

THE **New Era**

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President
Thomas S. Monson

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Share designed quotes and short video highlights from President Monson's conference addresses at lds.org/go/1131, lds.org/go/1132, lds.org/go/1133, lds.org/go/1134, and lds.org/go/1135.

ENDURING AND SERVING

Never Forsaken by God

“When the pathway of life takes a cruel turn, there is the temptation to ask the question ‘Why me?’ At times there appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel. . . . We feel abandoned, heartbroken, alone. . . . We become impatient for a solution to our problems, forgetting that frequently the heavenly virtue of patience is required.

“The difficulties which come to us present us with the real test of our ability to endure. A fundamental question remains to be answered by each of us: Shall I falter, or shall I finish? . . .

“Whenever we are inclined to feel burdened down with the blows of life, let us remember that others have passed

the same way, have endured, and then have overcome.

“The history of the Church . . . is replete with the experiences of those who have struggled and yet who have remained steadfast and of good cheer. The reason? They have made the gospel of Jesus Christ the center of their lives. This is what will pull us through whatever comes our way. We will still experience difficult challenges, but we will be able to face them, to meet them head on, and to emerge victorious.

“From the bed of pain, from the pillow wet with tears, we are lifted heavenward by that divine assurance and precious promise: ‘I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee’ (Joshua 1:5). Such comfort is priceless.”

“Your Heavenly Father loves you—each of you. That love never changes. It is not influenced by your appearance, by your possessions, or by the amount of money you have in your bank account. It is not changed by your talents and abilities. It is simply there. It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.”

Growing Stronger

“Our Heavenly Father, who gives us so much to delight in, also knows that we learn and grow and become stronger as we face and survive the trials through which we must pass. We know that there are times when we will experience heartbreaking sorrow, when we will grieve, and when we may be tested to our limits. However, such difficulties allow us to change for the better, to rebuild our lives in the way our Heavenly Father teaches us, and to become something different from what we were—better than we were, more understanding than we were, more empathetic than we were, with stronger testimonies than we had before.

“This should be our purpose—to persevere and endure, yes, but also to become more spiritually refined as we make our way through sunshine and sorrow. Were it not for challenges to overcome and problems to solve, we would remain much as we are, with little or no progress toward our goal of eternal life.”

“As we seek our Heavenly Father through fervent, sincere prayer and earnest, dedicated scripture study, our testimonies will become strong and deeply rooted. We will know of God’s love for us. We will understand that we do not ever walk alone. I promise you that you will one day stand aside and look at your difficult times, and you will realize that He was always there beside you.”

True Shepherds in Home Teaching

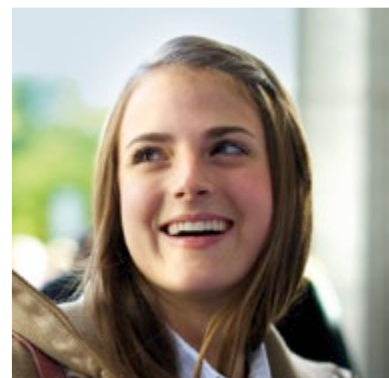
“Home teaching is more than a mechanical visit once per month. Ours is the responsibility to teach, to inspire, to motivate, and where we visit those who are not active, to bring to activity and to eventual exaltation the sons and daughters of God. . . .

“If any of you has slipped into complacency concerning your home teaching visits, may I say that there is no time like the present to rededicate yourself to fulfilling your home teaching duties. Decide now to make whatever effort is necessary to reach those for whom you have been given responsibility. . . .

“Brethren, our efforts in home teaching are ongoing. The work will never be concluded until our Lord and Master says, ‘It is enough.’ There are lives to brighten. There are hearts to touch. There are souls to save. Ours is the sacred privilege to brighten, to touch, and to save those precious souls entrusted to our care. We should do so faithfully and with hearts filled with gladness.

“. . . I turn to one particular example to describe the type of home teachers we should be. There is one Teacher whose life overshadows all others. He taught of life and death, of duty and destiny. He lived not to be served but to serve, not to receive but to give, not to save His life but to sacrifice it for others. He described a love more beautiful than lust, a poverty richer than treasure. . . .

“I speak of the Master Teacher, even Jesus Christ. . . . With Him as our unfailing guide and exemplar, we shall qualify for His divine help in our home teaching. . . . We will become true shepherds.”



“Conference always reaffirms to me that we have living prophets. I especially enjoyed President Monson’s testimony that the Lord is always with us, through the good times and the bad times. He won’t desert us. It was exactly what I needed to hear at this time in my life, and I’ll always be grateful for it.”

Abbie W. , 17, Arizona, USA



It applies to all relationships regardless of circumstances: . . .

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself [see Matthew 22:35–40].”

Divine Help through Trials

“Heavenly Father has perfect foresight, knows each of us, and knows our future. He knows what difficulties we will pass through. He sent His Son to suffer so that He would know how to succor us in all our trials.

“We know that Heavenly Father has spirit children in this world who sometimes choose sin and great unhappiness. That is why He sent His Firstborn to be our Redeemer, the greatest act of love in all creation. That is why we must expect that it will take the help of God and time to polish us for eternal life, to live with our Father.”

Serving as Priesthood Men

“All of us are blessed with responsibility for others. To hold the priesthood of God is to be held responsible by God for the eternal lives of His children. That is real, that is wonderful, and at times that can feel overwhelming. . . .

“You . . . can have at least three assurances. First, the Lord will give you, if you ask, the feelings of compassion He feels for those in need. Second, He will provide others . . . to join with you in your service. And third, the Lord . . . will more than recompense all who join in giving help to those in need. . . .

“You cannot know all your quorum members perfectly well, but God does. . . .

“You young men cannot know what acts of priesthood service the Lord is preparing you to give. But the greater challenge for every priesthood holder is to give spiritual help. All of us have that charge. It comes with being a member of a quorum. It comes with being a member of a family.”

FINDING HAPPINESS

The Only Plan of Happiness

“Heavenly Father has made each of us unique. No two of us have exactly the same experiences. No two families are alike. . . . Yet a loving Heavenly Father has set the same path to happiness for all of His children. Whatever our personal characteristics or whatever will be our experiences, there is but one plan of happiness. That plan is to follow all the commandments of God.”

Happy Family Life

“There is one overarching commandment that will help us to meet the challenges and lead to the heart of a happy family life.



President Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in the First Presidency

VIDEOS AND QUOTES

Share designed quotes and short video highlights from President Eyring’s conference addresses at lds.org/go/1136 and lds.org/go/1137.



in the sometimes sandy soil of doubt and uncertainty. . . .

“ . . . Please, first doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith. We must never allow doubt to hold us prisoner and keep us from the divine love, peace, and gifts that come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .

“ . . . Regardless of your circumstances, your personal history, or the strength of your testimony, there is room for you in this Church. Come, join with us!”

Stand Up

“Our destiny is not determined by the number of times we stumble but by the number of times we rise up, dust ourselves off, and move forward. . . .

“ . . . True repentance is about transformation, not torture or torment. Yes, heartfelt regret and true remorse for disobedience are often painful and very important steps in the sacred process of repentance. But when guilt leads to self-loathing or prevents us from rising up again, it is impeding rather than promoting our repentance. . . .

“When we make mistakes, when we sin and fall, let us think of what it means to truly repent. It means a turning of the heart and will to God and giving up sin. . . .

“We acknowledge that your path will at times be difficult. But I give you this promise in the name of the Lord: rise up and follow in the footsteps of our Redeemer and Savior, and one day you will look back and be filled with eternal gratitude that you chose to trust the Atonement and its power to lift you up and give you strength.

“ . . . No matter how many times you have slipped or fallen, rise up! Your destiny is a glorious one! Stand tall and walk in the light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ! You are stronger than you realize. You are more capable than you can imagine. You can do it now!”

COME AND FIND PEACE

To Those Who Doubt

“I suppose the Church would be perfect only if it were run by perfect beings. God is perfect, and His doctrine is pure. But He works through us—His imperfect children—and imperfect people make mistakes. . . .

“It is unfortunate that some have stumbled because of mistakes made by men. But in spite of this, the eternal truth of the restored gospel found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not tarnished, diminished, or destroyed. . . .

“It’s natural to have questions. . . . One of the purposes of the Church is to nurture and cultivate the seed of faith—even



**President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in
the First Presidency

VIDEOS AND QUOTES

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APOSTLES SPEAK TO US



THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL PROTECTION

"When I think of the future, I am overwhelmed with feelings of positive optimism. . . .

"The scriptures hold the keys to spiritual protection. They contain the doctrine and laws and ordinances

that will bring each child of God to a testimony of Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. . . .

"Make scripture reading a part of your regular routine, and the blessings will follow. There is in the scriptures a voice of warning, but there is also great nourishment.

"If the language of the scriptures at first seems strange to you, keep reading. Soon you will come to recognize the beauty and power found on those pages. . . .

"The gospel teaches us to be happy, to have faith rather than fear, to find hope and overcome despair, to leave darkness and turn toward the light of the everlasting gospel.

"Paul and others warned about the trials of our time and the days yet to come. But peace can be settled in the heart of each who turns to the scriptures and unlocks the promises of protection and redemption that are taught therein. We invite all to turn to the Savior Jesus Christ, to His teachings as found in the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



THE DOCTRINES AND PRINCIPLES CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

"The scriptures guide us to a standard of truth by which we can judge the knowledge we are receiving, whether it be true or false. True doctrine comes

from God, the source and foundation of all truths. The teachings and concepts of true doctrine are found in the gospel of our Lord and Savior. False teachings come from Satan, the father of all lies. His desire is to pervert, change, and alter revealed truths. He wants to deceive us so some of us will lose our way along the journey back to our heavenly home.

"The scriptures teach us how to avoid false teachings. For example, [see] 2 Timothy 3:16–17. . . .

". . . Use your bright minds to study and learn the Articles of Faith and the doctrines they teach. They are among the most important and certainly the most concise statements of doctrine in the Church. If you will use them as a guide to direct your studies of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you will find yourself prepared to declare your witness of the restored truth to the world. You will be able to declare in simple, straightforward, and profound ways the core beliefs you hold dear as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"I add my testimony to the truthfulness of the thirteen Articles of Faith."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"It was comforting to be reminded that no matter what, I can build my testimony and obey Christ. It doesn't matter what changes in life—Christ will not change and will not leave us. We just have to decide to follow Him. That is the one choice that will bring eternal happiness."

Jessica T., 18, California, USA



DECISIONS FOR ETERNITY

"We can change our behavior. Our very desires can change. How? There is only one way. True change—permanent change—can come only through the healing, cleansing, and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He loves you—each of you! He allows you to access His power as you keep His commandments, eagerly, earnestly, and exactly. It is that simple and certain. The gospel of Jesus Christ *is* a gospel of change! . . .

"While we are to emulate our Savior's kindness and compassion, while we are to value the rights and feelings of all of God's children, we cannot change His doctrine. It is not ours to change. His doctrine is ours to study, understand, and uphold.

". . . His way includes chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. The Lord's way is the only way for us to experience enduring happiness. His way brings sustained comfort to our souls and perennial peace to our homes. And best of all, His way leads us home to Him and our Heavenly Father, to eternal life and exaltation.

". . . Each day is a day of decision, and our decisions determine our destiny. One day each of us will stand before the Lord in judgment. We will each have a personal interview with Jesus Christ. We will account for decisions that we made about our bodies, our spiritual attributes, and how we honored God's pattern for marriage and family."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



NO OTHER GODS

"The emphasis we place on the law of chastity is explained by our understanding of the purpose of our procreative powers in the accomplishment of God's plan. Outside the bonds of marriage between a man and a woman, all uses of our procreative powers are to one degree or another sinful and contrary to God's plan for the exaltation of His children. . . .

"There are many political and social pressures for legal and policy changes to establish behaviors contrary to God's decrees about sexual morality and contrary to the eternal nature and purposes of marriage and childbearing. These pressures have already authorized same-gender marriages in various states and nations. Other pressures would confuse gender or homogenize those differences between men and women that are essential to accomplish God's great plan of happiness.

"Our understanding of God's plan and His doctrine gives us an eternal perspective that does not allow us to condone such behaviors or to find justification in the laws that permit them. And, unlike other organizations that can change their policies and even their doctrines, our policies are determined by the truths God has identified as unchangeable. . . .

"In this determination we may be misunderstood, and we may incur accusations of bigotry, suffer discrimination, or have to withstand invasions of our free exercise of religion. If so, I think we should remember our first priority—to serve God."

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



PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE LORD

"Fear will be replaced with faith and confidence when members and the full-time missionaries kneel in prayer and ask the Lord to bless them with missionary opportunities. Then, we must

demonstrate our faith and watch for opportunities to introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to our Heavenly Father's children, and surely those opportunities will come. These opportunities will never require a forced or a contrived response. They will flow as a natural result of our love for our brothers and sisters. Just be positive, and those whom you speak with will feel your love. They will never forget that feeling, though the timing may not be right for them to embrace the gospel. . . .

". . . I pray that none of you would ever feel that reaching out in normal, pleasant ways to share the gospel would ever be a burden. Rather, it is a privilege! There is no greater joy in life than being anxiously engaged in the service of the Lord.

"The key is that you be inspired of God, that you ask Him for direction and then go and do as the Spirit prompts you. When members view the work of salvation as their responsibility alone, it can be intimidating. When they view it as an invitation to follow the Lord in bringing souls unto Him to be taught by the full-time elders and sisters, it is inspiring, invigorating, and uplifting."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



PERSONAL STRENGTH THROUGH THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST

"Recently, . . . one virtuous young woman asked me what I feel is the most important thing they should be doing in their lives right now. I suggested they learn to recognize the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ in their lives. . . .

"It is a fundamental truth that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ we can be cleansed. We can become virtuous and pure. However, sometimes our poor choices leave us with long-term consequences. One of the vital steps to complete repentance is to bear the short- and long-term consequences of our past sins. . . .

"Satan will try to use our memory of any previous guilt to lure us back into his influence. We must be ever vigilant to avoid his enticements. . . .

"The joyful news for anyone who desires to be rid of the consequences of past poor choices is that the Lord sees weaknesses differently than He does rebellion. Whereas the Lord warns that unrepented rebellion will bring punishment, when the Lord speaks of weaknesses, it is always with mercy. . . .

". . . Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, each of us can become clean and the burden of our rebellion will be lifted. Remember, repentance is not punishment. It is the hope-filled path to a more glorious future."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"The most important thing I learned is to never give up, because the Lord is on my side and will always help me."

Samuel J., 16, Upper Austria, Austria



GENERAL CONFERENCE: STRENGTHENING FAITH AND TESTIMONY

"When I take notes at conference, I do not always write down exactly what the speaker is saying; I note the personalized direction the Spirit is giving me.

"What is *said* is not as important as what we *hear* and what we *feel*. . . .

". . . The world is moving away from the Lord faster and farther than ever before. The adversary has been loosed upon the earth. We watch, hear, read, study, and share the words of prophets to be forewarned and protected. For example, 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World' was given long before we experienced the challenges now facing the family. 'The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles' was prepared in advance of when we will need it most. . . .

"The greatest blessings of general conference come to us after the conference is over. Remember the pattern recorded frequently in scripture: we gather to hear the words of the Lord, and we return to our homes to live them. . . .

"In addition to inviting us to hold personal and family scripture study, Heavenly Father wants us to regularly study and apply what we have learned in conference. I testify that those who put their trust in the Lord and heed this counsel in faith will gain great strength to bless themselves and their families for generations to come."

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

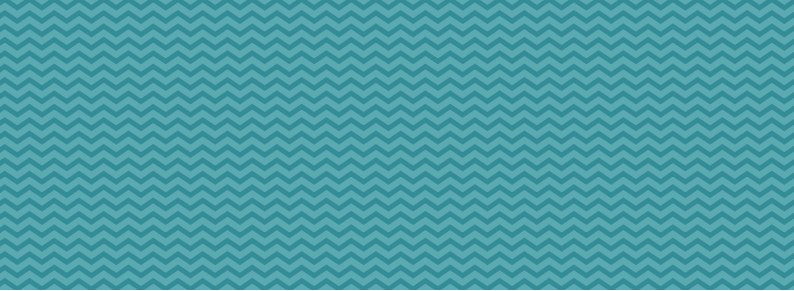


LIKE A BROKEN VESSEL

"How do you best respond when mental or emotional challenges confront you or those you love? Above all, never lose faith in your Father in Heaven, who loves you more than you can comprehend. As President Monson said to the Relief Society sisters so movingly last Saturday evening: 'That love never changes. . . . It is there for you when you are sad or happy, discouraged or hopeful. God's love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve [it]. It is simply always there' ['We Never Walk Alone,' *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 123–24]. Never, ever doubt that, and never harden your heart. Faithfully pursue the time-tested devotional practices that bring the Spirit of the Lord into your life. Seek the counsel of those who hold keys for your spiritual well-being. Ask for and cherish priesthood blessings. Take the sacrament every week, and hold fast to the perfecting promises of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Believe in miracles. I have seen so many of them come when every other indication would say that hope was lost. Hope is *never* lost. If those miracles do not come soon or fully or seemingly at all, remember the Savior's own anguished example: if the bitter cup does not pass, drink it and be strong, trusting in happier days ahead. . . .

"Also let us remember that through any illness or difficult challenge, there is still much in life to be hopeful about and grateful for. We are infinitely more than our limitations or our afflictions!"

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"My testimony of the need to live ALL of the standards of the Church, especially those very basic habits of prayer, scripture study, and paying tithing, has been greatly strengthened. I know where I want to be in the eternities, and I am willing to do what it takes to get there."

Taylor A., 13, Utah, USA



THE WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

"As we live the law of tithing, we often receive significant but subtle blessings that are not always what we expect and easily can be overlooked. . . .

"Often as we teach and testify about the law of tithing, we emphasize the immediate, dramatic, and readily recognizable temporal blessings that we receive. And surely such blessings do occur. Yet some of the diverse blessings we obtain as we are obedient to this commandment are significant but subtle. Such blessings can be discerned only if we are both spiritually attentive and observant (see 1 Corinthians 2:14). . . .

"For example, a subtle but significant blessing we receive is the spiritual gift of gratitude that enables our appreciation for what we have to constrain desires for what we want. A grateful person is rich in contentment. An ungrateful person suffers in the poverty of endless discontentment (see Luke 12:15). . . .

"Sometimes we may ask God for success, and He gives us physical and mental stamina. We might plead for prosperity, and we receive enlarged perspective and increased patience, or we petition for growth and are blessed with the gift of grace. He may bestow upon us conviction and confidence as we strive to achieve worthy goals. And when we plead for relief from physical, mental, and spiritual difficulties, He may increase our resolve and resilience."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH: BEWARE OF BONDAGE

"God intended that men and women would be free to make choices between good and evil. . . .

". . . We should do everything within our power to avoid the sin and rebellion that lead to bondage. . . .

". . . Moral agency can be abused in many ways. I will mention four that are particularly pernicious in today's culture.

"First, addictions that impair agency, contradict moral beliefs, and destroy good health cause bondage. . . .

"Second, some addictions or predilections, while not inherently evil, can use up our precious allotment of time which could otherwise be used to accomplish virtuous objectives. These can include excessive use of social media, video and digital games, sports, recreation, and many others. . . .

"Third, the most universal subjugation in our day . . . is ideology or political beliefs that are inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Substituting the philosophies of men for gospel truth can lead us away from the simplicity of the Savior's message. . . .

". . . Gospel truths are often rejected or distorted to make them intellectually more appealing or more compatible with current cultural trends and intellectual philosophies. . . .

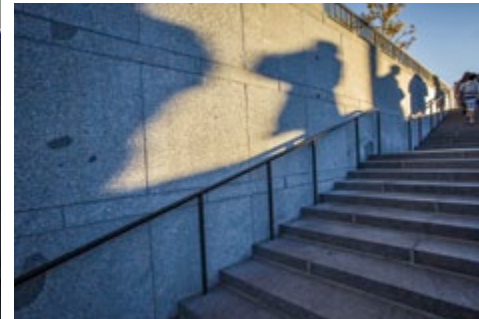
"Fourth, forces that violate sincerely held religious principles can result in bondage. . . . For example, health providers forced to choose between assisting with abortions against their consciences or losing their jobs."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



"I felt reassurance and encouragement to keep working toward my goal of having an eternal family and staying home to teach and care for my future family."

Victoria G., 16, California, USA



THE MORAL FORCE OF WOMEN

"Certainly there are trends and forces at work that would weaken and even eliminate [a woman's] influence . . . Let me mention three as a caution and a warning.

"A pernicious philosophy that undermines women's moral influence is the devaluation of marriage and of motherhood and homemaking as a career. . . . There is not a higher good than motherhood and fatherhood in marriage. There is no superior career, and no amount of money, authority, or public acclaim can exceed the ultimate rewards of family. . . .

"Attitudes toward human sexuality threaten the moral authority of women on several fronts. Abortion for personal or social convenience strikes at the heart of a woman's most sacred powers and destroys her moral authority. The same is true of sexual immorality and of revealing dress that not only debases women but reinforces the lie that a woman's sexuality is what defines her worth. . . .

"A third area of concern comes from those who, in the name of equality, want to erase all differences between the masculine and the feminine. Often this takes the form of pushing women to adopt more masculine traits. . . .

". . . In blurring feminine and masculine differences, we lose the distinct, complementary gifts of men and women. . . .

"My plea to women and girls today is to protect and cultivate the moral force that is within you."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



POWER IN THE PRIESTHOOD

"We sometimes overly associate the power of the priesthood with men in the Church. The priesthood is the power and authority of God given for the salvation and blessing of all—men, women, and children.

"A man may open the drapes so the warm sunlight comes into the room, but the man does not own the sun or the light or the warmth it brings. The blessings of the priesthood are infinitely greater than the one who is asked to administer the gift.

"To receive the blessings, power, and promises of the priesthood in this life and the next is one of the great opportunities and responsibilities of mortality. As we are worthy, the ordinances of the priesthood enrich our lives on earth and prepare us for the magnificent promises of the world ahead. The Lord said, 'In the ordinances . . . the power of godliness is manifest' [D&C 84:20].

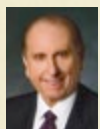
"There are special blessings from God for every worthy person who is baptized, receives the Holy Ghost, and regularly partakes of the sacrament. The temple brings added light and strength, along with the promise of eternal life.

"All of the ordinances invite us to increase our faith in Jesus Christ and to make and keep covenants with God. As we keep these sacred covenants, we receive priesthood power and blessings.

"Do we not feel this power of the priesthood in our own lives and see it among the covenant-keeping members of the Church?"

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HASTENING THE WORK OF SALVATION



Now Is the Time

"The holy scriptures contain no proclamation more relevant, no responsibility more binding, no instruction more direct than the injunction given by the resurrected Lord as He appeared in Galilee to the eleven disciples. Said He, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' [Matthew 28:19]. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, 'After all that has been said, the greatest and most important duty is to preach the Gospel' [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 330]. . . . President David O. McKay . . . phrased the familiar 'Every member a missionary!' [in Conference Report, Apr. 1959, 122].

"To their words I add my own. Now is the time for members and missionaries to come together, to work together, to labor in the Lord's vineyard to bring souls unto Him. He has prepared the means for us to share the gospel in a multitude of ways, and He will assist us in our labors if we will act in faith to fulfill His work."

President Thomas S. Monson



Share and Testify

"Your personal conversion will help you as you prepare to make covenants in the temple, serve missions, and establish your own future homes. As you are converted, you will have a desire to share with others what you have learned, and your confidence and ability to testify to others with conviction and power will increase. This desire to share the gospel with others and the confidence to testify boldly are natural results of true conversion."

Sister Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president

"I was reminded that I should pray for missionary experiences and then watch for opportunities to share my testimony. I need to be sharing it with my friends, without any hesitation."

Sarah C., 15, Florida, USA



Trust the Lord and Experience Miracles

"Trust the Lord. He is the Good Shepherd. He knows His sheep, and His sheep know His voice; and today the voice of the Good Shepherd is your voice and my voice. And if we are not engaged, many who would hear the message of the Restoration will be passed by. Simply stated, it's a matter of faith and action on our part. The principles are pretty simple—pray, personally and in your family, for missionary opportunities. Pray for the Lord to put opportunities in your path. The Lord has said in the Doctrine and Covenants that many people have been kept from the truth only 'because they know not where to find it' (D&C 123:12).

"You don't have to be an outgoing person or an eloquent, persuasive teacher. If you have an abiding love and hope within you, the Lord has promised if you 'lift up your voices unto this people [and] speak the thoughts that [He] shall put into your hearts, . . . you shall not be confounded before men.

"[And] it shall be given you . . . in the very moment, what ye shall say' (D&C 100:5–6). . . .

". . . If every member, young and old, will reach out to just 'one' between now and Christmas, millions will feel the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what a wonderful gift to the Savior. . . .

"God bless you, brothers and sisters, to find the great joy that comes from experiencing miracles through your faith."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Reach Out and Invite

"I testify that many of those who need our help are there waiting for us. They are ready for their valiant brothers and sisters to reach out to them and rescue them through small and simple means. I have personally spent many hours visiting less-active members of the Church whose hearts have already been softened by the Lord, who are now ready to receive our testimonies and our sincere expressions of love. When we reach out and invite them, they will return to the Church without hesitation.

"Let us reach out to others with faith and with love."

Elder Arnulfo Valenzuela of the Seventy



Find Great Happiness

"Doors and hearts open daily to the gospel message—a message that brings hope and peace and joy to the children of God throughout the world. If you are humble, obedient, and hearken to the voice of the Spirit, you will find great happiness in your service as a missionary. What a wonderful season it is to be a missionary—a time when the Lord is hastening His work!"

Elder Randy D. Funk of the Seventy



Unite in the Work

"The new converts, youth, young adults, those who have retired from their professions, and full-time missionaries need to be equally yoked in hastening the work of salvation. . . .

"May we all unite in a common objective 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39)."

Elder Edward Dube of the Seventy



Make a Game Plan

"If we, as members, really loved our family, friends, and associates, wouldn't we want to share our testimony of the restored gospel with them? . . .

"We need to be engaged as never before to match the excitement of our leaders and the commitment of our full-time missionaries. This work is not going to move forward in the Lord's intended way without us! As President Henry B. Eyring has said, 'Whatever our age, capacity, Church calling, or location, we are as one called to the work to help Him in His harvest of souls' ('We Are One,' *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2013, 62).

". . . I invite you to consider these three points as you think about your . . . plan.

"First, specifically pray to bring someone closer to the Savior and His gospel every day. You could do this by seeing all people as sons and daughters of God helping each other on their journey home. Think of the new friends you would make.

"Second, pray for the missionaries serving in your area and their investigators by name every day. The only way to do this is to greet them, look at their badge, call them by name, and ask them who they are teaching. . . .

"Third, invite a friend to an activity in or out of your home. Wherever you go or whatever you do, ponder who would enjoy the occasion and then listen to the Spirit as He directs you."

Elder S. Gifford Nielsen of the Seventy



Qualify for the Work

"Righteous living is a prerequisite for assisting the Lord in gathering His elect and in the literal gathering of Israel."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS



What if I pay tithing but haven't received the blessings I think I ought to receive?



"We may need and pray for help to find suitable employment. Eyes and ears of faith (see Ether 12:19) are needed, however, to recognize the spiritual gift of enhanced discernment that can empower us to identify job opportunities that many other people might overlook—or the blessing of greater personal determination to search harder and longer for a position than other people may be able or willing to do. We might want and expect a job offer, but the blessing that comes to us through heavenly windows may be greater capacity to act and change our own circumstances rather than expecting our circumstances to be changed by someone or something else.

"We may appropriately desire and work to receive a pay raise in our employment to better provide the necessities of life. Eyes and ears of faith are required, however, to notice in us an increased spiritual and temporal capacity (see Luke 2:52) to do more with less, a keener ability to prioritize and simplify, and an enhanced ability to take proper care of the material possessions we already have acquired. We might want and expect a larger paycheck, but the blessing that comes to us through heavenly windows may be greater capacity to change our own circumstances rather than expecting our circumstances to be changed by someone or something else."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

How can we have unity in the Church when we're all so different?



"Unity is not achieved by ignoring and isolating members who seem to be different or weaker and only associating with people who are like us. On the contrary, unity is gained by welcoming and serving those who are new and who have particular needs. These members are a blessing for the Church and provide us with opportunities to serve our neighbors and thus purify our own hearts.

"So, . . . it is your duty to reach out to anyone who appears at the doors of your Church buildings. Welcome them with gratitude and without prejudice. If people you do not know walk into one of your meetings, greet them warmly and invite them to sit with you. Please make the first move to help them feel welcome and loved, rather than waiting for them to come to you."

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric



"So many times it felt like the speakers were talking directly to me, and the Spirit testified the truth of what they spoke to my heart. I was able to receive answers to my prayers and strengthen my testimony that these leaders were all called by the Lord."

Emmett F., 16, South Carolina, USA



Why is life so hard?



"As we draw near to Him, we realize that mortality is meant to be difficult and that 'opposition in all things' (2 Nephi 2:11) is not a flaw in the plan of salvation. Opposition, rather, is the indispensable element of mortality and strengthens our will and refines our choices. The vicissitudes of life help us fashion an eternal relationship with God—and engrave His image upon our countenance as we yield our hearts to Him (see Alma 5:19)."

Elder Timothy J. Dyches of the Seventy

"I felt the Spirit telling me that if I want to become better, then this talk is my answer, and then this one, and so on, all the way through conference. I look forward to the next six months as I work to improve myself with what I have gained."

Joseph R., 17, British Columbia, Canada



Why is the Church opposed to same-sex marriage?



"Marriage between a man and a woman is fundamental to the Lord's doctrine and crucial to God's eternal plan. Marriage between a man and a woman is God's pattern for a fulness of life on earth and in heaven. God's marriage pattern cannot be abused, misunderstood, or misconstrued. Not if you want true joy. God's marriage pattern protects the sacred power of procreation and the joy of true marital intimacy. We know that Adam and Eve were married by God before they ever experienced the joy of uniting as husband and wife.

"In our day civil governments have a vested interest in protecting marriage because strong families constitute the best way of providing for the health, education, welfare, and prosperity of rising generations. But civil governments are heavily influenced by social trends and secular philosophies as they write, rewrite, and enforce laws. Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of the Lord regarding marriage and morality *cannot be changed*. Remember: sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God!"

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



What will happen to people with disabilities after this life?



"I bear witness of that day when loved ones whom we knew to have disabilities in mortality will stand before us glorified and grand, breathtakingly perfect in body and mind. What a thrilling moment that will be! I do not know whether we will be happier for ourselves that we have witnessed such a miracle or happier for them that they are fully perfect and finally 'free at last.' Until that hour when Christ's consummate gift is evident to us all, may we live by faith, hold fast to hope, and show 'compassion one of another' [1 Peter 3:8]."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles





"Hearing the leaders of this Church talk about how to stay strong has helped me realize that the struggles I'm facing are not eternal struggles. They are just temporary, and with the Lord's help, I can do anything!"

Cassidy M., 16, Alabama, USA



How can I control my temper?



"Another important step to becoming meek is learning how to control our temper. Because the natural man dwells within each one of us and because we live in a world full of pressure, controlling our temper may become one of the challenges in our lives. Think for a few seconds how you react when someone does not comply with your desires the moment you want them to. What about when people disagree with your ideas, even though you are absolutely sure that they represent the proper solution to a problem? What is your response when someone offends you, critiques your efforts, or is simply unkind because he or she is in a bad mood? At these moments and in other difficult situations, we must learn to control our temper and convey our feelings with patience and gentle persuasion. This is most important within our homes and within our relationships with our eternal companions. During the 31 years I've been married to my sweetheart, she has often given me gentle reminders of this as we have faced life's unsettling challenges."

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Presidency of the Seventy



I've repented, so why can't everything go back to the way it was before?



"It is a fundamental truth that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ we can be cleansed. We can become virtuous and pure. However, sometimes our poor choices leave us with long-term consequences. One of the vital steps to complete repentance is to bear the short- and long-term consequences of our past sins."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



What if I don't feel like I can live up to the Church's standards?



"Some might say, 'I don't think I could live up to your standards.'"

"All the more reason to come! The Church is designed to nourish the imperfect, the struggling, and the exhausted. It is filled with people who *desire* with all their heart to keep the commandments, even if they haven't *mastered* them yet."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency



I've been asked to teach a lesson in church. How should I prepare?



"The power of the gospel comes into the lives of those who so live that the Holy Ghost is their companion

and who follow the promptings they receive. Some focus their attention only on obtaining the word, and they become experts in delivering information. Others neglect their preparation and hope that the Lord in His goodness will somehow help them get through the class period. You cannot expect the Spirit to help you remember the scriptures and principles you have not studied or considered. In order to successfully teach the gospel, you must have both the word and the power of the gospel in your life. . . .

"After you have prepared yourself and your lesson to the very best of your ability, you must be willing to let go. When the quiet promptings of the Holy Ghost come, you must have the courage to set aside your outlines and your notes and go where those promptings take you. When you do this, the lesson you deliver is no longer your lesson, but it becomes the Savior's lesson."

David M. McConkie, first counselor in the Sunday School general presidency





What can I do if a member of my family is straying from the Church's standards and teachings?



"The way for . . . all of God's servants will not be easy in a decaying world. We cannot force God's children to choose the way to happiness. God cannot do that because of the agency He has given us.

"Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son love all of God's children no matter what they choose to do or what they become. The Savior paid the price of all sins, no matter how heinous. Even though there must be justice, the opportunity for mercy is extended which will not rob justice. . . .

"My message then . . . is that there is joy guaranteed for the faithful. From before the world was, a loving Father in Heaven and His Beloved Son loved and worked with those who They knew would wander. God will love them forever.

"You have the advantage of knowing that they learned the plan of salvation from the teachings they received in the spirit world. They and you were faithful enough to be allowed to come into the world when many others were not.

"With the help of the Holy Ghost, all truths will be brought to our remembrance. We cannot force that on others, but we can let them see it in our lives. We can always take courage from the assurance that we all once felt the joy of being together as a member of the beloved family of our Heavenly Father. With God's help we can all feel that hope and that joy again."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency

"I learnt a lot about humility and the importance of turning to the Lord to know His will. I also learnt about treasuring up the words of the gospel through the prophets and scriptures and how important it will be as I prepare to serve a full-time mission. In order to really understand the gospel and preach, I will need to treasure the words to explain the feelings and thoughts coinciding with doctrine I have felt, not just simply memorising words from a book but expressing the testimony of these truths myself."*

Joshua F., 17, West Yorkshire, England

* British spellings have been preserved.

Why doesn't God just stop bad stuff from happening?



"Why does He warn any of us to remove ourselves from a source of danger when He could simply stop the danger from happening? President Wilford Woodruff told the story of being spiritually warned to move the carriage that he, his wife, and child slept in, only to discover that a whirlwind shortly thereafter uprooted a large tree and dropped it exactly where the carriage had previously stood (see *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* [2004], 47).

". . . The weather could have been adjusted to eliminate the dangers. But here is the point—rather than solve the problem Himself, the Lord wants us to develop the faith that will help us rely upon Him in solving our problems and trust Him. Then we can feel His love more constantly, more powerfully, more clearly, and more personally. We become united with Him, and we can become like Him. For us to be like Him is His goal. In fact, it is His glory as well as His work (see *Moses 1:39*)."

Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy

WORDS TO LIVE BY



Be Ye Converted

"Young friends, we live in perilous times, and the decisions which you are called upon to make on a daily, or even hourly, basis have eternal consequences. The decisions you make in your daily life will determine what happens to you later. . . .

". . . Conversion takes place as we are diligent about saying our prayers, studying our scriptures, attending church, and being worthy to participate in temple ordinances. Conversion comes as we act upon the righteous principles we learn in our homes and in the classroom. Conversion comes as we live pure and virtuous lives and enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost. Conversion comes as we understand the Atonement of Jesus Christ, acknowledge Him as our Savior and Redeemer, and allow the Atonement to take effect in our lives."

**Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women
general president**

"The Spirit I felt was so good that I just couldn't stop smiling! I loved all the words that were said, but I especially loved those from the Young Women general president. They really made me feel I was a daughter of God and that He loves me."

Catarina F., 16, Centro Region, Portugal



Establish Your Priorities

"For Latter-day Saints, God's commandments are based on and inseparable from God's plan for His children—the great plan of salvation. . . . If we Latter-day Saints, who have been given this knowledge, do not establish our priorities in accord with this plan, we are in danger of serving other gods. . . .

"I pray that we will not let the temporary challenges of mortality cause us to forget the great commandments and priorities we have

been given by our Creator and our Savior. We must not set our hearts so much on the things of the world and aspire to the honors of men (see D&C 121:35) that we stop trying to achieve our eternal destiny."

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



Single-Minded Devotion

"Sisters, of all your associations, it is your relationship with God, your Heavenly Father, who is the source of your moral power, that you must always put first in your life. Remember that Jesus's power came through His single-minded devotion to the will of the Father. He never varied from that which pleased His Father. Strive to be that kind of disciple of the Father and the Son, and your influence will never fade."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping

"Covenant keepers are commandment keepers! . . .
". . . I invite each of us to evaluate how much we love the Savior, using as a measure how joyfully we keep our covenants. The Savior said, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him' [John 14:21]. How we all need a regular manifestation of the Savior in our daily lives!"

Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president



Do We Know What We Have?

"There exists today a great need for men and women to cultivate respect for each other as sons and daughters of God and reverence for our Father in Heaven and His priesthood—His power and authority.

"He has a plan for us, and when we exercise our faith and trust in His plan, our reverence for Him and for His priesthood power and authority will be strengthened."

Sister Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency



Rest Up, Replenish, and Refill

"In preventing illness whenever possible, watch for the stress indicators in yourself and in others you may be able to help. As with your automobile, be alert to rising temperatures, excessive speed, or a tank low on fuel. When you face 'depletion depression,' make the requisite adjustments. Fatigue is the common enemy of us all—so slow down, rest up, replenish, and refill. Physicians promise us that if we do not take time to be well, we most assuredly will take time later on to be ill."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Ye Are No More Strangers

"In this Church there are no strangers and no outcasts. There are only brothers and sisters. The knowledge that we have of an Eternal Father helps us be more sensitive to the brotherhood and sisterhood that should exist among all men and women upon the earth."

Bishop Gérald Caussé, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric



Called of Him to Declare His Word

"If you are burdened by sin and need to repent, please do so immediately. When the Savior healed those who were afflicted, He often invited them to rise up. The scriptures record that they did so straightway, or immediately [see Mark 5:41–42; John 5:8–9]. To be healed of your spiritual afflictions, please accept His invitation to rise up. Without delay, talk to your bishop,

branch president, or mission president and begin the process of repentance now.

"The healing power of the Atonement will bring peace to your soul and enable you to feel the Holy Spirit. The Savior's sacrifice is beyond measure, but our sins, though numerous and serious, may be counted and confessed, forsaken and forgiven. 'And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!' [D&C 18:13]."

Elder Randy D. Funk of the Seventy



Service to Others

"Fill your life with service to others. As you lose your life in the service of Father in Heaven's children, Satan's temptations lose power in your life."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Be Meek and Lowly of Heart

"Meekness is vital for us to become more Christlike. Without it we won't be able to develop other important virtues. Being meek does not mean weakness, but it does mean behaving with goodness and kindness, showing strength, serenity, healthy self-worth, and self-control."

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Presidency of the Seventy





your faith by mixing lies with half-truths. This is why it is absolutely critical that you remain constantly worthy of the Spirit. The companionship of the Holy Ghost is not just a pleasant convenience—it is essential to your spiritual survival. If you will not treasure up the words of Christ and listen closely to the promptings of the Spirit, you will be deceived (see Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37)."

Elder Adrián Ochoa of the Seventy



Drawing Closer to God

"God should be the center of our universe—our literal focal point. Is He? Or is He sometimes far from the thoughts and intents of our hearts? (see Mosiah 5:13). Notice that it's not just the thoughts of our hearts that are important but the 'intents.'"

Elder Terence M. Vinson of the Seventy



Claim the Blessings of Your Covenants

"I testify that the Lord has a plan for each of our lives. Nothing that happens is a shock or a surprise to Him. He is all-knowing and all-loving. He is eager to help us, to comfort us, and to ease our pain as we rely on the power of the Atonement and honor our covenants. The trials and tribulation that we experience may be the very things that guide us to come unto Him and cling to our covenants so that we might return to His presence and receive all that the Father hath."

Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency



Don't Become Enslaved

"When evil choices become the dominant characteristic of a culture or nation, there are serious consequences both in this life and the life to come. People can become enslaved or put themselves in bondage not only to harmful, addictive substances but also to harmful, addictive philosophies that detract from righteous living."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Teaching with the Power and Authority of God

"As you dedicate yourself to living the gospel with greater purpose than ever before and search the scriptures, treasuring them up in your heart, the . . . Holy Ghost . . . will testify to you of their truthfulness. . . . When this happens, the words that you read are no longer only the words of Nephi or Paul or Alma, but they become your words."

David M. McConkie, first counselor in the Sunday School general presidency



The Strength to Endure

"A testimony, like your body, needs to be in shape if you want it to endure. So how do we keep our testimonies in shape? We cannot get our bodies into good basketball shape by simply watching basketball on television. Similarly, we won't be able to get our testimonies in shape by simply watching general conference on television. We need to study and learn the fundamental principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then we must do our very best to live them. That is how we become disciples of Jesus Christ, and that is how we build an enduring testimony."

Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Presidency of the Seventy



Look Up

"If you ever come across anything that causes you to question your testimony of the gospel, I plead with you to look up. Look to the Source of all wisdom and truth. Nourish your faith and testimony with the word of God. There are those in the world who seek to undermine

"This conference has been a renewing charge in a world that has lost its spiritual battery."

Joseph V., 15, Idaho, USA

The
SCRIPTURES
hold
THE KEYS
to

SPIRITUAL PROTECTION.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
October 2013 general conference

**WE
WERE NOT
PLACED
ON THIS EARTH
TO WALK
ALONE.**

President Thomas S. Monson,
September 2013 general Relief Society meeting

**MAN'S LAWS
CANNOT**
make moral
WHAT GOD HAS
DECLARED IMMORAL.

**COMMITMENT
TO OUR
HIGHEST PRIORITY**
— to love and serve God —
REQUIRES THAT WE LOOK TO HIS LAW
FOR OUR STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
October 2013 general conference

*The WISE use of your FREEDOM
to make YOUR OWN decisions is
CRUCIAL to your SPIRITUAL GROWTH,
now and for eternity. . . .*

THE LORD'S WAY

IS THE ONLY WAY FOR

us to

**EXPERIENCE ENDURING
HAPPINESS.**

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
October 2013 general conference



"We were not placed on this earth to walk alone. What an amazing source of power, of strength, and of comfort is available to each of us. He who knows us better than we know ourselves, He who sees the larger picture and who knows the end from the beginning, has assured us that He will be there for us to provide help if we but ask. We have the promise: 'Pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good' [D&C 90:24]."

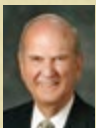
President Thomas S. Monson, September 2013 general Relief Society meeting



"The scriptures hold the keys to spiritual protection. They contain the doctrine and laws and ordinances that will bring each child of God to a testimony of Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer.

". . . They teach us where to go and what to do. They offer hope and knowledge."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 2013 general conference



"The wise use of your freedom to make your own decisions is crucial to your spiritual growth, now and for eternity. You are never too young to learn, never too old to change. Your yearnings to learn and change come from a divinely instilled striving for eternal progression. Each day brings opportunity for decisions for eternity. . . .

"The Savior's way of life is good. His way includes chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. The Lord's way is the only way for us to experience enduring happiness. His way brings sustained comfort to our souls and perennial peace to our homes. And best of all, His way leads us home to Him and our Heavenly Father, to eternal life and exaltation. This is the very essence of God's work and glory."

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 2013 general conference



"Our twelfth article of faith states our belief in being subject to civil authority and 'in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.' But man's laws cannot make moral what God has declared immoral. Commitment to our highest priority—to love and serve God—requires that we look to His law for our standard of behavior. For example, we remain under divine command not to commit adultery or fornication even when those acts are no longer crimes under the laws of the states or countries where we reside. Similarly, laws legalizing so-called 'same-sex marriage' do not change God's law of marriage or His commandments and our standards concerning it. We remain under covenant to love God and keep His commandments and to refrain from serving other gods and priorities—even those becoming popular in our particular time and place."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 2013 general conference

LEARNING FROM CONFERENCE



THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL CONFERENCE

Did you notice all of the scriptures mentioned in general conference? Here are the ones that were referred to most often:

- **Moses 1:39***
"For behold, this is my work and my glory— to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."
- **Matthew 11:28–30***
"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."
- **Luke 22:32**
"When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."
- **2 Nephi 31:20***
"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life."
- **Mosiah 5:2**
"The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually."
- **Mosiah 18:9**
"Mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and . . . stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, . . . that ye may have eternal life."
- **Doctrine and Covenants 18:13**
"How great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!"

* Seminary scripture mastery verses

SUPPORT FOR SUNDAY LESSONS

Messages from this conference have already been added to your *Come, Follow Me* lessons. Find out more at lds.org/youth/learn, and read each talk at conference.lds.org.

As you prepare for Sunday lessons, consider reviewing the conference talks below.

November: Spiritual and Temporal Self-Reliance

- Elder Russell M. Nelson
- Elder David A. Bednar

December: Building the Kingdom of God in the Latter Days

- President Thomas S. Monson (priesthood session)
- Elder M. Russell Ballard
- Elder S. Gifford Nielsen

January: The Godhead

- President Henry B. Eyring (Sunday morning session)
- Elder Terence M. Vinson

February: The Plan of Salvation

- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf (priesthood session)
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks

March: The Atonement of Jesus Christ

- President Dieter F. Uchtdorf (priesthood session)
- President Boyd K. Packer
- Elder Richard G. Scott

April: The Apostasy and the Restoration

- Elder L. Tom Perry
- Elder Quentin L. Cook



20 FEET DOWN

By Colin Mason

My aunt and uncle live on a tiny island in the Caribbean in a part of the world known as “Hurricane Alley.” In 2004 our family learned that Hurricane Ivan was heading straight for their home. My aunt had evacuated to Florida, but my uncle stayed to weather the storm in a bunker that he’d built in the middle of the island and that they always kept supplied with emergency essentials.

Hurricane Ivan slammed into the small island with the full force of a category-5 hurricane. The winds traveled at over 200 miles per hour (322 km/h). And during the worst of the storm, the entire island was completely covered with water—it even disappeared from satellite.

When the storm was over, my uncle emerged from the bunker and looked out to see complete and utter destruction. He slowly walked toward his

home on the coast, and his heart sank as he looked at all of the houses that had been destroyed. He was dreading what he’d find when he arrived home.

As he came around the curve, he anxiously looked and saw, amid the devastation, his lone house completely intact and standing tall. The lights were on because his generator had survived too.

When we asked him how his house had survived when the others fell, he told us his strategy for success. When he’d built the house, he’d bored and anchored the foundation into the bedrock 20 feet down. Even a hurricane could not destroy the strong foundation my uncle had built.

I realized that having a strong foundation can really make a big difference. Just as my aunt and uncle had built their house on solid rock so that it survived, so we too must build our

HOW WOULD MY AUNT AND UNCLE'S HOME EVER SURVIVE THE CATEGORY-5 HURRICANE THAT WAS HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THEIR SMALL ISLAND?



BUILDING A FOUNDATION IN CHRIST

lives on the “rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, . . . which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12).

We can build our strong foundations—spiritually speaking—by reading the scriptures, listening to the counsel of our Church leaders, following the principles outlined in *For the Strength of Youth*, and striving to live the commandments so we can always have the Spirit with us.

We can build rock-solid testimonies of the Savior before the storms hit, so we will be prepared. We will be ready to withstand any temptations or trials that face us. And when we return to our Heavenly Father and to our heavenly home, we can find that our spiritual home is standing, that the lights are on, and that all is well. **NE**

Colin Mason lives in California, USA.

In the April 2013 general conference, Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles mentioned several ways we can “become strong in the Lord” by building our foundation in Him. For example, we can:

- Learn doctrine and share testimonies with *Come, Follow Me* Sunday lessons and activities.
- Develop our gifts and talents as the Spirit guides.
- Participate in family, quorum, class, and Mutual activities.
- Have faith in the Savior and fear not!

As we do these things and build our foundation on the rock of Christ, we will be able to withstand any storms that threaten our spiritual safety. Elder Hales said, “In the strength of the Lord we are able to stand against any philosophy or creed that denies the

Savior and contradicts the great, eternal plan of happiness for all of God’s children” (“Stand Strong in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 50).

Read more from Elder Hales’s address at [lds.org/go/13Stand](https://www.lds.org/go/13Stand), along with the talk “A Sure Foundation” from Bishop Dean M. Davies at [lds.org/go/13Sure](https://www.lds.org/go/13Sure), or find them in the May 2013 issue of the *Ensign*.





Gaining a Testimony—

ALASKAN

EXPERIENCES



By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

For Matison J., growing up in Alaska, USA, was probably a lot different from what many of us experience elsewhere in the world. It's a pretty safe guess that most of us don't need to chop enough firewood to help heat our homes for seven months of the year, haven't seen moose walking down the middle of our street, and haven't been on black bear hunts or fished for salmon in the ocean.

But for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the similarities we share outnumber the differences. Matison says, "The Church is the same no matter where you go. Down in the [Alaskan] cities of Valdez or Homer—or in other

One of the most important things we can do in this life is gain an abiding testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



states or countries—it's the same. The same teachings, the same gospel."

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, each of us has a unique journey. But we each follow a path to conversion, make the same covenants, and strive to keep the same commandments. And for each of us, that path begins with gaining a testimony. We may not all gain a testimony the same way, but we each need one.

"There is absolutely nothing in this world that will provide more comfort and happiness than a testimony of the truth," says President Thomas S. Monson.¹

Matison and his siblings, Mackena and Merrick, each found this to be true, but in three very different ways.



1



MATISON'S SONG

For Matison, 17, a life of living gospel standards helped lay a foundation for a testimony-building experience he had that helped him *know* the restored gospel is true. It happened one morning on the way to school. He was feeling really stressed because of a big test he had that day. As he often did, he started singing along to a recording of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir performing “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing.”

“And I just felt it hit me,” he says. “It was almost like something hit the car. It was just such a strong, overwhelming feeling of comfort and peace in my mind. I had been feeling really stressed. But all of a sudden everything became calm. And I knew I was doing the right things.”

2



MACKENA'S TRIAL

For Mackena, 15, her testimony did not come until after a very personal, painful trial of faith (see Ether 12:6).

“Until the time I was about 12,” she says, “I had never had a single doubt about the gospel. I knew that the temple was where I was going. I knew that my family could be together forever, that Heavenly Father loves me, and that the Church is true.”

“But once I got into middle school, I began doubting a lot. And for three years I didn’t know that the Church is true. It was really hard. It was the loneliest, most terrible, saddest time in my life.”

Then one day her seminary teacher taught, “If you want faith, then it will come.” The message struck a chord with Mackena.

“I decided that I really wanted faith, because I was miserable. So I prayed a lot and I started reading my scriptures by myself for the first time in my life. And I repented. Now I feel that Jesus Christ is my very, very best friend. I know that He knows me and loves me.”

“I’m just really grateful,” Mackena says, “because now I know how precious my faith is to me, and I never want to let that go—ever.”





GAINING A TESTIMONY

Matison, Mackena, and Merrick each received strong testimonies in three distinct ways, and your path to receiving one might be different from theirs. Just because one person received it one way doesn't mean that someone else will have the same experience. But a testimony can come to all.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "As an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify of the truth of what is in the scriptures and what has been told to me and can be told to you by the Holy Spirit. It will be revealed according to your obedience and desires. The Savior taught us during His mortal ministry this great truth that applies to all of us: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you' (3 Nephi 18:20)."²

No matter who you are, the first step to gaining a testimony begins with a desire. But it doesn't end there.

MAINTAINING A TESTIMONY

Keeping a testimony is just as important as gaining one in the first place. President Monson said, "If you feel that you do not yet have the depth of testimony you would wish, I admonish you to work to achieve such a testimony. If it is strong and deep, labor to keep it that way. How blessed we are to have a knowledge of the truth."³

One of the ways Matison and Merrick work on strengthening

3



MERRICK'S MOMENT

For Merrick, 13, the simple choices he made to be in the right place at the right time brought him spiritual strength. He chose to go on a pioneer reenactment trek with the youth in his ward. On the last

day, they held a testimony meeting and a lot of youth bore their testimonies.

"It was really cool," Merrick says. "You could feel the Spirit a lot by just sitting there and listening to these people talk about all of the challenges they had on trek and how the pioneers had to do this but a lot worse. It was really cool to hear their perspective on the gospel."



their testimonies every day is by focusing on doing their duty as priesthood holders.

“Every morning at 6:15 a.m.,” Matison explains, “the guys in the family all sit down together and study the *Duty to God* booklet. It’s not about requirements but rather a way of life and a choice of how to live your life. The principles help you change your life so you’re living the way you’re supposed to. That’s a fun thing.”

Merrick admits it’s not always easy waking up early. “Sometimes I’ll fall asleep on the couch,” he says, laughing, “and they’ll have to wake me up. We review *Duty to God* in our deacons quorum on Sundays too. Someone shares a short thought each week, and on fast Sundays we focus the full lesson on it.” (Each month, one *Come, Follow Me* lesson in Aaronic Priesthood centers around *Duty to God*.)

Merrick has learned that focusing on priesthood service “helps me keep

my testimony, gain a stronger one, and stay on the right track for life.” His experience also shows that the personal choices we make every day build a testimony over time.

Mackena has also discovered that truth. She says, “I read my scriptures a lot and I pray a lot. Just doing the little things every day, just smiling and trying to be happy and trying to see the bigger picture when hard things happen. I’ve also had opportunities to share the gospel, which has strengthened my testimony a lot too. I love this Church.”

As we each follow our journey in life, the pattern of actively seeking a testimony and then building it each day—something these siblings have experienced—is true for all of us, no matter where we live. **NE**

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 68.
2. Robert D. Hales, “Gaining a Testimony of God the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 32.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others,” 68.

The Power of Prayer

Once when Matison, Mackena, Merrick, and their family were traveling to their cabin, their tractor kept getting stuck in the icy overflow. Eventually their dad decided they would have to make the rest of the trip on foot. But it would be cold and wet, with ice water soaking them up to their knees and sometimes even to their waists.

But their father said a simple prayer asking Heavenly Father to help them make it to the cabin, and off they went. Soon they were singing Primary songs and laughing along the way. They made it to where they’d stashed a canoe. Then the whole family—two adults and four children—canoeed through the icy river safely to their cabin.

“The Lord helped us,” Matison relates. “It turned out great. We said a prayer and asked Him for help and safety, and it turned out to be a great experience.”



DIZZY *in the Dark*

Find out what Lehi's dream has in common with a popular blindfold game.



If you've ever played games with a blindfold, like pin the tail on the donkey, you know there's all kinds of fun to be had in strapping on a blindfold, spinning around a few times, and then trying to reach some distant target through sheer guesswork and nerves of steel. (Seriously, what's not to love about navigating around in the dark while dizzy?)

Well, with a little preparation, you can create an awesome object lesson for family home evening by using familiar techniques from this popular game.

This object lesson relates to Lehi's vision of the tree of life as found in 1 Nephi 8. For preparation, you'll want to study up on the chapter and choose some verses to discuss as a family.

THE MISTS OF DARKNESS

If you live near a towering dark forest with thick, rolling mists that cloak the land in obscurity, by all means, use that as your setting. For the rest of us, a simple blindfold will serve perfectly well as the

mists of darkness.

This object lesson works great outside, but you can also do it indoors in a large room. For setup, you'll need to identify and mark two locations, preferably at least 20 feet (6 m) apart. One will be the starting

point, and the other represents the destination—or the tree of life. To mark the two points, you can use inanimate objects, such as chairs, or ask family members to quietly stand at assigned posts.

Pick a family member to blindfold and take her (or him) to the starting point. It's time for some spinning (but don't overdo it for safety reasons). Then, turn loose the blindfolded family member, whose goal is to reach the tree of life. Chances are she won't even come close, not with the mists of darkness—the blindfold—cramping her style.

Consider letting everybody take a turn, even if that means rotating through people who are standing at the start and finish locations.

At this point, consider discussing with your family the meaning of the mists of darkness (see 1 Nephi 12:17).



THE ROPE/PVC/IRON ROD

In the scriptures, we learn that Lehi saw in his dream multitudes of people “continually holding fast to the rod of iron” (1 Nephi 8:30). It’s time to give your family an “iron rod” of their own for this lesson.

As before, you’ll use the same start and finish points. But this time, connect the two points with some type of physical object, maybe a couple of PVC pipes linked together temporarily or a length of rope.

If you’re using people to mark the locations, they’ll hold both ends of the “iron rod.” If you’re using objects, you’ll need to find a way to secure the rod between the objects.

Now repeat the blindfold-spin-and-release challenge as before. This time, family members will have something to hold to help guide them to reach the destination. That single change makes all the difference in successfully making it to the final point.

Time for another discussion! Consider talking about how having an “iron rod” to hold made a difference. You might read 1 Nephi 11:25 and discuss how the word of God helps us find our way.



THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE

The scriptures teach us that the fruit on the tree of life in Lehi’s vision was “desirable to make one happy” (1 Nephi 8:10).

To help family members see that reaching the destination is worth the effort, one possibility you might consider is offering a reward when family members reach the “tree of life” destination. Maybe that’s a high five or a favorite treat for each family member. You might also want to read 1 Nephi 11:21–25 and discuss the love of God and the great blessings that will come to those who reach the true eternal blessings of obedience—not just the high five or treat that may be waiting at the end of the “iron rod” here. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, “With the Atonement, life is an ennobling, inspiring journey of growth and development that leads to eternal life in the presence of our Heavenly Father”

(“Four Titles,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 59). **NE**

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- If you want to sing a song with the lesson, you might consider “The Iron Rod” (*Hymns*, no. 274).
- What do the symbols in the dream mean? What is the iron rod, really? And what about that great and spacious building or the filthy water? Search the scriptures for these answers (see 1 Nephi 11:21–36; 12:16–18).




KUHA'O'S GIFT

By David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

Though he is blind, this young man from Hawaii has discovered a gift that helps him see God's love.

Whenever a 15-year-old is asked to be ward organist, it's a fairly remarkable thing. When it happened to Kuha'o C. of Hawaii, it was even more remarkable for two reasons: (1) he had been playing piano for under three years and (2) he is blind.

Beginning a few years ago, Kuha'o would sit and play the piano during his regular visits to his grandparents. He didn't have a piano at home, so

 **Watch Kuha'o Play**
To see Kuha'o play the piano and to hear more of his story, visit lds.org/go/13Gift.

MUSIC HELPS ME FEEL THE SPIRIT.

it seemed like something fun to try. Soon, however, Kuha'ō moved far beyond just playing around with the keys; he was really playing—and playing well. Though he took a few lessons after that, he has been mostly self-taught.

Kuha'ō was baptized in December 2009, and around that time he started playing the organ at the ward meeting-house, usually on Saturdays while his grandfather fulfilled his building maintenance assignment. He even started waking up at 5:30 a.m. on Sundays to hear *Music and the Spoken Word* with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir so that he could listen to the organ. It wasn't long before he was asked to accompany his congregation.

One day Kuha'ō's friend Andy Thunell heard him playing and was impressed with his ability to play by ear. Andy wanted to document this feat, so he made a video recording of Kuha'ō listening to a song for the first time and then playing it right afterward. Andy posted this video on the Internet, and people were amazed. Since then, many people have taken notice of Kuha'ō, and he has started quite a career, including more online videos, performances, recordings, trips, and competitions, including one in which he won a \$10,000 first prize—which he donated to the Hawaii Association of the Blind.

As a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood, Kuha'ō enjoys fulfilling his priesthood duties and serving others. "I like to serve people," he says, "because that's what it says in the scriptures—to be kind to others, to love thy neighbor as thyself, and to serve."

Like other young Latter-day Saints, Kuha'ō loves to read the scriptures (in Braille), especially the Book of Mormon, because the scriptures bring the Spirit. And when it comes right down to it, that's also why he enjoys music.

"Music helps me feel the Spirit," he says. "If I were to play something, I would hope you can feel the Spirit inside you, that the Spirit would give you a gentle touch. I feel an excitement when I play something on



either the piano or organ like 'Now Let Us Rejoice' [*Hymns*, no. 3], for example. To feel the love of Heavenly Father and that I'm really touched by the Spirit and that others are touched—this is what it's about."

Kuha'ō understands that Heavenly Father has given him a gift, a fact that is reinforced by something he carries with him all the time—his name. "My names [Kuha'ō Makana] in Hawaiian mean 'extraordinary gift,'" he explains. With his musical gift he wants to serve others, bear testimony, and help people feel close to their Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

His grandmother, Iwalani C., says that after Kuha'ō performs, "people tell him, 'You touched my heart,' or, 'You touched my spirit,' or, 'You made me cry,' because they feel the Spirit when he plays. And *I* feel the Spirit when he plays."

As he embarks on a career in music—a field in which he is still quite new—Kuha'ō continues to learn and grow in the gospel. And, of course, he plays in church on Sundays. Through it all, he relies on another gift from Heavenly Father—his testimony of the gospel—to both guide and ground him.

"I am touched by the Savior, Jesus Christ," he says. "I love Him so much. I want to stay close to Him, and I want the Lord to be with me. I know that the gospel is true and that President Thomas S. Monson is our prophet and leads us in the path of righteousness."

Despite his challenges, Kuha'ō knows he has been blessed with gifts from God. He also knows that one way to show gratitude for these gifts is to use them to bless others. **NE**



SUNDAY LESSONS

This Month's Topic:
Spiritual and Temporal
Self-Reliance

Super

TEENS

on the

JOB

By David Dickson
Church Magazines



Every job has something amazing to offer. These six youth talk about why hard work offers so much more than income.

It's a sad fact that in this day and age one can spend months searching help-wanted ads without finding a single one asking for a professional candy taster. Likewise, it's amazing just how few positions are available for part-time race-car testers.

The good news is that any job can be exciting and rewarding, even though it may not seem like it at first.

For the Strength of Youth teaches, "Work is honorable. Developing the capacity to work will help you contribute to the world in which you live" ([2011], 40).

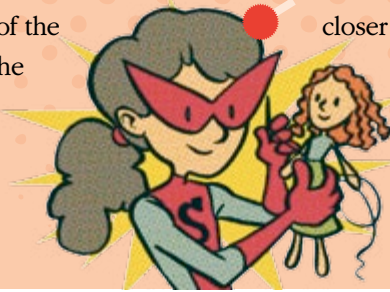
Work can provide needed income, life experience, and valuable skills. Every job has something to offer. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, "Whether one is a neurosurgeon, forest ranger, mechanic, farmer, or teacher is a matter of preference not of principle" ("Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel," *Ensign*, May 1998, 38).

So the type of work you do in your youth, whether as a paid employee or as service for your family or community, may not matter so much as learning the value of working and contributing to the world. Here, several youth whose lives have been blessed through hard work share a few tips about what they've learned.

STITCHING TOGETHER A BUSINESS

Not many teenagers get a chance to launch a small business with one of their parents. But when 15-year-old Blythe G. and her mom made a one-of-a-kind cloth doll for Blythe's younger sister, they had so much fun that they decided to keep going. "We started selling them," Blythe says. They also donate one doll a month to a sick child.

Blythe, an artist, loves her part of the process. "My main job is to paint the dolls' faces," she says. In addition, she's acquired other talents along the way. "I've learned a lot about marketing," Blythe says.



She's also learned how to sew. "That's been really fun," she says. "Now I can make all sorts of things." In fact, Blythe has already put those sewing skills to good use. As she and her mom sold more dolls, they added stuffed animals to their lineup. Blythe personally designed several of the stuffed animals they now sell.

Running this business has brought Blythe and her mom closer together. "I love doing it with my mom," she says. "My mom is my best friend."

To other youth thinking about starting a job, Blythe says, "Go for it! There are a lot of things you can't learn in school that you can learn only from going out there and doing stuff."

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Seventeen-year-old Amy J. lives in a part of Alabama, USA, that is popular among tourists. As a result, many businesses stay open seven days a week. And yet, Amy has been fortunate enough to find a job that doesn't require her to work on Sunday—something very important to her.

Amy works year-round as a lifeguard and swim instructor at the local recreation center. She enjoys her job, especially teaching swimming lessons. "I like working with the kids," Amy says.

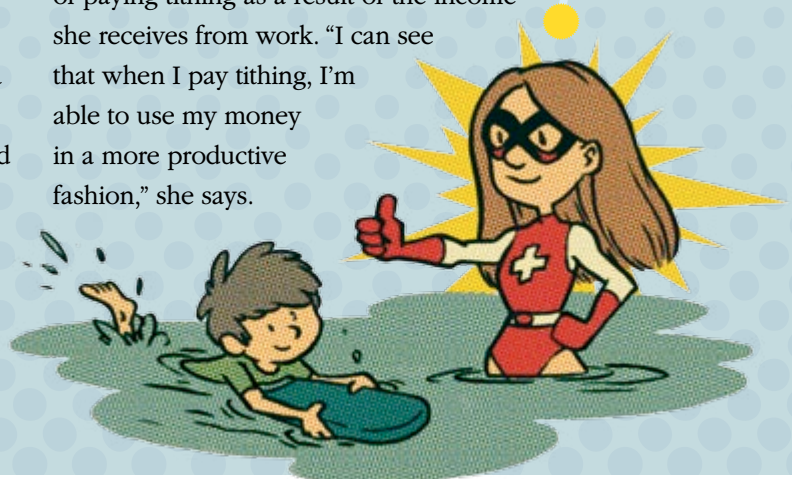
The job also provides valuable income. "Last summer I was able to save up money and buy a car. That has been a tremendous blessing," she says.

In short, she says it's a fantastic job. So how did she land it? By first joining the swim team. "My swim coach texted me about a job she knew of," Amy says. Amy believes she never would have found this opportunity if she hadn't been putting herself out there and meeting people. She advises all youth to become involved in activities and to network.

Amy, too, has picked up useful life skills from her job. In her case, some of them may prove extremely helpful. "I want to go into the medical field," she explains. The CPR and first-aid training she received as part of her lifeguard duties are excellent foundational skills.

She's learned about balancing work and school schedules too. "Time management skills definitely come from having a job," she says.

Last, but certainly not least, Amy has gained a testimony of paying tithing as a result of the income she receives from work. "I can see that when I pay tithing, I'm able to use my money in a more productive fashion," she says.



SUPER BABYSITTER

At age 12, Emma L. is a babysitting force to be reckoned with. She has a résumé and business cards. She's certified by the American Red Cross as a babysitter. She has a well-stocked prize box for the kids she babysits. And she has enough clients to keep her babysitting as often as she wants.

"It's a really enjoyable job," Emma says. "I've always liked little children."

Before starting as a babysitter, Emma saved up and used her own money to attend a two-day babysitting class taught by the Red Cross. Her philosophy to develop her skills before starting the actual work was simple: "If you do a sloppy job, they won't call you back."

On the other hand, Emma believes that if you do a great job, then you'll not only be asked back, but you'll also get

referrals. That's how Emma keeps picking up more clients. "It's easy if you start with one person and you're a good babysitter," she says. "Start small, and work your way up."

Because of her babysitting experience, Emma has gained other abilities, such as how to be a problem-solver when young kids aren't getting along. "Patience is something good I've learned," she says.

She's learned to enjoy her work—a great skill to pick up at any age. "I like being around the kids and seeing them happy," says Emma. "I like helping them out."



THE CUTTER OF GRASS AND SLAYER OF WEEDS

If an obnoxious weed tucked deep in a flower bed seems to heave a smug sigh of relief when the *local teenager* shows up to mow the grass—because, hey, a teenager coming to do a quick job is no big threat to its existence, right?—then that moment of satisfaction is going to be short-lived if 13-year-old

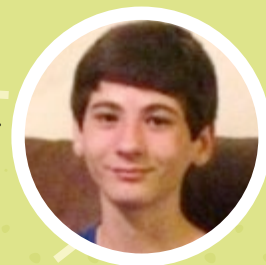
Nathan D. is the one behind the mower.

Nathan started mowing lawns for his neighbors in 2012. He knows how to keep customers happy, in part because he believes in not merely doing the job right but also in doing a bit more than is required.

Once he turns off the mower at a job, he double-checks the lawn. "Make sure everything is done right and that you haven't missed any spots," he advises to others interested in lawn care.

After that, it's time for the little something extra. "Before leaving the job you've done," Nathan says, "look for some extra things that wouldn't take much time to do." Pulling stray weeds is one of his favorites.

As a result of his income, Nathan has also learned great budgeting skills. Now in his second year of mowing lawns, Nathan has been able to buy school clothes and save for a mission.



MUSIC, MONEY, AND MISSION PREP

For the past four years, Brandon R., 17, has been able to earn spending money and save for a mission all while doing something he loves: teaching piano lessons. “I love influencing others to enjoy the wonderful gift of making music,” Brandon says.

Brandon has been taking lessons himself since he was only two years old. He currently has students ranging from ages 6 to 15. He loves watching their progress as they learn to enjoy playing.

“When I started teaching one student,” Brandon says, “he would run away. But then he started liking it more and more.”

Now in his senior year, Brandon is seeking additional students so he can save money even faster for his mission.

Brandon believes that from teaching piano, his teaching techniques in other areas have improved. “I think, for example, it’s easier to teach my brother something in math or to teach somebody something in a class,” he says. “There’s no better way to improve your teaching skills than to practice.”



SHE DOES THAT TOO

If having a variety of skills and work experience on a résumé is a good thing—and it is—then 16-year-old Sarah K. is off to an awesome start. She has worked at babysitting, house cleaning, and doing yard work. She’s done photography shoots at weddings and receptions. And for the past nine months, Sarah has been working part-time at a restaurant as a hostess and a busser.

“I believe in a strong work ethic,” Sarah says. She believes firmly that every job she’s had has taught her something useful.

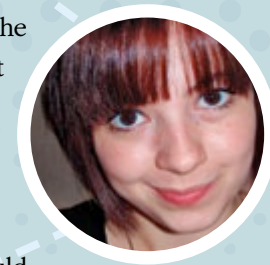
Sarah got started in her work-for-hire jobs the same way many Latter-day Saint youth do: by checking first with people in her ward. “The Church members started hiring me, and they would tell their friends,” she says.

It’s also been a family effort with her siblings.

Sarah is the second-oldest of nine children.

Her younger brothers know how to network and find yard-work jobs. “Whenever they had a gig, I would tag along,” she explains.

Her work plans are only getting started. “My goal is to be a cosmetologist and to have a business degree so I can build on that skill,” Sarah says. **NE**



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Throughout November, your Sunday lessons will focus on spiritual and temporal self-reliance. As part of temporal self-reliance, developing a solid work ethic prepares us for service at home—with our current *and* future families—on missions, in careers, and with every other part of our lives. The talent and capacity to work hard will never stop being useful. Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught, “Work is always a spiritual necessity even if, for some, work is not an economic necessity” (“Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel,” 38).

In what ways does work bless your life? How are you learning to be self-reliant? Consider writing down your feelings and sharing them with your family, at church on Sunday, on social media, or with other youth at [lds.org/go/113Work](https://www.lds.org/go/113Work).

A young man with short, curly brown hair, wearing a grey suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a black and white checkered tie, stands smiling on a large chessboard. The chessboard is composed of large black and white squares. Several oversized black chess pieces are scattered around him, including a king, a queen, a rook, and a knight. The background is a bright, slightly hazy outdoor setting with a greenish tint in the upper right corner.

THINKING SEVERAL MOVES AHEAD

By Matthew Garrett

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHEW REIER

A world-champion chess player explains how youth of the Church, like chess players, should plan for the future before they make their move.

In his own words, 15-year-old Kayden T. is “just a regular kid who happens to love an occasional four-hour chess match.” While he enjoys playing video games, biking, and going to Church dances like many other youth, Kayden can also claim that he is a world-champion chess player.

Though Kayden won the world chess title for his age group at the Youth World Chess Championship in Slovenia, he knows that he, like any other youth in the Church, has a purpose that is far greater than being able to say “check-mate” at the end of an epic match.

Kayden understands that by being a positive example and a caring friend, he can leave a legacy that lasts long after he’s achieved his final checkmate to end a chess match. By living Church standards and using his talents to share the gospel and inspire others, Kayden has been preparing for his future, demonstrating that in life, like in chess, it’s always better to plan several moves ahead.

Serving Friends and Family

Kayden was introduced to chess at a young age by his father. Playing with his father taught Kayden not only how to be a great chess player but also the importance of family. In his home, family comes first. Whether it’s attending a play, a clogging performance, a cross-country meet, or another activity that Kayden and his siblings are participating in, they all try to support one another.

In addition to knowing that the support and sacrifice of his family has helped him reach his chess goals, Kayden also recognizes that his family members help him become a better person and prepare for the future.

“Family helps keep your whole life in control,” he says. Family is also a place to strengthen your weaknesses. Although he may excel at chess, Kayden admits he isn’t the greatest cook and wishes he were better at public speaking.

He tries to learn from his brother Zac—who enjoys drama and performing arts—to overcome his shyness.

Kayden’s family life has also taught him to serve and care for others. During one tournament, a friend of Kayden’s became really upset about the competition. Kayden was in the middle of a match, though, so he couldn’t stop playing to help his friend. As he saw his friend storm away from the tournament with tears in his eyes, Kayden knew that the only thing he could do if he didn’t want to forfeit his game was to pray. So, during the middle of his chess match, Kayden silently prayed that the friend would find Kayden’s mom. Immediately the friend walked right by her, and she was able to help. By serving and praying for the well-being of his friend during a critical moment, Kayden realized that helping others is the true victory. This has helped him prepare to serve and learn that “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10).

Sharing the Gospel

“I use chess as a way to get the gospel out there,” says Kayden. When not moving his bishop on the chessboard, Kayden can be found serving with his bishop and inviting non-LDS friends and less-active members to teachers quorum activities. His advice for sharing the gospel with others is simple: think about how it blesses your life and share your experiences. As a future missionary, Kayden is preparing now by befriending new people and talking to them about his beliefs and faith.

Kayden also shares the gospel through social media. He posts links to Church websites on his blog and Facebook profile to give others the chance to learn more and ask questions about the Church. After a chess-playing friend of Kayden’s heard about the Church from other friends, he turned to Kayden and asked him questions online. Eventually the friend was baptized.

Sharing the gospel can be scary, but Kayden’s family makes it a goal to stand up for who and what they are as members of the Church. They try to use their talents to teach others about their beliefs. Hearing the spiritual



PLAN YOUR LIFE WITH PURPOSE

“Perhaps no generation of youth has faced such far-reaching decisions as the youth of today. Provision must be made for school, mission, and marriage. . . . Whatever your age, whatever your circumstance, I admonish you to plan your life with purpose.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 67.



experiences of an older brother on a mission has helped Kayden find the courage to talk with others about his faith. “It can be scary, but when we take the time to share the gospel, especially when we do it one-on-one, people will respect what we believe.”

Living the Standards

When it comes to tools for teaching about the gospel, orange juice may seem like an unusual choice. But for Kayden’s family, it’s been just that. Kayden and his family celebrate his victories with a glass of orange juice. Such an odd beverage of choice has garnered attention and allowed Kayden to share his standards with others. In fact, after Kayden won the world championship, his mom exclaimed, “Orange juice and root beer all around!” When somebody asked, “Can’t you stop being Mormon for just 10 minutes?” Kayden and his mom explained that, no, they could not loosen their standards for even a few minutes, because their standards are part of who they are and what they stand for.

There are few members of the Church in the upper ranks of the competitive chess world, and when the standards of most others around you are not as black and white as the spaces on a chessboard, there can be temptation to let your guard down. Kayden says, “Just as you have to focus in chess to be successful, you have to focus on the Spirit to remember what’s most important.”

He adds that for him, the need for the Spirit makes consistently doing the little things such as daily prayer and scripture study even more important.

Keeping the commandments allows him to uphold his standards and be an example. As Kayden says, “Some people might not fully understand our beliefs and standards, but we do have an influence on them when we are good examples.”

Becoming Your Best

For Kayden’s chess career, becoming his best means working toward becoming a chess Grandmaster—the highest rank in all of chess. But, as Kayden says, what we do in life should only be a part of who we are. In fact, despite his impressive chess skills, Kayden doesn’t even want to be remembered as a great chess player. He says, “I just want to be remembered as a friend and a nice person. I truly care less about being a chess player and more about being a nice person who inspires others. If people remember me a few years down the road, then all I really hope is that they’ll say, ‘That was a really nice guy.’”

Just as he needs to plan ahead in his chess matches, Kayden uses his decisions now as stepping-stones to his most important future goals of serving a mission and then marrying in the temple and starting a family. “Chess helps you focus and helps with your overall life plan,” he says. “Each move affects the future and the outcome of the match. You always have to be thinking things through and setting long-term goals.” **NE**

Matthew Garrett lives in Washington, USA.

CALLED TO SHARE

“There are new ways to invite others to ‘come and see’ [John 1:39]. Let’s make sharing our faith online more a part of our daily life.”

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





**MY FRIENDS ALL
GAVE IN TO SMOKING, BUT THE
LITTLE THINGS HELPED
ME STAY STRONG.**

By Eirik Sterri

I started skateboarding in the seventh grade with a group of my friends. Skateboarding was huge at my school in California. Most of the guys and some girls I knew skated on a regular basis.

I was a street skater. I didn't like going to skate parks because of the people there. I was honestly scared of the kinds of people who showed up at the skate parks.

As my friends and I continued on our "skating careers," we became fairly good. We were able to receive sponsorships from local skate shops, which meant we got free skateboards, shirts, pants, etc. It was awesome and a really fun sport to pursue.

But, as with anything else, there were temptations.

As we gained more confidence in our skills, my friends and I started traveling to different skate spots and parks, and we started meeting many new, different kinds of people. Unfortunately, the skaters we met all had one thing in common: smoking. Every skater smoked, it seemed. My freshman year, my friends gave in to the temptation and began smoking. Still, I didn't think much of it, because I'd decided I would never do that.

As time went on, my relationship with my friends grew weaker. We didn't have the same interests anymore. They used drugs or alcohol every weekend. I could see them throwing away their lives. I couldn't believe how bad it had become.

One Saturday morning, one of them asked me, "How did you stay away from it, man? Why can't I be like you? You have something special in your life." It was then that I realized it was because I'd always held myself to the Church standards.

I owe my ability to resist smoking and the other temptations to the little things. Even as my life got very busy with school, family, Church, dating, sports, and friends, I stuck to the plain and simple things. I read my scriptures, said my prayers, went to Mutual, and went to church. I know that if I hadn't given myself the spiritual nourishment I needed every day, then I may have given in to temptation.

I know we must do the little things in the gospel. They will give us the strength we need to stay strong and avoid temptation. **NE**

Eirik Sterri lives in California, USA.

SKATING WITH THE SPIRIT



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



JON CLARK



KEVIN BECKSTROM



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

“I am
repenting
of a sin, but other
people
gossip
about me.
It hurts a lot.
What do I do?”

If you’ve done all you can to repent of your mistake and people still gossip about you, don’t make it harder on yourself by getting upset. Quietly show others that their gossip is wrong by the way you live.

Talking privately with close friends to share how you feel can be an opportunity to explain repentance and the Atonement. You can also explain that because you regret what you did, you really are trying to change. The Atonement makes it possible for Jesus Christ to forgive you and help you be better. If the people who are important to you understand, they will support you through difficult times and can help you when they hear others gossip.

Don’t let another’s judgment keep you from making the changes you want to make or from letting yourself be happy right now. Pray for comfort and know that Heavenly Father is pleased with you for repenting. His opinion matters most. **NE**

Turn to Your Parents



I have also had to repent. Before I repented, my friends all knew what was going on, and I felt like

I was letting everyone down. My family relationships were bad too. It helped to talk to my parents. They were upset, but they supported my decision to change. I lost a lot of friends, but the ones I have now love me even though I made some bad choices. It helps to pray to Heavenly Father. He knew what I was going through and helped me through the trial. He will help anyone who asks for help.

Allisyn G., 16, Utah, USA

Pray for Peace



No matter what you do, you can’t control what other people say about you. What you *can* do is decide how

you react. If you act like it doesn’t bother you, then maybe they will stop. Eventually the people gossiping about you may forget that it even happened. Pray to Heavenly Father to help you feel peace when you hear their comments and to not let them bother you. No matter what they say about you, remember that you are doing what Heavenly Father wants you to. Whatever they say, this will not change.

Dallas C., 17, Nova Scotia, Canada

Rise Above



Don't think any less of yourself because of the comments. God knows you have the strength to endure the ridicule and move forward to better things. Now all you have to do is be the person Heavenly Father knows you can be, and then rising above this trial will become easier.

Lacey J., 15, Nebraska, USA

Keep Moving Forward

You should persevere and finish repenting because even if other people gossip, it is still more important to repent. If these people are your friends, they will respect you for persevering.

Ethan D., 15, Ohio, USA

Remember Forgiveness Is Real



Just try to remember one thing: the Lord has forgiven you. The people gossiping about you may not have realized that once you have repented, God will remember your sins no more (see D&C 58:42). Even though those around you may remember what you did wrong, your Father in Heaven does not.

Joey S., 15, Virginia, USA

Listen to Your True Friends

One thing you should do is ignore the gossip said about you. If it's from people in school, then spend more time with friends who don't gossip about you. Your friends can help you forget about anything people are saying.

Jarom S., 14, Arizona, USA

Pray for Those Who Hurt You

When you pray to the Lord as part of your repentance, take extra time to pray for those who gossip about you. Ask Heavenly Father to soften their hearts, and ask for strength to overcome the gossip.

Mary Jo T., 18, Ohio, USA

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



REPENTANCE BRINGS PEACE AND HAPPINESS

"Repentance always means that there is greater happiness ahead. I bear witness that our Savior can deliver us from our sins. . . . I testify that His divine gift removes guilt from our heart and brings peace to our conscience."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Repent . . . That I May Heal You," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 42–43.

UPCOMING QUESTION

Sometimes I feel
bored at church.
What can I do
to enjoy
going to church
more?

Send your answer and photo by December 15, 2013.

Go to newera.lds.org and click "Submit Your Work."

You can also write to us at
newera@ldschurch.org or

New Era, Q&A, bored
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



MILE MONDAYS

In my gym class, we had to run the mile every Monday. We called them “Mile Mondays.” Everyone dreaded them because they were exhausting. Each Monday, one classmate was always picked on because he was a little overweight and always finished the mile a few minutes after everyone else. I felt bad for him and wanted to help him out, but I wasn’t sure how.

One day I had an idea. After I

finished running the mile, I went back and ran with him until he was done. I was a little nervous because I wasn’t sure what everyone would think, but I decided that what other people think shouldn’t matter that much. I was surprised when more people joined me the next week. Every week, more people joined until eventually everyone in the class joined in! As we ran, we encouraged him by saying things like, “You can do it!” and “Only one more lap!” He began to smile while running, and people didn’t pick on him anymore. Each week he finished the mile

in less time, and we cheered him on every time he beat his personal best.

I’m glad we could boost his spirit and help him do his best. It really brought our class closer together, and we were all a little nicer to one another. This experience helped me remember that we are all God’s children and of great worth, and everyone needs to be treated that way. I’m glad I decided to run a little extra, and I know that Heavenly Father gave us all added strength to help His children feel loved.

Taylor F., Washington, USA

MY FIRST TEMPLE TRIP

I was so excited! I had turned 12 about two weeks ago and had received my first temple recommendation on Sunday. My dad was going to take me to the Spokane Washington Temple for the first time as a birthday present.

On the day of our trip, I was ready to go an hour early! I was just so eager to go! We finally got into the car and listened to hymns on the trip there, which really brought in the Spirit that day.

My mom had prepared some family names for me and my dad to take to the temple. While I was entering the font I had expected this huge spiritual experience, but that didn't happen. What did happen was that I was baptized for one of my deceased relatives, and I felt a still, small voice whisper to me, "You are doing the right thing."

On the way home I really thought about what had happened at the temple. I realized I didn't need the huge spiritual experience I had been expecting. I was so glad I had the Holy Ghost with me that day so that I could hear the still, small voice.

I'm so thankful for the temple and all of its blessings! The temple has brought me and my family great blessings, happiness, and experiences with the still, small voice.

Alexis F., Washington, USA

A WALLET IN FRANCE

My family was driving down a residential road in France when my father thought he smelled something burning. We pulled over to the side of the road and inspected the car. We couldn't find anything wrong with the car, but we did find something else: a wallet on the side of the road with money in it!

My initial reaction was that I would be

able to buy lots of neat things. I knew, however, that we should be honest. My father drove to the police station, and we turned the wallet over to the police. I felt happy, and I know that honesty is worth any cost.

Camille F., France



EXTRA HELP IN SCHOOL

Last year I was struggling in school and decided that I needed some additional help beyond tutoring and extra study—I needed to include my Heavenly Father in my study process. The lesson I learned from this decision cannot be found in a textbook, but it's something I'll always be grateful I learned.

I started to pray silently at school and vocally at night while doing homework and preparing for

exams. I asked Heavenly Father to help me concentrate on my schoolwork and remember what I was learning. By the end of the school year, I'd dramatically increased my grades. But even more important, I'd learned that I should turn to Heavenly Father more when I need help in any area of my life. He does hear our prayers, and especially when we put forth the work, He will help us.

Mike S., Utah, USA

At **what point** do you **end a friendship** with someone who has clearly **chosen a path** you **don't agree** with?

For the *Strength of Youth* says, “As you seek to be a friend to others, do not compromise your standards. If your friends urge you to do things that are wrong, be the one to stand for the right, even if you stand alone. You may need to find other friends who will support you in keeping the commandments. Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost as you make these choices” ([2011], 16–17).

In a broad sense, we never really end a friendship. People should

always feel that they can come to us for help and kindness when they need it. But we might need to stop spending time with people whose choices have taken them so far from the path of righteousness that they are constantly a bad influence and refuse to receive any good influence from us or anyone else. Through prayer, scripture study, and counseling with parents and leaders, you can be guided by the Holy Ghost in your decisions about your friends. **NE**

Is there **such a thing** as **“soul mates”**?

The short answer is no, not really. Even though you may feel especially connected to someone of the opposite sex right now, the true bond between a man and woman comes only after they’ve committed to marry one another and decided to work at it. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has said, “I don’t believe there is only one right person for you. I think I fell in love with my wife, Harriet, from the first moment I saw her. Nevertheless, . . . I don’t believe she was my one chance at happiness in this life, nor was I hers. . . . “ . . . Once you commit to being married, your

spouse becomes your soul mate, and it is your duty and responsibility to work every day to keep it that way” (“The Reflection in the Water” [Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Nov. 1, 2009]).

Though you may have strong feelings for someone, as a teenager you’re not in a position to marry, so wondering if someone is your “soul mate” doesn’t make much sense—and it shouldn’t be the focus of your adult courtship, either. In your youth, focus on building good friendships with many people. It’s natural to feel especially close to someone because they have interests or personality traits that appeal to you, but be careful not to let yourself get carried away by your feelings. Review the guidelines in the “Dating” section of *For the Strength of Youth* ([2011], 4–5), and pray and ponder about the purpose behind them. **NE**



The
COMPANIONSHIP
OF THE
Holy Ghost

IS NOT JUST
A PLEASANT CONVENIENCE—

it
is essential
TO YOUR
SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL.

Elder Adrián Ochoa of the Seventy,
October 2013 general conference

WHAT'S ONLINE



VIDEOS AND QUOTES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Want to share a message from general conference with your friends on social media? You'll find a short message and a designed quote from each member of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at lds.org/go/113Share.

Sharing the words of the Brethren and Church leaders through social media is one easy way to help spread the gospel throughout the world.

Besides conference quotes, you can also find other quotes to share from the *New Era's* Facebook page at lds.org/go/NEFB.



MUSIC VIDEO: "IF WE FORGET OURSELVES"

Youth around the world are fulfilling their covenants to serve others in a huge variety of ways. And their good works have been captured on camera. See a music video highlighting their acts of service to others at lds.org/go/113Serve. As one of the young men in the video testifies: Service is "what defines us as young men, to go out and look for people to serve, to be like Christ. It's one of the greatest attributes you can have, to be like Jesus Christ."



8

WAYS TO MAKE SEMINARY GREAT

Whether you attend seminary at home or in a Church building, before dawn or after, alone or with dozens of others, seminary can help change your life if you let it. Find eight great tips to help you make the most of your experience at lds.org/go/113Seminary.