



**By Elder
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Of the Seventy

THE BOOK OF MORMON AND God's Plan for Us

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and taught than in the Book of Mormon.*

One of the common themes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that *God has a plan*. It is described with various names reflecting its various parts—the plan of happiness, the plan of mercy, the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation (see Alma 42:5–31).

Nowhere is the plan more clearly defined and taught than in the Book of Mormon. In fact, a good way to study the Book of Mormon this year is to look for what it says about that plan and about what that plan means for us.

The prophet Lehi taught that “it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). And so it is with God's plan. As a result, Satan has a plan (see 2 Nephi 9:28), the world has many plans, and, unfortunately, we may even have our own plans. We “are free to choose” (2 Nephi 2:27) which plan we will follow—God's or someone else's.

The Plan in Daily Life

Let's examine the Book of Mormon for some practical implications of God's plan for our daily living, looking for ways to “liken [it] unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

For example, God has a plan for prayer—He asks us to “*pray always*” (see 3 Nephi

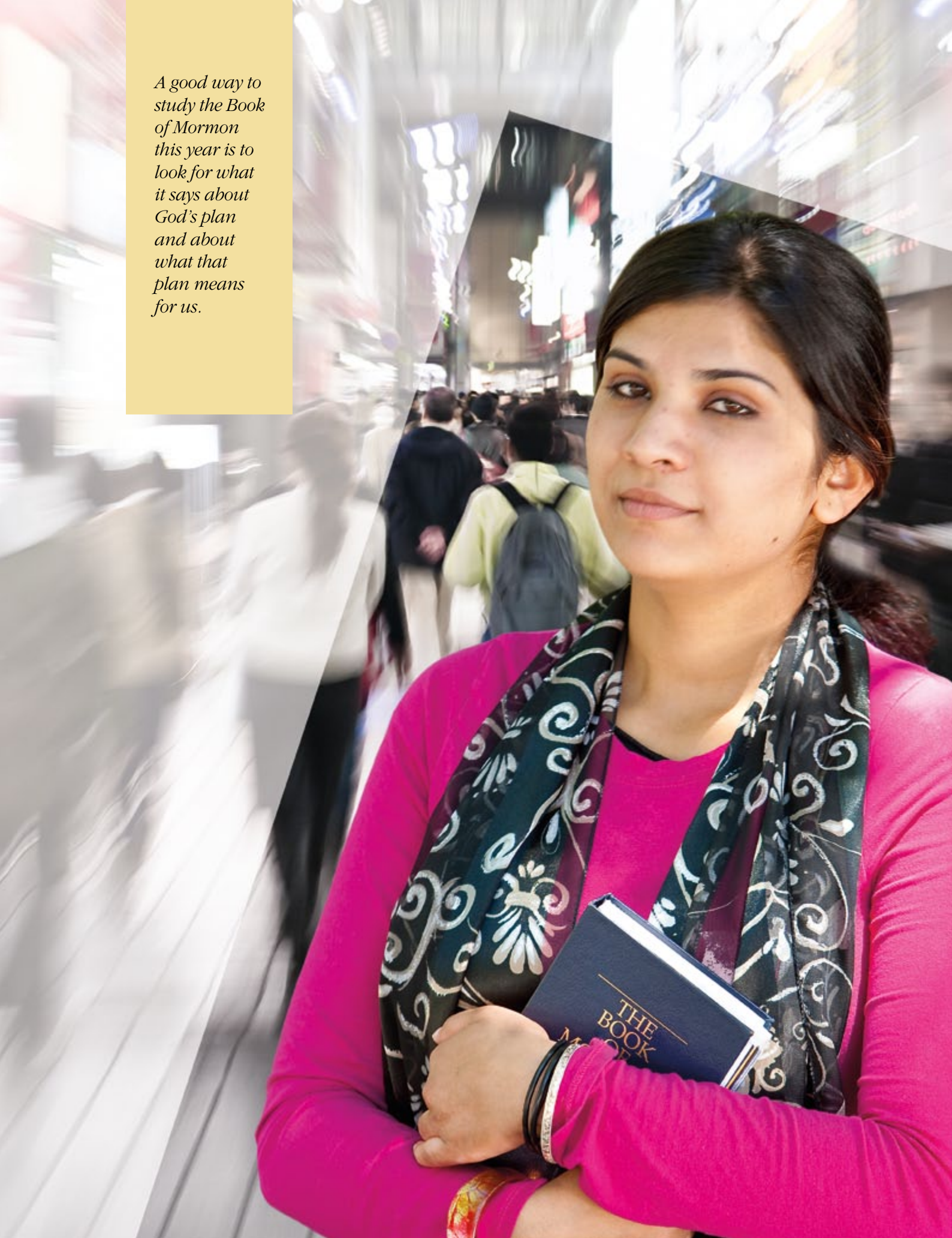
18:15–20). Sometimes we may not want to pray because we feel tired, discouraged, unworthy, or disappointed that previous prayers were not answered as we wanted. There are other plans, “for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:8), but God's plan is that we pray always.

God has a plan for scripture reading—we need to *study the scriptures every day*. As Nephi said, “Feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3). Some of us don't like to read or have a hard time understanding scriptural language or would rather spend our time in other pursuits. The Lord's plan, however, is that we read the scriptures daily.

When our nine children were young, it was hard to find a time we could read the scriptures as a family. We found that 5:30 a.m. was the only time. Some of the children had difficulty staying awake, but we persisted.

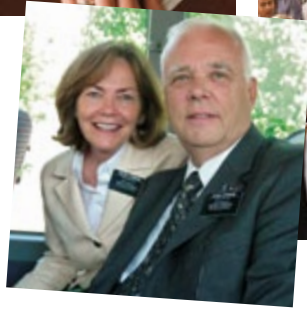
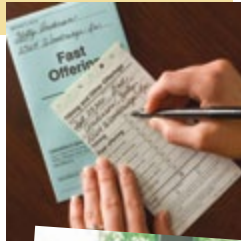
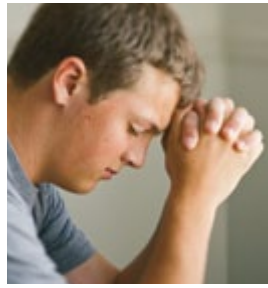
One day Sister Ellis and I were discouraged with all we had to do and with the seeming impossibility of getting it all done. That morning we read the following words in the Old Testament: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9). That was a personal revelation to us that lifted us

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By examining the Book of Mormon, we discover some practical implications of God's plan for our daily living.



and encouraged us to keep going. It was possible for the Lord to send us that message of love and support because we were studying the scriptures that day.

God has a plan for family home evening—through His prophets, He encourages us to *hold family home evening each week* (see 3 Nephi 18:21; Mosiah 1:4; 4:14–15). This is not easy when family members have conflicting schedules. Some family members may not cooperate, but God's plan is that we hold family home evening each week.

The Lord has a plan for worshipping Him—we are spiritually strengthened as we *attend our meetings every Sunday*. If we have to work Saturday night, we may feel tired. At times we may be frustrated with some ward members, teachers, or leaders. We may not have a ride or money for the subway or bus. The Lord's plan, however, is that we go—even if we have to walk. The effort to attend weekly is part of the sacrifice the Lord expects of us (see Mosiah 13:16–19; 18:25; D&C 59:9).

One of the main reasons we attend church each week is to partake of the sacrament. The Savior instituted the sacrament in both the Old and New Worlds (see Luke 22:19–20; 3 Nephi 18:1–11), and He explained the role the sacrament plays in our remembering Him so that we can have His Spirit to be with us (see 3 Nephi 18:7, 11). As we partake of the sacrament each week, we renew our covenants. It is part of His plan.

God has a plan for service—each of us needs to *serve in the Church and do our best to magnify our callings*. The Church of Jesus Christ is not a church of spectators; it is a church of workers. We may not enjoy certain callings, we may feel incapable, or we may think we have done our part and deserve a rest. But God's plan is that we serve Him by serving others (see Mosiah 2:17). As we serve Him, we come to know Him (see Mosiah 5:13).

The Lord has a plan for tithing—each of us is expected to *pay a full tithing*. We live in difficult times, and some of us are having a hard time financially. We may think that paying tithing would be easier if we were better off, but God's plan is that each of us be a full-tithe payer regardless of our circumstances (see 3 Nephi 24:10). By paying our tithing, we give the Lord an opportunity to bless us materially and strengthen us spiritually.

God has a plan for fast offerings—each month we have an opportunity to *fast and donate a fast offering to help the poor* (see Mosiah 4:26). This wonderful plan blesses the needy as well as those who fast and make an offering. It is so much better than all of the world's plans.

God has a plan for missions—every able young man should *serve a mission*. Some young men do not want to work that hard or would rather get married, go to college, get a job, or do nothing. But God's plan is that every young man who is physically and mentally capable prepare himself to serve a mission. Many young women choose to serve

also. We have personally witnessed the blessings of having our sons and our daughters serve missions. The Lord needs senior couples as missionaries too.¹

God has a plan for marriage—after a mission, the next step is *temple marriage*. Some young people don't feel ready for the responsibility of marriage, or they think they cannot get married because they don't have a house or a car or a job or a degree. Remember that Nephi was living in a tent and was no longer enjoying his family's former wealth when the Lord sent him and his brothers back to Jerusalem so that they could take the daughters of Ishmael to wife (see 1 Nephi 2:4; 7:1–5; 16:7).

Some young people prefer to just “hang out” and stay single. There are other plans, but God's plan is that marriage follow missionary service.

A Plan for Families

God has a plan for families—“*The family is ordained of God*” and is “*central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.*”² Children are a blessing from the Lord. They are a lot of work, but they are worth it. With our nine children we have learned that the work and challenges of family life are nothing compared to the joy that comes from having a posterity. Some couples may think they can't afford children or that they cannot love or care for more than a few. There are many plans, but God's plan is that we exercise the faith necessary to marry and welcome children into our home. The Book of Mormon—an account of families, from Lehi's to Mormon's—is replete with examples and teachings for parents and children.

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The Lord has a plan for the temple—He expects us to *worship in the temple regularly*. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995) urged us to make the temple the symbol of our membership in the Church.³ He and other latter-day prophets have counseled us to have a current temple recommend even if we cannot attend the temple. Sometimes we feel unworthy or don't have the means to go to the temple, or we rationalize that we will go tomorrow, next week, or next month. There are many plans, but the Lord's plan is that we have a current temple recommend and use it often. When the resurrected Savior visited the Nephites, He came to the temple (see 3 Nephi 11:1–10). We too can feel close to Him in the temple.

Results of Our Choice

What are the results of our choosing the Lord's plan? Happiness—here and hereafter. He promises that we can rise above the poverty around us, enjoy greater health, repent and be forgiven, find joy in serving, qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, learn and grow, and enjoy eternal life with an eternal family—a true “multiplicity of blessings” (D&C 97:25, 28).

What do we receive if we choose Satan's plan? His lies may give us joy for a season (see 3 Nephi 27:11), but in the end “he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). If we choose his plan or one of the world's plans, we have no promise.

I testify that the Lord's plan is better than any other. He knows us, loves us, and desires to bless and help us. He knows best! God has more than *a* plan—He has *the* plan. I pray that we will choose it. ■

NOTES

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “As We Meet Together Again,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. See Howard W. Hunter, “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign* and *Tambuli*, Oct. 1994, 2.