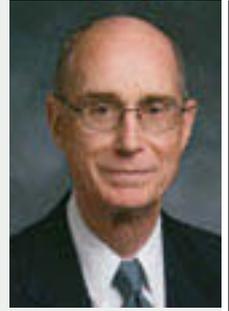




God gave Joseph Smith courage in his service. Likewise, God has given us more than enough help to banish fear and give us courage, whatever we may face in life.

By President
Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the
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MORAL COURAGE

One of the purposes of mortal life is to prove to God that we will keep His commandments when that takes courage. We passed that test in the spirit world. But a third of the hosts of heaven rebelled against the proposal that they be tested in a mortal existence where there was a risk that they would fail.

Before we were born, we knew God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, personally. We could see Them and listen to Them as They taught and encouraged us. Now a veil has been placed over our minds and memories. Satan, the father of lies, has an advantage because we must see the reality of who we are through the eyes of faith, while our bodies make us subject to carnal temptation and to physical weakness.

We have great helps to give us courage in this life. The greatest is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Because of what He did, sins can be washed away in the waters of baptism. We can renew that blessing when we partake of the sacrament



in faith and with a repentant heart.

Spiritual gifts are another help. We receive the Spirit of Christ at birth. That gives us the power to know when a choice before us would lead toward eternal life. The scriptures are a sure guide when we read them with the Holy Ghost as our companion.

The Holy Ghost lets us express thanks and ask for help in prayer with the clarity and confidence we once enjoyed with our Heavenly Father and which we will have when we return to Him. That communication with God helps banish fear from our hearts as it builds faith and love of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

The holy priesthood gives us courage in our service. In its ordinances we receive power to serve God's children and to withstand the influence of evil. When He calls us to serve, we have this promise: "And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels

round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

The Prophet Joseph Smith in his service had reason to be fearful. But God gave him courage with this assurance of the example of the Master:

“And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good.

“The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?” (D&C 122:7–8).

God has given us more than enough help to banish fear and give us courage, whatever we may face in life. As we reach out for His help, He can lift us toward that eternal life we seek. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, often asked questions to encourage people to ponder and apply the principles He taught. . . . His questions prompted thought, soul-searching, and commitment” (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 68). Consider creating and asking several questions to help individuals understand and apply the truths taught in this message. For example, you could ask, “What help has God given you to banish fear and give you courage?” or “How has God helped you overcome your fears?” Encourage individuals to ponder their answers before responding.

YOUTH

Nobody’s Perfect

By Shauna Skoubye

I have always longed to be like Nephi: strictly obedient, extremely faithful, and deeply spiritual. In my eyes Nephi was the supreme example of goodness. Few things appealed to me more than the thought of growing up to be just like him—or at least beginning to possess even a portion of his excellence.

One day I was having a mini crisis, caused by feelings of inadequacy. I had such ambitions and so many goals. But I just didn’t seem to be getting anywhere. Through tears of hopelessness, I expressed these feelings to my father. He promptly stood up, walked over to the bookcase, and pulled out one of his copies of the Book of Mormon. Without saying a word, he opened it to 2 Nephi 4 and began reading verse 17.

Chills spread through my body like electricity as I listened to these powerful words: “O wretched man that I am!” My thoughts raced. How could Nephi, my hero and example, say that he was “wretched”? If he was wretched, what did that make me?

Again, the electricity rushed through me as my father read verse 28: “Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin.” It felt to me as though the dark clouds in my mind had parted and cleared away to reveal the

CHILDREN

Gifts That Give Us Courage

President Eyring tells us about several gifts that give us courage. Read each scripture below, and write the name of the gift in the blank. Then match each gift with the picture to the right. Talk with your family about how that gift can give you courage.

1. Acts 22:16 _____
2. 2 Nephi 4:15 _____
3. D&C 59:8–9 _____
4. 2 Nephi 32:5; John 14:26–27 _____
5. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 _____

warmth and splendor of an open blue sky and bright sun. It is impossible to describe the way this verse illuminated my soul. Few verses of scripture have filled me with as much hope, inspiration, and joy as this one did.

In verse 30, Nephi said exactly what I was thinking, only in more eloquent words: "My soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation." This verse brought with it feelings of peace and gratitude for the Lord's tender mercy and love.

My dad closed the book and explained that these verses are sometimes called Nephi's psalm. He then gently taught me that even the greatest people on earth are imperfect, and these people must recognize their imperfections or else they would be prideful and, therefore, not great.

I understood. Just because I had weaknesses didn't mean I was incapable of becoming like Nephi.

Nephi said exactly what I was thinking: "My soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation."



Recognizing my weaknesses brought me closer to the caliber of Nephi. Nephi was great because, as well as being obedient and faithful, he was humble and willing to admit his faults.

Ever since that experience, I have treasured these words of Nephi. Each time I read them, I experience the same thrills and inspirations as the first time I read them. The verses sing out to me that I am a daughter of God, capable of more than I could ever imagine. I know that if I'm faithful and press forward, untold blessings are in store.

