

FEBRUARY 2015

THE **New Era**



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

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THESE ARE YOUR DAYS

These are your days to more fully turn your hearts to your ancestors and bring saving ordinances to millions within your families.



By Elder Neil L. Andersen

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Have you ever wondered why you were sent to earth now rather than at a different time in history? What would it have been like to stand by the side of Moses or to be a friend of Mary, the mother of Jesus? How about living in Nauvoo when the Prophet Joseph walked the streets, or joining other teenagers as they pulled and pushed their handcarts a thousand miles to a new home in the Salt Lake Valley?

Sometimes we look at former days or different places and ask, “Why not me? Why am I here in this place, and why now?” (See Helaman 7:6–8.)

My beloved young brothers and sisters, these are your days. You have been chosen to live in the final years preceding the Savior’s return to earth. We do not know the exact day or year of His coming, but we can readily see the signs that precede His coming.¹

One day, we will look back and see the glorious blessing that was ours to live in our time as we prepare the world for the Savior’s return. Let us see beyond the difficulties and the obstacles confronting us to our important

purposes and to the glorious days ahead.

With these being your days, what is the Lord asking of you? First, you are to take upon yourself the name of Jesus Christ. Learn of Him and of His love and unspeakable goodness to you and determine that you will always keep His commandments. You are to follow the Savior, love God, and serve those around you. All of us can have the privilege of living our lives as disciples of Christ, being led by His Spirit and lifting those around us.

A Sacred Duty

Some experiences are saved for specific generations. I want to talk about one of your sacred duties that has never quite been the same for any previous generation.

President Thomas S. Monson has encouraged the youth of the Church to visit the temples often to do baptisms for the dead. He said: “Now, my young friends who are in your teenage years, always have the temple in your sights. Do nothing which will keep you from entering its doors and partaking of the sacred and eternal blessings there.

I commend those of you who already go to the temple regularly to perform baptisms for the dead, arising in the very early hours of the morning so you can participate in such baptisms before school begins. I can think of no better way to start a day.”²

You have responded to the Lord’s prophet, and each year millions on the other side of the veil are given the opportunity to accept their baptism. No generation that has ever lived on this earth has had so great a privilege as you have to enter the doors of the Lord’s house and assist in the salvation of those who have come before.

As you well know, there is a vital *first* step that allows us to accomplish the sacred work of the temple. We are to search out and find those members of our families who came before us (see D&C 2:2; 128:18).

In the past this work of finding family names, documenting them, and bringing them to the temple was principally the work of older members of the Church. Why was that? Because it required enormous time and effort. It would often begin with large reels containing microfilmed records. It meant painstaking attention to dates and places, thick historical books with limited availability, and at times remote country cemeteries.

Our ability to find our ancestors online has emerged only in the past few years, with tremendous advancements just recently. The near future will bring even more availability.

While your generation has become extremely devoted to visiting the temple, in the months and years ahead you will be just as outstanding in finding and bringing names to the temple with you.



Preston England Temple



YOUTH TEMPLE CHALLENGE

Set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.

An Invitation to You

I want to challenge each of you to set a personal goal to help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple. (To begin the challenge, visit templechallenge.lds.org.) There is something powerful in searching out those who need temple ordinances, learning who they are, and then being part of their receiving these sacred ordinances. This is how you become “saviors on Mount Zion” (see Obadiah 1:21 and D&C 103:9). There is a joy and satisfaction that is understood only through spiritual feelings. We are linked to our ancestors forever.

Some of our families have been in the Church for many generations, and much of our direct ancestors’ work in the temple has been done. In 2013, for the first time, I could see my ancestors in a fan chart online, including my great-grandfather Niels Andersen, after whom I was named, and my great-great-grandfather Moroni Stocks, the first family member to be named for a Book of Mormon prophet. I was able to see photos of dozens of my family members online. Do you know what your great-grandparents looked like?

Finding Our Cousins

If your chart is not as complete as mine, your first responsibility is to fill it in as best you can. More and more information is becoming available each month.

If your chart is as complete as mine, there is still very important work for you to do. This work goes on and on. It will not be complete even when the Savior returns. When our chart appears complete, we help others find those in their lines and we find those closely related to those on our family tree. We call it “finding our cousins.”

How do we find our cousins? In two ways.

First, we go to our chart, and we find those closely related to our great-great-grandmothers or grandfathers. For example, I might go up my chart to Grandma Frances Bowen Evans and then look at the families of Grandma Evans’s brothers and sisters. She had five sisters and two brothers. In this way, I can find my cousins.

The second way to find our cousins is to help those around us. We begin with the special booklet *My Family*. If your family is new to family history, fill out the booklet. Or if your tree looks like mine, take the booklet to a new member or someone who hasn’t been quite as involved in

the Church as your family has been and help them search out their family. As you do so, you will help them bring others to the temple. These are your brothers and sisters, but we also like to call them your “cousins.”

To see how this works, see a short video of “Finding Our Cousins: The Eberts’ Experience” at lds.org/go/EbertNE2.

We are all brothers and sisters in our Father’s family. Our own families are not randomly thrown together. President Monson has said, “We discover something about ourselves when we learn about our ancestors.”³

When we see ourselves in perspective of our family, those who came before us and those who come after us, we realize how we are part of a wonderful link that connects us all together. As we search them out and take their names to the temple, we bring to them something they cannot obtain without us. In doing so, we are connected to them, and the Lord through His Spirit confirms to our soul the eternal importance of what we are doing.

President Monson said, “Those who understand the eternal blessings which come from the temple know that no sacrifice is too great, no price too heavy, no struggle too difficult in order to receive those blessings.”⁴

I add to his words that blessings and power from on high await our family members who have gone before us as they accept the ordinances we perform for them in the holy temples. They have finished their mortality, but they continue to live. We become “saviors on Mount Zion” and are bound together with them forever.

These are your days. You were born in a time of temples and technology. These are your days to more fully turn your hearts to your fathers and bring saving ordinances to millions within your families. These are your days to prepare for the Second Coming of the Savior.

As you contribute to this sacred work, your knowledge

Youth Temple Challenge and Social Media

Join in the social media campaign based on Elder Andersen’s invitation to youth. See what’s been happening with other youth and add your own experiences using [#TempleChallenge](https://twitter.com/TempleChallenge).

and faith in the Savior will increase and you will receive a more certain witness that life continues beyond the veil. You will receive protection against the temptations that surround you, and you will prepare yourself and the world you live in for the Second Coming of the Savior.

I know that life continues beyond the veil. I testify that Jesus is the Christ. He is our Savior and Redeemer. He lives. His glorious Atonement allows these ordinances in the temple to last forever. **NE**

From the address “Find Our Cousins!” given at the Family Discovery Day devotional for youth at the RootsTech 2014 Family History Conference, Feb. 8, 2014; see lds.org/go/cousinsNE2.

NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Preparation for the Second Coming,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 7–10.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 93.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 21.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—A Beacon to the World,” 92.

FINDING YOUR COUSINS

Just Getting Started?

Fill out the booklet *My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together* and then enter the details at FamilySearch.org. A ward or branch family history consultant can help you.

Does Your Family Tree Appear Full?

1. Sign in to FamilySearch.org with your LDS Account and click “Family Tree.” Select the “Fan Chart” view.
2. Hover over a family member’s name on the outer ring and click the small fan icon, placing that person in the center.
3. Change the view to “Descendancy” and then click to show four generations.
4. Look for temple icons that indicate ordinances may be needed for the displayed cousin. If prompted by FamilySearch, check for duplicate names.
5. Work your way around the outer ring of your fan chart and, when finished, move back one generation and repeat the previous steps.

ONE TASK

AT A TIME

You don't have to do everything all at once to be awesome.

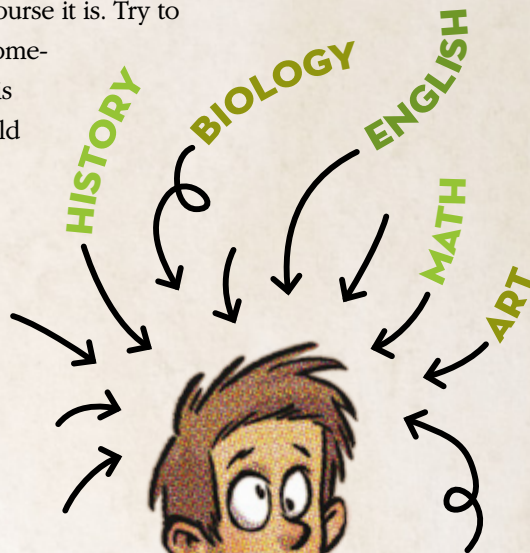
Your school day would fly by so much faster with one tiny tweak to the standard learning process. Namely, that all of your daily subjects be taught in a single classroom simultaneously.

Think of it! No schlepping your book bag from one side of the school to the next, no spending all day in classrooms. You'd simply sit in one spot for an hour or so while six or seven different teachers talked over each other and gave their lessons all at the same time.

Sound a bit silly? Of course it is. Try to pretend, however, that somebody actually thought this hair-brained scheme could work and you had to participate. Would you beat yourself up for not keeping up with the simultaneous lessons? You shouldn't. Nobody can be expected to focus on so many things at once.

Our journey through mortality is the same. We can't possibly do everything we are asked to do all at the same time. Sometimes, though, it's easy to forget that simple truth.

And that's when we can get discouraged.



WHAT MATTERS MOST ... AND WHEN

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "We need not worry if we can't simultaneously do all of the things that the Lord has counseled us to do. . . . In response to our sincere prayers for guidance, He will direct us in what should be emphasized at each phase of our life. We can learn, grow, and become like Him one consistent step at a time."¹

If we're not careful, it can be way too easy to look at the many different things we know we should be doing and focus on the areas where we're falling short (or where we *think* we're falling short).

If we slip into that practice too often and always feel like we aren't measuring up, a dangerous mind-set can form.

"Why even try for the celestial kingdom?" we might ask ourselves in exasperation. "I know I'll never make it!"

Despair and frustration are some of the favorite tools of the adversary.

And, they're also some of the most effective. The moment he can convince anyone to stop trying, he wins.

So don't let him win.

The truth is, you're probably doing better than you think.

PERFECTION AS A PROCESS

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency said, “God is fully aware that you and I are not perfect. Let me add: God is also fully aware that the people you think are perfect are not.”²

Trying to become perfect in every area of your life at the same time is like trying to climb a steep mountain on a unicycle while learning to juggle. This problem is made worse still when we measure our own efforts against those of other people.

“We spend so much time and energy comparing ourselves to others—usually comparing our weaknesses to their strengths,” President Uchtdorf says. “This drives us to create expectations for ourselves that are impossible to meet. As a result, we never celebrate our good efforts because they seem to be less than what someone else does.”³

So celebrate those good efforts! If you had a goal to memorize 10 new scriptures during a school year and you were able to memorize only 8 despite your best efforts, that’s still something to celebrate. You now have 8 scriptures you can call on anytime you need. It *especially* doesn’t detract from your success if your friend memorized 15 new scriptures. We’re not graded on a curve. Your good efforts stand on their own.



KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

As Elder Scott counseled, sincere prayer can help you know which parts of your life Heavenly Father wants you to focus on at this moment. When you want to do *everything* right now and don’t feel like you can, ask Him to help you prioritize what’s most important for you *right now*. There will be time for the others in the future.

And when you make mistakes along the way, remember that you’re in the very best of company. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Except in the case of His only perfect Begotten Son, imperfect people are all God has ever had to work with.”⁴

Perfection takes time. A lifetime. So don’t get bogged down trying to figure it out all at once.

Just keep moving ahead and let the Lord guide your steps. One step at a time. **NE**

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 31.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 120.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” 120.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Lord, I Believe,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 94.

BEYOND DEBATE

I was nervous about speaking up in class, but I knew it might be my peers' only chance to hear about the plan of salvation.



By Megan Guy

As a junior in high school, I was placed in an English class called Everything Is an Argument. We had to debate our feelings on certain topics, which was something I wasn't looking forward to.

One day the teacher brought up the topic of whether or not we believed the Bible to be true or just made-up stories. It was a conversation I didn't want to join. As the discussion went on, I was astonished at the number of people who claimed that the Bible couldn't possibly be true, and I didn't know how I could change their opinion. Just then, a student in the back of the class said he knew that the Bible was true. After that, a few others added their belief as well.

One student said he thought that people needed something to live for. I immediately thought of the plan of salvation, and before I knew it I found my hand raised for my turn in the discussion. I wasn't sure what I'd say; I just knew I had to say something.

I began to question my reflex to shoot my hand into the air, but I thought that this might be the only chance these 28 people would get to hear about this marvelous plan.

My turn came and I told my class that I knew there was something we live for—a plan called the plan of salvation. The teacher asked me to explain myself, and I told him that I would have an easier time explaining if I could draw a diagram on the whiteboard.

With everyone's eyes on me, I turned to the board and began to draw a diagram of the plan of salvation, full of circles and labels. The room was silent as the class watched. My heart was trying to run away from me because of how nervous I was that I'd say something wrong or that I wouldn't be able to answer the questions I knew would come. As I turned toward my classmates, I had an overwhelming confirmation that the Holy Ghost would guide me to say the right things. I knew that the plan of salvation was true, and there was nothing stopping me from bearing testimony to my class of this belief!

I started with the beginning of the diagram and talked about as much as I could without confusing anyone. I was surprised to not hear anyone tell me I was wrong, and I was even glad when my teacher and a few classmates asked questions. At the end of my question-and-answer session, the bell rang for the dismissal of school,

and I thankfully made a beeline for the door! A friend of mine caught up with me and told me that he respected me for standing up for what I believed in and wished that he had the courage that I showed in class. The Holy Ghost really helped me in class that day!

A few days later, my older brother was asked about the plan of salvation by a friend of his because her younger brother was in my class and had told her about it. To hear that someone had talked to his family about what I'd said was a great blessing to me. I love that I have the Holy Ghost to guide me in my life. **NE**

Megan Guy lives in Louisiana, USA.



“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me.”

Acts 1:8

By Mindy Anne Leavitt
Church Magazines

WHERE ARE YOUR
EVERYDAY CHOICES
LEADING YOU?

Your Future YOU

During the last general conference, a lot was said about choices and agency. We know that our choices matter—the message isn't anything new, but how often do you think about it? Every day you use your knowledge of right and wrong to choose between good and bad. Or good and better. Or better and best. And each day brings new opportunities to choose. But what if your choices aren't just affecting that day? What if good choices today lead to positive consequences years from now—and not-so-good choices today lead to negative consequences?



Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared the following story:

"I recently met a fine teenage young man. His goals were to go on a mission, obtain an education, marry in the temple, and have a faithful happy family. I was very pleased with his goals. But during further conversation, it became evident that his conduct and the choices he was making were not consistent with his goals. I felt he genuinely wanted to go on a mission and was avoiding serious transgressions that would prohibit a mission, but his day-to-day conduct was not preparing him for the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual challenges he would face. He had not learned to work hard. He was not serious about school or seminary. He attended church, but he had not read the Book of Mormon. He was spending a large amount of time on video games and social media. He seemed to think that showing up for his mission would be sufficient. Young men, please recommit to worthy conduct and serious preparation to be emissaries of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."¹

Like this young man, you might have all the best intentions for your future, but you might just be trying to make it through each day and finish that English paper due tomorrow, without much time leftover to think

about things that will matter years from now. But today's choices form tomorrow's habits, and little by little you are developing into the person you will one day become.

Do you take the time to think about the life goals you have and how your daily choices affect your achieving those goals? Do you think about what will help you along the covenant path? (See [lds.org/go/pathNE2](https://www.lds.org/go/pathNE2).) Elder Carlos A. Godoy of the Seventy reminded us of the importance of looking ahead to promised future blessings and evaluating how we're living in the present. He said, "If [you] project the possible consequences of [your] decisions into the future, [you] can see with greater clarity the best path to take in the present."² The choices you make will not just affect you today—they'll affect the missionary you, the professional you, the parent you, the *future* you.

So take a minute to think about your life goals or blessings you've been promised. Next, think about the choices you make every day. Consider the following goals and the daily choices that could affect achieving those goals.

FOR THE FUTURE SPOUSE AND PARENT YOU COULD BE, DO YOU:

- Pray morning and night?
- Study the Book of Mormon daily?
- Make learning more about the gospel an important part of your day?
- Participate in your Sunday meetings and seminary?
- Do family history?
- Follow the prophets' counsel about dating and sexual purity?
- Avoid pornography?
- Make time to learn how to cook, clean, make clothing repairs, and fix things around the house?

FOR THE FUTURE COLLEGE GRADUATE AND PROVIDER YOU COULD BE, DO YOU:

- Study and try to do well in school?
- Limit the time you spend on video games, TV, and social media?
- Find opportunities to learn new skills?

FOR THE FUTURE MISSIONARY YOU COULD BE, DO YOU:

- Take time to serve others?
- Develop your testimony of the Book of Mormon and of the Prophet Joseph Smith?
- Read *Preach My Gospel* and prepare for full-time missionary service by sharing your testimony with friends and acquaintances?
- Exercise regularly in preparation for the physical demands of a mission?

As you get caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, don't lose sight of your future life goals, your *eternal* goals, your promised blessings, your *future* you!

Keeping that earthly and eternal perspective isn't just about avoiding bad but also about opening doors for the future. Don't postpone all the good you plan on—and are capable of—doing. The choices you make—or don't make—every day can lead you to a bigger, better future, if you just take the time to prepare now. **NE**

NOTES

1. Quentin L. Cook, "Choose Wisely," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 47.
2. Carlos A. Godoy, "The Lord Has a Plan for Us!" *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 96–97.



What We Know about

PREMORTAL LIFE

The basic truths about life before we came to earth bless us with wonderful insights.

By Norman W. Gardner

Seminaries and Institutes

A young man who had decided to get married rather than serve a mission was persuaded to obtain his patriarchal blessing first. “During the blessing, he had a glimpse of who he was in the premortal world. He saw how valiant and influential he was in persuading others to follow Christ. Knowing who he really was, how could he not serve a mission?”¹ This is just one example of how knowledge of premortal life can make a difference for us.

“How old are you?” is easy to answer. Birthdays measure the age of our physical body. But really, we’re much older than that. Each of us “is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents” with “a divine nature and destiny.”² Before our spirit bodies were created, we each existed as “intelligence,” which “had no beginning, neither will it have an end.”³

Knowing that we are eternal beings with heavenly parents changes our lives by helping us see ourselves and our lives from a truly eternal perspective.

In our premortal life, we were taught lessons that prepared us to assist Heavenly Father in bringing about the salvation of His children (see D&C 138:56). We also had the agency to follow and obey God. Some of Father’s children distinguished themselves through their “exceeding faith and good works” and were foreordained, or given assignments, to serve in specific ways on earth (Alma 13:3). The greatest of those who followed Heavenly Father back then was His firstborn spirit son, Jesus Christ—or Jehovah, as He was known there.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that while in our premortal state, we were all present when God the Father

explained His plan for the salvation of His children. We learned that a Savior would be needed to overcome the problems brought on by the conditions of mortal life.⁴

Our Father in Heaven asked, “Whom shall I send [to be the Savior]?” Jesus Christ answered, “Here am I, send me” (Abraham 3:27). He was the Father’s “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning” (Moses 4:2) and was always meant to fulfill this role. But Lucifer interrupted and offered himself along with a proposal that would have destroyed the agency of man and exalted Lucifer above the throne of God (see Moses 4:1–4). Heavenly Father responded, “I will send the first” (Abraham 3:27). Lucifer rebelled and became known as Satan.

Division among spirits caused a war in heaven. A third part of God’s children turned away from Him and

followed Satan (see D&C 29:36–37). These rebellious spirits were denied physical bodies, were cast down to the earth, and continue to make war against the Saints of God (see D&C 76:25–29). The rest of God’s children shouted for joy because they could come to earth and because Jesus Christ was chosen to overcome sin and death (see Job 38:7).

In premortal life, we obtained gospel knowledge, testimony, and faith in the Savior and His Atonement. These things became an important protection and strength in the war in heaven. Those who followed God overcame Satan and his angels “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). When we learn the gospel and gain a testimony here on earth, we are essentially relearning what we once knew and felt in our premortal life.

Knowing that everyone on earth chose to follow the Savior in the premortal life changes our lives by helping us when we do missionary work. As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Every child of God in mortality chose the Savior’s plan. Trust that given the opportunity, they will do so again.”⁵

Much like we cannot remember the first few years of mortal life, our memory of premortal life has been withheld. This was necessary to help

us learn to walk by faith and prepare us to become like Him. But we can be assured that we knew and loved our Heavenly Father. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) promised that “nothing is going to startle us more when we pass through the veil to the other side than to realize how well we know our Father and how familiar His face is to us.”⁶

Knowing that Heavenly Father knew and loved us changes our lives by making our prayers more personal and intimate.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught: “There is no way to make sense out of life without a knowledge of the doctrine of premortal life. . . . When we understand the doctrine of premortal life, then things fit together and make sense.”⁷

How has your understanding of premortal life blessed you? NE

NOTES

1. Randall L. Ridd, “The Choice Generation,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 57.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 210; see also Doctrine and Covenants 93:29.
4. See *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 209.
5. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 34.
6. Ezra Taft Benson, “Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 6.
7. Boyd K. Packer, “The Mystery of Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, 18.

OUR PREMORTAL LIFE

Here are some scriptures that relate to different aspects of the premortal existence:

SPIRIT CHILDREN

- Romans 8:16–17
- Doctrine and Covenants 93:23, 29, 33–34
- Abraham 3:22–23

FOREORDINATION

- Jeremiah 1:5
- Alma 13:3
- Doctrine and Covenants 138:55–56

JESUS CHRIST—FIRSTBORN

- John 1:1–2; 8:56–58; 17:5
- 1 Peter 1:19–20
- Doctrine and Covenants 93:7, 21

COUNCIL IN HEAVEN

- Doctrine and Covenants 121:32
- Moses 4:1–4
- Abraham 3:24–28

WAR IN HEAVEN

- Revelation 12:4, 7–11
- Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–37
- Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–29

WE MISS *Sofía*

*In the dark and in pain,
I prayed for my sister's
well-being.*



By Fernando Peralta

In 2012 I had completed seminary and high school, and a new world was opening in my life. The beginning of the year was great, especially the multistake youth camp. I felt blessed and protected by my Heavenly Father.

Years before, I had decided I would serve a full-time mission, so in 2012 I planned to dedicate myself to saving all the money I could. Thanks to my older sister, Sofía, I was able to quickly find a job at the company where she worked. On February 22, Sofía and I took the train to work. It was a beautiful day, but when we arrived at the destination, I heard a loud noise, and then everything went dark.

When I awoke, I was hurting and confused. Was my journey on earth coming to an end? I really wanted to be around to experience certain things, like going on a mission and having a family. So I prayed, asking Heavenly Father to give me the opportunity to live and serve a mission.

Lying in the tangled wreckage of the train, I looked around for my sister, but I couldn't see her. Finally I heard firefighters asking everyone to stay calm, and I could feel hope in my heart. I prayed for my sister's well-being because I didn't know where she was. As I prayed, I felt great peace. I had to fight to endure the pain I felt, but Heavenly Father gave me the necessary strength.

After an hour I was rescued. I felt the Lord with me during that time. As I was taken to the hospital to have an operation on my leg, I couldn't stop thinking about my sister and wondering how she was. But every time I thought about her, I felt peace.

The next day my parents informed me that Sofía had not survived the accident. That news brought the greatest pain I have ever felt. But at the same time, I felt comfort and gratitude for the sacred covenants made by my parents in the temple in sealing our family together for eternity.

When I returned home from the hospital, the Lord blessed my family through our friends and relatives, who

were our angels, giving us comfort. We will always be grateful for that. Thanks to the power of the priesthood, I learned how to walk again much quicker than expected. I was able to walk normally after just a few months.

The gospel is beautiful every way you look at it. I am so grateful for temples and temple ordinances. I know that the Lord has something sacred prepared for my sister. Life without her is not easy, and it never will be, but the assurance and the peace we have is stronger than the pain we feel at her absence. We miss Sofía with all our hearts and remember her every day. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that heaven without your family just wouldn't be heaven (see *Between Heaven and Earth* [DVD, 2005]), and I testify that is true.

God loves us, and He never leaves us alone. Isaiah 54:10 says, "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." NE

Fernando Peralta lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



By Elder
Jorge F. Zeballos
Of the Seventy

FINDING STRENGTH *in Good Friends*

I was born and raised in a small city in Chile. When I was 12 years old, I saw the missionaries for the first time, and I was curious. Then one day a classmate at school told me that he and his family had become members of the Church. He invited me, and I attended all Sunday meetings and Tuesday activities for several months.

Our branch was new, and because I attended practically from the beginning, everyone thought I was a member. After six months I told one of the missionaries I was not, because I thought the missionaries were interested only in families.

The missionaries tried to involve my family, but my parents and siblings were not interested. They invited me to be baptized, but since I was 12, I needed my parents' permission. I thought my father would say I needed to wait until I was 18, but he said, "I have seen my son wake up every Sunday morning while his brothers and sisters keep sleeping, dress up in his best clothes, and walk to the chapel. If my son will be responsible with this decision, you have my permission." I couldn't believe it. I was in heaven in that moment. So I was baptized the following day.

Being a member of the Church provided spiritual blessings, of course. But it also gave me some wonderful

The friends you choose can have a big impact in your life, as they have in mine.



friends. Around the time of my baptism, several young men my age began coming to church, and we formed a very close-knit group. We started attending every meeting and activity together.

When I was 17, I left my city to go to college. Three of my friends decided to go to college in the same city, and we lived together. This was a great blessing because we could support and protect each other. We encouraged each other to go to church. We also had home evening among the four of us, and sometimes we invited other students who were members of the Church. All of those years at the university, we strengthened each other. Forty-five years later, those young men are still my best friends. Although we live in different parts of the world, we are always in contact. All six of us served missions.

That's why I encourage you to have good Church friends in your youth. Trust in them and help them. A good friend will always be willing to help you, will deserve your trust, and will never want to hurt you. I'm not saying your friends need to be perfect, but they should respect your standards and values. Being a good friend is not always about having

fun. It includes being sincerely interested in the well-being of your friends and being brave enough to tell your friends when they are doing something that's not right.

I admire you youth of the Church. Times have changed a lot since I was a young man. This period of time on earth is fantastic, but at the same time it's dangerous. To make it through you must be "continually holding fast to the rod of iron" (1 Nephi 8:30) and following the counsel and advice of your parents and Church leaders. Developing good friendships will help you to do this.

Some of you may feel alone because you are the only member of the Church in your school or your class. But you are not alone. Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father in Heaven consider each one of you a treasure, and They are eager to help you throughout your life. Your true friends will support you in drawing closer to Them.

The scriptures say that the "same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there [in heaven], only it will be coupled with eternal glory" (D&C 130:2). I can only imagine how it will be when we meet together in the next world, surrounded by glory, in total happiness with our friends and our families. That will be a wonderful time, and it will be forever. **NE**



FAKE Friends and Fool's GOLD

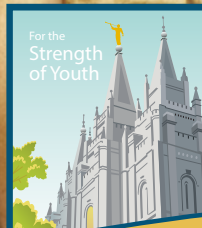
True friends are way more valuable than popularity.

Wouldn't it be awesome if you could walk into the school cafeteria and everybody cheered your name once they saw you? "Sit by us!" each table would clamor.

At first glance, that probably sounds like the ideal way school ought to be.

Now pretend there's a catch. Imagine that no matter which table you joined, you wouldn't find even one person whom you felt like you could open up to with a problem on your mind. Not one person who actually cared about you—just a roomful of people who want to be seen with you.

Still sound fun?



FRIENDS

THE VALUE OF TRUE FRIENDS

There's a big difference between real friends and phony or fair-weather friends. As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*, "Everyone needs good and true friends. They will be a great strength and blessing to you" ([2011], 16).

Notice that the counsel doesn't say, "Everyone needs LOTS of friends," just *good and true* friends.

Good friends, even a handful, make life sweeter. (Especially friends from your family!) When you need somebody to talk to, good friends are there. When you want to put a major dent in the food supply of an all-you-can-eat buffet, friends can help there too.

Developing meaningful friendships is always a two-way street. As explained further in *For the Strength of Youth*, **"To have good friends, be a good friend. Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them"** (16).

Walking together, biking together, attending Mutual activities together, encouraging each other in hobbies and goals—all of these and much more are ways good friends can add spice to life and keep us strong in the gospel.

Even so, it can still be tempting to feel not "popular" enough (no matter how many friends we might have) and to try and change our social

standing. And that's almost always a waste of energy.

Kind of like gathering fake gold.

FOOLED YA!

Throughout history a common mineral known as iron pyrite (also referred to as "fool's gold") has dashed the hopes of those who spent precious time and energy trying to gather it.

Pyrite is similar in color to gold but has a vastly different worth. One ounce of gold is usually worth well over \$1,000, while you'd be lucky to get a buck or two out of that much pyrite.

In the California gold rush of 1849, many prospectors toiled all day in the sun loading their sacks with the stuff, believing they'd struck it rich.

Even Captain John Smith (of Pocahontas fame) shipped an entire boatload of pyrite from Virginia back to England, believing it to be gold.¹

Each of these would-be treasure seekers ultimately discovered that they'd spent their time foolishly.

THE REAL THING

Not all that glitters is gold. Often, what we think of as popularity ends up amounting to nothing more than big piles of shiny pyrite. Real friends, on the other hand, are priceless.

It isn't fair to compare friends with precious metals, but ask yourself which prospector was better off? The one with a sack of 20 or even 100 nuggets of pyrite, or the one who managed to find a single true gold nugget?

This is not to argue that fewer friends = better. Far from it. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Each day of your life, strive to enlarge your own circle of friendship."²

So we should always try to make more *good* friends. Which means we ought to be careful how we spend our friend-making efforts.

For example, if you have to choose between making one real friend or convincing 20 people that you're cool enough to talk with now and again, that choice ought to be a no-brainer. Real trumps fake any day of the week.

Real friends build us up and keep us on the Lord's path. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "Living the gospel and being true to gospel principles is the key to true, lasting, triumphant friendship."³

Being a good friend to others means taking the time to really understand them and then spending the time to help them live a happier life.

Ultimately, not many of us will ever be greeted like celebrities when we enter a crowded room. And that's OK.

If there's even one person in that room who is truly glad to see you, who counts you as a real friend and whom you count as a real friend, then you've already struck gold. **NE**

NOTES

1. See legendsofamerica.com/we-mininghistory.html.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Be Thou an Example of the Believers," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 48.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Real Friendship," *New Era*, June 1998, 66.



When Good Friends Falter

“She and I were good friends, and we always had the same standards. But then . . .”

Does that sound familiar? We’ve all experienced it or seen it happen—a good friend starts to do things that aren’t right and encourages others to join in. Some of the toughest questions you may face are “Should I talk to my friend about this behavior?” and “Should I stop spending time with my friend if this behavior keeps going on?”

There isn’t one answer that fits every situation, so finding a solution will take faith and courage to heed the counsel in *For the Strength of Youth*: “As you seek to be a friend to others, do not compromise your standards. If your friends urge you to do things that are wrong, be the one to stand for the right, even if you stand alone. You may need to find other friends who will support you in keeping the commandments. Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost as you make these choices” ([2011], 16–17).

Here are just a couple of examples of youth who dealt with friends who started urging them down the wrong path.



If a friend who once had high standards slips ever lower, what should you do?

Letting Go

“I had a friend who began to encourage me to disregard my standards, and for a while I listened. I finally decided that enough was enough and I wasn’t going to let her influence me anymore. I prayed for strength and guidance, and because I was again living the way I know I should, I received the guidance I asked for. I eventually stopped hanging out with her, and in the months that have passed, my testimony has grown so much. Who you are friends with *definitely* makes a difference in your ability to live the way the gospel teaches.”

Margaret K., 17, Utah, USA

Keeping Hope

“At the beginning of middle school, I met another member of the Church who was very spiritually strong. He was an Aaronic Priesthood holder and seemed like a good example of someone who lived the gospel. We became good friends and talked a lot about the Church. As we got older, his self-worth and ability to uphold his standards started to deteriorate. Though we were still somewhat friends, he associated with others who were not very good influences. I would hear him curse frequently and joke about immorality and other inappropriate things. Several of his

friends were atheists and would talk rudely about ‘Mormonism.’ Later, he became addicted to tea and, at age 13, got a girlfriend.

“I didn’t know what to do. I tried telling him in a friendly way of my concern for him several times, but he brushed me aside. Still I didn’t give up. I upheld my standards and tried to be an example for him. I didn’t want to stop being his friend, but as things got really bad, that path started looking better and better. Eventually, I got on my knees several times in prayer for his safety.

“Then his father got a job in another state. This upcoming move caused my



THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS

“Friends help to determine your future. You will tend to be like them and to be found where they choose to go. Remember, the path we follow in this life leads to the path we follow in the next. . . .

“The friends you choose will either help or hinder your success.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “In Harm’s Way,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 47.

friend’s eyes to be opened to all he had done. All I had tried to tell him for three years, he suddenly understood. During the next few weeks, he worked hard to undo his past as much as he could. When I spoke to him, he thanked me for my example and willingness to not give up on him. He was the happiest he had been in years and truly understood what it means to be a Latter-day Saint.

“For any friend who falters, I think it’s best to alert him of his actions. But if, like my friend, he won’t listen, don’t give up. This is probably when he’ll need a real friend the most. Keep your standards, even if he tempts you to do otherwise. Pray for him. I know that you can gain strength through this, and I know that you won’t be alone in your efforts. It’s easy to feel weak and

out of place when we stand for good. But through the weak, the Lord will do a mighty work.”

Collin Z., 16, Wyoming, USA

Again, there’s no one answer to the question “Should I stop hanging out with my friend?” But one thing is certain: always pray for the Spirit’s guidance and be willing to heed it. Your basic attitude should be to care. Care about your spiritual well-being and that of your friend. Care about your example and influence on your friend. Care about your friend’s influence on you. And as you have faith in Heavenly Father’s loving care, you’ll get the answers you’re looking for. **NE**



My **NEW** Old Friend

By Lauren Meese

“**H**elp. . . Help!” The faint cry persisted every couple of seconds. It was my first day at the care unit, and already I was needed.

It was in the summer of my sophomore year that I decided to apply for the Hospice of the Valley Teen Volunteer Program. Once accepted, I attended numerous hours of training and orientation. However, no amount of class time could properly prepare me for the job I was undertaking. No one could properly describe the forlorn expressions I would see as I entered each room, the faces of critically ill or dying patients. No one could accurately explain the stale smell that would engulf me as I opened the door to the care home. But most of all, no one could tell me about the overwhelming joy that came with each visit.

That afternoon as I turned the corner, the cries of help reached my ears. I didn't even have time to think. It was an impulse to follow the plea.

I walked in to see a woman slightly raised from her bed, arms outstretched. I asked her what she needed, ready to call the nurse for pain medication or maybe to get the nursing assistant if she required the restroom. To my surprise, all she wanted was comfort, attention, a friend.

I was amazed at how quickly I felt at ease. We talked as if we were old friends,

laughing and catching up on the past. I couldn't help but smile as her face lit up with joy.

Then she said something I'll never forget. “I can tell by your voice that you are a very pretty girl.” This seemed like a rather unusual thing to say to someone. Did she not think my face was pretty? But as I looked at her closer, I realized that she couldn't see my face. She was blind.

That's when my heart dropped. Here was a woman in a strange place, getting treatment from complete strangers she couldn't even see. And I had been thinking about the smell. I had no idea that my cheery voice and undivided attention was bringing so much color into her life. For that, I would smell anything.

I walked out that day with a new attitude. This woman had taught me a valuable lesson. No matter what problems we may be facing, all around us are opportunities to forget ourselves and help another. When those chances come our way, we must make the effort to open our ears and turn our hearts to the ones who seem to be reaching out and calling, “Help.” We may just find a new friend. **NE**

Lauren Meese lives in Arizona, USA.

I was a volunteer, and she was calling for help, but it wasn't the kind of help I was thinking of.

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER TOLMAN



HOW TO BE *Friends*



WITH YOUR *Family*



By Bonnie Brown

“**S**he’s already my sister. And now I have to be friends with her too?” Sound familiar?

Let’s be honest, being friends with your family can seem hard—especially when your sister always takes the last Pop-Tart or your brother leaves the milk in the fridge with only two sips left. But the truth is, your family can be the best friends you have.

You’re probably already doing a great job. Think about the games you invented as kids—you know, the one where your brother pretends to be a dinosaur, and if he finds you, you have to run or be eaten? Or maybe it’s your own spin on Twister—the version that involves your elbows or head. These games are some of the many ways you’ve already started to turn family relationships into friendships. And there are other ways too. Here are ideas from youth that you might try for building friendships with your family members. Some may sound familiar, but have you actually *tried* them all out yet? Start today!

Sometimes your closest friends may be closer than you think.

TALK WITH EACH OTHER ONE ON ONE

Find fun ways to spend one-on-one time with each sibling and parent for 10 minutes a week. You can go to the park with your brother and see who can do more pull-ups on the monkey bars. Or you might teach your sister the proper way to apply makeup (remember: less is more!). You could join a parent on an errand or surprise your mom by helping her make dinner. As you get to know each other, you might be surprised at how well you can relate!

PRAY TOGETHER

The Lord has commanded us to pray together as a family (see 3 Nephi 18:21). President Thomas S. Monson said, “There is no more beautiful sight in all this world than to see a family praying together. There is real meaning behind the oft-quoted “The family that prays together stays together” (“Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 5). Pick a time of day when you can all kneel together in prayer, and pray for your family members by name.



FORGIVE EACH OTHER

If you get into an argument with a family member, hug and make up! Ezra A. from Australia, says, “When you get into a fight, rather than keeping a grudge, just be a bigger person and say sorry—straight afterward. One time I was fighting with my sister. We had a big argument, and instead of holding a grudge I just said sorry and ended it there. It felt good to get rid of the anger and not feel a grudge anymore.”



SERVE EACH OTHER

Who doesn't love nice surprises? Do the dishes when it's your sister's turn, make your brother's bed (especially if he never makes it himself), set up your sister's stuffed animal collection like a zoo, or finger paint a love note. They will *love* it!



HAVE FAMILY HOME EVENING

Family home evening is a time you can learn as a family and have fun! Jayden C. from Texas, USA, says, “One time we shot Nerf bows and arrows at each other for a family home evening activity. Dodging the arrows taught us about avoiding the fiery darts of the adversary. Now that I’ve been hit by Nerf arrows, I understand that the fiery darts of the adversary are not something you want to run into. These activities helped my siblings and me grow closer to our Heavenly Father and our family.”



READ THE SCRIPTURES TOGETHER

Studying the scriptures with your family can help you apply the scriptures to situations you might face. For example, what if your family were asked to pack up everything and leave? Or what do you do when you’re teased for your beliefs? Nephi gives help for both of those questions (see 1 Nephi 3:7; 17:17).

Levi C. from Wyoming, USA, says, “Often my mom asks us to read scriptures on our own, but the best days are when we read scriptures all together as a family. When everybody does this together, we all have things we can relate to and have something to talk about.”

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER’S TALENTS

Little brother on the soccer team? Big sister learning cello? When you support your siblings by going to their games, recitals, or other activities, you show them you care about them. Linley B. from Canada has a family that’s really into soccer. “We’ve always attended each other’s games as much as we can. I once had a soccer tournament in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, and my sister drove from Utah to come and watch me play. My mom always says that when we support each other—show that we’re proud of each other, pray for each other, etc.—that’s when she knows she did something right as a parent.”

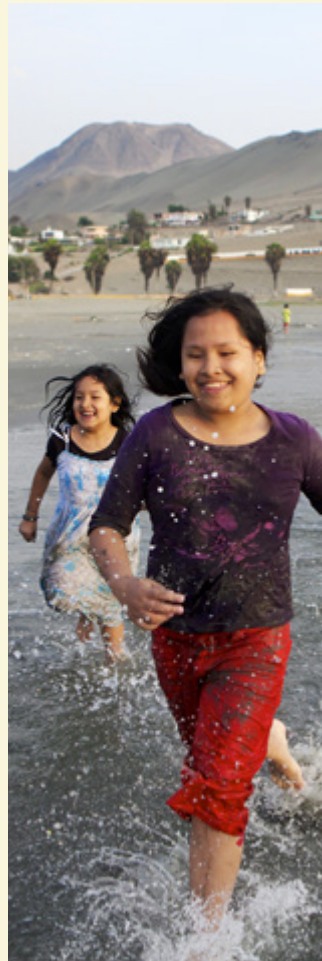


SUPPORT EACH OTHER

Sometimes as a family you'll need to endure hard things together. Holland S. from Washington, USA, says, "What brought me close to my five brothers were some of the trials we experienced together. They were horrible, but that brought us even closer. I know that if we stay close to our family in a time of need, we will gain closer and more meaningful relationships that will last through the eternities." When someone (or your whole family) is going through a hard time, look for ways to help.

HAVE FUN TOGETHER

The best times with family often happen when you carve out room in your schedules to spend time all together—no distractions—whether it's a planned activity or just hanging out. Sierra C. from Wyoming, USA, said, "I have five younger siblings. I find it best to put my music player and phone away and take the time to play with them. They love it when we go outside to jump on the trampoline or go and pet my cows. The whole day seems way better when we're all laughing and getting along."



REMEMBER WHAT MATTERS

"Never let a problem to be solved

become more important than a person to be loved."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Joy in the Journey," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 86.

MORE IDEAS FOR FAMILY FUN

- Play board games—grab all your family favorites and let the tournament begin!
- Explore the great outdoors. You can make outings extra fun by creating nature scavenger hunts or other activities!
- Learn more about others' interests. Rather than just watching your siblings use their skills, join in! If your brother loves building things out of boxes or blocks, let him teach you how to build the tallest block tower in the universe! If your sister is a dancer, have her teach you a few steps.
- Play games that test how well you know each other. If you don't get all the answers right, then you'll have learned more about your family by playing!
- Plan a trip to a museum, theater, or library, and get to know what there is to do in your neighborhood.



BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

If you build your family friendships now, they can bring you joy for the rest of your life and into eternity. Kaleigh K. from Utah, USA, says, "Family members are the best friends you'll ever have! Making fun memories with my siblings always overshadows any I've ever made with my friends."

So even if your brother *still* leaves hardly any milk in the container, remember that the time you spend together will strengthen your relationship, bring a happy spirit into your home, and prepare you for eternal joy with those you love. **NE**
Bonnie Brown lives in Utah, USA.



WET CEMENT
AND *Real*
Womanhood

By Hillary Olsen

DON'T GET STUCK IN THE
WAYS OF THE WORLD.



When she stepped, I stepped. When she flipped her hair, I flipped mine. I made sure to adjust my backpack so that it was slung over one shoulder, just like hers was.

The girl walking ahead of me was a few years older than I was. I didn't even know her, but she seemed so cool. I was convinced that if I could mimic her walk perfectly, I'd be cool too.

At one point she stepped off the sidewalk and walked on the side of the road, so I followed suit. After a while, she stepped back onto the sidewalk. I did the same, only—*squish!* The moment I stepped back onto the sidewalk, my feet sank a few inches. I stood there in shock for several seconds before realizing what had happened. I had stepped right into wet cement! The girl had stepped off the sidewalk to avoid the wet cement, and I had been so caught up in imitating her walk that I hadn't even noticed.

I was beyond embarrassed. It didn't occur to me to step back onto the side of the road; instead, I tromped through the wet cement until I reached solid ground. Luckily the girl continued walking and didn't notice me, but the dried clumps of concrete that clung to my shoelaces the rest of the day served as a reminder of my failed attempt at being cool.

THE RIGHT FOCUSES

I was only six at the time of the wet-cement fiasco, and I've obviously learned since then that a cool way of walking is not the most important thing to aspire to. Focusing on the wrong thing ended up leading me right into wet cement. To avoid getting led into "wet cement" yourself, it's important to focus on the right things.

The world is quick to give examples of what girls, young women, and women should seek after. But those ideals are increasingly different from what the Lord wants for His precious daughters. Because the Lord loves you, He sends guidance through Church leaders to help you as you grow. Here are four of the many things that you can aspire to as a daughter of God.

1. DEVELOPING TALENTS

Do you have a dream?

Pursue it! Is there a skill you wish you had? Learn it!

The Lord wants you to dream. He wants you to set goals and work toward them. (Just look at all that Personal Progress helps you learn!) He wants you to pursue worthy hobbies that help you grow and serve. You're *you* for a reason. You've been given gifts, talents, and desires so that you can grow and be a unique part of His work.

It's easy to underestimate your potential. One of the adversary's tactics is to cause you to focus on what you're not good at rather than what you *are* good at, making you think you have no creativity. "If that is how you feel," President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, urges, "think again, and remember that you are spirit daughters of the most creative Being in the universe. . . . You may think you don't have talents, but that is a false assumption, for we all have talents and gifts, every one of us."¹

Pursuing your dreams and developing talents will help you to serve others, reach your potential, and find joy in womanhood. As in all things, follow the

voice of the Spirit in deciding what to pursue among all your options. The Lord knows better than anyone what you are capable of and how He needs you to serve.



2. DISCOVERING TRUE BEAUTY

Have you ever met someone who seemed to have a glow about them? It's beautiful! That's their true, inner beauty shining brightly. This is the kind of beauty your Heavenly Father wants you to aspire to.

The world will tell you that it's what's on the outside that matters. The right hair, makeup, clothes, accessories—it's exhausting to keep up with the world's trends. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, "One would truly need a great and spacious makeup kit to compete with beauty as portrayed in media all around us."²

Of course, it's important to look your best as a representative of Christ, take care of your body, and be healthy. And it's OK to wear makeup. When used in moderation, it can enhance natural beauty. But the Lord wants you to focus on the genuine beauty inside you. He wants you to let it shine. "No amount of eye shadow, lipstick, or mascara could possibly compete with the natural attractiveness of a genuine smile. It brightens the room. It cheers others. It communicates friendship, love, and optimism so much more than any cosmetic ever could."³

This is the kind of beauty that "doesn't wash off. It is *spiritual* attractiveness. Deep beauty springs from virtue. It is the beauty of being chaste and morally clean. It is the kind of beauty that you see in the eyes of virtuous women. . . . It is a beauty that is earned through faith, repentance, and honoring covenants."⁴

Smile! You are *exquisite!* As you focus on living a clean and virtuous life, you'll let your true, inner beauty shine.



3. EMBRACING MOTHERHOOD

The Lord has given women the sacred responsibility of motherhood. Mothers are so important to the Lord's plan! "The world won't tell you that, but the Spirit will."⁵

Nothing can "exceed the ultimate rewards of family," and "there is not a higher good than motherhood . . . in marriage."⁶ You live in a world where the choice to be a mother requires more and more courage, but the Lord has prepared you to make the choice. He has placed within you "divine qualities of strength, virtue, love, and the willingness to sacrifice to raise future generations of His spirit children."⁷ As a daughter of God, you have those qualities as part of your divine nature, and you can be a great force for good even before you are a mother.

The blessings of raising children will come at different times to everyone. "The Lord's timetable for each of us does not negate our nature. . . . All around us are those who need to be loved and led."⁸ All around *you* are people who need your love and leadership.

You can use the divine characteristics the Lord has given you as a nurturer to bless those around you. Seek now to develop those qualities. They will give you opportunities to bless those around you in a powerful, loving way and to prepare to one day be a mother.



4. FOCUSING ON ETERNAL GOALS

You came to earth with very specific, eternal goals. Learning to have faith, following the Savior's example, and receiving necessary ordinances—all of these things will help you return to your Father's presence.

But there are many things to distract us along the way; that's why it's important to remember our eternal goals. "In all that you do, stay focused on the temple. In the temple you will receive the greatest of all the Lord's blessings, including marriage for time and all eternity."⁹

*“Who can find a
virtuous woman?
for her price is far
above rubies.”*

Proverbs 31:10

This is a wonderful time to be a young woman in the Lord’s kingdom! While there are many worthwhile pursuits in life, be sure to focus on your eternal goals of being worthy to enter the temple, making and keeping covenants, and becoming more like the Savior.

BECOMING A WOMAN OF CHRIST

These and other righteous focuses will keep your feet on spiritually solid ground and help you steer clear of “wet cement.” You will find joy as you reach your potential as a daughter of God.

Elder Holland has taught: “Be a woman of Christ. Cherish your esteemed place in the sight of God. He needs you. This Church needs you. The world needs you. A woman’s abiding trust in God and unfailing devotion to things of the Spirit have always been an anchor when the wind and the waves of life were fiercest.”¹⁰

Following the counsel of Church leaders and focusing on the right goals will help you become the woman of God the Lord wants you to be. There’s nothing cooler than that. **NE**

Hillary Olsen lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Happiness, Your Heritage,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 118–19.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “To Young Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 30.
3. Lynn G. Robbins, “True Beauty,” *New Era*, Nov. 2008, 30.
4. Elaine S. Dalton, “Remember Who You Are!” *Ensign*, May 2010, 122.
5. Sheri L. Dew, “Are We Not All Mothers?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 98.
6. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 31.
7. Quentin L. Cook, “LDS Women Are Incredible!” *Ensign*, May 2011, 18.
8. Sheri L. Dew, “Are We Not All Mothers?” 97.
9. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), ii.
10. Jeffrey R. Holland, “To Young Women,” 28.



POWER FLEXING, BEING POLITE, AND OTHER

MANLY

BEHAVIORS

**WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A REAL MAN?
READ ON IF YOU DARE.**

By David Dickson
Church Magazines

I was channeling my inner super-spy. The problem was, I'd been doing that all week and it hadn't worked out very well so far.

I stood with my friends on a grassy hillside far removed from

civilization. Stretched between this hill and the next was a thick steel cable that ran 40 yards (37 meters). The cable hung 6 feet (2 meters) above the ground, spanned a small valley between the hills, and had a downward slant.

In other words, it was the perfect

cable to slide down in spy-like glory. My friends and I had no idea why the cable was there in the first place. We only knew that a most manly destiny was calling loudly. We were there to heed the call.

And yet, that stubborn cable wasn't cooperating. Turns out we needed more than blindingly awesome courage and determination to accomplish our goal. We needed something to help us slide down. Our

first two attempts that week hadn't resulted in our sliding more than a few feet before friction stopped us cold.

But that didn't discourage us. My friend had an old 10-speed bike that he donated to the cause for our third attempt. His theory was that if we removed the front handlebars, spokes, and wheel from the rest of the frame, we could place the rim (tube and tire removed) on top of the cable. Then, wrench in hand, we could attach the handlebar and front spokes to the wheel by aiming them up around the underside of the cable. It was a giant pulley.

I was to be the guinea pig lucky person to try out our complex mechanism first. So there I stood, channeling my inner spy and poised and ready to earn some manly bragging points. I gripped the handlebars, took a deep breath, and howled in excitement while lifting my feet.

In milliseconds the other hillside started rushing toward me. Wind whipped through my hair as I flew across the gap between hills. I slammed into the far side with enough impact to steal the air from my lungs. I jumped to my feet, dusted myself off, and yelled to my friends, "You guys gotta try this thing!"

TRUE MANLINESS

Only . . . most of my friends didn't want to try the spy cable after seeing how my flight ended. Truth be told, nor did I after that excellent-but-wild ride. As exciting as the trip down had been, the jolting stop at the end was anything but fun.

Boys, young men, and men often like to perform feats of bravery and strength around one another. In popular culture, the measure of one's manliness is often determined by such accomplishments.

But what is *true* manly behavior? What does the Lord expect of boys, young men, and men?





and life beyond. Developing a solid work ethic and a capacity to do hard things will help you now and throughout your life. Has your neighbor's basement recently flooded with mud and debris? Time to man up!

2. LEARNING USEFUL SKILLS

Life takes discipline, hard work, and a willingness to learn useful skills as you grow. Your impressive mini-golf and bowling scores probably won't be much help on your mission or during job interviews.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "We cannot afford young men who lack self-discipline and live only to be entertained."¹

It's difficult to help friends and family using only your vast collection of memorized movie quotes. Learning to change the oil in a car or build a shelf with woodworking tools, however, can make a big difference in the lives of those you want to serve.

"It is a wonderful aspiration for a boy to become a man—strong and capable; someone who can build and create things, run things; someone who

a chance to put a few more points on my man card."

The prophet Lehi said it this way. After growing increasingly concerned about his rebellious sons Laman and Lemuel—who were technically men in terms of age—he gave the following rebuke: "Arise from the dust, my sons, and be men" (2 Nephi 1:21).

Yes, Laman and Lemuel were old enough to be men. They also complained and moped and groaned every time they were asked to do something hard.

Being willing and able to do hard things is a big part of high school, missionary work, college,

From scriptures and Church leaders, we can find the following five principles on how a son of God can grow into his full potential as a man. (As a heads-up, nowhere will you find the doctrinal directive, "Thou shalt bench-press 200 pounds.")

1. DOING HARD THINGS

The next time your parents ask you to pull weeds or re-stain the deck, try smiling, flexing a muscle or two, and thinking to yourself, "Here's

makes a difference in the world,” Elder Christofferson taught.²

As one more item to consider, after your mission, what do you think would more likely impress a girl you were dating: the ability to conquer a video game in 37.5 minutes or the skills to repair and thereby coax another 40,000 miles out of a car on its last legs?

3. RESPECTING WOMANHOOD

Treating girls, young women, and women with kindness and courtesy is at the heart of true manliness.

Sister Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, asked the following questions in general conference: “Sons of God, do you know who you are? . . . Do you embrace your roles and responsibilities to strengthen homes as fathers, grandfathers, sons, brothers, and uncles? Do you show respect for women, womanhood,

and motherhood?”³

Church leaders speak regularly about the virtues of women and the way sisters should be treated. “We who bear the holy priesthood have a sacred duty to honor our sisters,” taught Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We are old enough and wise enough to know that teasing is wrong. We respect sisters—not only in our immediate families but all the wonderful sisters in our lives. As daughters of God, their potential is divine.”⁴

Every time you pay a sincere compliment, smile and say hello, offer encouragement, give a gentlemanlike courtesy, and avoid making fun of girls or mistreating them in any way, you show respect for womanhood.

And that’s manly too.

4. SERVING IN AND STRENGTHENING YOUR PRIESTHOOD QUORUM

You have talents and skills. You possess wisdom, experience, and insights that are uniquely yours from the life you’ve lived.

All of these qualities can be used to strengthen your fellow priesthood quorum members.

“Of the many places you are needed, one of the very most

important is your priesthood quorum,” taught Elder Christofferson. “We need quorums that provide spiritual nourishment to members on Sunday and that also serve.”⁵

Your priesthood quorum is made up of young men who, like you, all need support and encouragement. Imagine how much more your quorum can accomplish in a service project rather than one person working alone. In a spiritual sense, that same strength expands in a group as you teach and encourage one another to live the gospel.

Give your best to make your quorum all it can be. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “One of the adversary’s methods to prevent us from progressing is to confuse us about who we really are and what we really desire.”⁶



So, don't be distracted from your manly identity and destiny. Your quorum needs you.

5. GAINING AN EDUCATION

You know that guy who buckles down in his studies, turns in all his homework on time, and isn't actually sweating bullets the night before a big project is due? Yeah, that guy is demonstrating some serious manly power.

Elder Christofferson taught, "Young men, you need to do well in school and then continue your education beyond high school."⁷

Even if your sights right now are focused more on graduating high school and serving a mission, they should be set still further on a temple marriage. When that day comes, you'll need all the education and training you can get. "In whatever [career] you choose, it is essential that you become proficient so that you can support a family and make a contribution for good in your community and your country,"⁸ said Elder Christofferson.

MANNING UP

There's nothing wrong with finding out who among you and your friends can hurl an oversized

round of firewood the farthest, go the longest without blinking, or eat a double-decker burger the fastest. Ultimately, though, none of those accomplishments adds up to true manhood.

On the other hand, things like following the prophets, magnifying your calling in the priesthood, respecting womanhood, and serving others can build you into the type of man who can help strengthen the Lord's kingdom.

That's as manly as it gets. **NE**



NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, "Brethren, We Have Work to Do," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 47.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, "Let Us Be Men," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 46.
3. Carole M. Stephens, "Do We Know What We Have?" *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 14.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Our Sacred Duty to Honor Women," *Ensign*, May 1999, 39.
5. D. Todd Christofferson, "Brethren, We Have Work to Do," 48.
6. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "You Can Do It Now!" *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 56.
7. D. Todd Christofferson, "Brethren, We Have Work to Do," 48.
8. D. Todd Christofferson, "Brethren, We Have Work to Do," 48.

GOT THAT SINKING FEELING?



“Your choices determine
whether technology
will empower you or enslave you.”

(Randall L. Ridd, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency,
“The Choice Generation,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 57.)

CHANGING *Hands and*

After a four-wheeling accident crushed her left hand, Claire was told she may never play the violin again. But she didn't believe it.

By Nichole Eck

For violinist Claire Z. of Idaho, USA, music has always been important. “It just makes everything better,” she says. “It gives you something to focus on and enjoy and share with others.” Music also gives Claire a way to share her beliefs. “I’m not very outgoing. Music is a way to bear my testimony.”

Growing up, Claire loved playing the violin and thought about studying it in college. But a four-wheeling accident almost changed her path forever.

The Accident

When Claire was 13, she and her friend were riding a four-wheeler together near Claire’s house. At a curve in the road, Claire lost control of the vehicle and it flipped. Claire’s friend was unharmed, but Claire’s left hand—the hand she most needed to play the violin—was crushed underneath a metal bar. Claire and her friend crawled out from under the vehicle and walked home, singing hymns and Primary songs to keep up their spirits.



CHANGING *Plans*



It took several surgeries and a year of physical therapy before Claire could even think about playing the violin again. At first it seemed impossible because the fingers of her left hand were weak and most of her ring finger had been amputated. Between surgeries, Claire found comfort playing the piano with her right hand.

The Lord's Help

Claire struggled with feeling angry and sad at the beginning of her trial. She remembers one night when she was having a hard time. "I felt like I was suffocating," Claire says, "like something really heavy was lying on my chest, and I couldn't breathe. Finally, I just knelt down and prayed, 'Heavenly Father, please help me to get through this and be OK.' And immediately that weight, that pressure just lifted, and I felt like I could do it. That was a really amazing experience. You can get through hard things with Heavenly Father."

SCRIPTURES OF COMFORT

When you go through hard times, remember that the scriptures are filled with messages from the Savior to help lift you up. Here are some examples. What others can you find?

- "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18).
- "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).
- "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my firstborn in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad" (2 Nephi 2:11).
- "My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes. Thy friends do stand by thee, and they shall hail thee again with warm hearts and friendly hands" (D&C 121:7-9).
- "And if thou shouldst be cast into the pit, or into the hands of murderers, and the sentence of death passed upon thee; if thou be cast into the deep; if the billowing surge conspire against thee; if fierce winds become thine enemy; if the heavens gather blackness, and all the elements combine to hedge up the way; and above all, if the very jaws of hell shall gape open the mouth wide after thee, know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).





A Backward Violin

Before the accident, Claire had been the youngest member of her city's symphony. After the accident, she was worried she would never play the violin again.

Claire's violin teacher started to research how to build a backward violin that could be held with the right hand instead of the left. Everything on and inside the violin had to be moved around. Other music teachers and professional musicians said it was impossible, but Claire, her mother, and her violin teacher knew it could be done and eventually found someone who would make the violin.

Once the new violin was ready, it was very frustrating for Claire to learn to play with her right hand. She'd spent years training her left hand and fingers to move quickly across violin strings. Now she had to start over and teach her right hand to do it all. She felt discouraged by her memories of playing, because she was now unable to play as well as she had before. But with time, practice, and prayer, she did improve.

After six months of daily practice, Claire eventually earned a spot back in the symphony with her friends. She also put on a piano and violin recital with her friends at

the hospital where she'd been treated. Those who know her think of her as an inspiration and have learned from her example of hard work, determination, and faith in the Lord.

The Positive Side

Claire has learned a lot from her trial, but she thinks the most important lesson is to stay positive. "Don't let your anger control you," she says. "You have to get negative feelings out because they're all in there, but make sure you're focusing on the good in your situation and finding the positive after you have those moments. You have to make yourself think positively and find the good things, however few or little you think they may be."

Claire says that good support also helped her stay positive. "I have great family, friends, and neighbors who were just happy, visited me, and brought me lots of treats."

Claire's life is very different from the life she may have imagined a few years ago, but she says, "I don't think I'd ever want it to change. I've met so many amazing people." With the Lord's help, hard work, determination, and a positive attitude, Claire can once again follow her dream and continue playing the violin. **NE**

Nichole Eck lives in Utah, USA.



BE OF GOOD CHEER

"There will always be things to

complain about—things that don't seem to go quite right. You can spend your days feeling sad, alone, misunderstood, or unwanted. But that isn't the journey you had hoped for, and it's not the journey Heavenly Father sent you to take. Remember, you are truly a [child] of God!

"With this in mind, I invite you to walk confidently and joyfully. Yes, the road has bumps and detours and even some hazards. But don't focus on them. Look for the happiness your Father in Heaven has prepared for you in every step of your journey. Happiness is the destination, but it's also the path."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Your Wonderful Journey Home," *Ensign*, May 2013, 129.

When can I start dating one-on-one instead of always going in groups?

As a Latter-day Saint youth, you're counseled to go in groups of two or more couples when you start dating (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 4). This helps keep things safer and more fun rather than forming serious relationships too early in life. When it comes to dating one-on-one, Church leaders haven't specified an age when it's appropriate to start. At the latest, when you're in your 20s and in a position to consider marriage, you most certainly *should* be single dating. Until then, talk to your parents and priesthood leaders about this question. **NE**

Why can't we remember our premortal life as spirits, and when will those memories return?

Our memories of life in the premortal world as spirit children of Heavenly Father are withheld from us while we're being tested. They won't return until sometime after our time of testing is over.

What we call the veil of forgetfulness exists during this testing for the simple

reason that Heavenly Father needed "to assure that it would be a valid test."¹ If we came to earth with those memories intact, we wouldn't be able to use our agency in the way Heavenly Father's plan requires. So our premortal memories are blocked—though people often talk

about having inklings and echoes of premortality in this life when our hearts are open to the influence of the Holy Ghost.²

We don't know exactly when these memories will return, nor do we know whether they will return all at once or gradually or whether the timing will be the same or different for every person. All we know is that these memories will eventually be restored to us after this life.

As Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

(1926–2004) taught, "Among the 'all things [that] shall be restored' (Alma 40:23) will be memory, including, eventually, our premortal memories."³ **NE**

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Truth Restored," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 78–79.
2. For instance, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) said that "by the power of the Spirit, in the redemption of Christ, through obedience, we often catch a spark from the awakened memories of the immortal soul, which lights up our whole being as with the glory of our former home" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 14).
3. Neal A. Maxwell, *Lord, Increase Our Faith* (1994), 103.



“I lost a dear friend recently. How do I deal with the grief?”

The death of a friend is one of the most difficult trials you can face. Grieving is a normal feeling after such a loss. You feel sad because you cared for your friend. “Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die” (D&C 42:45).

Some of the difficult feelings that can come during the grieving process include sadness, anger, hopelessness, fatigue, loss of interest in activities, and feeling overwhelmed. But at the same time, people who grieve often feel peace as they seek the Lord and draw near to Him; they are receiving His promise: “Blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted” (3 Nephi 12:4). Grief hurts, but it also heals.

As you work through your feelings, try to focus on the positive. Treasure the good memories you have of your friend. Pray to feel the Savior’s peace and comfort. Find hope in Heavenly Father’s love, goodness, and plan of salvation.

Feeling grief doesn’t mean that you don’t have faith. President Thomas S. Monson spoke in general conference about the loss of his wife. He said, “To say that I miss her does not begin to convey the depth of my feelings.” He then spoke of trials and concluded: “We know that there are times when we will experience heart-breaking sorrow, when we will grieve, and when we may be tested to our limits. However, such difficulties allow us to change for the better, to rebuild our lives in the way our Heavenly Father teaches us” (“I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 85, 87).

In what ways could your friend’s death inspire you to be better? **NE**



Combine Grief and Faith

Grieving is not a bad thing. (It can become bad, however, if you’re constantly depressed.) Combining grief and faith is the best way to adjust to the hardship of losing a loved one. Think about your friend now, in the spirit world, and what your friend could be doing. He or she loves you and wants you to be happy. Learning about the spirit world can increase your understanding of the plan of salvation and bring peace, hope, and faith. Don’t forget to pray to Heavenly Father for help. Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, know exactly how you feel and will help you if you ask sincerely.

Mary G., 14, Virginia, USA



God Loves Your Friend

Even though it’s hard for you to deal with grief, our Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation can comfort you through the Holy Ghost that someday you can meet your friend again. And remember that life here on earth is just a very short moment for us to be tried and tested. Our Heavenly Father is providing a place for your friend. God loves His children.

Marvin S., 16, Metro Manila, Philippines



Be Happy for Your Friend

When I have lost people I love, I try to remember that our Heavenly Father has a plan for them and that I can see them again. We can be happy for them because they do not have to suffer the afflictions of this mortal life any longer. It hurts that they are not physically present anymore, but we can look forward to being with them again.

Ariadna T., 19, Mexico City, Mexico



Find Help in Scriptures

A good friend of mine recently died in a tragic car accident. I have found comfort through coming unto Christ. I had to gain a testimony of Christ's love for each one of us; I had to understand who we are as children of God; and most importantly I had to understand God's plan and will for His children. As I turned to Him through scriptures, church, and Church materials, I was able to gain that testimony and feel peace and comfort. Especially helpful was the youth lesson titled "How can I find comfort when someone I care about dies?" All of the scriptures, articles, and videos referenced in this lesson are amazing and have changed my life.

Madilin N., 18, Iowa, USA

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

ABOUT SUICIDE

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"The act of taking one's life is truly a tragedy because this single act leaves so many victims: first the one who dies, then the dozens of others—family and friends—who are left behind, some to face years of deep pain and confusion...."

"Obviously, we do not know the full circumstances surrounding every suicide. Only the Lord knows all the details, and he it is who will judge our actions here on earth.

"When he does judge us, I feel he will take all things into consideration: our genetic and chemical makeup, our mental state, our intellectual capacity, the teachings we have received, the traditions of our fathers, our health, and so forth...."

"Suicide is a sin—a very grievous one, yet the Lord will not judge the person who commits that sin strictly by the act itself. The Lord will look at that person's circumstances and the degree of his accountability at the time of the act."

From "Suicide: Some Things We Know, and Some We Do Not," *Ensign*, Oct. 1987, 7, 8.



DEATH IS PART OF GOD'S PLAN

"It has been hard for me to live on earth and see these young men upon whom we have leaned for support and comfort taken from us in the midst of their youth. Yes, it has been hard to be reconciled to these things. I have sometimes thought that I should have felt more reconciled to have been called away myself if it had been the will of God; yet I know we ought to be still and know it is of God, and be reconciled to His will; all is right."

The Prophet Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007)*, 178.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"Some of my friends think that going to church is a waste of time. How can I help them see that it can be a great blessing?"

Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2015.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



The Plan of Salvation

You'll be studying about the plan of salvation in your Sunday classes this month. As you study and discuss this topic, you may ponder these questions: How can I help others understand the role of Jesus Christ in the plan of salvation? What is my role in fulfilling Heavenly Father's plan?

For some answers to these questions, read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Jesus Christ, Redeemer," "Jesus Christ, Savior," and "Salvation, Plan of." You'll also find teachings on the plan of salvation in general conference talks at conference.lds.org.

Share these Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE2.

As we look to
JESUS

as **our Exemplar**

and as we
follow
in His
footsteps,
we can return safely.

President Thomas S. Monson
October 2014 general conference

EVERYONE
of you

—right now—
is

valuable

&
essential

in Heavenly Father's
plan of salvation.

Sister Neill F. Marriott
Second counselor in the Young Women general presidency
October 2014 general conference

We appreciate your testimony, Elder. But the issue was the color of the stoplight, not whether the Book of Mormon is true.



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

I think he's reminding you that fast Sunday doesn't apply to him!



RYAN STOKER

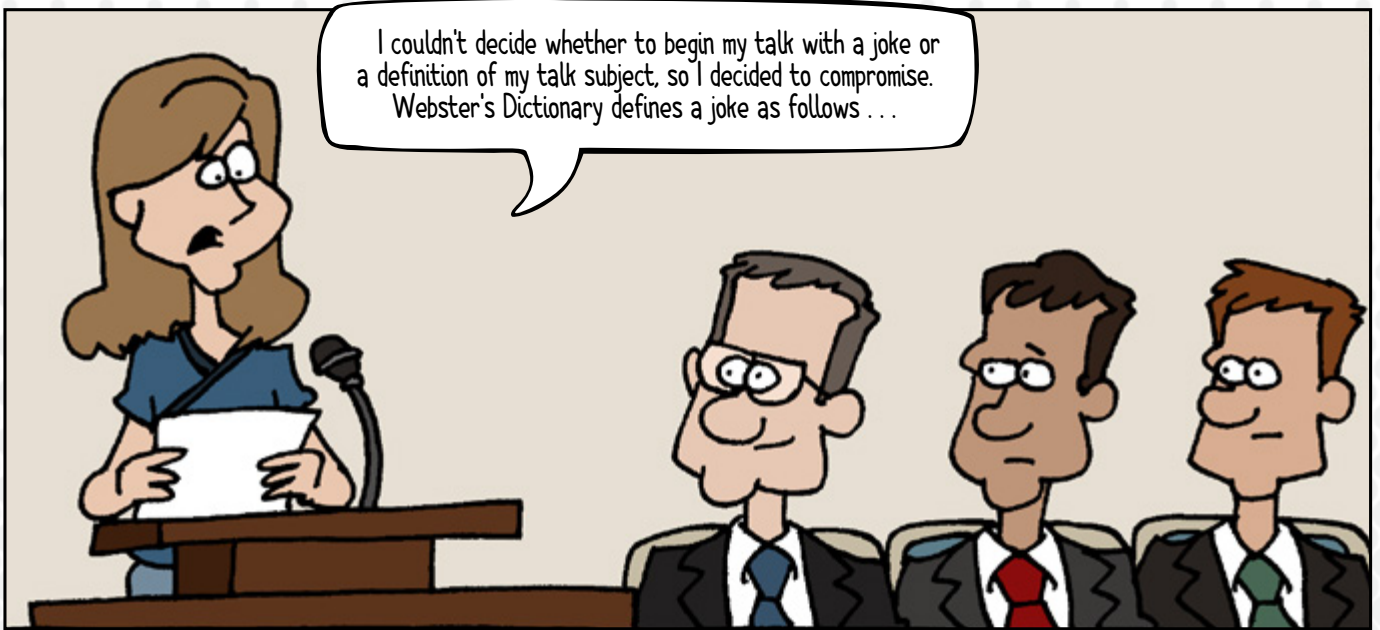
BEN'S FAILED ATTEMPT TO MAKE ASKING A GIRL TO DANCE LESS AWKWARD ...

Would you like to dance without any obligation to date or marry after a mission?

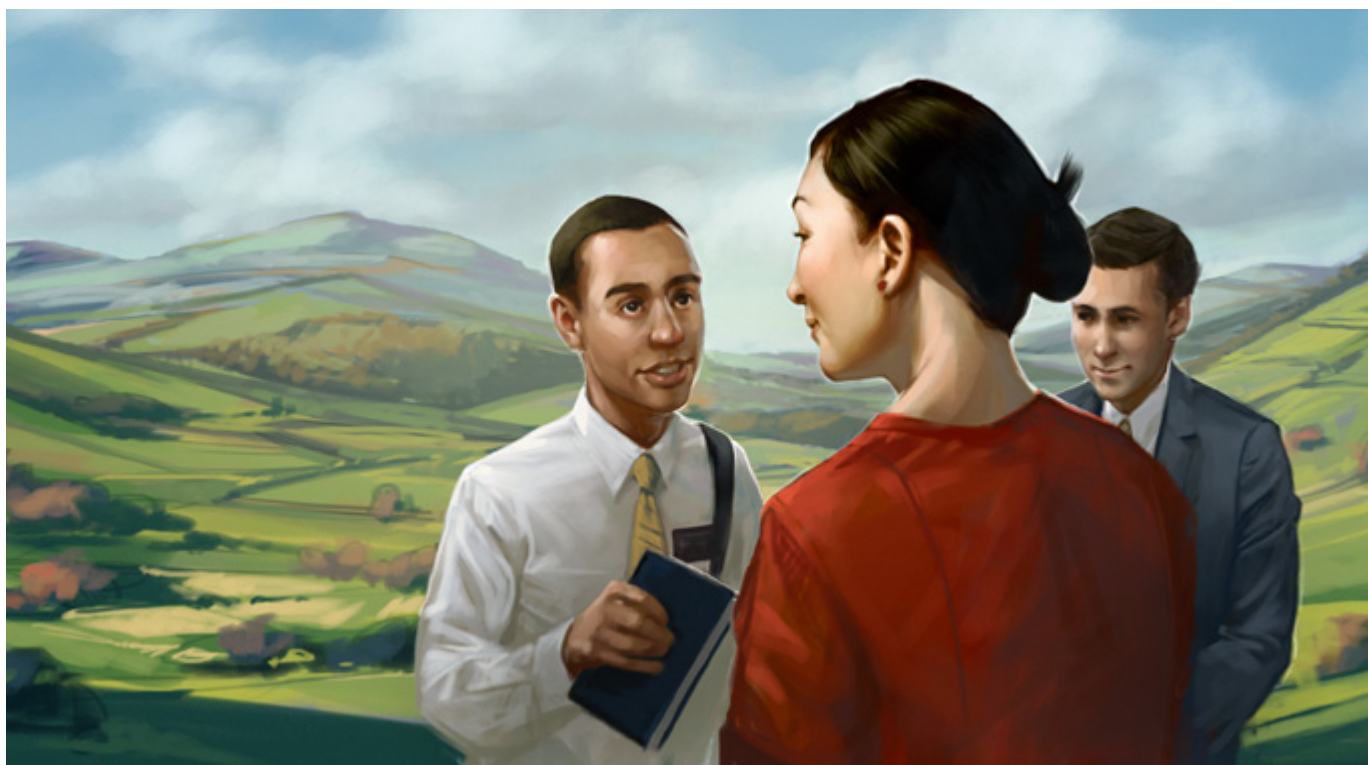


JON CLARK

I couldn't decide whether to begin my talk with a joke or a definition of my talk subject, so I decided to compromise. Webster's Dictionary defines a joke as follows ...



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



SHARING THE VIEW AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

While I was serving as a missionary in a small town in Wales, my companion and I were tracting a street leading up one of the many hills there. It was a warm summer day. As we reached the top of the hill, the view was beautiful, so my companion and I decided to take a short break to enjoy the view and regain our energy.

As I got an orange out of my backpack, I saw a Chinese lady walking up the hill. I don't know why, but I waved to her. She happily waved back and walked over to sit by us. We started talking, and she explained that she came up the hill to enjoy the view because it reminded her of

God and His love for her. She also told us that she had been ready to go back to China when a job in Wales came up. She took it, believing that God provided this job for a reason she didn't know.

Soon after this first meeting, we started teaching her in a recent convert's home and shared many spiritual moments together. One of them I cherish the most. We presented her with a Chinese copy of the Book of Mormon with our testimonies written in the front. The Spirit was so strong that she started crying.

Not long after, I was transferred to another area. Unfortunately, I couldn't go back to that area for her

baptism, but it will always strengthen me to think back to our first meeting high on a hilltop.

Jurek B., Germany

TOGETHER FOREVER

“**F**amilies can be together forever through Heav’nly Father’s plan” (“Families Can Be Together Forever,” *Hymns*, no. 300). I love this Primary song, which teaches that families can be sealed for eternity. I prayed that this could be true for my family, especially after my father passed away.

Recently the Lord answered my prayer. My mother, my two brothers, and I were able to travel to the Manila Philippines Temple to be sealed together and to my father. It was our first time in the temple together, and I can still remember the happiness I saw in my mother’s and brothers’ eyes. There was a great feeling of joy there.

I know the temple is the house of the Lord and that those in the temple have the proper authority to perform sacred ordinances. I’m so grateful that through these ordinances my family can be with my father again. Since going to the temple, we try to be a stronger family and do all we can to keep our covenants so that we can be together forever.

Crisanto C., Philippines

FRIENDS AGAIN

When Lucy* and I were little, we were good friends and played together often. As time passed it became harder and harder to get along with her. She was often negative and critical of me. It seemed like she really enjoyed stirring up trouble among our friends, and there were lots of hurt feelings. I decided I didn’t want to be around her anymore, and we stopped talking to each other. I felt really uncomfortable each time I passed her in the halls at school.

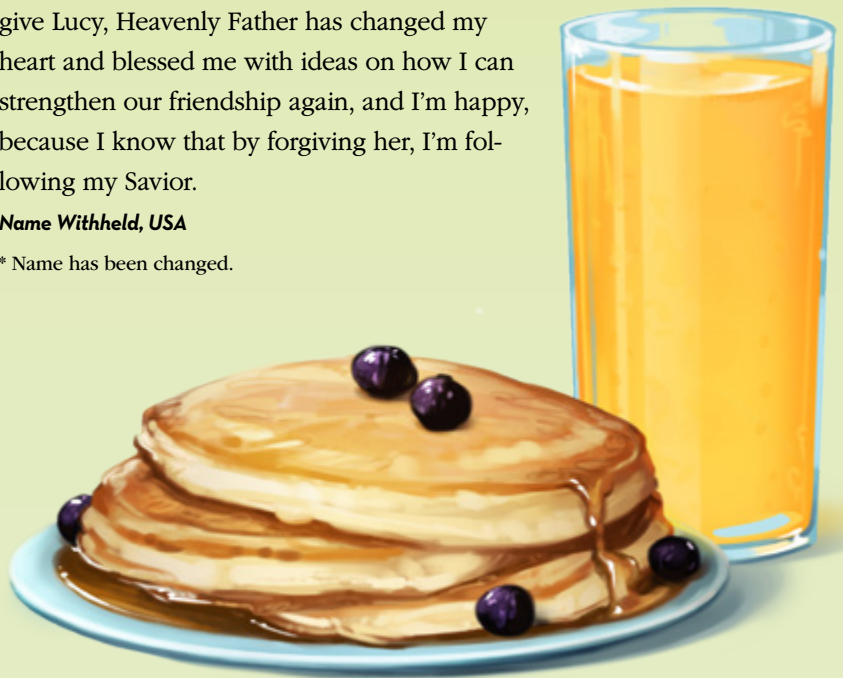
This past year as I became a Beehive and began to study about divine nature, individual worth, and good works, Lucy started coming to my mind. I decided I should forgive her for the way she’d acted and the things she’d said and done.

I started small by just saying hi to Lucy in the hallways when we passed each other. After doing this for a few weeks, I felt I was ready for the next step. I called Lucy and asked her if she’d like to go to the temple with me early in the morning to do baptisms. She was excited and said she’d love to go. We had a great morning at the temple and going out for breakfast!

I’ve found that as I’ve done my part to forgive Lucy, Heavenly Father has changed my heart and blessed me with ideas on how I can strengthen our friendship again, and I’m happy, because I know that by forgiving her, I’m following my Savior.

Name Withheld, USA

* Name has been changed.





By Elder
Quentin L. Cook

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO BE A MEMBER MISSIONARY

I believe with all of my heart that we are on the threshold of the most significant missionary success to date.

Our challenge is to **share the joyous, eternally significant gospel** with our brothers and sisters so they can find peace and happiness and exaltation.

With this in mind, how can we be effective missionaries?

First: Be a missionary all your life. President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught that every member is a missionary, and it is as true today as when it was first declared.

Second: Overcome feelings of hesitancy or inadequacy.

Third: Do not be discouraged because missionary work is hard.

Fourth: Be a good example and take every opportunity to share the gospel (see 1 Timothy

4:12). It is not enough to preach the gospel. One must also **live the gospel**. Very often people are receptive to being taught because they have had a positive experience with a Church member.

I know one BYU graduate who is a great example. He points out that there is a mirror quality to conversation. If we talk about the weather, people respond by talking about the weather. If we talk about sports, they respond by talking about sports. This friend says he asks people he meets about their school and listens intently. After they respond by asking him about his school, he tells them about BYU and then shares his testimony of the gospel. Then, in a positive way, he **offers to let them learn more from the missionaries**. He has been very successful in sharing the gospel. He has also remained on excellent terms with his friends who do not respond to his challenge because he genuinely loves them and is interested in them.

I am very enthusiastic about where we are at this time in missionary work. But, as President Hinckley (1910–2008) always counseled the Brethren, “We can still **do better.**”

There are great blessings, including eternal joy, in helping to bring souls unto Christ (see D&C 18:15).

Missionary work is not just one of the 88 keys on a piano that is occasionally played; it is a major chord in a compelling melody that needs to be played continuously throughout our lives if we are to remain in harmony with our commitment to Christianity and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My specific challenge to each of you is to make a commitment to be a missionary for the rest of your life.

If you look at your group of friends, there are many who would respond to the gospel if you would **have the faith to share the message** of the Restoration with them.

What we desperately need is for member-missionary work to become a way of life—for the Savior’s mandate to share the gospel to become part of who we are. **NE**

From a Brigham Young University devotional given on March 13, 2007.



RICH OR POOR,
WE ARE TO
“DO WHAT WE CAN”
WHEN
OTHERS ARE IN NEED.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
October 2014 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



CONNECTING WITH YOUR FAMILY

You know spending time with your family is important, but it doesn't always have to include a formal, planned event. Find ideas for having fun with your family in everyday activities at lds.org/go/funNE2. Check out more about strengthening your family at lds.org/go/familyNE2.



MORMON MESSAGE ON SUICIDE PREVENTION

If you know someone who has mentioned thoughts of suicide, know that you can make a difference. Watch "Sitting on the Bench: Thoughts on Suicide Prevention" to see how you can help at lds.org/go/helpNE2.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: FEBRUARY 14



Doing family history can strengthen and protect you and your family. On February 14, 2015, you can tune in live for Family Discovery Day, where Elders Quentin L. Cook and Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Young Women general president Bonnie L. Oscarson, and others will talk about the blessings you'll receive from doing family history, along with sharing ideas for finding and preparing names for the temple. Watch live streaming sessions on lds.org/discoverfamily.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS