

STAY TRUE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES



HAVE YOU EVER TRIED TO DO
SOMETHING THAT WAS REALLY
HARD? SO HARD THAT YOU
THOUGHT ABOUT GIVING UP?

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It happens to all of us, sometimes even with spiritual things.

When Joseph Smith faced tough times, he stuck with it. And a lot of those times came during his teen years: He had visions, learned about the Book of Mormon, prepared to translate it—all while people mocked and persecuted him.

It wasn't easy. His family was poor, and he lived in uncertain times in a frontier town that was sometimes rough and unkind. It would have been easy to just give up.

So how did he do it, especially when he felt discouraged? Here are four things he did that could be huge for you, too.



When Joseph sought answers, he studied the scriptures

Did you know that when Joseph went to pray in the Sacred Grove, he'd already been studying the scriptures and seeking answers for *two years*?

He later wrote, "At about the age of 12 years my mind became seriously impressed with regard to the all-important concerns for the welfare of my immortal soul, which led me to searching the scriptures."¹

And Joseph didn't just *read* the scriptures—he *searched* them. It took effort, pondering, and persistence. That opened his heart and prepared him for the inspiration that came when he read James 1:5–6:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

Only then, after his patient effort, was Joseph ready to pray about which church to join (see Joseph Smith—History 1:12–18).

When Joseph struggled, he kept praying

After the First Vision, Joseph still didn't have everything figured out. In fact, in many ways, things got harder.

Some people he respected criticized him. But rather than deny what he had seen, he continued to believe and stay close to God (see Joseph Smith—History 1:25, 28).

Sometimes Joseph felt alone. Some family members had joined a church, but since Joseph was told not to join other churches, he waited for more direction from heaven.

On the night of September 21, 1823—over three years after the First Vision—Joseph decided to ask God for "forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him" (Joseph Smith—History 1:29).

Moroni appeared and taught Joseph many things about the work God had for him to do, including translating the Book of Mormon (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–35).

Though he battled "weakness and imperfections" (Joseph Smith—History 1:29), Joseph continued to study and pray. He kept his faith and trust in God.

Joseph was humble, accepted correction, and kept repenting

Joseph's first visit with Moroni was in 1823, but he wasn't allowed to obtain the plates and translate the Book of Mormon until 1827. Part of the reason he had to wait four years was because he had to repent.

But Joseph was teachable. Each time Moroni visited, he tutored Joseph. This process helped Joseph become the leader God needed him to be.

Joseph was also humble. Moroni chastened Joseph several times. For example, Joseph said that when he first found the plates, he was, "tempted of the adversary and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the Glory of God."² Instead of being upset, Joseph took correction humbly, repented, and resolved to be better.³ He came to value the plates as sacred records meant to build up the kingdom of God.

Joseph turned to his parents

During his first visit, one of the things Moroni told Joseph to do was to tell his father. At first, Joseph didn't do it. He was afraid his father wouldn't believe him, wouldn't understand, or both. The next day, Moroni visited Joseph again and told him to tell his father, saying, "he will believe every word you say."⁴ With that counsel, this time Joseph obeyed. Not surprisingly, his family was a great support and, to the end of their days, helped him do the truly important things.

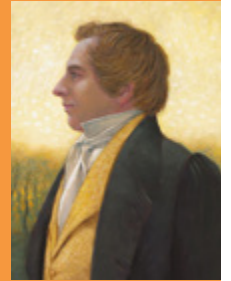
Joseph kept trying, and you can too

Like Joseph, when we aren't sure of what to do, we can study the scriptures and open our hearts to the promptings of the Holy Ghost. God will teach you the things you need to know for *your* life's plan.

Even though he had faith, he didn't know the details of how it would all work out. Just like us, he lived his life one day at a time and he persevered and trusted in God. He found strength to keep trying by keeping close to God and following promptings. And in time, he was able to do the work that God called him to do.

Though many revelations came in remarkable ways, Joseph learned that revelation is usually a process that takes time. When we are persistent, obedient, and faithful, answers come in the way and time that we need them.

Like Joseph, each of us can do the work God calls us to do when we are persistent in reaching out to Him through daily personal scripture study and prayer, if we are humble and teachable, and most importantly, if we just *keep trying*. **NE**



NOTES

1. "History, circa Summer 1832," pages 1–2, josephsmithpapers.org; spelling and punctuation standardized.
2. "History, circa Summer 1832," pages 4–5, josephsmithpapers.org.
3. See Oliver Cowdery, "Letter VIII," *Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1835, 197–200.
4. Lucy Mack Smith, "Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845," book 3, page 11, josephsmithpapers.org; Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 82.