

FEBRUARY 2016

THE New Era



5 WAYS TO **FEEL GOOD**
IN 5 MINUTES
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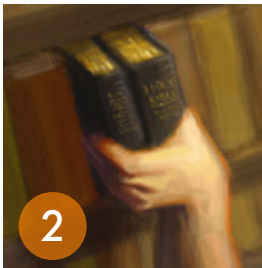
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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

February 2016 • Volume 46 • Number 2

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By Elder
Robert D. Hales

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Holy Scriptures: OUR SPIRITUAL LIFELINE

*When we want God to speak to us,
we search the scriptures.*

The holy scriptures are the word of God given to us for our salvation. The scriptures are essential in receiving a testimony of Jesus Christ and His gospel. The scriptures given to us by God in these latter days are the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These sacred records bear testimony of the Savior and lead us to Him. That is why great prophets like Enos cried unto the Lord in faith to preserve the scriptures.

Will you open with me the cover of the Book of Mormon? Look on the title page. We read that it is “written by way of commandment, . . . by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation.” It has “come forth by the gift and power of God,” and its interpretation is “by the gift of God”—by the Holy Ghost. It shows “what great things the Lord [has] done” and has given to us “that [we] may know the covenants of the Lord,” that we might not be “cast off forever.” Most importantly, it has been written to convince us “that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.”

Turn the page again, to the introduction. Here we learn that this prophetic record is “holy scripture comparable to the Bible.” It contains “the



Lehi's sons risked their lives and lost all their worldly possessions to recover the brass plates.

fulness of the everlasting gospel, . . . outlines the plan of salvation, and tells [us] what [we] must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.” It promises each of us that “all who will come unto [the Savior] and obey the laws and ordinances of his gospel may be saved.”

What is the vital role of this sacred book in our day? What is its message regarding the purpose of all scripture?

On page one of the book of 1 Nephi—the very first book in the Book of Mormon—we learn that Lehi,

in about 600 B.C., was directed by God to take his family and flee into the wilderness. But Lehi didn’t get very far before the Lord commanded him to send his sons back. Why? To retrieve the scriptures, the brass plates, which were so important that Lehi’s sons risked their lives and lost all their worldly possessions to recover them! Ultimately, it was the Lord’s help and Nephi’s faith that miraculously delivered the plates into his hands. When Nephi and his brothers returned, Lehi, their father, rejoiced. He began to

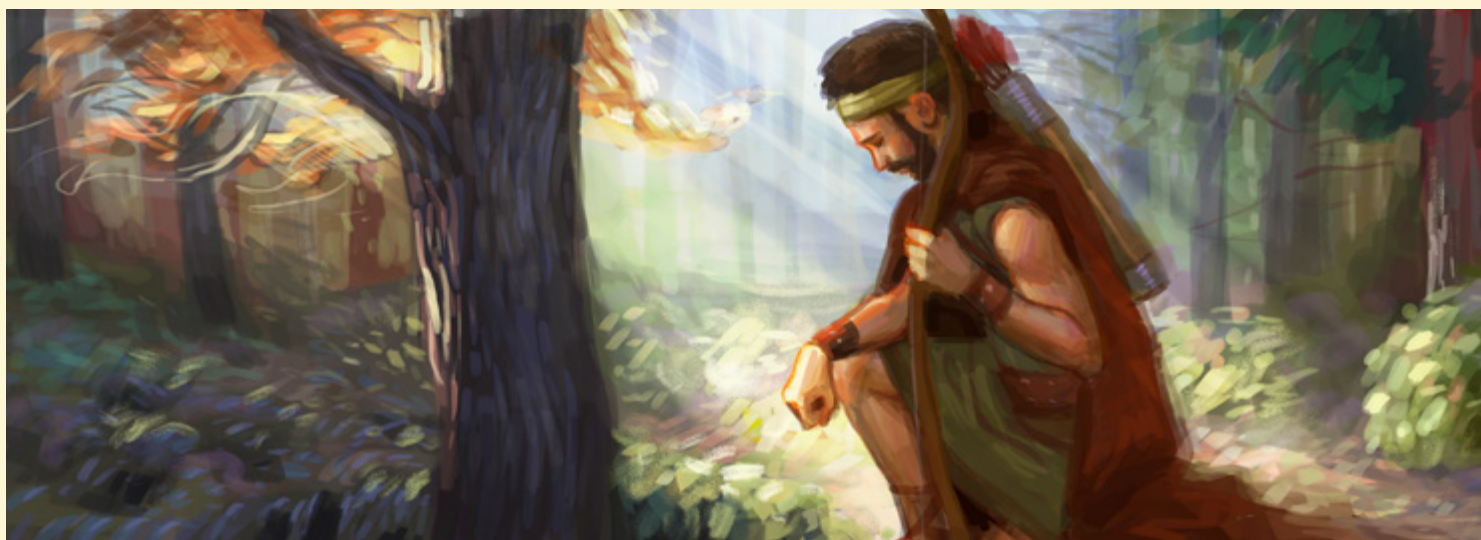
search the holy scriptures “from the beginning,” and “found that they were desirable; yea, even of great worth . . . insomuch that [Lehi and his posterity] could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto [their] children” (1 Nephi 5:10, 21).

Indeed, the brass plates were a record of Lehi’s fathers, including their language, genealogy, and, more importantly, the gospel taught by God’s holy prophets. As Lehi searched the plates, he learned what all of us learn by studying the scriptures:

- Who we are.
- What we can become.
- Prophecies for us and for our posterity.
- The commandments, laws, ordinances, and covenants we must live by to obtain eternal life.
- And how we must live in order to endure to the end and return to our Heavenly Father with honor.

So essential are these truths that Heavenly Father gave both Lehi and Nephi visions vividly representing the word of God as a rod of iron. Both father and son learned that holding to this strong, unbending, utterly reliable guide is the *only* way to stay on that strait and narrow path that leads to our Savior.

Several chapters of the Book of Mormon are devoted to Lehi and Nephi applying this lesson—searching the scriptures and quoting from them. Clearly they wanted their families



The Lord covenanted with Enos to preserve and bring forth the scriptures “in his . . . due time” (Enos 1:16).

and us to understand the importance of the scriptures, especially Isaiah’s prophecies about the Restoration of the gospel and the coming forth of *their* record—the Book of Mormon—in our day.

The Book of Mormon records how a number of civilizations regarded or *disregarded* the scriptures.

The fate of these civilizations, as recorded in scripture, is a testimony to all the world: if we don’t have the

us on earth today: take hold of the scriptures! Cling to them, walk by them, live by them, rejoice in them, feast on them. Don’t nibble. They are “the power of God unto salvation” (D&C 68:4) that lead us back to our Savior Jesus Christ.

I testify that the scriptures have been “kept and preserved [for us] by the hand of the Lord . . . for a wise purpose in him” (Alma 37:4, 18; see also 1 Nephi 9:5, Words of Mormon

due time” (Enos 1:16). Of the Book of Mormon, the prophet Moroni recorded, it was “written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed” (Book of Mormon title page). The scriptures which we have give prophecies and promises, and they have been fulfilled in *our* day.

What a glorious blessing! For when we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

If you have not heard His voice speaking to you lately, return with new eyes and new ears to the scriptures. They are our spiritual lifeline. **NE**
From an October 2006 general conference address.

When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures.

word of God or don’t cling to and heed the word of God, we will wander off in strange paths and be lost as individuals, as families, and as nations.

As with voices from the dust, the prophets of the Lord cry out to

1:7). Lehi prophesied, “These plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time” (1 Nephi 5:19). The Lord covenanted with Enos to preserve and bring forth the scriptures “in his . . .



By Sara N. Hall

When I was 17 my mother found out she had breast cancer. The shock overwhelmed my family and brought me to my knees in deep prayer. I cried for almost an hour, asking God why He would let this happen and if He would heal my mom. Relief began to come a few days later when our ward members, extended family, friends, and neighbors learned of the news. They rushed to our aid. Meals were brought in, kind words and deeds were exchanged, concern and sympathy given. The love we felt from them was deep.

But even though we received so much help, I fell into a deep depression. I didn't care what happened to me. I stopped doing things I loved. I became lazy and careless with chores, schoolwork, and my Church calling.

I saw my situation and the extra responsibility placed upon me as a great burden. I felt I could do everything myself and did not need anyone's help.

Satan worked especially hard on me, telling me that I should feel burdened, that God wanted me to be unhappy, and that I wasn't anything special. Sadly, for a while I believed it. I couldn't see the bright side of anything. I did not see myself as a daughter of God. Confusion blinded me, and I couldn't see my many blessings. I couldn't even look in the mirror. I felt pain and heartache.



Overcoming Depression

When depression is severe, talk with parents and leaders about seeking professional help, just like anyone with a physical ailment would. Read what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about dealing with mental and emotional challenges at [lds.org/go/helpNE216](https://www.lds.org/go/helpNE216).



SUNDAY LESSONS

This month's topic:
**The Plan
of Salvation**

MY RECOVERY ROOM

My mom was the one who was sick, but I needed to heal too.

Thankfully, a close friend spent a lot of time helping me, and my siblings supported me as well. I became more open with my parents, who in turn became more open with me. But still I struggled.

My mom would often comfort me when I felt down. When I felt like all hope was gone, it was nice to have someone to talk to and help me out. She would come home in between treatments and iron our clothing, prepare meals, and offer us comfort and counsel. It amazed me how she could endure such trials and yet be so selfless.

When I discussed my depression with her one day, she told me that the fact that I cried and admitted I needed help did not make me weak. I realized she was taking care of me when I should have been taking care of her.

After one of her many surgeries, my mom was in the recovery room. At the time, I couldn't help but think I needed my own recovery room. I had no idea where to start the healing process, but I had to do something.

So I started renewing my talents and abilities as well as developing new ones. I cooked and did the laundry. I took more walks to think. I sang solos. I played the clarinet and piano more and began playing better. I read more books. I started to listen to more uplifting music. I surrounded myself with advice from Church leaders and other valuable sources. I became closer to God and my Savior through personal prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

Still I felt like my peace was fleeting. It was hard when I wanted to be at peace on some days, and instead I would feel the sadness. The mood swings became even more difficult. It seemed my journey for peace had only begun.

Then I went to the temple to do baptisms for the dead with my Young Women class. I thought about my problems

while in the temple and while flipping through the pages of my scriptures. I found myself reading about the Savior in Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

A few minutes later, the confusion that had blinded me and caused me so much pain completely vanished. The Lord broke through the darkness and the despair of my heart and left the peace of the Spirit instead. I had a sense of clarity and happiness that I hadn't felt for a long time. I saw how many blessings I had received and how much everyone had done for me and my family. I saw how close my family, friends, and I had become. I saw myself as a truly beautiful daughter of God.

There in the temple I found my recovery room.

Looking back on this experience, I realize that I now have more empathy and compassion for those less fortunate than I am. I know where to recover. The hardest year of my life became the best year of my life. **NE**

Sara N. Hall lives in Utah, USA.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- How can you feel comfort when you face a trial?
- How does the temple remind us of our place in the plan of salvation?

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

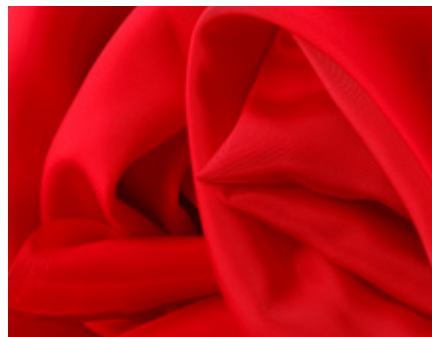
- Go to the temple and seek guidance from Heavenly Father.
- Share your stories of when a knowledge of the plan of salvation brought you comfort at lds.org/go/comfortNE216.

SCARLET, CRIMSON, SNOW, AND WOOL

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord taught of the power of the Savior's Atonement.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Isaiah 1:18.



Scarlet, Crimson

In Isaiah 1:18, the words *scarlet* and *crimson* refer to red colors that come from certain dyes. Ancient cultures placed great importance on dyes, especially those used for sacred or ceremonial purposes, such as burial clothing or purification rituals (see Leviticus 14:6). The point of a dye is that it is not only colorful but also *colorfast*, meaning that its rich color will stick to the cloth and not fade or wash away.

Scarlet and crimson are:

Bright red. Because of the vibrancy of their redness, they are emblems of standing out. Red has a strong psychological effect on people, and it can be reminiscent of blood, which is sometimes a symbol of guilt. Our sins can be grievous and obvious.

Permanent. The colorfast nature of scarlet and crimson dyes is similar to our sins, and “the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance” (Alma 45:16). “According to the great plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish” (Alma 34:9).



ONE OF THE SWEETEST FRUITS OF THE GOSPEL

“I testify that the Savior is able

and eager to forgive our sins. Except for the sins of those few who choose perdition after having known a fulness, there is no sin that cannot be forgiven. What a marvelous privilege for each of us to turn away from our sins and to come unto Christ. Divine forgiveness is one of the sweetest fruits of the gospel, removing guilt and pain from our hearts and replacing them with joy and peace of conscience.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Repent . . . That I May Heal You,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 40–41.



BIBLE FACT

The Hebrew words for scarlet (*shani*) and crimson (*tola*) signify where the colors were derived from—a worm (most likely *Kermes echinatus*).

The scarlet or crimson worm is of a family of insects that live on oak trees. Its lifespan is about 4–14 weeks. For about the last four weeks of its life, the female is ready to be fertilized and lay eggs. She then attaches firmly to the oak tree and produces a red dye, which stains her body as well as her eggs.

Just before the eggs were to hatch, these female insects were gathered, dried, and boiled. Alum was added as a mordant (a chemical that helps the dye stick to the cloth by combining to form an insoluble compound), and the resulting dye was used to make red-colored cloth.

ANOTHER BIBLE FACT

On the cross, the Savior quoted Psalm 22:1: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). A later verse of this messianic psalm states, “I am a worm, and no man” (Psalm 22:6). The Hebrew word used here for “worm” (*tola’at*) refers specifically to the crimson worm.



Snow, Wool

Snow is rare but not unheard-of in most areas of Israel. But, for instance, in the northern part of the country, Mount Hermon is covered in snow every winter (there’s even a ski resort there today). Wool was one of the most common fabrics in ancient Israel, and raising sheep was a common occupation. To make it a purer and brighter white in preparation for dyeing, wool was commonly soaked and washed in a strong soap.

Snow and wool are:

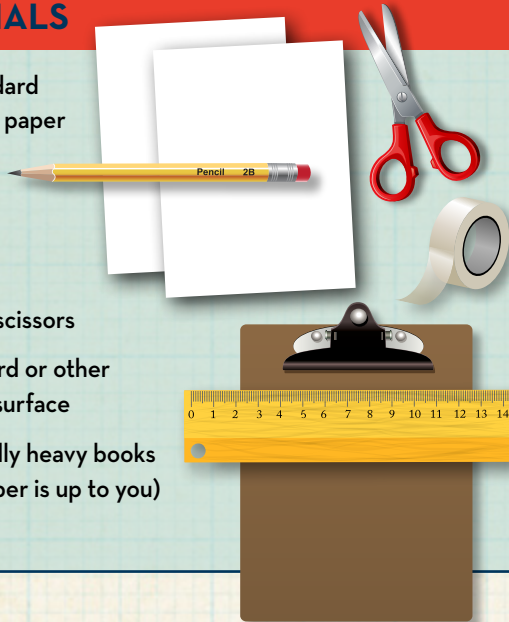
Pure, bright white. White represents purity. When Isaiah says that the Lord can change our sins from scarlet or crimson to snow or wool, he is saying that the Lord can do something that is impossible for us to do on our own. A cloth dyed red stays red. But regardless of the stain of our sins, the Atonement of Jesus Christ can make us pure again if we repent. “All are within the reach of pardoning mercy, who have not committed the unpardonable sin” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 76).

STRONGER THAN IT SEEMS

Teach your family about trusting in God with a simple piece of paper.

MATERIALS

- ▶ Two standard sheets of paper
- ▶ A pencil
- ▶ A ruler
- ▶ Tape
- ▶ A pair of scissors
- ▶ A clipboard or other nice, flat surface
- ▶ Some really heavy books (the number is up to you)



By Mackenzie Brown

Think about a piece of paper—just your standard, run-of-the-mill sheet. What could you do with this piece of paper? Write notes on it? Fold it? Make an airplane out of it?

What if I told you that a little piece of paper could be used to hold up to 60 lbs. (27 kg)? What, you don't believe it? Good. Then your family won't believe it either!

Before you begin the lesson, prepare one of your pieces of paper by turning it horizontally. Next, use your ruler and pencil to draw five vertical lines every $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches (3.65 cm) or so apart. Now on to the lesson!

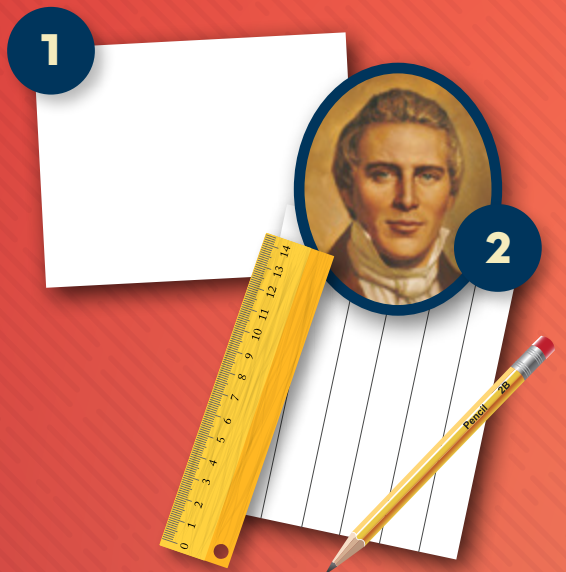
1. BUILDING SUSPENSE

Show your family your unprepared, regular piece of paper. Roll it up into a loose cylinder and hold it up to them. Ask them how much weight they think the piece of paper could support before collapsing. Maybe a water bottle? Your cell phone? Tell them that you can make a piece of paper hold up to 60 lbs. (27 kg).

2. JOSEPH SMITH AND US

Bring out your marked piece of paper. As you're doing this, tell your family the story of Joseph Smith, as recorded in Joseph Smith—History 1:8–26. Pay special attention to verse 22.

“My telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me . . . ; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no



consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me” (Joseph Smith—History 1:22).

As it says in the scripture, Joseph Smith was young—just like you—when he talked with God. The many trials that Joseph faced shaped him into the prophet God needed him to be.

3. SETTING THE STAGE

Start cutting off the strips of paper as marked. Ask your family members to talk about when they’ve faced hard times that were out of their control. As you’re telling stories, hand the strips of paper to your family members and tell them to roll up the strips as tightly as they can. Pass around tape to stop the paper from unrolling, and collect the cylinders from your family. Stand the cylinders on a table and arrange them in two lines of three. Set your flat surface on top of the paper rolls, making sure it’s stable and will distribute weight evenly.

4. STACKING UP

Now, with your platform ready, start stacking the books (carefully) on the platform. Tell your family that while Joseph’s hard times were painful, and he must’ve felt lonely and sad (see Joseph Smith—History 1:22–23; D&C 121), the Lord was preparing him to be His faithful servant and usher in the last dispensation.

5. STAYING STRONG

When you’ve finished stacking all the books, your family can admire the tall tower supported by the little rolls of paper.

Bring out your first piece of paper. Ask your family what they think of that piece of paper now. How much strength does it possess?

We’re just like the paper. When we allow ourselves to be shaped by a Master Builder’s plan, we become so much greater than we would have been on our own.

Cool, huh? **NE**

Mackenzie Brown lives in Utah, USA



TOSSING AWAY YOUR TIME

Don't take a chance on waiting 10 years to find out what you'll be like 10 years from now.

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

I glanced at the quarter in my hand and then eyed the 10-foot distance to the cement wall. The other kid's quarter had landed about six inches from the wall. Another good shot. He'd already won my first quarter last round. Now I had to win it back—and hopefully win an additional quarter from him in the third round.

You see, I wanted a soda with my lunch. And sodas cost 75 cents, which was 25 cents more than I had left after buying lunch at our junior high school cafeteria. Hence the contest.

I tossed my last quarter as skillfully as I could. I hoped for a lucky bounce that would put it closer to the wall than my opponent's, thereby making me the winner.

Nope. My fiendish coin hit the wall hard. I watched as it rolled back farther than my opponent's. He smirked and scooped up the spoils.

"Better luck next time," he said.

It would be an entire school year before it occurred to me that if I'd simply saved my change after lunch,

I could've bought a soda two days out of every three. At the time, though, the idea of turning two quarters into three or more with no effort was too enticing. I lost a lot of quarters that year.

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING

As *For the Strength of Youth* says, "It is false to believe that you can get something for nothing" ([2011], 41).

In terms of money, it was easy to recognize in hindsight how dumb even the low-stakes coin gambling had been.

But what about gambling away or wasting our *time*? In the end we may find we face greater risks in wasting our time than in wasting money.

For example, the sheer number of

hours spent playing a video game or browsing Instagram—the life cost—can easily dwarf the financial cost of the game itself.

"Just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it," taught Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives."¹

Doing these better things with our time is how we accomplish any worthwhile goal. In other words, getting something for something. It's the opposite of gambling away our time.

ROADSIDE LEGAL ADVICE?

Pretend you want to become a lawyer. The idea of battling for justice in the courtroom sounds like a cool career. Yet law school is so far down the road you can't even squint and see it in the distance. What, then, would be the best way to spend your time right now to achieve this goal?

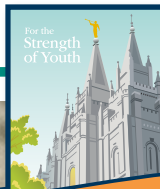
Do you set up a stand alongside the road, complete with a homemade



BECOME YOUR BEST YOU

"We become what we want to be by consistently being what we want to become each day."

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Transforming Power of Faith and Character," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 43.



WORK AND SELF-RELIANCE



sign to gain a little hands-on experience? “Disputes Settled: \$5—Future Lawyer at Your Service!”

No, not quite. We can’t just try our hand at practicing law any more than we can waltz into a hospital and see if we have any natural talent for administering anesthesia. Such professions require long years of training and certification before we can do the actual work.

But here’s the great part. We can still “be” that person right now anyway.

Working hard to clean out the garage—your latest Saturday chore—might not seem to have anything in common with preparing for an important court case, but in fact, they’re the same thing in principle.

Learning to work hard and complete a task to the best of your ability is precisely the skill set you’ll need for any chosen profession, for missionary service, education, marriage and family, Church service, and all the rest.

YOUR FUTURE YOU, RIGHT NOW

If we want to become someone great in the future, here’s the best and truest way to get there: *Be someone great right now.* Even if you’ve made mistakes in the past.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “Our destiny is not determined by the number of times we stumble but by the number of times we rise up, dust ourselves off, and move forward.”² Heavenly Father stands ready to help.

Finishing your homework on time? That’s true greatness in action. Attending the service project even though you’d rather hit the movie theater with friends? Even *more* greatness in action.

Spending time on the best activities is not only how we find happiness and realize our potential down the road, but it’s also how we find happiness and realize our potential today.

So, spend your time purposefully. Your life is much too important to leave to chance. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Can Do It Now!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 55.

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MADSEN



*Want a great career,
family, and testimony?
You can choose the path
to success today!*



YOUR FUTURE

Awesome by Design

Making choices now to achieve your dreams for the future can seem challenging, but good decisions in your teenage years will pay off. This approach follows this counsel from a prophet: “Our daily conduct and choices should be consistent with our goals” (Quentin L. Cook, “Choose Wisely,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 49).

These four stories show that regardless of your specific personal goals, you can achieve future success through committed preparation today.

Illustrating Superheroes: Clint Taylor

Clint grew up in Utah and currently works in California, USA, at Nickelodeon Studios as a storyboard artist.

What are some accomplishments you're proud of?

I've been a director at Warner Brothers Animation, and I've worked for Disney, Warner Bros., DreamWorks Studios, Marvel Comics, and Sony Pictures Entertainment. I've worked on animated shows from the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *X-Men* to *Dora the Explorer*.

How did you get good at what you do?

As a young boy, I enjoyed drawing pictures of what I was interested in. I spent hours drawing soldiers or superheroes or animals or whatever interested me that day. The more I practiced, the better I got at it. I found that my talent grew through diligence, observation, and perseverance. I felt that God had given me a wonderful gift, and I wanted to excel at it.

How did your mission prepare you for career success?

My mission to Korea was crucial in that it helped me learn faith, self-discipline, and commitment to excellence. I came off my mission with a greater sense of confidence. I had done something difficult and succeeded at it. It certainly helped me to be a better student at college.

What part did your education play in your success?

After my mission I studied painting and drawing at the University of Utah College of Fine Arts. Then I spent a semester abroad in France studying art and culture in Europe, which opened my eyes and mind to more artwork.



CLINT

Because of these experiences, I had a fairly extensive portfolio of artwork of my own. As soon as I graduated from the university, I was recruited by a man looking for artists to work on Marvel's *Spider-Man and His Amazing Friends*.

Becoming a Computer Whiz: Ioana Schifirnet

Ioana grew up in Romania and is majoring in information systems at Brigham Young University.

What did you do as a youth that prepared you for this work?

There was no moment when I just suddenly woke up and was good at programming or design, which I do a lot of nowadays. I know that I get to do the work that I'm doing because of a very large number of small decisions along the way.

I wasn't afraid to take hard classes, and I took the time to research different fields and the people in them. I also reached out to professionals and got advice from them. They know the good and the bad parts of the job and can help give you some direction.

What school subjects have been most helpful?

In my experience, the most helpful subjects in high school, and especially in college, had to do with technology. Learning a foreign language (for me, it was English) also helped because it taught me to be more understanding and respectful of other people and cultures. The foreign language might not translate directly into a career, but employers love to see that you have a global perspective.

What are some fears you had?

When I was younger, I feared that I would never really find something that I would enjoy doing. Then when I found something, I was afraid that I didn't have what it took to be successful.

It's normal to feel intimidated when you're trying to figure out what you enjoy, but don't let it paralyze you.

How did you overcome your fears?

The best thing that helped me was to go out and engage in meaningful activities, like doing online tutorials and



joining clubs. That's how clarity, knowledge, and confidence come. A group of friends or a club whose members share your interests can be such a powerful resource. The world is always changing and there is always something new to learn, but if you have a solid support system and great skills, keeping up with it can be fun.

Developing a Love for the Gospel: Jess McSweeney

Jess, a young adult from England, talks about her efforts as a teenager to stay strong in the gospel.

How did you strengthen your testimony?

As a teenager I studied the scriptures because I was counseled by leaders to do so. As I studied in faith, hoping for my testimony to grow, that is exactly what happened.

Now, as a young adult, I have found that my desire to learn and grow in the gospel comes from the way I can use it to impact others. I know that everything I learn can help someone else as well as myself.

Did you make goals to help you?

When I was in seminary, I made a goal to read the scriptures every day. However, as my daily scripture study became a habit, my motivation changed. I started reading not just to reach a goal but also because I loved the scriptures and wanted to strengthen my testimony. That reward isn't tangible, but it is something I can keep forever.

How has your love of the gospel helped you in your life?

Developing a love of gospel learning is not only about gaining knowledge; it's about understanding and applying

gospel principles. As I cultivate the habit of asking questions and seeking answers from the scriptures, I gain a testimony as well as the confidence to share the things I learn with others.

How important is hard work and diligence?

Gaining knowledge in any area of life takes time and effort. But to me, learning the gospel of Jesus Christ is one of the most important things to work hard for. You have to learn of Christ to gain a testimony of Him.

Raising Young Children: Han Lin

Han Lin was born and raised in Taiwan. He and his wife were sealed in the Laie Hawaii Temple, and they now live in Hawaii, USA, with their two children.

What's your definition of a good father?

A good father is not a perfect person, but he is one who is humble enough to take counsel from others and constantly seek to improve himself. A good father puts his family and their needs first. He is willing to sacrifice his time, personal interests, and everything else in order to make his family better. He strives to know how to help each family member grow and become Christlike.

What did you do as a youth that prepared you to be where you are today?

I did my best to keep all the commandments and make good decisions. Going to seminary definitely helped too. It was a big commitment since I had to wake up at 5:00 in the morning. However, I think that having friends who had the same goal as I did was helpful because we lifted each other. I think all the activities that we did as youth and as a group of good friends in the Church really helped us.

What messages from society did you have to overcome to become a good father?

The world tells people that they should have more fun and less responsibility, but hard work is essential in becoming successful at whatever you do. Being a good father requires everything you can give; growing toward perfection is a lifetime process—I grow together with my family.

What would you say to your teenage self and other teenagers?

Everyone needs friends, so make good friends. Be friends with people who are “anxiously engaged in a good cause” (D&C 58:27). Learn from these good friends, and you will be influenced by their examples and have the desire to become like them and improve yourself.

Do your very best in everything that you want to do—don't hold anything back. That way you will have no regrets when you look back. **NE**



JESS



HAN



SPIRITUAL CHECKUP

What are you doing today to prepare for eternity?

What decisions have you made today? Did you put on the boots or the sneakers? Sandwich or pizza for lunch? Did you go to seminary this morning? Every day, you're making hundreds of little decisions. While most of these decisions may seem unimportant, little daily choices add up—and they can equal eternal life if you choose wisely. This life is just one stage of the plan of salvation, but the things you do here—today—will affect your life now and forever.

When President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, was 16, he was sealed to his family in the temple. “We knelt together to be sealed on earth by the power of the priesthood, with a wonderful promise that we could be sealed for eternity,” he said. “I will never forget this magnificent moment.”¹





YOUR TURN

So, how are you doing? Are your choices leading you to eternal covenants and eternal life? Now might be a good time to do a personal spiritual checkup. Find a quiet place and think about what you do every day. How are you following the Savior? Ask Heavenly Father to help you know what you can change.

Take a few minutes and really reflect. You might start with some questions Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited young adults to ask in the April 2015 general conference:²

- Do I search the scriptures regularly?
- Do I kneel in prayer to talk with my Heavenly Father each morning and each night?
- Do I fast and donate a fast offering each month?
- Do I think deeply about the Savior and His atoning sacrifice for me when I am asked to prepare, bless, pass, or partake of the sacrament?
- Do I attend my meetings and strive to keep the Sabbath day holy?
- Am I honest at home, school, church, and work?
- Am I mentally and spiritually clean? Do I avoid viewing pornography or looking at websites, magazines, movies, or apps, including Tinder and Snapchat photos, that would embarrass me if my parents, Church leaders, or the Savior Himself saw me?
- Am I careful with my time—avoiding inappropriate technology and social media, including video games, which can dull my spiritual sensitivity?
- Is there anything in my life I need to change and fix, beginning today?

While you may not be going to the temple to be sealed to your family today, you *can* still have magnificent, eternal moments. When you make choices with eternal goals in mind, every day can be magnificent.

Just think about President Uchtdorf's life. What choices do you think he had to make every day to qualify him to be in the temple? What choices will he have to continue making to achieve his family's eternal goal?

NOW WHAT?

So, what do you feel prompted to change? Jot down some thoughts in your journal. Pick one or two things and try this week to make daily choices with eternal goals in mind. You might be surprised at what a big difference small changes can make—today and eternally. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Facebook post, Dec. 2, 2014, [facebook.com/lds.dieter.f.uchtdorf](https://www.facebook.com/lds.dieter.f.uchtdorf).
2. See M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Young Adults," *Ensign*, May 2015, 67–69.



CAPTAIN MORONI

and the Chance to Dance

ASKING GIRLS TO DANCE? WHEW! NO WAY. BUT THEN CAME THE CHALLENGE.

By Royce Kimmons

The reverberating dance music echoed loudly down the church hallway into the lobby where I sat with a set of scriptures open in my lap. I could hear the other youth laughing and socializing in the cultural hall, and I knew that somewhere down there the handful of young men from my small branch were catching up with old acquaintances.

I was the youngest person from my branch there and was still fairly new to Church dances. I wanted to meet other LDS youth and wanted to dance with some of the young women from my stake, but I always felt too out of place and self-conscious. So, I sat in the lobby.

This wasn't my first dance, either. I'd been to a handful before, and some of the older young women had even asked me to dance, but that only made me more self-conscious. A hundred personal flaws would rush through my mind, and I knew that they were just being nice to the new kid. I felt that no one *really* wanted to dance with *me*.

That's why this time I decided to stay in the lobby and leave them to enjoy themselves without worrying about me. Several times youth leaders and others from my branch tried to convince me to join the activity, but using the scriptures as a shield, I argued that I was happier studying the scriptures, idly reading about the bravery of Nephi, Captain Moroni, and the stripling warriors without putting their examples into practice. I went home that evening feeling miserable and alone.

At subsequent dances, I began to notice something when I went to the gym: as slow songs were played, most

of the young women would sit down and remain seated until the next fast song. Though the more confident young men asked some girls to dance, they always seemed to pick the same two or three young women (generally from their wards). This meant that most of the girls sat through the slow songs watching from the sidelines.

I don't remember exactly when the dance challenge first came about, but a couple of the young men from my branch decided that the young women should be able to dance to the slow songs. The challenge was simple: Ask a different young woman to dance for every slow song, and never sit out a dance.

Taking strength from the stories of Nephi, Captain Moroni, and the stripling warriors, I took the challenge to heart. For every dance after that, I did what I could to ensure that every young woman at every dance would have the chance to dance.

I started by asking any young women who were away from the center of the dance floor or who were from wards or branches that didn't appear to have any young men there. I often had enough time to ask some girls twice, having danced with every young woman at least once.

Because of this goal, I had the opportunity to get to know dozens of incredible young women over the years, and a girl declined to dance with me on only two or three occasions.

The last youth dance I attended was held immediately after seminary graduation. I looked around the small gathering and noticed the faces of dozens of young women I'd danced with during the last three years. I felt grateful

for the experiences I'd had, so I began the dance challenge again for one last time, inviting many girls to dance. Some of the young women were new, but most were now old acquaintances.

As one young woman eagerly jumped up to dance with me, I remembered the first time I'd asked her to dance three years before. I'd been very intimidated to ask her, because she was very beautiful, modest, and mature, and it seemed to me that if any young woman deserved to dance with someone better than me, then it would be her.

As we talked about our plans for college and careers during that last dance, she changed the topic very abruptly.

"I just want to tell you thank you," she said with a sincere smile.

Caught by surprise, I croaked out a confused response: "For what?"

"When I first started coming to these dances," she said, "no one would dance with me or the other girls from my branch. I really wanted to get to know other LDS people, but I'm shy. So I would sit in a chair and wait and wait, but none of the boys would ever ask. It was so humiliating that one time, while sitting and watching other people, I vowed that I would never come to a Church dance again.

"That was just before you asked me to dance for the first time. Because of that, I came to the next dance, where you asked me again. I kept coming to dances these past few years because I knew that even if no one else would ask me to dance, you would. So, thank you."

I found myself at a loss for words. This amazing daughter of God, whom any young man should be honored to dance

with, had experienced the same struggles I'd felt while sitting in that lobby.

I realized that all my fears hadn't been anything to worry about and that by applying the principles of courage, faith, and consistency, I was able to bring happiness into both my life and into the lives of those around me. **NE**

Royce Kimmons lives in Idaho, USA.

... you asked me
to dance
for the first time.
Because of that,
I came to the
next dance ...



THINK BIG

“Don’t let others convince you that you are limited in what you can do.
Believe in yourself and then live so as to reach your possibilities.”

President Thomas S. Monson (“Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2012, 5).



FIVE WAYS TO



FEEL



SHORT ON TIME? TAKE FIVE MINUTES TO FIND JOY TODAY
AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED BY THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES.

GOOD

IN FIVE MINUTES

By Karee Brown

Feeling overwhelmed with your to-do list? Finding a balance between school, church, sports, and other extracurricular activities can sometimes seem impossible. In fact, with a jam-packed schedule it can be hard to feel anything but busy. But guess what? God wants you to have joy—He created you so you could have joy (see 2 Nephi 2:25).

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, “If life and its rushed pace and many stresses have made it difficult for you to feel like rejoicing, then perhaps now is a good time to refocus on what matters most.”¹

Heavenly Father promised that those who keep His commandments will receive “never-ending happiness” (Mosiah 2:41). Never-ending is a whole lot of joy, but it all starts one day at a time. Start with just five minutes at a time, and you’ll be on your way to feeling joy more frequently.

Turn the page for five ideas to get you started.

Here are a few things you can do today—no matter what your schedule looks like.



Ponder

Take a few minutes to step back from everything. Listen to the birds or the wind as you reflect on God's creations and who you are as His child. Take the time to "be still and know that [He is] God" (D&C 101:16).



YOU CAN REJOICE

"Joy is more than happiness. Joy is the ultimate sensation of well-being. It comes from being complete and in harmony with our Creator and his eternal laws."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Joy and Mercy," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 73.



Share a Scripture

Read a conference talk or search the scriptures for an inspiring quote. Text it to a friend or family member or share it on social media. Spending a few minutes focusing on and sharing spiritual things is a great way to feel good.

Express Gratitude

Keep a little notebook and write down things you're grateful for each day, especially when it's hard to find joy in what you're doing. *Choosing gratitude* uplifts your feelings.



Give Appreciation

Think about the people in your life who encourage and support you—parents, leaders, teachers, grandparents, or friends. Take the time to call or text one of them and say how much you love or appreciate them. It's even better if you talk face-to-face.



Secret Service

There are plenty of five-minute secret acts of service you can perform around your house or for your neighbors or classmates. Empty the dishwasher, make a sibling's bed, take the garbage out, help someone carry their gear, or write a nice note to someone who's feeling down. **NE**

Karee Brown lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Of Things That Matter Most," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 22.

ARE YOU REALLY FEELING JOY OR ARE YOU ENJOYING A SITUATION?

Sometimes we think *joy* and *enjoyment* are the same, but they aren't.

To enjoy is temporary. It's taking delight or pleasure in an activity or occasion. Enjoyment is what you feel when you're being entertained or eating your favorite treat.

Joy is lasting. Joy can be eternal. It's a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. The good feeling you get when you recognize that Heavenly Father loves you or when you feel peace and happiness in the temple—that's joy.

My Almost-Missed MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

For a Personal Progress goal, I started praying to have a missionary experience. I tried to figure out which of my friends would be most willing to join the Church.

Months passed, and I thought I wouldn't have the experience that I sought—until I met Brenda. It was her first year at our school.

As the year progressed, we became close schoolmates, but it didn't occur to me to invite her to church until one of our friends invited Brenda to her church. I thought, "I don't believe it! I should've thought of that."

The next week Brenda said she enjoyed going to our friend's church and wanted to go again. I thought, "I've lost out." Not that it was a competition, but I wanted to take the gospel to Heavenly Father's children.

At that time our meetinghouse was being renovated and was scheduled to be rededicated in a few months. The bishop handed out invitations for an open house and the dedication. I invited all my friends who lived near the meetinghouse. The only one who accepted was Brenda. I was excited.

A few days before the open house, Brenda said she might not be able to go because her mother didn't want her to. I was disappointed, but

I understood and told her there would be other opportunities to learn about the Church.

At the open house, however, I was surprised to see Brenda there. She had talked to her mother, who ended up letting her go. I introduced her to the missionaries. We went to each room in the meetinghouse and heard a brief description of each Church organization. Finally, we went to the cultural hall and picked up pamphlets about the Restoration, family history, eternal marriage, and other gospel topics. Brenda said, "I believe in this!"

On Sunday she attended church. On Monday she attended a Mormon Helping Hands service project.

The seed that was planted in Brenda's heart grew with each passing day. She started changing her habits to conform with the commandments and was soon baptized.

Now, a few years later, she still tells me how happy she is to have found the true gospel and how grateful she is that I helped her find it.

Many times it is difficult to talk to people about the gospel, but if we pray, study the scriptures, listen to the Holy Ghost, and are willing to talk to someone, the Lord will help us. **NE**
Anne Laleska lives in Sergipe, Brazil.



By Anne Laleska

I wanted to share the gospel, but which of my friends might be interested?



When the Road Gets Bumpy,

ENJOY CATCHING SOME AIR

Find answers to help you deal with your trials.

By Barbara A. Lewis

Life is tough! Your friends snub you. The pop quiz pops up at just the wrong time. You don't get the part or make the team. You lose someone you love. You can't help but ask, "Why is this happening?" The thing is, we all signed up for this bumpy road in premortal life. It's part of Heavenly Father's plan. You don't need to pretend it doesn't hurt, but how you handle those nasty bumps in the road can determine your happiness now and in eternity.

If you learn from your troubles and submit to Heavenly Father's will, you'll grow into the incredible person He wants you to become. In His time, the Lord will make up for all the things that seem unfair in your life. Until then, He's given you tons of guidance in His scriptures!

When facing a bump in the road, consider this process from the chart at right: (1) write down the trial, (2) think of stories from ancient or modern prophets who faced similar things, and (3) read the stories again and identify principles that helped them and could help you.

Barbara A. Lewis lives in Utah, USA.



ANSWERS TO REAL-LIFE PROBLEMS

"The words of the Lord are found in the scriptures and the teachings of the apostles and prophets. They provide us counsel and direction that, when followed, will act like a spiritual life jacket."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Stay in the Boat and Hold On!" *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 91.



MY TRIAL

Example:
I feel so alone. I don't have any friends, and I don't feel like I fit in anywhere. I know I should go to church and Mutual, but it's hard to go when the other kids leave me out.

STORIES FROM SCRIPTURES OR MODERN PROPHETS

Example:
When Alma came to the city of Ammonihah, he tried everything to get somebody to listen to the message of the gospel. But they insulted him, spit on him, and threw him out (see Alma 8:13). He knew what rejection felt like! He left, feeling alone and sad, until an angel told him to return. Because Alma obeyed and kept trying, he felt joy and rejoiced (see Alma 8:15). Before long, he met Amulek, who became a true friend and support.

WHAT I LEARNED

- Example:*
- Sometimes true friends take a long time and a lot of effort to find. But don't give up!
 - No matter how alone I feel, the Lord is always aware of me and will help me.
 - Even prophets felt alone. It's part of life.

MY TRIAL

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STORIES FROM SCRIPTURES OR MODERN PROPHETS

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WHAT I LEARNED

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MY TRIAL

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WHAT I LEARNED

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ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF HARVEY



By Elder
Chi Hong (Sam)
Wong
Of the Seventy

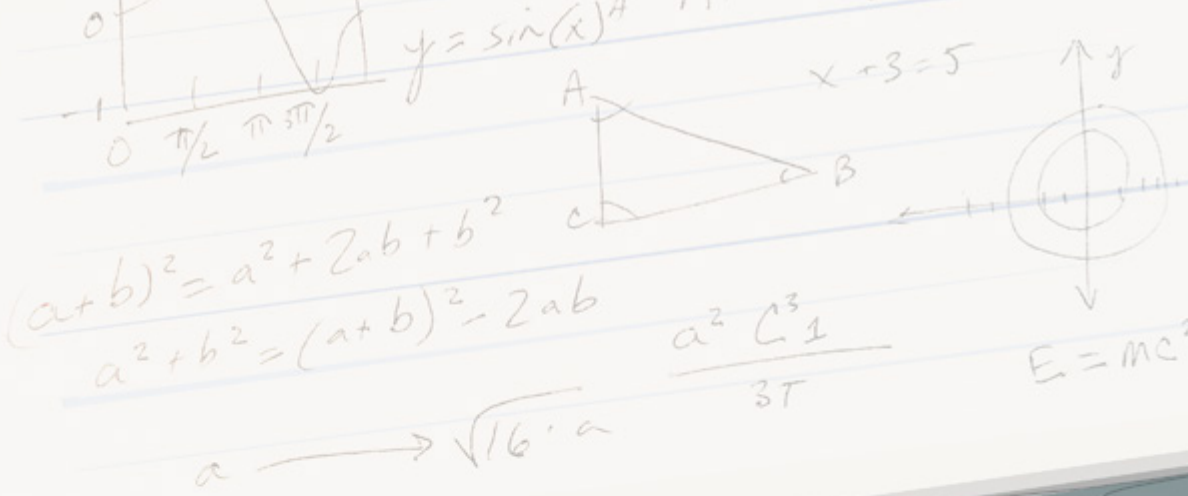
Help through the

HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost can help you with school, family,
and work as well as spiritual matters.



ILLUSTRATION BY RED HANSEN



The Holy Ghost can help us in every part of our lives. I learned this in a practical way when I was a college student at Brigham Young University–Hawaii.

At the time, I was working and taking a full schedule of classes. My wife and I also had a small baby to care for. With all these demands on my schedule, I didn't have much time for studying. I prayed every day for the companionship of Holy Ghost. I needed guidance to help me make the most of my time. I needed assistance understanding the material as well as remembering it later during exams.

Heavenly Help for a School Exam

One day during class, a professor was writing sets of advanced equations on the whiteboard to illustrate a point. These complex equations didn't relate to that class, but he wanted to talk about them briefly. After a few minutes the professor erased the board.

My next class was computer science, and we had an exam that day. Those exact

equations from the board in my previous class were on the test! What's truly remarkable is that we had never studied these before in our computer science class. All that memory came back to me from the other class I had attended, and I was able to answer the problem.

When the computer science professor graded the tests, he was so sure nobody answered that specific problem correctly that he automatically marked it wrong for every student. But when I got my paper back, I showed him that the answer I wrote on the paper was correct. It was wonderful.

The Holy Ghost helped me make the most of all my studying opportunities throughout college. I was able to achieve high grades and earn scholarships, which helped me pay for school.

Guidance through Life

Toward the end of my studies, many of my friends were planning to continue their schooling and achieve a master's degree. I loved studying and wanted to do the same thing, but the Spirit told me clearly that my mission in Hawaii was complete. It was time for me to return home to Hong Kong.

My wife and I followed the prompting. At the time I couldn't understand why I was being directed away from continuing my education. But sometimes we follow the Spirit without knowing all the details. Though my wife and I didn't know what to expect as we looked for jobs and an apartment, we were blessed and soon found success.

As I look back now, I understand why the Spirit was so strong in encouraging us to return to Hong Kong. It was very valuable to my family and me to be strengthened in the Church among the members there. I served

TWO WAYS TO STAY IN TUNE

To Heavenly Father, everything is spiritual—every part of our lives. He knows what is best for us and wants to teach us and guide us through life. So it is vital that we stay in tune with the spiritual guidance of the Holy Ghost in order to receive that guidance. Here are two ways that I've found help me stay in tune with the Holy Ghost:

1. Read the Book of Mormon every day.

When I was young, the President of the Church, Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), taught the importance of reading the Book of Mormon daily. I started doing that, and I've done so ever since as far as I can remember. Each day I find a quiet moment to read and ponder. As I read, many times the Holy Ghost teaches me something new.

2. Avoid worldly distractions.

You youth are so talented in so many ways. You're so sharp and can be so amazingly spiritually in tune. But the world tries hard to distract you. If you're willing to pay attention and block out distractions, then you will receive the guidance you need from the Holy Ghost.

as a bishop, as a counselor in the stake presidency, and as a stake president before being called as an Area Seventy. After retiring from my profession, I was able to earn a master's degree. All of those experiences helped prepare me for my current calling.

I testify to you that seeking after and following the guidance of the Holy Ghost is always the best way to plan and live your life. You were already given the gift of the Holy Ghost when you were confirmed a member of the Church, and if you will use that gift, it will be a huge help in all that you do. **NE**

Mom was going to love me for this.



WHEN BROTHERS DISH IT OUT



By Will Marriott

“Hey, Trace, where did Mom go tonight?” I called out as I walked through the dirty kitchen. It looked like a tornado had blown through—dirty dishes were all over the place.

“I don’t know. She and Dad went to a dinner party with some friends,” replied the youngest of my 11 brothers and sisters as he watched a basketball game.

“So, is this food up for grabs?” I asked, hoping to find something in the pots and pans.

Wesley, number 10 of the 11, came bounding down the old, battered stairs, and as he ran to see the latest basketball score, he said, “Mom made it for us and left for the party. She said she’ll be back late and to not make too much of a mess.”

“Too late for that,” I mumbled. “Man. Good thing it’s not my night to clean up.”

The Christmas season was in full swing, and having our whole family in town made for a heavy amount of stress that seemed to wind up in Mom’s shoulder muscles. That’s when the idea came to me. It had been a while since I’d done anything but dirty the house—so why not surprise Mom and make it less dirty for a change?

After having a bite to eat, I tried for a miracle. “Wes, Trace, what do you think about cleaning this place up for Mom?”

“You can do what you want. I’m watching the game,” Trace said. He sounded bugged by the mere thought of trading dishes for the game.

“I knew it was pointless to ask you two,” I grumbled, feeling annoyed. The giant mound of dirty dishes was daunting, but someone had to do the job.

Usually when Mom asks me to clean the kitchen I whine for at least five minutes before grudgingly carrying out her wish. I typically react to her pleas for help with pride and selfishness. So this time, at first I started cleaning because I was looking for her praise. But soon I felt a joy that I can’t explain in doing the work without being asked.

As I began to slosh dishes around in the sink and squeeze the pineapple-scented dish soap into the steaming water, something unexpected began to happen.

Slowly, as if trying to hide the fact that he was even thinking of helping, Wesley wandered in and said, “I’ll dry if you wash.” Not wanting to scare him off, I nodded without looking at him.

“OK,” I said, “but the element of surprise is everything, so let’s move fast.”

Two minutes later, Trace walked sheepishly into the kitchen and said, “I’ll wipe the counters and sweep, but that’s it. And if I miss anything cool in the game, I’m going to be mad.”

“No prob,” I answered. “The faster

we go, the faster we’ll be done. If Mom could only see us now, I think she’d have a heart attack.”

“Yeah,” they both said in unison.

“I was just thinking. What if we did the math?” Wes said. “There are 365 days in a year, times 13 of us, and then add three meals a day. I can’t even work those numbers. I’m just glad I’m not Mom.”

“It’s 14,235,” declared Trace triumphantly.

“Oh, and then times it by each utensil and cup on the table. I’m beginning to feel depressed. I don’t even know how Mom handles us all.”

“Hurry, here they come!” Trace yelled just as we caught sight of the car’s headlights. “Quick, hide!” I ran to my position at the top of the stairs, just out of eyesight, listening intently for Mom’s response to the sparkling countertops. As I waited, I sat thinking about what had just happened. We’d sacrificed half an hour that would have been wasted in front of the TV. How simple it was to give so little and have it mean so much.

The hum of the car’s motor cut out. The car doors opened and thumped shut. As the kitchen door swung open with a burst of icy winter air, we heard these rewarding words, “Oh! Heavenly angels have been at work!” **NE**

Will Marriott lives in Utah, USA.

SERVING TOGETHER

ACROSS

FAITHS

Socks, chalk, rakes, and more—these friends of diverse faiths are uniting to make their community a cleaner, happier, better place.

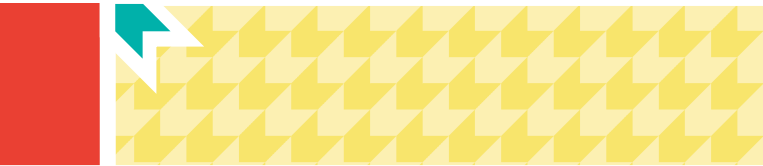
By Jill Hacking

Church Magazines

When Ryan Q., 15, of Missouri, USA, finished his Eagle Scout project a few years ago, he was itching for more of that just-served, feeling-great excitement, and he didn't think his work was done. "I felt the community could still use volunteers," Ryan says. "And I saw a need for youth specifically to serve in the community." A couple friends from his homeschooling group agreed. "We started out with myself and one other friend coming, but we've grown to about 10–15 people coming to a project." The youth come from different family and religious backgrounds, but they all share the same desire to serve.

Three years after they first came together, the interdenominational service group is still going strong. Ryan and the others work with local organizations—like senior citizen aid groups and environmental protection groups—to identify needs in the community. Then they plan and enthusiastically complete a project every month during the school year. Activities have covered all kinds of things, including cleaning yards and streams, lifting spirits, and helping feed the hungry.





UNITING IN SERVICE

“When we join hands to serve people in need, the Lord unites our hearts. . . . The feelings of unity will multiply the good effects of the service you give. And those feelings of unity in families, in the Church, and in communities will grow and become a lasting legacy long after the project ends.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Opportunities to Do Good,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 25.

HELPING PAWS

“My favorite activity was at a local animal shelter,” says 17-year-old Jessica M., who identifies with Metaphysical Spirituality. “We helped organize all the pet supplies. And then we got to play with the cats!” They also hosed out cages and gave the workers a much-appreciated hand. “The best part of being in this group is meeting friends and helping animals and people,” she says.

FAVORITE FRIENDS

“I also like visiting the assisted-living homes because I get along well with seniors,” Jessica says. “We talk and share stories and sing while Ryan and others play the piano.”

Visiting with elderly members of the community has been a popular activity—and the group has done it more than once. “We went to an Alzheimer’s home over Christmas,” says Ryan. “We each sat with a resident and got to know them. We made crafts and sang Christmas carols together. All the youth felt the Spirit and wanted to do the project again!”

Another time, they took “warm fuzzy cupcakes” (fuzzy socks rolled into the shape of cupcakes) to the residents of another assisted-living home.

“While there we celebrated a woman’s 101st birthday!” says Ryan. “We had a great time talking with the residents, laughing with their jokes, and learning from their life lessons. One woman was 103 and still loved doing crossword puzzles on her iPad with her friend who was 102!”

CHALK IT UP TO KINDNESS

Looking for a cheap project with a big reach, the group harnessed the power of sidewalk chalk. They obtained approval from the city and set out. “We went downtown and wrote kind messages on the sidewalk

with chalk,” says Isabelle C., a 15-year-old Lutheran. “When we finished, we left some chalk and wrote a message saying ‘write some more’ so other people could keep writing kind messages. This was my favorite project because I knew the messages we wrote would make someone smile. And they made me smile!”

“What I love most about the service group is knowing that through the activities we do, I’m helping someone in need,” she says. “I also love being able to connect with the other people who are in the group. The service group is a great way to build strong relationships. All the members in the group are service-minded teenagers who love helping others.”

IN THE SERVICE OF CHRIST

Ryan’s already thinking of more ways to serve. “We’ve been focusing on teen-only service projects, but next year we’re hoping to include families as well. I’m also trying to find more projects where we can work directly with people. We’ve found that those are the activities when we most feel the Spirit and the joy of serving.”

“This has been a great opportunity to reach out and do work with members of other faiths,” Ryan says. “Service has provided an experience where we can all bond in the service of Christ.”

YOUR TURN

Want to start your own community service group—and keep it going? Ryan’s advice: look to groups you’re already a part of. Find people with a shared interest. “Our homeschool community provided the niche that nurtured the group. But it could be any niche—be it a yoga club, hiking group, whatever—just as long as the values are the same and the connections are made, the group will flourish.” **NE**



Share your service ideas and get ideas from others at lds.org/go/serveNE216.

Isaiah 58:13-14

The prophet Isaiah taught us some of the blessings of keeping the Sabbath day holy.



A DELIGHT

Delight—A thing that gives joy, gratification, or satisfaction.

“Faith in God engenders a love for the Sabbath; faith in the Sabbath engenders a love for God. A sacred Sabbath truly is a delight.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 132.

HONOUR

Honor—To hold in high regard; to treat with respect or reverence; to acknowledge the greatness or rank of; to give deference or heed to; to place a high priority on.

RIDE UPON THE HIGH PLACES OF THE EARTH

“High places” can be mountains, hills, strongholds, or holy places. This phrase refers to Deuteronomy 32:13, which states some of the ways the Lord blessed His covenant people of Israel. It basically means that the Lord will bless His covenant people to rise above all obstacles, be protected and out of the reach of danger, be victorious over enemies (see Deuteronomy 33:29), and be closer to God.

TURN AWAY THY FOOT

The law of Moses restricted travel on the Sabbath as part of the commandment to rest from your labors. Of course, we don’t need to count the number of steps we take on the Sabbath, but our hearts, minds, and souls should be turned to God on that day and not to our own temporal or worldly concerns.

13 ¶ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the “high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

SABBATH

Sabbath—A day of rest and worship instituted by God and commemorating His seventh day of rest at the Creation (see Exodus 20:10–11). After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, Church members began commemorating the first day of the week (the Lord’s day) rather than the seventh. (See Bible Dictionary, “Sabbath.”)

OWN PLEASURE

“Not pursuing your ‘own pleasure’ on the Sabbath requires self-discipline. You may have to deny yourself of something you might like. If you choose to delight yourself in the Lord, you will not permit yourself to treat it as any other day. Routine and recreational activities can be done some other time.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 132.

FEED THEE WITH THE HERITAGE OF JACOB

The Lord’s covenant promises were given to Abraham, then Isaac, and then Jacob (or Israel). These promises included the gospel, the priesthood, posterity, and a land of inheritance, as well as blessings related to eternal salvation and increase (see Bible Dictionary, “Abraham, covenant of”). The Sabbath is a sign between the Lord’s people and the Lord (see Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20).

Editor’s note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected seminary scripture mastery verses, only a starting point for your own study.

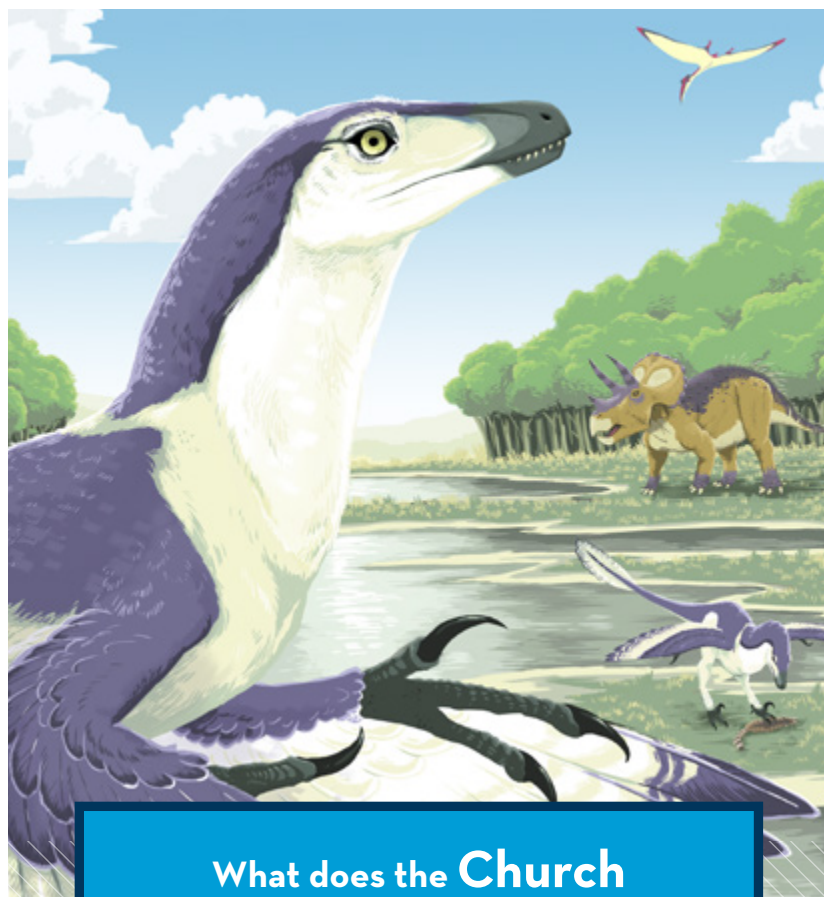
Why is church so repetitive?

In one of his epistles to the early Saints, the Apostle Peter said:

“I will not be negligent *to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them*” (2 Peter 1:12; emphasis added).

First of all, repetition is a basic principle of teaching and learning. The gospel contains truths, doctrines, and principles that we need to keep in our minds and hearts as we live our lives from day to day. We’re much more likely to remember these things if we hear them repeated often. As prophets have said in a number of different ways, “O, remember, remember” (see, for instance, Mosiah 2:41). And in the case of the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, repetition means renewal and thus, ultimately, salvation.

Secondly, it’s not essential that everything we hear in church be new, only that it be true, relevant, and applicable. We come to church not so that we can satisfy our “itching ears” (2 Timothy 4:3) by hearing “some new thing” (Acts 17:21) but so that we can be spiritually fed, renewed, and instructed. We follow the scriptures and the prophets, who receive revelation and inspiration from God to guide the Church. If something is repeated often, it may simply mean that we really need to hear it and heed it. **NE**



What does the Church believe about dinosaurs?

Did dinosaurs live and die on this earth long before man came along? There have been no revelations on this question, and the scientific evidence says yes. (You can learn more about it by studying paleontology if you like, even at Church-owned schools.)

The details of what happened on this planet before Adam and Eve aren’t a huge doctrinal concern of ours. The accounts of the Creation in the scriptures are not meant to provide a literal, scientific explanation of the specific processes, time periods, or events involved. What matters to us is that as part of His plan for us, God created the earth and then created Adam and Eve, who were our first parents and were instrumental in bringing about the Fall, which enabled us to be born on earth and participate in God’s plan. (See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 105.) **NE**

“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?”

A comparison might help your friends. You could explain that just as your body needs to eat and drink and sleep and your mind needs to learn, your spirit also needs to be fed. Attending church helps you feed your spirit.

You do this by learning the gospel and taking the sacrament, renewing the sacred promises you have made with Heavenly Father. This reflection and recommitment help you receive the promised blessing to “always have his Spirit to be with [you]” (D&C 20:77). Having His Spirit with you strengthens your faith and helps you become more Christlike.

You can also talk to your friends about other blessings you receive. You might tell them about the peace that you feel at church, share something helpful that you learned at church, tell about an opportunity you had to serve, or testify that going to church helps make the Sabbath day a delight (see Isaiah 58:13–14).

Perhaps the most powerful way to help your friends is to invite them to come and see for themselves. As they attend sacrament meeting and the other meetings with you, they will be able to feel the power of the Holy Ghost, learn the gospel, and see its blessings in members’ lives. **NE**



Let the Spirit Guide

You could bear your testimony about going to church. You could explain how good

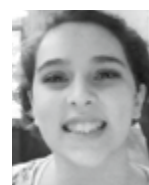
it makes you feel and how special the things you learn about are. As you bear your testimony, the Spirit will help you know what to say, and your friends will know that what you’re saying is true. The more they know, the more interested they might become. You can even invite them to come to church with you.

Mikelle M., 13, Utah, USA

Invite Them to Church

It’s hard to have friends who think that going to church is a waste of time, although we can feel happy for them as we help them come to know what our Father in Heaven has in store for each one of them. We can help them by inviting them to church so they can feel the joy of being in a dedicated meetinghouse and by having faith that they can feel love toward Heavenly Father and become aware of the blessings we receive by attending church.

Oscar Y., 19, Monagas, Venezuela



Focus on the Sacrament

Coming to church is important because it is the place where we

can renew our baptismal and all our

covenants through the sacrament. The Lord promises that His Spirit will always be with us if we partake of the sacrament worthily and fulfill our side of the covenant. The protection, direction, and comfort that we get from the Spirit are essential for our day-to-day lives. These unique blessings cannot be received any other way besides showing up at church and partaking of the sacrament.

Diana R., 16, Oregon, USA



Be Bold

You can help them understand by simply talking to them, inviting them, giving them scriptures, or even inviting the missionaries over to their house. Don't be shy. Be happy because they just might join the Church.

David H., 12, New Mexico, USA

Do Your Part

Going to church is not a waste of time if you actively participate and try to learn and understand what is being said or taught. You can feel the Spirit, and sometimes you can meet new people.

Ethan H., 15, Utah, USA

Keep the Eternal Perspective

Knowing that the Church is the kingdom of God on earth, we go to church every Sunday to take a step toward perfection and toward the

celestial kingdom. By going to church every Sunday, we get closer to Heavenly Father by renewing our covenants (taking the sacrament), and we evaluate ourselves to see how we are doing spiritually.

Esther M., 17, Kasai-Oriental Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Let Your Light Shine

As members of the Church, we shine with the things that we've learned in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Setting a good example and showing your friends that you're happy with the blessings that you've received through going to church can possibly teach them that going to church is worth it.

Johanna R., 20, Surigao del Sur, Philippines

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



A DAY OF DELIGHT

"The wards and branches of the Church offer a weekly gathering of respite and renewal, a time and place to leave the world behind—the Sabbath. It is a day to 'delight thyself in the Lord' [Isaiah 58:14], to experience the spiritual healing that comes with the sacrament, and to receive the renewed promise of His Spirit to be with us."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Why the Church," Ensign, Nov. 2015, 109.

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How do I make time for weekly youth activities, family home evening, and family and personal scripture study when school and homework take so much of my time?"

Send your answer and photo by March 15, 2016.

Go to newera.lds.org, and click "Submit Your Work." Sign in with your LDS Account, and then select "New Era" under "Choose Magazine." Click "Add File" to select your file and photos, and then click "Submit" to upload and send us your file.

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



The Plan of Salvation

When a family member dies, when you don't feel like you're worth much, when life seems random, your knowledge of the plan of salvation can help get you through.

As you study and discuss this topic at home and in church this month, you may ask yourself these questions:

- What is the purpose of this life?
- How can I help others understand the purpose of this life?
- How does knowing that God has a plan for me change the way I act?

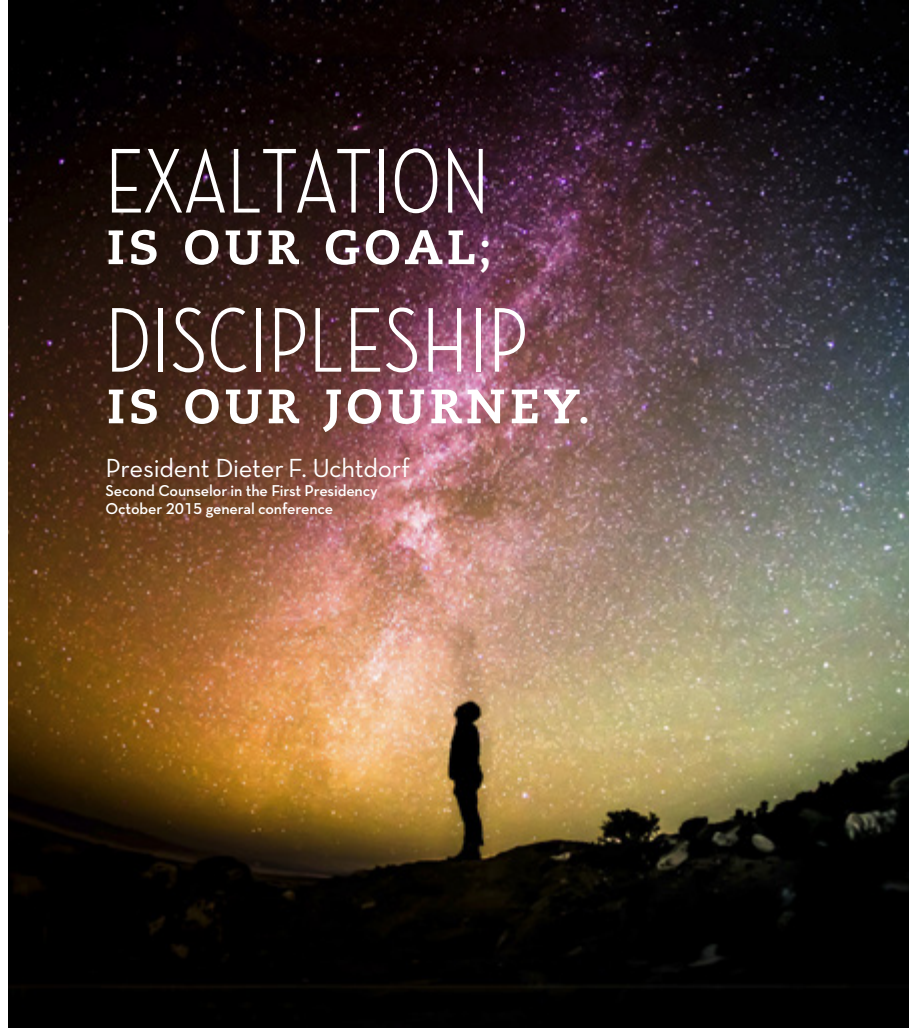
For some answers to these questions, read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Salvation, Plan of," "Gospel," and "Earth, Purpose of." You'll also find teachings on the commandments in October 2015 general conference talks at conference.lds.org.

Share These Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to think about this month's theme. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE216.

EXALTATION IS OUR GOAL; DISCIPLESHIP IS OUR JOURNEY.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf
Second Counselor in the First Presidency
October 2015 general conference



WE COME TO THIS EARTH TO NURTURE THE SEEDS OF DIVINE NATURE THAT ARE WITHIN US.

Rosemary M. Wixom
Primary general president
October 2015 general conference



I know you're trying to get us to church on time, but I don't think putting the milk on our cereal the night before is helping.

VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



Think of us as your personal trainers, here to help you work out your salvation.

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



I would love to ask Ashley to the dance, but I don't have her number in my contacts! How can I text her?!

Um . . . you could just talk to her.



RYAN STOKER

This is a journey to the promised land, Laman—not a cruise.



JON CLARK



FASTING WITH A PURPOSE

Recently I decided to take my fast Sundays to a new level and really focus on fasting with a purpose. The question was what to fast for. I'm doing pretty well. As a junior in high school, I serve in student government, get good grades, and have a passion for volleyball and the gospel. But as I read my patriarchal blessing, I felt different about myself. I felt like the Lord had so much more planned for me, so I fasted on how I could be a light for the world.

Fasting was a great experience, but I didn't have any huge personal revelations. On Monday I was back to my normal routine. Then the following Wednesday, ESPN asked if I would be their elite athlete blogger on their

high school volleyball website! They wanted me to write about whatever I wanted to for that audience.

Because of this experience, I've been able to mix my passion for volleyball with my standards and gospel insights in my blogs. I feel like I'm able to share who I really am in a personal way on a national platform.

When I fasted, I'd hoped that I could be the person my patriarchal blessing said I was, but I didn't see how it was possible. The Lord gave me a voice and He wants me to use it.

I have a huge testimony of fasting with a purpose, and I know that if we have faith, the Lord will fulfill His promises in His own way.

Cosy B., California, USA

PUTTING GOD FIRST

With only a few weeks left in the school year, one of my best friends wanted to have a party at his house to celebrate the end of school. Knowing I was LDS, he told me there would be no “bad things happening,” so I could attend. I told him I’d be there, but then two hours before the party started, I got a strong impression that I shouldn’t go.

It wasn’t easy, but I followed the feeling and told my friend I couldn’t come anymore for personal reasons. He was somewhat offended. He told me how other Mormons would be going and how I was just scared to go to a party. But I just thanked him for inviting me and said I hoped the night would be fun. Later I discovered that some kids came with alcohol, hookah, and even a “weed brownie.” I was told that I “missed a great night,” and since then, I haven’t been invited to another party like it—all because I followed the Spirit and put God and my standards before popularity. But because of that decision, I’ve been given a gift to see who my true friends are and whom I can trust.

I know that God is always

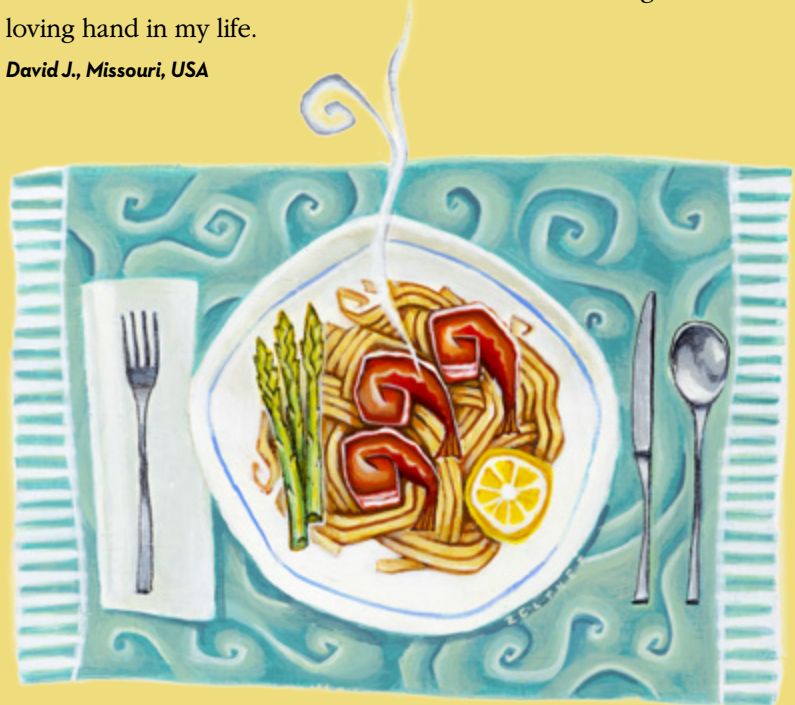
WHY WAS I PRAYING?

I’m serving as a missionary, and I love teaching people about Jesus Christ and helping them learn how to follow Him more closely. But sometimes it’s the teacher who learns the most.

One evening, while at a member’s home for dinner, I was asked to pray. As I was doing so, I realized it was starting to sound a lot like the last prayer I’d said at a member’s home. A thought came into my mind, “Whom are you praying to? Them or God?” It shocked me enough that I paused for a moment. I realized that I was praying “to be heard of men” (Alma 38:13) and not out of a sincere desire to communicate with my Father in Heaven. I was doing it out of duty instead of out of love for God.

As I finished my prayer, I silently thanked God for revealing my faults to me. I promised Him that I would pray to be heard of Him and not just to say nice words. As I’ve since kept that promise, I’ve drawn so much closer to Him and have been better able to recognize His loving hand in my life.

David J., Missouri, USA



looking out for us. As we put Him first in our lives, He will be there in the crucial moments that help us on our way back to Him. This is one of the purposes of life. We’re not here to

be popular (although it seems nice at times) but to live with God again. And the only way to do that is to put God first, no matter the situation.

Mason B., Washington, USA



By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO FIND JOY

Brothers and sisters, old and young, I plead with each of you to **remember that wickedness never was happiness** and that sin leads to misery. Young people, do not seek happiness in the glittering but shallow things of the world. We cannot achieve lasting happiness by pursuing the wrong things. Someone once said, “You can never get enough of what you don’t need, because what you don’t need won’t satisfy you.”

Young and old, **turn your eyes and your hearts away from the deceptive messages of the media.** There is no happiness in alcohol or drugs, only enslavement. There is no happiness in violence, only pain and sorrow. There is no happiness in sexual relations and physical familiarities outside the bonds of marriage, only degradation and increased momentum along the way to spiritual death.

There is no lasting happiness in what we possess. **Happiness and joy come from what a person is,** not from what he or she *possesses* or *appears to be*. Youth, **hold fast to your standards. Study and use** that saving pamphlet, ***For the Strength of Youth*.**

Righteousness fosters righteousness. The effects of righteous examples are felt for generations to come. Good parenting produces youth who make good parents. Just as many of us have been strengthened by the noble examples of our pioneering ancestors in many lands, so the righteous choices and sacrifices of our day can bless our families and our friends and our nations for all the years to come.

I testify to you of the lasting happiness and ultimate joy of those who exercise faith in God and keep His commandments. I urge each of you to **seek the joy that comes from keeping the commandments of God and exerting a righteous influence** for the benefit of those we love. **NE**

From an October 1991 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Last year at school I decided to try to do more with some of my friends. But I realize now that I actually began to be worldly and isolate myself from my family and my actual friends. This brought a lot of unnecessary heartache, which I could have avoided. This year I focused a lot more on the Church. I have found true happiness and joy as a result of trying to develop charitable and Christlike attributes. I know that this blessing is available for anyone who will seek it diligently.

**Ephream James O., 17,
Australia**



Share Your Experiences

Share how you find true joy in life and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/joyNE216.

HIS LAWS ARE A MANIFESTATION
OF HIS LOVE FOR US AND

OBEDIENCE

TO HIS LAWS IS AN EXPRESSION
OF OUR LOVE FOR HIM.

Carole M. Stephens

First counselor in the Relief Society general presidency
October 2015 general conference



WHAT'S ONLINE



EVERYTHING *You Need to Know*

It's easy to get overwhelmed when you think about everything you have to do—especially when you consider eternity! Elder Neil L. Andersen said to not worry about everything you don't know or have control over. Just remember, "You know enough," he said. Stay true to the plan of salvation, and God will help you on your journey. Watch a short clip from his message at lds.org/go/planNE216.



CHECK OUT TONS
OF EASY SERVICE IDEAS AT

lds.org/go/serviceNE216

FIND JOY *Every Day*

After reading "Five Ways to Feel Good in Five Minutes" (see page 24), keep in mind another way to feel good: serving. Need ideas? Check out over 20 service ideas that take five minutes or less. Spread sunshine to the people in your life, and you're bound to feel the warmth yourself!

PIZZA *and Family History*

Need another reason to get together for family history work? How about pizza? These youth enjoyed the work by having a pizza party. Watch their experience and brainstorm ideas to get the youth in your ward involved.



WATCH HOW
THESE YOUTH DID IT AT

lds.org/go/pizzaNE216