



Choose To Be Ready

By Edward S. Watson

Start getting ready now so that when a call to full-time missionary service comes, you'll be prepared.

You've probably grown up thinking CTR stands for "Choose the Right," and it certainly does. But those three letters can also stand for other things based on right choices. I have also come to think of CTR as a good reminder of how to prepare for full-time missionary service.

Here are three ideas—I call them the CTR of mission preparation—that can be of help to you as you prepare to serve:

C. CLEAN. I am clean and worthy to serve, or I will repent so that I can become clean and worthy.

T. TESTIMONY. I have or will gain a testimony that the gospel has been restored, and I

will prepare to share that knowledge.

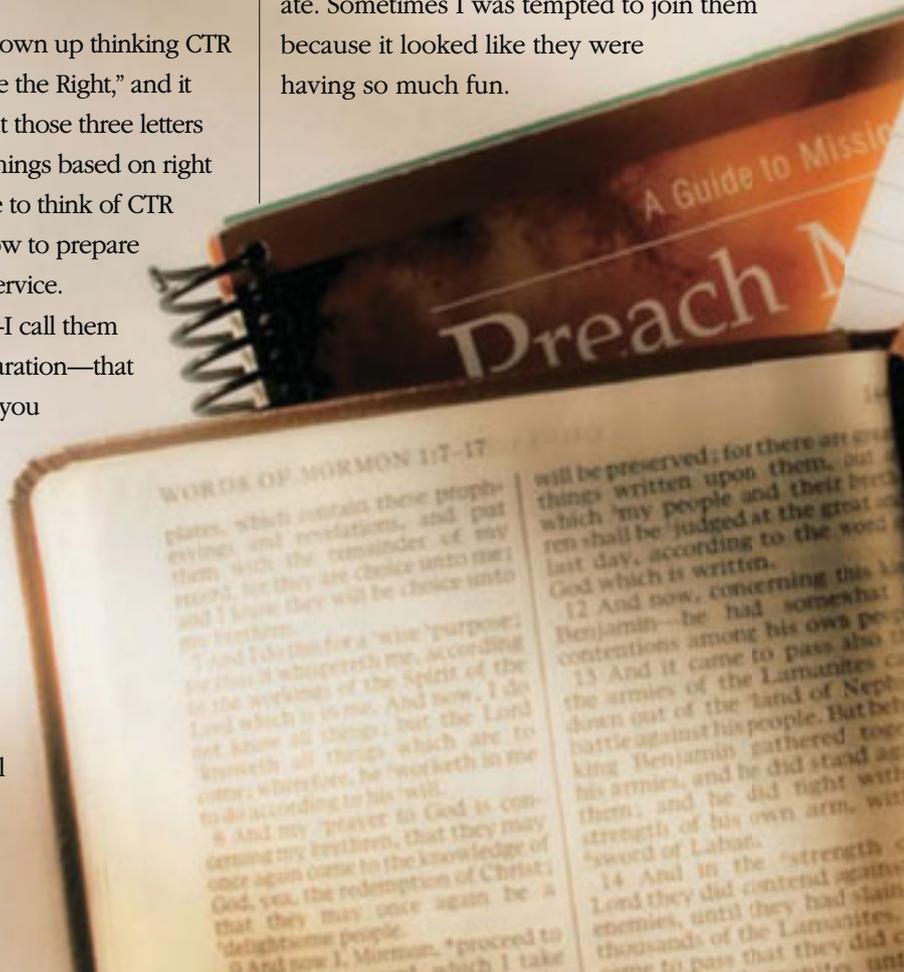
R. READY. I will be ready and willing to serve wherever I may be called to do so.

Here are some examples of what I mean.

CLEAN

The first time I passed the sacrament as a new deacon, I felt a great feeling of peace. I remember thinking to myself that I was doing something the Savior had done long ago when He blessed and administered the sacrament (see Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25). I realized that the priesthood I had just received allowed me to pass the sacrament. I was acting on the Savior's behalf! It was a wonderful feeling, and I promised myself that I would keep myself clean and pure so that I could always use the priesthood to serve others.

During my teenage years, that decision was tested a number of times. I watched friends accept invitations to see movies and go to parties that I knew were not appropriate. Sometimes I was tempted to join them because it looked like they were having so much fun.



I mentioned to my bishop this frustration about feeling left out. He helped me keep things in proper perspective by reassuring me that being a teenager only lasts a few years and that those who exercise their agency properly during those years will actually have far more freedom in the future than those who choose a different path.

I realized that I didn't want poor teenage decisions to affect my opportunities later in life. I tried to date young women and associate with friends who felt the same way. It wasn't always easy, but my decision to be worthy of the priesthood, enter the temple, serve a mission, and later marry in the temple have made any tough times as a teenager worth it. You will never regret staying clean and pure. If you have already made mistakes that keep

you from feeling close to the Spirit, talk to your parents and your bishop. They will know what to do to help you feel whole again.

TESTIMONY

Bermi was a teenager taking the missionary discussions in Colombia. His sister was already a member of the Church, and he knew the discussions almost as well as the missionaries because he had been studying with them for so long. When asked why he had not yet been baptized, Bermi replied, "I have a desire to believe, but I don't *know* that I have a testimony yet."

One of the elders had been studying in Alma chapter 32 and asked Bermi to turn to verse 27: "But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words."

As Bermi read those words, the Spirit confirmed to him that his desire to believe was enough for him to say that he had a testimony—a small testimony, but a testimony nonetheless. The elders reassured him that not everyone needed to have an experience like Joseph Smith or the Brother of Jared to say that they had a testimony. Even a *desire* to

believe was the start of a testimony. Bermi prayed

and expressed his desire to believe to

the Lord. A short time later he

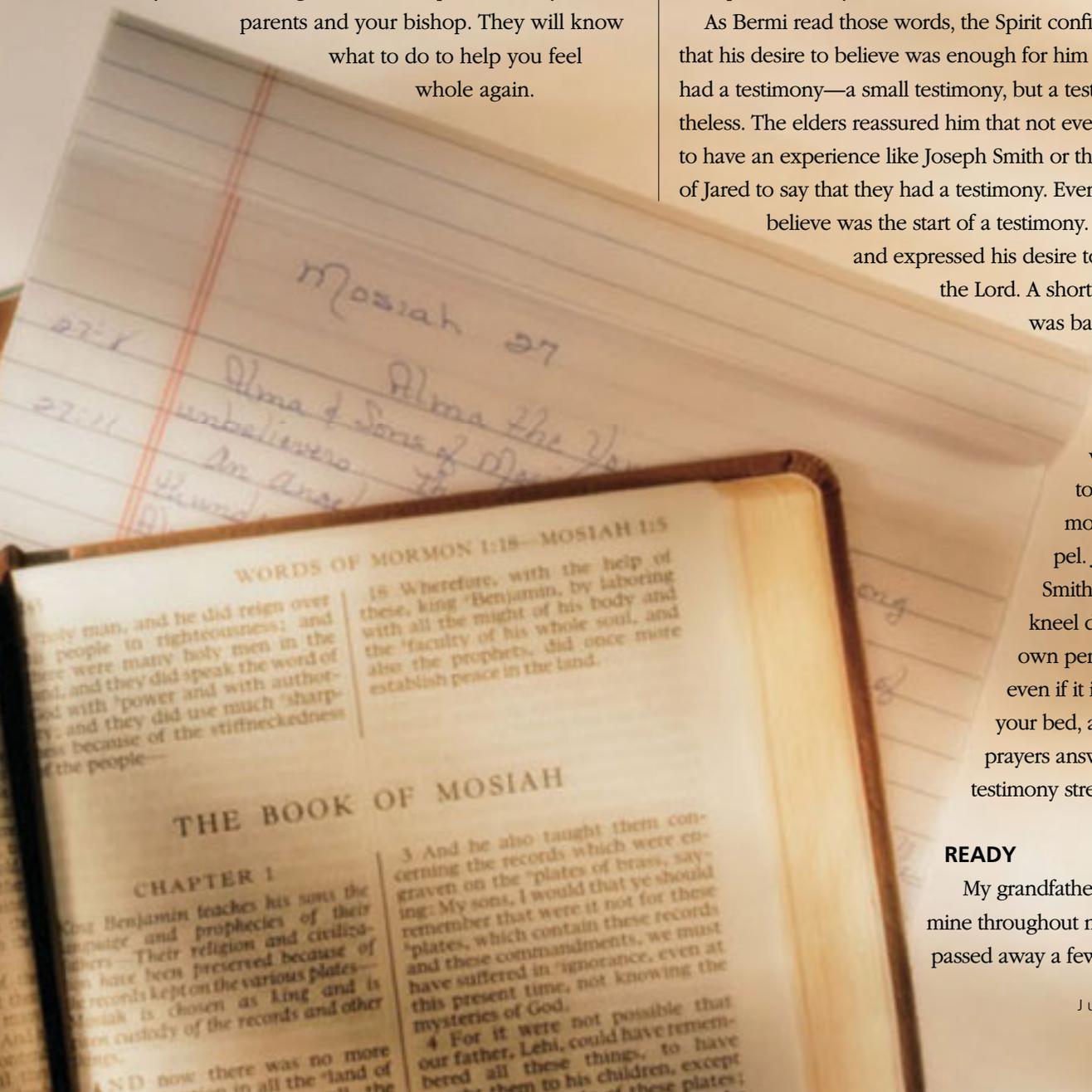
was baptized and

confirmed.

You do not need to have a vision in order to have a testimony of the gospel. Just like Joseph Smith, you too can kneel down in your own personal place, even if it is just next to your bed, and have your prayers answered and your testimony strengthened.

READY

My grandfather was a hero of mine throughout my life. He passed away a few years ago. I



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had watched his health decline from a strong former football and basketball star to a wheelchair-bound elderly man whose body had suffered the ravages of cancer, Parkinson's disease, and other debilitating conditions. Through the years of his decline, what I remembered most was the strength of his testimony. Even when he could barely talk loud enough to be heard at family reunions, he would still bear his witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Restoration, and the true Church.

For years when I visited their home, I would notice my grandparents' temple recommends sitting on the mantle above their fireplace. I knew that their health seldom allowed them to attend the temple, and eventually Grandpa was too weak to go at all. But still he kept a current temple recommend. He always wanted to be "ready."

As a teenager and throughout my life, I have remembered Grandpa and Grandma's example of always being ready and worthy to serve the Lord.

If you are age 12 or older, you can hold a temple recommend. Attending the temple now as a youth and renewing your recommend regularly will give you the opportunity to learn to love serving others. It will keep you on track to make and keep additional sacred covenants as an adult. It will also keep you focused on preparing to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and serving a mission.

Start Doing These Things

You can start doing all of these things right now by being where you are supposed to be, doing what you are supposed to be

A NOTE TO YOUNG WOMEN

Perhaps, at the appropriate age, you will approach your bishop because you have felt an impression that you should serve a mission. If so, these CTR steps will assist you along the way. But whether or not you feel impressed to be one of the many wonderful sister missionaries, decide now that you will prepare yourself spiritually to worthily enter the temple to be sealed for time and all eternity to a faithful returned missionary.

Young women play an important role in the life of future missionaries. That "boy" that over the years has teased you, insulted you, thrown spit wads at you, smelled funny on occasion, and then for some reason has now begun to progress from annoying to handsome and desirable—yes, *that* boy—is a missionary and servant of God in training. Please help him to live up to the standards that he should achieve. That is best for him and best for you, too, as you prepare for a future full of happiness on the road to eternity.

doing, dressing like you are supposed to dress, and acting like you are supposed to act. Remember, worthy Aaronic Priesthood holders have more spiritual power and authority than any king, president, or other worldly ruler.

Choose to be ready. You can begin to be a great missionary now, at home, at school, at work, and wherever you go. Then, when the time for a full-time mission arrives, you'll have no hesitation about accepting the call from the Lord that is meant for you. **NE**