

# Ensign



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*"It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night."*

**Moroni 7:15**

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



**“Ten Reasons I Love the Book of Mormon,”** page 12. After reading this article together as a family, you could invite each

member of the family to list the reasons *they* love the Book of Mormon. Consider having each person share their list and their favorite scripture from the Book of Mormon. You could make a goal to look for more reasons to love the Book of Mormon as you read it together regularly.

**“Stepping across the Mississippi,”** page 60. Begin by reading about the author’s experience of stepping

across the Mississippi River at a spot where it was a narrow stream. Point out that the daily choices we make are like small streams that

flow together to form a river. Consider asking family members to identify some “spiritually strengthening streams,” or good habits, that could help their lives be as “rivers of righteousness” (see page 61 for some ideas). You could set a goal to work on one of these habits as a family during the coming week. To close, you might want to watch the video “Selfies or Scriptures” ([lds.org/go/choicesE816](http://lds.org/go/choicesE816)).

### FAMILY JINGLE

When our children were young, my husband and I worried that they didn’t know the contact information they might need in an emergency: parents’ full names, phone numbers, and address. So we made up a song using our family’s information, set to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” and taught it to our children for family night. In a short time they were singing their new song perfectly. We were also careful to teach them this was private information to be shared only in an emergency. Now if they were ever lost, our children would have a family jingle that could help them be guided to safety.

Julie Edvalson, Washington, USA

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How might the magazine improve? To share your feelings, suggestions, or questions, use the “Submit an Article” link on our web page.



**By President  
Henry B. Eyring**

First Counselor in  
the First Presidency

# THE HOPE OF Eternal Family Love

**O**f all the gifts our loving Heavenly Father has provided to His children, the greatest is eternal life (see D&C 14:7). That gift is to live in the presence of God the Father and His Beloved Son forever in families. Only in the highest of the kingdoms of God, the celestial, will the loving bonds of family life continue.

All of us hope for the joy of living in loving families. For some of us, it is a feeling we have not experienced—a feeling we know is possible but have not yet realized. We may have seen it in the lives of others. For others of us, family love has seemed more real and precious when death has separated us from a child, a mother, a father, a brother, a sister, or a loving and beloved grandparent.

We have all felt the hope that someday we could feel again the warm affection of that family member we loved so much and now ache to embrace again.

Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. Because the Savior broke the bands of death, we will be resurrected. Because He atoned for our sins, we can, by our faith and repentance, become worthy of the celestial kingdom, where families are bound together in love forever.

The Savior sent the Prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith to restore the keys of the priesthood (see D&C 110). With those keys came the sealing power, offering God's greatest gift to His children—eternal life in families bound together forever.

It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim. A third of His spirit children rejected His offer in the spirit world. Out of lack of sufficient faith and then open rebellion, they chose never to know the joy of Heavenly Father's gift of eternal families.

For those of us who passed the crucial test in the pre-mortal spirit world and so qualified to receive the gift of mortal bodies, the great choice of eternal life is still ours to make. If we are blessed to find the restored gospel, we can choose to make and keep the covenants with God that qualify us for eternal life. As we endure in that faithfulness, the Holy Ghost will confirm our hope and confidence that we are on the path to eternal life, to live in families forever in the celestial kingdom.

For some, that eternal joy may seem a faint or even a fading hope. Parents, children, brothers, and sisters may have made choices that seem to disqualify them from eternal life. You may even wonder whether you have yet been qualified through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.



A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, “You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine.”

To all of those whose personal experience or whose marriage and children—or absence thereof—cast a shadow over their hopes, I offer my witness: Heavenly Father knows and loves you as His spirit child. While you were with Him and His Beloved Son before this life, They placed in your heart the hope you have of eternal life. With the power of the Atonement of

Jesus Christ working and with the Holy Spirit guiding, you can feel now and will feel in the world to come the family love your Father and His Beloved Son want so much for you to receive.

I testify that as you live worthy of the celestial kingdom, the prophetic promise that “family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine” will be yours. ■

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

Consider beginning by telling those you teach of a moment when you were grateful for the hope of eternal families. Invite them to ponder the moments when they’ve felt gratitude for eternal families. Ask

them if they’d like to share. You could then invite them to think of ways to improve and live more worthy of the celestial kingdom so that the prophetic promise of “family arrangements . . . more wonderful than you can imagine” can be theirs.

## Sharing Eternal Happiness

One of the best things about the gospel is the knowledge of the plan of salvation. We have the awesome opportunity to be with our family for eternity. That knowledge helps us to have hope whenever we feel overwhelmed by the world. President Eyring teaches, “Our loving Heavenly Father knows our hearts. His purpose is to give us happiness (see 2 Nephi 2:25). And so He gave the gift of His Son to make possible the joy of family bonds that continue forever. . . . It is an offer that every child of God who comes into the world may claim.”

That blessing applies to those of us living right now and to those who have passed on—but only through our help. Our ancestors are in the spirit world right now, waiting for us to prepare their names for the temple ordinances to be performed on their behalf. But sometimes it can be hard to do



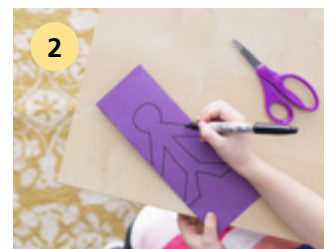
the work for them. We may be too busy, or we may live too far away from a temple to go very often.

Fortunately, there are other ways we can help our ancestors, like doing family history work, indexing, or babysitting for our parents while they go to the temple. By helping, we serve the Lord *and* bring the hope of eternal families to those on the other side of the veil.

## Families Are Forever

Because of Jesus Christ’s Atonement and the restoration of priesthood power to seal families, we can live with our families forever! What do you love about your family? Follow these instructions to make this paper chain to celebrate your family.

1. Fold a piece of paper in half twice so you have one long strip.
2. Draw a person with hands reaching the folded edges.
3. Cut the person out. Don’t cut where the hands touch the folded edges.
4. Unfold it. Write or draw something you love about each family member.
5. Tape multiple chains together if you have a larger family!





Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org).

## Nurturing Families Together

A “husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children.”<sup>1</sup> “The home is to be God’s laboratory of love and service,” said President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

“Our Heavenly Father wants husbands and wives to be faithful to each other and to esteem and treat their children as an heritage from the Lord.”<sup>2</sup>

In the Book of Mormon, Jacob said that the love that husbands had for their wives, the love that wives had for their husbands, and the love that both had for their children was among the reasons the Lamanites were at one point more righteous than the Nephites (see Jacob 3:7).

One of the best ways to invite love and harmony into our homes is by speaking kindly to our family members. Speaking kindly brings the Holy



Ghost. Sister Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, asked us to consider: “How often do we intentionally ‘speak kind words to each other?’”<sup>3</sup>

### Additional Scriptures

Romans 12:10; Mosiah 4:15; Doctrine and Covenants 25:5

### Consider This

How does loving and caring for one another invite the Spirit into our homes?

#### NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Salvation and Exaltation,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 8.
3. Linda K. Burton, “We’ll Ascend Together,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 31.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Let Us Be Men,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 46.

## Faith, Family, Relief



### Living Stories

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared a childhood experience that impressed upon him the importance of a loving family. When he and his brothers were boys, their mother had radical cancer surgery that made it very painful for her to use her right arm. With a family of boys, there was a lot of ironing, but as his mother ironed, she often stopped and went into the bedroom to cry until the pain subsided.

When Elder Christofferson’s father realized what was happening, he secretly went without lunches for almost a year to save enough money to buy a machine that made ironing easier. Out of his love for his wife, he set an example of nurturing within families for his boys. Of this tender interaction, Elder Christofferson said, “I was not aware of my father’s sacrifice and act of love for my mother at the time, but now that I know, I say to myself, ‘There is a man.’”<sup>4</sup>

# APRIL 2016 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 2016 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.*



## A Remission of Our Sins

“The ordinances of baptism by immersion, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the sacrament are not isolated and discrete events; rather, they are elements in an interrelated and additive pattern of redemptive progress. Each successive ordinance elevates and enlarges our spiritual purpose, desire, and performance. The Father’s plan, the Savior’s Atonement, and the ordinances of the gospel provide the grace we need to press forward and progress line upon line and precept upon precept toward our eternal destiny.”

**Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,”** *Ensign, May 2016, 62.*

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



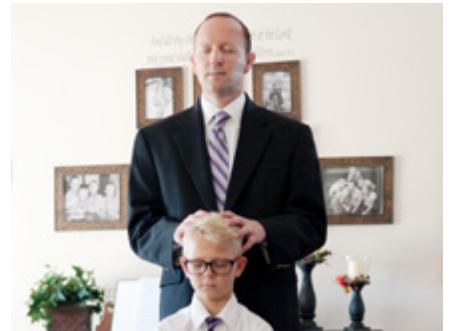
## Eternity

“My message tonight is an attempt to describe . . . what we must do to be a part of the plan of happiness our Heavenly Father has prepared for us. Before we were born, we lived in a family with our exalted and eternal Heavenly Father. He ordained a plan that enables us to advance and progress to become like Him. He did it out of love for us. The purpose of the plan was to allow us the privilege of living forever as our Heavenly Father lives. This gospel plan offered us a life of mortality in which we would be tested. A promise was given that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, if we obeyed the laws and priesthood ordinances of the gospel, we would have eternal life, the greatest of all His gifts.”

**President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Eternal Families,”** *Ensign, May 2016, 81.*

## DRAWING PARALLELS

# Divine Roles of Men



**M**ultiple speakers sometimes address the same gospel topic. Here is what three speakers said about the divine roles of men:

- Husband: “Treat your wife . . . the way Heavenly Father has treated you.” —Henry B. Eyring, “Eternal Families,” 83.
- Priesthood holder: “Live up to [your] privileges as bearers of the priesthood. In a coming day, *only* those men who have taken their priesthood seriously, by *diligently* seeking to be taught by the Lord Himself, will be able to bless, guide, protect, strengthen, and heal others.” —Russell M. Nelson, “The Price of Priesthood Power,” 67–68.
- Father: “The role of father is of divine origin, beginning with a Father in Heaven and, in this mortal sphere, with Father Adam. . . .  
“ . . . Fatherhood requires sacrifice. . . .

“Loving the mother of his children—and showing that love—are two of the best things a father can do for his children. This reaffirms and strengthens the marriage that is the foundation of their family life and security.”

—D. Todd Christofferson, “Fathers,” 94, 95.

## Great Stories from Conference

What catches our attention better than a story? The following stories are among the many shared at conference:

- What is the connection between magnolia blossoms and how love makes space for others in our lives? —See Neill F. Marriott, “What Shall We Do?” 10.
- Why did Elder Hales stay after stake conference to shake hands with everyone? —See Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105.
- By age 11, Yvette Buggingo was a refugee whose father had been killed and whose three brothers were missing. How did her story end? —See Linda K. Burton, “I Was a Stranger,” 13.
- What can these stories of Latter-day Saint children from nonmember homes inspire us to do? —See Neil L. Andersen, “Whoso Receiveth Them, Receiveth Me,” 49.

“Obedience is the lifeblood of faith.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,  
Second Counselor in the First Presidency,  
“He Will Place You on His Shoulders and Carry You Home,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 103.

To read, watch, or listen to general conference addresses, visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org).

# WE BELIEVE IN KEEPING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments are found in the Old Testament (see Exodus 20:1–17), but Latter-day Saints know that those commandments apply in all ages, not just in Old Testament times. Abinadi taught the Ten Commandments in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 12:33–36; 13:13–24), and the Lord revealed them again to the Prophet Joseph Smith for our day (see D&C 42:18–29; 59:5–13).

Although people in many societies today disregard these commandments, we believe they are still in effect. President Thomas S. Monson explained:

“Behaviors which once were considered inappropriate and immoral are now not only tolerated but also viewed by ever so many as acceptable. . . .

“Although the world has changed, the laws of God remain constant. They have not changed; they will not change. The Ten Commandments are just that—commandments. They are *not* suggestions. They are every bit as requisite today as they were when God gave them to the children of Israel.”<sup>1</sup>

We do not speak ill of others for not following the commandments. Rather, we look at our own lives and

determine how well we live by the divine instruction we’ve been given.

The Ten Commandments represent basic standards of behavior that can be divided into two groups: how we treat God and how we treat others. To help us keep God at the center of our lives, He commands us to worship no other gods, to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to avoid blasphemy and idolatry. To help us love God’s children, He commands us to honor our parents and to not steal, kill, lie, covet, or commit adultery.

Because of God’s continued revelations to His prophets, we have learned more about what He expects of us, but the Ten Commandments remain a good place to start in our quest to be obedient. “[God’s] commandments are a manifestation of His love for us and obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him.”<sup>2</sup> ■

*“Which is the great commandment in the law?” See the Savior’s response in Matthew 22:37–40.*

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Stand in Holy Places,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 82, 83.
2. Carole M. Stephens, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 120.

## COMMANDMENTS ARE FOR OUR HAPPINESS



“God’s commandments are not given to frustrate us or to become obstacles to our happiness. Just the opposite is true. He who created us

and who loves us perfectly knows just how we need to live our lives in order to obtain the greatest happiness possible. . . .

“Our Heavenly Father loves us enough to say: Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; and so on. We know the commandments. He understands that when we keep the commandments, our lives will be happier, more fulfilling, and less complicated.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 83.

Here are some examples of living the commandments today:

*"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). While most people are not tempted today to worship a golden calf, we should not worship "idols" such as prestige or material possessions (see 2 Nephi 9:30).*



*"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Keeping the Sabbath day holy can help us learn to have an eye "single to [God's] glory" (D&C 88:67).*

*"Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). This can include honoring our ancestors, our parents, and our heavenly parents.*



*"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Having pure thoughts helps us keep this commandment (see D&C 42:23).*



*"Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Coveting leads to, among other things, dissatisfaction and unhappiness.*

# TEN REASONS I LOVE THE BOOK OF MORMON

By David Fullmer

*As a second witness of Jesus Christ, this remarkable book teaches concepts and doctrines not found anywhere else.*

I love the Book of Mormon. In general, I love it for the power it has in bringing its readers “nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.” Perhaps that is why the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to it as the “keystone of our religion” and “the most correct of any book on earth.”<sup>1</sup>

But I love the book for specific reasons too. Here are 10 of the many reasons:

The Book of Mormon . . .

1. Was recorded in one period of history for use by readers in another—ours. See Mormon 8:16, 34–35.
2. Clearly describes Lucifer’s methods for spreading mayhem in the last days. See 2 Nephi 28:3–29.
3. Declares that human weakness is an opportunity to be made strong, with humility in coming unto Christ as the requirement. See Ether 12:27.
4. Defines charity as the pure love of Christ and a divine gift we can take specific steps to obtain. See Moroni 7:43–48.

5. Clarifies the need for opposition in all things. See 2 Nephi 2:11–13.
6. Delineates clearly under which circumstances mercy can satisfy the demands of justice. See Alma 34:11–30.
7. Records *two* groups of people being given specific instructions to study the words of Isaiah, one of which is us. See 2 Nephi 25:4–8; Mormon 8:23.



8. Serves as a companion witness with the Bible of God’s relationship with humankind, as foretold by an Old Testament prophecy. See Ezekiel 37:15–20; 2 Nephi 28:29; 29:3–8.
9. Contains a promise that if we read and pray about it with a sincere heart, having faith in Christ, the Lord will reveal to us that it is His word. See Moroni 10:4–5.
10. Teaches that the Savior’s suffering gave Him perfect empathy for our trials and the ability to succor us as we struggle with them. See Alma 7:11–13.

Above all, I love the Book of Mormon for its clear testimony that Jesus is the Christ. I love it for its promise that the Lord will eventually redeem all the house of Israel as they make and keep sacred covenants with Him. The Book of Mormon is a modern-day miracle—a gift of love to us from God Himself. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTE

1. Joseph Smith, in introduction to the Book of Mormon.

# A FAR GREATER GIFT

By Chris Deaver

*Brother Reynolds didn't just teach us—he loved us.*

During my last year in Primary we got a new teacher: Brother Reynolds. He had gray hair and wrinkles, and he shared stories about the Depression and his service in the U.S. military during World War II. At first I didn't relate to his stories—they were boring and happened so long ago.

One time my friends and I were misbehaving in class. Brother Reynolds took me aside and spoke directly to me. He simply asked me to do better and told me he wanted the best for me. Before then, my friends and I hadn't been paying much attention. But we soon learned something special about Brother Reynolds—he cared deeply about us, and his only agenda was to love us.

Brother Reynolds constantly shared his testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ. He had a light in his eyes as he taught us about the power of living a Christ-centered life. His stories became real adventures that sparked our imaginations and made us want to serve the Lord.

I still remember a lesson he taught about the Prophet Joseph Smith and how he testified that Joseph was once a young boy like us. With tears in his eyes, he told us that the Lord had high

expectations for us, just as He had had for Joseph. Brother Reynolds said we would each do great things in our lives, even change the world, if we would be like Joseph and stay close to the Savior.

A few years later when my friends and I were in high school, we learned that Brother Reynolds needed his apricot trees trimmed. We gladly trimmed the trees, which took several hours of climbing on ladders and cutting away. It was hard work, but we knew it would matter to Brother Reynolds.

That year we also learned that Brother Reynolds needed a new

set of scriptures. His were old, dog-eared, and tearing at the seams. We pooled our money and bought him a beautiful leather quad with his name engraved on it. We gave it to him at our ward Christmas party. I'll never forget the way his face glowed and his eyes twinkled with tears and excitement from seeing us boys do something that meant so much to him.

After I went to college some years later, I found out that Brother Reynolds had passed away. I went to visit his wife and family to share my deep respect and appreciation for him. When I saw all his happy children and grandchildren, I realized how blessed I had been to know this great man.

"He loved you boys," Sister Reynolds said through tears and with a smile. "He *really* loved you."

In a world where it's difficult to focus on the right things, Brother Reynolds showed us that our relationship with Heavenly Father and His Son matters most. We may have trimmed Brother Reynolds's trees and given him a new set of scriptures, but he gave us a far greater gift: an abiding love for the Savior, Jesus Christ. ■

*The author lives in California, USA.*



# NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit [news.lds.org](http://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, 2016. All members of Area Presidencies are General Authority Seventies.

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.

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).

In a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1835, the Lord revealed, among other things, “the order of the Seventy, that they should have seven presidents to preside over them, chosen out of the number of the seventy” (D&C 107:93). ■

Presidency of the Seventy						
						
L. Whitney Clayton Assists in all areas	Donald L. Hallstrom North America Northwest North America West	Richard J. Maynes North America Southeast	Craig C. Christensen Utah North Utah Salt Lake City Utah South	Ulisses Soares Idaho North America Central	Lynn G. Robbins North America Southwest	Gerrit W. Gong North America Northeast

Africa Southeast			Africa West			Asia		
								
Stanley G. Ellis First Counselor	Kevin S. Hamilton President	S. Mark Palmer Second Counselor	Marcus B. Nash First Counselor	Terence M. Vinson President	Vern P. Stanfill Second Counselor	Chi Hong (Sam) Wong First Counselor	Randy D. Funk President	David F. Evans Second Counselor



## Asia North



Kazuhiko  
Yamashita  
**First  
Counselor**



Scott D.  
Whiting  
**President**



Yoon Hwan  
Choi  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Brazil



Marcos A.  
Aidukaitis  
**First  
Counselor**

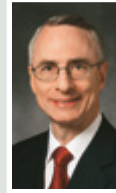


Claudio R. M.  
Costa  
**President**



W. Mark  
Bassett  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Caribbean



Claudio D.  
Zivic  
**First  
Counselor**



Walter F.  
González  
**President**



Hugo E.  
Martínez  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Central America



Adrián  
Ochoa  
**First  
Counselor**



Kevin R.  
Duncan  
**President**



Jose L.  
Alonso  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Europe



Paul V.  
Johnson  
**First  
Counselor**



Patrick  
Kearon  
**President**



Gary B.  
Sabin  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Europe East



James B.  
Martino  
**First  
Counselor**



Bruce D.  
Porter  
**President**



Larry S.  
Kacher  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Mexico



Arnulfo  
Valenzuela  
**First  
Counselor**



Paul B.  
Pieper  
**President**



Rafael E.  
Pino  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Middle East/Africa North



Larry R.  
Lawrence



Wilford W.  
Andersen

**Administered from Church  
headquarters**

## Pacific



S. Gifford  
Nielsen  
**First  
Counselor**



O. Vincent  
Haleck  
**President**



Craig A.  
Cardon  
**Second  
Counselor**

## Philippines



Allen D.  
Haynie  
**First  
Counselor**



Shayne M.  
Bowen  
**President**



Evan A.  
Schmutz  
**Second  
Counselor**

## South America Northwest



Lawrence E.  
Corbridge  
**First  
Counselor**



Carlos A.  
Godoy  
**President**



Hugo  
Montoya  
**Second  
Counselor**

## South America South



Allan F.  
Packer  
**First  
Counselor**



José A.  
Teixeira  
**President**



Mark A.  
Bragg  
**Second  
Counselor**



By Elder L. Whitney Clayton

Senior President of the Seventy

# Rooted in

One of the most troubling scenes in all scripture is recorded in the book of John. It occurred after the Savior had suffered incomprehensible agony for our sins and mortal weaknesses in the Garden of Gethsemane (see D&C 19:15–18).

This scene also followed His betrayal and arrest and happened after the night of indignities and physical abuse He suffered at the hands of the leaders of the Jews. It came after He was brutally scourged by Roman soldiers acting under the direction of Pontius Pilate. It occurred after the crown of thorns was pressed onto His head.

Pilate concluded that Jesus had done nothing that merited crucifixion. He ordered that Jesus be scourged, a form of extreme but normally not-fatal physical punishment. Perhaps Pilate hoped that by thus torturing

and humiliating the Savior, he would persuade the leaders of the Jews that Jesus had been taught a terribly painful lesson and been made a public example. Perhaps he hoped to awaken some sense of mercy in them. Thus, following the scourging, Pilate ordered that Jesus be brought into public view.

### “Behold the Man!”

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

“When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him” (John 19:5–6).

As critically important as the rest of the story is, I stop with Pilate’s words: “Behold the man!”

In this article and the next, Elder Clayton and his wife, Kathy, testify of the Savior and of His ability to help God’s children reach their eternal potential.

# Christ



Pilate's plea was profoundly ironic. Jesus's physical appearance at that moment was marred, but there never had been until then, and has not been since, any man or woman who more richly deserved to be "beheld." His life was perfect. He was without peer. No one had ever lived as He did. No one ever would. He possessed every virtue in its consummate form.

The Savior had every power of self-control. His emotions and feelings were perfect, as were His thoughts. His understanding was unlimited. He alone was truly worthy of being beheld—from every perspective—and of being examined, measured, and worshipped. No view into His mind, heart, and feelings would or could

possibly disappoint. His appearance did not reflect it then, but Jesus was the embodiment of the abundant life.

So it was not His appearance at that moment of suffering that we should remember first and foremost (see Isaiah 53:2). It was what He was inside that afflicted physical tabernacle that meant absolutely everything for all of us. What He was made possible what He did. It was the magnificence of what He was that invites our attention.

What we should see as we "behold the man" is His crescendoing triumph over the forces of evil, even though it did not then appear to be a victory at all. It was His perfect calm in the center of the most violent storm any human would ever suffer. Every

diabolical device the enemy ever invented had been or soon would be unleashed against Him. He overcame and conquered them all. He stood before Pilate in perfect peace and composure.

His dominion over the physical elements of the world and the conditions of mankind was demonstrated beyond doubt. He commanded evil spirits. He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He restored the dead to life, including children He returned to their parents. He perceived the thoughts and feelings of everyone. He forgave sins and cleansed lepers. He carried the burden of the sins, pains, illnesses, and failings of all humanity the night



before the scene with Pilate. Ironically, He even suffered for the sins of those who at that very moment were mistreating Him.

“Behold the man” indeed. He is the Son of the living God. He is the exemplar of life, the One sent to show the way and to be the Way. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6) for all of us. With those three words, “behold the man,” Pilate unknowingly and unintentionally expressed the simple formula for achieving the highest purposes of life.

When Pilate asked the Jews to behold the Savior, he pointed them and us toward the One, the only one, who can make our lives abundant and our “salvation perfect.”<sup>1</sup> Thus the commandment “Look to God and live” (Alma 37:47).

What we should remember when we behold Him is that because of Him, and all He did and all He was and is, we too can triumph. We also can overcome. We can live abundantly in the midst of trials. If we choose to “behold” Him and accept and apply His saving gospel, He will save us. He will rescue us from the effects of our own fallen natures and foibles, and He will save us from sin, from spiritual mediocrity, and from ultimate, eternal failure. He will purge, refine, beautify, and eventually even perfect us. He will give us joy and peace. He is the key to abundant life.

### **A Sermon of Seedlings**

My wife, Kathy, and I live on a hillside. A species of trees—the scrub oak—grows there. Unlike large and mighty oak trees, scrub oak trees never get big, but they are hardy and beautiful.

A few years ago we placed a large flowerpot on the walkway that leads to the front door of our home. We planted colorful flowers in the pot, which sits under the branches of a scrub oak tree. When the season changed and fall began, the scrub oak tree began to drop its seeds, or acorns, and a few fell into the flowerpot.

One spring day I noticed that a few seedlings had sprouted. We didn’t want anything but flowers in the pot, so I started to pull the seedlings out of the potting soil. To my surprise, the roots were three or four times longer than the visible part of the seedlings above the surface of the soil.

In Utah, USA, the summers are hot, with little rainfall, and the winters are cold, with wind and snow. But the deep roots of the scrub oak seedlings quickly get down through the surface soils. This allows more exposed root to draw moisture and nutrients from the soil. The deep roots also firmly anchor the trees to hold them erect and steadfast in the wind, beginning when they are young. Deep roots make survival easier for the scrub oak.

As the seedlings eventually grow to their full height, their roots continue to nourish, protect, and sustain them.

We can take a lesson from the scrub oak. We all have experiences that are like hot summers and cold winters. We have easy times and hard times, successes and failures, times of health and sickness, periods of happiness and moments of sorrow. Life isn’t static. It isn’t smooth.

Life is similar in other regards as well. We are all surrounded by the culture and traditions of our native communities and countries. Some of those influences are good, and some are bad. Some will lift us, and others will diminish and degrade us. Our homes may be blessed by the light of the gospel or be blighted by failure to keep the commandments of God. The examples of friends may be terrific or terrible. None of us knows where life will take us. We can’t fully predict our future health or wealth. We can’t foretell the influence of war or weather. Variable circumstances beyond our control press challenges on all of us.

But unlike trees, we can choose to deliberately develop the spiritual root structure for our lives. We decide where to set our roots down and how deeply to sink them into the soil. Daily decisions make tiny, almost imperceptible differences in the roots of our faith, the effect of which becomes foundational.

## Rooted in the Savior

Because we don't know when or how our own challenges will come, or how long our personal seasons of winter or summer will last, we should set down our roots as deeply as we can into the only true source of nourishment for our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants our lives to be abundant. He invites us to come unto Him. He said, "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

We build strength of soul to weather the storms of our lives by learning of Him. We learn by study and by prayer. We learn by watching righteous examples. We learn as we serve others in order to serve Him (see Matthew 25:40). We learn as we seek to emulate Him in any way we can.

Listening means heeding and hearkening, not just hearing. We listen to Him in private scripture study. We listen in sacrament meeting and in the temple. We hear Him in the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). We listen to Him in the voice of living prophets and apostles.

Careful listening reminds us that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We strengthen our roots with incremental, one-step-at-a-time growth. As we listen, we follow the path He

walked. He is the path that leads to the abundant life, and He is the light that illuminates it (see John 8:12).

## Keep the Commandments

There is no secret or surprise about what we can and should do to develop our roots: we keep the commandments of God. Our ability to do His will grows as we do His will. It becomes easier because we grow in conviction and faith. When we faithfully persist in applying the fundamentals of the gospel in our lives, the Lord blesses us with increased inner strength.

Worthy, thoughtful worship makes an important contribution to the depth of our spiritual roots. Reverently attending sacrament meeting and partaking of the sacrament with real intent make the Sabbath day more than just another Sunday. We cannot truly sink our roots deep unless we "always remember him" (D&C 20:77, 79). When we prepare ourselves before our meetings, the Sabbath becomes a richer experience for us. As we contemplate our need for forgiveness and the blessing of always having His Spirit to be with us, we begin to see the chapel as a sanctuary and the sacrament as a time of sanctification.

For that reason, there are some things we should always take with us when we go to church. Foremost among these are a broken heart

and a contrite spirit. We should go eager to seek and feel the blessings of the Savior's Atonement. Similarly, we should always leave some things at home. Thoughts of sports, work, entertainment, and shopping ought to be left locked in a closet inside our homes to be opened on any day other than the Sabbath day. Genuine worship promotes real conversion. It helps us send the roots of our faith down deep, where we find a spiritual reservoir, which "shall be in [us] a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

Paul wrote:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught" (Colossians 2:6-7).

If we don't experience personal storms and drought, our roots never have the chance to become strong. Ironically, smooth sailing is its own test—and a difficult one. The absence of problems can soften us if we aren't careful. We may "not watch [ourselves], and [our] thoughts, and [our] words, and [our] deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith" (Mosiah 4:30) without a trial that bends our knees and works on our hearts.

Life has a way of bringing distress to all of us even when we are doing

our best. Unless we make terrible choices, which always results in tragedy, we usually don't choose when or how the problems of life will knock on our doors. But we surely do decide each day how we will prepare for them. Thus the reminder from Joshua: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

Here's another reminder:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).

We shouldn't be surprised when we suffer a failure of faith if we walk on the margins of the strait and narrow path. What we do and don't do really matters because actions have consequences, as does inaction. When we become inattentive to the small, daily, repetitive but essential actions of belief, we weaken our roots. Over time we slowly draw away from God.

Thus, the way we speak to each other, the books and articles we read, the television shows and movies we watch, the things we don't read and would never watch, and the jokes we choose not to listen to or repeat all reflect where we are on the strait and narrow path—in

the center or on the edges. We can't claim to be nourishing our roots if the things we do and don't do aren't calculated to make us better Saints. Safety is found only in the center of the strait and narrow path.

### **The Path to Peace**

There is no better pattern of life anywhere, no surer way to find peace and the pathway forward, than by following the Lord Jesus Christ. His is the only name given under heaven with the power to make our lives more heavenly (see 2 Nephi 31:21; Moses 6:52). There is no one else we can "behold" who has the saving, renewing, transformative power the Savior does.



Jude's words capture the inevitable emptiness of life that eventually envelops those who choose anyone or anything other than the Savior: "Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (Jude 1:12).

Our souls should be so deeply rooted in Christ that we will be able to endure any challenge, triumph over any affliction, withstand any attack on our faith, and become like oak trees—firm, immovable, and steadfast. That kind of rootedness transcends time and outlasts every enemy, even the most subtle, invisible, and insidious ones.

We learn from Helaman how the promise of rock-like strength depends on our building our lives on the Redeemer, "a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12). Isaiah captured in just a few words the essence of what it means to be rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ and to bring to fruitage in our souls something of the attributes of the Savior. He wrote, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isaiah 58:11).

The Savior Jesus Christ is the exemplar of every virtue. He was

the one perfect man ever to live. He atoned for our sins. Through His Atonement we can become women and men of Christ. We can be cleansed, changed, healed, and refined. Our souls can become things of beauty.

May we "behold the man" more completely. May we emulate Him more worshipfully. May we follow Him more eagerly. May we sink our roots deeper in the soil of salvation until we rest on Him, the Rock of our Redeemer. May we increasingly enjoy the blessing of the abundant life He offers. ■

**NOTE**

1. See "O God, the Eternal Father," *Hymns*, no. 175.





# YOU ARE ROYALTY

By Kathy Kipp Clayton

*Rise to the level of your eternal stature.*

**W**hile our family was in Argentina on assignment from the Church, our son and I often visited sites of interest in our free time. Among them was a zoo unlike any zoo we had seen before.

Rather than wander past cages of sleepy animals, visitors were invited to enter the pens and pet the animals. Following the trainer, we made our way into the enclosure prepared for the large lions and petted them while they seemed to ignore us.

I asked the trainers how they had convinced those giant beasts to not eat us. They called my attention to several little dogs that likewise inhabited the pens. When the lions were small, those yappy dogs chased the lions mercilessly and nipped at their heels. The lion cubs became accustomed to cowering in the corner, afraid of the dogs.

When the lions grew, they continued to cower in fear. With the flick of a paw, they could easily have sent those dogs flying, but the lions didn't see themselves as they really were. They were unaware of their regal identity and potential.

We all face pesky little dogs that steal our confidence and keep us cowering in figurative corners. I name three.

## Lack of Confidence

Many of us characterize our performance more by our failures than by our successes. If we get 80 questions right out of 100, we sadly admit that we missed 20 questions rather than proudly note that we got 80 correct. Lack of confidence in our potential and in ourselves can blind us to our true worth and capacity.

## Incomplete Knowledge

Nephi saw a vision of the mother of the Savior, but when asked if he understood the condescension of God, he admitted he didn't know the meaning of all things. But first he asserted what he did know: "[God] loveth his children." (See 1 Nephi 11:12–17.) That's the most essential thing to know. It keeps us from allowing pesky dogs of incomplete knowledge to compromise our certainty of the truthfulness of the Church and of our relationship with God and His unfailing and empowering love for us.

## Carelessness or Inattention

Bad choices or the neglect of good ones cloud our vision of reality. There was a symbolic reason the children of Israel needed to gather manna daily (see Exodus 16:4). The daily obligation to gather food helped them to remember God. Today, scripture reading, praying, attending church, and serving each other are our daily manna as children of God to help us remember the Lord.

We have God's spiritual DNA coursing through our veins. We are His sons and daughters and His heirs. Swat away any deceiving messages, beliefs, or habits that cause you to cower in the corners of your life. Don't let them nip at your heels and make you feel fearful or hurt. Rise to the level of your eternal stature. You are royalty. ■

*From the Church Educational System addresses "Like a Watered Garden" and "A Regal Identity," delivered in New York, USA, on September 13, 2015.*



YOUNG ADULTS

Staying on  
Course  
to the

# TEMPLE



By Mindy Anne Selu

Church Magazines

It was a sunny Saturday morning in June. I was running a half marathon in Provo, Utah, USA. After getting separated from my running buddy, who'd been keeping our pace for the first nine miles or so, I could tell I was slowing down. I was on the home stretch but still had about four miles to go, and I didn't really know if I could make it the rest of the way. I was quickly losing steam around mile 10 after what I hoped would be the last hill of the course.

I grabbed my phone to stop the music streaming through my headphones and call my moral support—my then-boyfriend, Ben—for a pep talk. “Just focus on your breathing,” he said. “Lean forward, chest up.” I did as he said, feeling some momentum as I leaned into my run. “And keep your eyes straight ahead.” I looked up. Straight ahead of me—just about three miles away—was the new Provo City Center Temple. I could see its spire and the angel Moroni perched atop.

“I can see the temple!” I exclaimed. “Okay, keep going, then,” Ben

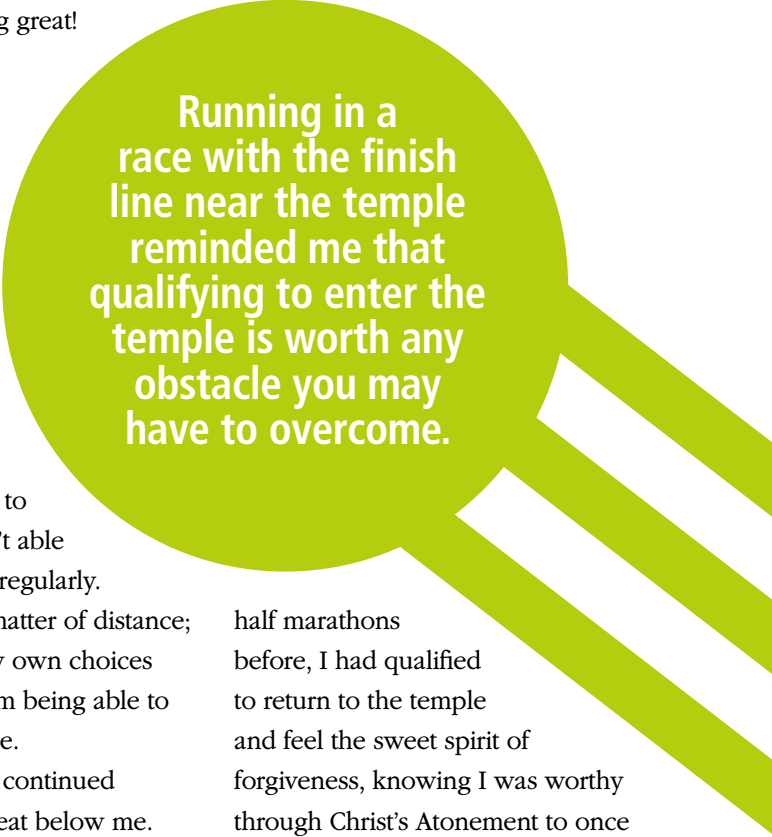
replied. “You’re doing great! Finish strong!”

### The Seemingly Insurmountable

We hung up and I continued running. I looked again at the temple ahead of me, thoughts rolling around in my head. I thought back to the times that I wasn't able to attend the temple regularly. Sometimes it was a matter of distance; other times it was my own choices that had kept me from being able to enter the Lord's house.

My feet somehow continued pounding a steady beat below me.

I remembered how difficult it had seemed to me to be worthy to return to the temple. The changes I'd needed to make in my life had seemed insurmountable, just like finishing the race seemed to me right then. But I had been successful. Just as I'd finished



Running in a race with the finish line near the temple reminded me that qualifying to enter the temple is worth any obstacle you may have to overcome.

half marathons before, I had qualified to return to the temple and feel the sweet spirit of forgiveness, knowing I was worthy through Christ's Atonement to once more partake of temple blessings.

I thought about being in the temple, where we learn about the Father's plan for us and are symbolically led into His presence. It's the closest place to heaven on earth. Being qualified to enter there is

the best way to know that we are “prepare[d] to meet God” (Alma 34:32).

And yet, for some who are not currently living up to temple standards, it can seem like an uphill battle to qualify or even desire to enter the temple—a feat of marathon-size proportions. The adversary doesn’t want us to make the changes necessary in order to be worthy to attend the temple. He doesn’t want us to even *want* to attend.

### Closer Than It Seems

A fellow runner lagged beside me, slowing to a walk. “We’re almost there!” I called out. She smiled painfully back, perhaps not appreciating my attempt to be encouraging.

I thought of those who had encouraged me in returning to the temple. The support of priesthood leaders had been

vital to my progression and reaching my goals. Through their eyes I had been able to see myself as a daughter of a very loving Heavenly Father who believed in me and wanted to bless me.

The running app on my phone told me I had passed mile 12. Only a little over a mile left to go! But the mile marker on the course was nowhere to be seen. My legs were exhausted, my feet were hurting, and my body just felt weak. Again I looked ahead to the temple and kept moving forward.

Finally, several blocks later, mile marker 12 appeared on the side of the road. Why had it been placed in the wrong spot? I wondered. I felt sorry for those runners who might have been wondering why mile 11 seemed so long. And then I thought of how the closer we come to achieving our goal of being worthy to attend the temple, the farther away Satan can make that goal seem. He wants us to feel that we are farther away than we are, that we’re not making as much progress as we really are.

### There Is Rest

The finish line was so close. Just beyond it, the temple. I kicked

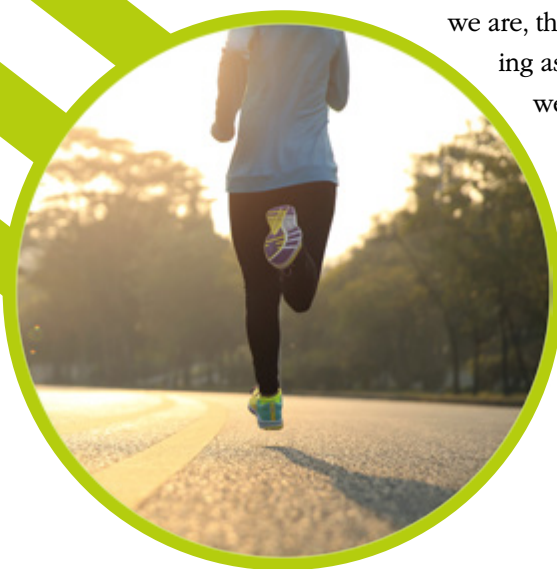
it up a notch, sprinting to the finish line, wanting only to finish and be able to rest. Tears came to my eyes as I thought about my regular temple attendance and the opportunity I would have the following week to attend the temple. As I thought about the knowledge and blessings and rest that awaited me there, the words of President Thomas S. Monson came to my mind: “There is rest for our souls and a respite from the cares of our lives [inside the temple].”<sup>1</sup>

Satan, the enemy of our souls and of our happiness, wants us to believe that if we have sinned, the path to the temple is difficult. He wants us to believe that we can’t change, can’t repent, can’t qualify to enter the house of the Lord. He will do anything to make us believe that it is impossible. But it’s not.

As I crossed the finish line and looked up at the temple, I thought back on my path to the temple—the literal one that I struggled with that morning, as well as the spiritual one I’d taken in the past—and realized that qualifying to enter the temple was and is worth every obstacle I had to overcome. And despite what the adversary would have us think, it’s always possible, as long as we keep our eyes on the temple. ■

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, “Blessings of the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 91.





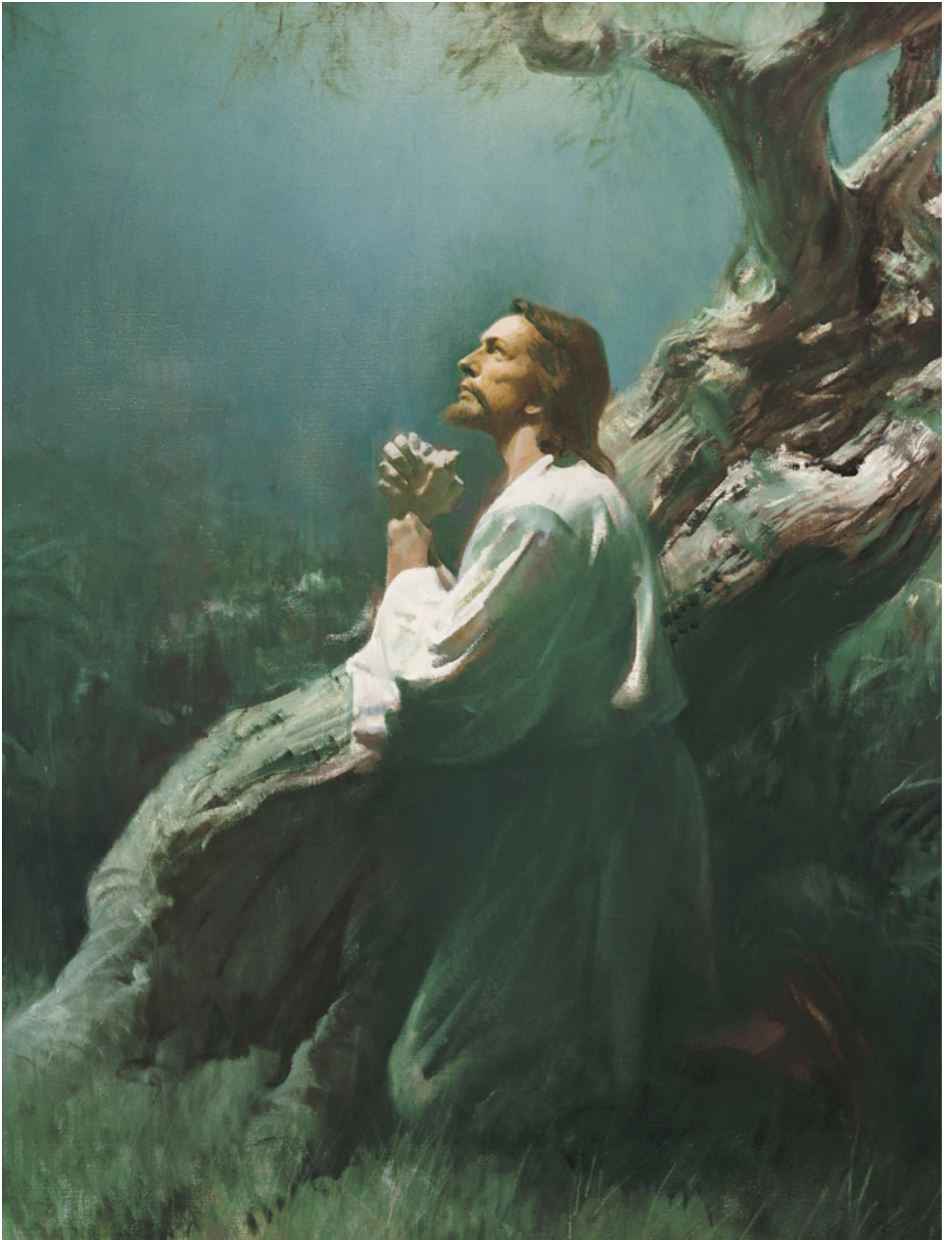
## **MAKE CHANGES TO SEE YOURSELF IN THE TEMPLE**

“It is our great desire that members of the Church will live to be worthy of a temple recommend. Please don’t see the temple as some distant and perhaps unachievable goal. Working with their bishop, most members can achieve all righteous requirements in a relatively short period of time if they have a determination to qualify and fully repent of transgressions. This includes being willing to forgive ourselves and not focus on our imperfections or sins as disqualifying us from ever entering a sacred temple.

“The Savior’s Atonement was accomplished for all of God’s children. His redeeming sacrifice satisfies the demands of justice for all those who truly repent. . . .

“Brothers and sisters, I pray that each of us will honor the Savior and make any necessary changes to see ourselves in His sacred temples. In doing so, we can accomplish His holy purposes and prepare ourselves and our families for all the blessings the Lord and His Church can bestow in this life and eternity.”

**Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “See Yourself in the Temple,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 98–99.**



DETAIL FROM CHRIST IN GETHESEMAINE, BY HARRY ANDERSON

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



# Accepting the Lord's Will and Timing

*Strong faith in the Savior is submissively accepting of His will and timing in our lives—even if the outcome is not what we hoped for or wanted.*

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) was a beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. He served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for 23 years, from 1981 to 2004. The spiritual power of his teachings and his example of faithful discipleship blessed and continue to bless in marvelous ways the members of the Savior's restored Church and the people of the world.

In October 1997, Sister Bednar and I hosted Elder and Sister Maxwell at Brigham Young University–Idaho (then Ricks College). Elder Maxwell was to speak to the students, staff, and faculty in a devotional assembly.

Earlier in that same year, Elder Maxwell underwent 46 days and nights of debilitating chemotherapy for leukemia. His rehabilitation and continued therapy progressed positively through the spring and summer months, but Elder Maxwell's physical strength and stamina were nonetheless limited when he traveled to Rexburg. After greeting Elder and Sister Maxwell at the airport, Susan and I drove them to our home for rest and a light lunch before the devotional.

I asked Elder Maxwell what lessons he had learned through his illness. I will remember always the precise and penetrating answer he gave. "Dave," he said, "I have learned that not shrinking is more important than surviving."



*My faith was strengthened as I witnessed this couple allowing their strong and understandable desires for healing to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).*

His response to my inquiry was a principle with which he had gained extensive personal experience during his chemotherapy. In January 1997, on the day he was scheduled to begin his first round of treatment, Elder Maxwell looked at his wife, reached for her hand, breathed a deep sigh, and said, “I just don’t want to shrink.”

In his October 1997 general conference message, Elder Maxwell taught with great authenticity: “As we confront our own . . . trials and tribulations, we too can plead with the Father, just as Jesus did, that we ‘might not . . . shrink’—meaning to retreat or to recoil (D&C 19:18). Not shrinking is much more important than surviving! Moreover, partaking of a bitter cup without becoming bitter is likewise part of the emulation of Jesus.”<sup>1</sup>

Scriptures concerning the Savior’s suffering as He offered the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice became even more poignant and meaningful to me.

“For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;

“But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;

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

“Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men” (D&C 19:16–19).

The Savior did not shrink in Gethsemane or on Golgotha.

Elder Maxwell also did not shrink. This mighty Apostle pressed forward steadfastly and was blessed with additional time in mortality to love, to serve, to teach, and to testify. Those concluding years of his life were an emphatic exclamation point to his example of devoted discipleship—through both his words and his deeds.

I believe most of us likely would expect a man with the spiritual capacity, experience, and stature of Elder Maxwell to face serious illness and death with an understanding of God’s plan of happiness, with assurance and grace, and with dignity. But I testify that such blessings are not reserved exclusively for General Authorities or for a select few members of the Church.

Since my call to the Quorum of the Twelve, my assignments and travels have enabled me to become acquainted with



faithful, courageous, and valiant Latter-day Saints all over the world. I want to tell you about one young man and one young woman who have blessed my life and with whom I have learned spiritually vital lessons about not shrinking and about allowing our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

The account is true and the characters are real. I will not, however, use the actual names of the individuals who are involved. I use with permission selected statements from their personal journals.

### **“Not My Will, but Thine, Be Done”**

John is a worthy priesthood holder and served faithfully as a full-time missionary. After returning home from his mission, he dated and married a righteous and wonderful young woman, Heather. John was 23 and Heather was 20 on the day they were sealed together for time and for all eternity in the house of the Lord.

Approximately three weeks after their temple marriage, John was diagnosed with bone cancer. Because cancer nodules also were discovered in his lungs, the prognosis was not good.

John recorded in his journal: “This was the scariest day of my life. Not only because I was told I had cancer, but also because I was newly married and somehow felt that I had failed as a husband. I was the provider and protector of our new family, and now—three weeks into that role—I felt like I had failed.”

Heather noted: “This was devastating news, and I remember how greatly it changed our perspectives. I was in a hospital waiting room writing wedding thank-you notes as we anticipated the results of John’s tests. But after learning about John’s cancer, Crock-Pots and cookware did not seem so important anymore. This was the worst day of my life, but I remember going to bed that night with gratitude for our temple sealing. Though the doctors had given John

only a 30 percent chance of survival, I knew that if we remained faithful I had a 100 percent chance to be with him forever.”

Approximately one month later John began chemotherapy. He described his experience: “The treatments caused me to be sicker than I had ever been in my life. I lost my hair, dropped 41 pounds, and my body felt like it was falling apart. The chemotherapy also affected me emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Life was a roller coaster during the months of chemo with highs, lows, and everything in between. But through it all, Heather and I maintained the faith that God would heal me. We just knew it.”

Heather chronicled her thoughts and feelings: “I could not stand to let John spend the night alone in the hospital, so I would sleep every night on the small couch in his room. We had lots of friends and family visit during the day, but the nights were the hardest. I would stare at the ceiling and wonder what Heavenly Father had planned for us. Sometimes my mind would wander into dark places, and my fear of losing John would almost overtake me. But I knew these thoughts were not from Heavenly Father. My prayers for comfort became more frequent, and the Lord gave me the strength to keep going.”

Three months later, John underwent a surgical procedure to remove a large tumor in his leg. Two days following the operation, I visited John and Heather in the hospital. We talked about the first time I met John in the mission field, about their marriage, about the cancer, and about the eternally important lessons we learn through the trials of mortality. As we concluded our time together, John asked if I would give him a priesthood blessing. I responded that I gladly would give such a blessing, but I first needed to ask some questions.

I then posed questions I had not planned to ask and had never previously considered: “John, do you have the faith not to be healed? If it is the will of our Heavenly Father that you are transferred by death in your youth to

*One of the greatest blessings of mortality is to not shrink and to allow our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father.”*



***My heart swelled with appreciation and admiration as I witnessed this young couple confront the most demanding of all spiritual struggles—the submissive surrender of their wills to God’s will.***

the spirit world to continue your ministry, do you have the faith to submit to His will and not be healed?”

Frequently in the scriptures, the Savior or His servants exercised the spiritual gift of healing (see 1 Corinthians 12:9; D&C 35:9; 46:20) and perceived that an individual had the faith to be healed (see Acts 14:9; 3 Nephi 17:8; D&C 46:19). But as John and Heather and I counseled together and wrestled with these questions, we increasingly understood that if God’s will were for this good young man to be healed, then that blessing could be received only if this valiant couple first had the faith not to be healed. In other words, John and Heather needed to overcome, through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “natural man” (Mosiah 3:19) tendency in all of us to demand impatiently and insist incessantly on the blessings we want and believe we deserve.

We recognized a principle that applies to

every devoted disciple: strong faith in the Savior is submissively accepting of His will and timing in our lives—even if the outcome is not what we hoped for or wanted. Certainly, John and Heather would desire, yearn, and plead for healing with all of their might, mind, and strength. But more important, they would be “willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [them], even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19). Indeed, they would be willing to “offer [their] whole souls as an offering unto him” (Omni 1:26) and humbly pray, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

What initially seemed to John, Heather, and me to be perplexing questions became part of a pervasive pattern of gospel paradoxes. Consider the admonition of the Savior: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it”

(Matthew 10:39). He also declared, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:30). And the Lord counseled His latter-day disciples, “By thy word many high ones shall be brought low, and by thy word many low ones shall be exalted” (D&C 112:8). Thus, having the faith not to be healed seemed to fit appropriately into a powerful pattern of penetrating paradoxes that require us to ask, to seek, and to knock that we might receive knowledge and understanding (see 3 Nephi 14:7).

After taking the necessary time to ponder my inquiries and to talk with his wife, John said to me: “Elder Bednar, I do not want to die. I do not want to leave Heather. But if the will of the Lord is to transfer me to the spirit world, then I guess I am good with that.”

My heart swelled with appreciation and admiration as I witnessed this young couple confront the most demanding of all spiritual struggles—the submissive surrender of their wills to God’s will. My faith was strengthened as I witnessed this couple allowing their strong and understandable desires for healing to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

John described his reaction to our conversation and the blessing he received: “Elder Bednar shared with us the thought from Elder Maxwell that it is better to not shrink than to survive. Elder Bednar then asked us, ‘I know you have the faith to be healed, but do you have the faith not to be healed?’ This was a foreign concept to me. Essentially he was asking if I had the faith to accept God’s will if His will were that I not be healed. If the time were approaching for me to enter the spirit world through death, was I prepared to submit and accept?”

John continued: “Having the faith not to be healed seemed counterintuitive; but that perspective changed the way my wife and I thought and allowed us to put our trust fully in the Father’s plan for us. We learned we needed to gain the faith that the Lord is in charge

whatever the outcome may be, and He will guide us from where we are to where we need to be. As we prayed, our petitions changed from ‘Please make me whole’ to ‘Please give me the faith to accept whatever outcome Thou hast planned for me.’

“I was sure that since Elder Bednar was an Apostle, he would bless the elements of my body to realign, and I would jump out of the bed and start to dance or do something dramatic like that! But as he blessed me that day, I was amazed that the words he spoke were almost identical to those of my father, my father-in-law, and my mission president. I realized that ultimately it does not matter whose hands are on my head. God’s power does not change, and His will is made known to us individually and through His authorized servants.”

Heather wrote: “This day was filled with mixed emotions for me. I was convinced that Elder Bednar would place his hands on John’s head and completely heal him of the cancer. I knew that through the power of the priesthood he could be healed, and I wanted so bad for that to happen. After he taught us about the faith to not be healed, I was

terrified. Up to that point, I had never had to come to grips with the fact that the Lord’s plan might include losing my new husband. My faith was dependent upon the outcomes I wanted. In a manner of speaking, it was one-dimensional. Though terrifying at first, the thought of having the faith not to be healed ultimately freed me from worry. It allowed me to have complete trust that my Heavenly Father knew me better than I knew

myself, and He would do what was best for me and John.”

A blessing was given, and weeks, months, and years passed by. John’s cancer miraculously went into remission. He was able to complete his university studies and obtained gainful employment. John and Heather continued to strengthen their relationship and enjoy life together.

Sometime later I received a letter from John and Heather informing me that the cancer had returned. Chemotherapy

*Even if we have strong faith, many mountains will not be moved. And not all of the sick and infirm will be healed.*

was resumed and surgery scheduled. John explained: “Not only did this news come as a disappointment to Heather and me, but we were puzzled by it. Was there something we did not learn the first time? Did the Lord expect something more from us?”

“So I began to pray for clarity and for the Lord to help me understand why this recurrence of the cancer was happening. One day as I was reading in the New Testament I received my answer. I read the account of Christ and His Apostles on the sea when a tempest arose. Fearing the boat would capsize, the disciples went to the Savior and asked, ‘Master, carest thou not that we perish?’ This is exactly how I felt! Carest thou not that I have cancer? Carest thou not that we want to start a family? But as I read on in the story, I found my answer. The Lord looked at them and said, ‘O ye of little faith,’ and He stretched forth His hand and calmed the waters.

“In that moment I had to ask myself, ‘Do I really believe this? Do I really believe He calmed the waters that day? Or is it just a nice story to read about?’ The answer is: I do believe, and because I know He calmed the waters, I instantly knew He could heal me. Up until this point, I had a hard time reconciling the need for my faith in Christ with the inevitability of His will. I saw them as two separate things, and sometimes I felt that one contradicted the other. ‘Why should I have faith if His will ultimately is what will prevail?’ I asked. After this experience, I knew that having faith—at least in my circumstance—was not necessarily knowing that he *would* heal me, but that He *could* heal me. I had to believe that He could, and then whether it happened was up to Him.

“As I allowed those two ideas to coexist in my life, focused faith in Jesus Christ and complete submission to His will, I found greater comfort and peace. It has been so remarkable to see the Lord’s hand in our lives. Things have fallen into place, miracles have happened, and we

continually are humbled to see God’s plan for us unfold.”

Righteousness and faith certainly are instrumental in moving mountains—if moving mountains accomplishes God’s purposes and is in accordance with His will. Righteousness and faith certainly are instrumental in healing the sick, deaf, and lame—if such healing accomplishes God’s purposes and is in accordance with His will. Thus, even if we have strong faith, many mountains will not be moved. And not all of the sick and infirm will be healed. If all opposition were curtailed, if all maladies were removed, then the primary purposes of the Father’s plan would be frustrated.

Many of the lessons we are to learn in mortality can be received only through the things we experience and sometimes suffer. And God expects and trusts us to face temporary mortal adversity with His help so we can learn what we need to learn and ultimately become what we are to become in eternity.

### **The Meaning of All Things**

This story about John and Heather is both ordinary and extraordinary. This young couple is representative of millions of faithful, covenant-keeping Latter-day Saints all over the world who are pressing forward along the strait and narrow path with steadfast faith in Christ and a perfect brightness of hope (see 2 Nephi 31:19–20). John and Heather were not serving in highly visible leadership positions in the Church, they were not related to General Authorities, and sometimes they had doubts and fears. In many of these aspects, their story is quite ordinary.

But this young man and young woman were blessed in extraordinary ways to learn essential lessons for eternity through affliction and hardship. I have shared this episode with you because John and Heather, who are just like so many of you, came to understand that not shrinking is more important than surviving. Thus, their experience

*God expects and trusts us to face temporary mortal adversity with His help so we can learn what we need to learn and ultimately become what we are to become in eternity.*



was not primarily about living and dying; rather, it was about learning, living, and becoming.

For many of you, their story is, has been, or could be your story. You are facing, have faced, or will yet face equivalent challenges in your lives with the same courage and spiritual perspective that John and Heather did. I do not know why some people learn the lessons of eternity through trial and suffering—while others learn similar lessons through rescue and healing. I do not know all of the reasons, all of the purposes, and I do not know everything about the Lord's timing. With Nephi, you and I can say that we “do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17).

But some things I absolutely do know. I know we are spirit sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father. I know the Eternal Father is the author of the plan of happiness. I know Jesus Christ is our Savior

and Redeemer. I know Jesus enabled the Father's plan through His infinite and eternal Atonement. I know the Lord, who was “bruised, broken, [and] torn for us,”<sup>2</sup> can succor and strengthen “his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12). And I know one of the greatest blessings of mortality is to not shrink and to allow our individual will to be “swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

Though I do not know everything about how and when and where and why these blessings occur, I do witness they are real. And I know that as you press forward in your lives with steadfast faith in Christ, you will have the capacity to not shrink. ■

*From a Church Educational System devotional, “That We Might ‘Not . . . Shrink,’” delivered at the University of Texas at Arlington on March 3, 2013.*

#### NOTES

1. Neal A. Maxwell, “Apply the Atoning Blood of Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 22.
2. “Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King,” *Hymns*, no. 181.

*Many of the lessons we are to learn in mortality can be received only through the things we experience and sometimes suffer.*

# Being a Woman

## AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

I WANT TO GO  
ON RECORD  
FROM MY OWN  
EXPERIENCE  
THAT MY LIFE  
IS RICH AND  
NOBLE AND INFI-  
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AS A WOMAN  
BECAUSE OF  
THE GOSPEL OF  
JESUS CHRIST.

**By Sharon Eubank**  
Director of LDS Charities

**M**any years ago, my friend and her husband were doing leadership training in rural Ghana, and a woman came up to her afterward and said very emotionally, “This is a woman’s church.” My friend asked the woman what she meant. She said, in essence, “We have the glorious Relief Society, which teaches us about spiritual things and everyday things that bless our families and us. And at the same time your husband is in the next room teaching our husbands that they must treat their wives and children with kindness and gentleness. We have the temple, so my children who are dead will be mine forever. Everything I want I find in this church. This is a woman’s church.”

Is this a woman’s church? With a few colorful exceptions, my personal experience has been largely one of empowerment. So rather than answer the question for you, I will rely simply on what I have witnessed around the world. I’m not a scholar, an academic, or a Church spokesperson. But I want to go on record from my own experience that my life is rich and noble and infinitely better as a woman because of the gospel and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Far from being restrictive and conservative, the Church’s doctrine on women’s roles in the family, Church, community, nation, and temple—and how men and women relate and interact in concert—is the most moderate, powerful, enlightened, and energizing doctrine I have ever heard expressed. So I say to my sisters that what you are hungry for as a woman, as a Christian, as an intellectual, as an eternal being is here in the doctrine of Jesus Christ in the Church.



“GOOD WOMEN . . .  
WILL BE DRAWN  
TO THE CHURCH IN  
LARGE NUMBERS . . .  
TO THE DEGREE THAT  
THE . . . WOMEN OF  
THE CHURCH ARE  
SEEN AS DISTINCT  
AND DIFFERENT—IN  
HAPPY WAYS—FROM  
THE WOMEN OF THE  
WORLD.”

**PRESIDENT SPENCER W.  
KIMBALL**



### **God’s Doctrine Holds Men and Women Equally Accountable**

The gospel of Jesus Christ applies to both men and women, and God’s doctrine holds both equally accountable, without a double standard. God doesn’t tolerate pornography, adultery, abuse, neglect, inequality, or oppression, regardless of our gender.

This doctrine also gives us our knowledge of where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. It gives us our understanding of our gender as women and men as well as our roles as daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, wives and husbands, and mothers and fathers.<sup>1</sup>

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Prophets have revealed that we first existed as intelligences and that we were given form, or spirit bodies, by God, thus becoming His spirit children—sons and daughters of heavenly parents.”<sup>2</sup> Intelligence has always existed (see D&C 93:29).

I am a *woman*. With gender came certain attributes and responsibilities.

I am a *daughter*. This role defines who I am in relation to Deity. I have divine parents and have the right, as a daughter, to communicate with Heavenly Father through prayer and to receive revelation through the Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup>

I am a *sister*. This role means that I am a Christian, a member of the Church, a sister in the gospel, a disciple, and that I have made covenants that I will sacrifice and consecrate and serve and lead.

I may also have the opportunity in this

life to be a *wife*—if not in this life, then certainly in the next. This role is who I am in relation to a chosen equal partner, a husband. Though we are not the same—since nobody has the combination of gifts and traits that I have or that he has—we use our complementary attributes to try to become one. The word *sealing* is an excellent description of the eternal unifying potential of a marriage created by priesthood authority in a temple.

The role of *mother* is who I am in relation to my progeny. Whether I actually attain this role in this brief span on the earth or afterward, the promise of eternal family is made to those whose marriages are sealed in the temple and by the Holy Spirit of Promise (see D&C 132:19).

Our doctrine is unique on earth, and it’s part of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Think what it means if you understand this doctrine and believe it. To me it gives eternal perspective to everything I do.

### **Church Is Where We Practice God’s Doctrine**

I believe being a member of the Church makes me a part of one of the best development programs ever designed. A broad curriculum of personal development, empowerment, and leadership for women happens simply by doing the things all members do: leadership, public speaking, decision making, persuasive discussion, budgeting, influencing, serving in the community, literacy, research, resource development, gardening, food preservation, family health—it goes on and on.





I believe that misunderstandings regarding women's roles arise when there is a disconnect between the doctrine and the practice of the doctrine. However, through continuing revelation from God to His prophets and to us through the Holy Ghost, we can continue to recognize and eliminate most misunderstandings that surface.

For example, apostles and prophets continue to clarify concepts we have always believed:

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said that “when men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power.”<sup>4</sup>
- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated, “We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be?”<sup>5</sup>
- President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, explained, “Every father is to his family a patriarch and every mother a matriarch as coequals in their distinctive parental roles.”<sup>6</sup>

### 1. Keep the Big Picture in Mind

May I now make three suggestions that will help us with our practice of the doctrine? My first suggestion is to keep in mind the big picture provided by the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Some time ago, as director of LDS Charities, I was in a meeting when I got an urgent plea regarding Christian refugees who were purged from Mosul, Iraq, by Islamic State forces and were pouring into Kurdistan. The Anglican

vicar of Baghdad had 5,000 people jostling for space in his church courtyard, and they had no food to eat. The Latter-day Saint humanitarian missionary couple was asking for emergency funds to purchase rice, beans, oil, and blankets, and we responded immediately so they could get dinner that evening.

Because of my work, these are the kinds of things in front of my face every day. Being forced to see the broad picture so often, I ask myself, what is the best use of my energies? As we seek answers, let us search the doctrines of the gospel. “Looking beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14) or becoming obsessed with one question or one practice often shifts our focus and time from gospel living.

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women general president, spoke of remaining anchored in the gospel as we seek answers: “We can choose whether or not we are going to stick with what we have already felt. There are not answers to everything, but we choose whether we will be true to what we have felt from the Holy Ghost. Let’s keep working to make things better, but keep our faith in the meantime.”<sup>7</sup>

Our practices will continue to change in the Church as we learn to apply our doctrine in better and more perfect ways. I hope the next generation is even more fair and equal in its practice of the gospel. But I also believe that the large foundational stones are in place and are enough to nurture our faith and our testimonies.

### 2. Stay Faithful in the Face of Opposition

Opposition isn’t necessarily bad. I believe that opposition strengthens us too. When I visited the Huntington Botanical Gardens in San Marino, California, USA, I noticed that huge fans in the exhibit simulated the constant trade winds that strengthen tropical trees to withstand potential hurricanes. The Lord sends us or allows daily “trade winds” in the form of problems and resistance in order to strengthen our roots and make us more flexible. Such challenges are actually a gift.

The following two vignettes from Church history give us perspective on opposition:

THE HOLY SPIRIT  
LEAVES AS SOON AS  
EITHER A MAN OR A  
WOMAN STARTS TO  
EXERCISE UNRIGH-  
TEOUS DOMINION  
AND FAILS TO LEAD  
WITH MEEKNESS,  
LOVE, AND PURITY.

**SEE D&C 121:37**



The first vignette is Brigham Young's arrival in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, as described by President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “No plow had even broken its soil. [Brigham Young] knew nothing of its fertility, nothing of the seasons, the weather, the frost, the severity of the winters, the possibility of insect plagues. [Early explorers] Jim Bridger and Miles Goodyear had nothing good to say concerning this place. Sam Brannan pleaded with him to go on to California. He listened to none of them. He led his people to this hot and what must have appeared as a very forlorn place. When he arrived, he looked across this broad expanse to the salt lake in the west and said, ‘This is the right place.’”<sup>8</sup>

The second vignette is Wilford Woodruff's remembering a statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Prophet spoke in the early days of the Restoration to a small gathering of leaders about the vast doctrinal knowledge that lay ahead for them: “I have been very much edified and instructed in your testimonies here tonight, but I want to say to you before the Lord, that you know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother's lap. You don't comprehend it.”<sup>9</sup>

I share these two stories because they describe how I feel. Being in the right place or having the right doctrine doesn't mean there won't be blinding salt flats and swarms of black crickets or killing frosts

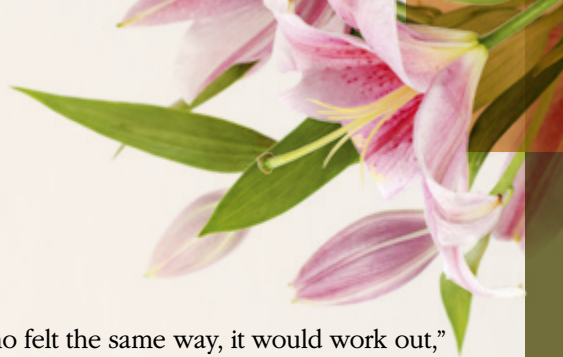


or naysayers, but this is the right place and the right doctrine. And we should be driving on. We understand about as much as a baby on her mother's lap about what the Lord is doing with men and women and priesthood. But the Lord is content to teach us as we are able, as we grow, as we ask. And as we increase in our understanding, we can do as Sister Oscarson said: “Keep our faith in the meantime.”

### 3. Seek the Holy Ghost

Asking questions and finding answers are at the heart of gaining a testimony of God's doctrine. The Holy Ghost will testify when something is true through peaceful and warm feelings. Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president, said of this process: “Let's go to the right sources for answers. Why would we believe the Internet and not the prophets? We can figure out how to ask the questions in a way that facilitates cooperation and brings honest concerns to the table. . . . But be patient and humble.”<sup>10</sup>

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles teaches us the difference between influences from Satan and



answers from God: “Who is it that whispers [lies] so subtly in our ear? . . . You and I both know who does this—it is the father of all lies. It is Lucifer, our common enemy.”<sup>11</sup>

The Prophet Joseph Smith, who had more experience getting revelation than anyone in this dispensation, tried to teach us that questions must be approached with a commitment to unity and respect.

This invites the Holy Ghost. In 1839, Joseph wrote in his letter from Liberty Jail that “the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven” and that power in the priesthood must be maintained “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:36, 41). The Prophet taught similar principles to the Relief Society: “Meekness, love, purity—these are the things that should magnify [us].”<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Smith spoke of gentleness and meekness as the means of feeling the Holy Ghost and exercising righteous influence. He said this to both men and women because it affects both halves of the equation in marriage and in the Church. All authority and divine sanction is negated (because the Holy Spirit leaves) as soon as either a man or a woman starts to exercise unrighteous dominion (see D&C 121:37) and fails to lead with meekness, love, and purity.

### What Women Hunger for Is in Our Doctrine

There is a hunger among many women in the world to be valued, to find purpose for their energies, to find men who want to build families and be faithful.

I once met a British dancer while traveling on a train in Finland. We were both happy to be speaking English, and as we chatted we asked each other questions: What are you doing in Finland? What do you believe? Learning of my beliefs, she asked, “You don’t smoke or drink? You don’t believe in premarital sex?” And throughout our conversation, she kept coming back to this subject, intrigued. “I suppose if

you dated men who felt the same way, it would work out,” she said. And then later: “Are there any men who feel the same way?” She started off disdainful and ended up wistful. She was hungry for something she heard in our doctrine.

The memory of our meeting on the train has never left me and often reminds me of the well-known statement by President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world . . . will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.”<sup>13</sup>

The doctrine of the identity and roles of women embodies the greatest desires of my heart. Mortal members’ practice of God’s doctrine is not perfect, but it is responsive, living, full of hope and good intent. We believe that God “will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God” (Articles of Faith 1:9). We can choose to follow that doctrine.

So I will ask again: Is this a woman’s church? My reply is based simply on my own experience around the world. Yes. ■

*From an address given at the FairMormon Conference in Provo, Utah, USA, on August 8, 2014.*

#### NOTES

1. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. D. Todd Christofferson, “Why Marriage, Why Family,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 50.
3. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” 129.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women and Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2014, 32.
5. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 51.
6. James E. Faust, “The Prophetic Voice,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 6.
7. Bonnie L. Oscarson, personal conversation with the author, July 21, 2014.
8. Gordon B. Hinckley, in James E. Faust, “Brigham Young: A Bold Prophet” (Education Week address, Aug. 21, 2001), 1, speeches.byu.edu.
9. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.
10. Linda K. Burton, personal conversation with the author, July 21, 2014.
11. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Other Prodigal,” *Ensign*, May 2002, 63.
12. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 482.
13. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 222–23.

# DO YOU KNOW **These** BOOK OF MORMON **Heroes?**

*There is much we can learn from the righteous examples of lesser-known Book of Mormon heroes.*

**By Faith S. Watson**

Church Magazines

**N**ephi, Abinadi, Alma, Ammon, Moroni, Mormon—the pages of the Book of Mormon abound with stories of great heroes. Their faith-filled examples of obedience, humility, and other Christlike attributes give us hope and patience as we face our own challenges. And their soul-stirring teachings and testimonies of Jesus Christ help us come closer to Him.

There are numerous other heroes in the Book of Mormon, however, whose stories are only lightly touched on. Generally only a few verses tell us about them—and many are not even named.

After quoting a scripture about the revered hero Captain Moroni (see Alma 48:17), President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) pointed out that two verses further on we read, “Now behold, Helaman and his brethren were no less serviceable unto the people than was Moroni” (Alma 48:19). President Hunter then observed, “Though Helaman was not as noticeable or conspicuous as Moroni, he was as serviceable; that is, he was as helpful or useful as Moroni.”<sup>1</sup>

Let’s take a look at a few of these lesser-known heroes. How did they faithfully bless others, leaving their righteous examples for us to follow along with those of their more well-known counterparts?

## **Sam and Joseph**

Sam, one of Nephi’s older brothers, faithfully supported Nephi. When Laman and Lemuel rejected their father’s prophesying soon after they had begun their journey in the wilderness, Nephi, “having great desires to know of the mysteries of God” (1 Nephi 2:16), prayed to the Lord. He wrote that his heart was softened and that he believed his father’s words. He confided his experience first to Sam and later recorded that Sam “believed in my words” (1 Nephi 2:17). Sam’s faithful support didn’t waver, even when he, along with Nephi, was beaten by Laman and Lemuel after their first attempt to obtain the brass plates failed (see 1 Nephi 3:28).

Before dying, Lehi blessed his family. He promised Sam that he would be like Nephi and be “blessed in all thy days” (2 Nephi 4:11). Sam and his family were among the faithful believers who followed Nephi when they separated from the Lamanites. In Alma 3:6 Sam is referred to as a just and holy man.

Joseph was Nephi’s youngest brother, born in the wilderness as was Jacob. In Lehi’s final blessing, he spoke to his youngest son at length, telling Joseph that he was “born in the wilderness of mine afflictions; yea, in the days of my



LEHI AND HIS PEOPLE ARRIVE IN THE PROMISED LAND, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

greatest sorrow” (2 Nephi 3:1). Lehi related the prophecies of Joseph in Egypt about Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon and the covenant blessings to which Joseph was entitled if he was faithful. Among Lehi’s last recorded words to Joseph are these: “Blessed art thou, Joseph. Behold, thou art little; wherefore hearken unto the words of thy brother, Nephi” (2 Nephi 3:25).

Obedient Joseph did hearken. He, along with Jacob, followed Nephi when Nephi’s group separated from the Lamanites. Nephi consecrated Jacob and Joseph to be priests and teachers of the people (see 2 Nephi 5:26). Jacob wrote, “We labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ,” and “we did magnify our office unto the Lord” (Jacob 1:7, 19). It was also said of Joseph that he was a just and holy man (see Alma 3:6).

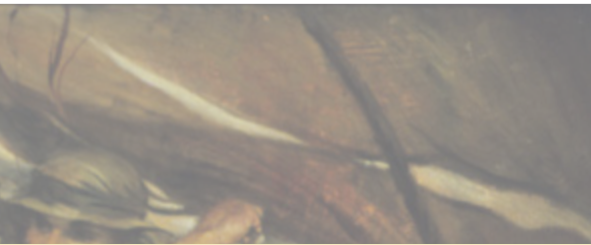
### ***For Families and Individuals***

- How can you support your brothers or sisters when they make a righteous decision?
- How will your support make them feel?
- How do you feel when you obey your parents or show respect to your siblings? Why?
- In the spirit of Sam’s example, think of someone you could bless with your support.
- Consider ways you can magnify your callings.

### **Nephi’s Wife and Children**

Ishmael and his household followed Nephi and his brothers into the wilderness to join Lehi’s family (see 1 Nephi 7). Nephi, his older brothers, and Zoram married Ishmael’s daughters (see 1 Nephi 16:7). There is little mention of Nephi’s wife or children in the scriptural record, but Nephi’s wife certainly demonstrated her faith when Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi on the ship. The Liahona ceased to work, and the ship, unsteerable, was tossed about on the sea in the midst of a great storm. Lehi had pleaded with Laman and Lemuel to release Nephi, but they “did breathe out much threatenings against anyone” who spoke for Nephi (1 Nephi 18:17). Nephi’s wife showed their children by example that we pray to Heavenly Father for help. Nephi wrote, “Also my wife with her tears and prayers, and also my children, did not soften the hearts of my brethren that they would loose me” (1 Nephi 18:19).





*There is little mention of Nephi's wife or children in the scriptural record, but Nephi's wife certainly demonstrated her faith when Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi on the ship.*

THEY DID TREAT ME WITH MUCH HARSHNESS, BY WALTER RANE, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM; ESCAPE OF KING LIMHI AND HIS PEOPLE, BY MINERVA TEICHERT


Nephi wrote about teaching his children, “My soul delighteth in the scriptures . . . and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children” (2 Nephi 4:15). And, “We labor diligently to write, to persuade our children . . . to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God” (2 Nephi 25:23). And then, “We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (verse 26). He made sure they would “look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the [Mosaic] law was given” (verse 27). Nephi’s children exhibited faith and a determination to follow the example of their mother when their father was bound (see 1 Nephi 18:19). Later, they accompanied their parents when the Nephites separated from the Lamanites, being among “those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God” and who “did hearken unto [Nephi’s] words” (2 Nephi 5:6).

#### **For Families and Individuals**

- Ponder the example you set for your children. Do your children know “to what source they may look”?
- How do you follow the examples of your parents?
- Do you turn to the Lord for help? Do you think about how your example of doing so can strengthen others?



#### **Gideon and Limhi**



After Alma and those who were converted to the Lord escaped from King Noah’s army, Gideon, a member of the army but opposed to the wicked king, sought to kill Noah. The king, seeing the Lamanites coming, pleaded for mercy that his people might not be destroyed, so Gideon spared him (see Mosiah 19:1–8). The king, really only concerned about himself, fled with some of his army and was later killed, as Abinadi had prophesied (see Mosiah 19:20; 17:18). The more righteous remainder of the people ended up in bondage to the Lamanites. Noah’s son, Limhi, a just man, became king, and Gideon served him faithfully as his captain (see Mosiah 20:17). Gideon noted that their

bondage to the Lamanites was the result of not heeding Abinadi's words (see Mosiah 20:21). After much suffering and learning humility, Limhi's people were discovered by Ammon. Gideon proposed a plan to escape the Lamanites, humbly reminding Limhi that he had many times been of service in battles (see Mosiah 22:3–8). The plan was followed, the people escaped, and they joined Mosiah's people (see Mosiah 22:9–13).

Later in the Book of Mormon, we again read about Gideon, now "stricken with many years" (Alma 1:9). He is described as a teacher in the Church (see verse 7). Nehor, who had introduced priestcraft and was preaching with much success, confronted Gideon. Gideon was not to be persuaded, "admonishing [Nehor] with the words of God" (verse 7). Nehor became angry and slew Gideon. Alma, now chief judge and presiding over Nehor's trial, accused Nehor: "Thou hast shed the blood of a righteous man, yea, a man who has done much good among this people" (verse 13).

Limhi, like Gideon, was a good man in spite of living under a wicked king—his own father. In his story we learn where his strength came from—he knew and revered the scriptures. After Ammon discovered Limhi's people, Limhi gathered his people and spoke to them, demonstrating a knowledge of the scriptures. He exhorted his people to trust in God, reminding them of God's help to His people in past times (see Mosiah 7:19–20). Next, he pointed out that the reason the people were in bondage was that they "would not hearken unto [God's] words" (verse 25). Limhi then quoted scripture to support this (see verses 29–31) and ended with the powerful promise that if the people turned to God, trusted Him, and served Him with all their hearts and diligence of mind, He would deliver them according to His will (verse 33).

Limhi also demonstrated a desire to gain knowledge when he asked Ammon if he could translate the Jaredite plates that Limhi's people had discovered. Limhi reacted with great joy to Ammon's explanation of what a seer is and that King Mosiah had this gift and could translate the plates. (See Mosiah 8:6–20.)

### **For Families and Individuals**

- What are some things we can do that would help our family? What about neighbors and friends?
- Do you recognize the power scripture study can have in your life, as it had in King Limhi's?
- Although Gideon was not among the first group to be converted, he became converted later. Does knowing this help you have patience with someone you love who does not yet seem to be fully converted?
- Ponder whether your testimony and knowledge of the gospel is strong enough to withstand attempts to persuade you away from the gospel.
- Consider Limhi's knowledge of the scriptures and how such knowledge can fortify you in times of difficulty and temptation.

*Limhi, like Gideon, was a good man. In his story we learn where his strength came from—he knew and revered the scriptures.*

### **King Lamoni's Wife and Abish**

Through his faithfulness in the king's service, Ammon gained King Lamoni's trust. The king promised Ammon that he would believe his words and Ammon taught the king the gospel. The king, believing, cried to the Lord for mercy and then collapsed as if dead. His servants took him to his wife and children, who greatly mourned for him. (See Alma 17–18.) After two days, the servants came to take Lamoni for burial, but the queen, having heard of the fame of Ammon, called for him. She told him the king's servants had said he was a mighty prophet of God. She said that others said her husband stank and should be buried, but to her he "[did] not stink" (Alma 19:5). Ammon assured the queen that the king was not dead and that he would rise the next day. He asked her if she believed him. The queen





replied, “I have had no witness save thy word, and the word of our servants; nevertheless I believe that it shall be according as thou hast said.” Ammon then said, “Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith; I say unto thee, woman, there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites” (Alma 19:9–10).

The queen stayed by her husband’s side until the next day when he arose, held out his hand to her, blessed God, and then blessed her. He bore testimony of the Savior. Both the king and his queen were overpowered with the Spirit and

sank to the earth. Ammon, overcome with joy, also fell to the earth. (See Alma 19:11–14.) The servants began to pray, and they too sank to the earth, except one woman—Abish. She had “been converted unto the Lord for many years, on account of a remarkable vision of her father,” but she had told no one. She knew she was witnessing the power of God and excitedly ran to tell the people to come see so that they could also be converted. (See verses 15–17.) They came, but contention arose, and so Abish took the queen by the hand, who rose and said, “O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell!” (verse 29). The queen then pleaded to God for the people and took the king’s hand. He arose and began to teach the people, many of whom believed and were baptized. (See verses 30–31, 35.)



#### ***For Families and Individuals***

- Consider talking with your children about how the queen gained her testimony.
- Clearly King Lamoni and his wife deeply loved and supported each other. What might you do to increase the love and support in your marriage?
- Ponder how believing the words of a prophet demonstrates faith.
- Do you, like Abish, run forth (see Alma 19:17) to share your testimony with others? Consider praying for opportunities to do so.

As you read and study the Book of Mormon, notice the less well-known heroes. Consider adding their examples to your list of Book of Mormon heroes who help you face your challenges and strengthen your love for and faith in our Savior Jesus Christ. ■

#### **NOTE**

1. Howard W. Hunter, “No Less Serviceable,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1992, 64.

# Choosing Faith

## IN DIFFICULT TIMES

**W**e all experience difficult times in our lives. Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: “Life is not easy, nor was it meant to be. It is a time of testing and trial.”<sup>1</sup> In the midst of these trials we can choose how to respond. There is one choice that will always bring peace and hope—that choice is faith.

The Savior said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Faith in Jesus Christ will help us endure the tribulations we encounter in this life.

Following are the testimonies of four Latter-day Saints who have chosen faith when faced with challenges.

### My Doubt Was Swept Away

**S**everal years ago, I came across a certain criticism of the Book of Mormon that I had never heard or read before. I did not have a ready answer for this criticism, and over the next several days I struggled with the issue.

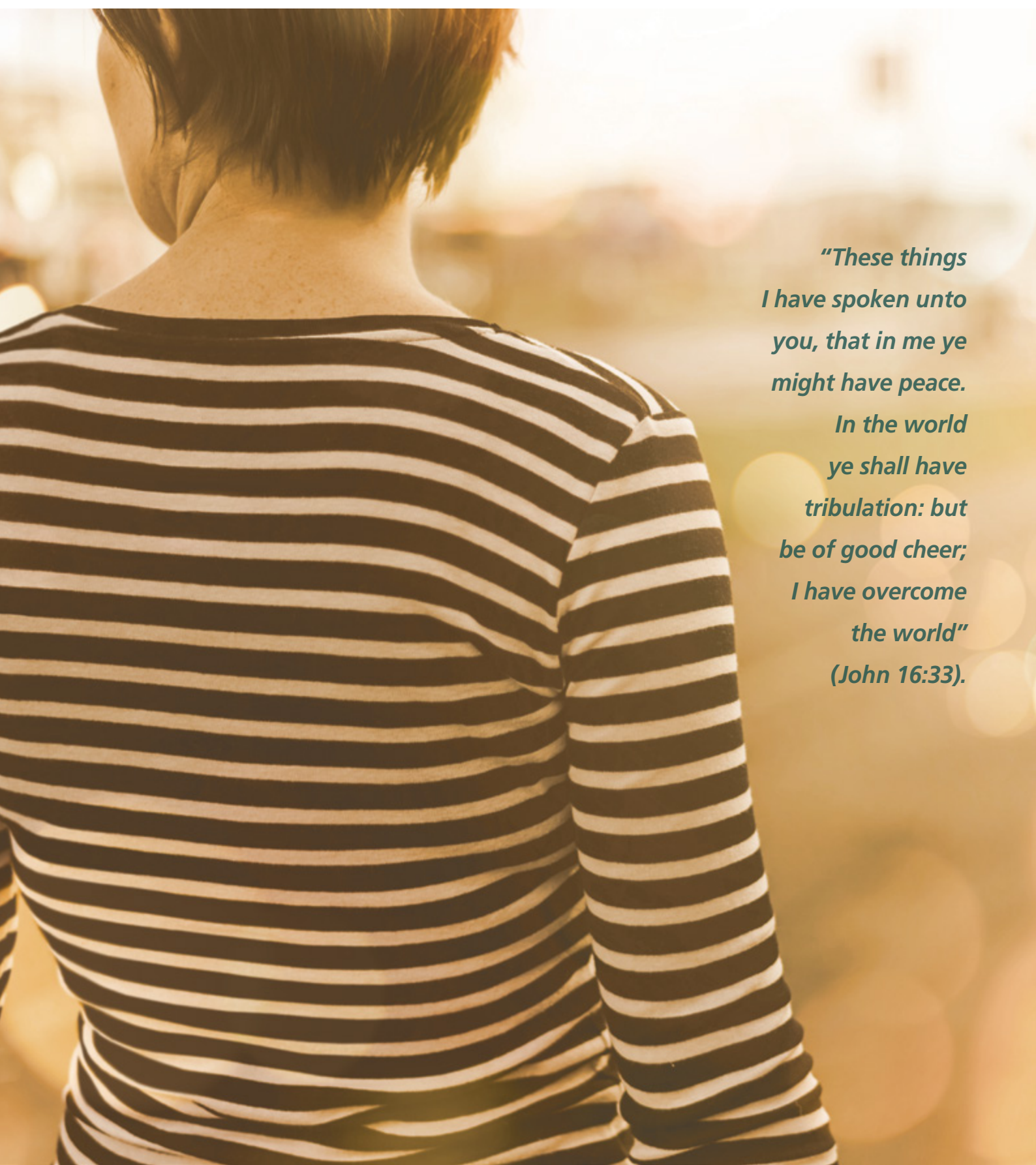
I tried to work out the conflict in my mind, formulating various scenarios that would explain what I had

*When we choose faith over fear and doubt, we find strength to face our challenges.*

read. None of this worked, and I found myself in a conflict of faith. This was truly a fiery dart of the adversary for me (see 1 Nephi 15:24); it had deeply pierced through a weak spot in my armor of faith. I had served a wonderful mission and had had many opportunities to bear strong testimony of the Book of Mormon. But now insidious doubt crept into my mind and threatened to destroy my faith and my testimony. I could see that if left unchecked, this doubt could eventually cause me to leave the Church.

In my anguish, I took my conflict to the Lord. I poured out my soul to Him in prayer. The answer didn’t come immediately, but I was confident that an answer would come. A couple of days later, I felt impressed to read the Book of Mormon. I opened to the title page and read the last sentence:

“And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”



*“These things  
I have spoken unto  
you, that in me ye  
might have peace.*

*In the world  
ye shall have  
tribulation: but  
be of good cheer;  
I have overcome  
the world”  
(John 16:33).*

This was the answer I had been waiting for! It was not the answer I had expected, but it was the perfect answer for me. All my doubt was swept away and was replaced with the knowledge that the Lord works through imperfect people to bring about His purposes. I had been so focused on a supposed flaw in the Book of Mormon that I had ignored the priceless truth and beauty of the book as a whole.

Through this experience I learned that when you're burdened by doubts, you should take them to the Lord. He hears and answers prayers. He will answer in a way just right for you that can wipe away your doubt. He can make the weak spots in your faith's armor so strong that no fiery dart will ever find purchase again.

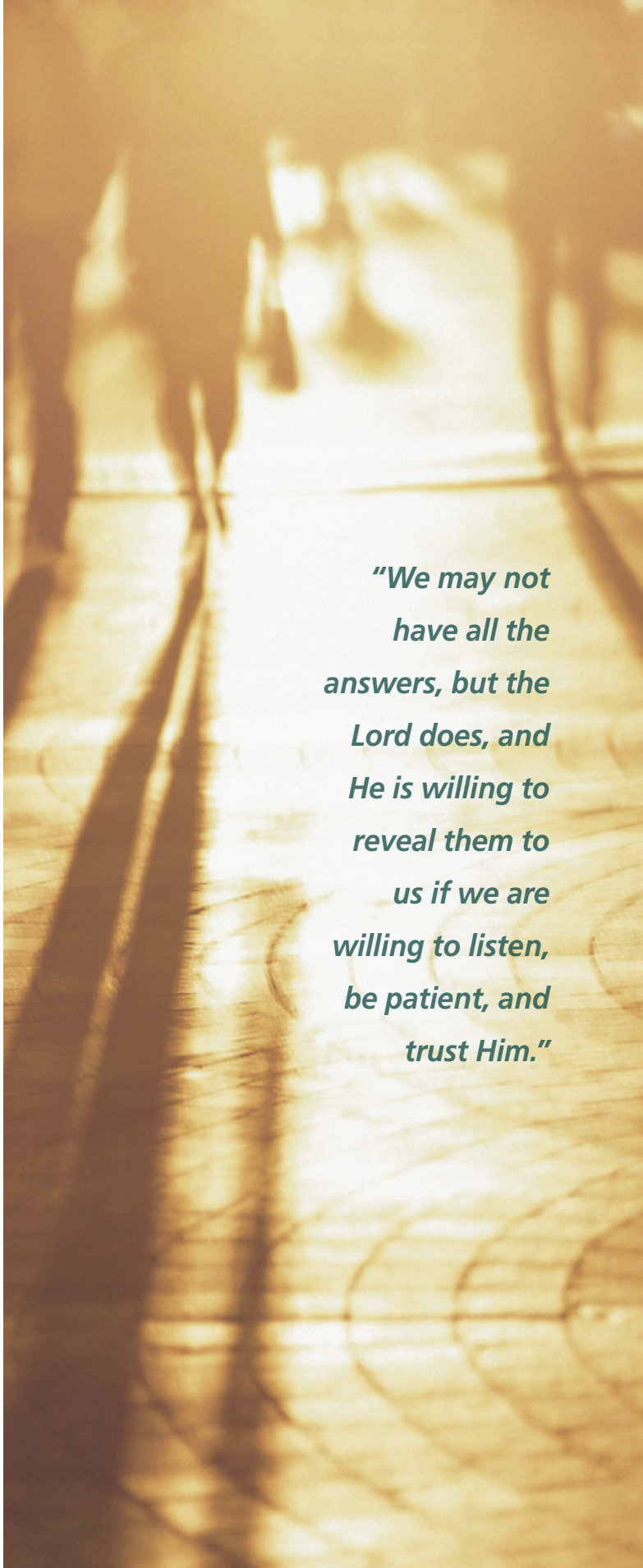
Michael Rapier, California, USA

## Believe in Revelation

**W**hen I was serving as a missionary in the Temple Square Mission, I was asked all kinds of questions. I did not always have the answers, but I had a testimony that the Lord knew the answers and that the answers would be revealed to me if I sought them.

I remember one particular experience when neither my companion nor I knew the answer to a question a young man had asked us. I felt the Spirit guide me to tell him that I did not know the answer but that I would study and pray about it. I testified that I knew there was an answer and if I sincerely sought the answer from the Lord, He would reveal it to me.

I do not know what that young man thought of my response, but the next time I had personal study, I knelt and asked the Lord for guidance in finding the answer for myself. I searched the scriptures and found a possible answer. I knelt again and prayed about my findings. The Spirit confirmed to me that what I had found was



***“We may not  
have all the  
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trust Him.”***

true. My testimony that the Lord answers our prayers was strengthened. I know that we may not have all the answers, but the Lord does, and He is willing to reveal them to us if we are willing to listen, be patient, and trust Him.

Karen Papin, California, USA

## “Because It’s True”

Two months after my baptism, I began to have concerns about my decision to become a member of the Church. I didn’t want the adversary snatching away my newfound testimony, but it just seemed to evaporate. I lost confidence and doubted my ability to follow the counsel of priesthood leaders that every member should be a missionary.

Grappling with these concerns, I remembered a phrase I had heard the missionaries use: “Because it’s true.” Those words echoed deeply in my conscience. They became my motto and helped me continue in faith.

As I prayed, pondered, and persevered, I found guidance in the Book of Mormon where Nephi says: “My soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding” (2 Nephi 31:3). I knew I could rely on the Lord for light and understanding, and I also knew that I would learn “precept upon precept” (D&C 98:12). That is the learning pattern the Lord has given us.

Through applying the Lord’s proven standard for learning as I studied the plan of salvation, and by steadily living the gospel, I regained confidence in my testimony. The Lord wants us all to pray earnestly so that He can give us the answers we seek in our daily lives.

Theodore P. Wierzbinski, Utah, USA

## Bear Testimony of What You Do Know

After I was married only a few months, my husband told me he didn’t believe in God anymore. This started a period in our marriage when I felt nervous and defensive whenever we talked about God or the Church. I didn’t know how to answer his questions or respond to his doubts and criticisms.

When he asked a question I couldn’t answer, I chose to trust God and not to “trust in the arm of flesh” (2 Nephi 4:34). I asked God if He was there, if the Book of Mormon was true, and if Joseph Smith really was a prophet. God answered my prayers with peaceful affirmation. I held on to this experience. I did not know everything, but I did know those things.

Over time, as I relied on the foundations of my testimony, I grew more confident. I chose to trust in the answers I had received from God and press forward. Now when I am confronted with questions I can’t answer, I say, “I don’t know, but let me do some research and get back to you.” And I always share my testimony of what I do know.

My husband still has his struggles with faith, but I have found that if I am humble in seeking answers, the Lord will give them to me in my daily scripture study, a conference talk, or a lesson at church. The more we trust in God, the more confidence we have. I know that confidence comes from faith (see Ephesians 3:11–12).

Name withheld ■

### NOTE

1. Quentin L. Cook, “Shipshape and Bristol Fashion: Be Temple Worthy—in Good Times and Bad Times,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 42.



### A GREAT AND POWERFUL FAITH

“May we choose to build up within ourselves a great and powerful faith . . . which will sustain us and will bolster our desire to choose the right.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.



**LOVE**

Where I Least  
Expected It



*After my father's death, I felt an outpouring of love from other people—many of whom I did not know.*

**By Hannah Rawhouser Eiselin**

**A**fter attending an all-day social worker training session on bereavement, I came home to learn that my father had suffered a massive heart attack. Even though Dad lived in Wyoming, USA, doctors had decided to send him to the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs hospital for cardiac care.

In shock, I began to cry. I felt desperate and afraid. I wanted to be with Dad, but I lived in Georgia. Thankfully, I was able to call him at the hospital and felt comforted upon hearing his voice.

He reassured me he would be fine and told me not to worry. But I did worry. While this heart attack was a surprise, my father had passed through years of health struggles, including diabetes, the loss of a limb, failing eyesight, and daily pain.

I talked to him for a few more minutes before a nurse took the phone from him and explained to me that he needed to rest. I asked to tell him just one more thing. She handed the phone back to him.

“Dad, I love you.”

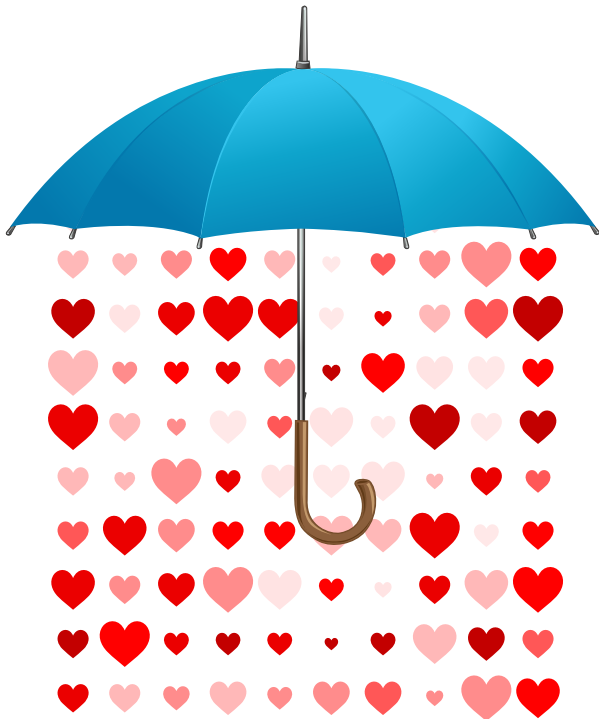
“I love you too.”

I went to bed that night with hope that he would somehow recover and I would speak with him the next day, but in the early hours of the morning, I received a phone call indicating I needed to come to Minneapolis right away.

I soon arrived at the hospital, where a doctor escorted me to my father's room and explained that his condition was poor. Dad lay incoherent with tubes everywhere and machines humming. I held his hand and talked to him, hoping he could hear me. I told him again that I loved him and tried to list all the things he had taught me. Then I sang “I Am a Child of God” to him. I had only about 10 minutes with him before his heart stopped. It was as though he had waited for me to get there before slipping away.

The machines started making loud noises. Doctors ran in and asked me to step out into the hall. Some 15 of them gathered around Dad's bed, talking about what they should do to revive him. Then there was silence. Everyone slowly walked out of the room. A nurse turned to me and said, “I'm sorry.” She wrapped her arms around me and held me. She didn't say anything; she just let me cry in her arms.

Over the years that have passed, I have thought a lot about that moment. I have come to realize that you don't have to know someone to love him or her. That nurse showed me great kindness during a time of grief and loss. Her expression of love was just the first of many I experienced in the days following my father's death.



I went into an empty room and called my brother, who lived in France. He said he and his wife and children would come as soon as they could get on a flight. Then I got a phone book and called the local bishop. I explained my situation, and he told me he would try to find someone I could stay with for the night. A few minutes later, he called me with the name and phone number of a couple who were willing to have me stay with them. Brian and Carina welcomed me into their home. I felt their love and concern. These were people I did not know, yet they extended their home and their love to me.

The next morning I called the airline to explain my need to change travel plans so I could go to my father's funeral and burial in Wyoming. The representative was kind: "I'm going to make this work so you don't have to pay for another plane ticket to get back to Wyoming." In a few minutes, she had rearranged my flight plan with little added expense. Later, I got choked up trying to explain the early return of my rental car. The young attendant promptly canceled my rental agreement and then said, "I am sorry. I will pray for you." I was touched by the actions of this complete stranger.

I continued to experience the love of the Lord through other people, most of whom I did not know. I arrived

*A nurse turned to me and said, "I'm sorry." She wrapped her arms around me and held me. She didn't say anything; she just let me cry in her arms.*

in Wyoming and went to my grandmother's house. My brother arrived with his wife and children two days later. It became our responsibility to prepare for the funeral. Dad's bishop called me and asked if there was anything he could do to help with arrangements beyond the funeral program—and continued to ask me every time we met with him. He helped arrange a luncheon following the funeral. When my brother and his family needed a place to stay (other family members who had come into town were already staying at my grandmother's house), the bishop found them one. He also gave me a wonderful blessing of comfort. I felt as though he loved me as his own daughter.

The day of the funeral the Relief Society sisters prepared a delicious luncheon. Many people came to pay their respects and share kind words about Dad. My single adult branch back in Atlanta sent flowers, accompanied by a box filled with notes of comfort. Many extended family members contributed funds to help pay for the funeral. A dear friend flew to Wyoming to be with me. While the day was sad, it was also replete with reminders of the love of the Lord, mostly through people I did not know.

At first, I thought this experience was a special circumstance. But I've since realized we have many opportunities to show love to people we don't know. When we serve in the temple, when the elders quorum helps a new ward member move in, when members help a refugee family, when we give generous fast offerings, we may not know the people we serve, but we can love them anyway.

The Savior taught, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). I saw the fruit of love throughout this experience. It not only helped me heal but also taught me a lesson I'll always remember: You don't have to know someone to love them. ■

*The author now lives in Arizona, USA.*



# REST IN PEACE

By L. Susan Dobmann

*O beloved, now departed  
from the world, sweet release.  
Cares of life, pain and sorrow  
harm no more, rest in peace.*

*Spirit fled to realms eternal,  
with the Savior to repose.  
Watching, waiting, till I follow,  
reuniting at life's close.*

*O departed, loved so tender,  
now with loved ones far away.  
In the arms of Heavenly Father,  
never leave, always stay.*

*Child of God, loved forever,  
may your memory never cease.  
O beloved, now departed  
from this world, rest in peace.*



THE AUTHOR LIVES IN UTAH, USA; PHOTO ILLUSTRATION POSED BY MODEL

# CANCER, COURAGE, & CONVERSION

By Melodee Cooper

As can happen with the trials we experience, cancer became a great paradox in my life. What could have consumed me in despair instead inspired in me a change of heart. Shortly after my diagnosis, I took the challenge by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to “not shrink” and made that the theme of my battle.<sup>1</sup> It was in the hardest trial of my young



*Cancer didn't just change me physically—it inspired in me a change of heart.*

life that my heart was turned to my Savior. I began to see the gospel of my youth through new eyes. I learned to see, hear, and understand with my heart (see Deuteronomy 29:4; Psalm 119:34; John 12:40).

### **Spiritual Conversion**

Spiritual conversion, like fighting cancer, does not happen quickly or all at once. As Elder Bednar has explained:

“Conversion is an ongoing process. . . . Gradually and almost imperceptibly, our motives, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds become aligned with the will of God. Conversion unto the Lord requires both persistence and patience. . . .

“ . . . Consistently being true to the gospel is the essence of conversion. We should know the gospel is true and be true to the gospel.”<sup>2</sup>

Before cancer, I had not been tried beyond that which I could bear without turning to the Lord completely, and sadly, I did not always have patience or persistence in the gospel. During my battle to overcome cancer, however, I chose to turn to the Lord in all things. I made the effort to

seek Him, and I put His promise to the test when He said, “Will ye not *now* return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?” (3 Nephi 9:13; emphasis added). Here are three specific ways cancer has helped me become converted to the Lord:

#### **1. Making and Keeping Covenants**

The blessings from keeping baptismal and temple covenants help us stay converted through trials. I was blessed as those around me kept their covenants to “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things” (Mosiah 18:9) and to be “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; . . . mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (verses 8–9).

One such display came only a few days after my cancer diagnosis. I was scheduled to speak in church, and the congregation organized a surprise to show their support: they all dressed in pink. This simple gesture changed my outlook on keeping covenants. There is power in the small, simple efforts.

During my trial of cancer, I also witnessed how “a

*Melodee's husband cut her hair at a “hair-shaving party” attended by more than 25 friends, who all wore hats or scarves to show their support.*

temple marriage provides an eternal perspective and a greater measure of divine assistance.”<sup>3</sup> I was converted to more fully keeping these sacred marriage covenants as I witnessed the strength and blessings that flowed as my husband and I worked together to overcome this difficult trial. I know my spouse loves more than my temporal self; he loves my soul, and this helps me as I strive to love him with all my heart. We didn’t simply make vows “until death do us part.” We are partners for eternity, and if we are committed and converted to keeping our covenants, we will be strengthened to withstand any trial.

## 2. “I Can Do All Things through Christ”

I’m a strong person. Some of my talents include independence, resourcefulness, and assertiveness. But our talents can often become a source of pride that Satan can use against us. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warned, “If we are not wary, Satan can

cause our spiritual downfall by corrupting us through our strengths as well as by exploiting our weaknesses.”<sup>4</sup>

When we fail to recognize the Savior as the giver of all gifts, we are often “compelled to be humble” (Alma 32:13). In my case, humility came when my immune system was so depleted that I did not have even enough energy to lift myself out of bed. Despair and fear began to overtake me. I went from being the mom who could “do it all” to being able to do absolutely nothing on my own. In humility, I turned to the Lord and experienced His promise that He will never leave us comfortless (see John 14:18). Angels in earthly form comforted me—a neighbor rushed over to climb my stairs, lift my crying baby from his crib, and calm him. My family members and friends dropped their plans in order to comfort me, clean my house, and cook for and feed me. Humility made me strong, as I was converted to humbly relying on the Lord’s strength to be able to “do all things” (Philippians 4:13).

## 3. Different People, Different Trials

Before cancer, I often found myself shocked that some people weren’t able to handle certain trials. Then I experienced a trial that was extremely difficult to handle, and I realized how wrong I had been to attempt to judge the lives of others. Cancer progresses in a somewhat public eye, so when people saw me as the bald and broken cancer patient, they would express things like, “I don’t know how you do it,” or “When I think about what you’re going through, I realize that I don’t have anything to complain about.” At the same time, I began to say, “Yes, I have cancer. But I have not experienced divorce, abuse, the death of a parent or child, job loss, poverty, addictions, having a child with a disability, or many other major storms that have burdened the lives of others.”

This life is one of testing, but the tests look different for each of us. One insightful Church member observed: “Everyone has different trials, and Heavenly Father is aware of those. If we are humble enough to follow the plan He has for us, we’ll be happy.”<sup>5</sup>



*My husband and I are partners for eternity, and if we are committed and converted to keeping our covenants, we will be strengthened to withstand any trial.*



*Humility made me  
strong, as I was  
converted to humbly  
relying on the Lord's  
strength to be able to  
"do all things."*

Through my cancer experience, my heart was changed to understand that not one person's story is just like mine—not their strengths or weaknesses; not their triumphs or trials. So I should quit comparing my life to others' lives.

Years ago, President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught: "It is not possible to judge another fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. . . . People are not in the same position. . . . It is not where you are but the direction in which you are going that counts."<sup>6</sup>

My conversion to the Lord helped me understand that without the Savior, none of us will ever have the hope of becoming perfect.

### **Pressing On**

The Savior's promised pattern was true for me: after much tribulation, I was converted, and He healed me (see D&C 112:13).

My doctor proclaimed, "You are cancer free." I celebrated being in remission, but the joy was short-lived. Only a year later we received the news that cancer had returned, this time in my bones. There is no cure this time, but I am still converted. I have not lost faith or the hope in miracles. During times of trial we have more reason to seek and to find our Savior and to take His yoke upon us (see Matthew 11:29–30).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared, "Though our trials are diverse, there is one thing the Lord expects of us no matter our difficulties and sorrows: He expects us to press on."<sup>7</sup>

I must strive to keep seeking, learning, enduring, and becoming perfected. Conversion is not a onetime event or a chore to be completed. "Conversion is not an end, but a beginning of a new way of life," said Elder L. Tom Perry (1922–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>8</sup> My conversion process continues as I "try a little harder to be a little better"<sup>9</sup> each day. I also hope to share my testimony and help others in their own conversion process, until I hear the words of the Master Healer: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21). ■

*The author lives in Texas, USA.*

### **NOTES**

1. See David A. Bednar, "Accepting the Lord's Will and Timing," *Ensign*, Aug. 2016, 28–35; Doctrine and Covenants 19:18.
2. David A. Bednar, "Converted unto the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 107, 108, 109.
3. "Celestial Marriage," *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 70.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, "Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 12.
5. Dave Belnap, in Melissa Merrill, "Faith and Infertility," *Ensign*, Apr. 2011, 29.
6. N. Eldon Tanner, "Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged," *Ensign*, May 1972, 35.
7. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Press On," *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 101.
8. L. Tom Perry, "When Thou Art Converted, Strengthen Thy Brethren," *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 18.
9. Gordon B. Hinckley, "We Have a Work to Do," *Ensign*, May 1995, 88.

# STEPPING ACROSS THE MISSISSIPPI

*Far from where the river is wide, I learned a lesson  
about the power of tributaries.*

By Tom Edmunds

A number of years ago I went on a business trip to Minnesota, USA, with some associates. On our way to an activity sponsored by the hosting company, our van driver pulled over at a wide spot in the road. He encouraged us to get out and look around.

It seemed like an odd place to stretch our legs, but then he pointed to a small set of stairs. It led to a three-foot-square platform with railings on three sides but not in back. At the back was an open space about 18 inches wide with a tiny stream running under it. Directly opposite this

space was another platform with stairs leading down the other direction.

We all took the opportunity to climb the stairs and step from one platform to the other. As the sign at the base of the platform explained, we had now stepped across the Mississippi River.

Of course, the Mississippi grows much wider from there. I have since crossed bridges in Missouri and Iowa where the river seems immense. At its widest navigable width, just downstream from its confluence with the Missouri River in Illinois, the Mississippi is nearly one mile across.



All rivers start small. They become great like the Mississippi as tributaries flow into them. We each have such tributaries and rivers in our own lives, for evil or for good. The Lord says, “Out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33).

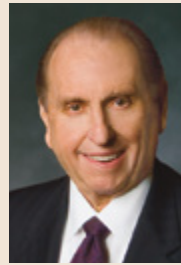
Some of life’s streams are negative. They start with an indiscretion, such as telling a little lie, looking “just once” at pornography, or allowing a seed of anger to be planted in our souls. Repentance allows us to cross over such transgressions easily while they are small. But if we keep feeding an evil stream, it eventually forms a sinister river. We tell a second lie to cover the first. We look at an inappropriate picture again, then again and again. We relive a small bitterness until it swells into resentment. These large rivers are much more difficult to cross. The Book of Mormon refers to such rivers of evil as “filthy water” and warns that they can become the “depths of hell” (see 1 Nephi 8:13–14; 12:16).

Fortunately, there are also spiritually strengthening streams. They start small, fed by daily habits like personal prayer, scripture study, and keeping a journal. We feel

comfort when we pray, so we pray again. We find an answer in the scriptures and gain confidence to search for more. We record our blessings and start to see clearly how the Holy Ghost guides us. Such recurring events become tributaries of testimony, flowing together to transform our spiritual stream into a river of righteousness.

Each of us has a choice about which sort of river we will feed each day. I hope that we will choose to feed the spiritual streams until they become rivers of righteousness. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



### CHOICES DETERMINE DESTINY

“It has been said that the door of history turns on small hinges, and so do people’s lives. The choices we make determine our destiny.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.



The colors on this map, created in 1944, indicate variations in the size, course, and content of a section of the Mississippi River and its tributaries over centuries of time.

# Kinship Care

*Raising the child of a relative involves unique challenges best met by applying gospel principles.*

**By Jacci Graham**, Licensed Clinical Social Worker,  
**and Jeremy Yorgason**, Associate Professor of Family Life at  
Brigham Young University

When one of Dorothy's sons fathered a child out of wedlock, her life took an unexpected turn. Initially, Dorothy (names have been changed) took care of her granddaughter only occasionally. However, as time went on, Dorothy's granddaughter began staying with her more and more frequently, and eventually, Dorothy gained legal custody of the girl. For Dorothy, the situation was difficult physically, financially, and emotionally, and her granddaughter faced the personal challenges resulting from living in an abusive home, then being thrust into a new environment.

Dorothy's story represents a growing trend within and without the Church: people are raising grandchildren or other young relatives. In the United States, relatives are raising more than 2.5 million children because their parents, for a variety of reasons, cannot.

Relatives who accept the responsibility of being a guardian and nurturer can be a great blessing to the children they welcome into their homes. Children in what is often called "kinship care" typically have fewer behavioral problems, have a greater sense of stability, and are more likely to report that they "always felt loved" than children in non-relative foster care or group homes.<sup>1</sup>

However, relatives who assume this parental role also face many challenges. The following suggestions can help

caregivers and children manage these challenges through applying gospel principles.

## Foster Habits of Love

Families like Dorothy and her granddaughter can study "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and discover truths such as, "Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Focusing on loving the children and teaching them to understand and live by gospel truths will help them develop habits of righteous living. Some of the most important habits are family scripture study and prayer, church attendance, and regular family home evenings. In addition, families benefit by spending regular time together, such as family dinnertime.

Citing various authorities, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught: "The time a family spends together 'eating meals at home [is] the strongest predictor of children's academic achievement and psychological adjustment.' Family mealtimes have also been shown to be a strong bulwark against children's smoking, drinking, or using drugs. There is inspired wisdom in this advice to parents: what your children really want for dinner is you."<sup>3</sup>





Other positive methods of helping a child foster a sense of self-worth and mature in a healthy way include giving praise, modeling positive behaviors, and implementing appropriate discipline.

### Establish Roles

One of the greatest challenges faced by kinship caregivers is establishing appropriate roles. For example, grandparents who care for their children's children often struggle to find balance between being a fun-loving grandparent and being a responsibility-bearing parent. When Dorothy gained custody of her granddaughter, for a number of years they enjoyed an easy, friend-like relationship. However, as the granddaughter reached her early teen years, she developed a less cooperative attitude while trying to cope with the challenges of her past. Dorothy struggled with how to foster a positive relationship and simultaneously establish rules and enforce consequences.

Establishing rules can be difficult, but children need structure and boundaries to have the sense of stability necessary for emotional health. Dorothy and her granddaughter eventually joined the Church. They found that applying gospel principles improved their relationship in meaningful ways. Their challenges did not disappear, but they found guidance and support during difficult times.

### Talk about the Parents

Children who, for reasons not of their own making, find themselves being raised by a non-parent relative may mistakenly blame themselves for their situation. One reason this happens is that caregivers sometimes do not explain to the child why he is not able to live with his parents. Caregivers may feel embarrassed or worry that the child will think poorly of the parents.

One of the most successful ways kinship caregivers can help children is to talk carefully with them about why they are being raised by a relative instead of their parents. Children who understand this are more likely to feel safe. Moreover, both the caregiver and the child are less likely



*Give praise, model positive behavior, and implement appropriate discipline.*

to blame themselves or feel a sense of shame. Prudence regarding the child's age and maturity must be exercised when weighing how much to reveal and how soon.

Being honest and positive about the children's parents will help maintain family ties and prevent the anger, frustration, and feelings of betrayal that often hinder healthy relationships.

### Assess Emotional Strain

Many children come to their extended families with emotional wounds from abuse or chronic neglect. Children's emotional trauma may lead them to act out in school, push the limits of rules they are given, and question the love that others show them. They may experience feelings of loss and struggle with attachment as they try to cope with new living situations. In these circumstances, caregivers can provide an environment of stability, encouragement, and love for children. Caregivers also may want to consider seeking professional mental health services for the child.

Caregivers themselves often experience emotional strain, frustration, or even anger as they try to integrate a child into a new home. Most caregivers who assume guardianship for a child did not expect this responsibility but

accepted it when asked. Many resume the parental role long after their own children have grown. They may question whether they are capable of parenting again.

Caregivers may benefit by refreshing their parenting skills (particularly discipline and problem-solving techniques) through books, Internet resources, and classes. Caregivers may also want to learn about age-appropriate behaviors so that they know what to expect of the children they care for. Studying the challenges the children may face—including emotional disorders, grieving the loss of parents, drug use, and behavior problems—will make supporting the child easier.

### Address Social and Physical Challenges

Older caregivers often say they don't relate well with the children in their care because of the vast age difference. Additionally, they find they no longer have the energy or strength to deal with these new challenges. Some feel lonely or isolated. Others describe frustration at not being physically able to do what they want or need to do to rear the child. In both cases, developing a strong network of emotional and practical support from neighbors and ward members can be immensely helpful. Caregivers may find others in similar circumstances and develop a social network. Ward leadership and home and visiting teachers also can provide needed assistance.

### Consider Financial Issues

Becoming a caregiver involves financial considerations. Alice was 84 when she adopted her great-granddaughter Julie. Several months later, Alice's husband died and she was left to raise Julie on her own. Alice knew that she would be physically and financially unable to care for her great-granddaughter by herself, so she sought the help of her sister Helen. At age 70, Helen moved in with Alice and went back to work as a respiratory therapist to help defray the costs associated with raising a child. After several years, both of Julie's siblings came to live with Alice and Helen, who together established a system of work distribution

that allowed them to care for three young children.

Alice and Helen found a creative solution to the question of how to afford raising children at an advanced age. In most cases, caregivers are not financially prepared for their new responsibility. In all cases, continuing to follow the counsel of Church leaders will increase the likelihood of success.

For instance, all caregivers can observe this counsel from Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "To provide providently, we must practice the principles of provident living: joyfully living within our means, being content with what we have, avoiding excessive debt, and diligently saving and preparing for rainy-day emergencies. When we live providently, we can provide for ourselves and our families and also follow the Savior's example to serve and bless others."<sup>4</sup>

Local priesthood leaders can also offer counsel. In addition, many areas have government and community-sponsored programs designed to help caregivers raise children in their charge. These programs help caregivers address the challenges associated with the cost of education, food, and even medical care.

### Counsel with the Lord

As in all things, caregivers can seek the counsel of the Lord. Regular temple attendance and prayer can help provide clarity for the many difficult decisions that both caregivers and children face. As they find answers through proactive searching of available resources and heed guidance from the Spirit, relative caregivers can be a powerful influence for good in the lives of children. They can be the means of teaching the children in their care "to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live."<sup>5</sup> ■

#### NOTES

1. See Tiffany Conway and Rutledge Q. Hutson, "Is Kinship Care Good for Kids?" (fact sheet, Center for Law and Social Policy, Mar. 2, 2007), 1–2, [clasp.org](http://clasp.org).
2. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, "Good, Better, Best," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 106.
4. Robert D. Hales, "Becoming Provident Providers Temporally and Spiritually," *Ensign*, May 2009, 8.
5. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.



**By Brian K. Ashton**  
Second Counselor,  
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General Presidency

# HELPING YOUTH Teach

**Y**outh need to teach. The Lord made this clear when He listed the duties of a priest: “The priest’s duty is *to preach, teach, expound, exhort, and baptize, and administer the sacrament*” (D&C 20:46; emphasis added).

Just a few verses later the Lord extends the duty to teach and expound to teachers and deacons (see D&C 20:58–59). The truth is that all of our young men and young women need the opportunity to teach occasionally.

## The Benefits of Youth Teaching Other Youth

Jesus Christ was the perfect teacher. Teaching helps youth follow the Savior’s example and become more like Him. Teaching also prepares them to become missionaries, parents, and leaders in the Church. When youth teach, they have to study the gospel and live it. They also have to have the Spirit in order to teach (see D&C 42:14). As a result, youth teachers usually learn more and gain a stronger testimony of the topic than those they teach.

In addition, youth who teach gain confidence and learn teaching skills. Youth who have had the opportunity to be teachers also learn to be better students and class members.

What’s more, the youth being taught are also blessed. Youth often listen and participate more when their peers teach. Friendships are strengthened as youth discuss gospel

topics with the Spirit present. And youth are frequently better able to help one another work through common problems.

## How Can Adult Leaders Help Youth Succeed?

When youth teach, adult leaders are responsible for ensuring appropriate behavior and a spiritual atmosphere.

Adult leaders follow the Spirit when inviting youth to teach.<sup>1</sup> Some youth are not ready to teach, and leaders must be careful not to make these youth feel uncomfortable. Other youth may be ready to teach only part of a lesson, but others could teach an entire lesson. While youth should usually have at least a part in teaching most lessons, they should not teach every lesson. In small classes, youth should not be asked to teach too often. Some lessons, especially those on difficult topics, are best taught by adults. Furthermore, youth need to see adult leaders model correct teaching principles.

Adult leaders or parents should work one-on-one with youth to help them prepare their lessons. This assistance includes asking youth to read the lesson at least a week in advance,<sup>2</sup> suggesting they pray to know what Heavenly Father would have them teach, developing a lesson plan, and practicing teaching the lesson together. As youth receive revelation during the preparation process, leaders can help them recognize it as such.



*Youth need to teach,  
and with some help,  
they can teach well.*

together. Jacob took the first half of the lesson, showed a short video, shared scriptures related to our topic, and asked thoughtful questions.

Jacob also asked the class members

Adult leaders can help youth teachers create questions that generate discussion, invite the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and help students discover truth for themselves. Leaders can also help youth learn to be silent after asking a question to give class members time to receive revelation.

During the lesson, adult leaders could share personal experiences and testimonies that help the youth see that they are not alone in their challenges and give them hope to overcome them. Youth need the wisdom and experience that adult leaders offer. Leaders should also clarify doctrine when necessary.

Adult leaders avoid taking over the lesson, even if the youth teacher is struggling. However, leaders can be prepared to provide support by studying the lesson materials beforehand and praying about how they can best help the youth teacher.

### **Youth Can Teach, and Teach Well**

I recently was asked to substitute teach my ward's 12- and 13-year-old Sunday School class. I asked my 13-year-old son, Jacob, to help me teach. We made a lesson plan

what they were feeling and helped them recognize the Holy Ghost.

In the second half of the class, I had the class members teach each other the First Vision. We then invited them to teach the First Vision to their families in family home evening. After the class we sent an email to the parents informing them of our invitation.

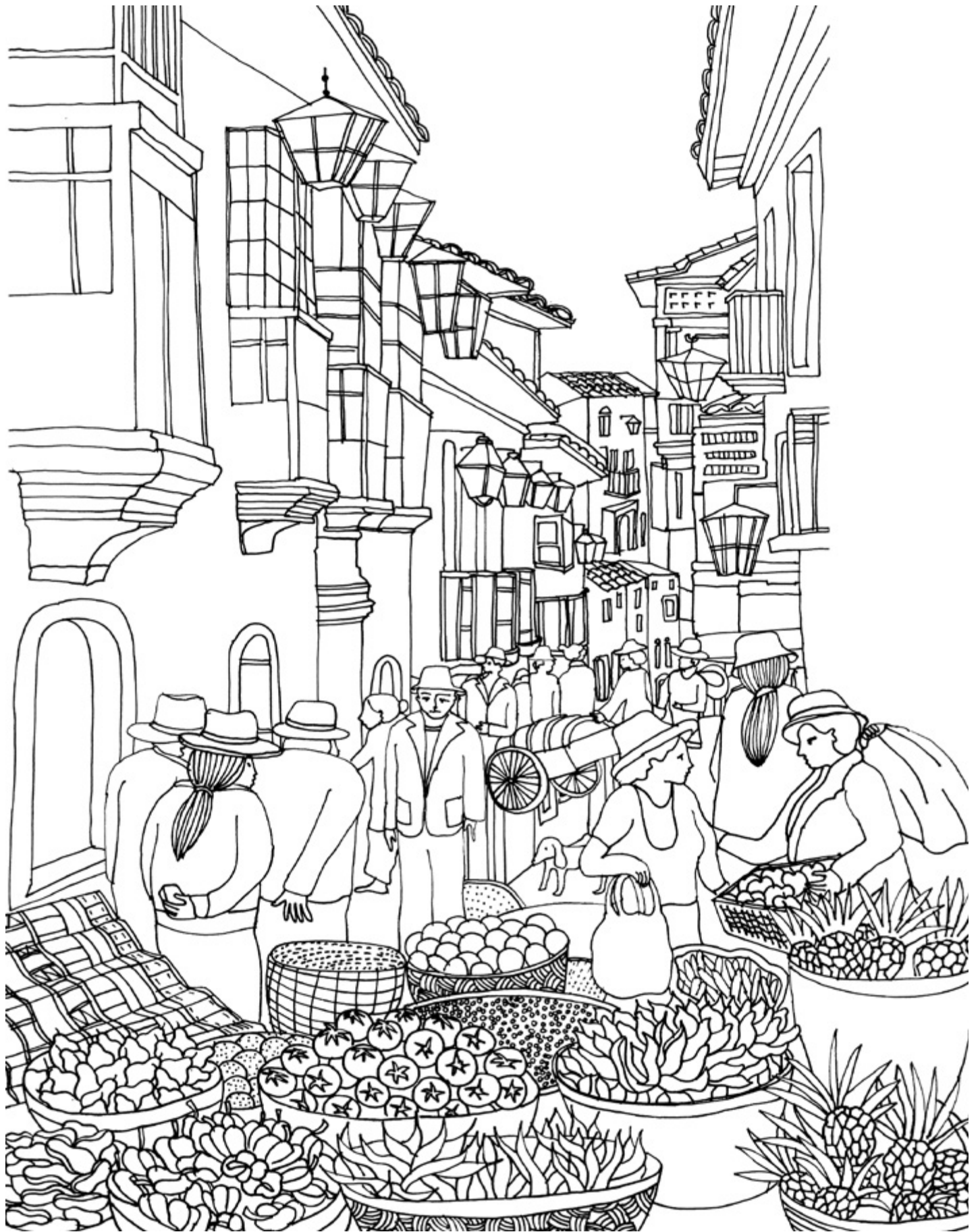
When I asked Jacob how he felt about the lesson, he said, "It was really good. I know the Spirit was there because I didn't think my classmates could answer our questions, but they did."

Youth need to teach, and you can help them succeed. As they do, their testimonies will grow, and they will be better prepared to be missionaries, parents, and leaders in the Church. More importantly, they will become more like the Savior. ■

*Please see the new manual Teaching in the Savior's Way at [teaching.lds.org](http://teaching.lds.org) for more ideas on improving teaching.*

#### **NOTES**

1. Aaronic Priesthood quorum presidents counsel with their adult leaders in deciding which youth will teach upcoming lessons (see *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 8.3.2).
2. Because revelation comes "line upon line, precept upon precept" (2 Nephi 28:30), reading the lesson at least a week in advance gives teachers time to receive revelation.





**By Elder  
Gene R. Cook**

Served as a  
General Authority  
Seventy from 1975  
to 2007

# THE Lost SCRIPTURES

*God does hear and answer our prayers if we exercise faith in  
Him and in His Son.*

**O**n July 29, 1977, Sister Cook and I had just finished visiting the Bolivia Santa Cruz Mission as part of my assignment as a member of the Seventy when we had a layover in the Cochabamba, Bolivia, airport for about five hours. We were very tired, so we were both delighted to have a few hours to rest. As I was drifting off to sleep, I had a strong impression that I should awaken and write down some ideas flowing into my mind.

I wrote for nearly three hours, solving some organizational problems I had struggled with in my responsibility at Church headquarters for a number of years. I felt a great outpouring of the Spirit and excitedly wrote down each inspired thought.

Finally we left for La Paz, Bolivia. We were graciously met by President and Sister Chase Allred at the airport and driven in their van to the mission office. We locked the van, leaving our luggage and my briefcase inside, but only did so because Sister Allred asked an elder to keep his eye on the van.

Upon entering the office, the president was confronted by a woman whose husband was dying. Both the president and I helped calm her and assist with her needs. Meanwhile, Sisters Cook and Allred left for the mission home.

When the president and I returned to the van, all of our property was gone. I assumed that Sister Cook had taken the things with her to the mission home. But while we were driving toward the home, I discovered that the right front small window-wing had been damaged and began to fear that perhaps our property had been stolen.

*The woman had a strong impression that something holy was being desecrated.*

Upon arrival at the mission home, we realized that all of our property had indeed been stolen. The loss of the clothing and a large amount of cash created an immediate but only temporary problem. What was more disheartening was that my scriptures were in the stolen briefcase along with the inspired ideas I had just received in Cochabamba. I was overwhelmed with discouragement, anger, and feelings of helplessness.

After we had all prayed for the recovery of our possessions, we tried to enjoy our dinner but could not. My scriptures had been given to me by my parents, with a sacred inscription to me from my mother and my father before he died. I had spent thousands of hours marking, cross-referencing, and loving the only earthly possessions I had ever considered to be of much value.

Though President Allred and I had much to discuss, I felt a strong impression that we must do all in our power to recover the scriptures. So after supper all of those present knelt to pray once again. I pled with the Lord that the scriptures would be returned, that the persons who had taken them would be led to know of their unrighteous act and repent, and that the return of the books would be the means of bringing someone into the true Church.

We determined to search the area near the mission office and in a nearby field, hoping that the thief or thieves might have taken the saleable items and discarded the English books.

About 10 of us then loaded into the van with flashlights and warm clothing. We drove up and down streets, scouring vacant lots and talking with people until we'd exhausted all possibilities. No one had seen or heard anything. Finally we returned home dejected. President Allred and I finished our business late into the night, and the next day Sister Cook and I flew back to our home in Quito, Ecuador.

Over the next few weeks, the missionaries in Bolivia kept searching. In sheer desperation, they decided to place an ad in two daily newspapers offering a reward.

Meanwhile, in Quito, I was struggling spiritually. I had not studied the scriptures at all since mine were stolen,

which had almost never been the case since my youth. I tried to study, but every time I read a verse, I could recall only a few of the many cross-references I had made over 20 years. I was disheartened, depressed, and had no desire to read. I prayed many times that my scriptures would be found, expressing to the Lord that I had never used my scriptures for any purpose other than for glorifying His name and trying to teach others the truths He had taught me. My wife and young children prayed continually for the same blessing every day for three weeks, saying, "Heavenly Father, please bring back Daddy's scriptures."

After about three weeks I felt a strong spiritual impression: "Elder Cook, how long will you go on without reading and studying?" The words burned, and I determined that I must be humble enough and submissive enough to start all over again. Using my wife's scriptures, I began reading in Genesis in the Old Testament, and with her permission, marking and cross-referencing once again.

On August 18, a Church employee, Brother Eb Davis, arrived in Ecuador from Bolivia with a package from the mission president in La Paz. He laid my scriptures on my desk along with the inspired notes I had made of my spiritual impressions.

The joy I experienced is indescribable. To realize that the Lord, in some miraculous way, could lift those books out of La Paz, a city of 700,000–800,000 people 1,300 miles away, from the hands of thieves and return them intact—not one page removed, torn, or soiled—is still beyond me. That day I promised the Lord I would make better use of my time and my scriptures—as instruments in His hands for teaching the gospel—than I had ever made before.

A few days later I returned to Bolivia and discovered that a lady had been in a marketplace—one of hundreds in La Paz—and saw a drunken man waving around a black book. She was a member of a protestant church and had a strong spiritual impression that something holy was being desecrated. She approached the man and asked him what it was. He did not know but showed her the book. She





asked if he had anything else. He pulled out another black book. She asked if there was more. He removed a folder full of papers that he said he was going to burn. She then asked to purchase those things from him, to which he agreed, for the price of 50 pesos (about U.S. \$2.50).

Afterward, she felt unsure why she had purchased the books. They were in English, but she didn't even know English. And they had been expensive—nearly 10 percent of her monthly income. She had no reason to buy the books except for her spiritual impression. She immediately began a search for the church that was named on the front of the books: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After approaching a number of churches, she finally arrived at the mission office of the Church in La Paz. She hadn't heard about the reward or seen the ad in the newspaper, which was to appear that day. She did not ask for any money, not even to reclaim the 50 pesos she had paid. The elders received the books with joy and paid her the reward anyway.

She told the missionaries that she was associated with a Pentecostal sect but listened intently as they told her about the gospel. She recalled reading something about Joseph Smith from a pamphlet she had picked up in the street two or three years previously. She accepted the missionary lessons, and after the second lesson, she committed to baptism. Two weeks later, on September 11, 1977, on a Sunday afternoon at a branch in La Paz, Bolivia, Maria Cloefe Cardenas Terrazas and her son Marco Fernando Miranda Cardenas, age 12, were baptized by Elder Douglas Reeder.

The Lord had transformed my overpowering feelings of helplessness when the scriptures were lost into great feelings of joy at seeing His hand revealed. The Lord said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

God does hear and answer our prayers if we exercise faith in Him and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

# YOUTH AND FAMILY HISTORY COME TOGETHER

By Sally Johnson Odekirk  
Church Magazines

When Westyn D., 17, of Utah, USA, attended a youth family history conference at Brigham Young University, he became excited about family history. He says, “When I was called as a ward family history consultant, I decided I needed to learn how to do it myself before I could teach others. It’s a lot more fun than I thought it would be. Even though it is hard work at times, I can really get in touch with my ancestors.”

Family history conference director Hannah Allan explains, “Family history is so personal that we wanted the youth to learn more about their own families. They have become excited about their families’ stories. They want to learn to do something worthwhile and eternal.”

Youth are following the direction of Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to “find, take, and teach”: *find* family names, *take* those names to the temple, and *teach* others to do likewise.<sup>1</sup>

## Finding Names and Stories

Emily M., 16, from Florida, USA, says, “When I go through tough times, I think of my ancestors and what they went through. They are my

heroes, and their stories inspire me. If they can do really hard things like going across the plains, then I can go through my trials.”

## Taking Names to the Temple

Taking family names to the temple deepens ties to our ancestors. During a testimony meeting, one young man said, “Many of our ancestors had to work hard to provide for their families in ways that we don’t have to. Since we have the time and technology available to us, we can do the temple work for them that they couldn’t do for themselves.”

## Teaching Others

Brooklyn T., 14, of Utah, a stake family history specialist, says, “It’s been fun getting to know other people through family history. The people I’ve taught have been excited to learn about their ancestors—where they came from, what their jobs were—and look at their photos so they can see family resemblances. It’s exciting to see how others connect with their ancestors.”

As the youth have learned to “find, take, and teach,” they have come to understand the promise found in Malachi 4:5–6:

*Teach youth the basics and watch them grow.*

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” ■

### NOTE

1. See Quentin L. Cook, “The Joy of Family History Work,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2016, 29.

Learn more about finding ancestors’ names to take to the temple and helping others do the same: [FamilySearch.org/findnames](https://www.familysearch.org/findnames)



## A CHALLENGE EXTENDED TO ALL

“I promise you protection for you and your family as you take this challenge to ‘find as many names to take to the temple as ordinances you perform in the temple, and teach others to do the same.’”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, address at RootsTech conference, Feb. 6, 2016.



### IDEAS FOR YOUTH WHO SERVE AS FAMILY HISTORY CONSULTANTS

- *Have a party with a mix of activities and teaching.* For example, teach skills on how to learn about ancestors and then have a cultural activity with food and customs from the countries ancestors came from.
- *Encourage people to collect stories of what ancestors liked to do.* Invite them to learn about sports their ancestors played, foods they ate, and jobs they had.

- *Use available resources to build interest.* For example: show videos related to family history and pioneers; use the *My Family* booklet to share stories; use the *Family History Coloring Book* to help children learn about family history; use social media to create awareness (see [lds.org/youth/family-history](https://lds.org/youth/family-history)).
- *Invite people to add photos, stories, documents, and sources on FamilySearch.org.*

**For more ideas, see [lds.org/callings/temple-and-family-history](https://lds.org/callings/temple-and-family-history).**



*Self-reliance takes many forms. With the Lord's help, we develop in body, mind, and spirit—and help others do the same. The following five stories show how members have been blessed by becoming more self-reliant.*

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: EARTHQUAKES AND DEMIJOHNS

When I was nine months old, my parents—a young couple, with three children and pregnant with another—were caught in a magnitude-7.5 earthquake in Argentina. As our house began to fall down, my father and mother grabbed us and ran. After checking to see that we were OK, they looked around at the devastation. My father quickly assessed the damages and losses, and realized that we would have no clean water from the public network. There wasn't even enough water to wash off the dust from the crumbling houses!

My grandmother had listened to the prophet and filled two demijohns with fresh drinking water, which supplied our family's needs until emergency assistance arrived.

When the shock wore off, my father grabbed his bicycle and went to check on his mother, who lived a few blocks away. When he arrived at his mother's destroyed house, he walked around back where she was sitting with only a few scratches.

My grandmother asked my father to save some things from the debris, and while he was doing so, he found two demijohns (glass containers in which 5 to 15 gallons [20 to 60 L] of wine were sold) filled with fresh drinking water. They were undamaged.

A few months before the earthquake, President Spencer W. Kimball

(1895–1985) had instructed the Saints throughout the world to store food and water. My grandmother, a recent convert, had listened. From those two demijohns, we were able to supply our family's needs for a couple of days until emergency assistance arrived.

This example of my grandmother's obedience was a testimony to my father, who later converted to the gospel. Our family has since been sealed in the temple. I am so grateful for my grandmother's faith and obedience to the call to be prepared. ■ Ricardo Sosa, Santa Lucia, Argentina



## PHYSICAL HEALTH: WEIGHT LOSS AND THE WORD OF WISDOM

In my mid-60s, it was getting harder for me to get around. I weighed almost 300 pounds (136 kg). I had low energy and stamina and even obtained a handicapped parking permit so that I could park as close to stores as possible.

I decided it was time to lose weight. I turned to Doctrine and Covenants 89 and prayed to Heavenly Father, “Help me to understand what this is really telling me.” Over time each verse, each word took on new meaning. Even though I don’t drink alcohol, tea, or coffee, and I don’t smoke, I hadn’t really absorbed the overall message. I knew the Word of Wisdom was a health code, but I had never before thought of it as a way of life.

For the first time I truly felt that I could change my lifestyle. I set a

realistic goal of losing 50 pounds (23 kg) in 50 weeks.

I kept track of my calories and nutrients. I researched the health benefits of everything I ate. As I ate healthier foods, I felt satisfied. I had no cravings. My body seemed to know what it needed. Unhealthy food I used to enjoy lost its appeal. I quit eating sugar. Over time, I quit counting calories and ate plant-based foods, as the Word of Wisdom says: “that which yieldeth fruit, whether in the ground or above the ground” (D&C 89:16). I met my goal and more. In just over 23 months I had lost over half my body weight. That’s 12 dress sizes smaller! I have now maintained that weight for over three years.

I feel healthy. I no longer have blood-sugar spikes when I’m hungry,

and I can’t remember the last time I had a headache. I don’t have to take medications. While losing weight has contributed to my overall feeling of well-being, my new lifestyle does also.

Controlling the things I eat is part of overcoming the natural man (see Mosiah 3:19). In turn, it tweaks my spiritual discernment, allowing me to receive the promise that I “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). Giving up fast food for wisdom is a good trade-off.

I am most grateful to a loving Heavenly Father who heard my simple plea and gave me insight into the Word of Wisdom. I know the Word of Wisdom is revelation. I know it can change lives. ■  
Carol E. Wolf, Utah, USA



## EMPLOYMENT: A LOT OF FAITH, A LITTLE FURNITURE

When my wife and I married, I was unemployed. We had very little furniture, but we had a lot of love and a lot of faith.

When I finally got a job, it required me to work Sunday afternoons. I had promised the Lord that I wouldn't work on His day. But I was still responsible for providing for my family. Even so, the promise I'd made didn't leave my mind.

My answer came the next Sunday while singing "Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning" (*Hymns*, no. 280) and realizing the importance of the Sabbath day. After learning that negotiating a new schedule wouldn't be an option, I quit my job. We went on with life, believing that the Lord would take care of us. My wife worked

to support us, and we had our first daughter, Saria. Meanwhile, I took a course in electronic mechanics, utilizing the Perpetual Education Fund. Still no job came.

My wife had to return to work three months after Saria was born, but Saria missed her desperately. We prayed to know what to do and decided to have her leave work. It seemed imprudent, but we felt it was what we were supposed to do. We had four months of unemployment insurance for me to find some work, and at a providential time I obtained some temporary employment.

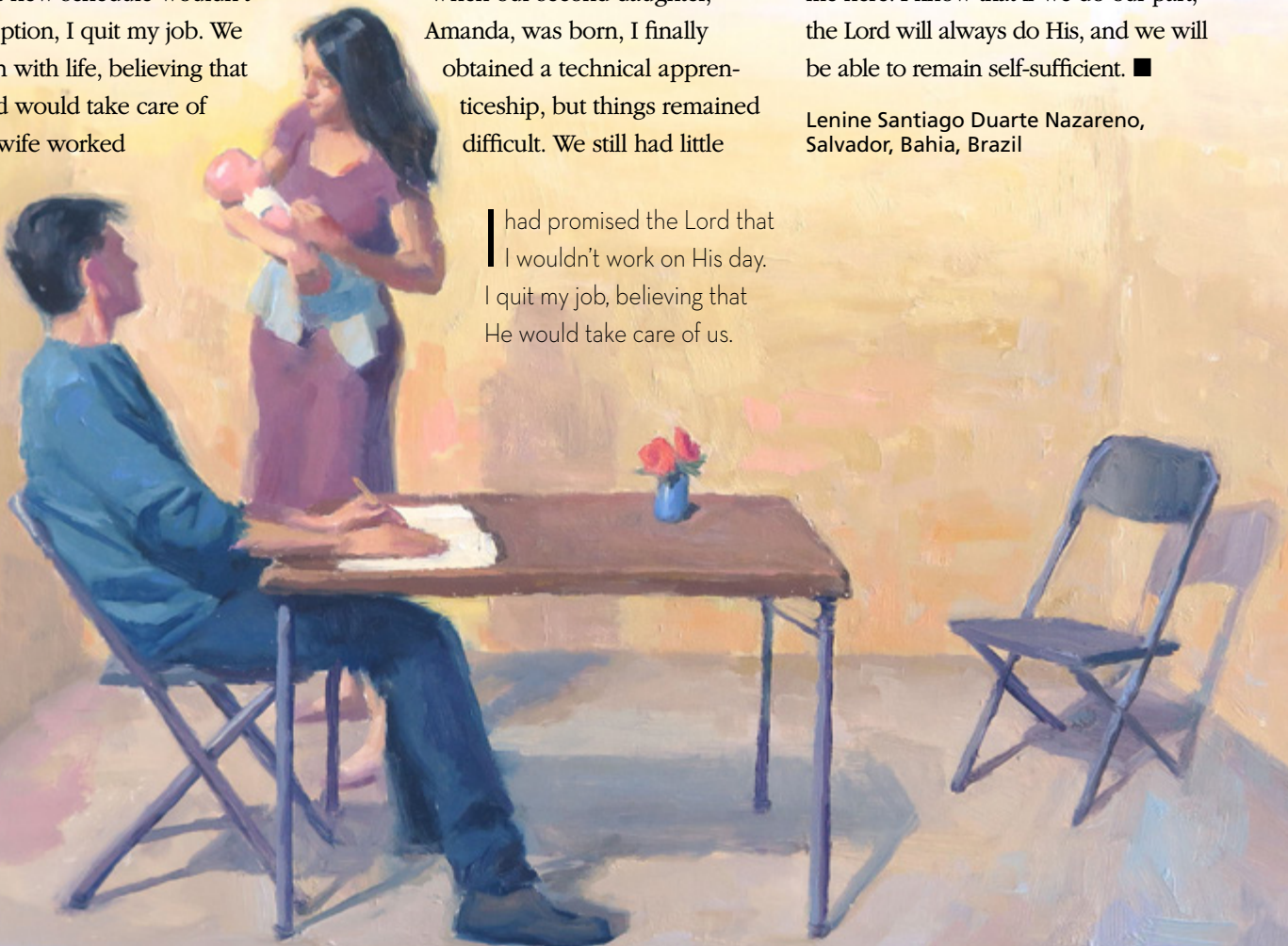
When our second daughter, Amanda, was born, I finally obtained a technical apprenticeship, but things remained difficult. We still had little

furniture and no stable work. I took the professional self-sufficiency course offered by the Church twice. I did my best, although the little I earned hardly covered our basic necessities.

Fifteen months after I started my apprenticeship, I got my current job. I am now a technician in electrical energy measurement at a large shopping center. I work Monday through Friday, which I consider to be a miracle in this industry. All my other colleagues work Sundays and holidays. We have a health plan and furniture! I know that the Lord and the Perpetual Education Fund got me here. I know that if we do our part, the Lord will always do His, and we will be able to remain self-sufficient. ■

Lenine Santiago Duarte Nazareno,  
Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

I had promised the Lord that I wouldn't work on His day. I quit my job, believing that He would take care of us.



## FINANCES: OATMEAL, BREAD, AND RICE AND BEANS

My husband's graduate school had been expensive, so we looked forward to a job that would help us pay off our debts. We were offered several positions but felt best about a professorship in Hawaii. However, when our contract arrived, the salary was lower than we had discussed. We were informed that there was a new policy and negotiation was not an option. We had felt sure about the new job, so we signed the contract anyway.

We loved Hawaii, my husband loved his job, and we were blessed as a family. Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our new interest rate would be 14 percent instead of our current 3 percent. We argued that we always made our payments on time and that had paid down a lot of the debt already. But the company was adamant.

First, we did some creative financing, transferring our balance to different credit cards with short-term, zero-percent interest rates. Then we started cutting costs. We drastically reduced our food, clothing, and diapers budget for our seven-person family. We lived on our food storage. Every morning we ate oatmeal; every afternoon we ate homemade bread; and every evening we ate rice and beans. There were no luxuries such as butter, fresh milk, or juice. After we paid tithing and basic expenses, all of our income went to paying off our credit cards.

Six months later, we had paid off 90 percent of our debt! The Lord had multiplied our income in miraculous ways. We were able to quickly pay off the remaining debt, and we are very thankful. My daughter still complains about when she had to eat oatmeal every morning, but I know that by paying our tithing and obeying the prophet, we were blessed financially and temporally. ■

Name withheld, Hawaii, USA



Things seemed to be going well with our student-debt payments until the credit card company informed us that our interest rate was going up.



**M**y husband and I wanted to accumulate a large supply of food storage, so we decided we would buy something extra every week.

## FOOD STORAGE: CANNED CHEESE AND MORTGAGE RATES

**W**hen I got married, I began to diligently store food. My husband and I wanted to accumulate a large supply, but we couldn't afford to buy it all at once, so we decided we would buy something extra every week. We looked for special offers on the things we bought regularly, especially canned foods.

I loved looking in my cupboard to see my little pile of canned and dried foodstuffs gradually growing bigger. Once we made the mistake of buying canned cheese, which was revolting,

but my husband steeled himself and ate a can each week until it was gone. After we had a decent amount of food storage, we began to eat from it, resolving to replace each item eaten with two more items.

Soon our cupboard became quite full, so we bought storage items for our dog and cats. We also began to store herbs and spices, vacuum-packed wheat, water and soft drinks, and anything we used daily that wasn't food, like soap, deodorant, and detergent.

Then we bought a house, and just

before we signed on the dotted line, mortgage rates increased drastically. We had to live on our food storage for almost a year to avoid losing our home.

Food storage is just a part of general housekeeping now. We use it and are blessed by it every day. I am so grateful that we listened to the inspired counsel from the Lord's prophets because it means that now I can look around in gratitude at my warm and cozy home. ■

Yvonne Aston, Channel Islands,  
United Kingdom



# ON THE PATH TO GREATER SELF-RELIANCE

*Are you becoming more self-reliant each day?*

**R**ate yourself on these statements to get an idea of where you are on the journey to self-reliance.

This evaluation is not a comprehensive list of guidelines. As you and your family prayerfully study this topic and counsel together, the Spirit can prompt you to know how to improve.

After completing the self-evaluation, consider setting some goals in the areas where you had lower scores.

## Preparedness

- \_\_\_ 1. I have cash set aside to use in case of an emergency.
- \_\_\_ 2. I keep my home stocked with emergency supplies (such as blankets, candles, flashlights).
- \_\_\_ 3. I keep important documents in a secure place, and my family and I know where to access them.
- \_\_\_ 4. I regularly buy and store extra food and water.
- \_\_\_ 5. I use the food storage I have and replace it with new food so it doesn't expire.

## Physical Health

- \_\_\_ 1. I make an effort to exercise regularly.
- \_\_\_ 2. I eat healthy foods and drink enough water every day.
- \_\_\_ 3. I live the Word of Wisdom and encourage others to do so as well.
- \_\_\_ 4. I avoid becoming addicted to harmful substances.
- \_\_\_ 5. I get adequate sleep and avoid oversleeping.

## Finances

- \_\_\_ 1. I seek ways to save money by reducing unnecessary expenses.
- \_\_\_ 2. I regularly put money aside in a savings or investment account.
- \_\_\_ 3. I avoid going into unnecessary debt.
- \_\_\_ 4. I pay an honest tithe and donate a generous fast offering.
- \_\_\_ 5. I take care of my possessions so they last longer.

## Education

- \_\_\_ 1. I seek formal and informal opportunities to learn.
- \_\_\_ 2. When seeking to gain more education, I look for resources such as scholarships or the Perpetual Education Fund.
- \_\_\_ 3. I welcome exposure to views and opinions that are different from mine.
- \_\_\_ 4. I seek the Spirit to help me discern truth and retain what I learn.
- \_\_\_ 5. I include daily gospel study as part of my education.

## Employment

- \_\_\_ 1. I make efforts to improve my work skills and productivity through seminars and work-sponsored classes.
- \_\_\_ 2. I work well with others, and they trust me.
- \_\_\_ 3. Before job searching, I seek feedback on my résumé and my interviewing skills.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am prayerful and positive while searching for work.
- \_\_\_ 5. I look for opportunities to make new contacts with potential to lead to employment.

## Response Key

**1**=Never, **2**=Sometimes, **3**=Often, **4**=Almost Always, **5**=Always



By Elder  
Matthew Cowley  
(1897–1953)

Of the Quorum of the  
Twelve Apostles

## MIRACLES

*“Send for the elders; I don’t feel very well.”*

A little over a year ago a couple came into my office carrying a little boy. The father said to me, “My wife and I have been fasting for two days, and we’ve brought our little boy up for a blessing. You are the one we’ve been sent to.”

I said, “What’s the matter with him?”

They said he was born blind, deaf, and dumb, no coordination of his muscles, couldn’t even crawl at the age of five years.

I said to myself, “This is it. ‘This kind cometh not out save by fasting and by prayer’ [see Matthew 17:21].” I had implicit faith in the fasting and the prayers of those parents. I blessed that child, and a few weeks later I received a letter: “Brother Cowley, we wish you could see our little boy now. He’s crawling. When we throw a ball across the floor he races after it on his hands and knees. He can see. When we clap our hands over his head he jumps. He can hear.”



Medical science had laid the burden down. God had taken over. . . .

I was called to a home in a little village in New Zealand one day. There the Relief Society sisters were preparing the body of one of our Saints. They had placed his body in front of the big house, as they call it, the house where the people come to wail and weep and mourn over the dead, when in rushed the dead man’s brother. He said, “Administer to him.”

And the young natives said, “Why, you shouldn’t do that. He’s dead.”

“You do it!”

. . . I had [a faithful old Maori] with me. . . . The younger native got down on his knees and he anointed this man. Then this great old sage got down and blessed him and commanded him to rise.

You should have seen the Relief Society sisters scatter. He sat up and said, “Send for the elders; I don’t feel very well.” . . . We told him he had just been administered to, and he said, “Oh, that was it.” He said, “I was dead. I could feel life coming back into me just like a blanket unrolling.” He outlived the brother that came in and told us to administer to him. . . .

God does have control of all of these elements. You and I can reach out, and if it’s His will, we can bring those elements under our control for His purposes. ■

*From “Miracles,” New Era, June 1975, 39–44, an article adapted from a talk given at a Brigham Young University devotional on February 18, 1953. Punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing standardized.*



## What is our reason for hope?

“If we give our heart to God, if we love the Lord Jesus Christ, if we do the best we can to live the gospel, then tomorrow—and every other day—is ultimately going to be magnificent, even if we don’t always recognize it as such. Why? Because our Heavenly Father wants it to be! He wants to bless us. A rewarding, abundant, and eternal life is the very object of His merciful plan for His children!”



## In Church Magazines

**Ensign:** How many of these lesser-known heroes in the Book of Mormon do you know? See page 42. Also, are you a grandparent who has had to take on the role of parent to your grandchild? Find helpful tips in “Kinship Care” (page 62).

**New Era:** Church leaders give answers to young people’s questions about marriage and family (page 2; see also page 14). Plus, youth can take “The 30-Day ‘I Love You’ Challenge” to see how many ways they can send that message to their families (page 10).

**Friend:** Does your family have media rules and standards? Don’t just talk about them once—keep reviewing and tweaking them to fit your family’s needs as time goes by. You can use “Be Smart, Be Safe, and Have Fun!” (page 24) to get a conversation started.

