

Ensign

A painting depicting a large group of people, primarily women and children, gathered around a central figure. They are dressed in white, simple, textured robes. The scene is set against a background of soft, blended colors in shades of green, blue, and white, suggesting an outdoor or semi-outdoor setting. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair, wearing a blue dress with a white floral pattern, is looking towards the group. The overall mood is one of care, support, and community.

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These elders were serving in Denmark in 1913. Decades earlier the Lord had revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that the field was "already to harvest" (D&C 4:4) and "that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people" (D&C 15:6). Accordingly, the Prophet and succeeding Church Presidents called many members to serve missions throughout the world.

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“Am I Going to Die?” page 12: Having an understanding of the plan of salvation is integral to our eternal progression. You might study the plan by reading scriptures such as 2 Nephi 2:22–25; 9:10–11; Alma 34:32–33; 40:11–14; 42:5–15; or Doctrine and Covenants 76:30–113. You could create a diagram by taking turns drawing each part of the plan of salvation as it relates to each scripture (see page 54 of *Preach My Gospel* for an example of a diagram). You might also practice teaching the principles to each other so you can simply explain the plan of salvation to someone who has questions about it.

“Family History and Temple Blessings,” page 26: Have you accepted the temple challenge that the Renlunds refer to? (see

pages 29 and 31). In the words of Elder Renlund, you are invited “to find as many names to take to the temple as ordinances you perform in the temple and to teach others to do the same.” And you can do it as a family! To learn more about the challenge, visit templechallenge.lds.org and discover some step-by-step family history tips. You could spend future family home evenings preparing names for the temple and teaching friends how to do their own family history.

PLANNING DELIGHTFUL SUNDAY ACTIVITIES

Are you searching for Sunday activity ideas to help strengthen your family and make the Sabbath a delight? Family home evening is an ideal time to generate ideas and plan such activities. To help get you started, consider reviewing the online article “20 Do’s for Making the Sabbath a Delight” (lds.org/go/sabbathE217). The article includes a printable “bucket list” of Sunday activities that your family can perform and check off as the activities are completed. The ideas include looking through family photo albums, writing thank-you notes to the people who speak in church, creating a gospel quote book, and taking a Sunday walk.

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FROM OUR READERS

See what readers are saying about the Ensign at ensign.lds.org. How has the Ensign blessed your life? How might the magazine improve? To share your feelings, suggestions, or questions, use the “Submit an Article” link on our web page.



By President
Thomas S.
Monson

“AS I HAVE LOVED YOU”

Some years ago a friend named Louis related to me a tender account about his gentle, soft-spoken mother. When she passed away, she left to her sons and daughters no fortune of finance but rather a heritage of wealth in example, in sacrifice, in obedience.

After the funeral eulogies had been spoken and the sad trek to the cemetery had been made, the grown family sorted through the meager possessions the mother had left. Among them, Louis discovered a note and a key. The note instructed: “In the corner bedroom, in the bottom drawer of my dresser, is a tiny box. It contains the treasure of my heart. This key will open the box.”

All wondered what their mother had of sufficient value to place under lock and key.

The box was removed from its resting place and opened carefully with the aid of the key. As Louis and the others examined the contents of the box, they found an individual photo of each child, with the child’s name and birth date. Louis then pulled out a homemade valentine. In crude, childlike penmanship, which he recognized as his own, he read the words he had written 60 years before: “Dear Mother, I love you.”

Hearts were tender, voices soft, and eyes moist. Mother’s treasure was her eternal family. Its strength rested on the bedrock foundation of “I love you.”

In today’s world, nowhere is that bedrock foundation of

love needed more than in the home. And nowhere should the world find a better example of that foundation than in the homes of Latter-day Saints who have made love the heart of their family life.

To those of us who profess to be disciples of the Savior Jesus Christ, He gave this far-reaching instruction:

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”¹

If we would keep the commandment to love one another, we must treat each other with compassion and respect, showing our love in day-to-day interactions. Love offers a kind word, a patient response, a selfless act, an understanding ear, a forgiving heart. In all our associations, these and other such acts help make evident the love in our hearts.

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) observed: “Love . . . is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Yet it is more than the end of the rainbow. Love is at the beginning also, and from it springs the beauty that arches across the sky on a stormy day. Love is the security for which children weep, the yearning of youth, the adhesive that binds marriage, and the lubricant that prevents devastating friction in the home; it is the peace of old age, the sunlight of hope shining through death. How rich are those who enjoy



it in their associations with family, friends, church, and neighbors.”²

Love is the very essence of the gospel, the noblest attribute of the human soul. Love is the remedy for ailing families, ill communities, and sick nations. Love is a smile, a wave, a kind comment, and a compliment. Love is sacrifice, service, and selflessness.

Husbands, love your wives. Treat them with dignity and appreciation. Sisters, love your husbands. Treat them with honor and encouragement.

Parents, love your children. Pray for them, teach them, and testify to them. Children, love your parents. Show them respect, gratitude, and obedience.

Without the pure love of Christ, Mormon counsels, “[we] are nothing.”³ My prayer is that we may follow

Mormon’s counsel to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that [we] may become

the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him.”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. John 13:34–35.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “And the Greatest of These Is Love,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1984, 3.
3. Moroni 7:46; see also verse 44.
4. Moroni 7:48.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

President Monson teaches us the importance of demonstrating true Christlike love, particularly in the home. Consider what you can do to show love to those you teach. You could also ask them to discuss ways they can show more love to one another. You might encourage them to select one of those ideas and make plans to achieve it as a family. For instance, family members could offer a secret act of service to another family member each week. You might ask them to later reflect on how striving to reach their goal increased the love in their home.

Praying for Peace

By Sarah T.

My parents often attended meetings after church, and I would watch my three younger brothers and help them make lunch—though they were often short-tempered and hungry. Usually if they started fighting, I could solve the small problem quickly. But sometimes it was hard to make peace once a fight had started because I’d get agitated.

One afternoon, my brothers were having an especially hard time getting along. I found that my efforts to make peace only made things worse because I was upset. So I just made my own lunch and stopped talking. Finally, I announced, “I’m going to pray. Can we please be quiet for a minute?” Once they settled down, I asked for a blessing



on the food. Before I closed the prayer, I added, “And please help us to be peacemakers.”

At first, they seemed not to hear and began fighting again. I was annoyed but knew I needed to be as loving and calm as I could be because I’d just prayed for peace. After a minute, I felt very calm. I ate without saying anything, and the boys eventually stopped fighting. I realized the peace I felt was an answer to a simple prayer. I had prayed to be a peacemaker, and my Heavenly Father had helped me stay calm when it was so tempting to yell. I know that He can truly give us peace.

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

CHILDREN

True Treasure

President Monson tells a story about a mother who had a special treasure box. When her children opened the box, they found pictures of themselves. The mother’s treasure was her family!

True treasure isn’t gold or jewels—it’s the people you love. Whom do you love? Draw a picture of them or write their names in the treasure box.



Christ's Atonement Is Evidence of God's Love

Prayerfully study this material and seek for inspiration to know what to share. How will understanding the purpose of Relief Society prepare daughters of God for the blessings of eternal life?



Faith
Family
Relief

Understanding that our Heavenly Father gave His Only Begotten Son that we might have immortality and the potential for eternal life helps us feel of God's infinite and incomprehensible love for us. Our Savior also loves us.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . .

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35, 38–39).

Of Jesus Christ's Atonement, Elder D. Todd Christofferson

of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The Savior's suffering in Gethsemane and His agony on the cross redeem us from sin by satisfying the demands that justice has upon us. He extends mercy and pardons those who repent. The Atonement of Jesus Christ also satisfies the debt justice owes to us by healing and compensating us for any suffering we innocently endure. ‘For behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam’ (2 Nephi 9:21; see also Alma 7:11–12).”¹

Christ has “graven [us] upon the palms of [His] hands” (Isaiah

49:16). Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President, says, “That supreme act of love ought to send each of us to our knees in humble prayer to thank our Heavenly Father for loving us enough that He sent His Only Begotten and perfect Son to suffer for our sins, our heartaches, and all that seems unfair in our own individual lives.”²

Additional Scriptures and Information

John 3:16; 2 Nephi 2:6–7, 9;
reliefsociety.lds.org

NOTES

1. D. Todd Christofferson, “Redemption,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 110.
2. Linda K. Burton, “Is Faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ Written in Our Hearts?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 114.



Consider This

How can we express our gratitude and love to God and to Jesus Christ for the gift of our Savior's Atonement?

OCTOBER 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the October 2016 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.



DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

The Word of Wisdom

In 1833 the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith a plan for healthy living. That plan is found in the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants and is known as the Word of Wisdom. It gives specific direction regarding the food we eat, and it prohibits the use of substances which are harmful to our bodies.

“Those who are obedient to the Lord’s commandments and who faithfully observe the Word of Wisdom are promised particular blessings, among which are good health and added physical stamina [see D&C 89:18–21]. . . .

“ . . . May we care for our bodies and our minds by observing the principles set forth in the Word of Wisdom, a divinely provided plan. With all my heart and soul, I testify of the glorious blessings which await us as we do.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Principles and Promises,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 78, 79.

PROPHETIC PROMISE



BE GRATEFUL FOR THE SABBATH

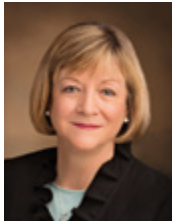
“We have the opportunity to take the sacrament each week—prepared, blessed, and passed by authorized servants of God. We can be grateful when the Holy Spirit confirms to us that the words of the sacrament prayers, offered by those authorized priesthood holders, are honored by our Heavenly Father.

“ . . . We will feel greater love and appreciation for the Savior, whose infinite sacrifice made possible our being cleansed from sin. As we partake of the bread and water, we remember that He suffered for us. And when we feel gratitude for what He has done for us, we will feel His love for us and our love for Him.

“The blessing of love we receive will make it easier for us to keep the commandment to ‘always remember him’ [Moroni 4:3; 5:2; D&C 20:77, 79]. You may even feel love and gratitude, as I do, for the Holy Ghost, who Heavenly Father has promised will always be with us as we remain faithful to the covenants we have made. We can count all those blessings every Sunday and feel grateful.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gratitude on the Sabbath Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 100.

Rise Up in Strength in These Perilous Times



“I believe with all of my heart that we sisters do have the innate strength and faith that will allow us to meet the challenges of living in the last days. . . .

“ . . . We need to study and understand [Jesus Christ’s] Atonement. . . .

“ . . . We need to understand the need for the restoration

of the doctrine, organization, and keys of authority in these latter days [through the Prophet Joseph Smith]. . . .

“ . . . We need to study and understand temple ordinances and covenants. . . .

“ . . . I testify that the Lord has blessed us, as women who live in these perilous times, with all of the power, gifts, and strength that are needed.”

Bonnie L. Oscarson, Young Women General President, “Rise Up in Strength, Sisters in Zion,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 13, 15.



HOW DO WE COME TO KNOW THE LORD?

“A grand object of mortality is not merely learning about the Only Begotten of the Father but also striving to know Him. Four essential steps that can help us come to know the Lord are exercising faith in Him, following Him, serving Him, and believing Him. . . .

“On a future day, ‘every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess’ [Mosiah 27:31] that Jesus is the Christ. On that blessed day, we will know He knows each of us by name. And I witness and promise we can not only know about the Lord but also come to know Him.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “If Ye Had Known Me,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 103, 105.

DRAWING PARALLELS

Anchoring Our Testimonies in Christ and His Doctrines

Several speakers spoke to those who are struggling with their testimonies. Use the November 2016 issue or visit conference.lds.org to read what they said.

- See Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Learn from Alma and Amulek,” 71.
- See M. Russell Ballard, “To Whom Shall We Go?” 90.
- See Quentin L. Cook, “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” 40.
- See Ronald A. Rasband, “Lest Thou Forget,” 113.

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

THE TRUE MIRACLE OF HEALING

By Jonathan Taylor

After my accident, I learned that physical paralysis isn't curable—but because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, spiritual paralysis is.

The year 2000 was full of significant events for my family and me. My wife and I celebrated our first anniversary. We became parents for the first time. It was also the year I became paralyzed, just five weeks after our daughter's birth.

That summer I had been helping an elderly sister in our ward by regularly biking the few blocks from our apartment to her home to mow her lawn, but one morning I was very tired and not as alert as I should have been—and I was accidentally hit by a car. While it is a miracle that I survived, I unfortunately did not escape without injury. One week after the accident, I awoke to the realization that I was paralyzed, unable to move any muscles below my lower chest.

Paralysis is a permanent disability. Even with all of today's great strides in modern science and medicine, it cannot be cured. And naturally I was afraid at first, concerned with how I was going to be a husband and a father. The fear was then replaced by anger at myself for being foolish—for not stopping at that intersection

and for not wearing a helmet.

I felt like a burden. It took many months at a rehabilitation hospital to teach me to live the rest of my life with my disability and how to become independent again. At the same time, living with my paralysis has helped me better understand the scriptures and our Savior's Atonement.

One particular insight came while I was pondering the miracles that Christ performed. In Mark 2, Jesus forgives a paralytic of his sins and then heals him. When the scribes questioned

His offer of forgiveness, Jesus said, "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (verse 9).

I had read this scripture many times before, but I never understood it until after my accident. In reading the chapter, we are reminded of how truly miraculous the healing was. Today, even after 2,000 years and many medical advancements, such a healing still cannot be achieved by man alone, and I live with this reality every



THE GREATEST MIRACLE

"To me, the greatest miracles in life are not the parting of the Red Sea, the moving of mountains, or even the healing of the body. The greatest miracle happens when we humbly approach our Father in Heaven in prayer, fervently plead to be forgiven, and then are cleansed of those sins through the atoning sacrifice of our Savior."

Linda S. Reeves, Second Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, "The Great Plan of Redemption," *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 90.



day. Many think that this is the lesson behind this scripture—that Christ has the power to cure even the incurable. But there is so much more to this scripture, especially as we look past the physical miracle and instead focus on the spiritual miracle.

Just as it is impossible for one with physical paralysis to “arise” and “walk,” it is equally impossible for man alone to overcome the spiritual paralysis caused by sin. I have learned that the Savior’s Atonement is the true miracle in this scripture. I may never experience the miracle of being able to physically arise and walk again in my earthly life, but I have received the greater miracle of the forgiveness of my sins through

the Atonement of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The reality of this miracle is affirmed in verses 10 and 11:

“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

“I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.”

Being healed of the effects of sin is the greatest miracle we each receive in our lives, all because of Jesus Christ. In atoning for our sins, Christ took our infirmities and sins upon Himself. He knows what we go through in life. He understands our individual disabilities, weaknesses, and challenges, no matter how big or small. There is no other

person in the world who can heal the spiritual paralysis of sin.

I am thankful for the insight that I have been blessed with. It provides needed perspective as I live with my disability and strive to use it to help me learn and grow. I have been able to stop feeling sorry for myself and go do the same things I loved to do before my accident, and I have been blessed to be able to serve in spite of my condition. Some may find it difficult to be thankful when living with a disability, but God blesses us continually—even in these times. I am grateful for my Savior, for His Atonement, and for this amazing miracle in my life. ■

The author lives in Wyoming, USA.

AM I GOING TO DIE?

By Gregory Hamblin

I didn't know why my son was suddenly scared by thoughts of death, but the truths of the gospel contain the reassurance he needed.

My seven-year-old son was pedaling furiously and going nowhere. The chain had fallen off his bike. I went over to help him out of his predicament, flipping the bike over so I could access the chain. As I worked, he said, "Dad? When I die, will I be all covered in blood?"

Somewhat shocked, I looked up at him. He was in tears.

"What? No!" I said. "You're not going to die." I sat on the curb, and he sat on my lap. He cried and cried. Where had this come from?

"Will my insides fall out?" he asked.

Had my little boy been watching horror movies or something? "No!" I said. Again I told him he wasn't going to die.

"No, Dad. Everybody is going to die, right?"

I took a deep breath. This was not a conversation I expected to have with such a young child.

When I became a father, I promised myself I would never withhold the truth from my kids, but the thought of telling any of them that they would

someday die was a nightmare. I tried to dodge his question. "You don't need to worry about that right now," I said. "You just be a happy boy and have fun and don't worry. You're going to be alive for a long, long time."

"I don't want to die," he said.

"What do I do here?" I asked myself. Thoughts of saying the wrong thing and forever traumatizing him whirled around in my head. "What do I do?" I offered a silent prayer for help.

I began to tell him about the plan of salvation. I told him that we are all visitors to this world. I told him how each of us is a being made of two parts: a body and a spirit. I told him that when people die—and, yes, we all will someday have to die—it's just our physical bodies that stop working. Our spirits are eternal and will never die (see Alma 40:11).

I told him that Jesus Christ is our Savior because He made it possible for us to all be together, even though we sometimes have to be apart for a while. I taught him that the Savior died for us and was resurrected and

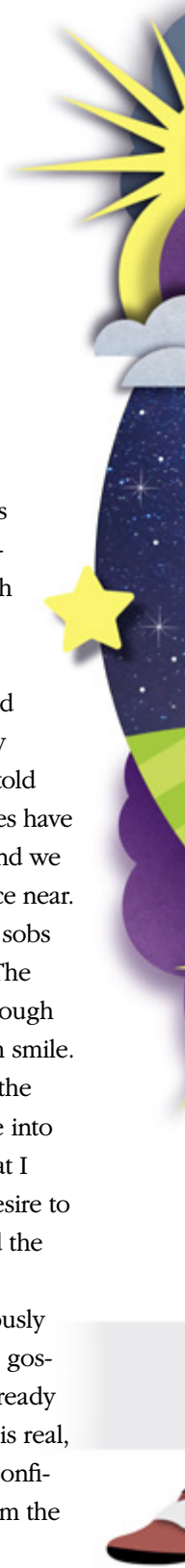
that because He lives, our spirits will someday return to our bodies, and we will never face death again (see Alma 11:43–45).

He asked if I had ever seen a dead person. I told him that I had been able to say good-bye to my grandparents at their funerals. I told him that even though their bodies have died, their spirits are still alive, and we can sometimes feel their presence near.

My son's fears subsided, and sobs turned into his typical giggles. The idea of relatives visiting even though we couldn't see them made him smile.

We walked together back to the house, pulling the repaired bike into the garage. I thought about what I had said. I thought about my desire to tell the truth to my children and the answers I had given my son.

In that moment I felt enormously grateful for my testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because I already knew that the plan of salvation is real, I was able to speak to my son confidently and honestly and give him the strength to overcome his fears.





My preparation for this moment began long before my son was born. When I was preparing for a mission, I had a goal to gain a testimony of every aspect of the gospel that I might be required to teach. The part I had struggled with the most was the Resurrection of the dead.

I studied, pondered, and prayed. I fasted and asked for a testimony. After a while, the Holy Ghost witnessed to me that the Resurrection is real, that there truly is life after death, and that the promises of the plan of salvation are real. (See 1 Nephi 10:19.)

That testimony became important on my mission, but it became one of my most treasured gifts when my son needed to find peace.

I'm so grateful for that witness, and I testify that the plan of salvation is real.

I testify of the importance of strengthening our testimonies so that when we or our loved ones feel fear, we can find peace in our testimonies and understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.

Finding Peace in IMPERFECTION

By Elizabeth Lloyd Lund

LDS Family Services

One of the misperceptions that we may struggle with during this earth life has to do with the concept of perfection. Many falsely believe that we must achieve perfection in this life in order to be saved or exalted.

As a therapist, I was once in a meeting with a woman when she burst into tears. She said, “How can I ever be good enough?” She went on to talk about how unworthy she was. As we explored her feelings, no great sin emerged from her past or present. She just felt she wasn’t good enough. She compared herself to neighbors, friends, and relatives, and everyone that she could recall was “better,” in her mind, than she was.

Thoughts Become Our Reality

I know that there are many who have had feelings of imperfection and insecurity, whether in a calling, as a

parent, or just in general. These feelings can cause us to hide our talents and hold back from others or feel discouragement, anxiety, or depression. Our thoughts about ourselves significantly influence our behaviors and feelings. Many of us say things to ourselves that we would never say to another person. This, in turn, holds us back from our true potential and diminishes our abilities and talents. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said, “Satan is increasingly striving to overcome the Saints with despair, discouragement, despondency, and depression.”¹

Fortunately, “the only opinion of us that matters is what our Heavenly Father thinks of us,” taught Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy. “Please sincerely ask Him what He thinks of you. He will love and correct but never discourage us; that is Satan’s trick.”²

To expect only perfection now would mean denying ourselves the opportunity for growth.

Imperfection Is an Opportunity

We are on earth to have joy, and part of that joy is what we create, what we believe, and what we accept. If we accept that we are flawed children of God who are learning as we go, we can accept our imperfections. Expecting immediate perfection would mean denying us the opportunity for growth. We would be



denying the gift of repentance and the power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement in our lives. Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “There was only one perfect being, the Lord Jesus. If men [and women] had to be perfect and live all of the law strictly, wholly, and completely, there would be only one saved person in eternity. The prophet [Joseph Smith] taught that there are many things to be done, even beyond the grave, in working out our salvation.”³ Our very imperfections may be a way through which God is preparing us to return to Him.

Weaknesses Can Become Strengths

Turning to our Heavenly Father in imperfection requires humility. This process is described in Ether: “If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them” (Ether 12:27). When we are humble, our Father in Heaven will open His arms to us and help us learn from our weaknesses. An example of this is in the New Testament. As Paul struggled with the “thorn in [his] flesh,” he learned that this weakness had humbled him and brought him closer to God (see 2 Corinthians 12:7).

This humility and willingness to learn is exactly what we must apply to our own imperfections. We must learn from these weaknesses so they can become strengths.

There is also a difference between being humbled and feeling of little worth or value. Humility draws us closer to the Lord, while shame and guilt can drive us away from the Lord. God does not want us to denigrate ourselves and feel that we have little worth in His eyes. This is hurtful to Him and to us. It’s important to recognize that we are worth the time and effort it takes to change. Part of what this earth life is about is finding ways to change our weaknesses. Some weaknesses may be lifelong battles, while others can be overcome more quickly.

Several years ago I worked with a client, Rachel (name has been changed), who had a problem with drinking. It had become a crutch and a means to release the stress of her difficult life. She determined that she was going to overcome her addiction, and with some help and encouragement, she stopped drinking. Before fully overcoming her drinking problem, she didn’t belittle herself for her weakness. She recognized it. Then, with determination and the help of a good bishop, the Lord, and a few key people, Rachel determined that she would stop drinking. Last time I spoke with her, she reported no desire to drink.

In order to grow from our weaknesses, we must turn to the Lord with faith, hope, and an understanding that He will hold us in the palm of His hand. President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has counseled: “To the individual who is weak in the heart, fearful in the heart, be patient with yourself. Perfection comes not in this life but in the next life. Don’t demand things that are unreasonable. But demand of yourself improvement. As you let the Lord help you through that, He will make the difference.”⁴

Choose Happiness Now

In the midst of becoming better, we can choose peace and happiness now. Even in the midst of the darkest circumstances we can choose our attitude. Viktor Frankl, a well-known psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, stated, “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”⁵

We are told, “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). This does not mean that God will magically fill our lives with happiness. Happiness is a choice for most of us. It takes effort and the practice of gratitude, trust, and faith. The negative can take all the room in our lives if we allow it. We may not be able to change the circumstances in our lives, but we can choose

how we react to them. President Thomas S. Monson said, “We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude.”⁶

As we choose to focus on the good, rely on the Lord and His Atonement, and accept and learn from our imperfections, we can remove unrealistic

expectations of ourselves and strive for goodness and happiness in our lives. We will be at peace with our imperfections and find comfort in God’s redeeming love. We will find joy in our hearts knowing that the plan of salvation can lead us back to our Heavenly Father as we make our best efforts, imperfect as they are, to be worthy to live with Him again. ■

NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “Do Not Despair,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 4.
2. J. Devn Cornish, “Am I Good Enough? Will I Make It?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 33.
3. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Seven Deadly Heresies” (Brigham Young University devotional, June 1, 1980), 6–7, speeches.byu.edu.
4. Russell M. Nelson, “Men’s Hearts Shall Fail Them” (video), mormonchannel.org.
5. Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (1959), 86.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Living the Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Jan. 2012, 4.



Of choosing how to react to challenges, President Thomas S. Monson said, “We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails.”

Working Out Weaknesses, Sketching Out Faith

By E. Tracy Williams

It took me seven years to qualify to serve a full-time mission. When I first spoke with my bishop, Bishop Tapueluelu, about it, he gave me some guidelines to strive to live by. He said if I followed them and learned to be obedient, I would be blessed. The first few guidelines—daily scripture study and weekly church attendance—were pretty doable. “This is easy,” I thought. But I got offended when I was told to change certain “worldly” things in my life, and my pride and stubbornness got the best of me.

Hoping for an easier way out, I moved to four different wards and spoke with four different bishops. I even went back to school to pursue a medical degree. Then I felt prompted to drop everything and prepare once again to serve a mission. So I did. I went back to Bishop Tapueluelu and humbly asked for his help. I was told that

there was a weight requirement for missionaries—and I realized that I weighed over the limit. Immediately, feelings of discouragement and embarrassment cluttered my mind, but my bishop encouraged me. He expressed his love and faith in me and said, “My door is always open. We can work on it together! One weakness, one week at a time.”

So I visited with my bishop every week, working out one weakness at a time. I had no idea that I’d have to wait another four years, just trying to qualify to serve a mission.

Relying on the Savior

During those years, I strived to come closer to Christ and apply His teachings in my life. As challenges came, His Atonement became real to me. I relied on the power, comfort, and strength He gave me through His Atonement when my best friend

I had to learn how to rely on the Savior to overcome my weaknesses and build on my strengths, both while preparing for a mission and while I served.

passed away, when our family lost our home, and when I got into a car accident. When circumstances caused me to lose many of my friends, I fell into depression, but the Savior pulled me out. My Friday nights with friends were replaced with working out at the gym and studying about the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

I prayed every night for the people whom I would one day serve and even for my future companions!

I eventually qualified and was called to serve in the New Zealand Auckland Mission, Tongan-speaking.

Street Art and the Spirit

When I entered the missionary training center, I realized that there was more to learn about Jesus Christ and His Atonement and myself. Even though I'm of Tongan descent, I had never been to the South Pacific islands, and I struggled with the Tongan language. When I got to New Zealand, I had no idea what people were saying to me in Tongan. I had

so much to say, but because I couldn't speak the language, my words were few, simple, and broken. I nodded my head when people asked me questions. They laughed at me, and I laughed with them, but behind closed doors the laughter turned into tears of frustration and discouragement. I thought to myself, "I worked seven years to come out here for this?"

So I prayed to Heavenly Father. In Ether 12:27 we learn that our weaknesses can become strengths if we trust in Him. I told Him about my weaknesses and my trust in Him, and

I got back up again . . . and again . . . and again. I started to rely even more on Christ and also on my strengths.

I love this gospel and I love street art, so I decided to combine the two. I packed my scriptures, a sketchbook, charcoal pencils, permanent markers, and cans of spray paint in my backpack. My companions laughed and asked, "What are you doing with spray paint?" I explained, "I may not speak the language yet, but I can show others my testimony."

For the remainder of my mission, I used street art—on paper, not on buildings—and the Spirit to teach others about Christ. And as crazy as it sounds, it worked. Many people didn't want to hear my message, so I sketched it. Doors and eyes opened when I told them that I did graffiti. They didn't believe me. They timed me for three minutes, and I sketched the word *faith* while teaching them about it. Among them were many who felt judged and unloved. I could testify that with faith in Christ we can feel of His love and forgiveness, and He can help us change for the better. He did for me.

Seven years of preparation for my mission helped me find myself. That time allowed me to gain a testimony of Christ's Atonement and His power to help me overcome my weaknesses and use my strengths to share what I knew with others. In the end it was worth the seven years. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



MAKING THE MOST OF WHAT WE HAVE

By Mindy Anne Selu

Church Magazines

It really wasn't a typical Friday night, although it may have looked like it to an outsider. My fellow interns and I were having dinner with the Farrer family of Cypress, California, USA. We had met them coming out of the Newport Beach California Temple one night, and when they found out we would be traveling around the country and living in hotels all summer, they graciously invited us—a group of nomadic but friendly interns—over for dinner at their house the following night. We gladly accepted.

After some delicious homemade pizza, we sat down with Brother and Sister Farrer and their teenage children for a rousing game of cards. It was a game I'd never played before, but I quickly caught on and began winning every hand. I was on fire. With every round, each player was left with either negative or positive points. After several rounds I had the most points by far, but unfortunately for one of my friends, she

couldn't seem to get out of the negative.

At the end of one round, Brother Farrer announced my ever-growing score and then looked to my friend, who had actually played a decent round, and said with laughter in his voice, "You're still at negative ten." She accepted her lot with equal laughter, and our game night continued in a spirit of fun and friendly competition.

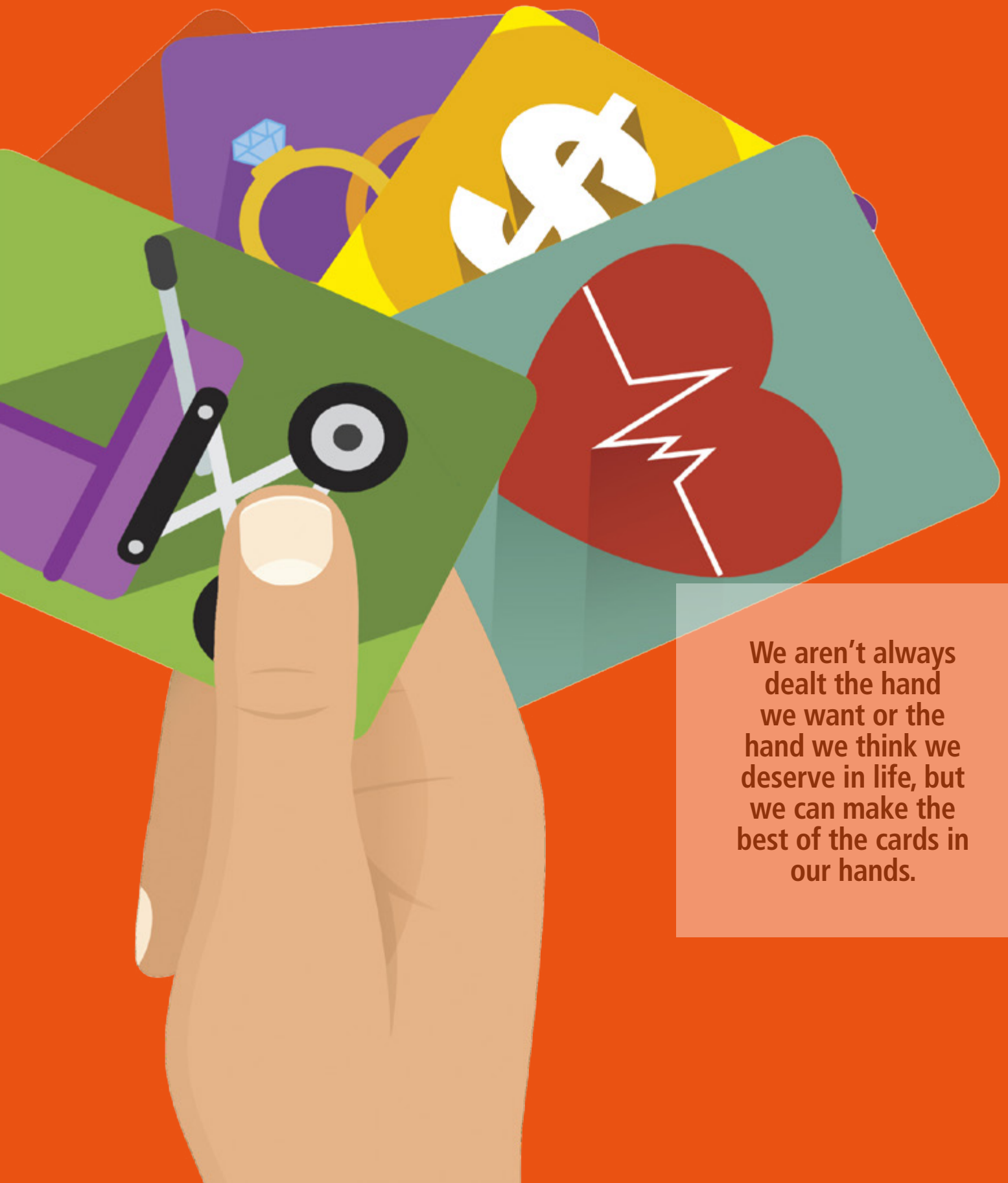
In the Negative

I've since thought about that phrase a lot: "You're still at negative ten." It became somewhat of an inside joke between my fellow intern and me, but I often thought that her attitude translated into a good life lesson.

So many times, we as young adults find ourselves lamenting the hand we have been dealt in life. We wish we had received the marriage cards, the children cards, the good-health cards, or the successful cards in the first round. It can be so easy to compare

our cards with those of our friends and acquaintances—especially when it seems that they always hold the winning cards and we can't seem to get out of the negative! And yet, so often we fail to see the good in the cards we are already holding in our hands. And we forget that no matter what our cards are—the experiences and opportunities we are given in life—we can still have a good attitude about them.

The thing about cards is that they change. During that game night I happened to luck out on almost every hand, and I handily finished the game with the highest score. However, we've all seen how any type of game, card or otherwise, can change in an instant. The cards we hold now are not the cards we will have in two months, in two years, in ten.



We aren't always dealt the hand we want or the hand we think we deserve in life, but we can make the best of the cards in our hands.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, reminded us that “what [we] see and experience now is not what forever will be. [We] will not feel loneliness, sorrow, pain, or discouragement forever. We have the faithful promise of God that He will neither forget nor forsake those who incline their hearts to Him [see Hebrews 13:5].”¹ In short, he reminds us that even if we feel that our hand is putting us in the negative right now, it won’t always be that way.

Playing Your Best Game

So what, then, do you do with the not-so-great hand at hand? The first step is to take a good, hard look at what you have in your hands. Take stock of all the good in your life and all the positive cards you (metaphorically) hold. Being grateful for what we do have will help us overcome the pain and bitterness we are prone to feel for what we don’t have. President Uchtdorf also said, “Those who set aside the bottle of bitterness and lift instead the goblet of gratitude can find a purifying drink of healing, peace, and understanding.”²

Once we recognize the blessings we do have, we can begin to accept

Trusting in the Lord’s timing is paramount if we are to stay optimistic while the game of life doesn’t seem to be going our way.

our lives as they are, continuing on faithfully and cheerfully, independent of the hope that our hand will improve.

We’re all going to experience hard things in life. We’re going to experience trials and heartache that we wouldn’t have chosen for ourselves, had we been given the choice. We’re going to be hurt by others’ choices and by our own. And we’re going to wish at times that our circumstances, our weaknesses, our challenges—our cards—were different. But the less time we spend lamenting over what we don’t have and instead focus on what we do have, the more we’ll be able to progress and become what Heavenly Father wants us to become. And we may discover that our growth is made possible by the very life circumstances that we find ourselves (not really wanting to be) in.

By recognizing and accepting what we have already been given in this life, we can start to build upon our strengths and talents, developing different aspects of ourselves and making the most of our circumstances. We can make the best of what we have. And more importantly, in doing so, we won’t be allowing the cards we don’t have to hold us back.

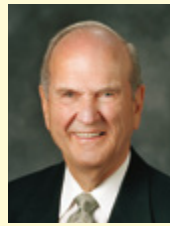
Changing Our Luck

It's clear that wishing we had a different hand in life is not a problem unique to this generation, or even this dispensation. In the Book of Mormon, Alma the Younger wished that he had been given different opportunities, different abilities, but he finally came to the realization that “[he] ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto [him]” (Alma 29:3). Nephi the son of Helaman wished that his cards looked a bit more like those of Nephi the son of Lehi:

“Oh, that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, that I could have joyed with him in the promised land; . . .

“Yea, if my days could have been in those days, then would my soul have had joy in the righteousness of my brethren” (Helaman 7:7–8).

I had a missionary companion who often wished that her hand included the knack to talk and relate to people easily, but it just wasn't an innate aspect of her personality. She recognized and accepted her limited (or just underdeveloped) capacities in those areas; however, I saw her time and time again work to overcome that situation and develop the



FOCUS ON JOY

“The joy we feel has little to do with the circumstances of our lives and everything to do with the focus of our lives.

“When the focus of our lives is on God's plan of salvation . . . and Jesus Christ and His gospel, we can feel joy regardless of what is happening—or not happening—in our lives. Joy comes from and because of Him. He is the source of all joy.”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Joy and Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 82.

ability to converse easily with others. By the end of her mission, she was fearless in talking to even the most unlikely prospective investigators. Her motivation was to become more like the Savior and better able to share His gospel, and she was successful in changing. She saw a card she didn't have and worked hard to attain it.

Sometimes we are able to change our circumstances, and sometimes we just have to say, as did Nephi, “I am consigned that these are my days” (Helaman 7:9)—or “these are my trials” or “these are my limitations” or whatever the case may be. The power to change all our cards is not always up to us. There will be times when we just have to be patient and wait on the Lord's timing for the winds to change and our hand to improve. Trusting in His timing is paramount if we are to keep that optimism and positive attitude while the game of life doesn't seem to be going our way.

Finding Joy (Enjoying the Game)

No matter our cards in life, as children of Heavenly Father, we have the divine capacity for joy, regardless of circumstances. “Men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). Notice how the scripture gives no caveats on that—it doesn't say that men are to have joy only when things are going their way or when times are easy or when they have everything they want in life. We are just simply to have joy. We shouldn't let the cards we hold keep us from enjoying the game or those we're playing it with. It would be wise to learn, as did the Apostle Paul, “in whatsoever state [we are], therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).

With that lesson learned, even if you feel like “you're still at negative ten,” you can laugh and know that the game isn't over yet. ■

NOTES

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “You Matter to Him,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 22.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Grateful in Any Circumstances,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 70.

Family Stories TURNED MY HEART

By Katherine Olson

Confession time: I love family history. I know that's not every young adult's passion, but a simple realization changed everything for me.

When I finally got around to looking at my family tree to see if I had ancestors who needed temple ordinances done, I found that much of it had already been completed by relatives. I wondered, "What can I do now?"

I found my answer in an article by President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "When we research our own lines we become interested in more than just names or the number of names going through the temple. Our interest turns our hearts to our fathers—we seek to find them and to know them and to serve them."¹

Knowing them seemed to be about much more than dates and pedigrees. I felt that I needed to

discover and preserve my family's personal stories.

I remembered that as a kid, I loved hearing family stories. My father would tell of the trials our ancestors endured and the blessings they received. And after my grandfather died when I was seven, it sparked a desire in me to learn more about his life stories. Now it felt like time to preserve them so that they could bless others.

As I began writing my family members' personal histories, I came to cherish my ancestors, and I have gained a greater desire to find even more of my family's stories, watching all the while for any who may need temple ordinances.

My advice to other young adults is this: Take advantage of opportunities to serve your ancestors, not just by doing their ordinance work but by preserving their stories. Go to your grandparents, parents, and siblings and ask them about their lives

Sharing family stories and pictures made family history come alive for me.

and what they know about their ancestors. Record your own experiences. Take that information to a Church family history center to learn about the many tools available to help you preserve it and share it with others. You too will come to find and cherish your own eternal family. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Your Family History: Getting Started," *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 17.

SO
MANY
WAYS
TO

SAVE AND SHARE *family stories*

Family history is about much more than names and dates. And the Church has made it easier than ever for us to preserve and share this information before history is lost.

So if you feel a little intimidated searching through censuses and catalogs,

CHECK OUT ONE OF THESE TOOLS INSTEAD:

Mobile Apps

Use the Memories app to upload and share photos, stories, and audio recordings on FamilySearch and link them to specific people. You can download or learn more about the app at familysearch.org/mobile/memories.

Do research, share stories, and post information about your family right from your phone or other mobile devices using the FamilySearch Tree app (available at familysearch.org/mobile/tree).

Websites

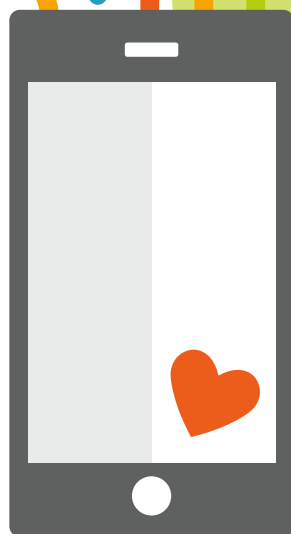
Use FamilySearch.org to organize your family tree and add stories, photos, or family histories.

If you find an ancestor who needs temple ordinances, you can print temple ordinance cards right from your family tree at

FamilySearch.org.

My Family Booklet

Need some help getting started on your family history? Here's a quick way to organize your thoughts—and your family's memories and stories—in a short booklet. Check out familysearch.org/myfamily to fill out a booklet online, get access to a paper copy, or fill out family information with a friend.



FAMILY HISTORY AND TEMPLE BLESSINGS

By Elder Dale G. Renlund

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

And by Ruth L. Renlund and Ashley R. Renlund





During their 2016 RootsTech presentation, Elder Dale G. Renlund and his wife, Ruth, and daughter, Ashley, reminded Latter-day Saints that real power comes from combining family history with temple blessings.

ELDER RENLUND: In December 1963, my family made the six-hour drive from Helsinki to the island of Larsmo, on the western coast of Finland. That's where my father grew up and where my grandmother Lena Sofia lived.

Years earlier, in 1912, Lena Sofia and my grandfather Leander listened to missionaries from Sweden preach the restored gospel. At that time there were fewer than 800 missionaries in the whole world.

Those missionaries taught the message of the restored gospel, and Lena Sofia and Leander were baptized the following day. They became members of a small branch, the first in Finland.

Just a few years later, Leander's mother, who had been living with them, died of tuberculosis. In 1917, Leander also died of tuberculosis, leaving Lena Sofia a widow and pregnant with their 10th child. That child—my father—was born two months after Leander's death. Lena Sofia eventually buried 7 of her 10 children. It was a very difficult struggle for her, an impoverished peasant woman, to keep intact what remained of her family.

For nearly two decades she did not get a good night's rest. She hustled at odd jobs during the day to scrape together enough food to eat. At night she nursed dying family members. Death literally hung over their heads. In those days timber was split and often put in the roof rafters to dry. Those timbers were then used to make coffins for those who died. It is hard to imagine how Lena Sofia felt.

On the day I met her in 1963, I had just turned 11 and she was 87. She was stooped from a lifetime of hard labor. She was so bowed over that when she stood from her chair, her height did not change. The skin of her face and hands was weather-beaten—as tough and textured as worn leather.

She stood as best as she could, pointed to a photo of Leander on the wall, and said to me in Swedish, “*Det här är min gubbe*” (This is my hubby).

I had enrolled in a Swedish-speaking school earlier that fall and was just relearning Swedish. I thought my grandmother had incorrectly used the present tense of the verb when she said, “This *is* my hubby,” because Leander had been dead for 46 years. I pointed out to my mother that Lena Sofia should have said, “This *was* my hubby.” My mother simply told me, “You don’t understand.”

She was right. I didn’t understand—not as I do now. Since then, I have reflected many times on the meaning of that experience and what my grandmother had taught me.

Think about the strength and comfort she must have gained from knowing about the sealing power! That power is given direction as we research and learn about our ancestors. Both family history and the blessings of the temple can be meaningful in our lives, but the real power comes when we combine them. It is not just randomly mixing two things together; rather, the one helps direct the other. The knowledge that these ordinances would someday be performed for her and Leander brought comfort and peace to Lena Sofia during the long years of her widowhood.

The True Value of Family History

ASHLEY: Without family history, the sealing authority can’t get where it needs to be to be used. And the true value of family history is realized only because of the sealing authority. The *real* power is in the combination.

SISTER RENLUND: I love this concept. We learn about both of these blessings everywhere in the scriptures.

Combining them brings more blessings and power into our lives. Let’s look at a couple of examples.

In the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord tells us He sent Elijah to “plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers.” And this would turn the hearts of the children to the fathers. I think this is part, Dale, of what your grandmother planted in you. Then the Lord tells us that “the whole earth would be utterly



wasted at [the Savior’s Second] coming” if this turning did not happen (see D&C 2:2–3). That is a powerful message.

So even if we had all the family history records the world could offer and all that we could possibly collect, without the sealing authority restored by the prophet Elijah, the purpose of the Creation would have been thwarted and “wasted.” This is one of the first messages the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith in our dispensation.

ELDER RENLUND: You’re right, Ruth. Without even knowing it, I have felt the strength and power of stories and examples my whole life from my grandmother and other progenitors.

There’s a prophecy in Doctrine and Covenants section 128 where Joseph Smith quotes Malachi 4:5–6. He explains

the phrase “turn . . . the heart of the children to their fathers” in the context of the sealing power and baptism for the dead. Then he says, “And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times” (see D&C 128:17–18).

Think of that! Joseph Smith foresaw that even children would understand and know things that the learned men and women of the world could not explain. Children and youth all over the world participate in these blessings every day, just as I did when I was 11, learning about these concepts from my grandmother and mother. People who never hear of the Savior while living on earth can have the opportunity to receive the same blessings as those who do have the opportunity in this life. This opportunity for blessings excludes no one.

Temple Ordinances and Individual Power

SISTER RENLUND: And the temple ordinances are central to individual power. In fact, the Lord has given us examples of this individual power. The early Saints were taught about the need for their endowments before they were able to further the work of salvation:

“It is expedient in me that mine elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion—

“That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands.

“And this cannot be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high” (D&C 105:9–11).

So the Lord was teaching about the importance of preparing to receive temple endowments so that the elders might be blessed with power from on high. This blessing enabled the Saints to continue to be more perfectly taught to use that power well.

ELDER RENLUND: You can extend this understanding if you continue to section 109, the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland Temple. Joseph Smith prays, “And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord’s house may feel thy power, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness” (D&C 109:13).

ASHLEY: Yes, the temple ordinances are pure and powerful. But I can see how, when you add the temple to the work of studying and learning about your ancestors, the power is greater and takes our blessings to the next level.

SISTER RENLUND: Dale, do you think Lena Sofia understood that when she made her comment to you about Leander? Was her understanding more powerful because she was acknowledging the power of the temple along with her love for him and her family?

ELDER RENLUND: Yes, this is exactly what she was teaching. Lena Sofia knew that her long-dead husband was and would remain hers throughout the eternities. Through the doctrine of eternal families, Leander remained a presence in her life and part of her great hope for the future. Lena was like others, who “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Hebrews 11:13).

In a blazing affirmation of her faith in the sealing authority, in 1938, Lena Sofia submitted the family records for her deceased children who were over eight years of age when they died. That way their temple work could be performed, although she herself would not get to the temple during her lifetime. These records were among the earliest submitted from Finland to a temple for ordinances.

Do you remember the challenge Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles gave at RootsTech in 2014?

ASHLEY: He said, “Prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple.”¹

SISTER RENLUND: And in 2015, he added eight words: “And help someone else to do the same.”²

Adding Spiritual Power

ELDER RENLUND: Exactly. I've been thinking about this apostolic challenge and how it can continue to grow. In light of our conversation, I believe we can add an element of spiritual power to this promise. Let's read in Ezekiel chapter 47:

"Afterward he [an angel] brought me [Ezekiel] again unto the door of the house [of the Lord]; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar.

"Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side.

"And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles.

"Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins.

"Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. . . .

"Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.

"And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh" (Ezekiel 47:1–5, 8–9).

Ezekiel sees a river that increases as it flows from the house. The water that is moving forth from the temple

represents blessings that flow from the temples to heal families and give them life.

ASHLEY: But the water gets deeper as it gets farther away. That doesn't make sense to me.

ELDER RENLUND: Think of me (one person), my parents (two people), my grandparents (four people)—all the way back, and forward too. The growth of the river is similar to the exponential growth of our family through the generations.

The blessings of the temple are available to everything and everyone. And what blessings! "Every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

"She's Waited Long Enough"

ELDER RENLUND: The Lord has a plan to overcome Lena Sofia's personal misfortune, our loss, your tragedy—in fact, everyone's calamity. He restored to the earth His priesthood and His sealing authority. Lena Sofia knew that, and so did my mom, Mariana.

SISTER RENLUND: You mean how she submitted Lena Sofia's name for temple work?

ASHLEY: I love that story. Shortly after Lena Sofia died in 1966, Grandma Mariana took her name in person to the Genealogy Department.³ The man behind the counter told her that Church policy stated that someone had to have been dead for at least a year before temple work could be done for that person. Grandma Mariana replied, "I don't like that answer. Let me talk to someone who can give a different one. She's waited long enough."

Grandpa Åke said that he tried to reason with her, but she gave him a look he knew very well—that another word on the subject would be pointless. Grandpa wrote in his journal: "I probably should feel sorry for the man downtown who said that nothing could be done for at least a year. That man just didn't know what he was up against. I could have told him, but he didn't ask."⁴

ELDER RENLUND: Less than two months later, with the authorization of the President of the Church, Lena Sofia's



and Leander's temple work was completed. Grandma Mariana and Grandpa Åke acted as proxies for Lena Sofia and Leander, who were sealed for time and all eternity in the Salt Lake Temple. And did you know that now it is Church policy that a person who has not been able to enjoy the blessings of the temple because of distance doesn't have to wait a whole year? That way, others like Lena Sofia can receive those blessings as quickly as possible. As Grandma Mariana told the man in the Genealogy Department, "They have waited long enough."

SISTER RENLUND: What a great day that was for your family! Think of the joy Leander and Lena Sofia felt, not to mention the joy their children felt. These blessings are the culmination of family history and temple work coming together, igniting the power we have talked about today.

I was recently reminded that Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles talked about this power. Years ago he started trying to encourage people to recognize the blessing of combining the two divine aspects of temple and family history.

Elder Bednar said: "Family history is not a program—and then we also worship in the temple. It's all gathered together in one in Christ. And there is a power in finding [your] own ancestors and taking your own family names to the house of the Lord. I've done that. I have worked with and spoken with hundreds and thousands of people who have done that work. And as good as it is as we're in the temple, it's even better when we have done the work to be able to perform those ordinances for our own kindred dead."⁵

ASHLEY: President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, also promised that we can see this power in our lives. He said: "While temple and family history work has the power to bless those beyond

the veil, it has an equal power to bless the living. It has a refining influence on those who are engaged in it. They are literally helping to exalt their families."⁶

A Promise of Protection

ELDER RENLUND: I feel grateful to add my testimony to theirs—to be one more apostolic voice in support of this temple challenge. I extend the promise of protection that has been offered in the past. Brothers and sisters, I promise protection for you and your family as you take this challenge to find as many names to take to the temple as ordinances you perform in the temple and to teach others to do the same.

If you accept this challenge, blessings will begin to flow to you and your family like the power of the river spoken of by Ezekiel. And the river will grow as you continue to perform this work and teach others to do the same. You will find not only protection from the temptation and ills of the world, but you will also find personal power—power to change, power to repent, power to learn, power to be sanctified, and power to turn the hearts of your family members to each other and heal that which needs healing. ■

From a presentation at the RootsTech 2016 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, on February 6, 2016. To watch a recording of the presentation, visit lds.org/go/217Renlund.

NOTES

1. Neil L. Andersen, "My Days' of Temples and Technology," *Ensign*, Feb. 2015, 33.
2. Neil L. Andersen, in Ryan Morgenegg, "RootsTech 2015: Elder Andersen Adds to Temple Challenge," lds.org/church/news/rootstech-2015-elder-andersen-adds-to-temple-challenge.
3. Now known as the Family History Department.
4. Mats Åke Renlund, "Reflections," personal journal, 119.
5. David A. Bednar, in "The Turning of Our Hearts" (video), lds.org/topics/family-history/turn-our-hearts.
6. Russell M. Nelson, "Generations Linked in Love," *Ensign*, May 2010, 93.

By Mireille Rouffet

It was 1973. Struggling with some challenges, I deeply desired to know God, so I decided to read the Bible. One day I read about Solomon's temple in 2 Chronicles 2–5, and I felt that such a holy place could be on the earth. So I fasted and prayed that I might be guided by the Holy Ghost to find it. I felt that if I found a temple, I would be able to tell one of the Lord's servants about my problems, and he would help me solve them.

So I set out to find a temple. At the time I lived in Fontenay-sous-Bois, a suburb of Paris, so I started driving toward the city to find a temple. I saw many buildings, including churches and synagogues, but I did not find a temple. Upon returning home, I prayed and wondered why I couldn't find a temple. Wasn't I pure enough? Or was I simply unprepared?

I SET OUT TO FIND A TEMPLE

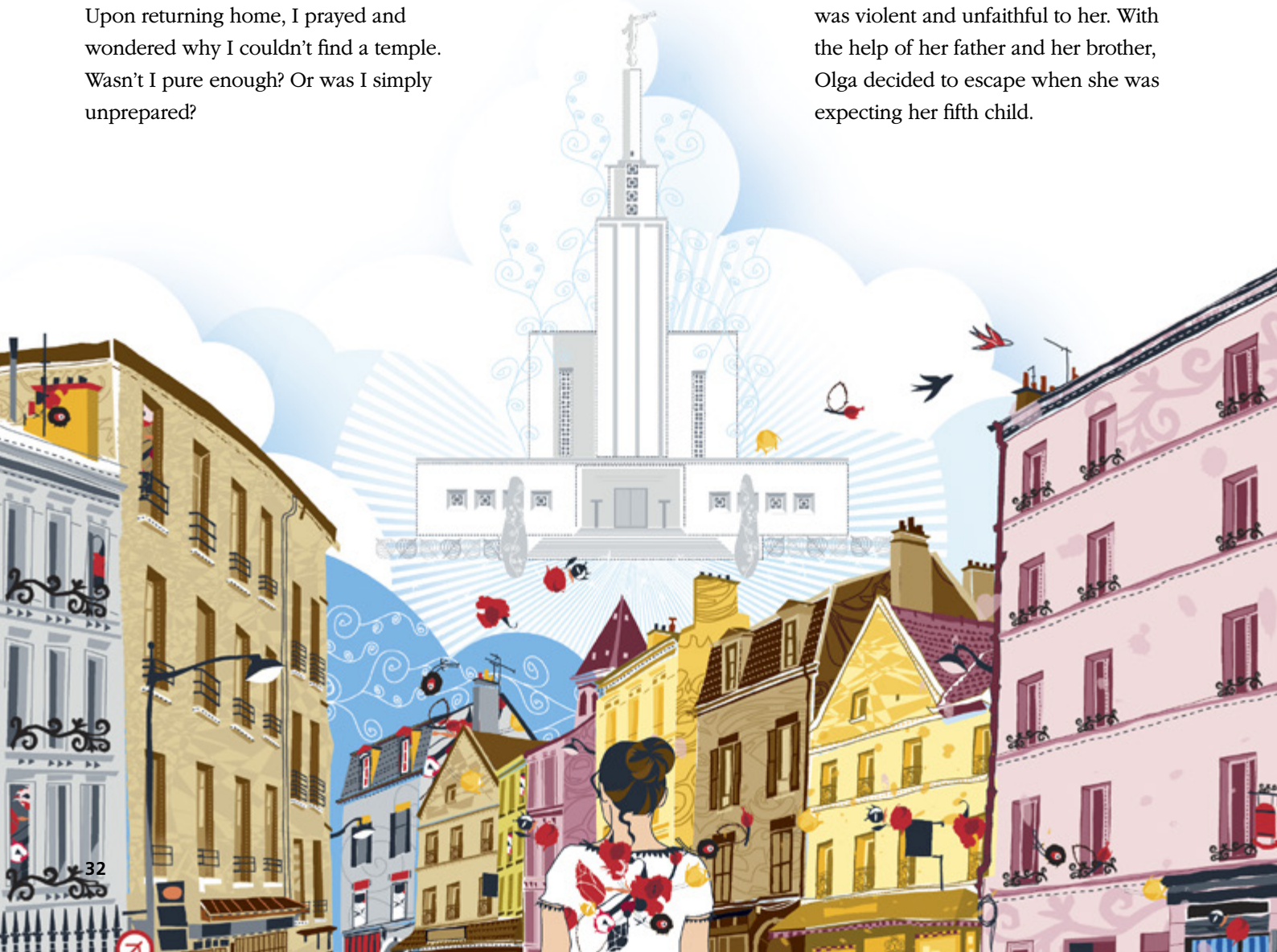
*I was searching for
a holy place and
ended up finding
a way to be part of
an eternal family.*

I forgot all about my failed search until sister missionaries for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to my home in February 1980. They taught me that the closest temple was in Zollikofen, Switzerland—the Bern Switzerland Temple.

I was baptized on April 12, 1980, and I went to the temple for the first time just over a year later, on May 5, 1981. There I was able to do the temple work for several women in my family, including my grandmothers, aunts, and cousins.

Of these women, the only one I had known was my cousin Olga.

Olga, who was from Italy, married at a very young age, but sadly, her husband was violent and unfaithful to her. With the help of her father and her brother, Olga decided to escape when she was expecting her fifth child.



She went to live with her parents and brother. After the birth of her child, Olga passed away. Olga's parents never recovered from the shock of her sudden death.

While I was performing the ordinances for Olga in the temple, one word kept coming to my mind: *mission*. But I was puzzled—I was busy raising three children by myself, and I couldn't possibly go on a mission.

The answer came several months later. One day my cousin Renzo told me that Olga's mother, my aunt Anita, had passed away. Suddenly I recalled that I had completed the temple work for Olga on a Tuesday, and her mother had passed away the following Friday. With great emotion, I felt impressed that Olga had been eager to receive her temple ordinances so she could welcome and teach her mother in the spirit world. Perhaps that was Olga's mission.

But I had a mission to help my own parents as well. I had tried to talk to them about the Church on several occasions, but they hadn't been interested. So after my mother and father died, I did the temple work for them as soon as I could.

When my parents were sealed, my heart was pounding, and my eyes filled with tears of love. I was then sealed to my parents. I could not stop thinking about my mother, and I wanted to embrace the sister who had been proxy for her. I thanked her for representing my mother. The sister too had tears in her eyes, and she thanked me for the experience. Even though I didn't know her, we felt like members of the same family.

My parents were then sealed to *their* parents, and Olga, whom I represented in the ordinance, was sealed to her parents, my uncle Marino and aunt Anita.

Every time I recall those experiences, I am overcome with emotion. I think about Olga, and I hope she is fulfilling her mission on the other side of the veil. Because of temple ordinances, I am no longer the only member of the Church in my family. I believe that my parents accepted the ordinances performed for them. I am filled with joy and thank the Lord for making it possible for me to establish an eternal family through the blessings of His holy temple. ■

The author lives in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France.



HEARTBREAK and HOPE



When a Spouse Uses Pornography

Seven ways the spouse of a pornography user can not only survive heartbreak but also see a promise of hope.

Amy made the choices every parent desires for a son or daughter. She was sealed in the temple after receiving a strong spiritual impression to marry her husband.

Prior to their wedding, her husband-to-be made a courageous choice as well, admitting to her that he had used pornography.

A short year later, Amy realized that his struggle with pornography was not in the past. Three years into their marriage—when they had an eight-month-old baby—Amy suffered the unimaginable pain of her husband's having an affair and being subsequently excommunicated from the Church.

How did Amy survive the heartbreak? How do the many other women and men with similar circumstances survive their pain?

Many spouses and other family members of pornography users have discovered helpful and hopeful behaviors common to their own and others' journeys. And they have courageously shared their stories.

The Church website [Overcoming Pornography.org](https://www.overcomingpornography.org) terms seven of these

common behaviors as “vital behaviors.” These behaviors—experienced at an individual pace and in an individual order—have proven to be, for many, vital to emotional, mental, and spiritual healing.

Vital Behavior 1: Address the Trauma of Betrayal

Learning about and addressing the trauma, self-blame, and other reactions a person has when discovering pornography use by his or her spouse.

When Eva found that her husband was involved with pornography, she felt “intense pain, anger, heartache, depression, and obsession.” Obsession is actually a common feeling for someone who experiences the trauma of betrayal of a spouse's pornography use, and Eva's behavior in response to these intense emotions is also not unusual. She began to obsess about her husband and his actions. Where was he? Who was he talking to? What was he doing? His pornography and sex addiction became the center of her life, and she desperately wanted to fix him, believing that if she could get his problem under control, they would be happy.

When Jamie learned of her husband's pornography use, she reacted with an understandable desire to control whatever she could. She thought she could arrange the life of her husband, Jon, so he wouldn't seek instant gratification through pornography, and he would, therefore, have no other option but to choose righteousness. She wrote daily lists for him: what he could do for fun and what chores he needed to complete.

A pivotal moment in Jamie's journey came when her bishop was inspired to emphasize, “Jamie, this is not your fault. Nothing you are doing is making him look at pornography. He is choosing.” And just as she was not the cause of his looking at pornography, she also could not be the cause of his stopping. Intellectually, she already knew what the bishop told her, but Jamie says that after the bishop's reminder, “the lists stopped. I gave up trying to control his behavior and trying to force him into righteousness—and I focused on myself.” In effect, Jamie gave herself permission to feel her own hurt and to work on her own recovery.

In addition to relying on the Lord, spouses can find help and support from family, friends, Church leaders, and professionals.



After Jamie's realization, Jon struggled and relapsed often, but he took responsibility for his own actions. And as they each worked on their own healing, Jon and Jamie found that they could heal better as individuals and as a couple.

Vital Behavior 2: Share Safely

Finding understanding, support, and validation through sharing appropriately.

Another turning point for Jamie and Jon came when one of their children needed a blessing. They called their home teacher, who bravely explained that he was seeking help to deal with his own struggles with pornography. He offered to find someone else to give the blessing. That openness lessened the shame Jon and Jamie felt about their own situation, and Jon finally felt safe enough to discuss his addiction with someone besides Jamie.

When the home teacher's wife offered to talk with Jamie, Jamie didn't see the point since her talking wouldn't fix Jon—and at that point, fixing him was her goal. Yet after she and the home teacher's wife visited, Jamie felt lighter. Nothing had changed. Jon still struggled, but she was relieved that someone else knew what she was going through and her world hadn't come crashing down.

Vital Behavior 3: Rebuild Spiritual Confidence

Feeling and following the promptings of the Holy Ghost and having restored trust in God.

When Amy faced her husband's excommunication, she knew that the Savior could provide the answer to the crushing weight she felt. However, she says, she wasn't sure how "to bridge that gulf between where I was and the healing power of Jesus Christ." How, she wondered, could she possibly find—or build—a bridge?

At first she tried to lessen her pain by vigilantly watching her husband and pleading with the Lord to heal him. But one day a spiritual prompting changed everything:

Amy realized that controlling someone else's behavior isn't part of Heavenly Father's plan and wasn't helping her come closer to the Savior. So, she says, the biggest thing she had to do was begin her own journey of healing—and turn her husband's journey over to him. She came to understand, through inspiration from the Spirit, that she needed to stop living her life as a reaction to pornography and trust in the enabling power of Jesus Christ and His Atonement to strengthen and bless her.

As she looks back, Amy says that at no point did any of her searching or investigating of her husband produce a feeling of peace. Life "was continual turmoil," she says. "And the only peace I found was when I recognized that Heavenly Father had a plan" for her husband and for her. When she used her own agency to turn to God and seek His help, "the help came" and the gulf between her pain and the Savior's help didn't feel quite so wide or the pain so weighty.

Vital Behavior 4: Get Help

Finding a pathway to healing through resources such as literature, a qualified therapist, a mentor, or a proven healing program.

After 25 years of marriage, Gina learned about her husband's pornography use and his infidelity. Traumatized, Gina called her bishop. She soon found

that he was an understanding listener who let her cry when she needed to—a blessing she acknowledges that not every spouse in her situation has.

Gina remembers that in one of their first meetings, her bishop “advised I get counseling immediately, not for my marriage or for my husband, but so I could have solid support as I faced the challenges ahead. He wanted me to feel cared for, and he knew that he did not have the background that might be needed. He saw my depression and anxiety and advised me to talk to my doctor about any medical help I might need.”

Over the next few years, Gina regularly attended support groups and counseling and sought the support of family—sometimes calling them to ask them to pray for her on her hardest days. She has learned, she says, that “Heavenly Father will never leave me in darkness.”

Vital Behavior 5: Be Open and Honest

Speaking with loved ones regularly about a personal journey of healing and recovery and doing so in an openly candid and authentic way.

Melissa decided to try one more time to save her marriage, which seemed distant and disconnected. That’s when her husband, Cameron, told her honestly about his pornography use. At her urging, he agreed

to tell the bishop, and eventually they both talked to their parents. But, as he explains, it “took two years to finally see that there was more to repentance than telling a few people and saying a prayer.” He had to learn that not looking at pornography wasn’t enough. To truly be in a state of recovery, he had to turn to God and find healthy ways to deal with the stress, fear, shame, and anxiety that triggered his craving to look at pornography.

After a relapse, Cameron agreed to attend an addiction recovery program and, over time, has come to understand that the Savior does not give up on us as soon as we make a mistake.

Through also attending a 12-step program, Melissa feels that her family finally has the tools to move forward. She remembers how difficult the 12-step meetings were in the beginning, but she was motivated by a facilitator who suggested that Melissa “try us for 90 days. If you don’t like us, we’ll refund your misery.” Melissa eventually realized that just as she felt hope from others’ stories, maybe she could help others feel hope by sharing her experiences.

Melissa used to believe that if she stayed married, she would only pretend to be happy. Her perspective changed when she realized that the Savior saw potential in her, in Cameron, and in all of Father in

Heaven’s children. He put all He is—the Light and the Life of the World—into saving us and giving us another chance. Because of the Savior, Melissa says, she can now smile in a genuine, I’m-happy-to-be-alive way.

Vital Behavior 6: Set Boundaries

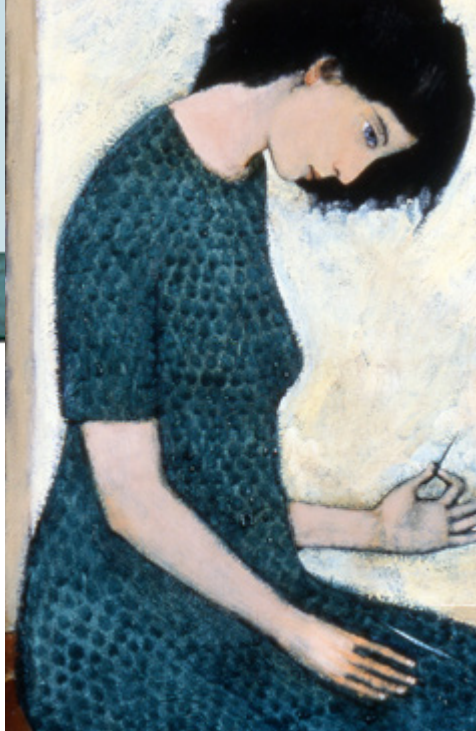
Creating appropriate boundaries with the pornography user and establishing a structure that allows functioning and healing.

Well into their journey of overcoming pornography, Jon and Jamie discovered how helpful it was to set boundaries, and they still have them today—even after a good amount of sobriety—because of the peace of mind that boundaries provide. Jamie says that when she was most vulnerable, setting boundaries “protected my heart.”

She and Jon agreed that there were appropriate times and ways to discuss issues surrounding a relapse. They agreed not to have “text wars” but to speak in person. They also agreed that if a discussion was turning into an argument, they could take a break and talk later.

Many of Jon and Jamie’s boundaries relate to how they communicate, but some of their other boundaries take the form of if/then statements in which they agree that certain actions will lead to certain consequences. That, Jamie says, allows them both to feel that life isn’t quite so chaotic.

Prayer, scripture study, and temple attendance help struggling spouses receive the Savior's healing power.



Vital Behavior 7: Practice Self-Care

Engaging in daily routines that heal and nurture mind, body, and spirit.

Gina remembers that soon after she met with her bishop for the first time, he advised her to do a few things that seemed like the standard answers. “He gently urged me,” she remembers, “to get to the temple, read my scriptures, continue in prayer.”

In the challenging years that followed, Gina found that the “standard answers” were her means of caring for herself. The scriptures became her sanctuary. “I would read a verse, write it down, and try to ponder what it meant to my situation, and then write those thoughts down,” she explains. “I knew that, more than ever, I had to hear the Lord’s word and have it take deeper root in my understanding. I could make so little sense of the rest of my world, but for the time I was in the scriptures, I was making sense of something—one verse at a time.”

Likewise, prayer and temple attendance took on new meaning. “When I was done pouring out my heart,” Gina remembers, “I would say, ‘Heavenly Father, now it’s Your turn.’” And she would wait quietly and listen. “Even in the darkest hour,” she explains, she realized that her “spirit was growing.”

Living in Hope

No individual’s journey of healing is the same as another’s, and each one is a process—not a destination. Common in many stories, however, is a realization that no amount of pornography use is OK or normal. As a result, when someone engages in any frequency of use or any level of involvement, his or her spouse will experience feelings of heartbreak, betrayal trauma, rejection, shame, and questioning of self-worth. Pornography use damages the connection, trust, and communication essential to a healthy relationship—making it vital for a spouse to seek

hope and healing.

Also common is the comforting discovery that in this bitter experience, spouses can

come to know the sweet not by finally finding it on the far side of their trials but by turning with hope to Jesus Christ in the midst of them.

Today, Gina is divorced and focused on her healing and that of her children, and she often reaches out to help women in similar circumstances find hope. Melissa and Cameron remain married and work to live in recovery. So do Jamie and Jon, who actively help other couples find the healing they have found through the Savior and His Atonement.

Eva is divorced and regularly attending 12-step meetings, where she finds safety and validation as she works on her recovery. She has come to understand that while she once made her husband’s addiction the focus of her life, healing comes as she puts the Savior at the center of her life and efforts.

Amy and her husband are still married—although he continues to relapse. Amy, however, testifies that peace comes when she watches general conference thinking, “How can I heal my pain?” not, “I hope my husband hears this.” She knows that Jesus Christ’s healing power and her faith in the infinite nature of the Atonement provide hope—not only for her husband but also for her.

One sister affected by pornography may speak for all when she says, “The Savior doesn’t want us to try harder; He wants us to turn to Him sooner.” These seven vital behaviors help women and men in their efforts to do that. ■

TWELVE TRUTHS

In addition to working on the seven vital behaviors, many family members of those who use pornography have also found hope and healing by studying the following 12 truths, found in the Church's Addiction Recovery Program materials. For more information about the materials and support for spouses and family members, see addictionrecovery.lds.org.

1. *God "will console you in your afflictions" (Jacob 3:1).* Pornography use is serious, but we can find comfort in knowing that God is aware of us and our situations, that He will never abandon us, and that He will support us in our afflictions.
2. *"Shake off the chains with which ye are bound" (2 Nephi 1:23).* We are not responsible for another's actions or to blame for another's addiction. As children of God who understand our divine nature and destiny, we know that we are free to act and to exercise our agency to make choices for ourselves.
3. *"He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people" (Alma 7:11).* As we give our burdens to the Lord, we understand that He can heal our deepest pain, that no blessing will be denied us, and that change takes time.
4. *"Draw near unto me" (D&C 88:63).* The Lord's help is essential, and we can find it by partaking of the sacrament, attending the temple, and seeking the companionship of His Holy Spirit.
5. *"Work out your own salvation" (Mormon 9:27).* We cannot control someone else and heal his or her addiction, but we can focus on our own healing, take care of ourselves, and gain understanding by learning about addiction.
6. *"Bear one another's burdens" (Mosiah 18:8).* In addition to relying on the Lord, we must seek appropriate help, including support from family, friends, priesthood and Relief Society leaders, mentors, support groups, and professionals.
7. *"In everything give thanks" (D&C 98:1).* Even as we experience discouragement, fear, and anger, we can also find joy as we acknowledge and express gratitude for the hand of God in our lives, recognize our own gifts and talents, and see the good in our loved one who is addicted.
8. *Be "firm and steadfast" (Helaman 15:8).* We can set appropriate limits to protect ourselves and our families—while not enduring abusive behavior of any kind—and seek the Lord's direction as to if and how a relationship should be preserved.
9. *We "have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty" (2 Corinthians 4:2).* Pornography use thrives in secrecy and can begin to be addressed only as we are honest with ourselves and with our loved one, establishing open and honest communication with him or her.
10. *"Lift up the hands which hang down" (D&C 81:5).* We can love and pray for our loved one, offering greater support as he or she is ready to accept it.
11. *"Bear all these things with patience" (Alma 38:4).* Recovery is a process, and while relapse should not be used as an excuse, it can be responded to with love and hope.
12. *"My peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).* As we exercise faith, we can find the peace the Lord promises, knowing that He will assist us as we extend forgiveness to those who have broken promises and hearts.



TEMPLES, TAPROOTS, AND FAMILY TREES



TURNING THE HEARTS, BY ANNIE HENRIE NADER © 2013. MAY NOT BE COPIED; BACKGROUND FROM GETTY IMAGES

To anchor our children against the winds of the world, we must help them to see themselves in God's great plan of salvation.



By Rosemary M. Wixom
Served as Primary General President from 2010 to 2016

Several years ago an Apostle of the Lord asked me this searching question: “What is the taproot that will anchor a child in the wind?”

To answer, we need to know that a taproot is the first and largest root that springs from a seed. It grows downward and provides stability. Plants with taproots tend to be drought tolerant and can even store reserves of food, making them self-sufficient and resilient.

With that description in mind, I thought of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in the Book of Mormon. They talked about being taught truth that caused them to turn their hearts to Christ. They said, “God . . . has made these things known unto us . . . because he loveth our souls as well as he loveth our children; . . . he doth visit us . . . that the plan of salvation might be made known unto us as well as unto future generations” (Alma 24:14).

I believe that the taproot that will anchor our children in the wind is helping them to see themselves in the great plan of salvation, as the Anti-Nephi-Lehies did. When children know who they are, where they came from, why they are here, and where they are going, their lives take on a sense of purpose, enabling them to grasp tightly to truth.

When it comes to anchoring our children against the winds of the world, we must devote our best efforts. We all want our children and grandchildren to have access to this taproot. When they understand God's plan for them, they will be stable, drought tolerant, self-sufficient, and resilient!

Helping our children be grounded in truth must become a priority for all of us—not only fathers and mothers but also grandparents, aunts, uncles, leaders, and teachers.

Anchored to the Taproot

How does family history relate to this idea of anchoring to the taproot of our Heavenly Father's plan? Let's go to the tree that grows from the taproot.

Consider the beautiful painting by Annie Henrie Nader titled *Turning the Hearts* (left). The artist said the tree represents the tree of life and the fruit of the gospel. “It also represents a family tree,” and “the fruit embodies those *precious pieces of information* we pass down through . . . generations.”¹

When I first saw this painting, I thought, “I want to do that!” I want to stand under that beautiful tree and pick those precious pieces of fruit from its branches to pass down to my

children and grandchildren. I want them to see themselves surrounding that tree. I want them to turn their hearts to their roots. I want them to know their progenitors—their positive attributes and their struggles. Where did their ancestors get the strength to endure? What are their stories of exercising faith in Jesus Christ that enabled them to live Heavenly Father’s plan?

I love family history! I love learning my ancestors’ stories. Those stories create a connection. But I don’t always feel like a family historian, because I haven’t done all we think of as “family history.” So, here are two confessions:

First, I am a beginner in doing research. My contribution right now is serving my husband, Jack, cookies while he does family history research on the computer.

Second, I am not into scrapbooking.

But am I still creating a connection to the taproot for my children and grandchildren? Here is how I am helping them to see the fruit of the tree:

When I discovered Annie Henrie Nader’s painting, I thought of my mother. She is 97 years old. She remembers her mother and grandmother. It occurred to me that I must seize *this* moment. My mother has picked fruit from the tree. She holds in her hand precious pieces of information she can share with my grandchildren. They could *personally* learn from her about their second- and third-great-grandmothers.

I could hardly wait to create a family gathering. It happened on Christmas Day. The children gathered around my mother and attentively listened to her describe the precious memories she loves about her mother and grandmother, who lived more than a hundred years ago. The children heard stories of faith, and they learned how these women endured trials. They learned that these great-grandmothers loved, laughed, and cried throughout their earth lives.

I began to think, “What more could I do?” When my grandchildren see the names of their ancestors on a printed page or on a computer screen, I want them to see more than just a name. I want them to see real people who dealt with many of the same challenges we experience today.

We can anchor all generations to the taproot as we share precious pieces of information about wonderful men and women, perform sacred temple ordinances for them, and seal our families together forever.

The veil is thin, and when we know about those who have gone before, they become real people with “real-life situations”² who can help us in times of need—especially when the wind is blowing. Joseph Smith said, “They are not far from us, and know and understand our thoughts, feelings, and motions, and are often pained therewith.”³

Making Our Ancestors Real

How do we make our ancestors real? We tell their stories. Too much courage, faith, and real-life challenges went into their lives for us to let their examples dissolve like faded ink on paper.

I started with a two-minute exercise. For two minutes I wrote everything I could remember about my deceased father that I could use to introduce him to my grandchildren. That got me thinking: “What if I were to do this exercise with other progenitors? And what if I made it an ongoing process? What if I collected that information? What if I took a simple notebook and titled it ‘Precious Pieces of Information?’ Could I also use my mobile device to record insights about each ancestor I have known?”

We can never tell when a memory will surface. I could take notes at funerals when we, as a family, celebrate

another life well lived. Is the Sabbath day not a perfect time to gather our children, talk about the stories of those who have gone before, and record all we can remember about those ancestors we love?

As my grandchildren's lives unfold, they could learn from:

- A great-grandmother who lost two babies at birth and later watched four of her boys go off to war—and only three return. Yet she lived a life of unusual optimism and cheerfulness.
- A great-grandfather who ran away from an orphanage at age 16 to make a life for himself. How did he find the self-discipline to become an inventor and an engineer?
- A great-grandfather whose quarantine for scarlet fever prevented him from graduating from high school. But he didn't give up. While working three jobs to provide for his family, he sat at the kitchen table late at night with his son, and they worked together toward high school graduation.
- A grandfather who taught thriftiness when he would tell his children, "I hope you can eat that between two slices of bread." Or after seeing a neighbor repair his car in the rain, he would teach them perseverance when he would say, "The rain never stopped Bill Black."
- A great-aunt in her 80s who paused her life many times to go to the homes of her siblings and care for them in their last days on earth. She is a legend, an example of unselfishness in our family.

Memories and Ordinances

These stories will be lost, however, unless I find ways to preserve and share them. I must also provide temple ordinances for those who are waiting. So, I've discovered two ways I can incorporate sharing into my life:

First, I can take opportunities to share these pieces of information with my children and grandchildren. I can say, "Katie, look how you are finding humor despite your trials. You're just like your Grandma Nancy."

Or I can compare examples of the past to the present when I speak of an ancestor's self-discipline in giving up tobacco. Might this be an example to help a grandchild step away from the addictive draw of video games?

Would knowing how a grandmother dealt with symptoms of depression help a young mother today with the same symptoms?

Second, I can share my information on the FamilySearch Memories app.⁴ I can attach photos and stories. As I submit these precious pieces of information online, others may connect the past to the present and continue to create an unbroken chain of memories.

To know these pieces of information about our immediate family members who have gone before is one step, but to climb into the branches of our family tree and discover names of those who are waiting for their saving ordinances is another step. In Annie Henrie Nader's painting, passing the fruit may also represent discovering names of ancestors and performing their ordinances. We can do it as a family. As we pass the fruit, we not only see ourselves in the plan of salvation, but we also offer salvation to those who have gone before. Both are important elements of family history.

So, I say to my husband: "Jack, move over. I want to sit next to you at the computer and learn family history! I want to take the next step in my family history journey and feel that same joy you feel when I see you run upstairs exclaiming, 'Look! I found another name to take to the temple!'"

Better yet, we'll do family history together. We can anchor all generations to the taproot as we share precious pieces of information about wonderful men and women, perform sacred temple ordinances for them, and seal our families together forever. ■

From a presentation at the RootsTech 2016 Family History Conference in Salt Lake City on February 6, 2016. To watch a recording of the presentation, go to lds.org/topics/family-history/familydiscoveryday/wixom.


NOTES

1. Annie Henrie Nader, description of painting on back of print.
2. Introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants.
3. Joseph Smith, in *History of the Church*, 6:52.
4. See familysearch.org/mobile/memories; familysearch.org/blog/en/familysearch-memories-app.



YE SHALL NOT
FEAR

*When disaster strikes,
the principles that saved
these families could
save you too.*



By Breanna Olaveson,
Melissa Hayes, and
Leah Welker

Charles and Rosemary Harvey had some money saved for a rainy day, but the floodwater came faster and higher than they anticipated. More than 5,000 homes would feel the impact of the flood that hit Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA, that spring. As the water level rose outside their home, the Harveys found that they had over four feet (1 m) of water in their living room.

Despite this, Brother and Sister Harvey weren't afraid. "The prophets have counseled us to save some for a rainy day," Brother Harvey says. "That's just what we did."

As the Harveys came to know, sometimes it doesn't just rain—it pours. The scriptures teach us that in the latter days "there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places" (Matthew 24:7). But when Church members heed the counsel of the prophets to be prepared temporally, mentally, and spiritually, they "shall not fear" (D&C 38:30).

Temporal Preparedness

Temporal preparedness is a way of life for Harold and Dorothy Maughan. Where they live in New Hampshire, winters are difficult nearly every year, and sometimes the area is struck by dangerous ice storms.

"You get two inches [5 cm] of rain—only the rain freezes when it hits the ground," Harold explains. "So you can have anywhere between a quarter inch and two inches of ice on the road. It's like a skating rink. The ice also gets on the branches of the trees. Even the big oak trees will split and the branches will fall off."

PHOTOGRAPH OF STORM BY FRDRIC LAHME/EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES PLUS; PHOTOGRAPH OF SIGN BY CRAIG MCCAUSLAND/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Not only do fallen branches and icy roads make travel difficult, but the icy rain can take out any power lines that are aboveground and even disable transformers for underground wires. That can leave their area without power for days.

Preparations for these winter storms are just part of the Maughans' routine every year.

During the summer, Harold ensures that there is plenty of wood for the family's wood-burning stove, stacking two tarp-covered piles against the side of their house. He keeps enough not only for the upcoming winter but also for the next. When the power goes out, the wood-burning stove is essential for cooking, heating, and lighting.

To take care of the fallen branches, the Maughans keep a chain saw full of gas. Back when the children were younger and still living at home, they helped clear and stack the wood while Harold cut it.

"It's been a family project, with the whole family helping to do that, as well as shovel snow," Dorothy explains. Then she laughingly recalls, "One year when the ward went over to help clear snow at the church, our daughter came home disgusted because the boys that showed up had never shoveled snow before. So she had to teach them how to do it."

Harold quips, "The first gift I gave my wife when I got married was a snow shovel."

Now they also have a snowblower with extra fuel, but they keep plenty of shovels around, just in case.

When asked how family members have kept their spirits up in the face of discouraging circumstances, Harold immediately says, "There's too much to do to get discouraged."

Dorothy adds, "And we could always sing a funny song, and we could get right on going again."

One of their greatest needs during the winter actually is water. All the houses on their road get their water from wells with electric pumps. When the power is out, there's no water. The Maughans keep plenty of potable water with their food storage, but they also have a pond in their front yard that overflows in a little waterfall. Because the water is flowing, the overflow stays liquid all winter; the Maughans fill up gallon jugs at the pond and take the water to their neighbors to take care of basic necessities like flushing toilets.

The Maughans strongly believe in helping their neighbors. Harold says, "The neighbors know that if they need something, they can come here to get it."

Not only do the Maughans share freely of their food storage, but they pitch in to help whoever needs labor as well. One neighbor had a sick son who required heart monitors and a controlled environment in his house.



Left: The children of Harold and Dorothy Maughan of New Hampshire, USA, helped with the family's preparedness work, such as chopping wood for their wood-burning stove.

Once, after an ice storm took out the power, everyone worked hard to clear the neighbor's driveway for emergency vehicles to come in. The Maughans brought the family water, helped keep them warm, and even cooked some food for the son on their wood stove. At least partly due to everyone's efforts, the son pulled through.

Harold says, "It's just the kind of thing we do."

Mental Preparedness

Physical preparedness is important in situations where access to life's necessities—like food, water, and shelter—is limited. But mental preparedness can be just as essential to emotional and physical survival.

The Gulf of Mexico region is often impacted by hurricanes, and when they hit, many people are forced to evacuate their homes. Eric Petersen was president of the Beaumont Texas Stake when his stake's area was affected by several hurricanes within months of each other. Mental preparedness helped him have peace of mind while members of his stake were evacuating. As one of their leaders, he worried about the people and their well-being as they traveled, but the stake's preparation and plan for keeping track of members helped ease his mind.

"Making sure everybody was safe was my biggest concern," President Petersen says. Stake leaders sent out a questionnaire asking stake members to identify where they would go in the event of a hurricane and to

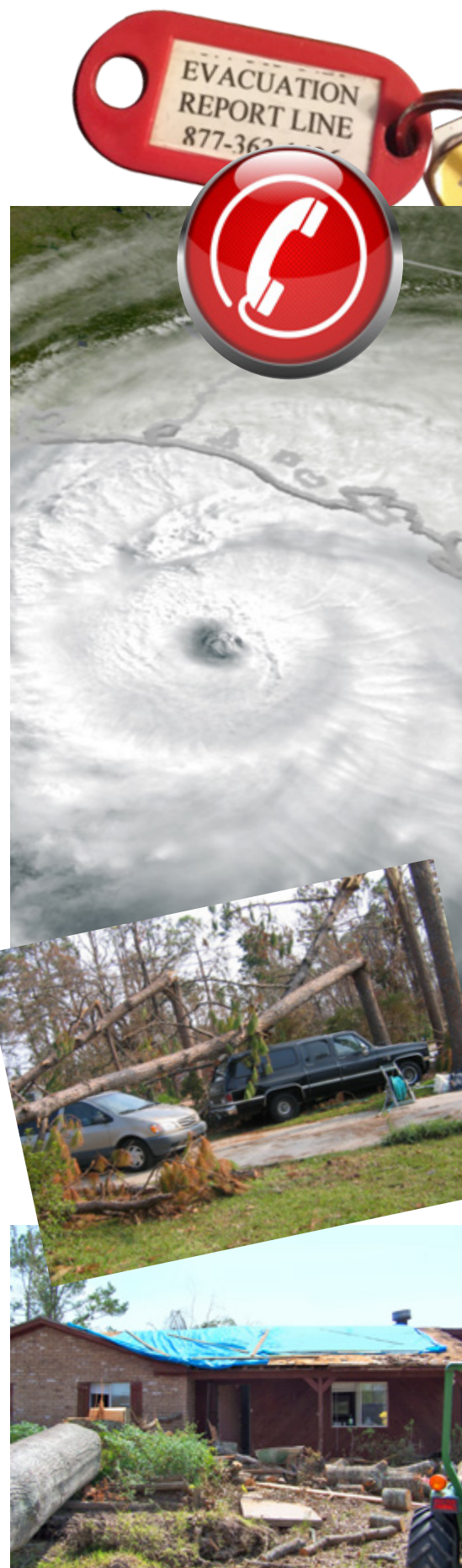
provide emergency contact information. Unfortunately, when Hurricane Rita affected the region, stake leaders weren't able to make contact with the members of the stake to find out if they were traveling or if they had arrived safely.

"That experience led us to create a hotline," President Petersen says. "We have a toll-free number that members call when they leave their homes and call again to confirm they have arrived at their destination."

When he was able to know which of his stake members were safe and which didn't arrive safely, President Petersen could more effectively seek out those members to help them. This preparation helped leaders deal with disasters quickly and efficiently.

Mental preparedness can also complement physical preparedness. The Maughans carefully taught their children everything they needed to do to prepare for and survive the harsh New Hampshire winters. They grew a large garden during the summer, and Dorothy compiled the family's favorite recipes and taught the children how to cook.

Right: After Hurricane Rita caused death and destruction along the U.S. Gulf Coast, leaders of the Beaumont Texas Stake created a toll-free number members could call to report whether they had evacuated safely. Watch the stake president describe that season's recovery efforts at youtube.com/watch?v=6giBfS5VyeM.





Harold says, “We taught the kids how to do everything we had to do, so even in an emergency situation, I didn’t have to spend time telling them, ‘This is what we need to do.’ I just said, ‘Look, go do this and go do that.’ And they knew what to do. Even the neighbors commented. The kids knew what had to be done, and they did it.”

Spiritual Preparedness

Temporal preparedness brings peace of mind, but some disasters destroy even the best-laid preparations. In these cases, Helaman’s message to his sons feels especially pertinent: “When the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down . . . because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation” (Helaman 5:12).

After losing many of their physical possessions, the Ashton family of California, USA, testified that spiritual preparedness ultimately sustained them through their hardships.

The Ashton children were sitting in sacrament meeting when the bishop announced the meeting was canceled. A fire in Southern California

was sweeping toward ward members’ homes, and they needed to make sure their homes were all right. With the Ashton parents, Tom and Sheila, and some of the other children out of town, it was up to the teenage siblings to take charge and keep the younger ones safe.

Once they saw the smoke and realized their home was in imminent danger, they decided they would stay at their aunt’s house in a neighboring city. After taking their younger sisters there, two of the brothers went home to gather what they could before the house was destroyed.

Their goal was to get in, grab what they could, and get out. They took a deep breath and ran into the smoky house, taking their pets, insurance papers, and photo albums with them. They returned to their sisters but couldn’t call their parents because the phone lines were closed. The next morning, they learned that their home and eight-acre avocado orchard had both been destroyed by the fire. Once phone lines reopened, one son called his parents to tell them about the damage.

When they heard the news, Tom and Sheila were both calm and accepting. They trusted in the Lord, and the family actually grew closer during that difficult time. Tom says, “It was a very edifying time because of the help, the love, and the people that rallied around us. We were very touched by all the Christlike love that people showed. It was an experience that I wouldn’t want to replace.”

Left: The Ashtons’ California home (bottom) was destroyed by fire (top), a trial that ultimately brought the family closer together.

Ward members helped by providing the Ashton family places to stay, and one family—not members of the Church and strangers to the Ashtons—repeatedly brought them much-needed clothes and supplies. Tom says, “It was a very humbling thing to accept. It seems it’s always easier to give than to receive in a lot of cases, and that was something that I had to learn.”

The Ashtons had been prepared for nearly any natural disaster. The house was built to remain stable in an earthquake, and they had plenty of food storage to sustain them during an emergency. They had backpacks ready to go in case they needed to evacuate. But all those things were lost in the fire, and the Ashtons were left only with their faith.

“You have things that you spend hours making and taking care of. Then you lose it and you wonder what its value was,” Tom says. “It makes you realize that what’s really important are eternal blessings.”

That understanding changed their outlook, as it did for Charles and Rosemary Harvey, the Iowa couple whose home was flooded. They continued to serve, even during their time of trial. They relied heavily on the gospel of Jesus Christ and their faith in Him to see them through. The water levels were still rising when it came time for them to serve as ordinance workers in the Nauvoo Illinois Temple, but they knew the temple was where they needed to be.



PREPARE EVERY NEEDFUL THING

“We [as a church] have built grain storage and storehouses and stocked them with the necessities of life in the event of a disaster. But the best storehouse is the family storeroom. In words of revelation the Lord has said, ‘Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing’ (D&C 109:8).

“Our people for three-quarters of a century have been counseled and encouraged to make such preparation as will assure survival should a calamity come.

“We can set aside some water, basic food, medicine, and clothing to keep us warm. We ought to have a little money laid aside in case of a rainy day.”

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “If Ye Are Prepared Ye Shall Not Fear,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 62.

Below: The Harveys in their flood-damaged basement in Iowa. (Sister Harvey has since passed away.)



“The strength of the covenants that we make in the temple is what prepared us,” Brother Harvey says. “We need to have trials. It’s how we react to them that really shows how much faith we have in our Heavenly Father.”

This reliance on God and eternal perspective gave the Harveys the same outlook the Ashtons had: that material possessions are not as important as we sometimes think.

“There is too much emphasis on the worldly things instead of the spiritual things,” Brother Harvey says. “Things of the world are just small and immediate gratifications—what we think we need. But spiritual strength comes from Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”

The sure foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ prepares Church members for the storms of life. Because physical storms come, those who are prepared for a disaster can find peace of mind in good times and can be self-reliant in difficult times.¹ As these families learned, when we are prepared, we indeed shall not fear. ■

Breanna Olaveson lives in Utah, USA; Melissa Hayes and Leah Welker live in Texas, USA.

NOTE

1. “Self-reliance is the ability, commitment, and effort to provide the spiritual and temporal necessities of life for self and family” (*Handbook 2: Administering the Church* [2010], 6.1.1).

For help in developing a ward or stake emergency preparedness plan, see preparedness.lds.org.

LIFE'S A PLAY

THE PLAN OF SALVATION
IN THREE ACTS

*We're in the middle of
a three-act play that
we don't fully understand,
but focusing on Christ
will help us find
an eternally happy ending.*

By Margaret Willden

The lights dim. The plush red curtain rises. The costumed figures around you spring into action. Who is the hero? Who is the villain? It's hard to say.

You stand center stage, unable to make sense of it all. Everyone seems to understand what's going on but you. "This is act 2," one actor whispers. "Look over this script."

We may not all be actors, but the notion of such a play is not that far from reality. Imagine the plan of salvation, also called "the great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8), as a three-act play. Act 1 is where we came from, act 2 is our life on earth, and act 3 is where we are going. During act 2, we have no memory of our past and little knowledge of our future, but fortunately the gospel of Jesus Christ—the play's script—puts our mortal life in context.

Act 1: Understanding Our Beginnings

From the scriptures and the words of living prophets, we learn of our premortal existence (see Abraham 3:22–24). Before we came to earth, we participated in a council with our Heavenly Father. We learned that we would come to earth to gain a body, have posterity, face opposition, and increase in light and truth. If we were obedient and became more Christlike, we could one day live with our Father again.

Because we would make mistakes along the way, Jesus Christ was chosen as our Savior to pay the price of sin. He suffered for each of us, and because of His sacrifice, we can be cleansed through repentance.

But Satan (or Lucifer, as he was called in the premortal existence) rebelled and sought to remove our ability to choose right or wrong. A War in Heaven began. Upon his defeat, Satan was cast out of heaven, along with the spirits who chose to follow him (see Moses 4:1–4).

Though we can't remember this premortal existence, we know that we promised to do all we could to return to God's presence once we were on earth. And He promised us agency, allowing us to choose to follow Him.

Act 2: Using Our Agency

Now we are here in act 2, and God has provided the script to guide us back to Him—the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our challenge is to use our agency to follow the script so we can prepare to return to our Heavenly Father (see Abraham 3:25). Like a complex play full of subplots, our mortal life can be complicated. It is riddled with temptations, trials, and tragedies of every kind. But the truth is that act 2 is all about choosing whether we will follow the teachings of Christ so we can become more like Him.

The scriptures provide the perfect pattern for happiness, encouraging us to "press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:20). We grow as we make and keep covenants, obey the commandments, and repent when we sin. As we immerse ourselves in the scriptures and teachings of our prophets, we will stay focused on the plan we joyfully agreed to follow in act 1.

Act 3: Embracing Eternity

Our physical bodies may die at the end of act 2, but the story doesn't end there. In fact, act 3 has no closing curtain—it is eternal (see Abraham 3:26).

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all of God's children who come to earth will be resurrected. What could be more joyful than resurrection? (see D&C 93:33).

Nearly all will also receive a degree of glory depending on their works: the telestial kingdom, with a glory like that of the stars; the terrestrial kingdom, with a glory like that of the moon; or the celestial kingdom, with the ultimate glory like that of the sun (see D&C 76:50–113). In the celestial kingdom we will dwell with the Father and the Son. A relative few will remain "filthy still" (2 Nephi 9:16) and be cast into outer darkness, where they can never progress.

What Will Your Story Be?

If we follow the gospel of Jesus Christ in act 2, act 3 of our play will be glorious beyond belief. The curtains are up. The action is underway. What will you do on stage? ■

The author lives in New York, USA.

This idea is based on a talk, "The Play and the Plan," given by President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in a Church Educational System fireside for young adults on May 7, 1995.



The Voice of the Spirit



By Elder Eduardo Gavarret
Of the Seventy

Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or need to change my course.

When I was young, my father had a store where he sold and repaired clocks and watches. Our family home was located in the back of the store, so I grew up with the sounds of clocks and watches.

At the end of each day, my father would take some of the wall clocks he had worked on during the day and hang them inside our home on the walls near our bedrooms. I didn't understand why he did this and why we had to sleep with all that noise. But with time, the sound of different clocks became a familiar part of otherwise quiet nights.

A couple of years later, I began working with my father in the store, learning from him how to repair watches. One morning he said something that opened my mind and helped me understand why he hung the wall clocks outside our bedrooms instead of keeping them inside the store.

"Could you bring me the wall clock that was near your bedroom last night?" he asked. "I was listening to the sound of it during the night, and I realized it is not working right. I need to look at it again."

That was it! In the silence of the night, he had listened to the sound of the clock in the same way a doctor listens to the sound of the heart of a patient. In the process of repairing various types of clocks and watches over a

lifetime, he had trained his ears to determine by a clock's sound whether it was working perfectly or not.

After that experience, I began to pay attention to the sound of the clocks during the night, just as my father did. By doing so, I learned to recognize whether a clock was working correctly or whether it needed adjustment.

As I grew older and gained an understanding of gospel principles, I began to compare this experience with the positive influence the Holy Ghost can have in our lives. I began to liken times of spiritual reflection and meditation to quiet moments in the night during my childhood, and I began to liken the sound of the clocks to the voice of the Spirit warning me, guiding me, and speaking to me from time to time.

Important Spiritual Qualities

This experience helped me recognize the truthfulness of experiences Nephi had with the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. From the Book of Mormon, we learn that Nephi shared with his brother Sam "the things which the Lord had *manifested unto [him] by his Holy Spirit*" (1 Nephi 2:17; emphasis added).

Nephi was well acquainted with the influence of the Holy Ghost. His life was filled with feelings of love from the Father and the Son, which were manifested to him

by the Holy Ghost. As we review the life of Nephi, we see clear examples of God's love made manifest through answered prayers and spiritual guidance. Examples include:

- Nephi's vision of the tree of life (see 1 Nephi 11–15).
- The Liahona, which worked according to faith (see 1 Nephi 16:10, 16, 26–30).
- Nephi's deliverance after being bound with cords (see 1 Nephi 7:17–18).
- The Lord's direction while Nephi's family crossed the ocean (see 1 Nephi 18:21–23).
- A warning from the Lord to flee into the wilderness (see 2 Nephi 5:5).

In his early years and likely with help from the example of his parents, Nephi developed a sensitivity to the voice of the Spirit. He cultivated this ability by exercising the following important spiritual qualities:

- *Desire*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, . . . [had] great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord” (1 Nephi 2:16). “I . . . desired to know the things that my father had seen” (1 Nephi 11:1; see also verse 3).
- *Faith*: “I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father” (1 Nephi 2:16).
- *Prayerfulness*: “And I, Nephi, did go into the mount oft, and I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things” (1 Nephi 18:3).
- *Obedience*: “And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father: I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 3:7).

The Work of the Holy Ghost

Nephi was well qualified to speak about the third member of the Godhead. He had learned to listen to the voice of the Spirit—whether in calm waters or troubled seas. His



experiences guided him to write about “the work of the Holy Ghost”¹ (see 2 Nephi 31–32). From Nephi and other prophets, we learn that:

The Holy Ghost *reveals*: “No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator”² (see 1 Nephi 10:17–19; 2 Nephi 32:5; Moroni 10:5).

The Holy Ghost *inspires*: He gives us thoughts, feelings, and words, enlightens our understanding, and directs our thoughts (see 1 Nephi 4:6).

The Holy Ghost *testifies*: He testifies of the Father and of the Son (see 2 Nephi 31:18; 3 Nephi 28:11; Ether 12:41).

The Holy Ghost *teaches*: He increases our knowledge (see 2 Nephi 32:5).

The Holy Ghost *sanctifies*: After baptism we may be sanctified through reception of the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:20).

The Holy Ghost *reminds*: He brings things to our mind when we need them most (see John 14:26).

The Holy Ghost *comforts*: During times of trouble or despair, the Holy Ghost can lift our spirits, give us hope

(see Moroni 8:26), teach us “the peaceable things of the kingdom” (D&C 36:2), and help us feel “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).³

The Influence of the Holy Ghost

In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, we learn that Lehi “was filled with the Spirit of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:12). In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon, Moroni promises us that God “will manifest the truth of [the Book of Mormon] unto [us], by the power of the Holy Ghost” (Moroni 10:4).

From the beginning to the end of this inspired book of scripture, the Holy Ghost actively participates in the lives of God’s people. This powerful influence extends to and touches all readers of the Book of Mormon who pray, show faith, and have a sincere desire to know the truth (see Moroni 10:4–5).

How can we recognize the Holy Ghost and use the right we have as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to receive the influence of the Holy Ghost in our lives? Elder Craig C. Christensen of the Presidency of the Seventy has taught: “We all have experiences with the Holy Ghost, even though we may not always recognize them. As inspired thoughts come into our minds, we know them to be true by the *spiritual feelings that enter into our hearts*.”⁴

To increase our ability to receive the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost

in our lives, we, like Nephi, need to cultivate a desire to receive, exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, “pray always, and not faint” (2 Nephi 32:9), and obey the commandments.

President Thomas S. Monson has asked that we do one more thing: “Open your hearts, even your very souls, to the sound of that special voice which testifies of truth. . . .

May we ever be in tune, that we might hear this comforting, guiding voice which will keep us safe.”⁵

From my father, I learned the lesson of listening in a practical way—working with watches and clocks. Today I treasure the lesson he taught me. The Holy Ghost, in fact, still brings that lesson to my mind and heart, and He gives me a promise of good things to come.

That experience has helped me search for quiet moments when I can listen for the voice of the Spirit. Listening closely to the Holy Ghost helps me determine whether I am walking the correct path or whether I need to change my course so that I can be in tune with Heavenly Father’s desires. ■

TO RECEIVE INFLUENCE AND DIRECTION FROM THE HOLY GHOST

- Cultivate a desire to receive.
- Exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray always.
- Obey the commandments.



THE HOLY GHOST AND PERSONAL REVELATION

“The Holy Ghost provides personal revelation to help us make major life decisions about such things as education, missions, careers, marriage, children, where we will live with our families, and so on. In these matters, Heavenly Father expects us to use our agency, study the situation out in our minds according to gospel principles, and bring a decision to Him in prayer.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 105.

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 105.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 132.
3. For further understanding of the roles of the Holy Ghost, see David A. Bednar, “Always Retain a Remission of Your Sins,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 59–62; Robert D. Hales, “The Holy Ghost,” 105–7.
4. Craig C. Christensen, “An Unspeakable Gift from God,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 14; emphasis added.
5. Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 84.



UNDERSTANDING CHURCH HISTORY BY
Study AND **Faith**

*Today, we learn about the past through incomplete pieces of history.
As we study these records, we must remember that they
do not represent the entirety of the past.*



By Keith A. Erikson
Church History Library Director

History means far more than memorizing dates and facts for a test. Every day, archivists, librarians, and historians in the Church History Library collect, preserve, and share records of the past that help us discern God’s hand in the Church’s history and in our individual lives. Understanding our history involves a process of learning and discovery that can help us strengthen our testimonies, deflect doubt, tell the best stories, discern true doctrine, and improve our thinking. As we “obtain a knowledge of history,” we will also assist in bringing about “the salvation of Zion” (D&C 93:53).

As a historian, I’ve come to appreciate that we learn about history “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118). Faith and study combine as we prayerfully feast on the scriptures, read and reflect on multiple historical sources, make connections between scripture passages and historical sources, consider information within proper contexts, look for patterns and themes, and draw out relevant lessons. These practices help us make sense of historical facts and find answers to our questions. Several principles can help us think about history in ways that open our minds to a deeper understanding.

The past is gone—only pieces remain

From our perspective in the present, the past is mostly gone. The people have passed away; their experiences have ended. However, pieces of the past remain—letters, diaries, records of organizations, material objects. Today, we can learn about the past only indirectly through the pieces that remain. Information is always lost between the past and the present. We must study the records that do survive while remembering that they do not represent the entirety of the past.

Consider one example: When Joseph Smith preached a sermon to the Saints, he typically had no prepared text, and no audio or video recording was made. Though a few in attendance may have written notes or reflections, even fewer of those notes survive. Thus, we cannot claim to know everything Joseph Smith ever said, though we can, for instance, quote Wilford Woodruff’s notes about Joseph’s sermon.

In other cases, important pieces of the Church’s history have not yet been discovered. For example, we do not have records of the visit of Peter, James, and John that are as detailed as the accounts of the visit of John the Baptist (see Joseph Smith—History 1:66–75). Similarly, though we have records of the priesthood’s being withheld from men of black African descent, no record has survived that authoritatively explains why the practice began. In the study of history, the absence of evidence is not a valid cause for doubt. Learning about the past is an effort of gathering as much trusted and, where possible, verifiable evidence while reserving final judgment on the portions of history that we are unable to fully understand because of the lack of information.

Facts don't speak, but storytellers do

Because the surviving pieces of the past are incomplete, people attempt to put the pieces together in order to tell a story. The earliest stories were told by participants and typically describe what they experienced and why it was important to them. Some participants told their stories on multiple occasions to different audiences. Some events prompted many participants to relate their experiences. Other events were forgotten until a later experience called them to mind.

Stories are collected and retold by others for many reasons—to entertain an audience, sell a product, shape public opinion, or lobby for change. Each story becomes an interpretation of the past, built on factual pieces and influenced by the teller's memory, interests, and goals. As a result, stories about the past are incomplete and sometimes contradictory. We must always consider who is telling the stories, how they are telling them, and why they are telling them.

Joseph Smith provided an example of how to evaluate storytellers and facts. In 1838, he observed that there were already “many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” As a result, he wrote a history intended to “put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession” (Joseph Smith—History 1:1). All of the stories told about Joseph Smith do not bear equal value or accuracy. Stories told by persons more closely connected to past events may be more reliable. The best stories consider all available pieces of the past and recognize the perspectives of the sources.



As we encounter history that is incomplete, open to interpretation, and different than we assumed, we must “put [our] trust in that Spirit which leadeth . . . to walk humbly” (D&C 11:12). It requires humility not to judge people in the past by our standards.

The past is different from the present (and that's OK)

As we seek to make sense of the pieces of the past and the stories told about it, we discover people, places, experiences, and traditions different from our own. Changes in science, technology, and culture produce different experiences with birth, eating, travel, holidays, hygiene, dating, medicine, and death. Different political and economic systems create different experiences with education, choice, freedom, and opportunity. Past views differ from our views on work, family, public service, and the role and status of women and minorities. Every temporal aspect of human experience changes over time in ways both small and great.

For example, from our perspective in the present, Joseph Smith's use of a seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon appears very different. In his time, however, many people believed that physical objects could be used to receive divine messages. These beliefs were based, in part, on biblical stories in which objects were used for divine purposes (see Numbers 17:1–10; 2 Kings 5; John 9:6). A revelation Joseph received for the organization of the Church explained that God “gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon” (D&C 20:8). Though the “means” included a seer stone as well as the Urim and Thummim, we can still discern the doctrinal message “that

God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age . . . ; thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever” (D&C 20:11–12).

Present assumptions distort the past

Because the past was different from our day, we must take special care not to make assumptions about the past based on our present ideas and values. We cannot assume that people in the past were just like us or that they would appreciate our culture or beliefs. We cannot assume that we now know everything, that we have read every source, or that our current understanding of the past will never change. Frequently, so-called problems with the past are actually just bad assumptions made in the present.

For example, Joseph Smith declared, “I never told you I was perfect.”¹ If we were to assume that prophets never made mistakes, then we might be startled to discover times when Joseph did. To “fix” this problem, we should neither stubbornly hold that Joseph was perfect nor charge the Church with deception. Rather, we can acknowledge Joseph’s humanity and see him in the context of other scriptural stories about prophets. As a result, we can adjust our assumptions to recognize that all

prophets are mortal and therefore have imperfections. We can feel grateful that God patiently works with each of us. Admitting the errors in our own thinking is sometimes the most difficult part of understanding history.

Learning history requires humility

As we encounter history that is incomplete, open to interpretation, and different than we assumed, we must “put [our] trust in that Spirit which leadeth . . . to walk humbly” (D&C 11:12). From our perspective today, we obviously know more than participants did about the outcome of the past, but we also know far less about their experience of living in it. The people who lived in the past belonged to their own times and places and circumstances. To have charity for their differences and empathy for their experiences, we must begin with humility about our own limitations. It requires humility not to judge people in the past by our standards. It requires humility to admit we do not know everything, to wait patiently for more answers, and to continue learning. When new sources are discovered that provide new insight into things we thought we knew, it requires humility to revise our understanding. ■

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 522.

A PATTERN FOR LEARNING BY STUDY AND FAITH

Faithful study of Church history can follow the pattern illustrated by Alma’s comparison of planting a seed (see Alma 32:27–42):

1. We *give place* for learning history by applying the principles outlined here.
2. We *plant* the seed in our minds and hearts through careful reading and reflection. (Is this a piece of the past or a story told later? Who created it and why? What is the main idea? What evidence supports it?)
3. We can *discern* the importance of our reading by considering how authentic and reliable the source is, placing our answers in proper historical contexts, and identifying eternal principles that can be applied to our personal circumstances.
4. Throughout our lives, we can *nourish* a faithful study of Church history through diligent reading, thinking, praying, sharing, and teaching.
5. By so doing, we will come to *reap* the fruit of faithful study as our understanding improves and our faith deepens, making us better learners and teachers, parents and children, disciples and Saints.

NEW RESOURCES FOR UNDERSTANDING CHURCH HISTORY

By John Heath

Church History Department

The Church has produced many new resources that capture the experience of early Latter-day Saints as they lived the Restoration. The gospel was restored in a time distant from our own, but the early Church members' challenges were like ours in many ways. The powerful examples of faith and determination found in the accounts of their lives provide perspective and hope as we face challenges living the restored gospel in our day.

Included among these resources are modern examples of courage and testimony from Saints around the world who are living the gospel and building the kingdom.

Other resources answer questions about specific revelations and doctrines and provide insights into the lives of Presidents of the Church.

Consider including this material in your study of the Doctrine and Covenants this year, and look for additional materials as they become available online and in the Church history section of the Gospel Library app.



Do you have questions about Church history? Do you want to find inspiring stories from the lives of pioneers around the world to enrich your teaching and study? [History.lds.org](https://history.lds.org) is the best place to start. At this site you will find links to all the resources listed below.

The Gospel Library App. A new section on this app provides a wealth of Church history information to access on mobile devices. Simply scroll to the section labeled “Church History.”

Revelations in Context (history.lds.org/section/revelations).

These articles give background information on practically every section of the Doctrine and Covenants, often through the story of a particular individual.

Pioneers in Every Land (history.lds.org/section/pioneers).

This web page features articles and short videos depicting Latter-day Saint pioneers around the world.

Gospel Topics Essays (lds.org/topics/essays). Read straightforward essays on important historical and doctrinal topics.

Prophets of the Restoration (history.lds.org/section/prophets).

View short video presentations and online exhibits about the lives of each of the Presidents of the Church.

Lower left and right: See highlights online from the Church History Museum exhibit “The Heavens Are Opened.” Top right: A boy visits the Grandin Building in New York, USA, one of many historic sites that can also be visited online. Right: Learn about Joseph Smith’s accounts of the First Vision and watch related videos.



Joseph Smith's Accounts of the First Vision (history.lds.org/firstvision). Here you'll find the original sources of Joseph Smith's four accounts of the First Vision as well as essays and videos that provide context.

Instructor's Resource Page (history.lds.org/studyguide). This page provides a listing of key resources coordinated with the lesson schedules for Gospel Doctrine, Relief Society, and Melchizedek Priesthood meetings.

Historic Sites (history.lds.org/section/historic-sites). Take a virtual tour of places central to the Restoration of the gospel.

Foundations of Faith (history.lds.org/exhibit/foundations-of-faith). Explore a digital exhibit of priceless foundational records that document the Church's restoration and growth. The exhibit includes short videos of 25 important artifacts housed at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City.

The Heavens Are Opened (history.lds.org/maps/the-heavens-are-opened). Use an interactive map to learn about objects from this Church History Museum exhibit. Access all the museum's online exhibits at history.lds.org/section/museum.

Church Historian's Press (churchhistorianspress.org). Books published under this imprint provide original source material and historical context. The materials are searchable and freely available online. Publication is ongoing and includes the following:

Joseph Smith Papers (josephsmithpapers.org). This series contains original documents, transcribed and annotated, that provide in-depth insight on every major aspect of the Church's founding.

The First Fifty Years of Relief Society (churchhistorianspress.org/the-first-fifty-years-of-relief-society). This project brings together original, annotated documents conveying the contributions and challenges of Latter-day Saint women in the 19th century. ■



TO Hallow THE Sabbath Day

The Lord hallowed the Sabbath day and commanded us to do the same. How can we more fully honor His holy day?

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has reminded us that we are “to *hallow* the Sabbath day.” To *hallow* means to greatly revere or respect, to make holy, to sanctify or consecrate. President Nelson related how he came to realize that his conduct and attitude on the Sabbath were actually a sign between him and his Heavenly Father (see Exodus 31:16–17; Ezekiel 20:20). As he learned to ask himself what sign he wanted to give to God, his choices about the Sabbath became very clear.¹

What sign can we give to the Lord to show our love and our devotion to Him? Are there changes we can make in our conduct and our attitude? In the following accounts, members share how they evaluated their Sabbath observance, made changes in their efforts to hallow this special day, and drew closer to the Lord.

Cherishing the Lord’s Holy Day

Shaun Bryan Nish of South Africa owned a successful construction company but felt that he did not have enough time with his family. He and his wife, Esme, decided that he should make a career change.

“After many hours of soul-searching and praying, we decided to sell the company and for me to go into what I enjoy, which is teaching,” says Brother Nish.

This decision required significant financial sacrifice, but Brother and Sister Nish and their four young children were able to make the adjustment. Brother Nish divided his time between working as a new teacher, pursuing a post-graduate certificate of education, serving as a branch president, and being a husband and father.

After teaching high school for a year, Brother Nish felt ready for a new challenge:

teaching for a year out of the country. As he began looking for opportunities, he found that in one country, several employers considered his family of four children a drawback, with some even suggesting that he leave his family behind.

Partaking of the sacrament, involving children in wholesome projects, and being with family are all ways to hallow the Sabbath day.





After months of searching, he finally received an offer from an employer that encouraged him to bring his family with him. There was also a branch of the Church near the school. But there was a complication: Sunday work was required. Brother Nish was torn. He felt that this was the right job for him, but he also knew from President Thomas S. Monson's teachings that decisions can determine our destiny.² "Which road am I following?" wondered Brother Nish.

He tried to reason with his prospective employer and was assured that he could have work off one or two Sundays a month. Encouraged by this, Brother Nish thought, "At least I will be going to church. I will still be the same person." But then his wife reminded him of President Monson's teachings about choices and told him that choosing to work two Sundays a month still meant not being able to keep the Sabbath holy on those days. She counseled him to have faith.

"I followed my wife's counsel and declined the offer," says Brother Nish. "I could not work on the Sabbath. Imagine my delight when three days later I got a phone call from the employer saying they were willing to give me all Sundays off."

Brother Nish concludes, "I learned that faith precedes the miracle and that the Lord wants us to cherish His holy day. I am putting more emphasis on the Sabbath and trying, as President Nelson has counseled, to 'make the Sabbath a delight.'³"

Family Gospel Study on the Sabbath

Sally Olsen and her husband, Maynard, of Utah, USA, began family gospel study with their children in earnest on Sundays when the Church made the change to the consolidated meeting schedule in 1980. At that time, a message from the First Presidency stated, "A greater responsibility will be placed upon the individual members and families for properly observing the Sabbath day. More time will be available for personal study of the scriptures and family-centered gospel study."⁴

As the Olsens encouraged gospel study in their home on Sundays, they saw an increase in love and unity in their family. Says Sister Olsen,

"Family home evening, daily scriptures, and family prayer were still consistently done in our home, but we found there is a power that accompanies gospel study on the holy Sabbath." One of the Sunday activities the Olsen

children regularly enjoyed was reading Church magazine articles on their own and then reporting on them during a family gathering later in the day.

"Being consistent about having concentrated gospel study on Sunday has helped all of our 12 children love the Lord, desire to serve Him, and do His will," says Sister Olsen. "We are eternally grateful for the Sabbath day and rejoice in the true delight it is as we focus our families on learning His gospel on His holy day."

Removing Distractions

One Saturday evening, as Benjamin Hardy of South Carolina, USA, contemplated how he might delight more in the upcoming Sabbath day, he decided to try something different: he would set aside email and social media during Sunday.





“I pondered this for a few minutes,” he remembers. “It would be extremely difficult for me. I check my

email, Facebook, and Twitter accounts every few hours—not just for socializing but for work. It’s hard not to unconsciously click the app on my phone to see what’s going on. I also realized that I often check my email and social media during church, family events, and time with friends.”

As Brother Hardy reflected, he felt that refraining from email and social media on Sunday was something he wanted to do to bring him closer to the Savior. He thanked Heavenly Father for the personal insight regarding his email and social media usage. He knew that following through with his plan would not be easy, but he was willing to give it a try.

The next morning, rather than checking his email or social media accounts, Brother Hardy let his wife sleep in while he played with their two little foster children. He says, “Our Sunday morning ritual is to make breakfast and watch a Church movie. Usually I have my phone next to me throughout both. I’m often in and out of reality and only halfway present with my family. However, that Sunday morning my phone stayed in my room. As I cuddled up to our three-year-old, I felt so much love for my wife and two children. I was completely present with them.”

As he partook of the sacrament later that day at church, Brother Hardy came to the conclusion that he wanted to forgo using email and social media on every Sabbath day. Though he knew this was a personal choice that others were not obligated to make, he felt it would help him make the most of the Lord’s day.

“Throughout church and the entire day,” he recalls, “my heart was drawn to the Savior. I more fully remembered Him throughout the day, without distractions. My testimony was strengthened, and I came to realize that my testimony is not just what I know but *who* I know—it is my relationship with my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”

Looking at family scrapbooks, serving others, going on a family walk, and sharing music can all bring love and peace on the Sabbath day.



FINDING JOY ON THE SABBATH

“You might well be wondering what you could do to live and worship on this Sabbath day to demonstrate your gratitude and to strengthen yourself and others for trials that lie ahead.

“You could begin today with a private and family prayer of thanks for all God has done for you. You could pray to know what the Lord would have you do to serve Him and others. . . .

“I can promise you your prayers will be answered, and as you act on the answers you will receive, you will find joy in the Sabbath, and your heart will overflow with thankfulness.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Gratitude on the Sabbath Day,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 102.

Blessings of Hallowing the Sabbath

Through Isaiah, the Lord promised:

“If thou turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord” (Isaiah 58:13–14).

Such a blessing can be ours as we “turn away” from worldly pursuits and hallow the Lord’s day. For each of us, the signs we give the Lord on His day involve personal decisions, choices that will bless us as we seek to show our love for Him and our desire to be obedient to His commandments. ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 130.
2. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 83.
3. Russell M. Nelson, “The Sabbath Is a Delight,” 130.
4. First Presidency, in Hal Knight, “Meeting Schedule Approved,” *Church News*, Feb. 2, 1980, 3.





By Elder Michael T.
Ringwood
Of the Seventy

YOU CAN KNOW for Yourself

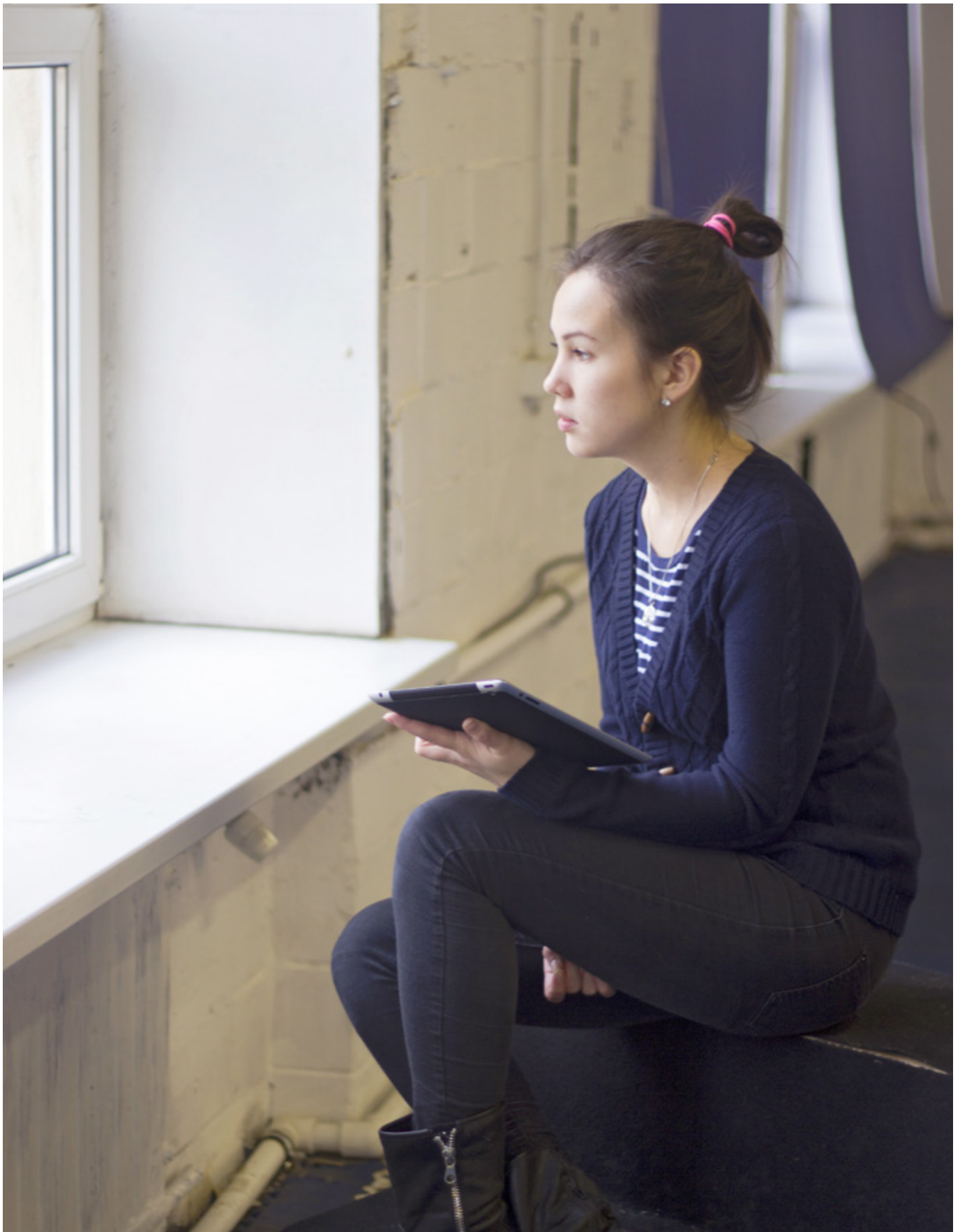
*Read the Book of Mormon. Experience it personally.
It is the word of God.*

I desire to impress upon your minds the power the Book of Mormon can provide in the journey to your promised land. I testify that because the Book of Mormon is the word of God, it was worth the sacrifices that were made to write it, preserve it, and bring it forth in our day. We can know it is true, and we must pass our testimony of it on to future generations.

In our day, it is so easy to go to the internet and read what everyone else thinks or feels about the Book of Mormon. We might be tempted to spend more time reading what is written there than reading the book itself. The Book of Mormon is one of those books that must be read and experienced by each of us. It is one of those books that can't be understood through another person. It is a book, after all, that comes with a promise:

“Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.





“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:3–5).

Millions of people have put this promise to the test and have gained a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I am one of those millions. For some, their testimony may have come easily and quickly, but for most of us, it takes time and effort to gain the promised testimony.

For me, it really did require me to remember how merciful Heavenly Father has been to His children from the days of Adam to our time. It required me to read with believing eyes and a believing heart and then to pray with real intent. That means I had to let God know that I was willing to live in accordance with a witness if I received one. It required me to have the commitment to make changes in my life if the answer did come. I did ask of God, and I did receive that witness.

Do Not Give Up

If you have not yet received that witness for yourself, do not be discouraged. Lean on my witness. Follow the same pattern I followed. It took time for me. It will take time for you. Do not give up.

I find it interesting that we tend to value only what comes at a cost and a price of intent and intensity. It is so important to know for ourselves. We must read from the pages of the Book of Mormon and search its words personally. What is written in the pages of this book is so much more important than what is written about it by others.

For those who have already been given a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, remember that it can be lost so

The Savior invited each person present to approach Him and feel the nail prints in His hands and feet. There were about 2,500 people there that day.

quickly. Keep reading, studying, and nurturing your testimony. Remember how it felt to receive your witness. Share that witness with others often.

The Savior taught the importance of having a personal witness when He appeared to the Nephites after His Resurrection. After introducing Himself, He invited each person present to approach Him and feel the nail prints in His hands and feet. There were about 2,500 people there that day (see 3 Nephi 17:25). Have you ever wondered how long it took for them to come forward and feel for themselves? If it took five seconds for each person to experience this, Jesus stood there for three and a half hours. If it took 10 seconds, He was there for seven hours. Yet He was willing to do that because He knows that each of us has to know for ourselves. As the 2,500 came forward, we read:

“And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.

“And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

“Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him” (3 Nephi 11:15–17).

Christ could have asked Nephi to come forth and feel the nail marks in His hands and feet and then to let everyone else know about it via Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, so to speak,

but He didn't. Some things are not to be experienced vicariously.

We must know for ourselves that Jesus is the Christ. The Book of Mormon can teach us that. We also must know for ourselves that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. We need to experience it for ourselves, not through anyone else.

“Most Worth Knowing”

If you have a testimony of this book, no matter how easy or difficult it was to obtain it, I promise that if you continue a serious study of it, your testimony will become stronger. You will never lose it. If you don't have a testimony now, I promise that if you begin a serious study of this book, you will come to know by the power of the Holy Ghost that it is true.

Remember these words from President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015), President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “What is taught in the scriptures is most worth knowing.”¹ And of no book is that more true than the Book of Mormon.

Moroni promised that those who receive the record and condemn it not will know of even greater things (see Mormon 8:12). This is a promise of revelation as we study this book!

My love of the scriptures, including the Book of Mormon, started while I served a mission in Seoul, Korea. When it really became a part of me, however, was after my mission.

I am most grateful today for a wise mission president, F. Ray Hawkins, who committed me to do 14 things as I finished my mission. One of those things was to continue to love the scriptures and to read from them daily. It was that commitment that kept me from missing scripture study too many days in a row. It was that commitment that helped me reintroduce structure into my life similar to the structure I had in the mission field so I could study every day.

For most of my married life, I was diligent from Monday to Friday. I always knew when I needed to wake up so I could exercise and study before I needed to be at school and later at work. Saturday belonged to my children, and I didn't always read on that day because I was constantly

going and coming from sports, dance, and lessons. The point is that even if I didn't keep my commitment to read daily, I did read regularly. I established a positive pattern and habit. When I missed a day or two, I got right back on track quickly.

When my oldest son was speaking in church before beginning his mission, he made a statement that helped me understand how grateful I was for my mission president. My son reported that each morning when he would come upstairs to read the Book of Mormon with the family prior to going to school, he always knew he would find his father at his desk reading the scriptures. I am indebted to a wise mission president for helping me have a generational impact on my son.

Commit to Study

If you have not begun a lifelong commitment to study daily from the scriptures, I invite you to begin today. If you are already doing so, I invite you to continue. I am sure that many of you returned missionaries made a commitment to your mission president similar to my commitment. I invite you to be truly committed to do just what you were challenged to do. I plead with you to make the Book of Mormon a large part of that daily commitment.

When you slip, start again. Don't let one missed day turn into two and then three or four. This will be a blessing to you, and it will also bless your children. One day your own son or daughter may stand to speak in church and say, “I remember always seeing my dad and my mom reading the Book of Mormon.”

I encourage you to read the Book of Mormon. I encourage you to experience it personally. It is the word of God. It will lead you to do good. You can know it is true, and you can pass that testimony on to future generations. ■

From a devotional address, “The Power of the Book of Mormon,” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on March 15, 2016. For the full address, visit web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches.

NOTE

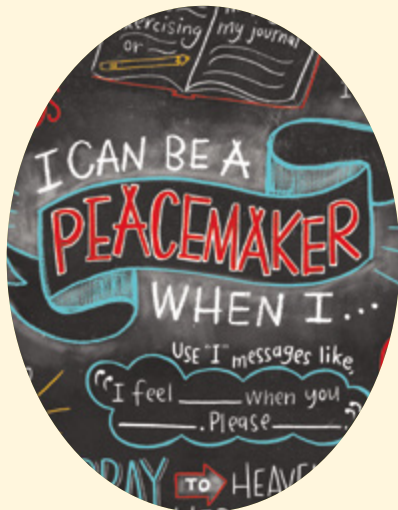
1. Boyd K. Packer, General Authority training, Mar. 31, 2011; see also Mormon 8:14.



Learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

FAMILY CONFLICT

Our families. We love them to the moon and back. Family life can be wonderful, funny, warm, and inspiring. But it can also be noisy, messy, challenging, and frustrating. Conflicts are inevitable. The question is this: How can we successfully deal with the conflicts and irritations that come with living in a family?



This month's *Friend* has lots of help for your family:

- “I Can Be a Peacemaker When I . . .” (page 34)—Want to turn family troublemakers into family peacemakers? These 10 simple ideas can make a big difference.
- “Question Corner” (page 16)—“I really love my family, but sometimes I get annoyed with them. What can I do?” Children give wise answers, along with some great ideas that may work in your family!
- “Matt and Mandy” (page 30)—This month’s cartoon shows how Matt and Mandy’s family uses a family council to resolve an argument over chores.
- “Show and Tell” (page 26)—A letter from a *Friend* reader reminds kids that feeling grumpy sometimes just happens as they grow up.

Find past pages in this series at FriendConnection.lds.org.

OTHER RESOURCES



- Children often feel worried and afraid when parents argue. In the July 2016 *Friend*, children give wise advice on finding comfort in challenging moments (see “Question Corner,” page 32).
- You can find more stories and tips about different family challenges at lessonhelps.lds.org. Click on “Lesson Helps by Topic” and then on topics like “Divorce,” “Fear/Worry,” and “Feelings.”

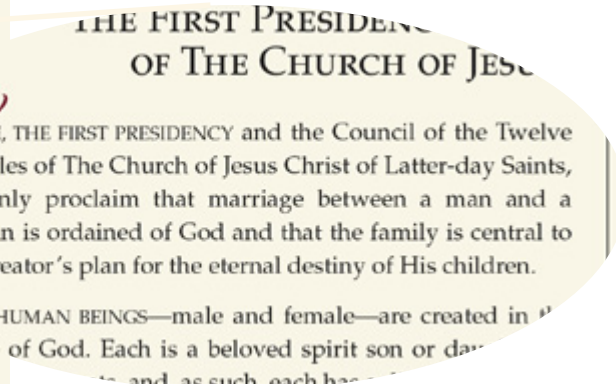


TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

Each month, we'll give you tips for talking with your children about a portion of "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."¹

This Month's Selection

"We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children."



How to Explain This to Children

This proclamation was written to the world by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It teaches what Heavenly Father wants us to know about families. Heavenly Father wants men and women to be married and create families because families are one of the most important parts of the plan of salvation. Families help us reach our "eternal destiny," which is to learn and grow to become more like our Heavenly Parents.

Activity Idea

Show your children pictures of your wedding or the wedding of grandparents or other couples in your family history. Tell your children the story of how you and your spouse met, or share other stories from family and friends. Invite your children to draw pictures of what they imagine their wedding and family will be like someday. Testify of the blessings that have come into your life because of marriage.

NOTE

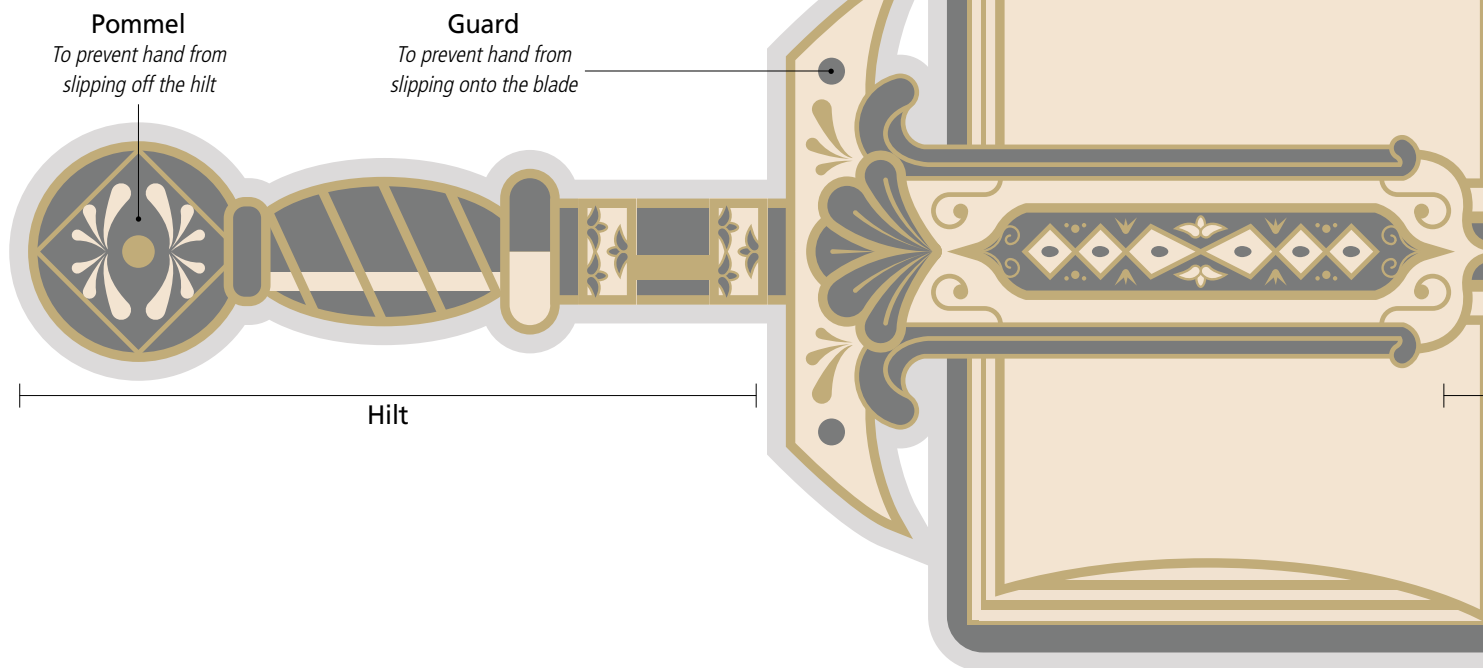
1. See "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.



Find other teaching tips and a copy of the family proclamation at ProclamationKids.lds.org.

A Two-Edged Sword

The Lord impressed upon us the power of His word.



A Two-Edged Sword

Swords were developed thousands of years ago as tools and weapons for thrusting and cutting. They evolved from daggers as material became more readily available (shifting from copper to bronze to iron), leading to longer blades and more widespread and versatile use.

Two-edged swords have been around about as long as there have been swords. A sword whose blade is sharpened on both sides is able to penetrate and cut at every contact point and with every movement. This means that it can be thrust more quickly and deeply and can cut more easily.

What We Can Learn

A two-edged sword:

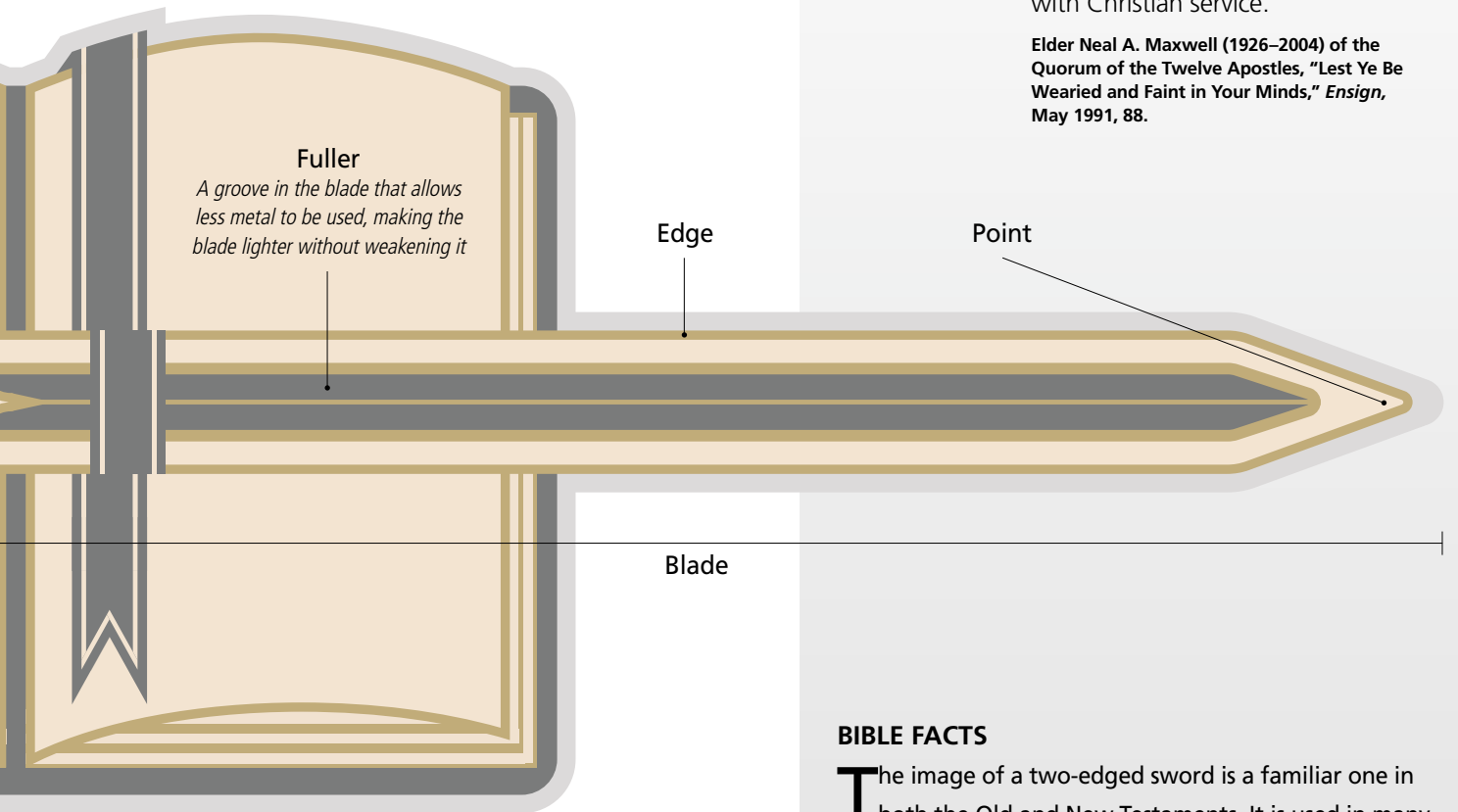
Penetrates. Through the Spirit, God reveals things “to

our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 475).

His word can also cut through culture, habits, biases, preconceptions, and doubts to speak to the innermost part of us, whether we are righteous or wicked. When people hear His word preached with power, they are often “pricked [or pierced] in their heart” (Acts 2:37) and desire to repent. In fact, the word of God has a more powerful effect on people’s

“My word . . . is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow.”

Doctrine and Covenants 6:2; 11:2; 12:2; 14:2; see also 33:1; Hebrews 4:12



THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT



“In a hardening world, the Lord can pierce our consciousness by using ‘the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.’ (Eph. 6:17; see also Jarom 1:12.) However, hearing must be ‘mixed with faith’ (Heb. 4:2) and with Christian service.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Lest Ye Be Worned and Faint in Your Minds,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 88.

minds than the literal sword (see Alma 31:5) and is one of the catalysts for developing faith (see Romans 10:17).

Divides. God’s word can separate truth from error and “divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil” (Helaman 3:29). It can help us identify the half-truths and complications that cloud our thinking by setting them up against God’s plain and precious truths.

Cuts in any direction. The word of God as revealed in the scriptures and teachings of living prophets is versatile and applicable in many situations for our blessing or condemnation, our edification, inspiration, instruction, or chastisement. And as we “treasure up in [our] minds continually the words of life” (D&C 84:85), the word of God is then “quick and powerful,” “lively and active” as we share it with others and apply it in our own lives.

BIBLE FACTS

The image of a two-edged sword is a familiar one in both the Old and New Testaments. It is used in many contexts. (See Judges 3:16; Psalm 149:6; Proverbs 5:4; Revelation 1:16; 2:12.)

In his analogy of the armor of God, the Apostle Paul compared the sword of the Spirit to the word of God (see Ephesians 6:17).

In the Bible, both the Greek and Hebrew words for *two-edged* mean “two-mouthed,” referring to how the blade consumes what it touches. But because the mouth is also where speech is produced, the original Bible languages inherently contain an association between a two-edged sword and the word.

In Hebrews 4:12, God’s word is said to be “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.” The Greek word for *quick* means “alive, living, lively.” The Greek word for *powerful* means “full of energy, energized, active, effective.”





PORTRAITS OF FAITH

When I asked about the bright blue table in the middle of Adriana's kitchen, I learned that there was a time she had no table at all. Struggling to make ends meet, she took one of the Church's self-reliance courses and decided that she could bake and sell bread—if only she had a table. She prayed for help and built a table from scrap wood.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Adriana González

Central Department, Paraguay

Everything I have asked from my heart, He has heard me. He has heard me because He knew it was good for me. Now we have two tables. This table is central to our family. We sit here to share. We work here. We teach what we have learned to others here. Through self-reliance, I learned to value myself. I discovered talents that God has given to me to help me and my family. I try to pass on what I have learned to my sisters in Relief Society, to help them to value themselves as daughters of God. I am grateful I am able to bless those around me.

For more photos and story about Adriana, go to lds.org/go/PortraitsE217.

To find out how the Church's self-reliance program can help you, visit srs.lds.org.



I followed my bishop's advice and paid the fine. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I was desperate to save money for a mission.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS

GIVING UP MY MISSION FUND

I joined the Church before my 21st birthday. I felt a strong desire to serve a mission, but I was in difficult circumstances. Because my father had left us, I was financially supporting my mother and three younger brothers. Almost all my money went to my family. At that time you needed at least £500 (U.S. \$615) before applying for a mission. After two years of saving, I still had only £250.

Financial setbacks occurred one after another. My younger brother got into trouble and was fined £240. My family was asking me to lend him the money—almost all I had. It seemed like a choice between a mission and my brother, even though he promised to pay me back when he could. I wrestled with it and sought counsel from my bishop. He advised me to help my brother. I followed his advice and paid the fine. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I was desperate to be able to go on a mission.

I thought it would take years to save the money again, but through humble

prayer, I received impressions about the future. The Spirit told me not to expect my brother to pay me back and that I would go on my mission the following year. It had taken two years to save the money I'd given to my brother, but the Lord was telling me I would have twice that by the end of the year.

I was doubtful but continued on, and every week for the next 10 weeks, a miracle occurred. A young single adult in the ward heard how I had given away my mission fund and gave me £100 for my mission. The next week another young adult gave me £100 for the same reason. I was humbled and started to repent for my unbelief.

Later, my employer was asking for voluntary redundancies (a financial incentive to employees who voluntarily resign). I volunteered but did not expect to be let go, as they had invested a lot of money in my training. My manager asked why I wanted to be laid off, so I explained about

my mission. He gave me a pay raise backdated for several weeks and accepted my submission for redundancy. He also gave me a bonus in my leaving package.

I found temporary work, which turned into a full-time job after two weeks. They also offered me weekend overtime. I accepted every Saturday. I submitted my mission papers shortly thereafter and was called to serve in the England London Bristol Mission. I had saved £2,500 in less than a year. I literally received 10 times the amount I had given away. In Luke 6:38 it reads: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

I know I was blessed for my obedience and faith in following my bishop's counsel. ■
Frederick John Holt, West Sussex, England

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSHUA DENNIS

FINDING PEACE IN THE SACRAMENT

As a young mother I struggled to find moments of peace during the hectic days when life revolved around caring for five active and demanding children. Five minutes here and 10 minutes there were all I managed to carve out, but I cherished each small slice of quiet.

Frequently I turned to my Heavenly Father in prayer, asking for strength, patience, and peace. Sundays were especially frantic with nursing a

baby, dressing a toddler, and supervising the older children in getting ready for church. Ironically, it was on a busy Sunday that I found my solution.

As I listened to the sacrament prayers that day, the words took on special significance: “. . . that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 20:77).

I was entitled to have the Lord’s Spirit to be with me. How had I never

before realized the significance of that promise?

The sacrament became the quiet, contemplative moment in my otherwise noisy life. In the ordinance of the sacrament, I found the peace I had sought.

Though I might have left sacrament meeting with a squirming toddler after partaking of the bread and water, I made sure I was there for that special time of remembrance. I looked forward to those precious moments with a fervency I had never experienced before.

Now that my children are grown, I enjoy the luxury of many more quiet moments. Nevertheless, I still cherish those moments spent taking the sacrament. ■

Jane McBride, Colorado, USA

How had I never before realized the significance of that promise?



THE COMFORTING POWER OF CHRIST

Several years ago my friend Joseph was planning to drive from Utah to Washington, D.C., USA. He invited me to go with him for the road trip. Along the way we visited various Church history sites, and when we got to the East Coast, we drove to New York City.

We were there just two weeks after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We felt strongly that we should visit the site where the Twin Towers had been destroyed.

We saw a soldier waving people through a crowded street as they

viewed the wreckage. He handed out tissues to dry people's tears.

Joseph and I could feel how deeply these events had hurt everyone, and we wanted to do something about it. We decided the best thing we could do was talk to people, listen to their stories, and perhaps share a message on the hope of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

On our way back to our hotel, we were traveling in the subway. Sitting across from me was a lady who was reading a book. I wondered what

was going on in her life. I introduced myself and told her that we were visiting New York. I said we were curious about her experiences with the recent events of September 11.

Her name was Maria, and she had lived in New York City for decades. She worked in a building a few blocks away from the towers. She told us that a few weeks before September 11, she had received a strong feeling that she should pray and ask if God was there. She said that up until that point in her life, she hadn't prayed much and

ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS



Maria told us that a few weeks before September 11, she had received a strong feeling that she should pray and ask if God was there.

TUTORED BY THE LORD: SINGLE PARENTHOOD

hadn't really felt like she needed to. She didn't feel an answer to her prayer until terrorists struck the towers on that fateful morning. Chaos and confusion ensued all around her, yet she suddenly felt calm. Maria told us that she felt this incredible peace and that, in spite of all the inexplicable destruction of the moment, she felt that God was there looking out for her.

After Maria shared this with us, Joseph and I told her that she had felt the Spirit of her Heavenly Father in the form of that special peace and comfort. We told her that she could always feel that peace, as she seeks Him in prayer and by searching the Book of Mormon. We gave her a copy of the Book of Mormon and told her that the book would bring her a continuation of the peace she had been seeking. She was very happy to receive it and thanked us.

I don't know what came next in Maria's story because Joseph and I had to get off at our stop, but I know that Heavenly Father loves each of His sons and daughters. I know He is in the details of our lives, especially when things seem to be going wrong all around us. He can provide unspeakable peace that comes from His Spirit, through the power of His Son, Jesus Christ. Christ's light can shine brightly through the thickness of any trial or tragedy because He has overcome it all. ■

Chris Deaver, California, USA

I had not planned on becoming a single parent of four children in my mid-20s and found myself reeling. I had a modest home to care for, four small children, and no post-high school education. I wondered how I would ever financially support my young family. My answers did not come in days or months but over many years of obeying one prompting after another.

Fortunately I had the habit of turning to the Lord in times of trouble. One night the answer came clearly: "Go to school." I wondered how this would be possible with the financial obligations I had, so I spoke to my parents and my bishop. They agreed that going to school was the right course, and within a few weeks I was enrolled at a local university, where I earned a degree in elementary education with a special education endorsement.

As a teacher, I was still not making enough money to meet the financial demands of my growing children. I continued to petition the Lord about the lack of funds. During a visit with my bishop, he recommended that I go back to school to obtain a master's degree. I went home, prayed about it, and enrolled back in school the following semester.

Several years later I was prompted to go back to school again. I scheduled the needed tests, interviewed for programs in educational

administration, and found myself enrolled, once again, in a master's program at another local university. Upon its completion, new employment opportunities opened up to me that have enriched my life with new relationships, fostered personal growth, and helped me discover new talents.

In the temple one night, I was sharing my frustration with the Lord that in spite of my efforts, I was still not able to consistently make ends meet. I felt the warmth of heavenly communication reminding me that all my family's needs had been met, either by my own work or by the generosity of others, and that as long as I remained obedient, we would be cared for. And as I am reminded by Alma 20:4, "I know, in the strength of the Lord [I] canst do all things."

I am so grateful to Heavenly Father for the promptings to complete my education and the consequent employment opportunities. I am also grateful for all those in my life who have been so thoughtful throughout the years. I've learned I can do more than I thought possible with the help of my Heavenly Father. Of equal significance, I've learned to receive graciously and to give generously. ■

Susan Kagie, Utah, USA



By Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933)
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

THE PARABLE OF THE UNWISE BEE

How many of us are wiser than the unwise bee?

Sometimes I find myself under obligations of work requiring quiet and seclusion. . . . My favorite retreat is an upper room in the tower of a large building. . . . The room is somewhat difficult of access and relatively secure against human intrusion. . . .

I am not always without visitors, however, especially in summertime; for, when I sit with windows open, flying insects occasionally find entrance and share the place with me. . . .

A wild bee from the neighboring hills once flew into the room, and at intervals during an hour or more I caught the pleasing hum of its flight. The little creature realized that it was a prisoner, yet all its efforts to find the exit through the partly opened case-ment failed. When ready to close up the room and leave, I threw the window wide and tried at first to guide and then to drive the bee to liberty and safety, knowing well that if left in the room it would die as other insects there entrapped had perished in the dry atmosphere of the enclosure. The



more I tried to drive it out, the more determinedly did it oppose and resist my efforts. Its erstwhile peaceful hum developed into an angry roar; its darting flight became hostile and threatening.

Then it caught me off my guard and stung my hand—the hand that would have guided it to freedom. At last it alighted on a pendant attached to the ceiling, beyond my reach of help or injury. The sharp pain of its unkind sting aroused in me rather pity than anger. I knew the inevitable penalty of its mistaken opposition and defiance, and I had to leave the creature to its fate. Three days later I returned to the room and found the dried, lifeless body of the bee on the writing table. It had paid for its stubbornness with its life.

To the bee's shortsightedness and selfish misunderstanding I was a foe, a persistent persecutor, a mortal enemy bent on its destruction; while in truth I was its friend, offering it ransom of the life it had put in forfeit through its own error, striving to redeem it, in spite of itself, from the prison house of death and restore it to the outer air of liberty.

Are we so much wiser than the bee that no analogy lies between its unwise course and our lives? We are prone to contend, sometimes with vehemence and anger, against the adversity which after all may be the manifestation of superior wisdom and loving care, directed against our temporary comfort for our permanent blessing. In the tribulations and sufferings of mortality there is a divine ministry which only the godless soul can wholly fail to discern. To many the loss of wealth has been a boon, a providential means of leading or driving them from the confines of selfish indulgence to the sunshine and the open, where boundless opportunity waits on effort. Disappointment, sorrow, and affliction may be the expression of an all-wise Father's kindness.

Consider the lesson of the unwise bee! ■

From the Improvement Era, Sept. 1914, 1008–9; punctuation and spelling standardized.

往前是人多許有必

我們望主的
殿裡觀看神
的聖道
我們是
行的律法
出於錫安
長解三百零三
年九月
畫於台北



MANY PEOPLE SHALL GO (DEPICTION OF THE
TAIPEI TAIWAN TEMPLE), BY CHIN TAI CHENG

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the
God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the
law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (2 Nephi 12:3; see also Isaiah 2:3).



In Church Magazines

Ensign: Often in life, we feel like we're not good enough. But our imperfections can allow us to choose joy through growing, progressing, and finding strength in weakness. See "Finding Peace in Imperfection" (page 14). Also, learn about the value of preserving and sharing family stories (pages 24, 40).

New Era: This month, Elder Gary E. Stevenson teaches youth how to conquer fear with faith (page 2). Youth can also learn how to be involved in family history (pages 30–34). Plus, find help for family and friends who suffer innocently because of others' pornography use (pages 36–39).

Friend: Use the *Friend* this month to talk about how Joseph Smith obtained and translated the golden plates (page 24). Cut out the Church history figures (page 28) and talk about one truth the Book of Mormon restored. What other truths can your children identify?

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