

Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Sunday Schedule
Beginning in January 2018

	Topic	Led by
First Sunday	Counseling together about local needs	Presidency or group leadership
Second and Third Sundays	Recent general conference message	Presidency or group leadership or a called teacher
Fourth Sunday	Special topic chosen by general Church leaders	Presidency or group leadership or a called teacher
Fifth Sunday	Topic chosen by the bishopric	Bishopric or someone they assign

Instructions for these meetings will be found in the November issue of the *Liahona* and *Ensign*, in the Gospel Library app, and at ComeFollowMe.lds.org.



For years, we have studied the Teachings of Presidents of the Church series. In 2018, we will begin using general conference messages to focus our study on the teachings of living prophets, apostles, and other Church leaders.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

STARTING JANUARY 2018

**Come, Follow Me—
For Melchizedek
Priesthood and Relief
Society Meetings**

*Introducing a new Sunday
experience for adults*



A New Sunday Experience

In January 2018, Sunday meetings for Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies will change. These changes involve the materials we use—the *Teachings of Presidents of the Church* series will be replaced with a greater emphasis on learning from general conference messages, counseling together, and studying special topics selected by our general leaders.

But the most meaningful change has to do with how we use these materials to accomplish the true purposes of our Sunday meetings.

The Purposes of Our Meetings

God has organized His covenant sons and daughters into priesthood quorums and Relief Societies to help accomplish His work. Something powerful happens when we gather under the direction of those holding priesthood keys. So while gospel instruction is important, Sunday priesthood and Relief Society meetings are more than classes. They are also working meetings where we learn together from general conference messages, counsel about the work of salvation, and organize to accomplish the work. The changes coming in 2018 will help us fulfill these purposes.

The most meaningful change has to do with **how we accomplish the true purposes** of our Sunday meetings.

Look for more information in the November issue of the *Liahona* and *Ensign*, in the Gospel Library app, and at ComeFollowMe.lds.org.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Is this change a new curriculum—or something more? The new materials may look like a curriculum, but they are also a catalyst for Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies to increase their participation in God's work and in meeting local needs. This change provides a forum for identifying, counseling about, and meeting those needs.

What will we focus on during Sunday meetings? Starting in November 2017, general conference issues of the *Liahona* and *Ensign* will include materials to be used in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Sunday meetings. Two monthly meetings will focus on conference messages, and leaders and teachers will be given ideas for helping members discuss and apply those messages. First Sundays will be spent in counseling together to meet local needs and fourth Sundays in studying a topic selected by our general leaders. See the monthly meeting schedule on the other side of this page.

What does it mean to counsel together about local needs? Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies “sit in council” (D&C 107:89) on the first Sunday of each month. Under the direction of priesthood or Relief Society leaders, first-Sunday meetings are used to identify local needs and counsel together about how to meet those needs. Possible topics for first-Sunday councils include how to improve communication with family members, serve in the community, and mentor youth in the ward or branch. In subsequent meetings, the quorum, group, or Relief Society follows up on impressions and actions.

Is this curriculum the same as *Come, Follow Me* for youth? Although the topics and materials of *Come, Follow Me—For Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Meetings* are different from those of *Come, Follow Me* for youth, the teaching and learning approach is the same. For more information about gospel learning and teaching, see *Teaching in the Savior's Way* at teaching.lds.org.

I'm not a teacher. Do I need to subscribe to the *Liahona* or *Ensign*? Your experience will be richer if you read the general conference messages and bring them to your Sunday meetings. You can access the messages digitally at conference.lds.org and on the Gospel Library app or by subscribing to the *Liahona* or *Ensign* (see store.lds.org).

What if a general conference magazine isn't available in my language? General conference messages are available in many languages at conference.lds.org and on the Gospel Library app, and curriculum materials will be available at ComeFollowMe.lds.org. If your language doesn't receive the new curriculum materials either online or in a magazine, see *Instructions for Curriculum, 2018* for additional information.

When do we begin to study new general conference messages? You will begin to study the October 2017 general conference messages in January 2018. After that, your local leaders will decide when to begin using messages from the next conference—likely in May and November of each year.

Who chooses which general conference messages we study? Your local leaders counsel together about which conference messages will best meet the needs of your quorum, group, or Relief Society. A high priests group, elders quorum, and Relief Society in the same ward or branch might study different messages in order to meet different needs.



Liahona

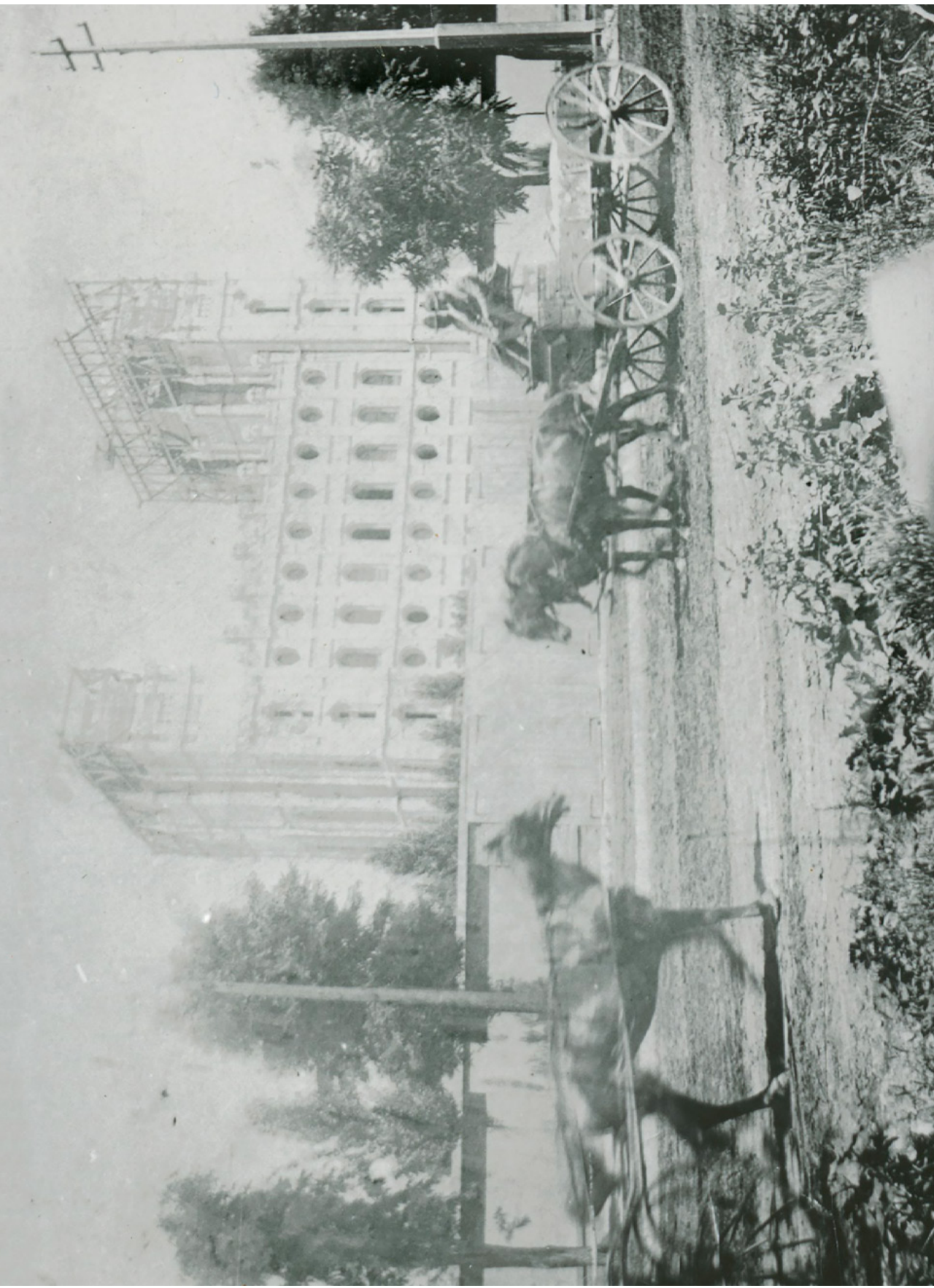
**Finding Your Path to
Self-Reliance, pp. 32, 40–43**

Temple and Family History Work:
An Invitation from President and
Sister Nelson, p. 14

Recently Baptized? You Can Serve
in the Temple Now, p. 20

Three Steps to Resolving Conflict
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Horse and buggies pass by the Salt Lake Temple, shown here in about 1891. Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) was President of the Church when the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated in 1893. He taught, “We are held responsible for . . . building temples to the Most High, wherein we can enter and attend to ordinances for the salvation of our dead” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff [2004], 94).

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library



BLESSINGS,
BY LOUISE PARKER

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine. . . .

*"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things"
(D&C 104:15, 17).*

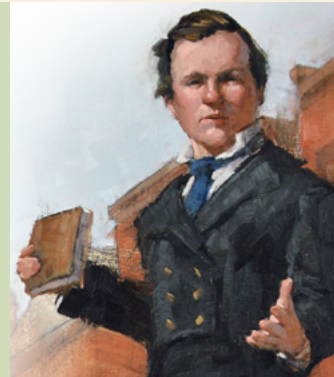
To learn more about self-reliance, see pages 32 and 40 in this issue.

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FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Five Lessons for Young Adults from Young Apostles

"We are defined by decisions, not circumstances": one of five lessons from the lives of five of the first Twelve Apostles of the Restoration—who happened to be young adults. Read about what other lessons we can learn from them.



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How a Conference Message Can

CHANGE YOUR LIFE

General conference is more than an event—it's a chance to change your life.

FOR CHILDREN

HELPING OUT, One Pencil at a Time

Caleb lives in Germany. He wanted to do something to help children in a refugee camp near him. So he came up with a plan.



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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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Photograph by Leslie Nilsson.

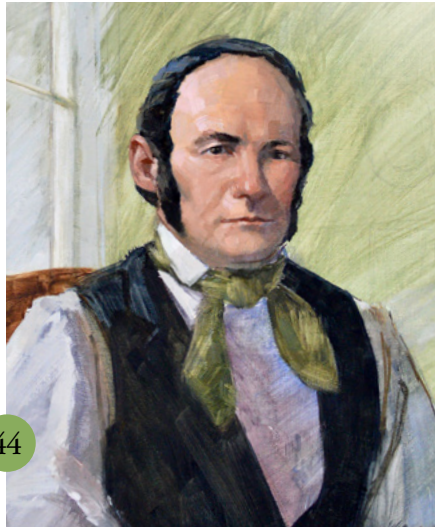
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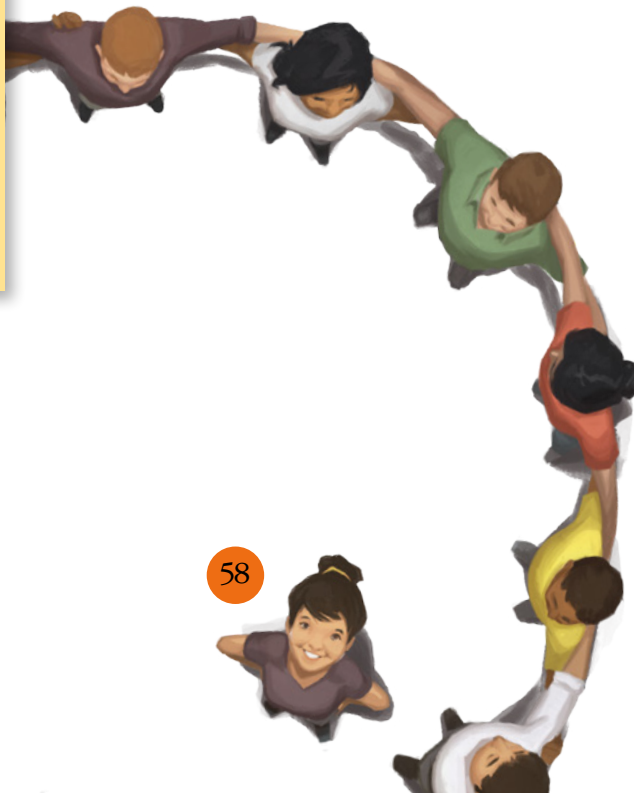
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International magazine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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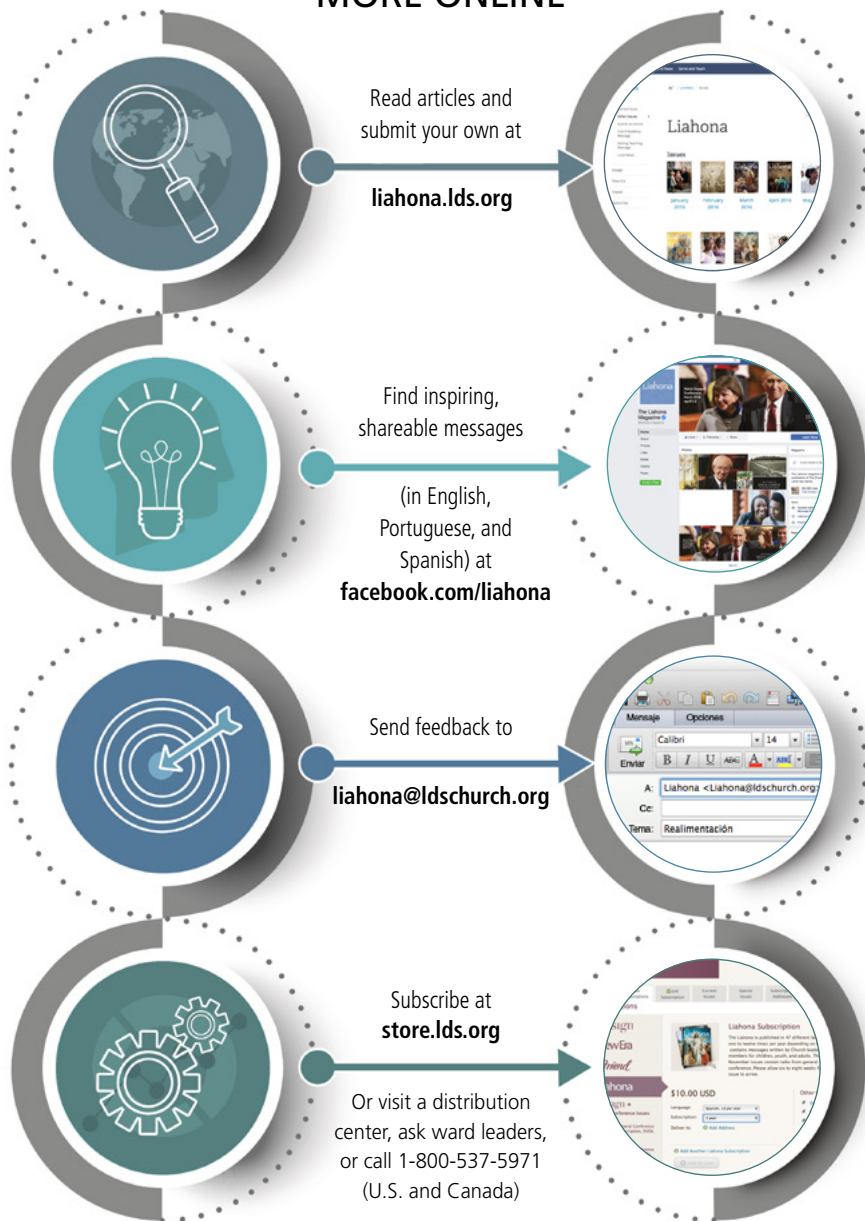
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MORE ONLINE



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**By President
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in
the First Presidency

BECOMING TRUE DISCIPLES

In every sacrament meeting, we have the privilege of promising Heavenly Father that we will always remember the Savior and keep His commandments so that we may have His Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). Remembering Him will always come to us naturally as we take His name upon us. We do so in many ways but especially when we serve others in His name, read His holy words, and pray to know what He would have us do.

It happened for me when I performed the baptism of a young man. I knew that I had been called by the Savior's ordained servants as a missionary to teach His gospel and to testify of Him and of His true Church. My missionary companion and I had promised the young man that he would be cleansed through the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ as he repented with faith in the Savior and was baptized by one of His authorized servants.

As I lifted the young man out of the waters of the baptismal font, he whispered in my ear, "I am clean, I am clean." In that moment, I remembered the Savior's baptism by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Even more, I remembered that I was doing the saving work of a resurrected and living Savior—attended by the Holy Ghost, as John had been.

For me and for each of us, remembering the Savior can be more than relying on a memory of our knowledge and experiences with Him. We can make choices every day that draw us closer to Him in the present.

The simplest choice may be to read the scriptures. By doing so, we can gain the feelings of being close to Him. For me, closeness comes most often when I read in the Book of Mormon. In the first minutes that I read in the chapters of 2 Nephi, I hear in my mind the voices of Nephi and Lehi describing the Savior as if they knew Him personally. A feeling of closeness comes.

For you, other places in scripture may especially draw you to Him. But wherever and whenever you read the word of God, with humble and real intent to remember the Savior, you will increase your desire to take His name upon you in your daily life.

That desire will change the way you serve in the Lord's Church. You will pray to Heavenly Father for help in magnifying even what appears to you to be a small calling. The help you will ask for is the ability to forget yourself and focus more on what the Savior wants for those you are called to serve.



I have felt His hand and His closeness in my service with our children when I prayed to know how to help them find the peace that only the gospel brings. At such moments, I cared less about being seen as a successful parent, but I cared deeply about the success and well-being of my children.

The desire to give to those we serve what the Savior would give to them leads to prayers that are a *pleading* to Heavenly Father, truly in the name of Jesus Christ. When we pray in that way—in the Savior’s name, with faith in Him—the Father answers. He sends the Holy Ghost to guide, comfort, and encourage us. Because the Spirit always bears witness of the Savior (see 3 Nephi 11:32, 36; 28:11; Ether 12:41), our capacity to love the Lord with all our heart,

mind, and strength increases (see Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; D&C 59:5).

The blessings of daily and present remembering will come slowly and steadily as we serve Him, feast on His word, and pray in faith on His

name. And this remembering will shape us to become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom on this earth—and later with His Father in the glorious world to come. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Eyring counsels us to remember the Savior always by making daily choices to draw closer to Him. With those you teach, you might read the sacrament prayers, which outline the covenant to always remember Him (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79). Consider

inviting those you teach to write a list of things they could do each day to remember the Savior. You might also consider inviting them to pray to Heavenly Father for each other’s success and well-being. Consider praying for them in the same manner.



YOUTH

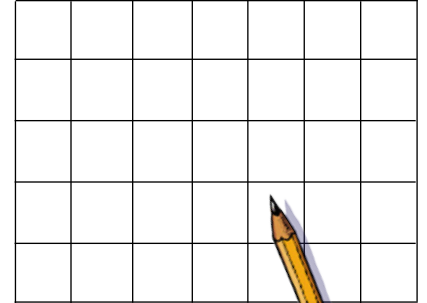
Remembering the Lord Every Day

Friends, chores, homework, TV—there are so many things that ask for our attention. But every week, we promise Heavenly Father “that [we] do always remember [His Son, Jesus Christ]” (D&C 20:79).

President Eyring says that we can “make choices every day” that help us remember the Savior. Consider making a goal this month to remember the Savior more each day. You could make a calendar and commit to doing one

thing per day. President Eyring lists things like reading the scriptures, praying in faith, and serving the Savior and others. There’s also journaling, attending Church meetings, listening to general conference, going to the temple, singing hymns—the list goes on! As we remember the Savior daily, President Eyring promises that “the blessings . . . will come slowly and steadily . . . [and] will shape us to become true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

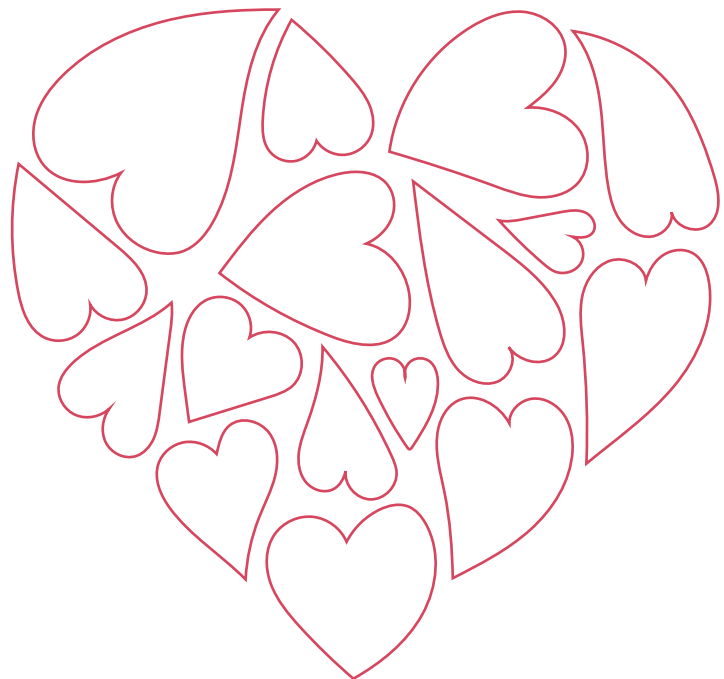
OCTOBER



CHILDREN

Lots of Love

When we read the scriptures or pray, we can feel how much Heavenly Father and Jesus love us. Color in a heart each time you pray or read your scriptures. What else can you do to feel close to Heavenly Father and Jesus?



Enfolding with Love Those Who Stray

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?

“The reality is that there are no perfect families . . .,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Whatever problems your family is facing, whatever you must do to solve them, the beginning and the end of the solution is charity, the pure love of Christ.”¹

Of those who are not participating fully in the gospel, Linda K. Burton, former General President of the Relief Society, said: “Heavenly Father loves all His children. . . . No matter where they are—on or off the path—He wants them back home.”²

“However wayward [your children] might be, . . . when you speak or talk to them, do it not in anger, do it not harshly, in a condemning spirit,” taught President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918). “Speak to them kindly.”³

Elder Brent H. Nielson of the Seventy reiterated the Savior’s instruction to those who have

10 pieces of silver and lose one: “Search until you find it. When the lost one is your son or your daughter, your brother or your sister, . . . after all we can do, we love that person with all of our hearts. . . .

“May you and I receive the revelation to know how to best approach those in our lives who are lost and, when necessary, to have the patience and love of our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, as we love, watch, and wait for the prodigal.”⁴

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “I have prayed with faith that someone I loved would seek and feel the power of the Atonement. I have prayed

with faith that human angels would come to their aid, and they came.

“God has devised means to save each of His children.”⁵

Additional Scriptures and Information

Matthew 18:12; Alma 31:35; 3 Nephi 13:32; D&C 121:41–42
reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “In Praise of Those Who Save,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 79, 80.
2. Linda K. Burton, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Sister Burton, Sister Wixom Visit Church’s Pacific Area,” *Church News*, Apr. 2, 2013, lds.org/church/news.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 254.
4. Brent H. Nielson, “Waiting for the Prodigal,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 103.
5. Henry B. Eyring, “To My Grandchildren,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 71.



Faith
Family
Relief



Consider This

How can we continue to show charity to those who do not want to live the principles of the gospel?

IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR A SECOND CHANCE

By Amber Jensen

The father of one of my struggling students told his daughter, "It's not too late for you to succeed." The Lord gives us the same message.

Sandra was a student in my advanced English class. Several weeks into the year, she hadn't done any of the homework or projects. She just daydreamed at her desk. She made up excuses for why she hadn't completed her assignments, and she demonstrated neither the attitude nor the work necessary for success in such a demanding course.

Her counselor and I decided to schedule a conference with Sandra, her father, and some of her other teachers to determine what direction she should take: should she drop her advanced courses and take standard ones instead? Most substantial was the unspoken question weighing on all of our minds: could we find a way to help Sandra succeed?

Believing that Sandra had been given many chances to succeed but instead had chosen to fail, I went into the meeting feeling very discouraged. Secretly I hoped she would decide to drop my class so that I wouldn't have to worry about her anymore. I felt I

had done all I could and that it was already too late.

In the meeting, Sandra's body language revealed that she too doubted her ability to succeed. She stared at the table as I recounted her failure in English class. As her history teacher confirmed that Sandra was failing his class as well, her body slumped lower in her chair and I could see tears streaming down her face.

Mustering compassion, I explained to her and her father that if Sandra wanted to succeed in these challenging courses, she was going to have to change the behavior that had gotten her so deeply into this hole and that it was going to be very difficult.

A Message from Her Father

The counselor then turned to Sandra's father, a man with little education who seemed uncomfortable in the school setting. The counselor asked him if he had any questions for the teachers. He said he didn't and thanked us for what we had done for

Sandra. But then he said he had something to say to his daughter.

My heart tightened. I had been a part of some parent-teacher conferences where the parents had verbally rebuked their children in front of teachers and counselors, berating them for their laziness, inattentiveness, and lack of motivation. I braced myself to hear it again.

What I heard instead surprised me. Sandra's humble father turned to his tearful 16-year-old daughter who was weighed down by shame and regret and said to her, "It's not too late. It's not too late for you to succeed. It really is not too late."

I left that meeting grateful for his loving reaction but concerned that he had no idea what it would take for his daughter to pass at this point. It seemed impossible. Word came later that she had decided to drop her history class but not my English class.

Later that day as I knelt in prayer, considering my own shortcomings and asking my Heavenly Father for



forgiveness, I realized how much I had to learn from Sandra's father. Insecurities and feelings of inadequacy had at times in my own life made me wonder if I was worthy or deserving of a second chance. In those moments, the Lord, like Sandra's father, chose not to berate me but instead to reassure: "It's not too late, my daughter. It's not too late."

The Message of the Gospel

How often have we believed the message of the adversary that we are beyond hope? But the prophets tell us otherwise. Isaiah proclaims, "Let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy unto him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah

55:7). Mormon adds his witness, "As oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven" (Moroni 6:8). The joy of the gospel is that it is never too late. For as often as we seek forgiveness, the Lord's redemption will allow us to start anew.

Sandra, with motivation to start again, made slow but significant changes. The transformation was not easy—it required daily effort to overcome her bad habits—but she saw the rewards of her efforts as her grade gradually improved.

From a gospel perspective, our final grade will not take into account how long we faltered or how deeply we dug ourselves into a hole. Instead,

the Lord will judge our lives based on what direction we're heading, how we have repented, and how much we have relied on the Lord's Atonement.

In my limited understanding, I had doubted Sandra's ability to overcome the mistakes of her past. In contrast, our perfect Father never loses hope in His children's capacity to achieve salvation by being perfected in Christ. It does not matter how far gone we are; He will always seek after the one. The Lord beseeches us to no longer wander as strangers in sin but instead to seek Him in hope and enjoy the blessings of His infinite Atonement. Indeed, it is never too late. ■

The author lives in Virginia, USA.

AN ELEPHANT IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher council meetings aren't just changing the way we teach; they're changing the way we learn.

By Jessica Griffith and
Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

Mzwakhe Sitole faces a challenge. As ward Sunday School president, he has a God-given responsibility to help improve gospel learning and teaching in the ward.¹

But the members of his ward in Johannesburg, South Africa, have, in some cases, vastly different backgrounds and expectations. Some are well-educated; others are not. Many have been taught that a student's place is to listen, not to talk. Others face an uphill cultural battle in understanding that *both* men and women should be involved in teaching at church and at home.

"We also have people who speak different languages," Brother Sitole says. "But the Spirit wants to prompt each one."

When teacher council meetings and *Teaching in the Savior's Way* were introduced last year, wards and branches throughout the Church began holding teacher council meetings to discuss, learn about, and practice what it means to teach in the Savior's way.

That's when Brother Sitole began to see how teacher council meetings could bless his ward. Cultural challenges could be addressed, class participation could be increased, and different perspectives of members could become blessings.

Like many others around the world, Brother Sitole realized that the Lord isn't using teacher council meetings just to change how we teach; He's using them to also change how we learn.

An Elephant with a Twist

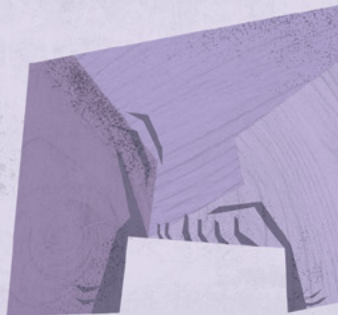
One of the most interesting discoveries for Brother Sitole was that as teachers empower students to participate in their own learning, everyone benefits from the expanded view that different perspectives provide.

That understanding came to Brother Sitole during a teacher council meeting, when a ward member shared the parable of the blind men and the elephant, only with a twist. The

Rope



Wall



Fan



parable tells how six blind men each describe an elephant differently (a leg is like a pillar, the tail is like a rope, the trunk is like a water spout, and so forth) because each is touching a different part.²

“But suppose the elephant represents gospel teaching,” Brother Sitole says. “Then we need to enable each class member to share their perspective, so that together we come to a common understanding of how the gospel blesses us all.”

That’s why teachers in Brother Sitole’s ward always sit around a table during teacher council meeting—to facilitate discussion. “It reminds us that everyone has an equal voice,” he says.

According to *Their* Needs

In Tokyo, Japan, Natsuko Soejima doubted she could teach well. “When I was called to be a youth Sunday School teacher,” she says, “I told the bishop I would be scared. But he said the call was from God, so I accepted.”

As a group, the class intimidated her because of the individual challenges they presented. Two of the youth had hearing disabilities. Some class members who had moved to Japan from other countries spoke only English. She also feared the age difference between her and her class members.

Then, in a teacher council meeting, Sister Soejima found an answer. “We talked about loving each class member, learning their names, praying for them

one by one, and teaching—guided by the Spirit—according to *their* needs,” she explains, “so that’s what I began to do.” She also did something else she’d learned in the council: “I used language that conveyed my love.”

The result? “My heart changed. I began to feel affection for my students. I cared about those who were missing and prayed for them too. As soon as one lesson ended, I started preparing for the next, to have time to think about teaching opportunities. I was overflowing with joy.”

Specific Answers

Brad Wilson, a Sunday School president in Minnesota, USA, makes sure teachers in the teacher council

Pillar



Hose



Spear



meeting don't leave until they've discussed how they're going to change because of what they've learned.

"We follow the outline provided in *Teaching in the Savior's Way*," says Brother Wilson. "We discuss teachers' experiences, then we discuss one of the suggested topics. As a facilitator, I ask questions and summarize thoughts. Then we practice implementation. We break into small groups and discuss, 'What am I going to do differently because of our meeting today?'"

Ron Goodson, a deacons quorum

instructor in the same ward, says he's impressed to see how Brother Wilson "coaches" the council. "We talk about how the Savior would teach," he says. "Then as you feel the Spirit, you think, 'This is something I should try with my class.' Thinking about the Savior changes your approach. It becomes less of 'I've got to prepare a lesson,' and more about, 'What do these deacons need and how can I help give them that?'"

He remembers writing in his journal, "I attended teacher council

meeting today, and here's what I need to do." In fact, his journal is full of such notes. He now prepares in advance: "Start early and you get promptings all week long." He asks the deacons what's going on in their lives: "I'm more effective in helping them when I know them better." And he's inviting deacons to help teach: "As they do, they learn better too."³

I Kept Singing

"In our council, we talked about how music can invite the Spirit," says



MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about teacher council meetings and *Teaching in the Savior's Way*, visit teaching.lds.org.

Jocelyn Herrington, a Primary teacher in the same Minnesota ward. “Later, I was teaching the Sunbeams. I thought, ‘I’ll sing while they’re coloring, and it will be nice.’ I started to sing, and they all stopped and listened. So I kept singing. It did bring the Spirit, and when I was done, they were reverent, waiting for me to speak. We had talked about that [in council] too, to bear your testimony when the opportunity comes. So I bore testimony in words they could understand.”

Sister Herrington says she appreciates Primary teachers being included in council meetings. “We talk about teaching adults,” she says, “but then Brother Wilson will say, ‘What about teaching youth? What about teaching children?’ He brings it back to our attention that all the different age ranges are there.”

From Council to Council

Adam Martin, a ward Sunday School president in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, says he appreciates suggestions from the ward council. “The Relief Society president or the elders quorum president will say, ‘We’d like teachers to focus on this,’ so we bring that up in teacher council [meeting],” he says.

When teacher council meetings first started, teachers weren’t sure what to expect, so he extended lots of personal invitations and introduced training materials available at teaching.lds.org. “Now the ball is rolling,” he says. “They know it’s a place to discuss what’s going on.”

CHANGES TO SUNDAY MEETINGS IN 2018

Beginning in January, changes are coming to Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings. These changes build on what members have learned in teacher council meetings. An explanation of the changes, including new lesson materials, will be provided—starting next month—in conference editions of the magazines, on the Gospel Library app, and on LDS.org.

One recent meeting focused on following the Spirit. “We talked about preparing well but not worrying about covering everything,” he says. “One sister said she had always felt she needed to talk about every item in her lesson plan. You could see the light go on for her when we talked about following inspiration as you guide a discussion.”

Finding Solutions Together

Each teaching situation includes its own opportunities, challenges, and potential blessings. That’s why councils are effective, because they allow teachers, with help from the Spirit, to seek and find answers to *their* specific challenges.

Geoffery Reid, a stake Sunday School president in Arizona, USA, says teacher council meetings work best when teachers understand that their purpose is to counsel: “Then they see that they can help each other.”

The stake, he says, is focusing on helping teachers to shift from thinking, “Am I performing well?” to thinking, “How is the message being received?”

Marisa Canova, a Primary teacher in the stake, says that in response to a prompting she felt in teacher council, she now encourages her Valiant 8 class members to pray for each other. That was effective, but it might not work the same way for an adult class. “Praying for every member in a large Gospel Doctrine class might be overwhelming,” she says. “Fortunately, those teachers say, ‘How do you think we can adapt that for our class?’ And we find solutions together.”

“What I appreciate about teacher council meetings,” she says, “is that they give us time to reflect on how we’re doing and what we’re doing. It’s helpful having support and feedback, feeling that you’re all working toward the same goal. I also like the different perspectives that multiple people bring to the table. It helps me consider things I definitely wouldn’t have considered on my own.”

As we participate and share in teacher council meetings, our vision of the elephant called “gospel teaching” begins to become clearer. Like Brother Sitole in Africa, many members around the Church are finding that as our ability to teach in the Savior’s way improves, it changes not only the way we teach but also the way we learn. ■

NOTES

1. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 12.2.2.
2. The parable is included in Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Jan. 13, 2013), broadcasts.lds.org; and Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is the Truth?” *Friend*, Mar. 2017, 2.
3. For more suggestions, see Brian K. Ashton, “Helping Youth Teach,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 66–67; *Liahona*, Aug. 2016, 24–25.



"Many [spirits] are anxiously looking forth to their friends who are still living to administer for them in the temples," my deceased great-grandfather said when he appeared to my grandfather A. C. Nelson.



Open THE Heavens

THROUGH TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY WORK



**By President
Russell M. Nelson**

President of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles
And by Wendy W.
Nelson

*During their 2017 RootsTech presentation,
President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Wendy,
invited Latter-day Saints to prayerfully consider
what kind of sacrifice they can make in order to do
more temple and family history work.*

President Nelson: When my grandfather A. C. Nelson was a young husband and father, just 27 years old, his father died. About three months later, his deceased father, my great-grandfather, came to visit him. The date of that visit was the night of April 6, 1891. Grandfather Nelson was so impressed by his father's visit that he wrote the experience in his journal for his family and friends.

"I was in bed when Father entered the room," Grandfather Nelson wrote. "He came and sat on the side of the bed. He said, 'Well, my son, as I had a few spare minutes, I received permission to come and see you for a few minutes. I am feeling well, my son, and have had very much to do since I died.'"

When Grandfather Nelson asked him what he had been doing, his father answered that he had been busy teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit world.

"You cannot imagine, my son, how many spirits there are in the spirit world who have not yet received the gospel," he said. "But many are receiving it, and a great work is being accomplished. Many are anxiously looking forth to their friends who are still living to administer for them in the temples."

Grandfather Nelson told his father, "We intend to go to the temple and get sealed to you, Father, as soon as we can."



A. C. Nelson, grandfather of President Russell M. Nelson.

My great-grandfather responded: “That, my son, is partly what I came to see you about. We will yet make a family and live throughout eternity.”

Then Grandfather Nelson asked, “Father, is the gospel as taught by this Church true?”

His father pointed to a picture of the First Presidency hanging on the wall of the bedroom.

“My son, just as sure as you see that picture, just as sure is the gospel true. The gospel of Jesus Christ has within it the power of saving every man and woman who will obey it, and in no other way can they ever obtain salvation in the kingdom of God. My son, always cling to the gospel. Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. Never do anything that would displease God. Oh, what a blessing is the gospel. My son, be a good boy.”

Sister Nelson: I just love all those B’s. “Be humble, be prayerful, be submissive to the priesthood, be true, be faithful to the covenants you have made with God. . . . Be a good boy.” Six B’s brought to you by your departed

great-grandfather. He certainly sounds a lot like President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) with his six B’s.¹

President Nelson: He does, doesn’t he? It’s so precious to me that my grandfather would leave that record for us. We learned that his father’s children were subsequently sealed to him. So the reason for his visit was accomplished.

The Spirit of Elijah

President Nelson: A name of great significance in the scriptures explains why the family is so important. That name is Elijah. EL-I-JAH in Hebrew literally means “Jehovah is my God.”² Think of it! Embedded in Elijah’s name are the Hebrew terms for both the Father and the Son.

Sister Nelson: Elijah was the last prophet to hold the sealing power of the Melchizedek Priesthood before the time of Jesus Christ. Elijah’s mission was to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to the children, so they could be sealed, or else “the whole earth would be *utterly wasted* at his coming” (Joseph Smith—History 1:39; emphasis added). That’s pretty strong language.

President Nelson: I like to think about the spirit of Elijah as “a manifestation of the Holy Ghost bearing witness of the divine nature of the family.”³ According to the Bible Dictionary, “The power of Elijah is the sealing power of the priesthood by which things bound or loosed on earth are bound or loosed in heaven” (“Elijah”).



Sister Nelson: So when we say that the spirit of Elijah is moving upon people to encourage them to seek after their kindred dead, we're really saying that the Holy Ghost is prompting us to do those things that will allow families to be sealed eternally.

President Nelson: It's wonderful to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers by telling important family history stories in ways that are accessible and memorable. Perhaps having family history documents, stories, photos, and memorabilia always before our eyes can strengthen our testimonies (see Mosiah 1:5). As we place them on our walls, our tables, our computers, our iPads, and even our cell phones, maybe we will be prompted to make better choices and draw closer to the Lord and to our families.

If we leave it at that level, however, we really haven't done enough. As Church members, our interest in family history work has been motivated by instruction from the Lord that our ancestors cannot be made perfect without us and that we cannot be made perfect without them (see D&C 128:15). That means we are to be linked together by the sacred sealing ordinances of the temple. We are to be strong links in the chain from our ancestors to our posterity. If our collections of stories and photos should ever become an end point in themselves—if we know who our ancestors are and know marvelous things about them, but we leave them stranded on the other side without their

ordinances—such diversion will not be of any help to our ancestors who remain confined in spirit prison.

Sister Nelson: Preserving ancestral stories is important, but it should never be at the expense of completing our ancestors' ordinance work. We need to make time for our ancestors' ordinance-qualifying information.

President Nelson: And that means sacrificing time we normally spend on other activities. We need to be spending more time in the temple and in doing family history research, which includes indexing.

Sister Nelson: Sacrifice does indeed bring forth the blessings of heaven.⁴ I have been blessed to find many ancestors who I feel confident were ready to make covenants with God and to receive their essential ordinances. Over time, I realized that if I was working on



an overwhelming project and I was out of time, energy, and ideas, if I would make a sacrifice of time by finding the ordinance-qualifying information for some ancestors or by going to the temple to be proxy for them, the heavens opened and the energy and ideas started flowing. Somehow I had enough time to meet my deadline. It was totally impossible, but it would happen every time. Temple and family history work bring me a joy that is truly not of this world.

Family History and Missionary Work

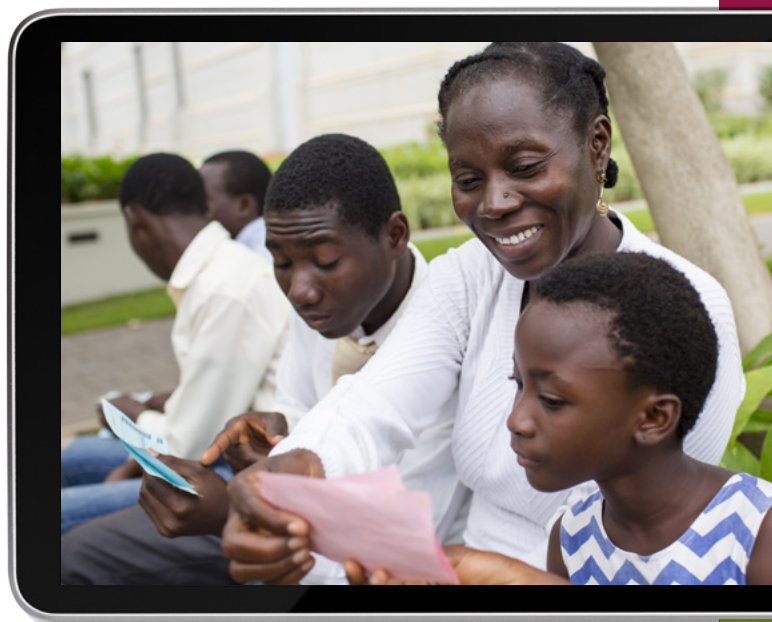
President Nelson: If I were a missionary today, my two best friends in the ward or branch where I served would be the ward mission leader and the ward temple and family history consultant.

People have an inborn desire to know something about their ancestors. That becomes a natural opportunity for our missionaries. As missionaries learn to love the people they teach, they will naturally ask about their families. “Are your parents living? Are your grandparents living? Do you know your four grandparents?” Conversations flow easily when those who are drawn to speak with the missionaries are invited to talk about the people they love.

At that point it can be natural for the missionaries, including member missionaries, to ask, “Do you know any of your great-grandparents? Do you know their names?” The probability is that investigators will not know the names of all eight of their great-grandparents.

Then the missionaries can make this suggestion: “I have a friend at our church who can help. If we could find the names of some or maybe even all of your great-grandparents, would it be worth a couple of hours of your time to find out who your great-grandparents are?” That friend at church, of course, is the ward temple and family history consultant.

Sister Nelson: I think it can be comforting for missionaries to know that they are never alone when they are finding and teaching those who are receptive to the truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. President George Q.



Cannon (1827–1901), who served as a counselor to four Presidents of the Church, taught that in these latter days, those who are joining the Church are joining precisely because their ancestors have been praying for one of their posterity to join the Church so that they, the ancestors, can receive their essential ordinances by proxy.⁵

Exaltation: A Family Affair

President Nelson: Exaltation is a family affair. Only through the saving ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ can families be exalted. The ultimate end for which we strive is that we become happy as a family—endowed, sealed, and prepared for eternal life in the presence of God.

Sister Nelson: Each Church class we attend, each time we serve, each covenant we make with God, each priesthood ordinance we receive, everything we do in the Church leads us to the holy temple, the house of the Lord. There is so much power available for a couple and for their children through the sealing ordinance when they keep their covenants.

President Nelson: Every day we choose where we want to live eternally by how we think, feel, speak, and act. Our Heavenly Father has declared that His work and His glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39). But He *wants* us to choose to return to Him. He will not force us in any



way. The precision with which we keep our covenants shows Him just how much we want to return to live with Him. Each day brings us closer to or farther from our glorious possibility of eternal life. We each need to keep our covenants, repent daily, and seek to be more like our Savior. Then and only then can families be together forever.

Sister Nelson: It is my testimony that however fabulous your life is right now, or however discouraging and heartbreaking it may be, your involvement in temple and family history work will make it better. What do you need in your life right now? More love? More joy? More self-mastery? More peace? More meaningful moments? More of a feeling that you're making a difference? More fun? More answers to your soul-searching questions? More heart-to-heart connections with others? More understanding of what you are reading in the scriptures? More ability to love and to forgive? More ability to pray with power? More inspiration and creative ideas for your work and other projects? More time for what really matters?

I entreat you to make a sacrifice of time to the Lord by increasing the time you spend doing temple and family history work, and then watch what happens. It is my testimony that when we show the Lord we are serious about helping our ancestors, the heavens will open and we will receive all that we need.

President Nelson: We can be inspired all day long about temple and family history experiences others have had. But we must do something to actually experience the joy ourselves. I would like to extend a challenge to each one of us so that the wonderful feeling of this work can continue and

even increase. I invite you to prayerfully consider what kind of sacrifice—preferably a sacrifice of time—you can make in order to do more temple and family history work this year.

We are engaged in the work of Almighty God. He lives. Jesus is the Christ. This is His Church. We are His covenant children. He can count on us. ■

From a presentation at the RootsTech 2017 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on February 11, 2017. To watch a recording of the presentation in English, Portuguese, or Spanish, visit lds.org/go/1017Nelson.

NOTES

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign*, Jan. 2001, 2–11; *Liahona*, Apr. 2001, 30–41.
2. Bible Dictionary, "Elijah."
3. Russell M. Nelson, "A New Harvest Time," *Ensign*, May 1998, 34.
4. See "Praise to the Man," *Hymns*, no. 27.
5. See *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, comp. Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. (1974), 2:88–89.



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: Temple Baptisms

There is no need to wait. All worthy members, including youth and new members, can serve in the temple now.

By Heather J. Johnson
Church Magazines

“Let us truly be a temple-attending and a temple-loving people,” said President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95). “We should hasten to the temple as frequently . . . as our personal circumstances allow. We should go not only

for our kindred dead but also for the personal blessing of temple worship, for the sanctity and safety that are within those hallowed and consecrated walls” (“A Temple-Motivated People,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1995, 5).

This counsel applies to all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—even if you are a recently

baptized member. As long as you are worthy, there is no waiting period before you can attend the temple. As soon as you are baptized and confirmed, you can obtain a limited-use temple recommend.

This recommend allows you to enter the temple to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations for deceased ancestors. As you serve and worship in the temple, you can strengthen your testimony of the gospel.

Of her first experience in the temple, Natalia Lorena Figueroa from Argentina said, “In the temple baptism, I watched a brother be baptized for my grandfather and my uncles. Then I was baptized for my grandmother and aunts. The joy I felt was incredible. Tears fell from my eyes, and I felt the burning in my breast as never before.” Similar blessings await those who qualify for and use limited-use temple recommends. ■



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I get a limited-use recommend?

- You must be age 12 or older and be a worthy member of the Church. Men must receive the Aaronic Priesthood, which can normally be done within a week of their baptism.
- To receive a recommend, your bishop or branch president interviews you. The interview is similar to the one you had before your baptism. You will discuss your testimony of the gospel and your observance of the commandments.
- The recommend is valid for a year.

What are some of the blessings of having a limited-use recommend?

- You can serve your deceased ancestors and others who have died by performing proxy baptisms and confirmations in their behalf.
- You can be reminded of your own baptism and confirmation and the covenants you've made.
- Even if you can't attend the temple often, you can carry your recommend with you as a constant reminder of the temple and your commitment to be worthy to attend.
- Living worthily of a limited-use recommend helps you prepare to receive your own temple ordinances of endowment and sealing.

How should I plan a visit to the temple?

- Ask a ward or branch leader, such as the ward mission leader or Relief Society president, for help in planning a visit to the temple.
- The schedules for each temple baptistry are posted online at temples.lds.org. You can also call the temple for information.
- If you are attending for the first time, you can call the temple to schedule an appointment. This way they will be prepared to welcome you and explain what you will do in the temple.



- Wear your Sunday best to the temple.
- Bring with you a change of white underclothing. Some temples provide white underclothing, but some do not. The temple will provide a white jumpsuit and towel.

What should I expect when I attend the temple to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations?

- When you enter the temple, you will first come to the recommend desk. A temple worker will check your recommend.
- Men and women then go to separate dressing rooms to change. Private locker spaces are provided to change from your clothes into a provided white jumpsuit.
- The temple workers will direct you where to go to perform proxy baptisms and confirmations.
- The baptisms and confirmations you take part in will be similar to your own baptism and confirmation, but you will be acting on behalf of a deceased person.
- After you have finished participating in the ordinances, you will go back to the dressing room and change into your own clothes.
- There is no need to be nervous about attending the temple. Temple workers are available everywhere you go in the temple. They will help you.

Resolving Conflict

in Your
Marriage



By S. Brent Scharman

Retired counselor, LDS Family Services

Matt and Margaret (all names have been changed) turned off the television following the concluding session of general conference. The messages had been inspiring, and they had enjoyed the positive atmosphere that had permeated their home that weekend.

Nobody could have been more disappointed than Matt and Margaret were when, less than 24 hours later, they were having a heated argument over whether to save an unexpected bonus Matt had received at work or spend it on school clothes for the older kids. The debate was not resolved, and Matt and Margaret each moved on to other tasks feeling misunderstood.

To create a lasting, happy marriage, couples must learn how to resolve conflicts so that each individual feels understood and decisions are made that involve acceptable compromise.

*Wonderful
blessings flow
from resolving
conflicts in
an atmosphere
of love.*



Spiritual Warning and Guidance

Scriptures and words of prophets and apostles provide ample cautions about contention. In 3 Nephi we read, “He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention” (3 Nephi 11:29). Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that Satan “works to drive a wedge of disharmony between a father and a mother. He entices children to be disobedient to their parents. . . . Satan knows that the surest and most effective way to disrupt the Lord’s work is to diminish the effectiveness of the family and the sanctity of the home.”¹

Differences of opinion, habit, or background are inevitable, but we have ample resources to help us know how to cope. Doctrine and instruction taught in Sunday worship and Church publications can help and can be supplemented with quality professional information as needed. Couples can learn methods for dealing with conflict. Inspiration can lead to changing hearts that soften each spouse from the inside.

President Thomas S. Monson cautioned: “Some of our greatest opportunities to demonstrate our love will be within the walls of our own homes. Love should be the very heart of family life, and yet sometimes it is not. There can be too much impatience, too much arguing, too many fights, too many tears.”²

When troubles persist and become destructive to family life, there can be more serious causes of conflict, including immaturity, selfishness, desire to win power struggles, and pride. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught, “I have long felt that the greatest factor in a happy marriage is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion. In most cases selfishness is the leading factor that causes argument, separation, divorce, and broken hearts.”³

Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles also commented: “When one considers the bad feeling and the unpleasantness caused by contention, it is well to ask, ‘Why do I participate?’ . . .

“ . . . It is important to recognize that we choose our behavior. At the root of this issue is the age-old problem of pride.”⁴

Whatever the cause, we need to learn new skills and soften our hearts when problems persist.

Causes of Conflict

There are many causes of conflict, ranging from superficial personal biases to deeper ingrained communication styles. In addition to overcoming selfishness and immaturity, couples will face other common causes of conflict, including factors such as the following:

Newlyweds learning to adjust to one another’s styles	Natural differences between men and women	Irritability prompted by exhaustion	Different opinions on how to best raise children or manage finances
Children learning to use agency	Different likes and dislikes	Overreactions to stress	Lack of understanding or skill in resolving conflict



Cautions about Anger

Many marital or family conflicts arise because of uncontrolled anger. If we're not careful, we can follow an angry incident with constant thinking about how we were wronged. The longer we ruminate the more reasons we can generate to justify our perspective. This brooding can prevent us from calming down, and when a second wave of anger emerges before the first is resolved, hormonal reactions can lead to additional outbursts.

For example, in a counseling session, Marilyn described how frustrating it had been to lie in bed after she and her husband had yelled at each other. "I knew

I was in the right," she said. "I knew he was going to flip on the light and apologize, but he never did. The more I thought about it, the madder I got. When I heard him start to snore, I couldn't stand it—I jumped out of bed and yelled at him some more and then went downstairs. Can you believe that he still didn't apologize?" Marilyn's experience is a good example of how not to deal with angry feelings.

Habits, even short-term ones, can seem hard to break.

But spouses can learn skills to help. Here are some useful practices:



Challenge thoughts quickly.

In our example, Marilyn could have said to herself, "It seems like I'm right, but I'm blowing it out of proportion. My relationship with my husband matters more to me than what we're arguing about."



Let it out in productive ways.

Yelling about your feelings won't help you "get it out of your system." The more you vent in an angry manner, the more intense your feelings will become.



Find a distraction.

Choose to think about something else or take a walk.



Listen to calming music
or read uplifting literature.



Start over.

Catch yourself in the beginning of a disagreement. Research has shown that the first three to five minutes of a conversation lays the foundation for what is likely to follow. Say, "This is going in a bad direction. Let's start over."



Allow your emotions to calm

before you try tackling a problem. Wait out the chemical reaction that may be taking place.



Write down your thoughts.

For some, this helps to increase self-awareness.



Steps to Resolving Conflict

Strengthening Marriage, an LDS Family Services manual, recommends three steps for resolving conflict: (1) expressing views, (2) exploring concerns, and (3) selecting mutually satisfying solutions.⁵ These steps are based on a communication and sharing model that is cooperative and addresses the issues of all concerned.

1. Expressing Views	2. Exploring Concerns	3. Selecting Mutually Satisfying Solutions
<p>Each individual shares views in an honest but non-attacking manner. Sometimes thoughtful reflection resolves the problem as it becomes clear the disagreement was merely a misunderstanding. For example, a wife who thinks her husband is selfishly insisting that she attend a high school basketball game with him instead of going out to dinner for a date might come to understand that he is less interested in basketball than in showing attention to a player who has stopped attending his Sunday School class.</p>	<p>Couples explore concerns at a deeper level. The focus is on understanding and accepting one another's concerns. Continuing the basketball example, the wife, while understanding her husband's concern for the student, might believe that he is developing a pattern of always putting the needs of others before those of the marriage. In this case, a more thoughtful discussion must be held in which each expresses feelings in a sensitive manner and opposition gives way to cooperation.</p>	<p>Couples brainstorm and decide on mutually satisfying solutions. The focus is on what each individual can do to address the concerns rather than on what their spouse can do. Such negotiation can test maturity and patience but, over time, lead to a belief that there is safety in expressing feelings and confidence that each person's desires will be addressed. Our couple may agree to spend one Friday night together at a basketball game, one Friday night in which the husband attends the game alone, and two Friday nights doing couple activities. It is not as important how the couple chooses to spend Friday night as it is that the quality of the decision-making process is satisfying to both.</p>



Results of Resolving Conflict

Wonderful blessings flow from resolving conflicts in an atmosphere of love. These include security; personal growth, which leads to inner peace; increased faith; enhanced character; and personal righteousness.

When conflicts are resolved, new patterns can take their place. The door then opens for spouses to express positive thoughts and demonstrate support. Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, said: “Words have surprising power, both to build up and to tear down. We can all probably remember negative words that brought us low and other words spoken with love that made our spirits soar. Choosing to say only that which is positive about—and to—others lifts and strengthens those around us and helps others follow in the Savior’s way.”⁶

Couples who have made long-term progress in resolving conflict reap desirable rewards. A husband of a previously troubled relationship said, “It’s hard for me to look back on how it used to be and believe that it was real. How could I have treated my wife the way I did? I’m grateful for the Spirit getting my attention and for the patience my wife has shown to me.”

Conclusion

Overcoming conflict takes conscious effort and follow-through. The very next thing you say or do can start more positive communication patterns in your marriage. You too can reap the fruits of the Spirit as experienced by the Nephites: “There was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

“And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults . . . ; and surely there could not be a happier people” (4 Nephi 1:15–16). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

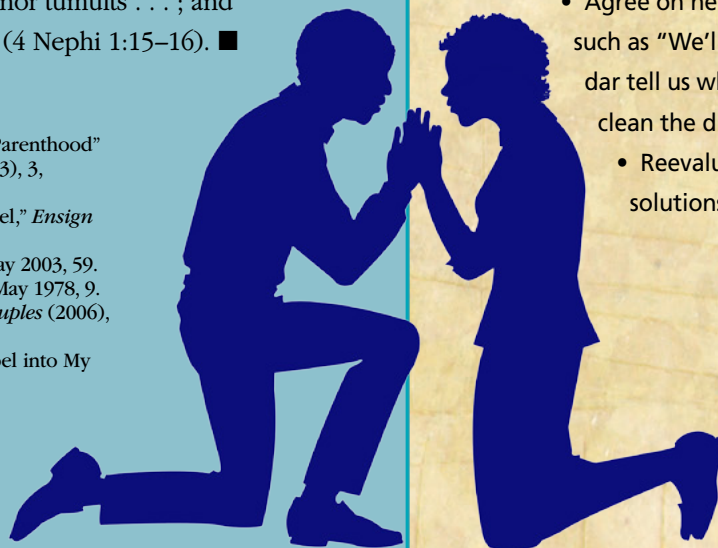
NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Sacred Responsibilities of Parenthood” (Brigham Young University devotional, Aug. 19, 2003), 3, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2014, 92.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Loyalty,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2003, 59.
4. Marvin J. Ashton, “No Time for Contention,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 9.
5. See *Strengthening Marriage: Resource Guide for Couples* (2006), 19–20.
6. Jean B. Bingham, “I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2016, 7.

Rules for Discussing Problems

Listed below are some ideas that increase the likelihood of successful conflict resolution:

- Seek spiritual help.
- Decide on a time and a place to talk if there is a serious history of problems.
- Seek to understand instead of argue.
- Let your spouse talk.
- Speak softly and be kind.
- Take a break as needed.
- Use appropriate language.
- Stay on topic. Discuss only the current concern.
- Never use violence.
- Do not threaten divorce or separation.
- Find measureable solutions, such as “I’ll initiate family prayer, and you conduct family home evening.”
- Plan on exceptions.
 - Agree on neutral reminders, such as “We’ll let the calendar tell us whose turn it is to clean the dishes.”
 - Reevaluate and revise solutions as needed.





Finding Help after Nancy's Death

*What did I need to do in order to activate
Jesus Christ's healing power in my life?*

By Darren Wilcox

In February of 2016, my wife Nancy passed away after an 11-year struggle with breast cancer. The overwhelming grief I felt in the first months after she died would be impossible to describe to one who has not experienced this kind of a loss. Sorrow, anguish, misery, pain—none of these words do it justice. It was unbearable.

The Savior's Healing Power

I have long understood that Jesus Christ “descended below all things” (D&C 88:6) so that He would be able “to succor [give relief or aid to] his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). This means that the power of the Savior's Atonement extends beyond providing for the Resurrection and for the redemption from sins. Through this power, He can also heal us in our times of suffering and need. In my grief, I urgently—almost frantically—tried to learn what I needed to do to activate this aspect of the Savior's power in my life. For weeks I searched the scriptures and talks by the General Authorities of the Church. I sincerely believed that, at the cost of considerable pain and sacrifice to Himself, the Savior knew the pain I was experiencing. But how did His knowing that help me? Since He suffered this *for* me, what did I need to do to receive the succoring that He thereby knows how to provide?

After much searching, study, prayer, and temple worship, I began to understand. First of all, I started to see more clearly that the Lord already had been succoring, comforting,

and supporting our family, especially in the weeks leading up to Nancy's death. There were marvelous spiritual experiences that I now recognize to be blessings that come from the healing and strengthening power available to us because of the Savior's Atonement. And just knowing that the Savior was already taking care of us in a very individualized way was, in and of itself, immensely comforting. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego of old, He has been with us in the “fiery furnace” (Daniel 3:17) of our affliction.

Trust in the Lord

I also learned that there are some things required of us in order to receive the Lord's comfort and healing. Most importantly, we have to trust in Him. That can be a difficult thing to do. Why should I trust in God when He could have prevented Nancy's death in the first place? In answer to this question, I continually ponder something that the Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith:

“Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation” (D&C 58:3).

We were blessed with many signs that the manner and timing of Nancy's death were according to the Lord's will. I have come to understand that an omniscient and loving Father has allowed us to suffer these things because, in His perfect design for our family's exaltation, this affliction is



ILLUSTRATION OF ATLANTA GEORGIA TEMPLE

somehow necessary. Knowing that, I understand that my part in His design is not just to endure it but to “endure it well” (D&C 121:8). To the extent that I can consecrate this tribulation to Him, I will be not only succored but also sanctified. I have already experienced this in many ways.

I have counseled our children to do what I have learned in this process myself:

- Let the pain of hard experiences drive you toward greater discipleship.
- Pour out your heart in prayer.
- If you feel anger toward God for allowing tragedies to happen, beseech Him to replace that anger with faith and submission.
- Covenant that you will love Him and be faithful to the end.
- Drink from the word of God constantly—from the scriptures and talks and writings of modern prophets and inspired teachers.
- Go to the temple with a hunger to be taught the things of eternity.
- Find people for whom a personal crisis is becoming a crisis of faith, and strengthen them with your testimony of these doctrines.

An Apostolic Witness

Approximately a month after Nancy’s death, there came a night when the grief I felt was absolutely crushing. I had been in very deep pain and sorrow all of that day. I remembered Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaching that “the path of salvation has always led . . . through Gethsemane.”¹ Though my suffering can’t be compared to the Savior’s, that night I was in the midst of my own “dark and bitter hours.”²

After experiencing this for some time and praying for help, there came into my mind something that I had read and bookmarked on my computer several years before. I located the document and scrolled down to what I was looking for. It was an interview with Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1928–2015) in which he was asked about losing his wife, Jeanene, to cancer in 1995. Elder Scott responded, “First of all, . . . I didn’t lose her. She’s on the other side of the veil. We’ve been sealed in that holy ordinance of the temple, and we’ll be together forever.”³

That night those words came with a power that I have never felt before. It was like a lighthouse beacon being switched on in a dark night. I have never read something that had such a sudden and profound effect on me. The

darkness and the pain were gone. It was like Alma when he could “remember [his] pains no more” (Alma 36:19). This apostolic witness penetrated me to the very core. I marveled that a concept I had understood since childhood could suddenly seem so remarkable. I found myself wondering how it was possible that Elder Scott could know something like this. And in the moment, I realized that I know it too. If I am faithful, I can have all of the hope that Elder Scott had. While there has certainly been sadness and mourning since then, I have never again felt the depths of pain and sorrow that I experienced that night.

This is the power the Savior extends to us to succor us in our trials. I know that our family’s grief will never completely disappear, but it becomes swallowed up in what have been called the “strengthening” and “perfecting” blessings of the Savior’s Atonement.⁴ We have drawn nearer to the Savior, have felt His assurances, and have been sustained by the certain foundation of our covenants. ■

The author lives in Georgia, USA.

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lessons from Liberty Jail” (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 7, 2008), 6, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Encircled in His Gentle Arms,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Mar. 2015, 5.
3. “A Sure Witness of Jesus Christ: Elder Richard G. Scott,” lds.org/prophets-and-apostles.
4. See Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Contrite Spirit: How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ’s Atonement* (2015), 34–52.



After an 11-year battle with breast cancer, Nancy Jean Newton Wilcox passed away in 2016.



STRENGTHENED BY JESUS CHRIST

“Isaiah taught that the Messiah would bear our ‘griefs’ and our ‘sorrows’ (Isaiah 53:4). Isaiah also taught of His strengthening us: ‘Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee’ (Isaiah 41:10). . . .

“And so we see that because of His Atonement, the Savior has the power to succor—to help—every mortal pain and affliction. Sometimes His power heals an infirmity, but the scriptures and our experiences teach that sometimes He succors or helps by giving us the strength or patience to endure our infirmities. . . .

“ . . . Our Savior’s Atonement does more than assure us of immortality by a universal resurrection and give us the opportunity to be cleansed from sin by repentance and baptism. His Atonement also provides the opportunity to call upon Him who has experienced all of our mortal infirmities to give us the strength to bear the burdens of mortality. He knows of our anguish, and He is there for us. Like the good Samaritan, when He finds us wounded at the wayside, He will bind up our wounds and care for us (see Luke 10:34). The healing and strengthening power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement is for all of us who will ask. I testify of that as I also testify of our Savior, who makes it all possible.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Strengthened by the Atonement of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 62, 64.



LET US BE **SELF-RELIANT** AND INDEPENDENT

As Latter-day Saints throughout the world embrace the principles and doctrines of the Church's self-reliance initiative, they are reaping the blessings of "greater hope, peace, and progress."

Before he became a member of the Church, Peter Uglow had spent most of his adult life chasing financial success. By all outward appearances, he seemed to have found it. After all, he had owned and run several businesses.

When a local Church leader in West Midlands, England, asked Peter to join a personal finances group offered through the Church's self-reliance initiative, he doubted that the course could teach him anything. Once Peter started attending the group, however, he quickly realized how much he still had to learn.

"The course is not just about finances; that is only half of the story," he says. "The most important thing for me was learning to have faith in Heavenly Father—how He provides us all temporal blessings and opens the door to true self-reliance if we follow His spiritual guidance."

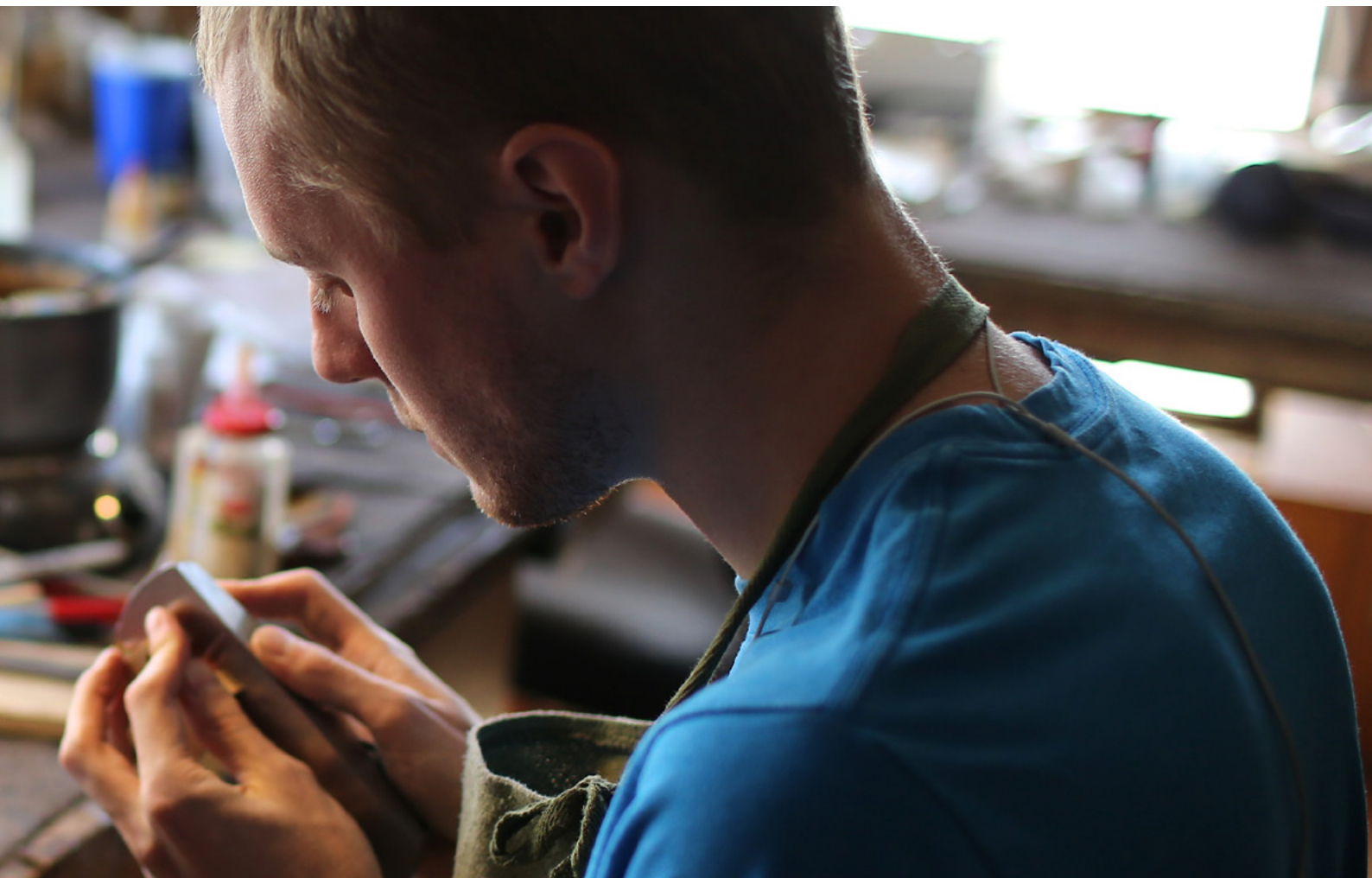
As a member of a personal finances group, Peter learned practical skills such as tracking family spending,

creating and living on a budget, reducing debt, and saving for the future. Using these skills, along with exercising faith in Jesus Christ and working hard, Peter and his wife repaid a large debt.

"I am feeling significantly lighter and freer without the fear associated with debt and financial disorganization," he says. "I am feeling the abundant blessings of Heavenly Father in a way I have never felt before. I have learned how to petition Him and listen to His answers when I need help with my temporal affairs."

Self-Reliance Initiative

Self-reliance is more than having a good job, food storage, or money in the bank. Rather, it is "the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family. As [Church] members become self-reliant, they are also better able to serve and care for others"¹ as they enthrone work as a ruling principle in their lives.



President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “*Self-reliance* is a product of our work and undergirds all other welfare practices. It is an essential element in our spiritual as well as our temporal well-being. . . . ‘Let us work for what we need. Let us be self-reliant and independent. Salvation can be obtained on no other principle. Salvation is an individual matter, and we must work out our own salvation in temporal as well as in spiritual things.’”²

Under the direction of local priesthood leaders, more than 500,000 Latter-day Saints in more than 100 nations have participated in the self-reliance initiative since 2014. The Church is now introducing the initiative throughout North America.

The initiative includes courses and resources “to help members of the Church learn and put into practice principles of faith, education, hard work, and trust in the Lord. Accepting and living these principles,” the First Presidency says, “will better enable [us] to receive the temporal blessings promised by the Lord.”³

Happy and Hopeful

Maria Edilene Romão had lost hope. She couldn’t find a job, she was a single mother, and she had several children to feed.

That’s when two members of her ward in Santa Catarina, Brazil, invited her to a self-reliance devotional. At the end of the devotional, Maria joined a group to help her find a job.

“For the first time in my life, I believed in a future where I could take care of my family,” she remembers. “I believed that the self-reliance group was going to help me change my life.”

It did.

During the next 12 weeks, Maria dedicated herself to her group, her studies, and her commitments. She worked with newfound energy toward her goals. She practiced job-interviewing techniques. Within two weeks, she secured a promising job interview. That interview landed her a job.

YOU'RE INVITED

The path to greater self-reliance starts with an invitation to a My Path to Self-Reliance devotional. At the devotional, you'll be encouraged to evaluate your current situation, establish a plan for moving forward, and then take your plan to the Lord. At the end of the devotional, you'll be invited to choose a self-reliance group that can help you:

- Find a job or improve your employment situation.
- Better manage your personal and family finances.
- Choose an education path and succeed in school.
- Start or grow your small business.

In your self-reliance group, you will:

- Attend a weekly two-hour group meeting for three months.
- Develop and act on personal commitments to achieve self-reliance goals.
- Learn from, counsel with, and support other group members.
- Gain greater faith in Jesus Christ and in His power to help you help yourself become self-reliant.

A self-reliance group functions like a council.

Participants help each other and are accountable to each other. Group facilitators invite interaction, encourage participation, show training videos, and help self-reliance groups follow the process as outlined in related materials.

Members can find videos and materials used in self-reliance training at srs.lds.org or on the Gospel Library mobile app.

"My life is changed forever," says Maria, who no longer struggles to feed her family. "Now I am happy, excited, patient, and hopeful. I believe that Heavenly Father lives and loves me. I know that when I exercise my faith in Jesus Christ, I am blessed."

"The Most Fantastic Tool"

Self-reliance is a means to a higher end, said Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance."

Only when we become self-sufficient, Elder Hales added, "can we truly emulate the Savior in serving and blessing others."⁴

Sergio Galbuchi learned that truth for himself when he started his own business shortly after the stake presidency called him as a stake self-reliance specialist. Armed with faith, skills, and knowledge he had gained as a member of the committee, Sergio and his wife, Silvia, opened a shop in Buenos Aires featuring "crafts and flavors" of Argentina.

"I think becoming self-reliant is a way to apply faith," says Sergio. Early on, he and Silvia did not enjoy the success they had hoped for, so faith remained central to their endeavor. But while they waited on financial fruits, they worked hard and blessed customers with their products *and* their missionary efforts.

"We get to know many people," Sergio says. "And we've had the chance to give away copies of the Book of Mormon."

Initially, the stake self-reliance committee identified 10 members in Sergio's stake who needed help with self-reliance. But then the bishops got involved.

"Now we know of 35 individuals in need," said Sergio as the effort grew. "Their bishops invited them individually to participate in groups."

Their faith blossomed, they made needed changes, and they employed new skills.





REVELATION AND SELF-RELIANCE

State and district presidencies implement, direct, and guide the Church's self-reliance initiative. They do this by working closely with the Relief Society and by organizing a self-reliance committee.

The committee includes a member of the stake high council, a member of the stake Relief Society presidency, the chairman of the bishops' welfare council, and stake self-reliance specialists. The committee trains and encourages ward councils to pray about and invite members to participate in the initiative. They organize self-reliance groups and work with the local Self-Reliance Services manager to gather and share community resources.

"The aim of the Church's self-reliance initiative is to help individuals receive personal revelation through obedience to key gospel principles. Facilitators are called to create an environment [through interactive discussion] where such revelation can occur, because it is the Holy Ghost, not a teacher, who can teach someone 'all things what ye should do' (2 Nephi 31:3; 32:5)."⁵

Priesthood leaders and members can find out more information at srs.lds.org.

"Every time I talk with priesthood leaders, I try to express to them that this is the most fantastic tool we've ever received from the First Presidency," Sergio adds. "It's better than any money that could be given to aid someone, and its teachings are clearer than much of the material that I learned when I was a university student."

Most important, those who complete their 12-week self-reliance courses become better disciples of Jesus Christ and learn how to use their skills to build the kingdom of God.

"This [self-reliance] group doesn't just focus on our business; it focuses on our relationship with God and others," Sergio says. "We become better disciples of Jesus Christ during our three months spent in this group. After all, maybe a business will help us become more self-reliant, but the ultimate purpose is to serve."



SELF-RELIANT AND INDEPENDENT

"The Church and its members are commanded by the Lord to be self-reliant and independent. (See D&C 78:13–14.)

"The responsibility for each person's social, emotional, spiritual, physical, or economic well-being rests first upon himself, second upon his family, and third upon the Church if he is a faithful member thereof."

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball (2006), 116.



Growth and Action

“It has always been a cardinal teaching with the Latter-day Saints,” said President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918), “that a religion which has not the power to save people temporally and make them prosperous and happy here, cannot be depended upon to save them spiritually, to exalt them in the life to come.”⁶

We should not be surprised, then, that by strengthening the temporal, we also strengthen the spiritual. Elder David and Sister Theresa Nish, who served as self-reliance missionaries in the Solomon Islands, saw that correlation firsthand among members of the Church there.

“Spiritual growth and temple attendance are clearly attributed to the principles, skills, and habits taught in *My Foundation* and to the comprehensive explanation in *My Path to Self-Reliance*,” they say of the initiative’s booklets. “[They] are helping people make spiritual as well as temporal progress, leading to spiritual and temporal self-reliance.”

Cheryl Redd, a self-reliance facilitator in Utah, USA, explains how the initiative’s spiritual principles have

helped her progress temporally: “I realized that these principles and foundations can apply to all aspects of our lives. These workshops have helped me become more focused on my responsibilities as a wife and mother. I now have the tools to better understand family finances. I see how working together with our spouses to manage finances is, in a way, a business. We need these tools for our families to succeed.”

Throughout the Church, this increased vision is translating into increased faithfulness and spiritual strength. As a result, members have increased their commitments to attend church, pay tithes, and remain temple worthy.

“It caught my attention,” says new member George Echevarría of the self-reliance initiative. George, who drives a taxi in Peru, says the initiative helped him gain a testimony of the gospel while filling him with a desire to improve himself. Now he hopes to become an electrician, fixing the small moto-taxis he has driven for years.

“We shouldn’t sit and wait for things to happen to us,” he says. “We should be proactive.”

“Your Life Will Be Blessed”

Latter-day Saints throughout the world are reaping the Lord’s promised blessings as they diligently learn, live, and apply the principles of spiritual and temporal self-reliance. While everyone can benefit, the initiative has especially blessed those who either lack or need strengthening in temporal and spiritual self-reliance. The Perpetual Education Fund supports the self-reliance initiative by helping those who have a plan for educational training to access necessary resources.

The scriptures promise the Lord’s help as we work toward self-reliance. He has said, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15).

Commenting on that purpose, the First Presidency has declared: “This revelation is a promise from the Lord that He will provide temporal blessings and open the door of self-reliance, which is the ability for us to provide the necessities of life for ourselves and our family members.”

As we study, apply, and teach these principles to family members, the First Presidency promises, “your life will be



THE ESSENCE OF OUR RELIGION

“Like two sides of a coin, the temporal and spiritual are inseparable. . . .

“This work of providing in the Lord’s way is not simply another item in the catalog of programs of the Church.

It cannot be neglected or set aside. It is central to our doctrine; it is the essence of our religion.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Providing in the Lord’s Way,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 53, 55–56.

blessed. You will learn how to act on your path toward greater self-reliance. You will be blessed with greater hope, peace, and progress.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 6.1.1.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Guiding Principles of Personal and Family Welfare,” *Ensign*, Sept. 1986, 3; see also Marion G. Romney, in Welfare Services Meeting Report, Oct. 2, 1976, 13.
3. First Presidency, in *My Foundation: Principles, Skills, Habits* (booklet, 2015), 2.
4. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” in *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (booklet, 2009), 2.
5. *You’re Invited: An Overview of Self-Reliance Services for Priesthood Leaders* (booklet, 2016), 11.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 164.
7. First Presidency, in *My Foundation*, 2.



Service isn't always convenient, but as a father and a bishop, Ilir Dodaj has tried to show his children that it is always worth it.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Ilir Dodaj

Durrës, Albania

An older sister in the ward had a tumor in her stomach and needed help every day because she could not move from her bed. Finally, she asked if just I would come, not another priesthood holder or any other person, because she was very sick and was going to die. She felt comfortable having her bishop help her.

One day I had an operation on my heart, and I was unable to visit her for a short time. When I went back to see her, she said, "Bishop, how can you come help me if you've just had an operation?"

I told her, "My calling is to serve others."

See more photos of Bishop Dodaj and his family at lds.org/go/101738.

To learn more about the work of a bishop, visit lds.org/topics/bishop.





HEAVENLY FATHER CARES ABOUT MY BUSINESS

As a single mother of five children, I felt the heavy responsibility of providing for my family. I am a domestic worker, but my job does not provide enough for my family. I joined a self-reliance group so I could learn how to improve my situation.

I was inspired by the “Starting and Growing My Business” group and decided that I could sew and sell insulated bags for slow cookers. I would sew the bags late into the night after

returning home from my day job.

I was working late one night on a large order that was due the next morning when my sewing machine stopped working. It was midnight, so no mechanics would be available to help. The machine came with a small tool kit, but I had never fixed a sewing machine before. I had no idea where to start.

Then the lesson in the *My Foundation* manual titled “Exercise Faith in

Jesus Christ” came to my mind. At that time, I knew that I needed to put my trust in the Lord. I sank to my knees and pleaded: “Heavenly Father, please help me fix this machine so I can make the order for my customer to collect in the morning. Heavenly Father, help me!”

Then I had the distinct impression to take the screwdriver from the tool kit and use it to push on a particular part of the sewing machine. I did so, relying completely on my faith. I held my breath as I switched the machine back on. It worked!

I was able to meet the deadline for the order. I discovered what it’s like to have Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as business partners. I know I will continue to be blessed as I seek for opportunities to apply what I’ve learned in the self-reliance group. ■

Buyisile Zuma, KwaZulu-Natal,
South Africa

I was working late one night on a large order that was due the next morning when my sewing machine stopped working.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS

AN INSPIRED ANSWER AT A JOB INTERVIEW

After I was assigned to lead a stake self-reliance committee, I realized that I was underemployed myself. With this realization, I desired more from my professional life.

I felt a renewed desire to find a better job and asked for help to write a professional résumé. I sent my new résumé to several businesses and was soon called for interviews.

At one, the interviewer pointed out a line on my résumé that mentioned my work as a counselor in the stake presidency and asked, “Could you tell me in five seconds what this church service means?”

I said that I was in the leadership of an organization responsible for the guidance and welfare of more than 2,500 people. The interviewer became interested and said, “You have one minute to decide how to give me a five-second response to this question: how do you guide those 2,500 people?”

I knew that this would be the defining moment in the interview. I prayed

and asked my Heavenly Father for help and quickly remembered the lessons I had learned from the self-reliance group. I felt a surge of confidence.

After one minute, the interviewer asked, “How do you guide those 2,500 people?”

“We help them establish goals,” I answered.

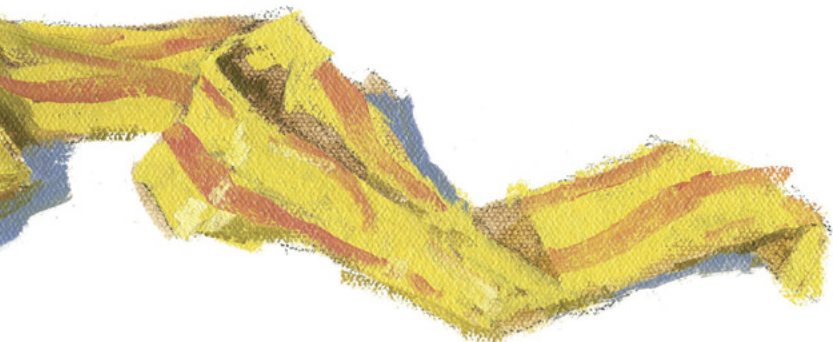
I knew that these five seconds would be the defining moment in the interview. I prayed and asked my Heavenly Father for help.

The interviewer stood, shook my hand, and said, “You’re hired.”

It is amazing how God took my hand and answered my prayer. I am grateful to my Savior for inspiring our leaders to create the self-reliance initiative. I have been personally blessed by it, and I have seen the simple, inspired processes of the self-reliance initiative bless many others in our stake. I am so convinced of the ability of self-reliance principles to lift lives that when I became a leader over 15 employees in my new job, I began teaching them the principles of self-reliance.

I have grown and I am more capable than I thought I could be. I now earn a salary that sustains me and my family. This initiative helps us improve each day by helping us find greater self-reliance. ■

Gibair Padilha Dos Santos,
São Paulo, Brazil



GROWING MY RICE CAKE BUSINESS

I wanted to send my son on a mission, but selling one kilo (2 lbs.) of *bibingka* (rice cakes) a week wasn't enough to be able to support him on a mission.

My son helped the family financially and was too worried about our financial condition to feel comfortable leaving. It was a constant struggle for our family to make money. I was proud of my 25-year-old son for his righteous desire to serve the Lord, but I realized that we would need some kind of miracle to make his dream of serving a mission come true.

I joined a self-reliance group. By being proactive and exercising my faith, I knew that my family would be blessed. During one meeting, I was prompted to go to a public market. There, I saw many women selling native snacks. I made a deal with one woman. I told her I would leave my products in the morning for her to sell and collect the profits at the end of the day. The arrangement was beneficial to both of us. I soon found more sellers. My business grew to 10 sellers during my time in the self-reliance group.

I learned to separate my personal money from my business money and pay myself a salary. I learned to stop spending time making products that didn't sell and focus instead on what was profitable. I also learned about marketing with social media. My action partner from the self-reliance group helped me create a Facebook account. From there, we learned about branding and packaging. My business eventually grew to the point that my husband could quit his physically



GAINING SELF-RESPECT THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE

demanding job and work with me.

Someone recently asked me how my sales were going. I proudly told him I am now selling 12 kilos (26 lbs.) of rice cakes.

“12 kilos a week is great!” he said.

“No, brother,” I said. “I sell 12 kilos *per day*.”

My son later told me he was happy that my business could now provide for our needs.

“Looks like I can serve a full-time mission now,” he said.

He is now serving in the Philippines San Pablo Mission. I am so grateful for the self-reliance initiative. The Lord truly meant it when He said, “It is my purpose to provide for my saints” (D&C 104:15). ■

Lordita Yagomyom, Misamis Occidental, Philippines

During one self-reliance group meeting, I was prompted to go to a public market. I made a deal with one woman to sell my rice cakes.

I was married, I had three kids, and I was unemployed. A work drought left me feeling hopeless. I worried about the safety of my family, and I stopped believing in myself.

My wife, Carla, encouraged me to attend a self-reliance group. It was embarrassing for me to admit that I didn’t have work, but she encouraged me to attend the group so I could take care of our family.

I reluctantly gave it a try. While attending the group, I realized that my English skills could be a valuable asset in the job world. I had studied English on my mission, but I only knew how to speak about religion. I enrolled in English classes offered by the Church to improve my vocabulary. When I returned home from English class one day, Carla handed me the phone.

“Who is it?” I asked.

“I don’t know,” she replied. “They’re speaking in English.”

It was a human resources representative from one of the biggest

companies in Costa Rica asking to interview me. I was stunned, but the interview went remarkably well. I later learned that Carla had set up the interview.

I got the job, and I remembered how my self-reliance group had helped me. Then I thought about how I could better apply what I learned. I started looking for an even better job and got one. Then I worked toward starting my own construction business.

I can’t imagine where my family and I would be without the start we received from the self-reliance initiative. I learned to be humble and to ask the Lord for help. I also learned to allow those who wanted to help me to bless my life. We have so many blessings. I now have self-respect, and I can bless my family with the money I earn. I know the Spirit blesses us when we are humble. ■

José Alberto Navas (as told to Miriam Sweeney), San José, Costa Rica



Five Lessons for Young Adults from Young Apostles

By Matthew C. Godfrey
Church History Department

They were between the ages of 23 and 35, yet they helped change the world. The first

Apostles of the restored Church were young. Some felt inadequate. Some made mistakes. But they all made a difference. Here are five lessons we can learn from their experiences.

1. You Don't Have to Feel Good Enough to Be Good Enough

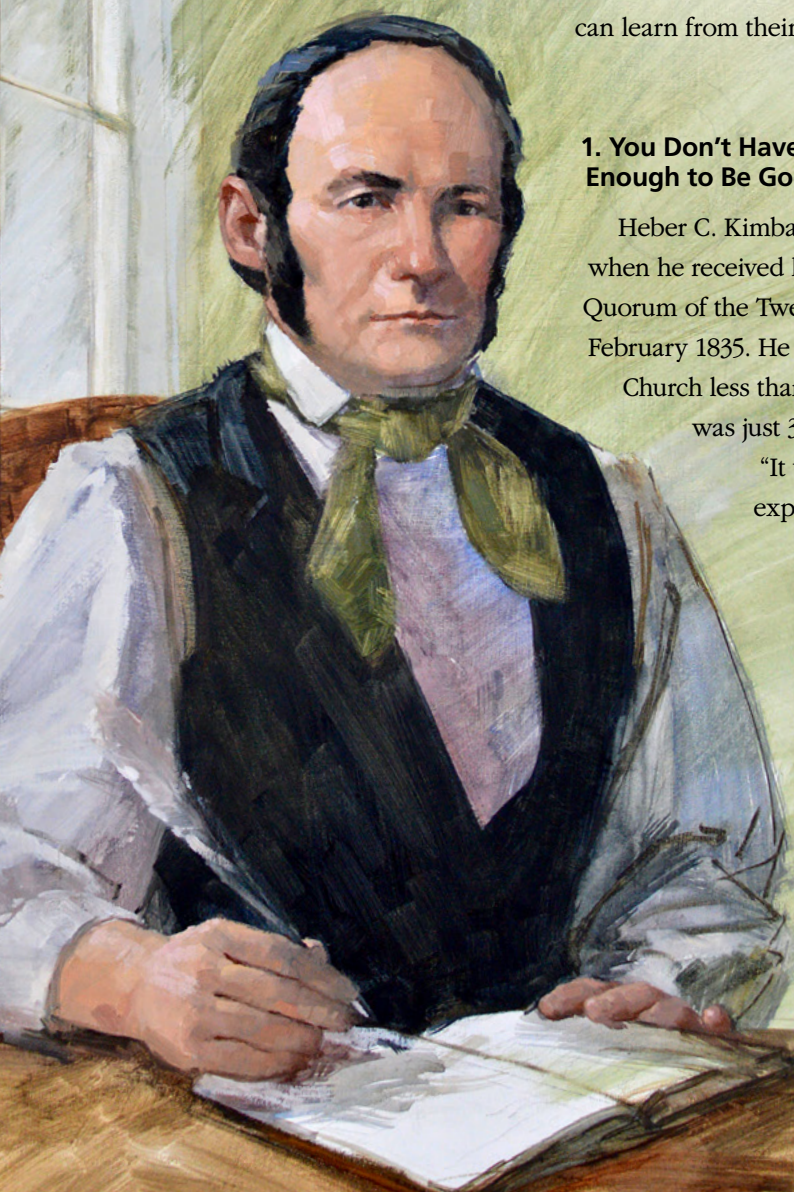
Heber C. Kimball felt inadequate when he received his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in February 1835. He had been in the Church less than three years and was just 33 years old.

"It was far from my expectation," Heber

**What can
we learn today
from the experi-
ences of the first
Apostles of the
Restoration?**

later recalled.¹ But he was willing to accept the calling, and in his ordination blessing he was told "that many millions" would "be converted by his instrumentality."²

As an Apostle he served two highly successful missions to England. He converted a host of individuals whose descendants may very well number in the millions today. For Heber, going forward even when he felt he had little to give blessed him and many others.





2. We Are Defined by Decisions, Not Circumstances

Thomas B. Marsh ran away from home in New Hampshire at age 14. He worked as a farm laborer in Vermont; as a waiter in Albany, New York; at a hotel in New York City; then as a servant on Long Island. His circumstances were unstable until he met and married Elizabeth Godkin.

He and Elizabeth were eventually led by the Spirit to western New York. There, they heard about the Book of

Mormon. Thomas saw copies of the first 16 pages as they came off the press, and the printer allowed him to read the proof sheet. Believing the book to be of God, Thomas chose to join the Church. He was baptized on September 3, 1830.³

Thomas preached the gospel in various areas. He endured tribulation when the Saints were ejected from Jackson County, Missouri, in November 1833. He was an original member of the Missouri high council when it

was organized in July 1834. After his calling as an Apostle at age 34, he served as President of the Quorum of the Twelve. Though he had earnestly defended Joseph Smith against dissenters in the past, Thomas himself eventually became disillusioned. In 1838 he chose to leave the Church.⁴

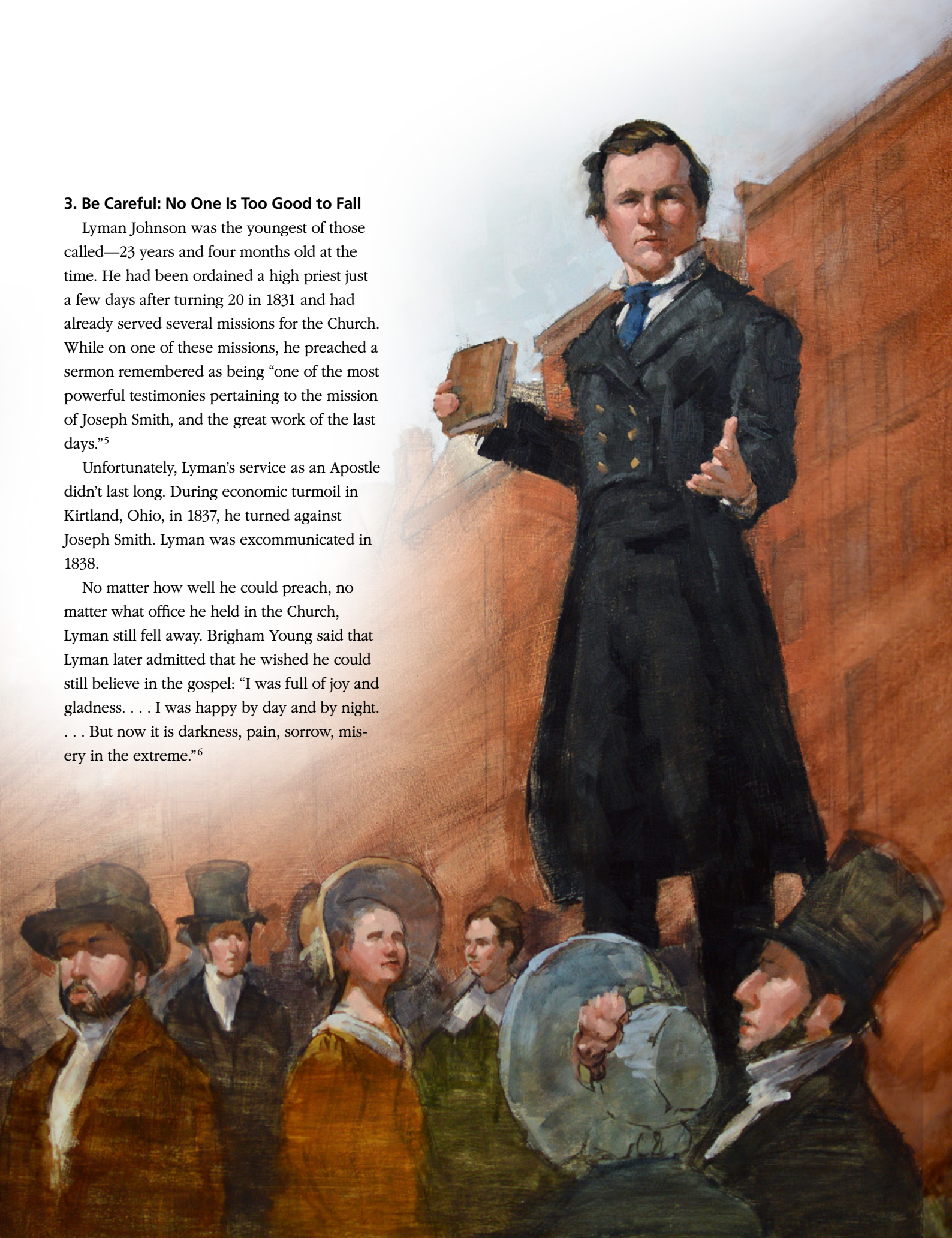
From Thomas Marsh we can learn that unstable circumstances don't need to keep us from the blessings of the gospel—or from blessing the lives of others.

3. Be Careful: No One Is Too Good to Fall

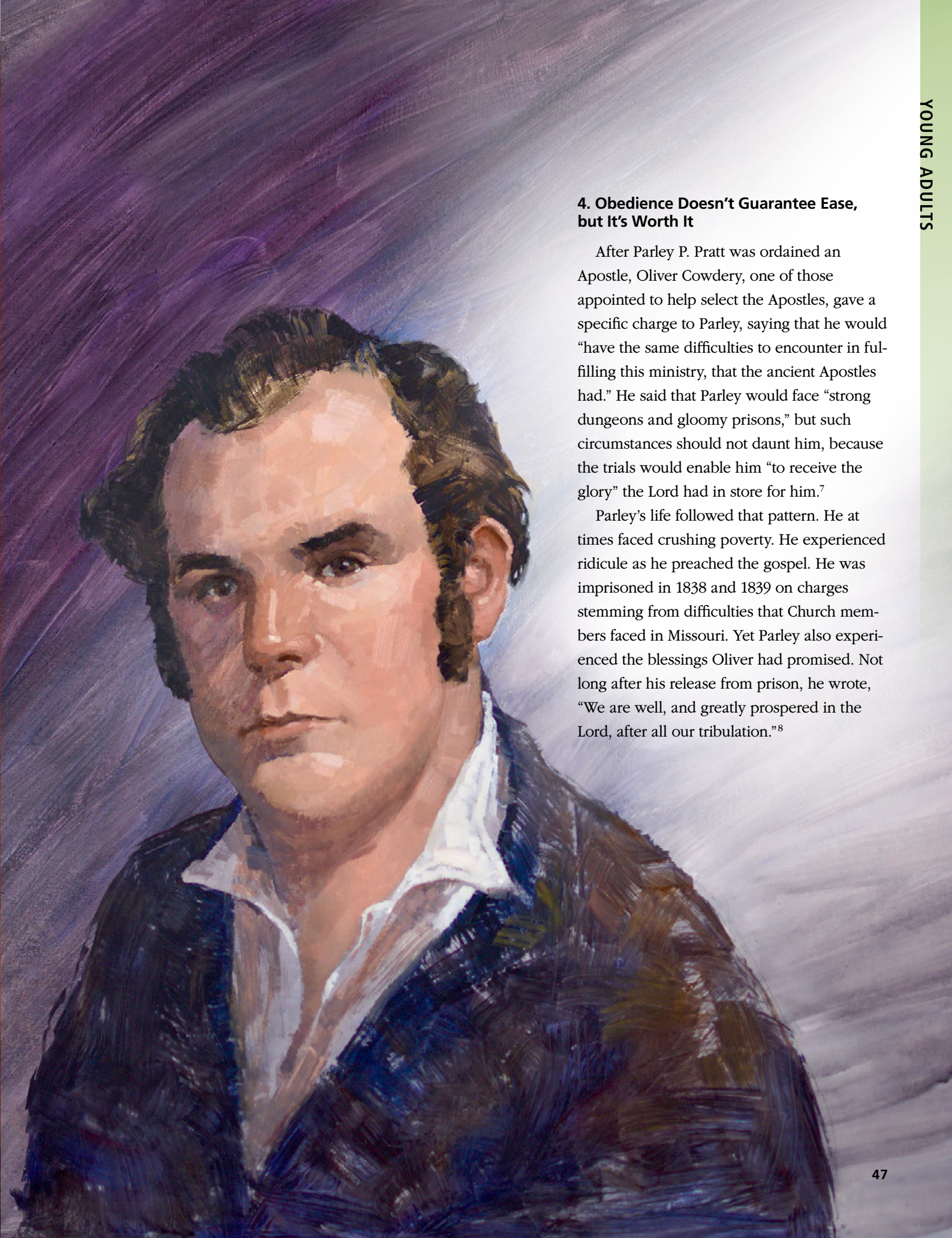
Lyman Johnson was the youngest of those called—23 years and four months old at the time. He had been ordained a high priest just a few days after turning 20 in 1831 and had already served several missions for the Church. While on one of these missions, he preached a sermon remembered as being “one of the most powerful testimonies pertaining to the mission of Joseph Smith, and the great work of the last days.”⁵

Unfortunately, Lyman’s service as an Apostle didn’t last long. During economic turmoil in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1837, he turned against Joseph Smith. Lyman was excommunicated in 1838.

No matter how well he could preach, no matter what office he held in the Church, Lyman still fell away. Brigham Young said that Lyman later admitted that he wished he could still believe in the gospel: “I was full of joy and gladness. . . . I was happy by day and by night. . . . But now it is darkness, pain, sorrow, misery in the extreme.”⁶



4. Obedience Doesn't Guarantee Ease, but It's Worth It



After Parley P. Pratt was ordained an Apostle, Oliver Cowdery, one of those appointed to help select the Apostles, gave a specific charge to Parley, saying that he would “have the same difficulties to encounter in fulfilling this ministry, that the ancient Apostles had.” He said that Parley would face “strong dungeons and gloomy prisons,” but such circumstances should not daunt him, because the trials would enable him “to receive the glory” the Lord had in store for him.⁷

Parley's life followed that pattern. He at times faced crushing poverty. He experienced ridicule as he preached the gospel. He was imprisoned in 1838 and 1839 on charges stemming from difficulties that Church members faced in Missouri. Yet Parley also experienced the blessings Oliver had promised. Not long after his release from prison, he wrote, “We are well, and greatly prospered in the Lord, after all our tribulation.”⁸

5. Age Doesn't Matter as Much as Faith

Orson Pratt, Parley's brother, was the second youngest of the Apostles. Ordained at 23, he was only a few weeks older than Lyman Johnson. The service that Orson had already rendered to the Church provides an excellent example of how young adults can be a force for good.

Orson was baptized on September 19, 1830—his 19th birthday. Shortly after, Joseph Smith received a revelation for him that said that Orson was God's son, that he was blessed because he believed, and that his responsibility was to preach the gospel (see D&C 34:3–6). Accordingly, Orson served numerous missions, including one with Lyman Johnson in 1832 in which they baptized nearly 100 individuals and ordained several elders.

When Orson was called as an Apostle, he was not in Kirtland.

On April 23, 1835, in the city of Columbus, he learned that his presence was required at a meeting in Kirtland on April 26th.

Not knowing the purpose of the meeting, he immediately made his way there. Unaware that he had been called as an Apostle, he walked in while the congregation was “praying, and wishing for his arrival.”⁹ Feeling the support of the Saints, Orson accepted his call.

As an Apostle, he prepared a pamphlet that contained the earliest printed account of Joseph Smith's First Vision. As a pioneer in 1847, he kept a detailed record of the trek west. He also wrote many missionary pamphlets and was a strong defender of the Book of Mormon.

Today Is Different . . . Or Is It?

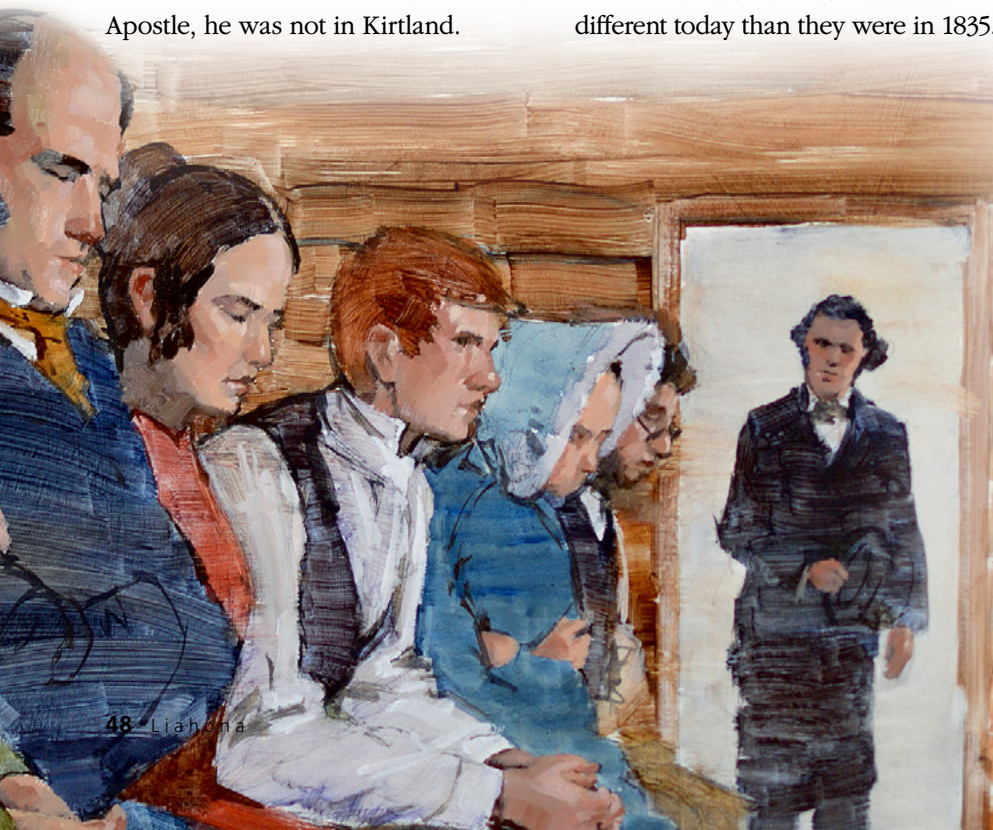
In many ways, young adults *are* different today than they were in 1835.

And yet these lessons can help young adults today in their efforts to live up to their potential. Here's a summary:

- If you feel inadequate, move forward anyway.
- Everyone has challenges. You can overcome yours.
- You'll be happier if you stay active in the Church.
- Stay committed. Be obedient and faithful. Blessings will come.
- You've got something important to give. The Lord is counting on you. ■

NOTES

1. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 868.
2. “Minutes, Discourse, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, ed. Matthew C. Godfrey and others (2016), 229.
3. See “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *The Deseret News*, Mar. 24, 1858, 18.
4. See “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *The Deseret News*, Mar. 24, 1858, 18; Kay Darowski, “The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, Matthew McBride and James Goldberg, eds. (2016), 57–59.
5. Edward W. Tullidge, *Tullidge's Histories* (1889), vol. 2 (supplement), 175.
6. Brigham Young, Discourse, June 17, 1877, in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:41.
7. Oliver Cowdery, in “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February, 1835,” in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 240–41.
8. “Letter from Parley P. Pratt, 22 November 1839,” josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-parley-p-pratt-22-november-1839/1.
9. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball's Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 869.



The Calling of the Restoration's Original Apostles

On February 8, 1835, Joseph Smith asked brothers Brigham and Joseph Young to sing to him. The Prophet then received a revelation that it was time for the Twelve Apostles to be called.¹

Joseph Smith asked Brigham to send out a notice that a conference would be held the following Saturday. He told Brigham that he would be one of the Twelve.²

Six days later, the Saints gathered. Joseph Smith said that one of the primary purposes of the meeting was for the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—to “choose twelve men from the church as Apostles.”³ Oliver and David had previously received that assignment in June 1829, but although they had “sought the Lord by fasting and prayer” to identify the Twelve, the time had not yet been right.⁴ Now, Joseph said, the time had come.

The Twelve (in the order presented at the meeting) were Lyman Johnson, age 23; Brigham Young, 33; Heber C. Kimball, 33;

Orson Hyde, 30; David W. Patten, 35; Luke Johnson, 27; William E. McLellin, 29; John F. Boynton, 23; Orson Pratt, 23; William Smith, 23; Thomas B. Marsh, 34; and Parley P. Pratt, 27. All had previously served missions. Eight had accompanied Joseph Smith on the Zion’s Camp expedition the previous summer.⁵

After their designation, each of the Apostles was ordained.⁶ Their ordination blessings were filled with promises of missionary success. Heber C. Kimball later remembered the blessings “predicted many things which should come to pass, that we should have power to heal the sick, cast out devils, raise the dead, give sight to the blind, . . . remove mountains, and all things should be subject to us through the name of Jesus Christ.”⁷

Oliver Cowdery also emphasized the difficulties they would face: “Be prepared at all times to make a sacrifice [*sic*] of your lives, should God require them in the advancement and building up of his cause.” Oliver encouraged the Apostles to seek personal knowledge of Jesus Christ so

that they could testify of His existence with surety: “Never cease striving until you have seen God, face to face.”⁸

Beginning in May 1835, the Apostles undertook several proselyting missions for the Church, and their general leadership also blessed many individuals. ■

NOTES

1. See “History, 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church), volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838],” addenda, note A, page 1, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/304.
2. See Joseph Young, *History of the Organization of the Seventies* (1878), 1.
3. “Minutes, Discourses, and Blessings, 14–15 February 1835,” in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 224–28.
4. “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835,” in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 242, 243.
5. The four who were not part of the camp were David W. Patten, Thomas B. Marsh, William E. McLellin, and John F. Boynton.
6. Only nine of the Twelve were present at the meeting on February 14, 1835. Parley P. Pratt was ordained on February 21, 1835, while Thomas B. Marsh and Orson Pratt were both ordained on April 26, 1835.
7. “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Apr. 15, 1845, 868.
8. “Minutes and Blessings, 21 February 1835,” in *Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, Volume 4: April 1834–September 1835*, 244.

To learn more about the calling of the original Twelve Apostles in this dispensation, visit history.lds.org.



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

A Christlike CHARACTER

*Jesus, who suffered the most, has the most
compassion for all of us who suffer so much less.*

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) taught a principle that has impressed me deeply and been the focus for much of my studying, reflecting, and pondering. He said, “There could have been no Atonement except for the character of Christ!”¹ Since hearing this straightforward and penetrating statement, I have tried to learn more about and better understand the word “character.” I have also pondered the relationship between Christ’s character and His Atonement—and the implications of that relationship for each of us as disciples.

The Character of the Lord Jesus Christ

Perhaps the greatest indicator of character is the capacity to recognize and appropriately respond to other people who are experiencing the very challenge or adversity that is most immediately and forcefully pressing upon us. Character is revealed, for example, in the power to discern the suffering of other people when we ourselves are suffering; in the ability to detect the hunger of others when we are hungry; and in the power to reach out and extend compassion for the spiritual agony of others when we are in the midst of our own spiritual distress. Thus, character is demonstrated by looking and reaching outward when the natural and instinctive response is to be self-absorbed and turn inward. If such a capacity is indeed the ultimate criterion of moral character, then the Savior of the world is the perfect example of such a consistent and charitable character.





Examples of Christ's Character

In the upper room on the night of the Last Supper, the very night during which He would experience the greatest suffering that ever took place in all of the worlds created by Him, Christ spoke about the Comforter and peace:

“These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:25–27).

Recognizing that He Himself was about to intensely and personally

experience the absence of both comfort and peace, and in a moment when His heart was perhaps troubled and afraid, the Master reached outward and offered to others the very blessings that could and would have strengthened Him.

In the great Intercessory Prayer, offered immediately before Jesus went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron to the Garden of Gethsemane, the Master prayed for His disciples and for all “which shall believe on me through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me. . . .

“ . . . That they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. . . .

“And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love

wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:20, 21, 23, 26).

I find myself repeatedly asking the following questions as I ponder this and other events that took place so close to His betrayal and His suffering in the garden: How could He pray for the well-being and unity of others immediately before His own anguish? What enabled Him to seek comfort and peace for those whose need was so much less than His? As the fallen nature of the world He created pressed in upon Him, how could He focus so totally and so exclusively upon the conditions and concerns of others? How was the Master able to reach outward when a lesser being would have turned inward? A statement from Elder Maxwell provides the answer to each of these powerful questions:

“Jesus’ character necessarily underwrote His remarkable atonement. Without Jesus’ sublime character there could have been no sublime atonement! His character is such that He ‘[suffered] temptations of every kind’ (Alma 7:11), yet He gave temptations ‘no heed’ (D&C 20:22).”²

Jesus, who suffered the most, has the most compassion for all of us who suffer so much less. Indeed, the depth of suffering and compassion is intimately linked to the depth of love felt by the ministering one.

Actively Seeking Charity

We can in mortality seek to be blessed with and develop essential elements of a Christlike character. Indeed, it is possible for us as mortals to strive in righteousness to receive the spiritual gifts associated with the capacity to reach outward and appropriately respond to other people who are experiencing the very challenge or adversity that is most immediately and forcefully pressing upon us. We cannot obtain such a capacity through sheer willpower or personal determination. Rather, we are dependent upon and in need of “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8). But “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30) and “in [the] process of time” (Moses 7:21), we are enabled to reach outward when the natural tendency is for us to turn inward.

Let me suggest that you and I must be praying, yearning, striving, and working to cultivate a Christlike character if we hope to receive the spiritual gift of charity—the pure love of Christ. Charity is not a trait or characteristic we acquire exclusively through our own purposive persistence and determination. Indeed we must honor our covenants and live worthily and do all that we can do to qualify for the gift; but ultimately the gift of charity possesses us—we do not possess it (see Moroni 7:47). The Lord determines if and when we receive all



spiritual gifts, but we must do all in our power to desire, yearn, invite, and qualify for such gifts. As we increasingly act in a manner congruent with the character of Christ, then perhaps we are indicating to heaven in a most powerful manner our desire for the supernal spiritual gift of charity. And clearly we are being blessed with this marvelous gift as we increasingly reach outward when the natural man or woman in us would typically turn inward.

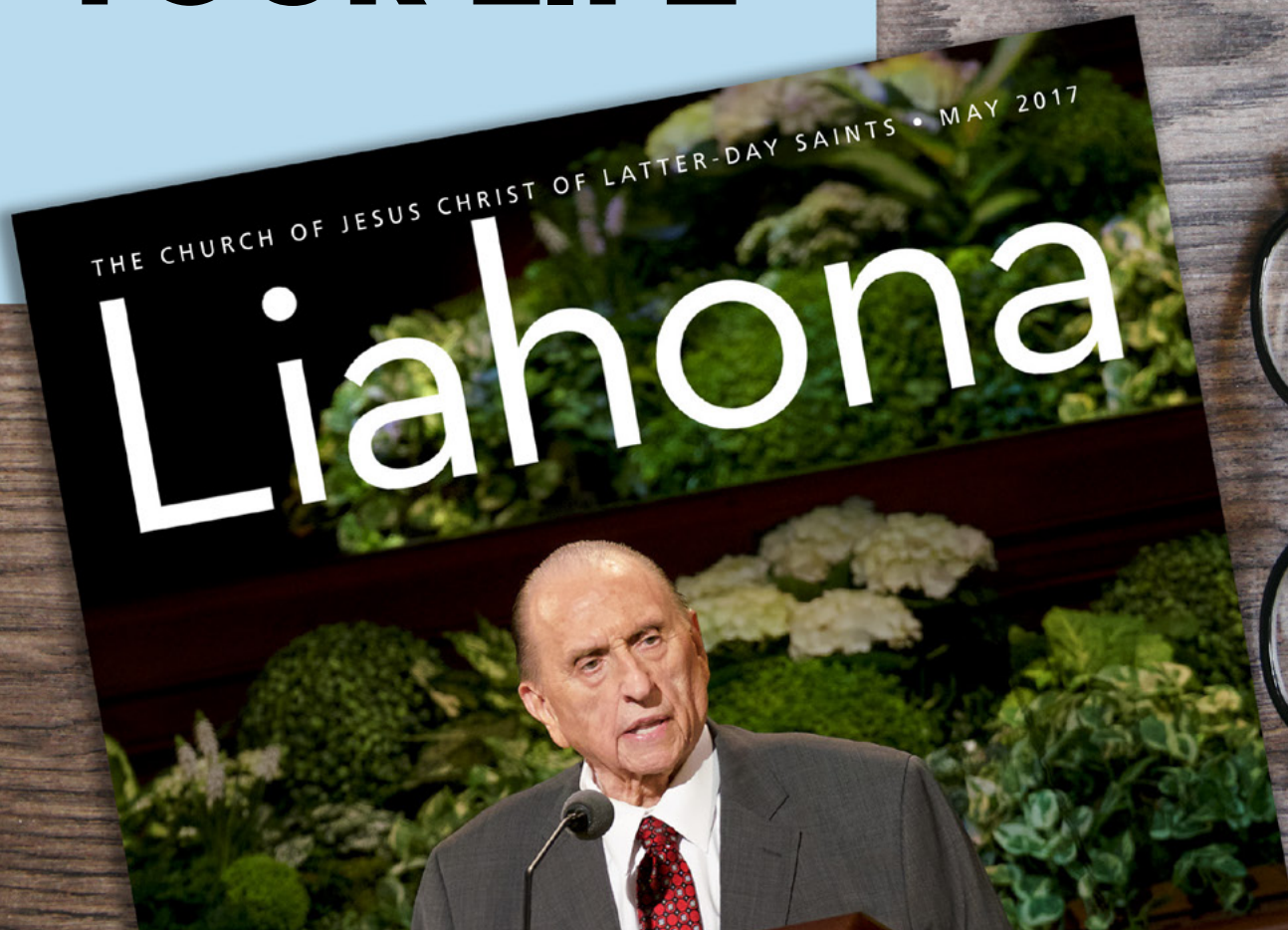
Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Eternal Father. I know that He lives. And I testify that His character made possible for us the opportunities for both immortality and eternal life. May we reach outward when the natural tendency for us is to turn inward. ■

From a Brigham Young University–Idaho Religion Symposium address given on January 25, 2003.

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “The Holy Ghost: Glorifying Christ,” *Ensign*, July 2002, 58.
2. Neal A. Maxwell, “O How Great the Plan of Our God!” (address to Church Educational System religious educators, Feb. 3, 1995), 6, si.lds.org.

How a Conference Message Can
**CHANGE
YOUR LIFE**



*You really can become more like Jesus Christ.
These tools will help you see how.*

By Hadley Griggs

Feeling a bit spiritually undercharged? Think you could use a little spiritual direction? Well, you're in luck, because general conference can be just the trick! Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "To the young members of the Church, I promise that if you will listen [to general conference], you will feel the Spirit well up within you. The Lord will tell you what He wants you to do with your life."¹

And it doesn't end with conference weekend—you can continue to feel the Spirit by studying the talks afterward too!

Conference helps us in a lot of ways. Maybe most important, it lets us draw closer to the Savior by teaching us how to become more like Him. A great way to get the most out of conference is to pay specific attention for teachings about Christlike attributes—whether during the broadcast or while you're studying the talks afterward. As you listen or read with certain Christlike attributes in mind, the words and the Spirit can help you learn how to be more like Christ.

You can take this quick quiz to see which attribute or two you might want to focus on as you study conference messages. (For a more in-depth quiz, check out the October 2016 *New Era* or chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel*.)

For each of the nine Christlike attributes below, pick the statement that best describes you.

1. FAITH:

- I'm unsure if Jesus Christ is my Savior.
- I believe in Jesus Christ and accept Him as my Savior.
- I hope Jesus Christ is my Savior.

At school there is a small group of kids that most other students think of as the "nobodies" because they are different. I didn't used to talk to them. I wasn't mean, but I just wasn't nice either.

When I heard President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, give his talk "The Merciful Shall Obtain Mercy" (April 2012 general conference), something changed. He said that there's one thing we should do when it comes to judging: "Stop it!" His talk helped me realize that instead of judging these kids at school, I should replace my bad thoughts and feelings with a "heart full of love for God and His children."

That Monday when I went to school, instead of meeting my usual friends, I went to where the group that people thought of as "nobodies" were. We started to talk, and I realized these people weren't at all different than anyone else. As I spent time with them, I developed a strong relationship with them. I have made five new friends.

I realized that my new friends were not "nobodies" at all—to God they have always been somebodies. I'm so happy to have learned more about God's love for His children.

Holly H., age 19, California, USA



2. HOPE:

- a. I feel peaceful and optimistic about the future.
- b. The future terrifies me!
- c. I usually just ignore the future—if I don't think about it, I don't have to worry about it.

3. CHARITY AND LOVE:

- a. I try to love other people, but there are some people who always seem to get on my nerves.
- b. I'm so busy trying to work on my own life that I have a hard time thinking about anyone else.
- c. I desire the eternal welfare and happiness of other people.

4. VIRTUE:

- a. "Being pure in thought and action." That doesn't sound like much fun!
- b. I am clean and pure in heart.
- c. I have a difficult time staying clean and pure.

5. KNOWLEDGE:

- a. I have so much going on that I can't really find time to look for answers to my questions.
- b. Ugh. Studying? Sometimes it feels so boring trying to learn things.
- c. I earnestly seek to understand the truth and find answers to my questions.

6. PATIENCE:

- a. I am able to wait for things without getting upset or frustrated.
- b. I guess I can wait for things, but I can get kind of upset about it.
- c. Waiting for things is the worst. I want everything now.

7. HUMILITY:

- a. I want to make sure I do everything on my own.
- b. I rely on the Lord for help.
- c. When working on something, I often forget that I can ask Heavenly Father for help.

8. DILIGENCE:

- a. I spend pretty much all of my time watching TV, hanging out with my friends, and avoiding responsibility!
- b. I often struggle to focus on the important things in my life, but I do try.
- c. I spend my time and energy on the most important things.

9. OBEDIENCE:

- a. I willingly follow the counsel of my leaders and parents.
- b. I'm usually my own boss—I often have a hard time listening to anyone else.
- c. I follow the counsel of my leaders and parents, but I sometimes grumble about it.

Now look at your answers. Which attributes would you like to work on? To learn how to develop them, you could pick one or two and pay attention for them as you listen to conference.

And if you answered that you're doing great on every one, keep it up! You can still pick one or two that stood out to you during the quiz and focus on those during your conference study. Wherever you are on your journey of becoming Christlike, you can always turn to the teachings of our leaders to help you on your path.

If you can't decide on an attribute now, don't worry! You can always listen to conference and see what stands out to you then.

Once you've chosen the attribute you want to focus on, you might want to write it down so you're ready to receive revelation about it while you listen to conference or as you study the talks afterward. As you listen and study, let the Spirit guide you to some specific ways you can work on the attribute. Check out this example below! ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

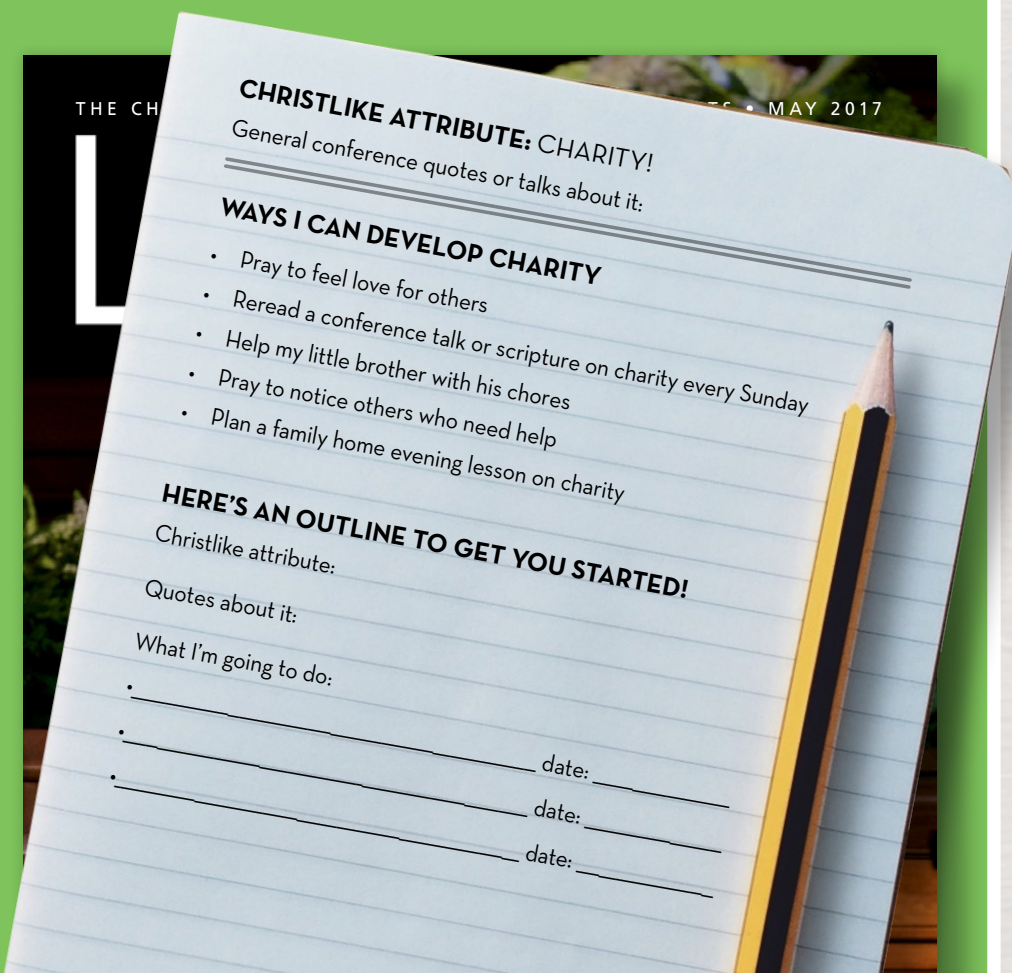
NOTE

1. Robert D. Hales, "General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 6.

During the October 2015 general conference, one particular talk stood out to me. Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a talk called "Through God's Eyes." He talked about the importance of seeing other people through the eyes of loving parents. When I heard that, I could feel that I needed to make more of an effort to love those around me.

One morning after conference, I kept an eye out for the perfect time to make someone feel happy. I went to my orchestra class and saw a boy I usually didn't pay much attention to. I could tell he was upset about something, so I went over and asked him how his day was going. He wasn't very talkative, so I asked him how he liked the orchestra class. He told me he didn't really know the music and was worried about the concert. I offered to run through it with him, and we played the song together. It sounded great! After that, we started talking about our instruments. We've become a lot closer, and I'm really glad that I took the time to talk to him.

Christa M., age 12, Texas, USA





Hold **FIRM**

By Lindsay Hiller

I grew up with friends who were members of the Church, and I became excited to be baptized and become a member myself. When I moved across the country for college, I began taking lessons from the missionaries. Unfortunately, pressure from my new peers made it difficult to follow the standards of the gospel. My fellow freshmen spent a lot of time at parties drinking alcohol. I had never tried alcohol before, but my new friends were constantly pressuring me to drink it.

I knew the gospel was true, but the temptation from my peers was difficult to resist.

I began to pray to Heavenly Father for the strength to make the right decision. I hadn't lowered my standards yet, but I was afraid I wouldn't have the strength to turn down the alcohol the next time it was offered. I missed my friends who shared the same values.

One Saturday night I went to a party with the people in my dorm. Immediately all of my friends were drinking and encouraging me to try my first taste of alcohol.

I was tempted. I took the cup of beer that was handed to me. I pulled it toward my mouth, uncomfortable but pleased to have the attention of my friends. Then Nick, a boy notorious for drinking, walked up to our circle.

"You didn't drink that, did you?" he asked.

"Not yet," I replied.

"If you do," Nick said, "you will regret it every day for the rest of your life."

I was shocked. I knew he was right. I didn't want to drink. I wanted to join the Church. I

handed the cup back and left the party,

grateful that I hadn't made a bad decision.

Friends make a big difference in how easy—or hard—it is to live our standards.

The next morning I went to church, found the missionaries, and set a date for my baptism. From that day on I stayed away from parties with alcohol. I made new friends at church who shared my values and standards. I was still friends with the people in my dorm, but I made my standards clear. When they learned how important my values were to me, they respected them and stopped pressuring me. They noticed and respected it when I left the room when they watched inappropriate movies or listened to inappropriate music.

My testimony was strengthened by this experience, and I will strive to never lower my standards because of peer pressure. I also know that the best way to face difficult decisions is to know your standards and hold firmly to them from the start.

I know that Heavenly Father answered my prayers for strength to resist temptation. I am grateful that the Holy Ghost encouraged me to make the right decision. I know that the standards of the Church are there to protect us, and I am grateful that choosing to follow them helped me choose to join the Church. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



SAYING NO TO TEMPTATION

“Individuals who do wrong want you to join them because they feel more comfortable in what they are doing when others do it also. They may also want to take advantage of you. It is natural to want to be accepted by peers, to be part of a group. . . . One of the hardest things for you to recognize is how truly strong you already are and how others silently respect you. . . . You don’t need to compromise your standards to be accepted by good friends. The more obedient you are, the more you stand for true principles, the more the Lord can help you overcome temptation.”

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Making the Right Choices,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 37.

Break the “TYPICAL TEEN” Mold

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

The world has a lot to say about teenagers today. You probably know some of the stereotypes or have heard someone complaining about “kids these days.” There are also a lot of studies and statistics about you—your social media habits, what you buy, even how short your attention span might be.

But President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, says he’s “uncomfortable” when he hears researchers describe their studies about young people. “And frankly,” he said, “I am less interested in what the *experts* have to say about you than what the Lord has told me about you.”¹

The Lord doesn’t need studies or stereotypes to get to know you. He doesn’t see you as a statistic or as someone weighed down by how “the world” tries to describe you.

“He loves you not only for who you are this very day but also for the person of glory and light you have the potential and the desire to become,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.²

God doesn’t just see you; He loves you.

Forget what the world says. How does Heavenly Father see you?



Want to break the world’s mold? Start seeing yourself the way Heavenly Father and His chosen servants see you. Want to bust stereotypes? Now is the time to be up and doing! As a 12-year-old, Christ reminded His earthly parents that He needed to “be about [His] Father’s business” (Luke 2:49).

He wasn’t too young, and neither are you. So the next question is this: How can you be about your Heavenly Father’s business?

His “business” is all about bringing to pass “the immortality and eternal life

of man” (Moses 1:39), so you can be about your Father’s business by doing your best to achieve your potential and by becoming someone who helps others achieve their potential too.

Now is the time to take responsibility for your own future. What can you do *right now* to make sure you are becoming who Heavenly Father knows you can become, not only in the eternities but also in *this* life?

Do you want to be married in the temple? Decide now to be pure in thought, word, and deed. Do you

You can live up to His vision of your potential.



I'M BECOMING THE BEST ME BY...

Learning to budget? Improving my gospel study? Developing a love of service? Share how you are taking charge of your own future by sending a message to liahona@ldschurch.org or on the LDS Youth Facebook or Instagram pages.

see yourself studying at a university? Develop good study skills now. Do you want to serve a mission? Add *Preach My Gospel* to your gospel study (especially chapter 3). Do you want to provide for a family? Learn how to make and keep a budget now.

You can also look at the things that make you happy *now*. Do you love math? Playing the piano? Writing stories? Keep at it! See if there are ways you can improve: school classes, online tutorials, competitions, workshops, and so on.

Break the mold and bust the stereotypes! Take charge of your own future. What are you doing to become the best you? Let us know by emailing liahona@ldschurch.org or leaving a message on the LDS Youth Facebook or Instagram pages. ■

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Stand as True Millennials," *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 24; *Liahona*, Oct. 2016, 46.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Living the Gospel Joyful," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2014, 123.



RISE IN FAITH

Fuel the fire of your faith to rise above the desert of doubt.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**
First Counselor in the
First Presidency

HOW TO KNOW FOR YOURSELF

Our dear young friends, our desire for each of you is that you may know for yourselves, independent of anyone else, that the God of heaven is real, that He knows you, and that His Son has atoned for the sins of the world.

Our hope is that you will gain for yourself an unshakeable testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to the earth for the last time. Joseph Smith's mission was unique, yet his humble prayer is a helpful model for you and for me. Joseph started for the grove to **pray with faith** that a loving God would answer his prayer and relieve his confusion. He gained that assurance by **reading the word of God** and **receiving a witness** that it was true. Joseph also prayed with the intent not only to listen but to obey at whatever the cost. He was committed to **act upon whatever God would communicate** to him.

In that spirit, I would like to extend a challenge to the youth of the Church. The challenge is this: come to know for yourself that these things are true. You can do this by following Joseph Smith's example: **study the scriptures**, let the words sink deep into your heart, **reflect on them** again and again, and then **ask of God**, with a willingness to accept His guidance—truly, His will be done.

While this challenge may sound like a simple invitation, I promise you it may take significant effort. I cannot promise that your answers will come in a day or in a week, but I can promise that God will speak to you in His own way and in His own time, if you ask in faith. As you **accept** and **act upon this invitation**, you will find that not only will answers come, but you'll also establish a pattern of acquiring spiritual knowledge that will bless you for the rest of your life. ■

From a March 2017 Face to Face event with President Henry B. Eyring and Elder Jeffrey R. Holland.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Commenting on the Face to Face event: "The main thing that impressed upon me personally was the clear focus on the importance of studying our scriptures and the answers we can get from them. I also really enjoyed the discussion on the subject of prayer and how we should approach God when praying. I realized that prayers can and should be personal but that we should be aware of how we approach God and approach Him in prayer respectfully, as our Heavenly Father, not as a peer."

Joshua C., Hawaii, USA

“In addition to prayer and scripture study, what’s the best way to strengthen my testimony?”

Your testimony probably won’t come all at once. It will grow one spiritual experience at a time—as the scriptures say, “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). You then have to nourish and strengthen your testimony, just like a growing seed (see Alma 32:28–43). And just as a plant can’t survive on water alone, there isn’t just one “best” way to strengthen your testimony. You need a combination of ways.

Prayer and scripture study are definitely good ways to nourish your testimony. As you study the gospel and pray with real intent to know something is true, the Holy Ghost will help you feel the truth of the gospel (see Moroni 10:4–5).

You can also strengthen your testimony by keeping the commandments. When you live a gospel principle—such as fasting, keeping the Sabbath day holy, or taking the sacrament—you start to gain a testimony of *how* and *why* it is true, instead of just *that* it is true. Jesus said that when you choose to “do his will,” you will “know of the doctrine” (John 7:17).

Another way to nourish your testimony is by sharing it. President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, “A testimony is to be *found* in the *bearing* of it!” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 54; *Tambuli*, July 1983, 34). You can share your testimony in church and seminary, at home, and with friends. When you do, the Holy Ghost can testify to *you* that what you are sharing is true.

As you strengthen your testimony in many different ways, it will grow and deepen, and you will feel peace and joy.



Work with the Missionaries

Missionary work has been the best way for me to strengthen

my testimony. Every time I work with the missionaries, I feel the love of Christ.

Joy D., age 19, Leyte, Philippines

Strive to Be a Disciple

You can strengthen your testimony by striving to be always a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Obedience to God’s commandments makes us valiant in our testimonies, and that in turn makes our testimonies even stronger and ready for God’s kingdom (see D&C 76:79). You can also strengthen your testimony by sharing it.

Elder Mule Simon, age 23, Democratic Republic of the Congo Lubumbashi Mission

Listen to the Holy Ghost

Going to church, reading the scriptures, listening to conference talks, and so on will only help you strengthen your testimony if you listen to the Holy Ghost. He will testify of the truth to you. Always listen to the Holy Ghost, because He is there and will help you strengthen your testimony.

Alyssa B., age 16, Virginia, USA





Go on a Mission

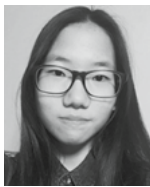
Going on a mission will strengthen testimonies for yourself and for others you teach. On a mission you will learn to rely fully on the Lord and not on your own strength. A mission will strengthen you, and as you serve the Lord and do his work, it will strengthen your testimony.

Elder Bailey Peaali'i Williams, age 19, Singapore Mission

Share What You Know to Be True

I have learned that one of the greatest ways to strengthen my testimony is to share it with others. Every time I share what I believe and I know it to be true—however simple and small it may be—I feel a great warmth inside my chest, and with it comes a greater confirmation in my heart that those things I have said are true! In other words, I feel my testimony being strengthened.

Douglas S., age 20, São Paulo, Brazil



Become More Christlike

We can strengthen our testimonies by becoming more Christlike. I have strengthened my testimony when I expressed the pure love of Christ and served others as the Savior did.

Kyung Jin P., age 17, Seoul, South Korea

Bear Your Testimony

A good way to strengthen your testimony is to bear it. Sometimes when you share your testimony, you find it. You can also fast to know for yourself if what you are taught is true. I have done both of these things, and they have greatly strengthened my testimony.

Porter S., age 12, Idaho, USA



Serve Others

Besides prayer and scripture study, I think the best way to strengthen your testimony is through service. When we serve others, we show God that we care about His children. Also, we can receive the Spirit when we are doing God's work. I know that many times I have received comfort through hard times and answers to questions while doing service.

Caroline J., age 18, Utah, USA



NOURISHING YOUR TESTIMONY

"Like a growing plant, [a testimony] must

be nurtured or it will wither. ... Obedience to the commandments is part of the nourishment you must provide for your testimony."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "A Living Testimony," Ensign or Liahona, May 2011, 125.

UPCOMING QUESTION

How can I invite the Spirit into my home when people are fighting or arguing?

Submit your answer and, if desired, a high-resolution photograph by November 15, 2017, at liahona.lds.org (click "Submit an Article") or by email to liahona@ldschurch.org.

Please include the following information: (1) full name, (2) birth date, (3) ward or branch, (4) stake or district, (5) your written permission, and, if you are under age 18, your parent's written permission (email is acceptable) to publish your response and photograph.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

*We live on different
sides of the world,
but we felt the same
way when temples
were built near us!*

From Paris

From interviews by Amie Leavitt, Utah, USA



My name is Rachel. I live near the Paris France Temple.

The temple is really important to my family. Before the Paris Temple was built, we would go on family trips to the Frankfurt Germany Temple several times a year. It took 10 hours to drive there and back!

We loved watching the new temple be built. Every week after church, our parents drove by to let us see how the construction was going. First they tore down an old building and dug a big hole. Then they started building the temple higher and higher. Soon the house of the Lord was there!

My siblings and I are excited to go to the temple someday. My oldest sister, Esther, gets to do baptisms first. We are all waiting anxiously for our turn to go too. We love the temple and are happy to have one in our very own city!



*The spiral staircase
in the Paris France
Temple*



to Sapporo



The chandelier in the celestial room of the Sapporo Japan Temple



My name is Koshi. I live near the Sapporo Japan Temple. I loved sitting by a window in my house and watching the temple be built.

During the open house, I invited my good friend to come with us. He thought everything was beautiful.

I like to think of the temple dedication as its birthday. That day was also my birthday. And President Monson's too! My parents and I got to be in the temple when it was dedicated. I even got to meet President Russell M. Nelson.

I am so grateful to live near the temple. When I have hard days at school, I can walk through the grounds on my way home. I feel Heavenly Father's love for me when I am there. I look forward to when I can go inside to do baptisms and later get married there. ■



By Elder
Robert D. Hales

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

How can the Holy Ghost help me?

The Holy Ghost is the third member of the Godhead.
He testifies of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

He speaks to our minds and
hearts gently. We each might
hear Him differently.

He gives us spiritual
gifts. He gives us
knowledge and helps
us remember
important things.

The Holy Ghost also
helps us make important
choices.

He teaches us.
He gives us hope.
He helps us do good.

He helps us be
clean from sin.
He comforts us.

OUR PAGE



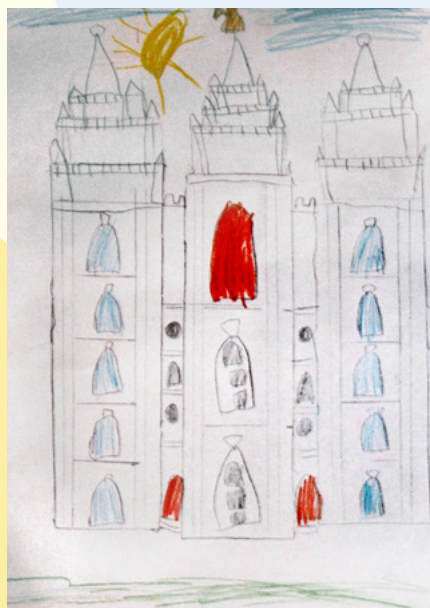
Lehi's Vision, by Maria V., age 10, Brazil



Lima Peru Temple, by Valeria T., age 9, Peru



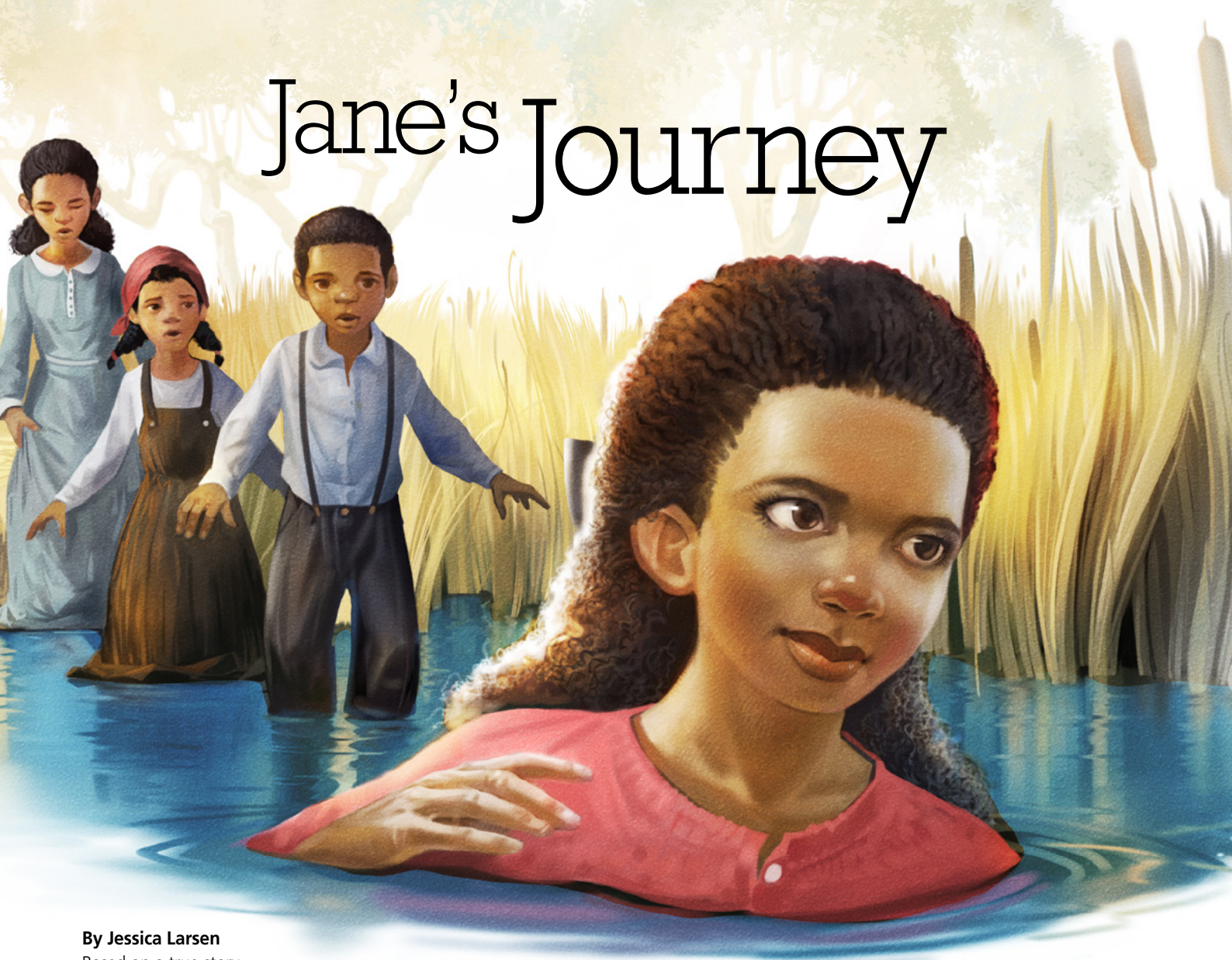
Guayaquil Ecuador Temple, by Landys Z., age 10, Ecuador



Salt Lake Temple, by Melissa L., age 5, and Ameila L., age 2, Estonia



Jane's Journey



By Jessica Larsen
Based on a true story

New York, USA, 1843

Jane Manning watched the boat float from the harbor out to Lake Erie. She felt like her dreams were floating away with it.

Just one year ago, she had joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and decided to move to be with the other Saints in Nauvoo. Her mother and seven other family members had traveled with her down the Erie Canal to Buffalo, New York. But in Buffalo, they weren't allowed on the boat because of the color of their skin.

"What do we do now?" her brother, Isaac, asked quietly.

The question echoed in the frosty air. Nauvoo was still 800 miles (1,287 km) away. They could give up and head home, or try to travel later. . . .

But Jane couldn't wait! She knew the Book of Mormon was true. God once again spoke through prophets. She needed to get to Nauvoo with her family.

Jane squared her shoulders and looked westward. "We walk."

And walk they did. Until their shoes wore out. Until their feet cracked and bled and they had to pray to be healed. Sometimes they slept outside, and the frost was so heavy it felt like falling snow. Some people threatened to put them in jail, thinking that they were escaped slaves. They didn't know that the Mannings were a free black family. And still they walked, singing hymns to pass the time.

They were nearing Nauvoo when they reached a river.

Jane Manning lived with Emma and Joseph Smith for several months. She married Isaac James, and they were among the early settlers of Utah Valley. She remained a faithful member of the Church even though she had many challenges. When she died in 1908, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) spoke at her funeral.

“No bridge,” Isaac said.

Jane nodded. “We’ll just have to walk through it, then.” As she stepped into the river, the water came up to her ankles. Slowly, she inched forward. The water swirled up to her knees and then past her waist. By the time she reached the middle of the stream, the water came up to her neck! Luckily, it didn’t get deeper, and all the Mannings crossed safely.

At last they came to Nauvoo. Jane could see the beautiful limestone walls of the Nauvoo Temple on a hill overlooking the valley. Even though it wasn’t finished

yet, it took her breath

away. Someone

directed them

to the house

where the

Prophet Joseph

lived.

A tall, dark-haired woman stood in the doorway. “Come in, come in!” she called. “I’m Emma Smith.”

The next few minutes were a blur. Jane met the Prophet, and he set up chairs around the room for all the Mannings. Jane sank into the chair gratefully and listened as Joseph introduced them to everyone there, including his friend Dr. Bernhisel. Then Joseph turned to Jane, “You have been the head of this little band, haven’t you?” he asked.

“Yes, sir!” answered Jane.

Joseph smiled. “God bless you! Now I would like to hear about your travels.”

Jane told about their injured feet and sleeping in the snow and crossing the river. Everyone listened quietly. “But it wasn’t terrible,” she finished. “We went on our way rejoicing, singing

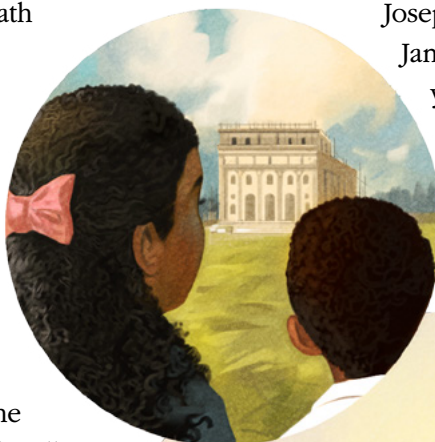
hymns and thanking God for His infinite goodness and mercy to us in blessing us, protecting us, and healing our feet.”

There was silence for a moment. “What do you think of that, Doctor?” Joseph finally said, slapping the man’s knee. “Isn’t that faith?”

“If it had been me, I fear I should have backed out and returned to my home!” Dr. Bernhisel admitted.

Joseph nodded and turned back to Jane and her family: “God bless you. You are among friends.” ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.



Sarah and the MRI

By Juliann Doman

Based on a true story

"When Christ was on the earth, He promised he would send the Holy Ghost to comfort us, our true, eternal friend" (Children's Songbook, 105).

"It looks like Sarah will need to have an MRI of her back," said Dr. Frank. He smiled at Sarah. "I'm going to schedule one for tomorrow. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Sarah's back had been hurting for a while. When she woke up that morning, it hurt so much that it was hard



ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID HABBEN

for her to stand up straight, and she could barely walk. Sarah and her mom had come to see Dr. Frank to find out what was wrong.

“Another MRI?” asked Sarah, looking up at Mom. She’d had an MRI once before. She remembered how scared she had felt in the big tube that took pictures of the inside of her body.

“I’m sorry, Sarah,” said Mom. “But the pictures will help Dr. Frank learn what’s wrong with your back. I know you can do it. And I’ll be right there with you.” Mom squeezed Sarah’s hand.

“But you can’t come inside with me,” said Sarah. Her head dropped, and a tear slipped down her cheek. Mom could be with her in the room, but once Sarah went into the machine’s tunnel, she would be alone.

Mom put her arm around Sarah. “That’s true, but do you know who *can* be there to comfort you?”

Sarah remembered a name she had heard for the Holy Ghost: *the Comforter*. Maybe the Holy Ghost could help her not feel so afraid.

“The Holy Ghost?” Sarah asked.

Mom nodded. “That’s right. You can pray for the Holy Ghost to help you. Dad and I will pray for you too.”

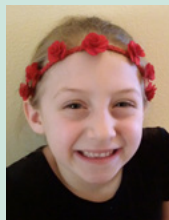
That gave Sarah a great idea. “Can I ask Dad for a blessing?”

Mom smiled. “Of course. I know he’d love to do that.”

That night Dad placed his hands on Sarah’s head and gave her a priesthood blessing. When he blessed Sarah that she would be comforted by the Holy Ghost, a soft warmth filled her body. The feeling stayed with her all night.

The next day Sarah lay on the bench that would slide into the big tube in the MRI machine. She repeated in her head the words Dad had used during her blessing: *The Holy Ghost will be there to comfort you*. Sarah squeezed Mom’s hand tight. Then the nurse slid her into the tube.

The MRI machine made funny noises while it took pictures of her back. Sarah had to lie very still so the



Analise F., age 6,
Utah, USA

When I was five, I needed surgery to get my tonsils and adenoids taken out. I was really nervous and afraid. My dad gave me a blessing. After the blessing, I wasn’t nervous anymore, and we were both happy because we felt the Holy Ghost.

pictures wouldn’t be blurry. She panicked for a minute, but then she felt that warm feeling again. It felt like one of Mom’s hugs. Or a snuggly blanket. She knew that everything would be OK. Before she knew it, the MRI was over!

In Dr. Frank’s office, he showed Sarah and Mom the pictures of Sarah’s back. “You did a great job lying still,” Dr. Frank told Sarah as he knelt down beside her. “These pictures of your back show that you will need surgery to help you walk better.”

Sarah gulped.

“We’d like to do the surgery soon,” Dr. Frank said, looking up at Sarah’s mom. Then he turned back to Sarah. “It might take a few weeks afterward for you to feel like your old self again, but after seeing you today, I know you’ll do great.”

Sarah tried to think about all the things she’d do after Dr. Frank fixed her back. *I’ll be able to run and swim and jump in a big pile of leaves*. She missed doing all those things. But surgery was even scarier than an MRI! Then Sarah remembered her prayers and her special blessing. Heavenly Father had sent her the Comforter. He would help her again.

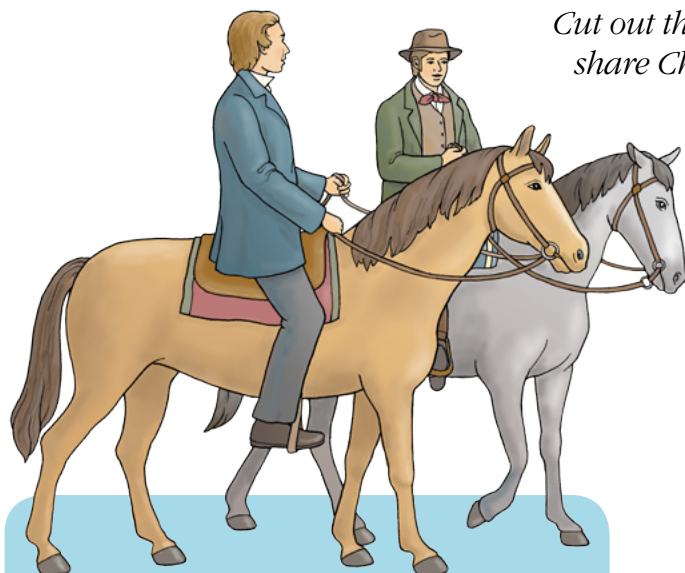
She looked at Dr. Frank. “Then can I jump in a big pile of leaves?” she asked.

He grinned. “Then you can jump in a big pile of leaves.” ■

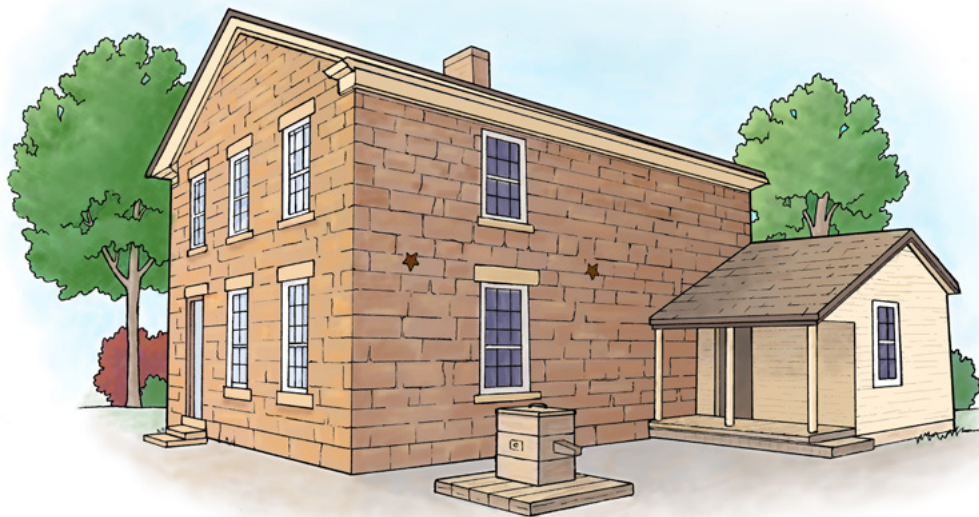
The author lives in Colorado, USA.

A New Prophet

Cut out these figures to help you share Church history stories.



Joseph and Hyrum



Brigham Young

In 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith went to Carthage Jail to wait for a trial. Bad men broke into the jail and killed the Prophet and his brother! The Saints weren't sure who the next prophet should be. Later, at a meeting where Brigham Young spoke, a miracle happened. Many people said that he looked and sounded just like Joseph Smith! They knew he would be the next prophet. Now we know that when a prophet dies, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles becomes the next prophet. ■

You can find more Church history figures at liahona.lds.org.



HELPING OUT, One Pencil at a Time

By Caleb H., age 10, Germany

It all started when my stake set up a project to help refugees. I really liked the project, so I asked my mom to tell my schoolteacher about it, and my teacher wanted to do something with the fourth grade. To set the example for the project, my sister, Maddie, and I went door to door asking for donations.

The day came to present the project to the rest of the fourth grade. I was a bit nervous. Actually, I was super freaked out, but I did my best. I told all the other fourth graders what we needed for school kits for the refugees. I told about how we went door to door, and I gave them a challenge to try to do better than me in raising money. Together we made over 100 kits! We put in notebooks, pencils, and other school supplies. We also added a note to say, "Welcome to Germany."

My mom and I took the kits to the refugee camp. I wouldn't say the camp was nice, but there was a playground and an area for learning academics. There was a train next to the camp that was really loud, and the kids told me it sounded like jets flying by in Syria and other places like that. Maybe it sounded like bombs to the kids who had heard them in their home countries.

I met a few kids at the camp my age, including Daniel, an awesome chess player. I didn't get to play chess against him, which was too bad because I love chess, but they invited me to play foosball and ping-pong. The boys told me that they missed their homes and really wanted to leave the camp and go to school again.

After we played foosball and ping-pong, we handed out the kits. I feel good that I could do something kind for the kids who lived at the camps. ■



Jesus Visited Joseph Smith

By Kim Webb Reid

Many years after Jesus was resurrected, a boy named Joseph Smith had a question. He didn't know which church he should go to.



Joseph read the Bible. It said that Heavenly Father will answer our questions if we pray to Him. Joseph went to the woods and prayed to Heavenly Father.



Heavenly Father and Jesus came down from heaven. Jesus said Joseph should not go to any of the churches because they were not teaching all the things that were part of His Church.

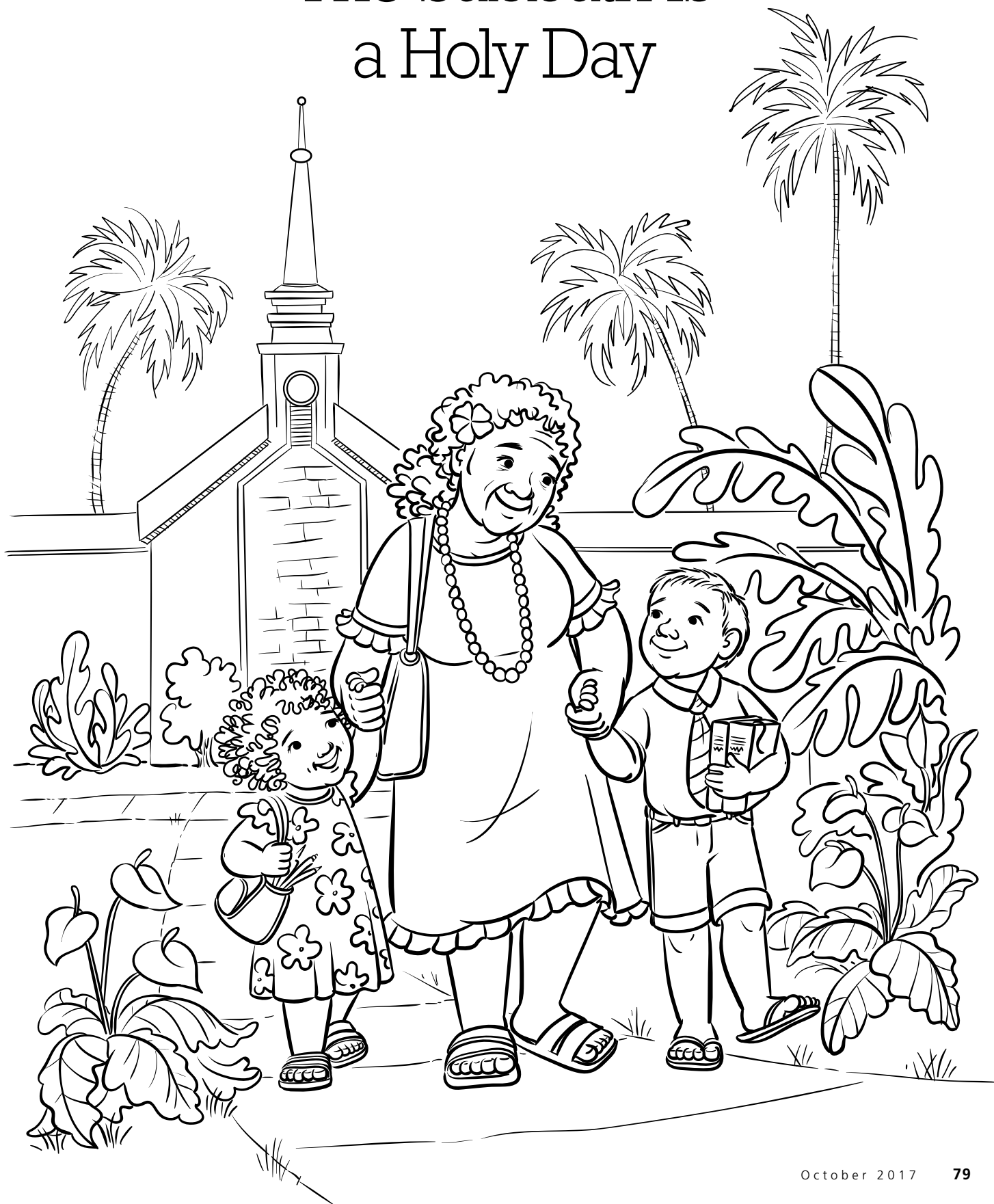
When Joseph grew up, he helped bring Jesus's Church back to earth. It is called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It helps people learn about Jesus and Heavenly Father.





Reading the scriptures teaches me more about Heavenly Father. When I pray, He can answer my prayers too. ■

The Sabbath Is a Holy Day





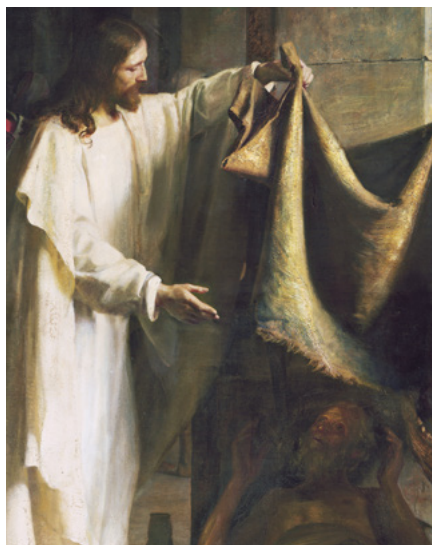
By President
Thomas S. Monson

HELP SOMEONE TODAY

We are the Lord's hands. He is depending on us.

I am confident it is the *intention* of each member of the Church to serve and to help those in need. At baptism we covenanted to “bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light” [Mosiah 18:8]. How many times has your heart been touched as you have witnessed the need of another? How often have you *intended* to be the one to help? And yet how often has day-to-day living interfered and you’ve left it for others to help, feeling that “oh, surely someone will take care of that need.”

We become so caught up in the busyness of our lives. Were we to step back, however, and take a good look at what we’re doing, we may find that . . .



too often we spend most of our time taking care of the things which do not really matter much at all in the grand scheme of things, neglecting those more important causes. . . .

We are surrounded by those in need of our attention, our encouragement, our support, our comfort, our kindness—be they family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers. We are the Lord’s hands here upon the earth, with the mandate to serve and to lift His children. He is dependent upon each of us. . . .

May the words of a familiar hymn penetrate our very souls . . . :

*Have I done any good in the world
today?
Have I helped anyone in need?
Have I cheered up the sad and
made someone feel glad?
If not, I have failed indeed.
Has anyone’s burden been lighter
today
Because I was willing to share?
Have the sick and the weary been
helped on their way?
When they needed my help was
I there?
("Have I Done Any Good?" Hymns,
no. 223.)*

. . . May we ask ourselves the question . . . : “What have I done for someone today?” My counsel to members worldwide would be to find someone who is having a hard time or is ill or lonely, and do something for him or her today. ■

*From "What Have I Done for Someone Today?"
Ensign or Liahona, Nov. 2009, 84–87.*