

Ensign



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Workers set up a sign at the construction site of the Bern Switzerland Temple. The temple was dedicated in September 1955 by President David O. McKay. It was the first temple built outside of North America and the first to present the ordinances in languages other than English.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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Ensign

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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.*



"Discipleship," page 47. What does it
mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? After
reading this poem as a family, you might

discuss ways you can
be disciples of Jesus
Christ. You might
think of ideas to draw
closer to the Savior, like
finding opportunities to
serve refugees in your
community, learning
about the Savior's life
during scripture study,
babysitting for a couple
so that they can attend
the temple, or reaching
out to a friend in need.
You could also watch
the new Easter video,
"Prince of Peace," found
at mormon.org/easter
and ponder the impor-
tance of Christ and
His Resurrection in our
lives (see the poster on
page 40).

**"The Old Family Album: The Power of
Family Stories,"** page 56. Before family home
evening, consider preparing a few stories

about your ancestors or
about significant events
from your immediate
family members' lives.
Together read the story
on page 56 about the
grandfather who danced
at his own funeral. Split
into two or more groups,
and give each group one
of the prepared family
history stories. Have
each group prepare a
short skit based on the
story, and then perform
for each other. Discuss
how these stories can
continue to influence the
lives of your family. Visit
FamilySearch.org to learn
how to attach memories
and stories to people in
your family tree.

LESSONS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

We began holding family home
evenings when our girls were
one and two years old. The first
time, our lesson was too long and
complicated. So the next week I
brought 10 different pictures of
Jesus. We studied each picture
briefly and then I asked, "Who is
this?" "Jesus," we all answered.
The lesson lasted about three
minutes. The following Monday,
we had a similar lesson but with
temples. "What is this?" "Temple."
Another success! When we went
to church, my two-year-old pointed
to a picture on the wall and said,
"Look, Mommy, temple!" Silently
I rejoiced.

Cynthia Green, California, USA

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Article" link on our web page.



**By President
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in the
First Presidency

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH

The Rabbi and the Soap Maker

There is an old Jewish tale about a soap maker who did not believe in God. One day as he was walking with a rabbi, he said, “There is something I cannot understand. We have had religion for thousands of years. But everywhere you look there is evil, corruption, dishonesty, injustice, pain, hunger, and violence. It appears that religion has not improved the world at all. So I ask you, what good is it?”

The rabbi did not answer for a time but continued walking with the soap maker. Eventually they approached a playground where children, covered in dust, were playing in the dirt.

“There is something I don’t understand,” the rabbi said. “Look at those children. We have had soap for thousands of years, and yet those children are filthy. What good is soap?”

The soap maker replied, “But rabbi, it isn’t fair to blame soap for these dirty children. Soap has to be used before it can accomplish its purpose.”

The rabbi smiled and said, “Exactly.”

How Shall We Live?

The Apostle Paul, quoting an Old Testament prophet, summarized what it means to be a believer when he wrote, “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17).

Perhaps in this simple statement we understand the difference between a religion that is frail and ineffectual and one that has the power to transform lives.

But to understand what it means to live by faith, we must understand what faith is.

Faith is more than belief. It is complete trust in God accompanied by action.

It is more than wishing.

It is more than merely sitting back, nodding our heads, and saying we agree. When we say “the just shall *live by faith*,” we mean we are guided and directed by our faith. We *act* in a manner that is consistent with our faith—not out of a sense of thoughtless obedience but out of a confident and sincere love for our God and for the priceless wisdom He has revealed to His children.

Faith must be accompanied by action; else it has no life (see James 2:17). It is not faith at all. It doesn’t have the power to change a single individual, let alone the world.

Men and women of faith trust in their merciful Heavenly Father—even during times of uncertainty, even during times of doubt and adversity when they may not see perfectly or understand clearly.

Men and women of faith earnestly walk the path of discipleship and strive to follow the example of their beloved Savior, Jesus Christ. Faith motivates and, indeed, inspires us to incline our hearts to heaven and to actively reach out, lift up, and bless our fellowmen.

Religion without action is like soap that remains in the box. It may have wondrous potential, but in reality it has little power to make a difference until it fulfills its intended purpose. The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of action. The Church of Jesus Christ teaches true religion as a message of hope, faith, and charity, including helping our fellowmen in spiritual and temporal ways.



President Uchtdorf and his daughter, Antje, visited refugees in a camp near Athens, Greece.

A few months ago, my wife, Harriet, and I were on a family trip with some of our children in the Mediterranean area. We visited some refugee camps and met with families from war-torn countries. These people were not of our faith, but they were our brothers and sisters and they urgently needed help. Our hearts were deeply touched when we experienced firsthand how the active faith of our Church members brings help, relief, and hope to our fellowmen in need, regardless of their religion, nationality, or education.

Faith yoked with consistent action fills the heart with kindness, the mind with wisdom and understanding, and the soul with peace and love.

Our faith can bless and righteously influence both us and those around us.

Our faith can fill the world with goodness and peace.

Our faith can transform hatred into love and enemies into friends.

The just, then, live by acting in

faith; they live by trusting in God and walking in His way.

And that is the sort of faith that can transform individuals, families, nations, and the world. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Uchtdorf explains that faith is more than just an expression of belief. True faith in Heavenly Father and in Jesus Christ requires action, and living by faith has the power to transform lives and homes. You could invite those you teach to share moments when they have seen the blessings and power of living by faith—from either personal examples or observations of others. Encourage them to pray for guidance to know how to better live the gospel.

Serving Others in Faith

President Uchtdorf tells us that our faith in God *must* be “accompanied by action.” When our faith is “yoked with consistent action,” he explains, it “fills . . . the soul with peace and love.” With the promise of this blessing, we *can* make a difference, and we can see this in our lives if we take the time to do faith-filled service. You could pray each morning to ask the Lord for help in serving others. For instance, ask Him to show you when a sibling needs help with a chore or when a friend needs a compliment. Then, when you receive a prompting, act on it! If you make these prayers and this service a habit, then your faithful, consistent action will bless your life and the lives of others. President Uchtdorf promises that you “can transform individuals, families, nations, and the world.”



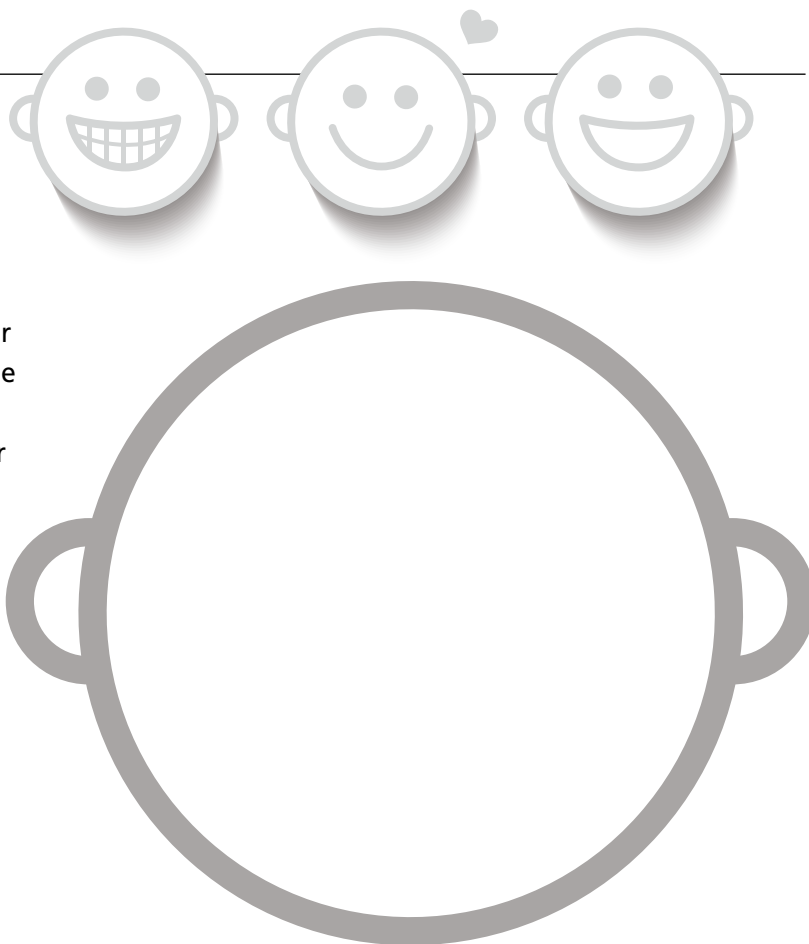
CHILDREN

Trust

Try this activity with a friend. You’ll have to trust and follow their directions carefully.

With a pen or pencil in your hand, close your eyes. Let your friend tell you where to draw the eyes, nose, mouth, and hair on this face. Then take a look. How did it turn out? You can color in the face and draw another to play again!

Sometimes it’s hard to follow directions. But when we try to follow Heavenly Father by listening to the Holy Ghost, He will help us. We can always trust Him.



Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?

The more we as sisters understand that the oath and covenant of the priesthood applies to us personally, the more we will embrace the blessings and promises of the priesthood.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “All who have made sacred covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has.”¹

The blessings and promises of the oath and covenant of the priesthood pertain to both men and women. Sister Sheri L. Dew, former counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, said, “The fulness of the priesthood contained in the highest

ordinances of the house of the Lord can be received only by a man and woman together.”²

Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President, has issued this call: “I invite you to memorize the oath and covenant of the priesthood, which can be found in Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–44. By doing so, I promise you that the Holy Ghost will expand your understanding of the priesthood and inspire and uplift you in wonderful ways.”³

Joseph Smith’s instructions to the Relief Society were intended to prepare women to “come in possession of the privileges & blessings & gifts of the priesthood.” This would be accomplished through the ordinances of the temple.

“Temple ordinances [are] priesthood ordinances, but they [do] not bestow ecclesiastical office on men or women. [These ordinances fulfill] the Lord’s promise that his people—women and men—would be ‘endowed with power from on high’ [D&C 38:32].”⁴

Additional Scriptures and Information
Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–40; 121:45–46; reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 32.
2. Sheri L. Dew, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 128.
3. Linda K. Burton, “Priesthood Power—Available to All,” *Ensign*, June 2014, 39–40.
4. “Joseph Smith’s Teachings about Priesthood, Temple, and Women,” Gospel Topics, topics.lds.org.



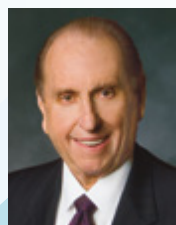
Faith
Family
Relief



Consider This

What can you do to more fully understand and access the promised blessings of the oath and covenant of the priesthood?





YOUR PERSONAL LIAHONA

"Your blessing is not to be folded neatly and tucked away. It is not to be framed or published. Rather, it is to be read. It is to be loved. It is to be followed. Your patriarchal blessing will see you through the darkest night. It will guide you through life's dangers. . . . Your patriarchal blessing is to you a personal Liahona to chart your course and guide your way."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Your Patriarchal Blessing: A Liahona of Light," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 66.



Understanding Your Patriarchal Blessing



By Allie Arnell and Margaret Willden

Life is full of uncharted waters: *Where should I go to school? What should I study? Should I go on a mission? Whom should I marry?* If you were given a personal map to navigate the decisions of life, would you follow it?

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have given us such a map—patriarchal blessings—to give us direction in our lives. Though we are given the gift of agency to make decisions of our own free will, patriarchal blessings can shed light on what paths will bring the greatest happiness.

But simply having a map isn't enough. We must study, understand, and apply the meaning within the map. Likewise, as you come to understand the language used in your patriarchal blessing—your own personal guide to life—you will be able to discern who you are in God's eyes and what you can become.

Discover Your Lineage

First and foremost, your patriarchal blessing declares your lineage, or the specific tribe of the twelve tribes of Jacob (who was later called Israel) to which you belong. Though we are not all literal descendants of Jacob, the scriptures teach us that Church members are adopted into the house of Israel: "For as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father" (Abraham 2:10).

Shelisa Schroepel of Utah, USA, says, "Knowing that I'm from the house of Jacob helps me understand my purpose in this life and why I'm called to certain callings in the Church."

Your patriarchal blessing may also describe any related blessings that accompany your particular tribe. For instance, many members of the Church belong to the tribe of Ephraim, a tribe that has the unique responsibility to

Identifying the parts of your blessing can help you find direction for your life.

spread the message of the restored gospel to the world (see Deuteronomy 33:13–17; D&C 133:26–34).

Find Personal Counsel

When used properly, a map keeps a traveler from becoming lost. Similarly, on this earthly journey, your patriarchal blessing may offer counsel and direction for your life. Your patriarchal



TIPS FOR STUDY

- Identify counsel, warnings, talents, and promises in your patriarchal blessing. Pray about how they might apply to you in your current stage of life.
- Study your blessing thoroughly and often throughout your life. The same sentence can have multiple meanings to you at different times.
- Remember that a patriarchal blessing doesn't mention every aspect of your life. Even if an important goal isn't mentioned in your blessing, it can still be an important thing to strive for.
- Be obedient to the gospel. The blessings in your patriarchal blessing are contingent upon your righteousness.
- Set goals to seek the gifts and develop the talents mentioned in your blessing.
- Reflect on where you are headed in life and where you eventually want to be. How do your goals align with your patriarchal blessing?
- Consider making a copy of your patriarchal blessing to use for study. You can write insights, highlight words that stand out, and note scriptures that relate to your blessing.

blessing doesn't simply tell you what to do, but it can offer personalized insights about which paths—if pursued in faith—can help you know when you're aligning your life with Heavenly Father's will. As you study your patriarchal blessing and seek to live in a manner that invites the Spirit of the Lord, you can find safety, joy, and direction.

Gabriel Paredes of Lima, Peru, says, "Some of the counsel that was given to me in my blessing I have only been able to fully apply with my family after being sealed to my wife.

"Recently we had been wondering what we could do to strengthen and build our new family. Our question was answered through my patriarchal blessing. In it I am advised to prioritize respect, tolerance, and love in my family, because these are some of the important foundations of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"As we have focused on this, my wife and I have been able to overcome problems. We still have occasional challenges as a family, but we're happy. I felt like the Lord was reminding me how I could have the family that He promised me. I know that the Lord speaks through patriarchal blessings and that the counsel in them is to be used in our lives."

Heed Admonitions

A map won't necessarily mark every hazard along the way, but fortunately, patriarchal blessings often

sound warnings to protect us along the way. Some of these admonitions help protect us from Satan's influence; others might enlighten us on how we can overcome the natural man within us.

For Caitlin Carr of Utah, some of the admonitions in her patriarchal blessing weren't immediately clear, but later study of her blessing yielded new insights.

"When I received my patriarchal blessing, I was warned about people who would try and sway me from the truth with pleasing talk. I didn't think much of it; I had a firm belief in the doctrines I'd been taught.

"However, the following year I was confronted with ideas and philosophies that, on the surface, seemed rooted in fairness and love but were not. These messages seemed to be coming from everywhere: the media, school, even close friends. Even though I knew these philosophies were contrary to God's plan, I found myself wanting to support both these new worldly ideas *and* the Church. I soon realized that 'no man can serve two masters' (Matthew 6:24) and that I shouldn't rely on the wisdom of men. Heavenly Father resolved my doubts through the scriptures and spoke peace to my mind and heart. As a result, my testimony has been strengthened and I have become more firm in defending that which I know to be true."

Develop Gifts and Talents

Your patriarchal blessing can also mention spiritual gifts and talents that the Lord has given you to build up His kingdom. If your blessing mentions a talent that is unfamiliar to you, this could be because you may not yet have had the chance to discover or develop this talent. Through diligent seeking and the help of the Lord, you can grow to embody this talent and many more.

Developing your talents helps you recognize the unique things you contribute to the Lord's work. Johanna Blackwell of California, USA, ponders the gifts and talents in her blessing when she feels tempted to compare herself with others: "As I look over the words in my patriarchal blessing, I am reminded that I have been blessed with the gifts I've personally needed to overcome trials and participate in the hastening of the Lord's work.

"My blessing tells me of my ability to love, forgive, and have the courage to mingle with those around me. As I've practiced these gifts, the Lord has blessed me with an increased desire to encounter and connect with new people and cultures. Consequently, my testimony has grown that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father, and I've been able to serve others as we each seek to become more like Christ."

Seek Promised Blessings

Lastly, our patriarchal blessings reveal Heavenly Father's promised blessings to us if we remain faithful to Him. There is no guarantee as to when these promises will be fulfilled, but we can know that as long as we obediently live the gospel, they will be fulfilled, whether in this life or the next.

Sergio Gutierrez of Nevada, USA, relies on a promise in his patriarchal

blessing whenever he feels worried about his future career plans: "At times I feel anxious about the uncertainty in my future, but there is a promise in my patriarchal blessing that always sets my mind at ease. This promise helps me know that as long as I work hard and remain faithful, I will have the necessary resources to be able to care for my family and to build up the Church. I don't know exactly what career path I want to pursue yet, but having this promise gives me faith and confidence."

If you've ever wondered what Heavenly Father's will is for you, you're not alone. The Lord understood that you would be faced with many different paths you could pursue in your life, so He has provided you with a personal map to keep your life aligned with His gospel. Patriarchal blessings can't make our decisions for us, but they can lead us to our own personal revelation. Through our patriarchal blessings, we are shown how we fit into the Lord's plan to gather Israel by learning of our tribe; we are given personal counsel, admonitions, and promises; and we are taught about the unique gifts and talents Heavenly Father has given us to serve Him. As long as you try to live in accordance with all of these elements of your own patriarchal blessing, you can know that your decisions have been within the Lord's will for your life. ■

The authors live in Illinois, USA, and New York, USA, respectively.



The Lord has provided you with a personal map to keep your life aligned with His gospel.

Praying for Comfort

By Mackenzie Brown

I was home alone on a Friday. I had been invited by some friends to go to a dance, and I had given a tentative “maybe”—I wasn’t sure if I felt like going anywhere. Looking around my darkened apartment a few hours before I had to go, I decided to start reading a book to pass the time. Eagerly I cracked open the book and snuggled into my favorite reading blanket.

The time seemed to fly by, and in no time at all I had turned the last page of my book. Somewhat ruefully, I looked at the clock again. It was a while after my friends would have left for the dance. I had missed my opportunity to go with them. I twiddled my thumbs for a moment, trying to think of ways to fill my time. I had finished my homework, the house was relatively clean, and my best friend was with her boyfriend.

I frowned, and unexpectedly a wave of loneliness crashed over me. Looking around my empty apartment, I suddenly felt so alone. It had been a rough year. My friends had left for missions, my longtime boyfriend had broken up with me, and I didn’t get along with my roommates. As I

sat there, the thought kept running through my mind: “No one cares about you. No one really knows you. You’re alone.”

I tried to ignore the thought. I knew it was untrue. I had a great family and some really good, close friends. I wasn’t alone! But the thought wouldn’t go away, and I felt my forced positivity get swallowed up in sadness.

In my room, I curled up on my bed, trying hard not to cry. I hated feeling weak, like I couldn’t handle my problems. But try as I might, I couldn’t stop the tears from coming. I sat there for a few moments, feeling sorry for myself. Then the thought popped into my head: “You’re never alone. Why haven’t you been talking to Heavenly Father?”

As I considered the thought, I knew I should probably pray, but I felt silly and childish. I didn’t want Him to see me so weak. Another thought came to me: “Do you think He can’t see you already? Do you think He won’t understand?”

Chagrined, I got to my knees. I bowed my head and humbly explained to Him how I was feeling. I described how comfortable I felt at home, how I felt tired after being out

The thought popped into my head: “Why haven’t you been talking to Heavenly Father?”

with people. I explained how I had decided to stay home even though I knew I was lonely and would have a good time with my friends. I described how I felt. Humbly I asked for comfort and love.

I said these words and immediately heard a knock at the door. I hurriedly closed my prayer and got up. I opened the door and was greeted by big smiles and hugs. My friends hadn’t left for the dance yet after all!

I ended up going to the dance and having a great time, but that wasn’t the most important part of that night to me. I had always had a pretty strong testimony of prayer, but up

until that moment, I hadn't realized how stale and repetitive my daily prayers had become. When I opened up my heart to my Heavenly Father and really told Him what was going on, I was blessed with real and personal comfort—the kind I had been missing in my life.

Later, I was reading my scriptures and came across this passage: “Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come

unto thee” (Job 22:21). Building a strong relationship with Heavenly Father is key to experiencing peace and happiness here on earth. When I don't talk to my Heavenly Father and listen to His voice through promptings, scripture, and modern-day revelation, I am cutting myself off from the happiness and blessings I could receive from Him.

I will always remember that moment as the experience that taught

me how much God truly loves me and knows me. Even when my prayers aren't always answered so immediately, I can always feel the difference in my life when I take the time to talk to Him. I know that He will always be there for me when I turn to Him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

For more on the blessings of prayer, watch the Mormon Messages for Youth video “Origin” (lds.org/go/originE417) and the Mormon Messages video “Prayer” (lds.org/go/prayerE417). See also the 2017 Mutual theme songs and music video at lds.org/go/themeE417.



Young Women— MISSION or NOT?

SMALL, QUIET ASSURANCES

By Lynne Crandall

Growing up I never wanted to serve a full-time mission. Talking to strangers about the gospel and inviting people to change their lives sounded too scary. But as I got closer to being old enough to go, I started thinking about it more and more. I wanted other people to have the blessings of the gospel, but I wasn't sure I wanted to serve a mission. I decided that if Heavenly Father wanted me to serve, I would do it—but I desired a loud and clear answer. I soon learned that receiving revelation doesn't always work that way, but that doesn't mean God leaves our prayers unanswered.

There was no lightning-bolt answer to my many prayers about serving a mission. However, over time I felt

many small, quiet assurances that serving a mission would be a good thing for me to do. I remember feeling a strong desire to serve God while studying the scriptures one day. Then during a Sunday School class, I felt the Spirit when the teacher talked about how serving a mission had blessed his family. I also felt peace while sitting quietly in the temple and thinking about serving a mission.

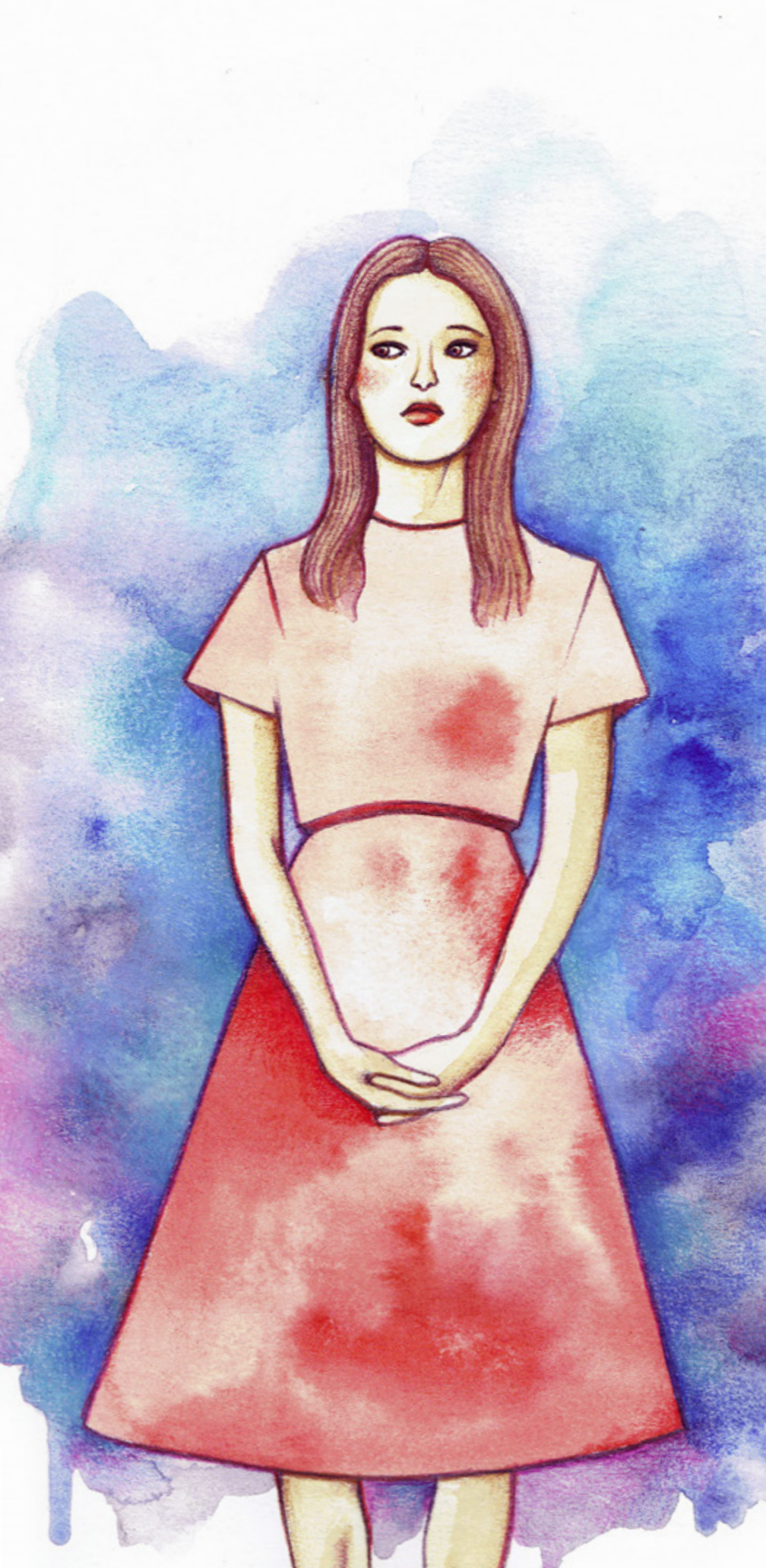
I hadn't fully committed to serving a mission yet, but I knew I needed to act. So I scheduled an appointment with my bishop to start filling out my papers. After my interview, I called my parents and told them my thoughts. As I talked to them, I felt the Spirit confirm that I had made a good choice.

I never got the big, showy answer I wanted, but I felt that the combination of my positive experiences constituted an answer. I put my trust in the Lord, worked with my local leaders to have



a missionary recommendation submitted, and was called to serve in the Canada Toronto Mission.

Preparing to leave on my mission was an exciting time, but my fears and doubts didn't magically disappear. To help me prepare, I watched *The District*, a video series used to help train missionaries. The videos showed



the day-to-day lives of real missionaries and probably helped a lot of future missionaries be excited about serving a mission, but seeing what missionaries actually did just made me more anxious. One episode showed a new missionary giving the Book of Mormon to someone on the street. I remember sitting on my bed thinking, “Oh no. What have I gotten myself into?”

I remembered the small spiritual experiences I’d had that helped me decide to go, but I started wondering: Were those small experiences really my answer? Were they enough? Despite my questions, I chose to trust the good feelings I’d experienced earlier and entered the missionary training center a few months later.

Even in the MTC I still had fears and doubts. I met a lot of missionaries who told stories about how they received a clear, distinct impression from God that they needed to serve a mission. I didn’t feel I had ever received a distinct answer of confirmation like that, and I wondered if it mattered to Heavenly Father that I was there.

Gradually I learned that I wasn’t serving a mission for me. I was there to serve Heavenly Father by serving His children. As I came to understand more about the gospel and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, my desire to share the gospel increased, and I was less anxious about talking to strangers about the gospel or inviting people to

change. I was no longer concerned by the different ways missionaries had received answers from God. My fears and doubts didn't matter anymore because I saw how the gospel blessed the people I loved and served.

The people I served weren't the only ones who were blessed. I received priceless blessings as well. Most important, my testimony of and faith in Jesus Christ were strengthened, and I came home with a greater desire to live His gospel.

I'm grateful I didn't receive the big, loud answer I wanted about serving a mission. Because I learned that God answered prayers with quiet impressions, I was able to recognize the impressions I received while serving my mission and have confidence they were from God. I was also able to help the people I taught recognize their answers from God, which often came gently and quietly. It turns out the impressions I had early on in my decision-making process hadn't led me astray. Serving a mission was a good thing for me to do. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

AN ANSWER THAT WAS HARD TO ACCEPT

By **Bethany Bartholomew**
Church Magazines

The historic announcement had been made lowering the age that

young women could serve missions,¹ and thousands had been called. Over the next two years, I would see many friends leave to serve the Lord as full-time sister missionaries.

Caught up in the excitement, I wondered if I should serve too. I knew it would be hard, but I admired those sisters who courageously served away from their families for 18 months, sometimes learning an unfamiliar language.

But after I prayed and fasted, I felt that I shouldn't go.

I had tried to be humble and follow the Lord's plan for me, and I was relieved to have an answer. But then my friends started returning from their missions, and I saw the incredible blessings in their lives because of their service. They all seemed different—in a good way. I loved having spiritual conversations with my roommates who had served



missions, and I loved hearing mission experiences in Church.

However, I found myself feeling a little jealous. Wasn't I good enough to have those same experiences? I wondered if maybe I hadn't listened well enough when I prayed about a mission.

I prayed and fasted some more. Again the answer: *Not right now.*

I tried to move forward, trusting I had received God's answer, but it wasn't long before doubt set in again. It felt like young men were noticing the amazing changes I was seeing in my friends as well. Certainly I had had amazing spiritual experiences through callings, college, and work, but I began to feel like I had to compete with the mission stories and experiences—and I couldn't even keep the difference between a zone and a district straight in my mind.

I even heard about young men who said they wouldn't marry a young woman who hadn't served a mission. I started to panic. Was that why some of the guys I had gone out with recently had lost interest in me after just a few dates?

In desperation I prayed again. Still, I felt that I shouldn't go.

It was so hard to accept. For a time I felt like everyone around me was either going on a mission or getting married and that I was stuck in some kind of in-between space. At one point I even felt that I *should* go on a mission. I started



NO YOUNG WOMAN SHOULD BE JUDGED FOR NOT SERVING A MISSION

"President Monson never intended for all of the young women in the Church to go on missions by dropping [the] age [to 19]. We're very grateful for those who go. It's changed the face of the Church. . . . But we do not want anyone feeling inadequate or left out or undignified or tarnished because she did not choose to serve a mission. And we're a little irritated with young men who say, 'Well, I'm not going to date you because you didn't serve a mission.' . . . We do not want that kind of climate over dating or marriages. . . . It isn't our place to pass a judgment."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Face to Face* broadcast, Mar. 8, 2016, facetoface.lds.org.

to prepare. I even canceled my contract for an apartment I was going to move into with one of my best friends. But just a few days later, I felt strongly once again that Heavenly Father was asking me to wait.

Trying hard to act in faith instead of fear or frustration, I decided to evaluate why I wanted to serve. Did I want to go for the right reasons? Did I want to go so I could become more "datable"? Was it to see miracles or for self-improvement? Did I want to serve Jesus Christ and bring people to Him? Was the mission I wanted so much for Him or for me?

I fasted and prayed for the courage to be willing to grow through the experiences that Heavenly Father had planned for me if I *wasn't* supposed to serve a full-time mission right then.

After two and a half years, I finally felt at peace. Heavenly Father had a plan for me, and if I was willing to

learn and serve in the ways that *He* wanted me to, I didn't have to serve a mission to see miracles and have life-changing experiences. Those things had been happening all along the way as I kept my covenants and trusted God. With His help, I was able to stick to my decision to stay.

Soon after, I ran into the young man I would marry. I was so grateful that he didn't judge me or hesitate to date me because I had decided not to serve a mission. He loved me for the person I had become, and I loved him for the person he had become. Heavenly Father had prepared us both through our different experiences, even though mine didn't include a full-time mission. ■

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 5.

For more, see "For Young Women: Making the Mission Decision," lds.org/youth/article/for-young-women-making-the-mission-decision.

Preparing for a New Journey

By Karina Martins Pereira Correia de Lima

In the weeks leading up to my marriage and temple sealing, I started getting a little nervous about all the things I needed to do before I started my new family. Despite all the joy of that moment, I felt stressed about organizing our new routine, getting our finances in order, finding storage for our belongings, and all my new responsibilities as a wife. I wanted to make sure we started off our marriage the right way by making room in our activities for important things like keeping the commandments and spending time together as husband and wife in spite of our busy lives.

As the wedding day came closer, I was surprised by a series of nightmares involving all sorts of troubles that could affect a family. Because I come from a loving but afflicted family, threatened by constant and

intense arguments and broken hearts, the bad dreams affected me more than they should have. So one night, after several others like it, I woke up sweating and decided to follow the advice that Sister Neill F. Marriott, Second Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency, gave in her talk “Yielding Our Hearts to God” (*Ensign* Nov. 2015, 30–32). I closed my eyes and prayed, “Dear Heavenly Father, what can I do to keep these bad things away from my family?”

The answer hit me as fast and as strongly as if someone had opened a door into my head and put the thought there. The still, small voice prompted me, “Just do what you are supposed to do. Be faithful in each step.” The Spirit whispered some specific counsel, and I felt that if I did those things, everything would be fine.

Like Nephi sailing into the unknown, I needed to exercise faith in the Lord about starting a family.

I smiled and felt my chest filled with warmth. All the worries were suddenly forgotten, because I knew it was true. I had felt the Holy Ghost before, but never as strong as I did that night. I felt the love of our Heavenly Father and our Savior surround me, and I knew that the comfort and salvation of my family was as



important for Them as it was for me.

As an added assurance, a story from the scriptures came to my memory—the moment that the Lord ordered Nephi to build a ship: “And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship, *after the manner which I shall show thee*, that I may carry thy people across these waters” (1 Nephi 17:8; emphasis added).

Nephi and his family had been in the wilderness for years, enduring all sorts of tribulations. He could have felt afraid of starting a journey across the sea and let his fears become stronger than his faith. But he didn’t. He accepted and obeyed the instructions of God. He had faith that His promises would be fulfilled. The Lord never told Nephi that storms wouldn’t occur or that waves wouldn’t hit the ship. But He told Nephi that if he followed His directions, he would be able to guide his family safely across the ocean to the promised land.

I realized that I had also traveled through a wilderness for many

years, but now I was in front of the sea, preparing for a new journey: marriage. I have been called—and I think that is the case for all Latter-day Saint families—to build a ship following God’s instructions.

Once my husband and I got married, troubles did come. I got sick, and we struggled to keep our financial affairs balanced and to put into practice all the good habits we had decided to follow.

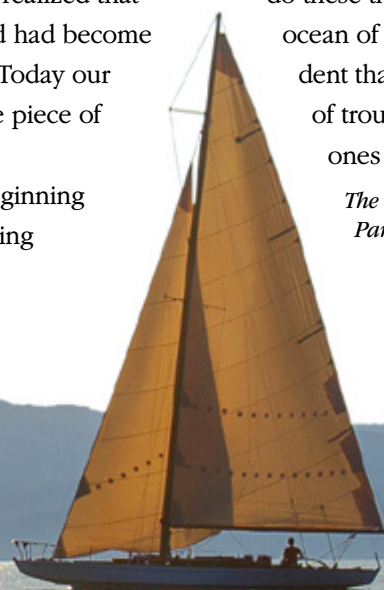
But the counsel I had received that night remained in my heart. We tried daily to learn and treasure the word of God in our hearts, to follow the good examples of our dear leaders—including Christ—and to improve our own behavior. I gained a stronger testimony of prayer and truly tasted the Father’s love for us. I started to trust more and fear less. We realized that the difficulties we faced had become steps to improvement. Today our home seems like a little piece of heaven.

We are still in the beginning of our journey, but getting

married and starting a family was the best choice I have ever made. My heart is full of joy when I think about the temple ordinance we received and know that it was sealed by God’s authority. The more I understand about the importance of the family in Heavenly Father’s plan and the sacredness of the covenant we made, the more I want to help other families receive the same ordinance.

I learned that we don’t need to worry about what is going to happen, because “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7). We simply need to be obedient, follow the instructions given through the scriptures and the words of modern-day prophets, and ask in prayer for more personal instructions. If we do these things, we can cross the ocean of these last days confident that no matter what kind of trouble hits us, our loved ones will be safe. ■

*The author lives in
Paraná, Brazil.*







**By Elder
Robert D. Hales**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

The Savior's Atonement:

FOUNDATION OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY

*We will all be resurrected and become immortal because of
the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*

The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) was asked, “What are the fundamental principles of your religion?” He answered, “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”¹

I want to give my voice to the Prophet Joseph’s statement. The center of all we believe is our Savior and His atoning sacrifice—“the condescension of God” (1 Nephi 11:16) whereby the Father sent His Son to earth to accomplish the Atonement. The central purpose for the life of Jesus Christ was to complete the atoning sacrifice. The Atonement is the foundation of true Christianity.

Why is the Savior’s Atonement the central gospel principle in the Church and in our lives?

Articles of Faith 1:3

The third article of faith reads, “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.”

“Saved” in this context refers to reaching the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom. Resurrection is granted to all who come to earth, but to receive eternal life, the full blessings of eternal progression, each person must obey the laws, receive the ordinances, and make the covenants of the gospel.

Why could Jesus Christ, and only He, atone for the sins of the world? He met all of the qualifications.

God Loved Him and Trusted Him

Jesus was born of Heavenly Parents in a premortal world. He was the Firstborn of our Heavenly Father. He was chosen from the beginning. He was obedient to His Father's will. The scriptures often speak of the joy Heavenly Father has in His Son.

In Matthew we read, "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

Luke records, "And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him" (Luke 9:35).

And at the temple in the land Bountiful following the Savior's Resurrection, the people heard the Father's voice: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (3 Nephi 11:7).

It particularly touches my heart when I read that while Jesus was suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Father, out of His great love and compassion for His Only Begotten Son, sent an angel to comfort and strengthen Him (see Luke 22:43).

Jesus Used His Agency to Obey

Jesus had to willingly give His life for us.

In the great Council in Heaven, Lucifer, "son of the morning" (Isaiah 14:12; D&C 76:26–27), said:

"Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

"But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:1–2; see also Abraham 3:27).

Because of the great love the Son has for His Father and for each of us, He said, "Send me." When He said "send me," He used His agency.

"As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . .

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.

I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:15, 17–18).

Had the Savior desired, legions of angels could have taken Him from the cross directly home to His Father. But He used His agency to sacrifice Himself for us, to complete His mission in mortality, and to endure to the end, completing the atoning sacrifice.

Jesus wanted to come to earth, and He was qualified. And when He came, He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

Jesus Was Foreordained

Peter taught that Jesus "was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (see 1 Peter 1:19–21).

Prophets in all dispensations foretold of the coming of Jesus Christ and what His mission would be. Through great faith, Enoch was shown a marvelous vision of the birth, death, Ascension, and Second Coming of the Savior:

"And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world. . . .



ECCE HOMO. BY J. KIRK RICHARDS

“And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men;

“And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and all the creations of God mourned; and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory. . . .

“And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father. . . .

“And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years” (Moses 7:47, 55–56, 59, 65).

About 75 years before the birth of Christ, Amulek testified: “Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it” (Alma 34:8).

Jesus Had Unique Qualifications

Only Jesus Christ could make the atoning sacrifice—being born of a mortal mother, Mary, and having received the power of life from His Father (see John 5:26). Because of this power of life, He overcame death, the grave’s power was nullified, and He became our Savior and Mediator and the Master of the Resurrection—the means whereby salvation and immortality are given to us all. We will all be resurrected and become immortal because of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Willingly Atoned for Adam’s Transgression

The second article of faith states, “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression.”

Through the use of our agency, we choose to exercise our faith. With diligence, we can repent; without the Atonement, we cannot.

In Moses we are taught, “Hence came the saying abroad



among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children” (Moses 6:54).

In 2 Nephi we are given a great teaching:

“For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; and the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord.

“Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement—save it should be an infinite atonement this corruption could not put on incorruption. Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more” (2 Nephi 9:6–7).

Jesus Was the Only Perfect Being

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Savior says, “Father, behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified” (D&C 45:4).

Jesus was the only human being who was perfect, without sin. Sacrifice in the Old Testament meant a blood

sacrifice—pointing forward to the sacrifice of our Lord and Redeemer upon the cross to fulfill the atoning sacrifice. When blood sacrifices were made in ancient temples, the priests sacrificed an unblemished lamb, perfect in every way. The Savior is often referred to in the scriptures as “the Lamb of God” because of His purity (see, for example, John 1:29, 36; 1 Nephi 12:6; 14:10; D&C 88:106).

Peter taught that we are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

Jesus Took Away the Sins of the World

The following verses make clear that through His Atonement, the Savior paid the price for our sins:

“All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all” (Mosiah 14:6).

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . .

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. . . .

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:8, 10–11, 19).

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses” (Matthew 8:17).

“But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice. . . .

“And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were prepared from the foundation of

the world. And thus cometh about the salvation and the redemption of men, and also their destruction and misery” (Alma 42:23, 26).

Jesus Endured to the End

Jesus Christ endured the trials, suffering, sacrifice, and tribulations of Gethsemane, as well as the anguish of Golgotha upon the cross. Then, finally, He could say, “It is finished” (John 19:30). He had completed His work in mortality and endured to the end, thus completing the atoning sacrifice.

In the garden He said, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39).

In the Doctrine and Covenants we are taught:

“Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:18–19).

Jesus said to his Father, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).



WHERE HAVE THEY TAKEN HIM? BY J. KIRK RICHARDS

Then, upon the cross, “when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30).

Jesus came to earth, kept His divinity so that He could perform the atoning sacrifice, and endured to the end.

Remember Him through the Sacrament

Today we remember the Savior’s atoning sacrifice with the emblems of bread and water—symbols of His body and blood—as instituted at the Lord’s Last Supper with His Apostles.

“And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

“Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19–20).

In John 11:25–26 we read:

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”

We also read: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51).

“The life of the world” means eternal life.

We need to prepare ourselves and our families weekly to be worthy to partake of the sacrament and to renew our covenants with repentant hearts.

The Father and the Son Love Us

The Father sent His Son to earth—the condescension—to allow Him to be crucified and to go through all He had to go through. In John we read:

“Jesus saith . . . , I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

“If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him” (John 14:6–7).



DOUBT NOT, THOMAS, BY J. KIRK RICHARDS

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Propitiation means reconciliation or appeasement.

Conclusion

Everyone who comes to the earth and receives a mortal body will be resurrected, but we have to work to receive the blessing of exaltation through our faithfulness, our agency, our obedience, and our repentance. Mercy will be meted out with justice, allowing repentance.

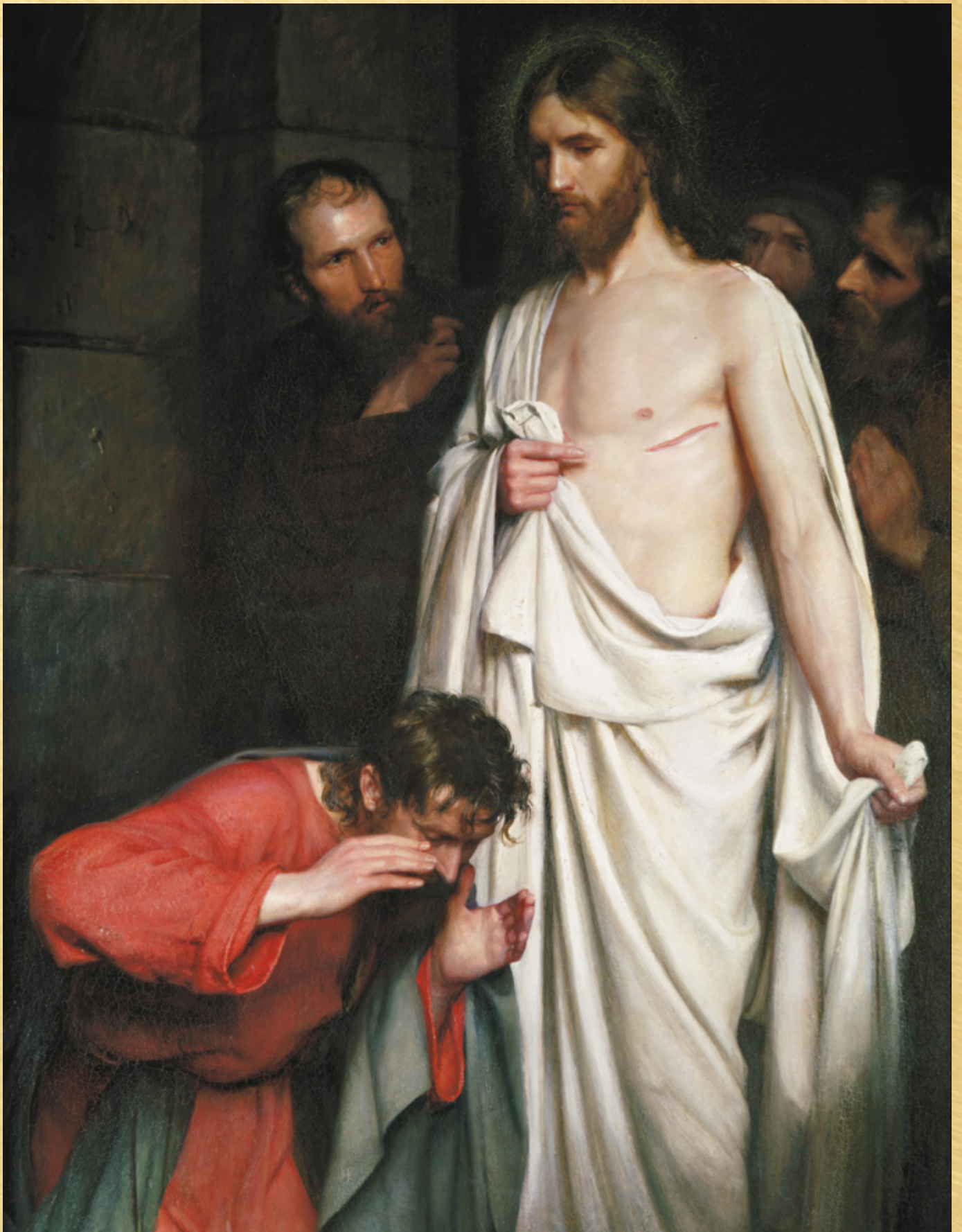
Because we have chosen to follow and accept Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, we take His name upon us at baptism. We take on the law of obedience. We promise we will always remember Him and keep His commandments. We renew our covenants when we partake of the sacrament.

By renewing our covenants, we are given the promise of having His Spirit to be with us always. If we allow His Spirit to come into our lives and direct our lives, we can return to the presence of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, which is Their plan of happiness for us—the plan of salvation. ■

From an address, “The Atonement,” delivered during the seminar for new mission presidents at the Provo Missionary Training Center on June 24, 2008.

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.



THE Resurrection OF Jesus Christ AND TRUTHS ABOUT THE BODY

By David A. Edwards

Church Magazines

“**H**e said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost” (John 19:30). At that moment, the spirit of Jesus Christ departed His body—a body that had endured suffering so that He could atone for the sins of all people and succor them in their infirmities (see Alma 7:12–13). That body, now an empty vessel, was removed from the cross, wrapped in linens, and eventually placed in a tomb. On the third day, the women approaching the tomb were there to complete burial preparations for that body.

But the body was gone.

The discovery of the empty tomb was just the beginning. Mary Magdalene, the Apostles, and many others later witnessed something miraculous: the resurrected, perfected Jesus Christ, in tangible and human form.

The Savior made sure that those who witnessed Him after His Resurrection fully grasped what kind of body He had. He invited the Apostles, for instance, to handle His body so that they could assure themselves that He was physical and not an

apparition (see Luke 24:36–40).¹ He even ate with them (see Luke 24:42–43).

As the Apostles then fulfilled their commission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, they faced opposition and persecution, some of which came because they taught that Jesus Christ was resurrected and that all mankind would be resurrected as a result (see Acts 4:1–3).

Today, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is just as central to the message proclaimed to the world by His Church as it was then. As the Prophet Joseph Smith said: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”²

The Resurrection helps answer fundamental questions about the nature of God, our nature and our relationship to God, the purpose of this life, and the hope we have in Jesus Christ. Here are a few of the truths underscored by Jesus Christ’s Resurrection.

Through His Resurrection, Jesus Christ taught us significant truths about the body.



A*ny who dismiss the concept of an embodied God dismiss both the mortal and the resurrected Christ.”*
—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland

Heavenly Father Has a Glorified Body

The idea that God has a human shape is certainly rooted in the Bible,³ as well as in the popular imagination, but many theological and religious philosophical traditions have rejected it in favor of a God “without body, parts, or passions,”⁴ since, in this view, the body (and matter generally) is evil or unreal, whereas spirit, mind, or ideas are the true substance of ultimate being or reality.

How gloriously simple and revolutionary, then, was the revelation of God’s nature through His Son, Jesus Christ.

During His ministry, the Savior said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9). This was even more true after His Resurrection with a perfected, immortal body, which showed that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also” (D&C 130:22).

The physical nature of Heavenly Father was thus revealed. As Joseph Smith later explained, “That which is without body or parts is nothing. There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones.”⁵

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has put it this way: “If having a body is not only not needed but not desirable by Deity, why did the Redeemer of mankind redeem *His* body, redeeming it from the grasp of death and the grave, guaranteeing it would never again be separated from His spirit in time or eternity? *Any who dismiss the concept of an embodied God dismiss both the mortal and the resurrected Christ.*”⁶

Heavenly Father Is All-Powerful, All-Knowing, and All-Loving

The superlative attributes of Heavenly Father’s character are also revealed in the very fact of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection. As Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said, “Given the reality of the Resurrection of Christ, doubts about the omnipotence, omniscience, and benevolence of God the Father—who gave His Only Begotten Son for the redemption of the world—are groundless.”⁷

The power, knowledge, and goodness of God are proven by Jesus Christ’s Resurrection, which gives evidence of the wisdom and love in Heavenly Father’s plan and His (and His Son’s) ability to carry it out.

We Are God’s Children

As the Bible teaches us, we were formed “in the image of God . . . male and female” (Genesis 1:27). Jesus Christ’s Resurrection reinforced this truth. In fact, in the very hour of His Resurrection, Jesus Christ emphasized our relationship to Heavenly Father, saying, “I ascend unto my Father, *and your Father*; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:17; emphasis added).

The Savior revealed that God and human-kind are not utterly unlike one another in their essential being. The basic form of our bodies is similar to that of our spirits,⁸ and our spirits were created in the image of God because that's the nature of the parent-child relationship.

A Body Is an Enabling and Ennobling Gift

Through His Resurrection, the Savior showed us that a physical, embodied existence is an integral part of the eternal being of God and His children. As the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “The elements are eternal, and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33). This inseparable connection fuses spirit and physical matter together so that they are one immortal, incorruptible, glorious, and perfect body—the only kind of body capable of receiving the fulness of joy that God possesses.

By contrast, after having a physical body and then being separated from it to enter the spirit world, “the dead [look] upon the . . . absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage” (D&C 138:50; see also D&C 45:17).

Even our mortal bodies are an essential part of Heavenly Father's plan and are a divine gift. When our premortal spirits come to this earth, they are “added upon” (Abraham 3:26) with a body. As the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment.”⁹

As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Our physical bodies make possible a breadth, a depth, and an intensity of experience that simply could not be obtained in our pre-mortal existence. Thus, our relationships with other people, our capacity to recognize and act in accordance with truth, and our ability to obey the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ are amplified through our physical bodies. In the school of mortality, we experience tenderness, love, kindness, happiness, sorrow, disappointment, pain, and even the challenges of physical limitations in ways that prepare us for eternity. Simply stated, there are lessons we must learn and experiences we must have, as the scriptures describe, ‘according to the flesh’ (1 Nephi 19:6; Alma 7:12–13).”¹⁰

In addition, as Joseph Smith taught, “All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not.”¹¹ Satan can tempt us,

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but he cannot compel. “The devil has no power over us only as we permit him.”¹²

Ultimately, the gift of a perfected, resurrected body helps put us beyond Satan’s power forever. If there were no Resurrection, “our spirits must become subject to . . . the devil, to rise no more. And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself” (2 Nephi 9:8–9).

The Spirit and the Body Are Not Enemies

Though they are different, the spirit and the body do not belong to two essentially different and irreconcilable realities. As Joseph Smith learned, “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter” (D&C 131:7–8).

In His glorified, resurrected state, Jesus Christ represents the perfect union of spirit and body, illustrating for us that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15). In this life we strive to be “spiritually-minded” rather than “carnally-minded” (2 Nephi 9:39), to “[put] off the natural man” (Mosiah 3:19), and to “bridle all [our] passions” (Alma 38:12). But that doesn’t mean that the spirit and the body are enemies. As Jesus Christ showed us, the body is not to be despised and transcended but mastered and transformed.



Life in a Mortal Body Has a Meaningful Purpose

The notion that this life is a test makes more sense when we consider what we know about our lives before and after it. We lived as spirits before we came to earth, and Heavenly Father intends for us to become like Him and live forever with immortal physical bodies. These truths mean that our time of testing in these mortal bodies is not arbitrary but has real meaning and purpose.

As Elder Christofferson has explained: “By our choices we would demonstrate to God (and to ourselves) our commitment and capacity to live His celestial law while outside His presence and in a physical body with all its powers, appetites, and passions. Could we bridle the flesh so that it became the instrument rather than the master of the spirit? Could we be trusted both in time and eternity with godly powers, including power to create life? Would we individually overcome evil? Those who did would ‘have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever’ [Abraham 3:26]—a very significant aspect of that glory being a resurrected, immortal, and glorified physical body.”¹³

Our experiences in our present bodies, including our relationships with one another, are meaningful because they are a likeness of that which is to come. As Joseph Smith learned, “That same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C:130:2).

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Ever since the sight of the empty tomb, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has brought hope because we recognize in His Resurrection the prospect of our own.

We Have Hope in Jesus Christ

Ever since the sight of the empty tomb, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has brought hope because we recognize in His Resurrection the prospect of our own, in which “all [our] losses will be made up to [us] . . . , provided [we] continue faithful.”¹⁴

The Savior’s early Apostles were able to bear a bold witness of His Resurrection because they had seen and felt His body. But there was much more to it than that. Just as Jesus Christ had healed bodily infirmities in order to show that He had power to forgive sins (see Luke 5:23–25), His Resurrection—the tangible evidence of His power to overcome physical death—became His followers’ assurance of His power to overcome spiritual death. The promises He gave in His teachings—forgiveness of sins, peace in this life, eternal life in the Father’s kingdom—became real and their faith unshaken.

“If Christ be not raised, [our] faith is vain” (1 Corinthians 15:17). But because He *did* rise from the dead, we can “have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal, and this because of [our] faith in him according to the promise” (Moroni 7:41).

During His mortal life, Jesus Christ invited people to follow Him. After His death and Resurrection, the destination became even clearer. If we, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel, cultivate a “celestial spirit” within us, we can “receive the same body which was a natural body” and be “quickened by a portion of the celestial glory [and] then receive of the same, even a fulness” (D&C 88:28–29). He has shown the way. He is the way. It is by His power—through His Atonement and Resurrection—that this celestial fulness is possible, which includes a fulness of joy in a resurrected body. ■

NOTES

1. When Jesus Christ appeared to the people in the New World, He asked them—thousands of them—to come, “one by one,” and touch His hands, feet, and side so that they could witness that they had both felt and seen the resurrected Lord (see 3 Nephi 11:14–15; 18:25).
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49.
3. See Genesis 1:27; Exodus 33:11; Acts 7:56.
4. Though similar ideas were contained in

- earlier Christian creeds, this particular formulation comes from the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church (1563).
5. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 42.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 42.
7. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Resurrection of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 113.
8. Even the revelation of the premortal Jesus Christ was a testimony of this fact, since it showed that the body of His spirit

- was human in form (see Ether 3:16).
9. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 211.
10. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 41.
11. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 211.
12. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 214.
13. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 51.
14. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 51.



**By Elder Larry R.
Lawrence**

Of the Seventy



The War Goes On

*The war that began in heaven continues to this day.
In fact, the battle is heating up as the Saints
prepare for the return of the Savior.*

Anyone who follows international news will agree that we live in a time of “wars and rumors of wars” (D&C 45:26). Fortunately, everyone on earth is a war veteran. We have been battling the hosts of evil in an ongoing war that began in the premortal sphere before we were born.

Because we had not yet received physical bodies, we fought the War in Heaven without swords, guns, or bombs. But the fighting was just as intense as any modern war, and there were billions of casualties.

The premortal war was fought with words, ideas, debate, and persuasion (see Revelation 12:7–9, 11). Satan’s strategy was to frighten people. He knew that fear is the best way to destroy faith. He may have used arguments like these: “It’s too hard.” “It’s impossible to make it back clean.” “There’s too much risk.” “How do you know you can trust Jesus Christ?” He was very jealous of the Savior.

Thankfully, God’s plan triumphed over Satan’s lies. God’s plan involved moral agency for mankind and a great sacrifice. Jehovah, known to us as Jesus Christ, volunteered to be that sacrifice—to suffer for all our sins. He was willing to lay down His life for His brothers and sisters so that those who repented could come back clean and eventually become like their Heavenly Father. (See Moses 4:1–4; Abraham 3:27.)

*In the War in Heaven, we loved
and supported our Father in Heaven.
We wanted to become like Him.*

The other advantage that helped Jehovah win the hearts of God's children was the powerful testimonies borne by His supporters, led by Michael, the archangel (see Revelation 12:7, 11; D&C 107:54). In premortality, Adam was called Michael, and Satan was called Lucifer, which means the "lightbearer."¹ That may seem like a strange name for the prince of darkness (see Moses 7:26), but the scriptures teach that Satan was "an angel of God who was in authority in the presence of God" before he fell (see D&C 76:25–28).

How could a spirit with so much knowledge and experience fall so far? It was because of his pride. Lucifer rebelled against our Father in Heaven because he wanted God's kingdom for himself.

In his classic talk "Beware of Pride," President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that Lucifer "wished to be honored above all others" and that "his prideful desire was to dethrone God."² You have heard too that Satan wanted to destroy man's agency, but that was not the only reason he fell out of favor. He was cast out of heaven for rebellion against the Father and the Son (see D&C 76:25; Moses 4:3).

Why did you and I fight against the devil? We fought out of loyalty. We loved and supported our Father in Heaven. We wanted to become like Him. Lucifer had a different goal. He wanted to replace the Father (see Isaiah 14:12–14; 2 Nephi 24:12–14). Imagine how Satan's betrayal hurt our Heavenly Parents. In the scriptures, we read that "the heavens wept over him" (D&C 76:26).

After a heated campaign, Michael and his armies prevailed. Two-thirds of the heavenly hosts chose to follow

the Father (see D&C 29:36). Satan and his followers were cast out of heaven, but they were not sent immediately to outer darkness. First, they were sent to this earth (see Revelation 12:7–9), where Jesus Christ was to be born and where His atoning sacrifice would be carried out.

Why were Satan's hosts allowed to come to earth? They came to provide opposition for those who are being tested here (see 2 Nephi 2:11). Will they eventually be cast into outer darkness? Yes. After the Millennium, Satan and his hosts will be cast out forever.

Satan knows that his days are numbered. At the



Second Coming of Jesus, Satan and his angels will be bound for 1,000 years (see Revelation 20:1–3; 1 Nephi 22:26; D&C 101:28). As that deadline approaches, the forces of evil are fighting desperately to capture as many souls as they can.

John the Revelator was shown the War in Heaven as part of a grand vision. He was shown how Satan was cast down to earth to tempt mankind. This was John's reaction: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12).

So how does Satan spend his days, knowing he has no time to lose? The Apostle Peter wrote that "the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

What motivates Satan? He will never have a body, he will never have a wife or a family, and he will never have a fulness of joy, so he wants to make all men and women "miserable like unto himself" (2 Nephi 2:27).

The devil targets all men, but especially those who have the most potential for eternal happiness. He is clearly jealous of anyone who is on the pathway to exaltation. The scriptures teach that Satan "maketh war with the saints of God, and encompasseth them round about" (D&C 76:29).

The war that began in heaven continues to this day. In fact, the battle is heating up as the Saints prepare for the return of the Savior.

President Brigham Young (1801–77) prophesied "that the Church would spread, prosper, grow and extend, and that in proportion to the spread of the Gospel among the nations of the earth, so would the power of Satan rise."³

I think all of us would agree that this prophecy is being fulfilled as we watch evil infiltrate the societies of the world. President Young taught that we need to study the enemy's tactics in order to defeat him. I share four of Satan's proven strategies and some ideas on how to resist them.

Satan's Strategies

1. Temptation. The devil is brazen when it comes to putting wicked ideas into our minds. The Book of Mormon teaches that Satan whispers unclean and unkind thoughts and sows thoughts of doubt. He nags us to act on addictive urges and to entertain selfishness and greed. He doesn't want us to recognize where these ideas are coming from, so he whispers, "I am no devil, for there is none" (2 Nephi 28:22).

How can we resist this direct temptation? One of the most effective tools is to simply send Satan away. That's what Jesus would do.

The New Testament account of the Savior on the mount of temptations is instructive. After each temptation the devil presented to Him, Jesus used a two-step defensive technique: first, He ordered Satan to leave; then He quoted scripture.

Let me give you an example: "Get thee hence, Satan," commanded Jesus, "for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). The next verse records, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matthew 4:11). The Savior's defense was very effective!

The biography of President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) gives insight into how President Grant, as a young man, resisted the devil. When President Grant recognized that Satan was whispering to him, trying to plant doubts in his heart, he simply said out loud, "Mr. Devil, shut up."⁴

You have the right to tell Satan to leave when you are confronted with temptation. The scriptures teach, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

The other part of the Savior's defense was to quote scripture. There is great power in memorizing scripture, as Jesus did. Scriptural verses can become an arsenal of spiritual ammunition.

When you are tempted, you can recite commandments such as "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy," "Love your enemies," or "Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly" (Exodus 20:8; Luke 6:27; D&C 121:45). Scripture power not only intimidates Satan, but it also brings the Spirit into your heart, reassures you, and fortifies you against temptation.



2. Lies and deception. The scriptures reveal that Satan is “the father of lies” (2 Nephi 9:9). Don’t believe him when he whispers messages such as “You never do anything right,” “You are too sinful to be forgiven,” “You will never change,” “No one cares about you,” and “You have no talents.”

Another of his oft-used lies is the following: “You need to try everything at least once—just to gain experience. One time won’t hurt you.” The dirty little secret that he doesn’t want you to know is that sin is addictive.

Another effective lie that Satan will try on you is this: “Everyone else is doing it. It’s OK.” It’s not OK! So tell the devil that you don’t want to go to the celestial kingdom—even if everyone else is going there.

Although Satan will lie to you, you can count on the Spirit to tell you the truth. That’s why the gift of the Holy Ghost is so essential.

The devil has been called “the great deceiver.”⁵ He attempts to counterfeit every true principle the Lord presents.

Remember, counterfeits are not the same as opposites. The opposite of white is black, but a counterfeit for white might be off-white or gray. Counterfeits bear a resemblance to the real thing in order to deceive unsuspecting people. They are a twisted version of something good, and just like counterfeit money, they are worthless. Let me illustrate.

One of Satan’s counterfeits for faith is superstition. His counterfeit for love is lust. He counterfeits the priesthood

You can count on the Spirit to tell you the truth. That's why the gift of the Holy Ghost is so essential.



by introducing priestcraft, and he imitates God's miracles by means of sorcery.

Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God, but same-sex marriage is only a counterfeit. It brings neither posterity nor exaltation. Although his imitations deceive many people, they are not the real thing. They cannot bring lasting happiness.

God warned us about counterfeits in the Doctrine and Covenants. He said, "That which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness" (D&C 50:23).

3. Contention. Satan is the father of contention. The Savior teaches, "He stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another" (3 Nephi 11:29).

The devil has learned from centuries of experience

that where there is contention, the Spirit of the Lord will depart. Ever since he convinced Cain to kill Abel, Satan has influenced siblings to quarrel. He also stirs up problems in marriages, among ward members, and between missionary companions. He delights in seeing good people argue. He tries to start family arguments right before church on Sunday, right before family home evening on Monday night, and whenever a couple plans to attend a temple session. His timing is predictable.

When there is contention in your home or workplace, immediately stop whatever you are doing and seek to make peace. It doesn't matter who started it.

Contention often begins with faultfinding. Joseph Smith taught that "the devil flatters us that we are very righteous, when we are feeding on the faults of others."⁶ When you think about it, self-righteousness is just a counterfeit for real righteousness.

Satan loves to spread contention in the Church. He specializes in pointing out the faults of Church leaders. Joseph Smith warned the Saints that the beginning step to apostasy is to lose confidence in the leaders of the Church.⁷

Almost all anti-Mormon literature is based on lies about the character of Joseph Smith. The enemy works hard to discredit Joseph because the message of the Restoration hangs on the Prophet's account of what happened in the Sacred Grove. The devil is working harder today than ever before to make members question their testimonies of the Restoration.

In the early days of our dispensation, many priesthood brethren, to their regret, did not stay loyal to the Prophet. One of them was Lyman E. Johnson, who was excommunicated for unrighteous conduct. He later lamented having left the Church: "I would suffer my right hand to be cut off, if I could believe it again. Then I was full of joy and gladness. My dreams were pleasant. When I awoke in the morning my spirit was cheerful. I was happy by day and by night, full of peace and joy and thanksgiving. But now it is darkness, pain, sorrow, misery in the extreme. I have never since seen a happy moment."⁸

Think about those words. They stand as a warning to all Church members.

I am a convert to the Church. I was baptized when I was a 23-year-old young single adult attending medical school in Arizona, USA. I know first-hand how Satan works on investigators to confuse them and discourage them when they are seeking truth.

All during my youth, I had watched the examples of Latter-day Saint friends. I was impressed with the way they conducted their lives. I made the decision to learn more about the Church, but I did not want to tell anyone I was studying Mormonism. To avoid pressure from my friends, I decided to make my search a private investigation.

This was many years before the internet, so I went to the public library. I found a copy of the Book of Mormon and a book called *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder*, by Elder LeGrand Richards (1886–1983) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. I began to read these books with great desire, and I found them inspiring.

While my spirit was yearning to learn more, Satan began to whisper in my ear. He told me that in order to be completely objective, I needed to read what was written by the critics of the Church also. I went back to the public library and began to look around. Sure enough, I found a book that discredited the Prophet Joseph.

Reading this anti-Mormon book confused me. I lost that sweet spirit and influence that had guided my investigation. I became frustrated and was about to abandon my search for truth. I was praying for an answer while reading anti-Mormon literature!

To my surprise, I received a phone call from a high

school friend who was attending Brigham Young University. She invited me to come visit her in Utah, promising that I would love the scenic trip. She had no idea that I was secretly studying about her Church.

I accepted her invitation. My friend suggested that we go to Salt Lake City to visit Temple Square. She was surprised by my enthusiastic response. She had no idea how interested I was to learn the truth about Joseph Smith and the Restoration.

The sister missionaries on Temple Square were very helpful. Without knowing it, they answered many of my questions. Their testimonies influenced me to “doubt [my]



PHOTOGRAPH IN FRONT OF BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS TEMPLE

The devil targets everyone, but especially those who have the most potential for eternal happiness.

doubts,”⁹ and my faith began to grow. The power of a heartfelt testimony cannot be overestimated.

My friend also shared her testimony with me and invited me to pray and ask God if the Church was true. On the long drive back to Arizona, I began to pray with faith—for the first time “with a sincere heart, with real intent” (Moroni 10:4). At some point on that trip, it seemed that my whole car lit up with light. I learned for myself that light can dispel darkness.

After I had decided to be baptized, the devil put up a final struggle. He worked on my family, who did everything in their power to discourage me, and they refused to attend my baptism.

I was baptized anyway, and gradually their hearts were softened. They began to help me research my family history. A few years later, I baptized my younger brother. The friend who invited me to visit her in Utah is now my wife.

4. Discouragement. Satan effectively uses this tool on the most faithful Saints when all else fails. For me, when I begin to feel discouraged, it helps me just to recognize who is trying to get me down. This makes me mad enough to cheer up—just to spite the devil.

Several years ago, President Benson gave a talk called “Do Not Despair.” In that insightful talk, he warned, “Satan is increasingly striving to overcome the Saints with despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression.”¹⁰ President Benson urged Church members to be on guard, and he gave 12 realistic suggestions for fighting discouragement.

His suggestions include serving others; working hard and avoiding idleness; practicing good health habits, which include exercising and eating foods in their natural state; seeking a priesthood blessing; listening to inspiring music; counting your blessings; and setting goals. And above all, as the scriptures teach, we are to pray always so we can conquer Satan (see D&C 10:5).¹¹

Satan trembles when he sees

*The weakest saint upon his knees.*¹²

It is important to know that there are limits to the power of evil. The Godhead sets those limits, and Satan is not

allowed to cross them. For example, the scriptures assure us that “power is not given unto Satan to tempt little children” (D&C 29:47).

Another significant limitation is that Satan does not know our thoughts unless we tell him. The Lord explained, “There is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart” (D&C 6:16).

Perhaps this is why the Lord has given us commandments such as “Do not murmur” (D&C 9:6) and “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor” (D&C 42:27). If you can learn to bridle your tongue (see James 1:26), you won’t end up giving too much information to the devil. When he hears murmuring, complaining, and criticizing, he takes careful notes. Your negative words expose your weaknesses to the enemy.

I have good news for you. The armies of God are larger than the armies of Lucifer. You may look around and think to yourself, “The world is becoming more and more wicked. Satan must be winning the war.” Don’t be fooled. The truth is, we outnumber the enemy. Remember, two-thirds of God’s children chose the Father’s plan.

Brothers and sisters, make sure you are fighting on the Lord’s side. Make sure you are carrying the sword of the Spirit.

It is my prayer that at the end of your lives, you can say with the Apostle Paul, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). ■

NOTES

1. Guide to the Scriptures, “Lucifer,” scriptures.lds.org.
2. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 5.
3. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 72.
4. See Francis M. Gibbons, *Heber J. Grant: Man of Steel, Prophet of God* (1979), 35–36.
5. See, for example, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Matter to Him,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 20; Gordon B. Hinckley, “The Times in Which We Live,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 74.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 454.
7. See *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 318.
8. Lyman E. Johnson, in Brigham Young, *Deseret News*, Aug. 15, 1877, 484.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Come, Join with Us,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 23.
10. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 65.
11. See Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” 65–67.
12. William Cowper, in Robert Andrews, comp., *The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* (1987), 78.

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DETAIL FROM 'THE SAVIOR WALKED ON WATER' BY WALTER RANE. MAY NOT BE COPIED



*Like the man
stumbling from
the shadows,
those who seek to
follow the Savior
are attracted by
the hope of
gospel light.*



By Elder
Timothy J. Dyches
Of the Seventy



Becoming

CHILDREN OF CHRIST

Two elders had worked all day in the heat of the Brazilian summer. As night descended, they paused under a streetlamp. From the deepening shadows, a man shuffled up to them. The smell of liquor surrounded him like fog. He laid a heavily callused hand on each of their shoulders.

“Missionaries,” he said, “*I need what you have.*”


They took his address and set a time. The following day, as promised—and unsure what to expect—they searched for the man. Winding their way along cobble paths amid houses loosely assembled from discarded materials, they finally arrived at one of the humblest homes on the street. As was the custom, they clapped their hands at the front door. It opened wide as a woman with neatly braided hair welcomed them in. There in the one room was a single furnishing—a couch that had been borrowed just for this occasion.

The missionaries hardly recognized the man, Marcos, from the previous evening. He warmly greeted them. He introduced his wife, Maria, and their four little daughters, then invited the missionaries to sit on the couch. The family sat on the floor and the elders began their lesson. The Holy Ghost filled every heart.

*As we strive to follow
the Savior, covenants
transform and enable
us to become the
children of Christ.*

The missionaries returned regularly and taught often. Marcos stopped drinking. He was soon baptized, and he in turn baptized his wife and children. Their baptismal service was a spiritual feast.

Marcos was soon blessed with a full-time job. Where at first there were no furnishings in their home, soon they had an oven in the kitchen, then



Covenants transform us, just as they transformed people in ancient times. They enable us to see more clearly who we are, why we are here, and how to follow the Savior.



a table, then chairs. They added a room for the children and, finally, two couches of their own. Their home was filled with peace and happiness.

The Next Covenant

Shortly before missionary transfers, the departing elder returned to say good-bye. He presented Marcos and his family with a postcard of the São Paulo Brazil Temple. He turned the card over and wrote two dates on the back: the date of their baptisms and the date, one year later, when they could be sealed as an eternal family. He encouraged them to be ready, in one year, to travel to the faraway house of the Lord.

Almost a year later, by chance while on exchanges, this elder was fortunate to visit that humble home again. Maria opened the door and beamed. The children wrapped their arms around him. “Don’t leave,” they pleaded. “Daddy will be back soon.”

As the elder and his companion waited, he noticed that the table, chairs, and

couches were gone. “Oh no,” he wondered silently, “is Marcos drinking again?”

When Marcos returned, he immediately grasped the elder’s hand in his familiar, callused grip. As they chatted, sitting on boxes, he shared that he was still working, still enjoying church every week.

“But where are all your things?” the missionary asked.

Marcos proudly gestured to the one remaining wall decoration—a picture frame holding both the photo of the family on the day of their baptisms and the postcard of the temple given to them a year before.

“The temple,” he beamed. “We are going!”

What great faith! Three days by bus each way. Sacrificing all their earthly belongings to be sealed together forever. Tears filled the elder’s eyes. Faith and repentance had dramatically altered Marcos’s life. And, as he and his family continued faithful and true to their covenants with the Lord, they had become children of Christ.

That night, still on the exchange, the elders were under a streetlamp when amazingly, another man stumbled out of the shadows in his own alcohol fog. In slurred speech, he said, “I know Marcos. *I need what he has*. Will you give me what you gave him?”

Conversion and Rebirth

We *all* need, and we all have access to, what Marcos received: the ability, through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, to be reborn. Spiritual rebirth is attended by the Holy Ghost and awakens a power within us to discover our divine nature, identity, and purpose. The Book of Mormon provides a road map for this remarkable spiritual regeneration in the book of Mosiah.

The elderly King Benjamin asked his son, Mosiah, to gather the people so he could share one final, important message. The site? The temple, the most sacred and significant symbol on earth of eternal covenants between God and man.

In spiritual anticipation, the people prepared themselves by bringing a sacrifice to “give thanks to the Lord their God, . . . who had delivered them . . . and had appointed just men to be their teachers, . . . who had taught them to keep the commandments of God, that they might rejoice and be filled with love towards God and all men” (see Mosiah 2:3–4).

In one of the greatest recorded sermons ever given, King Benjamin taught them about the plan of salvation, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the agency of man and that our service to others is the same as service to God. “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God” (Mosiah 2:17).

He emphasized that we can be saved “only in and through the name of Christ” and that we must “become as little children, and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:17, 18).

Children of Christ

As King Benjamin spoke, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon [the people], and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come” (Mosiah 4:3). Asked if they believed his words, the people cried with one voice, saying that the Spirit of the Lord had “wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually” (Mosiah 5:2). Both individually and collectively, they covenanted to do the will of God and to obey His commandments in all things (see Mosiah 5:5).

King Benjamin then declared:

“Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.

“ . . . There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.

“And . . . whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ” (Mosiah 5:7–9).

Enabling Power of Covenants

Covenants are sacred promises. “In these divine agreements, God binds himself to sustain, sanctify, and exalt us in return for our commitment to serve Him and keep His commandments,” said Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹

Covenants transform us. In sacred covenants, we hear the Lord’s voice and feel His love. They enable us to more fully understand *who* we are, *why* we are here, and *how* to follow

Taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to continue to follow His light as it becomes “brighter and brighter until the perfect day” (D&C 50:24).



of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that [we] may have eternal life” (Mosiah 18:9). Indeed, God has made a mighty promise to those who would become children of Christ.

Going Forward

So often pride, procrastination, inconvenience, and even distraction delay our happiness and joy in Christ. We all face the fundamental, strategic question: “What will I be willing to do, to give, to become like the Savior?”

Let us live our lives moving forward, focusing upon things that matter most. Allow repentance to empower you to partake of the sacrament worthily each week so that you may renew your commitment to take the Savior’s name upon you, always remember Him, and keep

the Savior in our lives, continually growing “in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you” (Mosiah 4:12).

The covenant to become children of Christ is not passive, nor can it ever be. In the process of becoming, we embrace the Messiah through complete obedience and develop deep and abiding faith in Him. We repent as we approach the Father daily in prayer. Children of Christ read and ponder the scriptures. We proclaim His gospel with courage, standing “as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in, even until death” (Mosiah 18:9).

The same verse shares the blessings of the covenant: “that [we] may be redeemed

His commandments (see D&C 20:77).

Like Marcos and King Benjamin’s people, we need the enabling power of gospel covenants. We need to become and remain children of Christ. I invite all to be “steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal [us] his, that [we] may be brought to heaven, that [we] may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things, in heaven and in earth, who is God above all” (Mosiah 5:15). ■

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 20.


Discipleship

By Patricia Bowers

*When I lay my burdens at His feet,
He counsels me to take them up no more.
And I can walk unfettered from my grief,
And I can see unhindered by my beam.*

*For fellowmen their heavy burdens carry,
Private pains that chafe their tired souls.
But I, arms empty now, can share their sorrows
And show them where to lay their burdens down.*

THE AUTHOR LIVES IN OKLAHOMA, USA; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION FROM GETTY IMAGES



My birthday gift wasn't what I expected, but the lesson it taught me was better than any material gift I could have received.

RECOGNIZING

By Duane Hoem

In the little town in rural Wisconsin, USA, where I grew up in the days after World War II, money was tight. Bicycles were expensive, but I just knew I would get one for my 12th birthday!

My father had returned from the U.S. Navy at the end of the war and, finding it impossible to get a job, had volunteered to go to Guam as a construction worker on an air base there. My mother worked as a cook in a restaurant,

earning just enough to keep food on the table. Even though I knew that we didn't have much money, I don't remember worrying how my mom would be able to afford my bike.

My birthday wasn't until August, but to make sure my mother knew exactly what bike I wanted, in May I hung a colored picture of a fancy red-and-white Schwinn bicycle in our kitchen. It was the coolest of bikes in those days, with its large whitewall

tires and battery-powered light and horn.

Every few days when my mother was near, I would mention something about the bike. She never said anything but sort of smiled as if she knew something I didn't. That was all the encouragement I needed.

When my birthday finally arrived, I got up early and dashed into the kitchen. My mother wished me a happy 12th birthday and told me there was something for me out in the shed. I raced out, threw open the door, and stood there—stunned.

Oh, there was a bike there, all right. But it wasn't a Schwinn. It wasn't red and white. This one was black. It had no horn and no light. There were no white sidewalls. These were skinny tires. My mother had bought me a used bike for my 12th birthday! I shut the shed door without even taking the bike out, went back into the house, and tore up the picture of the Schwinn. I had enough respect to thank my mother, but I promised myself that the black bike would remain in the shed.

Day after day I wondered how I could get rid of the bike without hurting my mother's feelings. One day I suddenly knew exactly what I was going to do! I would go to Herb

my timidity aside and, with all the confidence I could muster, approached him while he was working in the back room of his store. Before I could even start the speech I had rehearsed in my mind, however, Mr. Stone put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Duane, you are one of the luckiest kids I know." This confused me completely. I had just been given a used bicycle for my birthday. How lucky could I be?

Smiling, Mr. Stone explained, "Early last spring your mom put a bike on layaway for you. Every week she came in and put a dollar or two down, whatever she could afford. I know your mom went without things she needed. Oh, she wanted to buy you a new bike. She said something about a picture you had of a favorite bike, but she just couldn't afford one like that."

Then Mr. Stone asked, "Duane, do you see now why I think you're so lucky? Your mother would do anything in the world for you."

I thanked him and left the store before he could see the tears welling up in my eyes. As I pondered what Mr. Stone had told me, suddenly everything became very clear. It wasn't about the gift—it was about the sacrifice.



THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

"The degree of our love for the Lord and for our fellowman can be measured by what we are willing to sacrifice for them. Sacrifice is a demonstration of pure love."

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Law of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 11.

My Mother's Sacrifice


Stone's hardware store, where I knew my mother had purchased the bike, and get Mr. Stone to hire me after school and on Saturdays. My wages would go toward a new bike, probably not a Schwinn but certainly something more presentable than that ugly black thing.

I normally would never have had the nerve to approach a prominent businessman like Mr. Stone. But I was desperate, so I set


From that day on, I rode that bicycle everywhere, even through high school.

That afternoon in the back of the hardware store I started learning one of the most profound lessons on sacrifice that I have experienced in my lifetime, and it has shaped my thinking and behavior ever since. I know today, just as I learned that year, that I was indeed one of the luckiest kids in the world. ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.

A young man with dark, wavy hair is shown in profile, looking out of a multi-paned window. He is wearing a light-colored, vertically striped long-sleeved shirt and tan suspenders. He is holding a large, thick, antique book with a worn, reddish-brown cover and a green patterned spine. The background is a warm, golden light coming from the window, and a dark, leafy tree is visible through the window panes on the left. The overall mood is contemplative and historical.

*Joseph Smith's early
experiences can teach
us important lessons
about how revelation
from the Lord can
flow to prophets and
to each of us.*



Joseph Smith's

Early Experiences with Revelation

By **Steven C. Harper**
Church History Department

About three years before Joseph Smith was born, his mother, Lucy, lay in agony. She was sick with the same disease that had killed her two sisters, and she also felt spiritually lost and separated from the Savior. She pleaded with God to preserve her life and promised to seek His ways. Finally she sensed the Savior's words fill her mind: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Let your heart be comforted."¹

Lucy recovered. But about six months later she became upset when her husband felt they should no longer attend church. She left their house, found privacy in a grove of wild cherry trees, and poured out her heart in prayer again, pleading with the Lord to soften her husband's heart to the gospel. That night Lucy dreamed that her husband would eventually hear and receive the Savior's gospel wholeheartedly.²

Like his mother, young Joseph Smith needed revelation to guide his own life long before he became a prophet who received revelation for others. In his early teens he felt sorrow and guilt for his sins and tried to learn from the churches in the area how to obtain forgiveness. But he grew perplexed and distressed by their different doctrines.³

He turned to the scriptures and read Jesus's words, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). He read James 1:5 and learned that anyone who lacked wisdom was invited to ask God.⁴

PHOTOGRAPH OF TREES COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; SIGNATURE IN TITLE MODIFIED

A Personal Revelation

Joseph greatly desired personal revelation. “With a fixed determination,” he said, “I called upon the Lord.”⁵ Joseph prayed in faith and God answered, appearing to Joseph in company with His Son, Jesus Christ, who forgave Joseph and resolved his concerns. They did not call Joseph as a prophet then but promised to reveal the fulness of the gospel to him later.⁶

Joseph rejoiced. For days his soul was filled with joy. But when he reported his revelation to a minister, the minister rejected it, saying that God no longer gave revelations to His children.⁷

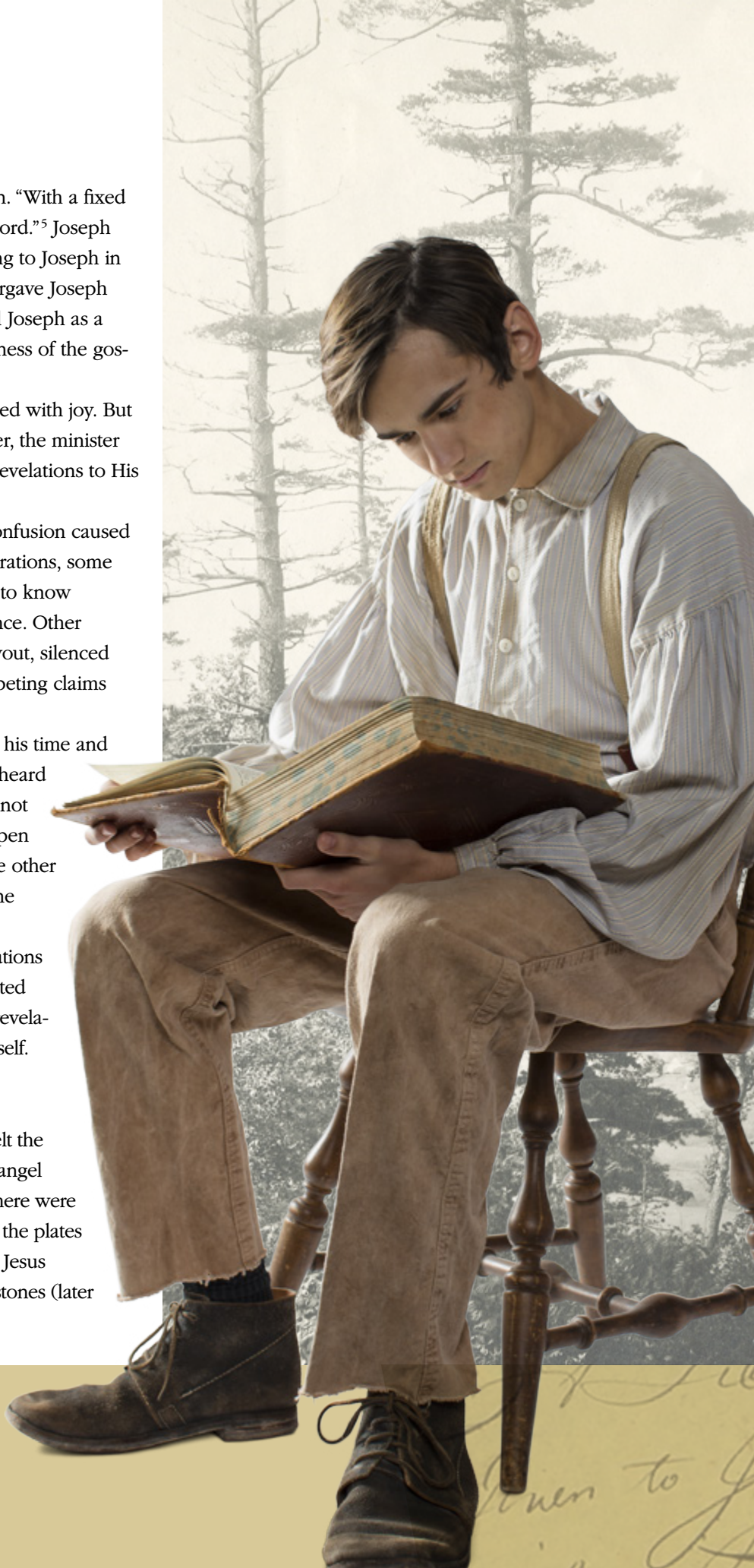
The minister was concerned about the confusion caused by competing claims to revelation. For generations, some Christians had taught that it was impossible to know the right way without God’s ongoing guidance. Other Christians, who were just as sincere and devout, silenced such claims, fearing they would create competing claims and therefore chaos.

For centuries before Joseph, as well as in his time and region, many people testified that they had heard from God, while others were sure God had not spoken. One group feared what would happen if God did not give any more revelation. The other group feared what would happen if everyone thought God would give them revelation.

Joseph believed that God had given revelations in the past and could again. But he was rejected when he testified that God had given him a revelation. So Joseph kept his vision mostly to himself.

Direction from God

Three years later, when he again keenly felt the need for forgiveness, Joseph prayed, and an angel named Moroni appeared and revealed that there were golden plates buried in a nearby hillside. On the plates ancient prophets had inscribed the gospel of Jesus Christ, and buried with the plates were seer stones (later



described by the biblical term *Urim and Thummim*) that the Lord had prepared for interpreting the writings (see Leviticus 8:8; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Nehemiah 7:65).

Over the next four years, Joseph met and married Emma Hale, and Moroni taught him more before entrusting the plates and the seer stones to him.

Not long after he received the plates and the stones, Joseph asked his mother for help, hoping she would call on Martin Harris, a prosperous middle-aged farmer who lived a few miles from Joseph's family. Joseph knew Martin was open to the idea of personal revelation.

Lucy visited Martin, and he agreed to come to her home to see Joseph a few days later. Joseph was away working to get flour when Martin arrived, so Martin used the time to quiz Emma and other family members about the plates. He questioned each of them alone and then caught Joseph by the arm when he arrived. Leading him away from the family, Martin asked about the plates, and Joseph told him that the angel had instructed him to translate and publish their contents. Printing the book would be an expensive task. Joseph told Martin he had looked in the seer stones to learn what to do.

"I saw you standing before me as plainly as I do now," Joseph said to the man twice his age.

"If it is the devil's work I will have nothing to do with it," Martin vowed, "but if it is the Lord's, you can have all the money necessary to bring it before the world."

Martin wanted to be sure. "You must not blame me for not taking your word," Martin said. "If the Lord will show me that it is his work, you can have all the money you want."

Martin returned home. Arriving after midnight, he crept into his bedroom and prayed, promising God he would aid Joseph's work if he could have a revelation that it was divine.

"He showed this to me by the still small voice spoken in the soul," Martin later testified. "Then I was satisfied that it was the Lord's work, and I was under a covenant to bring it forth."⁸



Martin Harris pressed Joseph Smith to ask the Lord to let him take the Book of Mormon manuscript to show to others.

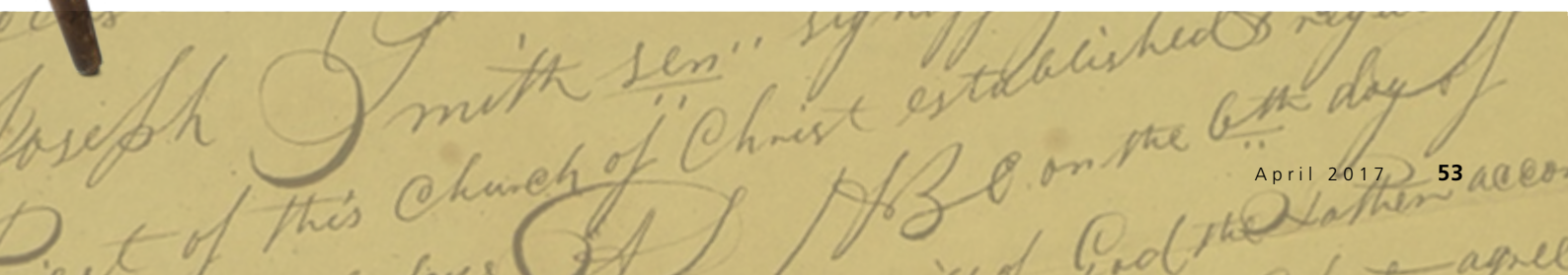
A few days later, Martin found Joseph in town. "Here, Mr. Smith, is \$50," Martin said, pulling a bag of silver coins from his pocket. "I give it to you to do the Lord's work." Joseph promised to repay, but Martin refused, insisting that he gave the money freely. It was just what Joseph needed to enable him and Emma to move to Pennsylvania and get started on the work of translation.⁹

Emma acted as scribe as Joseph dictated the words. When Martin visited them early in 1828, he took turns writing. Hour after hour, Emma or Martin sat next to Joseph as he translated the Book of Mormon.¹⁰ The scribes marveled when Joseph corrected their errors without looking up, his eyes fixed on the seer stones he received from Moroni, which were held together by a metal rim like a pair of glasses and which the Book of Mormon referred to as "interpreters." Joseph also used another stone he possessed that worked just as well.¹¹

The Persuasions of Men

Emma and Martin had penned more than 100 pages of translated words by summer. Emma was expecting a baby any day. Martin suggested he take a trip home with the manuscript. Joseph looked in the seer stones for an answer and told Martin he mustn't take the pages.

Martin was unsatisfied with that revelation and pressed Joseph. Showing the writings to his family members



would convince them of the truth, Martin reasoned.

“Inquire again.”

Joseph did so, but again the answer was no.¹²

Now Martin insisted. Things at home were difficult; the last time he had returned, his wife had made him sleep in a separate room. She kept telling neighbors that Joseph had fooled Martin but not her.¹³

Joseph wanted to please the older man, who had freely given his time and money.¹⁴ So when Martin begged again, Joseph asked for the third time.

“Let him go with them,” the Lord relented, but confiscated the interpreters.¹⁵

Joseph insisted that Martin return promptly after showing the writings to no one but his wife and a few family members. Martin readily agreed, took the writings, and left.¹⁶

“I feel so uneasy,” Emma said several days later, “that I cannot rest and shall not be at ease until I know something about what Mr. Harris is doing.” She asked Joseph to visit Martin in New York.

Joseph arrived at his parents’ home after a long stage-coach ride and an overnight walk, during which he thought about how “he had regarded man more than his Maker.” Joseph’s family invited Martin Harris to join them for breakfast. They waited till midday before they saw him walking toward the house, his eyes downcast.

They all began to eat, but then Martin dropped his utensils and cried, “I have lost my soul, I have lost my soul.”

Joseph jumped up. “Martin, have you lost that manuscript? Have you broken your oath and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own?”

“Yes,” Martin confessed. “It is gone and I know not where.”

“Oh, my God, my God,” Joseph uttered, “all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned. It is me that tempted the wrath [of] God by asking Him [for] that which I had no right to ask.” He ordered Martin to return home and find the manuscript.

“It is all in vain,” Martin replied, “for I have looked in every place in the house. I have

even ripped open beds and pillows, and I know it is not there.”

“Then must I return to my wife with such a tale as this?” Joseph asked. “I dare not do it,” he said. “And how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?” Joseph wept and groaned and paced the floor, forsaken.

Around sunset, Joseph finally ate a little. Then he left the next morning to return to Emma in Pennsylvania.¹⁷

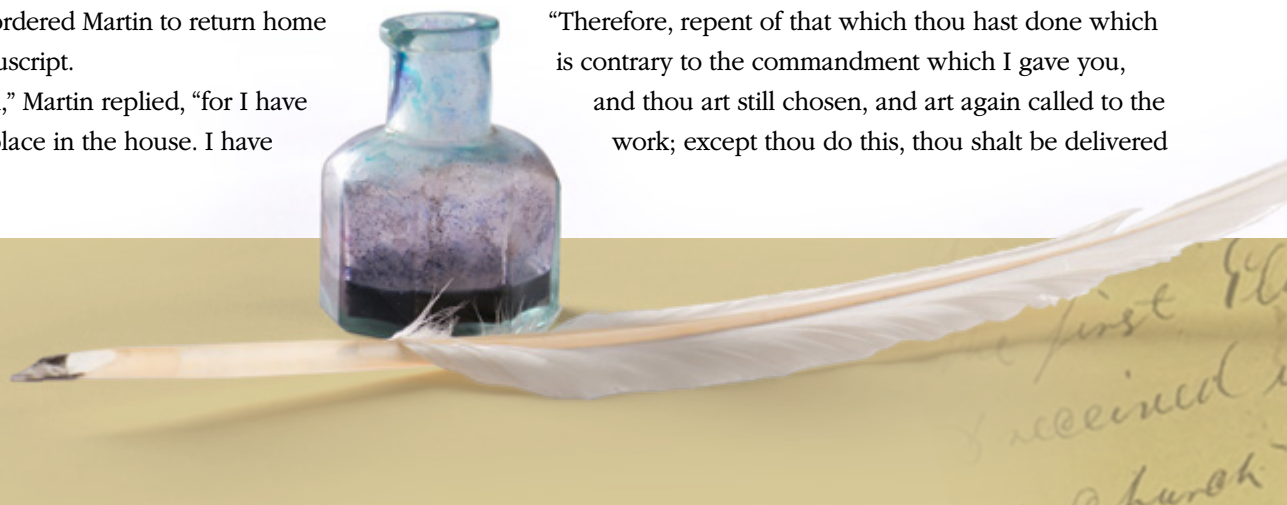
There Joseph prayed mightily for mercy, confessing weakness. When Moroni returned the seer stones to Joseph, the young prophet looked and found a stern revelation that is now Doctrine and Covenants section 3. “Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men,” it said. “For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him” (verses 3–4).

The Lord pierced Joseph with this revelation. “You have been entrusted with these things,” he was told, “but how strict were your commandments; and remember also the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them.” But Joseph had.

“How oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men,” the Lord continued firmly. “You should not have feared man more than God.” Joseph was indeed a chosen seer, “but because of transgression,” the Lord warned him, “if thou art not aware thou wilt fall” (D&C 3:5–7, 9).¹⁸

Then, about halfway through the revelation, the Lord’s tone changed. “Remember, God is merciful,” He said.

“Therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work; except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered





When Martin told Joseph he had lost the manuscript, Joseph said, “All is lost! . . . I have sinned.” Later he prayed for mercy and received the revelation known as Doctrine and Covenants section 3.

up and become as other men, and have no more gift” (D&C 3:10–11).

Learning to Hear the Lord’s Voice

In the end, the rebuke soothed Joseph’s soul and steeled his resolve.¹⁹ At just 22, he was learning to hear the Lord’s voice, to listen not just for revelation he wanted but for revelation he needed—and not just for revelation he needed personally but for revelation needed to fulfill God’s promises to all His children.

The Lord taught Joseph that the plates had been preserved to give Lehi’s descendants knowledge of God’s promises, “that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved” (D&C 3:20).

Through his experiences, Joseph became a prophet who received revelations that went beyond his own personal challenges and declared the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people. Joseph followed the Lord’s directions to him personally. He repented and regained his gift to translate. Then he used the gift to fulfill the Lord’s promises to His people. He brought forth the Book of Mormon, restored

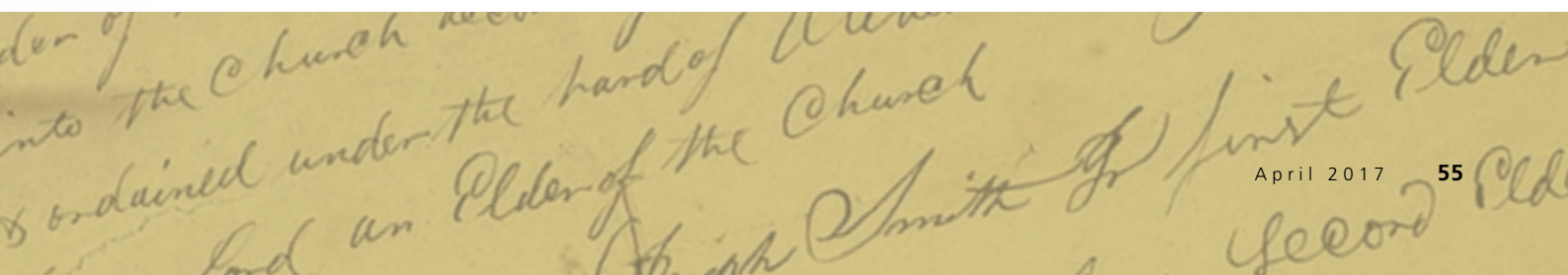
the Church of Jesus Christ, and called missionaries to carry the gospel to others.

In the process, Joseph learned that whether a person is a prophet or a teenager, the Lord’s promises are the same: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). Joseph learned that anyone who lacked wisdom could ask in faith, and God would answer (see James 1:5). In addition, he learned that revelation flows when we are humble, repent, and obey the Lord’s direction. And this is a lesson that can apply to all of us. ■

Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized in some quotations.

NOTES

1. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 2, pages 3–4, josephsmithpapers.org.
2. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845,” 48–51, josephsmithpapers.org.
3. See Joseph Smith—History 1:5–10; see also Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 1–3, josephsmithpapers.org.
4. See Joseph Smith—History 1:11; see also Joseph Smith, “Journal, 1835–1836,” Nov. 9–11, 1835, 23, josephsmithpapers.org.
5. Joseph Smith, “Journal, 1835–1836,” Nov. 9–11, 1835, 23.
6. See Joseph Smith, “Journal, 1835–1836,” Nov. 9–11, 1835, 24; Joseph Smith, “‘Church History,’ 1 March 1842,” 706–7, josephsmithpapers.org.
7. See Joseph Smith—History 1:21; see also Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 3.
8. In “Mormonism—No. II,” *Tiffany’s Monthly*, Aug. 1859, 168–70.
9. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, page 6; see also Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 5; “Mormonism—No. II,” 170.
10. See Emma Smith, in “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald*, Oct. 1, 1879, 289–90; Joseph Smith III to James T. Cobb, Feb. 14, 1879, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.
11. See Richard E. Turley Jr. and others, “Joseph the Seer,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2015, 48–55; Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, vol. 1 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2013), xxxi–xxxiv; “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 5, pages 7–8. Book of Mormon passages that refer to “interpreters” include Mosiah 8:13, 19; 28:20; Alma 37:21–24 (note the Savior’s prophecy in verse 23).
12. See Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 5–6.
13. See Joseph Smith, “History, circa 1841, draft [Draft 3],” 13–14, josephsmithpapers.org; “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, page 8.
14. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 6, pages 10–11.
15. See Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 6; Joseph Smith, “History, circa 1841, draft [Draft 3],” 14.
16. See Joseph Smith, “History, circa 1841, draft [Draft 3],” 14; “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, page 1.
17. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, pages 2–7.
18. See Joseph Smith, “Revelation, July 1828 [D&C 3],” including historical introduction, josephsmithpapers.org; Joseph Smith, “History, circa Summer 1832,” 6.
19. See “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, page 11.



The Old Family Album:

The Power of Family Stories

My ancestors' legacies live on through me, continually influencing my life for the better.

By Amneris Puscasu

One summer morning before World War II, my great-grandfather woke up as he always did—before sunrise. He went outside his house on a hill overlooking a green valley and his village in Romania, and sat on the grass covered by the early morning dew, deeply absorbed in his thoughts—the same thoughts that had been on his mind for a while. An educated man with a big heart and an inquisitive mind, he was loved and respected by everyone in the village.

His village, situated in the land of the ancient river Olt, was the prototype of the eternal image of the

Romanian village, in which archaism combines with fairy-like landscapes, a treasure of picturesque customs, and a natural responsibility to care for the objects and traditions one inherits from one's forefathers and pass them to the next generation.

After the sun arose, he went inside the house and confessed to his wife that he had been curious to see what his funeral would be like, and he wanted to have a dress-rehearsal funeral. He set the date, bought the coffin, hired the priest and professional mourners, and acquired all other items required by the Greek Orthodox tradition. The day of the dress-rehearsal funeral came. The tables were set in the middle of the village for the remembrance feast, the family was all dressed in black, the priest came, my great-grandfather lay down in the coffin, rearranging the pillow so he could have a comfortable view, and the funeral procession began. When the ceremony ended, the whole village was invited to the feast, where my great-grandfather fulfilled his dream of dancing at his own funeral. He lived another 20 years, often checking to see if his coffin still fit him.

Not Just Names and Dates

I have never met my great-grandfather, but his story has always been my favorite. It was passed down to me by my



grandparents. Every day they would tell my siblings and me stories about our ancestors: where they came from, what they were like, their values, dreams, and hopes. After every Sunday meal, my grandparents took out the old family album. With every turn of the page, stories came to life, past and present, as hearts were knit together in a tapestry of love that defies the test of time.

They were not just old photographs with names and dates scribbled on the back. Behind every face was a father or a mother, a son or a daughter, a brother or a sister. To us they were real people with hopes and dreams, struggles and disappointments, successes and failures. Though they are no longer physically present, their stories continue to live, their legacies continue to shine, and their faces continue to smile from an old family album that today binds in love the hearts of six generations.

Strength in Times of Trial

By the time I was 19, my parents and most of my immediate family were dead, and many of the possessions that I had inherited were lost or stolen. And yet there is one thing that time, natural calamities, or even death could never destroy: the bridge spanning past, present, and future that

each of my family members built. Because of their diligence, the thread that binds our hearts has proven stronger than any mortal trials and has given me the strength to overcome difficult circumstances.

When my parents and grandparents died, I felt such deep sorrow that I wondered if I would have enough strength to keep going. But I felt their influence from beyond the veil, and that helped me gain an unshakable testimony of life after death and, later, of temple ordinances.

I don't remember how my mother looked, nor have I met my great-grandparents, but every time I pick up the old family album, I see myself in their eyes. I am who I am because of all those who came before me, and their experiences and wisdom have shaped my character and guided me.

I think often of my family on the other side of the veil and of the sacrifices they made for me in order to have a better life. I think of the temple ordinances that enable us to be together again as a family someday. And I think of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, who made all of this possible. He paid the price so that we might live. For this we love Him and worship Him with gratitude today and forever. ■

The author lives in New York, USA.





A BRIDGE TO Hope AND Healing

With appropriate help, victims of sexual abuse can find the healing they so deeply desire.

By Nanon Talley

LDS Family Services, Texas, USA

Imagine you are standing at the edge of a cliff and want to get to the other side of a deep canyon, where you have been told that great happiness awaits you. As you search for a way to cross, you find a pile of supplies that, if put together correctly, will build a bridge to cross the canyon.

If you don't know how to build the bridge, the supplies will be useless and you will feel frustrated and hopeless. But if you get help from someone who has experience in building bridges, your knowledge and understanding can increase and together the task can be accomplished.

Over the past 18 years, my job has been to provide tools and guidance to help people cross the gulf of emotional or mental suffering. Of all the people I have counseled, no other clients seem to come so wounded as those who have been victims of sexual abuse. I have seen the impact that this challenge has on the individual's ability to endure well to the end.

However, I have also come to know that lasting relief from our struggles and suffering is possible through our Savior. His love lifts people out of darkness into light.

Why Does Sexual Abuse Cause Such Harm?

Victims of abuse tell me of a life full of depression, self-doubt, and other deep emotional pains. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) helped us understand why sexual abuse causes such deep hurt:

“There is the terrible, vicious practice of sexual abuse. It is beyond understanding. It is an affront to the decency that ought to exist in every man and woman. It is *a violation of that which is sacred and divine*. It is destructive in the lives of children. It is reprehensible and *worthy of the most severe condemnation*.”

“Shame on any man or woman who would sexually abuse a child. In doing so, the abuser not only *does the most serious kind of injury*. He or she also stands condemned before the Lord.”¹

The power of procreation is a sacred and divine power our Father in Heaven has given to His children. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “The power of procreation is spiritually significant. . . . Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son are

creators and have entrusted each of us with a portion of Their creative power.”² It’s no wonder, then, that violation of this sacred power is “worthy of the most severe condemnation” and causes the “most serious kind of injury.”

Understanding the Hurt

Sexual abuse is any nonconsensual interaction that involves touching or non-touching behaviors in which a person is used for the sexual gratification of another person. Far too often, victims of sexual abuse are left with confused thinking as well as feelings of unworthiness and shame that can be almost too heavy to bear. The pain and suffering victims experience is often intensified by others’ comments rooted in a misunderstanding of sexual abuse and its effects. Some victims are accused of lying or are told that the abuse was somehow their fault. Others are mistakenly led to believe that they must repent, as if they had somehow sinned by being victimized.

Many clients I have worked with who experienced sexual abuse in their childhood or youth are told to “get over it,” “leave it in the past,” or “just forgive and forget.” These types of statements—especially when coming from close friends, family members, or Church leaders—can lead the victim to increased secrecy and shame rather than healing and peace. Similar to a serious physical wound or infection, these emotional wounds do not just go away if ignored. Rather, the confusion that begins during the abuse grows, and together with the resulting painful emotions, one’s thinking may become altered, ultimately leading to the development of unhealthy behaviors. It is not uncommon for victims of abuse not to recognize that what occurred to them was abusive, yet they may still develop unhealthy behaviors and painful emotions.

Hannah (name has been changed) experienced sexual abuse early in her childhood. Like other victims, she grew up feeling like she was a terrible person who had no worth. She spent most of her life trying to serve others enough to make up for her feelings of not being “good



enough” for Heavenly Father or anyone else to love. In her relationships, she feared that if anyone truly knew her, they would think she was as awful as she believed she was. She experienced an intense fear of rejection that led to being afraid of trying new things in life or doing simple tasks like calling someone on the phone. She was blessed with a talent for artwork but gave up on it for fear of not being able to handle criticism.

For over 50 years her feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, fear, anger, confusion, shame, loneliness, and isolation guided her daily decisions.

Replacing Pain with Peace

The Savior suffered “pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind.” He did this so that He would “know according to the flesh how to succor his people” (Alma 7:11–12). His suffering was not just for our sins but also for our healing when someone else’s sins cause us suffering.

If He were here today, I imagine that the Savior would weep with and bless those who have been sexually abused, as He wept with and blessed the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 17). While He is not here physically, His Spirit can be with us, and He has provided a way for us to be healed, to feel peace, and to forgive.

For many who have been hurt, the



idea that the pain they carry could be replaced with peace is almost impossible to believe. Often the wounds of the abused go unnoticed and unrecognized by others for years. The hurt is masked by smiling faces, a willingness to help others, and living life as if nothing was wrong, yet the pain is constantly there.

Let’s compare the emotional healing process with that of caring for and treating a physical injury. Suppose that when you were young, you broke your leg. Rather than going to the doctor to get it set, you hobbled along until the deep pain was gone, but there is always a slight pain with each step you take. Years later you want the pain to go away, so you go to a doctor. The doctor must reset the bone, clean away any buildup that has grown, cast it, and send you to physical therapy to strengthen your leg.

The process of healing from abuse is similar in that the victim must first recognize that the pain is real and that something can be done about it. The process includes acknowledging what

COMMON BEHAVIORS OF VICTIMS

Victims often struggle with relationships and may constantly seek approval from others, become passive, put up barriers to keep people at a distance to avoid getting hurt, become promiscuous to seek nurturing through sexual activity (including pornography and self-stimulation), or do the exact opposite and avoid anything related to sex. The shame associated with these behaviors often inhibits individuals from seeking help from parents, priesthood leaders, or professionals because they do not understand the connection between what happened to them and their behaviors.

In living the gospel, victims tend to go to one extreme or the other: Some become overly religious. In an attempt to cover what they think is their unworthiness, they try to do everything right. Others feel that they are never going to be worthy of eternal life and at times give up trying.

LESSONS FROM DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS 123

While the Prophet Joseph Smith was imprisoned in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, he wrote an epistle to the Church, comprising sections 121–124 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which include the “duty of the Saints in relation to their persecutors” (D&C 123, section heading). He did not tell the Saints who had suffered persecution and physical injuries to keep their hurt to themselves and pretend like nothing happened. Consider how the counsel given in section 123 can apply to the problem of abuse.



happened and allowing the feelings of being hurt, scared, and sad to be felt, acknowledged, and validated. Often it is helpful to work with a professional experienced in this healing process. (Check with your bishop to learn what LDS Family Services resources are available in your area.)

Whether or not the victim has access to professional help, it is best to pray, study the life of the Savior and His Atonement, and visit regularly with a priesthood leader. He can help ease the burdens and receive inspiration to help the victim understand their divine worth and relationship with Father in Heaven and the Savior. As Sister Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, recently taught: “Healing may be a long process. It will require that you prayerfully seek guidance and appropriate help, including counseling with properly ordained priesthood holders. As you learn to communicate openly, set appropriate boundaries and perhaps seek professional counseling. Maintaining spiritual health throughout the process is vital!”³

For Hannah, her life had become so uncomfortable that she sought help. She knew from her testimony that she could feel peace and contentment in life but did not feel them on a consistent basis. Through prayer and talking with her bishop, she was guided to counseling, where she was able to gain the tools she needed to bring the truth out of darkness and share the awful burden she had been carrying alone. In doing so, she was able to release the pain and find the peace promised by the Savior (see John 14:27). Along with this peace and comfort came the desire and ability to forgive.

The Need to Forgive

The idea of forgiving is often difficult for victims of abuse to hear and is often misunderstood. If they think of forgiveness as letting the abuser off the hook or saying that what they did doesn’t matter anymore, the victim won’t feel validated. While we are commanded to forgive (see D&C 64:10), in situations where the harm is deep, healing typically must begin

before the victim can fully forgive the abuser.

Those who are suffering the pains caused by abuse may find comfort in this counsel from the Book of Mormon: “I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are pure in heart. Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction” (Jacob 3:1). The need for justice and the right to restitution can be turned over to the Lord so He can replace our hurt with peace.

Hannah eventually found that she could turn the need for justice over to the Savior and in return find a feeling of peace in her life as she had never before experienced. Previously, she had feared attending family gatherings where the abuser would be present. Now, due to her willingness to face difficult emotional wounds on her way to healing, she no longer fears being in his presence and can even have compassion for him in his old age.

Free of Needless Burdens

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated that “complete healing will come through your faith in Jesus Christ and His power and capacity, through His Atonement, to heal the

scars of that which is unjust and undeserved. . . .

“He loves you. He gave His life that you may be free of needless burdens. He will help you do it. I know that He has the power to heal you.”⁴

The adversary wants to keep people bound by pain and suffering because he is miserable (see 2 Nephi 2:27). With the help of our Savior, Jesus Christ, pain can truly be replaced with peace, only as the Savior is able to give, and we can live with joy. “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Living with joy will allow times of trial to be more bearable and enable us to learn and grow and become more like our Father in Heaven.

I am humbled by the blessing I have had in my life to sit with those who have been harmed by abuse and see the miracle of healing that truly comes only through the Savior. If you are suffering, please prayerfully turn for help. You do not have to carry the heavy burden alone. I know He heals, for I have witnessed it countless times. ■

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Save the Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 54; emphasis added.
2. David A. Bednar, “We Believe in Being Chaste,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 42.
3. Carole M. Stephens, “The Master Healer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 11.
4. Richard G. Scott, “To Be Free of Heavy Burdens,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 88.

COUNSEL FOR LEADERS, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS

When a victim trusts you enough to share with you their sufferings and abuses, conversations with them should begin with love and empathy for them. Far too often victims have shared with me that when they approached their bishop for help, the first focus was on needing to forgive the offender. This can leave the victim feeling as if all that matters is the offender. When this happens, individuals rarely return to their bishops for help and miss out on the spiritual healing that is possible with ecclesiastical love and support.

Forgiving is a vital piece in the healing process and is a commandment—but please trust that allowing someone to first acknowledge their suffering, feel their feelings, and talk about them with a trusted person will in time lead to the healing that comes from being able to forgive the abuser.

Church leaders can refer to ministering.lds.org to find “Abuse: Help for the Victim” for more information.



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GROWING A HEALTHY TECHNOLOGY GARDEN

By Marissa Widdison

Church Magazines

Are you a digital immigrant? If you can remember a time before Facebook, the answer is yes. It would take a pile of objects from 20 years ago to do what a single smartphone can do today. Which is awesome! But let's be real: this journey to the "digital age" has been a rough one in some ways. We've had to learn new skills, new lingo, and new social rules. And when you add kids to the mix, you get a whole new level of anxiety. How can we help our families stay safe and develop a healthy relationship with all of this technology?

The purpose of this article is to explore the answer to that question with an analogy that will help us talk about and remember ideas in a non-intimidating way—by comparing them to gardening! Gardens can be beautiful, relaxing, and practical, which is what our relationship with technology can be as well.

Idea One: Create a Plan

If you wanted to grow a garden, you wouldn't toss a bunch of seeds into the air and hope they grew perfectly. You'd do at least a little planning—maybe thinking about what sunlight is available, how much maintenance you can handle, and how many pounds of zucchini you can pressure neighbors into taking. Do we put similar effort into

thinking about how we use technology? Or do we just click away and hope everything ends up OK?

If you don't already have a plan, the good news is you don't have to create one from scratch. Search online for a "family media plan" and you'll find several examples from nonprofit organizations to use. Or start by answering guiding questions like these:

1. *When is using technology OK, and for how long?* Does your family have any designated technology-free times? For example, some families collect cell phones before dinner and put them in another room so they focus on each other during the meal. When technology is allowed, are there time limits? If you're looking for guidelines, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a limit of one to two hours of high-quality entertainment media per day for children (compared to the current average of seven hours!).

2. *What is acceptable and what isn't?* Most video games, shows, and movies come with some sort of rating. Do family members understand what is off-limits? You could use family home evening to role-play situations where you might need to turn down invitations or request new entertainment. Practice saying things like, "Sorry, I don't play games rated M for Mature. Can we play another game?"

3. *What level of monitoring will there be?* Decide how



much digital privacy is healthy for your family. Do you and your spouse have separate email accounts or share one? Do you know your children's passwords? One couple collects all their children's smartphones to charge in their bedroom overnight. This gives them an opportunity to periodically check browsing history and read text messages, which they feel is a healthy level of monitoring for their kids. Maybe you don't agree, but that's OK—different families, like different gardens, will thrive with different maintenance plans.

4. *What are the consequences when rules are intentionally broken?* In addition to clearly explaining to our children what the technology expectations are, we need to make sure they know there will be consequences if they intentionally break the rules. At the beginning of the school year, some teachers have children brainstorm and agree upon consequences for bad behavior and then hold them to that standard for the rest of the year. Perhaps something similar could work for your family.

5. *What is our turn-away plan when we accidentally encounter bad media?* Accept the fact that your kids will almost certainly accidentally encounter bad media at some point in their lives. We shouldn't punish them for stumbling upon it, but we can equip them to handle the situation. One family's turn-away plan was printed in the June 2011 *Friend* magazine in an article called "Crash and Tell." In the story, a boy gets away from an inappropriate pop-up ad by (1) turning off the computer and (2) telling an adult right away. Because his family has already talked about a plan, he knows what to do.

6. *How will we record our plan?* One mother wrote a "technology contract" for her son when he received his first smartphone. Another family wrote their media plan on a poster in the kitchen. What will help your family?

Idea Two: Pull the Weeds and Water the Flowers

Once we've planned and planted our garden, it's exciting to see sprouts appear. But our work isn't over! Now comes the ongoing challenge of pulling weeds and watering flowers.

Pull the Weeds

Wouldn't it be awesome if we could just do a thorough weeding at the beginning of summer and then, brushing dirt off our knees, say, "Well, I'm glad I got that over with!" and never weed again? Unfortunately, weeds spring up over and over again, and so do harmful media messages. We can prevent some of the bad language, crude images, cyberbullying, and violence with internet filters and good choices. But there will always be stubborn weeds that pop up in unexpected places.

Pornography is perhaps the most stubborn of media weeds. It seems to be popping up everywhere! And because pornography can be tricky to talk about with children, we may be tempted to treat it like a one-time situation. "Well, I had 'the talk' with Bobby, so he should be fine." In reality, kids will certainly encounter confusing and unsavory content more than once in their lives. That means we need to step up and have ongoing, age-appropriate discussions about media with our children—including about the tough stuff.

This doesn't mean we have to use the word *pornography* around the dinner table, although some families are fine with that. If you feel that your family needs a milder approach, ask your kids if they saw anything that made them feel uncomfortable that day, or if they heard any words they didn't understand. If we provide them with safe, open ways to get information, they're less likely to turn to the internet for answers and more likely to tell us about their media experiences.



If the thought of talking about pornography still gives you the nervous-parent sweats, here are a few resources that can help you communicate lovingly, boldly, and with confidence:

- **OvercomingPornography.org.** Here you'll find ready-to-go family home evening lessons about bodies, sexual intimacy, and related topics. Click "Resources" at the top of the page and then "Family Home Evening."
- **LessonHelps.lds.org.** This is a collection of child-friendly, Church-approved stories, activities, and media. If you click the topic "Media," you'll find *Friend* articles you could use to start a conversation.
- **EducateEmpowerKids.org.** This nonprofit organization is not affiliated with the Church but was founded by and continues to be directed by Latter-day Saint professionals. On this website you'll find several age-appropriate resources for talking to children about pornography as well as sexual intimacy.

Water the Flowers

What positive media habits do you want to grow? You could fill a garden with endless possible combinations of vibrant flowers and delicious vegetables. Similarly, there are countless ways your family can serve others online. For example, you could decide that before you scroll through your social media feed, you'll write three positive comments on other people's statuses. Or you'll send an uplifting meme to someone each week. Perhaps you could add these ideas to your family media plan. [Medialibrary.lds.org](https://www.medialibrary.lds.org) has plenty of inspirational content ready to share.

Idea Three: Don't Let the Garden Take Over

Now, even if a garden is full of good things, it can still become hard to enjoy or manage if it gets overgrown. The

same goes for technology—even good technology use can get out of hand. We need to remember that technology exists to serve us, not the other way around.

Some professionals suggest a periodic "media fast" to help us release our grip on technology. [BeautyRedefined.org](https://www.beautyredefined.org), a media literacy nonprofit organization founded and run by Latter-day Saint professionals, recommends choosing a period of time—three days, a week, a month, or whatever feels right for your family—and avoiding as much media as possible. Doing so will remind us that it's not the end of the world if we don't check our social media accounts multiple times a day. It also gives our minds the chance to become more sensitive to messages that don't mesh with truths we experience in the real world. When the time comes to reconnect with media, sit down as a family and reevaluate your habits. What uplifting media did you miss? Are there harmful messages you should stay away from?

Idea Four: Every Garden Is Different

The last idea is simple but important: Every garden is different. Some people grow flowers; others focus on veggies. Some gardens are meticulously pruned, while others are kind of wild. Different plants are susceptible to different bugs and grow well under different conditions. Every family is different, too. Your media use will be unique to your circumstances and your family. The important thing is that we take the time to understand the strengths and weaknesses of our family members, craft a media plan, and then weed, water, and cut back in a meaningful and ongoing way. That way we can grow a healthy media garden that will be useful and inspiring to every member of the family, whether they remember a time before Facebook or not! ■

From a 2016 Brigham Young University Women's Conference address.



Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

THE WORDS WE USE

You can't keep your kids from ever hearing bad language, but you *can* prepare them and teach them the why behind your family and gospel standards. Have a family discussion or lesson about why we use clean words and kind language. What are good words to use? Then talk about how to keep ugly and unkind words out of your home. If your kids do swear, calmly and kindly explain why that's inappropriate. Let your kids know that if they have questions about words they hear, they can ask you and not get in trouble.

You could use these stories from this month's *Friend* to help start a discussion:



- “Brock and the Bad Word” (page 8)—A boy starts swearing to fit in with his friends, then realizes it makes him unhappy and keeps him from feeling the Spirit. A CTR Challenge card helps your kids set goals for using good language.

- “Game Changer” (page 36)—Caleb logs out of his online game when his friends start using bad words, even

though he feels different and left out. Even if those around us use bad words, we can still be good examples and treat them kindly and respectfully. Brainstorm ways you and your kids can arm yourselves against the bad language you can't stop.



RELATED TEACHINGS

- The Lord taught that sacred things “must be spoken with care” (D&C 63:64). It's so common to hear the Lord's name misused that kids might not understand why it's wrong. Talk about why we should speak respectfully of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.
- Jean B. Bingham, First Counselor in the Primary General Presidency, taught: “Words have surprising power, both to build up and to tear down. . . . Choosing to say only that which is positive about—and to—others lifts and strengthens those around us” (“I Will Bring the Light of the Gospel into My Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 7).

OBJECT LESSON IDEA



Place a clean sponge in clean water and another in dirty water. When the sponges are full, take them out and squeeze them to show what kind of water comes out. Explain that our minds soak up words and ideas; what we've soaked up is what comes out. What kind of language do you want to soak up? Using good language doesn't mean just not swearing—it also means using language that's honest, kind, and respectful. We can choose to soak up good things that please Heavenly Father so we can have the Holy Ghost with us. Explain how, with repentance, we can become clean from any bad influences we've soaked up.

Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.

TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

Each month, we'll give you tips for talking with your children about a portion of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."¹

This Month's Selection

"In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life."



Gender is an essential characteristic of premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

IN THE PREMORTAL REALM, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God to be united eternally.

How to Explain This to Children

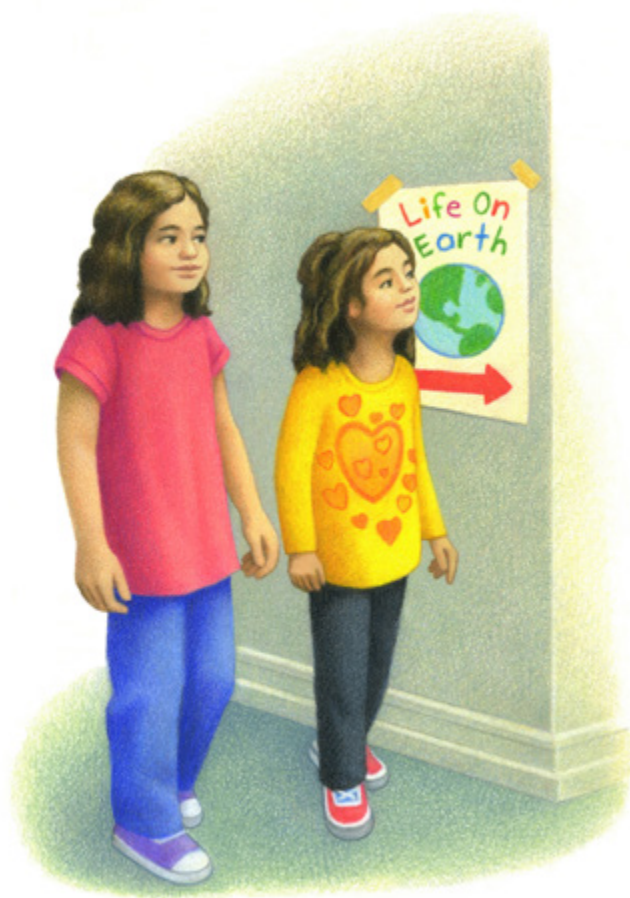
Before we were born on earth, we lived with Heavenly Father as His spirit daughters and His spirit sons. Heavenly Father told us He had a plan for us. In this plan we would get a body by being born on earth. We would have experiences that would help us grow. We could choose to learn and become more like our Heavenly Parents. One day we would return to Them. We loved Heavenly Father and accepted this plan.

Activity Idea

Review the plan of salvation by labeling different places in your house as different parts of the plan (for example, pre-earth life, life on earth, spirit world, eternal life). As you move from place to place, talk about why that part of the plan is important. If possible, find a picture of Jesus Christ to take with you. At each stop, talk about why Jesus is important to that part of the plan and how He can help us get to the next place successfully. Talk about why Heavenly Father's plan is sometimes called the "plan of happiness." ■

NOTE

1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



Find other teaching tips and a copy of the family proclamation at ProclamationKids.lds.org.

THE SHEPHERD'S CROOK

By Stephen G. Biddulph

Saving a marine from drowning helped me remember my own need for rescue by the Savior.

When I was a young marine lieutenant, I took my platoon to the pool for water survival training. Each marine was to jump off a 15-foot (4.6 m) tower—fully clothed in combat boots, fatigues, and helmet—into 12 feet (3.7 m) of water, come to the surface, and tread water for a time.

One marine in my unit froze on the tower that day. Despite taunts from his fellow marines and a direct order, he could not muster the courage to jump from the tower. In response to my inquiry as to the problem, the young marine told me that he was not a strong swimmer and that he was afraid that if he jumped in with all his clothes on, he would drown.

I had been a lifeguard at Brigham Young University, so I felt confident that I could help this young man. I removed the shepherd's crook—a long pole with an elongated hook on

the end used for rescuing people—from its place and told him that if he would jump, I would extend the shepherd's crook to him. All he had to do was grasp it when he felt me push it into his chest, and I would pull him to the surface.

Frankly, I was caught off guard by the marine's compliance. He shouted, "Sir! Yes, sir!" and off the tower he went.

He proved prophetic. He went straight to the bottom of the pool and stood there with arms outstretched, tiny bubbles of air escaping upward through pursed lips. Quickly I lowered the shepherd's crook and pushed the hook into his chest. He grabbed the pole, and I pulled him up to the cheers of the other marines, who seemed to appreciate a man who showed courage in the face of fear.

This experience of saving another

man from drowning has helped me remember my own need for rescue by the Savior—and my duty to lift and strengthen others. As I have contemplated this man's willingness to trust me, based only on my promise of rescue, my own trust in the Savior has been strengthened, and I have felt more fully my dependence upon Him for my own spiritual survival.

Each of us needs divine rescue from our leap of faith into mortality. How amazing it is to me that the Savior, at great personal suffering, condescended to come personally to our rescue, to lift us from the depths of death and sin by accomplishing His Atonement, an act of infinite love. All He asks of us is that we trust Him and reach out and grasp hold of the true gospel that He has so magnanimously extended to us, and He will lift us to





Him (see 3 Nephi 27:13–16). There is no depth to which we can sink in this life that is not reachable by His mercy and grace.

We are not alone in the pool of life. We are surrounded by others who also need rescuing. Some know what it is like to sink to the very depths of life and feel the helplessness and panic that come in knowing that they

cannot make it to the surface on their own. How remarkable it is when we can extend the shepherd's crook to someone else in need and lift that person up. I have discovered that the quality of my own life depends, in large part, upon my willingness to extend to others a shepherd's crook of love, service, example, and encouragement. As we help to rescue others, we value even more our own rescue.

My own leap of faith has been a blessing because of my testimony that God lives, that Jesus is our Savior, and that He stands ready with his shepherd's crook to lift each of us. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



HIS MERCIFUL ARM IS OUTSTRETCHED

"Those who will repent and forsake sin will find that His merciful arm is

outstretched still. Those who listen to and heed His words and the words of His chosen servants will find peace and understanding even in the midst of great heartache and sorrow. The result of His sacrifice is to free us from the effects of sin, that all may have guilt erased and feel hope."

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Reason for Our Hope," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 7.

Come, Come unto Him

Heartfelt ♩. = 44-48

Words by Steven K. Jones
Music by Michael F. Moody

mp

R.H.

1. He
(2. He)
(3. He)

5

came to us; He loved us that much. There is - n't a soul He's un -
came to earth; He lived as a man. There's no earth - ly care He
lived like us, ac - quain - ted with grief. To those who be - lieve He

8

rall.

wil - ling to touch; No life so dark He can - not light; No
can't un - der - stand; No earth - ly pain He did not feel; No
of - fers re - lief. He o - pens eyes; He for - gives sin For the

11

a tempo

sad - ness, no sor - row He can - not right. Come, come un - to
hun - ger, no heart - ache He can - not heal. Come, come un - to
hum - ble, the faith - ful who fol - low Him. Come, come un - to

2



14

Him. _____
Him. _____ Come to Him. Come learn of Him. _____ He's
Him. _____

17

meek and hum - ble and low - ly of heart. Come, come un - to

20

Him. _____ 1, 2. 3. 2. He 3. He Oh,

23

rall.
come, come un - to Him. _____

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Skaidrīte is one of the happiest people I have ever met. Her life seems picture perfect. But as a child she lived with her alcoholic mother, who was incapable of caring for her and her sister. Skaidrīte held her sister's hand as she died of starvation. Starting at age eight, Skaidrīte lived in a series of foster homes. She was kicked, beaten, and forbidden to pray. She was treated like a slave. Over the years, she contemplated suicide.

Years later, searching for hope, Skaidrīte entered an LDS meetinghouse.

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

Skaidrīte Bokuma

Kurzeme Region, Latvia

A sister missionary greeted me and smiled. I thought she was an angel. Since that day my life has changed. It has been 17 years now, and all thoughts of ending my life have vanished. Today, I am positive. When I have burdens, I put them on God. I have learned to rely on Him for everything. Life is beautiful for me.

See more about Skaidrīte's journey from tragedy to faith at lds.org/go/portraitsE417.

Learn how to recognize and help those who may be considering suicide at lds.org/go/41738.





PLEASE DON'T PLAY THAT SONG

Some time ago, my family and I lived in Veracruz, Mexico, where my children attended elementary school. Each morning as I helped my three children get ready for school, we listened to the radio—the most popular station in the city—with a very pleasant program conducted by a young male radio announcer.

We began hearing a very catchy song. As I started paying closer attention to the lyrics, I realized that the things it said, though not vulgar, were suggestive and crude.

I said determinedly to my children, “We cannot listen to this type of language.” Perhaps they didn’t even pay attention to the lyrics of the song, but they did pay enough attention to be humming its tune.

They saw me turn off the volume on the stereo system and asked me what I was doing. “I am going to tell the radio announcer to take that song off the program.” Their astonishment encouraged me to take further action.

They couldn’t believe it and neither could I, but I picked up the telephone and called the radio station. I didn’t expect to get an answer, but to my surprise, the same radio announcer we had just heard on the show answered my call almost immediately.

I told him that I didn’t agree with listening to that song, since many

When we heard a very catchy song on the radio, I started paying closer attention to the lyrics.

families tuned in to the radio at that time in the morning. He asked me what I would suggest he replace it with, but his demeanor was so well-mannered that I asked only that he not play that song during the time when the children were at home.

I never found out if my call was on the air, but I was just grateful that the radio announcer had listened. And for the next few days, I could tell that my request had been granted.

That experience affirmed to me that we should be courageous when it is in our hands to make decisions and do what is necessary to protect our children from negative influences. As we do so, the Holy Ghost can continue being our constant companion. ■

Maria Hernandez, Texas, USA



THE LOST WALLET

Recently I moved to a new home and asked some Church members to help me with a project at my house. In the middle of the project, I left to buy some materials that we needed to finish. After we finished the project, I realized I didn't have my wallet. I panicked because inside my wallet were all my personal documents along with money I had just received from a client that morning. I retraced my steps to where I'd made the purchases but didn't have any luck. I went home and searched to see if I had dropped it somewhere, but I still didn't find it. I began considering the possibility that I would have to acquire new copies of all the documents. Then before leaving my home, a friend asked, "Have you prayed yet?"

I immediately thought, "Of course I've prayed already!"

But in reality, I had not prayed with real intent. Instead, I wanted to force my will on Heavenly Father and somehow make it His duty to help me find my wallet. But then I remembered the scripture in Isaiah 55:8: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."



I asked Heavenly Father to answer our prayer in order to strengthen the faith of my wife and children.

On Sunday I went to church, and a member who had been with me the day before told me that he had prayed fervently to Heavenly Father that I might find my wallet. He said he had felt that I would find it. Later, as I sat down for my personal study, I began reading *Receiving Answers to Our Prayers* by Elder Gene R. Cook, emeritus member of the Seventy. The first page told a story with a problem identical to mine: Elder Cook's son lost his wallet, so the family gathered together and prayed to the Lord that they would find it.

After reading that experience, I put what I learned into practice and gathered my wife and children together. We formed a circle, and each person

offered a prayer, imploring the Lord to help us find the wallet if it were His will.

I had previously witnessed the power of prayer, but afterward, as I prayed in private, I asked Heavenly Father to answer our prayer in order to strengthen the faith of my wife and children.

The next day a man called me. He said he had found my wallet, including the money. I wept like a child because my prayer was answered and my family's faith was strengthened.

I know that Heavenly Father, even with so many children to attend to, responds to each of us according to His time and in His way. ■

Luiz Marcelino, Goiás, Brazil

RESCUED IN THE FOYER

My husband often has to work on Sundays, leaving me in charge of taking our four sons to church alone. One particular Sunday during sacrament meeting, my two toddlers were at odds with each other. If I got one of the boys interested in a book, his brother wanted it. I tried snacks, toys, and coloring, but nothing worked. I was overwhelmed with my boys, who just couldn't seem to sit quietly for one hour.

I pulled a small toy out of my bag and handed it to my one-year-old. Immediately a scream came from my three-year-old, Tyson, as he pounced on his younger brother, trying to retrieve the toy. I was humiliated as I carried two screaming, fighting little boys out into the foyer.

My face was immediately wet with hot tears. Why did this have to be so hard? I was doing what Heavenly Father wanted me to do by bringing my family to church, right? But I couldn't do it anymore. It was exhausting and embarrassing to fight my boys through sacrament meeting alone every week. I didn't ever want to come back.

I sat with these thoughts for only about 15 seconds, and then a sister who I barely knew came out into the foyer after me. Her name was Sister Beus. She usually sat alone, as her husband served in the bishopric

I was overwhelmed with my boys, who just couldn't seem to sit quietly for one hour.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARRIS

and her children were grown. She said, "You're always here alone! I can see that you're trying so hard. Could Tyson sit with me?" I couldn't even think of a response! I just nodded as she took him by the hand and led him, now calm and happy, back into the chapel.

I wiped away my tears, picked up my baby, and humbly walked back into the chapel to enjoy the rest of the meeting in peace.

The next Sunday as we walked into sacrament meeting, Tyson searched for his new friend. At night he would pray, "Thank you, Heavenly Father, for Sister Beus. I love her so much!"

It's been over three years, and Tyson still often searches the chapel for Sister Beus. Last year she was called to be Tyson's Primary teacher. He was the happiest little boy alive.

I am so grateful for Sister Beus and her willingness to love and serve others. I know that we can bless the lives of others when we serve as the Savior did. ■

Kristi Lewis, Utah, USA

DONE!

During my interviews as a bishop one Sunday afternoon, I had the pleasure of sitting down with a good friend to talk about some challenges he was facing. After listening to his concerns for a few minutes, I felt that what he needed was consistency in reading the scriptures. I was also reminded that, as his bishop, I too should be more constant in my scripture study, which was something I had been struggling with. So I suggested that we become "accountability partners" in striving to study more consistently.

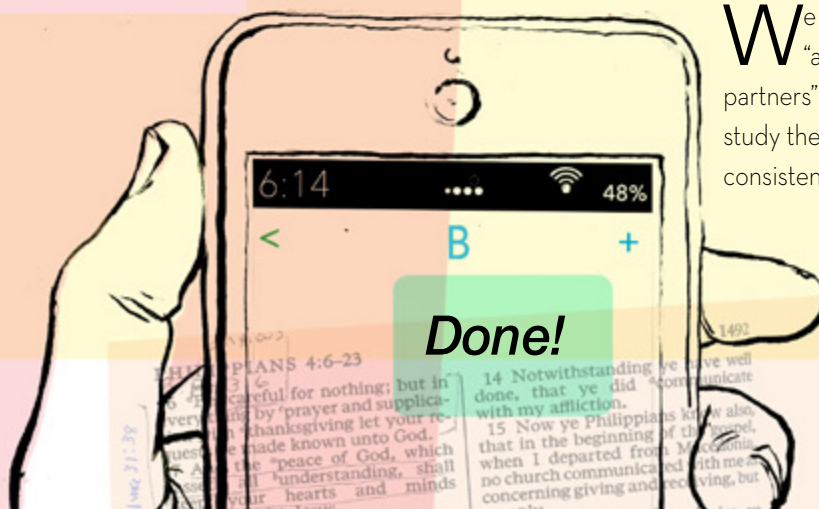
Every day after we finished reading our scriptures, we would text each other the word *Done!* Knowing that someone else was waiting to hear whether or not the other had completed his reading for the day was great motivation for the both of us. If one of us forgot, receiving a text was a reminder. If the other person did not text, he wasn't called out on it. We let each other take this challenge on without making the other person feel guilty.

We started the challenge six months ago now, and I don't recall

a day that we have missed reading our scriptures. This brother stood up during fast and testimony meeting a couple of months ago and shared his testimony of the positive impact that daily scripture study was having on him and his family.

I am grateful for this brother and his friendship, as well as his daily texts. I have seen how technology, when used properly, can enhance our lives. I'm also thankful for the scriptures and how they testify of Christ. I know that the Savior's atoning sacrifice makes it possible for each of us to return to live with Him someday. ■
Alex Whibley, British Columbia, Canada

We became "accountability partners" in striving to study the scriptures more consistently.





By Elder Bruce R.
McConkie (1915–1985)

Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE POWER OF GOD

Faith is power and power is priesthood.

God is God because He is the Embodiment of all faith and all power and all priesthood. The life He lives is named eternal life.

And the extent to which we become like Him is the extent to which we gain His faith, acquire His power, and exercise His priesthood. And when we have become like Him in the full and true sense, then we also shall have eternal life.

Faith and priesthood go hand in hand. Faith is power and power is priesthood. After we gain faith, we receive the priesthood. Then, through the priesthood, we grow in faith until, having all power, we become like our Lord.

Our time here in mortality is set apart as a time of probation and of testing. It is our privilege while here to perfect our faith and to grow in priesthood power. . . .

The holy priesthood did more to perfect men in the days of Enoch than at any other time. Known then as the order of Enoch (see D&C 76:57), it was the power by which he and his people were translated. And they



were translated because they had faith and exercised the power of the priesthood.

It was with Enoch that the Lord made an eternal covenant that all who received the priesthood would have power, through faith, to govern and control all things on earth, to put at defiance the armies of nations, and to stand in glory and exaltation before the Lord.

Melchizedek was a man of like faith, “and his people wrought righteousness, and obtained heaven, and sought for the city of Enoch” (Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:34). . . .

What, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood? And how shall we live as the servants of the Lord?

This doctrine is that God our Father is a glorified, a perfected, and an

exalted being who has all might, all power, and all dominion, who knows all things and is infinite in all His attributes, and who lives in the family unit.

It is that our Eternal Father enjoys this high status of glory and perfection and power because His faith is perfect and His priesthood is unlimited.

It is that priesthood is the very name of the power of God, and that if we are to become like Him, we must receive and exercise His priesthood or power as He exercises it. . . .

It is that we have power, by faith, to govern and control all things, both temporal and spiritual; to work miracles and perfect lives; to stand in the presence of God and be like Him because we have gained His faith, His perfections, and His power, or in other words the fulness of His priesthood.

This, then, is the doctrine of the priesthood, than which there neither is nor can be anything greater. This is the power we can gain through faith and righteousness. . . .

Truly there is power in the priesthood—a power which we seek to acquire to use, a power which we devoutly pray may rest upon us and upon our posterity forever. ■

From a general priesthood session address titled “The Doctrine of the Priesthood,” Ensign, May 1982, 32–34; capitalization standardized.



**OTHER SHEEP I HAVE,
BY ELSPETH YOUNG**

The risen Lord visited His "other sheep" (3 Nephi 15:21) in the Americas and elsewhere. The Nephites "did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come" (3 Nephi 11:15).



In Church Magazines

Ensign: Patriarchal blessings don't tell us everything that will happen in our lives, but they do provide a personal road map that can help lead us to the great happiness Heavenly Father has in store for each of us. See "Understanding Your Patriarchal Blessing" (page 8).

New Era: This month, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland teaches youth why it's vital for us to testify of the Restoration (page 2). Also, Elder Gregory A. Schwitzer talks to youth about how to prepare to serve a mission (page 34). And youth can find information and advice about dealing with anxiety (page 38).

Friend: Count down the week before Easter with your children by learning about a different name for Jesus each day (see page 24). You can also use the stories on pages 4 and 22 to help your family learn more about why Easter is so important.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

