

THE **New Era**

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HOW TO SURVIVE IN ENEMY TERRITORY



**By President
Boyd K. Packer**

President of
the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

We celebrate 100 years of seminary in the Church. I hold on to a thread that goes back to the early days when the resources for this program were very scarce.

From those humble beginnings, we now have 375,008 students in seminary classes in 143 countries with over 38,000 volunteer and full-time teachers worldwide. We invest much in our youth. We know of your worth and your potential.

Wisdom Will Help You Combat the Enemy

I speak as one who has seen the past and would prepare you for the future.

You are growing up in enemy territory. When you become mature spiritually, you will understand how the adversary has infiltrated the world around you. He is in homes, entertainment, the media, language—everything around you. In most cases, his presence is undetected.

I want to tell you that which will be of most worth and most desirable. The scriptures say, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get

wisdom,” and I would add, “with all [your] getting get [going!]”¹ I do not have time to waste and neither do you. So listen up!

The moment I decided to be a teacher is very clear in my mind. During World War II, I was in my early 20s and a pilot in the Air Force. I was stationed on the little island of Ie Shima. This island, a small, lonely one about as big as a postage stamp, is just off the northern tip of Okinawa.

One lonely summer evening, I sat on a cliff to watch the sun go down. I was pondering what I would do with my life after the war, if I was fortunate enough to survive. What did I want to be? It was on that night that I decided I wanted to be a teacher. I reasoned that teachers are always learning. Learning is a basic purpose of life.

I first taught seminary in 1949 in Brigham City. I had been a student in that seminary in my high school days.

There were three courses originally taught in seminary: Old Testament, New Testament, and Church History. It was my privilege to add an early-morning class on the Book of Mormon. I had returned from the war with a testimony of the Book of Mormon and an understanding of how the gift of the Holy Ghost operates.

The Gift of the Holy Ghost Will Protect You in Enemy Territory

You have been taught all of your lives about the gift of the Holy Ghost, but teaching can only go so far. You can and, in fact, you must go the rest of the way alone to discover within yourself how the Holy Ghost can be a guiding and protective influence.

For young men and young women, the process is the same. Discovering how the Holy Ghost operates in your life is the quest of a lifetime. Once you have made that discovery for yourself, you can live in enemy territory and will not be deceived or destroyed. No member of this Church—and that means each of you—will ever make a serious mistake without first being warned by the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Sometimes when you have made a mistake, you may have said afterward, “I knew I should not have done that. It did not feel right,” or perhaps, “I knew I *should* have done that. I just did not have the courage to act!” Those impressions are the Holy Ghost attempting to direct you

toward good or warning you away from harm.

There are certain things that you must not do if the lines of communication are to remain open. You cannot lie or cheat or steal or act immorally and have those channels remain free from disruption. Do not go where the environment resists spiritual communication.

You must learn to seek the power and direction that is available to you, and then follow that course no matter what.

First on your “to do” list, put the word *prayer*. Most of the time, your prayers will be silent. You can think a prayer.

You can always have a direct line of communication with your Father in Heaven. Do not allow the adversary to convince you that no one is listening on the other end. Your prayers are always heard. You are never alone!

Take care of your body. Be clean. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”²

Read carefully the promises found in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Word of Wisdom does not promise perfect health but that the spiritual receptors within you might be strengthened.

Stay away from tattoos and similar things which deface your body. Your body was created in God’s image.

Prophetic Counsel Teaches What Is True

I want to speak now in the pattern of straight talk about another matter.

We know that gender was set in the premortal world.³ “The spirit and the body are the soul of man.”⁴ This matter of gender is of great concern to the Brethren, as are all matters of morality.

A few of you may have felt or been told that you were born with troubling feelings and that you are not guilty if you act on those temptations. Doctrinally we know that if that were true, your agency would have been erased, and that cannot happen. You always have a choice to follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost and live a morally pure and chaste life, one filled with virtue.

President Gordon B. Hinckley announced the following in general conference: “People inquire about our position on those who consider themselves . . . gays and lesbians. My response is that we love them as sons and daughters



Do not squander these years of seminary instruction. Take advantage of the great blessing you have to learn the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of the prophets. Learn that which is of most worth.



See the Full Address
Get the full text and video of President Packer's address at seminary.lds.org/history/centennial.

of God. They may have certain inclinations which are powerful and which may be difficult to control. Most people have [temptations] of one kind or another at various times. If they do not act upon these inclinations, then they can go forward as do all other members of the Church. If they violate the law of chastity and the moral standards of the Church, then they are subject to the discipline of the Church, just as others are.

“We want to help . . . strengthen them, to assist them with their problems and to help them with their difficulties. But we cannot stand idle if they indulge in immoral activity, if they try to uphold and defend and live in a so-called same-sex marriage situation. To permit such would be to make light of the very serious and sacred foundation of God-sanctioned marriage and its very purpose, the rearing of families.”⁵

President Hinckley was speaking for the Church.

Use Your Agency to Keep or Regain Safe Ground

The first gift that Adam and Eve received was agency: “Thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee.”⁶

You have that same agency. Use it wisely to deny acting on any impure impulse or unholy temptation that may come into your mind. Just do not go there, and if you are already there, come back out of it. “Deny yourselves of all ungodliness.”⁷

Do not tamper with the life-giving powers in your body alone or with members of either gender. That is the standard of the Church, and it will not change. As you mature, there is a temptation to experiment or explore immoral activities. Do not do that!

The key word is *discipline*—self-discipline. The word *discipline* comes from the word

disciple or *follower*. Be a disciple/follower of the Savior, and you will be safe.

One or two of you may be thinking, “I am already guilty of this or that serious mistake. It is too late for me.” It is never too late.

You have been taught at home and in seminary about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Atonement is like an eraser. It can wipe away guilt and the effect of whatever it is that is causing you to feel guilty.

Guilt is spiritual pain. Do not suffer from chronic pain. Get rid of it. Be done with it. Repent, and, if necessary, repent again and again and again and again until you—not the enemy—are in charge of you.

Lasting Peace Comes by Repenting Often

Life turns out to be a succession of trials and errors. Add “repent often” to your list of things to do. This will bring you lasting peace that cannot be purchased at any earthly price. Understanding the Atonement may be the one most important truth that you can learn in your youth.

If you are associating with others who drag you down instead of building you up, stop and change company. You may be alone and lonely at times. The important question may be asked then, “When you are alone, are you in good company?”

Unwinding a habit that you have allowed to entangle you can be difficult. But the power is in you. Do not despair. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “all beings who have bodies have power over those who have not.”⁸ You can resist temptation!

It is not likely that you will ever have a personal encounter with the adversary; he does not show himself that way. But even if he came personally to you to test and tempt you, you have an advantage. You can assert your agency, and he will have to leave you alone.

Take Advantage of the Blessings of Seminary

You are not ordinary. You are very special. You are exceptional. How do I know that? I know that because you were born at a time and in a place where the gospel of Jesus Christ can come into your life through the teachings and activities of your home and of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is, as the Lord Himself has said, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth.”⁹

There are other things we could add to the list, but you know what you should and should not be doing in your life. You know right and wrong and do not need to be commanded in all things.

Do not squander these years of seminary instruction. Take advantage of the great blessing you have to learn the doctrines of the Church and the teachings of the prophets. Learn that which is of most worth. It will bless you and your posterity for many generations to come.

Not many years will pass until you are married and have children, a marriage that should be sealed in the temple. Our prayer is that you will find yourself, in due time, safely settled in a family ward or branch.

Go Forward with Hope and Faith

Do not fear the future. Go forward with hope and faith. Remember that supernal gift of the Holy Ghost. Learn to be taught by it. Learn to seek it. Learn to live by it. Learn to pray always in the name of Jesus Christ.¹⁰ The Spirit of the Lord will attend you, and you will be blessed.

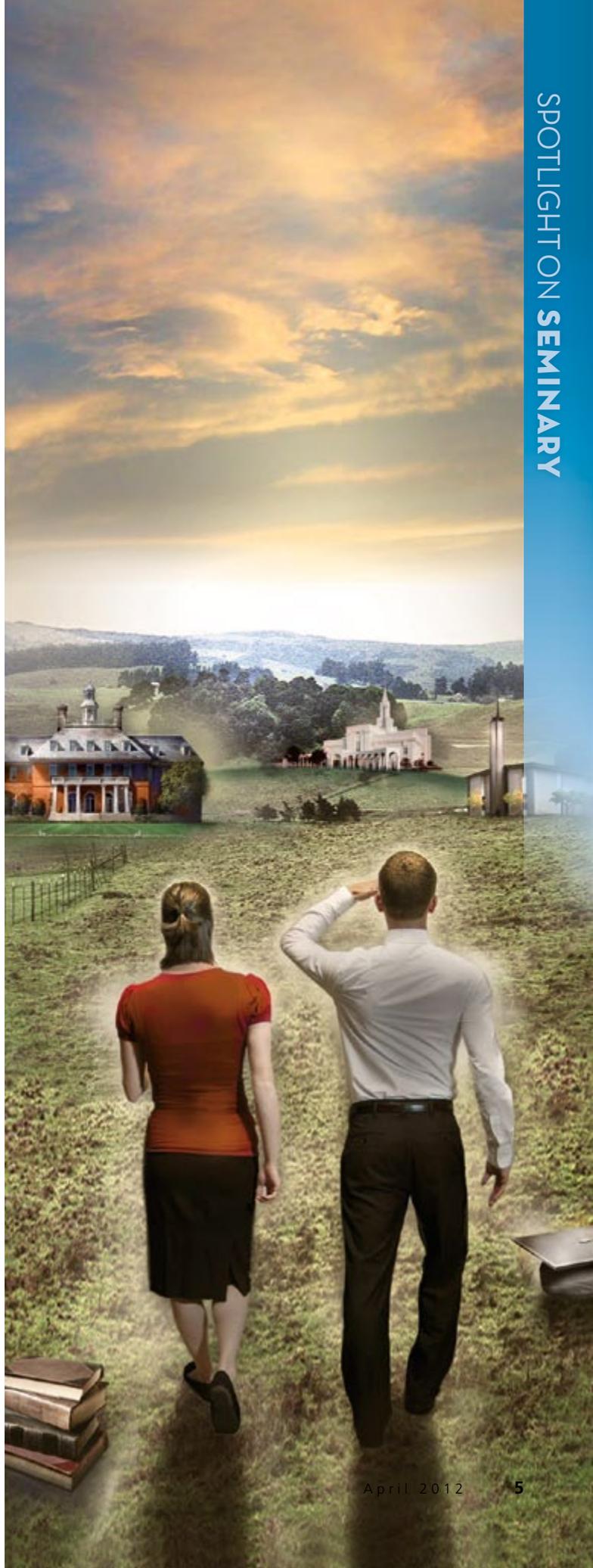
We have deep and profound faith in you.

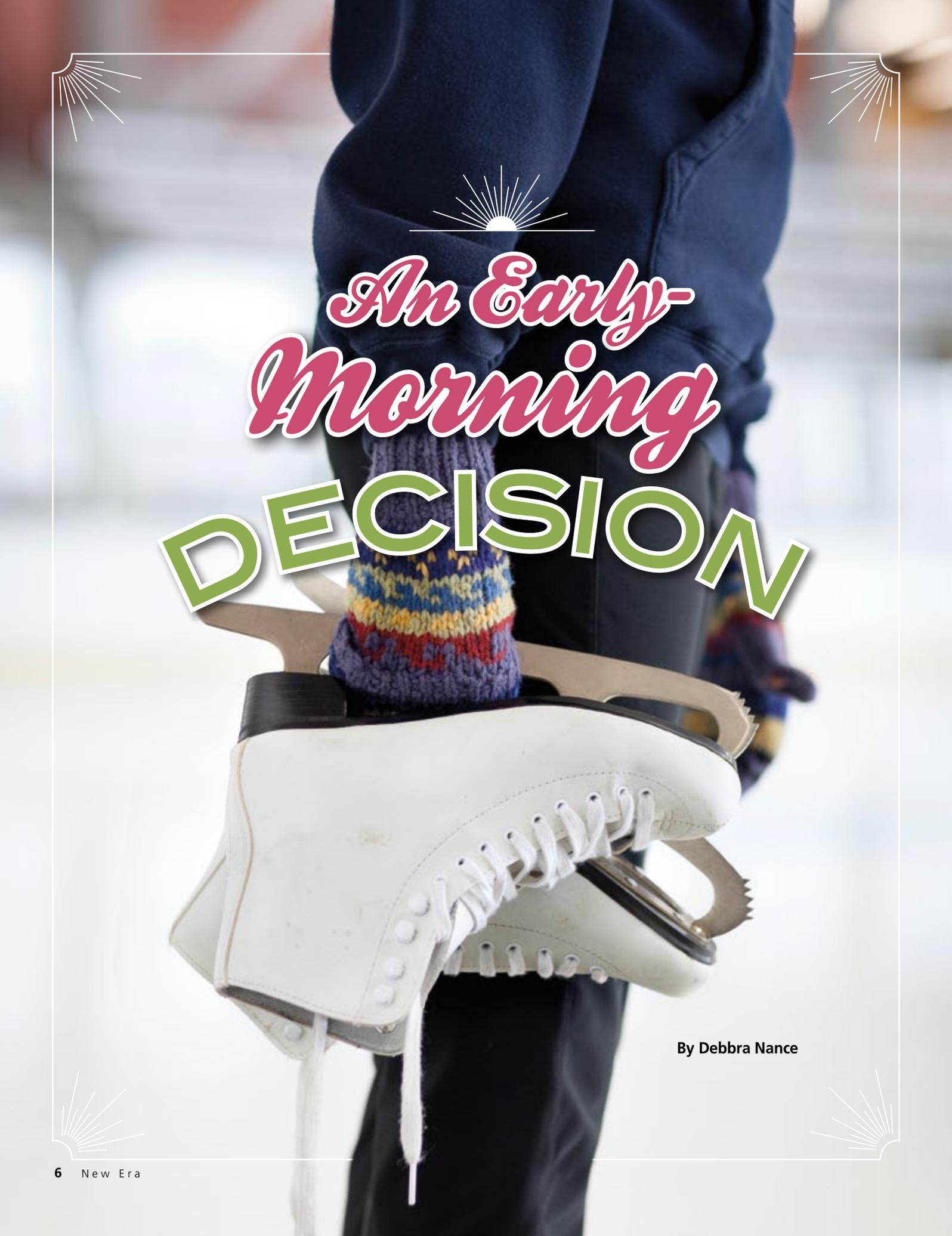
I bear my testimony to you—a witness that came to me in my youth. And you are no different from anyone else than I am. You have as much right to that testimony and witness as anyone. It will come to you if you earn it. I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you—the blessings of that witness to be in your life, to guide you as you make a happy future. **NE**

From a seminary centennial broadcast address given on January 22, 2012.

NOTES

1. Proverbs 4:7.
2. 1 Corinthians 3:16.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129; see also Moses 3:5; Abraham 3:22–23.
4. Doctrine and Covenants 88:15.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, “What Are People Asking about Us?” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 71.
6. Moses 3:17.
7. Moroni 10:32.
8. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.
9. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
10. See 3 Nephi 18:19–20.





An Early-Morning
DECISION

By Debra Nance

I loved ice-skating. But when I learned that skating practice would be at the same time as early-morning seminary, I had a choice to make.

At 13, I was a brand-new ice-skater with high hopes. Apparently I showed some aptitude, because after I had had a couple of group lessons, the teacher suggested I take private lessons. My parents agreed, and my ice-skating dream began in earnest. This was great!

To begin with, lessons were once a week, but I practiced more often. Soon I became friends with Jacque. She was short like me but with curly red hair and smiling green eyes. She was a good skater and had taken lessons since she was three. She could do figure eights and other complicated precision skating as well as the fancy jumps, hops, and spins for freestyle. I soon realized that I was “old” to be starting competition skating, but I practiced hard to learn my freestyle routine and precision skating.

Freezing-cold fingers and toes, falls on cold ice, and the tedium of performing the same moves over and over were all part of skating, but the effort was worth it. I loved the exhilaration of jumping, twisting in the air, and successfully landing and of gliding across smooth ice on one foot with my arms extended and cold air rushing past my face.

That winter, Jacque and I enthusiastically watched the Olympics, continued to practice, and even went to a competition where I passed off preliminary figures. She and I did a lot of things together that spring and summer. I tried to share the gospel with her once, but she wasn’t interested. All her thoughts were on skating.

Then one day Jacque said something that nearly took my breath away. She didn’t notice and kept chattering while lacing up her skates, but her words struck at my heart. She had said how much fun we would have at our morning practices when school started in the fall. That was the moment when I realized that skating would conflict with early-morning seminary. That had not occurred to me. I would be a freshman that year and would be eligible for seminary, which was held every morning before school. I could continue with my dream of skating, or I could go to early-morning seminary, but I couldn’t do both. I felt sick. What was I to do?

Though it seemed much longer, in reality it took only a few seconds for me to make a choice. I had been taught correct principles my whole life, and God and Church came first.



I gave up my skating and went to early-morning seminary. Jacque and I drifted apart. But I never regretted my decision. I made more friends and gained a testimony of the scriptures. I have wonderful memories of seminary that I wouldn’t trade for any honors I might have received from ice skating. **NE**

Watch a Video

Just like Debbra, other youth around the world are making the decision to choose seminary over extracurricular activities. You can watch a *Mormon Messages for Youth* video, “Surfing or Seminary?” about a young man in California who made a similar decision at lds.org/go/422.



SEMINARY in the Jungles of Ecuador

In a remote jungle, seminary is making a huge difference for these youth.

By Joshua J. Perkey
Church Magazines

East of Quito, Ecuador, past the volcanoes and Andes Mountains, the terrain drops swiftly to the Amazon jungle. There you'll find thick forests, abundant rivers, monkeys, toucans, and even pink dolphins.

You'll also find a city called Puerto Francisco de Orellana. It's a long ways from, well, everything else in Ecuador. Fifteen years ago, there were relatively few people in the area. But the discovery of petroleum brought industry, people seeking jobs, and members of the Church.

Seminary in a Small Branch

A few of the youth, like Oscar R., were already members when the branch was formed, but most are recent converts. And a fire burns in their hearts. "We are strong," Oscar says.

In September 2010, just a year after it was created, the branch started a seminary program. "When we first started gathering a few years

ago," says Oscar, "there were very few of us. I was the only youth. But we kept growing. Soon we had 6, then 10, and now even more youth."

Because some of the youth attend school in the morning and others in the afternoon, they organized two seminary class schedules—one in the morning from 8:00 to 9:00 and one in the afternoon from 4:30 to 5:30.

There may not be a lot of youth in the program, but for those youth who attend, seminary has changed their lives.

Why Go?

"Seminary is a great blessing for me," says Luis V., a recent convert. "It helps prepare me to be a good missionary. I have faced many challenges and temptations since I joined the Church, but I have been able to keep myself strong because I know I'm doing what's right."

And it's not just Luis who feels that way. "I have been a member of the Church for just a short while," says Ariana J., "but I have been attending seminary since I was baptized. I'm happy attending because I'm

Seminary strengthens youth such as these in Ecuador, many of whom are recent converts.



learning many true things regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ that fill my heart with hope and my mind with understanding.”

Attending seminary has helped ground Ariana in the gospel. “For me, it is a blessing to be a part of these classes,” Ariana says. “They strengthen my spirit and help me prepare so



that one day I can be a good spouse, mother, leader in the Church, and perhaps a full-time missionary.”

Ariana’s brother, Gerardo, feels the same. “I’m grateful because seminary has become an important part of my life,” he says. “It’s preparing me to serve a mission someday. There I have learned about the plan of salvation that God prepared for me. Each class I attend gives me hope that I can inherit the celestial kingdom and gives me the certainty that I have received the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Gerardo is pretty tired during class sometimes. He has to take his little brother to school first and then return home quickly to pick up his

sister so they can go to seminary. But he doesn’t mind.

“All of this is so new for me, but I am full of happiness,” says Gerardo. “I know I am on the correct path that will give me the opportunity to see my Heavenly Father again. The Holy Spirit gives me this assurance. I just have to make an effort and persevere unto the end.”

No Need to Be Nervous

For Walter A., seminary was initially a little intimidating. “I was nervous the first time I came,” he says. “But when I entered the class, I felt special because I felt the love you feel when you study the scriptures. And when I left, I felt strengthened with happiness in my heart for what I had learned. One of the greatest blessings Heavenly Father has for the youth is seminary.”

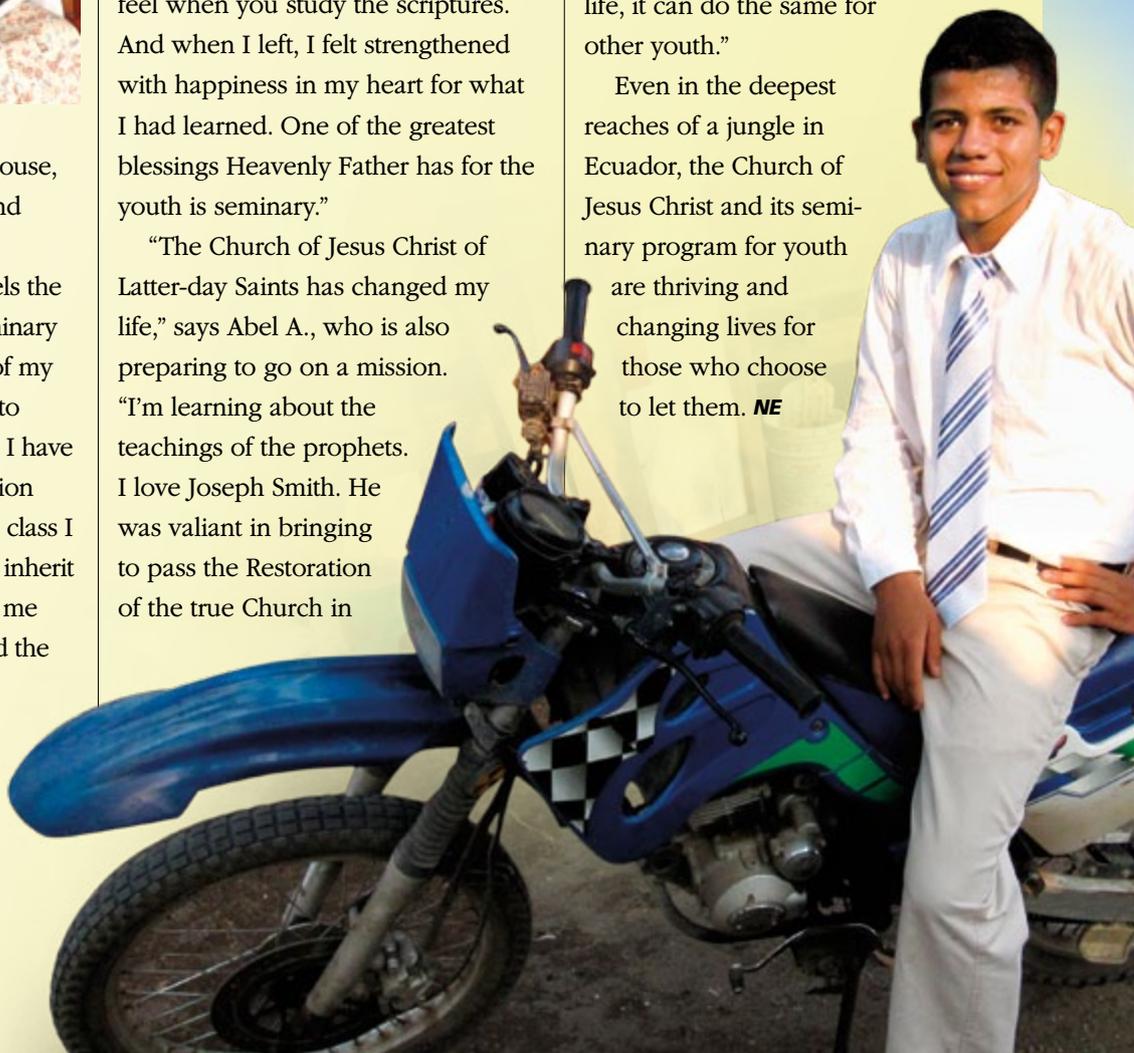
“The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has changed my life,” says Abel A., who is also preparing to go on a mission. “I’m learning about the teachings of the prophets. I love Joseph Smith. He was valiant in bringing to pass the Restoration of the true Church in

spite of all the problems this caused him. I want to be valiant like he was.”

A lot of youth have to make sacrifices to attend seminary. It’s not always easy, but for the youth in Puerto Francisco de Orellana, Ecuador, it’s worth the effort.

“When I think about pressing forward, like the scriptures say,” Abel explains, “I think it means to set our priorities for life. Seminary is one of these. Just as it has changed my life, it can do the same for other youth.”

Even in the deepest reaches of a jungle in Ecuador, the Church of Jesus Christ and its seminary program for youth are thriving and changing lives for those who choose to let them. **NE**



Throughout the world, seminary is bringing youth like you closer to Jesus Christ.



The Blessings of SEMINARY

By Brittany Beattie

Church Magazines

You are not alone in your decision to attend seminary. Throughout the world, hundreds of thousands of youth make seminary a part of their lives, reaching their classrooms by bus, canoe, bicycle, and more. Some youth wake up early and travel long distances to arrive in time, others make the journey in the evenings, and still others study at home for several days of the week.

Attending seminary requires sacrifice, but youth throughout the world are finding that seminary participation is worth every effort. And those who participate have something in common: their seminary experience brings them closer to the Savior and to our Heavenly Father.

Receiving Promised Blessings

Why is seminary so important for you? Some of the reasons include these promises from latter-day prophets and apostles:

- It “become[s] a godsend for the salvation of modern Israel in a most challenging hour.”¹
- It “will prepare you to present the message of the restored gospel to those you have opportunity to meet.”²
- It helps you “gain vital understanding of truth.”³

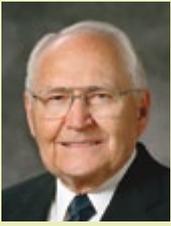
- Seminary “provides wonderful opportunities to learn the doctrines that will make you happy. It provides wonderful opportunities for socializing with those of your own kind.”⁴
- “Your knowledge of the gospel will be increased, your faith will be strengthened, and you will develop wonderful associations and friendships.”⁵
- “It yields . . . spiritual enrichment, moral strength to resist the evil that is all about us, as well as a tremendous increase in gospel scholarship.”⁶
- It is “one of the best preparations for a mission.”⁷

Finding a Way to Attend

Going to seminary often means you’ll have to give up something else you enjoy doing in order to find the time to attend. But it’s a sacrifice that’s worth making. Elijah B. of the Philippines chose to make that decision during her last year of high school. Throughout high school, she had always been second in her class. She was determined to place first her senior year and had even considered foregoing seminary, which she had attended in the years before, in order to meet her goal.

Then one day her thoughts changed. “I

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF SEMINARIES AND INSTITUTES; ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT GREER



A BLESSING WITH LIFELONG EFFECTS

"Many years ago I had the privilege of teaching early-morning seminary. The class was held between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. each school day. For two years I watched sleepy students stumble into class, challenging their instructor to wake them up. After prayer was offered and an inspirational thought given, I watched bright minds come alive to increase their knowledge of the scriptures. The most difficult part of the class was to terminate the discussion in time to send them on to their regular high school classes. As the school year progressed, I watched each student gain greater confidence, closer friendships, and a growing testimony of the gospel.

"A few years ago I was in a grocery store in a city not far from here when I heard someone call out my name. I turned to greet two of my former seminary students. They were now husband and wife. They introduced me to their four beautiful children. As we visited I was amazed with the number of seminary classmates they still had contact with after all these years. It was an evidence of a special bonding that had occurred in that very early morning seminary class."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Receive Truth," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 62.

[looked at] my study table," she says. "I saw a pile of books near it, my quadruple combination together with my seminary notebook and manual. Deep inside I asked myself, 'Which matters most?'"

Elijah found her answer in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." She decided to faithfully attend seminary and find other ways to balance her time in order to work on her academics. At the end of the year, she was named valedictorian and even won a university scholarship.

Spencer D. of Alabama, USA, decided to give up some social events so he could get the most from seminary. For his first two years of seminary, he woke up at 4:00 a.m. to attend, and the last two years he woke up at 5:00 a.m. He says, "I couldn't participate in a lot of late-evening activities with my friends because I would need to be in bed early. If I didn't, I would not be able to fully participate and learn the next morning." For Spencer, it wasn't just about showing up to class, it was also about being awake and prepared to learn.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "Just because something is *good* is not a sufficient reason for doing it. The number of good things we can do far exceeds the time

available to accomplish them. Some things are better than good, and these are the things that should command priority attention in our lives."⁸ That is important counsel to remember as you decide how to prioritize seminary in your schedule.

Preparing for Missions

Seminary also serves as a great preparation for the missionary work you will do—as a member missionary today and also if you serve as a full-time missionary in the future. Franco Marco M. of Peru knows that his scripture study in seminary has been helping him prepare for his full-time mission.

He says this preparation is worth getting up for seminary at 4:00 a.m., riding canoes when months of flooding hit the area, and then wading through mud to get to class. He says, "I want to finish seminary and start institute classes in order to be prepared for a mission. I am going to keep growing in the Church." Seminary is important to him because he learns about the scriptures and memorizes important verses, which will help him be a better missionary.

Being Blessed in All Aspects of Life

As youth around the world make the effort to attend seminary, they're receiving strength in much more than scripture study. Cameron L. of

England found that he was blessed in all areas of his life. “Not only does seminary help with the spiritual side of things, but it also helps with school and education,” says Cameron.

He says that “an early start to the day gets your brain into gear. Some of my friends said they were too busy to attend—well, it’s not like you’re going to be reviewing math at 6:00 a.m., are you?” As you study, “the Lord will help you in your exams, and if you go to seminary, He will help you even more,” says Cameron.

Of course, seminary helped Cameron strengthen his testimony as well. He says, “The beginning of my testimony came from the seminary program. At the youthful age of 14, I was really struggling in the gospel. I did not enjoy church, and I got up to things that I shouldn’t have. It was only a matter of months before I would have given up entirely.” But when a friend invited Cameron to attend seminary, he decided to go with her. Then the blessings really began to come.

“I began to feel the Spirit again,” says Cameron. “I started paying more attention in church and attended my Sunday School and priesthood lessons. It became easier, and I started to feel happier. I finally gained a

testimony of the gospel for myself.” After two months of seminary, Cameron met with his bishop and was ordained a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood.

Cameron knows that seminary helps him stand strong against the temptations of the world. “As seminary continued,” he says, “I found it easier to deal with the challenges that the world presents. It’s pretty tough being a youth in the world we live in—sin is surrounding us from all sides. I testify to you that if you attend seminary, you will find the strength to defend yourself against it. Seminary creates a spiritual shield to protect you. Many different trials and temptations have been thrown my way, and seminary has been such a huge help in keeping me on the strait and narrow.”

Strengthening One Another

Seminary also lets you gather with other teens who share your beliefs. Vika C. of Russia says, “I am inspired by like-minded people who hold similar moral standards and who believe in God as I do.” She adds, “If I have any questions, I can discuss them with my seminary teacher and other students. I can share my thoughts and my testimony with others to strengthen my own and others’ faith. By reading the scriptures together and pondering on their spiritual content, we get closer to God and each other.”

Ksenia G. of Ukraine has seen similar results. She says, “When we share our experiences with each other, we become stronger and we understand the scriptures better. When we





SEMINARY INFLUENCED THE LIFE OF PRESIDENT HENRY B. EYRING

Mildred Bennion was among the first class of seminary students at the Granite Seminary in 1912. She would later become the mother of President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.

She understood the importance of seminary in her life, and she wanted her children to have the same blessings she had felt from seminary, so her family made a big decision: “We moved to Utah at a considerable financial sacrifice in order that our sons could attend Seminaries and Institutes and find friends among our own people. That should answer the question of my feelings about such things” (quoted in C. Coleman, *History of Granite Seminary*, 142).

The importance of Church education continued in the Eyring family as President Henry B. Eyring in 1971 became president of Ricks College (now BYU–Idaho), a Church-owned college, and served as Commissioner of Church Education from 1980 to 1985 and again from 1992 to 2005.



Watch a Video

Watch President Eyring talk about his mother’s experience in the first seminary class of 1912 in a video at lds.org/go/423.

talk about examples from our lives during the lessons, I see the way the gospel works in my life and in the lives of others.”

Coming to Know Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ

A group of youth were recently asked how seminary has blessed them. Their answers reveal a major theme—that seminary helps them draw closer to Heavenly Father and the Savior. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “All of the topics that you study in seminary are important. Each year as you focus on one of the volumes of scripture, the central focus is the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁹

Here’s what several of these teens said about how seminary has brought them closer to Jesus Christ.

- “I’ve learned what the Savior does for me, reading all of these accounts from numerous prophets and realizing how important I am to Him. I realize that He loved me enough to die and suffer for my pain.”
- “Seminary is a great way to start my day. No matter how tired I am, I feel the Spirit and feel strengthened so that when hard things come up in my day, I know without a doubt that my Savior loves me, and I’m more confident to stand up for what is right.”
- “I am a convert to the Church. I started taking seminary before I even got baptized. Without seminary, I don’t know if I would have been baptized at all. Without seminary, I wouldn’t have the Savior in my life right now or know that I can be forgiven for my sins. I never really had Heavenly Father or Jesus Christ in my life. Seminary helped me find Them and have Them become forever a part of my life and my future kids’ lives.”
- “Going to seminary every day helped me grow closer to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through learning about His teachings, His great love for me, and how I can return to live with Him.”
- “When I am in seminary, I find a deeper meaning in the scriptures. It helps remind me every morning to be Christlike in my daily doings.”
- “Seminary taught me how to read my scriptures and not only to enjoy it but also to find application in the text. I learned doctrines and principles that helped strengthen my testimony of a loving Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, which I will take with me for the rest of my life.”

With so many blessings that come from attending seminary, it’s easy to see why youth around the world are making it a priority in their schedules. **NE**

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, *Teach the Scriptures* (address to Church Educational System educators, Oct. 14, 1977), 3.
2. L. Tom Perry, "Raising the Bar," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 48.
3. Richard G. Scott, "Realize Your Full Potential," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 42.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stand True and Faithful," *Ensign*, May 1996, 93.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Miracle Made Possible by Faith," *Ensign*, May 1984, 47.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The State of the Church," *Ensign*, May 1991, 52.
7. Ezra Taft Benson, "Our Responsibility to Share the Gospel," *Ensign*, May 1985, 7.
8. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104.
9. David A. Bednar, "Conclusion and Testimony," *Welcome to Seminary 2010–2011*, seminary.lds.org/welcome.

THE HISTORY OF SEMINARY

This year, seminary celebrates its 100-year anniversary. Here's a look at how seminary has grown over the years.

- 1888: President Wilford Woodruff oversees the formation of the Church Board of Education to direct the Church's educational efforts, including after-school religion classes.
- 1912: Organization of the first daily released-time seminary classes, totaling 70 students who leave high school for one class period to attend seminary. Classes are taught across the street from Granite High School in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.
- 1925: Enrollment reaches 10,000 students.
- 1948: Made available in Canada, the first country outside of the USA to have seminary.
- 1950: Organization of daily seminary (previously called "early-morning seminary") classes in California, where students meet in Church meetinghouses before school starts.
- 1958: Enrollment reaches 50,000 students.
- 1958: Made available in Central America, introduced first in Mexico.
- 1962: Made available in Europe, introduced first in Finland and Germany.
- 1963: Made available in Asia, introduced first in Japan.
- 1965: Enrollment reaches 100,000 students.
- 1967: Launch of home-study seminary in rural communities, where students study at home four days a week and meet together for one day each week.
- 1968: Made available in Australia.
- 1969: Made available in South America, introduced first in Brazil.
- 1972: Made available in Africa, introduced first in South Africa.
- 1983: Enrollment reaches 200,000 students.
- 1991: Enrollment reaches 300,000 students.
- 2012: Available in 134 countries and territories worldwide, with around 375,000 students enrolled.





THE CHALLENGE

By Matthew D. Flitton

Church Magazines

When I was a child, my parents took me to church only occasionally. I was baptized and ordained a deacon, but attending church was not a big part of our lives. By the time I was 14, I wasn't attending church at all. I was in the middle of yet another custody battle between my parents. When I moved in with my mom, I had no motivation to study, because I saw no purpose in my life. A lot of people stayed away from me in my new school because I wore black clothing and combat boots. My grades were terrible. That was the year I entered ninth grade.

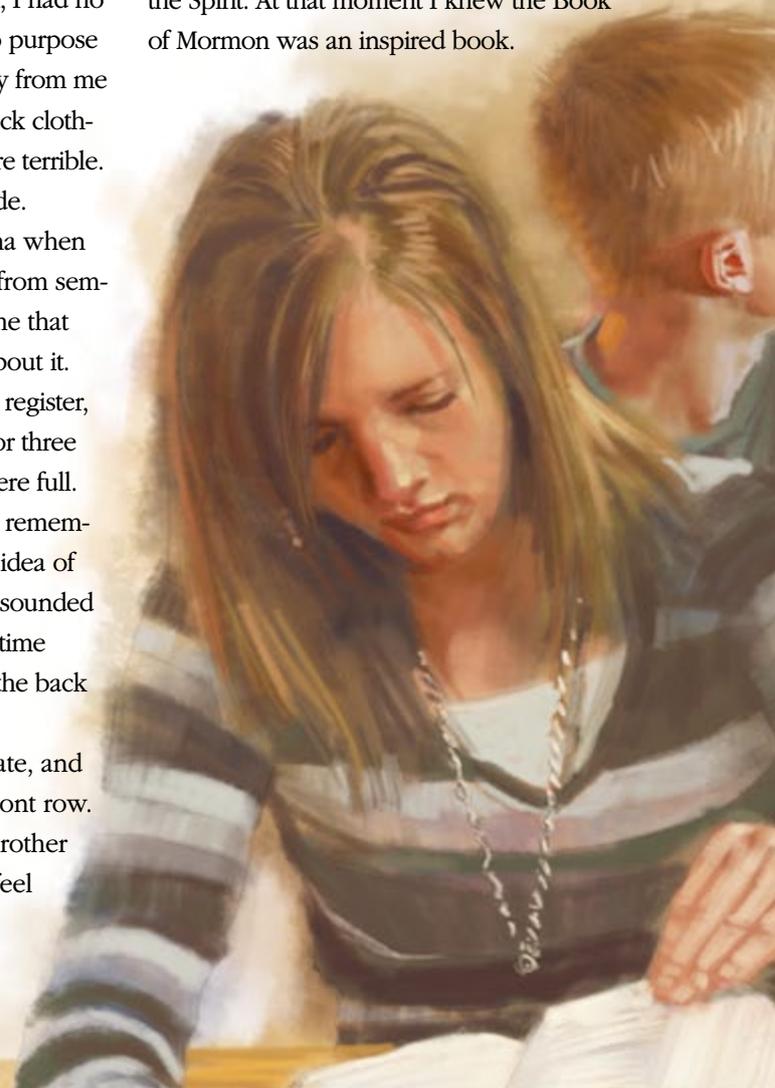
One day I was visiting my grandma when she told me that if I would graduate from seminary, she would give me \$100. For me that was a lot of money. I said I'd think about it.

When I went to my new school to register, the school counselor signed me up for three shop classes because other classes were full. I didn't want to take shop, and then I remembered Grandma's offer. Suddenly the idea of getting out of shop *and* getting \$100 sounded pretty good. I signed up for released-time seminary. I went to class, but I sat in the back and participated as little as possible.

One day I got to seminary class late, and the only seat available was on the front row. I sat down and heard our teacher, Brother Peck, say, "I don't know why, but I feel like we need to watch this today."

I didn't start out going to seminary for the right reasons, but I ended up in the right place.

We watched *How Rare a Possession*, a movie about how the Book of Mormon affected the lives of different people. As the movie ended and we got up to leave, something unexpected happened: I realized that I felt peaceful. It was such a foreign feeling that I wondered what it could mean. An impression came: I was feeling the Spirit. At that moment I knew the Book of Mormon was an inspired book.



I started going to church with some friends in our neighborhood. But then we moved and I stopped going.

In my new school I signed up for seminary. I began reading the scriptures daily. One night it hit me just how much my life needed changing. I had been learning about the gospel, but I hadn't been living it. I was still hanging out with people who made it difficult to live righteously. I knew I had to get serious about changing my life. The next day I went and talked to Brother Porter, my seminary teacher. He told me when and where my ward met.

The next Sunday I went to church but sat down in the back of the chapel. It took a while to make friends because of my reputation, but I kept going





The testimony I had gained through seminary was worth far more than any amount of money.

each week because I knew that was where I was supposed to be. For my 15th birthday, my other grandma gave me a gift certificate for a haircut and some new clothes. A few days later I was ordained a teacher.

When general conference came, Brother Porter gave us an assignment to watch at least one session. I put off the assignment until Sunday morning. When the session started, I rolled over in my bed and turned on the TV. As I watched President Thomas S. Monson, then the Second Counselor in the First Presidency, talk about the history of the Church in the German Democratic Republic, I felt that same feeling of peace. I recognized it as the Spirit testifying that I was listening to prophets. That afternoon my mom and brothers went grocery shopping. I stayed home to watch another session.

By that point I had made two very important decisions: I would live the gospel, and I wanted to get married in the temple. But I wasn't going to spend two years on a mission. Then our seminary teacher gave some lessons on missionary work. By the end of the week, I knew that going on a mission was the right thing to do.

I went to the bishop to get a recommend for my patriarchal blessing. Through that experience, I learned that God had a plan for my life. That knowledge helped me form my own plans for the future. My grades improved, and I started getting involved in clubs and activities at school. I was assigned to be a home teacher with a neighbor, who taught me about service and how a priesthood holder should live.

Despite the changes I made, my life wasn't easy. In some ways it became more difficult. Going to church meant more conflicts with my family over the kinds of activities we engaged in on Sunday and the kinds of movies we watched. Most of the time I went to church by myself. I missed out on dinners, movies, and visits to amusement parks. But that was more than made up for by the Spirit I felt. The Holy Ghost comforted me in difficult times and taught me as I read the scriptures.

When I graduated from high school and seminary, my grandma gave me the promised check for \$100. I thanked her and told her I didn't want it, but she insisted. The testimony I had gained of a loving Heavenly Father, the Savior, the Holy Ghost, the restored Church, and prophets who lead us today was worth far more than any amount of money. **NE**



2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Apostle Paul taught how the scriptures bless our lives.



All Scripture

“When we want to speak to God, we pray. And when we want Him to speak to us, we search the scriptures; for His words are spoken through His prophets. He will then teach us as we listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

“If you have not heard His voice speaking to you lately, return with new eyes and new ears to the scriptures. They are our spiritual lifeline.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Holy Scriptures: The Power of God unto Our Salvation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 26–27.

Good Works

What kinds of good works do the scriptures help you prepare to do? Here are a few of the more obvious ones. Can you think of more? Write about them in your journal.

- Serving as a full-time missionary
- Fulfilling Church callings (such as quorum and class presidencies)
- Teaching the gospel
- Bearing testimony
- Sharing the gospel
- Answering friends’ questions about the Church (see [lds.org/go/424](https://www.lds.org/go/424) for ideas)

Correction

The original Greek word used in the Bible literally means “straightening up again.” So the scriptures help keep you in line and following the straight and narrow path (see 2 Nephi 9:41).

16 “All ^bscripture is given by ^cinspiration of God, and is ^dprofitable for ^edoctrine, for ^freproof, for ^gcorrection, for ^hinstruction in ⁱrighteousness:

17 That the man of God may be ^jperfect, ^kthoroughly furnished unto all ^lgood works.

Reproof

Reproof—rebuke, chastening, scolding, or correction, usually in a kind manner.

Furnished

Furnished—equipped, supplied.

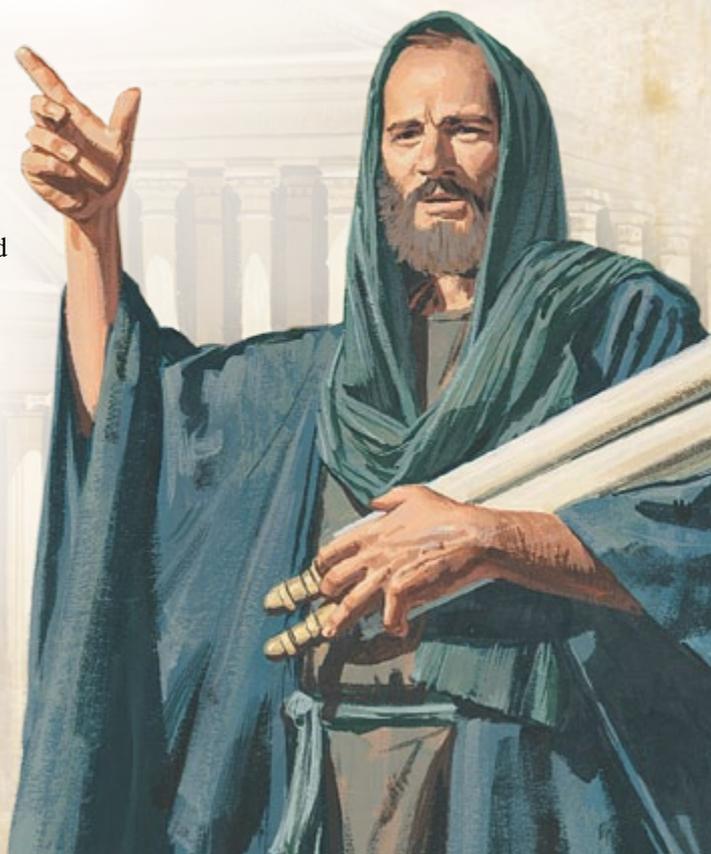


Doctrine

“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Do Not Fear,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 79.

Editors’ note: This page is not meant to be a comprehensive explanation of the selected scripture verse, only a starting point for your own study.



“Why do I need to go to seminary if I can just study the scriptures on my own?”

You will have the rest of your life to study the scriptures by yourself, so take advantage of the opportunity in seminary to study the scriptures with excellent teachers and friends now.

Learning and studying under the direction of a good teacher helps you gain new insight about scriptures that you may not have truly understood. The teacher might also share teachings from prophets and other Church leaders that give you a better understanding of the scriptures.

Also, it's often more enjoyable to learn with your class. You will have a chance to talk about the things you discover as you read. Your classmates may have had experiences that made certain scriptures their favorites. Hearing their experiences can bring the scriptures to life for you. And because you study the gospel with others, you can enjoy this promised blessing: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, . . . there will I be in the midst of them” (D&C 6:32).

Seminary also creates a structure for your study. You are motivated to read at a certain rate, which helps you finish each book of scripture. You have the opportunity to discuss and memorize scripture mastery verses. You can be guaranteed to gain more from the scriptures by taking seminary than almost any other way at this time in your life. **NE**

New Friends, New Ideas



In seminary you meet new friends, and you become close to each other, like a family. You learn many new things that you would not know on your own. It is fun and very spiritual. It makes sure you start your day off right. If you don't participate now, start and it will change your life.

Katarina B., 16, California, USA

Stronger Testimony



First, the Lord says that where two or three people gather in His name, He will be with them (see Matthew 18:20; D&C 6:32). Feeling His Spirit can help us

ponder what He has done for us. Second, when studying scriptures with others, we can better understand what is written. While listening to each other, we can hear something that we have not noticed ourselves, and the same can happen with others when we share our knowledge. Third, when I go to the seminary, my testimony is strengthened. Seminary is an opportunity to share our testimonies and listen to other people's testimonies. It helps us stay on the right path.

Dmitri G., 16, Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine

Perfect Combination



Seminary is an uplifting experience. Sometimes just studying on your own isn't enough. Personal study and seminary are the perfect combination.

The teachers are amazing, and if you have any questions, your teachers and classmates can help you answer them.

Dawson D., 15, Idaho, USA

Happiness



Seminary opens up my day. It makes me a happier person and more willing to discuss the gospel with other people. We go more in depth in the scriptures, so I understand more.

Madi S., 15, Colorado, USA

More Understanding



When I study the holy scriptures alone, I don't have as much fun as when I study with others. Plus, we can learn interesting ideas from others when we study the scriptures together. Through seminary I've learned about a lot of interesting stories, and I know more about the background of scriptures, which makes the study much more exciting! I am glad I decided to join seminary.

Rebecca M., 16, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

Lessons from Others



Going to seminary is a must for me. Not only does my devoted teacher teach and explain the truths found in the scriptures, but I also learn so much from our class discussions. Other students share their experiences on things they've learned, and they have helped me gain more knowledge about the gospel and the Savior and His Atonement. It is not enough to study on my own, for I have found some of the answers to my problems in class discussions. I can testify that seminary plays a vital part in

nourishing my testimony of the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Denzel J., 15, Western Samoa

Light and Truth



When I go to seminary, I seek light and truth and put on the whole armor of God (see D&C 27:15–18). That armor helps me recognize His voice at all times and in all places. Daily scripture study strengthens my faith and my testimony and helps me be strong in my trials. Attending seminary is one of the best ways to find light and truth and to study the scriptures and meditate.

Nohemi M., 17, Puebla, Mexico

Three Reasons

First, because I want to serve a mission, I attend seminary. Missionaries need to get up early and study the gospel in the morning. Attending seminary helps me develop the good habit of getting up early. Second, in the morning, we are clearheaded, so we can concentrate on our learning and study [see D&C

88:124]. It is wise to use the best hours in a day to learn about God. Third, if I study on my own, I might not have understanding as deep as my teacher does. With her guidance and teaching, I can learn much more than I do by myself.

H. Chen Yuan, 16, T'ai-chung, Taiwan

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



BLESSINGS OF SEMINARY

"I know the power that comes from associations in the seminary and institute programs. It has enriched my life, and I know it will do the same for you. It will put a shield of protection around you to keep you free from the temptations and trials of the world. There is a great blessing in having a knowledge of the gospel. And I know of no better place for the young people of the Church to gain a special knowledge of sacred things than in the institute and seminary programs."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Receive Truth," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 61–62.

NEXT QUESTION

"How do I explain to my friend why breaking the law of chastity is a bad idea?"

Send your answer and photo by May 15, 2012.

Go to newera.lds.org, click "Submit Material," and then select "Questions and Answers."

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

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

MORMONAD

GET INTO THE SCRIPTURES

Let seminary transform you.

(See 1 Nephi 19:23.)

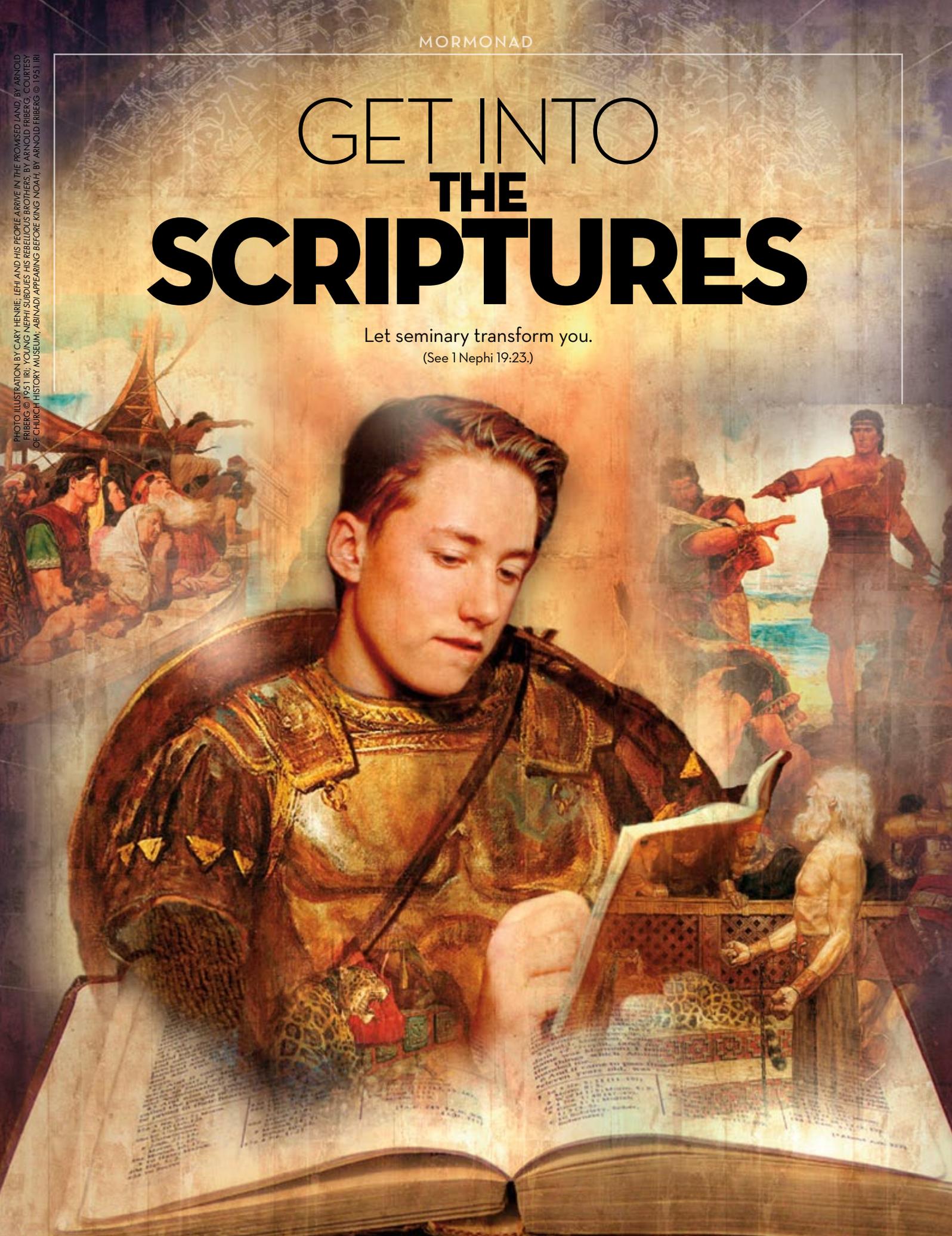
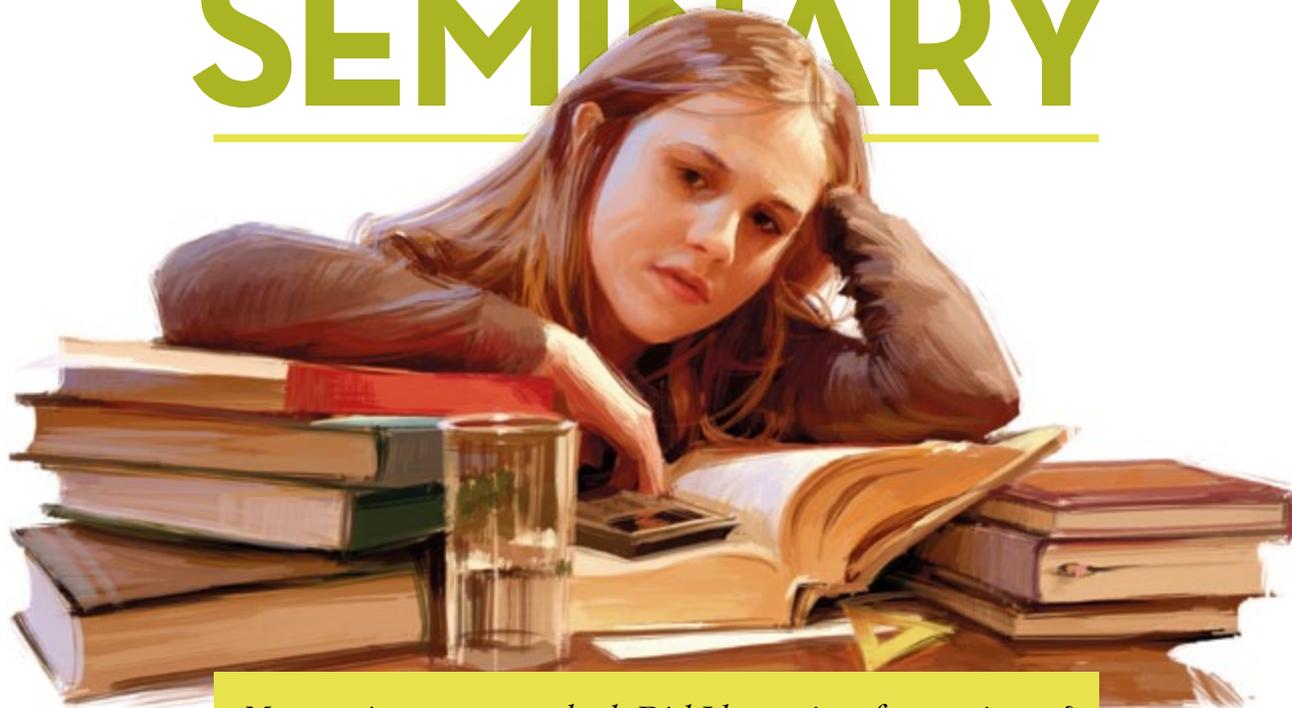


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CARY HENRIE. LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND. BY ARNOLD FRIBERG © 1951 IRI. YOUNG NEPHI SURVIVES HIS REBELLIOUS BROTHERS. BY ARNOLD FRIBERG. COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM. ABINADI APPEARING BEFORE KING NOAH. BY ARNOLD FRIBERG © 1951 IRI

GOING BACK TO SEMINARY



My evenings were packed. Did I have time for seminary?

By Whitney Wallace Denney

As a junior in high school, I worked away from my family in Washington, D.C., through a program whose schedule dictated that school start at 6:45 a.m. When school ended, work at the capitol continued until 5:30 p.m. at the earliest. Seminary started at 6:00 p.m. and took an hour and a half from my evening. I rarely had time to finish my homework before falling—exhausted—into bed. I didn't have time, I told myself, to do everything, and I decided seminary was the only thing that could go.

So, I quit seminary. I was confident I would make up the credit somehow and that I would still be able to graduate, and I reasoned to myself that it wouldn't affect my entrance into the celestial kingdom or cause me to lose my testimony if I didn't go to seminary for a few months.

Everything seemed fine, except that my grades dropped. My math teacher put me in mandatory study hall for an hour every night for several weeks. After three months without seminary, my friend convinced me to go just one Friday night. I agreed reluctantly. Deep down, I truly did

want to go, but I was too embarrassed to walk sheepishly into the classroom after my three-month absence.

However, my whole outlook changed the moment I entered the room. A feeling of peace and contentment flooded over me, wiping away my embarrassment and apprehension. I couldn't believe that I had let myself remove a constant source of strength and peace from my life, especially at a time when I was away from my family and needed extra strength to stand as a witness of Christ. I wondered how I could have let myself leave the place that made me happy. That night I made a commitment to attend seminary consistently.

I followed through with that commitment, and I was never put in mandatory study hall again. Even though I still struggled with math, my grades came up and stayed up, and I passed with a good grade. I know that Heavenly Father provided a way for me to follow His commandments and that He blessed me so that I could do more in His hands than I could do by myself. **NE**

WHY Seminary?

PARTICIPATE IN SEMINARY

"Seminary will help you to understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ. You will feel the Spirit of the Lord as you learn to love the scriptures. You will prepare yourselves for the temple and for missionary service.

"Young people, I ask you to participate in seminary. Study your scriptures daily. Listen to your teachers carefully. Apply what you learn prayerfully."

President Thomas S. Monson,
"Participate in Seminary,"
seminary.lds.org.

What would you say is the most important thing a student can gain from seminary and institute? When a group of seminary students asked the Commissioner of the Church Educational System, Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy, this same question, he answered that the most important thing you could gain is "the real testimony that Jesus is the Christ. The understanding that the *real* knowledge is the spiritual knowledge. It's what comes from the Holy Ghost to our souls individually. That's the most powerful truth, the most powerful thing that can come out of seminary and institute. It doesn't just change what you know; it changes who you are, and it changes how you look at the world. And that kind of higher education helps to make your other education complete" ("A Higher Education," *New Era*, Apr. 2009, 15).

Elder Johnson is one of the many General Authorities who have spoken about the wonderful blessings that come from attending seminary and institute. So if you're wondering why you should go to seminary, here are more good reasons from prophets and apostles.

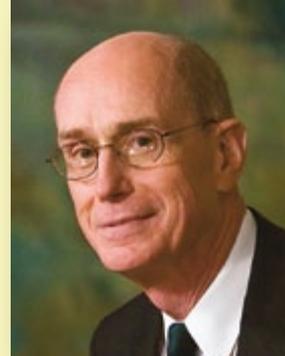


LAY A FOUNDATION FOR HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS

"The seminary programs will help you as a young man or woman to lay a foundation for happiness and success in life."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Now Is the Time to Serve a Mission!" *Ensign*, May 2006, 88.





LEARN THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL

"I wish every boy and girl could go to seminary, because that is where they learn many of the truths of the gospel. Seminary is where many of them get their ideals settled in their minds about what they are going to do, and they go on missions."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), "President Kimball Speaks Out on Being a Missionary," *New Era*, May 1981, 49.

GIVE IT PRIORITY

"Students, if your values are in place, you will not hesitate to forego an elective class that may decorate your life in favor of instruction which can hold together the very foundation of it. Then, once enrolled, attend, study, and learn. Persuade your friends to do the same. You will never regret it; this I promise you."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Agency and Control," *Ensign*, May 1983, 67.



INVITE BLESSINGS INTO YOUR LIFE

"I am grateful for the seminary system in the Church and for the institute program of the Church. I want to urge every high school student here to take advantage of the seminary program. Your lives will be blessed the greater if you do."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, Dec. 1995, 67.

DISCOVER THREE THINGS SEMINARY CAN DO

"There are three powerful things seminary can do. First, it puts young people together who share the same values. Youth like to be with others who share their faith and who love the scriptures. Second, it puts youth together with a teacher who has a testimony, and they can feel the fire of it when it is borne. Third, seminary gets young people into the scriptures."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "A Discussion on Scripture Study," *Ensign*, July 2005, 25.

BE A SEMINARY GRADUATE

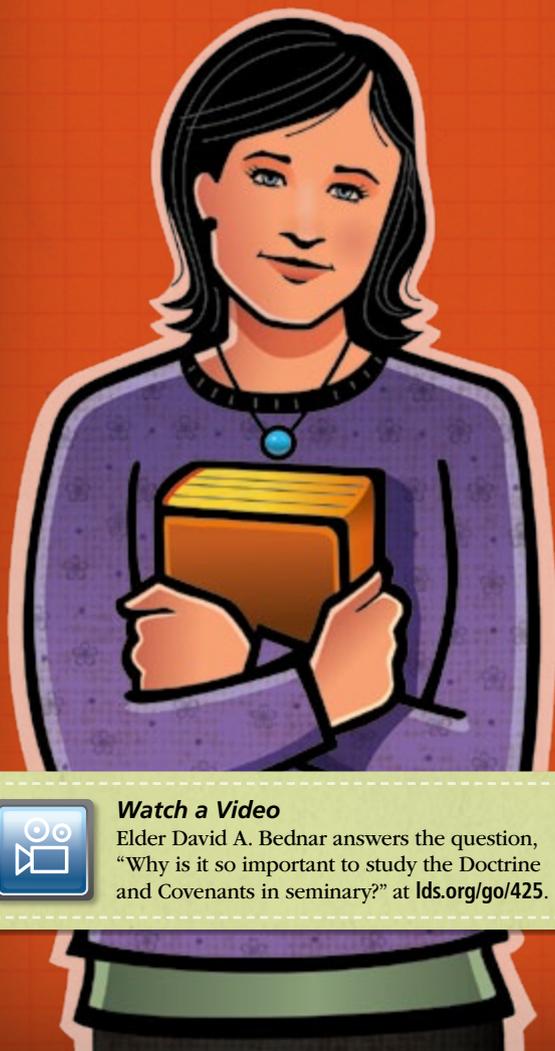
"Regularly attend seminary and be a seminary graduate. Seminary instruction is one of the most significant spiritual experiences a young man [and woman] can have."

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), "To the Youth of the Noble Birthright," *Ensign*, May 1986, 44; "To the Young Women of the Church," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 82.



LEARNING — TO — *Love* — THE — DOCTRINE *and* COVENANTS

The Doctrine and Covenants didn't seem to speak to me, but then I actually read it.



Watch a Video

Elder David A. Bednar answers the question, “Why is it so important to study the Doctrine and Covenants in seminary?” at lds.org/go/425.

By Jennifer Ricks

For a long time, whenever I searched the Topical Guide or the index of the scriptures to write a talk, I preferred finding scriptures in the Book of Mormon, the New Testament, and even the Old Testament over scriptures in the Doctrine and Covenants. Sure, a lot of the information in the Old Testament has old book names and seems hard to understand, but the Doctrine and Covenants has just numbers—no interesting book names at all.

My feelings about the Doctrine and Covenants changed when we studied it in seminary. I had already tried to read through the entire standard works during my personal scripture study, which I had started when I was eight, but I had skipped the Doctrine and Covenants. The Doctrine and Covenants seemed to be just tedious numbers and instruction—no storylines, no main characters, no wars, no challenges. How could it mean something to me?

So the Church history and Doctrine and Covenants year of study came. During my previous two years of seminary, I had fulfilled my goal to read the entire book of study (the New Testament and then Book of Mormon) as we studied it in seminary throughout the school year. I couldn't skip that goal just because of a bunch of boring numbers, so I took up the challenge.

Throughout the year, my seminary teacher taught us the historical context of each section in the Doctrine and Covenants. This instruction really helped me understand what I read on my own. The greatest thing I learned that year in seminary was that I was wrong—the Doctrine and Covenants is not a book of boring numbers that doesn't apply to me. On the contrary, I found that I connected to this book of scripture in a special way because the people the Lord talks to in the Doctrine and Covenants are a lot closer to me in lifestyle and time period than the people in any other book of scripture.

My experience with the Doctrine and Covenants taught me that if, for whatever reason, I feel uninterested in any type of gospel instruction, I'm usually missing out on something great. With patience and a sincere desire to learn, I came to appreciate the Lord's revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as all the writings of ancient and modern prophets. Through this experience the Holy Ghost touched me and the gospel blessed my life every day. **NE**

WHAT COMES AFTER SEMINARY?

Seminary graduation isn't the end of your religious studies. Something wonderful is still in store for you.

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

In seminary you study the scriptures and probably meet with others your age regularly. You feel welcome, and you can feel the Spirit. So when you've completed seminary, are these experiences over? Absolutely not.

The Church's institute program is the next step, and you'll love it. Whether you're going to college or not, you can continue to learn about the gospel, prepare for a mission and temple marriage, and share experiences with others your age.

Here are some answers to basic questions about institute. You can find out more at institute.lds.org.

What is institute?

Institute consists of gospel study classes, including classes on the scriptures, teachings of the prophets, and preparation for a mission or temple marriage. In some institutes you can choose from multiple classes.

Who can attend?

All young single adults are strongly encouraged to attend institute classes. Anyone—married or single—between the ages of 18 and 30 can attend.



FACTS ABOUT INSTITUTE

Number of students:
over 350,000

Number of locations:
over 2,500

Number of courses available: 15 basic courses, plus several other custom courses

First institute: Moscow, Idaho, USA (1926)

First institute outside the U.S. and Canada: Mexico (1959)

Purpose of institute:
To help young adults understand and rely on the teachings and Atonement of Jesus Christ, qualify for the blessings of the temple, and prepare themselves, their families, and others for eternal life with their Father in Heaven.

Where can I find institute?

Some areas have institute buildings near colleges and universities. In other areas classes are held in Church buildings or other locations. Contact your bishop or branch president to learn about the institute program in your area, or go to institute.lds.org to find an institute near you.

Why should I take institute classes?

President Thomas S. Monson has said: "Make participation in institute a priority. . . . Think of it. Friends will be made, the Spirit will be felt, and faith will be strengthened. I promise you that as you participate in institute and study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased" (institute.lds.org, Apr. 21, 2009). **NE**





A PATCHWORK OF PROGRESS

By Mindy Raye Friedman

Church Magazines

Several young women sit in a living room on a Sunday evening, talking about the gospel, as they are all wrapped up in patchwork quilts. The scene doesn't seem so unusual until you know it's the middle of summer in Utah, and it's very warm outside.

One of the young women comments on the situation. "It's not that the house is cold or anything," she says. "We're all wrapped up in our blankets because it's just comforting."

It's comforting because these quilts have become a big part of their lives. Each young woman earned the squares on her quilt and stitched the final product together. The quilts have a very special meaning because of the growth each young woman went through as she collected squares for a year and sewed her quilt together.

From Pizza Box to Patchwork Pile

When the leaders of the ward introduced the quilt project, they gave each young woman an unused pizza box with two quilt squares inside. Some of the young women were confused and not sure if they would ever have enough squares to make a quilt.

"When I got the two squares in a box, I thought, 'How am I supposed to make a quilt out of two squares?'" says Maren M., 16.



These young women learned that their lives are a lot like a patchwork quilt—they are pieced together one square at a time.



But over the next year, the young women gained more squares. They earned a square for each Young Women lesson they attended and for special occasions like holidays, camp, and New Beginnings. They got squares for finishing Personal Progress value experiences and for reading the Book of Mormon. On her birthday, each young woman was given a large block with a picture of her favorite temple.

“When our leaders explained the whole project to me, I did not want to sew a quilt, so I was just going to put it off,” says Katie W., 13. “Then I started getting the quilt squares every week, and I was so excited because they were so cute. Then it built up into this huge pile.”

“Two quilt squares at a time didn’t seem like anything,” says Abby M., 14. “They were just two little squares of fabric, and I didn’t think much of it. But slowly as I’d take them home from church and put them in my box, the pile just grew and grew and became a stack. Then before long, it was already time to sew them together.”

The First Stitch

Most of the young women in the ward had never used a sewing machine before and had no idea how to sew a quilt. So each young woman received help from a mother, grandmother, or Relief Society sister.

“I got to go up to Idaho and work with my grandma on it,” says Mikayla S., 14. “I don’t get to see or talk to her very often, so it was really nice to go up and work on something with her. I also learned that I like to sew.”

Mikayla wasn’t the only one who found a new talent in sewing. “I didn’t know how good I’d be at sewing, but I knew my grandma would be there to help me,” Abby says. “It actually just came naturally. It was a cool skill that I figured out I could do, and it was fun.”

Since making their quilts, some of the young women have even used their sewing skills for other projects. Maren made pillows for the young women she was in charge of at camp. Katie made headbands as Christmas gifts for her friends at school.



SPIRITUAL POWER

“True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Be Strong in the Lord,” *Ensign*, July 2004, 8.

in the end it builds up a big, beautiful blanket—or a big, beautiful testimony.”

Abby agrees with that. “My quilt is like my testimony,” she says. “It’s like the quilt squares are all the little parts that come together and make me all of the things that I value in life, all the things that I treasure.”

Centered around the Temple

All of the young women treasure their quilts and the experiences that led them to finish the quilts. It’s a reminder of what they have accomplished.

“My favorite square would probably be the Book of Mormon challenge because that was the first time I read the Book of Mormon all the way through,” Mikayla says.

Like Mikayla, each of the young women can point to her favorite squares and remember the experiences that go along with them. Those experiences will help the young women as they look to the future.

“I sleep with my quilt every night,” Katie says. “Every night before I go to bed, I look at the temple, and it reminds me that that’s where I need to end up.”



More Than Just a Quilt

In addition to learning how to sew, the young women learned other lessons.

“I learned patience, because I’m not very good at sewing, and I had to be patient with myself and my imperfections,” says Amanda W., 16.

Madison S., 15, learned how to be humble and ask for help with her quilt. “That happens a lot in our lives,” she says. “We don’t know how to do everything we want to do, and we have to ask Heavenly Father and our leaders and those who have gone before us how they did it and how we can then do it. It’s really helpful to me.”

During the project, the young women also had the opportunity to strengthen their testimonies through the experiences that the squares represented.

“It’s the squares on the quilt that represent my testimony,” Katie says. “That’s how it is in my life. You can’t just expect a testimony to come all at once. You have to wait; you have to get it one piece at a time. It comes slowly, but

Many young women put the temple image in the middle of their quilts to remind them the temple is their focus.

“Going to the temple is one of my biggest goals,” Amanda says. “The temple is the first thing I notice when I see my quilt. I think it gives me a sense of direction.”

Maren says that when she sees the temple on her quilt, it reminds her of how she wants to go there. “It helps me to remember to dress modestly when I get ready for school and to make good choices as I go throughout the day,” she says.

The young women are all glad they accomplished this project, and they look forward to the things that they will accomplish in the future as they continue to progress and gain the pieces that will make up their lives. **NE**



See More Photos Online

Head online to youth.lds.org to see more photos of these young women and their quilts. You can link directly to the article at lds.org/go/426.

"If a 72-hour kit is for basic survival needs, we'd better leave room for a cell phone, laptop, and flat screen TV in there."



JON CLARK

"Let me guess—you passed your Eagle Scout board of review?"



KEVIN BECKSTROM

"So, is this your first steak dance?"



DALTON JOHNSON

"We'd like to share a message with you about the law of tithing."



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

Harmony at HOME

What was that awful noise? It was Dad teaching us how to get along.

I will never forget that family night. My dad taught the lesson. He sat down at the piano, raised his hands in the air, and then brought them down hard on the keys, banging out a terrible sound. We all covered our ears and frowned. The noise was terrible.

After a moment, he lifted his hands to the keys again. This time he played a beautiful melody. The sound was lovely and refreshing. Then he turned and faced us.

“Harmony,” he said, “is a group of notes working together. It creates a beautiful sound.” We all agreed. He challenged us to make our home a house of harmony—working together, avoiding contention, and creating beautiful music.

That lesson left a profound impact on me. Even today when I hear quarreling among family members, I remember the terrible noise he made on the piano and the beautiful contrast of harmony.

Think about the role you play in your family. Do you cause contention or harmony in your home? Following are some ideas to help you be a “positive note.”

- **Obey family rules and curfews.** Obedience may seem restricting at times, but it can actually build your parents’ trust in you and help your family and your life function more smoothly.

- **Respond with respect.** Be polite in conversations with parents and siblings. Even if you feel that you are right, decide to disagree without being disagreeable. Honor your parents through love and obedience. When family members are treated with respect, they will listen more willingly to you.

- **Go the extra mile.** Everyone loves to have some unexpected help. You could do the dishes when it’s not your turn, volunteer to run an errand, help someone with homework, and do your chores cheerfully. Even simple acts of service can make a big difference.

- **Attend meals.** Even if school, church, and extracurricular activities keep you busy, make every effort to be home at mealtime. When families eat together, it gives them a chance to converse, laugh, and build relationships. Besides, it’s more fun than eating alone!

- **Talk often.** Parents and family members want to know what’s happening in your life. Make it a habit to tell them about your day. Share your successes and sorrows, and listen to theirs. Open communication develops trust and friendship.



• **Be a peacemaker.** Make a conscious decision to be positive, and your influence will be far-reaching. Whistle, hum a cheerful tune, or even sing around the house. Help find solutions to family problems and concerns. Your family may not be a symphony yet, but you can still help to create a beautiful melody. **NE**



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“Can you make a difference in your family? Yes, you can! . . . Eternal families are made up of individuals. ‘Do your part to build a happy home’ (*For the Strength of Youth* [2001], 10). Establish patterns of righteousness in your life. And be an example of the believers. The Lord is depending on you to assist in the exaltation of your eternal family.”

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, “Strengthen Home and Family,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 13.



By Lisa A. Smith
Seminaries and Institutes

Lessons from the Final Days of the

The first four books of the New Testament, or the “Gospels,” are some of the most celebrated books of scripture because they tell of the mortal life of Jesus Christ. The scriptures that cover the last week of the Savior’s life make up about one third of the record of the Gospels. By reading and studying these scriptures, we learn that the Savior was a Being of divine power who willingly gave His life as a sacrifice. He also fulfilled the prophecy that the “Lamb of God” would come to take upon Himself our sins (see Isaiah 53:7).

The Savior returned to the Jerusalem area for the final time with a purpose. When the Savior returned to Jerusalem during what is called His triumphal entry, it was to the shouts of many who received Him as their king. During the next several days, He would perform miracles, teach parables, and cleanse the temple a second time.

As the end of the week drew near, He turned His attention to the most important tasks to be accomplished—the Atonement and Resurrection—allowing all those who follow Him to return to the presence of Heavenly Father.

The Savior Told the Apostles of His Crucifixion and Resurrection Beforehand

The Savior is a Being of divine power and authority who willingly gave up His life. He was not taken and arrested without His foreknowledge. He allowed Himself

to be arrested to fulfill the will of His Heavenly Father. The Savior spoke to His disciples of His Crucifixion and Resurrection beforehand.

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day” (Matthew 16:21).

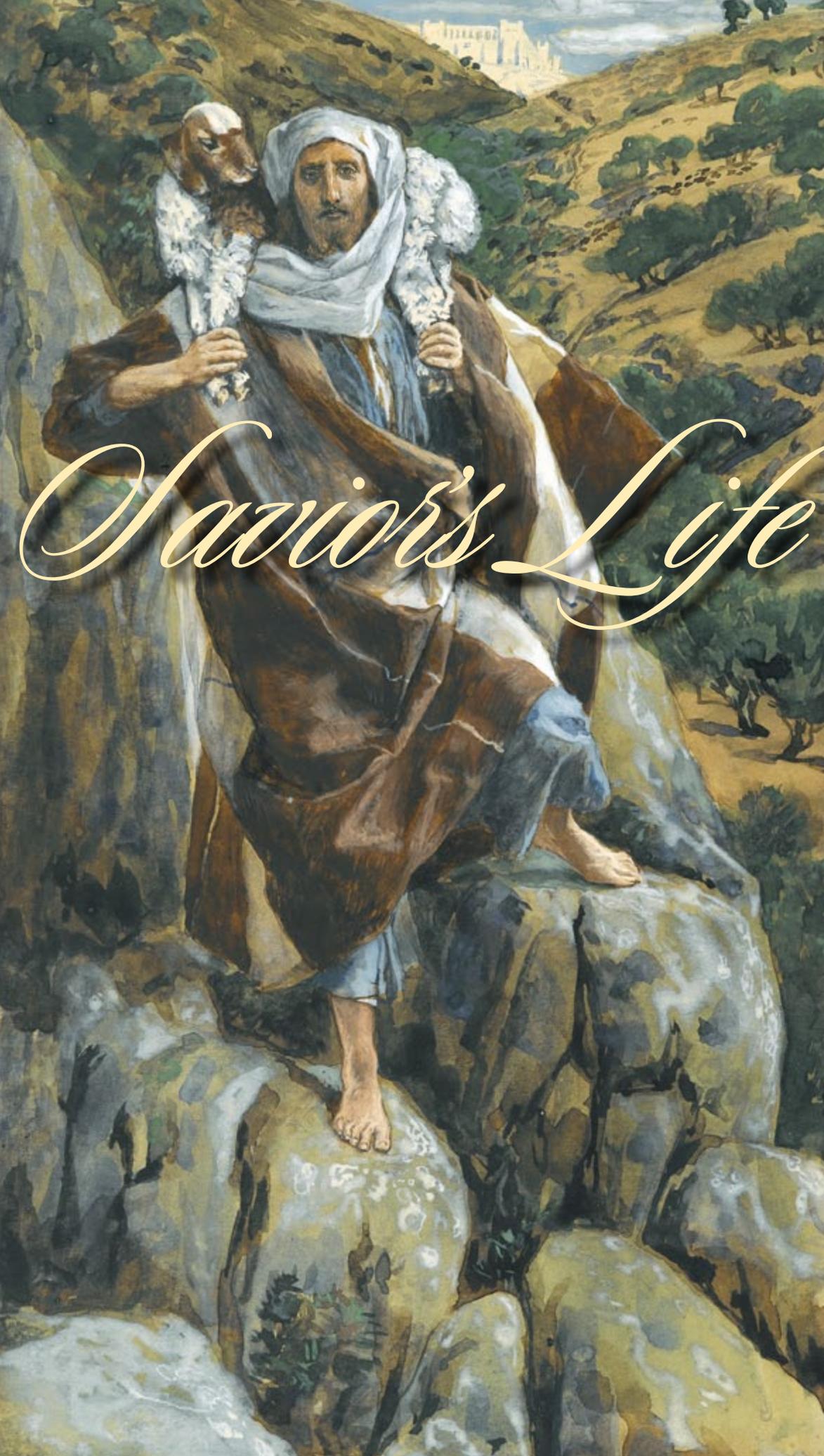
“Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified” (Matthew 26:2).

The Savior Is the Lamb of God

Jesus came to Jerusalem during the week of Passover to fulfill the scriptures—to give His life as the sacrificial lamb. One of Jesus’s titles is the Lamb of God. John the Baptist called Him the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul called Christ “our passover.”

Lambs were used in temple worship. They had to be both the firstborn and without blemish to symbolize the Savior’s great sacrifice. During the Passover each family would partake of a lamb that was slain to symbolize the Messiah, who would come to take their sins upon Him.

When the Savior was arrested, faithful Jewish households were likely celebrating the Passover, while the Savior, the *Lamb of God*, was taken to be sacrificed to fulfill the scripture.



Savior's Life



The Savior, a Being of divine power, was the Lamb of God (left) who willingly gave His life as a sacrifice. In the final days of His mortal ministry, He returned to Jerusalem (far left) and looked toward His most important tasks—the Atonement, including in the Garden of Gethsemane (above), and the Resurrection. What He did during those days can teach us great lessons.



Final Days

Jesus Christ was betrayed by Judas Iscariot (above) and allowed Himself to be taken, tried, and tortured.

The Savior Showed His Divine Power but Allowed Himself to Be Arrested

Jesus Christ showed His divine power in two ways on the night He was taken captive. The first was when the soldiers came to arrest Him.

“Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

“They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

“As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

“Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

“Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way” (John 18:3–8).

After Jesus merely spoke to them, the soldiers went backward.

During this time of confusion and fear, it was the Savior who was in charge, not the armed men who came to take Him. He allowed himself to be taken captive, to be scourged and crucified. He gave Himself as a sacrifice in obedience to the Father’s will and for our eternal benefit.

The Savior Performed Another Miracle

The Savior also healed the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest, again showing forth His divine power. In John 18:10–11, we learn that it was Peter who drew the sword and cut off the ear of the servant.

“And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest’s, and smote off his ear.

“Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

“But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matthew 26:51–54).

In Luke’s account we read that the Savior healed the ear in front of both the Apostles who were with Him and the soldiers who came to arrest Him, again showing His power:

“And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

“And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him” (Luke 22:50–51).



The Savior healed the ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant.

We Can Be Obedient Like the Savior

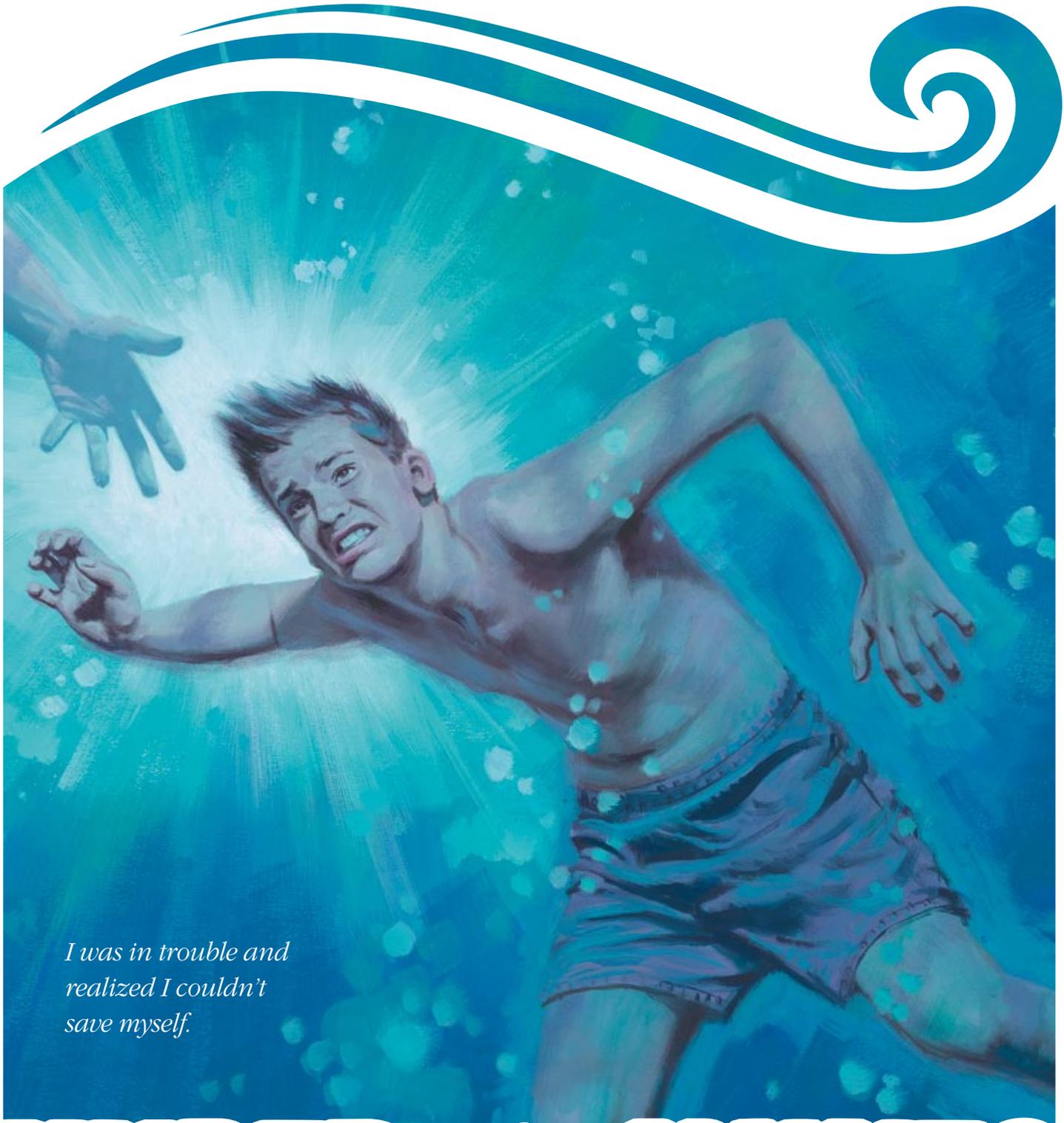
Jesus Christ had the power to save Himself from the fate that would befall Him, but in everything He was obedient to the Father's will. The Savior's Atonement and Resurrection overcome the effects of both spiritual and physical death. Because of His sacrifice in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary, we can repent of our sins and return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. Because Jesus Christ overcame death through the Resurrection, we will be resurrected.

We can follow the Savior's example by being obedient to the commandments, showing confidence in doing Heavenly Father's will. And in all our difficulties, we can rely on the Savior for help in our lives because of His Atonement. **NE**



Jesus Christ obeyed the Father's will in all things. He suffered and ultimately allowed Himself to be crucified (left) so that all mankind could overcome spiritual death through His Atonement and physical death through His Resurrection (above).

Savior's Life



I was in trouble and realized I couldn't save myself.

UNDER *the* WAVES



By Ryan H. Law

During the summer between my sophomore and junior years of high school, I attended a leadership camp along with a number of other high school students across the state. After a day of classes and workshops, the next activity was to go to the town’s new wave pool. It was a hot day, so the pool was crowded.

I had taken swimming lessons for a number of years and was a pretty strong swimmer, so when the waves stopped, I decided to swim down in the deep end of the pool to check out where the waves originated. Everything was fine until the buzzer sounded, indicating that the waves were going to start. I pushed off from the side to start swimming back toward the more shallow water when I suddenly felt myself being pulled under. I realized quickly that the waves were made as water was pulled from the bottom of the pool and then pushed out at the top. As the machine pulled water in, I got pulled under the surface. Then, as the machine pushed the water out, I would be pushed to the surface, where I could get a little breath and start to call out for help. Then I would again get pulled under.

After this happened a few times, I felt myself getting weaker from not getting enough air. No matter how hard I tried, I was not strong enough to get out of this cycle. Then, as a wave pushed me back up, I felt an arm go around me, and a big man pulled me over to safety. I was so weak I could hardly pull myself out of the pool. I was gasping for breath. The man who saved me asked if I was all right, and then he swam away and has probably never thought of the incident since. I don’t know this man’s name, but he literally saved my life. He did for me what I could not do for myself.

I have reflected on this incident often and have learned many lessons from it.

The main lesson I have reflected on is about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. All of us sin, and, therefore,

we cannot enter the celestial kingdom on our own merits (see Alma 11:37). We literally cannot save ourselves. Jesus Christ, in His infinite love and grace, paid for our sins and died for us so that we can live with our Heavenly Father again. He does for us what we cannot do for ourselves—He saves us from physical death through the Resurrection and spiritual death through the Atonement if we repent and follow Him. **NE**



THROUGH THE ATONEMENT

Jesus suffered willingly so that we might all have the opportunity to be washed clean—through having faith in Him, repenting of our sins, being baptized by proper priesthood authority, receiving the purifying gift of the Holy Ghost by confirmation, and accepting all other essential ordinances. Without the Atonement of the Lord, none of these blessings would be available to us, and we could not become worthy and prepared to return to dwell in the presence of God.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Atonement and the Value of One Soul,” *Ensign*, May 2004, 85.

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

DON'T CRASH

Prevent big problems later by fixing small problems now.

By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

SPIRITUAL CHECKUPS



"We need to conduct regular spiritual checkups on ourselves to determine the areas in which we need to improve."

"Usually we perceive these small failings with the aid of the Holy Spirit. . . . We need to listen carefully to what is being pointed out to us by the Spirit, Church leaders, loved ones, coworkers, and friends."

Elder Marcos A. Aidukaitis of the Seventy,
"Honesty in the Small Things," *Ensign*, Sept. 2003, 30.

Andrei has loved airplanes since he was little. But while there are many who dream of flying, Andrei's head isn't in the clouds; his interest is in the nuts and bolts. This 16-year-old from Romania is studying to be an aircraft mechanic.

In Romania teens can choose to attend a high school to prepare for college or a trade school. Because of Andrei's love for airplanes, his decision to attend the aviation trade school was easy.

Aircraft mechanics don't just fix airplanes that are broken. One of the most important things they do is inspect and maintain airplanes so they don't break down. They regularly inspect everything on a plane, from propellers to landing gear and each piece in between.

"It can be hard to find the tiny problem that could cause a plane to crash," Andrei says. "But finding it is easier than trying to put the whole plane back together again."

Keeping a regular maintenance schedule and refusing to skip it are important—both for airplanes and for Church members—in order to identify and correct problems before they become either mechanically or spiritually life threatening.

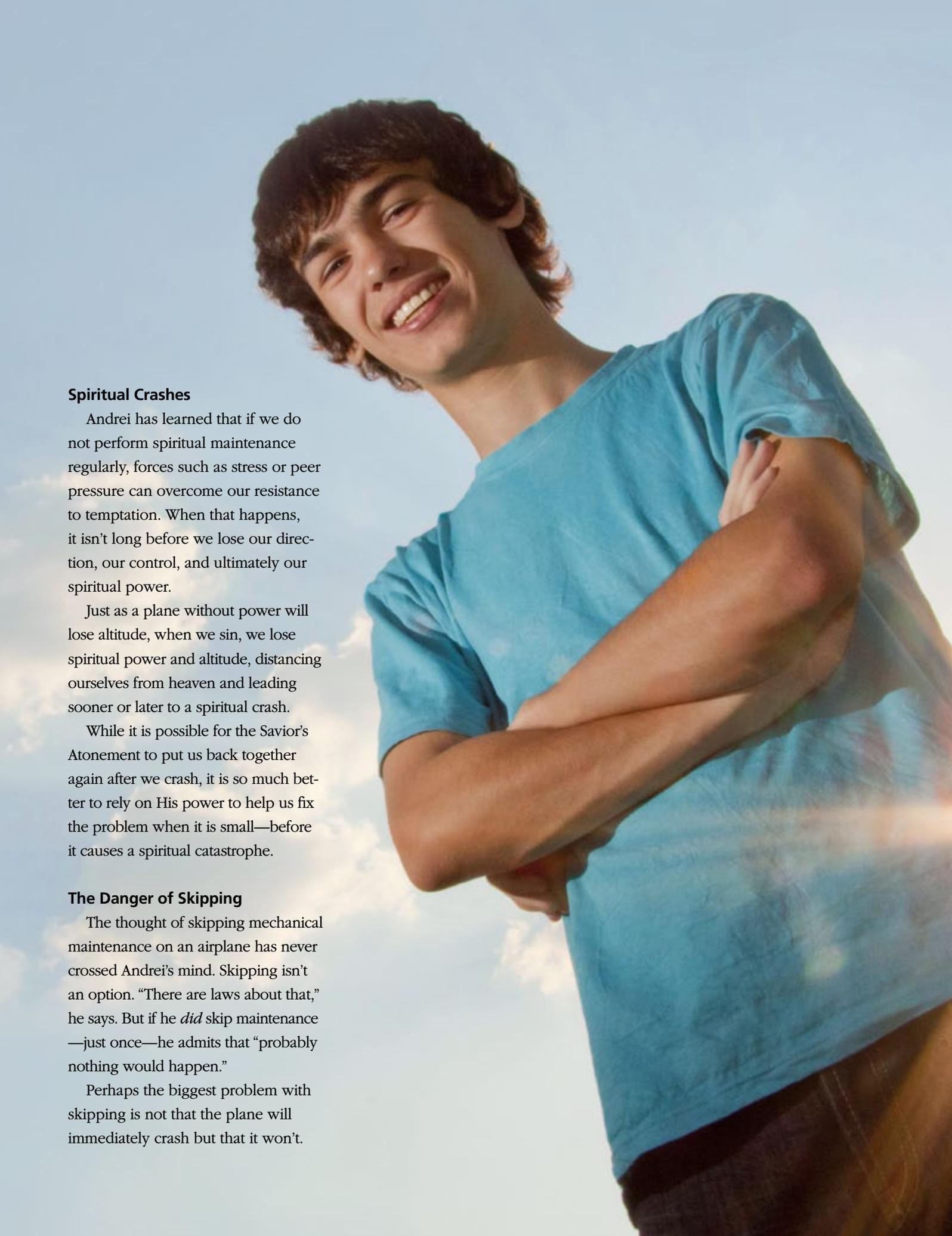
Spiritual Maintenance

Andrei lives in Bucharest, a city of nearly two million people. However, the Church is relatively young in Romania, and there are only enough members in Bucharest for two branches. Andrei and his family live far from other members of their branch. Andrei feels the pull of the world all around him at school and among his friends. He knows how easy it would be to crash—spiritually speaking—if he doesn't keep up regular spiritual maintenance.

Life can be hectic. Along with the time Andrei spends on his school studies, soccer, and the computer, he makes time for praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, and fulfilling his responsibilities as a priest. He also makes sure he "goes" to seminary, which he does online because of distance.

Doing those things is part of the regular spiritual maintenance that helps identify and correct weaknesses before they lead to a life-threatening crash of a spiritual nature.

"There are some things you just have to do regularly—creating a habit," he says. "You can't let life take over."



Spiritual Crashes

Andrei has learned that if we do not perform spiritual maintenance regularly, forces such as stress or peer pressure can overcome our resistance to temptation. When that happens, it isn't long before we lose our direction, our control, and ultimately our spiritual power.

Just as a plane without power will lose altitude, when we sin, we lose spiritual power and altitude, distancing ourselves from heaven and leading sooner or later to a spiritual crash.

While it is possible for the Savior's Atonement to put us back together again after we crash, it is so much better to rely on His power to help us fix the problem when it is small—before it causes a spiritual catastrophe.

The Danger of Skipping

The thought of skipping mechanical maintenance on an airplane has never crossed Andrei's mind. Skipping isn't an option. "There are laws about that," he says. But if he *did* skip maintenance—just once—he admits that "probably nothing would happen."

Perhaps the biggest problem with skipping is not that the plane will immediately crash but that it won't.

“If nothing bad happens when I skip today, I will be more easily tempted to skip tomorrow,” he says.

When maintenance is skipped regularly, the forces and stresses exerted upon the plane—or on us—will cause something to fail sooner or later.

“Eventually we will crash,” he says.

That’s why God has given us laws about regular spiritual maintenance too. “Meet together [at church] *oft*” (3 Nephi 18:22; emphasis added).

Pray *always* (see 3 Nephi 18:19).

Search the scriptures *diligently* (see

3 Nephi 23:1–5). “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts *unceasingly*” (D&C 121:45; emphasis added). Visit the temple *regularly*.¹

Keeping those laws and performing regular spiritual maintenance will keep us flying right.

“A plane is built to get off the ground, to leave the world,” Andrei says. “That is what Heavenly Father wants for us. With regular maintenance, we’ll safely get where we want to go—back to heaven.” **NE**

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 92.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.”

2 Corinthians 13:5.

SPiritual MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Aircraft mechanics often have a checklist of items they need to inspect regularly. Church leaders have suggested conducting our own regular spiritual checkups.² Here are some questions that can help you examine your spiritual health from time to time. If you have concerns about any of your responses, talk to your parents or bishop or branch president.

- Do I pray regularly and sincerely?
- Do I feast upon the word of God in the scriptures and the teachings of living prophets?
- Do I keep the Sabbath day holy and attend Church meetings regularly?
- Do I fast and pay my tithes and offerings willingly?
- Am I willing to forgive others?
- Do I regularly find ways to serve others?
- Do I remember the Savior at all times and follow His example?
- Do I keep my thoughts and language clean?
- Am I honest in all things?
- Do I keep the Word of Wisdom?

NOTE

2. See Joseph B. Wirthlin, “True to the Truth,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 17.



Personal Progress

Learn more about
Personal Progress at
PersonalProgress.lds.org.

Name: Aimee J.

Age: 18

Location: Utah, USA

Fun Facts: Won state title for 3-D art in the national PTA Reflections program; elected junior class secretary; served as Laurel class president; received Young Womanhood Recognition; graduated from seminary; plays flute and ukulele; received a superior score for a flute solo in a state solo and ensemble competition; ran on the cross-country and track teams; ran in the Utah Valley Marathon.

MORE than CLAY

Sitting in the courtyard of her high school, Aimee J. noticed that something was missing. Unlike other high schools, hers didn't have a statue of the school's mascot. She thought this was something she could probably change, having sculpted since she was young. All she needed was funding for materials and casting, as well as the permission and support of her school.

So Aimee drew up a proposal and presented it to the school principal. It was eventually approved, and Aimee started work on a model of the school's mascot, a thunderbird. Her model was later cast in bronze to become a six-foot monument to her high school, dedicated to her senior class.

How did you start sculpting? My dad is a sculptor, so we would always have clay around the house. I would just mess around with it, making little knickknacks and pots.

How did you feel while working on the sculpture? Sculpting the thunderbird was one of my Personal Progress value projects. I did the

sculpting in May of my senior year, so I missed out on a lot of barbecues and parties. It was a service for all of my fellow seniors, and it took a lot of long hours being all alone in that sculpting room, but it was worth it.

Is there a spiritual side to this process? I've noticed that if I'm more in tune with the Spirit, the creativity

flows better. Sometimes I listen to Church music while sculpting, and it seems to help everything work out better. Whether it's in athletics or art or anything, having the Spirit in your life definitely uplifts you, helps you see things in a clearer light, and makes you feel better about what you're doing.

What has sculpting taught you?

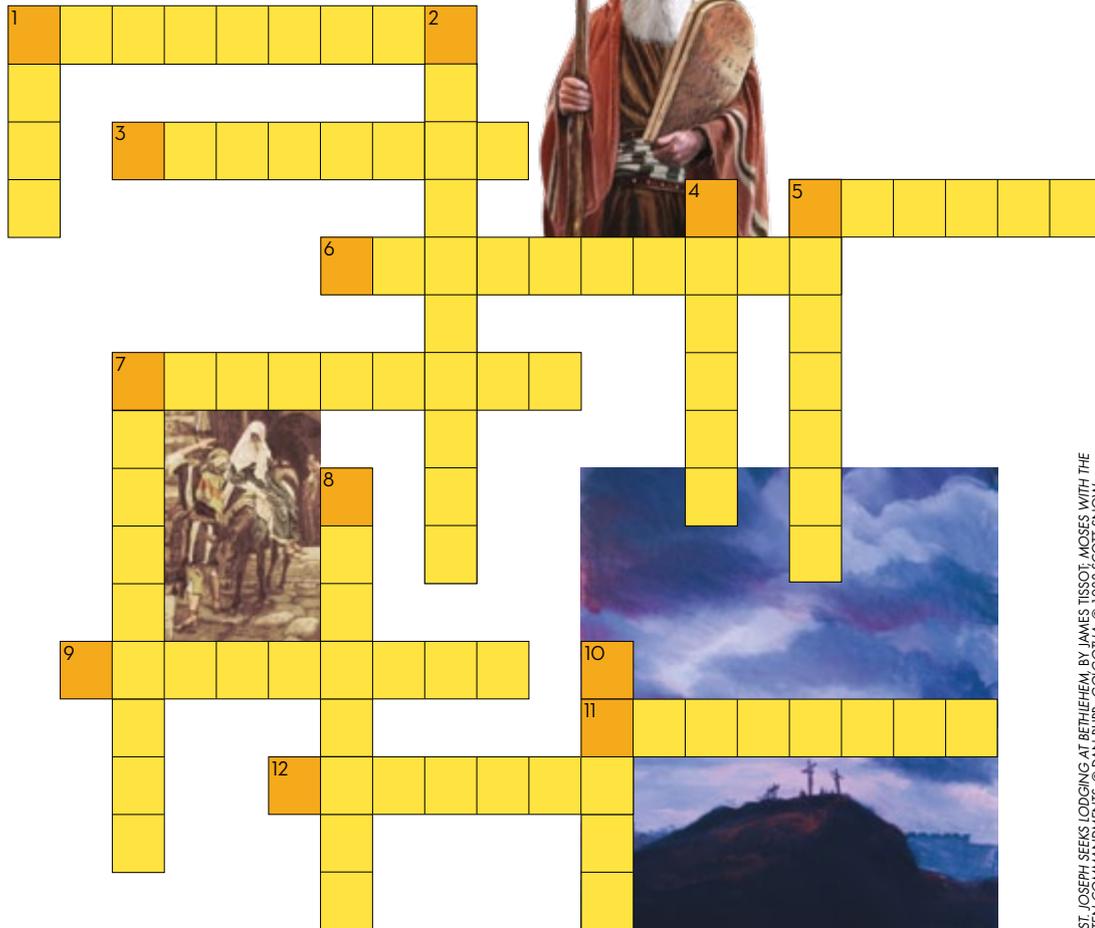
The scriptures give an analogy that we are like a lump of clay and life is the refining process that molds us and shapes us into who we will eventually become in our perfected state. [See Isaiah 64:8.] I think about that a lot as I sculpt and about how we need to be humble and allow ourselves to be molded by what Heavenly Father wants. **NE**

—As told to Elyssa J. Kirkham

CROSSWORD PUZZLE: PLACES IN THE BIBLE

ACROSS

- Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law in this city (see Matthew 8:5, 14–15).
- Saul was on his way to this city when Jesus appeared to him (see Acts 9:3–6).
- Jesus was baptized in this river (see Matthew 3).
- This is the garden where Jesus went to pray, atoned for us, and later was arrested (see Matthew 26:36–50).
- This is the hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (see John 1:44).
- Jesus made His triumphal entry in this city (see John 12:12–13).
- Jesus was crucified at this "place of a skull" (see John 19:16–17).
- This is the hometown of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (see John 11:1).



DOWN

- Jesus performed His first miracle here (see John 2:1–11).
- This is where Moses received the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 34:1–2).
- This is the hometown of Saul (see Acts 9:11).
- Joshua fought the battle of _____ (see Joshua 6).
- Jesus was born in this city (see Matthew 2:1).
- Jesus grew up here (see Matthew 2:23).
- Moses led the people of Israel out of this place (see Exodus 13:3).

Answers: **Across:** 1. Capernaum, 3. Damascus, 5. Jordan, 6. Gethsemane, 7. Bethsaida, 9. Jerusalem, 11. Golgotha, 12. Bethany **Down:** 1. Cana, 2. Mount Sinai, 4. Tarsus, 5. Jericho, 7. Bethlehem, 8. Nazareth, 10. Egypt

SWEET 16 SERVICE

For her 16th birthday party, Rachel H. of Alberta, Canada, wanted to plan it around a service project at the local drop-in center for the homeless. She invited friends from church and from school. Her friends liked the idea and were excited for the opportunity to give service. At the drop-in center they helped prepare lunch by filling juice glasses and slicing and buttering hundreds of slices of bread. After helping with lunch and cleaning the kitchen, Rachel's group toured the center with a guide.

Rachel says she is grateful that her birthday party could double as a missionary moment where her school friends could see how the youth of the Church look for opportunities to serve and bless the lives of others. "It was the best birthday ever," she adds.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RACHEL H.

ST. JOSEPH SEEKS LODGING AT BETHLEHEM, BY JAMES TISSOT, MOSES WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, © DAN BURK, GOLGOTHA, © 1988 SCOTT SNOW

5

CREATIVE GROUP DATE IDEAS

- Take a tour of a local factory (candy or ball bearings?).
- Hold a "readers theater" and share your favorite children's stories with one another.
- Borrow or rent a projector and have a drive-in movie in your backyard using a white sheet for the screen.
- Have a fondue party.
- Do some service: rake leaves, plant flowers, or mow a neighbor's lawn.

WHAT WE REALLY THINK OF YOUTH

"You, the youth of the Church, are a glorious group, a chosen generation... I plead with you, my young brothers and sisters, to remember who you are. You are sons and daughters of Almighty God. You have a destiny to fulfill, a life to live, a contribution to make, a goal to achieve. The future of the kingdom of God upon the earth will, in part, be aided by your devotion."

President Thomas S. Monson, "The Lighthouse of the Lord," *New Era*, Feb. 2001, 4, 7.

BE PREPARED

Last summer, Gabriel and Michael M. of Georgia, USA, both received the Boy Scouts of America Honor Medal for saving their father's life. While the boys and their father were on a kayaking trip in Texas, their father fell off a rope swing 22 feet above the Guadalupe River. He fell onto the kayaks below, passed out, and sank to the bottom of the river. Gabriel swam down and pulled his father to the surface. With an uncle's help, Gabriel and Michael were able to get their father into his kayak. Then they had to help guide him over one-half mile to the nearest takeout point where help was waiting to take him to the hospital. Their father had broken his right shoulder, six fingers, several ribs, and his right ankle. Just weeks before the accident, Michael had taken lifesaving and kayaking classes at Scout camp.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MICHAEL M.



MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

Psalm 139:9-10 I had been going through a rough time recently and felt very alone. But after reading this, I knew that God would always be with me. He loves me and wants to help me. Now when I pray, I pray with trust that the Lord will comfort and care for me and my family and that His "right hand shall hold me."

Katie W., 15, Washington, USA

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KATIE W.

Tell us about your favorite scripture in a paragraph or two. Send it to us, along with a photo, by going to newera.lds.org and clicking on "Submit Material."

WE'VE GOT MAIL

Line upon Line

My Personal Progress value project for Knowledge is collecting each of the "Line upon Line" articles in the *New Era* and putting them into a binder in order of books of scripture. Reading these articles helps me to better understand the scriptures. I especially like the ones that pertain to scripture mastery, and I would love to see you print them more often.

Morgan S., California, USA

White Dresses

When I read "It Started with a Friend" (Nov. 2011), Jenna's words that "I have never felt so beautiful in my life as I did in my white dress" at her baptism, I remembered having the same feeling when I first went to the temple. That feeling and memory return whenever I attend.

Jill W., Utah, USA

From Youth.Ids.org: Preparing the Sacrament

This article touched me in many ways (see "How to Prepare for the Sacrament" at lds.org/go/427). Being that I just turned 14 and had my first opportunity last Sunday to prepare the sacrament has made a big difference to me. We try to encourage each other to talk reverently and talk about Church-related things. We dress our best to show that we try to be modest.

Corbin Mark O., American Samoa

We love hearing from you, whether it's sending us a message or sharing an experience online at youth.lds.org. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking "Submit Material."

Or you can e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org or write to New Era, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024.

PRAYER OF THANKS

One day my dad and I were trying to lead one of our cows into a trailer so we could take her to a sale. She did not want to cooperate, though, and she ended up



jumping the fence. We began to lose all hope of getting her in the trailer as we watched her trot into the center of our neighbor's cattle herd.

As I walked toward the herd, I said a silent prayer that we would be able to lead her back into our pasture without startling the other cattle. Almost immediately after I said this prayer, our cow separated from the herd and jumped the fence back into our field.

Later that day as we ate dinner, my dad shared this experience with the rest of our family. He explained that he had been praying that everything would go well so our family could make some money from the cow. I smiled and told him that I had done the same thing.

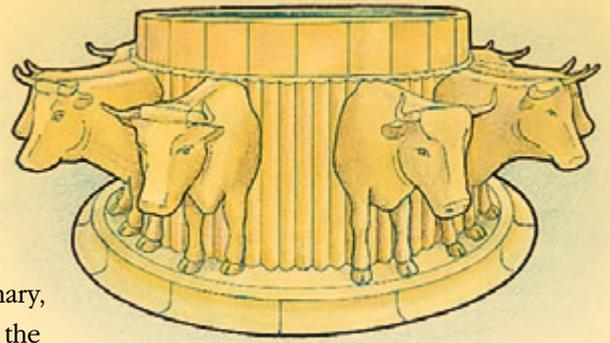
I will never forget his next words. He looked me in the eyes and asked, "Did you thank your Heavenly Father?" I thought about it and realized that I had not. That night I said a prayer of thanks. I thanked Him for answering my prayers, for my family, and for my dad, who is such a great example to me.

Cam H., Idaho, USA

SHARING WITH MY FAMILY

When I started reading the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet, I felt that many duties were waiting for me. Although I only recently decided to read, apply, and share what is written in this booklet, it has already influenced my spirituality. Using *Duty to God* helps me grow and become a little better. Before using

LOVE FOR TEMPLE WORK



For a long time in Primary, I wanted to go inside the temple and do baptisms for the dead. So when I became a Beehive, I couldn't wait to get started. The first time I went was on my 12th birthday. My dad took me to the Ogden Utah Temple, where we did the baptisms and confirmations. I felt the Spirit so strongly, and I didn't want the feeling to leave.

I decided that for a Personal Progress experience, I wanted to do my family history. A kind sister from my ward taught me how to use the FamilySearch program. I then searched for names with my mom, and every time I saw a

green arrow pointing to the temple, I squealed with delight—it meant we'd found another name to submit to the temple for temple work!

My mother and I just went to the temple to do six of the baptisms. Temple workers said they had more names for us to do if we'd like to do them. I was overjoyed! My mom and I did at least 12 baptisms each. I felt the Spirit and always will when I go to the temple.

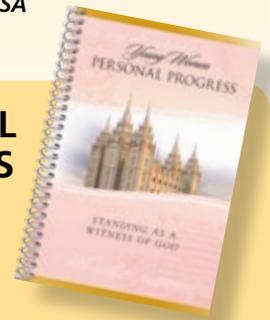
Kymira J., Utah, USA

this booklet, I had never taught or testified of the gospel to my family. After reading and applying what was written in the booklet, I started finding opportunities to teach and testify to my family.

I also made up my mind to attend all of my seminary classes this year. I have been strengthened, and I have made a goal to do the steps in *Duty to God*. I am grateful to Heavenly Father that I am a member of the Church. I know that the prophet, who leads the Church, helps young men draw closer to God through this priesthood service. *Fulfilling My Duty to God* has been a blessing to my family and me.

Mahandrisoa R., Madagascar

PERSONAL PROGRESS AND FAMILY HISTORY



You can participate in family history for several projects in Personal Progress, including the following:

- Faith value project, bullet 3
- Individual Worth value experience 6
- Individual Worth value project, bullet 1
- Good Works value project, bullet 3

Learn More about FamilySearch

Discover how you can use the online FamilySearch program to easily prepare names for temple ordinances by visiting youth.lds.org and clicking on "Youth and Family History." You'll find video tutorials and stories from other youth who are doing their family history.

HOW TO BUILD FAITH IN GOD THROUGH SCRIPTURE



Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

Every morning, I try to read a scripture passage that gives me guidance for the day. I then pray that I might incorporate that scripture in my life. It has been a testimony builder to start off my day remembering Christ.
Brandyn Y.

Every day I strengthen my testimony by reading my scriptures. Instead of just quickly finishing a chapter so I can get it done, I actually study it and think about what I am reading. It helps me study in depth if I have a scripture marker in hand.
Samantha L.

The scriptures enlarge our memory by helping us always to remember the Lord and our relationship to Him and the Father. They remind us of what we knew in our premortal life. And as these things penetrate our minds and hearts, our faith in God and His Beloved Son takes root.

The central purpose of all scripture is to **fill our souls with faith** in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ—faith that They exist; faith in the Father’s plan for our immortality and eternal life; faith in the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, which animates this plan of happiness; faith to make the gospel of Jesus Christ our way of life; and faith to come to know “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He has] sent” (John 17:3).

The word of God, as Alma said, is like a seed planted in our hearts that produces faith as **it begins to grow within us** (see Alma

32:27–43; see also Romans 10:13–17). Faith will not come from the study of ancient texts as a purely academic pursuit. It will not come from archaeological digs and discoveries. Faith comes by the witness of the Holy Spirit to our souls, Spirit to spirit, as we hear or read the word of God. And faith matures as we **continue to feast upon the word.**

Scriptural accounts of the **faith of others serve to strengthen our own.** We recall the faith of a centurion that enabled Christ to heal his servant without so much as seeing him (see Matthew 8:5–13). We hear and take courage from the determination of a tender boy prophet, hated and bitterly persecuted by so many adults: “I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it” (Joseph Smith—History 1:25).

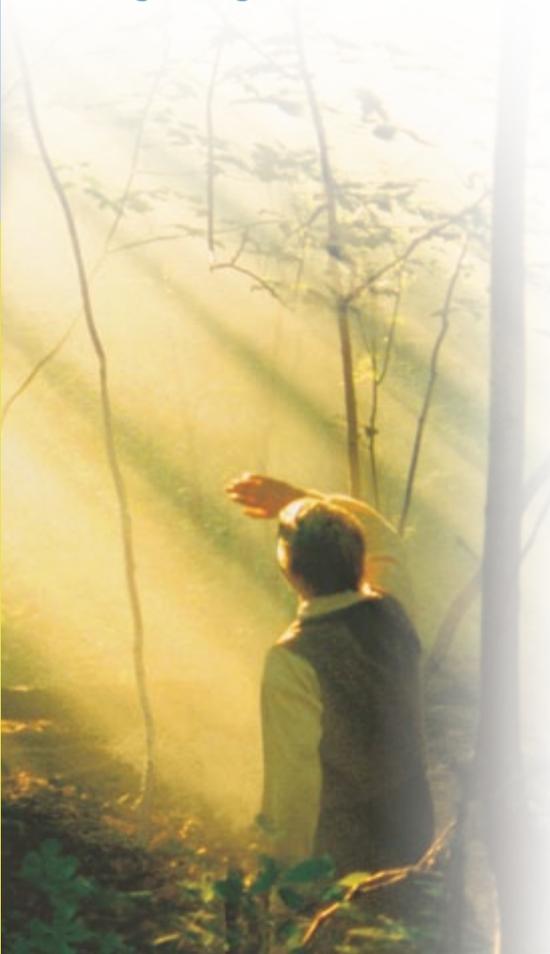
Because they expound the doctrine of Christ, the scriptures are accompanied by the Holy Spirit, whose role it is to **bear witness of the Father and the Son** (see 3 Nephi 11:32). Therefore, being in the scriptures is one way we receive the Holy Ghost. Of course, scripture is given through the Holy Ghost in the first place (see 2 Peter 1:21; D&C 20:26–27; 68:4), and that same Spirit can attest its truth to you and me. **Study the scriptures carefully, deliberately. Ponder and pray over them.** Scriptures are revelation, and they will bring added revelation.

May we **feast continuously** on the words of Christ that will tell us all things we should do (see 2 Nephi 32:3). **NE**

From the April 2010 general conference address “The Blessing of Scripture” (Ensign, May 2010, 32–35).

Share Your Experiences

Share *your* experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to [lds.org/go/428](https://www.lds.org/go/428).





The Quiet of the World

By Katie Rane

When there is too much to do
And never enough time to do it.
When the world expects so much
And I can only give a little.
When life goes by so quickly
That suddenly tomorrow is past:

I stop sometimes
And look around.
I realize
Life is simple:

In the smell of new rain.
In the warmth of the sun.
In the touch of the breeze.
In the eyes of a child.
In the blue of the sky.

And I find joy
In the quiet of the world.

WHAT'S ONLINE



Messages about the Savior

Each month, new videos about the Savior's life are posted online as part of the *Life of Jesus Christ Bible Videos* series. Let these videos

be a part of your Easter celebration. You can also share them with family and friends of any faith during this special Easter season. Find them online at [lds.org/go/429](https://www.lds.org/go/429), along with ways to share them at [lds.org/go/420](https://www.lds.org/go/420).

You can also view the video *Finding Faith in Christ* at [lds.org/go/421](https://www.lds.org/go/421).

Conference Highlights

See video clips from general conference with messages highlighted specifically for youth. You'll find them online at youth.lds.org—just click on “From Church Leaders.”

Seminary Resources

Go to [seminary.lds.org](https://www.seminary.lds.org) to see all of the resources available to you, including:

- Messages of inspiration and motivation from Church leaders.
- Tips and challenges to help you succeed in your scripture study.
- Study guides, reading charts, and bookmarks.
- Videos and music.
- Scripture mastery helps, including cards, audio downloads, and games.

