

2016 MUTUAL THEME

“Wherefore, ye must

PRESS FORWARD

WITH A STEADFASTNESS IN CHRIST,

having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

BLESSINGS OF PRESSING FORWARD

By the Young Men General Presidency

Living as a faithful member of the Church brings amazing blessings. But that doesn't mean life won't occasionally be hard. Temptations, friends who are untrue, family challenges, you name it. A lot of things will try and pull you away from the covenant path.

That's why this year's Mutual theme, “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20), holds such a powerful message. When you press forward with steadfastness in Christ,

staying true to your covenants, God can do marvelous things for you and through you. And He can help you feel hope, comfort, and peace at the same time.

It's something the Prophet Joseph Smith knew very well. He was just 14 when he experienced the First Vision. As he knelt to pray in the Sacred

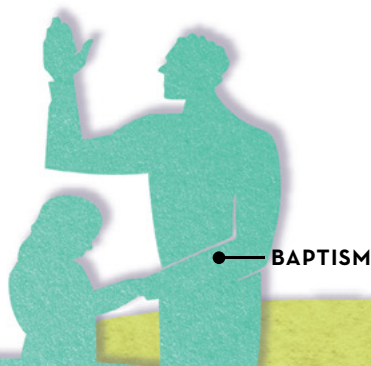


Stephen W. Owen, president (center); Douglas D. Holmes, first counselor (left); M. Joseph Brough, second counselor (right)

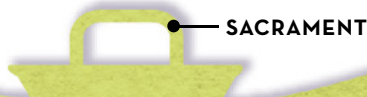
Grove, he was attacked by an unseen force of such incredible power that it threatened to destroy him. Only by exerting all his power to call on God was he rescued and received the visit from the Father and the Son.

Later, when Joseph shared his experience, he was ridiculed by friends and local leaders (see Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17, 21–26). That persecution never stopped and eventually took his life 24 years later.

But Joseph pressed forward with hope, and he was happy to do so in the service of the Lord. As he remained steadfast in



BAPTISM



SACRAMENT



Christ and exercised faith to do what was right, God blessed and supported him. And He will do the same for you.

So press forward. Commit to live the gospel. Keep your eyes firmly fixed on the Savior. Have “a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.” “[Feast] upon the word of Christ.” Serve under the direction of the priesthood. Seek to be what God wants you to be.

As you press forward, making and keeping covenants on the path to eternal life, we testify you will find happiness. ■

GOING FORWARD

By the Young Women General Presidency

Have you thought about where you are headed and where you want to end up? The Mutual theme for 2016 is 2 Nephi 31:20, and this one verse gives you seven points of counsel about your direction in life.

In it you will discover the divinely commanded *direction, action, attitude, learning, and promised reward* for your effort. Let’s look at some key words in this verse.

To **press forward** implies that you are being required to make a real effort against some opposing force. We have to put forth energy to live the gospel because we are surrounded by a world of opposition to the commandments of God.

Are you **steadfast** in Christ? Are you immovable in your loyalty to Him?

If you “abide in Him” (see John 15:4) and follow His teachings, then you are truly steadfast and blessings will surely come to you.



Bonnie L. Oscarson, president (center);
Carol F. McConkie, first counselor (left);
Neill F. Marriott, second counselor (right)

Your **hope and love of God and man** increase as you understand and feel God’s love personally. This understanding grows as you **feast upon the words of Christ**, that is, as you gratefully and purposefully apply the words of Christ to your personal life.

And finally, you must **endure!** Does that sound dreary and grinding? Actually, to *endure* can mean to continue on with the good you are doing—to be constant in your effort to press on. When you steadily stay on the gospel path, you are enduring.

Is it worth it? YES! Our loving Father in Heaven wants us to come back to Him, to have **eternal life** with Him because He knows that is where we will have true, lasting happiness and joy beyond what we can now imagine. That is why in 2 Nephi 31:20, He has spelled out so clearly and specifically what it takes to return to Him. We can do this with His help. He will always prepare the way for us to do what He commands. ■

— PRIESTHOOD

● TEMPLE
ENDOWMENT

TEMPLE
MARRIAGE ●

