

Ensign



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“WE QUALIFY FOR
**THE CLEANSING POWER
OF JESUS CHRIST**
WHEN WE PARTAKE OF THE
SACRAMENT WORTHILY.”

ELDER DALE G. RENLUND AND
SISTER RUTH L. RENLUND

From “The Beautiful Gift of the Sacrament,” page 30.



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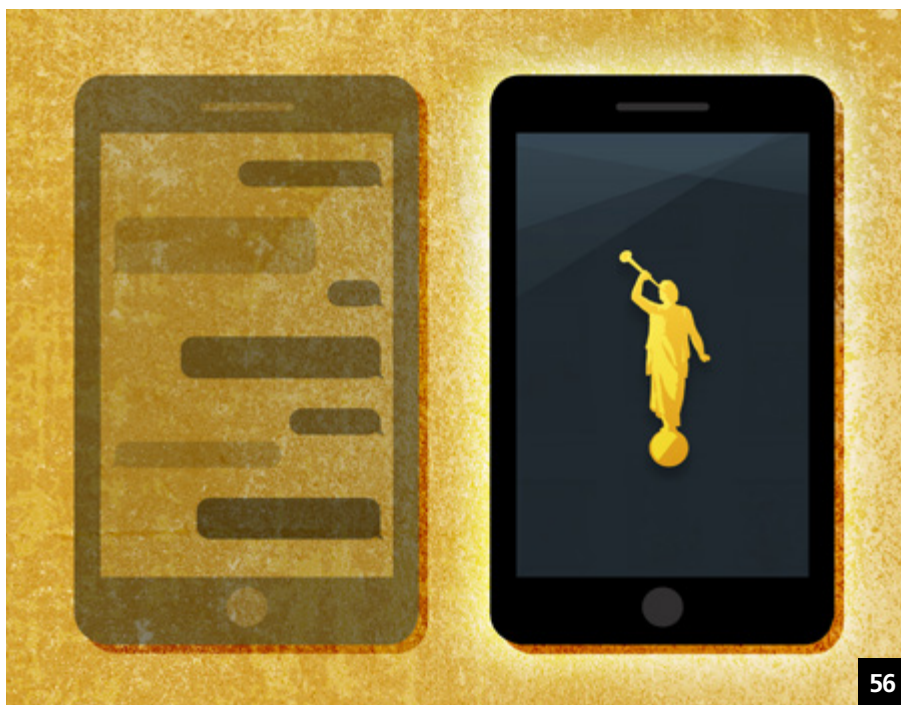
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SUBMISSIONS

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More Online



FINDING PURPOSE AS A DAUGHTER OF GOD

In this issue, a mother writes of the sacrifices she made and the purpose she found in fulfilling her divine role (see page 16). Learn more about finding joy in motherhood at lds.org/go/joyE818, and read how three very different women find purpose in their shared identity as daughters of God at lds.org/go/identityE818.

THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

Joseph Smith experienced the cleansing and enabling powers of the Savior's Atonement by repenting after the loss of the 116 manuscript pages from the Book of Mormon (see page 62). Learn more about the process of repentance by reading how one member overcame "perfectionistic guilt" at lds.org/go/repentanceE818.



PREPARING FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE

Young men and women can find great joy as missionaries when they have prepared to serve (see page 38). Such blessings also attend senior missionaries. To help older members prepare for such a calling, a new Church website allows them to match their interests and abilities with current opportunities. Explore the site at lds.org/go/seniorsE818.

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Darren and Stacey sold everything to chase Darren's dream job of animating for a movie studio in London, England. But when they found out they were expecting a baby after years of trying, they realized they couldn't afford to live there on just his income.

CHRISTINA SMITH, PHOTOGRAPHER

Darren and Stacey Rea

Sydney, Australia

Stacey: We started talking about moving back to Australia. In Brisbane there were no movie studios. Darren would have to essentially give up his career.

Darren: I felt like I was at rock bottom. My wife was pregnant, but I had no job and we couldn't afford a place of our own.

Stacey: There was a moment in the laundry room at my parents' house when we knelt down and prayed.

Darren: Then we heard there was a new studio opening in Brisbane. I got some contract work in animation.

Stacey: We've learned that no matter what we're going through, the most important thing we can have is faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

DISCOVER MORE

See more about Darren and Stacey's journey of faith, including additional photographs, at lds.org/go/E8184.

Find more stories in the "Portraits of Faith" series in the Media Library on LDS.org.





Ministering Principles

BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

*Our ability to care for others is increased
when we have a meaningful relationship with them.*

The invitation to minister to others is an opportunity to build caring relationships with them—the kind of relationship that would make them comfortable asking for or accepting our help. When we have made the effort to develop that kind of relationship, God is able to change lives on both sides of the relationship.

“I truly believe there is no significant change without significant relationships,” said Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency. And for our acts of service to be transformational in the lives of others, she said, they must

be “rooted in the sincere desire to heal and listen and cooperate and respect.”¹

Meaningful relationships aren’t tactics. They are built on compassion, sincere efforts, and “love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41).²

Ways to Build and Strengthen Relationships

“We build [relationships] one person at a time,” said Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.³ As we strive to build meaningful relationships with those we minister to, the Holy Ghost can guide us. The following suggestions are based on a pattern Elder Uchtdorf offered.⁴



Spend time together.

A relationship takes time to develop. Look for opportunities to maintain contact. Studies show that letting people know you care is essential to healthy relationships.⁵ Visit often with those you are called to serve. Talk with them at church. Use whatever additional means make sense—such as email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Skype, phone calls, or sending a card. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about the power of simple and creative expressions of love and support: “Often I would open my scriptures, . . . and I would find an affectionate, supportive note [my wife] Jeanene had slipped into the pages. . . . Those precious notes . . . continue to be a priceless treasure of comfort and inspiration.”⁶

Also, remember that a relationship takes two. You can offer love and friendship, but the relationship won’t grow unless the offer is accepted and returned. If the other individual seems unreceptive, don’t force the relationship. Give him or her time to see your sincere efforts, and if necessary, counsel with your leaders about whether or not a meaningful relationship still seems like a possibility.

Learn about them.

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught, “You can’t serve well those you don’t know well.” He suggested knowing the names of each family member and being aware of important events such as birthdays, blessings, baptisms, and marriages. This provides the opportunity to write a note or make a call to congratulate a family member on a special achievement or accomplishment.⁷

“Ministering Principles” articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as messages during ministering visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.



Communicate with caring.

Building meaningful relationships requires us to go beyond the superficial. Superficial communication is full of small talk about schedules, the weather, and other minor issues, but it doesn't include sharing the feelings, beliefs, goals, and concerns necessary to make more meaningful connections. Heavenly Father has modeled this more meaningful kind of communication by sharing His feelings and plans with His Son (see John 5:20) and with us through His prophets (see Amos 3:7). By sharing day-to-day events and

life's challenges with each other as guided by the Spirit, we gain appreciation for each other as we find common interests and shared experiences.

Listening is a critical part of communicating that you care.⁸ When you listen carefully, your opportunity to help others come unto Christ increases as you gain understanding and insight into their needs and as they feel loved, understood, and safe.

Appreciate differences as well as commonalities.

“Some . . . believe that the Church wants to create every member from a single mold—that each one should look, feel, think, and behave like every other,” said Elder Uchtdorf. “This would contradict the genius of God, who created every man different from his brother. . . .

“The Church thrives when we take advantage of this diversity and encourage each other to develop and use our talents to lift and strengthen our fellow disciples.”⁹

To love others the way God loves us requires that we try to see others the way God sees them. President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, “We must develop the capacity to see [others] not as they are at present but as they may become.”¹⁰ We can pray for help to see others the way God does. As we treat others based on their potential for growth, they are likely to rise to the occasion.¹¹

Serve them.

Be sensitive to the needs of those you minister to and be willing to give of your time and talents, whether in time of need or just because you care. You can be there to provide comfort, support, and needed help when there is an emergency, illness, or urgent situation. But in too many relationships we are reactive. God gave us agency so that we can act rather than be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:14).

Just as the Apostle John taught that we love God because He first loved us (see 1 John 4:19), when others feel our genuine love through our acts of service, it can soften hearts and increase love and trust.¹² This creates an upward spiral of kind acts that can build relationships. ■

NOTES

1. Sharon Eubank, in “Humanitarian Acts Must Be Rooted in Relationship, Sharon Eubank Says,” mormonnewsroom.org.
2. See “Ministering Principles: Reach Out in Compassion,” *Ensign*, July 2018, 6–9.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 22.
4. See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” 22.
5. See Charles A. Wilkinson and Lauren H. Grill, “Expressing Affection: A Vocabulary of Loving Messages,” in *Making Connections: Readings in Relational Communication*, ed. Kathleen M. Galvin, 5th ed. (2011), 164–73.
6. Richard G. Scott, “The Eternal Blessings of Marriage,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 96.
7. See Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 50.
8. See “Ministering Principles: Five Things Good Listeners Do,” *Ensign*, June 2018, 6–9.
9. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Four Titles,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 59.
10. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 69.
11. See Terence R. Mitchell and Denise Daniels, “Motivation,” in *Handbook of Psychology*, vol. 12, ed. Walter C. Borman and others (2003), 229.
12. See Edward J. Lawler, Rebecca Ford, and Michael D. Large, “Unilateral Initiatives as a Conflict Resolution Strategy,” *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 3 (Sept. 1999), 240–56.



MINISTERING AS THE SAVIOR DID

Jesus Christ built meaningful relationships with His disciples (see John 11:5). He knew them (see John 1:47–48). He spent time with them (see Luke 24:13–31). His communication went beyond the superficial (see John 15:15). He appreciated their differences (see Matthew 9:10) and saw their potential (see John 17:23). He served everyone, though He was Lord of all, saying He came not to be ministered to but to minister (see Mark 10:42–45).

What will you do to build stronger relationships with those you are called to serve?

WHAT IS FAITH?

By Mary B. Ferguson

This series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). The book is available, along with seven bonus chapters, in the Gospel Library app and online at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

As faith is the first principle of the gospel, it is necessary to inquire, What is faith? The scriptures tell us that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” [Joseph Smith Translation, Hebrews 11:1]. . . . Thus it is when we obey the gospel, certain blessings follow; but if we say we believe and do not obey, then is our faith vain. It is like the body without the spirit, dead. It was this living faith, my young sisters, which caused your fathers and mothers to obey the gospel in their native lands and homes; in the midst of scorn and persecution, through faith they left homes and kindred and all they held dear and embarked on the mighty ocean, . . . trusting in the arm of Jehovah to bring them safely to a haven of rest; and many of them had never known the trials and hardships of life. . . . Think of it, my

young sisters: your fathers and mothers traveling over a thousand miles (1,609 km) drawing a handcart, with their rations and bedding, cooking utensils, clothing and etc., many of them with little children; fording rivers up to their waists and toiling through miles of heavy sand, and yet by the campfire at night their songs of praise resounded to God, for the principles of faith were planted in their bosoms; they had an assurance of things not seen; by faith they arrived in these valleys; they were not then the rich fertile valleys you now see. By faith they subdued the sterile, barren soil and through the blessings of God succeeded in making the wilderness blossom as the rose. . . .

Time would fail me to tell you of the trials of our faith caused by crickets, grasshoppers, droughts, floods, and also by the persecution of our



ABOUT SISTER FERGUSON

Mary Tyndale Baxter Ferguson (1826–1909) was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and orphaned at a young age. After she was introduced to Mormon missionaries, Sister Ferguson was apprehensive, but the more she studied, the more she knew that the Church was true. She was baptized in October 1846 and recorded that as a result, “all my companions left me and I had my good name cast out as evil, for the gospel’s sake.”

At a Church conference in Scotland, Mary met John Baxter, whom she married in 1849. They emigrated to the United States in 1851. She nursed her husband through his poor health, the result of years of working in a coal mine. John died in 1869, leaving Mary to care for their seven children. Her obituary later noted her “hard struggle to rear and care for so large a family of small children, but the Lord heard her cry and blessed her and fitted her back for its heavy burden.”

Sister Ferguson supported her family as a nurse and midwife. She eventually remarried and moved to Spanish Fork, Utah, serving for several years as president of the Relief Society there. Her experiences revealed her commitment to God despite the challenges of her life. The talk excerpted here was given to young women in 1879.

enemies; but in all we are an exceedingly blessed and happy people; and through faith we intend to grow and increase and spread abroad till, like Abraham of old, of our increase there shall be no end.

Now, my dear young friends, you need not think that because we have

done so much there is nothing for you to do; you have got to spread abroad. You need not think that the territory of Utah is going to hold the children of Zion. You will have to build up new colonies. . . .

Therefore, contend earnestly for the faith delivered in these last days to

your fathers, that you may be enabled through faith to help bring to pass the purposes of Jehovah; and may the quickening influence of the Spirit of God rest upon the children of Zion, that it may be as a living fire within them, bringing forth much fruit unto righteousness. ■



PHOTOGRAPH OF SISTER FERGUSON, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY LIBRARY; FRAME FROM GETTY IMAGES
ILLUSTRATION BY DAN BURR

MY CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

April 2018 General Conference



PRIESTHOOD VS. PRIESTHOOD HOLDERS

“The Melchizedek

Priesthood is not a status or a label. It is a divine power held in trust to use for the benefit of God’s work for His children. We should always remember that men who hold the priesthood are *not* ‘the priesthood.’ It is not appropriate to refer to ‘the priesthood and the women.’ We should refer to ‘the *holders* of the priesthood and the women.’ ”

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Powers of the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 65.

A PROPHET

DOES NOT
STAND BETWEEN
YOU AND THE

SAVIOR.

RATHER, HE
stands beside you

AND
points the way

TO THE

SAVIOR.

Elder Neil L. Andersen
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,
“The Prophet of God,”
Ensign, May 2018, 27.

Diving Deeper

MINISTERING

In general conference many of our leaders talked about ministering. As you study the most recent messages, see if you can identify ministering traits. Here are a few talks to get you started:

- Henry B. Eyring, “His Spirit to Be with You,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 86–89.
- Henry B. Eyring, “Inspired Ministering,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 61–64.
- Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 101–3.
- Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 104–7.

Answers to Questions

CAN I REALLY PUT MY SINS BEHIND ME AND BE FORGIVEN?

“[The Savior] laid down His life and took it up again.

“He did this for all who believe in Him.

“He did this for all who do not believe in Him.

“He did this even for those who mock, revile, and curse His name. . . .

“Because of Jesus Christ, we will rise from the despair of death. . . .

“Because of Jesus Christ, our sins can not only be erased; they can be forgotten.”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Behold the Man!” *Ensign*, May 2018, 108, 109.

What questions did you have that were answered by something you heard at conference? Share your experience on our Facebook page: facebook.com/ensign.magazine.

DETAIL FROM WHERE THEY TAKEN HIM? BY J. KIRK RICHARDS; IMAGE OF EARTH FROM GETTY IMAGES



What Will I Do?

TRYING THE PROPHET'S TEACHINGS

I was touched by President Nelson's message in conference that God wants to speak with me and tell me what He wants me to do. Today I thought I would try that out. I prayed that I could be of help to someone today. After lunch I needed to fill my car up with gas. I had the thought that I needed to buy someone gas. Somewhat skeptically, I thought, "We'll see." I began pumping my gas. A minivan pulled up next to me, and a lady got out with her son. She got her purse out and fumbled through it.

I was finishing pumping when I heard her say somewhat timidly, "Excuse me." I turned to see a worried look on her face.

I told her I was supposed to buy someone gas today. "Is that someone you?" Surprised, she began to tear up. "Someone's watching out for you today," I said. I walked around the pump and inserted my credit card. Then I got in my car and drove away with the absolute assurance that someone is up there watching out for me too. Thank God for a prophet!

—Jonathan Benson, story shared on the *Liahona* Facebook page.

Have an experience you would like to share? Submit your story at ensign.lds.org, or share it on our Facebook page.

Ponder This . . .

WHAT WOULD I DO IF I KNEW I HAD ONE MORE DAY TO LIVE?

See Elder Taylor G. Godoy of the Seventy, "One More Day," *Ensign*, May 2018, 34–36.

Share your thoughts on the *Ensign* Facebook page, or record your thoughts in your journal.

Conference Numbers!

103,221

**MISSIONARIES
CURRENTLY SERVING:**

67,049 full-time
36,172 Church-service



new temples were announced to be built in Salta, Argentina; Bengaluru, India; Managua, Nicaragua; Cagayan de Oro, Philippines; Layton, Utah, USA; Richmond, Virginia, USA; and a city yet to be determined in Russia. See map above.



Area Presidency Assignments

North American Areas Now Overseen by Area Presidencies

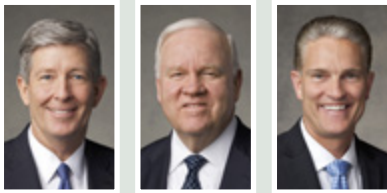
The First Presidency has announced that areas in the United States and Canada—previously overseen by members of the Presidency of the Seventy—will be administered by Area Presidencies. This change will be effective August 1.

“The creation of Area Presidencies for the United States and Canada is an important step forward,” said President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “It allows these Brethren to focus on the

specific needs of each region, providing counsel and direction to regional and local leaders. It also gives the Presidency of the Seventy greater capacity to assist the Quorum of the Twelve in their work and fulfill other assignments.” ■

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Idaho/North America Central

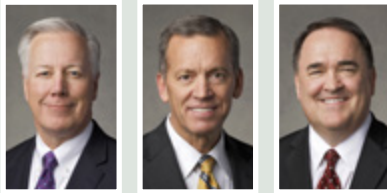


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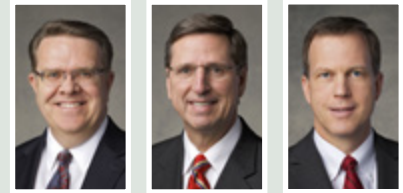


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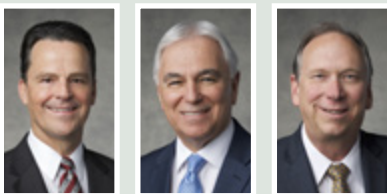


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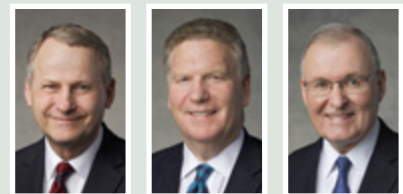


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OUTSIDE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

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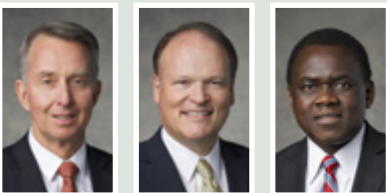


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Africa West

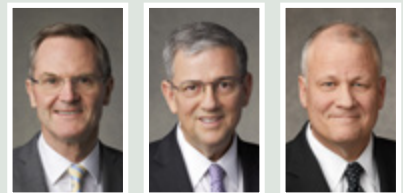


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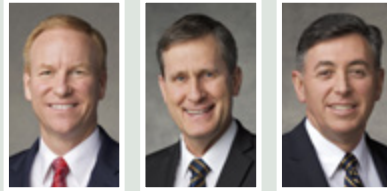


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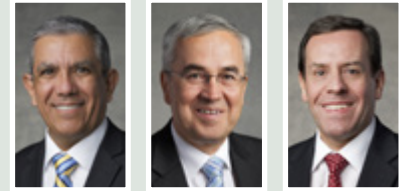


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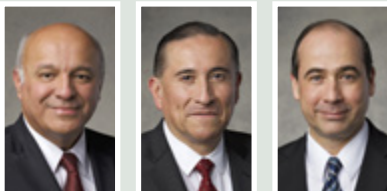


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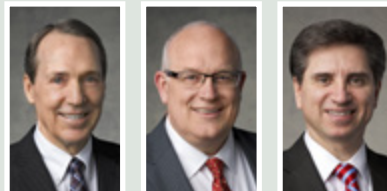


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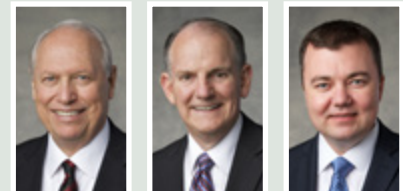


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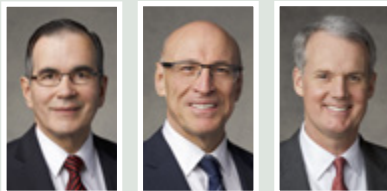


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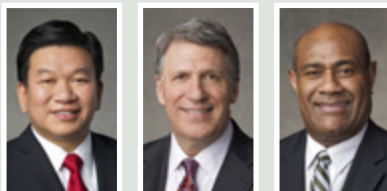


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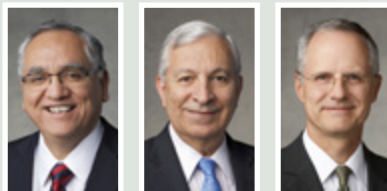


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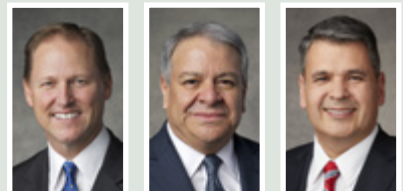


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STRIVING TO BECOME AN INTELLIGENT AND NOBLE MOTHER

By Lilian Pagaduan-Villamor

I was struggling to find purpose in motherhood. Then an old journal entry changed my perspective.

I have always wanted to be a great contributor in science. During my undergraduate studies at Brigham Young University–Hawaii, Dr. Douglas Oba, a very supportive professor, introduced me to and trained me in the world of molecular biology and biotechnology. I even had the opportunity to work at the molecular laboratory at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, USA, for a summer internship.

When I went home to the Philippines, I landed a job at the DNA Analysis Laboratory at the University of the Philippines. The highlights of my career included working on various community projects, attending trainings and conferences, and being recognized by local and international science communities for my scientific publications. I also started my graduate program. I felt fulfilled in my new career.

After two years of working, I married my childhood friend in the temple. A little while later, we had our first baby and for the first time

I found myself struggling. I didn't know how to balance caring for the baby, spending time with my husband, keeping up with classes in my graduate program, juggling projects and papers at work, and fulfilling Church callings. I talked with my husband about my struggles, and he gently suggested that I consider stepping away from my career. I saw some wisdom in his advice, but I wasn't ready to give up my professional life yet.

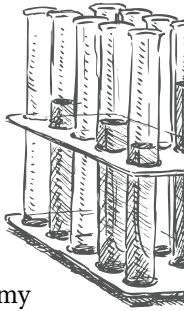
When I was pregnant with our second child, I had pre-term labor that required me to be on bed rest. I finally realized that I couldn't do it all at once. I knew I had to make the choice that would be best for me and my family. After much pondering and prayer, I decided to leave my scientific work and instead devote my full time to my children.

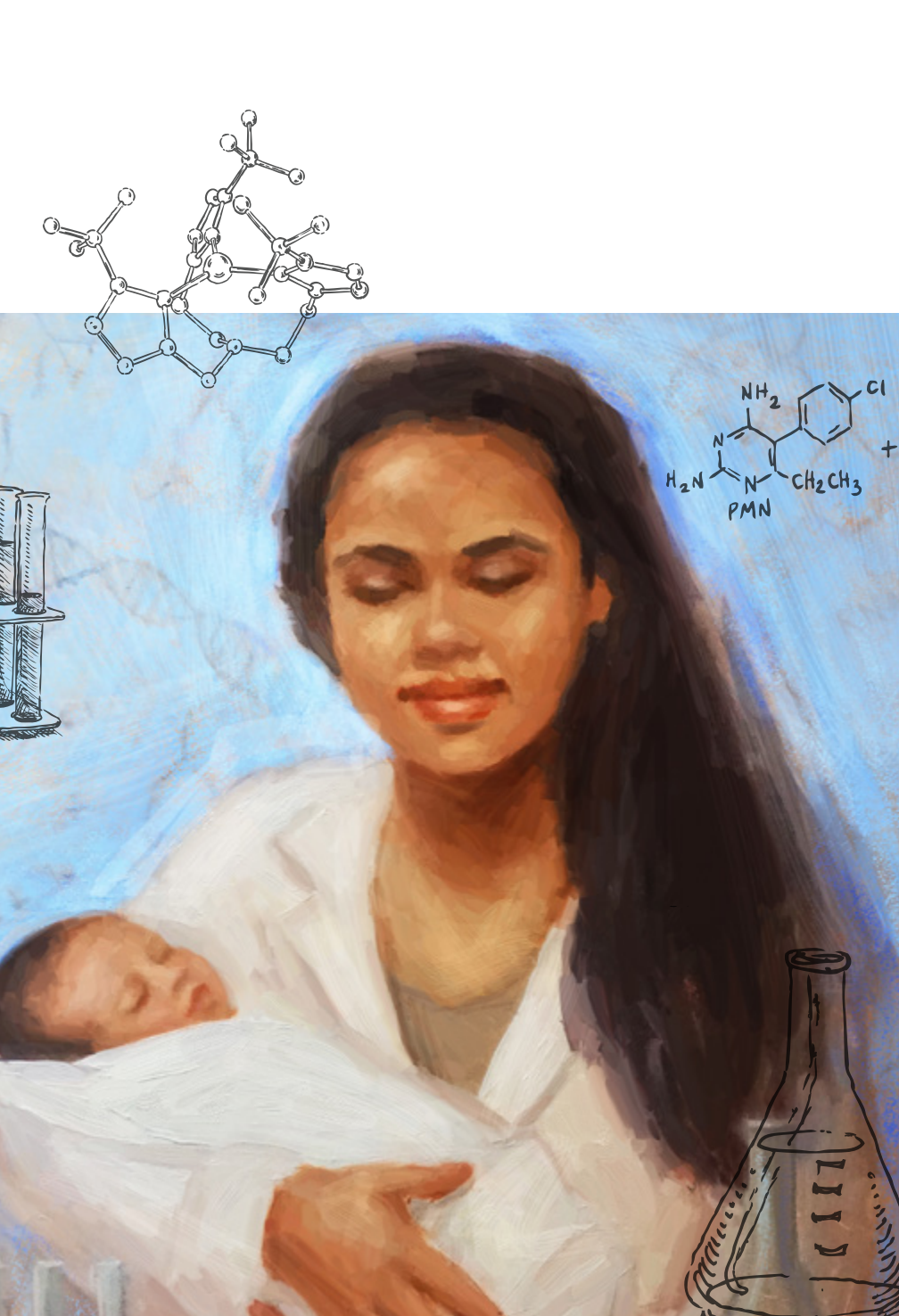
I had planned for motherhood my whole life, but I never realized how much of a sacrifice this choice would be. I tried my best to keep a positive

attitude, but I often felt sad that my career and graduate program had been cut short. I prayed to Heavenly Father for the spiritual strength to fulfill my role as a mother wholeheartedly. My husband patiently listened to my concerns. He encouraged me to write out my thoughts and feelings in my journal, which I had been unable to update for a while because of my busy schedule.

One day, while my kids were sleeping, I decided to look through my old journals. As I reviewed them, I was struck by how consistently I had written about my great desire to be a mom when I was a youth and young single adult. One statement in particular touched me: "I will strive to excel in my academic and spiritual learning so I can be an intelligent and noble mom to my kids."

That enlightenment was what I needed the most! I felt the Spirit testify to me that I had made the right choice for my family. I realized that my education and work experience were





INSPIRED CHOICES

“Once you know the Lord’s will, you can then move forward in faith to fulfill your individual purpose. One sister may be inspired to continue her education and attend medical school, allowing her to have significant impact on her patients and to advance medical research. For another sister, inspiration may lead her to forego a scholarship to a prestigious institution and instead begin a family much earlier than has become common in this generation, allowing her to make a significant and eternal impact on her children now.

“Is it possible for two similarly faithful women to receive such different responses to the same basic questions? Absolutely! What’s right for one woman may not be right for another. That’s why it is so important that we should not question each other’s choices or the inspiration behind them.”

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Women of Dedication, Faith, Determination, and Action” (Brigham Young University Women’s Conference address, May 1, 2015), 4, womensconference.byu.edu.

not just for my benefit but for my children’s. It was a renewal of my testimony and eternal perspective of motherhood.

I was a stay-at-home mother for five years. Eventually, I completed my graduate program and went back to work when our children were a little older. I am continually learning

to balance my limited time in performing my duties at work, home, and church, but I know it all works out with the Lord’s help. I continue to gain valuable experience in the “laboratory of life” and find joy and purpose in motherhood. ■

The author lives in Metro Manila, Philippines.



**By Elder
Kevin W. Pearson**
Of the Seventy

Do Not Leave the Savior

**We live in
tumultuous times.
But the question
is not how the
Church will fare;
rather, how will
you and I fare?**

Several years ago, I met a friend for lunch. We hadn't seen each other for many years. During my high school and early college days, he had been one of my closest friends. He was one of the strongest and most committed young men I knew.

We attended seminary together, played sports together, attended the university together, prepared for missions together, and left for missions a few months apart. After our missions, he married a talented and wonderful woman from my stake.

As the years passed, our lives took different courses. We moved to different cities and eventually lost touch with one another. I still remember how stunned I was to hear that he and his wife had left the Church. Of all those I knew in my youth, he was the last one I would ever have thought would leave the Church.

At lunch we reminisced over the friendship that had meant so much to both of us. We laughed again at some of the crazy experiences of our earlier days. We talked about our families and tried to close the gap of time.

Finally, I asked the obvious question: "Tim, what happened? You were so deeply converted and committed! Why did you leave the Church? What caused you to walk away from your temple covenants? Have you also left the Savior? We promised one another that we would be true and faithful to the end of our lives!"

"Kevin," he replied, "I simply see things differently now. My view of the Church and its teachings has changed. I don't hate the Church—I just don't need it anymore."

As we concluded our visit, I expressed my love and gratitude for a friendship I still value. Then, with deep feeling, I expressed my testimony: “Tim, I know these things are true. And you know they’re true too. You have always known. You’ve simply lost the clarity you once had. But you can regain the light and understanding of the Holy Ghost you once had. Please come back.”

We embraced as we said goodbye, and he whispered, “I admire your conviction and passion. But how can you be so sure?”

As I walked away, I reflected deeply on the choices we had made and on their impact on our lives and on the lives of our children and grandchildren.

My young friends, please don’t let what happened to my friend Tim happen to you. Are you as steadfast, immovable, and converted as you think you are? When you encounter the inevitable and necessary challenges of life, where will you turn for peace and understanding? When your life gets dark and dreary, will you still instinctively and consistently think to pray?¹

As criticism of the Church, its history, its leaders, and its teachings increases, where will you stand? As the beliefs and practices of an ever-darkening world collide with the principles of the restored gospel, what will you do?

“Will Ye Also Go Away?”

Some of Satan’s most effective weapons are distraction, deception, and spiritual desensitization. Each erodes faith, obscures vision, and skews perspective. Together they constitute the great challenge of our time. Satan uses them not simply to undermine Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, Church doctrine, and Church leaders but also to attack the Savior and the Father’s plan. It has always been so.

When the inevitable fury of temptations and tribulations approach Category 5 spiritual storm conditions, will you still trust God and cling to truth? The penetrating question of the Savior unto the Twelve is still in force today:



“Will ye also go away?”

“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

“And we believe and are sure that thou are that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:67–69).

I am reminded of a powerful statement by President Heber C. Kimball (1801–68), First Counselor in the First Presidency. The Saints had safely arrived in the Salt Lake Valley and were quite pleased with themselves. Having overcome and endured so much, they were a bit prideful and overconfident. President Kimball stated:

“Let me say to you, that many of you will see the time when you will have all the trouble, trial and persecution that you can stand, and plenty of opportunities to show that you are true to God and his work. . . . To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. . . . If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand.

“ . . . The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand?”²

We live in tumultuous times. But the question is not how the Church will fare; rather, how will you and I fare? “The Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing.”³ Whether you and I progress with it is the only unknown.



How to Survive Spiritually

I suggest six essential things each of us must do to survive spiritually.

1 Love and obey God first. Loving and obeying God necessarily precedes loving and serving others. Sequence is important. Nephi taught, “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). Heavenly Father loves us and is always willing to give us understanding. We must, however, put Him first in our lives.

2 Hold personal prayer. Prayer is essential. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “The best way to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books [he might have added “blogs”], but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching.”⁴ You will never be unworthy to pray! If you want more answers, ask more questions. Constantly seek for and pray for the influence of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:5). This is the light the Father sends that brings understanding.

3 “Seek learning even by study and also by faith” (D&C 109:7). Learning is a divine duty. Agents seek learning; objects wait to be acted upon. Great leaders are great learners. The Church needs great leaders—women and men seeking greater light and knowledge, deeper understanding and conversion (see D&C 93:36). This requires commitment and dedication. You cannot find deep truths scrolling a wiki or searching the blogosphere. Remember, faith is kindled by hearing the testimony of those who have faith, not by hearing the doubts of those who have lost it.

4 Search the scriptures, especially the Book of Mormon—every day! The Book of Mormon was expressly written to protect and preserve us as we navigate the conditions of our day. Regarding its power, Nephi testified of the rod of iron, “And I said unto them that it was the word of God; and whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction” (1 Nephi 15:24). If you start to feel confused and lost, start again on page one, and immerse yourself in the Book of Mormon.



5 Focus on the big picture. You are part of the greatest movement on earth: the gathering of Israel and preparation for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. You have an important role to play! You came to earth committed to being valiant in your testimony of the Savior. That is your divine identity. Focus on the big picture: Heavenly Father’s plan of happiness. It is the lens of truth. It is the context for all questions, issues, and concerns. “For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be” (Jacob 4:13).



6 Above all else, trust in Jesus Christ. He is still “the light and the life of the world” (3 Nephi 11:11; see also John 8:12). When you are encompassed and overwhelmed by doubt, difficulty, and temptation, trust Him. When life isn’t what you expected and those you trusted disappoint and betray you, continue to trust in Him completely. May you respond as Nephi of old in equally distressing times: “Nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted. . . . O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever” (2 Nephi 4:19, 34).



Whatever you do, do not leave the Savior! Because of His Atonement, we are agents, free to act and not to be acted upon. Each of us will stand before Almighty God and account for the light and truth we have chosen.

I promise you that if you will follow these principles and cling to truth, your faith will never fail. May God bless you to always choose to look through the lens of truth by the power of the Holy Ghost. ■

From a devotional address, “The Lens of Truth,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on March 7, 2017. For the full address, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See “Did You Think to Pray?” *Hymns*, no. 140.
2. In Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 449–50.
3. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:540.
4. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 4:425.



My fear of failure kept me from developing talents and seeking opportunities for growth.

But What If I Miss?

By Sarah Keenan
Church Magazines

When I was six, my dad took me and my older sister to play basketball. It was my first time playing at a real gym. The basketball felt heavy in my small hands and the hoop—even at its lowest setting—seemed overwhelmingly high.

“Don’t worry, just take a shot,” my dad said.

I turned to my dad. “But what if I miss?” I asked.

More than two decades later, I don’t remember if I made that shot or not. But I do remember the fear I felt: “What if I miss? What if my best efforts fall short? What should I do if I fail?”

Fearing to Fail

That same fear of failure has plagued me throughout my life. For a long time, I was naturally skilled in enough activities to cover that fear. But it still manifested itself in small ways. I didn’t try a sport until I knew I was good at it. I avoided school

subjects that did not correlate with my strengths. When I did try new activities that I was not immediately successful in, my solution was to quickly quit and move on to something I was more skilled in.

Then I went on my mission. For the first time, I was forced into an environment where my weaknesses were blaringly evident and I couldn’t easily back out. I had a hard time initiating conversations. I struggled teaching in a new language. I faced rejection multiple times a day. I was constantly failing—taking shots and missing—and there were days when I considered following my usual pattern for failure: giving up and going home.

Trouble with Translating

During this time, I received much-needed inspiration and correction from the story of Oliver Cowdery trying to translate the plates. After a few weeks of scribing for Joseph Smith, Oliver began to wonder if he could also translate the plates.



Joseph asked the Lord and received an answer that Oliver would be allowed to translate. However, the Lord also gave Oliver a few cautions, two of which were to “be patient” and “fear not” (D&C 6:19, 34).

Translating was not as simple as Oliver imagined. When the words didn’t come easily, he became frustrated and soon gave up.

Overlooking Opportunities

As I studied the story, I recognized that Oliver’s problem was similar to my own. He had expected to master translating quickly, and when it became evident that he would not be immediately successful—that he would fail many times as he worked to develop the gift—he went back to scribing, something he was

comfortable with. The Lord’s cautions were accurate: Oliver was not patient with himself or with God, and he feared. So God took the opportunity away from him (see D&C 9:3).

I realized how often my fear of failure had stopped me. I had been so afraid of “missing shots” that I hadn’t even taken them or had given up after a few attempts. In trying to avoid failure, I had missed opportunities at future success. I hadn’t been patient with myself or God, and I had feared.

Oliver Cowdery’s story also gave me hope. Although the Lord told Oliver that he would not be able to translate then, He also promised, “Other records have I, that I will give unto you power that you may assist to translate” (D&C 9:2). Oliver’s

opportunity to translate was not lost, just delayed. Likewise, opportunities I had missed were not lost. The Lord would provide more, if I was willing to be patient and not allow fear of failure to prevent me from trying.

Failing to Fear

I resolved to work through my fear of failure. Even though I still felt anxious talking to strangers or teaching in a foreign language, I improved at both. These skills have helped me in my life, even after my mission.

There are still times that I hesitate to try something new or do something I’m not particularly good at. But I’ve learned to be more patient. I’ve learned to keep taking shots and not be afraid to miss. ■

Consider these key principles in approaching one of the most important decisions you will ever make.

Choosing Whom to Marry

By Scott R. Braithwaite

Associate Professor of Psychology, Brigham Young University

When I first began my doctoral work in clinical psychology, I was given a little assignment: read everything that's ever been written about what predicts divorce.

Daunted but determined, I read my way through decades of research. Poring over stacks of articles, I was amazed at how well we could predict these things—multiple studies reported over 90-percent accuracy in predicting who would remain married and who would divorce. The most accurate prediction came from observing how couples resolve conflict, but a great deal of predictive power was available even before couples went on their first date.

I wondered why everyone didn't know this. Choosing whom to marry is such an important, formative decision, and simply knowing a handful of these facts could have an enormous impact. Let me share some key principles that can be helpful to know and consider.

"Birds of a Feather Flock Together" vs. "Opposites Attract"

Do birds of a feather flock together, or do opposites attract? That is, do people have healthier marriages if they are similar to one another or if they have differences that complement and balance out areas of weakness? Answers to questions about people are often complex, but in this case there is a clear answer: the more alike two people are, the more stable and satisfying their marriage. "Birds of a feather" for the win!



Why is that so? Consider this: The marriage relationship includes many important decisions and issues that have to be navigated, and any two people—including very compatible ones—have a lot to work through. If a couple starts out having to blend fundamentally different personalities, interests, and viewpoints, much more effort is required to make the marriage survive. However, if partners begin with similar outlooks and aspirations, their efforts can be directed more toward enriching the relationship and achieving long-term

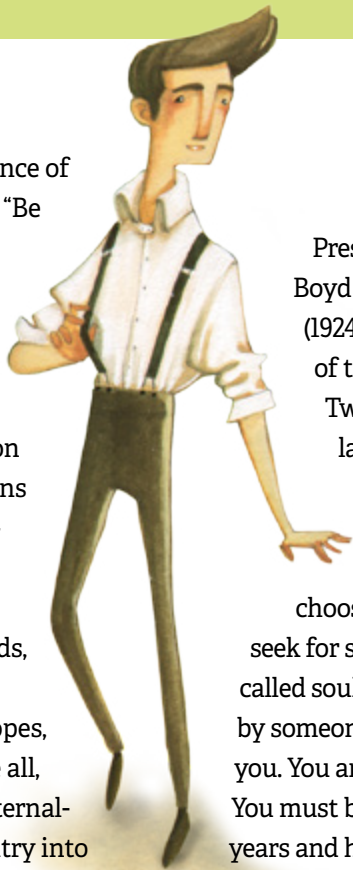
goals rather than trying to reconcile differences. Opposites may sometimes attract, but they have to work much harder at building a happy marriage.

This principle is especially important when it comes to matters of faith. In a large study, researchers examined the principle of “birds of a feather”—researchers call it homogamy—in religious affiliation. As usual in this area of research, they found that sharing your partner’s faith predicted a more stable, secure marriage. A closer look at the data

showed that marriages in which both partners were LDS were among the most stable of any religious pairing in the study. However, when one partner was LDS and the other was not, the rate of divorce increased by 27 percent, placing them among the most at risk of any religious pairing!¹

Why might this be? This finding highlights the power of being “birds of a feather”: those who have deep divisions on core issues have to work much harder to cleave to one another and become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). The Apostle Paul

taught about the importance of homogamy when he said, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 6:14). And President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) spoke clearly on this issue: “Many . . . reasons argue eloquently for marriage within the Church, where husband and wife have common backgrounds, common ideals and standards, common beliefs, hopes, and objectives, and, above all, where marriage may be eternalized through righteous entry into the holy temple.”²



President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, similarly taught: “I do not believe in predestined love. . . . You must do the choosing, rather than to seek for some one-and-only so-called soul mate, chosen for you by someone else and waiting for you. You are to do the choosing. You must be wise beyond your years and humbly prayerful unless you choose amiss.”⁴

Agency is so critical to our Heavenly Father’s plan; He does not remove it when it comes to choosing a spouse.

This may seem unromantic to some, but I would argue that it is far more romantic that you choose your spouse. It is much more meaningful to say to the one you love, “No, you weren’t chosen by someone else; I chose you. And I will continue to choose you every day of our life for eternity.”

In contrast, the idea of soul mates fosters a shallow definition of love as an intense feeling that really amounts to infatuation. If you buy into this fallacy, you may mistakenly decide something is wrong when the chemical rush of infatuation begins to evolve into the deeper but

less-frenetic love characteristic of enduring marriages.

Years ago I worked with a couple who were not LDS but were deeply religious. The husband had not been faithful to his wife. When I spoke with him alone, he explained, “This new woman I have met is my soul mate; I made a mistake the first time around. I am convinced that God is giving me a second chance to make things right so I can be with my soul mate.” His belief that he had a soul mate did not strengthen his commitment to his wife. Instead, it offered a quick, easy way to get back to the rush of infatuation that he had defined as “real love.”

The notion of soul mates can undermine the development of healthy, enduring relationships. Quoting an embroidered statement fashioned by his aunt, President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, “Choose your love; love your choice.”⁵

Making a Wise, Inspired Choice

So how do we go about making a wise, inspired choice of a spouse? Instead of looking for a soul mate, I suggest two things: (1) enjoy the process of dating and (2) develop the attributes you wish to see in your future spouse.

Dating is meant to be fun! Perhaps because we recognize how central

Stop Looking for Your Soul Mate

You might be thinking, “Isn’t our job simply to follow the Spirit to the person chosen for us in premortality?”

Although this may be a popular cultural sentiment, it does not square with the clear, consistent counsel from living prophets.

President Kimball taught: “‘Soul mates’ are fiction and an illusion; and while every young man and young woman will seek with all diligence and prayerfulness to find a mate with whom life can be most compatible and beautiful, yet it is certain that almost any good man and any good woman can have happiness and a successful marriage if both are willing to pay the price.”³

marriage is to God's plan, we develop a results-focused mentality that makes dating seem less like fun and more like digging a ditch. Usually this is because we can only see value in the outcome (marriage) and not the process (dating). If we adopt this mentality, dating can feel like a dreaded part-time job in which we interview a series of job applicants, most of whom we quickly decide to reject because of their manifest lack of potential. Ironically, this mentality makes it difficult not only to have fun but also to date in a way that leads to healthy relationships. If, on a first date, your mind is overloaded with thoughts about what color hair your children will have, you may have adopted this mindset!

By dating a number of different people without making each interaction a tribunal on the individual's fitness for eternal companionship, some good things will happen. You will become wiser about what you have to offer your future spouse, where you need some work, and what you hope for in a spouse. Some seemingly promising relationships will progress and end. That will be painful, but breaking up is a healthy part of this process rather than evidence you are doing something wrong. A natural consequence of investing in this process

will be wisdom, personal growth, and quite often, finding someone whom you will want to choose as your eternal companion.

Doctrine and Covenants 88:40 teaches that "virtue loveth virtue; light cleaveth unto light." Applied to marriage and relationships, this truth means that if you have developed light, virtue, intellect, and thoughtfulness, you will naturally be attracted to those who have similar traits.

Often young adults have a list of attributes they are looking for in a spouse ("taller than me," "gourmet chef," "future General Authority"). Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commented on these types of lists, noting that it is presumptuous of us to think that we are entitled to the partners we describe in our lists. Instead, he suggested, we should develop within ourselves the important attributes we desire in a spouse.⁶

By humbly cultivating important virtues, dating for fun without undue focus on "results," and staying close to the Spirit, you will develop as a person and

naturally gravitate to one of those "birds of a feather" whom you will love with your whole soul. ■

NOTES

1. See Evelyn L. Lehrer and Carmel U. Chiswick, "Religion as a Determinant of Marital Stability," *Demography*, vol. 30, no. 3 (Aug. 1993), 385–404.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, "Marriage and Divorce" (Brigham Young University devotional, Sept. 7, 1976), 2, speeches.byu.edu.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 194.
4. Boyd K. Packer, *Eternal Love* (1973), 11.
5. Thomas S. Monson, "Hallmarks of a Happy Home," *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 71.
6. David A. Bednar, in "Interview with Elder and Sister Bednar," *Conversations* (audio program, episode 1), mormonchannel.org.



THE Spirit Worked Slowly on Me

Like the river flowing through the Grand Canyon, the Spirit worked slowly on me.

By Olivia Snow

The Grand Canyon did not always exist in its current magnificent form. Millions of years ago, the river flowed over a flat plateau. But its slow, diligent persistence carved a sublime canyon with steep ridges and weaving channels. As I came to recognize, that's how the influence of the Holy Ghost worked on me.

Something More

I was raised an atheist in Montana. My parents taught me many wonderful things, like loving life and being kind to others. But some lessons they

taught me never felt quite right. Even though they told me there was no God and no heaven—or hell, for that matter—I felt drawn to the idea that there was something more.

Because my parents taught me that dying was the end of existence, I feared death. I was still a child when my mom became sick and was confined to a wheelchair. My fears intensified. What would happen to my mother if she died? Would she disappear forever?

Years passed, and my mom seemed to always be on the verge of dying. One day, she told me death would bring her relief from the pain she felt. I left the room in tears, thinking she would no longer exist. Searching for answers, I visited my Mormon friend Isaac, and he assured me that my mother would not cease to exist after death. She would still have the choice to

learn about and accept the Lord and His gospel, even if she didn't believe in God in this life. I didn't have the same faith, but I did feel peace.

Over the next few years, many of my friends, including Isaac, invited me to learn more about Jesus Christ.

One gave



me a Bible, and Isaac sometimes brought me to church. I learned that I needed to pray, but I didn't know how. Fearful that my parents would overhear me, I prayed silently in bed with my hands clasped underneath my pillow. I desperately asked Heavenly Father every night if He was real, but He never seemed to answer.

A Testimony Takes Shape

Although I had prayed for nearly a decade, it wasn't until I went to college that my testimony truly took shape. Isaac suggested that I look into Brigham Young University. After visiting the campus and feeling the same peace I felt the night I talked to Isaac, I applied only to BYU. Thankfully, I was accepted.

The first Sunday at BYU I attended my ward. Thinking I was a member, the bishop asked me to give the opening prayer, which I happily did—even though I still didn't know if God was really there. A few weeks into the semester, I got a job working as an investigative actor at the missionary

training center, where newly called missionaries practiced teaching me lessons multiple times a day. Gradually my testimony turned from a shallow waterway to a deep channel. I started reading the Book of Mormon every free moment—before bed, waiting for class to start, and even standing in lines. Slowly my diary entries transformed from “I wish this were true” to “I think I believe this is true.”

Even as I experienced this excitement about the scriptures, I struggled with recognizing the Spirit. I liked the idea of having a way to know for sure if something was true or not but didn't know how to obtain such assurances myself.

In Relief Society one Sunday, the teacher began talking about priesthood blessings. As she spoke about experiences she had had with blessings, I felt a strong desire to receive one. Little did I know then that this urge was a spiritual prompting. I called a friend in my ward and asked if a nonmember could receive a blessing. He said yes, and that night he blessed

me that I would feel the Spirit from my head to my toes and to my fingertips and that I would know that it was the Spirit without a doubt.

And I did. In that moment, I knew that it was all true. There really is a God, and He loves me. His Son atoned for me, and I can live with Them forever if I obey Their commandments.

Carving a Canyon

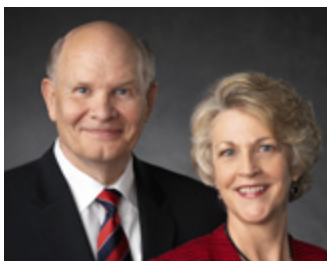
Once I finally identified the voice of the Spirit, I recognized all of the small moments when the Spirit had guided me without my really knowing it. The Spirit had slowly worked within me, carving my doubts into faith and sculpting my fears into comfort.

A few weeks later, I was baptized. My parents respected my decision to join the Church, although they still do not believe in God—yet. But I have hopes that the Spirit is slowly working on them just as it worked on me. After all, a small stream helped carve a canyon; it just took some time. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.







**By Elder Dale G.
Renlund and Sister
Ruth L. Renlund**

Elder Renlund is a member
of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

The Beautiful Gift of the Sacrament

*Pray that you will be renewed as you partake of
the sacrament and remember the Savior.*

In April 2017, we had the opportunity to help with the open house at the Paris France Temple before it was dedicated on May 21, 2017. Located on the temple grounds is a beautiful *Christus* statue. It is a copy of the 1838 original masterpiece by Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen. This statue provides a focal point in the gardens and declares to all who come our belief in Jesus Christ. The majesty, size, and setting are captivating. Visitors are drawn to this portrayal of the risen Lord and frequently want to stand there to get their pictures taken.

The statue is frequently referred to as *Christus Consolator*. A consolator is one who consoles.¹ To console means to comfort another at a time of grief or disappointment, to give solace, sympathize with, commiserate with, or show compassion for another.² For us, the *Christus* conveys these divine attributes of the Savior.

The original *Christus Consolator* is located in *Vor Frue Kirke*, the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen, Denmark. Surrounded by statues of the Twelve Apostles, the *Christus* is in a columned alcove. Above and below the statue are inscriptions of well-known verses from the Bible.



Christus Consolator in the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Inscribed at the top, in the panel above the two columns, are these words in Danish: “DENNE ER MIN SØN DEN ELSKELIGE HØRER HAM.” In English: “This is my beloved Son: hear him.”

These words were spoken by God, our Heavenly Father, as Jesus was transfigured on a mountain in front of Peter, James, and John. The complete verse says, “And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him” (Mark 9:7).

On the pedestal on which the *Christus Consolator* stands are these words in Danish: “KOMMER TIL MIG.” In English: “Come unto me.” Of all the words the Savior spoke, nothing is more pleading and important for us than “come unto me.”

The complete verse says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

With this original statue of *Christus Consolator*, we have both the Father’s invitation to hear His Only Begotten Son and the Son’s invitation to come unto Him. In perfect unity,

They invite all to hear and to come.

This is our way back to our heavenly home. “We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel” (Articles of Faith 1:3). Each person can come unto Jesus Christ fully only by receiving the restored gospel. We “receive the restored gospel through faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement, repentance, baptism, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.”³

The Doctrine of Christ

This is the unified message of the Father and the Son. They want all Heavenly Father’s children to follow the doctrine of Christ. Now, just so there is no confusion, the phrase “the doctrine of Christ” means the same as the gospel of Christ.

To emphasize the unity of the Father and the Son in Their message regarding the doctrine of Christ, let’s look at this chart.

	2 Nephi 31	3 Nephi 9	3 Nephi 11	3 Nephi 27	Total
Faith	1	2	4	1	8
Repentance	5	4	4	3	16
Baptism	10	0	13	3	26
Holy Ghost	8	2	6	1	17
Endure	3	0	0	3	6
Father	14	5	20	25	64

We know that the chapters noted here (2 Nephi 31; 3 Nephi 9; 3 Nephi 11; and 3 Nephi 27) contain the doctrine of Christ. These chapters frequently mention faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end. The number of times each is mentioned is tabulated. As you can see, faith is mentioned 8 times; repentance, 16 times; baptism, 26 times; the Holy Ghost, 17 times; and enduring to the end, 6 times.

What may be surprising, however, is that we also find that the Father is referenced many times in these chapters. In fact, He is specifically mentioned 64 times, more than baptism is mentioned.⁴ From this, we can know that the doctrine of Christ is the doctrine of both the Father and the Son.

Let's take a closer look at a couple of references to the Father:

“And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

“And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying:

He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. . . .

“And I [Nephi] heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved” (2 Nephi 31:11–12, 15).

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost testify that this is the only way.

Echoing the words from Matthew, the Father and the Son tell us that we should come unto Christ and take His yoke on us because the burdens we bear can be made light and we can find rest. We all carry burdens. We may be burdened with sin, sorrow, addiction, sickness, guilt, or shame. In these difficulties, looking to Christ brings healing and hope and consolation.

The doctrine of Christ—faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost—is not intended to be experienced as a one-time event. Our theology teaches us that we become perfected by repeatedly “relying wholly upon” the doctrine and merits of Christ (2 Nephi 31:19). This means that we repeat the steps in the doctrine of Christ throughout our lives. Each step builds on the preceding step, and the sequence is intended to be experienced over and over again.

As we exercise faith, it grows stronger. As we continually seek to repent, we improve. We can, through our own efforts, progress from having occasional experiences with the Holy Ghost to having Him as a constant companion. In addition, as we go through life, we can learn of Jesus Christ's attributes and develop these same qualities.⁵ As we become more and more like Him, our hearts are changed and we are able to endure to the end (see, for instance, 2 Nephi 31:2–21; 3 Nephi 11:23–31; 27:13–21; Moroni 4:3; 5:2; 6:6; D&C 20:77, 79; 59:8–9).

It is easy to see how all the steps in the doctrine of Christ can be repeated and built on throughout life. But what about baptism? We are, after all, baptized for ourselves just once.



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

To answer this question, we should consider a theological masterpiece written by Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles titled *The Articles of Faith*. It was first published in 1899 and has answered questions about the Church and its foundational teachings for subsequent generations who have read and studied it.

In the table of contents, we see that each chapter, aside from the introductory one, is associated with one of the thirteen articles of faith.⁶ Some articles of faith are covered in more than one chapter, but each chapter is associated with one article of faith.

Interestingly, chapter 9, titled “The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,” appears right after the chapter about the Holy Ghost.⁷ Elder Talmage associates it with article of faith number four.

At the beginning of chapter 9, Elder Talmage wrote, “In the course of our study of the principles and ordinances of the Gospel, as specified in the fourth of the Articles of Faith, the subject of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper very properly claims attention, the observance of this ordinance

being required of all who have become members of the Church of Christ through compliance with the requirements of faith, repentance, and baptism by water and of the Holy Ghost.”⁸

With those words in mind, we can see why Elder Talmage associates the sacrament with the fourth article of faith. The sacrament is the next ordinance everyone needs after being confirmed a member of the Church.

The sacrament is the next ordinance a man needs after receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood.

The sacrament is the next ordinance individuals need after being endowed in the temple.

The sacrament is the next ordinance a couple needs after being sealed.

The sacrament is the next ordinance we need. The sacrament is key to having faith in Jesus Christ, repenting of sin, and feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives. It is the mechanism by which we renew the covenants and blessings of baptism.

Handbook 2 says, “Church members are commanded to gather together often to partake of the sacrament to remember the Savior always and to renew the covenants

and blessings of baptism.”⁹ You may ask, “What blessings?” Certainly, a continuing endowment of the Holy Spirit is a blessing of baptism. But is the cleansing effect of baptism, one of its most wonderful blessings, also renewed?

Consider this statement by President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency: “We are commanded to repent of our sins and come to the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and partake of the sacrament. . . . We witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ and always remember Him and keep His commandments. When we comply with this covenant, the Lord renews the cleansing effect of our baptism. We are made clean and can always have His spirit to be with us.”¹⁰

Let us caution, though, that “the sacrament has not been established as a specific means of securing remission of sins.”¹¹ In other words, you cannot willfully sin Saturday night and expect to be miraculously forgiven by taking a piece of bread and drinking a little water on Sunday. Repentance is a more involved process requiring remorse and forsaking of sin. Preplanned repentance is repugnant to the Savior.

We qualify for the cleansing power of Jesus Christ when we partake of the sacrament worthily.¹² This is the way we keep ourselves “unspotted from the world” (D&C 59:9). The sacrament of the Lord’s Supper rightfully follows baptism in the repeated application of the doctrine of Christ in the progression of Latter-day Saints toward perfection.

We are to follow this path, with the sacrament becoming the successive ordinance to baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost. Preparation for the sacrament requires forethought and attention. You cannot expect the sacrament to be a spiritual experience if you are scurrying about, texting on your phone, or otherwise being distracted.

So come early to church. As the sacrament hymn begins, make sure your thoughts are focused on the Savior, His Atonement, His love, and His compassion. Pray that you will be renewed as you partake of the sacrament and remember Him.

A Lesson from Rwanda

In 1994 a horrific genocide occurred in Rwanda. Between 600,000 and 900,000 people were killed in a matter of 60 to 90 days.

Eventually, the Church established a branch in the capital city of Kigali. The branch was doing well—without full-time missionaries. In 2011 we were serving in the Africa Southeast Area when we learned, sadly, that our registration as a church with the country of Rwanda was invalid, which meant that we were functioning illegally as a church. We also learned that our meetinghouse, a converted two-story home, was not appropriately zoned to hold Church meetings. The Area Presidency, in consultation with our first contact in the Quorum of the Twelve, made the agonizing decision to close the branch. Our members were no longer able to meet for Church meetings.

Lawyers in Kigali, Salt Lake City, and Johannesburg, South Africa, began working fervently to resolve the problems. All the while, the Saints kept asking when they could meet together again. Months went by without resolution or progress.

After about 10 months, we flew to Kigali to visit those Saints and try to buoy up their spirits. Before we did, we asked that the matter be placed on the temple prayer roll of the weekly meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve.

The Tuesday before our scheduled trip from Johannesburg to Kigali, we were notified that, in a surprising move, the government had granted the Church provisional registration in Kigali. Then on Thursday of the same week, the zoning commission granted an exemption from the zoning ordinance. The Kigali Saints could once again meet in our building without violating the law.

This was miraculous! Members were quickly notified that the branch would be meeting on Sunday. We arrived on Friday and invited members to come to church. When Sunday came, all the members—*all* of them—and many of their friends came to church. They arrived early, eager to be together again. As the sacrament was blessed and passed,

we all experienced an extraordinary renewing, refreshing, and cleansing spirit.

We remember, in the meeting, wondering why we did not feel this same spirit every week as we partook of the sacrament. We looked around at the Saints and realized that they had come hungering and thirsting for the sacrament. Their faith, diligence, and patience brought all of us blessings. We pledged that whenever we again partook of the sacrament, we would remember this experience with the Kigali Saints. We committed that we too would hunger for the blessings of partaking of the sacrament.

You will recall that after the Savior instituted the sacrament among the Nephites, He told them that the sacrament was the key to establishing themselves on His rock. He said:

“And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things [partake of the sacrament]. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.

“But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall” (3 Nephi 18:12–13).

The sacrament is a beautiful gift we receive each Sunday that helps us in our earthly progression. Through the sacrament, we experience an important element of the doctrine of Christ, bringing us closer to our Savior and experiencing His love and forgiveness in our lives. We are grateful for these moments each week, which help us stay focused on the Savior.

“Just for Me”

A friend of ours in South Africa shared how she came to this realization. When Diane was a new convert, she attended a branch outside of Johannesburg. One Sunday, as she sat in the congregation, the layout of the chapel prevented a deacon from seeing her as he passed the

sacrament. Diane was disappointed but said nothing. Another member noted the omission and mentioned it to the branch president after the meeting. As Sunday School began, Diane was invited to an empty classroom.

A priesthood holder came in. He knelt, blessed some bread, and handed her a piece. She ate it. He knelt again, blessed some water, and handed her a small cup. She drank it. Diane had two thoughts in rapid succession: “Oh, he [the priesthood holder] did this just for me,” and then, “Oh, He [the Savior] did this just for me.” Through the sacrament, Diane felt Heavenly Father’s love just for her.

Her realization that the Savior’s sacrifice was just for her helped her feel close to Him and fueled an overwhelming desire to keep that feeling in her heart—not just Sunday but every day. She realized that although she sat in a congregation to partake of the sacrament, the covenants she made anew each Sunday were individually hers. The sacrament helped—and continues to help—Diane feel the power of godly love, recognize the Lord’s hand in her life, and draw closer to the Savior.¹³

Our invitation is the same as Moroni’s:

“Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God.

“And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:32–33).

This happens as we apply the doctrine of Christ, viewing the sacrament as the successive ordinance to baptism and reception of the Holy Ghost. In this way,



we can rely “wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). We are so grateful for the sacrament—how it teaches and reminds us each week of what our Savior did for us. We are so grateful to Him because we know He atoned just for each one of us.

When the Savior spoke to the Nephites, He said *when* rain, wind, and floods come. He didn’t say *if*. In fact, rain, winds, and floods come to everyone. But He told us that the way we are established on His rock is to look to Him as we partake of the sacrament (see 3 Nephi 15:9; 18:1).

The time will come in each of your lives when there will be a hesitation to go to church and partake of the sacrament. If it hasn’t happened yet, it will. But know this: if you follow the Savior’s direction and partake of the sacrament with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, blessings will pour upon you that will keep you firm, solid, and established on the firm foundation that is Jesus Christ. Your decision to do so will affect eternity. You will establish yourself upon Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. ■

From a devotional address, “Come unto Christ,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on September 26, 2017. For the full address, go to web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “consolator.”
2. See *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, “console.”
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 1.
4. Includes unambiguous Him/He/His.
5. See *Preach My Gospel*, chapter 6, 115–26.
6. See James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), v–ix.
7. See James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, vi.
8. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 171.
9. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.1.2.
10. Dallin H. Oaks, “Special Witnesses of Christ,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2001, 13.
11. James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 175.
12. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 17–20.
13. See Dale G. Renlund, “That I Might Draw All Men unto Me,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 41.

PARENTS, HELP THEM TO Prepare

The new missionary interview questions provide parents with a great resource to guide their children toward successful service.

By **Richard M. Romney**
Church Magazines

My son-in-law is preparing to become a commercial airline pilot. As I have watched him work toward his goal, I have learned that the training and examinations are rigorous. He has spent years studying and practicing, obtained a private pilot license, flown hundreds of hours on his own and with certified instructors, and passed intense written, verbal, and practical examinations.

When he finally completes his preparation he will know, and the airline that employs him will know, that he is truly ready to fly. They will also know they can trust him to safely carry passengers from one destination to another.

Invaluable Interviews

Informal interviews with flight instructors—conversations, really—have been a constant part of my son-in-law’s training. Their guidance is invaluable.

“Talking things through with them, especially as we fly together, answers a lot of questions,” my son-in-law says. “They point out areas where I need to improve, and that enables me to work to become fully qualified.” These preliminary “interviews” prepare him for a final interview required to obtain a commercial license.

As I have thought about what it takes to become a commercial pilot, I have been struck with the similarities between flight training and missionary preparation, particularly when it comes to conversations and interviews between youth and their parents and leaders. Over time, frequent, informal discussions with parents and leaders can help children learn general principles, and help youth be ready for the formal interviews that can lead to full-time missionary service.

Interviews are a part of life—school admission interviews, job interviews, and performance appraisals, for example. In the Church you have a baptism interview, bishop’s interviews, temple recommend interviews, as well as interviews for serving a mission.

The First Presidency recently introduced standard questions to be used by bishops and stake presidents as they interview prospective missionaries, saying, “Effective interviews are an essential part of preparing missionaries.”¹

What’s New, What’s Not

Having a list of specific questions for interviewing missionary candidates is new. So is making the mission interview questions available to parents, leaders, and teachers.



Frequent, informal discussions with parents can help youth learn gospel principles that will enable them to “prepare for take-off” as full-time missionaries.



This allows them to teach principles to children and youth and identify areas where improvement or additional preparation may be required.

What's not new is missionary standards. The questions do not change or add to the requirements for full-time missionary service. They reflect the same standards and principles found in the scriptures, *Handbook 1* and *Handbook 2*, *Preach My Gospel*, *True to the Faith*, and *For the Strength of Youth*. The questions are intended to help prospective full-time missionaries understand what will be required of them so that they can better prepare.

“Church leaders desire that this sacred time of service be a joyous and faith-building experience for every missionary, from young men and women to senior couples.”²

In addition, “Missionaries are most likely to experience success when they are worthy and physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared for missionary service.”³

As President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) once explained:

“[Missionary] work is rigorous. It demands strength and vitality. It demands mental sharpness and capacity. . . .

“ . . . Missionary work is not a rite of passage in the Church. It is a call extended by the President of the Church to those who are worthy and able to accomplish it. . . .

“ . . . There must be health and strength, both physical and mental, for the work is demanding, the hours are long, and the stress can be heavy.”⁴

Those considering full-time missionary service can use the questions to gauge their own preparedness and have meaningful conversations about the qualifications for missionary service with their parents and priesthood leaders.

Gauging Preparation

Parents can also use the questions as a guide in teaching children gospel principles and in helping youth to prepare as they approach the age for full-time missionary service. Like the flight instructors who help my son-in-law, parents can point out areas where their children need to improve so that they can become fully qualified.

A father in North Carolina, USA, put it this way: “What a great thing to know the questions in advance! Can you imagine the advantage you would have, going to a job interview, if you knew beforehand what the prospective employer was going to ask?”

Parents can discuss with their children how to prepare spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially for missionary service. Prospective missionaries who face challenges will have time to address those challenges and will come to interviews able to discuss what they have done to prepare themselves to represent the Lord and His Church.

“Preparing a missionary for service is the collective blessing and responsibility of the prospective missionary, their family, and Church leaders. All are encouraged to engage in candid and meaningful conversations to ensure that the prospective missionary is adequately prepared to meet the rigors and challenges that a mission might present.”⁵

What the Questions Cover

Personal worthiness is just one qualification to serve a full-time mission. In addition, a missionary candidate needs to meet physical, mental, and emotional qualifications in order to serve. The questions are intended to guide the interviews bishops and stake presidents will have with missionary candidates, so that leaders may discern the candidate's mind, heart, and capacity to serve. The interviews “should be a sacred experience for the individual and the priesthood leader, characterized by great love and the guidance of the Holy Ghost.”⁶

You can find the full set of questions in this month's *New Era* magazine or online at LDS.org, or you can obtain them from your bishop or youth leaders. Here is an overview of the subjects the questions cover:

Worthiness and Testimony

- Faith in God
- Testimony of Jesus Christ and His Atonement
- Understanding of the Holy Ghost and spiritual promptings
- Ability to bear testimony



- Knowledge and application of repentance
- Testimony of living prophets, the Restoration, and the Book of Mormon
- Commitment to living gospel standards:
 - Being chaste
 - Avoiding pornography
 - Paying tithing
 - Living the Word of Wisdom (including being free from substance abuse)
 - Keeping the Sabbath day holy
 - Being honest
 - Avoiding affiliation with or sympathy for individuals or groups whose teachings oppose or are contrary to the teachings and practices of the Church
 - Resolving unresolved serious transgressions or misdeeds

Eligibility and Capacity

- Physical, mental, or emotional conditions that would make it difficult to maintain a normal missionary schedule need to be discussed.
- Reading disorders that may affect ability to read and memorize need to be discussed.

- Speech disorders or conditions that may affect ability to speak, learn, teach, and communicate need to be discussed.
- Legal and financial responsibility and freedom, including unpaid debt.
- Criminal behavior.
- Sexual abuse of children.

Information concerning the physical, mental, and emotional preparedness of the missionary candidate will be shared with medical professionals at Church headquarters to help the Brethren determine the best opportunities for that missionary. It is important to know that once missionary recommendations are received at Church headquarters, all decisions concerning missionary eligibility are made by General Authorities of the Church. When a missionary is called by the President of the Church, the person's assignment is always made by a member of the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Like flight instructors, parents can point out ways their children can become fully prepared to soar in service.

LEARN MORE

Find answers to frequently asked questions about the new missionary interviews at lds.org/go/answersE818.



When pilots complete preparation, they know they are ready to fly. As prospective missionaries complete their preparation, they should feel a similar feeling.

Some prospective missionaries who face challenges may, with time, prepare themselves to qualify to serve. For example, Rachel Roy of Utah, USA, faced physical limitations because of cystic fibrosis. But she worked on her diet, exercise, and medical treatments, and was able to serve a full-time mission in Massachusetts, USA.⁷

The candidate's bishop and stake president can provide counsel about repentance for serious transgressions, such as adultery, fornication, heavy petting, other sexual perversions, or serious violation of civil law. Repentance must be genuine and demonstrated over time. A prospective missionary must also overcome any addictions before being considered for missionary service. A person with an extended pattern of serious sexual transgressions will not normally be considered for missionary service.

Celebrate What *Is* Possible

Like my son-in-law, I also thought about becoming a pilot. But my eyesight is poor

and I'm afraid of heights. Still, I loved being around aircraft. When I was in the military, I was able to serve for eight years on a ground crew. I conducted pre-flight and post-flight inspections, made sure planes were serviced and maintained, helped to park planes and jets, and in dozens of other ways contributed to our squadron's success. I wasn't a pilot, but I *did* feel I belonged.

As prospective missionaries prepare to serve, some may find that they will not be able to serve full-time away from home. President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, offers this counsel:

“Young men and young women with serious mental, emotional, or physical limitations are excused from full-time missionary service. They shouldn't feel guilty about that. They are just as precious and important to the Church as if they were able to go into the mission field.

“But while they don't serve full-time, they can take every opportunity to find and help

people join the Church. They can be member missionaries in college, at work, and in their neighborhoods. They ought to go forward, have a wonderful and full life, and help build the kingdom wherever they are.”⁸

For worthy candidates not eligible for full-time service, priesthood leaders can help identify other appropriate service opportunities, such as serving as a Church-service missionary, volunteer, temple and family history consultant, temple worker, and more. Parents and leaders can help youth understand that the Lord values all of the ways His children serve Him, share His gospel, and build His kingdom. (To learn more about what young Church-service missionaries do, go to lds.org/yccsm.)

Ready to Fly

When commercial airline pilots complete their preparation, they know they are ready to fly. As prospective missionaries complete their preparation, they should feel a similar feeling.

Remember that “missionaries, no matter their assignment, have the sacred privilege to represent the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. As such, they must be properly called, assigned, and set apart. . . . Leaders should submit a recommendation only when they are satisfied to the best of their knowledge that a missionary candidate is able to fulfill the responsibilities for which he or she is being recommended.”⁹

Missionaries should feel the same way. And so should parents. ■

NOTES

1. First Presidency letter, Oct. 20, 2017, news.lds.org.
2. “Interviewing Prospective Missionaries,” attachment to First Presidency letter, Oct. 20, 2017, news.lds.org.
3. “Frequently Asked Questions,” supplement to First Presidency letter, Oct. 20, 2017, news.lds.org.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Missionary Service,” *First Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, Jan. 11, 2003, 17, 18.
5. “Interviewing Prospective Missionaries.”
6. “Interviewing Prospective Missionaries.”
7. Rachel Roy, “Exercising Faith,” *New Era*, March 2018, 18–23.
8. M. Russell Ballard, “How to Prepare to Be a Good Missionary,” *New Era*, March 2007, 9.
9. “Interviewing Prospective Missionaries.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- Take an active role in helping your children prepare for missionary service.
- Share the qualifications for missionary service with your children and help them in their efforts to understand and live the standards.
- Use interview questions as topics for family home evening lessons and discussions.
- As children near the age for missionary service, be sure they understand the questions they will be asked in interviews with the bishop and stake president.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRIESTHOOD LEADERS

- Share interview questions with all prospective full-time missionaries and their parents before the interview and encourage them to review and discuss them.
- Discuss the interview questions as a ward council.
- Consider a fifth-Sunday discussion or other forum to share the interview questions with the adults and discuss ways parents can help youth prepare for missionary service.
- Share the interview questions with young men and young women beginning at an early age to help them understand the standards and qualifications for full-time missionary service.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As parents discuss repentance, chastity, tithing, the Word of Wisdom, Sabbath day observance, and honesty and integrity, the following resources may be helpful:

- Resources included with the official letter of Oct. 20, 2017 (see news.lds.org) and in the Missionary Online Recommendation System.
- *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service*
- *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference*
- *For the Strength of Youth*
- The Topical Guide in the scriptures
- Gospel Topics at topics.lds.org

My SCAR Story

By Michelle Boyack Madsen

Everyone I know has a scar story. If you start swapping stories within a group of people, each person can tell you how and when they got this scar or that scar. The stories can go on for hours. My own brother is mostly held together by stitches and has a great scar story about going head first into a brick wall. There are scars we get by accident and scars we get on purpose, like surgical scars. There are scars that remind us how we overcame something and scars that remind us how careless we can be. But we all have them, and so do I.

When I was 11 years old, I was riding my bike down a steep hill in the rain with my friend Sarah. She was on the back and we were riding double. I was driving and she was sitting behind me partly on the seat but mostly over the back wheel. As we came down the hill, we picked up speed. We were approaching a busy intersection, and I realized we had a serious problem. Because of the rain and the position of my friend on the back of my bike, I no longer had working brakes. I squeezed the hand brake with all my might, but we just kept accelerating. Looking ahead, I saw cars—cars we could hit or that could hit us. I knew that the only way to stop was to crash.

My eyes searched the terrain as it raced by. I quickly picked out the place for the crash, a small piece of grass next to the curb. I steered us closer and then tipped us over. As I fell, the pedal of the bike dug into my shin. People who saw us crash came running to see if we were OK, and we both were taken home and patched up. But I was left with a scar on my leg that looked like I was

stabbed with a fork. Even now, every time I see that scar I remember the details of that day—the pouring rain, how scared I was, the crash, and how relieved I was that we were okay. Because of the scar, I will never forget that experience.

Maybe that's why one of my favorite scriptures is one that is found in Isaiah 49:14–16 and then repeated this way in the Book of Mormon:

“But, behold, Zion hath said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me—but he will show that he hath not.

“For can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, O house of Israel.

“Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me” (1 Nephi 21:14–16).

I have always loved this scripture because it reminds me that Christ will never forget us, any of us. We are His scar story. We are graven upon the palms of His hands. Just as I remember vividly the events surrounding how I got the scar on my shin, He remembers how and why He got the scars on His hands and feet. He remembers us, and we are a part of Him. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



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JUSTSERVE

JustServe.org and the JustServe mobile app are provided by the Church to connect individuals—members and nonmembers alike—with service opportunities in their communities.

By Amy Conway Guan
Church Magazines

When Jon Anderson, president of the Powder Springs Georgia Stake, USA, was first introduced to an initiative sponsored by the Church called JustServe, he was skeptical. “I saw it as simply another program to manage,” he says. Then he remembered the talk “Good, Better, Best” given by President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, in the October 2007 general conference.¹ “I decided to find out for myself where JustServe fit—was it good, better, or best?”

As President Anderson learned more about the JustServe initiative, he found that it was just that—an initiative for communities to work together on service projects, not a mandate or a duty. Information on JustServe.org explains that “JustServe is a service to help link community volunteer needs with volunteers.”² Members and nonmembers

alike can go to JustServe.org or the JustServe mobile app to either post their own projects or volunteer for projects that fit their schedules, means, and interests.

President Anderson quickly recognized how important having a central location is for people who want to serve but don’t know where to start. He saw this firsthand by participating with his family in many of the service projects posted on JustServe.org.

“As everyone reaches out to help people in need,” he says, “we create a spirit of love and cooperation that transcends differences and connects us. Members of the community work side by side with people they would not have otherwise met. When they do, they build mutual understanding and we all become a little more like Jesus Christ.”

Standing Together as a Family

“If we all stand close together in the place the Lord has appointed and lift where we stand, nothing can keep this divine work from moving upward and forward.”³—Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

With five boys ranging in age from 7 to 18, Nate and Jenny Miller of Cedar Hills, Utah, USA, wanted to teach their sons how to serve and wanted something they could do together locally.

Jenny found the answer on JustServe.org—an ongoing volunteer opportunity with Meals on Wheels, a fresh-meal delivery service for homebound individuals. From 7-year-old Jett, who sorts cans into the right buckets, to 18-year-old Oakley, who drives his brothers on their delivery routes, all can contribute.

Mason, age 10, likes seeing the happy faces of the people when he drops off their meals. “Sometimes they’re just waiting at the door for us.”

Adds 13-year-old Trey, “The people we help remember who we are. They like to see us and we like

to talk with them about their lives. They care about each of us and we care about them too.”

Preston, age 15, says, “I love service because it helps me have a greater perspective of life. It helps me realize I’m not the only one. And when you’re doing it for them, it’s like you’re doing it for the Savior.”

The boys have loved serving together while serving others. “Getting with all my brothers and serving makes our relationship stronger,” says Oakley. “It just really brings the Spirit when we are able to serve others. It’s cool to see each other in that type of environment.”

“We are glad we can serve together as a family,” says Jenny. “The fact that the service we do is ongoing and in our community makes it much more powerful for us.”

As a dad, Nate loves seeing all his boys pitch in to help someone else. “Service brings joy that you can’t get in any other way,” he says. “I’ve seen service change the lives of my boys and our family.”

The Miller boys visiting with an elderly couple during their deliveries for Meals on Wheels, Cedar Hills, Utah





Judi and George Manning, Prosper, Texas

Embodying Kindness

“Kindness is the essence of greatness. . . . It softens hearts and molds relationships that can last lifetimes.”⁴—Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

George and Judi Manning were retired and had more than 40 years of medical experience behind them, he as a doctor and she as a medical assistant. When they returned home to Prosper, Texas, USA, after serving as area medical advisers for 13 Pacific Northwest missions, they began looking for something else to do that would utilize their skills. That was when they turned to JustServe.org and discovered a nearby health clinic that needed volunteer doctors. They leapt at the chance to serve.

The executive director of the clinic had posted the service opportunity just one week earlier when she heard about JustServe.org from the daughter of a Latter-day Saint nurse at the clinic. Her clinic provides free services to at-risk, high-need patients who can’t afford health care, and she needed help.

“Dr. Manning emailed me a few days later,” she says. “We desperately needed a family practitioner, and it was a blessing that Dr. Manning contacted us. I’ve learned that sometimes when you need something, you pray and the answers come—just as it did for us with the Mannings. They were 100 percent committed from the moment they stepped through the door.”

“The people we help remember who we are. They like to see us and we like to talk with them about their lives. They care about each of us and we care about them too.”

—Trey Miller, age 13

Emilee H. helping refugee families in Little Elm, Texas, USA



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GEORGE AND JUDI MANNING;
BELOW: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KAYN LANEY



On March 17, 2018, approximately 70 volunteers from the San Bernardino California Stake and the Highland Improvement Team worked together with the community to clean up the Highland Historic District.

Within a month, Brother Manning became the medical director of the clinic. “There were a number of opportunities listed on JustServe,” says Brother Manning, “but serving at the clinic gave us the opportunity to use skills that Sister Manning and I developed over the years.”

Sister Manning is impressed with the selflessness of the volunteers she works with. “We just do what we can,” she says. “Some volunteers are still students, but everyone is grateful for the opportunity to serve and give back to the community.”

Having Christlike Love

“We have a heaven-sent opportunity . . . to minister to the widows and the fatherless, the married and the single, the strong and the distraught, the downtrodden and the robust, the happy and the sad—in short, all of us, every one of us, because we all need to feel the warm hand of friendship.”⁵—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

After hearing about the plight of refugees in her community during a Relief Society meeting, Kristi Park of Wilsonville, Oregon, USA, knew she had to do something. “Hearing about the refugees really touched my heart,” she says. “I wanted to help as much as I could.”

Sister Park found an opportunity on JustServe.org with Catholic Charities to do just that. Her first task was to gather

supplies and furnish an apartment for a family of five coming from Iraq. She formed a committee, made a list of needed items, and solicited help from wards in the area. Items collected were stored in a donated storage unit until the refugee family arrived. On move-in day, ward members furnished the apartment while Sister Park picked up the family and brought them to their new home.

“I loved playing with the two youngest boys and teaching them to play trains,” Sister Park remembers.

“My volunteer role with Catholic Charities has expanded,” says Sister Park. “I now help connect members of the LDS community with refugees through Catholic Charities. I have seen ward members welcome families with open arms and love them. I have listened to sweet refugee girls tell of the great time they had attending LDS girls’ camp. I have watched teenage girls blossom, both those healing from the pains of leaving their home country and those serving them. And I have heard stories of heartache and anger, then watched service give hope.”

Sister Park loves sharing JustServe.org with other members of her community. “I have gained a stronger testimony of how service can affect those serving as much as it affects those we serve. My testimony of God’s love for all of His children has grown. There are so many opportunities to serve. Just find what sings to your heart and embrace it.”



Delivering Christmas food boxes to local veterans and widows, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, USA

Building Bridges

“We do not live alone—in our city, our nation, or our world. . . . Ours is the opportunity to build, to lift, to inspire, and indeed to lead.”⁶—President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018)

Betsy Winters, a stake Relief Society president in Prosper, Texas, never could have imagined how much JustServe would change her life and her community. She remembers, “When the stake president first asked me to help establish JustServe in our town, he saw my face and stopped to ask me if I was OK. I replied, “This will never work!” She felt that way because the small community where she lived not only had limited service opportunities but also seemed divided along religious or social lines. She had no idea where to begin to encourage these various groups of people to overcome their differences and misunderstandings to serve together.

Now Sister Winters says she has to laugh because JustServe actually is working! What made the difference?

In spite of her doubts, Sister Winters realized that the Lord’s timing was not her timing. She prayed to know how to use the JustServe initiative and JustServe.org. One evening, a group of Latter-day Saint women from the town met together to discuss the challenges their

“People in the community won’t care about us until we show how much we care about them. We have to know more about each other. The only way we are going to do that is if we serve next to each other.”

—Betsy Winters

children had been experiencing at school. Many Latter-day Saint youth faced criticism from their classmates and felt that their beliefs were being judged unfairly.

Sister Winters understood the concerns of these Latter-day Saint women; her daughter had also felt excluded at times at school. However, she was surprised to find that she wasn’t angry.

Heidi Hastings and Betsy Winters organizing donated household items, Prosper, Texas





BELOW: PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HEDI HASTINGS

Operation Holiday, Wichita, Kansas, USA

She says, “It’s because of JustServe and the mentality of wanting to build bridges in the community that I told them, ‘People in the community won’t care about us until we show how much we care about them. We have to know more about each other. The only way we are going to do that is if we serve next to each other.’”

With Sister Winter’s counsel in mind, the women began discussing the value of serving with their neighbors—shoulder to shoulder. Organizing service projects for themselves wouldn’t be enough; instead, they decided to go out to the other churches and work with them on

community projects, whether it was a firemen’s banquet, a Christmas parade, or the local women’s association.

As Church members began serving with their neighbors on projects found on JustServe.org, others began to see that Mormons cared about community needs too. These positive associations reverberated throughout the community, tearing down walls that had previously separated people. Even the schoolchildren felt the positive effects.

Good, Better, Best

In the end, President Anderson and many others have concluded that sincere, Christian service is the “best” choice. Service not only benefits the poor and needy but also helps people open their hearts to the gospel of Jesus Christ and especially to God’s love.

He says, “When you sit back and ask what is most important, you find it is simply serving others. It is being an example. There are many ways and opportunities to live the gospel, and service is just one thing everyone can do. We simply need to serve people, and JustServe can help us do that.” ■

NOTES

1. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Good, Better, Best,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 104–8.
2. “About Us,” JustServe.org.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.
4. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “The Virtue of Kindness,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 26.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 102.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “The Joy of Service,” *New Era*, Oct. 2009, 4.
7. “About Us,” JustServe.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Since JustServe was launched in North America in 2012, over 370,000 volunteers have registered on JustServe.org or the JustServe mobile app, and nearly 58,000 projects have been completed.
- JustServe.org is available in the United States and Canada and is being tested in Mexico, the United Kingdom, Puerto Rico, and Australia.
- While JustServe is sponsored by the Church, it is not just for members—it is for everyone. As stated on the

website, JustServe “does not discriminate based on race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation in posting projects or in encouraging volunteers to serve.”⁷ Specific project guidelines can be found on the website.

- Giving service is part of what Latter-day Saint missionaries are called to do, with time being set aside each week for that purpose. Participating in JustServe projects is a wonderful way for them to work side by side with others who desire to help those in need. Such Christlike service is the focus of JustServe.

WORSHIPPING IN A DIGITAL AGE

By Adam C. Olson
Church Magazines

One Sunday while the sacrament was being passed, a ward Relief Society president I know pulled out her smartphone to read “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles.” Inspired by this apostolic testimony of the Savior, she felt renewed in her commitment to always remember Him.

However, her positive feelings melted away a few days later when, in the mail, she received an anonymous letter from a ward member. The author criticized her for setting a bad example by being on her smartphone in sacrament meeting. She was crushed.

Certainly, she hadn’t meant to offend anyone by using her mobile device. She rarely used it in the chapel, and only then when she felt it was appropriate. But after receiving the letter, she began to doubt herself.

A New Challenge

Every generation has its challenges. One study reports that by 2020 there will be more people with a mobile phone (5.4 billion) than with running water (3.5 billion).¹ Add in tablets, “phablets,” and other connected devices, and you get a world that is wrestling with the question: What is appropriate “digital etiquette”?

As parents, leaders, and teachers struggle to

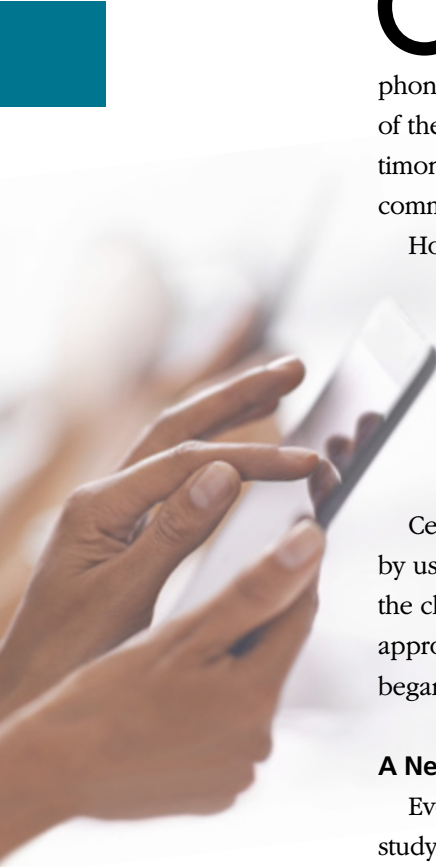
decide what is appropriate digital etiquette in Church settings, different opinions have led to sometimes conflicting ways to handle digital devices in Church meetings.

Church leaders have provided counsel on the blessings and dangers of using technology. However, Church leaders don’t always spell out all of the do’s and don’ts of gospel living (see Mosiah 4:29–30). Members are expected to study the matter for themselves and seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost in making decisions. Unfortunately, as in the situation above, sometimes we adopt not only a position but also a critical attitude toward those with a different position.

Inspired by God; Exploited by Satan

God has provided the blessings of technology for our benefit and the advancing of His work.² So while some members use their digital devices inappropriately, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught that “we should not allow a fear of mistakes to hold us back from receiving the great blessings these tools can provide.”³ We need to learn to use them appropriately and teach our children to do so as well.

Mobile devices help members of the Church with gospel study, family history and





Consider these three principles for using devices appropriately in the chapel.

temple work, and sharing the gospel. For example, over three million people used the Gospel Library app in January 2018. Their combined study time equaled more than a thousand years.

Along with noting the blessings, Church leaders have warned about the potential dangers as well, including wasted time, damaged relationships, and entrapment in sin.⁴ In Church settings, inappropriate use can distract us and others from worship and learning that are crucial to developing our relationship with God.

However, these dangers aren't unique to digital devices. "Some of these tools—like any tool in an unpracticed or undisciplined hand—can be dangerous," taught President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. ". . . That is no different from how people choose to use television or movies or even a library. Satan is always quick to exploit the negative power of new inventions, to spoil and degrade, and to neutralize any effect for good."⁵

Mobile Devices in Sacrament Meeting

Given the potential blessings—as well as the potential distractions—of these digital devices, how do members decide what

approach to take? Joseph Smith suggested the power of a principle-based approach when he said, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”⁶

Here, we examine principles that may be helpful in making decisions about using mobile devices in sacrament meeting. For a discussion on appropriate use of digital devices in the classroom, see “Teaching with Tech: Engaging Youth in a Digital World” by Brother Brian K. Ashton, Second Counselor in the Sunday School General Presidency, on page 56 of this issue.

Principle 1: My choices support worship.

Sacrament meeting is for “[paying our] devotions unto the Most High” (D&C 59:10). President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught that our focus there should be on renewing our covenants and our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement.⁷ What we choose to do in sacrament meeting should help us do those things.

Given that focus, if the need arises, we might appropriately use our devices to:

- *Enhance our worship.* A member might use a digital device during sacrament meeting to look up scriptures, sing hymns, or take notes on spiritual impressions.
- *Minister.* A bishop might notice someone new or less active slip into the back of the chapel during sacrament meeting and, if prompted, text the ward mission leader to welcome the individual and invite them to a Gospel Principles class after the meeting.
- *Facilitate essential connectivity.* Doctors, first-responders, and other on-call professionals can participate in worship services because they know they can be reached if necessary through their mobile devices.

As we seek to focus on the Savior, it's important to remember that our devices can facilitate our study, but they can't do our learning. They can give us something to ponder, but they can't do our thinking for us. They can even help us to remember to pray, but the praying is something we have to do for ourselves.

Elder Bednar taught that our relationship with God is real, not virtual.⁸ It can't be double-clicked or downloaded.⁹ So while the Relief Society president at the beginning of this article used her phone to help her center her thoughts on Christ, the covenant she was renewing wasn't with her phone; it was with Him. The journey her device helped her start had to be finished in her thoughts, her prayers, and her actions.

Principle 2: I minimize distractions.

We should all strive for an environment that enhances our focus on worship and learning. Minimizing distractions is important. This principle applies to many situations, from how we hold conversations or handle fussy children to how we use our digital devices.

There are so many ways to be distracted by a device that was designed to do so many things. Obviously, watching videos, listening to music, or playing games will make it difficult to pay attention to sacrament services. But so will checking email, text messages, social media, sports scores, and the many dings, buzzes, and badges that pull us into events, relationships, and conversations that exist outside of the meeting. All of this and more can distract us and others, even several rows away.

For those who want to eliminate digital distractions entirely, leaving their devices at home or turning them off may be appropriate. For those who use their devices to support their worship but want to avoid distracting others, it might be enough to silence the device, set it on do not disturb, or put it in airplane mode.¹⁰



Principle 3: I focus on my own worship.

There will always be distractions of one kind or another, and not all of them are digital. These might include a fussy infant, a buzzing insect, or the noisy traffic outside. We bear primary responsibility for what we get out of our worship. So if someone forgets to put their phone on airplane mode, we need to try to put ourselves on “ignore distractions” mode.

President Russell M. Nelson taught, “Each member of the Church bears responsibility for the spiritual enrichment that can come from a sacrament meeting.”¹¹

If we notice others around us using their devices, we need to be careful about assuming that what they’re doing

is inappropriate just because it’s on a digital device. If the individual is a child or someone we are called to have responsibility for, it may be appropriate to check on their usage as the Spirit directs. Otherwise, we try to return to our own worship.

Learning Together

In a statement that encompasses these principles, President Oaks counseled, “During sacrament meeting—and especially during the sacrament service—we should concentrate on worship and refrain from all other activities, especially from behavior that could interfere with the worship of others.”¹²

There are many other principles that could help guide our usage. As digital devices become an increasingly normal part of our culture, we will need to wrestle together with questions about what is appropriate. Because every situation is unique and technology will continue to change, we need to continually examine our own usage, consider new or different perspectives, and be willing to forgive others as we learn together. ■

NOTES

1. See “10th Annual Cisco Visual Networking Index (VNI) Mobile Forecast Projects 70 Percent of Global Population Will Be Mobile Users,” Feb. 3, 2016, newsroom.cisco.com.
2. See David A. Bednar, “Apostle Offers Counsel about Social Media,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2015, 17; *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 18–19.
3. In Sarah Jane Weaver, “Elder Bednar Tells 2016 Mission Presidents Not to Fear Technology,” Church News section of LDS.org, July 6, 2016, news.lds.org.
4. See “Elder Bednar Tells 2016 Mission Presidents.”
5. M. Russell Ballard, “Sharing the Gospel Using the Internet,” *Ensign*, July 2008, 60.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.
7. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 17–20.
8. See David A. Bednar, “Things as They Really Are,” *Ensign*, June 2010, 16–25.
9. See Scott D. Whiting, “Digital Detachment and Personal Revelation,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2010, 16–21.
10. See M. Russell Ballard, “Be Still, and Know That I Am God” (Church Educational System devotional, May 4, 2014), lds.org/broadcasts.
11. Russell M. Nelson, “Worshipping at Sacrament Meeting,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2004, 28.
12. Dallin H. Oaks, “Sacrament Meeting and the Sacrament,” 18–19.



By Brian K. Ashton

Second Counselor in
the Sunday School
General Presidency

Teaching with Tech: **ENGAGING YOUTH IN A DIGITAL WORLD**

*How can technology be an ally rather than
an enemy in the classroom?*

As I visit wards and stakes across the Church, teachers and leaders of youth often ask, “How do we keep digital devices from being a distraction in class?”

At the same time, many of the best youth teachers I have observed begin their classes with the phrase “Pull out your phone and look up . . .” Consequently, I’d like to share a few things that I have learned about helping youth use technology in righteous and productive ways in the gospel classroom.

Prophecies about Technology

Prophets and apostles have spoken to us about the blessings of technology, telling us how Heavenly Father has given us technology to help us move His work forward at an increasingly rapid rate. In 1862, President Brigham Young (1801–77) taught: “Every discovery in science and art, that is really true and useful to mankind has been given by direct revelation from God. . . . It has been given with a view to prepare the way for the ultimate triumph of truth, and the redemption of the earth from the power of sin and Satan. We should take advantage of all these great discoveries . . . and give to our children the benefit of every branch

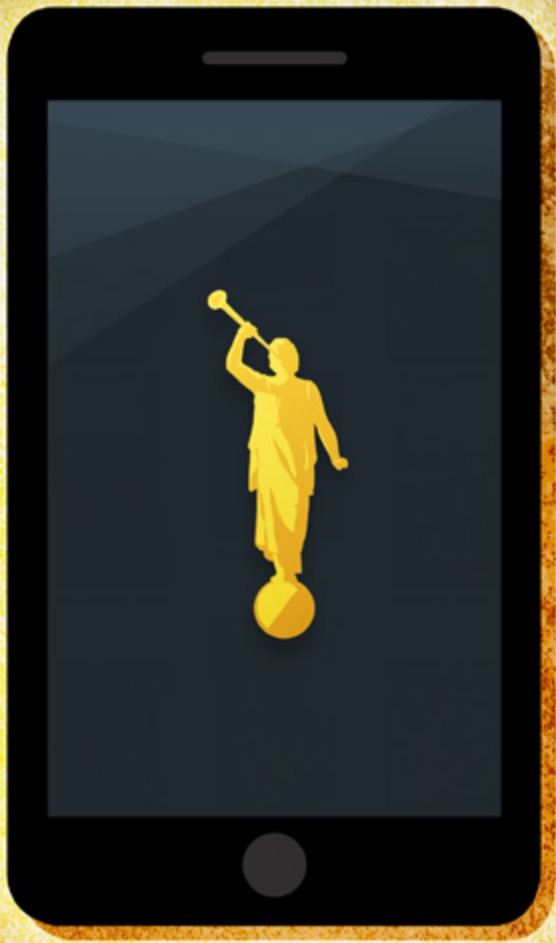
of useful knowledge, to prepare them to step forward and efficiently do their part in the great work.”¹

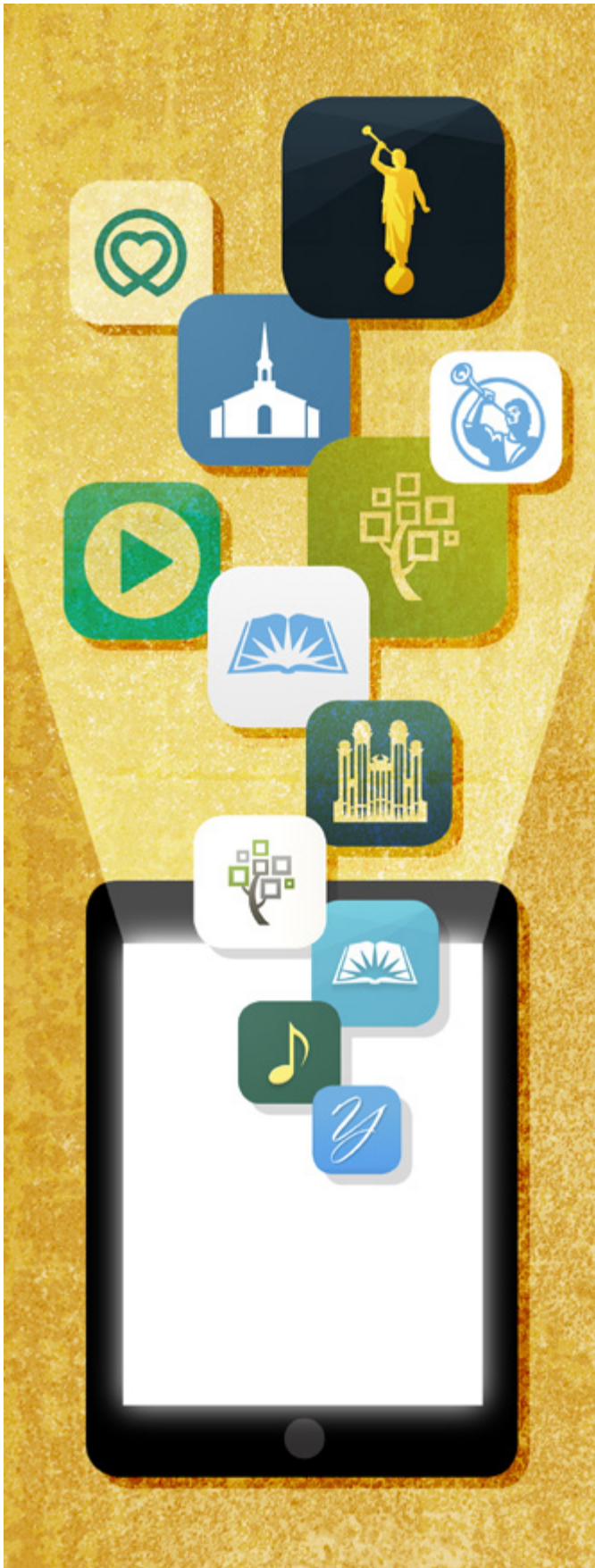
Using Digital Devices in Righteous Activities

In my own life, my study of the gospel has been greatly enhanced by using the scriptures and other resources in the Gospel Library mobile app.

Our youth have been prepared to study, teach, and preach the gospel in everyday life and as full-time missionaries using technology in ways that we have only begun to discover. Because the adversary tries to use every good and useful invention for his evil purposes, it is incumbent upon us as parents, leaders, and teachers to help youth learn to use technology in righteous and productive ways from an early age.

The home is the best place for this to happen. (Parents looking for helpful resources might consider using some of the Church materials listed in the accompanying sidebar.) The gospel classroom also offers important opportunities to help youth associate their digital devices with righteous activities and feeling the Holy Ghost. Here are a few ways that teachers and leaders can help make that happen.





Set Principle-Based Expectations

Set expectations about the use of technology in the classroom based on principles. One key principle might be “Our purpose in class is to learn the gospel through the Holy Ghost. Our use of digital devices should assist in this effort, not distract from it.” This is far more effective than a rule such as “We don’t access social media during class.” This rule sends the message that social media is bad, where the principle leaves open the possibility of using social media in class in appropriate ways, like reaching out to those who aren’t in attendance to let them know that they are missed and to invite them to come next week.

We harm our youth with rules that suggest a behavior is wrong when it’s not. It creates confusion about using the technology in other settings and misses the opportunity to teach how to use technology appropriately. The expectations we set with the help of the youth in our classes should be in line with their age and maturity.

Learn about the Technology

Don’t let your own fear or lack of understanding about technology get in the way of letting the youth use digital devices in appropriate ways. One ward reported that they held a training for teachers on how to use digital devices to study the gospel. They found that as the teachers became more skilled in using technology, they also became more excited about using digital devices to study the gospel, and the issue of digital devices being a distraction in the classroom largely went away.

Make Lessons Interactive

I have found that the best way to help students use technology righteously is to make the lessons interactive and incorporate digital devices into the lesson plan. I rarely find students using their cell phones inappropriately in classes where teachers ask inspired questions, the students are involved in the lesson and feel that the teacher loves them, and the Holy Ghost is present.

Where this happens, the teacher frequently begins the class by asking an inspired question and then having

the youth, often in small groups, find the answer to the question in the scriptures and words of the prophets. Throughout the lesson, the teacher has the class looking up scriptures, studying general conference talks, watching Church-produced videos, and discussing what they are learning. The more that youth are involved in the learning process, the greater the likelihood that they will use their digital devices appropriately.

Strike a Balance

As we incorporate technology into our lessons, it is important to remember that our use of technology needs to be balanced. We must be careful to ensure that technology does not become the lesson or distract from feeling the Holy Ghost.

In addition, some students do not have digital devices and should not be made to feel left out. With the exception of watching Church-produced videos, the activities that can be done on digital devices in the classroom should also be able to be done with paper scriptures and copies of Church magazines.

What's more, there are times when digital devices may not be appropriate. For example, when students or teachers are bearing testimony, it may make sense for teachers to lovingly invite students to put their cell phones away and just feel what the Spirit is teaching them.

Show Patience

Finally, for some youth, learning to use digital devices appropriately in class may take some time. Christlike teachers in any classroom show patience with and love toward those who are struggling.

Technology: An Enhancement, Not a Threat

Helping youth use technology appropriately will bless them throughout their lives, and it can enhance our classes. As Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles shared, “Technology, when understood and used for righteous purposes, need not be a threat but rather an enhancement to spiritual communication.”²

As the Sunday School General Presidency, we invite teachers to embrace technology in their lessons and make every effort to help youth learn to use technology for righteous purposes. If you'll ask Heavenly Father for help in your efforts, He will answer those prayers. ■

NOTES

1. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1954), 18–19.
2. Richard G. Scott, “For Peace at Home,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 30.

USING TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATELY

Brother Brian K. Ashton tells us that the home is the best place to learn to use technology righteously. The following resources can help individuals, parents, and families decide how to use existing technologies in appropriate ways:

- *Safeguards for Using Technology*. Although written for missionaries, the guidelines in this booklet can be adapted to the home. It is available in the Gospel Library app or in print through distribution centers or the online store.
- A list of family home evening lessons on avoiding pornography, including how to choose good media, can be found at overcomingpornography.org/resources.
- Guidelines on family discussions regarding social media are highlighted in “Families Should Discuss How to Use Social Media in Righteous Ways” (at lds.org/go/mediaE818) or in an article by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Flood the Earth through Social Media,” in the August 2015 *New Era*.

SAVING MY

By John C. Gaetz

Mother

When I was three years old, my mother started drinking. She became an alcoholic.

As I was growing up in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, I would often hear my father chastising my mother for her drinking and what it was doing to our family. As I got a little older, one of the jobs my father regularly gave me was to gather up all the alcohol I could find in the house and pour it down the toilet.

When I was 15, Mom died. An autopsy revealed she had been suffering from a brain tumor for approximately 12 years, the same amount of time she had been drinking. Doctors said she had endured excruciating agony, and we realized she had been drinking to dull the pain.



From right, clockwise: John's mother with him as a toddler before her battle with alcoholism began, John's father with him as a young teen, and John on the waters of Nova Scotia at age 17.

After my mother passed away, we realized we had horribly misjudged her. Then missionaries showed us there was a way to make amends.

John's mother (right) endured excruciating pain for years before she passed away. His father (far right) was sealed to her in the Washington D.C. Temple at age 83.



A memory came back to me. When I was just a little boy, I went into my parents' bedroom and found my mother kneeling by her bed, begging God to take her life. She knew her drinking was hurting our family. She must have felt desperately alone.

My father and I both expressed regret that we had misjudged Mom. We felt guilty that none of us had been aware she was so horribly sick. How we wished we could see her again and tell her that we now understood and that we loved her.

At age 35, I met the missionaries. I told them about my mother. I had always felt that she was now in heaven. I still longed to console her, even though I felt I would never qualify for heaven.

"In the temple, you can do work for your kindred dead," one of the missionaries said.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

He explained that I could help my mother to progress in the eternities by having saving ordinances performed in her behalf. That caught my attention. I didn't yet understand everything I could do for her, but if I could do anything, I wanted to do it. Then the missionaries explained that by becoming worthy and doing temple work, not only could I help my mother now, but someday we could be together again as a family.

As I learned more and more about Heavenly Father's plan of happiness, I came to understand the great importance of eternal families. As my gospel knowledge grew, so did my conviction that I must become a member of the Church. By doing so I could actually save my mother, if she would accept the ordinances done in her behalf.

After my baptism and confirmation, I had a year to prepare to receive my temple ordinances. Then I wanted to be present as temple ordinances were performed for my mother. In the meantime, there was something else I could do—I could help my father.

Dad was aware of my conversion. He had a lot of

questions, but he was still in Halifax, and I now lived in Calgary, Alberta.

Dad was an avid reader, so with the help of a

former mission president who had become my friend, I selected some good books about the Restoration and sent them to my father. From time to time, we would send additional books.

When the year had passed, I was able to receive my endowment in the Cardston Alberta Temple and to witness the temple ordinances performed for my mother.

I went to general conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, and in a restaurant at the hotel I saw a man wearing a missionary badge that said President Sorensen, Canada Halifax Mission. I found out he had been called to be mission president in the city where my father lived.

"I want you to baptize my father!" I said. He was surprised but said he would be happy to visit him. He told me to purchase a set of scriptures and have my father's name engraved on them. I did so and delivered them to President Sorensen just before he left for the mission field.

He delivered those scriptures and taught my father the gospel. It took two years, but my father finally embraced the truth. He was 82 when President David E. Sorensen (later a Seventy) baptized and confirmed him. A year later, President Sorensen escorted him as Dad received his temple endowment. Then my mother and father were sealed to each other, and I was sealed to them. Six months later, my father passed away.

I joined the Church thinking I had found a way to help my mother. But I had also found a way to help myself and my father, not only to make amends but to be with Mom eternally. ■

The author, formerly from Alberta, Canada, now lives in Utah, USA.



CHAPTER 6

The Gift and Power of God

This is chapter 6 of the new four-volume narrative history of the Church titled Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days. The book will soon be available in 14 languages in print, in the Church History section of the Gospel Library app, and online at saints.lds.org. Chapter 5, published in the July issue, described the loss of the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon translation in 1828.

When Joseph returned to Harmony in the summer of 1828, Moroni appeared to him again and took the plates away. “If you are sufficiently humble and penitent,” the angel said, “you will receive them again on the twenty-second of September.”¹

Darkness clouded Joseph’s mind.² He knew he had been wrong to ignore God’s will and trust Martin with the manuscript. Now God no longer trusted him with the plates or the interpreters. He felt like he deserved any punishment the heavens sent his way.³

Weighed down with guilt and regret, he went to his knees, confessed his sins, and pleaded for forgiveness. He reflected on where he had gone wrong and what he could do better if the Lord let him translate again.⁴

One day in July, as Joseph was walking a short distance from his house, Moroni appeared to him. The angel handed him the interpreters, and Joseph saw a divine message in them: “The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught.”⁵

The words were reassuring, but they soon gave way to reproof. “How strict were your commandments,” the Lord said. “You should not have feared man more than God.” He commanded Joseph to be more careful with sacred things. The record on the gold plates was more important than Martin’s reputation or Joseph’s desire to please people. God had prepared it to renew His ancient covenant and teach all people to rely on Jesus Christ for salvation.

The Lord urged Joseph to remember His mercy. “Repent of that which thou hast done,” He commanded, “and thou art still chosen.” Once again, He called Joseph to be His prophet and seer. Yet He warned him to heed His word.

“Except thou do this,” He declared, “thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift.”⁶

That fall, Joseph’s parents traveled south to Harmony. Nearly two months had passed since Joseph left their home in Manchester, and they had heard nothing from him. They worried the summer’s tragedies had devastated him. In a matter of weeks, he had lost his first child, nearly lost his wife, and lost the manuscript pages. They wanted to make sure he and Emma were well.

Less than a mile from their destination, Joseph Sr. and Lucy were overjoyed to see Joseph standing in the road



ahead of them, looking calm and happy. He told them about losing the confidence of God, repenting of his sins, and receiving the revelation. The Lord's rebuke had stung him, but like prophets of old he wrote the revelation down for others to read. It was the first time he had ever recorded the Lord's word to him.

Joseph also told his parents that Moroni had since returned the plates and interpreters. The angel seemed pleased, Joseph recounted. "He told me that the Lord loved me for my faithfulness and humility."

The record was now safely stowed in the house, hidden in a trunk. "Emma writes for me now," Joseph told them, "but the angel said that the Lord would send someone to write for me, and I trust that it will be so."⁷

The following spring, Martin Harris traveled to Harmony with some bad news. His wife had filed a complaint in court, claiming Joseph was a fraud who pretended to translate gold plates. Martin now expected a summons to testify in court. He would have to declare that Joseph had fooled him, or Lucy would charge him with deceit as well.⁸

Martin pushed Joseph to give him more evidence that the plates were real. He wanted to tell the court all about the translation, but he worried people would not believe him. Lucy, after all, had searched the Smiths' house and never found the record. And though he had served as Joseph's scribe for two months, Martin had never seen the plates either and could not testify that he had.⁹

Joseph took the question to the Lord and received an answer for his friend. The Lord would not tell Martin what to say in court, nor would He provide him any more evidence until Martin chose to be humble and exercise faith. "If they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph," He said, "if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you."

The Lord promised to treat Martin mercifully, however, if he did as Joseph had done that summer and humbled himself, trusted in God, and learned from his mistakes. Three faithful witnesses would see the plates in due time, the Lord said, and Martin could be one of them if he stopped seeking the approval of others.¹⁰

Before closing His words, the Lord made a declaration. "If the people of this generation harden not their hearts," He said, "I will establish my church."¹¹

Joseph reflected on these words as Martin copied the revelation. He and Emma then listened as Martin read it back to check its accuracy. As they read, Emma's father came into the room and listened. When they finished, he asked whose words they were.

"The words of Jesus Christ," Joseph and Emma explained.

"I consider the whole of it a delusion," Isaac said. "Abandon it."¹²

Ignoring Emma's father, Martin took his copy of the revelation and boarded the stagecoach for home. He had come to Harmony seeking evidence of the plates, and he left with a revelation testifying of their reality. He could not use it in court, but he returned to Palmyra knowing the Lord was aware of him.

Later, when Martin stood before the judge, he offered a simple, powerful testimony. With a hand raised to heaven, he witnessed of the truth of the gold plates and declared that he had freely given Joseph fifty dollars to do the Lord's

work. With no evidence to prove Lucy's accusations, the court dismissed the case.¹³

Joseph, meanwhile, continued the translation, praying the Lord would soon send him another scribe.¹⁴

Back in Manchester, a young man named Oliver Cowdery was staying with Joseph's parents. Oliver was a year younger than Joseph, and in the fall of 1828 he had begun teaching school about a mile south of the Smiths' farm.

Teachers often boarded with the families of their students, and when Oliver heard rumors about Joseph and the gold plates, he asked if he could stay with the Smiths. At first he gleaned few details from the family. The stolen manuscript and local gossip had made them wary to the point of silence.¹⁵

But during the winter of 1828–29, as Oliver taught the Smith children, he earned the trust of his hosts. Around this time, Joseph Sr. had come back from a trip to Harmony with a revelation declaring that the Lord was about

to begin a marvelous work.¹⁶ By then Oliver had proven to be a sincere seeker of truth, and Joseph's parents opened up to him about their son's divine calling.¹⁷

What they said captivated Oliver, and he longed to help with the translation. Like Joseph, Oliver was dissatisfied with modern churches and believed in a God of miracles who still revealed His will to people.¹⁸ But Joseph and the gold plates were far away, and Oliver did not know how he could help the work if he stayed in Manchester.

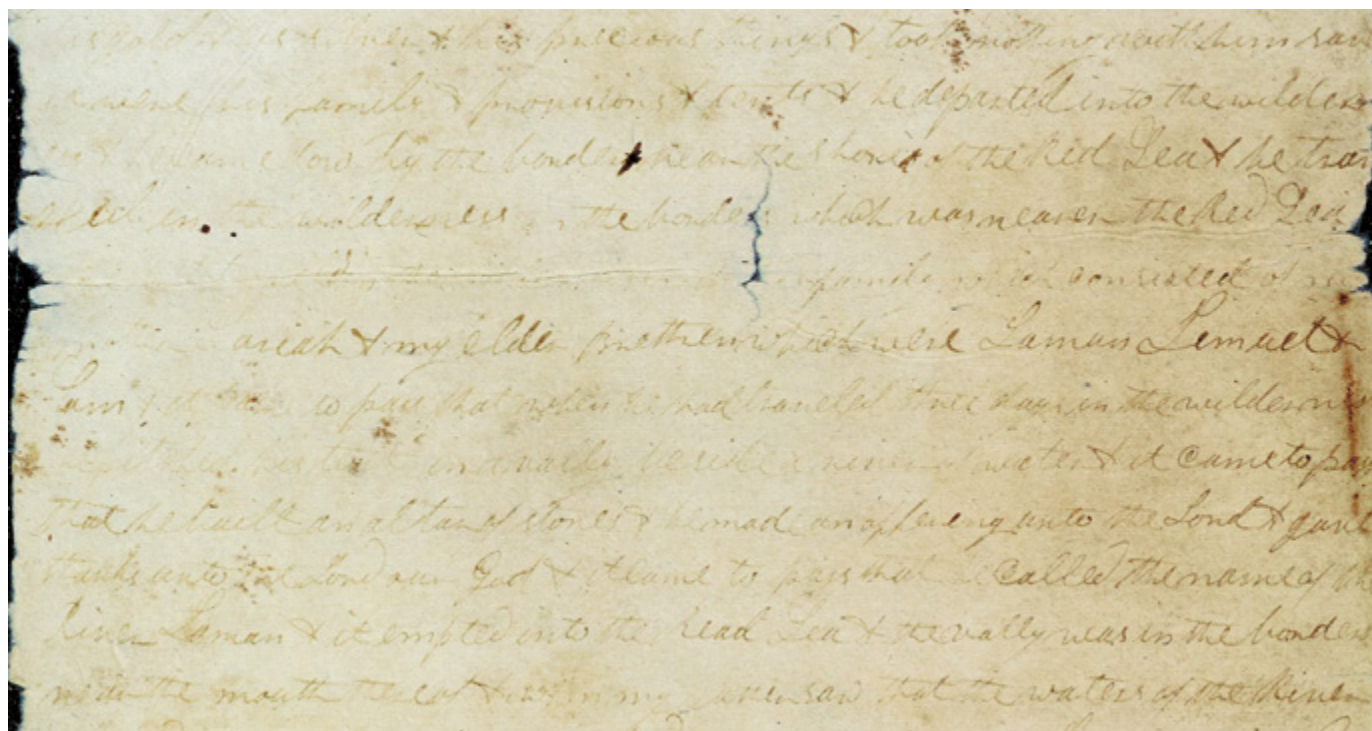
One spring day, as rain was falling hard against the Smiths' roof, Oliver told the family he wanted to go to Harmony to help Joseph when the school term was over. Lucy and Joseph Sr. urged him to ask the Lord if his desires were right.¹⁹

Retiring to his bed, Oliver prayed privately to know if what he had heard about the gold plates was true. The Lord showed him a vision of the gold plates and Joseph's efforts to translate them. A peaceful feeling rested over him, and he



*The record testified again
and again of Jesus Christ,
and Oliver saw how
prophets led an ancient
church and how ordinary
men and women did
the work of God.*





Oliver Cowdery was the scribe for this page of the Book of Mormon translation.

knew then that he should volunteer to be Joseph's scribe.²⁰

Oliver told no one about his prayer. But as soon as the school term ended, he and Joseph's brother Samuel set out on foot for Harmony, more than 100 miles (160 km) away. The road was cold and muddy from spring rain, and Oliver had a frostbitten toe by the time he and Samuel arrived at Joseph and Emma's door. Yet he was eager to meet the couple and see for himself how the Lord worked through the young prophet.²¹

Once Oliver arrived in Harmony, it was as if he had always been there. Joseph talked with him late into the night, listened to his story, and answered his questions. It was obvious Oliver had a good education, and Joseph readily accepted his offer to act as scribe.

After Oliver's arrival, Joseph's first task was to secure a place to work. He asked Oliver to draft a contract in which Joseph promised to pay his father-in-law for the small frame home where he and Emma lived, as well as the barn, farmland, and nearby spring.²² Mindful of their daughter's well-being, Emma's parents agreed to the terms and promised to help calm neighbors' fears about Joseph.²³

Meanwhile, Joseph and Oliver started translating. They worked well together, weeks on end, frequently with

Emma in the same room going about her daily work.²⁴ Sometimes Joseph translated by looking through the interpreters and reading in English the characters on the plates.

Often he found a single seer stone to be more convenient. He would put the seer stone in his hat, place his face into the hat to block out the light, and peer at the stone. Light from the stone would shine in the darkness, revealing words that Joseph dictated as Oliver rapidly copied them down.²⁵

Under the Lord's direction, Joseph did not try to retranslate what he had lost. Instead, he and Oliver continued forward in the record. The Lord revealed that Satan had enticed wicked men to take the pages, alter their words, and use them to cast doubt on the translation. But the Lord assured Joseph that He had inspired the ancient prophets who prepared the plates to include another, fuller account of the lost material.²⁶

"I will confound those who have altered my words," the Lord told Joseph. "I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil."²⁷

Acting as Joseph's scribe thrilled Oliver. Day after day, he listened as his friend dictated the complex history of two large civilizations, the Nephites and the Lamanites. He learned of righteous and wicked kings, of people who

fell into captivity and were delivered from it, of an ancient prophet who used seer stones to translate records recovered from fields filled with bones. Like Joseph, that prophet was a revelator and seer blessed with the gift and power of God.²⁸

The record testified again and again of Jesus Christ, and Oliver saw how prophets led an ancient church and how ordinary men and women did the work of God.

Yet Oliver still had many questions about the Lord's work, and he hungered for answers. Joseph sought a revelation for him through the Urim and Thummim, and the Lord responded. "If you will ask of me you shall receive," He declared. "If thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous."

The Lord also urged Oliver to remember the witness he had received before coming to Harmony, which Oliver had kept to himself. "Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" the Lord asked. "If I have told you things which no man knoweth have you not received a witness?"²⁹

Oliver was astonished. He immediately told Joseph about his secret prayer and the divine witness he had received. No one could have known about it except God, he said, and he now knew the work was true.

They returned to work, and Oliver began to wonder if he could translate as well.³⁰ He believed that God could work through instruments like seer stones, and he had occasionally used a divining rod to find water and minerals. Yet he was unsure if his rod worked by the power of God. The process of revelation was still a mystery to him.³¹

Joseph again brought Oliver's questions to the Lord, and the Lord told Oliver that he had power to acquire knowledge if he asked in faith. The Lord confirmed that Oliver's rod worked by the power of God, like Aaron's rod in the Old Testament. He then taught Oliver more about revelation. "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by

the Holy Ghost," He declared. "Behold, this is the spirit of revelation."

He also told Oliver that he could translate the record like Joseph did, as long as he relied on faith. "Remember," the Lord said, "without faith you can do nothing."³²

After the revelation, Oliver was excited to translate. He followed Joseph's example, but when the words did not come easily, he grew frustrated and confused.

Joseph saw his friend's struggle and sympathized. It had taken him time to tune his heart and mind to the work of translation, but Oliver seemed to think he could master it quickly. It was not enough to have a spiritual gift. He had to cultivate and develop it over time for use in God's work.

Oliver soon gave up on translating and asked Joseph why he had not been successful.

Joseph asked the Lord. "You have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was

to ask me," the Lord replied. "You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right."

The Lord instructed Oliver to be patient. "It is not expedient that you should translate now," He said. "The work which you are called to do is to write for my servant Joseph." He promised Oliver other opportunities to translate later, but for now he was the scribe and Joseph was the seer.³³ ■

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Building Spiritual Patterns

You can provide safety and strength for your family by establishing patterns of spiritual living in your home.

By Karmel and Lloyd Newell

One morning, a family was gathered for scripture study when the phone rang. The mother picked up the phone, and her sister-in-law from New Jersey spoke frantically on the other end: “Hurry! Turn on the news.”

The day was September 11, 2001. The news told of a horrifying terrorist attack in New York City. The children were shaken. Going to school seemed a little scary now.

The parents turned off the TV, and the family knelt to pray. After the prayer, the eight-year-old daughter said, “It’s going to be all right. I think the terrorists are just like the Gadianton robbers. We don’t need to be afraid of them.” Peace replaced fear. As the children left for school, the mother and father turned to each other and said, “That’s why we do this every morning.”

The family was fortified during a time of great distress because they had established a pattern of family prayer and scripture study. When fear struck, it was natural for them to pray because they prayed together every day. When world events were upsetting, they found reassurance in the scriptures because that’s where they always found reassurance.

Thankfully, events this dramatic don’t happen every day. Most often the challenges our families face are less drastic, but they are real, and they can be dangerous. You and your

family can prepare to face life’s challenges by establishing patterns of spiritual living in your home.

What Is a Spiritual Pattern?

A pattern in a work of art, such as a piece of music or a quilt, is a repeating design of notes or colors. A work of art is often defined by the patterns it displays.

Spiritually speaking, patterns can work in our families the same way. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) outlined some basic spiritual patterns when he counseled mothers: “Teach [your children] to pray while they are young. Read to them from the scriptures even though they may not understand all that you read. Teach them to pay their tithes and offerings on the first money they ever receive. Let this practice become a habit in their lives.”¹

These spiritual habits can become such a consistent part of our families that they help define who we are. They can unite family members, continue from one generation to the next, and give us a strong sense of stability, identity, and cohesion. Most important, they bring us closer to the Savior and help us overcome trials and temptations.

Beginning to Build

The patterns we hear in a beautiful piece of music don’t happen by chance; they must be carefully planned and



precisely executed. The same is true for spiritual patterns in our families. Without deliberate planning, it's easy for other activities to creep in and take precedence over spiritual patterns. Here are some tips for creating spiritual patterns in your home:

- Begin by discussing with your spouse the spiritual patterns you want to develop in your family.
- Prayerfully create a plan and present it in a family council.
- Decide on a regular time and place for the spiritual pattern. For example, one family decided to gather around the kitchen table for scripture study so there would be less contention and fewer distractions.
- Make it fun! Nothing quite compares with marching around the kitchen table singing “We Are All Enlisted”² after family prayer, or sipping hot chocolate together during scripture study on a cold morning, or watching your children act out an adventurous scripture story.
- Give spiritual patterns priority. Schedule other activities around them.
- Be creative and adapt to the needs of your family members. Scripture study for small children might last just a few minutes each day. A family home evening lesson for teenagers with lots of homework could be a well-planned 15 minutes. Remember that the length of time is not as important as consistency.
- Pray for inspiration for successfully integrating a spiritual pattern into your busy lives.

Following these guidelines is not a quick process. But through the patient repetition of small and simple acts, we can develop reliable spiritual patterns to strengthen our families, being assured that “by small means the Lord can bring about great things” (1 Nephi 16:29).

Persistence through Resistance

Because establishing spiritual patterns takes time, the rewards aren't always immediate. Parents may wonder if



their children are really benefiting from their efforts—especially when the kids quarrel, complain, or refuse to participate. Unfortunately, too many parents feel paralyzed by the seeming picture of perfection they see in the families around them, causing them to think: “Other families never get stuck in 1 Nephi like we do.” “Other families don't argue during family night.” “Other families don't forget to pray. What's wrong with us?”

The truth is, no family is perfect. And failed attempts, instead of discouraging us, should reaffirm to us the need to keep trying. Marjorie Pay Hinckley, wife of President Gordon B. Hinckley, put this in perspective when she wrote in a family letter: “I have a new project, one chapter a day from each of the standard works. I have been on it for four days and am only three days behind. Better to have tried and failed than never to have tried.”³

Every family encounters resistance to establishing spiritual patterns. But when children resist, wise parents persist. President Hinckley shared this encouraging example from his own parents, who established a spiritual pattern of family night that included musical performances:

“In the beginning, we would laugh and make cute remarks about one another's performance. But our parents persisted. We sang together. We prayed together. We listened quietly while Mother read Bible and Book of

Mormon stories. Father told us stories out of his memory. . . .

“Out of those simple little meetings, held in the parlor of our old home, came something indescribable and wonderful. Our love for our parents was strengthened. Our love for brothers and sisters was enhanced. Our love for the Lord was increased. An appreciation for simple goodness grew in our hearts.”⁴

Blessed for Your Efforts

The spiritual patterns you establish will bless your family and help you draw closer to each other and to the Lord. For example, one family wanted to bring greater meaning to their fast. They decided to remind each other of fast Sunday one day in advance, consider special needs for which they could fast, and begin their fast with a prayer. They agreed on a time to gather on Sunday to share feelings of gratitude. The mother concluded: “We feel the Spirit of the Lord more in our home, and we are more grateful. . . . Making fast Sunday more meaningful to our family has drawn us closer to each other and to the Lord.”⁵

Even if they don’t realize it at first, your children will be strengthened by the righteous habits you choose to create in your family. One young woman described how her parents put imaginary armor on her and her siblings before they left for school each day. This was meant to remind them of the spiritual armor that would protect them from evil. “I never really appreciated this until I was older,” she said. “I am just now realizing the significance of this ritual they created. . . . Even if it was something I thought was stupid, I know it had an impact on the way I lived my life.”⁶

Another young woman shared how she was affected by her mother’s persistence: “There was a time of decision early in my life where . . . I tried to separate myself from any situation where I might be reminded of my wrong choices. Yet my angel mother kept extending herself, even in the face of my blatant rejection. She constantly invited me to come to prayer and [scripture study], even when I refused to come. It was her consistency that helped me to repent.”⁷

When we consistently strive to strengthen our families and center our homes on Jesus Christ, the Lord will bless our efforts. We never really know when and how those blessings will manifest themselves. Perhaps your family or your children will face an intense crisis, as the family did on September 11, 2001, and the spiritual patterns you’ve established will provide the peace and strength to move forward with faith. More likely, a spiritual pattern will help you and your family withstand the temptations that subtly attack us every day. The Lord has promised, “Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great” (D&C 64:33). ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stand Strong against the Wiles of the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 99.
2. “We Are All Enlisted,” *Hymns*, no. 250.
3. *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley*, ed. Virginia H. Pearce (1999), 79.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Some Lessons I Learned as a Boy,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 54.
5. Staci Swinton Brooks, “Making More of Our Fast Sunday,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 73.
6. Name withheld, first-person account, from data gathered by the authors.
7. Name withheld, first-person account, from data gathered by the authors.

TO BE GIVEN HIGHEST PRIORITY

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

First Presidency letter, Feb. 11, 1999, in *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.4.1.





Use the Friend magazine to help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

DEALING WITH DISASTERS

Earthquakes, hurricanes, terrorist attacks. In any disaster, one of the earliest casualties is our children's sense of safety and security. That can be true even if the disaster is on the other side of the globe. No matter how hard we may try to protect them from shocking news, children hear about traumatic events at school and glimpse disturbing images on phones or televisions. They can also feel shock waves of sorrow, anger, and fear reverberating from us. So how can we comfort and empower our children?

Children's advocate Fred Rogers passed along the advice his mother would give him after traumatic events: "Always look for the helpers" (in Fred Rogers and Barry Head, *Mister Rogers Talks with Parents* [1983], 183). We can also teach our children to look for "the Helper"—a loving Heavenly Father whose helping hand is always stretched out to His children. This month's *Friend* can help families cope during those inevitable times when disaster strikes.

"The Lemonade Stand That Changed Everything" (page 32)

After a terrorist attack, a child feels comforted and empowered when she helps her neighborhood raise money for injured firefighters.

"What's on Your Mind?" (page 34)

This page gives lots of ideas for serving others in the wake of an illness or disaster.



"I Can Always Pray" (page 24)

These activities remind children that they can always pray to Heavenly Father, including when they're frightened or sad.

"Emergency Scavenger Hunt" (page 35)

Help everyone feel more secure by making or updating your emergency kit.



Find stories, activities, and media related to this topic and others at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.

TALK ABOUT IT

- Explain what happened in concrete terms: "Wind damaged the power lines that light our house." Then tell what's being done to help: "Workers are working on the lines, and we're going to use our emergency lanterns until the lines are repaired."
- Ask children what they already know about the disaster. Let their questions guide what you tell them.
- Limit the news coverage your family watches about the disaster.
- Let children express fear and sadness, and don't try to "reason" them out of their feelings. Worries about not seeing their friends or missing a soccer game may be very important to them.
- Do something as a family to help those who are suffering.
- Reassure them that you love them and that Heavenly Father loves them and all those who have been affected.

RELATED RESOURCES

- Janele Williams, "Helping Children Cope with Traumatic Situations," *Ensign*, Feb. 2008, 46–48.
- Shawn Evans, "Helping Children Feel Safe," *Ensign*, Feb. 2011, 14–17.
- "Help in Times of Trouble," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 129.
- JustServe.org.



The New Era magazine is there for your teens—and for you. See how this month's issue can help you talk with them and teach them.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO YOUTH

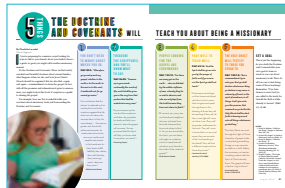
This month's *New Era* comes with the messages from the special worldwide devotional for youth by President Russell M. Nelson and his wife, Wendy Nelson, in June.

SHARING THE GOSPEL

In addition, the August issue features articles about sharing the gospel:



"Before You Are Called to Serve." Find out what it's like to serve a mission, and see more about the new interview questions for missionary candidates (page 24).



"5 Things the Doctrine and Covenants Will Teach You about Being a Missionary." Missionary lessons from the book that will be studied in seminary in the coming year (page 30).



"6 Reasons We Really Do Need the Church." See why the Church is indispensable (page 34).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Here are some questions answered in this month's *New Era* (pages 42–43):

What activities should I do in my free time to make it more valuable?

If God knows every decision we're going to make, what's the point of our agency?

TALK WITH THEM

Here are some questions you might ask:

- Why do you think President Nelson wanted to share that particular message with you?
- When you heard President Nelson's message, what did it make you want to do differently?
- How confident do you feel about sharing the gospel? What could help you feel more confident?

TEACH THEM

In family home evening or other teaching settings, consider using something you saw in the New Era. For instance:

- Read "Two Strokes for Integrity" (page 18), and share how you made a decision to be honest and upright even when nobody else was watching.
- Read "Our Plan to Beat the Odds" (page 10), and share your feelings about the blessings of eternal marriage.
- Read "Lock-Screen Scriptures" (page 7), and talk about some other things we can do to keep our minds focused on spiritual things each day.



SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS

How can the *New Era* better meet the needs of your youth? Do you have specific ideas for article topics, questions to be answered, or ways to help youth understand the gospel? Send your suggestions to newera@ldschurch.org.

FROM BRAZIL TO FINLAND AND BACK

By Salla Rantanen

A television documentary helped me find names from the other side of the world.

One year I traveled from Joensuu, Finland, where I was born and raised, to São Paulo, Brazil, for a vacation at the invitation of a Brazilian friend who is a fellow Latter-day Saint. While there, I became friends with the other members of his family, and when his mother added me as a friend on Facebook, I learned what her maiden name was.

Months after my return home, I happened to see a television documentary about traveling in Brazil

and recorded it to watch later. The show was about two Norwegian men who traveled the back roads of Brazil by car. They stopped at places of interest to show the everyday life in Brazil.

At one point, the men turned into what they thought was a little park alongside the road, but to their surprise, it was a nicely groomed cemetery. Just before departing, the cameraman panned away from the travelers to show a view of the

cemetery. Of all the headstones that came into view, only one, down in the lower right corner of the TV screen, had names and dates that could be read. I was surprised to see that the surname on that headstone was the same as the surname of my friend's mom, a rare German name in Brazil. I paused the video, took a photo of the headstone on my smartphone, and texted it to my friend in Brazil. I thought that this headstone might be important to his family and asked if



the people named on the headstone were his mother's relatives.

The next day a return text came that said, "They are my mother's family." His family wanted to know how I found that headstone and where the cemetery was located. I told them about the documentary and said that I would attempt to locate the cemetery by watching it again.

As I replayed the documentary several more times, I was able to pick out names of some towns and

villages that were mentioned, but I was unable to follow the travelers' route. Not wanting to give up, I went online and found a few tips from additional information about the documentary.

When I watched the video again, I was able to see part of the cemetery's name just as the men drove into it. I prayed for help, and after a search on Google Maps, I found the cemetery.

The discovery of the headstone in that cemetery in Brazil has led my

friends to find over 100 family names. Temple ordinances for the two individuals identified on the headstone and for several others have now been done.

I know that I was blessed to be guided by the Spirit to be part of finding these "lost" names. I know that there are varied and unique ways to help us find those who are waiting for their temple work to be done and that we have been given tools to assist us in performing this sacred work. ■

The author lives in North Karelia, Finland.

TOOLS TO HELP US FIND THOSE WHO ARE WAITING

Are you searching for an elusive ancestor and wonder where to look for information? The internet has opened up new avenues for family history research. Even simply typing an ancestor's name in a search engine like Google can bring amazing results.

FamilySearch and other websites offer records, books, and

newspapers online that may prove helpful, and FamilySearch can give you access to records on Ancestry.com, Findmypast.com, MyHeritage.com, and other sites (see familysearch.org/partneraccess). Plus, be sure to check out these resources: "Family History Research Wiki" (see directions below); "Finding Elusive Records" (video) at lds.org/go/elusiveE818.

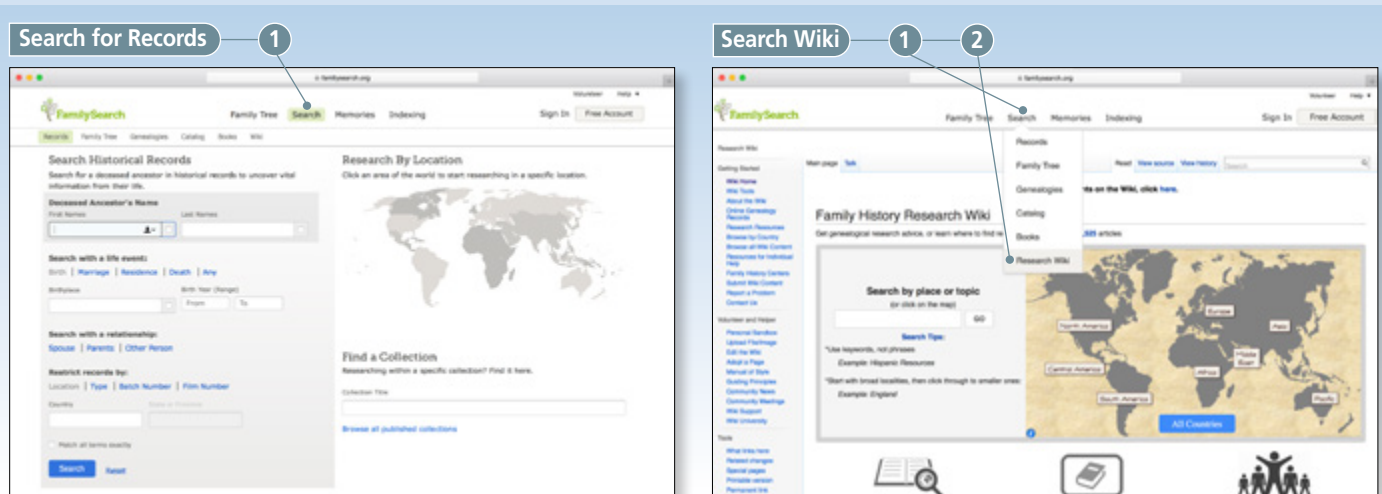


ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID GREEN

My son explained that while traveling through Wisconsin, his wife became seriously ill. What would he do with his children while their mom was in surgery?



STRANGERS WHO WERE FAMILY

Late one evening, my son Garrett called from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, USA. He and his wife, Shelly, and their children, were traveling from Alabama, where Garrett had just completed military training, to Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. He explained that while they were traveling through Wisconsin, Shelly became seriously ill. They had found a hospital, and Shelly was scheduled for an emergency appendectomy the next morning.

I arranged to fly and meet them, but I couldn't get there until the following day. My son expressed concern about what to do with his children—a five-year-old, a one-year-old, and a three-week-old baby—while their mom was in surgery.

Not knowing anyone in the area, he decided to call the bishop in Minot, even though they had not met. The bishop in Minot said he would contact the bishop in Eau Claire.

The following morning, the bishop in Eau Claire, along with the Relief Society president, met Garrett at his hotel. They said they would be happy to care for the children while Shelly was in surgery. Shelly later commented that she was completely at peace letting two strangers—who were family in the gospel—watch her children. By the time I arrived in Eau Claire, Shelly was recovering and my grandkids were back with her and Garrett. We were grateful for the help we received in our time of need.

A few weeks later, I was watching

the October 2016 general conference when President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said, “Where will you go to find a detailed and inspired Church organizational structure through which you are taught and supported by men and women who are deeply committed to serving the Lord by serving you and your family?” (“To Whom Shall We Go?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 91).

I couldn't help but think about what had happened in Eau Claire. It is a blessing to be not only a member of the Church but also a member of a gospel family, where we can serve and bless each other no matter where we are. ■

Jeff Messerly, Utah, USA

HEAVENLY FATHER HEARD MY PRAYER

We were still living in our home country, Argentina, when my husband and I started our family. We were returned missionaries and knew it was a blessing to be married in the Lord's temple. We were excited to walk the path back to Heavenly Father together.

We knew that the plan of salvation included trials, but we trusted that we would be able to overcome anything through faith and prayer. But we did not expect adversity to come upon us without stopping. Trial after trial seemed to rain down upon us.

One afternoon I was alone, feeling very sad and crying inconsolably because of our trials. I didn't know what to do. Every time I tried to stop crying, I only felt more depressed and anguished.

I then thought about the many men and women who shared with me how valuable prayer had been for them during difficult moments. I had a testimony of prayer, but my mind and spirit were so tormented that I thought I wouldn't be able to find the words to say.

In tears, I knelt by my bed and with all of my heart, I asked Heavenly Father for comfort and peace. I didn't ask for a solution or even for the trial to disappear. I just asked for peace.

While I was praying, I heard a knock on my front door. I opened it, with tears still in my eyes, and saw a

sister from Relief Society. She told me she was working in the area and had stopped by on her motorcycle. All I could do was hug her. She said, "I don't know why, but I felt I needed to stop by and see you."

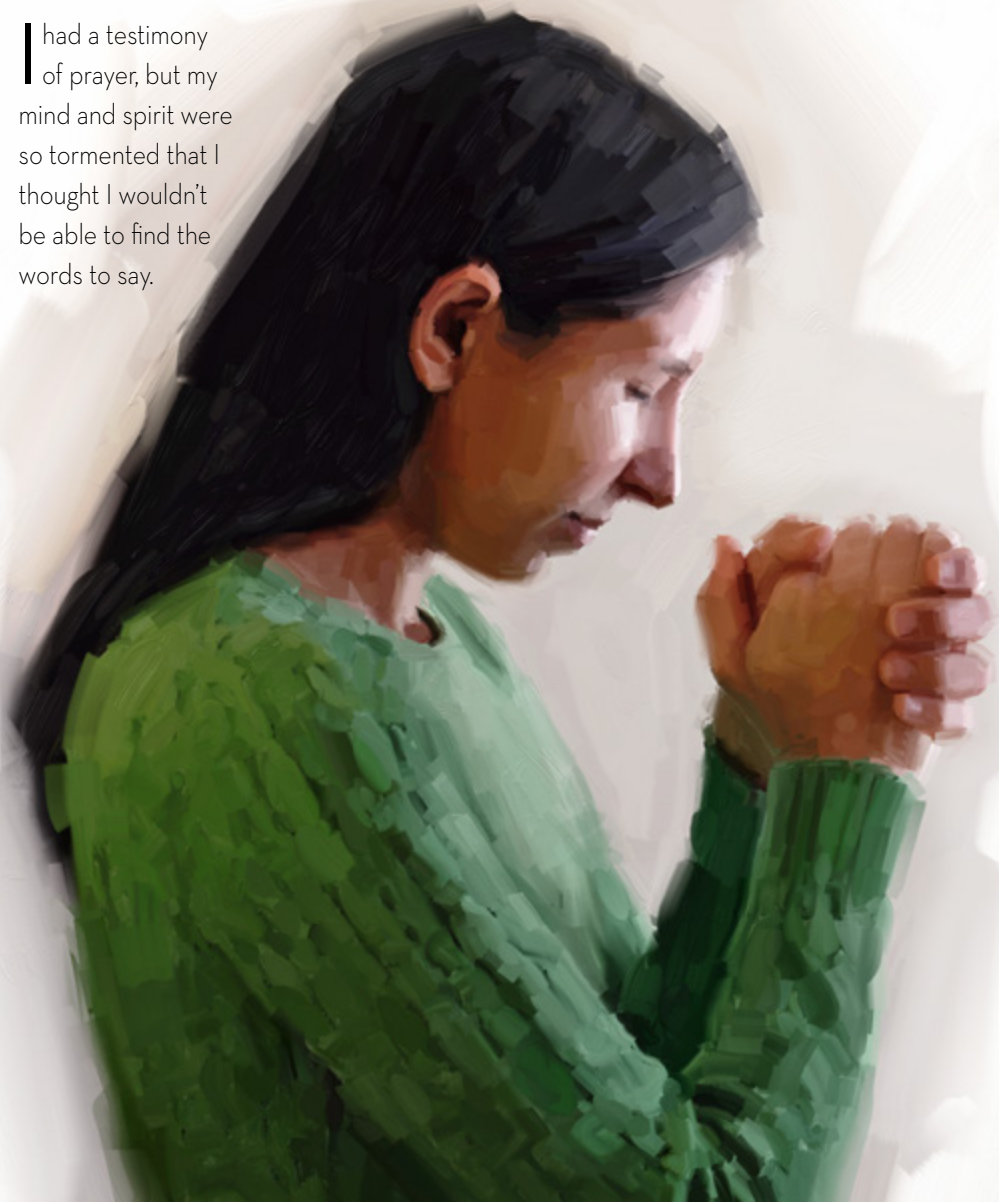
We sat at my kitchen table and she helped me calm down. After talking with her for a few minutes, I finally started to feel that I wasn't alone

and that Heavenly Father had heard my prayer.

It is a blessing to be able to talk to my Heavenly Father through prayer. He listened to me in my hour of need and sent one of His children to help me. I'm grateful this sister heard the inspiration of the Spirit and followed it. ■

Raquel E. Pedraza de Brosio, Utah, USA

I had a testimony of prayer, but my mind and spirit were so tormented that I thought I wouldn't be able to find the words to say.



AN OLD BOOK OF MORMON

Several years ago, I received a voice mail on my phone: “Is this Dan Hobbs who lived in Idaho Falls and served a mission in Washington in 1974? This is Tom Janaky. I think you taught my mom and dad.”

I was surprised. I had served in Texas, USA, not Washington, but I recognized the name. I immediately thought of the book on my dresser—a 1948 edition of the Book of Mormon. I opened it to a handwritten message on the cover page: “May God be with you. God bless you! Frank and Virginia Janaky, 1974.” Suddenly my mind went back 35 years.

I was 21 and close to the end of my mission in Houston, Texas. My companion and I were tracting without much success when we knocked on a door that was answered by a man who warmly invited us in. He introduced himself as Frank Janaky and introduced us to his wife, Virginia. We visited with them briefly.

On subsequent visits, we taught

them the gospel. They weren’t interested in baptism, but they were always friendly. During one discussion, I noticed an old copy of the Book of Mormon on a bookshelf. I can’t remember how it came to be in their possession, but I do remember mentioning how much I admired it.

Shortly before I returned home, my companion and I stopped by to say goodbye. Before we left, Frank signed the old Book of Mormon and gave it to me as a parting gift. He asked if I would sign his family Bible with my name and address. That was the last time I saw the Janakys, but I have always treasured their gift.

I returned the phone call that evening. Tom asked again if I had served a mission in Washington in 1974. I told him I had served in Texas and asked if his parents were Frank and Virginia.

He told me his parents had moved from Texas to Washington. He had assumed the missionaries who visited

his parents were in Washington. He said he had found my name and address in the family Bible.

“I am calling you to tell you that my brother and I have both been baptized, partly because of how nice the missionaries were to our parents,” he said. “They were so fond of all the missionaries who contacted them through the years.”

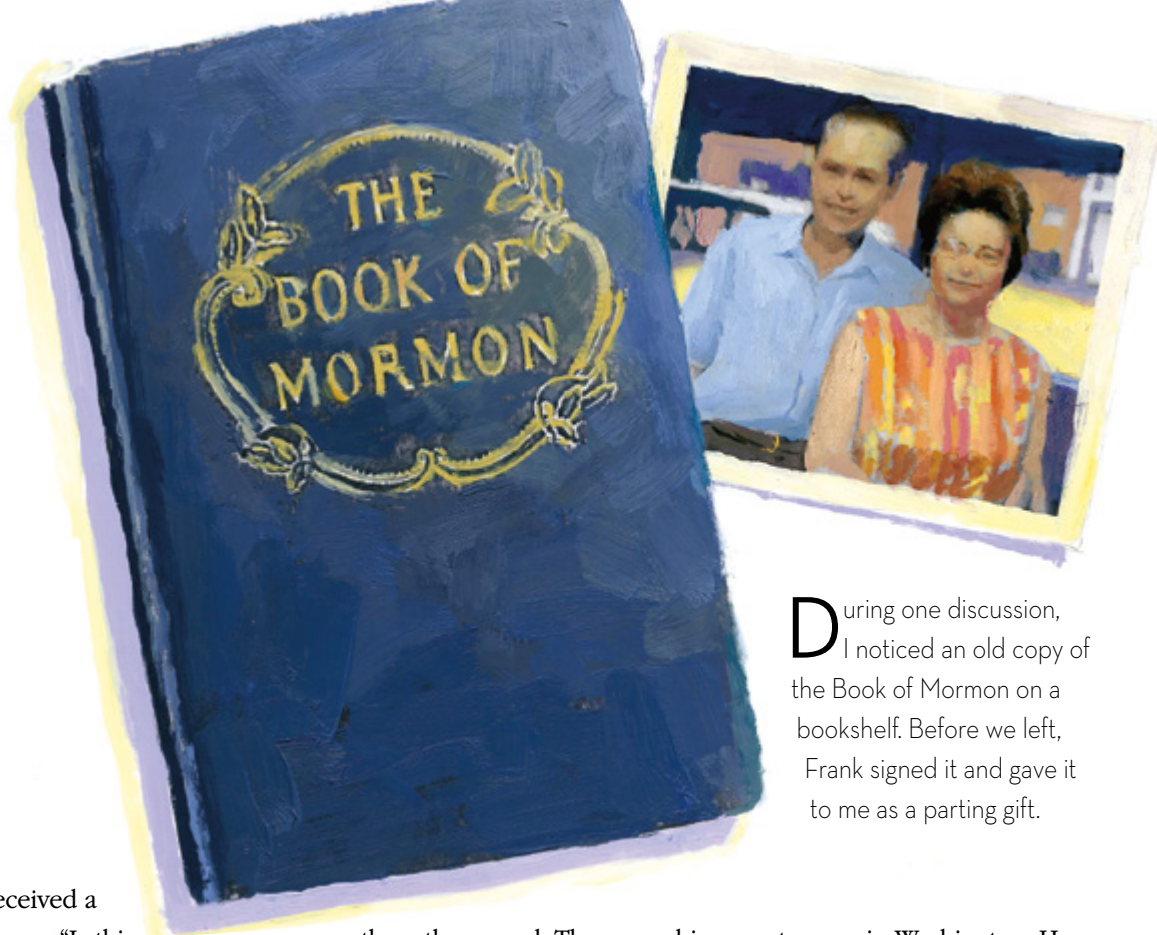
Tom then informed me that they had both passed away.

“But we are now completing their temple work,” he said.

With tears in my eyes, I thanked Tom for his call.

For years I felt that my mission wasn’t much of a success. Sometimes I wondered if I had touched anyone’s life while serving. Tom’s phone call was a tender mercy from the Lord. I am grateful for my mission and the small part I played in bringing the gospel to the Janaky family. ■

Dan Hobbs, Idaho, USA



During one discussion, I noticed an old copy of the Book of Mormon on a bookshelf. Before we left, Frank signed it and gave it to me as a parting gift.

THE PRAYERS OF A NEW MOTHER

As a first-time mother of a small and precocious boy, I sometimes feel my life consists of little more than diaper changes and feeding schedules.

While adjusting to motherhood, I found myself ignoring my spiritual needs. Instead of reading the scriptures, I would usually sneak in a much-needed nap or one more load of laundry. Prayers were simply hurried pleas to my Father in Heaven for my son to fall asleep and *stay* asleep, or for help to just make it through the day.

When my son was around four months old, I realized how depleted my spirit had become. My desire to strengthen my testimony was waning. I didn't feel like sitting through all three hours of church, and other responsibilities at home and at church seemed like things I didn't have time or energy for. I wanted to feel the light of the gospel again, but I was exhausted and didn't know where to begin. One night I fervently prayed for help.

The next morning, I dragged myself to church. While listening to the lesson in Relief Society, I saw a poster illustrating the purpose of Relief Society. I had seen the poster every Sunday, but I had never internalized its message before. It states that the purpose

of Relief Society is to help sisters “increase faith and personal righteousness, strengthen families and home, and seek out and help those in need.”

I read it again. This time my mind focused on “increase faith and personal righteousness.” It became clear that before I could fulfill my Church callings and serve others effectively, I needed to tend to my own spiritual health. I started by setting time aside each day to read the scriptures. I also worked on being more thoughtful when I prayed.

I found myself ignoring my spiritual needs. Instead of reading the scriptures, I would usually sneak in a much-needed nap or one more load of laundry.

As I began to nourish my own faith and personal righteousness and seek guidance from Heavenly Father, I felt my love for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ reignite. Serving in callings, visiting my Relief Society sisters, and partaking of the sacrament each week became meaningful in my life again. And the things I once viewed as having no time and energy for have now become a comfort and strength to me and my family. ■

Krystal Baker Chipman, Utah, USA





By Elder Marvin J. Ashton (1915–94)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

KEEP TRYING

To become a winner in the race for eternal life requires effort—constant work, striving, and enduring well with God’s help.

When I think of the Savior’s admonition to do cheerfully all things that lie in our power [see D&C 123:17], I think of the father of the prodigal son. The father was heartbroken by the loss and conduct of his wayward son. Yet we have no mention of his lamenting, “Where did I go wrong?” “What have I done to deserve this?” Or, “Where did I fail?”

Instead he seemed to have endured without bitterness his son’s misconduct and welcomed him back with love. “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. . . .” (Luke 15:24).

When family members disappoint us, we especially need to learn endurance. As long as we exercise love, patience, and understanding, even when no progress is apparent, we are not failing. We must keep trying. . . .



To become a winner in the race for eternal life requires effort—constant work, striving, and enduring well with God’s help. . . .

. . . Pain and obstacles will confront all of us. We may experience heartaches, sorrow, death, sins, weakness, disasters, physical illness, pain, mental anguish, unjust criticism, loneliness, or rejection. How we handle these challenges determines whether they become stumbling stones or building blocks. To the valiant these challenges make progress and development possible. . . .

Sometimes as children we were told everything would be all right. But life is not like that. No matter who you are, you will have problems. Tragedy and frustration are the unexpected intruders on life’s plans. . . .

. . . Greatness is best measured by how well an individual responds to the happenings in life that appear to be totally unfair, unreasonable, and undeserved. . . .

. . . Jesus is the Christ. One of His marks of greatness, His endurance, stands as a constant beacon for us to emulate. During His earthly sojourn He endured well as He suffered agony and rejection in their deepest forms. I bear my witness that God will help us to endure as we put forth the effort to live His teachings, seek His guidance, and keep His commandments. ■

From “If Thou Endure It Well,” Ensign, Nov. 1984, 20–22.



**PRODIGAL SON,
BY JUSTIN WHEATLEY**

*"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!
"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,
"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.
"And he arose, and came to his father" (Luke 15:17-20).*



YOUNG ADULTS

**SIX SUGGESTIONS FOR
SURVIVING SPIRITUALLY**

*The penetrating question of
the Savior unto the Twelve
is still in force today:
“Will ye also go away?”*

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