

JANUARY 2017

THE New Era



2017 MUTUAL THEME:

ASK

pp. 10-23

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CHAINSaws, AND
HELPING HANDS**

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**SURVIVING THE
SOCIAL
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**COME
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THEME**
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SNIPPETS FROM THIS ISSUE

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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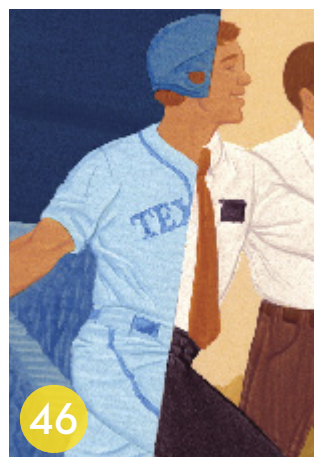
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*“When thou risest
in the morning let
thy heart be full of
thanks unto God.”*

—Alma 37:37



By Elder David A.
Bednar

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

Morning and Evening PRAYERS

*Prayer becomes more meaningful as we counsel with
the Lord in all our doings (see Alma 37:37).*

The patterns used by God in creating the earth are instructive in helping us understand how to make prayer meaningful. In the third chapter of the book of Moses we learn that all things were created spiritually before they were naturally upon the earth.

“And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth,

“And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth” (Moses 3:4–5).

We learn from these verses that the spiritual creation preceded the temporal creation. In a similar way, meaningful morning prayer is an important element in the spiritual creation of each day—and precedes the temporal creation or the actual execution of the day. Just as the temporal creation was linked to and a continuation of the spiritual creation, so meaningful morning and evening prayers are linked to and are a continuation of each other.

Consider this example. There may be things in our character, in our behavior, or concerning our spiritual growth about which we need to counsel with Heavenly Father in morning prayer. After expressing appropriate thanks for blessings received, we plead for understanding, direction, and help to do the things we cannot do in our own strength alone. For example, as we pray, we might:

- Reflect on those occasions when we have spoken harshly or inappropriately to those we love the most.
- Recognize that we know better than this, but we do not always act in accordance with what we know.
- Express remorse for our weaknesses and for not putting off the natural man more earnestly.
- Determine to pattern our life after the Savior more completely.
- Plead for greater strength to do and to become better.

Such a prayer is a key part of the spiritual preparation for our day.

During the course of the day, we keep a prayer in our heart for continued assistance and guidance—even as Alma suggested: “Let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord” (Alma 37:36).

We notice during this particular day that there are occasions where normally we would have a tendency to speak harshly, and we do not; or we might be inclined to anger, but we are not. We discern heavenly help and strength and humbly recognize answers to our prayer. Even in that moment of recognition, we offer a silent prayer of gratitude.

At the end of our day, we kneel again and report back to our Father. We review the events of the day and express heartfelt thanks for the blessings and the help we received. We repent and, with the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, identify ways we can do and become better tomorrow.

Thus our evening prayer builds upon and is a continuation of our morning prayer. And our evening prayer also is a preparation for meaningful morning prayer.

Morning and evening prayers—and all of the prayers in between—are not unrelated, discrete events; rather, they are linked together each day and across days, weeks, months, and even years. This is in part how we fulfill the scriptural admonition to “pray always” (Luke 21:36; 3 Nephi 18:15, 18; D&C 31:12). Such meaningful prayers are instrumental in obtaining the highest blessings God holds in store for His faithful children.

Prayer becomes meaningful as we remember our relationship to Deity and heed the admonition to:

“Cry unto God for *all* thy support; yea, let *all* thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let *all* thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

“Counsel with the Lord in *all* thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day” (Alma 37:36–37; emphasis added).

We are commanded to “pray always” (2 Nephi 32:9; D&C 10:5; 90:24)—“vocally as well as in [our] heart[s]; . . . before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private” (D&C 19:28). I testify that prayer becomes more meaningful as we counsel with the Lord in all of our doings.

I witness Heavenly Father lives and that He hears and answers every earnest prayer. Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Mediator. Revelation is real. **NE**

Adapted from an October 2008 general conference address.

*“When thou liest
down at night lie
down unto the
Lord, that he may
watch over you
in your sleep.”*

—Alma 37:37



MY DATE KNEW WHAT TO DO

By Ryley Roney

When I was 17 years old, one of my good friends asked me to go on a group date with him. We went to the park with a couple of our friends and played volleyball, ate treats, and talked around the fire to finish off the night. We had a lot of fun, and I was happy that I could spend that time getting to know my date. Just as we were getting ready to leave, a group of boys who were about our same age approached us. Almost instantly, I felt uneasy. Those boys were acting so strangely; they talked too loudly, and their eyes were red and glazed over.

One of them lifted something to his mouth, blew out a lot of smoke, and said, “Looks like you guys are having a party. Mind if we join?”

My date politely responded, “We’re actually just about to leave. We were just cleaning up.”

One of the boys then said, “But we’d love to join you! Besides, the party just started! Do you guys want to share a smoke?”

It was then that I realized that they weren’t smoking just regular cigarettes, and I completely froze. I realized why the Spirit had warned me so quickly. I didn’t want to be rude, but I also knew I didn’t want

anything to do with whatever they had to offer. I was so relieved that I was with my friend—a worthy priesthood holder—who shared my standards and could sense how uncomfortable I was.

Without hesitating, my date said, “No, thanks. We’re not into that kind of stuff. Have a good night!” And we left the park.


As he drove me home, I felt the Spirit’s peace come back. I told him how grateful I was that he shared my standards and that he had been there to help me out of that difficult situation. The *For the Strength of Youth* pamphlet counsels us to “date only those who have high moral standards and in whose company you can maintain your standards. Remember that a young man and a young woman on a date are responsible to protect each other’s honor and virtue” ([2011], 4). Though his actions were simple, my date helped me to maintain my standards.

I’ve learned that if I choose to be around and date people who share my standards, I will be blessed with the Spirit and the decision to keep the commandments and maintain my standards will be easier. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MADSEN



The situation was getting uncomfortable, but luckily I was with a friend who shared my standards.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO STAY DRY?

New Era Staff

Use a paper towel and an air pocket to help teach your family about staying safe from worldly influences.

SUPPLIES

- Clear cup
- Container big enough to fully submerge the cup
- Water
- Paper towel
- Tape



Be in the world but not of the world (see John 17:11, 15–16). You’ve probably heard this phrase before, but what does it really mean? You might hear swearing at school. You might have a hard time finding anything modest for your next dance. You might see or read something inappropriate on social media or in a book or magazine. These things and a whole lot more are “of the world,” and since we live here, sooner or later we’re going to be exposed to them.

In the gospel we’re taught that we’ll find lasting happiness if we remain in the world but not of the world.

And you know what? You can do it!

In this cool experiment, you can show your family how to be fully immersed in the world yet not soak up its influence.

1. IDENTIFYING THE WATERS OF THE WORLD

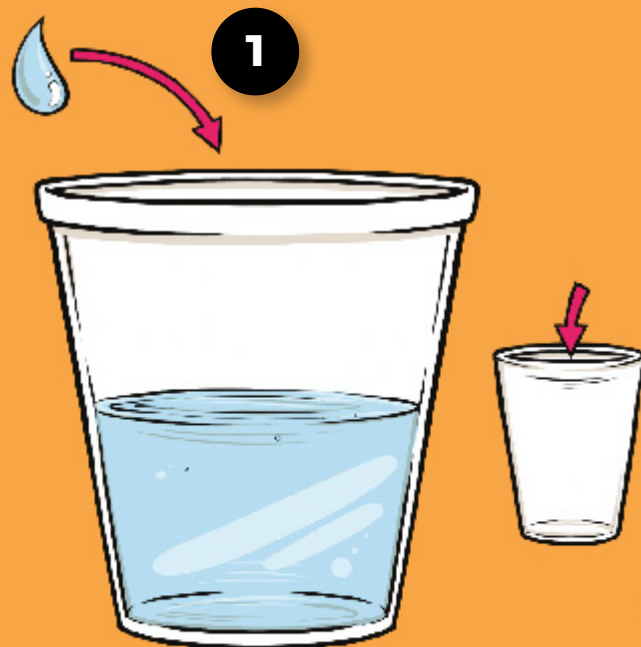
To start the lesson, fill your container with water. As you fill the container, explain to your family that the water represents the world’s temptations and challenges. Ask your family members to list what the “water” is in their own lives.

2. BEING IN THE WORLD

Fold the paper towel enough times to fit easily into the bottom half of the cup and then tape it down. Explain that the paper represents each of you.

3. TURNING THE TIDE

Turn the cup over and submerge it slowly in the water until it’s covered. Make sure the cup doesn’t tilt as you put it in (or



else the experiment won't work). Tell your family that the cup represents the things you do to protect yourself against the worldly temptations and trials that you talked about in step 1. Explain how making sure the cup doesn't tilt is similar to following the strait and narrow path that Heavenly Father has laid out for us (see 1 Nephi 8:20; 2 Nephi 31:18-19; 3 Nephi 27:33).

4. STAYING DRY

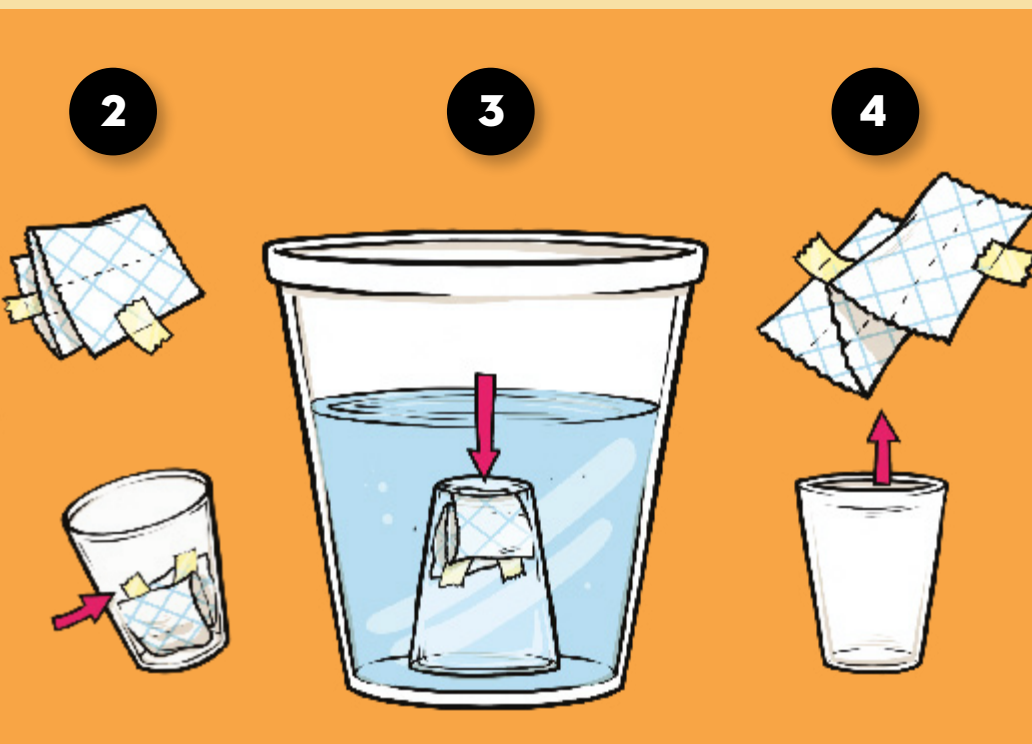
Once the cup is fully submerged, slowly pull it out, again making sure not to tilt it. Take the paper out of the cup, and try not to fall over in shock when you see that it's still completely dry! Because the cup went in straight, the air in the cup created a small pocket and a barrier that protected the paper towel from the water.

SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

In this lesson, the paper towel was *in* the water, yet it remained dry. Likewise, we can be *in* the world but “remain dry” of its negative influences, ultimately helping us find lasting happiness through living the gospel. We can do things every day that can help create a barrier (like the air pocket) that protects us. As a family, discuss ways you can do this in your own lives, like reading your scriptures and praying sincerely every day, keeping the Sabbath day holy, doing family history, and going to the temple.

But just remember: even if you do make a mistake and get “wet,” we can always repent and once again be “dry” of worldly influences.

As we protect ourselves from negative worldly influences, we can find real happiness through the gospel. Like the glass and air pocket that protected the paper towel, living the gospel can and will protect us too. **NE**



MAKING CHOICES

“We inevitably must make choices. If we know the doctrines and

principles of the gospel, we can make wise decisions. If our lives are pure, the Spirit will guide us. Then we will be able to symbolically pitch our tents toward the temple (see Genesis 13:18) and the covenants we have made to the Lord, and we will be in the world and not of the world.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Lessons from the Old Testament: In the World but Not of the World,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2006, 55.

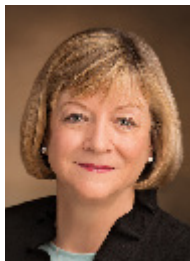


ASK

James 1:5-6



“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” James 1:5-6



Why was this theme chosen, and what does it mean to you? Brother Stephen W. Owen, Young Men General President, and Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, share their thoughts.

WHY THIS SCRIPTURE?

Sister Oscarson: The Lord knows what message you are going to need, and it's remarkable how some of the issues that arise during the year are answered by the theme and how it really fits what's going on in your lives.

When we discussed James 1:5–6 as a possibility for this year's theme, the Spirit filled the room. And we all agreed that it would be a great scripture for our youth because it has several connections. It has connections to Church history—it's the scripture that Joseph Smith read that prompted him to go to the Sacred Grove and pray. And the second great connection is that it bears testimony of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, something we need in a time when his reputation and Church history are continually being questioned by the world. It's also a message of how we receive personal revelation in our lives, which everyone needs to know.

Brother Owen: There is so much going on in your lives today, and you have so many questions. With all of the social media and search engines we have, there are a lot of sources where you could turn to get answers for your questions of faith. This key scripture shows Joseph Smith's process of revelation, which is a model we can follow.

HOW CAN YOUTH PERSONALIZE AND USE JAMES 1:5-6?

Sister Oscarson: This scripture has such a great message. It says, "Ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6). This is particularly poignant. You need to ask in faith, not in doubt.

Brother Owen: And asking in faith means asking with real intent. When Joseph Smith got the answer of which church to join, he didn't just say, "Well, that's good to know, but . . ." He went forward in faith.

Sister Oscarson: Remember that a righteous prayer is not asking for what we want but finding out what God wants for us.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOUTH ABOUT USING PRAYER IN THEIR LIVES?

Sister Oscarson: Make it a habit. You can't forget about it. You can't

neglect it. The brother of Jared gives us an example of that (see Ether 2:14).

Brother Owen: Forgetting to pray from time to time is one thing, but more troubling is turning away from the Lord and not wanting to pray. When you feel like you shouldn't pray, that's when you really need to pray. And if you're saying your prayers and reading the scriptures, you'll be in tune. And if you're not, you're going to distance yourselves.

Sister Oscarson: We can speak directly with God. He places no time limits. What a gift to know that we can do that and that He's always there.

HOW HAVE YOU LEARNED TO PRAY IN A MEANINGFUL WAY?

Sister Oscarson: I can't think of any one experience; it's a culmination of a lifetime. Praying has become one of the most meaningful parts of my day because I make an effort to be consistent. I've become much better at listening and receiving answers. We learn and we get better the more we engage in the process. It's just being consistent with it every single day, making sure that I don't miss that opportunity to talk to my Heavenly Father. The more we pray, the better we get at listening to those answers.



Brother Owen: In my youth when I really needed to know something, I remembered the First Vision and thought, “Joseph Smith did it. I don’t need a huge manifestation, but I need an answer.” And so in faith I followed that pattern. I remember kneeling down and bowing my head and saying a prayer out loud. Continuing to follow that pattern has blessed my life many times to receive personal revelation.

WHAT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOUTH CAN LEARN FROM THIS SCRIPTURE?

Brother Owen: I just want to reemphasize the pattern of prayer that Joseph Smith established. At just 14 years old, he was confused, so he read his scriptures. The First Vision was not a fleeting moment where Joseph simply kneeled down. There was a lot of work beforehand. He reflected on his question over and over again. When he found James 1:5–6, he said, “Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). It entered with great force into his heart, and then he acted upon it. He prayed with real intent and moved forward in faith. And that’s what we’re hoping you will be able to feel with this scripture throughout 2017. **NE**



ONLINE RESOURCES

Whether you’re planning an activity or conference or simply thinking about the theme on your own, you’ll find art, music, and additional resources for this year’s Mutual theme at lds.org/go/prayNE117.

ASK of GOD

Words and music by
Nik Day

Steadily ♩ = 156-170

Chords: Eb, Ab, Cm, Ab, Eb, Bb

9

1. You've been told — so ma - ny — things, — And you've been search -
2. Line by line — it slow - ly — grows, — — so much clear -

9

Chords: Eb, Ab, Cm, Ab

14

- ing high and low. — You're won - d'ring what —
- er than be - fore. — A lit - tle time, —

14

Chords: Eb, Bb, Eb, Ab

19

— to be - lieve. — There's on - ly — one — way to know. —
a lit - tle hope. — And you're not — won - d'ring an - y - more. —

19

Chords: Cm, Ab, Eb, Bb

24 $\text{\textcircled{S}}$

— If you ask, — then He will an - swer. If you kneel, He'll make you whole.

(2nd verse) 'Cause

Ab Eb Bb

28

— If you close — your eyes and whis - per, He will whis-per to — your soul. — If you're hurt-

28 Eb Eb/G Ab Eb Bb Eb Eb/G

33

- ing, He will heal — you. If you're hum - ble, He — will come. —

33 Ab Eb Bb Cm

37 *To Coda*
(Third time)

If you lack wis - dom, ask of God. — Ask — of God. —

37 Ab Eb Bb Eb

41

And where you used — to be a-fraid, cold, and lost — out on the waves, Now your faith

41 Ab Eb G



46

— will pull you through. — And where the wind — tossed you a-round,

46

Cm Bb/D Eb Ab

51

Now you're stand - ing on the ground, firm - ly an - chored in the truth. — And if you ask,

51

Eb/G Fm7 Eb/G Ab Bb

57

CODA Ask — of God. —

57

Bb Ab Eb Bb

62

62

Eb Eb/G Ab Eb Bb Eb

James 1:5-6

James taught us how to ask God so that we will receive an answer.



ASK IN FAITH

“The requirement to ask in faith [implies] the necessity to not only express but to do, the dual

obligation to both plead and to perform, the requirement to communicate and to act.”

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

LACK WISDOM

To some extent or other, we all lack the kind of wisdom that only God can give us. “The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). That’s why we all need to ask of Him.

LIBERALLY

Liberal—The Greek word this is translated from denotes “simplicity,” which may imply a single-mindedness in God’s purpose to give to us openly and generously.

UPBRAIDETH NOT

God will answer you and will never *upbraid* (criticize, scold, or reproach) you for humbly asking Him for an answer to a sincere question.

5 “If any of you lack ^bwisdom, let him ask of God, that ^cgiveth to all *men* liberally, and ^dupbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ^aask in ^bfaith, nothing ^cwavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

GIVETH TO ALL MEN

“He denieth none that come unto him, . . . and all are alike unto God.”

2 Nephi 26:33



NOTHING WAVERING

“In times of distress, let your covenants be paramount and let

your obedience be exact. Then you can ask in faith, nothing wavering, according to your need, and God will answer.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2009 general conference.

ASK OF GOD

“Prayers are addressed to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ. . . .

“The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that we must ask for in order to obtain.”

Guide to the Scriptures, “Prayer,” scriptures.lds.org.

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected Doctrinal Mastery verses, only a starting point for your own study.



I Didn't Feel Worthy to Pray

When I prayed, nothing changed. In fact, things at home got worse. I began to wonder if I didn't deserve answers.

Name Withheld

I'd always been somewhat confused about prayer, especially growing up with parents of separate religions.

With such confusion, I didn't have a testimony and I didn't feel like I could trust what I heard about prayer, because everyone seemed to believe something different.

I especially struggled with this when I started at a new school with no friends and no stable family or belief system to keep me rooted. I floundered for a long time and, with uncertainty and confusion, became really depressed. As it worsened, I felt so lost and far from my Heavenly Father. With everything going on within my family, it was easy to feel unworthy of love or compassion.

I'd prayed before that things would get better in my family, but they didn't seem to. I thought that if Heavenly Father really answered prayers for other people, then I must not be worthy of having my prayers answered, because nothing changed in my family. In fact, things got worse.

I thought that maybe I didn't deserve answered prayers since I was so confused about what to believe. How could I expect Heavenly Father to answer me when I didn't feel like I knew Him very well? In my eyes, I deserved to drift because it seemed I couldn't figure out what the right thing was. I thought

I'd stumbled too many times and that—for that reason—I wouldn't be given answers.

So I stopped praying, partly out of anger and partly because I didn't feel worthy to. I slipped further into despair until I no longer had a desire to keep going. I really felt like I didn't matter. I was at the end of my rope, feeling utterly worthless, when I finally turned to Heavenly Father.

"What's the point?" I asked. "Why should I go on?"

Suddenly I felt something I'd never felt before. Despite the hurtful things I'd believed about myself, I *knew* that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ love me. They always had, and nothing I'd done had driven them away. I knew that Christ is my Savior, something I'd had a hard time believing before. I remember hearing the words "*You are loved.*" I'd never before felt like I could say that I *knew* anything with certainty. At least not until then. I *knew* that I was loved and valued and that I had eternal worth. I know that Jesus Christ and His Atonement are real and that He truly is my Savior. I'm grateful that even when I had turned my back on Them, He and our Heavenly Father were still there to lift me up once I was ready to reach for Them. **NE**

At the time this article was written, the author had not been baptized.



DO NOT FORGET

"I know that . . . reassuring feelings of love are difficult to recall when you are in the midst of personal struggles or trials, disappointments, or broken dreams. . . . In the midst of life's greatest storms, *do not forget* your divine heritage as a son or daughter of God or your eternal destiny to one day return to live with Him."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
Oct. 2016 general
conference.

By Carlisa Cramer

Heavenly Father provided prayer as a way to communicate directly with Him in order to give thanks, ask for blessings, and grow spiritually. Sometimes all it takes is a bowed head, folded arms, and a few simple and sincere words. Cool, huh? Here are five different promises or blessings we can receive if we pray:

1

STRENGTH TO OVERCOME

As humans, we can feel weakness in many ways—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. We can struggle trying to run a race or pass a test or withstand temptation or even feel the Spirit. But prayer can give us the strength we need to overcome anything that life hands to us.

As Nephi said, “The Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7). The Lord can give us strength to accomplish any good thing that we try to do if it’s His will.

Pray for the strength to overcome a temptation. Pray for the strength to focus and study productively for a test. Pray for the strength to run and not be weary. Pray for strength, and He will make you strong.



PROMISES

2

KNOWLEDGE AND GUIDANCE

Personal revelation might have been one of the first promised blessings of prayer that you thought of, especially with the new Mutual theme running around in your head. Joseph Smith lacked knowledge about which church to join, so he got on his knees in the Sacred Grove, asked his question, and received an answer—in a pretty big way.

3

FORGIVENESS

Though it’s nice to think otherwise, we’re not perfect. We make mistakes, and that’s just a part of life. But the Lord provides a way to fix them: the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. And one access point to His power is prayer.

When we ask for forgiveness through prayer, we can be forgiven of our sins through the Savior’s Atonement. Though bigger sins may need the assistance of a bishop or branch president, personal and sincere prayer will always be one of the first steps to forgiveness—whether we are asking Heavenly Father to forgive us or to help us forgive someone else. He’ll even help us learn how to forgive ourselves.



OF PRAYER

But revelation isn't just for prophets, and it doesn't have to be an earth-shattering experience. If any of us lack wisdom on anything, we *can* and *should* ask of God. He will answer, though sometimes not in the way we would expect. The Lord will answer our questions and help guide our lives, but we have to first ask!



5

PEACE

One of the blessings we are promised if we pray is peace and comfort through the Holy Ghost. After all, He is called the Comforter. Be reassured that peace will come even in difficult times. Remember the Lord's promise in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Peace will eventually come if we ask.



Prayer is a direct way to communicate with our loving Father. Use it and let Him bless you for it. But after receiving these blessings from sincere prayer, remember to express your heartfelt gratitude in—you guessed it—a prayer. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

4

DESIRE TO DO THE LORD'S WILL

It may be harder to see this one as a blessing—because, honestly, sometimes we want things for ourselves that the Lord doesn't want for us. But as we pray to be truly converted and to have the desire to do the Lord's will, we'll notice something pretty amazing: what we want starts to look more like what He wants.

This change of heart won't happen immediately, though. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "For many of us, conversion is an ongoing process and not a onetime event that results from a powerful or dramatic experience. Line upon line and precept upon precept, gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God" (Oct. 2012 general conference).



5

QUESTIONS TO ASK

When Prayers Feel Unanswered

By Margaret Willden

Have you ever offered a prayer and waited for an answer that never seemed to come? You're not alone—but you can be sure that Heavenly Father does indeed hear your prayers. It's important to remember that answers may not come *when* or *how* you want them to and that our Father in Heaven always knows best.

Here are a few questions you might ask yourself when you're struggling to receive answers to a prayer:

1

Am I ready to act on the answer?

Praying in faith means being ready to act on the answer you receive—whether or not it's the answer that you expect. The Prophet Joseph Smith once received the following instruction: "Prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same" (D&C 132:3). If you pray about whether or not you should attend that party, will you obey no matter what (even if the answer is no)?

2

Have I done everything in my power?

Let's say that you didn't study for your science test because you were hanging out with friends instead. Will Heavenly Father help you pass your test if you simply ask for His help?

We need to do our part to receive the blessings. So in studying for a test, you could pray for the strength to do well according to your preparation.

Consider the example of the sons of Mosiah, who were successful in their missionary work when they put in the extra effort: "They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God" (Alma 17:3).



3**Have I ignored the answer?**

Heavenly Father always hears you, so it's possible that He has already answered your prayer! As it says in Doctrine and Covenants 6:14, "As often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit." You can pray for the spiritual eyes to recognize the answer, because prayers are sometimes answered in subtle or indirect ways—like through the actions of others.

Also, don't forget to take time to listen. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: "[Heavenly Father's] answers will seldom come while you are on your knees praying. . . . Rather, He will prompt you in quiet moments when the Spirit can most effectively touch your mind and heart" (Apr. 2007 general conference).

4**Are my desires righteous?**

If you ever asked for something that wasn't in your best interest, it's pretty likely your request wasn't granted. The Savior taught that we "must always pray unto the Father in [Jesus Christ's] name" (3 Nephi 18:19), which suggests that we ask for things that are right so they can be granted. Ask yourself, "How would the Savior feel about my wants?" If your wishes are rooted in selfishness or any other form of unrighteousness, pray to have a change of heart and to know what the Savior would have you desire.

5**Is it the right time?**

What we ask for must be right, but the timing must be right too. Heavenly Father has a grand plan in store for us, but our schedule is sometimes a little different from His. "My words are sure and shall not fail. . . . But all things must come to pass in their time" (D&C 64:31–32). It might mean waiting a little bit longer for that injury to heal or for a lost pet to be found, and sometimes the Lord's timing includes the next life—but you can be sure that He will hear and help you along the way.

It can be hard to be patient, especially when the answer to your prayer isn't obvious. But as you search, you can take courage in knowing that you will always find the answers you need if you seek with real intent: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). **NE**

The author lives in New York, USA.

CAPTURE YOUR LIFE ONE DAY AT A TIME

Keeping a journal is a lot easier than you think.

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

Journaling. You and I both know it's important, but have you ever struggled to write things down? I know I have. Like when I sit down to write and realize it's been two weeks since I last wrote. Wait, what? How did *that* happen? And with so many things to catch up on, how do I know what to write? There's just too much! Or how about those times when I *have* been writing consistently for a good while, but then I look back at what I've written and realize it's this long list of events, and it feels boring? It makes me wonder, "Who will want to read *that*?"

And sometimes things have felt too personal to share. Or I can't figure out whether to write by hand, type on my computer, record audio, create a video, or track my social media posts. Which way is best?

Yeah, sometimes (maybe a lot of times) it's been easy for me to lose steam and just not do it. But here's the cool thing: once I realized what journaling does for me and I discovered some sweet tricks to make it easy, I realized I could totally do this—and I have! I've written every day now for quite a while—and that evidence keeps proving I can do this.

Here's a little secret: so can you! When you arm yourself with reasons why journaling is great and have a few good ideas about how to do it, you make it so much easier to be successful. So here are a few things to think about.

TWO TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Be consistent. Even if you begin by writing just one sentence a day, start there. Over time you'll be amazed at the things you record—and how much easier it becomes each day to write.

It doesn't have to be perfect. Just focus on getting the important thoughts, experiences, and inspiration recorded. The big ideas are more important than the details.



Five Journaling Ideas

Want some ideas for how to record your life? Check out five creative ideas at lds.org/go/fiveNET17.

GOOD REASONS TO JOURNAL

1. You just feel awesome. Honestly. A few months ago, a friend encouraged me to write in my journal every day at least one good thing that happened that day and then see how it made me feel. So I gave it a try. The first night it felt really good. But after a few days it felt even better! I had all these examples piling up of neat things happening in my life. And I began to feel more positive and enthusiastic about life. I felt happier about myself and about others, and that affected how I treated myself and others. It's been amazing.

2. Recording helps you connect with God. When you record positive things, such as what you're grateful for, spiritual experiences and impressions, and successes or accomplishments you've had, then you become more in tune with God. And you'll probably notice those things more often. It's happened for me just like it has for President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, who said that because he journaled how he'd seen the hand of God in his family's life every day:

"More than gratitude began to grow in my heart. Testimony grew. I became ever more certain that our Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers. I felt more gratitude for the softening and refining that come because of the Atonement of the Savior Jesus Christ. And I grew more confident that the Holy Ghost can bring all things to our remembrance—even things we did not notice or pay attention to when they happened" ("O Remember, Remember," Oct. 2007 general conference).

3. You feel good because you're following the counsel of prophets. They've been telling us for a long time that we should keep records of the important things in our lives. When I make a mental note to remember I'm following the counsel of prophets, seers, and revelators, then I feel the blessings that come from it. That's great inspiration right there. And it's motivating.

4. Journaling regularly helps you focus on things that really matter. Once I started recording marvelous things Heavenly Father brought to pass in my life, I was able to see more clearly into some of the really important things that I was doing, feeling, and learning. And that got my journaling ball rolling.

5. Journaling is a great way to work through issues that trouble you. I often write those down so I can more easily ponder and pray about them. It helps me solve problems. And I suspect that one day those experiences might help my family later on—so it's a double bonus! **NE**

Unlike the last time we experienced a hurricane, we weren't running away from it—we were headed toward its aftermath.

HELPING HA AFTER THE STORM



NDS

By Rockwell Palmer

The last time a hurricane made landfall in Florida, USA, I was a little boy. The year was 2005. At the time we lived in Utah and were visiting Florida on a family vacation. My parents say I was not happy to wake up at 3 a.m. to evacuate when the eye of the hurricane was headed directly toward us.

The day after that hurricane passed, we woke up and went outside. My mom said the sky was a beautiful blue and the ocean was calm, but the city looked more like my little sister's bedroom—a disaster zone.

Fast-forward to now. It's the first week of October 2016. My family and



I have lived in Florida for eight years, and there's a hurricane in the Atlantic Ocean that's destroying everything in its path. It's moving toward us.

Every day we wake up, have family prayer, and then watch the news before we leave for school. My siblings and I all watch to see the

damage the hurricane has caused and to track the path the meteorologists think the storm will take. The only good news about the storm so far is that school is canceled on Friday.

It's 5 a.m. on Sunday morning, and my dad wakes me up and says it's time to go. Just like in 2005, we're up



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF BRAD PALMER AND BY JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES NEWS/GETTY IMAGES AND ANADOLU AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES

early and drive for several hours. I really don't want to be awake this early in the morning, but this time we aren't running away from a hurricane—we're going toward its aftermath.

We're driving a vehicle filled with chainsaws, gas cans, wheelbarrows, ladders, and a bunch of other tools. Hundreds of members of our stake are headed to a chapel in Daytona Beach, an area hit hard by the hurricane, to meet up with nearly 1,500 other Latter-day Saints from other stakes across the state.

The closer we get to Daytona, the lighter it gets outside, and we can actually start to see around us. Everything is a mess. Most of the businesses are closed, even the ones that are usually open 24 hours (yes, even McDonald's!). Very few of the gas stations are open for business, and if

they are, they don't have any gas. Billboards on the side of the road are torn apart. The frames holding highway street signs have been twisted and snapped. Fallen trees and other debris litter the roadways, businesses, and people's homes. The destruction is overwhelming at times.

At the chapel, volunteers from each ward are organized into teams of 10–15. It's Sunday, so inside we can still go in and partake of the sacrament. Outside, we each get a uniform: a Mormon Helping Hands yellow T-shirt. Then each team is given their service assignment.

The two teams from our ward are assigned to go work in Flagler, about 15 miles north. We drive to the courthouse to meet with county officials, who have a long list of homes and businesses that need assistance.

Our team has to navigate roadblocks and downed



power lines on our way to the first home, which the county officials said has a large tree that has fallen in the yard. After we arrive, I jump out of the vehicle and take my saw in hand. I can't believe how big the tree is. But in less than 15 minutes we have completely cut it up and piled the pieces by the road for pickup. One of the most special times of the day is when we have a prayer with the home's family before we move on to the next home.

We travel from home to home and even make a stop at the local First Methodist Church, clearing fallen trees and helping them repair the damage. We finish up just before their Sunday worship service. The reverend comes out to personally thank each one of us, then offers up a beautiful prayer asking the Lord to bless us for our service.

By lunchtime, both teams from our ward have completed all of the assignments we were given. I'm exhausted, but there are still plenty of people in the area we can serve. We take a short break for lunch, and then we begin looking for the next person to help.

We only have to drive past a few homes before we find that person. The rest of the day goes like this: we look for a home in need, we stop, we ask if they need help, we help, we pray with them, and then we look for the next person. Every time we finish helping someone, a member of our group says, "Let's find just one more home."

It's hot outside, and we're dirty, sweaty, hungry, thirsty, tired, and sore. But at some point during the day, I think we all forgot about how hard the work was because we were having so much fun serving. And at the end of the day, we all look around at each other and notice two things in common.

First, our actual "Mormon helping hands" had become filthy from the work we'd accomplished, but we're all proud of it. It's our badge of honor.

The second thing is that we are all smiling. It reminds me that we are all blessed to be a part of this great Church, where we are taught the importance and the benefit of Christlike service.

It was the most exhausting Sunday of my life, but the great thing about this on-the-job Sunday School lesson is that we were living our Christian convictions at the same time we were learning them. **NE**

The author lives in Florida, USA.



WHEN THE PLAN

Became Real

*Suddenly the plan of salvation was more than just a flow chart—
it was the source of my hope and comfort.*



By Alissa Holm

“Write down all of your talents, and pick one to tell us about,” Sister Jensen said to our Laurel class. I proudly explained that volleyball was my greatest talent and that our next season—my last year of volleyball—was going to be the best one yet.

“Talents come in many forms. Some are spiritual gifts,” Sister Jensen taught. “I think that Heavenly Father has blessed me to be able to love everyone around me.”

Sister Jensen radiated love everywhere she went and shared her testimony in everyday conversations. Her love was genuine, kind, and Christlike. She had become more than a Young Women leader to me—she felt like a second mother, a sister, or a best friend during my high school years. We went to concerts together, went shopping together, and made strawberry jam together. She brought me homemade pudding when I got my wisdom teeth pulled, and she liked to visit me at the snow-cone shack where I worked. She worked at my school, so she went to all my volleyball games too.

A few months later, near the end of summer vacation, I woke up at 3:00 a.m. to the phone ringing. My mom answered and then came to my bedroom. “The Jensens were in a car accident coming home from their family reunion,” she said. “The car rolled off the freeway, and Sister Jensen didn’t make it.”

My heart sank. “This isn’t real,” I thought. “She texted me earlier today. How could she be gone now?”

I felt shocked, confused, and sad all at the same time. After a few minutes, the tears came, and my mom held me while I cried. Sleep was impossible, so I lay there with my thoughts and tears for the rest of the night.

In the coming weeks, I dropped into a sadness I’d never felt before. Volleyball wasn’t a priority, and I no longer looked forward to starting the school year. Everything I was so excited about before was now buried

by sadness. “I feel completely overwhelmed with grief,” I wrote in my journal one night. “I can’t stop crying and I’m always tired.”

The night before the first day of school, I lay in bed crying and thinking about Sister Jensen’s death. I was sick of being sad, and I realized that I needed help to overcome the pain. I needed to pray.

“Please help me understand why she died and how I can cope with this,” I prayed.

I knelt there in silence, wondering if He would answer. After a few minutes, my mind started making connections between everything that had happened. My heart felt warm and my mind felt elevated. I realized that these thoughts weren’t my own; the Spirit was teaching me.

The plan of salvation—the flow chart I’d been taught since Primary—was *real*. Sister Jensen was born, she experienced happiness, she endured trials, she shared her love, and now she was in the spirit world. Her spirit still existed, and I *would* see her again. I realized that this plan, the plan of *happiness*, was designed to help us return to our Heavenly Father, to our families, and to our friends. In that moment, I wanted more than anything to live righteously so I could see her again.

During those first few weeks of school, I focused on trying to develop Sister Jensen’s talent of loving everyone. As I concentrated on loving other people, my pain began to slowly subside and I felt happier. I learned that we can show our love for others in many ways—by listening to them, by smiling at them, by taking them a treat, or by complimenting them. These are the small things that Sister Jensen did for me, so the best way to keep her memory alive was to spread her kind of love.

Although Sister Jensen died, I will always feel her love. As I strive each day to show a little more love for other people, I’m living the kind of life she did—and taking one step closer to seeing her again. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.

SABBATH DAY TECHNOLOGY

Distraction or Delight?

By Charlotte Larcabal
Church Magazines

Your phone buzzes. Almost without even thinking about it, you check it. One new message. You open it, read it, and quickly text a reply. It's almost a reflex.


You look up and remember where you are: church. It's not like you *actually* forgot you were at church. You just checked out for a few seconds. But it does take you a minute to focus on what's going on around you. And you are still thinking about that message . . .


Has this ever happened to you?


Technology can be so distracting! Do you ever feel like your phone controls part of you? Your phone buzzes and seems to say, "*Look at me,*" and you do. Sometimes you check your phone when it doesn't even buzz. (You totally want to check your phone right now, don't you?)

So is technology a bad thing? It can certainly distract us from what matters most. It can also bring a lot of garbage into our lives. But the thing is, technology is also a huge blessing and brings so much goodness. Even on Sundays! Even at church! The Sabbath is the Lord's day. We should be focused on Him and His gospel, not on entertaining ourselves. But if we can ignore and avoid all of the distractions (no, you don't have to check that notification), then technology can really enhance our Sabbath observance. How? Here are 20 suggestions.

You don't have to completely disconnect to make your Sabbath day a delight. Check out these tips.


 **1.** Put your phone on airplane mode during Church meetings. Then you can use your digital scriptures and *Come, Follow Me* outlines without any incoming distractions. Don't worry. Your messages will all be waiting after church. And three hours really isn't that long if you think about it.


 **2.** Set a goal to share one thing you learned from church in a personal text or on social media. It can be a thought you had or a quote or scripture you liked from a lesson.


 **3.** Mark and take notes on digital scriptures in the Gospel Library app, which also lets you put scriptures and quotes into personalized categories by creating tags.







 **4.** Connect with family or friends who are far away. Take some time to video chat with someone you love.


 **5.** Do family history using **FamilySearch.org**. Whether it's indexing, adding stories about relatives, or finding your ancestors, technology makes it so easy. There's even a FamilySearch Tree and FamilySearch Memories app to make it easy on mobile devices.


 **6.** Set goals for the upcoming week and set reminders on your device. ("Remember to read your scriptures!" "Write down five things you're grateful for!") It's a great


time to set reminders to act on promptings from the Spirit you received during church.


 **7.** Start a texting group where everyone can share scriptures, quotes, or other uplifting messages.


 **8.** Listen to awesome and uplifting music on the LDS Youth music player at lds.org/go/YouthMusic or on the LDS Youth app.


 **9.** You can also download sheet music from the LDS Youth music player. Print it out and learn a new song!


 **10.** Chances are, you're way more tech savvy than someone else in your family. Teach Dad something about FamilySearch or show Grandma how to text.


 **11.** Did a friend miss church? Shoot him or her a text reminder about upcoming activities.


 **12.** Check out all of the Church's mobile apps. Sure, there's the Gospel Library, LDS Music, and LDS Tools, but did you know about the LDS Youth and Bible Videos apps? You can also find apps for a scripture a day or Mormon Messages.

 **13.** Work on your Personal Progress or Duty to God online.


 **14.** Create a profile on **Mormon.org** (if you're 14 or older and have your parent's permission).


 **15.** Download and listen to talks from general conference.

 **16.** Write about your life! If journaling isn't your thing, set a timer for 10 minutes and just write what comes to mind.

 **17.** Read the lessons for next week. You can find the manuals in the Gospel Library app or on LDS.org. Write down your thoughts and questions.

 **18.** Visit volunteer.lds.org for simple ways you can serve online. For example, you can tag images with keywords that you would use to search for them. You can also share your photos for possible Church use.

 **19.** Use a recorder or a smartphone to record a family member's voice for record keeping. Think about how cool it will be to listen to years (or even months) from now.

 **20.** Write and send five personal and uplifting messages to people.

Also, remember, don't be afraid to disconnect from technology for a bit. The great thing about technology is that you *can* turn it off. **NE**



Celestial MOMENTS

*Sometimes it feels like
heaven isn't that far away.*

By Hollie Megan Laura Hunter

One day, my Young Women leaders taught us about special moments when you really feel the Spirit and feel close to God. They called them “celestial moments,” a simple phrase that was easy to remember. For me, I knew exactly what a “celestial moment” was; I’d felt it before, such as when you feel a tiny glimmer or taste of what life in the celestial kingdom might be like. And I’ve had plenty of these moments!

After our leaders introduced the idea, we went outside. The sun was gleaming through the trees. We shut our eyes. I felt the sun on my face as a warm breeze blew. Birds sang and trees swished in the wind as we enjoyed God’s creations. That was a celestial moment.

Another time I had a celestial moment was after my best friend was baptized. As we walked back to the chapel for the rest of the service, she took my hand and talked about how great it was that we were friends and always would be—even into the eternities. I’ll never forget that. I was excited and happy and grateful!

A year or so later, we were both able to feel that joy together once again as we stood at the font and watched her mother enter into the waters of baptism. There really was beauty all around.

Perhaps the best place to have these experiences is inside the Lord’s house. The first time I entered the temple, I was blessed to attend with my parents and my sister. I was baptized for my great-grandmother, and I felt that she was happy.

Celestial moments can occur anywhere and at any time—while listening to music or during family home evening or at school. I remember one family home evening where everyone couldn’t stop laughing! That was one of my favorite moments.

These celestial moments have strengthened my testimony and helped me to have a more grateful spirit. They’ve taught me great lessons. Most of all, they’ve made me happy and excited about the gospel! I know that if I continue to choose to live the gospel, all the beauty, happiness, peace, and love I feel in each celestial moment will be something I can always feel—in much greater measure—in the celestial kingdom. **NE**

The author lives in North Lanarkshire, Scotland.



THE BREAKING POINT

MY GREATEST OPPOSITION
AND TEMPTERS CHANGED INTO
SOME OF MY GREATEST ALLIES.

By Bryce Fielding

When I was growing up in Florida, USA, temptations to break the commandments and Church standards were everywhere. My Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) class was no exception. Foul language was used a lot, and there were many parties outside of school with alcohol and drugs. I was invited to many of these parties, but I never went, so people eventually stopped inviting me. By not attending these parties, I started to lose popularity, but I thought, “So what?” That didn’t really matter to me.

At the end of my third year, our instructors were deciding who would be the senior cadet command for the next year. I was in the running for one of the three spots, but it was given to someone else because the instructors knew him better because he went to those parties.

At the end of my senior year our senior instructor approached me and told me that if he had known how the year would turn out, he would have made me senior cadet command instead. He said it was because of my hard work, obedience, and dedication. This gave me great confidence to keep doing what was right, and it helped me to face what lay ahead.

I’d thought getting made fun of in JROTC for being a Mormon was hard, but that was child’s play compared to

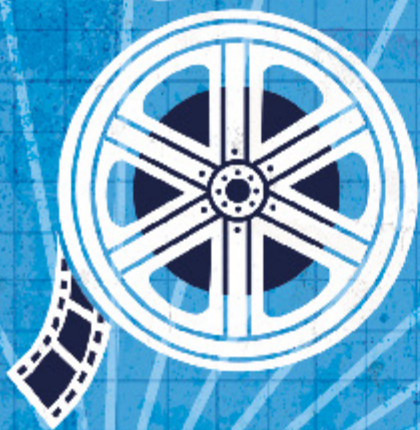
basic training. The temptation to swear was always present. Three or four times a day, day after day, the drill sergeant would get in my face and swear at me. And my fellow cadets would try to get me to swear. Then, half of the cadets at basic training ended up attending the same military school I did. It wasn’t long before the other members of my ROTC group also found out I was a Mormon and started making fun of me and trying to get me to swear. I wasn’t sure if I could keep this up for another 10 months. Basic training had been rough enough.

To my surprise, help came. My fellow basic training buddies from JROTC stepped up and defended my beliefs. They told the others, “Stop bothering him. Give up. Trust us, he won’t budge. We tried.”

After a while, people stopped making fun of me and started to support me. They even supported me in my decision to serve a mission, even though some of our instructors didn’t. My greatest opposition and tempters became some of my closest and greatest allies. I’m grateful that I stood up for my beliefs. I often wonder what would have happened if I had not chosen to keep the standards and commandments of God. **NE**

The author lives in Texas, USA.

SURVIVING *the* SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHT REEL



I recently felt irritated as I scrolled through my Instagram feed and felt perfectly justified in my unkind feelings toward some of my friends. After all, they seemed to live shiny, golden lives filled with one fantastic adventure after another. I felt conflicted but rationalized my feelings. “These people!” I scoffed.

My scoffs and eye rolls evaporated one morning when I read Moroni 7:4: “And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men.” At this time, Moroni was sharing the words of his father, Mormon, to the Church members. Mormon spoke to the “peaceable followers of Christ” about faith, hope, and charity (Moroni 7:3).

In this marvelous chapter, the Lord teaches how we can have a “peaceable walk” among men. In my negative and certainly unfair attitude toward my fellow social media users, I was not walking very peaceably. Rather, I’d been slinking along, secretly grumbling at others’ successes. I was like a “bitter fountain” not bringing forth “good water,” or not being Christlike in my thoughts and feelings toward others (Moroni 7:11).

I've talked to many social media users who feel irrationally bitter or depressed when scrolling through their friends' posts and pictures. Spending a little less time on social media is one way to avoid these feelings. Of course, many of us enjoy keeping tabs on our family members, friends, and acquaintances via social media. When those unsettling feelings creep in, however, how can we maintain a "peaceable walk with the children of men"? The scripture uses the preposition *with*. In life, we should not be against each other—we should be *with* each other; we should be one.



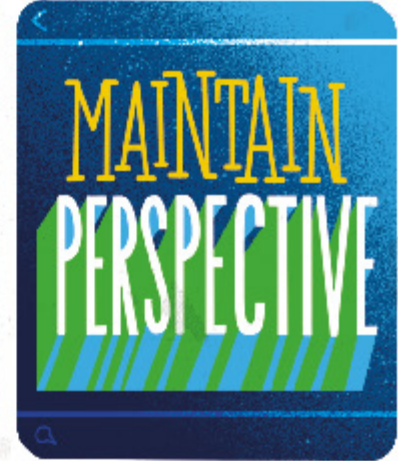
American author Mark Twain is credited with saying, "Comparison is the death of joy." Sometimes it's a challenge not to make comparisons. But filling our hearts with humility enables us to delight in others' shiny moments instead of begrudging them. The Lord asks us to "walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

It's equally important to not invite comparisons. We can ask ourselves some questions before sharing a post. "What is my intent? Is it to exclude someone or cause jealousy?" If so, rethink your sharing. But if it's just to share something you're super excited about or to uplift others, go for it.



Mormon also spoke about serving others with "real intent" (Moroni 7:6). We can adopt this real intent when we sincerely hope for others' happiness. This means being excited for our friend when she posts a selfie with her new outfit or for our friend who posts that he was just voted class president. Whether our social media friends are embarking on a trip we can only dream of or are sharing their academic or sporting achievements, we can celebrate with them.

Living peaceably just feels better. Eliminating the eye rolls and dropping the burden of jealousy helps us to walk *with* others, not away from them or against them.



One friend described social media as a "highlight reel" of life's events. Most people aren't inclined to share pictures of embarrassing situations, grief, or even a bad-hair day. Everyone experiences life's ups and downs, and it's important to remember that social media users typically share the ups.

It's funny how much we allow social media to affect our view of our worth. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, once asked, "Do you think your value to [Heavenly Father] changes based on how many followers you have on Instagram or Pinterest? Do you think He wants you to worry or get depressed if some un-friend or un-follow you on Facebook or Twitter? Do you think . . . popularity make[s] the slightest difference in your worth to the One who created the universe?"¹ **NE**
The author lives in California, USA.

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Living the Gospel Joyful," Oct. 2014 general conference.



SEVEN LIES

SATAN WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE

He's a miserable man bound by eternal limitations.

By David Dickson

Church Magazines

You. Are. *Amazing!* In fact, you're not merely amazing. Your potential is off the charts. We're not talking just about careers, talents, or even your awesome goal to memorize every line from your favorite movie (though that's plenty cool).

God reveals your true potential in scripture: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Eternal life, or exaltation, means receiving everything God has to give us (see D&C 84:38). In other words, no matter how bright you imagine your future to be, it's indescribably *brighter* than that.

Which is why a certain lying, scheming wretch of a bad guy is jealous of you. "[Satan] knows *he* can't improve, *he* can't progress, that worlds without end *he* will never have a bright tomorrow," taught Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "He is a miserable man bound by eternal limitations, and he wants you to be miserable too. Well, don't fall for that."¹

Satan will do all he can to thwart you along your way back to our Father in Heaven, which includes whispering (or in some cases, shouting) every lie under the sun. Here are seven lies you might encounter and the truths you can use to fight them.

LIE 1
God doesn't want to hear from you anymore. Not after you've ignored Him for so long.

THE TRUTH
God always wants to hear from you, even if it's been a while.

Elder Juan A. Uceda of the Seventy has taught: "At the very moment we say, 'Father in Heaven,' He hears our prayers and is sensitive to us and our needs. . . . He will see you with eyes of love and mercy—love and mercy that we cannot fully understand."²

LIE 3
Because God loves you, your behavior ultimately doesn't matter all that much.

THE TRUTH
This one can be especially tricky because it takes a truth—God loves you—and draws an interpretation from that truth that is false. Scriptures, and modern prophets and apostles, help us understand that our actions are important.

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "God does love us. However, what we do matters to Him and to us. He has given clear directives about how we should behave."⁴

LIE 2
This world is too wicked and scary for you to ever find happiness or peace.

THE TRUTH
Fear sure seems to be one of Satan's favorite tools in these latter days. But don't give in to that nonsense. Even when things are hard, even when they're really hard, God's plan provides hope and joy.

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught: "When the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy."³

LIE 4
If you can't gain a testimony about something right away, it must not be true.

THE TRUTH
If you want to know the capital of Assyria, a smartphone and about three seconds will get you your answer. Matters of the spirit, on the other hand, can take time. And it's always worth the effort.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "I don't pretend to know why faith to believe comes easier for some than for others. I'm just so grateful to know that the answers are always there, and if we seek them—really seek with real intent and with full purpose of a prayerful heart—we will eventually find the answers to our questions as we continue on the gospel path."⁵

LIE

5

Confessing your sins will only hurt the people you love. To spare them that pain, you must keep it a secret.

THE TRUTH

With this lie, the great deceiver is trying to get you to pass on his handiwork—deception—to those closest to you.

Don't listen to him for a second.

Sister Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, has taught: "When we have sinned, Satan often tries to convince us that the unselfish thing to do is to protect others from the devastation of the knowledge of our sins, including avoiding confessing to our bishop, who can bless our lives through his priesthood keys as a common judge in Israel. The truth, however, is that the unselfish and Christlike thing to do is to confess and repent. This is Heavenly Father's great plan of redemption."⁶

LIE

7

You've tried and tried, but you're just not good enough. You're never going to make it home to God.

THE TRUTH

It's the zinger of all lies! If the adversary can convince you you'll never be good enough, he scores a major victory. Don't let him plant this thought in your brain. With Jesus Christ's Atonement, we always have a path back to God.

Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy has taught, "The God of heaven is not a heartless referee looking for any excuse to throw us out of the game. He is our perfectly loving Father, who yearns more than anything else to have all of His children come back home and live with Him as families forever."⁸

When we fall short of perfection, and we always do, it's easy to get discouraged and want to throw in the towel. Here's a little more food for thought on that count. Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy has taught: "[One] tactic used by Satan is discouragement. He uses this tool effectively on the most faithful Saints, when everything else seems to fail. For me, when I begin to feel discouraged, it helps me to recognize who is trying to get me down. This makes me mad enough to cheer up, just to spite the devil."⁹

It's all right to get mad at the devil! After all, who likes being lied to? He wants to make you miserable, remember? Next time you find yourself facing one of these lies, or others like them, focus instead on your eternal potential and the many blessings Heavenly Father has prepared for you both now and in the eternities.

Truth. It beats bogus every time. **NE**

LIE

6

The Church's teachings are outdated. Just look at how most of the world believes and behaves today. Millions of people can't be wrong!

THE TRUTH

No matter how many people believe otherwise, eternal truths are still eternal truths.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "We are committed to knowledge of every kind and believe 'the glory of God is intelligence' [D&C 93:36]. But we also know that the preferred strategy of the adversary is to lead people away from God and cause them to stumble by emphasizing the philosophies of men over the Savior and His teachings."⁷

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2016 general conference.
2. Juan A. Uceda, Oct. 2016 general conference.
3. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 2016 general conference.
4. Dale G. Renlund, Oct. 2016 general conference.
5. M. Russell Ballard, Oct. 2016 general conference.
6. Linda S. Reeves, Oct. 2016 general conference.
7. Quentin L. Cook, Oct. 2016 general conference.
8. J. Devn Cornish, Oct. 2016 general conference.
9. Larry R. Lawrence, "Prepared to Face the Adversary," LDS Business College devotional, June 23, 2015, ldsbc.edu/campus-culture-events/devotionals/1204-prepared-to-face-the-adversary.html.

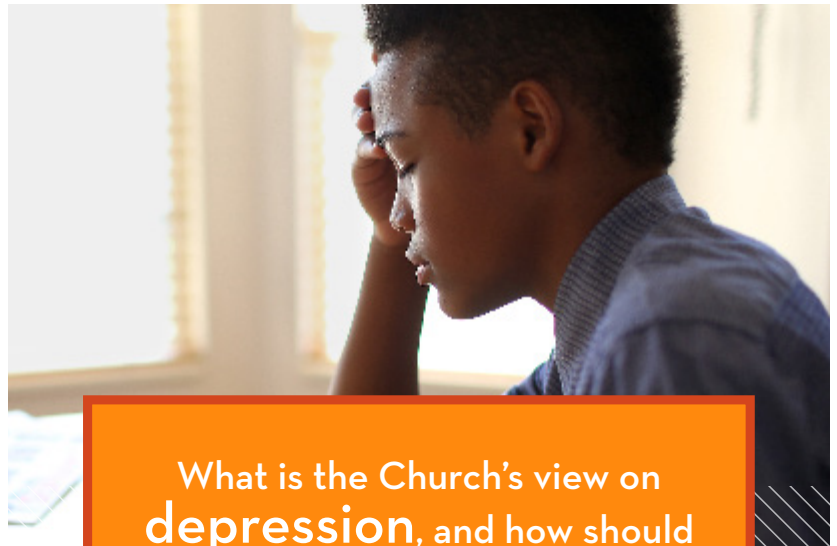
Why is it a greater sin to not forgive than to wrong someone?

The Lord has taught: “Ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

“I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men” (D&C 64:9–10).

When we withhold our forgiveness, we are placing our limited judgment above the Lord’s perfect judgment. He has a perfect view of people’s hearts and circumstances, and judgment belongs to Him alone. He will ultimately deal out perfect justice and perfect mercy to all—both those who wrong others and those who are wronged.

In addition, by requiring us to forgive, the Lord is helping us to choose happiness over misery, to abandon our bitter grudges and resentments and receive healing through His grace. Then we discover that, as Elder Kevin R. Duncan of the Seventy has reminded us, “The Savior’s Atonement is not just for those who need to repent; it is also for those who need to forgive” (Apr. 2016 general conference). NE



What is the Church’s view on depression, and how should I deal with depression?

Everyone feels down from time to time, and the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the support of family, leaders, and others can help us again find comfort, joy, and peace. But Church leaders have acknowledged that severe depression, or major depressive disorder (MDD), is a much more serious condition that can interfere with a person’s ability to function fully. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested several things to do if you’re facing extreme depression:

- Don’t lose faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Do the things that bring the Spirit into your life (pray, study the scriptures, and so on).
- Seek counsel from parents and priesthood leaders.
- Obtain priesthood blessings.
- Take the sacrament every week, and hold fast to the promises of Jesus Christ’s Atonement.
- Watch for stress indicators such as fatigue, and then make changes.
- If your problem persists, talk to parents or priesthood leaders about seeking the advice of a certified professional with good values.

(See Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 2013 general conference.) NE

“How can I make my prayers more meaningful?”

Do you remember the story of Enos? Once when he went to the forest to hunt, his soul hungered to know the truth, and he “cried unto [God] in mighty prayer” (Enos 1:4). As Enos prayed more fervently, he received answers. He learned that “whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it” (Enos 1:15).

We can follow the same pattern: prepare our minds and hearts to receive inspiration, ask Him about our questions and concerns, share our joys and sorrows, and take time to ponder and to receive answers through the Holy Ghost.

Carly D., 17, of Utah, USA, says, “Ask him to help you with little things as well as the big ones. I ask Him to help me when I’m tired so I can get through the day. He wants to hear the little things just like any friend does.”

Elder Juan A. Uceda of the Seventy has reminded us of the importance of prayer and asked: “When you pray, are you really praying or just saying prayers? . . .

“ . . . Do you prepare yourself for a moment of prayer? . . .

“At the very moment we say, ‘Father in Heaven,’ He hears our prayers and is sensitive to us and our needs. . . . The wonderful thing is that He will see you with eyes of love and mercy. . . .

“ . . . So a moment of prayer is a very, very sacred moment” (Oct. 2016 general conference). **NE**

Express Your Thoughts

When you pray, express your thoughts and feelings as if He is in the same room. Prayers are more meaningful when we take time to thank Heavenly Father for this awesome world.

One of my experiences with prayer was when I lost my wallet. It may seem unimportant, but it mattered to me. The wallet was hard to find, and after I checked everywhere, I prayed for help in finding it. I found it after a few more days of looking. Answers to meaningful prayers—even prayers over small matters—might not come quickly, but they will eventually come.

Garrett K., 14, Arizona, USA



Take Time to Pray

I’ve begun to understand a few basic principles about prayer.

First, Heavenly Father loves to hear from you. Whether it’s something deep or hopeful or thankful, He will listen. Second, saying a meaningful prayer doesn’t mean you have to say a long prayer. Some of the most meaningful prayers I’ve ever said are the shortest. Third, don’t be afraid to pause and think about what to say next—even in a public prayer. Fourth, be thankful and humble. Be sure to give thanks when you receive an answer to prayer.

Sophie C., 14, Vermont, USA



Be Thankful

When I express why I'm so thankful for each blessing Heavenly Father gives me, it

invites the Spirit to accompany me while I'm praying. Those spiritual experiences help me be happier throughout the upcoming day. I can feel more joy in my life, more gratitude for my blessings, and I can feel that He knows that I'm thankful for what He gives me. Be open to your Heavenly Father; He is always open with you.

Jarom H., 17, Utah, USA

Talk to Him

The way to make prayers more meaningful is to actually talk to Him. Tell Him about your day and the things you are struggling with. Ask for an experience that will help your testimony grow. Ask for help with the things you need help with.

Lindsey M., 17, Utah, USA

Think about What You're Saying

Prayers are sacred. They are a way to not just report back to God but also to talk with Him. He loves you and wants to hear from you. It doesn't need to be really deep and profound, but don't just mumble the same thing over and over again every night.

If you want to make prayers more real, think about what you're saying, and remember that what you say is

actually reaching Him. Make it meaningful by putting your heart and brain into your prayers.

Lauren E., 16, Missouri, USA



Be Reverent

When you're looking for an answer to your prayer, make sure you're in appropriate

places for the Spirit to guide you.

Rosemary A., 15, Utah, USA

Pray for Others

One thing that has really helped me make my prayers more meaningful is to pray for others. Our Sunday School class has an email group, and when someone needs help, they let us know so that we can pray for them and give them encouragement. I have been so impressed by how much it has changed my life. I hadn't realized it, but I had been



INQUIRE OF THE LORD

"When we pray, we should not presume to give counsel but should inquire of the Lord and hearken to His counsel..."

"Not all of our prayers will be answered as we might wish. Occasionally the answer will be no. We should not be surprised. Loving mortal parents do not say yes to every request of their children."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2003 general conference.

only praying for myself. This is a Church of serving others.

Eli W., 16, California, USA

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"How can I support a family member who is going through depression?"

Send your answer and photo by February 15, 2017.

Go to newera.lds.org, 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 Godhead

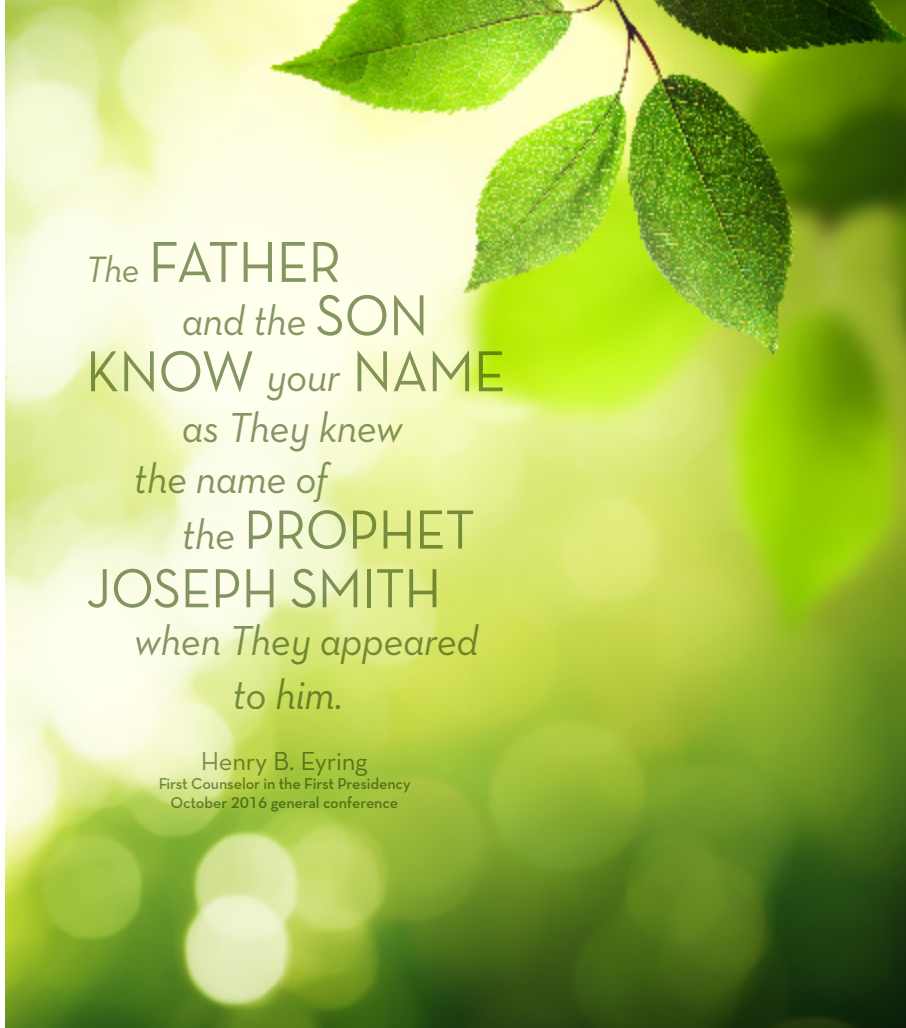
Understanding our relationship to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost can help us and lift us up in so many ways. Many speakers at the October 2016 general conference helped expand our understanding of the Godhead. For instance:

- “Gratitude on the Sabbath Day,” by President Henry B. Eyring
- “Sharing the Restored Gospel,” by Elder Dallin H. Oaks
- “‘Come, Follow Me’ by Practicing Christian Love and Service,” by Elder Robert D. Hales
- “Serve,” by Elder Carl B. Cook
- “A Witness of God,” by Elder Neil L. Andersen
- “The Master Healer,” by Carole M. Stephens

Find these and more at conference.lds.org.

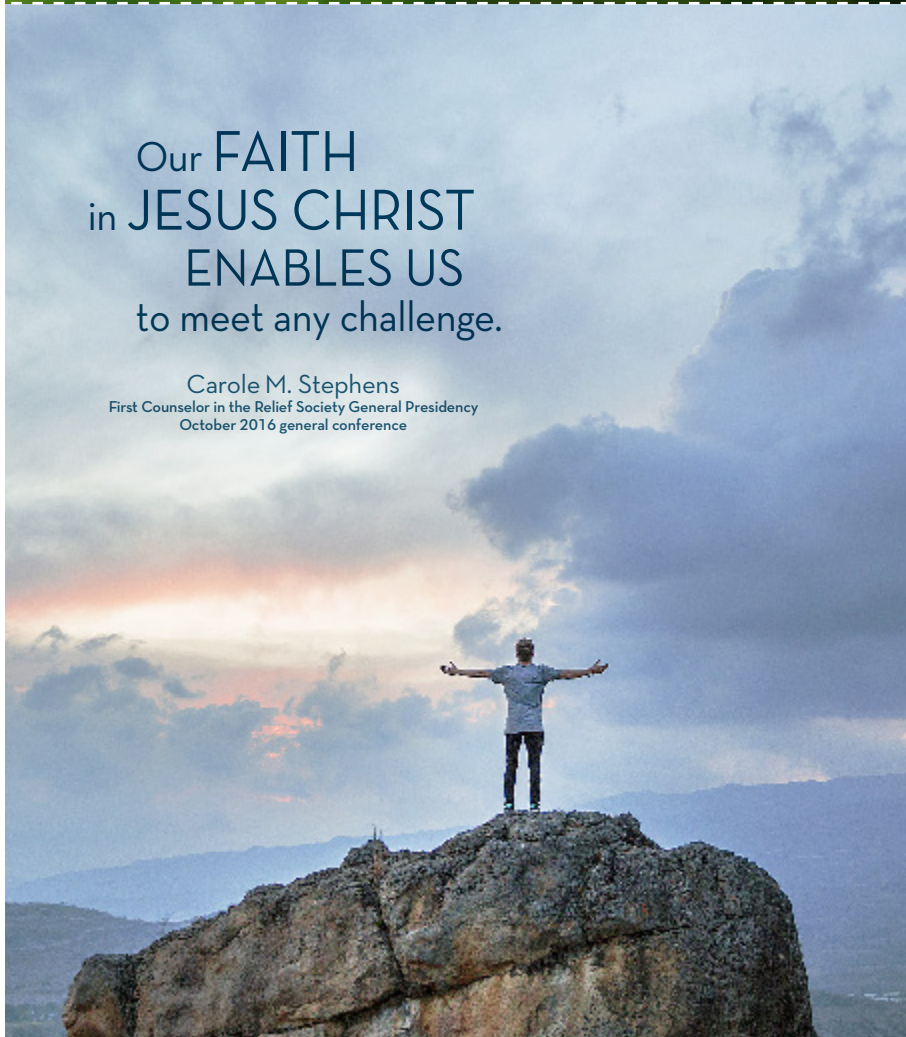
Share These Cards

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/cardsNE117.



The FATHER
and the SON
KNOW *your* NAME
as They knew
the name of
the PROPHET
JOSEPH SMITH
when They appeared
to him.

Henry B. Eyring
First Counselor in the First Presidency
October 2016 general conference



Our FAITH
in JESUS CHRIST
ENABLES US
to meet any challenge.

Carole M. Stephens
First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency
October 2016 general conference





KEVIN BECKSTROM



JON CLARK



SCOTT HALES



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



I NEED TO SERVE MY MISSION NOW

I've loved baseball my entire life. Toward the end of high school, I was recruited to play for a college in Texas, USA. I wanted to serve a mission but felt that this opportunity was too good to pass up and that a mission would need to wait a year.

On a weekend visit to the college, I woke up early Sunday morning with a strong prompting that I needed to attend my home ward three hours away. I did so, and one of the sacrament meeting speakers that afternoon talked about personal revelation. I felt these words were meant for me. Then in Sunday School we discussed the importance of serving a mission, and the Spirit testified to me that I should defer my scholarship because

if I went to college now, I'd never serve a mission. I went directly to tell my bishop, "I need to serve a mission, and I need to go *now*."

At home I emailed the baseball coach, sharing my testimony and my desire to be a missionary. Minutes later, he called me and said, "I've never seen a young man put God first like this. You have earned my respect today. You go serve. I'll have a spot for you on the team when you return."

Peace filled me, and I knew that Heavenly Father was helping me. I have a testimony of the blessings that come when we put the Lord first and choose Him over the world—and baseball.

Devin T., Texas, USA

FRIENDS AT MY SIDE

When I was in seventh grade I decided to participate in a running competition against the other middle schools. What I didn't know was that the area we were running in was hilly, and so running would be a lot harder than I was used to.

When I was a little over halfway through the race, I slowed to a walk and just decided that I couldn't do it. Tears came, and I felt weak and embarrassed.

As I was about to stop and sit down, two eighth-grade girls from my school caught up to me and started encouraging me to keep going. I reluctantly started to slowly jog with them, with one on each side of me. My whole body was aching, but I kept on going. When we were finally in sight of the finish line, my youngest sister came to run with me too.

When we crossed the finish line, I was relieved. I received a ribbon for seventh place, and I felt embarrassed since there were only seven girls who ran. But now it reminds me of how I completed something that seemed so impossible.

Life is hard, but when we feel like stopping, we need to remember that our friends, family, Heavenly Father, and Savior will always be there to help us through it.

Katie G., Utah, USA

ACCEPTING THE #TEMPLECHALLENGE

I was baptized in 2012 and attended a branch in the Ipoméia Brazil District. Since 2014, I have been really engaged in family history. It started with the invitation from Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at RootsTech to do baptisms for my own family names. I felt really committed to do family history, knowing that if I “knocked,” it would be “opened” (see Matthew 7:7).

Now I have many more generations, pictures, documents, and, most important, more family stories, which is awesome. Having this information, I wrote a book with pictures and dates from my family history. This project helped me contact my nonmember family members and gave me the opportunity to share my testimony that families can be eternal.

This work has helped me stand in holy places, stay active in the Church, and accept the calling to serve the Lord on a mission.

I have a testimony that the work of salvation done by this Church on both sides of the veil is true and inspired by our Heavenly Father. Before my mission, I had the opportunity to do baptisms for my ancestors, and now as a missionary I have the opportunity to baptize people who are alive and want to change their lives forever.

Elder Claudio Klaus Jr., Arizona Mesa Mission





By Elder
M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

We need not apologize for our beliefs nor back down from that which we know to be true. But we can share it in a spirit of loving understanding—**boldly and confidently**, with an eye single to the glory of God—without pressuring our listeners or feeling that we have failed in our duty if they do not immediately accept what we believe.

When we have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, we can then do simple things to help bring better understanding of the gospel into the lives of the less-active members of the Church as well as those who are not of our faith. There is no need for any new program to do this. We don't need a handbook or a calling or a training meeting. The only need is for good members of the Church to learn to **rely upon the power of the Holy Ghost** and, with this power, reach out and touch the lives of our Father's children. There is no greater service we can render than sharing our **personal testimonies** with those who lack an understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, brothers and sisters, are we ready to do something? Can each one of us resolve today to **increase our personal spiritual preparation** by seeking the guidance of the Holy Ghost and then, with His power as our companion, bless more of our Father's children with understanding and knowledge that the Church is true?

I testify that the Savior lives and He will bless each one of us if we will do all that we can to move this great work of His Church forward. May each one of us resolve to do something more. **NE**

From an April 2000 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

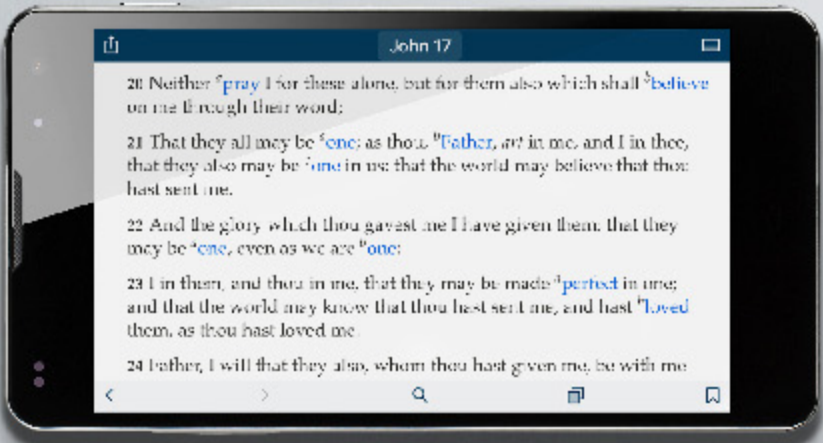
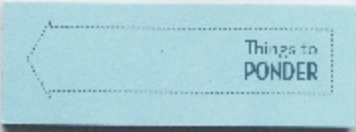
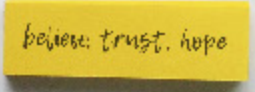
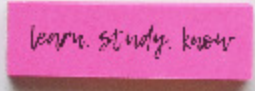
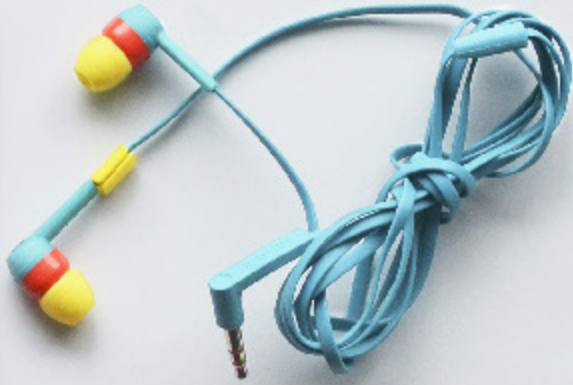
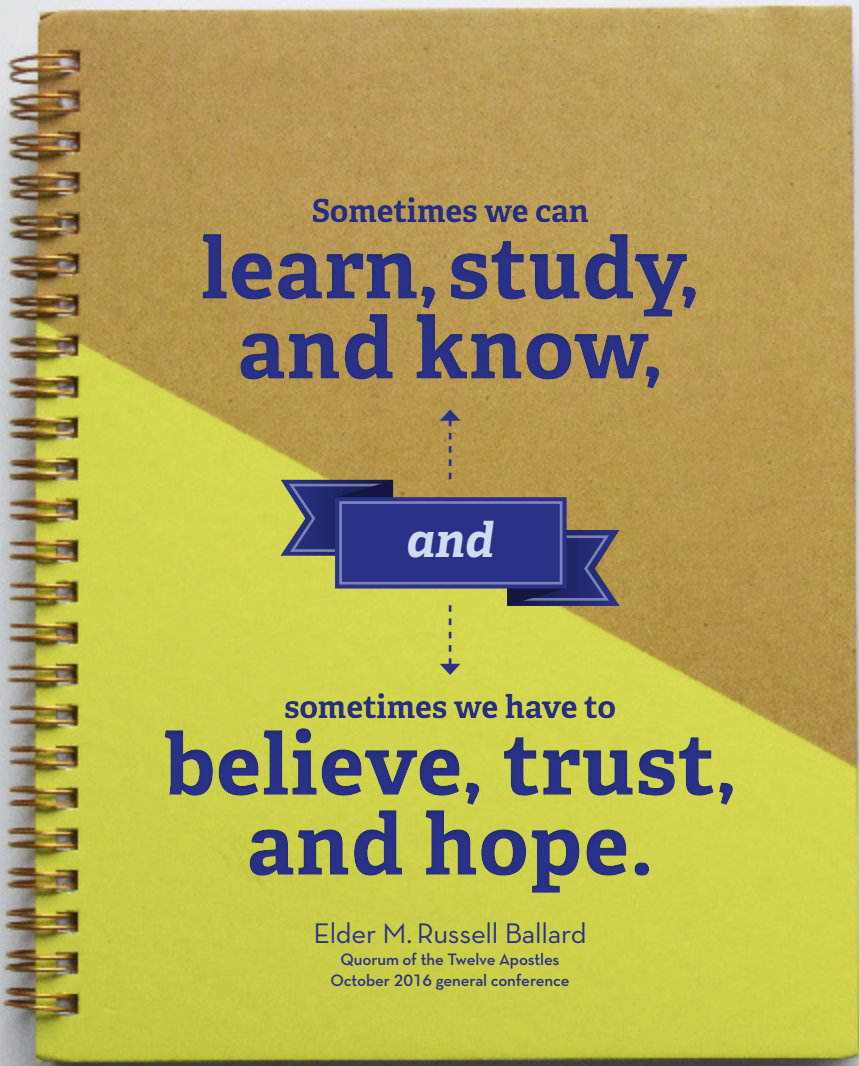
I'm so grateful that I've been raised in the Church. I love sharing the gospel, and I try to be a good example, because I know my friends and others are watching me, especially my Heavenly Father. Nothing you do is looked over or ignored by our Father in Heaven. You must strive to do what's right and share the gospel with His children, for there are an unlimited number of opportunities to do that; you just have to pray to find and use those opportunities.

Chari G., Arkansas, USA



Share Your Experiences

Share how you have shared the gospel and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/shareNE117.



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WHAT'S ONLINE



2017 Mutual Theme Album



With the start of 2017, it's time for a brand new album of Mutual Theme songs written by youth, for youth! Check it out on lds.org/youth/theme/2017 or on Spotify or Apple Music.



Here's what some of the songwriters say about the inspiration for their songs:

Jaeden Vaifanua wrote her song, "What Family Means," about her love for her own family—even when they all sing off-key during road trips.

Justin Garvin wrote his song, "Choose to Stay," about suicide prevention, because after several experiences with friends passing away, he wanted to make a difference and focus on hope.

Nefi Hernández wrote his song, "I Hear His Voice," about prayer and how it doesn't matter who you are or where you're from—the Lord will answer.

"IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY, AND UPBRAIDETH NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM. BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, NOTHING WAVERING. FOR HE THAT WAVERETH IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN WITH THE WIND AND TOSSED."—JAMES 1:5-6

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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