

# Liahona



175<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY  
*of*  
RELIEF  
SOCIETY

p. 14



*Elizabeth Howard, Eliza Roxcy Snow, and Hannah Tapfield King sit for a photograph circa 1867. Around this time, Eliza R. Snow accepted the assignment from President Brigham Young (1801–77) to help organize Relief Societies throughout the Church. She became the second Relief Society General President in 1880 and served until her death on December 5, 1887.*

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library



MESSAGES

- 4 **First Presidency Message: Armed with Righteousness**  
By President Henry B. Eyring
- 7 **Visiting Teaching Message: The Enabling Power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement**



ON THE COVER  
Photograph by Cody Bell.

FEATURE ARTICLES

- 13 **Preparing a Spiritual Feast**  
By Manuel Emilio Ciriaco  
*We decided to treat sacrament meeting like more than just another Sunday meeting—and the results were extraordinary.*
- 14 **An Outpouring of the Spirit**  
*On the 175th anniversary of the formation of Relief Society, the Relief Society General Presidency shares their testimonies and insights about this sacred and powerful organization.*
- 26 **Blessed by My Faithful Sister**  
By Rafael Antillon  
*My sister Thelma's example and testimony changed my life.*
- 30 **The Gospel and the Good Life**  
By Elder Quentin L. Cook  
*Elder Cook reminds us of the importance of choosing a life philosophy that focuses on the Savior and the things that matter most.*

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 **October 2016 Conference Notebook**
- 10 **Teaching in the Savior's Way: The Power of Teaching Doctrine**  
By Douglas D. Holmes
- 38 **Portraits of Faith: Markus Tilgner**
- 40 **Latter-day Saint Voices**
- 80 **Until We Meet Again: A Lesson From Dandy**  
By President David O. McKay



48

**44 Be an Example of the Believers**

By Elder Von G. Keetch

*How do we fulfill our God-given charge to teach others the truth without causing contention and anger?*

**48 Young Adult Profiles: Taste the World in South Africa**

By McKenna Johnson

**50 Seven Things We Fear about Repentance—and Why We Shouldn't**

By David A. Edwards

*We often put off repentance because of fear. These ideas and suggestions will help you find the courage to truly change.*

**54 Just What the Doctor Ordered**

By Charlotte Larcabal

*Unlike taking medicine or getting a shot, repentance can be sweet.*

**57 To the Point**

*What do we know about Mother in Heaven? How should sex education be taught?*

**58 From the Mission Field: Hesitantly Faithful, Abundantly Blessed**

By Isaias Vargas Chavarria

**60 Our Space**

**62 Poster: Choose Hope**

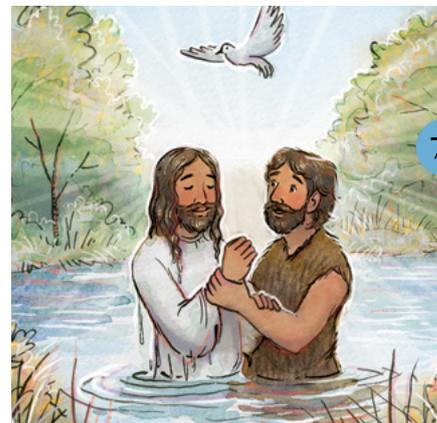
**63 Answers from Church Leaders: How to Face Trials of Faith**

By Elder Neil L. Andersen

**64 The Last-Minute Miracle**

By Cesar H. Bonito Duarte

*I had worked on the broken machine my entire internship with no success. Could a last-minute prayer help?*



76

**66 Worth the Wait**

By Jessica Larsen

*Sadie turned eight, but her dad still wouldn't give her permission to be baptized.*

**68 Answers from an Apostle: What if I feel like I don't measure up?**

By Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

**69 Question Corner**

*Sometimes I get annoyed with my family. What can I do?*

**70 Children with Heart: Painting Love**

By Jill Hacking

**72 A Great Feeling**

By Jane McBride

*It hadn't even been one day since Paulo got baptized, and already he had made a mistake. How could the sacrament help?*

**74 Seeing God's Prophet**

By Elder Kim B. Clark

*I remember the first time I saw the prophet in person.*

**75 Church History Figures: The Church Is Organized**

**76 Stories of Jesus: Jesus Was Baptized**

By Kim Webb Reid

**79 Coloring Page: I Am Thankful for My Body**



54



*See if you can find the Liahona hidden in this issue. Hint: How do you measure your height?*

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# Family Home Evening Ideas

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



**“Be an Example of the Believers,”** page 44: Elder Keetch discusses the importance of defending the doctrines of the gospel with love and kindness. After reading his talk, you could talk about times in family members’ lives when they have needed to defend the gospel. You could also read a scripture story about someone who stood up for their beliefs, like the story of Daniel or Esther. How did these people show love for both those around them and the Lord? You could try role-playing a situation where family members can practice sharing their beliefs on different topics with a calm and understanding attitude.

**“What if I feel like I don’t measure up?”** page 68: Elder Holland talks about what to do when we feel that we aren’t as good as we could be. As a family, you could talk about talents that Heavenly Father has given each family member. Consider inviting your family to write down a goal they want to accomplish over the next month, discussing ways to achieve this goal, how their talents will help them, and what skills they will need to develop to reach their goal. You could follow up with this activity later and encourage family members in setting and striving to achieve their goals.

## MORE ONLINE

The *Liahona* and other Church materials are available in many languages at [languages.lds.org](http://languages.lds.org). Visit [facebook.com/liahona.magazine](https://www.facebook.com/liahona.magazine) (available in English, Portuguese, and Spanish) to find inspirational messages, family home evening ideas, and material you can share with your friends and family.

## TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE

*Numbers represent the first page of the article.*

**Atonement,** 7  
**Baptism,** 61, 66, 76  
**Choices,** 30  
**Church history,** 75  
**Commandments,** 80  
**Covenants,** 4  
**Example,** 26, 44  
**Family,** 26, 30, 60, 69, 70  
**Family history,** 40  
**Fellowshipping,** 13, 43, 48  
**Gratitude,** 30, 79  
**Holy Ghost,** 41, 42, 63  
**Hope,** 50, 62  
**Humility,** 30  
**Jesus Christ,** 7, 76  
**Love,** 44, 70  
**Missionary work,** 26, 58  
**Obedience,** 58, 80  
**Prayer,** 4, 61, 63, 64, 66  
**Prophets,** 4  
**Relief Society,** 14, 40, 41  
**Repentance,** 50, 54, 63, 72

**Sacrament,** 13, 63, 72  
**Service,** 41, 42, 63  
**Spiritual protection,** 4, 14, 80  
**Trials of faith,** 63  
**Truth,** 44  
**Visiting teaching,** 40, 41, 43  
**Women,** 14, 26, 40



**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

# ARMED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

**G**od's prophet on earth, President Thomas S. Monson, has declared, "Today, we are encamped against the greatest array of sin, vice, and evil ever assembled before our eyes."<sup>1</sup>

Would you be surprised to learn that President Monson uttered those words 50 years ago? If we were encamped against an unprecedented array of wickedness back then, how much more so does evil threaten us today? For good reason, the Lord has proclaimed of our dispensation, "Behold, the enemy is combined" (D&C 38:12).

The war in which "we are all enlisted"<sup>2</sup> began before we were born on earth. It began even before the earth was created. It began many millennia ago in the premortal realm, where Satan rebelled and "sought to destroy the agency of man" (Moses 4:3).

Satan lost that battle and "was cast out into the earth" (Revelation 12:9), where he continues his war today. Here on earth "he maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about" (D&C 76:29) with lies, deception, and temptations.

He wars against the prophets and apostles. He wars against the law of chastity and the sanctity of marriage. He

wars against the family and the temple. He wars against what is good, holy, and sacred.

How do we battle such a foe? How do we fight against the evil that appears to be engulfing our world? What is our armor? Who are our allies?

## **The Power of the Lamb**

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Satan has power over us only to the degree that we permit him.<sup>3</sup>

Seeing our day, Nephi "beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and *they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory*" (1 Nephi 14:14; emphasis added).

How do we arm ourselves with righteousness and power? We keep the Sabbath day holy and honor the priesthood. We make and keep sacred covenants, work on our family history, and attend the temple. We strive continuously to repent and plead with the Lord to "apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins" (Mosiah 4:2). We pray and serve and testify and exercise faith in Jesus Christ.



We also arm ourselves with righteousness and power as we “treasure up in [our] minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85). We treasure up those words by immersing ourselves in the holy scriptures and in the words of the Lord’s chosen servants, who will share His will, mind, and voice (see D&C 68:4) during next month’s general conference.

In our battle against evil, we must always remember that we have help from both sides of the veil. Our allies include God the Eternal Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Our allies also include the unseen armies of heaven. “Fear not,” Elisha told a fearful young man as they faced an army of evil, “for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (see 2 Kings 6:15–16).

We need not fear. God loves His Saints. He will never abandon us.

I know that God, in answer to prayer, has fulfilled my petitions to deliver me from evil. I testify that with the help of God the Father, the Savior of the world, and the Holy Ghost, we can be assured that we will be given more than enough power to withstand whatever evil forces we face.

May we always be armed with righteousness so that we can have confidence in the ultimate victory. ■

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Correlation Brings Blessings,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Apr. 1967, 247.
2. “We Are All Enlisted,” *Hymns*, no. 250.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 214.

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Eyring reminds us we are waging a war against evil. You could begin by singing “We Are All Enlisted” (*Hymns*, no. 250) with those you teach. Then you might invite them to share how they’ve been protected through righteousness and brainstorm ways to protect their family against Satan, such as choosing wholesome media, holding family councils, or having weekly family home evening. You might challenge them to prayerfully ponder how to build up their family’s fortifications and encourage them to create a plan to implement their ideas.

## I Had Already Decided

By Madison Thompson

I once received a valuable lesson in a Young Women class on sexual purity—a topic that made a lot of the youth squirm in their seats. I don't remember everything I learned that day, but I do remember my leader talking about one of her personal standards—to always remain sexually pure. Her words stayed with me, and I then made the conscious decision to adopt it as one of my own personal values.

One day as I was riding home on a bus from a sporting event, someone on the bus started a game of truth or dare. Bored, some of the other kids and I joined in. When it came

to my turn, I was dared to do something that I knew wasn't right. This could've been a hard decision for me to make, but the words of my Young Women leader came to my head, and the choice was easy. I quickly declined. I had already made up my mind on what I would do in that situation.

I know that when we go to church and make room for the things we are taught there, we will be blessed with greater spiritual strength and protection from the temptations of the world.

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

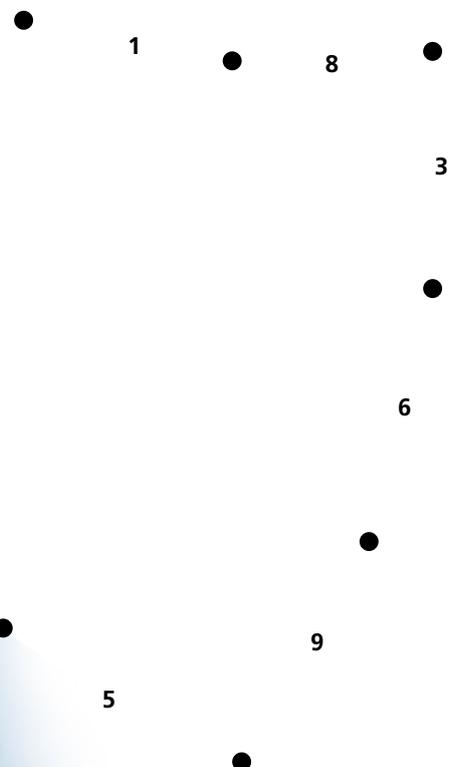
## CHILDREN



### Put on Your Armor

There are a lot of bad things in the world today. The gospel is like a shield that protects us. Here are 10 things President Eyring tells us to do to protect ourselves. For each one, find the number on the picture and draw a line between the dots. Color it in when you're done!

1. KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY
2. HONOR THE PRIESTHOOD
3. MAKE AND KEEP COVENANTS
4. WORK ON FAMILY HISTORY
5. GO TO THE TEMPLE
6. REPENT
7. PRAY
8. SERVE OTHERS
9. SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY
10. READ THE SCRIPTURES



# The Enabling Power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement

*Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?*



Faith  
Family  
Relief

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). “Though we all have weaknesses, we can overcome them,” says President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Indeed it is by the grace of God that, if we humble ourselves and have faith, weak things can become strong.”<sup>1</sup>

Our Savior says in the Doctrine and Covenants, “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).

“Nephi is an example of one who knew, understood,

and relied upon the enabling power of the Savior,” says Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Nephi’s brothers bound him with cords and planned his destruction. Please note Nephi’s prayer: ‘O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even *give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound*’ (1 Nephi 7:17; emphasis added).

“ . . . Nephi did not pray to have his circumstances changed. Rather, he prayed for the strength to change his circumstances. And I believe he prayed in this manner precisely because he knew, understood, and had

experienced the enabling power of the Atonement.

“I do not think the bands with which Nephi was bound just magically fell from his hands and wrists. Rather, I suspect he was blessed with both persistence and personal strength beyond his natural capacity, that he then ‘in the strength of the Lord’ (Mosiah 9:17) worked and twisted and tugged on the cords, and ultimately and literally was enabled to break the bands.”<sup>2</sup>

**Additional Scriptures and Information**  
Isaiah 41:10; Ether 12:27;  
[reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org)

**NOTES**

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 108.
2. David A. Bednar, “Strength beyond Our Own,” *New Era*, Mar. 2015, 4.



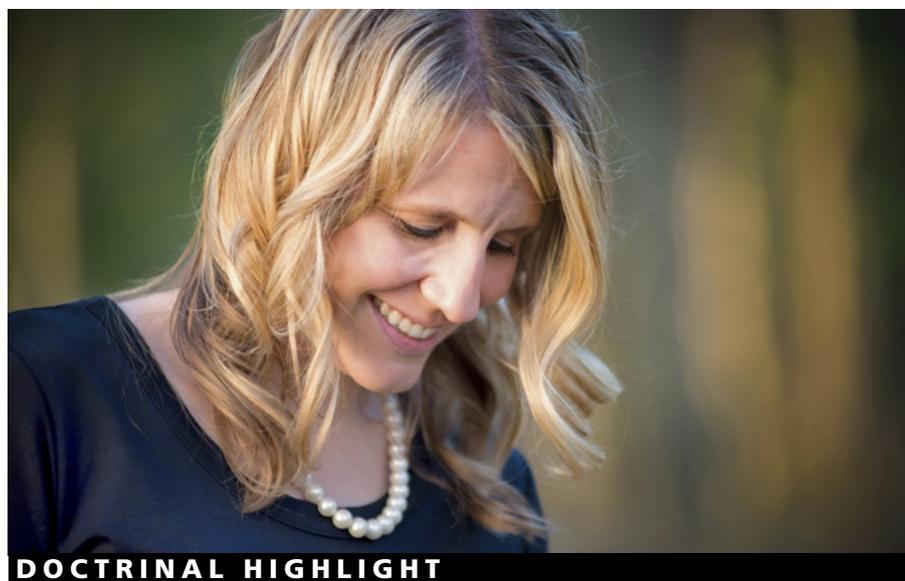
**Consider This**

How can the enabling power of Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice help our weaknesses be made strong?

# OCTOBER 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

*As you review the October 2016 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.*



## Joy Is Key to Our Spiritual Survival

**W**hen the focus of our lives is on God’s plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. . . .

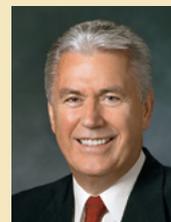
“ . . . His joy is constant, assuring us that our ‘afflictions shall be but a small moment’ [D&C 121:7] and be consecrated to our gain. . . .

“ . . . As in all things, Jesus Christ is our ultimate exemplar, ‘who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross’ [Hebrews 12:2]. Think of that! In order for Him to endure the most excruciating experience ever endured on earth, our Savior focused on *joy!* . . .

“If we look to the world and follow its formulas for happiness, we will never know joy. . . . Joy is a gift for the faithful.”

**President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 82, 83, 84.**

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



### TWO THINGS THAT FAITH CANNOT DO

1. “Our Father in Heaven . . . will not force anyone to choose the path of righteousness. God did not force His own children to follow Him in the premortal world. How much less will He force us now as we journey through this mortal life?

“God will invite, persuade. God will reach out tirelessly with love and inspiration and encouragement. But God will never compel—that would undermine His great plan for our eternal growth. . . .

2. “Faith cannot . . . force our will upon God. We cannot force God to comply with our desires—no matter how right we think we are or how sincerely we pray. . . .

“No, the purpose of faith is not to *change* God’s will but to empower us to *act on* God’s will. Faith is trust—trust that God sees what we cannot and that He knows what we do not.”

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Fourth Floor, Last Door,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 16, 17.**



### EXTEND CHARITY TO OTHERS

“Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment of charity. . . .

“ . . . We want to use the light of the gospel to see others as the Savior does—with compassion, hope, and charity. The day will come when we will have a complete understanding of others’ hearts and will be grateful to have mercy extended to us—just as we extend charitable thoughts and words to others. . . .

“Our obligation and privilege is to embrace improvement in *everyone* as we strive to become more like our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

**Jean B. Bingham, First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency, “I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 6, 8.**

## Becoming a Better Member Missionary

President Thomas S. Monson said in the October 2013 general conference:

“Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together. . . . [The Lord] will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work.”

Two Apostles encouraged us to become better member missionaries. Use the November 2016 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to read what they said.

—See Neil L. Andersen, “A Witness of God,” 35.

—See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sharing the Restored Gospel,” 57.

### CONFERENCE STORIES

## Turning Points

Use the November 2016 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to read what changed these lives.

- What did President Henry B. Eyring learn about the Aaronic Priesthood when he was a priest? —See “That He May Become Strong Also,” 75.
- What did Elder Dale G. Renlund learn about repentance when he was 12? —See “Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” 121.
- How did Elder Gary E. Stevenson gain his testimony of the Book of Mormon? —See “Look to the Book, Look to the Lord,” 44.
- What did Elder Craig C. Christensen do as a seminary student that changed the way he reads the Book of Mormon? —See “A Choice Seer Will I Raise Up,” 27.



To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

# THE POWER OF TEACHING DOCTRINE

*How can we increase our ability to teach doctrine with power and authority?*

**By Douglas D. Holmes**

First Counselor in the Young Men  
General Presidency

**A**s a new mission president, I arrived at our assigned mission with great anticipation of missionary meetings being filled with the Spirit like I remembered as a young missionary. But after completing our first round of zone conferences, I was disappointed. The Spirit was not as abundant as I had hoped, and some missionaries seemed unengaged.

As my wife and I pondered and prayed about how to invite a greater spirit into our lives and the lives of the missionaries, we were led to focus our teaching on the doctrine of Christ and its power to change us. As we pursued this course over the following months, several missionaries came to me sharing regrets about past behaviors and expressing a desire to be more diligent in keeping mission rules and living the gospel.

## **What Caused This Change?**

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, frequently taught:



“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”<sup>1</sup> I knew this before, but following this experience with my missionaries, I had



a much greater appreciation for the power and virtue of the word of God to change hearts (see Alma 31:5). As our mission progressed and we continued to focus on teaching doctrine, their hearts changed and so did ours. Because we understood doctrine, we understood the “why” of obedience, not simply the “what” and “how.”

### **Why Is Teaching Doctrine So Powerful?**

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that “the word of God is the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and by His prophets.”<sup>2</sup> True doctrine is centered in Christ. His doctrine, when taught and received by the Spirit, will always increase faith in Jesus Christ (see Alma 32:28–43; Moroni 7:25, 31–32).<sup>3</sup> Faith is “the moving cause of all action” or behavior.<sup>4</sup> As the Father and Son are revealed to us through Spirit-filled words, our faith grows, our desires to repent and obey increase, and we are changed.

The power to change hearts is not in the teacher but in “the virtue of the word of God” (Alma 31:5). Letters on a page or sound waves coming out of a mouth have no inherent power to change hearts, but when true words are charged by the Holy Spirit of God, they can bring about a mighty change of heart (see 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 5:7; D&C 68:4). When we teach His word by the Spirit, the Holy Ghost carries light and truth unto the heart

of the learner (see John 6:63; 2 Nephi 33:1; D&C 84:45). When learners open their hearts to receive the word, the Spirit enlightens their minds and changes their hearts—their motives and behaviors.

The Book of Mormon is a powerful witness that “true doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behaviors.” Here are just a few examples:

- King Benjamin taught the words he received from an angel to his people, and the Spirit brought a mighty change to their hearts that they had “no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2).
- As Alma the Elder taught the people, “their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word,” and they were saved (Alma 5:7; see also verse 9).
- The sons of Mosiah, “because of the power of his word” (Alma 26:13), helped bring about a complete change of heart in thousands of the Lamanites (see Alma 17:14–17; 53:10).

### **How Can We Improve?**

There are things all of us can do to increase our ability to teach doctrine with power and authority (see Alma 17:3; Helaman 5:18). We don’t have to earn a doctorate degree in teaching or in religious studies, but we do have to pay a price. The following ideas may help as you seek to invite the power of doctrine into your teaching.



### **SIMPLICITY BRINGS UNDER- STANDING**

“Preach the first principles of the Gospel—preach them over again: you will find that day after day new ideas and additional light concerning them will be revealed to you. You can enlarge upon them so as to comprehend them clearly. You will then be able to make them more plainly understood by those [you] teach.”

Hyrum Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:323.

1. *Treasure up and live by the word.* To teach doctrine with power and authority, we need to know the doctrine. The Savior told Joseph and Hyrum Smith that before they sought to declare His word, they must first seek to obtain it. Then they would have His Spirit and His word, “the power of God unto the convincing of men” (D&C 11:21). This kind of understanding “requires more than casual reading,” as President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) taught. It requires daily, concentrated study.<sup>5</sup>

Study alone is not enough. If we are to know the doctrine, we must also live it (see John 7:17; Alma 12:9). Diligent study and application of the scriptures and the words of living prophets is the way we come to have the power of His word “in us” (Alma 26:13; see also Alma 17:2–3; 32:42).

2. *Teach doctrine.* We must be careful to teach only true doctrine. The Holy Ghost is “the Spirit of truth” (John 15:26). Learners can feel His confirming witness when we declare “none other things than the prophets and apostles” (D&C 52:36) and avoid speculation and personal interpretation. One of the best ways to avoid even getting near false doctrine is to keep our teaching simple (see Mosiah 25:22; 3 Nephi 11:39–40). In addition, we

should tie the comments and experiences that class members share back to the doctrines we are studying.

3. *Teach by the Spirit.* We must remember that teaching is never about us. Our eye must be single to God. We are not to entertain or set ourselves up as a light. Paul told the Corinthians that he was with them “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Corinthians 2:3; see also verse 4). That does not sound like Paul used a well-rehearsed and scripted presentation.

If we are to be an instrument in God’s hands to change hearts, we need to get out of the way and let the Holy Ghost teach truth. As you prepare to teach, remember the thing that will matter most in your class is the presence of the Holy Ghost. Do all you can to invite the Spirit into your class. As you teach, don’t be afraid to pause so that you can listen to and feel the Spirit’s direction.

As we feast on and live by every word of God and teach only true doctrine by the power of the Holy Ghost, we will discover the Lord changing our hearts and the hearts of those we teach. I thank God each day for the change His word has brought to my heart and for teachers who taught me true doctrine with power and authority. ■

#### **NOTES**

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Little Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “The Power of Teaching Doctrine,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 73; *Liahona*, July 1999, 85.
3. President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught, “The doctrine of Jesus Christ was designed by the Lord to help us increase our faith” (“Let Your Faith Show,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 29).
4. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 1–2.
5. See Howard W. Hunter, “Reading the Scriptures,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 64.

# PREPARING A Spiritual Feast

By Manuel Emilio Ciriaco

When I was called as first counselor in the bishopric, sacrament meeting attendance in our ward had dwindled. As a bishopric, we decided to fast fervently and pray to Heavenly Father to give us the wisdom to know how to strengthen the members.

The Lord inspired us to emphasize the sacrament meeting as a spiritual feast, so we came up with a way to invite the members, their friends, and their neighbors to come to sacrament meeting and experience a spiritual feast. We made invitations that said, “Come and hear, see, and feel the presence of the Lord in a spiritual feast” and gave them to each of the members, including the young men and young women.

We also prepared a small ward choir of eight voices. We prayerfully selected spiritual hymns and speakers and invited members to help with the reverence of the occasion.

Everything was ready for the spiritual feast! Attendance that Sunday included 42 investigators and less-active members. At the second spiritual feast, there were 64 investigators and less-active members. Three months later we could no longer fit in the chapel, and six months later our ward had grown so much that we were preparing for it to be divided into two wards.

We learned that treating sacrament meeting as more than just a Sunday meeting but as a sacred experience gave us a marvelous opportunity to invite our loved ones to come unto Christ through a sacred spiritual feast.

Our preparation to improve the quality of the spirit and reverence of sacrament meeting helped improve the attendance of the people who had never imagined feeling joy by coming to see, feel, and find it in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ■

*The author lives in the Dominican Republic.*



*We made invitations that said, “Come and hear, see, and feel the presence of the Lord in a spiritual feast.”*

## HOW CAN WE HELP MAKE THE SACRAMENT A MORE SPIRITUAL ORDINANCE?

- Preparation can begin at home as families discuss how to improve their experience with the sacrament.
- Priesthood holders who administer the sacrament can do so reverently, knowing they represent the Lord in sharing the sacrament with the members. Those who bless the sacrament can make the prayers a sacred communication with God, not just repetition of words.



On

March 17, 1842,

minutes after she became president of the new Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, Emma Smith spoke on the purpose of that society. “To seek out and relieve the distressed,” she said. To “be ambitious to do good” and “watch over the morals.”<sup>1</sup>

*“The Society is not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls.”<sup>2</sup>*  
— Joseph Smith



# An Outpouring of the Spirit

*Speaking with tenderness and power on this 175th anniversary of Relief Society, the General Presidency shares their feelings, insights, and testimonies with us as Relief Society sisters.*

*W*e love the sisters throughout the Church,” says Linda K. Burton, General President of the Relief Society, speaking for herself and her counselors—Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor, and Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor. “What more could we want than to help each other along the covenant path toward eternal life? God revealed His purpose in Moses 1:39: ‘For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man [and woman].’ In Relief Society we help prepare women for the blessings of eternal life. We do this through increasing faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, strengthening individuals, families, and homes through ordinances and covenants, and working in unity to help those in need.”<sup>3</sup>

“As we remember and live the purpose of Relief Society, we as Latter-day Saint women will become ‘distinct and different—in happy ways,’<sup>4</sup> yielding a significant influence for good throughout the world. *That is what we want for our sisters in Relief Society.*”

Here, in an interview with Church magazines staff, the members of the Relief Society General Presidency answer questions of concern for today and share their vision for the future.



Nauvoo Relief Society established in the Red Brick Store.



First Utah Relief Societies formed to make clothing for Native American women and children.

1840

1842

1844

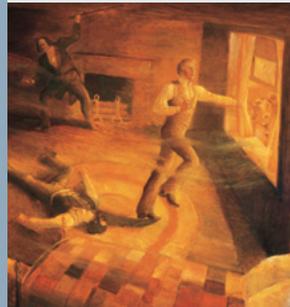
1850

1854



EMMA H. SMITH  
1842

Martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith.



DETAIL FROM MARTYRDOM OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM, BY GARY ERNEST SMITH



In

## Utah

Relief Societies continued working to save souls and attend to needs. Relief Societies also ministered to arriving immigrants, including the survivors of the Willie and Martin handcart companies, providing supplies, food, and medical care. Beginning in 1868, local ward Relief Societies began to construct halls in which to meet, care for the poor, conduct business, and sell goods. The construction of ward Relief Society halls ended in 1924.

### 1. What is it about Relief Society that unifies women from different cultures and diverse situations?

*Sister Burton:* Knowing and living our purpose unites us across cultures. I met a woman in Uruguay last year who told me how she had been called to be Relief Society president at the darkest time of her life. She was tempted to say, “I can’t do it right now.” But because she had made sacred covenants, she said, “I will do what I’ve been asked to do. I have faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. I know through His Atonement I can do it.” Then she said to me, “My calling brought light into my life as I served my sisters. I relied upon the Lord, and He blessed me.”

I recognized the purpose of Relief Society in her story. Her faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement helped her. She had made sacred covenants and wanted to keep them. As she worked in unity with the bishop, she fulfilled her calling. Now she

has a testimony that the Lord blesses us when we trust Him. I add my testimony to hers that our Savior Jesus Christ will help us through every mortal challenge and everything that seems unfair in this life.

*Sister Stephens:* Our faith in the power of the Savior’s atoning sacrifice is the great unifier. Our love for our Heavenly Father and knowledge of His great plan of happiness bind us together as we seek eternal life. Our sisters are single, married with children, or married without children. There are widows and those who are divorced. Our hope is that we can all work in unity and be one as we come to understand our identity, our work, and our purpose.

*Sister Reeves:* Unity brings us happiness because there is no contention and the love of God dwells in our hearts (see 4 Nephi 1:15). Unity crosses every line. Oh, how we want our sisters to



Eliza R. Snow called by Brigham Young to oversee the establishment of Relief Society throughout the Church.

Woman's Exponent newspaper began publication and became the voice of the Relief Society for 50 years.

1860

The first Relief Society meeting hall was constructed by the Salt Lake 15th Ward Relief Society. Over 120 halls were constructed in the next 50 years.



1868

1870

Utah women were among the first in the United States to vote.

1872



1880

ELIZA R. SNOW  
1866



feel that love for the Savior. Oh, how we want to be one in helping accomplish His purposes.

**2. What can women do if they don't feel part of Relief Society?**

*Sister Stephens:* The desire of our hearts as a presidency is that sisters understand their eternal identity.

We've always been part of God's work. As women we have been endowed with special gifts to profit everyone. We were taught and trained in the premortal life what our work would be. We were in that great Council in Heaven where we chose Heavenly Father's plan, which included the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We shouted for joy at the prospect of having a mortal body.

On earth, beginning with Mother Eve, women continue to be part of God's work. The Prophet Joseph Smith organized women after the pattern of the priesthood—a pattern that has always existed—when he organized the Relief Society in 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois.

President Russell M. Nelson, President



Deseret Silk Association  
founded under the leader-  
ship of Relief Society General  
President Zina D. H. Young.

Primary  
organization  
began.

1875



1876

Emmeline B.  
Wells led  
the new  
grain  
storage  
program.

1878



1880

Second  
Relief  
Society  
General  
Presidency  
set apart.

The

## most long-lived

economic enterprise of the Relief Society was the grain storage program: 1876–1918. During a wheat shortage near the end of World War I, they sold it at the unrefusable request of the U.S. government. The interest from this wheat money was used to decrease maternal and infant mortality, fund clinics for pregnant women and young children, sponsor healthcare education classes, and stockpile supplies for childbirth.

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled us, “Learn *for yourselves* who you really are. Ask your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ how He feels about you and your mission here on earth. If you ask with real intent, over time the Spirit will whisper the life-changing truths to you. Record those impressions, review them often, and follow through with exactness.”

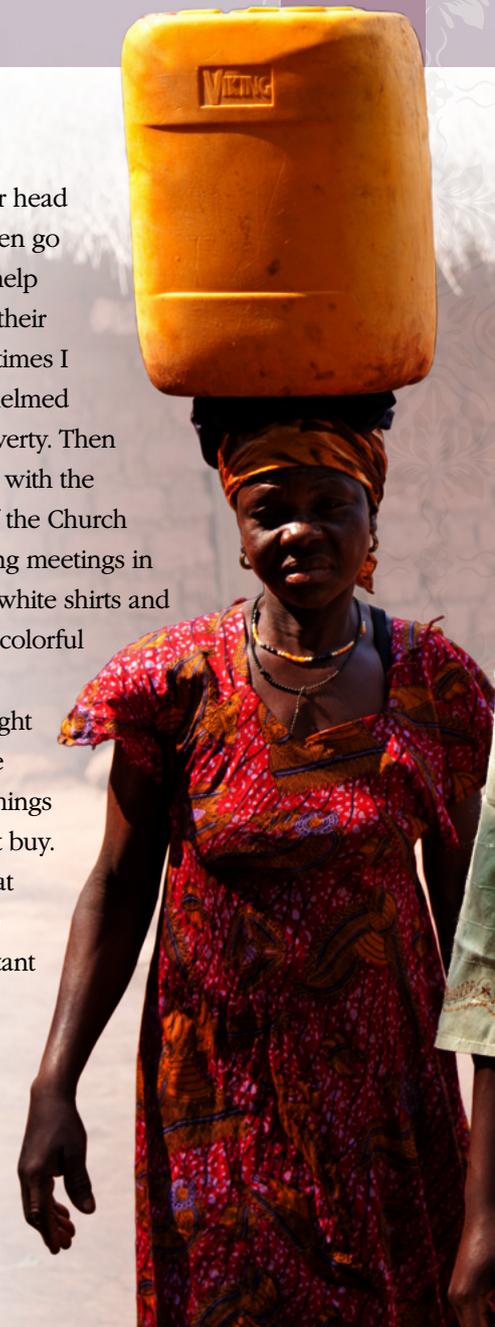
“I promise you that when you catch even a glimpse of how your Heavenly Father sees you and what He is counting on you to do for Him, your life will never be the same!”<sup>5</sup> Go to the temple and listen! Listen for who you are and what you will do.

### 3. How can women whose lives are terribly busy still enjoy the blessings of Relief Society?

*Sister Stephens:* It comes down to priorities. I recently spent time in West Africa, and I saw women carrying water from the

well on their head daily and then go to work to help provide for their families. At times I was overwhelmed with the poverty. Then I spent time with the members of the Church at the training meetings in their bright white shirts and homemade colorful dresses.

I was taught that they are rich in the things money can't buy. I learned that they put the most important things first. The gospel means everything



The Relief Society established the Deseret Hospital.

1882



*“The Relief Society . . . was first organized nearly half a century ago . . . to dispense temporal blessings to the poor and needy; and to give encouragement to the weak, and restrain the erring ones, and for the better development, and exercise of woman’s sympathies, and charities, that she might have opportunity to attain spiritual strength, and power for the accomplishment of greater good in the work of the redemption of the human family.”<sup>8</sup>—Zina D. H. Young*

1887

Relief Society women organized Utah and Idaho chapters of the Woman Suffrage Organization in 1889.<sup>7</sup>



ZINA D. H. YOUNG  
1888

1889

President Zina D. H. Young organized the first Relief Society general conference.

1890

1891

Relief Society was a charter member of the National Council of Women in the United States.



to them. They told me, “I don’t need anything. I have everything I need—I have the gospel and my family.” When we put the most important things first, other things will naturally drop out of our lives.

#### 4. What does Relief Society have to offer young women?

*Sister Burton:* Young women have the opportunity to help fulfill prophecy when they progress into Relief Society. In 1979, President Spencer W.

Kimball (1895–1985) prophesied that good women of the world “will be drawn to the Church in large numbers . . . to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”<sup>6</sup> We need the unique gifts, perspective, and talents that young women bring to help fulfill this prophecy.

Of President Kimball’s prophecy, President Russell M. Nelson said in 2015 to women of all ages—including young



First single sisters set apart to serve as proselyting missionaries.



The Relief Society Magazine contained discourses, inspirational fiction and poetry, biographies, and informational articles, including monthly lesson plans.

1896

Utah achieved statehood.

1898



1900

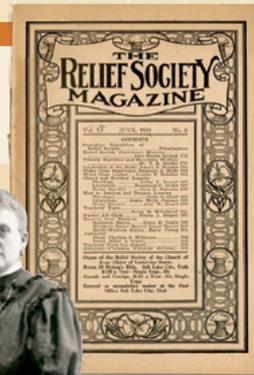
1902

First Relief Society handbook published, with a history, speeches, and instructions.



BATHSHEBA W. SMITH  
1901

First editor, Susa Young Gates.



EMMELINE B. WELLS  
1910

1914

Relief Society Magazine began publication. Woman's Exponent came to an end.

The

## Social Services

Department was established by Amy Brown Lyman in 1918 at the request of Church President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918). Sister Lyman also organized courses to train Relief Society members in the professional methods of social work. During the early years of the Great Depression, the department managed an enormous caseload and coordinated with local and federal government officials to distribute aid to the needy.

women, “You are the women [President Kimball] foresaw! . . .

“ . . . We need women who have a bedrock understanding of the doctrine of Christ. . . . We need women who know how to access the power that God makes available to covenant keepers. . . . We need women who have the courage and vision of our Mother Eve. . . .

“ . . . I plead with you to fulfill President Kimball’s prophecy. . . . As you do so, the Holy Ghost will magnify your influence in an unprecedented way!”<sup>9</sup>

*Sister Reeves:* We are all “daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us, and we love Him.”<sup>10</sup> In Relief Society, you will find we are more alike than different. For example, we’re all in a world with social media, advertising, and worldly role models. The value of women is being defined by the world. Comparing ourselves to what we see and hear in the world can make us feel like this is how we need to be. Now more than ever, we all need to remember

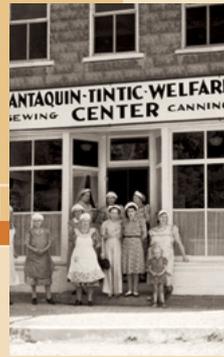
our value comes from being a daughter of God—not from what the world portrays we should be. Our strength comes from our relationship with our Father in Heaven, our Savior, and each other as sisters in the gospel. Draw upon that.

*Sister Stephens:* Young women, God needs you and we need you. You are the rising generation born with strength to stand strong against the challenges in these latter days. Join us as we become women who understand Jesus Christ and His Atonement, women who will make and keep sacred covenants, and women who will work in unity with each other and with priesthood leaders. It’s a blessing to be a woman of any age in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today. Let’s share our testimonies of who we are and who we are becoming. Let’s share our messages of joy, rejoicing with each other!

The Church Social Services Department was the precursor to today's LDS Family Services and LDS Humanitarian Services.

Church welfare program established in 1936.

Clothing, food, bandages, and thousands of quilts made by sisters in North America and Europe were sent to aid the Saints in postwar Europe.



1918

Relief Society focused on wheat sold to United States government.

1921

Relief Society focused on improving infant and maternal mortality rates.

1930

To help Utah benefit from the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, Amy Brown Lyman ran for the state House of Representatives and won in 1923. The goal of the Sheppard-Towner Act was to reduce maternal and infant mortality. Sister Lyman coordinated government and Relief Society programs. By 1928 these efforts had improved infant death rates by 19 percent and maternal death rates by 8 percent.

1936



1940

Relief Society members engaged in war-relief work.

CLARISSA S. WILLIAMS  
1921



LOUISE Y. ROBISON  
1928



AMY B. LYMAN  
1940



## 5. Why is it important for priesthood holders and Relief Society sisters to work together in unity?

*Sister Burton:* Men and women have complementary roles. Each of us brings with us our unique gifts and talents to contribute to the work of the kingdom and to strengthen one another. Women are half of the Lord's storehouse, vital to the work. We bring a perspective and a desire to contribute to building the kingdom that began with Eve, continued with Sarah, Rebekah, Esther, Mary, Elisabeth, Emma, Eliza, and other valiant sisters of this last dispensation and anciently.

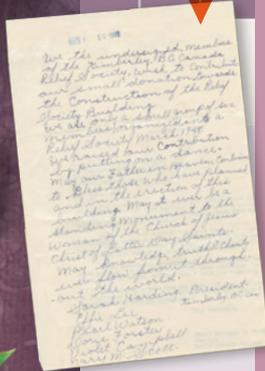
As we think about power and influence, power is usually associated with priesthood power. But the influence of a righteous woman carries tremendous power as well. The same virtues mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41 that invite priesthood power are the same virtues that invite the power of a woman's influence—"persuasion," "long-suffering," "gentleness and meekness," and "love unfeigned." These things are inherent in our divine nature, and therein lies our opportunity to influence for good in a powerful way.





The six-member Relief Society in Kimberley, British Columbia, organized a dance to raise funds to help construct the Relief Society Building in Salt Lake City.

Dedicated in 1956, the Relief Society Building provided work and meeting space for members of the board and General Presidency, editors of the Relief Society Magazine, and seamstresses who made temple clothing.



1949

First Relief Societies organized in Japan.



1956



1960



BELLE S. SPAFFORD  
1945



PHOTOGRAPH OF RELIEF SOCIETY COMMEMORATIVE PLATE COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

Relief Society Building open house.

## During

the long administration of Relief Society General President Belle S. Spafford, the Relief Society and other Church auxiliaries joined in a larger Church process of correlation, aimed to eliminate redundant efforts, reduce waste, and foster stability in a rapidly growing worldwide church. Changes included the reorganization of Church magazines and the end of independent auxiliary bank accounts.

As we work in unity with our priesthood brothers, we become little by little a more Zion-like people (see Moses 7:18).

*Sister Reeves:* When we read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” we see that our Heavenly Father uses the strengths of men and women according to the roles and responsibilities that will bring the optimum number of His children back to Him.<sup>11</sup> *The purpose of Relief Society helps us do that.*

### 6. What is it like for your presidency to work with the prophets?

*Sister Burton:* Just as Jesus Christ was a champion for women in His day, so are His Apostles in our day. Our prophets are thorough in their deliberations, always seeking input and the perspective of the sisters in the Church. I wish every sister in the Church could see and hear and feel what we get to experience in our association with prophets, seers, and

revelators on a regular basis. They are true disciples, selflessly and cheerfully giving their lives to the Lord as they seek to do His will and trust in His timing. They often testify that this Church belongs to Jesus Christ and that He leads and guides it.

*Sister Reeves:* When we have the ear of our leaders, which we have often, they petition us at an ever-increasing rate. The Brethren in these councils listen to and value what we say, and they work with us toward our common goals.

*Sister Stephens:* The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ. They know Him. They are becoming like Him. So if you want to understand the relationship that women leaders have with these witnesses of Jesus Christ, look at His example in the scriptures. Jesus Christ championed women, included women, and ennobled women. In councils with the Brethren, I have often looked at them

Belle S. Spafford was appointed president of the National Council of Women while serving as Relief Society General President.



General President Barbara B. Smith presented to the First Presidency a scroll representing 226,291 bushels of Relief Society wheat with a net worth of U.S. \$1,651,157 plus fund assets of over three quarters of a million dollars.



1966

Relief Society Magazine began publication in Spanish.

1968



1970

Final issue of Relief Society Magazine.

Ensign magazine began publication in January, 1971.

All female Church members age 18 and older were enrolled automatically in Relief Society.

1978

As women's traditional roles were being questioned, Relief Society leaders advocated for the importance of women's contributions to family and to society.

1980

1982

140th anniversary of Relief Society.

Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary co-sponsored events under the theme "Tribute to Women."

BARBARA B. SMITH  
1974



BARBARA W. WINDER  
1984



and thought, "This is a small portion of what it may feel like to be in the presence of the Savior."

## 7. What is the relationship between spiritual power and our covenants?

*Sister Stephens:* Spiritual power comes to us through the ordinances we receive and the covenants we make. There's also spiritual power that comes from keeping our covenants.

Spiritual power comes when we worthily partake of the sacrament on Sunday. This is when we can renew all the covenants that we have made with the Lord. We take His name upon us, "remember him," keep His commandments, and strive to always "have his Spirit to be with [us]" (D&C 20:77, 79).

*Sister Burton:* Of this spiritual power, Nephi said, "I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb" (1 Nephi 14:14). Isn't that term *saints* inclusive?

Nephi continues in the same verse to say that the power of the Lamb of God descended "upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory." We as "covenant



Relief Society initiated the Gospel Literacy Effort to teach basic literacy skills to Church members who could not read or write.

Relief Society collected 350,000 quilts in response to a need for 30,000 quilts for Kosovo refugees.



1992

150th anniversary of Relief Society.

Relief Society General President Elaine L. Jack asked Relief Societies around the world to celebrate through community service and other projects.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JASON SWENSEN, DESERET NEWS



1999

General President Mary Ellen W. Smoot spoke at the second World Congress of Families, in Rome, Italy.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MARY ELLEN SMOOT BY STUART JOHNSON, DESERET NEWS



ELAINE L. JACK  
1990



MARY ELLEN W. SMOOT  
1997



BONNIE D. PARKIN  
2002

## Today,

thanks to the leadership of faithful Relief Society sisters over the past 175 years, Relief Societies throughout the world help those in need. For instance, Relief Society leaders in Caracas, Venezuela, wanted to find ways for the sisters to serve. They visited a facility for the elderly and were shown to a room of women who were lying curled up on the floor and not wearing any clothing. The Relief Society sisters wept as they bathed, dressed, and fed the women and cut their hair.

people”—both men and women—can be “armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.” This is the divine destiny for all of God’s children who are covenant keepers.

*Sister Stephens:* Understanding the reach of our divine destiny is found in the answers to two questions: (1) Do you know who you are? (2) Do you know what you have? If we understood what we have, we’d understand that we have all that we need. Through the ordinances and covenants we make in the temple, we have the blessings, the power, and the authority of all things pertaining to priesthood. We’re not ordained. We don’t know why. Being ordained to the priesthood from father to son has been the order of God since the days of Adam and Eve.

*Sister Reeves:* I have a testimony that covenant-keeping women recognize that our Father has given us all we need to return to His presence through making and keeping covenants.

## 8. What is the most important thing you would like Relief Society sisters to remember?

*Sister Burton:* In Doctrine and Covenants 45:3 it says: “Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him.”

“Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren [and sisters] that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life” (verse 5). I love Christ’s tenderness toward us. He is pleading our cause because He loves us! He wants us to come unto Him! Let us love and increase our faith in Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father.

As covenant daughters of God scattered upon all the face of the earth today, we are armed in great glory with righteousness and with the power of God. As we remember our purpose, rejoice in and keep our covenants, we will be seen as “distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world,” and we can help prepare the world for the return of our Savior Jesus Christ. ■



New release of history of Relief Society announced in the October 2010 general conference by General President Julie B. Beck.

General President Linda K. Burton invited Church members worldwide to come to the aid of refugees (see [IWAsAStranger.lds.org](http://IWAsAStranger.lds.org)).

2004

First world-wide leadership training meeting for women's auxiliaries.



JULIE B. BECK  
2007



2010

"Studying and applying the history of Relief Society gives definition and expression to who we are as . . . followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ."<sup>12</sup> —Julie B. Beck

2011

Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society released by the Church.



2016

2017

175th anniversary of Relief Society.



2020

LINDA K. BURTON  
2012



For more Relief Society history, go to [history.lds.org/women](http://history.lds.org/women).



NOTES

1. Emma Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, Mar. 17, 1842, 13, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. Joseph Smith, in Relief Society Minute Book, June 9, 1842, 63.
3. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.1.1.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 223.
5. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 27; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 49.
6. *Teachings of Presidents: Spencer W. Kimball*, 223.
7. See Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, Maureen Urnsbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (1992), 138.
8. Zina D. H. Young, "First General Conference of the Relief Society," *Women's Exponent*, Apr. 15, 1889, 172.
9. Russell M. Nelson, "A Plea to My Sisters," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96, 97.
10. *Young Women Personal Progress* (booklet, 2009), 3.
11. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
12. Julie B. Beck, "Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 114.

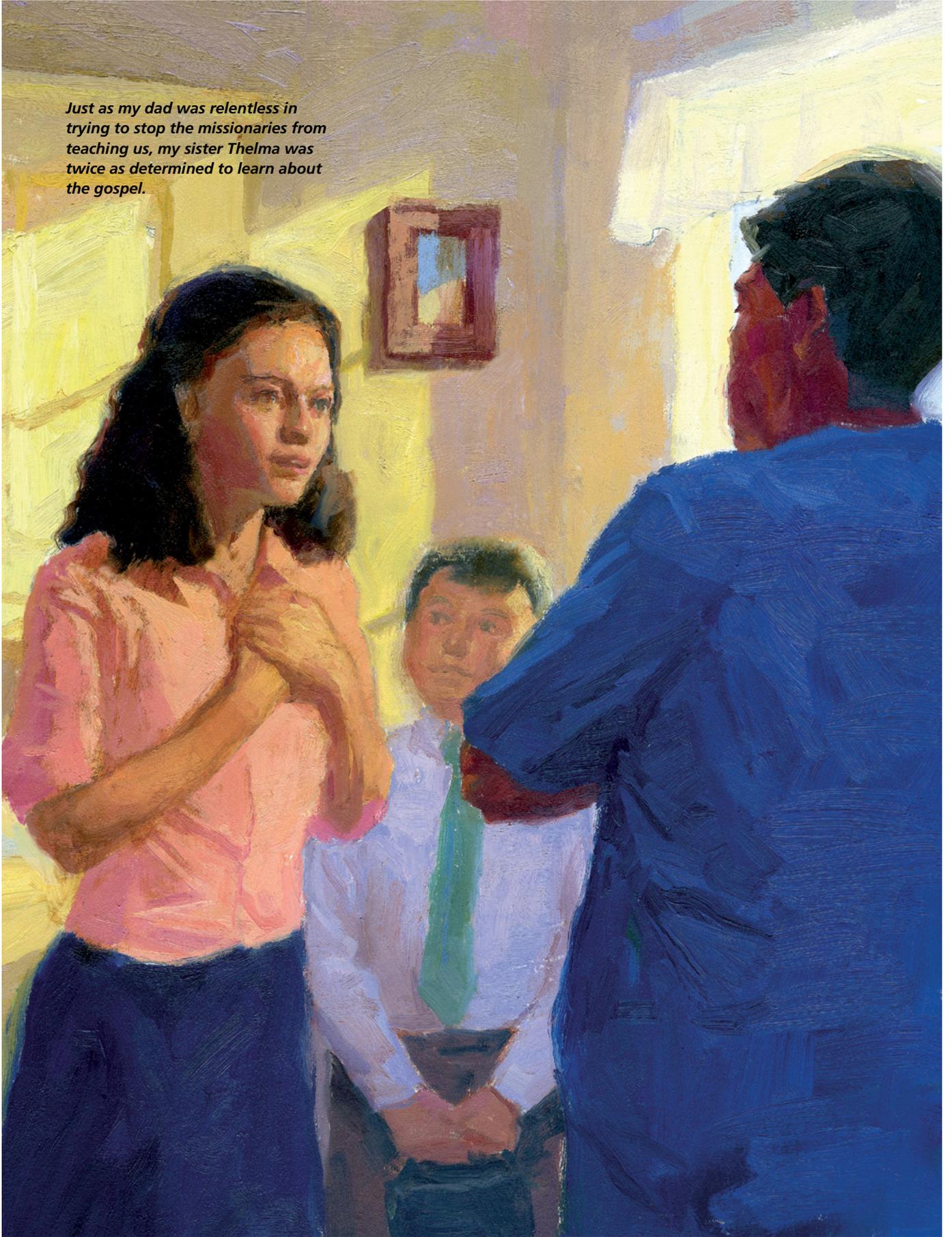
*This interview was conducted by LaRene Porter Gaunt, Church Magazines. Time line and sidebar information by Kate Holbrook, Church History Department.*

PURPOSE OF RELIEF SOCIETY

Relief Society helps prepare women for the blessings of eternal life as they

- increase faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement;
- strengthen individuals, families, and homes through ordinances and covenants; and
- work in unity to help those in need.

*Just as my dad was relentless in trying to stop the missionaries from teaching us, my sister Thelma was twice as determined to learn about the gospel.*



# Blessed

BY MY FAITHFUL SISTER

*I wouldn't be the man I am today without the righteous influence of my older sister.*

**By Rafael Antillon**

I am fortunate to have had good women in my life: a nurturing and courageous mother, wise and faithful sisters, and a loving and supportive wife. I wish to honor one of these influential women, my older sister, Thelma, for her impact in my life through her continuous good example.

When I was young, my father taught me to follow Thelma's lead when he and my mom were not around, and I am eternally grateful for this counsel.

## **Having a Determination to Learn**

Three of my eight siblings joined the Church in El Salvador the same time I did. Thelma was 14 years old and my oldest sibling when we got baptized. I was 8 years old at the time and the youngest of the family, so she was our leader.

We were introduced to the Church by our neighbor who sang songs that we later learned were hymns. Our neighbor told us about a wonderful place called Primary, where children learned to sing. The missionaries were contacted, and they started visiting our home to teach us.

However, my dad had strong feelings against the Church and about his children being taught by the missionaries. Being a small boy, I never understood what those two elders went through to bring the gospel into

our lives. Dad would kick them out if he found them at our home, and he would deliberately turn off the lights if the elders stopped by in the evening. Just as my dad was relentless in trying to stop the missionaries from teaching, Thelma was twice as determined to learn about the gospel and read the Book of Mormon. Thelma and the elders never gave up, and for this I am thankful.

Going to church was a struggle because Dad tried to stop us by using a variety of tactics, such as requiring that we do chores before we could leave for church.

One Sunday morning was particularly hard. He did not want to let us go, but we refused to be stopped. He kicked a garbage can and spilled its contents all over the floor we had just cleaned. Thelma quietly began picking up the garbage without complaining. After she had cleaned the floor again, she asked if we could go to church. We had finished all the chores and more, but he still did not want to give his permission. Finally he asked pointedly, "Why do you insist on going to this church anyway?" Thelma then bore a powerful testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel and of the message of the Restoration of the gospel. As she concluded, my dad waved his hand and gave his permission.

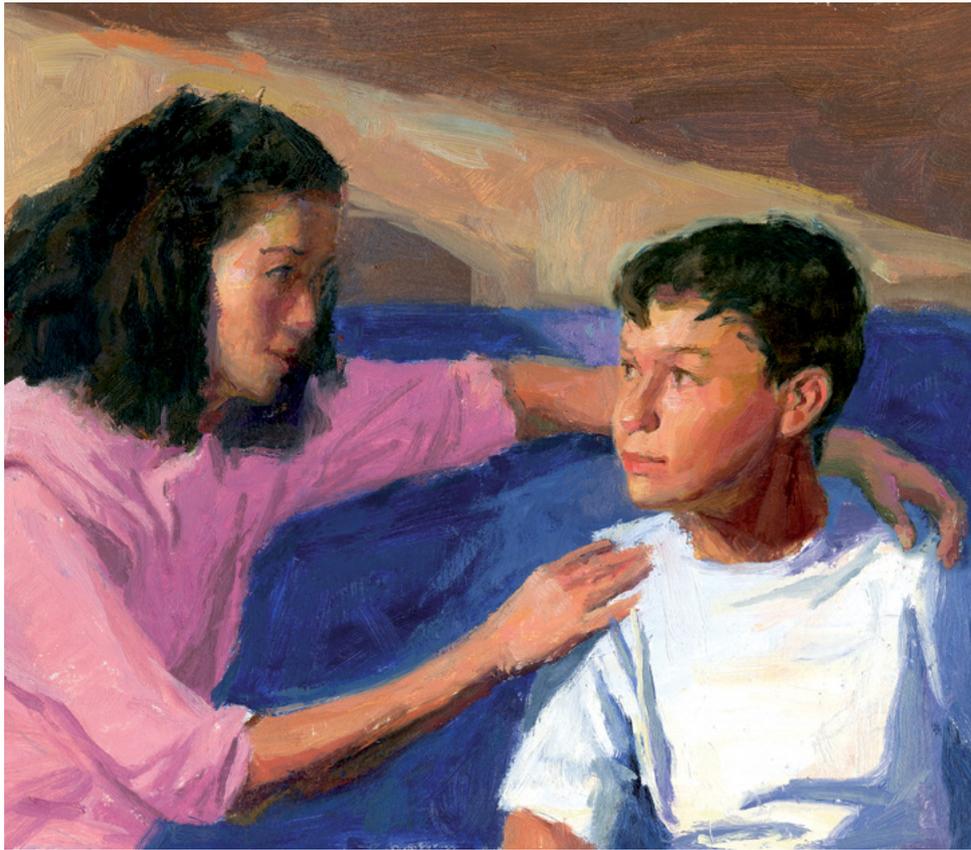
Dad never tried to stop us again after this incident and eventually, even though he did not like it, gave his consent for us to join the Church.

### Serving from the Start

I had no problem attending church on Sunday, but I was not as enthusiastic about attending Primary because it was on Saturday morning at that time. When I was 10, Thelma came home one Saturday and told my other siblings about a great soccer game between the deacons and the Blazers (11-year-old Scouts). She pointed out how unfortunate it was that I had missed the game because I had not attended Primary. Needless to say, I went the following Saturday (with my soccer cleats on) and never missed it again.

When Thelma was 16, she was called to be the Primary president. Our bishop had been trying to find someone to handle the many challenges the Primary organization was facing. The ward covered a large area, and it was difficult and expensive for many families with small children to travel by bus to the church both on Saturdays for Primary and on Sundays. Many of those children were not attending Primary, and no solution had been found. The bishop had been prompted to call Thelma but could not bring himself to do it because she was so young. The prompting continued, and after receiving approval from the stake president, the bishop extended the call to my sister.

This proved to be an inspired decision, and it blessed many children—including me. Thelma magnified her calling by following inspiration, using common sense, and implementing innovative ideas to develop training programs to bring the gospel to the children. She asked her counselors and teachers to hold Primary meetings at several places closer to their homes, and she provided ongoing training for those teachers. This solution allowed members to save time and money and enabled children who were previously not attending Primary to receive the blessings of this wonderful organization.



### Setting an Example of Faith

My siblings and I continued to follow Thelma's lead as time progressed. We held family home evenings and attended all of our Church meetings. Shortly after I was ordained a deacon, Thelma turned to me during one family home evening and recognized me as the priesthood holder in the family. This event taught me a valuable lesson about respect for the priesthood.

She also made sure I never lacked the proper encouragement and extra incentive to attend my priesthood meetings or to fulfill my responsibilities. For instance, Thelma used every noisy and energetic way to get me out of bed on Sunday mornings so I could attend priesthood meeting. She also taught me to look forward to my advancements in the Aaronic Priesthood.

At Mutual and seminary I didn't mind that I was always known as "Thelma's brother." Some of my friends had the support of their parents in the Church, but I had my bishop, Young Men leaders, and Thelma.

Thelma continued to be an example to me as she held a variety of callings until she left for her mission. She served honorably in the Guatemala Quetzaltenango Mission, and the fruits of her labors included the baptism

***When I was young, Thelma encouraged me to attend Primary and other Church activities. As the years go by, her example and enthusiasm for the gospel continue to be a source of inspiration to me.***

of our mother two days after Thelma returned home. Our joy was full as I, then a priest, performed this sacred ordinance. Following Thelma's example, I began to earnestly prepare to serve a mission.

After her mission, Thelma moved to the United States to attend Brigham Young University, despite our meager economic circumstances. She remained a strong influence on me regardless of the distance.

After I returned home from serving in the Guatemala Guatemala City Mission, I also traveled to Provo, Utah, to attend BYU. I was grateful for the kindness and support of so many people to help get me there. However, money was still going to be short.

Soon after I arrived in Provo, Thelma and I reviewed our financial situation. We both concluded that even with my working part-time, we did not have enough money to pay my rent and hers for the entire school year. Thelma never doubted that we would make it through that trial though. She trusted that the Lord would provide a way. Less than a week later, Thelma received a letter from BYU's Spanish department. As she opened it, she turned to me and exclaimed, "This! This is how we are going to pay your rent!" The letter informed her that she had been accepted as a teacher's assistant, which would increase her income.

### **Handling a Health Challenge**

As the years go by, Thelma continues to be a source of inspiration. She handles adversity better than anybody else I know. She takes care of her wonderful son who has Down syndrome, our elderly mother, and a husband with a serious health condition. Also, if those things weren't enough, she has health issues of her own.

A few years ago, Thelma underwent brain surgery to relieve pressure from a brain cyst. Given the needs of her loved ones, the prospect of any complications was intimidating. She prayed for help and inspiration and visited the temple. Through it all, her faith did not waver, but she had reservations about putting her life in the hands of the doctor who would perform the delicate surgery.

Thelma was visiting with a dear friend during this time and confided her concerns about the surgery. Thelma's friend asked for the doctor's name and upon learning the name, Thelma's friend said that the doctor was a member of her ward. She told Thelma that he was a faithful member of the Church and a worthy priesthood holder. He often played Church hymns while he performed surgeries. Although a simple piece of information, this was a tender answer to Thelma's prayers. Thelma's life and spiritual experiences are a source of continuous strength and testimony in my own life.

I think of young boys who may be experiencing an upbringing similar to mine. I think of those who have no male role model at home, who can only find refuge at Church, and those growing up in troubled countries. To them I say: Never give up; stay close to the Lord and to His servants. I am grateful that the Lord provided the support I needed to encourage me to accomplish my goals and become the person I am today. ■

*The author lives in New York, USA.*



### **THE FAITH AND DEVOTION OF WOMEN**

"I express my gratitude to you faithful Latter-day Saint women, now numbered in the millions and found across the earth. Great is your power for good. Marvelous are your talents and devotion. Tremendous is your faith and your love for the Lord, for His work, and for His sons and daughters. Continue to live the gospel. Magnify it before all of your associates."

**President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley* (2016), 104.**





**By Elder  
Quentin L. Cook**  
Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

# THE GOSPEL AND THE Good Life

*In the worst of circumstances, when everything else crumbles,  
family and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the essentials.*

**M**any talks stress the pursuit of dreams and passions. I acknowledge those goals, but I desire to have you contemplate a greater purpose in your life.

## **Gratitude for Blessings**

To begin, I hope you will be grateful for your blessings—especially your heritage. Gratitude and humility are closely intertwined. We live in a self-centered age. Social media, in particular, can easily be used for self-promotion. It has never been more important to be grateful and humble. Those who possess these attributes express appreciation for their blessings as they follow the Savior's example.

My friend Harvard professor Roger B. Porter, who is a faithful member of the Church, noted at one of the commencement proceedings at Harvard in May 2015 that gratitude “requires that we acknowledge our debt to others,” and “it often involves a humble response for unearned or unmerited gifts.” He concluded: “If you choose to embrace gratitude as a central element of your life, it will serve you well. It will help you resist the temptation to succumb to pride and to fall into a sense of entitlement. It will help you to see the good and to acknowledge the positive. It will help you to put in context the bumps in the road and the adversity you will from time to time encounter. It will help you focus attention on those less fortunate than you whose lives you can bless.”<sup>1</sup>



***An old Chinese proverb reads, "When you drink the water, don't forget the well from whence it came."***

I would suggest that we need to be especially grateful for our heritage. When we are blessed with goodly parents, we should be grateful. This is the debt each of us owes for our heritage. An old Chinese proverb reads, "When you drink the water, don't forget the well from whence it came."

It is clear from the scriptures that we are to honor our parents. Proverbs reads, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 6:20). Ephesians teaches us to "honour thy father and mother" (see Ephesians 6:2-3; see also Exodus 20:12). The great German philosopher Goethe put it this way, "What from your fathers' heritage is lent, earn it anew, to really possess it!"<sup>2</sup> It is clear that we need to be grateful for our parents and take positive action to acquire that which they would hope to bestow upon us.

#### **Eternal Principles vs. Worldly Philosophies**

In addition to encouraging you to have gratitude, I wish to share some practical advice that may help you to be both happy and successful in achieving a meaningful life, which is often referred to as "the good life."

In a recent essay, Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, articulated the concern I have about the diminished role of faith, moral values, and meaning in modern life. He stated:

"If there is one thing the great institutions of the modern world do not do, it is to provide meaning. . . .

"Science, technology, the free market and the . . . democratic state have enabled us to reach unprecedented achievements in knowledge, freedom, life expectancy and affluence. They are among the greatest achievements of human civilization and are to be defended and cherished.

"But they do not answer the three questions that every reflective individual will ask at some time in his or her life: Who am I?

Why am I here? How then shall I live? The result is that the 21st century has left us with a maximum of choice and a minimum of meaning.”<sup>3</sup>

This quote expresses in an elegant fashion the essence of my message. I am deeply concerned that the good life based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ is now secondary to a worldly view of the good life.

For those of us who are members of the Church, the gospel of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection and Atonement are the foundation for all that is essential, and they also bring meaning to this life. The Savior has inspired beliefs and established standards of conduct as to what is moral, righteous, and desirable and that results in the good life. However, the principles and basic morality the Savior taught are under serious attack in today’s world. Christianity itself is under attack.

This is not new. The recipe for the good life has been debated for centuries. When the Apostle Paul was in Athens, he encountered “philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks” (Acts 17:18). The Stoics believed that the highest good was virtue, and the Epicureans believed the highest good was pleasure. Many stoics had become proud and used their philosophy as “a cloak for . . . ambition and iniquity.” Many Epicureans had become hedonists who took as their motto, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”<sup>4</sup> Many in the academic world have long pointed to Aristotle’s advocacy of intellectual contemplation as a blueprint for the good life. It is interesting that many of these same worldly philosophies that conflicted with early Christianity are still present in slightly different forms today.

In addition, many new philosophies conflict directly with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This has happened quickly. Using Book of Mormon language, “in the space of not many years” (Helaman 7:6), much of the world now calls “evil good, and good evil” (2 Nephi 15:20). In fact, these two scriptural phrases reflect what is happening in our day. What is considered moral has swiftly changed. There has been an incredible movement away from moral conduct as the basis

of the good life. Some diminish Christianity by accepting the myth that in Christianity, happiness is not about this life but only about heaven.<sup>5</sup> I assure you that following the Savior brings happiness in this life *and* in heaven.

### **Eulogy Virtues vs. Résumé Virtues**

Some challenges are not just about good and evil. Some require us to make choices based on what is best, not just what is good.<sup>6</sup>

David Brooks, in an editorial titled “The Moral Bucket List,” developed the concept that there are “two sets of virtues, the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the skills you bring to the marketplace. The eulogy virtues are the ones that are talked about at your funeral.”<sup>7</sup> Brooks correctly concluded that the eulogy virtues are much more important. This hit home for me personally because I had an experience when I was in my



mid-20s that had a profound impact on me. It involved the funerals of two good men that took place only a few days apart. The account is true, but I have changed the names and have purposely been vague about a few of the facts.

I was 25 years old, had graduated from Stanford Law School, and had just started employment with a law firm. I spent my workday world with highly educated people who had amassed significant material possessions. They were kind and on the whole gracious and attractive people.

The Church members I associated with were much more diverse. Most of them had little material wealth. They were wonderful people, and most had meaning in their lives. It was at this juncture that two older, retired men I had known for many years passed away. Their funerals were held only a few days apart, and I traveled to both funerals. I have decided to call one of the men Rich and the other man Faithful. Those two funerals are cemented in my mind



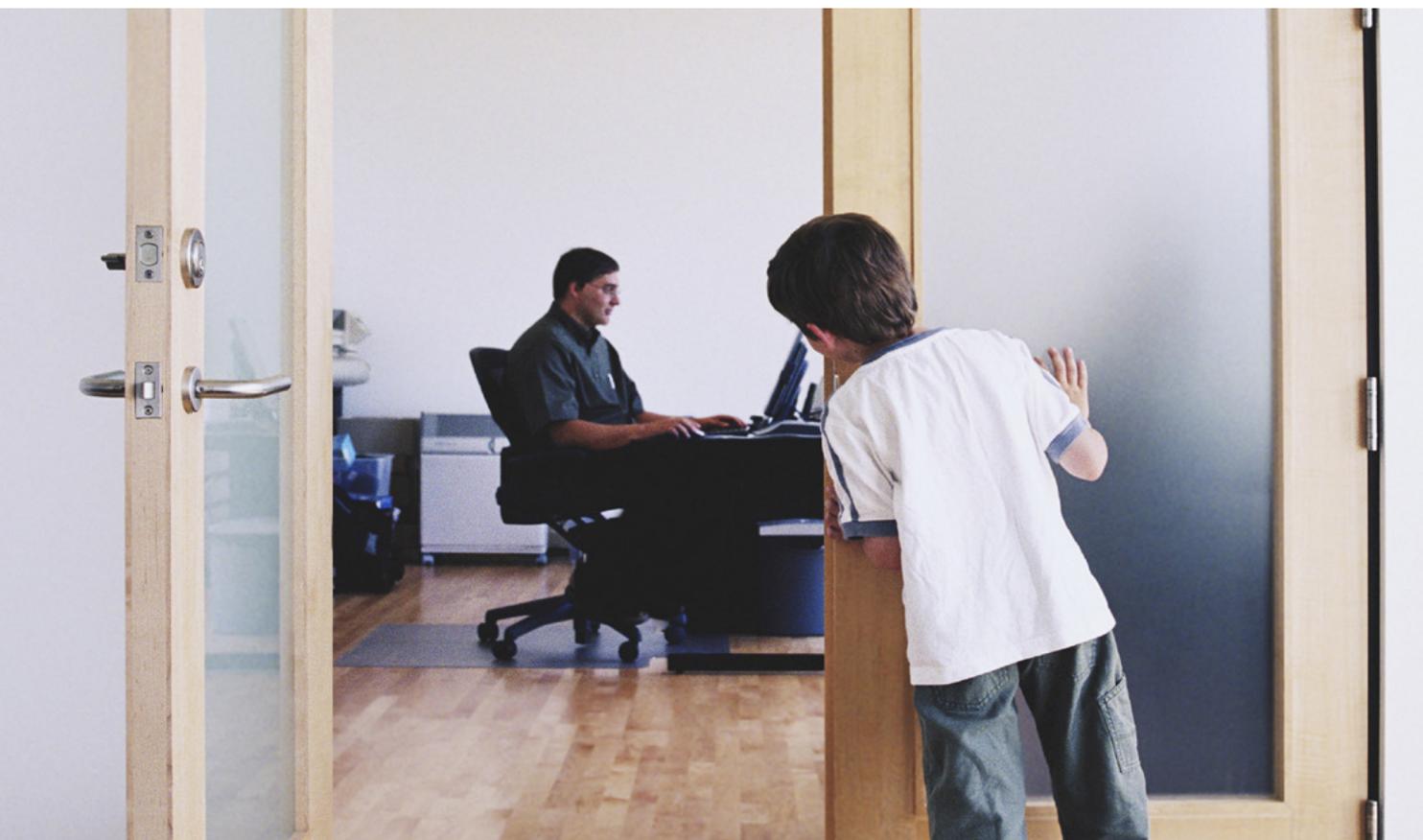
because they clarified the significance of the choices all people have before them, especially the young. They also demonstrate the complexity of the distinction between the résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues.

Both Rich and Faithful served missions as young men. By all accounts, they were both dedicated missionaries. After they attended college, their lives began to diverge. Rich married a beautiful woman who over time became less active in the Church. Faithful married an equally beautiful woman who was completely active in the Church. More than any other factor, this decision framed the remaining decisions of their lives. In my experience, when couples remain true and faithful to the Savior and the eternal significance of the family, the eulogy virtues are almost always preserved.

I will now share more about Rich. He had wonderful people skills and cared a great deal about people. He began employment with a major U.S. corporation and ultimately became president of that company. He had a large income and lived in a large, beautiful home set on spacious grounds. That is why I have decided to call him Rich. It would be fair to say that his career choices were not just good or better but were the best.

His family and Church choices, however, were not so good. He was a good man and did not engage in personal choices that were in and of themselves evil, but his family choices and influence on his children focused almost exclusively on education and employment, essentially the résumé virtues that are so valued in the marketplace. His sons also embarked on excellent careers. They did not, however, remain active in the Church, and they married young women who were not members. I am not aware of all the facts about his sons, but in each case these marriages ended in divorce.

Rich and his wife also became less active. They were primarily involved in high-profile social and community activities. He always considered himself LDS and was proud of his mission, but he did not attend church. He would, from time to time, contribute to Church building



projects and assist LDS members in their careers. Furthermore, he was an influence for honesty, integrity, and goodwill in all the positions he held.

His funeral was held at a nondenominational chapel at the cemetery. Many top executives and dignitaries attended the funeral, including the governor of the state where he lived. Except for his children, grandchildren, and me, everyone attending was over the age of 50. It was, on the whole, a somber funeral. Basic principles of the plan of happiness were not taught, and little was said of Jesus Christ. Rich's life was based almost exclusively on résumé virtues.

Faithful's employment decisions were far less successful. His initial effort at a small independent business was thwarted when the business burned and he lost everything. He subsequently created a small business but could barely make his required payments. He had a small but adequate home. He enjoyed

his work and his interaction with people. His career was good and certainly satisfactory but not distinguished or what might be called best. It was not a résumé-virtues career.

His family and Church choices, on the other hand, were absolutely the best. He and his wife were completely active in the Church. He served as called, often as a teacher, attended the temple frequently, and was a faithful priesthood holder. He had wonderful relationships, especially with his large family and his many grandchildren. They were all well educated, but his main emphasis to them was on living a Christlike life. In his retirement, he and his wife served a mission together. Though he faced trials, including the death of a son in World War II, he achieved satisfaction and joy throughout his life because of the purpose and meaning provided by his family and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

His funeral in the ward meetinghouse was large and joyful. People of all ages attended,

***When goals relating to education and occupation are elevated to a position superior to the family and the Church and a testimony of the Savior, the unintended consequences of over-emphasizing the résumé virtues can be significantly adverse.***



***The most significant choices can be made by everyone, regardless of their talents, abilities, opportunities, or economic circumstances.***

including large numbers of grandchildren and young people he had served. The plan of happiness was taught, and the Savior was at the center of the service. It was an exemplary Latter-day Saint funeral. The talks were about his character, kindness, concern for others, and faith in and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Choices and the Good Life**

I have indicated that these two funerals came at a defining time for me. I had served a mission, and I loved the Church. I was just starting my career and was becoming impressed with those having material and occupational success. I realized that the choices I was making would define my happiness in this life and determine the legacy I would leave. I also realized the eternal significance of the choices that were before me. It was clear to me that choices have eternal significance. What was

most important to me about the lives I just described is that I realized that the most significant choices can be made by everyone, regardless of their talents, abilities, opportunities, or economic circumstances. I realized that for me, my future children, and everyone I would have the opportunity to influence, putting the Savior, my family, and the Church first was essential. Doing so would result in the good life.

In the worst of circumstances, when everything else crumbles, family and the gospel of Jesus Christ are the essentials. Think of Father Lehi in the Book of Mormon, where it describes how he “departed into the wilderness. And he left his house, and the land of his inheritance, and his gold, and his silver, and his precious things, and took nothing with him, save it were his family” (1 Nephi 2:4).

This generation has the challenge of protecting faith and family. One researcher

has looked back as far as ancient India and Greece and concluded that every nonreligious population in history has experienced demographic decline.<sup>8</sup> The news media recently highlighted the declining birthrate in much of the world today. The *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed in a front page article, “The World’s New Population Time Bomb: Too Few People.” The article stated that in 2016, “for the first time since 1950, . . . combined working-age population will decline.”<sup>9</sup>

Lack of faith and population decline are clearly inter-related. The Father’s eternal plan for His children depends upon both faith and families. I am grateful that Latter-day Saints, in survey after survey, are maintaining faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and are continuing to marry and have children.

Some may not have the opportunity to marry or have children. But individuals who righteously follow the Savior and His commandments—and who provide selfless service to our Father’s children—“will receive all promised blessings in the eternities.”<sup>10</sup>

As we face the difficulties and trials of life, many events occur over which we have little or no control. But on matters of principle, conduct, religious observance, and righteous living, we are in control. Our faith in and worship of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, is a choice that we make.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, quoting William Law, an 18th-century English clergyman, stated this in a most succinct fashion: “If you have not chosen the kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead.”<sup>11</sup>

Please understand that in reciting the true account of the men I called Rich and Faithful, I am not advocating for less interest in goals relating to education or occupation. Quite the contrary, we should do everything we can to advance our accomplishments in these two areas. What I am saying is that when goals relating to education and occupation are elevated to a position superior to the family and the Church and a testimony of the Savior, the unintended

consequences of overemphasizing the résumé virtues can be significantly adverse.

I am confident that you can attain the joy and happiness you desire and that God wants for you if you are:

- Grateful for your blessings—especially your heritage.
- Committed to the eternal principles that will bring meaning to your life.
- Determined that your eulogy virtues prevail over your résumé virtues.
- Prepared to report to the Savior that you have lived a good life.

The most important meeting each of us will have on the other side of the veil is with the Savior, “the keeper of the gate” (2 Nephi 9:41). Regardless of who our ancestors are and whether we are rich or poor, we will report on our adherence to the commandments we have been given. We should live so we can “enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4).

We will want to joyfully report that we have lived a truly good life. ■

*From a devotional address, “The Good Life,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho, on December 18, 2015. For the full address in English, go to [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspreeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspreeches).*

#### NOTES

1. Roger B. Porter, commencement address, Dunster House, Harvard University, May 28, 2015.
2. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Bayard Taylor (1912), 1:28.
3. Jonathan Sacks, “How to Defeat Religious Violence,” *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 2, 2015, C2; see also Jonathan Sacks, *Not in God’s Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (2015), 13.
4. See Frederic W. Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul* (1895), 304.
5. See Carl Cederstrom, “The Dangers of Happiness,” *New York Times*, July 18, 2015, 8.
6. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 104–08.
7. David Brooks, “Moral Bucket List,” *New York Times*, Apr. 11, 2015, SR1, [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com); see also David Brooks, *The Road to Character* (2015), xi.
8. See Michael Blume, in David Brooks, “Finding Peace within the Holy Texts,” *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 2015, A23, [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com).
9. Greg Ip, “The World’s New Population Time Bomb: Too Few People,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 24, 2015, 1.
10. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.3.3.
11. Neal A. Maxwell, “Response to a Call,” *Ensign*, May 1974, 112; see also William Law, in *The Quotable Lewis*, ed. Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root (1989), 172.





## PORTRAITS OF FAITH

*In 1989, Markus, Karen, and their three-year-old son were granted permission to leave their home in East Germany to go on a holiday to Hungary. While they were there, Hungary opened its border to Austria, providing thousands of East German refugees a way to freedom. Markus and Karen recognized their unique opportunity. They could also leave.*

**LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER**

### **Markus Tilgner** *Saxony Anhalt, Germany*

I said, "Let's leave for Austria."

"Oh no, you can't," Karen said. "Your parents are left in Germany and my parents as well."

"They will understand," I replied.

"We've already started to build a house," Karen told me. "Let's finish that."

"No, let's start again," I said, "somewhere else, in western Germany."

Again I tried to tell her we should leave. She said, "No, because you have just been called as bishop and you said yes, you would serve."

This is why we did not leave Germany. Some weeks later the Berlin Wall was falling. We were blessed for staying. This was Heavenly Father's way for us.

For more photos of the Tilgners, go to [lds.org/go/31739](https://lds.org/go/31739).

Learn more about the blessings of religious freedom and how to protect them at [religiousfreedom.lds.org](https://religiousfreedom.lds.org).

## VISITING TEACHING, FAMILY HISTORY, AND MOTHERS

I joined the Church when I was 20. Shortly thereafter I married a man from the ward, and we moved because of work. When I was 22, our first son was born. At that time, my visiting teachers started visiting me regularly, even though we lived at the edge of the ward boundary.

Since I was a new mother at that time, my conscience told me that I needed to get in contact with my own mother. But I had broken off all contact with her eight years earlier

when my parents divorced. Each time my visiting teachers came over, we spoke about it, and I felt that the Spirit was urging me to take this difficult step.

We discussed how I could begin rebuilding our relationship since my mother does not belong to the Church. So much had changed in my life in the eight years that had passed since our falling out. Because of the strong promptings of the Spirit, I decided to contact my mother's mother first. My grandmother was blind, so her mail was sent to my aunt who cared for her.

I received a wonderful letter back, and we went to stay for a visit with my grandmother and my aunt. My grandmother was pleasantly surprised

and asked only that I stop by to see her daughter—my mother—on our way home. She was very happy.

My grandmother was a Lutheran, and she loved the Savior. While we stayed with them, my husband would read to her each morning from the Book of Mormon. She really enjoyed it. After a few mornings, my husband and my grandmother felt so full of the Spirit that my grandmother went to her desk and pulled out a genealogy book that had belonged to my deceased grandfather and showed it to him. There were eight generations listed neatly, including even their occupations. My grandmother was very happy while we were staying with her, and I promised her that I would visit my mother on the way home, which I did.

Five weeks after our visit to my grandmother's, she had a stroke and passed away. Two years later I performed the temple work for my ancestors from my grandmother's information.

I now have a good relationship with my mother. We live in the same town, and she helps me with my children at times.

Without the regular visits from my visiting teachers, who encouraged and supported me through this time, I would never have dared take this step to repair my relationship with my mother. Not only I but also many generations were blessed. ■

Heike Baake, Frankfurt, Germany



I felt the Spirit urging me to take this difficult step.

## MY VISITING TEACHERS FOUND ME

When I was a young mother with a two-year-old son, I lived for a short time in Santa Catarina, Brazil, and knew very few members of the Church there. I lived in a growing but remote neighborhood, so there weren't many neighbors close to my house.

One day I began to feel ill and quickly became dehydrated. Soon I couldn't even get up to take care of my son or go to the nearest telephone on the street to call my husband. I began to pray, but with each attempt to get up, I felt weaker.

It wasn't long before my visiting teachers knocked at my door. They recognized immediately that they had been guided by Heavenly Father to find me. They prepared a remedy for me, helped me with my son, and washed the dishes. Then they told me that they had walked for quite a while to find my house and had thought about giving up, but the Spirit had told them not to.

By the time they left, I was already feeling better. Before they left, we said a prayer together.

They probably don't know how much they helped me and nurtured me spiritually with their example of kindness and promptness in listening to and heeding the voice of the Spirit. ■

Enilze do Rocio Ferreira da Silva,  
Curitiba, Brazil



It wasn't long before my visiting teachers knocked at my door. They recognized immediately that they had been guided by Heavenly Father to find me.

## THE STRANGER'S SMILE

I normally would have avoided him—a worn-down man playing a game of cards at a table in the play area of a local fast-food restaurant. He had a soft smile on his sad countenance as he watched the children play. “He must be warming himself from the cold,” I thought as I passed his table to throw away my daughter’s half-eaten meal. As I noticed his table, bare of any food wrappers or paper cups, the still, small voice whispered to me, “Buy him some food.”

I returned to my table with some cash still in my pocket. “I’ll embarrass him,” I told myself. Then a feeling of peace came, and the Spirit’s sweet whispering stilled me: “Buy him some food.”

I didn’t tell my children what I was doing; I just picked up some trash and went to throw it away so I could get near the man’s table without letting my friend who I was eating with know.

I leaned in and asked, “Can I buy you some lunch?”

He looked startled and softly replied, “If you want to.”

I pulled out the small amount of cash I had left—just enough for a meal and a drink—and gave it to the man. I returned to my seat, undiscovered by the busy moms around me, and watched the man get up to buy his meal.

As I loaded my children into the car to go home, I looked through the window and saw the man carrying a tray of food back to his empty table. On his once-solemn face was a smile.

The winter breeze blowing against my face didn’t feel quite so cold. I basked in the warm, joyful Spirit that filled me from my boots to my frozen ponytail. I remembered the teaching of the Savior:

“For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink . . .

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? . . .

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:35, 37, 40).

I am thankful for the smile of a stranger that helped me find the courage to do what is right. ■

Jenner Porter, Texas, USA



# HELPING MIRTA RETURN

I was called to serve as a counselor in the Relief Society in my family's new ward. During our presidency meetings, we would go over a list of names of Relief Society sisters in our ward and consider how to help them and their families.

I was drawn to a sister in the ward named Mirta. She had been a member of the Church for many years, but for some reason, Mirta had not been attending for several years.

I noticed that her husband was the elders quorum president but that their children, who were members, did not attend church either. Each Sunday I would see her husband attend alone.

I felt that we needed to help this

family return to church together and enjoy the blessings that the Lord wanted to give them. During the following presidency meetings, I shared my hopes of helping Mirta return to church. We planned activities in which we could include her in a special way, and we identified a few assignments we could give her.

When we visited her, she accepted each one of the assignments and afterward fulfilled them perfectly. We noted that she would eagerly wait to be picked up by one of us for Relief Society activities.

When we organized the visiting teaching companionships as a presidency, I asked the others to consider

The Spirit's sweet whispering stilled me: "Buy him some food."

the possibility of Mirta and I becoming companions. Each month, without fail, Mirta and I would go visiting teaching. Every time we went out to visit the sisters was an opportunity to talk and get to know each other more.

Each time I invited her to attend church, she would merely say, "When I feel like I'm ready, I'll go." I didn't understand, but I respected her decision. Eventually her answers became, "Maybe I'll go on Sunday."

I would wait for her anxiously every Sunday. She never came, but I continued to keep her in my prayers. A sudden move caused my family to return to where we had previously lived, and I didn't have a chance to say good-bye to Mirta. When we left the ward, she still had not returned to church.

Some months later I was told that Mirta had returned to church and was a counselor in the Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, "You may never know how much good you accomplish. Someone's life will be blessed by your effort" ("To the Women of the Church," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2003, 115).

Many times the results are not what one expects and don't come when anticipated. Let us not cease to labor; this is the Lord's work, and we are His instruments chosen to change the lives of many people. ■

Raquel Elizabeth Pedraza de Brosio,  
Buenos Aires, Argentina





By Elder  
Von G. Keetch  
Of the Seventy

# Be an Example of the Believers

**T**he story is told of a small army unit that was assigned a very difficult mission far behind enemy lines. As the unit neared its objective, opposing units became aware of its presence. Superior forces quickly encircled the group and began firing from all sides. As they found themselves surrounded and began to suffer withering fire, the members of this small army unit looked up to find their commander standing upon a rock, exhorting them.

Looking at his men, the commander yelled: “Men, we’ve got them right where we want them. You can just fire in any direction!”

You and I also have a difficult mission in today’s world. It is to teach and defend the truths contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the world in which we live, I know it can be difficult to understand exactly what the best rules of engagement are, especially when you are surrounded

by so many voices willing to challenge the truth. There can often be so many barrages from so many different angles that it is difficult to know how to respond.

I want to talk about what it means to be what the Apostle Paul called “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12)—what it means to teach and defend eternal truth in the way our Heavenly Father desires while also exemplifying the respect, compassion, and deep love Christ exemplified; what it means to earnestly defend what we know to be right without just firing indiscriminately in any direction at a perceived enemy.

Indeed, it often seems that those two principles are in tension, doesn’t it? We are taught that we must fight “against spiritual wickedness” (Ephesians 6:12) in all of its forms, that we must “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9), and that we

**How can you best teach and defend the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ while also showing love, kindness, and understanding?**

must never be “ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16). Yet we are also taught that we should avoid contention and never “stir up the hearts of men with anger” (3 Nephi 11:30), that we should not just “live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18) but that we should also actively “follow after the things which make for peace” (Romans 14:19).



So how do we fulfill our God-given charge to stand firm in the gospel and to teach others the truth without causing contention and anger? It seems, especially in dealing with the controversial issues of the day, that saying anything at all can quickly lead to strife and contention. As you know so well, the world today seems to have little patience with anyone who wants to express a view that is not consistent with newfound trends.

When such challenges come to us, you and I tend to do one of two things: We either beat a hasty retreat, choosing not to engage in an environment that could quickly turn uncomfortable or even hostile; or we become defensive in a point-counterpoint debate that is entertaining to watch but that generates more heat than light.

It is better to study things out in our minds (see D&C 9:8) and then listen carefully for heavenly direction. Work up your courage and use the light within yourself.

May I point out a few things that will always be in play as we do our best to teach and defend the word of God while at the same time showing love and compassion to all people?

### **Defend the Word**

First, we will have the most success when we engage others one on one. In today's polarizing culture of stinging one-liners and perpetual attempts

at one-upmanship, little is usually accomplished in group free-for-alls. That is especially true with social media, where we must be careful that our comments on a sensitive societal issue do not veer from the spirit that Christ would want us to convey.

If we allow ourselves to be limited to 140 characters online, we will often be misunderstood. Usually, much more can be accomplished one on one, face to face, as individuals come to understand each other. That is precisely the way President Thomas S. Monson has taught us we should reach out and rescue—one by one. And it is most often the way the Savior reached out and touched lives during His ministry on earth.

Second, although we would undoubtedly be overjoyed if others

would see the light immediately and agree to receive the missionaries the next day, that need not be our initial goal. Our initial goal is to understand where others are coming from—to respect them as people and to understand their views. Only then can we effectively communicate with others, getting past the sound bites of accusation and misunderstanding that too often dominate our discussions.

Third, let us look for ways we can respect differing views and still live together in society. Rather than simply living according to our own views without infringing on another's freedoms, let us try something better—something that is fundamental in a pluralistic society if everyone is to be treated fairly. We must stand up for the basic civil rights of others,



recognizing their right to express their opinions and speak up for what they believe in, if we are to expect others to stand up for our basic civil rights.

Finally, coming to understand one another rarely occurs in a single event. It is a process—one that often can take a good deal of time. Others may never accept our views, but we can strive to eliminate words like *bigot* and *hate*. Let us see each other as intrinsically good and reasonable, even if we hold basic views that others may never accept.

### Act as the Savior Would Act

As you face difficult situations in which you are defending the gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope you will always remember to act as He would act. As the Apostle Paul taught, being “an example of the believers” is much more than just living the principles of the gospel for others to see. Paul tells us specifically that those same gospel principles must be part of our conversation, part of our love for others, part of the spirit we convey, and part of the faith that defines who we are (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

In the end, there really is no tension between the two great gospel principles—when properly understood—of standing up for truth while also respecting and loving others. Our strong conviction of the truth should never cause us to act in a way that is disrespectful or resentful toward

### AS YOU DEFEND THE GOSPEL:

- Engage others one on one, face to face.
- Try to understand the views of others.
- Stand up for the civil rights of all.
- See others as good and reasonable.
- Show love, kindness, and understanding.

others. But at the same time, our desire to show kindness and love to everyone should never undermine our duty to stand for truth.

These two principles are really just two sides of the same coin. On one side of the coin is our duty to explain and firmly defend the doctrine of God. On the other side of that same coin is our duty to act in a Christlike way, always showing respect and love.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles put it this way:

“Our tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs does not cause us to abandon our commitment to the truths we understand and the covenants we have made. . . . We must stand up for truth, even while we practice tolerance and respect for beliefs and ideas different from our own and for the people who hold them. . . .

“This inspired caution reminds us that for persons who believe in

absolute truth, tolerance for behavior is like a two-sided coin. Tolerance or respect is on one side of the coin, but truth is always on the other.”<sup>1</sup>

In a world that is quickly becoming more polarized and more contentious—where bullets often seem to be coming in rapid-fire staccato from all quarters—may I challenge you to examine both sides of your coin? In each circumstance that arises in your life, ask yourself how you can best teach and defend the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ while also showing love, kindness, and understanding to someone who may not accept that doctrine.

As you do so, I testify that you will have our Heavenly Father’s help and guidance. You will feel Him leading you along, putting thoughts in your mind, feelings in your heart, and words in your mouth at the precise moment they are needed. His Spirit will lead and guide you, transforming you into a true “example of the believers”—not only someone who lives the gospel of Jesus Christ but also someone who defends and explains its doctrine in a firm yet loving and inclusive way. ■

*From a devotional address, “An Example of the Believers,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on June 14, 2016. For the full address in English, go to [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

#### NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Balancing Truth and Tolerance,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2013, 28; *Liahona*, Feb. 2013, 32.

# Taste the World in South Africa

By McKenna Johnson

It's a sunny Saturday morning at the Neighbourgoods Market. You walk under the colorful umbrellas strung up outside the entrance and listen to live music while you search for today's perfect meal. Traditional South African fare served from a potjie pot—pesto, oysters, vegetables, bags of spices, terrines—you want to try everything.

Welcome to Johannesburg.

"It is a very warm, welcoming place," says Ross Mpye, 28. The bubbling energy of "Joburg" sometimes surprises visitors, who might not expect skyscrapers. "You won't find lions roaming the streets," Ross says.

A university student studying communications and divorced mother of a five-year-old son, Nate, Ross works as a production support analyst. From her bold palate to her efforts to serve others, she is adventurous, welcoming, and faithful in her daily life.

The Saints in Johannesburg reach out to each other and to those around them. For example, when the house of Ross's friend Tumi flooded, many friends from church helped clean

up the water and cheer up the family. "This was a turning point for Tumi's mom, who wasn't a member," explains Ross. "She started seeing the missionaries, and today she is a member and a Relief Society teacher." Such loving watchcare is fairly typical, as the South African members see each other as brothers and sisters. "We involve ourselves as though it was our problem," Ross says.

As Ross knows, this empathy is exemplified by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. "This is the kind of love that Heavenly Father blesses us with. He understands and knows my joys and sorrows as a young person today going through the challenges that He makes sure I prevail against," she says.

Ross's relationship with the Savior affects her life in many ways, from her interactions with others at work to her personal study. "Work environments can be hostile," she says. "Some people swear and some make dishonest decisions, thinking they don't matter. I'm blessed to have gospel principles and the teachings

**Different backgrounds and cultures don't keep the South African Saints from watching out for one another.**

of the prophets in my life. When I start my day with scripture study and a prayer, it helps me keep the Spirit with me at all times. When I am faced with temptations, the still, small voice reminds me who I am and what I stand for. This helps me to stay true to my standards."

The Neighbourgoods Market represents Johannesburg's cosmopolitan spirit. For Ross, the truth of the gospel represents something much deeper—the promise of eternal life. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA*



## MORE ABOUT ROSS

*What is your favorite aspect of your culture?*

Africans do not forget their ancestors, and neither do Mormons. We do family history and baptisms for our ancestors, and that resonates with Africans.

*What is one of your favorite South African dishes?*

Prawn masala. I love hot, spicy dishes. It's prawn in a curried sauce served with white basmati rice—it's very tasty.

## THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

- 62,600 Latter-day Saints
- 168 congregations
- 71 family history centers
- 3 missions
- 1 temple (and 1 other announced)

## FACTS

**Official name:** The Republic of South Africa

**Capitals:** Pretoria, Cape Town, and Bloemfontein

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 51.8 million people
- 1,553 miles (2,500 km) of coastline
- 11 official languages



# 7 THINGS WE FEAR ABOUT REPENTANCE

AND WHY WE  
SHOULDN'T

*We're often afraid to repent. But we can take courage in the truth.*



**By David A. Edwards**

Church Magazines

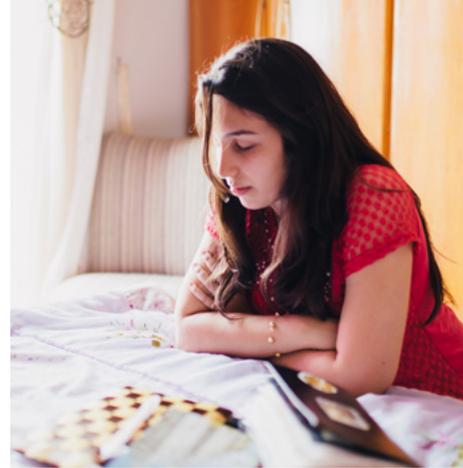
**W**e all know that every person needs repentance (see Romans 3:23). We know we need to repent in order to find true joy through the power of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice (see Alma 36:24). We also know that putting off repentance is a bad idea (see Alma

34:32–34). Yet so many of us do just that. Why? We know better, right?

One possible answer is fear. Whether we've committed a serious sin that we need to confess to our bishop or we have some little habits, attitudes, or behaviors that keep us from being fully committed to the

Lord's gospel and its standards, fear can keep us from doing what we need to do to change our lives.

Here are seven fears that can cause us to put off repentance, as well as some ideas and teachings that can help us take courage and do what we know will bring us peace and happiness.



## 1. Fear of Embarrassment

*If I tell my bishop what I've done, he'll be so disappointed—and I'll be so embarrassed. What if I have to tell my parents? What if others find out?*

There are far worse things than embarrassment, such as the spiritual burden of unresolved sin and the loss of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Any feeling of embarrassment you have in confessing to your bishop will last only a small moment and then be completely swept away by a wave of relief and joy. Anyone who has confessed to their bishop can attest to this.

“I promise you [that the bishop] will not condemn you. As a servant of the Lord, he will be kind and understanding as he listens to you. He will then help you through the repentance process. He is the Lord’s messenger of mercy to help you become clean through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”

Elder C. Scott Grow of the Seventy, “Why and What Do I Need to Confess to My Bishop?” *Liahona*, Oct. 2013, 59; *New Era*, Oct. 2013, 29.

## 2. Fear of Consequences

*If I tell my bishop about my sins, there might be consequences—not taking the sacrament, not blessing or passing the sacrament, not leaving on a mission when I want to. That would mess up my life too much.*

Remember that the positive consequences of repenting far outweigh what seem to be negative consequences. Focus on the good things the Lord promises to those who confess and repent.

“The fact that we can repent is the good news of the gospel! Guilt can be swept away. We can be filled with joy, receive a remission of our sins, and have peace of conscience. We can be freed from feelings of despair and the bondage of sin.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repentance: A Joyful Choice,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 124.

“If you have sinned, the sooner you repent, the sooner you begin to make your way back and find the peace and joy that come with forgiveness.”

*For the Strength of Youth* (pamphlet, 2011), 28.

## 3. Fear of Effort

*Making the kinds of changes I need to make seems so hard. It might take a long time too.*

Anything worthwhile takes effort. Forgiveness, peace, and spiritual growth are among the most worthwhile things imaginable.

“Repentance means striving to change. It would mock the Savior’s suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for us to expect that He should transform us into angelic beings with no real effort on our part. Rather, we seek His grace to complement and reward our most diligent efforts (see 2 Nephi 25:23). Perhaps as much as praying for mercy, we should pray for time and opportunity to work and strive and overcome.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, “The Divine Gift of Repentance,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 40.



## 5. Fear of Losing Your Personality

*If I conform to the Church's standards, I'll be giving up some of the things that make me me, like my favorite movies, TV shows, music, and ways of expressing myself. I'll just be another cookie-cutter Mormon. I'd rather just be me.*

Through repentance, you can have the Holy Spirit in your life. And through the Spirit, you can discover a deeper, truer, and better individual identity. It will be based on who you can become in God's eyes rather than anything constructed on the sandy foundation of tastes, preferences, habits, and quirks.

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"Satan would rather that you define yourself by your sins instead of your divine potential. . . . Don't listen to him."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Four Titles," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 58.

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"There is more individuality in those who are more holy.

"Sin, on the other hand, brings sameness; it shrinks us to addictive appetites and insubordinate impulses."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Repentance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 30.

## 4. Fear of a Shattered Self-Image

*I'm one of the "good kids." If I admit that I've made mistakes, that's it—I wouldn't be a "good kid" anymore. What would I be? Who would I be? I'd rather just try to forget it and move on as though everything were the same.*

We have to humbly acknowledge our sin before God so that He can "make weak things become strong" for us (Ether 12:27). And the image of yourself that you should strive to acquire is the one that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have of you: a child of God who, though imperfect, has infinite and divine potential through Their help.

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"God sees us as we truly are—and He sees us worthy of rescue. . . .

"... With each step of faith on the path of discipleship, we grow into the beings of eternal glory and infinite joy we were designed to become."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 104.



## 6. Fear of Failure

*I've tried to change so many times but keep making the same mistakes. Maybe I've had all my chances. Maybe I'll never be able to change. If I try one more time and fail, won't that prove it?*

Repentance isn't easy. It isn't meant to be. But it's your path to joy, so stick with it. There is no limit to sincere repentance (see Mosiah 26:30). The Son of God gave Himself as an infinite and eternal sacrifice to atone for our sins so that we can be forgiven if we have faith and repent (see Alma 34:9–16). Did you catch that? *Infinite*

and *eternal*. You are not beyond the bounds of His Atonement, because it has no bounds. Keep trying.

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“Sometimes in our repentance, in our daily efforts to become more Christlike, we find ourselves repeatedly struggling with the same difficulties. As if we were climbing a tree-covered mountain, at times we don't see our progress until we get closer to the top and look back from the high ridges. Don't be discouraged. If you are striving and working to repent, you are in the process of repenting.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repent . . . That I May Heal You,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 41.

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“With the gift of the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the strength of heaven to help us, we can improve, and the great thing about the gospel is we get credit for *trying*, even if we don't always succeed.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2016, 125–126.

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## 7. Fear of Success

*What if I really am able to change my life? There might be a lot more expected of me then. Maybe it's just better to be flawed and mediocre so I won't be expected to take on more responsibility.*

Being afraid of higher expectations or more responsibility may come from laziness or insecurity. But Heavenly Father's plan is one of improvement and progress. You accepted that plan before this life; embrace it now by being diligent and having faith. Try to see the kind of person Heavenly Father wants you to become and the kind of life He wants you to have. If you could actually see the person you have the potential to become, it would be difficult for you to even believe it. With Heavenly Father's and the Savior's help, it's within your grasp.

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“Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Will Within,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 68.

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# JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED



ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERTO RUGGERI

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

I hate going to the doctor. I always dread the fuss, the wait time, the shots, the orders to “take it easy.” When I was really little, I thought nurses and doctors were just mean people who thought I was a pin cushion, but as I got older I figured out they weren’t evil; they were helping. And I almost always felt better soon after seeing them. No matter how boring the waiting room was, how much I yelped getting a shot, or how disappointed I was when the doctor told me I needed to stay off my feet, in the end, it was always worth it.

Sometimes repentance might feel a bit like to a trip to the doctor.

### A Joy or a Pain?

Instead of cringing when you think about gross-tasting medicine or sharp needles, do you cringe a little when you hear the phrases “racked with eternal torment,” “tormented with the pains of hell,” and “the gall of bitterness”? (see Alma 36:12–18). That’s how Alma described the beginning of his repentance, wasn’t it?

After the angel appeared to Alma and the sons of Mosiah, Alma remembered all of his sins and saw how he had rebelled against God. He was so miserable that he wished he could “become extinct both soul and body” (Alma 36:15). Ouch. That almost makes a doctor’s shots seem like getting a high five from Grandma. So why would Alma go on to labor “without ceasing, that [he] might bring souls unto repentance”? (Alma 36:24). Why would he want other people to experience something that had been so painful for him?

Perhaps it was because of what happened next.

He remembered his Savior, Jesus Christ.

“I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me. . . .

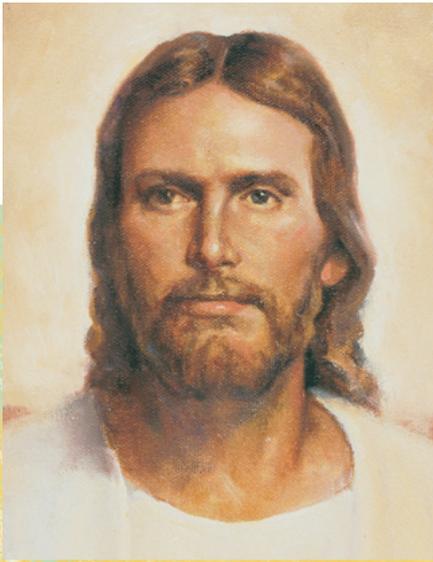
“And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

“And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy *as exceeding*

*as was my pain!*” (Alma 36:18–20; emphasis added). Alma learned that as difficult and even painful as it can be to face our sins, the joy we experience after is worth it. The joy he felt was more exquisite and sweet than anything he had ever felt before (see Alma 36:21).

### Nothing to Fear

If people cringe at the thought of repentance, it may be because they focus on the painful part. Often repentance does require time and sometimes making amends takes a lot of humility and hard work, but as Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “Repentance is not punishment. It is the hope-filled path to a more glorious future.”<sup>1</sup> President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, calls it “the sweet *blessing* of repentance.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, there is no reason to fear or avoid any aspect of repentance. No matter how difficult it is to face and make amends for our sins, the healing power of the Savior



through His Atonement will always be there to carry us through, and the joy we feel will completely overpower and overshadow any feelings of pain, embarrassment, or sorrow we may have had before.

### For Your Own Good

Do you know what the phrase *Primum non nocere* means? If you're a doctor, you probably do. *Primum non nocere* is Latin for "first do no harm." It's a guiding principle for all medical practitioners, a promise they make. That doesn't mean they promise to never cause pain, but instead that everything they do will always be for their patient's well-being.

Do you think God and Jesus Christ make any promises like that? You better believe it! Just take a look at Isaiah

1:18; Isaiah 41:13; Romans 8:28; and 3 Nephi 13:14. (Seriously, look them up. And these are only a few of them!) The difference is, humans can sometimes make mistakes. But Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father are perfect, so you can be absolutely certain that everything They ask of you will be for your own good. Always. So when God prescribes a dose of repentance, it's because He knows it will bless your life. Repentance isn't about punishment. It's about healing, triumphing over weakness, putting off the natural man, and turning away from sin in order to turn to God.

"Embrace the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance as things that are to be welcomed and applied daily according to the Great Physician's orders," said Elder Jörg

Klebingat of the Seventy. "Establish an attitude of ongoing, happy, joyful repentance by making it your lifestyle of choice."<sup>3</sup>

When the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, writes you a prescription for repentance, don't let your fear of pain or humiliation get in the way. Trust His promises that even though it may hurt for a little while, with great mercies will He gather you (see 3 Nephi 22:7), and just like Alma, you will be filled with joy as exceeding as your pain (see Alma 36:19–20). ■

#### NOTES

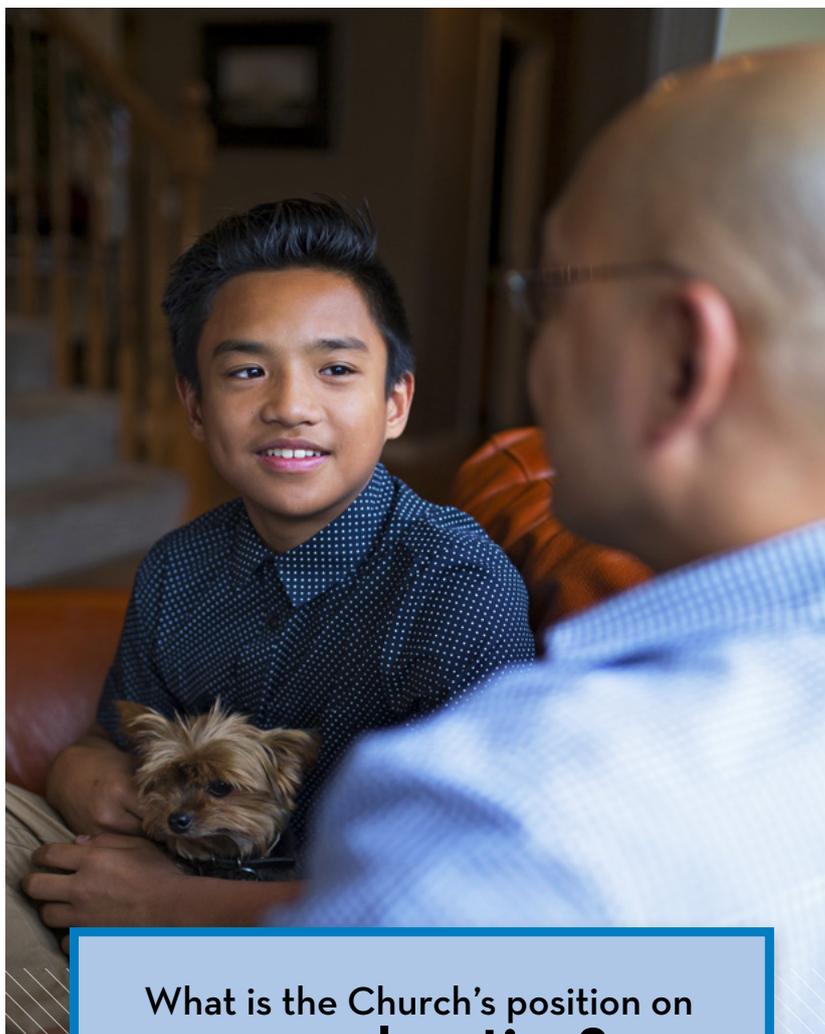
1. Richard G. Scott, "Personal Strength through the Atonement of Jesus Christ," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 84.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Repentance and Conversion," *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2007, 104; emphasis added.
3. Jörg Klebingat, "Approaching the Throne of God with Confidence," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 36.

## TO THE POINT

### Why don't we know much about our Heavenly Mother?

We know that we have both a Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother. This knowledge appears to have originated with Joseph Smith and has been repeatedly reinforced by inspired teachings of Church leaders over the years. However, beyond the existence of a Heavenly Mother and the role of our Heavenly Parents in working together for the salvation and exaltation of their children, no further details about Heavenly Mother have been revealed. For now, we know enough to understand that we are children of Heavenly Parents, who want us to become like Them. This understanding helps us see who we are and what we can become. It shows us that gender is part of our eternal identity and that men and women cannot be exalted without each other. And those are rare and precious truths in themselves. ■

For more information, see "Mother in Heaven" at [topics.lds.org](https://topics.lds.org).



### What is the Church's position on sex education?

Church leaders have said that you should be taught about intimacy primarily by your parents. In this responsibility, parents are encouraged to teach in the home about sexual intimacy honestly and plainly to help their children avoid serious transgressions. The Church even has materials to help in this teaching (see [lds.org/manuals/a-parents-guide](https://lds.org/manuals/a-parents-guide)).

When it comes to what you are taught in school about sex, Church leaders have urged your parents to be aware of what is taught there and to do what they can to ensure that it follows good moral and ethical values. ■



## HESITANTLY FAITHFUL,

*As a missionary in Mexico, I had an experience that helped me see the “good fruits” that can come when we put our faith into action.*

**By Isaias Vargas Chavarria**

A missionary activity had been planned in the stake where I was serving. My companion and I were to briefly explain a gospel principle to the investigators who would attend. However, when we arrived at the meetinghouse, we discovered that hardly any investigators had come. Instead of teaching the principle as we had originally planned, we were asked to go out into the street and invite the people passing by to come and take part in the activity.

Truthfully, I couldn't help but think, “This is not going to work.” I felt that our efforts would be fruitless—that no one would accept

the invitation to just come to the activity, particularly with such little notice.

But we understood the importance of obedience, so my companion and I tried to invite people to come in. Not much later, a woman and her daughter and her daughter's boyfriend passed by. We invited them to come in. At first they were hesitant, but finally they accepted the invitation and joined the group inside. I was surprised but very happy.

The activity started: a gospel-centered musical presentation. The activity lasted more than an hour. I worried that our guests were angry because the event lasted so long, but



## ABUNDANTLY BLESSED

I had a prayer in my heart asking for everything to work out well.

When the activity ended, I approached them to apologize for taking so much of their time. Before I could say a word to them, the woman said, “Thank you. Thank you so much. It was very beautiful. Thank you.”

I was astonished; they were thanking us for the experience, and they weren’t concerned about the time. It was marvelous, and there was joy in my heart. (And to think that I had been saying that inviting people on the street wasn’t going to work!) The woman wanted to know more about the Church and to attend our Sunday meetings.

I learned something great from this experience: exercising just a little faith, even if it is nothing more than a desire to believe, can yield great fruits (see Alma 32:27–28).

This experience changed my attitude for the rest of my mission. From that time on, at each missionary activity, I would see the fruits of my labors when I went forth with hope and an eye of faith.

If we exercise faith, even when we think it cannot come to pass, we can obtain delicious fruits. What we see as impossible is not impossible for God. ■

*The author lives in Guerrero, Mexico.*

### FIND THEM THAT WILL RECEIVE YOU

“You are to build up the Church by finding ‘them that will receive you’ (D&C 42:8). . . . Many of these people have been ‘kept from the truth [only] because they know not where to find it’ (D&C 123:12).

“Usually you do not know who these people are. They may not immediately recognize that you are the Lord’s servants. They may not understand that greater peace, direction, and purpose in life will come through the restored gospel than from anything else. They often do not realize that they are looking for the restored gospel until they have found it. For example, one convert said, ‘When I heard the gospel, it filled a hole in my heart that I didn’t know was there.’ Another said, ‘I have finished the search I didn’t know I was on.’”

*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Work (2004), 156.*

# OUR SPACE



## WORKING THROUGH MY FAMILY TRIALS

By Silvia C., Umbria, Italy

**A**fter my parents were divorced, it was a hard time in my life. Going to church usually made me feel better, but it hurt me to hear talks on families

because I didn't believe I had one.

My mother was less active and remarried.

My father was an atheist and lived with another woman. Both of them had children with their new partners, and I felt

like a weight—an error—as if I didn't count for anything.

So I began to pray, read the scriptures, meditate, and tried to keep going to church. But I couldn't help but wonder: What would I do in the next life without my family sealed in the temple?

The answers didn't come right away, but they did come. I looked up the definition of *family* and read scripture verses on the subject, and I started seeing the brighter side of things. Instead of thinking that I didn't have a family, I learned that I could help bring God's children into

the Church as a missionary. I learned to exercise patience and to be a light. I tried to better myself. I also realized that without a family like mine, I may not have developed the faith that I have, and I wouldn't value the law of chastity and the plan of salvation as I do now.

I've come to understand that I *do* have a family, and I am thankful for my new and larger family. It has been hard, but I don't worry about what will happen to my family after death. I trust in God, and He knows why we aren't sealed. He knows how much I love them and what's best for me. We can't understand everything, so it's important to have faith in God to sustain us and help us know that everything will turn out OK. ■

## BIRTHDAY PRAYERS FOR MY DAD

By Cooper B., California, USA

**M**y father was never raised in any religion, and my mother's family became less active when my mother was young. But one day my mother felt like she was missing something, so she decided to go back to the church she had grown up in, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My sisters and I went with her. But my father didn't like our attending church, and it tested my parents' relationship like never before.

I was baptized when I was eight, and I learned how families can be together forever. Every year on my birthday, I blew out the candles secretly wishing for my father to be baptized. I prayed that my dad's heart would be softened. After many years, the missionaries were eventually able to eat dinner with us. But the gospel was never brought up.

Then one summer my father came with me on a Young Men camping trip. Though he wasn't a member, my dad was put in charge of a fireside! I was scared, but everyone helped by participating in the fireside. Then my friend bore his testimony of prayer. He shared a time my father had helped my friend's little brother and had been an answer to his prayer. For the first time ever, I saw my dad cry. He felt the Spirit.

After that trip, my father wanted to learn more about the gospel with a new enthusiasm, and one morning he announced that he wanted to be baptized. We couldn't believe it!

My father's baptism was one of the best days of my life. The chapel was packed with everyone who came to support my dad, and I practiced the baptismal prayer a few hundred times because I was so excited. I was able to baptize my dad, and I can't even

describe the overwhelming emotions I felt as I embraced my father in the baptismal font.

The next year my family and I were sealed in the temple. After the sealing, we stood in a circle—as an eternal family—hugging each other with tears of joy running down our faces.

From this experience I learned that anything is possible. Don't give up. I am going to try my absolute best to be worthy to be sealed in the temple with my future family. ■



### IT'S YOUR TURN

Share your faith-building experience. Please limit your article to 400 words, label it "Our Space," and submit it at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) or email it to [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org) by April 10.

# CHOOSE HOPE

No matter what you're going through, you can find  
"a perfect brightness of hope" through the gospel.

(See 2 Nephi 31:20.)



**By Elder  
Neil L. Andersen**  
Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO FACE TRIALS OF FAITH

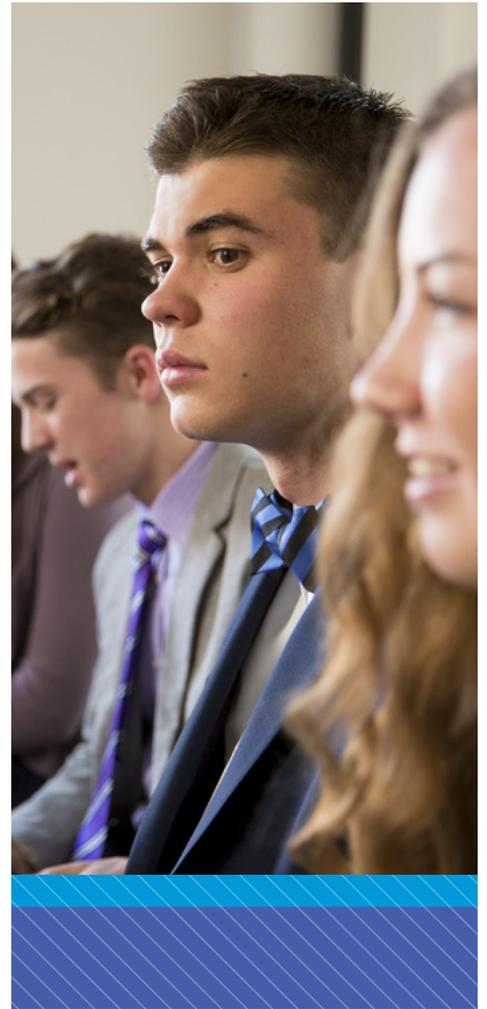
**F**iercy trials are designed to make you stronger, but they have the potential to diminish or even destroy your trust in the Son of God and to weaken your resolve to keep your promises to Him. These trials are often camouflaged, making them difficult to identify. They take root in our weaknesses, our vulnerabilities, our sensitivities, or in those things that matter most to us. A real but manageable test for one can be a fiery trial for another.

How do you remain “steadfast and immovable” (Alma 1:25) during a trial of faith? You immerse yourself in the very things that helped build your core of faith: you **exercise faith in Christ**, you **pray**, you **ponder** the scriptures, you **repent**, you **attend church** and **take the sacrament**, you **keep the**

**commandments**, and you **serve** others.

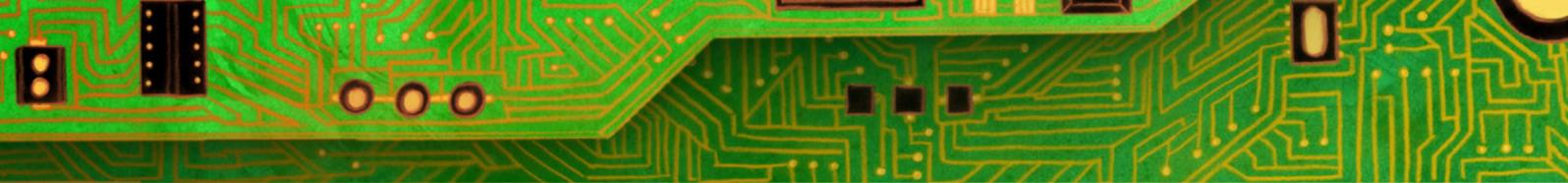
When faced with a trial of faith—whatever you do, you don’t step away from the Church! Distancing yourself from the kingdom of God during a trial of faith is like leaving the safety of a secure storm cellar just as the tornado comes into view.

The Apostle Paul said, “Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). It is within the sanctuary of the Church that we protect our faith. Meeting together with others who **believe**, we **pray** and find answers to our prayers; we **worship** through music, **share** testimony of the Savior, **serve** one another, and **feel the Spirit** of the Lord. We **partake** of the sacrament, **receive** the blessings



of the priesthood, and **attend** the temple. The Lord declared, “In the ordinances . . . , the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). When you are faced with a test of faith, stay within the safety and security of the household of God. There is always a place for you here. No trial is so large we can’t overcome it together (see Mosiah 18:8–10). ■

*From an October 2012 general conference address.*



# The Last-Minute MIRACLE

By Cesar H. Bonito Duarte

When I was 16, I attended high school at a technical school in order to earn an associate's degree in electronics. As a requirement for my degree, I had to complete a 30-day internship at a local business to show my technical skills.

My internship was with a paper goods company. My desire to serve a full-time mission had begun to grow, and this job would help me earn enough money to go. But there were three of us interns, and the company would only select one of us for a full-time position.

The company had a machine that had failed. When the machine was working properly, it could complete as much work as three similar machines.

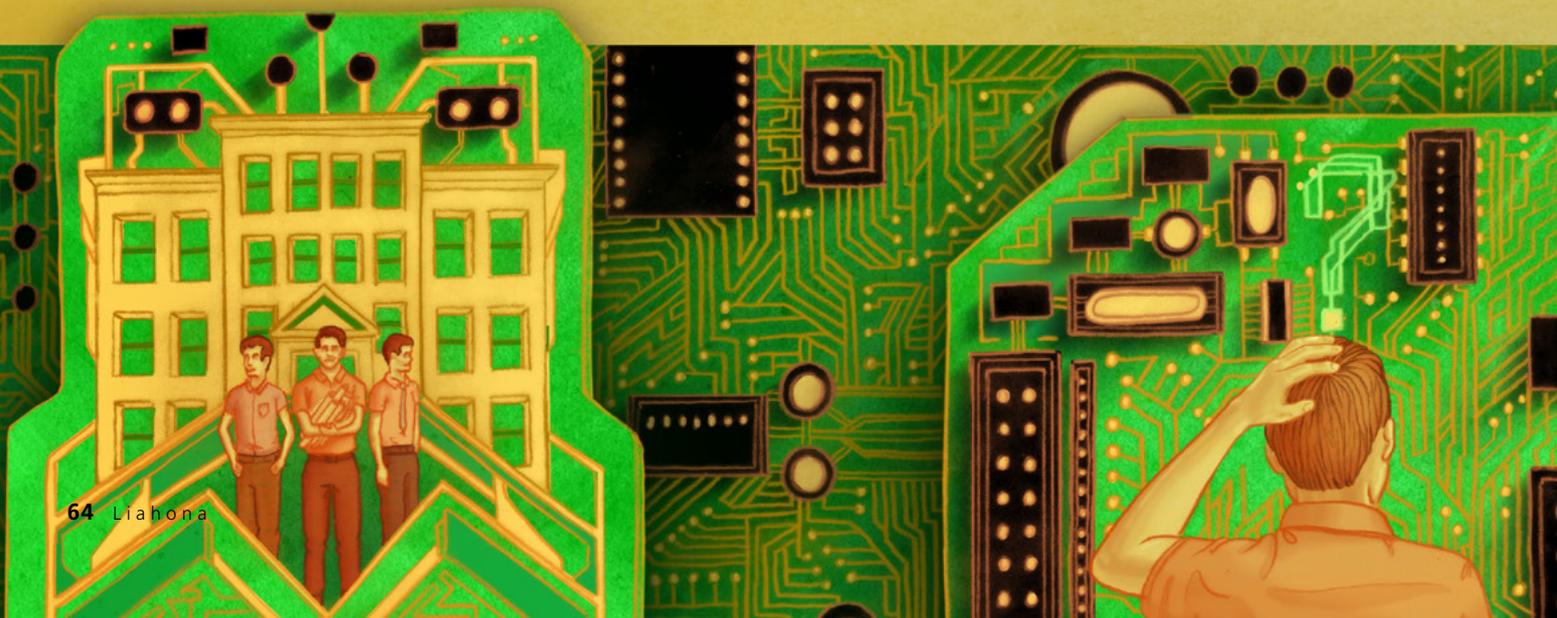
This piece of equipment hadn't been working for quite some time, and the company had ordered replacement parts from abroad to activate it—but it still didn't work. I accepted the challenge to try to fix it.

Day after day, I spent hours studying the machine. But it was complicated, and it wouldn't be easy to determine in just 30 days why it had failed, especially for someone as inexperienced as I was. However, I felt I could do it. Each morning before work, I read articles from the *Liahona* magazine and prayed to my Father in Heaven. I also struck up a friendship with my boss, an experienced electrical engineer, who obtained permission for me to take home copies of the blueprints on the weekends. I studied them intently.

As the internship drew to an end, my two colleagues finished their assigned projects and I felt the pressure growing. But in spite of negative (and even mocking) comments around me, I never doubted. The Friday that marked the end of our internships arrived quickly. Though I had resolved some of the issues, the machine still wasn't working. I felt confident that I was close to fixing it, so I told my boss that if I could have permission to work on Saturday, the machine would be fixed by Monday.

My words astonished my boss so much that he personally requested permission from the president of the company. My boss then informed me that the next day, all three of

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID CURTIS



*I was young, inexperienced, and short on time.  
Could a simple prayer really bring about a miracle?*

us—the president of the company, my boss, and I—would be working, just until noon. “All three?” I asked. He explained that the company president, an electronics engineer, was interested in my proposal because there had been so many failed efforts to repair the machine that he had given up on repairing it.

The next day, I was very intimidated to be working alongside two adult engineers. I was young and lacked expertise. However, they offered to work as my assistants; I felt uncomfortable and, at the same time, very privileged.

It was just minutes before noon when the president and my boss realized that our efforts had been a waste. I excused myself and went into

the bathroom. I knelt down, praying to my Father with great fervor. I felt an unexplainable, marvelous strength. I asked Him to help me get the job because I would need it to help me pay for my mission.

I came out of the bathroom electrified; but by that time, my assistants had already closed up the circuit compartments and gathered up the tools. I opened the machine back up and looked carefully at the 15 circuit cards inside. I noticed that one simple pin among over 4,000 pins in the system was not connected to the card. I connected it, put it in place, and turned on the machine. It worked! It was a miracle.

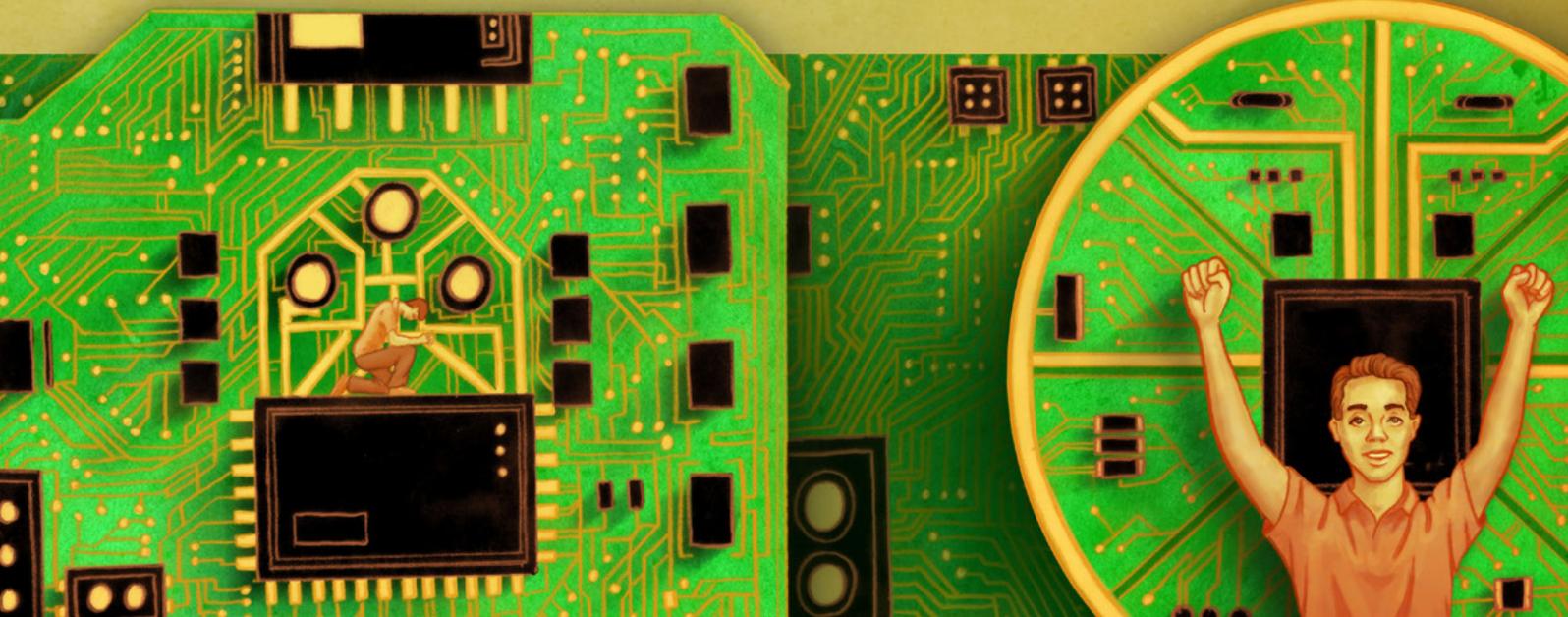
It was an unforgettable and touching moment. My boss hugged me,

and the company president shook my hand and congratulated me energetically.

I was able to work for that company for nearly two years, save up the money I needed, and leave on my long-awaited mission. When I explained the reason for my departure, the president of the company bid me farewell and said, “You already know where to come back to work after you finish your mission. I wish you much success.”

This experience showed me that nothing is impossible for God. If we do not doubt, miracles will be made manifest, but only after the trial of our faith—even at the last moment. Yes, miracles do occur. ■

*The author lives in Aragua, Venezuela.*



# Worth the Wait

By Jessica Larsen

Based on a true story

*Why couldn't I be  
baptized now?*

*"To be baptized as Jesus was . . .  
is just the thing I want to do"*  
(Children's Songbook, 104).

"Today we are going to learn  
a new song," Sister Reid  
announced. "It's called 'Baptism.'  
Everyone close your eyes and  
listen to the music."

I closed my eyes and relaxed  
in my chair. The pianist started  
playing a melody that sounded soft  
and graceful, like flowing water.

Then Sister Reid started singing:  
*"Jesus came to John the Baptist,  
in Judea long ago, and was  
baptized by immersion in the  
River Jordan's flow."*

I felt a tear slide down my  
cheek. I tried to wipe it away  
before Mom could see, but it was  
too late. Mom was the Primary  
president, and she always saw  
everything. I saw Mom look at  
me and smile sadly. She knew  
why I was crying.

After church, my little sister,  
Julie, hummed the song the  
whole ride home. I stayed  
silent.

"Do you want to color  
with me?" Julie asked when  
we got home.

I shook my head. "Maybe later.  
I've got to do something first."



I found Dad in the living room. He was sitting in his favorite chair with a book open on his lap. He liked to read while Julie, Mom, and I went to church.

I took a deep breath. “Dad?” I said. “Can I get baptized?”

Dad closed the book and asked me to sit by him.

“Oh, Sadie. We’ve talked about this. My answer is still no,” he said.

“But I really want to!” I said. “I turned eight a few months ago, and I’ve thought about it a lot. I know the Church is true, and the longer I wait, the more I know I want to be baptized.”

Dad shook his head. “I still think you’re too young to make such a big decision. But you know I love you.”

“I know,” I said. I knew Dad wanted what was best for me. He just didn’t think I was ready to make this choice.

I ran to my room and bowed my head. I prayed harder than I ever had before. “Heavenly Father, I really want to be baptized. Please help Dad understand.”

At first nothing happened, but I stayed on my knees. The melody of “Baptism” ran through my mind. After a while, I didn’t feel so sad. Instead, I felt peaceful inside. I started thinking about all of the things I could do, even though I couldn’t be baptized yet.

I could keep praying and keep going to Primary. I could be an example for Julie, and maybe I could even ask Mom to fast for me next week.

The peaceful feeling stayed with me as I headed down to dinner. I didn’t know when, but one day I would be baptized. And it would be worth the wait.

*Six months later, two days before her ninth birthday, Sadie’s dad gave her permission to be baptized. ■*

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*



## IF YOU HAVE TO WAIT

- Learn as much as you can about the gospel.
- Go to baptisms and look forward to when you can be baptized.
- Ask for priesthood blessings when you need them.
- Remember, Heavenly Father and Jesus love you and listen to your prayers.



By Elder  
Jeffrey R. Holland  
Of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles

# What if I feel like I don't measure up?



Don't give up.  
With the Atonement  
of Jesus Christ,  
we can improve.

Jesus Christ  
blesses those who  
*want* to improve and  
who *try* to keep the  
commandments. We  
always get credit  
for trying.

Everyone  
stumbles, but the  
Savior will help you get  
back up. He will help  
you repent, fix whatever  
you have to fix, and  
keep going.

So keep loving.  
Keep trying. Keep  
trusting. Keep believing.  
Keep growing. Heaven  
is cheering you on  
today, tomorrow,  
and forever.

*From "Tomorrow the  
Lord Will Do Wonders  
among You," Ensign  
or Liahona, May 2016,  
124–127.*



# Sometimes I get annoyed with my family. What can I do?



Pray to Heavenly Father and ask Him to help you be nice to your family. Hug them.  
**Noah F., age 10, Queensland, Australia**



I would pray, have family home evenings, and talk to them.  
**Luisa R., age 9, Baja California, Mexico**



**Giulia:** Try to think about all the good times you've had with them, and think about those good times and how people aren't perfect.



**Bruna:** Even if they don't say "sorry," I would forgive them.  
**Giulia and Bruna R., ages 13 and 8, São Paulo, Brazil**



**Julia:** I can be kind to my family, and when I am annoyed, I can tell them that I love them and then be nice. I can follow the Savior and show them love.



**Darrin:** Just be happy and share with them and serve them.  
**Julia and Darrin S., ages 8 and 6, New Mexico, USA**



If my little sister is annoying me, I make her bed or make her a treat. I also like to make cards, do extra chores, and say a prayer. I feel the Spirit telling me I did the right thing.  
**Adeline B., age 9, Tennessee, USA**

## NEW QUESTION

*"I have a brother who is making bad choices. What should I do?"*

Send us your answer and photo by April 15, 2017. Submit them online at [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) or email us at [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org). (Put "Question Corner" in the subject line.) Remember to include your parent's permission!

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



# Painting **LOVE**



By Jill Hacking, New York, USA

## GETTING STRONGER

*Lucy was born with a syndrome that makes her muscles not work together well. It makes it hard for her to swallow and talk. She rides a special bike and goes on hikes with her family to help her get stronger.*

## PAINTING

*Lucy's mom is an artist. When Lucy was a baby, she loved to watch her mom paint. Now her mom teaches her to paint too. Lucy likes to use colors that look pretty together, and she paints very carefully. Someday she wants to have an art studio with her mom.*

## LUCY'S HEART

*Lucy and her older sisters entered an art contest at their school about making the world a better place. Lucy knew she wanted to paint a heart. She said, "The world would be a better place if we have love in our hearts."*



# Hi!

My name  
is LUCY!

I live in Utah, USA, with my family. I like to paint, and I like sharing love with others.



### A LOVING SISTER

*When Lucy found out that her painting won the contest, she told her sister Ruby, "Yours is so good. I wish you would have won instead of me." Lucy couldn't believe it when she found out her painting won the contest for the whole United States too!*

### A SPECIAL WAY TO COMMUNICATE

*It's hard for Lucy to tell others what she is feeling. But she wants to help people feel loved and happy. And her paintings do that!*



### LUCY'S IDEAS FOR SHOWING LOVE

Have love in your heart.  
Love helps you feel happy.  
Be nice and kind to others.

### SEND US A HEART

How do you follow Jesus by showing love? Send us a heart with your story and photo, along with your parent's permission. Submit it through [liahona.lds.org](http://liahona.lds.org) (click "Submit an Article") or email [liahona@ldschurch.org](mailto:liahona@ldschurch.org).



# A Great Feeling

*Paulo had messed up.  
What could he do?*

**By Jane McBride**

Based on a true story

After Paulo came up out of the water, he and Dad got dressed in dry clothes. Then Dad and Grandpa and the bishop laid their hands on his head and confirmed him. Now he was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"I feel so great," Paulo said. He touched his heart. "In here."

Mom hugged him tight. "That's because you received the gift of the Holy Ghost when you were confirmed."

Paulo nodded. He didn't want to do anything to make that great feeling go away.

But the very next day, his little brother Carlo broke Paulo's toy plane. Paulo had saved up for a whole month to buy it!

"Look what you did!" Paulo yelled. "Why can't you leave my stuff alone?"

"I'm sorry," Carlo said. Tears rolled down his cheeks. "Maybe we can fix it."

"It won't be the same!"

Carlo ran out of the room crying.

Paulo felt awful inside. He knew Jesus wouldn't have yelled or gotten angry. Would he ever feel the way he did after his baptism again?

"I promised I would try to be like Jesus," he told Mom, his voice shaking. "But I've already messed up."

"You did something wrong," Mom said gently. "But Jesus also gave us a way to have the Holy Ghost with us again after we mess up."

Paulo knew what she was going to say. "I know. Repentance. I have to ask for forgiveness."

Mom nodded. "Then when you take the sacrament, you'll renew the promise you made to follow Jesus.



And you'll be just as clean as you were right after you were baptized and confirmed."

Paulo went to find Carlo. "I'm sorry I yelled at you," he said. "Let's fix the plane together."

Carlo smiled, and Paulo felt like he had done what Jesus would do. When he said his prayer that night, he asked Heavenly Father to forgive him and to help him be nicer to Carlo. A quiet peace settled in his heart.

That Sunday at church, Paulo paid extra attention to the sacrament prayers. He listened carefully to the words. As he took the bread and water, he felt Heavenly Father's love for him. Mom was right. That great feeling was back! ■

*The author lives in Colorado, USA.*

- When airplanes are new, their wings are shiny and bright. Air flowing over the wings keeps the plane in the air.
- When ice and snow build up on the wings, air can't flow smoothly over them. Then the airplane can't fly safely.
- Before the airplane flies, people use big hoses to spray off the wings and make them shiny and bright again.
- Then the airplane can fly as well as when it was new!

## KEEP YOUR WINGS SHINY!

- When we are baptized, we have no sins and we're given the gift of the Holy Ghost to help us learn and grow.
- When we make wrong choices, it's harder to feel the Holy Ghost.
- When we repent and pray for help, Heavenly Father forgives us. Our sins are taken away. The Holy Ghost can be with us.
- Because of the Savior's Atonement, we can repent every day! On Sunday, the sacrament helps us be clean, remember Jesus, and have a happy, new start.



By Elder  
Kim B. Clark  
Of the Seventy

# Seeing God's Prophet



When I was 11, I helped my ward build a new Church building. The members helped build them in those days—pounding nails, painting walls, and doing all sorts of things.

When I heard that President David O. McKay (1873–1970) would dedicate the building, I really wanted to be there. My parents said that I could go. I went early and sat on the front row.

I remember seeing President McKay up close. I saw the way he stood, how he talked to people, how he treated people. He had bright blue eyes and white hair. He *looked* like a prophet. When I heard him speak and say the dedicatory prayer, I knew in my heart that this was God's prophet.

I had a powerful spiritual impression from Heavenly Father: "This is My prophet." Heavenly Father was telling me through the Holy Ghost that President McKay was *His* prophet.

Once I knew that President McKay was God's prophet, I knew that the Church was true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet. I knew that the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel were true. I also knew that all the prophets, from Joseph Smith to David O. McKay, were God's prophets too.

Now every time a new prophet is called, I've had that same confirmation come: "This is My prophet." It all started when I was a boy. ■



**President David O. McKay was the ninth President of the Church and served from 1951 until 1970.**

# The Church Is Organized

*Use these figures to share Church history stories!*



Emma Smith



***After the Book of Mormon was translated, it was published as a book of scripture. A month later, the first official meeting of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was held in a farmhouse. About 60 people came. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery blessed and passed the sacrament. Jesus Christ's Church was finally organized on the earth again! A few months later, the Lord asked Emma Smith, Joseph's wife, to collect hymns for the Saints to sing during their Church meetings.***

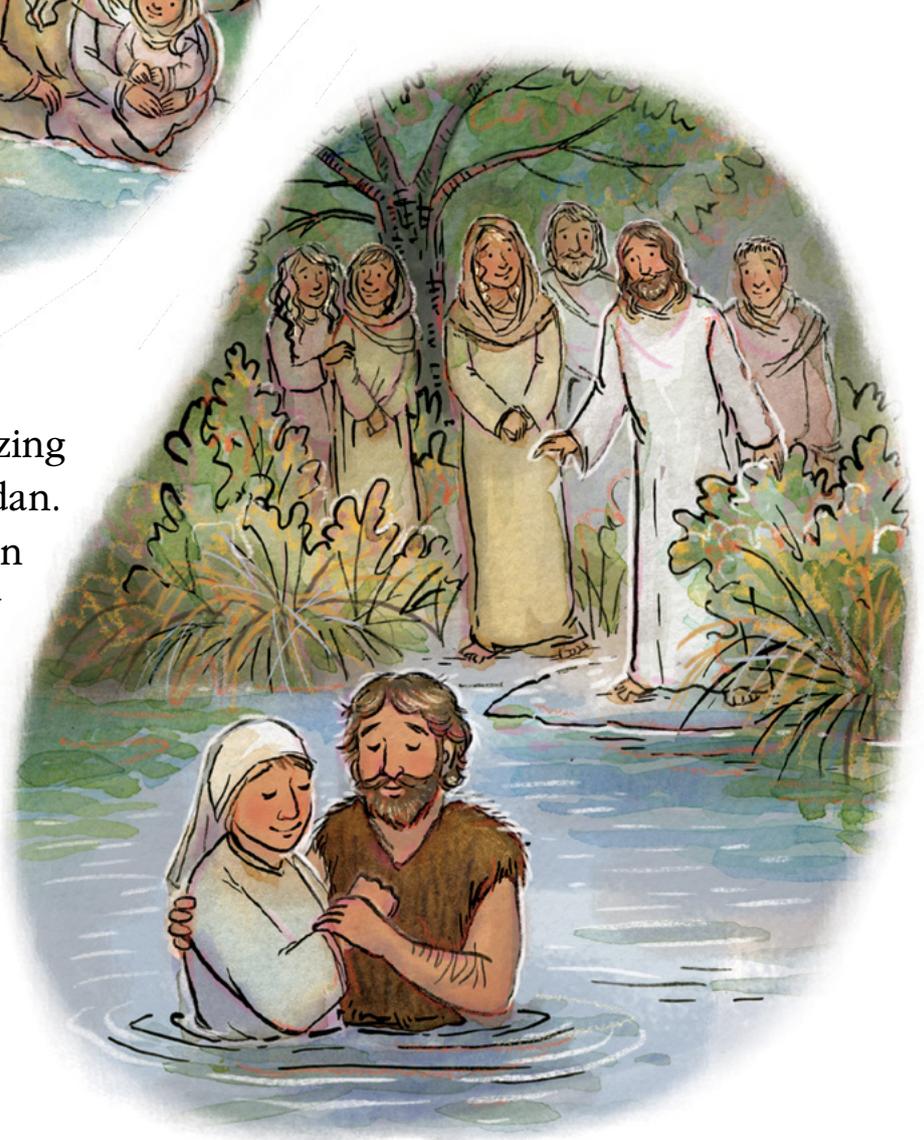
# Jesus Was Baptized

By Kim Webb Reid, Utah, USA



John the Baptist was a great prophet. He taught people to repent. Then he baptized them.

One day John was baptizing people in the river Jordan. Jesus came and asked John to baptize him. John knew that Jesus didn't have any sins. So why did Jesus want to be baptized?



Jesus said He needed  
to obey all of the  
commandments.  
Being baptized is a  
commandment.



After John baptized Jesus, a dove came to show that the Holy Ghost was there. Heavenly Father's voice came from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).



We can obey the commandments and choose to be baptized, like Jesus. Then we can be confirmed and have the gift of the Holy Ghost too. ■

# I Am Thankful for My Body



ILLUSTRATION BY APRYL STOTT



**By President  
David O. McKay  
(1873–1970)**  
Ninth President of  
the Church

## A LESSON FROM DANDY

*Like some young people, my horse  
Dandy resented restraint.*

I once owned and had great pleasure in training [a well-bred colt named Dandy]. He had a good disposition, a clean, well-rounded eye, was well proportioned, and all in all, a choice [animal]. Under the saddle he was as willing, responsive, and cooperative as a horse could be. He and my dog Scotty were real companions. I liked the way he would go up to something of which he was afraid. He had confidence that if he would do as I bade him, he would not be injured.

But Dandy resented restraint. He was ill-contented when tied and would nibble at the tie rope until he was free. He would not run away; he just wanted to be free. Thinking other horses felt the same, he would proceed to untie their ropes. He hated to be confined in the pasture, and if he could find a place in the fence where there was only smooth wire,



he would paw the wire carefully with his feet until he could step over to freedom. More than once my neighbors were kind enough to put him back in the field. He learned even to push open the gate. Though [he often did damage that was] provoking and sometimes expensive, I admired his intelligence and ingenuity.

But his curiosity and desire to explore the neighborhood led him and me into trouble. Once on the highway he was hit by an automobile, resulting in a demolished machine, injury to the horse, and slight, though not serious, injury to the driver.

Recovering from that, and still impelled with a feeling of wanderlust, he inspected the fence throughout the entire boundary. He found even the gates wired. So for a while we thought we had Dandy secure in the pasture.

One day, however, somebody left the gate unwired. Detecting this, Dandy unlatched it, took [another horse] with him, and together they visited the neighbor's field. They went to an old house used for storage. Dandy's curiosity prompted him to push open the door. Just as he had surmised, there was a sack of grain. What a find! Yes, and what a tragedy! The grain was poison bait for rodents! In a few minutes Dandy and his companion were in spasmodic pain, and shortly both were dead.

How like Dandy are many of our youth! They are not bad; they do not even intend to do wrong; but they are impulsive, full of life, full of curiosity, and they long to do something. They too are [restless] under restraint, but if they are kept busy, guided carefully and rightly, they prove to be responsive and capable; if left to wander unguided, they all too frequently violate principles of right, which often leads to snares of evil, disaster, and even death. ■

*From Conference Report, Oct. 1968, 87; punctuation and capitalization modernized.*



**THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS,  
BY JEREMY WINBORG**

*"He . . . took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise" (Luke 8:54).*

# Also in This Issue

## FOR YOUNG ADULTS

### Be an Example of the Believers

How do we stand firm in the gospel and teach others the truth without causing contention and anger?



p. 44

## FOR YOUTH

p. 50



### 7 THINGS WE FEAR ABOUT REPENTANCE—AND WHY WE SHOULDN'T

Don't let fear keep you from experiencing the peace and joy of repentance and forgiveness.

## FOR CHILDREN

### A Great Feeling

What happens when you do something wrong after you are baptized? How do you get that great feeling back?



p. 72

