

THE New Era

MAY 2012



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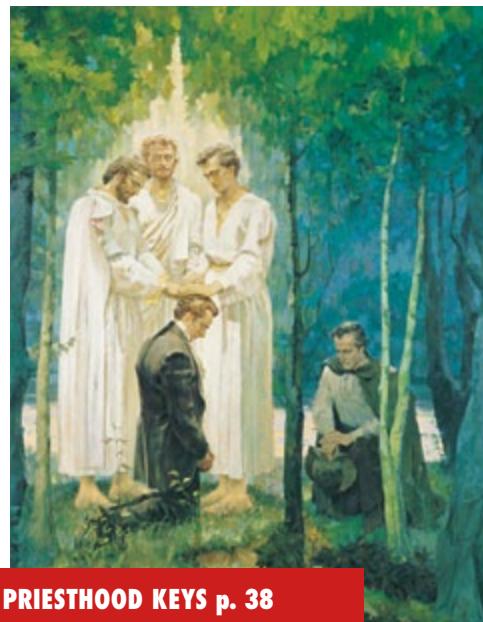
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Prophet

President Thomas S. Monson



Speaking of this general conference, President Monson said, “We are here to learn.” He went on to say, “Should there be changes which need to be made in your life, may you find the incentive and the courage to do so as you listen to the inspired words which will be spoken.”

This section points out messages especially pertinent to youth and can help as you study general conference.

You can also view video, download MP3s, or read the text of conference online at conference.lds.org.

Safety in Your Teens

No one has described the teenage years as being easy. They are often years of insecurity, of feeling as though you just don’t measure up, of trying to find your place with your peers, of trying to fit in. This is a time when you are becoming more independent—and perhaps desire more freedom than your parents are willing to give you right now. They are also prime years when Satan will tempt you and will do his utmost to entice you from the path which will lead you back to that heavenly home from which you came and back to your loved ones there and back to your Heavenly Father.

The world around you is not equipped to provide the help you need to make it through this often-treacherous journey. So many in our society today seem to have slipped from the moorings of safety and drifted from the harbor of peace. . . .

Is there a way to safety? Is there an escape from threatened destruction? The answer is a resounding yes! I counsel you to look to the lighthouse of the Lord. . . . It calls, “*This way to safety. This way to home.*” It sends forth signals of light easily seen and never failing. If followed, those signals will guide you back to your heavenly home. . . .

Besides attending your Sunday meetings and your weeknight activities,

when you have the chance to be involved in seminary . . . , take advantage of that opportunity.

When God Speaks

One of the greatest and most valuable lessons we can learn in mortality is that when God speaks and a man obeys, that man will always be right.

A Wartime Miracle

Miracles are everywhere to be found when the priesthood is understood, its power is honored and used properly, and faith is exerted.” [President Monson shares the story of one such miracle in “A Wartime Miracle” at lds.org/go/72A.]

Agency in Our Actions

Clearly, one primary purpose of our existence upon the earth is to obtain a body of flesh and bones. We have also been given the gift of agency. In a thousand ways we are privileged to choose for ourselves. Here we learn from the hard taskmaster of experience. We discern between good and evil. We differentiate as to the bitter and the sweet. We discover that there are consequences attached to our actions.

Because of Seminary

Some years ago I was on a board of directors with a fine man who had been extremely successful in life. I was impressed with his integrity and his loyalty to the Church. I learned that he had gained a testimony and had joined the Church because of seminary.

When he married, his wife had been a lifelong member of the Church. He belonged to no church. Through the years and despite her efforts, he showed no interest in attending church with his wife and children. And then he began driving two of his daughters to early-morning seminary. He would remain in the car while they had their class, and then he would drive them to school. One day it was raining, and one of his daughters said, "Come in, Dad. You can sit in the hall." He accepted the invitation. The door to the classroom was open, and he began to listen. His heart was touched. For the rest of that school year, he attended seminary with his daughters, which led eventually to his membership and a lifetime of activity in the Church. Let seminary help build and strengthen your testimony.

Eternal Joy Awaits

It is the celestial glory which we seek. It is in the presence of God we desire to dwell. It is a forever family in which we want membership. Such blessings are earned through a lifetime of striving, seeking, repenting, and finally succeeding.

Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where do we go after this life? No longer need these universal questions remain unanswered. . . . Our Heavenly Father rejoices for those who keep His commandments. He is concerned also for the lost child, the tardy teenager, the wayward youth,



the delinquent parent. Tenderly the Master speaks to these, and indeed to all: "Come back. Come up. Come in. Come home. Come unto me."

. . . I testify to you that He lives and that He awaits our triumphant return.

Read More

For complete text of President Monson's conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.

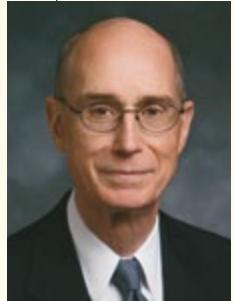
I thought President Thomas S. Monson's [Sunday morning] talk was really good. It made me think how much I just get caught up in life and don't take the time to slow down and think. I think everyone of us can improve in that aspect of our life. Let's all just pause for a moment and be grateful.

Jerika M., 15, Utah, USA

Faith

President Henry B. Eyring

First Counselor in the First Presidency



Faith in Christ

[The] particle of faith most precious and which you should protect and use to whatever extent you can is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moroni

taught the power of that faith this way: "And neither at any time hath any wrought miracles until after their faith; wherefore they first believed in the Son of God" [Ether 12:18].

A Foundation of Faith

A foundation of faith . . . takes time to build. . . . If the foundation of faith is not embedded in our hearts, the power to endure will crumble.

. . . That solid basis for a foundation of faith is personal integrity. . . .

It is never too late to strengthen the foundation of faith. . . . You can do it wherever you are and however alone and deserted you may feel.

Blessings of Faith

If we have faith in Jesus Christ, the hardest as well as the easiest times in life can be a blessing. In all conditions,

we can choose the right with the guidance of the Spirit. We have the gospel of Jesus Christ to shape and guide our lives if we choose it. And with prophets revealing to us our place in the plan of salvation, we can live with perfect hope and a feeling of peace. We never need to feel that we are alone or unloved in the Lord's service because we never are. We can feel the love of God. The Savior has promised angels on our left and our right to bear us up [see D&C 84:88]. And He always keeps His word.

A Focus on the Temple

There is nothing that . . . will come into your family as important as the sealing blessings. There is nothing more important than honoring the marriage and family covenants you . . . will make in the temples of God.

A Testimony of the Prophet and the Priesthood

Gain and keep a sure witness that the keys of the priesthood are with us and held by the President of the Church. Pray for that every day. The answer will come with an increase in . . . your feelings of hope, and with greater happiness in your service. You will be more cheerful and optimistic.

Read More

For complete text of President Eyring's conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.

Heavenly Father constantly reminds us of His infinite love. Throughout conference, I could see and hear my Heavenly Father through His Apostles. I could also sense that He is aware of me and what I am going through and that I'm never alone—neither is anyone alone. I was fortified to see that there are indeed "angels" watching over us.

Esmeralda V., 18, Alabama, USA



Kindness

AND FUNDAMENTALS



Judge Not

This topic of judging others could actually be taught in a two-word sermon. When it comes to hating, gossiping, ignoring, ridiculing, holding grudges, or wanting to cause harm, please apply the following:

Stop it!

It's that simple. We simply have to stop judging others and replace judgmental thoughts and feelings with a heart full of love for God and His children. God is our Father. We are His children. We are all brothers and sisters. . . .

Let us be kind.

Let us forgive.

Let us talk peacefully with each other.

Let the love of God fill our hearts.

"Let us do good unto all men"

[Galatians 6:10]. . . .

We are not perfect.

The people around us are not perfect. People do things that annoy, disappoint, and anger. In this mortal life it will always be that way.

Nevertheless, we must let go of our grievances. Part of the purpose of mortality is to learn how to let go of such things. *That is the Lord's way.*

Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

President Uchtdorf's talk was an answer to my prayers. Sometimes it's so easy to get mad at people. But if we consistently practice viewing everyone with God's love in mind, our hearts can change! That's the best part about the Atonement—we have the power to change and be more like our Savior every day. President Uchtdorf really put it in perspective: "It is the merciful who obtain mercy."

Heather H., 18, Utah, USA

The Basics of Faith

We need to be constantly reminded of the eternal reasons behind the things we are commanded to do. The basic gospel principles need to be part of our life's fabric, even if it means learning them over and over again. That doesn't mean that this process should be rote or boring. Rather, when we teach the foundational principles in our homes or in church, let the flame of enthusiasm for the gospel and the fire of testimony bring light, warmth, and joy to the hearts of those we teach. . . .

There are times when we have to step into the darkness in faith, confident that God will place solid ground beneath our feet once we do. . . .

Guided by the Holy Spirit, we will learn from our mistakes. If we stumble, we will rise. If we falter, we will go on. We will never waver; we will never give up.

Read More

For complete text of President Uchtdorf's conference addresses, go to conference.lds.org.



HOLINESS TO THE LORD
THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Relationships

WITH OTHERS

AN EXPRESSION OF KINDNESS

I really enjoyed this conference. You could just feel the power in everything that was being said. When they were talking about family, service, a change of heart, forgiveness, and so many other powerful topics, I could just feel the truth of the words they were saying—the power of pure and honest doctrine. How blessed we are to live when the world is in need of truth and we are given the opportunity to be the ones to help bring the world this light.

Carol J., 17, Idaho, USA

The biggest impression I had was that we need to make sure we can use our homes as safe havens from the world. We need to try to keep contention and hatred out of our homes because it drives the Spirit away. We have been told that home can be a heaven on earth only if we are filled with love. Another thing I found profound is the value of souls and that by saving one soul we can save thousands.

Nathan A., 14, Idaho, USA

Two young missionaries knocked on a door, hoping to find someone to receive their message. The door opened, and a rather large man greeted them in a less-than-friendly voice:

"I thought I told you not to knock on my door again. I warned you before that if you ever came back, it would not be a pleasant experience. Now leave me alone." He quickly closed the door.

As the elders walked away, the older, more experienced missionary put his arm on the younger missionary's shoulder to comfort and encourage him. Unknown to them, the man watched them through the window to be sure they understood his message. He fully expected to see them laugh and make light of



his curt response to their attempted visit. However, as he witnessed the expression of kindness between the two missionaries, his heart was instantly softened. He reopened the door and asked the missionaries to come back and share their message with him.

... This principle of having love one to another and developing our ability to be Christ centered in how we think, speak, and act is fundamental in becoming disciples of Christ and teachers of His gospel.

Elder Paul E. Koelliker of the Seventy

ACT ON PROMPTINGS

If we will pray and ask Heavenly Father who we can help and promise to act on the promptings He gives us letting us know how we can help, He will answer our prayers and we will become instruments in His hands to do His work. . . .

. . . As you act on [a] prompting and do it with love, watch as our Heavenly Father uses your willingness to act to bring about a miracle in your life and in the life of the person you care about.

Elder David F. Evans of the Seventy

JUMP IN AND HELP

If you come upon a person who is drowning, would you ask if they need help—or would it be better to just jump in and save them from the deepening waters? The offer, while well meaning and often given, "Let me know if I can help" is really no help at all.

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Presidency of the Seventy

ENVY

There are going to be times in our lives when someone else gets an unexpected blessing or receives some special recognition. May I plead with us not to be hurt—and certainly not to feel envious—when good fortune comes to another person? We are not diminished when someone else is added upon. We are not in a race against each other to see who is the wealthiest or the most talented or the most beautiful or even the most blessed. The race we are *really* in is the race against sin, and surely envy is one of the most universal of those. . . .

. . . Coveting, pouting, or tearing others down does *not* elevate your standing, nor does demeaning someone else improve your self-image. So be kind, and be grateful that God is kind. It is a happy way to live.

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

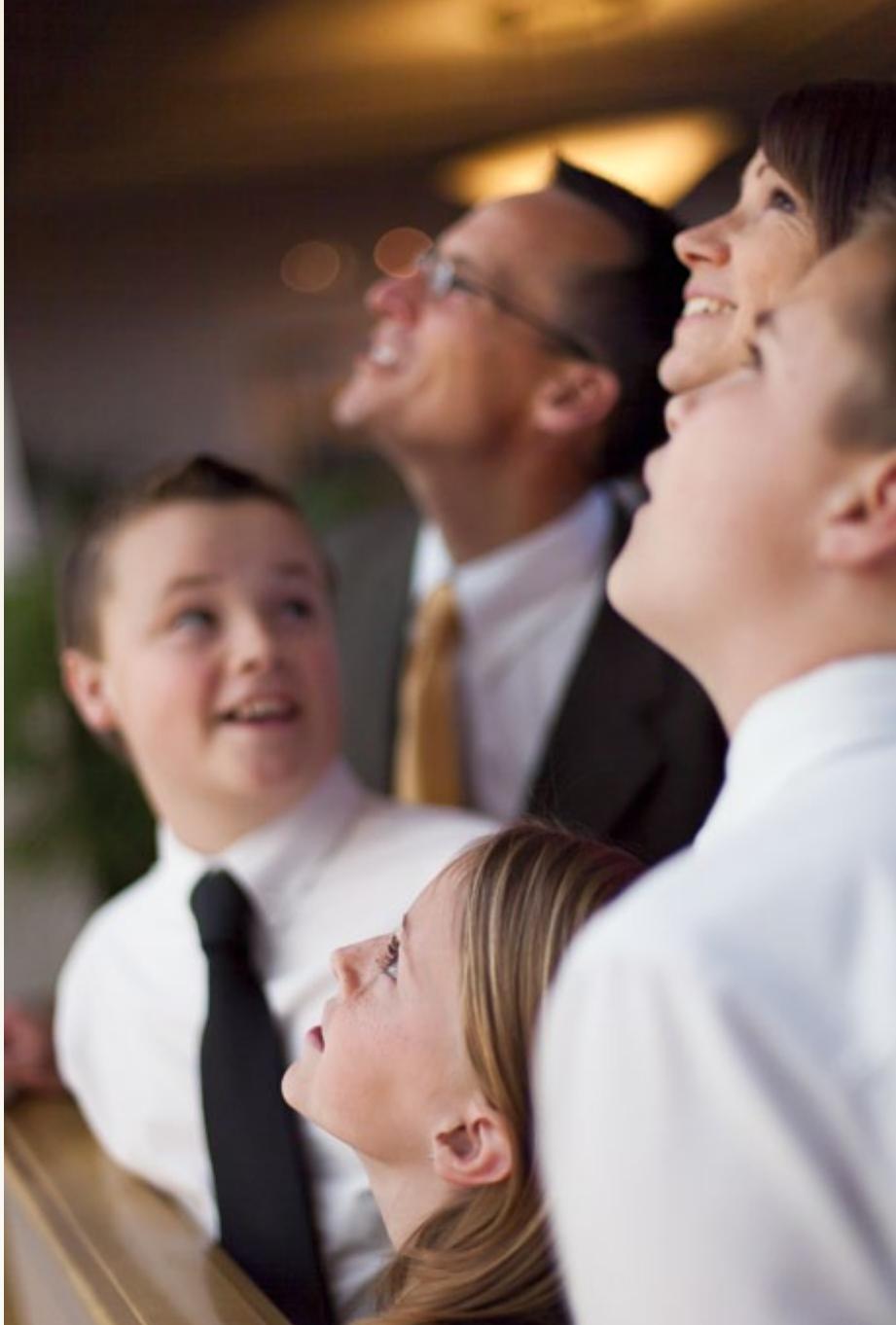
FAMILY: A PRIORITY

The most important *cause* of our lifetime is our families. If we will devote ourselves to this cause, we will improve every other aspect of our lives and will become, as a people and as a church, an example and a beacon for all peoples of the earth.

. . . May I suggest that we *prioritize*. Put everything you do outside the home in subjection to and in support of what happens inside your home. . . .

Organize your personal lives to provide time for prayer and scriptures and family activity.

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

**A KEY TO FACING TRIALS**

Many of you have already discovered the great, transforming truth that when you live to lift the burdens of others, your own burdens become lighter. Although circumstances may not have changed, your attitude has. You are able to face your own trials with greater acceptance, a more understanding heart, and deeper gratitude for what you have, rather than pining for what you yet lack.

Elder David S. Baxter of the Seventy

FAMILY TIME

Family time is sacred time and should be protected and respected. We urge our members to show devotion to their families.

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

INSPIRATION AND Guidance

"I WANT TO COME BACK"

When Elder Richard G. Scott spoke about listening to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, it answered a question of mine: "What am I doing wrong that I can't receive an answer to my prayer?" He answered it: fasting and feasting on the scriptures. I should have thought of that first, but I wasn't looking with my spiritual eyes.

Taylor L., 17, Utah, USA

I really felt the importance of family, acting on promptings, and the blessings of the Holy Ghost if we strive to be righteous. I feel enlightened and excited at the prospect of things I can improve in my own life and a new determination to share the light of the gospel with others.

Marilla W., 17, Alberta, Canada

Not long ago I was in South Africa visiting a home with Thabiso, the first assistant in the priests quorum in the Kagiso Ward. Thabiso and his bishop, who presides and holds the keys for the quorum, had been praying for quorum members who were less active, seeking inspiration about whom to visit and how to help them. They felt prompted to visit the home of Tebello, and they invited me to go with them.

Once we made it past the ferocious guard dog, we found ourselves in the living room with Tebello, a calm-spirited young man who had stopped attending church because he had become busy doing other things on Sundays. . . .



Not long ago I was in South Africa visiting a home

. . . The words of Thabiso . . . made the difference in the visit. . . . "I enjoyed so much talking to you all the time at church," he said. "You always have kind words for me. And you know, our soccer team has basically disappeared now that we don't have you. You are so good at it."

"I am sorry," Tebello answered. "I will come back with you guys."

"That will be awesome," said Thabiso. "And do you remember how we used to prepare to serve as missionaries? Can we start doing that again?"

"Yes," repeated Tebello, "I want to come back."

Adrián Ochoa, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency

ANSWERS TO PRAYERS

If you feel that God has not answered your prayers, ponder these scriptures—then carefully look for evidence in your own life that He may have already answered you. . . .

. . . Sometimes the discovery of what action to take may require significant effort and trust on your part. Yet you will be prompted to know what to do as you meet the conditions for such divine guidance in your life, namely, obedience to the commandments of the Lord, trust in His divine plan of happiness, and the avoidance of anything that is contrary to it.

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

I noticed that a lot of the speakers mentioned prayer. Prayer is so powerful and necessary for us here on earth. We can communicate to God through it, and it will bless us tremendously.

Rachel A., 16, Arizona, USA



BE OF GOOD CHEER

Our doctrine is clear; we are to be positive and of good cheer. We emphasize our faith, not our fears. We rejoice in the Lord's assurance that He will stand by us and give us guidance and direction [see D&C 68:6]. The Holy Ghost testifies to our hearts that we have a loving Father in Heaven, whose merciful plan for our redemption will be fulfilled in every aspect because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

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

OUR DAILY QUESTION

Our daily question must be, "Do my actions place me in the Lord's or in the enemy's territory?" . . .

The Light of Christ together with the companionship of the Holy Ghost must help us determine if our manner of living is placing us in the Lord's territory or not. If our attitudes are good, they are inspired of God, for every good thing comes from God. However, if our attitudes are bad, we are being influenced by the enemy because he persuades men to do evil.

Elder Ulisses Soares of the Seventy

WHY ASK?

One of the great lessons that each of us needs to learn is to ask. Why does the Lord want us to pray to Him and to ask? Because that is how revelation is received.

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



Discipleship

A N D D U T Y

MORE IMPORTANT THAN A GRADE

DELIVERANCE

We can be delivered from the ways of evil and wickedness by turning to the teachings of the holy scriptures. The Savior is the great deliverer, for He delivers us from death and from sin (see Romans 11:26; 2 Nephi 9:12).

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

QUALIFY NOW

It is difficult for youth to understand how present actions will prepare them for or disqualify them from future service opportunities. . . . The purpose of both temporal and spiritual self-reliance is to get ourselves on higher ground so that we can lift others in need.

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

In the Philippines, I met Karen, who shared an experience she had as a Laurel while studying for a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management. A teacher required that every student learn to make and taste the variety of drinks that would be served in their restaurants. Some of the drinks contained alcohol, and Karen knew it was against the Lord's commandments for her to taste them. In the face of serious consequences, Karen found courage to arise and shine forth, and she did not partake of the drinks.

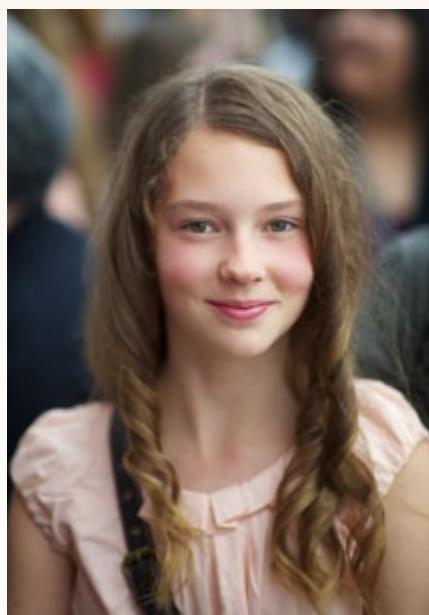
Karen explained: "My teacher approached me and asked me why I was not drinking. He said, 'Miss Karen, how will you know the flavor and pass this important subject if you do not at least taste the drinks?' I told him that I am a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and as members, we do not drink things that are harmful to us. Whatever he expected of me, even if it meant receiving a failing grade, I would understand, but I would not fail to live my personal standards."

Weeks passed, and nothing more was said about that day. At the end of the semester, Karen knew her final grade would reflect her refusal to taste the drinks. She hesitated to look at her grade, but when she did, she discovered that she had

received the highest grade in the class.

She said: "I learned through this experience that God . . . will surely bless us when we follow Him. I also know that even if I had received a failing grade, I would not regret what I had done. I know that I will never fail in the Lord's sight when I choose to do what I know to be the right thing."

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency



Video Highlights

For short video clips of conference messages for youth, go to lds.org/go/52B.

Every talk was amazing. I felt a special spirit during each one of them. Though I loved all the talks, Elder Perry's was my favorite. The way he taught that the Book of Mormon has a theme of deliverance really struck me. That was something I had never noticed before, and I felt a strong feeling that it was true.

Jordan B., 17, South Carolina, USA



YOUR DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of Christ?" [Matthew 22:42]. In the final assessment, our personal discipleship will not be judged by friends or foes. Rather, as Paul said, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" [Romans 14:10]. At that day the important question for each of us will be, "What thinks Christ of me?"

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

FULLY CONVERTED

The Lord wants the members of His Church to be fully converted to His gospel. This is the only sure way to have spiritual safety now and happiness forever.

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy

OUR DAILY CHALLENGE

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, but we are not. Each day, ours is the challenge to access the power of the Atonement so that we can truly change, become more Christlike, and qualify for the gift of exaltation and live eternally with God, Jesus Christ, and our families.

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

I really enjoyed listening to Elder Neil L. Andersen's talk about being a disciple of Christ. If I become a better disciple of Christ, then I'm arising and shining forth.

Jennifer G., 16, Texas, USA

REFLECT AND RECORD

As we seek answers from God, we feel the still, small voice whisper to our spirits. These feelings—these impressions—are so natural and so subtle that we may overlook them or attribute them to reason or intuition. These individualized messages testify of God's personal love and concern for each of His children and their personal mortal missions. Daily reflecting upon and recording the impressions that come from the Spirit serve the dual purposes of helping us (1) to recognize our personal encounters with the divine and (2) to preserve them for ourselves and our posterity. Recording them is also a formal recognition and acknowledgement of our gratitude to God.

Elder Paul B. Pieper of the Seventy

OUR SACRIFICES

For most followers of Christ, our sacrifices involve what we can do on a day-to-day basis in our ordinary personal lives. . . .

Just as the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ is at the center of the plan of salvation, we followers of Christ must make our own sacrifices to prepare for the destiny that plan provides for us.

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

Aaronic Priesthood:

DUTY AND POWER



AUTHORITY AND POWER

Worthiness and willingness—not experience, expertise, or education—are the qualifications for priesthood ordination. . . .

. . . A boy or a man may receive priesthood authority by the laying on of hands but will have no priesthood power if he is disobedient, unworthy, or unwilling to serve. . . .

. . . Priesthood holders young and old need both authority and power—the necessary permission and the spiritual capacity to represent God in the work of salvation.

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

RESPONSIBILITY TO RESCUE

Reactivation has always been an important part of the work of the Lord. While the rescue is a responsibility of every member, holders of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood have the responsibility to lead out in this work. After all, that is what priesthood service is all about—bringing all people to the exalting covenants; bringing peace, happiness, and self-worth.

Bishop Richard C. Edgley, Former First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

*M*y favorite session was the priesthood session. My favorite talk was by Elder David A. Bednar. It stood out to me, and I hope to put his words to use every day of my life.

Christopher K., 15, Alaska, USA

WORTHY TO ACT

As we perform our duties and exercise our priesthood, we will find true joy. We will experience the satisfaction of having completed our tasks.

. . . I urge you to contemplate those duties and then do all within your power to fulfill them. In order to do so, each must be worthy. Let us have ready hands, clean hands, and willing hands, that we may participate in providing what our Heavenly Father would have others receive from Him.

President Thomas S. Monson

USE THE POWER OF GOD

Let me ask you a question that I hope you will carry in your heart for the rest of your life. What greater power can you acquire on earth than the priesthood of God? What power could possibly be greater than the capacity to assist our Heavenly Father in changing the lives of your fellowmen, to help them along the pathway of eternal happiness by being cleansed of sin and wrongdoing? . . .

The Church has given you the Duty to God booklet as a resource to help you learn and fulfill your duties. Study it often. Get on your knees, away from technology, and seek the Lord's guidance. And then arise and use the power of God.

Adrián Ochoa, second counselor in the Young Men general presidency

Video

Brother Ochoa talks about how to remain worthy of and stand up boldly in your priesthood duty in a short video at lds.org/go/52C.

THE SACRAMENT

When young men prepare, bless, and pass the sacrament in worthiness and reverence, they literally follow the example of the Savior at the Last Supper and become like Him.

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

SHINE FORTH AS

Young Women

DIVINE LIGHT

Your beauty—your “shine”—does not lie in makeup, gooey cream, or the latest clothing or hairstyles. It lies in your personal purity. When you live the standards and qualify for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, you can have a powerful impact in the world. Your example, even the light in your eyes, will influence others who see your “shine,” and they will want to be like you. Where do you get this light? The Lord is the light [see D&C 84:46]. A divine light comes into your eyes and countenances when you draw close to your Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Elaine S. Dalton, Young Women general president

SEEK LEARNING

God gave you moral agency and the opportunity to learn while on earth, and He has a work for you to do. To accomplish this work, you have an individual responsibility to seek learning. The key to your future . . . can be found in the new *For the Strength of Youth* booklet under the standard of education and in the Young Women value of knowledge.

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency

STRENGTH FOR YOU

One of the greatest ways we can arise and shine forth is to confidently obey the commandments of God. We learn of these commandments in the scriptures, from modern-day prophets, and within the pages of the booklet *For the Strength of Youth*. Each of you should have your own copy. On my personal copy, I have circled the words *for and you*. . . . This simple act reminds me that these standards are not just general guidelines—they are specifically *for me*. I hope you will take the time to circle those words on your own booklet, read it cover to cover, and feel the Spirit testify that the standards are *for you* as well.

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency

YOUNG WOMEN THEME

Believe in the words you say each week as you recite the Young Women theme. Think about the meaning of those words. There is truth there. Strive always to live the values which are set forth. . . . These are beautiful gospel truths, and by following them, you will be happier throughout your life here and hereafter than you will be if you disregard them.

President Thomas S. Monson



I love it when I listen to talks from the leaders of the Church who have messages specifically for the youth like me. I feel the love of our Heavenly Father and the leaders of the Church. These talks may be simple, yet they have a great impact on my soul. “This way to safety. This way to home”—I will always remember that [from President Monson].

Queen Cel Arroco O., 15, Philippines

I have a friend who will soon be old enough to serve a mission. For the past few months he has been talking about not going, and nothing anyone says has been able to change his mind. During conference he was touched and now is talking about turning in his papers. I am grateful for conference and that it can have a large impact on those who truly listen to the messages.

Emma W., 18, Washington, USA



Answers

How can I tell if an impression comes from God?

Two indicators that a feeling or prompting comes from God are that it produces peace in your heart and a quiet, warm feeling.

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

I loved general conference! I tried to come as prepared as possible with questions, as Elder Richard G. Scott has advised. I fasted and prayed that I could get the most out of my conference experience. The Spirit was so strong in each session, and I received answers to each of my questions in a special way. Priesthood session really motivated me to act in fulfilling my duty to God and live so that the Light of Christ shows in my everyday actions. I shared on Facebook my conference experience and received positive feedback from nonmember friends about the gospel. I know that Heavenly Father cares for us and answers our prayers through living prophets! The music, especially the closing hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour" [Hymns, no. 98], strengthened my testimony of the Savior and inspired me to rely more on Him. I know He lives.

Brandy Y., 17, Arkansas, USA



Is it too late for me to be forgiven?

It is *never* too late so long as the Master of the vineyard says there is time [see Matthew 20:1–15]. Please listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit telling you right now, this very moment, that you should accept the atoning gift of the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the fellowship of His labor. Don't delay.

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



What if I come from a single-parent family?

Please never feel that you are in some kind of second-tier subcategory of Church membership, somehow less entitled to the Lord's blessings than others. In the kingdom of God there are no second-class citizens.

We hope that when you attend meetings and see seemingly complete and happy families or hear someone speak of family ideals, you will feel glad to be part of a church that does focus on families and teaches of their central role in Heavenly Father's plan for the happiness of His children; that in the midst of world calamity and moral decay, we have the doctrine, authority, ordinances, and covenants that do hold out the best hope for the world, including for the future happiness of your . . . families.

Elder David S. Baxter of the Seventy

What is the difference between revelation and inspiration?

The Holy Ghost communicates important information that we need to guide us in our mortal journey. When it is crisp and clear and essential, it warrants the title of revelation. When it is a series of promptings we often have to guide us step by step to a worthy objective, . . . it is inspiration.

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

If you listen to general conference, you can often find answers to the questions that concern you.



How can I help my less-active friend come back to church?

Many less-active members have loved ones on their knees daily petitioning the Lord for help in rescuing their loved one.

. . . It is not all that easy or comfortable for a less-active member to just walk back into the Church. They need help. They need support. They need fellowship.

. . . We have less-active members who are trying and willing to find the path back to activity.

. . . Many less-active members will hold callings if asked.



Bishop Richard C. Edgley, Former First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

What are some of the ways God communicates with the prophet?

How does the Savior reveal His will and doctrine to prophets, seers, and revelators? He may act by messenger or in His own person. He may speak by His own voice or by the voice of the Holy Spirit—a communication of Spirit to spirit that may be expressed in words or in feelings that convey understanding beyond words (see 1 Nephi 17:45; D&C 9:8).



He may direct Himself to His servants individually or acting in council (see 3 Nephi 27:1–8).

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

Do I really have to go to all my church meetings if I'm living the gospel?

Sometimes we use the terms *gospel* and *Church* interchangeably, but they are not the same. They are, however, exquisitely interconnected, and we need both. . . .

Some have come to think of activity in the Church as the ultimate goal. Therein lies a danger. It is possible to be active in the Church and less active in the gospel. Let me stress: activity in the Church is a highly desirable goal; however, it is insufficient. Activity in

the Church is an outward indication of our spiritual desire. If we attend our meetings, hold and fulfill Church responsibilities, and serve others, it is publicly observed.

By contrast, the things of the gospel are usually less visible and more difficult to measure, but they are of greater eternal importance. For example, how much faith do we really have? How repentant are we? How meaningful are the ordinances in our lives? How focused are we on our covenants?

I repeat: we need the gospel *and* the Church. In fact, the purpose of the Church is to help us live the gospel.

Elder Donald L. Hallstrom of the Presidency of the Seventy

The Saturday morning talk [from Elder Donald L. Hallstrom] on being active in the Church but inactive in the gospel gave me a new perspective.

Adyson S., 16, Utah, USA



General conference renewed an eternal perspective in my heart. I find it easier to do what is right and be happy after listening to and truly pondering the words spoken at general conference. My testimony has been greatly strengthened. I had questions about my own cleanliness from sin and what I needed to do to help myself and some of my friends, and general conference has brought me to the answers to those questions.

Samuel M., 18, Oregon, USA

I had come into general conference thinking about the Atonement and how it applies to me. This conference it seemed to be a main point that we can all repent and improve our lives, that Jesus suffered for me, and that I can repent to live with Him again. Jesus suffered for me so that I don't have to suffer. Some of the talks brought tears to my eyes as I thought of the Savior's love. Elder Bednar started his talk by telling the brethren that he loved us. It brought tears to my eyes, thinking of a General Authority loving me. As I listened to other talks, many mentioned their love for us. If they can love us, surely Jesus can love us even more.

Joseph R., 15, Colorado, USA



I'm struggling with one of the standards. What should I do?

President Harold B.

Lee taught, "The most important of all the commandments of God is that one that you are having the most difficulty keeping today." . . . If you are struggling with keeping these standards and commandments, I encourage you to look for support within the gospel. Read your scriptures. Spend time on . . . LDS.org to find answers to your questions. Talk to your parents, your Church leaders, and those who shine brightly as they live the gospel. Pray. Pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father, who loves you. Use the gift of repentance daily. Serve others. And most important, listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Ghost.

Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency

I want to be a stay-at-home mom rather than have a career. Why do I need to get an education?

Gaining knowledge now will pay huge dividends when you become a mother. "A mother's education level has



a profound influence on the educational choices of her [children]." . . . Educated women "tend to: Give birth to healthier babies, have children who are healthier, be more confident, resilient and have improved reasoning and judgment."

We learn in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" that "mothers are primarily responsible for the



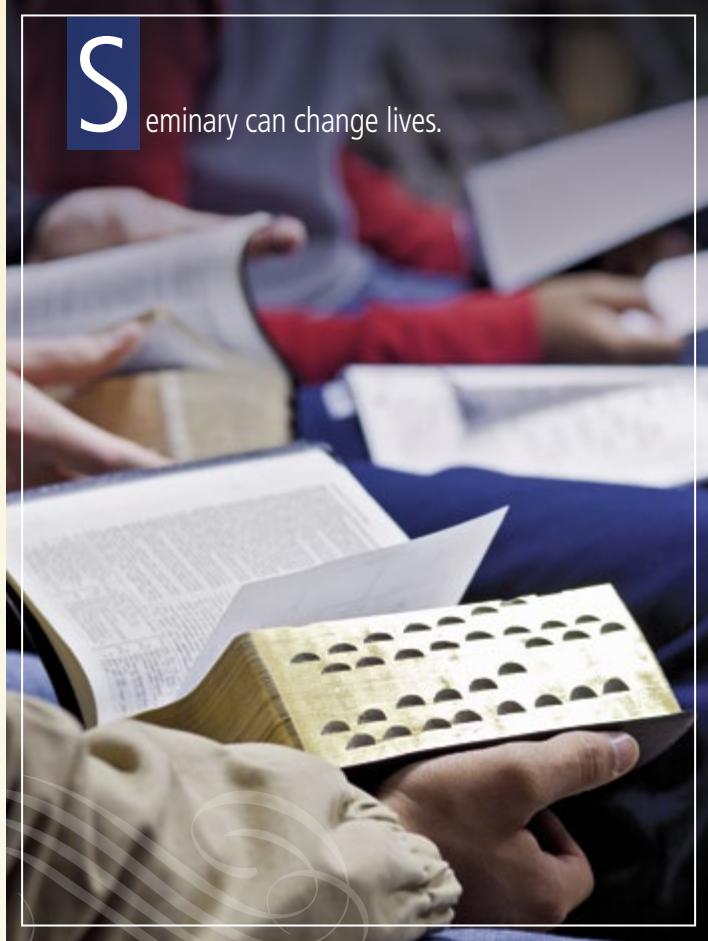
nurture of their children." Providing an education for your children is part of that nurturing and is your sacred responsibility. Like the stripling warriors, who "had been taught by their mothers" [Alma 56:47], you will be the most important teacher your children will ever have, so choose your learning carefully. Bless your children and your future home by learning as much as you can now.

Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency



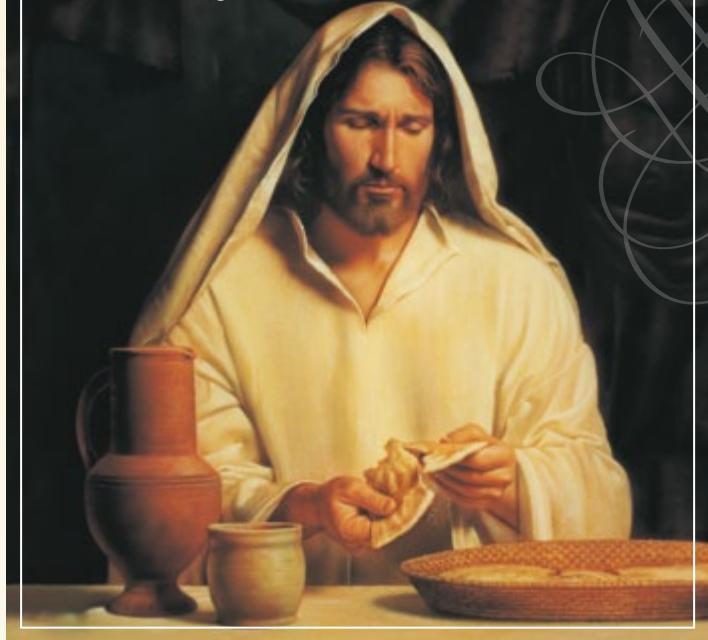
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eminary can change lives.



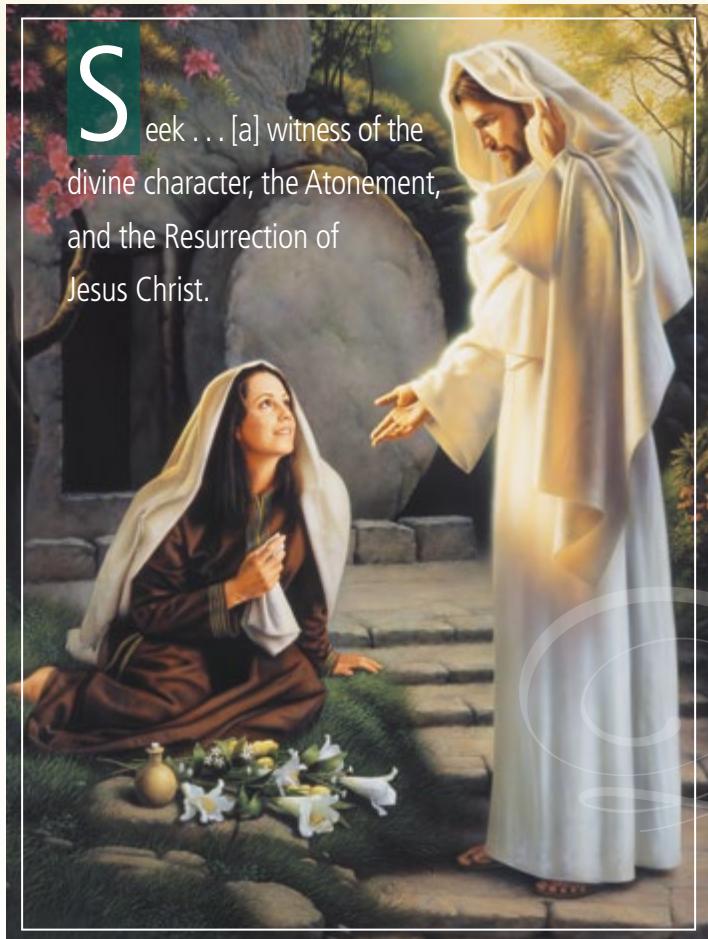
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or the sacrament to be a spiritually cleansing experience each week, we need to prepare ourselves *before* coming to sacrament meeting.



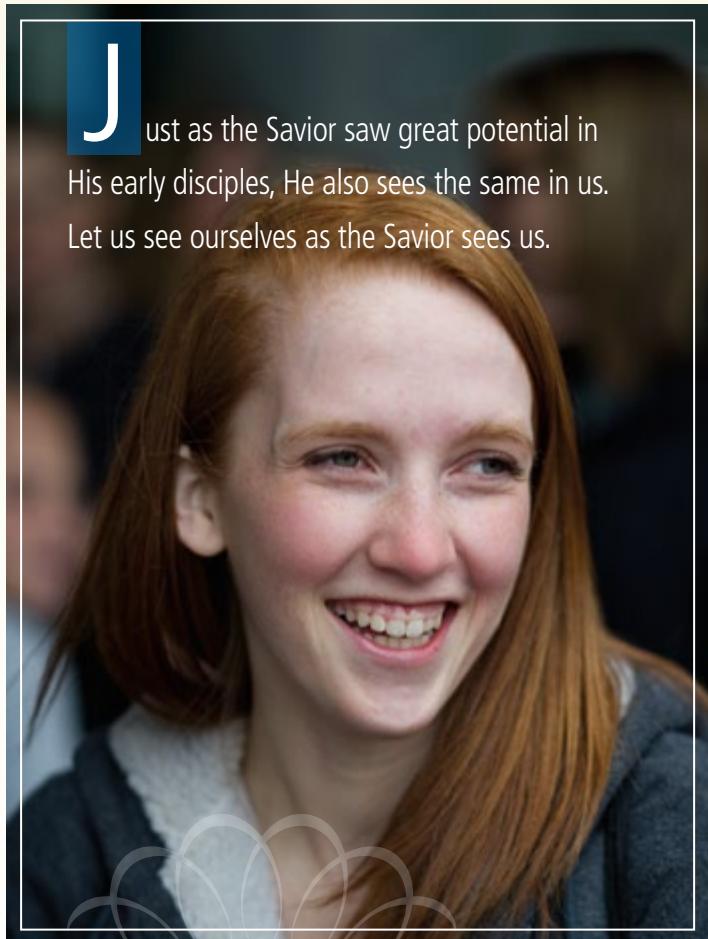
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eek . . . [a] witness of the divine character, the Atonement, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.



J

ust as the Savior saw great potential in His early disciples, He also sees the same in us. Let us see ourselves as the Savior sees us.



To worthily partake of the sacrament, we remember that we are renewing the covenant we made at baptism. For the sacrament to be a spiritually cleansing experience each week, we need to prepare ourselves *before* coming to sacrament meeting. We do this by deliberately leaving behind our daily work and recreation and letting go of worldly thoughts and concerns. As we do, we make room in our minds and hearts for the Holy Ghost.

Then we are prepared to ponder on the Atonement. More than just thinking about the facts of the Savior's suffering and death, our pondering helps us to recognize that through the Savior's sacrifice, we have the hope, opportunity, and strength to make real, heartfelt changes in our lives.

As we sing the sacrament hymn, participate in the sacrament prayers, and partake of the emblems of His flesh and blood, we prayerfully seek forgiveness for our sins and shortcomings. We think about the promises we made and kept during the previous week and make specific personal commitments to follow the Savior during the coming week.

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, April 2012 general conference

When you have the chance to be involved in seminary, whether in the early morning or in released-time classes, take advantage of that opportunity. Many of you are attending seminary now. As with anything in life, much of what you take from your seminary experience depends on your attitude and your willingness to be taught. May your attitude be one of humility and a desire to learn. How grateful I am for the opportunity I had as a teenager to attend early-morning seminary, for it played a vital role in my development and the development of my testimony. Seminary can change lives.

President Thomas S. Monson, April 2012 general conference

The Savior saw more in those humble fishermen whom He called to follow Him than they initially saw in themselves; He saw a vision of who they could become. He knew of their goodness and potential, and He acted to call them. They were not experienced at first, but as they followed, they saw His example, felt His teachings, and became His disciples. . . .

. . . When we emulate Him and do the things we see Him do, we begin to see a vision of who we can become. . . .

Just as the Savior saw great potential in His early disciples, He also sees the same in us. Let us see ourselves as the Savior sees us.

Elder O. Vincent Haleck of the Seventy, April 2012 general conference

The Prophet Joseph Smith confirmed the Savior's central role in our doctrine in one definitive sentence: "The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it" [Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith (2007), 49]. Joseph Smith's testimony of Jesus is that He lives, "for [he] saw him, even on the right hand of God; and [he] heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father" (D&C 76:23; see also verse 22). I appeal to all who hear or read this message to seek through prayer and study of the scriptures that same witness of the divine character, the Atonement, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Accept His doctrine by repenting, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then throughout your life following the laws and covenants of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, April 2012 general conference

Learning FROM CONFERENCE

THE SCRIPTURES IN GENERAL CONFERENCE

Speakers in general conference taught us from the scriptures. You can learn a lot by simply looking up the scriptures they used. The following scriptures were referred to most often:

- D&C 115:5 • 2 Nephi 2:11 • D&C 68:25–28 • D&C 121:37
- John 13:35 • D&C 18:10* • D&C 88:118 • Moses 1:39*

Here are some other scriptures that were referred to more than once:

- Psalm 127:3 • Acts 17:29 • 2 Nephi 25:26 • D&C 84:88
- Ecclesiastes 12:7 • Hebrews 12:9 • Mosiah 5:2 • D&C 107:99
- Matthew 5:7 • James 1:22 • Alma 11:43 • D&C 121:36*
- Matthew 11:28 • 1 Nephi 8:12 • Alma 40:11 • D&C 121:41
- John 3:16 • 1 Nephi 17:45 • Moroni 10:31 • Articles of Faith
- John 14:18 • 2 Nephi 2:26 • D&C 14:7* 1:13
- Acts 17:27 • 2 Nephi 25:23 • D&C 76:23–24*

* Seminary scripture mastery verses



HEARING AND DOING

General conference is always a good time for both hearing and doing. . . . I invite you to consider the words spoken by the servants of God this weekend. Then get on your knees. Ask God, our Heavenly Father, to enlighten your mind and touch your heart. Plead with God for guidance in your daily lives, in your Church responsibilities, and in your specific challenges at this time. Follow the promptings of the Spirit—do not delay. If you do all this, I promise that the Lord will not leave you to walk alone.

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

NEW! CONFERENCE CARDS

You can print additional conference cards (see pages 17–18) online at lds.org/go/52D. You'll also find ideas for using them in your home or school or sharing them with friends.

More Than a SCRIPTURE JOURNAL

By Paul VanDenBerghe

Church Magazines

"Hi, my name is Robbie. I'm a senior in high school. Last night I had the inspiration that I need to write in a journal, so that's what I'll do. I kinda have already, but I'm hit-and-miss on random pieces of paper."

This was the first official entry in Robbie S.'s journal. "It just kind of started like that," Robbie says, "and then it started to transform, and I started to figure out why I needed to keep a journal."

Robbie explains that he used to think keeping a journal was just for posterity, but then as he read in the scriptures each day and actually wrote down the impressions and ideas that came to him as he read, an important discovery came to him: "When I started to read my scriptures and write in my journal at the same time, I figured out that's one way you receive revelation."

The Plan

Since ninth grade, Robbie had been consistently reading from the scriptures, but it was after turning to the "Pray and Study the Scriptures" section in *Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* that he decided to transform his scripture *reading* into scripture *study*. He set



Setting a Duty to God goal to keep a scripture-reading journal brought all kinds of unexpected blessings.

a goal to read from the Book of Mormon every day and write in a journal about what he had read and about his day. Robbie liked how he could set his own goals in *Duty to God*. He says it was more personal and he felt like he was doing more than just checking off boxes to earn an award. "I really like that *Duty to God* is something you do your whole life," he adds.

The Blessings Begin

"As I studied the scriptures and wrote things in my journal afterward, I would look down at what I had written and say, 'That is not me who wrote that.' It was personal inspiration given directly to me from God. I have received answers to prayers and counsel for my life on things that I need to do better. I had no idea revelation worked that way."

Keeping the journal has changed Robbie in profound ways, like helping him recognize personal revelation in his



Robbie (center) and his brothers, Scott (left) and Josh (right), have all been blessed by faithfully reading the scriptures and keeping a journal.

life, but also in smaller, everyday ways, like helping him reach out to others at school. Another entry in his journal is a good example of how reading a specific passage in the Book of Mormon prompted Robbie to change his behavior. The entry reads:

"Beware of pride. I just started 4 Nephi today, and I need to be careful of pride. And I need to try to befriend more people and talk to more people in school."

So Robbie decided to sit by people at lunch who didn't have anyone to sit with. He also made it a point to meet new people at school each week. From this experience, Robbie learned that "when you forget yourself, you can make a big difference in people's lives."

Robbie is now off to meet new people and make a difference in their lives on a larger scale. He is currently serving a full-time mission in Kyiv, Ukraine.

All in the Family

Even before Robbie went on a mission, the impact of his example was not just on friends at school—it was also much closer to home. Robbie's brother Scott, who is now a priest, decided to follow his brother's example and made a plan to read his scriptures every day and to also keep a scripture journal. Scott wanted to experience the same kinds of blessings he saw Robbie enjoying. Scott faithfully reads from the Old Testament in the morning to match his seminary schedule, and then he reads



WRITE DOWN YOUR IMPRESSIONS

"Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come. Also, the knowledge you gain will be available throughout your life."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely," *Ensign*, June 2002, 32.

from the Book of Mormon in the evening. Like Robbie, he says his *Duty to God* plans have helped strengthen him and bring him closer to the Savior.

"I can see a big difference in how I handle things throughout the school day," says Scott. "I just feel happy, and I feel clean and pure. It gives me more assurance that I'm doing the right thing."

And the pattern of example is continuing in the family. As part of the "Learn, Act, Share" process in *Duty to God*, Scott shared his testimony of scripture study with his younger brother, Josh, who is a deacon. Scott wrote him this note to encourage him to read the scriptures:

"Josh, I don't know if you have started reading the Book of Mormon by yourself or not. But if you haven't, I would challenge you to start. The Book of Mormon has been a huge influence on strengthening my testimony. I know that it is the word of God. I love you and want to be with you forever in the celestial kingdom. I know that my life has been blessed through the teachings of the Book of Mormon, and yours can be too."

Now, Josh has set a plan in *Duty to God* to read his scriptures every day and to keep a scripture journal—following the examples of both his older brothers.

What started as a "study the scriptures" plan for one young man has not only enriched his own scripture study, but it has also helped the rest of his family experience the joy that scripture study can bring. Robbie's study plan has become much more than just a scripture-reading journal. **NE**

Build Your Future

LINE UPON LINE



Every good choice
draws you closer to
eternal blessings.
(See 2 Nephi 28:30.)

MAKE THE CHOICE: DATING

By Matthew D. Flitton
Church Magazines

Once you turn 16, group dating is a great way to build friendships. You'll want to keep in mind a few things. Young men, follow the example below to see what outcomes your decisions may have.

START

You worked up the nerve to ask someone out. Great job. Your date asks, "Who else is coming?" You answer:



NO ONE.

It's time to rethink this one (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 4). Your date says she won't go without a group. What do you do?



MAKE IT A GROUP DATE INSTEAD.



JOHN AND SUZY.

Good answer. Group dating is important in your teenage years. What do you have planned for the date?



GO TO A MOVIE.

A nice idea, but maybe not the best option. You enjoyed the show, but you sat next to each other for two hours without saying a word. What do you do next?



GO ON A HIKE.

Sounds fun! And it will give you lots of opportunities to get to know one another. Did you tell your date what the plan is?



STAY HOME.



GO HOME; YOU'RE TIRED.

You take your date home, and she thanks you for the nice time. It's too bad you didn't really get to know her better instead of just watching a movie.

YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL DATING

- A date is a planned activity that allows a young man and a young woman to get to know each other better.
- You should not date until you are at least 16 years old.
- When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples.
- Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person.
- Plan dating activities that are safe, positive, and inexpensive and that will help you get to know each other.
- Go only to places where you can maintain your standards and remain close to the Spirit.
- Always be kind and respectful when you ask for a date or when you accept or decline one.
- While on a date, be courteous as you listen to others and express your own feelings.



MAKE A DESSERT.



More on Dating

For more, visit lds.org/go/52E and read the *New Era* special issue on dating at lds.org/go/52F.



Questions & Answers

“How do I develop talents my without showing off?”

Talents or special abilities are gifts from our Heavenly Father. Recognizing the source of your talents is the first step in remaining humble about your achievements. But to make the most of your talents, it is up to you to practice and work on developing and improving them. The Lord has given you abilities, but what you make of them is entirely up to you.

Talents and gifts are given not only to better your life, but they are also meant to be shared and used to serve others. You should look for ways to use your talents to help others and give them enjoyment in either your performance or the works you produce. In this way, you are serving others and fulfilling your duty to develop your talent. When you are seeking to help others, it is clear that you are not showing off.

Gifts and talents come in many forms. As you learn to enjoy the talents of others, you will be better able to investigate what talents you may have been given and pursue them in a manner that does not involve boasting or showing off. It is a Christlike talent to appreciate others' efforts and find ways to encourage them in addition to appreciating and developing your own gifts. **NE**

Help by Teaching



A way to share your talents and not show off is to help someone by teaching them your talent. That way you make a friend too.

Andrew P., 14, California, USA

Be Grateful



Just realize that it is because of Heavenly Father that we have those talents. Be grateful to Him. Develop them to show love and gratitude to Him.

Kylee M., 16, Nevada, USA

Know the Correct Time

Heavenly Father gave us all talents, and we do need to develop them. However, we need to know the correct time and place to do so. If you are purposely using your talents to get attention at the wrong time, you are showing off. If you are not sure when it is appropriate to show your talents to others, ask Heavenly Father and your parents. They will always help you.

Alex L., 13, Utah, USA

Learn and Help Others



My family recently moved to a branch in a neighboring stake. Being the only branch member who can play the piano, I was called as pianist for sacrament meetings. Up

to this time, I've only played classical and popular tunes. The challenge to learn hymns quickly has been a struggle. Now, rather than hearing applause for my playing, I hear the beautiful voices of the branch members as they sing the hymns in praise of our Heavenly Father.

Robyn P., 18, Tennessee, USA

Encourage Others



Use your talents around people like friends and family. Once you get comfortable, you can use your talents in talent shows or at school and encourage others to try and develop their own.

Peri C., 15, Arizona, USA

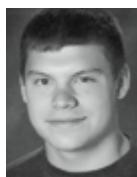
Notice Others



It helps me to notice what others are good at and then compliment them on it. This shows people you don't think you're better than everyone else, and it keeps you wanting to improve yourself in these areas.

Heather W., 18, Oregon, USA

Develop Talents You Love



If you worry about what people think of your talent or if you're showing off, then you're probably developing your talent for the wrong reason. You should develop your talent because you love it. If you do that, then others will be able to feel your love and passion for it and will enjoy your talent with you.

Doran P., 16, Washington, USA

Focus on Your Purpose



Those who focus on getting people's attention may not develop their talents as well as those who try to develop their

talents in a quiet and humble way. Just focus on what your purpose is, and let the Spirit guide you.

Madeleine P., 17, Mexico

Remember the Source



Stay humble. Realize you have been given a gift that is to be shared and developed without all the arrogance that often comes with talent.

Lauren A., 15, Texas, USA

Show Your Gratitude



Having talents is different from showing off. Sharing gifts that you have been given by God is a way of showing your gratitude to Him. It is important to develop them and not be worried about showing off.

Taylor S., 15, Arizona, USA

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

WE ARE ALL BLESSED



"We have all been blessed with many talents and abilities. Some have been blessed with the talent to sing, some to paint, some to speak, some to dance, some to create beautiful things with their hands, and others to render compassionate service. Some may possess many, others only a few. It matters not the size or the quantity but the effort we put forth to develop the talents and abilities we have received. You are not competing with anyone else. You are only competing with yourself to do the best with whatever you have received. Each talent that is developed will be greatly needed and will give you tremendous fulfillment and satisfaction during your life."

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Youth of the Noble Birthright," *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 74.

Send your answer and photo by June 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

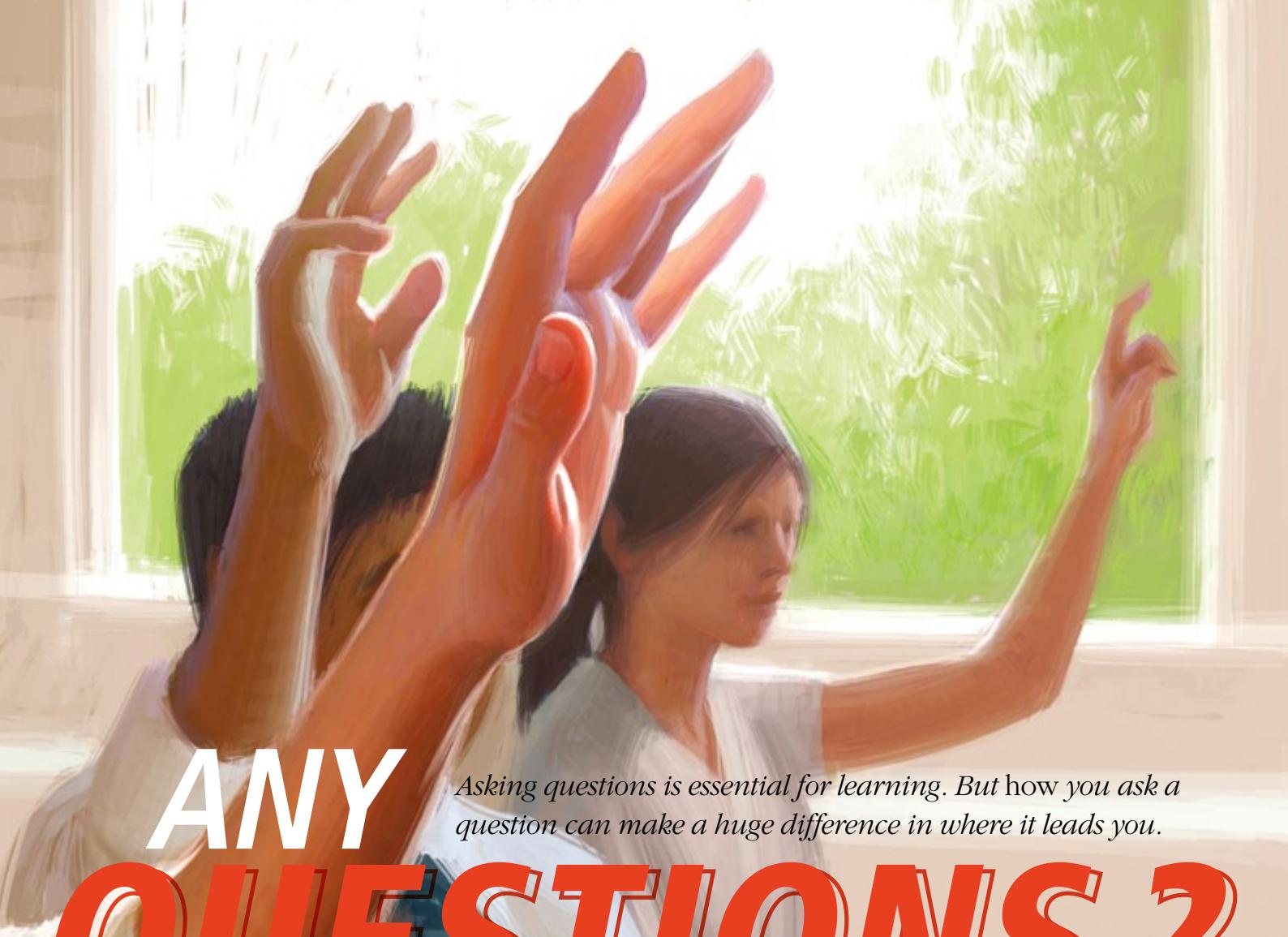
or

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

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.

NEXT QUESTION

**"My brother doesn't like me.
I try to be nice to him,
but he puts up a wall
between us.
What can I do to
improve our
relationship?"**



ANY QUESTIONS ?

Asking questions is essential for learning. But how you ask a question can make a huge difference in where it leads you.

By David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

When you were a child, the world was a bit of a mystery. You were naturally curious and probably asked a lot of questions about how things work and what things mean and why things are the way they are. And you trusted your parents and other adults as they helped you understand what you needed to know at the time.

Now, as a teenager, you are learning more and more about the world, both in school and through your own experience. You still have questions, some of them deep and searching, but you're probably trying to figure things out on your own a little more.

These questions you're asking inevitably include things related to the gospel and the Church. Whether you were raised in the Church or learned about it only recently, your study, pondering, and experience can lead you to more—and more complex—questions about the gospel.

Questioning vs. Asking Questions

There are basically two different ways we can approach our questions. For our purposes here, we'll distinguish between these approaches by labeling them *questioning* and *asking questions*. When it comes to matters of faith, there can be a pretty big difference

Motive FAITH
Attitude
 ASK ? What ?
 HOW Obtain ! WHAT ?

between the two. The difference has to do with how and why you're asking the questions, what you hope to gain from them, and where they'll eventually lead you.

Questioning, here, refers to challenging, disputing, or picking something apart. When it comes to religion, the result of this approach is often not to find answers but rather to find fault and destroy confidence.

On the other hand, in religion, just as in science or anything else worth studying, it's absolutely essential to *ask questions*, even difficult ones. It's the only way you'll get answers. And answers mean greater knowledge and understanding—and in the case of religion, greater faith and spirituality.

So, your attitude and your motive in asking a question can make all the difference in where it will eventually lead you. For instance, if you're studying the scriptures and come across a passage that seems to contradict a Church teaching or a scientific or historical fact, there's a big difference between asking "How could the scriptures (or the Church) possibly be true if . . . ?" and asking "What's the full context of this passage and what does it mean in light of . . . ?" The first question may lead you to a hastily drawn conclusion based on skepticism and doubt rather than actual knowledge or logic, whereas the second is more likely to lead you to greater insight and faith.

Though this example is a bit extreme, it illustrates how paying attention to the questions you ask and the reasons you ask them can help you to avoid drifting from *asking questions* into *questioning*.

What If Something Doesn't Make Sense?

As you study and learn and pray, you may come across something that troubles you or



FREEDOM AND DUTY

"As a Church, we encourage gospel scholarship and the search to understand all truth. Fundamental to our theology is belief in individual freedom of inquiry, thought, and expression. Constructive discussion is a privilege of every Latter-day Saint.

"But it is the greater obligation of every Latter-day Saint to move forward the work of the Lord, to strengthen His kingdom on the earth, to teach faith and build testimony in that which God has brought to pass in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times."

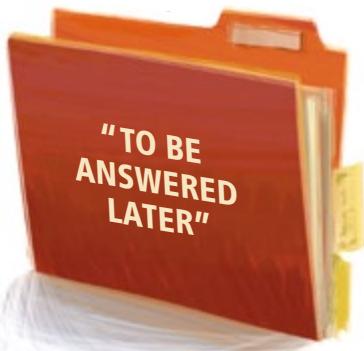
President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Keep the Faith," *Ensign*, Sept. 1985, 5–6.

doesn't make sense to you no matter how much you try to understand it. What should you do then?

First, ask yourself, "How vital is this question to my overall understanding and testimony of the gospel?" If you feel it really is important, try as best you can to resolve it, and ask for help from someone you trust, such as a parent, Church leader, or seminary teacher. This process can even be beneficial, as President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995) explained: "I have sympathy for young men and young women when honest doubts enter their minds and they engage in the great conflict of resolving doubts. These doubts can be resolved, if they have an honest desire to know the truth, by exercising moral, spiritual, and mental effort. They will emerge from the conflict into a firmer, stronger, larger faith because of the struggle. They have gone from a simple, trusting faith, through doubt and conflict, into a solid substantial faith which ripens into testimony" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, 108).

If you find that a question isn't that important, set it aside in your mental "To Be Answered Later" file. Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said that as we "remain steady and patient"

VER^T MOT^IVE HOU^L
 Why What
FAITH? WHY
 Motive What TESTIMONY
 ASK ? What ? LEARN
 GROW Obtain ?
 WHY Attitude?
 Attitude Motive HOW^WY
 MOTIVE HOW^WY
 FAITH? ASK Attitude
 Motive What ?



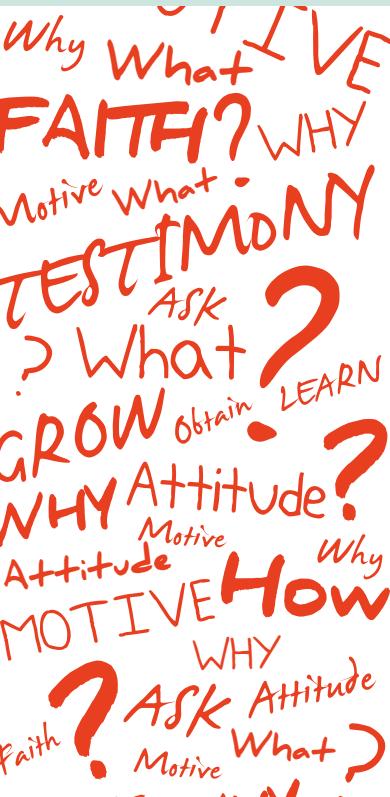


DISPELLING DOUBT

"Remember that faith and doubt cannot exist in the same mind at the same time, for one will dispel the other."

"Should doubt knock at your doorway, just say to those skeptical, disturbing, rebellious thoughts: 'I propose to stay with my faith, with the faith of my people. I know that happiness and contentment are there, and I forbid you, agnostic, doubting thoughts, to destroy the house of my faith. I acknowledge that I do not understand the processes of creation, but I accept the fact of it. I grant that I cannot explain the miracles of the Bible, and I do not attempt to do so, but I accept God's word. I wasn't with Joseph, but I believe him. My faith did not come to me through science, and I will not permit so-called science to destroy it.'"

President Thomas S. Monson, "The Lighthouse of the Lord," *New Era*, Feb. 2001, 9.



through our lives, "at times, the Lord's answer will be, 'You don't know everything, but you know enough'—enough to keep the commandments and to do what is right" ("You Know Enough," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 13).

Because we choose to press forward in faith even though we don't have the answer to every question, some people may accuse us of exercising "blind obedience" or of being "anti-intellectual." Is this a fair claim? Are there some things we aren't allowed to study or questions we aren't allowed to ask? Well, no, not really.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said to a group

of young people: "You will hear allegations that the Church is 'anti-intellectual.' . . . You are the greatest evidence to refute such an erroneous statement. Individually, you have been encouraged to learn and to seek knowledge from any dependable source. In the Church, we embrace *all* truth, whether it comes from the scientific laboratory or from the revealed word of the Lord. We accept all *truth* as being part of the gospel" ("Begin with the End in Mind," *Brigham Young University 1984–85 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [1985], 17).

A Diet of Doubt vs. a Feast of Faith

If you focus entirely on the intellect in your gospel study, you run the risk of spiritual malnutrition, because questioning and skepticism are pretty thin gruel. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has explained: "There are those whose intellectual approach to spiritual things has left them spiritually undernourished and vulnerable to doubts and misgivings. . . . The things of God, including a spiritual conversion and testimony, must be transmitted in the Lord's way, 'by the Spirit'" ("Nourishing the Spirit," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 9–10).

A diet of doubt will starve your spirit, but a feast of faith will feed you "even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst" (Alma 32:42). Asking questions doesn't need to cause doubt, though. In fact, it can help you build your faith. So keep asking good questions. Keep studying and praying and thinking deeply. As you do, the Holy Ghost will help you recognize which questions leave you spiritually famished and which ones lead you to "feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3). **NE**

MISSION BEFORE SOCCER

Christian loves soccer, but he loves the Lord and missionary work more. During his senior year of high school, he scored 17 goals and had 7 assists. His coach noticed Christian's leadership skills and commitment to others: "He does all the things a good leader should do. He helps motivate his teammates. He works as hard as anyone I've ever seen, and he's been blessed with a lot of talent. If there's anybody whom younger guys can look to, he's the example." Christian also regularly took time to go with the missionaries in his area and noticed how much they cared about the people they were teaching.

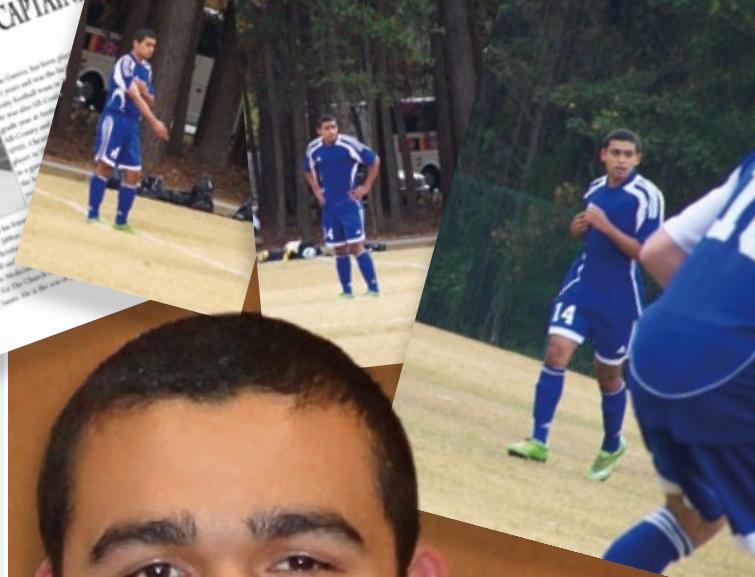
When did you decide to serve a mission? I've wanted to serve a mission for as long as I can remember. Although it was tempting to accept the opportunity to play soccer in college, I knew the right thing for me was to decline the offer of a scholarship and serve a mission. I know greater things will come in the future because I chose missionary service.

What did you learn when you went out with the missionaries? I learned that everyone has a good, kind side. I learned that the Holy Ghost can touch even the hardest, proudest heart, and He can soften people to let the gospel penetrate into their souls. I also learned that putting God first in everything we do is the best thing we can do. I feel that if I had chosen to play soccer instead of going on a mission, it would have been a selfish decision.

What have you learned on your mission? I discovered an amazing promise in Doctrine and Covenants 84:88 that says, "And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up." Now that I'm on my mission, I feel His love when I'm teaching people, and I know He is there.

I have no doubt that the Lord answers sincere prayers, and I know He loves each and every one of us. I know I am blessed to have the opportunity to serve a mission and that everything else will fall into place. **NE**

—As told to Sally Johnson Odekirk, Church Magazines



Name: Christian Guerra

Age: 19

Location: Georgia, USA

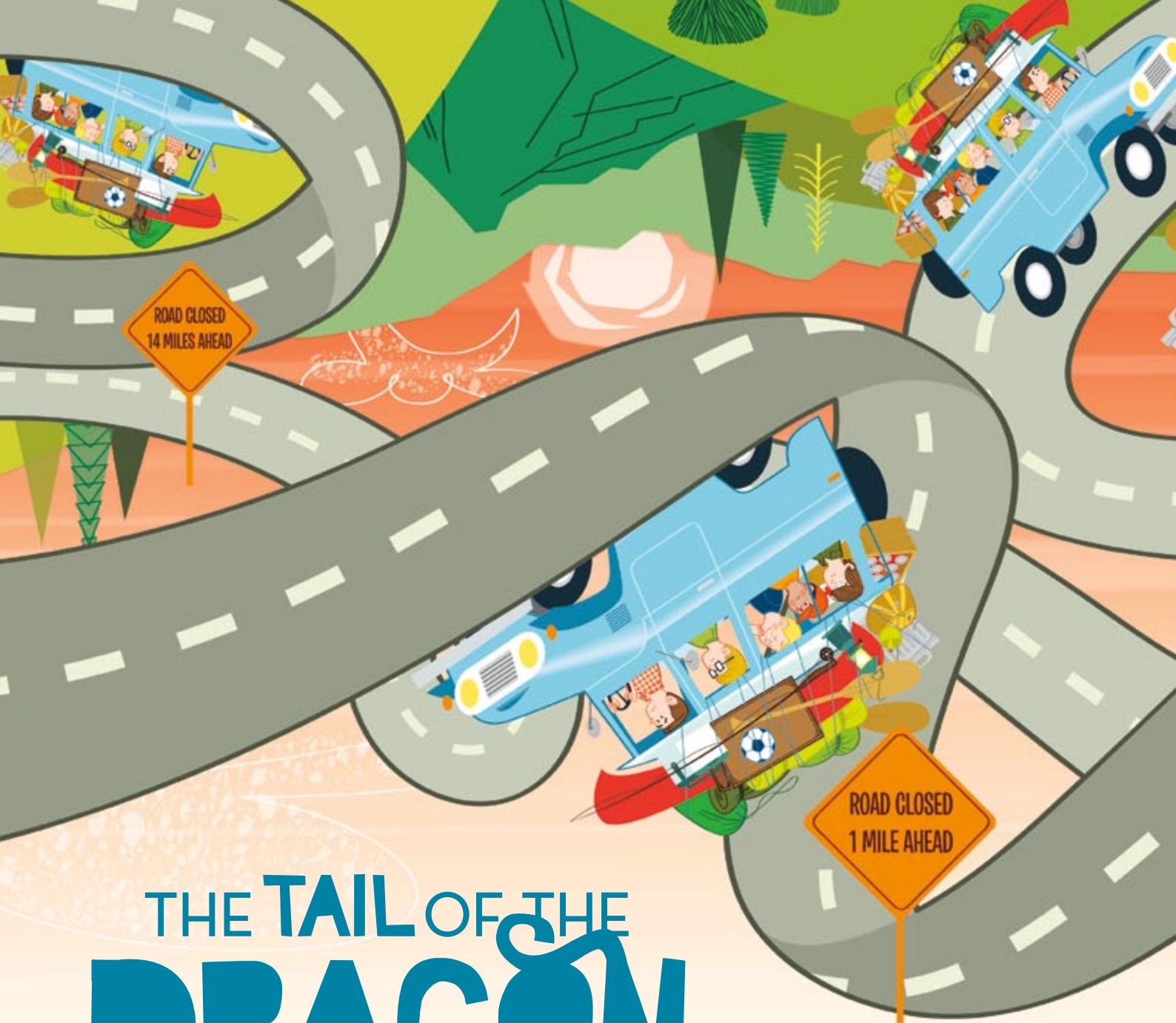
Fun facts: All-county soccer player. High-performing offensive soccer player at his high school. First player at his school to do a hat trick (scoring three goals in one game). High school athlete of the year. County soccer player of the year. On the principal's honor roll.

Currently serving in the California Long Beach Mission.



Watch a Video

See how a professional rugby player from New Zealand also made the decision to put a mission first at lds.org/go/52G.



THE TAIL OF THE DRAGON

By Bill Henrie

Following a weeklong, summer high-adventure activity in the Smoky Mountains of North Carolina with the young men of our ward, we contemplated two routes to get home: around the mountain to the east or through the mountain to the north. Those most familiar with the alternatives gladly drive an additional hour around the mountain to avoid a treacherous passage through an 11-mile, two-lane stretch of road with 318 curves, called

the Tail of the Dragon. Eager for the adventure and ready to return home as expeditiously as possible, some of us elected the road least traveled.

My family had traveled this shortcut through the mountains several times before. Motorcyclists and sightseers seeking to conquer the Tail of the Dragon travel the road most often, but commuters looking to save time also use it. At the halfway point, and at the first complaint of nausea



Our drive would have been much different if we had followed the warning signs.



SPIRITUAL WARNING SIGNALS

"There seems to be no end to the Savior's desire to lead us to safety, and there is constancy in the way He shows us the path. He calls by more than one means so that it will reach those willing to accept it. Those means always include sending the message by the mouths of His prophets. . . . Those authorized servants are always charged with warning the people, telling them the way to safety."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency,
"Safety in Counsel," *Ensign*, June 2008, 5.

from one of the young men, we rolled the windows down and slowed down to below 30 miles per hour.

Nine miles in, we stopped at the scenic lookout to ease the motion sickness and to reassure the young men that the meandering roller coaster ride had an end in sight. Before grudgingly getting back into the caravan, we reflected on the unusually high number of off-road motorcycles (we appeared to be the only vehicle on the road with a specific destination) and the sighting of an ambulance at the entrance to the 11-mile stretch. One of the young men also observed the policeman positioned on a road we had so carefully traversed at extremely slow speeds.

When we approached the 10-mile mark, we noticed a large orange sign that read, "Road closed 1 mile ahead," followed by a sign a half-mile later indicating "Road closed .5 miles ahead," and then big orange barricades separating through-traffic from a bridge reconstruction site.

We stopped and stared in disbelief at the barricade. I contemplated our unavoidable return through the stomach-turning 11-mile stretch and sighed aloud, "The road is really closed?"

Then came the words from one of the youth leaders we will not soon forget, the words we would dwell on throughout our return trip, the words we would contemplate and apply in later priesthood lessons and Mutual activities: "You didn't see that big orange sign back there that read, 'Road closed 14 miles ahead'?"

On that hot summer day, on the meandering road with 318 curves needlessly traveled twice, we were reminded that it takes a lot longer to get home when we ignore carefully placed warning signs. **NE**

I knew the counsel—no steady dating in your teens. But I thought we were the exception to the rule.

I am a senior in high school, and I am a recovering steady dater.

When I was finally 16, the guy I'd liked for a long time asked me on my first date. I was excited and couldn't believe he was actually interested in me. One date turned into two, two became three, and before I knew it,

we were a couple. I started liking him more and more, and I wanted to spend all my time with him. It started off so magical, almost like a movie—we got along great, understood each other, and never fought. He treated me like a princess.

As we continued to date only each other, my parents became concerned and tried to limit our dating. "But what do they know?" I would think to myself. After all, we had set our own rules and promised not to cross any lines. My parents started wanting to know where I was every second. Eventually I began to lie about who I was with or where I was. "But what is the harm in that?" I would think. "After all, I

But We Were in Love



am being a good influence on my boyfriend; I am encouraging him toward a mission.

And I've never been happier. If my parents just understood that, then they would allow us to steady date, because we are surely the exception to the rule."

As we entered the fifth month of our relationship, it seemed like true love. I thought we would continue to date until his mission, and then I would wait for him. It was perfect. However, as we began to talk about our future, our views about his mission didn't match up, and we decided to take a short break from the relationship.

As word of our "break" spread, news of his problem with the Word of Wisdom reached me. I felt betrayed and was devastated. How could he have been hiding this from me? When I found out the rumors were true, I did the hardest thing I've ever had to do: I broke off our relationship permanently.

I am still amazed how hurt and distraught I was over that breakup. I had fallen so

hard for my boyfriend that I had actually begun to

think I was "in love." I was hurting inside and tried to find distractions to ease the pain.

One day I was thinking about those five months, and it finally all made sense: "*I am not the exception to the rule. No one is the exception to the rule.*" Though I had been careful to remain morally clean and had done my best to prepare my boyfriend for a mission, it was still no excuse for my actions. I was still going against what the prophet counsels us to do. No matter how I looked at it from that moment on, I realized I had knowingly gone against the wishes of my parents, teachers, the prophets, and my Heavenly Father. How had I been able to become so distant from my Heavenly Father? How had I allowed myself to tune out the Spirit for so long and become so close to physical temptations?

I began to see every lie that Satan had led me to believe. It terrified me to know that I had let Satan have so much power over me in those five months.

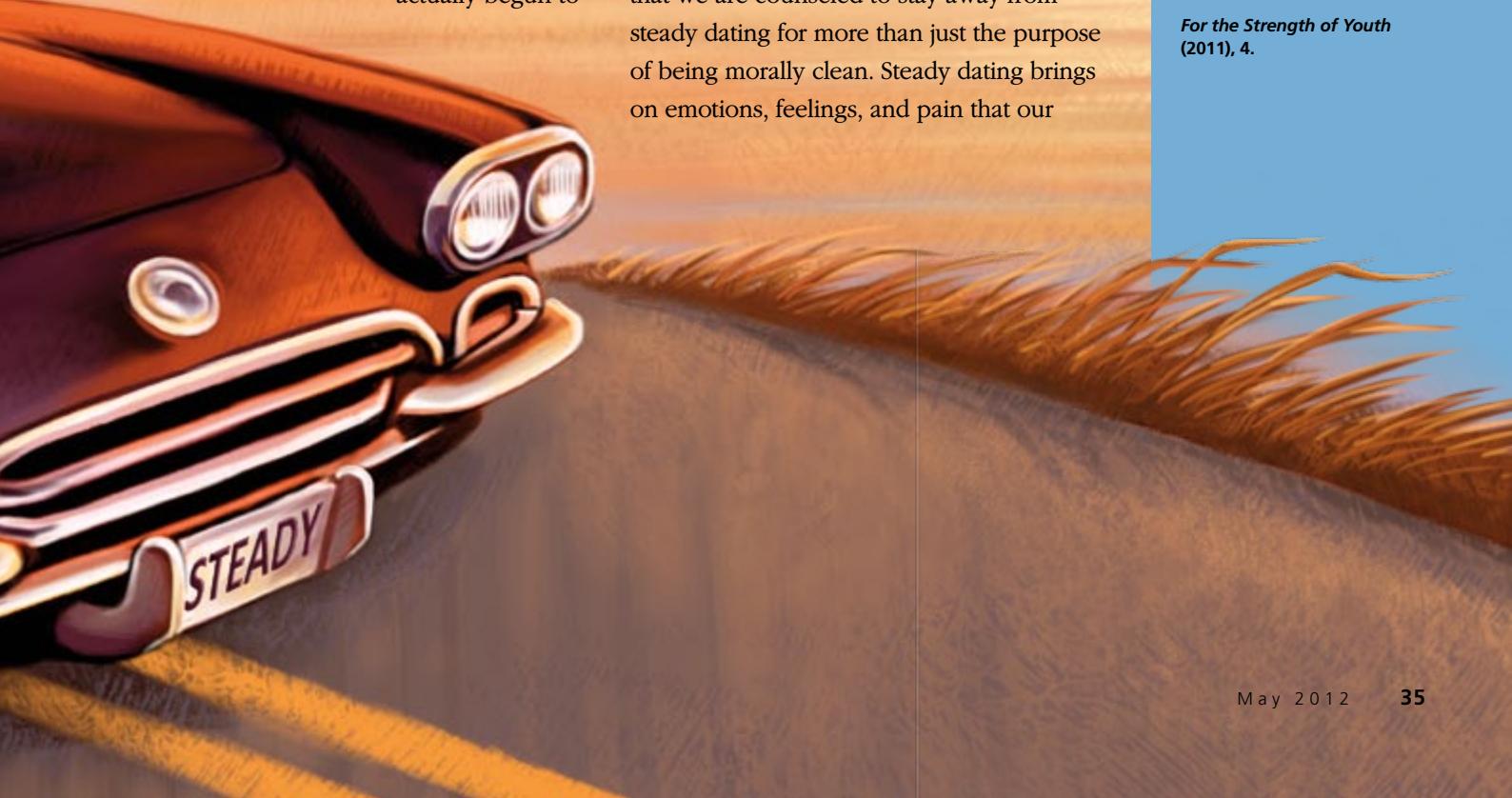
I began to realize other things, including that we are counseled to stay away from steady dating for more than just the purpose of being morally clean. Steady dating brings on emotions, feelings, and pain that our



FOR THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

“You should not date until you are at least 16 years old. When you begin dating, go with one or more additional couples. Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person. Developing serious relationships too early in life can limit the number of other people you meet and can perhaps lead to immorality. Invite your parents to become acquainted with those you date.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 4.





Don't Be Unsteady

Is feeling close to someone a bad thing? For an explanation of the dangers of the emotional side of steady dating as a teen, read "Unsteady Dating" at lds.org/go/51H.

young hearts are not ready to handle. Steady dating can keep us from meeting new people, going on dates with others, and ultimately missing out on bigger opportunities in life. Steady dating can ruin our parents' trust in us. Steady dating can lead to other sins, such as lying, losing the Holy Ghost, and ultimately jeopardizing our worthiness for a mission and the temple.

I also realized that even if our eternal companion may end up being someone we met in high school, as teens we are not yet emotionally or spiritually prepared for that

type of relationship. We are always overestimating our maturity and are in a rush to grow up. But there is really no need to rush when we're teenagers. We will have all eternity to be with our eternal companion!

I've learned that it is dangerous to let yourself believe that you are the exception to any rule. Do not let Satan's enticing lies talk you out of doing what you know is right.

Do not let yourself be blinded by your feelings. Do not lie to your parents or to yourself about your relationship with another person. Steady dating is simply not worth it. **NE**





Priesthood Keys

These keys unlock the door to the power of God.



With a set of keys, you can do a lot of things that you wouldn't otherwise be able to do—enter buildings, drive cars, and open trunks, among other things. Keys, basically, mean authority and access.

The same is true of priesthood keys. They control access to the blessings and ordinances of the priesthood. These keys are mentioned frequently in the Church, but we may not always understand them, so here are a few facts about priesthood keys.

What are priesthood keys?

Priesthood keys are the right to preside over and direct the Church within a jurisdiction. Keys usually apply to a geographic area, like a ward, stake, or mission. They also usually include authority over specific ordinances and activities (for instance, baptism, the sacrament, missionary work, and temple work).

Where do priesthood keys come from?

All priesthood keys ultimately come from Heavenly Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith taught, “The keys [of the priesthood] have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 104). The keys necessary for governing the Church in the latter days were restored to Joseph Smith by heavenly beings—for instance, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Moses, Elias, and Elijah (see Joseph Smith—History 1:72; D&C 27:12; D&C 110:11–12). These keys have been passed on to his successors.

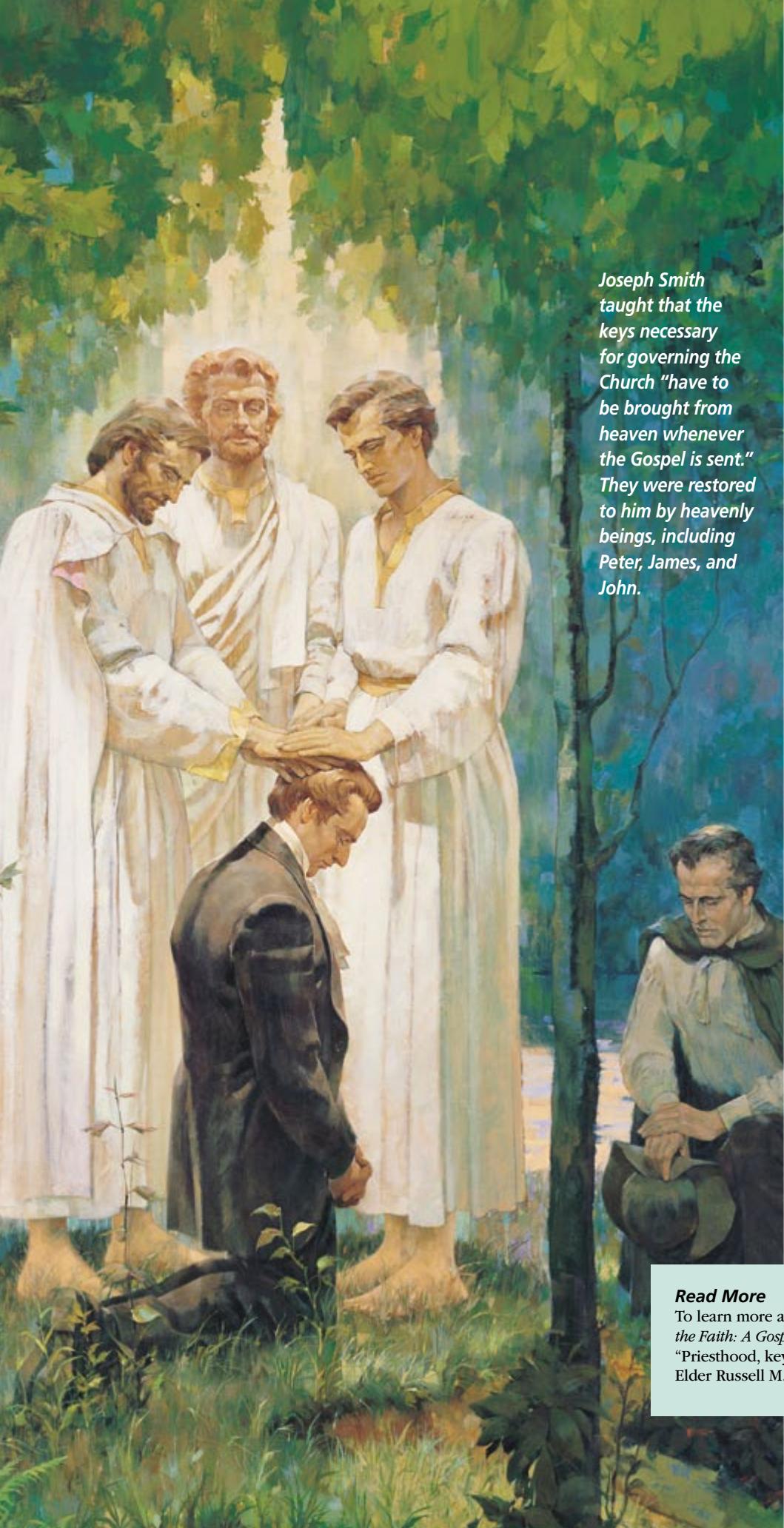
What do priesthood keys do? Why are they necessary?

Ordinances such as baptism and the sacrament help us to return to Heavenly Father in the celestial kingdom. Through the keys of the priesthood, the Church administers these ordinances and provides an organization to carry on the work of the Lord in an orderly manner—“Mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8).

So, for instance, although the Church has many worthy priesthood holders, they need authorization from someone holding keys before performing most ordinances. For example, if Aaronic Priesthood holders hear about a homebound ward member who would like to receive the sacrament at home, they cannot simply go and administer the sacrament to that member because they believe it’s the right thing to do. They must be authorized by the bishop, who holds the keys over the Aaronic Priesthood. And a father who holds the priesthood cannot simply baptize his 8-year-old daughter or ordain his 12-year-old son to the Aaronic Priesthood without first being authorized by the bishop to do so.

Who has priesthood keys?

Members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles hold all the keys necessary for governing



Joseph Smith taught that the keys necessary for governing the Church "have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent." They were restored to him by heavenly beings, including Peter, James, and John.

the Church. Only the President of the Church has the right to exercise all of those keys. He delegates these keys to others who preside in the Church—temple presidents, mission presidents, stake presidents, district presidents, bishops, branch presidents, and quorum presidents, including deacons and teachers quorum presidents.

What is the difference between holding keys and having a calling?

Having a calling means having responsibilities; holding keys means presiding over and directing the work of the priesthood. For instance, a ward Young Men president works under the direction of the bishop, who holds keys over the ward, but the Young Men president's responsibilities do not include presiding over the priesthood, so he does not receive keys. The keys to direct the work of the Aaronic Priesthood in the ward belong to the bishop, the teachers quorum president, and the deacons quorum president. **NE**

Read More

To learn more about keys of the priesthood, read *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), 126–27; Topical Guide, “Priesthood, keys of”; and “Keys of the Priesthood,” by Elder Russell M. Nelson (*Ensign*, Oct. 2005, 40).

Wearing Grandma's



*I thought my plan
was flawless, but
Grandma had
something else
in mind.*

By Rachelle Zeigler,
as told to IvaLou Zeigler

“**G**randma, I’m so sorry, but I can’t go to church with you. I forgot to bring a dress and shoes,” I told her in my most regretful voice. Not wanting to go to a ward of strangers, I had purposely left my church clothes home when I visited Grandma. I hadn’t washed my hair nor put on any makeup, and I waited until a half hour before church to give Grandma

Dress

the news. I was positive Grandma would agree I was not fit for church.

Smiling, Grandma quickly appraised my condition: "Rachelle, this isn't a problem. We're close to the same size, and I have the perfect outfit for you." She opened her closet and pulled out a blue paisley grandma-skirt with a coordinating pink blouse. The sleeves were too long, and the skirt's hem swished around my ankles. Not only was Grandma taller than me, but she also had long, narrow feet. After attempts with different shoes, she helped me stuff tissues in the toes of some colorful beaded loafers.

"You look beautiful," Grandma beamed. I pasted on a smile, but I was aware I couldn't look anything but ridiculous in an old-lady dress with flat, greasy hair. Grandma was optimistic, and with her sweet prodding, we headed out the door for church.

"Bishop," Grandma said as we entered the foyer, "I'd like you to meet my granddaughter Rachelle. She's come to visit me for a few days." I shook hand after hand as Grandma proudly introduced me to practically everyone in her ward.

It was a relief when sacrament meeting began and we were seated quietly on the bench. I was so embarrassed I couldn't concentrate on any of the announcements or songs. I kept my head down, hoping none of the young men had seen me. I was seriously wishing I were in my own dress, wearing makeup, with stylish hair.

The priests began to reverently bless the sacrament. It wasn't until the priests began to bless the water that I finally started to listen and realized what I had done. I had been so worried about attending an unfamiliar ward

that I had given no thought to remembering God, His Son Jesus Christ, and what They have done for us. I realized that I had even planned to break His commandment by not coming to church. I had also lied to my grandmother about forgetting my clothes. I felt ashamed.

As I thought of our Savior and His love for us, my heart lifted. I had planned to not come to church, but here I sat. This made me smile. I was grateful for Grandma, for the borrowed dress, and that Grandma loved me enough to bring me to church. She had helped me put God first and keep His commandments.

I never "forgot" my church clothes again. **NE**

5 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR CHURCH MEETINGS

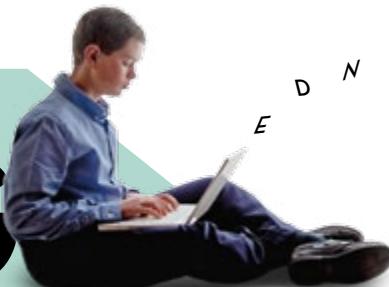
1. Get dressed and ready early enough that you don't feel rushed.
2. Avoid media that do not invite a spirit of worship.
3. Arrive at the church in time to listen quietly to the prelude music.
4. Prepare your mind for the sacrament by reading or thinking about the Savior, the Atonement, and the covenants you have made.
5. Pray to receive insight and direction that you need in your life right now.

There are many other ways to prepare for Church meetings on Sunday. Use the space below to write down things you've done that have helped you prepare.

GETTING INTO

INDEXING

By Brittany Beattie
Church Magazines



Think you're too young for family history? A few minutes a day can uncover names of many people waiting to receive temple ordinances.

You may have heard people use the word *indexing* in connection with family history and wondered what it was. FamilySearch indexing lets you type names from old records into a database that people worldwide can use to find their ancestors. The names you index generally won't come from your own family line but from scanned documents that include census records, birth certificates, marriage certificates, military registrations, and more.

Indexing lets everyone help one another with family history. Today, you may enter in the name of an ancestor of someone living in Australia, and tomorrow a person living in England may type in the name of an ancestor you and your family are looking for. As

we work together to enter these names into the FamilySearch database, we'll each have a greater chance of finding information about our own ancestors and be able to help take family names to the temple.

So, why should *you* participate in indexing? Here are eight great reasons!

WHY?

1 Because these aren't just names; they're people.

Look at the census record at right, which is an example of a record that would show up in the FamilySearch indexing software. It's easy to think of the document as just a long list of names of people who lived in the 1940s. But that list is not just a collection of names—those names represent individual sons and daughters of God. They are His children, and He wants them to enjoy the same temple blessings that you can. Each time you type a name into the FamilySearch indexing application, you're helping bring one person closer to his or her temple covenants.



*This is an example
of what a 1940 U.S.
Federal Census record
could look like.*

2 Because it feels great.

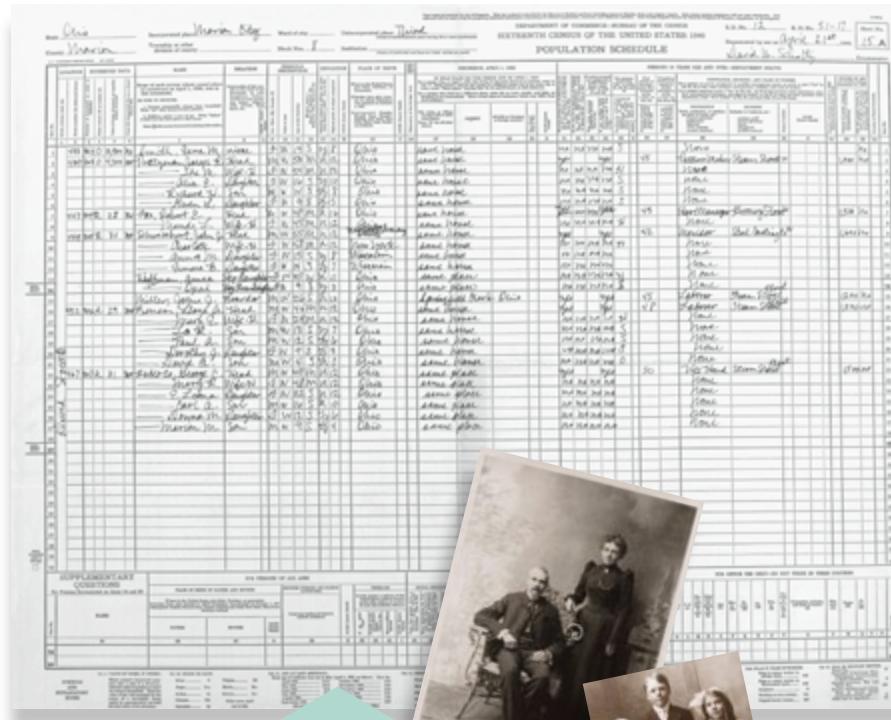
Typing names into a database may not sound very exciting. But this isn't your typical data entry—this work is filled with the Spirit of Elijah. The Lord promised that Elijah would return and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers (see Malachi 4:5–6). As you do this work, you'll be able to feel the Spirit of Elijah (which is the Holy Ghost). It will bring greater peace, joy, and purpose into your life because it's a work with eternal importance.

3 Because you're a perfect fit.

FamilySearch indexing is based around the computer. Can you think of anyone who is skilled at using the computer, is already online frequently, types quickly, and knows the way around today's technologies? It sounds like you (and your friends) have just what it takes for indexing. And you don't even need to be a member of the Church to index.

4 Because it fits your schedule.

You may wonder how you can fit indexing into your life, but it's easy. Since you don't have to complete an entire project in one sitting, you could work on it just five minutes at a time, perhaps while you're waiting for dinner or before you log on to a social networking site. Five extra minutes browsing the web may not make a big difference in your day, but five minutes spent indexing can bring the Spirit into your life and bless the lives of others for eternity.



AN URGENT NEED: THE 1940 U.S. FEDERAL CENSUS

On April 2, 2012, the FamilySearch indexing organization began work on the 1940 United States Census—a collection of over 130 million names! They need us to index in order to meet a goal to publish the records by the next general conference. As we work together, we can make it happen! Will you help?

Go online to lds.org/go/52J to watch a video tutorial about using the FamilySearch indexing application. Then head to indexing.familysearch.org to download the program and get started. (You should get an LDS Account for this, which requires you to find out your membership record number from your ward or branch clerk.) Then you can try FamilySearch indexing for yourself and see what a difference it makes in your life!



HOW DOES INDEXING WORK?

Here's how the names you type into the FamilySearch indexing software end up in the FamilySearch database and can later be taken to the temple.

1. A record is scanned and prepared for the FamilySearch indexing program. You can download this program for free at indexing.familysearch.org.
2. You download a batch of records and enter the names and information from the records by typing what you see. At the same time, another person is working on the same batch. That way, if one of you makes a mistake, there's a backup.
3. A third person, called an arbitrator, clears up any information where you and the other person working on the batch typed something different.
4. The names and data are added to the FamilySearch database, where everyone throughout the world can quickly search for their ancestors.
5. Someone finds the information about their ancestors in FamilySearch.
6. A person performs ordinances for their ancestors in the temple.

5 Because it's not just for older generations.

Do you think that family history work is only for your grandparents and that you'll be better suited for this work when you're older? Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in speaking to youth, has said, "The time is now" ("The Time Is Now," [lds.org/fhy](https://www.lds.org/fhy)).

Young men and young women all around the world have found that indexing is a great project for youth. In fact, you may find that it's a perfect service experience for your priesthood quorum or Young Women class or even for Personal Progress or Duty to God experiences.

6 Because technologies have been invented for this work.

Have you ever thought about how this generation constantly receives new technologies when people in the past lived for centuries without our modern means of communication? Well, it's no coincidence. Multiple prophets and apostles have testified that today's technologies have been invented to help God's work move forward (for example, see [lds.org/go/52K](https://www.lds.org/go/52K)). And FamilySearch indexing is one of those ways. Heavenly Father has given us technologies to help bring His children sacred covenants—and He has given you a special responsibility to help that happen as you prepare names for temple work!

7 Because it protects you from the influence of Satan.

Today's world is filled with temptation, so we need to fortify ourselves to stand strong. Elder Bednar has testified that family history work is one way to bring that strength and to protect us from the world. He said, "The Spirit of Elijah is the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of Elijah will influence anyone who is involved in this work. That, for a young person in the wickedness of the world in which we live today, is one of the greatest safeguards against the temptations of the adversary. The Spirit of Elijah will not only bless you, it will protect you" ("The Time Is Now," lds.org/fhy).

8 Because prophets have invited you to do so.

Many prophets have talked about doing this work. In the October 2011 general conference, Elder Bednar extended a specific invitation to youth to participate (see the quote at right). Have you acted on his invitation and experienced the blessings he promised? If not, today is a great day to start! **NE**

AN APOSTOLIC INVITATION



"I now invite the attention of the young women, young men, and children of the rising generation as I emphasize the importance of the Spirit of Elijah in your lives today. . . .

"Many of you may think family history work is to be performed primarily by older people. But I know of no age limit described in the scriptures or guidelines announced by Church leaders restricting this important service to mature adults. . . .

"It is no coincidence that FamilySearch and other tools have come forth at a time when young people are so familiar with a wide range of information and communication technologies. Your fingers have been trained to text and tweet to accelerate and advance the work of the Lord—not just to communicate quickly with your friends. The skills and aptitude evident among many young people today are a preparation to contribute to the work of salvation.

"I invite the young people of the Church to learn about and experience the Spirit of Elijah. I encourage you to study, to search out your ancestors, and to prepare yourselves to perform proxy baptisms in the house of the Lord for your kindred dead (see D&C 124:28–36). And I urge you to help other people identify their family histories.

"As you respond in faith to this invitation, your hearts shall turn to the fathers. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be implanted in your hearts. Your patriarchal blessing, with its declaration of lineage, will link you to these fathers and be more meaningful to you. Your love and gratitude for your ancestors will increase. Your testimony of and conversion to the Savior will become deep and abiding. And I promise you will be protected against the intensifying influence of the adversary. As you participate in and love this holy work, you will be safeguarded in your youth and throughout your lives.

". . . Any young person can do what I am suggesting, using the modules available at lds.org/familyhistoryyouth."

**Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
"The Hearts of the Children Shall Turn,"
Ensign, Nov. 2011, 26–27.**



BLESSED BY INDEXING

I was first introduced to FamilySearch indexing (see page 42) in one of my mom's Relief Society meetings. I didn't really understand what it was, but I thought it would be a terrific way to pass off a value project in my Personal Progress booklet.

Luckily, my neighbor was able to help me get started.

At first, it was just about getting the 10 hours done. Little did I know that it would be so much more than that. It was so cool to see how old these records were and just have the feeling of helping people find their family history. Now, when I go to the temple, I get an even more powerful feeling than I did before. It makes me feel happy inside.



Indexing also affected my family. My father works in the Church's Family History Department. When he saw me doing indexing, I could see a spark of excitement go through him. I learned more about his work, and we spent quality time together. Later, I taught my mom how to index and helped with workshops for ward members. After I had finished my 10-hour value project, I found myself still indexing. In about two and a half months, I was able to get over a thousand records done.

Indexing is such a great way to spend my extra time. Instead of doing things for myself, I am doing it for others. It helps the temple workers have names for baptisms for the dead. And it also builds the database that helps people find their ancestors and the significant dates in their lives.

Indexing is a great activity for everyone to do. It doesn't matter if you're 13, 18, or 56—every little bit of help counts.

Rachele J., Utah, USA

USING THE HYMNBOOK

Music has always played an important role in my life. I enjoyed music as a child, listening to all sorts of music without even necessarily paying attention to the lyrics. As I have grown in the gospel, I have come to realize the sacred nature of the hymnbook.

The hymns found in the hymnbook have brought me peace many times and have helped me draw closer to my Heavenly Father. Whenever I am faced with a troubling situation, I sing a hymn. If friends lose a loved one, sometimes I sing to them or refer them

STAYING ON MY KNEES

I decided it was finally time to read the many talks and scriptures our priesthood quorum leaders had asked us to read before camp. Glancing over all the material without much enthusiasm, I saw an article on repentance.

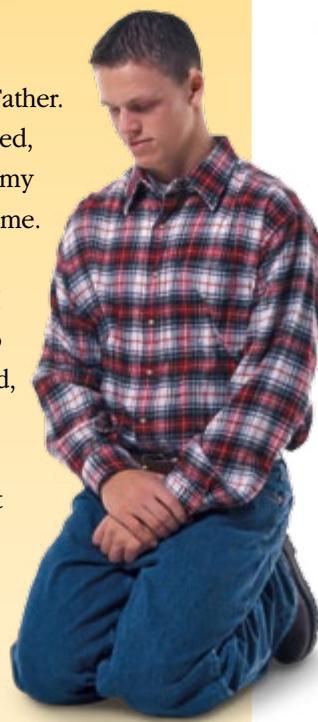
To a 15-year-old boy, the article was not particularly awe-inspiring. It seemed to simply reinforce what I heard in Sunday School on a regular basis. However, it was while reading the message that I realized I never really prayed with the kind of conviction described in the passage. I got off my bed where I had been reading, closed my door, knelt, and began to pray. I figured that I would lose nothing in the attempt.

Although my prayer began as somewhat of a rehearsed statement, I decided to stay on my knees until I felt like I had poured my heart out

to my Heavenly Father. The longer I prayed, the more sincere my outpourings became. And when I was finished, I knew I had a Father who listened and cared, and I knew I had a purpose on this earth. For the first time in my life, I thought I had truly become a convert to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When the pressures of life become overwhelming, I think of those few minutes when I felt so connected to my Father in Heaven. I can still feel that same closeness when I devote myself to prayer, go to the temple, and especially when I perform service in His name. I love this gospel of Jesus Christ.

Alex N., Colorado, USA



to a hymn. As I conduct hymns in sacrament meeting, I feel reverent, and the Spirit reminds me of my baptismal covenants and my desire to honor them.

I also like to ponder the words of the hymns. My scriptures are filled with marked verses of quotations found in these wonderful hymns. When I give a talk or prepare a lesson, I quote a hymn. When people ask me to refer them to a particular quote from the talk, I often tell them it is from my Church hymnbook. Some of these instances have led to

opportunities to share the gospel.

Most important, the hymns have helped me and my family grow stronger in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The lyrics have given me hope, strengthened my faith in the gospel, and helped me "feast upon the words of Christ" (2 Nephi 32:3) for the past 18 years. Our wonderful hymnbook is indeed special to me, and it always will be, because I know that we can sing these hymns as a prayer of the righteous unto our Father in Heaven (see D&C 25:12).

Chastmier O., Nigeria

WE'VE GOT MAIL

I gained something new from each talk and had many questions answered.



BEAUTIFUL AND INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC

All the speakers are so inspired and left me with a greater desire to be better. As always, the music touched me deeply. When the Mormon Tabernacle Choir sang "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," which is my favorite hymn, for the closing song, it felt like an answer to prayer. The song of the righteous truly is a prayer unto God [see D&C 25:12], and I am grateful that we have such beautiful and inspirational music to uplift us and to show God a little appreciation for everything He has done for us and given to us.

Shirley H., Arizona

GRATEFUL FOR CONFERENCE

This general conference was amazing. I felt that many of the messages that were shared applied to my life. I can now take these messages and apply them to me. I am so grateful that we are able to have conference every six months.

Kimberly H., Missouri

YOUNG WOMEN MEETING

Watching the general Young Women meeting has always been

important to me. There is power and strength in the number of righteous young women coming together to draw closer to the Lord. Many of my personal questions were answered, and many of my fears diminished as these faithful sisters and the prophet spoke. They testified of faith, virtue, diligence, education, obedience, and endurance. I know that Christ is the head of this gospel. He loves us and has given us humble and worthy leaders to help us return to Him.

Kathryn C., Utah

A CLEAR MESSAGE

I was amazed at how much President Dieter F. Uchtdorf's talk hit home to me. I tend to compare myself to others so I'll feel better about myself, but we should all be striving to support each other and celebrate our individual talents. We want to see others succeed, and we need to just let go and stop envying. The message is clear-cut and not impossible.

Lisa K., California

COMFORT AND ANSWERS

I felt a great amount of comfort and peace while listening to conference.

My testimony grew of Heavenly Father's love for me. There are a lot of things I need to improve on, but I'll be able to accomplish anything with the Lord's help.

Bethany G., Utah

I gained something new from each talk and had many questions answered. I'm grateful for everything I've learned and hope to apply it to my life.

Deborah O., Virginia

MILITARY STORIES

I appreciated the stories about the military. Like many other people, I have ancestors and current family members who served in the armed forces. I felt a special closeness to the military stories that were shared this conference.

Jonathan M., Mississippi

 We love hearing from you. Write to us by going online to newera.lds.org and clicking "Submit Material."

You can e-mail us at newera@ldschurch.org or write to:

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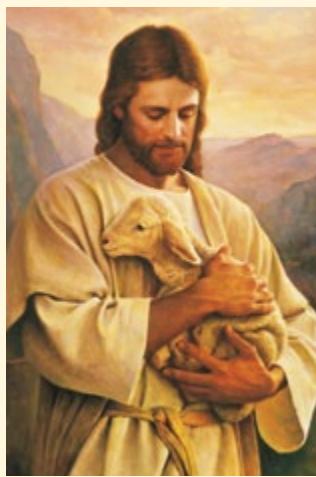


One

By Camille Nugent

What a difference
one
can make.
The tossing of a single stone
—just one—
into the sea of life
forms endless ripples
on the surface.
Ripples reaching far
and wide
which manifest
the power of
one.

WHAT'S ONLINE

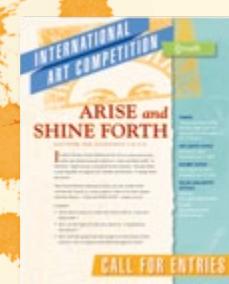


Testimonies of Jesus Christ

Hear the testimonies of President Monson, President Eyring, President Uchtdorf, and President Packer as they testify of Christ in the short *Mormon Messages* video "He Lives." Watch it at lds.org/go/52L.

Stories about the Living Prophets

Did you know that President Dieter F. Uchtdorf led a flight to rescue a hijacked plane, that Elder Russell M. Nelson met his wife while performing in a college play, or that Elder Jeffrey R. Holland and Elder Quentin L. Cook were missionary companions in the British Mission? You can read more about members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in their short biographies online at lds.org/go/52M.



International Youth Art Competition

Don't forget that the International Youth Art Competition deadline is coming up on Friday, June 1, 2012. Whether you love to paint, sculpt, take pictures, sketch, or more, be sure to visit lds.org/go/52N for information. The theme for the art competition is this year's Mutual theme—"arise and shine forth" (see D&C 115:5).