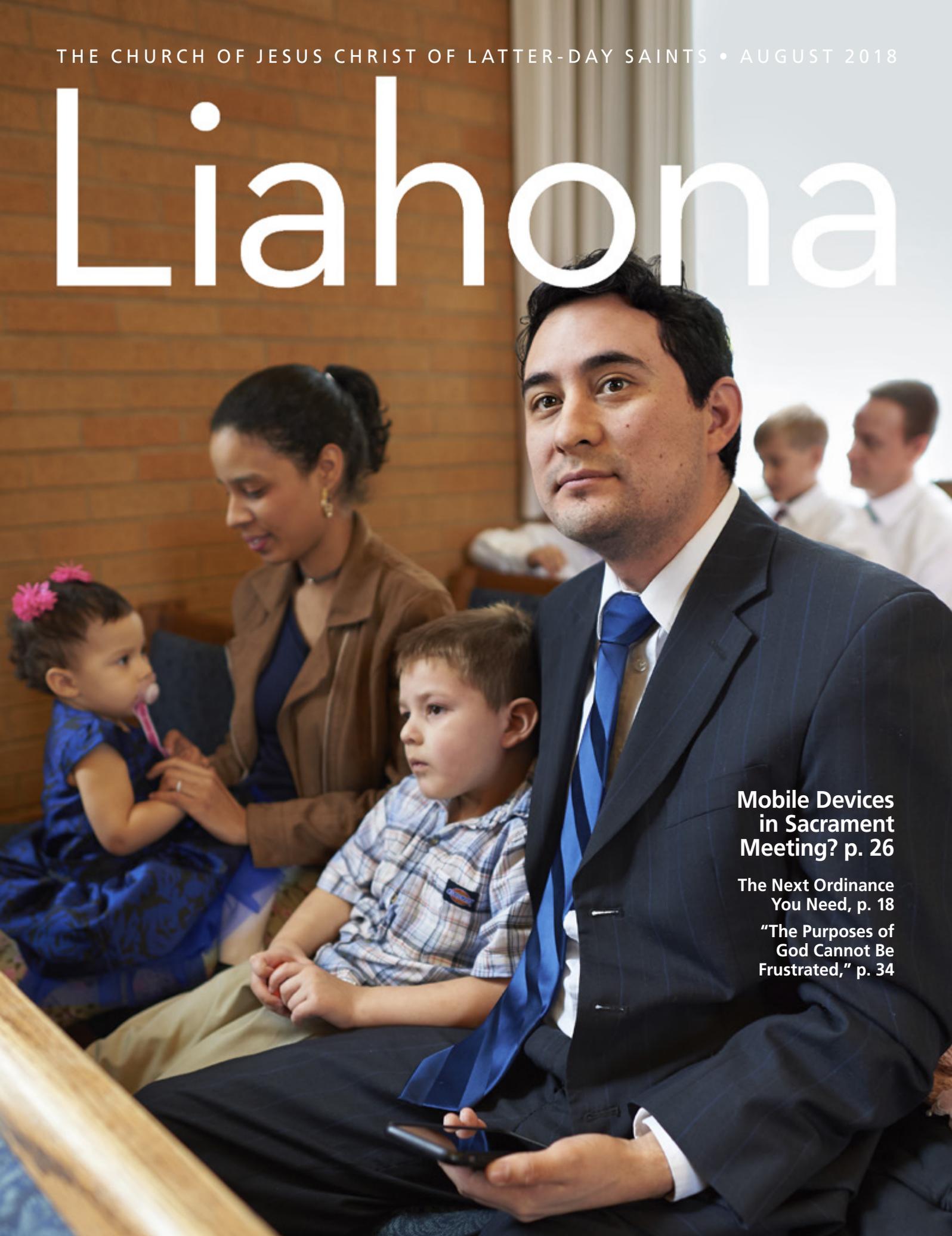


# Liahona



**Mobile Devices  
in Sacrament  
Meeting? p. 26**

**The Next Ordinance  
You Need, p. 18**

**"The Purposes of  
God Cannot Be  
Frustrated," p. 34**



“WE QUALIFY FOR  
**THE CLEANSING POWER  
OF JESUS CHRIST**  
WHEN WE PARTAKE OF THE  
SACRAMENT WORTHILY.”

ELDER DALE G. RENLUND AND  
SISTER RUTH L. RENLUND

*From “The Beautiful Gift of the Sacrament,” page 18.*



18

FEATURE ARTICLES

**10 The Spiritual Foundations of Church Financial Self-Reliance**  
By Bishop Gérald Caussé  
*In its finance and investment policies, the Church practices the principles it teaches to its members.*



ON THE COVER  
Photograph by Leslie Nilsson.

**18 The Beautiful Gift of the Sacrament**  
By Elder Dale G. and Sister Ruth L. Renlund  
*As we partake of the sacrament worthily, we can renew the blessings of baptism over and over again.*

**26 Worshipping in a Digital Age**  
By Adam C. Olson  
*Electronic devices can either enhance or inhibit our sacrament meeting worship.*

**30 Teaching with Tech: Engaging Youth in a Digital World**  
By Brian K. Ashton  
*Rather than forbid the use of technology in the classroom, we can teach youth how to use it for good.*

**34 Saints: The Story of the Church—Chapter 6: The Gift and Power of God**  
*Joseph is given the power to translate again, this time with the help of Oliver Cowdery.*

DEPARTMENTS

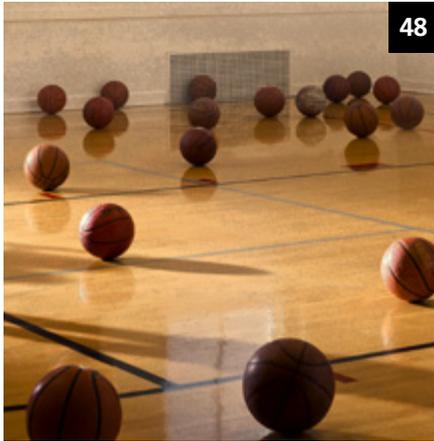
**4 Portraits of Faith: Darren and Stacey Rea—Sydney, Australia**

**6 Ministering Principles: Building Meaningful Relationships**

**16 Our Homes, Our Families: Striving to Become an Intelligent and Noble Mother**  
By Lilian Pagaduan-Villamor

**40 Latter-day Saint Voices**

**80 Until We Meet Again: Keep Trying**  
By Elder Marvin J. Ashton



**44 How Eric Learned to Trust God**

By Richard M. Romney  
*Amid hardship and pain, this young adult from Ghana found faith in God, which prepared him to accept the gospel.*

**48 But What If I Miss?**

By Sarah Keenan  
*If we let fear of failure prevent us from trying, we will miss out on precious opportunities for growth.*



*See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: What promises can you find in the Book of Mormon?*



**50 Before You Are Called to Serve**

By Ryan Carr  
*Get the perspective of full-time missionaries as they describe their experiences and suggest ways you can prepare to serve.*

**56 Five Things the Doctrine and Covenants Will Teach You about Being a Missionary**

By Charlotte Larcabal  
*These scriptures explain principles of missionary work that apply to all of us as we strive to share the gospel.*

**58 Six Reasons We Really Do Need the Church!**

By Eric B. Murdock and Joshua J. Perkey  
*Here are some reasons why the organization of the Church is essential to God's plan for us.*

**62 Questions and Answers**

*What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?*

**64 Poster: Revelation for Our Lives**

**65 The Last Word: Six Ways to Always Remember the Savior**

By Elder Gerrit W. Gong



**66 I Can Always Pray**

*Can you answer these questions about prayer?*

**68 Shine Your Light: A Shining Testimony**

*Even though I was scared, I shared my testimony in front of other students.*

**70 The No-Fighting Promise**

By Myrna M. Hoyt  
*Timmy remembered a story from the Book of Mormon and knew how he and his cousin could stop fighting.*

**72 Faith, Hope, and Grace—Part 1: A Voice of Peace**

By Megan Armknecht  
*It was scary living in Holland during the war, but Grace knew that her family would be OK.*

**74 Apostles Testify of Christ**

By Elder Ronald A. Rasband

**75 Football and Sundays**

By Elder Jörg Klebingat  
*I loved football, but once I found the Church, I loved God even more.*

**76 Scripture Stories: David and Goliath**

By Kim Webb Reid

**79 Coloring Page: I Can Be a Good Example**

International magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

**The First Presidency:** Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, Henry B. Eyring

**The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:**

M. Russell Ballard, Jeffrey R. Holland, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, David A. Bednar, Quentin L. Cook, D. Todd Christofferson, Neil L. Andersen, Ronald A. Rasband, Gary E. Stevenson, Dale G. Renlund, Gerrit W. Gong, Ulisses Soares

**Editor:** Hugo E. Martinez

**Assistant Editors:** Randall K. Bennett, Becky Craven

**Advisers:** Brian K. Ashton, LeGrand R. Curtis Jr., Edward Dube, Sharon Eubank, Cristina B. Franco, Donald L. Hallstrom, Douglas D. Holmes

**Managing Director:** Richard I. Heaton

**Director of Church Magazines:** Allan R. Loyborg

**Business Manager:** Garff Cannon

**Managing Editor:** Adam C. Olson

**Assistant Managing Editor:** Ryan Carr

**Publication Assistant:** Francisca Olson

**Writing and Editing:** Maryssa Dennis, David Dickson, David A. Edwards, Matthew D. Flitton, Lori Fuller, Garrett H. Garff, LaRene Porter Gaunt, Jon Ryan Jensen, Charlotte Larcabal, Michael R. Morris, Eric B. Murdock, Sally Johnson Odekirk, Joshua J. Perkey, Jan Pinborough, Richard M. Romney, Mindy Selu, Chakell Wardleigh, Marissa Widdison

**Editorial Intern:** Leah Barton

**Managing Art Director:** J. Scott Knudsen

**Art Director:** Tadd R. Peterson

**Design:** Jeanette Andrews, Fay P. Andrus, Mandie Bentley, C. Kimball Bott, Thomas Child, David Green, Colleen Hinckley, Eric P. Johnsen, Susan Lofgren, Scott M. Mooy, Emily Chieko Remington, Mark W. Robison, Brad Teare, K. Nicole Walkenhorst

**Design Intern:** Sione Inukihā'angana

**Intellectual Property Coordinator:**

Collette Nebeker Aune

**Production Manager:** Jane Ann Peters

**Production:** Ira Glen Adair, Julie Burdett, Thomas G. Cronin, Bryan W. Gygi, Ginny J. Nilson, Derek Richardson

**Prepress:** Joshua Dennis

**Printing Director:** Steven T. Lewis

**Distribution Director:** Troy R. Barker

**Mailing address:** *Liahona*, Fl. 23, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0023, USA.

The *Liahona* (a Book of Mormon term meaning "compass" or "director") is published in Albanian, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cambodian, Cebuano, Chinese, Chinese (simplified), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Fijian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kiribati, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malagasy, Marshallese, Mongolian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Samoan, Slovenian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Tahitian, Thai, Tongan, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. (Frequency varies by language.)

© 2018 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

**Copyright information:** Unless otherwise indicated, individuals may copy material from the *Liahona* for their own personal, noncommercial use (including for Church callings). This right can be revoked at any time. Visual material may not be copied if restrictions are indicated in the credit line with the artwork. Copyright questions should be addressed to Intellectual Property Office, 50 E. North Temple St., Fl. 13, Salt Lake City, UT 84150, USA; email: cor-intellectualproperty@ldschurch.org.

**For Readers in the United States and Canada:**

August 2018 Vol. 42 No. 8. LIAHONA (USPS 311-480) English (ISSN 1080-9554) is published monthly by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 50 E. North Temple St., Salt Lake City, UT 84150. USA subscription price is \$10.00 per year; Canada, \$12.00 plus applicable taxes. Periodicals Postage Paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Sixty days' notice required for change of address. Include address label from a recent issue; old and new address must be included. Send USA and Canadian subscriptions to Salt Lake Distribution Center at address below. Subscription help line: 1-800-537-5971. Credit card orders (American Express, Discover, MasterCard, Visa) may be taken by phone or at store.lds.org. (Canada Post Information: Publication Agreement #40017431)

POSTMASTER: Send all UAA to CFS (see DMM 507.1.5.2). NONPOSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: Send address changes to Distribution Services, Church Magazines, P.O. Box 26368, Salt Lake City, UT 84126-0368, USA.

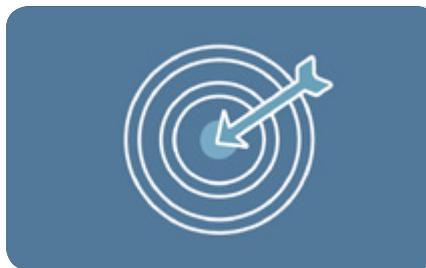
## More Online



Read articles and submit your own at  
[liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org)



Find inspiring, shareable  
messages (in English,  
Portuguese, and Spanish)  
at [facebook.com/liahona](https://facebook.com/liahona)



Send feedback to  
[liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org)



Subscribe at [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org)  
Or visit a distribution center,  
ask ward leaders,  
or call 1-800-537-5971 (U.S. and Canada)

ICONS FROM GETTY IMAGES

### TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Numbers represent the first page of the article.*

**Adversity**, 41, 44, 80

**Book of Mormon**, 18, 34,  
42, 70

**Church history**, 34, 58

**Church leaders**, 43

**Church meetings**, 26,  
30, 58

**Conversion**, 44

**Covenants**, 18, 58

**Disabilities**, 44

**Education**, 16

**Endurance**, 80

**Faith**, 4, 44, 55, 65, 72, 76

**Family**, 4, 16, 40, 72, 79,  
80

**Fear**, 48, 65, 72, 76

**Finances**, 10

**Heavenly Father**, 18, 41,  
44, 58

**Holy Ghost**, 18, 30, 34,  
43, 50, 56

**Individual worth**, 62

**Jesus Christ**, 18, 65, 74

**Joseph Smith**, 34

**Kindness**, 70

**Missionary preparation**,  
50, 56, 75

**Missionary work**, 42,  
50, 56

**Motherhood**, 16

**Peace**, 72

**Prayer**, 41, 43, 44, 66, 72

**Repentance**, 34, 43

**Revelation**, 34, 56, 58, 64

**Sabbath day**, 18, 75

**Sacrament**, 18, 65

**Service**, 6, 40

**Technology**, 26, 30

**Testimony**, 6, 34, 68

**Tithing**, 10

*Darren and Stacey sold everything to chase his dream job of animating for a movie studio in London, England. But when they found out they were expecting a baby after years of trying, they realized they couldn't afford to live there on just his income.*

CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER

## Darren and Stacey Rea

Sydney, Australia

**Stacey:** We started talking about moving back to Australia. In Brisbane there were no movie studios. Darren would have to essentially give up his career.

**Darren:** I felt like I was at rock bottom. My wife was pregnant, but I had no job and we couldn't afford a place of our own.

**Stacey:** There was a moment in the laundry room at my parents' house when we knelt down and prayed.

**Darren:** Then we heard there was a new studio opening in Brisbane. I got some contract work in animation.

**Stacey:** We've learned that no matter what we're going through, the most important thing we can have is faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.





# Ministering Principles

# BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

*Our ability to care for others is increased when we have a meaningful relationship with them.*

**T**he invitation to minister to others is an opportunity to build caring relationships with them—the kind of relationship that would make them comfortable asking for or accepting our help. When we have made the effort to develop that kind of relationship, God is able to change lives on both sides of the relationship.

“I truly believe there is no significant change without significant relationships,” said Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency. And for our acts of service to be transformational in the lives of others, she said, they must

be “rooted in the sincere desire to heal and listen and cooperate and respect.”<sup>1</sup>

Meaningful relationships aren’t tactics. They are built on compassion, sincere efforts, and “love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41).<sup>2</sup>

## **Ways to Build and Strengthen Relationships**

“We build [relationships] one person at a time,” said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>3</sup> As we strive to build meaningful relationships with those we minister to, the Holy Ghost can guide us. The following suggestions are based on a pattern Elder Uchtdorf offered.<sup>4</sup>



**Spend time together.**

A relationship takes time to develop. Look for opportunities to maintain contact. Studies show that letting people know you care is essential to healthy relationships.<sup>5</sup> Visit often with those you are called to serve. Talk with them at church. Use whatever additional means make sense—such as email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, phone calls, or sending a card. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about the power of simple and creative expressions of love and support: “Often I would open my scriptures, . . . and I would find an affectionate, supportive note [my wife] Jeanene had slipped into the pages. . . . Those precious notes . . . continue to be a priceless treasure of comfort and inspiration.”<sup>6</sup>

Also, remember that a relationship takes two. You can offer love and friendship, but the relationship won’t grow unless the offer is accepted and returned. If the other individual seems unreceptive, don’t force the relationship. Give him or her time to see your sincere efforts, and if necessary, counsel with your leaders about whether or not a meaningful relationship still seems like a possibility.

**Learn about them.**

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught, “You can’t serve well those you don’t know well.” He suggested knowing the names of each family member and being aware of important events such as birthdays, blessings, baptisms, and marriages. This provides the opportunity to write a note or make a call to congratulate a family member on a special achievement or accomplishment.<sup>7</sup>

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GETTY IMAGES

"Ministering Principles" articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as messages during visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.



### **Communicate with caring.**

Building meaningful relationships requires us to go beyond the superficial. Superficial communication is full of small talk about schedules, the weather, and other minor issues, but it doesn't include sharing the feelings, beliefs, goals, and concerns necessary to make more meaningful connections. Heavenly Father has modeled this more meaningful kind of communication by sharing His feelings and plans with His Son (see John 5:20) and with us through His prophets (see Amos 3:7). By sharing day-to-day events and

life's challenges with each other as guided by the Spirit, we gain appreciation for each other as we find common interests and shared experiences.

Listening is a critical part of communicating that you care.<sup>8</sup> When you listen carefully, your opportunity to help others come unto Christ increases as you gain understanding and insight into their needs and as they feel loved, understood, and safe.

### **Appreciate differences as well as commonalities.**

"Some . . . believe that the Church wants to create every member from a single mold—that each one should look, feel, think, and behave like every other," said Elder Uchtdorf. "This would contradict the genius of God, who created every man different from his brother. . . ."

"The Church thrives when we take advantage of this diversity and encourage each other to develop and use our talents to lift and strengthen our fellow disciples."<sup>9</sup>

To love others the way God loves us requires that we try to see others the way God sees them. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, "We must develop the capacity to see [others] not as they are at present but as they may become."<sup>10</sup> We can pray for help to see others the way God does. As we treat others based on their potential for growth, they are likely to rise to the occasion.<sup>11</sup>

## Serve them.

Be sensitive to the needs of those you minister to and be willing to give of your time and talents, whether in time of need or just because you care. You can be there to provide comfort, support, and needed help when there is an emergency, illness, or urgent situation. But in too many relationships we are reactive. God gave us agency so that we can act rather than be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14).

Just as the Apostle John taught that we love God because He first loved us (see 1 John 4:19), when others feel our genuine love through our acts of service, it can soften hearts and increase love and trust.<sup>12</sup> This creates an upward spiral of kind acts that can build relationships. ■

## NOTES

1. Sharon Eubank, in “Humanitarian Acts Must Be Rooted in Relationship, Sharon Eubank Says,” [mormonnewsroom.org](http://mormonnewsroom.org).
2. See “Ministering Principles: Reach Out in Compassion,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, July 2018, 6–9.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 22.
4. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” 22.
5. See Charles A. Wilkinson and Lauren H. Grill, “Expressing Affection: A Vocabulary of Loving Messages,” in *Making Connections: Readings in Relational Communication*, ed. Kathleen M. Galvin, 5th ed. (2011), 164–73.
6. Richard G. Scott, “The Eternal Blessings of Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2011, 96.
7. See Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 50.
8. See “Ministering Principles: Five Things Good Listeners Do,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, June 2018, 6–9.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Four Titles,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 59.
10. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 69.
11. See Terence R. Mitchell and Denise Daniels, “Motivation,” in *Handbook of Psychology*, vol. 12, ed. Walter C. Borman and others (2003), 229.
12. See Edward J. Lawler, Rebecca Ford, and Michael D. Large, “Unilateral Initiatives as a Conflict Resolution Strategy,” *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 3 (Sept. 1999), 240–56.



## MINISTERING AS THE SAVIOR DID

Jesus Christ built meaningful relationships with His disciples (see John 11:5). He knew them (see John 1:47–48). He spent time with them (see Luke 24:13–31). His communication went beyond the superficial (see John 15:15). He appreciated their differences (see Matthew 9:10) and saw their potential (see John 17:23). He served everyone, though He was Lord of all, saying He came not to be ministered to but to minister (see Mark 10:42–45).

**What will you do to build stronger relationships with those you are called to serve?**



By Bishop  
Gérald Caussé  
Presiding Bishop

## THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF

# Church Financial Self-Reliance

I recently had an opportunity to visit Kirtland, Ohio. In this historic place, where many remarkable events of the Restoration took place, visitors are invited to reflect on the faith and legacy of the valiant men and women who laid the foundations for this great latter-day work. While the Kirtland period was a time of unprecedented growth and spiritual outpouring, most of these early Saints were extremely poor and lived in precarious conditions. They had sacrificed everything—often prosperous farms and well-established professions—to follow Jesus Christ and His prophet Joseph Smith.

As I walked these sacred grounds, I could not help but reflect on the dramatic contrast that exists between the original poverty of Kirtland and the current relative prosperity of the Church and many of its multi-generational members. The Lord has blessed His Church and the Latter-day Saints in a remarkable fashion!

This abundance of temporal blessings is built upon God's often-repeated promise that "inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land."<sup>1</sup>

This promise is central to the story and teachings of the Book of Mormon. It appears in 18 different verses, and in seven of its 15 books. Although the blessing of prosperity mentioned in these scriptures is principally of a spiritual nature, it also includes the ability for the people of God to enjoy economic progress and become temporally self-reliant.

Most notably, temporal prosperity originates in the faithful observance of a few

*As leaders of the Church, we continually feel our great responsibility to use the sacred tithes and offerings in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.*



guiding principles that were revealed by the Lord through His prophets and have become part of the daily life and culture of Latter-day Saints. These principles include the law of tithing, the law of the fast, and the need for education, employment, and self-reliance. Church members are also counseled to live within their means, avoid unnecessary debt, and prepare for the future by developing temporal reserves, including food and financial assets.

As these temporal principles have been taught to members, Church leaders have also implemented them on a larger scale for the entire Church. In its finance and investment policies, the Church simply practices the doctrine and precepts that it teaches to its members. I will now discuss four of these principles.

### **First Principle: The Law of Tithing**

In a revelation received by Joseph Smith on July 8, 1838, the Lord directed that “those who have thus been tithed shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually.” It was also explained that this particular instruction would be for all the Saints “a standing law unto them forever.”<sup>2</sup>

The law of tithing was received that day as a commandment from the Lord and the reestablishment of a divine law which had been observed in times past by the people of Israel. It was a sign of the covenant made by the Lord with His people—that if they remained faithful to it, He would bless them both spiritually and temporally. Today, the law of tithing continues to be an essential practice of Latter-day Saints, regardless of where they live, their social standing, or their material circumstances. It is also the foundation of the financial stability of the Church.

Since my call to the Presiding Bishopric, I have never ceased to be amazed at the faith and loyalty of Church members as they live this law. Without tithing, the Church would be incapable of accomplishing its divine mission. In a memorable general conference address, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) declared: “I am profoundly grateful for the law of tithing. To me it is a constantly recurring miracle. It is made possible by the faith of the people. It is the Lord’s plan for financing the work of His kingdom.”<sup>3</sup>



***Members living near Church-owned farms have the opportunity to volunteer to pick fruits and vegetables. Produce from Church farms is sent to canneries and bishops’ storehouses to help members in need.***

That same day in 1838, Joseph received another revelation in which the Lord clarified the manner in which the utilization of tithing should be approved and administered. He declared, “It shall be disposed of by a council, composed of the First Presidency of my Church, and of the bishop and his council, and by my high council; and by mine own voice unto them, saith the Lord.”<sup>4</sup> The “bishop and his council” and “my high council” referred to in this revelation are known today as the Presiding Bishopric and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, respectively.

In our time, these instructions contained in section 120 of the Doctrine and Covenants continue to be meticulously applied. Every first Friday of December, the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric meet together to examine and approve the allocation of the Church’s sacred funds from estimated tithes and offerings for the following year. Holding such a council ensures that decisions are made in a spirit of counseling together, revelation, and unanimity.

As leaders of the Church, we continually feel our great responsibility to use the sacred tithes and offerings in a

manner that is appropriate and pleasing to the Lord. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has expressed so well, “We are keenly aware of the sacred nature of the widow’s mite.”<sup>5</sup> President Hinckley added:

“The money the Church receives from faithful members is consecrated. It is the Lord’s purse. . . . The funds for which we are responsible involve a sacred trust to be handled with absolute honesty and integrity, and with great prudence as the dedicated consecrations of the people.

“We feel a tremendous responsibility to you who make these contributions. We feel an even greater responsibility to the Lord whose money this is.”<sup>6</sup>

We are not a financial institution or a commercial corporation. We are the Church of Jesus Christ, and this Church has no other objective than that which the Lord Himself assigned to it—namely, to invite all to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him,”<sup>7</sup> by “helping members live the gospel of Jesus Christ, gathering Israel through missionary work, caring for the poor and needy, and enabling the salvation of the dead by building temples and performing vicarious ordinances.”<sup>8</sup>

By policy, sacred tithing funds are approved and appropriated to support the spiritual and religious mission of the Church. They are spent in support of six major areas: (1) providing and maintaining places of worship for more than 30,000 congregations around the world; (2) administering

***In July 2016, LDS Charities donated 280 wheelchairs and hand-powered tricycles in Karimnagar, India. Since 2001, LDS Charities has distributed over 500,000 wheelchairs in 133 countries.***



the Church’s welfare and humanitarian aid programs, including more than 2,700 projects in 2017; (3) providing education programs, including Church schools, universities, and seminary and institute programs; (4) supporting our worldwide missionary operations, including 420 missions and the resources needed by approximately 70,000 missionaries; (5) building and operating nearly 160 temples around the world, with many more to come, and administering an expansive family history and records preservation program; and (6) supporting the general administration of the Church.

I am grateful for the law of tithing. It is a source of blessings, both spiritual and temporal, for the Church and for each of its members.

### **Second Principle: Self-Reliance and Independence**

Personal agency is one of the greatest gifts of God. It is crucial for our earthly progress and our eternal salvation. By becoming self-reliant temporally and spiritually, God’s children progress in their ability to make choices independently and thus fulfill the measure of their creation.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the prophets of our dispensation have unceasingly invited Church members to strive to become self-reliant. The words of President Hinckley are particularly eloquent:

“I urge you . . . to look to the conditions of your finances. I urge you to be modest in your expenditures; discipline yourselves in your purchases to avoid debt to the extent possible. Pay off debt as quickly as you can, and free yourselves from bondage.

“This is a part of the temporal gospel in which we believe. May the Lord bless you . . . to set your houses in order. If you have paid your debts, if you have a reserve, even though it be small, then should storms howl about your head, you will have shelter for your [families] and peace in your hearts.”<sup>9</sup>

President Russell M. Nelson also emphasized the blessings of self-reliance when he said: “Working with a will, Saints gain a new appreciation of who they are and of their eternal worth. Righteousness, independence, thrift, industry, and self-reliance become personal goals. These qualities transform lives.”<sup>10</sup>

Just as wise budgeting at home enables individual members and families to maintain independence, prudent financial management is key to the Church's ability to act independently. This follows the divine injunction given through Joseph Smith that "through [the Lord's] providence, . . . the church may stand independent above all other creatures beneath the celestial world."<sup>11</sup>

This providence is particularly evident in our time. We rejoice in the fact that the Church has achieved complete financial independence and is able to accomplish its mission without any type of debt. As President Hinckley stated: "If we cannot get along, we will curtail our programs. . . . We will not borrow."<sup>12</sup>

Policies of financial management have been determined by Church leaders and are carefully applied in building the annual budget and allocating expenditures. These policies include two simple and clear principles:

- First, total expenditures will not exceed forecasted revenue.
- Second, the budget for operating expenses will not increase year to year at a more rapid rate than the anticipated growth in tithing contributions.

### **Third Principle: Provident Living**

Church members are conscious of the fact that they live in a period of calamities, caused both by human actions and the furies of nature. The prophecies about the last days are unequivocal, and there is great wisdom in preparing for the future—whether it be for possible famine, disaster, financial depression, or any other unforeseen adverse circumstance. Church leaders have frequently counseled members to practice provident living by establishing home storage, including extra water, basic food items, medications, clothing, and other supplies that could be needed in case of emergency. Members have also been counseled to "gradually build a financial reserve by regularly saving a portion of their income."<sup>13</sup>

This same principle of temporal preparation has also been applied at the general Church level. For example, grain silos and warehouses filled with basic emergency



***Members get help preserving family photos at their local family history center. Tithing donations help fund the Church's worldwide family history efforts.***

necessities have been established throughout North America. The Church also methodically follows the practice of setting aside a portion of its resources each year to prepare for any possible future needs.

The moneys set aside are then added to the investment reserves of the Church. They are invested in stocks and bonds; majority interests in taxable businesses (some of which date to the Church's early Utah history); commercial, industrial, and residential property; and agricultural interests. The Church's reserves are managed by a professional group of employees and outside advisers. Risks are diversified, consistent with wise and prudent stewardship and modern investment management principles.

In the parable of the talents, the lord who asked for an accounting from his servants chastised the one who had not invested the money entrusted to him but instead had hid that money in the earth. He characterized the servant

as “wicked and slothful”<sup>14</sup> for not investing that money for a reasonable financial return. Consistent with this spiritual principle, the Church’s financial reserves are not left idle in nonproductive bank accounts but are instead employed where they can produce a return.

These invested funds can be accessed in times of hardship to ensure the ongoing, uninterrupted work of the Church’s mission, programs, and operations and to meet emergency financial needs. The funds are also needed to provide additional financial resources to support the Church’s mission to prepare for the Lord’s Second Coming. They will help sustain Church growth as prophecy is fulfilled that the gospel of Jesus Christ will be taught and the Church established in all nations of the earth. We anticipate that a large part of this growth will take place in the developing and populous nations of the world. Ever-increasing financial means will be required to provide thousands of meetinghouses, additional temples, and other essential resources to bless members’ lives wherever they are. In short, all these funds exist for no other reason than to support the Church’s divinely appointed mission.

#### Fourth Principle: In the Lord’s Own Way

Paul warned the Saints of Corinth that their “faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”<sup>15</sup> I came to better understand the importance of this principle when I was called to serve in the Presiding Bishopric of the Church.

As a Bishopric, we counsel together to study issues, making use of our personal backgrounds, experiences, and areas of expertise. But ultimately our decisions are made in the spirit of prayer and the constant seeking of revelation as to the Lord’s will. While we consider such things as macro-economic indicators and financial analyses, our ultimate goal is to fulfill our responsibilities in a manner that will carry out the designs of the Lord and sacred mission of the Church to invite all to come unto Christ. This goal can only be achieved and implemented through inspiration and the power of His priesthood. Given the directive to do things in the Lord’s own way, this calling fills me with humility each and every day.

#### Conclusion

Some people occasionally describe today’s Church as a powerful and prosperous institution. This may be true, but the strength of the Church cannot be measured merely by the number or beauty of its buildings or by its financial and real estate holdings. As President Hinckley once said, “When all is said and done, the only real wealth of the Church is in the faith of its people.”<sup>16</sup> The key to understanding the Church “is to see it not as a worldwide corporation, but as millions of faithful members in thousands of congregations across the world following Christ and caring for each other and their neighbors.”<sup>17</sup>

In other words, the Church is all about people. It is all about individual members who are bound together by common beliefs and covenants. They are its strength and its future. I am deeply grateful for the revelations given by the Lord during the early days of the Restoration concerning the law of tithing, self-reliance and independence, provident living, and providing for the Saints in the Lord’s own way. I testify that these principles are the source of great spiritual and temporal blessings for Church members, their families, and the Church in its entirety. These principles will continue to guide our steps and support the mission of the Church until the Savior’s return. ■

*Adapted from an address delivered at the 2018 Church History Symposium, “Financing Faith: The Intersection of Business and Religion,” at Brigham Young University on March 2, 2018.*

#### NOTES

1. See, for example, 2 Nephi 1:20.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 119:4.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Of Missions, Temples, and Stewardship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 53.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 120:1.
5. David A. Bednar, “The Windows of Heaven,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 20.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Latter-day Saints in Very Deed,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 85.
7. Moroni 10:32.
8. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.2.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Boys and to the Men,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 54.
10. Russell M. Nelson, “In the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 27.
11. Doctrine and Covenants 78:14.
12. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To the Boys and to the Men,” 54.
13. *Handbook 2*, 6.1.1.
14. See Matthew 25:14–30.
15. 1 Corinthians 2:5.
16. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The State of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 54.
17. “The Church and Its Financial Independence,” July 12, 2012, mormonnewsroom.org.

# STRIVING TO BECOME AN INTELLIGENT AND NOBLE MOTHER

By Lilian Pagaduan-Villamor

*I was struggling to find purpose in motherhood. Then an old journal entry changed my perspective.*

I have always wanted to be a great contributor in science. During my undergraduate studies at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Dr. Douglas Oba, a very supportive professor, introduced me to and trained me in the world of molecular biology and biotechnology. I even had the opportunity to work at the molecular laboratory at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, for a summer internship.

When I went home to the Philippines, I landed a job at the DNA Analysis Laboratory at the University of the Philippines. The highlights of my career included working on various community projects, attending trainings and conferences, and being recognized by local and international science communities for my scientific publications. I also started my graduate program. I felt fulfilled in my new career.

After two years of working, I married my childhood friend in the temple. A little while later, we had our first baby and for the first time

I found myself struggling. I didn't know how to balance caring for the baby, spending time with my husband, keeping up with classes in my graduate program, juggling projects and papers at work, and fulfilling Church callings. I talked with my husband about my struggles, and he gently suggested that I consider stepping away from my career. I saw some wisdom in his advice, but I wasn't ready to give up my professional life yet.

When I was pregnant with our second child, I had pre-term labor that required me to be on bed rest. I finally realized that I couldn't do it all at once. I knew I had to make the choice that would be best for me and my family. After much pondering and prayer, I decided to leave my scientific work and instead devote my full time to my children.

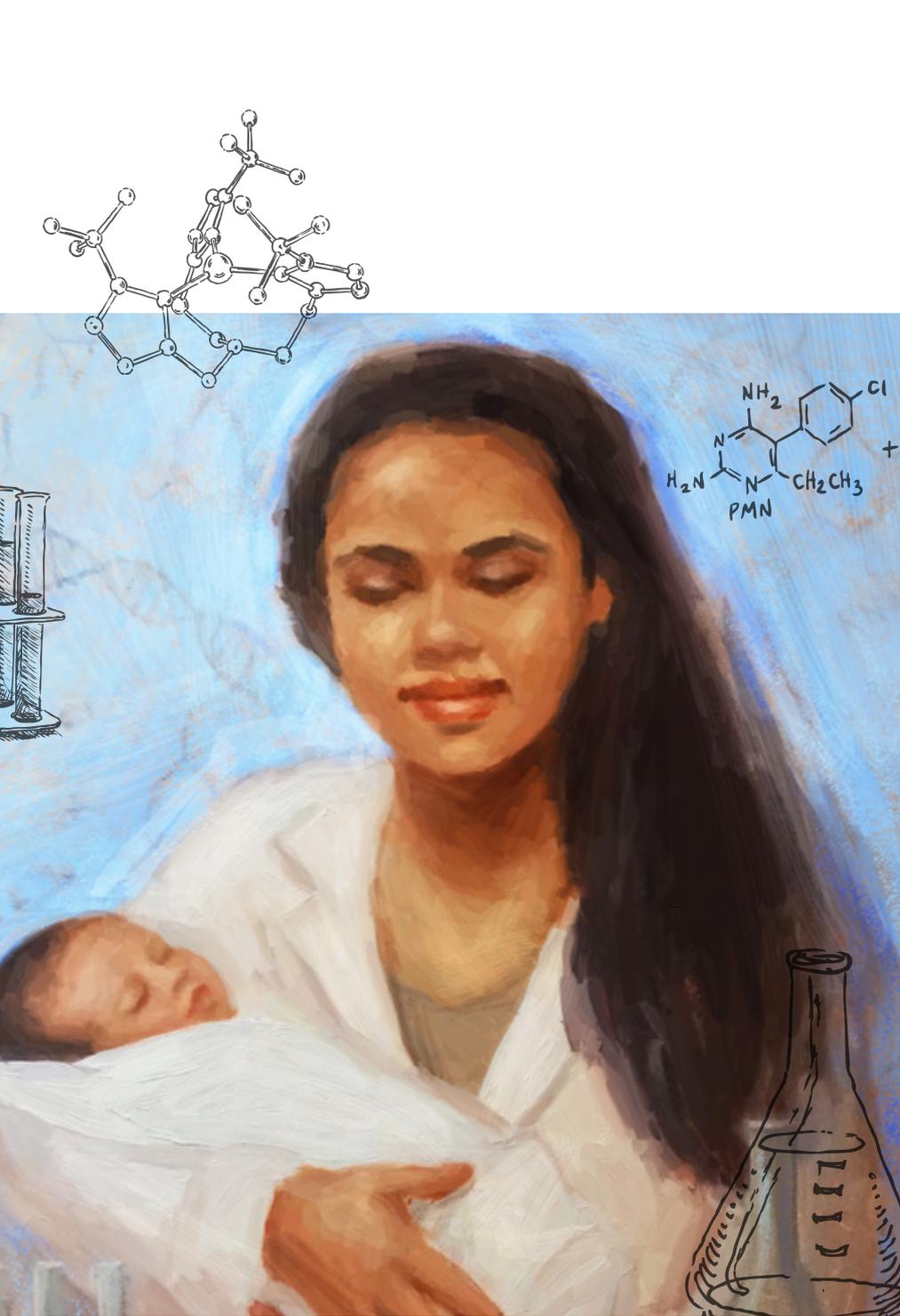
I had planned for motherhood my whole life, but I never realized how much of a sacrifice this choice would be. I tried my best to keep a positive

attitude, but I often felt sad that my career and graduate program had been cut short. I prayed to Heavenly Father for the spiritual strength to fulfill my role as a mother wholeheartedly. My husband patiently listened to my concerns. He encouraged me to write out my thoughts and feelings in my journal, which I had been unable to update for a while because of my busy schedule.

One day, while my kids were sleeping, I decided to look through my old journals. As I reviewed them, I was struck by how consistently I had written about my great desire to be a mom when I was a youth and young single adult. One statement in particular touched me: "I will strive to excel in my academic and spiritual learning so I can be an intelligent and noble mom to my kids."

That enlightenment was what I needed the most! I felt the Spirit testify to me that I had made the right choice for my family. I realized that my education and work experience were





## INSPIRED CHOICES

“Once you know the Lord’s will, you can then move forward in faith to fulfill your individual purpose. One sister may be inspired to continue her education and attend medical school, allowing her to have significant impact on her patients and to advance medical research. For another sister, inspiration may lead her to forego a scholarship to a prestigious institution and instead begin a family much earlier than has become common in this generation, allowing her to make a significant and eternal impact on her children now.

“Is it possible for two similarly faithful women to receive such different responses to the same basic questions? Absolutely! What’s right for one woman may not be right for another. That’s why it is so important that we should not question each other’s choices or the inspiration behind them.”

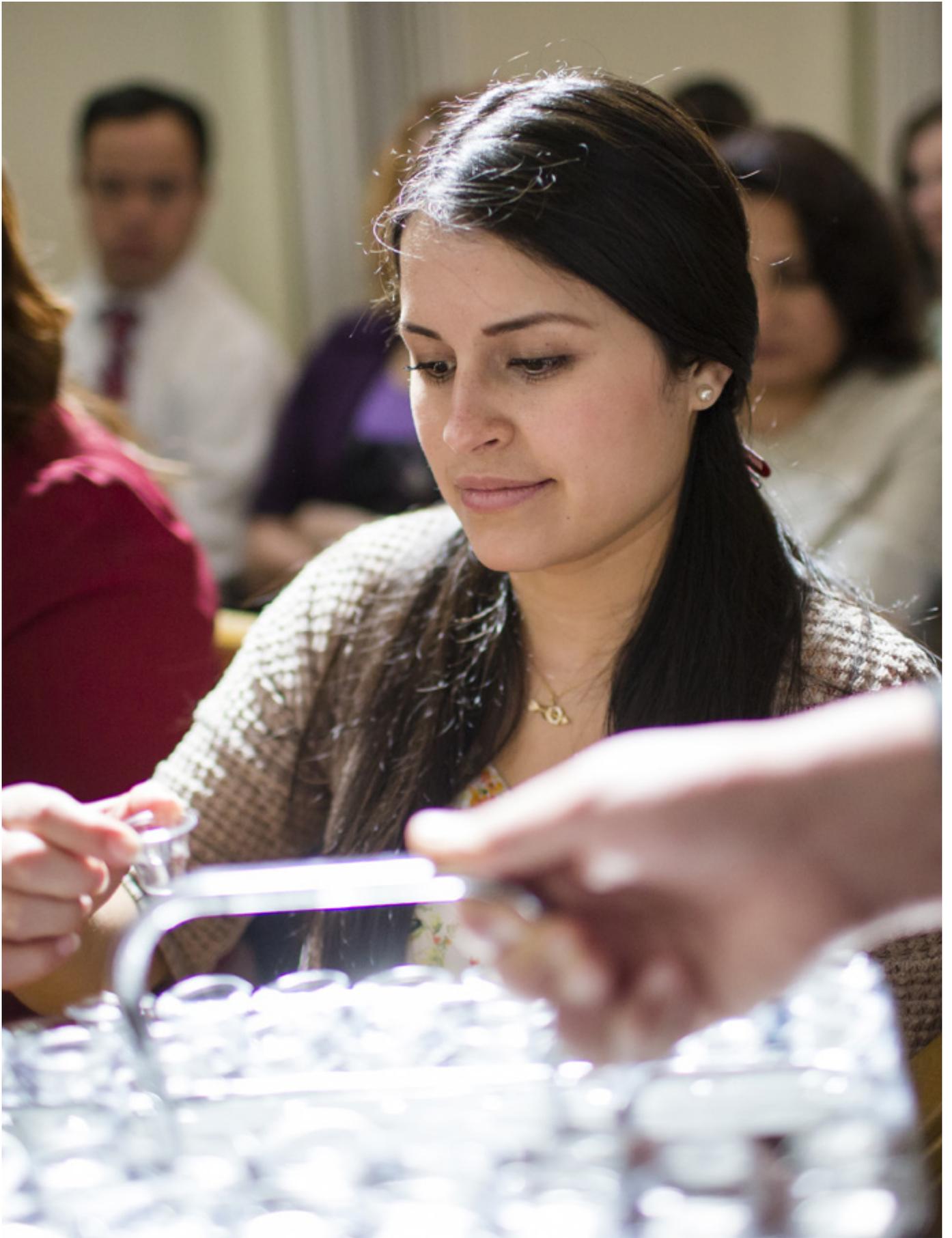
**President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Women of Dedication, Faith, Determination, and Action” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, May 1, 2015), 4, womensconference.byu.edu.**

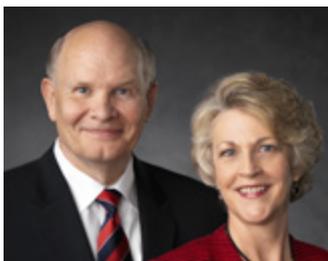
not just for my benefit but for my children’s. It was a renewal of my testimony and eternal perspective of motherhood.

I was a stay-at-home mother for five years. Eventually, I completed my graduate program and went back to work when our children were a little older. I am continually learning

to balance my limited time in performing my duties at work, home, and church, but I know it all works out with the Lord’s help. I continue to gain valuable experience in the “laboratory of life” and find joy and purpose in motherhood. ■

*The author lives in Metro Manila, Philippines.*





**By Elder Dale G.  
Renlund and Sister  
Ruth L. Renlund**

Elder Renlund is a member  
of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

# The Beautiful Gift of the Sacrament

*Pray that you will be renewed as you partake of  
the sacrament and remember the Savior.*

**I**n April 2017, we had the opportunity to help with the open house at the Paris France Temple before it was dedicated on May 21, 2017. Located on the temple grounds is a beautiful *Christus* statue. It is a copy of the 1838 original masterpiece by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. This statue provides a focal point in the gardens and declares to all who come our belief in Jesus Christ. The majesty, size, and setting are captivating. Visitors are drawn to this portrayal of the risen Lord and frequently want to stand there to get their pictures taken.

The statue is frequently referred to as *Christus Consolator*. A consolator is one who consoles.<sup>1</sup> To console means to comfort another at a time of grief or disappointment, to give solace, sympathize with, commiserate with, or show compassion for another.<sup>2</sup> For us, the *Christus* conveys these divine attributes of the Savior.

The original *Christus Consolator* is located in *Vor Frue Kirke*, the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen, Denmark. Surrounded by statues of the Twelve Apostles, the *Christus* is in a columned alcove. Above and below the statue are inscriptions of well-known verses from the Bible.



**Christus Consolator in the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen, Denmark.**

Inscribed at the top, in the panel above the two columns, are these words in Danish: “DENNE ER MIN SØN DEN ELSKELIGE HØRER HAM.” In English: “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”

These words were spoken by God, our Heavenly Father, as Jesus was transfigured on a mountain in front of Peter, James, and John. The complete verse says, “And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him” (Mark 9:7).

On the pedestal on which the *Christus Consolator* stands are these words in Danish: “KOMMER TIL MIG.” In English: “Come unto me.” Of all the words the Savior spoke, nothing is more pleading and important for us than “come unto me.”

The complete verse says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

With this original statue of *Christus Consolator*, we have both the Father’s invitation to hear His Only Begotten Son and the Son’s invitation to come unto Him. In perfect unity,

They invite all to hear and to come.

This is our way back to our heavenly home. “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:3). Each person can come unto Jesus Christ fully only by receiving the restored gospel. We “receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The Doctrine of Christ**

This is the unified message of the Father and the Son. They want all Heavenly Father’s children to follow the doctrine of Christ. Now, just so there is no confusion, the phrase “the doctrine of Christ” means the same as the gospel of Christ.

To emphasize the unity of the Father and the Son in Their message regarding the doctrine of Christ, let’s look at this chart.

	2 Nephi 31	3 Nephi 9	3 Nephi 11	3 Nephi 27	Total
<b>Faith</b>	1	2	4	1	8
<b>Repentance</b>	5	4	4	3	16
<b>Baptism</b>	10	0	13	3	26
<b>Holy Ghost</b>	8	2	6	1	17
<b>Endure</b>	3	0	0	3	6
<b>Father</b>	14	5	20	25	64

We know that the chapters noted here (2 Nephi 31; 3 Nephi 9; 3 Nephi 11; and 3 Nephi 27) contain the doctrine of Christ. These chapters frequently mention faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. The number of times each is mentioned is tabulated. As you can see, faith is mentioned 8 times; repentance, 16 times; baptism, 26 times; the Holy Ghost, 17 times; and enduring to the end, 6 times.

What may be surprising, however, is that we also find that the Father is referenced many times in these chapters. In fact, He is specifically mentioned 64 times, more than baptism is mentioned.<sup>4</sup> From this, we can know that the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of both the Father and the Son.

Let's take a closer look at a couple of references to the Father:

“And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

“And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying:

He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. . . .

“And I [Nephi] heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (2 Nephi 31:11–12, 15).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost testify that this is the only way.

Echoing the words from Matthew, the Father and the Son tell us that we should come unto Christ and take His yoke on us because the burdens we bear can be made light and we can find rest. We all carry burdens. We may be burdened with sin, sorrow, addiction, sickness, guilt, or shame. In these difficulties, looking to Christ brings healing and hope and consolation.

The doctrine of Christ—faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost—is not intended to be experienced as a one-time event. Our theology teaches us that we become perfected by repeatedly “relying wholly upon” the doctrine and merits of Christ (2 Nephi 31:19). This means that we repeat the steps in the doctrine of Christ throughout our lives. Each step builds on the preceding step, and the sequence is intended to be experienced over and over again.

As we exercise faith, it grows stronger. As we continually seek to repent, we improve. We can, through our own efforts, progress from having occasional experiences with the Holy Ghost to having Him as a constant companion. In addition, as we go through life, we can learn of Jesus Christ's attributes and develop these same qualities.<sup>5</sup> As we become more and more like Him, our hearts are changed and we are able to endure to the end (see, for instance, 2 Nephi 31:2–21; 3 Nephi 11:23–31; 27:13–21; Moroni 4:3; 5:2; 6:6; D&C 20:77, 79; 59:8–9).

It is easy to see how all the steps in the doctrine of Christ can be repeated and built on throughout life. But what about baptism? We are, after all, baptized for ourselves just once.



### The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

To answer this question, we should consider a theological masterpiece written by Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles titled *The Articles of Faith*. It was first published in 1899 and has answered questions about the Church and its foundational teachings for subsequent generations who have read and studied it.

In the table of contents, we see that each chapter, aside from the introductory one, is associated with one of the thirteen articles of faith.<sup>6</sup> Some articles of faith are covered in more than one chapter, but each chapter is associated with one article of faith.

Interestingly, chapter 9, titled “The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,” appears right after the chapter about the Holy Ghost.<sup>7</sup> Elder Talmage associates it with article of faith number four.

At the beginning of chapter 9, Elder Talmage wrote, “In the course of our study of the principles and ordinances of the Gospel, as specified in the fourth of the Articles of Faith, the subject of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper very properly claims attention, the observance of this ordinance

being required of all who have become members of the Church of Christ through compliance with the requirements of faith, repentance, and baptism by water and of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>8</sup>

With those words in mind, we can see why Elder Talmage associates the sacrament with the fourth article of faith. The sacrament is the next ordinance everyone needs after being confirmed a member of the Church.

The sacrament is the next ordinance a man needs after receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The sacrament is the next ordinance individuals need after being endowed in the temple.

The sacrament is the next ordinance a couple needs after being sealed.

The sacrament is the next ordinance we need. The sacrament is key to having faith in Jesus Christ, repenting of sin, and feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives. It is the mechanism by which we renew the covenants and blessings of baptism.

*Handbook 2* says, “Church members are commanded to gather together often to partake of the sacrament to remember the Savior always and to renew the covenants

and blessings of baptism.”<sup>9</sup> You may ask, “What blessings?” Certainly, a continuing endowment of the Holy Spirit is a blessing of baptism. But is the cleansing effect of baptism, one of its most wonderful blessings, also renewed?

Consider this statement by President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency: “We are commanded to repent of our sins and come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament. . . . We witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we comply with this covenant, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. We are made clean and can always have His spirit to be with us.”<sup>10</sup>

Let us caution, though, that “the sacrament has not been established as a specific means of securing remission of sins.”<sup>11</sup> In other words, you cannot willfully sin Saturday night and expect to be miraculously forgiven by taking a piece of bread and drinking a little water on Sunday. Repentance is a more involved process requiring remorse and forsaking of sin. Preplanned repentance is repugnant to the Savior.

We qualify for the cleansing power of Jesus Christ when we partake of the sacrament worthily.<sup>12</sup> This is the way we keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (D&C 59:9). The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper rightfully follows baptism in the repeated application of the doctrine of Christ in the progression of Latter-day Saints toward perfection.

We are to follow this path, with the sacrament becoming the successive ordinance to baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost. Preparation for the sacrament requires forethought and attention. You cannot expect the sacrament to be a spiritual experience if you are scurrying about, texting on your phone, or otherwise being distracted.

So come early to church. As the sacrament hymn begins, make sure your thoughts are focused on the Savior, His Atonement, His love, and His compassion. Pray that you will be renewed as you partake of the sacrament and remember Him.

## A Lesson from Rwanda

In 1994 a horrific genocide occurred in Rwanda. Between 600,000 and 900,000 people were killed in a matter of 60 to 90 days.

Eventually, the Church established a branch in the capital city of Kigali. The branch was doing well—without full-time missionaries. In 2011 we were serving in the Africa Southeast Area when we learned, sadly, that our registration as a church with the country of Rwanda was invalid, which meant that we were functioning illegally as a church. We also learned that our meetinghouse, a converted two-story home, was not appropriately zoned to hold Church meetings. The Area Presidency, in consultation with our first contact in the Quorum of the Twelve, made the agonizing decision to close the branch. Our members were no longer able to meet for Church meetings.

Lawyers in Kigali, Salt Lake City, and Johannesburg, South Africa, began working fervently to resolve the problems. All the while, the Saints kept asking when they could meet together again. Months went by without resolution or progress.

After about 10 months, we flew to Kigali to visit those Saints and try to buoy up their spirits. Before we did, we asked that the matter be placed on the temple prayer roll of the weekly meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.

The Tuesday before our scheduled trip from Johannesburg to Kigali, we were notified that, in a surprising move, the government had granted the Church provisional registration in Kigali. Then on Thursday of the same week, the zoning commission granted an exemption from the zoning ordinance. The Kigali Saints could once again meet in our building without violating the law.

This was miraculous! Members were quickly notified that the branch would be meeting on Sunday. We arrived on Friday and invited members to come to church. When Sunday came, all the members—*all* of them—and many of their friends came to church. They arrived early, eager to be together again. As the sacrament was blessed and passed,

we all experienced an extraordinary renewing, refreshing, and cleansing spirit.

We remember, in the meeting, wondering why we did not feel this same spirit every week as we partook of the sacrament. We looked around at the Saints and realized that they had come hungering and thirsting for the sacrament. Their faith, diligence, and patience brought all of us blessings. We pledged that whenever we again partook of the sacrament, we would remember this experience with the Kigali Saints. We committed that we too would hunger for the blessings of partaking of the sacrament.

You will recall that after the Savior instituted the sacrament among the Nephites, He told them that the sacrament was the key to establishing themselves on His rock. He said:

“And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things [partake of the sacrament]. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.

“But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall” (3 Nephi 18:12–13).

The sacrament is a beautiful gift we receive each Sunday that helps us in our earthly progression. Through the sacrament, we experience an important element of the doctrine of Christ, bringing us closer to our Savior and experiencing His love and forgiveness in our lives. We are grateful for these moments each week, which help us stay focused on the Savior.

### **“Just for Me”**

A friend of ours in South Africa shared how she came to this realization. When Diane was a new convert, she attended a branch outside of Johannesburg. One Sunday, as she sat in the congregation, the layout of the chapel prevented a deacon from seeing her as he passed the

sacrament. Diane was disappointed but said nothing. Another member noted the omission and mentioned it to the branch president after the meeting. As Sunday School began, Diane was invited to an empty classroom.

A priesthood holder came in. He knelt, blessed some bread, and handed her a piece. She ate it. He knelt again, blessed some water, and handed her a small cup. She drank it. Diane had two thoughts in rapid succession: “Oh, he [the priesthood holder] did this just for me,” and then, “Oh, He [the Savior] did this just for me.” Through the sacrament, Diane felt Heavenly Father’s love just for her.

Her realization that the Savior’s sacrifice was just for her helped her feel close to Him and fueled an overwhelming desire to keep that feeling in her heart—not just Sunday but every day. She realized that although she sat in a congregation to partake of the sacrament, the covenants she made anew each Sunday were individually hers. The sacrament helped—and continues to help—Diane feel the power of godly love, recognize the Lord’s hand in her life, and draw closer to the Savior.<sup>13</sup>

Our invitation is the same as Moroni’s:

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:32–33).

This happens as we apply the doctrine of Christ, viewing the sacrament as the successive ordinance to baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost. In this way,



we can rely “wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). We are so grateful for the sacrament—how it teaches and reminds us each week of what our Savior did for us. We are so grateful to Him because we know He atoned just for each one of us.

When the Savior spoke to the Nephites, He said *when* rain, wind, and floods come. He didn’t say *if*. In fact, rain, winds, and floods come to everyone. But He told us that the way we are established on His rock is to look to Him as we partake of the sacrament (see 3 Nephi 15:9; 18:1).

The time will come in each of your lives when there will be a hesitation to go to church and partake of the sacrament. If it hasn’t happened yet, it will. But know this: if you follow the Savior’s direction and partake of the sacrament with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, blessings will pour upon you that will keep you firm, solid, and established on the firm foundation that is Jesus Christ. Your decision to do so will affect eternity. You will establish yourself upon Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. ■

*From a devotional address, “Come unto Christ,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on September 26, 2017. For the full address, go to [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandsppeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandsppeeches).*

#### NOTES

1. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “consolator.”
2. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, “console.”
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
4. Includes unambiguous Him/He/His.
5. See *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 6, 115–26.
6. See James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), v–ix.
7. See Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, vi.
8. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 171.
9. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.2.
10. Dallin H. Oaks, “Special Witnesses of Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 13; *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 14.
11. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 175.
12. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 17–20.
13. See Dale G. Renlund, “That I Might Draw All Men unto Me,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 41.

# WORSHIPPING IN A DIGITAL AGE

By Adam C. Olson  
Church Magazines

One Sunday while the sacrament was being passed, a ward Relief Society president I know pulled out her smartphone to read “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles.” Inspired by this apostolic testimony of the Savior, she felt renewed in her commitment to always remember Him.

However, her positive feelings melted away a few days later when, in the mail, she received an anonymous letter from a ward member. The author criticized her for setting a bad example by being on her smartphone in sacrament meeting. She was crushed.

Certainly, she hadn’t meant to offend anyone by using her mobile device. She rarely used it in the chapel, and only then when she felt it was appropriate. But after receiving the letter, she began to doubt herself.

## A New Challenge

Every generation has its challenges. One study reports that by 2020 there will be more people with a mobile phone (5.4 billion) than with running water (3.5 billion).<sup>1</sup> Add in tablets, “phablets,” and other connected devices, and you get a world that is wrestling with the question: What is appropriate “digital etiquette”?

As parents, leaders, and teachers struggle to

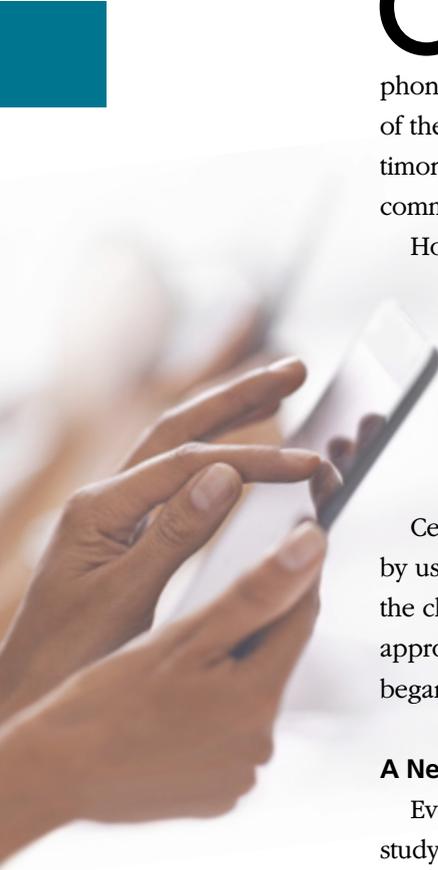
decide what is appropriate digital etiquette in Church settings, different opinions have led to sometimes conflicting ways to handle digital devices in Church meetings.

Church leaders have provided counsel on the blessings and dangers of using technology. However, Church leaders don’t always spell out all of the do’s and don’ts of gospel living (see Mosiah 4:29–30). Members are expected to study the matter for themselves and seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost in making decisions. Unfortunately, as in the situation above, sometimes we adopt not only a position but also a critical attitude toward those with a different position.

## Inspired by God; Exploited by Satan

God has provided the blessings of technology for our benefit and the advancing of His work.<sup>2</sup> So while some members use their digital devices inappropriately, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that “we should not allow a fear of mistakes to hold us back from receiving the great blessings these tools can provide.”<sup>3</sup> We need to learn to use them appropriately and teach our children to do so as well.

Mobile devices help members of the Church with gospel study, family history and





*Consider these three principles for using devices appropriately in the chapel.*

temple work, and sharing the gospel. For example, over three million people used the Gospel Library app in January 2018. Their combined study time equaled more than a thousand years.

Along with noting the blessings, Church leaders have warned about the potential dangers as well, including wasted time, damaged relationships, and entrapment in sin.<sup>4</sup> In Church settings, inappropriate use can distract us and others from worship and learning that is crucial to developing our relationship with God.

However, these dangers aren't unique to digital devices. "Some of these tools—like any tool in an unpracticed or undisciplined hand—can be dangerous," taught President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. ". . . That is no different from how people choose to use television or movies or even a library. Satan is always quick to exploit the negative power of new inventions, to spoil and degrade, and to neutralize any effect for good."<sup>5</sup>

### **Mobile Devices in Sacrament Meeting**

Given the potential blessings—as well as the potential distractions—of these digital devices, how do members decide what

approach to take? Joseph Smith suggested the power of a principle-based approach when he said, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”<sup>6</sup>

Here, we examine principles that may be helpful in making decisions about using mobile devices in sacrament meeting. For a discussion on appropriate use of digital devices in the classroom, see “Teaching with Tech: Engaging Youth in a Digital World,” by Brother Brian K. Ashton, Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency, on page 30 of this issue.

***Principle 1: My choices support worship.***

Sacrament meeting is for “[paying our] devotions unto the Most High” (D&C 59:10). President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that our focus there should be on renewing our covenants and our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement.<sup>7</sup> What we choose to do in sacrament meeting should help us do those things.

Given that focus, if the need arises, we might appropriately use our devices to:

- *Enhance our worship.* A member might use a digital device during sacrament meeting to look up scriptures, sing hymns, or take notes on spiritual impressions.
- *Minister.* A bishop might notice someone new or less active slip into the back of the chapel during sacrament meeting and, if prompted, text the ward mission leader to welcome the individual and invite them to a Gospel Principles class after the meeting.
- *Facilitate essential connectivity.* Doctors, first-responders, and other on-call professionals can participate in worship services because they know they can be reached if necessary through their mobile devices.

As we seek to focus on the Savior, it's important to remember that our devices can facilitate our study, but they can't do our learning. They can give us something to ponder, but they can't do our thinking for us. They can even help us to remember to pray, but the praying is something we have to do for ourselves.

Elder Bednar taught that our relationship with God is real, not virtual.<sup>8</sup> It can't be double-clicked or downloaded.<sup>9</sup> So while the Relief Society president at the beginning of this article used her phone to help her center her thoughts on Christ, the covenant she was renewing wasn't with her phone; it was with Him. The journey her device helped her start had to be finished in her thoughts, her prayers, and her actions.

***Principle 2: I minimize distractions.***

We should all strive for an environment that enhances our focus on worship and learning. Minimizing distractions is important. This principle applies to many situations, from how we hold conversations or handle fussy children to how we use our digital devices.

There are so many ways to be distracted by a device that was designed to do so many things. Obviously, watching videos, listening to music, or playing games will make it difficult to pay attention to sacrament services. But so will checking email, text messages, social media, sports scores, and the many dings, buzzes, and badges that pull us into events, relationships, and conversations that exist outside of the meeting. All of this and more can distract us and others, even several rows away.

For those who want to eliminate digital distractions entirely, leaving their devices at home or turning them off may be appropriate. For those who use their devices to support their worship but want to avoid distracting others, it might be enough to silence the device, set it on do not disturb, or put it in airplane mode.<sup>10</sup>



### **Principle 3: I focus on my own worship.**

There will always be distractions of one kind or another, and not all of them are digital. These might include a fussy infant, a buzzing insect, or the noisy traffic outside. We bear primary responsibility for what we get out of our worship. So if someone forgets to put their phone on airplane mode, we need to try to put ourselves on “ignore distractions” mode.

President Russell M. Nelson taught, “Each member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting.”<sup>11</sup>

If we notice others around us using their devices, we need to be careful about assuming that what they’re doing

is inappropriate just because it’s on a digital device. If the individual is a child or someone we are called to have responsibility for, it may be appropriate to check on their usage as the Spirit directs. Otherwise, we try to return to our own worship.

### **Learning Together**

In a statement that encompasses these principles, President Oaks counseled, “During sacrament meeting—and especially during the sacrament service—we should concentrate on worship and refrain from all other activities, especially from behavior that could interfere with the worship of others.”<sup>12</sup>

There are many other principles that could help guide our usage. As digital devices become an increasingly normal part of our culture, we will need to wrestle together with questions about what is appropriate. Because every situation is unique and technology will continue to change, we need to continually examine our own usage, consider new or different perspectives, and be willing to forgive others as we learn together. ■

### **NOTES**

1. See “10th Annual Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) Mobile Forecast Projects 70 Percent of Global Population Will Be Mobile Users,” Feb. 3, 2016, [newsroom.cisco.com](http://newsroom.cisco.com).
2. See David A. Bednar, “Apostle Offers Counsel about Social Media,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 17; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 18–19.
3. In Sarah Jane Weaver, “Elder Bednar Tells 2016 Mission Presidents Not to Fear Technology,” July 6, 2016, [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org).
4. See “Elder Bednar Tells 2016 Mission Presidents.”
5. M. Russell Ballard, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Ensign*, July 2008, 60; *Liahona*, June 2008, N2.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007)*, 284.
7. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2008, 17–20.
8. See David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” *Ensign*, June 2010, 16–25; *Liahona*, June 2010, 22–31.
9. See Scott D. Whiting, “Digital Detachment and Personal Revelation,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2010, 16–21.
10. See M. Russell Ballard, “Be Still, and Know That I Am God” (Church Educational System devotional, May 4, 2014), [lds.org/broadcasts](http://lds.org/broadcasts).
11. Russell M. Nelson, “Worshiping at Sacrament Meeting,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2004, 28; *Liahona*, Aug. 2004, 14.
12. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” 18–19.



**By Brian K. Ashton**

Second Counselor in  
the Sunday School  
General Presidency

# Teaching with Tech: **ENGAGING YOUTH IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

*How can technology be an ally rather than  
an enemy in the classroom?*

**A**s I visit wards and stakes across the Church, teachers and leaders of youth often ask, “How do we keep digital devices from being a distraction in class?”

At the same time, many of the best youth teachers I have observed begin their classes with the phrase “Pull out your phone and look up . . .” Consequently, I’d like to share a few things that I have learned about helping youth use technology in righteous and productive ways in the gospel classroom.

## **Prophecies about Technology**

Prophets and apostles have spoken to us about the blessings of technology, telling us how Heavenly Father has given us technology to help us move His work forward at an increasingly rapid rate. In 1862, President Brigham Young (1801–77) taught: “Every discovery in science and art, that is really true and useful to mankind has been given by direct revelation from God. . . . It has been given with a view to prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of truth, and the redemption of the earth from the power of sin and Satan. We should take advantage of all these great discoveries . . . and give to our children the benefit of every branch

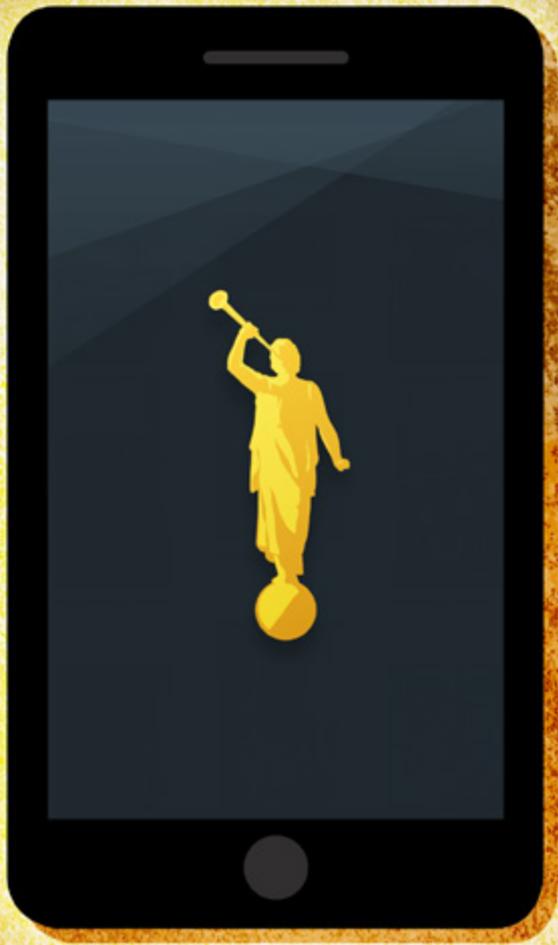
of useful knowledge, to prepare them to step forward and efficiently do their part in the great work.”<sup>1</sup>

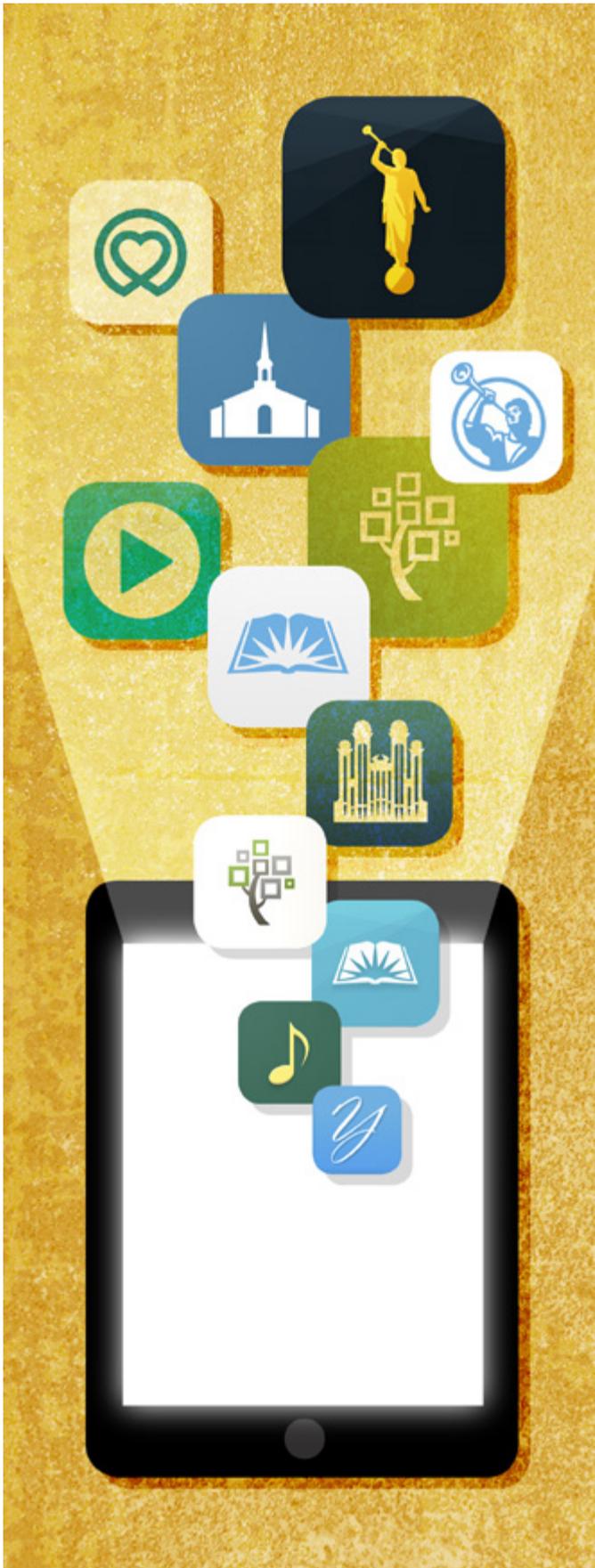
## **Using Digital Devices in Righteous Activities**

In my own life, my study of the gospel has been greatly enhanced by using the scriptures and other resources in the Gospel Library mobile app.

Our youth have been prepared to study, teach, and preach the gospel in everyday life and as full-time missionaries using technology in ways that we have only begun to discover. Because the adversary tries to use every good and useful invention for his evil purposes, it is incumbent upon us as parents, leaders, and teachers to help youth learn to use technology in righteous and productive ways from an early age.

The home is the best place for this to happen. (Parents looking for helpful resources might consider using some of the Church materials listed in the accompanying sidebar.) The gospel classroom also offers important opportunities to help youth associate their digital devices with righteous activities and feeling the Holy Ghost. Here are a few ways that teachers and leaders can help make that happen.





### **Set Principle-based Expectations**

Set expectations about the use of technology in the classroom based on principles. One key principle might be “Our purpose in class is to learn the gospel through the Holy Ghost. Our use of digital devices should assist in this effort, not distract from it.” This is far more effective than a rule such as “We don’t access social media during class.” This rule sends the message that social media is bad, where the principle leaves open the possibility of using social media in class in appropriate ways, like reaching out to those who aren’t in attendance to let them know that they are missed and to invite them to come next week.

We harm our youth with rules that suggest a behavior is wrong when it’s not. It creates confusion about using the technology in other settings and misses the opportunity to teach how to use technology appropriately. The expectations we set with the help of the youth in our classes should be in line with their age and maturity.

### **Learn about the Technology**

Don’t let your own fear or lack of understanding about technology get in the way of letting the youth use digital devices in appropriate ways. One ward reported that they held a training for teachers on how to use digital devices to study the gospel. They found that as the teachers became more skilled in using technology, they also became more excited about using digital devices to study the gospel, and the issue of digital devices being a distraction in the classroom largely went away.

### **Make Lessons Interactive**

I have found that the best way to help students use technology righteously is to make the lessons interactive and incorporate digital devices into the lesson plan. I rarely find students using their cell phones inappropriately in classes where teachers ask inspired questions, the students are involved in the lesson and feel that the teacher loves them, and the Holy Ghost is present.

Where this happens, the teacher frequently begins the class by asking an inspired question and then having

the youth, often in small groups, find the answer to the question in the scriptures and words of the prophets. Throughout the lesson, the teacher has the class looking up scriptures, studying general conference talks, watching Church-produced videos, and discussing what they are learning. The more that youth are involved in the learning process, the greater the likelihood that they will use their digital devices appropriately.

### Strike a Balance

As we incorporate technology into our lessons, it is important to remember that our use of technology needs to be balanced. We must be careful to ensure that technology does not become the lesson or distract from feeling the Holy Ghost.

In addition, some students do not have digital devices and should not be made to feel left out. With the exception of watching Church-produced videos, the activities that can be done on digital devices in the classroom should also be able to be done with paper scriptures and copies of Church magazines.

What's more, there are times when digital devices may not be appropriate. For example, when students or teachers are bearing testimony, it may make sense for teachers to lovingly invite students to put their cell phones away and just feel what the Spirit is teaching them.

### Show Patience

Finally, for some youth, learning to use digital devices appropriately in class may take some time. Christlike teachers in any classroom show patience with and love toward those who are struggling.

### Technology: An Enhancement, Not a Threat

Helping youth use technology appropriately will bless them throughout their lives, and it can enhance our classes. As Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared, “Technology, when understood and used for righteous purposes, need not be a threat but rather an enhancement to spiritual communication.”<sup>2</sup>

As the Sunday School General Presidency, we invite teachers to embrace technology in their lessons and make every effort to help youth learn to use technology for righteous purposes. If you'll ask Heavenly Father for help in your efforts, He will answer those prayers. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 18–19.
2. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 30.

### USING TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATELY

**B**rother Brian K. Ashton tells us that the home is the best place to learn to use technology righteously. The following resources can help individuals, parents, and families decide how to use existing technologies in appropriate ways:

- *Safeguards for Using Technology*. Although written for missionaries, the guidelines in this booklet can be adapted to the home. It is available in 28 languages in the Gospel Library app or in print through distribution centers or the online store.
- A list of family home evening lessons on avoiding pornography, including how to choose good media, can be found at [overcomingpornography.org/resources](http://overcomingpornography.org/resources) (available in 10 languages).
- Guidelines on family discussions regarding social media are highlighted in “Families Should Discuss How to Use Social Media in Righteous Ways,” at [lds.org/go/81833a](http://lds.org/go/81833a) (available in 10 languages), or in an article by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Flood the Earth through Social Media,” in the August 2015 *Liahona* or *New Era*.



## CHAPTER 6

# The Gift and Power of God

*This is chapter 6 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will soon be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and online at [saints.lds.org](http://saints.lds.org). Chapter 5, published in the July issue, described the loss of the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon translation in 1828.*

When Joseph returned to Harmony in the summer of 1828, Moroni appeared to him again and took the plates away. “If you are sufficiently humble and penitent,” the angel said, “you will receive them again on the twenty-second of September.”<sup>1</sup>

Darkness clouded Joseph’s mind.<sup>2</sup> He knew he had been wrong to ignore God’s will and trust Martin with the manuscript. Now God no longer trusted him with the plates or the interpreters. He felt like he deserved any punishment the heavens sent his way.<sup>3</sup>

Weighed down with guilt and regret, he went to his knees, confessed his sins, and pleaded for forgiveness. He reflected on where he had gone wrong and what he could do better if the Lord let him translate again.<sup>4</sup>

One day in July, as Joseph was walking a short distance from his house, Moroni appeared to him. The angel handed him the interpreters, and Joseph saw a divine message in them: “The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught.”<sup>5</sup>

The words were reassuring, but they soon gave way to reproof. “How strict were your commandments,” the Lord said. “You should not have feared man more than God.” He commanded Joseph to be more careful with sacred things. The record on the gold plates was more important than Martin’s reputation or Joseph’s desire to please people. God had prepared it to renew His ancient covenant and teach all people to rely on Jesus Christ for salvation.

The Lord urged Joseph to remember His mercy. “Repent of that which thou hast done,” He commanded, “and thou art still chosen.” Once again, He called Joseph to be His prophet and seer. Yet He warned him to heed His word.

“Except thou do this,” He declared, “thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift.”<sup>6</sup>

That fall, Joseph’s parents traveled south to Harmony. Nearly two months had passed since Joseph left their home in Manchester, and they had heard nothing from him. They worried the summer’s tragedies had devastated him. In a matter of weeks, he had lost his first child, nearly lost his wife, and lost the manuscript pages. They wanted to make sure he and Emma were well.

Less than a mile from their destination, Joseph Sr. and Lucy were overjoyed to see Joseph standing in the road



ahead of them, looking calm and happy. He told them about losing the confidence of God, repenting of his sins, and receiving the revelation. The Lord's rebuke had stung him, but like prophets of old he wrote the revelation down for others to read. It was the first time he had ever recorded the Lord's word to him.

Joseph also told his parents that Moroni had since returned the plates and interpreters. The angel seemed pleased, Joseph recounted. "He told me that the Lord loved me for my faithfulness and humility."

The record was now safely stowed in the house, hidden in a trunk. "Emma writes for me now," Joseph told them, "but the angel said that the Lord would send someone to write for me, and I trust that it will be so."<sup>7</sup>

The following spring, Martin Harris traveled to Harmony with some bad news. His wife had filed a complaint in court, claiming Joseph was a fraud who pretended to translate gold plates. Martin now expected a summons to testify in court. He would have to declare that Joseph had fooled him, or Lucy would charge him with deceit as well.<sup>8</sup>

Martin pushed Joseph to give him more evidence that the plates were real. He wanted to tell the court all about the translation, but he worried people would not believe him. Lucy, after all, had searched the Smiths' house and never found the record. And though he had served as Joseph's scribe for two months, Martin had never seen the plates either and could not testify that he had.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph took the question to the Lord and received an answer for his friend. The Lord would not tell Martin what to say in court, nor would He provide him any more evidence until Martin chose to be humble and exercise faith. "If they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph," He said, "if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you."

The Lord promised to treat Martin mercifully, however, if he did as Joseph had done that summer and humbled himself, trusted in God, and learned from his mistakes. Three faithful witnesses would see the plates in due time, the Lord said, and Martin could be one of them if he stopped seeking the approval of others.<sup>10</sup>

Before closing His words, the Lord made a declaration. "If the people of this generation harden not their hearts," He said, "I will establish my church."<sup>11</sup>

Joseph reflected on these words as Martin copied the revelation. He and Emma then listened as Martin read it back to check its accuracy. As they read, Emma's father came into the room and listened. When they finished, he asked whose words they were.

"The words of Jesus Christ," Joseph and Emma explained.

"I consider the whole of it a delusion," Isaac said. "Abandon it."<sup>12</sup>

Ignoring Emma's father, Martin took his copy of the revelation and boarded the stagecoach for home. He had come to Harmony seeking evidence of the plates, and he left with a revelation testifying of their reality. He could not use it in court, but he returned to Palmyra knowing the Lord was aware of him.

Later, when Martin stood before the judge, he offered a simple, powerful testimony. With a hand raised to heaven, he witnessed of the truth of the gold plates and declared that he had freely given Joseph fifty dollars to do the Lord's

work. With no evidence to prove Lucy's accusations, the court dismissed the case.<sup>13</sup>

Joseph, meanwhile, continued the translation, praying the Lord would soon send him another scribe.<sup>14</sup>

Back in Manchester, a young man named Oliver Cowdery was staying with Joseph's parents. Oliver was a year younger than Joseph, and in the fall of 1828 he had begun teaching school about a mile south of the Smiths' farm.

Teachers often boarded with the families of their students, and when Oliver heard rumors about Joseph and the gold plates, he asked if he could stay with the Smiths. At first he gleaned few details from the family. The stolen manuscript and local gossip had made them wary to the point of silence.<sup>15</sup>

But during the winter of 1828–29, as Oliver taught the Smith children, he earned the trust of his hosts. Around this time, Joseph Sr. had come back from a trip to Harmony with a revelation declaring that the Lord was about to begin a marvelous work.<sup>16</sup> By then Oliver had proven to be a sincere seeker of truth, and Joseph's parents opened up to him about their son's divine calling.<sup>17</sup>

What they said captivated Oliver, and he longed to help with the translation. Like Joseph, Oliver was dissatisfied with modern churches and believed in a God of miracles who still revealed His will to people.<sup>18</sup> But Joseph and the gold plates were far away, and Oliver did not know how he could help the work if he stayed in Manchester.

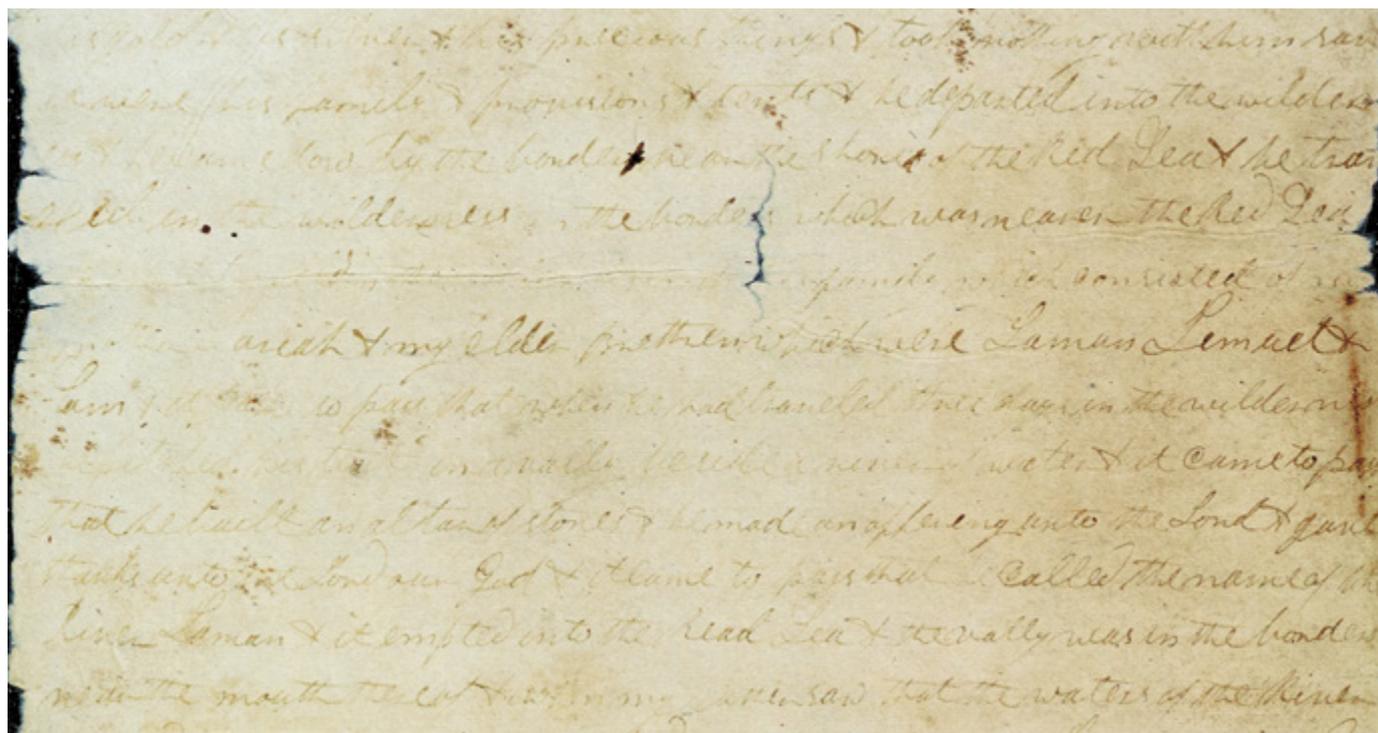
One spring day, as rain was falling hard against the Smiths' roof, Oliver told the family he wanted to go to Harmony to help Joseph when the school term was over. Lucy and Joseph Sr. urged him to ask the Lord if his desires were right.<sup>19</sup>

Retiring to his bed, Oliver prayed privately to know if what he had heard about the gold plates was true. The Lord showed him a vision of the gold plates and Joseph's efforts to translate them. A peaceful feeling rested over him, and he



*The record testified again  
and again of Jesus Christ,  
and Oliver saw how  
prophets led an ancient  
church and how ordinary  
men and women did  
the work of God.*





**Oliver Cowdery was the scribe for this page of the Book of Mormon translation.**

knew then that he should volunteer to be Joseph's scribe.<sup>20</sup>

Oliver told no one about his prayer. But as soon as the school term ended, he and Joseph's brother Samuel set out on foot for Harmony, more than 100 miles (160 km) away. The road was cold and muddy from spring rain, and Oliver had a frostbitten toe by the time he and Samuel arrived at Joseph and Emma's door. Yet he was eager to meet the couple and see for himself how the Lord worked through the young prophet.<sup>21</sup>

Once Oliver arrived in Harmony, it was as if he had always been there. Joseph talked with him late into the night, listened to his story, and answered his questions. It was obvious Oliver had a good education, and Joseph readily accepted his offer to act as scribe.

After Oliver's arrival, Joseph's first task was to secure a place to work. He asked Oliver to draft a contract in which Joseph promised to pay his father-in-law for the small frame home where he and Emma lived, as well as the barn, farmland, and nearby spring.<sup>22</sup> Mindful of their daughter's well-being, Emma's parents agreed to the terms and promised to help calm neighbors' fears about Joseph.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, Joseph and Oliver started translating. They worked well together, weeks on end, frequently with

Emma in the same room going about her daily work.<sup>24</sup> Sometimes Joseph translated by looking through the interpreters and reading in English the characters on the plates.

Often he found a single seer stone to be more convenient. He would put the seer stone in his hat, place his face into the hat to block out the light, and peer at the stone. Light from the stone would shine in the darkness, revealing words that Joseph dictated as Oliver rapidly copied them down.<sup>25</sup>

Under the Lord's direction, Joseph did not try to retranslate what he had lost. Instead, he and Oliver continued forward in the record. The Lord revealed that Satan had enticed wicked men to take the pages, alter their words, and use them to cast doubt on the translation. But the Lord assured Joseph that He had inspired the ancient prophets who prepared the plates to include another, fuller account of the lost material.<sup>26</sup>

"I will confound those who have altered my words," the Lord told Joseph. "I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil."<sup>27</sup>

Acting as Joseph's scribe thrilled Oliver. Day after day, he listened as his friend dictated the complex history of two large civilizations, the Nephites and the Lamanites. He learned of righteous and wicked kings, of people who

fell into captivity and were delivered from it, of an ancient prophet who used seer stones to translate records recovered from fields filled with bones. Like Joseph, that prophet was a revelator and seer blessed with the gift and power of God.<sup>28</sup>

The record testified again and again of Jesus Christ, and Oliver saw how prophets led an ancient church and how ordinary men and women did the work of God.

Yet Oliver still had many questions about the Lord's work, and he hungered for answers. Joseph sought a revelation for him through the Urim and Thummim, and the Lord responded. "If you will ask of me you shall receive," He declared. "If thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous."

The Lord also urged Oliver to remember the witness he had received before coming to Harmony, which Oliver had kept to himself. "Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" the Lord asked. "If I have told you things which no man knoweth have you not received a witness?"<sup>29</sup>

Oliver was astonished. He immediately told Joseph about his secret prayer and the divine witness he had received. No one could have known about it except God, he said, and he now knew the work was true.

They returned to work, and Oliver began to wonder if he could translate as well.<sup>30</sup> He believed that God could work through instruments like seer stones, and he had occasionally used a divining rod to find water and minerals. Yet he was unsure if his rod worked by the power of God. The process of revelation was still a mystery to him.<sup>31</sup>

Joseph again brought Oliver's questions to the Lord, and the Lord told Oliver that he had power to acquire knowledge if he asked in faith. The Lord confirmed that Oliver's rod worked by the power of God, like Aaron's rod in the Old Testament. He then taught Oliver more about revelation. "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by

the Holy Ghost," He declared. "Behold, this is the spirit of revelation."

He also told Oliver that he could translate the record like Joseph did, as long as he relied on faith. "Remember," the Lord said, "without faith you can do nothing."<sup>32</sup>

After the revelation, Oliver was excited to translate. He followed Joseph's example, but when the words did not come easily, he grew frustrated and confused.

Joseph saw his friend's struggle and sympathized. It had taken him time to tune his heart and mind to the work of translation, but Oliver seemed to think he could master it quickly. It was not enough to have a spiritual gift. He had to cultivate and develop it over time for use in God's work.

Oliver soon gave up on translating and asked Joseph why he had not been successful.

Joseph asked the Lord. "You have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was

to ask me," the Lord replied. "You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right."

The Lord instructed Oliver to be patient. "It is not expedient that you should translate now," He said. "The work which you are called to do is to write for my servant Joseph." He promised Oliver other opportunities to translate later, but for now he was the scribe and Joseph was the seer.<sup>33</sup> ■

A complete list of works cited is available in English at [saints.lds.org](http://saints.lds.org). The word *Topic* in the notes indicates additional information online at [saints.lds.org](http://saints.lds.org).

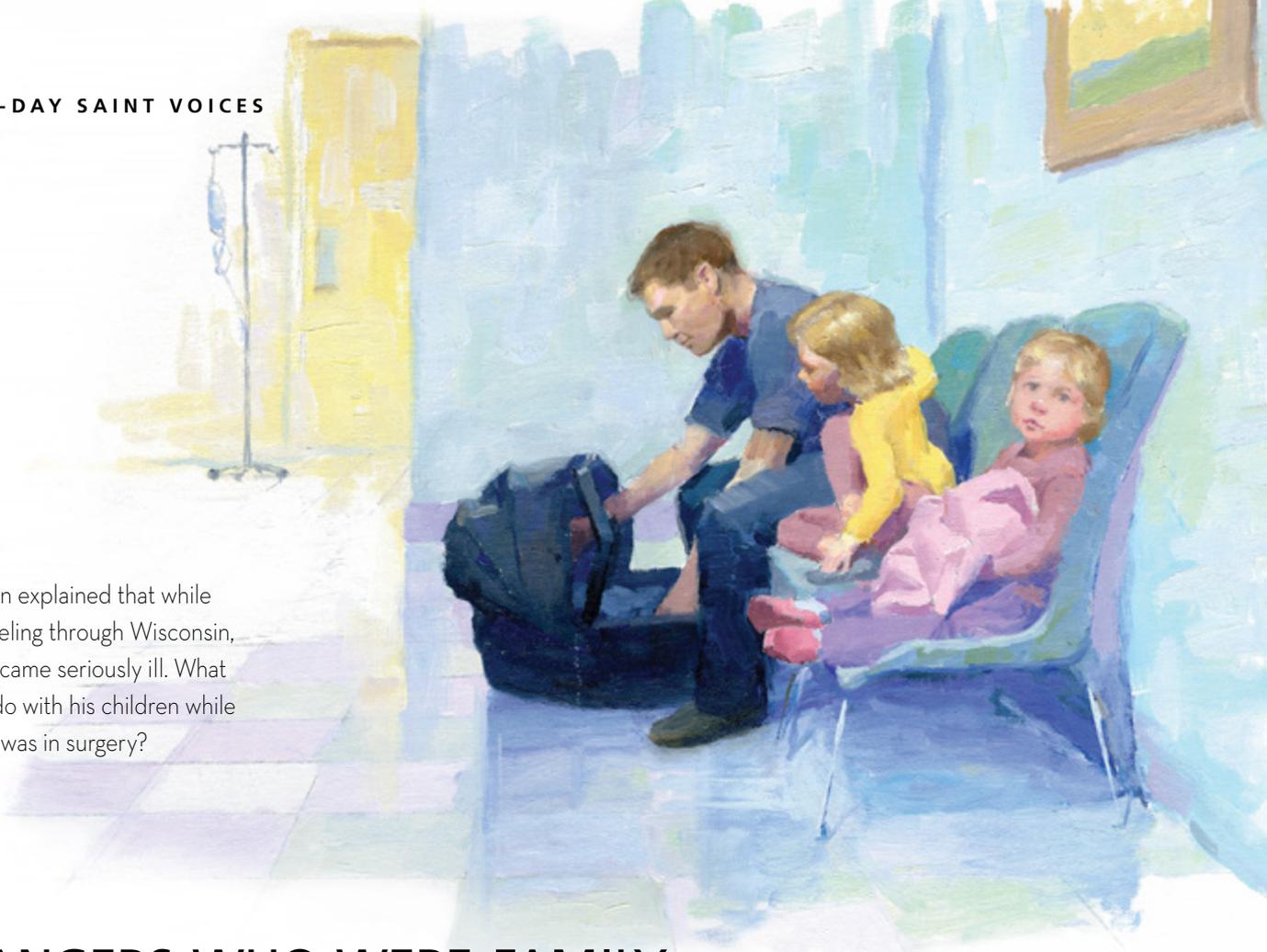
#### NOTES

1. Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 7, [9].
2. See *Doctrine and Covenants 10:2* (Revelation, Spring 1829, at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)).
3. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 7, [5]–[7].
4. Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 7, [8]–[9].
5. *Doctrine and Covenants 3:1* (Revelation, July 1828, at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)); Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 7, [8]–[9]; Joseph Smith *History, 1838–56*, volume A-1, 10, in *JSP*, H1:246 (draft 2).
6. *Doctrine and Covenants 3* (Revelation, July 1828, at [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org)); Joseph Smith *History, circa Summer 1832*, [6], in *JSP*, H1:16; Lucy Mack Smith, *History, 1844–45*, book 7, [8]–[9].



7. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, 138; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [8]–[11].
8. Preface to Book of Mormon, circa Aug. 1829, in *JSP*, D1:92–94; “Testamoney of Martin Harris,” Sept. 4, 1870, [4], Edward Stevenson Collection, Church History Library; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [5]; Historical Introduction to Revelation, Mar. 1829 [D&C 5], in *JSP*, D1:14–16.
9. “Testamoney of Martin Harris,” Sept. 4, 1870, [4], Edward Stevenson Collection, Church History Library; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 6, [9]; book 8, [5].
10. Doctrine and Covenants 5 (Revelation, Mar. 1829, at josephsmithpapers.org).
11. Revelation, Mar. 1829 [D&C 5], in *JSP*, D1:17.
12. Isaac Hale, Affidavit, Mar. 20, 1834, in “Mormonism,” *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian*, May 1, 1834, [1]; “considered” in original changed to “consider.”
13. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [6]–[7].
14. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [11].
15. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [12]; “Mormonism,” *Kansas City Daily Journal*, June 5, 1881, 1; Morris, “Conversion of Oliver Cowdery,” 5–8.
16. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [12]; Knight, Reminiscences, 5; Doctrine and Covenants 4 (Revelation, Feb. 1829, at josephsmithpapers.org); see also Darowski, “Joseph Smith’s Support at Home,” 10–14.
17. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [12].
18. Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:15.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 6 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A, at josephsmithpapers.org); Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 7, [12]; book 8, [1].
20. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 15, in *JSP*, H1:284 (draft 2); Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, [6], in *JSP*, H1:16; Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [1]; see also Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A, at josephsmithpapers.org).
21. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [3]–[4]; Joseph Smith History, circa Summer 1832, [6], in *JSP*, H1:16.
22. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [4]; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 13, in *JSP*, H1:276 (draft 2); Agreement with Isaac Hale, Apr. 6, 1829, in *JSP*, D1:28–34; Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:14.
23. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 18, in *JSP*, H1:296 (draft 2).
24. Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 15, in *JSP*, H1:284 (draft 2); Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [4]; Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290. **Topic:** Daily Life of First-Generation Latter-day Saints
25. “Book of Mormon Translation,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org; Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 15, in *JSP*, H1:284 (draft 2); Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:14; Joseph Smith III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 290; “Golden Bible,” *Palmyra Freeman*, Aug. 11, 1829, [2]. **Topic:** Book of Mormon Translation
26. Doctrine and Covenants 10:45 (Revelation, Spring 1829, at josephsmithpapers.org); 1 Nephi 9:5; Words of Mormon 1; Doctrine and Covenants 3 (Revelation, July 1828, at josephsmithpapers.org).
27. Doctrine and Covenants 10:42–43 (Revelation, Spring 1829, at josephsmithpapers.org). **Topic:** Lost Manuscript of the Book of Mormon
28. Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:14; Mosiah 8:16–18; see also Omni 1:20; Mosiah 8:8–13; 28:11–15, 20; Alma 37:21, 23; and Ether 3:24–28.
29. Doctrine and Covenants 6:5, 11, 22–24 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A, at josephsmithpapers.org).
30. Doctrine and Covenants 6:10–13 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A, at josephsmithpapers.org); Doctrine and Covenants 8:4–8 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–B, at josephsmithpapers.org); Historical Introduction to Revelation, Apr. 1829–B [D&C 8], in *JSP*, D1:44–45; Revelation Book 1, 13, in *JSP*, MRB:15.
31. Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–45, book 8, [1]; Paul and Parks, *History of Wells, Vermont*, 81; Historical Introduction to Revelation, 1829–B [D&C 8], in *JSP*, D1:44–45; see also Baugh, *Days Never to Be Forgotten*; Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 73; and Morris, “Oliver Cowdery’s Vermont Years and the Origins of Mormonism,” 106–29. **Topic:** Divining Rods
32. Doctrine and Covenants 6 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–A, at josephsmithpapers.org); Doctrine and Covenants 8 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–B, at josephsmithpapers.org); Joseph Smith History, 1838–56, volume A-1, 13–14, in *JSP*, H1:276–78 (draft 2); see also Book of Commandments 7:3; and Doctrine and Covenants 8:6–7.
33. Doctrine and Covenants 9 (Revelation, Apr. 1829–D, at josephsmithpapers.org); Oliver Cowdery to William W. Phelps, Sept. 7, 1834, *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 1:14.

My son explained that while traveling through Wisconsin, his wife became seriously ill. What would he do with his children while their mom was in surgery?



## STRANGERS WHO WERE FAMILY

Late one evening, my son Garrett called from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA. He and his wife, Shelly, and their children, were traveling from Alabama, where Garrett had just completed military training, to Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. He explained that while they were traveling through Wisconsin, Shelly became seriously ill. They had found a hospital, and Shelly was scheduled for an emergency appendectomy the next morning.

I arranged to fly and meet them, but I couldn't get there until the following day. My son expressed concern about what to do with his children—a five-year-old, a one-year-old, and a three-week-old baby—while their mom was in surgery.

Not knowing anyone in the area, he decided to call the bishop in Minot, even though they had not met. The bishop in Minot said he would contact the bishop in Eau Claire.

The following morning, the bishop in Eau Claire, along with the Relief Society president, met Garrett at his hotel. They said they would be happy to care for the children while Shelly was in surgery. Shelly later commented that she was completely at peace letting two strangers—who were family in the gospel—watch her children. By the time I arrived in Eau Claire, Shelly was recovering and my grandkids were back with her and Garrett. We were grateful for the help we received in our time of need.

A few weeks later, I was watching

the October 2016 general conference when President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Where will you go to find a detailed and inspired Church organizational structure through which you are taught and supported by men and women who are deeply committed to serving the Lord by serving you and your family?” (“To Whom Shall We Go?” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 91).

I couldn't help but think about what had happened in Eau Claire. It is a blessing to be not only a member of the Church but also a member of a gospel family, where we can serve and bless each other no matter where we are. ■

Jeff Messerly, Utah, USA

# HEAVENLY FATHER HEARD MY PRAYER

We were still living in our home country, Argentina, when my husband and I started our family. We were returned missionaries and knew it was a blessing to be married in the Lord's temple. We were excited to walk the path back to Heavenly Father together.

We knew that the plan of salvation included trials, but we trusted that we would be able to overcome anything through faith and prayer. But we did not expect adversity to come upon us without stopping. Trial after trial seemed to rain down upon us.

One afternoon I was alone, feeling very sad and crying inconsolably because of our trials. I didn't know what to do. Every time I tried to stop crying, I only felt more depressed and anguished.

I then thought about the many men and women who shared with me how valuable prayer had been for them during difficult moments. I had a testimony of prayer, but my mind and spirit were so tormented that I thought I wouldn't be able to find the words to say.

In tears, I knelt by my bed and with all of my heart, I asked Heavenly Father for comfort and peace. I didn't ask for a solution or even for the trial to disappear. I just asked for peace.

While I was praying, I heard a knock on my front door. I opened it, with tears still in my eyes, and saw a

sister from Relief Society. She told me she was working in the area and had stopped by on her motorcycle. All I could do was hug her. She said, "I don't know why, but I felt I needed to stop by and see you."

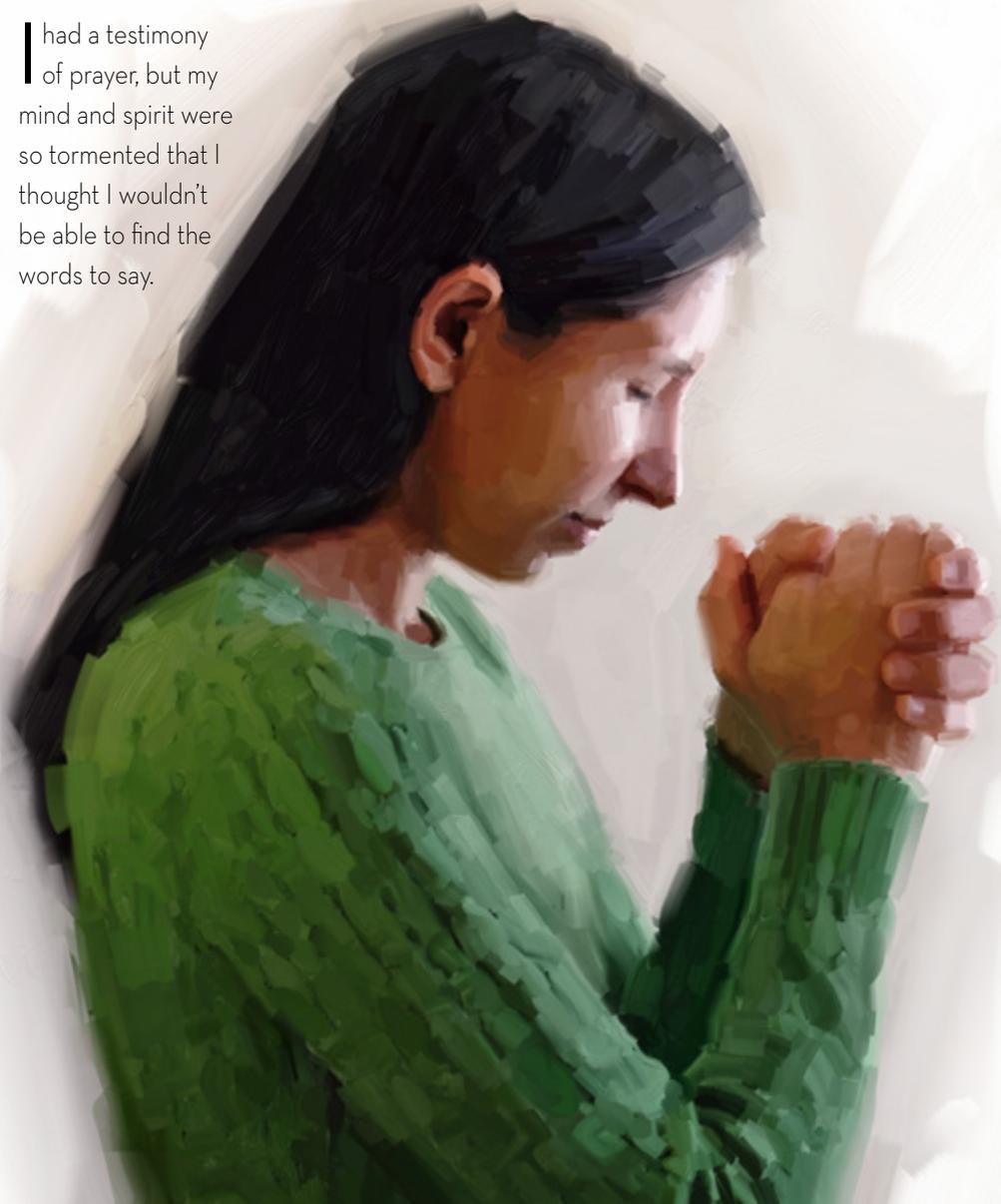
We sat at my kitchen table and she helped me calm down. After talking with her for a few minutes, I finally started to feel that I wasn't alone

and that Heavenly Father had heard my prayer.

It is a blessing to be able to talk to my Heavenly Father through prayer. He listened to me in my hour of need and sent one of His children to help me. I'm grateful this sister heard the inspiration of the Spirit and followed it. ■

Raquel E. Pedraza de Brosio, Utah, USA

I had a testimony of prayer, but my mind and spirit were so tormented that I thought I wouldn't be able to find the words to say.



## AN OLD BOOK OF MORMON

Several years ago, I received a voice mail on my phone: “Is this Dan Hobbs who lived in Idaho Falls and served a mission in Washington in 1974? This is Tom Janaky. I think you taught my mom and dad.”

I was surprised. I had served in Texas, USA, not Washington, but I recognized the name. I immediately thought of the book on my dresser—a 1948 edition of the Book of Mormon. I opened it to a handwritten message on the cover page: “May God be with you. God bless you! Frank and Virginia Janaky, 1974.” Suddenly my mind went back 35 years.

I was 21 and close to the end of my mission in Houston, Texas. My companion and I were tracting without much success when we knocked on a door that was answered by a man who warmly invited us in. He introduced himself as Frank Janaky and introduced us to his wife, Virginia. We visited with them briefly.

On subsequent visits, we taught

them the gospel. They weren’t interested in baptism, but they were always friendly. During one discussion, I noticed an old copy of the Book of Mormon on a bookshelf. I can’t remember how it came to be in their possession, but I do remember mentioning how much I admired it.

Shortly before I returned home, my companion and I stopped by to say goodbye. Before we left, Frank signed the old Book of Mormon and gave it to me as a parting gift. He asked if I would sign his family Bible with my name and address. That was the last time I saw the Janakys, but I have always treasured their gift.

I returned the phone call that evening. Tom asked again if I had served a mission in Washington in 1974. I told him I had served in Texas and asked if his parents were Frank and Virginia.

He told me his parents had moved from Texas to Washington. He had assumed the missionaries who visited

his parents were in Washington. He said he had found my name and address in the family Bible.

“I am calling you to tell you that my brother and I have both been baptized, partly because of how nice the missionaries were to our parents,” he said. “They were so fond of all the missionaries who contacted them through the years.”

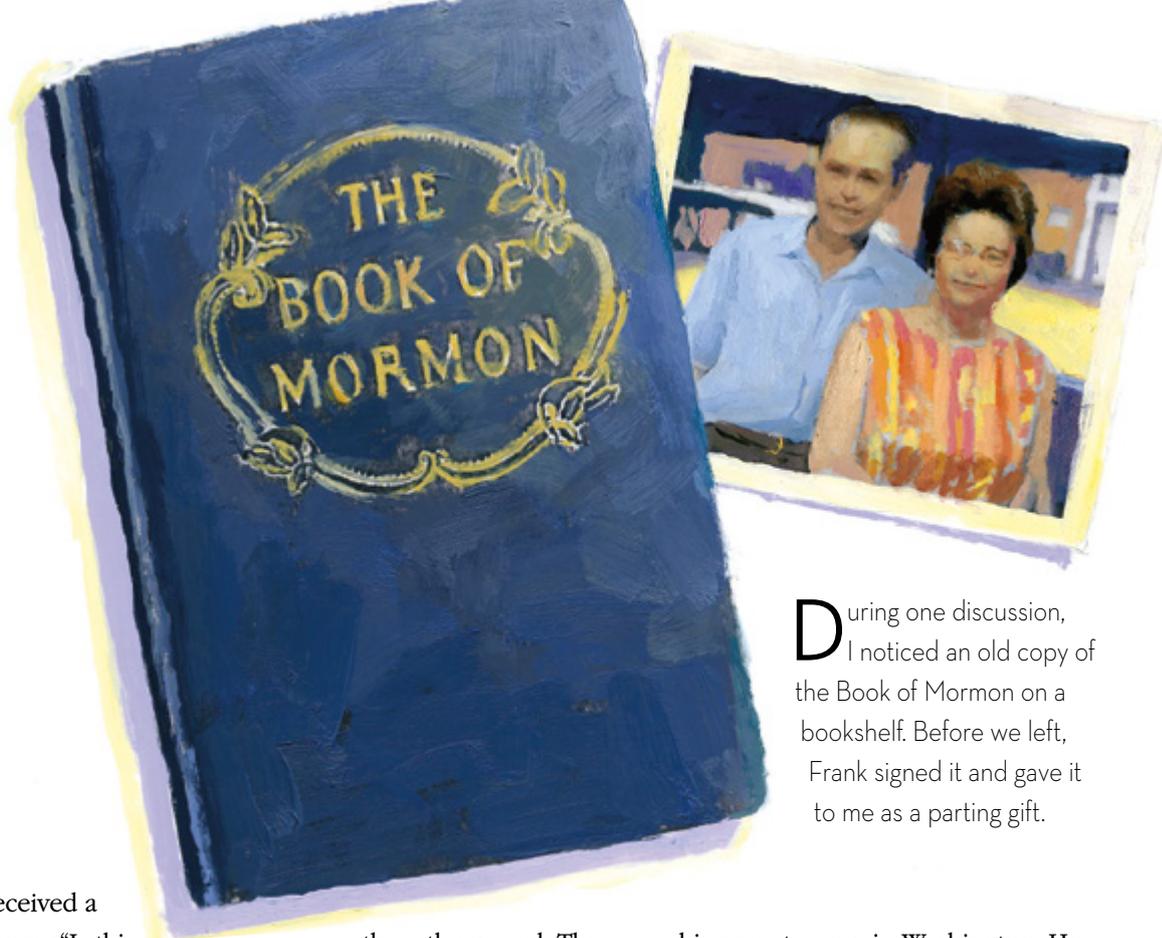
Tom then informed me that they had both passed away.

“But we are now completing their temple work,” he said.

With tears in my eyes, I thanked Tom for his call.

For years I felt that my mission wasn’t much of a success. Sometimes I wondered if I had touched anyone’s life while serving. Tom’s phone call was a tender mercy from the Lord. I am grateful for my mission and the small part I played in bringing the gospel to the Janaky family. ■

Dan Hobbs, Idaho, USA



During one discussion, I noticed an old copy of the Book of Mormon on a bookshelf. Before we left, Frank signed it and gave it to me as a parting gift.

# THE PRAYERS OF A NEW MOTHER

As a first-time mother of a small and precocious boy, I sometimes feel my life consists of little more than diaper changes and feeding schedules.

While adjusting to motherhood, I found myself ignoring my spiritual needs. Instead of reading the scriptures, I would usually sneak in a much-needed nap or one more load of laundry. Prayers were simply hurried pleas to my Father in Heaven for my son to fall asleep and *stay* asleep, or for help to just make it through the day.

When my son was around four months old, I realized how depleted my spirit had become. My desire to strengthen my testimony was waning. I didn't feel like sitting through all three hours of church, and other responsibilities at home and at church seemed like things I didn't have time or energy for. I wanted to feel the light of the gospel again, but I was exhausted and didn't know where to begin. One night I fervently prayed for help.

The next morning, I dragged myself to church. While listening to the lesson in Relief Society, I saw a poster illustrating the purpose of Relief Society. I had seen the poster every Sunday, but I had never internalized its message before. It states that the purpose

of Relief Society is to help sisters “increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and home, and seek out and help those in need.”

I read it again. This time my mind focused on “increase faith and personal righteousness.” It became clear that before I could fulfill my Church callings and serve others effectively, I needed to tend to my own spiritual health. I started by setting time aside each day to read the scriptures. I also worked on being more thoughtful when I prayed.

I found myself ignoring my spiritual needs. Instead of reading the scriptures, I would usually sneak in a much-needed nap or one more load of laundry.

As I began to nourish my own faith and personal righteousness and seek guidance from Heavenly Father, I felt my love for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ reignite. Serving in callings, visiting my Relief Society sisters, and partaking of the sacrament each week became meaningful in my life again. And the things I once viewed as having no time and energy for have now become a comfort and strength to me and my family. ■

Krystal Baker Chipman, Utah, USA



**This young adult from Ghana knows that even when life seems hopeless, you can always rely on Heavenly Father.**



# How Eric Learned to Trust God

**By Richard M. Romney**

Church Magazines

**W**hen 21-year-old Eric Ayala of Techiman, Ghana, was 3, he and his mother were at a street-side market when a car veered out of control and struck them.

Now paraplegic, Eric faced challenge after challenge as he grew up without the use of his legs. He eventually obtained leg braces that allowed him to stand, but he soon outgrew them and couldn't afford replacements. He was given a small wheelchair, but outgrew that too. His legs withered, sometimes shaking with spasms, and his feet became deformed.

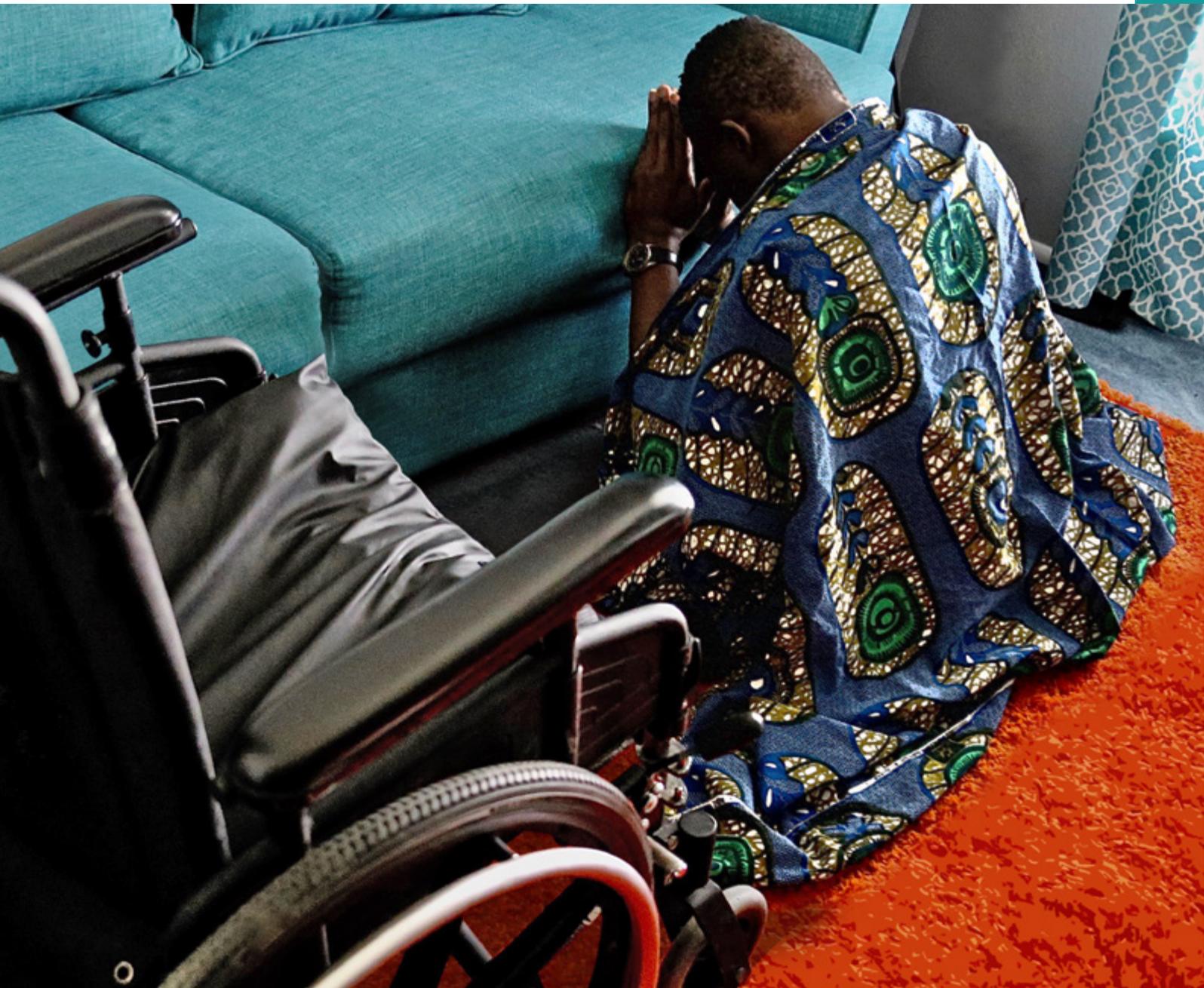
In Ghana, those with disabilities are often considered a burden. Eric's family had little money, not enough to pay for medical treatment. When Eric was about 10, he developed pressure sores caused by lack of movement and by sitting on wood and concrete. The sores festered, oozing constantly, and they smelled terrible.



As a result, Eric lived outside, on a bench in an open-air shed. His mother, Lucy, and his sisters brought him food, washed his clothes, and helped him bathe. Eric was often drenched by rain and shivered from cold in the night. He learned to love morning sunshine because it brought warmth. Too poor to go to school and unable to work, he spent years in that shed, occasionally venturing into the neighborhood on his wheelchair.

### **The Beginning of Belief**

Rather than becoming resentful, “I started to love and believe in God,” Eric says. “Nobody taught me about Him, but I could see His creations, and I could see the good and bad in people. Sometimes it is hard to believe in Him when life is hard. But then I would see something good come into my life, and I would say, ‘See, God is here, and it is wonderful.’”



Eric had not been formally taught how to pray, but he began calling upon God. He received answers—when he was sick, an unanticipated opportunity to see a doctor; when he asked for relief from his sores, they went away; when he outgrew his small wheelchair, a kind stranger brought him a larger one. “God did many good things in my life,” he says.

Then, in what seemed a miracle, at age 14, Eric was accepted for school. His mother, by cooking for others, had scraped together enough money to buy him a uniform and pay for books and tuition. At school, “I couldn’t go out and exercise with the others,” he explains, “so I stayed inside and studied all the time.” He amazed his headmaster by receiving top scores in math, reading, and writing.

A nun from the hospital donated a new tricycle that Eric could pedal with his hands, making it easier for him to go to school. But as Eric went back and forth, pressure sores opened again. Infection returned, along with the putrid smell as the wounds leaked. Students complained about flies constantly buzzing around Eric. He was 17 when the headmaster told him to go home and get well, or he could not return to school.

Eric’s father had a tiny farm out in the country. He had taken the family to work on the farm, but Eric

remained at home in his shed, alone. Meanwhile, his sores enlarged to huge wounds and infection entered into his bones, a life-threatening condition called osteomyelitis.

### **Talking with an Obruni**

When he was 18, Eric saw his friend Emmanuel Ofosu-hene speaking English with an *obruni* (white man). The *obruni* was a Mormon missionary, Elder Old. “I only spoke Twi, but Emmanuel interpreted for me: ‘I am so sick I think I will die. Can you help me know what to do so I can go to heaven?’

“Elder Old and his African companion sat with me and taught me. For some reason, they started with the Word of Wisdom. I knew they were speaking the truth because I already knew coffee and tobacco were bad.” They also gave Eric a brochure about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and invited him to church.

“When I went, I saw this Church was different,” he says. “It was reverent.” Even though it took him an hour to push himself to church in his wheelchair, Eric loved the meetings. “I wanted to go up front and be with people,” he says. “But I stayed at the back because I knew I smelled bad.”

Eric told the missionaries, “What I am learning is true.” He also told

them he wanted to be baptized, but doctors had warned him not to get his wounds wet. “I will rely on God to provide answers,” he said. He attended church for about a year and then became too ill and weak to wheel himself there.

Eventually, Eric was taken to the hospital again. In Ghana, patients have to provide their own water, food, bedding, medicine, and bandages. If they have no money, they are not treated. Eric’s mother and sisters did what they could. Eric received food and medical attention infrequently, so he grew weaker.

### **An Unexpected Visit**

Then Eric received some unexpected visitors. Missionaries, Sister Peprah and Sister Nafuna, had seen his photograph at the church and came to see him in the hospital and brought him food. It had been a year since he had been to church, but he told them he still wanted to be baptized.

A few days later, Eric’s sister visited him and found him very ill. She ran home and told their mother. Though their mother had suffered permanent leg damage in the accident with Eric, she walked to the hospital, wincing with every step. “You must come home,” she told Eric. “If you’re going to die, I at least want you near.”

The next morning, the sister

missionaries came to the house. “You weren’t at the hospital,” Sister Peprah said. “So we came here.” With them were Elder and Sister Wood, senior missionaries from New Zealand. They took inventory of needs and promised to return.

A few days later, Eric’s father took the family back to the farm—except Eric, who found himself alone again and without food or water. When Elder and Sister Wood returned and discovered Eric alone and hungry, they brought him food and water. They returned the next day and noticed fluid running down his leg and found a huge open ulcer on his thigh. They immediately took Eric back to the hospital.

The Woods learned of a medical humanitarian team from the United States that would be coming to Ghana. The team would perform surgery for Eric without cost. The surgeon treated the ulcer on Eric’s leg. But when he saw the severity of Eric’s wounds, as well as the osteomyelitis, he determined he could not do all the necessary procedures in Ghana. Based on his recommendation, the humanitarian organization initiated a process that would eventually bring Eric to the United States to receive additional treatment and permanently close his wounds. In addition, a shelter in Winneba, Ghana, run by members of the Church, agreed to have Eric live there when he returned so that he could attend school and complete his education.

### **The Lord Provided**

Elder Wood, an engineer by profession, rebuilt Eric’s hand-pedal tricycle. He performed a similar overhaul on his wheelchair. He also counseled with President Cosgrave of the Ghana Kumasi Mission, a medical doctor. They felt Eric could be baptized if proper precautions were taken.

“Elder Wood wrapped my body in plastic, with tape around the plastic,” Eric explains. “Then he carried me into a font filled with water treated with disinfectant.

I was baptized on June 26, 2016.” Eric had relied on the Lord, and the Lord had provided a way. ■



**My fear of failure kept me from developing talents and seeking opportunities for growth.**

# But What If I Miss?

**By Sarah Keenan**  
Church Magazines

**W**hen I was six, my dad took me and my older sister to play basketball. It was my first time playing at a real gym. The basketball felt heavy in my small hands and the hoop—even at its lowest setting—seemed overwhelmingly high.

“Don’t worry, just take a shot,” my dad said.

I turned to my dad. “But what if I miss?” I asked.

More than two decades later, I don’t remember if I made that shot or not. But I do remember the fear I felt: “What if I miss? What if my best efforts fall short? What should I do if I fail?”

## **Fearing to Fail**

That same fear of failure has plagued me throughout my life. For a long time, I was naturally skilled in enough activities to cover that fear. But it still manifested itself in small ways. I didn’t try a sport until I knew I was good at it. I avoided school

subjects that did not correlate with my strengths. When I did try new activities that I was not immediately successful in, my solution was to quickly quit and move on to something I was more skilled in.

Then I went on my mission. For the first time, I was forced into an environment where my weaknesses were blaringly evident and I couldn’t easily back out. I had a hard time initiating conversations. I struggled teaching in a new language. I faced rejection multiple times a day. I was constantly failing—taking shots and missing—and there were days when I considered following my usual pattern for failure: giving up and going home.

## **Trouble with Translating**

During this time, I received much-needed inspiration and correction from the story of Oliver Cowdery trying to translate the plates. After a few weeks of scribing for Joseph Smith, Oliver began to wonder if he could also translate the plates.



Joseph asked the Lord and received an answer that Oliver would be allowed to translate. However, the Lord also gave Oliver a few cautions, two of which were to “be patient” and “fear not” (D&C 6:19, 34).

Translating was not as simple as Oliver imagined. When the words didn’t come easily, he became frustrated and soon gave up.

### **Overlooking Opportunities**

As I studied the story, I recognized that Oliver’s problem was similar to my own. He had expected to master translating quickly, and when it became evident that he would not be immediately successful—that he would fail many times as he worked to develop the gift—he went back to scribing, something he was

comfortable with. The Lord’s cautions were accurate: Oliver was not patient with himself or with God, and he feared. So God took the opportunity away from him (see D&C 9:3).

I realized how often my fear of failure had stopped me. I had been so afraid of “missing shots” that I hadn’t even taken them or had given up after a few attempts. In trying to avoid failure, I had missed opportunities at future success. I hadn’t been patient with myself or God, and I had feared.

Oliver Cowdery’s story also gave me hope. Although the Lord told Oliver that he would not be able to translate then, He also promised, “Other records have I, that I will give unto you power that you may assist to translate” (D&C 9:2). Oliver’s

opportunity to translate was not lost, just delayed. Likewise, opportunities I had missed were not lost. The Lord would provide more, if I was willing to be patient and not allow fear of failure prevent me from trying.

### **Failing to Fear**

I resolved to work through my fear of failure. Even though I still felt anxious talking to strangers or teaching in a foreign language, I improved at both. These skills have helped me in my life, even after my mission.

There are still times that I hesitate to try something new or do something I’m not particularly good at. But I’ve learned to be more patient. I’ve learned to keep taking shots and not be afraid to miss. ■

BEFORE YOU ARE

**CALLED**



# TO SERVE

*What is it like to serve a mission?*

**By Ryan Carr**  
Church Magazines

**H**ave you thought about serving a mission? If so, you've probably wondered what it's like. Here's your chance to ask some full-time missionaries (not real missionaries, but these answers are typical):

**YOU:** "Hi, elders. What is a typical day like?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We're up early—at 6:30 a.m. For the next couple of hours, we study the gospel and our mission language. We review our goals for the week and plan our day. We even think of backup plans if people aren't available for their appointments with us. Then we're out the door, and we work all day, finding people to teach, coordinating the work with members, and having teaching appointments."

**YOU:** "Have you ever felt homesick?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, especially at the start of our missions. But we can email our families and read emails from them once a week. We've found that the best way to get over homesickness is to focus on our work."

**YOU:** "How do you feel about talking with strangers?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We were really nervous about that when we

first got here, but the Lord blesses us to get used to it because we do it every day. We know that not everyone wants to hear our message, but some are interested, so we have to be willing to speak up anytime. It actually becomes fun to meet people and get to know them."

**YOU:** "Is it hard to teach the gospel?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, doing it well takes some practice, but we had good training in the missionary training center. We are trying to teach the lessons in a way that meets the needs and answers the questions of the people we're teaching. We study the gospel every day so we can teach it well. Most importantly, we feel guided by the Spirit. Being set apart as missionaries helps."

**YOU:** "Is a mission hard work?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, we work about 70 hours a week, but it's so fulfilling. Of course we feel disappointed when people don't progress,

but overall, it's a blessing to be instruments in the Lord's hands to help people progress spiritually. We try to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost because we know that only the Spirit can help people gain testimonies and become converted."

**YOU:** "What if I'm not sure I have a testimony?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "That's OK—keep praying and reading the scriptures! Go to church and seminary. Go to the temple if you can. Rely on the Lord and His teachings. The more chances you have to feel the Spirit, the stronger your testimony will become. Practice sharing your beliefs in family home evening. Read the Book of

Mormon. It will help you be able to teach the gospel."

**YOU:** "How did you prepare for your missions?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We studied the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. We got jobs and saved our money. But we wish we would have read *Preach My Gospel* and attended mission-preparation classes more often. We also wish we would have learned how to cook!"

**YOU:** "Do you think I could ever become a missionary?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Definitely! There are about 70,000 missionaries around the world. And

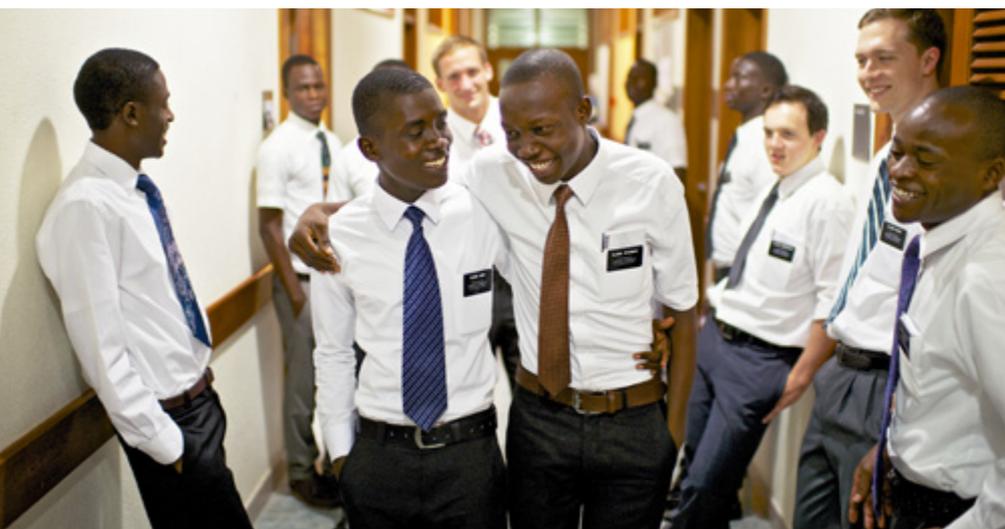
it all starts with desire: 'If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work' (D&C 4:3). But it will also take some preparation—you have to get ready not just spiritually but also financially, physically, emotionally, and socially."

**YOU:** "What else will help me prepare?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Make it a goal to live the gospel and keep the commandments the best you can. This will help strengthen your testimony and help you be worthy of the Spirit. When you're a missionary, you'll want to testify to people *from personal experience* that the gospel is true. So take the time now to learn more about gospel principles and live those principles in your own life."

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We would also recommend that you read the questions on the following pages. They're the ones that your bishop or branch president will ask you as you fill out your missionary forms. Discuss these questions with your parents and Church leaders. There are a lot of questions, but don't get overwhelmed—it's not like you have to report to the missionary training center tomorrow! Take the time you need to get ready so that when your first day on the mission arrives, you'll be worthy, excited, and ready to serve." ■

*The author served as a full-time missionary in the Canada Montreal Mission.*





## WORTHINESS AND TESTIMONY

**1.** Do you have faith in and a testimony of God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?

**TESTIMONY:** “Experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words” (Alma 32:27).

**2.** Do you have a testimony that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world? Please share your testimony with me. How has the Atonement of Jesus Christ influenced your life?

**3.** What does it mean to you to repent? Do you feel that you have fully repented of past transgressions?

**REPENTANCE:** “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins— behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:42–43).

**4.** Will you share your testimony with me that the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and that President Russell M. Nelson is a prophet of God?

**5.** Do you have a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?

**6.** Full-time missionary service requires living gospel standards. What do you understand about the following standards?

**IF YOU CHOOSE TO SERVE** a mission, you and your Church leaders will want this sacred time of service to be joyful and inspiring. With that goal in mind, it’s important for you to be prepared, worthy, and able to serve. To help you prepare, here are the questions that your bishop or branch president will ask you to determine your readiness. You can discuss these anytime with him and with your parents or Church leaders.

### a. The law of chastity

In reference to the law of chastity, have you always lived in accordance with what has been discussed? If not, how long ago did the transgression(s) occur? What have you done to repent?

**LAW OF CHASTITY:** “Chastity is sexual purity, a condition that is ‘pleasing unto God’ (Jacob 2:7). To be chaste, you must be morally clean in your thoughts, words, and actions. You must not have any sexual relations before you are legally married” (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 29).

### b. Avoiding pornography

#### **AVOIDING PORNOGRAPHY:**

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency has explained that exposure to pornography runs on a spectrum from inadvertent exposure to compulsive use, or addiction. Knowing one’s level of involvement helps one find the appropriate solution. Learn more in “Recovering from the Trap of Pornography,” *Liahona*, Oct. 2015, 50-55; and [overcoming-pornography.org](http://overcoming-pornography.org).

### c. The law of tithing

**d. The Word of Wisdom**, including the use of drugs or the abuse of prescribed medications

### e. Keeping the Sabbath day holy

### f. Being honest in all you say and do

Have you lived in accordance with all of these standards? Are you now living in accordance with them? Will you live in accordance with them as a full-time missionary?

## CAPACITY AND ELIGIBILITY

**7.** Do you have any legal actions pending against you?

**8.** Have you ever committed a serious violation of criminal law, regardless of whether or not you were arrested, you were convicted, or the record was expunged?

**9.** Have you ever sexually abused a child in any way, regardless of whether or not you were charged, you were convicted, or the record was expunged?

**10.** Have you ever committed any other serious transgression or misdeed that should be resolved before your mission?

**11.** Do you support, affiliate with, or agree with any group or individual whose teachings or practices are contrary to or oppose those accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

**12.** Do you have any unpaid debts? How will these debts be paid off before your mission or managed while you serve a mission?

**13.** Do you currently have or have you ever had any physical, mental, or emotional condition that would make it difficult for you to maintain a normal missionary schedule, which requires that you work for 12-15 hours a day, including studying for 2-4 hours a day, walking or biking for up to 8-10 hours a day, and so forth?

**14.** Have you ever been diagnosed with or received treatment for dyslexia or other reading disorder? If so, are you comfortable reading the scriptures and other documents aloud? Do you believe that you could memorize appropriate scriptures and other information with the assistance of your companion? In what ways do you now compensate for this disorder?

**15.** Have you ever been diagnosed with or received treatment for a speech disorder? If so, are you comfortable speaking in front of others? Do you feel that you have adequate tools to help you learn, teach, and communicate?

**16.** Have you ever been on medication or otherwise treated for any of the following conditions: attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), or autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger’s)? If yes, please explain.

**17.** If you were being treated for one of these conditions and discontinued treatment, did you do so under a doctor’s supervision? If not, why did you stop? How well have you been functioning without treatment or medication? When was the last time you were on medication for these issues? ■

Find videos and other resources on mission preparation at [lds.org/go/81850](http://lds.org/go/81850).

Many worthiness and health conditions that would hinder you from serving a successful mission can be overcome. Seek the help you need. If you still have ongoing health concerns at the time you are ready to serve, let your bishop or branch president know. This will allow the Church to consider your situation before assigning you to a mission. For example, see Sister Fletcher’s story following these questions.

# COULD I SERVE THERE?

By Erika Fletcher

From the first penny that I put in my mission savings jar, I knew I wanted to serve. I had saved money for 12 years when the announcement came that sisters could serve at age 19. Although I wasn't sure if the time was right for me, the Lord answered my prayers, and I felt inspired to start my mission papers.

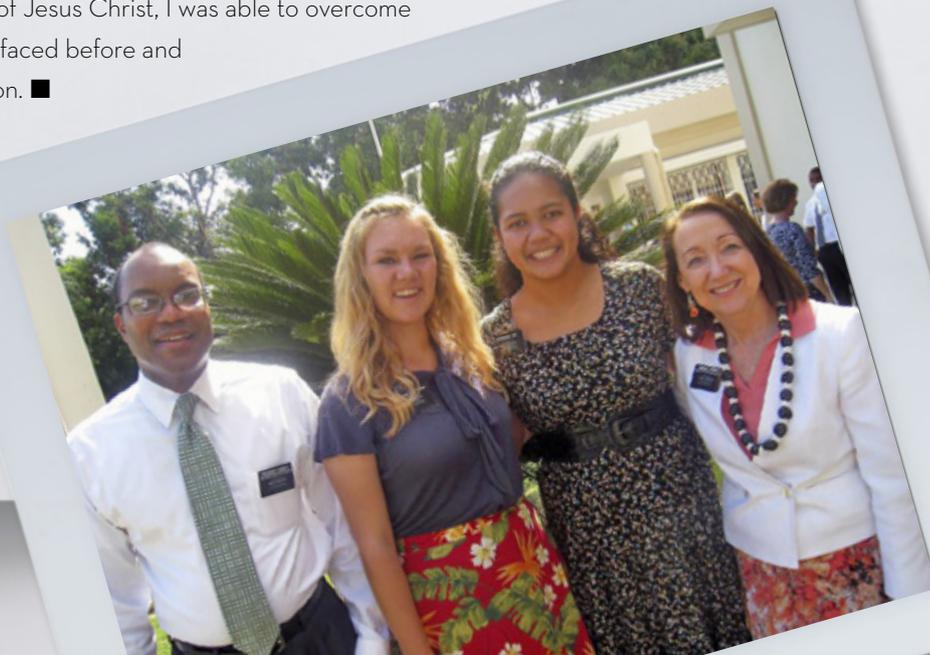
I wanted my mission call to be right for me and knew that being honest with my Church leaders, especially about my health, would be the only way to feel at peace. I have epilepsy, a condition that causes unpredictable seizures. Fortunately, my condition is completely controlled by medicine. Still, it was possible that my dependence on it could limit where I could be assigned to serve.

Imagine my surprise when I was called to serve in the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission! There was a problem though: I found out that my medication wasn't available in the Dominican Republic. I was confused. Why would the Lord inspire Church leaders to send me somewhere that didn't have my medication?

My family and I prayed together for an answer. I felt a strong conviction that the Lord really wanted me to serve in the Dominican Republic, so we went to work. My doctor wrote me an 18-month prescription, but our insurance would only pay for a year's worth of medication, leaving us to pay for the last 6 months. As we moved forward with faith, we eventually found an affordable option.

When I was set apart, my stake president blessed me that my condition would not affect me during my mission—a promise that I can testify was fulfilled. Although I was stretched to my physical limits, I know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I was able to overcome the challenges I faced before and during my mission. ■

***Despite having epilepsy, Sister Fletcher (left) was able to serve a mission (pictured here with her companion and mission president and his wife).***



# 5 THINGS

## THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

By Charlotte Larcabal  
Church Magazines

If you're preparing for a mission or just looking for ways to talk to your friends about your beliefs, there's a guide so great you might call it another missionary manual.

It's the Doctrine and Covenants. There we find newly revealed and beautiful doctrines about eternal families, what happens when we die, and how Jesus Christ's Church should be organized. But we also find—again and again—commandments to share the gospel. In fact, with all the promises and admonitions it gives to missionaries, you might look at this book of scripture as a guide to sharing the gospel.

For example, here are five wonderful truths you can learn about missionary work just from reading the Doctrine and Covenants.



1

**You don't need to worry about where you go.**

**D&C 80:3:** "Wherefore, go ye and preach my gospel, whether to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west, it mattereth not, for ye cannot go amiss."

"I do not believe that the phrase 'it mattereth not' as used by the Lord in this scripture suggests that He does not care where His servants labor. In fact, He cares deeply. . . . He inspires, guides, and directs His authorized servants. As missionaries strive to be ever more worthy and capable instruments in His hands and do their best to fulfill faithfully their duties, then with His help they 'cannot go amiss'—wherever they serve."<sup>1</sup>

—Elder David A. Bednar

2

**Treasure the scriptures, and you'll know what to say.**

**D&C 84:85:** "Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man."

"As you treasure up the words of the scriptures and latter-day prophets by study and faith, your desire to share the gospel will increase. You are promised that the Spirit will help you know what to say when you teach."<sup>2</sup>

—*Preach My Gospel*

# Will Teach You about Being a Missionary

3

People looking for the gospel are everywhere.

**D&C 123:12:** “For there are many yet on the earth . . . who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”

“All around you, every day, are friends and neighbors ‘who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.’ As you are directed by the Spirit, you can share a thought, an invitation, a text or tweet that will introduce your friends to the truths of the restored gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

—Elder David A. Bednar

4

Pray well to teach well.

**D&C 42:14:** “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.”

“Missionaries should get on their knees and plead with the Lord to loosen their tongues and speak through them to the blessing of those they will be teaching. If they will do this, a new light will come into their lives. There will be greater enthusiasm for the work. They will come to know that in a very real sense, they are servants of the Lord speaking in His behalf. They will find a different response from those they teach.”<sup>4</sup>

—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

5

The Holy Ghost will testify to those you speak to.

**D&C 100:7–8:** “But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things. And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.”

“The Holy Ghost can work through the Light of Christ. A teacher of gospel truths is not planting something foreign or even new into an adult or a child. Rather, the missionary or teacher is making contact with the Spirit of Christ already there. The gospel will have a familiar ‘ring’ to them.”<sup>5</sup>

—President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015)

Set a Goal

This is just the beginning. As you study the Doctrine and Covenants this year, set a goal to learn as much as you can about missionary work. Then do all you can to start living some of those teachings. Remember: “If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work; for behold the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 4:3–4). ■

## NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “Called to the Work,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2017, 68.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 19.
3. David A. Bednar, “Called to the Work,” 70.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Missionary Service,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 20.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “The Light of Christ: What Everyone Called to Preach the Gospel, Teach the Gospel, or Live the Gospel Should Know” (address delivered at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2004), 2, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

# 6

## REASONS We Really *Do* Need — the — CHURCH!

By Eric B. Murdock and Joshua J. Perkey  
Church Magazines

**H**ave you ever heard someone ask why we have a church? Or maybe why we need one? Why can't they just be spiritual on their own—go to the mountains or the beach or another special place and feel close to God—and call it good?

It's certainly true that you can be close to God wherever you are (in fact, it's a really good idea!), but Heavenly Father has *so much more* in store for you than generic spirituality. He wants you to become the best you can be. In fact, He wants you to inherit all that He has and gain eternal life. And He has a plan and an organization so you can do that. The plan is the plan of salvation, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the organization—"the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

Here are six reasons why we really do need the Church.



### 1. To Learn and Participate in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

One of the blessings of being a member of the Church is that we can learn the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 1:17–23). If we have a sincere desire to learn, and if we are humble, prayerful, diligent, and obedient, we can gain a testimony and have hope in the Resurrection and in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Through Church leaders and Church materials, we also learn about other essential doctrine, including the Restoration of the gospel, the calling of prophets today, and the true nature of the Godhead. Living in accordance with true doctrine brings us joy and happiness.

## 2. To Receive Essential Ordinances and Covenants

Heavenly Father's work is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). But sometimes we might forget that His work requires some work on our part too! We qualify for the blessings of eternal life by obedience to the ordinances and covenants of the gospel. President Russell M. Nelson has said: "We cannot *wish* our way into the presence of God. We are to obey the laws upon which those blessings are predicated [see D&C 130:20–21]."<sup>1</sup>

The ordinances we participate in and the covenants we make are necessary for us to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father and live with Him. Those ordinances and covenants require the priesthood—which is available only in God's true Church. Without those covenants, we'd be lost.

We have the Church so we can be enlightened and have the truth made known. It has given me the knowledge that I need to know—the knowledge of the plan of salvation.

*Nicholas M., Ohio, USA*

## 3. To Help Each Other Along the Way

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "A major reason the Lord has a church is to create a community of Saints that will sustain one another in the 'strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life' [2 Nephi 31:18]."<sup>2</sup>

At church, we can develop caring relationships with others. We can help each other get through tough times as we lead, guide, and walk beside each other (see "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301; Ephesians 2:19). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "We are all children of God, and we must teach each other; we must help each other 'find the way.'"<sup>3</sup> The Church is the perfect place to do that!

Through the Church we can receive ordinances, make covenants, and have our families sealed forever. It is Heavenly Father's organisation on this earth with priesthood power and authority. To teach people of the truth of the gospel and to come unto Christ and to prepare people for exaltation.

*Shantelle M., Australia*

We have the Church to create an environment where members can gather and help each other learn and grow. The Church exists to help members become more Christlike by encouraging everyone to look to others and lift the burdens of those we love and care about. It also creates a safe place where people may live their beliefs.

*Jeremy P., Illinois, USA*

Through the Church I can have an eternal family, with my parents, sisters, and one day my own family.

*Wilford P., São Paulo, Brazil*

The Church helps us to spread love and the gospel across the globe and to bring light to a world in moral darkness.

*Kenzi B., Washington, USA*

Through the Church we can walk the path to immortality and eternal life where we can live with our Heavenly Father and our families forever.

*Emma W., New Hampshire, USA*

## 4. To Help Families Qualify for Eternal Life

Another major reason we have the Church is to help families qualify for eternal life. The sealing ordinance in the temple allows families to be together forever. For that to happen, we have to live worthy to receive those blessings. The Church helps families help each other do that.

As Elder Christofferson has taught, “The point of gospel teaching and priesthood ordinances administered by the Church is that families may qualify for eternal life.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Church helps us live up to those covenants—and helps us support each other along the way.

## 5. To Bless People All over the World

Elder Christofferson said that as we work together in the Church, Heavenly Father can “achieve needful things that cannot be accomplished by individuals or smaller groups.”<sup>5</sup>

Did you know that every year for the past 30 years, the Church has donated US\$40 million worth of welfare and humanitarian aid and service projects? The generous donations and volunteer service that Church members offer accomplishes things that could be done in no other way.

Through our extraordinary missionary program, missionaries share the light of the gospel with people all over the world. Nearly 105,000 missionaries (including young adults and seniors) are serving. Wow! That’s more people than the population of some cities!

And because of members’ charitable donations, the Church has the resources to build temples all over the world. As of April 2018, there were 182 temples in operation, under construction, or announced.



The Church helps us to maintain organization, teachings, and to create a support system for members. By establishing a church, the Lord ensures that the correct doctrines are taught. The Church provides members with revelations, standards, and guidelines that help us live as Christ would have us live.

*Rachel F., Arizona, USA*

## 6. To Establish the Kingdom of God on the Earth

One of the most important reasons God established a church is that it is the kingdom of God here on the earth (see D&C 65). The Lord bestowed upon Joseph Smith and all the prophets and apostles since him the keys of the priesthood. Elder Christofferson taught, “In the authority of these keys, the Church’s priesthood officers preserve the purity of the Savior’s doctrine and the integrity of His saving ordinances.”<sup>6</sup>

Through the Church leaders, the Lord can administer His work and minister to His children. Without such leadership, all kinds of false ideas and teachings would threaten to lead us into dark, forbidden paths. In other words, to help us know how to achieve eternal life, we need the protection provided by truly called and ordained prophets and apostles. That happens only in His Church. ■

Through the Church, things can be accomplished that couldn’t be through individuals.

*Emma W., Utah, USA*

The Church helps us because Heavenly Father knew these were troubled times. He knew we needed a prophet here on the earth to guide us. He knows us.

*Matthew P., New Hampshire, USA*

### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Now Is the Time to Prepare,” Apr. 2005 general conference.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church,” Oct. 2015 general conference.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 90.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”
5. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”
6. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”

# What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?

*“Alma spoke of priorities when he taught that ‘this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God’ (Alma 12:24). How to best use the rich heritage of time to prepare to meet God may require some guidance, but surely we would place the Lord and our families at the top of the list.”*

Elder Ian S. Ardern of the Seventy, “A Time to Prepare,” Oct. 2011 general conference.



## Work Toward a Finished Product

Do something that matters. Sometimes I waste my time doing mean-

ingless things, like surfing the internet for two hours, and I regret it later. You could try to develop a new talent, work on Personal Progress or Duty to God, tutor a sibling or friend, grow a garden, write a story, or get organized—the possibilities are endless. The rule I live by is to make sure my use of free time is always helping me work toward a finished product.

*Kimberly A., age 19, Alaska, USA*



## Become Who You Want to Be

There is a quote in my living room that says, “Ask yourself if what you

are doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow.” Think about the type of person you want to become and the goals you have. Choose to do things that will help you achieve those goals. Do things that will allow you to keep the Spirit with you and that align with the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.

*Amy P., age 16, Kentucky, USA*



### Sing or Listen to Hymns

The activity I love doing most in my free time is singing hymns. I made it a goal to memorize as many Church hymns as I could. I usually download some hymns I want to learn so I can listen to them any time I have a free moment.

*Justice O., age 16, Orlu, Nigeria*



### Set Goals

You first need to think about the person you want to be in a few years. Then you can decide what you should do now with your free time to achieve that goal. At the end of each day, I think about what my goals are and make a schedule of what I will do the next day with my free time.

*Elder Agostinelli, age 20, Chile Santiago West Mission*

### Study the Book of Mormon

I make my free time more meaningful and valuable by studying the Book of Mormon. It is the keystone of our religion and, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, we can “get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

*Lynne T., age 18, Accra, Ghana*

### Study Doctrine

One great way to use your free time is by studying the Lord’s doctrine. From an eternal perspective, reading scriptures, Church magazine articles, and other uplifting materials will benefit you a lot more than doing other activities.

*Josh C., age 13, Tennessee, USA*

*Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as official pronouncements of Church doctrine.*

## If God knows every decision we’re going to make, what’s the point of our agency?

This question has puzzled people for centuries. The way we answer it is based on two basic, revealed truths:

**God knows all.** God’s view is not bound by time (see D&C 38:2). In addition, He had an eternity of personal experience with us before we came to this earth, so He knows the inclinations and character of each of us better than we do.

**We have agency.** We are intelligent beings, children of God, who loves us and has established a plan that allows us to become like Him—if we choose to obey Him

(see D&C 93:27–32; Abraham 3:21–25). Agency means that we can act for ourselves and not be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14, 16, 27).

God’s familiarity with our character and His foreknowledge of our choices does not *cause* us to make those choices. Both because He knows us and because we have agency, He invites and entices us—but does not force us—to do good and believe in Jesus Christ (see Moroni 7:16–17).

### What Do You Think?

“How can I get along better with my family?”

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by September 15, 2018, at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) (click “Submit an Article or Feedback”).

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

**DOES GOD  
REALLY  
*want* TO  
SPEAK  
TO YOU?  
YES!**

PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON  
FROM "REVELATION FOR THE CHURCH, REVELATION FOR OUR LIVES,"  
APR. 2018 GENERAL CONFERENCE

# Six Ways to Always Remember the Savior

By Elder Gerrit W. Gong  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Each week, in partaking of the sacrament, we covenant to always remember the Savior. Drawing on the nearly 400 scripture references to the word *remember*, here are six ways we can always remember Him.

First, we can always remember Him by having confidence in His covenants, promises, and assurances.

Second, we can always remember Him by gratefully acknowledging His hand throughout our lives.

Third, we can always remember Him by trusting when the Lord assures us, “He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

Fourth, He invites us to remember that He is always welcoming us home.

Fifth, we can always remember Him on the Sabbath through the sacrament. At the end of His mortal ministry and the beginning of His resurrected ministry—both times—our Savior took bread and wine and asked that

we remember His body and blood.

In the ordinance of the sacrament, we witness unto God the Father that we are willing to take upon us the name of His Son and always remember Him and keep His commandments, which He has given us, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79).

Finally, sixth, our Savior invites us to always remember Him as He always remembers us.

Our Savior declares:

“Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:15–16; see also 1 Nephi 21:15–16).

He testifies: “I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God” (D&C 45:52).

I humbly testify and pray that we will always remember Him—in all times, all things, and all places we may be in (see Mosiah 18:9). ■

*From an April 2016 general conference address.*



Born in  
**Redwood City,  
California.**



Sustained to the  
**Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles**  
on March 31, 2018.



Has 4 children and  
3 grandchildren.



After a coach's  
encouragement,  
he tried out  
for the school  
**football  
team**  
and loved it!

Married  
Susan Lindsay  
in the  
**Salt Lake  
Temple**  
in January 1980.



Served as assistant to the U.S. State  
Department in Washington, D.C., in 1986.



Served as a missionary in  
the Taiwan Taipei Mission.

# I Can Always Pray



## Prayer Questions

Check all the answers that you agree with.  
Add answers of your own. Then share what you know about prayer with someone else.

### 1. Why does Heavenly Father want you to pray?

- Because I'm His child, and He wants to hear from me
- Because He wants to help me

---

---

### 2. When do you pray?

- Every night and morning
- When I'm afraid
- When I need to make a choice

---

---

### 3. Where do you pray?

- In my room
- Outside under the stars

---

---

### 4. What do you pray about?

- A problem I have
- What happened during the day

---

---

### 5. How do you hear Heavenly Father's answers?

- When I read the scriptures
- When I feel peaceful

---

---

## MY PRAYER JOURNAL



- Write down what you're worried about or need help with.
- Talk to Heavenly Father about it in prayer.
- After you pray, quietly listen for the Holy Ghost.
- During the week, keep watching and listening for answers.
- Write down the answers you get.



## Prayer REMINDER Card



"The first, the middle, and the last thing to do is to pray."  
—President Henry B. Eyring

.....

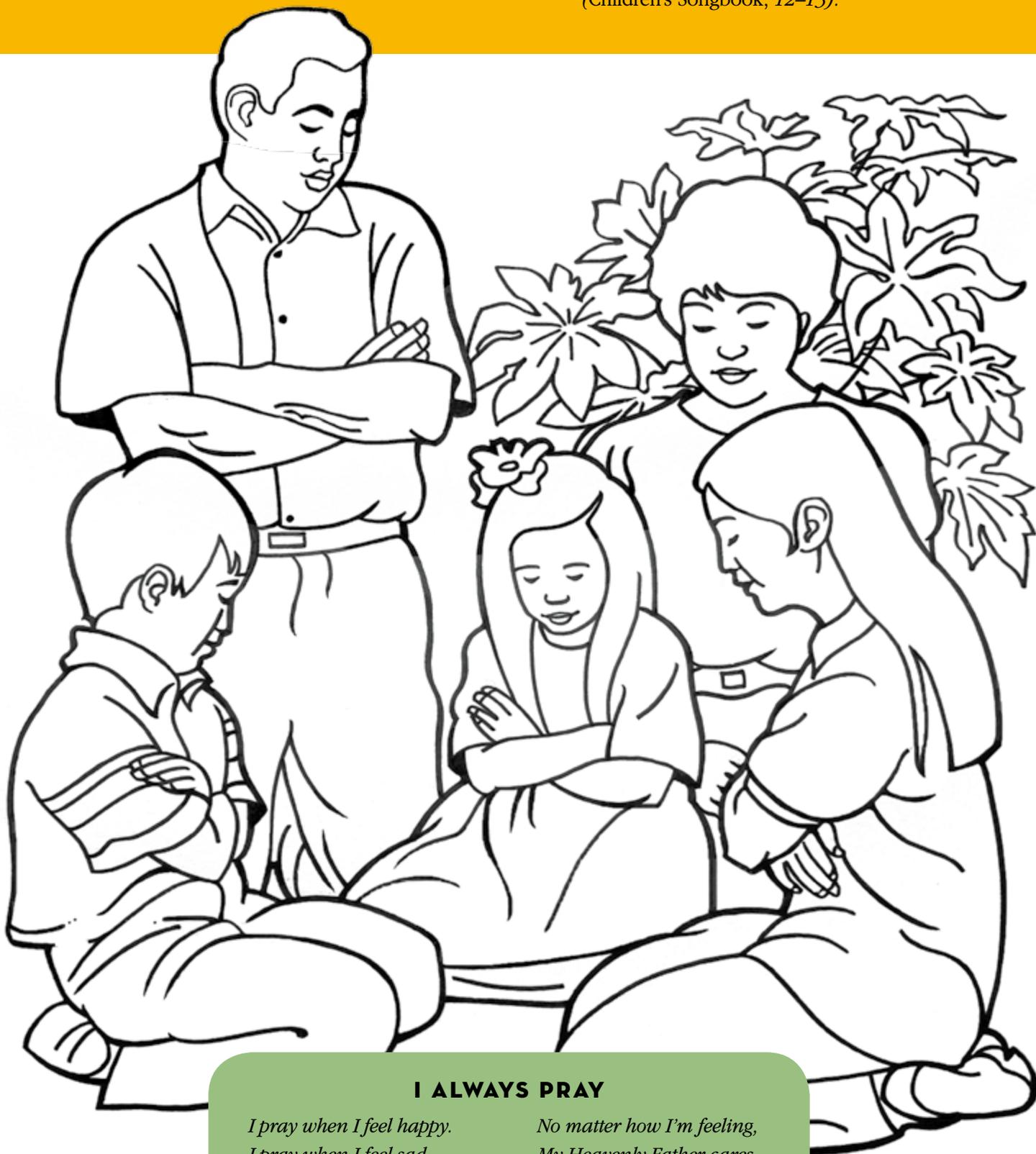
## Prayer REMINDER Card



"We can come to know the Lord and trust Him through prayer."  
—Sister Bonnie H. Cordon

.....

*"Pray, he is there; speak, he is list'ning.  
You are his child; His love now surrounds you"*  
(Children's Songbook, 12-13).



### **I ALWAYS PRAY**

*I pray when I feel happy.  
I pray when I feel sad.  
I pray when I am frightened  
And when I'm hopping mad.*

*No matter how I'm feeling,  
My Heavenly Father cares.  
So if my day is bad or good,  
I always say my prayers.*

By Teresa Weaver

Hi!  
My name is  
Steffani!

I try to shine my light  
by sharing my testimony.



### A Beautiful Island

I live in Sri Lanka. It's a beautiful island country near the southern tip of India. We have tropical forests, an aqua blue sea, and ancient historical ruins. I love my country!

මොර්මොන්ගේ  
පොත

දේවුන් ක්‍රිස්තුස් වහන්සේගේ  
තවත් ලිපිපුවත

### Friends from Everywhere

My school has children from many countries. Some are Christian, Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist. We are all kind and friendly to each other.

# A Shining Testimony



## 1. A Scary Invitation

One day the Christian students had a special assembly. We were invited to share our testimonies. A hush fell over the room. No one went up to the stage. Everyone was too afraid! I am very shy, so I felt that way too.

## 2. “Go, Go”

Then a warm wave flowed over me, and I felt the Holy Ghost tell me, “Go, go.” I said a quick prayer in my heart. I walked up to the stage with butterflies fluttering in my stomach.



## 3. Sharing My Testimony

I told my classmates that Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to talk to Him often. I shared my experiences with prayer. I said I know Heavenly Father always listens to me and wants to help me. I was glad I had the courage to share my testimony. I felt like I had been a shining light in a quiet room.

## 4. Go and Do

My favorite scripture story is in the Book of Mormon, where Nephi says he will go and do what the Lord commands. I hope I can always have courage to do what Heavenly Father needs me to do.



## SEND US A STAR!

Jesus asked us to “let your light so shine before men” (Matthew 5:16). How do you let your light shine? Email us a photo of your star with your story, photo, and parent’s permission at [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).



# The NO-FIGHTING Promise

By Myrna M. Hoyt

Based on a true story

*“They took their swords, and all the weapons . . . , and they did bury them up deep in the earth” (Alma 24:17).*

Today was an awesome day. Timmy’s cousin Madi was coming over. And she was going to stay for a whole week! He couldn’t wait to show her his toys and to play together.

When Madi came over, the adventures began right away. For the first two days, they played with toy dinosaurs and pretended to be pirates. It was lots of fun. But on the third day, things didn’t go as well. Timmy and Madi couldn’t agree on *anything*.

“Let’s go outside and turn the tree house into a spaceship!” Timmy said.

“I don’t want to. Let’s just stay inside and draw,” Madi said.

“Inside is boring!”

“No, it’s not! We always play the games *you* want to play. Why do you always get to choose what we do?”

Timmy and Madi kept arguing. They weren’t having fun anymore. Timmy didn’t like the way he felt when they fought. Then he thought of something.

“Hey, Madi,” Timmy said, “let’s be like the Anti-Nephi-Lehies.”

“The who?”

“The Anti-Nephi-Lehies. They were people in the Book of Mormon who buried their swords. They had



been in lots of fights, and they were sorry, so they repented. They promised Heavenly Father they would never fight again. Then they buried their weapons in the ground to show that they wanted to keep their promise.”

Suddenly an idea popped into Timmy’s mind. “Let’s make some toy swords and bury them and promise we won’t fight each other.”

“OK,” Madi said.

Timmy and Madi got some plastic building toys from

Timmy’s room and made different kinds of swords out of them. Some were long. Some were short. And some had lots of different colors. When they were done, Timmy and Madi carried their weapons to the big rug in the entryway.

“Let’s pretend the rug is a big hole,” Timmy said.

They sat down by the edge of the rug. Then one by one, they set each of their swords onto the rug, pretending to bury them.

“I promise that I’m not going to fight anymore,” Timmy said, dropping his last toy sword onto the pile.

“Me too,” Madi said. “Now let’s go play! What do you want to do?”

“Let’s draw,” Timmy said with a smile.

Madi smiled back. “Then let’s play spaceship outside.”

For the rest of the week, Timmy and Madi kept their promise. And they had a lot more fun playing together after leaving their fighting behind. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



*Grace Vlam is a nine-year-old girl living in Holland in 1940 during World War II. Nazi Germany has just begun attacking Holland.*

## **BOOM! BOOM!**

It was three o'clock in the morning, and the city was being bombed. One minute Grace had been asleep in her bed, and the next, Dad was telling everyone to get under cover. Now Grace was huddled under the kitchen table with her dad, mom, and younger brothers, Heber and Alvin. She could hear the rumble of

explosions and glass shattering outside. It was so loud!

“What’s going to happen to us?” Grace asked Dad.

Dad stroked her hair. “I don’t know,” he said. “But let’s say a prayer.”

The Vlam family held each other close.

“Dear Heavenly Father,” Dad prayed, “please keep our family safe.”

After a while, the noise quieted down. There were no more explosions. They were safe!

Mom took Grace’s hand and smiled at her.

“Remember when we were sealed in the temple?”



*“Whatever happens, God will take care of our family,” Mom said.*

# A Voice of Peace

By Megan Armknecht

Based on a true story

Grace nodded. When they had moved from Indonesia to Holland, they were able to stop in Utah and be sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

“Whatever happens, God will take care of our family,” Mom said.

The next day, Grace heard air-raid sirens when she was outside on the city plaza. She looked up and saw planes above her head, with little black things falling from them. She stood there, staring, her mouth wide open.

A man started shouting at her. “Run! Those are bombs!”



Grace raced home, her heart pounding as she finally made it safely through the front door.

A few days later, the Nazis—who were the government leaders of Germany—officially took over Holland. Sometimes they took people who had been military officers as prisoners. Because Dad had been an officer in the Dutch military, the Nazi officers watched him carefully.

“But that won’t happen to Dad,” Grace thought. “We’re members of the Church, and Dad is a leader in the mission presidency. God will protect him.”

After the bombings, the Vlam family had to leave their city. One day at her new school, Grace heard other students whispering.

“Some people were taken prisoner today!”

“Will they ever come back?”

Grace was scared. Was Dad OK? She ran home as fast she could. As she burst through the door, she saw Mom in the hallway.

“Is it true?” Grace asked. “Is Dad gone?”

Mom didn’t say anything, but Grace knew from Mom’s sad eyes that Dad had been taken away. He was a prisoner of war. Grace leaned against the wall. She was too afraid to even cry.

“What do we do now?” she thought.

At that moment, Grace heard a voice say, “You will see your father again.” The voice was calm and clear. Grace knew it was the voice of the Holy Ghost. It made her feel a little better.

She didn’t know exactly what would happen, but she did know that Heavenly Father would take care of her and her family.

*To be continued . . . ■*

*The author lives in New Jersey, USA.*



“I know that Jesus Christ lives; I love Him, and I know with all my heart that He loves each of us.”

**By Elder Ronald A. Rasband**  
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

*“Standing with the Leaders of the Church,” Ensign or Liahona, May 2016, 49.*



By Elder  
Jörg Klebingat  
Of the Seventy

# Football and Sundays

In Germany, football is the most popular sport. My dad signed me up for a football club when I was five. We practiced three or four times a week. Games were mostly on Saturdays and Sundays. When I wasn't playing football for the club team, I played football with my friends. We played football almost every day until the sun went down.

When I was 15, I started playing for a team in a bigger city. Football became more serious. We practiced more often. We traveled to more places. We played against more teams. Football was my life.

Then, when I was almost 18, I was at a concert. I saw a boy about my age. He stuck out. He wasn't drinking, smoking, or swearing. I wanted to know why. I found out he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His example made me want to learn more. Later I joined the Church.

After I was baptized, I learned two things. First, I shouldn't be playing football on the Sabbath. I should go to church. Second, Heavenly Father expected me to serve a mission. But I was pretty good at football. I had a friend I had played football with when we were younger. We each got an offer to play on a professional team. My friend took the offer. I chose to leave football behind and go on a mission instead. It was not a hard choice because I knew the Church was true.

But my choice was difficult for my family and friends. They didn't understand what I was doing. My parents sent me newspaper clippings of my friend playing football. That was not easy for me. But I never ever regretted serving a mission.

Heavenly Father has blessed me every day because I chose to serve a mission. He has blessed me with peace. I felt the good feeling that comes from making the right choice. ■



# David and Goliath

By Kim Webb Reid

David was a boy who took care of sheep. His big brothers were soldiers trying to protect their people. One day, David's father sent him to take food to his brothers.



When David got there, he saw a giant soldier named Goliath. Goliath said if anyone could beat him, the war would be over. But no one was brave enough to fight him.



David said *he* would fight Goliath. The king told David no. David was only a boy, and Goliath was strong and big! But David knew God would help him. Finally, the king said, “Go, and the Lord be with thee.”



David did not wear armor like Goliath did. He picked up a stone and put it in his sling. He threw the stone at Goliath’s forehead. Goliath fell down! David won! He had saved his people.



Sometimes I face big, scary problems. When I ask God for help,  
He will help me be strong. ■

*From 1 Samuel 17.*

# I Can Be a Good Example



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



By Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

## KEEP TRYING

*To become a winner in the race for eternal life requires effort—constant work, striving, and enduring well with God’s help.*

When I think of the Savior’s admonition to do cheerfully all things that lie in our power [see D&C 123:17], I think of the father of the prodigal son. The father was heartbroken by the loss and conduct of his wayward son. Yet we have no mention of his lamenting, “Where did I go wrong?” “What have I done to deserve this?” Or, “Where did I fail?”

Instead he seemed to have endured without bitterness his son’s misconduct and welcomed him back with love. “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. . . .” (Luke 15:24).

When family members disappoint us, we especially need to learn endurance. As long as we exercise love, patience, and understanding, even when no progress is apparent, we are not failing. We must keep trying. . . .



To become a winner in the race for eternal life requires effort—constant work, striving, and enduring well with God’s help. . . .

. . . Pain and obstacles will confront all of us. We may experience heartaches, sorrow, death, sins, weakness, disasters, physical illness, pain, mental anguish, unjust criticism, loneliness, or rejection. How we handle these challenges determines whether they become stumbling stones or building blocks. To the valiant these challenges make progress and development possible. . . .

Sometimes as children we were told everything would be all right. But life is not like that. No matter who you are, you will have problems. Tragedy and frustration are the unexpected intruders on life’s plans. . . .

. . . Greatness is best measured by how well an individual responds to the happenings in life that appear to be totally unfair, unreasonable, and undeserved. . . .

. . . Jesus is the Christ. One of His marks of greatness, His endurance, stands as a constant beacon for us to emulate. During His earthly sojourn He endured well as He suffered agony and rejection in their deepest forms. I bear my witness that God will help us to endure as we put forth the effort to live His teachings, seek His guidance, and keep His commandments. ■

*From “If Thou Endure It Well,” Ensign, Nov. 1984, 20–22.*



**PRODIGAL SON,  
BY JUSTIN WHEATLEY**

*"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!  
"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,  
"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.  
"And he arose, and came to his father" (Luke 15:17-20).*



YOUNG ADULTS

**ERIC LEARNED TO TRUST GOD**

*Even living with severe disabilities in Ghana, Eric can still recognize the good in his life.*

44

YOUTH TEACHERS

**ENGAGING YOUTH USING TECHNOLOGY**

30

FUTURE MISSIONARIES

**USE THESE QUESTIONS TO PREPARE**

50

CHILDREN

**FILL IN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER**

66

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

