

JULY 2017

THE New Era

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Did you know we're on Instagram?



Check out **@lds youth** this month to see stories from these youth and more!



Cover: Strength through sacrament covenants, p. 12

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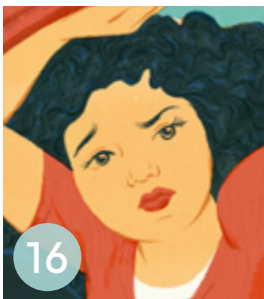
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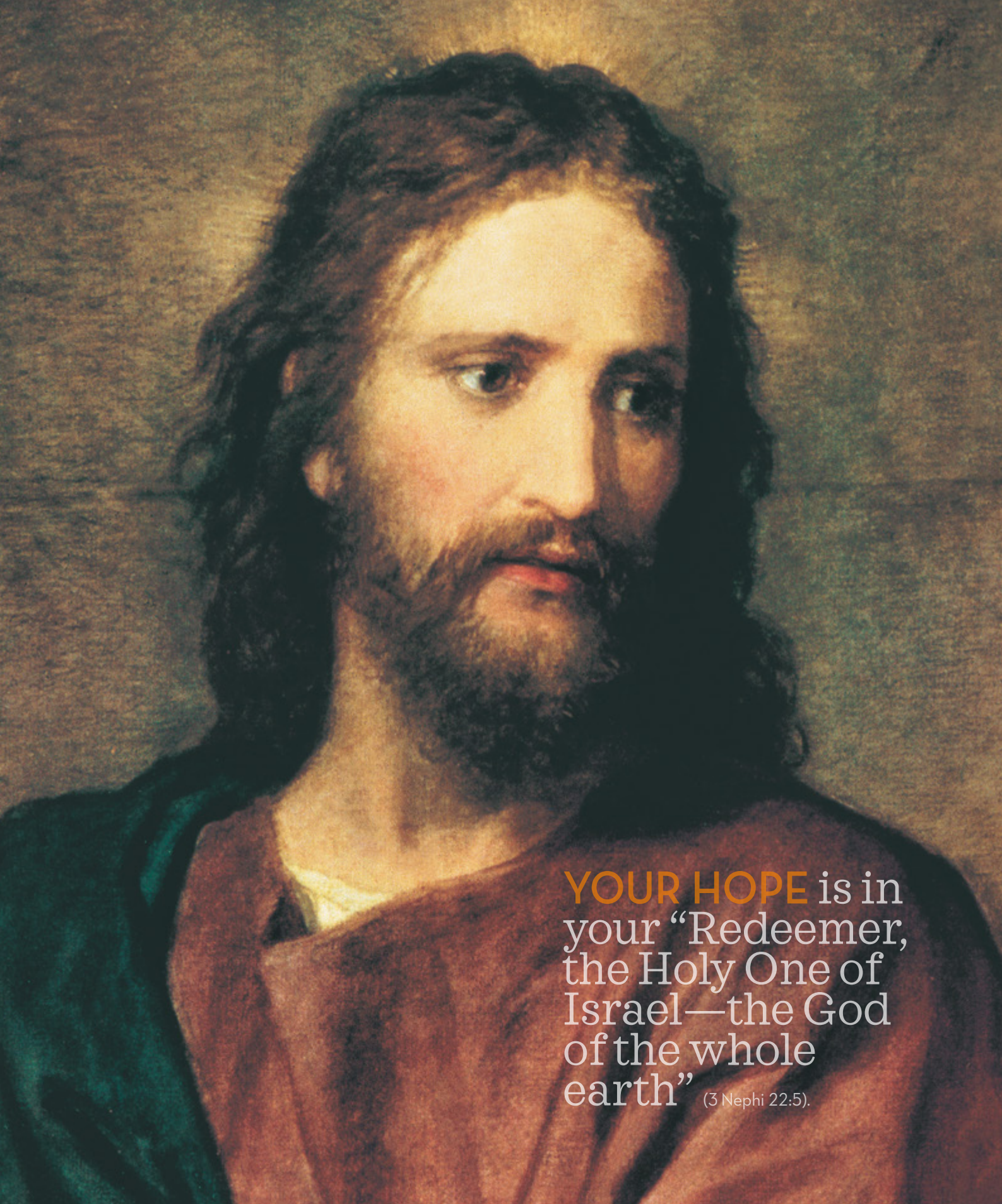


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YOUR HOPE is in
your “Redeemer,
the Holy One of
Israel—the God
of the whole
earth” (3 Nephi 22:5).



By President
Russell M. Nelson

President of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE POWER OF HOPE

BRING A MESSAGE OF HOPE. Regardless of how desperate things may seem, remember, we can always have hope. Always! The Lord's promise to us is certain: "He that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome" (D&C 63:20). I repeat, there is always hope!

We came to the earth to receive our bodies and to be tested. Do you remember the scripture that states, "We will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25)? Passing tests of obedience requires faith and hope—constantly.

Hope is part of our religion—mentioned in one of the Articles of Faith. "We follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we *hope* all things, we have endured many things, and *hope* to be able to endure all things" (Articles of Faith 1:13; emphasis added).

Hope emanates from the Lord. Only with an eternal perspective of God's great plan of happiness can we ever find a more excellent hope. "What is it that ye shall hope for?" asked Mormon. He then answered his own question: "Behold I say unto you that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ" (Moroni 7:41). Paul expressed the same thought. He succinctly called the Lord Jesus Christ "our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1). Have you heard the old statement that "hope springs eternal?" It can only be true if that hope springs from Him who is eternal.

Faith, Hope, and Charity

Have you noticed in the scriptures that hope seldom stands alone? Hope is often linked with faith. Hope and faith are commonly connected to charity. Why? Because hope is essential to faith; faith is essential to hope; faith and hope are essential to charity. They support one another like legs on a three-legged stool. All three relate to our Redeemer.

Faith stems from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Hope* centers in His Atonement. *Charity* is manifest in the “pure love of Christ” (see Moroni 7:47). These three attributes are intertwined like strands in a cable and may not always be precisely distinguished. Together, they become our tether to the celestial kingdom.

HOPE becomes an anchor to the soul.

In our quest for faith, hope, and charity, we must beware of the dangers of doubt, despair, or disdain for the divine. Moroni so taught: “If ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity” (Moroni 10:22).

Each of you is special, valued, and needed in building the kingdom of God. The adversary is also aware of your worth and will surely taunt you. When Satan’s temptations come your way, please remember this counsel from Alma:

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted

above that which ye can bear. . . .

“Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts” (Alma 13:28–29).

Anchor of Faith and Hope

A more excellent hope is mightier than a wistful wish. Hope, fortified by faith and charity, forges a force as strong as steel. Hope becomes an anchor to the soul. To this anchor, the faithful can cling, securely tethered to the Lord. Satan, on the other hand, would have us cast away that anchor and drift with the ebb tide of despair. If we will cling to the anchor of hope, it will be our safeguard *forever*.

A scripture declares:

“Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast” (Ether 12:4).

The Lord of hope invites all people to come unto Him. Steps toward Him begin with faith, repentance, and baptism. Moroni explained that “the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and . . . the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, . . . until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God” (Moroni 8:26).

Hope of Eternal Life

Happiness comes when scriptures are used in shaping our lives. They speak of



HIS HOPE is in you.
You are literally the
“Hope of Israel, Zion’s
army, Children of
the promised day.”

the “brightness of hope” (2 Nephi 31:20) for which we yearn. But if our hopes were narrowly confined only to moments in mortality, we should surely be disappointed. Our ultimate hope must be anchored to the Atonement of the Lord. He said, “If you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

An understanding of that objective should help us approach the future with faith instead of fear, with a more excellent hope in place of despair. God sent each of us here to be happy and successful.

Meanwhile, He also needs us. We are to “seek not the things of this world but seek . . . first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness” (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 6:38). He decreed that “no one can assist in this work except he shall be humble

and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things” (D&C 12:8).

Press Forward with Hope

I would like to quote a scripture by way of summary and promise:

“Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

Your hope is in your “Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth” (3 Nephi 22:5). His hope is in you. You are literally the “Hope of Israel, Zion’s army, Children of the promised day” (*Hymns*, no. 259). **NE**

From a Brigham Young University fireside address given on January 8, 1995.

SABBATH DAY ON THE FARM

*As you keep the
Sabbath day holy and
keep the other com-
mandments of the Lord,
He will bless your life.*





By Elder Randall K.
Bennett

Of the Seventy

Sundays **ON THE FARM**

Working summers as a youth with a beloved uncle and aunt on the family farm was hard work! There was always work to do—machinery to fix, fields to plow, seed to plant, cows to herd, and grain to harvest. We took breaks for meals, but other than that, most days we were working.

Except on Sundays.

For our family, the Sabbath day really was a day of rest and worship, even with the constant needs on the farm. When I was younger, that didn't always make sense to me.

You see, Sunday always seemed to me to have perfect weather for farm work like planting, fertilizing, and harvesting. I realized that the adversary wants us to think that Sunday is the very best day of the week for things other than worship and rest.

As we drove the miles to church, we'd often see our neighbors putting seed in the ground or harvesting the grain. And we were taking the whole day off! Sometimes it was really a trial of faith to look up at the sky and know that we were missing a day of perfect weather—especially when it

might hail or rain the next day and destroy the crops.

But year after year, season after season, no matter how many perfect farming days we missed to keep the Sabbath day holy, we were abundantly blessed. Some might say our choice didn't make sense, but I believe we were blessed *for* our choices. And a bounteous harvest wasn't the only blessing. The blessings I have seen, and the blessings you will see, will be more than you can count.

Sundays **ON YOUR FARM**

Your life is full. Every morning you're up early getting ready for school, finishing last-minute homework, and perhaps heading out for early-morning seminary. School, work, family, studying, sports, or band practice—whatever you happen to be interested in—can take every second of your day. You take a break for meals, but other than that, you're occupied.

Except on Sundays.

I hope that, for you, the Sabbath is a day of rest.

There probably is a lot you could participate in on Sunday—sports, recreation, opportunities to make money, time to get caught up on schoolwork. The adversary wants you to believe that Sunday is the very best day of the week for doing whatever you want or need to do. But I promise you great blessings if you will make the Sabbath a day of worship, service, and rest.

As you walk, drive, or ride to church, you probably see lots of people who seem to be enjoying a leisurely or productive day. And you are taking the whole day away from things of the world! Sometimes it is really a trial of faith for you to look around and know that you are missing a day of fun or relaxation or studying—especially when your busy life begins again when the alarm goes off on Monday.

My young friends, just as I wasn't missing out by not working or studying on the Sabbath, you are not missing out when you do what is right either, and great blessings will come from keeping this day holy.

The Center OF OUR SABBATH DAY

We certainly should strive to live every day as a sign to Heavenly Father that we love Him and honor His laws (see Russell M. Nelson, Apr. 2015 general conference), but there's something extra special about Sunday. We cease from our labors, we worship together, we serve one another and reach out to those in need, and we make an extra effort to give the entire day to the Lord.

Of course the greatest blessings from honoring the Sabbath day come from worthily partaking of the sacrament.

When I was your age, I began to appreciate more and more the promise of always having His Spirit with me. I knew, come Monday, and for the rest of the week, I would need the Spirit to be with me. Whether I was facing temptation at school or was distracted with the things of the world, I knew having the Spirit made everything easier. Great joy came as I recognized, listened to and followed the promptings of the Spirit.

To truly enjoy the blessings of the weekly ordinance of the sacrament, we don't wait until Sunday to repent. Instead, we should always be repenting daily, even hourly. Repentance is meant to be a joyful process, not something we do only in the bishop's office. As we partake of the sacred emblems of the Savior's Atonement with a clear conscience, we can commit to be willing, to keep trying, to do better, and to become better.

The Season FOR DECISIONS

Now is the season for important decisions for your future. As a young man, I chose to keep the Sabbath day holy and to dedicate my Sundays to Heavenly Father. That and other spiritual goals I set and kept as a teenager have made all the difference in my life, these many years later. As you keep the Sabbath day holy and keep the other commandments of the Lord, He will bless your life, just as He has blessed mine. **NE**



“No matter how many perfect farming days we missed to keep the Sabbath day holy, we were abundantly blessed.”





Mackenzie P., 17, Oregon, USA



My name is Mackenzie. I love testing soil and competed at a National Soil Analysis Competition in Oklahoma. (I also love crazy hats!)

One of my favorite things about the gospel is that it's an individual journey. We all learn different aspects at different paces, as we each grow into the people Heavenly Father designed us to become.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD M. ROMNEY AND COURTESY OF MACKENZIE P. AND SHAYDEN S.

I'm Shayden S. I'm 14 years old, and I'm from Switzerland. I do kickboxing competitions, and I also like doing CrossFit for fun. In kickboxing I became a sort of champion in an unofficial championship, and then I took second place at a tournament. Now I'm qualified for the championships in Ireland. I make sure I don't have any competitions on Sunday, and if I have one, then I don't go. Sometimes I don't go to kickboxing because I go to Young Men activities and seminary.

We have seminary once a week, and then we get reading homework for the rest of the week. I like reading about Jesus

Christ—where He went and what He did. One story I think is really cool is when Jesus made more bread and fish and gave everyone enough to eat.



THE BREAD AND THE WATER

The emblems of the sacrament can teach us a lot about the Savior Jesus Christ.

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

Luke 22:19-20



Bread

Bread is one of the most common and most ancient staple foods in the human diet. People have been making bread since before recorded history. It is a good source of carbohydrates, which provide energy. It will also keep longer than many other foods, making it portable as well.

Because bread is so common, many languages have sayings that use the word *bread* as a replacement for *food* (as in the Savior’s “Give us this day our daily bread” [Matthew 6:11]). Thus, it often represents the very idea of nourishment.



Water

Water is the most abundant compound on the earth’s surface, covering over 70 percent of it. All living things need water. About 60 percent of the human body is water, which is necessary for the proper functioning of pretty much all cells, tissues, organs, and systems. Humans can survive only a few days without water.



Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. . . . This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever” (John 6:35, 54, 58).

- The first sacrament used wine to represent the blood of Jesus Christ. Today we use water, but it carries the same meaning (see D&C 27:2).
- The Savior declared, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

BIBLE FACTS

- The Savior introduced the sacrament at the Last Supper, which was a Passover meal. At the Passover, unleavened bread was eaten. Leaven (such as yeast) contains microbes or compounds that cause air bubbles to form in the dough, giving the bread a lighter, softer texture but also making it more prone to mold and decay. Thus, unleavened bread represented purity— not being corrupted.
- The Israelites in the wilderness ate manna, which Moses said was “the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat” (Exodus 16:15). Jesus Christ declared: “I am the bread of life. . . .

What We Can Learn

BREAD:

Nourishes us. Through His Atonement and Resurrection, Jesus Christ enlivens our spirits and bodies. Because of His Resurrection, our bodies and spirits will be united inseparably, never to die. Through Him, the Bread of Life, we are fed spiritually, receiving spiritual energy and strength. The sacrament reminds us of this.

Is common. Jesus Christ’s Atonement and Resurrection are available to *all* mankind and do not require us to go to exotic lengths to receive their blessings.

Is portable. There is nowhere you can go (spiritually or physically) where the Atonement of Jesus Christ cannot reach you if you are willing to repent.

WATER:

Is essential for life. Without Jesus Christ, we would be subject to physical and spiritual death eternally (see 2 Nephi 9:7–9). But His Resurrection brings immortality for the body, and His blood was shed to pay the price of our sins so that we can repent, obtain forgiveness, and live again spiritually in Heavenly Father’s presence. “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:12).



FEEL GOD’S NEARNESS

“I invite you to attend sacrament meeting each week and partake of the holy emblems of the Savior’s body and blood. I invite you to feel God’s nearness as He is made known to you, as He was to the disciples of old, in the ‘breaking of [the] bread’ [see Luke 24:30–35].

“ . . . As we draw closer to God, the enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ will come into our lives.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016 general conference.

STRONG

ALL WEEK LONG





THESE YOUTH SHARE HOW THE LORD BLESSES THEM AS THEY TAKE THE SACRAMENT AND REMEMBER THEIR COVENANTS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

New Era Staff

It's Sunday night. That means tomorrow is Monday—back to homework, your job, football practice, piano lessons, and more. There's certainly a lot to do this week! But you've got this. You can conquer your long to-do list this week.

Want to know how?

You've got spiritual strength on your side. Every Sunday, you can take the sacrament and renew the covenants you've made. As you do, you are promised that if you take upon you the name of Jesus Christ, remember Him, and keep His commandments, you will always have His Spirit to be with you (see D&C 20:77, 79). That means you can feel spiritually strengthened no matter what you face this week.

We asked some youth to share their experiences with the sacrament and how it has strengthened them as they remembered their covenants all week long. Check out some of their stories. Maybe you've faced similar things!

BACKGROUND AND ABOVE: PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION (LEFT) BY CODY BELL



I CAN FIND COURAGE

Always remembering the Savior helps me have courage in the face of difficult trials. Halfway through my senior year of high school, my family moved back to the United States, but I stayed in Australia by myself to finish the school year. After I visited them during a school holiday, I was flying back to Australia, and I felt incredibly lonely. However, I suddenly realized that I wasn't alone; I never was and I never will be because the Savior's Spirit will always be with me as I strive to follow Him. That was the greatest comfort I could have received in that moment.

Shannon S., 19, Sydney, Australia



I CAN BE A FRIEND

At school there was a girl with a disability. Most people used that as an extra excuse to make fun of her. My friend and I were the only ones who tried to help her. Some days it seemed like the whole class teamed up against her. It was challenging to know how to react. I wanted to just walk away, but I chose to remember that she is a child of God and to think about how Jesus would treat her. I felt the calming effect of the Holy Ghost. I remembered that I could make a difference. Following the Savior's example helped me a lot, and I knew everything would be OK.

In my baptismal covenants I am promised to always have the Holy Ghost with me if I act as the Savior would. I'm grateful to have felt that comfort and strength from the Holy Ghost.

Alexis L., 13, Kansas, USA



I CAN KEEP THE SPIRIT

When I hear the sacrament prayers, I remind myself that if I keep my part of my baptismal covenant, I can keep the Spirit with me. My week is a lot easier when I keep the Spirit nearby. For example, many students at my school use bad language and speak in inappropriate ways. Remembering my covenants helps me to ignore what I hear and even to influence some of my peers to stop speaking that way.

Jacob B., 14, Colorado, USA



I CAN STAND STRONG

For me, taking upon myself the name of Jesus Christ means remembering that His Spirit can always be with us and that we must choose to do what is right. Once at a birthday party, my friends were drinking, and they offered me an alcoholic drink. I said no. Then one of my Church friends came and told them that we do not drink alcohol because of our religion. Remembering the Savior always brings the Spirit close to me and keeps bad things away from me.

Miguel C., 16, Paraná, Brazil

I CAN BE WORTHY

During the sacrament, I used to think about things like what I have to do in the week, things at school, or my friends. But then through Sunday School classes and the messages of our prophets, I began to understand the meaning of the sacrament. I now think about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, that He gave His life for us, paid for our sins, and suffered all things. That gives me the motivation every day to say: I can strive to be like Him and demonstrate the same love that He showed others. I can share the gospel with others. I can do something to be more worthy to enter the temple and to take the sacrament.

Alessandra B., 17, Santiago, Chile



I CAN BE COURAGEOUS

Knowing that I have covenanted to take upon myself the name of Christ gives me a sense of duty to follow Him, but it's not always easy. One time at a group activity I saw a kid who didn't have anyone to talk to. I felt like I should go talk with him. At first, I didn't want to. I am not that great at putting myself out there to make friends. But remembering what Christ would do, I found the strength to make a new friend. As I was talking to him, I could feel the Spirit prompting me to ask questions and have fun.

Evan A., 16, Utah, USA



I CAN FEEL PEACE

Taking the sacrament gives me a peaceful feeling and thoughts that convince me I can handle anything life throws at me. Last June, I was having a difficult time in my life. One of my best friends moved away, I was struggling with depression, and I had unrealistic thoughts about body image. One Sunday, I was taking the sacrament, and a flood of peace washed over me. I felt truly happy.

Olivia T., 14, Virginia, USA



I CAN FORGET MY STRESSES

The sacrament is a spiritual boost for the week. It reminds me of the covenants that I have made with my Father in Heaven, and it guides me through the week. It makes me think of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us, and that prepares me spiritually for the upcoming week.

One time I was stressed and frustrated, but when I took the sacrament and read the sacrament hymn, I was filled with the Spirit. I forgot about my stresses and focused on the Savior.

Brett B., 17, Colorado, USA



THE BATTLE WITH MY BATHROOM MIRROR

By Stephanie Snow



*All I could see
were my flaws.
How could
I ever like the
way I look?*

Every society around the world has its standards of beauty. When we don't/can't conform to them we may be left feeling inadequate. I have fought the battle with my bathroom mirror for most of my life. From a young age I became acutely aware of what I should look like, and even more aware that I didn't hit the mark. Dieting, exercising, and scrutinizing every curve became a normal part of my life.

As I grew and matured, I compared myself to my peers constantly, trying to find myself on the beauty scale. I was always too tall, my hair was too curly and thick, my waist was too big, there was a gap between my front teeth—and that was just for starters.



DOES IT MATTER TO HIM?

“Do you suppose it matters to our Heavenly Father whether your makeup, clothes, hair, and nails are perfect? . . . Do you think outward attractiveness, your dress size, or popularity make the slightest difference in your worth to the One who created the universe?”

“He loves you not only for who you are this very day but also for the person of glory and light you have the potential and the desire to become.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Living the Gospel Joyful,” Oct. 2014 general conference.

The latest fashions never fit my body like they did the mannequin at the store or the model in the advertisement. I tried all the fixes—diets, exercise, different hairstyles, fashion tips and tricks of the celebrities, beauty products advertised on TV and in magazines—yet my body still refused to transform into the “ideal.” When I realized that I would never reach my society’s standard of beauty, feelings of insecurity grew and my self-esteem plummeted. The mirror remained my enemy.

Little did I know I was succumbing to one of Satan’s best-laid plans of attack. As a result of the War in Heaven, he (and his followers) lost the opportunity to ever receive a body. He is intensely jealous of those of us who do have one. Using every resource in his power, Satan tries to make us hate, mistreat, and even loathe our bodies, “seek[ing] that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Satan has taught the world to believe that our bodies are merely packages—ornaments that must conform to specific proportions, shapes, and sizes—and that these determine our level of happiness, success, and worth in this life. He also advocates that we use any means available to measure up to the ideal, no matter the cost.

It wasn’t until I looked to the Lord and His word that I began to find peace in this area of my life. One day I read a verse in the book of Mosiah that quoted Isaiah, referring to the Savior: “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. . . . He was despised, and we esteemed him not” (Mosiah 14:2–3). I realized that although Jesus Christ was not widely accepted by those around Him, His understanding of His worth came from His relationship with the Father and doing “always those things that please him” (John 8:29).

Beauty is mentioned several times throughout the scriptures. From what we read, it is clear that the beauty we need

to focus on most comes from within and is created through the development of Christlike characteristics. The closer we come to being like Christ, the more beautiful we will truly be. True beauty is defined as holiness (see 1 Chronicles 16:29), and salvation to the meek (see Psalm 149:4). The Lord also says of those who share the gospel, “How beautiful upon the mountains shall they be” (1 Nephi 13:37). And Zion is called “the perfection of beauty” (Psalm 50:2). We know Zion to be “the pure in heart” (D&C 97:21). The Lord said about the Zion of Enoch, “They were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).

In this life our spirits are housed in imperfect, mortal bodies. They are, well, not perfect. They will age, develop wrinkles, probably accumulate a few more pounds than we’d like; they’ll sag, the hair will go grey—or may fall out. Our bodies will eventually wear out and die, no matter what we do to try to stop, delay, or cover up this process.

However, these bodies that we have been given can be the source of our greatest joy on this earth. Through the gift of our bodies we can walk in, talk about, see, smell, or hear all the wonderful creations of our Heavenly Father. In partnership with Him, our bodies are the means of bringing new life to this earth. We must hold in deep reverence and respect these gifts we possess, the combination of which is a sacred temple.

When we look in the mirror noticing all of our “flaws”—the freckles, the short legs, the long nose—we need to remember who created the person we see reflected back at us. We should rejoice in our individual beauty and remember that we are God’s children and that He loves us. He created us in His image for specific and divine purposes. Keeping this in mind will help us do all we can to take care of our bodies, present our best selves, and then love what the Lord has given us. **NE**

The author lives in Oregon, USA.

THE CAVE

By Frank Winger

We thought maybe we shouldn't go in any farther. Well, just a few steps more.

One day my friend Todd and I decided to go shooting. But pretty soon we got totally bored. It wasn't even lunchtime and we were ready to go home.

As we put our gear in the car, I noticed something odd. "Hey, Todd," I said. "What do you think that big dark spot on the hill is? Looks like a cave, doesn't it?"

We decided to take a look. We didn't have any lights with us, so we thought we would only explore as far in as we could go and still see the light from the entrance.

We walked a few yards into the cave and turned back to check the light. No problem. We walked in several more yards. Sure enough, the light was still there, but now it looked only about a foot high. We stopped and thought maybe we shouldn't go in any farther. Well, just a few steps more.

Suddenly everything went black. I don't mean dark. I mean black. We turned a full circle. There was no light.

We put our hands against the wall and began walking in the direction we had come—or so we thought. After following that wall a longer time than it took to walk in, we still couldn't see an inch of light.

We turned the other way, again feeling along the wall, but again we saw no light.

We kept turning one direction and another, but we found no light. We started stumbling over rocks on the floor of the cave. There hadn't been rocks like this where we came in.

"I'm scared," Todd confessed.

"I'm scared, too," I answered.

"No one is going to come looking for us," Todd said. "We told them we wouldn't be back until late." Todd was quiet for a minute and then he added, "Maybe we're going to die."

"Maybe."



I didn't think it was maybe. I thought for sure we were going to die. Even when we didn't show up later that night, our folks wouldn't know where to come looking for us. It would be days before they found us.

We walked on for a long time. Finally we both collapsed down onto the ground. I fought back tears. I didn't want to die like this.

"Frank," Todd said quietly, "I don't know what to do now."

"I do," I replied. "What we should have done hours ago. We're going to pray, and we're going to pray very hard."

We knelt down and poured out our hearts, pleading with Heavenly Father to show us the way out. We prayed longer than I'd ever prayed in my life. It was the most sincere and humble prayer I'd ever uttered. We were completely dependent on Father in Heaven's mercy.

When we finished our prayers we stood there for a few moments then turned in the direction we felt impressed to try. Within a few yards we saw a tiny glimmer of light. With just that tiny glimmer we knew which way to go.

When we reached the entrance of the cave, we knelt down again and thanked Heavenly Father for answering our prayers.

Then we looked at our watches. We had wandered around in that cave for eight hours! We got home and told our story, and the whole family thanked Heavenly Father.

The next day, Todd and I thought it would be interesting to take our big flashlights and go back to look at the cave.

We climbed up to the entrance and turned on the flashlights. We walked a few yards into the cave and froze with a chill of terror. It wasn't a cave. It was an abandoned mine filled with endless horizontal passageways and several vertical shafts falling into seemingly bottomless abysses. One wrong step and Todd and I would have hurtled down one of those shafts.

When I think about this experience, I think about light and darkness. I think about how captivating it is to explore just a little into the darkness. Just a step at a time, always knowing you can turn around and, seeing the light—even if only a little light—you are sure you can find the way out again. But I learned that you can take just one step too far into the darkness, and the light is gone. So, I decided right then: the best course of action is to stay out of the darkness entirely. **NE**

The author lives in California, USA.



A SONG FOR MANON

What was originally envisioned as an evening's entertainment grew into an outpouring of love for an individual young woman.

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

The young women were excited. In fact, the entire ward in southern France was excited. To encourage greater unity, leaders were planning a ward social, with dinner and entertainment. Knowing that the Beehives, Mia Maids, and Laurels had already been learning songs and dances during some of their activities, the leaders invited them to provide the evening's entertainment.

And so the ward's young women began practicing in earnest—all of them but one. Manon would not be able to perform. She had been undergoing cancer treatments for more than two years.

Manon C., age 16, still came to meetings and activities as often as she could, and she always shared a bright smile despite what she was going through. But during chemotherapy she was sometimes too weak to do much more than

rest. Ward members had fasted and prayed several times on her behalf. No one expected her to practice or to dance.

But she *could* attend the dinner. So why not dedicate the evening to Manon?

A Dedicated Evening

The idea quickly caught on.

"We wanted Manon to feel the ward's love and support for her," explains Emma S., 16. "If our ward wanted to become more unified, what better way to do it than by working together to show our love for Manon?"

The entire ward became involved in the preparations. Families received assignments to bring food for the dinner; the Relief Society helped make costumes for the young women; the young adults provided technical support (lighting, sound, and background videos) for rehearsals



From left: Emma wrote a song, young women performed, Manon was guest of honor, and youth and leaders all helped.

and the final performance; and priesthood brethren helped set up tables and chairs.

All of this work was done by ward members spread out over a large area. “The youth in the ward are very close in spirit, but we live far apart,” says Aiolah V., 16. “We don’t see each other in school because we live in different parts of town, so we make an extra effort to ensure that no one gets left off to the side.”

“We also stay in touch all the time, thanks to cell phones,” says Inka S., 15. “We teach each other by sharing our different experiences. We know we can count on each other, and we try to set good examples for each other.” The young women, who love being together whenever they can, found that rehearsals for the dinner show provided additional opportunities to deepen friendships.

“Before we started rehearsing, I was quite shy,” Inka explains. “I was afraid of making a mistake. But when we danced as a group, I put my shyness aside. I knew it was time to show the ward how hard we had worked.”

Manon, for her part, was both humble and gracious. “When they told me about the dinner and show and that I’d be the guest of honor, I thought I’d be bothered that they were making a fuss,” she recalls. “On the other hand, I was excited to be there!”

A Show of Love and Support

Soon the evening arrived, and it was a perfect occasion to offer love and support for Manon. “The food, of course,

was excellent,” Aiolah says. “This is France, after all!”

And then the entertainment—called a *spectacle* in French—lived up to its name. Games, vocal presentations, and dances delighted the audience. Then the young women, as a combined choir, provided the highlight of the show. They dedicated a song to Manon, a song Emma wrote and composed herself. The lyrics in the chorus sum up the love and support everyone wanted Manon to feel:

*Please don’t give up,
‘Cause we believe in you,
And don’t forget who you are,
‘Cause we believe in you.*

As the young women performed the song, it was as if everyone in the ward were singing along, at least in their hearts. It felt like Emma’s simple song was transformed into an unsung chorus that resonates in the hearts of Latter-day Saints wherever they are—an anthem of courage and compassion; family and friends; unity, faith, and hope; a never-ending prayer that is heard in heaven.

The leaders’ intent in organizing the social was to unify the ward. Dedicating the evening to Manon not only helped to accomplish that goal but also generated an enduring sense of support for Manon and her family and an understanding that every child of God is important. “It is the goal of the Church to help us be closer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ,” Aiolah says. “We know that They love us and that we are never alone.” **NE**

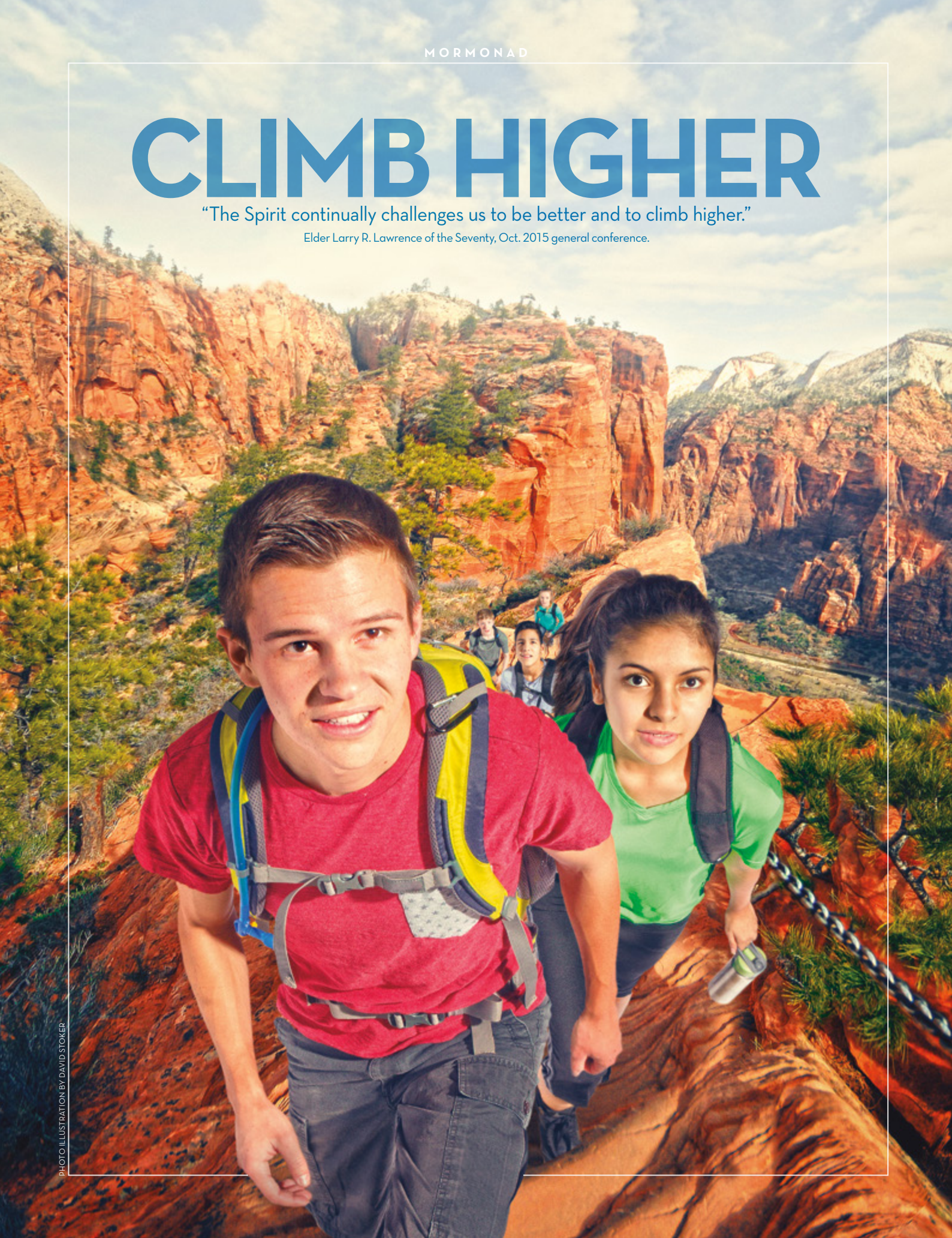
MORMONAD

CLIMB HIGHER

“The Spirit continually challenges us to be better and to climb higher.”

Elder Larry R. Lawrence of the Seventy, Oct. 2015 general conference.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER





UNICORNS, SOUL MATES, *AND* OTHER MYTHICAL CREATURES



By David A. Edwards and David Dickson
Church Magazines

Here's your
field guide to
fantastical fauna
that, though unreal,
can actually
harm you.

Throughout history, humans have envisioned creatures that don't actually exist in the natural world. Often, people come to actually believe in these inventions of human fantasy to some degree. This usually happens through a combination of misunderstanding, ignorance, and plain old imagination. Take the unicorn, for instance:

The Unicorn

A creature (usually a horse) with a single horn on its head. The horn was said to have magical, healing, or medicinal properties. The word *unicorn* is mentioned in the King James Bible, but that is a mistranslation; the animal referred to is actually some kind of wild ox or other form of *Bovidae*.

Where they live: Deep in the (enchanted) forest

What they feed on: Grass, oats, absorbed sunshine, or rainbows



Creatures like this may be fun and interesting to think about (and perhaps psychologically revealing), but they still have no basis in reality.

There are other mythical creatures that a lot of people nonetheless believe in nowadays. But these are not the kind that are fun and interesting to believe in. In fact, believing in them can be spiritually and emotionally harmful.

Some of them are things people believe exist out there somewhere; some of them are things people believe themselves to be. In either case, believing in them diminishes joy and growth. So, in a way, though they're not real, they feed off of you. See if you've heard of any of them.

CREATURES OF PERFECTION

The Soul Mate

Also known as the One-and-Only. A particular person of the opposite sex you are meant to be with.¹

Where it lives: Out-There-Somewhere

What it feeds on: Deferred happiness, unrealistic expectations



The Flawless One

Also known as the No-Need-to-Repent-er; a perfect person; one who never makes mistakes.²

Where it lives: The Kingdom of Aboveall

What it feeds on: Ignorance, insecurity, pride



See Romans 3:23

CREATURES OF EASE



The Pure Talent

Also known as the Lazy Success. A person whose obvious and consistent success comes entirely from inborn qualities that they have never had to work hard at developing, maintaining, or improving.

Where it lives: The Plains of Effortlessness

What it feeds on: Lack of motivation to improve



The Life Cruiser

A person who never has to face any trials or failures. Special powers include the innate ability to avoid all pitfalls, calamities, tragedies, accidents, pain, and loss.

Where it lives: The Isle of Ease

What it feeds on: Avoiding reality; when we look at others and think it's unfair that their lives are so much easier than ours, this creature feeds on self-pity, envy, and resentment

The Direct Conduit

Somebody who always has crystal-clear answers to their prayers and never has to struggle because the Spirit always speaks to them and makes decisions for them.³

Where it lives: The Floating Island of Yield

What it feeds on: Misguided expectations, lack of spiritual self-reliance; can also feed on spiritual insecurity and despair when people believe they ought to possess these powers but don't



NO SHORTCUTS

“Success will not come immediately because it requires preparation and hard work. There really are no shortcuts to success.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Message to My Grandsons,” Apr. 2007 general conference.



The No-Prayer-No-Scripture-Study Lifelong Testimony Holder

A person whose special gifts make it so that they don't need to pray or read the scriptures in order to maintain a strong testimony.

Where it lives: The Dense Hollows

What it feeds on: Spiritual complacency

The Once-and-Done Scripture Genius

A person who has read the scriptures once and doesn't need to go back and read or study them again, having obtained the full benefits of them in one go.

Where it lives: The So-Low Plateau

What it feeds on: Minimal effort, spiritual complacency, a “been there, done that” attitude

The Aimless Achiever

Somebody who doesn't make or pursue concrete goals but who nonetheless achieves all kinds of success. A cousin of the Life Cruiser.

Where it lives: The Invisible Sky-Castle of No-Goal

What it feeds on: Low achievement, wasted time



The Unscathed Limit-Pusher

Somebody who always walks to the edge of moral danger but never experiences any spiritual harm.

Where it lives: The Cliffs of Zero Consequence

What it feeds on: Moral risk



The Believer-Not

A person who is able to have great faith in basic gospel principles while at the same time having deep doubts about those same gospel principles.⁴

Where it lives: The Gray Area

What it feeds on: Doubt, insecurity, worldliness

CREATURES OF IMPOSSIBILITY

The Ungifted

A person suffering from a curse that leaves them permanently without any talents or gifts.

Where it lives: No-Good Grotto or the Desert of Dull

What it feeds on: Lack of self-worth, insecurity, fear of failure



See Moses 4:4

The Island

A person who never needs help from anyone for anything. Also known as a 100 Percent Do-It-Yourself-er or Do-It-All. Special powers include skills, intelligence, emotional equilibrium, and resourcefulness beyond any human.

Where it lives: The Ocean of Noman

What it feeds on: Social and emotional isolation, unrealistic expectations, pride

STOP COMPARING

“We must stop comparing ourselves to others. We torture ourselves needlessly by competing and comparing.”

Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy, Oct. 2016 general conference.

CREATURES OF HABIT

The Exception

An extraordinary being whose unique circumstances make it so that commandments and standards do not apply to them as they do to other, less special people.

Where it lives: Special-Special Land

What it feeds on: Excuses, pride, unwillingness to change



CREATURES OF SOCIAL FANTASY

The Beloved Meanie

Someone, often popular, who does and says unkind things to others and who is also truly loved for doing so.

Where it lives: Statusville, in the Bog of Belittlement

What it feeds on: Social anxiety, putting down others



The Frempter (Friend/Tempter)

Someone capable of being a person’s “good friend” while also being the one who tempts them to break standards and commandments.

Where it lives: The Frenemy Territory

What it feeds on: Social anxiety

The Just-the-Way-I-Am-er

Once this species reaches a certain age—usually in their teens—they will never be able to change any personal attributes (never get better grades, never be more kind, keep all bad habits, etc.).

Where it lives: The Swamp of Sameness

What it feeds on: Pride, unwillingness to change, insecurity, fear of failure

CONCLUSION

To reiterate: Not one of these creatures exists. But your belief in them can harm you. So, rule number one in vanquishing them is simple: **DON’T BELIEVE IN THEM. NE**

NOTES

1. “I do not believe in a one and only soul mate for anyone. . . . Once you commit to being married, your spouse becomes your soul mate. And it is your duty and responsibility to work every day to keep it

that way” (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Reflection in the Water” [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009], broadcasts.lds.org).
2. “All have sinned, and

come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “God is . . . fully aware that the people you think are perfect are not” (President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Forget Me Not,” Oct. 2011 general conference).
3. “The Holy Ghost is not given to control us.

Some of us unwisely seek the Holy Ghost’s direction on every minor decision in our lives. This trivializes His sacred role. The Holy Ghost honors the principle of agency” (Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Apr. 2016

general conference).
4. “Faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time” (President Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” Oct. 2015 general conference).

See Matthew 7:12

WHAT



YOU'RE WORTH AND HOW TO KNOW IT

THE WORLD IS ALWAYS TRYING
TO TELL US HOW WE SHOULD
MEASURE OUR VALUE.
HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT
WE'RE REALLY WORTH?

By Hadley Griggs

“Oh no! I spent all day working on my science project, and I didn’t start my math homework, take the dog for a walk, call my grandma and wish her a happy birthday, or post on social! I can’t believe myself. I can’t do anything right.”

Does this sound like you?

Sometimes life can get so overwhelming that our to-do lists feel miles long, and all we see are the things we haven’t done. And while I’ve always loved to-do lists, there are some nights I feel like I didn’t accomplish anything. And because of that, I sometimes feel worthless.

I’m not alone—my mom can get discouraged with her to-do lists, too. But one time she shared with me a little secret: some days she doesn’t write out a to-do list. Instead, she’ll wait until she finishes something, and *then* she’ll write it down and cross it off. At the end of the day, instead of looking at a list of all the things she still has to do, she has a different kind of list—a “done list.” And then she feels so much better.

So what’s going on here? Why do we sometimes convince ourselves that we’re only worth what we’ve accomplished, what talents we have, or even what we are worth compared to classmates, or what we see in the mirror? Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explains it this way: “When we choose to define ourselves . . . by some characteristic that is temporary or trivial in eternal terms, we de-emphasize what is most important about us and we overemphasize what is relatively unimportant.”¹ In my case, and in my mom’s case, we’re sometimes overemphasizing achievements and de-emphasizing what’s really important. We’re measuring our self-worth by the wrong things.

WHAT IS SELF-WORTH?

It's important that we know what people mean when they talk about "self-worth." It's our actual, intrinsic value as individuals—and that never changes. (We'll talk about that in a minute.) What can and often does change is our *sense* of self-worth. So when we say that our own sense of self-worth can rise and fall with everything that happens each day, we're talking about how we *perceive* our value, not about our actual value as people.

It's also important to understand that our having a high sense of self-worth is not the same as unrighteous pride. According to President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, pride "is a sin of comparison," because prideful people measure their greatness as something that makes them better than others.² Self-worth should have nothing to do with comparison—it should be the opposite. It is the value that we can feel as individual sons and daughters of God.

HOW SHOULD MY WORTH BE MEASURED?

The world is always trying to tell us how we should determine our self-worth. Sometimes it's how physically attractive we think we are or how many followers we have on social media or how talented we are or how fast we can turn in tests at school . . . and the list goes on. With all of this going on around us, how can we know what we're *really* worth?

President Thomas S. Monson has given us the answer. He has taught, "The worth of a human soul is its capacity to become as God."³ In other words, our worth comes from who we have the ability to become: if we keep the Lord's commandments, "then shall [we] be gods, because [we] have all power" (D&C 132:20). This potential comes from being "spirit [sons and daughters] of heavenly parents,"⁴ and it is why "the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (D&C 18:10). Our true self-worth can't be measured by any earthly scale.

As children of God, we can also feel His love, which should be another boost to our sense of self-worth. In President Monson's words, "Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is not changed by your talents and abilities. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God's love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there."⁵



HOW CAN I SEE MY TRUE WORTH?

Of course, there are a thousand little things that can distract us from accurately understanding our true worth—and that’s when our sense of self-worth can start feeling a little low.

Luckily, there are also a thousand little ways we can get back in tune and cultivate a healthy understanding of self-worth. Here are a few:

- **Strive for righteousness.** Living righteously brings us one step closer to realizing our divine potential to become like God. On the other hand, when we make mistakes and sin, we may feel shame, which can overwhelm us and bring down our sense of self-worth. Instead, we should allow godly sorrow to lead us to sincere repentance. Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement, our guilt can be swept away through repentance, which can help us focus on our future—not our past. We will also be worthy of the Spirit, which can give us peace and confidence, helping us have a true sense of our worth.



- **Serve others.** By magnifying our talents and our callings and by engaging in other forms of service, we can draw closer to Jesus Christ, and become more like Him—bringing us closer to our divine potential.

- **Remember who you are.** Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, has said: “The real source that we should turn to to find out our value is our Heavenly Father. . . . The thing that gives me the greatest comfort is knowing who I am. . . . If we really understood that we are literal sons and daughters of Heavenly Father, I don’t think we would ever question our value.”⁷



- **Rejoice in the successes of others.**

Instead of feeling jealous or upset that others get an A on a test, congratulate them. Remember that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, and that comparisons are not an accurate measure of anyone’s self-worth. In the words of Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We are not diminished when someone else is added upon.” He says that feeling envious of others’ successes is like “downing [a] quart of pickle juice every time anyone around you has a happy moment!”⁶ When we are happy for other people, we can understand a little more how God rejoices in our successes—again helping us to draw closer to our potential.

- **Acknowledge the little things you do every day.** Allow yourself to feel enthusiastic about your daily successes, even the tiny ones. For instance, keep a “done list”! When you accomplish something, however small, write it down and cross it off. It’s OK (and good) to rejoice in the little things.



YOU ARE WORTH IT

We all struggle with feelings of low self-worth at times in our lives, because the world wants us to judge ourselves by so many different and difficult standards. But in the end, our worth has nothing to do with how much we cross off our to-do lists, who our friends are, or even what talents we have been given. Our divine worth is constant—and it comes from who we are: divine children of a loving Heavenly Father with the potential to become like Him. The more we try to reach that potential, the more we’ll discover our eternal worth. **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “How to Define Yourself,” *New Era*, June 2013, 48.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Pride and the Priesthood,” Oct. 2010 general conference.
3. Quoted in Thomas S. Monson, “My Brother’s Keeper,” Oct. 1994 general conference.
4. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” Oct. 2013 general conference.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2012 general conference.
7. “Face to Face with Elder Rasband, Sister Oscarson, and Brother Owen,” Jan. 2016, facetoface.lds.org.

FUN STOP

Discount Deacon Ties

Four young men turned 12 and became deacons around the same time. Before passing the sacrament for the first time, they all went together to buy some ties at a discount store. The selection was limited, though—there were only four colors: green, red, purple, and blue. In the end, each boy bought two ties and each tie color was bought twice. From the following clues, **can you tell who had which color of ties?**

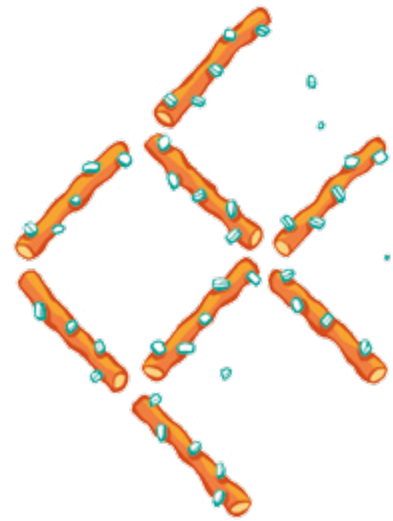
- Norton had a **green** tie.
- Sutton did not have a **red** one.
- Easton had a **blue** tie but not a **purple** one.
- Weston did not have a **green** one.
- One boy with a **red** tie also had a **purple** one.
- One boy with a **green** tie also had a **blue** one.
- One of the boys with a **purple** tie had no **red** tie.
- Neither of the boys with a **green** tie had a **purple** one.
- No person has two ties of the same color.
- No two persons had the same two colors of ties.



HINT: You'll probably want to draw a chart to solve this.

Pretzel Problem

It's the last day of camp, and your snack stash has completely dried up. Not good! All that hiking has built up an appetite, and dinner is a long ways off on the bus ride home. However, hope is in sight. Your friend has a handful of pretzel sticks left that he says can be yours for the taking—if you can solve the following puzzle:



Can you make the fish swim in the opposite direction by moving only three pretzel sticks?

Try solving this in your head or by drawing it out. Or, use any eight pencils/toothpicks/etc. to experiment.

Name Scramble

Can you figure out these Book of Mormon names by rearranging the letters?

1. **BIDNAIA** _____ (Mosiah 17:1)
2. **AELAKIM** _____ (Omni 1:12)
3. **SABIH** _____ (Alma 19:16)
4. **DHGOIDNA** _____ (Alma 30:23)
5. **UIKESHKMN** _____ (Helaman 2:3)
6. **PINHE** _____ (1 Nephi 17:7)
7. **SLHINBO** _____ (Alma 38:5)
8. **CUTENAM** _____ (Alma 51:29)

Pioneer Puzzler

Which pioneer do you think wore these exceptionally cool sunglasses?

- A. Brigham Young
- B. Heber C. Kimball
- C. Porter Rockwell
- D. Wilford Woodruff



Don't Read This Story Yet!



Before you read, **grab a sibling or friend or two and have them come up with words to fill in all the blanks based on the hints (but don't read the sentences).** Then see if you can read the story without laughing.

_____! It's the time you've been _____ for: the next stake dance! Before you go, here are a few tips to make sure you have the best _____ of your life.

- Make sure you wear your nicest _____, to impress all of the _____.
- Don't forget to pack your _____—you never know when you might _____ it.
- It's totally _____ to brush up on some moves before the dance—_____ love to see someone who knows how to _____!
- Show up _____ to make a good first impression.
- While it's great to dance with all your friends, take the time to _____ around and meet some _____.

Good luck on the dance floor—remember, stake dances can be _____, but if you do it right, you'll _____!

One-Hop Shopping

Terrence the toad is tired of hopping. The wizard/tutor who turned him into a toad said he'll restore Terrence to human form if he can prove he'll stop slacking off on his homework. (And you thought your teachers were demanding!)

All Terrence must do is solve this riddle. With each hop around the circle, he may **only change the previous word by one letter to reach the new word.** If he reaches the final lily pad with a word that's one letter away from the original word, he'll prove to Wizard Wonderly that he's ready to buckle down on his studies.



CLUES

1. Something you run really fast.
2. It's hard to make sushi without this.
3. What you might call a rollercoaster.
4. An order of bacon, if it's not already your main dish.
5. A "dad" in medieval times.
6. How your feet feel after too much hiking.
7. What you may need to replace on your shoe after that long hike!
8. A realtor's favorite word on a yard sign.
9. To work or press into a shape. Or, if you leave bread out too long.
10. He likes the dark, and he's got the tiny eyes to prove it.
11. In Old Testament days, animal offerings had to be without blemish and ... (see Lev. 1:3 if you're stuck).
12. Something our friend Terrence wants for his next birthday—if he gets turned back to a human in time—that he can practice with during medieval battle class.

Find answers to puzzles on page 45.

WILLIE HANDCART COMPANY
RESCUE SITE

WILLIE HANDCART COMPANY
RESCUE SITE

DEVIL'S
GATE

OUTH
PASS
N RIVER
MBARD FE

YOU



To be a Latter-day Saint is
to be a pioneer.

YOUR PIONEER JOURNEY— FOR REAL, NOT PRETEND

By Aaron L. West

Church History Department

When I was a little boy, I sometimes pretended to be a sports star. I pretended I could fly. I pretended I was a giant. I was happy with my life, even though I was short, earthbound, and only mildly athletic. But pretending was fun. I enjoyed experiencing something different, even if it was just in my imagination. I guess that's why a lot of people like to pretend.

Speaking of pretending, we Latter-day Saints love to go on pioneer treks. We wear pioneer clothes (sort of). We pull pioneer handcarts (kind of). We eat pioneer food (well, not exactly). We make a huge effort to pretend to be pioneers. The amazing thing is that we don't need to pretend. *We already are pioneers.*

President Thomas S. Monson has said, "To be a Latter-day Saint is to be a pioneer, for the definition of a pioneer is 'one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow.'"¹ President Monson has taught us, by his words and his actions, how to be true pioneers:

"We follow in the footsteps of the ultimate Pioneer—even the Savior—who went before, showing us the way to follow.

"'Come, follow me,' He invited."²

Come . . . follow . . . me. These simple words can help us be true pioneers.

Let's look at these words from the perspective of a few modern-day pioneers who recently went on a stake pioneer trek.





Taylor A.



Ethan G.



Harmony C.

“COME, FOLLOW ME”

The word *come* is an invitation. It suggests movement from one place to another. Taylor A. knows well the meaning of this word.

Taylor is bright, joyful, and full of the Spirit, but she would be quick to tell you that those words did not describe her two years ago. She has moved to a different place now, spiritually and physically. She is a pioneer.

“I’ve been a pioneer in my life,” she said, “because I’m a recent convert. And my journey has just been amazing. I just feel like it’s a whole new life. And once we take that first step in our journey, miracles happen.”

Not only does Taylor understand the invitation to come—she knows the source of the invitation. She observed, “In our world, we’re so disconnected with what got us here, right? We are so caught up in our jobs and technology, and a message that’s really been hitting me lately is putting Christ first. If we just connect to what the pioneers really did—[they were] centered in Christ.”

Follow is another invitation. On the pioneer trek, Ethan G. gained a greater understanding of this word. “Sometimes I haven’t felt the best on trek, or I’ve felt kind of discouraged,” he admitted. “But I realize that the pioneers also felt that way.”

Ethan used to wonder why the early pioneers were willing to do what they did. He said, “I feel like I might have just given up. But as I’ve thought about that, I kind of realized that it’s because they loved the Savior, and they have a hope they can become better through Him. I want to try that too.”

Before Ethan went on the trek, he read about pioneers from the past, felt a connection with them, and was inspired by their faith to follow Jesus Christ. And what is Ethan doing now? He is preparing to receive a call to serve as a full-time missionary. True to President Monson’s counsel, he is getting ready to show others the way to follow.

Where should we come? Who should we follow? The Savior tells us: “Come, follow *me*” (Luke 18:22;

emphasis added). When Harmony left home for trek, she saw the Lord’s hand in her experience. She knew she was following Him.

Harmony’s path to her stake trek was different from others’ paths. At age 15 she learned that she had a rare form of skin cancer. She wasn’t able to participate in her stake trek. “I was devastated,” she recalled.

Four years later, when her stake announced another trek, Harmony was free of cancer. But at age 19, she thought she wouldn’t be able to go. Then she received a calling to participate as a leader. She said, “It’s a testimony to me that the Lord knows who we are, and He knows the desires of our hearts, and if they’re righteous and good, He’ll bless us.”

Harmony offered advice to help us when we face trials: “To anyone who’s struggling, I’d say just to lean on the Lord. He’s always there for you. He loves us, and He won’t let us fall. We just need to reach out our hand to Him, and He will help us on our pioneer journey.”



PIONEERS— OUR SPIRITUAL ANCESTORS

“I have no ancestors among the 19th-century pioneers. However, since the first days of my Church membership, I have felt a close kinship to those early pioneers who crossed the plains. They are my spiritual ancestry, as they are for each and every member of the Church.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “[The Global Church Blessed by the Voice of the Prophets](#),” Oct. 2002 general conference.

YOU CAN BE A PIONEER

If you never go on a pioneer trek, you can still be a pioneer. You don’t have to wear a bonnet or pull a handcart. You just need to follow Jesus Christ, as the early pioneers did. In doing so, you will be, as President Monson said, “one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow.”


If you do have an opportunity to go on a pioneer trek, enjoy it! And when it’s over and you leave your handcart behind, don’t leave your pioneer testimony inside it. Bring that testimony with you.

You are a real-life, modern-day pioneer. With the ultimate Pioneer—the Savior—as your guide, you are sure to succeed! **NE**

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “[True to the Faith of Our Forefathers](#),” *Ensign*, July 2016, 4; quoting *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), “pioneer.”
2. Thomas S. Monson, “True to the Faith of Our Forefathers,” 4–5.

On youth.lds.org, you can watch a video of Taylor, Ethan, Harmony, and other modern-day pioneers, and you can read stories of early pioneers.



FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, AND THE

By Larry Hiller

Church Magazines

It seems like every school has them—small groups of friends who are always seen together.

And when you see one, you are pretty sure the others are close by. That's how faith, hope, and charity seem to be in the scriptures.

They are mentioned together so often that there must be a strong connection. But what is it? And more importantly, what does it mean for you?

I got so curious about it that I once read the Book of Mormon through just so I could mark every place where I found the words *faith*, *hope*, and *charity*—or those concepts. I was amazed at how many times they appeared and how often they were seen together.

But what really hit me was another time when I was reading Lehi's famous dream of the iron rod in 1 Nephi 8. Suddenly I realized that even though the words *faith*, *hope*, and *charity* are not mentioned together specifically in the story, Lehi's vision contains a great example of what they are and how they relate to each other.

The Dream

In the first part of his dream, Lehi sees a tree “whose fruit was desirable to make one happy” (1 Nephi 8:10). And when he tastes the fruit it fills his soul with “exceedingly great joy” (verse 12). He sees a rod of iron that leads to the tree. And he sees numberless people seeking the tree, many of them becoming lost in a mist of darkness.

But, Lehi tells us, “he saw other multitudes *pressing forward*; and they came and *caught hold* of the end of the rod of iron; and they did *press their way forward*, continually *holding fast* to

the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and *partook of the fruit of the tree*” (1 Nephi 8:30; emphasis added).


Now look at those emphasized parts of that verse. People *caught hold* of the rod of iron and *pressed forward*. They *held fast* to the rod of iron. And eventually they *partook* of the fruit. Those are all actions.

Faith Moves Forward

We can't completely define faith in one short article. But one thing the Bible Dictionary tells us is that faith is “a principle of action.” As James says, “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead” (James 2:17).

In his dream, Lehi saw people *taking hold* of the iron rod and *moving forward* despite the mists of darkness. When we exercise faith through acting on it, we not only *show* our faith but we *grow* our faith. It's one of the things Alma teaches us in Alma 32.

The Bible Dictionary also says, “To have faith is to have confidence in something or someone.” And for our faith to be effective, our trust “must be centered in Jesus Christ.” In this life we all travel through “mists of darkness.” Satan whispers doubts. The world—which lives in the “great and spacious building”—shouts all kinds of philosophies and theories that contradict the gospel. When we have faith in Christ, we ignore those things and move forward.

A man in a light blue shirt and dark pants stands on a mossy rock, looking up at a large tree with glowing fruit. The background is a dramatic, cloudy sky. A circular callout highlights one of the glowing fruits.

PRESSING
FORWARD IN FAITH
AND HOLDING FAST WITH
HOPE LEAD US TO TASTE
THE SWEETNESS
OF GOD'S LOVE.

IRON ROD

Hope Holds Fast

The hope we are talking about is not simply wishful thinking. It's not like saying, "I hope I pass that chemistry test." The scriptures make clear that hope is something firm and reliable. It is based on the reality that God is our loving Father and that through Christ and His Atonement, we can return to our Father. Moroni tells us: "Whoso believeth in God might with *surety* hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh *an anchor* to the souls of men, which would make them *sure and steadfast*, always abounding in good works" (Ether 12:4; emphasis added).

Just as faith keeps us moving forward, we keep holding fast to the iron rod because we have hope, which anchors us. Hope is also a form of confidence or trust. It is a reassurance the Spirit gives us that the Lord's promises are true and that they apply to us personally. And our grip on the iron rod tightens even more.

Faith, Hope, and the Iron Rod

Before we move on to charity, let's look at the iron rod itself. Nephi tells us that the iron rod represents the word of God (see 1 Nephi 11:25). Most would agree

that the word of God includes everything that God reveals through His prophets. Certainly it includes the commandments we must follow. But as important as the commandments are, there is more to the word of God—it is what we feast on and what nourishes us (see 2 Nephi 32:3; Moroni 6:4).

Remember, both faith and hope require that we have confidence and trust in God. And our Father in Heaven has revealed the reasons why we can have faith and hope. For one thing, He has said that we really are His children, and He is focused on helping us succeed. Remember, He said that His work and glory is to bring about our "immortality and eternal life" (Moses 1:39).

God has revealed the plan of salvation, which centers on our loving Savior and His Atonement and Resurrection. Knowing that our Father in Heaven and Savior have perfect love and infinite power and that their promises are sure, we truly *can* have faith and hope.

The Sweet Fruit of Charity

By holding fast to the iron rod and pressing forward, we come to the tree of life, with its incredibly desirable fruit. Nephi tells us that the tree represents "the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men" (1 Nephi 11:22). As we partake of the fruit of the tree, we become filled with that love and a desire to share it with others (see 1 Nephi 8:12).

Another word for that love is *charity*. Moroni tells us that "charity is the pure love of Christ" and that "whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him" (Moroni 7:47).

I confess that I used to think we reached the tree and partook of the fruit at the end of life, when we had finally fought our way through the mists of darkness. Now I understand that by exercising faith and hope, we begin in this life to taste the sweetness of the Lord's love for us—to become filled with charity. That gives us strength to continue forward confidently and successfully, pressing forward in faith and holding fast with hope. **NE**



AS WE PARTAKE
OF THE FRUIT OF THE
TREE, WE BECOME
FILLED WITH THAT LOVE
AND A DESIRE TO SHARE
IT WITH OTHERS
(SEE 1 NEPHI 8:12).

How do I balance not judging others and not condoning sin?

We're commanded to forgive others and leave final judgment to God (see D&C 64:9–11), but this doesn't mean condoning sin. If we're around others who are engaging in sinful behavior, we should be a light to them and stand up for what's right. At a minimum, this means setting a good example by not engaging in sin ourselves and not placing ourselves in questionable situations or company. But should we point out people's bad behavior to let them know God's laws and where we stand on them? And if so, when and how should we do it?

The answer probably depends on the situation, the kind of relationship we have with the people involved, and their knowledge of God's laws. For instance, talking one-on-one to family members and close friends is better than telling a roomful of mere acquaintances to repent. Seek the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. He can guide your words and actions so that you can show the right balance of love, tolerance, and steadfast commitment to the Lord's standards. **NE**



If I've stopped viewing pornography on my own, do I still have to talk to the bishop?

If you've been viewing pornography, you're encouraged to "seek the help you need. Your parents and bishop can help you take the steps necessary to repent and rid yourself of this destructive habit" (*For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 12).

If you've stopped viewing pornography on your own, the question isn't really whether or not you're still "required" to talk to your bishop about it. The real question is "Why not talk to my bishop?" There really is no downside to it. He will be understanding and encouraging, and he will be pleased with the efforts you've made to forsake your past sins. The bishop can help you resolve any lingering doubts you may have regarding your worthiness and the thoroughness of your repentance. And he can help you strengthen your faith and trust in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice. For similar reasons, you should also consider talking to your parents. **NE**

“As a young woman, how can I know if Heavenly Father wants me to serve a mission?”

Think about what President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said: “We need some young women [as full-time missionaries]. They perform a remarkable work. They can get in homes where the elders cannot. But it should be kept in mind that young sisters are not under obligation to go on missions. They should not feel that they have a duty comparable to that of young men, but some will wish to go. If so, they should counsel with their bishop as well as their parents” (“To the Bishops of the Church,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 19, 2004, 27).

You should also pray to know if serving a mission is right for you. Once you’ve reached a decision in your mind, ask God if it is right, and stay attuned to the whispering of the Holy Ghost.

For young women, the question about whether or not to serve a mission is a deeply personal one. Some young women will feel prompted to serve missions, and for other equally worthy young women, the answer will be no. Regardless of what your answer is, you are beloved daughters of God, who wants you to find joy in your lives, to strengthen your families, and to help build up the Church through your righteous example and service. **NE**



Follow the “Standard Process”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said:

“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures” (Oct. 2006 general conference). You can follow the “standard process” if you really want to know whether God wants you to serve a mission. You must sincerely ask the Lord in prayer and study the scriptures to know His answer. In case you have second thoughts about even asking in the first place, remember that even though young women are not required to serve missions, all of God’s children have the same potential to bless and to be blessed by preaching the gospel.

Mikaela S., 18, Philippines



Seek Counsel and Pray

When I was deciding whether or not to go on a mission, I went to those whom I trusted. I talked to my parents, bishop, friends, siblings, and seminary teachers and asked for their advice. I also studied my patriarchal blessing, looking for things that could relate to missionary work.

Just as we should when seeking an answer to any prayer, I made a

decision first, and then I took that decision to the Lord. I selected a day, asked my family to fast for me, and went to the temple to ask for confirmation of my decision. I received an overwhelming feeling that I had made the right decision.

Anne W., 18, Utah, USA

Ask with a Sincere Heart

Prayer, fasting, scripture study, and temple work can help someone answer questions they may have, as long as they do it with a sincere heart and love of Christ.

Tyler K., 15, Arizona, USA



Look to Your Patriarchal Blessing

I have looked to my patriarchal blessing for lots of answers to questions, including whether or not to serve a mission. After praying and studying my blessing, I have come to know that I will be serving many missions, so I am preparing to do so now. If you haven't received your patriarchal blessing yet, I encourage you to get one.

EmmaLee H., 17, Arizona, USA

We Can All Be Missionaries

Pray and read the scriptures to find the answers to your questions. Every

one of us is in God's army, and we all can be missionaries, whether we serve a full-time mission or not.

Logan H., 17, Oregon, USA

Listen to the Spirit

You can pray and fast and listen to hear what the Spirit has to say. If the Lord strongly wants you to serve or doesn't want you to go, you will know. Otherwise, it could mean the Lord has left the choice up to you, which means either choice is fine with the Lord.

Hope W., 16, Utah, USA

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



A VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION

"We affirm that missionary work is a priesthood duty—and we encourage all young men who are worthy and who are physically able and mentally capable to respond to the call to serve. Many young women also serve, but they are not under the same mandate to serve as are the young men. We assure the young sisters of the Church, however, that they make a valuable contribution as missionaries, and we welcome their service."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," Oct. 2012 general conference.

UPCOMING QUESTION

How can I motivate myself to do the things I ought to do but often don't—like personal prayer, scripture study, and homework?

Send your answer and photo by July 15, 2017.

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



Ordinances and Covenants

Heavenly Father wants us to return to Him. He sent His Son to show us the way and mark the path. Important milestones on that path are the ordinances and covenants of the gospel. In the April 2017 general conference, Church leaders have taught us about these ordinances and about making and keeping their associated covenants. For instance:

- “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” by President Russell M. Nelson
- “Let the Holy Spirit Guide,” by Elder Ronald A. Rasband
- “Our Father’s Glorious Plan,” by Elder Weatherford T. Clayton
- “A Sin-Resistant Generation,” by Joy D. Jones
- “The Beauty of Holiness,” by Carol F. McConkie

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 youth.lds.org.

TAKE TIME — to be — HOLY.

Carol F. McConkie
First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency
April 2017 general conference



— THE —
HOLY GHOST
BINDS
us to the Lord
[and]
prompts us to
walk in the light
of the Lord.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband
Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
April 2017 general conference



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



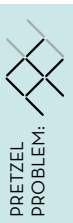
RYAN STOKER



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



JON CLARK



PRETZEL PROBLEM:

ANSWERS (from pages 32-33) DISCOUNT DEACON TIES: Norton: green, red, Sutton: purple, blue; Easton: green, blue; Weston: red, purple. PIONEER PUZZLER: (A) Brigham Young: NAME SCRAMBLE: 1. Abinadi, 2. Amaleki, 3. Abish, 4. Giddonah, 5. Kishkumen, 6. Nephir, 7. Shibli, 8. Teancum. ONE-HOP SHOPPING: 1. race, 2. rice, 3. ride, 4. side, 5. sire, 6. sore, 7. sole, 8. sold, 9. mold, 10. mole, 11. male, 12. mace.



SACRAMENT IN ANY LANGUAGE

After a walk along a dirt road to the bus stop, followed by a long bus ride, followed by a subway ride, I was happy to get on the streetcar. It was my first Sunday morning in Vienna, Austria, where I was staying for the summer, and I was looking forward to going to church. I felt a sense of relief when I noticed a sign on a small building with the words: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Visitors welcome.” I clutched both my English and German scriptures tightly as I entered the building. I followed the

sound of hymns to the chapel and sat at the end of a bench.

After the hymn, an opening prayer was given, but I didn’t understand much of it. Then the man I assumed was the bishop addressed the congregation. Few of his words made any sense to me. Suddenly I felt conspicuous as I sat alone. I felt lost and hopeless.

I blinked back tears. Then, one of the men got on his knees and began to bless the sacrament. The words were in German, but I knew what was being said, and the message was clear

and powerful. As I listened to the promise that we can “always have His Spirit,” I was filled with peace.

As I sat in a small chapel surrounded by people, a city, and a language that were all foreign to me, I savored the familiarity of the sacrament. I felt a sense of belonging. I knew that the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church unite us, and the comfort and blessings of the gospel are available to all, no matter where we may be.

Catherine P., Utah, USA

FROM SEED TO TREE

A few years ago, I wanted to gain my own personal testimony of the Book of Mormon, so I put more effort into reading my scriptures daily. When I reached the end of the book, I followed the counsel of Moroni, who said to ask God, and if I have a sincere heart and real intent, Heavenly Father would answer my prayer (see Moroni 10:4–5). I kneeled down and prayed. I waited for an answer. I expected an unforgettable spiritual experience that night, or the feeling of what they call “burning in the bosom,” but nothing came.

I was disappointed, but I didn’t give up. I continued to read my scriptures each day in faith. And as I read, the scriptures enlightened my mind little by little. I learned to love the messages and words found in the scriptures, and they brought comfort and hope to my heart. These seemingly small experiences became more frequent.

One day I realized that there was a difference between how strong my testimony was before and how strong it is now. I realized that everyone gains their testimony in different ways. For me, testimony came like the story found in Alma 32: like a little seed of faith, as I nourished it daily by reading my scriptures, pondering, and applying

MUSICAL MISSIONARY

One summer, my youth choir took a tour to all of the main Church history sites. We had the opportunity to perform concerts in places like Liberty Jail, the Kirtland Temple, and even the Sacred Grove.

While it was a great opportunity to visit the places where the gospel was restored, I had an even more powerful experience realizing that we were preaching the word of God through our music. For instance, as we sang “The Spirit of God” (*Hymns*, no. 2), I felt that we were testifying of the Lord’s Church and of the blessings of having the gospel in our lives. I felt that we were bringing people to Christ.

By the time the tour was over, my testimony had been strengthened so much, and I had seen many of the other choir members’ testimonies grow too. I also hope and pray that we were able to touch the lives of the many people who listened to us. By sharing the word of the Lord through music, we had a great missionary experience. I am now preparing for my full-time mission, and I look forward to continuing to preach the gospel.

Jared P., Utah, USA



the things I learned from the scriptures, my testimony slowly but surely grew “line upon line, precept upon precept” (2 Nephi 28:30). From that seed of faith and desire has grown a tree of testimony.

But my story doesn’t end here.

I know I must continue to nourish the tree so it doesn’t weaken and wither away. Then my tree of testimony will grow larger and more rooted, and when the storms of temptation and trial come, my tree will not fall.

Charlene L., Philippines



By Elder
Dallin H. Oaks
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

HOW TO GAIN A TESTIMONY

The first step in gaining any kind of knowledge is to really **desire to know**. In the case of spiritual knowledge, the next step is to **ask God in sincere prayer**. As we read in modern revelation, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal” (D&C 42:61).

Here is what Alma wrote about what he did: “Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit” (Alma 5:46).

As we desire and seek, we should remember that acquiring a testimony is not a passive thing but a process in which we are expected to *do* something. Jesus taught, “If any man will do

his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

Another way to seek a testimony seems astonishing when compared with the methods of obtaining other knowledge. **We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it**. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them.

A personal testimony is fundamental to our faith. Consequently, the things we must do to acquire, strengthen, and retain a testimony are vital to our spiritual life. In addition to those already stated, we need to **partake of the sacrament each week** (see D&C 59:9) to qualify for the precious promise that we will “always have his Spirit to be with [us]” (D&C 20:77). Of course, that Spirit is the source of our testimonies. **NE**

From an April 2008 general conference address.



HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

I have a testimony of the Church. It came through inspiration and dedication and reading the scriptures daily. And when you have your own testimony, it is amazing how differently you see and hear things.

Shannon Muriel M., Colorado, USA

Share Your Experiences

Share how you gained a testimony and read the experiences of other youth at youth.lds.org.

To return to His
presence and to receive the

ETERNAL BLESSINGS

that come from making and keeping

COVENANTS

are the most important

GOALS

we can set.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

April 2017 general conference

HONOUR
TO THE
LORD
THE
HOUSE
OF THE
LORD

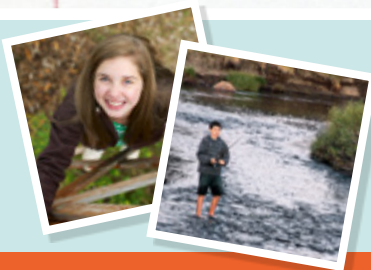


TELL US ABOUT YOUR AWESOME FRIEND!

We want to know why your friend is awesome. Tell us about them. What does your friend do that inspires you? How have they helped you? Or made you laugh? Do they do goofy tricks? Do they share their testimony? Do they always have the right thing to say to pick you up? We want to know!



SEND IT TO US BY JULY 31!



Send us your story and a good picture of your friend—especially one that captures their personality. We may use it in an upcoming issue of the magazine or online at youth.lds.org!

TO SUBMIT: Go to newera.lds.org and click on "Submit Your Work." Then select "New Era" from the dropdown, fill out the form, and upload your files. Or email us at newera@ldschurch.org.