

FOR YOUTH OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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**SPECIAL
ISSUE
DUTY
TO GOD**



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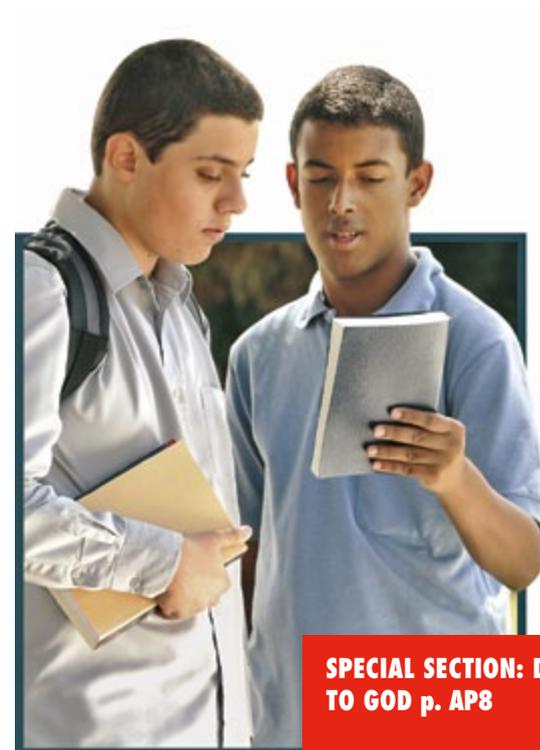
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Introduction to Duty to God



By the Young Men General Presidency

When Joseph Smith was 17 years old, Moroni, a messenger sent from the presence of God, appeared to Joseph and said that God had a work for him to do (see Joseph Smith—History 1:33).

Dear brethren of the Aaronic Priesthood, God has a work for you to do as well. It probably won't be to translate ancient records on gold plates—rather, it will be something that fits your unique talents and circumstances. How will you know what your work is? Part of it is described in your Aaronic Priesthood duties, which are found in the scriptures and summarized in your *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet (see pages 23, 47, and 71).

Learn about those duties. Study them prayerfully. As you do, the Spirit will whisper to you specific things you can do to fulfill them. Is there someone in your family who needs your service? Do you have a friend who needs to hear your testimony of Christ? Is there something you can do to make the ordinance of the sacrament a more spiritual

experience for ward members? Write down what the Spirit tells you to do. Carry out your plans, and then share your experiences with your quorum members.

You will be richly blessed as you fulfill your duty to God, but instead of focusing on the blessings you will receive, focus on the blessings you can share. People all around you need your priesthood service. That is the work God has for you to do.

We have seen the marvelous good you are doing as priesthood men. We testify that the priesthood is God's power. He shares it with you because He loves you—and because He loves the people you serve. **NE**



“Behold, thou art my son; . . . and I have a work for thee”
(Moses 1:4, 6).

The Future Begins Now

Your Future Beckons

Active service in the Aaronic Priesthood will prepare you young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, to serve missions, and to marry in the holy temple.

You will ever remember your Aaronic Priesthood quorum advisers and your fellow quorum members. . . .

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, your future beckons; prepare for it. May Heavenly Father ever guide you as you do so. May He guide all of us as we strive to honor the priesthood which we hold and to magnify our callings.

President Thomas S. Monson, "Do Your Duty—That Is Best," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 59.

Diligence and Trust

Just a few weeks ago, I saw a new deacon start on [the] path of diligence. His father showed me a diagram his son had created that showed every row in their chapel, a number for each deacon who would be assigned to pass the sacrament, and their route through the chapel to serve the sacrament to the members. The father and I smiled to think that a boy, without being asked to do it, would make a plan to be sure he would succeed in his priesthood service.

I recognized in his diligence the pattern from the new *Duty to God* booklet. It is to learn what the Lord expects of you, make a plan to do it, act on your plan with diligence, and then share with others how your experience changed you and blessed others. . . .

You will become more diligent as you feel the magnitude



of the trust God has placed in you. There is a message from the First Presidency for you in that *Duty to God* booklet: “Heavenly Father has great trust and confidence in you and has an important mission for you to fulfill. He will help you as you turn to Him in prayer, listen for the promptings of the Spirit, obey the commandments, and keep the covenants that you have made” [*Fulfilling My Duty to God: For Aaronic Priesthood Holders* (booklet, 2010), 5].

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Act in All Diligence,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 60–61.

The End from the Beginning

I will speak today to you wonderful young men who are preparing to make a difference in the world—you who have entered the ranks of the Aaronic Priesthood. . . . The

priesthood you bear is a wonderful force for good. You live in a time of great challenges and opportunities. As spirit sons of heavenly parents, you are free to make the right choices. This requires hard work, self-discipline, and an optimistic outlook, which will bring joy and freedom into your life now and in the future.

The Lord said to Abraham, “My name is Jehovah, and I know the end from the beginning; therefore my hand shall be over thee” (Abraham 2:8). My young friends, today I say to you that if you trust the Lord and obey Him, His hand shall be over you, He will help you achieve the great potential He sees in you, and He will help you to see the end from the beginning.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “See the End from the Beginning,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 42.

Fulfilling Your

The purpose of Duty to God is to help you experience the power, authority, and divine mandate you received when the priesthood was conferred upon you.



**By Elder
Craig C. Christensen**
Of the Seventy

While serving as full-time missionaries in Chile, my companions and I had several opportunities to give priesthood blessings. On one occasion, after pronouncing a blessing on a single mother suffering from cancer, we expressed our appreciation for the opportunity of blessing her. Her response surprised us. She exclaimed, “Elders, *you* are the real blessing.” She continued, “Having worthy priesthood men in my home is the greatest blessing of all.”

As we thought about her comments, we recognized that God really does bless His children through righteous priesthood holders. If we hadn’t been there, ready to fulfill our priesthood duty, she could not have received the blessing we provided. We learned that fulfilling our duty to God meant living worthy to bless and serve others.

Why Duty to God?

Young men of the Aaronic Priesthood, the purpose of *Fulfilling My Duty to God* is to help you experience the power, authority, and divine mandate you received when the priesthood was conferred upon you. The Lord has said that “men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free

will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them” (D&C 58:27–28).

Duty to God helps you exercise this power by taking the initiative to serve others, including your family, and to magnify all of your priesthood duties. More importantly, Duty to God helps prepare you to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, make sacred covenants and receive temple ordinances, serve honorable full-time missions, and become righteous husbands and fathers.

Fulfilling your Duty to God is not a program but a process. As you participate in Duty to God, you **learn** about what God expects of you and make plans specific to your own feelings and circumstances. As you **act** on your plans, you gain a testimony and learn from your experiences. You then **share** what you are learning with your family, quorum members, and others. As you make and implement your plans, you learn how to express your feelings and take personal responsibility for your own spiritual growth and development.

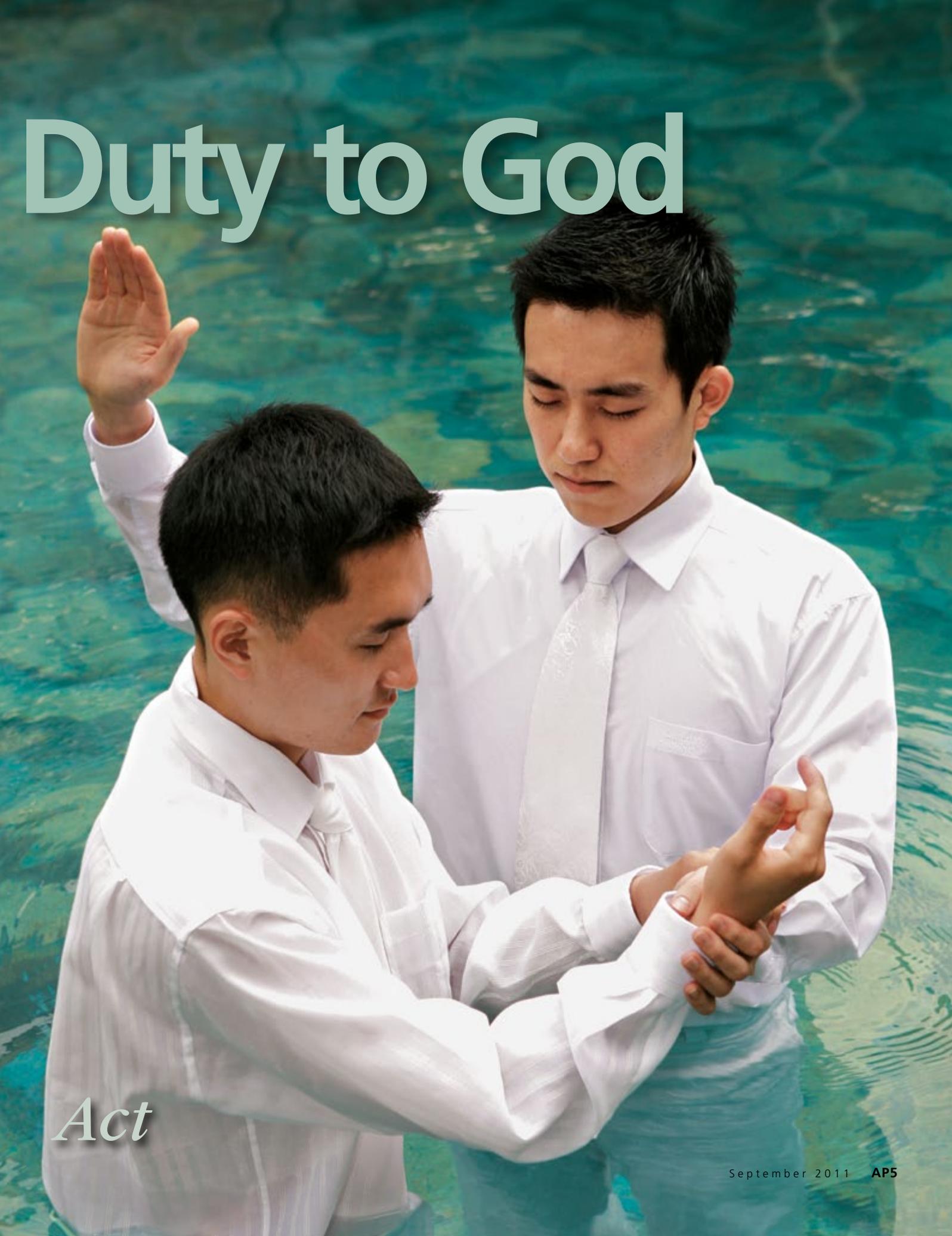
We learned that fulfilling our duty to God meant living worthy to bless and serve others.

Be a Participant, Not a Spectator

President Thomas S. Monson has taught, “Yours is the privilege to be not spectators but participants on the stage of priesthood service” (“To the Rescue,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 48).

Learn

Duty to God

A photograph of two men in white shirts and ties performing a baptism in a pool of water. The man on the left is being baptized, with his head tilted back and eyes closed. The man on the right is pouring water over his head. The background is a clear, blue-green pool of water.

Act

Everything about Duty to God invites you to act—you act by learning, you act by serving and by doing, and you act by sharing. As you implement your plans from Duty to God, you become full participants in the priesthood by magnifying your priesthood duty. You learn more profoundly that “when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

Gain a Vision of Your Duties

President Monson has also taught: “Each of us has duties associated with the sacred priesthood which we bear. Whether we bear the Aaronic or the Melchizedek Priesthood, much is expected of each of us” (“True to Our Priesthood Trust,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 56).

If someone were to ask you to name the duties of a deacon, you would probably say that a deacon passes the sacrament and collects fast offerings. And you would be right. However, as the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet illustrates, the service of a deacon encompasses much more than that. For example, a deacon is to watch over the Church, fellowship quorum members, speak in meetings, and share the gospel and his testimony with others. As you work on Duty to God, you will gain a much broader vision of what is expected of you and how you can better fulfill your duties as a deacon, teacher, or priest.

Develop Spiritual Strength

Duty to God also helps you establish spiritual habits that will bless your life. For example, you develop plans to pray regularly and to study the scriptures. Through Duty to God, you learn how to teach doctrines and make plans

to share what you have learned with others now and as a full-time missionary in the future.

One young man, Logan G. Van Wagoner, shared the result of his plans to make scripture study more meaningful: “Duty to God has made a big change in my life. One great change is that

We encourage you to dedicate time each week to learn your duty, to make plans, and to diligently carry out your plans.

I used to just read my scriptures. I wouldn’t pay a lot of attention and just ended up glancing through the verses so I could say I had read. But soon after I started Duty to God, it helped me realize the importance of the scriptures.

I started to read each verse and mark or highlight things the Spirit made me feel were important and significant. I also started to check the cross-references to help me really understand and learn what I could. Now I feel the Spirit every time I read, telling me those things are true. It’s made a huge and positive difference in my life.”

An Invitation and a Promise

We invite each of you to make Duty to God a part of every aspect of your Aaronic Priesthood experience. We encourage you to dedicate time each week to learn your duty, to make plans, and to diligently carry out your plans. We know that as you share your experiences with your family and friends, your testimony will grow and you will strengthen and bless those around you as well.

President Henry B. Eyring called the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet “a powerful tool.” He went on to promise: “It will strengthen the testimonies of young men and their relationship with God. . . . It will strengthen their relationships with their parents, among quorum members, and with their leaders” (“Help Them on Their Way Home,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 24).

We promise that as you fulfill your duty to God, you will experience the powerful blessings of the priesthood in your life. You have the Holy Ghost as your companion and will be prepared to serve wherever and whenever you are called upon. As a worthy priesthood man, you will be a profound blessing to all you serve. **NE**



Share

Duty to God with **DAD**

By Paul VanDenBerghe

Church Magazines

*Need help with Duty to God?
It's close to home.*

After learning about the new *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet in a fireside last year, Aleks Miller—deacons quorum president of a ward in the Vancouver British Columbia Stake—was eager to get started. He and his father set up a schedule to meet each Sunday to work on a section of the booklet together.

“My dad and I, every week, sit down and look through a section of the book,” says Aleks. “We start with a prayer, and then we learn the stuff and read the scriptures. We answer the questions in the section and then write down how we can implement what we’ve learned.” Aleks often shares with his mother what he and his father are working on. “I talked with my mom about the sacrament and the meaning of the sacrament prayers and wrote down some ideas about how I, as a deacon, could help make the sacrament more meaningful for her.”

After only a few weeks of these Duty-to-God-with-Dad meetings, Aleks noticed it was making a difference in his life. “It makes me feel



A FORCE FOR GOOD

“[God] has given you His power to do great things. As you fulfill your duty to God, you will strengthen and bless your family. This is your greatest priesthood duty. . . .

“As you fulfill your duty to God, you will be a force for good at all times and in every circumstance. Your righteous example and your faithful priesthood service will be a powerful way to invite all who know you to come unto Christ.

“In their most critical time, the Nephites looked to a young man, Mormon, for leadership and inspiration (see Mormon 2:1–2). Today, we look to you to be a great strength to the Church and a force for good on the earth. This is what the Lord expects.”

David L. Beck, Young Men general president, “The Magnificent Aaronic Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 55.

really good,” he says. Sitting down with his father is not always the first thing Aleks wants to do on a Sunday afternoon, “but once we start learning and reading together, I’m a lot happier and I feel better about doing it.”

Aleks has set new goals and is gaining a greater understanding of the gospel as he studies and learns with his father. “One of the sections in *Fulfilling My Duty to God* suggested we study five topics in *For the Strength of Youth* and then write down a goal for each one so that you can do better,” explains Aleks. “I chose honesty. So one of my goals was to let my parents know when I do something wrong instead of just keeping it to myself.”

Another topic Aleks chose was education. “My goal was to go an entire month in school with no messing around in class and finishing all my work so I wouldn’t have any homework. It’s going pretty well, and now I have a lot of extra time.”

Now Aleks is encouraging all the deacons in his quorum to work on fulfilling their duty to God. And he offers the same advice to any other young men who are thinking about opening their booklets and getting down to work: “Just do it,” he says. “If you can’t seem to get started on your own, do it like I do and ask your dad to do it with you.” **NE**

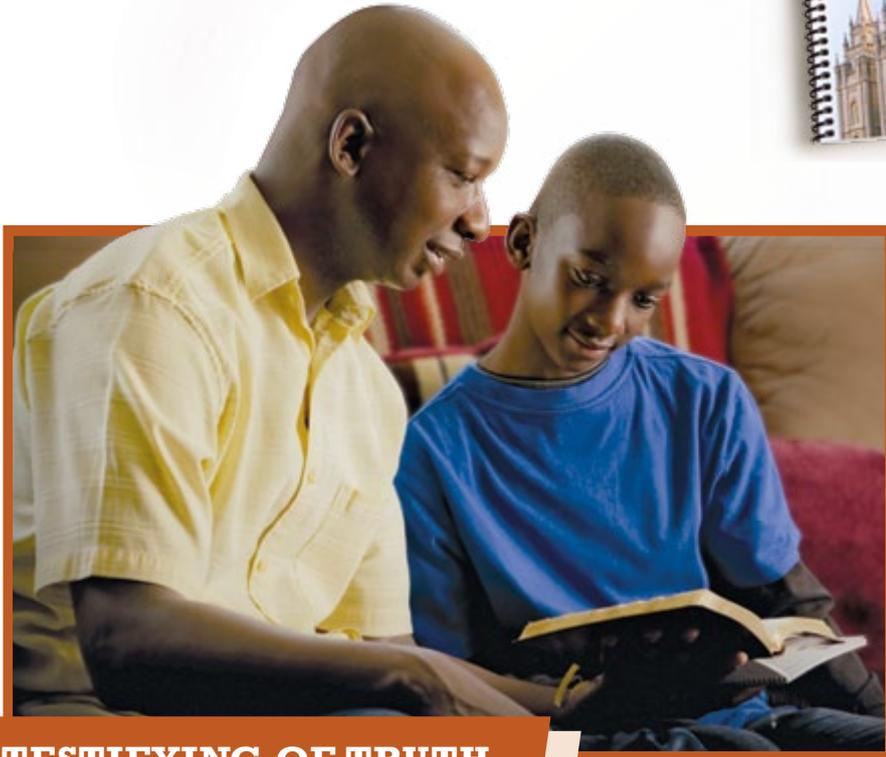
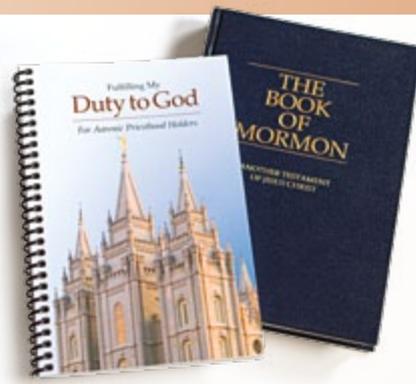
FULFILLING MY DUTY TO GOD

At every age, in every Aaronic Priesthood office, Duty to God helps a young man chart his growth by setting goals in specific areas. This section gives you some

examples and principles to follow as you set and carry out your own goals for becoming the kind of priesthood holder the Lord expects you to be.



PRAY AND STUDY THE SCRIPTURES



TESTIFYING OF TRUTH

By Armando Razanakotonirina

My name is Armando. I am from the Antananarivo Madagascar Stake. I want to testify to you that reading the scriptures and doing Duty to God really brings blessings to us and to those around us.

I remember one Monday in our family home evening I felt that it was an occasion for me to bear my testimony about the Book of Mormon. I had chosen previously that this would be the action I would take to follow the pattern in the booklet. I testified especially to my father, who had been inactive for months, to let him know

what I know about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Soon after it seemed my father started to gain more faith again, and the next Sunday he started coming to church again. He met with the bishop and began to focus more on doing his duty. I realized that following the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet had brought blessings to my family. I know that it prepares us to become effective missionaries, worthy bearers of the priesthood, diligent leaders, and good fathers to take our families to the temple. I know we will be successful in our lives if we do our duty to our Heavenly Father. **NE**



DO IT DAILY

Developing a habit of regular prayer and scripture study will keep you close to the Lord and nourish your testimony. As you make your plan to develop this habit, consider these ideas:

- Keep a scripture study journal, and write down something you learn from the scriptures each day. Share what you've written with your family.
- Make your personal prayers more meaningful by spending a few moments before and after your prayer listening for promptings from the Spirit.



LIVE WORTHILY

HOLD UP YOUR LIGHT

By Fred Caruso

Our Scout troop traveled to Cape Hatteras on North Carolina's Outer Banks for a surf fishing adventure. Arriving at mid-afternoon, we set up camp and then drove to the beach to fish.

We found a nice stretch of beach at the end of a driveway that wound through high sand dunes. Confident from my years of driving a trailer, I proceeded down the winding pavement and parked. We retrieved our fishing gear, rigged surf rods, cut bait, and eagerly hiked to the beach, hoping to catch the large bluefish and channel bass that roam the surf.

The excitement and labor of surf fishing made us lose track of time. I began to think about the van, trailer, and long, winding driveway. With no room to turn

around, I knew we would have to back out. This is easy in daylight, but daylight was quickly fading.

As I backed out, I could not see if my wheels were



LIVE THE STANDARDS

Your example can help guide others to safety by worthily living the Lord's standards. In the "Live Worthily" section of the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet, you're invited to study the standards from *For the Strength of Youth* and make plans to apply them. Here are some ideas:

- Language: Whenever someone says something negative about another person, respond by saying something positive about that person.
- Sabbath Day Observance: Make a list of activities that are appropriate for Sunday.



on safe, firmly packed gravel or the loose, sinking sand that would easily swallow an axle. Facing the possibility of a stranded vehicle 10 miles from camp in the dark, I knew it was time to pray for guidance. After we prayed, I tried to maneuver. Then one of the young men said, "Let's all take out our flashlights and stand along the safe ground. Just follow our lights, and we'll get you out."

There soon was a string of lights shining in the darkness. It was easy to back up. As I progressed down the pitch-black driveway, the lights moved on, marking the safe path. Soon I was nearly at the highway entrance and feared that the trailer might back onto the dark highway instead of the safe shoulder. Again, the young men reminded me, "Just follow our light." They guided me safely onto the shoulder, and then they all boarded the van. About an hour later we were eating hot soup around the campfire.

Two days later, at fast and testimony meeting, I was reflecting on the actions of our young men. There could have been hundreds of them trying to guide me, but only those holding up the light could actually help. I thought of Jesus saying: "Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do" (3 Nephi 18:24).

I bore testimony of our valiant and wise young men and the lesson they had taught me. I reminded them to keep the light of Christ burning brightly so they can guide those stranded on the sand dunes of life looking for that light that leads to safety. **NE**

UNDERSTAND DOCTRINE

FINDING THE ANSWERS

By Sam Magnusson

I have two big things in my life: church and sports. I found out that I had to combine the two when I tried out for my high school basketball team.

I started going to practice during the summer right before my freshman year. As I got to know the older players and their personalities, they started to notice I didn't do a lot of things they did—I didn't cuss, smoke, do drugs, look at pornography, or even go on dates yet. They started to make fun of me slightly. In a high school of about 1,500 students, only 4 of us are members of the Church. So you can guess we got teased a bit. But it didn't bother me much, and I was happy to stand up for what I knew was true.

As the season drew on, my teammates started to ask me more about the Church. There weren't big, important questions, just things like "Why don't you date?" Then one day during study hall, some of the players started talking about their families, and that conversation turned to religion. So they asked deeper questions about the Church like "What is repentance?" and "Do you believe in a heaven and a hell?"

I always carry a copy of *For the Strength of Youth* in my backpack, so I pulled it out to help answer their questions. We talked about the Church for over an hour. When it was

over, there were two questions I could not answer. I promised to look up the answers and get back to them. That night I looked up the answers, and my mom suggested I bring extra copies of *For the Strength of the Youth* and also the book *True to the Faith*.

The next day while we studied together, when the boys asked questions, I pulled out the books and passed them around. We had another long and deep discussion about the Church. I asked if anyone wanted to keep the books, and some people did. Later that week we had another talk about other churches, not just mine, and my coach, who is very religious, talked about his and other beliefs.

I don't know if anything good will come out of this, but I know that my team members now know more about the true gospel and why I am different from them. My testimony had been strengthened, and I have gained the courage to talk about and stand up for what I know is right and true. **NE**



IDEAS FOR GAINING UNDERSTANDING

The better you understand the doctrines of the gospel, the more prepared you are to invite all to come unto Christ. Consider these ideas as you make your plans to understand doctrine:

- Do any of your friends or family members have questions about the gospel? Choose to study a doctrinal topic that could help you answer their questions, and then share with them what you learn.
- Choose topics that correspond with your study in seminary, Sunday School, family home evening, or quorum meetings. Look for opportunities to share in these settings what you learn from your study.

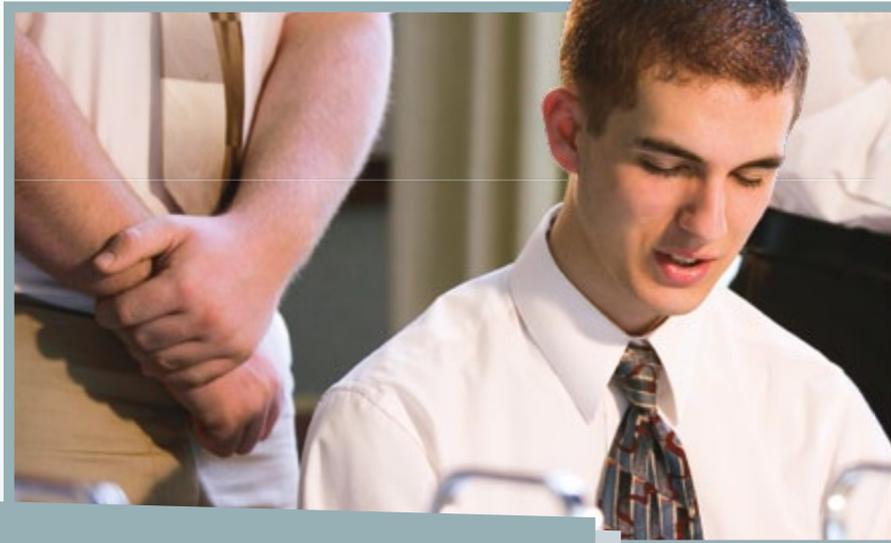
ADMINISTER PRIESTHOOD ORDINANCES



DO YOUR DUTY REVERENTLY

Your reverence toward ordinances can have a great influence on those you serve. Here are some ideas to consider as you make plans to administer priesthood ordinances reverently:

- Offer to show a new quorum member how to administer the sacrament.
- Try to arrive at church 30 minutes early so the sacrament can be ready before ward members start arriving.



A PRAYER TO REMEMBER



remember as a deacon watching the priests as they would officiate at the sacrament table. One priest had a lovely

voice and would read the sacrament prayers with clear diction—as though he were competing in a speech contest. The older members of the ward would compliment him on his “golden voice.” I think he became a bit proud. Another priest in the ward had a hearing impediment which caused his speech to be unnatural in its sound. We deacons would [snicker] at times when Jack would bless the emblems. How we dared do so is beyond me: Jack had hands like a bear and could have crushed any of us. On one occasion Barry with the beautiful voice and Jack with

the awkward delivery were assigned together at the sacrament table. The hymn was sung; the two priests broke the bread. Barry knelt to pray, and we closed our eyes. But nothing happened. Soon we deacons opened our eyes to see what was causing the delay. I shall ever remember Barry frantically searching the table for the little white card on which were printed the sacrament prayers. It was nowhere to be found. What to do? Barry’s face turned pink, then crimson, as the congregation began to look in his direction. Then Jack, with that bear-like hand, reached up and gently tugged Barry back to the bench. He, himself, then knelt on the little stool and began to pray: “Oh God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to



the souls of all those who partake of it. . . .” He continued the prayer, and the bread was then passed. Jack also blessed the water, and it was passed. What respect we deacons gained that day for Jack who, though handicapped in speech, had memorized the sacred prayers. Barry, too, had a new appreciation for Jack. A lasting bond of friendship had been established.

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Aaronic Priesthood Pathway,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 42.



SERVE OTHERS

CALLING MY QUORUM

By Mark Tensmeyer

One Saturday afternoon I received a phone call from the father of a family I home taught. “I was wondering if you could watch our kids while Cindy and I go visit her grandma,” Brother Stevens asked (names have been changed). “She hasn’t been doing well, and we think this might be our last chance to see her.”

I assured Brother Stevens I would be glad to help. “That’s great!” he said. “And if you could, it would be nice if you could straighten up around the house, since today is our anniversary.”

When I arrived, Brother and Sister Stevens left me with some microwavable noodles and a list of chores to do around the house. Then they drove off. I had a strong impression that I should do more than just watch their children. This was a difficult day for them, and I wanted to make it a bit better. I decided to do all the chores on the list and more, including washing the dishes and mowing and edging the lawn.

Obviously, I couldn’t do all of that and take care of their three kids in just three hours, so I thought I should call some members of my priests quorum. There was just one problem: I wasn’t exactly friends with the guys in my quorum. We got along all right, but aside from the Church,

we didn’t have a lot in common. We went to different schools, and I rarely saw them outside of Church functions. I felt awkward calling them for something like this.

I called the Young Men president and asked if he could get some of the guys together to help. He kindly replied that he was simply an adviser and explained that I should call Peter, the first assistant to the bishop, who had the calling to help me in my priesthood responsibility. That was exactly what I was afraid he would say.

Nervous and with a little hesitation, I called Peter and asked if he could come over. “Sure,” he said. “I’ve got Scott and Kevin here, and I’ll bring them over too.”

Together, we mowed and edged the lawn, did the dishes, and straightened up the house. Brother and Sister Stevens came home just as we were finishing.

That experience taught me that priesthood quorums are united by faith in Jesus Christ *and* in service, regardless of differences in interests, personalities, or backgrounds. **NE**



IDEAS FOR SERVICE

To hold the priesthood means to serve others. There are countless opportunities to serve all around you. Here are two simple examples:

- Take the lead in your quorum to pick up litter whenever you see it in your meetinghouse or on the grounds outside.
- Try to anticipate chores your parents might ask you to do, and get them done before they ask.



INVITE ALL TO COME UNTO CHRIST

YOU NEVER KNOW

By Jeffrey Olson

While ago my bishop and priests quorum adviser challenged our quorum to give away two copies of the Book of Mormon within a year. I took the challenge to heart and always had a Book of Mormon on me (in the car, in my backpack, etc.). Several people accepted copies, but nobody really showed any further interest.

Then one day in June, I was filling up my car with gasoline after work and saw a coworker buying cigarettes. Because of his smoking and his rough personality, I never thought about sharing the gospel with him. He came over to talk to me, and we talked about music and movies. When I explained that I don't watch movies with vulgarity, violence, or immorality, the topic changed to religion. I grabbed the Book of Mormon from the backseat of my car, wrote my testimony inside the cover, and gave it to him.

The next time I worked with him, I asked if he had read any of it. He said, "Jeff, I read the introduction, and I know it's true. I want to know more and be baptized."

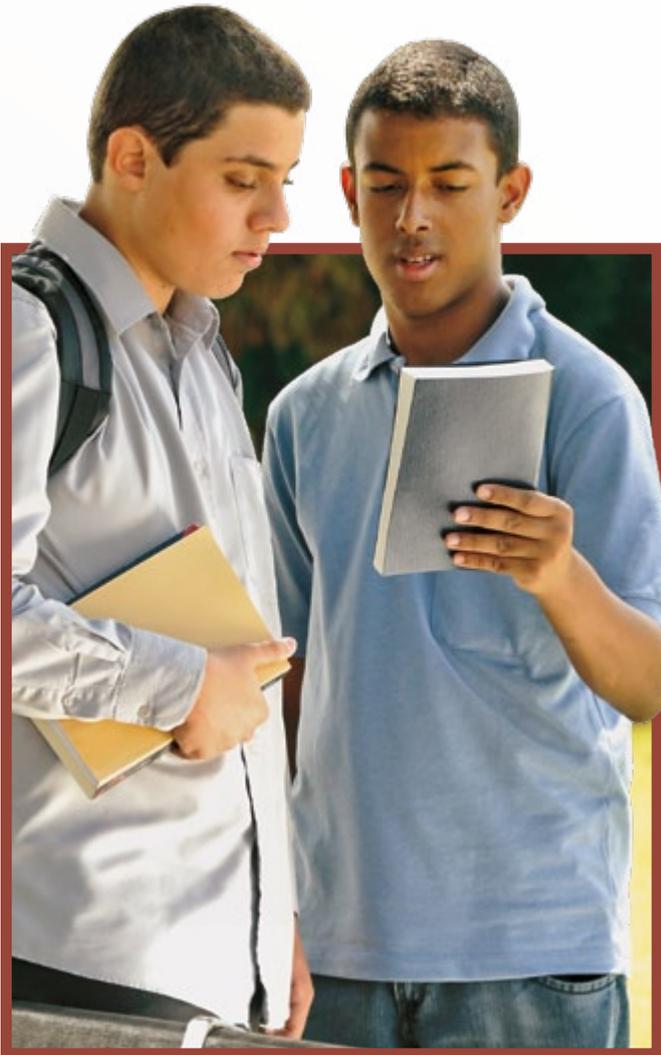
That really shocked me. I gave the missionaries his address so that they could teach him, and I took him to church with me. He loved it. He set a date for his baptism.

Before his baptism, he told me that he had been offered a really good job, but he had to act immediately. It was in Alaska, and he was leaving in two days. So we found the address of the meetinghouse in town, and then he left.

Over the next few months we kept in touch, but he made no progress toward baptism. Then one day he called and told me he had contacted the missionaries and was going to be baptized that Saturday.

Now he holds the Aaronic Priesthood and has blessed the sacrament several times.

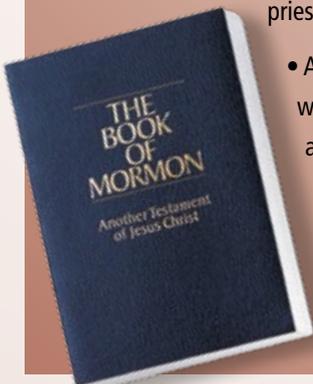
This goes to show that you never know who will accept the gospel, so share it with everyone, and God will provide a way. **NE**



REACH OUT TO SOMEONE

One of the greatest services you can do as a priesthood holder is to help someone come unto Christ. Consider these ideas as you make your plans to fulfill this priesthood duty:

- As a quorum, plan an activity that will interest a friend of another faith, and invite him to this activity.
- Write your testimony inside a copy of the Book of Mormon, and give it to someone as a birthday or Christmas present.



HOW TO SET GOALS

As you do the activities suggested in the *Fulfilling My Duty to God* booklet, you will be more successful if you make specific plans and goals. Here are some tips for effective goal setting and planning.



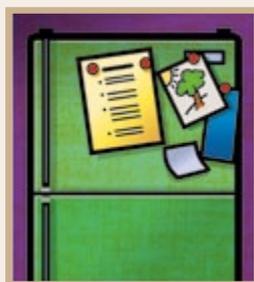
- **Remember your purpose.** The activities you are planning should “help you develop spiritual attributes and become the kind of priesthood holder Heavenly Father wants you to be” (*Duty to God*, 8).



- **Get good advice.** Share your plans and goals with your parents and leaders. They can support and help you.



- **Stretch yourself.** Set goals that will challenge you and make you grow. You can do great things if you plan to do them.



- **Write it down.** “Learn to write your goals down. I would even put them in a prominent place—on your mirror or on the refrigerator door” (M. Russell Ballard, “Go for It,” *New Era*, Mar. 2004, 4).



- **Measure your progress.** Set daily and weekly goals that you can measure so that you can track your progress toward your main goal. As appropriate, share your progress with your quorum, parents, and leaders.



- **Follow the Spirit.** Pray before you plan, and pay attention to promptings while you plan.



- **Be specific.** Goals should have specific time periods, requirements, definitions of success, and so on. You can think big while planning small.



- **Plan to plan.** Regularly set aside a specific time to make your plans and goals.



When you plan and set goals related to Duty to God, you are showing your faith and the seriousness of your desire to succeed. President Thomas S. Monson has said, “It is necessary to prepare, to plan, so that we don’t fritter away our lives. Without a goal, there can be no real success. . . . Wishing will not replace thorough preparation to meet the trials of life. Preparation is hard work but absolutely essential for our progress” (“Three Gates Only You Can Open,” *New Era*, Aug. 2008, 2, 4).

**“I feel like
I don’t have much
in common with
the other guys
in my quorum.**

**How can we build
more
unity?”**

The Church is built on unity, and that unity needs to start within its wards and branches—down to each priesthood quorum. But when all the members of the quorum are so diverse in their interests and goals, promoting unity seems like a difficult task. Alma teaches that “there should be no contention . . . but that [we] should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having [our] hearts knit together in unity” (Mosiah 18:21).

You probably know the *why* of unity, but the difficulty is the *how*. In *True to the Faith*, we learn that we can build unity by “serving together, teaching one another, and encouraging one another” ([2004], 182–83). The first thing you can do is to become friends with the members of your quorum. Learn what they like to do and respect their differences. When you plan activities, try to plan them so you can teach each other and learn about everyone’s different interests. Support and encourage each member as he reaches toward his goals. Serving together can also be a great way to build unity. You can serve the other young men, or ask them to help you serve others. Counsel together about your priesthood responsibilities to become united in purpose.

Once you start becoming more unified, you will notice greater blessings. You will be able to lift and encourage one another and provide more service. You will also become united in the Lord and have a better understanding of Him. But mostly you will see “how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalm 133:1). **NE**

Build Each Other Up



Make sure that every member of the quorum is one in hope, doctrine, charity, faith, and so forth. Then, no matter what differences you may see now, you will see other great sons of God helping you in the work of the Lord and building each other up.

Jordan O., 16, Florida, USA

Focus on Faith in Christ



The first principle of this gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you and your quorum members strive to have faith in Christ at the center of your lives, then you actually have a great deal in common. Exercising this faith together will help you feel love and respect for each other.

Darrell L., 18, Manchester, England

Enjoy Having Fun Together



I found that one way to strengthen your quorum unity is by having your quorum over to do awesome things like watch movies and play games.

Christopher K., 14, Alaska, USA

Find Things in Common



You could plan activities for each person and you probably will find something in common. This will bring more unity in your quorum because you will know what your quorum members like and how to work with them.

Nathan C., 16, Utah, USA

Get Together



I feel that the best way to build unity at the quorum level is to hold activities outside of the regular Sunday lessons and

weeknight activities. A bowling night, a party, or a service project can really help bring the quorum together. Once you start having fun with everyone, you'll probably realize that you have a lot more in common with them than you thought.

Daniel C., 17, Louisiana, USA

Include the Quorum in Your Life



One way you can feel more a part of the quorum is to interact with the other members. Try to talk to them about what they like

to do. Another way to feel welcome is to hang out with them and try to become their friend. Include them in your life rather than waiting for them to include you in their lives.

Aaron T., 18, Arizona, USA

Treat Each Other Like Friends



My quorum is split among four high schools, so we don't see each other a lot during the week. But we still are a very close group.

We do activities with each other outside of Church stuff. We get together and play games, go on group dates, get food, see movies—that kind of stuff. We treat each other like friends. Food helps too!

Andrew O., 18, New Mexico, USA

Do Activities



You could do activities together that aren't Church-related, like having a less-active member spend an

evening with you or going to a movie with another member who isn't close to you. As long as you have the Spirit with you, He'll guide and lead you.

Jonathan M., 18, Mississippi, USA

Make Memories



Look for common interests and make memories together. Keep in touch

outside of church, go to activities together, and talk about what's going on in the branch or ward. The more time you spend together, the more you will find you have in common with each other.

Michael H., 16, New York, USA

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



UNITED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

"I have learned over the years that the strength in a quorum doesn't come from the number of priesthood holders

in it. Nor does it come automatically from the age and maturity of the members. Rather, the strength of a quorum comes in large measure from how completely its members are united in righteousness. That unity in a strong quorum of the priesthood is not like anything I have experienced in an athletic team or club or any other organization in the world."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "A Priesthood Quorum," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 43.

NEXT QUESTION

"I have a problem with not forgetting past mistakes after I have repented. What can I do to feel at peace?"

Send your answer by October 15, 2011.

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, past mistakes
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA

Responses may be edited for length or clarity.



One Year,

Three goals led to great things for these young men from England.

By Martin Reid

The Aaronic Priesthood quorums in a ward in Worcestershire, England, began the year like many others—setting goals. They came together to plan ways to do more to honour their priesthood and fulfil their personal duty to their Heavenly Father. Everyone generated ideas, and soon the blackboard was full of worthy endeavours.

The ideas were then grouped into three main goals:

1. Attend the temple at least twice to perform baptisms for the dead.
2. Work diligently on their current portion of Duty to God.
3. Increase the membership of each quorum by one, either through baptism or activation.

The young men recognised that the first two goals were things that were mostly down to them to achieve but that the third would require the Lord's hand. They left that day excited and confident that these goals, though not easy, were definitely achievable through diligence and committed action.

A Good Beginning

The year began well. The missionaries were blessed to find and teach Craig Smith, then 17 years old. Though at the time there



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARTIN REID

3 Goals



were no priests in their ward, Craig was welcomed by all the young men and fit in well.

“I was made to feel so welcome by the other young men and quickly felt comfortable being around them, even though they knew much more about the Church than I did,” Craig recounts. “It was hard letting go of some of the things that I used to do with my friends before I joined the Church, but I know that living the gospel will make me much happier.”

Fulfilling Their Duty

As the year progressed, the young men did all they could to fulfil their goals, and their leaders helped them focus and stay on track as they carried out their Duty to God.

John Nolan remembers, “At the time I remember lacking some motivation and wanted to avoid the subject with our adviser, but I recognise now how those progress sessions really helped push me to do more than I would have done on my own, and I felt really good doing my Duty to God, knowing that I had achieved something worthwhile.”

Deacons Mason Krstic and Elliot Stobbs also needed support from their quorum adviser. Elliot recalls, “Our Young Men

Young men in Worcestershire, England, found joy as they worked on their goals for their Aaronic Priesthood quorums, including attending the temple, working on Duty to God, and increasing quorum membership.

leaders would tell us how important it was to carry out our Duty to God, and at first I didn't understand why. But by the end of the year I had had so many great experiences that I knew why they encouraged us to do this."

Michael Deamer remembers, "Duty to God is amazing. I've learned so much, from climbing a mountain to sewing a button on my shirt! It really has pushed me to develop talents and knowledge in areas which I never thought I would be interested in."

Top of the list of great experiences the young men had that year were the temple trips they took to both the London and Preston temples. Michael Stanley recalls how there was even a special spirit during the three-hour journey. "It is always fun to go together in a minibus. I think it has really helped to build unity within the youth."

One Last Goal

As December approached, however, it looked like the third goal would not be achieved, although the young men had done their part. They had worked diligently on their Duty to God, attended the temple, and strengthened their quorum unity. They had also taken part in many different missionary challenges, like going out with the missionaries, inviting friends to youth activities and church, and placing copies of the Book of Mormon.

Little did they know that the Lord had been preparing people's hearts to hear the gospel.

In November the Young Men president introduced the missionaries to his neighbours, Portuguese women whom he had spoken with about the Church as they had been introduced to it previously in Portugal. These women quickly saw what good the gospel could do for their sons, Patrick Pereira and Miguel Lima, and asked the missionaries to teach them.

Patrick and Miguel progressed very quickly and loved



coming out to the youth activities as they felt great excitement and friendship whilst they were there. "It was quite exciting," Miguel remembers. "I got to meet new people and find good friends."

A baptism date of December 19 was set by the missionaries, who were not conscious of the young men's goals. But the Lord was, and this was recognised by all the young men.

The Lord had been preparing the hearts of Patrick and Miguel, who were of deacon and teacher age, respectively. Together with Craig, their baptisms meant that each quorum had increased by one, which exactly matched the goal the quorums had prayerfully set. On their baptismal day, most of the ward members were there to see these two young men make a sacred covenant with their Heavenly Father.

"It felt right," Patrick remembers. After being baptised, he says that he felt "like a blank slate, a new beginning."

Matt Stobbs says, "It was amazing when I found out they were to both be baptised just before the end of the year. It made me feel that Heavenly Father really knows us and is watching over His children individually and is aware of our struggles and our goals."

Paul Stobbs, bishop of the ward, says, "I can only describe the events that led to the young men's goals being met as miraculous. I know that Heavenly Father recognised their faith and dedication to the gospel and subsequently blessed their efforts. Being witnesses to these events has inspired all members of the ward to show more faith."

These young men really caught the vision of Alma and his missionary spirit. Patrick and Miguel are now attending early-morning seminary and are thankful for what has been added to their lives.

"My life will never be the same," Miguel says. "I am really glad that we were taught by the missionaries."

"Me too," adds Patrick. "It is really good to have good friends who encourage me to do good things. And we have a lot of fun too." **NE**

Editor's note: British spellings have been preserved.

As the end of the year drew closer—as well as the deadline for the quorum goals—two new young men joined the Aaronic Priesthood quorums after being baptised.

"OK, Brian—I know we should date in groups, but this is ridiculous!"



RYAN STOKER



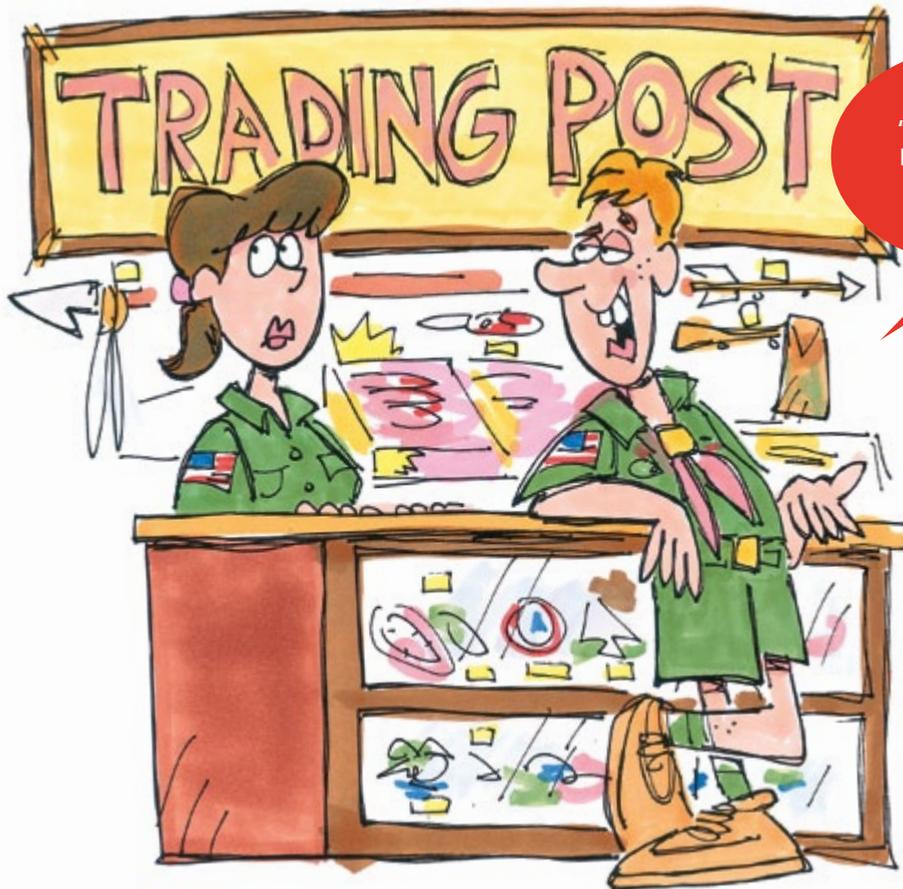
KEVIN BECKSTROM

"So, do you have any questions about your new calling as deacons quorum secretary?"

"Just one. Does this mean I get gifts on secretary's day?"



ARIE VAN DE GRAAFF



VAL CHADWICK BAGLEY

"Do you sell maps? Because I'm lost in your eyes!"

LEARN, ACT, SHARE



By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

*Three words
give you the key
to fulfilling your
duty to God.*

Helman Ayala loves ninjitsu (a Japanese martial art). This priest in the Mexico City Tecamac Stake has spent a lot of time practicing what he has learned. Often his friends ask him to show them different techniques.

He also loves music and has taken some guitar lessons. “But I don’t have a lot of time to practice,” he says. “So I haven’t progressed much. And I can’t share it much.”

Helaman understands the importance of practicing what you learn and then sharing it. “You can’t just know. You must do,” he says. “We can learn things, but if we don’t put them into practice, they won’t do us any good. And sharing is essential to help you make sure you’ve learned it.”

That’s what he likes about the new Duty to God. “I like the idea of ‘learn, act, share,’” he says. “It has helped me a lot. Knowing more and applying what I’ve learned has helped my testimony.”

He uses the plan of salvation as an example. It’s a doctrine he has heard many times. “But studying it for myself, I saw the love Heavenly Father has for us. The Holy Ghost touched my heart, and I felt inside that it is true. I came to feel the love He has for me that He would send His Son.”

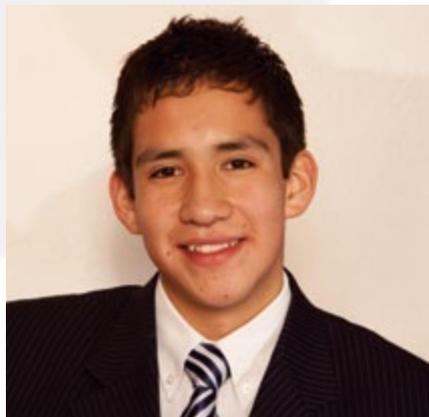
As Helaman sets and works on his Duty to God goals, he appreciates the support he receives from his parents. “My parents encourage me, they remind me when I forget, and they ask me if I’ve set my goals,” he says.

His father, who is the bishop of their ward, spends time helping him.

“He helps me understand things I don’t understand,” Helaman says. “My father and mother both support me a lot in that respect.”

Helaman says the goals Duty to God asks young men to set are for their good. Duty to God has strengthened his faith and helped him resist temptation. It has also helped prepare him for the future. “The book helps you to prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood and teaches you many of the things you’ll need as a missionary.”

Just as he has progressed in



ninjitsu through setting goals to learn, acting upon what he has learned, and sharing with others, Helaman knows that “to progress in life, we need to set goals and look to the future.”

Using Duty to God and with his parents’ help, Helaman has made a good start. **NE**



DILIGENCE AND TRUST

“The contents of [the *Fulfilling My Duty to God*] booklet are a physical representation of the Lord’s trust in

the rising generation. . . . And I have seen evidence that the trust is well placed.

“In visits I watched Aaronic Priesthood quorums in action. I have seen young men following patterns of learning, making plans to do what God wants of them, then moving out to do what they have committed to do and sharing with others how they were changed spiritually. And as I watched and listened, it became clear that fathers, mothers, leaders, friends, and even neighbors in a congregation were touched by the Spirit as they heard youth testify how they had been strengthened. The youth were lifted as they bore testimony, and so were those who were trying to help them rise.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Help Them on Their Way Home,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 24.

NEmore

Watch a video about the “learn, act, share” concept at [lds.org/go/912](https://www.lds.org/go/912).

"You have no idea how much I admire it when you don't laugh at inappropriate jokes. It inspires me even more when you encourage others to follow your example!"

"I really notice when you are respectful and kind to your mothers and sisters. I like to see you take pride in your education and figuring out what you want in the future. I like it when young men talk about their mission and are excited to serve the Lord and bring others unto Christ."

"The young women are looking for guys like you. You're the first people we're going to date when we turn 16."

"WHEN I WATCH A YOUNG MAN SAY NO TO A BAD TEMPTATION, IT'S THE BEST FEELING EVER. YOU KNOW THOSE WHO HAVE ENOUGH COURAGE TO SAY NO ARE THOSE WORTH GETTING TO KNOW."

"THE YOUNG WOMEN IN THE CHURCH APPRECIATE THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO STAND UP FOR THEIR STANDARDS AS WELL AS YOUR OWN."

NOTES TO THE GOOD GUYS

We asked young women from various places around the world to tell us what they admire about the Latter-day Saint young men they know who do what's right and honor their priesthood. They had a lot to say. Here are a few of their anonymous notes to the Aaronic Priesthood holders in their lives.

"Boys who keep the standards, treat girls with respect, and uphold their Aaronic Priesthood are the ones most young women look for. Plus they're the most handsome."

"All those little things like being modest and clean in their language and actions really show that those boys love their Heavenly Father and put Him first!"

"We sisters truly want only young men who stand up for what they believe in and respect the gospel. It's something that overpowers looks."

"YOU REPRESENT THE STRIPLING WARRIORS OF HELAMAN IN OUR AGE. YOU ARE NOT ASKED TO FIGHT AGAINST PHYSICAL ENEMIES BUT TO BE ADMIRABLE IN A WORLD WHERE DARKNESS PREVAILS."

"I notice it when you are kind to others and when you don't join in with the boys who are being mean and making inappropriate comments."

"It's inspiring to me to see that you hold your priesthood and that you choose to exercise it. You will be honored by your children and wife. I like it when you walk out of a movie or change the radio station if a bad song is on. It helps me to strive to be like Christ."

"I know you are wise and meek because you read your scriptures and carry them around. I know you have a testimony because you are willing to share it."

"It's inspiring when young men pass the sacrament with smiles on their faces."

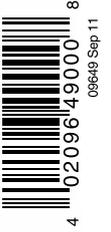
"I love it when boys share their testimonies. I love guys who admire Joseph Smith. I love guys who dress properly and modestly and serve without complaining."

"It is inspiring when a guy stands up to his friends when they are doing or saying something offensive or immoral."

"You come to church every week, but most of the time you're the only young man in Sunday School. You're quiet, but you pay attention and participate. You're nice, and I've never seen you angry. I like that about you."

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SPECIAL ISSUE
PERSONAL
PROGRESS



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**THE PATH OF PERSONAL
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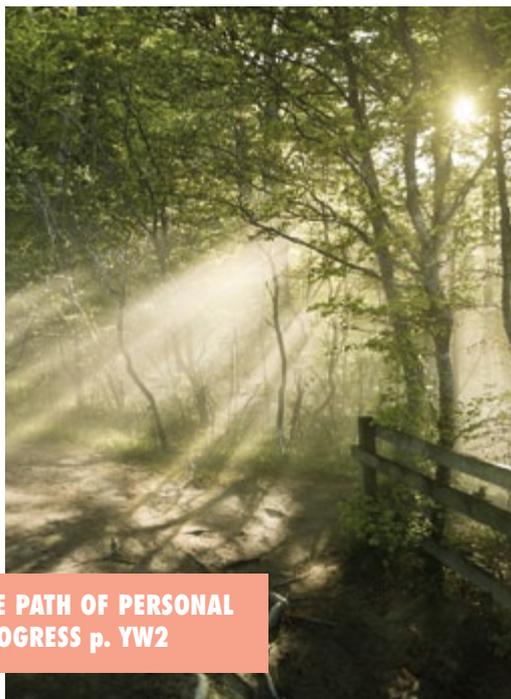
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**The page numbering reflects the fact
 that this special issue is divided into
 two halves: Aaronic Priesthood (AP)
 and Young Women (YW).*

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NewEra.Lds.org.



**Introduction to Personal
 Progress** **YW1***

Elaine S. Dalton
*As you participate in Personal Progress, you
 will fortify yourself spiritually.*

**The Message:
 The Path of Personal Progress** **YW2**

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Elder Shayne M. Bowen
*Personal Progress helps you develop values
 that prepare you and mold your character so
 that you can fulfill your divine potential.*

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*“How can I stay motivated to do Personal
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*Two girls from Ukraine use Personal Progress
 to reactivate members of their families.*

**One Word and a Lesson
 of a Lifetime** **YW21**

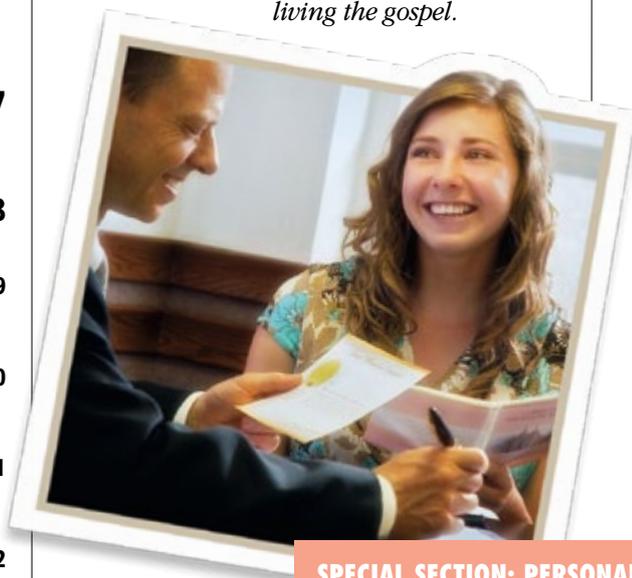
Heather Wrigley
I knew better, but would one word matter?

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Janet Thomas
*Sadie Taylor of Ames, Iowa, found a guide
 for her life starting with a single experience
 in Personal Progress.*

Notes to the Good Girls **YW24**

*The New Era asked young men what they
 admire most in the young women they see
 living the gospel.*



**SPECIAL SECTION: PERSONAL
 PROGRESS p. YW8**

Introduction to PERSONAL PROGRESS



By Elaine S. Dalton
Young Women General
President

Personal Progress is a pattern of small, righteous actions that, if done consistently over time, will strengthen your faith in Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and build your testimony and prepare you for your future roles. Doing Personal Progress will prepare you to enter the Lord's holy temples. As you participate in Personal Progress, you will be fortifying yourself spiritually. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches about the importance of consistent, small, righteous actions:

"I like to think of . . . spiritual armor not as a solid piece of metal molded to fit the body but more like chain mail. Chain mail consists of dozens of tiny pieces of steel fastened together to allow the user greater flexibility without losing protection. . . . It has been my experience that there is not one great and grand thing we can do to arm ourselves spiritually. True spiritual power lies in numerous smaller acts woven together in a fabric of spiritual fortification that protects and shields from all evil" ("Be Strong in the Lord," *Ensign*, July 2004, 8).

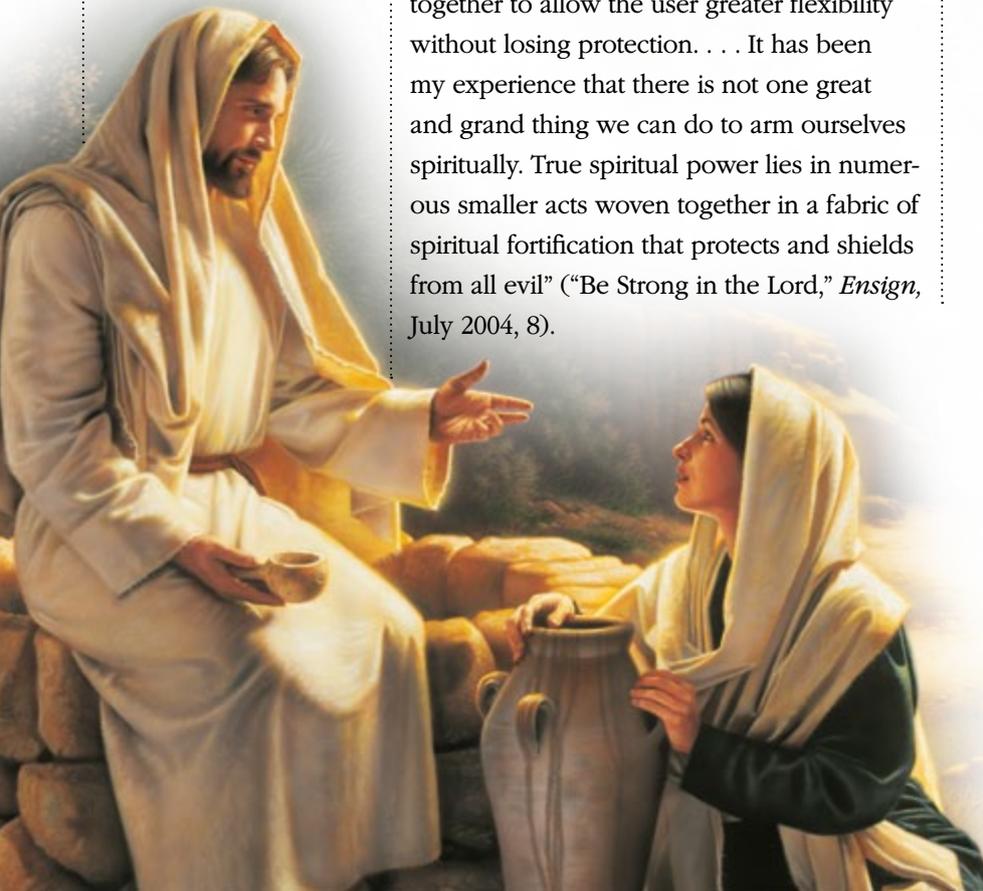


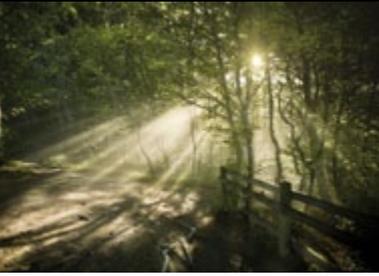
Personal Progress is not a program that is separate and apart from your life. It is a tool that you can use to draw closer to Heavenly Father and our Savior, serve others, be anxiously engaged in good works, learn leadership skills, develop relationships with others, and prepare for temple covenants. Personal Progress helps each young woman who participates develop daily righteous routines and holy habits. When you do small things consistently, they become part of who you are and they change you.

It really is "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass" (Alma 37:6). **NE**



LIVING WATERS BY SIMON DEWEY; PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SMITH





THE PATH OF PERSONAL PROGRESS



FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

My dear young sisters,
although there have always
been challenges in the
world, many of those which you face are
unique to this time. But you are some of our
Heavenly Father's strongest children, and
He has saved you to come to the earth "for
such a time as this" [Esther 4:14]. With His
help, you will have the courage to face what-
ever comes. Though the world may at times
appear dark, you have the light of the gospel,
which will be as a beacon to guide your way.

**President Thomas S. Monson, "May You Have Courage,"
Ensign, May 2009, 127.**





PREPARATION AND EXAMPLE

The Young Women program has in it [a] powerful pattern to develop spiritual strength

in the young women and to offer the opportunity for us to help. Personal Progress helps young women prepare to receive the ordinances of the temple. They are helped by the examples of mothers, grandmothers, and every righteous woman around them in the Church. I have seen how parents helped a daughter achieve her goals and dreams by noticing and appreciating all the good things she does.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Help Them on Their Way Home," *Ensign*, May 2010, 24–25.



WHAT YOU MUST BECOME

On the first page of your *Young Women Personal Progress* book, you will find these

words: "You are a beloved daughter of Heavenly Father, prepared to come to the earth at this particular time for a sacred and glorious purpose" [(booklet, 2009), 1].

Sisters, those words are true! They are not made up in a fairy tale! Isn't it remarkable to know that our eternal Heavenly Father knows you, hears you, watches over you, and loves you with an infinite love? In fact, His love for you is so great that He has granted you this earthly life as a precious gift of "once upon a time," complete with your own true story of adventure, trial, and opportunities for greatness, nobility, courage, and love. And, most glorious of all, He offers you a gift beyond price and comprehension. Heavenly Father offers to you the greatest gift of all—eternal life—and the opportunity and infinite blessing of your own "happily ever after."

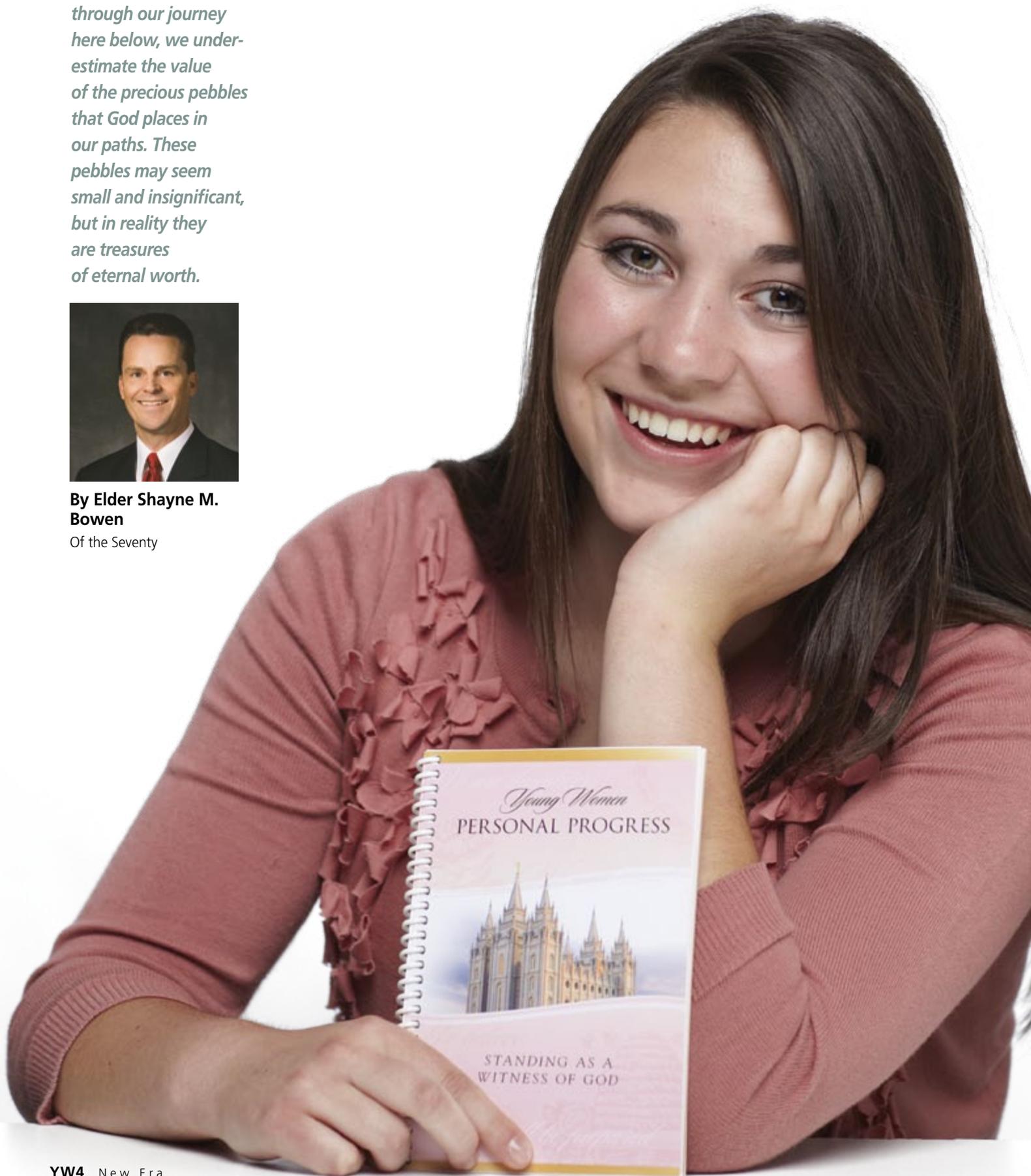
But such a blessing does not come without a price. It is not given simply because you desire it. It comes only through understanding who you are and what you must become in order to be worthy of such a gift.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Your Happily Ever After," *Ensign*, May 2010, 124–25.

Sometimes as we move through our journey here below, we underestimate the value of the precious pebbles that God places in our paths. These pebbles may seem small and insignificant, but in reality they are treasures of eternal worth.



By Elder Shayne M. Bowen
Of the Seventy



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CODY BELL, WEIDEN ANDERSEN, AND © ISTOCK; ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL MANN

WHY PERSONAL PROGRESS?



The Parable of the Pebbles

One night in ancient times, three horsemen were riding across a desert. As they crossed the dry bed of a river, out of the darkness a voice called, "Halt!" They obeyed. The voice then told them to dismount, to pick up handfuls of pebbles, put the pebbles in their pockets, and remount. The horsemen followed the instruction.

The voice then said, "If you have done as I commanded, tomorrow at sunup you will be both glad and sorry." The horsemen rode on. When the sun rose, they reached into their pockets and found that a miracle had happened. The pebbles had been transformed into diamonds and other precious stones.

The horsemen remembered the warning that they would be both glad and sorry. They were glad they had taken some pebbles, sorry they had not taken more.

The Plan and Your Progress

You are a daughter of a loving Heavenly Father. When you left your heavenly home to come to this wilderness (mortal life), Father did not leave you on your own. He prepared every needful thing for you to return back to your eternal home. He has placed living prophets on the earth to guide you. He has provided you with the ability through fasting, study, and prayer to know which pebbles are the most valuable. He has given you His Only Begotten Son to pay the price that you cannot pay, to atone for what you cannot atone for. He has provided the plan of happiness, which returns you home safe and sound and with the knowledge and covenants that allow you to become like Him. He has told you who you are.

Through living prophets, He has given you the Personal Progress program, which helps you develop values that prepare you and mold your character so that you can fulfill your divine potential.





The living prophets of God have clearly communicated to you what is of greatest eternal worth. They have clearly indicated that “families are central to God’s plan, which provides a way for family relationships to extend beyond the grave. Sacred temple ordinances and covenants, faithfully kept, help us return to the presence of God, united eternally with our families.

Personal Progress helps you develop values that prepare you and mold your character so that you can fulfill your divine potential.

“Exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom can be attained only by those who have faithfully lived the gospel of Jesus Christ and are sealed as eternal companions.

“The sealing of husband and wife for time and eternity by the authority of the priesthood—also known as temple marriage—is a sacred privilege and obligation that all should strive to receive. It is the foundation of an eternal family.

“The nature of male and female spirits is such that they complete each other. Men and women are intended to progress together toward exaltation.”¹

This is why we have *Young Women Personal Progress*. Everything in the Personal Progress program leads you to the holy temples. Personal Progress is an inspired program to help you stay focused on that which is eternal and which moth and rust doth not corrupt.²

Precious Possessions

The world would have you believe that the values of faith, divine nature, individual worth, knowledge, choice and accountability, good works, integrity, and virtue are insignificant pebbles in a modern world. That is not true. “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise.”³

Sometimes as we move through our journey here below, we underestimate the value of the precious pebbles that God places in our

paths. These pebbles may seem small and insignificant, but in reality they are treasures of eternal worth.

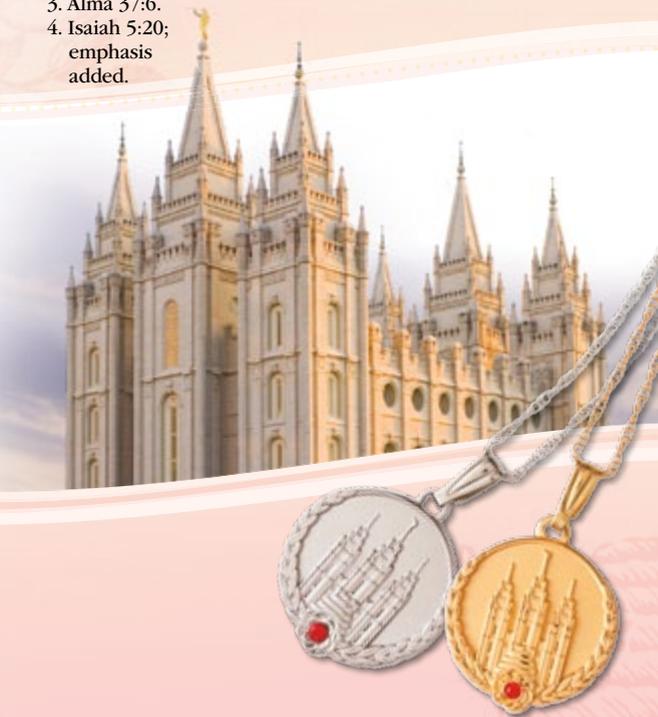
Remember the voice that says, “Fill your pockets”? We sometimes hear another voice saying, “Don’t worry. They are only pebbles. They will slow you down. They will be heavy and cumbersome to carry. It’s just not worth the hassle. Besides, if they are that important, your friends will have some extras.”

Often, we are so focused on the journey that we don’t see the destination. We halfheartedly follow the direction that is given us and wander in strange paths that promise excitement and thrills but that always end up hollow and cheap. Indeed Isaiah said, “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*”⁴

If you are wise in your journey here on earth, one day the pebbles that you have gathered will be transformed. And on that glorious, light-filled day when you see Him again, the precious gems that you possess will give you rightful entry into His presence, and you will be home. **NE**

NOTES

1. *Administering the Church* [2010], 3.
2. See Matthew 6:19–21.
3. Alma 37:6.
4. Isaiah 5:20; emphasis added.



BE YOUR OWN KIND OF
BEAUTIFUL



*“For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward
appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”
(1 Samuel 16:7)*

We are daughters

PERSONAL PROGRESS

“Give me a young woman who loves home and family, who reads and ponders the scriptures daily, who has a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon. Give me a young woman who faithfully attends her Church meetings, who is a seminary graduate, who has earned her Young Womanhood Recognition award and wears it with pride! Give me a young woman who is virtuous and who has maintained her personal purity, who will not settle for less than a temple marriage, and I will give you a young woman who will perform miracles for the Lord now and throughout eternity.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), “To the Young Women of the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 84.

You are a young woman growing toward womanhood, and the Personal Progress program helps you reach your full potential by inviting you to learn basic gospel principles through study and action. As you work on Personal Progress, you will strengthen your home and family,

develop leadership skills as you work with others, and be prepared to make and keep sacred temple covenants. In this section you’ll find examples and principles to keep in mind as you carry out your own experiences and projects related to the Young Women values.



We will be prepared.

We believe

We believe

FAITH

Faith value project bullet four invites you to write a story that “illustrates your faith in Jesus Christ” (Young Women Personal Progress [2009, booklet], 18). The following article shares one young woman’s story and thoughts on faith.



TURNING TO CHRIST

By Anna Evans

Faith is a principle of action and power. I have always thought of faith as something in your heart or mind, such as believing you will be with your family forever. But faith as an action is exercised if we are “anxiously engaged in a good cause” (D&C 58:27) and aiming toward a goal we have set. Whenever we work toward a worthy goal, we exercise faith.

Does this mean that doing my homework every night with the goal in mind of getting good grades is exercising faith? I think it is, because if I am doing my homework, then I will be able to do well on tests. I am exercising faith because I hope for something (good test grades) that I cannot yet see.

Having faith in Jesus Christ means relying completely on Him and

trusting in His infinite power, intelligence, and love. It includes believing His teachings. It means believing that even though we do not understand all things, He does. Because He has experienced all our pains, afflictions, and infirmities, He knows how to help us rise above our daily difficulties (see Alma 7:11–13).

This truth gives me so much hope for the future. It also confirms the strength I have been feeling since my father passed away. One day, I saw a little boy and girl run up to their dad and give him a big hug. My heart dropped. I wanted my dad so badly. At that moment I wanted to give up and cry forever.

After I pondered this for quite some time, my heart was turned to someone for comfort: Jesus Christ. I had to learn to have faith in Jesus,

rely on Him, know that He has suffered, and know that He helps me if I allow Him to. I exercised faith by remembering that He knows how to help me, and I need to do everything I can to be closer to Him so I can more fully feel of His love. The only way to true happiness is having faith in Him and knowing that He will never leave you (see John 16:33).

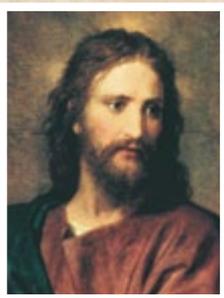
Because faith is a principle of action and power, in order to have faith in Christ we must go to church, read our scriptures, pray daily, and do things that bring the Spirit into our lives. One way to do that is by doing Personal Progress. If you set a goal to complete it and you work toward it, then you are exercising faith in Jesus Christ, and He will bless you for your efforts. Faith is a beautiful virtue that can help us in so many ways, as long as we take action and use that power to help. **NE**

NEMore

If you complete bullet four of the Faith value project by writing an original story, poem, or song about your faith in Jesus Christ, consider sending it to the *New Era* by going to newera.lds.org and clicking “Submit Material.”

IDEAS FOR THE FAITH VALUE

- Record in your journal about a time when faith in Jesus Christ helped you through a hard time.
- Read several talks about faith from recent general conferences. Record in your journal the characteristics you can develop to show greater faith in Heavenly Father’s plan for you.





DIVINE NATURE

TRUE ROYALTY

By Jalaire Musgrave

I had dreamed of this day. Like the other candidates for homecoming queen, I was nominated and voted upon, and then I waited anxiously for that unforgettable night. The final six candidates were to dress up in something professional or in their Sunday best for the football game, where the king and queen would be announced. The other candidates wore dresses that came up way above their knees and revealed too much skin. I wore my *puleatasi* (a traditional Samoan evening gown) that dangled at my ankles and covered my shoulders. I received many compliments from teachers, parents, and even students on how well I was dressed.

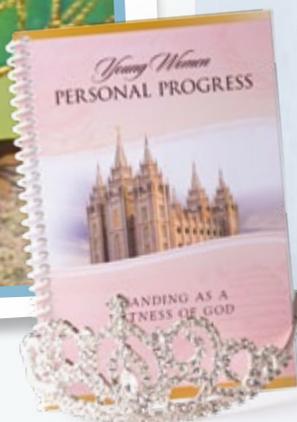
Finally, the moment came. The announcer introduced the candidates, including what their biggest accomplishments were. I remember listening to a very specific part of my

introduction: “Jalaire is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Her biggest accomplishment was completing her Personal Progress, which is a prestigious award similar to the Eagle Scout.”

At that moment, I forgot all about what was going on and realized how fortunate I was to be raised in the Church. Shocked and overwhelmed when they called my name as the homecoming queen, I made my way to the middle of the field, where the crown was placed on top of my head. That night I realized that it wasn't about the crown. I felt like a queen because I had dressed modestly. When we faithfully live the gospel and beautify our lives and help others strive to do the same, we feel like royalty and live up to our divine potential. **NE**

IDEAS FOR THE DIVINE NATURE VALUE

- Create a program or play that talks about the divine worth of young women as daughters of God. Find participants, hold rehearsals, make costumes, etc. Invite your ward or others to come watch it.
- Make a goal to go to the temple a certain number of times. Learn about the importance of temples. Write in your journal the things that you feel about your divine worth as you attend the temple.



INDIVIDUAL WORTH

Individual Worth value experience 1 asks you to think about how much Heavenly Father knows you, loves you, and is mindful of you. This story shares how one young woman gained her testimony of those truths.

AM I A CHILD OF GOD?

By Valarie Schenk

I was looking for the truth and ecstatic to hear the gospel message from the missionaries. I joined the Church, but I was the only member of my family to do so. After about one year, my testimony was growing stronger every day, but something was missing. I didn't know I was a child of God.

I had accepted God as the Father of all, but I had not realized how intimately He knows each of His creations. *With all that there is in this world, I asked myself, how could He possibly know me personally? How could He consider me His daughter? How could He love me as His child?*

With these questions in mind, I turned to Heavenly Father in prayer. Shortly after, during scripture study, I stumbled across 1 Chronicles 28:9. King David told his son, "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

No other verse of scripture has brought me closer to my Father in Heaven than this one. It testified to me not only that I am a daughter of God but that if I seek Him, I can know Him. It testified to me of my individual worth. I had not, in my heart, been fully converted to the idea that I was a child of God. I had hoped that these things were true but couldn't grasp the knowledge of such a loving Father in Heaven. I couldn't accept His love, knowing my shortcomings and the many mistakes I had made.

The scripture taught me how David, who had made many mistakes of his own, counsels his son Solomon to seek the Lord and serve Him with full purpose. These words gave me a strong desire to develop a personal relationship with my Father in Heaven. I was learning more about His loving ways. I knew that, like David and Solomon, I could be found of Him.

I also discovered that Heavenly Father knows me personally. As I continued to study this scripture, the phrase "the Lord searcheth all hearts" was embedded in my mind. Each time I read it, the Holy Ghost whispered to my heart that Heavenly Father knows me and I am His beloved child. He knows my thoughts, aspirations, desires, fears, intents, and imaginations. With these insights, I gained a testimony that I am a child of God. **NE**

IDEAS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL WORTH VALUE

- Interview your oldest relatives and create a history of their lives and stories. You could video record them or tape them so you have their voice, too. Think of how their history has influenced your life and helped you become who you are. Give copies of the history to your family members.
- Use your talents to help someone. For instance, volunteer to play the piano in seminary or Young Women, sing with the ward choir, make meals for someone in your ward, write stories for children, or plant a garden with your parents.

We will be prepared

KNOWLEDGE

A CHALLENGING BUT MEANINGFUL READ

By Lynette Randall

My Young Women president challenged all of the young women in my ward to read *Jesus the Christ* in just five months. As I sat down to read it, I was disappointed at first. I had expected the heavens to open and light to pour down, instantly filling me with the Spirit. However, that did not happen. Instead, I struggled to get through even the first chapter without my mind wandering off. I put the book down, frustrated at the seeming lack of divine inspiration.

I decided I needed to change my approach to reading. The next evening I knelt by my bed and asked Heavenly Father to allow me to have the Holy Spirit accompany me, that I might better understand and be able to read this book about His Son and my Savior. After that prayer, I felt a subtle wave of peace come into my room as I settled down to read. I understood the book better and enjoyed it more.

Every night after that, I made sure I started and ended my reading sessions with a prayer, in which I thanked my Heavenly Father and invited the Spirit to guide me as I learned more of the Savior.

I struggled at times and became discouraged that I couldn't just zip through this 800-page book. But I continued on with my reading and even felt sad as I turned to the last

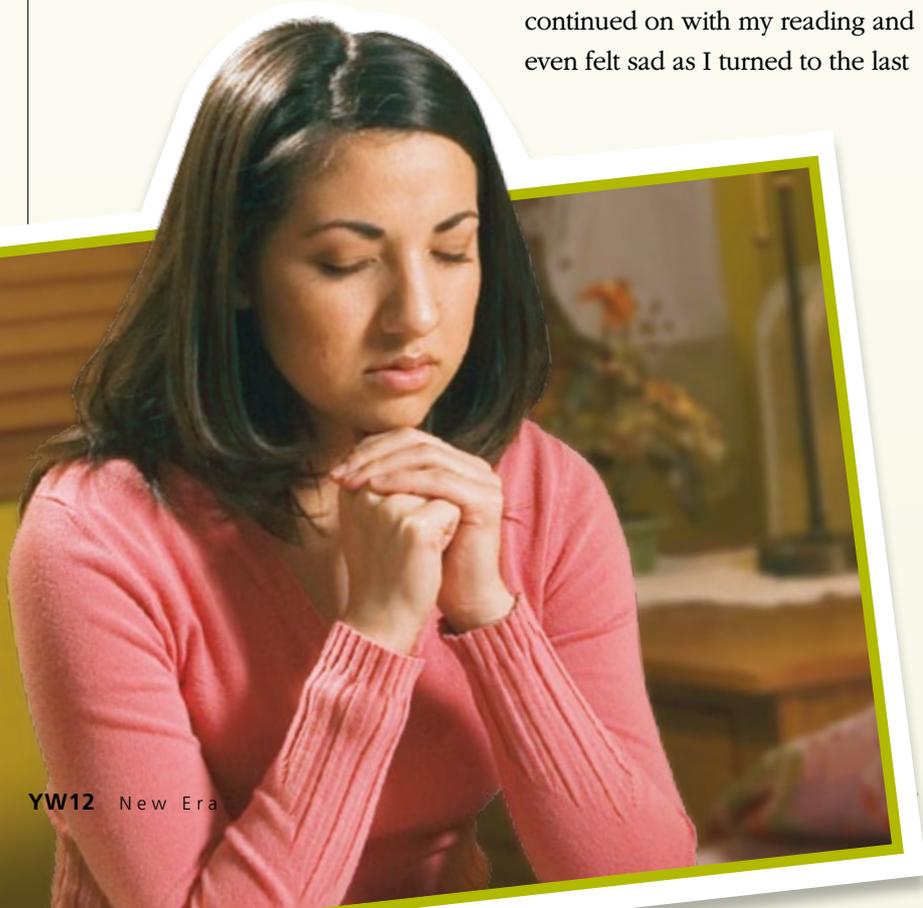
page, knowing the book was ending. The Spirit that was present as I read *Jesus the Christ* was so indescribably sweet and comforting, and I came to know my Savior on a deeper level. My testimony of the Savior and of the Atonement grew so much from the simple act of reading a book for a few minutes every night. **NE**



IDEAS FOR THE KNOWLEDGE VALUE



- Ask a parent, grandparent, or ward member to teach you basic cooking skills. You could invite your sisters, cousins, or young women in the ward. Make a recipe book, and cook one of the recipes.
- Read stories from President Monson's life. Afterward, talk to a family member or a Young Women leader about what you learned and how knowing about his life can help you.
- Learn how to make bread and donate it to be used for the sacrament on Sunday.





IDEAS FOR THE CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY VALUE

- Watch all four sessions of conference and write in your journal every time a speaker talks about choice and accountability.
- For three weeks, write in your journal each day about how the choices you made had an effect on you.



CHOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Choice and Accountability value project bullet four invites you to “learn basic clothing alteration and repair techniques as you adapt your wardrobe to standards of modest dress” (Young Women Personal Progress, 50). The value project bullet one also encourages you to use the standards in For the Strength of Youth to “help you and other youth choose to live the Lord’s standards” (50). The following story shares how one young woman created a project that addresses both ideas.

195 DRESSES

By Charity Fuller

I was tired of not being able to find a modest prom dress, so with an idea from my cousins, I decided to do something. A Young Women leader, Sue Brown, helped me collect used prom dresses from graduated seniors and rent them out to high school girls for no charge if the dresses were returned clean. Fellow young women and other sisters helped organize things and alter immodest dresses.

Within three months, we had filled not only a closet but a room with 195 dresses. A year later the project

continues, now run by my younger sister, Jessica, who has collected an additional 105 dresses.

Modesty is about showing Heavenly Father we love and trust Him. When we obey, we invite the Spirit into our lives. The Spirit protects us, purifies our affections, and inspires us to be virtuous. We develop true beauty. Satan’s goal is to get us to disobey because he understands that for each standard we choose not to keep, we lose some of our power, protection, and blessings. I know that the dress standards in *For the Strength of Youth* keep us safe and beautiful. **NE**

NEMore

Watch a short video about Charity’s dress project at lds.org/go/913.

GOOD WORKS

A VISION OF SERVICE

By Nicole Tucker

When Kim moved into our ward, the young women welcomed her with open arms and service.

Kim has been blind since early childhood, so each of us takes a turn to lead the way to her seat during Young Women class. There is a lot of love and service to give, but not just for Kim. We need Kim as much as Kim needs us.

A few of us have earned our Young Womanhood Recognition medalion and are working on earning the Honor Bee with 40 hours of service. As part of that, we are mentoring Kim and helping her with her Personal Progress. Every month we each sign up for a time to visit Kim. Together we look up scriptures, conference talks, and *For the Strength of Youth* standards. We also discuss gospel principles taught in Personal Progress.

We have become closer to Kim by helping her. She is such a joy to have around, and she's always making us laugh. Even though she is blind, we know she is a young woman with hopes and dreams, and she is a precious daughter of God.

It is important to serve others, because "when [we] are in the service of [our] fellow beings [we] are only in the service of [our] God" (Mosiah 2:17). Not only does service help others, but it brings us true happiness.

Heavenly Father has given us so much, and service is one of the ways we can show our gratitude. **NE**

To learn more about earning an Honor Bee, visit lds.org/go/914.



INTEGRITY

CHANGING MY TUNE

By Kimberly Udall

Choosing good music has always been hard for me. I used to listen to whatever was popular at the time. I would memorize the words and sing along to the radio, but I wasn't really paying attention to what I was hearing and singing. These small things led to my not making the best decisions in other parts of my life.

Most of the songs had a bad word in the lyrics. I would always make sure I didn't sing those words, but every once in awhile one would slip.

It's just once, and I'm not doing it on purpose, I would think to myself. I should



We believe

IDEAS FOR THE GOOD WORKS VALUE

- Pray for guidance to find someone who needs service. Help that person however he or she needs help, such as mowing the lawn, shopping for groceries, and cleaning the house. Record in your journal how you feel while serving.
- Develop your leadership skills by organizing a group service project. Involve others in the service, and evaluate the project and process afterward. Consider a humanitarian aid project, such as collecting supplies for and putting together hygiene kits.





We will stand

have stopped listening to that music right away, but I didn't.

Looking back, I realize the more bad music I listened to, the more my attitude and the way I was acting was changing as well. I didn't feel the Spirit with me very often, and I felt unhappy and angry all the time. I would yell at my friends, and I'm sure I wasn't fun to be around.

Then I had this overwhelming feeling that I should look in my *Personal Progress* book. I noticed Integrity value experience 2: "Pray daily for strength and for the guidance of the Holy Ghost to help you live with integrity. Write in your journal the things you can do to improve your personal integrity and at least one new habit you want to develop" ([2009], 62). I realized I hadn't been the best I could be. I decided that I should work on listening to better music. Now I choose not to listen to bad music. I feel so happy, and the Spirit is back. **NE**



IDEA FOR THE VIRTUE VALUE

- After you read the Book of Mormon, you could review your journal and make a list of all the things you wrote down regarding how the Savior and His disciples lived virtuous lives. Consider hanging the list where you'll see it and can reflect on it each day.

We will be prepared

VIRTUE

Virtue value experience 2 asks you to "write about a time when you felt the guidance of the Holy Ghost" (Young Women Personal Progress [2009, booklet], 70). The following story shares one young woman's experience.

DRIVEN BY THE SPIRIT

By Elise Bowen

I turned the wheel and guided the car around the corner, resisting the urge to glance at my driving instructor's face to see how I was doing. If I passed this test, I would finally get my driver's license.

A parked truck caught my eye on the road ahead. Immediately, I felt uncomfortable and slowed down. My instructor said, "The speed limit here is 35 miles an hour." I didn't know how to respond—I couldn't tell my teacher I just had a bad feeling. The girls in back shifted, and I felt my face getting red. I decided to drive faster. But then I looked at the truck again and changed my mind.

"What are you doing?" my instructor asked, confused. I had slowed the car to 10 miles per hour, and I didn't know how to explain why. As I got closer to where the truck was,

the feeling grew stronger. I hovered over the brake, holding my breath. If I wasn't watching so closely, I would never have seen a basketball bounce from behind the truck. I slammed on the brakes, and the car skidded to a halt. The front bumper was just inches from a four-year-old boy who had run after the ball.

I couldn't breathe, and it took a moment before I could relax enough to keep driving. My instructor and the other girls didn't say a word. I finished the test in silence, trying not to notice the stares from the backseat.

I passed the driving test, but it didn't seem to matter anymore. The focus of my whole summer had shifted the second that boy ran in front of my car. I know that the most important test for me was listening to the Spirit and obeying His counsel. **NE**

IDEAS FOR THE INTEGRITY VALUE

- Think about situations where youth might be tempted to be dishonest. Decide now how you would act, and write about it in your journal.
- Read a scripture story where someone showed integrity, and then record in your journal how that example can help you today.
- Choose someone who lives with integrity. Send a letter expressing your appreciation for their example.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID STOKER, NICOLE TUCKER, GARTH BRUNER, AND MATT BEER

“How can I stay motivated to do Personal Progress, and who can help?”

One way to stay motivated is to remember that by consistently working on your Personal Progress, you are cultivating feminine attributes, strengthening your testimony and reaching your divine potential, as well as preparing to enter the temple and to have a family (see *Young Women Personal Progress* [2009], 1).

Personal Progress is more than just receiving a medallion; it helps you become the best you can be. You can personalize it for what you need in your life. Keep that in mind as you look over the value experiences and plan your projects.

If you try to do it all at once, Personal Progress can seem intimidating. Focus on just one or two experiences at a time. You may find that you are already doing something that fulfills an experience. Set aside a specific time to work on your experiences—for example, every Sunday after church. Other young women, your parents, and Young Women leaders can also help you stay on track. When you have someone cheering you along, it is easier to continue no matter what may get in the way. **NE**

Make a Chart



I just finished my Personal Progress. One way I stayed motivated was by making a chart and keeping track of what I was doing. I also told my mom what I was planning on doing, and she would ask me about it. I am working on my Honor Bee now. The best way of all to do Personal Progress is to pray for help.

Emily H., 15, Washington, USA

Work with Friends



I do Personal Progress with friends. We are starting a Personal Progress club. We sit and do Personal Progress. We all can relate to it and are able to share stories on it. It is so much fun. We take turns reading scriptures and set goals together. I learn so much and am able to spiritually grow. I also am so excited about the ribbons.

Madison R., 14, California, USA

Work Together



On the first Tuesday of every month my Young Women group has a Personal Progress night. We all do the experiences together and set goals. It motivates me a lot when we do it all together. It also creates deeper discussions, because we all have an experience to share or a thought to give.

Eva S., 15, Utah, USA

Start Good Habits

I know that staying motivated for Personal Progress can be hard. The things that helped me were the longer value experiences that took two to three weeks. I made a chart and checked off the days as they passed. As I went through the experiences, I could see good habits becoming part of my life, such as morning prayers and daily journal writing, and I was happier in general.

Erin F., 16, Utah, USA

Remember to Apply



I stay motivated to do Personal Progress by remembering that what I do every day can be applied to it. When you look at it as just another thing on your to-do list, it can become a real drag. But what really helps me is to look at things that I'm already doing and applying them to value experiences and projects. This helps me accomplish more, and it makes me realize all the good I'm doing in my everyday life.

Stephanie M., 16, Michigan, USA

Call and Report



My cousin and I call each other on Sundays to set goals and to tell each other what we did that week for Personal Progress. This helps us stay motivated because we can report our achievements to someone. So far, we have had great success!

Jamie H., 14, California, USA

Just Do It



It helps being upfront with friends and family. It makes them want to be involved with you, so you're not doing Personal Progress alone. Set aside time on Sunday to do something new in it, and use all the tools available, including online Personal Progress [personalprogress.lds.org]. Set a date you'll be done by—not just for the whole Personal Progress but with each value—and stick to it. Other than that: Just do it! Thinking about doing it does not get it done.

Sarah W., 17, Idaho, USA

Set Goals with Dates



The way I motivated myself to do Personal Progress was to set a goal for when I would finish it. I wanted to get it done before my 16th birthday. Having that goal gave me something to shoot for and helped me pace myself. I was able to get it done two months before my birthday. So, my advice is: set a goal and work toward it.

Shirley H., 16, Arizona, USA

Post Reminders

It helped me to post Personal Progress tidbits on my mirrors. They were nice daily reminders of what I needed to focus on.

Francesca G., 18, Texas, USA

Do a Few Things

If you make goals for Personal Progress to do a few things every month, then you know that there is a possibility in finishing what you need to get done. Also, reward yourself for achieving your goals.

Olivia L., 13, Illinois, USA

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



YOU ARE NEEDED

"In the restored light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, a woman, including a young woman, occupies a majesty all her own in the divine design of the Creator. . . .

"Be a woman of Christ. Cherish your esteemed place in the sight of God. He needs you. This Church needs you. The world needs you. A woman's abiding trust in God and unflinching devotion to things of the Spirit have always been an anchor when the wind and the waves of life were fiercest."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "To Young Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 28.



Work on Personal Progress Online!

At personalprogress.lds.org you can type your journal, link to all of the scriptures, and track your Personal Progress. Your ward or branch clerk can give you your Membership Record Number to get started, and then your parents and leaders can approve all of your work online. It's easy!

NEXT QUESTION

"I have a problem with not forgetting past mistakes after I have repented. What can I do to feel at peace?"

Send your answer by October 15, 2011.

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Our Families' Personal Progress

By Hillary Slaughter
and Elyssa J. Kirkham

Sometimes one person can change everything around him or her. If you start with yourself—if you have courage to start with yourself—then everything around you may order itself in time,” says Katya Kalashnikova from Kyiv, Ukraine.

Through faith and Personal Progress, Katya Kalashnikova and Ivana Rubanchuk were able to find that courage, giving them the opportunity to strengthen their families and prepare for the temple.

Making a Change

Both Katya's and Ivana's families joined the Church shortly after the Kyiv Ukraine Mission was organized in 1992. But both families drifted into inactivity before either girl was old

enough to be baptized.

Ivana's family moved when she was 13 to a home near a Latter-day Saint chapel. As she and her mother walked past it, her mother remembered the goodness the Church had brought into her life. She encouraged Ivana to go to church. “My mother knew that in the Church they would teach me only good things in comparison to the world,” Ivana says. She began attending church and activities and meeting with the missionaries, and when the missionaries asked her if she would be baptized, she agreed.

Katya's Story

At age 15 Katya was returning from a trip with a community youth group. She was surprised when her father told her that he had invited the missionaries to teach her. He made it

clear that while she was welcome to listen, he was not interested.

Katya set a time to meet with the missionaries. “As I listened, I felt that this is the right way to go. I remembered those feelings I'd had going to church as a child. And after a while, I decided to be baptized,” she says.

Progressing Personally

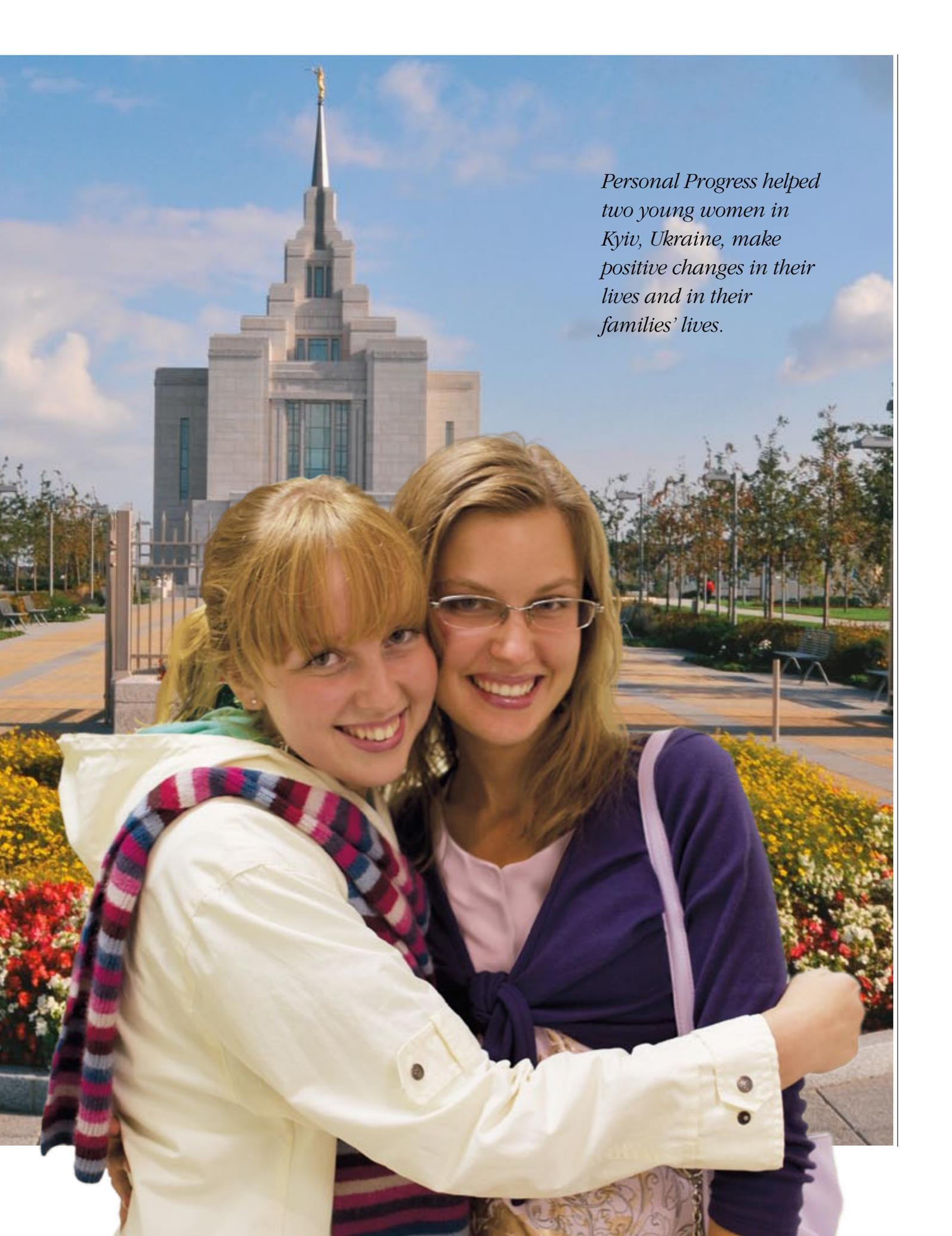
Both young women had to make adjustments to become members of the Church, and Personal Progress helped them make the transition. “I was still growing. I had my own habits. Even my manner of dress needed to change,” Katya recalls. “Personal Progress little by little helped me change. It gave me power to be a daughter of God, not just in church but every day.”

Through Personal Progress, Ivana and Katya were able to establish habits that would spiritually strengthen them, such as prayer, scripture study, and watching appropriate media. They also learned how to teach lessons and serve others. Overall, it helped them draw closer to God and become better examples to their families.

“Personal Progress helped me. Every completed assignment gave me growth; it added knowledge and courage,” Ivana says. “It was

Katya Kalashnikova gained knowledge by doing Personal Progress, which influenced her parents to join her in attending church. Opposite page: Katya and her friend Ivana Rubanchuk in front of the Kyiv Ukraine Temple.



A photograph of two young women hugging in front of a large, modern building with a prominent spire topped by a golden statue. The woman on the left has blonde hair and is wearing a white jacket and a colorful striped scarf. The woman on the right has brown hair, wears glasses, and a purple cardigan over a pink shirt. They are both smiling warmly. The background shows a paved walkway, some trees, and a clear blue sky with light clouds.

*Personal Progress helped
two young women in
Kyiv, Ukraine, make
positive changes in their
lives and in their
families' lives.*

especially good for me because most members of my family aren't active members of the Church."

Leading by Example

The changes Ivana made through Personal Progress helped her be an example to her family. "All this time my parents have seen how I've changed. They were very happy that I was going to church," Ivana says. She attended church and activities alone until one day her mother decided to come with her to sacrament meeting. Now they attend church together.

Katya's example also touched the lives of her family. Shortly after Katya joined the Church, her mother started to come with her and then her father. The families of both of these young women noticed the difference Personal Progress and Church activity made in Katya's and Ivana's lives. They saw how

happy they had become and wanted to take part in that joy.

Entering the House of the Lord

The joy of Katya and her family continued to grow. As Katya participated in Personal Progress, she noticed that it focused on the importance of the temple. "There is a whole section dedicated to going to the temple, and I really wanted to get to the temple, but my parents weren't ready," she remembers.

Katya was able, however, to attend the temple with her seminary class. She recalls, "I did temple work for the first time. I was really happy, and I wanted to go again. I really wanted my family to go there and be sealed for eternity."

Katya's family prepared and finally felt that they were ready to go to the temple. Two years after her first visit

to the temple, Katya returned, this time with her family. "I understood that it really is a place where families can become eternal," Katya says. They were sealed in the Freiberg Germany Temple.

Continuing in Faith

Katya and Ivana are grateful for the Church, and both have benefited from its offerings, especially Personal Progress. "My testimony of Personal Progress is that it makes us stronger and helps us be perfected in every aspect of our lives," says Katya.

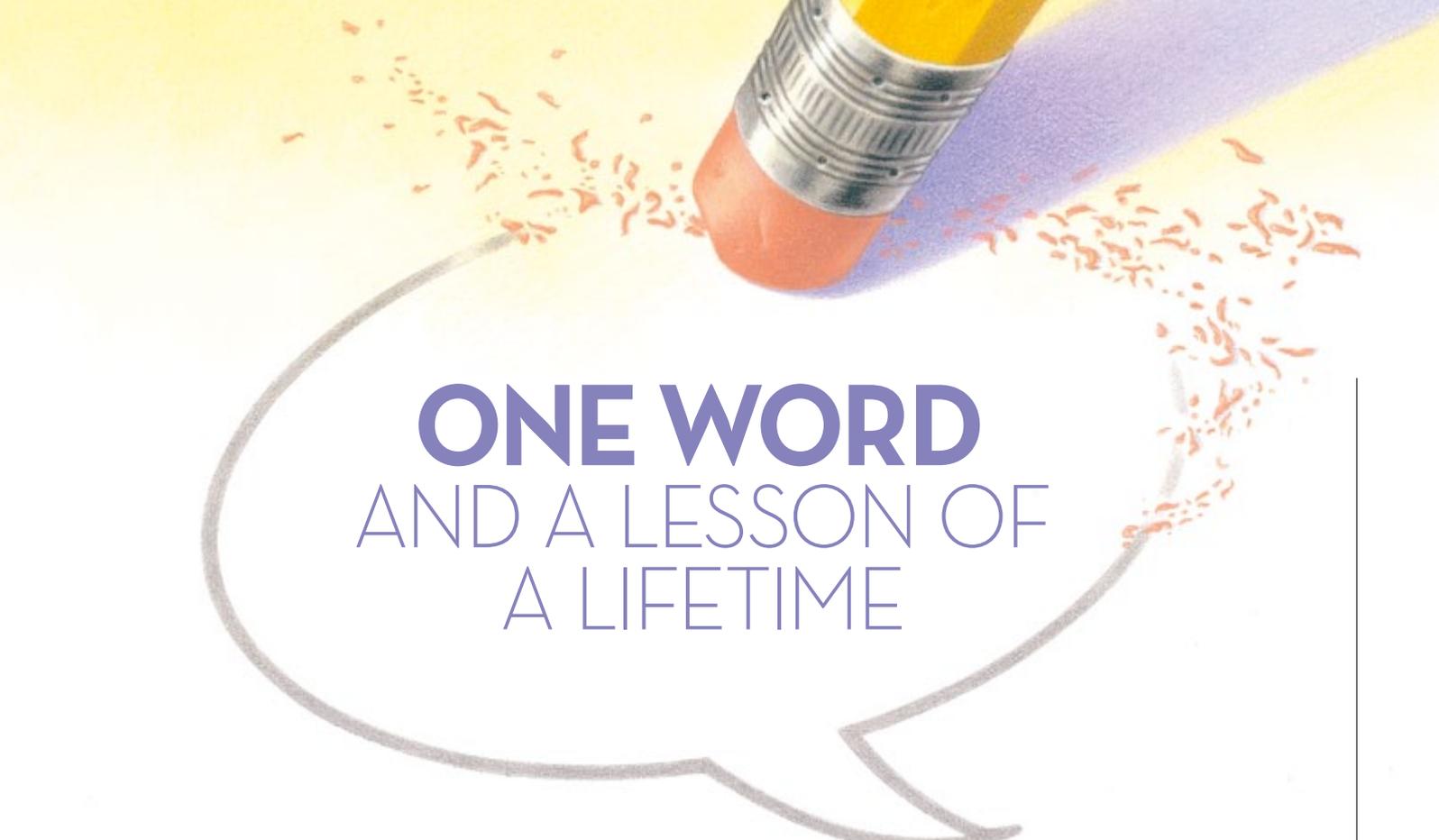
Ivana feels that Young Women and Church organizations have helped her prepare to be a missionary. Ivana is positive about missionary work. She says, "Don't get discouraged, but always be an example of how the Church changes our lives. We're happy in it, and every person wants to be happy. And if we take people and show them that happiness, then they will follow our example. We always can—with small steps—help those people, serve them, and in some wonderful moment, they will be ready." **NE**

Ivana credits Personal Progress with helping her set a good example for her family. Ivana and her mother now attend church together.

NEmore

Watch a video about Katya and Ivana's experience online at lds.org/go/915.





ONE WORD AND A LESSON OF A LIFETIME

By Heather Wrigley

Church Magazines

Integrity—a Young Women value—is how you act when you think no one is looking.

It was a blistering 115 degrees F (46°C) outside, typical for a summer day out on the farm in Brawley, California. I kicked the tire of the huge water truck that had broken down for the third time in four days. I relied on my summer job to pay for entertainment, school clothes, and eventually college. Despite the heat, I hated having to cut a day's work short, but it looked like I was going to have to do so again.

David, a member of our ward and a family friend, walked over from the mill to take a look at the truck. Venting my frustrations to him, I was tempted to say a word I had heard others use when they were annoyed. The moment before I actually said it, the thought crossed my mind that I shouldn't because I knew it was a bad word. But in an instant, I brushed it off, thinking no one would ever find out. I said the word, but it didn't make me feel any better.



INTEGRITY AND SELF- RESPECT

"Perhaps the surest test of an individual's

integrity is his refusal to do or say anything that would damage his self-respect."

President Thomas S. Monson, "In Quest of the Abundant Life," *Ensign*, Mar. 1988, 4.

Looking up, David told me he and Dad would fix the truck when they could. In the meantime, I found other work to do for the rest of the day.

Hopping into Dad's truck at the end of the day, we began the drive home. Not too long after getting on the road, Dad looked over at me and mentioned that David had told him about my reaction to the truck breaking down, swear word and all. "David said he never expected to hear something like that come out of my daughter's mouth," Dad said. "He respects you too much, honey."

I hung my head, and the tears came quickly. I had lowered myself in the eyes of people whose opinions I cared about. But most of all, I felt disappointed in myself and knew God did too. I realized that was why saying the word hadn't made me feel any better.

I made a promise never to say that word again or anything else that would not please God, not because I didn't want to make my dad and David ashamed of me but because it was the right thing to do. Integrity, I learned, is the way you act when you think no one is looking. **NE**

WHERE MUSIC LEADS



What started as a Personal Progress experience has led Sadie Taylor to some great musical experiences.



By Janet Thomas
Church Magazines



Learn How to Lead Music
Starting on page 383 in the hymnbook are beat patterns under “For Beginning Music Directors.” Also, view an interactive conducting course at lds.org/go/916.

Watch a Video
See a video about Sadie at lds.org/go/917.

When Sadie was 13, she decided to work on Knowledge value experience 6 for Personal Progress. Sadie was going to memorize two hymns, learn the conducting patterns, and lead them in Young Women meetings.

One of the best places to practice was in the car. Sadie and her mother would put on some music and then figure out the patterns for different songs. It was a lot of fun, and Sadie loved it. “Mom and I would be in the car, and she would help me figure out how to lead. It was really hard, but I really liked it.”

Even the harder time signatures were fun for Sadie. “I ran into songs I couldn’t figure out. I could do the 4/4 time, but the 6/8 and 3/4 took a lot longer to figure out.”

Sadie led her hymns in Young Women and was able to complete her value experience, but conducting music for Sadie didn’t end there. She became a regular in Young Women.

Leading in Sacrament Meeting

Her Young Women leader mentioned to the ward chorister that if he ever needed a substitute in sacrament meeting, Sadie was capable of doing it. Soon Sadie was asked to lead. But that first time was hard. “I was really scared, and I just looked at my family the whole time. I was too afraid to look out at everybody else. The ward was nice about it. They were supportive of me learning.”

Then she was asked to substitute for a month or two. That’s when she gained confidence. She enjoyed going to the bishop and talking about the topics for sacrament meeting so she could select the right hymns.

Call to Choir

When Sadie was 15, the bishop called her to be the ward choir director. “At first,” said Sadie, “I was really excited. Then I realized it was a big calling, and it would be a lot of work. But it’s been great. I’ve had a lot of support from people who sing in the choir and even from people that don’t sing. They will ask how they can help.”

Sadie has sung in choirs since she was seven, but she had never tried to direct one. Now she is clapping out the beats and teaching parts to the choir. “We’re not going to be the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, but we really try to focus on the words and the spirit of the song. If we miss a few notes, that’s fine, but if we have the Spirit with us, it’s a lot nicer.”



Sadie’s Future

Sadie would never have guessed that just completing a value experience in Personal Progress would possibly lead to her future educational plans. She loves being a choir director and would like to go into music education and perhaps become a school choir director. “I love music. Now that it’s a part of my life, it really seems like a gift that has been given to me.” Sadie was chosen as a drum major in her school band.

Looking back, Sadie is a little surprised by where she has come since learning how to lead music with her mother as they drove in the car—something they never would have done without being motivated to fulfill her Personal Progress.

“I knew I would gain great things from Personal Progress, but I didn’t know it would shape what I would do every day and a possible career in college. It’s amazing.” **NE**

"I want to thank you for standing up for your standards, even when it is hard to do so. The world puts a lot of pressure on you, but you stand firm. That is impressive, and I admire you for it."

"I don't think young men do enough to recognize your remarkable efforts to stay strong. Perhaps we just don't know what to say. But we notice and appreciate your strength."

"One thing in particular that we are really grateful for is that you dress modestly. It helps us stay strong and raises our respect for you. It is very impressive and we are grateful. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

"The young men all look up to you girls because you have righteous standards that will lead to the celestial kingdom. Please continue living righteously so that we young men have something to strive to become."

"I really like to see you at seminary. I really like it when you act like a daughter of God around everyone. I love when you dress appropriately. It makes it so I don't feel uncomfortable around you. I love seeing you at the temple. It shows me that you care about the gospel."

"Your willingness to act, live, and talk the gospel has inspired me to do it as well. Your happiness and glow of joy just make it hard to be sad around you. Thank you for the joy of being in this Church."

"I'VE SEEN THE WAY YOU TREAT OTHER PEOPLE, AND IT INSPIRES ME TO TREAT OTHERS BETTER. I ENJOY BEING AROUND GIRLS WHO KEEP THEIR STANDARDS."

"Your faithfulness is a strength to me, even if I don't openly admit it."

NOTES TO THE GOOD GIRLS

We talked to young men from various places around the world about the Latter-day Saint young women they know who are maintaining high standards and quietly going about doing good. Here's what the young men would like to say to them.

"YOUNG MEN OF THE CHURCH LOOK FOR THE GIRL WHO CONTINUOUSLY HAS THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IN HER AND IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE WHO SHE IS."

"I notice when you are with little children, you are just so kind and caring towards them, a future faithful mother of a child of God."

"I notice it when girls don't drop their standards no matter who is around. I also notice it when girls smile."

"You really are exceptional because of all the good things you do and the bad you refrain from doing. I admire the strength you have to stay strong and keep the commandments. How beautiful are the faithful and obedient young women of the Church."

"I notice that you are kind to people no matter the circumstance."

"I admire your example of living the commandments. I hope you will keep it up because we are here for you. We love your moral strength, your faith, and your chastity."

"I LOVE IT WHEN GIRLS ARE MODEST AND SMILE. IT ACTUALLY HELPS ME ACT MORE LIKE MYSELF. I LOVE IT WHEN GIRLS LOOK AT THE POSITIVE SIDE AND MAKE THE BEST OUT OF THE SITUATION."