

Ensign



**Disciples and the
Defense of Marriage,
pp. 34, 50, 80**

All Missions Bring Souls to Christ, p. 24

Safety in God's Standards, pp. 42, 48, 68



*"Ye shall know them
by their fruits. Do men
gather grapes of thorns,
or figs of thistles?"*

*"Even so every good
tree bringeth forth
good fruit; but a corrupt
tree bringeth forth evil
fruit. . . ."*

*"Wherefore by their fruits
ye shall know them."*

Matthew 7:16–17, 20

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Prepress: Joshua Dennis

Printing Director: Craig K. Sedgwick

Distribution Director: Stephen R. Christiansen

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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Disciples and the Defense of Marriage,” page 34: Consider how you can be a “defender of marriage” in your own home. Have you ever had a conversation with your children about their future marriages or about how the Church’s view of marriage differs from the world’s? Have you ever shared your feelings about marriage with your children? Have you taught them the teachings of the prophets and apostles concerning marriage? During a family home evening, consider discussing these topics, using “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129).

MORE OUT OF CONFERENCE

For years we enjoyed reading the conference issue of the *Ensign* as a family, one talk at a time. But we came to realize we were simply reading it to “get through it,” without stopping to digest the messages. To get more out of what we were reading, we decided to provide one copy of the conference *Ensign* for each family member. Everyone was to select and study a talk and then share highlights during family home evening. Gathering together to teach each other from the talks—asking questions and having gospel discussions—became a great way of hearing each other’s informal testimonies in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere.

Greg Batty, Utah, USA

“Lighting Our Children’s Path with Gospel Standards,” page 42: Consider using one of the ideas suggested on page 46 of the article. For example, you could use the “Stand for the Right” poster on page 47 (also found on page 20 of this month’s *Friend*) to start a family discussion about reading good books, using “good words,” being honest, or showing respect to others. You could also read aloud the quotation from President Uchtdorf on page 45 and then ask your family: In what ways are the standards and teachings of the gospel like “light posts” to us? See also the related articles on pages 48 and 68 of this issue.

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By President
Thomas S. Monson

I have had the privilege of attending many cultural celebrations held in conjunction with temple dedications. I have loved all of them, including the most recent one I attended in Phoenix, Arizona, USA, last November.

Latter-day Saint youth who participate in cultural celebrations put on marvelous, memorable programs. Last year in Phoenix, just prior to the celebration, I told the participants, “You are children of light.”

I would like all of the youth of the Church to know that they are children of light. As such, they have a responsibility to be “as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15). They have a duty to share the truths of the gospel. They have a calling to stand as a temple beacon, reflecting gospel light to an increasingly dark world. They have a charge to keep their light aflame and burning brightly.

In order for us to be “an example of the believers” (1 Timothy 4:12), we ourselves must believe. We must develop the faith necessary to survive spiritually and to project a light for others. We must nurture our testimony until it becomes an anchor to our lives.

Among the most effective ways to gain and keep the faith we need today is to read and study the scriptures and to pray frequently and consistently. To the youth of the Church, I say, if you haven’t done so, develop now a habit of daily scripture study and prayer. Without these two essential practices, outside influences and the sometimes-harsh realities of life can dim or even extinguish your light.

The teenage years are not easy. They are prime years when Satan will tempt you and do his utmost to entice you from the path which will lead you back to your heavenly home. But as you read and pray and as you serve and obey,



STAND AS A LIGHT

you will come to know better “the light which shineth in darkness” (D&C 6:21), our Exemplar and our strength—even the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Light we are to hold up to dispel the gathering darkness (see 3 Nephi 18:24).

With a strong testimony of the Savior and His restored gospel, you have limitless opportunities to shine. They surround you each day, in whatever circumstances you find yourselves. As you follow the example of the Savior, yours will be the opportunity to be a light, as it were, in the lives of those around you—whether they be members of your own family, classmates, co-workers, mere acquaintances, or total strangers.

When you are a light to the world, people around you will feel a special spirit that will make them want to associate with you and follow your example.

I plead with parents and leaders of our youth to help them stand firm for truth and righteousness. Help open wide to their view the gates of learning, of understanding, and of service in the kingdom of God. Build within them strength to resist the temptations of the world. Give



them the will to walk in virtue and faith, to be prayerful, and to look to heaven as their constant anchor.

To our youth, I say, our Heavenly Father loves you. May you feel also the love which Church leaders have for you. May you ever have a desire to serve your Heavenly Father and His Son. And may you always walk in truth and stand as a light among God's children. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider discussing with those you teach what it means to be a "[child] of light." What responsibilities does it entail? You could discuss times when their light has been particularly bright and what made it bright. Consider asking them to think of a specific person, such as a youth, a co-worker, or a member of their family, who may be in need of light. Then you could pray together about a way to share light with that person.



YOUTH

Beacon of Light

President Monson teaches that the youth of the Church “have a calling to stand as a temple beacon, reflecting gospel light to an increasingly dark world.” He gives a few ways you can do this:

- Share the gospel
- Believe
- Develop faith
- Be a light to others
- Nurture your testimony until it becomes an anchor to your life
- Read and study the scriptures



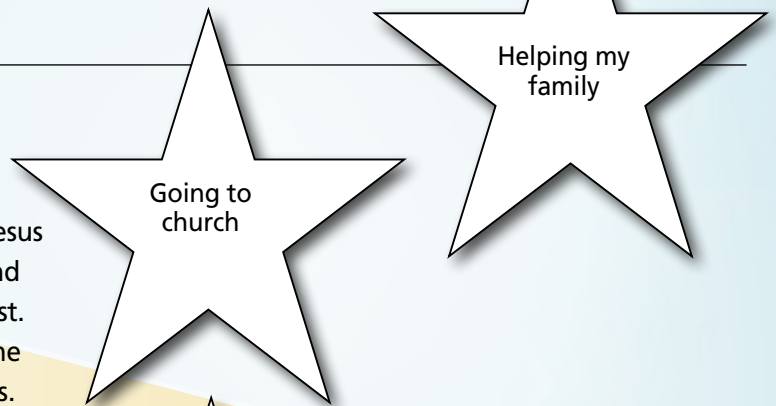
- Pray frequently and consistently
- Serve
- Obey

Consider rating yourself from 1 to 5 in each of these areas. For areas with a lower score, you could study these topics in the scriptures or search them on [LDS.org](https://www.lds.org). After you’ve studied these topics, you could think of ways you can strengthen these areas and set goals to do so.

CHILDREN

Shine Your Light

As a child of God, you’re a child of light. You can gain more light by following our Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father love you and want you to shine for others and lead them to Christ. You can shine just by being you when you follow the commandments, like praying and reading scriptures. Fill the stars below with ideas of how you can shine for others as an example of Jesus Christ. The first two have been done for you. Color the stars.



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

Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Meek and Humble

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

Jesus said, “He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:26–27).

“The Savior is our supreme example of the power of humility and submissiveness. After all, His submitting His will to the Father brought about the greatest, and even the most powerful, event in all of history. Perhaps some of the most sacred words in all the scriptures are simply, ‘Not my will, but thine, be done’ (Luke 22:42).”¹

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we always seek to be like Him. “Meekness is vital for us to become more Christlike,” said Elder Ulisses Soares of the Seventy. “Without it we won’t be able to develop other important virtues. Being meek does not mean weakness, but it does mean behaving with goodness and kindness, showing strength, serenity, healthy self-worth, and self-control.”² As we work to



develop this attribute, we will find that “humbly submitting our will to the Father brings us the empowerment of God—the power of humility. It is the power to meet life’s adversities, the power of peace, the power of hope, the power of a heart throbbing with a love for and testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ, even the power of redemption.”³

Additional Scriptures

Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; Mosiah 3:19; Helaman 3:35

NOTES

1. Richard C. Edgley, “The Empowerment of Humility,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 99.
2. Ulisses Soares, “Be Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 9.
3. Richard C. Edgley, “The Empowerment of Humility,” 99.

Consider This

How can having humility help us love as the Savior did?

Faith, Family, Relief



From the Scriptures

One of the sweetest and most powerful moments of Christ’s ministry was when He washed the feet of His disciples. “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded” (John 13:4–5).

As the Savior introduced this ordinance, the disciples may have been overwhelmed that their Lord and Master knelt before them and performed so meek a service. Jesus then explained the lessons He wanted them and all of us to learn:

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.

“For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14–15).

APRIL 2015 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken; . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38).

As you review the April 2015 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT



A Sacred Sabbath

“How do we *hallow* the Sabbath day? In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of things to do and things *not* to do on the Sabbath. It wasn’t until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted a *sign* between me and my Heavenly Father. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don’ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not

an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I simply asked myself, ‘What *sign* do I want to give to God?’ That question made my choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. . . .

“Faith in God engenders a love for the Sabbath; faith in the Sabbath engenders a love for God. A sacred Sabbath truly is a delight.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 130, 132.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



Fast Offerings Change Hearts

“In the Church today we are offered the opportunity to fast once a month and give a generous fast offering through our bishop or branch president for the benefit of the poor and the needy. . . .

“. . . Part of your fast offering and mine this month will be used to help someone, somewhere, whose relief the Lord will feel as if it were His own.

“Your fast offering will do more than help feed and clothe bodies. It will heal and change hearts. The fruit of a free-will offering may be the desire in the heart of the recipient to reach out to others in need. That happens across the world.”

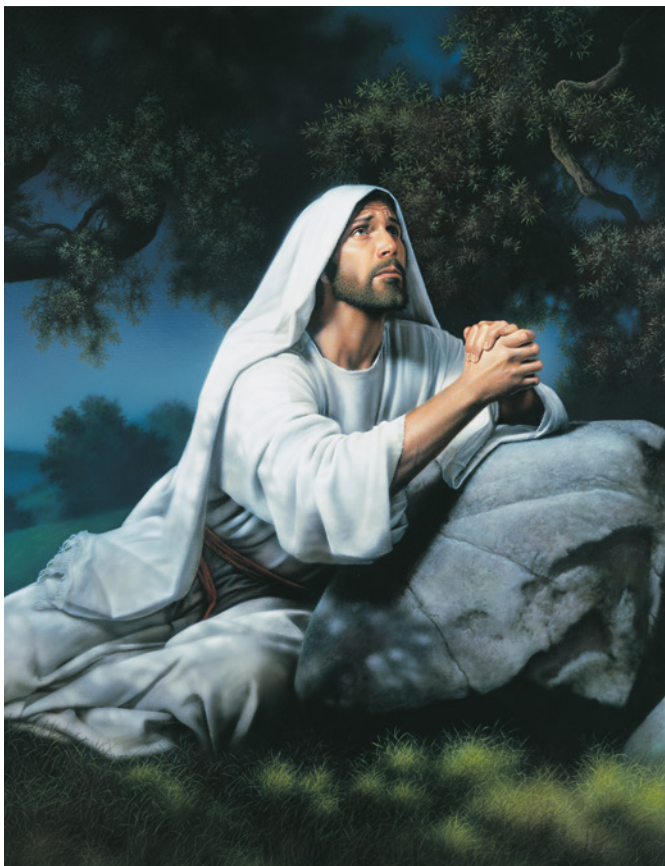
President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Is Not This the Fast That I Have Chosen?” *Ensign*, May 2015, 23, 24.

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

"At least four things are needed for the success of this divine plan," said Elder D. Todd Christofferson. Find the answers in his talk, "Why Marriage, Why Family," 50.

1. "The Creation of the _____ as our dwelling place."
2. "With the Fall [of Adam and Eve] came an awareness of _____ and _____ and the God-given power to _____. Finally, the Fall brought about physical _____ needed to make our time in mortality temporary so that we would not live forever in our sins."
3. "We see the role of death in our Heavenly Father's plan, but that plan would become void without some way to overcome death in the end, both _____ and _____. Thus, a Redeemer, the Only Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, suffered and died to atone for Adam and Eve's transgression, thereby providing _____ and immortality for all."
4. "God ordained that men and women should marry and give birth to children, thereby creating, in partnership with God, the physical bodies that are key to the _____ of mortality and _____ to eternal glory with Him."

Answers: 1. earth; 2. good, evil, choose, death; 3. physical, spiritual, resurrection; 4. test, essential



ANSWERS FOR YOU

Each conference, prophets and apostles give inspired answers to questions Church members may have. Use your May 2015 issue or visit conference.lds.org to find answers to these questions:

- What is "godly fear," and how can it bless our lives? See David A. Bednar, "Therefore They Hushed Their Fears," 46.
- What are the most important religious traditions in the home that help children know they are loved and safe? See Quentin L. Cook, "The Lord Is My Light," 62.
- How does understanding the relationship of justice, love, and mercy help us understand Easter and the Atonement of Jesus Christ? See Jeffrey R. Holland, "Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet," 104.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit conference.lds.org.

WE BELIEVE IN BEING HUMBLE

“The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment. ‘What will men think of me?’ weighs heavier than ‘What will God think of me?’” —President Ezra Taft Benson

When we become members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we covenant to always remember Him, take His name upon us, and keep His commandments (see D&C 20:77). Any sin prevents us from keeping this covenant, but there’s one sin, above all others, that we need to avoid because it leads to so many others: pride.

“Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness,” taught President Ezra Taft Benson

(1899–1994). “All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is missing.” He said, “The central feature of pride is enmity [hatred or hostility]—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen.”¹

Hostility toward God “is in the spirit of ‘my will and not thine be done.’ . . . The proud cannot accept the authority of God giving direction to their lives. . . . The proud wish God would agree with them. They aren’t interested in changing their opinions to agree with God’s.”²

Enmity toward our fellowmen is manifested in many ways: “fault-finding, gossiping, back-biting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.”³

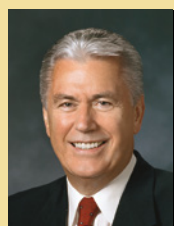
Pride hinders our progress, hurts our relationships, and limits the service we give. President Benson suggested this solution: “The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness. It is the broken heart and contrite spirit.”⁴ He taught that “humility responds to God’s will—to the fear of His judgments and to the needs of those around us. . . . Let us choose to be humble.”⁵

The following illustrations show ways we can choose to be humble. ■

The scriptures offer many warnings about pride, such as in Proverbs 16:18; Ezekiel 16:49–50; Doctrine and Covenants 23:1; 38:39.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 232.
2. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 232.
3. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 235.
4. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 238.
5. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 229, 238.



THE MOST HUMBLE MAN

“The greatest, most capable, most accomplished man who ever walked this earth was also the most humble. He performed some of His most impressive service in private moments, with only a few observers, whom He asked to ‘tell no man’ what He had done [see Luke 8:56]. When

someone called Him ‘good,’ He quickly deflected the compliment, insisting that only God is truly good [see Mark 10:17–18]. Clearly the praise of the world meant nothing to Him. . . . We would do well to follow the example of our Master.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “On Being Genuine,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 83.

We can show humility by:



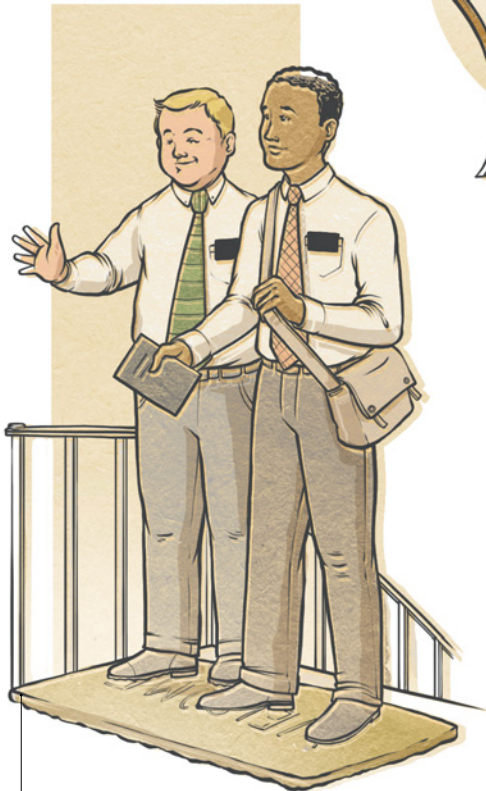
Receiving counsel and correction.



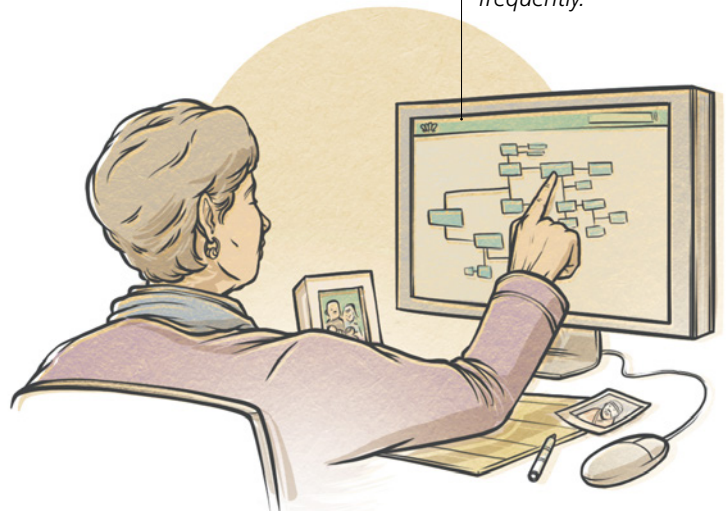
Giving selfless service.



Praying with real intent.



Serving a mission.



Doing family history work and attending the temple more frequently.

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

New Area Leaders Assigned

The First Presidency has announced changes in area leadership assignments, effective on August 1, 2015. All members of Area Presidencies are members of the First or Second Quorum of the Seventy.

The Seventy are called by revelation, under the direction of the First Presidency, to assist the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in their ministry throughout the world.

“The history of the Seventies really goes back to the Old Testament,” said President Boyd K. Packer, President of

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.¹ The first reference to the Seventy is found in Exodus 24:1, and they are later referred to in Numbers 11:16–17, 25, when they are gathered to assist Moses.

During Christ’s mortal ministry, He called the Seventy, instructed them in a manner similar to the Twelve Apostles, and sent them out “before his face,” explaining that those who heard their voices would hear His voice (see Matthew 10:1, 16–17; Luke 10).

“We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive Church,” President Packer said. “And it included Seventies.” (See Articles of Faith 1:6.) In today’s rapidly growing Church, the Seventy play an important role in assisting the Twelve. “Seventies by delegation can do anything the Twelve tell them to do,” President Packer said.² ■

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy, Part One: Revelation and the Role of the Seventy” (video), LDS.org.
2. Boyd K. Packer, in “The Twelve and the Seventy.”

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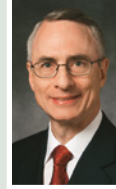


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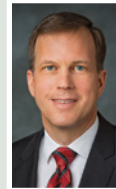


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A GLORIOUS REUNION

By Susan L. and C. Terry Warner

Decades of separation and heartache ended when the Lord brought a father and a son together in the temple.

It was a beautiful morning in April 2012 when John Ekow-Mensah entered the Accra Ghana Temple. The elderly brother, now in his 80s, had made the trip with a group of Saints from Nkawkaw, where he lived alone. The group planned to stay the night in nearby rooms for temple patrons and spend two days serving in the temple.

Seated inside the temple, Brother Ekow-Mensah was waiting to participate in initiatory ordinances when a younger man sat down beside him. The younger man, age 54, had planned to go through an endowment session that morning with his wife, but arriving too late for that session, he decided to do initiatory ordinances.

“Where are you from?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Sekondi,” the man replied.

“What part of Sekondi?” Brother Ekow-Mensah asked.

“Ketan,” the younger one answered, “in the area where the schools are located.” As the conversation continued, the men both sensed where



these questions might be leading.

Moved by a growing sense of recognition, the younger man looked at Brother Ekow-Mensah. “You are my father,” he announced. “What is your name?”

“John Ekow-Mensah.”

“That is my name too,” the son replied.

After serving in the temple, the two men sat for a long time in the celestial room, reconnecting their lives and rekindling their love. Though everything Brother Ekow-Mensah



Jr. said and did was respectful and proper, he seemed not quite ready to embrace his father wholeheartedly—until he learned why his father had to leave and why he could not contact his family.

Nearly 50 years ago Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. had married a woman whose grandmother—the oldest matriarch at that time—held sovereign power in their tribe. Sadly, the matriarch had been opposed to John's marriage to her granddaughter. At her insistence the couple ultimately separated when their oldest son, John Jr., was just four or five years old. John Jr. had known

his great-grandmother as a strong, hard-working woman, not as the power that had deprived him of all association with his natural father for nearly 50 years.

Expulsion from the family essentially severed all ties.

Because of the lack of telephones or mail service, John Sr. had no way to keep contact with his family. His search for work took him many hours away. He lived in Mankessim from about 1963 to 1989, where he operated a small paint shop. From there he moved to Ada, where a woman whose building he was painting introduced him to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Brother Ekow-Mensah Sr. joined the Church in 1991.

Because Brother Ekow-Mensah Jr. was so young when his parents' marriage dissolved, he didn't know much about his heritage. Occasionally his mother remarked that he was a "carbon copy" of his father, but that was the extent of his knowledge.

After he grew up and married, John and his wife, Deborah, decided to find a church they could join. John was at the University of Ghana in Accra when he saw a *Liahona* magazine on a shelf. He picked it up and found himself interested in what it had to say. John noted the publisher: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

When John returned from school to his home in Sekondi, his wife was anxious to tell him of a church she had

learned about from a friend. She told him the name was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. John told her this was the church he had read about in a magazine at the university.

John and Deborah were taught the gospel and baptized in 1999. A decade later they were sealed in the Accra Ghana Temple, and the three youngest of their five children were sealed to them.

Then in the temple in April 2012, tears came as the father and son recognized each other. Their joy was compounded by their understanding that they had separately joined the Church and found their way into the temple that beautiful morning. ■

The authors live in Utah, USA, and served in the Ghana Accra Mission.



Father and son, reunited at the temple after nearly 50 years of separation

THE POWER OF HOME TEACHING

By Jeff B. Marler

How could we home teach a family who wouldn't even let us in the door?

I was assigned to home teach with Brother Erickson, an older member of my ward who was a dedicated home teacher. He had me do the scheduling, which I didn't mind.

One of our families, the Wrights (name has been changed), was not actively involved with the Church. When I called the home, Brother Wright said, "Don't ever call my home again."

I told Brother Erickson what had happened. The following month, when he asked me to call the Wrights again, I reminded him that Brother Wright didn't want us to call. Brother Erickson insisted that I call anyway, so I did. When Brother Wright answered the phone, I asked him not to hang up on me and told him that my home teaching companion had insisted I call. I asked if we could home teach him just by calling each month. He agreed.

From that point on, I called the Wrights each month. Every time I called, Brother Wright would say, "You've made your call." Then he would hang up. I didn't have a problem with that, and Brother Erickson didn't ask for more.

But after several months had passed, Brother Erickson suggested that we

fast for the Wrights. I agreed, so one Sunday we prayed and fasted to find a way to reach Brother Wright. The next morning as I passed the Wright home on my way to work, Brother Wright was coming out of the house. I could see a toy truck under one of the rear tires of his car, so I stopped and pointed it out. He thanked me.

"By the way," I said, "I'm your home teacher."

He thanked me again as I headed off to work.

I called Brother Erickson to tell him what had happened. He asked me to call Brother Wright to set up a home teaching appointment for the next

evening, which I did. Brother Wright was both congenial and accepting. We had a great visit with the family and set up another appointment. I left their home with a greater testimony of fasting and prayer and of the importance of being a home teacher.

Later that week we learned that Brother Wright had allowed the full-time missionaries to start teaching his 15-year-old daughter. She had been praying for months that her father would soften his heart and let her be baptized. Over time the family began attending church, and Brother Wright eventually consented to his daughter's baptism. In fact, he was the one who baptized her.

I'm grateful that Brother Erickson was in tune with the Spirit. His insights during this experience helped me gain a greater testimony of the power and potential of dedicated home teaching. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.



THE WINDOW AT THE POOL

By Becky Heiner

Our family relationships can help us learn, understand, and live the gospel.

Our vacation was ending. Over waffles that morning, we planned how to make the most of our time at the hotel before enduring the five-hour drive home. My husband decided to take our three young daughters for a final escapade in the pool. I would take advantage of a treadmill in the workout room.

The treadmill I chose faced a wall-sized window overlooking the swimming pool. Shortly I saw a family, my family, make their way to the pool. Towels, shoes, and T-shirts flew everywhere as the girls excitedly prepared to jump into the water. Normally I would be following behind them, gathering up clothes and shoes and, quite honestly, being a bit annoyed by it all. Instead, I saw this family from the outside looking in, as though the

giant window before me was a movie screen. As my feet pounded a rhythm on the rotating belt beneath, I watched.

I saw how happy everyone was, laughing and playing together, and I thought about the times I had become discouraged by the petty arguments that inevitably arise in a family, by the uneasy feeling that, despite my best effort, I was failing to teach my children to love each other. But as I watched, I saw people who were happy together. I discovered that I wasn't failing to teach them to love one another; I was just failing to notice that they could.

I watched one of the girls jumping from the pool's edge over and over again into her daddy's arms. I thought about all the big jumps she would make throughout her life and hoped she would trust Heavenly Father to

catch her each time. I knew that with each jump she was learning to trust and that being part of our family was a safe way to learn that trust.

Another daughter sought to perfect a swimming skill. I saw how her family's encouragement kept her trying. There would be times in her life when she would need that same support in the face of more difficult challenges.

And then I watched as our third daughter was accidentally bumped into the pool. Upset and angry, she sputtered her way out of the water and into a chair. Immediately her family noticed she was missing. I watched each one lovingly encourage her to rejoin them. She eventually did, and I thought of her future, of all the times she would be hurt and feel like giving up. I hoped she would always find in the love of her family the strength to endure.

Suddenly, the realization hit me: our families can be a key to our ability to learn, understand, and live the gospel. Nephi noted that "by small means the Lord can bring about great things" (1 Nephi 16:29). And so it is with families. Yes, parents struggle. But every effort to teach and train and love, no matter how small, matters.

My little movie drew to a close. As I turned off the treadmill and watched my family gather their clothes, I felt renewed determination to keep going, to keep doing all the little things that I sometimes worry don't make a difference. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



PATIENCE:

More Than Waiting

Patience is not an easy lesson to learn, but it's worth it.

By Hillary Olsen

Sister Olsen, we bless you with patience.” Those weren’t the words I wanted to hear. I had been praying all day to have enough faith to be healed. In the blessing, I was promised that I’d eventually get better, but I was assured that it would take time.

I sighed as the elders finished giving me a blessing. I had only three months left on my mission, and I wanted to be out with the people—not sick in bed. I wanted to accept the Lord’s will, but I honestly didn’t understand why He would make me wait.

It took me several days to come to terms with my situation. I had resigned myself to the fact that I wasn’t going to get better right away,



but in the meantime I was miserable—until one day I turned to the scriptures. Eventually, I found the peace I needed in James 1. Joseph Smith found his answer in verse 5—mine was in verses 2–4:

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [the Joseph Smith Translation changes “divers temptations” to “many afflictions”];

“Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

As I read those verses, I can’t say that I was suddenly able to “count it all joy” that I was sick, but I did learn some things that helped me feel less miserable about my situation.

The fact that I hadn’t been immediately healed didn’t mean that I didn’t have faith, and it didn’t mean the Lord didn’t care about my situation—quite the opposite, actually. The Lord cared enough to test my faith by not healing me right away so that I could develop patience.

I realized that the Lord wanted me to develop patience because it’s a vital characteristic. Patience refines us. Patience helps us become more like the Savior. I did have important

responsibilities as a full-time missionary, but I realized that when it comes to serving the Lord, He cares just as much about the instrument as He does the task at hand. The Lord was teaching me patience so that I could be a better and more effective missionary in those final months of my mission.

My promised blessing of healing did eventually come, but my lesson in patience didn’t end there. Many blessings in our lives—marriage, employment, children, physical or emotional health, answers to prayers—don’t come right when we expect them to. When you experience delayed answers to prayers, and you likely have or will, commit to patience by trusting in the Lord and His timing. It will bless your life.

Perspective on Patience

I came home from my mission mistakenly feeling that I could check patience off my list of lessons to learn. The thing about patience, though, is that it’s not a lesson we learn only once. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave a talk on patience, and I read it for the first time after a rather discouraging breakup with someone I had been dating. I was feeling heartbroken and a little hopeless, and at

that point, the last thing I thought I needed was a reminder to be patient. Surprisingly, though, Elder Maxwell’s insights on patience taught me some powerful concepts that totally changed my perspective (once again) and helped me recommit to patience.

Patience Isn’t Resignation

For example, I learned that committing to patience doesn’t mean we shrug our shoulders and give up hope. Elder Maxwell taught: “Patience is not indifference. Actually, it means caring very much but being willing, nevertheless, to submit to the Lord and to what the scriptures call the ‘process of time.’”¹ I had always thought of patience as a somewhat passive response to life’s experiences, a sort of relenting. But patience is not relenting. Patience is a manifestation of inner strength and devotion to the Lord.

Patience Is Confident, Not Anxious

Elder Maxwell also taught: “Patience is a willingness, in a sense, to watch the unfolding purposes of God with a sense of wonder and awe, rather than pacing up and down within the cell of our circumstance. Put another way, too much anxious opening of the oven door and the cake falls instead of rising. So it is with us. If we are always

selfishly taking our temperature to see if we are happy, we will not be.”² This idea really resonated with me (and not just because I am an impatient baker). It’s discouraging when plans fall through or don’t pan out as expected. To our mortal minds, divine timing can be hard to understand. But what I *can* understand is that God is a loving Father who has a plan that guarantees eventual happiness if we are faithful, and I am learning to accept His timing with confidence—not with anxiousness.

It’s Not Always about Us

Because patience tests us at a very personal level, our focus is often inward. But Elder Maxwell taught that “patience also helps us to realize that while we may be ready to move on, having had enough of a particular learning experience, our continued presence is often needed as a part of the learning environment of others.”³

Not only do we need patience, but others also need our patience or the example of our patience. This idea had never dawned on me, and it helped me to view patience as a noble quality, very closely tied to charity, the pure love of Christ, which “never faileth” (Moroni 7:46).

More Than Waiting

Even when we have the right perspective, waiting can be hard. But I have learned that patience is more than just waiting. I have learned this from my brother Andrew and his wife, Brianna, as they have dealt with being unable to have children. Although their hopes were crushed when they learned they wouldn’t be able to have children, they found new hope through the prospect of adoption—but that still meant more waiting.

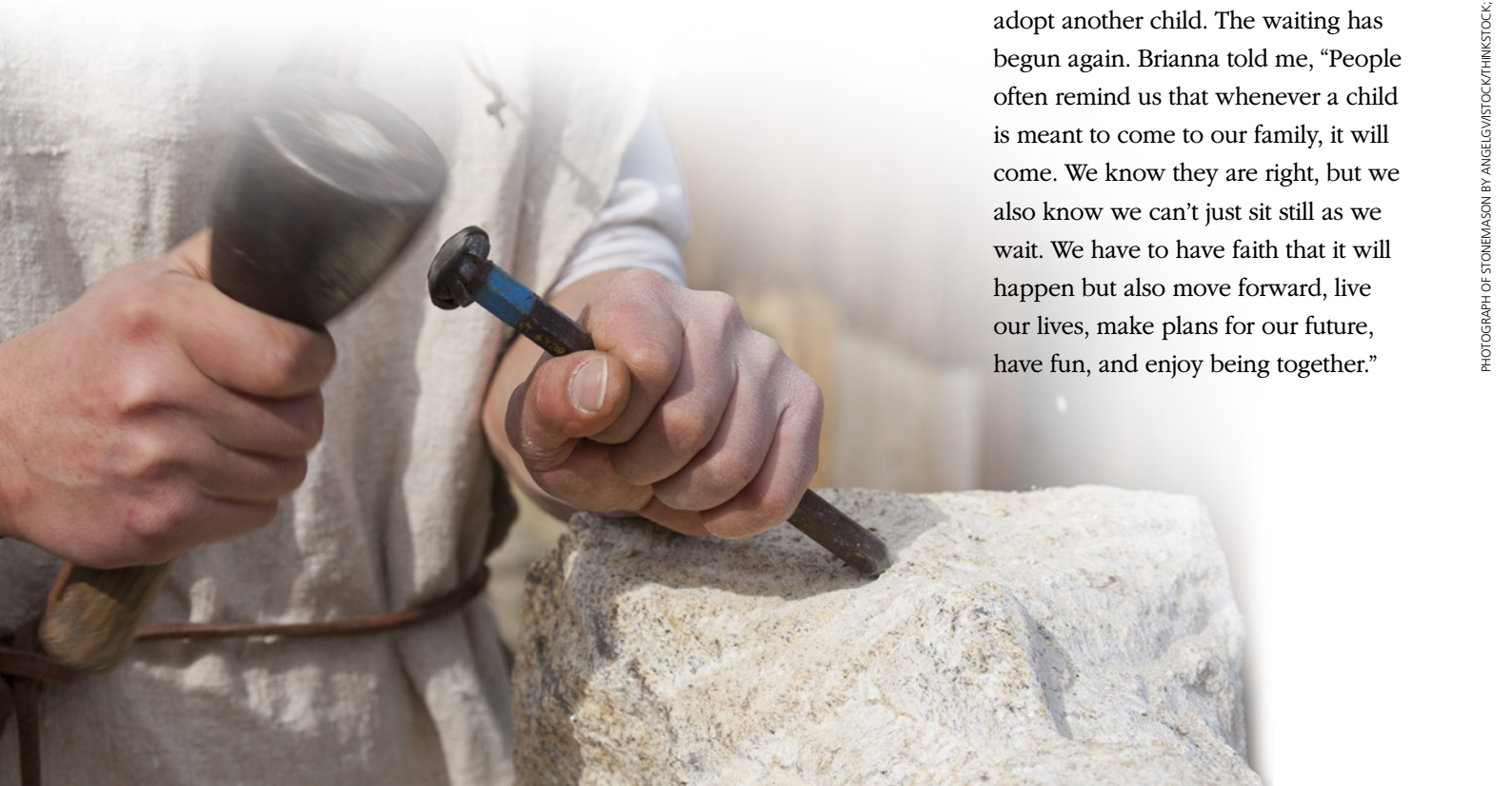
I hesitate to use the word *wait* when referring to them because that word often has very passive

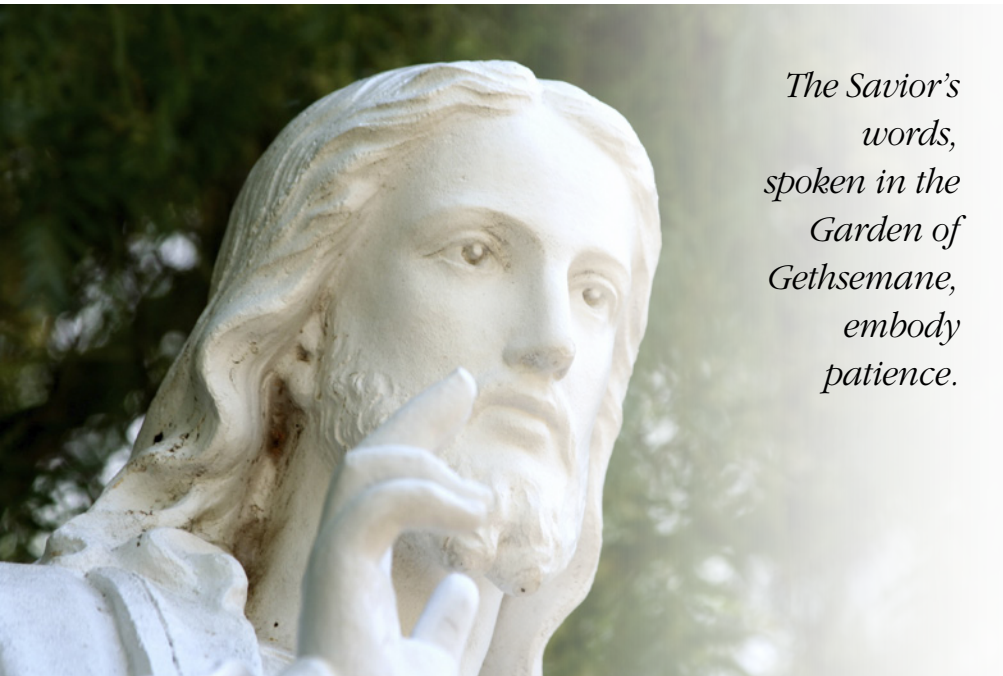
connotations. For them, waiting doesn’t mean biding their time until a child comes—patience is so much more than that.

Andrew said, “So much of adoption is in the Lord’s hands, not ours. But it makes us feel good to have something we can do to work toward our goal of having children in our family.” Whether it’s through blogging, sharing their contact information with friends and family, or getting involved with local groups of adoptive parents, they try to “do all things that lie in [their] power” (D&C 123:17), and then they put their trust in the Lord.

After years of waiting and praying, they were able to adopt a beautiful baby girl named Jessica. As they held her in their arms, years’ worth of disappointment and discouragement faded away. For them, she was and is a miracle.

Five years have now passed since they adopted Jessica, and for the last four years, they have been trying to adopt another child. The waiting has begun again. Brianna told me, “People often remind us that whenever a child is meant to come to our family, it will come. We know they are right, but we also know we can’t just sit still as we wait. We have to have faith that it will happen but also move forward, live our lives, make plans for our future, have fun, and enjoy being together.”





The Savior's words, spoken in the Garden of Gethsemane, embody patience.

Waiting is hard, but Andrew and Brianna have taught me to choose to be happy today. It's so easy to think, "I will be happy when _____," but we miss out on so much of what life has to offer by postponing our happiness. Even though we sometimes have to put our desires aside to submit to the will of our Father, that doesn't mean we have to also put our happiness aside. His love can provide strength, fill voids, and instill hope.

The Savior's Example of Patience

The Savior is our ultimate example of patience. To me, His words spoken in the Garden of Gethsemane embody His patience. In the midst of unimaginable suffering and sacrifice,

He asked that, if possible, the cup of His suffering be taken from Him. "Nevertheless," He said, "not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39). The word *nevertheless* carries a powerful message. In spite of what the Savior really wanted in that moment, He expressed His willingness to accept His Father's will and to endure.

We'll all be required to wait for things in our lives—even at times the most righteous desires of our hearts. But Jesus Christ, our "best, [our] heav'nly Friend,"⁴ can comfort and reassure us of good things to come. And He is lovingly patient with us as we learn to be like Him, as we learn to face the expected and unexpected plot twists of mortality and say to our

Father, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

My perspective on patience has definitely changed as I have entered adulthood. Patience is a process, and I'll always be learning. Even though waiting *is* hard, I am learning to "count it all joy" when my patience is tried—not because I find joy in the hardness of it, but because I know that it has glorious purpose. I know that letting "patience have her perfect work" is part of fulfilling my purpose here on earth of one day becoming "perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, "Patience" (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 27, 1979), 1, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Neal A. Maxwell, "Patience," 2.
3. Neal A. Maxwell, "Patience," 3.
4. "Be Still, My Soul," *Hymns*, no. 124.



THANK HIM FOR PATIENCE

"If you pray, if you talk to God, and if you plead for the help you need, and if you thank him

not only for help but for the patience and gentleness that come from not receiving all you desire right away or perhaps ever, then I promise you that you will draw closer to him."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Waiting Upon the Lord," (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 30, 1990), 4, speeches.byu.edu.

Mission or Money?



Gelzcke Felix Nogueira

A year after becoming a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I sent in my papers to serve as a full-time missionary. My family was totally against me serving a mission and thought that I should get my master's degree instead. I had recently finished my bachelor's degree, and it was always my dream to get a master's degree when I finished. My professors were willing to help me as well because I was a good student.

As I prepared to leave for my mission, life became very difficult financially for my family. My oldest brother lost his job. A short time later the company where my father had worked for many years began to fail economically, and he was laid off. My father ended up using all of

No amount of money is equal to the blessing of seeing families prepare to go to the temple and be sealed.

his government benefits to help my grandmother, and one night I saw him crying because he didn't know how to support the family.

At the time, I was receiving a university scholarship that was about equal to half of a minimum wage salary. When I received my payments, I would always pay my tithing first. But when I received my

most recent payment after my father lost his job, my mother asked me not to give money to the Church because we needed it at home. I told her about tithing and its importance and showed her the promise the Lord gave in Malachi 3:10. Although she wasn't happy, I paid my tithing and I knew that it was right.

While I continued my mission preparation, I entered a competition at a local university just to see how I would do. I passed and was offered a position where I could earn almost the same amount of money that my father had earned in his job. It would be enough to take care of my family until my father could retire. My family hoped that I would take the job.

I prayed a lot, and the Lord responded that I needed to go out to the mission field. I trusted Him and



accepted my call to the Brazil Santa Maria Mission. The Lord blessed my family while I was gone on my mission. I know the windows of heaven were opened (see Malachi 3:10). My father and brother found work again, and the family was able to raise dairy cows for more income.

My testimony of Jesus Christ and His work has grown, and seeing the joy on the faces and the change in the hearts of those I served is something very valuable to me. No amount of money is equal to the blessing of seeing families prepare to go to the temple and be sealed. ■

The author lives in Ceará, Brazil.



TITHING: A TEST OF OUR FAITH

“My beloved brothers and sisters, the eternal blessings of tithing are real. I have experienced them in my life and in the life of my family.

The test of our faith is whether we will live the law of tithing by our obedience and sacrifice. For, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ‘a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation’ [*Lectures on Faith* (1985), 69].”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Tithing: A Test of Faith with Eternal Blessings,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 29.

CATCHING THE VISION: All Missions BRING SOULS TO CHRIST

By **Destiny Yarbro**

Disability Services, Priesthood Department

Tristan and Tyler are 10-year-old twins with a disability known as Williams syndrome. Like the other one-million-plus children in the Church, they sing “I Hope They Call Me on a Mission”¹ with their whole hearts in Primary. They eagerly look forward to serving missions in the future. While it is likely that Tristan and Tyler will not serve full-time proselyting missions, their contributions as young Church-service missionaries will be equally valuable in building up the kingdom of God.

More young adults are being called as young Church-service missionaries than ever before. How do we talk about these faithful missionaries in a manner that does not in any way belittle or negate them or their dedication?

1. ALL MISSIONS ARE BASED ON SERVICE.

Sometimes we unnecessarily distinguish between proselyting and Church-service missions as if one kind of service were better than another. All missionary work is based on service. For this reason we sing “Called to *Serve*”² in Church meetings and call young people and seniors to *serve* missions.

Elder Ryan Taylor was called to serve in California on

a proselyting mission. When he became sick and had to return home early, he chose to trust in the Lord and serve as a young Church-service missionary at a nearby hospital. “When we get through something hard, we are better able to serve,” he says. He also taught a mission

preparation class and helped other returned missionaries make the transition to being home after a medical release. While many think of missionary work as only proselyting, he says, “a mission is a commitment to the Lord. It’s accepting the call to serve.”

Elder Levi Riter’s patriarchal blessing said that his musical ability would increase as he played for older people. His blindness didn’t hinder his ability to play the piano at various veterans homes as a

young Church-service missionary. Many of the veterans had Alzheimer’s disease, but Elder Riter says that as he played hymns, it helped bring back memories—and they sang.

Remember that whether they are playing the piano for veterans, teaching a family the gospel, or associating with children at a hospital, all missionaries are “only in the service of [their] God” (Mosiah 2:17).

For young adults, full-time proselyting missions and Church-service missions are more alike than they are different.

Elder Ryan Taylor (right) served at a children’s hospital. Sister Altheda Geurts (top right) served as a mission office assistant. Elder Matthew Zalar (bottom right) served as a temple worker and special assistant in the Virginia Richmond Mission.



2. ALL MISSIONS ARE LIFE CHANGING.

All missionaries return from their missions with life skills, developed talents, and greater perspectives.

Sister Altheda Geurts and Elder Matthew Zalar have medical conditions that require them to live near specialized doctors. That did not inhibit their ability to serve the Lord as young Church-service missionaries and build up the kingdom of God. Sister Geurts decided that she would rather serve to the best of her ability than not at all. She served as an office assistant in the Washington D.C. North Mission. Elder Zalar, whose full-time proselyting mission was cut short by the effects of his chronic illness, later served as a temple worker and special assistant in the Virginia Richmond Mission. Serving missions has helped these two young adults recognize their ability to serve the Lord even while facing health challenges.

Missions are known to change missionaries for the better. Elder Carlos H. Amado, an emeritus member of the Seventy, said, “The more we give of ourselves, the more our capacity to serve, understand, and love will grow.”³





3. ALL MISSIONS ARE COMMITMENTS TO THE LORD.

All missionaries make commitments to the Lord to serve with all their “heart, might, mind and strength” (D&C 4:2). At times, they and their families are asked to make sacrifices. Sacrifices do not come only in the form of knocking on doors in the rain.

Elder Adam Moss always wanted to serve a full-time proselyting mission and was thrilled to enter the missionary training center. A week into his mission, however, he began struggling with anxiety and depression and was honorably released. He prayed to the Lord, “I still know You’re there. I’m not going to leave the Church.” He then felt prompted to talk to his bishop about the possibility of fulfilling a Church-service mission. He says that Heavenly Father has watched over him and that he wouldn’t “trade [his Church-service mission] for anything.” Elder Moss says he admires young Church-service missionaries because he feels they are saying, “I’m not going to give up. I’m going to continue serving.”

4. ALL MISSIONS BRING SOULS TO CHRIST.

All missionary work is focused on bringing souls to Christ. When the Ito family moved from Japan to Utah, Tatsu Ito,

who had spinal muscular atrophy, decided to serve as a young Church-service missionary. Tatsu’s younger brother, Dan, “could see how [Tatsu] was changing” during the mission and knew that Tatsu was truly “preparing to return to heaven.” When Tatsu passed away in early 2013, Dan, who also has spinal muscular atrophy, went to the temple and felt prompted to ask if he might be called to complete the same mission Tatsu had been serving before his passing. Dan was blessed to be able to do so. He served on the LDS.org response team and reviewed “I’m a Mormon” profiles in Japanese. He says he is also “a representative of God in everyday life.” If someone has problems, he is “always happy to listen to them, and encourage them to go to their bishops, and give them a blessing.” While Elder Ito’s mission did not have a proselyting routine, he says that he absolutely felt that he was a missionary and accountable for his choices. He says that his mission helped “increase [his] willingness to serve more every day.”

When President Thomas S. Monson made his historic announcement in October 2012 lowering missionary-age requirements,⁴ Sister Jessica Wixom thought that the young Church-service missionary program was only for members with physical or intellectual disabilities. She assumed that, as someone with anxiety, she would not be able to serve a mission. However, she was able to serve with the addiction recovery program sponsored by LDS Family Services. Her missionary service brought souls to Christ by teaching them of the power of the Atonement. Sister Wixom’s testimony of the Atonement grew as she visited jails and spoke with incarcerated men and women. “I’ve seen so many people change,” she says. “Heavenly Father loves His children.”

Missionaries who have assignments that are temporal in nature, such as working at a bishops’ storehouse or maintaining Church facilities, also bring souls to Christ by building His kingdom.

5. ALL MISSION CALLS ARE FROM THE LORD.

All of these young Church-service missionaries bore testimony that their calls came from the Lord.

Elder Dan Ito (top left) responded to LDS.org feedback and also reviewed “I’m a Mormon” profiles in Japanese. Sister Andriana Richards (right) serves with Seminaries and Institutes at the Church Office Building. Sister Jessica Wixom (top right) helped members who are struggling with addictions.

Elder Levi Riter encourages future young Church-service missionaries to “hold on to hope” and reminds them that the Lord “will make the call. He wants you to serve Him.” Elder Ryan Taylor testifies that serving a mission is “being a part of something positive and Christlike and edifying.” Elder Dan Ito says, “I know Heavenly Father chose me to serve.”

Elder Matthew Harding served in his home stake as a missionary. He was thrilled to accept the call to travel with his father, a member of the high council. Although Elder Harding cannot talk, he shakes hands and shares his love with everyone he meets. His stake president says that when he extended the call, “the Spirit confirmed” it. “We knew [it] was from above.”

EVERY MEMBER IS NEEDED

All missionary work is the Lord’s work. Young Church-service missionaries are valuable and needed. “The body [of the Church] hath need of every member, that all may be edified together” (D&C 84:110). Through their devoted labors, young Church-service missionaries bless many lives as they build up the kingdom of God. Indeed, the Church needs such consecrated offerings of service from each and every one of us. ■

NOTES

1. “I Hope They Call Me on a Mission,” *Children’s Songbook*, 169.
2. “Called to Serve,” *Hymns*, no. 249.
3. Carlos H. Amado, “Service, a Divine Quality,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 36.
4. See Thomas S. Monson, “Welcome to Conference,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 4–5.



DID YOU KNOW?

With the variety of mission opportunities available, the desires of young adults to serve missions can be realized even when a full-time proselyting mission is not an option. Whatever the particular mission, young Church-service missionaries are given many opportunities to help move the Lord’s work forward.

Other aspects of the young Church-service missionary program to be aware of include the following:

- Missionaries serve at least eight hours per week for 6 to 24 months.
- Opportunities are crafted to match the strengths of the missionary.
- Many missionaries do more than one kind of service.
- Some missions offer more supervision than others.
- Online mission opportunities are available.
- Most missionaries live at home or with relatives during their service.
- Worthy missionaries returning home early from a full-time proselyting mission may also serve a Church-service mission.

Additional information is available online at lds.org/yicsm.



Tristan and Tyler eagerly anticipate the day when they can serve the Lord as His missionaries.



GOING TO DAD'S RESCUE

By Chantal Martin Owens

I will never forget the sacrament meeting where I first heard an excerpt from the conference talk “Man Down!” by President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency.¹ It completely altered my perspective.

I remember being preoccupied at the time with figuring out how I could become more Christlike and learn to let go of years of anger and bitterness through true forgiveness. This had proven to be nearly impossible as I battled ongoing and overwhelming feelings of hurt and hatred.

My own father was the source of such inner turmoil. He passed away when my brother and I were still

young, but I was old enough to have been affected by the atrocities my father committed against our family. Most of the memories I had of him were scenes where he lay unconscious from an overdose. I couldn't picture him without seeing his glassy eyes and uninterested interactions. There were also the many stints in rehab, the pornography, the constant deceit, and the time he spent my birthday in jail. Ultimately, I remembered his betrayal of our family as he was excommunicated and spent his days in sin before eventually dying from an overdose.

Everything about my childhood made me angry because I knew

My father's poor choices left deep wounds in our family. But who was I to say he was not eligible for the Savior's atoning grace?

Heavenly Father intended families to be loving and nurturing. I grew up believing that I had done something wrong in the premortal life that caused me to be sent to an earthly father who didn't love me, who chose drugs over his family. I had not yet come to understand the importance of two vital principles: agency and the Atonement.

No Man Left Behind

During the 16 years since my father's passing, I have had time to grow and mature, both emotionally and spiritually. I have sought counsel and comfort from priesthood leaders, good friends, and professional counselors from time to time. There were periods when those dark feelings of bitterness would overwhelm me, and I occasionally chose to turn away from God out of anger. I had to repeatedly exercise true repentance in my own life, each time more fervently than before. Most important, I have learned to turn to the Savior and seek His healing for my aching heart. And I've been humbled as I've gained an appreciation for His love and patience.

I was particularly filled with this sense of humility and with gratitude for my Savior during that pivotal sacrament meeting. I remember with vivid detail when the second speaker stood and began reading from President Eyring's talk:

"Almost all of us have seen a battlefield portrayed in a film or read the description in a story. Over the din of explosions and the shouts of soldiers, there comes a cry, 'Man down!'

"When that cry sounds, faithful fellow soldiers will move toward the sound. Another soldier or a medic will ignore danger and move to the injured comrade. . . . Whatever the risk, someone will run low or crawl to

Over the noise of battle, when a soldier is hurt others cry, "Man down!"



get there in time to protect and give aid. . . . The histories of such groups are full of stories of those loyal men who were determined that no man would be left behind. . . .

“ . . . Our comrades are being wounded in the spiritual conflict around us. . . .

“ . . . You are under covenant to go to a spiritually wounded child of God. You are responsible to be brave enough and bold enough not to turn away.”²

Those words struck me to the core. My eyes welled with tears as I had a very powerful and personal realization that the Lord loved my dad; he was Heavenly Father’s son too.

A New Heart

I began to picture my dad as one of those spiritually wounded soldiers who had fallen on the battlefield with no one to help bring him back to safety. I thought of how the Lord and His servants here on this earth had come to my rescue when I was spiritually in danger and how Christ’s Atonement had healed my broken spirit countless times. My heart began to burn with this question: Why not my own dad? Why had I believed him to be so ineligible for the limitless grace of God? Suddenly I realized that he was just as entitled to access the Lord’s healing power as I was. Who was I to say he should be left behind? I, being his own daughter, should

have been the first to cry, “Man down!” and to run to his aid.

This insight changed my life. With a new heart, I pursued a unique opportunity to give my dad the option for the relief he so desperately needed, though on the other side of the veil now. I took on the sacred task of writing to the First Presidency, requesting that my father be re-baptized by proxy and have his temple ordinances restored. Joy consumed me as I read the return letter stating that the request had been approved and that his proxy baptism had been performed by the Salt Lake Temple presidency. All his temple blessings were now restored. My heart enlarged with renewed hope as I read those words. I have never felt with more surety that God loves all His children and has provided us with a perfect plan to return to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I have exercised a deeper faith in the Lord’s plan, I have felt peace and assurance that my family will see each

other again. I have been blessed with so many experiences that have helped me come to know my dad’s heart, to understand his journey, and to recognize the distinction between who he is and the disease he suffered from. This earthly life was just one part of his eternal existence. His life continues in the spirit world, where the opportunity to repent and accept the ordinances of salvation is available to those who choose to follow such a course.

Remembering the Good

With my new attitude I decided to make a conscious effort to stop dwelling on the bad and try to remember the good in my dad. This has been challenging at times because of my limited resources. All I had of my dad were a handful of photos, a pair of glasses, a few army medals, and the flag that covered his coffin. There were no journals and no accounts of him from people who knew him before he was ill. It was difficult trying to get to know someone who was no longer

Looking back at my Dad’s struggles, I realized that as his daughter I should have been the first to cry, “Man down!” and run to his aid.



here. But then the Lord gave me a miraculous opportunity to do just that.

One day at the temple I met Brother Lussier, a temple worker in the baptistry. We began chatting and I discovered he had served in the Canada Montreal Mission, just like my dad. Immediately I felt this was not a coincidence, and I told him my dad had served in the same mission. As we continued talking, we realized they had served at the same time. I explained that my father had passed away when I was 13 and that I knew nothing of his mission. I felt impressed to ask Brother Lussier if he might have any photos of my dad among his mission pictures. I knew it was unlikely and that the request might seem strange, but he happily agreed to check for me and took my contact information.

As I drove home from the temple that night I wept. I had been praying for something like this for years. I had spent months scouring mission alumni sites and Facebook pages for any clues about my dad and who might have served with him. I had just about given up. And now the prospect of meeting someone who might have known my father on his mission, who might have heard his testimony and seen the light in him—it was almost too much for my heart to contain.

Less than a week later I received an email from Brother Lussier. Although he did not serve directly with my dad,

he had reached out on my behalf and contacted multiple networks of missionaries who had served in Montreal. They gave selflessly of their time to seek out photos and stories of my dad. Within days I was put in contact with many who had served with my dad and loved him. They had many photos and even an old book inscribed by him, all of which they were willing to give me. Some even shared their thoughts and feelings about him with me by telephone. With the Lord's help, I now had invaluable treasures and tokens to remember my dad by.

In keeping with the popular motto from my dad's mission, "Je me souviens" (or "I remember"), I too will remember. I will remember the words of President Eyring and the testimony borne to my spirit. I will remember my Redeemer and His power to heal and sanctify all of God's children. I will remember the many miracles the Lord has wrought in my life to help me have a true change of heart. I will remember the love and service shown to me by so many along the way, and particularly by my dad's fellow missionaries. And now, with gratitude, I will also remember and treasure the testimony my dad once bore and the service he gave as a young missionary. I will remember the good. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

NOTES

1. See Henry B. Eyring, "Man Down!" *Ensign*, May 2009, 63–66.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Man Down!" 63, 64.



JUDGE NOT

"We must refrain from making final judgments on people because we lack the knowledge and the wisdom to do so. We would even apply the wrong standards. . . . The Lord's way of final judgment will be to apply His perfect knowledge of the law a person has received and to judge on the basis of that person's circumstances, motives, and actions throughout his or her entire life."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "'Judge Not' and Judging," *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 8.

MY IRON ROD

By Katie Maudsley

I love Lehi's vision of the tree of life, recorded in the Book of Mormon.

Like Lehi and his family, we all have had to press forward through mists of darkness to reach the tree and its exceedingly desirable fruit (see 1 Nephi 8:7, 10–14). We are able to reach the tree only by clinging to the iron rod (see 1 Nephi 8:19–24, 30). I passed through this journey myself.

Although I was raised in the Church, when I moved away to college I felt bombarded by doubts. How did I know that Jesus Christ was my Savior? How did I know that Joseph Smith had seen God the Father and Jesus Christ? How did I know that the Book of Mormon was true? I knew I had had spiritual experiences, but somehow I couldn't remember how they felt.

A Blessing from my Brother

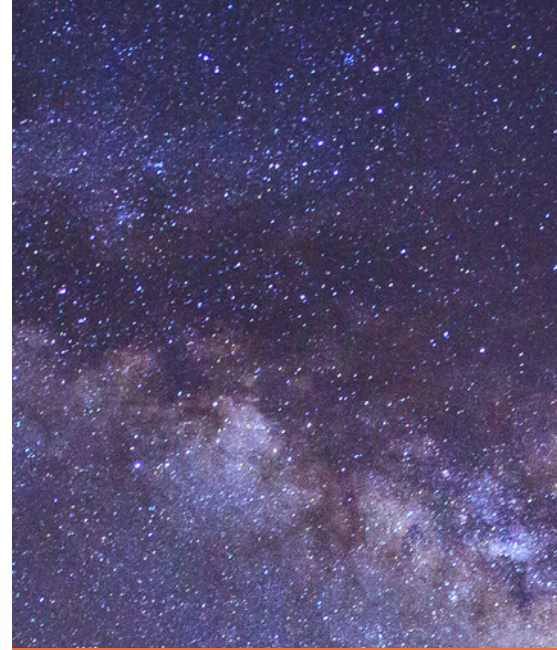
Despite the darkness that surrounded me, I continued to read the Book of Mormon and pray, but I didn't feel that my prayers were being

answered. I wanted an instantaneous, powerful spiritual experience.

I went to my older brother for help. I told him about my feelings and how I repeatedly told myself I believed in Christ in an effort to overcome my confusion. He told me that I should study and search to find out what I believed and why.

As I followed his advice, I found myself thinking hard about the reasons for the commandments. I began to ponder the purpose of life and what makes us happy. And I came to realize some things—that we are meant to have families, that certain substances are damaging, and that some choices bring happiness while others lead to self-destruction. Nevertheless, I felt incapable of breaking through the massive clouds of uncertainty that pressed down on me.

I asked my brother for a blessing, hoping to hear that my trial would be removed. Instead, I was told in the blessing that Heavenly Father



Studying the Book of Mormon saved me from doubts and darkness.



How do I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior?
How do I feel the Holy Ghost?
What is the purpose of life?

knew exactly what I needed to experience in mortality.

Light Penetrated the Darkness

As I continued to pray and study daily, little rays of sunshine gradually penetrated the darkness, giving me enough strength to press forward. I remember reading Alma's words: "Even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you" (Alma 32:27). I felt weak and that I did not have the faith to believe. However, I did have the "desire to believe," and that was enough to begin.

Finally, one night I went outside to observe the stars for a school assignment. I looked up and thought, "There are so many advancements in human knowledge, yet no scientist can create a star." That starry night, I came to feel that Someone greater than all of us existed and had created those stars.

Through these months of struggle, I came to know that the Book of Mormon is true because it saved me

from the powerful darkness that surrounded me. It was the iron rod that helped me stay on the path. Knowing that the Book of Mormon was true, I knew that Joseph Smith had restored the true Church. I realized that God gives us commandments to make us happy, and I came to know that Jesus is the Christ because of the comfort I felt from knowing I could turn to Him for succor.

This experience was a stepping-stone toward my serving a mission, and now, years later, I continue to draw on what I learned. I know that if God had taken this trial away from me, as I had wanted, He would have withheld an even greater blessing—experiencing for myself the truth of the restored gospel. The spiritual assurance I sought did not come immediately, but I held on and continued to read the Book of Mormon and pray, a journey that eventually led me to the fruit I wanted in my life. ■

The author (pictured left) lives in Utah, USA.



THE PROFOUND POWER IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

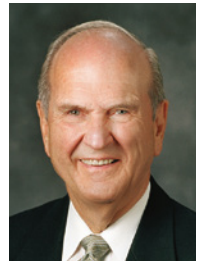
"If you are struggling, confused, or spiritually lost, I urge you to do the one thing I know will get you back on track. Begin again to prayerfully study the Book of Mormon and live its teachings every day, every day, every day! I testify of the profound power in the Book of Mormon that will change your life and strengthen your resolve to follow Christ. The Holy Ghost will change your heart and help you see 'things as they really are' [Jacob 4:13]."

Elder Kevin W. Pearson of the Seventy, "Stay by the Tree," *Ensign*, May 2015, 116.

How do I know that Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ?
How do I know the Book of Mormon is true?
How do I know that Joseph Smith was a prophet?

PHOTOGRAPH OF STARS BY SCRIPFOTO/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK; BACKGROUND BY MISHCH/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK





**By Elder
Russell M. Nelson**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Disciples and the Defense of Marriage

Disciples of the Lord are defenders of traditional marriage.

We cannot yield. History is not our judge.

A secular society is not our judge. God is our judge!

There is great power in a strong partnership. True partners can achieve more than the sum of each acting alone. With true partners, one plus one is much more than two. For example, Dr. William J. Mayo and his brother, Dr. Charles H. Mayo, formed the Mayo Clinic. Lawyers and others form important partnerships. And in marriage, a husband and a wife can form *the* most significant partnership of all—an eternal family.

Sustainable improvements in any endeavor depend on collaboration and agreement. Great leaders and partners develop the skill of sharing insights and efforts and the pattern of building consensus. Great partners are completely loyal. They suppress personal ego in exchange for being part of creating something larger than themselves. Great partnerships depend upon each partner developing his or her own personal attributes of character.

Guardians of Virtue

Now seems to be my time for attending funerals. I have witnessed many families saying good-bye for a season to those they love and to whom they are sealed. I often leave funerals wondering, “What would I like to have said about me at my funeral?”

It is not too early in your life to ask the same question. What would you like to have said about you at your funeral?

I hope it is said that you were a good husband and father or a good wife and mother, that you were a person of integrity, that you were kind and patient, that you were humble and hardworking, and that you were a person of virtue.

The greatest guardians of all virtues are marriage and family. This is particularly the case with the virtues of chastity and fidelity, both of which are required to create enduring and fully rewarding marriage partnerships and family relationships.

Male and female are created for what they can do and become—together. It takes a man and a woman to bring a child into the world. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable. Men and women are distinct and complementary. Children deserve a chance to grow up with both a mom and a dad.¹

You will likely encounter increasing debate about the definition of marriage. Many of your neighbors, colleagues, and friends will have never heard logical and inspired truths about the importance of marriage as God Himself defined it. You will have many opportunities to strengthen understanding of the Lord’s side of that argument by the eloquence of your examples, both as individuals and as families.

The Apostle Paul foresaw our circumstances when he said:

“In the last days perilous times shall come.

“For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

“Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, . . . despisers of those that are good,

“. . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”

Then he concluded: “From such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

After his remarkable prophecy of our time, Paul added this word of warning: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

Ponder that! It means that during these perilous times, life will not be comfortable for true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. But we will have His approval. He gave us this assurance: “Blessed are all they who are persecuted for my name’s sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (3 Nephi 12:10).

In short, as disciples, each of us will be put to the test. At any hour of any day, we have the privilege of choosing between right and wrong. This is an age-old battle that started in a premortal realm. And that battle is becoming more intense every day. Your individual strength of character is needed now more than ever before.

No Part-Time Disciples

The day is gone when you can be a quiet and comfortable Christian. Your religion is not just about showing up for church on Sunday. It is about showing up as a true disciple from Sunday morning through Saturday night—24/7! There is no such thing as a part-time disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.





Jesus invites anyone who wants to be His disciple to take up his cross and follow Him (see Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; D&C 56:2; 112:14). Are you ready to join the ranks? Or will you be ashamed of the gospel? Will you be ashamed of your Lord and His plan? (see Mormon 8:38). Will you yield to voices of those who would have you join them on the popular side of contemporary history?

No! The youth of Zion will not falter! I believe you will be courageous and proclaim God's truth with clarity and kindness, even when His truth is politically unpopular! Paul set that pattern when he declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16; see also 2 Timothy 1:8).

Disciples of the Lord are defenders of traditional marriage. We cannot yield. History is not our judge. A secular society is not our judge. God is our judge! For each of us,

Judgment Day will be held in God's own way and time (see Romans 2:5; Alma 33:22; Ether 11:20; D&C 88:104; 133:38).

The future of marriage and of countless human lives will be determined by your willingness to bear solemn witness of the Lord and live according to His gospel. Great protection is available to us as we enter the waters of baptism and take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. King Benjamin so explained: "And now, 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" (Mosiah 5:7; see also verse 8).

I appreciate a statement by Sister Sheri Dew, a former member of the general Relief Society presidency, at a recent Brigham Young University Women's Conference. She

One of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage.



The burden of discipleship is heavy. As disciples of the Lord, you will stand as defenders of marriage.

said: “At the heart of becoming disciples is *doing* what we promise to do every time we partake of the sacrament—which is to ‘always remember’ the Lord. This means remembering Him when we choose what media we’re willing to expose our spirits to. It means remembering Him in how we spend our time and when choosing between a steady diet of pop culture or the Word of God. It means remembering Him in the middle of conflict or when temptation looms. It means remembering Him when critics attack His Church and mock truth. It means remembering that we have taken His name upon us.”²

Sister Dew’s message is consonant with a message from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95), who said: “If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and His restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. . . . If our lives are not centered on the Savior and His teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right.”³

Proclaim the Will of God

Wherever we go, you and I as disciples of the Lord bear a solemn responsibility to proclaim the will of God to all people. And one of the more demanding opportunities of our time is to stand up for the truth regarding the sacred nature of marriage.

Our message is shaped by divine doctrine, canonized in the Bible:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27).

“God blessed them, and . . . said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living”

(Genesis 3:20; see also Moses 4:26).

God is the Father of all men and women. They are His children. It was He who ordained marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Marriage was not created by human judges or legislators. It was not created by think tanks or by popular vote or by oft-quoted bloggers or pundits. It was not created by lobbyists. Marriage was created by God!

The Ten Commandments forbade adultery and covetousness (see Exodus 20:14, 17; Deuteronomy 5:18, 21).

Those ancient commandments were given later to people of New Testament times (see Matthew 5:27–28; 19:18; Romans 13:9) and Book of Mormon times (see Mosiah 13:22, 24; 3 Nephi 12:27). In modern revelation the Lord has reaffirmed, “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else” (D&C 42:22).

True intimacy, as planned by our Creator, is experienced only within the sacred union of a husband and wife because it is enriched by truth and ennobled by the honoring of covenants a husband and a wife make with each other and with God. It is crucial to note that full fidelity to those covenants forbids pornography, lust, or abuse in any form.

Social and political pressures to change marriage laws have resulted in practices contrary to God’s will regarding the eternal nature and purposes of marriage. Man simply cannot make moral what God has declared to be immoral. Sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God.

Brothers and sisters, undergirded by incontrovertible truth, proclaim your love for God! Proclaim your love for all human beings, “with malice toward none, with charity for all.”⁴ They as children of God are our brothers and sisters. We value their rights and feelings. But we cannot condone efforts to change divine doctrine. It is not for man to change.



Love Means Obedience

God loves His children. And if they love Him, they will show that love by keeping His commandments (see John 14:15, 21; 1 John 5:2; D&C 46:9; 124:87), including chastity before marriage and total fidelity within marriage. Scriptures warn that behavior contrary to the commandments of the Lord will not only deprive couples of divinely approved intimacy but will also bring about the stern judgments of God (see Leviticus 26:15–20; Psalm 89:31–32; Matthew 5:19).

The noblest yearning of the human heart is for a marriage that will endure beyond death. Complete fidelity to covenants made in holy temples will allow husband and wife to be sealed together throughout all eternity (see D&C 132:7, 19).

The burden of discipleship is heavy. As disciples of the Lord, you will stand as defenders of marriage. And as you are true and faithful, not only will He help you and protect

you (see D&C 84:88), but also He will bless your families (see Isaiah 49:25; D&C 98:37).

You are beneficiaries of the infinite Atonement of the Lord. Because of Him, you will eventually be rewarded with immortality. And because of Him, you may enjoy the blessing of eternal life with Him and your families. ■

From a BYU commencement address, “Disciples of Christ—Defenders of Marriage,” given on August 24, 2014. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Sheri L. Dew, “Sweet above All That Is Sweet” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, May 1, 2014), 7, ce.byu.edu/cw/womensconference/transcripts.php.
3. Howard W. Hunter, “Fear Not, Little Flock” (Brigham Young University devotional, Mar. 14, 1989), 2, speeches.byu.edu.
4. Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address,” Mar. 4, 1865.



When we were first married, we thought that doing what felt good was freedom. As time passed, we discovered where true freedom lies.

By Cindy Lambourne

When Hal and I were married in 1972, we didn't even consider a traditional wedding. We didn't feel the need for the white dress and all the fuss, and we certainly did not plan to have a temple marriage, even though both my family and Hal's were members of the Church. I was crazy in love with Hal, a Vietnam War veteran with shoulder-length strawberry-blond hair and a full, red beard. I would have married him anywhere.

We started our married life wearing bell-bottoms and living in a small apartment. We hung tapestries on the walls and melted candles in wine bottles. Our first big purchase was a yellow Volkswagen bus.

There was so much to be passionate about in that turbulent time in history. The music was daring, the fashions controversial, and the parties wild. "If it feels good, do it" was the banner of the day, and we embraced it. We indulged our appetites as no other generation had dared. We declared that we would always be free.

Returning to the Gospel

As the years passed, however, we became the dreaded "establishment": we held jobs, paid taxes, had children,

owned a home, and voted. We had good times and hard times, as most couples do, but eventually I began to realize that the freedom we had so adamantly declared in our youth was in jeopardy, threatened by the very indulgent lifestyle we had chosen.

I worried about how much alcohol my husband consumed. It wasn't fun anymore. He was overbearing and sometimes unkind when he drank. It got worse as time passed. There were arrests for driving under the influence, bitter arguments, and a separateness that cut deep. Finally we had a confrontation in which I gave Hal the choice to either get help or find someplace else to live. Gratefully, he chose to check into a recovery center for veterans. When he was released from the program, he confided in me that he felt his best chance at staying sober was to become active in the Church.

At first I resisted. After all, I had spent a great deal of time and energy convincing myself that I didn't need the "outdated" beliefs I had grown up with. Still, it was wonderful to truly be in love with my husband again, so if this would help him stay sober, I would try.

A missionary couple from the stake began visiting us once a week. They read the Book of Mormon with us and

WE FOUND TRUE FREEDOM IN OBEDIENCE

reviewed basic gospel doctrines. We also learned about blessings that the Lord wanted to give us. I felt a testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel take root in my heart.

My relationship with my husband became deeper as the two of us developed a relationship with our Father in Heaven. The road was bumpy and the going rough at times. Old habits were hard to break, and new habits took time to make. As we worked toward becoming worthy to receive the blessings of the temple, the Spirit testified that we were finally headed in the right direction. Our family was sealed in the Salt Lake Temple on our 21st wedding anniversary.

Together Forever

Five years later I started to notice a yellow tinge to Hal's eyes and skin. Shortly after, he was diagnosed with viral hepatitis C. We were told that he would need a liver transplant.

While we waited for a liver, Hal went into a coma and had to stay at the hospital. After several weeks, I got a phone call from the hospital telling us that there was a liver for Hal, which meant he had a chance at recovery. I

prayed for a successful surgery so the generosity of the donor would not be in vain.

The surgery was a success, and Hal came home a few weeks later. Things were good for three years, and then Hal again began to suffer from symptoms of liver disease and was admitted to the hospital. We were told that the hepatitis was destroying the new liver and that because the disease had moved so aggressively, Hal would not be considered for a second transplant. The doctors felt that a year was the most we could expect.

Just one month later, surrounded by his loving family, my brave husband passed on from this life. The importance of the changes we had made in our lives and the steps we had taken to embrace the gospel took on new meaning that day. The powerful covenants the two of us had made with our Heavenly Father sustained me in the days following my husband's death and continue to support me and give me hope. Because of the gospel and temple sealings, I know I will be reunited with him if I do my best to abide by Heavenly Father's law, where real freedom exists. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

"As we walk in obedience to the principles and commandments of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we enjoy a continual flow of blessings promised by God in His covenant with us. Those blessings provide the resources we need to act rather than simply be acted upon as we go through life."

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Power of Covenants," *Ensign*, May 2009, 21.

Lighting Our Children's Path

with Gospel Standards

By Jan Pinborough
Church Magazines


Our daughter got home from girls' camp bursting to tell us about her first midnight hike. Dressed in their sweats and PJs, the girls had followed the beam of their leader's flashlight as it cut through the darkness of the thick Tennessee woods. There were rocks, logs, and ravines—not to mention a pretty large population of raccoons, skunks, and bats—and even a distant coyote's howl. When they reached a clearing by the lake, they all rested under the starry sky before heading back to their tents. So many things could have tripped them up, but everyone was safe. Their hike was a brilliant success.

Today's children are taking their earthly journey when every day the world is becoming a little less filtered, a little cruder and more contentious. Morally, it's a very murky time in the world's history. And many are losing their way.

So parents need to be armed with a spiritual equivalent of the camp leader's flashlight—the standards and teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Gospel standards give children safety, security, and direction. They help them find their way to the temple. In the words of the Psalmist, they give them “a lamp unto [their] feet, and a light unto [their] path” (Psalm 119:105).

Here are six ways we can light our children's paths with gospel standards:





By diligently teaching our children gospel standards, we can help them find their way in an ever-darkening world.

WALKING ALONGSIDE OUR YOUTH

"I have a grandson who once asked me to go with him to a popular but inappropriate movie. I told him I wasn't old enough to see that film. He was puzzled until his grandmother explained to him that the rating system by age didn't apply to Grandpa. He came back to me and said, 'I get it now, Grandpa. You're never going to be old enough to see that movie, are you?' And he was right!

"Besides showing youth the way by example, we lead them by understanding their hearts and walking alongside them on the gospel path."

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Our Duty to God: The Mission of Parents and Leaders to the Rising Generation," *Ensign*, May 2010, 95.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOLLIE HIBBERT

PART OF OUR CONVERSATION TODAY

“The world will teach our children if we do not, and children are capable of learning all the world will teach them at a very young age. What we want them to know five years from now needs to be part of our conversation with them today.”

Rosemary M. Wixom, Primary general president, “Stay on the Path,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 9.

1. Make the Standards Your Own

We can only share a light that we already have. Our children watch us with unblinking eyes, and they know when our commitment to gospel standards is genuine.

Studying “My Gospel Standards” and *For the Strength of Youth* are good ways to begin. Evaluating needed changes can make our flashlight’s beam more powerful and reliable.

2. Be Aware

A revelation to the Church in 1838 urges: “Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations” (D&C 115:5).

Before we arise in the morning, we must be awake. Being awake implies being aware. We can’t be naive about the temptations our

children face. We need to be aware of trends and technologies.

But children must feel safe before they will talk to us about how things really are at school and among their friends. Sometimes it might feel natural to react with alarm. But if we respond instead by listening carefully and asking the child about his or her feelings, we build trust. Then our child will more likely see us as an ally in dealing with challenges.

3. Begin Early

Gospel standards bless, empower, and protect children, now and throughout their lives, and the best time to begin teaching them is early on, when our children are eager to learn from us and less susceptible to peer pressure.



4. Make Them Part of Family Culture

Talk about gospel standards. Celebrate them. Memorize them. Even sing them!

Cara Kennedy of Indiana, USA, hung a “My Gospel Standards” poster at eye level in her home so her children would see it often and learn the standards from a young age. Eventually she wrote a song about the standards, which includes the words, “When people say, ‘Why do you do this?’ When people say, ‘Why don’t you do that?’ I stand up tall and simply say, ‘These are my gospel standards!’” Some of Sister Kennedy’s nieces and nephews have also learned the song, and when they sing it, they shout that last line and throw their fists in the air!

5. Focus on Meaning and Purpose

Each gospel standard is rooted in eternal principles, such as the sanctity of the body and spirit. Each one leads toward the temple and is protective and empowering. As Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said of covenants, each one “elevates us beyond limits of our own perspective and power. It is like the difference between plodding through a muddy field and soaring through the skies in a supersonic jet.”¹

Living gospel standards helps us in our striving to be the kind of person Christ is. Ultimately, they lead us toward “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).



CHOOSING HEAVENLY FATHER’S PATH

“God knows something we don’t—things that are beyond our capacity to comprehend! Our Father in Heaven is an eternal being whose experience, wisdom, and intelligence are infinitely greater than ours. Not only that, but He is also eternally loving, compassionate, and focused on one blessed goal: to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life [see Moses 1:39].

“In other words, He not only *knows* what is best for you; He also anxiously *wants you to choose* what is best for you.

“. . . Doesn’t it make sense to embrace and follow His commandments, even the ones that appear difficult? Should we not cherish the light posts He has given that guide us through the darkness and the trials of mortality? They mark the way back to our heavenly home! By choosing Heavenly Father’s path, you lay a divine foundation for your personal progress . . . that will bless you throughout your life.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Living the Gospel Joyful,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 121.

My Gospel Standards

I will follow Heavenly Father's plan for me.

I will remember my baptismal covenant
and listen to the Holy Ghost.

I will choose the right.
I know I can repent when I make a mistake.

I will be honest with Heavenly Father, others, and myself.

I will use the names of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ reverently.
I will not swear or use crude words.

I will do those things on the Sabbath that will help me feel
close to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

I will honor my parents
and do my part to strengthen my family.

I will keep my mind and body sacred and pure,
and I will not partake of things that are harmful to me.

I will dress modestly to show respect for
Heavenly Father and myself.

I will only read and watch things that are
pleasing to Heavenly Father.

I will only listen to music that is pleasing to Heavenly Father.

I will seek good friends and treat others kindly.

I will live now to be worthy to go to the temple
and do my part to have an eternal family.

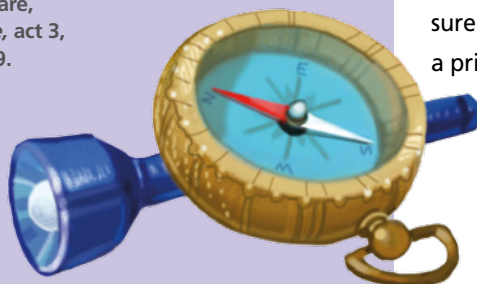
I AM A CHILD OF GOD

I know Heavenly Father loves me, and I love Him.
I can pray to Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere.
I am trying to remember and follow Jesus Christ.

Timeless Standards

“Virtue is bold,
and goodness never
fearful.”

William Shakespeare,
Measure for Measure, act 3,
scene 1, line 199.



6. Have a Monthly Standards Family Home Evening

Family discussions and role-playing can help children be brave and unashamed in living gospel standards and becoming a light unto the world. Consider these resources for upcoming family home evening lessons: “My Gospel Standards” poster (left); “Stand for the Right” poster (right, also page 20 of this month’s *Friend*); and “Aim for the Best” (page 24 of this month’s *Friend*). Rather than compare clothing, music, and media with what others are doing, we can compare with what is truly virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy.

Lesson Idea: Discuss the different meanings of the word *standard*: (1) a banner carried at the top of a pole to serve as a rallying point; (2) a structure serving as a base or support; (3) something established as an example or a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, value, or quality; (4) a means of determining what a thing should be; (5) having recognized and permanent value.² ■

NOTES

1. “Prepare for the Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2010, 49.
2. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “standard.”



WANT MORE TEACHING IDEAS?

Go to lds.org/go/standardsE815 to find a treasure trove of stories and activities, including a printable “My Gospel Standards” poster,

C.L.E.A.N. language cards, and dozens of other teaching ideas on each of the gospel standards.

I can stand for the right
by choosing . . .

Good books

Good friends

Good music

Good videos and
other media

Good words

Honesty

Kindness

Modesty

Respect

I can follow Jesus Christ!

STAND

for the

RIGHT

*Our prophet has some words for you,
And these are the words: "Be true, be true."*

*At work or at play, in darkness or light,
Be true, be true, and stand for the right.*

(Children's Songbook, 159)



TEACHING Gospel Standards — ONE FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE

Here are some ways our family has been able to apply the principles from "My Gospel Standards."

By Jocelyn Christensen

Clean Language

When our oldest child started school, we struggled to figure out how to prepare him for the inappropriate language he might hear from other children. In the end, we came up with this guideline: "If you hear someone using a word that you have never heard Mom or Dad use at home, then ask us what it means before using it yourself." We have also taught our children to pay attention to how certain words make them feel.

We also taught a family home evening lesson about using C.L.E.A.N. language:

- C – Choose your words carefully.
- L – Learn the meanings of words before using them.
- E – Encourage others with the words you say.
- A – Avoid slang or replacement words.
- N – Never use hurtful or vulgar language.

Although we tried to make these guidelines easy to remember and reviewed them often, we wondered how much our children would retain. One day when our children were playing outside, I overheard one of my daughters say to the other, "You shouldn't say that! Remember, you should 'encourage others with the words you say!'" They had been listening, after all.

Music

One day in the car a song came on the radio that was popular in my youth but which didn't reflect the music

standards I had committed to living. After a moment, I turned the song off. With a big sigh of relief, my son said, "Thanks for turning that off, Mom!" I explained to my son that sometimes it's hard even as adults to make good choices but that we *all* must work hard *every day* to keep the standards.

That experience reminded me just how much my children depend on me to make correct choices. It also showed me that involving my children in my efforts to choose virtue can strengthen our entire family in our resolve to live the standards.

Modesty

When our children were still young, I realized that teaching them to value modesty over the fashion of the day would be harder to do later, so I'd better start now.

First I examined my own wardrobe. "My Gospel Standards" says, "I will dress modestly to show respect for Heavenly Father and myself." I wanted to make sure I was dressing myself out of respect for Heavenly Father, not out of respect for the standards of the world.

Next I looked at my children's clothing. Some of the outfits that we had received secondhand were not modest enough to meet the standards in *For the Strength of Youth*. So we took them out of our clothing rotation and replaced them with more modest clothing as our budget allowed. We try to remind our children that their beauty comes from inside of them, not from their clothes.



Loving Others

In my efforts to teach my children gospel standards, I realized they also depend on me to model love and acceptance of other people, regardless of how those people look.

Some time ago, while several other women and I were waiting to pick up our children from preschool, I noticed that some of the moms were dressed provocatively and were pierced and tattooed and that there wasn't much social interaction between them and the moms who maintained a more modest appearance. So one day I struck up a conversation with one of the moms from the first group, and although I didn't expect to have much in common with her, we quickly became friends. Since then, this mother's family has joined us for Church functions and birthday parties, and our daughters have enjoyed frequent play dates together.

As we make efforts to be kind and friendly to those who don't share our beliefs, all the while holding firmly to our standards, our example may not only encourage our own children to be kind but also influence other families to be charitable toward those they see as "different." In this and other ways, we can make "My Gospel Standards" not just a list of declarations but a way of life. ■

The author lives in Pennsylvania, USA.



By Elder
Bruce C. Hafen

Served as a member
of the Seventy from
1996 to 2010

THE Proclamation ON THE Family: TRANSCENDING THE CULTURAL CONFUSION



This is the first of two articles by Elder Hafen that help commemorate the 20th anniversary of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” The second article will be published in the September 2015 issue of the Ensign.

“What are your greatest concerns?” a newspaper reporter asked President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) in June 1995, as he turned 85. He replied: “I am concerned about family life in the Church. We have wonderful people, but we have too many whose families are falling apart. . . . *I think [this] is my most serious concern.*”¹

Three months later President Hinckley publicly read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.”²

It was no coincidence that this solemn declaration was issued precisely when the Lord’s prophet felt that, of all the subjects on his mind, unstable family life *in the Church* was his greatest concern. Later he added that the greatest challenge facing both America and the rest of world “is the problem of the family, brought on by misguided parents and resulting in misguided children.”³

The proclamation was not merely a collection of pro-family platitudes. It was a serious prophetic warning about a major international problem. And now, 20 years later, the problem is getting worse, which shows just how prophetic the 1995 warning was.

Before we explore what that means for each of us, let us consider how modern culture ended up where it is today.

Universal Love Story

Humankind’s oldest, most hoped-for story line has a familiar plot: boy meets girl, they fall in love, marry, have children, and—they hope—live happily ever after. That universal love story is so central to the great plan of happiness that it began with Adam and Eve, and for most Church members, it still guides our lives like the North Star.

The joys of human love and family belonging give us hope, purpose, and a desire to live better. They make us long for the day when we will

Permanent commitments to marriage and parenthood are like two anchor threads running through the design of our social tapestry.



take the hands that have held ours and together enter the Lord’s presence. There we will embrace our loved ones and stay with them always, to “go no more out” (Revelation 3:12).

For many years society generally supported this inborn longing to belong. Of course, families had problems, but most people still believed that “tying the knot” of marriage created a relatively permanent family unit. And those knots held the fabric of society together, with “hearts knit together in unity and in love” (Mosiah 18:21).

In recent generations, however, the fabric has increasingly frayed as we have experienced what some writers call “the collapse of marriage.”⁴ Many people outside the Church no longer see marriage as a source of long-term commitments. Rather, they now see marriage and even childbearing as temporary personal options. Yet permanent commitments to marriage and parenthood are like two anchor threads running through the design of our social tapestry. When those threads fray, the tapestry can unravel and we can lose the plot of the universal love story.

I have watched this unraveling from my own perspectives as a father, a Church member, and a teacher of family



law. Beginning in the 1960s, the civil rights movement spawned new legal theories about equality, individual rights, and liberation. These ideas helped the United States begin to overcome its embarrassing history of racial discrimination. They also helped the country reduce discrimination against women. These protections from discrimination are part of each citizen's *individual interests*.

Some forms of legal classification, however, are actually beneficial. For example, the law “discriminates” *in favor* of children on the basis of their age—they can't vote, drive a car, or sign a binding contract. And they receive years of free education. These laws protect children and society from the consequences of children's lack of capacity while also preparing them to become responsible adults.

Laws have also given a privileged status to relationships based on marriage and kinship—not to discriminate against single and unrelated people but to encourage biological parents to marry each other and to raise their own stable children, who are the key to a stable continuing society. Such laws thus express society's *social interests* in its children and in its own future strength and continuity.

Historically, laws maintained a workable balance between social interests and individual interests because each element plays an important role in a healthy society. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. courts began to interpret family laws in ways that gave individual interests a much higher priority than social interests, which knocked the legal and social system off balance. This change was but one part of the transformation of American family law—the biggest cultural shift in attitudes about marriage and family life in 500 years. I will illustrate this transformation with some examples from U.S. law, although the laws of most developed countries have followed similar trends.

A Culture Shift

In a nutshell, advocates began using potent individual-liberation ideas to challenge laws that had long supported the interests of children and society in stable family structures. Courts and legislatures accepted many of these individualistic ideas, even when the ideas damaged larger social



interests. For example, no-fault divorce was first adopted in California in 1968 and then spread across the United States. No-fault significantly changed the way people thought about marriage. Under the old divorce laws, married people couldn't just choose to end their marriage; rather, they had to prove spousal misconduct, like adultery or abuse. In those days only a judge representing society's interests could determine when a divorce was justified enough to outweigh the social interest in marital continuity.

As originally conceived, no-fault divorce had worthy goals. It added irremediable marriage breakdown, regardless of personal fault, as a basis for divorce—which simplified the divorce process. In theory, only a judge, who still represented society's interests, could decide whether a marriage was beyond repair. But in practice, family court judges deferred to the personal preference of the couple and eventually *liberated* whichever partner wanted to end the marriage.

These legal changes accelerated a larger cultural drift that no longer saw marriage as a relatively permanent social institution but rather as a temporary, private relationship, terminable at will—without seriously considering how divorce damaged children, let alone how it damaged society. Before long, judges' doubts about society's right to enforce wedding vows gave married couples the false impression that their personal promises held no great social or moral value. So now, when marriage commitments intrude on personal preferences, people are more likely to walk away. They see marriage as a “nonbinding commitment,” whatever that contradiction means.

Reflecting these new attitudes, courts expanded the parental rights of unwed fathers and began to give child custody and adoption rights to unmarried individuals. This uprooted the long-established preference

that family law had given, whenever possible, to the married, two-parent biological family. Both experience and the social science research had clearly shown—and still show—that a family headed by married, biological parents almost always provides the best child-rearing environment. But over time, the unwed-parent cases contributed to, and were influenced by, skyrocketing rates of unmarried cohabitation and births outside marriage.

Further, in 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court granted individual women the right to choose abortion, thereby rejecting long-held cultural beliefs about the social interests represented by unborn children and by elected legislators who until then had collectively decided the value-laden question of when life begins.

Talking about no-fault divorce leads logically to a brief comment about same-sex marriage. This has become a difficult and poignant topic, even though only 17 years ago, no country in the world had legally recognized same-sex marriage. So how could this very idea burst upon the international scene precisely when the historic concept of marriage had lost so much public value during the previous four decades?

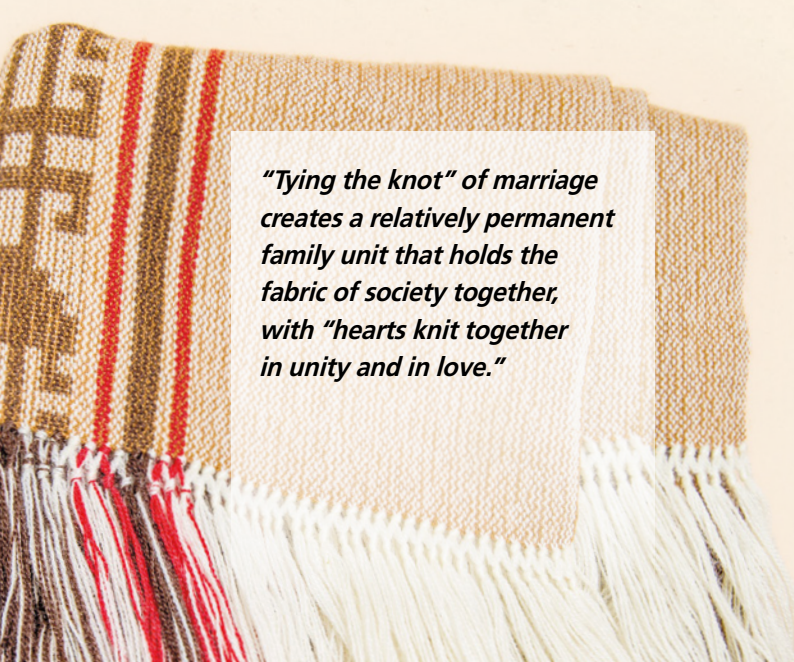
One likely answer is that the “personal autonomy” theory of the first U.S. pro-same-sex marriage case in 2001



simply extended the same individualistic legal concept that had created no-fault divorce. When a court upholds an individual’s right to *end* a marriage, regardless of social consequences (as can happen with no-fault divorce), that principle may also seem to support an individual’s right to *start* a marriage, regardless of social consequences (as can happen with same-sex marriage).

In other words, when people see man-woman marriage as just a matter of personal preference rather than as society’s key social institution, it’s little wonder that many would now say of same-sex marriage that individuals should be free to marry as they choose. That’s what can happen when we lose track of society’s interest in marriage and children. Clearly God loves all of His children and expects us to treat one another with *compassion* and *tolerance*—regardless of private conduct we may or may not understand. But it is a very different matter to *endorse* or *promote* that conduct by altering a legal concept—marriage—whose historic purpose was to promote society’s interest in having biological parents rear their own children in stable homes.

The U.S. Supreme Court relied on the personal autonomy theory, among other legal theories, when it ruled on June 26, 2015, that state laws may not “bar same-sex couples from marriage.” Thus same-sex marriage is now legal in every U.S. state.



“Tying the knot” of marriage creates a relatively permanent family unit that holds the fabric of society together, with “hearts knit together in unity and in love.”



Significantly, however, the court's majority opinion also "emphasized that religions, and those who adhere to religious doctrines, may continue to advocate with utmost, sincere conviction that, by divine precepts, same-sex marriage should not be condoned. The First Amendment ensures that religious organizations and persons are given proper protection as they seek to teach the principles that are so fulfilling and so central to their lives and faiths, and to their own deep aspirations to continue the family structure they have long revered. The same is true of those who oppose same-sex marriage for other reasons."⁵

Effects on Marriage and Children

Now consider the effect of these changes on marriage and children. Since about 1965 the U.S. divorce rate has more than doubled, although it has dipped slightly in recent years—partly because the number of unmarried couples has increased by about 15 times, and their frequent breakups aren't included in the divorce rate. Today about half of all first marriages end in divorce; about 60 percent of second marriages do. The United States is the world's most divorce-prone country.⁶

Today 40 percent of U.S. births are to unmarried parents. In 1960 that number was 5 percent.⁷ About 50 percent of today's teens now consider out-of-wedlock childbearing a "worthwhile lifestyle."⁸ The percentage of children in single-parent families since 1960 has increased fourfold, from 8 percent to 31 percent.⁹ Over half of today's U.S. marriages are preceded by unmarried cohabitation.¹⁰ What was highly abnormal in the 1960s is the new normal.

In Europe, 80 percent of the population now approves of unmarried cohabitation. In parts of Scandinavia, 82 percent of firstborn children are born outside marriage.¹¹ When we lived in Germany recently, we sensed among Europeans that, in many ways, marriage is no more. As a French writer put it, marriage has "lost its magic for young people," who increasingly feel that "love is essentially a private matter which leaves no room" for society to say anything about their marriage or their children.¹²

Nonetheless, the children of divorced or unwed parents have about *three times* as many serious behavioral, emotional, and developmental problems as children in two-parent families. By every measure of child well-being, these children are far worse off. And when children are dysfunctional, society becomes dysfunctional. Here are some examples of that dysfunction, acknowledging that some elements in such general trends may have multiple causes. In the past five decades:

- Juvenile crime has increased sixfold.
- Child neglect and all forms of child abuse have quintupled.
- Psychological disorders among children have all worsened, from drug abuse to eating disorders; depression among children has increased 1,000 percent.
- Domestic violence against women has increased, and poverty has shifted increasingly to children.¹³

How serious are these problems? As President Hinckley said in 1995, these issues were his "most serious concern." And the trends that troubled him then are now measurably worse. As a *Time* magazine writer put it:

"There is no other single force causing as much measurable hardship and human misery in this country as the collapse of marriage. It hurts children, it reduces mothers' financial security, and it has landed with particular devastation on those who can bear it least: the nation's underclass. . . .

"The poor [have uncoupled] parenthood from marriage, and the financially secure [blast] apart their [own] unions if [they] aren't having fun anymore."¹⁴

Turning Our Hearts

One tattered golden thread in the unraveling social tapestry reflects the heart of the problem: the children—bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh. Something true, even holy, about posterity—children and procreation and eternal bonds of affection—resonates deeply within the mystic chords of our collective memory.

The child-parent tie matters so much that God sent Elijah in 1836 to “turn the hearts” of the fathers and the children toward each other. If those hearts do not so turn, He said, “the whole earth [will] be smitten with a curse” and “utterly wasted” before Christ returns (D&C 110:15; Joseph Smith—History 1:39; see also Malachi 4:6). In today’s world, those hearts do appear to be turning—but away from, rather than toward, each other.

Are we already living in the time of the curse? Perhaps. Today’s children (and therefore society—the earth) are indeed being “wasted” (devalued, made useless, rendered desolate) by each issue discussed here.

The doctrine is clear—and is substantiated by years of research. We don’t need to return to the family laws of yesteryear, *but* if we could just care more about our children and their future, people would marry before becoming parents. They would sacrifice more, much more, to stay married. Children would be raised, whenever possible, by their biological parents. Ideally, there would be no elective abortions or unwed births. Of course, some exceptions are needed—some divorces

are justified, and adoption is often heaven-sent. Yet in principle, the 1995 proclamation on the family says it perfectly: “Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”¹⁵

But we are suffering from collective amnesia. We are not hearing the mystic chords of eternal, or even recent, memory. The enemy of our happiness wants to convince us that the sacred, long-term bonds of family affection are confining, when in fact no relationships are more liberating and fulfilling.

Building a good marriage is not easy. It is not supposed to be easy. But when a confused culture confuses us about what marriage means, we may give up on each other and ourselves much too soon. Yet the gospel’s eternal perspective, as taught in the scriptures and the temple, can help us transcend the modern marital chaos until our marriages are the most satisfying, sanctifying—even if also the most demanding—experiences of our lives. ■

Adapted from an address, “Marriage, Family Law, and the Temple,” delivered at the J. Reuben Clark Law Society Annual Fireside in Salt Lake City on January 31, 2014.

NOTES

1. In Dell Van Orden, “Pres. Hinckley Notes His 85th Birthday, Reminisces about Life,” *Church News*, June 24, 1995, 6; emphasis added.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “President Hinckley Warns against Family Breakups,” *Deseret News*, Apr. 23, 2003, deseretnews.com.
4. See Caitlin Flanagan, “Why Marriage Matters,” *Time*, July 13, 2009, 47.
5. Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. (2015).
6. See census.gov/compendia/statab/2011/tables/11s1335.pdf; see also Alan J. Hawkins, *The Forever Initiative: A Feasible Public Policy Agenda to Help Couples Form and Sustain Healthy Marriages and Relationships* (2013), 19.
7. See “Disastrous’ Illegitimacy Trends,” *Washington Times*, Dec. 1, 2006, washingtontimes.com.
8. See *The State of Our Unions: Marriage in America 2012* (2012), 101, 102.
9. See “One-Parent and Two-Parent Families 1960–2012,” Office of Financial Management, ofm.wa.gov/trends/social/fig204.asp.
10. See Bruce C. Hafen, *Covenant Hearts: Why Marriage Matters and How to Make It Last* (2013), 227.
11. See Noelle Knox, “Nordic Family Ties Don’t Mean Tying the Knot,” *USA Today*, Dec. 16, 2004, 15, usatoday.com.
12. *Report of the Mission of Inquiry on the Family and the Rights of Children*, a study commission appointed by the National Assembly of France, Jan. 25, 2006, 32.
13. See Hafen, *Covenant Hearts*, 226–27.
14. Flanagan, “Why Marriage Matters,” 47; emphasis added.
15. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.

The gospel’s eternal perspective, as taught in the scriptures and the temple, can help us transcend the modern marital chaos until our marriages are the most satisfying, sanctifying experiences of our lives.

THE EXAMPLE OF A

Faithful Father

My father had honored the Sabbath, expecting to bring down a blessing from heaven. Instead he received a ruinous hailstorm and financial disaster.

By Judson H. Flower Jr.

Economic survival during the Great Depression was no easy task. To make ends meet, my father farmed from spring planting through fall harvest, then hauled cattle or coal for a local trucker during the winter months. My mother added to our meager resources by teaching during the school year. As children, my brother and I were largely unaware of these financial difficulties, as our lives were in most respects like those of everyone around us.

By 1940, as the country gradually recovered from the severity of the Depression, my father's efforts to improve our financial condition began to bear fruit. During the farming season of 1941, he leased a large acreage of land that, aided by ample summer rains, yielded a bounteous crop of field peas. The sale of this crop, he was certain, would enable him to get out of debt and begin the upward climb to financial stability.

When the time for harvest arrived, my father joined a group of farmers who harvested their crops as a team, moving in sequence from one farm to the next. As it happened, my father's crop of peas was scheduled to be harvested last. When that day arrived, it fell on a Sunday.

I clearly remember a conversation between my mother and father that Saturday evening. It centered on my father's feeling that as the season was growing late, he should proceed with the harvesting on Sunday, which he would not normally do. He felt that



this circumstance was akin to the “ox in the mire” of the Savior’s teachings in the New Testament (see Luke 14:1–6). My mother, who recognized the seriousness of my father’s concern, did not attempt to dissuade him, but it was clear from the look on her face that she was disappointed that he would be harvesting on the Sabbath.

The next morning, my mother, brother, and I got up and dressed to go to church, not expecting my father to attend with us that day. But shortly before we were to leave for the meetinghouse, my father came into the room dressed in his Sunday clothes. We walked together to church and spent the Sabbath in meetings and other appropriate activities.

Later that evening, a terrific hailstorm completely destroyed my father’s crop.

That could have been a severe test of faith for any father. He had honored the Sabbath, expecting that by so doing he would bring down a blessing from heaven—and instead he received a ruinous hailstorm and the financial disaster it brought with it.

My father had always been the most patient man I ever knew. On numerous occasions I observed him when his long hours of labor were frustrated by something beyond his control: a balky animal; a newly repaired machine that broke down again; an irrigation dam washed out by a heavy thunderstorm; or other people failing to do the things they had committed to.

I have observed other men give way to outbursts of temper or profanity or even threats of violence in reaction

to some misfortune or supposed injustice. My father’s response, in similar circumstances, was typically to sigh heavily, shrug his shoulders, and start over on whatever task was at hand.

The loss of my father’s pea crop, though far greater in magnitude than other things that had gone wrong, was still met with patience and a firm faith that God had better things in mind for him, which would sooner or later come to pass.


His only observable reaction came after a few weeks of pondering his situation. He decided that he would cease to farm for his livelihood. Instead he enrolled in a training program for mechanics, having always had a natural ability in mechanical skills. Within a few months the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. My father soon found employment in the wartime aircraft industry, and our family moved to San Diego, California. There, his ability to provide for our family steadily improved through the years.

Though his accumulation of worldly goods was never more than modest, the “things of this world” were never his goal. Moving to San Diego proved to be a great blessing to me—it was there that I met and eventually married my eternal companion. Our life together and our family might never have been, except for my father’s failed pea crop.

I have ever been blessed by the example of a faithful father, and I have striven to emulate and honor that example throughout my life. ■

The author lives in Montana, USA.





Those who have been divorced have experienced great pain. They need the healing power and hope that come from the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Latter-day Saint Men and Divorce

By **S. Brent Scharman**

Retired Counselor, LDS Family Services

The ultimate purpose of all we teach is to unite parents and children in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are happy at home, sealed in an eternal marriage.”¹ In spite of this inspired teaching from President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, divorces take place. Divorce is traumatic: those involved can experience feelings of shock, denial, confusion, depression, and anger, as well as physical symptoms such as disrupted sleep and eating patterns.

In my experience as a counselor, I found that, although much of what men and women experience in divorce is the same, there are some differences:

- While still married, men are more likely to minimize the seriousness of marital problems. Their surprise at divorce can lead to a feeling of instability.
- Men are less inclined to share their feelings, so they can be less likely to learn from their experience.
- Men tend to be action oriented, so they may be less inclined to seek counseling and instead bury their feelings by working long hours or immersing themselves in a hobby.
- Because of financial concerns and the blow to their ego, some men experience challenges like depression, weight gain, experimenting with alcohol, and becoming less active in the Church.

The only safe path through a divorce is to remain true to the gospel. Healthy adjustment requires an ability to be kind when you may not feel like it, to maintain confidence

Although a strong marriage is the ideal, some marriages unfortunately end in divorce. If you are divorced, here are some ways to stay close to your children and strong in the gospel.

and self-worth, to be able to tolerate painful feelings while continuing to function, to be patient with others involved, to be fair and non-vindictive, and to maintain a solid spiritual foundation, which can draw you closer to the Lord, who has “descended below” all things and whose Atonement is sufficient to heal and lift you (D&C 122:8).

Regardless of who was at greater fault in your divorce, healing won’t come until there is repentance and forgiveness. As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: “We must let go of our grievances. . . . Remember, heaven is filled with those who have this in common: They are forgiven. And they forgive.”²

Maintaining a Relationship with Your Children

Perhaps no single issue provokes power struggles more than child custody. When children spend most of their time with their mother, it is easy for the father to feel like he has become a visitor to his own children. This may make him feel powerless and controlled by the system. However, unless there is potential for abuse or other harmful interaction, children do best when they maintain relationships with both parents. Fortunately, most former spouses learn to cooperate for the benefit of their children.



HOPE FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

“We know that some look back on their divorces with regret at their own partial or predominant fault in the breakup. All who have been through divorce know the pain and need the healing power and hope that come from the Atonement. That healing power and that hope are there for them and also for their children.”

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Divorce,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 71.

Regular interaction with your children should remain a high priority, regardless of distance or remarriage. Even if the allotted time is not all you desire, make the visits positive and never say negative things to the children about their mother. Children are most likely to adjust successfully to parental divorce when their mother and father are willing to put the happiness and stability of children ahead of their own hurt feelings.

Staying Active in the Church

Some men have said that nothing shook their testimonies like divorce. This is particularly true if they have been faithful in Church activity and have prayed fervently for a resolution to marital problems. This shaken feeling can leave a divorced man uncomfortable with Church attendance, especially if he believes that others are assuming he has been unfaithful to his wife.

Yet continuing Church activity exposes us to correct principles and surrounds us with

caring people. If Church members don’t seem to reach out to you, don’t be resentful. They likely don’t know what to do or say. Be patient and reach out yourself. Find a support network. Counsel with your quorum president, bishop, or stake president and consider professional counseling, such as with LDS Family Services, if available. This will help you examine your own behavior and see things more accurately.

Divorced men are welcome in the Church in the same manner as married men. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “There are many good Church members who have been divorced” and reiterated that “unless a divorced member has committed serious transgressions, he or she can become eligible for a temple recommend under the same worthiness standards that apply to other members.”³

Growing through Difficulties

Some men say that although they would never want to go through such an experience again, they have learned from it. They recover and move forward with their lives. Such an approach was expressed by this man I counseled: “I still have a hard time grasping the concept that I’m a divorced man, but I am. I never expected it, but it happened, and I accept it. My goal now is to do all I can to remain faithful to Christ, build a strong new marriage, and be as good a model to my children and stepchildren as I can.” ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Boyd K. Packer, “The Shield of Faith,” *Ensign*, May 1995, 8.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 77.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Divorce,” *Ensign*, May 2007, 70.



The Wounds of Divorce

By David Paul

Divorced father with three children

As a member of the Royal Canadian Navy, I have been trained to do an “after-action review” after an encounter with the enemy or other calamity. It is a hard look at how those involved can make improvements to reduce or avoid further injuries or mishaps. Throughout life and especially during trials such as divorce, an after-action review can bring many avenues to learn and grow.

It starts by taking the correct amount of responsibility for what occurred. As we take an accurate accounting of our actions, perhaps with the help of a counselor, recognizing where our agency was involved and where the ex-spouse’s agency was involved, we can observe things we can change in ourselves. We can also assess the status of our mental, spiritual, and emotional health.

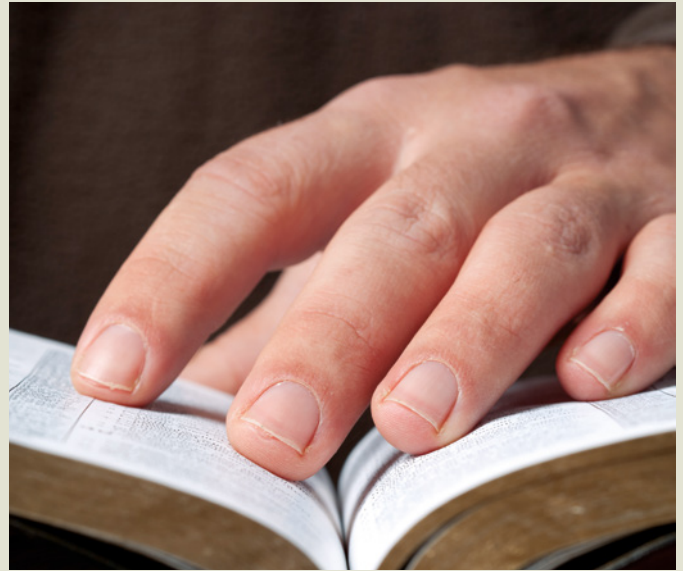
Making constructive efforts to change as we apply the lessons learned encourages the healing process while paving the way to a brighter future.

Accessing the Savior’s Atonement

In war there are always horrific wounds. These can be deep and painful, and those who have not experienced them cannot truly understand what it’s like. Wounds to our hearts and souls caused by divorce are equally painful and can also be difficult to understand for those who have not experienced something similar.

But we are not alone. The Savior is ready to help us. His Atonement’s healing power can help us recover. Do not turn your back on the Church. Ask for priesthood blessings and get to the temple as often as you are able. The healing process is often a long one, but having the Spirit in your life will help speed the process.

The first year after divorce is tough. There is a grieving process at the loss of a relationship that was once the center of our hopes. It is like a roller-coaster ride of emotions and challenges. We play our part in the healing



process by remembering that we are precious children of our Heavenly Father with divine potential, by attending our Church meetings, reading our scriptures, praying, serving, and attending the temple. Though the road may seem long, the promise is sure. Follow the Lord, and you can have eternal life and all the blessings you are promised, including peace and joy in your soul.

Moving toward Remarriage

Be careful when you decide to start dating. Make sure that you know who you are and what you want. Be OK being alone with yourself (and the Savior). When you are happy with who you are and where you are going, it is harder for the adversary to derail you or for you to end up in an unhealthy dependence on someone else. The relationship you developed with your former spouse took some time to reach certain emotional and romantic milestones. Even unhealthy relationships have areas of comfort, so it can be tempting to slip into those too quickly with someone. Watch your pace.

Supporting Divorced Men

Those who have suffered through a divorce are like veterans on the battlefield of this war for our souls. They need our respect, love, understanding, support, and acceptance. Give loving guidance and encouragement if and when they are open to this. Exercise faith in them and remember that the Savior has His timetable to heal the pieces of a broken heart and spirit. Healing and miracles will happen, in time.

The author lives in British Columbia, Canada.

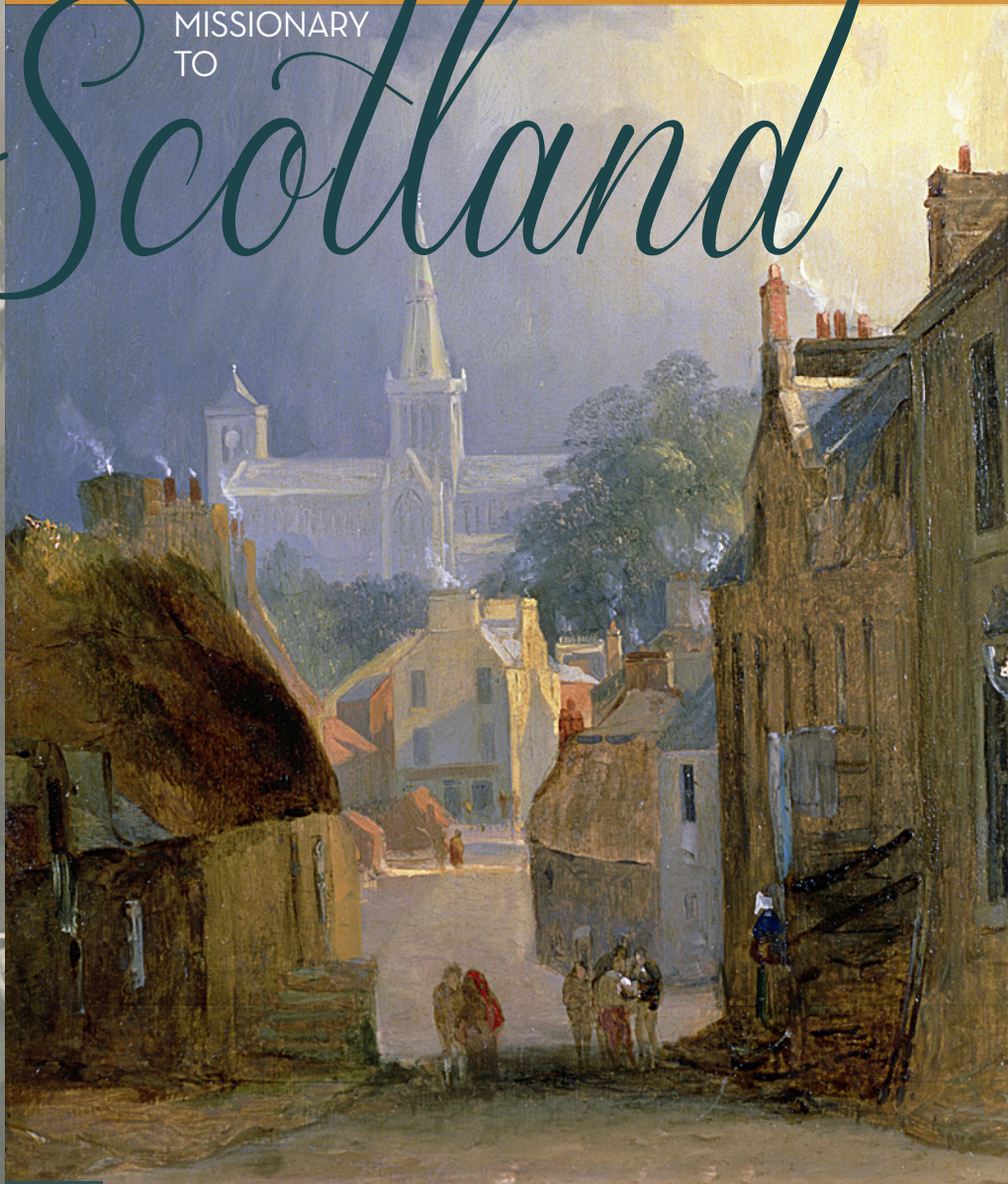
JOSEPHINE BOOTH

SISTER
MISSIONARY
TO

Scotland



Missionaries serving in the British Mission, circa 1899. Josephine Booth (right) is sitting next to Eliza Chipman, one of her missionary companions.



JOSEPHINE BOOTH WAS THE SEVENTH SINGLE SISTER MISSIONARY. SHE SERVED AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR BOTH THE CHURCH AND MORMON WOMEN.

By Matthew S. McBride
Church History Department

On January 13, 1901, Sister Josephine Booth and her companion visited yet another home and offered a man a “Mormon tract.” The man, referring to the Church’s past practice of plural marriage, remarked smugly, “My goodness, woman, I’m too much married already.” Josephine wrote in her journal that since the man “looked ill-treated,” she decided not to lecture him about marriage.¹

Josephine Booth was a pioneer sister missionary, one of the first single sister missionaries called. She served in Glasgow, Scotland, from 1899 to 1901, and in her journal she recorded challenges she faced acting as an ambassador not only for the Church but specifically for Mormon women.

A “Lady Missionary”

The First Presidency authorized the calling of the first sister missionaries in March 1898.² Several mission presidents had asked for sister missionaries in order to help break down deep prejudices against the Church. One popular perception held that Mormon women were mindless polygamous slaves and that the elders were in England to secretly recruit plural wives.

By their presence and teaching, Josephine and her companions exemplified Mormon womanhood and helped refute these claims. People were often surprised to meet a poised, articulate “lady missionary.” Josephine said she felt others “at a distance eyeing us as though we were creatures belonging to another sphere.” When she spoke at meetings, people sometimes “came in off the street to see a Mormon woman.”³

Josephine wrote that one “stately looking” woman “was very curious to see some real live Mormons, [so] she came to have a look at us.” The

conversation went well, and Josephine wrote that the woman “seemed very friendly and said she wished her boy could see us, as he was quite opposed to our people.”⁴

A Greater Voice

The sisters were assigned neighborhoods to canvas door-to-door, distributing tracts, or pamphlets. In a typical month Josephine would give out 600 to 700 tracts and have gospel conversations with about 30 individuals or families. She often wrote of being exhausted spiritually and physically by her work. Yet after a successful conversation she would feel “quite happy, as I always do when I find some one willing to listen.”⁵

The missionaries typically “met many frowns and few smiles” while tracting. Cold moments of rejection led Josephine to write despairingly, “This is a cold hard-hearted world.”⁶ However, she rejoiced in the small gains she made as she worked with investigators. She and her companion taught the gospel to a Mrs. Milne and



her daughters. “Mr. Milne,” Josephine wrote, “although extremely bitter against our people at first, has sufficiently thawed out to shake hands very heartily and say, ‘How is our missionary girl to day?’” She then wrote, “Our girl smiled her very best smile and inwardly wished that . . . the warmth of the gospel might send away the frost altogether.”⁷

In addition to the rigors of tracting, early sisters were frequently called upon to speak at street meetings. Josephine wrote of one early experience: “Went to a street meeting. Had an attentive crowd but after the meeting was over, a fellow jumped into the ring and opposed us.”⁸ These confrontations taught Josephine and the other missionaries how to better articulate and defend their beliefs.

Josephine also frequently spoke at

larger, more formal gatherings, typically on Sundays. Over time she gained confidence as a speaker. She was invited several times to St. George’s in the Fields—a large place of worship belonging to the Church of Scotland—to speak to a youth temperance organization called the Band of Hope. She was introduced as a “‘Mormon’ missionary girl from Utah” and spoke on general religious and moral topics such as honesty.⁹



Josephine Booth, just prior to her departure as a missionary

1850

1860

1870

1880

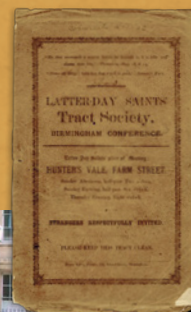
1850s

In England, Scotland, and Wales:

Many Latter-day Saint women took part in **TRACTING SOCIETIES** and held monthly meetings to map out districts and report on their successes. It was said that these women circulated half a million tracts authored by Orson Pratt.

“[The sisters’ distribution of tracts] made them preachers, in a way; and they carried their sermons to the homes of rich and poor, to be read at the fireside by those who, but for this, never would have gone to hear an elder preach.”

—EDWARD W. TULLIDGE¹



1883

The Church began to buy tracts and have members in the British Mission distribute them.

In 1851 the president of the London Conference, Eli B. Kelsey, reported on a plan to distribute thousands of tracts that members had purchased.



1851

LOUISA BARNES PRATT

accompanied her husband, Addison Pratt, who had been called to preach the gospel in the Pacific. Louisa taught Tahitian children on the island of Tubuai from 1851 to 1852.



1865

MILDRED RANDALL was set apart in 1865 to travel with her husband to Hawaii, where she served as a teacher. In 1873, she became the first woman to depart on a mission without her husband when she returned to Hawaii to teach for three years.



After her first speech, several women congratulated her on her remarks and invited her to speak at charity meetings. She concluded her entry for that day, “I got so excited over it all that I couldn’t sleep.”¹⁰

The Highs and Lows

The pages of Josephine’s journal are alive with intricate descriptions of local churches, museums, markets, factories, and theater productions. She and the other missionaries took every opportunity to participate in important events, visit historic sites, and adopt local customs.

There were also dreadful moments. Josephine wrote of a confrontation she had with a drunken man who got “quite sociable” with her. She screamed and ran as he chased her “amid many roars of laughter.” That night, she

wrote, “I dreamed of drunken men and persecuted Mormons.”¹¹ On another occasion, she and Sister Eliza Chipman felt prompted to hire a private car to take them home in order to avoid a man who had been following them.¹² The sisters also endured a flea infestation in their apartment. She recorded, “I come out [of] my ‘retirement’ about three times every night to continue my flea hunts. Talk about Stanley in the wilds of Africa hunting lions. He will never know what ‘diligent hunting’ is till he hunts fleas.”

Her Fellow Laborers

Josephine served with two companions: first Eliza Chipman and then Emily Penfold. She typically got along well with them, though like most missionaries, they had moments of frustration with each



Center of photograph: The first single sister missionaries in the history of the restored Church, Lucy Jane Brimhall and Amanda Inez Knight. They served in the British Mission starting in April 1898.

BELOW, RIGHT, MAP © ALISTAIR SCOTT/THINKSTOCK

1890

To learn more about early sister missionaries, visit lds.org/go/sistersE815.

ELIZABETH McCUNE traveled with her family to England in February 1897. While there she sang at street meetings and held the elders’ hats while they preached, but she felt a desire to preach herself.

1897
FEBRUARY



ELIZABETH McCUNE was invited to speak at a Church conference in London and made a favorable impression.



“If a number of bright and intelligent women were called on missions to England, the results would be excellent.”
—ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN (1858–1932) of the Seventy³

To watch a video about **ELIZABETH McCUNE** and the first sister missionaries, go to lds.org/go/mccuneE815.



Convinced that Elizabeth’s presence and words had been the “means of allaying much prejudice,” **ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN** of the European Mission presidency wrote the First Presidency, requesting sister missionaries.²



other. While looking for an address, Sister Chipman once told Josephine that she “would pity us if you were to be our guide.” When Sister Chipman got them lost along the way, Josephine retorted that she “did not think that it would have been much worse if I had been leading.” In her journal she confided, “It is hard to fight against the world and the girl I live with.”¹³

She also made friends with the elders. At the time, elders and sisters did many things together: ate meals, went sightseeing, attended social functions, preached, folded and distributed tracts, and accompanied each other to meetings. Because there were no policies or precedents explaining how elders and sisters should interact, they learned as they went along.

At a branch meeting in November 1900, one of the members in Glasgow complained that the elders were “dangling around after the sisters.” Though she was “astounded at the awful accusation”¹⁴ and felt neither she nor the elders had done anything wrong, she understood the importance of maintaining the trust of the members.

A few days later, she “gave the boys a talk.” She was “afraid we were too light minded” and “didn’t want us by any act of ours to retard the work.” In spite of the elders’ protestations, she insisted, “We must be more serious. Not that we have done any thing wrong—but—well, we must work more, think more, and pray more.”¹⁵

This talk helped put their relationship on a more formal footing. But

Whenever I had the pleasure of listening to one of [the lady missionaries] bear testimony to the truth of the Gospel, and talk of their Utah sisters, and defend the women of Mormondom, I felt their words were far more convincing than anything that could be said by the men. . . . I believe there is room for a good many sisters to do effective missionary service.”

—ELDER JOSEPH W. McMURRIN (1858–1932) of the Seventy, “Lady Missionaries,” *Young Woman’s Journal*, December 1904, 539–40.



1898

1898
APRIL 1

1899 JOSEPHINE BOOTH,
seventh single sister missionary,
served in Glasgow, Scotland.

Below: Women serving in the Eastern States Mission in 1915.



“It has been decided to call some of our wise and prudent women into the missionary field.”—PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON (1827–1901), First Counselor in the First Presidency⁴



“The lady missionary is no longer an experiment, but an unqualified success.”
—ELDER FRANCIS M. LYMAN (1840–1916) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles⁵



LUCY JANE BRIMHALL and AMANDA INEZ KNIGHT were set apart to be the first single female proselyting missionaries in the history of the Church.



1902

27

women went on missions.

1918

As the number of male missionaries decreased due to military service, 38 percent of all missionaries were women.

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the good-humored elders did not let her lecture go without a response. They visited the sisters' apartment a few days later, "sat down, and each taking a bible from their pocket began to read." They also brought a book called *How to Behave*, and "there they sat as solemn as two owls." "It was so funny," recorded Josephine, "that I fairly roared."¹⁶

A New Path

As Josephine's mission drew to a close, the mission presidency assigned her to visit branches throughout Europe as an example of the good work that sister missionaries were doing. Following Josephine's talk in Denmark, a member recognized the impact she had on those in attendance and said, "Sister Booth the Lord is pleased with your work. . . .

Your testimony has been borne in power."

Reflecting on her service as a missionary, Josephine, like some missionaries, struggled with feelings of inadequacy, but she overcame them with the Lord's support. "In [God's] mercy he forgives and loves me, because I want to be his daughter in very deed."¹⁷

Josephine may not have fully realized her impact on the world and the Church, but the efforts of Josephine Booth and dozens of other pioneering "lady missionaries" blazed a new trail, marking the way for today's sisters. ■

NOTES

1. Josephine D. Booth (Woodruff), Jan. 13, 1901, Journal, 1899–1901, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Punctuation modernized. Subsequent references to this journal are by date only.
2. See George Q. Cannon, in "Biographical Sketches: Jennie Brimhall and Inez Knight," *Young Woman's Journal*, June 1898, 245.

3. May 19, 1901.
4. Dec. 15, 1899.
5. Oct. 15, 1900.
6. Nov. 28, 1899.
7. Oct. 4, 1900.
8. Aug. 11, 1899.
9. "Josephine D. Booth," in Andrew Jenson, ed. *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (1901–36), 1:504.
10. Oct. 17, 1900.
11. Aug. 12, 1899.
12. Dec. 17, 1899.
13. Nov. 30, 1899.
14. Nov. 12, 1900.
15. Nov. 26, 1900.
16. Nov. 28, 1900.
17. May 26, 1901.

TIME LINE NOTES

1. Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 276.
2. See Matthew S. McBride, "I Could Have Gone into Every House": Elizabeth McCune Helped Pave the Way for Sister Missionaries," history.lds.org.
3. Joseph W. McMurrin, in McBride, "I Could Have Gone into Every House."
4. George Q. Cannon, in "Biographical Sketches: Jennie Brimhall and Inez Knight," *Young Woman's Journal*, June 1898, 245.
5. Francis M. Lyman, in Lydia D. Alder, "Thoughts on Missionary Work," *Woman's Exponent*, Aug. 1, 1901, 22.
6. Thomas S. Monson, "Welcome to Conference," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 5.

1920

1950

2000

2010

2020

1945

1964

The age requirement for sister missionaries fell to 21.

1971

The mission length for sisters dropped to 18 months.

2012
OCTOBER



"I am pleased to announce that able, worthy young women who have the desire to serve may be recommended for missionary service beginning at age 19, instead of age 21." —PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON⁶

MORE THAN
22,000
sister missionaries were serving at the end of 2014.

The year 1945 marked a time when the number of sister missionaries exceeded the number of elders.



During the mid-1900s, FAREWELL TESTIMONIALS were often held for missionaries about to enter the field. If on a weeknight, these events might even include dancing afterward. (Above: Farewell testimonial program for Evelyn May Taylor, called to the Northern California Mission in 1946.)



PHOTOGRAPH OF PROGRAM COURTESY OF ARDIS PARSHALL





By Elder
Allan F. Packer
Of the Seventy

HEAVENLY FATHER'S FIXED Standards

God's standards are fixed, and no one can change them. Individuals who think they can will be greatly surprised in the Final Judgment.

My first job out of college was working for a major airplane manufacturer. While there, I learned that to make airplanes that were safe, the company had specifications for every part. The parts had to be certified as meeting all standards, including shape, size, material, and tolerances.

If a part met the standards, it would be placed in inventory for building an airplane. If it didn't meet the standards, the part would be rejected and returned to the supplier. Suppliers of parts were careful to understand and meet all of the requirements, including the tolerances.

Would you willingly ride in an airplane made with substandard parts? Of course not! You would want the parts to exceed the standard. Some people, however, appear to be willing to embrace substandard behavior in their lives. But only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can you adopt the behavior needed to qualify for exaltation.

Tolerance is a word that is heard frequently in society today, usually in the context of tolerating or accepting other people's cultures or behavior. Sometimes it is used by people wanting acceptance to do something without consideration of its impact on society or others. My purpose is not to talk about that definition but to focus on the *engineering* definition of the word and its application for us.

Tolerance is used to define acceptable variations from a defined standard. In a manufactured part, the tolerance might be specified to be five inches long (13 cm), plus or minus a thousandth of an inch (0.0025 cm). Another part might be defined to be made of a certain material that is 99.9 percent pure, like gold bars. The Lord has set tolerances to help us qualify for exaltation.

Standards and Judgment

Standards for salvation are called commandments, which are given by our Father in Heaven. These standards apply to all parts of our lives and at all times. They are not selectively applied at a certain time or in a certain situation. The commandments define the tolerances required to qualify for exaltation.

There is a judgment that, in a sense, is like the certification process for a plane part. Just as there are qualifying tests for aircraft parts, our Father in Heaven has a judgment to determine if we will be certified. It is to our advantage to know and meet the standards within the tolerance the Lord has set.

You will remember that the ten virgins in the Savior's parable were invited to the wedding feast. When the bridegroom arrived, five had oil and were able to enter. The other five came late and could not enter. (See Matthew 25:1–13.)

Regarding this parable, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The arithmetic of this parable is chilling. The ten virgins obviously represent members of Christ’s Church, for all were invited to the wedding feast and all knew what was required to be admitted when the bridegroom came. But only half were ready when he came.”¹

The first five virgins met the standards, and so must we.

God created us in His own image. The plan for us on this earth is to obtain a body, have experience, receive ordinances, and endure to the end. Standards have been established and tolerances set that we need to live to qualify for exaltation. God has promised that we can be exalted, but He has also said, “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

Standards and Agency

In God’s plan of salvation, we are being molded, shaped, and polished to become like Him. It is something each of us has to experience individually.

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

God has established what we must do and the standards we must meet. Something quite remarkable is that He gives us the moral agency to decide whether to accept and meet those standards. However, there are consequences to our decisions. He gave us agency, but He does not give us the authority to change the standards or the consequences of our decisions.

Because there are standards and because we have agency to choose, there is a Final Judgment, at which time each of us will be reviewed to see if we meet the standards—in other words, to see if we have lived within the standards and tolerances God has defined. His judgment will be final.

The doctrine of repentance allows us to correct or fix defects, but it is better to focus on meeting God’s standards than to plan on invoking the principle of repentance before the Judgment. I learned this lesson when I was young.

As a teenager I spent my summers working on my grandfather’s ranch in Wyoming, USA. It was a sheep and cattle ranch of more than 2,000 acres (810 ha), plus additional rangeland. The ranch operation required a lot of equipment. Because the closest repair center was far away, my grandfather taught us to carefully maintain the equipment and to inspect everything before we left the ranch house. If we had a breakdown, it was usually miles from the ranch house, and that meant a long walk.

It didn’t take long for me to learn the law of consequences. It was always better to avoid problems than to take a long walk. The same is true with the commandments of our Heavenly Father. He can tell the difference between someone who truly is striving to become like Him and an individual who is pushing the edges but trying to stay just inside the acceptable limits.

Standards and Opposition

There are those in the world today who are striving to dismiss or change the standards established by God. This is not a new phenomenon.

“Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (2 Nephi 15:20).

We must not be deceived or give heed to those who would attempt to convince us that God’s standards have changed. They have no authority to change the standards. Only the designer, Heavenly Father, can change the specifications.

All of us easily recognize how ridiculous it would be for a supplier of airplane parts to listen to some uninformed individual who promotes making changes to the specifications or tolerances of a part. None of us would want to fly in an airplane manufactured with such a part.

Likewise, no one would accuse an airplane manufacturer of being unthoughtful or intolerant when it rejects such parts. The manufacturer would not allow itself to be intimidated or bullied into accepting parts that could not be certified. To do so would jeopardize its business and the lives of the passengers who might fly in its airplanes.



We wouldn't willingly fly in an airplane made with substandard parts. Nor should we accept or practice substandard behavior. Only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can we qualify for exaltation.

The same is true with God's laws and commandments. His standards are fixed, and no one can change them. Individuals who think they can will be greatly surprised in the Final Judgment.

Meeting the Standards

Our Heavenly Father is the designer of the plan of salvation. He has put in place all that is needed for us to qualify to return to His presence. The standards are set, known, and easily available to each of us.

The Savior has said that all of us are capable of meeting the standards. The Word of Wisdom is evidence of this, indicating that it is "given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of *all* saints, who are or can be called saints" (D&C 89:3; emphasis added).

The Savior also teaches that we will "not be tempted above that which [we are] able to bear" (D&C 64:20), but we must "watch and pray continually" (Alma 13:28).

You have the power, "for the power is in [you], wherein [you] are agents unto [yourselves]. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:28).

You can meet the standards and tolerances. You have the capacity to qualify for exaltation.

Guidance from the Holy Ghost

We learn the standards by attending church and by studying and acting on the doctrines found in the scriptures and in the words of modern prophets.

The greatest source of guidance is the promptings that come from the Holy Ghost, who will teach us all things we must do (see 2 Nephi 32:2–3). With the aid of the Holy Ghost and the Light of Christ (see Moroni 7:16–18), we can know right and wrong. We can be guided throughout our lives. We can feel in our hearts and have thoughts come into our minds that can give comfort and guidance. This is true even for children.

God has promised that He will help us as we strive to meet His standards. Just as we wouldn't willingly fly in an airplane made with substandard parts, we shouldn't accept or practice substandard behavior. Only by knowing, understanding, and living the doctrine of Christ can we qualify for exaltation. ■

From a devotional address, "Standards and Tolerance," given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on November 13, 2012. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTE

1. Dallin H. Oaks, "Preparation for the Second Coming," *Ensign*, May 2004, 8.

THRUST IN YOUR Sickle

A harvesting tool can help us learn how to be effective member missionaries.



Field of grain

Reaper

Sickle



Blade
(either
serrated
or smooth)

Handle

A Sickle

The sickle is one of the oldest and most common agricultural tools around the world. Its invention coincides with the Agricultural Revolution in the Neolithic Age, when people discovered that they could cultivate and harvest grains from wild grasses (such as barley and wheat). It has a curved blade for cutting down stalks of grains. The earliest sickles were made of

jawbones or other curved bones, wood, or clay and had flint or other sharpened stones set into a groove. Later, sickle blades were made of brass, copper, iron, and other metals and then set into handles made of wood or other material. The blades needed to be kept sharp for the tool to be effective.

A sickle's blade bunches the grass stems in its curve, allowing the reaper to slice and catch the bunch at the same time, making for an efficient way of collecting the grain-bearing grasses.



YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

“The harvest is the Lord’s. Your responsibility is to thrust in the sickle.”

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “What I Want My Son to Know before He Leaves on His Mission,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 42.

For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul.

Doctrine and Covenants 4:4

WHAT WE CAN LEARN

A sickle is:

A tool. People use tools in order to do things that would otherwise be impossible or much more difficult. We have many available tools (including social media, the Internet, and just opening our mouths) to share messages about the gospel of Jesus Christ and invite people to learn more about it. We just need to use them.

Sharp. As a boy on a farm, Elder Kevin R. Duncan of the Seventy learned that a sickle needs to be kept sharp to be effective. “On the farm, we kept a file on hand to sharpen our sickle every day. In missionary work and indeed in all areas of life, we need to keep our spiritual sickles sharp so that we can achieve our own best potential. Reading scriptures daily, praying, and keeping all other commandments help us stay sharp and useful” (“Abandoned Seeds in Rocky Places,” *New Era*, July 2014, 18).

Common. To participate in the harvest, people needed a sickle. Fortunately, sickles were relatively easy to make and quite common. When it comes to sharing the gospel, there’s no special or incredibly rare thing you need to have before setting out to do it. If you have “faith, hope, charity and love” and “an eye single to the glory of God,” you are qualified for the work (D&C 4:5).

Personal. Though harvesting technology has advanced and many farmers now use vehicles called combines to harvest large fields, the pattern for effective harvesting in missionary work has not changed since the Savior first sent laborers into the field. We thrust in our sickles and serve, teach, and baptize people individually.

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: “Covenants are made personally, individually. . . . Ordinances are performed for individual persons, one by one, no matter how many must ultimately receive them. . . .

“That’s how the kingdom of God is built—one person at a time, one covenant at a time” (“Keeping Covenants: A Message for Those Who Will Serve a Mission,” *New Era*, Jan. 2012, 3). ■



BIBLE FACT

After the Savior Jesus Christ spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well, testifying to her that He was the Messiah (see John 4:7–26), He spoke to His Apostles of “fields . . . white already to harvest” (John 4:35). (“White” was a way of saying the grain was ripe.) The woman told the people of her city about the Savior, leading to the conversion of many in that place (see John 4:28–30, 39–42). So, in speaking of the fields that were white, the Savior was helping His Apostles see just how many people were ready to hear and accept the message of His gospel, including people they may have overlooked.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREG NEWBOLD

ORAL FAMILY HISTORY FADES IN JUST THREE GENERATIONS

By Paul Nauta

Family History Department

Have you ever worried when you couldn't remember details of a family story about your grandparents or great-grandparents? Well, there may be good reason for concern—it has been said it takes only three generations to lose oral family histories.¹

When he learned this, Jim Ison of Utah resolved that it wouldn't happen on his watch. He decided at that moment in 2013 that—as the connecting link between his grandchildren


and his grandparents—he was going to upload old photos, stories, and source documents onto FamilySearch's Family Tree so his posterity could enjoy them and so they would be preserved forever.

He started with a box of old family photos that had been passed down for generations and included family members going back to his second great-grandfather. "I uploaded the photos to the 'cloud' online in my

free FamilySearch.org account for safekeeping," says Jim enthusiastically. Then he added to the photos some stories passed down from his father. "Now any grandchild or future great-grandchild can see these pictures and read these stories anytime."

He also found research indicating that the more children know about their forebears—where they grew up, illnesses they struggled with, and tough trials they went through—the greater their self-esteem and ability to deal with life.² So Jim focused on sharing those kinds of things in the lives of his ancestors. For example, Jim's Bavarian great-grandfather, a widower, married a woman who spanked the children every morning and told them the spanking was for anything during the day she wouldn't catch them doing! Jim's grandfather and the grandfather's older brother ran away

Getting Started



Watching My Grandson Play Ball


In this video, Elder Tad R. Callister relates how his grandfather missed an important meeting to watch him play softball. (2:36)

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Watching My Grandson Play Ball

In this video, Elder Tad R. Callister relates how his grandfather missed an important meeting to




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FIRST AND FOREMOST A GRANDFATHER

Watch Tad R. Callister, Sunday School general president, share a story about his grandfather: lds.org/go/callisterE815.

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DESCRIPTION

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Ida Susanne Meh...
Ida Susanne Mehner
(1891-1975) KWCQ-Y3P

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To share your family memories on FamilySearch, sign in at FamilySearch.org and select "Memories," then the kind of item you want to share—"Photos," "Stories," "Documents," or even "Audio."

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from home, changed their last name to avoid being caught and sent back, and came to America about 10 years

later after serving in the German navy. "My grandchildren can learn helpful lessons from the lives of their

ancestors that they can easily find online," says Jim, who loves his role as an intergenerational connection for his posterity. ■

NOTES

1. See Aaron Holt, in Sally Johnson Odekirk, "What's a Family Tree Gathering?" *Ensign*, Oct. 2014, 39.
2. See Bruce Feiler, "The Stories That Bind Us," *New York Times*, March 15, 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/03/17/fashion/the-family-stories-that-bind-us-this-life.html.

WHO YOU ARE



"In many ways each of us is the sum total of what our ancestors were. The virtues they had may be our virtues, their strengths our strengths, and in a way their challenges could be our challenges."

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Phenomenon That Is You," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 53.

WHERE IS YOUR CHURCH?

During my years in the military, it was sometimes a challenge to find a Latter-day Saint chapel. With little notice, I could find myself in a new city or even a new country.

One Sunday I found myself in Amsterdam, Holland. At 8:30 a.m. our colonel unexpectedly announced that we had the day off. Already in uniform, I convinced a friend to drop me off at church. In his rental car, we had the following conversation:

Friend: "So where is your church?"

Me: "I don't know because I've never been to this city before. But if you can get us to the city center by

quarter to nine, we can find it."

Friend: "Why? What happens at quarter to nine?"

Me: "That's when we'll see the Mormon missionaries heading to the chapel."

Friend: "I thought you said you've never been here before?"

Me: "I haven't."

Friend: "So how do you know there's a chapel here?"

Me: "There's a chapel here all right *and* Mormon missionaries."

Friend: "OK, here we are in the city center. It's quarter to nine, and I don't see any missionaries."

Me: "There they are."

Friend: "Where? You mean those small figures way up there crossing the street? We can't even see who they are from here."

When we caught up to the missionaries, I jumped out of the car and had an animated conversation with them, shaking hands, cracking jokes, laughing, and smiling.

Me: "Thanks for dropping me off."

Friend: "I thought you said you didn't know those guys?"

Me: "I don't. We just met."

Friend: "People don't talk like that unless they already know each other."



Me: "I'll explain later."

Friend: "I'm not sure I can find this place again, and you haven't told me what time to pick you up."

Me: "The meetings will last three hours. Then a family will invite me to dinner. After we eat and talk a while, they'll drive me back to headquarters."

Friend: "You don't know that someone is going to invite you to dinner and drive you back."

I reassured him that I would be well taken care of and thanked him again.

The meetings were inspiring. I accepted the first of three invitations to dinner. During dinner we had an enlightening conversation about the growth of the Church in Holland.

I have been blessed to find Church members many times during my life. Sometimes we have met in royal palaces and sometimes in humble huts. Sometimes we have met in abandoned, dusty barracks. Sometimes we have met in hospital chapels. Sometimes we have met in large tents or outside under the open sky.

Wherever we have met, I am always glad I made the effort to find the Church. For as the Lord has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). ■

Dee Jepson, Idaho, USA

"If you can get us to the city center by quarter to nine," I told my friend, "we can find a chapel."

A PRAYER IN THE FAMILY HISTORY CENTER

After I was called as the family history consultant for our branch in Ushuaia, Argentina, I came to feel a deep need to search for my ancestors. The task was difficult, and scarcely a day went by that I did not try a new strategy to discover who they were and where they had come from in Italy.

In 2006 I was called to oversee the family history center. I continued to feel frustrated, however, by my failure to find information about my family. My frustration grew after my husband's search for his ancestors paid off. That year, Ruben identified the names of more than 5,000 of his ancestors who had lived in San Ginesio, Macerata, Italy.

One afternoon in the family history center as Ruben found ancestor after ancestor on microfilm, he joyfully and repeatedly cried out, "Another one!" Feeling discouraged, and with tears in my eyes, I expressed my sadness, adding that I didn't know what to do to find my family members. Seeing my pain, he suggested that we pray. We did so, pleading for the Holy Ghost to enlighten us so that we could accelerate the work on behalf of my family.

During our prayer, Ruben suddenly remembered a certain website that featured Italian surnames. Immediately after our prayer, we checked it out. Within minutes we had found four people with my maiden name, Gos, in the telephone directory of the small Italian

town of Iutizzo, in northern Italy.

Immediately I sent letters to each of them. One wrote back, saying that her husband had the same surname, but he didn't belong to the family. However, she had known one of my grandfather's deceased sisters, and she offered to put me in touch with another relative, still living.

A few months later, in December 2006, we received a long-distance telephone call.

"Is this Susana Gos?" a distant male voice asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"This is your cousin from Italy," he said.

The caller, Giovanni Battista Tubaro, was the son of my grandfather's sister Maria!

In March 2008, Giovanni and his wife, Miriam, came to visit us in Argentina. We introduced them to the gospel and family history work, and for several days we talked of those who had preceded us. Now each of their names going back to six generations had a face and a history.

Family history has allowed me to contribute to an important part of the Lord's work. It has also brought me closer to my ancestors—children of our Heavenly Father whom I never would have known of had it not been for a prayer of faith in the family history center. ■

Susana Magdalena Gos de Morresi,
Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

GET HER TO THE HOSPITAL!

I was single and self-employed when I was new in the Church, so I had days when I had extra time. On one of those days I called the Relief Society president and asked if anyone needed help that afternoon. She mentioned an elderly sister named Anita (name has been changed) who had recently come home from the hospital and was lonely. I had met Anita before and was happy to visit her.

I called and then went to her apartment. She asked me to make lunch for her, and afterward we had a great visit. She had a good sense of humor and

loved to laugh and tell stories about her life.

After lunch she said she was tired and asked me to help her from her wheelchair to bed. Soon I had her tucked in. Suddenly, the still, small voice I had heard so much about spoke to me: “Get her to the hospital now!”

Anita hated hospitals and had just returned home. I asked her if she felt OK. She said she was fine but felt tired.

I moved away from her bedside and knelt. As soon as I started to pray, the voice repeated, “Get her to the

hospital, and get her there now!”

I hesitated, asking myself, “What am I going to tell the doctor at the hospital?”

I called a friend, who also prayed and then told me to follow my prompting.

Anita was angry that I would even mention taking her to the hospital, but I called an ambulance anyway. When it arrived, two paramedics entered and took her vital signs. Without asking questions, they put her on a gurney and sped off in the ambulance.

I followed in my van. After arriving at the hospital, I sat and waited. Soon a doctor came out. He asked me, “She didn’t tell you that she had fallen before you came to her apartment, did she?”

“No,” I responded.

He told me that Anita had injured her spleen and was bleeding internally. Without immediate medical attention, he said, she might have died.

I felt a mixture of remorse and exultation—remorse that I had hesitated and exultation that ultimately I had listened to the Holy Ghost. Most of all, I felt grateful to know that the Lord had trusted me to help this injured sister and had inspired my Relief Society president to send me to her.

My own health has deteriorated since this experience, but the Lord still prompts me. I pray always for the strength to follow those promptings. ■

Gayle Y. Brandvold, California, USA

Anita said she felt fine, but I moved away from her bedside, knelt, and prayed.





I unloaded my purse, and there on the bottom with my boarding pass was an issue of the *Ensign*.

CAN I GET A BOOK OF MORMON?

As I entered the airport on my way home from a visit with old friends, I felt discouraged that I hadn't shared the gospel on this trip. I always carry a Book of Mormon in my purse to remind me to pray for someone I can give it to, but too often it stays in my purse. This trip was yet another miss.

I took a deep breath and prayed a silent apology. I felt like a terrible member missionary.

As I shuffled through the security line, I felt prompted to speak to the woman ahead of me. We chatted about our destinations and then separated to different lines. As I headed toward my gate, however, I saw the same woman. "Oh, hi again," she said. "Good to see you!"

I asked her when her flight was leaving. "Oh, not for hours—I'm early."

"Well, come and sit with me!" I said.

I still had 45 minutes before my flight boarded, so we sat at my gate and talked about our work. I mentioned some of the writing I do for Latter-day Saints, and suddenly she lit up.

"You're a Mormon?" she asked. "I've been wanting to know more about Mormons. How can I get a copy of the Book of Mormon?"

"Well," I said, opening my purse, "I have one right here."

"Oh, my," she said. "I think maybe we were supposed to meet today."

Gratitude flooded my heart. When she asked what makes Latter-day Saints different from other religions, I felt guided in what to say.

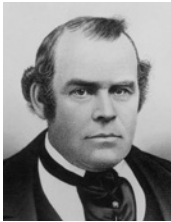
I told her I'd have the missionaries contact her, and then boarding was announced. I opened my purse to get my boarding pass but couldn't find it.

I unloaded my purse. There, on the bottom with the pass, was a general conference issue of the *Ensign*! I gave it to her and thanked the Lord that I had to search for my boarding pass. She mentioned that she usually brings reading material with her but felt she shouldn't this time.

"Maybe it's so I can read this," she said. With my boarding pass in hand, I gave her a hug and said good-bye.

Now we talk each week, and she tells me about her visits with the sister missionaries. It has been a year, and I hope to someday see her baptized. I don't know if that will happen, but I still marvel at the workings of Heavenly Father to help our paths cross. I thank Him for hearing my prayer and granting me the simple opportunity to share a Book of Mormon. ■

Joni Hilton, California, USA



**By Elder
Parley P. Pratt
(1807–57)**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

HE TAUGHT ME THE HEAVENLY ORDER OF ETERNITY

I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also.

In Philadelphia I had the happiness of once more meeting with President [Joseph] Smith, and of spending several days with him and others, and with the Saints in that city and vicinity.

During these interviews he taught me many great and glorious principles concerning God and the heavenly order of eternity. It was at this time that I received from him the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressibly endearing relationships which none but the highly intellectual, the refined and pure in heart, know how to prize, and which are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness.

Till then I had learned to esteem kindred affections and sympathies as appertaining solely to this transitory state, as something from which the heart must be entirely weaned, in order to be fitted for its heavenly state.

It was Joseph Smith who taught me how to prize the endearing



relationships of father and mother, husband and wife; of brother and sister, son and daughter.

It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. It was from him that I learned that we might cultivate these affections, and grow and increase in the same to all eternity; while the result of our endless union would be an offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, or the sands of the sea shore.

It was from him that I learned the true dignity and destiny of a son of God, clothed with an eternal

priesthood, as the patriarch and sovereign of his countless offspring. It was from him that I learned that the highest dignity of womanhood was, to stand as a queen and priestess to her husband, and to reign for ever and ever as the queen mother of her numerous and still increasing offspring.

I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this groveling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was my heavenly Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion; a kind ministering angel, given to me as a comfort, and a crown of glory for ever and ever. In short, I could now love with the spirit and with the understanding also. ■

From Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt (1979), 297–98.

INSIGHTS



How do we develop godly fear?

“Godly fear is loving and trusting in Him. As we fear God more completely, we love Him more perfectly. And ‘perfect love casteth out all fear’ (Moroni 8:16). I promise the bright light of godly fear will chase away the dark shadows of mortal fears (see D&C 50:25) as we look to the Savior, build upon Him as our foundation, and press forward on His covenant path with consecrated commitment.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Therefore They Hushed Their Fears,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 49.



In **Church** Magazines

Ensign: Patience isn't a lesson you learn just once, but through our trials we can understand what patience is—and what it isn't. See "Patience: More Than Waiting" (page 18).

New Era: This month, youth will learn from President Monson how to lose themselves in service (page 2), and then learn how to be themselves when they're sharing the gospel (page 38). They can also take the challenge to make 10 people smile today (page 24).

Friend: Does your child know anyone struggling with the effects of divorce? Use the story on page 44, along with the questions and answers on page 46, to talk to your children about some of the worries they have or how they can help someone whose family is going through a divorce. Help children be strong!

