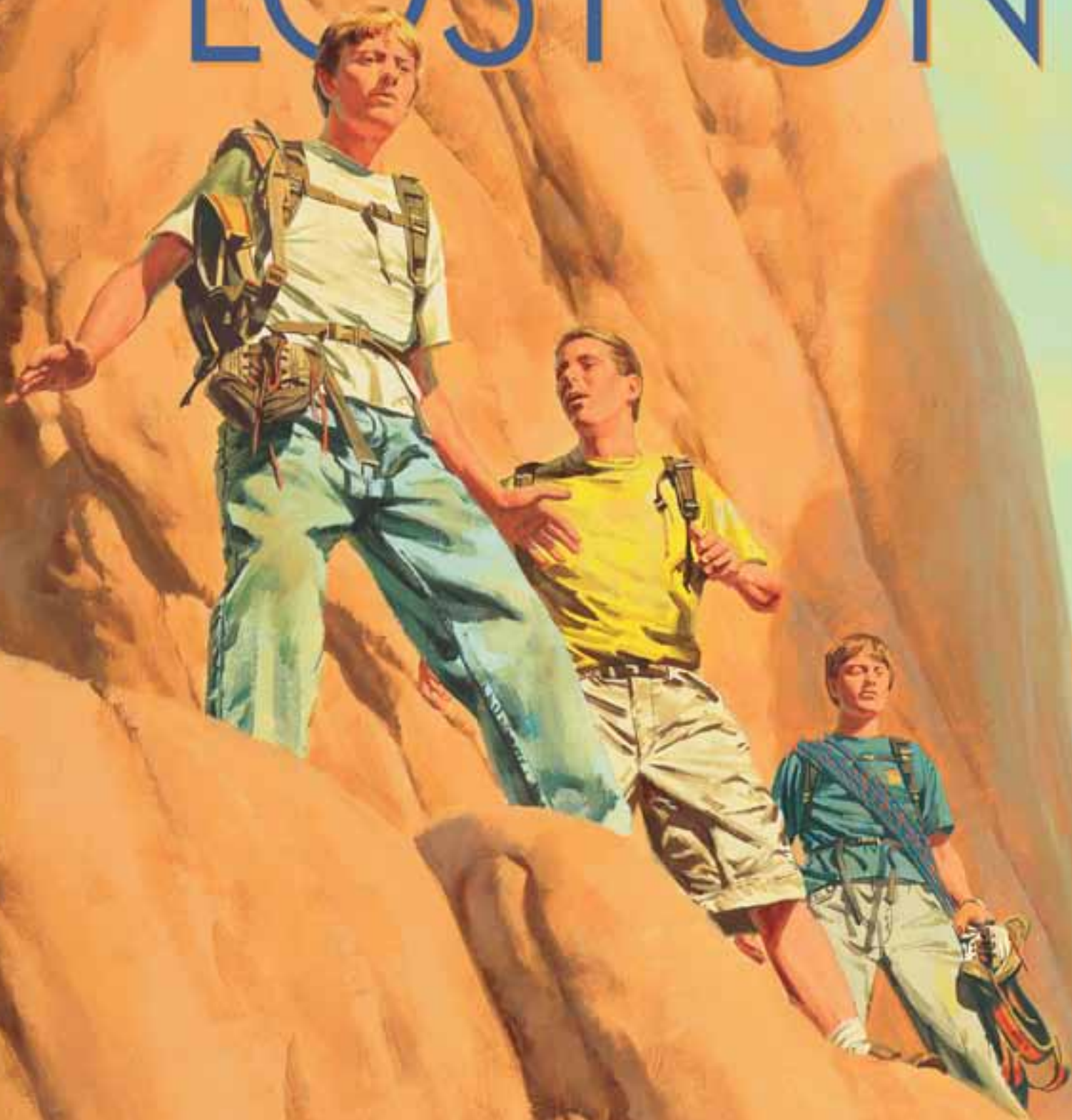


# LOST ON



# THE LEDGE

BY NATHAN WAITE

*Our cell phone didn't work, but our prayer did.*

It had been a perfect day of exploring a narrow sandstone canyon and basking in the rugged beauty of southern Utah. I was a little worried that we hadn't come across any signs of previous hikers in the canyon, but we had researched the route and had a good map, so we knew what lay ahead: a spectacular 150-foot rope descent through a waterfall into a picturesque canyon, leading out to the main road. As Dustin, Roland, and I neared what we expected to be the end of our adventure, we stopped to eat the last of our food and grinned at each other in anticipation.

Half an hour later, the canyon opened up to the sunlight, and in front of us the riverbed curved in a different direction than the map indicated. Our spirit of adventure overcame our better judgment, so we followed this new course. The soft sand quickly turned to rock, and we scrambled over boulders and potholes. We successfully negotiated a 40-foot drop, turned a corner—and stared in disbelief. There in front of us the ground melted away, dropping hundreds of feet to the Virgin River below.

It dawned on us that we had messed up somehow. There was no turning back; the slick canyon walls made ascension impossible. My two friends scouted the narrow ledge for a possible route down while I pored over the map. After awhile, my eye spotted another canyon on the map, and this one definitely matched the canyon we were in. Scanning the map, I could see that the cliff we were on was over 400 feet high. Dustin and Roland returned, and we talked about the possibility of trying to descend the cliff with the rope we had. Roland suggested we pray about it, and we quickly agreed.

It was a simple, sincere prayer. We thanked the Lord for keeping us safe and admitted that we had made mistakes. We told Him we were now trying our best to correct ourselves and return to safety. Laying before Him our problem and the possible solution of descending the cliff, we asked for a confirmation. And the Lord truly responded, touching each of us with a quiet feeling in our hearts that we should not try to go down the cliff.

As darkness fell, we realized our only way out was rescue. Our cellular phone received no signal, and we couldn't go forward or back. When the sun sank behind the opposite mountains, the temperature dropped sharply, and we spent a sleepless night shivering together, hungry and thirsty, a few steps from a 400-foot cliff. Before



***We placed our trust in the Lord, and as the helicopter burst over the canyon wall, we knew He had answered our prayers***

trying to sleep, we again offered up a prayer of sincere thanks for protection, and a blessing of peace for our families, who had certainly figured out, by now, that something had gone wrong.

The next morning, by the time it was light enough to safely walk around the cliff's edge, we had decided on several courses of action. We burned leaves to send up white smoke and scattered our equipment around the ledge to make us easier to spot from the air. After we split a granola bar, Dustin climbed up to higher ground to try to get reception for the phone, while Roland and I set about purifying water from a pool. We had made mistakes, and now we could only do everything in our power to be rescued, trusting that the Lord would comfort our families and lead rescuers to us. The day wore on, and our situation worsened. The fire melted our water container, Dustin had no luck with his phone, and we made plans

for surviving another night. In that helpless state, I realized like never before my utter dependence on the Lord. I'd never felt so close to Heavenly Father when I prayed.

We thought we heard planes throughout the day, but neither the fire nor our yells brought them any closer. Around noon we heard the thumping sound of an engine grow and saw a helicopter in the distance, but our hopes faded when it flew out of sight. Then, quite suddenly, the search and rescue helicopter burst over the far canyon wall. It spotted Dustin above us and circled, looking for a place to land. Not long after, a rope dropped down to us, quickly followed by the search and rescue team with food, water, and our way home.

As we flew over canyon and mountain to our waiting families, I offered a silent prayer of thanks. The Lord had helped us make wise judgments and had helped our rescuers find us. He had also answered our plea to comfort our families. While they had spent a sleepless night, they had felt the Spirit whisper that we were OK. The Savior's promise in 3 Nephi 18:21 is true: "Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed." I learned that on the edge of a 400-foot cliff, waiting to be rescued. **NE**

Do you have a story about a prayer that was answered? Share it with us at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).