



# START THE YEAR RIGHT

BY BRITTANY WEISLER

I always look forward to the priesthood blessings my dad gives us before the school year because they give me strength and peace for the year ahead. I remember being scared when I was going into middle school for the first time because we had just moved. In my blessing I was promised that if I chose the right and was kind to everyone around me, the Lord would watch over me and bless me.

That year I tried to reach out to others and choose the right. I began reading the Book of Mormon, and throughout the year I was filled with peace.

I knew the Lord was keeping His promise because I was doing what I was supposed to be doing. At the end of the school year I knew it had been a hard year, but I had tried my best, and the Lord had kept his promise.

I am so thankful I have a dad who can give me priesthood blessings. Those blessings have strengthened my testimony because I have been able to feel and see them working in my life. Knowing that the Lord is able to work through my dad to speak and help me has strengthened my relationship with my Heavenly Father and my earthly father. **NE**

# MY WAY OUT

BY KATIE HAFEN

Over the past school year, I've noticed more and more the immorality and profanity in the high school environment. When I went to school dances, the dress, the dancing, and the music were so vulgar that I never felt comfortable. Even in the classroom I heard swearing of equal vulgarity and could hardly wait to get away from it. When I borrowed music from my friends, there would be some really good songs that might swear once, and I would have to make a choice to get the song or not.

I felt a huge weight dragging down my spirit, making it hard to even feel happy. The only way that I was able to endure was to remember a scripture mastery from the New Testament. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). I realize that other people have the same problems to get through, and that no matter what trials are thrown at me, I can get through them all with God's help. If we are tempted, we can conquer it because we won't be given any temptation we can't handle. There is nothing we can't overcome if we rely on Heavenly Father's power and the Atonement of Jesus Christ. **NE**

# TEMPLE SERVICE

BY ANNE PARSONS

One August I went to the Salt Lake Temple with my father and stepmother after spending a long summer in Oregon. I had been looking forward to the visit because I had been feeling overwhelmed about going back to school. I wasn't sure if I could meet all of the requirements of my upcoming junior year.

While my parents went in to participate in an endowment session, I went

to do baptisms. Going to the temple had always been a spiritual experience for me, but that day I didn't feel the Spirit, which increased my lonely feelings. I decided to say a prayer.

In my prayer, I admitted I didn't know how to feel better but asked for a chance to help someone else. When I opened my eyes, there was a girl my age by herself who appeared to be confused. When I asked if she needed some help, she said it was her first time in the Salt Lake Temple and didn't know where to go. As I helped her find her way around the temple, we enjoyed our time together doing baptisms. I know helping her was the answer to my prayer. **NE**

# WELL SUITED

BY SPENCER COPE

I have always been thrifty with my money. My parents taught me to work hard for the things I wanted, and I learned quickly to save every penny, nickel, and dime that I earned.

They also taught me the importance of tithing. Though it was difficult at first to part with the money, I quickly learned that God always blesses us for the sacrifice.

When I received my mission call I was thrilled to go but quickly realized I was going to need a lot of supplies. I had saved my money for years, but the cost of each month in addition to the shoes, shirts, ties, belts, scriptures, and other various

articles I would need as a missionary quickly added up. As a college student, my finances were already strained.

I knew I needed to serve the Lord, and I knew that He would help me to do it, so I decided to "prove" Him as it says in Malachi 3:10. I always paid a full tithe. I knew God would provide a way, and He did.

With my parents' aid, I covered all of the expenses I would need, except for one suit. I went to a local second-hand store in hopes of finding one. I often have a difficult time finding clothes that fit because I am rather tall with long arms. After a few minutes of searching the racks I found just the suit I was looking for, and it fit perfectly!

It was a direct answer to a simple prayer. Even though it was a small need, I know that when we pay a full tithe, the Lord will provide a way. **NE**

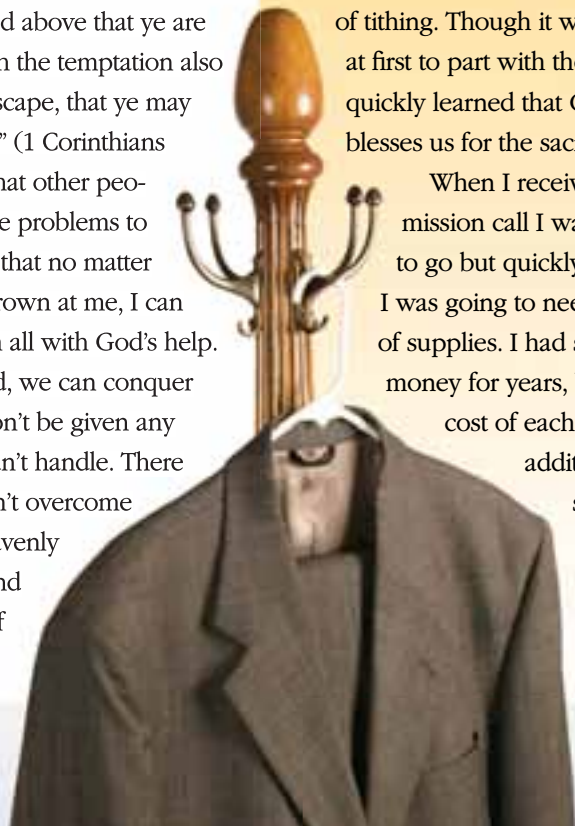


ILLUSTRATION BY GREGG THORKEISON, PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STOKER

# SEARCHING FOR A FAVORITE HYMN

BY MICHAEL PAUL INYANG

Our mission president had been admonishing the missionaries in the Ghana Accra Mission to “stay focused.” He was famous for using this phrase. At one of our zone conferences, he suggested ways we could do this, and a key point in his list was having a favorite hymn.

He told us to select a favorite hymn, memorize it, and sing it at times we may be tempted or down. This statement echoed in my memory throughout the day.

I was homesick. Nobody in my family had written to me recently, and I felt depressed. I had been less focused. This was the moment I needed to select a hymn to uplift my spirit. I was familiar with many hymns in our green hymnbook, but which did I love the most?

That night, I took an old hymnbook and flipped through the dog-eared pages, searching for a hymn that had a comforting meaning to me.

Immediately, I had an idea. Elder Sheldon F. Child of the Seventy, then Africa West Area President, had visited our group in the missionary training center and spoken about the Atonement. He

concluded, “If all you young missionaries understood the Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, there would be no need of mission rules.”

That was the kind of hymn I needed. I was no longer confused. If I had a hymn about the Atonement, I would feel the love of my Savior, be comforted, and stay focused on what He wants me to do.

I finally chose hymn number 136, “I Know That My Redeemer Lives.”

Today I am grateful to my mission president for his wise counsel. Now I have a favorite hymn memorized, which I ponder always and remember to sing in times of depression, trials, and difficulties. “I know that my Redeemer lives. What comfort this sweet sentence gives. . . . He lives to bless in time of need.” **NE**

# A YOUNG MISSIONARY

BY LAUKAU MOKOFISI

It was my best friend’s birthday, and she was turning 13. I rushed to find a present for her before school, but I couldn’t find anything. Then I saw the Book of Mormon. I decided to challenge myself by giving it to her as a gift. I felt good inside but sort of scared because I had never given anyone the Book of Mormon before. I was afraid she might not accept it.

When I arrived at school, I looked for her and told her that I had a special book for her. She took the book and saw a picture of my family in the front. I told her that it was the Book of Mormon, a book that tells the truth of why we are here on earth. I also told her that I was sorry for not giving her a better gift.

She looked me in the eye and said it was the greatest thing I could have given her. Her words touched my heart, and I nearly cried. I felt like a missionary already! I can’t wait until I’m old enough to go on a mission so I can share the gospel with other people like my friend. **NE**

**INSTANT MESSAGES** features personal experiences, insights into favorite hymns and scriptures, and other uplifting thoughts. If you have a personal experience that has strengthened your testimony and you’d like us to consider it for Instant Messages, please e-mail it to

[newera@ldschurch.org](mailto:newera@ldschurch.org)

or send it to:

New Era, Instant Messages  
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420  
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Please limit submissions to 400 words or less. They may be edited for length and clarity.