

AUGUST 2015

# THE New Era



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HOPE IN A  
TROUBLED  
FAMILY**

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New Era

## THE MONTHLY YOUTH MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

August 2015 • Volume 45 • Number 8

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**Cover:** Flood the Earth through Social Media, p. 30  
**Cover photograph:** Leslie Nilsson

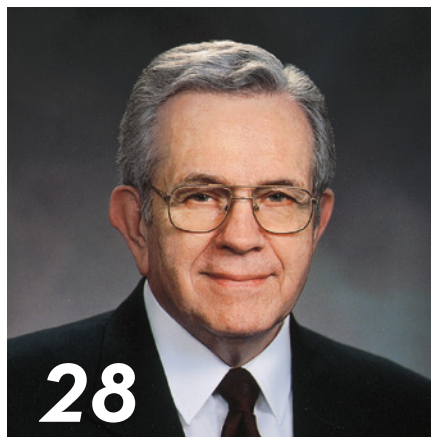
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By President  
Thomas S.  
Monson

## *Lose Yourself* IN SERVICE

*The needs of others are ever present, and each of us can do something to help someone.*

**J**ack McConnell grew up in the hills of southwest Virginia in the United States as one of seven children of a Methodist minister and a stay-at-home mother. Their circumstances were very humble. He recounted that during his childhood, every day as the family sat around the dinner table, his father would ask each one in turn, “And what did you do for someone today?”<sup>1</sup> The children were determined to do a good turn every day so they could report to their father that they had helped someone. Dr. McConnell calls this exercise his father’s most valuable legacy, for that expectation and those words inspired him and his siblings to help others throughout their lives. As they grew and matured, their motivation for providing service changed to an inner desire to help others.

Besides Dr. McConnell’s distinguished medical career—where he directed the development of the tuberculosis tine test, participated in the early development of the polio vaccine, supervised the development of Tylenol, and was instrumental in developing the magnetic resonance imaging procedure, or MRI—he created an organization he calls Volunteers in Medicine, which gives retired medical personnel a chance to volunteer at free clinics serving the working uninsured. Dr. McConnell said his leisure time since he retired has “evaporated into 60-hour weeks of unpaid work,





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but [his] energy level has increased and there is a satisfaction in [his] life that wasn't there before." He made this statement: "In one of those paradoxes of life, I have benefited more from Volunteers in Medicine than my patients have."<sup>2</sup> There are now over 90 such clinics across the United States.

Of course, we can't all be Dr. McConnells, establishing medical clinics to help the poor; however, the needs of others are ever present, and each of us can do something to help someone.

### **Our Responsibility to Minister**

The Apostle Paul admonished, "By love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). Recall with me the familiar words of King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon: "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God" (Mosiah 2:17).

The Savior taught His disciples, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but

whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luke 9:24).

I believe the Savior is telling us that unless we lose ourselves in service to others, there is little purpose to our own lives. Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives.

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

### **Simple Service**

You may lament: I can barely make it through each day, doing all that I need to do. How can I provide service for others? What can I possibly do?

Several years ago, I was interviewed by the *Church News* prior to my birthday. At the conclusion of the interview, the reporter asked what I would consider the ideal gift that members worldwide could give to me. I replied, "Find someone who is having a hard time or is ill or lonely, and do something for him or her."<sup>3</sup>

I was overwhelmed when that year for my birthday I received hundreds of cards and

letters from members of the Church around the world telling me how they had fulfilled that birthday wish. The acts of service ranged from assembling humanitarian kits to doing yard work.

I share with you just a few of the countless notes contained in the many gifts I received. One small child wrote, “My grandpa had a stroke, and I held his hand.” From an 8-year-old girl: “My sister and I served my mom and family by organizing and cleaning the toy closet. It took us a few hours and we had fun. The best part was that we surprised my mom and made her happy because she didn’t even ask us to do it.” An 11-year-old girl wrote: “There was a family in my ward that did not have a lot of money. They have three little girls. The mom and dad had to go somewhere, so I offered to watch the three girls. The dad was just about to hand me a \$5 bill. I said, ‘I can’t take [it].’ My service was that I watched the girls for free.”

My birthday cards and notes came also from teenagers in Young Men and Young Women classes who made blankets for hospitals, served in food pantries, were baptized for the dead, and performed numerous other acts of service.

Relief Societies, where help can always be found, provided service above and beyond that which they would normally have given. Priesthood groups did the same.

My brothers and sisters, my heart has seldom been as touched and grateful as it was when Sister Monson and I literally spent hours reading of these gifts. My heart is full now as I speak of the experience and contemplate the lives which have been blessed

as a result, for both the giver and the receiver.

My brothers and sisters, may we ask ourselves the question which greeted Dr. Jack McConnell and his brothers and sisters each evening at dinnertime: “What have I done for someone today?”

That service to which all of us have been called is the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. **NE**

*From the October 2009 general conference address “What Have I Done for Someone Today?”*

#### NOTES

1. Jack McConnell, “And What Did You Do for Someone Today?” *Newsweek*, June 18, 2001, 13.
2. Jack McConnell, “And What Did You Do for Someone Today?” 13.
3. See Gerry Avant, “Prophet’s Birthday,” *Church News*, Aug. 23, 2008, 4.

FIND SOME-  
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HARD TIME  
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# TREASURE TRANSFORMATION

**D**o you remember the first time you picked up a sparkly rock as a kid and thought you'd suddenly struck it rich? Surely, you figured, this was some priceless gem or at the very least a hunk of gold that could pay for a three-story tree fort complete with a fireman's pole and waterslide.

Well, here's an object lesson you can share in your next family home evening that'll make your inner child feel like you've just discovered a diamond mine.

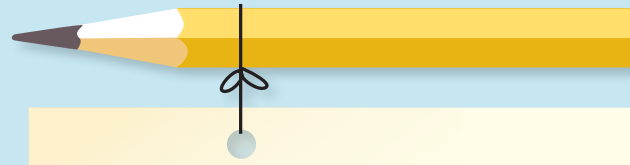
And while it won't actually make you any richer than that sparkly rock did, it's still almost like finding treasure. Or like creating your own treasure—all while teaching an important gospel principle.



*You can use this object lesson to teach your family about true treasure.*

## SUPPLIES NEEDED

- A box of Borax laundry booster (look for it near powdered laundry detergent)
- Widemouthed quart mason jars or similar-sized watertight containers
- Pipe cleaners in various colors
- A pencil
- Thin string or fishing line



**TOP-SECRET  
PREP**

The tricky part to this object lesson is that you'll need to prep at least eight hours beforehand. Don't worry, though—the results are worth it! Try not to let your siblings see what you're up to, either. It's a surprise. Ready to jump in?

## THE LESSON

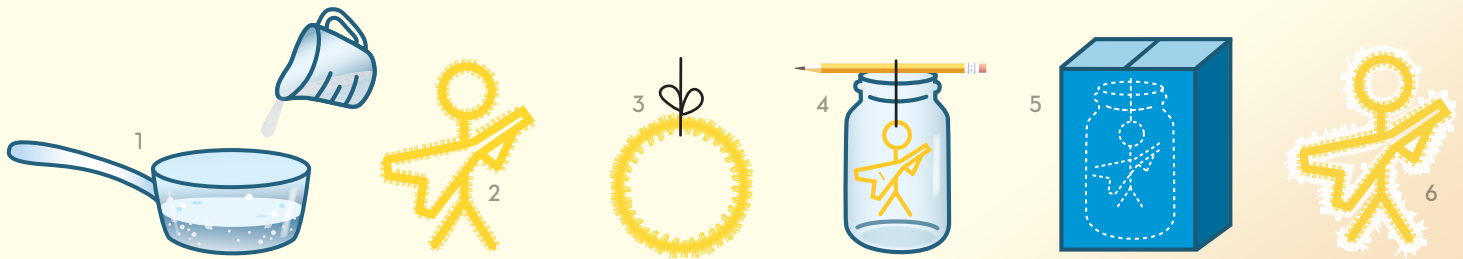
This lesson is all about how the gospel transforms our lives. Jumping in to live the gospel just now and again won't create the desired effect. We need to immerse ourselves fully in the gospel—and stay there—to let it transform us long-term. Here's one way to approach teaching that concept in your lesson.

1. Start the lesson by bending pipe cleaners into the same shape as your hidden demo. Tell your family that these pipe cleaners represent you.



## HERE'S WHAT TO DO.

1. Boil 4 cups of water in a pot and then add 1 cup of Borax. Stir to dissolve and then let it cool completely. Pour the solution into a quart jar.
2. Bend your pipe cleaners into a shape that can represent you. You might write your name or create a cool stick figure. The shape should fit inside your jar with some room to spare.
3. Tie string to one end of your pipe cleaner.
4. Tie the other end of the string to a pencil. Your pipe cleaners need to hang from the pencil to stay suspended in the solution without touching the bottom or sides of the jar.
5. Hide the jar (for purposes of sneakiness) and leave it undisturbed for 6–8 hours.
6. Pull the pipe cleaners out of the water and admire your crazy-cool work of art! Large crystals should now cover every inch of your awesome creation.



2. Using a jar of newly prepared solution, tell your family that the water represents the gospel.
3. Dip the pipe cleaners in and out of the solution a few times. Ask your family if they notice any big difference. (They shouldn't.)
4. Here's where your sneakiness pays off. Reveal your finished demo as an example of what true immersion in the gospel can do for us. Allow some time for ooh's and ahh's, and then ask how following God's commandments can bring each of us real treasure.
5. You might want to share the following quote or others of your own choosing that talk about the transforming power of the gospel.

“Serving God and our fellowmen will challenge us and transform us into something greater than we ever thought possible” (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Four Titles,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 60).

6. Discuss ways that you as a family can stay immersed more fully in the gospel. You could even talk about how the decisions you've made so far to be immersed have blessed your life.

## WRAPPING UP

Of course, it's not fair for you to have all the fun. Once the lesson is over, let everybody make a razzle-dazzle creation. Use one jar of solution per person.

Happy treasure making! **NE**



# ASK PAPÁ

By Nancy Gonzalez Schwebach

I loved to read, and the summer I turned 12, I visited the nearby library often. One day, a large book caught my eye. I found it was about genealogy, which was a new word for me. Intrigued, I took the book home.

Once home, I looked through it carefully. The old pictures of people who had lived a long time ago, along with their births, marriages, and where they lived, sparked my interest because

I didn't know much about my own family. I wondered what my

## PAPÁ HÉCTOR NEVER REALLY TALKED MUCH, BUT I WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT OUR FAMILY.

ancestors were like and where they came from.

I decided to find out.

“Mamá,” I asked my mom while she was fixing dinner, “where were you born?”

“Well, in Mexico, of course.”

“Yes, but what part of Mexico?”

“In Coahuila. It’s a state.”

“Oh. What’s it like?”

I wanted to find out more about her family, her parents, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, as well as her grandparents. She came from a large family and told us stories from her childhood, but she didn’t know all the details. She said, “If you want to know more, you’ll have to ask Papá Héctor.”

Papá Héctor was my mom’s father. Before we moved to Texas, USA, I had seen him only a few times, and he was very reserved and seemed a little stern. Since we’d moved to Texas, Papá Héctor started visiting us every Saturday morning.

Whenever he showed up, my brothers and sisters and I would greet him quickly and then leave. But I knew the only way to find out more about our family was to ask Papá.

One Saturday morning when he was watching a TV program, I sat next to him on the sofa and blurted out, “So how have you been, Papá Héctor?”

“Good, good.” He barely looked at me.

I stared at the floor, not knowing what to say next, and then started

again, “I wondered if I could ask you something.”

This time he turned to look at me, somewhat surprised, as he answered, “Sure, what do you want to know?”

I explained that I wanted to know more about our family. That’s how he started telling me about where he was born and his life in a little mining town up in the Sierra, about his parents and siblings and all the fond memories of his childhood and youth. As the weeks went by, little by little he started opening up more and more. We became the best of friends.

I discovered that behind his stern appearance he actually had a great sense of humor! He also had an amazing memory and rattled off every person’s full name, with exact birth, marriage, and death date, as well as the official names of places. He made sure I learned how to write them in Spanish correctly.

I learned that Papá Héctor had been the *presidente municipal* (mayor) of his town twice—and other things I never imagined. My mother was surprised. “I don’t get it,” she said. “He talks more with you than he ever did with me.”

I think he was flattered that I would be so interested in his life. I waited impatiently for Papá Héctor to arrive every Saturday morning. Since he had started talking more, he smiled more often and would sometimes burst out laughing. My younger brothers and sisters all agreed he was much more

fun, and we sat around him to listen to his stories. He told us of his childhood pranks, his travels, and how he and my grandmother had fallen in love.

Pretty soon I had not only a rough sketch of our family tree, but I also had a visual image of each person he described to me. They were no longer unfamiliar names of people I’d never met, but somehow they became real. Each person he described now had a place in my heart.

The missionaries taught my family the gospel two years later. My grandfather didn’t approve of our new religion, but he still showed respect for my decision to join the Church. Papá Héctor died suddenly when we were away on vacation, and I never had the opportunity to say good-bye.

I’m grateful that I took the time to get to know him, and I’m grateful for his friendship and for the wonderful heritage he left me. Knowing a little more about my family and ancestors has given me great joy and a sense of identity. It makes me feel proud of my roots, of our customs, warm culture, and beautiful language. And I suspect that he, too, must feel proud. **NE**

*Nancy Gonzalez Schwebach lives in Utah, USA.*

### Did You Know?

You can add your family’s stories, audio files, and photos at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). What stories can you learn from your parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles? Find time to listen and record what they have to say and then add them to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) and enrich your family.



  
SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:  
Marriage and  
Family

# RECIPE

## for a Happy Family

*Here are nine ways you can strengthen your family.*

By Mindy Anne Leavitt

Church Magazines

As far as important doctrines within the gospel of Jesus Christ go, the family is definitely high on the list. You young women regularly recite your commitment “to strengthen home and family,”<sup>1</sup> you young men are invited to “make a list of ways you can help build a happy home,”<sup>2</sup> and both young men and young women are reminded: “Your family will be blessed as you do your part to strengthen it.”<sup>3</sup>

So what’s the best way to strengthen your family and help create a happy home? “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” has the answer! This important document describes why families are so important in Heavenly Father’s plan and what exactly we can do to strengthen our family relationships. It also explains exactly how we

can be happier in our families. There’s no secret recipe—just the basic principles of the gospel we’ve been taught all along: “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”<sup>4</sup>

There you have it—the simple formula for creating a happy family and improving your eternal family relationships. That’s not to say it doesn’t require work and effort on your part, however. But all the effort you put into strengthening your family will ultimately make you—and them—happier.

Here are some ideas on what these principles could look like when put into practice.

## FAITH

- Participate in family and personal scripture study and family home evening.
- Make a goal with your family to better keep a commandment, such as the law of the fast or the law of tithing.
- Make plans to listen to the upcoming general conference or to study the previous general conference together as a family.

## PRAYER

- Participate in family prayer.
- In your personal prayers, pray for each family member specifically, by name. Think about their needs as you pray for them.

## REPENTANCE

- Say you're sorry; say it often. And mean it.
- Learn about the importance of Christ's Atonement and the sacrament together and the role they both play in the repentance process.

## FORGIVENESS

- Be humble and recognize that everyone, even parents, makes mistakes.
- Remember what you love about those who've hurt or offended you.
- Pray for help in forgiving others.

## YOUTH EXPERIENCES

We asked some youth how they practice these principles in their own families. Here's what they said about their experiences:

### FAITH

I chose to arrange the next two family home evenings, focusing on faith. I started off by preparing the lessons and trying to learn the chords on the guitar for the songs we would sing.

The first lesson was on faith. I asked what we as a family could change to grow our faith. They replied, "Praying, studying scriptures, fasting, going to church," and so on. We agreed that there are many things you can do to grow your faith, but the most important thing is to actually do them. It's important that you act in order to strengthen your faith.

The second lesson was on spiritual gifts. We talked about what faith and spiritual gifts had to do with each other.

Our faith-themed family home evenings went really well. We improved some things in our family; we had fun and tried not to just get it over with. We felt the Spirit together as a family.

*Riza S., 16, Roskilde, Denmark*

### PRAYER

I decided to practice my faith by praying and asking God for help and guidance. At first I didn't realize the impact of my prayers, but after a few days I found that we had more peace at home.

But then my faith was challenged. My youngest brother was hurt and had to have immediate surgery, one of my friends was also hurt badly, and my mother got a sore throat with a high fever. All these horrible circumstances expelled the feelings of peace around me. I was very sad but continued to pray. My grandmother's favorite poem came to mind, which says that God knows all things better

than we do and that we should trust Him. So I started to practice my faith even more and do everything I could. Not much later my brother was able to leave the hospital. My friend was not hurt as badly as it had first appeared. My mother recovered.

Now when I pray for others, I pray with more focus and more faith than before. We should have faith in God, especially when believing in Him and His plans is hard, and never complain—because He knows best.

*Jarom K., 18, Graz, Austria*

## REPENTANCE

I have realized how much repentance affects everything. For example, for some months I was committing sins and not repenting of them, and I was finding it difficult to break this cycle. But after speaking with the bishop and other close friends, I was able to use the repentance process and feel so much closer to God and feel happier again. In praying hard and spending lots of time reading my scriptures, I realized that I had to change how I was living some parts of my life. I realize now how much I have grown because of this. Through this experience I was able to get much closer to my mum and dad especially.

Although I still have temptations and still commit sins, I am able to use the Savior's Atonement to repent and

review how I have done every day and try to always want to improve. I will be forever grateful for the Atonement in my life.

*Billy P., 17, Ipswich, England*

## WORK

Since I consider family history a type of work, I decided to make my own family history book. So I made a compilation of all the pictures of the members of my family. I did that so that my kids and my great-grandchildren will be able to see how their ancestors looked. And while I was doing it, I felt so peaceful because I knew I wasn't doing it for myself, but I was also doing it for generations to come.

*Glory S., 18, Johannesburg, South Africa*



Youth in South Africa created a video about how they applied the principle of work in their families. To watch their video, go to [lds.org/go/work&NE](https://lds.org/go/work&NE).

## WHOLESUME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

My first attempt at doing recreational activities with my siblings was rough, to say the least. But a turning point for me was a trip to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The leaves were every color, and the amusement park was fun, but moments of curt words, selfish actions, and



## RESPECT

- Obey your parents.
- Don't speak badly or unkindly of anyone in your family.
- Look for the positive qualities you see in each family member. Share with them what you admire about them.

## LOVE

- Pray for charity—the Savior's love—for the members of your family.
- Find ways to serve your family.
- Write notes of encouragement and love. Hide them in lunch boxes, purses, or wallets for your family members to find later.

## COMPASSION

- Encourage family members to share their feelings and try to understand each other.
- Comfort each other through hard times and try to bear one another's burdens (see Mosiah 18:8-9).

## WORK

- Offer to prepare a meal for the family.
- Help out with things around the house, such as mowing the lawn, weeding the garden, or cleaning windows.
- Help your younger siblings with their schoolwork.

## WHOLESAME RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Help plan family outings, vacations, or activities your family might enjoy doing together.
- Go digital-less. Turn off the TV and other electronics while you're with your family.

teasing gone wrong often dampened the mood. Before we left, my sister and I hiked up a small hill and sat quietly as we listened to the nature around us. It was the first time in a while that we had sat without quarreling, quietly discussing the days ahead and our current struggles. The Spirit was present, bringing peace I had forgotten.

I started to try to go out of my way to talk to my siblings, ask them about their day, give them a hug—just be involved in their life. I helped my youngest, autistic brother with his homework. I helped my youngest sister make grammar flash cards and create silly rhymes to memorize the different parts of speech. On her next test she had improved by more than 20 points and received her highest test grade. The joy I felt from those moments was different and more profound than I had expected.

Being in a family can be hard, but in times like those it is all worth it. Those little moments lead to ones of fun, games, and laughter; and I have felt a new unity in my family. **NE**  
*Emily C., 17, North Carolina, USA*

### NOTES

1. "Young Women Theme," *Young Women Personal Progress* (2009), 3.
2. *Duty to God* (2010), 80.
3. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 14.
4. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.

## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

### THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- When do you feel the most joy at home?
- How do you contribute to the joy of others in your home?

### THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

- Read the suggestions in this article, and pick one or two of them to do each day this week.
- Share your feelings about what makes a happy family at home, at church, or on social media at [lds.org/go/family8NE](https://lds.org/go/family8NE).

# Waiting with Faith



I WAITED FOR YEARS BUT NEVER GAVE UP HOPE  
THAT MY PARENTS WOULD JOIN THE CHURCH.



By Mikaeli Duarte da Silva

I was introduced to the Church by my aunt and uncle, who live near my home. I was only seven years old at the time, and I loved going to church to be with the other children. My parents were not members, but they did not mind that I went to church every Sunday with my aunt and uncle. My parents said that it was much better for me to be involved with a church that taught of Jesus Christ than to be out in the streets getting into trouble.

The missionaries came often to our home to teach us. My parents loved the discussions, but they did not want to embrace the gospel. They said that they were not ready because entering the waters of baptism is a serious commitment. The missionaries continued to come to our home, but they always left disappointed with the answers my parents gave. I knew, however, that one day they would be baptized.

When I turned eight, I was ready to make the baptismal covenant. My mom asked me if that was what I really wanted. She told me that once I was baptized, I could not change my mind and that baptism would change my entire life. I said that being baptized was something I had dreamed about since I first started going to Primary.

After I was baptized and confirmed, I continued to go to church, but my

parents rarely came to our Primary activities. It was painful for me to see all the other children with their parents. But I hoped that one day they would be baptized and we would be sealed in the temple, and my greatest dream would become a reality.

When I was a teenager, the missionaries continued to teach my parents, but they still did not want to be baptized. However, they would occasionally come to church, which gave me a little hope. I still dreamed that my parents would join the Church, but I began to think that it would never come to pass in this life.

Then one beautiful Sunday morning when I was 17, my mother again went to church with me. On our way home she told me something that I can still hear in my thoughts and in my heart. She said that she had decided to be baptized. I was shocked! After waiting for so long, I wondered if this was real. In May 2010, my mother entered the waters of baptism. It was such a happy day.

After the baptism I looked at my father and said, “You’re the only one left now.” He responded that it would not be soon because he didn’t feel the desire to be baptized. I was again sad—part of my dream had come true, but the rest seemed far away. Although it was hard, I was certain that things would change. To my great happiness, my prayers were

again answered two months later when my father entered the waters of baptism. It was the greatest joy of my life. I felt as though the heavens were singing.

After my parents joined the Church, I realized that another part of my dream had come true but that we needed to be sealed for eternity in the house of the Lord. My parents told me they didn’t feel ready, that they didn’t have enough money for the long trip to the Recife Brazil Temple, and that they didn’t have anyone to watch our home while we were gone. I was sad, but I kept praying for that blessing, knowing that the Lord would answer my prayers.

In time my mother began to feel a strong desire to go to the temple, even though my father continued to put it off. After many conversations with the bishop, they both decided to go. I felt so much joy I could barely contain it!

In September 2011, my mother, my father, and I went to the temple for the first time in our lives. I was sealed to my parents the next day, and I can truly say that, after 11 years of waiting, it was the best day of my life.

I am very grateful to Heavenly Father for everything He has given to me, especially for answering my prayers and fulfilling my greatest dream: the dream of seeing my whole family in the house of the Lord. **NE**  
*Mikaeli Duarte da Silva lives in Ceará, Brazil.*



By Elder  
David S. Baxter  
Of the Seventy

# FINDING HOPE IN A TROUBLED FAMILY

*No matter what you have been through or are going through now, thanks to the Savior you can know there are better days ahead.*



As a boy (below), I wondered if the Lord knew our troubled family. When I was a teen (left), I learned that salvation could come to our home, as it had for Zaccheus (far right).



A perfect example of the power of hope is the story of King Lamoni's father in the Book of Mormon. He didn't even know if there was a God.

But with a sense of hope he prayed, "If there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee" (Alma 22:18).

He hoped there was a God. He hoped he was being taught the truth. Eventually he and his household were converted. Then he opened his entire kingdom for the preaching of the gospel, and thousands of people joined the church. (See Alma 23:1–5.) He had found hope, and that hope changed his life.

### Like Zaccheus?

When I was a child in Scotland, I was also looking for hope. We were a poor, little family—my mother and four children, of which I was the oldest. After my parents' divorce when I was five, there came a stepfather who was not a good man. We hadn't experienced much love at home. My mother cleaned houses to make ends meet. Life was tough.

When I was 10, I went to a gospel mission hall. The teacher was without question a disciple of Jesus Christ. One Sunday he taught us about Zaccheus. The Savior visited Zaccheus at home, and Zaccheus became a changed man. He said that he gave away half of his goods to the poor and that if he had wronged any man, he gave back four times as much as he had taken. Jesus said salvation had come to the house of Zaccheus, "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Although I was young, I found myself wondering if salvation could come to *my* home. Did Jesus know me? If I was lost, could He find me?

### How I Found Hope

Then when I was 12, Latter-day Saint missionaries started visiting us. Whenever they were in our home, we felt a sense of peace and sheer goodness. Those were unusual



feelings for us at that time. I wanted those feelings in my life all of the time, not just when the elders were with us.

I started to believe that salvation *could* come to our home. The missionaries helped me understand that Heavenly Father knows each of us individually. They explained that He is so anxious to bless us that He sent His Son to save us. I felt that the Savior *had* found us. I embraced the gospel with gratitude and was baptized a month before my 13th birthday. I received the Aaronic Priesthood and started to pass the sacrament, which seemed like a great honor, knowing that the first sacrament was blessed and passed by Jesus Himself.

I felt as though our family expanded to include the entire ward. We were immediately given opportunities to serve, and it was a wonderful feeling. Through my early Church life I gained hope. There *were* better days ahead. It was possible to feel a sense of belonging. We were important to Heavenly Father.

Our life didn't suddenly change. We still had difficulties—of course we did. My mother married another bad man, an alcoholic, so there were still hard days and harsh times. But I now had an entirely different sense about the future. The gospel allowed me to rise above my challenges and feel abiding peace.

*I couldn't do anything about the family circumstances of my youth—alcoholism, poverty, and divorce. But when I was 15, I made a major decision: "I will change the future—for myself and for the children I will someday have. My unhappy family history will not be passed on."*

*The good news is that you get to shape your future. Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever your condition may be, you can have a happy and fulfilled life if you stay close to the gospel and place your faith in Jesus Christ.*

## Changing the Future

I couldn't do anything about the family circumstances of my youth—alcoholism, poverty, and divorce. But when I was 15, I made a major decision: "I will change the future—for myself and for the children I will someday have. My unhappy family history will not be passed on." I felt the Holy Ghost prompting me to build a good life.

As young people, we go through all kinds of situations. Mine were quite dramatic and might not apply to everyone. But there will be something that affects each person deeply. Bad things can happen to good people. You may feel a quiet desperation, or you may feel that your life looks bleak.

The good news is that you get to shape your future. Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever your condition may be, you can have a happy and fulfilled life if you stay close to the gospel and place your faith in Jesus Christ. In Gethsemane He experienced total agony—mental, spiritual, physical, and emotional—all of that piled on top of Him. I can't describe it because it is indescribable,



As I continued to grow in the gospel, I found it prepared me not only for life as a young man, but also for the happy family life I enjoy today.

but He did it. And because of what He endured, He understands when we're suffering, anxious, hurt, afraid, sick, injured, or abused. He understands everything. He will help you.

In many dark midnight hours, during my teenage years and also later in life, there have been times when I have felt as though I were weeping at the Savior's feet, pleading for a blessing. Figuratively I have felt Him leaning down, picking me up, putting His arms around me, and blessing me with love. And this I know: as His disciple you are entitled to His help and He will turn everything to your good. That is the hope of the gospel. **NE**

## HOW YOU CAN FIND HOPE

**Start with desire.** "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you" (Alma 32:27).

**Be obedient.** The little things are big things—pray, read the scriptures, come to church. These things entitle you to blessings.

**Seek the Holy Ghost.** He does everything in His power to give us direction.

**Repent** of sins.

**Get on the path** that will lead you to the Savior, and stay on that path.

**Focus on the future** (see Philippians 3:13).

**Put the past behind you** and concentrate on what you can do now. Smile. Be optimistic. Be cheerful.

**Go to the temple.** Be there as often as you can. Feel the comfort it brings.

**Know that you are known.** Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know each of us. They want us to be happy and to return to live with Them again.

**Trust in the Lord's promises.** "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

# STAY TRUE



Be who God wants you to be  
by staying in line with gospel truth,  
even when the standards of  
others are falling.



# THE GOSPEL AND YOUR PERSONALITY

By David A. Edwards  
Church Magazines

**A**re you a stereotypical Mormon? If you surveyed members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by far most of them would probably say no to this question. Of course, they might all have different ideas of what a stereotypical Church member *is*, but still, most of them would be pretty sure that they're not it.

That's because people generally feel that they're unique, and they don't like the idea of being lumped into generic categories. Of course, there are beliefs and behaviors that all Latter-day Saints ought to share, but we're also not all exactly alike in every way, nor should we be.

Unfortunately, sometimes people get the impression that there's a fixed mold that all Church members are supposed to fit into, and they feel like they don't fit. They sometimes even feel like the deeper their commitment to the Church becomes, the more they have to give up their personality or individuality.

So, what do you do if you start to feel like the Church doesn't fit your personality or that your personality doesn't fit in the Church?

## Who Are You, Really?

Dr. Richard German Ellsworth, a psychologist and Church member, says that "the

## WHAT IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU DON'T FIT IN WITH EVERYONE ELSE AT CHURCH?



teenage desire to individuate [to 'be your own person'] is part of a normal developmental process." So, it's normal to feel like you need to "do your own thing" and "be yourself."

Over time, you'll notice there are certain things you like and want. You get a feel for your tastes, desires, preferences, talents, and skills, and you may think, "This is who I really am." In this process, however, ask yourself, "Who am I, really? And where does knowledge about my true self come from?"

"In reality," says President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "[we] are elegant and eternal creatures of infinite value with potential

beyond imagination. Discovering who we really are is part of this great adventure called life."<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Spirit, which "speaketh of things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13), whispers these truths to you, teaching you that there's a lot more to you than what you're thinking, feeling, and wanting at the moment. In fact, there's far more to you than the sum total of everything you've experienced in this life.

You are the one and only you, a one-of-a-kind child of heavenly parents. Thus, your uniqueness has deep roots in the eternities. You existed as a spirit before you were born here on earth, and you chose even then to

**YOU ARE  
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"THAT'S JUST THE WAY I AM."

A fixed mind-set



"I CAN BECOME BETTER."

A growth mind-set

## IS YOUR MIND-SET TOO SET?

Believing that you can and should change is a much healthier mind-set than believing "that's just the way I am." Latter-day Saint psychologist Dr. Lynn D. Johnson says research shows that people with a "fixed" mind-set ("that's just the way I am") experience more negative emotions and outcomes than people with a "growth" mind-set ("I can become better").

"A fixed mind-set focuses a person on innate talents," for example, says Dr. Johnson. "A growth mind-set focuses a person on practice and hard work," which bring greater success in the long run.

Changing the fixed mind-set, however, is definitely possible, says Dr. Johnson. "When people become aware of the two mind-sets, they can choose to switch and thus gain some tenacity and grit." And this increased resilience is a key to a healthier, happier life.

**THE CHURCH NEEDS YOU TO BE YOU— THE BEST YOU.**

follow Heavenly Father's plan and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior (see Abraham 3:22–28). So the journey to discover your "true self" can actually lead you closer to Heavenly Father. But, like so many good things, the quest for self-discovery can also be twisted into something that leads you away from Him and from the Church of Jesus Christ.

### Does "the Church" Clash with "Your Personality"?

Part of being unique, of course, is being different. If you dwell on your differences from others, though, you may start to feel

like you don't belong, and that's never a very good feeling.

To those who feel they don't fit in with others in the Church, President Uchtdorf has said, "If you could see into our hearts, you would probably find that you fit in better than you suppose. . . . Your background or upbringing might seem different from what you perceive in many Latter-day Saints, but that could be a blessing. . . . We need your unique talents and perspectives. The diversity of persons and peoples all around the globe is a strength of this Church."<sup>2</sup>

Whether you have the same tastes and opinions as the other Church members you know says nothing about whether you belong in the Church. The Church is filled with all kinds of different people all over the world, and you're one of them.

Though we may not all agree about our favorite authors and TV shows, about art, fashion, etiquette, politics, and a host of other things, Church members have all chosen to unite through covenants to become disciples of Jesus Christ. We've dedicated ourselves to His work, each of us contributing in a unique way. It's not about being assimilated by the Church and having your individuality dissolved.

"We do not lose our identity in becoming members of this church," said President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency (1920–2007). "We become heirs to the kingdom of God, having joined the body of Christ and spiritually set aside some of our personal differences to unite in a greater spiritual cause."<sup>3</sup>





The Church's mission is to help people come unto Jesus Christ and receive salvation and exaltation. It does this by administering the teachings and ordinances of the gospel, which is "the plan by which we can become what children of God are supposed to become."<sup>4</sup>

### Is This "Just the Way You Are"?

This life is about learning and growing and changing—it's about *becoming* the self you came here to become, and the Church is there to help. We're supposed to acknowledge our weakness and be made strong through the grace of Jesus Christ (see Ether 12:27). Even repenting of sin isn't just about regaining lost innocence—it's about being transformed into a "new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17), something we've never been before.

So, to think of your personality, preferences, or opinions as something set or non-negotiable is to build potential roadblocks to your progress. You should never say, "That's just the way I am."<sup>5</sup>

But do you lose your individuality if you choose to alter your behavior and attitudes according to the standards taught in the Church?

Not really.

Now, if you mimic other people in the Church just to "fit the mold," that's not quite right. That kind of sameness for the sake of sameness "would contradict the genius of God" as well as "the intent and purpose of the Church," as President Uchdorf has said.<sup>6</sup> Also, it's boring.

But if you choose to change because you feel it will help you be better or be more obedient or draw closer to the Spirit (and not simply because it matches what others are doing), then you're doing the right thing. And, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum

of the Twelve Apostles (1926–2004) said, "There is more individuality in those who are more holy."<sup>7</sup> The Church needs you to be you—the best you.

### Become Yourself

A lot of voices out there would tell you that the "real you" is lying dormant within you, waiting to be let out but always being boxed in by "the Church." Basically, they're trying to sell you a vision of yourself as a pre-packaged "natural man [or woman]" (Mosiah 3:19) defined by appetites, desires, selfishness, and pride and in no need (or perhaps even with no possibility) of change.

What the rest of the world doesn't know is that the "real you" is a fascinating mixture of past, present, and future: a past self, now forgotten, that existed in the eternities and was spiritually born of God; a present self that's a work in progress with unimaginable potential; and a future self that will be transformed, glorified, and perfected through trials, repentance, resurrection, and divine grace.

Your unique self is truly amazing. Your personality is something for all to appreciate. And by helping you to "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18; see also Matthew 22:39), the gospel of Jesus Christ—as well as the Church that administers it—helps you become the self that Heavenly Father knows you can become and wants you to become.

So, don't worry about whether you're a stereotypical Mormon. Be yourself. But do more than that. Become yourself. **NE**



#### NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Reflection in the Water," (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009); [lds.org/broadcasts](#).
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 23.
3. James E. Faust, "Heirs to the Kingdom of God," *Ensign*, May 1995, 62.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Challenge to Become," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 33.
5. See Donald L. Hallstrom, "What Manner of Men?" *Ensign*, May 2014, 53–54; see also Jeffrey R. Holland, "For Times of Trouble," *New Era*, Oct. 1980, 11.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Four Titles," *Ensign*, May 2013, 59.
7. Neal A. Maxwell, "Repentance," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 30.

#### Different Personalities

If you want to see just a few of the different kinds of people and personalities there are in the Church, go to [mormon.org/people](http://mormon.org/people) and watch some of the videos.



# MAKE 10 PEOPLE SMILE Today!

**10 SMILES. 24 HOURS.  
ARE YOU READY TO  
TAKE THE CHALLENGE?**

**E**ver wanted to be a superhero? Read on! While we may not be able to teach you how to fly or to shoot lasers from your eyes, we *can* give you a mission that could help lots and lots of people. The Savior taught, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), and you can be a light to everyone you meet by reaching out and uplifting them.

The *New Era* asked youth to be their own variety of superhero by trying to make 10 people smile each day; their experiences were incredible. Are *you* ready to take the challenge? Here’s how it worked out for them.

“I found that making someone smile is not as hard as it seems. Sometimes all it takes is a joke or a friendly comment or a smile. Throughout my school day I saw countless people; some I knew, some I didn’t know, but that didn’t stop me. I tried to see people the way Christ would see them. Everything I said, I truly meant. I felt a connection between that person and me. But even more, I felt a stronger connection with my Heavenly Father. I know that as we strive to be more like Him through seeing and acknowledging our brothers and sisters—and looking for their Christlike qualities—we can see ourselves in the way Christ sees us and come closer to Him.”

**Blaire A., Utah, USA**

“When I was making people smile, I felt very pleased and happy when I helped someone have a better day. One person I made smile was someone who did not have very many friends. When I said hello with a smile, it put a big smile on his face. I also told my chorus teacher she was a great piano player. I love making people smile, because it is doing what Heavenly Father and the Savior want us to do.”

**Matthew P., Colorado, USA**

“I’d like to consider myself a professional in the smiling business. I know what it takes to make people smile. It didn’t take much to make my basketball teammate smile when I yelled, ‘You got it, Marty!’ from across the gym. It took a bit more to make one of the customers I was working with at my grocery store smile after they told me they were having a bad day. But talking with them a bit and joking about the cold weather quickly set those eyes sparkling. I think most people are searching for a reason to smile. Sometimes, though, in this tricky world, it’s a bit difficult to find a reason for a moment of happiness. Isn’t it wonderful that we get an opportunity to be the reason to smile? I think it is. Even if I’m not an artist or a child prodigy; even if I’m not written about in history books; and even if no one else remembers me but the little girl who was so excited because I liked the color of her shirt, I still have my smile. And I’m more than happy to pass it on. Why don’t you do the same?”

**Allie V., Nebraska, USA**

## A FEW IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

- Write a thank-you card.
- Invite someone new to sit with you at lunch.
- Tell your siblings something you like about them.
- Do a secret act of service for your parents.
- Offer to help someone with homework.
- Listen intently when a friend needs to talk.
- Play a game with your younger siblings (even for just 10 minutes) and let them win.
- Pay someone a compliment.
- Tell a funny joke to a friend.
- Say “hi” to someone you don’t know as you pass on the street.
- Text or call a friend you haven’t seen in a while.
- Bake something for a neighbor and deliver it anonymously.
- Offer to babysit for a neighbor couple so they can go to the temple or on a date.
- Text your mom.
- Wave to the kid in the car next to you.



### BEGIN NOW

“May we begin now, this very day, to express love to all of God’s children, whether they be our family members, our friends, mere acquaintances, or total strangers.”

**President Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 94.**



Leilani F., 16, Texas, USA,  
and Sierra

# A BLIND HORSE AND ME

By David Dickson  
Church Magazines

**T**hey were going to crash headlong into a fence. And there was nothing Leilani could do about it.

Leilani F., a 16-year-old from Texas, USA, was sitting atop a blind horse. Sierra was an 11-year-old thoroughbred who had no intention of letting herself be guided anymore. The horse had chomped down on the bit and refused to follow any further direction.

“Sierra wasn’t listening and I started panicking,” Leilani said. It was about this time that Leilani started to reconsider her decision to try and help this horse.

A horse lover her entire life, Leilani volunteered with an organization that works with abandoned horses. The organization gave Leilani her pick of any horse in the program to work with. She chose Sierra.

“I knew nobody else would pick her because she’d gone blind,” said Leilani. “I felt sad for her, and I knew she was sweet. I wanted to give Sierra a real chance.”

Of course, it's harder to keep such good feelings intact when you're plowing straight for disaster.

"I'd been working with her and we were doing fine," Leilani explained. "But then she decided to take the bit from me and trot off in a different direction. Nothing I could do would stop her."

Sierra was so wound up that she refused to walk. She insisted on trotting, a much faster stride for a horse. As the fence drew closer and Leilani's panic grew with each step, something

that my Father in Heaven was showing me that I was Sierra. We are all, in one way or another, blind horses."

Dropping the reins also happened to save Leilani and Sierra from their impending crash with the fence. Sierra calmed down in reaction to the dropped reins and released the bit in her mouth. At that point Leilani picked up the reins again and gently steered them both clear of harm.

That day became a turning point. Leilani saw Sierra in a completely new light. From that moment on she

warnings from God, that I must be ready to respond and be willing to trust what He says."

Leilani learned each day how to draw nearer to God and listen more closely for His direction. After all, she had the perfect example right in front of her of what it means to turn your own intentions and plans over to someone who can see better.

Sierra became so good at trusting Leilani that the two of them took first place in two separate contests at a horse show. Sierra has since found a new home where she's really hit her stride. She now trusts so completely



#### FOLLOWING THE MASTER

"As James 3:3 states, 'Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.' We must be sensitive to our spiritual bits. Even with the slightest tug from the Master, we must be willing to completely alter our course."

Elder L. Tom Perry (1922-2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Obedience through Our Faithfulness," *Ensign*, May 2014, 101.

SOMETIMES SEEING  
WITHOUT YOUR EYES  
CAN OFFER THE  
GREATEST VISION  
OF ALL.

happened that turned the whole situation upside down.

A feeling of peace washed over Leilani, and then, "I heard this thought very clear in my mind saying, 'This is you.'"

Leilani was so shocked by the thought that she dropped the reins and literally almost fell out of the saddle.

"In that very moment, I felt in my heart the great love that my Heavenly Father has for me and the sadness He feels when I disobey him. I realized

worked slowly and carefully to build trust with Sierra. And in her own life, Leilani started listening more closely for the voice of the Lord to guide her past her own unseen dangers.

"God taught me little lessons through Sierra every time I rode her," Leilani said. "Sierra can't see hills and divots in the ground, so I have to tell her where they are. With a warning from a source she can trust, Sierra now knows that obstacles are ahead and is prepared so she doesn't trip and fall. I learned that I must listen for

that she can gallop across open fields at full speed—something she never could've done before. "She uses humans as her eyes," said Leilani. "It makes her feel free."

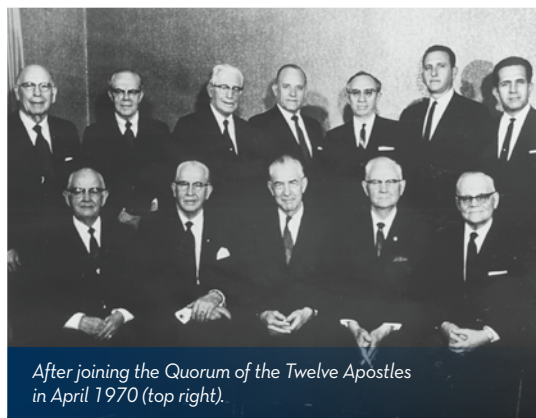
Leilani views keeping the commandments in the same light. "At first they might seem restrictive," Leilani said, "but they keep us free."

Her experiences with Sierra have helped Leilani in many ways. For starters, Leilani knows now that she wants to be a horse trainer in the future. But more importantly, "Because of Sierra, I'm learning more and more about how to hear and trust the voice of the Lord." **NE**

## REMEMBERING

# PRESIDENT BOYD K. PACKER

(1924-2015)



After joining the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in April 1970 (top right).

When President Boyd K. Packer first had his picture in the newspaper because of an important position he had been given, one of his high school teachers was apparently pretty surprised and said, “That just proves that you can’t tell by looking at a frog how high he is going to jump!”

“The image of that frog, sitting in the mud instead of jumping,” said President Packer, “illustrates how inadequate I have felt when facing the responsibilities that have come to me.”<sup>1</sup>

But face them he did, and he has blessed millions of people in the process.

For example, every time you look at a footnote in the scriptures, you’re witnessing the work of a committee that President Boyd K. Packer participated in with other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Those references were created without the use of a search engine but rather with a large team, hours of hard work, a love of the scriptures, and a lifetime of study. The project included tens of thousands of footnotes, the Topical Guide, the Bible Dictionary, maps, and new chapter headings.

Not only did President Packer have a love



With his wife, Donna, and the oldest 8 of their 10 children.

for the scriptures, but he also had a love for teaching them. He wanted to teach seminary and did so for years, later becoming supervisor over the Church’s seminaries and institutes.

Teaching seminary strengthened his great love for the youth of the Church, and he spoke to them directly on numerous occasions. He taught boldly and with love—love for God, love for the people, and love for the doctrine. He was frequently called a master teacher.

President Packer made it easy to understand the gospel through his analogies. If you’ve seen “Spiritual Crocodiles” ([lds.org/go/crocodiles8NE](https://lds.org/go/crocodiles8NE)) or “The Mediator” ([lds.org/go/Mediator8NE](https://lds.org/go/Mediator8NE)), you’ll know why.

Despite all he has done, President Packer never considered himself better than anyone



As a young man in Brigham City, Utah.



On his wedding day with his wife, Donna, 1947.



Serving as a bomber pilot in World War II (left).



Speaking in one of more than four decades of general conferences as an Apostle.



Talking with President Thomas S. Monson at general conference, 1984.



Working on a painting, a favorite hobby along with making wood carvings of birds and other animals.

else. In fact, he said on multiple occasions that “as General Authorities of the Church, we are just the same as you are, and you are just the same as we are. . . . No member of the Church is esteemed by the Lord as more or less than any other.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet President Packer did speak of the witness and testimony of the Savior he had as a special witness: “I have the witness that would qualify me for the calling I have. I’ve had it since I met the First Presidency those many years ago” when called as a General Authority.<sup>3</sup>

In one of his final conference talks, he would again bear a powerful testimony of the Lord:

“After all the years that I have lived and taught and served, . . . there is one great truth that I would share. That is my witness of the Savior Jesus Christ.

“Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon recorded the following after a sacred experience:

“‘And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“‘For we saw him’ (D&C 76:22–23).

“Their words are my words.

“I believe and I am sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that He lives. . . .

“I bear my witness that the Savior lives. I *know* the Lord. I am His witness.”<sup>4</sup> NE

#### NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Weak and the Simple of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 7.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “The Weak and the Simple,” 9.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “The Weak and the Simple,” 9.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “The Witness,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 97.

## OTHER FACTS AT A GLANCE

- Born September 10, 1924, in Brigham City, Utah, USA (60 miles [100 km] north of Salt Lake City)
- The 10th of 11 children
- Contracted polio at age 5, which would affect his health his entire life
- Earned a doctorate degree in education
- Served as president of the New England Mission
- Became a General Authority at age 37
- Served for over 53 years as a General Authority—the fifth-longest service in the Church’s history
- Worked on the 1981 LDS scriptures, which provided cross-references to all the standard works
- Became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in February 2008, after serving as Acting President since June 1994

*Sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth.*







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

# FLOOD THE EARTH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

**W**e live in a truly distinctive dispensation. A gospel dispensation is a period of time in which the necessary priesthood authority, ordinances, and doctrinal knowledge are found on the earth to implement the Father's plan of salvation for His children. Essential to the establishment of a dispensation is an authorized servant of God, a dispensation head, who holds and exercises the authority and keys of the holy priesthood. Gospel dispensations were established through Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith, and others. In every dispensation gospel truths are revealed anew—or dispensed—so the people of that period are not entirely dependent upon past dispensations for knowledge of Heavenly Father's plan.

Apostasy from the truth occurred in each previous dispensation. However, the work of salvation that was commenced but not completed in those earlier eras continues into the final dispensation. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that for this reason, the rolling forward of the latter-day glory, even the dispensation of the fulness of times, “is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age; it is a theme upon which prophets, priests and kings have dwelt with peculiar delight; they have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we live; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations they have sung and written and prophesied of this our day.”<sup>1</sup>

In this greatest and last of all gospel dispensations, “a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding

together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and the prudent, shall be revealed . . . in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times” (D&C 128:18).

## The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times and Technology

We are blessed to live, learn, and serve in this most remarkable dispensation. An important aspect of the fulness that is available to us in this special season is a miraculous progression of innovations and inventions that have enabled and accelerated the work of salvation: from trains to telegraphs to radios to automobiles to airplanes to telephones to transistors to televisions to computers to satellite transmissions to the Internet—and to an almost endless list of technologies and tools that bless our lives. All of these advancements are part of the Lord hastening His work in the latter days.

In 1862 President Brigham Young (1801–77) said: “Every discovery in science and art, that is really true and useful to mankind has been given by direct revelation from God, though but few acknowledge it. It has been given with a view to prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of truth, and the redemption of the earth from the power of sin and Satan.”<sup>2</sup>

Please now consider the words of President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), spoken in 1974, as he described the future of missionary work:

“I believe that the Lord is anxious to put into our hands inventions of which we laymen have hardly had a glimpse. . . .

“With the Lord providing these miracles of communication, and with the increased efforts and devotion of our missionaries and all of us, and all others who are ‘sent,’ surely the divine injunction will come to pass: ‘For, verily, the sound must go forth from this place into all the world, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth—the gospel must be preached unto every creature’ (D&C 58:64).”<sup>3</sup>

And in 1981 President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught: “We are confident that as the work of the Lord expands, he will inspire men to develop the means whereby the membership of the Church, wherever they may be, can be counseled in an intimate and personal way by his chosen prophet.”<sup>4</sup>

Messages and pictures that used to require days, weeks, and months to send and receive now can be communicated around the world in seconds. We thank Thee, O God, for the prophets who have taught and prepared us for the time in which we live—and who have urged us to use technological advancements to support the ongoing mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>5</sup>

The Lord is hastening His work, and it is no coincidence that these powerful communication innovations and inventions are occurring in the dispensation of the fulness of times. Social media channels are global tools that can personally and positively impact large numbers of individuals and families. And I believe the time has come for us as disciples of Christ to use these inspired tools appropriately and more effectively to testify of God the Eternal Father, His plan of happiness for His children, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Savior of the world; to proclaim the reality of the Restoration of the gospel in the latter days; and to accomplish the Lord’s work.

Several basic guidelines should be followed as we use social media to convey gospel messages:

## 1. Be Authentic and Consistent

First, we are disciples and our messages should be authentic. A person or product that is not authentic is false, fake, and fraudulent. Our messages should be truthful, honest, and accurate. We should not exaggerate, embellish, or pretend to be someone or something we are not. Our content should be trustworthy and constructive. And anonymity on the Internet is not a license to be inauthentic.

Authenticity is strengthened through consistency. The gospel messages you share will be accepted more readily if your Christlike example is evident in the ongoing pattern of your posts.

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson is a strong example of the power of consistency in social media. When called to serve as the Young Women general president in April of 2013, her Pinterest followers doubled overnight. Sister Oscarson’s previous pins provided ample evidence of her integrity, prompting one blogger to ask, “Would your Pinterest page pass the Bonnie Oscarson test? . . . Who will people decide you are if all they know is what is on your social media page?”<sup>6</sup>

## 2. Edify and Uplift

Second, we and our messages should seek to edify and uplift rather than to argue, debate, condemn, or belittle.

Share the gospel with genuine love and concern for others. Be courageous and bold but not overbearing in sustaining and defending our beliefs, and avoid contention. As disciples our purpose should be to use social media channels as a means of projecting the light and truth of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ into a world that increasingly is dark and confused.

## 3. Respect Intellectual Property

Third, we and our messages should respect the property of other people and organizations. This simply means that



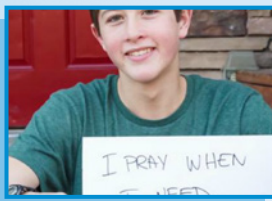
**THE LORD IS HASTENING HIS WORK,** and it is no coincidence that these **POWERFUL COMMUNICATION INNOVATIONS AND INVENTIONS ARE OCCURRING** in the dispensation of the fulness of times.

## SIX EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS

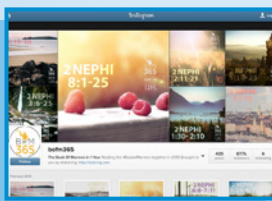
Here are several examples of gospel messages and images that have been created by the Church and by its members and communicated to the world through social media.



**1. *Because of Him.*** A brief Church-produced video honoring the true meaning of Easter. It was viewed more than five million times during Easter week last year in 191 countries and territories. Using the accompanying #BecauseofHim hashtag (something used to identify related social media messages), members and others communicated many of their own thoughts and images about the Savior and His Resurrection in many social channels and places, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. See it at [lds.org/media-library/video/topics/easter](http://lds.org/media-library/video/topics/easter).



**2. *Did You Think to Pray?*** Church members and others published more than 300 photos of themselves on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other social channels with signs that completed the phrase “I pray when . . .” In addition, thousands of people used the #DidYouThinktoPray hashtag to share thoughts about when and why they communicate with their Heavenly Father. These simple actions led to more than 40,000 conversations about the need for prayer. See [mormonchannel.org/watch/collection/mormon-channel-videos/i-pray-when-didyouthinktopray](http://mormonchannel.org/watch/collection/mormon-channel-videos/i-pray-when-didyouthinktopray).



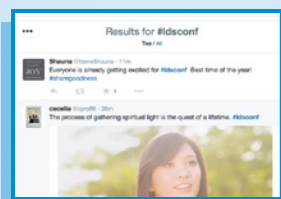
**3. *Book of Mormon 365.*** An Instagram account created by a couple from Arizona, USA, who post a reading assignment from the Book of Mormon every day. The assignments are divided into 365 pieces—the perfect size to allow followers to read the full Book of Mormon in one year. More than 55,000 people followed this account in 2014, with many of them actively sharing their thoughts and impressions as they read the Book of Mormon together.



#### 4. **General Authority Social Media Accounts.**

Last summer the Church established an official Instagram account. The members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles now specifically choose photos of themselves to be posted. Some of the Brethren now have their own Twitter accounts. All of the Brethren also have their own Facebook pages on which they communicate important gospel messages.

Find their pages at [lds.org/media-library/social](https://lds.org/media-library/social).



#### 5. **#LDSconf.**

The #LDSconf hashtag, now displayed on the lower left corner of the screen during general conference broadcasts, was created in October 2008 by a faithful member looking for an opportunity

to follow and share conference-related tweets—long before the Church started using it. Thousands of members participate in the #LDSconf hashtag conversation about counsel from living prophets and apostles, and through it millions of people around the world are edified by general conference messages.



#### 6. **Meet the Mormons.**

A Church-produced feature-length film to help those not of our faith better understand us as a people. This film addresses common misperceptions about our beliefs

and highlights the blessings that come from living the gospel of Jesus Christ. The film can be viewed on DVD, in visitors' centers, on Internet movie channels, and on social media channels. For more information, visit [meetthemormons.com](https://meetthemormons.com). This movie is one additional way members can share their beliefs with family and friends in a simple and effective way.



I exhort you to  
**SWEEP THE EARTH WITH  
MESSAGES** filled with  
**RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUTH**  
—messages that are  
**AUTHENTIC, EDIFYING,  
AND PRAISEWORTHY.**

you should not create your own content using someone else's art, name, photos, music, video, or other content without permission. The content in the Media Library on LDS.org, unless otherwise indicated, has been cleared for use by members without seeking permission from the Church. Additional information about the use of Church media can be found at [social.lds.org](https://social.lds.org).

When you share messages online, make sure others understand that you are expressing your personal thoughts and feelings. Please do not use the Church logo or otherwise suggest that you are speaking for or on behalf of the Church.

#### 4. Be Wise and Vigilant

Fourth, be wise and vigilant in protecting yourself and those you love. We should remember that the Internet never forgets. Anything you communicate through a social media channel indeed will live forever—even if the app or program may promise otherwise. Only say it or post it if you want the entire world to have access to your message or picture for all time.

Following these simple guidelines will enable members of the Church around the world to create and share gospel messages that will cause the light to “shine forth out of darkness” (Mormon 8:16).

#### An Apostolic Invitation

What has been accomplished thus far in this dispensation communicating gospel messages through social media channels is a good beginning—but only a small trickle. I now extend to you the invitation to help transform the trickle into a flood. Beginning this day, I exhort you to sweep the earth with messages filled with righteousness and truth—messages that are authentic, edifying, and praiseworthy—and literally to sweep the earth as with a flood (see Moses 7:59–62).

I pray we will not simply participate in a flash flood that rises swiftly and then recedes just as rapidly. I am not suggesting a one-time glitzy initiative from which

we quickly move on to the next task on our lengthy list of gospel things to do. We need not become social media experts or fanatics. And we do not need to spend inordinate amounts of time creating and disseminating elaborate messages.

Imagine the impact we can have as hundreds of thousands and millions of members of the Lord's restored Church contribute in seemingly small ways to the rising floodwaters. May our many small, individual efforts produce a steady rainfall of righteousness and truth that gradually swells a multitude of streams and rivers—and ultimately becomes a flood that sweeps the earth. “Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33).

We have been and are blessed in so many ways; and where much is given, much is required. I pray that you may come to understand more fully the spiritual significance and blessing of living in the dispensation of the fulness of times, that you may have eyes to see clearly both the possibilities and the pitfalls of the remarkable technologies that are available to us today, that you may increase in your capacity to use these inspired tools appropriately, and that you may receive inspiration and guidance about the role you should play in helping to sweep the earth as with a flood of truth and righteousness. As you press forward in this holy work, I promise you will be blessed in mortality in the individual, specific, and necessary ways that will prepare you for eternity. **NE**

*From an address given on August 19, 2014, during Campus Education Week at Brigham Young University.*

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 186.
2. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 18–19.
3. Spencer W. Kimball, “When the World Will Be Converted,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1974, 10–11.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Faith: The Essence of True Religion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 5.
5. See “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet,” *Hymns*, no. 19.
6. “Would Your Pinterest Page Pass the Bonnie Oscarson Test?” [latterdaysaintwoman.com](http://latterdaysaintwoman.com).

## AN EMAIL FOR

# JESSICA

By Sydney Squires

I didn't usually run home from school and fling open my scriptures to study them, but today was unusual. Sprawled on my bed, I booted up my laptop and typed two words: *Dear Jessica*.

I'd known Jessica for a few years, but our conversations were brief. One day in English, however, we were assigned seats by each other, and our class discussion ventured into the topic of religious symbolism.

I was surprised when Jessica, an atheist and usually argumentative, started asking the teacher questions that were uncharacteristically sincere: "What did 'Godhead' mean? What does it mean that there are three members?"

Finally, Jessica leaned back and confided to me, "I'm glad I'm not religious; it just seems like a lot to keep track of."

I struggled for words, but I couldn't let a moment like

this pass. "I actually love the Church," I said at last. The discussion was moving on, so we promised to talk more after class. I shared a bit of my testimony and eventually lent her a few books about our faith.

After a few weeks of discussions both religious and nonreligious, Jessica finally said, "I understand what you're getting at, Sydney, but I don't know if I can believe all of this. I just can't believe that God would let so many bad things happen to us."

I didn't feel ready to answer her question on the spot, so I asked for her email, which led to me being sprawled on my bed, scriptures open, unsure of what to write.

I refocused on the screen. *Dear Jessica*. I looked at the sticky notes I'd filled with scriptures and started writing.

As I wrote, the Spirit surged up within me. Each word fell together with power and clarity.



Sharing the gospel can be as simple as an email to a friend.

Dear Jessica,

I don't know exactly what you've been through, what your struggles are, or what the exact words you need are, but God does.

I've been thinking a lot about your questions: "Why do I have trials? And why doesn't God just stop them and make everything easier?"

First, it's important to understand that progression is eternal. We don't just become worthy of God's presence overnight. It's a lifelong process. Struggle is required, but even though life is hard, I know that "men are, that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25). God does not cast our struggles upon us because that's just how life is; He desperately wants us to be happy. However, I can say that this life is about not only our natural progression through struggles, but about our eternal progression in overcoming them.

Jessica, Jesus Christ knows how to come to our aid! While you have struggles in your life, Jesus Christ had them in His too. I promise that He understands every one of your struggles exactly and that He knows you personally. I know I'm only a 15-year-old girl, but I know He lives, that this is all true, and that He loves you more than it is humanly possible to imagine.

Please come to me with any more questions you have!

Love,

Sydney

I stared at the document for a few minutes. I'd written for almost two hours, leafing through scriptures and every example I could think of to produce this. As I scanned through it, I felt completely at peace. I closed my scriptures and clicked Send.

Jessica and I never talked about that letter, and she ended up moving. I don't know if my words will lead her to the gospel this year, in 10 years, or ever in this lifetime, but writing that email helped my testimony. I'm confident it can have the same effect on her as soon as she chooses to let it.

*Sydney Squires lives in Utah, USA.*



# JUST BE

# YOU

*Scared of sharing the gospel?  
Relax and just be yourself.*

By Alex Masterson

**Y**our friends pull you aside and excitedly tell you that your favorite band is performing this Sunday. They even found out that you can get a group price if you all go together. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! So what would you do? Take the tickets and go, even though the concert's on a Sunday? Or keep the Sabbath day holy after telling them you're "busy" (without mentioning that you're going to a fireside)?

Or is there something better you could do? Maybe this could be an opportunity to share why Sundays are different for you than other days.

Outside the home, choices like this one happen all the time—away from parents, missionaries, leaders, teachers, and maybe even friends. These choices may seem uncomfortable or scary, but they can also be golden opportunities to share what you believe.

As a member of the Church, you have so much to offer the world. You have specific strengths, experiences, and perspectives that make the things you say and do matter. So, believe it or not, you *can* make a difference in the lives of those around you. You just have to be willing to act.

The best part is that some of the best missionary opportunities can just happen naturally if you remember three things: live the gospel, talk to people, and keep things simple.

## LIVE THE GOSPEL

The best way to *teach* the gospel is to *live* the gospel every day, because if you want to become a light to others, you have to fan your own spiritual flame first.

As you live the gospel, you'll realize that your example and your attitude are more than enough to inspire people to change for the better. A fellow teammate could stop drinking alcohol after seeing how well you perform without it. Or your friends could want to be more loving and loyal because you're there for them no matter what.

There will also be times when your very way of living will spark opportunities for discussion and questions. Your friends might ask why you decided to turn in a wallet to the lost and found instead of keeping it for yourself. Or some kids at school might ask why you don't swear.

At first, it might seem scary to be different, but remember that your differences can give you the power to help people, especially if you follow the Savior's counsel to be kind and compassionate (see John 13:34) and aren't pushy about what you believe (see Alma 38:12). Don't expect the world to change overnight because of your righteous choices, but know that eventually people will notice. That alone can be enough to bring about change.



## TALK WITH PEOPLE

If you want to influence people for the better, they need to know who you are first. You don't necessarily have to be loud, chatty, or even outgoing. You just have to reach out and show some love and friendship to those around you. Show people that you care (see 3 Nephi 12:14-16).

As you get used to talking with people, this also gives you the opportunity to be open about your life and the things you believe in. That doesn't mean you need to teach them missionary lessons or anything. It just means being yourself.

So if you find out that a friend has been struggling with an issue, you can suggest prayer, because your friend most likely knows that's what you do when you have an awful day. And it won't be awkward to invite people to Church activities, because they'll already have heard about other fun Church activities you've gone to. Think about it. That's what friends do! They share.



## KEEP IT SIMPLE

When people know you're a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, they tend to ask you all kinds of questions. Some will be sincere, others won't. You'll find that many people aren't looking for missionaries to come and teach them right now; they're usually just curious about your actions or beliefs.

So, no matter the question or the motive, one of the best things you can do is to keep it simple—simple truths, simple testimony, and simple invitations (see Luke 10:25-28).

For example, if some of your friends invite you to a party where you know there will be alcohol, you might be tempted to teach an in-depth lesson on the Word of Wisdom. That's more likely to confuse people or put them off. Instead, just make it clear where you stand. Tell them you don't drink, and use their questions as an opportunity to bear testimony of simple truths. Then tie in simple experiences with specific blessings you've seen.

But make sure you also listen to the Spirit. Sometimes you might be prompted to invite them to learn more or to come to a Church meeting with you. Maybe all you need to do in that moment is invite your friends to come with you to a friend's house instead of to the party. Then, you will live up to your standards and your friends will get the chance to as well.





## BE YOU

Missionary work doesn't have to be stressful. It doesn't even have to be something preplanned. Some of the best missionary opportunities can come naturally. Just live the gospel the best you can. Talk to people. Keep things simple. Just be you, because your life and example can change the world. **NE**

*Alex Masterson lives in Utah, USA.*

## What Do I Do if Someone Asks Me about the Gospel?

Here are a few other tips for how to respond when someone asks you gospel questions:

**Stay Calm.** Most people ask questions either because they're curious or because they just want to know more about you. Don't feel like your answer is solely responsible for their entire eternal salvation.

**Be Tactful.** Avoid comparing your beliefs with others. You probably don't understand all the intricacies of what they believe, so just play it safe and stick to what you know, finding common ground you can build on.

**Tell the Truth.** Honesty helps people better understand Heavenly Father and His plan for them. And if you don't know the answer, be honest about that too. You can always do some extra study and get back to them later.

**Be Cordial When You're Asked Bizarre Questions.** Some questions can be contentious or just plain weird. Instead of trying to prove and disprove every part that's true and false, just be cordial and direct, and then tell them what you believe.

**Bear Testimony.** Bear testimony of simple truths. Statements like these are powerful because they quickly teach truth in a way people can't disagree with. Here are a few examples:

- "I believe families can be together forever."
- "I believe our bodies are a gift from God."
- "I believe God has always called prophets on the earth."



For more on answering questions about the gospel, visit [lds.org/go/answers8NE](https://lds.org/go/answers8NE).

I think being cool matters too much to me. How can I worry less about it?

When you say you want to worry less about being cool, you probably mean you don't want to care so much about what certain people think of you or whether you're upholding a certain image. That's good. It means you've probably seen through that kind of "coolness" and realized how empty, fleeting, and changeable it is. You want to care more about pleasing God than pleasing other people (see D&C 3:7), you want to be a more genuine person, and you want to focus more on things that are real and enduring.

First, you can pray to Heavenly Father "with all the energy of heart" for charity (see Moroni 7:48). This "pure love of Christ . . . endureth forever" (Moroni 7:47). With this love, you will "fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear" (Moroni 8:16). This love helps you develop empathy for others (to feel what they're feeling), to treat them with kindness, and to serve them. So, rather than focusing on how they view you, you'll be seeing them as God sees them.

And here's the interesting part. If you start seeing people in this way and are sincere, friendly, and kind toward them, guess what? That's when they'll *really* think you're cool—in a much better sense of that word than you thought before. Now, how cool is that? **NE**



If my parents were sealed in the temple and then got divorced, which one am I sealed to?

For Latter-day Saint children of divorce, questions like this can add to the sadness and uncertainty that divorce brings. But here's a fact you need to know: children can be sealed to only two parents. So if you were born to your parents after they were sealed in the temple (born in the covenant) or were sealed to them in the temple yourself, you are still sealed to them—both of them—even after a divorce. This is true even if your parents' temple sealing to each other is canceled. The important thing to remember is that Heavenly Father loves all of you and wants the best for you, both now and in eternity. If you keep your covenants, your relationships in the next life will be fair and right. You can seek peace in these matters by praying and, if you feel you need extra support, by counseling with your bishop. **NE**

“My parents were married in the temple, but now they’re divorced. I’m angry that they have broken up our family. How do I forgive them?”

**D**ivorce is sad and difficult for all members of the family. Feelings of anger, loss, and hurt are normal. However, dwelling on negative feelings keeps you from peace and healing. Pray to Heavenly Father to help you get rid of harmful feelings and to understand your parents. Realize that they are also hurting.

Remember that Jesus Christ—who suffered for all of our sorrows and sins—is willing to forgive each of us. We too should forgive others. (See the parable of the debtors in Matthew 18:23–35.) Your parents will be grateful for your selfless gift of forgiveness. As you and your family members let go of anger and blame, your whole family will be strengthened and better able to adjust. Those who forgive “rise to a higher level of self-esteem and well-being” (James E. Faust, “The Healing Power of Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 68).

In this difficult time, it’s important to continue to build your family relationships, especially with your parents. In the years to come, you can rely on and cherish those relationships. Don’t let angry feelings prevent these important relationships from growing.

Have faith in Heavenly Father’s plan for you and your family. Believe that “all these things . . . shall be for thy good” (D&C 122:7). Believe that He will continue to guide and bless your life. Believe that you can have a wonderful marriage one day and that God will provide for your family in this life and in the eternities.

Forgiveness is a process and takes time. Be patient with your efforts to love, forgive, and understand your parents. Look forward to the peace and happiness that come from forgiving. **NE**

**Pray to Understand**

When my parents divorced, it was hard on my siblings and me. It took several years for me to forgive my father. I had to study the scriptures and pray with all my heart. I even talked to a counselor. Then I prayed to understand my dad. My eyes were opened, and I understood him, and it helped me heal. I was able to forgive, and I was freed from the chains that had held me down for so long. I know that the Savior’s Atonement is real. The Lord loves us and will never leave us comfortless.

*Name withheld*



**Trust Heavenly Father and Forgive**

I’ve gone through this same situation, and I know it’s a tough one.

It’s important to realize that although your parents may not love each other anymore, they still love you because you are their child. Also, trust in Heavenly Father. He has commanded us to forgive everyone. He knows you and has a plan for you. If we continue to live worthily, I know that we can receive the promise of having an eternal family, even though our families here on earth may be a little broken.

*Ashley W., 17, Texas, USA*

### Show Your Love

Think about how much you love your parents. Remember all the fun you had with them before it happened. Talk with them about those times and plan activities with your mom and dad individually. Play games with them and show your love toward them.

*Sierra J., 15, Idaho, USA*



### Try to Understand

Try to put yourself in their shoes. It won't be easy to forgive them if you don't try to understand their situation. Trust that God

has a plan for you and your family and that we have trials in this life so that we can learn and progress. Sometimes we can't control our circumstances, but we can control our attitude. Although it might be difficult, try to always look for the good in your parents and think about how you can help.

*Elder Caten, 20, Argentina  
Córdoba Mission*



### Get Support from Others

I was able to get through my parents' divorce and forgive them with help from the people around me. My friends, leaders, siblings, and family members helped me through everything. I was able to go on with my life with support from everyone.

*Geena C., 18, New Mexico, USA*



### Let Go of the Bitterness

Feeling bitter is harmful and goes against the teachings of the

Church. Pray to Heavenly Father, fast, and read the scriptures to look for answers. If you hold on to bitterness, you will be allowing Satan to enter and destroy your family because he knows how important families are in our Heavenly Father's plan.

*Carol M., 14, Honduras*

### Seek for the Holy Ghost

First, none of us is perfect, except for our Lord Jesus Christ. I would try to see the situation through your parents' eyes. Choose a good time and go talk to them. Don't criticize your parents for what they did. Second, many people turn bitter during trials



### FORGIVENESS HEALS

"In many families, there are hurt feelings and a reluctance to forgive. It doesn't really matter what the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to injure. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals."

*President Thomas S. Monson, "Hidden Wedges," Ensign, May 2002, 19.*

like these, so try to have the Holy Spirit with you. Do your personal scripture study and say your daily prayers.

*Ashley P., 15, Utah, USA*

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

## UPCOMING QUESTION

**"I have a friend who feels like she doesn't have any friends at church except me. What can I do to help her?"**

Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2015.

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), click "Submit Your Work," and sign in with your LDS Account. Under "Choose Magazine," select "New Era." To select the files to upload for your answer and photo, click "Add File." Then click "Submit" to upload and send us your files.

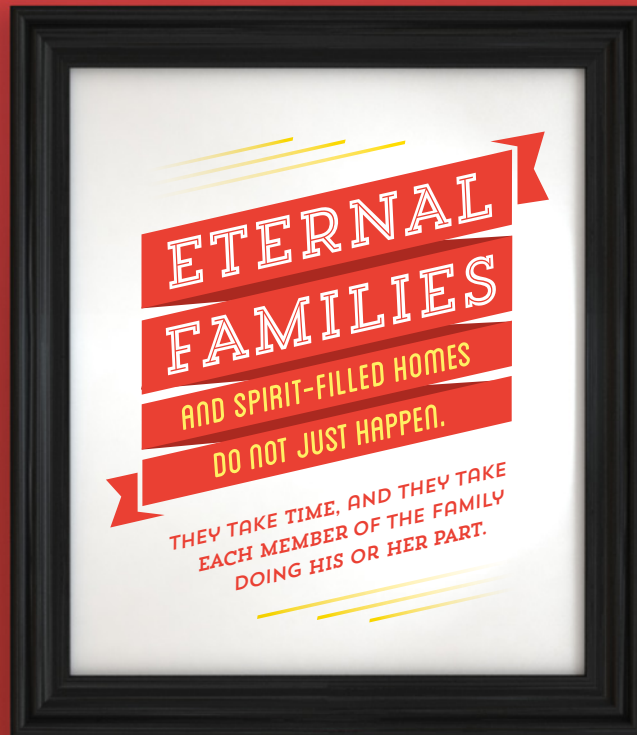
Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



## Marriage and Family

You'll be studying about marriage and family in your Sunday classes this month. As you study and discuss this topic, you may ponder these questions: What is the role of the family in the plan of salvation? What can I do now to help make sure my future family will be an eternal family?

For more on this topic, read "The Family: A Proclamation to the World." You'll also find teachings on marriage and family in April 2015 general conference talks at [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).



Cheryl A. Esplin  
First counselor in the Primary general presidency  
April 2015 general conference



Elder D. Todd Christofferson  
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
April 2015 general conference

### Share these Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to think about this month's theme. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at [lds.org/go/cards8NE](http://lds.org/go/cards8NE).



What are you doing?

I'm standing all amazed.



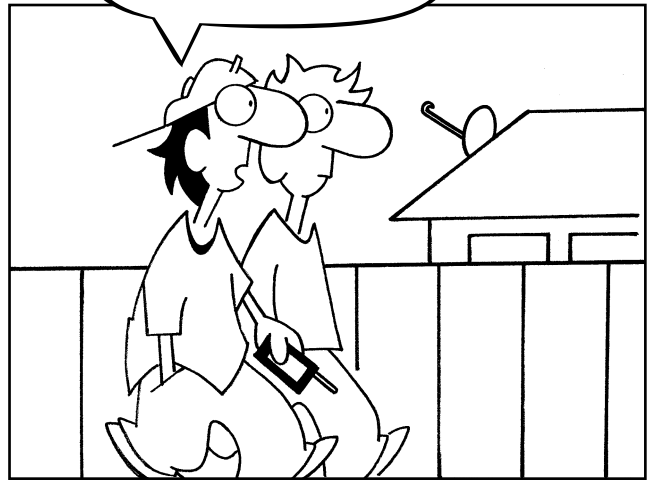
VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY; IDEA BY EVELYN T., AGE 12

No, Laman-I'm quite sure you can't download music or games on it . . .



JON CLARK

My phone has GPS navigation, but I still have no idea where I'm going with my life.



RANDY GLASBERGEN

What in the world?! My mom packed shampoo, a washcloth, and toothpaste! What does she think this is, girls' camp?!



KEVIN BECKSTROM



## A LITTLE PRIORITY

It was the first full week of eighth grade, and I was already feeling stressed about keeping up with my heavy course load. To make matters worse, my mom had volunteered the two of us to spend the afternoon taking care of a two-year-old boy named Aaron. The plan was that Aaron would nap for two hours while his mom was gone and I'd work on my schoolwork on my laptop while he napped. However, soon after our arrival at Aaron's house, we heard him crying. At first, we thought he might fall back asleep, but his crying grew louder and louder until he

was wailing, screaming, and calling out for his mom.

"Great. How am I going to get my schoolwork done now?" I thought. I felt instantly stressed. I still had my computer open to do my assignment, but how much Spanish homework do you think I was accomplishing with his siren-like wailing going on? Yep, *nada*.

My mom was doing everything possible to comfort him, but he was clinging to her and sobbing, his tears leaving wet spots all over her shirt.

Then I felt the Holy Ghost speak softly to my mind and heart, prompting me that comforting Aaron was

more important than my homework.

So I shut my laptop and started to talk to him. Between my mom snuggling and rocking him and me talking to him, he finally stopped screaming and settled down. Soon enough, little Aaron actually got down from my mom's lap.

He seemed to want to play. At that point, my mom could have played with him and I could have returned to my studies. But again, I felt that it was important for me to play with little Aaron.

So I sang crazy songs, made silly voices, rolled around on the floor,



and contorted my face in all kinds of funny ways. He smiled and laughed. When Aaron's mom came home, it was awesome to have a happy, giggly Aaron greet her.

My mom and dad have always taught me and shown a good example of how serving others brings joy and meaning to our lives. Now I think I understand what it means in the Bible to "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39), and it feels awesome!

**Dallin H., Oklahoma, USA**

## MY NUMBER ONE APP

**T**he home screen of my tablet shows apps in order of recently opened to last opened. As I was looking through it one day, I noticed that my scripture app was last. I thought nothing of it, but several weeks later I was on my tablet again and realized that I hadn't read my scriptures in a while. I decided to start reading them again. Since then I have been studying and reading my scriptures every day. It has definitely helped me grow spiritually. I have a testimony now that the scriptures are true and that they can help me get through hard times. So, now every time I go into my tablet, the first app it shows isn't a game with enraged birds or a video app but my scriptures!

**Abby H., Utah, USA**



## A LIGHT TO MY FAMILY

**I** joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when I was in boarding school. A brother in the Church invited me to attend, and I was very eager to know what the Church was all about. The sister missionaries started teaching me, and after a few months I decided to be baptized. I called home to talk to my family about my decision to change my faith but did not give them much more information about the Church; I knew that the holiday would be the best time for me to share more.

I started preparing for my holiday by buying Church magazines,

DVDs, the Doctrine and Covenants, and hymns in order help my family understand the reason why I decided to join The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When I went home, I talked to my family about my new faith and how I knew it was the only true Church. To help them understand, I held family home evenings with them every night. We covered the topics of obedience, scriptures, Church history, family responsibility, faith, and prayer.

My mum was very happy to hear about the Church, and she even told me she would love to come to church

one day and hear for herself what I shared with her.

When I returned to school, I left them with magazines, DVDs, CDs, and hymns, because my father really enjoyed the hymns I played every morning when sweeping the house. Today I am a very happy person because I have shared with my family about the true Church.

**Catherine L., Lusaka, Zambia**



By Elder  
M. Russell Ballard

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## HOW TO TUNE IN TO THE HOLY GHOST

There are several things that greatly enhance our ability to understand the promptings of the Holy Ghost and thereby hear the voice of God.

### *First is fasting and prayer.*

When the sons of Mosiah were united with Alma the Younger, they rejoiced in their reunion and acknowledged that because “they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting,” they had been gifted with the spirit of prophecy and revelation, and “when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God” (Alma 17:3).

*Second is immersing yourself in the scriptures.* The word of God “will tell you all things what ye should do” (2 Nephi 32:3). The scriptures are a conduit for personal revelation. Your generation is much more versed in holy writ than was mine at your age. You have been taught to read and study the scriptures. I urge you to intensify your study of them. I promise that your ability to hear the voice of the Lord as communicated through the Holy Ghost will increase and improve.

### *Third is preparing to spend time in the house of the Lord.*

When the time appropriately comes for you to go to the temple, you will leave the temple “armed with . . . power” (D&C 109:22) and with the promise that as we “grow up” in our knowledge of the Lord, we will “receive a fulness of the Holy Ghost” (D&C 109:15). The temple is a place of personal revelation. Prepare yourself to enter, for inside the doors of the temple rests the power that will fortify you against the vicissitudes of life.

*Fourth is listening to the counsel of your father and mother.* They are wise and experienced. Share with them, as my children have shared with me, your fears and concerns. Seek blessings from your father. You should also receive your patriarchal blessing.

*Fifth is obedience and repentance.* There are certain things you simply cannot do if you want to have the Holy Ghost with



you. It is not possible to listen to vulgar lyrics, watch movies filled with sexual innuendo, tamper with pornography on the Internet (or anywhere else for that matter), take the name of the Lord in vain, wear revealing clothing, compromise in any way the law of chastity, or disregard the values of true manhood and womanhood and expect the Holy Ghost to remain with you. Whenever anyone participates in those kinds of activities, it should not be a surprise if feelings of loneliness, discouragement, and unworthiness follow. Do not make the choice to go it alone rather than have the Spirit of the Lord to guide, to protect, to prompt, to warn, and to fill you with peace. Repent if you need to so you can enjoy the companionship of the Spirit.

Women and men who can hear the voice of the Lord, and who respond to those promptings, become invaluable instruments in His hands. **NE**

*From a Brigham Young University devotional address given on March 13, 2001.*

NOWHERE IS THE

GENEROSITY

*and*

MERCY OF GOD

MORE MANIFEST

*than in*

REPENTANCE.

President Boyd K. Packer  
(1924-2015)

President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles  
April 2015 general conference

## WHAT'S ONLINE



### **ONE SMILE** *at a Time*

Did you see the smile challenge on page 24? Getting people to smile really can brighten up their day. Learn more about the power of a smile at [lds.org/go/smile8NE](https://lds.org/go/smile8NE). Also, check out how the Church's humanitarian efforts provide smiles to people around the world at [lds.org/go/operation8NE](https://lds.org/go/operation8NE).



**CHECK OUT  
MAYLENE'S STORY AT**  
-----  
[lds.org/go/storm8NE](https://lds.org/go/storm8NE)

### **MORMON MESSAGE:** *After the Storm*

You expect a tornado to destroy things, right? Well, it does. But when a tornado destroyed Maylene's home, it also rebuilt her hope.

### **2015 MUTUAL SONG:** *Show Them*

How are your actions spreading the light of Christ to others? Find more ideas of how you can share your beliefs through your actions by listening to the new Mutual song "Show Them."



**YOU CAN  
DOWNLOAD IT FROM**  
-----  
[lds.org/go/show8NE](https://lds.org/go/show8NE)

THE CHURCH OF  
**JESUS CHRIST**  
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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