

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • DECEMBER 2018

Ensign

A detailed oil painting of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus. Mary is depicted with a serene expression, her eyes closed in a gentle embrace. She wears a white veil and a dark blue garment. The infant Jesus is wrapped in a white cloth, his face resting against Mary's. The background is a textured, golden-brown color.

**The Sweetest Gift
Given at Christmas, p. 14**

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Potential, p. 20**

**How to Find Jesus Christ in the
Old Testament, p. 32**

THE
CHURCH
IS HERE

La Paz, **Bolivia**





Snow-covered Illimani Mountain provides a striking backdrop for the high-altitude, red-brick city of La Paz, often regarded as the administrative center of Bolivia because so many government official offices are located there.

Missionaries preaching in the Andes Mission arrived in Bolivia in November 1964 and held a meeting with 19 in attendance. They baptized and confirmed the first convert one month later. Today, Church membership in Bolivia exceeds 203,000 in 255 congregations and 5 missions. The nearest temple is in Cochabamba, 145 miles (233 km) away, a seven-hour drive from La Paz.

The Church in Bolivia is well known for community humanitarian projects, including donating wheelchairs and neonatal medical equipment; participating in blood drives; supporting agricultural, home-gardening, and village-development efforts; and organizing relief efforts in times of need.

- Latter-day Saints in the La Paz metropolitan area meet in 40 different locations.
- Spanish is the most dominant language, but many speak Quechua, Aymara, or Guarani.
- The first full-time missionary from Bolivia was called in 1967.
- December 2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the Church in Bolivia. Members in La Paz held a community celebration in January 2015.



“You Want Us to Do What?!”

As the Church’s curriculum development team asked members to test the new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum for 2019, we heard this question repeatedly, along with comments like: “At first I thought, ‘This is crazy!’ I wasn’t sure it would work.” But these early concerns were gradually replaced by confirmation that “our scripture study changed completely” or “It works!”

Why do their experiences matter to you? Because the new curriculum is for you and your family in your home and not just for your teacher at church.

At the suggestion of the First Presidency, this month’s issue explores the principles behind this newest phase of *Come, Follow Me* curriculum—which comes on the heels of the revised youth curriculum introduced in 2013, *Teaching in the Savior’s Way* in 2016, and the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society curriculum launched in 2018.

Beginning on page 20, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, who gave guidance to the curriculum-development work, provides insights that

if applied can transform us in profound and eternal ways. It is not just a curriculum but an approach to daily gospel learning and living.

As I have watched prophets, seers, and revelators direct the development of this new home-centered, Church-supported curriculum, I have marveled at how it fits the Church’s movement toward a less-prescriptive approach to gospel living, inviting us to take greater responsibility for our personal spiritual growth. As we do so, I am convinced that we will receive greater light and truth and our capacity to follow Jesus Christ and forsake the evil one will increase (see Doctrine

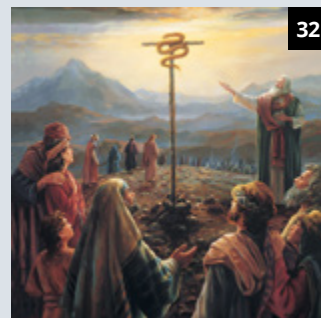
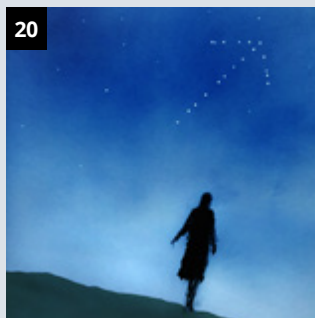
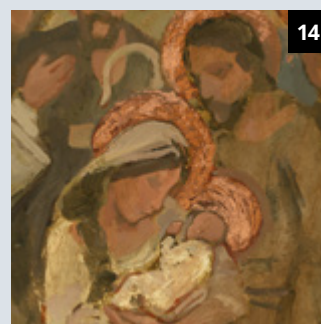
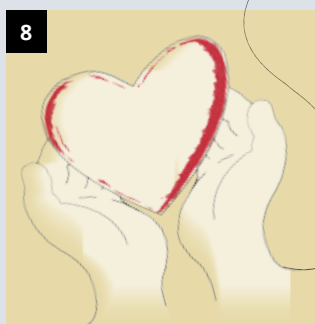
and Covenants 93:29–40), bringing peace to our lives and goodness to the world.

Michael Magleby
Director of Curriculum Development



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PHOTOGRAPH BY NEONBRAND/UNSPLASH

3 Things to Remember When You Feel Like You're Falling Short

By Leah Barton

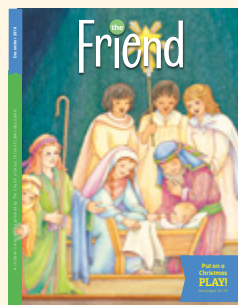
Feeling stuck? Here's how you can bounce back and start progressing again.



Why I No Longer Ask "Why?" after My Brother's Death

By Ximena Cardozo Corbalán

Ximena explains how she found peace after her brother passed away on his mission. Her father's account is found on page 18 of this issue.



Friend Connection

Learn how articles in the *Friend* magazine can help you teach your children about respecting the beliefs of others.



New Era Connection

Find out how this month's *New Era* magazine can help you talk with your teens about Christmas-related topics like service, gratitude, and gifts of the Spirit.

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THE FIRST CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

We tell the

Christmas story every year, but how often do we picture the journey that Mary and Joseph took? Their faith and sacrifices are significant parts of the story.



1. Luke 1:26-27, 30-31

Mary was from Nazareth, a village of 400-500 people.¹ To the world, she was a simple peasant girl. And yet she and Joseph accepted their calling to raise the Son of God.

2. Luke 2:4-5

Traveling to Bethlehem would have taken at least four to five days,² and the scriptures give no hint of a donkey accompanying them through the rocky hills. Even “great with child,” Mary made the journey with Joseph that fulfilled prophecy: the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2).

3. Luke 2:7-11

In Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary were without their own home or crib to place the King of kings. They must have felt great humility as they witnessed, amidst an otherwise



humble birth, the clear signs that this babe was the Son of God.

4. Matthew 2:13-14

Without warning, the small family had to leave their city and country behind.

Before the Christ child was even two years old, His life was being threatened (see Matthew 2:16). But dedication to and love for their Savior motivated Mary and Joseph to take the long trip to Egypt.

5. Matthew 2:19-23

After some time in an unfamiliar land, Joseph and Mary made their longest trip yet. But the miles must have seemed shorter, because this time, they were returning home. Once there, they put their faith in God and raised Him who would “be called a Nazarene” (Matthew 2:23).



Like Mary and Joseph, **WE TOO ARE TRAVELING ON OUR OWN JOURNEY WITH JESUS CHRIST.**

While the going may be long and difficult, every footstep of faith leads us closer to eternal life—a gift provided by our loving Savior, whose own journey made salvation possible. ■

NOTES

1. See James F. Strange, “Nazareth,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992), 4:1050-51.
2. See D. Kelly Ogden, “The Road to Bethlehem,” *Esquire*, Dec. 1995, 13.

When Blanca's husband and mother became sick and unable to care for themselves, she had to leave her job to care for them full-time. By turning to the Lord, Blanca has found strength beyond her own.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Blanca Solis

Asunción, Paraguay

I do not get tired of praying and asking the Lord for strength to continue forward. I pray to Him at all times. What my family has gone through has helped me realize that the Lord has walked with me through it all. He gives me the opportunity to rise up again. It is incredible the great amount of strength the Lord gives me.

I never ask myself, "Why me?" I have always thought there was a reason for it. I trust the Lord and accept what He sends me. He has supported me as I have passed through very difficult times, and I have been strengthened.

FIND MORE

Need help as a caregiver? Visit lds.org/go/12186.

Learn more about providing care for elderly loved ones at lds.org/go/12187.

Find more Portraits of Faith at lds.org/go/18.





Ministering Principles

COMMUNICATE THAT YOU CARE

There are so many ways we can show we care, especially at Christmastime. We can say it, text it, write it, give it, share it, pray it, sing it, hug it, play it, plant it, or clean it. Simply try it.

Showing love to others is at the very heart of ministering. Relief Society General President Jean B. Bingham said: “True ministering is accomplished one by one with love as the motivation. . . . With love as the motivation, miracles will happen, and we will find ways to bring our ‘missing’ sisters and brothers into the all-inclusive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹

Letting others know we care is an essential element of developing personal relationships. But different people get the message in different ways. So how can we appropriately express our love for others in ways they will understand and appreciate? Here are some ways to communicate that we care, along with a few ideas to start your own thinking.

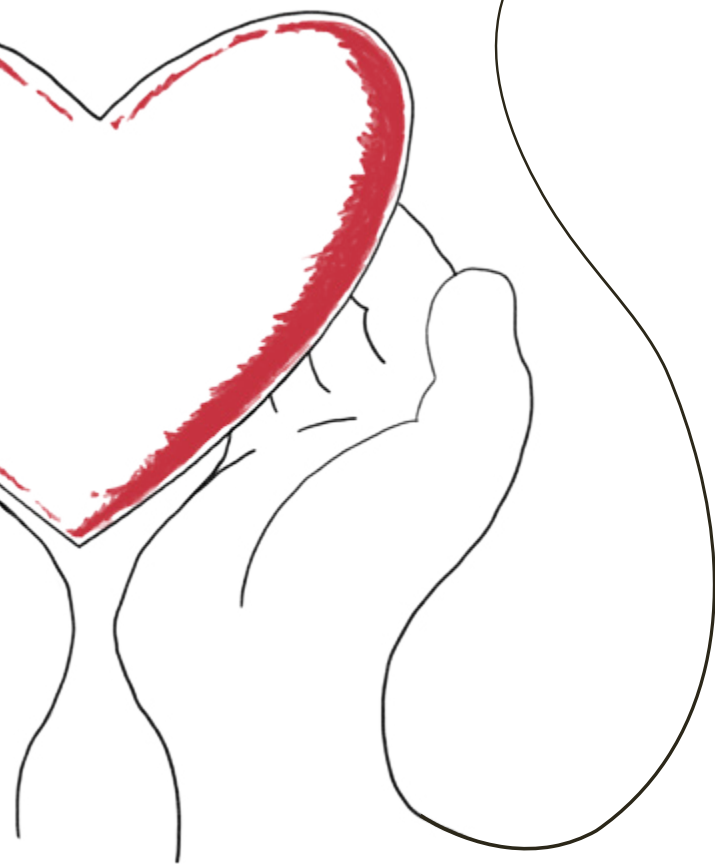


Ministering Principles articles are intended to help us learn to care for one another—not to be shared as a message during visits. As we come to know those we serve, the Holy Ghost will prompt us to know what message they might need in addition to our care and compassion.

Say It

Sometimes there's no substitute for saying how you feel about someone. While this could mean telling someone you love them, it also includes sharing what you admire about them or paying a sincere compliment. This kind of affirmation helps strengthen relationships. (See Ephesians 4:29.)

- Find an opportunity to let the individual know how much you admire one of his or her strengths.
- Stop by, call, or send an email, text, or card telling the individual you're thinking of them.



Visit

Taking the time to talk with and listen to someone is a powerful way to show how much you value him or her. Whether you visit at home, at church, or elsewhere, there are many people who need someone they can talk to. (See Mosiah 4:26; Doctrine and Covenants 20:47.)

- According to the individual's needs, schedule a visit. Take time to really listen and understand his or her circumstances.
- Where it may be difficult to visit homes because of distance, cultural norms, or other circumstances, consider finding time together after Church meetings.



Serve with a Purpose

Be mindful of what the individual or family needs. Providing meaningful service communicates that you care. It combines the valuable gifts of time and thoughtful effort. “Simple acts of service can have profound effects on others,” said Sister Bingham.²

- Offer service that strengthens individuals or their families, such as watching the children so parents can go to the temple.
- Look for ways to lighten loads when life gets overwhelming, such as cleaning windows, walking the dog, or helping in the yard.



Listening to others will help us discover ways to show them that we care. See the Ministering Principles article “Five Things Good Listeners Do” in the June 2018 issue of the *Ensign*.



Do Things Together

There are individuals who don’t connect through deep conversations. For some people, connections are made by finding common interests and spending time together doing those things. The Lord urged that we “be with and strengthen” our brothers and sisters (Doctrine and Covenants 20:53).

- Go for a walk, plan a game night, or set up a regular time to exercise together.
- Serve together on a community or Church project.

Give a Gift

Sometimes time or opportunities to interact are limited. In many cultures, giving gifts is a sign of caring and empathy. Even an occasional, simple gift can communicate your interest to build a better relationship. (See Proverbs 21:14.)

- Take them a favorite treat.
- Share a quote, scripture, or other message you feel they could benefit from.



A Labor of Love

As you come to know those to whom you minister and for whom you seek inspiration, you will learn more specifically how to communicate your love and care to them individually.

Kimberly Seyboldt of Oregon, USA, tells the story of seeking inspiration and giving gifts to show love:

“When I find life is getting me down, I get up and make zucchini bread, usually about eight loaves. My special ingredient is the silent prayer I offer as I bake to know who needs those loaves of bread. I have been able to better know my surrounding neighbors as the warm zucchini bread has been my invite into their homes and lives.

“One warm summer day, I pulled up alongside a family selling pints of blackberries on the side of the road. I didn’t need more blackberries, but the young, thin boy at the stand was excited to see me, thinking I was his next customer. I bought some blackberries, but I also had a gift for him. I gave the boy two loaves of bread. He turned to his father for approval, then said, ‘Look, Dad, now we have something to eat today.’ I was filled with gratitude for this opportunity to show love in a simple way.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles pleaded “that every man and woman—and our older young men and young women—will [be] . . . more deeply committed to heartfelt care for one another, motivated only by the pure love of Christ to do so. . . . May we labor side by side with the Lord of the vineyard, giving the God and Father of us all a helping hand with His staggering task of answering prayers, providing comfort, drying tears, and strengthening feeble knees.”³



Jesus Christ Cares

Before Jesus Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, “Jesus wept.

“Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!” (John 11:35–36).

“I have compassion upon you,” Christ said to the Nephites. Then He called for their sick and afflicted, their lame and blind, and “he did heal them” (see 3 Nephi 17:7–9).

The Savior set the example for us as He cared for others. He taught us:

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

“This is the first and great commandment.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matthew 22:37–39).

Who needs your care? How could you show them that you care? ■

NOTES

1. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 106.
2. Jean B. Bingham, “Ministering as the Savior Does,” 104.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Be With and Strengthen Them,” *Ensign*, May 2018, 103.



By Jean B. Bingham
Relief Society
General President

Where Did My Home and Visiting Teachers Go?

The flexibility of ministering should encourage us to show greater caring, not lead us to relax.

One of my friends recently asked me in bewilderment, “Where did my visiting teachers go?” From the time her husband passed away, they had been so caring and attentive, but since the announcement of the new ministering program at general conference in April 2018, she hasn’t seen hide nor hair of them.

We are all adjusting to a new way of doing things, and some ministering brothers and sisters may not have understood that although a home visit isn’t the only way to minister, it is certainly a wonderful way to show love and genuine interest—and many members still need it.

Putting *Why* over *How*

For some, the problem may be misunderstanding the purpose of the change. The purpose behind replacing home and visiting teaching with ministering wasn’t simply to change *how*

we take care of each other but to help us be more guided by *why*.

The ultimate goal of our ministering is to help others become more deeply converted to the Savior Jesus Christ and grow toward their divine potential. The program’s added flexibility isn’t meant to encourage relaxing our efforts; it’s meant to provide greater opportunity for the Spirit to guide our efforts.

So whether or not someone needs a visit today should be based in large part on what will help them move forward on Heavenly Father’s path for them.

Learning Together

Despite the initial uncertainty about what is expected of us as we minister, our sisters and brothers are reaching out to one another. Wherever I’ve traveled, it has been exciting to hear from countless women (and many men) sharing their stories of the positive impact their ministering—or being ministered to—is having on relationships and personal growth.

I recently came back from North Carolina, USA, where a ward Relief Society president shared some ideas she had received from stake leaders. With a few clarifications, I thought they were spot on and worth sharing.





"A NEWER, HOLIER APPROACH"

This chart represents the way some members had come to perceive the old program, compared to how we hope all will understand what it means to minister.

OLD

Home and visiting teaching

Motivated by duty

Box*

What do I do?

Focus on process

CHECK IT OFF

Focus on the task

Once-a-month visit

Bring a set message

What counts as a visit?

Assigned to brothers and sisters

Report that it's done

NEW

Ministering

Motivated by love

Pearl

Why do I do?

Focus on outcome

KEEP CHECKING IN

Focus on the person

Simple, flexible contact(s)

Spirit-led gospel sharing

Countless ways to care

Entrusted with brothers and sisters

Change hearts

* A parable is told of a jeweler who had a precious pearl but was saddened when the people who came to see it focused more on the beautiful box it sat in rather than the pearl itself. Similarly, as we shift from home and visiting teaching to ministering, we can better focus on the "pearls" of meaningful ministering rather than the "box" of policy and procedure.

HOW TO HAVE SUCCESSFUL MINISTERING INTERVIEWS

In the digital version of this article, Sister Bingham shares five guidelines for helpful ministering interviews. Visit [lds.org/go/E121813](https://www.lds.org/go/E121813).

Keep Going

We are all learning together as we embrace "a newer, holier approach" to ministering.¹ Perhaps some of us feel overwhelmed or intimidated. It helps to remember that "newer and holier" does not mean "flawless and unachievable."

Whether you are still uncertain about the purposes of ministering and how it works or you think you have it down, I invite you to watch and read the resources at [ministering.lds.org](https://www.ministering.lds.org) and study the Ministering Principles articles published each month in the *Ensign* (see page 8 in this issue).

These materials will help align your ministering efforts with the Savior's work.

Thank you, wonderful sisters and brothers, for loving and caring and reaching out and giving of yourselves. You are truly remarkable, and your ministering will be "something extraordinary!"² ■

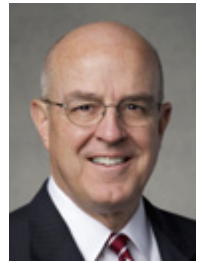
NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "Ministering," *Ensign*, May 2018, 100.
2. Emma Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 14.





By Elder
L. Whitney Clayton
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy



THE SAVIOR'S GIFT OF PEACE

Even in a world where peace seems far off, the Savior's gift of peace can live in our hearts regardless of our circumstances.

Is there anything better than beautiful Christmas music and carols, Christmas gatherings of family and friends, smiling faces, and the joyful exuberance of children? Christmas has a divine ability to bring us together as families, friends, and communities. We look forward to exchanging gifts and enjoying a festive holiday meal.

In *A Christmas Carol*, written by English author Charles Dickens, Ebenezer Scrooge's nephew captures the magic of this sacred time of year. He reflects, "I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round . . . as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their . . . hearts freely, and to think of [other] people. . . . And therefore . . . , though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it has done me good, and will do me good; and I say, God bless it!"¹

As a parent, and now as a grandparent, I have been reminded of the magic of Christmas as I have watched my children, and now their children, celebrate the Savior's birth and

enjoy one another's company as our family gathers together. I am sure you have watched, as I have, the joy and innocence with which children look forward to and relish this special holiday. Seeing their joy reminds each of us of happy Christmases past. It was Dickens again who observed, "It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself."²

I was raised near Los Angeles, California, USA, where our home was surrounded by orange groves. One evening each Christmas, my parents invited family, friends, and neighbors to our home to sing Christmas carols and enjoy refreshments. It was a wonderful tradition for all of us, and the singing seemed to go on for hours. We children would sing as long as we felt we must, and then we would steal away to the orange groves to play.

My wife, Kathy, and I also raised our family in Southern California, relatively close to the coast. Christmas there is characterized by palm trees swaying in the breeze. Every year, our children looked forward to going down to the harbor to watch the annual Christmas boat parade. Hundreds of beautiful



THE TRANSFORMATIVE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON IS ROOTED IN THE REDEEMING POWER OF JESUS CHRIST TO CHANGE OUR LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

yachts, twinkling with lights of all colors, circled the harbor as we watched in wonder.

Now that we live in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Kathy and I have made a tradition of taking our children and grandchildren to a local production of the play *A Christmas Carol*. Every year as we watch Scrooge undertake his miraculous transformation from a heartless hermit to a happy neighbor filled with Christmas joy, we feel the tug to let go of the Scrooge within us. We feel prompted to do a little better to follow the Savior's example of charity to all.

The Redeeming Power of Jesus Christ

The transformative spirit of the Christmas season is rooted in the redeeming power of Jesus Christ to change our lives for the better. The beloved account of the birth of the Son of God more than 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem is recorded in the book of Luke:

“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . .

“And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; . . .

“To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

“And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:1, 3–14).

Fear Not

The angel perceived the shepherds' fear when he appeared to them, telling them to “fear



not.” The astonishing glory of God, which radiated from the unexpected heavenly messenger, had indeed struck fear in their hearts. But the news the angel had come to share was nothing to be afraid of. He had come to announce a miracle, to bring the ultimate good news, to tell them that the redemption of mankind literally had commenced. No other messenger before or since has brought happier greetings.

The Only Begotten of the Father was beginning His mortal sojourn: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” These were indeed good tidings of great joy.

We each face moments in our lives when the great joy that the angel promised can seem elusive and distant. All of us are subject to the frailties and hardships of life—illness, failure, problems, disappointment, and, in the end, death. While many people are blessed to live in physical safety, others today do not. Many face great difficulty meeting the demands of life and the physical and emotional toll those demands can bring.

And yet, despite life’s hardships, the message of the Lord to each of us is the same today as it was to the shepherds keeping watch 2,000 years ago: “Fear not.” Perhaps the angel’s injunction to fear not has more transcendent relevance to us today than it did in calming the shepherds’ fear that first Christmas night. Could he also have meant for us to understand that because of the Savior, fear will never triumph? Could he have meant to reinforce the fact that ultimate fear is never justified, that no earthly problem need be lasting, and that none of us is beyond redeeming?

The sweetest gift given at Christmas will always be the one our Savior Himself gave us: His perfect peace. He said: “Peace I

leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Even in a world where peace seems far off, the Savior’s gift of peace can live in our hearts regardless of our circumstances. If we accept the Savior’s invitation to follow Him, lasting fear is forever banished. Our future has been secured. These are the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

“Fear thou not,” the prophet Isaiah reminded us, “for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10).

Hope in the Savior

Because of the Savior, born 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, there is hope—and so much more. There is redemption, release, victory, and triumph. “The wrong shall fail, the right prevail.”³

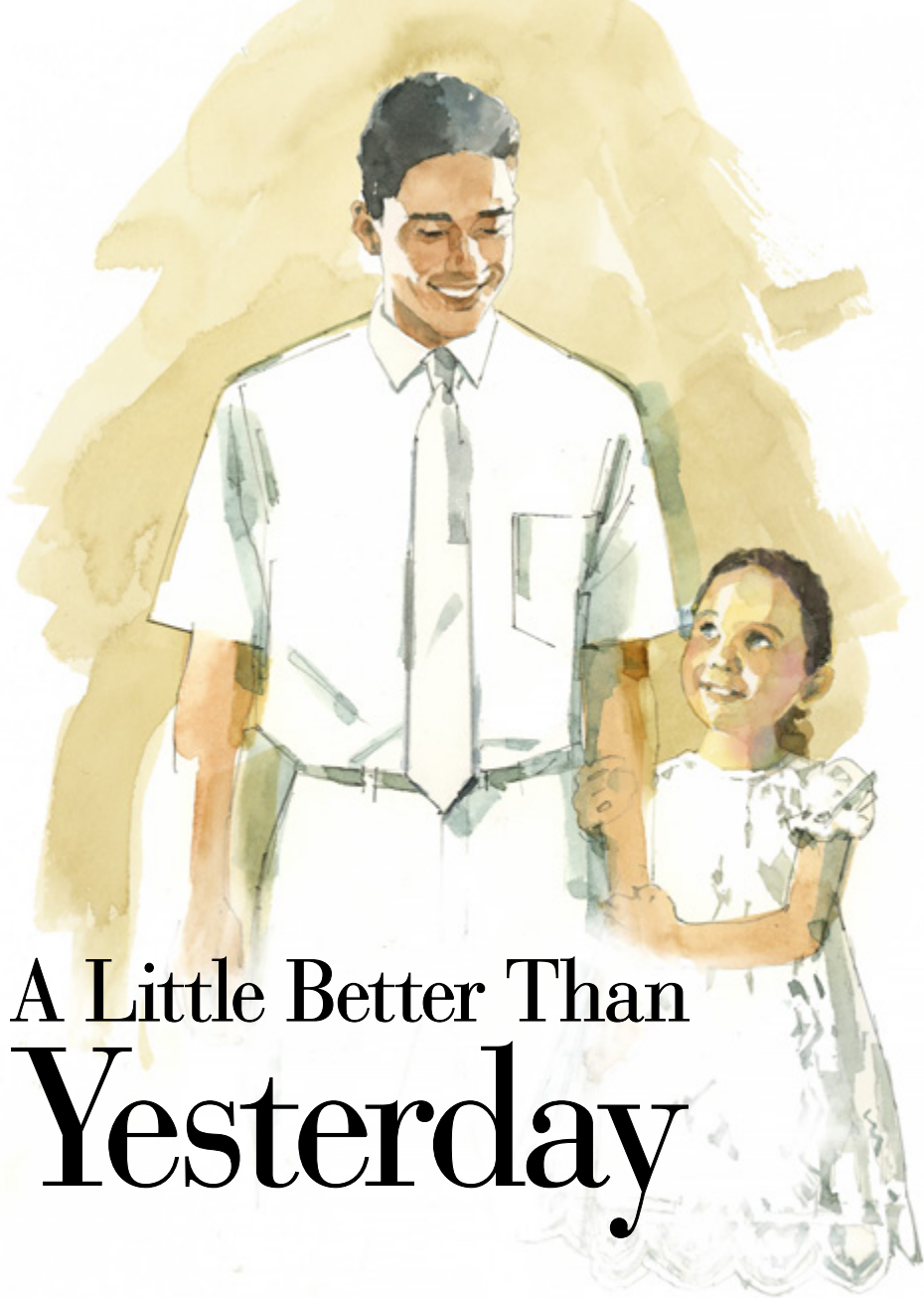
No wonder a choir of angels suddenly appeared as a heavenly exclamation point to the angel’s announcement of the Savior’s birth, singing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” No message could ever be more reassuring. No message was ever filled with more good will toward men.

May this season be one of peace and joy for all of us, “for unto [us was] born [that] day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” ■

From a First Presidency Christmas Devotional address, “Fear Not,” given on December 6, 2015, in the Conference Center.

NOTES

1. Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (1858), 5–6.
2. Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 67.
3. “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” *Hymns*, no. 214.



A Little Better Than Yesterday

By Luis Omar Cardozo

When his mission president called, Sergio had been out almost a year. He was our only son, and he was the first of our children to serve a full-time mission. My wife, Liliana, and I were proud of him and the example he set for his two sisters.

Sergio had a way about him that we knew would make him a good missionary. He was a natural leader, he was happy and sincere, and he could motivate others.

It didn't matter to him whether someone was a member of the Church—he made friends with everyone. And if

others made fun of him for being a Latter-day Saint, he took it with good humor and seldom got offended.

We were excited when Sergio received his mission call to the Peru Chiclayo Mission. He began his service on November 20, 2013. He loved his mission. At first, it was easy to write to him. But as the months passed, I needed more time to think about his letters and respond to his spiritual growth.

We didn't worry about Sergio. We thought that the mission field was the safest place he could be. His mission president called us on October 7, 2014.

We Never Felt Alone

The mission president told us that Sergio and his companion had been teaching investigators about the temple and eternal families. Afterward, as Sergio offered the closing prayer, he paused, suddenly lost consciousness, and fell to the floor. He received a blessing and was rushed to a medical center. Doctors determined that he had suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm. They tried in vain to revive him.

The news filled us with deep sorrow. Despite our grief, Liliana and I had to travel to Peru to retrieve Sergio's body and personal belongings. We had difficulty thinking clearly, so we were grateful that someone from the Church—from the moment we left our home until we returned—was there to help us. We also

received help from the Holy Ghost, who comforted us and helped us endure. We never felt alone.

It is difficult to find gratitude in tragedy, but I am grateful for the Lord's tender mercies associated with Sergio's death. When he died, I was serving as bishop, Liliana was teaching seminary, and our daughter Ximena was serving as ward Young Women president. We were busy serving and loving others, which grounded us in the gospel. If Sergio had to leave us, I will always be thankful that Heavenly Father took him while we were strong in the faith.

I am also grateful that Sergio departed this life while serving the Lord and while "in the service of [his] fellow beings" (Mosiah 2:17). The Lord has declared, "Those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them" (Doctrine and Covenants 42:46).

The Holy Ghost gave me a small glimpse of what Heavenly Father must have endured when His Only Begotten died for us. I realized that I didn't have any right to be angry with God. My Father in Heaven knew what I was going through. A peace came over me that allowed me to accept His will and the timing of Sergio's death. Liliana experienced and felt the same.

Comforting Words

Our family had been sealed in the temple in 2005, when Sergio and Ximena

were small. Ruth was born in the covenant a short while later. Before he left on his mission, Sergio baptized her.

Three days after his death, Ruth had a dream about Sergio. It was the night of her ninth birthday. Ruth dreamt that the two of them walked hand in hand together throughout the day and that he spoke comforting words to her.

Ruth and Ximena were very close to Sergio, and they miss him deeply. Ruth

still receives comfort from the memory of her dream.

One day as we were going through Sergio's belongings, Liliana and I found his mission day planner. We noticed that on each page of each day, Sergio had written the phrase "Be a little better than yesterday."

Those words have never left me. They remind me that we must continue to live the gospel. That's how we can be together as a family after this life. That's how Sergio can be ours again.

As we pass through difficult times, the Savior will succor us. I know that is true, just as I know that His promises are sure. So we hold on to the gospel, and we follow Sergio's example. We try to be a little better each day. ■

The author lives in Salta, Argentina.

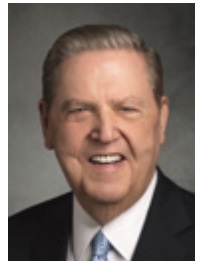
We must continue
to live the gospel.
That's how Sergio
can be ours again.





MAKING
YOUR LIFE A
SOUL-STIRRING
JOURNEY OF

Personal Growth



**By Elder
Jeffrey R. Holland**
Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Learning, living, and
teaching the gospel are at
the heart of growing toward
our divine potential.

Editors' note: In this article written for the *Ensign*, Elder Holland shares the powerful principles of conversion that serve as a foundation for the Church's new *Come, Follow Me* curriculum.

What a thrilling time it is to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! When I think about recent developments in the Lord's kingdom, it seems obvious that God is taking us on a soul-stirring journey with hills and vales and vistas so stunning we can scarcely imagine them until we climb a little higher and there they are before us.

In the past year alone, we've bid farewell to a beloved prophet and lovingly sustained a new one. We've taken a new approach to Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood quorum meetings, with greater emphasis on

counseling together to accomplish the Lord's work. In that same spirit, we've seen the Lord bring high priests and elders together in one quorum and witnessed a seismic shift in the way priesthood holders and sisters minister to God's children. If that's not enough to take your breath away, consider the First Presidency's recent

He Wants to Change Our Hearts

Even so, as we look back on where we've been, I hope we can see more than just modified policies, new programs, and revised manuals. The Lord's work has always been ultimately about people, not programs. Whatever changes He directs in an organization or a schedule or a curriculum, what He's

Teaching, learning, and living the gospel are key principles at the heart of growing toward our divine potential and becoming like our Heavenly Parents.

announcement about new resources to support personal and family scripture study, with corresponding changes to Primary and Sunday School materials—to say nothing of ongoing advancements in the areas of missionary work, family history research, and temple work.

And surely there is more to come. As our ninth article of faith declares, “We believe all that God has revealed”—that’s often the easy part. It takes a special kind of faith to “believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom,” and then to be ready to accept them, whatever they are. If we are willing, God will lead us to places we’ve never dreamed we could go—as lofty as our dreams might already be. His thoughts and His ways are certainly much higher than ours (see Isaiah 55:8–9). In a sense, I suppose we’re not unlike those in Kirtland to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “You know no more concerning the destinies of this Church and kingdom than a babe upon its mother’s lap.”¹

really hoping to change is you and me. He wants to change our hearts and enhance our future.

No, we can’t yet see those great and important things that lie beyond the next bend in the trail. But we do have some idea about the ultimate destination:

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

“What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27).

“You shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:20).

I don’t know about you, but to me that sounds like a long journey—and an exhilarating one! Such a divine goal, lofty though it is, is at the heart of what makes the restored gospel so attractive and inspiring. Deep in our souls is an echo—a memory—that tells us this is why we came to



earth. We accepted our Father in Heaven's plan first and foremost because we wanted to become like Him. We knew that it was a staggering goal that would never be easy to achieve. But we simply couldn't be satisfied with anything less. Our souls were created to grow, and we were stirred then and now to make the journey.

Learning and Becoming

Teaching, learning, and living the gospel are key principles at the heart of growing toward our divine potential and becoming like our Heavenly Parents. Sometimes we call this process *eternal progression*. Sometimes we call it *conversion*. Sometimes we simply name it *repentance*. But whatever we call it, it involves learning. The Prophet Joseph Smith said:

"You have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, . . . by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one. . . .

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation."²

So let's talk about learning. As a teacher at heart, I love the word and the idea, though I do think we should define it a little better than we usually do. For gospel purposes I don't just mean the accumulation of knowledge, though that is part of it. I also don't just mean passively listening to a lecture or memorizing facts. I mean learning in the sense of growth and change, of insight leading to improvement, of knowing the truth, which in turn leads us closer to the God of all truth.

President Russell M. Nelson tied together learning and this converting change of heart when he taught that as "the Holy Ghost gives conviction to the earnest seeker of truth," it fosters faith, which "promotes repentance and obedience to God's commandments." These essential ingredients of conversion turn us "*from* the ways of the world *to* . . . the ways of the Lord," which "brings a mighty change of heart."³

This isn't about knowing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel or diagramming the allegory of the olive trees, as useful as such exercises may be. This kind of learning is about changing ourselves,

about being different (better) because we know more of what God knows.

You can see that the kind of learning I'm talking about is far too big to fit into a classroom or to be wrapped up in a 50-minute lesson. Scriptures, prophets, parents, sunshine, rainy days, spiritual promptings, and the everyday curriculum of life itself all provide opportunities for us to learn about God and His plan, for surely "all things bear record" of Him

The home is both classroom and lab, where learning and living the gospel are so seamlessly combined that they are almost indistinguishable.

(Moses 6:63). Eventually we all discover that He is willing to teach us not only at church but anywhere and anytime—in informal moments with our children and our friends, our neighbor or our workmates, the man or woman we see on the bus or the employee who helps us at the market—wherever and whenever we are willing to learn.

But all these truths God is trying to teach us each day are only so many seeds sown in rocky soil or among the thorns to be burned up or choked out unless we take Alma's counsel to nourish them by experimenting on the word, or as James says, to be doers of the word and not hearers only (see Mark 4:1–20; James 1:22; Alma 32:27–43). As we learn truth and choose to act on it, our testimonies grow (see John 7:17). Then, as we make the truth a part of us by striving to live it consistently even in the face of challenges, it changes us and we become more like the Father of truth.⁴



Gospel Learning Is Centered in the Home

This is why we say that gospel teaching, learning, and living must be “home centered and Church supported.”⁵ First, the home is where we spend most of our time—certainly more time than we spend at church (overworked bishops notwithstanding). We wouldn't expect our physical bodies to survive long on one meal a week—even if it is a very good meal. Similarly, if a one-hour Church class, even an excellent Church class, is the main setting for our “feasting upon the word of Christ” (2 Nephi 31:20), then we are in danger of spiritual malnourishment.

Second, the home is both classroom and lab, where learning and living the gospel are so seamlessly combined that they are almost indistinguishable. This living laboratory experience simply can't be recreated in the classroom alone.

Perhaps most important, the home is—or can be—an echo of heaven, a reminder of the

eternal goal we came here to pursue. As President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, put it: “Though earthly families are far from perfect, they give God’s children the best chance to be welcomed to the world with the only love on earth that comes close to what we felt in heaven—parental love. Families are also the best way to preserve and pass on moral virtues and true principles that are most likely to lead us back to God’s presence.”⁶

Have I frightened you parents? I hope not. This emphasis on teaching, learning, and living at home is not meant to be an added burden for individuals and families. Quite the opposite, actually—we hope that by acknowledging and supporting your efforts at home, we can in some way lighten the burden you carry there. Or, better yet, perhaps we can strengthen you to “bear [it] with ease” (Mosiah 24:15).

Supporting Gospel Learning at Church

This expanded view of embracing the gospel outside of the classroom doesn’t mean that the classroom isn’t important. Of course we hope that meaningful learning still happens at church. In fact, the supporting role of Church classes is critical to home-centered learning. But in order to help change lives, teaching at church can’t be independent of what’s happening in those lives. It must be relevant to and draw on the experiences of both teachers and learners.

Clearly then, focusing on a manual or a chalkboard or the arrangement of chairs or even some excellent discussion questions may not be the right focus. The individual child of God and his or her eternal progress must be the object of our effort and affection. We are trying to touch lives, and we only touch chairs or chalk or audiovisual equipment if that helps us touch a life. To paraphrase

LEARNING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL AT HOME

Research by both Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint researchers has found that home-centered religious practices have a powerful and lasting effect on children. As children grow into adulthood, they often maintain the religious beliefs and patterns established in the home of their youth.

Parents who establish their families on principles of righteousness as found in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” give their children advantages that accumulate over time, bringing spiritual and temporal blessings to them.

Also, Church research in the United States has found that children and youth in Latter-day Saint families who have daily family prayer, family scripture study at least several times a week, and weekly family home evening are about 20 percent more likely than others to attend church weekly, be endowed, or marry in the temple when they become adults.

Of course, children have their agency, so parents’ faithful religious observance in the home, such as regular family prayer and scripture study, does not always result in a child’s acceptance of parental values. The likelihood of inter-generational transmission of religious beliefs and behaviors increases when parents set a good example, have a close and loving relationship with their children, and have open conversations about religious topics. One’s family tends to be such a powerful influence on individual religious observance that a significant minority of “prodigals” eventually return to the fold in mortality.

While the implications of this research suggest positive outcomes where there is rich home-centered gospel learning, they also suggest that Church support is especially important for new converts or other members who live in homes where gospel practices may be weak. These members may benefit from modeling and mentoring, such as having family home evening with another family, learning how to have family prayer consistently, observing positive ways to talk about religion at home, and ministering alongside more experienced members.

the Savior, what doth it profit a teacher or a class if it sponsors the world's greatest doctrinal presentation and none of that doctrine becomes evident in the life and love, the thought and the feelings of the individual member, the person God so much wants to save and exalt?

The true measure of success will not be how smoothly the lesson went, how well we filled the time, how many compliments the teacher gets afterwards, or

even how many class members participated. Success depends on what happens in the life of the learner. Did Brother Herrero find something in the scriptures in class last week that helped him get through the challenges he's been facing? Or better yet, did something happen in class that enhanced his ability to find during the week the answers he needs? When he shared that experience this week, did Sister Schmidt find the hope and faith she needed to believe that God would help her too? (See "You Don't Get Fit by Watching Others.")

All of this may mean that, if you are a teacher, what you see in one of our new teaching resources will be somewhat different from what you're used to seeing in our old manuals. You may find less specific instruction about what to do and how to do it. That was by design, to urge you to pray for, watch for, and draw on your own experiences and your own inspiration, as well as that of the people you teach. (See "Are You Soloing or Leading the Choir?")

So let's assume the course of study is the New Testament and I'm the Sunday School teacher. I don't necessarily come to class with a quiver full of factoids about the setting of Matthew 5, inspirational quotes from wise people regarding the Sermon on the Mount, and creative activities about how to be a peacemaker, all organized and timed to take us right up to five minutes before the hour. Instead, I study and live the principles in Matthew 5 just as I expect the learners to do. The only difference is that I might do it with more thought and prayer about each of my class members

and how these principles might be meaningful to them. Then, in class, under the influence of the Spirit, I encourage them to edify and support one another in their strivings to study and live by Matthew 5. I help them see connections between their lives and the precious doctrine in the scriptures. Above all, I

YOU DON'T GET FIT BY WATCHING OTHERS

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles compared gospel learning to a trip to the fitness center. Learners, he said, "do not get stronger by watching someone else do the exercises. They learn and then participate. As their spiritual strength increases, they gain confidence and apply themselves all the more" ("A Classroom of Faith, Hope, and Charity" [evening with a General Authority, broadcast for Church Educational System religious educators, Feb. 28, 2014], broadcasts.lds.org).

ARE YOU SOLOING OR LEADING THE CHOIR?

Often teachers feel like a soloist, as if everything depends on them. Instead, they can view themselves more like a choir director. A teacher's role is unique and needed—they direct the discussion, inspire gospel living, and point everything back to pure doctrine. But the music comes from all of us. Teachers help us find the gospel voice we each have inside by inviting and inspiring us to have our own experiences in studying the scriptures. Then, when we come to class, we share our personal insights and discoveries. This will add to the chorus.

pray for inspiration in the moment to turn a fact into faith, to turn a question into a quest.

Of course, in Primary my role may be a little different. But my goal is not to keep the little ones entertained for 45 minutes or keep them quiet so I can say what I want to say without interruption. My purpose is to build them up as independent learners, to help them see how their lives are enriched by gospel truths, and to support their parents—their most important gospel teachers.

Now, having stunned the parents, perhaps I have frightened the teachers. If so, let me reassure you with two thoughts: (1) You are teaching people, not lessons, and you know the people better than any lesson manual

*Success depends
on what happens
in the life of the
learner.*



possibly can. (2) Your personal efforts to learn and live the gospel are the best possible preparation to teach the gospel to others. Remember that the best way to invite the Spirit into our lives—and into our teaching—is to learn and live the gospel ourselves. The Spirit is the ultimate teacher in this Church, and fortunately, there is no limit to that influence.

He Marked the Path and Led the Way

It is our great desire that the Lord will lift us to new heights of spiritual growth through new ways of learning and living the gospel. With His help, we will share the gospel with our friends, not because we feel it is an obligation but because

the gospel is part of our everyday lives, and we can't open our mouths without some truth of the gospel tumbling out! Ideally, our friends of other faiths will see increased light in our lives and will find the missionaries—even before the missionaries find them—to get for their own families some of what they have seen. Temple marriages, family history work, priesthood power and ordinances, moral purity, caring for the poor—all of that will be the blessed result of deeply converted disciples of Christ learning and living the gospel every day, with full, appropriate, consistent support from Sunday classes. That is what the Lord is leading us toward, and it truly is a soul-stirring journey!

*I bear witness
that as we learn
His will, as we
gather light and
truth and make
it part of us
every day, that
light will grow
in us.*



We use the phrase “Teaching in the Savior’s Way,” but I hope that it never becomes a catchphrase or a cliché. Really, all we mean by it is that we need to be Christlike, as teachers and as learners, to try to share the gospel the way He did. This is a chance to join the disciples, to go into the highways and byways with Jesus, looking for one who may be lost. This is a chance to climb the Mount of Beatitudes with the multitudes and sit by the shore of Galilee with the throng. This is a chance for all of us to touch the hem of the Master’s clothing and be healed.

I have always loved these poetic words penned by Eliza R. Snow for one of the most moving hymns in the Church:

*He marked the path and led the way,
And ev’ry point defines
To light and life and endless day
Where God’s full presence shines.⁷*

Brothers and sisters, I am honored to walk with you toward the glorious future our Father in Heaven has in store for us. I know your hearts. I know that you love the Lord and want to do His will. I bear witness that as we learn His will, as we gather light and truth and make it part of us every day, that light will grow in us, “brighter and brighter until the *perfect* day” (Doctrine and Covenants 50:24; emphasis added) when we can be with Him because we will be like Him. ■

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.
2. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 221, 268.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “Jesus Christ—the Master Healer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 86.
4. See Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34; see also David A. Bednar, “Converted unto the Lord,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 106–9.
5. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 1.4.
6. Henry B. Eyring, “Gathering the Family of God,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 20.
7. “How Great the Wisdom and the Love,” *Hymns*, no. 195.



NEW INSIGHTS WILL COME

“As you ponder and pray about doctrinal principles, the Holy Ghost will speak to your mind and your heart. From events portrayed in the scriptures, new insights will come and principles relevant to your situation will distill upon your heart.

“You cultivate such revelatory experiences by living according to the light already given you and by searching the scriptures with pure motives—with real intent to ‘come unto Christ.’ As you do so, your confidence will ‘wax strong in the presence of God,’ and the Holy Ghost will be your constant companion.”

President Russell M. Nelson, “Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 18.

HOW SHOULD I USE THE NEW COME, FOLLOW ME RESOURCES?

The new *Come, Follow Me* resources for individuals and families, Sunday School, and Primary are meant to help us have meaningful experiences learning from the scriptures at home and at church. So how will these new *Come, Follow Me* resources work together?

- In 2019 you will be invited to study the New Testament. *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* will provide ideas to support your personal and family study at home. Use this resource in any way that is helpful to you.
- Each week, adults, youth, and children throughout the Church will study and discuss the same chapters of the New Testament.
- If you are a Sunday School or Primary teacher, use *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* to enhance your personal and family study. You will also receive a teacher’s manual to help you create engaging classroom experiences that support the scripture study that class members are doing at home.

For more information about the new *Come, Follow Me* resources, visit **comefollowme.lds.org**.

Decisions and Miracles: And Now I See

By Irina V. Kratzer

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

There was a time in my life when I was touched by love and the Light of Christ. My life has since changed forever.

I know how it is to live without the gospel. I lived that way for 30 years. I was born in Russia of goodly parents. . . . When I grew up, I got married and gave birth to a lovely baby girl. Soon I successfully graduated from the university and got a job I really liked. And yet, . . . I was far from being happy.

. . . My marriage . . . gradually fell apart. . . . I was hardly able to provide simple food for my daughter and me. I sinned. I made one wrong choice after another. Hunger, depression, and poor decisions made my life miserable. I [blamed] bad fortune, not realizing that in many ways I was suffering the natural consequences of my sins. But how could I know that? Sin did not exist according to what I had been taught. . . .

Religion in [the Soviet Union] was prohibited after the Communist

Revolution in 1917. I was taught from kindergarten that there is no such thing as God and that only the Communist Party and Grandpa Lenin could bring happiness to the Russian people. Religious people were badly persecuted in our society. Believers lost their jobs, were not allowed to go to school, and were labeled “crazy.” Everybody was required to take atheism classes at the university, where we proved that God does not exist. . . . I just did not think of God. Yet I felt pain in my heart about my poor choices. Later I would learn that the pain I felt was the Light of Christ giving me a sense of conscience to tell right from wrong. . . .

. . . Life seemed to me like a dark tunnel with only the grave at the end. I felt I was slowly dying. . . . I did not know how to pray, so I dreamed. . . . I dreamed that one day I would run away from everything miserable in my life and would start again from the beginning—happy and bright. I wanted so much



ABOUT SISTER KRATZER

Irina Valentinovna Kratzer (b. 1965) lived in Barnaul,

Siberia, where she went to

medical school and became a

cardiologist. Medicine was not a lucrative field; months would go by when the hospital did not distribute paychecks. After divorcing her abusive husband in 1996, Irina felt exhausted and hopeless as she worked extra night shifts to support her mother and daughter on low wages.

Irina was raised in an atheist environment and did not believe in God. Nevertheless, one night she ventured a request: “All right, God, if you’re there, just let me know, because you probably don’t even care about me. Who am I to you, a little thing here trying to survive?”

A few weeks later, in August 1996, Irina met a man who would introduce her to the Church and help her travel to the United States to study English. Eight months after her arrival in Utah, USA, in April 1998, Irina married Tay Kratzer.

Sister Kratzer was a teacher in an Orem, Utah, Relief Society when she was invited to speak at the Brigham Young University Women’s Conference. Punctuation and capitalization standardized.

for my daughter to have a better life than I did. . . .

[Then] the Book of Mormon came into my life. I read one chapter every morning before I went to work. Reading this book, I learned that God lives, that Jesus is His Son, [who] came to this earth to help sinners like me. The more I read this book, the more I saw the gap between the teachings of Christ and the way I lived. I learned that was why my life was so miserable. . . .

. . . I was ready for a dramatic change. I will always remember the night . . . when I cried the whole night through, realizing that my life was not

good, that my poor decisions had hurt people I loved the most. It was the most painful experience of my life. I sobbed and pled the whole night. . . . By the end of the night I was exhausted and had no more tears. When the first morning light broke through, peace and relief came to me. I heard the words: “Here is my hand. I will lead you and guide you. But you have to promise me that you will change.” And I did; I promised. I wanted this guidance and help more than anything else. . . .

I did not know, on that painful and joyous night in Russia, how great Christ’s promises are. I did not know then that

in just a little while I would travel to America where I would learn more about the gospel, and I would soon be baptized. . . . I did not know that my daughter would come to America to join us in happiness. . . .

. . . He gave me so many miracles that I did not have even a little chance to doubt His divine hand in my life. . . .

Walk with Christ! Hold onto His hand! Feast upon His word. Drink in His light with your every pore, with all your soul. In times of hardships, you won’t be left in a dark tunnel but in the light of His love with brighter light always ahead of you. ■



“I Am That I Am”

Symbols of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament

In this ancient record particularly, Jesus Christ must be sought or He might not be found.



By Stephen P. Schank

Priesthood and Family Department of the Church

As Moses hid his face, the Lord's merciful words issuing forth from the burning bush must have rung with the echoes of eternity:

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people . . . ; for I know their sorrows;

"And I am come down to deliver them. . . .

"And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?"

"And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you" (Exodus 3:7–8, 13–14).

Known to ancient Israel as the Lord Jehovah, the premortal Jesus Christ identified Himself as the source to which His people should look for redemption. Thousands of years later, the resurrected Jesus Christ reconfirmed His promise of deliverance to modern Israel with these words: "Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that *I am* the Son of the living God, that *I was*, that *I am*, and that *I am to come*" (Doctrine and Covenants 68:6; emphasis added).

The scriptures, the words of life, are designed to point the children of God in every generation to Jesus Christ

for deliverance from sin and death and all our earthly problems. The Old Testament is no exception; as with every volume of scripture, it is intended to turn our hearts and minds to our Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. But in this ancient record particularly, He must be sought or He might not be found.

When searching for Christ in any book of scripture, it helps to constantly remind ourselves what we are looking for. Jesus Christ *is* the source of life! To the fatal problems of spiritual and physical death introduced by the Fall, Christ *is* Israel's eternal solution. Lehi declared, "He offereth himself . . . to *answer* the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7; emphasis added). It is that answer—the Redeemer of Israel, the Great "I Am"—that we seek when searching the scriptures. Within the poetic and often archaic language of the Old Testament, however, the eternal problems—and Jesus Christ, the solution—are not always readily identifiable. Even so, Jesus Christ is there beneath the surface, waiting to be found in the ancient narratives.

As you keep in mind the name of the Lord shared with Moses on Mount Sinai—"I Am"—consider the many things that Jesus Christ *is* to those who put their trust in Him. The following examples are symbolic teachings from the Old Testament designed to turn our hearts and minds to the Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance.

SEARCHING FOR JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The prophets, including those in the Old Testament, can be seen as "types and shadows of their Messiah," wrote Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. "It is wholesome and proper to look for similitudes of Christ everywhere and to use them repeatedly in keeping him and his laws uppermost in our minds" (*The Promised Messiah* [1978], 453).

The Old Testament was not designed simply to preserve a narrative history of God's covenant people. The stories themselves, along with their accompanying surface-level messages and morals, are of secondary importance to disciples of Christ. Consistently, the primary subject of the prophets' writing—and therefore the most worthy object of our study—is Jesus Christ!

Here are a few principles to keep in mind when searching for truths about Jesus Christ in the Old Testament:

1. All things created by God are like Jesus Christ (see Moses 6:63).
2. All things given from God to mankind typify Jesus Christ (see 2 Nephi 11:4).
3. All prophets are types, or symbols, of Jesus Christ (see Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 451).
4. Repentance opens the door to learning about Jesus Christ through types (see Alma 26:21–22).

I AM . . . THE LAMB SLAIN FOR YOU
Animal Sacrifice and the Coat of Skins



Before Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, the Lord clothed them in the skins of an animal to provide a covering for them. In the Old Testament, the word *atonement*, in its various forms, appears 81 times. In 73 of those occurrences, the original Hebrew word is *kaphar*, which literally means “to cover.” After their expulsion from the garden, Adam and Eve were commanded to offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. An angel later instructed them that this practice was “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father” (Moses 5:7).

Animal sacrifices continued under the law of Moses, along with the ritual covering of those participating in priesthood ordinances.

When we covenant with the Lord and receive His holy ordinances, His Atonement covers us so that we are no longer exposed to the full effects of the Fall of Adam. Jesus Christ is truly the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for us so that we no longer have to be subject to the effects of sin and death.

Genesis 3:21; 37:3; Exodus 40:14–15; Ezekiel 16:1–12; Matthew 22:11–12; Galatians 3:26–29; 1 Nephi 11:21, 32–33; Alma 34:14–16; Moses 5:5–8; 7:47

I AM . . . THE BREAD OF LIFE
Manna



While Moses and the children of Israel journeyed from Egypt toward the promised land, they relied upon the mercies of the Lord for daily bread. The Lord provided them with a sweet “bread from heaven,” which the people called “Manna” (interpreted as “What is this?”). Those who gathered the bread daily and remained faithful to the Lord and His prophet had life continually throughout their journey in the wilderness.

Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life; He came down to earth from heaven to bring us life every day of our mortal journey. As we gather His words every day, we will experience the sweetness and vitality available through Him throughout our mortal journey.

Exodus 16:4, 12–21, 31; Deuteronomy 8:2–3; John 6:26–35, 48–58, 66–68; 3 Nephi 20:8

I AM . . . THE SOURCE OF LIVING WATER

Water from the Rock at Horeb



As the children of Israel thirsted for water in the wilderness, Moses turned to the Lord. Moses was instructed to smite a certain rock at Horeb (Mount Sinai) with the rod given him by the Lord. When he did, water gushed forth from the rock to sustain life for the millions of journeying Israelites.

Jesus Christ is the Rock of Israel; when He was smitten at Calvary, blood issued forth from His body. The blood of Christ brings us life! We can access the life found in the atoning blood of Christ as we follow prophets who have been given keys to bring forth living water from Him.

Exodus 17:1–6; Numbers 20:8, 11; John 4:10–15; 1 Corinthians 10:1–4; Doctrine and Covenants 28:2

I AM . . . YOUR HEALER

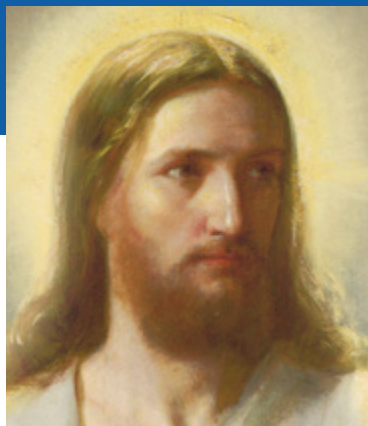
Serpent Raised Up on a Pole



The difficulties of their journey caused the children of Israel to complain, murmuring against the prophet and the Lord. As a result, the Lord allowed poisonous serpents to bite them, bringing death to many. Moses prayed to the Lord to take away the serpents; instead, the Lord provided a way for the people to escape death when they had been bitten. The action required for them to be healed was to look upon a brass serpent that was affixed to a pole.

Jesus Christ was nailed to a pole—the cross—so that we might look to Him in our sufferings and not be overcome by them. Jesus Christ does not always take away our trials, but as our Healer, He can take the poison out of them through the blessings of His Atonement.

Numbers 21:4–9; John 3:14–16; 1 Peter 2:24; Alma 33:18–22; Helaman 8:14–15; 3 Nephi 27:13–15



*“I am the light of the world:
he that followeth me shall
not walk in darkness,
but shall have the light of life.”*

John 8:12

The Menorah

Menorah

The Hebrew word *menorah* means “lampstand.” The King James Version of the Bible translates it as “candlestick.”

The original menorah was made for the tabernacle in the wilderness. It was made of solid gold and placed opposite the table of shewbread (see Exodus 25:31–37; 37:17–24). It had seven oil lamps that were level with each other—a central stem with three branches curving upward on either side. It burned only pure olive oil (see Exodus 27:20). The wicks had to be saturated with oil and regularly trimmed in order to burn brightly.

An almond motif was used in its design, including almond-shaped bowls with almond blossoms.



branches

central stem

wick

olive oil

HANUKKAH CANDLES ▶

The nine-branched lampstand used in the modern celebration of Hanukkah is technically called a *hanukiyah*, though people often call it a menorah. Hanukkah celebrates the story of how Jews around 165 B.C. cleansed the temple and burned the temple lamps for eight days (the time needed to consecrate more oil) with only a single day's worth of oil.



The menorah from ancient Israelite temple worship focuses us on God's presence and guidance in our lives.



The sacking of Jerusalem in A.D. 71, when the menorah and other temple articles were carried away, is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome, Italy.



What We Can Learn

The menorah:

Requires purity. The menorah was solid gold and was meant to hold only pure olive oil, which “is sometimes a symbol for purity and for the Holy Spirit and its influence” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Oil,” scriptures.lds.org). Nothing impure can enter God’s kingdom (see 3 Nephi 27:19).

Gives light. Jesus Christ said, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). As we follow Jesus Christ and strive for purity, the Holy Ghost can be our constant companion and light our way.

Represents making and keeping covenants. Our covenants can light our path through life, reminding us of our ultimate goal of returning to our Heavenly Father. As we honor our covenants and saturate our lives with thoughts, words, and deeds that invite the Spirit, we can receive strength from God and be a light to others.

Represents wholeness and the Lord’s presence. If we repent and make and keep covenants, we can be made whole through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and, ultimately, enter the presence of our Heavenly Father again. ■

BIBLE FACTS

- In Jewish tradition, the menorah, with its treelike form and ornamentation, is often associated with the burning bush as well as the tree of life. And these are associated with the presence of the Lord (or the *shechinah*, the fiery pillar and cloud of His presence; see Bible Dictionary, “Shechinah”).
- The menorah has seven lamps. The number seven often represents wholeness, completeness, or perfection. It was also associated with covenants (the Hebrew word meaning “to swear an oath” is derived from the word for “seven”).
- Solomon’s temple had 10 menorahs (see 1 Kings 7:49). And a menorah was also found in the temples of Zerubbabel and Herod. The Roman emperor Titus carried away the menorah and other temple articles as spoils of victory over Judea in A.D. 71 (as depicted in the Arch of Titus in Rome).
- The Savior said that His disciples “are the light of the world” and should not “put [their light] under a bushel, but on a candlestick” (Matthew 5:14–15). The Greek word translated as “candlestick” here is the same word translated from “menorah” in the Greek Old Testament (or Septuagint).
- Zechariah saw a menorah in vision as an emblem of Israel’s restoration and the rebuilding of the temple (see Zechariah 4). And John saw seven golden menorahs in the Lord’s presence, representing seven ancient Christian churches he was addressing (see Revelation 1:12–13, 20).



By M. Joseph Brough

Second Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency

**If you are worthy,
Heavenly Father will
not let you make big
mistakes without
giving you a warning.**



A Still, Small Voice among **Big Decisions**

As a new mission president in the fall of 2011, I was excited to be out among our missionaries. My wife, Emily, and I decided to do apartment inspections and visit every pair of missionaries in the mission.

As we traveled from Guatemala City to one of our more remote zones, known as Sololá, we learned that a demonstration was blocking the road in front of us. Demonstrations in Guatemala can take hours, and there is usually no way to get past them. But when we inquired about a possible detour, we learned of another route. That route, however, came with the following warnings:

- It is not a great road.
- Make sure you are not on the road after dark.
- Bands of robbers frequent the road.

Like any zealous new mission president and wife, on Emily and

I went. After driving a while, we came to a spot on a dirt road that looked like a steep drop-off in front of us. Emily joked that we should get the camera out and take pictures as we went over the edge.

Years earlier, when I was a young missionary in Guatemala, I had learned that a small branch dragged onto the road meant “proceed with caution.” It might even mean “stop.” I had seen a branch but failed to register what it meant.

A moment later, we found ourselves dangling off a 20-foot (6 m) ledge where a bridge had washed out. I managed to climb out my side, but Emily could not open her door. When she tried to climb over the seat and come out my door, the vehicle began to rock. Obviously, it was a very disconcerting moment.





Not knowing what to do, I paused outside the vehicle and pleaded with Heavenly Father, "Please help me in my moment of carelessness." Can you believe that a large banana truck suddenly pulled up behind us? The driver and passengers saw us and came over to laugh and enjoy the predicament of the silly gringo. They pointed out the branch on the road. Literally, it was just a twig.

Then, to our miraculous blessing, they retrieved from their truck the only chain I saw in three years of service in Guatemala. Before they left, they cut down a tree and

pulled it across the road. I think they wanted to make sure that the next North American to come by did not make the same mistake.

Heed Promptings and Warnings

I tell you this story to make the point that we must heed warnings, promptings, and direction given us by the voice of the Lord—no matter how strong or mild. That voice comes in many forms: scriptures, commandments, whisperings from the Holy Ghost, words of living prophets, and counsel from parents, Church leaders, and good friends. Are we listening for and heeding these promptings and warnings? Why is it important to do so?

We read in Proverbs:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil” (Proverbs 3:5–7).

We must trust the Lord with all our heart. We must understand that our knowledge falls short of what is best for us and best for others. If we do trust in Him, what a wonderful promise He bestows: He will direct our paths.

In our family, we have a saying that became an important part of our mission. President Russell M. Nelson has been teaching the concept for a

while. He said it this way: “Obedience brings success; exact obedience brings miracles.”¹

Our family and mission version is “Obedience brings blessings, but exact obedience brings miracles.”

I do not completely understand what exact obedience means, but here is what I have come to understand. It does not mean that we are perfectly obedient right now in all things, although we can be perfect in obeying many of the Lord’s commandments. Hence, repentance must be a key part of exact obedience. Exact obedience requires a commitment to all the warnings and promptings and commandments Heavenly Father gives us.

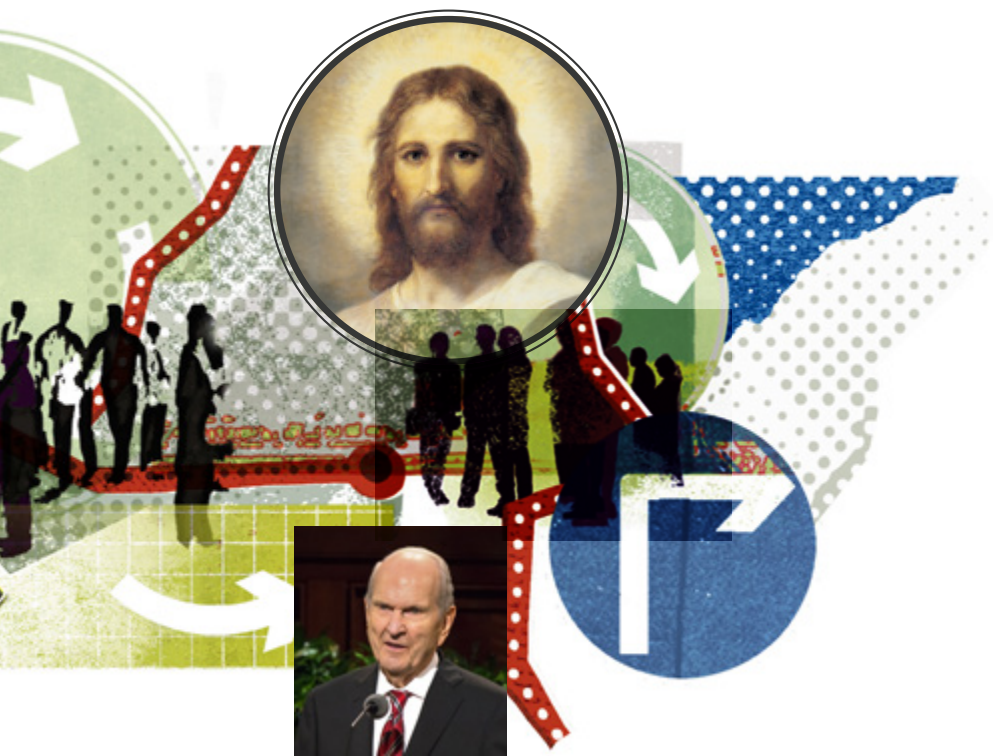
Sometimes we will not understand why Heavenly Father asks certain things of us. Those times can be some of the toughest times to be

exactly obedient. Remember when Adam, one of the greatest of all, was asked why he gave sacrifice: “And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me” (Moses 5:6).

Follow the Prophets

Emily has been a wonderful example of exact obedience even when she has not understood. During the October 2000 general conference, she heard the following counsel from President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008): “We discourage tattoos and also ‘the piercing of the body for other than medical purposes.’ We do not, however, take any position ‘on the minimal piercing of the ears by women





for one pair of earrings—one pair.”²

When my wife arrived home, she explained to our second daughter the importance of following the prophets no matter what. As she talked, my wife also obeyed. She took out her second pair of earrings for the last time. I believe she still does not understand why, but I know that why does not matter to her.

To some of us, that may seem insignificant because it is such a small thing. That is true. However, I do not remember the Savior saying, “If ye love me, keep my commandments that appear important” (see John 14:15).

My dear brothers and sisters, one clear voice of warning we must always heed comes from the Lord’s chosen apostles and prophets. It might not be popular by the world’s

standards, just like that small thing requested by President Hinckley. But you can—you must—trust that it comes from Heavenly Father. It might be only a small twig, or it might be a whole tree dragged across the road. I exhort you to read or listen to general conference with this thought in mind: What twigs or trees did the Lord place in my path?

Trust in the Lord

Some of you may be thinking, “Well, that is great. But what do you do when you are seeking promptings, counsel from the Lord, warnings, and direction, and you just do not seem to receive an answer?”

Maybe you have this concern regarding important decisions in your life. Remember the promise to trust in the Lord with all your heart,

and He will direct your paths.

Regarding important events in our lives, we do want clear direction, and that may be hard to find. But I have come to understand that if I am repentant, being exactly obedient, following my leaders, and making other good choices—in other words, if I am worthy—Heavenly Father will not let me make big mistakes without proper warning. Nor will He let you.

My young friends, Heavenly Father is here to keep us from making costly mistakes if we seek His warnings, promptings, and revelations from all available sources—and if we heed and act upon them. We have the right to have the Holy Ghost always with us, especially in crucial moments of life.

That you will successfully identify the warning twigs and trees that Heavenly Father places in your path is my hope.

I testify that as we heed the voice of the Lord, as we receive it from its many sources and strive to be exactly obedient, we can have a life that ends with “and they lived happily ever after.” That can happen only by living the doctrine of Christ and making and keeping sacred covenants. ■

From a devotional address, “Heeding the Voice of the Lord,” delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho on October 17, 2017.

NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, in R. Scott Lloyd, “Elder Nelson Delivers Spiritual Thanksgiving Feast to MTCs,” Church News section of LDS.org, Dec. 4, 2013, [lds.org/go/feastE1218](https://www.lds.org/go/feastE1218).
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 52.



Music Is Powerful

Three young adults share how music has blessed their lives.

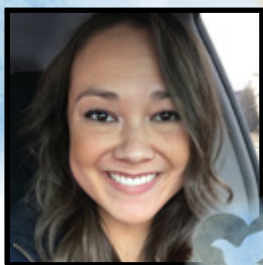
By Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines

The Savior knew He was going to die soon. He knew He was about to be betrayed by someone He loved, go through unthinkable pain, and save the world.

How would you prepare for something like that? We don't have an exact account of Christ's last moments with His disciples, but we do know one thing: He sang a hymn with them.

"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:30).

If music is valuable enough for Jesus to include in the last moments of His life, surely it can be a powerful force in our lives too. We asked three young adults in The Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square to talk about the power of music. We hope their thoughts will prompt your own ideas about how to invite the blessings of music into your life.



Music Transforms

"I was inactive for a large part of my life," said Tabernacle Choir member Darilyn Merrill. "Music has always kept my heart beating in the gospel. It reminded me of how wonderful the Spirit felt and played a paramount role in my conversion back to the Church."

Darilyn described gospel-related music and *Especially for Youth* CDs as "the greatest missionaries" in her life. "They always seemed to shuffle into place on my music player exactly when I needed them, as if the Lord was saying, 'OK, Darilyn, it's time you remember Me.'"

Darilyn described how music takes a listener on a journey—to the past, present, or sometimes a more majestic future.

"From where I was to where I am now, the gospel has transformed me, and music has been a key player in that transformation," Darilyn said. As a catalyst for the Spirit, music has been her therapy and her solace. "[Music] brings me peace every week."



Music Evokes

Violinist Jarom Redhair has a suggestion if you have trouble appreciating classical music. Try learning a little about the story behind the piece, the composer, and what was going on in the world at the time. "It'll make the listening experience much more interesting and open up a whole new world of music to you."

Jarom's musical training began at age seven, when an elementary school teacher recognized he had an ear for music and started giving him lessons. Now he plays in the Orchestra at Temple Square.

Waking up early to get ready for *Music and the Spoken Word* makes for long Sundays, but Jarom said the blessings make up for the lack of sleep. Many people who aren't members of the Church watch and listen to the broadcast weekly—years ago his own father began to learn more about the Church after hearing The Tabernacle Choir in person!

"Music evokes emotions in a way words can't," Jarom said. "I feel music speaks to our souls."



Music Connects

Kaija Purvis has always been an introvert. Because of her experience with music, she can stand in front of crowds and cameras with confidence.

"Every single time I finish performing, I feel proud of myself for accomplishing something difficult," said Kaija, who sings with The Tabernacle Choir. "It is quite empowering to show myself that I can do hard things."

Kaija was adopted from India as a baby and feels a close connection with that country. She believes music can connect cultures.

"Music has no bounds. It can bring people from various religions, cultures, and ethnicities together. Good, inspiring music lifts us up and brings us hope," Kaija said. "As I sing to people across the world, I'm hoping they can feel my love for them and Heavenly Father's love for them."

Jesus has promised to bless us through music. "The song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads" (Doctrine and Covenants 25:12). Whether you create music or listen to it, sing using a soprano voice or sign language, each one of us can receive this blessing! ■

RELATED RESOURCES

- Free gospel-music downloads: youth.lds.org
- Gospel radio: mormonchannel.org
- Musical-number sheet music: music.lds.org
- Russell M. Nelson, "The Power and Protection of Worthy Music," *Ensign*, Dec. 2009, 13–17.
- Psalm 95:1

Seek This Jesus

SA and Piano

Words and music by
Rachel P. Mohlman and Anna M. Molgard

Reverently ♩ = 80-88

A *Altos mp*

See this

Piano mp

Je - sus — who has come for you Wrapped in soft - ness, — sleep - ing

now. See the ba-by in the man-ger there. See His ten-der, gen-tle brow As He

rests in peace-ful slum-ber through the night; See this Je - sus here to - night.

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BSopranos *mp*

17

See the star - light _____ through the sta - ble door;

Altos *mf*

See the star - light _____ through the sta - ble door; Feel the

17

20

Feel the moon-beams cast a glow On the foot - prints _____ of the earth-en floor

moon-beams cast a glow On the foot-prints of the earth-en floor As the

20

24

As the cat-tle soft-ly low. As He rests be-neath the soft and star-ry light, Be with

cat - tle _____ soft-ly low. As He rests be-neath the soft and star-ry light, Be with

24



28 *mp*

Je - sus here to - night. Seek this

mf

Je - sus here to - night. Feel His pres-ence reach be-yond The hum-ble set-ting as it dawns.

28

32 *mf* *f*

Je - sus here to - night. Seek this Je - sus _ in the light. Seek this

mp *f*

Seek this Je - sus _ here to - night in the light. Seek this

32

C *p*

Je - sus _ who has come for you. He is wait-ing _ e - ven now, Reach-ing

p

Je - sus _ who has come for you. He is wait-ing _ e - ven now, Reach-ing

36 *f* *rit.* *mp*

40 *mp*

gent - ly — for your trem - bling hand, Light - ly soft - en - ing your brow, Pour - ing

gent - ly — for your trem - bling hand, Light - ly soft - en - ing your brow.

44 *p*

peace in - to the shad - ows of your night. Seek this Je - sus. — Seek His light. —

Seek this Je - sus. — Seek His light. —

48 *p*

— See this Je - sus here to - night. —

— See this Je - sus here to - night. —

48 *p mp a tempo rit.*



Family Bonds

A Strength & a Blessing

By Andrew Timmons

When I was a little boy, my mother noticed I would repeatedly drop a pen, pick it up, and drop it again. That, combined with other signs—my fear of germs and cracks in the sidewalks, and the need to touch whatever I bumped into multiple times before I could leave it alone—eventually led my parents to take me to a mental health professional. Hours of strange tests followed, including shape and color recognition exams, storytelling exercises, and a computer game that changed the rules of play at random. The doctors found that not only did I have the worst case of obsessive-compulsive disorder they'd ever seen but I also had Tourette's syndrome.

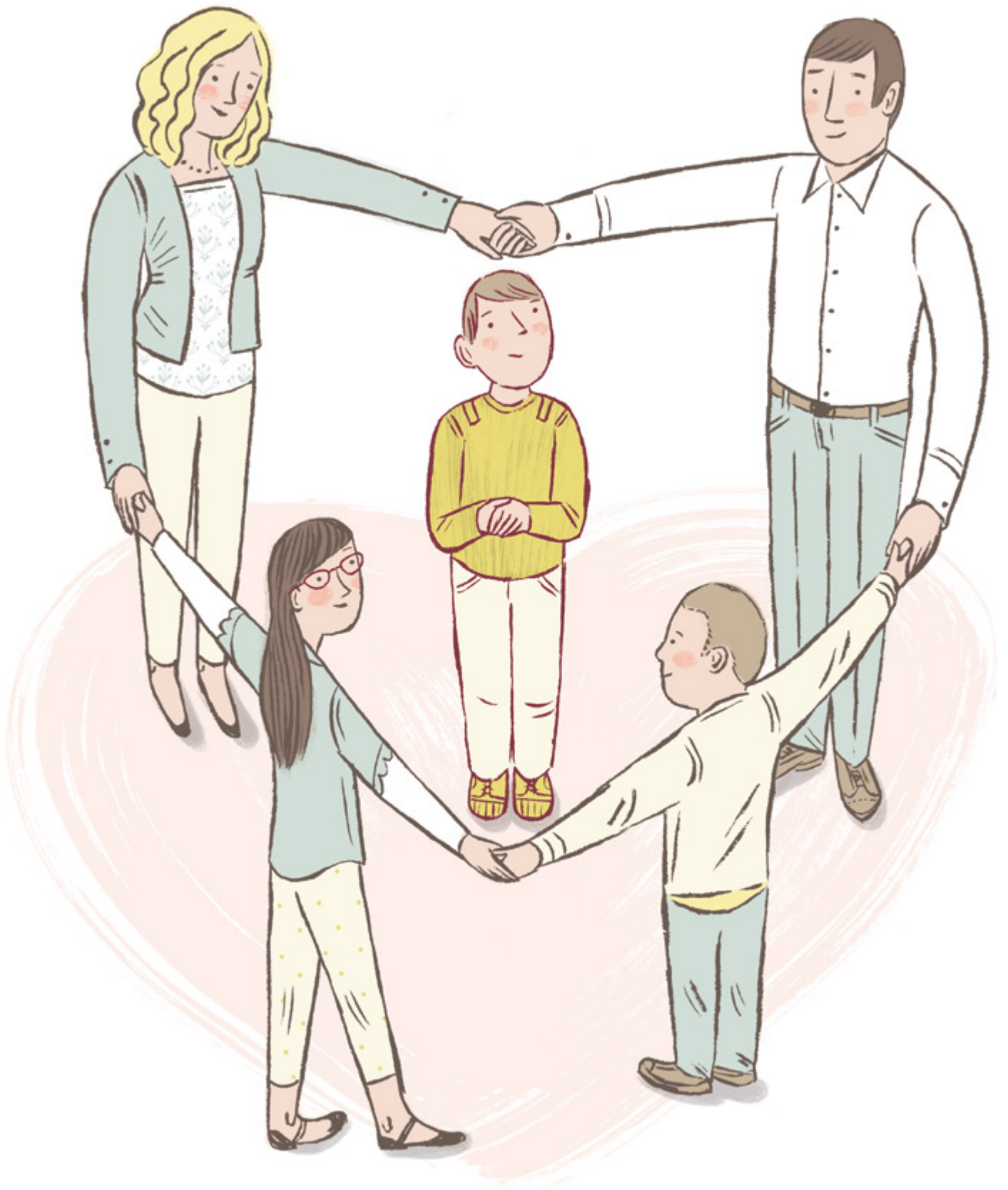
Living with Tourette's Syndrome

Tourette's syndrome is a neurological disorder that usually emerges in early childhood and is often defined by motor tics. These "tics" are involuntary movements of the body, such as a twitch or grimace or even a leg or arm movement that looks like a muscle spasm. They can be frequent and repetitive. It's like having an itch that you just can't resist scratching. I don't want to do the actions my mind sometimes tells me are necessary, but I'll never be at ease if I don't.

I used to hate stairs, because for every step I ascended, I'd have to descend two steps. Other times, because of these involuntary mental compulsions, I might feel forced to make perfect symmetry in the number of steps that I took. If I miscounted or got fed up and tried to "cheat," I'd have to start over or else I'd never overcome the urge to go back and fix it. Plus, if I didn't properly follow the "correct" pattern, I would always have to make another equally flawed attempt so as to cancel out the first flawed attempt. If both flawed attempts weren't identical, I would have to start over and make the same mistakes to match each individual flawed attempt.

You might see now why I would hate any encounter with stairs.

In my struggle to cope with Tourette's syndrome, my family became the biggest miracle of all.





BE PATIENT

"If you are the one afflicted or a caregiver to such, try not to be overwhelmed with the size of your task. Don't assume you can fix everything, but fix what you can. If those are only small victories, be grateful for them and be patient. Dozens of times in the scriptures, the Lord commands someone to 'stand still' or 'be still'—and wait. Patiently enduring some things is part of our mortal education."

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 41.

Of course there were other challenges less drastic than staircases. Imagine applying similar imaginary rules to actions like picking up toys, going through doorways, misspelling a word, tripping over my shoelace, breathing, blinking, coughing—basically any everyday action that so many of us take for granted. And that's just the physical tics. I also have verbal tics that compel me to make noises—weird noises—in public!

Family Support

Despite all these challenges, I had the most ideal childhood that I could have imagined, thanks to my family. My parents, my greatest blessing from God, were always there for me, providing encouragement and understanding whenever I needed it most.

My mother has been an angel of love and peace, showing me so much care and concern. She has unwearingly encouraged me to try new things, to make new friends, and to never give up, no matter how hard life became.

My father also patiently helped me in some of my most difficult moments. One day I was panicked and feeling ashamed because I couldn't understand my algebra homework. When my father got home from work that night, he stayed up with me until 4:00 a.m., patiently guiding me in the right direction so I could figure out the answers.

My siblings were always there to help me too. My mother recalls opening her bedroom door one

night to see me standing at the top of the staircase with a gloomy look on my face as I mentally prepared myself for the ordeal of going downstairs. My younger brother, about five years old at the time, stood beside me at the top of the stairs and said, "It's okay, Brother. I'll go down with you."

Other times my older sister would come to the rescue. There were many times when she would walk in on me performing some ritual of arm waving or finger snapping and find me close to tears of frustration because I couldn't stop. At those times she would run to get my mother or father, who would pick me up and hold me to help me forget whatever absurd compulsion had taken control over me.

Medicine and Miracles

It's been years now since my diagnosis. Eventually, after many unsuccessful trial runs, we found a drug that suppresses the majority of my tics, though I still have urges every now and again. This medicine was invented by doctors the same year I was born. Combining the medicine with the help of my family and priesthood blessings allowed me to go through school like a normal kid. I even served a full-time mission for the Church, despite doctors' expectations to the contrary.

I thank God every day for blessing me with such an amazing family. I try to imagine how I would have managed if things had been different—if we didn't have family home evening every



week, if we didn't read scriptures together every night since before I could talk. What if the members in my family hadn't made a commitment to go to each other's Little League games and piano recitals, or have sit-down dinners and make Sunday our "family day"? My family isn't perfect, but they've been more than I could have ever asked for.

I understand now why the adversary tries so hard to destroy the family, the most basic social unit. It is from our families, including our vast heavenly family, that we draw strength, comfort, and encouragement. I have seen the power and influence that a righteous family can have on an individual. The family is ordained of God, and true happiness can be found when we live righteously and sustain each other within the sacred family bonds of love.

The greatest blessing of my life, the one that was made available to me the same year I was born, is not the miracle drug that relieves me of my medical condition—though it *has* helped me live a normal life. It is my family. With Heavenly Father and my eternal family, I can overcome anything.

And that's a miracle. ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

NOTES

1. See *What Is Tourette Syndrome?* (brochure), Tourette Association of America, tourette.org/media/WhatisEnglish.proof_.r1.pdf.
2. See "Tourette Syndrome: Symptoms and Causes," Mayo Clinic, mayoclinic.org.
3. "Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder," National Institute of Mental Health, nimh.nih.gov.
4. See "Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder," nimh.nih.gov.

ABOUT TOURETTE'S SYNDROME

Tourette's syndrome manifests itself through tics, meaning "involuntary, repetitive movements and vocalizations." These tics can begin to appear in children five to seven years old and may vary from mild to severe. Tourette's is reported to be "3 to 4 times more common in boys than girls," and the cause of the condition is currently unknown, though genetics and environmental factors likely play a major role.¹

Symptoms of Tourette's may include the following:

- Motor tics, such as eye blinking, head jerking, nose twitching, stepping in a particular pattern, touching or smelling objects
- Vocal or phonic tics, such as grunting, coughing, throat clearing, repeating one's own or another's words, using obscene words²

ABOUT OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

"Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common, chronic and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (*obsessions*) and behaviors (*compulsions*) that he or she feels the urge to repeat over and over."³

Symptoms may include the following:

- Anxiety about germs or becoming contaminated
- Needing to arrange objects in a certain order
- Fixation with being clean or with washing hands
- Needing to double-check (making sure doors are locked, oven turned off, and so on)
- Repeatedly feeling the need to count⁴



Poems, Banana Bread, & Tiny Keys

My grandmother
taught me that
memorizing can
be good but that
understanding
is even better.



By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

To a young boy, it seemed like a pretty good deal. My grandmother wanted me to memorize poems. Every week when we came to visit, if I could recite one of her poems, she would give me a loaf of banana bread—a small loaf, just my size, made especially for me.

At first, my goal was just to get the bread. It was warm and wonderful, sometimes with nuts inside and on top, but always fresh out of the oven and timed for delivery when we arrived at the door. I can still smell the aromas of the kitchen, still see the larger loaves she baked for family, neighbors, and friends, still remember the delight on my father's face as my grandmother—his mother—offered him a slice.

And if I would repeat the poem she had taught me the week before, I got a child-sized loaf all for myself, with its crunchy, buttery crust; a soft-yet-textured middle; and hints of vanilla and banana. And was that cinnamon? I always wondered if she used cinnamon. All I had to do was repeat the poem, and the prize was mine.

Here is one of the first poems I learned:

*Have a place for everything,
And put everything in it.
Then when you need to find it,
You can find it in a minute.*

I have thought about that poem repeatedly over the years, most often when I have been helping my children learn to take responsibility for organizing their own space and put possessions in a place where they can be—unlike my car keys—easily found.

And when I would teach my children about organizing, I would repeat my grandmother's poem, remember her banana bread, and most of all, remember the gentle guidance she gave to a young boy by placing helpful thoughts in his head.

After a while, my goal shifted. Yes, I still liked getting the bread, savoring every morsel as I ate it with a cold glass of milk. But my goal became to try to understand the poem. I think it particularly pleased Grandma when I could explain the meaning and not just say the words. I know I pleased her when my actions showed that I understood—for example, I remember telling her one time how I had organized my room so that everything had a home, and how easy it was now to keep track of where things were.

Over the years, I have thought that Grandma's poems are not unlike the messages we receive from our Heavenly Father. They are often messages He sends through the scriptures, through His Son, Jesus Christ, or through prophets and apostles and other Church leaders. And I think Heavenly Father is pleased when I can remember the words. In response, He gives me spiritual bread that sustains and refreshes me.

But I think Heavenly Father is even happier when I show by my actions that I understand what His words mean. "If any man will *do* his will," the Savior said, "he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17; emphasis added).

Here's another poem my grandmother taught me, one I repeat all the time to my children:

*Hearts, like locks, open with ease
With the use of tiny keys.
And don't forget that two of these
Are "Thank you, sir," and "If you please."*

After all this time, Grandma, I think I can now explain some of the meaning of those words by offering my thanks to you. You used a tiny key to unlock my heart, and you taught me the difference between being a hearer and a doer (see James 1:22). For that, I am eternally grateful. ■



The Book of Abraham, Revelation, and You

By Kerry Muhlestein

Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University

I have spent almost two decades studying the book of Abraham and its history. I wish to use this book as an example to discuss an important issue: the relationship between knowledge and revelation.

While education is valuable and important, as we become increasingly educated, we must guard against the tendency to respect the world's methods of learning more than God's. As Jacob says:

"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, . . . supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. . . .

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

The academic learning process is only a tool—and a tool with limitations. The knowledge we currently have is limited,



and we need to keep improving it. This means that many things we are currently convinced of could be overturned in the future. If we forget the limited nature of what we learn by the academic process, we leave ourselves open to the danger of trusting in man's wisdom more than God's. Let me provide some examples from my own studies.

Although academic research can provide helpful information, revelation from God is the most trustworthy and valid source of knowledge.

Human Sacrifice in Ancient Egypt

Joseph Smith tells us that Facsimile 1 in the book of Abraham depicts a priest of Egypt attempting to sacrifice Abraham. For some, a problem has arisen because Egyptologists long taught that the Egyptians did not engage in human sacrifice. As a graduate student in Egyptology, I believed all the academic publications that said this, and I confidently taught it. Then I learned of some archaeological remains in an Egyptian fort that seemed to be an example of human sacrifice in ancient Egypt. As I studied more, not only did I become convinced that it *was* human sacrifice, but I became so fascinated that I devoted years to studying it.

During my research, I came to realize that the Egyptians often *did* engage in human sacrifice. As a result of my studies and those of others, the practice of human sacrifice in ancient Egypt is now generally accepted by my colleagues in Egyptology. As I continued examining this phenomenon, I learned that the situation described in Abraham chapter 1 is exactly the kind of situation in which we would expect a human sacrifice to occur, based on the Egyptian evidence. That is, those attempting to stop the practices of the Egyptian

cultic system were sacrificed. It became clear to me that the very thing that had bothered some people about the story of Abraham's near sacrifice was actually a point that *supports* the authenticity of that story. All we had to do was look at it more closely.¹

Sadly, before we had come to understand that our earlier position on human sacrifice was wrong, some members of the Church began to question their testimonies over this very issue. They trusted in something they thought they knew from the academic process more than the spiritual witness they had received by revelation from the Holy Ghost that the Pearl of Great Price was scripture. By the time the academic process caught up to revelation, some had left the Church. I wish they had listened to Peter, who cautioned the Saints, "Seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the [world], fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Peter 3:17).

Revelation as a Source of Knowledge

There are many similar examples we could look at. Let me mention just one more. Some have maintained that it is unrealistic to suppose there were writings about Abraham in Egypt because the Egyptians knew nothing about him. We have now learned that a significant group of Egyptian priests were indeed collecting stories about Abraham, Moses, and other biblical figures.²

While we could spend a great deal of time showing many more examples of incorrect assumptions and providing additional evidence that supports what Joseph Smith taught, we would be missing the larger point. Instead, we must learn that





revelation is the most trustworthy and valid source of knowledge. When we do so, we come to sift our learning through the gospel rather than sift the gospel through our learning. Doing this saves us from falling into difficulties caused by things we learn about the book of Abraham, Joseph Smith, social issues, or anything else we may encounter. The key is to remember that revelation is our most trustworthy source of learning and that we should not abandon it when we discover that, based on our current understanding, something doesn't seem to make sense.

Those in the world will deride such a stance because they have not had experience with it, and thus it makes no sense to

them. As the Apostle Paul taught, “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).

An experience from my own life demonstrates why we should not let the world devalue that which we have learned through the Spirit.

While I was at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), studying Egyptology, something in my knee started to cause me horrible pain. Deep within that knee I could feel a small particle grinding against other tissues. The doctors at the UCLA Medical Center could not feel the lump themselves,



so they took various kinds of X-rays and MRIs. Nothing showed up. As a result, none of the doctors believed there was anything inside my knee; they thought it must be some other problem, such as nerve damage. Some even tried to treat me for these other imagined problems.

Because I kept insisting that there really was something inside my knee, I was finally referred to the head of orthopedic medicine. He was willing to make an incision in my knee and see if he could find anything. Through this incision, he found a piece of cartilage that had been chipped off and had started to gouge the surrounding tissues. Its removal completely cured me.

According to the best practices and technology available, there was nothing in my knee. Because most of the doctors would trust only what they themselves could feel or see or what technology told them, they did not believe there was an actual, physical object causing me pain. Yet, using senses available only to me, I could feel there was indeed something inside my knee. It was both real and powerful. In the end, my senses (which were not available to their empirical processes) were right.

Thus it is with revelation. I know from revelation that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God who translated the book of Abraham by inspiration. Receiving such revelation is a real and powerful method of learning truth, a method I refuse to ignore or dismiss just because others haven't experienced that same method of learning.

When There Are No Answers

In my years of research, I have found academically satisfactory answers to most questions that

have arisen surrounding the book of Abraham. Carefully examining assumptions and pursuing knowledge—while placing a premium on revelation as the most trusted source of truth—have helped me find answers to those things I have carefully and painstakingly investigated. I still have a few questions about the book of Abraham for which I have not yet found an academically satisfying answer, based on the current state of Egyptology. But I am not concerned about this. I remember what God told Oliver Cowdery: “Behold, I have manifested unto you, by my Spirit in many instances, that the things which you have written [or, in my case, read] are true; wherefore *you know* that they are true” (D&C 18:2; emphasis added).

I *know*, through the same kind of revelation Oliver Cowdery experienced, that the book of Abraham is inspired. I trust that sooner or later the academic process will catch up, and I will find satisfactory answers to all my questions. I have seen this happen numerous times throughout my life and have full confidence that it will happen again in the future. I can expect this not only because of my past experience but also because I trust so fully the revelatory method of learning. I recommend this as a model in everything we do. ■

NOTES

1. See Kerry Muhlestein and John Gee, “An Egyptian Context for the Sacrifice of Abraham,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*, vol. 20, no. 2 (2011), 70–77.
2. See Kerry Muhlestein, “The Religious and Cultural Background of Joseph Smith Papyrus I,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2013), 20–33; and Kerry Muhlestein, “Abraham, Isaac, and Osiris-Michael: The Use of Biblical Figures in Egyptian Religion, a Survey,” in *Achievements and Problems of Modern Egyptology*, ed. Galina A. Belova (2011), 246–59.



CONFIDENCE IN THE IMPRESSIONS YOU FEEL

“I witness that as you gain experience and success in being guided by the Spirit, your confidence in the impressions you feel can become more certain than your dependence on what you see or hear.”

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “To Acquire Spiritual Guidance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 7.





FamilySearch Indexing: Easier Than Ever!

By Margot Hovley
Church Magazines

Indexing! People are talking about it. Our leaders are encouraging us to get involved. But what is it? And why is it important? And how can each of us help?

Maybe you always thought you'd try indexing but:

- You didn't know how to get started.

You can index anytime or anywhere—even in your pajamas. All you need is a computer or a tablet.

- You didn't think you'd have time.
- You tried it once or twice and it seemed too confusing.
- It didn't seem as important as other family history tasks.

Here are answers to some frequently asked questions to help you get comfortable with indexing.

Q&A

What is indexing?

Indexing is a process that helps us organize the data contained in many kinds of records. There are several types of records to choose from—birth, death, immigration, military, census, deed, probate, and so on. You can also choose from records in many different languages (the indexing of non-English records is greatly needed at present). Individuals log on to a web-based system to look at images of genealogical records and record what they see into forms on their computers.

Indexing began in the year 2006, and in 2017, work shifted to the new web-based system (see familysearch.org/indexing/my-indexing).

Why do we do indexing?

Indexing makes records available and searchable. As one grateful researcher put it, “An unindexed record is an unfindable record.” Before indexing began, those who did family history had to manually look through old records, sometimes spending endless hours pouring over microfilms, hoping to find family names. The indexing process now transforms the information into digital format, and searches that used to take hours, days, or even years can now be accomplished in seconds.

Indexed records make a wonderful new tool possible called “hinting.” The computer looks at the information in your family tree and compares it to the FamilySearch database—all 3-plus billion records. When it finds a record that matches most or all of the information about an ancestor in your tree, it’s posted as a “hint” on that person’s FamilySearch profile page. These hints can springboard you into



England, Derbyshire, Church Registers, 1537-1918 ▾ Derbyshire ▾ Duffield ▾ Marriages 1837-1839 (10 of 129)

1838. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Duffield

No.	Wife Married.	Spouse and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Race or Profession.
192	George Hadley	Hannah Brown	24	Single	Labourer

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England

This Marriage was solemnized between us, George Hadley and Hannah Brown in the presence of us, James Thompson and James Brown

Image Index Information Event Type Event Date Event Place

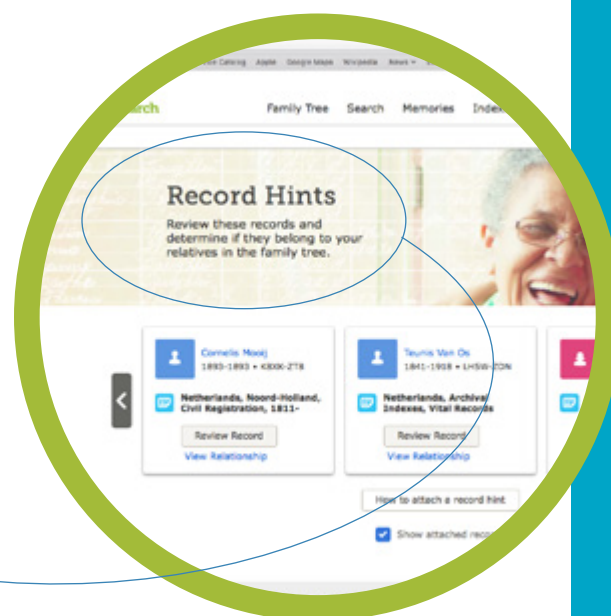
George Hadley Marriage 30 Apr 1838 Duffield, Duffield, Derbyshire, England

George Hadley
England, Derbyshire, Church of England Parish Registers, 1537-1918

Name:	George Hadley
Event Type:	Marriage
Event Date:	30 Apr 1838
Event Place:	Duffield, Duffield, Derbyshire, England
Gender:	Male
Marital Status:	Single
Father's Name:	Joseph Hadley
Spouse's Name:	Hannah Brown
Spouse's Marital Status:	Single
Spouse's Father's Name:	George Brown

INDEXING STATISTICS FOR 2017

- Number of volunteers: 324,018 from 164 countries
- Records indexed: 208,959,154
- Average number of records indexed each day: 572,490
- Records reviewed: 94,366,627





many temple and research opportunities. Indexing is the engine that fuels the hinting feature.

The descendant view of your family tree shows you the descendants of your ancestors, helping you find missing cousins. This powerful feature is also made possible by indexing.

What does it provide the system?

Millions of names are added to FamilySearch through indexing efforts. It is the main source of new information added to the system, ready to be utilized by family members.

DID YOU KNOW?

To date, the total number of records indexed is 1,275,313,269.

On FamilySearch there are 20 times more searchable records in English than in all other languages combined. Fluency in a foreign language is not required to index in that language. Training is available.

What does indexing provide me personally?

Through indexing, your computer can bring your ancestors to you. The days of hunching over microfilm readers are all but gone. Once records are digitized, they aren't just searchable—you can even view many of them in their original form right on your computer screen. Seeing the original records is like reaching into the past.



Maybe you're at a temporary standstill on your own family's genealogical research but would nevertheless like to help with the saving work of temple and family history. Indexing is one way to stay involved. Who knows? You may be the person who indexes a record that breaks down someone else's research barriers. Participating in indexing will bring blessings into your life and the lives of others.

I tried indexing but couldn't read the handwriting. How do I overcome this obstacle?

If you've tried indexing in the past, give the new web-based system a try at familysearch.org/indexing/my-indexing. It's easy to select what difficulty level you want—some projects have easy-to-read handwriting or typescript and can help you gain confidence and experience. There is an incredible array of helps available online, from training videos to interactive practice sessions to live help from a host of trained missionaries who can look at the project with you and get you back on track.

Overview Web Indexing Find a Project Help Resources

Language Resources and Handwriting Helps

FamilySearch can help you understand those hard-to-read records.

Whether you are struggling to read old handwriting or working in an unfamiliar language, we have resources to help you! Using the tips and tricks shown below, you'll be a pro in no time.

Choose Language: English

Handwriting Helps

- Alphabet (Secretary Hand)
- Old English Guide - Introduction
- Old English Guide - A to M
- Old English Guide - N to Z
- Lesson 1: Reading Handwritten Letters
- Lesson 2: Reading Handwritten Names and Words
- Lesson 3: Reading Handwritten Documents

Additional Resources

- 18th Century Tutorial
- Penmanship 1500-1800 (UK National Archives)

Alphabet (Secretary Hand)

Letter	Letter Form Variations	Letter	Letter Form Variations
A	A A A A	a	a a a
B	B B B B	b	b b b
C	C C C C	c	c c c
D	D D D D	d	d d d
E	E E E E	e	e e e
F	F F F F	f	f f f

I would like to help, but how can I fit it in when I'm so busy already?

Indexing has been designed so you can do it in small chunks. You can sit down and do a name or two in five minutes or several batches when you have a free afternoon. All you need is a computer or tablet with a web browser and access to the internet. Think about those small free moments you have each day, like on your lunch break or when you're waiting in a doctor's office or even after meetings on the Sabbath. You could make a huge impact in a small amount of time.

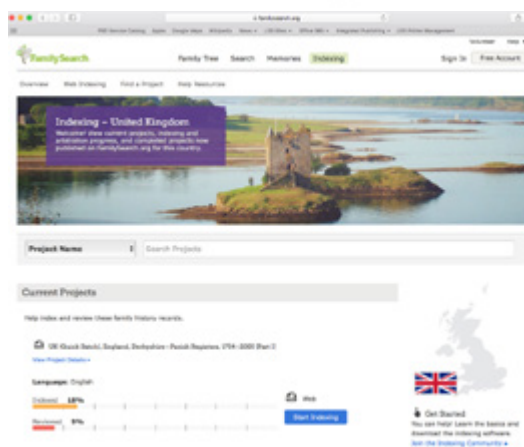
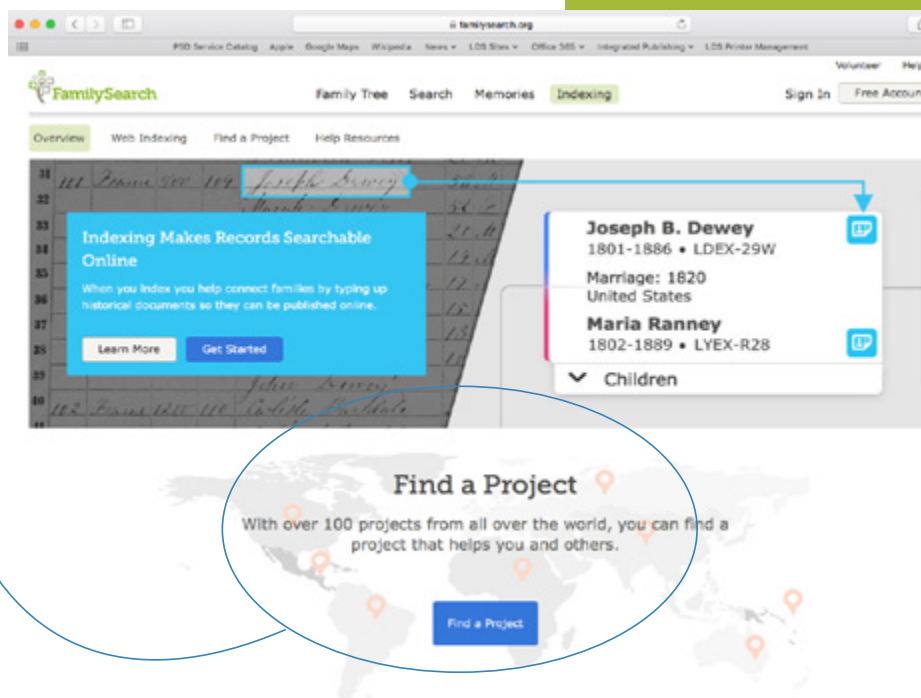
New this year are "quick batches," which are indexing batches consisting of only one or two images. These are great for beginners, people short on time, and volunteers who want to try new languages or difficulty levels.

I'm nervous that I'll do it wrong. What if I make a mistake? Won't that make the name unfindable?

Relax! Many simple errors are caught by the system as you submit a batch in a computerized quality check. But in addition, every indexed name is checked by an experienced indexer in a process called reviewing (formerly arbitration). So don't worry—your efforts don't need to be perfect in order to be of great benefit.

What is reviewing? What are the requirements for becoming a reviewer?

Once you have some experience indexing and understand how it works, you can volunteer to review. In reviewing, your computer screen will display a genealogical record, along with the indexing work that's been done for it. Your job is to simply check that it has been done correctly. Then the record is ready to be added




DISCOVER MORE

To learn more about the blessings of participating in family history, watch this video: lds.org/go/blessingsE1218.

to FamilySearch. Just as with indexing, reviewing work can all be done online and at your convenience.

If you have previously worked as an arbitrator, you automatically qualify to volunteer to help with reviewing. Once qualified, volunteers can



easily switch between indexing and reviewing.

Help with reviewing is greatly needed, as there are not nearly as many volunteers helping with reviewing as indexing. Training and mentoring for reviewing is readily available.

My children are great with computers. Can they help with indexing?

Anyone who has a FamilySearch account, including children over the age of eight, can participate. Young children should be supervised by an adult who is familiar with indexing. Children should also understand that the records are for temple work and need to be handled with care and be as accurate as possible.

Persons of other faiths are also welcome to sign up for a free FamilySearch account to help with indexing efforts.

I'm used to the old indexing system. What are some things about the new web-based system that will help me feel more comfortable with it?

The web-based system gives you the ability to filter and sort the long list of projects, or even mark your favorites, so that you see just the batches you want. In addition, the web-based system includes simple tutorials, or “Tips,” that can help you learn how to use the indexing program. You can customize your indexing experience to your preferences.



A REFINING INFLUENCE

“Family history work has the power to do something *for* the dead. It has an equal power to do something *to* the living. Family history work . . . has a refining, spiritualizing, tempering influence on those who are engaged in it.”

President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Your Family History: Getting Started,” *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 17.

The web-based system also has a feature that allows you to get help at each input window and easily check your work when needed.

The old indexing system was restricted to desktop computers and laptops, whereas the new web-based system can be used on tablets for even more accessibility. It requires no programs to be installed, so you can be up and running quickly, and your hard drive space is conserved.

Never has service been so easy or convenient. You can help build the kingdom as you serve at home in your pajamas! In just a few clicks of your computer mouse, the blessings of temple and family history work can start flowing into your life. ■

A Single Red Bulb

By Lori Ries

A simple Christmas tree ornament reminded me of what Christmas is really about.

Christmas wasn't Christmas. Although I tried to be merry with carols playing in the background, I pulled out the storage bins with a heavy heart. The snowman cookie jar only reminded me that there was no one to bake with. The Santa figurine seemed to say that there was little reason to hang stockings, and the peppermint-striped wrapping paper reminded me that morning wouldn't bring the voices of excited children.

This year our youngest had left for college, and our house felt lonely and quiet. I chose only the non-Santa-type decorations and placed everything else back in the boxes.

With my husband out of town, I decorated the tree alone. My daughter-in-law posted pictures online of my grandchildren hanging ornaments on their tree, and my heart yearned for yesterday. I wondered how time had slipped by so quickly. How had my children grown so fast? Lost in my thoughts, I looked down at the light bulb in my hand. It was a single red bulb.



I examined the color, a deep red. Crimson. I looked around at the simplicity of what was left of the decorations: a few nativities, a manger built from Popsicle sticks, and a decoration that spelled out NOEL in gold letters. My eyes were wet. The bulb was red—red like the atoning blood of the Savior.

I thought about how I had always equated decorations, cookie cutouts, and children's glee on Christmas morning with what made me happy at

Christmastime. Then I thought about my children and their eternal families. I thought about all the joy I had in my family and the joy they had in their own. I pondered how the babe lying in the manger made that possible. A sweetness of warmth sprung in my heart as I contemplated the gift of the Savior—not just for me but for all mankind.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*” (Luke 2:10; emphasis added).

As I continued decorating the tree, I meditated on the humble birth and life of Jesus Christ. He came to mend the broken, build the downtrodden, comfort the lonely, bring peace in imperfection, and give compassion for suffering. He was born and died that we might live with Him in our Father's kingdom once more. He came that man might know true happiness. My heart swelled and I found joy in Christ because Christ is Christmas. ■
The author lives in Oregon, USA.



**By Elder
Carl B. Cook**
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

WIN THE BATTLE with the Natural Man

Through Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we can put off the natural man and become Saints.

The scriptures teach us how we can put off “the natural man” and become Saints through Jesus Christ and His Atonement (Mosiah 3:19). Like all of us, I have been battling with the natural man for many years. But I am determined to never relax, retreat, or retire from the fight.

The natural man is the mortal part of us that allows our temporal desires to overrule our inherent spiritual goodness and our desires to become like our Heavenly Parents.¹ Of course, we won’t win the fight immediately. It is a daily battle for each of us, and we depend upon God and Jesus Christ to help us change our nature.

From Stubby to Spinner

I had a horse who helped me appreciate the amazing process of change. When our children were young, my wife and I looked for a gentle children’s horse. Our neighbor had such a horse, but he would sell us kind and gentle Bob only if we also bought his other horse, Stubby. The names alone describe the horses. Eventually we decided to purchase both horses to acquire Bob.

Sure enough, Bob was wonderful, and Stubby ended up being a stubborn, strong-willed, obnoxious animal who consistently acted up and caused trouble with the other horses. I usually ended up riding Stubby during our family rides. He was defiant. When I tried to turn right, Stubby fought to go left. If I wanted to gallop, he would buck or crow-hop.



I decided to do all I could to help bring about a change in Stubby's disposition. I corrected bad behavior and rewarded good behavior. I rode him side by side with our well-behaved horses. I rode him frequently and groomed him often. Over time, Stubby began to soften. He submitted more readily to the saddle and bridle, and he began allowing me to guide and control him without resistance.

As Stubby's disposition improved, he surprisingly became my horse of choice. He was energetic and had good stamina. He was not at all hesitant or fearful in challenging situations, and in a group of other horses, he led out without needing to be urged on. Over a period of 10 to 15 years, Stubby developed

into an exceptional lead horse. In fact, Stubby made such a turnaround that we changed his name to Spinner.

When I walked to the pasture, Spinner was quick to come to me. He responded to the gentlest commands. I could ride him easily without a saddle or even a bit in his mouth. He was gentle and became a favorite horse of our grandchildren. We would say, in horse lingo, that he was "well broke." Spinner gave up his wild nature and aligned his will with his master's will.

Spinner underwent a major transformation, but it took time, patience, and a lot of work. Through this process of change, Spinner's life improved immensely, and so did mine! It broke



my heart when he passed away. We buried him in a place of honor, marked with a hitching post and his halter.

In a similar though much more meaningful way, we are invited to change and submit ourselves to God, who is our Master. In the New Testament we read:

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4:7–8).

Submitting to God

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) described some of the blessings that come to us as we draw nigh to God and align our will with His: “Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace.”²

Blessings do come as we submit our will to Heavenly Father, and the more fully we submit our will to Him, the richer the blessings will be. They may not be the blessings we expect, but they will always be the blessings we need.

Real joy is available to each of us as we align ourselves with God. To experience this joy, we must learn to follow the enticings of the Spirit—the things of God—rather than the enticings of the adversary—the things of the natural man. Because of the Father’s gift of agency, we choose daily which enticings to follow.

In Matthew we read, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).

As my Grandma Jenny, who was a true cowgirl, used to say, “You can’t ride two horses at the same time.”³

Enticements of the Adversary

The adversary entices us to be lazy, complacent, discouraged, indifferent, and doubting. He also entices us to give in

to appetites of the flesh, such as violating the Word of Wisdom, viewing pornography, breaking the law of chastity, or engaging in other immoral practices. If we are wise, we ignore and shun those enticements. We exercise self-control and develop the capacity to avoid them. If we are injured by them, or if we become ensnared by them, we can escape through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Though some things may take time to overcome, nothing is impossible—including repudiation of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and healing.

Another enticement of the adversary is pride. President Benson described pride as “the great stumbling block.”⁴

One sign of pride is pushing back or turning away from God or from others who invite us to do God’s will. A resistant and prideful condition is described well in the Book of Mormon: “Behold, they do not desire that the Lord their God, who hath created them, should rule and reign over them; notwithstanding his great goodness and his mercy towards them, they do set at naught his counsels, and they will not that he should be their guide” (Helaman 12:6).

In other words, pride says, “Don’t tell me what to do. Don’t try to control my life.”

When we rebel or turn our backs toward God, we are actually turning our backs on true joy and happiness. Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “Only by aligning our wills with God’s is full happiness to be found.”⁵

Pride, that sinister, grievous, subtle, disrupting, insidious, menacing, and rotten attribute of the natural man, constantly pulls us to focus on ourselves: our looks, our talents, our desires, our goals, our passions—on me, me, me. We look inward rather than outward toward others or upward toward God. Pride causes us to focus on what we want instead of on what others want or on what God wants.

The antidote for pride is humility. It is humbling ourselves and putting God’s will above our own, seeking what He wants instead of what we want, and aligning our will with His.

It is often challenging to recognize pride in ourselves. As President Benson described, we often sin in ignorance.⁶ When

I lose the Spirit or feel distant from God or from others, I find it helpful to ask myself, “Is it pride that is causing this problem?” Inevitably, the Spirit whispers, “Yes, it is!”

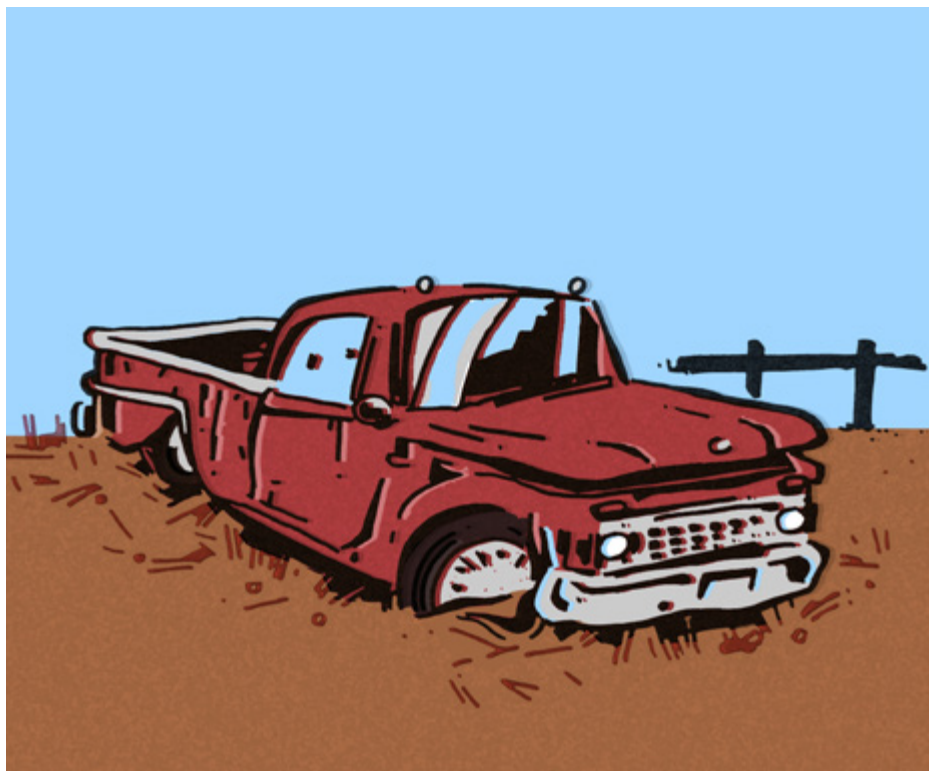
I am grateful for the Lord’s mercy and kindness in helping us overcome our weaknesses. It is not easy to ask the question “Is it pride?” or to accept the answer. But recognizing pride is the first step toward overcoming it. We can then identify what we need to work on, humble ourselves, plead for forgiveness, let our pride go, and align our will with God’s.

Yes, the enticings of the adversary are real, but the enticings of the Holy Spirit are also real—and powerful! As we obey and yield to the enticings of the Spirit to pray, study the scriptures, and serve others, we begin to see who we really are—from God’s perspective and not just from our own. We feel God’s pure love for us and recognize our infinite worth. We can feel comforted, valued, and lifted. And often the enticings of the Spirit and our feelings of God’s love will prompt us to repent, change, and become better.

Both Feet in the Stirrups

One evening during my missionary service in Germany, my companion and I were teaching a lesson on honesty. We taught the investigators that stealing is taking something that does not belong to you. Suddenly, an experience forcefully came back to my memory.

As a 16-year-old, I had fixed up an old truck to drive to school and work, but it was an ongoing challenge to keep it running. One day, when a friend and I were driving along a country road, we noticed a truck similar to mine discarded in a field. The old truck was partially dismantled and rusting away, but it had a part that was missing from my truck. Since the truck appeared to be



abandoned, I rationalized that surely no one would miss the part. My friend encouraged me, and we removed the part from the abandoned truck and put it on my truck.

As I taught the investigators, I was pained by my having taken the part. I knew it was wrong. The Spirit helped me understand that from God’s point of view, I had not been honest. I began repenting and asking God for forgiveness. I realized that to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, to teach gospel principles, and to testify with power, I must be living those principles. From a cowboy’s perspective, I knew I had to have both feet in the stirrups.

This incident was on my mind for the remaining 18 months of my mission. When I returned home, it was a great relief to find the owner of that old truck, reimburse him for what I had taken, and complete my repentance. At last I felt clean, and I was filled with joy and peace.

The Path of Repentance

The path of repenting and changing is a path that each of us can follow, no matter our situation. It is a joyful path we walk with the Savior. As we do, we come to better understand His great power, mercy, and love. We better comprehend who He is and therefore who we are and who we have the

potential to become. The path of repentance is the path that leads to becoming a Saint.

The first step along the path is to exercise faith in God and pray to Him with real intent, sharing our heartfelt feelings. We may feel a desire to repent of our sins, to be cleansed and healed. We may also be filled with resolve and strength to change and progress. The Spirit will guide us, and Jesus Christ will help us along the path.

It took approximately 15 years for Spinner's nature to change significantly. Heavenly Father doesn't expect immediate perfection. He accepts our efforts, but He would not have us delay. He would have us come unto Him now and work to become "submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us]" (Mosiah 3:19). He wants us to be His.

Discipleship can at times be challenging, but if we have faith and cultivate the Spirit, we can "cowboy up"—face the challenge with determination—and learn to put off the natural man. It can be a joyful process.

I love the scripture in the Book of Mormon that describes this pattern of living and progressing: "They did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God" (Helaman 3:35).

I invite each of us to yield our hearts to God, to align our will with His, and to truly change. We can ask ourselves, "Am I stuck as a Stubby, or am I becoming a Spinner? Am I following my own course and striving to please myself, or do I desire to please God? Am I attempting to satisfy the appetites of the natural man, or am I striving to please my Master?"

Heavenly Father can help us answer these questions. He can also help us in our quest to improve and become more like the Savior.

I know that as we submit and yield our hearts to God, He will bless us. Jesus Christ sets the perfect example for us. His only desire is to fulfill God's plan. God's will is His will. God's

work is His work. They are one. Even when faced with making the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus submitted His will to His Father's, saying, "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

I bear testimony that through Jesus Christ and His Atonement, we can do all things—including putting off the natural man and becoming Saints. ■

From a devotional address, "Putting Off the Natural Man and Becoming Saints," given at Brigham Young University on October 10, 2017. For the full address, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. See Spencer W. Kimball, "Ocean Currents and Family Influences," *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 112.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 42–43.
3. Jenny Afton Skeen Cook (1906–91).
4. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 239.
5. Neal A. Maxwell, "Swallowed Up in the Will of the Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 23.
6. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 232.



Helping Children Find Peace

By Barbara A. Lewis

As the floodwaters of Hurricane Harvey washed into their home in Katy, Texas, the McShane family fled upstairs. Soon the first floor was completely flooded. They were trapped.

But the McShane family had a defense against the rising waters. During the flood, Patricia McShane wrote, “We know the Lord is in control. No matter what happens we will survive and we will get through this together! We will continue to pray and trust in our Heavenly Father.” With this attitude, she and her family were able to hold on until rescue came the next afternoon, when their daughter’s fiancé and his father arrived in a canoe with supplies and homemade bread.¹

Hurricanes rage in everyone’s life, whether they are actual storms or gales of personal troubles. Peace is not necessarily the absence of problems. Peace is an inside job. Like the McShanes, we can feel peace in our hearts even in the midst of a storm by focusing on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. As we practice cultivating peace within ourselves, we can help our children do the same.

Talk Openly about Feelings

Children are like barometers—they can detect the “atmospheric changes” in our feelings and moods. They easily read the body language, vocal pitch, and facial expressions of adults. If we feel agitated, they are often the first to sense it.

We can help children feel more peace by explaining why we feel troubled. Simple answers can sometimes be enough. If we don’t explain the problem, they might assume the worst or blame themselves. But when children feel included, their stress level is usually lower than it would be if they were left to imagine what might be wrong.

It’s also important to acknowledge children’s feelings. When children learn that feelings are a part of life, they can learn to work through them and turn to God for true peace.

A little girl named Abigail was afraid to go to sleep because she believed there were monsters hiding under her bed. Her father told her she was being silly. Instead, Abigail’s father could have lessened her fear by validating her feelings and admitting that he is also afraid sometimes. He could have shown her how to handle her fear by praying with her. This would help Abigail better manage her own emotions and trust in both her earthly father and her Heavenly Father.

Limit Media Consumption

It is not only monsters under the bed that can scare children. Children today fear such things as terrorist attacks, shootings, hurricanes, drownings, and kidnappings.² Much of their fear stems from media consumption. Children can see the news, watch frightening movies, and access inappropriate games and websites. Media violence can make children less sensitive to violence and more prone to nightmares, depression, aggression, and fear of harm.³

As we practice
cultivating peace
within ourselves,
we can help
our children
do the same.



A newspaper editorial observed, “A society that views graphic violence as entertainment . . . should not be surprised when senseless violence shatters the dreams of its youngest and brightest.”⁴

To combat the negative effects of media on children, set secure boundaries for technology use. Consider taking regular “fasts” from electronic media with children. Instead, spend time with them outdoors—hiking, swimming, running, climbing, or playing sports. Brainstorm ideas for service and allow children to choose how to serve. Praise the children for their good ideas. Help them notice the peace that flows from service.

Let Them Learn from Their Choices

A father took his son to a park to fly his kite. The father helped his son launch the kite in the air. The boy ran, letting out more string as the kite soared. Soon there was no more string.

The boy called, “Daddy, let’s cut the string and let the kite go; I want to see it go higher and higher.”

His father answered, “Son, the kite won’t go higher if we cut the string.”

“Yes, it will,” the boy urged. “The string is holding the kite down.”

The wise father allowed his son to cut the string. Immediately the kite was spinning out of control. It darted and swayed until it crashed to the ground. It was a startling lesson for the young boy, but he learned a great principle.⁵

Oftentimes we are tempted to jump in and solve children’s problems for them or to shield them from disappointment. But this robs them of the chance to learn how to figure things out for themselves. When children learn to accept disappointment and overcome simple struggles, they gain confidence and become more self-reliant. They feel more secure knowing that problems can usually be solved and mistakes can be fixed. This empowerment brings inner peace.

Teach Them to Feel the Holy Ghost

Children need to learn how to recognize the Spirit. One of the roles of the Holy Ghost is to bring comfort and peace.



LOOKING INSIDE: FINDING PEACE WITHIN YOURSELF AS AN ADULT

- Pray for a peaceful heart.
- Read scriptures, conference talks, and inspiring books.
- Forgive people and yourself.
- Reach out to serve others.
- Set personal boundaries for media use.
- Eat wholesome foods and exercise.

The sons of Mosiah must have felt some apprehension as they prepared to venture on missions into the Lamanite territory. The Lamanites at that time were ferocious people who loved to rob and murder wandering Nephites (see Alma 17:13–14). However, before the sons of Mosiah separated, they prayed together, and “the Lord did visit them with his Spirit, and said unto them: Be comforted. And they were comforted” (Alma 17:10). The peace they gained through the Holy Ghost strengthened them to continue.

We can teach our children to seek and recognize the peace the Comforter brings. When a child has a warmhearted moment after doing a kind deed, we can teach him or her that this tenderness is how the Holy Ghost makes us feel.



LOOKING OUTSIDE: REACHING OUTWARD TO HELP CHILDREN FIND PEACE

- Listen to children and accept their feelings as valid.
- Pray with children when they are worried.
- Empower children by teaching them problem-solving skills and allowing them to solve simple problems.
- Show children how to handle frustration through prayer, scripture study, and activities.
- Help children recognize the peace the Holy Ghost provides.
- Set boundaries for media use.

Encourage children to pay attention to their feelings while they pray, study the scriptures, serve, or do other things that invite the Holy Ghost. With practice, they will be able to identify the peace and comfort that comes from the Holy Ghost and seek it on their own.

Build Righteous Habits

Studying the scriptures and praying together each day can build security and purpose for a family, even when a child is not engaged. A teenage son in one family refused to roll out of bed for scripture study each morning. So after reading with the other children, his mother knelt by his bed, prayed separately with him, and read scriptures to him while he dozed.

When the son left home, she often read scriptures to him over the phone. Years passed and storms raged in her son's life. Later, the mother wrote long, loving letters to him while he was in prison. The son answered her letters, but this time he quoted scriptures to her. He testified of the peace that the Lord's words had brought to him while in a dark place. The mother then knew that all the scriptures and peaceful words she had shared with him, even when he refused to listen, had been carried to his heart.

More years passed. The son fully repented and came back to church. Eventually, his mother was able to attend his endowment and sealing to a wonderful woman in the temple. She recognized the great answer to her prayers, as "peace, like a river,"⁶ flowed from her son's heart.

Focus on the Savior

Above all, we can teach children to find peace by pointing them toward the Prince of Peace. By following His path, we can avoid unnecessary fear and suffering. Sheri L. Dew, former Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, encouraged mothers to "teach their children where to find peace and truth and that the power of Jesus Christ is always stronger than the power of the adversary."⁷

The Savior said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Peace ultimately comes from knowing that our Father in Heaven has a plan for us and from exercising faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement. As the McShane family learned, we can find peace inside, even when storms swirl around us. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. See Delisa Hargrove, "Hope after Harvey: Some Personal Stories," MormonHub, Sept. 8, 2017, mormonhub.com/blog/faith/hope-harvey-personal-stories.
2. See Elizabeth Landau, "Terrorism, Kidnapping among Top Fears for Today's Youth," CNN, Apr. 16, 2009, cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/04/16/children.fears.
3. See Nicole Adams, "How Watching Violence on TV Affects Kids," Livestrong, June 13, 2017, livestrong.com/article/221006-how-tv-violence-affects-kids.
4. Quoted in Thomas S. Monson, "Finding Peace," *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 4.
5. See Patricia P. Pinegar, "Peace, Hope, and Direction," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 67–68.
6. "It Is Well with My Soul," *Gospel Hymns No. 2* (1876), no. 76; see also Isaiah 48:18; 66:12.
7. Sheri L. Dew, "Are We Not All Mothers?" *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 97.

An Invitation to

Light The World



This Christmas season, Church leaders have again invited us to “Light the World.” This year, events will begin with a worldwide day of service and end with a special Sunday worship service. Each week in between features a different theme with different ideas for how we can “Light the World” by following the Savior’s example of love and service.

“Light the World” Worldwide Day of Service

“Light the World” officially begins on December 1, 2018, with a worldwide day of service. Serving together is a natural way for us to bless those around us and strengthen relationships with neighbors and friends.

During this day of service, members and missionaries are encouraged to plan simple acts of service with their neighbors to benefit the community where they live.

Weekly Themes

This year, service ideas are grouped by weekly themes. As you consider how you can give as the Savior gave, visit lighttheworld.org for ideas on how you can:

01 Light the WORLD

02 Light your COMMUNITY

03 Light your FAMILY

04 Light your FAITH

A Special Sunday Invitation

As part of the culmination of “Light the World,” members are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors who aren’t members or who attend infrequently to join them in worshipping the Savior during a special sacrament meeting on December 23, 2018. Ward and branch leaders have been asked to plan a Christ-centered meeting and help guests feel welcome and comfortable.

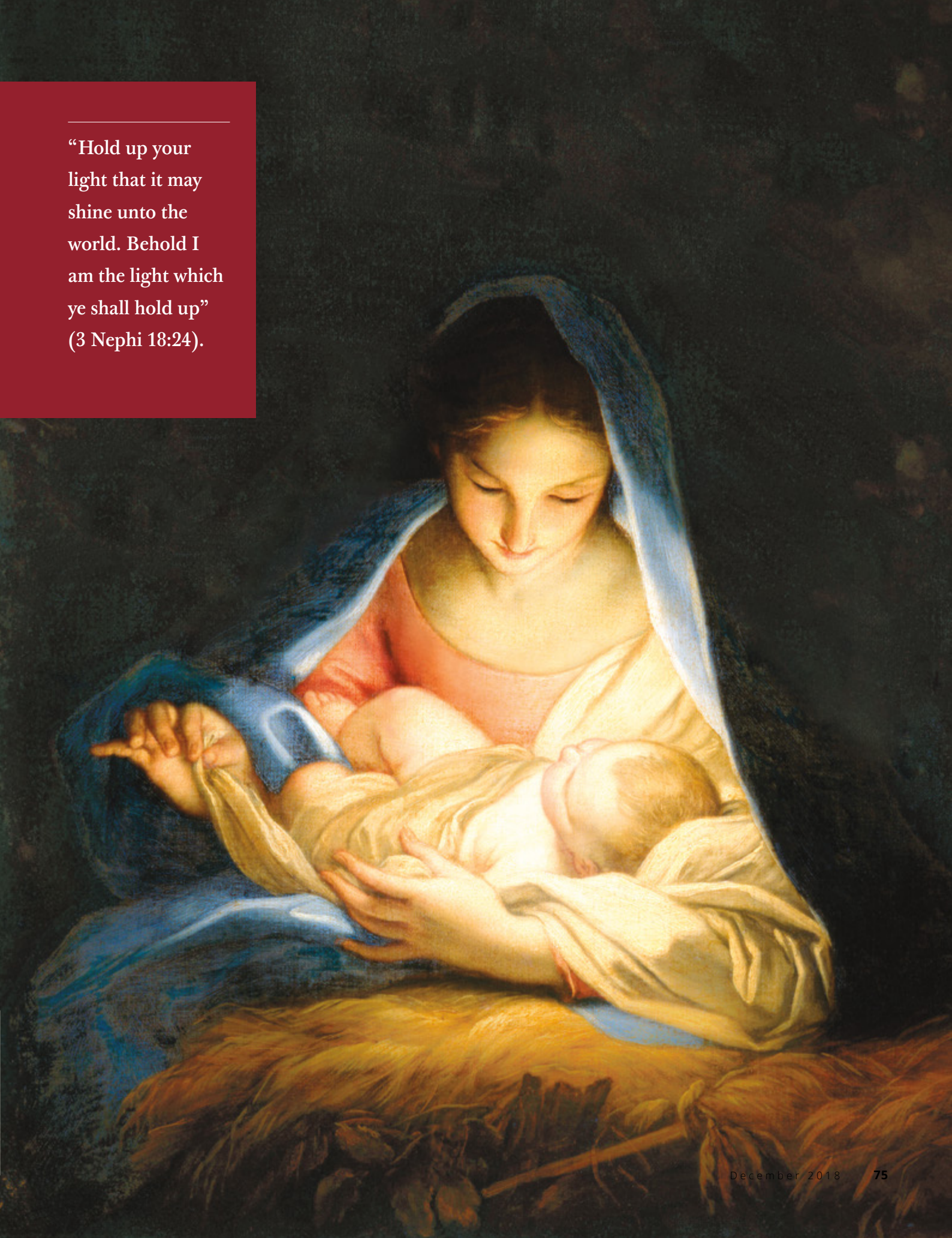
As you pray, ask Heavenly Father to help you know who might be prepared to accept an invitation. For some helpful tips on making church more inviting when inviting your friends, visit lds.org/go/invitingE1218.

This Christmas, we can “Light the World” as we look for ways to share the light and love of the Savior with those around us. ■

DISCOVER MORE

- For ideas on how to “Light the World” this Christmas, visit lighttheworld.org.
- Need some tips on inviting your friends to come to church with you? Find some ideas at lds.org/go/invitingE1218.

“Hold up your
light that it may
shine unto the
world. Behold I
am the light which
ye shall hold up”
(3 Nephi 18:24).



A Sweet Christmas

My family has made Christmas a memorable occasion for as long as I can remember. When I left for the Brazil Porto Alegre South Mission, I didn't realize how hard it would be for me to spend Christmas away from them for the first time.

During my first Christmas in the mission field, I longed to be with my family, but my companion and I were alone. A sense of self-pity and sadness seized me.

On Christmas Eve, a dear family invited my companion and me to dinner. We had a nice evening, but this family's happiness just reminded me that I was away from my own family. That night we went home, and I tried to sleep and forget that the next day was Christmas. For the first time in my life, I was relieved when Christmas was over.

A year later, I reflected on the previous Christmas and thought about what I could do to have a better Christmas in the mission field. I realized that my feelings of sadness the year before came from focusing on myself instead of on the Savior. I also realized that Christmas is a time to remember the Savior's birth

and that I should be happy to serve Him as His representative.

In talking with my companion, we decided to buy lollipops to give to members, investigators, children, and anyone else we came across on Christmas Day. We also practiced Christmas hymns to sing. Joy flooded my heart on Christmas Day as we met with people, sang hymns, and gave away lollipops.

On our way home that evening, we met an elderly man sitting on the sidewalk. We asked if he had received a Christmas present that day. He said yes—he had spoken on the phone with his children who lived far away.

"We have one more present to give you," we said. We gave him a lollipop.

"This will not only sweeten my mouth," he said, "but this will also sweeten my spirit."

I had the worst Christmas on my mission because I focused only on myself. I also had the best Christmas when I instead focused on the Savior. I know when we focus on Him, He will bring sweetness to our spirits at Christmas and every day of the year. ■

**Wilson Correia dos Santos,
Pernambuco, Brazil**



For a better Christmas in the mission field, my companion and I decided to buy lollipops to give to anyone we came across on Christmas Day.



*I felt prompted to meet this man.
I approached him, extended my
hand, and asked for his name.*

“Ye Have Done It unto Me”

Our family has a Christmas tradition of giving gift bags of food, gloves, hats, and other necessities to those in need. In 2016, Christmas Eve was especially cold for the area of California, USA, we live in. We were bundled up, but we were still shivering!

As we drove to a park near our home where many people who are homeless stay, we saw a man huddled in the meager shelter of a bus stop, covered in an old blanket. My husband, Dennis, stopped the car and took our son, Jonathan, with him to give the man a gift bag. Our daughter, Abbey, and I stayed in the car and watched.

The man lifted his head as Dennis handed him the bag. A huge smile spread across the man’s face. They shook

hands and began to talk. This was unusual because normally there isn’t much of an exchange.

After several minutes, Dennis returned to the car and opened the trunk.

“Is everything OK?” I asked.

“Yes,” he said. “I’m giving him my parka. He needs it more than I do.”

I was speechless. This was a really nice parka that Dennis had worn only a handful of times! Dennis went back to the man and helped him put on the warm parka. The man’s face was beaming. Dennis and the man continued talking.

I felt compelled to meet this man. I opened my car door, and Abbey followed me. Dennis smiled as we approached, and he introduced us to the man. I extended my hand and asked for his name.

He took my hand, smiled warmly, and replied, “Jesús.”

My family continued the conversation, but I didn’t hear much after that. I kept thinking of the significance of this sweet man’s name: Jesús—the name of our Savior. In that moment, I was reminded of the Savior’s teaching: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). That experience forever changed me. ■

Shannon Knight, California, USA

I wrapped my white cane and gave it as a Christmas gift to the brother who gave me a priesthood blessing.



ILLUSTRATION BY CAROLYN VIBBERT

We Were Both Blessed

I was left half-blind when a truck knocked me off my bike. A little over four years later, during the Christmas season in 2011, I felt prompted to ask a brother I had known in a previous ward for a priesthood blessing. I saw this brother only from time to time, so I didn't understand why I should ask him. I knew there were other worthy priesthood holders I could ask instead.

In the weeks that followed, the feeling that I needed a blessing became stronger. I was serving as a temple worker in the Frankfurt Germany Temple, so I decided to ask one of the brethren there for a blessing.

After I made this decision, the brother I had been impressed to ask entered the temple. I immediately knew this wasn't a coincidence—Heavenly Father wanted

me to ask this brother specifically. I worked up my courage and asked to talk with him after his session. He agreed.

Later, I explained that I didn't know why, but I felt I needed a blessing from him. He said he would be happy to help. He invited another brother into the room and then began giving me a blessing. As he finished, I was confused. The blessing was nice, but there was nothing particularly special about it.

Then I opened my eyes.

When I opened my eyes, I could see the whole room almost clearly. I couldn't believe it! I asked the brother if he knew why he was the one who needed to give me this blessing. His response humbled me.

"I don't think this blessing was only for you," he said. "It was for me too. I'm giving my niece a blessing tomorrow

because she is getting baptized. Our family is not active in the Church, and she is the first family member to be baptized in almost 20 years. Many in our family will attend the baptism, and I wasn't sure my faith was strong enough to give the blessing. Now I know I can do it."

In the days that followed, my vision improved enough that I no longer needed my white cane. I wrapped it and gave it as a Christmas gift to this brother along with a letter. "I know this is not the staff of Moses," I wrote, "but I hope it reminds you of the priesthood power that you hold."

Heavenly Father loves us and delights to bless us. This blessing at Christmas not only restored my sight but also gave a humble priesthood holder confidence in his priesthood service. ■

Anna Fingerle, Hesse, Germany

The Book of Mormon: A Special Gift

On Christmas Eve 2016, while my husband and I were serving as temple missionaries for the Manila Philippines Temple, I wanted to give a copy of the Book of Mormon to someone. Inside the front cover of a copy, I wrote my testimony and included a postcard of the Manila temple with information on where to learn more about the Church. Then I knelt in prayer and asked the Lord to guide me to someone He had prepared.

I left our apartment and crossed the street. A security guard for the nearby missionary training center was visiting with two men. He called out, “Merry Christmas!” I felt impressed to walk over to them.

After I introduced myself, I learned that one man was a groundskeeper for the missionary training center and the other was a farmer. I learned that they were both members of the Church.

I asked if they knew someone who might be interested in receiving as a Christmas gift a copy of the Book of Mormon. The farmer looked surprised. He said he had a friend coming to visit the temple grounds with him in a few minutes. He had wanted to give his friend a Book of Mormon but had not been able to obtain

one. Filled with emotion, I pulled the Book of Mormon from my bag. I told them about my prayer and gave him the book.

The Spirit touched us all, and the farmer expressed hope that his friend would read the Book of Mormon and accept the gospel. As I walked back to my apartment, I thanked the Lord and prayed that the farmer’s friend would keep his commitment to visit the temple grounds.

About 15 minutes later, I received a call from the MTC security gate. The farmer’s friend had arrived. I immediately went to meet him. He was the captain of a merchant ship that was heading back to sea in two days. He thanked me for the Book of Mormon and said he would take it on the ship with him. Before we said goodbye, I looked directly into his eyes and said, “This book is true.” As I did so, the Spirit confirmed this truth to me.

That Christmas I gave a special gift: a Book of Mormon and my testimony that it is true. I also received a special gift: the Lord answered my prayer and blessed me with an opportunity to share the gospel. ■

Claudette Bybee Burt, Washington, USA

The captain thanked me for the Book of Mormon and said he would take it on the ship with him.





By Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85)

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Knowing Christ through Joseph Smith

There is one by whom the knowledge of Christ and of salvation has come in our day.

We teach and testify that salvation is in Christ. He is our Lord, our God, our King. We worship the Father in His name, as have all the holy prophets, and all the Saints of all ages.

We rejoice in Him and in His atoning sacrifice. His name is above every name, and to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord of all, without whom there would be neither immortality nor eternal life.

But I shall now speak of another, of the one by whom the knowledge of Christ and of salvation has come in our day. . . .

I shall speak of Joseph Smith, Jr., the mighty prophet of the Restoration, the one who first heard the heavenly voice in this dispensation, the one through whose instrumentality the kingdom of God was once again established among men. . . .

In the spring of 1820 [God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ] rent the veil of darkness which for long ages had shrouded the earth. . . . They came down from Their celestial home to a grove of trees near Palmyra, New York. Calling young Joseph by name, They then told him that . . . he would be the instrument in Their hands of restoring the fulness of Their everlasting gospel. . . .

All men may well ask themselves where they stand with reference to Joseph Smith and his divine mission. Do they inquire after his name and seek that salvation found only in the gospel of Christ as revealed to His latter-day prophet . . . ? The great



question which all men in our day must answer—and that at the peril of their own salvation—is: Was Joseph Smith called of God? . . .

. . . Let there be no misunderstanding. We are witnesses of Christ. He is our Savior. . . . But we are also witnesses of Joseph Smith, by whom we know of Christ, and who is the legal administrator to whom power was given to bind on earth and seal in heaven, that all men from his day forward might be heirs of salvation. ■

From “Joseph Smith—The Mighty Prophet of the Restoration,” Ensign, May 1976, 94–96. Capitalization standardized.



**NATIVITY QUILT BY
JUDY WANGEMANN**

*"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.
"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. . . .
"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:11-12, 14).*

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

