

WHEN GOOD THINGS
HAPPEN TO OTHERS
AND BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO YOU



HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH TRIALS—ESPECIALLY WHEN OTHERS SEEM TO GET ALL THE BLESSINGS?

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Imagine you've practiced hard for years to make the long-distance track team. You've done everything you can to prepare, including keeping the Word of Wisdom, with faith that the Lord will bless you for your obedience. But after tryouts, you get cut from the team, and a friend—one who smokes—makes the team.

How would you feel? Devastated? Confused? We all deal with disappointment and tragedy—even when we're doing our best to live the gospel. And it can seem extra hard when others who don't keep the commandments seem to get all the breaks.

In fact, sometimes it doesn't seem to make any sense. After all, you've been promised that God will bless you for keeping His commandments. So why do bad things sometimes happen to people who are doing their best to live as God has asked us to live, and why do good things sometimes happen to people who aren't choosing to do good?

We may not always know why things happen the way they do. But we can trust that Heavenly Father understands. Whether you struggle with envy because of blessings others received, disappointment because of blessings you didn't receive, or sorrow because of tragedy, Heavenly Father can help you find peace.

WHEN GOOD THINGS HAPPEN TO OTHERS

One hard part about seeing good things happen to other people, especially when we feel like we're the ones who deserve the reward, is choosing not to judge others. We may feel envious or jealous, maybe even sad that we were left out. We may wonder, "Why do others get the good things and I don't?"

Well, maybe that's not the right question. We can spend a lot of time wondering why good things happen to other people. But in the end, we can't change what happened. What we *can* change is how we feel about it. If we don't do that, the consequences only hurt us.

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Envy is a mistake that just keeps on giving. Obviously we suffer a little when some *misfortune* befalls *us*, but envy requires us to suffer all *good fortune* that befalls *everyone* we know! What a bright prospect that is—downing another quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment!"¹

But how do we stop judging others when the feelings seem so real? We begin by realizing that we have the power to choose how we feel.

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained it this

Use the

GIFT OF AGENCY

CHOOSE THE GOOD

LOOK FOR THE BLESSINGS

KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS

Have the right ATTITUDE

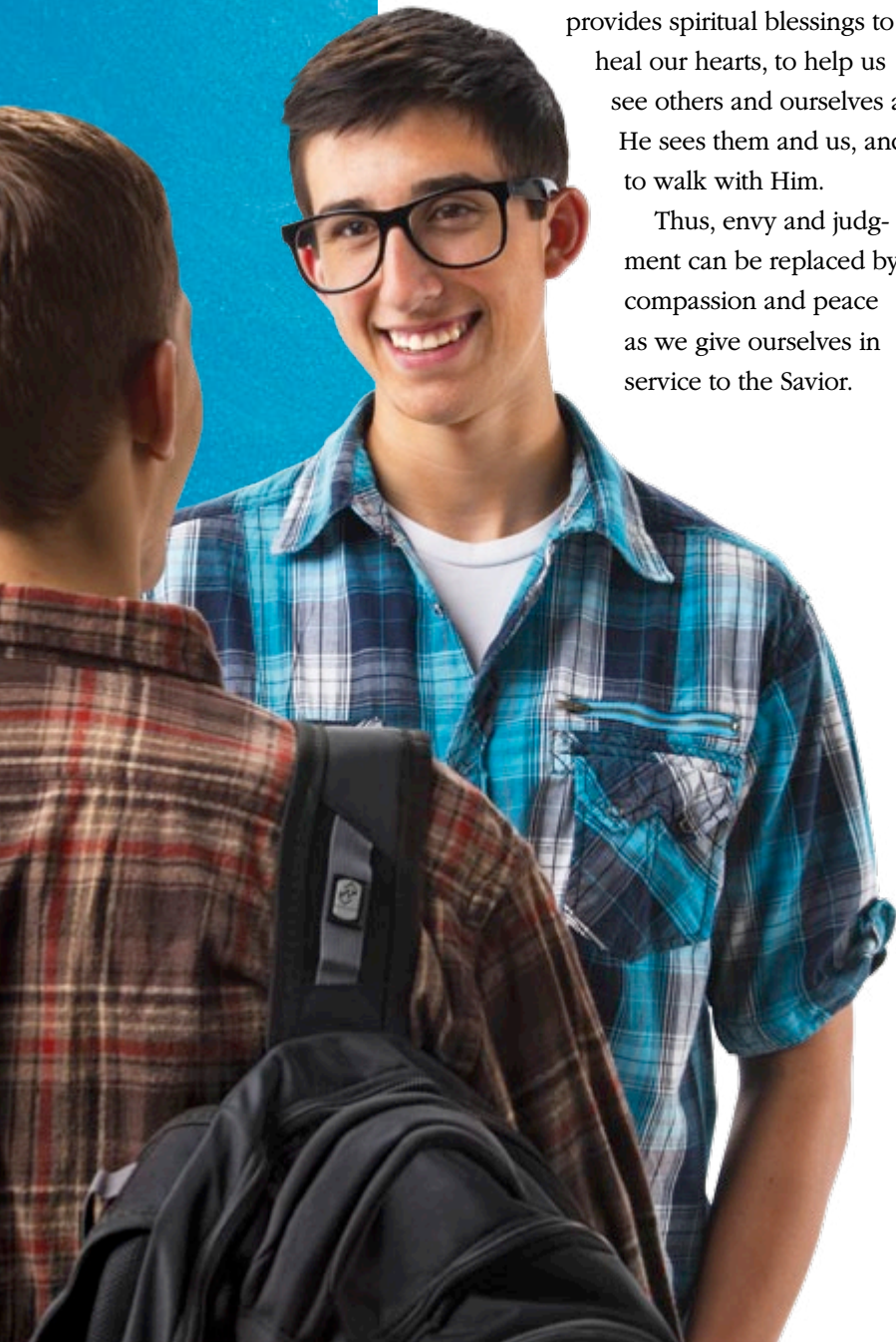
DON'T JUDGE OTHERS

CHOOSE
HOW YOU
ACT,
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way: “As sons and daughters of our Heavenly Father, we have been blessed with the gift of moral agency, the capacity for independent action and choice. Endowed with agency, you and I are agents, and we primarily are to act and not just be acted upon.”²

Another way to stop judging others is to live as the Savior asks us to live. As we strive to keep the commandments, God provides spiritual blessings to heal our hearts, to help us see others and ourselves as He sees them and us, and to walk with Him.

Thus, envy and judgment can be replaced by compassion and peace as we give ourselves in service to the Savior.



WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO YOU

But what about when bad things happen directly to you? How do you handle that? From little things to big things, trials come all the time, and some things can be truly life-changing. Maybe a loved one’s illness is diagnosed as cancer or you were hit and nearly killed by a driver who wasn’t paying attention. In cases like these, doesn’t your anger or frustration feel justified?

Maybe that’s not really the right question, either. What Elder Bednar taught about agency is still true. Each of us can choose how we act, react, think, and even feel. You can choose to be angry at life or at God or even at yourself. But what good does that do?

As Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Distancing yourself from the kingdom of God during a trial of faith is like leaving the safety of a secure storm cellar just as the tornado comes into view.”³

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Peace comes from knowing that the Savior knows who we are and knows that we have faith in Him, love Him, and keep His commandments, even and especially amid life’s devastating trials and tragedies.”⁴

HOLD FIRM TO YOUR FAITH IN THE SAVIOR

Choosing to be unhappy, even when it seems justified because of unfair things that happen, leads to darkness, bitterness, and disappointment. The good things we choose to believe, follow, and act on lead us to Christ and to the peace He offers (see

TWO EXAMPLES FROM YOUTH



Matthew 11:28; John 14:27). Just think of Joseph Smith's example—he endured many great trials because of his faith and devotion to Christ,

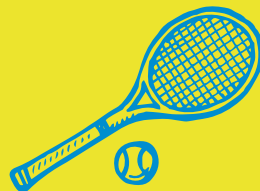
but he always remained true to the Lord and received many blessings and greater knowledge as a result.

No matter what happens, the Savior stands ready to help heal you and guide you. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has taught: “There may be some among you who feel darkness encroaching upon you. You may feel burdened by worry, fear, or doubt. To you and to all of us, I repeat a wonderful and certain truth: God’s light is real. It is available to all! It gives life to all things (see D&C 88:11–13). It has the power to soften the sting of the deepest wound. It can be a healing balm for the loneliness and sickness of our souls. In the furrows of despair, it can plant the seeds of a brighter hope. It can enlighten the deepest valleys of sorrow. It can illuminate the path before us and lead us through the darkest night into the promise of a new dawn.”⁵ **NE**

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Laborers in the Vineyard,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 31–32.
2. David A. Bednar, “And Nothing Shall Offend Them,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 90.
3. Neil L. Andersen, “Trial of Your Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 40.
4. Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 33.
5. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Hope of God’s Light,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 75.

How you deal with trials—both in the moment and later—can make a difference in the rest of your life and perhaps eternity. In these two stories, youth share how they found peace during their trials. After reading these stories, consider making a plan to let go of and avoid envy, anger, and judgment by coming unto Christ.



CUT FROM THE TEAM

Malia H. from Arizona, USA, had played on her school’s tennis team for two years. In her senior year, the rules changed, requiring seniors to try out again.

She spent months practicing for hours at a time, even when others quit because of the heat. Then came time for tryouts. She gave it her best, but she didn’t make the team.

“I felt like my heart was breaking. I’d worked for an entire year to make my goals a reality. I was also embarrassed. I was angry. Why didn’t my coach give me a fair chance? Why didn’t Heavenly Father help him choose not to cut me from the team?”

“Struggling to overcome the hurt led me to think about the sorrows of the Savior. He spent His entire ministry in the service of His neighbors, yet He was despised by many of these same people (see Isaiah 53:3–5). Although He was the only person who did not need forgiveness, He willingly suffered the anguish of all sin. With His stripes to rescue me from death, how could I resent the small injustices in life? The miracle of the Atonement beckoned to me, urging me to seek the merciful Son.”



INJURED FOR LIFE

In November 2010, Elder Jeremy Schone was serving as a missionary in Malaysia. One night he and his companion were biking home when he was hit by a truck being driven on the wrong side of the road. Jeremy broke multiple bones, his aorta was torn, his lung collapsed, his brain swelled, and he contracted pneumonia. In short, he should have died.

But time after time, little miracles occurred and he not only survived but also continued to heal. Even so, the recovery was long and painful. “And there will be trials for the rest of my life,” Jeremy says. It would have been easy for Jeremy to wonder why something like that could happen to him, especially when he was serving a mission. But turning to the Savior taught him many things.

“Because of what I learned, I can bear witness that our Savior suffered for all of our trials. As we humbly and faithfully endure our trials, we can be filled with a new spiritual strength—the strength that we will need to endure to the end, the strength that we will need to obtain our exaltation.”