wouldn’t allow it. So for four years, Sharon attended church, seminary, and youth activities while she waited for the chance to join the Church.



When Sharon turned 18, she was baptized and confirmed. She went to college and studied psychology. She married Joseph Poche in February 2013. Shortly after, they traveled to the Johannesburg South Africa Temple to be sealed. She said that studying the gospel helps her focus on the important things in a world that could easily be distracting.

“I know what life is all about and why we’re here on the earth,” she says. “That knowledge helps me to focus on the things that are most important.”

Growing Strength

Inside the Nairobi National Park is a sanctuary for black rhinos. This facility raises and relocates this endangered animal to other parks to help restore the animal population, which was hunted to near



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SHARON POCHE

Joseph and Sharon Poche

extinction. It has been recognized as one of the most successful and important sanctuaries in Kenya.

Likewise, the gospel provides sanctuaries where Church members can come, receive strength, gain courage to spread the gospel, and establish strongholds of faith. ■

For more information on this topic, see Robert D. Hales, “Stand Strong in Holy Places,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2013, 48.

Below: Rhinos graze in Nairobi National Park.





**By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

IN HIS OWN TIME,
IN
His Own
Way

*Revelation is a reality. It comes in the Lord's way
and according to the Lord's timetable.*

Iwould like to examine some principles that apply to all communications from the Spirit—communications to the person who teaches, to the person who seeks to learn, and to every member of the Church.

First, we should recognize that the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in His own time and in His own way. Many people do not understand this principle. They believe that when they are ready and when it suits their convenience, they can call upon the Lord and He will immediately respond, even in the precise way they have prescribed. Revelation does not come that way.

Qualifying for Revelation

Fundamental to any effort to receive revelation is a commitment to do all we can with our own efforts and judgment. This means we need to serve and to work.

Going forward with our service and work is an important way to qualify for revelation. In my study of the scriptures I have noted that most revelation to the children of God comes when they are on the move, not when they are sitting back in their habitations waiting for the Lord to tell them the first step to take.



For example, it is significant to note that the revelation known as “the Word and Will of the Lord concerning the Camp of Israel” (D&C 136:1) was not given in Nauvoo as the Quorum of the Twelve planned the exodus from Nauvoo in those sorrowful days following the Martyrdom of the Prophet in 1844; nor was it given on the west bank of the Mississippi River. It was given at Winter Quarters, Nebraska, after the Saints had spent a punishing year moving from Nauvoo westward across Iowa to temporary camps on the Missouri River. The revelation to guide the movement of the Saints across the plains was given on January 14, 1847, when the Saints had already gone about a third of the way to the valleys of the mountains.

We will get promptings of the Spirit when we have done everything we can, when we are out in the sun working rather than sitting back in the shade praying for direction on the first step to take. Revelation comes when the children of God are on the move.

So we do all we can. Then we wait upon the Lord for His revelation. He has his own timetable.

Timing and Type

About 35 years ago, when I was president of Brigham Young University, we were making plans to persuade the president of the United States to speak at the university. We had particular times that would suit our convenience, and we had in mind some things we wanted him to say and do while he was there. But all of us were wise enough to know that we could not contact the highest authority in the United States and invite him to come to the BYU campus—even to speak to 26,000 people—and put conditions on his appearance.

We knew that in inviting the president, we had to say in effect, “We will welcome you whenever you can come

and for whatever time you choose to be here and for whatever you choose to say and do while you are here. We will accommodate our schedules and our arrangements entirely to your visit.”

Now, if that’s the way a community of 26,000 people must approach the highest authority of a nation, it should not be surprising that one person—however important—is in no position to put conditions upon or to impose personal timing upon a visit or communication from the Highest Authority in the universe.

Indeed, this is the principle the Lord revealed to His children in the great revelation printed in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord said, “Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (verse 63).

Next, the Lord declared that if our eye is single to His glory, our whole body will be filled with light and we will be able to comprehend all things. Then, His instruction continued with this great promise: “Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall

see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and *it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will*” (verse 68; emphasis added).

The principle stated in that revelation applies to every communication from our Heavenly Father. We cannot force spiritual things.

In most cases, “his own way” is not the thunderous interruption or the blinding light but what the scriptures call the “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12; 1 Nephi 17:45; D&C 85:6). Some have misunderstood this principle. As a result, some have looked exclusively for the great manifestations recorded in the scriptures and have failed to

*We need to know that
the Lord rarely speaks
loudly. His messages
almost always come
in a whisper.*



From revelations to Hyrum Smith (depicted above) and Oliver Cowdery, we learn that God teaches us by the power of His Spirit, which enlightens our minds and speaks peace to us concerning the questions we have asked.

recognize the “still small voice” that is given to them. This is like making up our minds that we will learn only from a teacher who shouts and that we will refuse to listen to even the wisest teaching that comes in a whisper.

We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper.

Revelation as Enlightenment and Peace

One of the greatest explanations of how the Spirit teaches us is in the revelation given to Oliver Cowdery at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April 1829. In this revelation the Lord told Oliver:

“Yea, behold, I will *tell you in your mind and in your heart*, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

“Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:2–3; emphasis added).

Similarly, the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the spirit of revelation as “pure intelligence,” which “may give you sudden strokes of ideas.”¹ In another revelation, Oliver was reminded that he had inquired of the Lord and that “as often as thou hast inquired thou hast

received instruction of my Spirit” (D&C 6:14). How did that instruction come? “Behold,” the Lord said, “thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*” (verse 15; emphasis added). That same teaching was repeated in a revelation given to Hyrum Smith in which the Lord said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall *enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy*” (D&C 11:13; emphasis added). These are great descriptions of the way the Lord communicates with us by His Spirit.

In further instruction to Oliver Cowdery, the Lord reminded him of the time he had prayed that he might know “the truth of these things” (D&C 6:22). And the Lord described how He had answered that prayer and given Oliver a revelation: “Did I not *speak peace to your mind* concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (verse 23; emphasis added).

From these revelations we learn that God teaches us by the power of His Spirit, which *enlightens our minds* and *speaks peace* to us concerning the questions we have asked.



The Lord did not communicate with Adam immediately after he obeyed the command to sacrifice the firstlings of his flocks. The scripture says, “And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam” (Moses 5:6).

Revelation Is a Feeling

We also learn from these revelations that being taught by the Spirit is not a passive thing. Often the Lord’s communication does not come until we have studied matters out in our own minds. Then we receive a confirmation.

The process was explained to Oliver Cowdery in another revelation received at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April 1829. The Lord described why Oliver had not been able to translate the Book of Mormon:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that *you must study it out in your mind*; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, *you shall feel that it is right*” (D&C 9:7–8; emphasis added).

This may be one of the most important and most misunderstood teachings in all the Doctrine and Covenants. The teachings of the Spirit often come as feelings. That fact is of the utmost importance, yet some misunderstand what it means. I know of persons who think they have never had a witness from the Holy Ghost because they have never felt their bosom “burn within” them. The burning of the bosom,

I suggest, is not a feeling of caloric heat like combustion but a feeling of peace and warmth and serenity and goodness.

Revelation Is Not Constant

Revelation is not constant. The Lord’s way puts limits on how often He will speak to us by His Spirit. Not understanding this, some have been misled by expecting revelations too frequently.

Commenting on the workings of the Spirit, President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, “I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently.”²

To illustrate that point, consider what we are taught about our first parents after they were cast out of the Garden of Eden and shut out from the presence of the Lord. The Lord gave Adam a commandment that he should sacrifice the firstlings of his flocks as an offering unto the Lord. He obeyed. Did the Lord communicate with him immediately? The scripture says: “*And after many days* an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam” (Moses 5:6; emphasis added).

William E. Berrett, one of our finest gospel teachers, who served as an administrator at BYU and for the Church Educational System, said this about the matter of constant

or continuous revelation: “Those who pray that the Spirit might give them immediate guidance in every little thing throw themselves open to false spirits that seem ever ready to answer our pleas and confuse us. . . . The people I have found most confused in this Church are those who seek personal revelations on everything. They want the personal assurance from the Spirit from daylight to dark on everything they do. I say they are the most confused people I know because it appears sometimes that the answer comes from the wrong source.”³

The Prophet Joseph Smith said something similar. When the Saints “supplicate at the throne of grace,” he counseled, they shouldn’t do so over trivial matters but rather should “pray earnestly for the best gifts.”⁴ That is an important principle. We pray continuously for guidance, but we shouldn’t expect *continuous* revelation. We expect *continuing* revelation, which is the continuing assurance of revelation whenever we seek guidance and our circumstances are such that a wise and loving Lord chooses to give it to us.

Revelation and Testimony

Visions do happen. Voices are heard from beyond the veil. I know this. But these experiences are exceptional. And when we have a great and exceptional experience, we rarely speak of it publicly because we are instructed not to do so (see D&C 63:64) and because we understand that the channels of revelation will be closed if we show these things before the world.

Most of the revelation that comes to leaders and members of the Church comes by the “still small voice” or by a feeling rather than by a vision or a voice that speaks specific words to our hearing. I testify to the reality of that kind of revelation, which I have come to know as a familiar, even a daily, experience to guide us in the work of the Lord.

Not understanding these principles of revelation, some people postpone acknowledging their testimony or their spiritual progress until they have experienced a miraculous event. They fail to realize that with most people—especially those raised in the Church—the precious revelation that gives us a testimony is not an event but a process. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) observed: “Being born again is a gradual thing, except in a few isolated instances that are so miraculous they get written up

in the scriptures. As far as the generality of the members of the Church are concerned, we are born again by degrees, and we are born again to added light and added knowledge and added desires for righteousness as we keep the commandments.”⁵

We should understand that the Lord will speak to us in His own time and in His own way. This is usually by what the scriptures call the “still small voice” of enlightenment. We are often obliged to act upon our best judgment, subject to the Spirit’s restraining impressions if we have strayed beyond permissible limits.

Revelation is a reality. It comes in the Lord’s way and according to the Lord’s timetable.

I testify that these things are true. We have the gift of the Holy Ghost, the right to the constant companionship of the Spirit of the Lord to testify of the Father and of the Son, to lead us into truth, to teach us all things, and to bring all things to our remembrance (see John 14:26; 16:13). ■

From an address delivered to new mission presidents on June 27, 2001.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
2. Boyd K. Packer, *That All May Be Edified* (1982), 337.
3. William E. Berrett, in Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *The Holy Ghost* (1989), 29–30.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*, 131.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, “Jesus Christ and Him Crucified,” in *Brigham Young University 1976 Speeches* (1977), 5.

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THE LEADER'S ROAD TO Revelation

*Local priesthood and auxiliary leaders share
four principles that have helped them to act
with inspiration in their callings.*

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

“**W**hen I was first called, I felt overwhelmed,” says a branch president who has now served for several years. “I had faith that Heavenly Father knew how to bless the members and their families, but how could I know what He specifically wanted *me* to do to help them?”

The president knew two principles that had strengthened him as a convert to the Church and as a young father: scripture study and prayer. So he put them into practice with renewed purpose.

“As I did, I felt that I should read what it says in Doctrine and Covenants 9:8, to ‘study it out in your mind; then you must ask [the Lord] if it be right.’ When I read those words once again, I knew the Lord was already guiding me on the road to revelation.”

That is a road all leaders must travel to be effective in their callings. And as they seek the inspiration to which they are entitled, they learn over and over again that certain gospel principles facilitate divine guidance. Here are four of them.

1. Counsel Together

“I found that even when I felt strongly inspired to do something, I gained reassurance when I talked it through with my counselors,” says a former branch Relief Society president. “Sometimes they would simply confirm that they felt the same way, and we would go forward in unity. But sometimes they helped me to see things I hadn’t seen, and we could either modify what we were doing or be more sensitive in how we did it. Then we would still go forward in unity.”



TRUST INSPIRATION

"I am always humbled and grateful when my Heavenly Father communicates with me through His inspiration. I have learned to recognize it, to trust it, and to follow it. Time and time again I have been the recipient of such inspiration."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 84.

Counsel is also available through checking the handbooks, studying general conference messages, and praying with faith.

"Some of the best counsel I receive comes when I read and reread the talks from general conference," says a ward Young Women president. "Then when I kneel in prayer, I ask Heavenly Father about the things I have studied and how to apply the teachings of living prophets and general auxiliaries to help the young women."

A counselor in a stake Sunday School presidency says, "When we meet as a presidency, we always review a short passage in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*. As we regularly review the instructions we've already received, the Spirit helps us to stay in agreement with the guidelines."

"I take great comfort in the fact that the Lord's Church is a church of councils," a stake president says. "It is a choice experience to preside in councils where people with a lot of combined wisdom and experience pray together and then discuss the best way to proceed. Their inspiration enables me to think through alternatives, listen to the Spirit, and then have full confidence in taking my decision to the Lord."¹

Sometimes seeking counsel means finding someone with greater expertise. "I was trying to help a family with financial problems and felt impressed to have them talk to a brother in the ward who is a financial adviser," says a recently released bishop. "He was able to help them in ways that I would never have been able to."

Another bishop, who had been counseled that bishops need to allow other ward leaders to step up and do their duty, relates this

experience: "A widow in our ward wanted to be visited by the bishop at least once a week. In her mind, only a visit from the bishop would do. I tried to see her as often as possible, but I had many responsibilities, including a young family. Finally, with one of my counselors, I went to see her again.

"As we talked, I felt prompted to say, 'Dear sister, you know that as your bishop I love you. And because I love you so much, I have asked two of our faithful Melchizedek Priesthood holders and two of our wonderful Relief Society sisters to each check on you at least once a month, more often if needed. They will report back if you have any needs or concerns. Would that be all right?' 'Oh yes, bishop,' she said. I asked if she would like to know their names, and she said yes. When I told her, she said, 'Those are my home teachers and visiting teachers!' And I said, 'Now you understand the way the Lord has established for us to watch over you.'"

2. Listen with Care

Leaders also say the ability to listen and discern is helpful in seeking inspiration.

"As we meet with sisters, I try to hear more than just the words they are speaking," says a ward Relief Society president. "Sometimes through the Spirit I can feel that they need help. I feel blessed to see it in their eyes or sense it in their demeanor. Sometimes I have even said, 'I am your Relief Society president, and I feel that you need something. How can I be of service to you?' I feel that I often receive inspiration by asking, 'What would the Savior do?'"

"I appreciate the way our bishop listens to the sisters in our ward councils," says a ward



“When I want to feel excited and encouraged,” one bishop says, “I go sit with the Primary children as they sing. It always lifts my heart.”

Primary president. “He always asks how we feel and listens carefully to all that we have to say. Several times he has said, ‘We need to remember that there are many insights that come to wives, to mothers, and to single sisters.’”

“We also need to remember that listening includes listening to the Spirit,” says a high priests group leader. “The most accurate assessment of a leader’s success may be his or her ability to feel and follow the Spirit. President Monson has demonstrated this over and over again.”²

3. Stand in Holy Places

Leaders also find that certain locations are conducive to revelation.

“For me, the ultimate place to feel inspired is in the temple,” says a counselor in a bishopric. “When I want to feel close to the Lord, I go to His house so I can feel free from worries and focus on listening to the Spirit.”

“I have a room in my home that is designated as my office,” says a stake patriarch. “I have asked the Lord to help it be a place where the Spirit can feel welcome. When I am preparing to give a blessing, I go there and pray. It is also where I have interviews and give blessings.”

“Our meetinghouses are dedicated as places of worship,” a bishop says. “Sometimes on a weekday evening, when I want to feel peace, I sit in the chapel. I think about the members of the ward and how much the Savior loves them. Or sometimes I sing a hymn.”

“For me the Primary is a holy place,” says another

bishop. “When I want to feel excited and encouraged, I go sit with the Primary children as they sing. It always lifts my heart.”

“Prayer can make any place a holy place,” says a branch Young Men president. “Think of the revelations that came to the Prophet Joseph when he was in Liberty Jail. He was able to make it a holy place by calling on the Lord.”

4. Act with Authority

“Some members of our ward did not take callings seriously,” a bishop says. “I felt that I could help them by explaining how we, as a bishopric, had prayed to know who should be called and that we had received an answer. I wanted them to know that the Lord, working through leaders with authority, had called them. It made a big difference when they knew their calling was inspired and that the Lord expected them to also seek inspiration in order to magnify that calling.”

He and his counselors had traveled the road to revelation, a road that is open to all Church members and leaders. And by describing the road they had traveled, they also inspired others. ■

NOTES

1. See M. Russell Ballard, “Counseling with Our Councils,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 24–26.
2. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “Consider the Blessings,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 86–89.

For additional information about leadership, go to the Leadership Training Library at lds.org/service/leadership.

Scripture Study FOR FAMILY STRENGTH



STUDY WITH A PROMISE

“When individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, . . . other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81.

Build a strong foundation for you and your family through more consistent and meaningful scripture study.

By Lori Fuller
Church Magazines

The following ideas may help you and your family reap the rewards of enhanced scripture study. These examples are only suggestions and can be adapted to your individual and family needs.

Study with a Question

Coming to the scriptures in search of answers is a good way to enhance your scripture study. You can begin your study with a prayer, asking to find answers to your specific questions. As you read, highlight

scriptures that address your questions. Write notes in the margins of your scriptures or in a separate notebook.

If studying as a family, you could begin each scripture study by asking your children if they have any questions they are trying to answer. As you read, look for scriptures that answer these questions, and stop to discuss them.

Study by Topic

Pick a topic you would like to learn more about, such as prayer, and read the entry in the Bible Dictionary or in the Guide to the Scriptures. Then read the scriptures listed on



that subject in the Guide to the Scriptures, Index, or Topical Guide. Within the list of scriptures, highlight the most helpful verses. After highlighting your favorite scriptures on prayer, you will have a personalized reference on the topic. You could also purchase an inexpensive copy of the scriptures and mark in a designated color all the scriptures you find about a certain topic. Pick another doctrine to study when you finish and use a new color to mark the verses.

If studying as a family, pick a topic together and assign each child to silently read a few scriptures then share his or her favorite. It may take several days to complete a topic, so keep track of what you have learned by discussing it and taking notes at the end of each study session.

Study for Guidance

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, once explained how he used scripture study to find specific guidance for his life and calling. After praying to Heavenly Father about what to do, President Eyring wrote down a list of answers, color-coded each item on the list, and pasted a copy in an inexpensive set of the scriptures. He explained, “The first [answer on the list] was ‘I am to be a witness that Christ is the Son of God.’ Then I read my scriptures looking for ideas that taught me how to witness that Christ is

the Son of God. Every time I came to something, I marked it in blue. Soon I developed my own topical guide around what I thought the Lord wanted me to do.”¹

If studying as a family, decide on several areas you would like to work on together. Write down these concerns and keep them in a visible place. As you read, assign each child to look for and highlight scriptures relating to a specific concern.

If just reading a few verses a day is difficult, and more in-depth study seems impossible, or if just getting your family to sit down together is a struggle, don’t despair and don’t give up. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled that while no one episode of family scripture study may seem especially memorable or even successful, “our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results.”²

As we seek to read the scriptures more consistently and to enhance our scripture reading with meaningful study, the Lord will bless our efforts. He will guide us as we structure our scripture study and will make it more rewarding for us and for our families. ■

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, “A Discussion on Scripture Study,” *Ensign*, July 2005, 24.
2. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 20.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID STOKER





*There's more to generating classroom
discussion than asking questions.
We need to ask the right type of questions.*

GREAT Questions, GREAT Discussions

By Jack Lyon

A Sunday School teacher asks, “Who were the first two people on earth?” She looks expectantly over her class of teenagers, but no hands go up. The class members look down at their feet or leaf idly through their scriptures. “It’s a simple question,” the teacher says. “Doesn’t anyone know the answer?”

Next door, in Gospel Doctrine class, the teacher asks, “What is the most important principle of the gospel?”

A sister timidly raises her hand. “Faith?” she asks.

“That’s a great response,” the teacher replies, “but not quite what I’m looking for. Anyone else?”

Silence.

Teachers ask questions because they want to involve class members in their lessons. They understand that students who are involved learn more than those who just sit and listen. But questions like those above generally don’t work.

“Who were the first two people on earth?” is an ineffective question because the answer is so obvious that no one wants to respond—or sees a need to.

“What is the most important principle of the gospel?” is also an ineffective question. No one knows the answer the teacher is looking for except the teacher, who is essentially saying, “Guess what I’m thinking.”

These are questions of fact; each has a *specific* answer. But great classroom discussions come from a different type of question—oddly enough, from questions *without* a specific answer. That is the key.

Asking Open-Ended Questions

If you’re a teacher of an adult class, you might ask, “What principle of the gospel has been most important in your life, and why?” Class members will probably pause to think about their experiences—and that’s OK. If you relax and wait a few seconds, hands will start going up, and you’ll hear about real, heartfelt experiences people have had with the gospel. You’ll also notice that one person’s comments will spark comments from others. Before long, the class will be having an interesting and inspiring discussion!

If you want the class to have a discussion about something specific like faith, consider saying something like this: “Today we’ll be talking about faith, the first principle of the gospel.” Then ask a question about faith that doesn’t have a specific answer:

1. “What part has faith played in your life?”
2. “Why do you think the Lord wants us to have faith?”
3. “What are some ways we can increase our faith?”



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA SMITH

There's much more to classroom discussion than getting people to make comments. In the end, it's a highly spiritual matter that can bring the class closer to God.

You'll get lots of answers, and as you do, you may want to write them (in abbreviated form) on the chalkboard. When you're finished, you'll have a nice list you can use to help sum up your discussion.

There's an added benefit to asking open-ended questions: Even class members who don't add to the discussion will be thinking about the questions. Their understanding and testimony may grow even though they haven't said anything.

Discussing the Scriptures

Open-ended questions can be effective during a discussion of the scriptures. Many teachers think that calling on class members to read a scripture passage is a good way to involve them. Unfortunately, it may not be. Some people are not good readers and may stumble over words. Other class members may have a hard time hearing the reader.

The easiest person to hear in a classroom is the teacher, who stands at the front of the class. Also, teachers can stop in the middle of a passage to ask a question and stimulate discussion. As you read the following example, see if you can spot what the teacher does to encourage discussion:

Teacher: "Today we're going to discuss a well-known story, the parable of the prodigal son. But I'd like us to think not just about the prodigal son but also about the

other members of his family. Please open your Bible to Luke 15:11, on page 1305." (Giving the page number helps students who may not be familiar with the scriptures.)

After waiting for class members to find their place, the teacher begins reading: "A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.' Now, what are some things we can tell already about this family?" (Notice the open-ended question.)

Student: "The father seems willing to give the younger son what he wants."

Teacher: "He does, doesn't he? Usually a son wouldn't get his inheritance until after his father died. But the father seems to be a loving, generous man. What else?"

Student: "The younger son seems selfish to me. That's a lot to ask from a father who's still alive."

Teacher: "Yes, it is. He seems to be thinking only of himself. What about the older son?"

Student: "So far he's awfully quiet." The class laughs.

Teacher: "Yes, and that may say something about his character. Let's watch for that as we continue to read."

As you read that example, what did you notice the teacher doing to encourage discussion? You might make a list—it will be your list and your interpretation of the situation, so all of your answers will be right. Why? Because the

first question in this paragraph is an open-ended question, and as long as you answer such a question honestly, you won't give any wrong answers. If you ask similar questions in a classroom setting, the same will be true for class members, which means they'll soon learn that their comments are welcome and that it's safe for them to respond.

In addition, you may have noticed that I did something to engage your mind *before* you began reading. I wrote, "As you read, see if you can spot what the teacher does to encourage discussion." I did this because I knew it would help you think about what you were reading and prepare you to participate in this "discussion" afterward.

The teacher in the example used this technique twice: once when he said, "I'd like us to think not just about the prodigal son but also about the other members of his family," and then when he said, "Let's watch for that as we continue to read." Both suggestions give class members something to focus on so they'll be ready to respond to open-ended questions when the teacher asks them.

Doing this helps class members make a connection with the passage being read. Instead of sitting passively on their chairs, they're reading along and actually thinking about the scriptures. And when the reading is finished, they're ready to respond to questions. Then you just need to call on them and coordinate the discussion.

Notice also in this kind of discussion that you are actually teaching *from the scriptures*, not just from the manual. Although the manual should be used to prepare the lesson and is a great source of open-ended questions, the scriptures should remain the primary focus of our teaching and learning.

Staying Focused

There is a challenge in having a lot of classroom discussion: it's easy for the discussion to get off track. It's important that you prepare your lesson well so that you know where you want it to go and so that you're ready, if necessary, to bring the class back to the main topic of discussion. Usually all you need to provide is a little guidance: "That's

interesting, but I think we're a little off track. Let's get back to our discussion of faith now."

It also helps if you have a clear, interesting introduction so class members know the focus of your lesson. Then have a discussion, guiding things along.

Finally, give an inspiring summary of what was taught. The words of a hymn or poem often make a good summary. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has said, "Tell your listeners what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you have told them. That is a useful technique."¹

Be sure to bear your testimony of the truths discussed.

Sharing Feelings and Experiences

There's more to all this, however, than just having a great discussion. When appropriate, the Spirit will inspire members of the class in their comments so that they share what the Lord wants the class to hear. As the Lord said to His disciples, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Of course, we need to be cautious about sharing deeply personal or sacred experiences. But stories from class members can add much to any lesson. As the Gospel Doctrine manual advises: "Share insights, feelings, and experiences that relate to the lesson. Invite class members to do the same."²

There's much more to classroom discussion than getting people to make comments. In the end, it's a highly spiritual matter that can bring the class closer to God.

As you use these techniques, you'll see growth in spirituality and gospel knowledge, including your own. Instead of wondering how to fill up your class time, you'll start running out of time. You may even see an increase in your class size because class members will know they're going to be part of a great discussion—learning from the scriptures, from each other, and from the Spirit of the Lord. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach Ye Diligently*, rev. ed. (1991), 354–55.
2. *New Testament Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual* (1997), vi.

I WOKE UP TO THE GOSPEL

I was raised by atheist parents and as a young man felt that my life was fine without God. That changed in 1989, however, when my large intestine ruptured, and I lay in a coma for eight days.

I have few memories from my time in the hospital, but I strongly remember envisioning a man in white standing next to me after my operation and telling me it was time to “return and

wake up.” When I resisted, he added, “My brother, you are dead. You either go back, or you stay here.” I did as he said and woke up full of pain.

After leaving the hospital, I had strange dreams that included people I had never met. I had the feeling that I had promised to do something, but I didn’t know what it was. I set about searching and reading about different religions. As I read the New Testament,

I realized that if the truth was on the earth, it would be found in Jesus Christ.

I searched from 1989 to 1994. I felt lost and confused as I searched for the people I kept seeing in my dreams. My struggle and confusion became great, and I found myself praying desperately for answers.

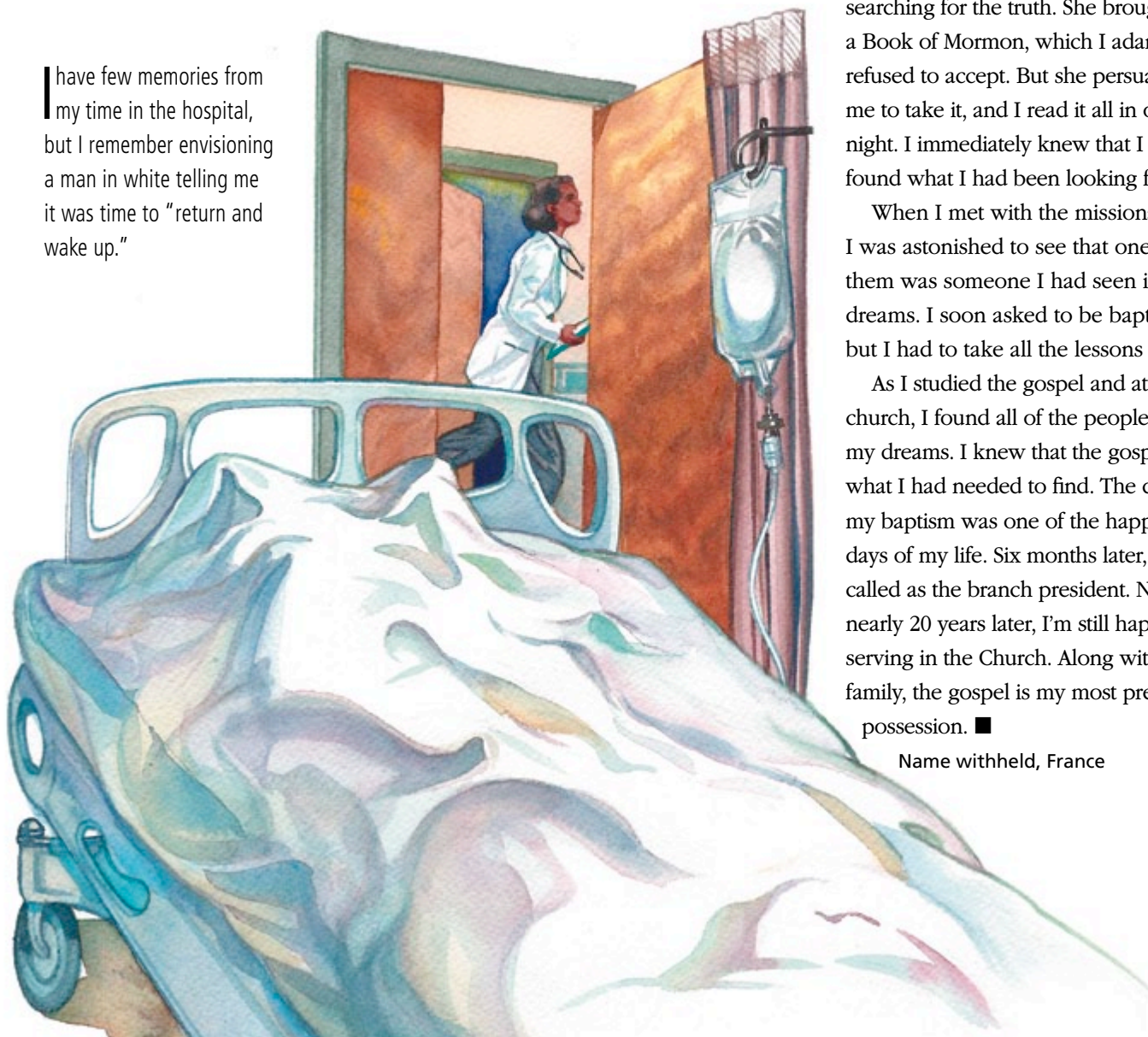
Shortly after these prayers, I met a new co-worker. She learned that I was struggling, and I told her that I was searching for the truth. She brought me a Book of Mormon, which I adamantly refused to accept. But she persuaded me to take it, and I read it all in one night. I immediately knew that I had found what I had been looking for.

When I met with the missionaries, I was astonished to see that one of them was someone I had seen in my dreams. I soon asked to be baptized, but I had to take all the lessons first.

As I studied the gospel and attended church, I found all of the people from my dreams. I knew that the gospel was what I had needed to find. The day of my baptism was one of the happiest days of my life. Six months later, I was called as the branch president. Now, nearly 20 years later, I’m still happily serving in the Church. Along with my family, the gospel is my most precious possession. ■

Name withheld, France

I have few memories from my time in the hospital, but I remember envisioning a man in white telling me it was time to “return and wake up.”



MY MOST SINCERE PRAYER

When I was a freshman in college, I had a part-time job at a convenience store in a small town. I had the closing shift, which ended at 11:00 p.m. Despite the relative safety of the community, I would frequently get nervous while closing the store all alone.

One night I felt particularly anxious. As I finished cleaning the store and made my way to the cash register to shut it down, a feeling of dread came over me. I did not have any logical reason for being so afraid, but I could not shake my nervousness. I did not want to overreact by calling the police, but I also wanted to be protected if there was any real danger.

Finally, I knelt to pray. I told Heavenly Father that I was afraid and didn't know what to do. It was the most sincere prayer I had ever given.

As I stood up, I immediately noticed a vehicle pulling up to the fuel pump nearest to the building. To my surprise and relief, it was a police officer. As he pulled out his credit card to fill his patrol car with fuel, I quickly started my final closing responsibilities. I wanted to take advantage of his protective presence and get as much done as I could before he finished at the pump. When he had finished fueling, he made a call on his cell phone and

sat in his car as he talked. He was still there when I locked up and got in my car. Both of us pulled away from the convenience store at the same time.

As I drove home, I was amazed at how quickly my prayer had been answered. I humbly thanked Heavenly Father for listening to me. I had been taught that I was a daughter of God, but until that night I had never felt His love for me so near or so tangibly. Words cannot describe the peace I felt in my heart. I know that the Lord will bless me if I have faith and ask for His help. ■

Jaimee Lynn Chidester, Utah, USA

As I stood up after praying, I immediately noticed a vehicle pulling up to the fuel pump nearest the building.



I AM A CHRISTIAN

I am a second-grade teacher in a community where Latter-day Saints are well known. So I was surprised one day when a peer told me of another teacher's remark about me. The teacher had said, "Did you know that Mrs. Craig is not a Christian?"

I was torn inside. I had just lost my husband of 28 years, and I had been closer to the Savior and my Heavenly Father than at any other time in my life. I knew that I would have to bear my testimony to this teacher, but I

wasn't sure how to do it. I did not want to offend her, but I also wanted her to know that Latter-day Saints are Christians.

The next morning the Holy Ghost whispered to me what I should say. As I lay in bed, I thought of all the paintings I had in my home of the life of Jesus Christ. Each painting had a special place in my heart and was connected to a special time in my life. Thinking of those paintings brought many tender

The Holy Ghost whispered to me what I should say, and that morning at school I went into my colleague's room.

feelings about the love I have for the Savior.

One painting in particular shows the Savior calming the stormy sea. It reminds me that He conquers all and that I, through Him, can also overcome all things, including the heartbreak of losing my husband.

As I continued to reflect on the paintings, I was overwhelmed with a feeling of gratitude for the blessings that had come to me because I belong to the Savior's Church.

That morning at school I went into my colleague's room and told her I wanted her to know I am a Christian. I asked her, "How many paintings of the Savior do you have in your home?" She told me that instead of paintings, she had two crosses in her home.

I told her about the paintings of the Savior in my home and what the scenes depicted in the paintings meant to me. I then bore my testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

I also told my co-worker that it was only through my knowledge of Jesus Christ that I had been able to survive the past year. I told her how His tender mercies had helped my children and me get through the difficult time of losing a father and husband.

I hugged her as I left, and she offered a sincere apology. There was no doubt in my heart that she knew that I, a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, am a Christian. ■

Kathy Fjelstul Craig, Arizona, USA



THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS TAUGHT

One day at work, I had to leave for a few hours to take care of some important errands for my mother.

I went to the office in the morning and told a colleague that I would be absent in the afternoon. During a break she whispered to me, "I can help you with the time clock."

"No, thanks," I said.

As I left the office to catch the bus, my friend followed me to the time

clock. She said quietly, "Why don't you clock in for the afternoon period, and then I'll punch your time card when I go home?"

Before I could utter a word, she added, "Look, our salary is below minimum wage, so it would be OK to do this. It's just a small amount. Besides, we are not the only ones who do it."

I began to consider what she had said. She had some good points, and

I knew she had good intentions. But this was not what I had been taught in the Church.

Gathering all my strength and resolve, I told her softly, "My friend, the Lord is good, and if He blesses us, we can receive from Him more than that amount."

She left and was somewhat annoyed with me for rejecting her offer. While I walked to the bus stop, I worried about how small my paycheck would be. I knew we would have to forego buying some food the following month.

As I walked, I remembered the words of one of the hymns: "Be honest in your heart; and God will love and bless you and help to you impart."¹ A phrase from another hymn came to my mind: "Choose the right! And God will bless you evermore."²

These lines strengthened my decision not to give in to temptation but to trust in the Lord's promises.

Three years have passed since that incident, and I now have a new job. The Lord has definitely blessed me. It took time, but the promise of the hymns indeed came true, and I can feel that many blessings will continue to come to me as I continue to choose the right. I am grateful for the hymns, which give me courage to hold on to that which is right in the sight of God. ■

Irene Taniegra, Philippines

NOTES

1. "Improve the Shining Moments," *Hymns*, no. 226.
2. "Choose the Right," *Hymns*, no. 239.

When I told a work colleague that I would be absent in the afternoon, she told me, "I can help you with the time clock."



Move Forward

IN FAITH

What should you do when you have to make a decision and you've prayed about your choices, but you're still unsure of what to do?

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has stated, “It is the plain and very sobering truth that before [and after] great moments, certainly . . . great spiritual moments, there can come adversity, opposition, and darkness” (“Cast Not Away Therefore Your Confidence,” *Liahona*, June 2000, 34; *Ensign*, Mar. 2000, 7).

But opposition doesn't mean that Heavenly Father has abandoned you. He is there, and He will guide you. Sometimes we must move forward in faith until our way is illuminated. Following are some insights from modern prophets about patiently waiting for answers and guidance.

Walk to the Edge of the Light



“Shortly after I was called as a General Authority, I went to Elder Harold B. Lee for counsel. He listened very carefully to my problem and suggested that I see President David O. McKay. President McKay counseled me as to the direction I should go. I was very willing to be obedient but saw no way possible for me to do as he counseled me to do.

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

He said, “The trouble with you is you want to see the end from the beginning.’ I replied that I would like to see at least a step or two ahead. Then came the lesson of a lifetime: ‘You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.’ Then he quoted these 18 words from the Book of Mormon:

“Dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith’” (Ether 12:6).

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Edge of the Light,” BYU Magazine, Mar. 1991, magazine.byu.edu.

Proceed with Trust



“What do you do when you have prepared carefully, have prayed fervently, waited a reasonable time for a response, and still do not feel an answer? You may want to express thanks when that occurs, for it is an evidence of [Heavenly Father's] trust. When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior's teachings and you need to act, proceed with trust. As you are sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, one of two things will certainly occur at the appropriate time: either the stupor of thought will come, indicating an improper choice, or the peace or the burning in the bosom will be felt, confirming that your choice was correct. When you are living righteously and are acting with trust, God will not let you proceed too far without a warning impression if you have made the wrong decision.”

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2007, 10.

GO FORWARD

Right before I graduated from college, my wife and I were pondering two questions: when we should begin having children and where to go after graduation. We spent many hours talking about these intimidating issues but hadn't come to any conclusions.

One particular Sunday, our conversation slowly turned into a debate, which

then escalated into an argument. At that moment, the doorbell rang. We were surprised to find our home teachers standing in the doorway.

We invited them in and listened to their message. One of our home teachers began talking about Moses and the children of Israel making their escape from Egypt. When the children

of Israel got to the shores of the Red Sea, they could go no further, and the Egyptians were quickly approaching. The scriptures say that the children of Israel "were sore afraid" (Exodus 14:10). When Moses prayed for guidance, the Lord responded, "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (Exodus 14:15).

As soon as our home teacher read that scripture, the feelings of frustration and fear melted away. My wife and I realized that we had been sitting on the banks of the Red Sea wondering what to do but that in order to "see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus 14:13), we would have to go forward.

In our case, going forward meant making an informed decision, working diligently, and trusting in the Lord. We had to stop debating and start acting in faith. As we followed the Lord's guidance, the sea of choices before us parted, and we were able to walk through unscathed. We are grateful for the blessings we received from moving forward in faith and for home teachers who inspired us to take the first steps.

Steven Scott Stokes,
North Carolina, USA



Don't Take Counsel from Your Fears



“Let us not take counsel from our fears. May we remember always to be of good cheer, put our faith in God, and

live worthy for Him to direct us. We are each entitled to receive personal inspiration to guide us through our mortal probation. May we so live that our hearts are open at all times to the whisperings and comfort of the Spirit.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Be Not Afraid,” Liahona and Ensign, Oct. 2002, 6.

Wait Patiently for Revelation



“The gradual increase of light radiating from the rising sun is like receiving a message from God ‘line upon line, precept

upon precept’ (2 Nephi 28:30). Most frequently, revelation comes in small increments over time and is granted according to our desire, worthiness, and preparation. Such communications from Heavenly Father gradually and gently ‘distil upon [our souls] as the dews from heaven’ (D&C 121:45).”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Spirit of Revelation,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2011, 88.

Know That God Will Provide

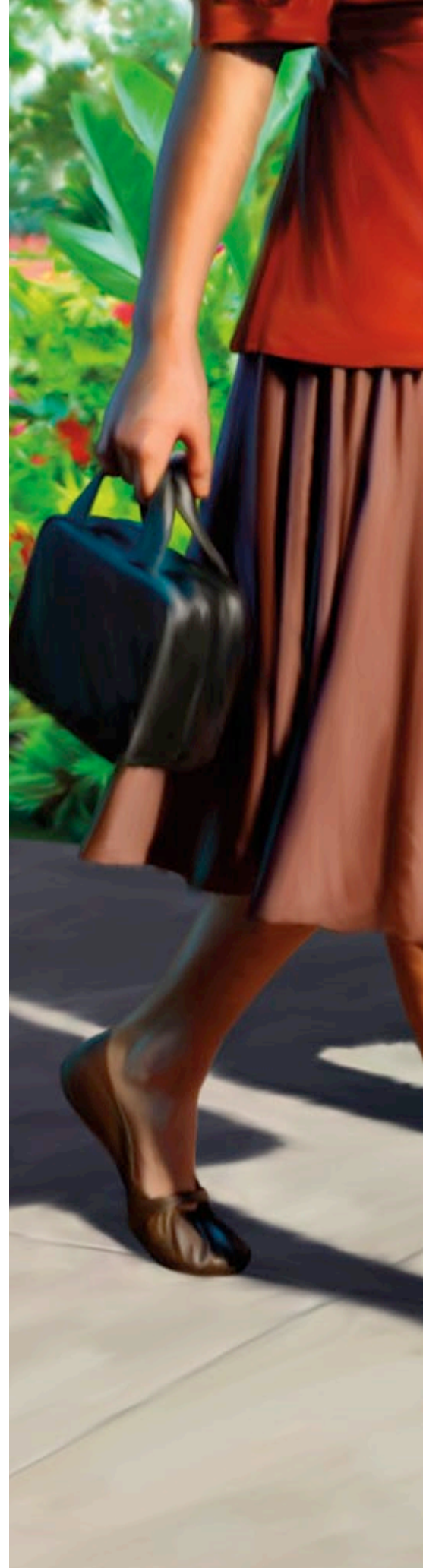


“During [a] busy season of my life, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin extended a call to me to serve as stake president.

“During my interview with him, many thoughts raced through my mind, not the least of which was the unsettling worry that I might not have the time this calling would require. Although I felt humbled and honored by the call, I briefly wondered if I could accept it. But it was only a fleeting thought because I knew that Elder Wirthlin was called of God and that he was doing the Lord’s work. What could I do but accept?”

“There are times when we have to step into the darkness in faith, confident that God will place solid ground beneath our feet once we do. And so I accepted gladly, knowing that God would provide.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Why of Priesthood Service,” Liahona and Ensign, May 2012, 59.



FAITH PRECEDES MIRACLES

I wanted to be a missionary ever since I was young. It started as a simple desire and continued to grow. But life in the Philippines was difficult. My father and brother didn't have jobs, so I was the only one who could help my mother support our family. Because I was helping my family financially, my savings for my mission built up slowly.

I wasn't sure how things would work out. One night I read Ether 12:12: "For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith." Then I read a message from President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) regarding faith: "It takes faith—unseeing faith—for young people to proceed immediately with their family responsibilities in the face of financial uncertainties. . . . It takes faith to fill full-time missions. But know this—that all these are of the planting, while faithful, devout families, spiritual security, peace, and eternal life are the harvest."¹

These teachings helped me understand that I needed more faith to submit my mission papers and to be a full-time missionary. I knew that even though it was hard, God would help me.

My branch president interviewed me and told me afterward that the last thing I needed to do was make the initial payment and then be interviewed by the mission president. I felt so happy

and excited. I would get my paycheck that week, and I would be able to give the required amount. However, when I got home, I found out that my father was in the hospital. I felt overwhelmed when I realized we had to pay the hospital the exact amount I needed for my mission payment.

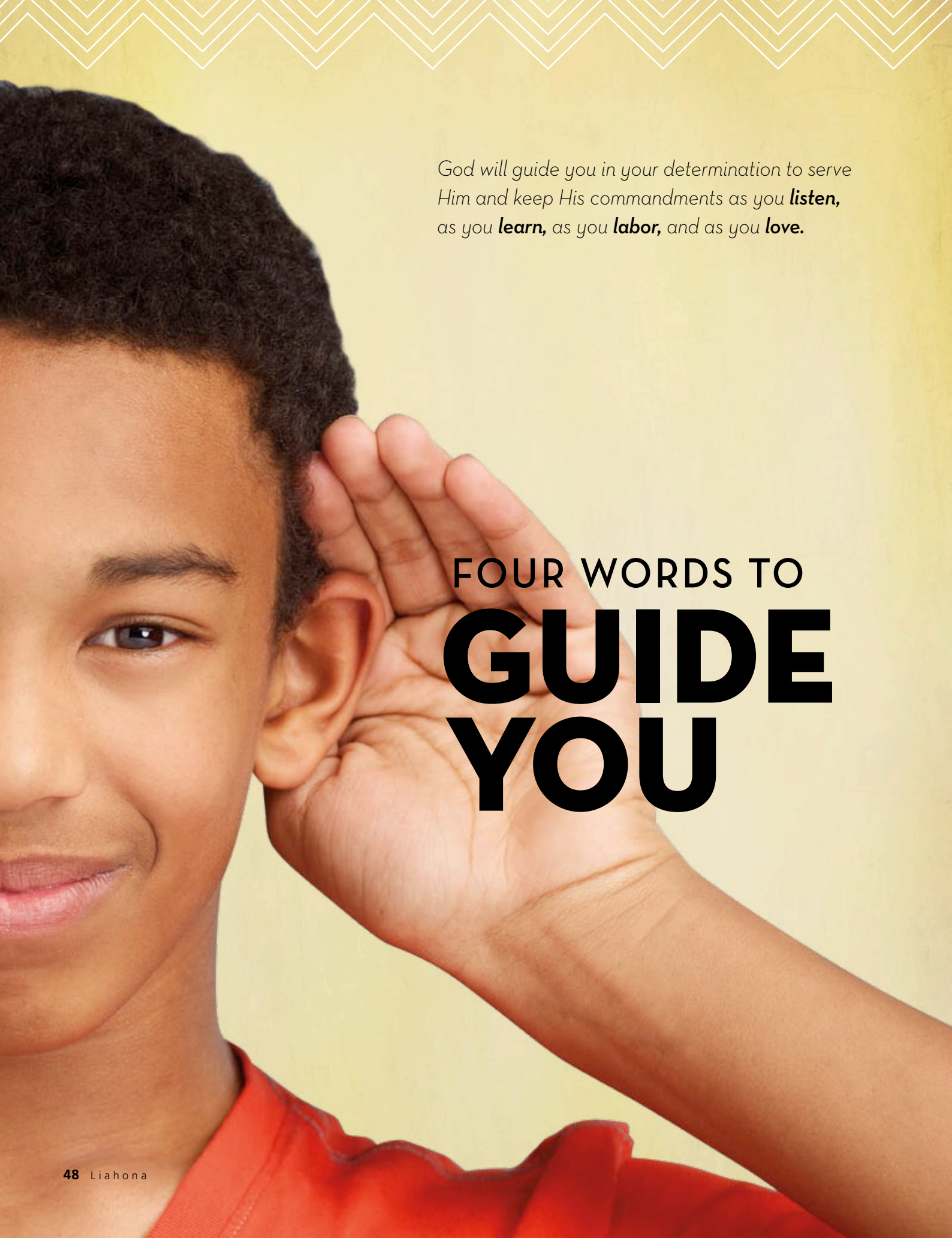
But Heavenly Father prepared a way. We got some help from relatives and members of the Church, including my branch president. Miraculously my father was out of the hospital after one week, and I was able to make my payment. Two weeks after I turned 22, I received my mission call to the Philippines Olongapo Mission.

I know that Heavenly Father made it possible for me to submit my mission papers. I know that if I continue to trust in Him and to act in faith, He will make impossible things possible. He will answer all our prayers, and He will continue to guide us as long as we continue to obey Him. ■

Cheenee Lagunzad,
Bulacan, Philippines

NOTE

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (1972), 11; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 143.



*God will guide you in your determination to serve Him and keep His commandments as you **listen**, as you **learn**, as you **labor**, and as you **love**.*

FOUR WORDS TO
**GUIDE
YOU**



By President
Thomas S. Monson

I made a few resolutions I'd like to share with you, hoping that you too will join in making the same choices. First, *I will listen*. Second, *I will learn*. Third, *I will labor*. And fourth, *I will love*. These four words can well determine our destiny.

Listen

I would hope that you would listen to your mother and listen to your father, each of whom is upon his or her knees each morning and each evening, praying for you, asking our Heavenly Father to watch over you and to guide you in your choices, to be cautious, as it were, in your conduct. I believe that when we recognize our parents and the fact that they are concerned for you and for me, then we honor them, and the words echoing from Mount Sinai have a personal meaning: "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12).

I trust that we will listen to the words of the prophets. I hope also that we will listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. I promise you that if we have an ear attuned to the Holy Spirit, if there is a desire for righteousness within our heart, and our conduct reflects that desire, we shall be guided by that Holy Spirit.

I hope that I shall ever listen for the whisperings of that Holy Spirit,

that during each day of the year you and I may have the opportunity to respond to these promptings and the directional influence of our Heavenly Father. Therefore, I promise to *listen*.

Learn

Number two, *I will learn*. It isn't enough simply to listen if we don't learn. I make a pledge that I will learn more from the scriptures and, hopefully, that you too will have that privilege. Wouldn't it be marvelous if we could take into our hearts that counsel from the Lord, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Let us learn from the standard works, but let us also learn from the lives of the Church leaders and the lives of those who are closest to us.

For example, I believe that I can learn patience by better studying the life of our Lord and Savior. Can you imagine the disappointment which He must have felt, knowing that He had the keys to eternal life, knowing that He had the way for you and for me to gain entrance into the celestial kingdom of God, as He took His gospel to those people in the meridian of time and saw them reject Him and reject His message? Yet He demonstrated patience. He accepted His

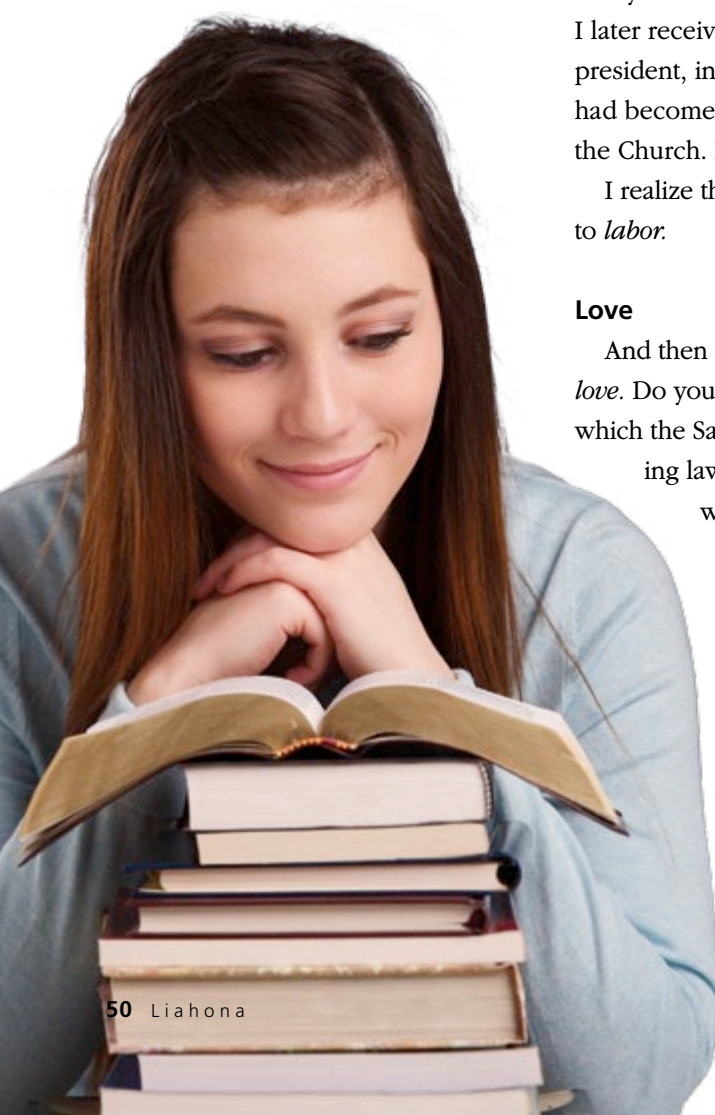
responsibility in life, even to the cross, the Garden of Gethsemane preceding it. I would hope to learn patience from the Lord.

I would urge that you join me with a pledge, *I will learn*.

Labor

Then, number three, *I will labor*. It's not enough to wish, it's not enough to dream, it's not enough to promise. We must do. The Lord said, "He that thrusteth in his sickle *with his might* . . . layeth up in store that he perisheth not" (D&C 4:4; emphasis added). And Nephi declared, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). It was James who summed up this lesson: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

One summer years ago, for example, I had a weekend free. Yet the Spirit prompted me to fulfill a responsibility. I boarded a plane for California. As I sat down, the seat next to me was empty. However, there occupied that seat eventually a most beautiful young lady. I noted that she was reading a book. As one is wont to do, I glanced at the title. It was by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I said to her, "Oh, you must be a Mormon."



She responded, “Oh, no. Why would you ask?”

I replied: “Well, you’re reading a book written by a very prominent member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

She said, “Is that right? A friend gave this to me, but I don’t know much about it. However, it has aroused my curiosity.”

Then I wondered. Should I be forward and say more about the Church? And the words of Peter came: “Be ready always” (1 Peter

3:15). And I decided that this was the time when I should bear my testimony. It was my privilege to answer her questions relative to the Church—intelligent questions that came from a heart that was seeking the truth. I asked if I might have the opportunity to have missionaries call upon her. I asked if she would like to attend our branch of single adults in San Francisco. Her answers were affirmative. Upon returning home, I wrote to the stake president and passed along to him this information. Can you imagine my delight when I later received a call from the stake president, in which he said that she had become the newest member of the Church. I was overjoyed.

I realize that I have a responsibility to *labor*.

Love

And then that final pledge: *I will love*. Do you remember the answer which the Savior gave to the inquiring lawyer who asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

And He replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love

thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36–39).

It was the English playwright William Shakespeare who wrote, “They do not love that do not show their love.”¹ How might you and I demonstrate our love for God and love for our fellowmen? Through obedience to God’s commands and the counsel of His servants. We have the privilege to obey the law of tithing, to obey the code of morality, to obey in each facet of our lives the word of our Heavenly Father.

Our Heavenly Father can appreciate our love for Him by how well we serve Him and how well we serve our fellowmen.

The Choice Is Yours

Four pledges: *I will listen, I will learn, I will labor, I will love*. As we fulfill these pledges, we can have the guidance of our Heavenly Father and experience true joy in our own lives.

The choice is yours, and the choice is mine, remembering that our choices, our decisions, determine our destiny. God will guide you in your determination to serve Him and keep His commandments *as you listen, as you learn, as you labor, and as you love*. ■

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on January 16, 1973.

NOTE

1. William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ed. William George Clarke and William Aldis Wright, *The Great Books of the Western World* (1952), act 1, scene 2, line 31.

How do I “stand in holy places” when there’s so much unholiness around me, like at school?

To prepare us for difficult times, the Lord commands us to “stand in holy places” (D&C 45:32; see also D&C 87:8). To do that, we need to live worthily and have the Holy Ghost with us. The Spirit will help us overcome temptation and negative influences. Here are some ways to invite the Spirit into your life:

- Pray. Begin your day with prayer, and especially pray during the day when you have to be around unholy influences at school or elsewhere.
- Attend seminary and study the scriptures daily. Studying the doctrines taught in the scriptures will help you be filled with light and truth—“light and truth forsake that evil one” (D&C 93:37).
- Take the sacrament each week. As you meaningfully renew your covenant to live the gospel, you receive the Lord’s promise to have His Spirit with you.
- Live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. These standards will help you stand for holiness.
- Stay close to your parents. Teens who have good relationships with their parents are much stronger in difficult situations.

These suggestions will strengthen you spiritually. They will help you when you find yourself in an unholy situation that is unavoidable, like at school. But it’s best if you can avoid unholy situations whenever possible.

Keep an Attitude of Reverence



I have learned that you can make the places around you holy, because *who* we are is more important than *where* we are. There is a lot of temptation at school, but what is truly important is having an attitude of reverence toward Heavenly Father and striving to take upon you the name of Christ. In this way, you will be able to make your school a holy place for you because you will remember Heavenly Father and our Savior.

Elder Ojeda, age 21, Colombia Bogotá North Mission

Choose the Good, Avoid the Bad

I try to avoid areas in my school where I know other people usually do wrong things. I also carefully choose who I sit with in class or during lunch because they affect how I think and act. But no matter how careful we are, we occasionally see or hear unholiness. When this happens to me, I quickly look away and sing a hymn in my head to clear my mind. Also, reading scriptures and talking to uplifting friends have helped me. We can’t always choose our surroundings, but we can choose how we react to them.

Eliza A., age 14, Utah, USA

Stand Up for Your Faith



Make the area around you holy. Surround yourself with friends who meet the recommendations in *For the Strength*

of Youth. Let others know of your standards and ask them to stop inappropriate conversation or turn off bad music when you are around. Don’t be afraid to stand up for your faith.

Thomas S., age 15, Georgia, USA

Be Strong and Brave



We must be strong and brave. We must choose the right. Sometimes it’s very hard, but if we will do that, we will be

happy. When people ask us to drink or smoke with them, we need to be brave and say no. We can explain to them

that we want to choose the right, so we don't do those things.

Anastasia N., age 20, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine

Seek the Spirit



We encounter people at school who don't share our standards. Yet, with the Holy Ghost guiding our way, we will be able

to make the right choices and set a good example for them. It is important for us to always "stand in holy places" in order to feel the love of Heavenly Father. One way to do that is to seek for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. When we choose to be in the atmosphere of God's love, there will be great joy in our hearts, knowing that Heavenly Father is pleased with our actions.

Genzen N., age 18, Zamboanga, Philippines

Never Compromise



A few years ago, I was one of a few Church members in my grade. People thought I was weird because I was

dedicated to living all of the standards of the Church. So one day I decided that I could compromise my standards a little bit. When I did, I noticed that I had more attention from others. But after just a few weeks, I felt guilty and turned to the Lord for repentance. He did help me, and I had to make a lot of sacrifices, but it was worth it! I truly

got to see the blessings of living the gospel at school. I did lose friends and attention, but I gained respect and happiness.

Sutton K., age 15, Texas, USA

Think about the Temple

The holiest place that exists upon the earth is the temple. Thinking about it will help you do what is right, no matter what circumstance you may find yourself in. You can also put up a photo of the temple where you can see it; this will help you feel better and have the strength to not give heed to the unholiness that exists at school.

Angel T., age 18, Ecuador

For more suggestions on how to stand in holy places, you could review these talks from the April 2013 general conference: Dallin H. Oaks, "Followers of Christ" and Robert D. Hales, "Stand Strong in Holy Places," available at conference.lds.org.



IT'S YOUR CHOICE

"We choose where we will be. God has given us our agency. He will not take it

from us, and if I do that which is wrong and get into the devil's territory, I do it because I have the will and power to do it. I cannot blame anybody else, and if I determine to keep the commandments of God and live as I ought to live and stay on the Lord's side of the line I do it because I ought to do it, and I will receive my blessing for it. It will not be the result of what somebody else may do."

President George Albert Smith (1870–1951), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* (2011), 198.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My mom works all day. How can I improve our relationship?"

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 15 at liahona.lds.org, by email to liahona@ldschurch.org, or by mail (see address on page 3).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

The following information and permission must be included in your email or letter: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.



TESTIMONY THROUGH SEMINARY

By Karla Brigante

My mother taught me the gospel when I was young, but because my father was not a Church member, I always wondered if I was on the correct path. I never understood why my father had never joined the Church if it really was true. Still, I loved going to Primary and singing the hymns. I also enjoyed when my mother read the scriptures to me, and little by little I began to develop my own testimony.

When I joined Young Women, one of the first goals I made was to share my testimony every fast Sunday. Bearing my testimony became a habit for me and strengthened my desire to increase my knowledge when I was able to enroll in seminary.

My first seminary class covered the Old Testament. That year I not only grew to appreciate and value the Old Testament, but I also learned the importance of temples and genealogy.

I joined together with other students from my ward and got involved in

family history work. We extracted hundreds of names and developed an enormous love for people we knew almost nothing about—just their names and other limited data. Even though I knew that the work we were doing was important, I sometimes felt discouraged and frustrated. I was working so that ordinances could be done for people I did not know, yet I could not reach my own father. He did not understand the importance of what I was doing. I continued praying and fasting that he would be touched.



The following year in seminary we studied the New Testament. One morning after I woke up, I began to read about the Savior in Gethsemane. Tears flowed from my eyes as I realized that the drops of blood He shed were for me. How I wished I had never sinned! The words of Isaiah that I had studied the previous year came into my mind: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5). As I read about the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, my mom came into my room. I shared with her my feelings, my testimony, and my desire for my father to know what I had learned in seminary.

My testimony continued to grow the next year as we read the Doctrine and Covenants. I obtained a testimony

that Joseph Smith was a prophet. I also decided to follow his example and ask God if the Church is true. Although I already had conviction in my heart, one afternoon I found myself alone and sincerely prayed. As I did, I realized that the testimony I was asking for had been developing as I studied the scriptures and attended seminary.

The Lord opened my mind and my heart that year, and I understood the Doctrine and Covenants as I never had before. I also learned of the great value of souls (see D&C 18:10–16) and began to share my growing testimony with those who did not know about the gospel, including my father.

I knew that studying the Book of Mormon during my final year of seminary would also fortify my testimony. As I truly studied, I felt Heavenly

Father’s love for me. The stories inspired me to the point that all I wanted to do was read the Book of Mormon. I began to take the Book of Mormon to school and would read it during my free time. I also began to discuss what I was reading with my father.

One day after a long conversation with my father about the gospel, I challenged him to read all of the Book of Mormon. I testified that, like me, he could receive a testimony.

I am happy to say that my father read the Book of Mormon. When he did, he knew the Church was true and was eventually baptized! My family is now preparing to be sealed in the temple. I know that attending seminary and reading the scriptures helped me develop my own testimony, and I know that they bless families. ■

The author lives in São Paulo, Brazil.

WHY TEMPLE MARRIAGE?

*We talk a lot about temple marriage in the Church.
Have you ever wondered why?*

There's been a lot of talk lately about marriage—what it is, why we have it, the role it plays in society. In church we talk a lot about temple marriage. You know it's important because you've heard about this since you were taught your first lessons about the gospel, whether you were a Sunbeam or a convert in your youth.



But some of you may be wondering, “Why?” To you it may be more than a question of what temple marriage is all about. You want to know—in your heart, not just in your mind—why you should work so hard to marry in the temple, especially when marriage as an idea and institution seems to be weakening in societies all over the world.

Well, it starts with the doctrine of the family.

The Doctrine of the Family

We use the term *doctrine* to help define many things in the Church. For example, the Guide to the Scriptures defines *doctrine of Christ* as “the principles and teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹ So what do we mean when we talk about the doctrine of the family or the doctrine of eternal marriage?

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” states, “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.”² In other words, when we talk about why we are here on the earth and what we are meant to accomplish and become, it’s all tied to the idea that we are part of a family and can marry and establish new families.

The family proclamation also states: “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”³

But what happens to our families when we die? If you are married by the law of your state or country, will that law have any authority over you when you die? No, because those laws are made by man and have authority only as long as you live under that authority. For marriage relationships to continue after you die, those marriages must be sealed together in the right place with authority that lasts through the eternities. That place is the temple, and that authority is the priesthood (see D&C 132:7, 15–19). By choosing a temple marriage and keeping those covenants, you choose to be able to live forever with your spouse.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout August, you'll be studying about marriage and family in your priesthood quorums and Young Women and Sunday School classes. One of the important doctrines of the family is that through temple marriage, a family can be sealed together and still be a family after the resurrection.

After reading this article, think about how your life is different because you can be sealed to a spouse in the temple. Also, think about how this affects your choices today and what you're doing to prepare for temple marriage. Write down your feelings and consider sharing them with others by testifying at home to your family, at church on Sunday, or on social media.



The Reason We Care

Maybe you already know that doctrine, and yet you still wonder, “But why else does it matter so much?” Maybe it’s not a matter of understanding the doctrine. Maybe it’s more a simple question of what marriage and family mean in your heart. The simple answer is that the greatest happiness and joy available to us come through living the gospel and gaining and maintaining a temple marriage.

In the April 2013 general conference, Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy explained

it this way: “No other relationship of any kind can bring as much joy, generate as much good, or produce as much personal refinement.”⁴

We also know that “happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵

If you think about it, you’ll spend a large part of your life preparing for big changes that come along. There’s baptism, graduating from Primary into Young Men or Young Women, attending the temple, and participating in family history research and temple

ordinances for your ancestors. For young men, there's receiving the priesthood and advancing in priesthood offices. For young women, there's advancing in Young Women classes. There's high school graduation or its equivalent. And now missionaries can leave at age 18 or 19. There's a lot to prepare for and look forward to.

But the most important covenant we prepare for is being sealed in the temple. When individuals in families live according to the plan of happiness and keep their temple covenants, they experience true joy.

The gospel is what life is all about. It's the whole reason we are here. When we follow the gospel path, it leads to joy. And that path leads to a temple marriage, either in this life or in the life to come. No blessings will be withheld from the Father's faithful children.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled, "The most important single thing that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world is to marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority."⁶ ■

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, "Doctrine of Christ," scriptures.lds.org.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. "The Family," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
4. L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2013, 83.
5. "The Family," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
6. Bruce R. McConkie, "Agency or Inspiration?" *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38; see also Thomas S. Monson, "Whom Shall I Marry?" *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 6.



JOYS OF MARRIAGE

Some of the joys of marriage include:

Confidence and Support.

When you get married, you have someone who will cheer you on and encourage you in doing what is right, who will lift you up each day, who will share in all your joys and sorrows.

Children. It brings great joy to be trusted with the care and keeping of Heavenly Father's children.

Sharing. It is such a great blessing to share in the life of another person and someday in the life of children as well. Your and your spouse's successes become successes for the family. Making memories together adds deeper meaning to life.

Counsel. A spouse can give you good, honest advice, and you can trust it because you know it's coming from someone who has only your best interests at heart.

Strength. Two are stronger than one. You can strengthen and help each other to live the gospel more completely.

Laughter. When you know someone this well and when you

really trust each other, you'll enjoy life with laughter and humor.

Love. Being told each day that you are loved is marvelously renewing and refreshing.

Service. There is great joy in serving one another and much more so when you do it for someone you love.

Friendship. You'll have someone there with you through the good times and bad.

Trust. It is comforting to know that you are with someone who always wants what's best for you and that you can confide in him or her without fear.

Physical and Emotional Intimacy. Marriage is a unique relationship in which the Lord binds two people in an eternal relationship whose goals include oneness, togetherness, and joy.



Choosing Not to GOSSIP

By Brett Schachterle

During my sophomore year in high school, I volunteered as part of the technical crew to produce my high school's annual musical. The experience became one of my favorite memories of the year, because it was fun and I learned so much doing it. I also loved working with the people I met.

But the most important thing I learned was not something I had expected.

In order for the tech crew to communicate quietly with each other, we used radio headsets. We also used them to tell jokes, have conversations, even to sing to each other to entertain ourselves during the long rehearsals.

But the first time we used the headsets wasn't actually so comfortable for me. At first I was having a blast. Then some people started gossiping about the actors rehearsing onstage. I tried to ignore the snide comments and rude remarks, but as the conversation developed, the gossip grew crueler and more offensive.

I felt sick hearing some of the comments, but I was afraid to stand up against my new friends. I wish I had, because as I tolerated their jokes, I was eventually tempted to laugh and make my own comments. I began to rationalize why it would have been fine. Nobody but the tech crew would

have heard me, and I wanted to fit in with the people around me.

As hard as it was, I knew that backbiting about those onstage wasn't right, and I chose not to gossip.

After the rehearsal we learned that everything we had said over the headsets had been broadcast backstage. All 60 or so of the cast members had heard us talking. Some were angry, upset, or embarrassed. No one was impressed.

Later, while I was talking with one of my friends about what had happened, she said, "Everyone knows

you'd never say anything like that."

Her comment shocked me, and I realized the significance of the choice I had made. If I had chosen to join in with the gossip, what would that have said about me? What would that have said about the Church?

I'm grateful for the choice I made in that dark, little theater, even when I thought others wouldn't know, because it has opened blessings of friendship, peace, and confidence that I would have lost had I chosen to gossip. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.



We “SPEAK” after These Things

The words we use reflect the feelings of our heart and who we really are.



While serving as a bishop, a wonderful young man came to my office for an interview. As we visited, he mentioned that his only major problem was swearing. He constantly heard vulgar language around him, and he too had started swearing. He said he had been trying to quit but was unsuccessful, and he wanted some counsel on how he might stop using bad language.

I immediately thought of suggestions similar to what is now found in *For the Strength of Youth*: “If you have developed the habit of using language that is not in keeping with these standards—such as swearing, mocking, gossiping, or speaking in anger to others—you can change. Pray for help. Ask your family and friends to support you.”¹ I wish this counsel had been available in *For the Strength of Youth* at that time.

An Experience from My Youth

I did tell this young man of an experience I had as a youth in an environment where inappropriate language was often used. It seemed that whenever I heard any type of profanity, those words would take hold in my mind more easily than the



By Larry M. Gibson
First Counselor in the
Young Men General
Presidency

good thoughts I wanted to have. A wonderful priesthood leader told me that the mind was like a miraculous storage device and that we could remove inappropriate thoughts by quickly overwriting them with things that were praiseworthy.

A friend and I decided to do just that. We memorized two hymns, “I Need Thee Every Hour” (*Hymns*, no. 98) and “More Holiness Give Me” (*Hymns*, no. 131), and the thirteenth article of faith. We agreed that if either of us said something inappropriate, we would immediately sing one of the hymns or quote the article of faith.

We quickly realized we did not want to sing the hymns aloud in certain places. We were too embarrassed! So we quoted the thirteenth article of faith, emphasizing the part, “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” It worked! We discovered that when we would repeat it, the inappropriate thoughts would disappear. By changing one word, we also created a simple motto: “We *speak* after these things!” When either of us said this phrase, we would think, “Are my words true, chaste,

benevolent, virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy?” (see Articles of Faith 1:13). If they were not, we knew we had work to do.

What We Can Do

We live in a time when there is much that is profane, crude, and vulgar. It seems nearly impossible to completely shield ourselves from hearing or seeing things we wish to avoid. The key is for us to ensure that we do not become the carrier of things profane, crude, or vulgar. Paul must have felt this when he said, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth” (Ephesians 4:29).

I have watched some youth use inappropriate language because they thought it would help them fit in and others use it because of a desire to stand out. In fact, these seem to be the major reasons why youth slip into this habit.

I am most impressed with those youth who “dare to be different,”² like one young man with a non-member friend who cursed regularly. Each time his friend would swear, he would good-naturedly ask him to stop. Eventually his friend did stop.

The friend was so impressed with him and the way he lived his life that he wanted to learn more about the Church. Soon after, he was baptized.

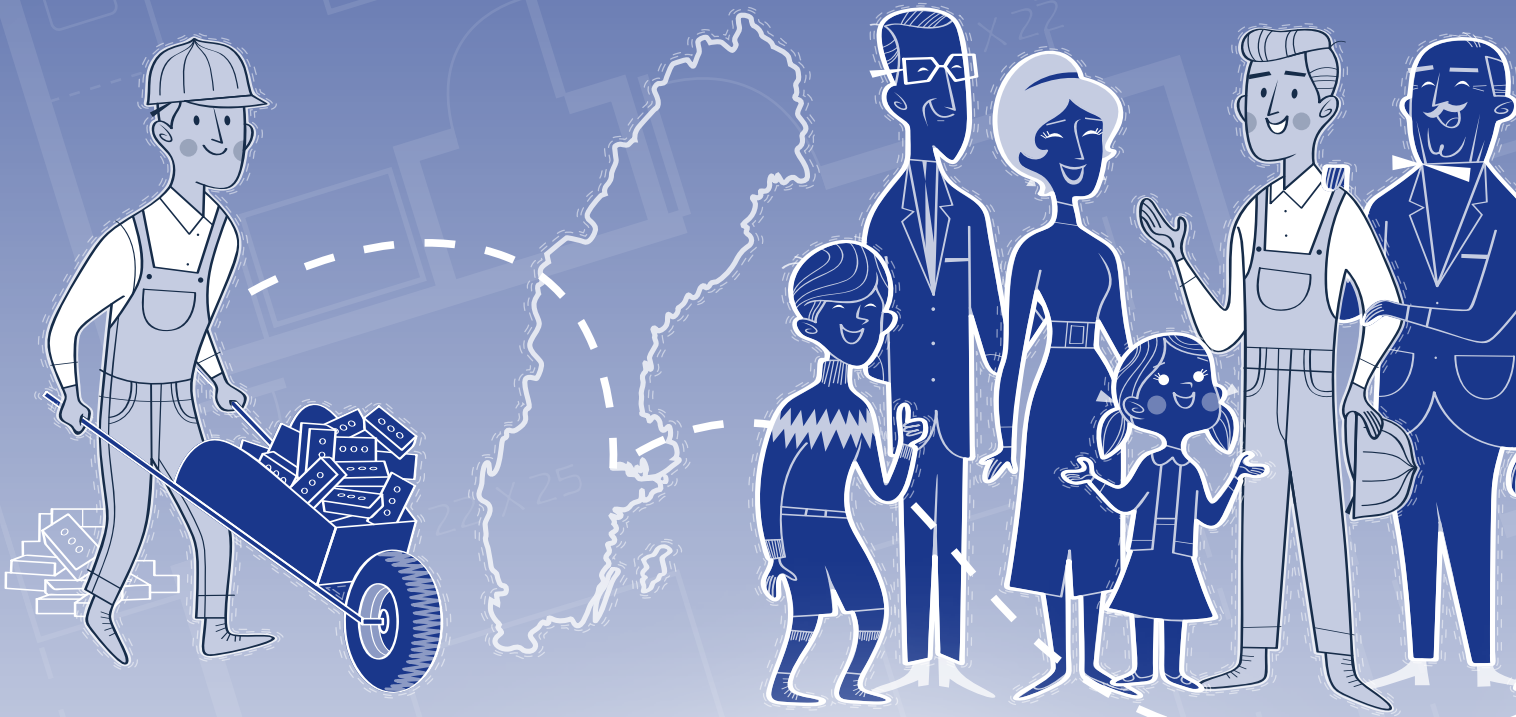
What we feel in our hearts is what we think about, and what we think about is what we speak about. Thus, it is true that the words we use reflect the feelings of our heart and who we really are.

As is so well stated in *For the Strength of Youth*: “Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Good language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others invites the Spirit to be with you.”³

Each of us can enjoy the blessings of having the Spirit *always* with us, as promised when we partake of the sacrament each Sabbath day. It will depend on us—on how we act, what we do, and, yes, even what we say. It is my hope that we will use our words not to profane or gossip but to show that we are followers of our Savior, even Jesus Christ. ■

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (booklet, 2011), 21.
2. L. Tom Perry, “The Tradition of a Balanced, Righteous Life,” *Liahona*, Aug. 2011, 33; *Ensign*, Aug. 2011, 49.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 20.



WORK SERVICE

AND SPIRITUAL SELF-RELIANCE

The blessings of hard work and service go beyond just temporal help.



**By Elder
Per G. Malm**
Of the Seventy

Bricklaying at 16

Learning how to work hard is essential while in your youth. Hard physical work is a part of life. I learned that lesson early when I was called on a special Church-service mission to help build meeting-houses. I was only 16 years old and had just graduated from my school. I was assigned to the bricklaying crew. It was hard work, but I loved it.

We were put in groups and traveled from Sweden, where I lived, to several other countries close by. At each location we would make arrangements to stay with a member from the local ward. I was struck by the willingness of good, solid Church members

to open their homes and contribute whatever they could. Even if their own finances were not in abundance, they desired to serve.

Most of the young men called to these Church-service missions were older, but in my case I was 16. I later served a proselyting mission when I was 19. When my brother and I received the callings, my father came to us and said, “Even though it may be a temporary interruption of your continued studies, I want to have sons who learn early to serve in the Church. Gaining that experience will be a foundation for the way you can approach life.” Today, answering the call to serve a proselyting mission is a priority for young men.



When I received the call to serve this mission, I was a little bit nervous, but I did not hesitate to accept it. I had been taught from a young age to say yes when asked to serve in any capacity for the Lord's work. So, more than nervousness, I felt excitement. It had been a great experience to help build meetinghouses for the Church.

Gaining Testimony and Self-Reliance

I know that it is through serving others that we can gain a love for and testimony of the gospel. During the time that I was away from my family as a young man, I learned that I needed to take responsibility for my life—not only physically but also spiritually. I also learned how to really listen to and follow the promptings of the Spirit.

But those feelings and abilities didn't come only during my time as a Church-service missionary. My testimony and my desire to serve started before that. As a youth I was shy, and I even had challenges speaking because of my insecurity. But gradually, as I involved myself in service, I was strengthened—step by step. I was given opportunities to learn, serve, and grow through callings and assignments in our branch. I became anxiously engaged

(see D&C 58:27). I learned that in life, where you start is not where you will end up; the starting point is the beginning of a life of change.

A Promise to Help Us

The key to making that change is to always remember who we are. We are sons and daughters of Heavenly Father. Each of us was born with a promise: when we make and remain true to covenants and do our best with our circumstances, talents, and abilities, then we shall return to our Heavenly Father with honor. That is part of our eternal perspective, and we need to remember that we are not alone. Heavenly Father will give us the power and ability to face our challenges.


It was through the experiences I had while serving early in life that I began to establish my own confidence in the Lord. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 encourages us to let our “confidence wax strong in the presence of God.” When you are involved in the service of the Lord, you will feel of His Spirit, you will feel of His love, and you will come to understand that, even though this life is a test, you are not alone. When you live righteously and you serve, you will be given help and powers beyond your own. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN BEACH



By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles
*The members of
the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles are
special witnesses
of Jesus Christ.*

Why is it important **NOT** to be **JEALOUS** of others?

A colorful illustration of a young girl and a young boy. The girl, on the left, has brown hair in a braid and is wearing a green top. The boy, on the right, has dark hair and is wearing a green t-shirt. They are both smiling. The girl is holding a silver trophy that depicts a runner. The background is a soft, painterly mix of green and blue.

We are not in a race against each other to see who is the wealthiest or the most talented or the most beautiful or even the most blessed.

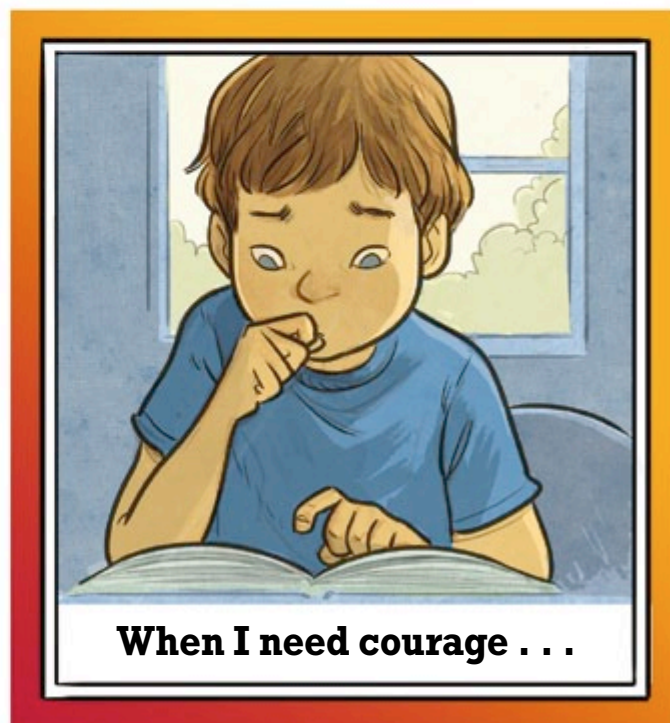
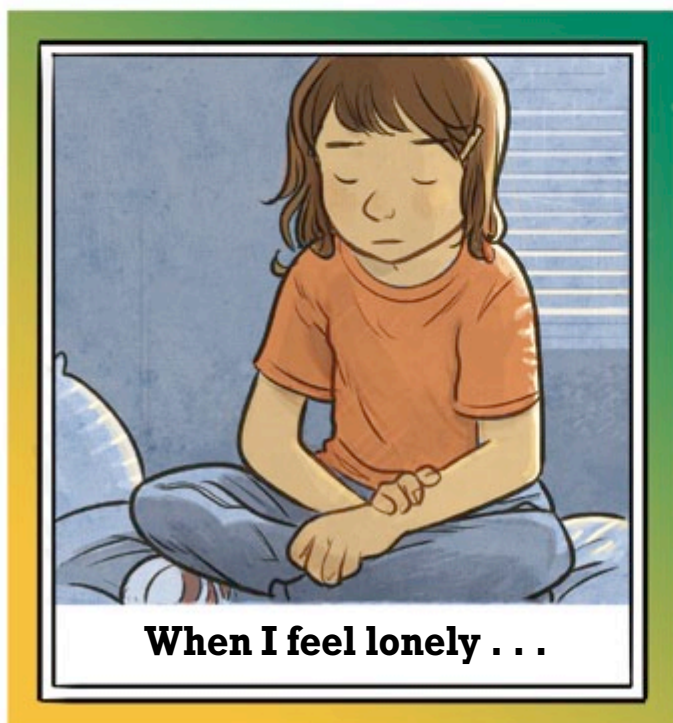
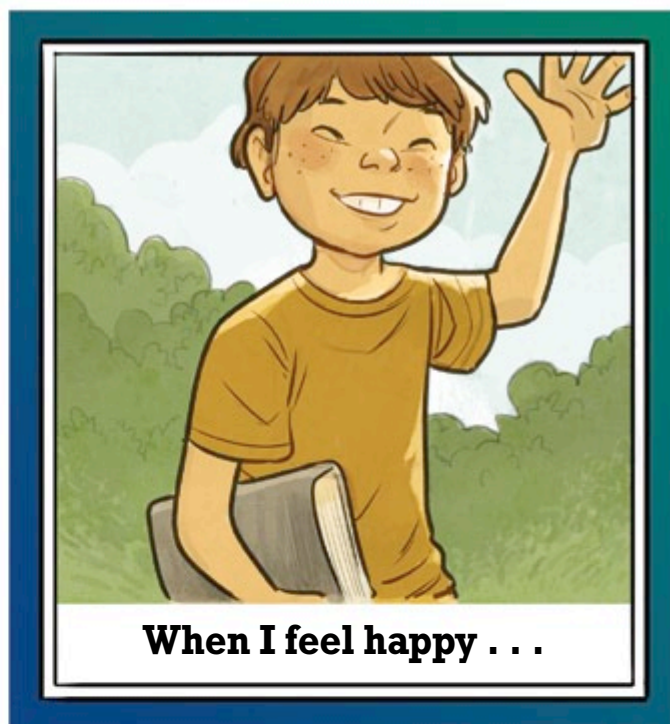
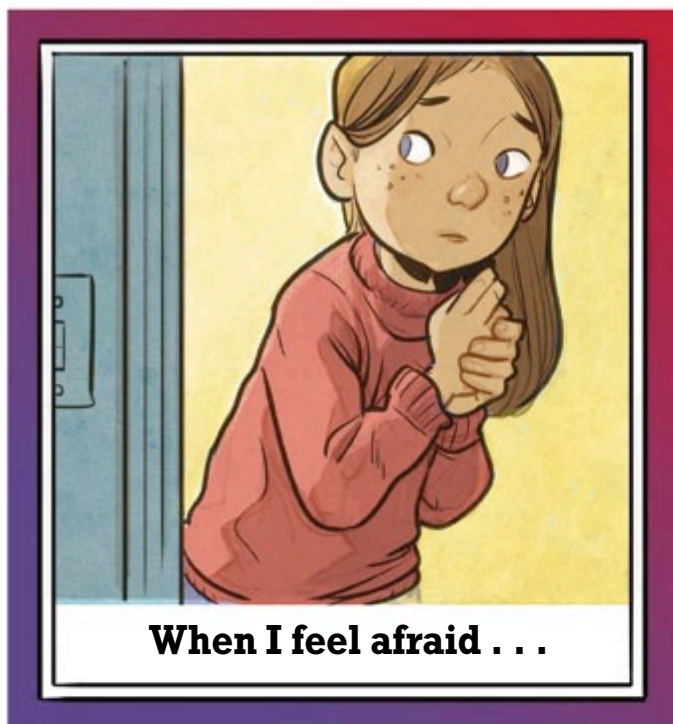
The race we are *really* in is the race against sin.

Coveting, pouting, or tearing others down does *not* make you a better person.

Be kind, and be grateful that God is kind. It is a happy way to live.

Scripture Cards

The scriptures can help us in happy times and in challenging times. Cut out these cards and place them in your scriptures. You can also write your own favorite scripture verses on each card!



I CAN READ . . .

- Psalm 118:24
- John 13:17
- Alma 26:35
- _____
- _____
- _____

I CAN READ . . .

- Joshua 1:9
- 2 Kings 6:14–17
- Doctrine and Covenants 50:41–43
- _____
- _____
- _____

I CAN READ . . .

- Daniel 6
- 1 Nephi 3:7
- Alma 56:44–48
- _____
- _____
- _____

I CAN READ . . .

- Isaiah 41:10
- 3 Nephi 17:18–25
- Doctrine and Covenants 84:88
- _____
- _____
- _____

Alpacas on the Loose!

That last alpaca wouldn't budge. What was I supposed to do?

By Romney P., age 12, California, USA

"Heav'nly Father, now I pray, guide and guard me ev'ry day" ("Heavenly Father, Now I Pray," Children's Songbook, 19).

Last summer I worked for my neighbor. She has a big alpaca farm right next to her walnut orchard. Alpacas look kind of like llamas, only smaller.

My job was to clean out their

stalls every day. I liked the work, even if it wasn't easy.

One hot summer afternoon I showed up and my neighbor was gone. That wasn't a problem, though. She already told me I could clean the stalls any time I chose, even if she was away.

While I was cleaning, one of the alpacas knocked over a gate. In a few seconds all 14 alpacas escaped into the yard and orchard!

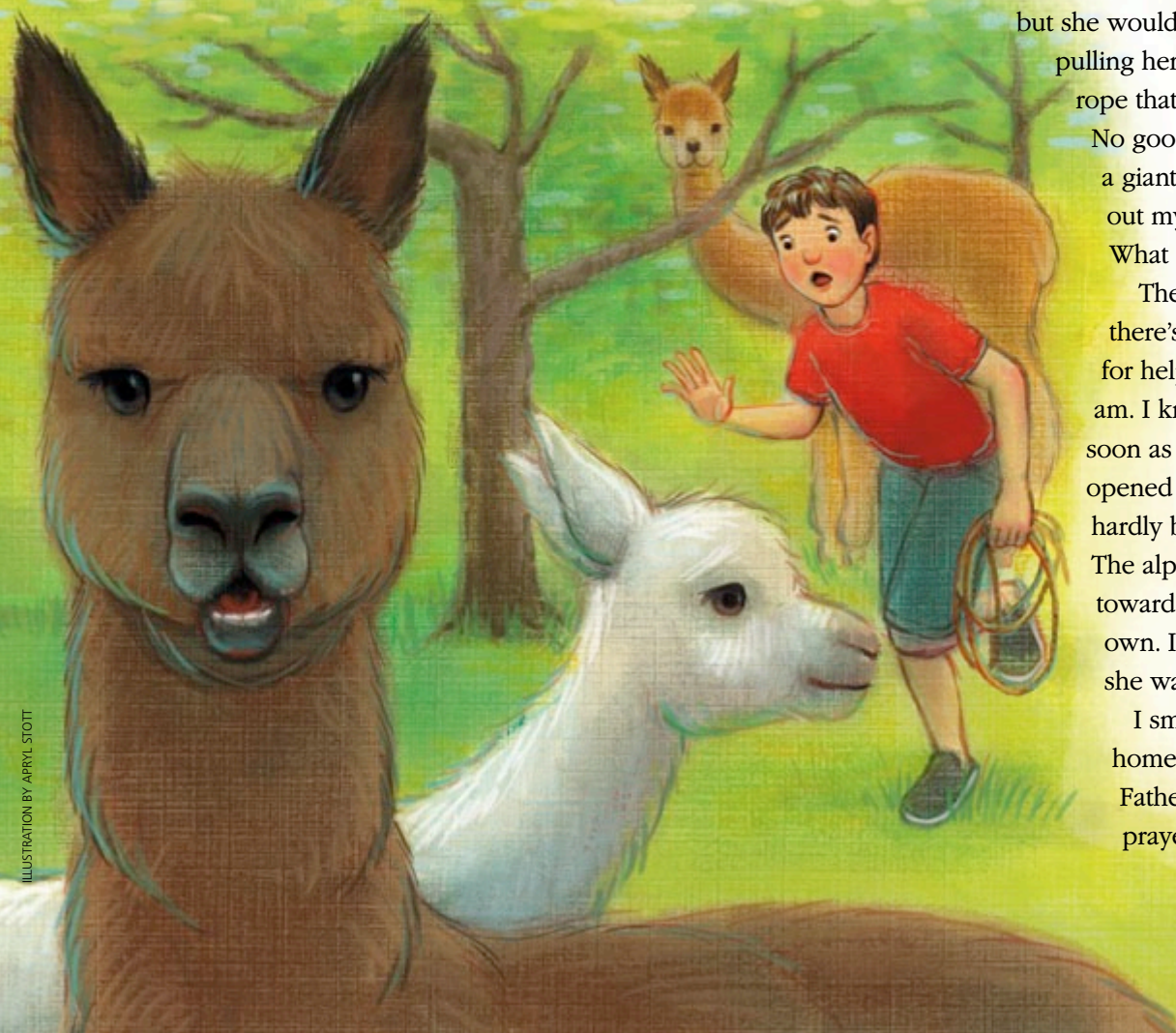
I couldn't believe it! I felt sick to my stomach. How would I ever get them back by myself?

I started scrambling as fast as I could, rounding them up one or two at a time. Fifteen minutes later my heart was pounding from all the running, but the last one finally went back into the stall. Whew!

Then I turned and saw a pregnant alpaca lying down by a fruit tree 30 feet away. Ugh. Still one more to go. I tried scaring her back into the stall, but she wouldn't budge. Then I tried pulling her with a harness and a rope that I found in the garage. No good. She lay there like a giant pile of bricks. I blew out my breath in frustration. What else could I try?

Then I remembered there's always a way to ask for help, no matter where I am. I knelt down to pray. As soon as I finished praying, I opened my eyes and could hardly believe what I saw. The alpaca was walking back toward the stall, all on her own. I opened the gate, and she walked right in.

I smiled as I rode my bike home. I knew Heavenly Father had answered my prayer. ■





Exploring NAUVOO

Come along to see an important place in Church history!

By Jennifer Maddy

The dust gently rises as you walk down the street. You can see sunlight dancing on the Mississippi River. Then a horse clops by pulling a wagon. Have you gone back in time? No, you're standing on Parley Street in Nauvoo, Illinois.

In 1839 the Prophet Joseph Smith and early members of the Church settled Nauvoo and built a beautiful city and temple. They lived here until the mid-1840s, when they started their journey west.

The Saints even made their own fancy buttons.



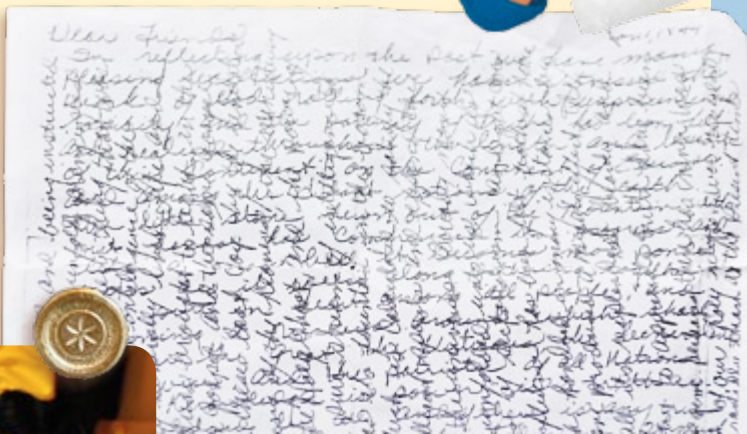
The word Nauvoo is from a Hebrew word that means "beautiful place." Nauvoo had beautiful gardens, brick buildings, and green fields.





Many old buildings in Nauvoo have been restored. Missionaries dressed in 1840s clothing tell visitors about the early Saints. You can try a gingerbread cookie at the Scovil Bakery or see how shoes are made at the boot shop.

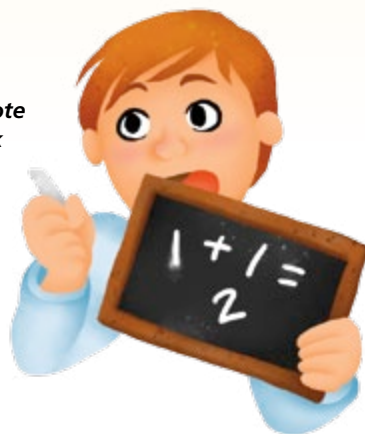
Paper and postage were expensive, so people used "cross writing" in their letters. They would write one direction, then turn the paper and write across it. Try it and see if you can read your writing!



It took three people to make rope the way the pioneers did it!



In school, children wrote with chalk on slates.

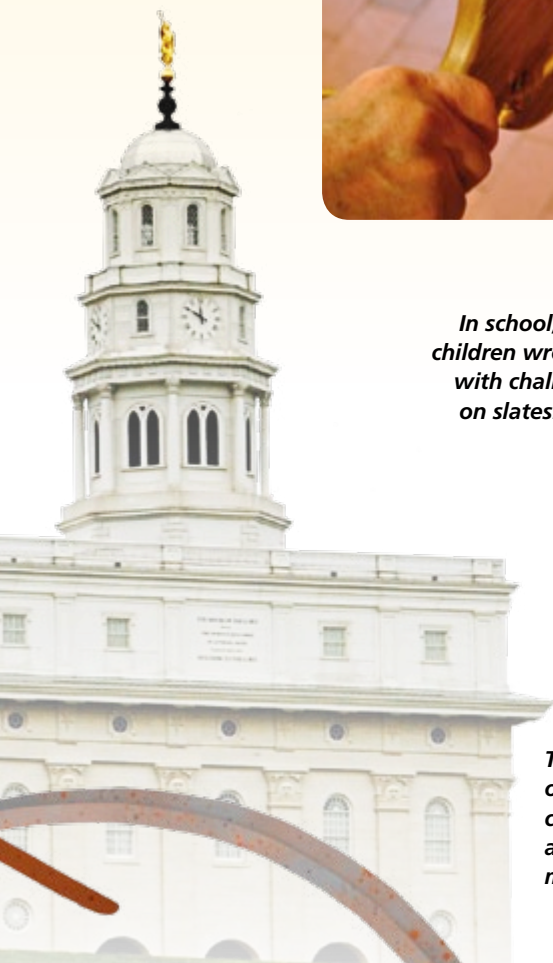


The Nauvoo Temple stands on a hill overlooking the city and river. Read more about the temple in next month's issue!



Candles were made by tying string around a rock and then dipping it in animal fat over and over.

The light from this lantern made fun patterns on the walls and ceilings.



Heavenly Father Hears and Answers My Prayers



Have you ever had a problem that you felt very worried about? Alma and his missionary companions did. They had been trying to teach the Zoramite people about Jesus Christ, but the Zoramites would not believe them. The Zoramites thought they were better than other people. When they prayed at church, they went up onto a tall stand called the Rameumptom and said the exact same prayer each time.

Alma decided to pray for help. He told Heavenly Father how sad he was

that the Zoramites were so proud and unbelieving. He asked Heavenly Father to comfort him and his companions and give them strength in their difficult missionary work.

Heavenly Father answered Alma's prayer. He comforted Alma and his companions and helped them feel strong. (See Alma 31.)

Heavenly Father always hears our prayers, and He answers us in different ways. His answers may not come right away or in the way that we expect, but He always answers us because He loves us. ■

LET'S TALK

What other scripture stories do you know where people prayed and received an answer? You can read one of these stories as a family and talk about some of the ways Heavenly Father answers our prayers.

How has Heavenly Father answered your prayers, and how did you recognize His answer? What problems do you have now that you could pray about?

SONG AND SCRIPTURE

- "A Child's Prayer," *Children's Songbook*, 12–13
- Doctrine and Covenants 112:10

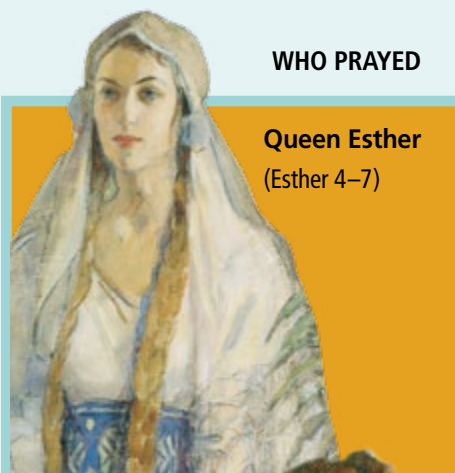
PRAYERS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Below are some examples of people from the scriptures who prayed for help with different problems and received answers. Find the boxes that go together from each column. Use the scripture references beside each picture to help you.

WHO PRAYED

WHY HE OR SHE PRAYED

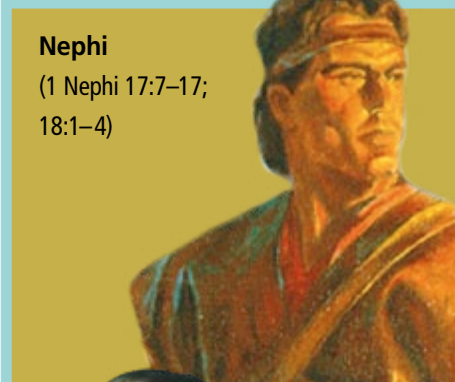
WHAT HAPPENED



Queen Esther
(Esther 4–7)

They were afraid their language would be changed so they would not be able to understand each other.

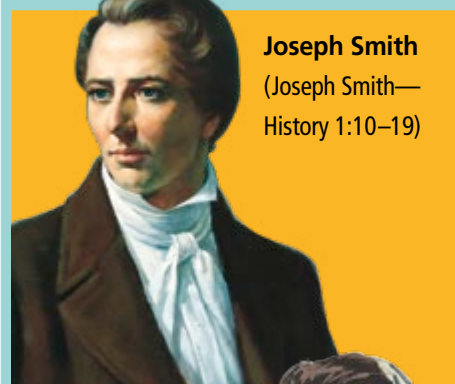
Heavenly Father told him how to make tools and build a ship.



Nephi
(1 Nephi 17:7–17;
18:1–4)

He needed to know which church he should join.

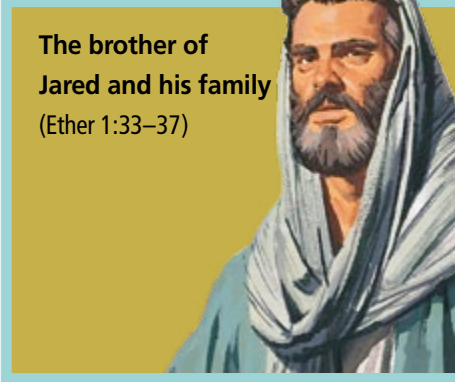
The king let her live, and she persuaded him to save her people.



Joseph Smith
(Joseph Smith—
History 1:10–19)

She needed to persuade the king to protect her people from being destroyed, but she could be killed for going before him without being invited.

The Lord had mercy on them and did not change their language.



The brother of Jared and his family
(Ether 1:33–37)

He needed to build a ship to take his family to a new land, but he didn't know how to build one and didn't have the tools he needed.

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him not to join any of the churches.

LEFT: ILLUSTRATION BY BRAD TEARE; RIGHT: QUEEN ESTHER, BY MINERVA K. TEICHERT © WILLIAM AND BETTY STOKES; DETAIL FROM NEPHI WRITING ON THE GOLD PLATES, BY PAUL MANN © 1988; JOSEPH SMITH, JR., BY ALVIN GITTINGS © 1959; IRI; ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN © 1999; IRI

Hi! I'm Will from Taiwan



Do you have any favorite family activities? Will and his brother, Allen, enjoy spending Saturdays with their family exploring new places on the island of Taiwan, where they live.

From an interview with Amie Jane Leavitt

Before we go to bed, we read the scriptures as a family. Allen really likes the story of Moses and the brass serpent. My favorite story is when the Lord warns Lehi to leave Jerusalem and tells Nephi to build a ship to go to the promised land.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WILL'S FAMILY; EXCEPT AS NOTED;
PHOTOGRAPHS OF DRAGON AND MOONCAKE BY ISTOCKPHOTO;
PHOTOGRAPH OF FOOTBALL BY JOHN LUKE; PHOTOGRAPH OF TAIPEI
TAIWAN TEMPLE BY WILLIAM FLOYD HOLDMAN



WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Will: play computer games, Frisbee, and soccer

Allen: read books, draw, and go on walks with my grandfather

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE COLORS?

Will: orange

Allen: all the colors in the rainbow

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE ANIMALS?

Will: dinosaurs

Allen: the orangutans and giraffes I see at the zoo



LET'S EXPLORE!

- Taiwan is a tropical island off the coast of China.
- Most people live in big cities and speak Mandarin Chinese. More than 90 percent of people are Buddhist or Taoist.
- The Church has one temple in Taiwan, in the capital city of Taipei.



Taiwan has many fun holidays and festivals. In September, we celebrate the Moon Festival. Our entire family gets together, and we eat yummy moon cakes, which are pastries filled with red bean or lotus seed paste.



In Taiwan, we often get a chance to do missionary work. In school, I had to teach my class something I knew about honesty. I taught them how to sing the Primary song "Stand for the Right."

After school, my brother and I walk home with our grandfather. We do our homework and eat dinner with my mom and dad. My favorite food is beef noodles, and Allen's is fried rice. We both like sweet food too.



OUR PAGE



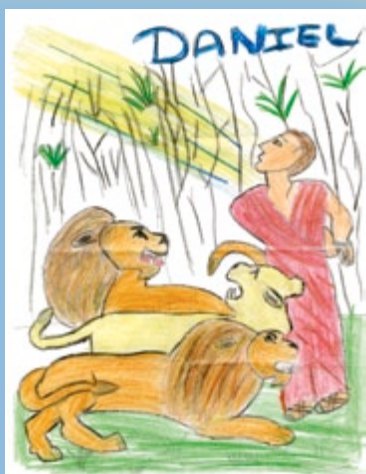
Children of the Castellón Ward in Spain learn in Primary to pray, to read and understand the scriptures, and to serve their neighbors.



Francisco P., age 4, from Chile, loves to visit the Santiago Chile Temple gardens. He is learning to give talks in Primary and always says his prayers. He likes to help during family home evening.



Giordano V., age 5, Peru



Daniel, by Dali M., age 10, Mexico



Kayque M., age 5, from Brazil, is a very bright and alert young boy, even though he cannot walk because of cerebral palsy. He likes going to church. He loves the hymns and always sings in sacrament meeting. The first hymn he learned was "I Am a Child of God." Kayque is loving, likes to give compliments, and is a great blessing to his family.



I want to share my testimony: I know that God lives, that He hears and answers our prayers if we have faith. I know that Jesus Christ loves us, and I know that the Book of Mormon is true.

Elisa F., age 11, Brazil



I would like to share what I felt on the day I was baptized. As I was going down the stairs into the baptismal font, I felt a voice inside me say, "Paula, you are doing what is right." I was so happy to be baptized!

Paula G., age 9, Argentina

Our Answer

By Tatiana Agüero

Based on a true story

“He will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

I still remember the first time I saw the two men standing on our doorstep in Peru. They were wearing white shirts and ties, and they were so tall! I thought they had warm smiles.

“They must be nice,” I thought. My parents must have thought so too because soon the missionaries were coming to our home often.

I loved listening to the missionaries and always felt they were telling the truth.

“Don’t you want to be baptized, Mamá?” I asked my mother one day.

She smiled. “I do. But I want to be baptized with your father.”

I nodded. I was nine years old—old enough to be baptized. But I wanted to be baptized with my father as well, and he wasn’t sure if he believed what the missionaries taught.

“Keep praying, and the time will come,” Mamá said, as if she could read my thoughts.

I knew that the missionaries had challenged my father to follow the

invitation at the end of the Book of Mormon to ask God with a sincere heart if the gospel is true. So one evening I decided to help my father with that challenge. I asked if we could pray together the way the missionaries had asked. We went into my room and knelt down. He asked me who was going to say the prayer.

“You say it, please,” I said.

My father started praying to Heavenly Father. When he asked if we should be baptized, a feeling of love and peace wrapped itself around us. It was so strong that my father stopped speaking for a minute. We knew we needed to be baptized.

I’ll never forget the look in my father’s eyes after he ended that prayer.

“We have our answer,” he whispered, giving me a hug.

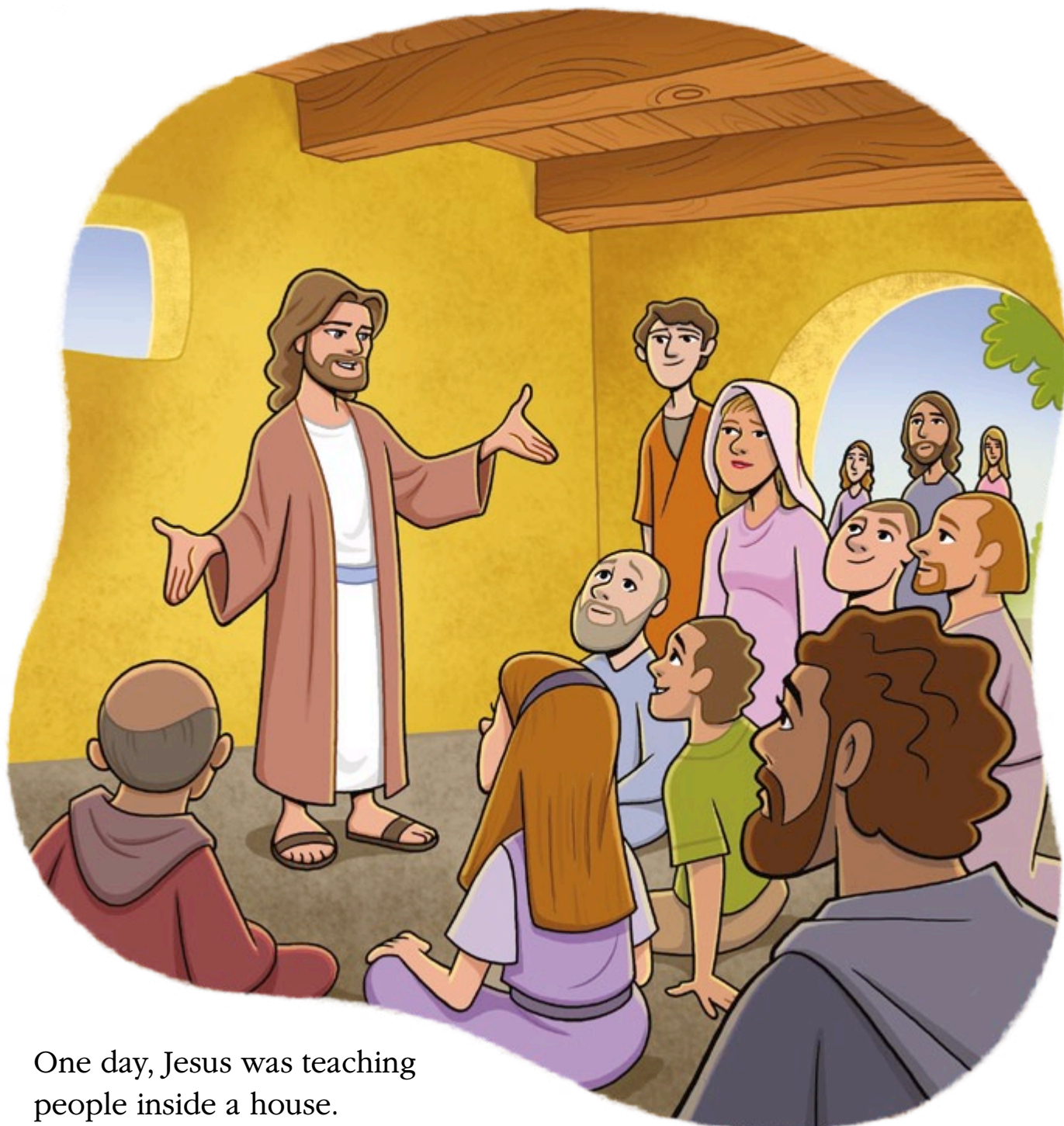
I smiled as I buried my head in his shoulder. The Holy Ghost had made it possible for us to know the truth (see Moroni 10:5). ■

*A simple prayer
changed my family
forever.*



Jesus Heals a Sick Man

By Margo Mae
From Luke 5:17-25

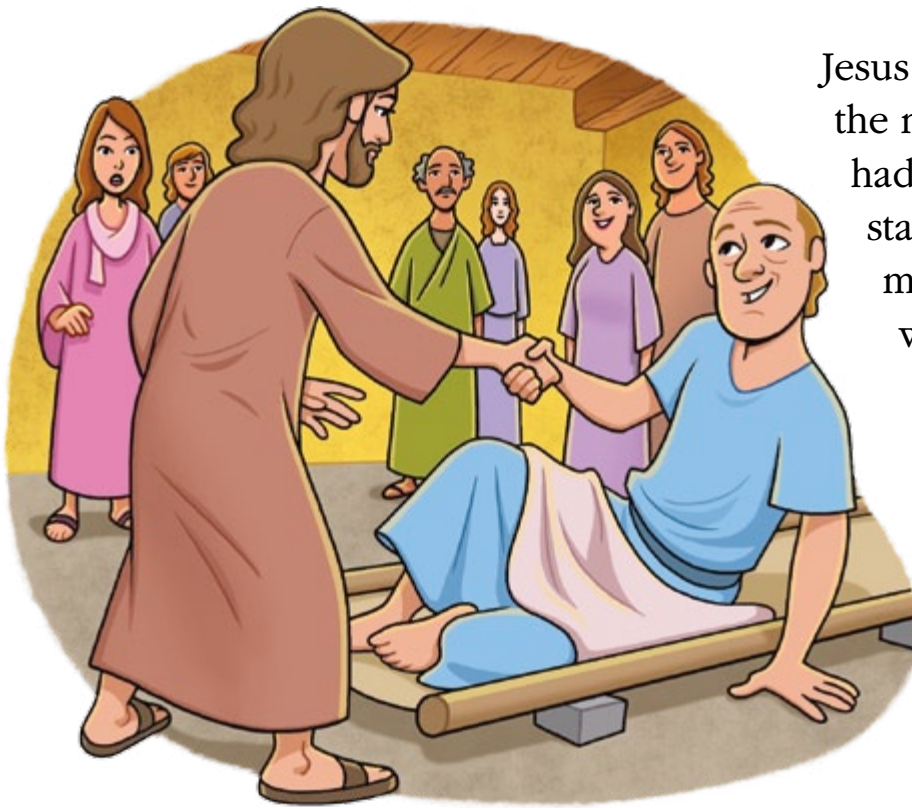


One day, Jesus was teaching people inside a house.

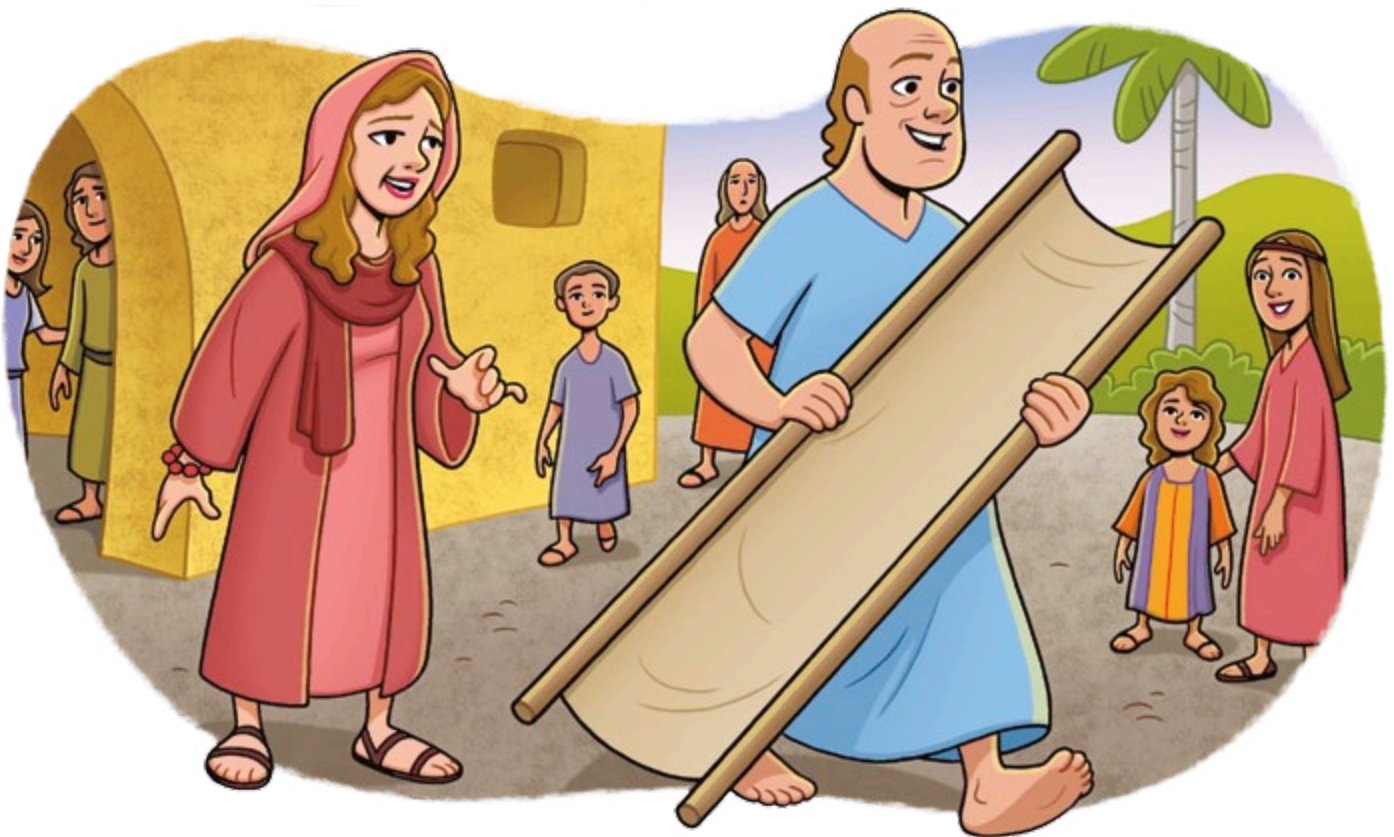
Outside the house was a man who could not walk. His friends had carried him to the house so Jesus could heal him. But the house was so crowded that his friends couldn't carry him inside.



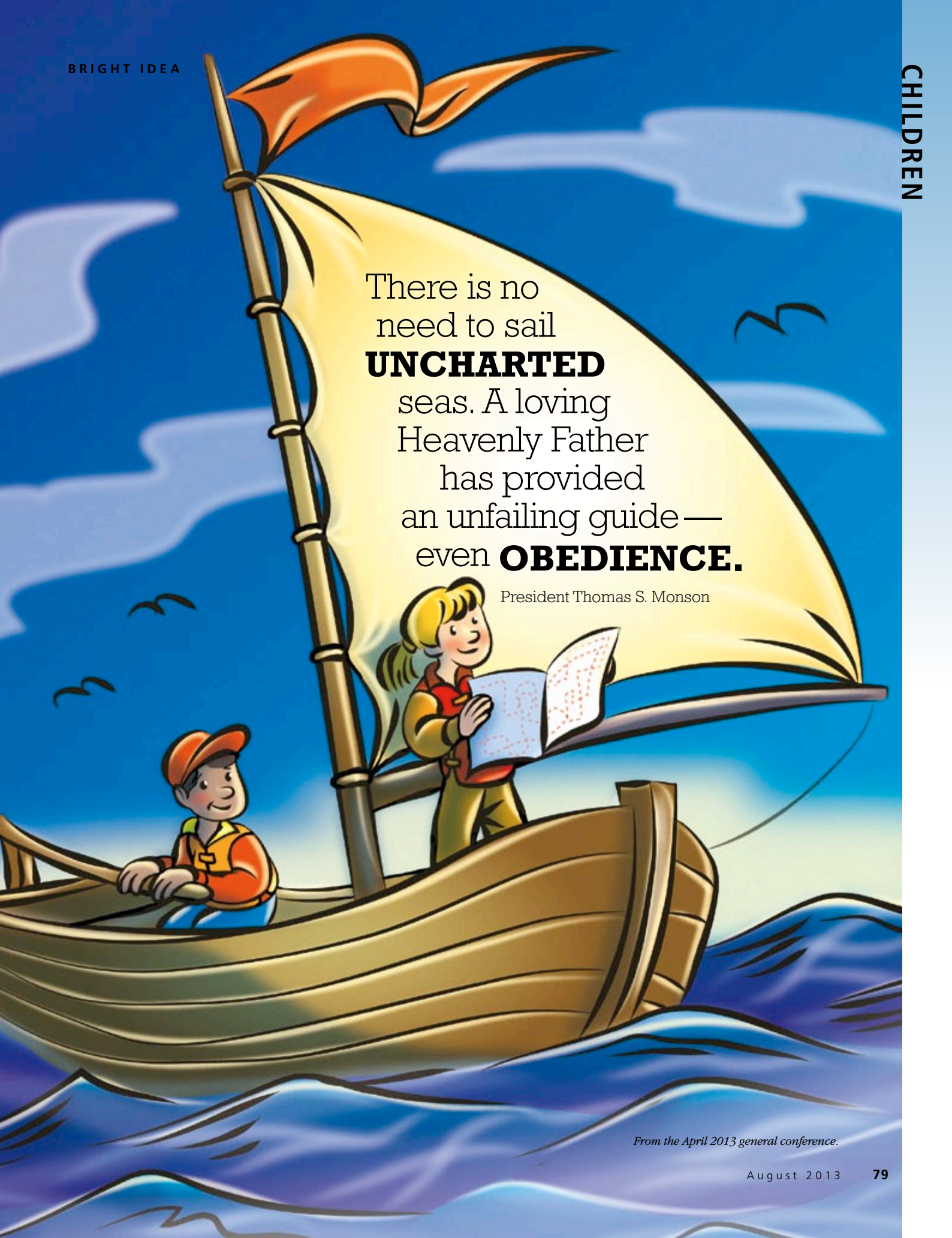
The man's friends carried him onto the top of the house. Then they made a hole in the roof. They lowered the man and his bed into the house so Jesus could see him.



Jesus saw how much faith the man and his friends had. He told the man to stand up and walk. The man stood up. He could walk again! Picking up his bed, he went happily home.



That day, Jesus Christ showed His great power by healing the man. He wanted people to know He had power to do many wonderful things. ■



There is no
need to sail
UNCHARTED
seas. A loving
Heavenly Father
has provided
an unfailing guide —
even **OBEDIENCE.**

President Thomas S. Monson

From the April 2013 general conference.

GRACE FOR MOTHER DUCK AND ME

By Rosie Kaufman

One spring afternoon I was packing my car to begin shuttling my five young children to and from lessons and practices. As I loaded football cleats and dance bags, I noticed a mother duck and her ducklings waddling down the sidewalk of our suburban neighborhood.

As I watched, she began to cross the road. Unfortunately, she chose a gutter grate for her crosswalk, and as she passed over it, her babies followed. Four of her ducklings slipped helplessly between the bars of the grate.

When the mother reached the other side, she realized she was missing some of her little ones and could hear their muffled peeps. Totally oblivious of her mistake, she crossed back across the drainage grate, looking for her missing ducklings and losing two more. With horror and some disgust at her poor judgment, I went to the grate to see if I could lift it. Although I used all my strength, the grate barely budged, and I was late to pick up one of my kids.

Figuring I would have to fix the situation later when I wasn't so rushed, I hopped in the car while muttering self-righteously, "She doesn't deserve to be a mother."

During the next hour and a half, I made many of my recurring parenting mistakes. These are mistakes I have begged forgiveness



Just like the mother duck, I sometimes come up short. And that's when the Savior steps in.

for many times from both my children and my Father in Heaven. Each time I resolve to do better and not to fall prey to these weaknesses again. When I snapped at one of my kids for teasing another, my words echoed loudly in my ears, "She doesn't deserve to be a mother."

Suddenly I felt overwhelming compassion for that mother duck. She was trying to navigate the world with the instincts she was given, just as I was. But sometimes those instincts simply weren't enough, and it was our children who suffered.

I resolved to get the grate off somehow and lift the ducklings out. As I rounded the corner to our street, I saw a small group gathered. My neighbor had lifted the grate, climbed inside the drainage tunnel, and was gently lifting the ducklings out to safety. The frightened little birds scrambled to find their mother, who was pacing nervously in a nearby bush. She hadn't asked for help, but my neighbor had stepped in when her protection was simply not enough. I was overcome with emotion as I thought of the Savior doing the same for my children and me.

Sometimes we come up short, even when we have the best intentions and try our hardest. However, the Savior's "grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before [Him]" (Ether 12:27). It comforts me to know that my shortcomings will not ruin my children and that they will be the recipients of love, peace, understanding, and grace from our Savior. He "reaches my reaching"¹ and wants my family and me to succeed. Our shortcomings will not prevail when we humble ourselves and stand with the Lord by our side. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" *Hymns*, no. 129.

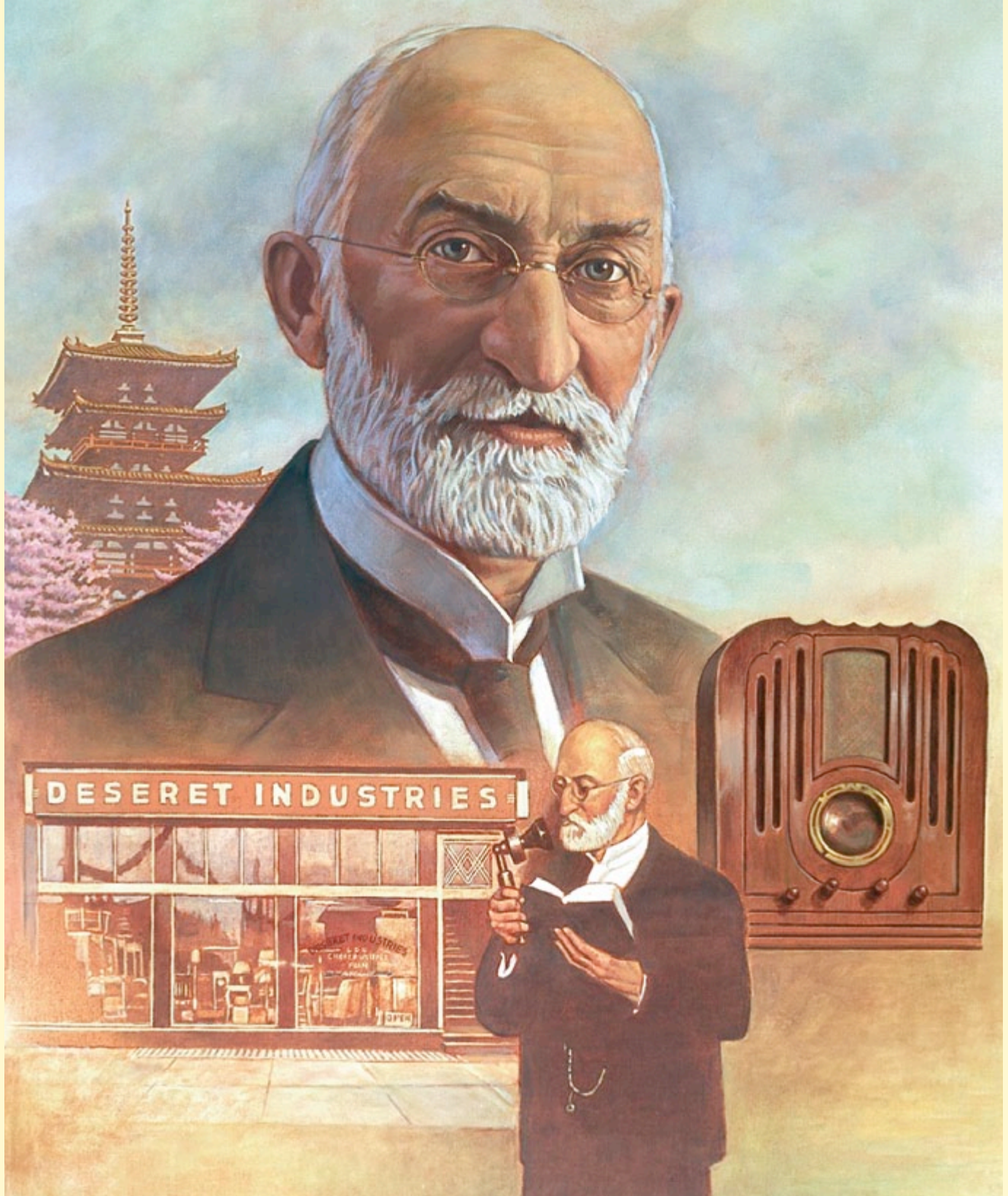
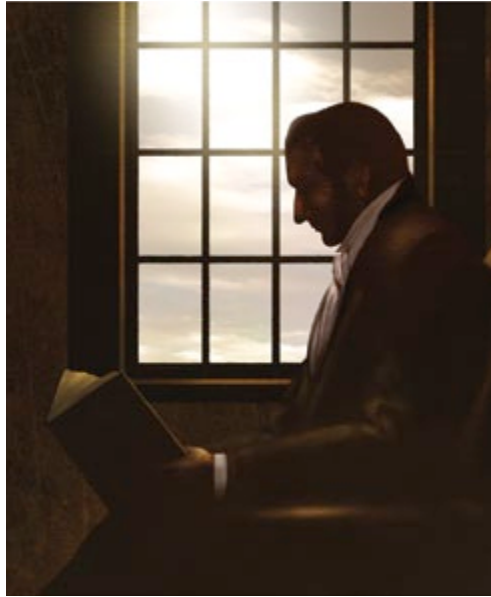


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT T. BARRETT

HEBER J. GRANT

Heber J. Grant organized and presided over the first mission in **Japan**. He was the President of the Church when the Church started to use **radio** to broadcast talks. When members needed help during the Great Depression, President Grant formed the welfare program of the Church, including **Deseret Industries**. This organization still collects items and sells or donates them to people in need.



*W*e should recognize that the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in His own time and in His own way," writes Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "Many people do not understand this principle. They believe that when they are ready and when it suits their convenience, they can call upon the Lord and He will immediately respond, even in the precise way they have prescribed. Revelation does not come that way." To read more about how revelation comes to us, see "In His Own Time, in His Own Way," page 24.