

THE **New Era**

AUGUST 2013

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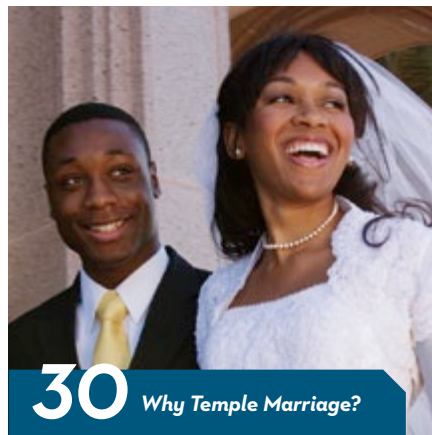
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FOUR WORDS

— TO —

GUIDE
YOU



By President
Thomas S. Monson

I made a few resolutions I'd like to share with you, hoping that you too will join in making the same choices. First, *I will listen*. Second, *I will learn*. Third, *I will labor*. And fourth, *I will love*. These four words can well determine our destiny.

LISTEN

I would hope that you would listen to your mother and listen to your father, each of whom is upon his or her knees each morning and each evening, praying for you, asking our Heavenly Father to watch over you and to guide you in your choices, to be cautious, as it were, in your conduct. I believe that when we recognize our parents and the fact that they are concerned for you and for me, then we honor them, and the words echoing from Mount Sinai have a personal meaning: "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12).

I trust that we will listen to the words of the prophets. I hope also that we will listen to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. I promise you that if we have an ear attuned to the Holy Spirit, if there is a desire for righteousness within our heart, and our conduct reflects that desire, we shall be guided by that Holy Spirit.

I hope that I shall ever listen for

the whisperings of that Holy Spirit, that during each day of the year you and I may have the opportunity to respond to these promptings and the directional influence of our Heavenly Father. Therefore, I promise to *listen*.

LEARN

Number two, *I will learn*. It isn't enough simply to listen if we don't learn. I make a pledge that I will learn more from the scriptures and, hopefully, that you too will have that privilege. Wouldn't it be marvelous if we could take into our hearts that counsel from the Lord, "Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). Let us learn from the standard works, but let us also learn from the lives of the Church leaders and the lives of those who are closest to us.

For example, I believe that I can learn patience by better studying the life of our Lord and Savior. Can you imagine the disappointment which He must have felt, knowing that He had the keys to eternal life, knowing that He had the way for you and for me to gain entrance into the celestial kingdom of God, as He took His gospel to those people in the meridian of time and saw them reject Him and reject His message? Yet He demonstrated patience. He accepted His responsibility in life, even to the cross, the

Garden of Gethsemane preceding it. I would hope to learn patience from the Lord.

I would urge that you join me with a pledge, *I will learn*.

LABOR

Then, number three, *I will labor*. It's not enough to wish, it's not enough to dream, it's not enough to promise. We must do. The Lord said, "He that thrusteth in his sickle *with his might* . . . layeth up in store that he perisheth not" (D&C 4:4; emphasis added). And Nephi declared, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). It was James who summed up this lesson: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22).

One summer years ago, for example, I had a weekend free. Yet the Spirit prompted me to fulfill a responsibility. I boarded a plane for California. As I sat down, the seat next to me was empty. However, there occupied that seat eventually a most beautiful young lady. I noted that she was reading a book. As one is wont to do, I glanced at the title. It was by a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I said to her, "Oh, you must be a Mormon."

She responded, "Oh, no. Why would you ask?"

I replied: "Well, you're reading a book written by a very prominent member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

She said, “Is that right? A friend gave this to me, but I don’t know much about it. However, it has aroused my curiosity.”

Then I wondered. Should I be forward and say more about the Church? And the words of Peter came: “Be ready always” (1 Peter 3:15). And I decided that this was the time when I should bear my testimony. It was my privilege to answer her questions relative to the Church—intelligent questions that came from a heart that was seeking the truth. I asked if I might have the opportunity to have missionaries call

upon her. I asked if she would like to attend our branch of single adults in San Francisco. Her answers were affirmative. Upon returning home, I wrote to the stake president and passed along to him this information. Can you imagine my delight when I later received a call from the stake president, in which he said that she had become the newest member of the Church. I was overjoyed.

I realize that I have a responsibility to *labor*.

LOVE

And then that final pledge: *I will love*. Do you remember the answer which the Savior gave to the inquiring lawyer who asked, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”

And He replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:36–39).

“Seek ye out
of the best
books words of
wisdom; seek
learning, even by
study and also
by faith”
(D&C 88:118).

It was the English playwright William Shakespeare who wrote, “They do not love that do not show their love.”¹ How might you and I demonstrate our love for God and love for our fellowmen? Through obedience to God’s commands and the counsel of His servants. We have the privilege to obey the law of tithing, to obey the code of morality, to obey in each facet of our lives the word of our Heavenly Father.

Our Heavenly Father can appreciate our love for Him by how well we serve Him and how well we serve our fellowmen.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

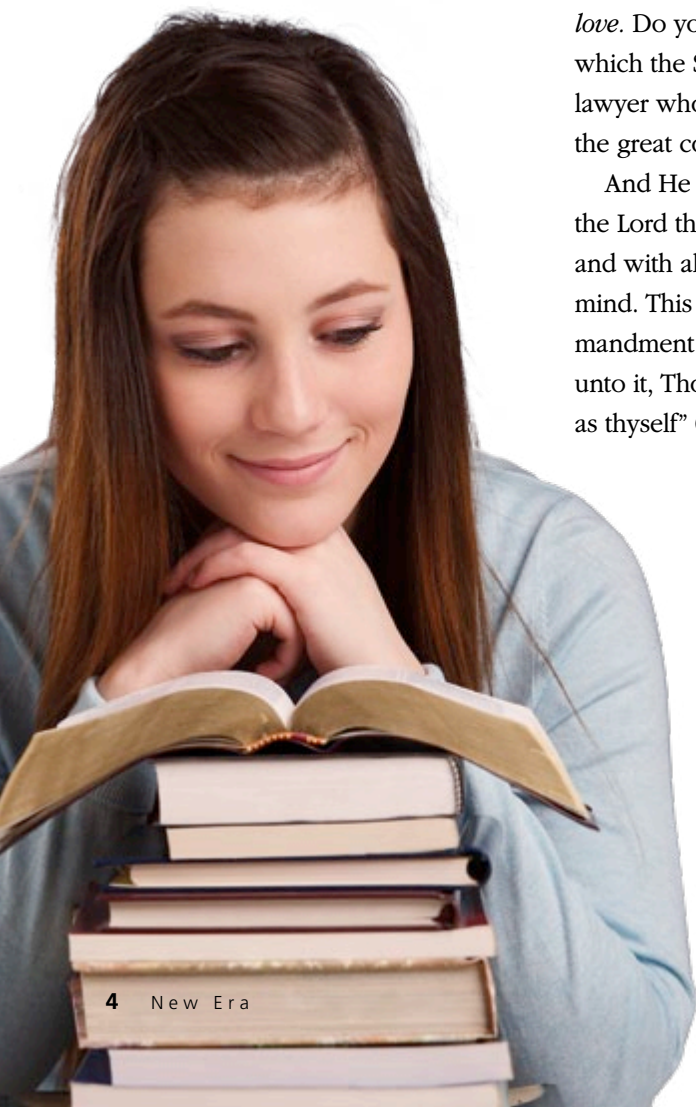
Four pledges: *I will listen, I will learn, I will labor, I will love*. As we fulfill these pledges, we can have the guidance of our Heavenly Father and experience true joy in our own lives.

The choice is yours, and the choice is mine, remembering that our choices, our decisions, determine our destiny. God will guide you in your determination to serve Him and keep His commandments *as you listen, as you learn, as you labor, and as you love*. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on January 16, 1973.

NOTE

1. William Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ed. William George Clarke and William Aldis Wright, *The Great Books of the Western World* (1952), act 1, scene 2, line 31.



Hebrews 5:4

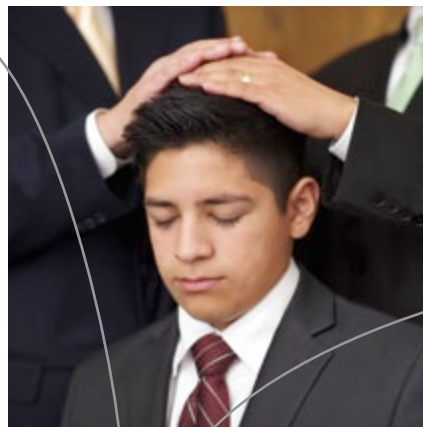
In Hebrews we learn about receiving authority from God.



NO MAN TAKETH

“We have not acquired [the priesthood] through purchase or bargain. The Lord has given it to men who are considered worthy to receive it. . . . It is given only by ordination by the laying on of hands by those in authority to do so. The qualification for eligibility is obedience to the commandments of God.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Four Cornerstones of Faith,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 7.



to bless the lives of others. . . . Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Willing and Worthy to Serve,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 66, 69.

AS WAS AARON

Aaron was called by God to help the prophet Moses lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. You can learn about how he was called by the Lord in Exodus 4:10–16, 27–30. In addition to Aaron, many other men have been called of God and given authority from Him. Explore these examples from the scriptures to learn about some of these men and their callings. Then see if you can find more examples.

- Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 1:4–10)
- Samuel (see 1 Samuel 3)
- Nephi and Lehi (see Helaman 5:18; 11:18–19)
- Alma the Younger (see Alma 8:23–24)
- Twelve Apostles in the New Testament (see John 15:16)
- Twelve disciples in the Book of Mormon (see 3 Nephi 11:21–22; 12:1)

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.

4 And no man taketh this ^a“honour unto himself, but he that is ^bcalled of God, as ^cwas Aaron.

CALLED OF GOD



“The pattern for obtaining priesthood authority is described in the fifth article of faith: ‘We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.’ Thus, a boy or a man receives the authority of the priesthood and is ordained to a specific office by one who already holds the priesthood and has been authorized by a leader with the necessary priesthood keys.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Powers of Heaven,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 48.

THIS HONOUR

This phrase refers to the previous verses in which Paul writes about being ordained and having power and authority to do God’s work. We call this power the priesthood. President Thomas S. Monson taught how the priesthood is an honor and a privilege:



“How blessed we are to be here in these last days, when the priesthood of God is upon the earth. How privileged we are to bear that priesthood. The priesthood is not so much a gift as it is a commission to serve, a privilege to lift, and an opportunity



DYNAMIC DEACONS



HERE ARE TWO PRESIDENTS WHO, THROUGH EXAMPLE AND INSPIRATION, BLESSED THE LIVES OF THOSE AROUND THEM.

AARONIC PRIESTHOOD DUTIES

Check out these resources to learn more about doing your duty as a deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood.

- ★ A new deacons quorum president learns what a quorum president should do (lds.org/go/83Learn).
- ★ How can deacons do their duty to God? See lds.org/go/83Duty.
- ★ A deacons quorum president finds a meaningful way to serve a quorum member (lds.org/go/83Dayton).
- ★ Principles that every deacons quorum president should know (lds.org/go/83President).
- ★ Pages 22–35 in the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet.
- ★ Each office in the Aaronic Priesthood has specific duties. There's an explanation at lds.org/go/83Priesthood.

INVITE ALL TO COME UNTO CHRIST

"[Deacons are] to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ."

Doctrine and Covenants 20:59



GO AND DO

"I invite each deacons, teachers, and priests quorum presidency to regularly counsel, study, and pray to learn what the Lord's will is for your quorum and then go and do."

"Sacred Keys of the Aaronic Priesthood," Larry M. Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, *Ensign*, May 2011, 57.



LOCATION:
WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

EXPERIENCE:
ACTIVATION
OF QUORUM
MEMBERS

CORNELL F.

Sets an example through simple acts of service. Makes sure every quorum member is contacted.

Well before sacrament meeting started, the president was already there. He always is. Now, before you assume we're talking about a stake, district, or branch

president, let's clarify. Cornell F. is a deacons quorum president.

Every Sunday he magnifies his calling. This particular Sunday is ward conference, and Cornell is here early, placing hymnbooks on the benches where the deacons will be seated. He wants his quorum to benefit from the sacred music that should be a significant part of worship.

Another Sunday, he is pleased to report that all of the deacons in his ward are in attendance, six who are active and three who haven't been coming regularly but are being fellowshipped.

"Every Sunday," he says, "I give deacons assignments to call or visit

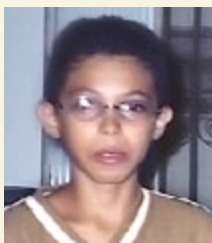
less-active quorum members or friends who are investigating the Church." He also notes that "every Tuesday evening before our youth activities we invite all the deacons to come."

At the ward conference, the deacons pay special attention to inspiring messages from the stake president and the bishop. Then after the meeting, "the deacons stay to make sure that the chapel is clean and tidy," Cornell says. They also look after the rest of the meetinghouse. "We take out the bins and sometimes we help to clean the nursery room," he explains.

"We are 'can-do' deacons," he says, "and each deacon plays a big role in our success."

"YOU ARE PREPARING FOR YOUR MISSIONS WHEN YOU LEARN YOUR DUTIES AS DEACONS."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Who Honors God, God Honors," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 49.



LOCATION:
AMAZONAS,
BRAZIL

EXPERIENCE:
MISSIONARY
WORK

ALESSANDRO E.

Follows promptings of the Holy Ghost. Shows determination and dedication in doing his duty.

This young man did his duty so well that, partly as a result of his service, six people joined the Church, including a couple that got married.

Alessandro E., a newly called deacons quorum president, wanted to increase the

number of members in his quorum. He tried to activate some of the deacons but without much success. He tried sharing the gospel with his friends at school but also without success.

So Alessandro sought his mother's advice. "She said I should fast and pray," he explains. So he did, and he felt a prompting from the Holy Ghost to go back to one of his friends from school. "This time," Alessandro says, "he agreed to come to a sacrament meeting."

Missionaries began teaching the friend, and soon he and his brother were baptized, along with two cousins. The friend's parents initially showed no interest in the Church, even though they permitted the discussions to take place in their home and approved

when their children sought permission to be baptized. But after some discussions and visits they changed their minds. They believed what they were learning, gained their own testimonies, and wanted to become Latter-day Saints. However, before they could join the Church they had to be married first. Soon they were, and soon after that they were baptized.

That was a happy day for many people, including Alessandro. As president of his deacons quorum, he now had brought new members into the quorum and into the ward. He had learned that a good leader seeks counsel from those he trusts, that Heavenly Father answers prayers, and that it is important to follow promptings.



How
SEMINARY
Changed Me and My Family Forever

By Karla Brigante

My mother taught me the gospel when I was young, but because my father was not a Church member, I always wondered if I was on the correct path. I never understood why my father had never joined the Church if it really was true. Still, I loved going to Primary and singing the hymns. I also enjoyed when my mother read the scriptures to me, and little by little I began to develop my own testimony.

When I joined Young Women, one of the first goals I made was to share my testimony every fast Sunday. Bearing my testimony became a habit for me and strengthened my desire to increase my knowledge when I was able to enroll in seminary.

My first seminary class covered the Old Testament. That year I not only grew to appreciate and value the Old Testament, but I also learned the importance of temples and family history.

I joined together with other students from my ward and got involved

in family history work. We indexed hundreds of names and developed an enormous love for people we knew almost nothing about—just their names and other limited data. Even though I knew that the work we were doing was important, I sometimes felt discouraged and frustrated. I was working so that ordinances could be done for people I did not know, yet I could not reach my own father. He did not understand the importance of what I was doing. I continued praying and fasting that he would be touched.



The following year in seminary we studied the New Testament. One morning after I woke up, I began to read about the Savior in Gethsemane. Tears flowed from my eyes as I realized that the drops of blood He shed were for me. How I wished I had never sinned! The words of Isaiah that I had studied the previous year came into my mind: “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him” (Isaiah 53:5). As I read about the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, my mom came into my room. I shared with her my feelings, my testimony, and my desire for my father to know what I had learned in seminary.

My testimony continued to grow the next year as we read the Doctrine and Covenants. I obtained a testimony

that Joseph Smith was a prophet. I also decided to follow his example and ask God if the Church is true. Although I already had conviction in my heart, one afternoon I found myself alone and sincerely prayed. As I did, I realized that the testimony I was asking for had been developing as I studied the scriptures and attended seminary.

The Lord opened my mind and my heart that year, and I understood the Doctrine and Covenants as I never had before. I also learned of the great value of souls (see D&C 18:10–16) and began to share my growing testimony with those who did not know about the gospel, including my father.

I knew that studying the Book of Mormon during my final year of seminary would also fortify my testimony. As I truly studied, I felt Heavenly

Father’s love for me. The stories inspired me to the point that all I wanted to do was read the Book of Mormon. I began to take the Book of Mormon to school and would read it during my free time. I also began to discuss what I was reading with my father.

One day after a long conversation with my father about the gospel, I challenged him to read all of the Book of Mormon. I testified that, like me, he could receive a testimony.

I am happy to say that my father read the Book of Mormon. When he did, he knew the Church is true and was eventually baptized! My family is now preparing to be sealed in the temple. I know that attending seminary and reading the scriptures helped me develop my own testimony, and I know that they bless families. **NE**
Karla Brigante lives in São Paulo, Brazil.

WE "SPEAK" AFTER THESE THINGS

The words we use reflect the feelings of our heart and who we really are.



While I was serving as a bishop, a wonderful young man came to my office for an interview. As we visited, he mentioned that his only major problem was swearing. He constantly heard vulgar language around him, and he too had started swearing. He said he had been trying to quit but was unsuccessful, and he wanted some counsel on how he might stop using bad language.

I immediately thought of suggestions similar to what is now found in *For the Strength of Youth*: “If you have developed the habit of using language that is not in keeping with these standards—such as swearing, mocking, gossiping, or speaking in anger to others—you can change. Pray for help. Ask your family and friends to support you.”¹ I wish this counsel had been available in *For the Strength of Youth* at that time.

An Experience from My Youth

I did tell this young man of an experience I had as a youth in an environment where inappropriate language was often used. It seemed that whenever I heard any type of profanity, those words would take hold in my mind more easily than the



By Larry M. Gibson

First Counselor in the
Young Men General
Presidency

good thoughts I wanted to have. A wonderful priesthood leader told me that the mind was like a miraculous storage device and that we could remove inappropriate thoughts by quickly overwriting them with things that were praiseworthy.

A friend and I decided to do just that. We memorized two hymns, “I Need Thee Every Hour” (*Hymns*, no. 98) and “More Holiness Give Me” (*Hymns*, no. 131), and the thirteenth article of faith. We agreed that if either of us said something inappropriate, we would immediately sing one of the hymns or quote the article of faith.

We quickly realized we did not want to sing the hymns aloud in certain places. We were too embarrassed! So we quoted the thirteenth article of faith, emphasizing the part, “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.” It worked! We discovered that when we would repeat it, the inappropriate thoughts would disappear. By changing one word, we also created a simple motto: “We *speak* after these things!” When either of us said this phrase, we would think, “Are my words true, chaste,

benevolent, virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy?” (see Articles of Faith 1:13). If they were not, we knew we had work to do.

What We Can Do

We live in a time when there is much that is profane, crude, and vulgar. It seems nearly impossible to completely shield ourselves from hearing or seeing things we wish to avoid. The key is for us to ensure that we do not become the carrier of things profane, crude, or vulgar. Paul must have felt this when he said, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth” (Ephesians 4:29).

I have watched some youth use inappropriate language because they thought it would help them fit in and others use it because of a desire to stand out. In fact, these seem to be the major reasons why youth slip into this habit.

I am most impressed with those youth who “dare to be different,”² like one young man with a non-member friend who cursed regularly. Each time his friend would swear, he would good-naturedly ask him to stop. Eventually his friend did stop.

The friend was so impressed with him and the way he lived his life that he wanted to learn more about the Church. Soon after, he was baptized.

What we feel in our hearts is what we think about, and what we think about is what we speak about. Thus, it is true that the words we use reflect the feelings of our heart and who we really are.

As is so well stated in *For the Strength of Youth*: “Clean and intelligent language is evidence of a bright and wholesome mind. Good language that uplifts, encourages, and compliments others invites the Spirit to be with you.”³

Each of us can enjoy the blessings of having the Spirit *always* with us, as promised when we partake of the sacrament each Sabbath day. It will depend on us—on how we act, what we do, and, yes, even what we say. It is my hope that we will use our words not to profane or gossip but to show that we are followers of our Savior, even Jesus Christ. **NE**

NOTES

1. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 21.
2. L. Tom Perry, “The Tradition of a Balanced, Righteous Life,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2011, 49.
3. *For the Strength of Youth*, 20.

Choosing Not to GOSSIP

By Brett Schacterle

During my sophomore year in high school, I volunteered as part of the technical crew to produce my high school's annual musical. The experience became one of my favorite memories of the year, because it was fun and I learned so much doing it. I also loved working with the people I met.

But the most important thing I learned was not something I had expected.

In order for the tech crew to communicate quietly with each other, we used radio headsets. We also used them to tell jokes, have conversations, even to sing to each other to entertain ourselves during the long rehearsals.

But the first time we used the headsets wasn't actually so comfortable for me. At first I was having a blast. Then some people started gossiping about the actors rehearsing onstage. I tried to ignore the snide comments and rude remarks, but as the conversation developed, the gossip grew crueler and more offensive.

I felt sick hearing some of the comments, but I was afraid to stand up against my new friends. I wish I had, because as I tolerated their jokes, I was eventually tempted to laugh and make my own comments. I began to rationalize why it would have been fine. Nobody but the tech crew would

have heard me, and I wanted to fit in with the people around me.

As hard as it was, I knew that backbiting about those onstage wasn't right, and I chose not to gossip.

After the rehearsal we learned that everything we had said over the headsets had been broadcast backstage. All 60 or so of the cast members had heard us talking. Some were angry, upset, or embarrassed. No one was impressed.

Later, while I was talking with one of my friends about what had happened, she said, "Everyone knows

you'd never say anything like that."

Her comment shocked me, and I realized the significance of the choice I had made. If I had chosen to join in with the gossip, what would that have said about me? What would that have said about the Church?

I'm grateful for the choice I made in that dark, little theater, even when I thought others wouldn't know, because it has opened blessings of friendship, peace, and confidence that I would have lost had I chosen to gossip. **NE**

Brett Schacterle lives in Washington, USA.



**“ONE OF THE
GREATEST BLESSINGS
WE CAN OFFER TO THE WORLD
IS THE POWER OF
A CHRIST-CENTERED HOME
WHERE THE
GOSPEL IS TAUGHT,
COVENANTS ARE KEPT,
AND LOVE ABOUNDS.”**



Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“For Peace at Home,” April 2013 general conference



A Christ-Centered Home

This month, your Sunday lessons will focus on marriage and strengthening the family (see lds.org/youth/learn), a topic that was talked about a lot in the most recent general conference.

As society continues to devalue the family, it’s important for us to stand strong to protect the family unit in society and also to strengthen our own families at home. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that not only parents but also children have an important role in strengthening the family and the feeling of peace at home, and so he counseled:

“Be certain that every decision you make, whether temporal or spiritual, is conditioned on what the Savior would have you do. When He is the center of your home, there is peace and serenity. There is a spirit of assurance that pervades the home, and it is felt by all who dwell there.”

Read more about how to have a Christ-centered family life in his April 2013 general conference address, “For Peace at Home,” at lds.org/go/83Home.



Preparing for a Happy Marriage

It may be natural to think you don’t need to prepare for marriage yet because it could be years away, but you can actually do a lot in your youth to prepare for a fantastic marriage when you enter adulthood. Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy shared several principles of happy marriages:

- Recognition that the marriage is a pearl beyond price
- Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Repentance and humility
- Respect, transparency, and loyalty
- Love with complete devotion

This month, consider writing down some goals for things you can do today that will help you become the best spouse. After all, the habits you develop today will go with you into your future. Read more from Elder Clayton’s April 2013 general conference address, “Marriage: Watch and Learn,” at lds.org/go/83Watch.

“SEEK AFTER THE IDEAL
— of forming an —

ETERNAL MARRIAGE,

including by
striving or preparing to be

A WORTHY SPOUSE.”
.....

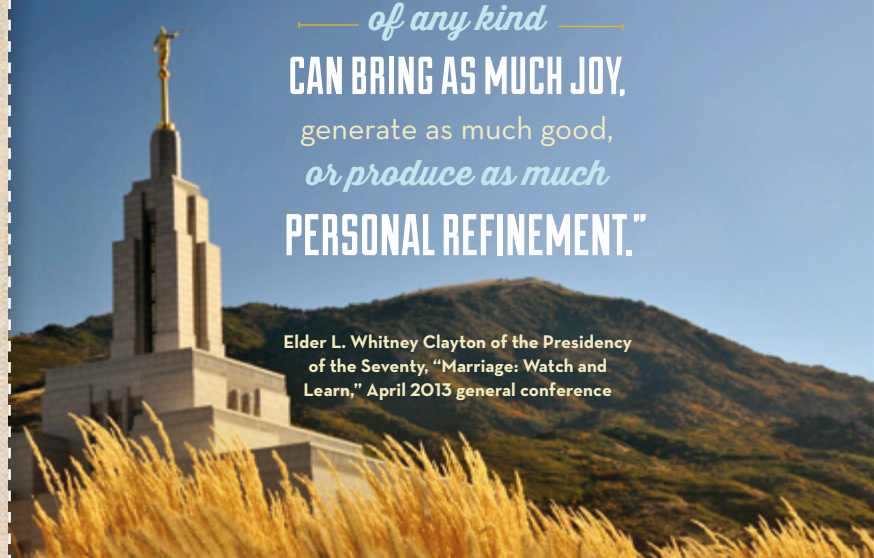
“No other relationship
— of any kind —

CAN BRING AS MUCH JOY,

generate as much good,
or produce as much

PERSONAL REFINEMENT.”

Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency
of the Seventy, “Marriage: Watch and
Learn,” April 2013 general conference



Share These Cards Online

As you talk about marriage and family this month, consider using these cards in lessons or on social media. You can even hang them in your bedroom or locker to remind you about your gospel study throughout the month. Download or share them online at lds.org/go/83Cards.

How do I “stand in holy places” when there’s so much unholiness around me, like at school?

To prepare us for difficult times, the Lord commands us to “stand in holy places” (D&C 45:32; see also D&C 87:8). To do that, we need to live worthily and have the Holy Ghost with us. The Spirit will help us overcome temptation and negative influences.

Here are some ways to invite the Spirit into your life:

- Pray. Begin your day with prayer, and especially pray during the day when you have to be around unholy influences at school or elsewhere.
- Attend seminary and study the scriptures daily. Studying the doctrines taught in the scriptures will help you be filled with light and truth—“light and truth forsake that evil one” (D&C 93:37).
- Take the sacrament each week. As you meaningfully renew your covenant to live the gospel, you receive the Lord’s promise to have His Spirit with you.
- Live the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. These standards will help you stand for holiness.
- Stay close to your parents. Teens who have good relationships with their parents are much stronger in difficult situations.

These suggestions will strengthen you spiritually. They will help you when you find yourself in an unholy situation that is unavoidable, like at school. But it’s best if you can avoid unholy situations whenever possible.

Keep an Attitude of Reverence



I have learned that you can make the places around you holy, because *who* we are is more important than *where* we are. There is a lot of temptation at school, but what is truly important is having an attitude of reverence toward Heavenly Father and striving to take upon you the name of Christ. In this way, you will be able to make your school a holy place for you because you will remember Heavenly Father and our Savior.

*Elder Ojeda, 21, Colombia Bogotá
North Mission*

Choose the Good, Avoid the Bad

I try to avoid areas in my school where I know other people usually do wrong things. I also carefully choose who I sit with in class or during lunch because they affect how I think and act. But no matter how careful we are, we occasionally see or hear unholiness. When this happens to me, I quickly look away and sing a hymn in my head to clear my mind. Also, reading scriptures and talking to uplifting friends have helped me. We can’t always choose our surroundings, but we can choose how we react to them.

Eliza A., 14, Utah, USA

Stand Up for Your Faith



Make the area around you holy. Surround yourself with friends who meet the recommendations in *For*

the Strength of Youth. Let others know of your standards and ask them to stop inappropriate conversation or turn off bad music when you are around. Don't be afraid to stand up for your faith.

Thomas S., 15, Georgia, USA

Be Strong and Brave



We must be strong and brave. We must choose the right. Sometimes it's very hard, but if we will do that, we will be happy. When people ask us to drink or smoke with them, we need to be brave and say no. We can explain to them that we want to choose the right, so we don't do those things.

Anastasia N., 20, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, Ukraine

Seek the Spirit



We encounter people at school who don't share our standards. Yet, with the Holy Ghost guiding our way, we will be able to make the right choices and set a good example for them. It is important for us to always "stand in holy places" in order to feel the love of Heavenly Father. One way to do that is to seek for the companionship of the Holy Ghost. When we choose to be in the atmosphere of God's love, there will be great joy in our hearts, knowing that Heavenly Father is pleased with our actions.

Genzen N., 18, Mindanao, Philippines

Never Compromise



A few years ago, I was one of a few Church members in my grade. People thought I was weird because I was dedicated to living all of the standards of the Church. So one day I decided that I could compromise my standards a little bit. When I did, I noticed that I had more attention from others. But after just a few weeks, I felt guilty and turned to the Lord for repentance. He did help me, and I had to make a lot of sacrifices, but it was worth it! I truly got to see the blessings of living the gospel at school. I did lose friends and attention, but I gained respect and happiness.

Sutton K., 15, Texas, USA

Think about the Temple

The holiest place that exists upon the earth is the temple. Thinking about it will help you do what is right, no matter what circumstance you may find yourself in. You can also put up a photo of the temple where you can



IT'S YOUR CHOICE

"We choose where we will be. God has given us our agency. He will not take it from us,

and if I do that which is wrong and get into the devil's territory, I do it because I have the will and power to do it. I cannot blame anybody else, and if I determine to keep the commandments of God and live as I ought to live and stay on the Lord's side of the line I do it because I ought to do it, and I will receive my blessing for it. It will not be the result of what somebody else may do."

**President George Albert Smith (1870-1951),
Teachings of Presidents of the Church:
George Albert Smith (2011), 198.**

see it; this will help you feel better and have the strength to not give heed to the unholiness that exists at school.

Angel T., 18, Ecuador

Learning from General Conference

For more suggestions on how to stand in holy places, you could review these talks from the April 2013 general conference at conference.lds.org:

- Dallin H. Oaks, "Followers of Christ."
- Robert D. Hales, "Stand Strong in Holy Places."
- Ann M. Dibb, "Your Holy Places."

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"My mom works all day. How can I improve our relationship?"

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2013.

Go to newera.lds.org and click "Submit Your Work."

You can also write to us at newera@ldschurch.org or

New Era, Q&A, Mother
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

OPERATION Happiness

By Kaitlyn Hedges

“Reaching out to others, you really forget your own problems. I’m able to see the joy on the faces of those I’m helping, along with the confirmation of the Spirit letting me know that what I’m doing is good.”



Until her junior year of high school, Brittany R. of New Mexico, USA, seemed to have the life of a typical teenager—playing in the high school band, surviving classes, and planning life after graduation. But things didn't work out the way she imagined.

During her junior year of high school, Brittany came down with flu-like symptoms that—after many hospital stays and tests—eventually led doctors to diagnose her with a rare disease that paralyzed her digestive tract. Eating normal food was no longer an option. Ever since, she's had to stay in the hospital for months at a time for various surgeries and procedures, and now she eats through specially prepared tubes she keeps in a backpack.

Brittany has chosen to reach outward instead of focusing on her problems. "The more that you [focus] on yourself, the more likely you are to fall into a rut and feel sorry for yourself," Brittany says. "Reaching out to others, you really forget your own problems." She adds, "I'm able to see the joy on the faces of those I'm helping, along with the confirmation of the Spirit letting me know that what I'm doing is good."

Deciding to Focus Outward

While her high school years were disrupted by hospital stays and feeding tubes, Brittany found a way to help other patients in similar situations. She had read in Doctrine and Covenants 60:13 about not hiding our talents, and she decided to act. "I have a lot that I do, and I like to share it with others and bring smiles to their faces," Brittany says. "I've been given so much. I love to help other people have a good life too." She used her talents to draw cartoons, compile a coloring book, and make sock monkeys for other patients—all in an effort to make them smile in the midst of adversity.

Operation Draw

It all started when, during one of her hospital stays, Brittany began drawing funny, chaotic cartoon scenes and posting them on her door. One scene featured a carnival with roller coasters, bumper cars, a person stuck in a fake



Each morning Brittany loads her backpack with medications and nourishment that flow through tubes from the backpack into her body. It's the only way she can eat.

cannon, and even someone getting buried by an out-of-control cotton-candy machine. Another showed different events in the hospital, including a patient escaping in a wheelchair.

Children especially loved her drawings, and all sorts of people would stop at her door to smile and laugh. Brittany ended up making copies of these drawings so the hospital could put them up on the walls. She'd found that something she did for fun could provide a way to bless others.

Operation Coloring Book

Another way to spread happiness with her talents began to develop after she had a conversation with one of her friends in the hospital. She and a fellow patient laughed at their thoughts of "how you know you've been in the hospital too long." These quips soon turned into a coloring book Brittany drew called *Life Is Full of Color*. Each page has one of Brittany's drawings and a humorous blurb, like, "You know you've been in the hospital too long when you can work your own IV pump" or ". . . when your room at the hospital is more decorated than your room at home." The coloring book was published and is now being given to children in the hospital. Brittany hopes it helps them know they're not alone in their trials.



DETERMINING YOUR LIFE'S STORY

"It is your reaction to adversity, not the adversity itself, that determines how your life's story will develop."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Your Happily Ever After," *Ensign*, May 2010, 126.



Left: Brittany teaches some friends how to make sock monkeys. Below left: Images she drew for her coloring book.



ADDING IT UP

Coloring book pages drawn:

33

Sock monkeys made:

400+

Hospital stays completed:

12

over the last 4 years

Total time spent in the hospital:

About 2 years

Others helped and uplifted:

Countless

▶ Watch a Video

See more about Brittany's journey in the short video "God Will Lift Us Up" at lds.org/go/83Lift.

Operation Sock Monkey

The best-known of Brittany's creative service may be a sock monkey project she started—a project one of her friends has now dubbed "The Secret Ninja Monkey Operation." Why sock monkeys, you might ask?

Well, the project started as just a fun activity to do with a pair of knee socks. As Brittany worked on the first sock monkey, however, she thought of friends who were going through surgeries. She decided to make sock monkeys for those experiencing hard times, including patients who are frequently in the hospital. "Really, my sock monkeys are for anyone who needs a pick-me-up," she says.

She even customizes some of the sock monkeys with medical equipment so that patients uncomfortable about getting new tubes or surgeries will have "a buddy with them who has the same thing." She and her friends have sent over 400 sock monkey "buddies" to patients all over the world.

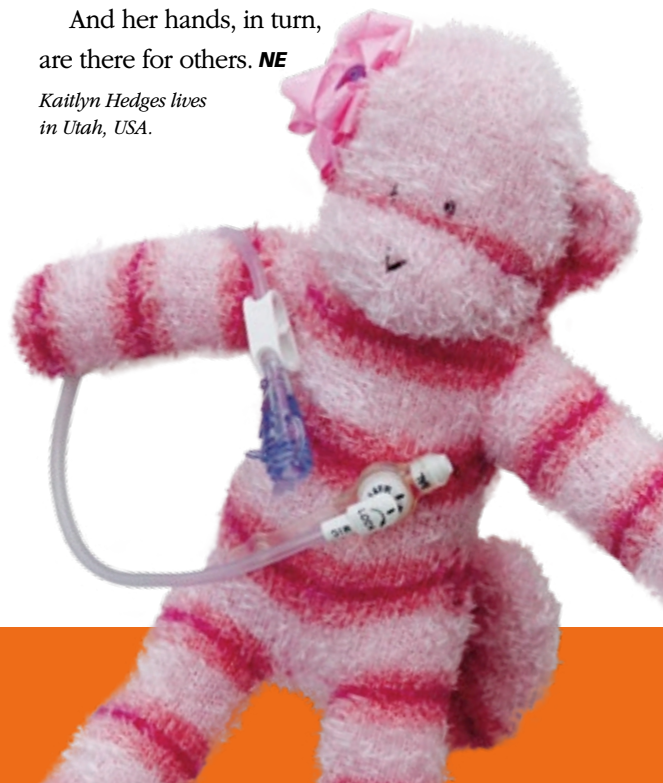
Lifting and Being Lifted

The service Brittany has given has not led to a cure for her sickness, but it has improved her life. "I don't like having this condition," Brittany says, "but emotionally I like to look outward and not focus so much on myself but more on how I can use this to strengthen others. At times I do have a woe-is-me day. That would almost always happen at some point in time, but emotionally I have been able to keep positive and happy and optimistic." Sock monkeys and drawings help her and those she serves stay positive enough to avoid negative emotional ruts.

Brittany has helped the patients around her see they are loved and not alone in their struggles, and because of the gospel she knows she is not alone either. "I've seen miracles happen," Brittany says. "I've learned that Heavenly Father and Christ will lift me up—help me rise to the challenge—as long as I reach out for Them. Their hands are always there for me."

And her hands, in turn, are there for others. **NE**

Kaitlyn Hedges lives in Utah, USA.



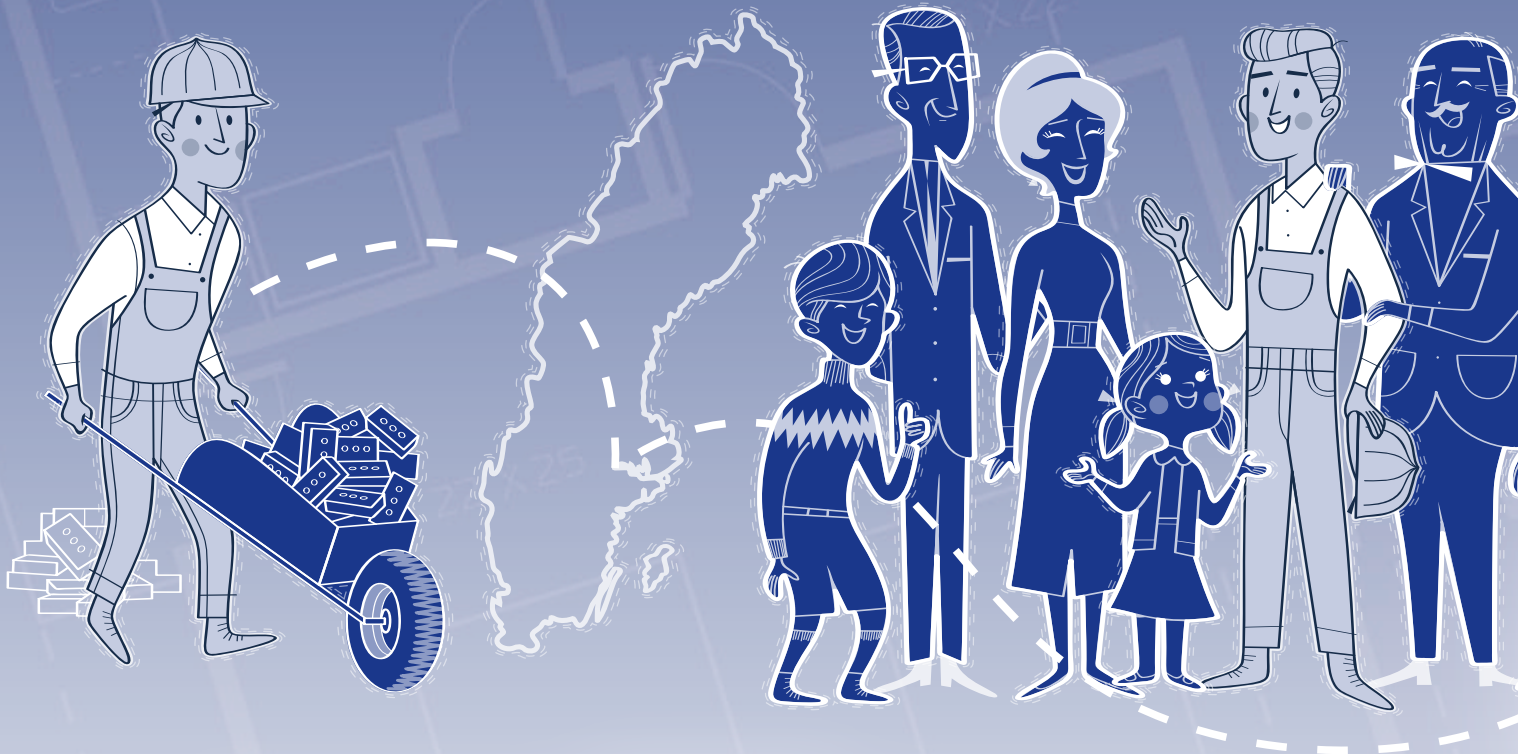
PHOTOGRAPHS BY R. VAL JOHNSON AND ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK; ILLUSTRATION BY BRITTANY R.



LEND A HAND

"Minister every day. Opportunities are all around you. . . . Most consist of small, sincere acts that help others become followers of Jesus Christ."

(David L. Beck, "Your Sacred Duty to Minister," *Ensign*, May 2013, 55.)



WORK SERVICE

AND SPIRITUAL SELF-RELIANCE



By Elder
Per G. Malm
Of the Seventy

The blessings of hard work and service go beyond just temporal help.

Bricklaying at 16

Learning how to work hard is essential while in your youth. Hard physical work is a part of life. I learned that lesson early when I was called on a special Church-service mission to help build meeting-houses. I was only 16 years old and had just graduated from my school. I was assigned to the bricklaying crew. It was hard work, but I loved it.

We were put in groups and traveled from Sweden, where I lived, to several other

countries close by. At each location we would make arrangements to stay with a member from the local ward. I was struck by the willingness of good, solid Church members to open their homes and contribute whatever they could. Even if their own finances were not in abundance, they desired to serve.

Most of the young men called to these Church-service missions were older, but in my case I was 16. I later served a proselyting mission when I was 19. When my brother and I received the callings, my father came



to us and said, “Even though it may be a temporary interruption of your continued studies, I want to have sons who learn early to serve in the Church. Gaining that experience will be a foundation for the way you can approach life.” Today, answering the call to serve a proselyting mission is a priority for young men.

When I received the call to serve this mission, I was a little bit nervous, but I did not hesitate to accept it. I had been taught from a young age to say yes when asked to serve in any capacity for the Lord’s work. So, more than nervousness, I felt excitement. It had been a great experience to help build meetinghouses for the Church.

Gaining Testimony and Self-Reliance

I know that it is through serving others that we can gain a love for and testimony of the gospel. During the time that I was away from my family as a young man, I learned that I needed to take responsibility for my life—not only physically but also spiritually. I also learned how to really listen to and follow the promptings of the Spirit.

But those feelings and abilities didn’t come only during my time as a Church-service missionary. My testimony and my desire to serve started before that. As a youth I was shy, and I even had challenges speaking because of my insecurity. But gradually, as I involved myself in service, I

was strengthened—step by step. I was given opportunities to learn, serve, and grow through callings and assignments in our branch. I became anxiously engaged (see D&C 58:27). I learned that in life, where you start is not where you will end up; the starting point is the beginning of a life of change.

A Promise to Help Us

The key to making that change is to always remember who we are. We are sons and daughters of Heavenly Father. Each of us was born with a promise: when we make and remain true to covenants and do our best with our circumstances, talents, and abilities, then we shall return to our Heavenly Father with honor. That is part of our eternal perspective, and we need to remember that we are not alone. Heavenly Father will give us the power and ability to face our challenges.

It was through the experiences I had while serving early in life that I began to establish my own confidence in the Lord. Doctrine and Covenants 121:45 encourages us to let our “confidence wax strong in the presence of God.” When you are involved in the service of the Lord, you will feel of His Spirit, you will feel of His love, and you will come to understand that, even though this life is a test, you are not alone. When you live righteously and you serve, you will be given help and powers beyond your own. **NE**


 **More Online**
For Mormonads, stories, and other articles on this topic, visit lds.org/go/83Work.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRYAN BEACH

By Tory C. Anderson

Playing the clarinet had always come easy to me, so I hadn't expected this change.

I started playing the clarinet in sixth grade, and it came fairly easy to me. In junior high and high school, I always joined the school band. One year, I missed school on the day of the band tryouts. We weren't trying out for acceptance into the band, but rather for what "seats" we would have and in what sections. I was horrified to learn that because I'd missed the tryouts I would be placed in the very last seat in the last clarinet

From First to LAST CHAIR



BE WILLING TO WORK HARD

"Set high goals for yourself, and be willing to work hard to achieve them. Develop self-discipline, and be dependable. . . . Heavenly Father has given you gifts and talents and knows what you are capable of achieving. Seek His help and guidance as you work to achieve your goals."

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 40.

section. I'd always been a first section player and often first chair. Sitting in the last chair embarrassed me and made me a little angry. My band teacher understood this and reminded me that I didn't have to stay there—I could work my way back up throughout the year. I worked hard and eventually reached first chair again.

As I progressed through high school, the first section was my norm. So I became a little lazy and didn't practice any harder than I needed to in order to stay in a top spot.

Each year there was an All-State band event where every school selected the best player of each section to be a part of a large multi-school band. It was an honor to be selected, but I forgot that fact. I took it for granted when I was selected and showed up one year on performance day having only glanced at the music. I'd had the ability to master the music, but it would have actually taken some work—work that I hadn't put in.

I knew I couldn't play the music very well this year, but I'd been to All-State in previous years and knew how it worked: because I came from the first chair section in my school I would be placed in the first chair section in the All-State band. I wouldn't be much good to the band this year, but I could fake my way through the day and have fun.

The air was abuzz with excitement as the band students gathered. Then the room grew quiet as the band director stepped onto the podium. What he said next concerned me.

"Instead of grouping everyone based on your position at school, you will try out for the seat in your section.

You will play the music you have prepared for a judge, and he or she will place you in your appropriate seat. You do not have to try out, but if you do not, you will automatically be placed at the bottom of the last section."

My lack of preparation landed on my chest like a pallet of bricks. The music was hard this year, and I had not practiced. I knew how awful I would sound in front of the other first chair section members if I chose to try out. But if I didn't try out, I would be placed at the bottom of the last section. In all fairness, I can now admit that I deserved to be

at the bottom of the last section. However, at that time I was prideful and could not bear to be in the last section. Even if I hadn't practiced, I knew I was first section material and decided that I would be in that section no matter what.

At the last moment, as the first section clarinets were going to the tryout room, I hurried to join them. One by one, each clarinetist played. My heart sank when it became clear they'd all practiced. Then it was my turn.

In my pride, I put the clarinet to my mouth and proceeded to embarrass myself as I played. I did not have to imagine the amused looks of my fellow clarinetists and the rather horrified look of the judge when I finished. The judge kindly said nothing, but his thoughts were clear enough when he placed me in the last chair in my section.

My stubbornness had kept me in the section I thought I deserved, but it was no victory. I couldn't hold my head up

*"I'm really quite good,"
I wanted to say. "It's just that
I didn't practice."*

or participate freely in the other students' excited conversations during the breaks. I was a fake among the genuine. There was no way I could convince them that I actually belonged with them. They had heard me play.

"I'm really quite good," I wanted to say. "It's just that I didn't practice." But I never said it because I knew what their response would have been: "You should have practiced like we did."

I knew that when it came right down to the performance, my potential didn't matter—only the current skill that I'd developed did.

The saving grace of the day was that I learned clearly and deeply the meaning of hard work and preparation. I saw a connection to the parable of the ten virgins. I had arrived at All-State without oil, so to speak. I could not borrow from the skills of the other clarinetists. I now know that each minute of every day is the time to prepare—especially in the aspects of life that really matter. **NE**

Tory C. Anderson lives in Utah, USA.



★ ★ ★ JOINING ★ ★ ★
THE LORD'S
ARMY

A series of events led me to become part of the Lord's army.



“I knew the Book of Mormon is true and that I would do everything in my power never to let God down again.”

By Nathaniel Free

I was a directionless 16-year-old moving around the country when a pastor of a local church in northern California took me in. He gave me a roof over my head and my first exposure to Jesus Christ. I began to attend the local church’s youth congregation. After a few months, I was given free schooling at a youth ministry school, allowing me to become a youth minister over a group of 8–15-year-olds. Life seemed to be falling into place, but I still lacked a life plan. When my pastor suggested I enroll in the army, I realized it could help me gain the focus I needed for my life. Plus, I was excited to serve my country and knew it was a great opportunity to receive an education. So I enlisted.

I soon learned that even though there are a lot of tough things in life, basic training may be among the toughest. But on Sunday, all soldiers were given a small break to attend religious worship, which provided a much-needed rest—not just from the daily rigors of the army, but also from a stern drill sergeant as well. I eagerly accepted this opportunity and began attending a different faith’s worship services each week. When I attended The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I told the members I was already a member so they wouldn’t try to convert me. I was surprised by how much I enjoyed the three-hour break, so I decided to go back the following week.

That time I took John, my training partner, with me to church. The first speaker was a woman who was graduating from basic combat training. She shared her conversion story and then sang the hymn “A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief” (*Hymns*, no. 29). I glanced at John and noticed tears forming in his eyes.

“What is this feeling?” he asked. “I’ve got the tingles.”

As I replied, “It’s called the Spirit,” it struck me that something special was going on—something about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was different.

John and I soon met with the missionaries, and they gave us copies of the Book of Mormon. John readily accepted his copy; I was more hesitant. In basic training

our only free time was the four hours we had for sleep, and I did not feel like we could waste a precious minute doing anything other than sleep. But John felt differently.

That night as I climbed into my bunk, I noticed a light coming from the bunk next to me. It was John reading the Book of Mormon instead of sleeping. The night guard for our barracks later approached and asked John what he was doing. John matter-of-factly replied, “I’m reading the Book of Mormon.” The guard responded, “Oh, John, you’re not reading those lies are you?” I grimaced on the top bunk. I knew I should defend John and the Book of Mormon, but I cowardly decided to roll over and act like I was asleep.

John climbed out of his bunk, stood up, and, addressing the guard boldly, stated, “This is another testament of Jesus Christ. You take that back.”

I lay in anguish all that night. I had failed to defend my God and my training partner. I felt like I had denied my Christ and denied my discipleship. I, who was a certified minister, had lain in bed, while John, after having the Book of Mormon for only a few hours, had bravely stood up to defend it. Overcome with shame and embarrassment, I knew that the only thing I could do was to read the Book of Mormon for myself.

As I began to read, it wasn’t long before I gained a testimony that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ. I was so excited and knew I had to share the good word with my adopted family. I wrote home to my pastor and eagerly explained what I’d learned. I was surprised, confused, and mostly sad when he wrote back telling me I could never go home to them again unless I stopped going to the LDS Church and reading the Book of Mormon. I wanted to remain close to my family, but by then I knew the Book of Mormon is true and that

I would do everything in my power never to let God down again, even if it meant giving up my family (see Matthew 10:37–39).

So I did what I had to do. I got baptized.

About two years later, I was praying one night when a thought entered my mind: “What about a mission?” I dismissed the idea as impossible. After all, I had signed a contract and was enlisted to serve in the army for a set amount of time. The next night the same thing happened, and I shrugged it off again. But when the thought came back for the third consecutive night, I decided to ask Heavenly Father about it.

“If I really am supposed to serve a mission, help me know what to do,” I pleaded.

About 10 minutes later I was lying in my bunk when someone knocked on the door. It was my elders quorum president, looking a little uncomfortable.

Somewhat sheepishly he said, “I’m not exactly sure why, but for the past three nights the Spirit has prompted me to tell you that you are supposed to serve a mission. Tonight the prompting was so strong that there was no way I could ever think of sleeping without telling you.”

I knew my answer, and so I started to act on it. I knew it’s extremely hard to get permission to take a two-year break from the army, but after much effort and many small miracles, I was finally granted leave for two years to serve a mission. I received my call to the Alaska Anchorage Mission, where I’m now serving.

The Lord has blessed my life with so much. He brought the pastor into my life so I could learn about Jesus Christ and straighten out my life. Then He helped me find the Church and the restored gospel, and He cleared the way so I could serve a mission. I am so grateful that He trusts me enough to call me to share His gospel with His children. He knows each and every one of us, and if we have faith in Him, He will always prepare a way for us and guide us to the right places at the right times. **NE**

Elder Nathaniel Free is serving in the Alaska Anchorage Mission.



YOUR SERVICE

Just as the example of Nathaniel’s friend helped him join the Church during his military service, you can also be a great missionary if you serve in the military. For you, President Thomas S. Monson has said:



“Brethren, as you plan with purpose your lives, remember that your missionary opportunities are not restricted to the period of a formal call. For those of you who serve in the military, such time can and should be profitable. Each year our young men in uniform bring many souls into the kingdom of God by honoring their priesthood, living the commandments of God, and teaching to others the Lord’s divine word” (“Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 67).



By Richard M. Romney
Church Magazines

At 15, I wanted more than just about anything to play football. There were just a few problems: I was small and slow and had played football only occasionally with the kids in my neighborhood.

But I found that there was one thing I could do well by practicing over and over again—I became a kicker. All summer long I practiced kicking extra points and field goals, sometimes 200 in a day. By the end of the summer I was consistent, and I did become my school’s designated field-goal kicker.

I’ve seen the principle of “practice makes perfect” applied by basketball players who seem to shoot free throws nonstop until they rarely miss and by actors who recite lines until they can deliver them with emotion and intensity that comes only from practice, practice, practice. I’ve watched ballet dancers perform flawlessly, roofers nail shingles with greater accuracy than a machine, concert pianists never miss a key, and chefs expertly blend ingredients—because they have done the simple things over and over again until they can do them with precision.

One day when I was tired and wondering if I really had the energy to kneel and pray, it dawned on me that there are good reasons why the Lord commands us to do certain things over and over again, such as praying and reading our scriptures. When we pray repeatedly—not

The FIELD & GOAL Principle

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS WHY THE LORD COMMANDS
US TO DO SOME THINGS OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

repetitiously, but with real intent—our prayers become more and more natural, more and more meaningful. We gain confidence in calling upon our Heavenly Father.

The same is true of scripture study. The more often we read, the more readily the scriptures stay

in our hearts and minds. Then when we need answers, the more quickly we can recall the words of the Lord.

It’s the same with so many gospel activities—writing in a journal, doing family history and taking names to the temple, fasting, paying tithes and offerings, giving meaningful service, attending meetings—the list goes on and on. The Lord knows that consistent effort, though repetitive, makes a difference. And He commands us to do certain essential things consistently so that they become part of our lives and we become ready to act as disciples of Christ “at all times and in all things, and in all places” (Mosiah 18:9), all because we’ve been practicing along the way.

Whether you call it the field-goal, free-throw, actor, ballet-dancer, roofer, concert-pianist, chef, or even daily prayer or scripture-study principle, it takes consistent practice to see the results. But over time you’ll discover that practice makes perfect. **NE**

A Work in Progress
One basketball player, Tyler Haws, made 143 free throws in a row! See how he did it at lds.org/go/83Ball.

The MITCH MOBILE

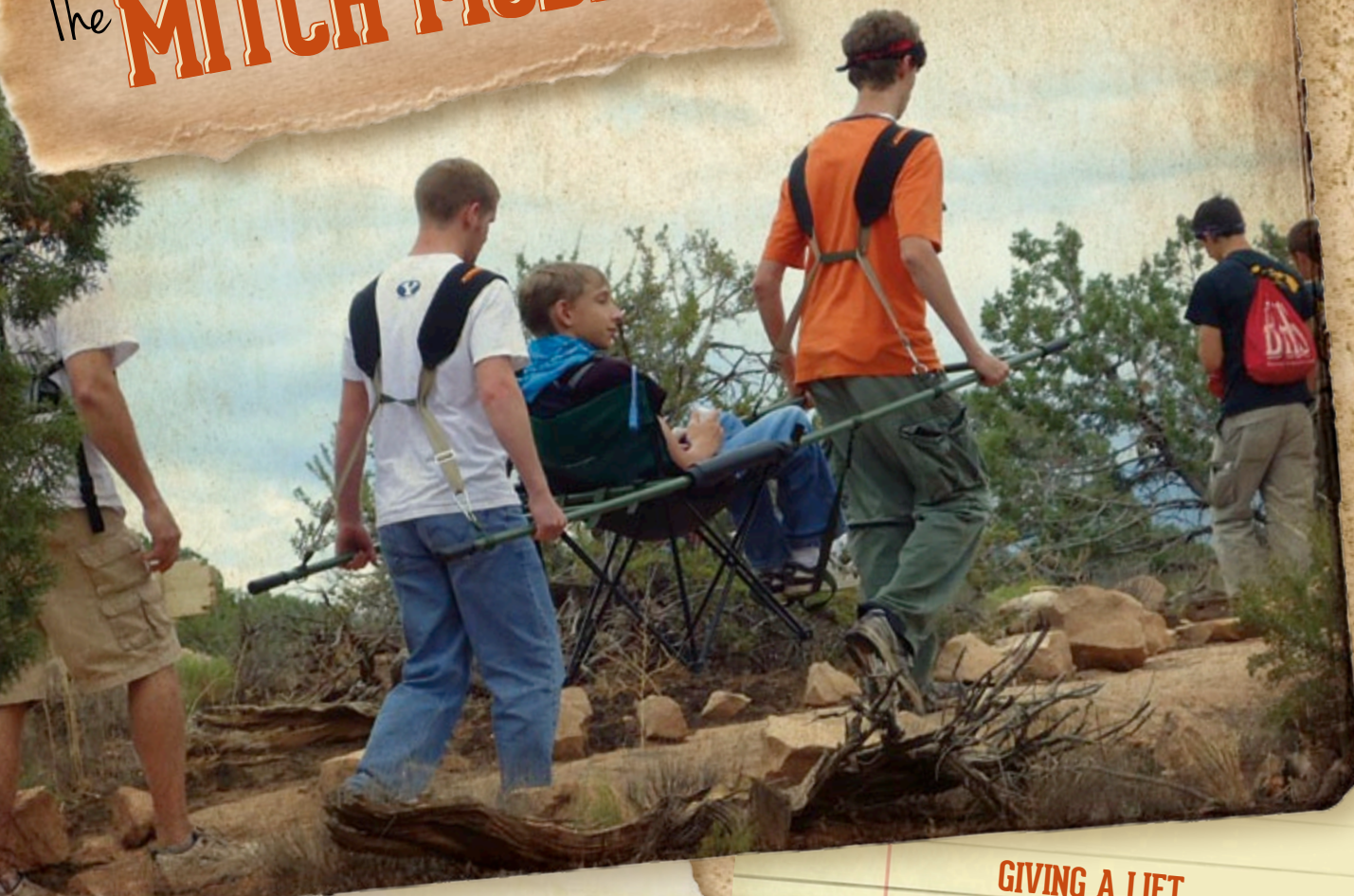


ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT GREER. PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MATE LEISHMAN AND JONATHAN K. BACKGROUNDS BY ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK AND HEMERATHINKSTOCK

When Jonathan K., 17, was helping to plan an upcoming high adventure activity with his Scout troop, he couldn't get one young man out of his mind: his friend Mitchell F., a young man with spina bifida.

The group had some incredible—but physically challenging—country in mind they wanted to explore. They were planning on hiking through canyons and other wilderness areas around southern Utah.

Jonathan knew the rugged terrain they planned to visit could make it difficult for his friend to participate. However, he and the rest of his troop wanted to do all they could to allow Mitchell to join the adventure. "We wanted him to experience everything too," Jonathan says.

GIVING A LIFT

As a solution, Jonathan used his Eagle Scout project to build a carrying device—the "Mitch Mobile," as it came to be called—that would allow the young men to literally carry Mitchell throughout the journey.

There was no shortage of volunteers to help with building the Mitch Mobile. Friends and business owners from around town donated supplies to build the carrier and harness. Many people worked long hours to make sure the entire construction was safe, strong, and portable.

Of course, it was only after the carrier was completed that the true service began. After a few short trial runs around town, it was time to take the Mitch Mobile out on its true maiden voyage.



THE MITCH MOBILE

THE WIDE-OPEN WILDERNESS

Ultimately, the high adventure outing was a huge success from start to finish. Jonathan and friends were able to carry Mitchell over every stretch of landscape and rough terrain they'd planned to see and explore. All of the young men gladly took turns wearing the harness. "I love taking him with us," Jonathan says. They have since been on trips to many other backcountry locations.

"We've taken him everywhere," Jonathan says. They've traversed slot canyons, cliffs, rivers, sand dunes, and steep hills. "He's basically like a brother to me."

As for Mitchell, he's enjoyed the camaraderie with his friends every step of the way. He's also enjoyed the amazing terrain they've visited together. One of his favorite activities was rappelling. "I've loved it," Mitchell says.

MODERN-DAY WARRIORS

The Mitch Mobile had yet another chance to shine when Mitchell's older brother Spencer, along with Jonathan, carried Mitchell during a community parade. They marched with a large group of Latter-day Saint young men dressed as the 2,000 stripling warriors to carry the message of the gospel.

Mitchell wanted to ride in the harness rather than a wheelchair, because he thought it would be more accurate to Book of Mormon times. He loved being in the parade with so many other youth. "It was pretty powerful," Mitchell says.

BLESSING OTHERS

Even after all the young men have done with it so far, the Mitch Mobile is just getting started. The carrier will benefit others for years to come. The Mitch Mobile was donated to a local spina bifida organization, so while it remains stored permanently at Mitchell's home, the carrier is also available for use by others who can benefit from it.

The lives of many people will be blessed because a small group of young men wanted to make sure one of their closest friends never had to feel left out. **NE**

LEARNING FROM GENERAL CONFERENCE

Numerous speakers in the April 2013 general conference spoke about serving others. For example, President Thomas S. Monson said, "I pray that we may be aware of the needs of those around us. . . . May we ever be ready to extend to them a helping hand and a loving heart" ("Until We Meet Again"). And President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said, "Serving God and our fellowmen will challenge us and transform us into something greater than we ever thought possible" ("Four Titles"). Read the rest of their talks at conference.lds.org, where you'll also find inspiring messages on this topic from President Henry B. Eyring ("Come unto Me"), Elder Tad R. Callister ("The Power of the Priesthood in the Boy"), and Brother David L. Beck ("Your Sacred Duty to Minister").



WHY Temple Marriage?

We talk a lot about temple marriage in the Church.
Have you ever wondered why?

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

There's been a lot of talk lately about marriage—what it is, why we have it, the role it plays in society. In church we talk a lot about temple marriage. You know it's important because you've heard about this since you were taught your first lessons about the gospel, whether you were a Sunbeam or a convert in your youth.



But some of you may be wondering, “Why?” To you it may be more than a question of what temple marriage is all about. You want to know—in your heart, not just in your mind—why you should work so hard to marry in the temple, especially when marriage as an idea and institution seems to be weakening in societies all over the world.

Well, it starts with the doctrine of the family.

The Doctrine of the Family

We use the term *doctrine* to help define many things in the Church. For example, the Guide to the Scriptures defines *doctrine of Christ* as “the principles and teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹ So what do we mean when we talk about the doctrine of the family or the doctrine of eternal marriage?

“The Family: A Proclamation to the World” states, “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”² In other words, when we talk about why we are here on the earth and what we are meant to accomplish and become, it’s all tied to the idea that we are part of a family and can marry and establish new families.

The family proclamation also states: “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”³

But what happens to our families when we die? If you are married by the law of your state or country, will that law have any authority over you when you die? No, because those laws are made by man and have authority only as long as you live under that authority. For marriage relationships to continue after you die, those marriages must be sealed together in the right place with authority that lasts through the eternities. That place is the temple, and that authority is the priesthood (see D&C 132:7, 15–19). By choosing a temple marriage and keeping those covenants, you choose to be able to live forever with your spouse.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



Throughout August, you'll be studying about marriage and family in your priesthood quorums and Young Women and Sunday School classes. One of the important doctrines of the family is that through temple marriage, a family can be sealed together and still be a family after the resurrection.

After reading this article, think about how your life is different because you can be sealed to a spouse in the temple. Also, think about how this affects your choices today and what you're doing to prepare for temple marriage. Write down your feelings and consider sharing them with others by testifying at home to your family, at church on Sunday, on social media, or with other youth at [lds.org/go/83Marriage](https://www.lds.org/go/83Marriage).

The Reason We Care

Maybe you already know that doctrine, and yet you still wonder, "But why else does it matter so much?" Maybe it's not a matter of understanding the doctrine. Maybe it's more a simple question of what marriage and family mean in your heart. The simple answer is that the greatest happiness and joy available to us come through living the gospel and gaining and maintaining a temple marriage.

In the April 2013 general conference, Elder L. Whitney Clayton of the Presidency of the Seventy explained

it this way: "No other relationship of any kind can bring as much joy, generate as much good, or produce as much personal refinement."⁴

We also know that "happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."⁵

If you think about it, you'll spend a large part of your life preparing for big changes that come along. There's baptism, graduating from Primary into Young Men or Young Women, attending the temple, and participating in family history research and temple

ordinances for your ancestors. For young men, there's receiving the priesthood and advancing in priesthood offices. For young women, there's advancing in Young Women classes. There's high school graduation or its equivalent. And now missionaries can leave at age 18 or 19. There's a lot to prepare for and look forward to.

But the most important covenant we prepare for is being sealed in the temple. When individuals in families live according to the plan of happiness and keep their temple covenants, they experience true joy.

The gospel is what life is all about. It's the whole reason we are here. When we follow the gospel path, it leads to joy. And that path leads to a temple marriage, either in this life or in the life to come. No blessings will be withheld from the Father's faithful children.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled, "The most important single thing that any Latter-day Saint ever does in this world is to marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority."⁶ **NE**

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, "Doctrine of Christ," scriptures.lds.org.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. "The Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
4. L. Whitney Clayton, "Marriage: Watch and Learn," *Ensign*, May 2013, 83.
5. "The Family," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
6. Bruce R. McConkie, "Agency or Inspiration?" *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38; see also Thomas S. Monson, "Whom Shall I Marry?" *New Era*, Oct. 2004, 6.



JOYS OF MARRIAGE

Some of the joys of marriage include:

Strength. Two are stronger than one. You can strengthen and help each other to live the gospel more completely.

Confidence and Support. When you get married, you have someone who will cheer you on and encourage you in doing what is right, who will lift you up each day, who will share in all your joys and sorrows.

Children. It brings great joy to be trusted with the care and keeping of Heavenly Father's children.

Sharing. It is such a great blessing to share in the life of another person and someday in the life of children as well. Your and your spouse's successes become successes for the family. Making memories together adds deeper meaning to life.

Counsel. A spouse can give you good, honest advice, and you can trust it because you know it's coming from someone who has only your best interests at heart.

Laughter. When you know someone this well and when you

really trust each other, you'll enjoy life with laughter and humor.

Love. Being told each day that you are loved is marvelously renewing and refreshing.

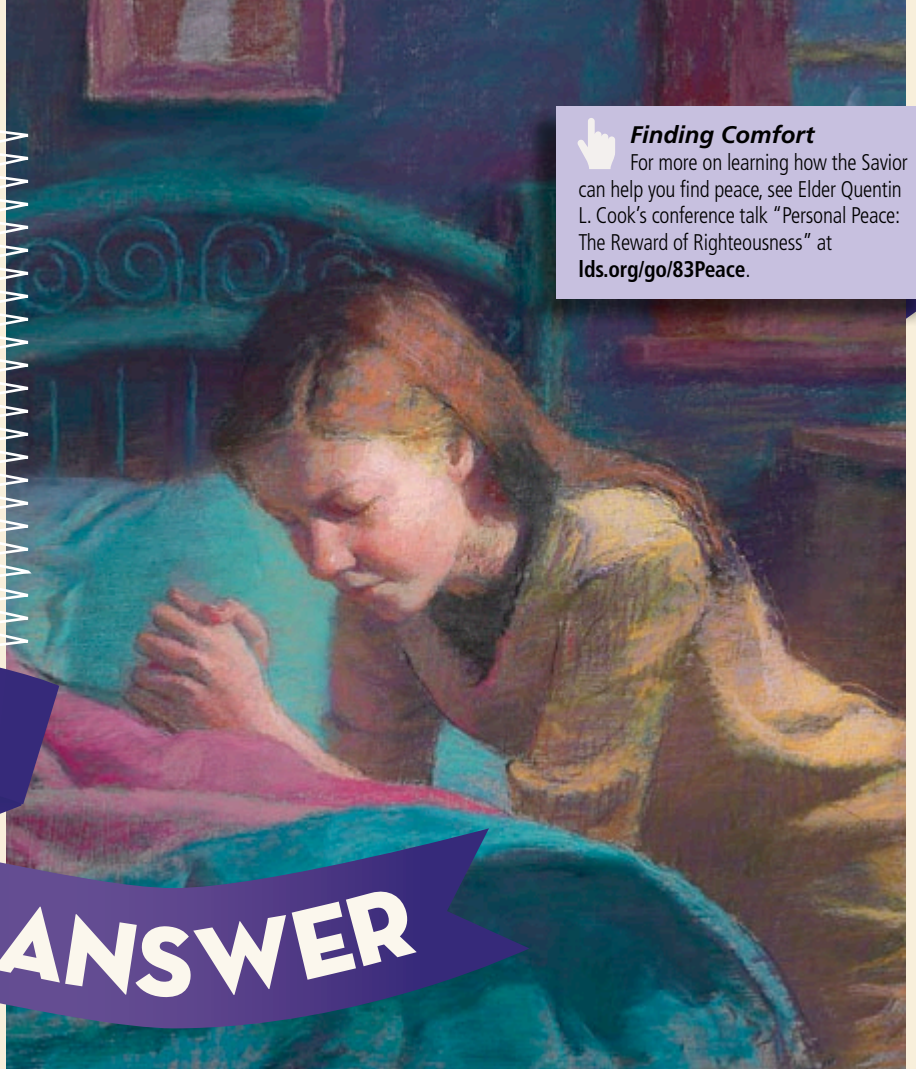
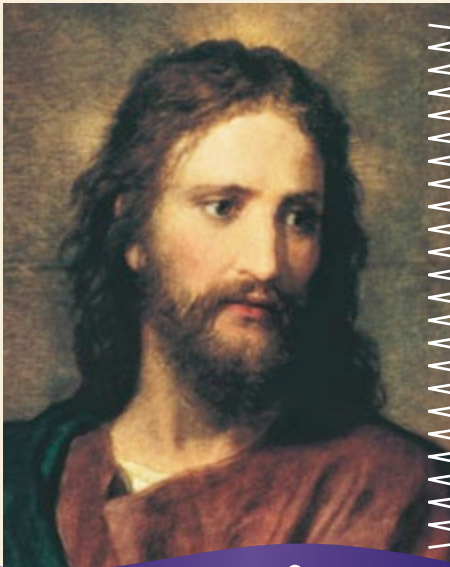
Service. There is great joy in serving one another and much more so when you do it for someone you love.

Friendship. You'll have someone there with you through the good times and bad.

Trust. It is comforting to know that you are with someone who always wants what's best for you and that you can confide in him or her without fear.

Physical and Emotional Intimacy. Marriage is a unique relationship in which the Lord binds two people in an eternal relationship whose goals include oneness, togetherness, and joy.





Finding Comfort
 For more on learning how the Savior can help you find peace, see Elder Quentin L. Cook's conference talk "Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness" at [lds.org/go/83Peace](https://www.lds.org/go/83Peace).

Waiting FOR AN ANSWER

Name Withheld

I didn't have a happy childhood. My father is very against the Church, and my parents have made my Church participation difficult. Plus, because of things my parents told me, I believed I was ugly and dumb. My feelings of self-worth were reduced to nothing.

One night, things at home were worse than ever before. I went to my bedroom, and out of stress and exhaustion, I fell to my knees to pray.

Until that moment, I don't think I'd ever prayed seriously. I began, "My dear Heavenly Father, I need Thy help so much. Please send me someone whom I can talk to and trust. At times like these, I long for someone on earth to hold me, listen to me, and try to help me."

I prayed with similar pleadings for more than a week. I watched and listened, hoping that Heavenly Father would send me someone I could talk to in person. Nothing happened.

Things at home became worse, but I prayed daily. I heard testimonies of prayers answered immediately and others answered within weeks. But the comfort I wanted came in a way I hadn't expected, and my prayer to have someone on earth help me didn't come for *two years*. So instead of just praying, I started seriously studying the scriptures, fasting, and reading my patriarchal blessing often.

I started to feel something. I could tell I was growing spiritually. During those two very painful years, I got to

know my Heavenly Father and my Savior. Because of those two years of praying and waiting, I gained a relationship with Them that is so powerful and strong that I wouldn't trade it for anything. Even though the answer hadn't come the way I thought it would, through the Savior's grace and Atonement, I was able to find peace.

As I look back on those two years, I realize that Heavenly Father and the Savior know me better than I'll ever know myself. They know what's best for me. Two years after my first prayer, Heavenly Father sent people to help me. But by waiting, I was also blessed with endurance, strength, and a testimony that keeps growing stronger every day. **NE**

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS; DETAIL OF CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUNG RULER BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO. INC.



BLESSINGS OF FASTING

By Mindy Raye Friedman

Church Magazines

You're probably well aware of what the law of the fast means—once a month on fast Sunday, you go without food and drink for two meals, pray, and contribute a fast offering to help the poor (and, of course, you can fast and pray at other times of need, within reasonable, healthy limits). But are you aware of all the blessings that come with keeping this commandment? Here are several to consider. What others can you find in the scriptures, teachings of living prophets, and personal experience?

Power to Overcome Temptations

“Fasting will strengthen your self-discipline [and] fortify you against temptations” (*For the Strength of Youth*

[2011], 39). So how does fasting do this? Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained that as you fast, “through your spirit, you develop personal power over your body’s drives of hunger and thirst. Fasting gives you confidence to know that your spirit can master appetite. . . . Fasting fortifies discipline over appetite and helps to protect against later uncontrolled cravings and gnawing habits” (“Self-Mastery,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 30–31).

Healing and Miracles

In the New Testament, the disciples of Jesus Christ unsuccessfully tried to cast a devil out of a boy. After the Savior was able to do so, the disciples asked why it hadn’t worked for them like it had for the Savior. Jesus told

them that “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” (see Matthew 17:14–21). *True to the Faith* explains: “This account teaches that prayer and fasting can give added strength to those giving and receiving priesthood blessings. The account can also be applied to your personal efforts to live the gospel. If you have a weakness or sin that you have struggled to overcome, you may need to fast and pray in order to receive the help or forgiveness you desire” ([2004], 67).

Love for God’s Children

Contributing a generous fast offering after skipping two meals on fast Sunday helps us understand and love Heavenly Father’s children who don’t have as many blessings as we do. Elder L. Tom Perry of the



Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that living the law of the fast “raises our appreciation for those who are without and provides a means to satisfy their daily requirements” (“Building a Community of Saints,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 36).

Remission of Sins

Helping out the poor as part of our fast also brings the additional blessing of helping us retain a remission of our sins. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) explained: “When we give to the bishop an offering to relieve the suffering of others, we not only do something sublime for others, but we do something wonderful for ourselves as well. King Benjamin taught that as we give of our substance to the poor, we retain ‘a remission of [our] sins from day to day’ (Mosiah 4:26)” (“The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 74).

Personal Revelation

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah talked about the law of the fast. He promised that if you fast and pray, “the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry,

and he shall say, Here I am” (Isaiah 58:9). He also taught that if you help those in need, “the Lord shall guide thee continually” (Isaiah 58:11). From the Book of Mormon we learn that the

sons of Mosiah “had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation” (Alma 17:3). We also learn that Alma the Younger “fasted and prayed many days” so that he could gain a testimony (Alma 5:46). Like these men, you can also be led by the Lord and receive revelation if you obey the law of the fast.

OTHER BLESSINGS

In addition to the blessings mentioned, ancient and modern prophets have also taught about these blessings of observing the law of the fast:

- Loose the bands of wickedness.
- Free the oppressed.
- Break every yoke.
- Increase our physical health.
- Increase prosperity.
- Energize us spiritually.
- Strengthen our self-discipline.
- Fill our homes with peace.
- Lighten our hearts with joy.
- Prepare us for times of adversity.
- Open the windows of heaven.
- Help us teach with power.
- Increase humility and spirituality.

From Isaiah 58:6, 8; Marion G. Romney, “The Blessings of the Fast,” *Ensign*, July 1982, 4; Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 75; Alma 17:3; and L. Tom Perry, “The Law of the Fast,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 31.

Stronger Relationship with God

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “By not eating these two meals, we draw close to the Lord in humility and prayer” (“Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 9). President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) explained that this happens because fasting will “promote communion with the Holy Ghost, and insure a spiritual strength and power. . . . As fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, this law would bring the people nearer to God” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 198). **NE**

RENEW

The thought of going from England to the United States was exciting, and performing in a Church-themed musical would be fantastic! I quickly signed up for the trip, not thinking about the cost. I started saving my money, but I knew it was going to be difficult. I was at a new job, which had been amazing for work experience but didn't pay well, and I was really struggling for money.

One afternoon I was looking at my bills. As I calculated everything I owed, I thought back to the previous Sunday. We'd had a lesson about paying tithing and the blessings that would come. During the lesson I'd been thinking about how I hadn't yet paid my tithing that month. I realized that if I paid my tithing, my bank account would be emptied.

I wouldn't have time to earn enough money to go on the trip or have any spending money while there. But I knew I had to pay my tithing.

The next Sunday, I filled out the tithing slip and gave it to my bishop. I wondered what I was going to do about the money I'd need for this trip, but I told myself that if I showed my faithfulness, everything would work out for the best. I hoped that meant I could find a way to go on the trip.

Not 10 minutes after I gave my tithing envelope to the bishop, a woman in my ward came up to me and handed me another envelope. "Just something to wish you luck on your trip. Have a good time!" she said. I'd been in the ward for only six months and didn't know her very well, but I did know that she had 10 children and led a very busy life.



TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

"Tithing is a commandment with a promise. The words of Malachi, reaffirmed by the Savior, promise those who bring their tithes into the storehouse that the Lord will open 'the windows of heaven, and pour [them] out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it' [Malachi 3:10; see 3 Nephi 24:10].

The promised blessings are temporal and spiritual."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Tithing," *Ensign*, May 1994, 34.

LOPES

By Beth Hippard

Paying my tithing meant I might lose out on the trip of a lifetime.

When I got home, I opened the envelope to find U.S. money. I immediately called her up and told her I couldn't accept the money she had given me. She stopped me short. "Beth, this is something I felt really prompted to do. I really want to do this and help you out with your trip. I really want you to be able to have a good time."

I sat at the desk in my room, absolutely stunned. I couldn't believe what had just happened. As I stared at the money, I started wondering about the currency conversion. I had paid my tithing in British pounds, and she had given me U.S. dollars. I quickly looked on the Internet to see the conversion rates. As I typed in the amount of dollars I had just been given, I stared in shock at the screen. It was the exact amount that I had paid in tithing, plus 10 pence. I couldn't believe my eyes!

Now I was back to my starting balance. I was so grateful to the Lord. With that, I would have just enough money to go on my trip, although I wouldn't be able to go on any outings or buy anything, including food.

The next morning, a friend of mine called me out of the blue and told me about a job. It would last for one week and the hours were terrible, but it paid really well—enough to provide money for food and other activities while on my trip.

Even though it wasn't easy for me to give up the last of my money for tithing, I knew that the money wasn't mine—it was the Lord's. I know that tithing can really bless lives when it is paid faithfully, and I saw this in my own life. **NE**

Beth Hippard lives in England.

WHAT BLESSINGS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

Not all blessings that come from paying tithing will be of a temporal nature. Elder Carl B. Pratt, formerly of the Seventy, reminds us, "The Lord's richest blessings are really; it is a matter of faith—faith in the Lord" ("The Lord's Richest Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2011, 102–3). Read his address at lds.org/go/83Tithing and search the scriptures to see what blessings the Lord promises those who faithfully pay their tithes and offerings.

THE OTHER

Six

In the April 2013 general conference, Elder Perry taught us that happiness comes from keeping all—not just some—of the Ten Commandments.



If you **THINK ABOUT WHAT MAKES YOU TRULY HAPPY**, your thoughts will often center on things that are really meaningful to you and others. In the April 2013 general conference, several Church leaders taught that eternal happiness arises from one of the most meaningful ways we show our love of God—obedience to the commandments.

HAPPY!



Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that our **“ETERNAL HAPPINESS COME[S] FROM OBEDIENCE TO [GOD’S] LAWS.”** He talked about many ways to obey, including the Ten Commandments. He warned us that more than half of the Ten Commandments are viewed by the world as no longer important.

“In my judgment,” he said, **“FOUR OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ARE TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY TODAY AS EVER.** As a culture, we disdain and condemn murder, stealing, and lying, and we still believe in the responsibility of children to their parents.

“But as a larger society, **WE ROUTINELY DISMISS THE OTHER SIX COMMANDMENTS:**

“If worldly priorities are any indication, **WE CERTAINLY HAVE ‘OTHER GODS’ WE PUT BEFORE THE TRUE GOD.**

“**WE MAKE IDOLS OF CELEBRITIES, OF LIFESTYLES, OF WEALTH,** and yes, sometimes of graven images or objects.

“**WE USE THE NAME OF GOD IN ALL KINDS OF PROFANE WAYS,** including our exclamations and our swearing.

“We use **THE SABBATH DAY FOR OUR BIGGEST GAMES,** our most serious **RECREATION,** our heaviest **SHOPPING,** and virtually everything else but worship.

“We treat **SEXUAL RELATIONS** outside marriage as recreation and entertainment.

“And **COVETING** has become a far **TOO COMMON** way of life. (See Exodus 20:3–17.)”¹

THINK ABOUT IT: the world takes **ONLY 40%** of the Ten Commandments seriously. That means **60% ARE DISMISSED AS UNIMPORTANT!** Well, what are those six ignored commandments, and why should you keep them? Here are some ideas to help put it into perspective.

COMMANDMENT 1:

PUT GOD FIRST

Sometimes it can be hard to put God first, such as when you're so tired you'd rather sleep in than wake up for seminary or when you'd rather spend time on the Internet instead of preparing for your Sunday learning. While these decisions may seem small, they can have a big impact because they help you know if you're putting "other gods" before Heavenly Father. Those "other gods" can include a lot of different things too, including possessions, a desire for power or popularity, or an unhealthy amount of time spent pursuing a hobby.



SHOULD I CHANGE?

Think about how you plan your time and activities each day. Do your everyday decisions show Heavenly Father that you put Him first? Is there anything you should change because it's taking priority over your relationship with God?

COMMANDMENT 2:

DON'T WORSHIP IDOLS

Idolatry is "the worship of idols or an excessive attachment or devotion to anything."² While you may think that most people don't worship idols like they did in the Bible, it's important to realize you may be giving more attention to everyday objects than you think. For example, have you ever become upset with a sibling because she tried to play with your autographed soccer ball or your new music player, placing that object as more important than your family? Or have you spent hours polishing and re-polishing a trophy or car that's barely had time to gather dust since the last time you polished it? If so, you may be giving too much devotion to objects.

Worshipping idols can also mean becoming obsessed with people. You can learn a lot from people in the spotlight who have great skills, whether they be athletes, musicians, or actors—or even just the "popular" people at your school. But just because people get a lot of attention doesn't necessarily mean they're good role models for life. Learning good skills from them can be helpful, but following their examples can often go too far. Trying to be too much like someone else can cause you to lose sight of who you really are—a child of our Heavenly Father—and who the ultimate example is—Jesus Christ.

WHO AM I REALLY?



What are ways you can remember to follow Jesus Christ and keep Him as the ultimate example in your daily life?

COMMANDMENT 3:

DON'T TAKE GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

It's important to be careful about the way you treat the names of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Doing so shows your love for Them. *For the Strength of Youth* says, "Always use the names of God and Jesus Christ with reverence and respect."³ Make sure the media you read, watch, or listen to shows the same respect, because if you frequently hear the Lord's name taken in vain, you may be more tempted to do so yourself. Also, you may want to be careful to avoid any commonly used abbreviations or phrases where the names of God and Jesus Christ are taken in vain.

RESPECT!



How does what you say or listen to reflect how you feel about the great love and blessings from Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ?

COMMANDMENT 4:

KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY

The world often tempts you to misuse the Sabbath, treating it as a day to relax and enjoy yourself. And have you noticed that many of the biggest sporting events or the best shopping deals seem to be on Sundays? But this is not how you should view the Sabbath.

“Because the Sabbath is a holy day, it should be reserved for worthy and holy activities. Abstaining from work and recreation is not enough. In fact, if we merely lounge about doing nothing on the Sabbath, we fail to keep the day holy.”⁴ Rather than doing things that would make Sunday seem like just another day of the week, try to do things that honor the Sabbath, like reaching out to people in need, studying the scriptures, and spending time with family.

NOT JUST
ANOTHER DAY.



What things can you do on Sunday to remind yourself that the Lord has reserved the Sabbath as a day of worship?

COMMANDMENT 7:

DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY

Television shows, movies, and music frequently portray sexual intimacy outside marriage not as a sin but rather as an acceptable way to have fun and for two people to show they love each other. But this attitude distorts Heavenly Father's plan of happiness. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said in the April 2013 general conference, “Intimate relations are proper only between a

man and a woman in the marriage relationship prescribed in God's plan.”⁵

Like all commandments, this one is given so that we can find true, eternal happiness. *For the Strength of Youth* teaches, “Remaining sexually pure helps you to be confident and truly happy and improves your ability to make good decisions now and in the future.”⁶

I AM
PURE.



What do you do to apply the principles taught by living prophets and in *For the Strength of Youth* to keep yourself sexually pure and to avoid the false teachings of the world regarding sexual intimacy?

COMMANDMENT 10:

DO NOT COVET

Coveting means that you “envy someone or . . . have an excessive desire for something.”⁷ It's not wrong to want to improve your life. In fact, working hard so you can provide for yourself and your future family is part of God's plan for you. Even so, you need to be careful not to get caught up comparing yourself to others or focusing on what you don't have. “Coveting . . . can consume our thoughts and plague us with constant unhappiness and dissatisfaction.”⁸ Instead, give thanks to Heavenly Father for all He has given you and do your best to improve your education and talents so you can best serve Him and follow His plan for you.

I'M
THANKFUL.



What goals can you set to keep improving your life while staying focused on the Savior and not coveting the lives, experiences, or possessions of others?

The TEN COMMANDMENTS

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

As you strive each day to keep the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**—along with **ALL OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS**—you will find the **BLESSINGS** that our Heavenly Father has prepared for you. As Elder Perry said, **"THE COMMANDMENTS . . . ARE LOVING COUNSEL FROM A WISE, ALL-KNOWING HEAVENLY FATHER.** His goal is our eternal happiness, and **HIS COMMANDMENTS ARE THE ROAD MAP** He has given us to return to Him, which is **THE ONLY WAY** we will be **ETERNALLY HAPPY.**"⁹ *NE*

LEARNING FROM CONFERENCE

Read more from Elder Perry's address at lds.org/go/83Ten. President Thomas S. Monson also talked about the happiness that can come from obedience in his conference address "Obedience Brings Blessings," which you can read or watch at lds.org/go/830bey.



NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, "Obedience to Law Is Liberty," *Ensign*, May 2013, 87–88.
2. Guide to the Scriptures, "Idolatry," scriptures.lds.org.
3. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 20.
4. *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 146.
5. David A. Bednar, "We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign*, May 2013, 42.
6. *For the Strength of Youth*, 35.
7. Guide to the Scriptures, "Covet," scriptures.lds.org.
8. *True to the Faith*, 178.
9. L. Tom Perry, "Obedience to Law," 88.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

5. Honor thy father and thy mother.

6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

10. Thou shalt not covet.

See Exodus 20:1–17.

My friends and I are 14 and 15 years old. Is it OK for us to have a party with both boys and girls?

You and your friends shouldn't have any worries about holding a gathering of boys and girls as long as it meets a few conditions: (1) There should be adult supervision at the party, (2) the boys and girls should not be paired up with each other at the party so that it seems like a dating situation, and (3) the atmosphere (music, language, activities, and so on) at the party should be in harmony with Church standards, allowing you to feel the Spirit while you're there.

Some ways to ensure that these conditions are met are to include parents in the planning of the party, plan activities that keep people interacting with the larger group, and hold the party in a common and contained space so that people are discouraged from pairing off by themselves. At any age, occasional parties with friends who have similar values can be really enjoyable. At your age, you just need to focus on having fun together in a wholesome and safe environment and avoid any sense of dating or pairing off. **NE**

Is it OK to have doubts about the gospel?

It is normal to have questions about the gospel and even to experience doubt. Pondering your unanswered questions can often be healthy if it motivates you to sincerely seek

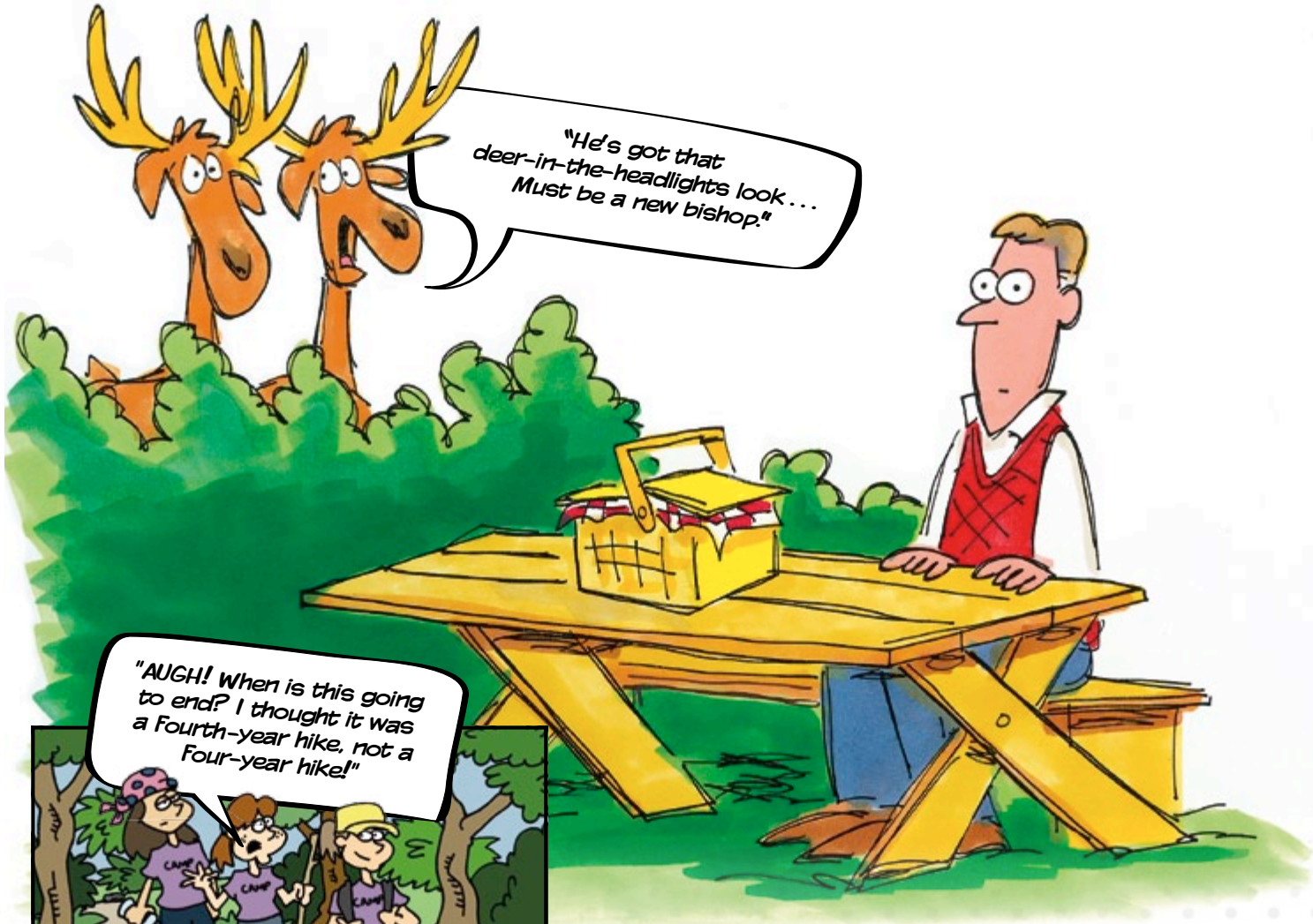
greater knowledge and truth. In addition, such questions are often part of "the trial of [our] faith" that is required before we receive a witness from God (Ether 12:6). However, doubt is a dreary destination, so it should never be a goal in itself.

Remember, God is merciful, and if you maintain hope and a desire to know the truth, He will reward you with the answers you seek or at least with the peace and reassurance you need in order to continue in faith (see Matthew 7:7; 2 Nephi 32:3; Alma 32:21–22; Moroni 10:5; D&C 6:36). **NE**



Answers from Conference

For an Apostle's counsel on this topic, see Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's conference talk "Lord, I Believe" at [lds.org/go/83Believe](https://www.lds.org/go/83Believe).



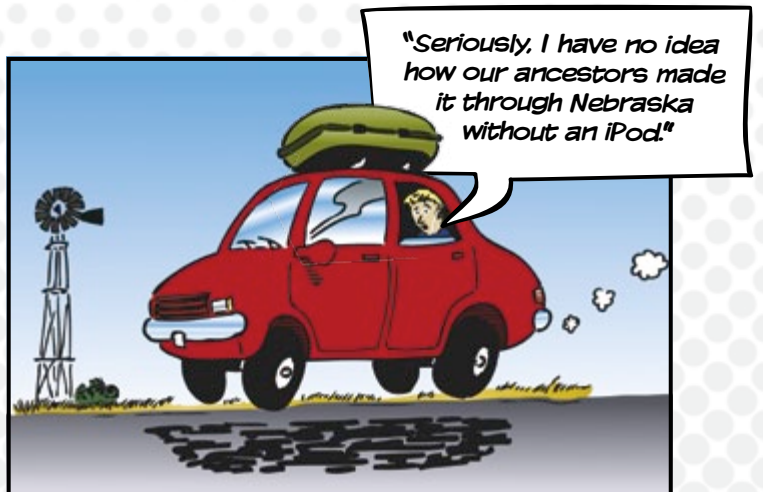
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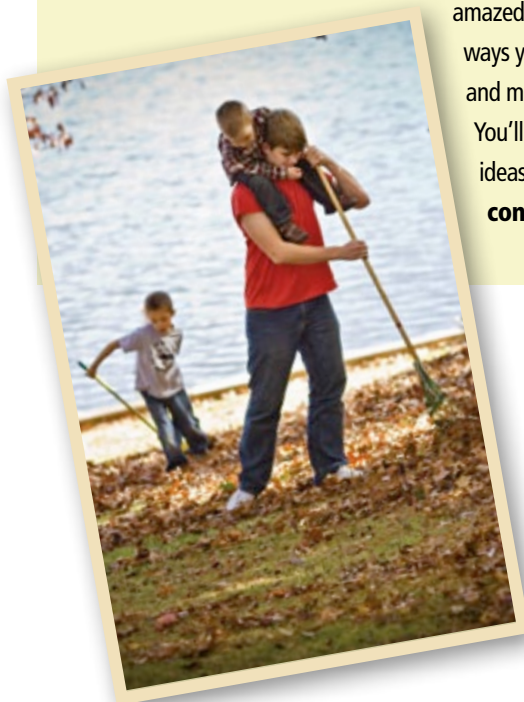
Conference Connection

Your talents are needed! In the April 2013 general conference, several Church leaders spoke about how each of us can help build God's kingdom in meaningful ways. For example:

- "You have your own special contribution to make, and God can magnify that contribution in a mighty way. Your ability to contribute is not dependent upon your calling in the Church. Your opportunities for service are endless. If you are waiting on the sidelines, I encourage you to get in the game" (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Four Titles," *Ensign*, May 2013, 61).
- "You will find that most [opportunities to minister] consist of small, sincere acts that help others become followers of Jesus Christ" (David L. Beck, Young Men general president, "Your Sacred Duty to Minister," *Ensign*, May 2013, 57).

What might be some of those endless opportunities for service? Well, maybe a friend or relative could use a pick-me-up visit or a phone call. Or perhaps you could do one or two of your siblings' chores before they get home. If you pray for guidance, you'll likely be

amazed at how many ways you can pitch in and make a difference. You'll find additional ideas in the talks at conference.lds.org.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF HANNAH P.



Unexpected Calling

Hannah P., a Laurel from Illinois, USA, thought she had a handle on what it means to accept and fulfill a calling. After all, she'd already served as Mia Maid class president and later as second counselor in the Laurel class presidency. But then she was given a ward calling she never expected: family history consultant.

"This came as a shock," Hannah says. "This wasn't a calling for a 16-year-old. It was a calling for older, wiser people!"

Shock notwithstanding, Hannah accepted the calling and rolled up her sleeves, so to speak. Soon she realized she really could make a difference. "It doesn't matter what age you are. Anyone can do family history," she says.

Hannah spends one evening a week at the local family history center working on FamilySearch

(see FamilySearch.org) and teaching others to do the same. "Not only do I have the opportunity to feel the spirit of Elijah myself," she says, "but I can also help others feel it." She loves helping people find a family name they've been trying to find for months. "They're thrilled!" she says about such moments.

One of Hannah's favorite experiences was helping a group of young men and young women learn how to do indexing. "It was amazing to see how fast they caught on," she says. "It was just like Elder David A. Bednar teaches: our fingers are meant for so much more than texting and tweeting" (see "The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 24–27).

▶ Watch a video about another young woman called as a family history consultant at lds.org/go/83FH.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHURCH PUBLISHING SERVICES

5

Items Not to Forget on Your Next Hike

Plenty of water.

Try bringing multiple small bottles so you can distribute the weight evenly in your backpack or share with others as needed.

Nonperishable food.

Hiking burns a lot of energy—several hundred calories an hour. Even after a big breakfast you'll still need to refuel on a long hike. Nuts, dried fruit, and granola bars make great options.

A small first aid kit.

A compass, even if you know the area.

A mobile phone in case of emergency.

	behold	white	already		to		For	is
For			behold	white		field		
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Missionaries Needed

The objective of a regular Sudoku is to fill the 9×9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time. For this puzzle, instead of numbers, use the nine bold words to complete the puzzle.

D&C 33:3

“For behold, the field is white already to harvest; and it is the eleventh hour, and the last time that I shall call laborers into my vineyard.”

To see the solution, visit lds.org/go/83Sudoku.

My Favorite Scripture

1 Nephi 4:6 *“And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.”*



I really like this scripture because it says that you don't always need to know specifically what to do as long as you have the Spirit with you. You can keep the Spirit in your life by keeping the commandments and staying close to Heavenly Father through prayer.

Last year my family was going to move, and we didn't know where to go. We prayed a lot, and the Spirit guided us to move from Maryland to Illinois. It was

hard, but in the end it turned out nice for our family. I know that if we keep the commandments, then the Spirit will be with us and the Lord will guide us.

Joshua S., 14, Illinois, USA

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JOSHUA S.

WE'VE GOT
MAIL

Serving a Mission


I liked the story “Should I Leave or Stay?” in the March 2011 *New Era*. When I read it, I realized that I should go on my mission no matter what the circumstances might be, because I will be doing Heavenly Father's work.

Jaymison J., 13, Colorado, USA

Living the Standards

I have found that dressing correctly and modestly never feels bad. When I went to Young Women camp, youth conference, and EFY, it was impossible to doubt that being modest is the right way to be. We have to keep in mind that our clothing can't make anyone uncomfortable if we're dressed appropriately.

Kente B., 16, Belgium

 We love hearing from you, whether it's sending us a message or leaving a comment online. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking “Submit Your Work.” Or leave a comment on any article at youth.lds.org.

You can also email us at newera@ldschurch.org or write to New Era, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA.

MELODIES AND MISSIONARY WORK

“**L**et your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). This is the first scripture mastery verse I learned in my first year of seminary. After I memorized it, I tried to follow its teaching. I never knew who was watching me, but I wanted to set a good example for them. As I became good friends with my piano teacher, I learned that we can shine as bright as a candle and stand out in a group.

I’d begun practicing piano in kindergarten. After I finished sixth grade, my family moved to a different state, so I had to find a new music teacher. A friend at church suggested I take lessons from her instructor, Susan. At the time, Susan was teaching about 80 lessons a week and her schedule was very full. But she agreed to teach me and squeezed my piano lesson in right after school.

At each lesson, the first song I would practice would be a hymn. As I played, Susan sang the words and would often ask me questions about the scriptural meaning of the piece. This served as a great missionary opportunity. Susan and I had fun as



we played duets and learned more about each other. I found out that she worked as the music director at her Catholic church. She always showed a great love for God, and I am glad we had such a strong relationship.

One day, Susan sent out invitations for a recital. At my lesson, she told me it would be our last performance. To her dismay, she had to close down her piano studio because our economic times hurt Susan financially and she knew she couldn’t pay the

rent for her studio and keep her two other jobs going.

The night of the recital arrived and was filled with splendid talent and beautiful music. Before each student performed, Susan shared something unique about the person or information about the song he or she would play. As she stood before the audience to introduce me, she began to tear up. “I know that God sends certain people into our lives for a reason,” she began. She said she

PERSONAL PROGRESS AND GOATS

One day my family visited a barn to play with some baby goats. When we arrived, we found out there was a newborn goat whose mother could not take care of it. The owner of the goats needed someone to nurse the baby goat back to health. I jumped at the opportunity, and we decided it would be my Knowledge value project for Personal Progress (see PersonalProgress.lds.org).

When we picked up the goat the next day, we learned that triplets had been born the night before and were very weak. I volunteered to care for one of them. So there I was with a *Personal Progress* booklet, two baby goats, goat-milk formula, and little experience.

First I did my research. I found out that baby goats love to climb, run, and snuggle in dark corners. They need to be fed every four to six hours, and you have to teach them how to drink from a bottle. Next, I laid down blankets and bedding in a pen and set up a box for the goats to sleep in. I also



set up a ramp and stand for them to play on. Throughout the project, every night I woke up in the middle of the night to feed them, I cleaned a lot, and I struggled to feed the animals with a bottle, but overall I had lots of fun.

This Personal Progress project increased my knowledge and helped me grow. I learned many new skills, such as being patient, keeping a schedule, caring for an animal, converting measurements, and keeping a journal. I love Personal Progress.

Katie B., New York, USA

could see something bright and different about me. As she spoke about our friendship, I felt the Spirit strongly, and I could tell she felt it too. Then I played a duet with Susan for the finale of the recital.

The impact and importance of my lessons stretched far beyond improving my piano talent. There was a reason Susan chose to teach me even though she already had an overflowing list of students waiting for an open lesson. I know that because I tried to set a good example for Susan, she is now more familiar with the Church and its teachings. She has not given up her own religion to change faiths, but she knows about the restored gospel. I'm glad I could share my light with her.

Megan B., Ohio, USA

A PRAYER FOR MY UNCLE'S FAMILY

One night before bed I was thinking about what to pray for when I felt prompted to pray for my uncle's family. I prayed

that they would feel the Spirit. Two days later I learned that my uncle had lost his job and that his family would have to move.

It was then I realized that what I had prayed for was a prompting from the Holy Ghost, and I felt grateful that I had listened to the still small voice. In a situation where I could not do

much else to help, I felt good knowing my prayers could help. Sometimes instances like this may seem insignificant, but I know that seeking personal revelation, listening to promptings, and following them—even small ones—can increase our faith and strengthen others.

Andrew P., Missouri, USA



**By Elder
Russell M. Nelson**
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR FUTURE

May I offer my vision of you and your future. You enter a world caught in a steep slippery slide of diminishing moral values. Against that backdrop, your character and integrity will let you

stand out and shine like a lighthouse. You, your families, and your homes will become beacons of hope in a darkened world. Your **faith and optimism** will make you leaders in your communities, in your countries, and in the kingdom of God on earth.

It will be your privilege to **proclaim the gospel to the world.**

You will **place a high priority** on those two great commandments: to **love God** with all your heart, and to **love your neighbor** as yourself (see Matthew 22:37–39). You will continue to learn and build in yourselves an ever-increasing capacity to **serve others.** As you do so, you will find that your own lives have been enlarged and enriched.

When you serve your fellow men and women, you **serve God** and help to establish His Church in those lands where you live.

You will **be examples** to all with whom you associate—examples of **forbearance, of integrity, of controlling your tempers, appetites, and emotions, as you honor the priesthood and your sacred covenants.**

As you **adhere to the standards** of the Church, you will be in great demand. And you will find true joy in total obedience to God's laws. While some others

choose which commandments they will keep, you know the fallacy and danger of this approach. It will only lead to misery. You will gain protection and spiritual strength in **complete obedience.** After all, he or she who does not stand for something will likely fall for anything.

What will keep you joyful and safe, physically and spiritually? Obedience! Obedience to *all* of God's commandments will allow the Holy Ghost to be your constant companion. Such obedience will prepare you to be great leaders, great wives and husbands, great mothers and fathers. Such obedience will allow you to **become more like the Lord** (see 3 Nephi 27:27).

Prophets fervently warn that pornography, infidelity, and immorality are all tools of the adversary. They will destroy you, physically and spiritually. Satan's objective is to hook you and make you miserable, even as he is. **Shun these traps** now and your future will be brighter.

Remember, your goal is exaltation and eternal life. That goal is God's glory.

The Lord's vision for you as His elect children requires that you be **clean, virtuous, and qualified for eternal life.** *NE*

From a BYU–Hawaii commencement address given on April 9, 2011.



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/83Prepare.



THE

GREAT TEST

OF THIS LIFE IS

OBEEDIENCE.

"A knowledge of truth and the answers to our greatest questions come to us as we are obedient to the commandments of God."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Obedience Brings Blessings,"
April 2013 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE

Scorpion Stings and Obedience



In the April 2013 general conference, several prophets and apostles emphasized the blessings that come from obeying God's laws and the dangers that come from disobeying them (see pages 38 and 49). Check out a related story about a young boy's dangerous encounter in the desert in the Mormon Messages for Youth video "The Sting of the Scorpion" at lds.org/go/83Scorpion, and see what a scorpion can teach us about the importance of obedience.



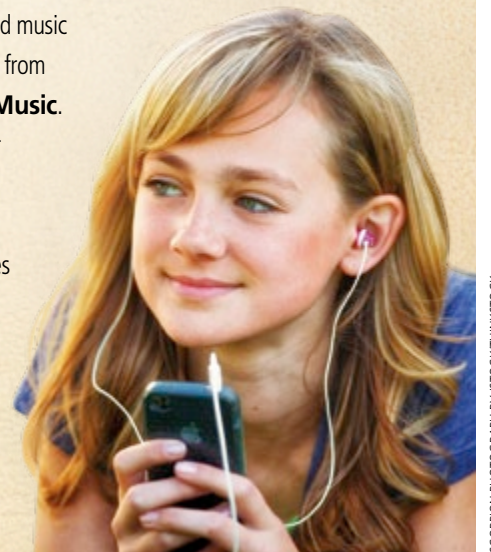
Your Home—a Holy Place

This month your Sunday lessons focus on marriage and family (see pages 13 and 30). Small things you do every day can have a huge impact on your family and bring the Spirit into your home. It might be as simple as doing your chores willingly, being ready for family prayer, or saying, "I love you." Watch a short video about three youth who take a bishop's challenge to make their home a holy place at lds.org/go/83Holy.

Motivating Music

Feeling a little down and wish you had some good music to listen to? You can find free music to download from the Church's youth website at lds.org/go/83Music.

Try listening to "I'm Changed" by Kaitlin Lunt or "Mountains to Climb" by Erin Thomas to get motivated to become a better person through Christ. Or download "It's a Good Start" by James Warren and think about how it relates to Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's story about the young man who couldn't yet say that he *knew* the Church is true but could say that he *believed* it (see lds.org/go/83Faith).



SCORPION PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK