

AUGUST 2018

THE

# New Era

## ***YOUR MISSION***

**CHOOSE, PREPARE, SERVE**

pp. 20-33

**A CAUSE  
FOR CELEBRATION**  
p. 2

**MEET  
ELDER GONG**  
pp. 16, 49



# HAVE YOU ENLISTED?



**WE'D LOVE TO HEAR!**

Tell us about your experiences as you accept President Nelson's invitation to enlist in the youth battalion of the Lord.



**Hope  
of Israel**



Send your stories and photos to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

"During President Nelson's youth broadcast, I took some notes and was afterward inspired to draw this picture."

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**Janette S., Utah, USA**

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August 2018 • Volume 48 • Number 8

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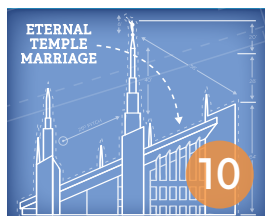
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## BUY THEIR FRUIT?



WHEN THE WORLD TRIES TO BLEND EVIL AND GOOD, THE RESULT IS ALWAYS ONE BAD APPLE.  
(See Matthew 7:16-20, Luke 12:17, and 2 Thess 3:1-5.)

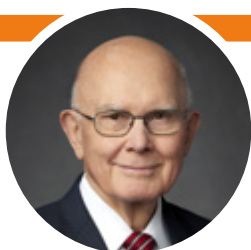
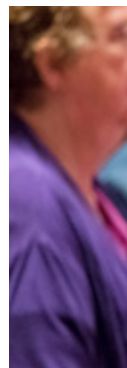


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From an address given at “Be One,” the 40th anniversary celebration of the 1978 revelation on the priesthood, on June 1, 2018.

# BE ONE



By President  
Dallin H. Oaks

First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

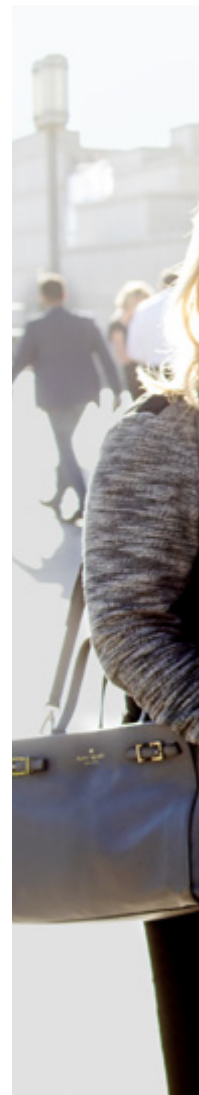
## A CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

**FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS** who were adults at that time, the 1978 revelation on the priesthood was an event that is etched in memory.

I.

The news reached me on a telephone that seldom rang. My two sons and I were working in the yard of a mountain home we built as a place of retreat from my heavy responsibilities as president of Brigham Young University. The caller was Elder Boyd K. Packer. He told me about the revelation on the priesthood, which was just being announced. We exchanged expressions of joy, and I walked back to my work. I sat down on the pile of dirt we had been moving and beckoned to my sons. As I told them that all worthy male members of the Church could now be ordained to the priesthood, I wept for joy.

Why was the revelation on the priesthood such an occasion of joy? As a young man studying and working in the legal profession, I lived in the Midwestern and Eastern regions of the United States for 17 years. I had observed and shared the pain and frustration experienced by those who suffered these restrictions and those who observed them, criticized them, and sought for reasons. I studied the reasons then being given and could not feel confirmation about the truth of any of them. As part of my prayerful study, I learned that, in general, the Lord seldom gives reasons for the commandments and directions He gives to His servants. I determined to be loyal to our prophetic leaders and to pray—as promised from the beginning of these restrictions—that the day would come when all would enjoy the blessings of priesthood and temple. Now, on June 8, 1978, that day had come, and I wept for joy.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SMITH





## II.

When we consider what has happened and is happening in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and in the lives of its members since 1978, we all have cause for celebration.

Institutionally, the Church reacted swiftly to the revelation on the priesthood. Ordinations and temple recommends came immediately. The reasons that had been given to try to explain the prior restrictions on members of African ancestry—even those previously voiced by revered Church leaders—were promptly and publicly disavowed. The Lord had

spoken through His prophet, and His Church obeyed.

In contrast, changes in the hearts and practices of individual members did not come suddenly and universally. Some accepted the effects of the revelation immediately and gracefully, some accepted gradually, and some, in their personal lives, continued the attitudes of racism that have been painful to so many throughout the world, including the past 40 years. Some have wanted to look back, concentrating attention on reexamining the past, including seeking reasons for the now-outdated

restrictions. But most in the Church, including its senior leadership, have concentrated on the opportunities of the future rather than the disappointments of the past. Most have trusted the wisdom and timing of the Lord and accepted the directions of His prophet. In doing so, we have realized the eternal significance of His prophetic teaching that “one being is as precious in his sight as the other” (Jacob 2:21). In doing so, we have received new impetus to fulfill the command of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are to teach the everlasting gospel unto all—to “all nations, kindreds, tongues and people” (D&C 42:58).



## III.

To concern ourselves with what has not been revealed or with past explanations by those who were operating with limited understanding can only result in speculation and frustration. To all who have such concerns, we extend our love and this special invitation. Let us all look forward in the unity of our faith and trust in the Lord's promise that “he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female” (2 Nephi 26:33).

As we look to the future, one of the most important effects of the revelation on the priesthood is its divine call to abandon attitudes of prejudice against any group of God's children. Racism is probably the most familiar source of prejudice today, and we are all called to repent of that. But throughout history, many groups of God's children are or

**“ONE BEING IS AS PRECIOUS  
IN HIS SIGHT AS THE OTHER.”**





# WE SHOULD HASTEN... TO PUT ALL PERSONAL PREJUDICES BEHIND US.

have been persecuted or disadvantaged by prejudices, such as those based on ethnicity or culture or nationality or education or economic circumstances.

As servants of God who have the knowledge and responsibilities of His great plan of salvation, we should hasten to prepare our attitudes and our actions—institutionally and personally—to put all personal prejudices behind us. As President Russell M. Nelson said following our recent meeting with the national officers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: “Together we invite all people, organizations, and government[s] to work with greater civility, eliminating prejudice of all kinds.”<sup>1</sup>

Even as we unite to banish attitudes and practices of prejudice, we should remember that it is not prejudice for the Church to insist on certain rules in furtherance of the Lord’s requirement of worthiness to enter a temple. The Lord has declared that obedience to covenants and commandments is an

essential requirement to enjoy sacred blessings. Any attempt to erase divine requirements for eternal life and eternal families would be like trying to establish Satan’s plan that “all would be saved.” We mortals already rejected Satan’s plan in our premortal lives. We chose the plan of our Heavenly Father, which provides the freedom to choose and keep the eternal covenants and commandments that apply equally to all. The equality of God is not equal outcomes for all, but equal opportunity for all.

## IV.

Our determination in this anniversary program is to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the revelation on the priesthood by looking forward. As we do, we express special appreciation for our marvelous members of African descent, especially our African American members who have persisted in faith and faithfulness through a difficult transition period of fading prejudice. Now we join together in concentrating our attention on the

glorious post-1978 effects of that revelation in blessing the children of God all over the world. As our prophetic leaders declared at that time:

“The Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

Now temples are being built in many nations for the blessing of God’s children on both sides of the veil. On earth and in heaven, we rejoice together. This is part of our preparation for the Second Coming of Him who declared through a Book of Mormon prophet that “he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation” (2 Nephi 26:24) and who declared through a modern prophet that “if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

## NOTES

1. “First Presidency and NAACP Leaders Call for Greater Civility, Racial Harmony,” Mormon Newsroom, May 17, 2018, [mormonnewsroom.org](http://mormonnewsroom.org).
2. Official Declaration 2.

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# BUILDING BRIDGES

By President Russell M. Nelson

**CENTURIES AGO**, an exacting lawyer asked the Savior:

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”<sup>1</sup>

Again in 1831, this instruction was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, when the Lord said, “And let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practice virtue and holiness before me.”

Then, by way of emphasis, He added, “And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.”<sup>2</sup>

In the meridian of time, and again in the latter days, the Lord has stressed His essential doctrine of equal opportunity for His children. And President Oaks has reminded us, “[The Lord] denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; . . . all are alike unto God.”<sup>3</sup>

On every continent and across the isles of the sea, faithful people are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in culture, language, gender, race, and nationality fade into insignificance as the faithful enter the covenant path and come unto our beloved Redeemer.

Ultimately, we realize that only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of men and the true sisterhood of women. That understanding inspires us with passionate desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation.

It is my prayer and blessing that I leave upon all who are listening that we may overcome any burdens of prejudice and walk uprightly with God—and with one another—in perfect peace and harmony. **NE**

## NOTES

1. Matthew 22:36–40.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 38:24–25.
3. 2 Nephi 26:33.



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**“BLACK AND WHITE,  
BOND AND FREE,  
MALE AND FEMALE;  
. . . ALL ARE ALIKE  
UNTO GOD.”**

---



*How could I  
stay focused on  
my scriptures when  
I felt so busy?*

---

By Kaylee Mciff

**FOR A LONG TIME**, I wanted to focus more on my scriptures, but I felt so busy. I have both school and dance, and I felt that I didn't have enough time or energy. Then, when I was listening to general conference, I heard a talk that asked us to renew our focus on our scriptures every day. I knew my scriptures would make me happier and bless me—I just needed to find a way to remember them even when I was busy. I knew I could do it, though, because I had faith in myself and in the promises of prophets.

I came up with the idea to make my phone's lock screen a scripture. That way, every time I turn on my phone, I think of the scriptures. I can keep the scriptures on my mind all the time. I choose a new scripture every week, and I specifically choose it based on either a topic I'm struggling with or what we have been learning in Young Women.

One week, I chose Luke 1:37 for my lock screen: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." I chose it because I had been stressed out about school for several weeks, and I wanted to keep in mind that we can do anything if we have hope and faith. That week, I was doing a math packet for class that was very hard. I started to feel really discouraged. I wanted to give up, and I almost did—until I saw that scripture on my phone: "For with God nothing shall be impossible." I knew that I could do my math because it was *not* impossible. I just needed to believe in myself and in God. I said a prayer to help me focus and give me hope. I felt that God was with me, and I was able to focus and get it done.

I immediately started to see the blessings in my life of keeping my focus on the scriptures. The scriptures can help me in many ways, even if it's as simple as getting a math packet done. Now, if I'm having a rough day, I know I can turn on my phone and the scripture will be there to make me happy. If I am scared or nervous, I look at the scripture and know that everything is going to be OK. Doing this simple thing has helped me feel good because I know that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are with me no matter what. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

LOCK-SCREEN  
SCRIPTURES

FOR WITH GOD  
NOTHING SHALL BE  
IMPOSSIBLE.  
LUKE 1:37





# WORLDWIDE YOUTH DEVOTIONAL

**“YOU ARE  
AMONG THE  
BEST THE  
LORD HAS**

*ever sent to this world.  
You have the capacity  
to be smarter and  
wiser and have more  
impact on the world  
than any previous  
generation.”*

**President Russell M. Nelson**







ON

June 3, 2018,  
President Russell M.  
Nelson and his wife,  
Wendy W. Nelson,

invited all the youth in the Church to “enlist in the youth battalion of the Lord” and take part in “*the greatest challenge, the greatest cause, and the greatest work on earth.*”

That challenge is the gathering of Israel.

Are you ready to join and do your part?

“There is *nothing* of greater consequence,” President Nelson said. “Absolutely *nothing*. This gathering should mean *everything* to you. This *is* the mission for which you were sent to earth.”

What exactly is the gathering? “*Anytime* you do *anything* that helps *anyone*—on either side of the veil—take a step toward making covenants with God and receiving their essential baptismal and temple ordinances, you are helping to gather Israel. It is as simple as that.”

You can read all of President and Sister Nelson’s talks in the “Hope of Israel” booklet, or go online to **[hopeofisrael.lds.org](http://hopeofisrael.lds.org)** to read or watch their devotional. Check back on [youth.lds.org](http://youth.lds.org) and in the *New Era* to read more about how you can enlist in the battalion of youth.

WILL YOU  
HELP  
GATHER  
ISRAEL?

I loved listening to President Nelson and am excited for the Lord’s youth battalion to gather Israel. This week, I gave more of my time to the Lord. I went to the temple a couple of times and learned how to index and find family names!

**Andrew B., Utah, USA**

I loved this devotional. I’ve spent all day watching it over again, thinking about it, and studying *For the Strength of Youth*. I want to be part of the Lord’s youth battalion!

**Elizabeth B., Utah, USA**

There’s a young man I’ve always wanted to share the gospel with, but I was afraid. After hearing President Nelson’s words, I shared *For the Strength of Youth* with him. His reaction surprised me. He gladly accepted it and thanked me for it. I’m so glad I listened to the prophet and followed the Spirit.

**Lindsay M., Alaska, USA**

This was so comforting to hear. I’m grateful to know that even though it might not be as easy as saying 1, 2, 3, we, as youth, can be a part of the Lord’s latter-day army.

**Rachel H., Virginia, USA**

I learned a lot in this devotional! I know that following the counsel of the prophet will help us grow spiritually and reach our greatest potential as sons and daughters of God.

**Zyrah Z., Camarines Sur, Philippines**

How are you  
helping gather Israel?

Let us know at [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)  
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# Our Plan to Beat the Odds

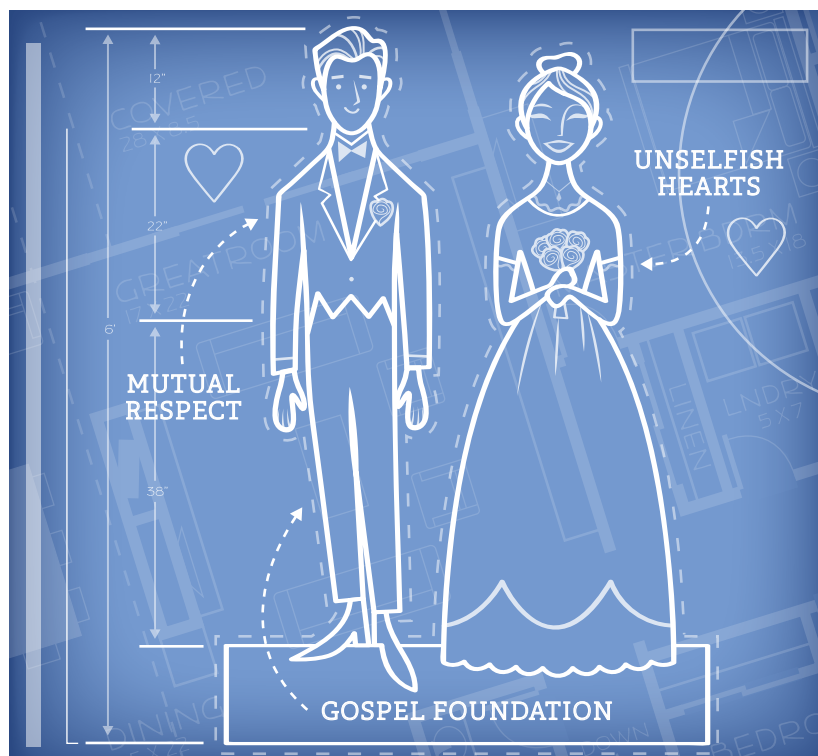
*We knew our marriage could work despite our parents' divorces.*

**By Matthew Flitton**

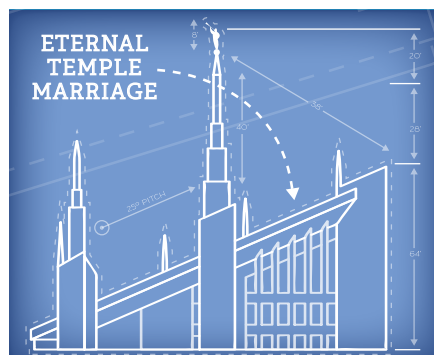
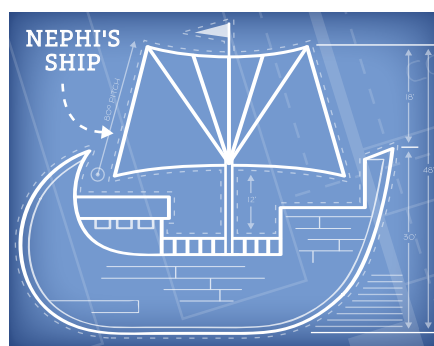
Church Magazines

**T**he odds seemed against our marriage from the start. My parents divorced when I was four. By the time I left for my mission, my parents had gone through three more marriages. One of those marriages lasted only seven months. My wife's parents divorced when she was 13. According to statistics, we were three more times likely to divorce than people raised in intact homes.<sup>1</sup>

Those of us who have experienced this can wonder if marriage is a good idea. After all, we've suffered the effects of divorce. We've had siblings, grandparents, and other relatives who have entered and exited our lives like waves on a seashore. We've seen what divorce can do to everyone involved. Why would we enter this relationship that's supposed to last for eternity, when we've seen the bitter ends of these kinds of relationships in a few short years?



Despite all that, I wasn't afraid of marriage. I had watched the relationships falling apart as a youth, but I knew that if I could find a better model, I could make marriage work. Since all of them lacked a firm gospel foundation, I thought that might be the missing ingredient.



When Nephi was told to build a ship, the Lord told him, "Thou shalt construct a ship, after the manner which I shall show thee" (1 Nephi 17:8). Nephi did and says it was not built "after the manner of men" but "after the manner which the Lord had shown unto me" (1 Nephi 18:2). By building your future marriage on gospel principles—by building them in the manner the Lord has shown—you can have a successful relationship regardless of your background.



As we moved forward in our relationship, Annie (my wife) and I agreed on a few things. The first was that there was no easy escape clause in our marriage. Divorce wasn't an option unless infidelity or abuse were involved. We agreed that everything else could be worked out. We also recognized that the behavior patterns we had seen in our homes growing up didn't work. We needed a better way: that way is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because Annie and I had both previously been endowed, temple attendance was an important part of our courtship. We went regularly and enjoyed the Spirit together. We started studying the Book of Mormon together. This formed a good basis for our discussions about what we wanted to create in a marriage.

The same month that my wife and I got engaged, the Church released the proclamation on the family, which counsels, "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>2</sup>

Similarly, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) in speaking of the increase in divorces throughout the world, identified one major reason: "It appears to me that there are some obvious reasons that account for a very high percentage of these problems. I say this out of experience in dealing with such tragedies. I find selfishness to be the root cause of most of it."<sup>3</sup>

It's easy to blame our spouse for problems, especially the small annoyances that bubble up with daily living. If we concentrate on those problems, they can grow into huge divisions that can sink a marriage.<sup>4</sup> I've often found that selfishness makes those frustrations grow. Knowing this has helped me to think more about Annie and her needs and helps me to ignore minor annoyances.



We have now been married for 22 years. It hasn't always been easy. Annie and I have had the normal relationship bumps. There have been difficulties over the years. But because of our commitment to the relationship and a willingness to turn to the Lord for answers, we have grown together. As different situations and questions have arisen, we have been able to turn to the scriptures, the teachings of the prophets, and prayer to find solutions.

The average length of a first marriage that ends in divorce is nine years (in the USA).<sup>5</sup> Because Annie and I built our marriage after the manner the Lord has shown us, we beat those odds. I'm glad we didn't let fear of the world we were raised in stop us. There's always more work to do, but we are both confident that our marriage will continue to improve through the years to come. **NE**



#### NOTES

1. See "Children of Divorce More Likely to End Their Marriages," June 27, 2005, news-wise.com/articles/view/512757.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, May 2017, 145.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "What God Hath Joined Together," Apr. 1991 general conference.
4. See Lola B. Walters, "The Grapefruit Syndrome," *Ensign*, Apr. 1993, 13.
5. See "Marriage and Divorce: Patterns by Gender, Race, and Educational Attainment," Oct. 2013, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/marriage-and-divorce-patterns-by-gender-race-and-educational-attainment.htm](http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2013/article/marriage-and-divorce-patterns-by-gender-race-and-educational-attainment.htm).

# BUY THEIR FRUIT?



WHEN THE WORLD TRIES TO BLEND EVIL AND GOOD,  
THE RESULT IS ALWAYS ONE BAD APPLE.

(See Matthew 7:16–20; Isaiah 5:20; and 2 Nephi 15:20.)



# THE UNEXPECTED Signal

By Ben Bernards

My brother left home as a 14-year-old to attend an elite math and science academy boarding school. Although he came from a big family, he felt easily lost in the crowd. He saw all his older siblings go and live their lives, some in the Church and some not. Living away from home as a teenager, he found it easy to just not go to church. He didn't interact with a quorum or have weekly youth nights to attend. And so my family and I watched him finding his own way for a few years.

AS WE TEXTED, HE STARTED TO GET OUT ...

... OF THE SPIRITUAL DEAD SPACES.



"HIS EXPERIENCE REMINDS ME OF  
THE BEAUTIFUL, SUBLIME TRUTH:  
THERE IS A GOD IN HEAVEN WHO  
LOVES US. AND HE CAN FIND WAYS  
TO TALK TO US."

TALK?

:|

7:42am

:) ;|

He went to a university, and serving a mission just didn't enter his mind. I'd still try to find ways to stay in contact with him, whether it was discussing the philosophical differences in *Star Wars: Episode VII* vs. the Prequels or geeking out on our mutual admiration for Brandon Sanderson novels. Of all the ways we tried connecting with each other, talking about the gospel together never led to a strong bond between us.

Then one morning he texted me.

7:42 AM txt msg: "Hey man, can we talk?"

When you get a text like that early on a Sunday morning, yeah, you forget everything else that's going on and you talk.

He told me he'd just gotten a new apartment and a new roommate. He said, "Ben, I don't know any other way to explain this, but I got something like an impression in my heart that I needed to be both careful and helpful with this new guy . . . like I could be a light to him somehow, like I could somehow support him in his life. And I don't get it. I don't get those kinds of feelings."

I could read between the lines of what he was telling me. Heavenly Father was talking to him. I told him that sometimes when we use things like cell phones or laptops or radios, we may get weird little signals from places we weren't meaning to tune in to. Sometimes folks with ordinary terrestrial radios have picked up snippets of broadcasts from the International Space Station even though they weren't trying to. Sometimes people with baby monitors can hear phone conversations in neighboring apartments.

And sometimes God will send impressions to people who aren't used to talking to Him. Such impressions won't always be very strong and they won't override the agency we have. But sometimes we just may get a little pulse of a signal or a quiet whisper from Him trying to talk to us.

His experience reminds me of the beautiful, sublime truth: there is a God in heaven who loves us. And He can find ways to talk to us through little tiny promptings of the Spirit. And then we have the choice as to how we're going to respond.

So that's what I told him. "Are you going to find ways to maybe tune in a little bit more, seeing if you can get closer to His signal, shut out the noise, and hear His voice a little bit stronger? Are you going to actually act on what you feel? Or are you going to just let it wash over you and fade away?"

He said "Well, I think I know what I need to do."

We talked for a few more minutes, and I felt a prompting. And the irony wasn't lost on me; there I was, trying to help him have the courage to follow the Spirit, while I was simultaneously welling up my own courage to do the same.

I said a silent prayer, took a breath and big gulp and said, "You know, I think God is trying to call you back."

And what wonderful joy as I could hear him smile over the phone as his tension melted away.

He said, "I think He is too."

This may be the first time he realized on his own what God could really be. He felt that throughout his whole life people had talked to him about the Church, the gospel, and what he should do.

And now he could say he knew for himself. It was only small, candle-sized knowledge, but he knew that if he would take steps to get closer to the source of that signal, then he would get a stronger signal and the light would grow brighter.

There is a God who lives and knows each one of us. He's there. And if we tune in to His signals, get out of the spiritual dead spaces, eliminate the noises, and do what we can to truly listen, He'll speak to us in the ways we need to hear. **NE**

*The author lives in California, USA.*

"THE IRONY WASN'T LOST ON ME;  
THERE I WAS, TRYING TO HELP  
HIM HAVE THE COURAGE TO  
FOLLOW THE SPIRIT, WHILE I WAS  
SIMULTANEOUSLY WELLING UP MY  
OWN COURAGE TO DO THE SAME."





# OUR SAVIOR STANDS WITH US

“I reverently witness and solemnly testify of the living Christ. . . . He is Alpha and Omega (see D&C 19:1)—with us in the beginning, He is with us to the end.”

Elder Gerrit W. Gong of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2018 general conference.



*Elder Gong enjoys one-on-one trips with his sons—here canoeing with Sam in Canada.*

## ELDER GERRIT W. GONG



*Elder Gong delighted missionaries he visited by serving them ice cream.*

**W**hen Elder Gerrit W. Gong was a young man, he really wanted to play school basketball. “I practiced and practiced,” he said. “One day the coach pointed to our 6-foot-4-inch (1.93 m) all-state center and our 6-foot-2-inch (1.88 m) all-star forward and said to me, ‘I can put you on the team, but you’ll likely never play.’ I remember how kindly he then encouraged, ‘Why not try out for soccer? You’d be good.’ My family cheered when I scored my first goal.”<sup>1</sup>

Elder Gong learned that remembering the assistance of others helps us acknowledge the Savior’s hand in our lives and helps us remember that we are never alone.

“Sometimes things go wrong even though we have done our very best,” he teaches. “Our Savior weeps with and for us. When we always remember Him [see D&C 20:77, 79], He can stand with us ‘at all times and in all things, and in all places’ [Mosiah 18:9].”<sup>2</sup>

“When you are uncertain, lonely, undecided, embarrassed, ashamed, angry, or otherwise afraid, as we may each feel at times, please remember our Savior. He is always here with us, inviting gently, powerfully, lovingly, be not afraid, only believe [see Mark 5:36].”<sup>3</sup>

*Elder Gerrit W. Gong was sustained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on March 31, 2018.*

### NOTES

1. Gerrit W. Gong, Apr. 2016 general conference.
2. Gerrit W. Gong, Oct. 2010 general conference.
3. Gerrit W. Gong, “Be Not Afraid, Only Believe,” (BYU-Hawaii devotional address, Sept. 24, 2013).

► For more about Elder Gong, see page 49.





**Above:** Elder Gong with his family; meeting with the Catholic Archbishop of Bangkok, Thailand; on the way to his son Matthew's international origami competition; as a young boy with his mother and father, who were both converts to the Church; with local children and his family painting a mural in Nepal, an activity the family repeated in several locations to encourage happiness and hope.



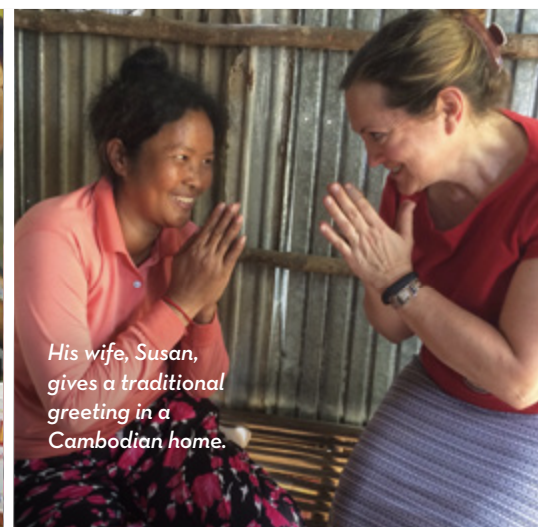
*Elder Gong has visited every continent, including Antarctica (pictured here).*

**"I TESTIFY OF GOD OUR ETERNAL FATHER AND HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST. THEY KNOW US BETTER AND LOVE US MORE THAN WE KNOW OR LOVE OURSELVES. THIS IS WHY WE CAN TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEART."**

Elder Gerrit W. Gong, "Strengthen One Another in the Lord" (Brigham Young University Women's Conference address, May 4, 2018), 6, [womensconference.byu.edu/transcripts](https://www.womensconference.byu.edu/transcripts).



*At the end of a long trip abroad, Elder Gong surprised his family with familiar food—they ate 17 hamburgers!*



*His wife, Susan, gives a traditional greeting in a Cambodian home.*



A close-up, low-angle shot of a modern golf driver head resting on a green grassy field. The driver has a dark, metallic finish with a large, clear, textured face. In the background, a white flagpole with a yellow flag is visible against a blurred green landscape.

# TWO STROKES

## *for Integrity*

*No one saw my botched shot.  
So would it still count?*



By Emma Pister

I was five years old when I first picked up a golf club. Golf had always been a sport that our family played together, and as the youngest of four siblings who were on the high school golf team four years each, I felt the substantial pressure to live up to their reputation.

In my senior-year golf season, I had shown great improvement, and it started to become a possibility for me to go to state—the first girl in years to go to the state tournament to represent our team. Before I knew it, I found myself in the two-day playoff tournament to go to state. I was determined to try as hard as I could.

This season had also been one of spiritual growth as I began to learn to pray for things such as a calm mind or to plead with Heavenly Father that I would just be pleased with myself after tournaments.

More than any other game I could remember, it felt like I had a constant prayer in my heart. The Spirit was with me as I played the best 18-hole round and broke my personal record. At the end of the day, the scores were posted, and I was in the running for state. The top five of about 40 girls would make it, and I desperately wanted to be one of them.

The next day this mentality took over, and the stress of having to do better than my best took hold of me. Shots that I had practiced over and over were suddenly replaced by shaking hands and an unsteady swing.

I stood over a short shot that I was about to hit into the hole. Much to my embarrassment I missed the shot, and the ball landed no more than two inches from the hole. Angry and frustrated, I didn't take the time to set up, and I hit the ball prematurely. It missed the hole once again, moving only about half an inch. I looked around, waiting for someone to snicker or say, "That counts too, you know!" Every time you hit the ball it counts as a stroke. But no one had seen. I knew my already-suffering score didn't need another mess-up stroke and that no one had seen it. But in this same instance the thought

the results board. To my dismay, I saw that I had come in sixth place, and by just two strokes. I felt devastated.

On the bus ride home I reevaluated every shot, but over and over again the two shots that no one had seen seemed to play in my mind.

Just as the thought had come to me earlier, I thought, "Never would I wish to ruin my peace of mind and my reputation as an honest person for something so short-term as the state golf tournament." With this thought, my mind felt at peace. I felt good knowing that I would never trade those two strokes of integrity for a chance at state.

## The stress of having to do better than my best took hold of me.

came to my mind, "One stroke of honesty holds far greater rewards than that of a dishonest mind."

I quickly told the girl my honest score, knowing that it was indeed the right thing to do.

Twenty minutes later I made an almost identical mistake, adding yet another stroke of honesty to my score card.

Eventually I pulled out of my bad performance rut and really started to play again, and my score improved greatly.

As we finished our last playoff round, all the girls hurriedly raced to

### EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING

"When you have integrity, you are willing to live by your standards and beliefs even when no one is watching."

*For the Strength of Youth*  
(2011), 19.

My decision that day to give up the temporal for the eternal continues to bless my life. I know that if I can do hard things when no one is watching, the Lord will always bless me—even if it means giving up state, and even if it's only by two strokes. **NE**

*The author lives in Oregon, USA.*

# Sister to Sister

A mission can be a wonderful opportunity for a young woman, but remember it's your own personal decision whether to serve. Pressure from others should not play a role. These two young women share how they decided whether or not to serve a mission.

## DECIDING TO SERVE A FULL-TIME MISSION

By Samantha Anderson

*In high school I never even thought about going on a mission. But after some spiritual experiences, I began to seriously think about serving. Each time I started my papers, though, something would happen to keep me from going. I was frustrated and confused. It felt like I was getting mixed signals.*





### Why was it so hard to decide?

The first time I started my mission papers, my bishop and I counseled together and decided I wasn't mentally healthy enough to go. I was depressed because one of my best friends had suddenly passed away. Later, when I felt like I was ready, my bishop helped me start my papers again. But very quickly I felt sad and upset. I felt like I didn't *want* to serve a mission. That made me feel like a terrible person.

I didn't want to move forward with my papers without having a true desire to serve, so I kept going to school and living my life. During that time I prayed, studied the scriptures, and went to church. I learned a lot about myself and about God's will for me. Because of this, I was eventually able to feel a desire to serve again.

### How could I know I was doing what God wanted?

Besides feeling pressure from everyone around me to serve a mission, I doubted myself for not wanting to go. Did it mean I didn't have a testimony? Was my testimony not strong enough? Was I lazy? Was I not recognizing spiritual promptings? I second-guessed the strength of my testimony and my relationship with Heavenly Father.

I knew that I couldn't serve a mission with those negative feelings, so I decided to focus on my studies and try to stay close to the Lord—going to Church meetings, praying, reading my scriptures. Eventually, I reached a point where I was OK with my decision, and I felt that Heavenly Father was OK with it too.

### So that was that ... wasn't it?

One morning I was reading my scriptures, and out of nowhere came this huge desire to serve a mission! It didn't come from any pressure, it didn't come from wanting to impress anybody, it didn't come from anywhere but inside myself. I prayed about it, and the feeling didn't go away—my desire didn't go away. So I decided to start my papers again.

### But would my feelings change again?

After all the ups and downs I'd had so far, I was super worried that I was misreading my feelings. So I started reading *Preach My Gospel*, I watched *The District*, I talked to my mom, I started my papers. And throughout all that, I got more and more excited to go. That's when I knew that this time, the timing was right. I knew that Heavenly Father was pleased with my decision, and yet I also knew that if I did not have the desire to serve, Heavenly Father would have supported that decision as well. In the end, it was my decision, nobody else's.

### How did I recognize that I should go on a mission?

Peace was such a huge part of it for me. Knowing that the timing was right and that it was my decision created this huge feeling of peace in my heart. That was what ultimately allowed me to serve. If I had been anxious about it, I couldn't have done it. But that's what the Spirit does for us: He gives us peace.

## EACH MAY RECEIVE A DIFFERENT RESPONSE

"Once you know the Lord's will, you can then move forward in faith to fulfill your individual purpose. . . . Is it possible for two similarly faithful women to receive such different responses to the same basic questions? Absolutely! What's right for one woman may not be right for another. That's why it is so important that we should not question each other's choices or the inspiration behind them."

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Women of Dedication, Faith, Determination, and Action" (Brigham Young University Women's Conference address, May 1, 2015), 4, [womensconference.byu.edu](http://womensconference.byu.edu).

## DECIDING NOT TO SERVE A FULL-TIME MISSION

By Mckenzi Ham

*Growing up, I never felt any pressure to serve a mission.*

*When I got to college, though, all of that changed. Suddenly I was in a whirlwind of young men and women whose entire futures revolved around serving a mission. Rather than a question of if, serving a mission became a when—even for me.*

*I wanted a mission to be right for me. I prayed. I talked to my bishop. I counseled with my parents. I read my scriptures. I received a father's blessing. But I continued to feel anxious and overwhelmed about serving a mission. It wasn't until I finally made the decision not to serve a mission that I found the peaceful feeling I had been searching for.*





**How would I deal with the pressure I felt to serve a mission?**

I had to just ignore all the voices and opinions around me trying to tell me what was best for me. The decision to serve or not was between me and Heavenly Father. Prayer was my greatest help in keeping the pressure off. As I turned to Him, all those voices seemed to fade away. Initially, I thought that my parents were pressuring me to serve, but when I really opened up and counseled with them, I realized that their love for me would always come first. They became one of my greatest supports.

**How would I deal with feeling judged?**

At first, I absolutely felt judged for not serving a mission. But then I realized that a lot of that judgment was self-inflicted. As I prayed for peace and learned to be patient with myself, those insecurities slowly—so, so, so slowly—began to disappear. As I drew closer to Heavenly Father, I began to understand who I am and how much I'm worth in His eyes.

**How would I keep growing spiritually?**

God put a lot of people in my path to help me grow. I started working and became really close with my coworkers. Most of them were a few years younger than me and were going through hard stuff at school and at home. I was able to be a friend to them, help

them understand how much they mattered, and even uplift them spiritually. Even though I didn't think I was doing much at the time—giving rides home, bringing treats to share—I see now how serving and loving them healed me spiritually.

**How could I know what God wanted for me?**

The specifics of what Heavenly Father wanted me to do were fuzzy at first. But I knew that He loves me and wants me to be happy—to find joy and peace in life. I struggled for months with my decision because I didn't want to decide. I wanted God to tell me what to do. But He loves me enough to let me choose for myself. To serve as a full-time missionary or continue serving right where I was were both righteous choices. Peace came after I prayerfully made my decision and presented it to Him.

**How can I continue to have peace?**

The temple became my greatest source of comfort and peace. Eventually I even received my endowment. My temple experience brought me closer to my Savior and helped me to understand my divine self-worth. My temple covenants have blessed my life and made me feel His love even more. Ever since I received my endowment, I haven't had any insecurities or felt any pressure about not having served a full-time mission. **NE**

## TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME

### **1. Start with yourself.**

What do you want to do? Where can you see yourself a year from now? If you don't know, that's OK. Where do you want to see yourself? Start seeking. Read your patriarchal blessing with your questions in mind. Discover how you feel about serving a mission.

### **2. Take it to the Lord.**

Now that you know how you feel, tell Heavenly Father about it. An open heart invites personal revelation. Ask to know God's will—if He would have you do one or the other—and be willing to humbly accept it.

### **3. Move forward.**

You may not recognize a definite answer right away. Peace can mean you should follow the path you're already on. Anxiety or doubt may lead you to another path. Just keep moving forward. Do good; be good! And the Lord will prompt you as you go.

BEFORE YOU ARE

CALLED







# TO SERVE

*What is it like to serve a mission?*

By Ryan Carr

Church Magazines

**H**ave you thought about serving a mission? If so, you've probably wondered what it's like. Here's your chance to ask some full-time missionaries (not real missionaries, but these answers are typical):

**YOU:** "Hi, elders. What is a typical day like?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We're up early—at 6:30 a.m. For the next couple of hours, we study the gospel and our mission language. We review our goals for the week and plan our day. We even think of backup plans if people aren't available for their appointments with us. Then we're out the door, and we work all day, finding people to teach, coordinating the work with members, and having teaching appointments."

**YOU:** "Have you ever felt homesick?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, especially at the start of our missions. But we can email our families and read emails from them once a week. We've found that the best way to get over homesickness is to focus on our work."

**YOU:** "How do you feel about talking with strangers?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We were really nervous about that when we

first got here, but the Lord blesses us to get used to it because we do it every day. We know that not everyone wants to hear our message, but some are interested, so we have to be willing to speak up anytime. It actually becomes fun to meet people and get to know them."

**YOU:** "Is it hard to teach the gospel?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, doing it well takes some practice, but we had good training in the missionary training center. We are trying to teach the lessons in a way that meets the needs and answers the questions of the people we're teaching. We study the gospel every day so we can teach it well. Most importantly, we feel guided by the Spirit. Being set apart as missionaries helps."

**YOU:** "Is a mission hard work?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Yes, we work about 70 hours a week, but it's so fulfilling. Of course we feel disappointed when people don't progress,

but overall, it's a blessing to be instruments in the Lord's hands to help people progress spiritually. We try to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost because we know that only the Spirit can help people gain testimonies and become converted."

**YOU:** "What if I'm not sure I have a testimony?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "That's OK—keep praying and reading the scriptures! Go to church and seminary. Go to the temple if you can. Rely on the Lord and His teachings. The more chances you have to feel the Spirit, the stronger your testimony will become. Practice sharing your beliefs in family home evening. Read the Book of

Mormon. It will help you be able to teach the gospel."

**YOU:** "How did you prepare for your missions?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We studied the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon. We got jobs and saved our money. But we wish we would have read *Preach My Gospel* and attended mission-preparation classes more often. We also wish we would have learned how to cook!"

**YOU:** "Do you think I could ever become a missionary?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Definitely! There are about 70,000 missionaries around the world. And

it all starts with desire: 'If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work' (D&C 4:3). But it will also take some preparation—you have to get ready not just spiritually but also financially, physically, emotionally, and socially."

**YOU:** "What else will help me prepare?"

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "Make it a goal to live the gospel and keep the commandments the best you can. This will help strengthen your testimony and help you be worthy of the Spirit. When you're a missionary, you'll want to testify to people *from personal experience* that the gospel is true. So take the time now to learn more about gospel principles and live those principles in your own life."

**FULL-TIME MISSIONARIES:** "We would also recommend that you read the questions on the following pages. They're the ones that your bishop or branch president will ask you as you fill out your missionary forms. Discuss these questions with your parents and Church leaders. There are a lot of questions, but don't get overwhelmed—it's not like you have to report to the missionary training center tomorrow! Take the time you need to get ready so that when your first day on the mission arrives, you'll be worthy, excited, and ready to serve." **NE**

*The author served as a full-time missionary in the Canada Montreal Mission.*





# INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**IF YOU CHOOSE TO SERVE** a mission, you and your Church leaders will want this sacred time of service to be joyful and inspiring. With that goal in mind, it's important for you to be prepared, worthy, and able to serve. To help you prepare, here are the questions that your bishop or branch president will ask you to determine your readiness. You can discuss these anytime with him and with your parents or Church leaders.

## WORTHINESS AND TESTIMONY

**1.** Do you have faith in and a testimony of God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?

**TESTIMONY:** "Experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27).

**2.** Do you have a testimony that Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten Son of God and the Savior and Redeemer of the world? Please share your testimony with me. How has the Atonement of Jesus Christ influenced your life?

**3.** What does it mean to you to repent? Do you feel that you have fully repented of past transgressions?

**REPENTANCE:** "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:42-43).

**4.** Will you share your testimony with me that the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ have been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith and that President Russell M. Nelson is a prophet of God?

**5.** Do you have a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?

**6.** Full-time missionary service requires living gospel standards. What do you understand about the following standards?



#### a. The law of chastity

In reference to the law of chastity, have you always lived in accordance with what has been discussed? If not, how long ago did the transgression(s) occur? What have you done to repent?

**LAW OF CHASTITY:** “Chastity is sexual purity, a condition that is ‘pleasing unto God’ (Jacob 2:7). To be chaste, you must be morally clean in your thoughts, words, and actions. You must not have any sexual relations before you are legally married” (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 29).

#### b. Avoiding pornography

##### **AVOIDING PORNOGRAPHY:**

President Dallin H. Oaks of the First Presidency has explained that exposure to pornography runs on a spectrum from inadvertent exposure to compulsive use, or addiction. Knowing one’s level of involvement helps one find the appropriate solution. Learn more in “Recovering from the Trap of Pornography,” *New Era*, Oct. 2015, 2-7; and [overcomingpornography.org](http://overcomingpornography.org)

#### c. The law of tithing

**d. The Word of Wisdom**, including the use of drugs or the abuse of prescribed medications

#### e. Keeping the Sabbath day holy

#### f. Being honest in all you say and do

Have you lived in accordance with all of these standards? Are you now living in accordance with them? Will you live in accordance with them as a full-time missionary?

### CAPACITY AND ELIGIBILITY

**7.** Do you have any legal actions pending against you?

**8.** Have you ever committed a serious violation of criminal law, regardless of whether or not you were arrested, you were convicted, or the record was expunged?

**9.** Have you ever sexually abused a child in any way, regardless of whether or not you were charged, you were convicted, or the record was expunged?

**10.** Have you ever committed any other serious transgression or misdeed that should be resolved before your mission?

**11.** Do you support, affiliate with, or agree with any group or individual whose teachings or practices are contrary to or oppose those accepted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

**12.** Do you have any unpaid debts? How will these debts be paid off before your mission or managed while you serve a mission?

**13.** Do you currently have or have you ever had any physical, mental, or emotional condition that would make it difficult for you to maintain a normal missionary schedule, which requires that you work for 12-15 hours a day, including studying for 2-4 hours a day, walking or biking for up to 8-10 hours a day, and so forth?

**14.** Have you ever been diagnosed with or received treatment for dyslexia or other reading disorder? If so, are you comfortable reading the scriptures and other documents aloud? Do you believe that you could memorize appropriate scriptures and other information with the assistance of your companion? In what ways do you now compensate for this disorder?

**15.** Have you ever been diagnosed with or received treatment for a speech disorder? If so, are you comfortable speaking in front of others? Do you feel that you have adequate tools to help you learn, teach, and communicate?

**16.** Have you ever been on medication or otherwise treated for any of the following conditions: attention deficit disorder (ADD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), or autism spectrum disorder (including Asperger’s)? If yes, please explain.

**17.** If you were being treated for one of these conditions and discontinued treatment, did you do so under a doctor’s supervision? If not, why did you stop? How well have you been functioning without treatment or medication? When was the last time you were on medication for these issues? **NE**

Find videos and other resources on mission preparation at [lds.org/go/81850](http://lds.org/go/81850).

Many worthiness and health conditions that would hinder you from serving a successful mission can be overcome. Seek the help you need. If you still have ongoing health concerns at the time you are ready to serve, let your bishop or branch president know. This will allow the Church to consider your situation before assigning you to a mission. For example, see Sister Fletcher’s story following these questions.



# COULD I SERVE THERE?

BY ERIKA FLETCHER

From the first penny that I put in my mission savings jar, I knew I wanted to serve. I had saved money for 12 years when the announcement came that sisters could serve at age 19. Although I wasn't sure if the time was right for me, the Lord answered my prayers, and I felt inspired to start my mission papers.

I wanted my mission call to be right for me and knew that being honest with my Church leaders, especially about my health, would be the only way to feel at peace. I have epilepsy, a condition that causes unpredictable seizures. Fortunately, my condition is completely controlled by medicine. Still, it was possible that my dependence on it could limit where I could be assigned to serve.

Imagine my surprise when I was called to serve in the Dominican Republic Santo Domingo East Mission! There was a problem though: I found out that my medication wasn't available in the Dominican Republic. I was confused. Why would the Lord inspire Church leaders to send me somewhere that didn't have my medication?

My family and I prayed together for an answer. I felt a strong conviction that the Lord really wanted me to serve in the Dominican Republic, so we went to work. My doctor wrote me an 18-month prescription, but our insurance would only pay for a year's worth of medication, leaving us to pay for the last 6 months. As we moved forward with faith, we eventually found an affordable option.

When I was set apart, my stake president blessed me that my condition would not affect me during my mission—a promise that I can testify was fulfilled. Although I was stretched to my physical limits, I know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I was able to overcome the challenges I faced before and during my mission. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

Despite having epilepsy, Sister Fletcher (left) was able to serve a mission (pictured here with her companion and mission president and his wife).



# 5 THINGS

# THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS WILL

By Charlotte Larcabal

Church Magazines

If you're preparing for a mission or just looking for ways to talk to your friends about your beliefs, there's a guide so great you might call it another missionary manual.

It's the Doctrine and Covenants. There we find newly revealed and beautiful doctrines about eternal families, what happens when we die, and how Jesus Christ's Church should be organized. But we also find—again and again—commandments to share the gospel. In fact, with all the promises and admonitions it gives to missionaries, you might look at this book of scripture as a guide to sharing the gospel.

For example, here are five wonderful truths you can learn about missionary work just from reading the Doctrine and Covenants.



1

**YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT WHERE YOU GO.**

**D&C 80:3:** *"Wherefore, go ye and preach my gospel, whether to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west, it mattereth not, for ye cannot go amiss."*

"I do not believe that the phrase 'it mattereth not' as used by the Lord in this scripture suggests that He does not care where His servants labor. In fact, He cares deeply. . . . He inspires, guides, and directs His authorized servants. As missionaries strive to be ever more worthy and capable instruments in His hands and do their best to fulfill faithfully their duties, then with His help they 'cannot go amiss'—wherever they serve."<sup>1</sup>

—Elder David A. Bednar

2

**TREASURE THE SCRIPTURES, AND YOU'LL KNOW WHAT TO SAY.**

**D&C 84:85:** *"Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man."*

"As you treasure up the words of the scriptures and latter-day prophets by study and faith, your desire to share the gospel will increase. You are promised that the Spirit will help you know what to say when you teach."<sup>2</sup>

—*Preach My Gospel*



# TEACH YOU ABOUT BEING A MISSIONARY

3

## PEOPLE LOOKING FOR THE GOSPEL ARE EVERYWHERE.

**D&C 123:12:** “For there are many yet on the earth . . . who are blinded by the subtle craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, and who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.”

“All around you, every day, are friends and neighbors ‘who are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it.’ As you are directed by the Spirit, you can share a thought, an invitation, a text or tweet that will introduce your friends to the truths of the restored gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

—Elder David A. Bednar

4

## PRAY WELL TO TEACH WELL.

**D&C 42:14:** “And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.”

“Missionaries should get on their knees and plead with the Lord to loosen their tongues and speak through them to the blessing of those they will be teaching. If they will do this, a new light will come into their lives. There will be greater enthusiasm for the work. They will come to know that in a very real sense, they are servants of the Lord speaking in His behalf. They will find a different response from those they teach.”<sup>4</sup>

—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)

5

## THE HOLY GHOST WILL TESTIFY TO THOSE YOU SPEAK TO.

**D&C 100:7–8:** “But a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall declare whatsoever thing ye declare in my name, in solemnity of heart, in the spirit of meekness, in all things. And I give unto you this promise, that inasmuch as ye do this the Holy Ghost shall be shed forth in bearing record unto all things whatsoever ye shall say.”

“The Holy Ghost can work through the Light of Christ. A teacher of gospel truths is not planting something foreign or even new into an adult or a child. Rather, the missionary or teacher is making contact with the Spirit of Christ already there. The gospel will have a familiar ‘ring’ to them.”<sup>5</sup>

—President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015)

## SET A GOAL

This is just the beginning. As you study the Doctrine and Covenants this year, set a goal to learn as much as you can about missionary work. Then do all you can to start living some of those teachings. Remember: “If ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work; for behold the field is white already to harvest” (D&C 4:3–4). **NE**

### NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, April 2017 general conference.
2. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 19.
3. David A. Bednar, April 2017 general conference.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Missionary Service,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 20.
5. Boyd K. Packer, “The Light of Christ: What Everyone Called to Preach the Gospel, Teach the Gospel, or Live the Gospel Should Know” (address delivered at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 22, 2004), 2, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

# CALMING MY MISSIONARY NERVES

I WAS EXCITED  
TO BE A  
MISSIONARY.  
SO WHY WAS I  
SUDDENLY SO  
NERVOUS?

## COPING WITH FEARS

It's normal to feel nervous when you're in a new and unfamiliar situation. Learning how to prepare emotionally for your mission and other life events can help make these transitions easier.

Here are a few ideas from the booklet *Adjusting to Missionary Life* ([2013], 20) that may help if you feel overwhelmed by anxiety:

- Take a short break.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Refocus on gratitude.
- Take one step at a time.
- Help someone else.





By Cindy Ford

I entered the Provo Missionary Training Center on July 20. When I said good-bye to my family, I was confident, happy, and so excited to leave! I had heard that some people struggle in the MTC, and I was determined to not be one of those people.

However, only 10 minutes after entering the MTC, a wave of panic hit me. No matter how hard I tried to shake it off, I couldn't change the way I felt. The reality of being away from family and friends for 18 months struck me. Could I make it that long?

For three weeks I pleaded with the Lord for help, peace, and understanding. I talked to my leaders, received blessings, and tried to have faith and wait patiently for answers. I studied diligently and tried to be obedient. I was determined to stay.

One night at the end of my third week, I was praying—pleading still—for help. The words of Isaiah, which I knew from a song, came into my mind:

“For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

“In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. . . .

“For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:7–8, 10).

At that moment, I felt Heavenly Father answer my prayer by lifting this huge burden I had carried for three weeks.

During my last week at the MTC, I was perfectly and completely at peace. I felt gratitude for my Heavenly Father and for the Savior and His Atonement. I was grateful for His love, His tender mercies, and all the faithful people I served with.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ is real and powerful to save. In *Preach*

*My Gospel* it says, “As your understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ grows, your desire to share the gospel will increase” ([2004], 2). Although I still had to face challenges out in the field, I had a witness that the Savior's Atonement was real and that the Lord was mindful of me. I learned that God will strengthen and guide all those who humble themselves, have faith, and ask for the things they need—even, and especially, His missionaries. **NE**

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### Additional Resources

- *Adjusting to Missionary Life*, lds.org/manual/resource-booklet-adjusting-to-missionary-life
- Elder Gregory A. Schwitzer, “Prepare to Serve,” *New Era*, Apr. 2017, 34–37.
- Wendy Ulrich, “The Hardest Part of Being a Missionary,” *New Era*, June 2016, 36–40.
- Robert K. Wagstaff, “Preparing Emotionally for Missionary Service,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2011, 22–26.

#### PROFESSIONAL HELP



“Because your health is so important, if you develop symptoms that require medical treatment, be sure to get good professional help. In some cases, if your symptoms are severe, you’ll be honorably excused from your mission. And you’ll be blessed for having kept yourself worthy. If you return home early, please know that the Lord loves and appreciates every effort you made to serve Him. Anyone who goes on a mission and tries his or her best has had a successful mission.”

Elder Gregory A. Schwitzer of the Seventy, “Prepare to Serve,” *New Era*, Apr. 2017, 37.



6

# REASONS

We Really *Do* Need

— the —

# CHURCH!

By Eric B. Murdock and Joshua J. Perkey  
Church Magazines

**H**ave you ever heard someone ask why we have a church? Or maybe why we need one? Why can't they just be spiritual on their own—go to the mountains or the beach or another special place and feel close to God—and call it good?

It's certainly true that you can be close to God wherever you are (in fact, it's a really good idea!), but Heavenly Father has so *much more* in store for you than generic spirituality. He wants you to become the best you can be. In fact, He wants you to inherit all that He has and gain eternal life. And He has a plan and an organization so you can do that. The plan is the plan of salvation, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the organization—"the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth" (D&C 1:30).

Here are six reasons why we really do need the Church.

## 1 To Learn and Participate in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

One of the blessings of being a member of the Church is that we can learn the fulness of the gospel (see D&C 1:17–23). If we have a sincere desire to learn, and if we are humble, prayerful, diligent, and obedient, we can gain a testimony and have hope in the Resurrection and in the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Through Church leaders and Church materials, we also learn about other essential doctrine, including the Restoration of the gospel, the calling of prophets today, and the true nature of the Godhead. Living in accordance with true doctrine brings us joy and happiness.



## 2 To Receive Essential Ordinances and Covenants

Heavenly Father's work is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). But sometimes we might forget that His work requires some work on our part too! We qualify for the blessings of eternal life by obedience to the ordinances and covenants of the gospel. President Russell M. Nelson has said: "We cannot *wish* our way into the presence of God. We are to obey the laws upon which those blessings are predicated [see D&C 130:20–21]."¹

The ordinances we participate in and the covenants we make are necessary for us to return to the presence of our Heavenly Father and live with Him. Those ordinances and covenants require the priesthood—which is available only in God's true Church. Without those covenants, we'd be lost.

We have the Church  
so we can be enlightened and  
have the truth made known.  
It has given me the knowledge that  
I need to know—the knowledge  
of the plan of salvation.

*Nicholas M., Ohio, USA*

## 3 To Help Each Other Along the Way

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "A major reason the Lord has a church is to create a community of Saints that will sustain one another in the 'strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life' [2 Nephi 31:18]."²

At church, we can develop caring relationships with others. We can help each other get through tough times as we lead, guide, and walk beside each other (see "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301; Ephesians 2:19). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "We are all children of God, and we must teach each other; we must help each other 'find the way.'"³ The Church is the perfect place to do that!

Through the Church  
we can receive ordinances, make  
covenants, and have our families  
sealed forever. It is Heavenly Father's  
organisation on this earth with priesthood  
power and authority. To teach people  
of the truth of the gospel and to  
come unto Christ and to prepare  
people for exaltation.

*Shantelle M., Australia*

We have the Church  
to create an environment where  
members can gather and help each  
other learn and grow. The Church exists to  
help members become more Christlike by  
encouraging everyone to look to others and  
lift the burdens of those we love and care  
about. It also creates a safe place where  
people may live their beliefs.

*Jeremy P., Illinois, USA*



Through the Church  
I can have an eternal family,  
with my parents, sisters, and  
one day my own family.

*Wilford P., São Paulo, Brazil*

4

## To Help Families Qualify for Eternal Life

Another major reason we have the Church is to help families qualify for eternal life. The sealing ordinance in the temple allows families to be together forever. For that to happen, we have to live worthy to receive those blessings. The Church helps families help each other do that.

As Elder Christofferson has taught, “The point of gospel teaching and priesthood ordinances administered by the Church is that families may qualify for eternal life.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Church helps us live up to those covenants—and helps us support each other along the way.

The Church helps us  
to spread love and the gospel  
across the globe and to bring light  
to a world in moral darkness.

*Kenzi B., Washington, USA*

5

## To Bless People All over the World

Elder Christofferson said that as we work together in the Church, Heavenly Father can “achieve needful things that cannot be accomplished by individuals or smaller groups.”<sup>5</sup>

Did you know that every year for the past 30 years, the Church has donated US\$40 million worth of welfare and humanitarian aid and service projects? The generous donations and volunteer service that Church members offer accomplishes things that could be done in no other way.

Through our extraordinary missionary program, missionaries share the light of the gospel with people all over the world. Nearly 105,000 missionaries (including young adults and seniors) are serving. Wow! That’s more people than the population of some cities!

And because of members’ charitable donations, the Church has the resources to build temples all over the world. As of April 2018, there were 182 temples in operation, under construction, or announced.

Through the Church we  
can walk the path to immortality  
and eternal life where we can live  
with our Heavenly Father and  
our families forever.

*Emma W., New Hampshire, USA*







The Church helps us to maintain organization, teachings, and to create a support system for members. By establishing a church, the Lord ensures that the correct doctrines are taught. The Church provides members with revelations, standards, and guidelines that help us live as Christ would have us live.

*Rachel F., Arizona, USA*

## 6 To Establish the Kingdom of God on the Earth

One of the most important reasons God established a church is that it is the kingdom of God here on the earth (see D&C 65). The Lord bestowed upon Joseph Smith and all the prophets and apostles since him the keys of the priesthood. Elder Christofferson taught, “In the authority of these keys, the Church’s priesthood officers preserve the purity of the Savior’s doctrine and the integrity of His saving ordinances.”<sup>6</sup>

Through the Church leaders, the Lord can administer His work and minister to His children. Without such leadership, all kinds of false ideas and teachings would threaten to lead us into dark, forbidden paths. In other words, to help us know how to achieve eternal life, we need the protection provided by truly called and ordained prophets and apostles. That happens only in His Church. **NE**

Through the Church, things can be accomplished that couldn’t be through individuals.

*Emma W., Utah, USA*

The Church helps us because Heavenly Father knew these were troubled times. He knew we needed a prophet here on the earth to guide us. He knows us.

*Matthew P., New Hampshire, USA*

### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Now Is the Time to Prepare,” Apr. 2005 general conference.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church,” Oct. 2015 general conference.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Teaching and Learning in the Church,” *Ensign*, June 2007, 90.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”
5. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”
6. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why the Church.”

## I LOVE CHURCH NOW!

I'm Julieta. I was baptized a year ago. I learned about the Church accidentally when my father met the missionaries. Because of him we got to know the missionaries better. When I first started coming to church, it was really hard. Even after I was baptized, I needed to be persuaded to go. It felt like an obligation. Later, after I participated in youth conference, I started to love going to church. I gained a testimony and came to love the Church. Now I really love to attend church.

**Julieta A.**

17, Yerevan, Armenia





### Tamina W.

14, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

I like to play piano and spend time with friends. My favorite subject in school is art. I've completed a year of seminary. Seminary is very demanding, starting every morning at 6:00. But actually it's fun because you can read the scriptures, and if you have questions, they can be answered. When you go to seminary, you're prepared and your day is strengthened. You can then go to school with the Spirit. The gospel brings you rest and peace.



### Jonah P.

17, Arkansas, USA

I love walking on trails, hammocking, and just stargazing. I also experiment with wood carving and woodburning. The sacrament is also important to me. Every Sunday morning, I get up to make homemade bread for the sacrament. Through just a few minutes of work, I can help dozens of people. But the biggest drive for me is when I take the sacrament to those who can't make it to church. Their gratitude strengthens my testimony of service and the power of the sacrament.



For more stories about awesome youth from around the world, go to @LDSYouth on Instagram. Send your own photos and testimonies to [newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org).

# FUN STOP

## To Solve or Not to Solve?

You can tell that this year is going to be an interesting one in your new drama class. In the prop closet, one cardboard box contains two red hats. Another box contains two blue hats. A third box contains one red and one blue hat.

Each of the three boxes is labeled, but all labels are wrong. Your drama teacher explains that quick thinking is a valuable asset to any aspiring actor (that, and she also seems to like puzzles).

Your teacher poses the following challenge to you and your fellow stars of the stage: **by opening only one box, without looking inside, and only removing one hat at random to inspect, how could you correctly determine the contents of all three boxes?** The one who answers correctly gets to wear a Shakespearian crown for the remainder of class.



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



RYAN STOKER



JON CLARK

## Temple Time



Can you identify this European temple?

- ☐ A Rome Italy Temple
- ☐ B Bern Switzerland Temple
- ☐ C London England Temple
- ☐ D Paris France Temple



## Solving in Circles

Have you ever worked hard at something only to end up right back where you started? It's not so fun when that happens in video game boss battles or science project experiments, but it's the perfect way to solve this puzzle.

**Starting at the first word, change the previous word by only one letter to reach the new word.** At the end, you'll be only one letter away from the original word.

Neat

01

12

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

### CLUES

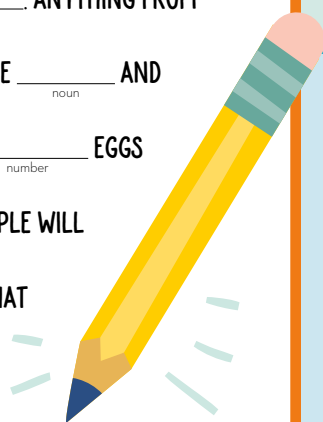
1. The opposite of messy.
2. Made of mud, leaves, twigs, and feathers, it's the ultimate in eco-friendly housing.
3. President Dallin H. Oaks taught that sometimes we have to give up "good," and even "better" things to make room for this.
4. A percussionist's chief responsibility.
5. Keep an eye out for this animal if you ever choose to mock Elisha (see 2 Kings 2:23-24).
6. The Apostle Paul wrote, "God has not given us the spirit of \_\_; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).
7. Cooking meat with high heat for a short time on each side.
8. Flying at a great height.
9. Tusks are his major fashion feature.
10. Nephi had never built one of these before, but he didn't let that stop him.
11. A watery deterrent against castle raids.
12. The resurrected Jesus Christ asked his disciples for this to eat (see Luke 24:41).

## New School Jitters

Find answers to puzzles on page 43.

Ready for some back-to-school funnies? Grab a friend or family member and **fill out the blank spaces before reading the story.**

THE FIRST \_\_\_\_\_ IN A NEW SCHOOL CAN BE A(N) \_\_\_\_\_ EXPERIENCE. BUT IF YOU'RE \_\_\_\_\_, YOU CAN SURVIVE IT WITHOUT ANY MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_. GO TO BED EARLY THE NIGHT BEFORE, BUT DON'T STAY UP \_\_\_\_\_ ABOUT THE NEXT DAY. THINK \_\_\_\_\_ THOUGHTS. DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME DECIDING WHICH CLOTHES TO \_\_\_\_\_. ANYTHING FROM YOUR \_\_\_\_\_ WILL DO, AS LONG AS IT'S \_\_\_\_\_. AFTER YOU WAKE UP, \_\_\_\_\_ AT YOURSELF IN THE \_\_\_\_\_ AND SAY, "\_\_\_\_\_, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A(N) \_\_\_\_\_ DAY." \_\_\_\_\_ A GOOD BREAKFAST—\_\_\_\_\_ EGGS OR A BOWL OF \_\_\_\_\_ SHOULD DO. WHEN YOU \_\_\_\_\_ AT SCHOOL, BE SURE TO \_\_\_\_\_. PEOPLE WILL SEE THAT YOU'RE \_\_\_\_\_ AND WILL WANT TO TALK TO YOU. THEN THEY'LL THINK, "\_\_\_\_\_! THAT NEW \_\_\_\_\_ SURE IS \_\_\_\_\_!"



# What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?

*“Alma spoke of priorities when he taught that ‘this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God’ (Alma 12:24). How to best use the rich heritage of time to prepare to meet God may require some guidance, but surely we would place the Lord and our families at the top of the list.”*

Elder Ian S. Arden of the Seventy,  
Oct. 2011 general conference.



## Work Toward a Finished Product

Do something that matters. Sometimes I waste my time doing mean-

ingless things, like surfing the internet for two hours, and I regret it later. You could try to develop a new talent, work on Personal Progress or Duty to God, tutor a sibling or friend, grow a garden, write a story, or get organized—the possibilities are endless. The rule I live by is to make sure my use of free time is always helping me work toward a finished product.

Kimberly A., 19, Alaska, USA



## Become Who You Want to Be

There is a quote in my living room that says, “Ask yourself if what you

are doing today is getting you closer to where you want to be tomorrow.” Think about the type of person you want to become and the goals you have. Choose to do things that will help you achieve those goals. Do things that will allow you to keep the Spirit with you and that align with the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*.

Amy P., 16, Kentucky, USA





### Sing or Listen to Hymns

The activity I love doing most in my free time is singing hymns. I made it a goal to memorize as many Church hymns as I could. I usually download some hymns I want to learn so I can listen to them anytime I have a free moment.

*Justice O., 16, Orlu, Nigeria*

### Study the Book of Mormon

I make my free time more meaningful and valuable by studying the Book of Mormon. It is the keystone of our religion and, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, we can “get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book” (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

*Lynne T., 18, Accra, Ghana*



### Set Goals

You first need to think about the person you want to be in a few years. Then you can decide what you should do now with your free time to achieve that goal. At the end of each day, I think about what my goals are and make a schedule of what I will do the next day with my free time.

*Elder Agostinelli, 20, Chile Santiago West Mission*

### Study Doctrine

One great way to use your free time is by studying the Lord’s doctrine. From an eternal perspective, reading scriptures, Church magazine articles, and other uplifting materials will benefit you a lot more than doing other activities.

*Josh C., 13, Tennessee, USA*

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

### Tell Us What You Think:

“How can I get along better with my family?”

**Send your answer and photo by September 15, 2018.**



### If God knows every decision we’re going to make, what’s the point of our agency?

This question has puzzled people for centuries. The way we answer it is based on two basic, revealed truths:

**God knows all.** God’s view is not bound by time (see D&C 38:2). In addition, He had an eternity of personal experience with us before we came to this earth, so He knows the inclinations and character of each of us better than we do.

**We have agency.** We are intelligent beings, children of God, who loves us and has established a plan that allows us to become like Him—if we choose to obey Him (see D&C 93:27–32; Abraham 3:21–25). Agency means that we can act for ourselves and not be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14, 16, 27).

God’s familiarity with our character and His foreknowledge of our choices does not cause us to make those choices. Both because He knows us and because we have agency, He invites and entices us—but does not force us—to do good and believe in Jesus Christ (see Moroni 7:16–17).

Go to [newera.lds.org](http://newera.lds.org), and click “Submit Your Work.” Sign in with your LDS Account and then select “New Era” under “Choose Magazine.” Click “Add File” to select your file and photos, and then click “Submit” to upload and send us your file.

*Responses may be edited for length or clarity.*

**FUN STOP ANSWERS (from pages 40-41): Solving in Circles:** neat, nest, best, beat, bear, fear, sear, soar, boat, moat, meat, To Solve or Not to Solve?: “One red hat and one blue hat.” Since all labels are wrong, this has either two blue or two red. The other boxes can then be worked out by elimination. **Temple Time:** (a) Rome Italy Temple.

# The First Vision

## JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY 1:16–17

"I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

"... When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—**THIS IS MY BELOVED SON. HEAR HIM!**"

### PILLAR OF LIGHT . . . ABOVE THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SUN

Joseph Smith described the glory of the Lord's presence just as other prophets had:

**1** It's bright or fiery  
(see Exodus 3:2–4;  
Deuteronomy 5:4; Isaiah  
33:14; Matthew 17:2, 5).



**2** It can seem  
like a pillar  
(see Exodus  
13:21).



### Calling me by name

The Father knows each  
of us individually.



### = Two Personages =

These two words convey  
important truths:

- 1** Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are two separate beings.
- 2** They are in human form, suggesting that . . .
- 3** We are literally the spirit children of the Father, not some other kind of animal creation of His.

"This is how Joseph Smith's First Vision blesses our own personal lives, the lives of families, and eventually the whole human family—we come to believe in Jesus Christ through the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith."

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,  
Apr. 2005 general conference.

### THIS IS MY BELOVED SON

The Father has introduced the Son at other times:

At Jesus's baptism  
(see Matthew 3:17).

On the Mount of  
Transfiguration  
(see Matthew 17:5).

When Jesus Christ  
appeared to  
the Nephites  
(see 3 Nephi 11:7).



### Hear Him!

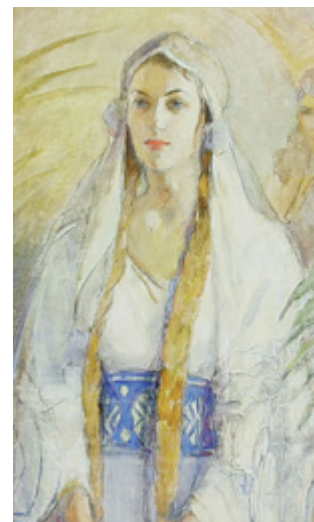
The Father's voice to  
Joseph—and to us all—  
directs us to hear His  
Son. That's how we'll have  
peace and eventually  
return to the Father.



SCRIPTURE  
SAVVY

“But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” —*Job 23:10*

Heavenly Father knows our path and potential. When we trust in Him and endure our trials faithfully, He can purify us like gold.

Valiant  
YOUNG WOMAN

Esther was a beautiful Jewish woman who was chosen as the next Persian queen to King Ahasuerus. When a law ordering the death of the Jews was made, Esther had her people fast and pray for her for three days so that the king would listen and have mercy on them. Esther's faith and courage saved her people (see Esther 2–7).

“Heavenly Father knows and loves each of you. If you turn to Him, He will not fail you! He will bless you with the strength and the courage you will need to complete your journey back to Him.”

Ann M. Dibb, former Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, Apr. 2010 general conference.

KNOW THE  
DIFFERENCE**TO MINISTER:**  
*verb*

to serve or to comfort someone else; becoming part of someone's life and caring about him or her

**MINISTERING BROTHER or SISTER:**  
*noun*

someone who ministers to someone else in the Church

**MINISTER:**  
*noun*

in some Christian faiths, a leader or member of the clergy

## THIS MONTH IN CHURCH HISTORY

1835



- ▶ Doctrine and Covenants accepted as a standard work.

1840



- ▶ Baptisms for the dead announced by Joseph Smith.

1923



- ▶ Cardston Alberta Canada Temple dedicated—the first temple outside of the U.S.

1985



- ▶ Johannesburg South Africa Temple dedicated—first temple in Africa.

2004



- ▶ Mexico became the first country outside of the U.S. to reach 1 million Church members.



## IT'S SNOW COINCIDENCE

**FOR A LONG TIME**, I wasn't really good at praying to my Heavenly Father. I was either too tired or would forget. Finally, for a Personal Progress experience, I challenged myself to start praying every night and every morning. I was doing really well and felt good too. I was waiting for some big moment to prove that God answered my prayers. That moment never came for me, but I did see God answer my little sister's prayer.

That weekend was the Daddy-Daughter

“Every sincere prayer is heard and answered by our Heavenly Father, but the answers we receive may not be what we expect or come to us when we want or in the way we anticipate.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2008 general conference.

dance, and she was really excited. A couple of days before the dance, my stepdad called and said that his work schedule had changed, causing him to miss the dance. My little sister was devastated and my stepdad even cried when he gave the news.

But our sadness didn't last long. The next day, he called back to say that because of the incoming snowstorm he could come home and go to the dance! My little sister's eyes lit up with happiness as she said, “Whoa! I prayed last night that Daddy could make it to the dance!”

That night, I prayed to Heavenly Father and thanked Him for being there for my sister and my family. I learned that God does answer our prayers, although it may not be exactly when and how we want them answered. He wants us to be happy. He loves us! He promises to help and remember us. And it's our part to remember Him.

**Katie W., Washington, USA**



### How Can I Have Meaningful Prayers?

1. Counsel with the Lord. As you bring your worries, joys, and decisions to Him, you can receive personal strength and knowledge. (See Alma 37:36–37.)
2. Express your gratitude. Recognizing your blessings rather than asking for things can be inspiring. (See Colossians 3:15.)
3. Pray for others. And not just for those you love. Seeking to help others keeps your heart full of humility and cleansed from pride. (See Helaman 3:33–35.)



# EMBRACE YOUR FAITH

**ONE SUMMER** I participated in a youth leadership summit hosted by a popular teen magazine. Once there, I soon made friends with the other girls. We addressed important issues like how to overcome bullying, the smart use of technology and social media, and how to be a good friend.

During my group's free time, one of the girls pulled out her phone and began to watch a video that was very offensive. When I realized what they were watching, I was really confused. If we were the leaders, then why were they choosing to watch this awful video?

I asked them to turn the video off, which they did, but soon turned on another video that was even worse. I decided to walk away and left the room. Another girl followed close behind me, and we spent free time somewhere else.

I thought about Sister Ann M. Dibb's general conference talk, "I Know It. I Live It. I Love It" (Oct. 2012 general conference). When we really know, love, and embrace our faith in the Savior, we can receive the help we need when tough choices have to be made.

I had been taught the gospel my whole life. In that moment, I had been able to live what I knew to be right, but most importantly, I loved the peace I felt from making the right choice.

**Mia H., Missouri, USA**



## A DEAL WITH MOM

**WHEN I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD**, I really wanted a gaming console. I knew that my parents didn't really like video games, so I made a deal with my mom. I told her that I would serve a mission if she would buy me the one I wanted when I got back. Smiling, my mom jokingly said, "Son, I will even buy you two games to go with it."

Now that I'm 17 and seriously preparing to serve a mission, I realize how silly that deal was (though my mom and I still laugh about it). My motivation to serve has changed as my testimony and faith in Jesus Christ have grown. I want to share the joy and blessings that come with living the gospel.

I've found that going to seminary, studying my scriptures, praying, and helping with family home evening have helped me to feel more prepared to serve on my mission. I think it is up to us as youth to take the lead in preparing to serve. Maybe that's on a mission. Maybe it's attending the temple, participating in ordinances, and serving in the Church. Whatever we do, as long as what we want lines up with what God wants, we will be blessed.

**Brigham R., New Zealand**



# Six Ways to Always Remember the Savior

By Elder Gerrit W. Gong

*Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

*From an April 2016 conference address.*

**E**ach week, in partaking of the sacrament, we covenant to always remember the Savior. Drawing on the nearly 400 scripture references to the word *remember*, here are six ways we can always remember Him.

First, we can always remember Him by having confidence in His covenants, promises, and assurances.

Second, we can always remember Him by gratefully acknowledging His hand throughout our lives.

Third, we can always remember Him by trusting when the Lord assures us, “He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42).

Fourth, He invites us to remember that He is always welcoming us home.

Fifth, we can always remember Him on the Sabbath through the sacrament. At the end of His mortal ministry and the beginning of His resurrected ministry—both times—our Savior

took bread and wine and asked that we remember His body and blood.

In the ordinance of the sacrament, we witness unto God the Father that we are willing to take upon us the name of His Son and always remember Him and keep His commandments, which He has given us, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us (see Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79).

Finally, sixth, our Savior invites us to always remember Him as He always remembers us.

Our Savior declares:

“Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (Isaiah 49:15–16; see also 1 Nephi 21:15–16).

He testifies: “I am he who was lifted up. I am Jesus that was crucified. I am the Son of God” (D&C 45:52).

I humbly testify and pray that we will always remember Him—in all times, all things, and all places we may be in (see Mosiah 18:9). **NE**



When applying for the Rhodes Scholarship, he included **tree climbing** as an athletic ability.



Has 4 children and 3 grandchildren.



Born in  
**Redwood City, California,**  
Dec. 23, 1953.



Elder

# GERRIT W. GONG



Sustained to the  
**Quorum of the Twelve Apostles**  
on March 31, 2018.



Married  
Susan Lindsay  
in the  
**Salt Lake Temple**  
in January 1980.



He is in his family's  
**33rd recorded generation,**  
dating back to A.D. 837  
(late Tang dynasty)  
in southern China.



When he tried out for the school basketball team, the coach encouraged him to try out for the **soccer team**, and he loved it!

He got **engaged over the telephone,**



while he was at Oxford University in England and his wife was in Provo, Utah.

Served as a missionary in the Taiwan Taipei Mission.



Asked the high school cheerleaders to do **silent cheers** for the chess team.



He loves to travel.  
He has been to  
**all seven continents.**



His aunt lured him out from under the bed with a promise to go get **french fries** when he was homesick as a young boy.



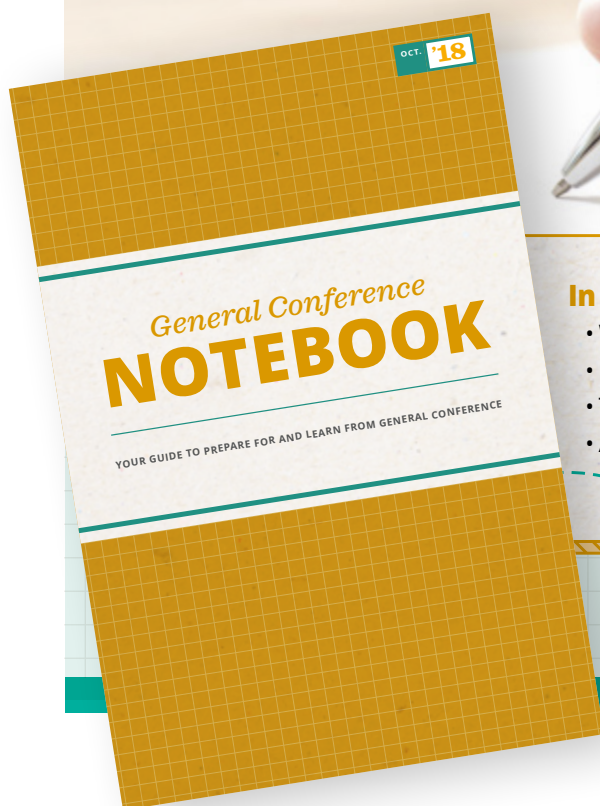
Consumed **17 hamburgers** with his wife and four children at the end of a long trip.



He loves to go **hiking and backpacking.**

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