

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • APRIL 2015

Ensign



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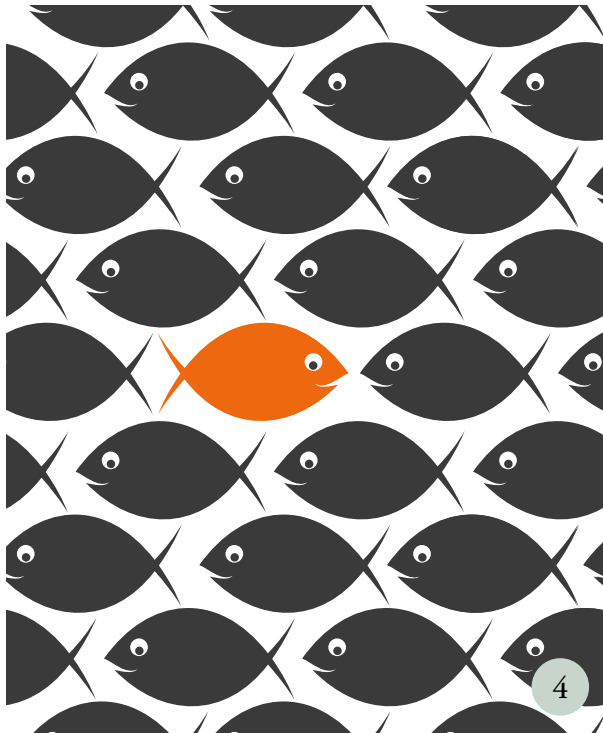
*"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?
"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."*

Luke 15:4-5

This photo, taken in Israel in April 2010, shows the risks a shepherd will take to rescue his sheep.

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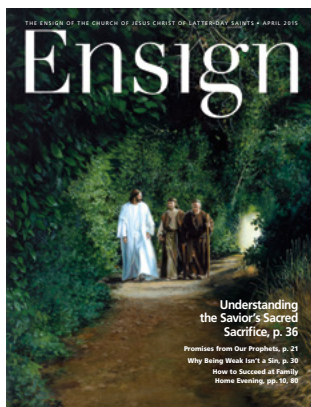
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Ensign

A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Henry B. Eyring, Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Stephen R.
Christiansen

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Family Home Evening Ideas

This issue contains articles and activities that could be used for family home evening.
The following are some examples.



**“Four Tools That Bring Promised
Blessings,” page 21:** Consider focusing your
family home evening on one of the tools

mentioned in the
article, such as temple
worship. You may
wish to begin with
a song that teaches
about the tool you
selected (for example,
“I Love to See the
Temple,” *Children’s
Songbook*, 95). Review
with your family some
of the blessings associ-
ated with the tool you
chose, then counsel
together about how
you can better utilize
this tool in your lives.
For instance, you
might set a goal to
prepare family names
for the temple.
Conclude by watching
a related Church video

(such as “The Blessings of the Temple,”
lds.org/go/templeE415).

“I Need Thee Every Hour,” page 64: Just

as the words of the
hymn “I Need Thee
Every Hour” helped
Pak Mi-Jung decide to
be baptized, hymns
can have a powerful
impact on our lives.
Think of a time that
the words of a hymn
have blessed your life
and consider sharing
the experience with
your family. Invite
each family member
to choose a favorite
hymn and tell how it
has blessed his or her
life. Then sing each
hymn with your family.
(You might spread this
out over a couple of
weeks.)

USING CONFERENCE TALKS

In our efforts to use general confer-
ence talks for family home evening les-
sons, the following ideas have helped:

- Read and ponder the talks during
personal study time.
- Pray for guidance about which mes-
sages may best meet your family’s
needs.
- Focus on specific principles from the
talks; this makes it easier to plan
fun, interactive ways to teach your
family.
- Involve family members in preparing
and presenting the lesson.
- Follow the Spirit as you teach; use
music to calm and engage your
family.
- Together plan ways to apply the
message and set related family
goals.

Emily Layton, Utah, USA

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By President
Thomas S.
Monson

President Monson Calls for

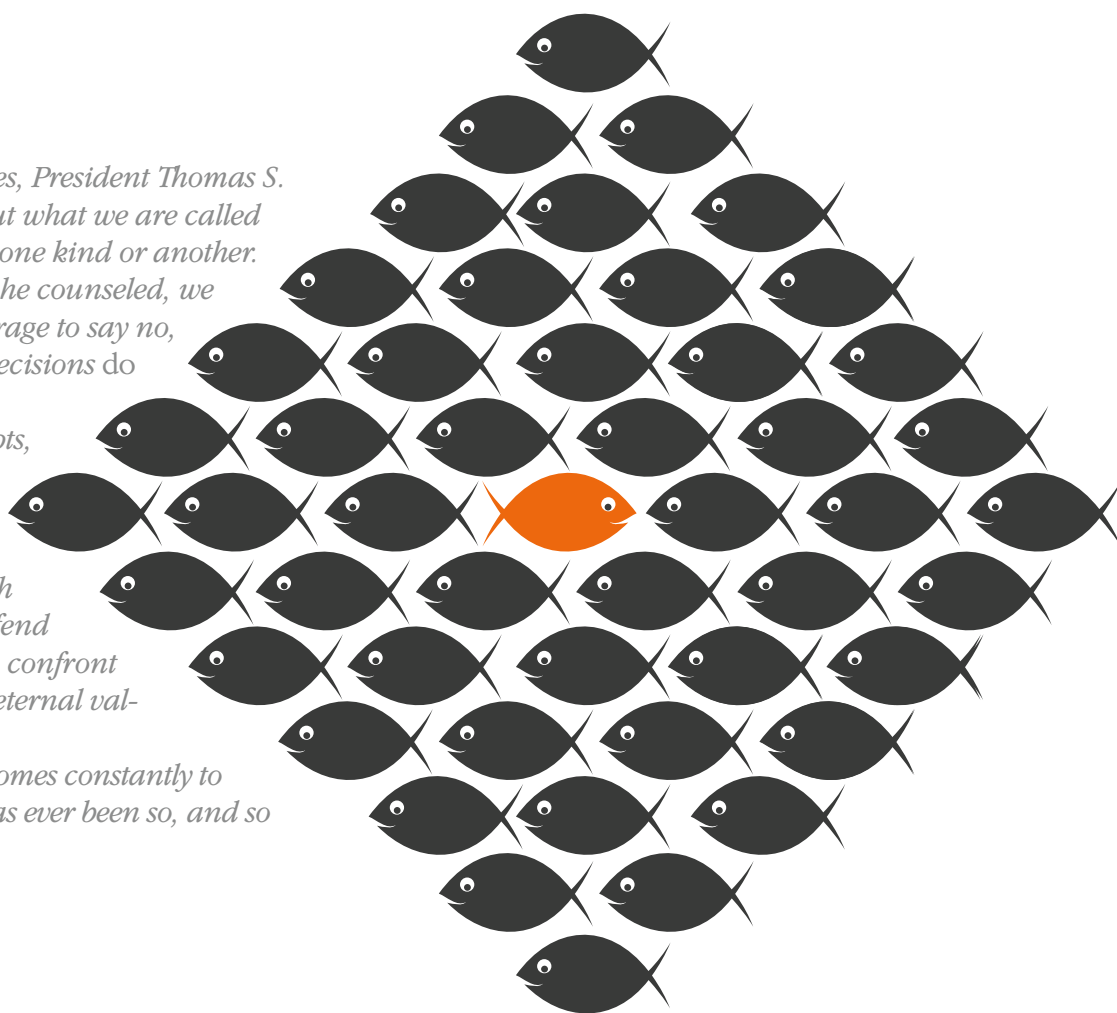
COURAGE

Scarcely an hour passes, President Thomas S. Monson has observed, but what we are called upon to make choices of one kind or another.

To make wise choices, he counseled, we need courage—"the courage to say no, the courage to say yes. Decisions do determine destiny."¹

In the following excerpts, President Monson reminds Latter-day Saints that they need courage to stand for truth and righteousness, to defend what they believe, and to confront a world that is rejecting eternal values and principles.

"The call for courage comes constantly to each of us," he said. "It has ever been so, and so shall it ever be."²



Courage Brings God's Approval

"We will all face fear, experience ridicule, and meet opposition. Let us—all of us—have the courage to defy the consensus, the courage to stand for principle. Courage, not compromise, brings the smile of God's approval. Courage becomes a living and an attractive virtue when it is regarded not only as a willingness to die manfully but also as the determination to live decently. As we move forward, striving to live as we should, we will surely receive help from the Lord and can find comfort in His words."³

Withstand with Courage

"What does it mean to endure? I love this definition: *to withstand with courage*. Courage may be necessary for you to believe; it will at times be necessary as you obey. It will most certainly be required as you endure until that day when you will leave this mortal existence."⁴

Have Courage to Stand for Truth

"[May] you have the courage to stand firm for truth and righteousness. Because the trend in society today is away from the values and principles the Lord has given us, you will almost certainly be called upon to defend that which you believe. Unless the roots of your testimony are firmly planted, it will be difficult for you to withstand the ridicule of those who challenge your faith. When firmly planted, your testimony of the gospel, of the Savior, and of our Heavenly Father will influence all that you do throughout your life."⁵

We Need Spiritual and Moral Courage

"The messages portrayed on television, in movies, and in other media [today] are very often in direct opposition to that which we want our children to embrace and hold dear. It is our responsibility not only to teach them to be sound in spirit and doctrine but also to help them stay that way, regardless of the outside forces they may encounter. This will require much time and effort on our part—and in order to help others, we ourselves need the spiritual and moral courage to withstand the evil we see on every side."⁶

May We Ever Be Courageous

"As we go about living from day to day, it is almost inevitable that our faith will be challenged. We may at times find ourselves surrounded by others and yet standing in the minority or even standing alone concerning what is acceptable and what is not. . . .

"May we ever be courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe, and if we must stand alone in the process, may we do so courageously, strengthened by the knowledge that in reality we are never alone when we stand with our Father in Heaven."⁷ ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

You might ask those you teach to think of a situation in the coming week—at home, at work, at school, or at church—that will require them to act with courage. They might face a fear, endure something challenging, stand for their beliefs, or decide to obey a principle of the gospel more fully. Invite them to share their thoughts or write them down.

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, "The Three Rs of Choice," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 67, 68.
2. Thomas S. Monson, "The Call for Courage," *Ensign*, May 2004, 55.
3. Thomas S. Monson, "Be Strong and of a Good Courage," *Ensign*, May 2014, 69.
4. Thomas S. Monson, "Believe, Obey, and Endure," *Ensign*, May 2012, 129.
5. Thomas S. Monson, "May You Have Courage," *Ensign*, May 2009, 126.
6. Thomas S. Monson, "Three Goals to Guide You," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 118–19.
7. Thomas S. Monson, "Dare to Stand Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 60, 67.

Someone Else's Sarah

By McKenzie Miller

I used to find it difficult to use my beliefs as a response to a question as simple as “Why don’t you drink coffee?” In the past I came up with excuses like “It’s too bitter” or “I don’t like the taste.”

Why was I embarrassed? Why was I so afraid to stand up for what I believe? Looking back now, I don’t understand exactly what I feared. But I do remember exactly when I stopped hiding behind excuses.

One day in my high school English class, the teacher announced that we’d be viewing an episode of a TV show I knew I shouldn’t watch. While other students cheered in excitement, my classmate Sarah raised her hand and asked if she could leave.

When the teacher asked why, Sarah responded matter-of-factly, “Because I’m Mormon and I don’t watch shows with profanity.”

Her courage to stand up in front of the class was amazing. Thanks to Sarah, I too stood up and waited outside with a clear conscience for the show to finish.

I was forever changed. I started explaining my beliefs instead of avoiding the subject. And as a result, I found confidence in myself and participated even more in Church and school activities.

I never told Sarah how much her example meant to me, but I try to emulate her example of confidence. I now realize that being a member of God’s wonderful, sacred Church is absolutely nothing to be ashamed about. I hope that I can, through my example, be someone else’s Sarah.

The author lives in Utah, USA.

CHILDREN

Courage in the Scriptures

President Monson teaches us to have courage and stand for what we believe. There are lots of examples in the scriptures of people who showed courage. Read the scripture next to each name. How did these people show courage and stand up for what they knew was right? Use the spaces to write or draw a picture of your answers.

Joseph Smith (Joseph Smith—History 1:11–17)

Daniel (Daniel 6:7, 10–23)

Samuel the Lamanite (Helaman 13:2–4; 16:1–7)

Esther (Esther 4:5–14; 5:1–8; 7:1–6)

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the life and roles of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

The Attributes of Jesus Christ: Without Guile or Hypocrisy

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring attributes of the Savior.

Understanding that Jesus Christ is without guile and hypocrisy will help us faithfully strive to follow His example. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “To beguile is to deceive or lead astray. . . . A person without guile is a person of innocence, honest intent, and pure motives, whose life reflects the simple practice of conforming his [or her] daily actions to principles of integrity. . . . I believe the necessity for the members of the Church to be without guile may be more urgent now than at other times because many in the world apparently do not understand the importance of this virtue.”¹

Of hypocrisy, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “None of us is quite as Christlike as we know we



should be. But we earnestly desire to overcome our faults and the tendency to sin. With our heart and soul we yearn to become better with the help of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.”²

We know “we will be judged according to our actions, the desires of our hearts, and the kind of people we have become.”³ Yet as we strive to repent, we will become more pure—and “blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8).

Additional Scriptures

Psalm 32:2; James 3:17; 1 Peter 2:1–2, 22

Consider This

What can we learn about being without guile from little children? (see Guide to the Scriptures, “Guile,” scriptures.lds.org).

NOTES

1. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Without Guile,” *Ensign*, May 1988, 80, 81.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 23.
3. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.2.1.

Faith, Family, Relief



From the Scriptures

Little children are without guile. Jesus Christ said: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . And he took [the children] up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10:14, 16).

Christ also ministered to the children in the Americas after His Crucifixion. He commanded that the people bring their little children to Him and “set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; . . .

“ . . . [And] he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. . . .

“And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and . . . they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, . . . and the angels did minister unto them” (3 Nephi 17:12, 21, 24).

THE POWER OF FAITH

By Amber Barlow Dahl

If Heavenly Father were to free us from our challenges simply because we asked, He would deny us the very experiences necessary for our salvation.

One year in college, I was taking a test when my neck began to hurt. The pain didn't go away when the tension of the test had passed. I consulted with doctors and therapists and tried a variety of treatments, but still the pain continued. Over the next year, as I struggled to cope with this pain, I also struggled to increase my faith. I spent much time in prayer, I studied the scriptures, and I asked for priesthood blessings. I felt that if I just had enough faith, I would be healed.

Jesus Christ healed the sick, the blind, the lame, the leprous—"according to [their] faith" (Matthew 9:29). I knew He had the power to heal me as He had so many others during His mortal life. I concluded, therefore, that only my lack of faith kept me from being healed, so I redoubled my efforts. While I continued with physical therapy, I prayed and fasted and studied and believed. Yet my pain persisted.

The scriptures teach us that with faith we can work miracles (see Matthew 17:20), yet I could not be relieved of this minor suffering. Where was the power in my faith? Finally, I quietly accepted my situation, found ways to cope with my discomfort, and became content to

save full understanding of faith and healing for a future time.

Years later I was talking with a friend who had struggled with terrible nausea that had sent her to the hospital more than once during her first pregnancy. Erin wanted to have another baby, but she was terrified that she would have to endure the same discomforts she had faced with her first pregnancy. She told me that she had been fasting and praying and that she really believed Heavenly Father would not ask that of her a second time.

As we talked, I recalled the scripture, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). I thought of my own experience in learning to be still in the midst of affliction and urged Erin to continue to have faith but not to make that faith dependent on whether or not she experienced nausea with her next pregnancy.

As I continued to study the principle of faith, I turned to Alma's discourse on faith in which he teaches that "if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true" (Alma 32:21).



RISING ABOVE TRIALS

"Is there not wisdom in [Heavenly Father] giving us trials that we might rise above them, responsibilities that we might achieve, work to harden our muscles, sorrows to try our souls? Are we not exposed to temptations to test our strength, sickness that we might learn patience, death that we might be immortalized and glorified?"

"If all the sick for whom we pray were healed, if all the righteous were protected and the wicked destroyed, the whole program of the Father would be annulled and the basic principle of the gospel, free agency, would be ended. No man would have to live by faith."

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 15.



Pondering this scripture, I discovered that faith wasn't what I thought it was. Faith, Alma teaches us, is hope in true principles. To have faith does not mean we believe our Heavenly Father will always give us what we ask for when we ask for it. Having faith that Christ would heal my neck or that He would grant Erin a nausea-free pregnancy is not having faith in true principles. However, we can have faith that Christ has the power to heal, that He is mindful of us, that He will strengthen us, and that if we endure well, we may qualify for eternal life.

The Lord promised, "Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of

Christ, ye shall receive it" (Enos 1:15). I believe the power in this promise lies in the counsel to believe "in the name of Christ." The Bible Dictionary entry on prayer teaches us: "We pray in Christ's name when our mind is the mind of Christ, and our wishes the wishes of Christ—when His words abide in us (John 15:7). We then ask for things it is possible for God to grant. Many prayers remain unanswered because they are not in Christ's name at all; they in no way represent His mind but spring out of the selfishness of man's heart."

When we ask in faith for something that is in accordance with the will of God, He will grant us according to

our desires. Heavenly Father knows us, loves us, and desires everything necessary for us to return to His presence. And sometimes that includes trials, troubles, and challenges (see 1 Peter 1:7). If Heavenly Father were to free us from our challenges simply because we asked, He would deny us the very experiences necessary for our salvation. We must learn to trust in God's plan for us and submit our will to His. As we align our desires with His desires and acknowledge our complete dependence on Him, we may qualify to receive "the end of [our] faith, even the salvation of [our] souls" (1 Peter 1:9). ■

The author lives in Oregon, USA.

FAMILY HOME EVENING— YOU CAN DO IT!

No matter what your family is like, family home evening can bless and strengthen you.

A father gets home tired after a long day at work and finds the rest of his family struggling with similar grumpy feelings. It's Monday night, and holding family home evening seems impossible. After saying a prayer for help, the father and mother decide to keep things simple. They call their family together, sing a hymn, and pray together. They give each member a small candle to light as they tell about something that inspired them recently. In a darkened room, the light of the candles represents inspiration and focuses the children's attention. As testimonies are shared, a feeling of sweet peace and love enters the home. The family ends the night grateful they held home evening.

Did you know that family home evening has been a Church program for 100 years? In April 1915, the First Presidency directed members to set aside one night each week for family prayer, music, gospel learning, stories, and activities. (See page 80 for an excerpt from the First Presidency letter.) Prophets continue to remind us of the importance of family home

evening. "We cannot afford to neglect this heaven-inspired program," President Thomas S. Monson said. "It can bring spiritual growth to each member of the family, helping him or her to withstand temptations which are everywhere."¹

Here are some attitudes to keep in mind as you make family home evening part of your week:

This applies to me. "Family home evenings are for everyone," said Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.² All of us—married or single, with children or without—can dedicate time to strengthening family and learning the gospel.

I can find time. The Church sets the example by keeping Monday nights free from Church activities. You can show the Lord and your family that you are willing to set aside time for what is most important.

I can find what works for my family. If your family is separated geographically, try a "family online evening" to talk with family members online or over the phone. Does someone have to work late? Hold a "family park evening"

near the workplace during a break. A divorced father held a "family letter evening" each Monday, writing to his children who lived far away.³ Let obstacles be a catalyst for greater creativity.

I can start this week. Family home evening can be organized according to the needs and circumstances of your home. Here are some general suggestions:

- Start and end with prayer.
- Use music, including hymns and Primary songs.
- Learn from the scriptures and modern prophets.
- Include a variety of physical activities, service projects, and gospel-centered activities from week to week.
- Have fun! Play a game or make refreshments.
- Be consistent. If you can't do it on Monday, find another day that works.

I want the blessings. Prophets have promised that if we participate in family home evening, great blessings will result: Love and obedience at





home will increase. Faith will develop in the hearts of youth. Families “will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations” that surround them.⁴

While your family home evenings may not be perfect experiences every time, your family will be strengthened and blessed by your efforts. “Each family home evening is a brushstroke on the canvas of our souls,” Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught. “No one event may appear to be very impressive or memorable. But just as the . . . strokes

of paint complement each other and produce an impressive masterpiece, so our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results.”⁵ ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.
2. L. Tom Perry, “Therefore I Was Taught,” *Ensign*, May 1994, 38.
3. See “Family Home Evening: Any Size, Any Situation,” *Ensign*, Dec. 2001, 42.
4. First Presidency, in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965–75), 4:339.
5. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 19–20.

GIVE HIGHEST PRIORITY

“We counsel parents and children to give highest priority to family prayer, family home evening, gospel study and instruction, and wholesome family activities. However worthy and appropriate other demands or activities may be, they must not be permitted to displace the divinely-appointed duties that only parents and families can adequately perform.”

First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999.

Repentance Is Real

Although my friend felt his mistakes had ruined his life forever, I knew that, like Corianton, he could get back on track.

By Shauna Ikahihifo

Years ago, a young man who was a dear friend of mine called me up and asked to go for a drive. As young single adults pursuing our own goals, we did not see each other as often as we once had. So I welcomed this chance for us to catch up on each other's lives. The moment he got in the car, however, I sensed something was wrong. For most of the drive we sat in silence.

Finally, he turned to me with tears in his eyes.

I gently asked, "What's wrong?"

He hung his head as he began to tell me of his choices during the last few months. Here he was, one of the most valiant men I knew, almost

sobbing as he described how far he'd fallen in such a short time. Beaten down, he lamented, "I've lost everything. It's over."

As he said those words, I felt something ignite within me. "Don't you believe in the Atonement?" I asked him. "Didn't the Savior suffer for *all* of our sins? Do you really think you're beyond His power to save?" I pleaded for him to not give up, bearing testimony that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all the blessings of eternity could be his as he repented.

The Power of Repentance

I later discovered an unlikely scripture hero, Corianton. This man's story

helped me better understand the infinite mercy of the Atonement and the reality of God's desire for us to receive His promised blessings.

When the Book of Mormon first introduces Corianton, the son of Alma the Younger, he and his older brother Shiblon are being called to preach the gospel to the Zoramites, an apostate Nephite group (see Alma 31:7). While we later see Shiblon commended for his "faithfulness and [his] diligence" (Alma 38:3), we discover that Corianton was not so stalwart.

While still a missionary, Corianton "[forsook] the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron . . . after the harlot Isabel" (Alma 39:3). His

behavior was so wicked that when the Zoramites saw his conduct, they would not believe the words of his father, Alma (see Alma 39:11).

But fortunately it was not too late for Corianton to change. His father's counsel showed him how he could be cleansed from his sins and be pure before God again. Alma encouraged Corianton to come unto Christ and turn away from all the materialism and iniquitous behaviors he once entertained. (See Alma 39:9–14.) Eventually, Alma called Corianton again to the work (see Alma 42:31; also 49:30).

Corianton returned to the ministry with his brothers (see Alma 43:1–2). They proclaimed the gospel throughout all the land with so much success that they were able to establish the Church in every city (see Alma 45:22).

We Can Try Again

Corianton's failure to be obedient was not the end of him. Although it may have seemed to him that he had lost everything, his father, Alma, and the Savior knew otherwise. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Corianton was able to repent and change course.

Corianton could have decided it was too hard to change or that the shame of his errors was too much to face, but he didn't give up. He didn't decide that he had fallen too far to be saved. Instead, he repented and worked to become a faithful servant, not only fulfilling his duty but magnifying it. Later he and his father and brothers were all referred to as "men of God" (Alma 48:18). Corianton apparently continued to serve and possibly had a leadership role (see Alma 63:10).

All Is Not Lost

After our talk in the car, my dear friend realized that he was not beyond the mercies of our Savior's Atonement. He eventually took all the necessary steps to fully repent of his transgressions, become clean and pure before the Lord, and enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost. He went on to marry in the temple and become a father. He is still receiving blessings he thought he'd missed out on because of past wrongs.

If we ever find ourselves thinking we've fallen too far for Heavenly Father to rescue us, let us remember we can turn to Him and that through the miraculous Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be made new. All is not lost, for with God our potential is endless. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

As we drove in silence, my friend turned to me and said, "I've lost everything. It's over."



MY Heart IS Whole

The hurt I felt
had festered for
years, but I knew
I needed to some-
how let it go.

Name withheld

I was 18 years old and my heart, it seemed, was irreparably broken. I felt I would never trust again.

To avoid being manipulated, lied to, let down, or hurt, as had so recently and painfully been the case, I decided that it would be better to live my life without caring about or believing in others. From now on, people would be dispensable.

This philosophy succeeded in that it did usually protect me from getting hurt, but it also prevented me from experiencing a lot of happiness. After several years, long after this pattern of thinking had become my norm, I realized that I didn't want to end up where it was taking me. I knew that God, whom I still trusted, had a plan for me and part of that plan was happiness. I also believed that through Jesus Christ's Atonement, I could be whole again. I didn't know how, but I wanted to experience that reality.

I decided to take action. The first thing I needed to do was let go of

the pain of years past. I knew that the Savior would take it from me and that His Atonement was powerful enough to help me, but letting go didn't come easily. The hate and hurt had festered for years. Gradually, however, I began to let go. I realized that the Atonement covered *all* sins, and if my offender chose to repent, my withholding forgiveness wouldn't halt his progress. It would, however, hinder *mine*. To hold on to hatred and anger was akin to believing that my forgiving this person was somehow more essential than the Savior forgiving him, and that, of course, simply wasn't true.

Doctrine and Covenants 64:8–11 helped me understand this better:

“My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened.

“Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before

the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

“I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

“And ye ought to say in your hearts—

Finally, I allowed myself to be vulnerable again in forming friendships.



let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds.”

Those verses helped me understand that I needed to stop focusing on the Lord’s job (judging) and start working on my own: forgiving all men. When I did finally let go, I understood that my forgiveness did nothing to benefit the other person—he didn’t even know about it—but it did *everything* to benefit me.

Next, I had to consciously change my flawed mental processes. I had to acknowledge that many people are trying their best to be good and kind and trustworthy. I faced the fact that most people aren’t out to hurt me.

I also humbled myself in recognizing that none of us are perfect. People might let me down unintentionally, but then, I know I’ve let people down too. What really matters is that relationships are two-way streets; healthy ones involve giving and taking on both sides.

Finally, I had to put myself out on the line again. I allowed myself to be vulnerable in forming friendships and dating relationships. It was hard to trust at first, so I fasted and looked for help in the scriptures and on the Church’s website, LDS.org. One scripture in particular helped me a lot:

“Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will

boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things; yea, behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever” (Alma 26:12).

I realized that with God’s help, all things were possible. If He had brought about “many mighty miracles” for Ammon, I knew He could bring them about for me. I had worked hard to change my attitude, but in the end, it was the Savior who helped me “after all [I could] do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

I also prayed earnestly that Heavenly Father would guide me to people I could love and trust and who would love and trust me back. In time, this happened.

It has been a long and difficult process, but healing has come. I no longer hold on to the hateful feelings that I once felt. I no longer feel like I’m bound by the “awful chains” that held me down (2 Nephi 1:13). I now feel love and trust and happiness, more than I ever knew I could. My heart is whole again. ■



BLESSINGS OF FORGIVING OTHERS

“If we can find forgiveness in our hearts for those who have caused us hurt and injury, we will rise to a higher level of self-esteem and well-being.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Healing Power of Forgiveness,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 68.



By Elder
Anthony D. Perkins
Of the Seventy

GO FORTH IN Faith

You young adults are now living in what has been called “the Decade of Decision.”

You are making many of the most important choices of your life, such as “going to the temple, serving a mission, getting an education, selecting an occupation, and choosing a companion and being sealed for time and for all eternity in the holy temple.”¹

I speak particularly to those who are struggling with one or more of these important decisions—some perhaps almost paralyzed from fear of making the wrong decision or needing reinforcement to remain confident in a decision made previously.

Four lessons of inspired decision making by Nephi, if applied, can reduce your fears and increase your confidence to move forward.

1. Obey the Commandments

The last verse of Nephi’s sacred record encapsulates his life: “For thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey” (2 Nephi 33:15).

Nephi’s faith in and love for the Savior is exemplified in his obedience to God’s commandments. He prayed (see 1 Nephi 2:16). He read the scriptures (see 1 Nephi 22:1). He sought and followed direction from a living prophet (see 1 Nephi 16:23–24). Such obedience permitted the Holy Ghost to powerfully accompany Nephi throughout his life and yielded ongoing personal revelation.

You too must stay close to the Lord by keeping God’s commandments. I testify that consistent obedience to small things such as reading the scriptures, praying daily, attending Church meetings, heeding the counsel

Four lessons of inspired decision making by Nephi can reduce your fears and increase your confidence to move forward.

of living prophets, and serving others will qualify you for the Spirit—and the revelation it brings.

Perfection is not a prerequisite to personal revelation. The prerequisite is daily repentance (see Romans 3:23). If your repentance is sincere



Nephi's faith in and love for the Savior is exemplified in his obedience to God's commandments.

and thorough (see D&C 58:42–43), the cleansing power of the Atonement will bring the Spirit to guide you in the weighty decisions of life.

2. Move Forward in Faith

Put yourself in Nephi's sandals. Your father tells you the Lord has commanded your family to leave your wealth and depart for the wilderness. Wouldn't you like to know about your journey and destination?

I suppose Nephi would have been thrilled had the Lord clearly revealed his future. But that is not how God worked with Nephi, and it is not how He will work with you.

As Nephi's family traveled through the wilderness, instructions came to him only "from time to time" (1 Nephi 16:29; 18:1). Viewing his life's journey with certainty up front would not have provided him the soul-stretching and faith-forming experiences that helped him become a more Christlike man.

If you are waiting for God to reveal what academic major to pursue,

whom to marry, what job to accept, where to live, whether to go to graduate school, and how many children to bear, you will likely never leave your apartment. I testify that personal revelation will come only "from time to time."

Our Heavenly Father wants us to grow, and that includes developing our ability to weigh facts, render judgments, and make decisions. But He also invites us to bring our decisions to Him in prayer (see D&C 9:7–9). Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that answers to our prayers come "in one of *three* ways."²

Confirming Assurance

"First," Elder Scott said, "you can feel the peace, comfort, and assurance that confirm that your decision is right."³ My wife, Christy, and I have found that assurance for critical life-affecting decisions can be communicated through the scriptures, often after temple worship.

For example, after much pondering and praying, we decided to abandon our new dream home in Texas, accept a job transfer, and move with six young children to Beijing, China. But we desperately desired spiritual confirmation for such a momentous move. Divine assurance did come to us—in the temple—as we read these words in the Doctrine and Covenants: "It is my will that you should . . . tarry not many days in this place; . . . think

TO REDUCE FEARS AND INCREASE CONFIDENCE

1. Obey the commandments.
2. Move forward in faith.
3. Live in the present.
4. Draw on the strength of others.





Nephi would have been thrilled had the Lord clearly revealed his future. But that is not how God worked with Nephi, and it is not how He will work with you.

procrastinate any longer and must act. I have learned that, as Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “we will get promptings of the Spirit when we have done everything we can, when we are out in the sun working rather than sitting back in the shade praying for direction on the first step to take.”⁶

As with Nephi, the Spirit will in due time confirm or warn of your chosen path.

3. Live in the Present

Nephi’s commitment on the journey to the promised land stands in stark contrast to that of his brothers Laman and Lemuel. They made the decision to go, but their hearts never left Jerusalem. Nephi was fixing his broken bow to hunt for food and mining ore to build a ship while his brothers seem to have been lounging in a tent.

Today the world has many Lamans and Lemuels. But the Lord needs committed men and women like Nephi. You will experience greater progress in life when you wholly commit to your decisions and strive to excel in your current circumstances even while you have an eye open to the future.

Nephi exemplifies the wise counsel of President Thomas S. Monson: “Daydreaming of the past and longing for the future may provide comfort but will not take the place of living in the present. This is the day of our opportunity, and we must grasp it.”⁷

not of thy property. Go unto the eastern lands” (D&C 66:5–7).

The voice of Jesus Christ in the scriptures, accompanied by powerful feelings from the Holy Ghost, confirmed that our decision to move to China was right.

Unsettled Feeling

The second way Heavenly Father answers prayers is through an “unsettled feeling, the stupor of thought, indicating that your choice is wrong.”⁴

After my mission to Taiwan, I thought international law would be a good career choice. As Christy and I considered that possible future, we understood that five more years of expensive education lay ahead.

The U.S. economy was in a deep recession and our funds were limited, so we reasoned that joining the Air Force ROTC would be a wise choice to pay for my schooling. But as I took the required tests and filled out the paperwork, we just could not get comfortable making that commitment. No stupor of thought or dark feelings

came—only an absence of peace.

That seemingly illogical financial decision was inspired, in part, because I would have been a horrible lawyer!

Divine Trust

God answers prayers a third way: no response. “When you are living worthily and your choice is consistent with the Savior’s teachings and you need to act,” Elder Scott said, “proceed with trust.”⁵

Nephi’s final attempt to obtain the brass plates illustrates how we should proceed with divine trust. He recorded:

“I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.

“Nevertheless I went forth”
(1 Nephi 4:6–7).

Moments will arrive during your decade of decision when you cannot

4. Draw on the Strength of Others

Even after we have sought the Spirit, moved forward with our decision, and are wholly committed to it, doubts may still arise and cause us to question our decision. In such circumstances a trusted family member or friend can provide counsel and strength to stay the course. I suggest that along his journey, Nephi's bride became his trusted anchor.

An appreciation for Nephi's wife came to me while visiting the Church History Museum. I was transfixed by a



A trusted family member or friend can provide counsel and strength to stay the course.



painting there of Nephi lashed to the mast of a ship, soaked to the skin in a driving storm.⁸

At Nephi's side were his wife and one of his children. She was experiencing the same storm and challenges as Nephi, but her eyes were defiant and her strong arms were protectively wrapped around his shoulders. In that moment I realized that I too was blessed to have a loyal spouse offering strength in my times of trial. I hoped that I was a similar strength to her.

Brethren, preserving and enhancing the spiritual strength you developed (or will yet develop) as a missionary or in other righteous service is your best asset in becoming a desirable husband and father. Sisters, spiritual sensitivity, faith, and courage to follow Jesus Christ are

among your best qualities as a wife and mother.

I invite you to become the type of person your current or future spouse can draw on for wise counsel and strength. A virtuous man and a worthy woman, sealed for time and all eternity in the temple, can do difficult things as equal partners.

I promise that if you will apply the lessons learned from Nephi and modern prophets about making decisions, you will be led along with personal revelation "from time to time." As you progress through your decade of decision, may you, as did Nephi, have the faith to say:

"I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do.

"Nevertheless I went forth" (1 Nephi 4:6–7). ■

From a devotional address, "Nevertheless I Went Forth," given at Brigham Young University on Feb. 4, 2014. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, "To the Aaronic Priesthood: Preparing for the Decade of Decision," *Ensign*, May 2007, 48.
2. Richard G. Scott, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2007, 10; emphasis in original.
3. Richard G. Scott, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," 10.
4. Richard G. Scott, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," 10.
5. Richard G. Scott, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," 10.
6. Dallin H. Oaks, "In His Own Time, in His Own Way," *Ensign*, Aug. 2013, 24.
7. Thomas S. Monson, "In Search of Treasure," *Ensign*, May 2003, 20.
8. See *Helpmeet*, by K. Sean Sullivan, in "The Book of Mormon: A Worldwide View," *Ensign*, Aug. 2000, 39.

FOUR TOOLS THAT BRING PROMISED BLESSINGS

Defend yourself against Satan with these four tools.

In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Helaman teaches his sons that they must build their spiritual foundation on Jesus Christ in order to withstand the whirlwinds of life (see Helaman 5:12). In the October 2014 general conference, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught about four spiritual tools that help us build this foundation: prayer, scripture study, family home evening, and temple worship. These four tools help us hearken unto the words of Christ and build our testimonies, lives, and homes “upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God” (Helaman 5:12; see also Matthew 7:24–27).

“When these tools become fundamental habits,” Elder Scott said, “they provide the easiest way to find peace in the challenges of mortality.”¹ They help us to withstand the mighty winds of the adversary, so that they have “no power over [us] to drag [us] down to the gulf of misery and endless wo” (Helaman 5:12). As Elder Scott taught, “The more we develop these habits, the more anxious is Satan to harm us but the less is his ability to do so.”²

These marvelous promises are not the only promises associated with regularly utilizing and more deeply internalizing these four tools. The following eight pages present many of God’s promises, as made known to us through His chosen leaders, for using prayer, scripture study, family home evening, and temple worship. As you read through the promises, think about how you’ve seen them in your own life. What can you do to incorporate these four tools more fully in your family?

These essential habits bring us closer to God and help us build on “a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall” (Helaman 5:12). Elder Scott declared, “As we actively come unto [Christ], we can endure every temptation, every heartache, every challenge we face.” Ultimately, as you use these four tools, you will be drawing closer to Christ and “securing your life in the power of [His] Atonement.”³

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 93.
2. Richard G. Scott, “Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority,” 94.
3. Richard G. Scott, “Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority,” 94.

Promised Blessings of Prayer

"I tell you this: God cares about you. He will listen, and He will answer your personal questions. The answers to your prayers will come in His own way and in His own time, and therefore, you need to learn to listen to His voice."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Receiving a Testimony of Light and Truth," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 21.

"I must testify of the blessings of daily scripture study and prayer and weekly family home evening. These are the very practices that help take away stress, give direction to our lives, and add protection to our homes."

Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, "Protection from Pornography—a Christ-Focused Home," *Ensign*, May 2014, 16–17.

"And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith."

Doctrine and Covenants 42:14

"As you pray for forgiveness, you will find yourself forgiving others. . . .

"One way you will be changed by such fervent prayer is, I promise you, that you will feel truly that you are a child of God."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Priesthood Man," *Ensign*, May 2014, 64.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Matthew 26:41

"Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work."

Doctrine and Covenants 10:5



"Humble, trusting prayer brings direction and peace."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Using the Supernal Gift of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 2007, 8.

"Prayer is a great tower of strength, a pillar of unending righteousness, a mighty force that moves mountains and saves souls. Through it the sick are healed, the dead are raised, and the Holy Spirit is poured out without measure upon the faithful."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–1985) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Patterns of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 1984, 32.

A close-up photograph of a young woman with long, dark, wavy hair. Her eyes are closed, and her head is slightly bowed, suggesting a state of prayer or deep reflection. She is wearing a white collared shirt with a green patterned scarf. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a similar setting.

PRAYER

“To those within the sound of my voice who are struggling with challenges and difficulties large and small, **PRAYER IS THE PROVIDER OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH**; it is the **PASSPORT TO PEACE**. . . . Miracles are wrought through prayer.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be Your Best Self,”
Ensign, May 2009, 68.

Promised Blessings of Scripture Study

"I said unto them that . . . whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction."

1 Nephi 15:24

"I promise you . . . that if you will study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Be Your Best Self," Ensign, May 2009, 68.

"Through daily, constant scripture study, you will find peace in the turmoil around you and strength to resist temptations. You will develop strong faith in the grace of God and know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ all will be made right according to God's timing."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority," Ensign, Nov. 2014, 93-94.

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, [families] will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, . . . mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. . . . Faith, hope, and charity—the pure love of Christ—will abound in our homes and lives."

President Marion G. Romney (1897-1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Book of Mormon," Ensign, May 1980, 67.


"Privately studying, pondering, and communicating with your Heavenly Father can make an amazing difference in your lives. It will give increased success in your daily activities. It will bring increased alertness to your minds. It will give you comfort and rock-steady assurance when the storms of life descend upon you."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Be Strong in the Lord, and in the Power of His Might" (Church Educational System fireside, Mar. 3, 2002), 4, speeches.byu.edu.

"The scriptures can also help us obtain answers to highly specific personal questions."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in *Scripture Study— the Power of the Word Teacher Manual*, rev. ed. (Church Educational System manual, 2001), 45.



A photograph of a woman and a young girl sitting at a desk, looking down at an open book. The woman is pointing at the text in the book, and the girl is looking at the same page. There are pencils and other papers on the desk. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

“The Holy Ghost
will guide what we
say if we **STUDY
AND PONDER THE
SCRIPTURES**
every day.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the
First Presidency, “Feed My Lambs,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 83.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Promised Blessings of Family Home Evening

“We cannot afford to neglect this heaven-inspired program [of family home evening]. It can bring spiritual growth to each member of the family, helping him or her to withstand the temptations which are everywhere. The lessons learned in the home are those that last the longest.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Constant Truths for Changing Times,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 19.

“Each family prayer, each episode of family scripture study, and each family home evening is a brushstroke on the canvas of our souls. No one event may appear to be very impressive or memorable. But just as . . . strokes of paint complement each other and produce an impressive masterpiece, so our consistency in doing seemingly small things can lead to significant spiritual results.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 19–20.

“And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.”

Isaiah 54:13

“Families who prayerfully prepare and consistently hold their weekly Home Evenings, and who work together during the week to apply the lessons in their lives, will be blessed. There will be better feelings between husband and wife, between parents and children, and among children. In such homes the Spirit of the Lord will be made manifest.”

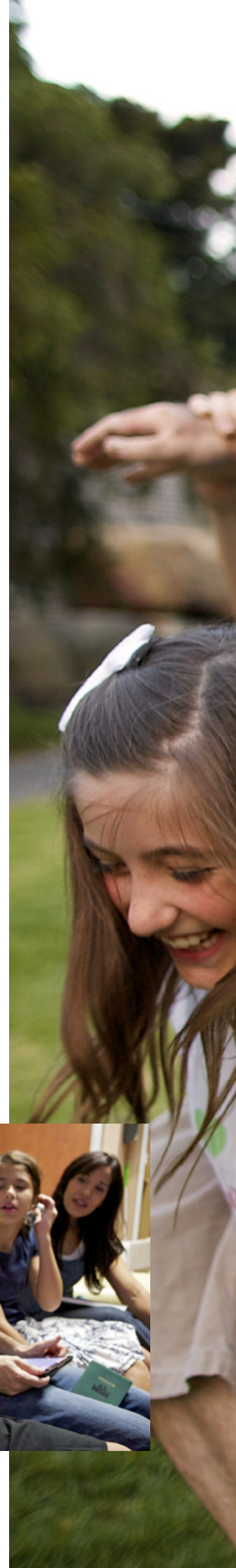
President David O. McKay, in *Family Home Evening Manual 1967* (1967), iii–iv.

“Regular participation in family home evening will develop increased personal worth, family unity, love for our fellowmen, and trust in our Father in heaven. It is our promise that great blessings will come to all who conscientiously plan and hold weekly family home evenings.”

“Message from the First Presidency,” in *Family Home Evening: Happiness through Faith in Jesus Christ* (1976), 3.

“Whether we are young or old, single or married, whether we have children at home or have become empty nesters, family home evening can increase unity and love in our homes.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Enriching Our Lives through Family Home Evening,” *Ensign*, June 2003, 3.





FAMILY

HOME EVENING

**“TRAIN UP A
CHILD IN THE
WAY HE SHOULD
GO: and when he
is old, he will not
depart from it.”**

Proverbs 22:6

Promised Blessings of Temple Worship

“The house of the Lord will have a refining effect upon you. It will cultivate unselfishness within your lives. It will build righteousness. It will impress upon you the importance of doing what you ought to do.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “Inspirational Thoughts,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2006, 6.

“Divine covenants help us to filter out of our minds impurities that could harm us.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 34.

“There is a power associated with the ordinances of heaven—even the power of godliness—which can and will thwart the forces of evil. . . . Our families will be protected, our children will be safeguarded as we live the gospel, visit the temple, and live close to the Lord.”

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 172.

“When members of the Church attend the temple regularly, inner peace calms the soul; the Spirit of the Lord permeates the home; love and respect deepen between family members; problems are more clearly defined; solutions are more apparent; emotions are more serene in family relations.”

Elder Royden G. Derrick (1915–2009) of the Presidency of the Seventy, *Temples in the Last Days* (1987), 156.

“I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house.

“Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments, and do not pollute this holy house.”

Doctrine and Covenants 110:7–8



GUAYAQUIL ECUADOR TEMPLE

“The eternally significant blessing of uniting our own families is almost beyond comprehension.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Roots and Branches,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 47.

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at each other. The man is on the left, wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a dark blue striped tie. The woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored patterned short-sleeved shirt. They are standing in front of a white building with arched windows.

TEMPLE WORSHIP

“As we go to the holy house, . . . we will be **ABLE TO BEAR EVERY TRIAL** and **OVERCOME EACH TEMPTATION**. The temple provides **PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES**. It brings **PEACE TO OUR SOULS.**”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,”
Ensign, Oct. 2010, 15.

IT Isn't A SIN TO BE WEAK

By Wendy Ulrich

“Am I really worthy to enter God’s house? How can I be if I’m not perfect?”

“Can God really make my weakness into a strength? I’ve fasted and prayed for days to have this problem removed from me, but nothing seems to change.”

“In the mission field I lived the gospel more consistently than at any time in my life, but I have never been more aware of my shortcomings. Why, when I was being so good, did I sometimes feel so bad?”

As we ponder such questions, it is crucial to understand that while *sin* inevitably leads us away from God, *weakness*, ironically, can lead us toward Him.

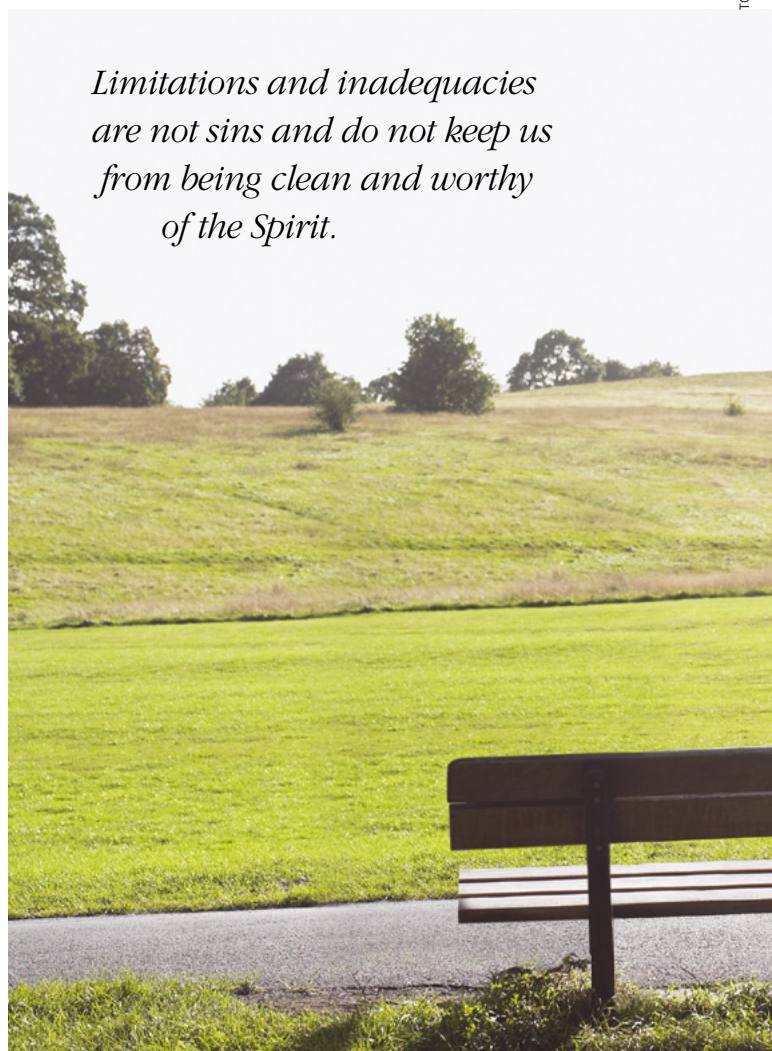
Distinguishing between Sin and Weakness

We commonly think of sin and weakness as merely different-sized black marks on the fabric of our souls, different severities of transgression. But the scriptures imply that sin and weakness are inherently different, require different remedies, and have the potential to produce different results.

Most of us are more familiar with sin than we care to admit, but let’s review:

Sin is a choice to disobey God’s commandments or rebel against the Light of Christ within us. Sin is a choice to trust Satan over God, placing us at enmity with our Father. Unlike us, Jesus Christ was completely without sin and could atone for our sins. When we sincerely

*Limitations and inadequacies
are not sins and do not keep us
from being clean and worthy
of the Spirit.*





**While sin inevitably
leads us away from God,
weakness, ironically, can
lead us toward Him.**



repent—including changing our mind, heart, and behavior; offering appropriate apologies or confessions; making restitution where possible; and not repeating that sin in the future—we can access the Atonement of Jesus Christ, be forgiven by God, and be clean again.

Becoming clean is essential because nothing unclean can dwell in God's presence. But if our only goal were to be as innocent as we were when we left God's presence, we would all be better off lying snugly in our cribs for the rest of our lives. Rather, we came to earth to learn by experience to distinguish good from evil, grow in wisdom and skill, live values we care about, and acquire the characteristics of godliness—progress we cannot make from the safe confines of a bassinet.

Human weakness plays an important role in these essential purposes of mortality. When



THE PROMISE OF THE ATONEMENT

"Restoring what you cannot restore, healing

the wound you cannot heal, fixing that which you broke and cannot fix is the very purpose of the atonement of Christ. . . .

"I repeat, save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ."

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19–20.

Moroni worried that his weakness in writing would cause the Gentiles to mock sacred things, the Lord reassured him with these words:

"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether

12:27; see also 1 Corinthians 15:42–

44; 2 Corinthians 12:7–10;

2 Nephi 3:21; and Jacob 4:7).

The implications of this familiar scripture are profound and invite us to

distinguish sin (encouraged by Satan) from weakness (described here as a condition "given" to us by God).

We might define weakness as the limitation on our wisdom, power, and holiness that comes with being human. As mortals we are born helpless and dependent, with various physical flaws and predispositions. We are raised and surrounded by other weak mortals, and their teachings, examples, and treatment of us are faulty and sometimes damaging. In our weak, mortal state we suffer physical and emotional illness, hunger, and fatigue. We experience human emotions like anger, grief, and fear. We lack wisdom, skill, stamina, and strength. And we are subject to temptations of many kinds.

Though He was without sin, Jesus Christ joined us fully in the condition



DISTINGUISHING SIN AND WEAKNESS

	Sin	Weakness
Definition?	Willful disobedience to God	Human limitation, infirmity
Source?	Encouraged by Satan	Part of our mortal nature
Examples?	Knowingly breaking God's commandments, believing Satan over God	Susceptibility to temptation, emotion, fatigue, physical or mental illness, ignorance, predispositions, trauma, death
Did Jesus have?	No	Yes
Our response should be?	Repentance	Humility, faith in Christ, and efforts to overcome
God's response in turn?	Forgiveness	Grace—an enabling power
Which results in?	Being cleansed from sin	Acquiring holiness, strength

of mortal weakness (see 2 Corinthians 13:4). He was born as a helpless infant in a mortal body and raised by imperfect caretakers. He had to learn how to walk, talk, work, and get along with others. He got hungry and tired, felt human emotions, and could get ill, suffer, bleed, and die. He was “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” subjecting Himself to mortality so He could “be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” and succor us in *our* infirmities or weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15; see also Alma 7:11–12).

We cannot simply repent of being weak—nor does weakness itself make us unclean. We cannot grow spiritually unless we *reject* sin, but we also do not grow spiritually unless we *accept* our state of human weakness, respond to it with humility and faith, and learn through our weakness to trust in God. When Moroni fretted about the weakness of his writing, God did not tell him to repent. Instead, the Lord taught him to be humble and to have faith in Christ. As we are meek and faithful, God offers grace—not forgiveness—as the remedy for weakness. Grace is an enabling power from God to do what we cannot do on our own (see Bible Dictionary, “Grace”)—the appropriate godly remedy by which He can “make weak things become strong.”

Exercising Humility and Faith

From early on in our Church experience, we are taught the essential elements of repentance, but how exactly do we foster humility and faith? Consider the following:

- **Ponder and pray.** Because we are weak, we may not recognize if we are dealing with *sin* (calling for an immediate and pervasive change of mind, heart, and behavior) or with *weakness* (calling for humble, sustained effort, learning, and improvement). How we view these things can depend on our upbringing and maturity. There may even be elements of both sin and weakness in a single behavior. Saying a sin is really a weakness leads to rationalizing instead of repenting. Saying a weakness is a sin can result in shame, blame, despair, and giving up on God's promises. Pondering and praying help us make these distinctions.
- **Prioritize.** Because we are weak, we cannot make every needed change all at once. As we humbly and faithfully tackle our human weakness a few aspects at a time, we can gradually reduce ignorance, make good patterns habitual, increase our physical and emotional health and stamina, and strengthen our trust in the Lord. God can help us know where to begin.

- **Plan.** Because we are weak, getting stronger will require more than a righteous desire and lots of self-discipline. We also need to plan, learn from mistakes, develop more effective strategies, revise our plans, and try again. We need help from scriptures, relevant books, and other people. We start small, rejoice in improvement, and take risks (even though they make us feel vulnerable and weak). We need supports to help us make good choices even when we are tired or discouraged and plans for getting back on track when we slip.
- **Exercise patience.** Because we are weak, change may take time. We don't just renounce our weakness the way we renounce sin. Humble disciples willingly do what's required, learn resilience, keep trying, and do not give up. Humility helps us have patience with ourselves and with others who are weak too. Patience is a manifestation of our faith in the Lord, gratitude for His confidence in us, and trust in His promises.

Even when we sincerely repent of our sins, obtain forgiveness, and become clean again, we remain weak. We are still subject to illness, emotion, ignorance, predispositions, fatigue, and temptation. *But limitations and inadequacies are not sins and do not keep us from being clean and worthy of the Spirit.*

Weakness to Strength

While Satan is eager to use our weakness to entice us to sin, God can use human weakness to teach, strengthen, and bless us. Contrary to what we might expect or hope,



DISTINGUISHING CONSTRUCTIVE GUILT (GODLY SORROW) AND HUMILITY FROM THE UNHELPFUL COUNTERFEIT OF SHAME

Constructive Guilt— Godly Sorrow for Sin	Faith and Humility— Christlike Meekness in Weakness	Destructive Shame— Unhelpful Counterfeit
<p style="text-align: center;">We tend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel remorse for violating our moral code. • Repent, changing our mind, heart, behavior. • Be open, confess our wrongs, make repairs. • Grow and learn. • See ourselves as inherently good, of worth. • Desire to align our behavior with our positive self-image. • Trust fully in the redemptive power of the Atonement of Christ. 	<p style="text-align: center;">We tend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel calm assurance and self-acceptance, warts and all. • Takes risks to grow and contribute. • Take responsibility for errors, desire to improve. • Learn from mistakes and try again. • Develop a sense of humor and enjoy life and others. • See our weakness as giving us common ground with others. • Be patient with others' weaknesses and flaws. • Increase in confidence in God's love and help. 	<p style="text-align: center;">We tend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel worthless, despairing. • Try to hide our weaknesses from others. • Fear being exposed. • Blame others for problems. • Avoid risk-taking, seeing failure as humiliating. • Compete and compare ourselves with others. • Become defensive and stubborn or wishy-washy. • Be sarcastic or excessively serious. • Become preoccupied with our failings or our superiority. • Fear God's rejection and disgust.

however, God does not always “make weak things become strong” unto us by eliminating our weakness. When the Apostle Paul prayed repeatedly for God to remove a “thorn in the flesh” Satan used to buffet him, God told Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:7, 9).

There are many ways the Lord makes “weak things become strong.” While He may eliminate the weakness through the dramatic cure we hope for, in my personal experience this is somewhat rare. For example, I see no evidence that God eliminated Moroni’s weakness in writing after the famous verse in Ether 12. God may also make weak things strong by helping us work around our weaknesses, gain an appropriate sense of humor or perspective about them, and improve on them gradually over time. Also, strengths and weaknesses are often related (like the strength of perseverance and the weakness of bullheadedness), and we can learn to value the strength and temper the weakness that goes with it.

There is another, even more powerful way that God makes weak things strong unto us. The Lord says to Moroni in Ether 12:37, “Because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.”

Here God is not offering to change Moroni’s weakness, but to change Moroni. By tackling the challenge of human weakness, Moroni—and we—can learn charity, compassion, meekness, patience, courage, long-suffering, wisdom, stamina, forgiveness, resilience, gratitude, creativity, and a host of other virtues that make us more like our Father in Heaven. These are the very qualities we came to earth to hone, the Christlike attributes that prepare us for the mansions above.

Nowhere is God’s love, wisdom, and redemptive power more evident than in His ability to turn our struggle with human weakness into the invaluable godly virtues and strengths that make us more like Him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



**By President
Boyd K. Packer**
President of the
Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

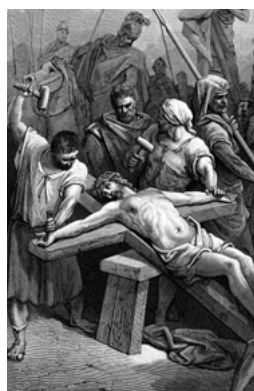
The Savior's Selfless and Sacred Sacrifice

*The Lord is always there.
He has suffered and paid the penalty
if you are willing to accept Him
as your Redeemer.*

We all live on spiritual credit. In one way or another, the account builds and builds. If you pay it off as you go, you have little need to worry. Soon you begin to learn discipline and know that there is a day of reckoning ahead.

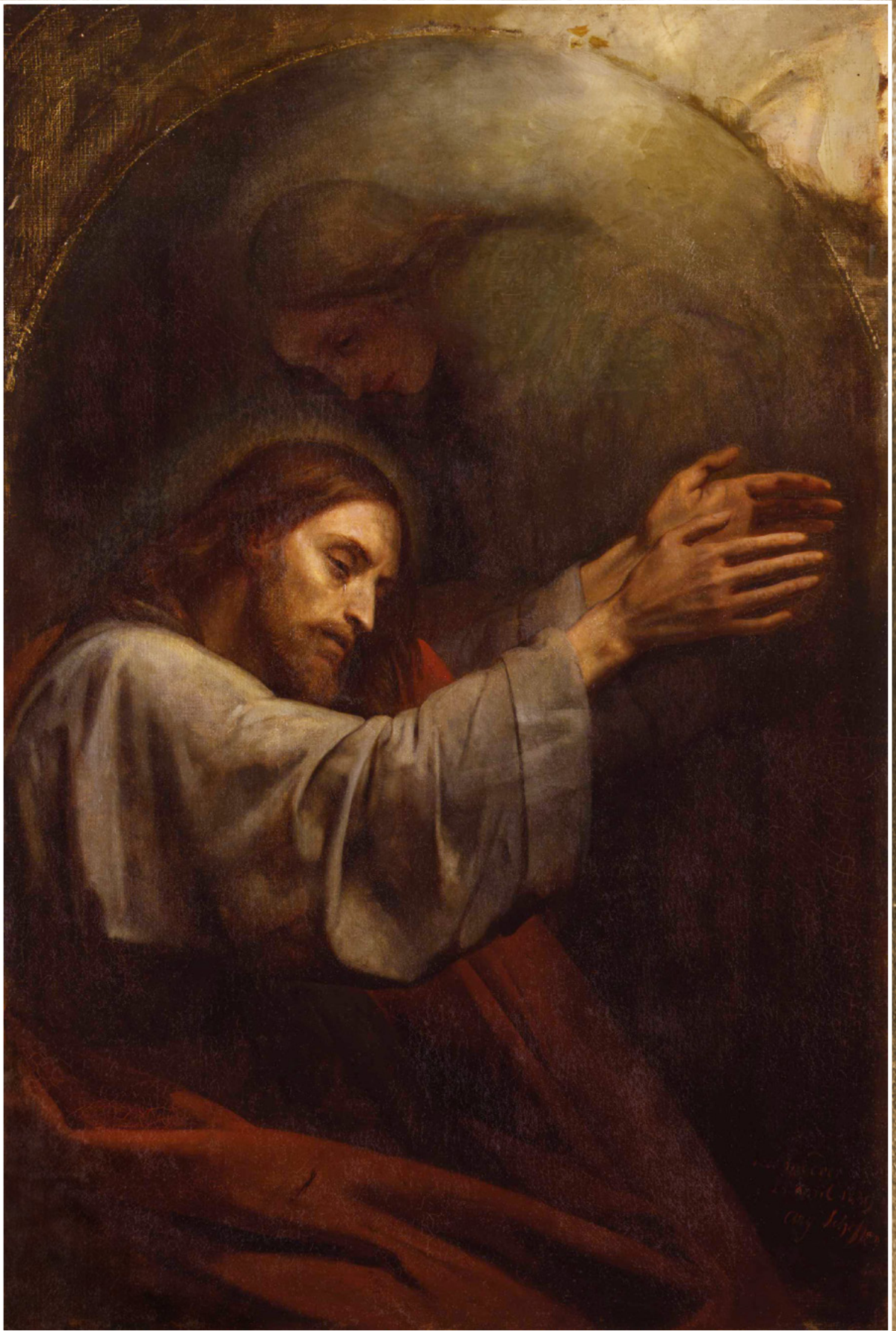
Learn to keep your spiritual account paid off at regular intervals rather than allowing it to collect interest and penalties.

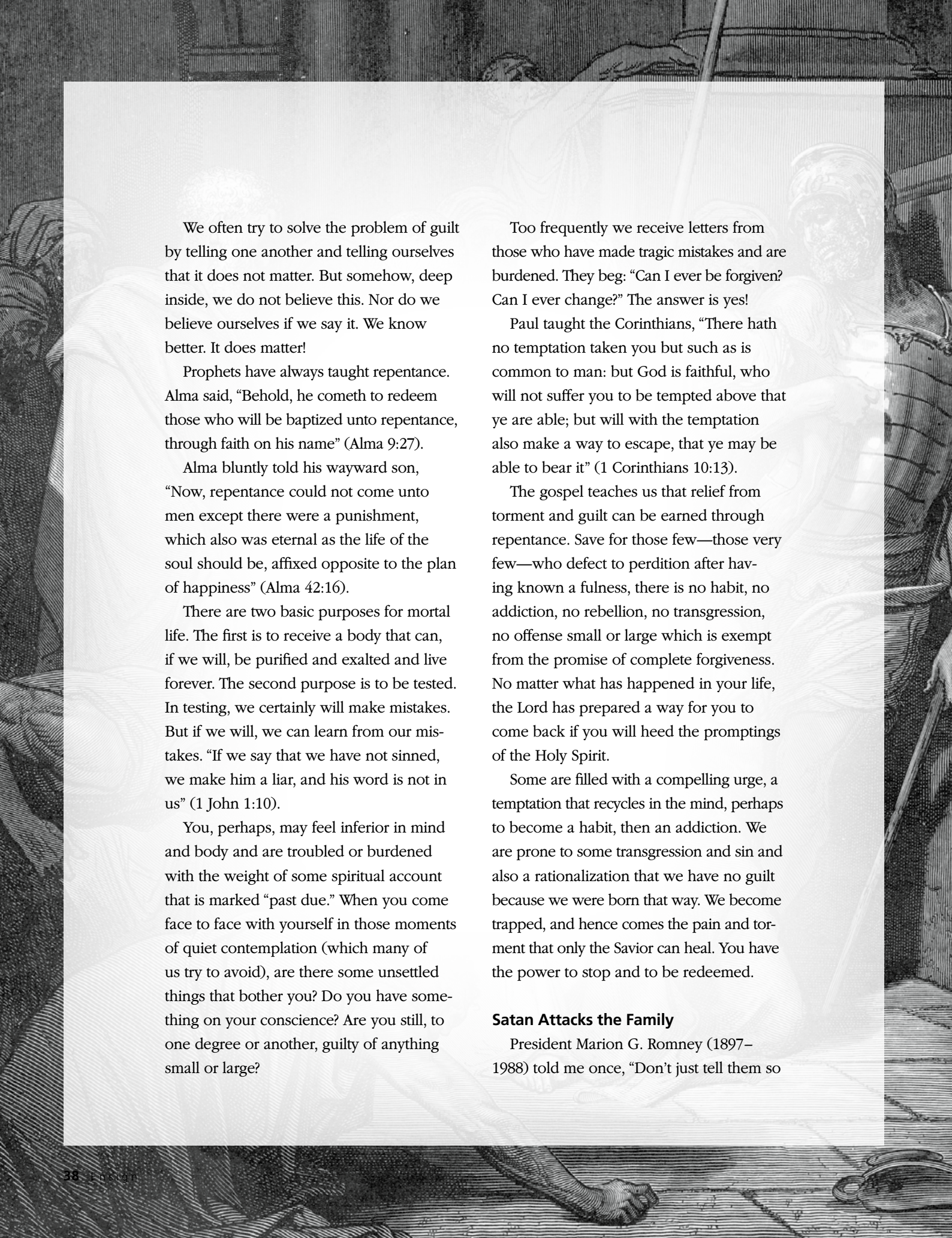
Because you are being tested, it is expected that you will make some mistakes. I assume that you have done things in your life that you regret, things that you cannot



even apologize for, much less correct; therefore, you carry a burden. It is time now to use the word *guilt*, which can stain like indelible ink and cannot easily be washed away. A stepchild of guilt is disappointment, regret for lost blessings and opportunities.

If you are struggling with guilt, you are not unlike the people of the Book of Mormon of whom the prophet said, “Because of their iniquity the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face” (Helaman 4:23).





We often try to solve the problem of guilt by telling one another and telling ourselves that it does not matter. But somehow, deep inside, we do not believe this. Nor do we believe ourselves if we say it. We know better. It does matter!

Prophets have always taught repentance. Alma said, “Behold, he cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name” (Alma 9:27).

Alma bluntly told his wayward son, “Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed opposite to the plan of happiness” (Alma 42:16).

There are two basic purposes for mortal life. The first is to receive a body that can, if we will, be purified and exalted and live forever. The second purpose is to be tested. In testing, we certainly will make mistakes. But if we will, we can learn from our mistakes. “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:10).

You, perhaps, may feel inferior in mind and body and are troubled or burdened with the weight of some spiritual account that is marked “past due.” When you come face to face with yourself in those moments of quiet contemplation (which many of us try to avoid), are there some unsettled things that bother you? Do you have something on your conscience? Are you still, to one degree or another, guilty of anything small or large?

Too frequently we receive letters from those who have made tragic mistakes and are burdened. They beg: “Can I ever be forgiven? Can I ever change?” The answer is yes!

Paul taught the Corinthians, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few—those very few—who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense small or large which is exempt from the promise of complete forgiveness. No matter what has happened in your life, the Lord has prepared a way for you to come back if you will heed the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Some are filled with a compelling urge, a temptation that recycles in the mind, perhaps to become a habit, then an addiction. We are prone to some transgression and sin and also a rationalization that we have no guilt because we were born that way. We become trapped, and hence comes the pain and torment that only the Savior can heal. You have the power to stop and to be redeemed.

Satan Attacks the Family

President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) told me once, “Don’t just tell them so

that they can understand, tell them so that they cannot misunderstand.”

Nephi said: “For my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding” (2 Nephi 31:3).

So listen up! I will speak plainly as one called and under obligation to do so.

You know that there is an adversary. The scriptures define him in these terms: “That old serpent, who is the devil, . . . the father of all lies” (2 Nephi 2:18). He was cast out in the beginning (see D&C 29:36–38) and denied a mortal body. He has now sworn to disrupt “the great plan of happiness” (Alma 42:8) and become an enemy to all righteousness. He focuses his attacks on the family.

You live in a day when the scourge of pornography is sweeping across the world. It is hard to escape it. Pornography is focused on that part of your nature through which you have the power to beget life.

To indulge in pornography leads to difficulties, divorce, disease, and troubles of a dozen kinds. There is no part of it that is innocent. To collect it, view it, or carry it around in any form is akin to keeping a rattlesnake in your backpack. It exposes you to the inevitable spiritual equivalent of the serpent’s strike with its injection of deadly venom. One can easily understand, with the world being what it is, that you can almost innocently be exposed to it, read it, or view it without realizing the terrible consequences. If that describes you, I warn you to stop it. Stop it now!

The Book of Mormon teaches that all “men



There has been only One in all the annals of human history who was entirely sinless, qualified to answer for the sins and transgressions of all mankind.

are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” (2 Nephi 2:5). That includes you. You know what is right and what is wrong. Be very careful not to cross that line.

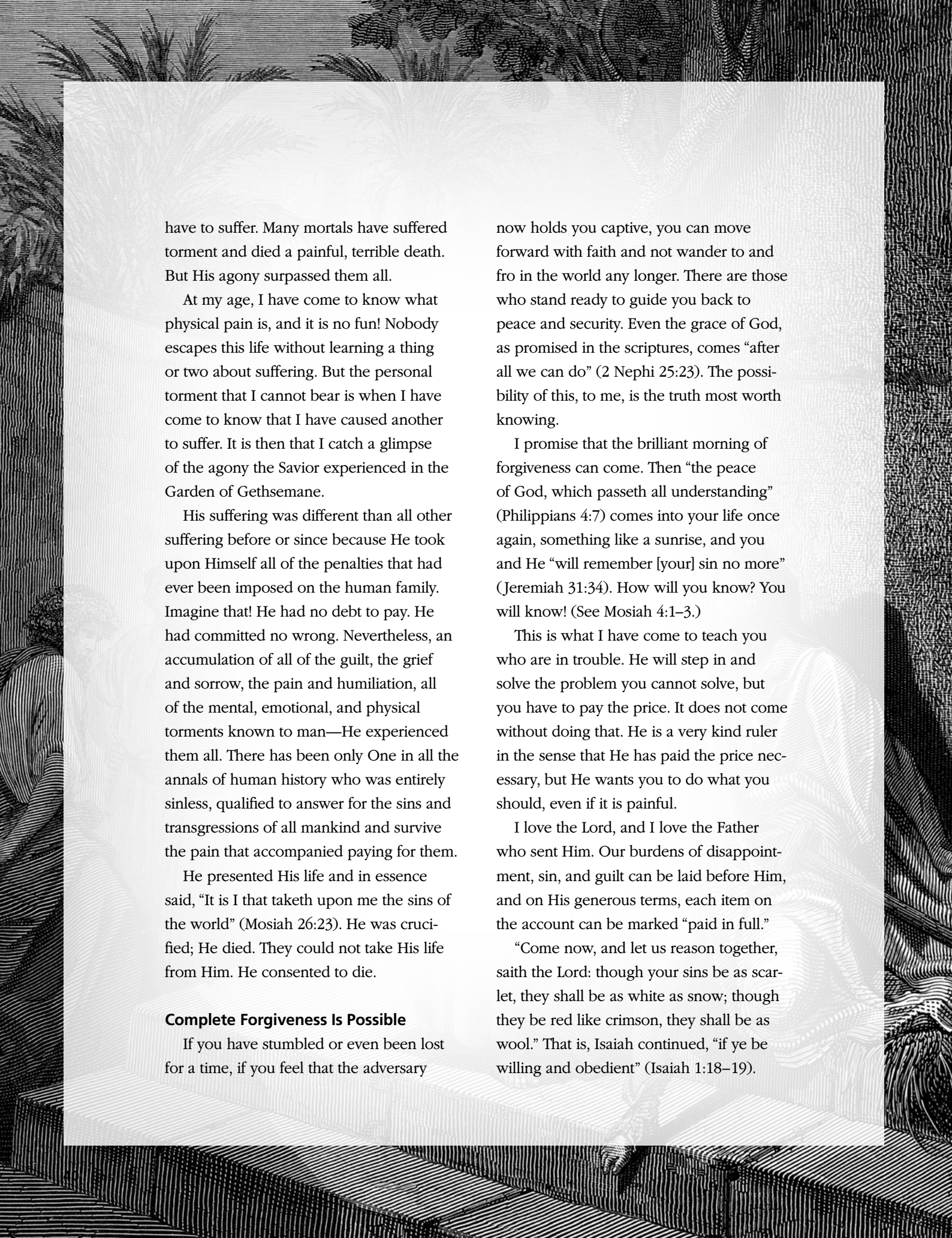
Although most mistakes can be confessed privately to the Lord, there are some transgressions that require more than that to bring about forgiveness. If your mistakes have been grievous, see your bishop. Otherwise, ordinary confession, quietly and personally, will do. But remember, that great morning of forgiveness may not come all at once. If at first you stumble, do not give up. Overcoming discouragement is part of the test. Do not give up. And as I have counseled before, once you have confessed and forsaken your sins, do not look back.

The Savior Suffered for Our Sins

The Lord is always there. He has suffered and paid the penalty if you are willing to accept Him as your Redeemer.

As mortals, we may not, indeed cannot, understand fully *how* the Savior fulfilled His atoning sacrifice. But for now the *how* is not as important as the *why* of His suffering. Why did He do it for you, for me, for all of humanity? He did it for the love of God the Father and all mankind. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

In Gethsemane, Christ went apart from His Apostles to pray. Whatever transpired is beyond our power to know! But we do know that He completed the Atonement. He was willing to take upon Himself the mistakes, the sins and guilt, the doubts and fears of all the world. He suffered for us so that we would not



have to suffer. Many mortals have suffered torment and died a painful, terrible death. But His agony surpassed them all.

At my age, I have come to know what physical pain is, and it is no fun! Nobody escapes this life without learning a thing or two about suffering. But the personal torment that I cannot bear is when I have come to know that I have caused another to suffer. It is then that I catch a glimpse of the agony the Savior experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane.

His suffering was different than all other suffering before or since because He took upon Himself all of the penalties that had ever been imposed on the human family. Imagine that! He had no debt to pay. He had committed no wrong. Nevertheless, an accumulation of all of the guilt, the grief and sorrow, the pain and humiliation, all of the mental, emotional, and physical torments known to man—He experienced them all. There has been only One in all the annals of human history who was entirely sinless, qualified to answer for the sins and transgressions of all mankind and survive the pain that accompanied paying for them.

He presented His life and in essence said, “It is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world” (Mosiah 26:23). He was crucified; He died. They could not take His life from Him. He consented to die.

Complete Forgiveness Is Possible

If you have stumbled or even been lost for a time, if you feel that the adversary

now holds you captive, you can move forward with faith and not wander to and fro in the world any longer. There are those who stand ready to guide you back to peace and security. Even the grace of God, as promised in the scriptures, comes “after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23). The possibility of this, to me, is the truth most worth knowing.

I promise that the brilliant morning of forgiveness can come. Then “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) comes into your life once again, something like a sunrise, and you and He “will remember [your] sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). How will you know? You will know! (See Mosiah 4:1–3.)

This is what I have come to teach you who are in trouble. He will step in and solve the problem you cannot solve, but you have to pay the price. It does not come without doing that. He is a very kind ruler in the sense that He has paid the price necessary, but He wants you to do what you should, even if it is painful.

I love the Lord, and I love the Father who sent Him. Our burdens of disappointment, sin, and guilt can be laid before Him, and on His generous terms, each item on the account can be marked “paid in full.”

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” That is, Isaiah continued, “if ye be willing and obedient” (Isaiah 1:18–19).

Come unto Him

The scripture “learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God” (Alma 37:35) is an invitation attended by the promise of peace and protection from the adversary. “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Do not expect that all will go smoothly throughout your life. Even for those who are living as they should, it sometimes will be just the opposite. Meet each of life’s challenges with optimism and surety, and you will have the peace and faith to sustain you now and in the future.

For those who do not yet have all of the blessings you feel you want and need to have, I firmly believe that no experience or opportunity essential for redemption and salvation will be denied you who live faithfully. Remain worthy; be hopeful, patient, and prayerful. Things have a way of working out. The gift of the Holy Ghost will guide you and direct your actions.

If you are one of those struggling with guilt, disappointment, or depression as a result of mistakes you have made or blessings that have not yet come, read the reassuring teachings found in the hymn “Come unto Jesus”:

*Come unto Jesus, ye heavy laden,
Careworn and fainting, by sin oppressed.
He’ll safely guide you unto that haven
Where all who trust him may rest.*



*Our burdens of
disappointment,
sin, and guilt can
be laid before the
Lord, and on His
generous terms,
each item on
the account
can be marked
“paid in full.”*

*Come unto Jesus; He’ll ever heed you,
Though in the darkness you’ve gone astray.
His love will find you and gently lead you
From darkest night into day.*

*Come unto Jesus; He’ll surely hear you,
If you in meekness plead for his love.
Oh, know you not that angels are near you
From brightest mansions above?¹*

I claim, with my Brethren the Apostles, to be a special witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That witness is reaffirmed each time I feel within myself or in others the cleansing effect of His sacred sacrifice. My witness, and that of my Brethren, is true. We know the Lord. He is no stranger to His prophets, seers, and revelators.

I understand that you’re not perfect, but you are moving along that road. Have the courage. Know that any person who has a body has power over one who has not.² Satan is denied a body; so if ever you are confronted with temptations, know that you outrank all those temptations if you will exercise the agency given to Adam and Eve in the garden and passed on to this very generation.

If you look forward with hope and desire to do that which the Lord would have you do—that is all that is expected. ■

From a devotional address, “Truths Most Worth Knowing,” given at Brigham Young University on Nov. 6, 2011. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. See “Come unto Jesus,” *Hymns*, no. 117.

2. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 211.



Two Pairs of Shiny Black Shoes

All I could see was their shoes, but that was enough.

By George Reynolds

When I enlisted in the army, my main reason for doing so was to escape religion in general and Mormons in particular. I had been raised in the Church, but after my parents' divorce I grew bitter and resentful. I had no interest in anything to do with God, and my belief that there was a God at all was teetering.

After basic training I was assigned to the presidential honor guard in Washington, D.C. I thought that here I would find peace from the many familial and religious matters that weighed on my mind.

All enlistees are required to enter religious information for official military records, and I didn't know what else to put, so I listed my religion as "Latter-day Saint." This became known in my barracks, and I became the object of humorous gibes from time to time. But every time I would respond by telling the men, "I am not a Mormon!"

A Knock on Our Door

Two years had passed, and I was living off the military post with two other soldiers as roommates. One afternoon, someone knocked on our door.

I was upstairs, so one of my roommates answered. He called up to me that people were here to see me.

I was excited with the thought of friends coming by, so I ran to the top of the stairs and looked down. All I could see were two pairs of shiny black shoes, but I didn't need to see any more. I knew those shoes belonged to Mormon missionaries.

What's more, I knew my roommate was only entertaining them to play a joke on me. I asked myself, "Why won't they just go away?" But my roommate called again.

I came downstairs and tried to be at least a little cordial. I shook their hands and said hello. With a smirk on his face, my roommate invited them to come in, and they did.

All I was thinking was how I could get this over with as quickly as possible. By now my other roommate had joined us, and both roommates asked the missionaries questions and enjoyed making small talk. All I remember is that one missionary was from Germany and the other from the northwest United States.

After a few minutes, the elders stood up to leave and asked, "Can we come back?" I was going to say no, but before I could, my roommates told them to stop in again when they were in the area. And they did.

Something Happened within Me

During their next visit, something happened within me. I felt an urge to pray and to read from the Book of Mormon. That night I did read, and I got down on my knees to pray. I didn't even know what I was praying for exactly, but I knew I had to call upon God and ask what I should do.

Although I heard no audible words, I was spoken to in a way that I understood perfectly and plainly. I knew there was indeed a God in the heavens and that He loved me and knew me. From then on, I started gaining a true testimony of the restored gospel and the Prophet Joseph Smith. All of my criticism toward God, and especially toward Mormons, withdrew as if a curtain had been opened in my mind. A sweet feeling of peace entered my soul. Alma's words in the Book of Mormon about being born of God describe what I was feeling and thinking (see Mosiah 27:28–31).

A year later I submitted an application for a full-time mission, and at the age of 24 I was called to serve among the wonderful people in Perth, Australia. I came home and married in the temple, and my wife and I are happily married with four children.

The complete change of direction in my life and all of the blessings I now enjoy came because two missionaries that I didn't even know followed a prompting to visit our apartment. I will forever be grateful for those two pairs of shiny black shoes and for the change that came into my life. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





By Elder
W. Christopher
Waddell
Of the Seventy

PURE Religion

Selfless service—forgetting ourselves, responding to the needs of others, and laying down our lives in their service—has always been a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Matthew chapter 11 the Savior teaches us a significant lesson by what He did *not* say in response to a question raised by disciples of John the Baptist:

“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

“And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

“The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matthew 11:2–5).

Rather than offer a short doctrinal explanation describing that He was, indeed, “he that should come,” the Savior responded by way of what He did—His example of service.

In the April 2014 general conference, Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us: “We best serve our Father in Heaven by righteously influencing others and serving them. The greatest example who ever walked the earth is our Savior, Jesus Christ.”¹

Selfless service—forgetting ourselves, responding to the needs of others, and laying down our lives in their

service—has always been a characteristic of disciples of Jesus Christ. As King Benjamin taught more than 100 years before the birth of the Savior, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

James reminds us that an essential aspect of “pure religion” is found in our service to others as we “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27). “Pure religion” is more than a declaration of belief; it is a demonstration of belief.

Love Your Fellow Travelers

In mid-July 1984, just weeks after my wife, Carol, and I were married in the Los Angeles California Temple, we were on our way to Utah, where I would begin my career and Carol would finish her college education. We were driving in separate cars. Between the two vehicles, we were transporting everything we owned.

About halfway to our destination, Carol pulled up alongside my car and began to motion to me. This was in the days before cell phones and smartphones, texting and Twitter. Seeing the expression on her face through her car window, I could tell she was not feeling well. She

communicated that she could continue driving, but I was worried for my new bride.

As we approached the small town of Beaver, Utah, she again pulled alongside, and I could tell she needed to stop. She was ill and could not continue. We had two cars full of clothes and wedding gifts, but unfortunately we had little money. A hotel room was out of our budget. I was not sure what to do.

Neither of us had ever been to Beaver, and not really knowing what I was looking for, we drove around for a few minutes until I saw a park. We pulled into the parking lot and found a tree with some shade, where I laid out a blanket so Carol could rest.

A few minutes later another car drove into the nearly empty parking lot and parked next to our two cars. A woman, about the age of our mothers, got out of her car and asked if anything was wrong and if she could help. She mentioned that she had noticed us as she drove by and felt she should stop. When we explained our situation, she immediately invited us to follow her home, where we could rest as long as we needed to.

We soon found ourselves on a comfortable bed in a cool basement bedroom of her home. Just as we had settled, this wonderful sister mentioned that she had a number of errands to run and that we would be left alone for a few hours. She told us that if we were hungry, we were welcome to anything we could find in the kitchen, and that if we left before she returned home, to please close the front door.

After getting some much-needed sleep, Carol felt better and we continued our trip without stopping by the kitchen. When we left, the kind woman had not yet returned home. To our chagrin, we didn't make note of the address and have never properly thanked our own good Samaritan, who stopped along the way and opened her home to strangers in need.

As I reflect upon this experience, the words of President Thomas S. Monson, who embodies the Savior's admonition to "go and do likewise" (see Luke 10:37) as much as any mortal, come to mind: "We cannot truly love God if we do not love our fellow travelers on this mortal journey."²

Wherever we encounter "fellow travelers"—on the road or in our homes, on the playground or in our schools, in the workplace or at church—as we seek, see, and act, we will become more like the Savior, blessing and serving along the way.

Seek

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

"Unlike our precious Savior, we surely cannot atone for the sins of mankind! Moreover, we certainly cannot bear all mortal sicknesses, infirmities, and griefs (see Alma 7:11–12).

"However, on our smaller scale, just as Jesus has invited, we can indeed strive to become 'even as [He is]' (3 Nephi 27:27)."³

As we seek to become even as He is, with a sincere desire to bless "our fellow travelers," we will be provided opportunities to forget self and lift others. These opportunities may often be inconvenient, testing our true desire to become more like the Master, whose greatest service of all, His infinite Atonement, was anything but convenient. "Nevertheless," He states, "glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men" (D&C 19:19).

Sincerely seeking to be more like the Savior will allow us to see what we may not otherwise see. Our good Samaritan lived close enough to the Spirit to respond to a prompting and approach a stranger in need.

See

To see with spiritual eyes is to see things as they truly are and to recognize needs we may not have otherwise noticed. In the parable of the sheep and goats, neither those who were "blessed" nor those who were "cursed" had recognized the Savior in those who were hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison. They responded to their reward by asking, "When saw we thee?" (See Matthew 25:34–39, 40–44).

Only those who had seen with spiritual eyes, recognizing the need, acted and blessed those who suffered. Our good Samaritan recognized the need as she saw with spiritual eyes.

Act

We may see needs around us but feel inadequate to respond, assuming that what we have to offer is not sufficient. As we seek to become even as He is and as we see needs in our fellow travelers through spiritual eyes, we must trust that the Lord can work through us, and then we must act.

Entering the temple, Peter and John encountered a man “lame from his mother’s womb” who asked them for alms (see Acts 3:1–3). Peter’s response is an example and an invitation to each of us:

“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

“And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up” (Acts 3:6–7).

We may act by giving our time and talents, a kind word, or a strong back. As we seek and see, we will be placed in circumstances and situations where we can act and bless. Our good Samaritan acted. She took us to her home and provided us with what she had. In essence she said, “Such as I have give I thee.” It was exactly what we needed.

President Monson has taught these same principles:

“Each of us, in the journey through mortality, will travel his own Jericho Road. What will be your experience? What will be mine? Will I fail to notice him who has fallen among thieves and requires my help? Will you?

“Will I be one who sees the injured and hears his plea, yet crosses to the other side? Will you?

“Or will I be one who sees, who hears, who pauses, and who helps? Will you?

“Jesus provided our watchword, ‘Go, and do thou likewise.’ When we obey that declaration, there opens to our eternal view a vista of joy seldom equaled and never surpassed.”⁴

As we become more like the Savior by seeking, seeing, and acting, we will come to know the truthfulness of King Benjamin’s words: “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17). ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 35.
2. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 91.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 22.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Your Jericho Road,” *Ensign*, May 1977, 71.

SEEK SINCERELY

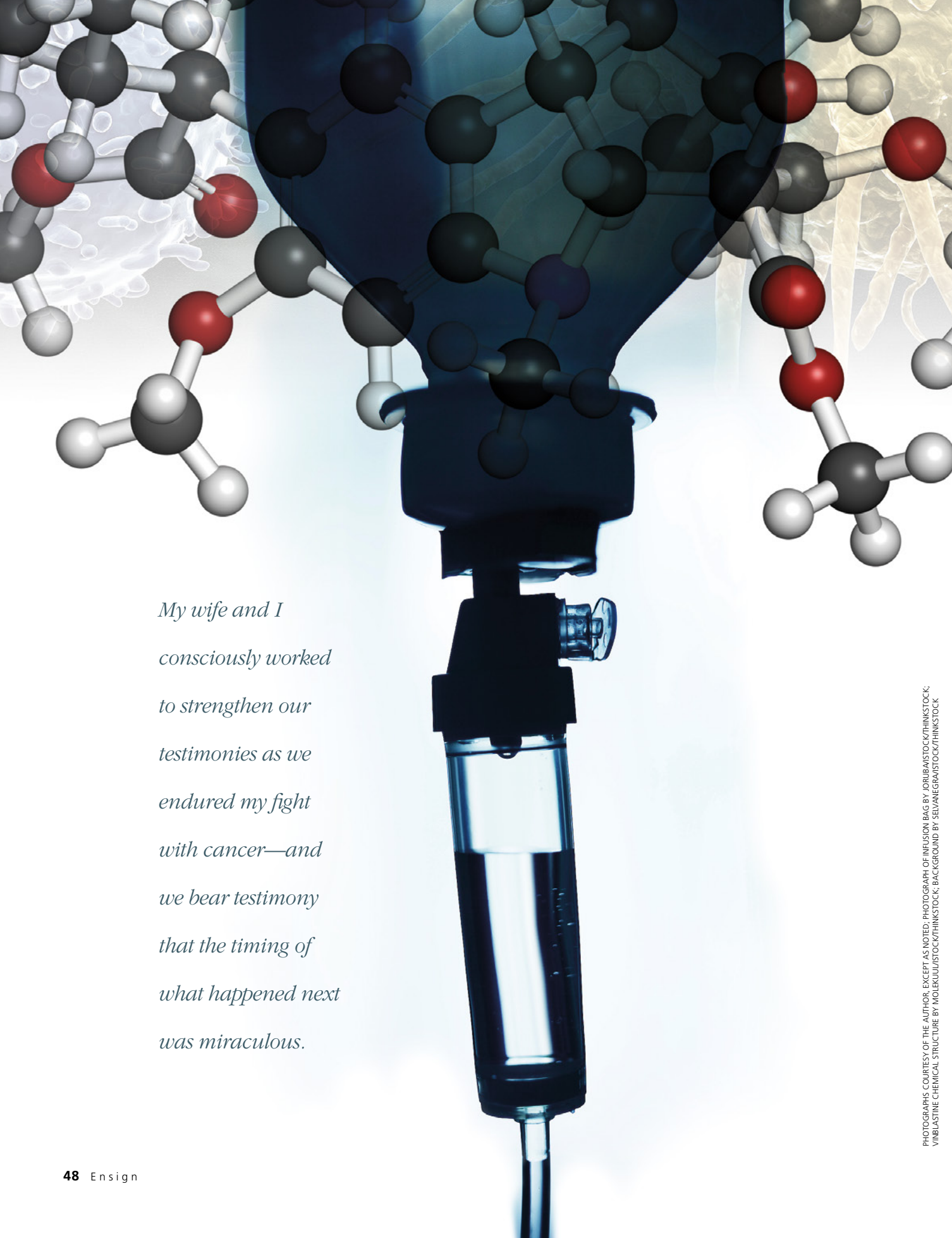


SEE WITH SPIRITUAL EYES



ACT AND BLESS





*My wife and I
consciously worked
to strengthen our
testimonies as we
endured my fight
with cancer—and
we bear testimony
that the timing of
what happened next
was miraculous.*

CHALLENGES, MIRACLES, & TESTIMONIES

By Jacob Aaron Black

“I’m very sorry, Jacob,” the fertility doctor said quietly. “Chemotherapy has left you with only approximately a 10 percent chance of having more children. And with Michelle’s history of lower fertility, it’s essentially impossible.” Tears filled Michelle’s eyes. The news, though not totally unexpected, was devastating. Chemotherapy had saved my life, but its side effects were difficult to bear. We went home from that visit and tearfully held our two-year-old son, Jonas, for whom we were extremely grateful.

In the midst of these feelings of devastation, we looked heavenward. It was our testimonies that had gotten us through the cancer experience. We knew we had to continue to strengthen our testimonies through hope and faith to be able to endure this new post-cancer challenge.

We had faith in our Heavenly Father and in the power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We had been married in the temple five years earlier and made covenants with our Heavenly Father. We knew if we remained faithful in living our baptismal, priesthood, and temple covenants, we would be sustained and blessed according to God’s unique will for our lives. We were happy to align our will with God’s will for our family. We believed the promised



Left: Infusion bag for chemotherapy, with illustration of the chemical structure of vinblastine, a chemotherapy drug. Background: Generic cancer cells and lymph cells.

blessings of our covenants would come in God’s time.

Furthermore, a phrase in my patriarchal blessing gave us hope: “The gift of healing will be evident in your life.” When I received that blessing at age 17, I had interpreted it as my administering to the sick through the power of the priesthood. After cancer, I realized that the “gift of healing” applied directly to me.

Hope and Faith to Try Again

We had been counseled by my oncologist to wait for at least two years after I finished the cancer treatments before even trying for another child. The time would allow the chemotherapy drugs to be fully purged from my body. Two years had passed, and our lives were becoming more and more stable, post-cancer. We began discussing lightly the prospect of trying to have another child. To be honest, I was scared. Cancer had taken a lot from us physically, emotionally, and financially. Michelle wanted another baby more than anything in the world. I was scared that my body wasn’t fully healed. I was scared my wife’s heart would be irreparably broken. I was scared it would be one more thing cancer would take from us.

With these thoughts and feelings swirling within us, we settled down to watch April 2012 general conference. In the course of the Saturday afternoon session, our fears left us and we were filled with peace.



THE GOSPEL IS OUR SURE FOUNDATION

“Our journey through life has periods of both good times and bad. Each presents different challenges. How we learn to adjust to the changes which come along depends on the foundation on which we build. The gospel of our Lord and Savior provides a sure and solid foundation. It is constructed piece by piece as we gain knowledge of the Lord’s eternal plan for His children. The Savior is the Master Teacher. We follow Him.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Finding Lasting Peace and Building Eternal Families,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 43.



Elisabeth Hope and Rachel Faith

We learned of Michelle’s pregnancy in May—the Tuesday before Mother’s Day. We learned that our baby was, in fact, twin girls—the Monday before Father’s Day.

We began discussing what to name these girls. We wanted their names to reflect the depth of our gratitude to God that their births represented. We decided to name them after women of faith found in the Bible—Elisabeth, because it is a derivative of the Hebrew name *Elishева*, meaning “God’s Promise,” and Rachel, because the life of the biblical Rachel paralleled our life. The Rachel of ancient times faced being unable to bear children; yet as she continued to live a faithful life, God’s unique plan for her life was revealed—and she bore a son, Joseph, and later another son, Benjamin (see Genesis 30:22–24; 35:24).

Michelle wanted the twins’ middle names to be Hope and Faith as a reminder of the power of these two doctrines in our lives. The question now was, which name would go with Elisabeth and which would go with Rachel? The answer came clearly as I read a talk by President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, about the Christlike attributes of hope and faith. He said, “Hope is trust in God’s promises.”¹ Decision made. Hope would be Elisabeth’s middle name because both names meant “God’s Promise.” Therefore Rachel’s middle name would be Faith.

Power of Priesthood Manifest

As Christmastime approached, so too did the birth of our babies. We discovered that one of the babies had turned. The doctor advised us to consider a C-section. We went home and prayed about it, receiving a strong and

immediate answer that a C-section was necessary. The next day our two healthy six-pound baby girls were born. Michelle and the babies came home a few days later.

Michelle, however, soon returned to the emergency room because the severe swelling she’d experienced during pregnancy wasn’t going down. An X-ray showed that the swelling and fluid retention had enlarged her heart. “It’s a really good thing you had that C-section,” the doctor told her. “If you’d tried to deliver twins normally, the strain on your heart probably would have killed you.”

We humbly thanked our Heavenly Father for yet another blessing. We were overwhelmed with gratitude for the promises of the gospel and the power of the priesthood manifest in our lives.

Blessings Always Come—in Time

This is our story. Everyone’s story is different. Yet since this experience, Michelle and I have felt a responsibility to bear our testimonies of the power of the priesthood, faith in patriarchal blessings, trust in the love of God, and hope through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Yes, we experienced difficult challenges, but we’ve also experienced miraculous blessings. We feel we would be ungrateful if we did not share our testimonies that living the gospel helps us deal with our challenges. We know that all stories do not unfold like ours did. Nevertheless, we all can be blessed to know God’s plan for our lives through the confirming witness of the Holy Ghost. Our testimonies are founded on truth, not whether miracles follow.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the timing of events in our life experience:



"I think of those who want to be married and aren't, those who desire to have children and cannot, those who have acquaintances but very few friends, those who are grieving over the death of a loved one or are themselves ill with disease. I think of those who suffer from sin—their own or someone else's—who need to know there is a way back and that happiness can be restored. I think of the disconsolate and downtrodden who feel life has passed them by, or now wish that it would pass them by. To all of these and so many more, I say: Cling to your faith. Hold on to your hope. . . .

" . . . Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don't come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come*." ²

Rachel Faith Black and Elisabeth Hope Black are living witnesses that the Lord is personally involved in the lives of His children. Each step along the way, the hand of the Lord was visible to us. Our testimonies, in turn, continued to grow during my fight with cancer as well as during the miraculous blessing that came afterward. The trials and challenges, the blessings and miracles that others experience in this life will certainly be different from those we experienced, but our testimony is that all who strive to follow God's plan for their lives will be given the power that can help them endure as well as rejoice. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Christlike Attributes," (address given at the seminar for new mission presidents, June 24, 2005), 4, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 36, 38.



Far left: Rachel and Elisabeth. Above left: Michelle and Jonas. Above right: Michelle with newborn twins. Below: Jacob, Elisabeth, Jonas, Rachel, and Michelle.



THE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE OF

"We call upon the women of the Church to stand together for righteousness. . . . I see this as the one bright shining hope in [the] world."
—President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)



WOMEN



Do we know the power of our spiritual strength?

By Starla Averkamp Butler

Many wonderful, humble women in the Church provide dedicated service without realizing the far-reaching impact their lives have—as examples of temporal service, but also as legacies of spiritual strength. One such woman is my grandmother, Cherie Petersen. She has served faithfully in quiet callings all her life. If you asked her, she would claim that she doesn't have many talents to offer the world. However, as I have started to learn about her life, I've realized just how much her spiritual strength has affected my life.

Cherie's parents stopped attending church and divorced when she was still very young, so she grew up with a mother, Florence, who was always working. Florence had been neglected as a child, as she was raised in a boarding school while her mother, Georgia, lived a worldly life. In spite of the challenges in her upbringing, Cherie remained active in the gospel, faithfully attending church with her great-grandmother Elizabeth's family or with friends. She saw in their families what she wanted for her own. She didn't know exactly what a family should be like, but she knew what it shouldn't be, and she was determined to have her future family be different.

Cherie's husband—my grandpa Dell—once told me, “To have a testimony, you have to want it. Cherie always wanted a testimony.” Though their early years of marriage were filled with struggles, they were determined to remain strong as a family. They were less active during the first year of their marriage because of Dell's work schedule, but a call to serve in the Primary prompted Cherie to begin attending, and Dell soon joined her at church as a deacons quorum adviser. They've both been active and strong in the Church ever since. Cherie's

DAUGHTERS OF DEITY, BY KATHLEEN PETERSON, MAY NOT BE COPIED

willingness to serve and determination to raise a strong family helped my mother become the strong woman she is, and my mother's example has helped define my life, especially as I now start my own family.

As women we can have a profound spiritual influence on the lives of those around us. Indeed, Joseph Smith taught that our role is “not only to relieve the poor, but to save souls.”¹ Jesus Christ has called the women of His Church to be His disciples and to be strong spiritually. Our spiritual strength and influence are vital in the progression of the work of salvation, and we need to seek opportunities to spiritually strengthen those around us. As we do, the influence of our faith and righteousness will last far beyond what we can see.

Called to Be Disciples

Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote, “The world’s greatest champion of woman and womanhood is Jesus the Christ.”² Think, for example, of what He taught two of His female disciples in the New Testament, sisters Mary and Martha. The book *Daughters in My Kingdom* explains: “Luke 10 contains an account of Martha opening her home to Jesus. She served the Lord by taking care of His temporal needs, and Mary sat at the Master’s feet and absorbed His teachings.

“In an age when women were generally expected to provide only temporal service, the Savior taught Martha and Mary that women could also participate spiritually in His work. He invited them to become His disciples and partake of salvation, ‘that good part’ that would never be taken from them.”³

Like Martha, sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that the primary role of women is to offer temporal



Four generations: Elizabeth (left), holding her granddaughter Florence. Annie (center) came to Utah with her parents and is Elizabeth’s mother. Georgia (right) is Elizabeth’s daughter, but Georgia and her daughter Florence left the Church. It was faithful Elizabeth who helped her great-granddaughter Cherie and Cherie’s posterity return to the gospel.

service, such as providing meals, sewing, and cleaning for others. This service is a valuable and cherished sacrifice; however, even more than He needs sisters who can sew and cook, the Lord needs women of spiritual power whose faith, righteousness, and charity shine through in their lives. He knows that we each have so much to offer. Jesus Christ calls *all* of us to develop our spiritual strength and ability to receive and act on revelation to help move His work forward. Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, said to the sisters, “You have been sent to earth in this dispensation of time because of who you are and what

you have been prepared to do! Regardless of what Satan would try to persuade us to think about who we are, our true identity is that of a disciple of Jesus Christ!”⁴

The Lord knows us and our situations, and He has a work for each of us to do on this earth. No sister knows too little or has too few talents to be a spiritual force for good and bring others to Christ. With this divine potential we have the responsibility to become spiritual leaders in our homes and communities. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles proclaimed, “Every sister in this Church who has made covenants with the Lord has a divine mandate to help save souls, to lead the women of the world, to strengthen the homes of Zion, and to build the kingdom of God.”⁵

We do not have to be in high positions or do unusual things to help those around us make choices that will lead them closer to Jesus Christ—our most important duty. Both the largest and the smallest things we do in the lives of one or two people, even just within our own family, can have a profound impact.



Women in the Work of Salvation

A beloved hymn states, “The errand of angels is given to women; and this is a gift that, as sisters, we claim.”⁶ We have much to offer in lives of those we love. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has shared stories of how the spiritual strength of two women affected his life:

“When I was a young child, my father was not a member of the Church and my mother had become less active. . . . Some months after my eighth birthday, Grandmother Whittle came across the country to visit us. Grandmother was concerned that neither I nor my older brother had been baptized. I don’t know what she said to my parents about this, but I do know that one morning she

*“The Savior taught
Martha and Mary
that women could
participate spiri-
tually in His work.
He invited them
to become His dis-
ciples and partake
of salvation.”*

took my brother and me to the park and shared with us her feelings about the importance of being baptized and attending Church meetings regularly. I don’t remember the specifics of what she said, but her words stirred something in my heart, and soon my brother and I were baptized. . . .

“Grandmother used just the right amount of courage and respect to help our father recognize the importance of his driving us to the church for our meetings. In every appropriate way, she helped us to feel a need for the gospel in our lives.”⁷

A second source of spiritual strength was Elder Scott’s wife, Jeanene. When they were dating they began to talk about the future. Jeanene, who had grown up



BABE, BY KATHLEEN PETERSON, MAY NOT BE COPIED

in a strong missionary home, expressed her desire to marry a returned missionary in the temple. Elder Scott, who hadn't thought much about serving a mission before, was strongly impacted. "I went home, and I could think of nothing else. I was awake all night long. . . . After many prayers I made the decision to meet with my bishop and begin my missionary application."⁸ Although Jeanene gave him the guidance and prompting he needed, Elder Scott said, "Jeanene never asked me to serve a mission *for her*. She loved me enough to share her conviction and then gave me the opportunity to work out the direction of my own life. We both served missions and later were sealed in the temple. Jeanene's courage and commitment to her faith have made all the difference in our lives together. I am certain we would not

A beloved hymn states, "The errand of angels is given to women; and this is a gift that, as sisters, we claim." We have much to offer in lives of those we love.

have found the happiness we enjoy without her strong faith in the principle of serving the Lord first. She is a wonderful, righteous example!"⁹

It was the spiritual influence of these women in his life that helped just one young man—Elder Scott—make some of the most important decisions in his life: to be baptized, to serve a mission, and to marry in the temple.

We can help others want to make good choices by our example, actions, words, and personal righteousness. Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, proclaims, "We are covenant daughters in the Lord's kingdom, and we have the opportunity to be instruments in His hands. . . . We participate in the work of salvation each day in small and simple ways—watching over, strengthening, and

teaching one another.”¹⁰ As we rely on the Spirit and press forward in sincere and humble efforts to help those around us come closer to Christ, we will be guided in what we can do and given the strength to do it, and we will feel the joy of bringing the Lord’s children unto Him.

Becoming a Spiritual Influence

Knowing our responsibility, we might ask as disciples of old, “What shall we do” (Acts 2:37) to be a spiritual influence? In a recent general conference, Sister Burton invited the sisters to imagine “some of the possible spiritual ‘help wanted’ signs related to the work of salvation:

- Help wanted: parents to bring up their children in light and truth
- Help wanted: daughters . . . , sisters . . . , aunts . . . , cousins, grandparents, and true friends to serve as mentors and offer helping hands along the covenant path
- Help wanted: those who listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and act on impressions received
- Help wanted: those who live the gospel daily in small and simple ways
- Help wanted: family history and temple workers to link families eternally
- Help wanted: missionaries and members to spread the ‘good news’—the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Help wanted: rescuers to find those who have lost their way
- Help wanted: covenant keepers to stand firm for truth and right
- Help wanted: true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹¹

These aren’t new things, but when we seek opportunities to participate in the work of salvation, we will improve our ability to help those around us. Elder Ballard said, “There is nothing in this world as personal, as nurturing, or as life changing as the influence of a righteous woman.”¹² As we develop our spiritual power through personal prayer and scripture study, firm obedience, and faithfully keeping our covenants, we will become that influence.

Beyond What We Can See

President Brigham Young (1801–1877) said, “Can you tell the amount of good that the mothers and daughters in Israel are capable of doing? No, it is impossible. And the good they will do will follow them to all eternity.”¹³

My grandmother’s righteous decisions have impacted her family generations past what she could see as a young woman. However, the spiritual influence of the women in my family stretches even farther back. Cherie gained much of her own spiritual strength from observing her great-grandmother (my third great-grandmother) Elizabeth. Elizabeth’s example of faith and testimony reached past two generations of inactivity to help her great-granddaughter Cherie reverse a trend of broken families and return to the Church.

As we become a spiritual strength to those around us, our influence will stretch beyond what we can see. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “We call upon the women of the Church to stand together for righteousness. They must begin in their own homes. They can teach it in their classes. They can voice it in their communities. . . .

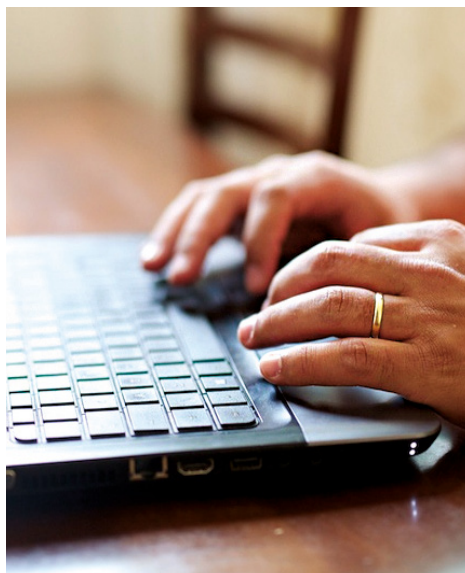
“I see this as the one bright shining hope in a world that is marching toward self-destruction.”¹⁴

As we fulfill this command, the work of the Lord will be urged forward both in the world around us and, most importantly, in our families and the lives of those we love. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 453.
2. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 475.
3. *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 3–4.
4. Linda K. Burton, “Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 122–123.
5. M. Russell Ballard, “Women of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2002, 70.
6. “As Sisters in Zion,” *Hymns*, no. 309.
7. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 32.
8. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” 33.
9. Richard G. Scott, “I Have Given You an Example,” 33.
10. Carole M. Stephens, “We Have Great Reason to Rejoice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 117.
11. Linda K. Burton, “Wanted: Hands and Hearts to Hasten the Work,” 124.
12. M. Russell Ballard, “Mothers and Daughters,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 18.
13. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 216.
14. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Standing Strong and Immovable,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 10, 2004, 20.



13 WAYS TO Study THE SCRIPTURES

With Music

Listen to beautiful music as you read.

Music invites the Spirit and enlightens the mind. Sometimes I play classical music while I read by candlelight.

Use the hymnbook. I like to read a hymn's lyrics and then look up the scriptural references listed after each hymn. I find it helpful to do this during the administration of the sacrament each week.

By Kristen G. Walton

A spiritual feast—that's what I anticipate during my personal scripture study time. But it wasn't always so. I first had to change my attitude about studying the scriptures, and that meant changing *how* I study. I find it easier to have consistent, meaningful scripture study when I vary my methods.

Online Resources

Listen while you work. I play recordings of the scriptures while I work in the kitchen and on my MP3 player when I go for a walk. Download your free audio copy at lds.org/scriptures. You can also purchase CD audio recordings of the standard works at Church distribution centers.

Study online. I often read my scriptures online at LDS.org. The linked footnotes make it easy for me to access cross-references.

Study Aids

Use scriptural resources. The Topical Guide and Bible Dictionary are often overlooked as study tools, yet they contain much added insight and information. They are especially useful resources when you want to study a specific topic.

Take notes. I keep a small notebook with my set of scriptures and write down impressions I receive while reading them. For me, this is the best way to retain and review these precious insights.

Keep multiple copies. I have several inexpensive copies of the Book of Mormon, for instance. In one of my copies I have marked in red each mention of Christ and the Atonement. Each copy is like a blank slate, ready for me to highlight according to topic or any way that will help shed new light on a verse.



Refer to Church magazines. In the Doctrine and Covenants, we learn that “by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (1:38). Conference addresses, First Presidency messages, and other inspired articles are also considered scripture and should be included in our studies.

For Variety

Read outdoors. I love to read my scriptures while enjoying nature. Sometimes I read in my backyard or hike to a favorite secluded spot.

Memorize a verse each week. I like to write down a selected verse on a 3-inch-by-5-inch card that I carry with me. I review it whenever I have a few spare minutes, such as when I’m in line at the bank’s drive-through, waiting at a doctor’s office, or preparing dinner. Before long, I’ve got it memorized.

Study a scriptural hero. When I am facing adversity, I love to read about my scripture heroes. Reading about Esther helps me to feel braver. Learning about Job helps me to keep things in perspective. Enos’s example teaches me about the power of prayer.

Prepare a talk. Sometimes I like to pretend that I have been assigned a talk for sacrament meeting. The best part is that I get to assign myself the topic, so I choose something of special interest to me or that might help me overcome a challenge. I study and research the topic, then write the talk—just as if it were the real thing. I save my “talks” in a binder and if appropriate use them for family home evening lessons or in case I’m actually asked to speak in church.

Set goals. I loved participating in the Book of Mormon reading challenge that President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) issued some years ago (see “A Testimony Vibrant and True,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2005, 6). As I read the Book of Mormon then, I felt the presence of the Spirit more in my daily life. Because of that experience, I have tried to set additional reading goals so that I’m always feasting upon the spiritual nourishment provided in the scriptures. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

The standard works are available in a variety of audiovisual formats at Church distribution centers or online at store.lds.org. For free downloads of the scriptures and other gospel study materials, go to lds.org/scriptures or lds.org/media-library.



**By Bishop
Keith B. McMullin**

Served as Second
Counselor in the
Presiding Bishopric
from 1995 to 2012

Faith & Works

IN A SECULAR SOCIETY

*It is our singular privilege to be true to the faith
and to press forward in good works.*

Education in secular subjects contributes much to the betterment of our world. Secular learning of the highest level blossoms in an atmosphere of virtue, moral responsibility, spiritual truth, and faith.

Much is touted today about secular societies. People and nations pride themselves on being *secular* and on focusing on “worldly things or [on] things that are not regarded as religious, spiritual, or sacred.”¹

Religious expression in some parts of the world today is discouraged in public forums, civil rights are dependent on courts and legislative processes, and men and women readily seek solutions and redress through litigious means. In the extreme, society’s secularism overlooks the concept of eternal life, places all things in the context of the natural world, and consequently is prone to *works without faith*.

It requires watchfulness and great effort to be men and women of faith in a secular world. It is the nature of people, when inundated by worldliness, to “first endure, then pity, then embrace.”² Secularism is inundating people today with such results.

Unchecked by faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of mankind, the secular world produces men and women who are “proud, obsessed with self, overly competitive, reactionary, fiercely independent, driven by desires, appetites, [and] worldly acclaim. . . . In general, the natural man is an unredeemed creature, a being who walks . . . in the light of his own fire . . . [see 2 Nephi 7:10–11]. Such a one is acclimated to the nature of things about him, taking his cues and bearings from a fallen world.”³

Succinctly stated, “All men that are in a state of nature, or . . . in a carnal state, . . . are without God in the world” (Alma 41:11).

Because secularism typically ignores the eternal perspective, it can in time lead to unbelief. In the words of Wolfhart Pannenberg, who was a professor of theology at the University of Munich:

“A public climate of secularism undermines the confidence of Christians in the truth of what they believe. . . .

“In a secular milieu, even an elementary knowledge of Christianity . . . dwindles. It is no longer a matter of rejecting Christian





teachings; large numbers of people have not the vaguest knowledge of what those teachings are. . . . The more widespread the ignorance of Christianity, the greater the prejudice against Christianity. . . .

“ . . . The difficulty is exacerbated by the cultural relativizing of the very idea of truth. . . . In the view of many, . . . Christian doctrines are merely opinions that may or may not be affirmed according to individual preference, or depending on whether they speak to personally felt needs. . . .

“ . . . The thoroughly secularized social order gives rise to a feeling of meaninglessness.”⁴

Faith in Christ is replaced by faith in man. In public discourse and private thought, the questions of where we came from, where we go when life ends, and what ultimately governs the here and now go unaddressed and become irrelevant. This state of unbelief is becoming a calamity of colossal proportions.

The Importance of the Restoration

Heavenly Father knew this would happen. The Restoration of the gospel rekindled faith in Jesus Christ as the Creator, Savior, and Redeemer. It brought again the correct understanding of life's purposes. In 1831 the Lord told His children:

“Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments; . . .

“That faith . . . might increase in the earth” (D&C 1:17, 21).

Before the foundations of this world were laid, before the orbs of the universe received their place, men and women lived and moved

Our faith and accompanying works can stem the tide of unbelief in the world. This is our sacred duty as Latter-day Saints.

and had their being (see Acts 17:28). The secular thought that life is nothing more than biology denies the fundamental truth—the subconscious awareness residing in the recesses of every living soul—that “man *was* also in the beginning *with God*” (D&C 93:29; emphasis added). This truth is immutable and irrefutable.

Paradisiacal Eden with our first parents, Adam and Eve, came thereafter so that we, through mortal life’s experiences and

Christ’s Redemption, might become complete, fully developed, and perfected beings. The ages of the patriarchs, the supernal advent of our Savior and His incomparable Atonement in the meridian of time, and “the times of restitution of all things” (Acts 3:21), which began in 1820, set the framework by which men and women, boys and girls could once more govern their lives and surroundings by “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Articles of Faith 1:4).



We stand at the confluence of these world events. “What is past is prologue, and what has been is yet to be.”⁵ What can happen—what must happen—is that our faith and accompanying works stem the tide of unbelief in the world. This is our lot in life as well as our sacred duty as Latter-day Saints.⁶

Our Master said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you” (Matthew 17:20). President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded us, “When all is said and done, the only real wealth of the Church is in the faith of its people.”⁷

He also said: “In the on-working of this great cause, increased faith is what we most need. Without it, the work would stagnate. With it, no one can stop its progress.”⁸

Such faith is more than attitude, more than belief, more than mere expression of what one knows or feels. Real faith, the faith spoken of by the prophets, begets righteousness in this life and salvation in the life to come. It is centered in the true and living God and in Jesus Christ, whom He has sent (see John 17:3). It is founded on truth, preceded by knowledge, and perfected by works. It causes mortals to understand and behave as Heavenly Father’s children should. This faith “is the first great governing principle which [enables us to have] power, dominion, and authority over”⁹ how we think and act and what manner of men and women we are.

A Formula for Faith

The Apostle James gave us the formula for such faith:

“What profit is it . . . for a man to say he hath faith, and hath not works? . . .

“Yea, a man may say, I will show thee I have faith without works; but I say, Show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. . . .

“ . . . Faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone. . . .

“Seest thou how works [are] wrought with . . . faith, and by works [is] faith made perfect?” (Joseph Smith Translation, James 2:14–15, 17, 21 [in the Bible appendix]).

We hear much about *benchmarks*. A benchmark is “a standard of excellence [or] achievement . . . against which similar things [are] measured or judged.”¹⁰ There are four benchmarks that can help each of us know if our personal faith in Christ is being “made perfect” by our works. These benchmarks are:

1. The choices we make
2. The devotion we exhibit
3. The obedience we practice
4. The service we give

I bear my witness that God is in His heaven and knows all of His children. Jesus Christ is His Beloved Son, the Redeemer of all mankind. Joseph Smith, as a young lad, was called by the voice of God and His Holy Son as a prophet, and ensuing from that call, the true Church and kingdom of God was restored to the earth. How blessed we are to know these things and to stand at the confluence of history.

We came from realms of glory. It is our singular privilege to be true to the faith and to press forward in good works.

May we do what the prophets say. Generations past expect it, generations present are saved by it, generations future depend upon it, and the Holy Spirit will guide us every step of the way. ■

From a Church Educational System fireside address, “Faith and Works in a Secular World,” given at Brigham Young University on November 5, 2006. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (1987), “secular.”
2. Alexander Pope, in John Bartlett, comp., *Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. (1968), 409.
3. *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (2003), “Natural man.”
4. Wolfhart Pannenberg, “How to Think about Secularism,” *First Things*, no. 64 (June–July 1996), 27, 30; available at firstthings.com/article/1996/06/002-how-to-think-about-secularism.
5. Boyd K. Packer, General Authority training meeting, Oct. 2006; see also William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act 2, scene 1, line 253.
6. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Moral Discipline,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 105–8.
7. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The State of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 54.
8. Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Faith to Move Mountains,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 85.
9. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 5.
10. *Random House Dictionary*, “benchmark.”



“I Need Thee

EVERY HOUR”

Pak Mi-Jung’s two children quickly accepted the gospel, but she didn’t think she could make the commitment to be baptized.

By Jonathan H. Westover

One pleasant Sunday afternoon on my mission in the Korea Seoul West Mission, my companion, Elder Ricks, and I were saying good-bye to members after church and were about to set out proselyting when the ward mission leader introduced us to a small, solemn 12-year-old boy, Kong Sung-Gyun, who had attended church that day and wanted to learn more about the gospel.

Of course we were excited about the prospect of teaching him, though we did not typically teach children so young. We immediately called his home to seek his parents’ permission, and I talked briefly with his mother, Pak Mi-Jung. I was pleasantly surprised when she said she was pleased her son was looking into attending church and that she would be happy to have us come and teach him.

Unexpected Investigators

The next evening we arrived at Sung-Gyun’s home, and we were surprised to discover that Mi-Jung also wanted us to teach her daughter, Kong Su-Jin. Since we were strangers in her home, Mi-Jung wanted to sit in on the lessons too. Of course we were happy to teach as many as wanted to listen!

After they had served us some simple refreshments, we sat

down together and began to get to know each other. Elder Ricks and I shared a little about our families and why we were serving a mission, and then Mi-Jung told us about the recent trials and hardships her family had been through, including her son’s battle with cancer. He had successfully gone through radiation treatments, and the cancer was in remission, but the doctors warned them that the cancer could still return. Of course this took a big toll on their family. They were a working-class family, and their father worked extremely hard to provide the simple necessities for his family.

My heart was heavy as I learned of the many trials and hardships in their lives. However, while life was not easy for them, their family was extremely close and relied heavily on each other. We left their home that evening having gotten to know this very special family much better and having had the opportunity to share a simple gospel message of love and hope with them.

Elder Ricks and I went back to teach several more times in the following weeks, each time experiencing the same warmth and generosity we had experienced on our first visit. When the topic of baptism came up, the children were both eager to join the Church. Additionally, their mother, Mi-Jung, was supportive of her children’s desires. However,

though our teachings resonated with her, she personally did not feel that she could make and keep the kind of commitments that joining the Church required. She also did not feel that it would be appropriate for her to get baptized without her husband, whom we had yet to meet. But, she was more than willing to continue to meet with us and also wanted to join her children each week in attending church.

As we continued to teach in their home, we met Mi-Jung's husband, Kong Kuk-Won—a humble, gracious, and generous man. He joined us for the final few discussions and instantly believed everything we taught, including principles and teachings others often find difficult, like tithing and the Word of Wisdom. The father's only obstacle was that he had to work at the airport every Sunday and was unable to attend church with the rest of his family. Despite his busy work schedule, he and his wife arranged to attend their children's baptisms the following Sunday afternoon, and it was a wonderful occasion!

Following the children's baptisms, we continued to meet frequently in the family's home. We held family home evenings, shared scriptures and uplifting experiences, and introduced them to many ward members and helped them to get integrated into the ward. However, despite the continued gospel experiences and the regular Sunday attendance of the children and their mother, Kuk-Won and Mi-Jung were no closer to setting their own baptismal date. We just continued to love and support them the best we knew how.

As the months went by, Elder Ricks was transferred, and my new companion, Elder Minor, was an elder straight from the missionary training center. He was full of faith, energy, and excitement, and I honestly had a difficult time keeping up with him! After meeting with Kuk-Won and Mi-Jung on a few occasions, Elder Minor approached me and asked whether or not my previous companion and I had fasted with them. We had not. In fact, I was a bit embarrassed to admit that the thought had not even occurred to me! So we met with this loving family and suggested a fast. I was amazed to discover that after learning of fasting from us, they had already been periodically fasting on their own, both for the health of their son and for a change in work schedule



The Spirit was strong in the room as we completed the final verse. Mi-Jung looked me right in the eyes and said, "I need to get baptized."

that would allow Kuk-Won to attend church with his family. We asked if we might join them in their family fast, and soon their faithful prayers were answered: Kuk-Won's work schedule was changed. While we thought this was the only thing keeping them from getting baptized, Mi-Jung still did not feel ready to get baptized.

An Inspired Idea

On one visit to their home, Elder Minor had another inspired idea. After we shared a scripture message, he pulled out his pocket-sized hymnbook and asked if we could sing with them. Though we had sung together with their family

on previous occasions, I had never seen Mi-Jung join in the singing and just assumed that she did not like singing or was uncomfortable because the music was new to her. Elder Minor asked her if she had a favorite hymn, and to my astonishment, she got choked up and replied that she loved singing hymns and that ever since she was a little girl, her favorite hymn had been “I Need Thee Every Hour” (*Hymns*, no. 98). We asked if she would sing that hymn with us, and she tearfully agreed. Soon we were singing a four-part harmony, with Kuk-Won and his children singing the melody, Mi-Jung singing alto, Elder Minor singing tenor, and me singing bass.

The Spirit was as strong in the room as we had ever felt. As we sang the third verse, emotion overcame her, and her voice dropped out as we continued:

*I need thee every hour,
In joy or pain.
Come quickly and abide,
Or life is vain.
I need thee, oh, I need thee;
Ev'ry hour I need thee!
Oh, bless me now, my Savior;
I come to thee!*

As we completed the fourth and final verse, she was sobbing. As her husband tried to comfort her, she was eventually able to compose herself. She looked me right in the eyes and said, “I need to get baptized.”

The baptismal service for Kong Kuk-Won and Pak Mi-Jung that following Sunday afternoon was a truly joyous occasion! Their children, Sung-Gyun and Su-Jin, participated in the program, and numerous local members attended to show their support for the newest convert family in their ward. And

Elder Minor and I provided a special musical number: “I Need Thee Every Hour.”

Eventually I finished my mission and returned home. After a year at Brigham Young University, I returned to South Korea for a summer internship, and each weekend I made a point of visiting the many special friends and families I had met while serving on my mission. After a few weeks, I made my way back to meet with this special family. Upon arriving at their home, I noticed that someone was missing—their son, Sung-Gyun. With tears in her eyes, Mi-Jung broke the news to me: their son’s cancer had come out of remission, and at age 14 he had lost the battle.

As I tried to express my heartfelt condolences to their family and also process the deep sorrow and pain I was feeling, Kuk-Won assured me that they knew everything would be OK. They loved the gospel, attended church faithfully, and looked forward to the day when their family might be sealed together for eternity in the Seoul Korea Temple. Despite the heartache and loss they felt, they knew they would again see Sung-Gyun and be reunited. Mi-Jung also told me that singing hymns daily helped her and her family find the strength to cope with the loss of her beloved son and feel the accompanying peace the Spirit brings.

As I left their home that evening, I reflected again on the words of Mi-Jung’s favorite hymn. I am grateful that Heavenly Father blessed this amazing family with peace after Sung-Gyun’s passing, and I am especially grateful for the Spirit’s role in Mi-Jung’s personal conversion and for the faith and hope their family held for the eternal blessings of the temple. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

HYMNS CONSOLE THE MOURNING

“Some of the greatest sermons are preached by the singing of hymns. Hymns move us to repentance and good works, build testimony and faith, comfort the weary, console the mourning, and inspire us to endure to the end.”

*“First Presidency Preface,”
Hymns, ix.*

CALLED TO Rescue

Challenged by two presidents to rescue others, I tried and failed—until I included the Lord in my efforts.

By Sandra Marsaw

Some years ago, my stake president initiated a series of meetings on “The Rescue,” President Thomas S. Monson’s call to Church members to invite less-active members and those not of our faith to receive all the blessings of the restored gospel. I came away from the meetings feeling personally called to help with the rescue.

Throughout the years, I have invited less-active sisters to church, given copies of the Book of Mormon to friends, and had gospel-centered discussions with members of other faiths. Yet nothing I did resulted in any fruit I could see. Most painful of all had been my inability to bring one of my children back to the Church.

However, as I pondered the invitation to rescue others, words from the Primary song “Nephi’s Courage” (*Children’s Songbook*, 121) came to mind:

I will go; I will do the thing the Lord commands.

I know the Lord provides a way; he wants me to obey.

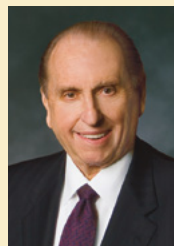
I knew that two of the Lord’s servants had asked me to obey. I just needed to trust the Lord to provide a way. So I began praying for His help. Several days later, the name of a sister I visit teach came to mind. I had been visiting LaDonna for more than a year. The only Latter-day Saint in her home, she had come to church several years earlier but had stopped coming because of family emergencies.

As I prayed for guidance, the Spirit whispered that I wasn’t including the Lord enough. So I began entering LaDonna’s name on the temple’s prayer roll. My husband and I began to pray for her every day, and we fasted for her on fast Sundays.

One day, LaDonna told me unexpectedly that she wanted to go to church the next Sunday. I was thrilled. However, six weeks later, LaDonna’s mother-in-law was hospitalized; LaDonna felt she had to stop coming to church in order to care for her.

Shortly afterward, I received inspiration to prepare a meal for LaDonna’s mother-in-law when she came home from the hospital. About 2:00 a.m. a few days later, I awoke abruptly, overwhelmed with the impression that I needed to bring them dinner that very day.

I was unable to contact LaDonna during the day, but that night, not knowing if anyone was home but trusting in the Spirit, I took the meal to their house. When I arrived,

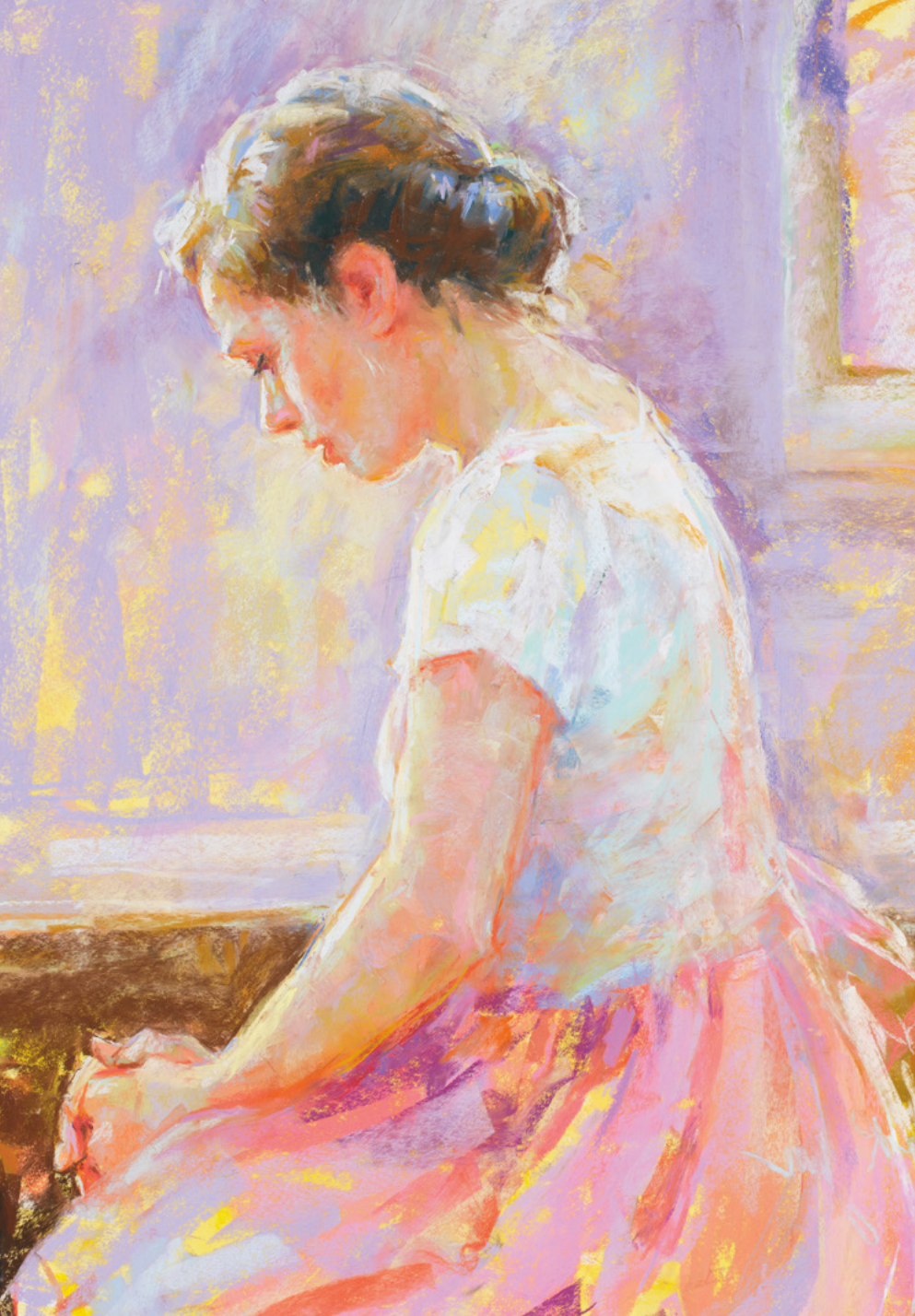


TO THE RESCUE

“Amid the storms of life, danger lurks. Men and women, boys and girls find themselves stranded and facing destruction. Who will guide the lifeboats, leaving behind the comforts of home and family, and go to the rescue?”

“Our task is not insurmountable. We are on the Lord’s errand; we are entitled to His help.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Our Responsibility to Rescue,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 4.



I discovered they had come from the hospital just 20 minutes earlier. I told them how I had been prompted to bring them a meal. I wanted them to know, as I did, that Heavenly Father was aware of their needs.

Sometime later while visiting LaDonna, her husband, Harry, mentioned that he wanted to start reading the scriptures. I was prompted to challenge him to read the Book of Mormon. This time, however, I didn't want to follow the prompting. I was afraid of offending him. But as Harry continued to speak, the impression grew stronger, and the

words "be bold" came clearly to my mind. I took a deep breath and gave him the challenge.

Harry responded that he already knew what Mormons believe. Peace came over me, and I received inspiration on what to say. I told Harry that he didn't need to take anyone's word on what Mormons believe. He could find out himself by reading the Book of Mormon. I promised him that God would let him know what was true. Much to my surprise, Harry accepted the challenge.

LaDonna and Harry began to read the Book of Mormon together. Several weeks later, while they were reading, Harry stopped and asked, "What *do* Mormons believe?"

LaDonna pointed to a bookmark with the Articles of Faith that I had given him and said, "This is what we believe." He read the bookmark several times, and as he pondered, the Spirit witnessed to him that the Articles of Faith are from God. With that witness, he knew the Church was true. He surprised his wife by announcing that he wanted to be baptized.

I watched in amazement as the Lord continued His work. Harry's brother, John, overheard one of the lessons and became interested. He soon began taking the missionary lessons as well. Both Harry and John were baptized.

I've learned that rescuing others is not about *me*; it is not about my unsuccessful attempts. It is and always will be the Lord's rescue. All He requires is that we ask for and use His help. The Holy Spirit knows how and where to direct us. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

For more ideas on this topic, see hasteningthework.lds.org.

Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent

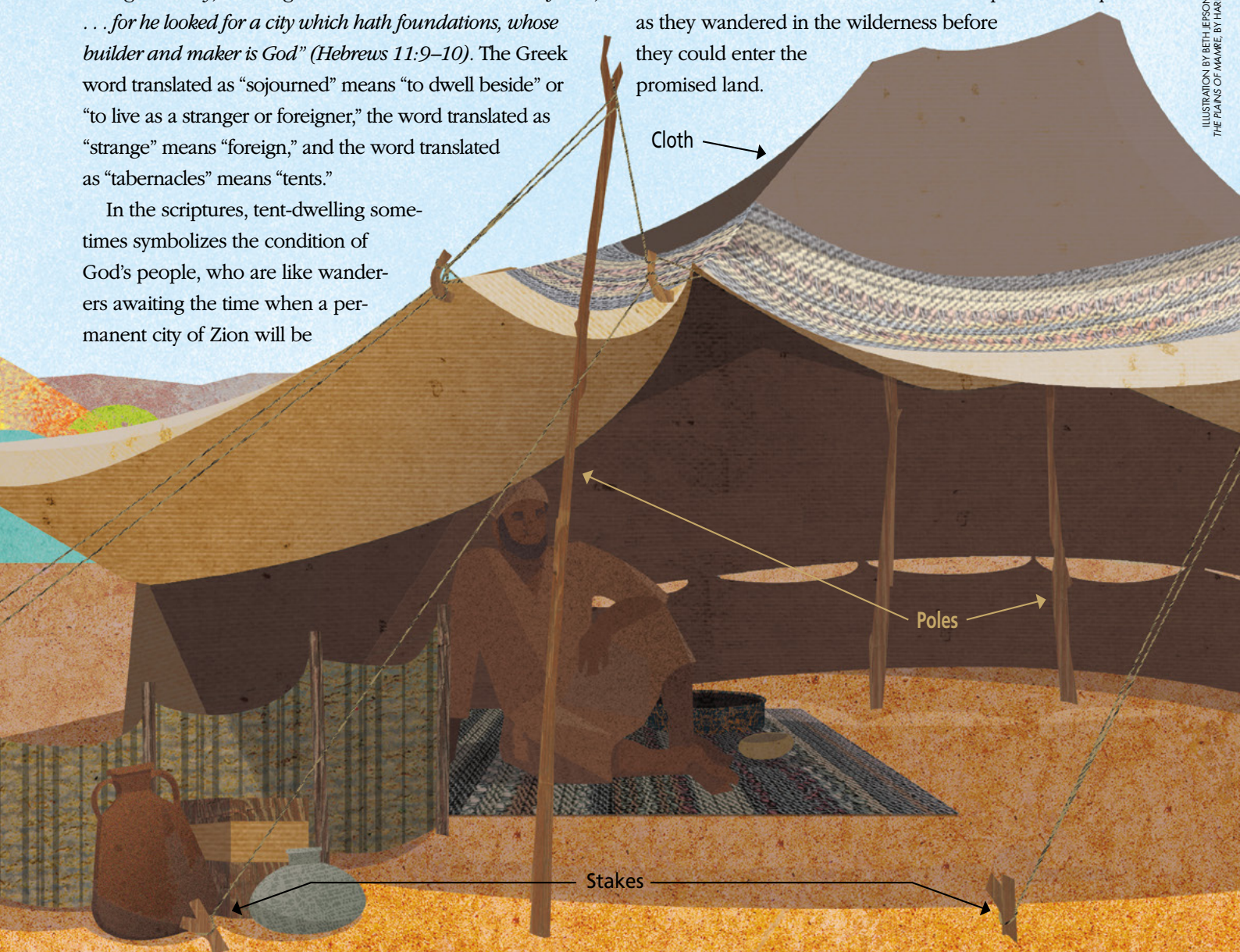
Tents teach us about God's kingdom and His love.

WAITING FOR A PERMANENT HOME

"[Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:9–10). The Greek word translated as "sojourned" means "to dwell beside" or "to live as a stranger or foreigner," the word translated as "strange" means "foreign," and the word translated as "tabernacles" means "tents."

In the scriptures, tent-dwelling sometimes symbolizes the condition of God's people, who are like wanderers awaiting the time when a permanent city of Zion will be

established, which itself anticipates a heavenly home in the celestial kingdom. The ancient Israelites, for instance, had a tabernacle (or tent) that functioned like a portable temple as they wandered in the wilderness before they could enter the promised land.



EXPANDING GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" (Isaiah 54:2). Isaiah was referring to the process by which many Middle Eastern nomads add on to their tents. They rarely built new tents but would simply repair the old tent, one section at a time, using about a year's worth of goat hair clippings. To expand the tent, they would add another section to it through continued patching of this kind.

As we share the gospel with others and invite them to come unto Christ, the kingdom of God (or the tent of Zion) expands throughout the world. The tent metaphor from Isaiah is why we call our large regional groupings of congregations "stakes."

OFFERING PROTECTION AND SHELTER

"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock" (Psalm 27:5). The Hebrew word translated as "tabernacle" means "tent."

This scripture plays upon the protective and sheltering role of the tribal head in Middle Eastern culture. Allowing someone into the tent symbolized a general extension of hospitality and sometimes refuge. Through covenants, we can enter God's tent and receive the blessings of His love and mercy. And in the stakes of Zion we gather "for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm" (D&C 115:6).

CHRIST'S TEMPORARY DWELLING

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Greek word translated as "dwelt" in this verse literally means "to dwell as in a tent." Jesus Christ came to earth as a temporary sojourner in order to redeem us from death and sin.

BIBLE FACTS

WHAT WAS THE TENT COVERING MADE OF?

Black goat's hair (the same material that is called "sackcloth" in the Bible).

WHO LIVED IN TENTS?



The Bible says Jabal "was the father of such as dwell in tents" (Genesis 4:20). The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived mostly in

tents. In the ancient Middle East, many people spent at least part of their time moving from place to place and dwelling in tents, so it was a very familiar way of life. The tent of the family or tribal leader was the center of community life for such groups. Modern Bedouin nomads have preserved many of the customs of ancient tent-dwellers.

Cords/Ropes

"I AM NOT A SON"

Sister Stone finished a batch of indexing and was ready to hit the submit button, when she clearly heard the voice of a young girl say, "I am not a son."

Sister El Stone had never even heard of FamilySearch indexing when her stake president asked every member of the stake, 12 years of age and older, to index 1,000

names in one month's time. Indexing makes it possible for Church members and others to search through millions of historic records online in seconds, uncovering information

that was previously unknown or hidden.

The busy mother of six children says she wasn't very enthusiastic about taking on the project. "Nevertheless, I did it out of sheer obedience. I was just going to bust out these 1,000 names and be done with it."

The Stone family had to share one computer for the indexing project, and El says what started out as a tedious task began to change the feeling in their home. "I could feel myself changing and my heart softening towards issues that were heavy on my heart. The feeling in the room changed while we were indexing. The Spirit was tangible."

Following the stake president's counsel, El began every indexing session with prayer and tried to see the names on the screen as members of a family. "It became a very emotional project for me, filled with sacred experiences.

"One morning I started indexing a batch. After I had entered everything in the computer and was getting ready to hit the submit button, I heard very clearly the voice of a



HOW TO

1. **Get started:** Visit familysearch.org/indexing, sign in with your LDS Account, and follow the steps on-screen.
2. **Index a batch:** It usually takes 30 minutes or less to index a batch of 25–50 records, ultimately making them searchable for others.
3. **Invite others:** Invite your family or ward members to index with you—share the experience!

Media Library

Specifically for material in the Media Library, you may post material from this site to another website or on a computer network for personal, church-related, noncommercial use unless otherwise indicated. For more information about using and sharing Church media, check out our FAQ page.



HOME



VIDEO



AUDIO



IMAGES



SOCIAL

Search Media

A Voice Said, "I am Not a Son"



A Voice Said, "I am Not a Son"

DOWNLOAD

Indexing is a monumental, spiritual work where help is given in both directions, within and beyond the veil.

(1:33)

Video Categories

View by Topic
Auxiliary Training
Bible Videos – The Life of Jesus Christ
- View Chronologically
- View by Scripture
Book of Mormon
CES Devotionals
Children
Christmas Devotionals
Church History
Doctrine and Covenants
Easter
Family History
Feature Films
General Conference
Hasten the Work
Homefront TV Spots
Humanitarian
I'm a Mormon
Inspirational Playlists
Leadership Training Library
Missionary
Mormon Channel Programs
Mormon Messages

COOPERATION ON BOTH SIDES OF THE VEIL

To watch a video about El Stone's experience with FamilySearch indexing, go to lds.org/go/indexingE315.

young girl, who said, 'I am not a son.' It was a 13-year-old girl named Ellen, whom I had marked as a son instead of a daughter. I'm sure that Ellen will thank me someday for correcting that mistake. I have a testimony of how actively inspired this work is from beyond the veil."

El's advice? "Just start. It's easy! You have to do your best, but heaven's

help will come." All you need is desire, a computer, and access to the Internet. Training is available online or through your stake indexing director.

Every name indexed represents another chance that someone will find a missing ancestor and provide the ordinances of salvation for that person. ■



DECIDE TO TAKE A STEP

"[Family history] does not require a large block of time. Just a little time on a consistent basis will yield the joy of the work. Make the decision to take a step."

Elder Allan F. Packer of the Seventy, "The Book," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 101.

HE IS RISEN

An unwavering faith in Christ is the most important need of the world today.



By President David O. McKay (1873–1970)

Ninth President of the Church

David O. McKay was born on September 8, 1873. He was ordained an Apostle on April 9,

1906, at age 32, and on April 9, 1951, he was sustained as the ninth President of the Church. The following is excerpted from an address he gave at the April 1966 general conference. For the full address, see Conference Report, Apr. 1966, 55–59.

If a miracle is a supernatural event whose antecedent forces are beyond man's finite wisdom, then the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most stupendous miracle of all time. In it stand revealed the omnipotence of God and the immortality of man.

The Resurrection is a miracle, however, only in the sense that it is beyond man's comprehension and understanding. To all who accept it as fact, it is but a manifestation of a uniform law of life. . . .

Establish it as a fact that Christ did take up his body and appeared as a glorified, resurrected being, and you answer the question of the ages: "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14).

Witnesses of the Resurrection

That the literal Resurrection of Christ from the grave was a reality to the disciples who knew Him intimately is a certainty. In their minds there was absolutely no doubt. They were witnesses of the fact; they knew because their eyes beheld, their ears heard, their hands felt the corporeal presence of the risen Redeemer.

Peter, the chief Apostle, on the occasion when the eleven had met to choose one to take the place of Judas Iscariot, said, "Wherefore of these men . . . must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). . . .

On another occasion Peter declared before their enemies, the very men who had put Jesus to death on the cross: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. . . . This Jesus hath

God raised up, whereof
we all are witnesses"
(Acts 2:22, 32). . . .

Additional Witnesses

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands with Peter, with Paul, with James, and with all the other early Apostles who accepted the Resurrection not only as being literally true, but as the consummation of Christ's divine mission on earth.

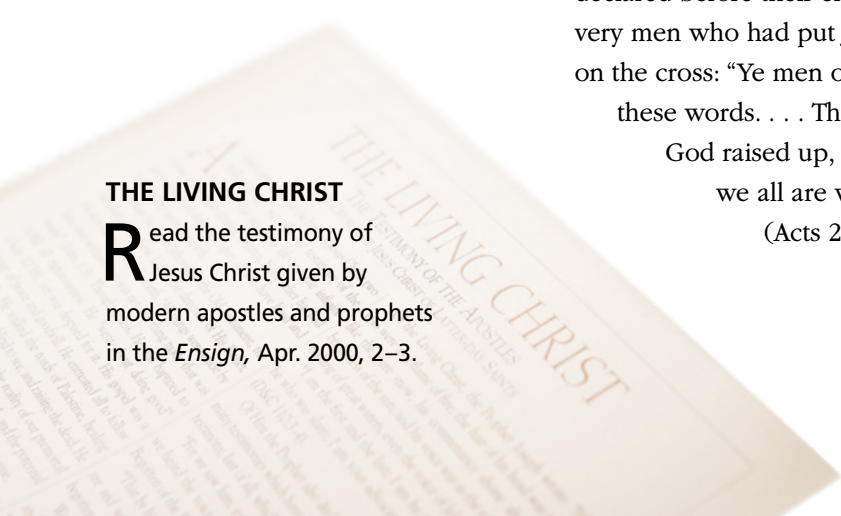
Eighteen hundred years after Jesus died upon the cross, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared that the risen Lord appeared to him, saying: "I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). . . .

If Joseph Smith's testimony stood alone, it would be, as Christ said of His testimony when He spoke of Himself, of no avail; but Jesus had God's testimony and that of the Apostles. And Joseph Smith had other witnesses [who] corroborated [his] testimony, the truth of which was made known by the appearance to them of the angel Moroni. . . .

. . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [also] proclaims the glorious vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith:

THE LIVING CHRIST

Read the testimony of Jesus Christ given by modern apostles and prophets in the *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2–3.





world that Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world! No true follower is satisfied to accept Him merely as a great reformer, the ideal teacher, or even as the one perfect man. The Man of Galilee is—not figuratively, but *literally*—the Son of the living God. . . .

Truly Born Again

No man can sincerely resolve to apply in his daily life the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth without sensing a change in his whole being. The phrase “born again” has a deeper significance than what many people attach to it. . . . Happy is the person who has truly sensed the uplifting, transforming power that comes from this nearness to the Savior, this kinship to the living Christ. I am thankful that I know that Christ is my Redeemer. . . .

The message of the Resurrection . . . is the most comforting, the most glorious ever given to man, for when death takes a loved one from us, our sorrowing hearts are assuaged by the hope and divine assurance expressed in the words: “*He is not here; he is risen!*” [see Matthew 28:6; Mark 16:6].

With all my soul I know that death is conquered by Jesus Christ, and because our Redeemer lives, so shall we. ■

Subheads altered; capitalization and punctuation standardized.

“And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!” (D&C 76:22). . . .

In the light of such unimpeachable testimonies as given by the ancient Apostles—testimonies dating from a few years subsequent to the event itself—in the light of that most marvelous revelation in this age of the living Christ, it seems difficult indeed to understand how men can still reject Him and can doubt the immortality of man.

What We Need Today

An unwavering faith in Christ is the most important need of the world today. It is more than a mere feeling. It is power that moves into action, and should be in human life the most basic of all motivating forces. . . .

If only men would “do His will,” instead of looking hopelessly at the dark and gloomy tomb, they would turn their eyes heavenward and know that Christ is risen! . . .

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declares to all the

SING YOUR FAVORITE HYMN

I had just given birth to our daughter, Rebekah. My labor had been intense, and I was exhausted.

When Rebekah was placed in my arms, I had the overwhelming feeling that I should sing my favorite hymn, “I Am a Child of God” (*Hymns*, no. 301). My initial response was, “No, I’m too tired. I’ll sing it to her later.” But then the thought came again. So, though I was exhausted, I began singing the first verse. My husband and my mother joined me.

When we finished the song, I felt a special feeling in the room. Even the doctor, who until that point had been professional and rather aloof, had tears streaming down her face. She thanked us for singing such a beautiful song. She said that in all the years she had been delivering

babies, she had never felt as she did at that moment.

I reflected on that experience and wondered if I should find a recording of the hymn and give it to her. Unfortunately, I became busy with life and forgot about it.

Then the day arrived for my postpartum checkup. As the doctor walked into the room, her face lit up, and she gave me a hug. She said she hadn’t been able to get that song out of her mind and had even tried to find the music on the Internet so she could sing it to her family. That’s when the Holy Ghost reminded me that I should have gotten a copy of the music for her. I promised her that within the week I would be back with the music.

That night I

prayed for help to find the arrangement of the song that would be best for her. The next afternoon I ordered a CD that features the song. When it arrived in the mail a few days later, I couldn’t wait to give it to her.

She was thrilled to receive it and thanked me for the gift. She told me that she wasn’t sure why, but this song was very important for her to share with her family. As we continued to talk, I shared with her not only my love for the song but also my testimony of the simple truths it teaches.

As I drove home that day, I felt the love of our Heavenly Father for one of His daughters—my doctor. He knows and loves her, and He wants her to understand that she too can return to live with Him once more. ■

Angela Olsen Center, Ohio, USA

When we finished the song, the doctor, who until that point had been professional and rather aloof, had tears streaming down her face.



Why would Heavenly Father not “always” watch over us and warn us?



HIS PROMISE OF ALWAYS

As I sat in sacrament meeting pondering the prayer on the bread, the words kept repeating themselves in my mind: “that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (Moroni 4:3; D&C 20:77).

“Always,” it said—not just at certain times. Why, then, several months earlier, had my husband and I not been prompted regarding how to protect our 11-year-old son before he was killed in a bicycle-automobile accident? Why would Heavenly Father not “always” watch over us and warn us?

I had been taught in Primary and believed that the Holy Ghost would protect us. He would use the still, small voice to watch over, guide, and warn us of danger. This thought had been in my mind since Ben had

passed away. I missed him very much, and my heart ached for understanding and peace.

Where was my warning voice? Where was the Holy Ghost? I felt that we were doing our best to be righteous. We paid our tithing, attended our meetings, and served whenever we were asked. We were far from perfect, but we held family home evening and scripture study. We were trying.

About this time I was sitting in a Relief Society class when the teacher told a story of a close relative. While waiting at a stoplight, the relative had felt a distinct impression to stay where she was as the light turned green. She heeded the prompting, and almost immediately a large truck came barreling through the intersection, running a red light. Had she not heard and obeyed that voice, she and her children might have been hurt or even killed.

This story hit me hard, but as I sat in my chair in tears preparing to stand and leave the room, a great comfort washed over me. I felt peace that the Holy Ghost had indeed been with me. In my case He had not been there as a warning voice but as a comforter.

From the time of Ben’s accident, I had felt strength beyond my own and had been comforted by my Heavenly Father’s love. I lacked understanding at times of why certain things happen, but I had never doubted His love.

I have faith that God understands all things and will never leave me comfortless. The Holy Ghost plays many roles in our lives. He can protect us, but He also guides us, comforts us, teaches us, and provides understanding and other blessings.

I learned that Heavenly Father does keep His promises. He had “always” been with me. ■

Robyn Casper, Utah, USA



I noticed two boys about five and seven years old running through the store parking lot with tears streaming down their faces.

THE SPIRIT WHISPERED TO ME

“Hey, guys! Come back!” a frantic voice called out.

I turned to notice two boys about five and seven years old running through the store parking lot with tears streaming down their faces. The salesman looked concerned as he called to them.

As I turned back toward my car, the Spirit whispered, “You can be of help here.” The whisper was quiet yet so clear that a moment later I was running through the parking lot toward the boys.

I found the older one standing by a brown minivan. I approached and knelt beside him.

“Hi. My name is Christina. Are you OK?”

At my words, he cried harder and hid his face in his arm. The salesman and the other boy joined us.

“I think they only speak French,” the salesman told me. “We just found

them running through the store, lost.”

I repeated my introduction to the children in French. French was my first language, but I hadn’t spoken it since I was adopted into an English-speaking family as a small child. Normally, my French is poor. At that moment, though, it was neither clumsy nor stilted. The words were clear in my mind and my voice as I comforted the boys.

Between sobs, the older boy explained in a quick torrent of words that he and his brother could not find their parents anywhere in the store and had run outside looking for them. As I listened, I became vaguely aware of how amazing it was that I was not only conversing freely in French but also readily understanding and consoling two frightened children.

“They’ve lost their parents and want to wait for them here at their car,” I told the salesman. The little boy told

me the names of his parents, which I gave to the salesman so he could page them. A few minutes later the boy spotted his father coming out of the store and ran to meet him.

As I followed the boy to his father, I found that I could no longer manage even a good-bye in French. I tried in vain to say anything the boys could understand, but I could say nothing more than a few random words. Finally, I resorted to English, saying to the boy, “Bye. It was nice to meet you.”

As I left the boys with their parents, I was full of gratitude. Heavenly Father had worked through me to comfort two of His little ones. I was humbled that the Lord could magnify my limited abilities to fulfill His purposes. I was grateful to witness what can happen as we offer ourselves to Him when called upon, even in the most unlikely of settings. ■

Christina Albrecht Earhart, Washington, USA

WE MUST GO TO THE TEMPLE NOW!

One Sunday morning a recently baptized member was introduced to the ward. Her name was Lydia. She won our hearts at once.

Lydia was older and blind from years of battling diabetes. She quickly came to know ward members by their voices and footsteps. She would say our names and shake our hands, and we never alluded to the fact that she was blind.

After the required year's wait, Lydia met with the bishop and the stake president to receive her temple recommend. In Relief Society one Sunday, she pulled me down beside her and exclaimed, "The stake president told me I must go to the temple as soon as possible. Will you take me?"

It was the first week of December—busy times were upon all of us. I tried to make the usual excuses and said, "Couldn't we wait until January?"

"No, we must go now!"

"The stake president told me I must go to the temple as soon as possible," Lydia said. "Will you take me?"

A group of women from the ward went to the temple every month, so I approached them about making the trip with Lydia. They were also very busy. But Lydia, with tears in her eyes, again told us the stake president had told her to go as soon as possible.

At that we all agreed to make the 150-mile (241 km) trip the following week. On the way, we filled the van with the chatter and friendship of eight women. Lydia was overjoyed by her temple experience and the blessing of receiving her endowment.

The first week of January, Lydia's condition worsened and she entered the hospital for emergency care. A week

later she was gone. But Lydia went with the eternal blessings she had received in the temple just a few weeks earlier.

Later I related to the stake president the story of our trip and told him how impressed I was that he had felt prompted to tell Lydia she must go to the temple immediately.

"I really didn't mean she must go now," he responded. "I always tell new recommend holders to go to the temple soon. The Spirit spoke to Lydia, not me!"

Lydia taught us all to listen to the Spirit and to act upon it immediately.

I am thankful for her reminder to listen to the still, small voice. ■

Mary Holmes Ewen, California, USA



This month marks 100 years since the First Presidency encouraged members to have family home evening. The following excerpt comes from the First Presidency letter introducing family home evening. It was released in April 1915 and printed in the Improvement Era in June 1915 (pages 733–34). Capitalization and punctuation have been modernized.

Dear Brethren and Sisters:
We counsel the Latter-day Saints to observe more closely the commandment of the Lord given in the 68th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

“And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion . . . that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents; . . .

“And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord” [see D&C 68:25–28].

The children of Zion should also observe more fully the commandment of the Lord given to ancient Israel and reiterated to the Latter-day Saints:

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” [Exodus 20:12].

These revelations apply with great force to the Latter-day Saints, and it is required of fathers and mothers in this Church that these commandments shall be taught and applied in their homes.

To this end we advise and urge the inauguration of a “home evening”

throughout the Church, at which time fathers and mothers may gather their boys and girls about them in the home and teach them the word of the Lord. They may thus learn more fully the needs and requirements of their families, at the same time familiarizing themselves and their children more thoroughly with the principles of the

refreshments of such a nature as may be largely prepared in the home might be served.

Formality and stiffness should be studiously avoided, and all the family should participate in the exercises.

These gatherings will furnish opportunities for mutual confidence between parents and children,

between brothers and sisters, as well as give opportunity for words of warning, counsel, and advice by parents to their boys and girls. They will provide opportunity for the boys and girls to honor father and mother and to show their appreciation of the blessings of home so that the promise of the Lord to them may be literally fulfilled and their lives be prolonged and made happy. . . .

We . . . encourage the young people to remain at home that evening and use their energies in making it instructive, profitable, and interesting.

If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influences and temptations which beset them.

Your brethren,
JOSEPH F. SMITH
ANTHON H. LUND
CHARLES W. PENROSE
First Presidency ■

100 YEARS OF Family Home Evening



gospel of Jesus Christ. This home evening should be devoted to prayer, singing hymns, songs, instrumental music, scripture reading, family topics, and specific instruction on the principles of the gospel and on the ethical problems of life, as well as the duties and obligations of children to parents, the home, the Church, society, and the nation. For the smaller children, appropriate recitations, songs, stories, and games may be introduced. Light

INSIGHTS



How can I make family home evening a priority?

“While you are working to strengthen your family and cultivate peace, remember . . . weekly family home evening. Be cautious not to make your family home evening just an afterthought of a busy day. Decide that on Monday night your family will be together at home for the evening. Do not let employment demands, sports, extracurricular activities, homework, or anything else become more important than that time you spend together at home with your family. The structure of your evening is not as important as the time invested. The gospel should be taught both formally and informally. Make it a meaningful experience for each member of the family.”



In Church Magazines

Ensign: This year marks the 100th anniversary of family home evening (see pages 10 and 80). To help the Church celebrate, share your family home evening experiences, photos, and short videos at lds.org/go/EnsignFHE100 beginning April 27, 2015.



New Era: This month, youth can learn from the events of the Savior's last week (page 24). They'll also see what promises we have been given by prophets if we will do four simple things (page 11). And youth are given encouragement and advice in talking to adults about problems and challenges (page 20).

Friend: How can you teach children about being kind? Read the story "April's New Wheelchair" (page 4) and do the activity on page 6. We can show our love for Jesus by the way we treat others. Set a goal to do "random acts of kindness" for a month!

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS