

Building an

BY ELDER BENJAMÍN DE HOYOS
Of the Seventy



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Growing up in Mexico, I had the blessing of belonging to a wonderful Latter-day Saint family. I loved coming home from college in the wintertime, opening the door, and smelling the cinnamon and flour tortillas. While we were a family poor in temporal things, we were a family rich in the gospel and testimony.

I especially loved my parents' testimonies of the Book of Mormon. My father was a wonderful student of the Book of Mormon. Many times, even when I was an adult, we would talk about the book and cry because the Spirit was strong. He understood the doctrines of the book. He was converted in 1917, when he was six years old, and many times he shared experiences he had had when he was a boy watching animals on the ranch. He always had in his bag a copy of the Book of Mormon.

My mother was a peaceful woman who always served her family and the Lord. She became a strong example of faith to our family, raising six children and continually serving in the Church. She served as a missionary in the 1940s, when our whole country was just a single mission.

My Father's Teachings

While I was growing up, my father was a very busy man because he had a demanding job as a truck driver for construction projects. But he always took time for me. When I was in high school, my father would ask my five sisters when he came home from work, "Where is Benjamín?"

My sisters would come to me and say, "Father wants you."

I would leave playing with my friends and run to ask him, "What do you need, Father?"

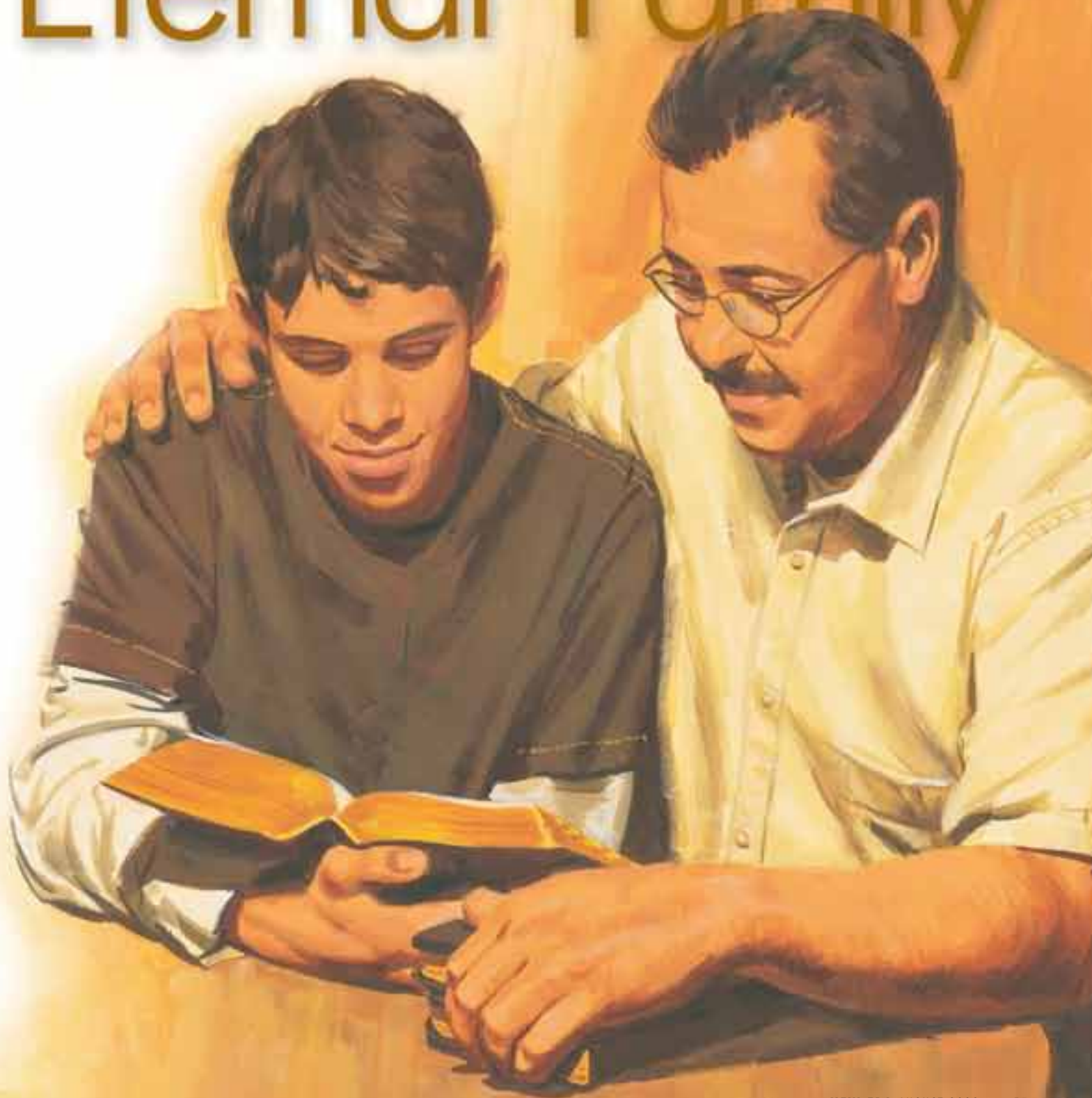
He would say, "Bring your scriptures, and come with me."

Two or three times a week we would read the scriptures together like that. He was a master teacher of the scriptures. At that time we did not have seminary in Mexico. Now I think of those study sessions as my own seminary class with my father as the teacher.

While reading the scriptures and hearing my father explain them to me, I learned for myself what the Spirit feels like in my heart and in my mind. Many times the Spirit was very strong as he would explain the scriptures.

These kinds of experiences with my father were the beginning of my own testimony of Heavenly Father and the Church. I always thought that the Church was true, but just

Eternal Family





Once when I was in a car with my friends, they drove really fast. A policeman pulled us over, and I was scared. I remembered the words of my father about taking care of the future. That experience helped me make a decision about the kinds of friends I wanted to have.

thinking so was not enough. My father took my hand and put it on the iron rod. His manner of taking care of me was the key for my testimony and my inner security in the gospel.

During those meetings, not only did I learn many things from him about the scriptures, but I learned that my father loved me in a way that I couldn't quite understand at the time. Many other times he would invite me to a movie or to eat, and I know that I was protected by my father's care for me.

Now I am a father, and I know that he loved me in a special way.

Choosing Friends Carefully

When I was 16, most of my friends at school weren't members, but they knew that I was a member of the Church. They started to smoke and do other things I wouldn't do. So things began to change between us; our types of conversation were very different, and our thinking and activities weren't compatible.

One day my father asked me, “Why aren’t you thinking about your friends’ effect on you?” He counseled me to be careful and think about the necessity of changing my friends.

When I started at the university, I became very busy and didn’t spend a lot of time with my friends, but one time when we were together, they decided to do something bad. We were in a car, and they drove really fast. A policeman pulled us over, and I was scared. I remembered the words of my father about taking care of the future. That experience helped me make a decision about the kinds of friends I wanted to have.

I became very involved in Church activities. Attending Mutual was wonderful because I decided to have those kinds of friends. I learned that my father was right—that I should take care of my relationship with good friends. I needed friends who would help me prepare for a mission.

A Loving Heavenly Father

As my father did with me, my Heavenly Father takes care of me personally. I know that Heavenly Father loves me. In many ways and in many circumstances, He takes care of us individually. Sometimes we do not hear and we are not willing to listen because our friends may get our attention more than He does. But I know that Heavenly Father loves us, and He will give us the opportunity to know in our hearts that He will be with us as we ask for His help.

The Privilege of Passing the Sacrament

I especially remember feeling the love of Heavenly Father as a youth participating in the sacrament. In my ward there were only a few young men, so every Sunday I passed the sacrament. When I served as a teacher, every Sunday I prepared the bread and the water. At that time we used glass cups, which I had to wash one by one.

When I passed the sacrament, I could see the eyes of the people. Old people, young people, children—each

had a special feeling while taking the bread and water. I could see that they felt the love of Heavenly Father personally. Those experiences with the sacrament marked my life forever. Every week I remember the Lord, who died for us. I remember that if we are worthy, we can be together as a family eternally.

Comfort from Testimony

When my father was an old man, we talked about the possibility of his death. He did not have fear; he felt peace. When he spoke about death, he knew that he would be with his family again. Because of the Atonement and Resurrection, both of us had great inner security. We were always very grateful to the Lord because of the miracle of the Resurrection.

Because of the teachings of my father, I knew since I was a child that the gospel of Jesus Christ is true—not just in my mind but also in my heart. Many times the Spirit has let me know that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that we have a prophet today, President Thomas S. Monson. Knowing that I have the gospel makes me happy. And I know with certainty that the Lord cares about us and knows us. Consequently, I have my own personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because of His sacrifice, I know that I can be with my father and the rest of my family again. **NE**



THEY WILL HELP YOU

“Honor your fathers and mothers. They will help you make good decisions. . . . Choose friends who have high ideals. Choose friends who will help you to be good.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “To the Children of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 82.