

# Ensign



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*Noted Latter-day Saint photographer George Edward Anderson captured this moment in 1907. It contrasts the everyday with the eternally significant event that transpired in the nearby grove: the First Vision. In that Sacred Grove near Palmyra, New York, 14-year-old Joseph Smith prayed to know which church to join and was answered with a visit from God the Father and the Son.*

Photograph courtesy of Church History Library

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## Family Home Evening Ideas

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



**“Valiant in Our Testimony of the Savior,”** page 66. Elder Golden discusses how we will each face difficult yet defining moments in our lives.

You could role-play several situations in which family members are faced with a challenging decision. For instance, you might practice saying no to a classmate who asks to cheat off your homework or asking a friend to use clean language. Talk about how you can prepare by developing a strong testimony of the Savior before such situations arise.

**“Friend Connection: Unanswered Prayers,”** page 72. This issue introduces a new

department, *“Friend Connection.”* Use this page to learn how the *Friend* magazine can help your family understand a different

sensitive topic each month. This month’s topic is unanswered prayers. As you look over the suggested ideas, think about how you have seen your prayers answered. You might share specific experiences where the Lord has answered your prayers, whether they were answered in an expected or unexpected manner. Consider encouraging each other to record in a journal the particular ways in which the Lord has answered your prayers and blessed you.

### WHAT’S NEW IN THE FRIEND?

Consider using family home evening to explore what’s new in the *Friend* magazine for 2017:

- New paper that’s better for coloring and pencil-and-paper activities. Break out the crayons!
- A monthly CTR story and challenge card to support the 2017 “Choose the Right” sharing time theme.
- An invitation to help the *Friend* fill the world with love! Children can cut out a paper heart, write how they showed love like Jesus, and mail it in.
- A reading chart in the January *Friend* and monthly scripture figures to help families learn about Church history.
- A longer “For Older Kids” section with new features and more stories for preteens.

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### FROM OUR READERS



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



**By President  
Dieter F. Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor in  
the First Presidency

# Aiming AT THE CENTER

**R**ecently, I watched a group of people practicing the art of archery. Just by watching, it became clear to me that if you really want to master the bow and arrow, it takes time and practice.

I don't think you can develop a reputation for being an accomplished archer by shooting at an empty wall and then drawing targets around the arrows. You have to learn the art of finding the target and hitting the bull's-eye.

## Painting Targets

Shooting first and drawing the target afterward may seem a little absurd, but sometimes we ourselves mirror that very behavior in other circumstances of life.

As Church members, we sometimes have a tendency to attach ourselves to gospel programs, issues, and even doctrines that seem interesting, important, or enjoyable to us. We are tempted to draw targets around them, making us believe we are aiming at the center of the gospel.

This is easy to do.

Throughout the ages we have received excellent counsel and inspiration from prophets of God. We also receive direction and clarification from various publications, handbooks, and manuals of the Church. How easy it would be to select our favorite gospel topic, draw a bull's-eye around it, and then make a case that we have identified the center of the gospel.

## The Savior Clarifies

This is not a problem unique to our day. Anciently, religious leaders spent a great deal of time cataloging, ranking,

and debating which of the hundreds of commandments was the most important.

One day a group of religious scholars attempted to draw the Savior into the controversy. They asked Him to weigh in on an issue upon which few could agree.

"Master," they asked Him, "which is the great commandment in the law?"

We all know how Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."<sup>1</sup>

Please note the last sentence: "On these two commandments hang *all* the law and the prophets."

The Savior not only showed us the target, but He also identified the bull's-eye.

## Hitting the Target

As members of the Church, we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ. Implicit in that covenant is the understanding that we will strive to learn about God, love Him, increase our faith in Him, honor Him, walk in His way, and stand steadfastly as witnesses of Him.

The more we learn about God and feel His love for us, the more we realize that the infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a divine gift of God. And God's love inspires us to use the





path of true repentance, which will lead to the miracle of forgiveness. This process enables us to have greater love and compassion for those around us. We will learn to see beyond labels. We will resist the temptation to accuse or judge others by their sins, shortcomings, flaws, political leanings, religious convictions, nationalities, or skin color.

We will see every one we meet as a child of our Heavenly Father—our brother or our sister.

We will reach out to others in understanding and love—even those who may not be particularly easy to love. We will mourn with those who mourn and comfort those who stand in need of comfort.<sup>2</sup>

And we will realize that there is no need for us to agonize about the correct gospel target.

The two great commandments are the target. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.<sup>3</sup> As we accept this, all other good things will fall into place.

If our primary focus, thoughts, and efforts are centered on increasing our love for Almighty God and extending

our hearts to others, we can know that we have found the right target and are aiming at the bull's-eye—becoming true disciples of Jesus Christ. ■

#### NOTES

1. Matthew 22:36–40.
2. See Mosiah 18:9.
3. See Matthew 22:40.

#### TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

**B**efore sharing this message, you could sing “Our Savior’s Love” (*Hymns*, no. 113). Then consider encouraging those you visit to reflect on the “targets” in their own lives. You could discuss ways to ensure that the two great commandments—to “love the Lord thy God” and to “love thy neighbour as thyself” (see Matthew 22:37, 39)—are always guiding their actions. You might also share specific ways in which you have focused your own life on Christ and share testimony of how that has blessed you.

## A Smile Can Make the Difference

**P**resident Uchtdorf identifies two goals we should have for our actions: love God and love our fellowmen. But sometimes it just isn't that easy to love others. Throughout your life, there may be times when you find it difficult to interact with others—perhaps someone has hurt you or you have a hard time communicating or getting along with someone. In these moments, try to remember the love you've felt from friends, family, Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ. Remember the joy you felt in those situations and try to imagine if everyone had the opportunity to feel such love. Remember that everyone is a daughter or son of God and is deserving of both His *and* your love.

Think of a specific person in your life whom you've had difficulty getting along with. Include them in your prayers



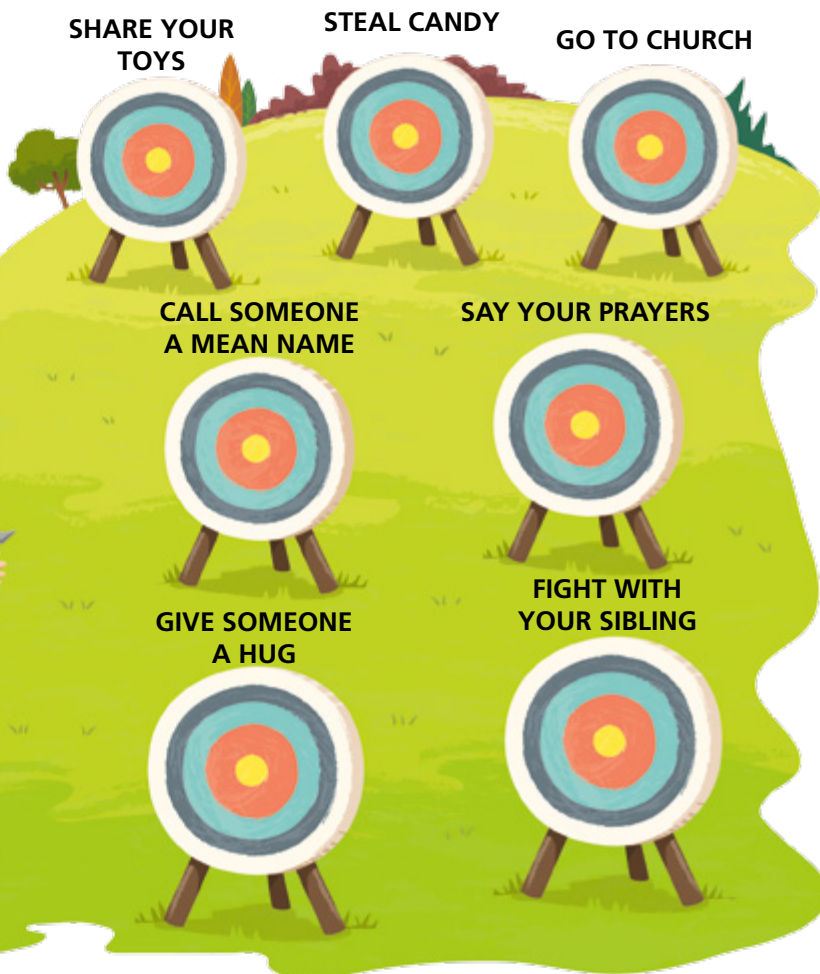
and ask Heavenly Father to open your heart to them. You'll soon start to see them how He does: as one of His children who deserves love.

After you've prayed, do something nice for them! Maybe invite them to a Mutual activity or an outing with friends. Offer to help with a homework assignment. Even just say "hello" and smile at them. The little things can make a big difference . . . in both of your lives!

## Bull's-Eye!

**P**resident Uchtdorf says the gospel is like target practice. We need to aim for the most important things. The most important commandments are to love God and to love others. If we focus on these two things, we can hit the bull's-eye every time!

Draw an arrow in the targets that help us show love for God and others. Draw an X over the targets that are not good things to do.





# The Purpose of Relief Society

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



Faith  
Family  
Relief

The purpose of Relief Society is to “prepare women for the blessings of eternal life,” says Linda K. Burton, Relief Society General President.<sup>1</sup> It is through faith, family, and relief that we engage in our “vital part in the work.”<sup>2</sup>

Relief Society “is a temporal and spiritual work,” says Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency. “That is what the women did in the Savior’s day, and that is what we continue to do.”<sup>3</sup>

As we look to the Samaritan woman at the well, who left her water pot and ran to tell others that Jesus was a prophet (see John 4:6–42), or to Phebe, who joyfully served others throughout her life (see Romans 16:1–2), we see examples of women in the

Savior’s day who took an active part in coming unto Christ. It is He who opens our way to eternal life (see John 3:16).

As we look to our pioneer sisters in Nauvoo, Illinois, who gathered in Sarah Kimball’s home in 1842 to form their own organization, we see God’s plan for bringing Relief Society into being and in line with the priesthood. After Eliza R. Snow wrote a constitution, the Prophet Joseph Smith reviewed it. He realized that the Church was not fully organized until the women were organized. He said that the Lord accepted their offering but that there was something better. “I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood,” he said.<sup>4</sup>

“The Relief Society was not

just another group of women trying to do good in the world. It was different. It was ‘something better’ because it was organized under priesthood authority. Its organization was a necessary step in the unfolding of God’s work on earth.”<sup>5</sup>

**Additional Scriptures and Information**  
Doctrine and Covenants 25:2–3, 10; 88:73; [reliefsociety.lds.org](http://reliefsociety.lds.org)

**NOTES**

1. Linda K. Burton, in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday and More March 17,” *Church News*, Mar. 13, 2015, [news.lds.org](http://news.lds.org).
2. Linda K. Burton, in Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday.”
3. Carole M. Stephens, in Weaver, “Relief Society Celebrates Birthday.”
4. Joseph Smith, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 11–12.
5. *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 16.



Consider This

How does Relief Society help women fulfill Heavenly Father’s divine role for them and lead them to eternal life?

# OCTOBER 2016 CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

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



## DOCTRINAL HIGHLIGHT

## Repentance Is God’s Gift to Us

“One of the terms we hear often today is that God’s love is ‘unconditional.’ While in one sense that is true, the descriptor *unconditional* appears nowhere in scripture. . . .

“God will always love us, but He cannot save us in our sins. Remember the words of Amulek to Zeezrom that the Savior would not save His people *in* their sins but *from* their sins, the reason being that with sin we are unclean and ‘no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven’ [Alma 11:37] or dwell in God’s presence. . . .

“From the Book of Mormon we learn that the intent of Christ’s suffering—the ultimate manifestation of His love—was ‘to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance’ [Alma 34:15]. . . .

“Repentance, then, is His gift to us, purchased at a very dear price.”

Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Abide in My Love,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 48.

## PROPHETIC PROMISE



### THE PLAN OF SALVATION

“Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God’s laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.

“We are blessed to *have* the truth. We have a mandate to *share* the truth. Let us *live* the truth, that we might merit all that the Father has for us. He does nothing save it be for our benefit. He has told us, ‘This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ [Moses 1:39].

“From the depths of my soul and in all humility, I testify of the great gift which is our Father’s plan for us. It is the one perfect path to peace and happiness both here and in the world to come.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 80–81.





## Christ's Infinite Atonement

**T**he Savior, the Master Healer, has the power to change our hearts and give us permanent relief from the sorrow caused by our own sin. . . .

“ . . . [He] can comfort and strengthen us when we experience pain because of the unrighteous actions of others. . . .

“ . . . [He] can comfort and sustain us as we experience painful ‘realities of mortality,’ such as disaster, mental illness, disease, chronic pain, and death. . . .

“The Savior [says]: . . .

“ . . . If ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you, and whosoever will come . . . will I receive’ [3 Nephi 9:14].”

Carole M. Stephens, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, “The Master Healer,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 10, 11, 12.



POWER TO CHANGE BY MICHAEL T. MALM

“Anything that opposes Christ or His doctrine will interrupt our joy.”

President Russell M. Nelson,  
President of the Quorum of  
the Twelve Apostles, “Joy and  
Spiritual Survival,” *Ensign*,  
Nov. 2016, 84.

## Come, Follow Him

Several speakers encouraged us to develop Christlike attributes and remember the Savior as we worship on the Sabbath. Use the November 2016 issue or visit [conference.lds.org](http://conference.lds.org) to read what they said.

- How can I practice Christian love and service? —See Robert D. Hales, “‘Come, Follow Me’ by Practicing Christian Love and Service,” 22.
- How can I become a better home teacher? —See Jeffrey R. Holland, “Emissaries to the Church,” 61.
- How do I develop sincere and heartfelt worship on the Sabbath day? —See Dean M. Davies, “The Blessings of Worship,” 93.
- How can I make partaking of the sacrament more meaningful? —See Peter F. Meurs, “The Sacrament Can Help Us Become Holy,” 85.

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

# WE BELIEVE THE CHURCH WILL FILL THE EARTH

There were only six members of the Church when it was organized in 1830 in a small town in New York, USA. Since then the Church has grown to over 15.5 million members, with wards and branches in over 150 countries. This growth is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy that the Church would roll forth to fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:31–45). The Church—the kingdom of God on earth—is described as a stone “cut out of the mountain without hands” (Daniel 2:45), revealing that it is a divine, not a man-made, work.

Even as the Church’s influence fills the earth, its members will still be relatively few. Nephi foresaw this and wrote of our day, “I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few” because of the surrounding wickedness (1 Nephi 14:12). As the time of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ draws near, the world will become more and more wicked, and “it will become less and less popular to be a Latter-day Saint.”<sup>1</sup>

But Nephi also foresaw “that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth” (1 Nephi 14:12). Wards and branches can be found all over the world, general conference is interpreted in over 90 languages, and almost 75,000 full-time missionaries are sharing the gospel in 418 missions. The gospel is also being spread worldwide through social media and websites such as [Mormon.org](http://Mormon.org) and [LDS.org](http://LDS.org).

These efforts are significant and extensive but often proceed quietly. “This work of the Lord is indeed great and marvelous, but it moves forward essentially unnoticed by many of mankind’s political, cultural, and academic leaders. It progresses one heart and one family at a time, silently and unobtrusively, its sacred message blessing people everywhere.”<sup>2</sup>

The stone prophesied of so long ago truly is rolling forth, and as we do our part, the gospel will continue to spread and fill the whole earth (see Daniel 2:31–45). ■

To learn more about the Church’s future, read Doctrine and Covenants 65; Gordon B. Hinckley, “Stone Cut Out of the Mountain” (Oct. 2007 general conference); L. Whitney Clayton, “The Time Shall Come” (Oct. 2011 general conference).

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, “Stand as True Millennials,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2016, 28.
2. L. Whitney Clayton, “The Time Shall Come,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 13.



#### THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

“It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it will fill the world.”

**The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44), in a priesthood meeting in 1834, in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 137.**



**What can we do to help the gospel roll forward?**



*Keeping the commandments and strengthening our testimonies give us a foundation to help spread the gospel.*



*Fulfilling our callings helps strengthen the Church in our local areas.*



*Teaching our families the gospel strengthens them to live faithfully in a world that teaches them otherwise.*



*We can help spread the gospel by simply talking to people about it.*



*In the temple we can perform ordinances for those who died without hearing the gospel in this life.*

# I WANT TO LIVE WITH YOU FOREVER!

By Leongina Adamés de Ubri

*The faith of a six-year-old helped me find my faith again.*

When I was 22, my life took an unexpected turn: my mother passed away. She and my father were people of great faith, and they had raised me in the gospel. After her death, my father moved away from our country to the United States. As time went by, I began to feel very lonely since I am my parents' only child. I did not have my mother with me here on the earth, and my father lived far away; I only saw him for three weeks out of the year.

It was with those feelings that I began to increasingly seek refuge in my "friends" from college and from the office where I was working. Little by little, I began to find false happiness in temporal things. I stopped attending church, and I gradually became completely inactive. Later, I married a wonderful young man who, though he had very good principles, did not know about the gospel. We had three children: Leah, Isaac, and Ismael.

One October, my father came to visit and see the new baby. During

his visit, six-year-old Leah asked her grandfather why he never brought her grandmother with him. My father then explained to her that Grandmother was in a very special place close to Heavenly Father. As soon as my father left, Leah forcefully told me, "Mom, I want to meet Grandma. I know she is in heaven, but I also want us to be there together someday—Grandma and Grandpa, Dad, Isaac, Ismael, and you, and me. I want to live with you forever. I want

us to be the same family up there that we are down here so we can play with Grandma!"

I did not know what to say. I touched her beautiful, innocent face, and then I walked off to my bedroom. I fell on my knees and cried until I ran out of tears. I asked Heavenly Father for forgiveness. I knew that I had left the path that would allow us to live together as an eternal family. I had failed in my responsibility to lead them along the right path, and I had



## BOUND IN HEAVEN

"The Savior in His mortal ministry spoke of the power to seal families in words to Peter, His chief Apostle, when He said, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Matthew 16:19).

"It is only in the celestial kingdom that we can live in families forever. There we can be in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Savior."

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, "Families Can Be Together Forever," *Ensign*, June 2015, 4.





failed to talk to my husband about the gospel.

When I was able to stand, I contacted a Church leader, and he put me in contact with the elders in my ward. The following night, they came and taught my husband. From that night on, our lives changed forever. Now we attend church every Sunday as a family. I have a calling that allows me to help less-active sisters. We are also preparing to attend the temple.

The Spirit of God sometimes guides us through those we least expect. This time it happened through my six-year-old daughter. I now know that by being sealed in the temple, I can live with my family forever. ■

*The author lives in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.*

# QUESTIONING OUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

By Ted Barnes

Priesthood and Family Department of the Church

Imagine you're sitting at lunch with some friends discussing a movie you saw together. Then one of your friends says, "Who can tell me what the most important scene was in the movie?"

A bit confused by the question, you think for a moment and suggest that the last scene was probably the most important. "Well, that's a good comment," your friend says. "But it's not quite what I had in mind. Anyone

else? Let's hear from someone who hasn't shared yet."

You wouldn't talk this way among friends, but for some reason it seems to happen often in Sunday classes.

Instead of discussing gospel truths naturally and comfortably, as teachers we sometimes say things that in other settings would seem strange and even stifle conversation. We hope

that class members will feel that they are among friends and be comfortable sharing their thoughts regarding the principles they are learning. Such sharing can

invite the Spirit and enrich the experience for everyone.

How do we make sure our questions lead to more natural and meaningful discussion? There are some do's and don'ts that many teachers have found helpful: Don't ask questions that have obvious answers. Do ask questions that have more than one answer. Don't ask questions that are too personal.

It may also be valuable, before we start planning questions to ask in class, to ask ourselves a question: *Why am I asking questions in the first place?*

## Why Do You Ask?

The motivation behind our questions makes a big difference. For





*The most important question may be the one teachers ask themselves before they get to class.*

example, do we sometimes ask questions because we have something to say but we want a class member to say it instead? We rightfully don't want to do all the talking, but we do want a particular point to be made, so we sometimes ask a question that we know will elicit the answer we want to hear. This mindset leads to questions that are really statements in disguise, like "How will avoiding pornography help you keep your thoughts pure?" or "Is it important to pray every day?"

There are situations in which it is perfectly appropriate to ask questions that are meant to draw out a particular answer. They can serve to emphasize a point or help the teacher advance the lesson. But questions like these are not likely to encourage meaningful discussions.

On the other hand, if we ask questions because we really want to know what is in our class members' minds and hearts and lives, then it will show in the questions we ask.

Questions that invite class members into a heartfelt conversation that fosters spiritual learning include questions like "As you read this verse,

what stands out to you?" or "What experiences have taught you to trust the Lord's promises?" or almost any question that begins with "What do you think . . . ?"

Consider these examples:

- The Spirit asked Nephi, "What desirest thou?" (1 Nephi 11:10).
- The Savior asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" (Matthew 16:15).
- And He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life: . . . Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26).

Each of these questions invited someone to share what was in his or her heart. And in each case, what followed was a powerful spiritual experience.

### **Questions Are an Expression of Love**

Believe it or not, asking questions that foster discussion comes naturally to almost everyone—even to people who don't consider themselves good teachers. We do it spontaneously every time we have a meaningful conversation with friends or family—or just a chat about a favorite movie over lunch. But when we stand in front

of rows of expectant students, we suddenly forget all about what comes naturally.

So perhaps part of the trick to asking good discussion questions is to think to ourselves, "How would I ask this if we weren't in a classroom—if we were just sitting at home talking about the gospel as a group of friends? How would I invite them to share their insights and feelings?" Teaching isn't *exactly* like a casual chat among friends, but they have one thing in common: they should be motivated by sincere interest and genuine love.

So don't worry if you aren't yet skilled at crafting well-worded questions. Even if all you can do is love the people you teach, the Spirit will guide you, and you will get better and better at knowing what to say. "Charity never faileth," Paul declared (1 Corinthians 13:8), and that's true even for something as simple as a teacher asking questions in a class. ■

**Y**ou can learn about six types of questions in "Ask Inspired Questions," *Teaching in the Savior's Way* (2016), 31–32, available at [teaching.lds.org](http://teaching.lds.org).



By Elder  
C. Scott Grow  
Of the Seventy

# PROPHETIC PRINCIPLES OF *FAITHFULNESS*

**M**ore than 20 years ago, I completed my service as a mission president in South America. My wife, Rhonda, and I have seen great triumph as well as heartbreaking tragedy in the lives of our missionaries during those intervening 20 years.

The majority of our missionaries are happily sealed in the temple, raising righteous children and sending them on missions, and serving faithfully in Church auxiliary and priesthood callings. Some, however, are less active, some have been married and divorced, and some have been excommunicated from the Church.

What has made the difference in the lives of our former missionaries? What might some of them have done differently to avoid personal tragedy? What about you? Where will you be in 20 years? What decisions and commitments do you need to make now and in the future to help you remain faithful?

I suggest 10 principles that will help you.

## 1 CONTINUALLY NOURISH YOUR TESTIMONY

The Spirit-filled experiences of a mission establish a foundation of faith that can bless you throughout your life. That foundation of faith can be diminished only through neglect or sin.

Recently I interviewed a returned missionary who is less active and claimed to have lost his faith. I asked him if he was praying and studying the

**What decisions and commitments do you need to make now and in the future to help you remain faithful?**

Book of Mormon, as he did when he was a missionary. He said he wasn't because he had lost his faith in Joseph Smith.

I felt prompted to ask him this question: "Are you into pornography?" He answered yes. I told him it was no wonder he had lost his testimony.

I explained that a testimony is nothing more or less than the Holy Ghost bearing witness to our soul of the truthfulness of the gospel and of the restored Church. When we fail to pray and study the scriptures, the influence of the Spirit in our life is weakened, lowering our resistance to temptation. When we sin and become unclean, we lose the companionship of the Holy Ghost altogether. Without the ongoing witness of the Spirit, we can easily begin to think we don't have a testimony and maybe never did.

Our testimony needs to be continually nourished. That nourishment comes from personal prayer, daily scripture study—particularly the Book of Mormon—and serving in the Church throughout our life.







## 2 FOLLOW THE COUNSEL OF LIVING PROPHETS & APOSTLES

I am going to review prophetic counsel that can help you have a happy marriage, a faithful family, and a successful life. I refer to “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” I am going to share some important parts of that proclamation, which was issued by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1995. We sustain these Brethren as prophets, seers, and revelators. They are the spokesmen for God to His children on earth.

On the day the Church was organized, God spoke regarding His prophet, saying, “For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.” Then the Lord promises temporal blessings and eternal blessings when we follow the counsel of prophets: “For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name’s glory” (D&C 21:5–6).

What a blessing in these difficult times.



## 3 BE SEALED IN THE TEMPLE AND KEEP YOUR COVENANTS

The prophets, seers, and revelators “proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.” They add: “The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.”<sup>1</sup>

The most important decision you make in life “is to marry the right person, in the right place, by the right authority”<sup>2</sup> and then to keep your temple covenants. There is no exaltation without a temple sealing.

To qualify for exaltation, couples must enter into “the new and everlasting covenant, and it [must be] sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed”—the prophet. If we keep our temple covenants, we will “inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths . . . and glory in all things, . . . which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19; see also verse 7).

A temple sealing contains the promise of eternal blessings in the next life and increases the likelihood of a happy marriage in this life. As a consecrated son or daughter of God, you have covenanted to come to earth at this time to build up God’s kingdom. That kingdom-building includes your own temple marriage.

## 4 PARTNER WITH GOD IN BRINGING HIS SPIRIT CHILDREN TO EARTH

The family proclamation states: “The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God’s commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force.”

Families today are smaller than they were a generation ago—even LDS families. We can always find reasons to justify delaying or limiting the number of children we have. For example, “We need to graduate first” or “We need to get a better job so we can have more money” or “Why take all the fun out of marriage by having kids?”

You’ve been blessed with a testimony of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. You have the blessings of eternity to offer to your children. Don’t get hung up on the thought that you must provide all things temporal. The greatest gift you have to offer to your children is access to all things spiritual in the kingdom of God.

When you prayerfully counsel with your spouse about having children, remember that you are the youth of the noble birthright. Please don’t leave God out of your deliberations. Share that right to birth with as many spirit sons and daughters as God is prepared to send to your home. After all, these were His children long before they will be yours.

With faith in God and His prophetic word, go forward without excuse or hesitation and create your own eternal family.

## 5 DO NOT INDULGE IN PORNOGRAPHY OR OTHER IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

The proclamation continues, “Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”

Complete fidelity means being physically faithful as well as emotionally faithful to your spouse. Pornography and online relationships are examples of emotional infidelity. When a spouse engages in pornography, he or she violates a sacred trust of the most intimate nature. The innocent spouse feels betrayed. Confidence and trust in the marriage deteriorate. The harvest of adultery is sown in the seedbed of pornography.

I share some feelings from a man who had been sealed in the temple but lost his family because of pornography and an online relationship with a woman. In sorrow he writes: “I did not heed the words given to me in my patriarchal blessing, which stated that Satan would have no power in my life except that which I would give him. I gave him plenty, and slowly and surely he took it and used that power to destroy my life with my wife and my children. I loved them with all my heart and still do and always will, but that love was not enough to defeat the power I willingly gave Satan in my life to destroy it. The Church’s teachings provided [us] a way to return as a family sealed for time and all eternity to our Heavenly Father, would I have but listened and heeded them, but in the end I did not.”

What a tragedy.







## 6 TEACH AND LIVE THE GOSPEL IN YOUR HOME

The proclamation teaches us things we must do to be happy in our homes. “Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities.”

When my wife and I were a young married couple, we tried repeatedly to establish a firm habit of reading the scriptures together every day as a family. When our oldest child was about seven years old, we finally made it a daily habit. Reading first thing in the morning, we continued faithfully from that time forward. Once the habit was established with the other children, the younger children were eager to participate as they became old enough. Often we had to read before 6:00 a.m. because of early-morning seminary.

Young married couples are in a position to start their own righteous family traditions—holding daily family scripture study, having family prayer, and preparing their children for missions and temple marriage.

## 7 HONOR THE ROLES OF FATHER AND MOTHER IN RAISING CHILDREN

The proclamation also shares some important counsel about raising children: “Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as *equal partners*.”

Sometimes one parent may feel that he or she is better qualified to raise and discipline the children. The prophets of this dispensation have taught repeatedly that husbands and wives form a partnership in marriage, that all decisions relative to the family should be made jointly and harmoniously.

Equal partners are to be equal partners. Counsel together and pray together. Be guided by the Spirit to know the most effective way to raise your children together. Their eternal destiny will be affected by your decisions.

## 8 USE YOUR MORAL AGENCY TO CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THE SAVIOR

The decision as to where you will be in 20 years or 20 centuries is entirely up to you. You’re free to choose; however, eternal consequences flow from your choices. Because of the Savior’s Atonement, men “are redeemed from the fall [and] they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to *act for themselves* and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day, according to the commandments which God hath given.

“Wherefore, men are . . . free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power



of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:26–27; emphasis added).

Satan hates you because of who you are and what you represent. He wants to make you miserable, as he is. Jesus Christ loves you. He paid the price for your sins. He gave His life for you. He invites you to follow Him and repent, if necessary. As you choose to follow the Savior, you will have “joy in this life and eternal life in the world to come.”<sup>3</sup>

## 9 DEVELOP FAITH TO ENDURE TO THE END

Faith comes as you are converted unto the Lord. The prophet Nephi taught: “Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life” (2 Nephi 31:20).

President Thomas S. Monson recently said in general conference, “The future is as bright as your faith.”<sup>4</sup> That includes faith to endure and overcome all obstacles, including offenses, betrayals, and disappointments. Your faith to endure will determine your destiny, even your eternal destiny.



## 10 SUBMIT YOUR WILL TO THE WILL OF GOD

I pray that God has touched your soul with a desire to do better and be better and to follow the counsel of our living prophets. I hope that you have felt a desire to strengthen your commitment to become all that God has foreordained you to be.

“Brethren [and sisters], shall we not go on in so great a cause? Go forward and not backward. Courage, . . . and on, on to the victory! . . . Let us, therefore, as a church and a people, and as Latter-day Saints, offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (D&C 128:22, 24).

What might that offering be that you individually can give to God? It is that one gift He would never require of you. It is the offering of your will to submit to His will. It is to lay your agency on the altar of personal sacrifice.

One of the *Lectures on Faith*, prepared by the early Brethren in this dispensation, states: “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

Your agency is the one thing that is truly yours that you can give as an offering to God. By volunteering your will to His will, you will become like Him.

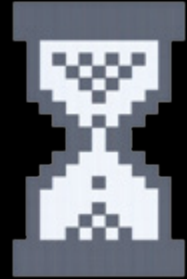
I conclude with my witness of the Savior. To the degree that you exercise faith in Jesus Christ, submit your will to God’s will, follow the counsel of His prophets, and obey the promptings of the Spirit, you will be faithful, happy, and successful. ■

*From a devotional address, “Where Will You Be in 20 Years?” given at Brigham Young University–Idaho on May 15, 2012. For the full address, go to [web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches](http://web.byui.edu/devotionalsandspeeches).*

### NOTES

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129; emphasis added.
2. Bruce R. McConkie, “Agency or Inspiration?” *New Era*, Jan. 1975, 38.
3. Gordon B. Hinckley, *Caesar, Circus, or Christ?* Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year (Oct. 26, 1965), 8; see also Russell M. Nelson, “Spiritual Capacity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 16.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “Be of Good Cheer,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 92.
5. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 69.

# Trusting in the Lord's Timing



By Shannon Volmar

I was a recently returned missionary, struggling to find the next step in my life. I had graduated from college before my mission, and I returned home with confidence and a determination to pursue righteous goals.

Those first several months following my return proved much more difficult than I had anticipated, and my optimism dwindled. I attempted several different pathways that I thought were good and right, none of which came to fruition.

As each disappointment mounted, I felt confused and sad. Despite my efforts, my righteous desires seemed to go unfulfilled. Meanwhile, many of my peers already seemed to be acquiring the blessings I desired and was working for. I prayed earnestly for understanding and guidance.

The answer to my prayer came in a simple but powerful manner. I

felt impressed to search through a box of family photographs, where I happened upon an old envelope containing pictures of my sixth-grade graduation. As I stared at them for a minute, a memory of that ceremony suddenly flooded my mind.

It was nearing the conclusion of the awards presentation, and the teachers announced the distribution of certificates for students they felt earned a spot on the “honor roll.” I had worked hard to excel in school, so I anticipated being on that list. As the names were called, I got ready to stand to retrieve my award.

Then suddenly the reading was finished. I looked around in surprise at those students sitting near me. One of them, holding her award, looked at me in confusion and said, “Why didn’t *you* get one?” The only response I could muster was, “I don’t know . . .”

I sat in silent disappointment.

**As a recently returned missionary, I felt confused and sad when the blessings I longed for seemed to go unfulfilled.**

What happened next had a profound impact on my 11-year-old life. My teacher stood and announced that there were two students who she felt had gone above and beyond her expectations, and they would therefore be given the “Student of the Year” award instead of an honor roll certificate. One of the awards was presented to another student in my class.

The other was given to me.

Though I had long forgotten this

episode, the Spirit helped me realize how surprisingly similar my current situation was to that of my elementary school graduation. I had been comparing my circumstances with those of others, wondering if I had been forgotten. In that moment, a wave of peace washed over me. I could picture a loving, merciful God listening to my doubts and wanting me to have the patience and faith to see that He hadn't forgotten me. Yes, I was doing my best to achieve righteous goals, and someday the Lord would bless me. I just had to trust in His timing. Blessings don't always come when *we* think they will—sometimes not even in this life—but they do come.

Not even a month passed after I had this experience when I met an amazing young man who soon became my best friend and eternal companion. We had a beautiful courtship and were sealed together in the temple. We have been blessed in many ways, and I find

that my goals have become clearer and that my path is far better than the one I originally anticipated as a struggling returned missionary.

This and other righteous desires were fulfilled in the Lord's timing. If the course of events had happened in the way *I* had wanted them to, I wouldn't have learned to rely not only on the Lord's plan for me but also on His timing. I also think it would have been much harder for the Lord to bless me in the ways He knew would ultimately make me the most happy. And those blessings have always been something significantly better than what I thought I wanted—just like a "Student of the Year" award instead of an honor roll certificate.

Even returned missionaries need reminders about the principle of faith. I know I did, and I was reminded of it in a powerful and comforting way when I found myself in an old photograph. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



#### **ACCORDING TO HIS TIMING**

"God's promises are not always fulfilled as quickly as or in the way we might hope; they come according to His timing and in His ways. . . . The promises of the Lord, if perhaps not always swift, are always certain."

**President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "Continue in Patience," *Ensign*, May 2010, 58.**



By Richard J. Anderson

In 1970 I was a young missionary serving in a remote area of the Navajo Nation in the southwestern United States. The past year had been filled with new and exciting gospel experiences. My love of the desert lands and the Navajo people had grown immensely. The beauty of the Southwest quickly touched my soul. I knew that this was where the Lord had called me.

One night my companion and I returned home to find a note on our door from the man at the trading post. The note said the mission president had called and had asked us to call him back, so we immediately went over to the trading post and returned his call. The president informed us that we were to open an area that had not had missionaries for over seven years. I asked where we would live. He said we would need to find a place.

That posed a challenge. The desert land—dotted with Navajo hogans

## SACRAMENT MEETING IN A HOGAN

**As missionaries, we barely had a place to live. How would we find somewhere to meet for church?**

(circular homes made of rock or timbers and mud) often miles apart—would not easily yield a place for us to stay. This was to be a full act of faith.

### Finding a Home

Since we didn't yet have a new home, we continued to live in our old area with the new elders who had

been called to work there. When we weren't teaching the people, we traveled around our new area in search of a place to live. Our new field of labor was about 25 miles away from our old area. We drove a pickup truck that bounced along the washboard dirt roads as we sang "Ye Elders of Israel" and "Scatter Sunshine."

We became somewhat discouraged with our inability to find a place to live. After prayer and fasting, we finally asked the man who operated the trading post in our new area if he knew of anywhere we could set up our missionary home. He told us that there was an abandoned hogan close to the trading post. We followed his directions to the place and found an old, partially collapsed hogan with rocks caving in on the side. It needed work, but we were young and excited to be on the Lord's errand, so we determined to make this our home.



First, however, we needed the community's acceptance. We knew that to the Navajo, hogans were not just homes; they also had spiritual significance. With that in mind, we asked the people in the area how they felt about our living in this hogan. We received a most gracious welcome.

We then came to another decision: this was to be not only our home but also the Lord's house where we could meet for Sunday services.

### **Building a Chapel**

We wanted to make our church house special. This was to become a sacred place. We dug a deep hole where we could mix mud to reattach the stones to each other and build up the broken wall. The trader, not a member of the Church, donated white lime and white cement with which we painted the circular interior mud walls.

Then came the problem of furniture. The mission supplied two beds and

some pots and pans, but we would need different furniture for church meetings. We began gathering chairs from wherever we could find them and amassed a collection of every kind of chair one might imagine—some wood and some metal, all very old and rickety. We found some old lumber lying by the roadside and fashioned it into a pulpit and a sacrament table. The sacrament table was about a foot tall, since that was all the lumber we could find.







*This Navajo hogan is similar to the one that the author and his companion used as a home and that became a dedicated meetinghouse for the growing Navajo membership.*

At one point we heard that one of the two non-LDS churches in the area was getting a new piano, so we asked the reverend of that congregation what they were going to do with their old piano. When he said he had no plans, we asked if he would consider giving it to us, and he answered, “That would be a good thing to do.” We hauled the piano to our hogan.

With instructions from our mission president, we dedicated the hogan for Sunday worship services. Each Sunday, we created a chapel out of our living quarters by piling one bed on top of the other, stacking all of our belongings on the beds, and draping old white sheets from the ceiling to the floor to hide all those items. We covered the sacrament table with white cloth and set up two rows of chairs that looked like an antique store collection.

### **Building a Congregation of Saints**

At first, my companion and I would say all the prayers, lead the music, bless and pass the sacrament, and give the talks. I served in that area long enough to see many baptisms.

Soon members learned to give simple, sincere talks in our meetings. A young man, having recently received the Aaronic Priesthood and been ordained to the office of priest, began to help bless the sacrament.

Sundays became a new, glorious experience to me. In that humble place, we offered up our sacraments and worship on His holy day (see D&C 59:9–12). We experienced what Isaiah proclaimed:

“If thou turn away . . . from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, . . .

“Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father” (Isaiah 58:13, 14).

We indeed rode upon a “high place” in the desert.

What started with two members and a few investigators grew into a Sunday worship group of more than 30 loving Saints. They were drawn in by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ,

the fellowship of other worshippers, and the Holy Spirit that was ever present in our chapel. We were living the message given by the Lord in April 1829: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them—even so am I in the midst of you” (D&C 6:32). This hogan became hallowed ground, a sacred place to me.

Many years later I was called to serve as the president of a mission that covered the same ground. The places I knew were now gone. The hogan—our old rock church—no longer stood. But what will stand forever is my never-ending gratitude and respect for those humble Saints and investigators. They came to a different kind of church edifice and found the Lord’s Church in Sabbath worship amidst red mud and Navajo stone. There we learned much about true Sunday worship. I still seek such spiritual experiences each Sunday and find them wherever I am. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



# ASSURANCE

By Larry Hiller

*Songbird flown.*

*Fallen leaf.*

*Icy wind of*

*Wintry grief.*

*Robin's song.*

*Budding spring.*

*Hope returns*

*On healing wing.*







By Elder Gary E. Stevenson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

# WITH ALL THY GETTING, GET Understanding

*Real understanding will come to you as you realize the interdependence of study and prayer, as you maintain a commitment to serve while learning and earning, and as you trust in and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Much of my life as a university student revolved around the library. Each time I entered, I was greeted by a sign over the entry that read, “And with all thy getting get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7).

We all know that recall follows repetition. I therefore have this scripture from the book of Proverbs engraved indelibly in my mind, having read it each time I entered the library during my four years of undergraduate work.

I offer the same exhortation to each of you: “And with all thy getting get understanding.” I also invite you to think about the meaning of this scripture and how it might benefit you. I have done so. I have turned it over in my mind time and time again, and my interpretation of its meaning has evolved considerably. Perhaps you can benefit from my observations.

## An Understanding Heart

As a young missionary in Japan struggling to learn a difficult language, I heard some vocabulary words early and often. Greetings

such as *ohayo gozaimasu* (good morning) or *konnichiwa* (good afternoon) were two of these. Another was *wakarimasen*, which means, “I don’t understand.” This word, along with a side-to-side hand expression, seems to be a favorite response from Japanese contacts directed to young missionaries as they attempt to strike up conversations.

Initially, as I reflected on the meaning of “and with all thy getting get understanding,” I thought of *understanding* more in terms of this type of comprehension: what I might hear with my ears and understand in my mind. I thought of the Japanese saying *wakarimasen*. Do I understand or not understand?

As I have studied and observed the use of the word *understanding* in the scriptures and from the words of living prophets, however, I have come to realize a deeper meaning. Consider these words from Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles when he was the Presiding Bishop of the Church:





Planet Nine?

2012 VP 113

silver  
47

**Ag**

107.868

gold  
79

**Au**

196.967

titanium





### TRUST IN THE LORD AND IN HIS WORD

“To be an example of faith means that we trust in the Lord and in His word. It means that we possess and that we nourish the beliefs that will guide our thoughts and our actions. Our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in our Heavenly Father will influence all that we do. 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, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 87.

*To intelligence we add knowledge, experience, wisdom, and help from the Holy Ghost through prayer. Only then do we reach an understanding in our hearts.*



“First, we start with the intelligence with which we were born. To our intelligence we add knowledge as we search for answers, study, and educate ourselves. To our knowledge we add experience, which should lead us to a level of wisdom. In addition to our wisdom, we add the help of the Holy Ghost through our prayers of faith, asking for spiritual guidance and strength. Then, and only then, do we reach an *understanding* in our hearts—which motivates us to ‘do what is right; let the consequence follow.’ (*Hymns*, 1985, no. 237.) The feelings of an *understanding* heart give us the sweet spirit of assurance of not only knowing but doing what is right no matter what the circumstances. The *understanding* in our hearts comes from a close interdependence of study and prayer.”<sup>1</sup>

Now consider again: “And with all thy getting get understanding.” Understanding in this context follows intelligence, knowledge, experience, wisdom, and promptings from the Holy Ghost—all of which lead us to knowing and doing what is right.

Most of you are approaching or have entered a critical intersection or crossroads

in your life. You are becoming more independent with each passing year, and you are moving deeper into the “and with all thy getting” phase of your life. What is it that you are going to be getting? You may be getting a husband or a wife, your own family, a job, to name a few things.

To manage these very important things that we “get,” we must also obtain “understanding,” as the scripture teaches. This understanding comes through an interdependence of study and prayer. Said another way, we must trust in and rely on the Lord Jesus Christ. Alma described this when he likened the word unto a seed. As he stated, “It beginneth to enlighten my *understanding*, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me” (Alma 32:28; emphasis added).

President Thomas S. Monson often quotes a scripture from Proverbs that adds another dimension to this understanding: “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).<sup>2</sup>

As we trust in and rely on the Lord, a greater measure of understanding comes from Him into our heart.



### **“The Hand of the Lord Is Over Us”**

Let me offer an example of a powerful woman who played a key role in the Restoration, who trusted in the Lord, and who leaned not unto her own understanding.

Shortly after the Church was organized in Palmyra, New York, Joseph Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, remained in Waterloo, New York, with a large group of Saints while her husband, Joseph Sr., and some of their sons, including Joseph Jr., departed before her for Kirtland, Ohio. Her responsibility was to bring this group to Ohio when she received word from her son, the Prophet.

Word came in early spring 1831. Lucy, with the help of some of the brethren, began to move the group to Buffalo, New York, with the intention of making passage to Ohio by ship on Lake Erie. She said: “When the brethren considered the spring sufficiently open for traveling on the water, we all began to prepare for our removal to Kirtland. We hired a boat . . . ; and . . . we numbered eighty souls.”

Then, as they pushed off into the Erie Canal and headed to Buffalo, she said: “I then called the brethren and sisters together, and reminded them that we were traveling by the commandment of the Lord, as much as Father Lehi was, when he left Jerusalem; and, if faithful, we had the same reasons to expect the blessings of God. I then desired them to be solemn, *and to lift their hearts to God continually in prayer*, that we might be prospered.”

About halfway to Buffalo from Waterloo, passage along the canal became impossible. Conditions for the 80 Saints were uncomfortable, and murmuring began almost immediately. Lucy, relying on the Lord, had to unite their faith. She told them: “No, no, . . . you will not starve, brethren, nor anything of that sort; only do be patient and stop your murmuring. I have no doubt but the hand of the Lord is over us.”

When they arrived in Buffalo on the fifth day after leaving Waterloo, the harbor leading to Lake Erie was frozen. They took passage on a ship with Captain Blake, a man acquainted with Lucy Smith and her family.


After a couple of days, although conditions on the ship were not conducive for all of them to stay while

awaiting notice of departure, Lucy reported, “Captain Blake requested the passengers to remain on board, as he wished, from that time, to be ready to start at a moment’s warning; at the same time he sent out a man to measure the depth of the ice, who, when he returned, reported that it was piled up to the height of twenty feet [6 m], and that it was his opinion that we would remain in the harbor at least two weeks longer.”

This was devastating news to the group. Supplies were low and conditions were difficult. Lucy Mack Smith further recorded her admonition to the Saints: “You profess to put your trust in God, then how can you feel to murmur and complain as you do! You are even more unreasonable than the children of Israel were; for here are my sisters pining for their rocking chairs, and brethren from whom I expected firmness and energy, declare that they positively believe they shall starve to death before they get to the end of their journey. And why is it so? Have any of you lacked? . . . Where is your faith? Where is your confidence in God? Can you not realize that all things were made by him, and that he rules over the works of his own hands? And suppose that all the Saints here should lift their hearts in prayer to God, that the way might be opened before us, how easy it would be for him to cause the ice to break away, so that in a moment we could be on our journey!”

Now, please observe here the great faith of Mother Smith—how she chose to trust in the Lord and how she asked that the Saints with her not lean unto their own understanding:

“‘Now, brethren and sisters, if you will all of you raise your desires to heaven, that the ice may be broken up, and we be set at liberty, as sure as the Lord lives, it will be done.’ At that instant a noise was heard, like bursting thunder. The captain cried, ‘Every man to his post.’ The ice parted, leaving barely a passage for the boat, and so narrow that as the boat passed through[,] the buckets of the waterwheel were torn off with a crash, which, joined to the word of command from the captain, the hoarse answering of the sailors, the noise of the ice, and the cries and confusion of the



*After encouraging her stranded brothers and sisters to cease murmuring and to raise their desires to heaven, Lucy Mack Smith recalled that “the ice parted, leaving barely a passage for the boat.” As soon as the Saints’ boat passed through, the ice closed up again.*



spectators, presented a scene truly terrible. We had barely passed through the avenue when the ice closed together again, and the Colesville brethren were left in Buffalo, unable to follow us.

“As we were leaving the harbor, one of the bystanders exclaimed, ‘There goes the ‘Mormon’ company! That boat is sunk in the water nine inches deeper than ever it was before, and, mark it, she will sink—there is nothing surer.’ In fact, they were so sure of it that they went straight to the [news] office and had it published that we were sunk, so that when we arrived at Fairport we read in the papers the news of our own death.”<sup>3</sup>

### “Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding”

“And with all thy getting get understanding,” or, said another way, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5).

I have personally observed the heartbreak and personal havoc wrought upon those whose focus is on worldly “getting” and not on the Lord’s “understanding.” It seems that those who lean unto their own understanding or rely on the arm of the flesh are more likely to develop a disproportionate focus or obsession for material gain, prestige, power, and position. But keeping the “getting” in accordance with this scriptural guidance of “understanding” will temper your temporal appetite. It will allow the proper context for your activities as a productive member of society and of the Lord’s kingdom.

As a young student full of aspiration, I remember listening to a respected and successful mentor suggest that we appropriately manage ambitions by following an order of “learn, earn, serve.” President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) taught a pattern that leads to trusting the Lord and relying on Him rather than on ourselves. He said: “Each of us has a fourfold responsibility. First, we have a responsibility to our families. Second, we have a responsibility to our employers. Third, we have a responsibility to the Lord’s work. Fourth, we have a responsibility to ourselves.”

We must have a balance. President Hinckley suggested that we fulfill this fourfold responsibility through family prayer, family home evening, family scripture study, honesty and loyalty to our employer, fulfillment of our Church responsibilities, personal scripture study, rest, recreation, and exercise.<sup>4</sup>

American philosopher and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.”<sup>5</sup>

Fortunately, Latter-day Saints never have to look very far to know what to do. With your knowledge of a loving Heavenly Father and the great plan of happiness, you have rudders deep in the water. Now, put your oars in deeply as well and pull hard and even.

In a general conference talk, President Monson quoted from Proverbs, as he had done before: “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.” Then he said, “That has been the story of my life.”<sup>6</sup> What a great life to emulate.

I have great expectations for each of you, as do the Father and the Son. I finish where I began—with the exhortation found in Proverbs: “And with all thy getting get understanding.”

Get real understanding. This will come to you as you realize the interdependence of study and prayer, as you maintain a commitment to serve while learning and earning, and as you lean not unto yourself but trust in and rely on the Lord. ■

*From a devotional address, “Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding,” given at Brigham Young University on January 14, 2014. For the full address, go to [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).*

#### NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “Making Righteous Choices at the Crossroads of Life,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 10; emphasis added.
2. See, for example, Thomas S. Monson, “A Word at Closing,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 112.
3. See Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, Lucy Mack Smith* (1979), 195–99, 202–5; emphasis added.
4. See Gordon B. Hinckley, “Rejoicing in the Privilege to Serve,” *Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting*, June 21, 2003, 22, 23.
5. Ralph Waldo Emerson, in “The American Scholar,” an address delivered on Aug. 31, 1837, at the University of Cambridge.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “A Word at Closing,” 112; quoting Proverbs 3:5–6.







INSIGHTS FROM THE DOCTRINE  
AND COVENANTS ABOUT

# the Father and the Son

*This book of revelations reveals lost truths  
about the Godhead and how we can live with  
the Savior and Heavenly Father again.*

**By Norman W. Gardner**

Seminaries and Institutes

**T**he Restoration of the gospel has given the world far greater knowledge about the nature of the Godhead and Their purposes. With this knowledge, our faith in Them grows and our desire to keep Their commandments increases.

Specifically, the Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about Jesus Christ because it teaches powerful truths concerning “His divinity, His majesty, His perfection, His love, and His redeeming power” (introduction to the Doctrine and Covenants). This book of modern revelation includes the Lord’s invitation to “learn of me, and listen to my words” (D&C 19:23). It can deepen our understanding of Him, what our relationship to Him is, what He has done for our redemption, and what He expects of us.



## In the Doctrine and Covenants, we can hear the voice of Jesus Christ

The Doctrine and Covenants is not ancient scripture but contains revelations given to Joseph Smith and his successors in our modern world. Jesus Christ's divine voice is heard speaking as the representative of the Father.<sup>1</sup> The first-person voice of the Lord Jesus Christ is recorded more frequently in the Doctrine and Covenants than in the New Testament, Book of Mormon, and Pearl of Great Price combined.<sup>2</sup>

**D&C 18:33–35** “I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it. These words are not of men . . . , but of me; . . . it is my voice which speaketh them unto you.”



*Joseph Smith received many revelations from the Savior.*

JOSEPH SMITH JR., RECEIVING REVELATION, BY DANIEL A. LEWIS



THE LORD APPEARS IN THE KIRTLAND TEMPLE, BY DEL PARSON

*Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery saw Jesus Christ in the Kirtland Temple.*

## The Doctrine and Covenants contains accounts of those who saw God

As a result of the First Vision in 1820, the boy Joseph Smith gained firsthand knowledge of the existence of the Father and the Son. The Doctrine and Covenants records additional instances when the Prophet and others saw the Father and the Son in visions or personal appearances. These accounts serve as modern witnesses for us that They live and that They directed the Restoration of the gospel.

**D&C 76:19–23** The Father and the Son were seen in vision in February 1832.

**D&C 137:1–3** The Father and the Son were seen in vision in January 1836.

**D&C 110:2–4** The great Jehovah, Jesus Christ, appeared in April 1836.



## The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about God the Father

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “When we understand the character of God, and know how to come to Him, He begins to unfold the heavens to us. . . . When we are ready to come to Him, He is ready to come to us.”<sup>3</sup> The Doctrine and Covenants helps us draw closer to Heavenly Father by teaching about His nature, attributes, and purposes.

**D&C 20:12, 17–18** God the Father is infinite and unchangeable.

**D&C 76:20, 23** The Father and the Son are separate and distinct beings.

**D&C 93:3–5** The Father and the Son are one.

**D&C 130:22** The Father and the Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bones.

**D&C 138:3–4** Heavenly Father loves His children, so He sent His Son to save mankind.

DETAIL FROM MOSES SEEING JEHOVAH, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY



*Jehovah (Jesus Christ) spoke to Moses face to face.*

## The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn about Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ was the Firstborn of all the spirit children of Heavenly Father. In the premortal life, Jesus obtained all knowledge and power and represented the Father as the Creator of the worlds. Through His divine power, the Lord Jesus Christ is the source of light and life for all of His creations. The Doctrine and Covenants clarifies many of His roles in the Father’s plan.

**D&C 93:21** Jesus Christ was the Firstborn of all the spirit children of God.

**D&C 38:1–3** Jesus Christ obtained all knowledge and power before the world was made.

**D&C 76:24** Jesus Christ represented the Father as the Creator of the worlds.

**D&C 88:6–13** Jesus Christ is the source of light and life for all of His creations.

**D&C 45:11; 136:21, 22** Jesus Christ was the great Jehovah of the Old Testament.

**D&C 43:34** Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world.

**D&C 18:11–13; 20:21–25** Jesus Christ suffered, was crucified, died, and rose again.

**D&C 29:10–12** Jesus Christ has promised to return to earth with power and glory.



*While being stoned to death, Stephen saw the Father and the Son.*





*Through modern revelation, we can learn how to become more like the Father and the Son.*

### **The Doctrine and Covenants helps us learn what the Father and the Son expect of us**

More than any other book of scripture, the Doctrine and Covenants makes it plain what eternal life is: to return to live with the Father and the Son, receive all that the Father has, and become like Them. It also tells us how Jesus Christ, through His Atonement, makes this possible and what we need to do to fulfill the requirements He has set. In addition, we learn in the Doctrine and Covenants what it means to follow Jesus Christ's example, since, like us, Jesus Christ did not have a fulness at first but received grace for grace until He had all power and glory.

**D&C 1:32; 19:16–19; 58:42–43; 95:1–2** The Savior offers forgiveness to those who repent.

**D&C 20:37, 41, 72–74;** see also **33:11** The Godhead invites those who believe to receive baptism and the Holy Ghost.

**D&C 84:19–21** Through the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the power of godliness is manifest.

**D&C 93:12–14, 16–17** Jesus Christ received grace for grace until He had a fulness.

**D&C 20:30–31** The Savior gives grace to those who love and serve Him.

**D&C 35:2; 50:40–43** We can become one with the Father and the Son.

**D&C 93:19–20** We can receive of the Father's glory and fulness.



## The Doctrine and Covenants provides a pattern for acquiring spiritual knowledge

In addition to teaching and testifying of the Father and the Son, the Doctrine and Covenants provides a pattern to acquire spiritual knowledge about all the members of the Godhead through the help of the Holy Ghost: study the Lord's word, ask Heavenly Father for understanding, and exercise faith in Jesus Christ by obeying His commandments.

Light and truth are promised to those who live according to all of the Lord's words. It is important to learn details about the nature of the Godhead and Their purposes. This knowledge can lead to diligent searching for spiritual understanding and conviction of the truth. This knowledge confirms for us that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know us personally, that They love us, and that They desire to bless us with eternal life.

**D&C 6:5; 76:5–10, 114–18** Heavenly Father wants us to ask for knowledge and promises to share it.

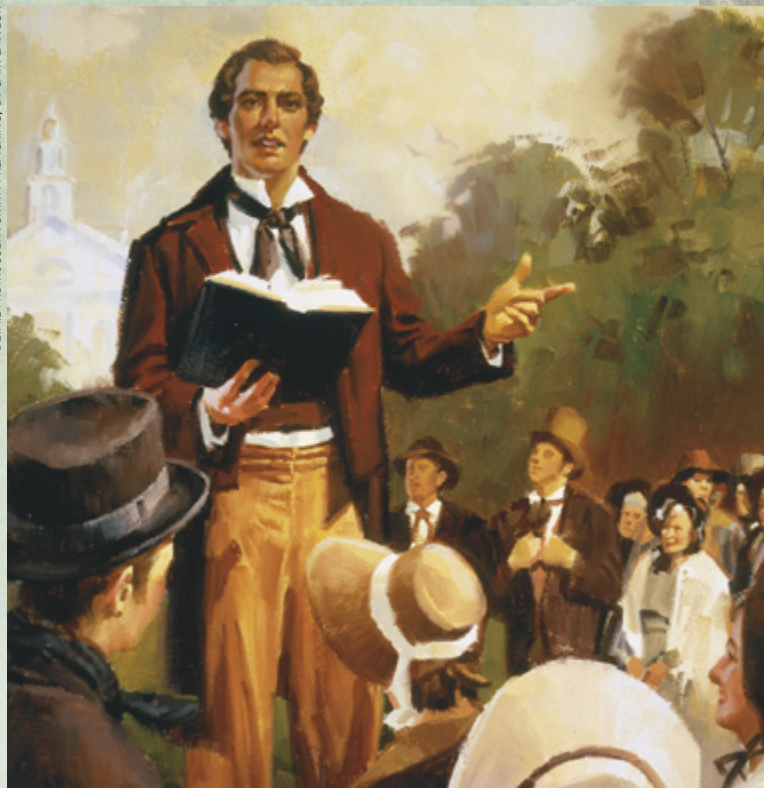
**D&C 84:43–48** The Father teaches us when we give diligent heed to His words.

**D&C 88:118** Seek learning by study and by faith.



Study and prayer can unlock spiritual knowledge.

DETAIL FROM JOSEPH SMITH PREACHING, BY SAM LAWLOR



Joseph Smith revealed the character and purposes of the Father and the Son.

## Conclusion

The Doctrine and Covenants helps us draw nearer to Heavenly Father and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, by revealing Their character and Their purposes. The Prophet Joseph Smith summarized why we can trust and rely upon God: “The purposes of our God are great, His love unfathomable, His wisdom infinite, and His power unlimited; therefore, the Saints have cause to rejoice and be glad, knowing that ‘this God is our God for ever and ever’ (Psalm 48:14).”<sup>4</sup> ■

## NOTES

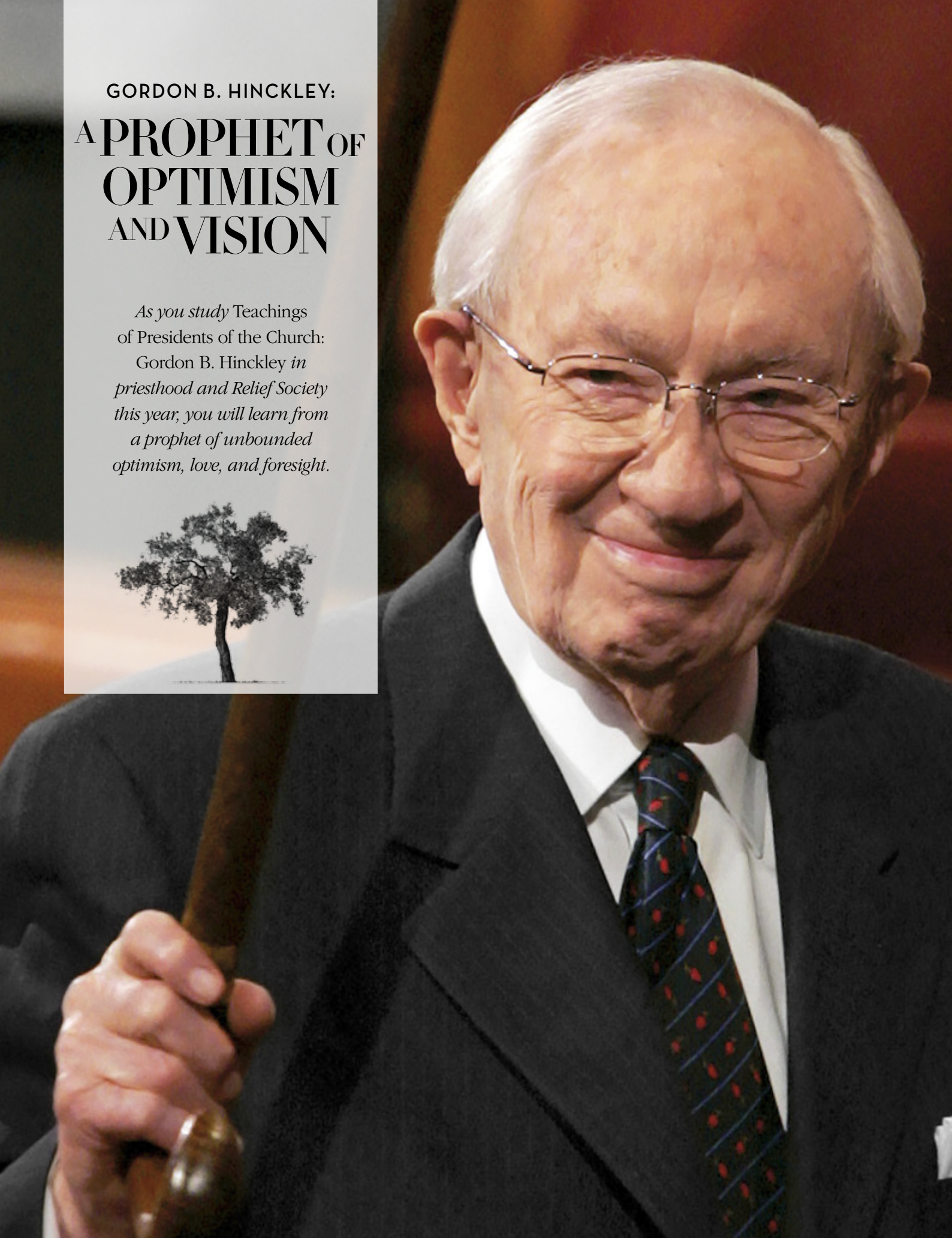
1. President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained: “All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. In all of the scriptures, where God is mentioned and where he has appeared, it was Jehovah. . . . The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:27).
2. See Gordon B. Holbrook, “The Voice of Jesus Christ in the Doctrine and Covenants,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2013, 40, 45 (note 2).
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 40–41.
4. *Teachings: Joseph Smith*, 39.



GORDON B. HINCKLEY:

# A PROPHET OF OPTIMISM AND VISION

*As you study Teachings  
of Presidents of the Church:  
Gordon B. Hinckley in  
priesthood and Relief Society  
this year, you will learn from  
a prophet of unbounded  
optimism, love, and foresight.*





*Gordon B. Hinckley was born on June 23, 1910, to Bryant Stringham Hinckley and Ada Bitner Hinckley. He married Marjorie Pay in the Salt Lake Temple on April 29, 1937, and they became the parents of five children. He served as the 15th President of the Church from March 12, 1995, to January 27, 2008.*

**By Andrew D. Olsen**

Church Publishing Services Department

“I have to plant some trees each spring,” President Gordon B. Hinckley recorded in his journal at age 82. “I think I have done so for at least the last 50 years. . . . There is something wonderful about a tree. It starts ever so small and grows through the seasons. It affords shade from the hot summer sun. It bears delicious fruit. It carries on the remarkable process of photosynthesis. . . . A tree is one of the remarkable creations of the Almighty.”<sup>1</sup>

President Hinckley continued planting trees into his 90s. In many ways, his love for planting was reflected in his ministry as an Apostle and as President of the Church. When he planted, it was an expression of optimism, a characteristic that also infused his teachings and his interactions with others. He nurtured each tree, just as he did each person. And he looked far into the future,

seeing what the trees would become—just as he saw the eternal potential of each person and the grand future of God’s work.

### “We Have Every Reason to Be Optimistic”

“I am an optimist!” President Hinckley often declared. “My plea is that we stop seeking out the storms and enjoy more fully the

sunlight.”<sup>2</sup> His optimism went much deeper than having a positive outlook, although he cultivated that. The ultimate source of his optimism—the source that made it a power—was his faith in God and his testimony of God’s plan for the happiness and salvation of His children.

One manifestation of President Hinckley’s optimism was his firm belief that “things will

work out.”<sup>3</sup> That phrase, said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “may well be President Hinckley’s most repeated assurance to family, friends, and associates. ‘Keep trying,’ he will say. ‘Be believing. Be happy. Don’t get discouraged. Things will work out.’”<sup>4</sup>

This message wasn’t only for others, however. “I say that to myself every morning,” President Hinckley told a congregation. “If you do your best, it will all work out. Put your trust



in God, and move forward with faith and confidence in the future. The Lord will not forsake us.”<sup>5</sup>

President Hinckley’s optimism sustained him through trials, feelings of inadequacy, and overwhelming pressures. And he stood by his conviction that “things will work out” even when he experienced setbacks and disappointments, heartache and loneliness.

In his optimism, President Hinckley did not minimize problems. He explained: “I have seen a good deal of this earth. . . . I have been in areas where war rages and hate smolders in the hearts of people. I have seen the appalling poverty that hovers over many lands. . . . I have watched with alarm the crumbling morals of our society.

“And yet I am an optimist. I have a simple and solemn faith that right will triumph and that truth will prevail.”<sup>6</sup>

During an interview with a *New York Times* reporter in Nauvoo, Illinois, USA, President Hinckley acknowledged the prevalence of tragedies and problems, and then he drew on his love of Church history to teach about optimism:

“We have every reason to be optimistic. . . . Look at Nauvoo. Look at what they built here in seven years and then left. But what did they do? Did they lie down and die? No! They went to work! They moved halfway across this continent and turned the soil of a desert and made it blossom as the rose. On that foundation this church has grown into a great worldwide organization affecting for good the lives of people in more than 140 nations. You can’t, you don’t, build out of pessimism or cynicism. You look with optimism, work with faith, and things happen.”<sup>7</sup>

President Hinckley’s optimism also influenced his sense of humor—an upbeat, congenial wit that built affinity with others. One time he stayed with a stake president whose family lived in an old schoolhouse that they had converted

into a home. That night, a classroom served as President Hinckley’s bedroom. During stake conference the next day, he quipped, “I [have] slept on a great many occasions in classrooms before—but never in a bed.”<sup>8</sup>



### “Our Concern Must Always Be with the Individual”

In his first general conference address as President of the Church, Gordon B. Hinckley spoke extensively about the Church’s growth. “We are becoming a great global society,” he said. He then shifted to emphasize this essential principle: “Our interest and concern must always be with the individual. . . .

“ . . . We speak in terms of numbers, but all of our efforts must be dedicated to the development of the individual.”<sup>9</sup>

While a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, President Hinckley traveled to some of the most remote areas of the world, including war zones, to minister to individuals.

No group was too far away or too small for his attention. He continued this same way as President of the Church, traveling more than a million miles to more than 60 nations, sometimes meeting with large groups, sometimes with just a handful.

In 1996, President and Sister Hinckley made an 18-day journey to eight nations in Asia and the Pacific. Beginning in Japan and moving at a vigorous pace, they met with thousands of people who packed every venue. “These are emotional experiences for me,” President Hinckley recorded while in Korea. “I see things that I scarcely dared dream of when I came here first in 1960.”<sup>10</sup> On this trip he also dedicated the Hong Kong China Temple.

The final scheduled stops were in the Philippines. After speaking to 35,000 people in Manila, President Hinckley recorded, “I stood and waved to them with great emotion



in my heart. We left with tears in our eyes.” Earlier that day he had returned to the place where, in 1961, he had offered a dedicatory prayer to begin missionary work in the Philippines. “We were able to find only one native Filipino member,” he recalled. “From that one member the Church has grown to more than 300,000 members.”<sup>11</sup>

When the Hinckleys began the trip home, they learned that the plane would refuel on the island of Saipan. President Hinckley asked if there were any missionaries on Saipan and was told that there was a small number. Although he was at the end of an exhausting trip, he wanted to meet with those few missionaries: “I asked if we might somehow get word to them that we would land in Saipan about 7:00 p.m. and would try to come out at the airport to greet them.”

Hours later in Saipan, 10 missionaries and about 60 Church members were there to greet the Hinckleys. “They threw their arms around us,” President Hinckley recorded. “They were so grateful to see us, and we were grateful to see them. We could spend only a very short time with them since only a brief time was needed to refuel the plane. We left our blessing with them and went back to the plane.”<sup>12</sup>

Another typical example of President Hinckley’s caring for an individual occurred during the 2002 Winter Olympics, which were held in Salt Lake City, Utah. Nearly every day he met with presidents, ambassadors, and other dignitaries. One day, shortly before meeting with the president of Germany, he met with a 13-year-old young woman on her birthday. “[She] suffers from aplastic anemia, a very serious illness,” he recorded. “We had a delightful visit. . . . I told her that we would remember her in our prayers.”<sup>13</sup>

President Hinckley had a special love for the children and youth of the Church, and they felt the same for him. After hearing him speak in Brazil, one young woman expressed: “I felt the Spirit of God intensely. When President Hinckley was ending his talk, he said to us, ‘You can leave here, go home, and forget everything that I said here today, but never forget that I love you.’ I will never forget those words.”<sup>14</sup>

President Hinckley’s wife, Marjorie, was both a partner

and influencer in his concern for individuals. He recorded: “Everyone she knows seems to love her because she has a genuine interest in people. She is concerned with their problems and their needs. How fortunate I am to have such a companion.”<sup>15</sup>



*Clockwise from top: President Hinckley meeting with members; with his wife, Marjorie, in Hong Kong, China; contemplating at general conference.*

After their five children were grown, the Hinckleys usually traveled together, and Sister Hinckley reached out with love around the world. When she met missionaries, she would often give their parents a surprise phone call when she returned home. She was also gifted at connecting with large audiences. “[Marge] knows how to say the things that please and help the people,” President Hinckley recorded after a regional conference. “The rest of us preach while she simply talks with them.”<sup>16</sup>

At the funeral for President Hinckley, one of his counselors, President Henry B. Eyring, summarized some of his accomplishments. He then observed that all of these accomplishments had one thing in common:

“Always they were to bless individuals with opportunity. And always he thought of those with the least opportunity,

the ordinary person struggling to cope with the difficulties of everyday life and the challenge of living the gospel of Jesus Christ. More than once he tapped his finger on my chest when I made a suggestion and said, ‘Hal, have you remembered the person who is struggling?’”<sup>17</sup>



*Clockwise from top: President Hinckley at the Boston Massachusetts Temple; interacting with the news media; with members in Ghana.*

## Vision for the Future

Connected with President Hinckley’s optimism and his focus on individuals was his prophetic vision for the future. Most profoundly, that vision concerned temples. The ordinances of the temple, President Hinckley emphasized, are “the crowning blessings the Church has to offer.”<sup>18</sup>

When he became President of the Church in 1995, there were 47 operating temples worldwide. Under his leadership, the Church more than doubled this number in a little over five years. His vision regarding temples was bold and expansive, but the entire purpose was to bless individuals one by one.

The inspiration for this new era of temple building came in 1997 when President Hinckley went to Colonia Juárez, Mexico, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of

a Church-owned school. Afterward, during a long, dusty drive, he was contemplative. “It got quiet,” recalled his secretary, Don H. Staheli. “And then, as I understand it, the revelation started coming. He had thought about smaller temples in the past, but not in the way that he thought about them this time.”<sup>19</sup>

President Hinckley later described the process: “I began to ask myself what could be done to make it possible for these people to have a temple. . . . As I meditated on this, the thought came into my mind that . . . we can build all of the essential elements of a temple into a relatively small building. . . . I sketched out a plan. . . . The whole picture came into my mind very clearly. I believe with all my heart that it was inspiration, that it was revelation from the Lord. I came home and talked with my counselors about it, and they approved of it. I then presented it to the Twelve, and they approved of it.”<sup>20</sup>

Four months later in general conference, President Hinckley made the historic announcement that the Church would begin to build smaller temples in areas where there were not enough members to justify larger ones. “We are determined . . . to take the temples to the people and afford them every opportunity for the very precious blessings that come of temple worship,” he said.<sup>21</sup>

In the next general conference, President Hinckley made another historic announcement, saying that plans were going forward to have 100 temples in operation by the end of the year 2000. “We are moving on a scale the like of which we have never seen before,” he stated.<sup>22</sup> When he reported on the progress of temple building in April 1999, he used a familiar phrase: “This is a tremendous undertaking, with many problems, but no matter the difficulty, things work out and I am confident we will reach our goal.”<sup>23</sup>

In October 2000, President Hinckley traveled to Boston, Massachusetts, USA, to dedicate the Church’s 100th temple—one of 21 he dedicated that year on four continents. By the end of his life, 124 temples were completed and another 13 were announced or under construction.

President Hinckley’s vision for the future prompted him to seek inspiration about other ways to bless God’s



children. He was anguished by the suffering and poverty he saw, so he directed a substantial expansion of the Church's humanitarian work, primarily among those who are not members of the Church. He also instituted the Perpetual Education Fund to help Church members in poverty-stricken countries. From this fund, they could receive loans to pay for the education they needed to obtain better employment, which would help them break the chains of poverty and become self-reliant. As of 2016, more than 80,000 individuals had received the opportunity for education or training made possible by loans from this fund.

Many other examples of President Hinckley's prophetic vision, such as "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" and the building of the Conference Center, are included in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Gordon B. Hinckley*.



That is my nature."<sup>24</sup> No matter his age, whether a young missionary or a 97-year-old prophet, it was likewise his nature to plant gospel seeds and saplings in the hearts of people around the world. He served for 20 years as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. He then served for 14 years as a counselor in the First Presidency. When he became President of the Church at age 84, he led it through nearly 13 years of dynamic growth.

At the core of President Hinckley's lifetime of service was his testimony of Jesus Christ and of His gospel restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. In a general conference address titled "My Testimony," he expressed the following witness, speaking parts of it through tears:

"Of all the things for which I feel grateful this morning, one stands out preeminently. That is a living testimony of Jesus Christ. . . .

*"He is my Savior and my Redeemer.* Through giving His life in pain and unspeakable suffering, He has reached down to lift me and each of us and all the sons and daughters of God from the abyss of eternal darkness following death. . . .

*"He is my God and my King.* From everlasting to everlasting, He will reign and rule as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. To His dominion there will be no end. To His glory there will be no night. . . .

"Gratefully, and with love undiminished, I bear witness of these things in His Holy name."<sup>25</sup> ■

### "My Testimony"

A few days before his 91st birthday, President Hinckley recorded: "I do not need to plant anymore, but I will.

#### NOTES

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22. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 310.
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24. Journal, June 18, 2001.
25. *Teachings: Gordon B. Hinckley*, 321–23.

# Reaching Out in Love:

## TIPS FOR HOME AND VISITING TEACHERS

By **Darren E. Schmidt**

I will admit I was at a loss for words. I had just spent nearly half an hour trying to help a less-active widowed man, whom I loved, understand why bad things sometimes happen to good people. I had used numerous scriptures and analogies that had often helped my seminary students, but to no avail.

Then suddenly my home teaching companion, my 15-year-old son, spoke up with something he had learned from his personal scripture reading. This took me by surprise. He shared a couple of verses and then testified powerfully of God's love for His children and of His desire to bless us, often doing so through our trials.

This testimony was so powerful, sincere, and meek—just as the Lord has directed such testimonies to be (see D&C 100:3–8)—that the heart of the man miraculously changed. Tears filled his eyes as he expressed gratitude to my son for the words he had spoken. Peace filled the room, and I was reminded of the inspiration that can come to a home teacher, regardless of age or experience, when his desire is to bless, strengthen, and inspire the families he teaches. When home or visiting teachers open their mouths in faith, the Lord can speak

through them (see D&C 33:8–10).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) gave the following counsel to home teachers—counsel that is also applicable to visiting teachers: “Above all, be a genuine friend to the individuals and families you teach. . . . A friend makes more than a dutiful visit each month. A friend is more concerned about helping people than getting credit. A friend cares. A friend loves. A friend listens, and a friend reaches out.”<sup>1</sup>

### Five Ideas

As we all seek to be better disciples of Jesus Christ and to develop

true friendships with those we home or visit teach, here are some ideas that might be helpful:

*Keep a home or visiting teaching journal.* Take some time following your visit to record how your families or the individuals you visit are doing and any impressions you have about how best to help them. You could also note their birthdays or upcoming events. This is a great way to help you remember things and be more effective in blessing their lives.

*Pray often for the families or individuals you visit, and seek inspiration.* In some cases, there are certain challenges that families or individuals







need to work through on their own. Others may occasionally need special assistance or attention. After thoughtful prayer, home and visiting teachers can follow the promptings of the Spirit to know what is best to do in each circumstance.

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, taught:

“Think of the families or even individuals you have been called to serve. Human judgment and good intentions will not be enough.

“So you will pray for the way to know their hearts, to know what things are amiss in the lives and the

hearts of people whom you don’t know well and who are not anxious to have you know them. You will need to know what God would have you do to help them.”<sup>2</sup>

*Look for opportunities to serve.* Certainly we try to be responsive when those we home or visit teach request our help. In addition, however, we should be looking for opportunities to be “anxiously engaged in a good cause” without having to be asked, knowing that the power is in us and that we will be held accountable for how we use our time and energies (see D&C 58:26–28).

*Be creative.* In addition to a visit, doing something extra can go a long way in developing a friendship with those you home or visit teach. Deliver a birthday treat, mail a card, have them over for a get-together, or drop off a Church video or conference talk you think they might enjoy. The point is to be creative and guided by the Spirit in the ways you choose to serve them.

*Be available to be blessed by home or visiting teachers yourself.* One home teacher expressed to me the joy he felt when one of our children greeted him with a hug at church, saying, “You’re my home teacher!” Home



## EMISSARIES OF THE LORD

“See yourselves as emissaries of the Lord to His children. . . . We would hope . . . that you will establish an era of genuine, gospel-oriented concern for the members, watching over and caring for each other, addressing spiritual and temporal needs in any way that helps.”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Emissaries to the Church,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 62.

teachers who visit regularly can inspire our families by their words and examples, as well as add a second witness to the things that we teach our children. This has occurred on many occasions in our home as home teachers have shared inspired messages and invitations with our family. Likewise, by welcoming visiting teachers into their homes, sisters strengthen one another’s faith and discipleship, thereby blessing families, the Church, and the community.

### Helping the Less Active

President Thomas S. Monson gave a hopeful promise to those who visit less-active members: “If we are conscientious in our calling, we will have many opportunities to bless lives. Our visits to those who have distanced themselves from Church activity can be the key which will eventually open the doors to their return.”<sup>3</sup>

In my home, I have a picture of the Savior given to me from a couple I was privileged to home teach. Along with many others in

our ward, we were blessed to help them return to Church activity and later serve in many callings. I consider this one of the sweetest blessings of my life. Observing the spiritual and miraculous change take place in the lives of this couple over a period of years was truly remarkable!

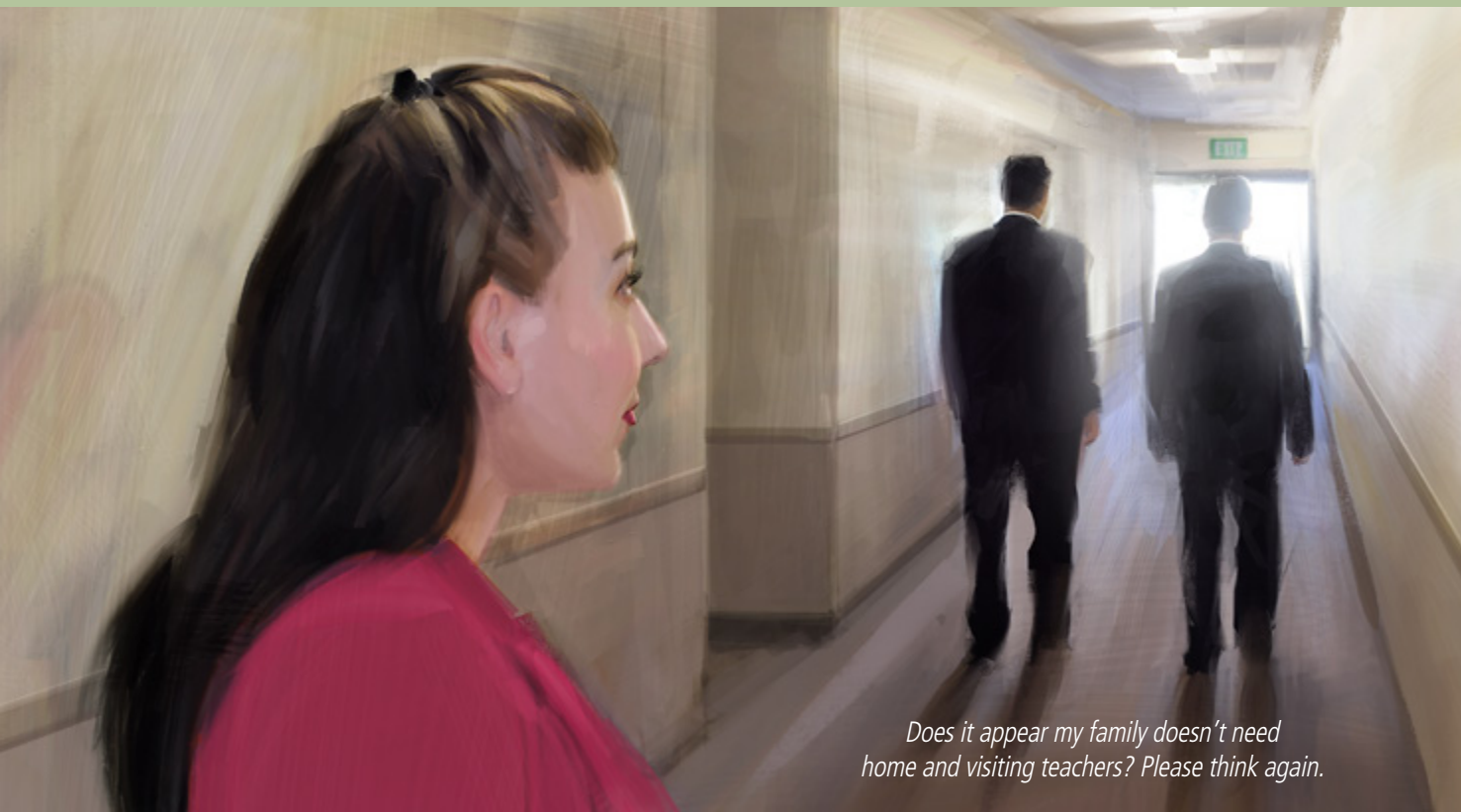
Though we each have great opportunities to bless and strengthen others through our home or visiting teaching efforts, perhaps the greatest blessing we can receive is the closeness that we develop with our Father in Heaven and the Savior in seeking to do Their will, acting on it, and then becoming more like Them in the process. Our Lord has great need of us, and I know that when we are on His errand, we are entitled to His blessings. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*

#### NOTES

1. Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Home Teachers of the Church,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 50.
2. Henry B. Eyring, “Priesthood and Personal Prayer,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 85.
3. Thomas S. Monson, “True Shepherds,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 67.





*Does it appear my family doesn't need home and visiting teachers? Please think again.*

## AWAITING YOUR VISIT: ONE SISTER'S PERSPECTIVE

Name withheld

Today, when we talked about when you could come visit my family and me, you said, “Oh, I know you are fine. We’ll catch you another time.”

That may be true based on what you see: a good marriage, financial security, faithful church attendance, dedication to Church callings, and well-adjusted children. From the outside, it may look like we have things under control and don’t need help from anyone. While it’s true that we have been deeply blessed in many ways and we feel grateful to Heavenly Father for His kindness, it’s *not* true that we don’t need home and visiting teachers.

For instance, did you know that over the years we have moved several times and have experienced difficulty in starting over in a new ward? Did you know that because of the size of our family I am sometimes overwhelmed with the tasks at hand? Did you know that my husband’s frequent travels shift much of the heavy burden of running the home and family to my shoulders? Did you know that we have children who are grown and living outside of our home, and that I have worried about one of them

and his testimony? Did you know that we have been dealing with depression and an eating disorder among our children? And did you know that both my husband and I are struggling right now with some health issues?

Of course, life is full of challenges and problems for all of us. Some days run more smoothly than others. These trials and challenges are just part of our earthly existence.

Even if you were to come to do home or visiting teaching, we might choose not to share some of these private things, but we would still love to have you in our home. That way, if the time came that we did feel like sharing some of our burdens, we would feel that you were a safe person to share with. Maybe we could even begin a friendship.

We might not ask you to do anything for us—that’s generally not our way—but we would like the company of fellow Latter-day Saints in our home, sharing their spirit and their testimony of gospel principles with our family. We would love our children to see how the process of home and visiting teaching works.

Please know that we see you as our brother or sister. Please come to our home and teach our family. Please come to our home, sit with us, and help us fill our cup. Then we will all be refreshed. ■



*How can we protect our marriages against the growing evil of technology-assisted emotional infidelity?*



# MARRIAGE, TECHNOLOGY, AND EMOTIONAL INFIDELITY

**By Lori Cluff Schade**

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

**T**he institution of marriage has come under a great deal of scrutiny. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warned us more than a decade ago that “the adversary’s attacks upon eternal marriage will continue to increase in intensity, frequency, and sophistication.”<sup>1</sup> One area of concern involves modern technology, which has opened new avenues for engaging in what is termed “emotional infidelity.”

Heavenly Father’s teachings on the sanctity of marriage, however, remain clear. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” tells us that “children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity.”<sup>2</sup>

The scriptures declare, “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14; see also Mosiah 13:22; D&C 59:6), and “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife [or husband]” (Exodus 20:17; see also Mosiah 13:24). Story after story—from David and Bathsheba (see 2 Samuel 11) to Akish and the daughter of Jared (see Ether 8:8–17)—warn us of the destructive results of lust and infidelity.

So when God’s teachings on the sanctity of marriage are so clear, why do some put their marriage at risk for the fleeting excitement of emotional infidelity?



*In a healthy marriage, protecting our hearts or emotions is just as important as protecting our bodies.*

### Redefining Infidelity

Texting, email, games, chat rooms, and social media offer an array of new ways for individuals to connect outside of marriage, and the result is an enormous increase in technology-assisted infidelity. As a marriage therapist, I have seen emotional infidelity develop through all of these channels.

One client said to me, “I feel like I’m in a nightmare. I mean, this is not who I am.” Her husband had discovered a series of texts on her cell phone between her and another man in their ward. The texts ranged from flirtation to wholehearted emotional sharing, and her husband was deeply wounded.

The absence of physical contact had made it easier for my client to justify her ongoing emotional interaction, unaware that the generated connection would become so powerful. In some ways, these types of emotional connections are more harmful than physical connections. Betrayed partners often report more distress about a

spouse’s emotional involvement with someone outside the marriage than about the physical betrayal that often follows. In the words of one client, “I believe that my wife loves me, but I also believe that a sliver of her heart belongs to him, and I can’t live with that.”

Over three decades ago, Latter-day Saint marriage and family therapist Carlfred Broderick gave a talk addressing infidelity titled “It Came Out of the Blue, like a Scheduled Airline.” He chose the title because couples he worked with often expressed surprise at their predicament and said that the infidelity had “come out of the blue”; however, Dr. Broderick pointed out that infidelity is the result of previous smaller decisions in marriage. These choices place a couple on a course for betrayal as predictable as a scheduled airliner.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Broderick’s ideas are more relevant today than ever.

### Losing Spiritual Integrity

Online and texting activities are easy to hide. In the absence of face-to-face communication, people tend to be more open about sharing intimate feelings. This creates intense emotional connections. Some feel like they can have the novelty of infidelity online with one person while enjoying the stability of marriage in real life with another. This plan does not work. Infidelity in any of its forms compromises marriages spiritually, structurally, and sometimes irreparably. Putting one’s committed marriage at risk by being involved in emotional infidelity is akin to selling one’s birthright for a mess of pottage (see Genesis 25).

Viewing instances of technology-assisted emotional infidelity has helped me better understand the importance of the Savior’s admonition that “whosoever looketh on a woman [or man], to lust after her [or him], hath committed adultery already in his [or her] heart. . . . I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart” (3 Nephi 12:28–29).



A healthy marriage offers a secure bond and a capacity for quality and depth with which emotional infidelity—when looked at honestly—cannot ultimately compete. However, the secrecy surrounding emotional infidelity through the use of cell phones or computers can seem exciting. In contrast to this fantasy, the practical tasks of marriage—such as bill paying, childcare, and chores—may make marriage seem mundane, clouding judgment. In a technology-based relationship, people can easily control their presentations to the other person. Such relationships are fraught with deception. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said that Satan “will do anything he can to counterfeit true

love, to profane and desecrate true love wherever and whenever he encounters it.”<sup>4</sup>

### Committing to Loyalty

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, “One might expect that every marriage in the house of the Lord would carry with it a covenant of loyalty one to another.”<sup>5</sup> Renowned marital researcher John Gottman pointed out that “a committed relationship is a contract of mutual trust, respect, nurturance, and protection. *Anything* that violates that contract can become traitorous.” He identified two common aspects that diminish trust in marriage: “Deception (not revealing your true needs to avoid unpleasant conflict) and a yearning for emotional connection that seems unavailable from the partner.”<sup>6</sup> The real danger comes when the avoidance of conflict becomes deep-seated resentment.

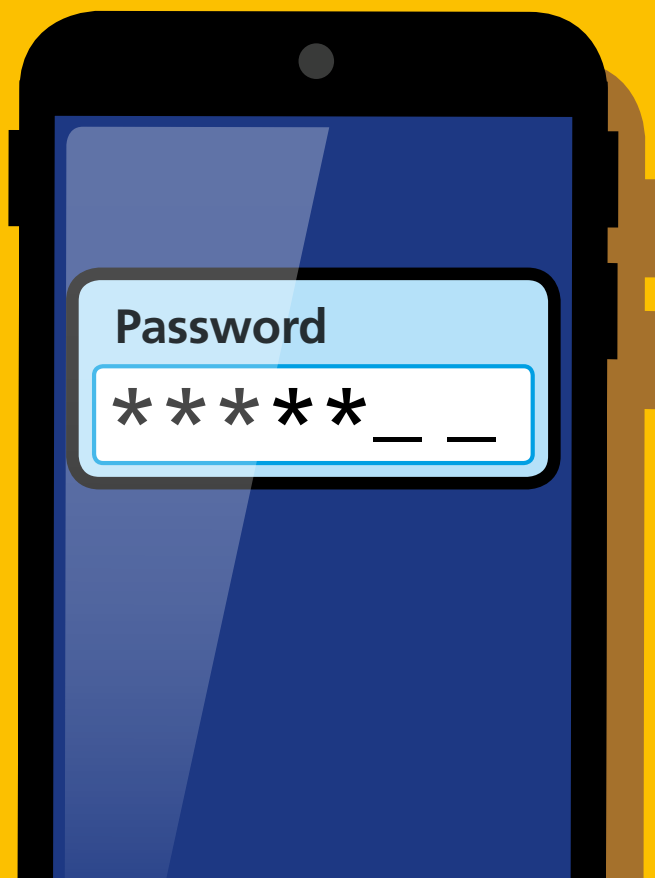
I once asked a man who had been engaging in online infidelity via texting if he knew what he was getting from that relationship that he wasn’t getting in his marriage. He explained that he got acceptance and admiration he didn’t feel at home. I asked him if he ever talked to his wife about it. He replied, “I don’t think I want to risk that kind of rejection. She hasn’t liked me for a long time.” He had decided to “not need anything” from his marriage, leaving it open to attack. In a healthy marriage, both partners are loyal to each other and take turns sharing needs and responding to each other in meaningful ways. Attending early to difficulties within the marriage helps prevent infidelity.

### Protecting Your Marriage

Knowing what signs to watch for and how to apply gospel principles can help prevent emotional infidelity and build stronger marriages.

1. *Realize that you are not immune to the possibility of infidelity.* In his Brigham Young University marriage classes, Brent Barlow told a story about a ditch in front of his family’s home. Being aware of the risks the ditch posed, he and his wife frequently counseled their children to be cautious. He pointed out that his children were likely safer from that

*A boundary has been crossed when one person begins hiding interactions from a spouse.*



potential peril than people living farther away because his children's awareness of the danger kept them vigilant.<sup>7</sup>

Researcher Shirley Glass has pointed out that those who become involved in infidelity frequently love their spouses and believe that infidelity is wrong. However, love and convictions don't always make us immune to the temptation to develop inappropriate attachments under certain circumstances.<sup>8</sup> We must always remain vigilant in our marriages.

2. *Actively monitor communication boundaries within and around the sacred marital relationship.* In this Internet age it is vital that we build strong boundaries to protect our marriages. In Alma 49 we read how Captain Moroni led the Nephites to build a fortress around the city Ammonihah "in a manner which never had been known among the children of Lehi" (verse 8). The Lamanites had conquered that city before and assumed it would be "easy prey" (verse 3), but they were wrong and "astonished exceedingly" (verse 5). They failed in their attempt to take the city.

Dr. Glass uses the imagery of walls and windows to illustrate communication boundaries in marriage.<sup>9</sup> In a solid marriage, open sharing between partners is represented by a window, while walls are erected around the relationship, protecting it from intrusive forces from the outside. When emotional infidelity occurs, one partner has put up a wall, limiting communication with the marital partner, and opened a window to an outside partner by sharing personal information. Spouses should *never* discuss marital problems with another person where there is any potential for infidelity.

Be especially careful in your online contact with former love interests, since previous familiarity potentially ignites high levels of emotion, says Dr. Glass.<sup>10</sup> People are often unprepared for the emotion elicited from these encounters and can misinterpret the feelings to mean that the old bond is somehow more legitimate than the marriage relationship. This comparison is inaccurate and fraudulent. While brain chemicals produced in these situations are real and drug-like, they are also fleeting and unsustainable.



*Ask yourself, "Would I be comfortable if my spouse were watching over my shoulder?"*

3. *Remain transparent with your spouse.* Infidelity includes deception. A boundary has been crossed when one person begins hiding interactions from a spouse. One deception can entirely shift a relationship. A wife locked her phone and changed the password so that her husband couldn't see her text messages. He found out later that this was the point at which she and the man she was involved with online had started disclosing their feelings for each other. Additionally, when she locked her phone, she began planning to meet up with the other man, which eventually led to physical infidelity.

4. *Watch carefully and correct often.* King Benjamin's words apply here: "If ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, . . . ye must perish" (Mosiah 4:30).

As President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said:

"The difference between happiness and misery in individuals, in marriages, and families often comes down to an error of only a few degrees. . . .



“Small errors and minor drifts away from the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring sorrowful consequences into our lives. It is therefore of critical importance that we become self-disciplined enough to make early and decisive corrections to get back on the right track and not wait or hope that errors will somehow correct themselves.”<sup>11</sup>

### Healing through the Atonement of Jesus Christ

When a spouse has made a mistake but has repented, the couple can rebuild their relationship through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. However, too many people with truly repentant spouses fail to believe that healing is possible after a violation of trust. Rebuilding trust is scary and difficult, but it is possible, and people can restore strong marriages from the wreckage. As couples allow themselves time to heal and continue to work at communication about the tragic events, and as they make restitution by being different in action, validating each other and apologizing, healing starts to emerge. Forgiveness can be a slow process, but it is attainable. As Elder Walter F. González of the Seventy said, “The power of our covenants is greater than any challenge we face or we may face.”<sup>12</sup>

The most gratifying experiences I encounter as a couples therapist are those in which betrayal has threatened the foundation of a marriage but the partners heal from the tragedy and create more strength and closeness than they had before. They realize the importance of recommitting and healing, and they put forth the effort to make it happen. They listen to each other more carefully. They humbly evaluate what they can do differently to prevent such incidents from happening again. They exercise kindness and patience. They appreciate each other more than before. Most important, they exercise faith and find ways to obtain healing through Jesus Christ and His Atonement, both individually and as a couple. I cannot overemphasize that healing is possible. I have seen many marriages heal after betrayal.

I remember one instance in which a husband whose wife had been involved in online infidelity came in not only understandably hurt but also uncharitable and condemning

toward his wife. As we processed the situation in therapy, he realized that he had been emotionally unavailable to her. He began to soften over time. Not only did he become more forgiving of her, but he asked for forgiveness from her. She became genuinely apologetic and connected to him and gave up her online infidelity completely. She realized she really did want to be with her husband, who had become more responsive and kind to her.

When healing occurs, it is usually because *both* spouses increase their spiritual sensitivity and responsiveness to each other and *both* take responsibility for their own contributions to difficulties in the marriage.

Heavenly Father sees and understands our day, with its unique challenges. He knew technology would become a risk as well as a blessing, and He provided a plan for us to follow to return to Him. Strengthening our testimonies of the all-encompassing nature of the Atonement of Jesus Christ helps us access motivation to connect with spouses and strengthen marriages. President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, pointed out that “marriages performed in our temples, meant to be eternal relationships, . . . become the most sacred covenants we can make.”<sup>13</sup> As we work to fortify and repair our marriages through repentance, we honor our sacred marital covenants. God will help us. ■

#### NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, “Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan,” *Ensign*, June 2006, 85.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. See Carlfred B. Broderick, “It Came Out of the Blue, like a Scheduled Airline: Guarding against Adultery and Weathering Tribulation” (audio recording, 1983).
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Place No More for the Enemy of My Soul,” *Ensign*, May 2010, 46.
5. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Loyalty,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 59.
6. See John Gottman and Nan Silver, *What Makes Love Last? How to Build Trust and Avoid Betrayal* (2012), 66.
7. See Brent Barlow, “When Speaking of Marriage, Consider Temples and Ditches” (Meaningful Marriage series), [brentabarlow.blogspot.com](http://brentabarlow.blogspot.com); first printed in *Deseret News*, Jan. 19, 1984.
8. See Shirley P. Glass, *Not “Just Friends”: Rebuilding Trust and Recovering Your Sanity after Infidelity* (2003), 21–22.
9. See Glass, *Not “Just Friends,”* 25.
10. See Glass, *Not “Just Friends,”* 34.
11. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “A Matter of a Few Degrees,” *Ensign*, May 2008, 58, 59.
12. Walter F. González, “Followers of Christ,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 14.
13. James E. Faust, “Father, Come Home,” *Ensign*, May 1993, 36.

# THE HOLY GHOST

## Our Personal Guide

*The third member of the Godhead can help make our life's journey safer and more sure.*

By Janice Porter Hayes

**B**y the time my uncle Ken Porter was 19 years old, he had flown more than 50 missions in Europe as a tail gunner on a B-17 for the U.S. military. Of all his World War II experiences, one of my favorites is his story of the first all-black fighter group, known to history as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The Tuskegee Airmen often acted as escorts for Ken and his bombing group, assigned to keep them as safe as possible and giving aid when needed. Their help was never more valued than during one hazardous mission over Hungary when things went badly and my uncle's plane was hit by flak from head to tail, knocking off the nose cone, damaging two of the engines, and wounding most of the crew. In an attempt to stay in the air, they discarded most of their guns, ammo, and anything else they could find. Even so, their situation became dire until at last they were able to make radio contact with the Tuskegee Airmen.

"Where are you boys?" one of my uncle's crewmen asked. "We can't see you."

Within seconds of his call, the answer came reassuringly back: "Don't worry, fellas. You can't see us, but we sure enough can see you!" With that, the Tuskegee Airmen flew in to help my uncle, his crew, and their damaged B-17 to safety.

In recalling that story, I've often thought how we also have a guide in our lives. While the Savior was gathered with His Apostles before His Crucifixion, He told them, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16). This Comforter was also meant for us. With the



Holy Ghost to guide us, our life's journey will be safer and more sure, bringing us to where the Lord wants us to go.

This guide follows us through all phases of our lives. When I was younger, my life's questions focused on things such as which university to attend, which career path to follow, whether or not to serve a mission, and whom to marry. Now as a parent, my decisions affect not only my life but also those of my husband and our children.

Such a decision faced our family several years ago when we were given the opportunity to adopt a child. It was a decision that required sacrifices of time and money and the changing of our family dynamics. After prayerful consideration, we felt certain there was a child waiting to join our family and started the process that eventually led us to an orphanage in Asia.

Once there, we continued to need the guidance of the





Comforter. Because adoptive parents in that part of the world were allowed to choose their child, we needed help to know, in a very small amount of time, which child would fit into our family and be the most happy with us. We arrived at the orphanage with a prayer in our hearts.

After spending less than an hour moving from room to room, holding and playing with one child after another, we met Sophie, a beautiful four-year-old with a shy smile, sitting quietly in the last room we visited. For my husband and me, it was love at first sight, along with the assurance that this child was meant to be ours. In all the years since, we have never doubted or regretted our choice. Sophie is a vital part of our family and a joy to have with us.

We can have such guidance in all areas of our lives. If we consider the Holy Ghost as our personal guide, sent from a loving Father and His Son, we begin to understand

how invaluable this blessing is to us. With the Comforter by our side, we can, like my uncle Ken and his crew, return safely home. ■

*The author lives in Arizona, USA.*



### **GUIDANCE FOR MAJOR DECISIONS**

“The Holy Ghost provides personal revelation to help us make major life decisions about such things as education, missions, careers, marriage, children, where we will live with our families, and so on. . . .

“Each of us may feel the influence of the Holy Ghost differently. His promptings will be felt in different degrees of intensity according to our individual needs and circumstances.”

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

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION, “RED TAILS—THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN,” BY JEFF STEPHENSON © 2012, MAY NOT BE COPIED





# Rescuing the Lost

COUNSEL for  
PARENTS and  
LEADERS

*The Savior's parables in Luke 15 provide guidance for reaching out and rescuing children who have strayed from the gospel path.*



**By Roy Bean**

Associate Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy,  
Brigham Young University

**B**linking away tears, Jeff and Samantha (names have been changed) sat in my office talking about their children's struggles with addiction, mental illness, and poor decision making. As Jeff and Samantha described their situation, they wrestled with a complex mix of feelings, ranging from sadness and anger to love and compassion.

Their son and daughter, now ages 22 and 25, were raised in a family where the gospel was preached and lived. When they were young, the children got along with siblings, behaved well at home and at church, and had several good friendships. However, by their mid-teens they were failing classes, refusing to attend church, and were both in overly serious dating relationships.

By the end of high school, their behaviors had worsened, and the children were regularly using drugs and alcohol, which created even more conflict and turmoil for the family. Now, in young adulthood, both children were a source of concern due to their poor life decisions, failed marriages, Church inactivity, employment difficulties, and disconnection from the family.

In my work as a marriage and family therapist, I have found that few matters bring greater heartache and anguish than losing a child to the adversary's influence. Well-acquainted with this pain, our Heavenly Father provides reassurance and guidance to parents and Church leaders facing this challenge. Some of the best counsel can be found in Luke 15, where the Savior gives the parables of the lost sheep, the misplaced silver coin, and the prodigal son. Each parable begins with something that is missing and ends in a celebration of the rescue and return of that which was lost. There are several lessons we can learn from each parable, and a careful examination provides three separate options for *how* the rescue can be carried out.



## The Lost Sheep: Searching Diligently

*“What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine and go into the wilderness after that which is lost, until he find it?” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 15:4 [in Luke 15:4, footnote a]).*

In this parable, the shepherd leaves the 99 and enters the wilderness to search for the lost sheep. The shepherd is single-minded in his focus on the lost sheep, demonstrating both bravery and unselfishness. In doing so, he follows the example of the Master Shepherd, who has numbered His sheep and knows each one individually (see John 10:14–15; 3 Nephi 18:30–32).

Today’s parents and leaders can apply this parable and undertake their own diligent search. It could involve praying fervently and constantly, holding a family fast each month, and striving to make regular contact with the child. It may involve serving the child even when it is not convenient or planning activities around their interests without expecting an immediate return to Church activity. These efforts are most helpful when the child hears a voice that he or she knows to be reassuring and loving (see John 10:4).

It is also worth noting that the shepherd likely did not leave the 99 sheep unattended for too long, as neglect of those sheep can also have its own set of negative consequences.

Samantha and Jeff had a firm conviction that true happiness was possible only through obedience to the commandments (see Alma 3:26). They also needed to be reminded to have fun and edifying moments with their wayward children. After recognizing this, they visited favorite picnic spots and went camping with their children. They took a road trip with the whole family and did a service project for an elderly neighbor who had been good to the children in their youth. On the trip, they re-created several old family photos and posted them proudly on social media, refusing to let any of the problems define their family. In the process, they found it easier to love all

their children as they enjoyed activities together. They also found that these more happy times kept their children’s problems from destroying their hopeful feelings about the family and its eternal purpose.

## The Lost Coin: Searching Inwardly

*“What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?” (Luke 15:8).*

As she searches for the lost coin, the woman’s efforts are focused, literally, on cleaning her own house. Likewise, for today’s families it may be necessary for some parents to look inwardly at their own lives as they try to rescue a lost family member. Through individual introspection and a search for personal revelation, parents and families can repent, clear away bad habits, develop a closer connection to God, and apologize for any mistakes made.

Looking inwardly can help parents identify individual weaknesses or the marital and family problems that may have contributed to a child’s alienation. For example, a child may be driven away through parental neglect or insensitivity or perhaps because parents weren’t as willing to forgive and forget as they could have been. These shortcomings can be discovered through prayerful self-examination and open conversations with trusted friends. In more complicated or stubborn circumstances, family therapy can be helpful as a way to search inwardly and help address contributing issues. Self-examination can be humbling and difficult, as it is always much easier to see the failings of a wayward child, even when there is a real need for improvement in one’s own life (see Matthew 7:3–5).

For Mario and Jessica, one such problem area was in their constant disagreements about rules and consequences for their daughter, Megan, age 16. Megan was struggling with substance abuse and poor school performance, which had resulted in family arguments about curfew and other rules. Fear and worry led Jessica and Mario to blame each other for Megan’s mistakes, and as a result, they had drifted apart instead of pulling together in their time of need. As is





*For today's families it may be necessary for some parents to look inwardly at their own lives as they try to rescue a lost family member.*



common for many couples in these high-stress situations, one parent (in this case, Mario) had become rigid and unforgiving, pushing the other parent, Jessica, to deal more permissively with their daughter in an attempt to keep the parenting balanced.

In meeting with them, I immediately saw their willingness to improve as parents and a strong desire to help their daughter. I explained that while children should be provided with both structure (rules and consequences) and flexibility (empathy and personalized adjustments), it is healthier when each parent provides *both* elements. Otherwise, one parent will work to establish more rules to control the child's behavior while the other parent will argue for fewer rules and less strictness so as to not push the child away.

The shift to more balanced and shared parental roles was not easy for Mario and Jessica, but it was aided when Mario worked harder to build a loving relationship with Megan. As he stepped out of his "rule enforcer" role, there was less conflict at home and Jessica saw that he wasn't trying to punish Megan at every turn. This helped Jessica feel better about enforcing rules and consequences, resulting in more even and balanced expectations for curfew. Not surprisingly, when Jessica and Mario stopped treating each other as the enemy, they became more united in rewarding, disciplining, negotiating with, *and* loving their daughter.

### **The Prodigal Son: Parents Remaining Steadfast**

*"The younger son . . . took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living" (Luke 15:13).*

When one's best efforts do not result in the return of lost children, parents can feel desperate and hopeless. Aware of these feelings, perhaps from His own and His Father's experiences, the Savior provides lasting counsel in this final and frequently referenced parable (see Luke 15:11–24). In it, there is a dramatic presentation of the options that remain for families after parents and others have done everything they can think to do.



First, the father trusts in God's loving plan for his son. Despite his wealth and ability to fund a desperate and expansive search, the father does not send his servants out after the wayward young man in the middle of his "riotous living." Instead, the father follows God's own respect for mortal agency, permitting the son to be humbled and to come to his own remembrance of the value of family and faith.

*"And when [the son] came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

*"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee"*  
(Luke 15:17-18).

In moments like this, families need to trust the Lord and let Him work to ready their son or daughter for change. In my experience, many children do not "come to themselves" or become humble enough to listen to good counsel until *after* they have learned life lessons the hard way. For example, if a child has been unable to stay drug free, then it is probably time for him or her to experience the consequences of jail time and other penalties. If parents or other loved ones respond too quickly in rescuing the child from his or her own mistakes, this can delay or even interfere with the child's change of heart (see Alma 5:12-15).

When facing these challenging moments, it is important for family members to encourage one another to be patient because it is difficult to stand by and not help when a child is suffering, even when that suffering is a consequence of the child's own mistakes.

Second, from this parable we see that father, family, and home did not move. As a result, when the young man was finally humble enough to come home, he knew right where to find it. In this regard, the father remained spiritually "fixed, immovable, and unchangeable" (D&C 88:133) in his faith and actions.

Taking this parable to heart, parents must strive to remain unwavering in their obedience to God's laws, despite any disappointment and worry about children.



*The parable of the prodigal son stands as one of the greatest stories of God's love and compassion for His children.*





Sadly, some parents begin to falter themselves and lose faith in the promises of eternal families when their children fall away. Please remember that some self-doubt and worry about God's unfulfilled promises are commonplace when dealing with a lost son or daughter; however, these insecurities can be conquered in many ways. As recommendations, parents should focus on the blessings that they have received and find ways to reach out and serve those they are able to influence.

Third, the father, watching the path leading up to the home, saw his son “yet a great way off, . . . had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). While most of the return journey was made by the son alone—finding his way to true change—the father rushed out to greet him and to bring him the rest of the way home. This welcome helped bond the father and son together and eased the shame the son might have felt as he returned home.

To help families more patiently endure the waiting, I have counseled parents to create a mental portrait of their Heavenly Father at the window of the home, watching the path, ready to rush out and welcome the lost soul home. In the words of one client, this “image helps me not worry so much, because I can see the Lord watching and waiting for my daughter. It also helps me to replace moments of fear with feelings of hope, and I know that God will help me know when I should run out to help.” Given the unique circumstances of each family, it is also a good idea for parents to discuss how they will support their child who is still “a great way off” but who is now following the path home.

Fourth, the father's forgiveness is admirable and worthy of emulation as he embraces his son. All the heartache and sleepless nights were real and very painful for the father, but these are diminished as he reunites with his son. This kind of compassion and forgiveness is no small accomplishment for family members who have been hurt by the actions and absence of a prodigal (see the reaction of the other son in Luke 15:25–32). Surely, the Savior had challenging moments like these in mind when he commanded us to “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44).

The parable of the prodigal son stands as one of the greatest stories of God's love and compassion for His children and has considerable value beyond simply offering hope and reassurance to saddened parents. For example, it may remind faithful parents that they too face their own struggles and failings and need forgiveness. This recognition can help them be patient with and understanding toward their children.

Through these three parables, dedicated parents, leaders, and loved ones can find inspiration in their efforts to respond appropriately to children who falter. Prayerful consideration and personal inspiration will help all to know God's will for the lost soul. Studied carefully and applied diligently, these parables as well as teachings provided by our prophets will allow the promises of eternal families to be realized and enjoyed forever. ■



### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

“We cannot pray away another's agency. Remember the father of the prodigal son, who patiently waited for his son to ‘[come] to himself,’ all the while watching for him. And ‘when he was yet a great way off,’ he ran to him [Luke 15:17, 20]. We can pray for guidance about when to speak, what to say, and yes, on some occasions, when to be still. Remember, our children and family members already chose to follow the Savior in their premortal realm. Sometimes it is only by their own life's experiences that those sacred feelings are awakened again. Ultimately, the choice to love and follow the Lord has to be their own.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “‘Come, Follow Me’ by Practicing Christian Love and Service,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 24.

# GRASS, BLISTERS, *God's love*

By Pauline Mooney

It was an early morning in April. The sun was shining brightly, and there was not a cloud in sight. I gazed out my bedroom window and laughed. Here in Ireland we don't say, "Is it going to rain today?" We say, "What time is it going to rain today?"


It had been such a difficult couple of months. My health had taken a turn for the worse, and it was taking longer for me to recover than usual. I was becoming frustrated over having to stay in bed. As a single sister, I am used to pushing myself and being on the go.

My gardens resembled something out of a Tarzan movie. Even if my asthma had allowed it, I couldn't cut the grass because my lawn mower had broken. Having no strength most days to even make it down the stairs, I cried

*The Savior's love for me shone  
forth in a young man's willingness  
to serve me no matter the cost.*







and pleaded with the Lord that I might get well as soon as possible, but I guess I had to learn patience.

By the end of the sixth week I felt beaten. As I lay in bed one night, I felt lost. The only person I could confide in was my Heavenly Father. I could not kneel but perched myself up on the bed and began to pour my heart out. I was overcome with a sense of peace, and I felt the Lord's reassurance that this trial was just about over. By the next morning I was feeling a little better. So I booked a flight for the following Monday to take me to the Preston England Temple for a week, with no regard for the jungle surrounding my house.

### **Young Men to the Rescue**

The day after I got home from the temple, spiritual batteries recharged and feeling like a new person, I was surprised to receive a call from my bishop. The young men needed a service project. Did I still need my grass cut? "Yes, please!" I answered. While I was attending a Church meeting that evening, the young men came and did a wonderful job.

I was very touched when I saw the hard work the young men had put into cutting down the jungle that had sprung up in my yard while I was sick.

But there was more.

### **Willing to Suffer for Me**

During Sunday School the following Sabbath day, we discussed the plan of salvation. A mother asked if she could share something. With tears in her eyes she told of an experience she had had that week. Her son had gone to do a service project with the young men. He came home with painful blisters on his feet, hardly able to walk. She had asked him, "Why did you do so much? Why did you not just do a little?" He looked her straight in the eye and said, "It really doesn't matter, Mum. Look at who it was for."

That was me he was talking about. I was the one he was willing to suffer for. And in that moment I caught a glimpse of my Savior's love for me. In his one act of service, this young man had helped me realize the lengths the Savior would go to just for me. After all my years of study, praying, and listening, I finally got it. My heart was full. Tears flowed freely as I knew my Heavenly Father had shown me my divine worth, allowing me to see the Savior's love shine forth in this young man's willingness to serve no matter what the cost. I truly had a stripling warrior cut my grass! (see Alma 53:16–22).

I know without a shadow of a doubt that my Savior lives. I have a purpose here on earth—to try to be like that stripling warrior and do all I can do to help and ease the burdens of others. ■

*The author lives in Dublin, Ireland.*









By Elder  
Christoffel  
Golden  
Of the Seventy

# Valiant

## IN OUR TESTIMONY OF THE SAVIOR

*Each of us will be called upon to act in moments that are difficult and yet defining. These moments will determine who we are and what we have become.*

As a young man many years ago, I was drafted—or as we called it, “conscripted”—into the South African military. I was assigned to a squad of soldiers who were good men but had the roughness of speech and behavior that is sometimes manifested by men serving in the military.

Surrounded by such influences, I discovered that it wasn’t always easy to live gospel standards. But from the beginning of my military service, I was pleased to stand up for my beliefs. I made it clear that I would not engage in conduct that I knew was wrong. I am grateful that the men in my squad—some grudgingly at first—grew to respect my standards.

On one occasion, during a military training camp, a group of us were standing around a campfire on a beautiful, dark, cloudless, star-filled night. Some of the fellows in my squad were drinking beer while I sipped a soft drink. The discussion was pleasant, with no improper talk.

During our visiting, a few men from another unit wandered over to our happy band. One of these men turned to me and, noticing the soft drink in my hand, mocked me for not joining the men in drinking beer. Before I could respond, one of my friends surprised me by rebuking the man.

“We suggest that you leave now, sir,” he said. “We will not have anyone speak to Chris like that! In fact, he is the only man amongst us who lives his life like a true Christian.”

With that, the rebuked man quietly skulked away into the dark night. At that moment, although a little embarrassed by the unexpected compliment, I remembered Paul's counsel to be "an example of the believers" (1 Timothy 4:12).

You too face choices, especially at this time in your life, when your spirit is uniquely attuned and receptive to great opportunities that await you. The question is, what will you want to write about yourself in 5, 10, or 20 years' time—or even at the end of your life?

### What Does It Mean to Be Valiant?

In one of the most remarkable visions recorded in holy writ, the Prophet Joseph Smith described the condition of those who will inherit the celestial kingdom after they have been resurrected and judged. This same section in the Doctrine and Covenants (section 76) also reveals the conditions and circumstances of those who are not fit for the celestial kingdom but instead are candidates for the terrestrial and telestial kingdoms.

In speaking of those who will inherit the terrestrial kingdom, revelation teaches us that they "are [the] honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men . . . [and] who receive of [God's] glory, but not of his fulness" (D&C 76:75–76). Then we learn this astounding principle: "These are they who are *not valiant in the testimony of Jesus*; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God" (D&C 76:79; emphasis added).

Imagine that for a moment. Would we forfeit the glory of the celestial kingdom, with all of its profound and everlasting blessings, simply because we were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus here on earth in our brief, mortal, probationary state?

What does it mean to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus? A modern-day Apostle of the Lord declared:

"It is to be courageous and bold; to use all our strength, energy, and ability in the warfare with the world; to fight

the good fight of faith. . . . The great cornerstone of valiance in the cause of righteousness is obedience to the whole law of the whole gospel.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'come unto Christ, and be perfected in him'; it is to deny ourselves 'of all ungodliness,' and 'love God' with all our 'might, mind and strength.'" (Moroni 10:32.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to believe in Christ and his gospel with unshakable conviction. It is to know of the verity and divinity of the Lord's work on earth. . . .

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to 'press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.' It is to 'endure to the end.' (2 Nephi 31:20.) It is to live our religion, to practice what we preach, to keep the commandments. It is the manifestation of 'pure religion' in the lives of men; it is visiting 'the fatherless and widows in their affliction' and keeping ourselves 'unspotted from the world.'" (James 1:27.)

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to bridle our

passions, control our appetites, and rise above carnal and evil things. It is to overcome the world as did he who is our prototype and who himself was the most valiant of all our Father's children. It is to be morally clean, to pay our tithes and offerings, to honor the Sabbath day, to pray with full purpose of heart, to lay our all upon the altar if called upon to do so.

"To be valiant in the testimony of Jesus is to take the Lord's side on every issue. It is to vote as he would vote. It is to think what he thinks, to believe what he believes, to say what he would say and do what he would do in the same situation. It is to have the mind of Christ and be one with him as he is one with his Father."<sup>1</sup>

Here I need to add something our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, taught during His earthly, mortal ministry:

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

*To be valiant  
is to live our religion,  
to practice what we preach,  
and to keep the commandments.*





“For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

“And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:34–39).

Our purpose in mortality is nothing more or less than to prepare to live once again in the presence of our beloved Heavenly Father as joint heirs with Jesus Christ (see Romans 8:16–18). This glorious existence in eternal families alongside our wife or husband and our children and extended family

is available to everyone even though some are to experience these blessings sometime beyond the veil of mortality.

Such blessings require that we take up our cross and remain valiant unto the end in testimony and devotion to our Lord and Savior.

### **Prepare to Act**

The road each of us is required to chart is filled with countless opportunities and fraught with numerous challenges. We are required to make many decisions every day—some small and seemingly unimportant, others profound and lasting in their effects.

It is a glaring fact that each of us will be called upon to act in moments that are difficult and yet defining. These moments will determine who we are and what we have become. Often they come when it is inconvenient and





unpopular to act righteously and valiantly. As you write your life's story, you will find that the most defining moments you will ever face occur when you are standing alone.

I relate an account here of standing alone in the midst of great opposition. Sometime during November 1838, the Prophet Joseph Smith and others, including Elder Parley P. Pratt (1807–57), were chained and incarcerated in Richmond, Missouri, USA.

Elder Pratt records the following incident during their incarceration:

“In one of those tedious nights we had lain as if in sleep till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies and filthy language of our guards, Colonel Price at their head, as they recounted to each other their deeds of rapine, murder, robbery, etc., which they had committed

among the ‘*Mormons*’ while at Far West [Missouri] and vicinity. They even boasted of defiling by force wives, daughters and virgins, and of shooting or dashing out the brains of men, women and children.

“I had listened till I became so disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards; but had said nothing to Joseph, or any one else, although I lay next to him and knew he was awake. On a sudden he arose to his feet, and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

“SILENCE, ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS INSTANT!”

“He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty.



Chained, and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.”<sup>2</sup>

The courage that the Prophet Joseph Smith showed is not reserved for prophets or members of the Church of a previous generation. An incident in the life of President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) bears this out. In the fall of 1857, while 19-year-old Joseph F. was returning from his mission in Hawaii, USA, he joined a wagon train in California, USA. It was a volatile time for the Saints. Johnston’s Army was marching toward Utah, and many had bitter feelings toward the Church.

One evening, several hoodlums rode into the wagon train camp, cursing and threatening to hurt every Mormon they could find. Most in the wagon train hid in the brush, but Joseph F. thought to himself: “Shall I run from these fellows? Why should I fear them?”

With that, he walked up to one of the intruders, who, with pistol in hand, demanded, “Are you a ‘Mormon?’”

Joseph F. responded, “Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through.”

At that, the hoodlum grasped his hand and said, “Well you are the —— —— pleasantest man I ever met! Shake, young fellow, I am glad to see a man that stands up for his convictions.”<sup>3</sup>

You are now engaged in some of the most significant moments of your life! You are now writing and will yet write, moment by moment and day by day, your personal history. There will be times when you will need

to act, while on other occasions you will wisely hold your peace. Opportunities will abound, decisions will need to be made, and challenges will have to be confronted!

In our Heavenly Father’s great plan of happiness, ever remember that you are never alone! Many in this life, and more beyond the veil of mortality, even on this very day, are pleading your cause with the Lord. Great power has been given you through the ordinances you have received and the covenants you have made. Above all, your beloved Heavenly Father and His Son—our Savior Jesus Christ, our Advocate—are ever present to help you through life. In a deeply affecting teaching during the Savior’s mortal ministry, He extended an invitation to every living soul and therefore to each of us:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28–30).

I add my solemn witness of the living reality of our Eternal Heavenly Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. I also testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in every conceivable way the Lord’s restored Church and kingdom of God upon the earth.

May I—and those who share this testimony—ever remain valiant to this great cause. ■

*From an LDS Business College devotional address, “Being Valiant,” given at the Assembly Hall on Temple Square on June 17, 2014. For the full address, go to [ldsbc.edu](http://ldsbc.edu).*

#### NOTES

1. Bruce R. McConkie, “Be Valiant in the Fight of Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1974, 35.
2. *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (1938), 210–11.
3. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 104.



#### STAND FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE

“May we ever be courageous and prepared to stand for what we believe, and if we must stand alone in the process, may we do so courageously, strengthened by the knowledge that in reality we are never alone when we stand with our Father in Heaven.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 67.



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

## UNANSWERED PRAYERS

“Why aren’t my prayers being answered?” It’s a question that many of us have probably wondered about. It can be a particularly confusing question for children who are still learning about the relationship between prayer and principles like obedience, faith, and Heavenly Father’s will. Two articles from this month’s *Friend* can help you start a family conversation of your own about this sensitive topic.



### “Answers from an Apostle” (page 12)

Short quotes from Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles answer the question “Will Heavenly Father always answer my prayers?” On the next page, there’s a short story about Elder Oaks’s father getting sick and dying when Dallin was seven years old. Has your family had any similar situations? Talk about how your family can find peace even when heartfelt prayers aren’t answered with happy endings.



### “Don’t Forget to Pray for Erik” (page 36)

This story is about a family praying for a son who has distanced himself from the Church. You could use the same backpack analogy to explain that agency plays a central role in what happens when we pray for others.



### SCRIPTURE SUPPORT

- *Jesus Christ’s example (Matthew 6:10)*: When Jesus taught us how to pray, He used the phrase “Thy will be done.” Talk about what this means. Jesus Christ set the perfect example in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Matthew 26:39). Are there ways your family prayers can shift to acknowledge God’s will?
- *Joseph Smith receiving the golden plates (Joseph Smith—History 1:53)*: When Moroni told Joseph about the golden plates, Joseph wanted to start working with them right away. However, he was told to wait for four years until he was ready. Why do you think Heavenly Father wanted Joseph to wait?



### OBJECT LESSON IDEA

Sometimes prayers aren’t answered the way we want because we understand only a small part of life, while Heavenly Father sees the big picture. You could use a puzzle or painting to help children understand this idea. Looking at only one piece of a puzzle or small area of a painting, it’s impossible to tell how the color and shape fit with the whole. Only when we see the big picture do we understand the purpose of a particular piece. Similarly, we can trust that Heavenly Father is answering our prayers in ways that will come together beautifully.

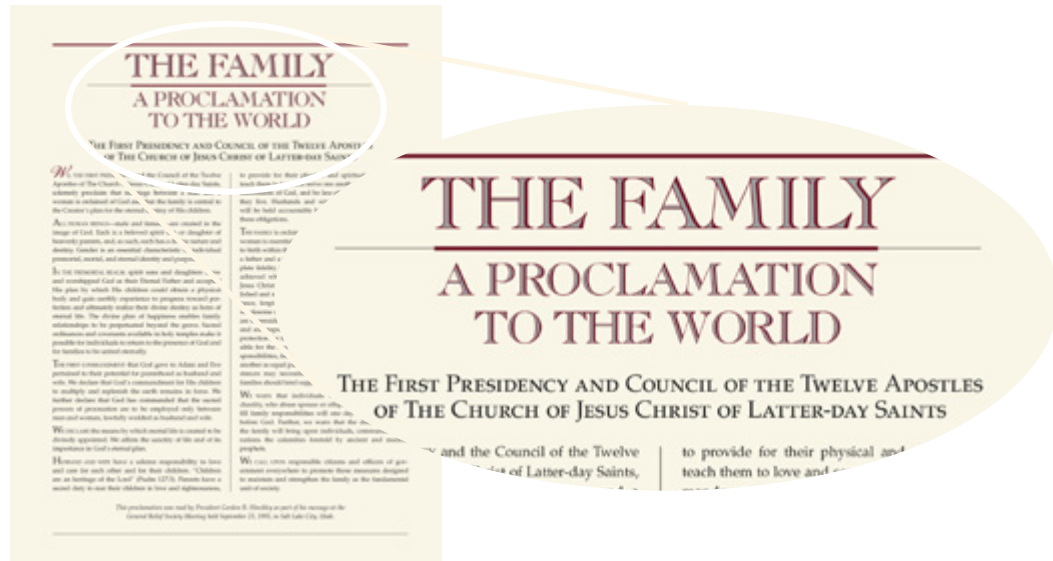


# TEACHING THE PROCLAMATION TO CHILDREN

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

## This Month's Selection

Read out loud the full title of the proclamation: "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."



## How to Explain This to Children

A "proclamation" is a very important announcement. Sometimes kings and queens make proclamations to the people in their land. This proclamation wasn't written by a king or a queen—it was written by the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles! It teaches us important things that Heavenly Father wants us to know about families. It warns us about actions that will hurt our families or our communities. It also teaches us how we can stay safe and happy in this life. These teachings are so important that we want everyone in the entire world to hear this message. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), who was the prophet before President Monson, first read this proclamation at a general Relief Society meeting in September 1995.

## Activity Idea

Imagine your family had the chance to share a message when the entire world was watching. What would you say? Create your own proclamation by writing or drawing your testimonies onto a large paper or poster board. Take turns standing on a chair and reading the statements of testimony out loud in a bold way, as if you were making an announcement. How does sharing your testimony make you feel? Why would it be important to listen to the proclamations and testimonies of the First Presidency and the Apostles? ■

### NOTE

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

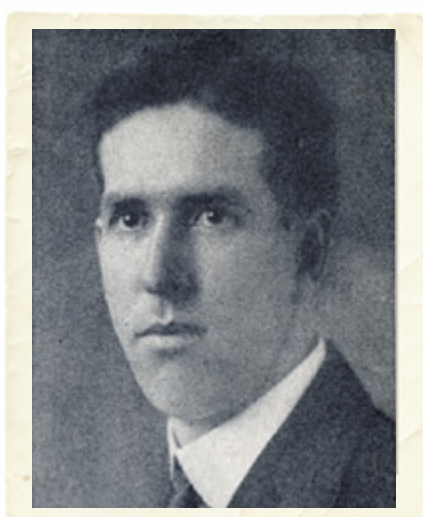


Find other teaching tips and a copy of the family proclamation at [ProclamationKids.lds.org](http://ProclamationKids.lds.org).

# THEY WALK WITH ME

By Carol Ann Stump

*A look at my great-grandmother's book of remembrance opened up new doors.*



Half of my 16 great-great-grandparents crossed the plains with wagons and handcarts. All but two were members of the Church living in Utah well before the 20th century. My family has been doing family history for over 100 years. It is done. No more to do.

So, over the years I've been enjoying the histories written by my many relatives. They are inspiring! I especially love the photographs. One of my favorites is the portrait of Annabelle, the beloved sister of my great-great-grandfather.

When I unpacked my great-grandmother's book of remembrance hoping to find a previously overlooked

photograph, I thumbed through several pages of pedigree charts and thought I should double-check these dates in FamilySearch. Guess what I discovered. Annabelle was never sealed to her husband, John. In fact, her husband and his family were nowhere to be found in Church records. And here I thought we were done.

I knew Annabelle's husband's name from my great-grandmother's records. Then, thanks to modern technology, indexers, and FamilySearch partner sites, I found this couple in census records, as well as other records that were available. I verified John's important dates, input them into FamilySearch, and reserved the

ordinances—all in a few hours! I was also able to find records of his parents, siblings, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

I found myself longing for a photograph of John, and then it occurred to me to search for his name on the Internet. What a discovery! He was a notable political economist, professor, activist, and politician. An online used bookstore had scanned the cover of one of his books—a cover with his photograph. I like to think of Internet search engines as a modern-day miracle, but I believe it is the Spirit that inspires people everywhere to scan, upload, and index various documents, histories, books, and records.

I have now reserved more than 200 ordinances in my supposed "It Is Done, No More to Do" family tree. Discovering my long-gone family members has been a life-changing event. In the past, significant transformations in my life have come through painful personal trials. But this has been different. My life has changed through love, connection, and inspiration. I have seen a glimpse of eternity. I want to be connected to these people. I love them. They inspire me. They walk with me. ■

*The author lives in Utah, USA.*



## HOW TO FIND FAMILY NAMES

Do you want to take family names to the temple, but most of your ancestors have had their temple work done? Where do you start looking?



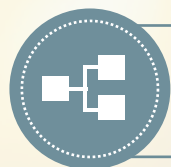
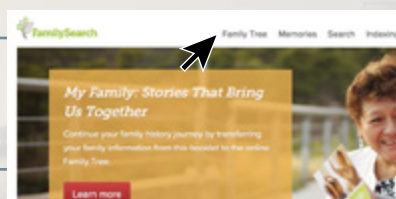
## FAMILIES SEALED FOREVER

“Elijah came not only to stimulate research for ancestors. He also enabled families to be eternally linked beyond the bounds of mortality. Indeed, the opportunity for families to be sealed forever is the real reason for our research.”

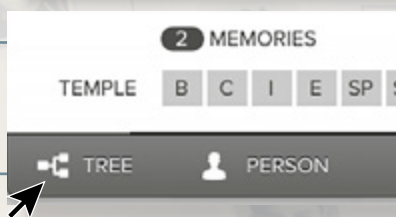
President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “A New Harvest Time,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 34.



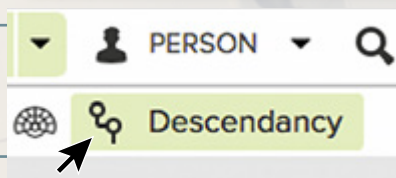
1. Sign in to [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). In the Family Tree drop-down menu, click “Tree.”



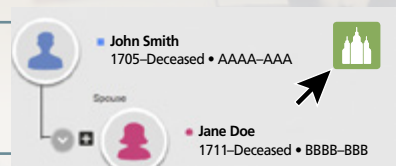
2. Click the name of an ancestor born in the late 1700s or early 1800s, and then select the “Tree” icon for that ancestor.



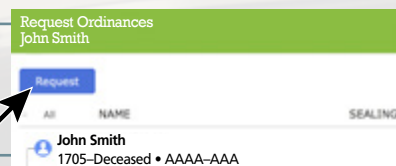
3. Select the descendency view (near the top left of the screen). A list of the ancestor’s descendants appears.



4. Verify if temple work has been done for each descendant (a green temple icon indicates work needs to be done).



5. When you see someone who needs ordinances performed, click the green temple icon, then click the “Request” button.



## RESPECTING WOMEN—NO MATTER WHAT AGE

I was called to teach the Aaronic Priesthood in my branch, and one Sunday the topic was respect for womanhood. During the lesson we discussed that respect should be shown to every female, from infant to adulthood, as stated in the Aaronic Priesthood manual.

Gabriel (name has been changed), one of the young men in the class, said that to him a woman is a female who is old enough to be his mother and any female younger than that should respect him because he is a man. No one else in the class agreed with him, which was hard for him to believe.

We continued to discuss ways to show respect to women, and I told them that one thing I do is give up my seat on the large public transportation van when a woman boards, even if it means standing for 30–40 minutes before arriving at my destination. I told

them that men ought to stand and let women have the seats. Gabriel was still uncomfortable with the lesson.

Two days later, I boarded a van and sat down in the front. All of the seats were full when a man and his young daughter boarded and walked to the rear. Soon after, an elderly woman entered the van, and I stood up and offered her my seat.

A man behind me tapped my shoulder, pointed to the back of the van, and told me a young man had asked him to get my attention. I walked back to see who this young man was. Everyone nearby was smiling because the young man had just given his seat to the man and his four-year-old daughter who had boarded earlier. It was Gabriel, the young man in my priesthood class who had been uncomfortable with the topic of respect for womanhood.

He said to me, “I was watching to see if you would stand for the woman who entered the van. I was moved when I saw that you did, and I remembered our lesson on Sunday and had to stand up for the little girl and her father.”

How happy I was to see that our young men live what they are taught in the Church. He used to think that respect was reserved only for older women, but after our Sunday lesson, he chose to show respect for a four-year-old girl.

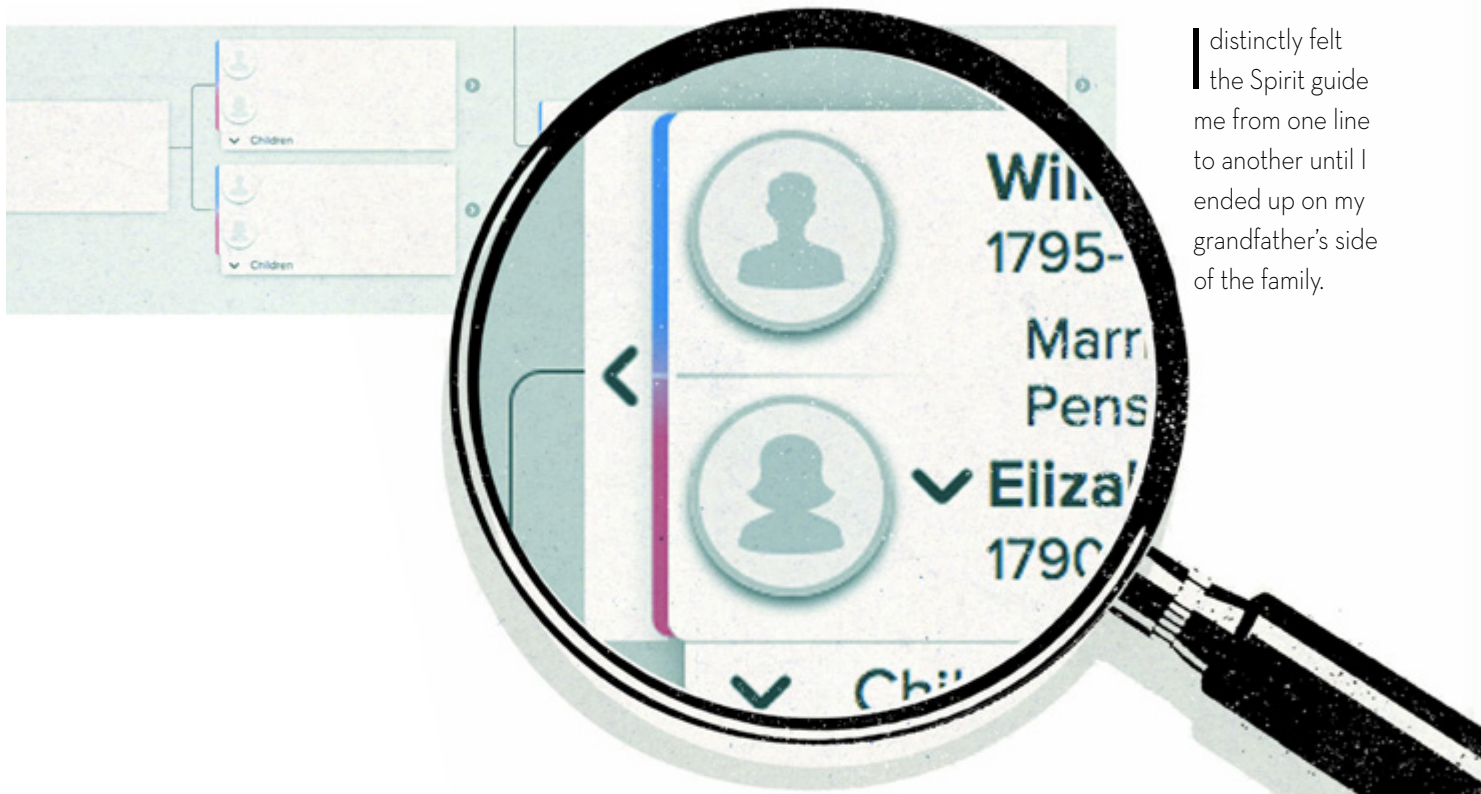
I was also happy that I chose to live what I taught, helping him learn to show respect for women of all ages. I wondered what his feelings would have been if I had not stood up for the woman in the van. A scripture came to my mind: “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them” (John 13:17). ■

Owie Osaretin Friday, Edo, Nigeria

An elderly woman entered the van, and I stood up and offered her my seat.







I distinctly felt the Spirit guide me from one line to another until I ended up on my grandfather's side of the family.

## WHO IS READY NOW?

One Sunday following the final session of a general conference, I felt a very specific prompting to sign into my FamilySearch account and do some family history. I was reluctant to work on my family history because I had never had much success with my other attempts. My family is quite vigilant in family history, and I just had a thought in the back of my mind that there was nothing left to do.

I sat back and sighed with frustration as I looked at the dead end I had tried working on for years, hoping that this would finally be the day where I would find some information. I began my regular searches through census, marriage, and birth records, and after an hour I found nothing.

Then the Spirit that had been whispering to me all weekend through the conference sessions prompted me to pray and find out who was ready for their work to be done now.

As I finished my prayer, I went back to my own name and moved forward through the line. I distinctly felt the Spirit guide me from one line to another until I ended up on my grandfather's side of the family. Over the next hour the Spirit flourished in the room, and I came away with six names to take to the temple. As I finished requesting the names for the temple, I glanced down at some of the records I had received information from. My eyes swelled with tears and my heart was full of joy—the

information had come from indexers who had volunteered their time to enter records for my ancestors. In gratitude, I indexed names for others for the next hour.

That day my testimony swelled with thankfulness for two reasons. One, that during general conference, the Spirit had led me to do family history work and to know which names to search for. Second, for Church members all over the world who index names so that people like me can find our ancestors clearly and quickly and hasten their work. It was a clear and powerful testimony to me of God's work spreading forth upon the whole earth. ■

Leisa Wimpee, Nevada, USA

## A SCOUTMASTER'S PRAYER

I was a Scoutmaster leading 20 young men and two leaders on an activity trip in southern Utah, USA.

When we got to the turnoff that would take us to the campsite, I stopped and surveyed the desert in front of me. I had made this trip many times, but for some reason, I couldn't see anything that I recognized. I scanned left and right, looking for something familiar.

No matter how many roads I turned onto, they were all dead ends.

It was getting dark. Finally, I stopped and told everyone to stay

put. I grabbed a flashlight and told them that I'd find the road on foot and signal to them once I had found the way.

What I actually did was kneel down and beg Heavenly Father to help us out of this awkward situation. I poured my heart out to Him, detailing my preparedness, my love for the boys, my gratitude for the fathers who had come with us, and my absolute faith that He would answer my prayer quickly. I finished my prayer and stood up. I expected to get up off my knees, point my flashlight out into the

darkness, and have the beam immediately fall upon the right road.

But nothing happened.

I silently scanned the horizon as far as my beam would reach.

Still nothing.

I couldn't believe it. I *knew* that as soon as I stood up, I would see the road. I *knew* that the Lord would not let me down, especially with so many people depending on me.

I now had to face two frustrated fathers and their vans full of rowdy, anxious young men, all of them asking, "Are we there yet?"

What I actually did was kneel down and beg Heavenly Father to help us out of this awkward situation.

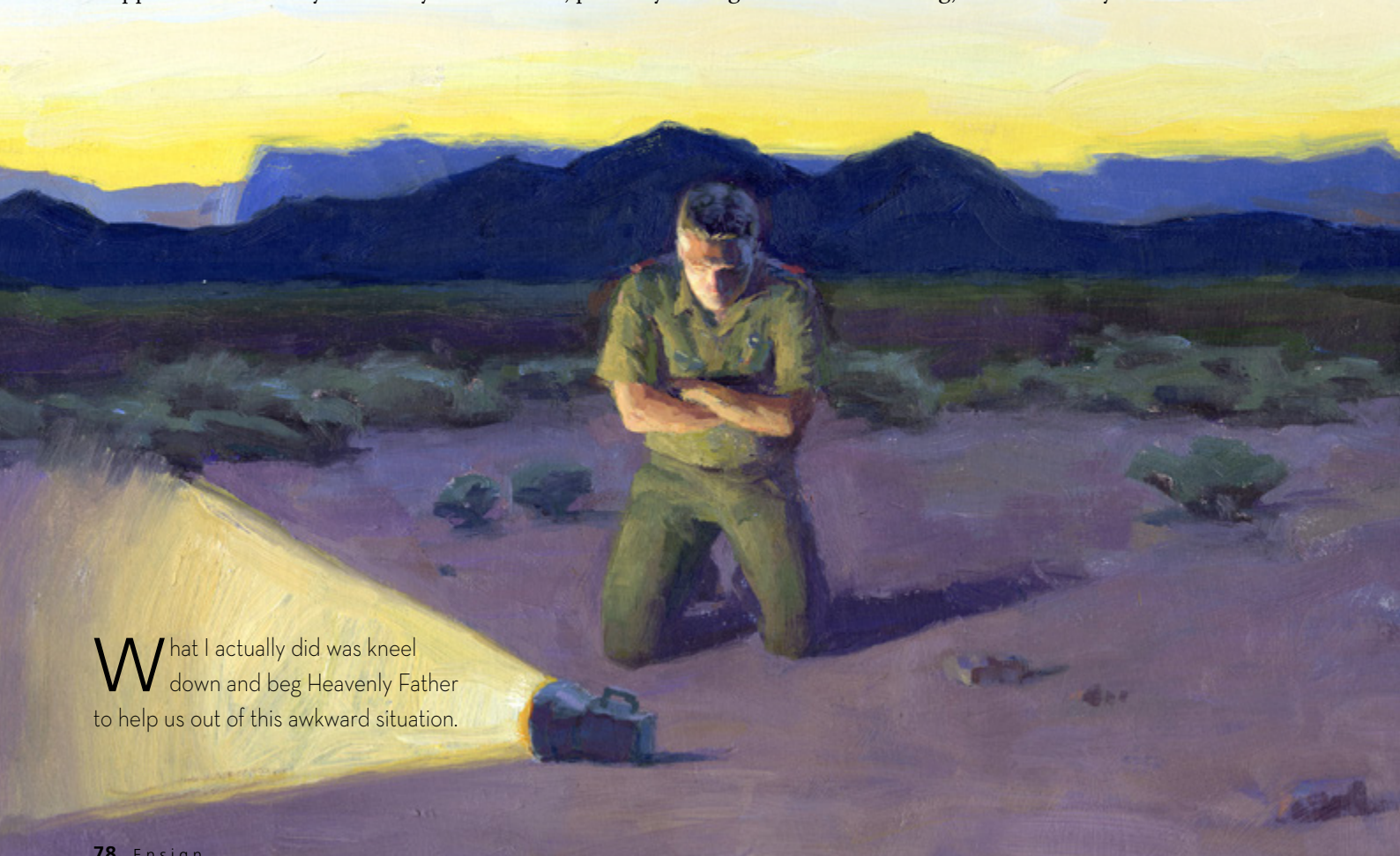


ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS



I apologized and assured them that I had made this trip 20 times in my life and that I knew the road was there. I just couldn't see it.

Finally, we decided to drive into town and rent two motel rooms. We would start out fresh on Saturday morning.

Since we couldn't build fires to cook the campfire dinners we brought, we went to the local pizza place we'd seen at the end of town.

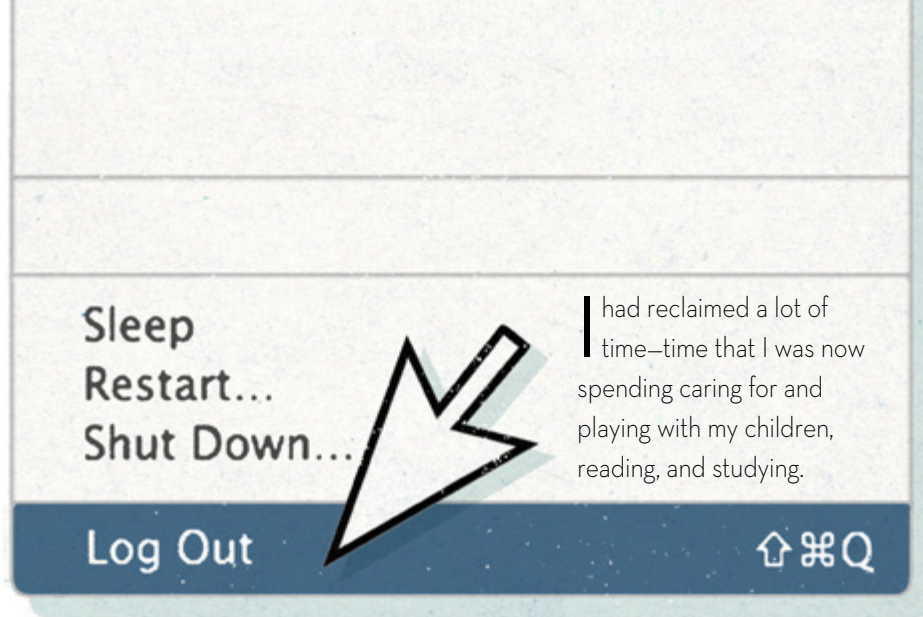
The pizza was delicious and the boys were happy, but I still felt guilty about the motel and dinner bills.

As we ate, I wondered why Heavenly Father hadn't answered my prayer, when suddenly I heard a loud boom.

I got up, swung open the door of the pizza place, and saw the biggest downpour of rain I had ever seen. There were lightning bolts to the northwest—right toward where I had been praying for an answer not an hour earlier. At that moment, the Spirit came over me, and I realized that the Lord *had* answered my prayer!

The next morning, the sky was blue, and as we headed back into the maze of dirt roads, I drove straight to the exact turnoff I had been searching for the night before. I know now how prayers are sometimes answered with a no, but they are *always* answered. ■

Tony Rogerson, Utah, USA



## ADJUSTING MY PRIORITIES

Shortly after I started our family blog, I found myself spending all of my free time updating it and thinking about how to make it more creative or appealing. I spent a great deal of time reading others' blogs too.

Within a few weeks, blogging had taken priority over my daily scripture study and other reading. I couldn't concentrate while studying, I didn't want to read as much, and I felt a lack of the Spirit in my life. I had less patience with my children, and the time I should have been spending with them I was spending on the computer.

It wasn't that blogging was inappropriate; after all, it is a great way to stay in touch with family and friends. But since I could feel my focus shift away from things that would give me a strong spiritual foundation, I knew something needed to change.

I started by admitting to myself that I didn't need to blog every day and that I didn't need to check other people's blogs daily either. I decided

I could still spend free time on the computer but only after I had finished my scripture study and other reading. By the time I got the most important things done, there usually wasn't much time for blogging, but that was OK. I had reclaimed a lot of time—time that I was now spending caring for and playing with my children, reading, and studying.

After just a few days of adjusted priorities, I noticed that I was feeling the Spirit more abundantly in my life again.

I know that as I make a priority each day of doing what will benefit me spiritually, I will feel the Spirit more and more on a daily basis. I know that making time for studying the scriptures, reading Church magazines and other good literature, and thinking about things that matter eternally can help me be a better wife, a better mother, and a better member of the Lord's Church. ■

Jinny Davis, Texas, USA



**By President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)**

First Counselor in the First Presidency

## THE CASE FOR A LIVING PROPHET

*In 1939, before the outbreak of World War II, Brother Brown was invited by a member of England’s House of Commons to present a legal argument for Brother Brown’s claim that Joseph Smith was a prophet. In an address given at Brigham Young University on October 4, 1955, titled “The Profile of a Prophet,” President Brown described their conversation (see [speeches.byu.edu](https://speeches.byu.edu)).*

I began . . . , “You say that my belief that God spoke to a man in this age is fantastic and absurd?”

“To me it is.”

“Do you believe that God ever did speak to anyone?”

“Certainly, all through the Bible we have evidence of that.”

“Did He speak to Adam?”

“Yes.”

“To Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, and on through the prophets?”

“I believe He spoke to each of them.”

“Do you believe that contact between God and man ceased when Jesus appeared on the earth?”

“No, such communication reached its climax, its apex, at that time.”

“Do you believe, sir, that after Jesus was resurrected, a certain



lawyer—who was also a tentmaker by the name of Saul of Tarsus—when on his way to Damascus talked with Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, resurrected, and had ascended into heaven?”

“I do.”

“Whose voice did Saul hear?”

“It was the voice of Jesus Christ, for He so introduced Himself.”

“Then, I am submitting to you in all seriousness that it was standard procedure in Bible times for God to talk to man.”

“I think I will admit that, but it stopped shortly after the first century of the Christian era.”

“Why do you think it stopped?”

“I can’t say.”

“You think that God hasn’t spoken since then?”

“I am sure He hasn’t.”

“There must be a reason. Can you give me a reason?”

“I do not know.”

“May I suggest some possible reasons? Perhaps God does not speak to man anymore because He cannot. He has lost the power.”

He said, “Of course that would be blasphemous.”

“Well, then, if you don’t accept that, perhaps He doesn’t speak to men because He doesn’t love us anymore and He is no longer interested in the affairs of men.”

“No,” he said, “God loves all men, and He is no respecter of persons.”

“Well, then, if He could speak, and if He loves us, then the only other possible answer, as I see it, is that we don’t need Him. We have made such rapid strides in science and we are so well educated that we don’t need God anymore.”

And then he said—and his voice trembled as he thought of impending war—“Mr. Brown, there never was a time in the history of the world when the voice of God was needed as it is needed now. Perhaps you can tell me why He doesn’t speak.”

My answer was: “He *does* speak, He has spoken; but men need faith to hear Him.” ■





**THE FIRST VISION, BY JORGE COCCO SANTÁNGELO**

*"When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith—History 1:17).*



# In Church Magazines

**Ensign:** How can we protect our marriages against the evil of technology-assisted emotional infidelity? See “Marriage, Technology, and Emotional Infidelity” (page 50). Plus, find out how three of the Savior’s parables provide guidance for reaching out to wandering children (page 58).

**New Era:** Get material related to the 2017 Mutual theme, including some thoughts from the Young Men and Young Women General Presidents (page 10), a poster (page 13), and a new song (page 14). Also, find ideas for youth on navigating social media (page 36).

**Friend:** This year, the *Friend* is asking children to show how much they care. When they do something kind, they can write on a heart and mail it to the *Friend* (this would make a great family home evening!). The magazine will be collecting hearts to cover a huge map of the world throughout the year. (See page 6.)