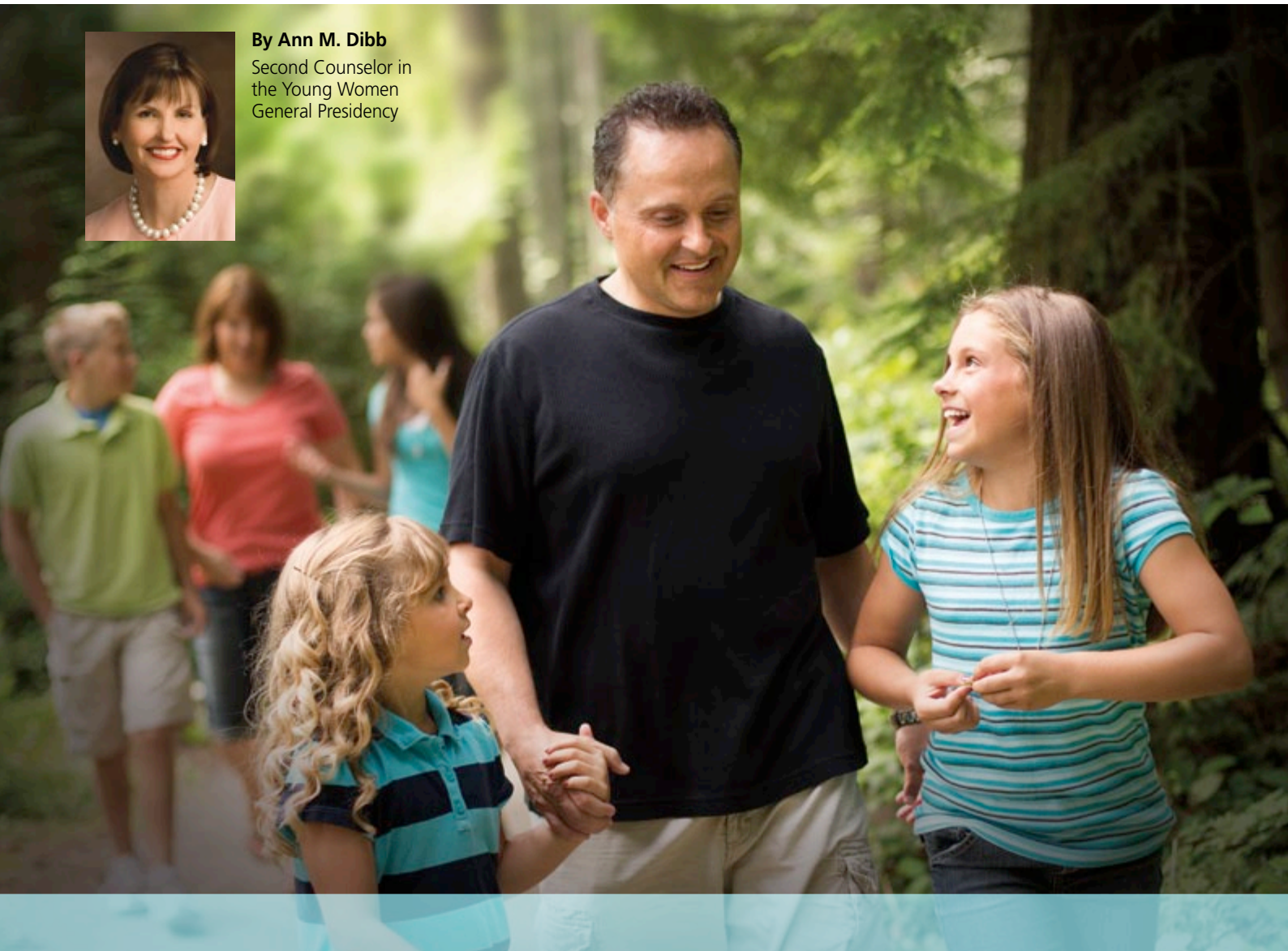




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## I HAVE A TESTIMONY OF THE FAMILY

**Y**ears ago I listened as a sister in my ward bore her testimony. I remember what she shared and how I felt. Sister Reese expressed gratitude for her righteous family and for the joy and comfort the knowledge of eternal families gave her. I felt the Spirit confirm my sincere desire to have that same blessing and testimony about families.

May I offer several suggestions to help you gain a testimony of the importance of family:

**1. Prayerfully seek the Lord's inspiration** and record your impressions as you study. Purify your life by keeping the commandments. This will help you qualify for the Spirit, who will assist you in your quest.

**2. Read "The Family: A Proclamation to the World,"**<sup>1</sup> first delivered by a prophet almost 20 years ago. My testimony of prophets, seers, and revelators is strengthened as I read this document and consider the changes that have taken place in

the world in relation to the family. As you read the proclamation, make note of the doctrines, counsel, warnings, and promised blessings and what they mean to you personally.

**3. Study the words of the prophets and General Authorities.** Their words are inspired and will bless those who believe and follow them. For example, President Thomas S. Monson has taught: “The family must hold its preeminent place in our way of life because it is the only possible base upon which a society of responsible human beings has ever found it practicable to build for the future and maintain the values they cherish in the present.”<sup>2</sup>

**4. Study the scriptures.** They contain multiple examples of families established on the foundation of righteousness, obedience, and faith in the testimony of Jesus Christ. Read your scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon, with the question, “What teachings would bless me when applied to my present and future family?”

**5. Study For the Strength of Youth, especially the “Family” section.** Learn about the responsibilities and blessings of a family. Make note of the work required for each member to create and maintain a united, gospel-centered family. Recognize how you can strengthen relationships within your family. Look for the assurance and comfort found in the quote to the right.

Truly, every section in *For the Strength of Youth* relates directly to and would improve family relationships. As the standards and commandments are followed by each member, they will feel an increase of love for each other, be blessed with the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and qualify for sacred temple ordinances and covenants that will bless families now and eternally.



### GOD'S PLAN FOR FAMILIES

“God desires that all of His children come into the world as part of an eternal family with a mother and father who love and care for each other and for their children. If this is not your experience, be patient and continue to live righteously. Look for worthy role models. Prepare now to fulfill your divine roles as a husband or wife and as a parent. Commit to marry in the temple and establish your own eternal family.”

*For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 15.

**6. Act upon what you have learned** in your study and *apply* what you have learned in your family (see D&C 88:119).

I have heard touching testimonials by young women who have worked on the third value experience in the Divine Nature section of Personal Progress, where young women are asked to make a special effort to strengthen their family relationships for two weeks (young men can find a similar plan in *Fulfilling My Duty to God* [2010], 80–81). One young woman shares, “I’ve experienced a miracle. I love my sister, and it happened in just two weeks! I’ve made it a goal to repeat this experience for each member of my family every single year. Why? Because it has made me so happy!”

**7. Pray and seek confirmation through the Spirit as to the importance of family.** Be patient and watchful. A testimony will come through the Spirit because “the family is ordained of God” and “it is the most important unit in time and in eternity.”<sup>3</sup>

I know that by doing these things the day will come when you, like Sister Reese, will be able to stand and share, “I have a testimony of the family, and this knowledge gives me comfort and joy.” **NE**

#### NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. *Teachings of Thomas S. Monson*, comp. Lynne F. Cannegieter (2011), 112.
3. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.1.1.