

Ensign

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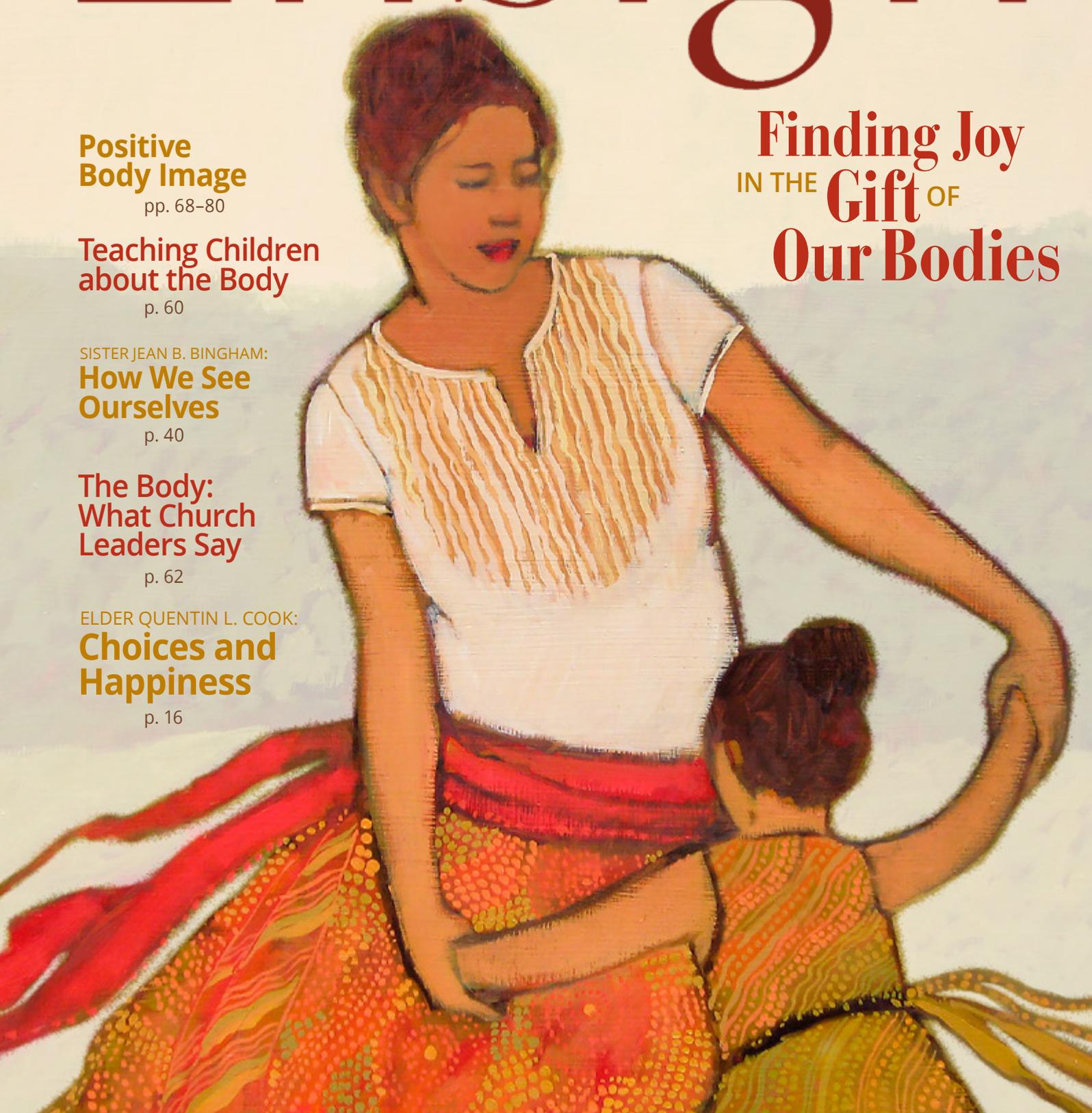
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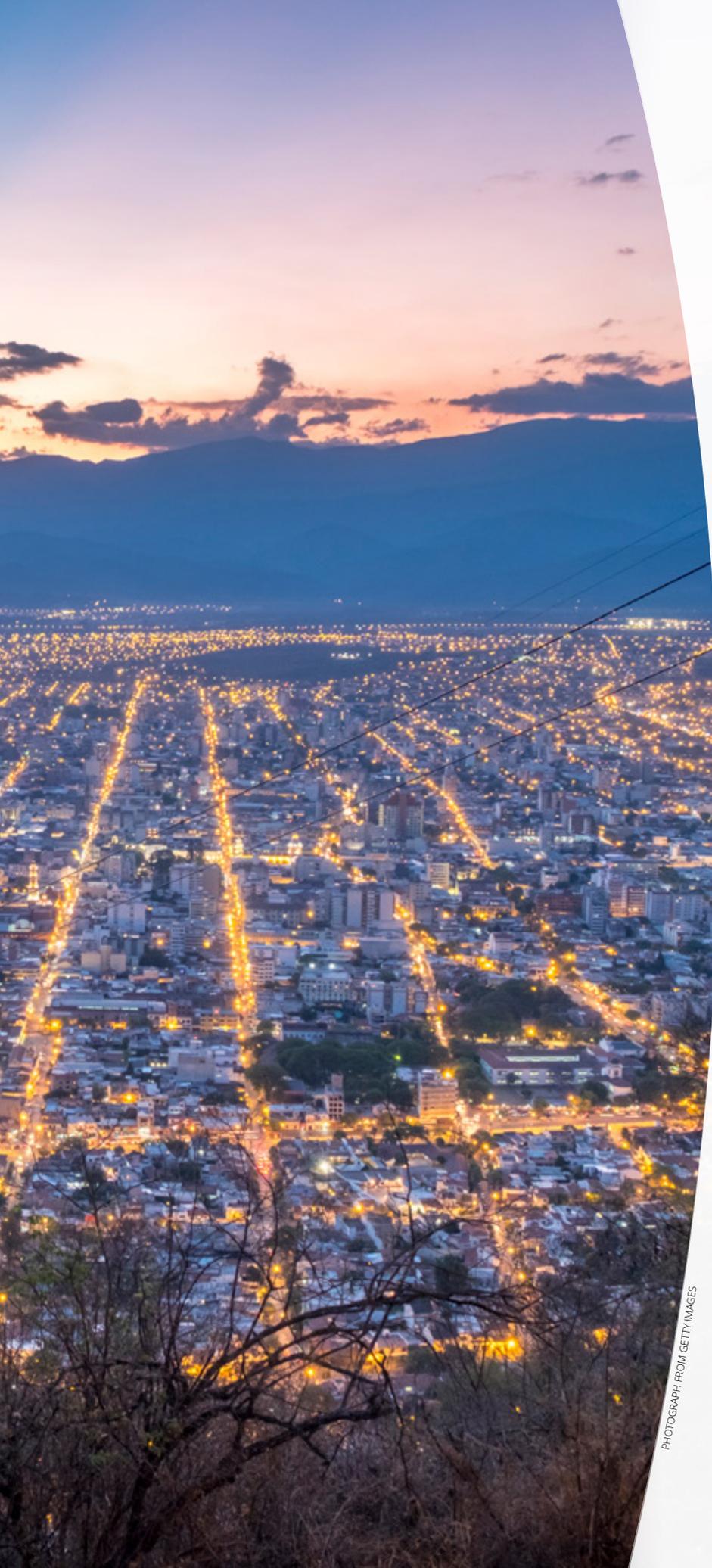


THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

Salta

Argentina





PHOTOGRAPH FROM GETTY IMAGES

Here are a few facts about the Church in Argentina:



Temples in operation

Church members



452,000



769

Congregations

Missions

14



1923 Two German families who are Church members move to Argentina.

1925 Apostle Melvin J. Ballard sent to Argentina; six members baptized.

1939 First chapel built in South America, in Buenos Aires.

2018 Salta Argentina Temple announced.

 The El Portezuelo Ward chapel.

 A hospital where members often donate blood and clothing.

In Spanish the city is often referred to as *Salta la Linda*, "Salta the Beautiful." It will be even more beautiful when it becomes home to a temple.



Learn more about the history of the Church in Argentina and other countries at [history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories](https://www.history.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/GlobalHistories).



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The Gift of Our Bodies

The body. It's an amazing thing, isn't it? How many times have you heard someone say, "Hey, watch this!?" Whatever follows may be awe-inspiring or simply silly, but whatever it is, it's a reminder of how incredible and capable the human body is.

And yet sometimes we look at our body and wish it were different. A little thinner perhaps. Or more muscular. More flawless, more sculpted.

In this issue, we explore why it's important to maintain a positive body image and to love the body God has given us, regardless of its shape, size, and limitations (see pages 68–80). We review teachings from Church leaders on the body (see pages 62–63) and share how parents can help children safeguard their bodies and avoid the world's harmful messages on the subject (see pages 60–61).

Also, President Russell M. Nelson shares a special message in this month's issue of the *New Era* encouraging us to master our appetites and respect our bodies. Whether you have youth in your home or not, you'll want to pick it up.

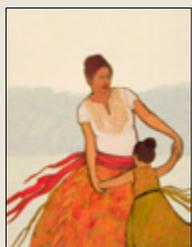
I hope these messages not only build your faith but also help you feel more confident and more grateful for the marvelous gift that is your mortal body.

J. Ryan Jensen
Church Magazines



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August Digital-Only Articles

Available in the Gospel Library app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org



Come, Follow Me

Support Articles and Activities

To discover articles, videos, and other resources that coincide with your family's study of the New Testament this month, see the digital version of this issue in the Gospel Library app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



How to Build Confidence and Self-Esteem *By Welfare and Self-Reliance Services*

Along with building our faith, we need to learn skills that help us overcome low self-esteem.



The Sacrifices I Made to Join the Church *By Nicky Guthrie*

A young adult from Scotland gave up old friends but found great new friends within the Church.

PHOTOGRAPH OF YOUNG WOMAN BY JOANNA NIXUNSLASH; PHOTOGRAPH OF YOUNG ADULTS BY TIMOTHY ETHEN HANSEN

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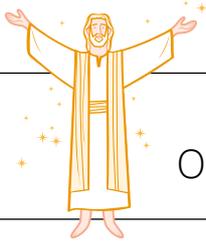
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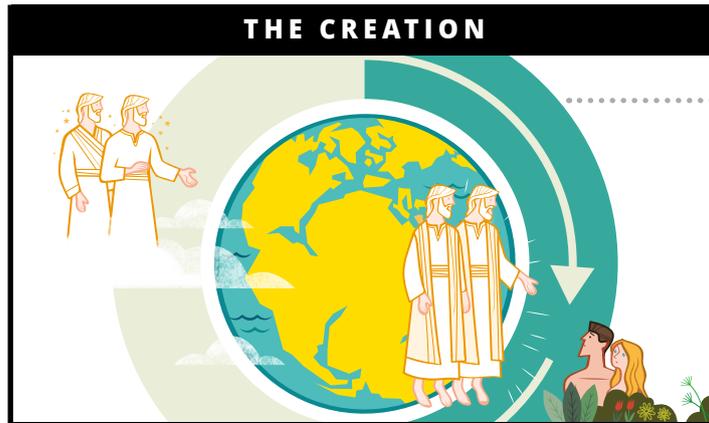
THE FALL AND RENEWAL OF HUMANKIND—AND THE EARTH

We all experience birth, life, death, and resurrection—and so does the earth, in a sense. The earth was born (through the Creation), was baptized with water (through the Flood), will be baptized with fire (“when the Lord shall come, . . . and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” [Mormon 9:2]), and will be renewed like a resurrection.¹

3. The Earth and Humankind in Sanctified State:

“At the Second Coming of the Lord, the earth will be . . . returned to its paradisiacal state and be made new.”⁵

“Wherefore, [the earth] shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again,” and the righteous shall inherit the celestial kingdom (the sanctified earth) (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:17–26).



1. The Earth and Adam and Eve in Paradisiacal State:

“This first temporal creation of all things . . . was paradisiacal in nature.”² Immediately after the Creation, nothing was mortal or subject to death.³



2. The Earth and Humankind in Fallen State:

“The earth itself fell under the curse incident to the fall of [Adam and Eve], and . . . even as man shall be redeemed so shall the earth be regenerated.”⁴

THE SECOND COMING

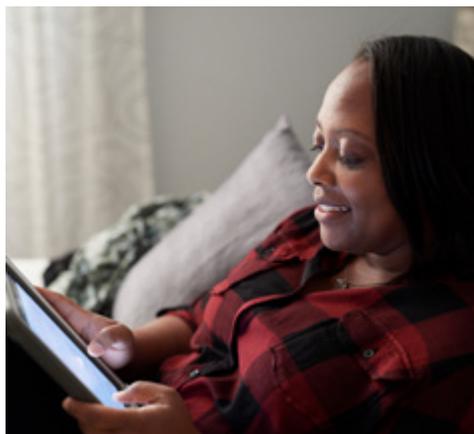


NOTES

1. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1916), 322.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, “Christ and the Creation,” *Ensign*, June 1982, 9.
3. See Robert L. Millet, “The Man Adam,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1994, 10.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 322; see also Genesis 3:17.
5. Russell M. Nelson, “The Creation,” *Ensign*, May 2000, 85.

Tomicka Barnes

Alabama, USA



It wasn't learning about the priesthood ban that shook Tomicka's faith; it was the speculation behind that restriction put forward by some Latter-day Saints. Tomicka faced a choice: walk away from the Church or hold to the rod. Thanks to the Book of Mormon, she held tight.

LESLIE NILSSON, PHOTOGRAPHER

Some people said things like, "You weren't as valiant in the War in Heaven" or, "You're not as intelligent or as faithful." Those things didn't mesh with what I knew to be true from my mom, from other black members of the Church who are really good examples of faith, and even from faithful black people outside the Church.

I had a moment, a crisis of faith, when I thought that I could just walk away from it all. But at that moment, I thought, "Is the Book of Mormon true? Do you believe it to be true?"

I could answer, "Yes, without a shadow of a doubt, I believe it to be true." Then the Spirit told me, "Well, if the Book of Mormon is true, then everything else is."

That was the reason I could stay.

DISCOVER MORE

See more about Tomicka's journey of faith, including additional photos, in the digital version of this article in the Gospel Library app or at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Read about how Elder Edward Dube of the Seventy held on to his faith after learning of the pre-1978 priesthood restriction at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8196](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/8196).



Ministering Principles

CAN I HELP SOMEONE CHANGE?



Yes. But your role may be different than you thought.

We were created with the capacity to change. Growing toward our divine potential is the purpose of our mortal experience. One of our ultimate goals in ministering is to help others come unto Christ and make the changes necessary to return to His presence. But because of their agency, our role in helping them to become more Christlike is limited.

Here are seven powerful lessons from the Savior on how we can help others in their efforts to change and become more like Him.

1. Don't Be Afraid to Invite Change

The Savior wasn't afraid to invite others to leave old ways behind and embrace His teachings. He invited Peter and James to leave their jobs and "become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). He invited the woman caught in adultery to "go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). He invited the rich young man to give up his attachment to worldly things and follow Him (see Mark 10:17–22). We too can be both bold and loving as we invite others to make changes and follow the Savior.



SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

Send us your experiences as you have ministered to others or have been ministered to. Go to ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click “Submit an Article or Feedback.”

2. Remember It’s Their Choice to Change

The kind of change the Savior invites can’t be compelled. The Savior taught and invited, but He did not force. The rich young man “went away sorrowful” (Matthew 19:22). In Capernaum, many of His disciples chose to “go back,” and He asked the Twelve if they would also go away (see John 6:66–67). Some of John the Baptist’s followers chose to follow the Savior; others did not (see John 1:35–37; 10:40–42). We can invite others to become more like Him, but we cannot make the decision to change for them. And if they have not yet chosen to change, we shouldn’t give up—nor should we feel like we have failed.

3. Pray for Others’ Ability to Change

During His Intercessory Prayer, Jesus asked God that His disciples would be kept from evil, would become more like Him and the Father, and would be filled with God’s love (see John 17:11, 21–23, 26). And knowing that Peter would need strength in his efforts to grow into his role, the Savior prayed for him (see Luke 22:32). Our prayers for others can make a difference (see James 5:16).



4. Teach Them to Rely on His Power

It is only through the Savior that we can truly change and grow toward the divine potential we all have. He is “the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by [Him]” (John 14:6). It is His power that can “make weak things become strong” (Ether 12:27). It was faith in His atoning power that enabled Alma the Younger to change (see Alma 36:16–23). We can teach others to rely on the Savior so that they too can have His refining power in their lives.

5. Treat Them as They Can Become

Love and acceptance can be powerful agents of change. The woman at the well was living with a man who was not her husband. Jesus’s disciples “marvelled that he talked with the woman” (John 4:27), but Jesus

cared more about what she could become. He taught her and gave her the opportunity to change, which she did. (See John 4:4–42.)

When we treat others as they have been rather than as they can become, we can hold them back. Instead, we can forgive and forget past mistakes. We can believe that others can change. We can overlook weakness and point out the positive traits that they may not be able to see in themselves. “We have the responsibility to see individuals not as they are but rather as they can become.”¹

6. Let Them Go at Their Own Pace

Change takes time. We must all “continue in patience until [we] are perfected” (Doctrine and Covenants 67:13). Jesus had patience with others and

INVITATION TO ACT

What could you do this week to invite and support others in their efforts to change and become more like the Savior?



continued to teach even those who opposed Him, testifying of His role given Him by His Father and answering their questions (see Matthew 12:1–13; John 7:28–29). We can be patient with others and encourage them to be patient with themselves.

7. Don't Give Up If They Relapse into Old Ways

After Christ died, even Peter and some of the other Apostles went back to what they were familiar with (see John 21:3). Christ reminded Peter that he needed to “feed [His] sheep” (see John 21:15–17), and Peter returned to the ministry. It can be all too easy to return to former ways. We can continue to support with gentle encouragement and inspired invitations to continue to follow the Savior and strive to become more like Him.

Allow Others to Grow

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles tells this story about allowing others to grow: “I was told once of a young man who for many years was more or less the brunt of every joke in his school. He had some disadvantages, and it was easy for his peers to tease him. Later in his life he moved away. He eventually joined the army and had some successful experiences there in getting an education and generally stepping away from his past. Above all, as many in the military do, he discovered the beauty and majesty of the Church and became active and happy in it.

“Then, after several years, he returned to the town of his youth. Most of his generation had moved on but not all. Apparently, when he returned quite successful and quite reborn, the same old mind-set that had existed before was still there, waiting for his return. To the people in his hometown, he was still just old ‘so-and-so.’ . . .

“Little by little this man’s Pauline effort to leave that which was behind and grasp the prize that God had laid before him was gradually diminished until he died about the way he had lived in his youth. . . . Too bad, too sad that he was again to be surrounded by . . . those who thought his past was more interesting than his future. They managed to rip out of his grasp that for which Christ had grasped him. And he died sad, though through little fault of his own. . . .

“Let people repent. Let people grow. Believe that people can change and improve.”² ■

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 70.
2. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Best Is Yet to Be,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2010, 25–26.

f Family Study fun

Consider these activities during family scripture study or home evening.



Masterpiece Testimony Theater

July 29–August 4 (Acts 22:1–21; 26:1–29)

Paul bore bold testimony, even in the face of danger.

- 1 Create an everyday scenario for each family member to role-play bearing testimony. Emphasize that testimonies in conversation need not end in “amen” or include every element of a typical testimony. (Example: A coworker asks why we don’t drink alcohol.)
- 2 Act out each scenario, being as sincere and authentic as possible.

Discussion: What was easy and difficult about the role-play? What motivated Paul to bear such powerful testimony? How can we build our courage to testify?



Grace Carry

August 5–11 (Romans 3:23–24)

All of us fall “short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). But with Jesus Christ we can be saved.

- 1 Designate the sofa as “the celestial kingdom.”
- 2 Have everyone stand, face the sofa, and take three giant steps backward.
- 3 Have them take one small step toward the sofa (their efforts), with the sofa still out of reach.
- 4 Have the strongest person (acting as the Savior would) carry each person to the sofa.

Discussion: How does Christ’s grace save us “after all we can do”? (see 2 Nephi 25:23). How can we show our love and gratitude for the Savior?

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

Find more home evening ideas in this month's *Friend*.



Pillow Tower of Doom

August 12–18 (Romans 8:38–39)

Life's obstacles can fill us with hopelessness and impede us from feeling God's love. Christ can help.

- 1 Create a tall tower of pillows and sofa cushions (life's challenges).
- 2 Sit someone behind the tower and turn off the lights.
- 3 Shine a flashlight beam (God's love) at the person behind the tower, with the pillows blocking the light.
- 4 Invite someone (acting as Christ would) to knock down the pillows to let God's love shine through.

Discussion: Share a time when life was hard, you felt discouraged, and then God's love reached you when you turned to Him in prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.



Human Knot

(best with four-plus people)

August 19–25 (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Paul tells the Saints that there should be “no divisions among” them and that they should be “perfectly joined together” in mind and judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).

- 1 Stand everyone in a circle.
- 2 Have everyone reach out their right hand and take someone else's (not next to them).
- 3 Do the same with the left hand, taking a different person's hand.
- 4 Work together to untangle the knot without letting go of any hands. End up in a circle again.

Discussion: What can we do as a family to be more “joined together”? How can we work together to remove divisions?

Idea contributed by Maddison Brown



Sacrament Hymn Sing-Along

August 26–September 1 (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

Paul taught how Christ introduced the sacrament to His Apostles and instructed them, “This do in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24).

- 1 Ask each family member to identify a favorite sacrament hymn and explain why it's a favorite.
- 2 Sing one or more of the hymns chosen.
- 3 Watch the “The Last Supper” from the Bible videos series or “The Sacrament” from the children's Bible videos series (both at ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Discussion: How do the sacrament hymns prepare us to partake of the bread and water? What can we do during the sacrament to help each other focus on the Savior? ■

August 19–25 (1 Corinthians 2:9)

Where Were the Blessings “God Hath Prepared”?

We can’t always imagine how God will guide and bless us,
but sooner or later blessings will come.

By Allisa White
Church Magazines

One night as I knelt to pray, the panic set in. In less than two months, I was going to graduate from college, leave my two jobs, and find myself with few options for employment in the small town where I lived. As if that wasn’t complicated enough, my husband, Nick, still had a year left in his university program—a program that was making him miserable.

We had to make a lot of difficult decisions fast. Should I look for a job elsewhere? Should Nick transfer schools?

I was an emotional wreck. We had tried making an action plan—we had gone to the temple, prayed often, and made decisions based on what we felt was the Lord’s guidance. But then something out of our control had foiled our plan, forcing us to start all over. This had happened again. And again.

Now I felt paralyzed, blind to what the Lord wanted me to do.

Incomprehensible Blessings

I didn’t feel an answer from Heavenly Father immediately. But as Nick and I continued to pray, read the scriptures, and go to the temple, we clung to the hope that blessings and guidance would come.

Just when it seemed like nothing would go right for us, everything began to fall into place. I received a job offer I couldn’t refuse. Nick transferred schools and enjoyed his new program. Other problems were miraculously resolved.

It wasn’t until months later, when I came across 1 Corinthians 2:9, that I realized what the Lord had done for us: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Warmth flooded through me as I felt the Holy Ghost testifying of the truth of this promise. Even though there were plenty of times when God seemed to be silent during our



time of need, we had endured in faith. And Heavenly Father, in His own time, had fulfilled His end of the promise by blessing us in unexpected, incomprehensible ways—ways that my eyes couldn't see and my heart couldn't imagine.

Peace in Our Future

As I look now to my future, I realize that there will always be hard decisions to make, changes to adapt to, and trials to endure. But if I remember the promise in 1 Corinthians 2:9, I'll know that unimagined blessings await. As long as my husband and I keep our end of the promise and “love God with all [our] might, mind and strength” (Moroni 10:32), we have nothing to fear. The unknown future may seem daunting, but something incredible will come. ■

DISCUSSION

In what ways has Heavenly Father showed His love for you? What can we do to show our love to Heavenly Father? In what unexpected and wonderful ways has the Lord blessed you?



HOPE AND ASSURANCE

“No matter how bleak the chapter of our lives may look today, because of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we may hope and be assured that the ending of the book of our lives will exceed our grandest expectations.”

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 22–23.





**By Elder
Quentin L. Cook**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

The Eternal Importance of Righteous Choices

The choices we make are critical—
they are the key to our future and happiness.

We live in a world that emphasizes diversity over unity. Many assume that it is virtually impossible for people from different cultures and diverse backgrounds to be united in common goals. Some have asserted, “We lack a unifying narrative to explain how a pluralistic people live” together.¹ Some believe “the world is determined by your single tribal identity. They describe society as a battleground” that “cultivate[s] mistrust, division and emotional frozenness.”²

A unifying answer to these assertions is the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the underlying principle that brings unity and happiness. I love 2 Nephi chapter 9, which contains incredible instruction about learning, wisdom, wealth, labor, and refusing to see or hear the consequences of sin. It contains profound doctrine that allows us to follow the paths of righteousness that lead to the Savior.

I will share five principles that I believe will contribute to your successful quest for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, righteousness, and knowledge. These objectives can be compatible and complementary. At a practical level, many of you are preparing for family life and the means of supporting your family. Faith, righteousness, and knowledge will greatly assist you in both areas. Any honest labor is worthwhile and to be admired. Work that includes values, meaningfulness, and new ideas and that blesses mankind is particularly significant.

1. Continue to Learn

The first principle that I will share is to enthusiastically and righteously continue your quest for knowledge. One of my heroes in this category is Paul Cox, an active member of the Church. He received a bachelor of science degree from Brigham Young University in botany and earned other post-graduate degrees. He served a mission in Samoa and later lived with his family in Savai'i, Samoa, for many years. One of his focuses was ethnomedicine, in which he studied some of the plants that had been used by generations of Samoan mothers to treat health issues. With a coauthor, he wrote *Plants, People, and Culture: The Science of Ethnobotany*.³

He has made several breakthroughs in treating diseases. While he has done many things in his exceptional career, the one I wish to mention occurred many years ago. Paul and a Samoan chief, Fuiono Senio, conducted ethnobotanical research in the village of Falealupo, Western Samoa.

An account in *BYU Magazine* reported: "The village had reluctantly licensed its forest to a logging company to raise funds to build a school, because, says Cox, 'They felt they had to choose between their children and their forest, which was a terrible, terrible decision for them.' When he learned of the transaction with the logging company, Cox told the chiefs he would personally pay to build the school if they could stop the logging" of the rain forest.⁴

He did build the school with the help of businessmen who had connections with Samoa.⁵ Brother Cox has received many honors and awards, including the Goldman Environmental Prize for grassroots environmental heroes. He represents a continuing quest for knowledge to bless mankind. This account exemplifies the love of learning and the synergism of knowledge.



Knowledge, used righteously, whether old or new, is important.

President Russell M. Nelson, another of my heroes, was a pioneer in the development of open-heart surgery, which has significantly blessed those who live in our time. Some years ago, I asked him about the incredible history of open-heart surgery and his significant role in it. We discussed it for some time, and then he humbly stated, "How wonderful it is that the Lord, who knows all, allows us the great joy of discovering certain pieces of knowledge."

2 Nephi 9:29 reads, "But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God." Knowledge has always been important, and today we are at the threshold of many new and exciting scientific and technological advancements. Certainly, much of this will have enormous benefits for the Church and for the entire human family. Knowledge, used righteously, whether old or new, is important.

2. Righteous Choices Matter

Many years ago, Elder Bruce C. Hafen, now an emeritus member of the Seventy, shared a comical example of bad choices during a talk given in New Zealand. As I remember it, Cookie Monster (a famous *Sesame Street* character) had won a quiz

show, and he could choose among three choices for his prize. First, he could have a new house one month later. Second, he could have a new car one week later. Or third, he could have a magnificent cookie—right now! What do you think he chose? You are right—he chose the cookie!⁶

We laugh at this, but the choices we make are critical—they are the key to our future and happiness. Remember, we are the sum total of every decision we make. We live at a time when almost every choice is debated and dissected. Many people almost immediately oppose any righteous proposal or principle (see 2 Timothy 4:3). Near the end of his life, the prophet Lehi taught:

“For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. . . .

“Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:11, 27).

Given the war in heaven over the plan of salvation (see Abraham 3), it is not surprising that the religious principles taught in this, the last dispensation, are attacked with malignant ferocity. But lest we be discouraged, let us remember the outcome of the War in Heaven and the wonderful outcome that we know will be ushered in with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

A great enemy of good choices is rationalization. Many argue that we are not accountable for our choices. But because of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we know that we *are* accountable (see Doctrine and Covenants 72:3). We also know to whom we must account. It is the Savior! (See 2 Nephi 9:41; see also Acts 4:12.)

Sometimes important choices are quite simple. As young missionaries serving in England, my companion and I had the opportunity to go to the temple. As we crossed the temple grounds, the temple president, Selvoy J. Boyer, walked toward us. Seeing our missionary badges, he pointed at us and asked, “Matthew 5:48—do you know that scripture?” My companion stated, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” President Boyer said, “That is correct. Elders, are you living that commandment?”

We started to stammer; we knew we were not perfect! He helped us. He asked questions about what we had done for the past three days. He asked about when we went to bed, when we got up, whether we had individual and companion scripture study, and whether we went proselyting on time. Then he said, “I am sure you are not perfect, but you have made perfect choices for the past three days, and that means you are moving in the right direction.” He left us thinking about the importance of what he had asked.

The choices we make are key to our future and happiness.



Lehi issued this cry about choice, which every righteous father and mother echo to their sons and daughters: “I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit” (2 Nephi 2:28).

We need to understand that there is opposition in all things and that the righteous choices we make are critical.

When I was young, I was introduced to a statement by Harry Emerson Fosdick, a renowned Protestant minister. In speaking of choices, he said:

“The tragic evils of our life are so commonly unintentional. We did not start out for that poor, cheap goal. That aim was not in our minds at all. . . . That is why the road to hell is always paved with good intentions, and that is why I am not celebrating high ideals, lofty aims, fine purposes, grand resolutions, but am saying instead that one of the most dangerous things in the world is to accept them and think you

believe in them and then neglect the day-by-day means that lead to them. Ah, my soul, look to the road you are walking on! He who picks up one end of a stick picks up the other. He who chooses the beginning of a road chooses the place it leads to. It is the means that determines the end.”⁷

3. Give Day-to-Day Consecrated Effort

Righteous day-to-day consecrated effort is better than occasional heroic actions. A friend of mine, Jim Jardine, indicated in a lecture at Brigham Young University that when he was a student, he thought “of consecrating [his] life in one grand, heroic gesture” but came to realize that “consecration is not a once in a lifetime event; it is a daily devotion.”⁸

When I was young, I too wanted to prove myself through some heroic gesture. My great-grandfather David Patten Kimball was one of the young men who rescued and helped carry members of the Martin handcart

company across the Sweetwater River. That sounded like the kind of consecration for which I was looking. Later, as I visited with my grandfather Crozier Kimball, he explained that when President Brigham Young (1801–77) sent the men on their rescue mission, he instructed them to do everything they possibly could to save the handcart company. Their consecration was specifically to “follow the prophet.” My grandfather told me that consistent, faithful, righteous dedication to one’s duty or to a principle is to be much admired.

As heroic as it was for David Patten Kimball to help rescue the pioneers, it would be equally heroic today to follow the prophet by adhering to his counsel in reducing social media use, studying the Book of Mormon, and particularly helping to gather scattered Israel on both sides of the veil. If we help gather scattered Israel, we will be rescuing the souls of mankind—just as my great-grandfather helped to rescue the lives of the handcart company.

Some members of the Church profess that they would commit themselves with enthusiasm if given some great calling, but they do not find ministering or gathering family history sufficiently heroic for their sustained effort.

4. Be Strong and Immovable in Matters of Righteousness

A few years ago, Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was speaking about some of his personal friends who were less active in the Church. He said he had observed the ebb and flow of their faith and what the underlying cause was. Elder Maxwell then stated:

“A verse in the Book of Mormon offers the most satisfactory explanation. It is an

Righteous day-to-day consecrated effort is better than occasional heroic actions.

interrogative in Mosiah 5:13: ‘For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?’

“This describes what usually happens: otherwise basically decent people simply get caught up with the cares of the world. If instead of drawing closer to the Master we become a stranger to Him, then we have lost our way. The decent people to whom this happens haven’t engaged in major transgression, as a rule, but they have distanced themselves from the Savior, and He has become a stranger to them.”⁹

It is essential that we place faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. A wonderful mission president had each of us missionaries memorize a simple statement

relating to faith and righteousness that has stayed with me all my life. I commend it to you:

*There is no chance, no destiny, no fate
[That] can circumvent or hinder or control
The firm resolve of a determined soul.¹⁰*

My dear friends, you need to be determined souls when it comes to living righteously!

5. Earn Your Heritage through Righteous Choices

One of the great accounts in the Book of Mormon is Alma’s counsel to his three sons—Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton. Alma was the son of Alma, the prophet. He experienced a miraculous conversion as a young man. He became the chief judge of the nation and the

Heroism can be found in the simple act of sustained ministering.



“One fault to be avoided by the Saints, young and old, is the tendency to live on borrowed light [and] to permit . . . the light within them to be reflected, rather than original.”

high priest and prophet of the Church. Two of his sons had made good choices. But one son had made some very bad choices. To me the greatest significance of Alma’s counsel is that he was giving it as a father for his own children. His first concern was that they have a testimony of God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost.

Alma starts out in chapter 36 by telling Helaman of his miraculous conversion. An angel told Alma he would be destroyed if he continued to oppose the Church. He testifies that the knowledge he was sharing did not come from his own wisdom but was revealed to him from God. He wants Helaman to have a testimony.

Many of you, if not most, have a testimony. We each need a personal testimony. President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1919) said, “One fault to be avoided by the Saints, young and old, is the tendency to live on borrowed light [and] to permit . . . the light within them to be reflected, rather than original.”¹¹

President Heber C. Kimball (1801–68), a counselor to President Young, said:

“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? . . .

“. . . If you don’t have it you will not stand; therefore seek for the testimony of Jesus and cleave to it, that when the trying time comes you may not stumble and fall.”¹²

The 76th section of the Doctrine and Covenants refers to the three degrees of glory and compares the celestial glory to the sun. Then it compares the terrestrial kingdom to the moon and the telestial kingdom to the stars (see also 1 Corinthians 15:41).

It is interesting that the sun has its own light, but the moon is reflected light or “borrowed light.” Speaking of those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom, verse 79 states, “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus.” We cannot obtain the celestial kingdom and live with God the Father on borrowed light.

Be grateful if you have had goodly parents who have testimonies and have taught you the gospel. However, you need your own testimony. The philosopher Goethe said, “What from your father’s heritage is lent, earn it anew to really possess it.”¹³

Each individual has the responsibility to make righteous choices and to seriously ponder the five areas of advice I have set forth. Your principal goal is to build your personal faith. World conditions increasingly require deepening individual conversion to, and strengthening faith in, Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

Prepared for Perilous Times

The Church has made an incredible effort to give you a road map to assist you in making righteous choices. The Lord has prepared us, line upon line, for the “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1)

we now face. A short list of actions by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to provide this road map include the following:

- Honoring the Sabbath day and the sacred ordinance of the sacrament has again been emphasized for the past five years.
- Under the bishop's direction, strengthened elders quorums and Relief Societies focus on the purpose and divinely appointed responsibilities of the Church, helping members make and keep sacred covenants.
- Ministering in a higher and holier way is being joyfully adopted.
- As we begin with the end in mind, temple covenants and family history service are becoming a purposeful part of the covenant path.

Additional adjustments to achieve a new balance between what happens at church and in the home were presented during the October 2018 general conference. Adjustments were presented to achieve a home-centered, Church-supported Sabbath effort. In the address I delivered, which was approved by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, we declared that the purposes and blessings associated with this adjustment and other recent changes include the following:

The Church has given us a road map to help us make righteous choices.



- Deepening conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and strengthening faith in Them.
- Strengthening individuals and families through home-centered, Church-supported curriculum that contributes to joyful gospel living.
- Honoring the Sabbath day, with a focus on the ordinance of the sacrament.
- Helping all of Heavenly Father's children on both sides of the veil through missionary work and receiving ordinances and covenants and blessings of the temple.¹⁴

Righteously adhering to the counsel given will bless you now and throughout your life. ■

From devotional addresses given at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on November 20, 2018, and at the Utah Valley Institute of Religion on February 1, 2019.

NOTES

1. David Brooks, "The Rise of the Amphibians," *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 2018, nytimes.com.
2. Brooks, "The Rise of the Amphibians."
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4. Julie Walker, "Professor and Samoan Chief Awarded for Saving Rain Forest," *BYU Magazine*, Summer 1997, 8; see also, Anne Billings, "You Can Make a Difference: Paul Cox—Preserving God's Creations," *Liahona*, Nov. 1998, 32–37.
5. These included Church members Rex Maughan, Ken Murdock, and others.
6. See Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, "Bridle All Your Passions," *Ensign*, Feb. 1994, 16.
7. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Living Under Tension* (1941), 111.
8. James S. Jardine, "Consecration and Learning," in Henry B. Eyring, ed., *On Becoming a Disciple-Scholar: Lectures Presented at the Brigham Young University Honors Program Discipline and Discipleship Lecture Series* (1995), 78.
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10. Ella Wheeler Wilcox, "Will," in Charles Wells Moulton, *The Magazine of Poetry: A Quarterly Review*, vol. 5 (1893). The mission president was Elder Marion D. Hanks.
11. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 87.
12. Heber C. Kimball, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 6th ed. (1975), 450.
13. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Bayard Taylor (1912), 1:28.
14. See Quentin L. Cook, "Deep and Lasting Conversion to Heavenly Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 8–11.

How Seminary Can Now Enhance Your Family's *Come, Follow Me* Experience

Parents, here's how seminary can make your family gospel study even better.

By Jeffrey Coleman and Brittany Ann Reece

In March 2019 the First Presidency announced a significant change to seminary. Seminary classes around the world are now studying the same book of scripture that individuals and families are studying at home and at church as part of *Come, Follow Me*. As seminary teachers (and parents), we couldn't be more excited about it!

One obvious blessing is how it will simplify our teenagers' lives. On top of school, sports, work, family time, and a social life, many youth in the past tried to study from three different books of scripture: one for seminary, one for Sunday School, and another one for family study. That's a lot.

Once Church leaders aligned family and Sunday School study in the same scriptures, aligning seminary as well just made sense. It allows the youth to take a deeper dive into one book of scripture. But simplification is just the beginning.

Strengthening the Home

Sister Bonnie H. Cordon, Young Women General President, taught that as youth are asked to be “a part of the teaching, to be a part of that great movement at home,” they will help in “strengthening the home.”¹

The youth are hungry for truth and excited to share! That might be a little hard to believe if you've ever gotten a blank stare from a teenager. As parents and teachers, we all have! As seminary teachers, we ask teenagers questions all the time. Sometimes we get a blank stare in return simply





In the past, families may have struggled to align Church, seminary, and family scripture study. Recent changes can help gospel discussion be better for all family members.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EVA VAZQUEZ

because our youth don't have the answers. But when the seminary and *Come, Follow Me* curriculum are aligned, our seminary-age children can more easily apply the things they are learning in seminary to a family gospel discussion and vice versa. We've already seen it in our seminary classes.

Bringing Scripture Study from Home to Seminary

At the beginning of 2019, when the new *Come, Follow Me* was just beginning, we could feel the excitement of the students. Even though we were studying from the Doctrine and Covenants in seminary, they started sharing things they had learned from studying the New Testament with their families. They were so excited about it. When we studied Doctrine and Covenants 89 (the Word of Wisdom) in seminary, it was around the same time we were studying John 2 (when Jesus Christ turns water into wine) in *Come, Follow Me*. Finding common principles and ideas between the two readings allowed the students to share with their peers what they had learned at home. They were much more engaged, and the discussion was much more invigorating because the students had things to talk about. They were able to apply the things they had learned at home to what we were learning at seminary.

Bringing Seminary into the Home

In 2020, studying the Book of Mormon at home, in seminary, and in Sunday School opens the door even wider for students to share even more of what they learn in those places.

There are a few learning strategies we use in seminary that can help your family’s scripture study. Knowing about them can help you see ways to get your teenagers more involved in your home-centered scripture study.

As you sit down as a family, your teenager will have already been studying the same principles from the same book of scripture, and they will have insights if they have already studied those principles in seminary. They won’t feel as “put on the spot” when you ask them to share because they will actually have things to share. Their experiences at seminary will help empower them to talk about the gospel at home. Family home evenings and family scripture study will become more of a time to share personal insights with one another.

Some open-ended questions you might use to invite your teens to share in your home are:

1. What spiritual experience did you have in seminary today?
2. What impacted you the most today?
3. What principle did you learn in seminary that you feel can help us as a family?
4. What scripture story did you learn today that you feel you can share with us?
5. What scripture story affected your life in seminary?
6. How were you inspired in seminary to be better today?
7. What did you learn about the Savior because of what you learned in seminary?

There may be times when your family study is ahead of what is being studied in seminary.

During these times, the questions above could be adapted by seminary teachers to draw on what youth are learning at home.

Doctrinal Mastery

Seminary’s approach to scripture study is no longer just about memorization. We focus on doctrinal mastery—helping students understand, apply, and gain a testimony of the doctrine taught in the scriptures. It’s more about deepening conversion to true doctrine and knowing how to teach it with power.

For example, if a verse teaches about the Godhead, when we study that scripture in seminary, we search for other verses that teach about the Godhead. Then we encourage the students to note what we can learn about the Godhead from those verses. Finally, we come up with scenarios in which the students role-play how they might explain our beliefs about the Godhead using those scriptures.

You could use this approach at home and invite your teen to:

1. Teach the principles in the scripture.
2. Share cross-references to other scriptures about the topic.
3. Help your family memorize or remember how to find the verses.
4. Discuss how these teachings apply to your lives.

Preparation for Deep Learning

There’s a big emphasis in seminary on something we call deep learning—learning that leads to conversion. One key to deep learning is improving preparation to learn. Improving student preparation is different for every seminary class, but one thing some seminary classes are trying is a preparation assignment. We send students home with the assigned scripture block and some study questions to get them reading the scriptures that we’ll be studying in class. When seminary and *Come, Follow Me* curriculums are more closely aligned, preparation assignments for seminary can be shared with a student’s family. It will give families one more way to learn together.



You could invite your teen to:

1. Share preparation assignments with the family.
2. After the seminary lesson, share what else he or she learned on the topic.

For example, if a teenager sets a goal to develop more patience, the next step is planning how they are going to develop it. In what ways or settings do they feel they struggle with patience? One student decided he could use more patience when he was driving. When we talked about how he could practice patience in the moment, he came up with a plan to listen to calming music in the car and put a note on the dashboard reminding him to pray for patience every time he gets in the car.

You could invite your teen to:

1. Talk about his or her goals.
2. Share how you can set and achieve similar goals as a family.

Empower Your Children to Strengthen Your Home

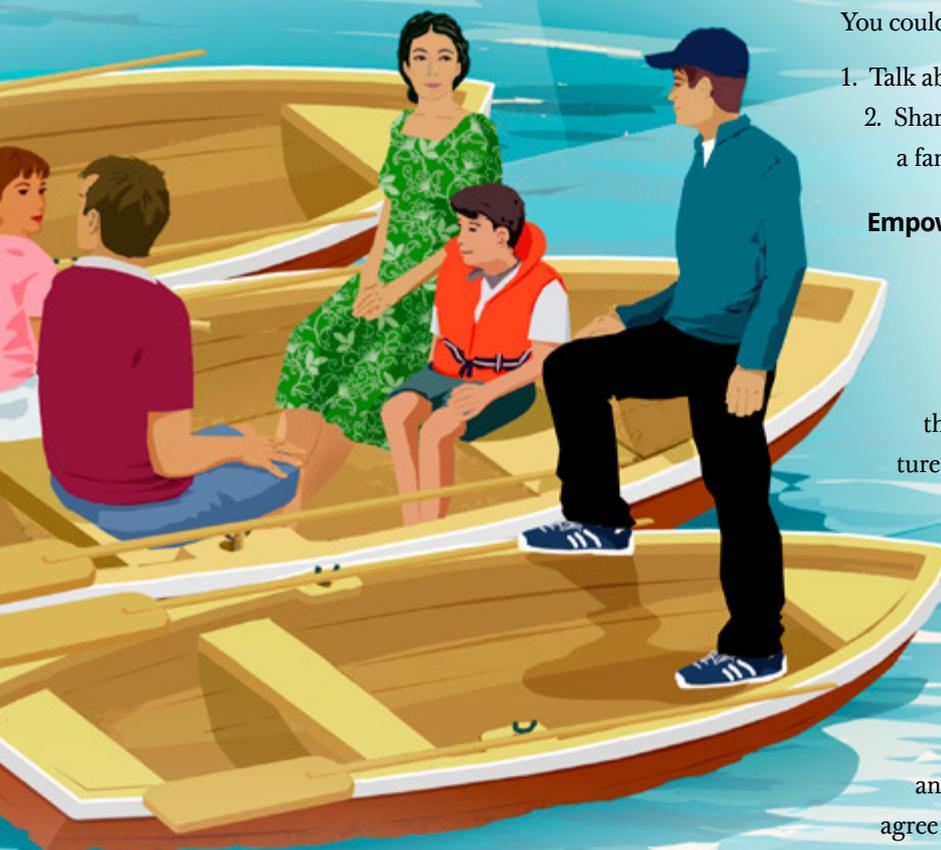
You have an incredible opportunity to inject a bit of enthusiasm into family scripture study, and now with the aligned curriculum, you can invite your seminary-age children to share what they are learning. When they study the same scriptures in seminary and with their families in *Come, Follow Me*, they will be more empowered than ever to strengthen their families with their insights into the gospel.

This next step in the Church's efforts to become "a home-centered Church, supported by what takes place inside our branch, ward, and stake buildings"² empowers the youth to play an even bigger role in strengthening their homes. We agree with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he said: "We think this is a tremendous development at this time when our young people need ever more strength. We think this is a wonderful alignment to bring that coordination with what the rest of the Church is doing, and we believe that it's going to be wonderfully symbiotic with the Church-supported—and now that we add seminary-supported—home-centered gospel study."³ ■

The authors are seminary teachers in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Bonnie H. Cordon, "Seminary Curriculum to Support Home-Centered Learning" (video, Mar. 22, 2019), [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Opening Remarks," *Ensign*, Nov. 2018, 7.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Seminary Curriculum to Support Home-Centered Learning."



Setting Specific Goals

You may have noticed that the *Come, Follow Me* curriculum often encourages us to set goals. It's something we're emphasizing in seminary as well. We're teaching our students to set specific goals, not just general goals like "Be more healthy." When a student sets a goal, they plan *when*, *where*, and *how* they're going to achieve that goal.



Small Choices, Big Consequences

How will we respond when the world asks,
“Don’t you also want to go?”

Ever since I was a little boy, I have always loved the New Testament. I love to read about the Savior teaching His disciples eternal principles that changed their lives forever.

I also find it fascinating how those same principles have changed my personal life in so many ways. Again and again, I have seen that when we apply the Master’s teachings, our own decisions, even small ones, often lead to big consequences.



**By Elder
Massimo De Feo**
Of the Seventy

My “Small” Choice

Many years ago, as a brand new manager, I traveled to South America to attend an important work seminar held by high-ranking officials of the government agency I worked for.

The very first night at the end of the conference, the “big boss” of the agency announced a special activity for that night. Sure that everyone would appreciate his proposal, he proclaimed proudly: “To show you how much we appreciate you, tonight we invite all of you to a special night out, visiting the bars in the city, famous for a special cocktail drink. We will all taste the different variations of that drink and vote which bar makes the best version. There will be a contest and a winner. And don’t worry, it’s all on me, my special treat for you.”

As everyone applauded his plan, he added a rhetorical question: “Anyone not coming? Say it now or never!”

As everyone applauded again, I thought how embarrassing it would be to say anything in front of all those people, to contradict the boss’s expectation that this was an incredible offer.

Nevertheless, in a matter of seconds I decided what to do. I raised my hand, the only one who did. Then, in an intimidating way, he asked what I had to say. I had never heard a silence so loud before in my life!

I said: “Sir, I thank you for your generous offer, but I will not join you all tonight.”

After another silence, even more silent than I thought possible, he asked, “Why?” In that moment, I could have come up with some good excuses—that I was sick or had an important

phone call to make to the other side of the world or any other reason that would have saved me from obvious embarrassment. But I said the simple truth, that as a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I don’t drink alcohol.

“We’ll Have Fun without You”

After pondering for a moment, he finally said, “Then we will have fun without you.” And to the others, he said, “Follow me. Let’s go have fun! Let’s leave him alone.”

I still remember the echoes of their laughs as they were leaving the conference room and I was left by myself. I realized that many times, choosing the Lord is, as President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) taught, all about choosing “the harder right instead of the easier wrong,”¹ even at the risk of being left alone.

As I walked to my room, I remember hearing a distinct voice in my mind: “Don’t you also want to go?” I was taken aback for a moment, but then suddenly, the words of Simon Peter to the Savior came to my mind. To that same question, he replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

With feelings of new peace, I felt as if I was surrounded by angels bearing me up. Although I was alone, I didn’t feel alone. As I chose the Lord and stood for my principles, I saw that when we choose the Lord, we may be left alone in the world, but the Savior will never abandon us.

Small but Big

The decisions we make every day may seem small, but they always have real implications and big consequences, for good or bad.

In fact, a few years after that eventful day, the same boss visited our office in Rome. He was still the same man, full of power and authority. Again, he looked intimidating to all of us.

This time, after all the meetings, he approached me in a different way. He was surprisingly kind. He told me that he still remembered the day when I stood for my beliefs. Then, to my surprise, he asked if I would accept to become the manager of the agency for all of Europe, which was a huge opportunity for my career. As he tried to convince me that the new job would be appealing in terms of salary, travel, and benefits, what really made the difference was when he said: “We look

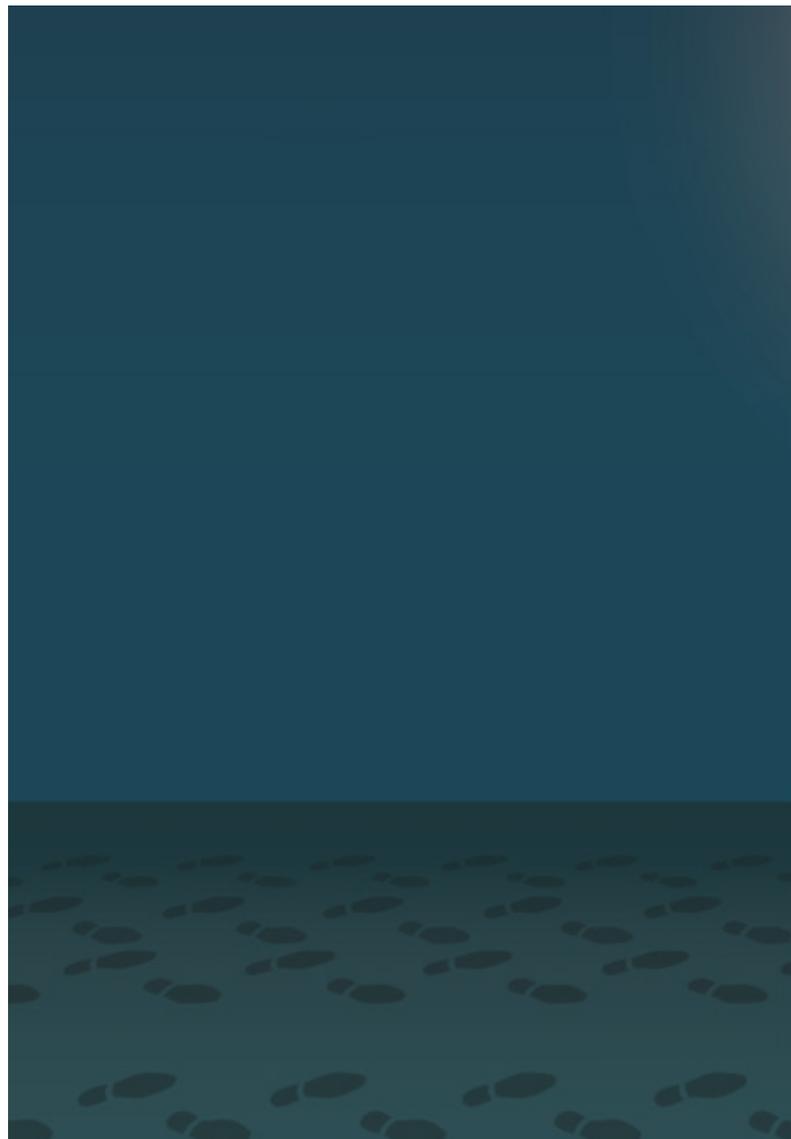
When we choose the Savior,
He will never abandon us.

not only at good qualifications. We need people with integrity, who stand for their principles. We need people like you.”

I was surprised to hear those words, to see that my small decision to stand for my beliefs years before eventually had such a big impact on him. My small decision ultimately resulted in a great blessing for me, both temporally and spiritually. Ironically, as part of my new assignment, I also became the supervisor of most of the managers who had laughed at me years before.

The Correct Choice

President Monson said, “As we contemplate the decisions we make in our lives each day—whether to make this choice or that choice—if we choose Christ, we will have made the correct choice.”²



The Apostle Paul also taught that choosing the Lord is always the best possible choice, despite how hard that choice can be: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28).

Every day, the choices we make will indeed determine what we will become. If we choose the Lord, as President Monson said, “we will have made the correct choice,” because, as Paul remarked, “all things work together for good to them that love God.”

Many times we hesitate to make the right choices because we try to please the Lord without offending Satan. But we cannot please God without upsetting Satan. We simply cannot serve two masters. Our ultimate decision will always be whether to live the first two commandments in the right priority: To serve God first and then our neighbor,



Living righteously in a wicked world is not an easy task. But we have the promise that we will receive the Spirit more abundantly when we stand as true witnesses of God.

or to put the second commandment before the first by trying to please others before we please God (see Matthew 22:37–39).

Stand as Witnesses

The most universal covenant we make at baptism is “to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be” (Mosiah 18:9; emphasis added). That covenant is a decision we make once and forever, to stand for our beliefs as witnesses of God every moment of our life. The promised blessing is that we will have the Spirit more abundantly upon us (see Mosiah 18:10).

The world, our peers, and people who don’t share our same values will always exert some pressure on us, pressure that comes when we strive to live a celestial law in a terrestrial

world. Indeed, living righteously in a wicked world is not an easy task. Sometimes it can seem like a huge challenge. Sometimes it can seem like a daily conflict. But we have the promise that we will receive the Spirit more abundantly when we stand as true witnesses of God. When we pray to Heavenly Father, He will bless us with the power of the Holy Ghost, providing that crucial extra help we need. Divine grace will fill the inevitable spiritual gap we all experience as imperfect beings trying to reach higher and holier ground.

Eternal Consequences

Choices that may seem small at the time may in fact have eternal consequences. But because we made a covenant, we have a promise. When we choose the Lord—when we stand as witnesses at all times, in all things, and in all places—then all things will work together for the good of those who love God. As we choose the Lord, although we might remain alone at times, angels will be all around us, bearing us up, and we will not feel alone anymore (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:88).

I solemnly testify that in those sacred moments of small decisions but big consequences, it is only through Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we will find peace and rest. Many times, we will be asked to either go with the world or to stand for our principles. How will we respond when asked: “Don’t you also want to go?” Will we go with the world, or will we stay with the Lord? Will we remain silent and be acted upon, or will we stand for our beliefs and act instead?

May we always choose the Lord and readily respond: “To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” Then we will enjoy the blessings of our righteous decisions, temporally and spiritually, in this life and for eternity. ■

NOTES

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

Area Presidency Assignments

The First Presidency has announced that seven areas in the United States and Canada will be combined into three areas. This change as well as the following Area Presidency assignments will be effective August 1.

President M. Russell Ballard, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained that Area Presidencies “focus on the specific needs of each region, providing counsel and direction to regional and local leaders.” ■

Africa Southeast



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First Counselor

S. Mark Palmer
President

Joni L. Koch
Second Counselor

Africa West



Edward Dube
First Counselor

Marcus B. Nash
President

Hugo E. Martinez
Second Counselor

Asia



Peter F. Meurs
First Counselor

David F. Evans
President

David P. Homer
Second Counselor

Asia North



Takashi Wada
First Counselor

Yoon Hwan Choi
President

L. Todd Budge
Second Counselor

Brazil

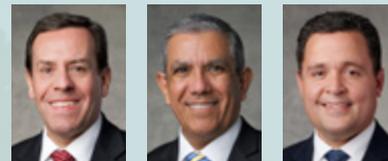


Adilson de Paula Parrella
First Counselor

Marcos A. Aidukaitis
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Joaquin E. Costa
Second Counselor

Caribbean

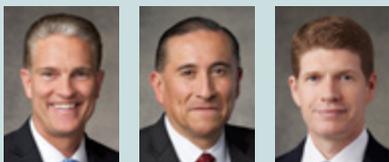


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First Counselor

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Jorge M. Alvarado
Second Counselor

Central America



Brian K. Taylor
First Counselor

Juan A. Uceda
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Second Counselor

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Europe East



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Rafael E. Pino
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John C. Pingree Jr.
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Anthony D. Perkins
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Second Counselor

Administered from Church headquarters

North America Central



Chi Hong (Sam) Wong
First Counselor



S. Gifford Nielsen
President



Matthew L. Carpenter
Second Counselor

North America Northeast



Allen D. Haynie
First Counselor



Randall K. Bennett
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W. Mark Bassett
Second Counselor

North America Southeast



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South America South



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Second Counselor

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Randy D. Funk
First Counselor



Craig C. Christensen
President



Walter F. González
Second Counselor

* Area Seventy



Phebe

By Camille Fronk Olson

Emeritus Professor of Ancient Scripture,
Brigham Young University

Ministering sisters and brothers can learn much from Phebe's example of service.

With the Church's new inspired approach to ministering, we are not given specific instructions as ministering sisters and brothers about what to do for others but are encouraged to act on inspired promptings to meet others' needs, whether they be spiritual, temporal, physical, or social. The example of Phebe—a devoted disciple who lived during the time of the Apostle Paul—teaches us that by using our God-given abilities and unique opportunities, we will be ready to minister in personalized ways as the Spirit directs.

In closing his letter to the Romans, Paul introduced Phebe to the Saints with these words:

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

"That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Romans 16:1–2).

Paul uses three titles that provide insights into Phebe's character and position: "our sister [*adelphē*]," "a servant [*diakonos*] of the church," and "a succourer [*prostatis*] of many." The meaning and function of each title hint that Phebe played a meaningful role in ministering to others in the early Church.

A Sister

From Phebe's title of *adelphē*, we may observe that she was an active member of her Christian community in Cenchrea, a harbor near Corinth in Greece. Paul recognized Phebe as an active participant in the Lord's work in the area where she lived. Considering that her name is Greek, Phebe was likely a Gentile convert to Christianity.¹

A Servant

Romans and Greeks regarded a *diakonos* as someone who held a subservient position. Jesus redefined the term to be a crowning virtue. He made being

a *diakonos* a foundational characteristic for any who would desire discipleship. (See Matthew 20:25–28.) For Christians, the term connotes a position of trust, such as a selfless servant, teacher, or missionary.

The King James translators typically used the words "minister" or "deacon" when they referenced a man as a *diakonos* (see 1 Timothy 3:8). In the case of a woman doing the work of a *diakonos*, they used the word "servant." Similarly, Paul recommended Tychicus, who delivered Paul's letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, as "a beloved brother" and a "faithful minister [*diakonos*] in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:21; see also Colossians 4:7). Although the King James Version describes Phebe as a "servant" and Tychicus as a "minister," the Greek word is the same. Paul recommended Phebe to the Romans because of significant Christian service, including his trust in her to deliver this important letter from a considerable distance.



The words Paul used to describe Phebe suggest that she gave significant service to both Paul and the Church. Paul trusted her to deliver his important letter addressed to the early Saints in Rome.

A Succourer

The term *prostatis* is the same one used in Paul’s letters to describe male Christian leaders (see 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:4; 5:17). In Greek, the word connotes a benefactor, protector, patron, or leader of a group or club.² Paul’s reference to Phebe as a patroness suggests that she was of significant benefit to Paul specifically and to the Church generally. Whether that assistance to the early Church was financial, spiritual, temporal, or some other type, Paul does not say.

Paul wrote to the Romans at the end of his third missionary journey, in about AD 58, and spoke of his plans to

take the gospel to Spain (see Romans 15:24–28). Scriptural evidence suggests he had never been to Rome before, although he knew many Christians who had relocated there (see Romans 16:3–16). His epistle introduces himself to the Church there and mentions his plans to stop in Rome on his way to Spain. How would Paul finance this extensive travel and lodging? Reference to Phebe as a benefactor or “succourer” to him may provide a hint about her role in this regard and her ability to encourage additional support for Paul from the Romans when he arrived.³

Though her appearance in scripture is minimal, we can learn from Phebe’s

example of devotion to the work of ministering in the Church. Notably, Paul chose not to identify specific ways that Phebe served the cause of Christianity in her day, only that she could be trusted and that her service was important to the Church. By being a loving servant and “succourer” to those around us, we can leave a similar legacy. ■

NOTES

1. See C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1979), 2:780.
2. See James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* (1999), 195.
3. See Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (2003), 155–56; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp (2007), 947–48.



By Jean B. Bingham
Relief Society
General President

CATCH THE VISION,

Seeing with spiritual eyes enables us to develop an eternal perspective, fulfill our divine potential, and share the gospel with those around us.

I'd like to talk with you about spiritual vision. Spiritual vision is necessary for progress and critical to the fulfillment of our highest potential. I'll begin with some personal experiences.

Despite Challenges

My oldest sister was born with cataracts. She was legally blind from birth. When she was 15 months old, she got her first pair of tiny glasses with thick, heavy lenses. First thing in the morning, she would put them on. She refused to take them off until she was ready to sleep at night. The glasses didn't give her 20/20 vision, but even at 20/400, it was a vast improvement.

Although she was bright intellectually, because of her poor eyesight she missed visual cues, and some of those things affected her social development. For example, she was never able to clearly see facial expressions. Gaps in understanding caused her to



My sister when she was one year old



SHARE THE VISION!

misunderstand situations, which sometimes created challenges for her and others.

Despite these challenges, she learned to play the piano and organ. She graduated from college with a degree in education, and for many years she has used her skills as a special education teacher to help struggling students. Her spiritual vision allowed her to see beyond her mortal limitations.

From Blurry to Clear

In contrast, I've had adequate vision most of my life. Recently, however, I found myself struggling to read anything smaller than large print. Everything was a little blurry and uncertain. Details disappeared. Colors were muted. Distracted by having to work to simply see what was being shown, I sometimes missed important points in meetings. I tried using magnifying

reading glasses, in addition to contact lenses with increasingly stronger prescriptions. But despite my best efforts, my vision continued to deteriorate.

Then, thanks to an expert ophthalmologist and his highly trained staff, I learned I had developed cataracts. But unlike my sister, for me there was a relatively quick fix. A surgeon replaced the defective lens with an artificial lens. Afterward, I was astonished. With my near vision restored, now I can read just about any size print. Colors are clear and vibrant, and details are sharp rather than indistinguishable. I feel more confident. I can focus on the important things, and I actually feel more joy in life!

Seeing from Afar

Besides near vision, the surgery also restored my far vision, or perspective. Let me provide some examples.



When I have been on the upper floors of the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, I have found that on a very clear day it's possible to see mountain peaks that are miles away.

Our home is about a mile up on the foothills. From that vantage point, we can see across the valley to mountains bordering the valley to the west, part of the range beyond that, and also the mountains in the distant north. That's about 50 miles or so in those directions.

From the hills, we can see many details—buildings and fields dotting the landscape, roads with their traffic flow, airplanes flying to and from the airport, and smoke from fires. We can even see weather changes coming and prepare for them.

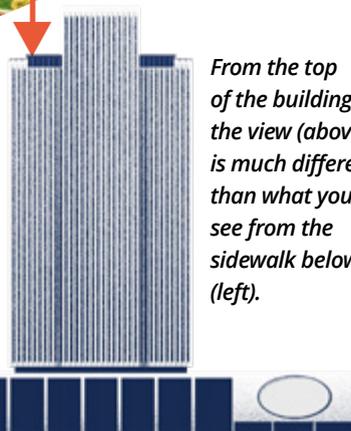
But my view is still limited compared to other vantage points. For example, when I have been on the upper floors of the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, I have found that on a very clear day it's possible to see mountain peaks more than 100 miles away. That's an even greater distance than I can see from my vantage point at home.

Our Need for Spiritual Vision

So how does this relate to us as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? Just as physical vision is important in this life, spiritual vision is critical in our quest for eternal life. Proverbs 29:18 tells us, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." The truth is, we all need help learning to see clearly with our spiritual eyes.

My sister, born with a visual disability, needed help from others to learn and progress physically and socially. As Church members, while we are developing spiritual vision, we may need help learning to discover eternal truths. Such truths will open up marvelous new vistas we can scarcely imagine. But first we must find a vantage point that gives us a view of eternity.

When my own eyesight was gradually diminishing, I needed others' help to regain the vision I previously enjoyed. In a similar way, members



From the top of the building, the view (above) is much different than what you see from the sidewalk below (left).

who once enjoyed clear gospel vision but whose circumstances have clouded their vision over time are like I was. They have lost sight of the joy the gospel brings to everyday life. Our efforts can bless them as they seek to regain that perspective.

As members of the restored Church, we have a responsibility, first of all, to improve our own spiritual vision. As we do so, we will find that our spiritual vision improves as we encourage our families and fellow Saints to do the same. And as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we invite all people to come unto the Savior so that they also may gain a clearer vision of their purpose here on earth. This is part of the “gathering of Israel” in which President Russell M. Nelson has invited each of us to participate.

Prophetic Vision

One of our great blessings as members of the Church is to be led by prophets, seers, and revelators. The President of the Church, under the direction of Heavenly Father and the Savior, sees from a perspective that is both eternal and celestial. Choosing to follow his counsel will help us stay on and move along the covenant path that will bring us back to our heavenly home.

As “watchmen on the tower” (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:44–46), the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles see from high spiritual ground. Their unique vantage point enables them to see dangers “afar off” (see Doctrine and Covenants 101:53–54). We are wise when we appreciate their perspective and act on their counsel as they strive to help members live righteously and prepare for future challenges. As we sustain them, we increase in sensitivity to the Spirit and are better able to reach out in love to others.

That We Might Have Joy

So, here are two questions for each of us to ask:

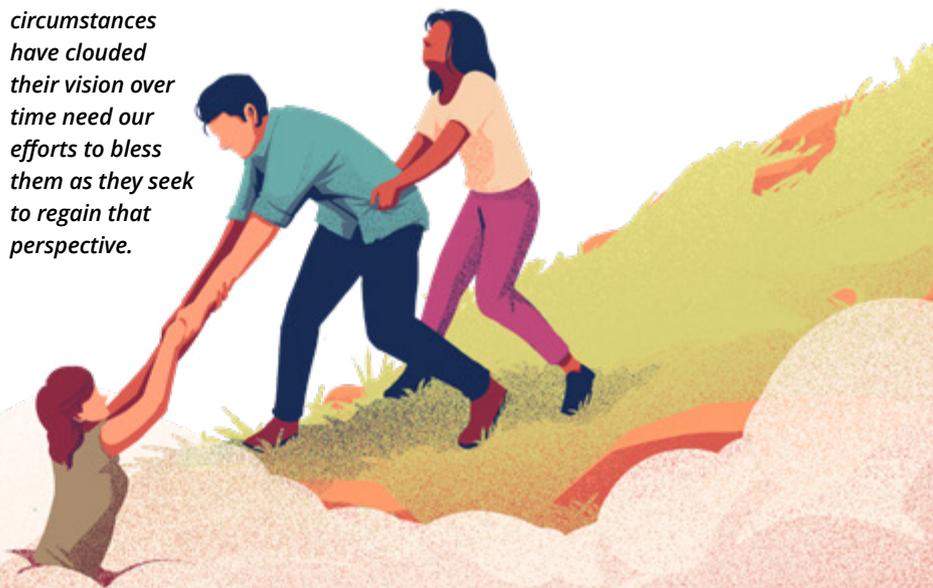
- What am I doing in my life and in my calling to help myself, my family, and my brothers and sisters see more clearly and feel more deeply the joy of the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- If I am not experiencing that joy right now, what do I need to do to regain spiritual vision and establish eternal perspective in my life?

“Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25) is not just a quick scripture for youth to memorize in seminary; it is the whole point of our earthly journey and what we hope for in our eternal progress. It is the spiritual vision we need to obtain.

Without clear spiritual vision, our potential is limited. Just as clouds can obscure our physical vision, the darkness of disbelief can cloud our spiritual vision, making us hesitant to step out and move towards the grand possibilities for which we were designed. But the more we understand the plan of our Heavenly Father, the more we are able to fulfill our full potential as His sons and daughters.

Let us each strive to live according to clear and distinct gospel truth, so that we can open our spiritual eyes to the beauty, joy, and divine potential our Heavenly Father sees in each of us. May we each look in the right direction—to our prophets, seers, and revelators—and encourage our families and friends to do the same as we “call on the name of the Lord” in preparation for “that great and notable day” of His coming (see Acts 2:17–21). ■

Members whose circumstances have clouded their vision over time need our efforts to bless them as they seek to regain that perspective.



The Best Investment

By Michael R. Morris
Church Magazines

After being laid off, Blanca Gregory had difficulty finding a new job. But then she joined a Find a Better Job self-reliance group.

Blanca Gregory had worked in banking for 27 years, including 12 years as an assistant manager—which is why getting laid off came as a shock. Her surprise, however, was quickly replaced by worry and stress.

Thankfully, Blanca’s husband, Eric, was employed, and the family had savings to tide them over. After recovering from an illness and being out of work more than a year, Sister Gregory began looking for a new job.

She updated her resume, enrolled in computer classes, attended job fairs, and began filling out job applications. As a result, she got several job interviews. With her work experience, she thought that finding a new job would be easy.

“I grew worried when I didn’t hear back from anyone,” Sister Gregory says. “I was like, ‘What is going on?’”

Months passed without a single job offer. Finally, her husband, who was then serving as bishop of their ward in Newport Beach, California, USA, suggested that Blanca check out the Church’s self-reliance initiative and then join a Find a Better Job group.



“You Feel the Spirit”

As part of a Find a Better Job group, Sister Gregory began a 12-week course that helped her learn to network, recognize opportunities, update her resume, present herself professionally, and prepare for job interviews. She also set daily goals related to identifying resources, making contacts, and holding face-to-face meetings.

“A self-reliance class is not like any other class. It’s an inspiration. You feel the Spirit there,” she says. “Our class taught us to exercise faith, be diligent, work hard, and plead with the Lord—relying not just on our own skills and ability to find a job but also on Heavenly Father’s help.”

Thanks to her Find a Better Job group, Sister Gregory gained extensive practice sharing her qualifications and contacting people and businesses using a networking tool called “Me in 30 Seconds.” A Me in 30 Seconds statement helps employers understand the kind of job a potential employee is seeking, the person’s experience, and how the person could help the business succeed.

About eight weeks into her course, Sister Gregory felt impressed one day to kneel and pray continually throughout the day for help.

“I humbled myself,” she says. “I really needed Heavenly Father to help me find something. I wasn’t saying I want to be a manager or I want to make so much money. I just needed a job. I poured out my heart to the Lord.”

As part of her “homework” that day, she applied electronically for five positions. The very next day, a prospective employer called to interview her for a position as a bank branch officer. She was excited her prayers had been answered so quickly.

“I wasn’t nervous about the interview, because I had practiced in the class for so long,” says Sister Gregory. Nevertheless, she prayed fervently before the interview. “Heavenly Father,” she pleaded, “please put words into my mouth so I can answer correctly and so that those interviewing me can see the value of what I have to offer.”

“It Will Change Your Life”

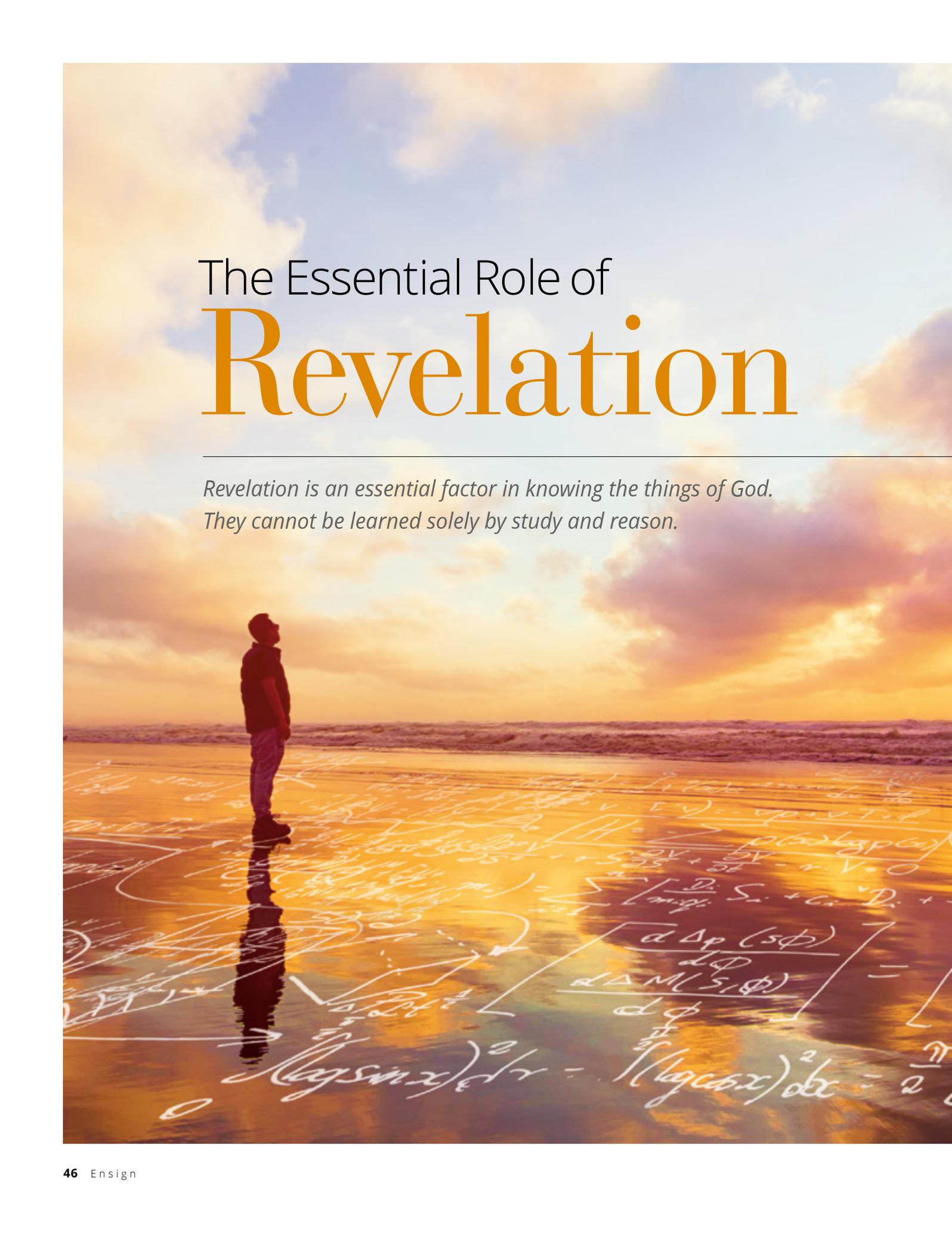
In March 2018, a few days after Sister Gregory’s interview, Mickey and Margaret Foster pulled into a Newport Beach Stake chapel parking lot to visit that evening’s Find a Better Job group. The Fosters, then serving as full-time Self-Reliance Services senior missionaries, arrived early and were surprised to see Blanca already parked there.

“She was so excited that she jumped into our car to tell us she had just gotten a job,” Elder Foster says. “She described how much she loved her Heavenly Father and what the self-reliance initiative and her self-reliance group had meant to her in her quest to find employment.”

Sister Gregory also testified to the Fosters that she had never felt closer to the Savior or felt His personal involvement more in her life. Overcome with gratitude and emotion, all three wept. A year later, Sister Gregory remains grateful for her self-reliance group, for heavenly help, and for her job as a bank officer.

“The pay is good. The schedule is good. The benefits are good,” she says. She is using her skills, developing new talents, and “growing in the company.”

“Joining a 12-week Find a Better Job group is the best investment you could make,” she says to anyone looking for a job or looking to change jobs. “It won’t just help you update your resume and share your skills, but it will also help you learn to exercise your faith and grow your testimony. That’s what makes the difference. The class is only a couple of hours each week, but it will really help. It will change your life.” ■



The Essential Role of Revelation

*Revelation is an essential factor in knowing the things of God.
They cannot be learned solely by study and reason.*



**By Elder
Terence M.
Vinson**
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

The Lord’s admonition to us with respect to learning is clear. He tells us, “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118).

The Lord is saying that both knowledge and wisdom are necessary. As stated simply in the words of this proverb from Guinea, West Africa: “Knowledge without wisdom is like water in the sand.”

A more complete explanation of the importance of both knowledge and wisdom is given in the words of Jacob, son of Lehi:

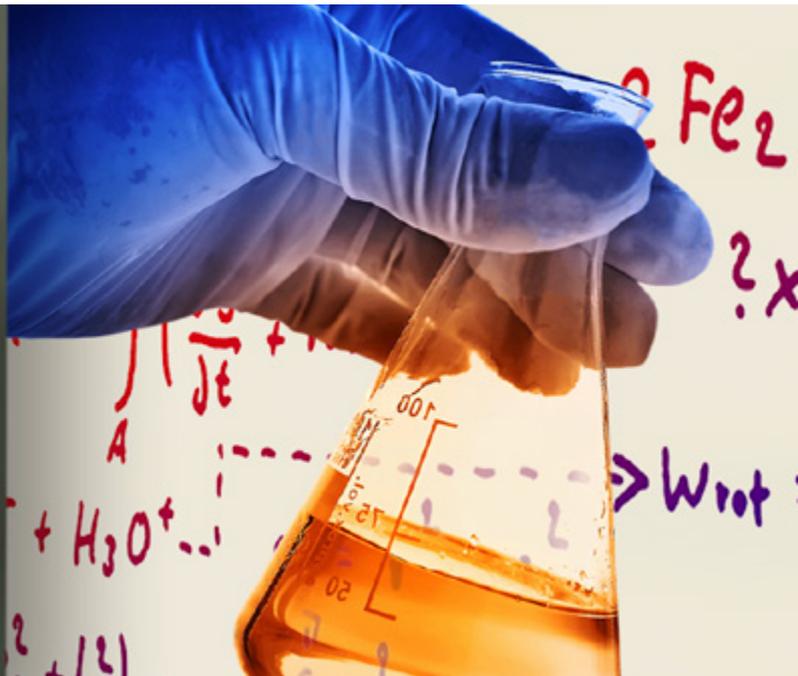
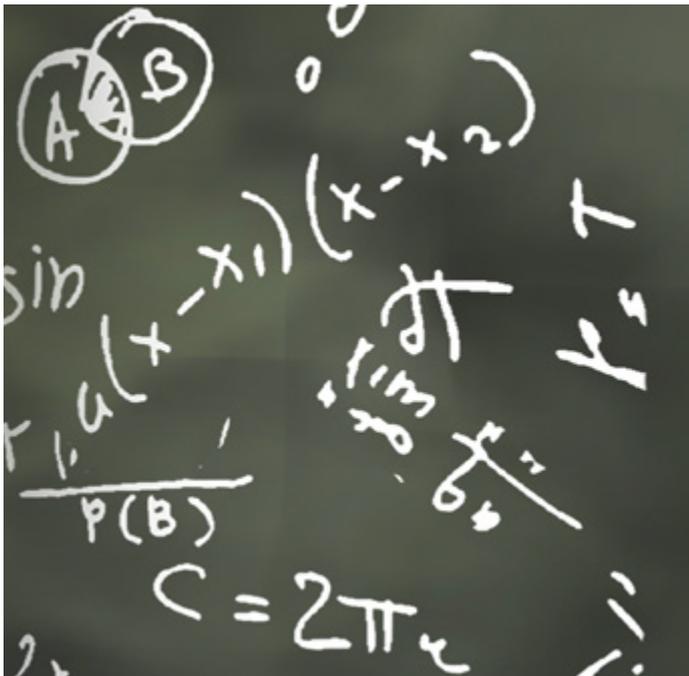
“O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish.

“But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God” (2 Nephi 9:28–29).

Here, we have a hint at how to find wisdom: we must hearken to the counsels of God. As the Lord has said concerning those who put their trust in Him:

“Their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

“For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man” (Doctrine and Covenants 76:9–10).



But most people do not understand this or do not live it; for them, education is purely an intellectual pursuit. We are easily indoctrinated in modern society to believe that we can really only know something through our intellects and our physical senses. There is no tolerance in the modern world for things that can't be proven scientifically.

Nobel Prize-winning Russian novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn expressed the idea that the problems of the Western world began in the Renaissance. He indicated that the thought processes enshrined during the Renaissance “did not [see in] the existence of . . . man . . . any higher task than the attainment of happiness on earth. . . . Modern Western civilization [has developed] on the dangerous trend to worship man and his material needs. . . .

“ . . . We have placed too much hope in political and social reforms, only to find that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life.”¹

Two Ways to Know

Latter-day Saints understand that there are, instead, two different ways of knowing things: scientifically (through the use of reasoning and the physical senses) and spiritually (through revelation and the spiritual senses). The experiences that my wonderful wife, Kay, and I have been blessed to enjoy in West Africa have reinforced for us the power of knowing spiritually. Many West Africans

dream dreams or see visions that have spiritual implications for them and for their families.

Like others, I have not always clearly understood what it means to know spiritually. As a young man, I met a beautiful young lady who was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had never before heard of this church. Having grown up in a different Christian church, I felt that to accept the teachings of the restored Church, I needed to be totally convinced intellectually that my previous beliefs were mistaken and that these new teachings were truly teachings of the gospel that Jesus Christ had previously established.

Several consecutive sets of missionaries taught me, but I always had questions for them. When they could not answer my questions, they would go away and then return the following week with the answers. By then I had more questions. This continued for several weeks as I tried to receive an intellectual conversion.

Then, one day as I sat in a church meeting, I felt clearly this message from the Holy Ghost: “Terry, all of your questions have answers. It is not important for you to know them all now. As the questions come to you, they will be answered. But I need you to act and to be baptized now.”

Do you see what had happened? My study and pondering gave rise to revelation. I immediately acted and was baptized. Over the subsequent 44 years, the prophecy



We are easily indoctrinated in modern society to believe that we can really only know something through our intellects and our physical senses.

contained in that revelation has been fulfilled. All of my questions have been answered, including those I had not even considered 44 years ago.

President Dallin H. Oaks, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has spoken about the different ways of knowing:

“What do we mean when we testify and say that we *know* the gospel is true? Contrast that kind of knowledge with ‘I know it is cold outside’ or ‘I know I love my wife.’ These are three different kinds of knowledge, each learned in a different way. Knowledge of outside temperature can be verified by scientific proof. Knowledge that we love our spouse is personal and subjective. While not capable of scientific proof, it is still important. The idea that all important knowledge is based on scientific evidence is simply untrue.

“While there are some ‘evidences’ for gospel truths (for example, see Psalm 19:1; Helaman 8:24), scientific methods will not yield spiritual knowledge. This is what Jesus taught in response to Simon Peter’s testimony that He was the Christ: ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and

blood”—or, we might say, logic or the physical senses—“hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven’ (Matthew 16:17). The Apostle Paul explained this. In a letter to the Corinthian Saints, he said, ‘The things of God knoweth no man, but [by] the Spirit of God’ (1 Corinthians 2:11; see also John 14:17).

“In contrast, we know the things of man by the ways of man, but ‘the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned’ (1 Corinthians 2:14).

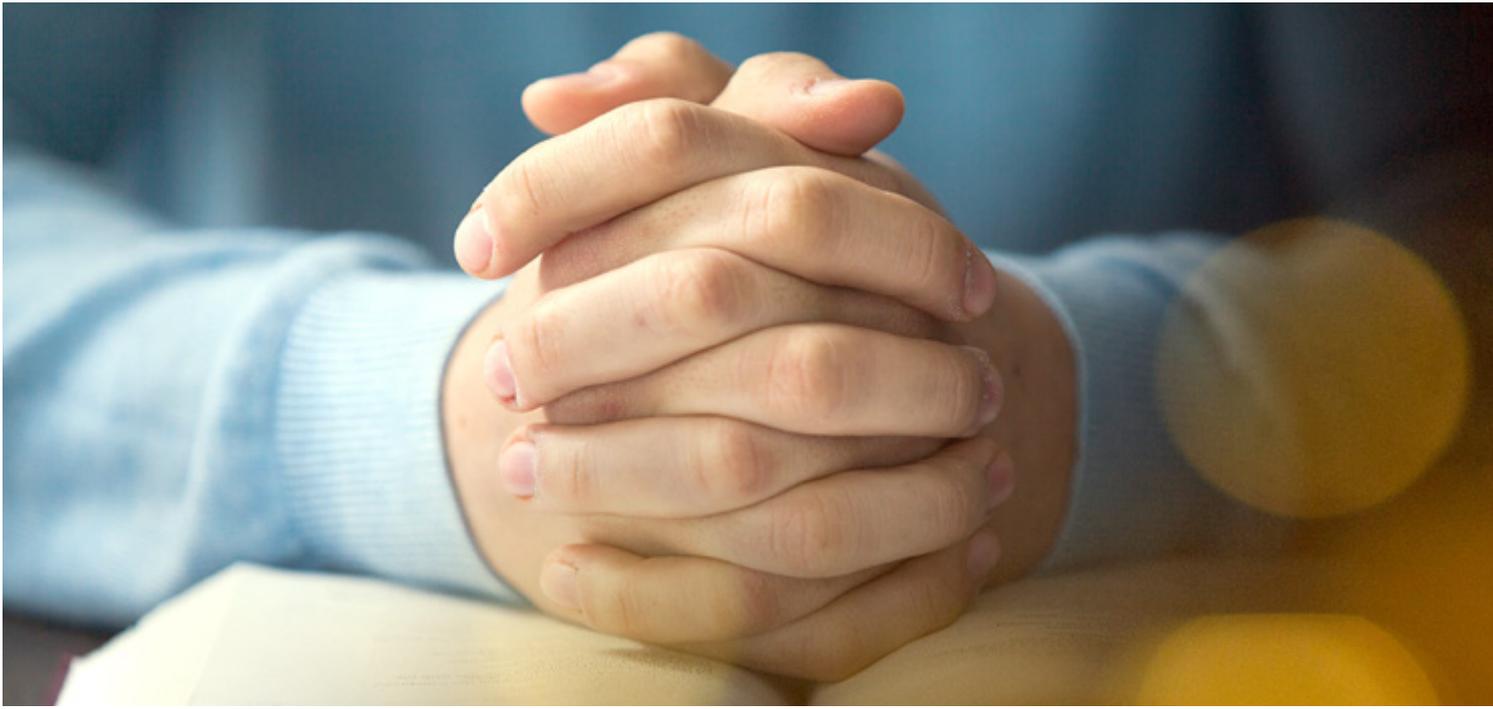
“The Book of Mormon teaches that God will manifest the truth of spiritual things unto us by the power of the Holy Ghost (see Moroni 10:4–5). In modern revelation God promises us that we will receive ‘knowledge’ by His telling us in our mind and in our heart ‘by the Holy Ghost’ (D&C 8:1–2).”²

This is revelation.

The Witness of the Holy Ghost

President Oaks continued:

“One of the greatest things about our Heavenly Father’s plan for His children is that each of us can know the truth of that plan for ourselves. That revealed knowledge does not come from books, from scientific proof, or from intellectual pondering. As with the Apostle Peter, we can receive that



knowledge directly from our Heavenly Father through the witness of the Holy Ghost.

“When we know spiritual truths by spiritual means, we can be just as sure of that knowledge as scholars and scientists are of the different kinds of knowledge they have acquired by [scientific] methods.”³

Although spiritual knowledge and intellectual knowledge are different, both are important. To comprehend the things of the world, we must be intellectually enlightened; to know and understand the things of God, we must be spiritually enlightened.

Revelation is an essential factor in knowing the things of God. The things of God cannot be learned solely by study and reason.

Note also that study and reason precede revelation, and the intellect will confirm the revelation. But it’s not the intellectual confirmation that’s most important; it’s the revealed truth and our acting on it. We learn through study and faith (see Doctrine and Covenants 9:7–9; 88:118).

Some things of this world are unseen, as indicated by the Apostle Paul: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

As we think about this, it makes perfect sense in a plan

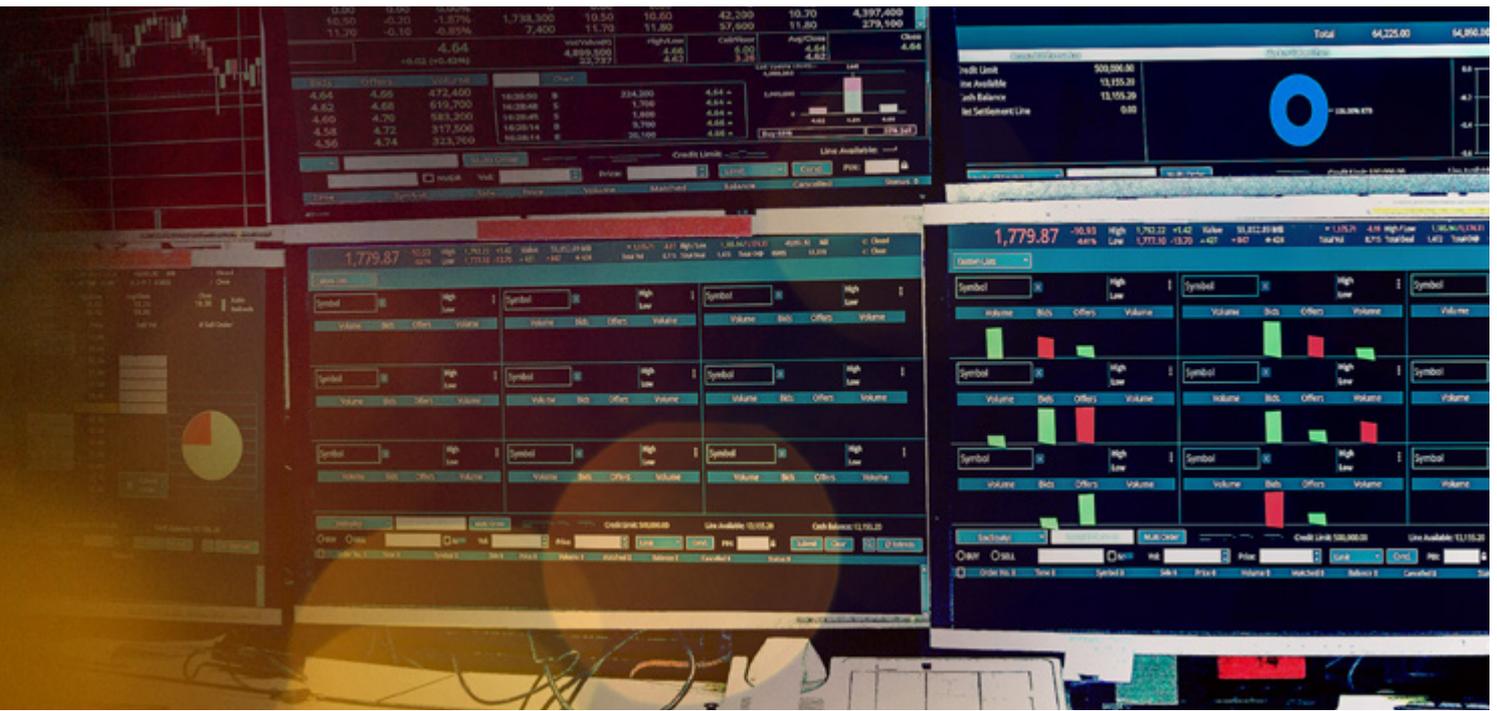
of salvation that is completely just and fair. You have all been in high school or college classes with people of greater or lesser intellect than yourself. A good portion of our intelligence is due to genetics. How fair would it be if God favored people of greater intellect over those with lesser ability by making the acceptance of gospel truths a function of our intellects? Why would He give some an advantage based on inherited intellect?

He would not, and He does not! Rather, we learn spiritual truths as a function of our spiritual receptivity. Such is a spiritual gift, nurtured by individual faith, prayer, humility, and goodness, as well as a desire to respond and to act.

Despite the apparent conflict between reason and revelation, the rational view and the religious view of the world are not opposites of one another. The religious view (at least the view of a religion that is undiluted by apostasy) includes reason as well as revelation, and it embraces the truths determined by both. In contrast, the rational view excludes what is spiritually revealed.

Have Faith, Seek, and Teach

Let’s examine in greater detail Doctrine and Covenants section 88:118: “And as *all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another* words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best



Latter-day Saints understand that there are two different ways of knowing things: scientifically (through the use of reasoning and the physical senses) and spiritually (through revelation and the spiritual senses).

books words of *wisdom*; seek *learning*, even *by study* and also *by faith*” (emphasis added).

The teachings of this verse are critical.

First, the Lord tells us that a basic human problem is a lack of faith.

Second, He says that we must seek diligently, not superficially.

Third, we “teach one another.” This is an exercise in mutual help and mutual growth, one individual to another (see Doctrine and Covenants 84:106).

Our focus should not just be on acquiring *knowledge* but also on acquiring *wisdom*—the practical application of knowledge for purposes of good.

Finally, these things are acquired through both study and faith, with *faith* being a word that encompasses our acting on what we believe in order to gain knowledge and wisdom.

Clearly, we have a responsibility to know by both reason and revelation, with revelation being an essential component for spiritual knowledge and wisdom. That skill is exemplified by our prophet, President Russell M. Nelson. I assure you that he is a man of both the highest intellect and the highest faith who depends on revelation and who receives it in absolute abundance. The consequence of this is his powerful relationship with the Savior, and just as powerful a relationship with others. When you associate with President Nelson, you can both see and feel his love, just as we will all one day see and feel the love of our Savior as we stand before Him. Then we will be overcome by His undying and incomprehensible love for us individually.

I have learned this truth through reason and through revelation. The more powerful of these two in knowing this and other spiritual realities has been the latter: revelation. My witness is born of the myriad spiritual experiences I have been blessed to see, feel, and receive. ■

From a devotional address, “How Can We Know—By Reason or by Revelation?” given at Brigham Young University—Idaho on September 25, 2018. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTES

1. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “The Exhausted West,” *Harvard Magazine*, July–Aug. 1978, 25, 26, harvardmagazine.com.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Testimony,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 26.
3. Dallin H. Oaks, “Testimony,” 26.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide:

“A Monumental Moment in Church Education”

A new Church initiative helps members
worldwide access higher education.

By Breanne Su'a

BYU-Pathway Worldwide

For more than a century, hundreds of thousands of Church members have pursued higher education on the campuses of Church-sponsored colleges and universities. But for millions of other members, attending one of these universities—or any university, for that matter—feels like an impossibility. Tuition costs, competitive admission requirements, geographical distance, and a host of other obstacles discourage members from even applying. Given the Church's doctrinal focus on education, these obstacles can leave members feeling discouraged and hopeless.

BYU-Pathway Worldwide was created with those members in mind. This new educational initiative—composed of the PathwayConnect program as well as online certificates and degrees offered in partnership with BYU-Idaho—allows members to pursue higher education wherever the Church is organized at a fraction of normal tuition costs. Last year alone, over 40,000 Church members in 100 countries participated.

Speaking to this tremendous growth, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stated: “We’re part of a monumental moment in Church education in The

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is one of those pivotal marks in our history that we won’t fully understand until we look back at it years and maybe decades from now.”¹

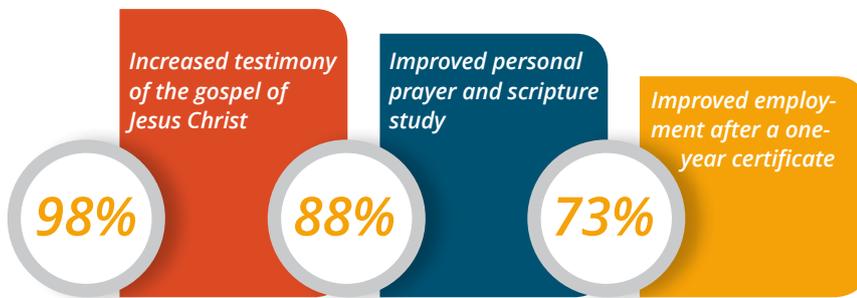
The Pathway to Christlike Leadership

BYU-Pathway Worldwide’s mission is to develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities. It does this by helping students grow in their testimony, adopt practices of effective learning, and gain the skills and direction they need to lead and support their families.

This pursuit of education and self-reliance has always been an aspect of our discipleship. In 1833, the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith, “I, the Lord, am well pleased that there should be a school in Zion” (Doctrine and Covenants 97:3).

Elder Kim B. Clark, Commissioner of the Church Educational System (2015–19), said: “Zion is everywhere the Lord has established His Church. Brothers and sisters, it is a miracle that we can say today that BYU-Pathway is a school in Zion, wherever Zion is.”²

BYU-Pathway Worldwide Outcomes



"I've never seen anything this powerful in bringing back into activity young adults who have wandered away."

—Stanford Demars, former stake president, Providence, Rhode Island



Hyrum DeGering: Staying on course after a mission

Like many returned missionaries, Hyrum found the transition from missionary life in Australia to his home life in Utah, USA, to be difficult. Mission life had given him structure and purpose

and direction. But what was his purpose now?

BYU-Pathway Worldwide gave him the structure and purpose he was seeking. In his weekly gatherings in the PathwayConnect program, Hyrum felt motivated by the encouragement and perspectives of his fellow students. His assignments in his religion classes kept him reading the scriptures and seeking the Spirit each day. Other studies with BYU-Pathway helped him identify the career path he wanted to pursue.

"BYU-Pathway provides many resources that help returned missionaries continue their spiritual and temporal education," Hyrum said. "Through PathwayConnect, they'll be able to polish the skills they learned on their mission to help prepare themselves for their future."

Hyrum completed PathwayConnect and is now enrolled in an online degree program. His goal is to earn the prerequisites to qualify for a radiology degree at another university.

"BYU-Pathway instigates that drive to progress and figure out what your next step is. It gives you a guide—a compass and a course—for where you want to go next in life."

BYU-Pathway Worldwide pre-approves all young returning and recently returned missionaries for admission to PathwayConnect who meet the English language requirements. See details at byupathway.lds.org/returnedmissionary.



Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard: A single mom's journey to support her family

As a single mother of three children, Ashley desperately wanted to provide for her family. But educational opportunities in Montana, USA, where

she lived seemed expensive and ill-suited to her busy life as a mom. Trusting in the Lord, Ashley prayed for guidance. A few months later her prayers were answered when she discovered PathwayConnect, a one-year online program that teaches students basic skills in how to succeed at home, at work, at church, and in school.

Through weekly gatherings with other students, coupled with her online coursework, Ashley learned how to be a better mother and developed a newfound love of the scriptures.

"I don't think a change of heart happens only once or twice in our lives," Ashley said. "It can happen over and over again. PathwayConnect taught me that. It changed my heart and helped me become more of the woman I'm meant to be."

After PathwayConnect, Ashley earned a bachelor's degree online through BYU-Pathway's partnership with BYU-Idaho and is now enrolled in a master's degree program in Montana. Ashley also recently remarried and was sealed to her husband.

"[My degree program] has been such a blessing for me, and more than simply academically. The same spirit I felt through my PathwayConnect courses continued in my upper-level courses as well."



Michael Alves: Improving employment

For years, getting an education seemed impossible to Michael. He couldn't afford to quit his job and enroll in school full-time. But after hearing about PathwayConnect, he

realized his goal of becoming a software engineer was more attainable than he'd thought.

"I started PathwayConnect with a very limited knowledge of English," Michael said. "Week after week, I gained the necessary confidence to keep moving forward and improve."

After PathwayConnect, Michael started an online degree program in the technology field. As he began the first certificate of his degree program, he started networking and was offered a position he couldn't pass up.

"It was the biggest opportunity of my life. After a while, they liked my work so much that they offered me a promotion."

Because of his education through BYU-Pathway Worldwide, Michael was able to quadruple his income and get a job as a senior user-interface engineer in Brazil.

"Without knowing how to study, without English, I wouldn't have gotten anywhere," he said. "BYU-Pathway has given me everything I have."

BYU-Pathway's Programs

PathwayConnect

PathwayConnect is a one-year online program that teaches basic skills to help students succeed at home, at work, at church, and in school. Over three semesters, students complete online coursework in life skills, professional skills, and university skills while also gathering once a week with other local BYU-Pathway students. Those enrolled also attend institute or take online religion courses, and English-language practice is available to assist non-native English learners.

After completing PathwayConnect, students can then earn a job-ready certificate in one year or less and then continue on to earn a degree.

It's free to apply. No standardized tests or high school diploma are required. You don't need a worthiness interview to start the program. Upcoming start dates are September 2019 and January 2020. Visit byupathway.lds.org/admissions.

Certificates and Degrees

In partnership with BYU-Idaho, BYU-Pathway Worldwide provides access to nearly 40 online certificates and degrees. (BYU-Pathway provides the programs, services, and support; BYU-Idaho grants the degree.) The degrees are built by stacking job-oriented certificates—so no credits are ever lost. (Standard university admission requirements apply.)

1. Students who start with a **certificate** acquire employable skills immediately. Seventy-three percent of those who earn a certificate receive immediate job improvement.
2. After the first certificate, an **associate degree** is built from a second certificate, plus general education courses.
3. A **bachelor's degree** is then built from a third certificate, plus more general education.



Carolina Galvis: Affordable education

Carolina grew up in Venezuela but at the young age of 11 moved to the United States. She dreamed of earning a degree and becoming a lawyer, but the burden of paying for school

made her dream feel unobtainable.

“I had no money. I could not afford school. I felt I had no choice but to give up on my dream.”

Caught in a cycle of low wages and limited opportunities, Carolina struggled to find a stable job and make ends meet. When Carolina heard about BYU-Pathway Worldwide, she knew it was an answer to prayers.

After completing the one-year PathwayConnect program, she went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in business management. “Completing college always seemed impossible. But now I know that it is possible. I’m closer to my dream than I’ve ever been. Soon I’ll be able to serve people as their attorney and advocate.” ■

NOTES

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, in BYU-Pathway Worldwide devotional special broadcast, Nov. 1, 2018, byupw.org/speech/special-broadcast.
2. Kim B. Clark, “BYU-Pathway Worldwide: A School in Zion” (address given at BYU-Pathway Worldwide president’s dinner, Oct. 11, 2018), 5.

Overcoming Constraints to Education

- **Low Cost:** Tuition is *significantly less* than at many other schools.
- **Spiritual and Academic Confidence:** By combining academic learning with religious education, BYU-Pathway Worldwide inspires hope, opening new opportunities to learn by study and by faith.
- **Online:** BYU-Pathway’s courses and programs are completely online. All students need is access to a computer with internet to be able to participate—anywhere in the world.

A Ministering Tool

Aside from the benefits BYU-Pathway Worldwide provides to its students, for ecclesiastical leaders BYU-Pathway can be a valuable tool in their ministering efforts.

Priesthood leaders have indicated that BYU-Pathway Worldwide plays a significant part in their efforts to help their members. Many students have reported significant spiritual benefits because of their participation in BYU-Pathway’s programs.



BYU

PATHWAY
WORLDWIDE

To learn more and to apply,
visit byupathway.lds.org.



CHAPTER 2

Glory Enough

Editors' note: This is an excerpt of chapter 2 from No Unhallowed Hand, volume 2 in the Saints series. (Volume 2 will be released early next year.) The previous chapter, in the July issue, describes the advance company of migrating Saints, called the "Camp of Israel." They have been camped at Sugar Creek, a relatively short distance across the Mississippi River from Nauvoo. On March 1, 1846, Brigham Young began to lead the advance company west.

While the Saints with Brigham Young were leaving Sugar Creek, 43-year-old Louisa Pratt remained in Nauvoo, preparing to leave the city with her four young daughters. Three years earlier, the Lord had called her husband, Addison, on a mission to the Pacific Islands. Since then, unreliable mail service between Nauvoo and Tubuai, the island in French Polynesia where Addison was serving, had made it hard to stay in contact with him. Most of his letters were several months old when they arrived, and some were older than a year.

Addison's latest letter made it clear that he would not be home in time to go west with her. The Twelve had instructed him to remain in the Pacific Islands until they called him home or sent missionaries to replace him. At one point, Brigham had hoped to send more missionaries to the islands after the Saints received the endowment, but the exodus from Nauvoo had postponed that plan.¹

Louisa was willing to make the journey without her husband, but thinking about it made her nervous. She hated to leave Nauvoo and the temple and did not relish the idea of traveling by wagon over the Rocky Mountains. She also wanted to see her aging parents in Canada—possibly for the last time—before going west.

If she sold her ox team, she could get enough money to visit her parents and book passage for her family on a ship bound for the California coast, thus avoiding overland travel altogether.

Louisa had almost made up her mind to go to Canada, but something did not feel right. She decided to write to Brigham Young about her concerns with overland travel and her desire to see her parents.





“If you say the ox team expedition is the best way for salvation, then I shall engage in it heart and hand,” she wrote, “and I believe I can stand it as long without grumbling as any other woman.”²

A short time later, a messenger arrived with Brigham’s response. “Come on. The ox team salvation is the safest way,” he told her. “Brother Pratt will meet us in the wilderness where we locate, and he will be sorely disappointed if his family is not with us.”

Louisa considered the counsel, steeled her heart against the difficult trail ahead, and decided to follow the main body of the Saints, come life or death.³

That spring, workers raced to finish the temple before its public dedication on May 1. They installed a brick floor around the baptismal font, fitted decorative woodwork into place, and painted the walls. The work proceeded all day and often into the night. Since the Church had little money to pay the laborers, many of them sacrificed part of their wages to ensure the temple was ready to dedicate to the Lord.⁴

Two days before the dedication, workers finished painting the first-floor assembly hall. The next day, they swept the dust and debris out of the large room and prepared for the service. The workers were not able to put finishing touches on every room, but they knew that would not keep the Lord from accepting the temple. Confident they had fulfilled God’s command, they painted the words “The Lord has beheld our sacrifice” above the pulpits along the east wall of the assembly hall.⁵

Conscious of the debt they owed the workers, Church leaders announced that the first session of the dedication would be

a charitable event. Those who attended were asked to contribute a dollar to help pay the impoverished laborers.

On the morning of May 1, 14-year-old Elvira Stevens left her camp west of the Mississippi and crossed the river to attend the dedication. An orphan whose parents had died soon after the family moved to Nauvoo, Elvira now lived with her married sister. Since no one else in her camp could join her for the dedication, she went alone.

Knowing that it might be years before another temple was built in the West, the Apostles had administered the endowment to some young single people, including Elvira. Now, three months later, she climbed the steps to the temple doors once more, contributed her dollar, and found a seat in the assembly hall.⁶

The session opened with singing from a choir. Orson Hyde then offered the dedicatory prayer. “Grant that Thy Spirit shall dwell here,” he pleaded, “and may all feel a sacred influence on their hearts that His hand has helped this work.”⁷

Elvira felt heavenly power in the room. After the session, she returned to her camp, but she came back for the next session two days later, hoping to feel the same power again. Orson Hyde and Wilford Woodruff gave sermons on temple work, priesthood, and the resurrection. Before closing the meeting, Wilford praised the Saints for finishing the temple even though they would have to abandon it.

“Thousands of the Saints have received their endowment in it, and the light will not go out,” he said. “This is glory enough for building the temple.”

After the session, Elvira returned to her camp, crossing the river one last time.⁸ Saints in Nauvoo, meanwhile, spent the

rest of the day and night packing up and removing chairs, tables, and other furnishings until the temple was empty and left in the hands of the Lord.⁹

Farther ahead on the trail, Brigham and the Camp of Israel stopped at a place called Mosquito Creek, not far from the Missouri River. They were hungry, two months behind schedule, and desperately poor.¹⁰ Yet Brigham still insisted on sending an advance company over the Rocky Mountains. He believed that a group of Saints needed to finish the journey that season, for as long as the Church wandered without a home, its enemies would try to scatter it or block its way.¹¹

Brigham knew, however, that outfitting such a group would strain the Saints' resources. Few had money or provisions to spare, and Iowa provided limited opportunities for paid labor. To survive on the prairie, many Saints had sold prized possessions along the trail or worked odd jobs to earn money for food and supplies. As the camp moved west and settlements thinned, these opportunities would only become harder to find.¹²

Other matters also weighed on Brigham. The Saints who did not belong to the advance company needed a place to spend the winter. The Omahas and other Native peoples who inhabited the land west of the Missouri River were willing to let the Saints camp there over the winter, but government agents were reluctant to allow them to settle on protected Indian lands for a long period of time.¹³

Brigham also knew the sick and impoverished Saints in Nauvoo were depending on the Church to take them west. For a time, he had hoped to assist them by selling valuable property in Nauvoo, including the temple. But so far this effort had been unsuccessful.¹⁴

On June 29, Brigham learned that three officers from the United States Army were coming to Mosquito Creek. The United States had declared war on Mexico, and President James Polk had authorized the men to recruit a battalion of 500 Saints for a military campaign to the California coast.¹⁵ ■

To read the rest of the chapter, please visit saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org or the digital version of this article in the August issue of the *Ensign in the Gospel Library* app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

The word **Topic** in the notes indicates additional information at saints.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

NOTES

1. Louisa Barnes Pratt to Brigham Young, Mar. 24, 1846; Brigham Young to Addison Pratt, Aug. 28, 1845, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; see also *Saints*, volume 1, chapter 41. **Topic:** Louisa Barnes Pratt
2. Louisa Barnes Pratt to Brigham Young, Mar. 24, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; Louisa Barnes Pratt, *Journal and Autobiography*, 127.
3. Louisa Barnes Pratt, *Journal and Autobiography*, 127. Final sentence of quotation edited for readability; original source has "Brother Pratt will meet us in the wilderness where we locate will be sorely disappointed if his family is not with us."
4. Mendenhall, *Diary*, Apr. 1–4, 1846; Samuel W. Richards, *Journal*, Apr. 22–29, 1846; Haight, *Journal*, Apr. 6, 1846; Morris, *Autobiography*, 40–41.
5. Samuel W. Richards, *Journal*, Apr. 23 and 29–30, 1846; Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, Jan. 1, 1877, 18:304; Lanman, *Summer in the Wilderness*, 31–33.
6. Barney, "Ruins of the Nauvoo Temple"; *JSP*, CFM:525, note 71.
7. Historian's Office, *General Church Minutes*, Thomas Bullock booklet no. 8, May 1, 1846.
8. Barney, "Ruins of the Nauvoo Temple"; Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 15, May [1], 1846, 34; Scott, *Journal*, May 1, 1846; Woodruff, *Journal*, May 1 and 3, 1846.
9. Holzappel and Cottle, "Visit to Nauvoo," 11. **Topic:** Nauvoo Temple
10. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 45. **Topic:** Pioneer Trek
11. Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 15, June 28, 1846, 87–89; Brigham Young to William Huntington and Council, June 28, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.
12. Orson Pratt, *Journal*, Feb. 1846; Mar. 6, 1846; June 19, 1846; see also Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 32–33.
13. Brigham Young to William Huntington and Council, June 28, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL.
14. "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons*, Nov. 1, 1845, 6:1011; Orson Pratt, *Journal*, Apr. 28–29, 1846; Brigham Young to Jesse Little, Jan. 20, 1846; Jesse Little to James K. Polk, June 1, 1846, Jesse C. Little Collection, CHL.
15. Historian's Office, *History of the Church*, volume 15, June 29–30, 1846, 89–90; Quaife, *Diary of James K. Polk*, 444–50; Brigham Young to "the High Council of the Church," Aug. 14, 1846, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL; see also Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 21. **Topic:** Mexican-American War



Known as the Mormon Battalion, nearly 500 Latter-day Saint men volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army and go to California.

Our Sacred Bodies

By Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines

If we don't teach our children about the eternal importance of bodies, the world will eagerly step in and mis-educate our children for us.

In 1 Corinthians 6:19, the Apostle Paul teaches that our bodies are sacred: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" This is not what the world teaches. Instead, confusing messages swirl around our children, raising questions and creating doubts.

What is the perfect body size?

What are the right clothes to wear?

What should I use my body for?

Here are a few ideas for helping children appreciate their bodies as amazing instruments for good.

Bodies Are Gifts

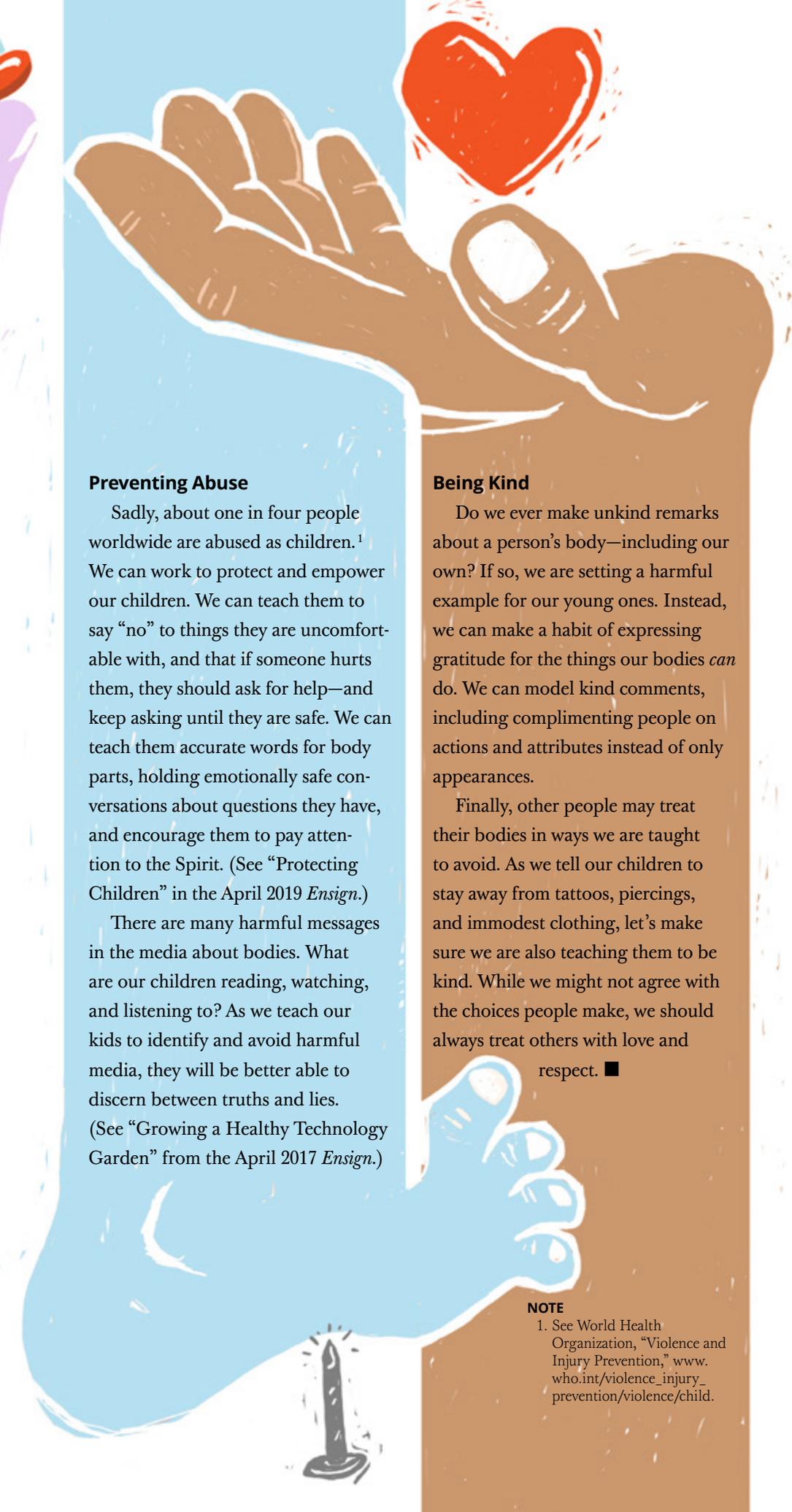
Bodies come in different shapes, colors, sizes, and ability levels. Perhaps the most valuable message we can communicate to our children is that *every* body is a precious blessing. Gaining a physical body is an important part of the plan of happiness—after all, our soul is made up of our spirit and our body! (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:15). As Paul taught, our bodies are temples for the Holy Ghost.

Children, like adults, may be frustrated by how their body looks or acts. That's OK. Help your child understand that even imperfect bodies allow us to learn and grow. We can set an example of focusing on the good things our bodies can do instead of worrying too much about how our body looks or comparing our body to others. Someday, each one of us will be resurrected, and our bodies will "be restored to their proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23).

Caring for Bodies

The healthy habits children develop will bless them for the rest of their lives. As parents, we have a significant influence over the food they eat, their physical activities, their hygiene habits, and other ways they care for their bodies. In addition to encouraging them to be healthy, we can create a family environment that models these good decisions. This includes having open and shame-free discussions about sexual intimacy and what changes to expect in their body as they grow up. (For help holding age-appropriate conversations, check out *A Parent's Guide* on ChurchofJesusChrist.org.)



A stylized illustration of a hand holding a heart. The hand is brown with white outlines, and the heart is red with white outlines. The background is light blue with white splatters. The hand is positioned as if holding the heart gently. The heart has a small flame-like shape above it. The overall style is simple and graphic.

Preventing Abuse

Sadly, about one in four people worldwide are abused as children.¹ We can work to protect and empower our children. We can teach them to say “no” to things they are uncomfortable with, and that if someone hurts them, they should ask for help—and keep asking until they are safe. We can teach them accurate words for body parts, holding emotionally safe conversations about questions they have, and encourage them to pay attention to the Spirit. (See “Protecting Children” in the April 2019 *Ensign*.)

There are many harmful messages in the media about bodies. What are our children reading, watching, and listening to? As we teach our kids to identify and avoid harmful media, they will be better able to discern between truths and lies. (See “Growing a Healthy Technology Garden” from the April 2017 *Ensign*.)

Being Kind

Do we ever make unkind remarks about a person’s body—including our own? If so, we are setting a harmful example for our young ones. Instead, we can make a habit of expressing gratitude for the things our bodies *can* do. We can model kind comments, including complimenting people on actions and attributes instead of only appearances.

Finally, other people may treat their bodies in ways we are taught to avoid. As we tell our children to stay away from tattoos, piercings, and immodest clothing, let’s make sure we are also teaching them to be kind. While we might not agree with the choices people make, we should always treat others with love and respect. ■

NOTE

1. See World Health Organization, “Violence and Injury Prevention,” www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/child.

FOR CHILDREN

Included in this month’s *Friend*:

- “Your Body Is a Temple” (page 24)
- “Done with Swim Team!” (page 36)
- “For Parents of Little Ones” (inside back cover)
- “My Body” (page FJ1)
- “Amelia’s Growing Body” (page FJ2)

For other resources, visit lessonhelps.ChurchofJesusChrist.org and click on the topic “Bodies.”

FOR TEENS

Included in this month’s *New Era*:

- “Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” by President Russell M. Nelson (page 2)
- “Some Things We Don’t Share” (photo sharing has its limits; page 16)
- “Vaping, Coffee, Tea, and Marijuana” (page 28)
- “What I Learned from Having to Lose Weight for My Mission” (page 34)
- “What Is the Law of Chastity?” (page 36)

For other resources, visit youth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

What Church Leaders Are Saying about the Gift of Our Bodies

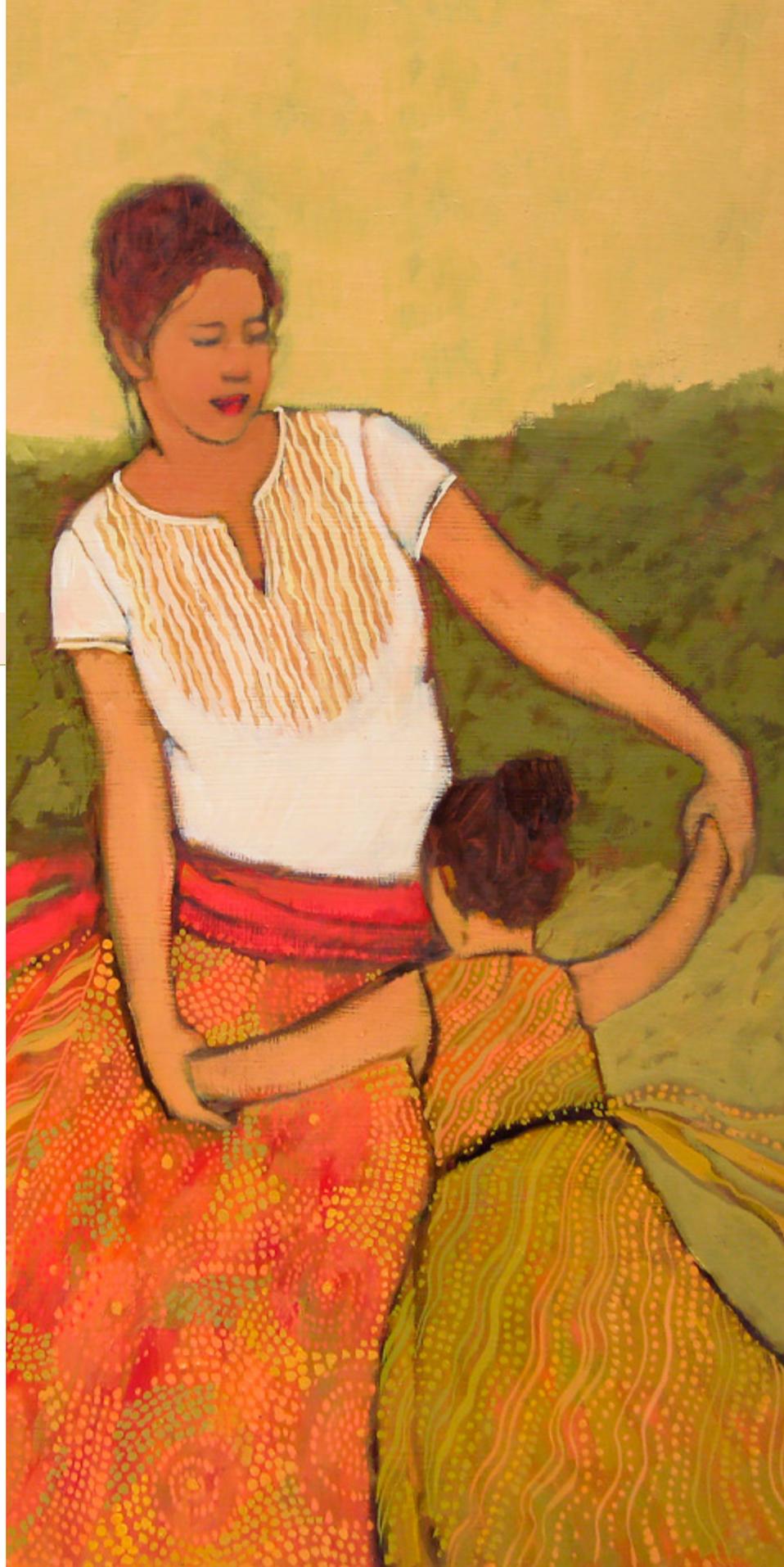
PRESIDENT RUSSELL M. NELSON

“The gift of our physical bodies is a transcendent miracle. A unique body is given to each of us by our loving Heavenly Father. He created it as a tabernacle for our spirits, to assist each of us in our quest to fulfill the full measure of our creation. Our bodies allow each of us to experience the great plan of salvation that He has designed for all His precious children. He wants us eventually to become more like Him and return to live with Him. That great blessing would not be possible without our first receiving a physical body in this probationary estate.”

“Your Body: A Magnificent Gift to Cherish,” *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 2.

“With your body being such a vital part of God’s eternal plan, it is little wonder that the Apostle Paul described it as a ‘temple of God’ [1 Corinthians 3:16; see also 6:19]. Each time you look in the mirror, see your body as your temple. That truth—refreshed gratefully each day—can positively influence your decisions about how you will care for your body and how you will use it.”

“Decisions for Eternity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 107.



ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"We are all different. Some are tall, and some are short. Some are round, and some are thin. And almost everyone at some time or other wants to be something they are not! . . . We should all be as fit as we can be—that's good Word of Wisdom doctrine. That means eating right and exercising and helping our bodies function at their optimum strength. We could probably all do better in that regard. But I speak here of optimum health; there is no universal optimum size."

"To Young Women," *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 29.

ELDER DAVID A. BEDNAR

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"Because a physical body is so central to the Father's plan of happiness and our spiritual development, Lucifer seeks to frustrate our progression by tempting us to use our bodies improperly. One of the ultimate ironies of eternity is that the adversary, who is miserable precisely because he has no physical body, entices us to share in his misery through the improper use of our bodies. The very tool he does not have is thus the primary target of his attempts to lure us to spiritual destruction."

"We Believe in Being Chaste," *Ensign*, May 2013, 43.

ELDER D. TODD CHRISTOFFERSON

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

"As God and Christ are deserving of our reverence, so Their works are deserving of our respect and reverence. That of course includes the marvelous creation that is this earth. And yet as wonderful as this earth is, it is not the greatest of God's creations. Greater still is this marvelous physical body. It is in the very likeness of the person of God. It is essential to our earthly experience and key to our everlasting glory. . . .

"How are we to preserve the sanctity of this most important and sacred of God's creations? At a minimum, we would not in any way defile our bodies."

"A Sense of the Sacred" (Brigham Young University devotional, Nov. 7, 2004), 3–4, speeches.byu.edu.

MICHELLE D. CRAIG

First Counselor in the Young Women General Presidency

"Satan wants us to . . . compare our looks, our skills, our talents, our bodies to other people and to feel bad about our failings. If we listen, we may never realize the great inner beauty that God has granted each of us. . . .

". . . Each one of us is a child of God with unlimited potential waiting to be developed and an inner beauty to be trusted and revealed. As we exercise faith in God and live as disciples of Jesus Christ, His Son, we can live with confidence, find joy, and reach our eternal potential."

"What Voices Will You Listen To?" *New Era*, Aug. 2019, 33.

A Calling for John

As a new bishop many years ago, I noticed a faithful sister who always attended church without her husband, John. I learned that he had previously been a branch president during the time their meetinghouse was being built. He received so little help from branch members that he burned himself out doing most of the work and became less active.

When ward members came to their home, he would light up his cigarette and set his beer can by his chair as if to say, “You won’t get me to come back.”

Eventually, I learned that John was an

appliance repairman. Older members in the ward often called me to fix things. Now that I knew of John’s skills, I would call John and ask for advice on repairs.

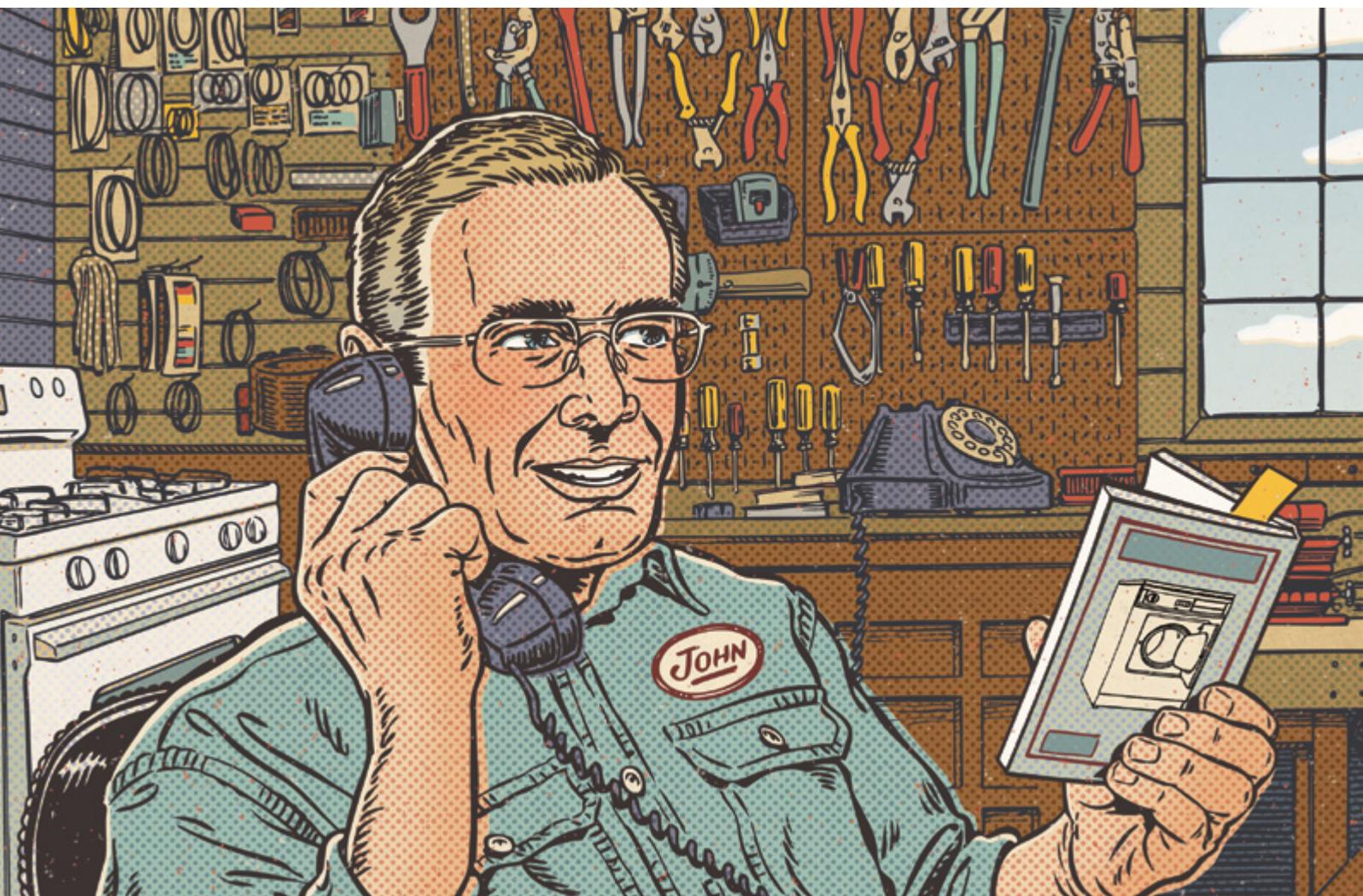
I continued this for maybe a year. At that time, we needed to call a ward clerk. After prayerful consideration, I felt impressed to extend the call to John.

I told the stake president and he said, “We can’t call him now! He smokes and has his beer.” I asked the stake president to call him in for an interview anyway. John came to the interview but emphatically answered, “No, I am not worthy.”

Things continued as before—John remained less active, and I called him for advice. During this time, I didn’t say anything to him about coming back to church. I asked the stake president to interview him a second time. Again, John said no, but this time he added, “I will tell you when I’m ready.”

After this I still called John for advice and fellowshipped him the best I could.

One day I answered the phone and heard, “Is this the ol’ Bishop?” He had started calling me by that title. “This



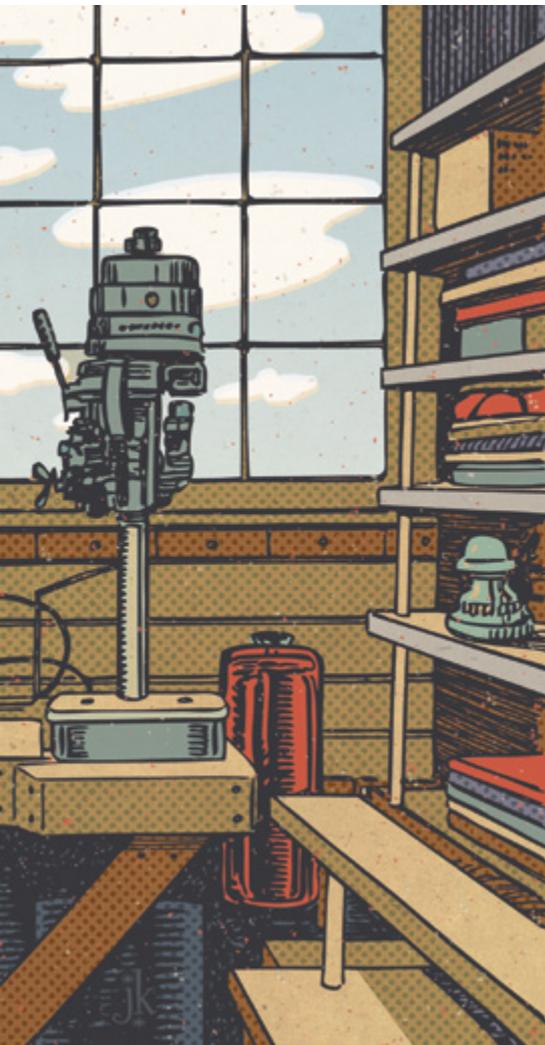
Our Little Angel

is John. I'm ready." He was then called and served as our ward clerk.

As the years passed, John served in a number of callings. He and his wife served a mission together, and now they serve in the temple. At my 50th wedding anniversary party, John wrote a note that said, "Bishop, thank you for saving my life."

I can't put in words the joy I feel knowing that John returned to church in part because I was patient and asked him for help when I needed it. ■

Burke Waldron, Utah, USA



Finally, after trying for a long time, we were expecting our first child. What joy and what emotion! Everything was going well. Our daughter was developing, growing, and everyone around us was as happy as we were for the blessing of this long-awaited daughter.

But complications set in. A rare blood and liver complication threatened both the baby and me. Doctors also discovered blood clotting in the placenta. When I was six months along, our daughter needed to be born.

When she was born, she weighed just under a pound (0.5 kg) and measured just over 10 inches (25 cm). In the hospital the nurses called her our "little warrior." But four days after her birth, her condition worsened and she passed away. Giving birth to my daughter and then going home without her in my arms and seeing her little things at home gave me inexplicable pain!

I traveled with her little coffin in my lap for almost 190 miles (300 km) until we reached our hometown of Garruchos and buried her there. At times I could feel her presence, as if

I learned that John was an appliance repairman, so I would call him for advice on repairs. He would tell me what to do, and then I'd take care of the problem.

she were touching my face with her hand. My husband, Gustavo, dedicated the grave, and we buried her.

We spent three days at my parents' home, where people came to visit us. Some could not understand how God could allow this to happen to us. But we never questioned the Lord. He chose us to be the parents of this special person, this little angel, who needed so few days on this earth to fulfill her mission. We didn't see this as a punishment or a trial. We saw it as a blessing. It is now our duty to be worthy of being with her again.

The gospel gives us the light, strength, and hope of one day being able to raise her. Of course, we are sad on occasion, and sometimes we feel an emptiness. But then the Spirit comforts us.

We are trying to have another baby, and we know that things happen according to the Lord's plan and time. Heavenly Father loves us and will never abandon us. How grateful we are to Him for having prepared a way for us to one day live together as a family. ■

Patrícia Moraes, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

BONUS ARTICLE

Read an additional "Latter-day Saint Voices" article in the digital version of this issue in the Gospel Library app or at ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



I texted the mom and told her that I had made an extra lasagna and wanted to bring it over to her and her family.

The Birthday Lasagna

For a long time, I felt the desire to bake bread or make some extra food and just drop it off to someone in our ward to share my love and the Lord's love with them, but I had never done it.

I love to cook, but only my husband and I are at home now. So I make smaller meals because huge meals usually take us several days to finish.

One night I decided to make some lasagna. Instead of making one large pan, I made two smaller pans. That way we would eat one for dinner, and I could give the other pan to someone who needed it.

I called the Relief Society president to see if anyone needed a meal brought to them. She mentioned a single mother

who worked and had two children. That afternoon, I texted the mom and told her that I had made an extra lasagna and wanted to bring it over to her and her family.

She texted me back and said, "That is so weird! Sure, that would be great!" She was still at work, but her children would be home, so I could bring it over anytime.

A little while later, she texted me again and asked, "Did you know it was my birthday today?" I assured her that I had no idea. She replied, "Well, happy birthday to me!"

When I took the meal over, she had just gotten off work. She was thrilled, as were her children.

On Sunday, she found me at church, and with tears in her eyes, she told me that every year on her birthday, her grandmother would make her dinner—and it was always lasagna. Her grandmother had passed away the year before, and that was the first birthday her grandmother wouldn't be there to make lasagna for her.

When I dropped off lasagna on her birthday, it strengthened her testimony that the Lord is aware of her and loves her. And it strengthened my testimony that if we make ourselves available to be an instrument in the Lord's hands, He will show us where we can serve. ■

Name withheld, Texas, USA

150 Pages by Thursday?

I was at the lowest point in my life. My wife had asked for a divorce after leaving me for another man. I was 30 years old and living with my mother. I was also close to losing my job.

The senior editor of the newspaper where I worked warned me, “If you come to work intoxicated again, you will be immediately dismissed.” On my way home, I wondered how I could stop drinking.

Just then, two missionaries stopped and talked to me about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I told them I was not interested. But being a journalist, I felt compelled to give them my card.

Several days later, my mother told me that two Americans were there to see me.

“They have one of your cards,” she said.

They were the same missionaries from a few days before. One of them handed me a pamphlet and talked about the Prophet Joseph Smith. Then

his companion handed me a Book of Mormon. He asked if I would read several chapters from it. When I agreed to do so, he looked at me closely and asked if I would read 150 pages.

“Impossible!” I said.

“Well, we’ll come back on Thursday,” he said. That was several days away. I didn’t think I could read those pages in that time.

After work the next day, I felt a strong urge to find my friends and go drinking. Then I remembered the senior editor’s warning and the 150 pages I had been asked to read. I went home and began reading the Book of Mormon. I also read the pamphlet about Joseph Smith.

The Spirit touched my heart as I read about Joseph Smith. I also felt the

truthfulness of the Book of Mormon as I read and learned more about the Savior. Soon I had read 150 pages. On Thursday, the missionaries returned and asked if I had read.

“Yes!” I said. “All 150 pages!”

I wanted to know more. When they taught me about the Word of Wisdom, I told them I was ready to give up alcohol.

The next Sunday, I went to my first fast and testimony meeting. I shared my newfound testimony of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. A short time later, I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church.

In the 48 years since my baptism, I have tried to keep the commandments and stay close to the Church. I remarried and served a mission with my wife. Over the years, I accepted many callings. I now serve in the temple. Every time I’m there, I thank the Lord for pulling me from the darkness and bringing me into the light. ■

Hildo Rosillo Flores, Piura, Peru

On my way home, I wondered how I could stop drinking. Just then, two missionaries stopped to talk to me.



Young Adults

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DIGITAL ONLY

I Am Worth Fighting For: Overcoming My Eating Disorder
By Ciara Hulet

Learning to Love Myself after an Eating Disorder
By Reagan Quinn

Understanding and Supporting Those with Eating Disorders
By Kevin Theriot, PhD

Why I’m Grateful for My Post-Pregnancy Body
By Sandra Vanessa Vargas-Corvalan

Facing Insecurities and Learning to Love My Body
By Chantele Sedgwick

Finding Joy in Yourself
By Aubrey Johnson

Reflecting Your True Identity

What do you see when you look in the mirror? Do you pick out things you don’t like about your appearance? Do you beat yourself up for your mistakes or weaknesses? Do you see someone who criticizes you staring back?

Or do you see yourself as a child of God? Do you see someone who thinks positively and expresses gratitude in any circumstance? Do you see someone who treats you with compassion?

When we understand who we truly are, we can stop focusing so much on our reflection in the mirror and instead seek to reflect the light of Christ. In this section, you’ll read about body image and come to a greater understanding of your own worth. I share my insights about the body from the truths found in the scriptures and the temple (page 70). Marcus shares how he overcame negative self-image and how we can all recognize that we are, indeed, good enough (page 74). Then Hannah explains the ease of getting caught in the world’s standards of beauty and how we can deepen our appreciation for our bodies through Christ (page 76).

In digital-only articles, Ciara and Reagan share their struggles with eating disorders and how they’ve relied on the Savior for healing. A mental health professional offers guidance for understanding and supporting those who struggle with eating disorders. Sandra Vanessa and Chantele share how they’ve learned to love their bodies after having children, and Aubrey shares three ways to find joy from within.

As disciples of Christ, we can’t get tied up in the ever-changing philosophies of the world regarding our appearance. Our value as individuals is truly determined by how much the Savior loves us. Next time you study your reflection, remember that your worth is infinite, and it comes from God.

Sincerely,
Aspen Stander



Find these articles and more:

- At [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)
- In **YA Weekly** (under the Young Adults section in the Gospel Library)



Created in His Image

Our bodies were not created to be flaunted or praised or judged on subjective standards of attractiveness. They were created that we might have eternal life.





By Aspen Stander

Church Magazines

In the digital age, we are bombarded by messages that our bodies are not good enough unless they are a certain size and shape. Some social media posts seem to imply that we should eat only green smoothies made with organic ingredients and run 10 miles (16 km) a day in order to achieve the “perfect” body and thus be adored by friends, family, and strangers alike.

Many of us feel ashamed about what we perceive to be imperfections in our bodies. We feel that since we can't be perfect—since we don't look like an Instagram model—we are not worthy of love and acceptance.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Our bodies are gifts from God. They were not created to be flaunted or praised or judged on subjective standards of attractiveness. They were created that we might have eternal life.

Divine Truths

In the premortal life, Heavenly Father presented His plan of salvation to the spirits in heaven. As part of His plan, we would receive a body in order to experience mortality on earth. In our physical bodies, we would use our agency to learn the gospel and receive the ordinances that would allow us to return to live with Him as resurrected beings.

So, putting the plan in motion, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27). Because our Heavenly Father has a body of flesh and bone (see Doctrine and Covenants 130:22), receiving your own body allows you the potential to become more like Him. Physical bodies are not just inconvenient containers for our spirits—they are necessary for our salvation and exaltation.

We are not called to maintain a certain weight or to conform to the beauty ideals of a certain society. We are called to serve God and to become more like Jesus Christ. We are called to proclaim the gospel, to raise up righteous families unto the Lord, and to follow the covenant path to return to our Father in Heaven.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GETTY IMAGES

Satan's Lies

If having a body is such a great blessing, why do so many people struggle with body image or obsess over their physical appearance? Why do so many people look upon their bodies with disgust rather than with the love and care with which they were created?

Our bodies are a privilege and a gift. Perhaps one reason Satan influences us to struggle with loving or appreciating our bodies is that he doesn't have one. He rejected the plan of salvation and was cast out of heaven, never to experience the great joys or great pains of mortality. He can tempt us to think that our bodies are not good enough, that we need to go to dangerous or unhealthy extremes to meet the world's standards of "beauty." When we believe that we must be flawlessly attractive in order to be worthy of love, our outlook becomes unbalanced, and the adversary can whisper thoughts of inadequacy, worthlessness, and self-hatred into our minds.

Satan would have us forget that we are created in the image of our Heavenly Parents and that our eternal worth does not depend on what we look like. The adversary knows that fixating on our bodies is a distraction from more important matters: our standards, our relationships with other people, and our relationship with God. The adversary wants us to become so preoccupied with our looks or our

weight that we forget about the work we have been called to do to further the plan of happiness.

Endowed with Power

Our bodies are gifts from God, and they are essential as we seek to progress along the covenant path. Understanding that having a body is a privilege denied to those who chose to follow Lucifer's plan instead of following Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is incredibly empowering. We need our bodies to receive the ordinances of the temple, where we can also learn beautiful truths about the purpose and potential of our bodies. Our physical participation in priesthood ordinances is necessary to prepare us for eternal life. That's why we must perform temple work for the dead, whose spirits are currently separated from their bodies—they cannot do it themselves.

Realizing what a true privilege having a body is can minimize any insecurities you may have about your body and replace those insecurities with gratitude.

A Sweet Reunion

Someday, each of us will also die. Our bodies will be temporarily separated from our spirits until we are resurrected. When we are resurrected, every limb, joint, and hair of our physical bodies will be "restored to their proper and perfect frame" (Alma 40:23). I imagine this will be a sweet reunion as we touch, taste, smell, hear, and see with renewed strength and vigor. I imagine approaching my family members with outstretched arms to embrace them. I *don't* imagine worrying about the stretch marks from my last growth spurt or the extra layer of fat around my midsection. Those things will be gone. I imagine that we will



be able to see ourselves and each other in the way the Savior sees us, and in our bodies we will be reunited with God (see 2 Nephi 9:4).

Our bodies are given to us that we may fill the measure of our creation and receive a crown of glory in the presence of God the Father (see Doctrine and Covenants 88:19). This is made possible because of the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, who redeems us from death and sin. If we use our bodies to perform the work that we have been called to do rather than fixating on the way our bodies look, we will be better able to reach our full potential in this life and the next. ■

TIPS FOR IMPROVING BODY IMAGE

1. **Practice gratitude.** Whenever you catch yourself talking or thinking negatively about your body, think of all the things your body allows you to do. Your arms allow you to play basketball, to embrace a friend who's having a rough day, to cradle a newborn child. Your legs give you the strength to walk, dance, run, cartwheel, and kneel in prayer. Your lungs work seamlessly to provide your cells with oxygen, expanding and contracting with every breath you take to deliver oxygen to your body. Your heart beats to sustain life, and your brain works at lightning speed to sustain consciousness. As you're thinking about the miracle of your body, what are more ways you can express that gratitude?
2. **Have compassion.** The first and second great commandments are to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself (see Matthew 22:37–39). We know we should have compassion for others, but have we truly considered what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves? It requires us to first love ourselves. Would you ever make fun of a friend or family member for being too fat, too thin, too short, or too wrinkly? Of course not! Extend the same compassion to yourself that you would to others.
3. **Take care of yourself.** Eat foods that will nourish both your mind and body and that will supply you with adequate energy each day. Exercise in a way that feels good and helps you appreciate the gift of your physical body. Find healthy ways to manage stress and make sure to take breaks to breathe and relax. And it can be difficult at times, but one of the most important ways to take care of your body is to get enough sleep!
4. **Attend the temple.** Nowhere is the importance of our physical bodies made more clear than in the ordinances of the temple. We are promised both spiritual and physical blessings as we perform these ordinances for ourselves, and we can be reminded of these blessings as we receive ordinances on behalf of those in the spirit world.



Aspen Stander is an editor by profession, an occasional writer, and an avid reader. She likes hiking, traveling, eating chocolate, and playing the piano.

Feeling “Good Enough”: 3 Ways to Overcome Negative Self-Image

Depression and anxiety led me down a path of poor physical health and even worse self-image. But three things helped me love myself again.

By Marcus Paiz

“You are not good enough.” Those are the words hanging up on a wall in my basement. There’s a small room there where I exercise, and as negative thoughts come into my mind, I write them down and pin them up on a board. It’s a reminder of the struggles I have faced and the old self I am leaving behind.

For a long time I told myself I wasn’t good enough. I felt overwhelmed with depression and anxiety, which in turn led to poor physical health. I was drowning. I felt worthless. I felt hopeless. I believed I wasn’t worthy of God’s love or anyone else’s.

As young adults, many of us probably experience times when we feel like we’re not good enough, whether it has to do with our behavior, talents, or, in my case, self-image. Recently, I challenged myself to open up and dust off

the most hidden pages in my personal book of life.

During my exploration, I found a few things that had cultivated the negative personal image I held inside for so long. But I also discovered these three ways to overcome them.

1. Remove Comparisons

I once read a quote by Theodore Roosevelt that said, “Comparison is the thief of joy.” In a world where everyone’s life experiences are freely shared through social media, I felt constantly driven by unrealistic comparisons to friends, family, and prominent social figures. My deepest shortcomings were being matched with another’s greatest accomplishments, and I was often left feeling inadequate. In this time of negative self-reflection, I realized that I needed to change my mind-set.



I took a break from all forms of social media and started to work on personal positivity and seeing the best in others. In a short amount of time, my thoughts began to change. I quickly stopped comparing my negatives to others' positives like I had so often done before. In fact, I began to secretly celebrate the successes of others! This practice instantly melted away the wall of pride and jealousy I had built up over time. What followed was a clear mind and the ability to view things from an eternal perspective.

2. Align with God's Will

Our experience on earth is sometimes overshadowed by the burdensome realization that we are imperfect mortal beings. Eventually the negative way I viewed myself and my body consumed all parts of my life. When

I felt the weight of my imperfections growing, I would turn to destructive behaviors instead of to the Lord. These behaviors created a feeling of imperfection that was so heavy at times that I felt life wasn't worth living. Ultimately the only place I could turn to was to the Lord. Through humility and repentance, I made an effort to be more consistent in reading the words of prophets with a purpose and praying to understand my surroundings with heavenly eyes.

No trial is too great when we turn to the Lord and accept His will, no matter the outcome. Contrarily, trials tend to feel burdensome when we attempt to force our will over His. By accepting His will, I found a higher level of clarity, and I began to see value in the person I was instead of constantly living in a state of inadequacy.

3. Develop Perfect Love

In Moroni 8:16 we are told that "perfect love casteth out all fear." Perfect love is the most powerful tool we can wield as we face ourselves in the mirror and comprehend the eternal value of ourselves and everyone around us. It is seeing ourselves for who we are instead of putting our flaws under a microscope. It is not conditional on outward appearance. It is forgiving ourselves and others of past errors and moving forward with our eyes fixed on the light of eternal glory.

I found I cannot simply attempt to love; I must let it consume me and become a part of who I am. Within the walls of perfect love we find the true nature of God—and by extension our own divine nature—and the path that He has created for us.

My journey to better mental, physical, and spiritual health has strengthened my faith in God's timing and His eternal love for me. At times I was brought very low, but when I stopped comparing myself to others, aligned my will with God's, and learned to truly love myself, the image of my eternal destiny came into focus and I found peace. God's love is infinitely mighty. When we slow down and take the time to discover it, He will help us see that we are good enough, even in our weakest moments. ■



Marcus Paiz lives in Utah, USA, and is a recruiter for a start-up tech company. He enjoys fitness, singing, and hanging out with his wife, Sarah, and their three cats. He served a full-time mission in Mesa, Arizona, USA.

YOUNG ADULTS

Rethinking Beauty

A Gospel Perspective
on Body Image



By Hannah DeTavis

When I was in college, my roommates and I would sit in our hallway at night and talk about everything, from treacherous exams to comedic first dates. One night, we landed on the topic of body image.

One of my roommates showed us her social media feed filled with endless pictures of “perfect” girls with “perfect” lives. “I’m sick of not being skinny enough! Maybe I shouldn’t eat breakfast tomorrow,” she said, a fake sob in her voice.

We all laughed at her melodrama, but we all knew that she was only partly kidding. Slowly, we all opened up about the various ways we’d chased media standards of beauty. Some of us had flitted from one fad diet to the next, some of us had spent too much time comparing our bodies to others’, and some of us had even considered plastic surgery. We felt sheepish talking about our concerns, but we each acknowledged that while it’s important to maintain a put-together appearance, at one point or other we had each

developed an unhealthy fixation on our bodies.

There was a somber lull in the conversation. I looked over at the mirror across from us to see four beautiful girls who struggled to see past the filtered images in the media to recognize their own divine value. Our warped perceptions of our bodies seemed small compared to the struggles of others with more severe body-image problems, but I couldn’t help but wonder: Where did we fit into the conversation about body image?

I later realized that I had been part of the conversation about body image since I first sang “I Am a Child of God.”¹ Heavenly Father has revealed doctrine relating to body image, and He’s done so through scriptures and prophetic counsel. But sometimes, when we hear gospel truths repeated often, we may overlook their actual meaning. As I reexamined the meaning of key doctrinal scriptures and phrases—this time with spiritual eyes—Heavenly Father taught me how He defines beauty.

When I stopped overlooking simple gospel truths about the body, the Savior healed my broken perceptions.



“I am a child of God”

Our nurturing Heavenly Father has two eyes, two hands, two feet, and one heart—just like us. We are made after the image of God, even if details of our shape, size, and color may differ. We should celebrate those details! We may never feel as though we fit societal ideals of beauty, but what is more beautiful than the self-assurance that comes from this simple truth: “I am a child of God”?² Shifting our body image is less about how often we exercise at the gym and more about how often we exercise faith and remember in whose image we were created.

“Living in mortality with a physical body”

Preach My Gospel explains that “we lived as spirit children of our Father in Heaven before we were born on this earth. We were not, however, like our Heavenly Father, nor could we ever become like Him and enjoy all the blessings that He enjoys without the experience of living in mortality with a physical body.”³ From this, we learn that our bodies are truly one of God’s greatest gifts because they allow us to eventually enjoy “all that [the] Father hath” (Doctrine and Covenants 84:38). Sometimes, because of our limited perspective, we take for granted the blessing of a spirit and a body joined together in mortality—we don’t remember our pre-earth life when we didn’t have bodies, and we haven’t experienced the spirit world without bodies. Even so, as we study God’s plan of salvation, we can better appreciate the role of our bodies in that plan.

“Your body is [a] temple”

We often hear, “Your body is [a] temple,” (1 Corinthians 6:19)—so frequently, in fact, that we may lose sight of what this truth actually means. One summer, I toured dozens of cathedrals and churches in Europe. Many of these buildings were large and ornate, and others were small and quaint. Regardless of the details of each building, all were revered as beautiful, sacred spaces. Why do we readily praise the unique beauty of literal tabernacles but turn around and criticize the most sacred tabernacles of all—our bodies? Much like Michelangelo,



who painted thousands of details on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, our Heavenly Father has embedded innumerable, divine details in our DNA that compose a stunning picture of who we really are. With the Savior's help, we can learn to cherish the little details that God has included as part of our "tabernacle[s] of clay" (Moroni 9:6).

"Glorify God in your body"

The Apostle Paul taught, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20). God doesn't ask us to glorify ourselves by posting flawless photos on Instagram. He asks us to glorify Him by keeping our bodies pure and healthy. Satan has never had a body and never will. Because he is bitter about his eternal state, he tries to plant lies into the minds of those who do have bodies. When we look at another person's body with jealousy, lust, or unrighteous comparison, we need to stop and recognize that those feelings aren't from Heavenly Father. No matter how damaged our body image may be, the Savior can teach us to love our physical bodies and treat them with respect.

"All things unto me are spiritual"

The Lord never intended for us to be more concerned about our bodies than we are for our spirits. In Doctrine and Covenants 29:34, He explains that "all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal." Here the Lord

teaches that all commandments—even the ones like the Word of Wisdom that seem temporal—are given to us for spiritual purposes. President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "How you use your body affects your spirit."⁴ If we are constantly loathing our outward appearance, we may interrupt our inward connection to heaven. When we follow the counsel of prophets to care for and love our bodies, we open ourselves to more spiritual nourishment.

"There [was] no beauty that [they] should desire him"

After the dismal hallway chat with my roommates, I knelt beside my bed and told my Heavenly Father how tired I was—tired of keeping up with unrealistic ideals of "pretty" and tired of beating myself up when I didn't meet them. I needed His help to heal my broken perception of what beauty really is. As I crawled into bed, I looked up at a picture of the resurrected Christ on my wall. It occurred to me that just a few days prior to His Resurrection, He had not looked as glorious. I closed my eyes and envisioned Him carrying a cross as heavy as the world up to Golgotha, His feet caked in dirt, His back lacerated, and His hair matted with blood. Certainly, to the Roman soldiers who mocked Him, "there [was] no beauty that [they] should desire Him" (see Isaiah 53:2). But to me, there was nothing more moving than the image of my Savior's "bruised, broken, [and] torn" body.⁵ He was willing to sink to the

lowliest of spiritual and physical states to exalt me to the highest of spiritual and physical states. Because Jesus Christ conquered all of the ugliness and pain in the world, life is beautiful. I am beautiful.

We can't ever afford to think of the precious truths of the gospel as clichés, especially as they relate to our self-worth. As Bonnie L. Oscarson, former Young Women General President, taught, "We need to get the gospel [truths] from our heads into our hearts!"⁶ Today, when I hear, "I am a child of God" or "Your body is a temple," I don't zone out because I've heard it all before; I tune in because knowing these truths gives me a valuable voice in the conversation about body image. They teach me that I don't have to starve myself or go to extreme lengths physically to feel worthwhile. More importantly, they teach me that as I feed myself spiritually, I can feel the best kind of beauty—beauty that is divinely given, beauty that lasts. ■



Hannah DeTavis enjoys teaching classes on rhetoric, binge-reading creative nonfiction, and eating crème brûlée (when she can get her hands on it). She lives in Idaho, USA, with her husband and Boston terrier.

NOTES

1. "I Am a Child of God," *Hymns*, no. 301.
2. *Hymns*, no. 301.
3. *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2018), 48.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Decisions for Eternity," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 107.
5. "Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and King," *Hymns*, no. 181.
6. Bonnie L. Oscarson, "Do I Believe?" *Ensign*, May 2016, 88.

Best Advice . . .

Young adults share their best advice about improving your body image.



“I think of all the things my body can do: carry a child, walk, run, play, sing, and help others.”
—Blythe Brady, Utah, USA

“Don’t worry what anyone except the Lord thinks of you! I try to remember that those ideas come from Satan because he doesn’t have a body.”
—Lauren Appleby, Queensland, Australia



“Spend time developing a meaningful relationship with Christ. I stop thinking about myself. Focus on others and how you can make a difference in the world.”
—Emily Speth, Utah, USA

SHARE YOUR STORY

Do you have an amazing story to share? Or do you want to see articles about certain topics? If so, we want to hear from you! You can submit your articles or your feedback at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).



HONOR YOUR BODY AS A TEMPLE

“Your body is a temple of God; honor it. Don’t get caught in the squeeze of opposing pressures. Downward pressure to be worldly is contrary to the uplifting pressure to live in accord with the Lord’s standards. Step aside from the squeeze and let the elevating power of the Lord lift you without restraint to your loftiest heights.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Standards of Standard-Bearers of the Lord” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 6, 1991), 6, [speeches.byu.edu](https://www.speeches.byu.edu).

LEFT: ILLUSTRATIONS FROM GETTY IMAGES



What’s the best advice you’ve ever received about overcoming addictions, even to things like smartphones and video games? Send us your response at [ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.ensign.ChurchofJesusChrist.org) by August 31, 2019.

August 19–25 (1 Corinthians 1:20)

Uncommon Sense: How Christ’s Teachings Changed Everything

The Savior’s teachings may seem unconventional or foolish to the world, but to a disciple they provide answers, peace, and access to His love.

By Hank R. Smith

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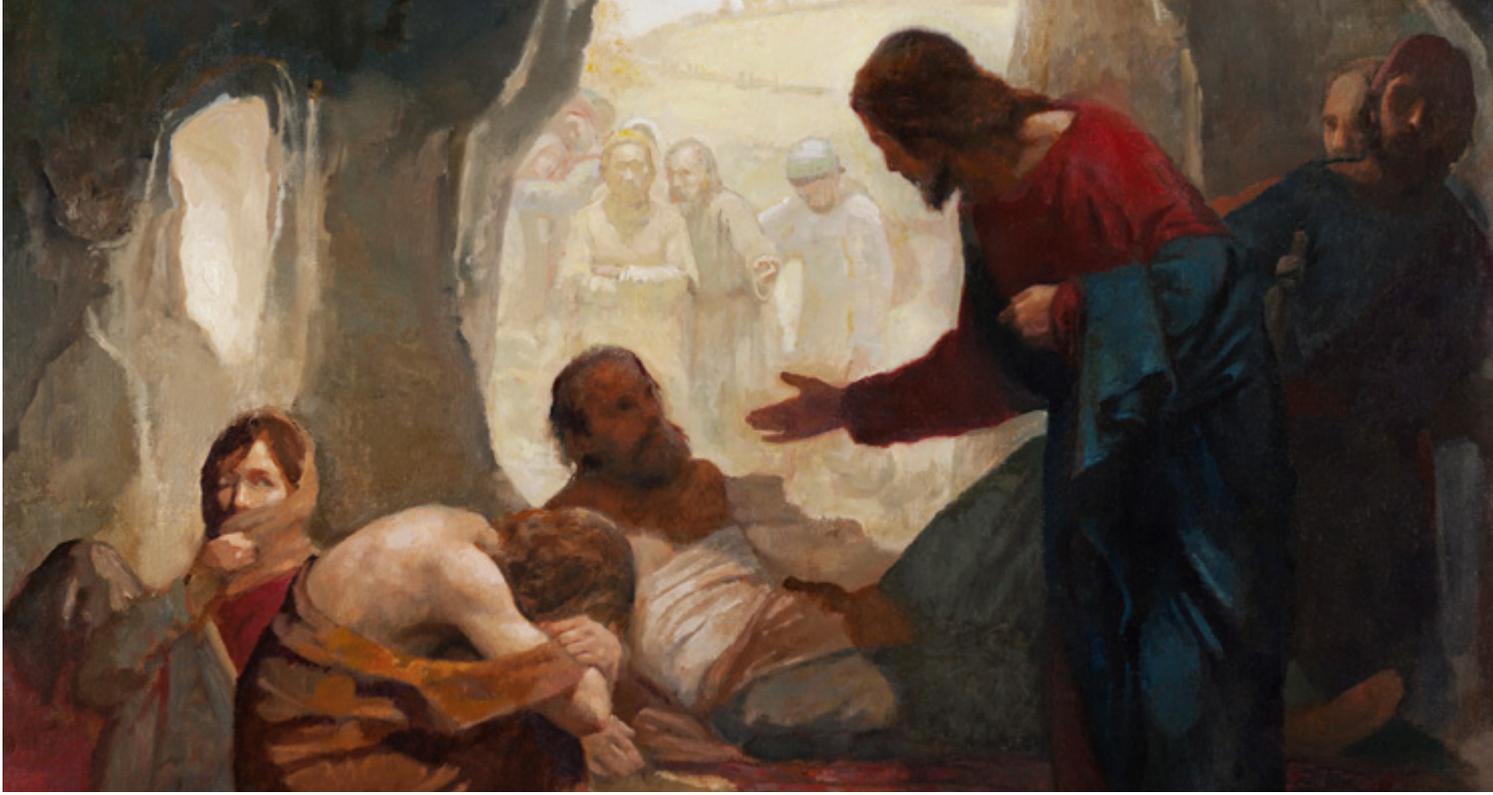
Around six months before the Savior died—just following the bestowal of priesthood keys on Peter, James, and John upon the Mount of Transfiguration—the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1). In response, the Savior “called a little child unto him” and said, in part, “Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2, 4). This answer was likely the opposite of what the disciples were thinking.

Later in His ministry, Jesus echoed this teaching when He said, “And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant” (Matthew 20:27). In Jesus’s day, servants and children did not have social prestige. The Roman and Jewish leaders of the time, such as Herod, Pilate, and the Pharisees, were not subservient like children. And they weren’t servants—they *had* servants. To be like a child is to be humble, teachable, quick to forgive, and undesiring of position or authority. A servant helps others and is obedient to a master. These attributes were not common for secular leadership, yet they were what the Savior desired for leaders in His Church.

These teachings still apply in our time. In many cultures in the modern world, having a leadership position often means doing less and being served more. It often involves using others for the leader’s own gain. However, to be a leader in the Savior’s Church, you are called to work and serve more than you ever have before. Stephen W. Owen, Young Men General President, taught: “The world teaches that leaders must be mighty; the Lord teaches that they must be meek. Worldly leaders gain power and influence through their talent, skill, and wealth. Christlike leaders gain power and influence ‘by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned’ [Doctrine and Covenants 121:41].”¹

This was not the only surprising teaching the Savior presented. He was asked many questions by His followers and His enemies. His answers often shocked them, frequently contradicting what was considered customary. Many people today still see His teachings as foolish. But in truth, the opposite is true. Christ’s teachings showed just how flawed and “foolish the wisdom of this world” really is (1 Corinthians 1:20). Consider these uncommon principles He taught.





Service

Teaching what it meant to follow Him, Jesus said, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). This explanation must have been confusing. How could I save my life by losing it?

President David O. McKay (1873–1970) explained: “Whenever you forget self and strive for the betterment of others, and for something higher and better, you rise to the spiritual plane. If . . . we will lose our self-centered self for the good of the Church . . . , for the good of the community, and especially for the progress of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we will be blessed spiritually, and happiness will be our reward.”² Instead of doing what may seem to be in our own best interest, the Savior invites us to act in the best interest of others.

Viewed this way, this uncommon teaching makes perfect sense. Giving up your life in service can lead you to find solutions and resolutions to your own complex problems. Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught: “Often, the answer to our prayer does not come while we’re on our knees but while we’re on our feet serving the Lord and serving those around us. Selfless acts of service and consecration refine our spirits, remove the scales from our spiritual eyes, and open the windows of heaven. By becoming the answer to someone’s prayer, we often find the answer to our own.”³

Humility

The Savior often pointed out the vain attempts of the Pharisees and Sadducees to seek public recognition. He spoke of how they gave alms, prayed, and fasted to be seen of men (see Matthew 6:1–5, 16). He spoke of the scribes desiring the “salutations in the marketplaces” and “the chief seats in the synagogues” (see Mark 12:38–39).

The Savior instructed His disciples to do just the opposite: “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). Later, to one rich man He said, “Sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven” (Luke 18:22). What a difficult request if we equate personal wealth with personal value!

Today, we live in a world centered on individual success and wealth. We often hear that the ultimate goal in life is to be the best, the richest, or the most famous. The world tells us to climb the ladder of success, but the Lord invites us to humble ourselves and spend our days in His service. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught, “To the proud, the applause of the world rings in their ears; to the humble, the applause of heaven warms their hearts.”⁴ As disciples of Christ, we must beware of what many others seek—self-aggrandizement, “the honors of men” (Doctrine and Covenants 121:35), and “great riches” (Helaman 7:26).

Humility can open our lives to revelation and guidance from heaven. Elder Ulisses Soares of the Quorum of the

Twelve Apostles taught: “Those who are humble are able to acknowledge and understand the Lord’s answers to their prayers. . . . The humble are meek and have the ability to influence others to be the same. God’s promise to the humble is that He will lead them by the hand. I truly believe that we will avoid detours and sadness in our lives as long as we walk hand in hand with the Lord.”⁵

Forgiveness

Peter once asked the Savior, “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” (Matthew 18:21). Peter likely thought he was being generous when he offered seven as an appropriate number of times one should forgive. How must he have felt, then, when Jesus responded, “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until



seventy times seven”? (Matthew 18:22). Seventy times Peter’s generous amount! The Savior then offered a parable about a man who was forgiven of an astronomical amount of debt. The man in the parable was not punished when he had nothing to pay, but he was punished when he would not forgive a fellow servant. (See Matthew 18:23–35.)

The Savior’s teachings on forgiveness may still seem outrageous to many today. Culture often applauds those who seek to “get even” with those who have hurt them. When we feel injured, insulted, humiliated, or rejected by another person or group, we almost automatically look for ways to feel better. Often we are told that justice will be found in retaliating against the injuring party.

The Savior offers us a completely different path. “Love your enemies,” He taught, “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). This counsel may seem like foolishness to some, but the Savior lived these principles. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: “The Lord never promised an easy road, nor a simple gospel, nor low standards, nor a low norm. The price is high, but the goods attained are worth all they cost. The Lord himself turned the other cheek; he suffered himself to be buffeted and beaten without remonstrance; he suffered every indignity and yet spoke no word of condemnation.”⁶ The Savior understands the roots of human happiness. Forgiveness can heal emotional wounds. Through forgiveness, we can exchange the burden of contention and anger for love and peace.

Sacrifice

The Savior told His Apostles, “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). This is a very unusual idea. Human life is much more valuable than the life of an animal. It would be senseless for a man to sacrifice his life for an insignificant sheep—unless the shepherd loved his sheep more than his own life.

Why then did Christ allow Himself to be sacrificed? Because He loves his sheep. And because it was more important to Him to fulfill His Father’s will than it was to preserve His own life.

*I marvel that he would descend from his throne divine
To rescue a soul so rebellious and proud as mine,
That he should extend his great love unto such as I,
Sufficient to own, to redeem, and to justify.⁷*

Christ’s teachings are still contradictory to much of what is taught in the world today. However, to the modern-day follower of Christ, these principles, though uncommon, make perfect sense indeed. ■

NOTES

1. Stephen W. Owen, “The Greatest Leaders Are the Greatest Followers,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 75.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* (2003), 86.
3. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Waiting on the Road to Damascus,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 76.
4. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 229.
5. Ulisses Soares, “Be Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 10.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 92.
7. “I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193.

Come, Follow Me Shareable Scriptures

Download these picture quotes (from August's *Come, Follow Me* readings) and share them on social media—or send them to those you minister to, your Sunday School class, or your family: ChurchofJesusChrist.org/go/81981 (find a fifth picture quote, for August 26–September 1, at this same address).

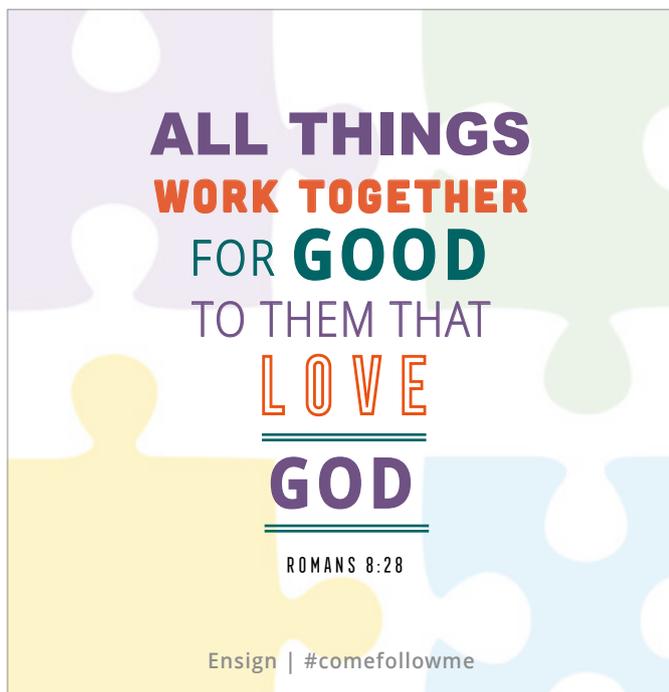
JULY 29–AUGUST 4



AUGUST 5–11



AUGUST 12–18



AUGUST 19–25

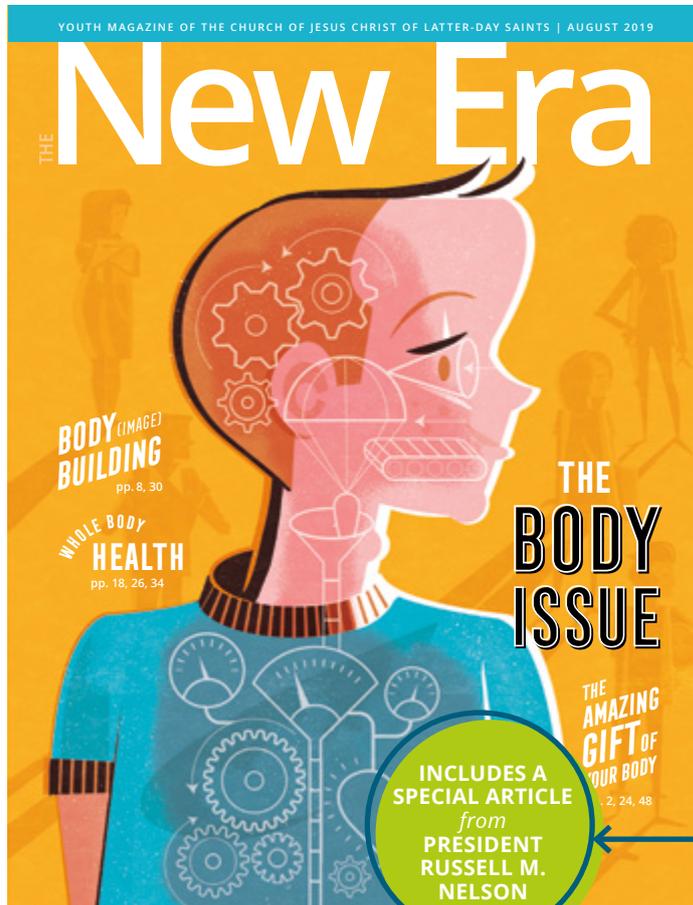


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