

MARCH 2015

THE **New Era**

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Made Easier

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STRENGTH BEYOND OUR OWN

*The enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ
strengthens us to do and be good and to serve beyond
our own individual desire and natural capacity.*



**By Elder
David A. Bednar**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

I suspect that many Church members are much more familiar with the nature of the redeeming and cleansing power of the Atonement than they are with the strengthening and enabling power. It is one thing to know that Jesus Christ came to earth to die for us—that is fundamental and foundational to the doctrine of Christ. But we also need to appreciate that the Lord desires, through His Atonement and by the power of the Holy Ghost, to *live* in us—not only to direct us but also to empower us.

Most of us know that when we do wrong things, we need help to overcome the effects of sin in our lives. The Savior has paid the price and made it possible for us to become clean through His redeeming power. Most of us clearly understand that the Atonement is for sinners. I am not so sure, however, that we know and understand that the Atonement is also for saints—for good men and women who are obedient, worthy, and conscientious and who are striving to become better and serve more faithfully. We may mistakenly believe we must make the journey from good

to better and become a saint all by ourselves, through sheer grit, willpower, and discipline, and with our obviously limited capacities.

The gospel of the Savior is not simply about avoiding bad in our lives; it also is essentially about doing and becoming good. And the Atonement provides help for us to overcome and avoid bad and to do and become good. Help from the Savior is available for the entire journey of mortality—from bad to good to better and to change our very nature.

I am not suggesting that the redeeming and enabling powers of the Atonement are separate and discrete. Rather, these two dimensions of the Atonement are connected and complementary; they both need to be operational during all phases of the journey of life. And it is eternally important for all of us to recognize that *both* of these essential elements of the journey of mortality—both putting off the natural man and becoming a saint, both overcoming bad and becoming good—are accomplished through the power of the Atonement. Individual willpower, personal determination and motivation, effective planning and goal

setting are necessary but ultimately insufficient for us to triumphantly complete this mortal journey. Truly, we must come to rely upon “the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah” (2 Nephi 2:8).

Grace and the Enabling Power of the Atonement

In the Bible Dictionary we learn that the word *grace* frequently is used in the scriptures to connote enabling power:

“[Grace is] a word that occurs frequently in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul. The main idea of the word is *divine means of help*

or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ.

“It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by His atoning sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. *It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals*, through faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, *receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power* that allows men and women to lay hold

on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts” (“Grace”; emphasis added).

Grace is the divine assistance or heavenly help each of us desperately needs to qualify for the celestial kingdom. Thus, the enabling power of the Atonement strengthens us to do and be good and to serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity.

In my personal scripture study, I often insert the term “enabling power” whenever I encounter the word *grace*. Consider, for example, this verse with which we are all familiar: “We know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). I





believe we can learn much about this vital aspect of the Atonement if we will insert “enabling and strengthening power” each time we find the word *grace* in the scriptures.

Nephi’s Example

The journey of mortality is to go from bad to good to better and to have our very natures changed. The Book of Mormon is replete with examples of disciples and prophets who knew, understood, and were transformed by the enabling power of the Atonement in making that journey. As we come to better understand this sacred power, our gospel perspective will be greatly enlarged and enriched. Such a perspective will change us in remarkable ways.

Nephi is an example of one who knew, understood, and relied upon the enabling power of the Savior. Recall that the sons of Lehi had returned to Jerusalem to enlist

Ishmael and his household in their cause. Laman and others in the party traveling with Nephi from Jerusalem back to the wilderness rebelled, and Nephi exhorted his brethren to have faith in the Lord. It was at this point in their journey that Nephi’s brothers bound him with cords and planned his destruction. Please note Nephi’s prayer: “O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even *give me strength that I may burst these bands* with which I am bound” (1 Nephi 7:17; emphasis added).

Do you know what I likely would have prayed for if I had been tied up by my brothers? “Please get me out of this mess NOW!” It is especially interesting to me that Nephi did not pray to have his circumstances changed. Rather, he prayed for the strength to change his circumstances. And I believe he prayed in this manner

precisely because he knew, understood, and had experienced the enabling power of the Atonement.

I do not think the bands with which Nephi was bound just magically fell from his hands and wrists. Rather, I suspect he was blessed with both persistence and personal strength beyond his natural capacity, that he then “in the strength of the Lord” (Mosiah 9:17) worked and twisted and tugged on the cords, and ultimately and literally was enabled to break the bands.

The implication of this episode for each of us is straightforward. As you and I come to understand and employ the enabling power of the Atonement in our personal lives, we will pray and seek for strength to change our circumstances rather than praying for our circumstances to be changed. We will become agents who act rather than objects that are acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14).

The Savior Knows and Understands

In Alma chapter 7 we learn how and why the Savior is able to provide the enabling power:

“He shall go forth, suffering *pains* and *afflictions* and *temptations* of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the *pains* and the *sicknesses* of his people.

“And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death

which bind his people; and he will take upon him their *infirmities*, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:11–12; emphasis added). The Savior has suffered not

just for our iniquities but also for the inequality, the unfairness, the pain, the anguish, and the emotional distresses that so frequently beset us.

There is no physical pain, no anguish of soul, no suffering of spirit, no infirmity or weakness that you or I ever experience during our mortal

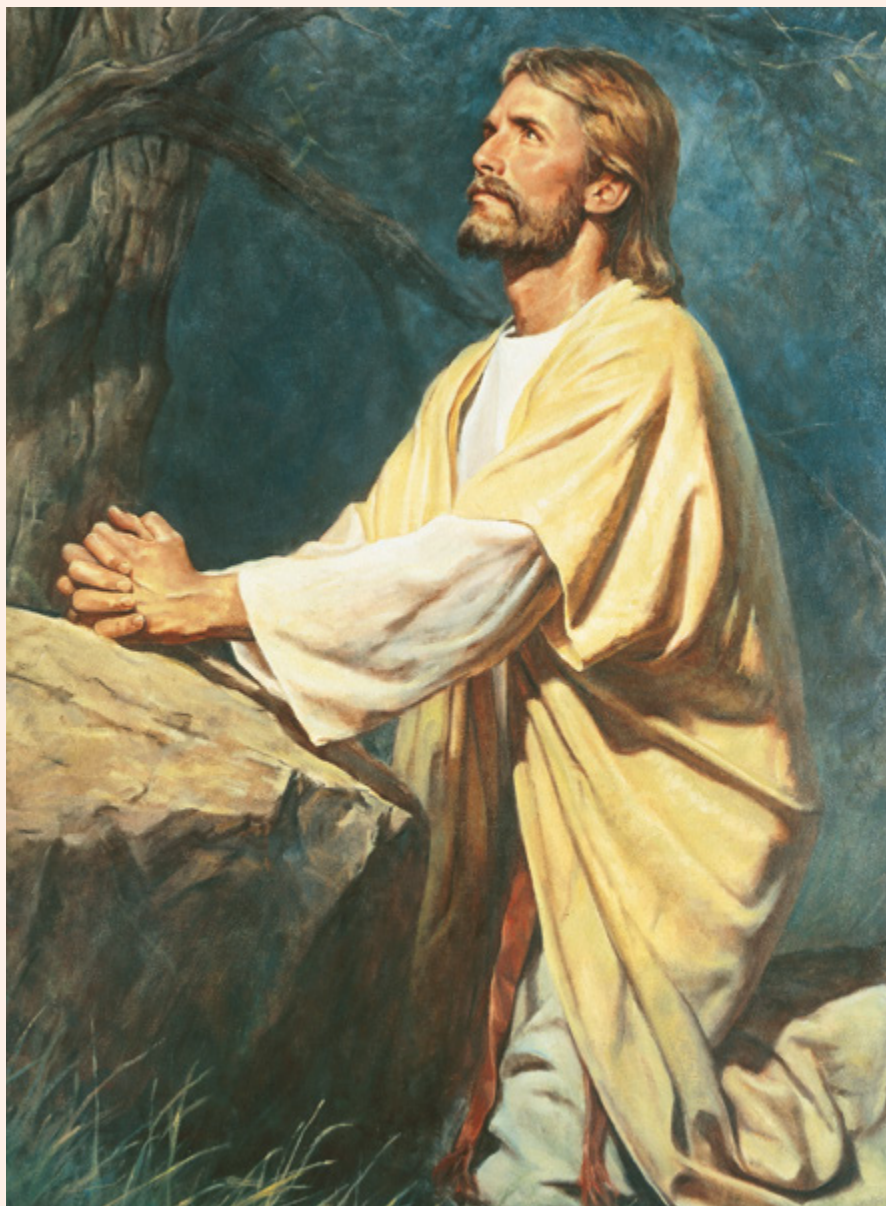
journey that the Savior did not experience first. You and I in a moment of weakness may cry out, “No one understands. No one knows.” No human being, perhaps, knows. But the Son of God perfectly knows and understands, for He felt and bore our burdens before we ever did. And because He paid the ultimate price and bore that burden, He has perfect empathy and can extend to us His arm of mercy in so many phases of our life. He can reach out, touch, succor—literally run to us—and strengthen us to be more than we could ever be and help us to do that which we could never do through relying upon only our own power.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

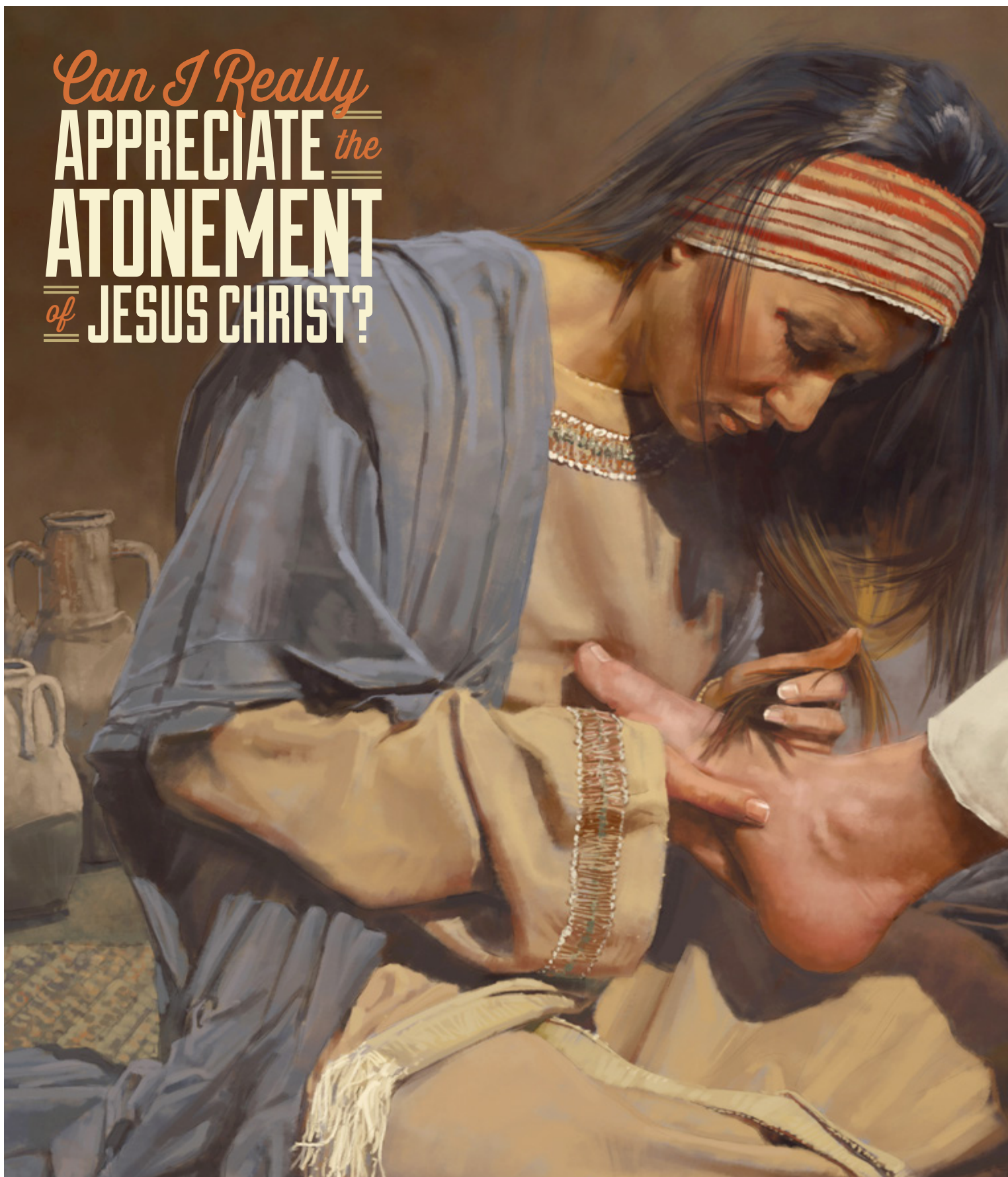
“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

I declare my witness of and appreciation for the infinite and eternal sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know the Savior lives. I have experienced both His redeeming power and His enabling power, and I testify that these powers are real and available to each of us. Indeed, “in the strength of the Lord” we can do and overcome all things as we press forward on our journey of mortality. **NE**



Can I Really
APPRECIATE *the*
ATONEMENT
of **JESUS CHRIST?**



If I haven't had to be forgiven of any "major sins," can I still appreciate the Atonement of Jesus Christ as much as those who have?

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

The degree to which we appreciate the Atonement of Jesus Christ isn't necessarily measured according to the magnitude of the sins we've been forgiven of, though it's understandable why you might link the two.

For instance, in Luke 7:36–50 we read of the Savior's visit to the house of Simon the Pharisee, where a woman came and washed Jesus's feet with her tears and anointed them with ointment. Simon said to himself that if Jesus were a prophet, He would have known that the woman was a sinner. Jesus then told a parable of two people who both owed money to the same man, one owing 500 pence and the other 50. Neither could pay, so the man forgave both debts. The Savior then asked which debtor would love the man the most. Simon replied that it would be the one who was forgiven most, and the Savior said he was right. Of the woman with the ointment He then said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke 7:47).

We learn many things from this scripture, but it would be wrong to think that one of the lessons is that greater sins are required for a greater appreciation of the Savior and His Atonement. *There is never any advantage in sinning.* The story is about the Lord's forgiveness and mercy, which come according to our faith, humility, and repentance—things we all need and can have in equal measure, whether we've sinned a lot or a little. Remember that "*all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23; emphasis added).

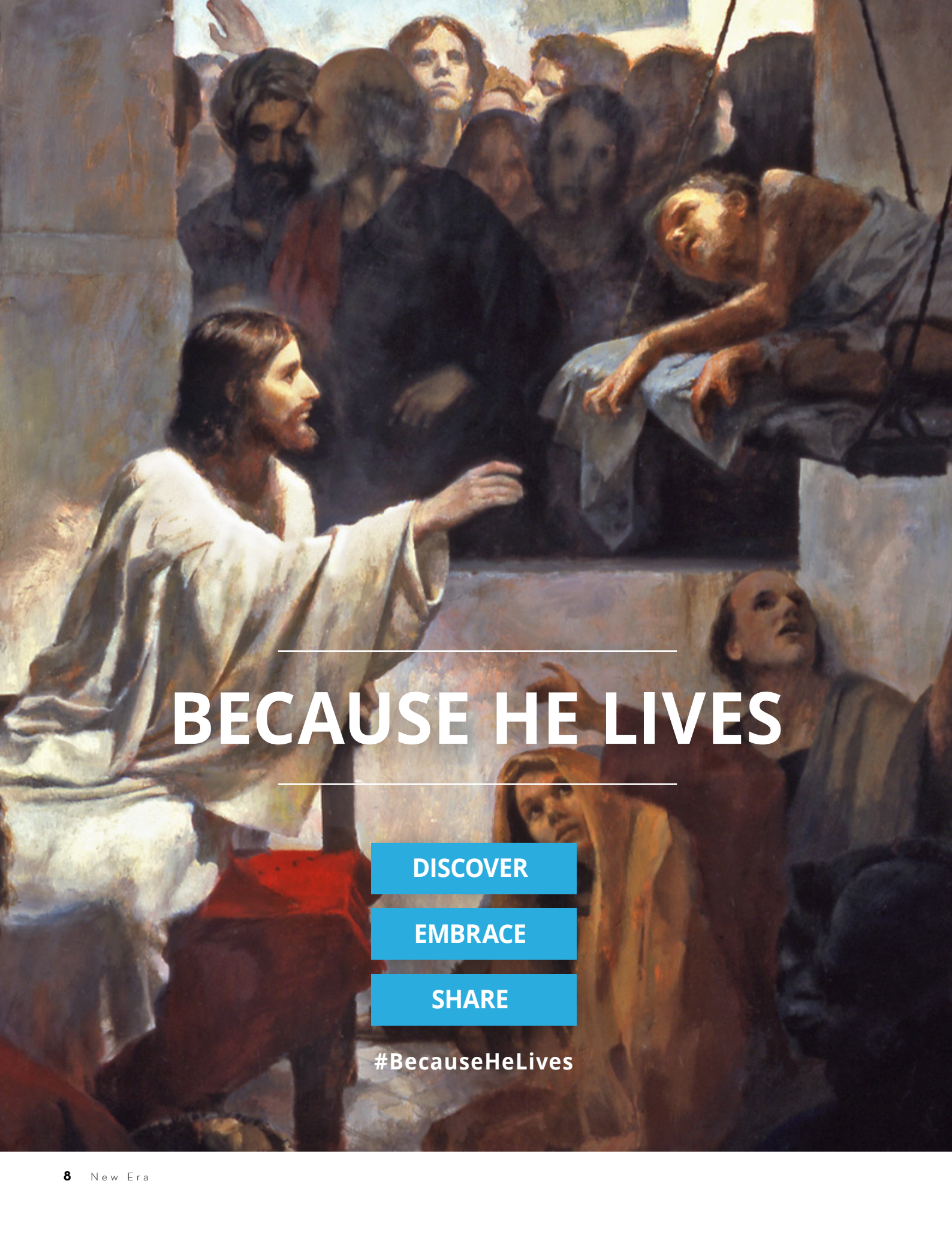
Simon didn't recognize his own sins (for instance, pride and self-righteous judgment) or his own need for faith in the Savior, humility, and repentance. If he had, he would have felt the same way the woman did, regardless of how much smaller he may have thought his debt was. Comparing your sins to another's isn't the point. As far as *you're* concerned, the worst sins in the world are the ones *you* have committed, because those are the ones that could keep you from returning to Heavenly Father.

In addition, part of our appreciation for the Atonement of Jesus Christ comes from the fact that it not only lifts us out of a hole but also continues to lift us higher. The Savior's grace not only pays the price of our sins but also gives us the "strength and assistance to do good works that [we] otherwise would not be able to maintain" (Bible Dictionary, "Grace"). (For more on the strengthening power of the Atonement, see David A. Bednar, "Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease," *Ensign*, May 2014, 88–89.) **NE**


SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
**The Atonement of
Jesus Christ**

ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN CALL



BECAUSE HE LIVES

DISCOVER

EMBRACE

SHARE

#BecauseHeLives



**By Elder
Russell M. Nelson**
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

One of the most significant of all scriptural phrases is found in Matthew 28:6, “He is not here: for he is risen.” Given by angelic messengers near an empty tomb, this proclamation declared that the Lord Jesus Christ had overcome death through His Atonement and Resurrection. Later He appeared to His Apostles and charged His followers to declare their witness to the world that He lives.

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in these, the latter days, we have also been charged with testifying of the realities of the Savior’s Atonement and Resurrection. This Easter season gives each of us a personal opportunity to discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share His joy.

DISCOVER HIS SACRIFICE

During that first Easter season two millennia ago, the Lord suffered unspeakable agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross as He took upon Himself the sins and pains of all humankind. Betrayed by one He had called friend, He was arrested, scourged, mocked, and crucified. The Savior Himself has taught that this great sacrifice was for a purpose:

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

As we discover, through prayerful and purposeful study, the impact His mission in mortality has on us, the Holy Ghost can teach and testify to us of the Atonement’s eternal significance.

EMBRACE HIS TEACHINGS

With the understanding that comes from discovering the power of His Atonement, we ask ourselves, as did the Jews of ancient Jerusalem, “What shall we do?” The Apostle Peter instructed them to be baptized. “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized” (see Acts 2:37–41). Likewise, we also need to embrace the Savior’s teachings.

Indeed, embracing His teachings—and helping others do so—is the great work of these latter days. That is why we have missionaries; that is why we have temples—to bring the fullest blessings of the Atonement to faithful children of God. That is why we respond to our own calls from the Lord. When we comprehend His voluntary Atonement, any sense of sacrifice on our part becomes completely overshadowed by a profound sense of gratitude for the privilege of serving Him.

SHARE HIS JOY

During His brief ministry in the American hemisphere, the Savior observed that the Nephites had discovered His sacrifice and embraced His teachings, and He said unto them, “Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full” (3 Nephi 17:20). As we follow this pattern of discovering the power of the Savior’s Atonement and embracing His teachings, we experience the joy that comes from striving to be more like Him. As we do so, we naturally want to share our joy with those we love, inviting them to discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share in His joy.

To share the joy of this Easter season, please visit HeLives.mormon.org to view a powerful video and share your testimony of the Savior using the social media hashtag #BecauseHeLives.

Like those angelic messengers in the meridian of time, we also declare, “He is not here: for he is risen.” He lives. And because He lives we, too, can know “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23). **NE**

FOLLOWING *the* MASTER

When someone asks about the life of Jesus Christ, what comes to mind? You might think about how the Savior suffered for our sins, died, and was resurrected, making it possible for us to return to our Heavenly Father. Through Him, everyone can overcome sin and live again.

What else do you think of? How He helps us find our way through life? How He is our great example? How He invites us to serve others?

These are all great answers, and you'll come up with even more. As you think about the Savior, keep in mind that part of His mission was to teach us how to live. He invites us to love God—the first great commandment—and to love and serve others—the second great commandment (see Matthew 22:36–40). That may not always seem easy, but remember that you don't have to do it without help. In fact, He will bless you so you can live the disciple's life and find true joy as you turn to and follow Him.

President Thomas S. Monson said, "We have been provided with a perfect example to follow—even the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—and we have been instructed

What can you do to be more like the Savior?

to follow that example. . . . We need not walk by the shores of Galilee or among the Judean hills to walk where Jesus walked. All of us can walk the path He walked when, with His words ringing in our ears, His Spirit filling our hearts, and His teachings guiding our lives, we choose to follow Him as we journey through mortality. His example lights the way. Said He, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6)" ("Ponder the Path of Thy Feet," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 86).



Share Your Experiences

Share your thoughts and feelings with family and friends and on social media. And send an email to us at newera@ldschurch.org telling us how you live as a disciple of Christ.

In the October 2014 general conference, prophets and Church leaders invited us to live as disciples of Christ and promised the blessings and grace that would come as we do. Here are a few talks where you can find these teachings:

- » President Thomas S. Monson, "Ponder the Path of Thy Feet," [lds.org/go/feetNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/feetNE3)
- » President Boyd K. Packer, "The Reason for Our Hope," [lds.org/go/hopeNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/hopeNE3)
- » Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "Are We Not All Beggars?" [lds.org/go/beggarsNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/beggarsNE3)
- » Elder David A. Bednar, "Come and See," [lds.org/go/comeNE3](https://www.lds.org/go/comeNE3)



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST?

Have you thought about how you're doing as a disciple of Christ and what changes you might make to do better? His life is a pattern of goodness. Here are some examples from His life to get you started.

CHRIST'S WAY OF LIFE

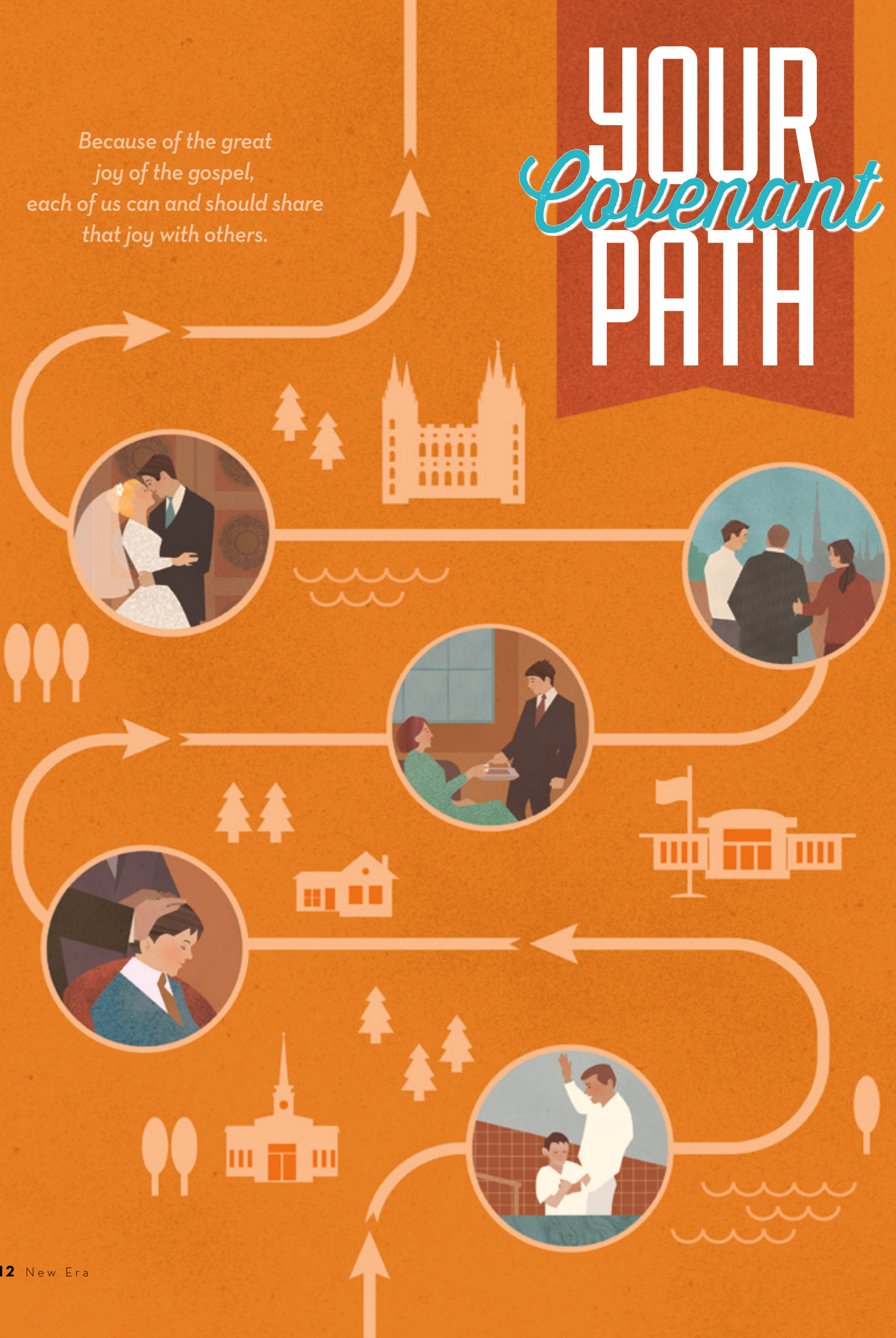
How can you follow the Savior?

- » He served others (John 2:1-11).
- » He ministered to the sick (Luke 5:12-15).
- » He prayed to Heavenly Father (John 17).
- » He stood up for what's right (John 2:14-17).
- » He showed compassion (Matthew 14:16-21).
- » He studied, learned, and taught from the scriptures (Luke 4:16-21).
- » He was humble (Matthew 27:27-31).
- » He shared the gospel with others (Matthew 5-7).
- » He resisted temptation (Matthew 4:1-11).
- » He was obedient (Matthew 26:39).
- » He forgave others (Luke 23:34).
- » He inspired hope (John 14:15-17).

WHAT WILL I DO TO BE MORE LIKE CHRIST?

Because of the great
joy of the gospel,
each of us can and should share
that joy with others.

YOUR *Covenant* PATH



Being a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints really is awesome. There are so many blessings and joyful things that come from our membership. When we're baptized, we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. That gift provides us guidance and direction, helps us repent and be clean, and changes our lives. These blessings are a result of living on the covenant path—or living faithfully according to the covenants we've made and will make, and doing the things that help us stay faithful.

The Covenant Path and You

So, what are those covenants? They include being baptized, being confirmed and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, (for young men) being ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood and then (once they're at least 18) to the Melchizedek Priesthood, receiving the temple endowment, and being sealed in the temple. "Covenants with God help us to know who we really are."¹ With each covenant, we promise Heavenly Father to strive to live as He has asked us to. As we do, He promises we can have His Spirit to be with and guide us.

As we faithfully follow the covenant path, we'll end up doing a lot of things that can help us grow, enjoy life, and be happy. And a big part of that includes the service we provide, such as young men who bless and pass the sacrament, which blesses everyone in the ward, or young women who reach out to fellowship those around them. Plus, as you follow the covenant path, you'll be blessed by temple trips, priesthood blessings of comfort and

counsel, a patriarchal blessing, counsel from prophets and apostles, and the power of personal prayer.

And, of course, there's the hope that the doctrines give, such as eternal families, healing through faith and blessings, and the Resurrection.

Yes, when we live up to our covenants and strive to live as the Savior, Jesus Christ, has taught us to and when we heed the counsel of living prophets, life is just so much better.

Your Responsibility

But being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ isn't just about the blessings you receive personally. It's also about helping other people "come unto Christ, and be perfected in him" (Moroni 10:32). In fact, for each of us, as we live the gospel, a desire will grow within us for others to be blessed by the gospel, especially members of our family.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, explained that "the Lord knew you would have those feelings when He allowed you to receive the covenants which are blessing your life. . . . Even more, He knew how that desire would increase when you came to know the joy of the promises He makes to us in sacred temples. . . . He promises us, if we are faithful, that we may live with Him in glory in families forever in the world to come."²

That desire to share is also our responsibility. President Eyring also taught, "The duty to warn our neighbor falls on all of us who have accepted the covenant of baptism. We are to talk with nonmember friends

and relatives about the gospel. Our purpose is to invite them to be taught by the full-time missionaries who are called and set apart to teach."³

Part of our covenant relationship with our Heavenly Father, because of our baptism, is to share the gospel. Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ declared, "It becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor" (D&C 88:81).

The Covenant Path for Your Family and Friends

As you think about your family members and friends who may not be members of the Church or who may not be active in it, it's natural to want them to enjoy the same blessings, opportunities, and help that you have as a result of making and keeping covenants. You'll want them to receive power and inspiration through the Holy Ghost, to enjoy the blessings of temple covenants, and to receive guidance through patriarchal blessings.

Of course, you'll also want them to enjoy some of the great blessings that come through Church membership, such as attending Mutual activities and feeling the peace of the temple and the joy of repentance.

It might just be that they are waiting for someone like you to open the door by being a good friend and example and by a simple invitation to follow the covenant path.

So, what are you waiting for? **NE**

NOTES

1. Jean A. Stevens, "Covenant Daughters of God," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 115.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Hearts Bound Together," *Ensign*, May 2005, 77.
3. Henry B. Eyring, "A Voice of Warning," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 33.

Live THE GOSPEL

WHAT DOES A MISSIONARY LOOK LIKE? FIND OUT BY LOOKING IN A MIRROR.

Somebody asks, “What does a missionary look like?” You could say, “White shirt, tie, name tag; rides a bike.” But you could also say, “You’re looking at one right now.” And the truth is, both answers should be right.

“Wait a minute,” you say. “I’m not like the elders and sisters, meeting with members and investigators, teaching lessons, devoting myself full-time to sharing the gospel.” No, you’re not exactly like that, but:

- Remember that basketball game when the call went the other way? You were ready to say some bad words, but you restrained yourself. Did you know someone was watching you and was impressed by your self-control?
- Or how about the time you stayed after school for a service project and talked with your friend who doesn’t go to any church? You told her that helping others makes us feel good, because by serving them we’re serving God.

The Savior said that people, seeing our good works, will glorify Heavenly Father (see Matthew 5:16). So although you may not always think of it that way, simply by living the gospel, you’re being a missionary.



“Be thou an example of the believers”

(1 Timothy 4:12).

Your Choice

In the Book of Mormon, Alma praised his sons Helaman and Shiblon for upholding the standards of righteousness. Corianton, however, had seriously sinned.

Alma reprimanded Corianton not only for his own misconduct but also because of its negative effect on others: “How great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites; for when they saw your conduct they would not believe in my words” (Alma 39:11).

Helaman and Shiblon demonstrated the importance of setting a good example. But Corianton showed that being bad not only hurts you but may also hurt others. Just like these three sons, you can be an example for good or for evil. It’s up to you! **NE**



Although They’ve Never Met

Read about the gratitude a woman expresses for a young woman she’s never met but who made a big difference in her life at lds.org/go/exampleNE3.

Sabrina’s Invitation

By Flaviana Gonzalez

When I was 17, Sabrina and I went to the same boarding school in Uruguay. I was going through a difficult time and didn’t want to have anything to do with anybody. But I did make a few friends.

Sabrina in particular stood out. She was nice to everyone. She invited me to play volleyball at her church, and she smiled even when I made excuses not to go. As I felt more comfortable with her, I thought maybe I *should* go.

Then one day I was rushed to the hospital with appendicitis. After surgery, I couldn’t go to school for 15 days. When I returned, Sabrina wasn’t there. She had moved back home.

School wasn’t the same without her, so I wrote her a letter.

I asked her to forgive me for not playing volleyball. I told her that I’d always felt good around her and that I missed her.

Soon I received a letter and a package. In the letter, Sabrina told me she was happy that I’d written to her. She also told me about a tragic bus accident in which several people she knew had been killed. Then she wrote something that would change my life:

“We should always be at peace with God, because we never know when He will call us to His presence. Please read the book I sent with this

letter. Ask God if it is true.”

In the package was the Book of Mormon. I started reading and I *did* ask if it was true. I felt so wonderful I thought my heart would burst. I’d never felt that way before. I went to church and started meeting with the missionaries. Soon I became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

That was 15 years ago. Today I still have a firm testimony. Thank you, Sabrina, for inviting me to play volleyball. Even though I never did come to play, your example helped to bring me to Jesus Christ. **NE**

Flaviana Gonzalez lives in Salto, Uruguay.



By Elder Larry R. Lawrence
Of the Seventy

EXAMPLES MADE THE DIFFERENCE

I was introduced to the Church through the examples of Latter-day Saint students at my high school in Tucson, Arizona. They were a small minority, only 4 members out of my class of 400, but I noticed how different they were—and that impressed me.

The Latter-day Saint youth I knew were normal teens in many ways: they played sports and were involved in student government, music, and other activities. But to me, the thing that set them apart from everyone else was their quiet confidence. They seemed to know where they were going and what they wanted out of life. They used clean language and didn't drink. I didn't swear, drink, or smoke either, but I felt like I lacked the direction and confidence they had.

I was also impressed by their dedication. I was amazed that not only did LDS youth attend church every Sunday, but they also attended early-morning seminary every weekday before school. They dressed modestly and were respectful. One of my friends often talked about serving a mission. I was impressed that he wanted to give up two years of his life to do something so unselfish.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR EXAMPLE

One day I was talking to an LDS young woman I knew, and I asked her about her plans for the weekend. She really surprised me when she said, "I'm going to be speaking at my church on Sunday, so I'll spend some of the weekend preparing my talk."

You can't imagine how surprised I was that a 15-year-old could speak at church! I only attended church twice a year, and members of our congregation were never asked to participate. I learned from my friend that no one had given her a script; she would be writing down her own thoughts, and then she would practice delivering them.

To me, nothing could be more frightening than speaking in public, but my friend didn't seem nervous. It was part of that quiet confidence that the Mormons radiated. In fact, when I was chosen to speak at high-school graduation a year later, I really longed for some of that "Mormon confidence." Little did I know that over 40 years later, I would be speaking at general conference!

I was so impressed with my

member friends that when high school ended, I thought to myself: "Someday I want to find out more about the Mormon faith."

As I attended college and then medical school, I was continually drawn to Latter-day Saints. I watched them closely, and they rarely disappointed me. Finally, after several years, I decided that I was going to learn for myself what made them so different. I went to the public library and checked out every book I could find about the Mormons.

I found a copy of the Book of Mormon and began to read it. As soon as I read just a few chapters, I had the feeling that this was something special. After about six months of reading and studying, I realized that I needed to make some changes in my life. A voice inside me whispered that real faith requires action. If I wanted to experience what my LDS friends had, I knew I would have to act.

So I decided to be baptized. As soon as I made the decision, I felt the assurance of the Spirit. It was

I WAS SO IMPRESSED WITH MY MEMBER FRIENDS THAT WHEN HIGH SCHOOL ENDED, I THOUGHT TO MYSELF:

“SOMEDAY I WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE MORMON FAITH.”

the best decision I ever made!

After I was baptized and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, I finally understood the source of that “Mormon confidence.” It comes from the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

As I watched my LDS friends in high school, I noticed how they took an interest in other people. They were always kind and helpful. Now I realize that their interest in others was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

PEOPLE NOTICE YOU

My friends were not aware of the impact their example had on me. They were very surprised to hear that I joined the Church five years after our high-school graduation.

Because of my own experience, I want to encourage you, the youth of the Church, to be aware that you are being watched. Others are making mental notes and storing them away. So be an example of the believers—in word, in thought, and in action (see 1 Timothy 4:12). You never know the impact you may have. **NE**



BE READY TO SHARE

As people are influenced by your example, their hearts may be prepared to learn about the gospel. Take time to listen to the Spirit’s promptings about whom you can share the gospel with.

"First SEEK TO OBTAIN my WORD"



THE POWER OF *PREACH MY GOSPEL*

"[*Preach My Gospel*] is a guidebook for missionary work—

which means it is a guidebook for all of us. Read it, study it, and then apply what you learn to help you understand how to bring souls to Christ through invitation and follow-up."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Following Up," *Ensign*, May 2014, 80.

It's been one of those weeks—you've been working so hard to get everything turned in that you can hardly focus during your last class. You start to daydream about your soft bed when the teacher asks you to hand in your research paper.

Your what?!

Somehow it slipped your mind! Your heart drops and you feel sick.

Now imagine that a friend asks you what makes your church unique. Are you ready to answer or do you have that sinking feeling again?

The Lord said, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (D&C 38:30). He also taught us how we can prepare to share or defend our beliefs. He said, "Seek not to declare my word,

but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men" (D&C 11:21).

Being prepared to share the gospel means you know the gospel. The Lord doesn't ask you to become a scholar, but He does want you to be prepared to teach and defend His gospel. That's why we're reminded to "feast upon the words of Christ," because "the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:3). Studying *Preach My Gospel* and general conference talks is also a great way to learn the gospel and prepare to share it.

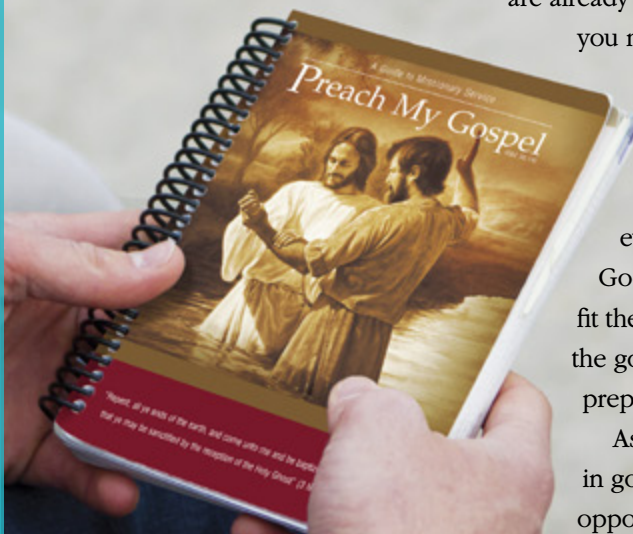
There are many other ways you are already preparing yourself—and you might not even realize

it. When you attend

Church meetings, go to seminary, pray, and participate in family home evening, you are learning

God's word. It can be hard to fit these things in, but learning the gospel is the best way to prepare to share the gospel.

As you immerse yourself in gospel learning, when the opportunity comes to share or defend your beliefs, you can feel confident that the Lord will guide you with His Spirit to know what to say. **NE**



SCRIPTURE POWER



Every day I need
The power that I get each time I read.

(See Clive Romney, "Scripture Power," *Friend*, Oct. 1987, 10-11.)

Have COURAGE



It takes courage to share the gospel with a stranger. Just ask a new full-time missionary. Sometimes it takes even more courage to ask your friends if they'd like to know about the Church, the Book of Mormon, or our beliefs.

You wonder: What if they're not interested? What if they're offended? What if they make fun of me? What if they say they hate me and never want to see me again?

Don't worry. That's really not likely to happen. Your friends will probably just say, "No, thanks." But don't be surprised if some respond, "Sure, tell me more"—especially if you're living the gospel.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "We are members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ, empowered and sent forth by the Lord Himself to find, nourish, and bring safely into His Church those who are seeking to know the truth."

From that perspective, sharing the gospel is "simple and clear." But, Elder Ballard admitted, "missionary work can be challenging and sometimes frightening."

How can we overcome that fear? Elder Ballard suggests three ways below:

FIRST, *pray by yourself and with your family* that the Lord will help you find ways to share the gospel. (See the sidebar for what a young woman in Brazil did.) Also, ask the Lord to lead you to those who are ready.



SECOND, *be an example*. In a world of decaying standards, your friends will notice your light. Your personal worthiness will give you courage and spiritual power.



THIRD, *exercise faith and trust in the Lord* and always show love for others.



TO *Share* THE *Gospel*

“Some members say, ‘I’m afraid to share the gospel because I might offend someone,’” Elder Ballard said. “Experience has shown that people are not offended when the sharing is motivated by the spirit of love and concern. How could anyone be offended when we say something like this: ‘I love the way my church helps me’ and then add whatever the Spirit directs?”¹

The duty to share the gospel belongs to all members of the Church—including you. So be brave and let the Lord bless your efforts. **NE**

NOTE

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Essential Role of Member Missionary Work,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 38, 39–40.



THE COURAGE OF BELIEVERS

“With the courage of our convictions, may we declare, with the Apostle Paul, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ’ [Romans 1:16]. And then, with that same courage, may we follow Paul’s counsel: ‘Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity’ [1 Timothy 4:12].”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Strong and of a Good Courage,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 69.

THE MOST PRECIOUS THING I HAVE

By Mariana Santos

At our multistake youth conference, we all received a Book of Mormon and were invited to give it to someone. I wanted to give mine to my favorite pop singer.

When I found out he was giving a concert in my city, I thought this would be the perfect opportunity. Each of his concerts has a random drawing that selects 15 fans to go backstage and meet him. It’s nearly impossible to be selected, but I entered anyway.

A few weeks before the concert, I wrote my testimony in a Book of Mormon and prayed. I explained to Heavenly Father that the odds were against me and that I needed His help.

As soon as I said “amen,” my cell phone rang with a call from the singer’s office. I had been selected!

Backstage on the day of the concert, I presented the singer with the book. He opened it and read my testimony: “I spent a lot of time thinking of a valuable, useful present for you. I realized that I needed to give you something that was valuable because of what it contained and not because of its price. This is the Book of Mormon; it is the most precious thing I have. It will be for you too if you read it.”

He gave me a hug and said he would read it. I couldn’t hold back my tears!

It’s a rare experience to give a Book of Mormon to a famous person. But sharing the book should be a common experience. I could have given it to a school friend, a neighbor, or anyone else.

Giving a Book of Mormon, bearing our testimony, speaking about the Church, and being an example are our duties. We should never be ashamed to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mariana Santos lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



Try these 11 easy ways to share the gospel in everyday conversations.

EXTEND INVITATIONS and FOLLOW UP

If you want to share the gospel but are nervous or aren't sure how to do it, this article is for you. Sharing the gospel is more than just inviting your friends to meet with the missionaries. That's a great idea, but there are so many other things you can do to "invite others to come unto Christ" (*Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 1). And it's easier than you think. Maybe a soccer analogy will help.

Good players know how and when to pass the ball to their teammates to give them an opportunity to move forward. Inviting others to learn about the gospel is like passing the ball, only instead of giving them an opportunity to score a goal, you're giving them an opportunity to come unto Christ.

Here are a few ideas to get you started. Pray for inspiration and be creative as you adapt these ideas to fit your friends' interests or situations. Then cheer them on!



Invite a friend to Mutual

You have a friend who is obsessed with sports. So when you hear that this week's Mutual activity is a sports night, you realize it's the perfect opportunity to invite her along.

Invite a friend to watch general conference with you

You're listening to a talk from general conference on your MP3 player while you walk to school. A friend asks what you're listening to. You tell her the truth—you're listening to the words of a living prophet of God. "What does that mean?" your friend asks. You explain about modern prophets and apostles and then ask your friend if she would like to join you in April to hear what those leaders are saying.

Share an article from the *New Era*

One of the articles from a recent issue of the *New Era* reminds you of a conversation you had with one of your friends. You share your copy of the magazine (or an online link) with him and invite him to read the article.

Tell someone about the Book of Mormon

Your ward has a goal to read the Book of Mormon by the end of the year, so you take your scriptures to school. One of your friends notices your book and asks you what it's about, so you explain what the Book of Mormon is and share your testimony of it.

Read Kenneth's story later in this article to see what happened when he saw a Church member with a Book of Mormon at school.



Invite and follow up

"It is my testimony that as we work together, seeking the one, inviting, and following up with trust and faith, the Lord will smile upon us and hundreds of thousands of God's children will find purpose and peace in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Following Up," *Ensign*, May 2014, 81.

Invite a friend to go to a Church dance

Your best friend invites you to hang out this Friday, but you have a Church dance that night. Instead of just rejecting his invitation, you invite him to the dance!

Invite a friend to church

You've been asked to teach part of a lesson on Sunday. When a friend asks what you're up to this weekend, instead of skipping over your Sunday plans, you explain that you'll be teaching part of a lesson at church. Your friend is curious, so you invite her to come with you so she can hear you teach.

Show your friends Mormon.org

Your friends have a lot of questions about our beliefs, so you show them Mormon.org to help answer their questions.

ILLUSTRATION BY SUZY GERHART; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY DUSTON TODD



Small steps on the path to conversion

On the first day at my new school, I noticed a girl who was different from the others. She had a hard home life, and she was always teased by the other students. Because her locker was next to mine, I soon got to know her better. She was nice, but she had a bad habit of swearing.

I explained to her my beliefs and the standards taught in *For the Strength of Youth*. She was very interested. I invited her to Mutual for a few weeks, and she worked hard to overcome her swearing habits.

I eventually gave her a copy of *For the Strength of Youth* and a copy of *True to the Faith*. The next day at school she said she'd learned so many new things in those two booklets. I invited her to Mutual that night, and as we were cleaning up afterward, she said, "Hannah, can I get baptized?"

I froze. I'd never helped someone join the Church. For a moment I simply stood there—I couldn't speak—but finally I took her hand and walked her over to a member of the Young Men presidency, who helped my friend get in touch with the missionaries so she could start preparing for baptism.

I felt so good that my friend had decided to be baptized. To think that I'd helped her along the path of conversion was wonderful. I immediately began brainstorming how to help others take the same path.

Hannah C., Idaho, USA

Share a scripture in a text message

During your morning scripture study, you come across a verse that would be really helpful for a friend who has been having a hard time lately. You send her a text message letting her know that you were thinking about her and came across a scripture that she might like.

Invite someone over for dinner

Dad is making his famous spaghetti this week! You notice a new student at your school who doesn't seem to have many friends, so you decide to invite him over for family dinner. If it's a Monday night, you might even ask him to stay for family home evening afterward.

Ask a friend to help you work on a Personal Progress, Duty to God, or Eagle Scout project

As you plan your big project, you realize that you'll need help, so you decide to ask some of your nonmember friends to help. This can give you the opportunity to explain why you serve, and you can also have fun serving together.

Give a friend *For the Strength of Youth*

If a friend asks why you live by certain standards, give him a copy of *For the Strength of Youth* and talk about how living the standards has helped you feel happier.

Read Hannah's story in this article to see how she shared this booklet with a friend.



Would you like to learn about my religion?

There was something different about Apryl. I couldn't put a name to it, but whatever it was, it was a good difference. I eventually discovered she was a Latter-day Saint.

One day at lunch, I sat down at a vacant table—vacant except for Apryl's books in a small stack. On top of the stack was the Book of Mormon. I reached over and picked it up.

"I'm looking at your book," I told Apryl when she arrived a few minutes later with her lunch tray. "OK," she said, looking a little surprised.

I read a few pages and was fascinated. I believed in God, but I also considered myself a science-oriented

person. What I read, however, had a ring of truth to it. It really could have happened. And if it really did happen, then what? It stirred my soul to think about it.

When the lunch period ended, I returned Apryl's book to her and went to my next class. I was excited about what I'd read in the Book of Mormon, but I was still too shy to talk to her about it.

A few weeks later, Apryl approached me during study hall with a serious look on her face. "Are you really interested in learning about my religion?" she asked. I was, and I told her so. "There's

a special meeting this Friday for people who want to know about our Church," she said. "I wondered if you might want to go."

I did. At the meeting, the mission president explained some basic doctrines of the Church. Everything he said made sense to me. Soon I began taking the missionary lessons. I wasn't instantly converted, but after fasting and praying, I received my testimony and was baptized.

My life is very different from what it would have been had I not embraced the restored gospel. And it's a good difference.
Kenneth H., Alabama, USA

Don't forget to follow up

After inviting, the next step is to follow up. In soccer, the best players know their job isn't over once they pass the ball—they have to keep moving and get open.

Following up can be as simple as asking what your classmate thought about the scripture you shared or how your friend felt after coming to church with you.

For an example of how following up changed a young man's life, check out Kenneth's story.

When you follow up after inviting others to learn about your beliefs, you're showing that you care about their happiness. They'll sense your sincere desire to help and they'll feel comfortable asking you more questions in the future. **NE**



Remember

IT'S THEIR CHOICE

Agency applies to everyone, including those you invite to learn about the Church.



INVITE OFTEN, AND INVITE EVERYONE.

Since it's impossible to know in advance who will or won't be interested in the gospel, share your invitations regularly and share them with as many as you can, paying particular attention to promptings of the Spirit. We succeed as missionaries when we invite people to learn and accept the truth.

As you invite others to learn about the gospel, it's important to realize that they have agency to choose whether or not to accept your invitation. Your success is not measured by their response; it is measured by your commitment to share.

So if success isn't measured by who said yes or who got baptized, what *should* you focus on as you create goals for missionary work? Set your sights on what *you* can do rather than on how others respond. Remember, you have agency too. You can choose to:



REMAIN FRIENDLY.

If someone declines an invitation to learn more, continue to be courteous and kind. Maintain friendships as long as standards are high. Extend Christlike love to everyone you can, even if they don't understand everything you believe and do.

STAY FAITHFUL.

The Savior said it best: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Love the gospel and live the gospel, and sooner or later you *will* find people who want to know why and who are prepared to accept the gospel.



FAITH TO SHARE

“We respect each person’s choice and timing. The Lord said, ‘Let every man choose for himself’ [D&C 37:4]. A person’s lack of interest need not

diminish our bonds of friendship and love. Whether or not the invitation is accepted as you invite others to ‘come and see,’ you will feel the approval of the Lord and, with that approval, an added measure of faith to share your beliefs again and again.”

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “It’s a Miracle,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 79.

How to Be a Successful Missionary

Looking for other tips on how to be a more successful missionary? Check out 10 great ideas on pages 10–11 of *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004).

BE PATIENTLY PERSISTENT.

As shown in the story at the right, sometimes it takes many invitations before the timing is right. Continue to open the door, continue to be friendly, and don’t become discouraged. The Lord is aware of your efforts and He will bless you. (See D&C 98:2.) **NE**

I ASKED AGAIN AND AGAIN

By Meiry Susana da Silva Rosa

I knew we are all supposed to share the gospel, but I had never had any success. Then, during a Spanish course I was taking, I met a young man named Tiago. We became friends and often walked home from school together. One day we passed an LDS chapel that had recently been built.

“I have been a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for several years,” I said. I shared with him some of the things that we believe, and I told him how much my family and I have been blessed because of the gospel. I invited him to attend meetings that coming Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

Sunday arrived and I anxiously waited, but he did not come. During the week, I invited him again. This continued every week for two or three months. He always gave me a reason why he hadn’t shown up: “I slept late,” “I was tired,” “There were problems.” But I kept asking him anyway, and he didn’t seem to mind.

One Sunday morning I sat down on one of the benches toward the back of the chapel. There were still a few minutes to go before the meeting began when someone quietly called my name. I looked toward the door, and there was Tiago!

“Didn’t I promise you I would come one day?” he said. He attended sacrament meeting and, to my surprise, stayed for the rest of the meetings and seemed pleased when I introduced him to the missionaries. He began meeting with them regularly. Tiago and I continued to talk as we walked home from school, but our conversations were about the truths he was learning. I was able to answer questions and bear my testimony. Finally, he gained a testimony of his own and joined the Church.

Today I am a full-time missionary in the Brazil Santa Maria Mission. Before I left for the mission field, Tiago also submitted his application to be a full-time missionary, and he is now serving in the Brazil Manaus Mission.

I recently received a letter from him. “Thank you for inviting me again and again to come to church,” he wrote. “I will be eternally grateful.” I am happy not only to share the gospel each day but also to know that Tiago is doing the same.

Meiry Susana da Silva Rosa lives in São Paulo, Brazil.



By **Randall L. Ridd**
Second Counselor
in the Young
Men General
Presidency

DON'T JUDGE

Who Is Ready

*You never know
who is ready to
receive the gospel.*

I'll always remember the dinner at my 40th high school reunion. I was anxious to see old friends I hadn't seen in years and find out what had happened in their lives since high school.

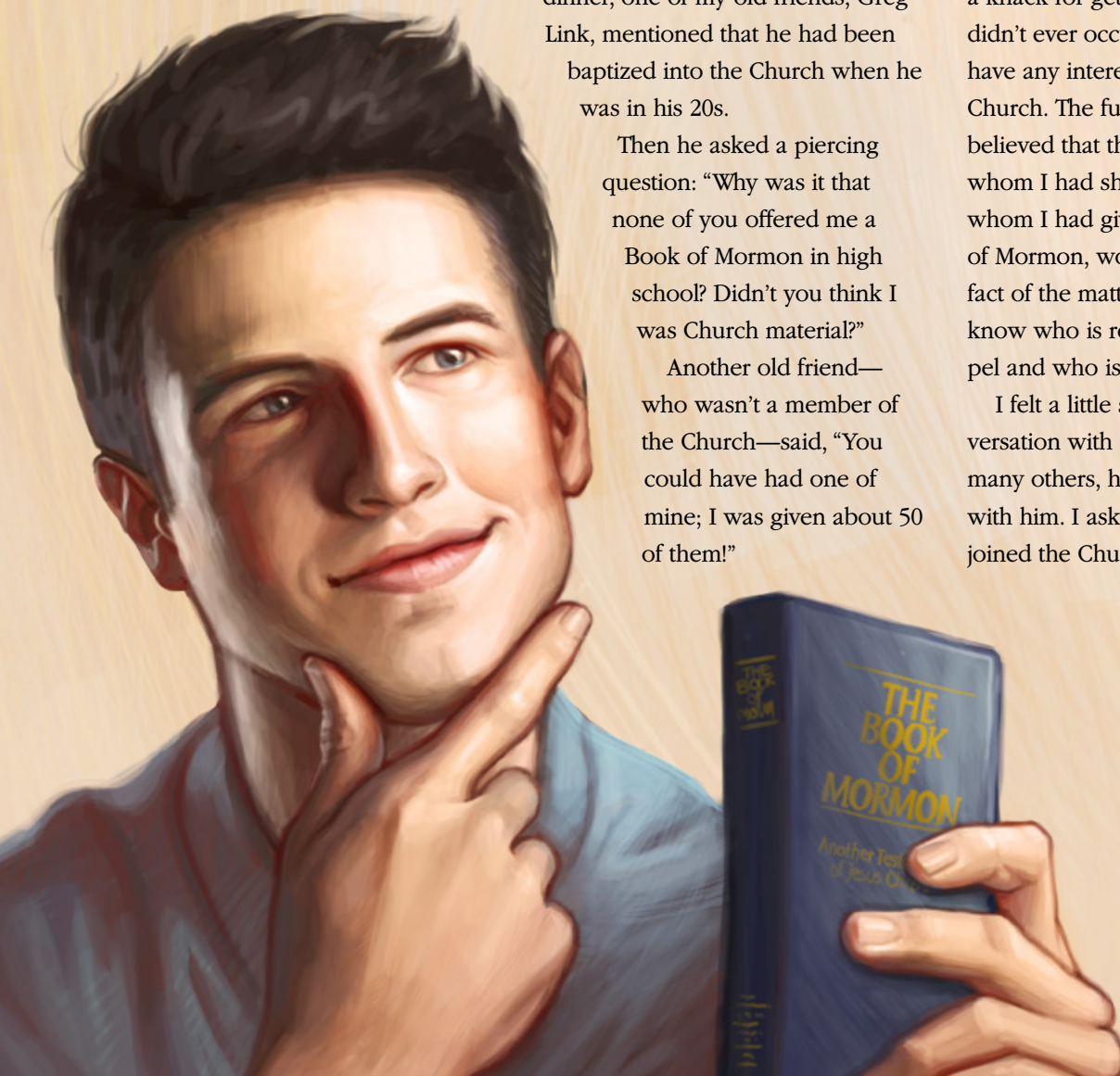
While we were chatting at a table with 8 or 10 other classmates during dinner, one of my old friends, Greg Link, mentioned that he had been baptized into the Church when he was in his 20s.

Then he asked a piercing question: "Why was it that none of you offered me a Book of Mormon in high school? Didn't you think I was Church material?"

Another old friend—who wasn't a member of the Church—said, "You could have had one of mine; I was given about 50 of them!"

I was stunned. Back in high school, if you had told me that Greg would be baptized and become a successful motivational speaker, I wouldn't have believed it. I really liked Greg. He was the kind of loyal friend you could count on when you needed him. But I knew he liked to party, and he had a knack for getting into trouble. It just didn't ever occur to me that he would have any interest in hearing about the Church. The funny thing was, I had believed that the other friend, with whom I had shared the gospel and whom I had given a copy of the Book of Mormon, would one day join. The fact of the matter is, you just never know who is ready to accept the gospel and who is not.

I felt a little sheepish after that conversation with Greg because I, like so many others, hadn't shared the gospel with him. I asked him how he finally joined the Church. Here is his story:





THE LORD PREPARES HIS CHILDREN

“The Lord loves all of His children. He desires that all have the fulness of His truth and the abundance of His blessings. He knows when they are ready, and He wants us to hear and heed His directions on sharing His gospel. When we do so, those who are prepared will respond to the message of Him who said, ‘My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow me’ (John 10:27).”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Sharing the Gospel,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 9.

My family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, when I was about 11, but I didn't join the Church until I was 24. Looking back, I can see why no one shared the gospel with me. I was not a golden contact on the surface. Actually, I was a bit of a rowdy kid. I got into fights and got into trouble at school regularly.

I had a number of LDS friends, but only one ever talked about the Church. And that was because I teased him about reading the Book of Mormon when he babysat.

I was curious about things, though. My mom took me to a local Christian church. I once asked them why Jesus hadn't come to the Americas. They kind of laughed at me for asking such a question, so I didn't ask anything else about it.

Years later I decided to visit the

visitors' center on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. There was a diorama on Christ in America. Suddenly I remembered my questions about that topic from my younger years. That's when the Spirit hit me, and I knew I was ready to listen.

The example of my friends from high school stayed with me. In fact, the people I respected most were LDS. Randy Ridd and his wife both went to my school. They were always great examples, very good people. That made a big impact on me later. I thought, “If Randy believed this was real, it must be important.”

I don't know what might have happened if they had shared more about the gospel at the time. I might not have been ready. But looking back, I wish they had. I know it would have had an impact on me.

I feel so grateful that my example had a positive impact on Greg. I would feel even better, though, if I had done something about it at the time. If I had shared the gospel or the Book of Mormon or even just invited Greg to an activity, it could have changed his life. He might have joined the Church sooner. Maybe he would have even served a mission.

I've learned that being a good example is

truly important, but so is the responsibility to share the gospel. The Lord has commanded us to do so: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15).

So don't be afraid to share. What's more, don't be too quick to judge who is ready and who is not. You might just be surprised whose heart has been softened, even if that interest is hidden deep down where you can't see it. **NE**

ANSWERS

to Common

QUESTIONS

DO YOU EVER FEEL UNPREPARED WHEN PEOPLE ASK YOU QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHURCH? HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW YOU MIGHT ANSWER A FEW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.

Why do you have other scriptures? Isn't the Bible enough?

The Bible gives us much, and other scriptures give us even more. God has revealed His word in the Bible. We believe He has also revealed His word in other scriptures. This doesn't mean we think any less of the Bible, though. In fact, the other scriptures help us know that the Bible is true by giving us additional witnesses of it. All scriptures are proof that Heavenly Father loves His children and gives them what they need to follow His plan. Additional scriptures help clarify some things that otherwise might be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Mormon men have lots of wives, right?

No. In the 19th century, some men in the Church had more than one wife because God told the Prophet Joseph Smith to introduce this practice. Some men in the Old Testament were also commanded to do so (for instance, Abraham, Jacob, and David). This is something God has commanded for His own purposes in the past, but it was always a highly restricted and controlled practice. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stopped practicing plural marriage in 1890, and anyone practicing or advocating it today cannot belong to the Church.

Why are Mormons against gay people?

We're not *against* anyone, and we don't hate anyone. As Christians, we are taught to show compassion and kindness to all people, whether or not we agree with their beliefs, lifestyle, or behavior. To disagree is not to hate or demean. We believe that nobody should be the target of hateful

Why do you have other scriptures? Isn't the Bible enough?



Are you really Christians or more like a cult?

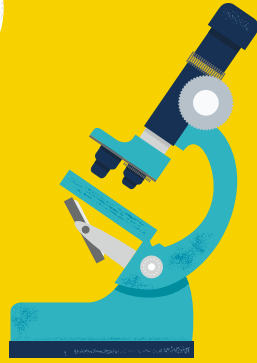
We are Christians. We believe in Jesus Christ. When people say that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are not Christians, it's often based on a certain faulty logic: in their minds, since they're Christians and some of our teachings are so different from theirs,

acts and words or be discriminated against in employment or housing, for instance. At the same time, we believe that sexual relations (whether heterosexual or homosexual) outside of marriage is sin and that God has ordained marriage to be only between a man and a woman. These beliefs are consistent with what Heavenly Father has revealed about the central role of the family (father, mother, and children) in His plan of salvation. This is the core and essence of eternity. This is what endures. Of course, people are free to choose how they live their lives, but that doesn't change God's plan, His commandments, or the blessings of keeping them. For more on this topic, visit mormonsandgays.org.

Mormons can't possibly be Christians. For instance, they object to our belief that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are separate beings. Other groups might even say we're a cult, but that's often just meant to label us and scare other people away. What really matters is this: we believe in Jesus Christ; He is our Lord and Savior who suffered, died, and rose again to overcome sin and death for us; and we follow His example and teachings. These are the common, core beliefs of all Christians, so yes, we are Christians.



Do you blindly obey?



Doesn't scientific evidence prove that the Book of Mormon couldn't possibly be true?

Why does it matter what church you belong to? Doesn't God love everyone?

God does love everyone. In fact, Heavenly Father loves everyone so much that He sent His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die so that we could have our sins forgiven, be resurrected, and live with Them in heaven. Jesus Christ has taught us what we need to do in order to be happy in this life and receive eternal life in the hereafter, including repenting and being baptized. He also established a Church in ancient times to administer these teachings and ordinances. Unfortunately, because people rejected the truth, that Church was lost from the earth for a long time, and various new churches arose. But in time, Jesus Christ restored His original Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is the only Church with true authority to perform sacred

ordinances such as baptism. Because God loves everyone, He wants everyone to have the opportunity to learn about this Church and, through proper priesthood authority, be baptized in it and receive the covenants necessary for exaltation. That authority and those covenants are available only in His Church.

Doesn't scientific evidence prove that the Book of Mormon couldn't possibly be true?

No. The scientific evidence we have cannot prove or disprove the Book of Mormon. Archaeological or genetic research in the Americas, for instance, is ongoing and often raises more questions than it answers. So to draw absolute conclusions from it about the Book of Mormon (either for it or against it) is usually a bit of a stretch—and quite risky, since new evidence often comes along that

refutes old conclusions. But more important, attacks against the Book of Mormon on scientific grounds are usually based on faulty assumptions about what the book claims to be. For instance, it does *not* claim to be a record of the ancestors of all of the native peoples across the entire Western Hemisphere, nor does it claim that the people described in it were the first or only people inhabiting the area described in it. And yet, many scientific criticisms seem to assume that the book claims exactly these things. Science is learning more and more about the ancient Americas, and that process will continue. But we shouldn't assume that any of that research will give conclusive evidence for or against the Book of Mormon. The ultimate proof of its truth comes through sincere study and prayer and by the power of the Holy Ghost.

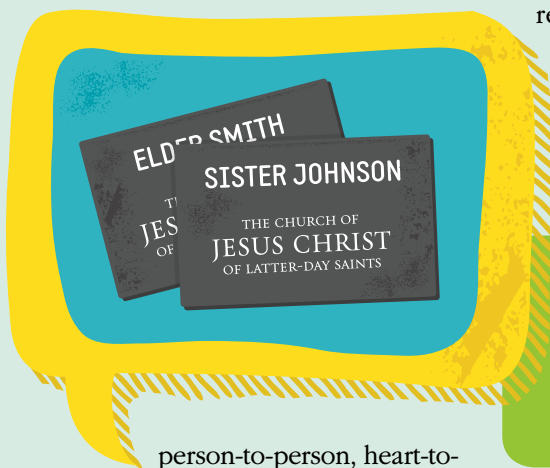
What happens in your temples, and why are you so secretive about it?

We don't think of it as *secret* so much as *sacred*. In the temple we participate in sacred ordinances and make covenants with Heavenly Father. We learn about His plan of salvation and the role of the Savior, Jesus Christ, as well as the glorious promises He makes to us if we are faithful and obedient. Also, the temple is where we are married and sealed together as families for all

eternity. There, we can also participate in these ordinances vicariously for our deceased ancestors. If you would like to learn more about our temples, see temples.lds.org.

Why does your church send out young men and women to be missionaries?

We believe we have the most important message in the world, and we want to share the happiness it's brought us with everyone. But this message isn't the kind that can simply be broadcast in the media or posted online. It is best delivered



person-to-person, heart-to-heart, spirit-to-spirit. That's why we send missionaries. The Lord calls them to preach His gospel to the world—the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ and of the Restoration of His Church. Young men and women are at just the right age to be doing this. They may be a bit unpolished sometimes, but they learn to rely on the Lord.

Why don't you believe in having sexual relationships until you're married?

God has commanded us not to. Keeping God's commandments helps us to have a safe and joyful journey through life, and sexual purity is an area where obedience brings perhaps the greatest measure of peace and joy. The power to create new life is sacred, as is the intimate expression of love between husband and wife, so the Lord has commanded us to have sexual relations only within the bonds of marriage. That is, abstain from sexual relations if you're not married, and when you are married, be completely faithful to your spouse. So much personal anguish and so many societal problems could

How can you be sure what you believe is true?

be avoided if we would all keep this commandment. Marriage is ordained of God and has a special place in His plan of happiness for His children. By reserving sexual relationships for marriage, we elevate both marriage and the sexual relationship to their proper and sacred place in our lives.

Do you all just blindly obey whatever you're told?

We do obey the prophets God has chosen—because we have faith in Him, not because we're blind followers. Blind obedience is not true obedience, anyway. The choice to obey—even when we may not fully understand a commandment—is made individually and is based on the trust, faith, and courage we develop as we draw closer to God by heeding His word to His prophets. We know that we can and should seek our own confirmation from God that what His servants have asked us to do is His will. That is our duty and our privilege.

How can you be sure what you believe is true?

Surety comes through the Holy Ghost, which gives you feelings and thoughts that will lead you to a knowledge of the truth if you seek it diligently, sincerely, and honestly and are willing to exercise faith. Only wholehearted effort will do—real study, earnest prayer, true commitment to act. If you do these things, God will reward you with an assurance of the truth. That's His promise, and we know He keeps it. **NE**

 For more answers to common questions, go to mormon.org/faq.

Member

MISSIONARY



TASK FORCE

200 YOUTH. 100 CHANCES
TO BEAR TESTIMONY.
ONE HOUR. GO FOR IT.

Some goals stretch you more than others. And then there are other goals that hardly seem possible at first glance.

The youth planning committee from a stake in Texas, USA, knew they were shooting for the moon on this one.

“We weren’t really sure how we were going to do it,” says Kyle O., 17, one of the young men on the planning committee for their stake’s annual stake youth conference. Even the adult leaders let out a bit of a gasp after the youth proposed their plans.

So, what was the goal? Simply this: to send out 200 youth in pairs to bear their testimony about a gospel message with 100 different nonmember or less-active families. In the families’ own homes. During a single hour.

No point in setting goals that are boring, right?

✓ Starting an Adventure

The annual two-day conference is something the youth in this stake look forward to all year. It takes a ton of planning, praying, and courage to try things that have never been done before.

Each conference starts with the youth planning committee. “We really wanted the youth to have a positive experience in sharing the gospel,” says McKenna F., 17, one of the young women on the committee.

Specifically, they hoped to provide a positive experience for those young men and young women who didn’t think they had the confidence to share the gospel with others. “We wanted to give them a taste that it really is doable,” McKenna explains.

✓ Making Preparations

One thing the youth committee *didn’t* want was 100 doors slammed in their faces. They didn’t want to spend the hour trying to find families to visit.

So they had the adults throughout the stake ask friends and neighbors if they would allow the youth to come share a testimony about Christ. In the end, 115 families accepted the invitation.

As part of preparation, full-time missionaries and other leaders provided tips and advice to the youth during the conference so that when they talked to others, they could say what was in their hearts. Many of the youth were still nervous, but they headed out anyway.

The next hour would prove to be the favorite of the entire two-day conference, hands down.

✓ Answering an Unexpected Question

Luke E., 17, and his younger companion approached the home of their assigned family to visit. A small cross hung on the front door. “With that cross on the door, I knew they were probably a pretty faithful family,” Luke says.

Inside the home they had a great spiritual discussion with the family. Luke and his companion shared their testimony and thoughts based on Christ’s words in the Bible, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

As the conversation unfolded, the couple asked a question that Luke and his younger companion hadn’t expected.

“What is the Book of Mormon?” they asked.

The adult leaders in the room remained silent in order to allow the youth to answer.



*"A lot of the youth were really nervous. . . . But going out to share **increased their confidence.**"*
—Kyle O., 17

*"We are grateful for **young people** in the world **who believe** something **so passionately.**"*
—Family who was visited



"I took this one," Luke says. In a few minutes he explained the meaning of the title and subtitle ("Another Testament of Jesus Christ") of the Book of Mormon, as well as a basic overview of the contents inside. He shared with them how Jesus visited and taught other nations after His Resurrection. Luke also bore testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and left them a copy.

When Luke finished answering the question, the couple was touched. They thanked everyone for coming and said, "We are grateful for young people in the world who believe something so passionately."

For Luke, the experience was a huge boost in confidence for sharing the gospel.

"Sometimes in high school you clam up and stay quiet about spiritual things, and then you lose your confidence," Luke says. "That day was very strengthening for me as a young man preparing to serve a mission."

Connecting with a Stranger

Tristan S., 17, served on the planning committee and was excited about the whole conference. But even with all that energy, he still felt a little unsure about the actual teaching experience.

"I was nervous," Tristan says. For one thing, part of the goal with each visit was to stay and talk for at least 15 minutes. In other words, no showing up, sharing a scripture or two, and leaving within a few minutes. Sometimes 15 minutes can feel pretty long.

Tristan went with a younger companion to the home of a single man in his 30s. "We

shared scriptures from Matthew about how Jesus Christ brings peace in our life," Tristan says.

The man they were visiting added to the conversation right away as he shared his own insights and experiences. They sailed right past the 15-minute mark without noticing. By the time they reached 45 minutes, the man told them, "There's something different about you guys."

Tristan and his companion gave the man a card directing him to mormon.org, which he accepted gladly.

"It was an amazing experience," Tristan says. "It's something I'll never forget."

Making the Invitation

Lindsey J., 17, and her companion for the day visited a woman who's been investigating the Church for three years. Her husband was not investigating.

The conversation with the wife was going well when, after a few minutes, her husband decided to enter the room and join in. "They were a very talkative family," Lindsey says.

As they continued to visit, Lindsey felt a strong prompting. "Usually I'm not the kind of person to ask somebody something so direct," she explains, "but I felt like I should ask the husband if he would be interested in going to church."

So she did.

To Lindsey's surprise, the husband answered that, yes, he'd like to attend even though he wouldn't make any promises. Two Sundays later, both husband and wife

"A lot of the *youth* said that this was *the best weekend* of their lives."
—Lindsey J., 17

"That day was very *strengthening* for me as a young man preparing *to serve a mission*."
—Luke E., 17

came to church together. They've been attending ever since.

Lindsey has most enjoyed getting to know the couple better and better. "I say 'Hi' to them all the time," she says. They've become close friends. Lindsey even brought flowers on Mother's Day because the woman doesn't have children of her own.

Ever since the youth conference, Lindsey has chatted with many other youth about their experiences. With each conversation, it became clearer just how much everybody enjoyed sharing testimonies about the Savior.

"A lot of the youth said that this was the best weekend of their lives," Lindsey explains.

Beginning the Next Journey

That one short hour of teaching was just the beginning. Some families began meeting with full-time missionaries afterward. Others attended a Church meeting for the first time, prayed, or started reading scriptures.

As for the youth who participated, they'll never forget the experience. They also gained confidence in sharing their beliefs with others. "A lot of youth were really nervous about this," says Kyle O. "But going out to share increased their confidence. They realized it really wasn't that hard to open your mouth and share the gospel, to share the love of Christ."

It just goes to show that you don't have to be afraid to shoot for the moon when it comes to setting goals.

You might just get there. **NE**



How Can I Share My

TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST?

SUNDAY LESSONS
This Month's Topic:
**The Atonement of
Jesus Christ**

Take a look around you. There are people everywhere—your close friends, acquaintances at school, strangers on the bus—who are dealing with really hard things. They may be sad or worried about the future or burdened because of the past. The good news is that you know something

that can bring joy and happiness into their lives—you know the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Chances to share your testimony of Jesus Christ are everywhere, in many different situations. Look around you—you'll see them. Want some ideas on messages you can share that might make a difference? Here are just a few.

Because of Him

When I was in fourth grade, my non-member friend's mom passed away. My friend's heart was broken, and she didn't come to school for a long time. One day she came for a few hours, and at recess we were sitting on the field when she suddenly asked me if she would ever see her mom again. I instantly knew what to say because of the things I'd been taught at church. I told her I knew she would see her mom again

someday. She looked confused and asked me how I knew that. I told her the prophet and other teachers of our Church teach us about Jesus Christ and that because of Him we will live again, and if we make and keep covenants, we can be with our loved ones for eternity. She looked really happy after that, and I was grateful that I was able to bear my testimony to her.

Katie N., Utah, USA

WHEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW OR MEET IS:

YOU CAN SHARE A MESSAGE ABOUT:

SCRIPTURES YOU MIGHT SHARE:

Sad because a loved one has died.	The plan of salvation. Because Jesus Christ overcame death, we will too. Share how you have the hope of seeing loved ones even after death.	Mosiah 16:8; Alma 40:12.
Feeling nervous or hopeless about the future.	The hope you have for the future because of Christ. Whether it's fear about your future education, big life decisions, or just growing up in general, when you place your trust in Jesus Christ, you will always be on the right path. Share an experience of how your faith in Jesus Christ helps you feel at ease about the future.	1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Nephi 31:20; Ether 12:4; D&C 88:6.
Dealing with addiction.	The grace of Jesus Christ. This "divine help or strength is given through the mercy and love of God" (Guide to the Scriptures, "Grace"; scriptures.lds.org). Share how you've found strength to overcome temptations or an addiction by turning to Christ and relying on the cleansing and enabling power of His Atonement (see page 2).	2 Nephi 2:8; 25:23.
Struggling with feeling unloved or alone.	The comfort the Savior provides. Before He died, Jesus Christ said He would not leave us comfortless (see John 14:18). Share how you've found comfort and felt the Savior's love, such as through prayer.	Joshua 1:5; John 3:16; D&C 138:3.
Living with an illness or disability.	The promise of resurrection. Share how you keep an eternal perspective on earthly trials and your hope of one day obtaining a perfect, resurrected body.	Alma 40:23; 41:2.
Feeling guilty and weighed down by mistakes and sins.	The joy you've felt in repenting and applying the Atonement of Jesus Christ.	Matthew 11:29-30; 2 Nephi 25:26.
Going through a big life change, such as a move or the divorce of parents.	The assurance that Jesus Christ is always there for you. Even though life is full of big, sometimes scary changes, the Savior's love for us never changes. Share an experience of feeling the Savior near you during hard times.	2 Nephi 4:34; 3 Nephi 10:4-6.

How to Approach Sensitive Topics

Because some of these situations deal with really hard issues, it's important to approach them with a bit of caution. Here are some tips:

- Be sensitive to the feelings of those you talk with and sincere in wanting to lighten their burdens, but respect their agency if they aren't receptive to your message.
- Pray to have the Spirit inspire you with what to say and when to say it. After all, Heavenly Father knows best what message each of His children needs to hear in hard times.
- Share personal experiences of how your testimony has helped you through similar struggles or issues.

HE IS ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU— NO MATTER WHAT



By Josalin Dunn

When I was seven years old, I was diagnosed with cancer. During the next year, I went through several rounds of chemotherapy and eventually a big surgery. The surgery left me cancer free until my freshman year of high school, when it came back and spread to my liver, where it remains to this day.

Through this whole process, I've become a stronger person as I've grown closer to my Savior. There were times when I felt like He was very close to me, telling me to keep fighting because my journey here on earth was not even close to done. These experiences strengthened my testimony of Christ.

Not long ago I was talking with my close friend Heather. She confided in

me, through a flood of tears, that her parents had decided to get a divorce. She was hurt because she felt that God had abandoned her even though she'd lived a good life.

"Why do bad things happen to good people?" she asked.

I told her my cancer story and how my parents must have spent countless nights on their knees asking Heavenly Father that same question as their seven-year-old daughter lay in the next room with the chemicals from chemotherapy flowing through her body.

I then bore my testimony of trials and how Heavenly Father doesn't give us trials that He knows we can't overcome. He knew I could handle cancer. I shared my testimony of Christ—when

Jesus was crucified for our sins, Heavenly Father knew Jesus could do it. I told Heather that Heavenly Father doesn't enjoy watching us suffer. He is with us the entire time, and we can turn to Him for guidance and strength. I testified to Heather that once we overcome our challenge, we can feel His presence stronger than we've ever felt before.

Through her tears, Heather thanked me for sharing my feelings with her and told me that she would pray to God when she felt like she couldn't go on.

I hope I planted a small testimony inside Heather that God is always there, no matter what. I know that Heavenly Father loves each of us and is always by our side during our hard times. **NE**

Josalin Dunn lives in Florida, USA.

People say the **world** is dangerously **overpopulated**. Should I not **plan** to **have** very many **children**, if any?



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE PETERSON

People tell me **I'm too sheltered** because of the Church. How can **I respond** to them?

When people say you're sheltered, it usually means they think you don't know enough about the realities of the world. But quite often, all they're really saying is that you're not worldly enough for their liking.

For example, if you're with a group of people who

are telling dirty jokes and you don't understand everything they're referring to and don't want to hear those kinds of jokes anyway, those people might tell you you're too sheltered. The fact is, of course, that you just don't want to wallow in filth.

You can tell those who say you're sheltered that

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "From the perspective of the plan of salvation, one of the most serious abuses of children is to deny them birth. This is a worldwide trend. . . . As rising generations diminish in numbers, cultures and even nations are hollowed out and eventually disappear."¹

We believe that "children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3) and that "God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force."²

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has also said we should follow the Lord rather than the philosophies of men: "Arguments swirl around that the earth is dangerously overpopulated and that couples should restrict the number of their children. . . . I adjure you to believe the Lord, who said that 'the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare' [D&C 104:17]."³ **NE**

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Protect the Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 43.
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Russell M. Nelson, "Youth of the Noble Birthright: What Will You Choose?" (Church Educational System devotional for young adults, Sept. 6, 2013); lds.org/broadcasts.

you know enough of what goes on in the world to know that you don't want to be a part of some of it.

Frankly, those who accuse religious people of being too sheltered are usually too sheltered themselves—from spiritual things. They seem to put a high priority on acknowledging the "realities" of life, but they deny the spiritual side of reality. "The Spirit . . . speaketh of things as they

really are" (Jacob 4:13).

If you feel you *are* naive about things you ought to know more about, though, you can remedy that. Through education and service, you can learn about what's going on in the world without immersing yourself in foul things. The Savior said, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). **NE**

“My friend is being bullied. What can I do to help her?”

Unfortunately, bullying behavior has been around for thousands of years, and with the Internet there are even more ways for people to be bullied. You can help your friend as you think about what Alma the Elder said at the waters of Mormon about the baptismal covenant: “Bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; yea, and [be] willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:8–9).

Here are some ideas on how you can help lighten your friend’s burden:

Talk to your leaders, teachers, and parents to get their help. They need to know what’s happening in order to help your friend.

Say something encouraging. Sometimes even a few words will help ease the situation. For example, you can say something good about your friend—both to her and to others—and let her know how important she really is.

Set an example for others by continuing to be her friend. Noah M., 16, of Florida, USA, explains, “Just being her friend can help a lot. Setting an example can also encourage others to stop bullying.”

Pray for help and listen for promptings. Remember that your friend is a beloved daughter of Heavenly Father, and He can give you and her the guidance you need.

Report cyberbullying using the tools provided on the social media sites where the bullying is taking place.

For more on the subject, see the video “Bullying—Stop It” at lds.org/go/stopNE3 and “How to Beat Bullying” (*New Era*, June 2004, 34) at lds.org/go/bullyNE3. NE

Talk Positively

Help your friend realize that she is wonderful and unique and that our Father in Heaven loves her. You can help by talking to the people bullying her too. If she’s not in the room and people are being mean, you can tell them all the wonderful things about her. By doing that, you may help them realize how great she really is.

Holly H., 16, California, USA



Stand Up for Your Friend

Be an example to those who bully her. If you feel like you’re not able to help, pray and ask for help. Pray for your friend and for the bullies. Help your friend even if it means others will bully you too. Heavenly Father will help you and your friend when you pray.

Hannah H., 13, Utah, USA

Show God’s Love

When people at school and church bullied me, a young woman in my ward reached out to help. She showed me that what others thought about me didn’t have any meaning in God’s eyes and that I should care only about what Heavenly Father thinks. Show your friend God’s love through your love and actions. Once she realizes that what the bullies think doesn’t matter and that only what God thinks of her matters, she will be able to shrug off the words and actions of the bullies.

Ellie P., 17, Washington, USA



Protect Her

It's important to remember that you are your brother's keeper (see Genesis 4:9), and

whenever possible, help protect your friend from harm. You can tell the authorities about what is happening and take your friend away from the aggressor to avoid further problems. Think about what Jesus would do.

Victoria Q., 14, Washington, D.C., USA

Let Her Know She's Not Alone

Engage her in conversation. Just talking to her can brighten her day and help keep her mind off the bullies.

Also, if you're there while she's being bullied, stand by her to let her know you're on her side. It's a tremendous help to know that there is someone who is not against you when you think the whole world is.

Tara B., 16, Pennsylvania, USA

Treat Others the Way Christ Would Treat Them

Everyone has agency, and some people are not going to use that agency in a positive manner. We can't make choices for them, but we can live our lives so that the Spirit can work with us. When we do the things we need to do to have the Spirit in our lives and treat others the way Christ would treat them, His love will radiate through us. Your friend, through your example, can feel comfort and confidence in the fact that our Heavenly Father loves

her. As you treat the bullies as Christ would treat them, they will feel His love for them. Feeling that love can help soften their hearts and help them realize the errors of their ways.

Eli T., 19, Utah, USA

Get Help

Talk to an adult. They have a lifetime of experience, and people respect them. If you see this happening to your friend, stand up for her. It can be hard, but it will make a difference. Constantly remind your friend that what the bullies are saying isn't true and that there are many people in this world who love her.

Justin L., 15, Minnesota, USA



Use Kindness and Care

I have a close friend who gets bullied at church and at school.



LET US BE KIND

"We are all brothers and sisters. . . . Let us be kind. Let us forgive. Let us talk peacefully with each other. Let the love of God fill our hearts."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," Ensign, May 2012, 75-76.

Though she lives in a different state and I rarely see her, I still help her out by talking to her on the phone, giving her advice about what to do, and making her feel she is important. Use kindness and care for those who struggle with being bullied. If you see it happen, help those people out and stop the bullying.

Kellen L., 17, New Mexico, USA

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

UPCOMING QUESTION

"I know God has forgiven me for past sins, but how can I forgive myself?"

Send your answer and photo by April 15, 2015.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS Account, and then select "New Era."

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



The Atonement of Jesus Christ

You'll be studying about the Atonement of Jesus Christ in your Sunday classes this month. As you study and discuss this topic, you may ponder these questions: How is Jesus Christ the way, the truth, and the life? How can I draw closer to Jesus Christ through the sacrament?

For some answers to these questions, read the scriptures listed in the Topical Guide under "Jesus Christ, Atonement through" and "Sacrament." You'll also find teachings on the Atonement of Jesus Christ in general conference talks at conference.lds.org.

Share these Cards

Give yourself an easy reminder to prepare for your Sunday lessons. Just place these cards in your scriptures, locker, or bedroom. You can also download or share them online at lds.org/go/cardsNE3.

I AM
THE WAY,
THE TRUTH,
AND
THE LIFE:
NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE
FATHER, BUT BY ME.

John 14:6

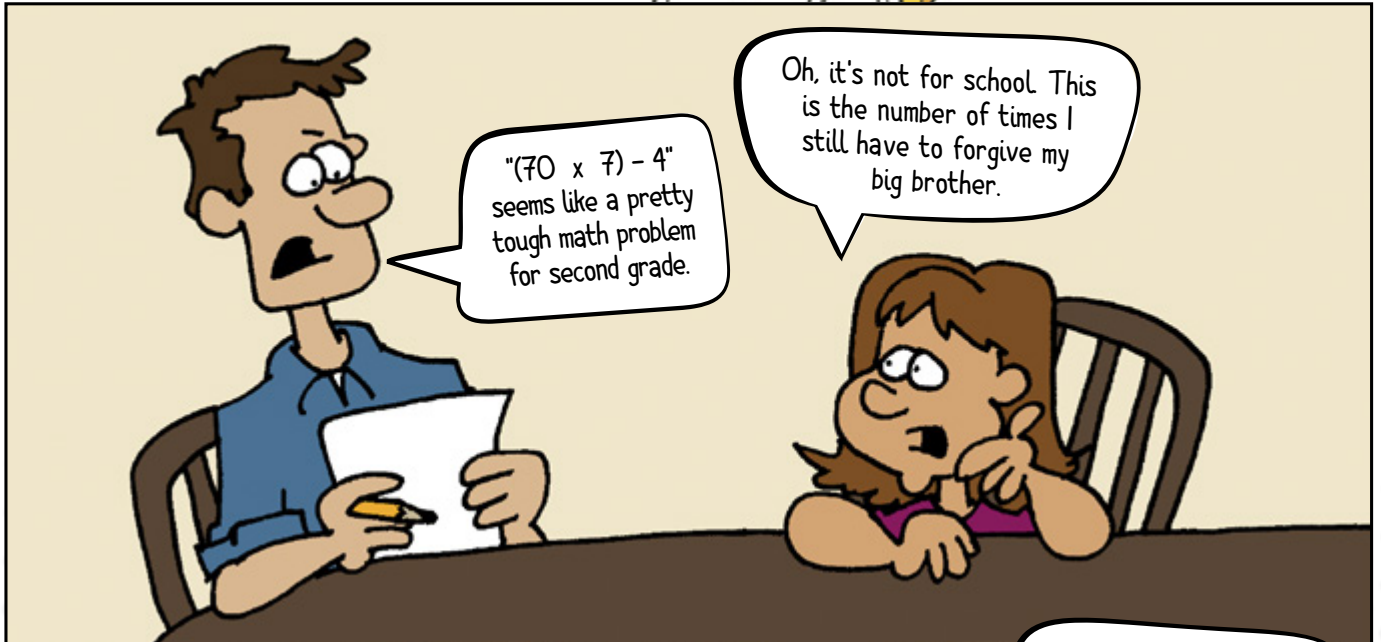
THE
SACRAMENT...
NEEDS TO BECOME
MORE HOLY
AND
SACRED
TO EACH OF US.

Elder James J. Hamula
of the Seventy
October 2014 general conference

This "saving-seats-at-church" is really getting out of hand.



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY



"(70 x 7) - 4" seems like a pretty tough math problem for second grade.

Oh, it's not for school. This is the number of times I still have to forgive my big brother.

ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



I'll probably stay in school until I get my PhD. Someday I'd like to feel smarter than my phone.

RANDY GLASBERGEN



OK, Bishop, I asked 15 girls the question, "Do you want to dance?"

Great, Brother Jacobs, but I wanted you to dance with them-not take a survey.

JON CLARK



HOPE AT THE HOSPITAL

There's a hospital for cancer patients in my area called City of Hope. I never knew this hospital existed until I advanced to the office of a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood, when I learned that the LDS chaplain at the hospital was a member of my ward. One day he asked me and another member of the priests quorum to help him take the sacrament to some members of the Church who were receiving treatment at City of Hope.

When we arrived, I was shocked by the number of people who were really sick. The care they received at the hospital really was their last hope. We entered the first room and met a woman from Missouri, USA, who had just started treatment. She was

surprised to learn that the hospital had a connection with the local ward and that young men would take the time to come and administer the sacrament.

We returned again the next week and found there were now eight members checked in to the hospital. Not only did we administer the sacrament to them, but we visited with each one as well. I felt a deep sense of gratitude for my own health and for the opportunity to help the patients.

The following week I was on a family trip, so another quorum member went in my place. He told me that the members at the hospital had asked where I was. It made me feel happy to know that my service mattered to them, and it motivated me to continue to go

when I'm needed so that my service will bring peace to people who "stand in need of comfort" (Mosiah 18:9).

Scott C., California, USA

BEING MYSELF

About halfway through seventh grade, I wanted to be part of the "in" crowd. I started changing just to fit in. I got mad easier, I tried to make a boy I liked think I was someone different from who I really am, and I started hanging out with people who didn't have the best reputation. At the beginning of the fourth quarter of school, I noticed that I'd changed.

I had a lot of fond memories of the year before: no swearing, no bad influences. I'd had great friends—friends who actually cared about me and were good influences.

I decided to stop trying to change and just be myself, including keeping the commandments. Not long after that decision, when a boy asked me out, I told him, "No, I won't date until I'm 16." He asked why, and I responded, "I'm LDS." He was sort of mad because I turned him down, but I knew I'd done the right thing. It felt good to stand up for my beliefs.

I thought, "If my friends leave me because of who I am, then they're not really my friends." I'm now a lot happier, and I know that from now on I'll choose my friends wisely and be true to myself.

Samantha F., Utah, USA

MY MUM, MY BOOK, AND MY PRAYER

I was stressed out. I'd lost one of my library books and my teacher told me I had to bring it in the next day or I'd get in trouble. My mum and I looked around the whole house, searching under every couch and looking through every bookcase. We couldn't find it anywhere. I was nervous about getting in trouble at school. My mum suggested we take another look around the house. We double-checked every place and looked in places we hadn't thought about before. But we still had no luck.

Then my mum suggested that we say a prayer. We knelt down together on the wooden floors and prayed, asking Heavenly Father that we might be able to find my lost book and that everything would be OK. We closed the prayer together and then my mum looked at me and asked, "Where do you feel we should look?" I answered immediately, "My bookshelf." We'd looked a number of times all through that bookshelf and hadn't been able to find it, but we still walked into my bedroom to search again. Something immediately caught my attention: a book was hanging on its side, halfway out among the other books. I pulled it out and, sure enough, it was my lost book. I was overjoyed and then knelt down again with my mum and thanked Heavenly Father for answering my prayers.

I know that if we kneel to Heavenly Father in sincere prayer, He will answer our prayers. It may not be immediate or what we asked for, but we will get an answer.

Ainsley B., Victoria, Australia



Send Us Your Story

To send in your experiences for Instant Messages, go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Your Work," sign in with your LDS Account, and then select "New Era." Please limit submissions to 400 words or fewer.





By Carol F. McConkie
First Counselor in the
Young Women General
Presidency

HOW TO ENDURE

You can learn to endure to the end in many ways. You can learn to endure as you repent and, with faith in Christ, **strive to overcome** the things of the world. You learn to endure when you bridle your passions and **put the things of God first** in your lives. You learn to endure when you **keep your covenants**.

Enduring means to remember that you have taken the name of Christ upon you and that you will **always remember Him** and keep His commandments.

Enduring means to **serve God**, to **bless others** temporally and spiritually. You are aware of other people, see their needs, and respond immediately to alleviate their burdens and serve them in the way the Savior would.

Enduring means learning how to **preach the gospel** always, “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that

[you] may be in” (Mosiah 18:9) until the end of your lives.

Enduring means to **stand in holy places**, come what may, so that you will always have the Spirit to be with you wherever you are.

Enduring means to **be valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ**, to follow the Savior and keep His commandments, to give everything to build the Church, including making necessary sacrifices to **strengthen your family**, to **attend the temple**, to **do family history** and missionary work, and to reach out to those who are struggling.

Enduring means to **sanctify yourselves**, to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness” (Moroni 10:32).

We endure all things by the power of the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ. By the power of the Atonement, we are healed, we are cleansed, we are enabled, and we are loved. Through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ, in our lives every day we are able to endure adversity and feel a sense of purpose in our mortality. As we endure in all things, we are prepared to receive the greatest of all the gifts of God, that of eternal life. **NE**

Adapted from a Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address given May 3, 2013.



Share Your Experiences

Share how you’re enduring and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/endureNE3.



Just because

THINGS ARE GOING WELL

does not mean that we should not

FROM TIME TO TIME
CONSIDER

whether there might be

SOMETHING BETTER.

Elder Carlos A. Godoy
of the Seventy
October 2014 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



LIFE RECLAIMED

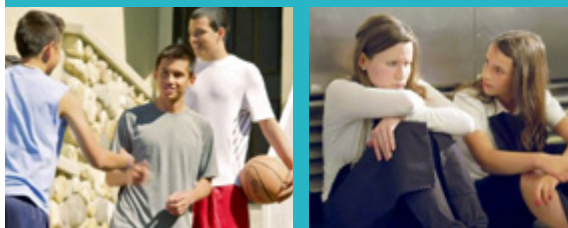
Just like an old landfill, our pasts may be full of sin and other not-so-pleasant things. How can we change? Elder Shayne M. Bowen of the Seventy uses this analogy to show that “the Atonement of Jesus Christ is available to each of us. It can clean, reclaim, and sanctify even you.” See the video at lds.org/go/reclaimedNE3.



TEXT THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE WORLD!

Want to use technology to share your feelings about the gospel but aren't sure where to start? A video at lds.org/go/textNE3 gives an example about how to bear your testimony in a natural, loving way. For more ideas on how to share the gospel online, check out social.lds.org.

HOW DO I HASTEN THE WORK?



Sometimes it's hard to know how you can share the gospel without feeling awkward about it. Check out a few examples of how you could invite others to learn about your beliefs in simple, easy ways in “I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go” at lds.org/go/whereNE3.