

By Elder
David F. Evans
Of the Seventy



Will

My years in high school and my first year of college occurred during the Vietnam War. By the time I started college, the Church had entered into an agreement with the U.S. government concerning how many missionaries could serve. The agreement was that each ward could send out only two missionaries per year, and the rest of the young men would not be called and perhaps be drafted into the military. Despite my wanting to serve a mission all my life, it seemed very unlikely that I would be able to go.

I enrolled at the University of Utah in the fall of 1969. By the end of January 1970, I met and started dating my future wife, and by that spring we had fallen in love.

The Bishop Called

One hot afternoon in July, I came home and my mother

said to me, “David, the bishop called. He wants to meet with you.”

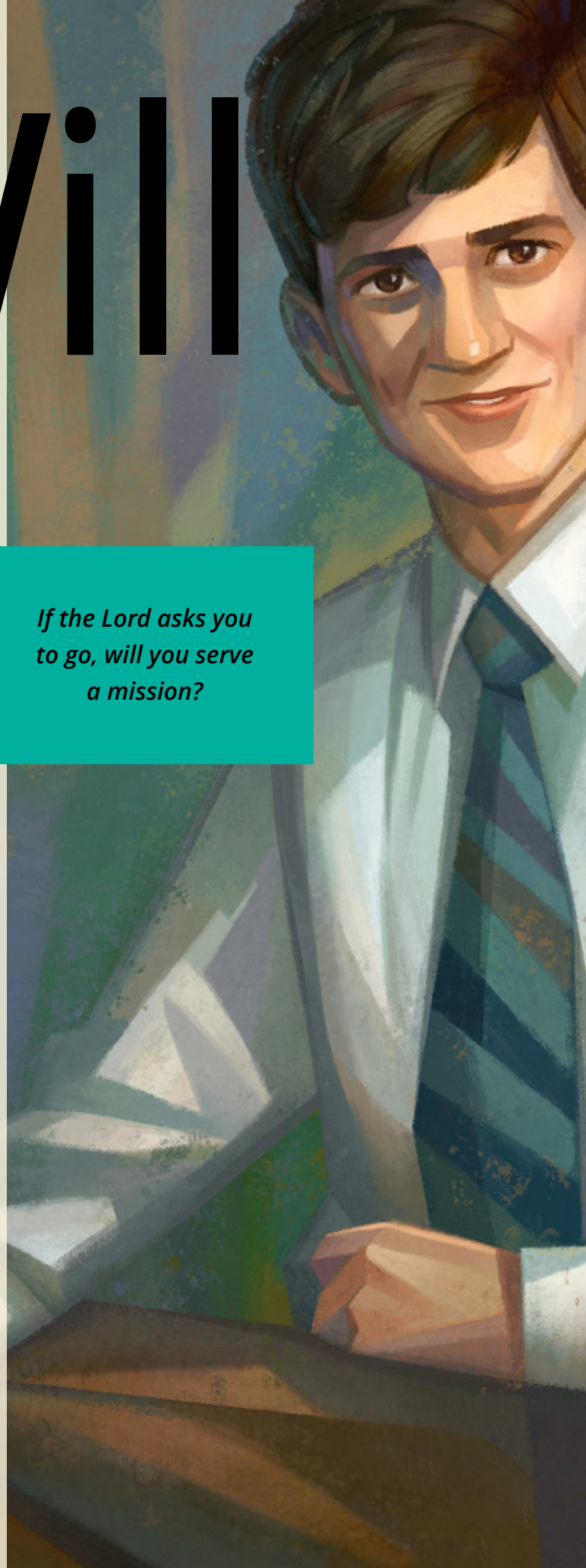
I responded, “I’m busy.”

My mother looked at me and said, “If you are too busy to go meet with the bishop, you pick up the phone and you call him and tell him that.”

I knew that I wasn’t *that* busy, so I went to meet with my bishop in his office. He was sitting at his desk, which was unusually cleared off. I could quickly tell that this interview was not at all what I thought it was going to be.

“David,” he said, “there is another ward that can’t use one of their missionary spots. We’ve been given the opportunity to send one more missionary. As a bishopric, we felt impressed to ask Heavenly Father if there was someone who ought to go right now. What I can tell you is this: now is the time the Lord would have you serve your mission.”

*If the Lord asks you
to go, will you serve
a mission?*



You Go?



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN SIMONSEN

I was stunned by what he said. I had thought that because of the war and the quota, I would never be able to go on a mission. I asked if I could take some time to think about it. He asked how much time I would need, and I told him that I would like a week.

We then ended the interview, and I walked out—still stunned—to my car. I started driving around Salt Lake City, letting the afternoon’s events sink in.

Deciding to Serve

Within a few minutes, I drove back to the church, parked the car, and walked back into the bishop’s office. He was still sitting there with absolutely nothing on his desk.

I looked at him and asked, “Bishop, what are you doing?”

He kindly responded, “I’m waiting for you.”

I then stated, “Well, Bishop,

if now is the time that the Lord would have me serve, of course I’ll serve.”

When I got home, my mother was in the kitchen. I was afraid if I told her everything I felt, then I would start to cry. So instead I said, “Mom, I can’t talk about it right now, but you should know that I’m going on a mission, and I’m going soon.”

Later that afternoon, I talked with my father about my decision. He gave me the sweetest, most encouraging counsel. Then I found my girlfriend (who is now my wife) and told her about my decision. We walked and talked and cried and talked some more. But there was no hesitation for either of us. If I could go, I should go, and I would go.

I received my call to serve in Japan in August, and on October 10, 1970, I left on my mission.

When the Lord Calls, Will You Go?

In chapter 24 of Alma, the recently converted Anti-Nephi-Lehies make a promise to never shed blood again. When their enemies come to attack them, they are willing to die rather than violate that promise. Then in chapter 27, Ammon suggests to the king that they leave their lands and join the Nephites, but the king declines, believing that the Nephites will also not accept them (see Alma 27:3–6). Ammon asks the king, “I will go and inquire of the Lord, and if he says unto us, go . . . , will ye go?” (Alma 27:7). The king of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies responds, “Inquire of the Lord, and if he saith unto us go, we will go; otherwise we will perish in the land” (Alma 27:10). Ammon asks, and the Lord commands them to leave. Without hesitation, the Anti-Nephi-Lehies leave.

Throughout your life, the Lord will ask you to “go.” When He does, will you go? Will you do it when He asks you to do it? I know from my own experience that much of the spiritual growth and blessings we experience in our lives are ultimately tied back to our decision to respond when the Lord calls. President Russell M. Nelson has said, “Each day is a day of decision, and our decisions determine our destiny” (“Decisions for Eternity,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 108).

During my mission in Japan, I had the opportunity to teach the gospel to people I came to love. In 1998, 26 years after my mission concluded, I was called

**Counsel with
your parents,
counsel with
your bishop,
and counsel
with the Lord
through prayer.**

**When you know it is
the right time to go,
then you should go.**



as a mission president in Japan. I was in a different area this time, but I was back with the people I loved and who have loved me.

My entire family was able to partake of this remarkable experience building up the Lord’s Church in Japan.

A few years after my wife and I returned home from our mission, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) asked us to meet with him. During that meeting, he extended a call to me to serve as a General Authority. He reflected on my experiences as a young missionary and as a mission president and told us that although there were many people who were qualified to be General Authorities, the Lord would use me because of my previous experiences and decisions.

Since President Thomas S. Monson announced the change in the missionary age, young people have been asked to counsel with their parents, counsel with their bishops, and counsel with the Lord through prayer. When you know it is the right time to go, then you should go. As you have patience and exercise faith, I know that the Lord will make His will known unto you.

I testify that as you are obedient to the will of the Lord, you will be blessed beyond measure. ■