

# Ensign



**Learning to Delight in the Scriptures, pp. 10, 38, 44, 48**

**What Happily Married Couples Do, p. 12**

**Look Up, Not Sideways, p. 26**

**President George Albert Smith: He Lived as He Taught, p. 52**





MAY NOT BE COPIED

### *The Tree of Life, by Wilson J. Ong*

*In 1 Nephi 8, Lehi tells of his vision of the tree of life. He said:*

*“After I had prayed unto the Lord I beheld a large and spacious field.*

*“And it came to pass that I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy.*

*“And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen. . . .*

*“And I beheld a rod of iron, and it extended along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood” (1 Nephi 8:9–11, 19).*

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**A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**  
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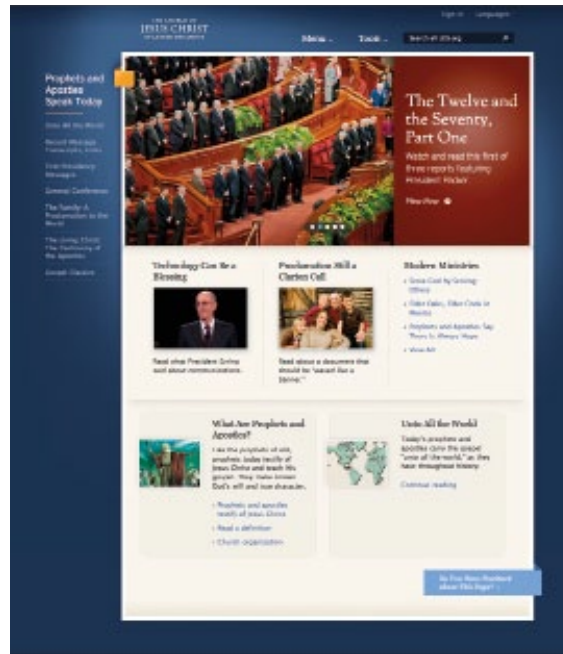
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**HOW CAN STUDY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON STRENGTHEN FAMILIES?**

Several articles in this issue talk about the scriptures, particularly the Book of Mormon (see pages 10, 32, 38, 44, and 48). In April 2010, Elder David A. Bednar spoke about how studying the Book of Mormon can strengthen families. To read or listen to his talk, visit [lds.org/general-conference/2010/04/watching-with-all-perseverance](http://lds.org/general-conference/2010/04/watching-with-all-perseverance).

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**DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?**

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. On each submission, please include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, and the name of your ward and stake (or branch and district).

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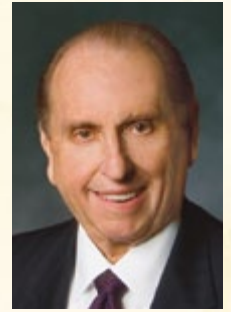
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By President  
Thomas S. Monson



# LIVING THE Abundant Life

**A**t the advent of a new year, I challenge Latter-day Saints everywhere to undertake a personal, diligent, significant quest for what I call the abundant life—a life filled with an abundance of success, goodness, and blessings. Just as we learned the ABCs in school, I offer my own ABCs to help us all gain the abundant life.

## Have a Positive Attitude

*A* in my ABCs refers to attitude. William James, a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher, wrote, “The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.”<sup>1</sup>

So much in life depends on our attitude. The way we choose to see things and respond to others makes all the difference. To do the best we can and then to choose

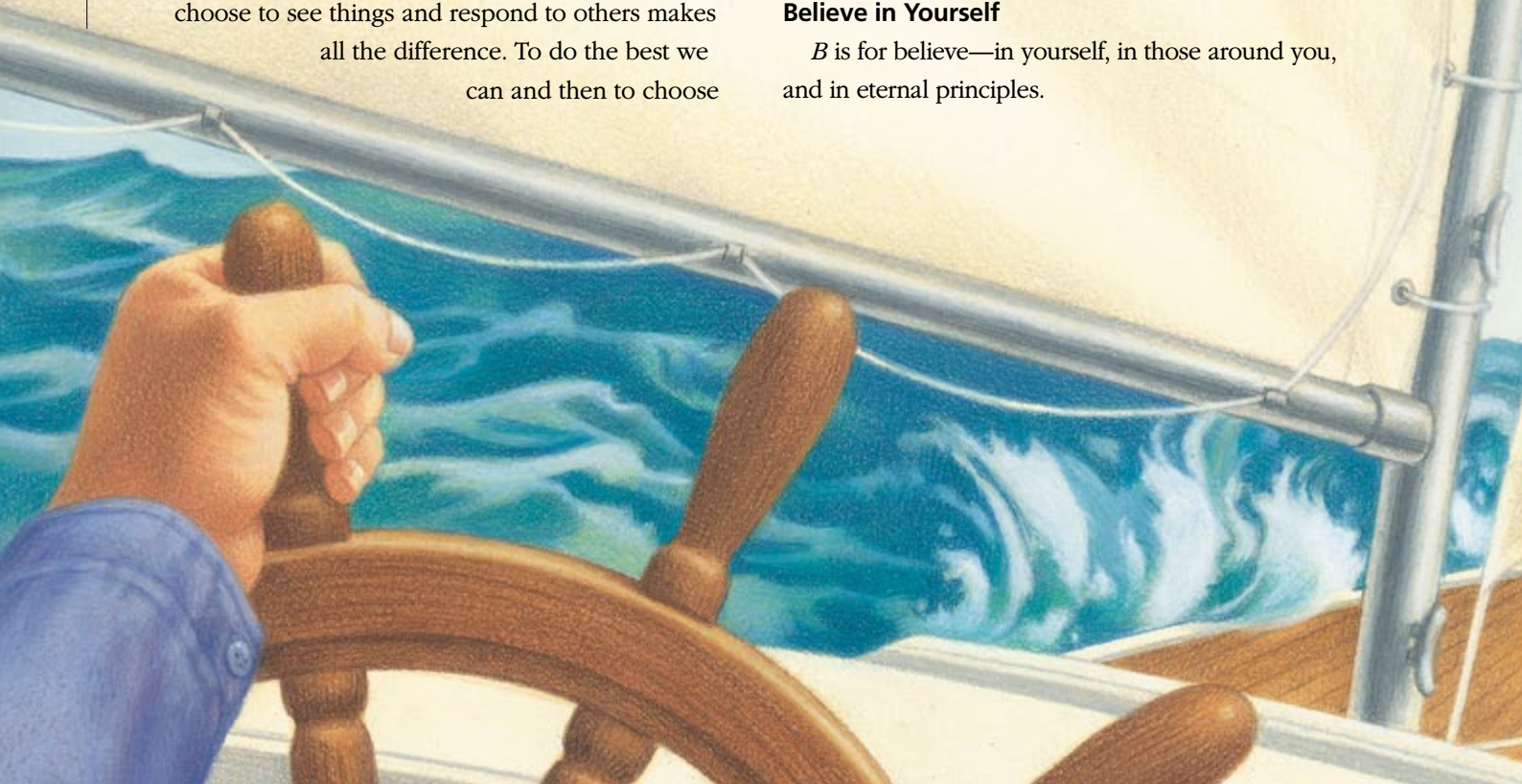
to be happy about our circumstances, whatever they may be, can bring peace and contentment.

Charles Swindoll—author, educator, and Christian pastor—said: “Attitude, to me, is more important than . . . the past, . . . than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day.”<sup>2</sup>

We can’t direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails. For maximum happiness, peace, and contentment, may we *choose* a positive attitude.

## Believe in Yourself

*B* is for believe—in yourself, in those around you, and in eternal principles.





Be honest with yourself, with others, and with your Heavenly Father. One who was not honest with God until it was too late was Cardinal Wolsey who, according to Shakespeare, spent a long life in service to three sovereigns and enjoyed wealth and power. Finally, he was shorn of his power and possessions by an impatient king. Cardinal Wolsey cried:

*Had I but served my God with  
half the zeal  
I served my king, He would not  
in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine  
enemies.*<sup>3</sup>

Thomas Fuller, an English churchman and historian who lived in the 17th century, penned this truth: “He does not believe that does not live according to his belief.”<sup>4</sup>

Don’t limit yourself and don’t let others convince you that you are limited in what you can do. Believe in yourself and then live so as to reach your possibilities.

You can achieve what you believe you can. Trust and believe and have faith.

## Face Challenges with Courage

C is for courage. Courage becomes a worthwhile and meaningful virtue when it is regarded not so much as a willingness to die manfully but as a determination to live decently.

Said the American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide on, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.”<sup>5</sup>

There will be times when you will be frightened and discouraged. You may feel that you are defeated. The odds of obtaining victory may appear overwhelming. At times you may feel like David trying to fight Goliath. But remember—David *did* win!

Courage is required to make an initial thrust toward one’s coveted goal, but even greater courage is called for when one stumbles and must make a second effort to achieve.

Have the determination to make the effort, the single-mindedness to work toward a worthy goal, and the

courage not only to face the challenges that inevitably come but also to make a second effort, should such be required. “Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow.’”<sup>6</sup>

May we remember these ABCs as we begin our journey into the new year, cultivating a positive attitude, a belief that we can achieve our goals and resolutions, and the courage to face whatever challenges may come our way. Then the abundant life will be ours. ■

## NOTES

1. William James, in Lloyd Albert Johnson, comp., *A Toolbox for Humanity: More Than 9000 Years of Thought* (2003), 127.
2. Charles Swindoll, in Daniel H. Johnston, *Lessons for Living* (2001), 29.
3. William Shakespeare, *King Henry the Eighth*, act 3, scene 2, lines 456–58.
4. Thomas Fuller, in H. L. Mencken, ed., *A New Dictionary of Quotations* (1942), 96.
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in Roy B. Zuck, *The Speaker’s Quote Book* (2009), 113.
6. Mary Anne Radmacher, *Courage Doesn’t Always Roar* (2009).

## TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**C**onsider inviting family members to share personal experiences when a positive attitude, belief in themselves, or courage helped them. Or invite them to find examples of these three principles in the scriptures. You might prepare to teach by prayerfully thinking of scriptures or experiences of your own.



## Courage to Weather the Storm

By Maddison Morley

On the second night of my stake's Young Women camp, we had a big rainstorm and tornado. My ward had about 24 young women attending the camp with two leaders, and we all had to fit into one small cabin for protection. The rain was falling hard, and the wind was getting worse. I had to continually remind myself of the prayer for safety our stake president had offered earlier. Our ward also said our own group prayer in our cabin, and I said my own personal prayers.

A lot of girls were scared, and it was easy to see why. Our cabin was not very sturdy, and we were right by a river. In about 20 minutes the storm got so bad that the whole stake had to run from their ward cabins to the counselors' cabins, which were on higher ground. My stake president said another prayer, and we sang hymns, Primary songs, and camp songs in an attempt to comfort ourselves. Yes, we were scared, but we felt that everything would be all right. Half an hour later it was OK to go back to our ward cabins.

We later found out what had happened to the tornado that night. It had split into two storms. One of them went around us to the right and the other to the left. What we got wasn't even the worst of it!

I know that God heard our prayers that night and that He protected us from the worst of the storm. Why would a tornado split unless God needed it to? I know that in the storms of life, we can always pray to Heavenly Father and He will hear and answer us, giving us the courage and protection we need to make it safely through.

## Captain Moroni

Captain Moroni had courage as he faced challenges. He loved truth, liberty, and faith. He devoted his life to helping the Nephites preserve their freedom. You can be like Captain Moroni by facing your challenges with courage. You can even make your own title of liberty by writing on the flag below or on a separate piece of paper the things that are important to you and your family.

### Where to Find Out More

**Alma 46:11–27:** The title of liberty

**Alma 48:11–13, 16–17:** Moroni's qualities



PHOTOGRAPH © CORBIS



Study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your own life.

## Watchcare and Ministering through Visiting Teaching

Charity [means] far more than a feeling of benevolence,” taught President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency. “Charity is born of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and is an effect of His Atonement.”<sup>1</sup> For Relief Society sisters, visiting teaching can be charity in action, an important way to exercise our faith in the Savior.

Through visiting teaching, we provide watchcare by contacting each sister, sharing a gospel message, and seeking to know her and her family’s needs. “Visiting teaching becomes the Lord’s work when our focus is on people rather than percentages,” explains Julie B. Beck, Relief Society general president. “In reality, visiting teaching is never finished. It is more a way of life than a task. Faithfully serving as a visiting teacher is evidence of our discipleship.”<sup>2</sup>

As we provide consistent and prayerful watchcare, we learn how to best minister to and meet the needs of each sister and her family. Ministering can take many forms—some large and some not so large. “Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another: a question concerning a person’s family, quick words of encouragement, a sincere compliment, a small



note of thanks, a brief telephone call,” taught President Thomas S. Monson. “If we are observant and aware, and if we act on the promptings which come to us, we can accomplish much good. . . . Countless are the acts of service provided by the vast army of Relief Society visiting teachers.”<sup>3</sup>

### From the Scriptures

John 13:15, 34–35; 21:15; Mosiah 2:17; Doctrine and Covenants 81:5; Moses 1:39

### What Can I Do?

1. What am I doing to help my sisters feel that I am a friend who loves and cares for them?
2. How can I become better at watching over and caring for others?

Faith, Family, Relief



### From Our History

In 1843, Church members in Nauvoo, Illinois, were divided into four wards. In July of that year, Relief Society leaders appointed a visiting committee of four sisters for each ward. The visiting committees’ responsibilities included assessing needs and collecting donations. The Relief Society used these donations to provide for the needy.<sup>4</sup>

While visiting teachers no longer collect donations, they do retain the responsibility to assess needs—spiritual and temporal—and to work to meet those needs. Eliza R. Snow (1804–87), second Relief Society general president, explained: “A teacher . . . should surely have so much of the Spirit of the Lord, as she enters a house to know what spirit she meets in there. . . . Plead before God and the Holy Ghost to get [the Spirit] so that you will be able to meet that spirit that prevails in that house . . . and you may feel to talk words of peace and comfort, and if you find a sister feeling cold, take her to your heart as you would a child to your bosom and warm [her] up.”<sup>5</sup>

### NOTES

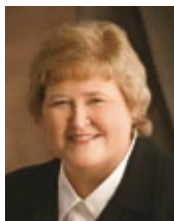
1. Henry B. Eyring, “The Enduring Legacy of Relief Society,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 121.
2. Julie B. Beck, “Relief Society: A Sacred Work,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 114.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Three Goals to Guide You,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 120–21.
4. See *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 105.
5. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 108.

# Visiting Teachers

## LED ME TO JESUS CHRIST

By Jayne P. Bowers

*“[The Lord] said unto [Peter] the third time, Lovest thou me? And [Peter] said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 21:17).*



### THE BLESSINGS OF VISITING TEACHING

“Many women have reported that the reason they came back into Church activity was because a faithful visiting teacher came month after month and ministered to them, rescuing them, loving them, blessing them. . . .

“At times the most important blessing about your visit will be to just listen. Listening brings comfort, understanding, and healing. Still another time you may need to roll up your sleeves and go to work in the home or help to calm a crying child.”

**Barbara Thompson, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, “And of Some Have Compassion, Making a Difference,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 120.**

In the late 1970s, a friend asked me to go to Relief Society with her. “What’s that?” I asked. My friend simply said, “Come and see.” Wow! I was captivated from the first moment.

Later that summer Leann came to my house and said that she was my visiting teacher. This seemed strange and wonderful at the same time, especially since I was not a member of the Church. Here she was taking time from her busy schedule to share a spiritual thought with me and to see if there was anything she could help me with. I knew from her spirit that she was sincere. I’ve never forgotten Leann and the messages she shared with me.

A couple of years passed, and Frances moved into our ward. Truthfully, it wasn’t exactly “our” ward since I wasn’t a member yet, but I thought of it that way. By this time I had two little girls, and I could see how the Church auxiliaries were blessing their lives. Come rain or come

shine, Frances, my new visiting teacher, visited me with a lesson, a laugh, a story, or a helping hand. I recall when Frances came one hectic afternoon. Seeing that I couldn’t sit and talk, Frances stirred my culinary concoctions on the stove while I tended to my daughters’ needs.

Years passed and I moved. As much as I hated to leave my Church friends, I soon found another group of sisters with strong testimonies and big hearts in the Relief Society in “my” new ward. A Relief Society teacher gave us a decorated to-do list and encouraged us to write “Be kind” at the top of our lists each day. The sisters sitting beside me and I thought it was a grand idea, especially since it supported the Relief Society motto “Charity never faileth” (Moroni 7:46).

Then I read a story about a pioneer woman. When that woman was a child, the prophet asked her family to help settle a Latter-day Saint community in a remote area. Tragedy befell when one of her





## HOW ARE VISITING TEACHERS BLESSED BY THEIR SERVICE?

Barbara Thompson helps answer this question in her general Relief Society meeting talk “And of Some Have Compassion, Making a Difference” (*Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 120):

“When I went visiting teaching, I always felt better. I was lifted, loved, and blessed, usually much more than the sister I was visiting. My love increased. My desire to serve increased. And I could see what a beautiful way Heavenly Father has planned for us to watch over and care for one another.”

**Consider writing your testimony of visiting teaching or home teaching in your journal.**

siblings died. Her mother was distraught, and deep sadness permeated the family.

One day this little girl was looking out the window. As far as she could see, a blanket of snow surrounded the family’s modest home. As the little girl stared at the horizon, she saw two people trudging toward the house. On they came, slowly making their way, and suddenly the child realized who they were—they were her mother’s visiting teachers.

That story inspired me. I was baptized in May 1983. It is an honor to be a visiting teacher myself. I love associating with so many women who exemplify the “virtuous woman” whose “price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10). It is wonderful to be with women who are also striving to be kind, to love one another, and to bring others unto Christ. ■

***Visiting teachers share a gospel message and sometimes a helping hand.***

***The sisters they visit are strengthened by associating with women who are striving to be kind, to love one another, and to bring others unto Christ.***

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For additional information, see Julie B. Beck, “‘Daughters in My Kingdom’: The History and Work of Relief Society,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 112; and Henry B. Eyring, “The Enduring Legacy of Relief Society,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 121.

# HELPING CHILDREN LOVE THE BOOK OF MORMON

*We found these tools helpful in teaching our children from the Book of Mormon.*

**By Clyde J. Williams**  
Correlation Department

**A**s my wife and I raised our family, we deeply desired to instill in our five children a love for the Book of Mormon. Like carpenters, we learned that a variety of tools would be not only helpful but also essential in teaching our children to love the scriptures. We also came to realize that having the tools or techniques to teach our children was one thing and knowing how to use them was another.

In addition, we knew we needed to learn how to teach our children to apply the Book of Mormon to their lives and see its relevance to the world in which they live. Our ability to use various approaches to help our children depended first and foremost upon our personal understanding of the scriptures, our testimony of their truthfulness, and our enthusiasm for them.

## **Teaching Younger Children**

Because the language of the scriptures is somewhat uncommon and a child's vocabulary is limited,

teaching children to love the Book of Mormon can be challenging. When our children were young, their attention spans were short and so was our scripture study time. We often used the illustrated scripture readers for family scripture study.

To reinforce the principles our children were reading and learning in scripture study, I often used scripture stories as bedtime stories. In later years my daughter shared how influential this was. She said, "I think stories that were told over and over again became favorites for us. You sat beside our beds and shared the stories from the scriptures. We loved them and asked to hear them again and again because even at that young age we could feel the spirit of the message they carried and knew the people you were telling us about were valiant and faithful. We wanted to be like them."

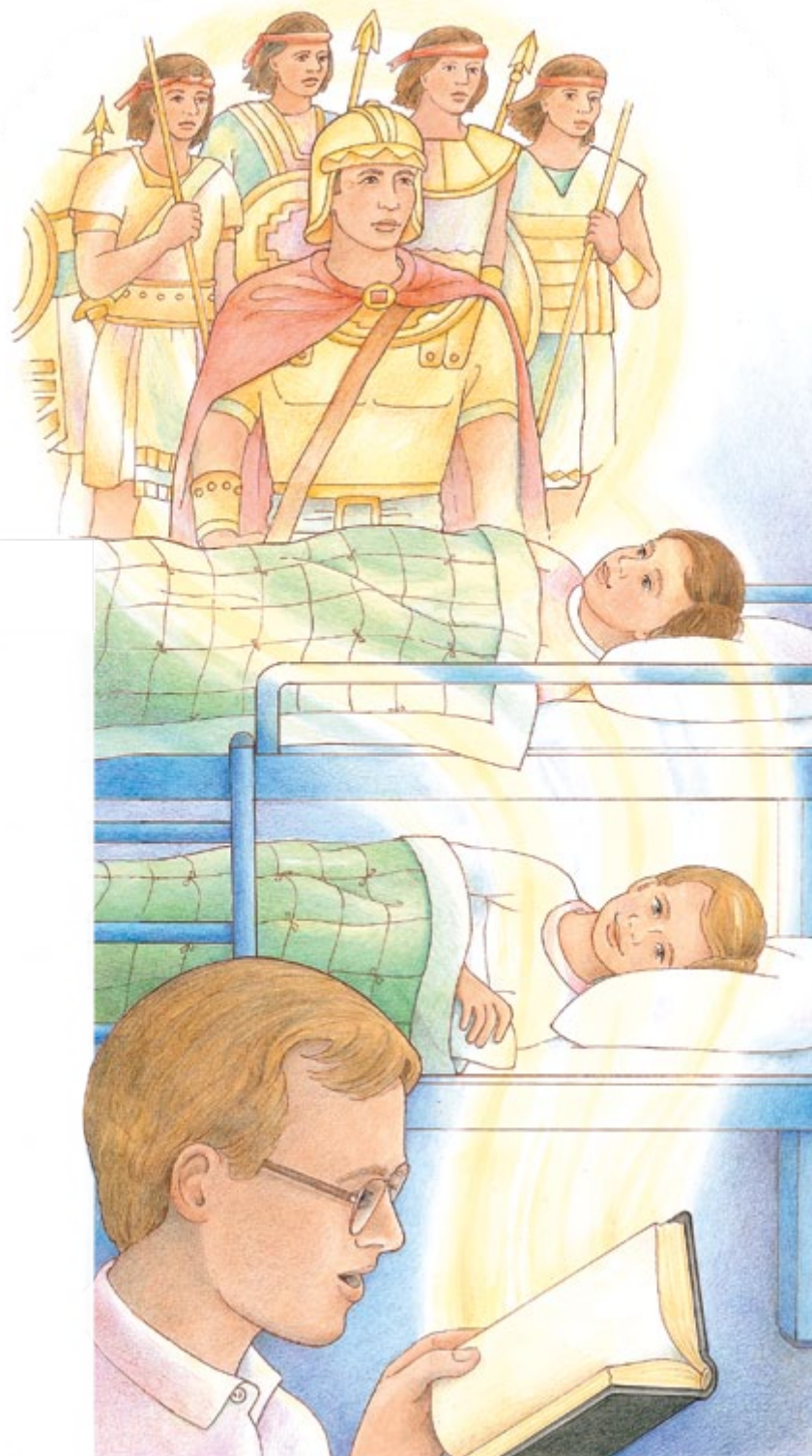
## **Tailoring Lessons to the Needs of Our Family**

Of course, as our children matured, we read from the Book of Mormon and other scriptures directly. We tried faithfully to read from the scriptures every morning, even though some of the children were wrapped up in blankets with their eyes half closed. Nevertheless, they now report that they were listening, remembering, and planting seeds for the future.

We also emphasized scriptures during family home evening. For example, we often included activities such as scripture charades: family members would act out a story from the scriptures, and other family members would try to guess the story. Our children also loved playing "Who Am I?"—a game in which we would give them a series of clues until they could guess the individual from the Book of Mormon we were identifying. As our children got older, they participated in preparing and presenting the lessons.

As we tailored our home evenings to the current needs of our family, we used stories and insights





from the Book of Mormon to help teach principles. For example, we drew lessons on morality and avoiding pornography from Alma's counsel to his son Corianton in Alma 39. A good lesson on avoiding marking our bodies with tattoos developed from the story of the Amlicites in Alma 3.

I've prepared lessons on dealing appropriately with sibling rivalries based on the lives of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 7:20–21; 16:4–5), Jacob (see 2 Nephi

***We often used Book of Mormon stories as bedtime stories.***

2:1–3), and Corianton (see Alma 39:1, 10). The sobering account of Alma and Amulek in Alma 14:12–28 teaches about patience in suffering. One important principle we learned with these and many other issues was to make sure we addressed them with our children before they had really become an issue or a problem in their lives.

### Asking Questions

In addition to reading the scriptures with our children, we realized it was important to ask questions that would help our children see the significance of what they were reading. The complexity of these questions varied depending on their ages, but the point was to teach them to look for insights and application and to help them realize how much there is to discover in the Book of Mormon.

For example, I asked why they thought Nephi would say that he had “seen many afflictions in the course of [his] days” and in the very next line say something that seemed contradictory: that he had “been highly favored of the Lord” (1 Nephi 1:1). Through our discussion, our children discovered that even as the Lord delivered Nephi from his afflictions, He also gave Nephi greater understanding of His mysteries (see 1 Nephi 1:1, 20).

Children and youth learn best when we help them discover truths for themselves. As they do so, they will feel inspired to love and use the Book of Mormon throughout their lives and will feel equipped to help others do the same.

Our children came to know that we knew that the Book of Mormon contained real stories of real people. They came to see what we saw, know what we knew, and feel how we felt about the Book of Mormon. This has fortified their testimonies, helped them love the Book of Mormon, and led them to endeavor to do the same for their own children. ■



# WHAT *Happily* MARRIED COUPLES DO

*Ten ideas for enriching your marital relationship.*

**H**AVING SPENT MY CAREER HELPING COUPLES STRENGTHEN THEIR MARRIAGES, I have learned that couples who are experiencing marital troubles often face a twofold problem: they have lost the Spirit of the Lord in their relationship because of contention, and they are not doing the kinds of activities that would bring them closer to each other. Happily married couples do some specific types of things to keep their marriages vibrant and meaningful for both partners. The following ideas may help you and your spouse evaluate and enrich your relationship.



**Have positive conversations.** Sharing experiences and feelings in depth with each other is the solution to most marital problems. Couples need time just to talk about marriage, family, career, Church callings, children, the ward, the neighborhood, goals, and many other subjects.



You both must feel comfortable exchanging your thoughts and feelings without fear of criticism, feeling inferior, or being smothered.

**Show affection.** We all need to feel loved, cherished, needed, and wanted. Physical embraces, hugging, kissing, holding hands, caring for each other, and

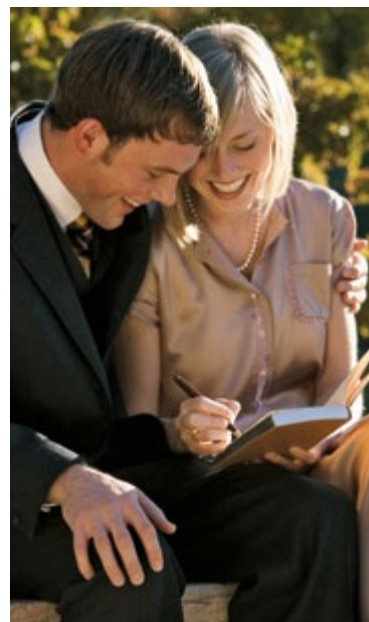
seeing to each other's needs can help spouses show and feel affection that is crucial for married couples.

**Remember that you are each other's therapists.**

No counselor or outsider knows the two of you better than the two of you do! You know each other's likes and dislikes and strengths and weaknesses. A good therapist listens attentively; provides new perspectives on situations; compliments on progress; is patient, kind, and nonjudgmental; and helps us think things through in ways that allow a better solution. Superficiality dooms relationships because such a shallow level of communication does not create positive emotions and feelings between spouses.



**Be humble and cultivate Christlike attributes.** When you have a disagreement, realize that both of you have the responsibility to resolve it. Sometimes seeing a situation from the other person's point of view is difficult. However, with humility and kindness, you can work together to solve problems in a manner that accommodates both of your needs.



**Date frequently.** You and your spouse need time together to renew your relationship. New perspectives come with time away from the mundane. That means dating is essential. If you have children but few resources, look for creative ways to go on dates. For example, you might ask in-laws or neighbors to watch your children while you two get away for a mini vacation. You might exchange childcare with other couples for different date nights. Above all, recognize that a babysitter is cheaper than a divorce.

**Enrich your intimacy.** Intimate relations were designed by the Lord as a sacred opportunity to renew marriage covenants, provide therapy, and keep you two in love. It is essential in a stressful world that the two of you enjoy your physical and emotional relationship. Intimacy is not to be abused. This is your spouse, companion, confidant, lover, and therapist all rolled into one, and you two should enjoy the privilege of sharing your masculine and feminine traits in a wholesome way. Of course, the relationship must be healthy if this part of the marriage is to be cherished. Intimacy should not be used as a punishment or a weapon to hurt the other spouse or reward "good behavior." It is also important not to solicit behavior that is offensive to your spouse. Rather, loving, kind interactions facilitate greater unity.



## QUICK TO FORGIVE

“Marriage partners must be quick to forgive. If we will sue for peace, taking the initiative in settling differences—if we forgive and forget with all our hearts . . . if we forgive all real or fancied offenses before we ask forgiveness for our own sins—if we pay our own debts, large or small, before we press our debtors—if we manage to clear our own eyes of the blinding beams before we magnify the motes in the eyes of others—what a glorious world this would be! Divorce would be reduced to a minimum; courts would be freed from disgusting routines; family life would be heavenly; the building of the kingdom would go forward at an accelerated pace; and the peace which passeth understanding would bring to us all a joy and happiness which has hardly ‘entered into the heart of man.’”

*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 242.



**Spend time with children and grandchildren.** Be kind to children. A wife will have a hard time feeling affection toward her husband if he mistreats or is unkind to their children. The reverse is also true. Husbands and wives who take an active, positive role in parenting engender love from their spouses.

**Seek feedback and help each other.** From an eternal perspective, we are all new at marriage and have a lot to learn. A humble approach toward each other allows husbands and wives to learn from one another. Seeking feedback from your spouse about how you are doing and how you could improve might be just what you need to be a better spouse and parent. Remember that insisting on being right is not as important as being united and having the Spirit.

**Eliminate anger.** Anger is a great destroyer of marriages and families. Displays of temper are not of God but of the devil (see 3 Nephi 11:29–30). If you become angry when something upsets you, your family members may be hesitant to share their deepest thoughts and feelings with you.

**Be sensitive to each other’s stress levels.** Mothers generally make sure children get to school and other events, fix

food, nurse everyone, and serve as the family psychologist—in many cases, for most of the day. Working spouses often come home tired and drained. This can make emotions extra raw. Both spouses will benefit from seeking to make homecoming a positive experience for each other and the children. That may mean leaving frustrations at the door on the way into the home, or it might mean adjusting daily routines from time to time to accommodate one or both spouses. The key is to seek to support each other through good times as well as those difficult moments.

In addition, here are a few more specific things all couples can do that, through consistent effort, will bring happiness into the home and invite the Spirit into your lives:

1. Kneel together in prayer morning and night to call down the powers of heaven to bless your marriage.
2. Study the scriptures individually and as a family.
3. Attend the temple together regularly.

My all-time favorite short piece of counsel on marriage came from President Gordon B. Hinckley, who shared this important key to a great marriage: “A happy marriage is not so much a matter of romance as it is an anxious concern for the comfort and well-being of one’s companion.”<sup>1</sup> If you want a happy marriage, do what happily married couples do. ■

### NOTE

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “What God Hath Joined Together,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 73.





# My Father Rescued Me

By Greg W. Haws

S nuggled in our sleeping bags and lying on a mattress, my brother and I were in the back of our father's pickup truck on an exciting outing with him and two of his friends. The aluminum camper shell of the truck bed did not provide any heat, but it was a covering over us. My brother Ken and I were 10 and 12, and we talked excitedly about our upcoming adventure.

A flaw in the truck's design caused the exhaust pipe to end at the back of the cab instead of extending to the rear of the bed. As we drove in the darkness of the early morning, carbon monoxide filtered up through the bed into our space, filling the air we were breathing. Dad drove the truck higher and higher into the mountains while we became lethargic, then unconscious, and finally breathless.

For some reason, our father pulled over and decided to check on us. When he opened the back of the truck we were unresponsive and not breathing.

He pulled me out first and felt a faint heartbeat. Immediately he performed rescue breathing. The other men did the same for my brother.

I felt like I was in a deep, dark pit that I could not get out of by myself. In fact, I did not want to climb out. It was easier to stay where I was. But my father would not allow it. He revived me and then shifted his attention to Ken. Back and forth he went as we drifted in and out of consciousness. Eventually we were breathing on our own, at least enough to be transported to a hospital, where we received additional treatment.

Many times over the next several years, my father was prompted to "pull over" and check on me. I was never in such physical danger as I was that night in the truck, but several times I faced an emotional or spiritual crisis. My father extended his hand to lift me out of those pits as well. A few times I did not want to climb out because it was easier to stay where I was, but my father would not allow it.

Years later, I stood at his bedside holding his hand as his grip relaxed and life left his body. I thought about the many times he had heard and acted on promptings to check on my brothers and me. I am grateful for his love for us and for his closeness to the Spirit, both of which have blessed our lives immeasurably. ■









ILLUSTRATIONS BY DIANE HAYDEN



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# Recognizing God's Hand

## IN OUR DAILY BLESSINGS

*Asking for and receiving daily bread at God's hand plays a vital part in learning to trust Him and in enduring life's challenges.*

Luke records that one of the Lord's disciples asked Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). Jesus then gave a pattern for prayer that has become known as the Lord's Prayer (see Luke 11:2–4; see also Matthew 6:9–13).

Included in the Lord's Prayer is the petition "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11; see also Luke 11:3). We all have needs each day for which we turn to our Heavenly Father. For some, it is quite literally bread—that is, the food needed to sustain life that day. It could also be spiritual and physical strength to deal with one more day of chronic illness or a painfully slow rehabilitation. In other cases it may be a less tangible need, such as something related to one's obligations or

activities that day—teaching a lesson or taking a test, for example.

Jesus teaches us, His disciples, that we should look to God each day for the bread—the help and sustenance—we require that particular day. The Lord's invitation to seek our daily bread at our Heavenly Father's hand speaks of a loving God, aware of even the small, daily needs of His children and eager to assist them, one by one. He is saying that we can ask in faith of that Being "that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given" (James 1:5). That is, of course, tremendously reassuring, but there is something at work here that is more significant than just help in getting by day to day. As we seek and receive divine bread daily, our faith and trust in God and His Son grow.

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### Looking to God Daily

After their great exodus from Egypt, the tribes of Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness before entering the promised land. This massive host of well over a million people had to be fed. Certainly that number in one location could not subsist long on hunting game, and their seminomadic lifestyle at the time was not conducive to raising crops or livestock in any sufficient quantity. Jehovah solved the challenge by miraculously providing their daily bread from heaven—manna. Through Moses, the Lord instructed the people to gather enough manna each day for that day, except on the day before the Sabbath, when they were to gather enough for two days.

Despite Moses's specific instructions, some tried to gather more than enough for one day and store the balance:

“And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

“Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank” (Exodus 16:19–20).

As promised, however, when they gathered twice the normal daily quantity of manna on the sixth day, it did not spoil (see Exodus 16:24–26). Again, however, some could not believe without seeing, and they went looking to gather manna on the Sabbath, but “they found none” (see Exodus 16:27–29).

By providing daily sustenance one day at a time, Jehovah was trying to teach faith to a nation that over a period of 400 years had

lost much of the faith of their fathers. He was teaching them to trust Him. In essence, the children of Israel had to walk with Him each day and trust that He would grant a sufficient amount of food for the next day *on* the next day and so on. In that way He could never be too far from their minds and hearts.

Once the tribes of Israel were in a position to provide for themselves, they were required to do so. Likewise, as we plead with God for our daily bread—for help in the moment that we cannot provide for ourselves—we must still be active in doing and providing that which is within our power.

### Trusting in the Lord

Some time before I was called as a General Authority, I faced a personal economic challenge that persisted for several years. It ebbed and flowed in seriousness and urgency, but it never went away. At times this challenge threatened the welfare of my family, and I thought we might be facing financial ruin. I prayed for some miraculous intervention to deliver us. Although I offered that prayer many times with great sincerity and earnest desire, the answer in the end was no. Finally, I learned to pray as the Savior did: “Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). I sought the Lord's help with each tiny step along the way to a final resolution.

There were times when I had exhausted all my resources, when I had nowhere and no one to turn to for help to meet the exigency before me. With no other recourse, more than once I fell down before my Heavenly Father, begging in tears for His help. And He did help. Sometimes it was nothing more than a sense of peace, a feeling of assurance that things



would work out. I might not see how or what the path would be, but He gave me to know that, directly or indirectly, He would open a way. Circumstances might change, a new and helpful idea might come to mind, some unanticipated income or other resource might appear at just the right time. Somehow there was a resolution.

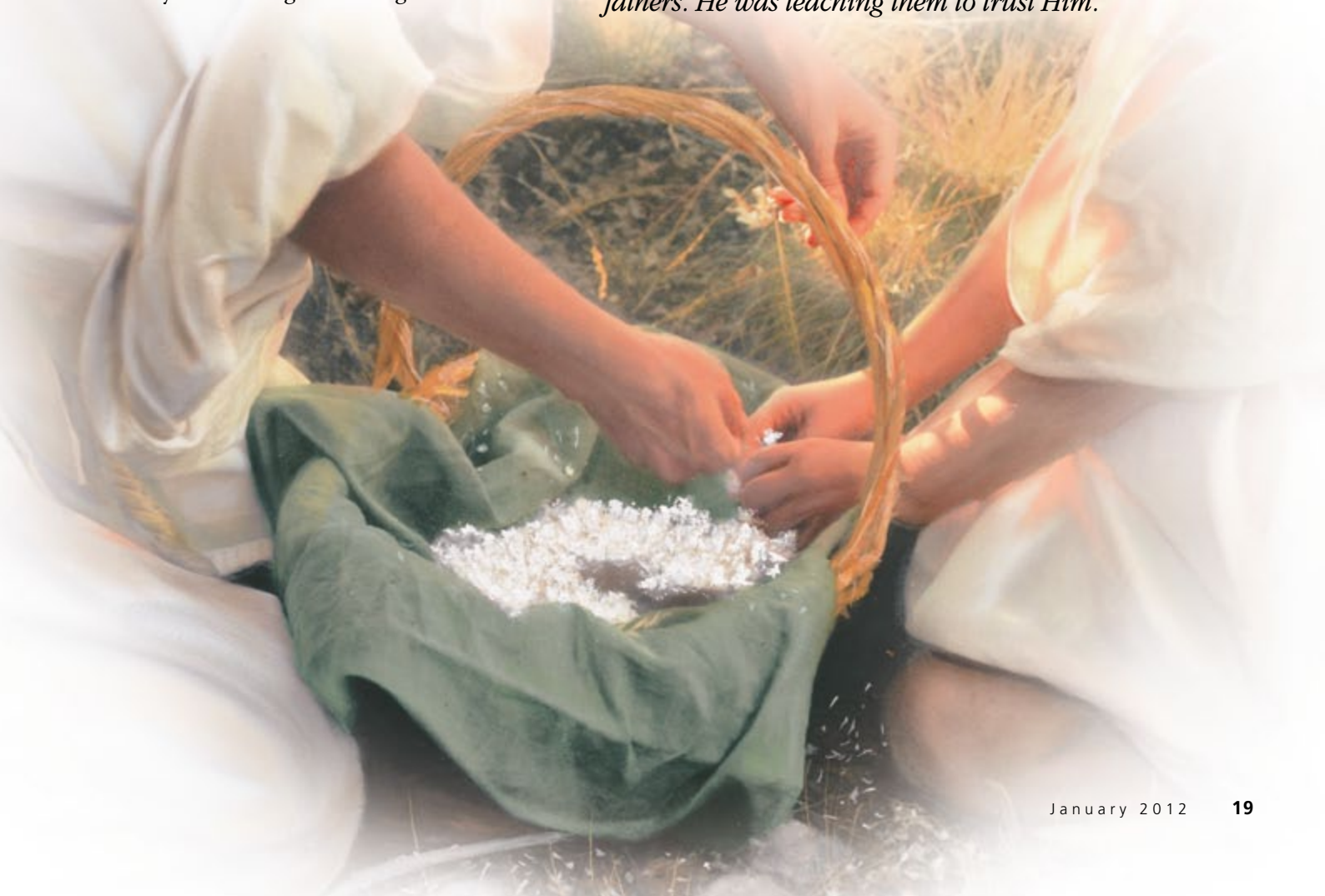
Though I suffered then, I am grateful now that there was not a quick solution to my problem. The fact that I was forced to turn to God for help almost daily over an extended period of years taught me how to truly pray and get answers to prayer and taught me in a practical way to have faith in God. I came to know my Savior and my Heavenly Father in a way and to a degree that might not have

happened otherwise or that might have taken me much longer. I learned that daily bread is a precious commodity. I learned that manna today could be as real as the physical manna of biblical history. I learned to trust in the Lord with all my heart. I learned to walk with Him day by day.

### **Working through Problems**

Asking God for our daily bread rather than our weekly, monthly, or yearly bread is also a

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way for us to focus on the smaller, more manageable bits of a problem. To deal with something big, we may need to work at it in small, daily bites. Sometimes all we can handle is one day—or even just part of one day—at a time.

In the 1950s my mother survived radical cancer surgery, which was followed by dozens of painful radiation treatments. She recalls that her mother taught her something during that time that has helped her ever since:

“I was so sick and weak, and I said to her one day, ‘Oh, Mother, I can’t stand having 16 more of those treatments.’

“She said, ‘Can you go today?’

*We also need a daily portion of divine bread to become what we must become. To repent, improve, and eventually reach “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” is a step-by-step process.*

“‘Yes.’

“‘Well, honey, that’s all you have to do today.’

“It has helped me many times when I remember to take one day or one thing at a time.”

The Spirit can guide us when to look ahead and when we should deal just with this one day, with this one moment.

### Reaching Our Potential

Asking for and receiving daily bread at God’s hand plays a vital part in learning to trust Him and in enduring life’s challenges. We also need a daily portion of divine bread to become what we must become. To repent, improve,





and eventually reach “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) is a step-by-step process. Incorporating new and wholesome habits into our character or overcoming bad habits or addictions often means an effort today followed by another tomorrow and then another, perhaps for many days, even months and years, until we achieve victory. But we can do it because we can appeal to God for our daily bread, for the help we need each day.

President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982), First Counselor in the First Presidency, said: “As we reflect on the value of resolving to do better, let us determine to discipline ourselves to carefully select the resolutions we make, to consider the purpose for making them, and finally to make commitments for keeping them and not letting any obstacle stop us. Let us remind ourselves at the beginning of each day that we can keep a resolution just for that day.”<sup>1</sup>

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently taught that consistency in simple daily practices such as family prayer, scripture study, and home evening is crucial in building successful families. “Our consistency in doing seemingly small things,” he said, “can lead to significant spiritual results.”<sup>2</sup>

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), speaking of repentance, gave this counsel: “We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more [Christlike], that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible.”<sup>3</sup>

### Seeking the Lord’s Help in Serving

Remember that we should not be looking only inward when we seek a daily measure

of divine bread. If we are to become more like the Master, He who came “not to be ministered unto, but to minister” (Mark 10:45), we will seek His help in being of service to others day by day.

President Thomas S. Monson lives this principle better than anyone I know. There is ever present in his heart a prayer that God will reveal needs and means for him to assist those around him in any given day or moment of the day. One example from his time as a bishop illustrates the fact that sometimes even a little effort may, with the workings of the Spirit, yield remarkable fruit.

“One to whom [President Monson] reached out was Harold Gallacher. His wife and children were active in the Church, but not Harold. His daughter Sharon had asked Bishop Monson if he would ‘do something’ to bring her father back into activity. As a bishop, he felt prompted one day to call on Harold. It was a hot summer’s day when he knocked on Harold’s screen door. The bishop could see Harold sitting in his chair, smoking a cigarette and reading the newspaper. ‘Who is it?’ Harold asked sullenly, without looking up.

“‘Your bishop,’ Tom replied. ‘I’ve come to get acquainted and to urge your attendance with your family at our meetings.’

“‘No, I’m too busy,’ came the disdainful response. He never looked up. Tom thanked him for listening and departed the doorstep. The family moved without Harold ever attending services.

“Years later . . . Brother Gallacher phoned

*If we are to become more like the Master, He who came “not to be ministered unto, but to minister,” we will seek His help in being of service to others day by day.*

the office of Elder Thomas S. Monson and asked to make an appointment to see him.

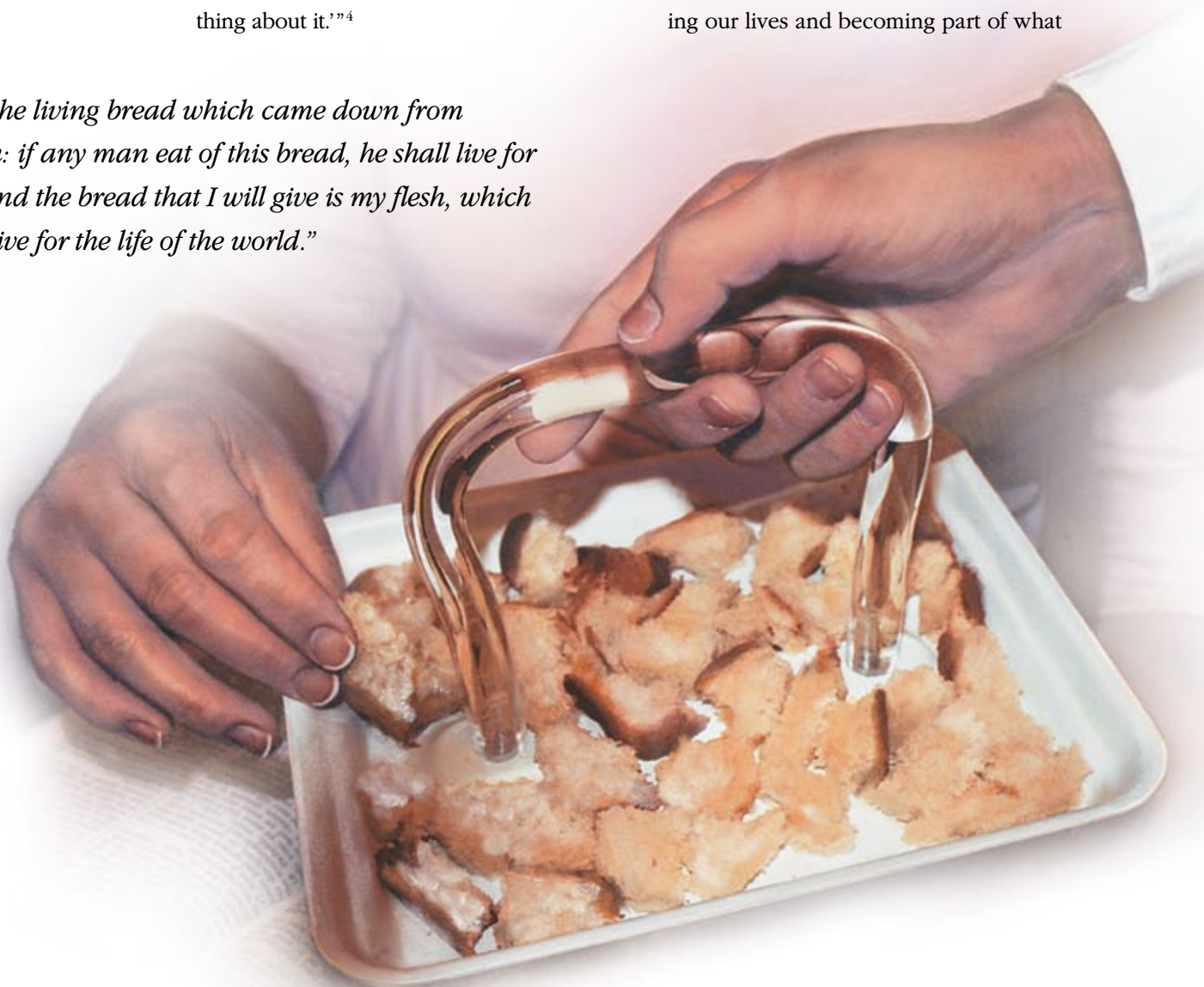
“. . . When the two met some time later, they embraced. Harold said, ‘I’ve come to apologize for not getting out of my chair and letting you in the door that summer day long years ago.’ Elder Monson asked him if he [was] active in the Church. With a wry smile, Harold replied: ‘I’m now second counselor in my ward bishopric. Your invitation to come out to church, and my negative response, so haunted me that I determined to do something about it.’”<sup>4</sup>

*“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”*

### **Making Daily Choices**

Thinking of our daily bread keeps us aware of the details of our lives, of the significance of the small things that occupy our days. Experience teaches that in a marriage, for example, a steady stream of simple kindnesses, help, and attention do much more to keep love alive and nurture a relationship than an occasional grand or expensive gesture.

Likewise, in daily choices we may prevent certain insidious influences from entering our lives and becoming part of what





we are. In an informal discussion that Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) and I had some years ago, we observed that one can avoid most pornography and pornographic images just by making good choices. For the most part it is simply a matter of self-discipline not to go where pornography is likely to be found—physically or electronically. We acknowledged, nevertheless, that because it is so tragically pervasive, pornography could assault a person minding his own business quite by surprise. “Yes,” observed Elder Maxwell, “but he can immediately reject it. He does not have to invite it to come in and offer it a chair to sit down.”

The same goes with other destructive influences and habits. Our attention each day to avoiding the very beginnings of such things can protect us from awakening some future day to the realization that because of inattentiveness, some evil or weakness has taken root in our soul.

In reality, there aren’t many things in a day that are totally without significance. Even the mundane and repetitious can be tiny but significant building blocks that in time establish the discipline and character and order needed to realize our plans and dreams. Therefore, as you ask in prayer for your daily bread, consider thoughtfully your needs—both what you may lack and what you must protect against. As you retire to bed, think about the successes and failures of the day and what will make the next day a little better. And thank your Heavenly Father for the manna He has placed along your path that sustained you through the day. Your reflections will increase your faith in Him as you see His hand helping you to endure some things and to change others. You will

be able to rejoice in one more day, one more step toward eternal life.

### Remembering the Bread of Life

Above all, remember that we have Him of whom manna was a type and symbol, the Redeemer.

“I am that bread of life.

“Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:48–51).

I bear my witness of the living reality of the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, and of the infinite power and reach of His Atonement. Ultimately, it is His Atonement and His grace that is our daily bread. We should seek Him daily, to do His will each day, to become one with Him as He is one with the Father (see John 17:20–23). As we do so, may our Heavenly Father grant us our daily bread. ■

*From a Church Educational System fireside address given on January 9, 2011. For the full text in English, visit [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

#### NOTES

1. N. Eldon Tanner, “Today I Will . . .,” *Liahona*, Mar. 2003, 27–28; “Just for Today,” *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 5.
2. David A. Bednar, “More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 20.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, “A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Tambuli*, Mar. 1990, 7; *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5.
4. Heidi S. Swinton, *To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson* (2010), 160–61.

*Ultimately, it is the Savior’s Atonement and grace that is our daily bread.*

By Don L. Searle

# More Than Just a Sunday Church

*She wanted a church founded on faith in Jesus Christ, one that required sacrifice and daily commitment. So far, no church stood up to her scriptural tests.*

Hazel Egan was not looking for just any church where she could be comfortable. “I wanted to be baptized into the true church,” she says. “I didn’t want just a Sunday church.”

But where could she find this religious organization? A student of the scriptures, Hazel had looked into different Christian faiths and found none that matched her criteria. She wondered if it might be impossible to find the true church she sought.

Then one day in 1992, missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints knocked on her door in Sydney, Australia.

Hazel and her husband, Richard, had Christian backgrounds. They had known each other since childhood in their native India. But when Richard, who was working in Australia, returned to India to marry Hazel and take her to Sydney, he probably did not realize how intense her desire was to find the true church—if it existed.

From her study of the Bible, Hazel knew that baptism would be a requirement for membership in the true Church of Jesus Christ. Other things would also be required. This church would ask members to pay tithing. Fasting would be part of its worship. It would



be not just a one-day-a-week religion but a way of life.

When the missionaries came to her door, she recalls, “we had a really interesting discussion”—without her realizing that this discussion could lead to baptism. She had two of these discussions with the missionaries before Richard was able to meet them. From that time on, the Egans took the missionary discussions together. Hazel was soon baptized, but Richard still had questions about tithing and the need for baptism.

Stake missionaries helped him resolve his concerns about baptism so that he too was baptized. But he still wondered about tithing. He received his own witness of that principle later when a young elder taught him about it. This witness was reaffirmed as Richard and Hazel paid tithing. They saw immediate blessings, and Richard understood for himself that the Lord keeps His promises to tithing payers (see Malachi 3:10).

As Hazel continued studying the gospel, she found answers to many questions that had previously puzzled her. For example, she had found it confusing that the Lord would harden Pharaoh’s heart, as written in the account in Exodus 7:3. But the Joseph Smith Translation makes plain what Moses was told: “And *Pharaoh* will harden *his* heart” (footnote a).

The gospel “gives us a great sense of direction,” Richard says. His wife had said that she wanted to find a church that would provide

moral direction for the children they hoped to have. That is what they found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, she says. “We just love it. This is home.”

The Egans now have three children. The oldest daughter, Julia, says she sometimes has opportunities to share her testimony with friends at school, and she enjoys serving in the Church.

Richard smiles as he recalls, “After the first year of being in the Church, I realized how busy we were going to be.” He learned much more about being busy when after five years as a member he was called to be a bishop, an office in which he served for the next six and a half years. Neither he nor his wife have ever tired of serving.

Because of the gospel, Richard says, “My family is closer. We’ve got a main purpose in this life”—to follow Heavenly Father’s plan and prepare for life together in the eternities. “All that we do as a family is focused on that,” he says. The Egans read the scriptures together each night to learn more about the gospel. “We love our scripture reading,” Hazel says. “I think in any LDS home there is a sense of harmony as you focus on the gospel. We love being together, even just to go for walks.”

Following the teachings of Jesus Christ has changed their perspective on many things, the Egans say. A few years ago their son was hit by a car. His physical injuries and subsequent recovery were minor, but perhaps the more important healing occurred in the Egans’ hearts. Hazel recalls that the accident turned out to be a beautiful spiritual experience because of the gospel. Richard says they were able to freely forgive the driver. He says, “If I hadn’t been a member of the Church, I don’t believe I could have handled it so well.”

When Richard was serving as bishop, Hazel’s mother came from India for a visit and joined the Church while she was staying with them. Now, when the Egans look to their future, they look to India, hoping to serve a mission together there someday. Richard believes many Indians will readily accept the gospel. “It will give them a strong sense of hope,” he says.

Richard and Hazel are eager to share that hope—the same hope they found in the true Church of Jesus Christ. ■



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID STOKER; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH BY DON L. SEARIE

# LOOK UP

*A challenge for all of us is  
not to look sideways to see  
how others are viewing our  
lives but to look up to see how  
Heavenly Father sees us.*





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



As a young man I was called to serve a mission in Hamburg, Germany. At the Language Training Mission—the predecessor to today’s missionary training center—I struggled to learn the language. As the first and then the second week passed, I noticed that the others in my district were progressing much faster than I was. While they were advancing to complex concepts, my *dies*, *ders*, and *dases* were a disaster.

I started to become concerned—and discouraged. How could I serve a successful mission if I couldn’t communicate with the people I was called to teach?

I prayed for help and sought a priesthood blessing, which provided some reassurance. But I continued to search and struggle, and one day I felt more uptight and worried than ever. As my companion and I walked down the hallway, I stopped at a small janitor’s closet. I asked

my companion to wait for me for a moment. I slipped into that tiny room and knelt down on a mop. I began to plead with Heavenly Father for some relief.

The Lord answered that prayer. I felt this thought come into my mind: “I never called you to master the German language. I just called you to serve with all of your heart, mind, and strength.”

I immediately thought, “*I can do that*. I can serve with all of my heart, mind, and strength. If that’s what the Lord has called me to do, *I can do that*.” I stood up feeling tremendously relieved.

From that point on, my measuring stick changed. I no longer gauged my progress and success against that of my companion or other members

of my district. Instead, I focused on how the Lord felt I was doing. Instead of looking to the side to compare myself to others, I began to look up, so to speak, to know what *He* thought of my efforts.

I don’t know that I learned the language much faster or much better from that point on, but I no longer felt the concerns I once had. I knew what the Lord wanted me to do, and it was in my power to do it.

I began counseling with Heavenly Father in the morning, telling Him that I didn’t know what the day would bring but that I would do my very best. “Whatever I can learn, allow me to learn it,” I prayed, “but no matter what, I’m going to give Thee my very best today.”

At night I would pray again to report on what I had studied and what I had done. I shared with my Father in Heaven my struggles and my successes alike. I had begun



to turn to Him—not to others or even myself—to validate my progress.

That lesson that I learned in a tiny broom closet more than 35 years ago has stayed with me all my life, through a number of callings and assignments. Whenever I have been asked to do something where the expectations seem greater than what I have the capacity to do, I remember that experience and say to myself, “Wait. Who called you? Who are you serving? Who are you trying to please?”

The world we live in today has all kinds of measurements—most of them external to us. I think such measurements can be especially harsh to young adults. You go to school and earn a grade, but that doesn’t necessarily take into account what else you experience in your other classes or your family or your life situation. Sometimes we’re judged by the way we look or by the car we drive. We might base our sense of self-worth on how many friends are writing on our wall on social networking sites. We worry about what others think about the person we’re dating or what people will think if we marry before finishing school. It’s easy to get caught up in trying to please others, but we can’t trust such external measurements; the world can be too quick both to praise and to criticize.

I think the challenge for all of us—but perhaps particularly for young adults—is to try not to look sideways

to see how others are viewing our lives but to look up to see how Heavenly Father sees us. He doesn’t look on the outward appearance but on the heart (see 1 Samuel 16:7). And He knows, better than anyone else, what each one of us needs.

So how do we “look up”? Here are some principles that can help.

### **Tap into Spiritual Power**

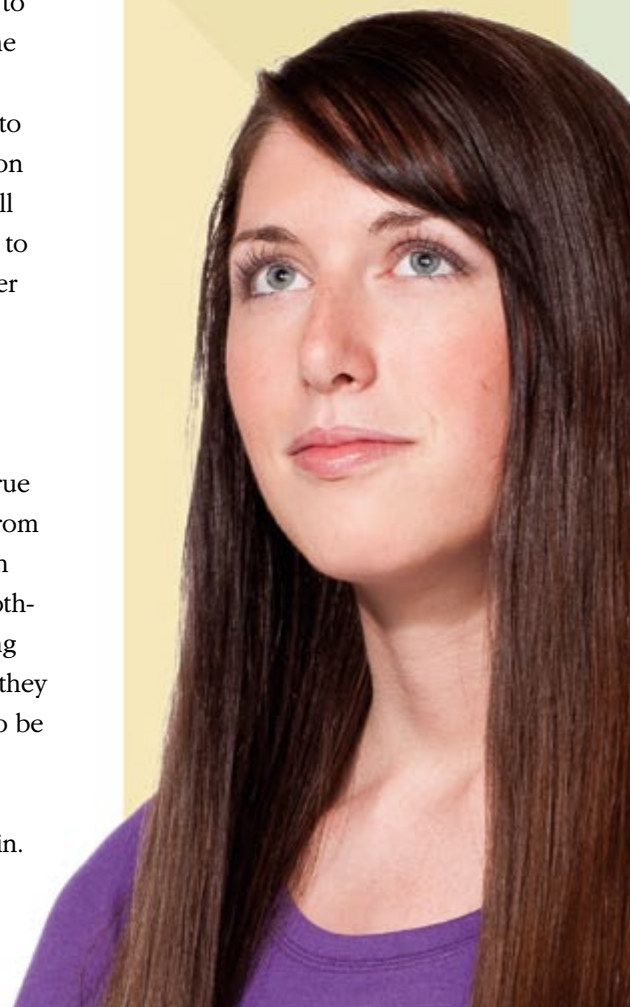
We can tap into the spiritual power we need in making decisions by beginning each day with personal prayer and scripture study. That prayer can include a petition to be receptive to God’s plan for us. Even though we may not see the whole plan, we can ask to be receptive to the part of the plan that will come that day. As we are receptive, we will see the fruits of our choices to follow Him. We’ll be able to act on impressions we receive. And we’ll be able to do difficult things and to do, for the right reasons, whatever is required.

### **Stay True to the Direction You Receive**

We can “look up” by staying true to the direction we’ve received from a loving Heavenly Father through personal revelation. Sometimes others would dissuade us from acting on what we receive, and even if they have good intentions, we need to be true to what we have felt.

My wife and I have a daughter serving a full-time mission in Spain.

***We can “look up”  
by staying true to the  
direction we’ve received  
from a loving Heavenly  
Father through personal  
revelation.***







## LOOK HEAVENWARD

“Looking heavenward should be our lifelong endeavor. Some foolish persons turn their backs on the wisdom of God and follow the allurements of fickle fashion, the attraction of false popularity, and the thrill of the moment. Their course of conduct resembles the disastrous experience of Esau, who exchanged his birthright for a mess of pottage.

“And what are the results of such action? I testify to you today that turning away from God brings broken covenants, shattered dreams, and crushed hopes. Such a quagmire of quicksand I plead with you to avoid. You are of a noble birthright. Eternal life in the kingdom of our Father is your goal.

“Such a goal is not achieved in one glorious attempt, but rather is the result of a lifetime of righteousness, an accumulation of wise choices, even a constancy of purpose and lofty ideals.

“Amidst the confusion of our age, the conflicts of conscience, and the turmoil of daily living, an abiding faith becomes an anchor to our lives.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Guideposts for Life’s Journey” (Brigham Young University devotional address, Nov. 13, 2007), 3, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).

That daughter spent her high school years in New Zealand, while I was serving as mission president. When she turned 21, she said, “Dad, Mom, I think I need to serve a mission.” Of course, we were pleased with this righteous decision, but knowing that it had been a sacrifice for her to move away from friends and family during her teenage years, I told her, “You’ve already served a mission.”

She smiled and said, “No, Dad, *you* have. Now *I* want to go serve the Lord.”

“OK,” I smiled. “You fill that mission. You follow that prompting to serve.”

Today I am elated that she is not only serving her Heavenly Father and His children in Spain but she is also following the impression she felt. She didn’t let even me—a well-meaning parent—convince her to do anything other than what she felt was right for her life and Heavenly Father’s plan for her.

## Don’t Be Afraid to Act

As important as it is to learn Heavenly Father’s plan for our lives, we sometimes get so caught up in knowing every detail, start to finish, that we become afraid to act. Don’t fall into this trap. Make good choices using your best judgment and move forward with your life. We’re blessed as we make choices. Don’t be afraid to make choices because you are

afraid of making mistakes. Don’t be afraid to try new things.

In doing so, you will find joy in the journey.

## Stand by Your Post

When our family was living in New Zealand, we sometimes became overwhelmed by the number of challenges that investigators, recent converts, missionaries, and others were experiencing. We often found ourselves praying for answers—and expecting to receive them *quickly!*

All of us are in need of help. And sometimes the solutions we seek *do* come quickly. But other times they come in ways other than we had hoped. Or they come later than we expected. And occasionally, it seems, they’re not coming at all.

In such cases, adopt the attitude of “stand by your post” until the Lord sends some help, however long that takes. But standing by your post doesn’t mean standing still. As I mentioned, don’t be afraid to act. Keep doing good things. Keep obeying the commandments. Keep praying and studying and doing your best until you receive additional direction. Don’t abandon your post. In His time the Lord will allow all things to work out for your good.

“Looking up” has blessed my life over and over since my experience in the Language Training Mission. As Mormon explains in Helaman 3:27, “The Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name.” I have felt and experienced His mercy and love. I know His mercy will come to all of us as we believe and call upon His name. ■

# WORSHIP THE LORD BY Singing Hymns

By W. Herbert Klopfer  
Church Music Department

*Hymns have power to strengthen and inspire us, lifting us to higher spiritual ground.*

In 1984 about 30 brethren waiting to be interviewed sat in a small chapel room in Leipzig, Germany. They had come from all over East Germany to meet with President Thomas S. Monson, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, as he organized the Leipzig Germany Stake.

President Monson had not been conducting interviews long when he heard a chorus of men begin singing hymns in the next room. He turned to his companion and asked, “Do these brethren represent a priesthood choir for the meeting?” His companion replied, “Oh no, they’re the brethren we’re going to interview this afternoon. They would prefer singing to chatting.”<sup>1</sup>

President Monson later recalled that they sang for four hours. He said that as he would interview some of the tenor section, the tenors became a little weak, and then they would return and the basses would come in for the interviews. And so it went throughout the day until the last interview had been completed.<sup>2</sup>

These brethren, who were gathered as Latter-day Saints from the far reaches of a

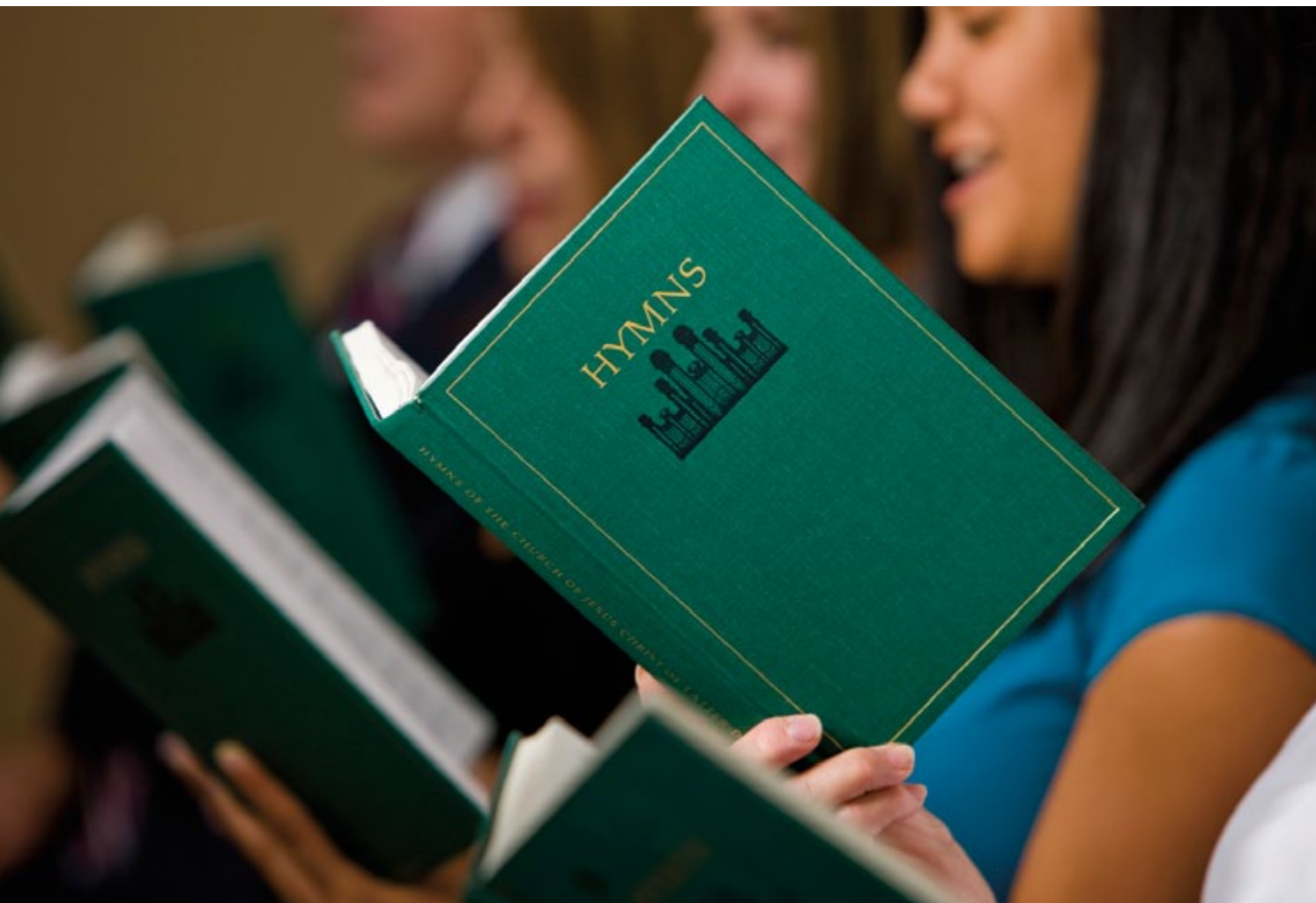
divided country, did the unexpected. Rather than talking about the weather, discussing sports, or simply enjoying each other’s friendship, they sang.

The lesson that President Monson drew from that experience was, “If you love the Lord, if you love his doctrine, you’ll love the hymns. And when you love them, you sing them.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “The singing of hymns is one of the best ways to learn the doctrine of the restored gospel” and “is a glorious way to worship.”<sup>4</sup>

Because singing the hymns invites the companionship of the Holy Ghost, we become more receptive to gospel truths as we participate. Both the messages and the music of the hymns invite us to “come unto Christ, and be perfected in him” (Moroni 10:32). As we sing, the Spirit testifies of the Savior’s divinity and other eternal principles. And no matter how well they are sung or by whom, the hymns have power to strengthen and inspire us as we use them, lifting us to higher spiritual ground.





The hymns also help us live the gospel by inspiring righteous actions. In the preface to the hymnbook, the First Presidency wrote that the hymns “can fill our souls with heavenly thoughts and bring us a spirit of peace.” In addition, they wrote that “hymns can also help us withstand the temptations of the adversary.”<sup>5</sup>

If our minds are filled with the tunes and words of hymns, less room remains for Satan’s influence. Singing hymns dismisses unworthy thoughts, deepens spiritual sensitivity, and quiets and lifts our spirits. When counseling Church members to memorize hymns as a way to keep out evil thoughts, President Boyd K. Packer said, “Because the music is uplifting and clean, the baser thoughts will slip shamefully away.”<sup>6</sup> As we sing the hymns and fill our hearts and minds with their heavenly influence, we will find ourselves drawing closer to the Lord and striving to keep His commandments.

The First Presidency has counseled members of the Church to sing the hymns of Zion.<sup>7</sup> Following that counsel will help us learn and teach the gospel through our sacred hymns and “bring out the spirit of music in the heart and soul of every boy, every girl, every man, and every woman.”<sup>8</sup> In doing so we will find greater love for the Lord’s doctrine, increased strength to withstand temptation, and a deepened testimony of the Savior and His love for each of us. ■

#### NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, quoted in “Celebrating the New Hymnbook,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 105.
2. Hymnbook Celebration, Salt Lake City, Utah, September 3, 1985, audiotape, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “New Hymnbook,” 105.
4. Dallin H. Oaks, “Worship through Music,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 10.
5. *Hymns*, x.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Worthy Music, Worthy Thoughts,” *Liahona*, Apr. 2008, 35; *New Era*, Apr. 2008, 11.
7. *Hymns*, ix.
8. Thomas S. Monson, “New Hymnbook,” 105.



**By Elder  
Stanley G. Ellis**  
Of the Seventy

# THE BOOK OF MORMON AND God's Plan for Us

*Nowhere in scripture is God's plan more clearly defined  
and taught than in the Book of Mormon.*

One of the common themes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is that *God has a plan*. It is described with various names reflecting its various parts—the plan of happiness, the plan of mercy, the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation (see Alma 42:5–31).

Nowhere is the plan more clearly defined and taught than in the Book of Mormon. In fact, a good way to study the Book of Mormon this year is to look for what it says about that plan and about what that plan means for us.

The prophet Lehi taught that “it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). And so it is with God's plan. As a result, Satan has a plan (see 2 Nephi 9:28), the world has many plans, and, unfortunately, we may even have our own plans. We “are free to choose” (2 Nephi 2:27) which plan we will follow—God's or someone else's.

## The Plan in Daily Life

Let's examine the Book of Mormon for some practical implications of God's plan for our daily living, looking for ways to “liken [it] unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23).

For example, God has a plan for prayer—He asks us to “*pray always*” (see 3 Nephi

18:15–20). Sometimes we may not want to pray because we feel tired, discouraged, unworthy, or disappointed that previous prayers were not answered as we wanted. There are other plans, “for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:8), but God's plan is that we pray always.

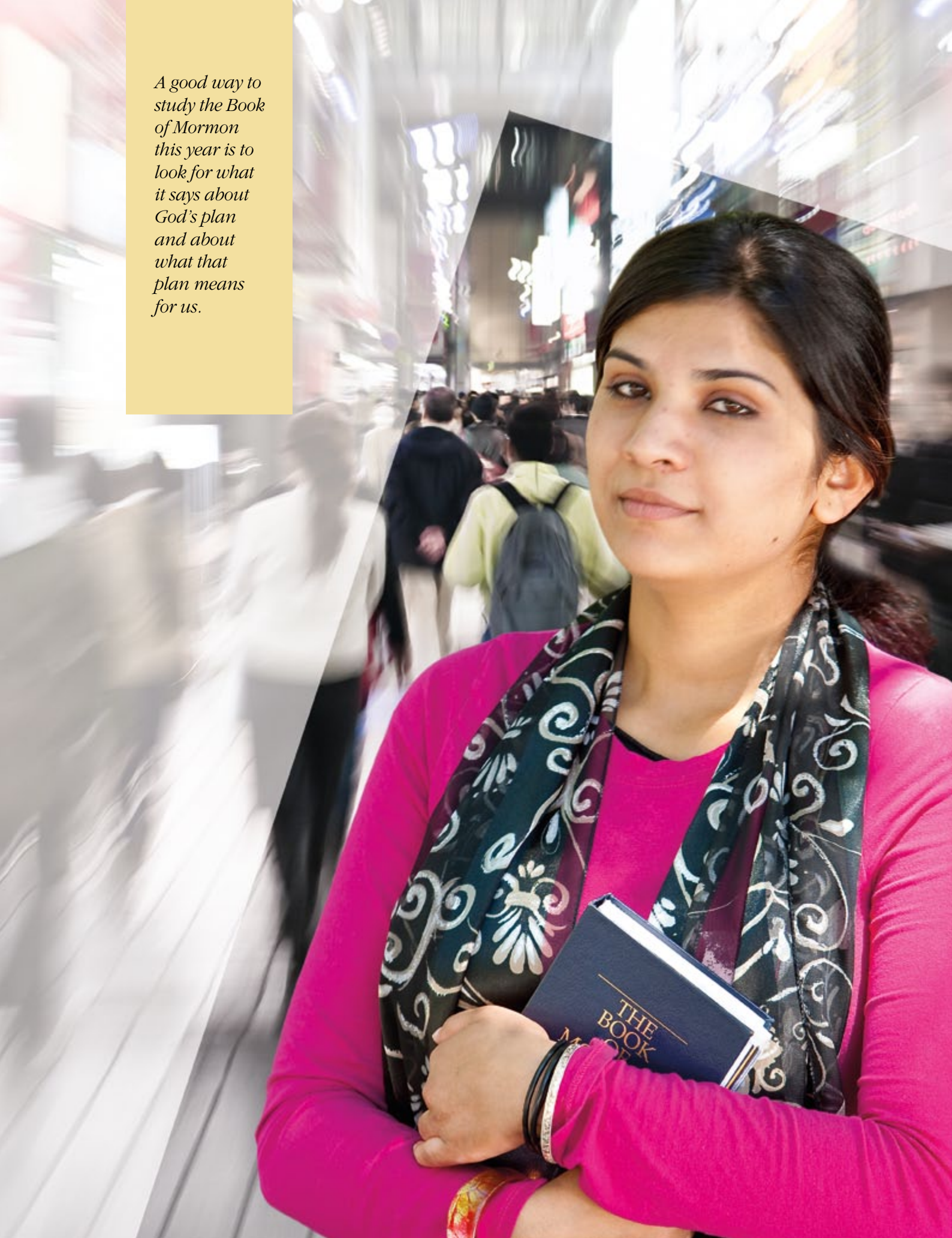
God has a plan for scripture reading—we need to *study the scriptures every day*. As Nephi said, “Feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3). Some of us don't like to read or have a hard time understanding scriptural language or would rather spend our time in other pursuits. The Lord's plan, however, is that we read the scriptures daily.

When our nine children were young, it was hard to find a time we could read the scriptures as a family. We found that 5:30 a.m. was the only time. Some of the children had difficulty staying awake, but we persisted.

One day Sister Ellis and I were discouraged with all we had to do and with the seeming impossibility of getting it all done. That morning we read the following words in the Old Testament: “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:9). That was a personal revelation to us that lifted us

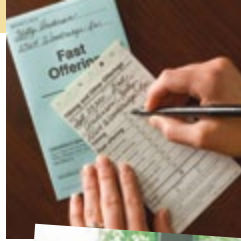


*A good way to study the Book of Mormon this year is to look for what it says about God's plan and about what that plan means for us.*





*By examining the Book of Mormon, we discover some practical implications of God's plan for our daily living.*



and encouraged us to keep going. It was possible for the Lord to send us that message of love and support because we were studying the scriptures that day.

God has a plan for family home evening—through His prophets, He encourages us to *hold family home evening each week* (see 3 Nephi 18:21; Mosiah 1:4; 4:14–15). This is not easy when family members have conflicting schedules. Some family members may not cooperate, but God's plan is that we hold family home evening each week.

The Lord has a plan for worshipping Him—we are spiritually strengthened as we *attend our meetings every Sunday*. If we have to work Saturday night, we may feel tired. At times we may be frustrated with some ward members, teachers, or leaders. We may not have a ride or money for the subway or bus. The Lord's plan, however, is that we go—even if we have to walk. The effort to attend weekly is part of the sacrifice the Lord expects of us (see Mosiah 13:16–19; 18:25; D&C 59:9).

One of the main reasons we attend church each week is to partake of the sacrament. The Savior instituted the sacrament in both the Old and New Worlds (see Luke 22:19–20; 3 Nephi 18:1–11), and He explained the role the sacrament plays in our remembering Him so that we can have His Spirit to be with us (see 3 Nephi 18:7, 11). As we partake of the sacrament each week, we renew our covenants. It is part of His plan.

God has a plan for service—each of us needs to *serve in the Church and do our best to magnify our callings*. The Church of Jesus Christ is not a church of spectators; it is a church of workers. We may not enjoy certain callings, we may feel incapable, or we may think we have done our part and deserve a rest. But God's plan is that we serve Him by serving others (see Mosiah 2:17). As we serve Him, we come to know Him (see Mosiah 5:13).

The Lord has a plan for tithing—each of us is expected to *pay a full tithing*. We live in difficult times, and some of us are having a hard time financially. We may think that paying tithing would be easier if we were better off, but God's plan is that each of us be a full-tithe payer regardless of our circumstances (see 3 Nephi 24:10). By paying our tithing, we give the Lord an opportunity to bless us materially and strengthen us spiritually.

God has a plan for fast offerings—each month we have an opportunity to *fast and donate a fast offering to help the poor* (see Mosiah 4:26). This wonderful plan blesses the needy as well as those who fast and make an offering. It is so much better than all of the world's plans.

God has a plan for missions—every able young man should *serve a mission*. Some young men do not want to work that hard or would rather get married, go to college, get a job, or do nothing. But God's plan is that every young man who is physically and mentally capable prepare himself to serve a mission. Many young women choose to serve



also. We have personally witnessed the blessings of having our sons and our daughters serve missions. The Lord needs senior couples as missionaries too.<sup>1</sup>

God has a plan for marriage—after a mission, the next step is *temple marriage*. Some young people don't feel ready for the responsibility of marriage, or they think they cannot get married because they don't have a house or a car or a job or a degree. Remember that Nephi was living in a tent and was no longer enjoying his family's former wealth when the Lord sent him and his brothers back to Jerusalem so that they could take the daughters of Ishmael to wife (see 1 Nephi 2:4; 7:1–5; 16:7).

Some young people prefer to just “hang out” and stay single. There are other plans, but God's plan is that marriage follow missionary service.

### A Plan for Families

God has a plan for families—“*The family is ordained of God*” and is “*central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.*”<sup>2</sup> Children are a blessing from the Lord. They are a lot of work, but they are worth it. With our nine children we have learned that the work and challenges of family life are nothing compared to the joy that comes from having a posterity. Some couples may think they can't afford children or that they cannot love or care for more than a few. There are many plans, but God's plan is that we exercise the faith necessary to marry and welcome children into our home. The Book of Mormon—an account of families, from Lehi's to Mormon's—is replete with examples and teachings for parents and children.

*God's plan is that we exercise the faith necessary to marry and welcome children into our home.*



The Lord has a plan for the temple—He expects us to *worship in the temple regularly*. President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995) urged us to make the temple the symbol of our membership in the Church.<sup>3</sup> He and other latter-day prophets have counseled us to have a current temple recommend even if we cannot attend the temple. Sometimes we feel unworthy or don't have the means to go to the temple, or we rationalize that we will go tomorrow, next week, or next month. There are many plans, but the Lord's plan is that we have a current temple recommend and use it often. When the resurrected Savior visited the Nephites, He came to the temple (see 3 Nephi 11:1–10). We too can feel close to Him in the temple.

### Results of Our Choice

What are the results of our choosing the Lord's plan? Happiness—here and hereafter. He promises that we can rise above the poverty around us, enjoy greater health, repent and be forgiven, find joy in serving, qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, learn and grow, and enjoy eternal life with an eternal family—a true “multiplicity of blessings” (D&C 97:25, 28).

What do we receive if we choose Satan's plan? His lies may give us joy for a season (see 3 Nephi 27:11), but in the end “he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27). If we choose his plan or one of the world's plans, we have no promise.

I testify that the Lord's plan is better than any other. He knows us, loves us, and desires to bless and help us. He knows best! God has more than *a* plan—He has *the* plan. I pray that we will choose it. ■

#### NOTES

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “As We Meet Together Again,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 5–6.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. See Howard W. Hunter, “The Great Symbol of Our Membership,” *Ensign* and *Tambuli*, Oct. 1994, 2.

# LEADERSHIP THE LORD'S WAY

By Craig Merrill Director, BYU Master of Business Administration Program

*As we serve and lead in the way the Lord has directed, regardless of our calling, we will both bless and be blessed.*

When Brother Jones and his son were assigned to home teach the Williams family, they began making monthly visits. Through those visits, Kim, a daughter in the family, learned that they cared about her. She had many questions about the gospel and enjoyed conversations with them.

One summer when Kim was struggling to know if she had a testimony, Brother Jones, along with another holder of the Melchizedek Priesthood, was asked to attend Young Women camp. Kim later said how much it meant to her to have her home teacher there. She told her family that she had gained a testimony of the Savior's love for her when Brother Jones and another priesthood holder, at her request, gave her a priesthood blessing at camp.

Her home teachers were, in the truest sense, friends to the Williams family. Their influence mattered to Kim and her parents—and to the Lord.

## Leadership and Callings

In today's world, it is common to measure one's personal growth by ever-greater positions of responsibility

in the workplace or by pay raises that signal increasing personal accomplishment. We often look at visible positions of responsibility as an indication that a person is an important contributor. It is not surprising then that many people struggle to know how best to measure their growth in spiritual matters.

I have heard many Latter-day Saints question their own standing because they have not been called to leadership positions in the Church. But is our progress properly measured by leadership callings?

In fact, leadership does not require a calling. Some people who exert the uplifting and encouraging influence that constitutes true leadership do so with no calling or position. Doctrine and Covenants 121 teaches some important lessons about leadership:

“We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.

“Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

“No power or influence can or

ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

“By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile” (verses 39–42).

It is common to confuse leadership with telling people what to do. That can lead to unrighteous dominion. It would not be appropriate to say, “You must do as I say because I (who hold the priesthood or am called by the priesthood) said so.” An important lesson of section 121 is that a true leader does not give direction and expect it to be followed simply because of position. Rather, priesthood leadership is about invitation. A kind invitation, based in pure knowledge and love unfeigned, will always be a greater motivation than “Because I said so.”

It is true that leaders who tend toward issuing orders can get a lot done. But they are not leading in the way the Lord has revealed. And they are not developing the independent ability and confidence that should exist among those they are leading.





### True Leadership

Notice that a calling or position of authority is not listed in verses 41 or 42 as one of the proper ways to wield power or influence. Rather, the power and influence of a true leader are exerted through persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, kindness, and pure knowledge. These characteristics of true leadership can be exhibited by all, regardless of calling or position.

Leadership callings are much like training wheels on a bicycle. The training wheels allow a child to learn how to balance and ride with confidence. A leadership calling puts people in a position to learn how to love, be patient, and persuade through pure knowledge and kindness. They may also learn that any attempt to compel behavior is accompanied by withdrawal of the Spirit and decreased effectiveness.

After our release, we will find out if we have grown and learned while in our calling. Have we learned to love and serve others without the calling being the impetus? Have we learned to serve with power as an influence for good simply because of who we have become?

The Lord will call on us repeatedly throughout our lives. He knows our hearts. He will call on us when He needs our particular skills, knowledge, or sensitivity to the Spirit. He will call on us according to our willingness to hear His voice and love as He loves.

When we learn how to be an influence for good in the Lord's way, we will become people who lift others simply because that is who we are. Callings will not be the primary reason for our good influence. Yet, when asked, we will serve well where we are assigned in the Church.

### BEING A FAITHFUL DISCIPLE

"All Church leaders are called to help other people become 'true followers of . . . Jesus Christ' (Moroni 7:48). . . .

"Leaders can best teach others how to be 'true followers' by their personal example. This pattern—being a faithful disciple in order to help others become faithful disciples—is the purpose behind every calling in the Church."

*Handbook 2: Administering the Church (2010), 3.1.*

Whether we serve in the Sunday School or in youth programs, as a home teacher or a visiting teacher, or even as a bishop or a Relief Society president, our service to others will be an expression of our love of the Savior. As we serve and lead in the way He has directed, regardless of our calling, we will both bless and be blessed. ■



# Children





# Delight

IN THE BOOK OF MORMON



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT CASEY



**T**he Church History Museum near Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, is featuring a large Book of Mormon exhibit (above) for children until January 6, 2013. The exhibit celebrates the rich Latin heritage within the Church by focusing on Book of Mormon truths while highlighting modern-day stories of faithful Latin American Saints. It is divided into three interactive sections: Learn Truths, Share Truths, and Live Truths.





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**GUIDED BY THE LIAHONA**

*Just as the Liahona guided Lehi and his family in their travels, the Book of Mormon can guide us in our lives.*



**LEARN TRUTHS**

*Here children can step into Book of Mormon stories, such as boarding a ship and using the Liahona to sail across the ocean as Lehi and his family did (see page 38) or building the wall (above) upon which Samuel the Lamanite prophesied of Christ's birth. They can gather plastic fruits and vegetables for a "missionary meal" or use dolls to tell the story of the Nativity (left). Children can look at a painting of Moroni burying the gold plates and then turn the metal pages in a life-sized replica of the plates (below).*







### **LIVING BOOK OF MORMON TRUTHS**

*Starting on the left in the picture above, a tortilla toss game teaches children that with faith, nothing is impossible, as they learn how a family sold tortillas to earn money to go to the temple; next, a gardener and his bicycle teach children of service as they learn of a brother who planted small gardens to feed those in need; and a red dump truck teaches about gathering as children learn of a member who gathered others on Sundays and drove them to church.*





### SHARE TRUTHS

*Visitors can enter a missionary apartment (above) complete with a stove, a table, and a vegetable garden and learn the joy of being a missionary.*



### LIVE TRUTHS

*As children put on a vest or a long skirt and practice dance steps (left), they learn about modesty and a young girl from Peru who wore a long skirt for a dance recital instead of the suggested immodest costume.*

*They can ring the doorbell on an apartment building and hear testimonies of the Book of Mormon from those who have lived its truths, learn to keep the Sabbath Day holy from a talented runner who chose not to race on Sundays, and try their hand at abridging records in Moroni's library (above). ■*





# Finding Answers

## IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

By Sara D. Smith

**O**ur journey on earth can be challenging, but our loving Heavenly Father did not send us here to handle the storms of life alone. One of the greatest helps He gave us is the Book of Mormon. It not only teaches the fulness of the gospel but also guides us through the problems we encounter. As we search the Book of Mormon, the Spirit will help us find answers to our problems and questions.

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified:

“The Book of Mormon, above all other books that I know of, is the greatest source we have for answers to real-life problems. . . .

“How many times peace has come into the lives of those who are struggling with real problems when they read the Book of Mormon! The examples of spiritual guidance that emanate from the book are without number.”<sup>1</sup>

In the following accounts, members share how they found in the Book of Mormon the answers they sought.

### Experiencing a Change of Heart

Although he learned the gospel while young, Greg Larsen (name has been changed) of California, USA, later fell away. He became involved with drugs and crime and soon found himself in prison. He wanted to turn his life around but was not sure how.

“Men from the local ward taught Sunday School in the prison,” wrote Greg. “One of

them told me my life would get better if I read the Book of Mormon. And that is what I did.

“When I got out of prison, I went back to church, but I still had the urge to revert back to my old habits. As I continued to read the Book of Mormon, I learned about the people of King Lamoni in Alma 19:33, whose ‘hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil.’ I began to pray for this change of heart.”

Greg found the answer to his prayer in Helaman 15:7, which teaches that “faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart.”

“As I read those words, tears streamed down my face. The Spirit testified that my Heavenly Father loved me and would help me. I felt that if I had enough faith to speak to my bishop, it would be enough. As I laid my sins at the Savior’s feet, I received a true change of heart.”

### Finding Her Path

Laura Swenson from Idaho, USA, came home one day frustrated and in tears. She was not married, and her plans for college and the career she had dreamed of were falling apart. “I wondered if I was even going anywhere,” she wrote.

“I was prompted to turn to the Book of Mormon. In the first four verses of 1 Nephi 18, I found an answer to my concerns. These verses describe the ship that Nephi built to carry his family to the promised land. It was ‘of curious workmanship’ and



*“I learned about the people of King Lamoni in Alma 19:33, whose hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil.’ I began to pray for this change of heart.”*





### HELP WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS

"[The Book of Mormon] can help with personal problems in a very real way. Do you want to get rid of a bad habit? Do you want to improve relationships in your family? Do you want to increase your spiritual capacity? Read the Book of Mormon!"

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "A Testimony of the Book of Mormon," *Liahona*, Jan. 2000, 85; *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 71.

not built 'after the manner of men'; rather, it was built 'after the manner which the Lord had shown' (verses 1–2). Nephi consulted with the Lord often while building the ship. When the ship was finished, 'it was good, and . . . the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine' (verse 4).

"I realized that my own journey was of 'curious workmanship.' It didn't fit the patterns of men but would get me where I needed to go if I sought the Lord's guidance. These verses were a beacon of light in a dark moment. My problems didn't end overnight, but I found the perspective that I needed. I am now in a rewarding career for which I had never planned."

### Discovering Another Testament

As a young man, Adrián Paz Zambrano of Honduras wondered why the Bible mentions only the area around Jerusalem and wondered if Jesus Christ visited other nations.

"Years later two missionaries of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints came to my house," wrote Adrián. "They showed me the Book of Mormon and invited me to read in 3 Nephi, which tells about Christ visiting the Americas.

"As I read, I remembered the questions I had when I was young. I had found the

answers. Because of the Book of Mormon, I learned that Jesus Christ visited the Americas after His Resurrection. I was filled with joy because I knew that God loved all His children regardless of location or circumstance."

Adrián and his wife prayed together to know if the Church was true, and both received a testimony. They were baptized and confirmed, and one year later their family was sealed in the temple.

### Providing for His Family

At age 30, Eric James of New Mexico, USA, was diagnosed with a kidney disease. As a young father, he was devastated and wondered if he would be able to provide for his family.

He read in the Book of Mormon that Nephi wondered the same thing when he broke his bow made of fine steel. But after making a bow out of wood, Nephi was again able to feed his family. (See 1 Nephi 16:18–23, 30–32.)

"Nephi's story filled my soul like a brilliant light," Eric said. "The health I had enjoyed up until that point was like Nephi's steel bow. When my health failed, it was like my bow had broken. But I realized that the Lord had blessed me with a wooden bow in the form of a kidney transplant. The transplant would give me the strength to care for my family. This gave me hope. Almost 10 years later, I continue to provide for my family and serve the Lord the best I can."

### Teaching Children Obedience

When his children were young, Juan José Resanovich of Argentina turned to the Book of Mormon when he had questions about how to teach and raise his children. "My wife and I searched its pages for inspiration for our children, and we always found answers," he wrote.

The Resanoviches taught their children obedience by pointing them to Nephi's example in 1 Nephi 3:5–6:

“Thy brothers murmur, saying it is a hard thing which I have required of them; but behold I have not required it of them, but it is a commandment of the Lord.

“Therefore go, my son, and thou shalt be favored of the Lord, because thou hast not murmured.”

“We taught our children that Nephi respected his earthly parents and the things of God,” wrote Juan. “We made a goal that as a family we would have Nephi's attitude of respect and obedience.

“Each of our children served a mission. We did not have to convince them to serve. They have been good students, good friends, and good children. Our family has a lot to improve, but the Book of Mormon is a tremendous help in reaching our goals.”

### Escaping the Bands of Addiction

While battling an addiction to food, Susan Lunt of Utah, USA, prayed for help. She turned to the Book of Mormon and read that Nephi was delivered from bands his brothers had tied around his hands and feet:

“O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me . . . ; yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound.

“And it came to pass that . . . the bands were loosed” (1 Nephi 7:17–18).

“This scripture described exactly how I felt—bound with bands of addiction,” Susan wrote. “Nephi's tangible bands were immediately loosed when he asked for deliverance. My bands were intangible and I didn't overcome my addiction in a moment, but as I read

those words, I felt something shift inside me. I felt as if the bands around my heart, mind, and body had been loosened, and I knew that I could overcome my addiction.”

Susan has made great progress and, because of the inspiration she found in the Book of Mormon, has been able to break other habits that held her bound, including anger, selfishness, and pride. “I know that the Book of Mormon is the word of God,” she explained, “and that the answer to any of life's questions can be found within the pages of that book.” ■

#### NOTE

1. M. Russell Ballard, in “We Add Our Witness,” *Tambuli*, Dec. 1989, 13; *Ensign*, Mar. 1989, 8–9.

## BOOK OF MORMON ANSWERS

- What should I do next in my life? (See 1 Nephi 4:6; Alma 37:36.)
- How can I improve my marriage? (See 1 Nephi 5:1–9.)
- Why should I keep a journal? (See Jacob 1:2–4; Alma 37:2–4; Helaman 3:13–15.)
- How can I be a better friend? (See Alma 15:18.)
- How can I fulfill my calling? (See Alma 17:2–12.)
- What should I pray about? (See Alma 34:17–27.)
- How can the Atonement help me repent and change? (See Alma 36.)
- How should I react when someone is unkind? (See Alma 60–62.)
- How can I protect my family from the evil in the world? (See Helaman 5:12; Moroni 8:2–3.)
- Why should I attend church? (See Moroni 6:5–9.)

**S**tudy suggestion: Make a list of your own questions and look for answers as you prayerfully study the scriptures.



*Familiarity can lead us “to be less  
and less astonished at a sign or a  
wonder from heaven.”*

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM C. OLSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED

By Adam C. Olson  
Church Magazines



## REDISCOVERING A WONDER OF THE WORLD... and Avoiding the Dangers of Spiritual Apathy

Ciro Villavicencio estimates that during his first three years as a tour guide in Peru's Cusco region, he led nearly 400 tours to Machu Picchu, the famed "lost city" of the Incas. Yet, even after his many visits, this site—included on various lists of wonders of the world—has not lost its wonder for him.

"There's always something new to learn," he says. Spending several hours taking a group of visitors through Machu Picchu isn't unusual for Ciro. However, he has seen how easy it is to lose that wonder. A few of his colleagues do a whole tour in 45 minutes. "They've lost interest," he says.

Ciro, a member of the Chasqui Ward and high councilor in the Cusco Peru Inti Raymi Stake, believes that understanding his colleagues' disinterest could help Church

members increase interest in another wonder of the world—the most significant one—the "marvelous work and a wonder" of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Nephi 25:17).

### The Dangers of Wonder Lost

Abandoned in the late 1500s by the Incas and undiscovered by the conquistadores, this isolated city high in the Peruvian Andes was lost to all but a few. At the turn of the 20th century, its discovery by the outside world brought droves of researchers and tourists.

After decades of study, "some people thought that they had found everything to be found at Machu Picchu," Ciro says. "When people think that everything has been found or that everything is done, they give up or devalue the item or the effort."





*As long as researchers have studied Machu Picchu, they have been rewarded with new discoveries and additional knowledge.*

Ciro worries that the same complacency can happen in the Church. He has seen how time and familiarity can lead some members “to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, insomuch that they [begin] to be hard in their hearts, and blind in their minds, and [begin] to disbelieve all which they [have] heard and seen” (3 Nephi 2:1).

This loss of wonder can leave members susceptible to Satan’s lies, such as: You don’t need to listen to that speaker; you already know it all. You don’t need to go to Sunday School; you’ve heard that lesson before. You don’t need to study your scriptures today; there’s nothing new there.

“And thus [does] Satan get possession of the hearts of the people” (3 Nephi 2:2).

Experiencing peaks and valleys in enthusiasm for gospel learning is not uncommon. But those who allow a lull in spiritual learning to lengthen into a lifestyle are in danger of losing “even that which they have” in spiritual understanding (2 Nephi 28:30; see also Matthew 25:14–30).

## Rekindling Wonder

Understanding three truths has helped *Ciro* remain teachable in spite of apathy’s appeal:

### **1. There is more that I need to know.**

During times of intense gospel study on his mission and as an institute teacher, *Ciro* has discovered that there is always something more to learn, whether it’s a new principle or a new application of one he already knew. More important, that new spiritual knowledge is often something he needed to know to get through whatever challenges he was facing—or about to face.

“Part of being teachable,” he says, “is remembering that there’s always something I don’t know that I probably need to know.”

### **2. I need the Holy Ghost’s help to learn what I need.**

When you don’t know what you need to know, you need a knowledgeable teacher (see John 14:26). As *Ciro* studies the scriptures alone or with his wife or as he participates in classes and meetings, he is constantly reminded that it doesn’t matter how often he has read a particular verse or heard a particular concept.

“The Spirit can teach me things I had never considered,” he says. “The Holy Ghost is the teacher.”

### **3. Learning takes effort on my part.**

Learning is an active not a passive exercise.<sup>1</sup> It requires desire, attention, participation, and application of principles learned (see Alma 32:27).

“I have to take responsibility for learning,” *Ciro* says. “Heavenly Father won’t force me to learn anything.”

## Wonder Rewarded

For *Ciro*, Machu Picchu remains a wonder of the world because, for as long as researchers have studied it, they have been rewarded

with new discoveries and additional knowledge.

Even after a century of study, archaeologists have found in just the past several years a burial site, ceramics, and even additional terrace structures, all of which have added to what is known about Machu Picchu and the Incas.

Such is the case with studying the gospel of Jesus Christ. “There is always something new to discover in the gospel for those who make the effort,” *Ciro* says.

Just as new discoveries at Machu Picchu build upon previous knowledge, providing researchers with a more complete understanding, “he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full” (Alma 12:10; see also D&C 50:24).

“The gospel is an unending fount of living waters to which we need to return regularly,” *Ciro* says.

### The Marvelous Work of Wonder

As *Ciro* watches from a ledge high above Machu Picchu, dozens of different tour groups walk among the ancient buildings. For *Ciro* the tragedy in the disinterest among a few of his colleagues is that it hurts not only them but those who could be experiencing wonder through them.

Keeping wonder for the gospel alive will bless not only the individual but those associated with him or her. “The

change the gospel makes in people’s lives is a wonder,” says *Ciro*. “And those who have experienced that change can



themselves become a wonder in the lives of others.” ■

**NOTE**

1. See David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” *Liahona*, Sept. 2007, 16; *Ensign*, Sept. 2007, 60.



## Finding Motivation to Read the Scriptures

By Wilfer Montes Leon

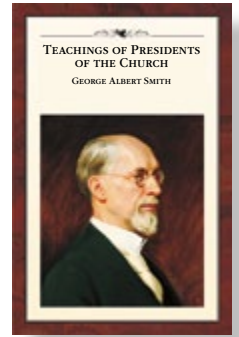
We need to pray for motivation to read the scriptures and also for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We need to delight in the scriptures; that is, enjoy the word of God and feel the love offered to us by the message it gives us. We need to not just let the letters pass before our eyes, because the idea is for us to fall in love with this marvelous gospel.

Each time you search the scriptures, you will learn more, and through them you can come to know the will of our Heavenly Father. He often answers our prayers through the standard works of the Church. When we feel peace and receive inspiring thoughts, we can know that they come from Heavenly Father through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:1–3).

PHOTOGRAPH OF ANIMAL © GETTY IMAGES; PHOTOGRAPH OF SCRIPTURES BY CODY BELL







# HE LIVED AS HE TAUGHT

*Experiences from the life of President George Albert Smith demonstrate that he not only believed the gospel—he lived it.*

**By Ted Barnes**  
Curriculum Department

Near the end of a stressful day, John A. Widtsoe sat in his office, “rather tired after the day’s work.” He was facing a controversial problem, and he was feeling the heavy weight of his responsibilities. “I was weary,” he said.

“Just then there was a knock upon the door, and in walked George Albert Smith. He said, ‘I am on the way home after my day’s work. I thought of you and the problems that you are expected to solve. I came in to comfort you and to bless you.’

“... I shall never forget it. We talked together for awhile; we parted, he went home. My heart was lifted. I was weary no longer.”

Recalling this experience many years later as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Elder Widtsoe (1872–1952) said: “That was the way of George Albert Smith.

... He gave of his own time, his own strength.”<sup>1</sup>

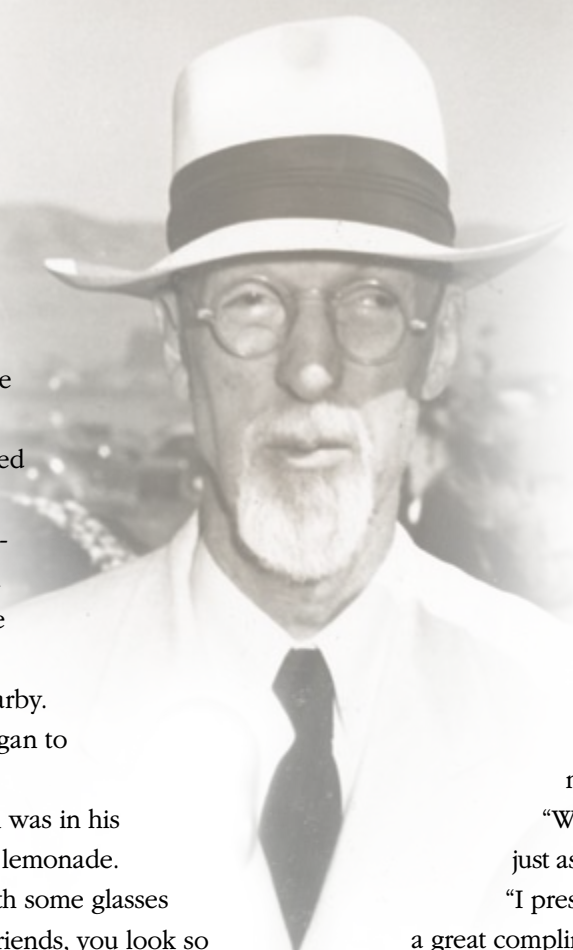
George Albert Smith (1870–1951), who served as the eighth President of the Church, from 1945 to 1951, believed that if we truly have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it will manifest itself in our lives—particularly in the way we treat one another. “A correct and consistent life,” he taught, “is the strongest testimony that we will be able to bear of the truth of this work.”<sup>2</sup>

In *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith*, the Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society curriculum for 2012, President Smith’s testimony is expressed powerfully—both through his teachings and through stories from his life. The following are some examples of these stories and teachings.

## **The Power of Kindness**

One hot summer day, some workers were doing repairs to the street outside





President Smith's home. As the work intensified and the sun grew hotter, the workers started using obscene and profane words. Soon one of the neighbors approached and scolded the workers for their offensive language, pointing out that George Albert Smith lived nearby. Unimpressed, the workers began to swear even more.

Meanwhile, President Smith was in his kitchen preparing a pitcher of lemonade. He brought it out on a tray with some glasses and said to the workers, "My friends, you look so hot and tired. Why don't you come and sit under my trees here and have a cool drink?"

Humbled and grateful, the workers accepted his offer, and after their welcome break they finished their work respectfully and quietly.<sup>3</sup>

Experiences such as this demonstrate George Albert Smith's conviction that we can "meet our problems in the spirit of love and kindness toward all."<sup>4</sup> "There are those who will make mistakes," he said. "There are those among us today that have gone astray, but they are the children of our Lord and he loves them. He has given to you and to me the right to go to them in kindness and love and with patience and with a desire to bless, seek to win them from the mistakes that they are making. It is not my privilege to judge. . . . But it is my privilege, if I see them doing the wrong thing, to in some way, if possible, turn them back into the pathway that leads to eternal life in the Celestial kingdom."<sup>5</sup>

"What a joy, what a comfort, what a satisfaction can be added to the lives of our neighbors and friends through kindness. How I would like to write that word in capital letters and emblazon it in the air. Kindness is the power that God has given us to unlock hard hearts and subdue stubborn souls."<sup>6</sup>

## Sharing the Gospel

President Smith considered sharing the gospel to be "the ultimate kindness."<sup>7</sup> He acknowledged and rejoiced in the goodness he found in other churches, but he knew that the restored gospel has something unique and valuable to offer humankind.

Once while he was serving as a mission president, someone said to him, "Well, from all I can learn, your church is just as good as any other church."

"I presume he thought he was paying us a great compliment," President Smith noted. "But I said to him: 'If the Church I represent here is not of more importance to the children of men than any other church, then I am mistaken in my duty here.'"<sup>8</sup>

One reason our message is so important, President Smith taught, is the fact that "the Latter-day Saints are the only ones who bear the authority of our Heavenly Father to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel. The world has need of us."<sup>9</sup>

Because of this, President Smith wanted Latter-day Saints to feel "an intense and enthusiastic desire to divide with all of our Father's children the good things that he has so generously bestowed upon us."<sup>10</sup>

"I feel sometimes," he said, "that we do not sufficiently sense the importance of [the gospel], that we do not teach it with the earnestness it demands."<sup>11</sup>

A close friend observed how President Smith exemplified "earnestness" in sharing the gospel: "On several occasions I have had the privilege of traveling on the train with President Smith. Each time I observed that as soon as the journey was well underway, he would take a few gospel tracts from his bag, put them into his pocket, and then move about among the passengers. In his friendly, agreeable manner he would soon make the acquaintance of a fellow traveler, and in a short time I would hear him relating

the story of the founding of the Church by the Prophet Joseph Smith or telling of the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo and their trials and difficulties in crossing the plains to Utah or explaining some of the gospel principles to his new-found friend. Conversation after conversation would follow with one passenger after another until the journey was ended. In my entire acquaintance with President Smith, which has extended more than forty years, I have learned that wherever he is, he is first and foremost a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”<sup>12</sup>

### Teaching Our Children

George Albert Smith and his wife, Lucy, took seriously the divine mandate to “bring up [their] children in light and truth” (D&C 93:40). Their daughter Edith told of one occasion when her father took advantage of a teaching opportunity. She had taken the streetcar home from a piano lesson, and the conductor neglected to collect her fare. “Somehow he passed me by,” she recounted, “and I reached my destination still holding my nickel in my hand, and frankly quite elated that I had made the trip free.

“ . . . I ran gleefully to Father to tell him about my good fortune. He listened to my story patiently. I was beginning to think I was a great success. . . .

“When I had finished my tale, Father said, ‘But, darling, even if the conductor doesn’t know about this, you know and I know and Heavenly Father knows. So, there are still three of us who must be satisfied in seeing that you pay in full for value received.’”

Edith returned to the street corner and paid her fare. She said later, “I am indeed



**President Smith shows the Book of Mormon to Many Turquoise (left) and Manuelito Begay.**

thankful for a Father who was wise enough to kindly point out the error to me, because if it had been overlooked, I could have thought he approved.”<sup>13</sup>

President Smith taught Church members that love has the power to inspire our children to live righteously: “Teach your children to observe the moral law. Surround them as by the arms of your love, that they may have no desire whatsoever to partake of the temptations to evil that surround them on every hand.”<sup>14</sup>

“It is our duty—I should say it is our privilege as well as our duty to take sufficient time to surround our children with safeguards and to so love them and earn their love that they will be glad to listen to our advice and counsel.”<sup>15</sup>

### Eternal Families

George Albert and Lucy Smith had been married for about 40 years when Lucy began a prolonged struggle with frail health. Though he worried about her and tried to comfort her as much as he could, President Smith’s duties as a General Authority often required him to be away from home. One day after President Smith gave a talk at a funeral, someone handed him a note telling him to return home immediately. He later wrote in his journal:

“I left the chapel at once but my Darling

*President Smith considered sharing the gospel to be “the ultimate kindness” because “Latter-day Saints are the only ones who bear the authority of our Heavenly Father to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel. The world has need of us.”*



wife had breathed her last before I arrived at home. She was passing while I was talking at the funeral. I am of course bereft of a devoted helpmeet and will be lonely without her.”

“While my family are greatly distressed,” he continued, “we are comforted by the assurance of a reunion with [her] if we remain faithful. . . . The Lord is most kind and has taken away every feeling of death, for which I am exceedingly grateful.”<sup>16</sup>

President Smith drew strength and comfort from his testimony of the plan of salvation and the temple ordinances that seal families eternally. He taught:

“The assurance that our relationship here as parents and children, as husbands and wives will continue in heaven, and that this is but the beginning of a great and glorious kingdom that our Father has destined we shall inherit on the other side, fills us with hope and joy.

“If I were to think, as so many think, that now that my beloved wife and my beloved parents are gone, that they have passed out of my life forever and that I shall never see them again, it would deprive me of one of the greatest joys that I have in life: the contemplation of meeting them again, and receiving their welcome and their affection, and of thanking them from the depths of a grateful heart for all they have done for me.”<sup>17</sup>

“When we realize that death is only one of the steps that the children of God shall take throughout eternity, and that it is according to his plan, it robs death of its sting and brings us face to face with the reality of eternal life. Many families have been called upon to say goodbye temporarily to those they love. When such passings occur, they disturb us, if we will let them, and thus bring great sorrow into our lives. But if our spiritual eyes could be opened and we could see, we would be comforted, I am sure, with what our vision would behold. The Lord has not left us without hope. On the contrary he has given us every assurance of eternal happiness, if we will accept his advice and counsel while here in mortality.

“This is not an idle dream. These are facts.”<sup>18</sup>



**Top: President Smith with his son George Albert Smith Jr. Above: A 1947 issue of Time magazine featured an article about President Smith and the Church.**

## Love and Service

President Smith was perhaps best known for the love he showed to others. He believed love to be the essence of the gospel. He told the Saints, “If the gospel of Jesus Christ, as delivered to you, has not planted that feeling of love in your hearts for your fellow men, then I want to say that you have not enjoyed the full fruition of that wonderful gift that came to earth when this Church was organized.”<sup>19</sup>

As President of the Church, President Smith blessed the lives of thousands through worldwide welfare efforts and other initiatives. Nevertheless, he still found time for smaller, more personal acts of service. One of his associates, Elder Richard L. Evans (1906–71) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: “It is not uncommon to see him, before and after office hours, walking hospital halls, visiting room after room, blessing, encouraging, and cheering with his unexpected appearances in those places where his comforting and reassuring presence is so gratefully welcome. . . . It is characteristic of him to go wherever he feels that he can give help and encouragement.”<sup>20</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson shared this example of President Smith’s love: “On a cold winter morning, the street cleaning crew [in Salt Lake City] was removing large chunks of ice from the street gutters. The regular crew was assisted by temporary laborers who desperately needed the work. One such wore only a lightweight sweater and was suffering from the cold. A slender man with a well-groomed beard stopped by the crew and asked the worker, ‘You need more than that sweater on a morning like this. Where is your coat?’ The man replied that he had no coat

to wear. The visitor then removed his own overcoat, handed it to the man and said, ‘This coat is yours. It is heavy wool and will keep you warm. I just work across the street.’ The street was South Temple. The good Samaritan who walked into the Church Administration Building to his daily work and without his coat was President George Albert Smith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His selfless act of generosity revealed his tender heart. Surely he was his brother’s keeper.”<sup>21</sup>

## The Details of Daily Life

Whether sharing his faith with fellow train passengers or giving a cold street worker the coat off his back, President George Albert Smith consistently bore his testimony through his actions as well as his teachings. A prominent theme that runs throughout *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* is that the gospel of Jesus Christ should have a powerful effect on our lives.

As one observer said of President Smith: “His religion is not doctrine in cold storage. It is not theory. It means more to him than a beautiful plan to be admired. It is more than a philosophy of life. To one of his practical turn of mind, religion is the spirit in which a man lives, in which he does things, if it be only to say a kind word or give a cup of cold water. His religion must find expression in deeds. It must carry over into the details of daily life.”<sup>22</sup>

President J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871–1961), one of his counselors in the First Presidency, summarized President Smith’s life with these words: “He was one of those few people of whom you can say he lived as he taught.”<sup>23</sup> ■

## NOTES

1. John A. Widtsoe, in Conference Report, Apr. 1951, 99; see also *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: George Albert Smith* (2011), xxxvii–xxxviii.
2. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 9.
3. See *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 223.
4. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 223.
5. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 227.
6. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 228.
7. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 124.
8. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 152.
9. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 125.
10. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 129.
11. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 150.
12. Preston Nibley, in *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 123.
13. See *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 235.
14. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 240.
15. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 228.
16. See *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, xxvii.
17. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 83–84.
18. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 76–77.
19. *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 14.
20. Richard L. Evans, in *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 11–13.
21. Thomas S. Monson, in *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 13.
22. Bryant S. Hinckley, in *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 2.
23. J. Reuben Clark Jr., in *Teachings: George Albert Smith*, 3.





# LETTING GO OF My Fear

*I felt that my testimony was private, but when I finally shared it, I realized it had the power to help others.*

I was baptized on my 40th birthday after eight years of resisting the attempts of my husband, his home teachers, and so many sets of missionaries that I lost count—all trying to get me to read the Book of Mormon. On July 4, 1991, I finally began to read it and found that I could hardly put it down to eat or sleep until I finished. Now when I hear the hymn “I Stand All Amazed,”<sup>1</sup> I feel as if it were written just for me, and I truly do stand all amazed when I think of what I have now as a member of the Church compared to what I had before.

Converting to the Church after years of being agnostic gave me an entirely different outlook on the world and my place in it. I embraced this new way of life and even newer way of thinking, but I struggled to let go of some of my old inhibitions. I was terrified at the thought of saying a public prayer or testimony and was adamant that I would never do so.

I had stayed firm in my resolve for three years when my bishop asked to talk with me. He suggested that it would be a growth experience for me to share the testimony he knew I had in a fast and testimony meeting. I told him I could not do it yet. He gently told me he hoped I would be able to do so soon.

I felt that my testimony was private and personal, so when I told my husband about my response to the bishop’s suggestion, I expected him to agree with me. To my surprise, Terry encouraged me to search the scriptures about proclaiming the gospel, to pray about what I read, and to try to bear a brief testimony the next Sunday.

I couldn’t believe what he was asking me to do! Then

I got an idea. I would simply go to the pulpit on Sunday, recite the same words the children say, and be done with it.

Sunday came and I was ready, but I sat there in the meeting waiting for the courage to stand up. My palms were wet, my mouth was dry, and I couldn’t move. Finally the meeting was only a few minutes from ending, and I began praying for the strength to go up.

I took a deep breath. And then I decided I just couldn’t do it yet. Maybe I would next month. I began to calm down, but suddenly I felt such an urge to get up that I nearly leaped out of my seat. I literally bounded up the aisle, quickly said one last silent prayer, and started as planned.

“I want to bear my testimony. I know this Church is true. I love my . . .”

I went blank. I stood there in silence for what seemed like forever, and then I started quietly: “I just want you all to know how much this Church means to me. Before I had the gospel, I had no one to turn to during the hard times. I got frustrated and became an angry young woman.”

I felt as if I would pass out, but my mouth kept moving: “I do not think many of you would have liked me back then. In fact, you probably would have feared me.”

I was in shock at the words coming out of my mouth, but I helplessly continued. I told the congregation about an experience in my life when I had been so angry at another driver for a small offense he committed against me that I became outraged and verbally threatened him! I actually felt satisfied when I saw him lock his doors because I knew he was afraid of me.



At this point in my testimony I was stifling my sobs and trying to stop talking, but I continued on. “I felt trapped, and I was angry at the world, all the while wondering, ‘Why me?’ This gospel has taught me that there is a reason we go through our trials, and more important, I know that I am not alone and that I am a daughter of God. I am now a different woman, and I have found the peace I always wanted.”

Sobbing nearly uncontrollably, I quickly finished. As I sat down, I wondered why I had blurted that out. I was embarrassed, feeling I had exposed too much of myself. I hadn’t even thought of that driving incident for 15 years. But when the meeting ended, many ward members expressed love for me and gratitude for my remarks.

My husband and I moved away shortly after that, but we moved back into the ward less than a year later. Our first Sunday back was wonderful; I had forgotten how much I loved those people. At the end of sacrament meeting, a sister came up to me and gave me a bear hug. She told me she and her daughter had cut off all communication with each other many years ago, and she said, “Your testimony made me realize that if you had once been so angry and yet became the woman you are now, then maybe my daughter was no longer the angry person I saw so long ago.”

She continued with tears swelling in her eyes. “I called my daughter, and she wasn’t angry anymore. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your testimony that day.”

I hugged her and told her I was glad my humiliation did someone some good. She responded, “No! You have no idea what your testimony did for me and for my daughter and her children—my

grandchildren I did not even know. I am certain that Heavenly Father had a hand in this. You really needed to say those things to wake me up!”

She then told me that shortly after their reunion her daughter had been diagnosed with a fast-growing, incurable cancer, and she had recently passed away. This woman was grateful for the time she was able to spend with her daughter and the role she could now play in the lives of her grandchildren.

I cried with gratitude that the Spirit had not given up on me as I sat in the congregation, trying to gather the courage to stand up. As this sister shared her experience with me, I learned how important it is that we as members bear our testimonies when we are prompted.

I never thought Heavenly Father would call on “a soul so rebellious and proud as mine”<sup>2</sup> to share my testimony and in turn help another.

My husband and I moved again after I learned this great lesson, and we were called to be stake missionaries in our new stake. I knew that accepting this calling would require a lot from me and would take me far outside my comfort zone. I was scared, but I was determined to turn over a new leaf. I said prayers when asked, and I even promised myself I would bear testimony as often as I could muster the will.

Being a missionary was not always easy, but because a lot of people we approached reminded me of the woman I had been, I was determined to share with them the peace I had found in the gospel—a gift I will be forever grateful for. ■

*Gilda Hughes Christensen passed away while this article was being prepared for publication.*

#### NOTES

1. *Hymns*, no. 193.
2. “I Stand All Amazed,” *Hymns*, no. 193.





# MY JOURNEY FROM *Alcoholism to Sobriety*

*Alcohol put me on a path to destruction and misery.  
The Addiction Recovery Program helped put me  
back on the path to Heavenly Father.*

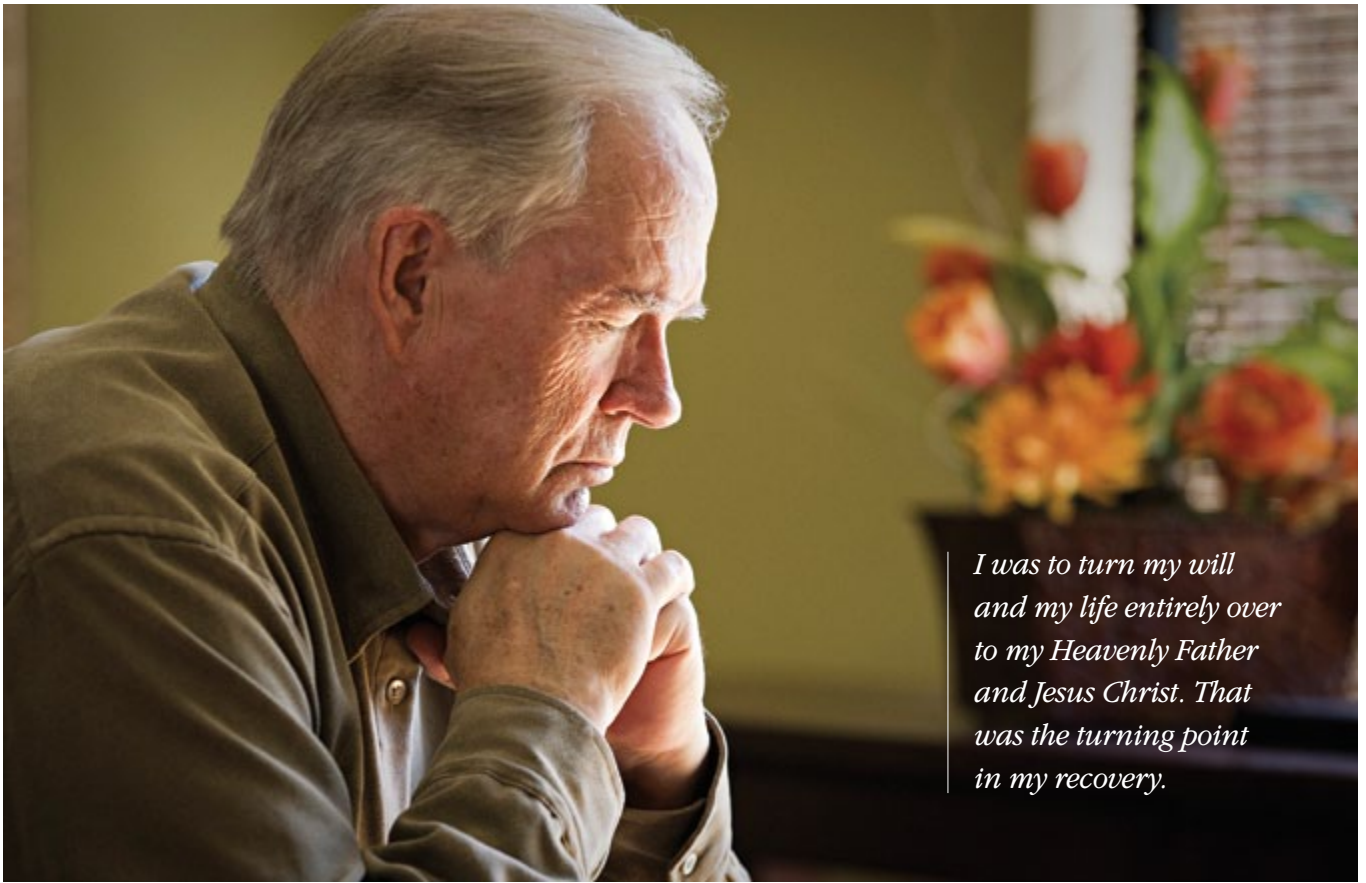
**By Gary LeRoy Evans**

**P**lease, Father in Heaven, help me.”  
These are the words I cried in desperation to the Lord. I was  
under the influence of alcohol at the time, and I simply didn’t know  
what else to do.

I had been raised in the Church by wonderful, loving parents. I went on a mission to England and Scotland, came home, and married my childhood sweetheart in the temple. I chose the broadcasting industry as my profession. I gained great popularity and became very prideful. Later, as a sports announcer, I traveled a lot and started drinking socially on occasion.

Decades later, at 68 years of age, I finally realized that drinking had made my life a total mess, a tragedy. Divorced for 20 years, lonely, inactive in





*I was to turn my will and my life entirely over to my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. That was the turning point in my recovery.*

the Church, miserable, and deeply in debt, I was ready to give up. It was in that desperation I pleaded with the Lord, “Please, please help me.”

The next day I was arrested for the second time for driving under the influence of alcohol, which brought with it a large fine, a yearlong suspension of my driver’s license, and 10 days in jail. I wanted to die.

### **A Path to Recovery**

While I was in jail, my sister invited me to live in her family’s trailer in the desert when I got out. What a great break! This surely was an answer to my prayer.

The first day I was there, I took my dog for a walk and found a spot where no one would disturb me. I fell to my knees in prayer. This spot became my sacred place where hour after hour, day after day, I pleaded with the Lord for help.

I learned through an ad in the newspaper about a meeting for the LDS Addiction Recovery Program, a 12-step

program. The meeting was held at an LDS meetinghouse, and although I hadn’t been active in years, I thought I might as well try it. When I arrived at the meeting, I was greeted by a kind senior missionary couple.

The meeting started with prayer. I was not really at ease, but I felt a warm, comfortable feeling. As people at the meeting shared their life stories, I felt connected to them. Their honesty touched me, and I realized that others had the same problems I had and, like me, were trying to get rid of them. After the closing prayer, I quickly left.

But the next week I went back. And I kept going. People who attended the meeting were so honest in their sharing. I began to pick up on things that I could use to help myself. I knew that my life had become unmanageable and that by myself, I was helpless to stop drinking.

### **The Blessings of Obedience**

One day when I was very discouraged—depressed, really—I again asked the Lord for help. When I came

in from praying in the desert, I started ironing my shirts. Suddenly, from nowhere, came the words, “Be not discouraged; many blessings will be yours.” This startled me. Where did those words come from? Then I realized that the Holy Ghost had spoken to me, an alcoholic, so unrighteous and undeserving of the Lord’s blessings. I was astounded.

By this time, I had learned much about the 12 steps of the Addiction Recovery Program. Step three stated that I was to turn my will and my life entirely over to my Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. That was the turning point in my recovery. After much prayer and fasting I was determined to do that, and I went forward.

I started going to church. At first it was uncomfortable—no one greeted me or said much—but I kept going. After a few weeks, the bishop greeted me, and we had our first meeting. He was loving and kind, forgiving and understanding. He told me that if I would attend church, not drink, pay my tithing, and do some other things, that I could take the sacrament. What a special blessing!

But how was I to pay tithing? My job barely covered my living expenses. I still had my fine to pay and my large debt. But I was determined. No matter what—*no matter what*—I was going to pay my tithing.

Then the blessings came. Five days after I paid tithing for the first time, my brother called and told me that our mother’s house had finally sold (she had passed away) and that I would receive a share of the proceeds. It was almost the exact amount of my debt. I felt the Lord was blessing me for being obedient.



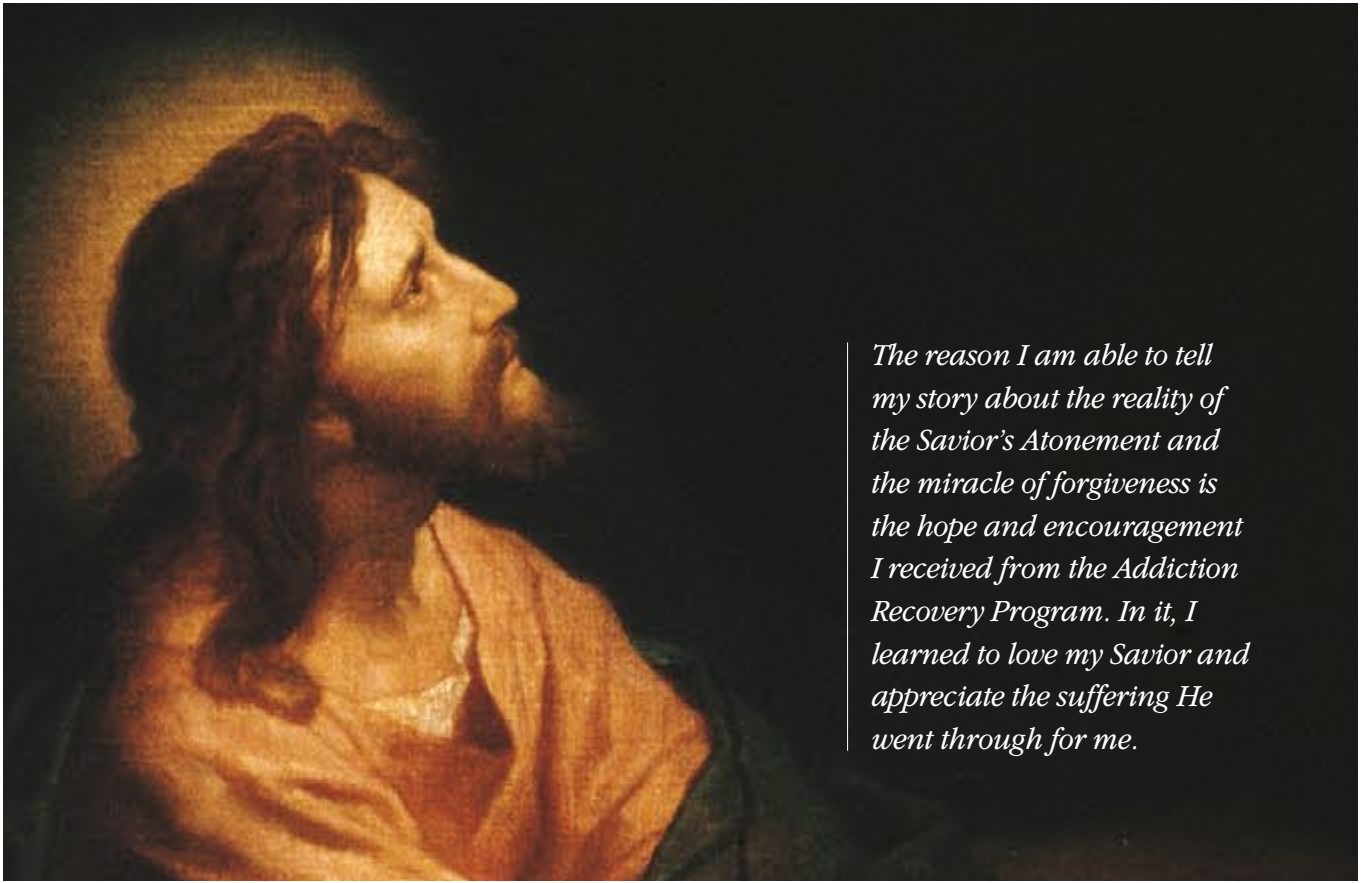
### **FERVENT PRAYER IS KEY**

“Priesthood leaders can help as those with addictions seek counsel from them. Where necessary, they can refer them to qualified licensed counselors and LDS Family Services. The addiction recovery program, adapted from the original 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, is readily available through LDS Family Services.

“To those who are dealing with an addiction personally or within your family, I repeat, fervent prayer is key to gaining the spiritual strength to find peace and overcome an addictive craving. Heavenly Father loves all of His children, so thank Him and express sincere faith in Him. Ask Him for the strength to overcome the addiction you are experiencing. Set aside all pride and turn your life and your heart to Him. Ask to be filled with the power of Christ’s pure love. You may have to do this many times, but I testify to you that your body, mind, and spirit can be transformed, cleansed, and made whole, and you will be freed. Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life’ (John 8:12).”

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “O That Cunning Plan of the Evil One,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, November 2010, 110.**





*The reason I am able to tell my story about the reality of the Savior's Atonement and the miracle of forgiveness is the hope and encouragement I received from the Addiction Recovery Program. In it, I learned to love my Savior and appreciate the suffering He went through for me.*

### Continued Progress and Peace

I continued going to church and meeting with the bishop regularly. I did all the things he asked me to do. I also continued going to the Addiction Recovery Program meetings twice a week, where I was able to help others by sharing how the Lord had helped me. There were other blessings, too: I got a new job with higher pay, accepted callings in the ward, and received wonderful priesthood blessings from my stake president.

One day the bishop asked me if I would like a temple recommend. My tears flowed as he interviewed me. I loved the temple and went often. Additionally, I was called to be a missionary in the Addiction Recovery Program, where I had the opportunity to help others like me.

Then I was blessed to become a veil worker in the temple. How could that be? Just a short time ago I was living in darkness, and now I was serving in one of the most holy places on earth. Only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and the miracle of forgiveness could this have been possible.

### Unimaginable Gifts

About a year later, I married again. What a special blessing to have a choice companion to share all of these blessings with!

Immediately after our marriage, we received a call to serve together in the Addiction Recovery Program. We currently serve as regional coordinators in the program, which we view as a great responsibility as well as an opportunity to help others who are struggling with addiction.

The reason I am able to tell my story about the reality of the Savior's Atonement and the miracle of forgiveness is the hope and encouragement I received from the Addiction Recovery Program. In it, I learned to love my Savior and appreciate the suffering He went through for me in the Garden of Gethsemane. In addition, I learned of my Heavenly Father's great love for me and for all of His children when I received the answer to my desperate prayer: "Please, Father in Heaven, help me." ■

## HOPE AND HELP

If you or someone you love struggles with addiction, there is hope. Addiction recovery groups sponsored by LDS Family Services are available to help you and your loved ones overcome addictive behavior and more fully enjoy the blessings of Church participation. To find out more, see your priesthood leader, visit [ldsfamilyservices.org](http://ldsfamilyservices.org), or contact the LDS Family Services office nearest you.

The program's manual, *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing*, is available in many languages. To buy a printed copy, visit [store.lds.org](http://store.lds.org); to download a free PDF, visit [providentliving.org](http://providentliving.org).

### THE 12 STEPS OF THE ADDICTION RECOVERY PROGRAM SPONSORED BY LDS FAMILY SERVICES

LDS Family Services' Addiction Recovery Program has adapted the original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. into a framework of the doctrines, principles, and beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

**Step 1—Honesty:** Admit that you, of yourself, are powerless to overcome your addictions and that your life has become unmanageable.

**Step 2—Hope:** Come to believe that the power of God can restore you to complete spiritual health.

**Step 3—Trust in God:** Decide to turn your will and your life over to the care of God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Step 4—Truth:** Make a searching and fearless written moral inventory of yourself.

**Step 5—Confession:** Admit to yourself, to your Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, to proper priesthood authority, and to another person the exact nature of your wrongs.

**Step 6—Change of Heart:** Become entirely ready to have God remove all your character weaknesses.

**Step 7—Humility:** Humbly ask Heavenly Father to remove your shortcomings.

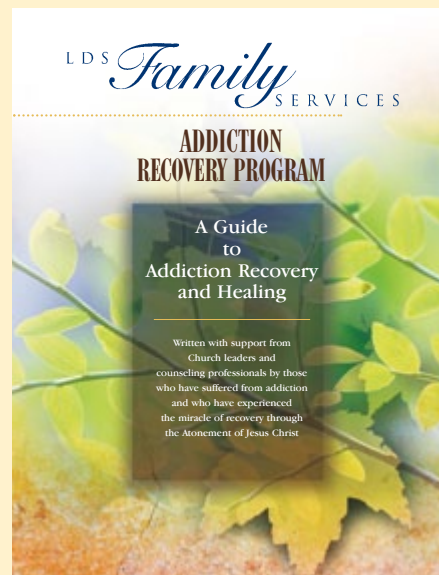
**Step 8—Seeking Forgiveness:** Make a written list of all persons you have harmed and become willing to make restitution to them.

**Step 9—Restitution and Reconciliation:** Wherever possible, make direct restitution to all persons you have harmed.

**Step 10—Daily Accountability:** Continue to take personal inventory, and when you are wrong promptly admit it.

**Step 11—Personal Revelation:** Seek through prayer and meditation to know the Lord's will and to have the power to carry it out.

**Step 12—Service:** Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, share this message with others and practice these principles in all you do.





## BATTERIES AND BITTER WINDS

One day following my shift at the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple, I volunteered to take two brethren to their car, which had stalled on the highway just south of Idaho Falls, Idaho, USA. A kindly couple had stopped during that bitter-cold December day and brought Brother Thompson and Brother Clark the remaining distance to the temple.

Brother Thompson was convinced that his car needed a new battery. I took him to purchase the battery at a nearby automotive shop, and because I had tools in my car, I agreed to change it.

Fortunately I had brought a new pair of gloves and my winter jacket. Pulling the car's hood up, I prepared to remove the dead battery and replace it with the new one.

To change the battery, I had to disassemble and move several car parts, including the windshield washer reservoir. I soon found that my tools would not fit all of the metric-sized bolts and several screws would not even budge. I used different tools and tried different positions, but nothing moved. The temperature outside was around 5 degrees Fahrenheit (-15°C), and the semitrucks whizzing by created wind gusts that were bitter cold. I had reached a cold, frustrating impasse.

I turned to the only help available. I prayed earnestly, explaining my need to Heavenly Father and asking if

He would either loosen the bolts and screws or help me find a way to do it. Finishing my prayer, I again grabbed a pair of pliers and grasped a resisting screw. It was already loose! Silently and fervently expressing thanks, I removed the screw and continued.

Soon I found a frustrating, resisting bolt deeper in the car. Again, completely stymied, I prayed more earnestly for help, doing so with growing trust. This time I felt directed to remove some deeper bolts first and

then twist the battery brace, which I did. The resisting bolt moved easily. In a few moments I pulled out the old battery.

I slid the new battery in and with numb fingers reassembled all the parts as best as I could. I then reattached the electrical cables. Brother Thompson turned the key and smiled broadly as the engine started. I gratefully closed the hood. I had been outside for about an hour, and my lower legs and feet were



ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. BJORN THORKELSON

*I used different tools and tried different positions, but nothing moved. I had reached a cold, frustrating impasse.*



numb as I stiffly stumbled into my car.

I followed Brother Thompson and Brother Clark home to ensure their safe arrival. As I drove, my car's heater felt lovely, and my legs and feet slowly warmed. I thanked Heavenly Father profusely for His help. In return I was impressed to know that He had answered the prayer of these brethren by sending me as His servant. In His wonderful way He had provided for their need and reaffirmed my faith. ■

C. Lee Bendixsen, Idaho, USA

## A VALUED POSSESSION

I used to work at a customer service call center where it was impossible for co-workers to socialize much with each other. Our supervisor decided to organize a lunch one Saturday with the entire group to give us a chance to get acquainted. She instructed each of us to bring some object that was valuable to us and explain why it was significant.

As I thought about her request, I realized that this would be an opportunity to teach my co-workers about the gospel. Because religion is a sensitive topic, I knew I had to be careful regarding the object I took and how I explained its value to me.

When the lunch day arrived, we all enjoyed getting to know each other better. After lunch our supervisor began our activity by presenting her valued object—a family photo album. She told us of the difficulties she had gone through while separating from her husband, becoming a single mother, and starting a new life.

Following several other presentations, it was my turn. I told my co-workers that my object was something I brought with me every day: my CTR ring. I told them that the letters stood for “Choose the Right” and that the ring reminded me to always obey the commandments of God. Several people asked questions about the Church and Latter-day Saint beliefs, which gave me an opportunity to tell them about the importance of families in our Heavenly Father's plan for His children, that

families can be eternal, and that we have a Savior who gave His life for us. I also shared some experiences from my mission. As I spoke, I felt the Spirit, as did my co-workers.

After that day some asked other questions about the gospel, and I invited several of them to church. I later changed jobs and never found out if any of them became interested in knowing more, but I felt good knowing that I had told them that the true Church of Jesus Christ is upon the earth and that Heavenly Father has a plan of happiness for His children.

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a responsibility to share the gospel. Through small and simple things like a CTR ring, we can teach great lessons that may work toward the salvation of our brothers and sisters. ■

Rafael Barrios, Santa Fe, Argentina

***Because religion is a sensitive topic, I knew I had to be careful regarding the object I shared.***





*When I sat on the couch, overcome with emotion, our two-year-old son approached the empty blanket and whispered, “Hello, baby sister.”*



## READ YOUR BOOK OF MORMON

**W**e were supposed to be filled with joy, but our hearts were heavy and our arms were empty. Debra Caelia Carter arrived on her due date, April 26, 2010, but she was stillborn.

As we walked into our home, I carried the tiny pink blanket we had used to hold and cuddle Debra at the hospital. When I sat on the couch, overcome with emotion, our two-year-old son approached the empty blanket and whispered, “Hello, baby sister. I love you.”

Tears streamed down my face, and I turned away. As I did so, I saw the words of a poster from the *Friend* magazine hanging on the wall: “Our Heavenly Father is only a prayer away, and the Holy Ghost

is within whispering distance.”<sup>1</sup>

I began to pour out my heart to God in silent, fervent prayer. As I did so, I felt the Holy Ghost whisper, “Read your Book of Mormon again.” I had just finished reading it, but the feeling was distinct and the impression clear.

Arising early the following morning, I began reading the Book of Mormon. I used pencils and markers to highlight every passage about faith, prayer, hope, Jesus Christ’s attributes, preaching the gospel, and hearkening to the Lord’s voice. I knew that I must do what Nephi, Enos, Moroni, and other Book of Mormon prophets had done when they suffered trials. And I must do it with the same love for the Savior that filled their lives during difficult times.

During these daily, personal scripture study hours, I felt the Lord’s arms encircling me in His love, and I felt the power of His atoning sacrifice for all. The Spirit spoke to me, a peace covered me, and answers came to my fervent prayers. Pondering the words I read gave me strength as I grieved.

One day the Spirit filled me with joy as I read these words:

“I love little children with a perfect love; and they are all alike and partakers of salvation. . . .

“Little children . . . are all alive in [God] because of his mercy. . . .

“For behold that *all little children are alive in Christ*” (Moroni 8:17, 19, 22; emphasis added).

I felt as if I could see my daughter *alive* in Christ—smiling and happy and encircled in His arms. From that moment on I felt the power to endure, and I felt a new hope ignite in my soul for my family. I knew that if we would hold fast to the Atonement, the scriptures, the words of the living prophets, and each other through our temple covenants, we would be reunited as a family eternally.

I love the Book of Mormon, which clearly testifies of Jesus Christ, what He did and does for us, and what we must do to be like Him. The Book of Mormon brings light to my life and fills up my heart with hope in Christ. ■

Jewelene Carter, Virginia, USA

### NOTE

1. From Elaine S. Dalton, “At All Times, in All Things, and in All Places,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2008, 118.

## DADDY'S SHOES

Several years ago while my parents were helping the Relief Society organize some clothes, shoes, and other items to be donated to the needy, my father noticed a well-kept pair of shoes in the middle of a pile of items. At that moment he felt a strong impression to keep the shoes.

My mother laughed and said, “This pair of shoes is three sizes too small for you. They wouldn’t even fit!”

My father, however, strongly insisted. After several jokes from the sisters, they finally allowed him to keep the shoes.

As soon as he arrived home, he cleaned them, filled them with newspaper, and placed them in a box on top of his dresser. We received instructions not to touch the box. For five years it remained in the same place.

One day a new family moved into the house next door. They had two children and a six-month-old baby. My sister and I immediately became friends with their two girls, who were our age. We shared with our new friends what we were learning in church, and we invited them to Primary. They were excited and eager to learn more about what we had shared with them.

After returning home from Primary, they didn’t stop talking about the Church with their parents. Our parents then invited the whole family to hear the missionary lessons and go

to church. They joyfully accepted. They loved the lessons, and we were excited to attend church with them.

But when Saturday came, their daughters seemed disheartened. When we asked what was wrong, they said their parents no longer wanted to go to church.

We were disappointed and asked Daddy to talk with their parents. When he told them about the blessings of attending church, the father replied, “Yes, I know all of this. The problem is that I haven’t worn any other kind of shoe besides my sneakers in a long time, and I know that we should go to Church meetings well dressed.”

*My father felt a strong impression to keep the shoes even though my mother laughed and said, “This pair of shoes is three sizes too small for you.”*

At that moment my father looked at my mother. She knew exactly what to do. The shoes in the box on top of Daddy’s dresser fit our friends’ father perfectly, and the entire family went to church. It was a wonderful Sunday for them and for us. Soon they became members of the Church, and today they are a beautiful eternal family.

I know that my father received direction from the Holy Ghost to keep those shoes. As a result, I always seek His guidance in looking for families ready to hear the gospel. I know He prepares families, and I know we need to look for them and bring them to Christ. ■

Priscilla Costa Xavier, São Paulo, Brazil





# October 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 2011 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.



## STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

### Courage to Stand Alone

I believe my first experience in having the courage of my convictions took place when I served in the United States Navy near the end of World War II. . . .

“I shall ever remember when Sunday rolled around after the first week [of boot camp]. We received welcome news from the chief petty officer. Standing at attention on the drill ground in a brisk California breeze, we heard his command: ‘Today everybody goes to church—everybody, that is, except for me. I am going to relax!’ Then he shouted, ‘All of you Catholics, you meet in Camp Decatur—and don’t come back until three o’clock. Forward, march!’ A rather sizeable contingent moved out. Then he barked out his next command: ‘Those of you who are Jewish, you meet in Camp Henry—and don’t come back until three o’clock. Forward, march!’ A somewhat smaller contingent marched out. Then he said, ‘The rest of you Protestants, you meet in the theaters at Camp Farragut—and don’t come back until three o’clock. Forward, march!’

“Instantly there flashed through my mind the thought, ‘Monson, you are not a Catholic; you

*Until that very moment I had not realized that anyone was standing beside me or behind me on the drill ground.*



are not a Jew; you are not a Protestant. You are a Mormon, so you just stand here!’ I can assure you that I felt completely alone. Courageous and determined, yes—but alone.

“And then I heard the sweetest words I ever heard that chief petty officer utter. He looked in my direction and asked, ‘And just what do you guys call yourselves?’ Until that very moment I had not realized that anyone was standing beside me or behind me on the drill ground. Almost in unison, each of us replied, ‘Mormons!’ It is difficult to describe the joy that filled my heart as I turned around and saw a handful of other sailors.

“The chief petty officer scratched his head in an expression of puzzlement but finally said, ‘Well, you guys go find somewhere to meet. And don’t come back until three o’clock. Forward, march!’ . . .

“Although the experience turned out differently from what I had expected, I had been willing to stand alone, had such been necessary.

“Since that day, there have been times when there was no one standing behind me and so I *did* stand alone. How grateful I am that I made the decision long ago to remain strong and true, always prepared and ready to defend my religion.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 61–62.

#### Questions to ponder:

- What effect does our standing strong have on others?
- Can you remember a time when your courage and convictions were tested? How did you respond?
- What can we do to prepare ourselves to stand strong?

Consider writing your thoughts in a journal or discussing them with others.

Additional resources on this topic: Guide to the Scriptures, “Courage, Courageous”; Thomas S. Monson, “The Call for Courage,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2004, 54–57; Study by Topic on LDS.org, “Peer Pressure”; *For the Strength of Youth*, “Go Forward with Faith.”

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

## Go and Do

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that to advance an understanding of the Church, we should:

From "Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 42–43.



1. "Be bold in our declaration of Jesus Christ. We want others to know that we believe He is the central figure in all human history."



2. "Be righteous examples to others. . . . Our lives should be examples of goodness and virtue as we try to emulate His example to the world."



3. "Speak up about the Church. In the course of our everyday lives, we are blessed with many opportunities to share our beliefs with others."

## Prophetic Promise

Not a day has gone by that I have not communicated with my Father in Heaven through prayer. It is a relationship I cherish—one I would literally be lost without. If you do not now have such a relationship with your Father in Heaven, I urge you to work toward that goal. As you do so, you will be entitled to His inspiration and guidance in your life—necessities for each of us if we are to survive spiritually during our sojourn here on earth. Such inspiration and guidance are gifts He freely gives if we but seek them."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Stand in Holy Places," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 84.

### FILL IN THE BLANK

1. "Prayerful study of \_\_\_\_\_ will build faith in God the Father, in His Beloved Son, and in His gospel. It will build your faith in God's prophets, ancient and modern. It can draw you closer to God than any other book. It can change a life for the better." (Henry B. Eyring, "A Witness," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 70.)
2. "A \_\_\_\_\_ becomes an enduring friend that is not weakened with the passage of time." (Richard G. Scott, "The Power of Scripture," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 6.)
3. "For those who think the trials they face are unfair, the \_\_\_\_\_ covers all of the unfairness of life." (Quentin L. Cook, "The Songs They Could Not Sing," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 106.)
4. "When we have \_\_\_\_\_, we are willing to serve and help others when it is inconvenient and with no thought of recognition or reciprocation." (Silvia H. Allred, "Charity Never Faileth," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 115.)

Answers: 1. the Book of Mormon; 2. memorialized scripture; 3. Atonement; 4. charity.



**M**om taught all of her 13 children to play the piano, but I never made it easy for her. I remember lying on the piano bench whining, insisting it was too hard. I learned, but to say that I played well would be an overstatement.

Years passed. I married and my husband was accepted to dental school. As we prepared to move to Indiana, I felt frequent impressions to practice the piano. I feared it was because our new ward did not have enough pianists.

Sure enough, shortly after we settled into the ward, the bishop extended to me a calling to be the Relief Society pianist. My heart sank. I told him I didn't play very well but I would try. I fought tears as I left his office and cried all the way home.

After several sleepless nights, I concluded that I would simply tell the bishop that I had reconsidered. Even though my parents had taught me to always accept callings, I just couldn't do this.

Before calling the bishop, however, I talked it over with my husband, who encouraged me to at least try. He reminded me that I had yearned to play better and that this could be an opportunity to do so. I decided he was right.

I prayed fervently and asked for Heavenly Father's help. The words of Proverbs 3:5–6 came to my

mind: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

With those words in mind, I put my trust in Him.

The only hymns I could play were those without any sharps or flats. Unfortunately, those would get me through only a few weeks. When I talked to the former Relief Society pianist about my situation, she kindly offered to substitute for a month while I practiced. Another friend offered to watch my children so that I could focus on practicing.

The first week I played in Relief Society, I made so many mistakes that I could barely see through my tears. When I finished, I didn't want to come out from behind the piano. But the sisters in the ward were so encouraging that I kept trying.

As I continued to practice the piano—sometimes for more than two hours a day—I slowly began to improve. I'm still not an excellent pianist, but now I feel confident enough to volunteer when needed.

I'm thankful my loving parents taught me to accept callings. I was the Relief Society pianist for less than a year, but my testimony of and love for my Heavenly Father grew more than I ever could have imagined. I know that when we trust in Him, He will direct our paths, and we can see His hand in all things. ■

# Piano Playing and Prayer

*On my first Sunday as Relief Society pianist, I made so many mistakes that I could barely see through my tears.*

By Heidi Owen





# Testimony Wall

One Monday our family had a family home evening lesson about what testimonies are and how to share them. After bearing our testimonies to our children, my husband and I brought out colored index cards—one color for each member of the family.

We labeled four cards for each child with one of the first principles and ordinances of the gospel: faith, repentance, baptism,

gift of the Holy Ghost. We each then wrote our basic testimony of each principle on the cards. The younger children needed help, and the older children needed a bit of prompting to remember experiences they had that strengthened their testimony of each principle. At the end of the family home evening, we shared what we had written and then taped the

cards on the wall.

Now we have a testimony wall that we add to with each testimony-building experience we have. Throughout the year we gather as a family and read what was written.

In this way, our testimonies are growing and we are learning to share them with others.

Tiffany Bodine,  
Washington, USA



INDEX CARDS © ISTOCK/PHOTO

## HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

**“Recognizing God’s Hand in Our Daily Blessings,” page 16:** Read the Lord’s prayer in Luke 11:2–4 or Matthew 6:9–13. Ask your family to think about what “give us this day our daily bread” means. Then summarize the first section of the article, where Elder Christofferson discusses what the Lord means when He talks about “daily bread.” You may wish to review the main points of the article. Consider concluding by adding your testimony to Elder Christofferson’s that Jesus Christ is the “Bread of Life.”

**“Look Up,” page 26:** Share the experience that Elder Cook had in a broom closet as a young missionary, then summarize the remaining sections of the article. Consider asking family members to discuss how they can focus on what Heavenly Father thinks of them rather than what the world thinks of them. Conclude by reading 1 Samuel 16:7.

**“George Albert Smith: He Lived as He Taught,” page 52:** The first section of the article states that George Albert Smith “believed that if we truly have a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it will manifest itself in our

lives—particularly in the way we treat one another.” Review the article with your family. You might then ask family members to share something they learned from George Albert Smith’s example of treating those around him with kindness. Consider asking how they can use what they learned to show more kindness to others.

**HE LIVED AS HE TAUGHT**  
*Experiences from the life of President George Albert Smith demonstrate that he not only believed the gospel, he lived it.*

**By Ted Reeves**  
George Albert Smith (1870–1951), who served as the eighth President of the Church from 1945 to 1951, had a reputation for being a man of few words. He was known for his quiet strength, his steady faith, and his unwavering commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was a man of few words, but his words were powerful. He was a man of few words, but his words were powerful. He was a man of few words, but his words were powerful.

**The Power of Kindness**  
One day, while on a mission, Smith was being taken to the altar to be sealed.



## Fund Helps Members Worldwide Receive Temple Blessings

By Heather Whittle Wrigley

Church News and Events

Since the time he entered the Manila Philippines Temple in July 2001, just before leaving for his mission to Singapore, Riaz Gill of Pakistan knew that he wanted to return to the temple so he could have an eternal family.

In 2007, his wife, Farah, was baptized, but funds were tight and they didn't know when they would be able to make the trip to the temple, more than 3,500 miles (5,700 km) away. With the birth of their son, Ammon Phinehas, in

**Riaz Gill, his wife, Farah, and son, Ammon Phinehas, were able to attend the Manila Philippines Temple and be sealed as a family in 2010, thanks to the Church's General Temple Patron Assistance Fund.**



2009, their desire to be sealed in the temple grew even stronger, and late in 2010, with help from the Church's General Temple Patron Assistance Fund, their prayers were answered.

"Going to the temple with my family has helped to make my testimony stronger," Brother Gill said. "After our temple visit, it seems like I have more to give to the Lord. . . . The temple visit was so good and faith-promoting, it is hard to express in words."

While there, Brother Gill was also able to perform ordinances for his father, grandfather, and father-in-law, who have all passed away. He had the work done for his mother, and he was sealed to his parents.

"It has been a great privilege for me and my family to visit the temple," he said. "I want to give my special thanks with a lot of prayers to the leaders who made this temple trip possible."

Since 1992, the fund, sustained 100 percent by member contributions, has been a way to provide a one-time visit to the temple for members living outside of the United States and Canada who otherwise would not be able to go. Members wishing to donate to the fund simply write in "Temple Patron Fund" on the

"Other" section of the normal contribution slip. Individuals can also donate to the fund through LDS Philanthropies.

During general conference in October 2011, President Thomas S. Monson encouraged members to contribute to the General Temple Patron Assistance Fund saying, "There are still areas of the world where temples are so distant from our members that they cannot afford the travel required to get to them. They are thus unable to partake of the sacred and eternal blessings temples provide" ("As We Meet Again," *Liahona* and *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 4–5).

"The intent of this fund was to help those clearly in parts of the world where it would be more challenging to attend the temple," said Elder William R. Walker, Executive Director of the Temple Department. "The one-time provision is to provide for an individual to receive his or her own ordinances."

Some of the greatest demand, Elder Walker said, comes from Africa, the Pacific, and Asia. Stake presidents and mission presidents make recommendations to their Area Presidency, which administers the fund on a country-by-country basis.



### ***Manila Philippines Temple***

During 2009 and 2010, approximately 4,000 members used the fund to travel to a temple for the first—and possibly only—time.

Elder Walker said that in order to bless as many lives as possible, they “look at the temple where [they] can get the most economical airfare. That means it’s not always based on proximity or even on whether or not the temple is in their area.”

Each member who uses the

fund is expected to make some sort of sacrifice or contribution.

“In some places just getting a passport would be expensive and very difficult,” Elder Walker said. “So in some areas, where members have to leave their country to go to the temple, they have to supply their own passport to be able to use the fund. In some countries, it’s just a set amount of money. To some it may not seem like much, but for them it may be all they could save in six months.”

Elder Walker said that those who contribute to a goal generally find they appreciate it more. “In almost every case people have done their best to contribute and have been richly blessed, and they have not taken it for granted,” he said.

In addition to making it possible for people to go to the temple, the funds are also used to purchase seven sets of garments for each individual so that they can honor their covenants



once they return home.

President Monson's statement during conference was the first time the fund has been announced over the pulpit by the prophet. That, coupled with the growing demand on the fund, will most likely lead to an increase in donations, Elder Walker said.

"We still have people coming into the Church, and we've not nearly satisfied the needs in many areas," he said. Citing the counsel from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–1995) in 1994 that all worthy members carry a temple recommend,<sup>1</sup> he continued, "We have many faithful members of the Church who have current temple recommends but who have not yet been to a temple and don't have an immediate prospect of going to the temple."

Elder Walker said President Monson's announcement of the fund came from his love for temples and his sensitivity to the Saints who are the primary beneficiaries of the fund.

"When you go to these far-away places, you get the feel for the people and the challenges they have," Elder Walker said. "This fund will be to the blessing of many people." ■

#### NOTE

1. See Howard W. Hunter, "The Great Symbol of Our Membership," *Tambuli*, Nov. 1994, 6; *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 2.

## RootsTech 2012 Registration Now Available

By Philip M. Volmar

Church News and Events

**G**amification. Cloud-based solutions. GPS-based genealogy. The terms may sound like something straight out of a science fiction book, but these are just a few of the topics genealogists and technologists can expect to cover at RootsTech 2012, which is scheduled for February 2–4 at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

Registration, which is available online only, is now open for the event at [rootstech.org](http://rootstech.org). Participants may register for conference passes for \$189. Also available are \$79 day passes and \$35 student passes. Visit the RootsTech website for full details about registration and session offerings.

The conference will bring genealogy technology users and creators together to learn, collaborate, and shape the future of family history, a market whose consumer interest has been growing rapidly in recent years.

Those interested in attending

can expect engaging classroom presentations; expert panel discussions; hands-on workshops; and informal, participant-led conferencing. Topics include GPS and geo-mapping, mobile devices, social applications, imaging, and visualization.

RootsTech 2011 set a precedent as a conference for genealogy technology users who are progressive, forward-thinking, and early adopters of devices and tools that simplify family history research. The conference drew more than 3,000 attendees in its inaugural year.

RootsTech is designed to bring technologists together with genealogists to learn from each other and find solutions to the challenges family history researchers face today. The conference's activities and offerings are focused on content that will help genealogists and family historians discover new research tools while enabling technology creators to learn the latest development techniques from industry leaders and pioneers. ■

rootstech 



Students attend seminary in Wetterau, Germany.

## Worldwide Seminary Program Anchors Students in the Gospel

By **Melissa Merrill**

Church Magazines

**L**auren Homer of Utah, USA, walks across the street to attend during second period of high school every other day. Frazer Cluff of Tasmania, Australia, attends at home with his mum as his teacher. Ben Gilbert of Vermont, USA, participates weekly, right before Mutual; and in Alabama, USA, McKenzie Morrill attends daily via web conference. Jamie Greenwood of New Mexico, USA, gets up at 4:00 a.m. to be able to get to her 5:15 a.m. class on time.

All of these teens—and nearly 370,000 others like them—are

following prophetic counsel to make seminary a priority in their lives.

The seminary program, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, has been implemented differently over time, and even today individual needs and local circumstances often necessitate adaptation. But across time and distance, one thing remains the same: gospel study is helping anchor teens in their testimonies of the Savior and His gospel.

As Elijah Bugayong, 18, of the Philippines approached her final year of high school—and of seminary—she

thought about having always been second in her high school “batch,” or class. That year, she was determined to secure the honor of being first. She told herself that she would do anything to reach that goal, including giving more time to academic subjects. She even considered forgoing seminary, until one day when she had a poignant experience.

“I [looked at] my study table,” she explained. “I saw a pile of books and near it, my quadruple combination together with my seminary notebook and manual. Deep inside I asked myself, ‘Which matters most?’”

She prayed and later found her answer in Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

From that point on, she put extra effort into balancing her time so that she could still faithfully attend seminary and excel in her academic performance. At the end of the year, she was named valedictorian and won a scholarship that would help her with her university expenses.

To read of the sacrifices and successes of seminary students around the world, search “Seminary Program Anchors Students in the Gospel” at [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org). ■

*To watch a video in which Elder Oaks encourages seminary students in their study of the Old Testament, visit [seminary.lds.org](http://seminary.lds.org). To learn about a seminary 100th anniversary fireside with President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, on January 22, visit [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org).*



### Leadership Training Video Library Now Available Online

As an interactive supplement to the updated *Handbook 2: Administering the Church*, the Church's Priesthood Department has announced the Leadership Training Library, an online collection of short training videos that highlight the principles taught in the manual. The new resource is available now at [leadershiplibrary.lds.org](http://leadershiplibrary.lds.org).

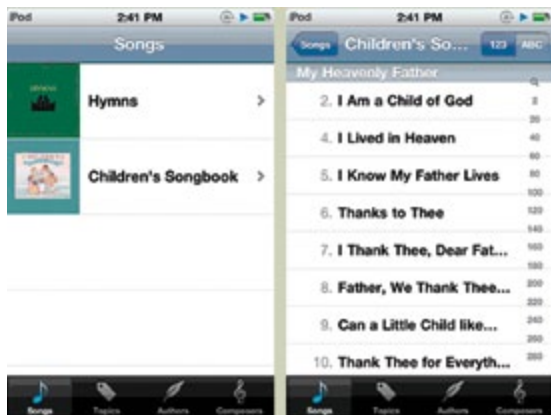
The library is initially available in English. Portions of the library will also be provided in 10 additional languages in early 2012.

### DVD Introduces 2012 Mutual Theme

A new DVD entitled *Strength of Youth Media 2012: Arise and Shine Forth* was shipped to units in November 2011 to help youth leaders introduce the 2012 Mutual theme. The DVD may be used to supplement quorum meetings, classes, youth conferences, and other youth activities throughout the year. It is available in 11 languages. Additional support materials are available in this month's *New Era* and *Liahona* magazines and on [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).

### LDS Music App for iOS Released

The Church has created a new music app, LDS Music 1.0 for iOS. The app, released in October 2011, contains the content of the LDS hymnbook and the *Children's Songbook*, viewable as sheet music or simple text. The application plays instrumental music for each song. Future plans include adding playlists, audio controls, and additional music. The app is available for free download in Apple's App Store. ■



### President Monson Teaches Young Adults

President Thomas S. Monson encouraged young adults to “be a light to the world” (1 Timothy 4:12), during a Brigham Young University–Provo devotional on November 1, 2011.

“What is light?” he asked. “I prefer the simple ‘something that illuminates.’ Providing an example of righteousness . . . can help to illuminate an increasingly dark world. . . . It is up to each of us to develop the faith necessary to survive spiritually and to project our light for others to see. . . .

Jesus Christ is the “‘true light, which lighteth every man who cometh into the world’ (John 1:9), a light which ‘shineth in darkness’ (John 1:5). . . .”

Encouraging members to gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon, President Monson said: “As you keep the flame of testimony burning brightly you will become a beacon of righteousness—even a light for all to see. . . .”

“Our opportunities to shine are limitless,” President Monson testified. “They surround us each day in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. As we follow the example of the Savior, ours will be the opportunity to be

a light, as it were, in the lives of those around us.” (Search “Monson Light” on [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more.)

### President Packer Tells Young Adults to Study Mercy

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, advised young adults to learn more about repentance and the Savior’s mercy during a Church Educational System broadcast on November 6, 2011. (Search “Packer Mercy” on [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more.)

### Elder Nelson Visits Africa, Dedicates Malawi

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited South Africa, Madagascar, Malawi, and Kenya, telling members to look toward the temple. (Search “Nelson Africa” on [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more.)

### Elder Christofferson Meets Members, Officials in Argentina

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles visited members and missionaries in Argentina in November and emphasized the need for “real growth.” (Search “Christofferson Argentina” on [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org) for more.) ■

Read more of these stories—and many others—at [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org).

# In Other Church Magazines

## THE NEW ERA



### New Mutual Theme

The new Mutual theme is presented by the Young Women and Young Men general presidencies on page 6. Learn about it in more depth in the Line upon Line section on page 8, and find a Mormonad about it on page 9.



### Finance Tips

Does your family need to learn how to handle money better? Here are some tips for teens to become more self-reliant and learn to live within their means. Read "Making Sense of Dollars and Cents" on page 14.



### Standing for Truth

Two young women respond to general conference by sharing their experiences with standing for truth, even when that means standing alone. Read their stories and excerpts from President Thomas S. Monson's October 2011 conference talks on page 42.



### Music for Beginning Pianists

In 2012, the *Friend* is introducing a monthly sheet music feature of simplified hymns and children's songs to help the aspiring pianists in your home develop their musical talents. The song in the January issue, "As a Child of God," is also featured in the 2012 Outline for Sharing Time.

## THE FRIEND



### Especially for 9- to 11-year-olds

For years, the *Friend* has featured a "For Little Friends" section that includes content for its youngest readers. Now older children also have a section of their own. Turn to pages 44–47 in the January *Friend* to find content especially for 9- to 11-year-old readers.



### Conference Spotlight

Help your children remember important messages from the October 2011 general conference by reading with them the Conference News page included on page 49 of the January *Friend*.



## LEARNING FROM THE EXPERT

By George C. Robinson

As a surgeon I am often asked how I gained my skills. Some suppose that one takes a class, watches an operation, and then is turned loose. There is even an ironic saying in training: see one, do one, teach one. However, nothing is further from the truth.

I gained my professional skill and knowledge under the guidance of many gifted and patient physicians. I began first by watching over shoulders and then up close. After a year of observing, I was given small assignments, helping the surgeon and his or her “first assistant”—the assistant surgeon.

After another year I was allowed to stand across the table from the surgeon and act as first assistant during simple operations. After another year or two, I was allowed to be first assistant in more complicated operations. Then I began to do the simplest operations, such as fixing a hernia, while the experienced surgeon acted as my first assistant.

In my last year of training—seven years after I had completed medical school—I was allowed to do complicated operations while the surgeon acted as first assistant. I discovered that the greatest teachers could make the operation flow smoother through their assistance because they could show me what needed to be done in clear and simple ways—ways they had learned through this same mentoring process.



*As a student surgeon, I always had someone more skilled at my side.*

*As a child of God, I have the same opportunity.*

I did not fully appreciate the guidance of these amazing and gifted expert surgeons who were my first assistants until I finished training and was on my own. However, even 30 years later, my teachers are in my mind as I daily use the skills they so painstakingly taught, demonstrated, and corrected.

Learning the principles of the gospel is no different. We are taught line upon line through experience—by a very patient Teacher. We look to Him, follow His example, ask for inspiration, and our Heavenly Father blesses us with guidance—often received through the Holy Ghost, the words of living prophets, the scriptures, and others who love and serve. Our Guide stands figuratively at our side as we gain confidence, smoothing our path, giving needed correction, answering questions, and offering more and more trust as we prove worthy of it.

Some student surgeons are eager to act independently, to do things their own way. Likewise, we sometimes try to act without our expert Guide. I have learned, however, during many years as a surgeon that even now I always wish for and cherish a first assistant who knows more than I do—especially when lives and souls hang in the balance!

Our growth in the gospel began in the premortal realm, continues here, and will doubtless continue long after our mortal life is finished. But in all phases of our experience, our Savior has gone before, demonstrating the skills needed to succeed. And He invites all to rely upon Him and His expertise. ■



MAY NOT BE COPIED

*The Light of the World, by Howard Lyon*

*“Behold, I am the law, and the light. Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live;  
for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life.*

*“Behold, I have given unto you the commandments; therefore keep my commandments. And this is the law and  
the prophets, for they truly testified of me” (3 Nephi 15:9–10).*





*As we study the Book of Mormon individually, as families, and in our Sunday School classes this year, we can—as Lehi did—search these ancient records and find that they are “desirable; yea, even of great worth unto us, insomuch that we [can] preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children” (1 Nephi 5:21). See “Helping Children Love the Book of Mormon,” page 10, and “Finding Answers in the Book of Mormon,” page 44.*