



By Elder
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Of the Quorum of the
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HOW TO PREPARE NOW TO SERVE A MISSION

Let me offer a few suggestions about what each of you can do to raise the bar as you prepare for missionary service.

The minimum physical standard for full-time missionary service refers to a potential missionary's physical health and strength. For example, one of the questions on the missionary recommendation forms asks if you "can work 12 to 15 hours per day, walk 6 to 8 miles per day, ride a bicycle 10 to 15 miles per day, and climb stairs daily." Missionary work is hard, and full-time missionaries must **be in good physical condition** to serve. Raising the bar to a higher physical standard could involve further physical conditioning.

Raise the bar higher in your intellectual preparation. Take your schooling seriously. It is important to be able to read, speak, and

write with intelligence. Expand your knowledge of the world around you by reading good books. Learn how to study. Then apply your improved study habits to learning the gospel of Jesus Christ. Consistently and regularly read from the Book of Mormon.

Don't neglect the opportunity of attending seminary and institute classes. Participate and gain all you can from the scriptures taught in these great religious-education settings. They will prepare you to present the message of the restored gospel to those you have opportunity to meet. **Study from *Preach My Gospel***, emphasizing the basic doctrines taught in chapter 3. Each time you are asked to speak in church or to teach a family home evening lesson, focus on these basic doctrines.

You must recognize that missionary service is emotionally demanding. Your support system is going to be withdrawn from you as you leave home and go out into the world. Many of the ways you use now to cope with emotional stress—like hanging out with friends, going off by yourself, playing video games, or listening to music—are not allowed by the rules of missionary conduct. There will be days of rejection and disappointment. **Learn now about your emotional limits, and learn how to control**

your emotions under the circumstances you will face as a missionary. By doing this, you raise the bar to greater heights and, in effect, fortify yourself against emotional challenges during your missionary service.

Prospective missionaries also must be prepared with the social skills needed to serve a mission. More and more, young people are isolating themselves from others by playing video games; wearing headphones; and interacting through cell phones, e-mail, text messaging, and so on instead of in person. Much of missionary work involves relating face-to-face with people, and unless you **set the bar higher in the development of your social skills**, you will find yourself underprepared. Let me offer a simple suggestion: get a job that involves interacting with people. As an increased motivation, set a goal to **earn enough money** from your part- or full-time work **to pay for at least a significant part of your mission.** I promise great blessings—social, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual blessings—to every young person who pays for a significant part of his or her mission. **NE**

From an October 2007 general conference address.



Share Your Experiences

Share how you're preparing to serve a mission and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/mission7NE.