

Ensign



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ONE OF GOD'S
GREATEST GIFTS
TO US IS THE **JOY OF**
TRYING AGAIN,
FOR **NO FAILURE**
EVER NEED BE FINAL.

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON



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By Margot Hovley
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Imagine a mother and father gathering their children around a dinner table for nourishment and feelings of love and belonging. As the family members sit down, there's joy on their faces from being together and perhaps some happy anticipation of the delicious meal to come.

In much the same way, Heavenly Father has asked us, His covenant children, to gather our ancestors. As members of God's family, in a future heavenly day we'll sit down together in peace and love. We'll nourish each other and feel the joy of togetherness.

To create this beautiful picture, we need to act. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: "As you follow the promptings to learn about your family history, you may discover that a distant relative shares some of your facial features or your

**FAMILY HISTORY
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More Online



RECHARGE YOUR SPIRITUAL BATTERIES

Elder Bassett points out our need for regular spiritual replenishment—a charge for our spiritual batteries (see page 30). Three family home evening ideas that will help energize your family's spiritual batteries can be found at lds.org/go/E11830.

TEMPLE NIGHT SIMPLIFIED

Going to the temple may not always be easy or convenient, but when we strive to make the temple a priority, we will be blessed (see pages 34, 42). Here are six tips for making temple trips easier: lds.org/go/E11842.



PEACE: 2018 MUTUAL THEME

This year, youth will learn how to find peace in a troubled world through the gospel of Jesus Christ. See page 46 for creative ways to use the Mutual theme to teach and strengthen youth. Find four more ways at lds.org/go/E11846.

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By President
Thomas S. Monson

THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

“Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement,” President Thomas S. Monson has taught. “Our task is to become our best selves. One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final.”¹

We often associate the advent of a new year with resolutions and goals. We resolve to improve, to change, to try again. Perhaps the most important way we can try again is by embracing what President Monson has called “the gift of repentance.”²

In the following excerpts from his teachings since he became President of the Church, President Monson counsels us to “apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.”³

The Miracle of Forgiveness

“We have all made incorrect choices. If we have not already corrected such choices, I assure you that there is a way to do so. The process is called repentance. I plead with you to correct your mistakes. Our Savior died to provide you and me that blessed gift. Although the path is not easy, the promise is real: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ [Isaiah 1:18]. ‘And I, the Lord, remember them no more’ [D&C 58:42]. Don’t put your eternal life at risk. If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will

find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness.”⁴

Return to the Path

“Although it is imperative that we choose wisely, there are times when we will make foolish choices. The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings, that we might return to the path which will lead us to that celestial glory we seek.”⁵

The Way Back

“If any of you has stumbled in his journey, I assure you that there is a way back. The process is called repentance. Although the path is difficult, your eternal salvation depends on it. What could be more worthy of your efforts? I plead with you to determine right here and now to take the steps necessary to fully repent. The sooner you do so, the sooner you will be able to experience the peace and the quietness and the assurance spoken of by Isaiah [see Isaiah 1:18].”⁶

People Can Change

“We need to bear in mind that people can change. They can put behind them bad habits. They can repent from transgressions. They can bear the priesthood worthily. And they can serve the Lord diligently.”⁷



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

All of us are imperfect—only through the gift of repentance made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can we be cleansed from sin and improve our lives. Consider discussing with those you teach how we “correct our course settings” through repentance. How have they felt nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through positive changes they have made in their lives? You could invite those you teach to write spiritual resolutions for the new year and to be accountable to a friend, spouse, or other family member for their progress.

Become Clean Again

“Should there be anything amiss in your life, there is open to you a way out. Cease any unrighteousness. Talk with your bishop. Whatever the problem, it can be worked out through proper repentance. You can become clean once again.”⁸

The Savior’s Essential Role

“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.”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. “The Will Within,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 68.
2. “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.
3. Mosiah 4:2.
4. “The Three Rs of Choice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 69.
5. “Choices,” 86.
6. “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 85.
7. “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 68.
8. “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 67.
9. “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 80–81.



Resolve to Repent

While goals for the new year can help us grow, the best way to change is through repentance.



See also “Eight Myths about Repentance” at lds.org/go/1186.

President Monson explains that “our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves.” Many people dedicate January to making goals and resolutions of improvement: to smile more, eat healthier, or learn a new skill. While these goals can help you change for the better, the best way to change is through repentance.

Though repentance can be hard, it is a gift! As we rely on Jesus Christ by repenting of our sins, we are able to grow and progress. President Monson said: “Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost.” Through repentance, you can be washed clean of your sins and progress to become more like Him.

Think of something that may be keeping you from becoming like the Savior. Is it your language? how you treat your friends or family? After thinking of what you could improve, pray to Heavenly Father and express your desire to change. Remember that through the power of His Atonement, Jesus Christ can help you overcome your weakness. As President Monson taught, “The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings.”

CHILDREN

Repentance Is a Gift

The gift of repentance isn't a gift that you can see or touch. Instead, it's a gift that you can feel. This means that when we make a wrong choice, we can repent and feel peace and happiness again.

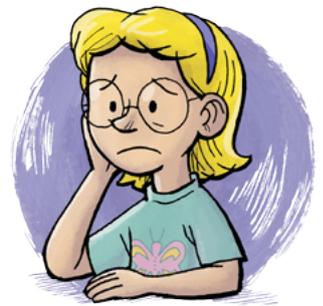
Heavenly Father and Jesus will always help us repent. Match each picture with a different step of repentance.

We feel sorry.

We pray to Heavenly Father, tell Him what happened, and ask for His help to make a better choice next time.

We apologize and try to make it better.

We feel peace and know that we have been forgiven.



Keep In Touch with Her Anytime, Anywhere, Any Way

Visiting teaching is about ministering. Jesus ministered anytime and anywhere. We can do the same.



Faith, Family, Relief

To “minister” is to give service, care, or aid that contributes to the comfort or happiness of another. Visiting teaching is about discovering ways to minister to those we visit. Jesus Christ ministered to all—anytime and anywhere. He fed the 5,000, comforted Mary and Martha at the death of their brother, and taught His gospel to the woman at the well. He did it because of His sincere love.

Following His example, as visiting teachers we can come to know and love each sister we visit, remembering that love is the foundation of all we do. When we pray for inspiration to know how to serve her and help her strengthen her faith, “the angels

cannot be restrained from being [our] associates.”¹

From the organization of Relief Society in 1842 to today, the ministering of women has blessed lives. For example, Joan Johnson, an 82-year-old widow, and her visiting teaching companion visit their neighbor who is 89 and has pneumonia. They could see that their neighbor didn’t just need them once a month, so they began checking in on her every week in person or by phone.

For other visiting teachers, sending a text or email giving encouragement might be the best thing to do for a sister that month. Making personal

connections and listening with an attitude of love is the essence of visiting teaching. Modern technology and time-honored face-to-face visits help us do it anytime, anywhere, and in many ways.² That is ministering as Jesus did.

NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 454.
2. See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 9.5.1.



Consider This

How do we stop worrying about “what counts” for visiting teaching and instead focus on what each sister needs from her visiting teachers?

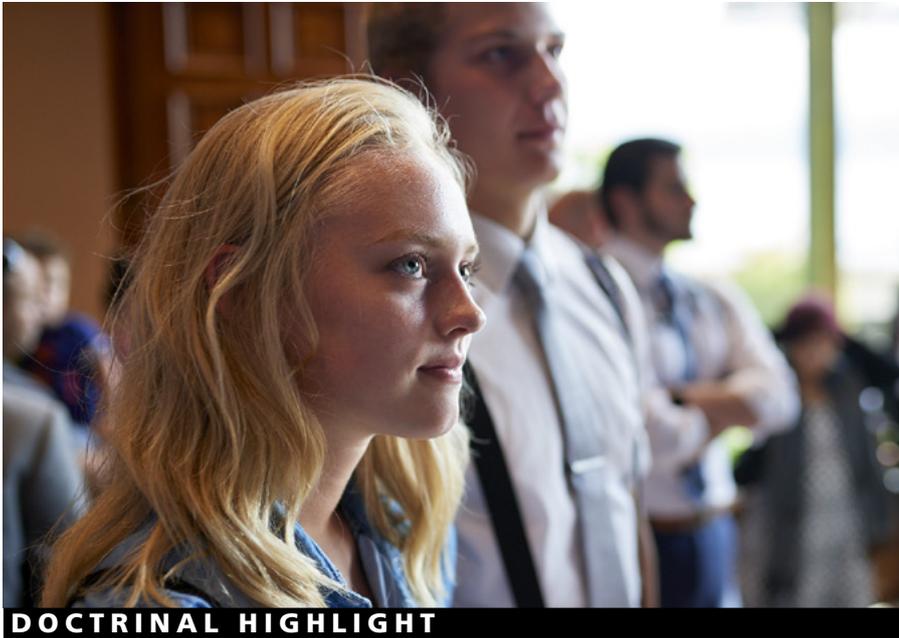
Ministering

Rather than provide a specific message, each month this page will feature a different principle to help us minister more effectively to each other. As you pray and seek inspiration, you will know the spiritual message and service each sister needs.

OCTOBER 2017 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 2017 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.



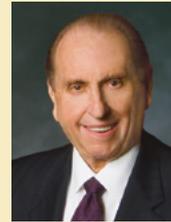
God Is Guiding You

“Each of us has divinity within us. When we see God working through us and with us, may we be encouraged, even grateful for that guidance. When our Father in Heaven said, ‘This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ [Moses 1:39], He was talking about all of His children—you in particular.

“The Lord’s hand is guiding you. By ‘divine design,’ He is in the small details of your life as well as the major milestones. As it says in Proverbs, ‘Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; . . . and he shall direct thy paths’ [Proverbs 3:5–6]. I testify that He will bless you, sustain you, and bring you peace.”

Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “By Divine Design,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 57.

PROPHETIC PROMISES



PAST WORDS OF PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

Quoted by speakers in October 2017 general conference

“My dear sisters, this is your day, this is your time.”
—Quoted by Sharon Eubank, “Turn On Your Light,” 9.

“As we follow the example of the Savior, ours will be the opportunity to be a light in the lives of others.” —Quoted by O. Vincent Haleck, “The Heart of the Widow,” 59.

“It is essential for you to have your own testimony in these difficult times, for the testimonies of others will carry you only so far.”
—Quoted by David F. Evans, “The Truth of All Things,” 68.

“Those who live only for themselves eventually shrivel up and figuratively lose their lives, while those who lose themselves in service to others grow and flourish—and in effect save their lives.” —Quoted by Bonnie L. Oscarson, “The Needs before Us,” 25.

“Find someone who is having a hard time or is ill or lonely and do something for them. That’s all I would ask.” —Quoted by Gary E. Stevenson, “Spiritual Eclipse,” 44.

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

Who Said This?

Match the following quotes to the conference speaker.

1. "You don't know everything, but you know enough."

2. "We cannot *control* all that happens to us, but we have absolute control over how we *respond* to the changes in our lives." _____
3. "Hard is good! Hard makes us stronger, humbles us, and gives us a chance to prove ourselves. . . . Hard is the *constant*! We all have challenges. The *variable* is our reaction to the hard."

4. "Remember that the Savior most often ministered to one person at a time." _____



WHERE CAN I TURN FOR PEACE?

"Lasting joy is found in focusing on our Savior, Jesus Christ, and living the gospel as demonstrated and taught by Him. The more we *learn about, have faith in, and emulate* Jesus Christ, the more we come to understand that He is the source of all healing, peace, and eternal progress. . . .

". . . I testify that as you center your life on Jesus Christ, you will find joy in your circumstances, whatever they may be. Indeed, 'He, only One,' is the answer [see "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" *Hymns*, no. 129]. Make time and take time to come to know Jesus Christ through studying diligently, developing greater faith in Him, and striving to become ever more like Him."

Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President, "That Your Joy Might Be Full," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 85, 87.

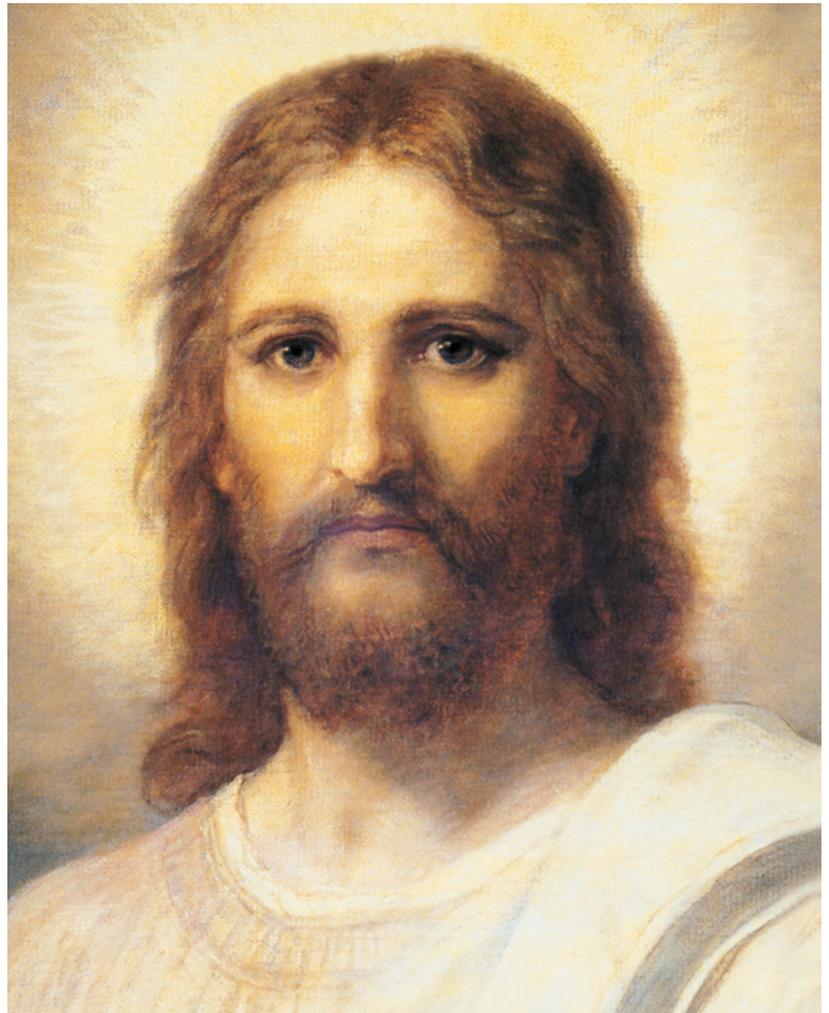
Answers for You



What is the Lord's doctrine on the equality of people?

"We are all equal before God. His doctrine is clear. In the Book of Mormon, we read, 'All are alike unto God,' including 'black and white, bond and free, male and female' [2 Nephi 26:33]. Accordingly, all are invited to come to the Lord.

"Anyone who claims superiority under the Father's plan because of characteristics like race, sex, nationality, language, or economic circumstances is morally wrong and does not understand the Lord's true purpose for all of our Father's children" (Quentin L. Cook, "The Eternal Everyday," *Ensign*, Nov. 2017, 55).



Answers: 1. Neil L. Andersen; 2. W. Christopher Waddell; 3. Stanley G. Ellis; 4. Bonnie L. Oscarson

WHAT IF WE BUILT A SNOWMAN?

By Colby Ferrin

If we are willing to give and serve, God will use us as instruments in His hands to bless others.

Sister Cobia had always been a friend to the young men in our ward. Whenever we collected fast offerings as deacons, she would invite us in and tell us stories about her family, her miraculous life, and her blessings from God.

She was a widow, and lately she had been struggling with her health. In fact, she was bedridden. We were priests now, and a service project seemed like a good idea for someone who meant so much to us.

As we debated what type of service to do, someone asked, “What if we built her a snowman?” We all considered that for a moment and then nodded in agreement.

When we showed up at her home a few evenings later, however, we had a problem. It had been snowy a couple of days before, but a warming trend had melted almost all the snow.

We were disappointed until one of us pointed toward the mountains and said, “There’s no snow down here, but there’s snow up there.”

We looked at each other, unsure if he was joking. But then one of our leaders said, “Let’s go get that snow!”

Eager and determined, the seven of us hopped into the cabs of our leaders’ pickups and started toward the mountains. Thirty minutes later, we got out, grabbed shovels, and filled the two truck beds with snow. Then we promptly headed back to Sister Cobia’s home, parked a few houses away so she wouldn’t notice us, and shoveled the snow out of the pickups.

Sister Cobia was lying in a bed in her front room near a large window, so we decided to make our snowman right in front of the window. In the dark, we quietly formed three large snowballs and piled them on top of each other. Next, we dressed up our snowman. Then we rang the doorbell and ran.

We didn’t know what Sister Cobia thought until the following Sunday, when a few of her relatives visited our priests quorum after finding out we had built the snowman. With tears in their eyes, they told us that Sister Cobia had passed away the day after our service project. They said her last words included an expression of gratefulness for the snowman and the love it represented.

When they asked where we had found the snow, we explained that we had gone to the mountains. They thanked us again, and we all wept as they said good-bye.

We don’t always know what others are going through or how powerfully a simple act of service can lift their spirits. But if we are willing to give and serve, God will use us as instruments in His hands to bless others. I know that—as does everyone who was part of our priests quorum. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



KNOWN TO GOD

“Loving service anonymously given may be unknown to man—but the gift and the giver are known to God.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “See Thou Tell No Man,” *Ensign*, June 1992, 5.



ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER BRICKING

Home Earlier Than Planned

By Destiny Yarbro

Both of my parents served missions. At a young age I heard their mission stories and dreamt of the day when I would be able to serve the Lord as a full-time missionary.

Preparing for my mission was one of the most precious times of my life. I was closer to the Lord than ever before. I received my mission call to the Budapest Hungary Mission and entered the Provo Missionary Training Center (MTC), determined to give my all to my Heavenly Father.

Being at the MTC was an incredibly spiritual experience for me. As I grew closer to the Lord, I sincerely prayed that I was willing to do anything He asked and promised that I would love the Hungarians with my whole heart.

Near the end of my MTC experience, I became ill. After a short stint at home to recoup, I was given the

opportunity to continue my mission to Hungary. I was placed with a wonderful trainer, Sister Sunshine Nestor, who taught me how to recognize the daily tender mercies and miracles of the Lord.

After a few months, I became ill again. Although Sister Nestor and I continued to work the best we could, I had to return home yet again.

In my mind I had let the Lord down because I had not served a “full” mission. I was convinced that there were still Hungarians that I “should have” taught if I hadn’t become sick. I wondered if I did not have enough faith to be healed because, after all, the Lord protects His missionaries. I had *never* considered that my sacrifice to the Lord would not be to give a year and a half of my life but rather to sacrifice the kind of mission that I had anticipated.

There are many ways to continue to serve the Lord and find meaning after returning home early from a mission.

My Search for Meaning at Home

As I walked off the plane coming home, I couldn’t help but think that I had left the most important work of my life behind in the mission field. It took time, but I learned that there was work at home that would bring my life meaning as well.

No matter your reason for returning from your mission earlier than



anticipated, decide today to make this experience a step *forward* in your progression, not a step back. I came home for medical reasons, but others come home for a variety of reasons, including transgression. As a result, some of the ideas below may not apply to your situation. Pray to the Lord to find ways to serve Him from home. For example, if you came home for transgression and are not yet worthy to attend the temple, you can still find meaning as you regularly walk around temple grounds and commit to one day return to His holy house.

Besides reading my scriptures, praying, and attending church, each of the following steps on my journey was vital to my healing.

1. Staying Connected

My first step to finding meaning in my life was to stay connected with the Saints and missionaries in Hungary.

For some time, I lived for preparation days when I would receive emails from Sister Nestor and my MTC companions. I have to admit, sometimes it wasn't easy to read about my companions' missions or to speak with the Hungarians that I missed so badly. But as I look back now, I realize that it was critical to my healing to hear about the miracles happening there.

2. Indexing Online

My little brother, gently prompted by my intuitive mother, convinced me to start indexing. Initially I did batches

of names to appease him, but one day a registry of Hungarian names popped up on my screen. The Spirit swept over me and taught me that I was still able to help bring Hungarian souls to Christ—just on the *other* side of the veil!

3. Setting Goals

After the mission, all of my pre-mission life goals seemed unattainable with my new health condition. But with time I realized that there were goals I could accomplish while lying down. I called goals such as reading

Jesus the Christ “horizontal goals” and worked on them daily.

4. Going Back to School

One of my pre-mission life goals was to graduate from college. While attending classes would have been difficult with my illness and the constant doctor appointments, my dad encouraged me to take online classes from Brigham Young University Independent Study. Not only was this an achievable horizontal goal, but I also realized that maybe I was capable of doing more pre-mission goals than I had previously thought possible.

5. Serving an Online Mission

One day at church, a sister walked up to my mom and said, “Do you know that Destiny can serve an online indexing mission?” This unexpected question was an answer to my

prayers. I was able to serve the Lord for nine months as an indexing support Church-service missionary. This was a mission I *could* do!*

6. Teaching Mission Preparation

As I became better at managing my health condition, I began studying at a community college while doing my online mission. I was asked to teach mission preparation at the nearby institute. Teaching helped me realize that my enthusiasm for missionary work had not waned and that even my short mission had provided me with many experiences that could be valuable for my students.

7. Volunteering at the MTC

After successfully attending a semester of college near my home, I moved to Utah, USA, to attend BYU. At first, I could hardly walk by the Provo MTC without feeling a rush of conflicting

emotions. But I started volunteering weekly at the MTC and found that it was healing to meet the wonderful missionaries being sent to my beloved Hungary.

8. Performing Temple Work

A Hungarian sister, Edit, who has prepared nearly 150,000 names for the temple asked me to take some of her names to the temple. It was a joy to do the saving ordinances for these Hungarians!

Gradual Healing through His Work

Serving a mission was my most important life dream, and, understandably, I felt a loss when I came home earlier than anticipated. For a time, I struggled to talk about my mission. I had to work through feelings of failure. I had to learn how to judge the value of my mission by my desire to



serve rather than the length. Although I didn't realize it at the time, each of these steps toward meaning in my life also brought healing.

For years I was nervous that returning to Hungary would be difficult for me emotionally. When I eventually traveled there, it wasn't until the second day that I realized that not only was I not feeling any pain, I was also feeling overwhelming joy to be back. I knew then that Heavenly Father had given me the opportunity to experience the healing power of the Savior's Atonement. I now know that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all things will be made right in the end. ■

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

*Many early returned missionaries continue to serve as young Church-service missionaries. See [lds.org/yycsm](https://www.lds.org/yycsm) or meet with your bishop or branch president for more information.



AN ACCEPTABLE OFFERING

“When I give a commandment to any of the sons [or daughters] of men to do a work unto my name, and [they] go with all their might and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them and hinder them from performing that work, behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons [and daughters] of men, but to accept of their offerings.”

—Doctrine and Covenants 124:49

TIPS FOR PARENTS

The following is a list of things to consider:

- Allow your missionary time to grieve and heal.
- Tell your missionary often how much you love him or her.
- Encourage him or her to meet regularly with your stake president and bishop.
- Ask your missionary how much he or she would like others to know about the reason he or she is home.
- Let others know that your missionary is home and that you are excited to see him or her again.
- Give your missionary time to talk with you about the mission, sharing both wonderful and hard experiences.
- Encourage your missionary to pray about what to do next in life and then support his or her decision of whether to return to the mission.

MINISTERING RESOURCES

Leaders can find understanding and ways to help early returning missionaries online at [ministering.lds.org](https://www.ministering.lds.org).

TIPS FOR WARD MEMBERS

It can be hard to know what to say when missionaries come home earlier than expected. You can help their transition to home life by welcoming them home, expressing your love for them, and thanking them for serving a mission.

You may not know why that missionary is home, and the reason may be very different from what you expect. Keep in mind that their healing process is between them and the Lord and that they only need to know of your support.

It can be good for missionaries to share their experiences from the mission in a safe environment. Recognize that they may need some time before they can talk about their missions. If you want a missionary to share a story in class, call them ahead of time to ask if they would be comfortable sharing.

How Institute Helps You Learn the Gospel

Try these three ways to get more from your institute of religion classes.

By Po Nien (Felipe) Chou
Seminaries and Institutes

“The world today is more challenging than it was . . . years ago,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Our young men and young women have many more distractions to sidetrack them in their preparations for both a mission and a future happy life.” Now, more than ever, we

need to learn “how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit.”¹

To help you become more spiritually in tune, the Church has provided institutes of religion. Institute can give you hands-on “meaningful experiences with the word of God.”²

When you attend institute, you can choose from numerous classes. Teachers who understand the needs and questions of young adults will help you learn from the scriptures and teachings of latter-day prophets.

A recent change in institute now gives you the opportunity to use (1) course study journals, (2) course questions, and (3) personal learning projects to elevate your learning and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ. These three study options will help you personalize your gospel study and learn firsthand how the Spirit works with you.

Course Study Journals

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recommended capturing spiritual impressions in a journal: “Write down in a secure place the important things you learn from the Spirit. You will find that as you write down precious impressions, often more will come.”³

Students use a journal (whether on paper or in the Gospel Library app) in class and at home to record impressions as they study the scriptures. Jayme Dhennz, an institute student in the Philippines, has seen the benefits of keeping a study journal: “I can’t really pass up writing passages and messages from the scriptures or talks of the prophets because it widens my gospel learning.”

Brother Seiichi Takahashi’s institute students in Nagoya, Japan, like journaling because it allows “the learning process to flow smoothly” and helps



students come to class more prepared to learn and participate.

Taisia Bartolomeo of southern Italy says, “By writing down what I learned, I am able to better recall the concepts when I need them.” Her classmate, Mariaterasa Santoro, adds, “My journal is something I can look upon to recall a specific spiritual concept or personal revelation.”

Course Questions

Questions, given at the beginning of the course, give students topics to ponder and study throughout the course. At the end, students submit their personal, Spirit-guided answers to their teacher.

Ilaria Bellomo, a student in southern Italy, explains, “The questions made me reflect on my life and on the fact that what I study for institute helps me know Jesus Christ better.”

Jinseop Jeong, an institute student in South

Korea, says, “The questions helped me think deeply about and review what I learned. It was an important time to review, contemplate, and internalize what I learned.”

The students’ spiritual growth becomes evident in their answers. Sister Seonsim Kang, a stake institute teacher in Korea, says, “It was a great experience for me to read and learn the testimonies and thoughts of the students.”

Personal Learning Projects

Many institute students prayerfully choose to do a meaningful project. Depending on their interests, students around the world have created gospel-related art, music, videos, and social media posts. These projects invite the

students to act on the things they have learned in class. For instance, one student chose to paint a portrait of the Savior to accompany the course “Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel.”

One student attending an “Eternal Family” course created a temple and family history project that “culminated in a temple trip with my grandmother and immediate family members in which we completed together over 40 temple sealings that had been prepared throughout the semester. This brought our family closer together.”

As Cenia Avila Organig, an institute student in Bicol, Philippines, points out, working on a personal learning project “provides flexibility,” giving students the freedom to learn the word of God and feel the Spirit using their own talents.

Elevated Results

Using these learning approaches can improve your gospel study and deepen your testimony. By diving deeper into gospel study through institute courses, you can better understand how to apply the word of God in your own life and how to bless the lives of others. ■

NOTES

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Greatest Generation of Young Adults,” *Ensign*, May 2015, 67.
2. “Teaching with Power,” [lds.org/si/objective/elevate-learning/teaching-with-power](https://www.lds.org/si/objective/elevate-learning/teaching-with-power).
3. Richard G. Scott, “To Acquire Knowledge and the Strength to Use It Wisely,” *Ensign*, June 2002, 32.



LAYING MY SINS AT THE SAVIOR'S FEET

By Emily Platts

My heart seemed to beat in loud, slow-motion thuds as I drove, in my very best clothes, through the dark, rainy streets. I was headed to a meeting with an unknown bishop to whom I was about to confess 10 years' worth of Word of Wisdom failings, morality lapses, and other sins that I couldn't wait to repent of and ultimately leave behind me.

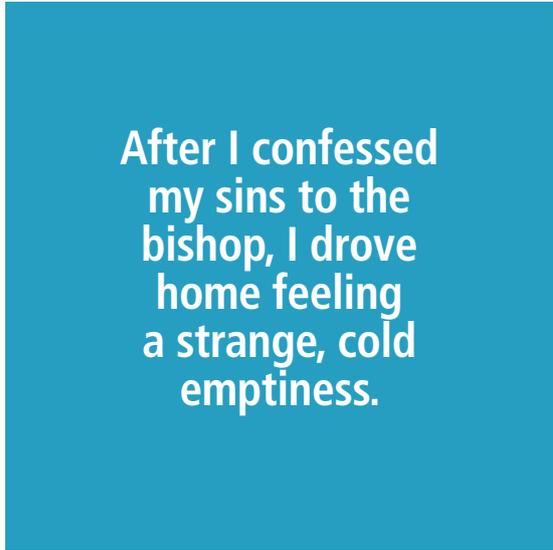
A Series of Poor Choices

After I had gone to college and had an apartment of my own, I found it easy to skip Sunday meetings. Sooner than I could have predicted, I was making poor choices in boyfriends and ultimately living a party lifestyle. I still watched general conference twice a year and went to church on Easter. I continually fooled myself into believing that my daily choices didn't define me or my future. I decided I was just taking a little break from Church

activity. I still felt that I had a general, everyday prayer in my heart and a belief in the Savior and my Heavenly Father.

Nevertheless, my language rapidly changed. My outfits changed. My previously gentle demeanor became pessimistic and suspicious, I was quick to anger, and I spoke of sacred things with crassness and rudeness. Eventually I forgot words to hymns that used to bring me comfort, and I couldn't face praying to my Father in Heaven at all.

Pieces of my previous life as an active member of the Church (100-percent-seminary-attendance winner and general gospel smarty) were slowly extracted from my heart and soul. I felt my body and its natural desires taking dominion over my once-strong spirit. Pangs of conscience struck me now and then, and I would drink more alcohol to squash the feeling.



After I confessed my sins to the bishop, I drove home feeling a strange, cold emptiness.

Drinking more led to more poor choices, which led to sorrow, which led to more drinking to quiet my suffering spirit. Occasionally I would run into other inactive Latter-day Saints in a club or a situation where I knew they weren't being true to their religion. I longed to tell them to turn back and leave this sinful lifestyle. My heart secretly ached for



what I knew too well they, and I, were missing.

The Time to Change Was Now

The pangs of spiritual torment became louder, more frequent, and more unbearable. My seemingly inconsequential choices had added up over the days, months, and years into a life I hadn't planned on. I had always felt a profound pull toward motherhood and a home filled with the Spirit, and I looked behind me and saw my young adult life wasted. How could I reconcile what I had always hoped for with the decisions I was making? The time to change and make things right was now, but how could I approach my Heavenly Father after shunning Him for so long?

One night the anguish in my soul was too much to bear for one more minute. I knew I needed to pray to at least try to get some sense of peace. I didn't know what to say in my prayer other than the truth. I told Heavenly Father about my insecurities, my sorrows, my sins, and my desire to change. The experience that followed was the most sacred and important event of my life. I was lifted and loved and felt with absolute conviction that the Lord was on my side, anxious for

me to return. I knew that He and a crowd of very real angels would help me through the important and holy process of repentance.

I found out which ward I belonged to, discovered the executive secretary's contact details, and made an appointment with the bishop to confess and begin the path toward a new life in the gospel. Now, on that rainy night in October, I walked into a church building I had never set foot in, down a hall and toward an office I had never seen. The priesthood leader with whom I would entrust my personal failings and hopes for the future



FINDING FORGIVENESS

"Sometimes the steps of repentance are initially difficult and painful, like the cleansing of a soiled garment. Yet, they produce purity, peace of mind, self-respect, hope, and finally, a new person with a renewed life and abundance of opportunity."

Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Finding Forgiveness," *Ensign*, May 1995, 77.

was someone I had never met. I was nervous, but my heart leapt to know I would be heading home that night with a serious weight lifted off my shoulders.

The bishop was kind and humble. He tenderly heard my confession. I tearfully described the previous years of my life and my sins against the Lord. It was a powerful meeting, and I felt the Holy Ghost comforting my anguish and strengthening my resolve. We agreed to meet again in a week.

A Strange Emptiness

I left, expecting the spirit of the meeting to cling to me like a new skin. It did not. I drove home with a strange emptiness, trying to discern the feeling of coldness that had crept over me. I went inside my condo and fell to my knees, hoping to feel the same heavenly fire I felt when I first came to the Lord with my desire to leave my sins behind. I was so confused, so disheartened. I sobbed and begged for the Lord to hear me and to comfort me, to help me through the next hard part. I felt nothing.

My dad was a man who had always been an example of honoring his priesthood and having unwavering faith in God. I phoned him, distraught,

and told him of the evening's events. "I don't understand!" I cried. "Where is He? Why do I feel worse than when I went in to see the bishop?" He thoughtfully listened to me demanding answers. Why had the weight on my shoulders simply morphed into a flat emptiness?

"Emily," he said, "for years you have been wearing the shabby and filthy clothing of your choices. Your sins have kept you warm in a way. Now you have laid those tattered rags at the feet of the Savior."

I had only taken the first steps of the repentance process. I had forsaken my sins. Now I needed to let the Savior's sacrifice work in my soul and to embrace the enabling power of His Atonement.

The Chastening of the Lord

That night, pondering the evening's events in my mind, I read in Hebrews 12:

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us. . . .

". . . My [daughter], despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every [child] whom he receiveth.

“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with [daughters]; for what [daughter] is [she] whom the father chasteneth not?” (Hebrews 12:1, 5–7).

I felt a burning in my chest and an overwhelming confirmation that this was what was happening to me—I was being chastened. I had reached out and felt His love and His desire to help me return to my true self. I had confessed my sins and felt the love and humble acceptance of a priesthood leader, whose primary job was to aid me in my spiritual journey. Now I was feeling the loving chastening of

a perfect Father in Heaven, who was reminding me that this was only the beginning of my journey and that I needed to requalify for the privileges of the Holy Ghost as a constant companion. I needed to have faith and works to be forgiven, and I had a lot of steps ahead of me before I could be completely cleansed.

I wouldn't wish the dark years of my life upon anyone, and I would never say I am grateful for my sins. But I am profoundly grateful to have had such a sacred and meaningful experience with the gift of repentance and to know of the very real love and concern

my Father in Heaven and Savior Jesus Christ have for me. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, the Lord taught me as He forgave me. His love, mercy, and blessings I never want to forsake again. I also felt the darkness of Satan during this transition in my life, and I know he will always try to thwart our attempts to be closer to Christ.

My testimony of repentance and the power of the Savior's Atonement has grown ever stronger since those fateful months returning to the gospel. Now as a happily married mother of five children, I feel even more the importance of communicating with my Heavenly Father and of repenting continually for my mistakes. Attending the temple, receiving my endowment, and keeping my covenants have brought me great strength and a feeling of closeness to the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the author of our eternal salvation, offering us a peace that “passeth all understanding” (Philippians 4:7). I know the blessings of forgiveness are available to all God's children and that there is no sinful chasm too deep that our Savior will not lovingly and purposefully deliver us from if we are willing to faithfully repent and lay our sins at His feet. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



Letting Go of Contention

I felt justified in my anger toward my roommate, but I didn't want these bitter feelings weighing me down.

By Afton Nelson

I was so mad. Living with college roommates always had its difficulties, but Wendy (name has been changed) seemed to be one of the most challenging roommates ever. No matter how hard I tried, I found myself irritated and angry more and more often. This particular morning, though, I'd finally had it.

I stewed as I got ready for classes, and my attitude continued

to deteriorate. I began to compile a mental list of all of Wendy's shortcomings, getting more and more upset with each one I thought of.

I ate breakfast alone, since all my other roommates had already left for class. Then I gathered everything I would need for the day into my book bag. I grabbed my scriptures and threw them in the bag, and they landed with an awkward thump. I realized that my anger was affecting me in a way I didn't like. I remembered the scripture from 3 Nephi 11:29: "For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another."

I realized that my attitude of contention was driving the Spirit away. I didn't want to feel this way anymore. I wanted to be happy and worthy of the companionship of the Holy Ghost. I knelt at the side of my bed and prayed for forgiveness. But I also

prayed for help. What could I do to get these feelings of anger toward my roommate to go away?

The answer came: Serve her.

That was the last thing I wanted to do, but I followed the prompting. I stood up and looked around the room. What could I do to serve Wendy right now? I noticed she had not made her bed that morning, and so I decided I would do it for her. Would she even notice? I immediately realized it didn't matter. I wanted the feeling of contention in my heart to go away, not earn Wendy's gratitude. This change of perspective helped me realize that even if we both needed a change of heart, I only had control over my own. Suddenly I was eager to serve her.

I tucked in the blankets and smoothed out the bedspread and fluffed the pillow, just as if I were making my own bed. I did the best job I could. Then, when I was done, I fished a bag of candy out of my book bag. I'd been looking forward to

eating it, but as I placed it on Wendy's pillow, I felt a weight lift from me. I felt the Spirit return and the anger in my heart start to dissipate.

Wendy and I were never best friends, but that was OK. I learned that day that I didn't have to let anger

and contention keep me from feeling the influence of the Holy Ghost in my life. I could choose to let go of unkind feelings and choose to be happy, even if my circumstances were not ideal. ■

The author lives in Oregon, USA.



HOW WE SHOULD TREAT OTHERS

“Kindness is how a Christlike person treats

others. Kindness should permeate all of our words and actions at work, at school, at church, and especially in our homes. . . .

“When we are filled with kindness, we are not judgmental. The Savior taught, ‘Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven’ [Luke 6:37]. . . .

“‘But,’ you ask, ‘what if people are rude?’

“Love them.

“‘If they are obnoxious?’

“Love them.

“‘But what if they offend?

Surely I must do something then?’

“Love them.

“‘Wayward?’

“The answer is the same. Be kind. Love them.

“Why? In the scriptures Jude taught, ‘And of some have compassion, making a difference’ [Jude 1:22].

“Who can tell what far-reaching impact we can have if we are only kind?”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Virtue of Kindness,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 26, 28.





By Elder
M. Russell Ballard
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles

THE ETERNAL IMPORTANCE OF Family

Temples are very important to Latter-day Saints because in them, couples are married for time and eternity, not just till death do they part. As the Church proclaimed in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” 23 years ago, “Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and . . . the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.”¹

This doctrine explains our strong position on the family. We also believe we are to reach out to all people with understanding, love, and compassion. My remarks will first focus on the doctrinal reasons that traditional families play such an important role in our Church. Second, I will explain the relationship between religious sensitivities surrounding the family and religious freedom. Finally, I will suggest some guiding principles on reaching out to those around us, despite any misunderstandings or disagreements.

In his address delivered during the ninth World Congress of Families in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Elder M. Russell Ballard said that those who believe in traditional marriage must rally all the support they can to strengthen and protect their faith, family, and freedom.

The Church’s Beliefs on the Family

To provide context on our Church’s beliefs on the family, I would like to quote lyrics from a song frequently sung by our children called “I Lived in Heaven.” This song outlines where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. It is what Latter-day Saints call the plan of salvation—an eternal plan of our Heavenly Father.

*I lived in heaven a long time ago, it is true;
Lived there and loved there with people I know. So did you.
Then Heav'nly Father presented a beautiful plan,
All about earth and eternal salvation for man.*

*Father said he needed someone who had enough love
To give his life so we all could return there above.
There was another who sought for the honor divine.
Jesus said, "Father, send me, and the glory be thine."*

*Jesus was chosen, and as the Messiah he came,
Conquering evil and death through his glorious name,
Giving us hope of a wonderful life yet to be—
Home in that heaven where Father is waiting for me.²*

With this song in mind, let me explain a few important elements of the plan of salvation that will emphasize our immortality and eternal nature and that of our families.

Before this life, we lived with God, who is our Heavenly Father. He is the literal Father of our spirits, and we are His spirit children. Therefore, all who are born into this life are spiritual brothers and sisters.

"God's whole purpose—His work and His glory—is to enable each of us to enjoy all His blessings." Our choice to obey or disobey His commandments determines our eternal destiny. "Jesus Christ is central to God's plan. Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ fulfilled His Father's purpose and made it possible for each of us to enjoy immortality and eternal life."³ Marriage and family ties are bound by priesthood authority to endure beyond the grave if we are married "for time and for all eternity" in the temple (D&C 132:7).

I hope this brief overview will help you understand how completely linked our theology is to the traditional family. Society, law, and popular opinion may change, but society's version of the family cannot and will not substitute for God's purpose and plan for His children.

In today's world, where marriage and children are increasingly marginalized, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not stand alone in identifying the

traditional family as one of its most important doctrinal elements.

Pope Francis has said, "He [God] made men and women for happiness, to share their journey with someone who complements them, to live the wondrous experience of love: to love and to be loved, and to see their love bear fruit in children."⁴

The Southern Baptist Church proclaims: "Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. . . . The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image."⁵

Our doctrinal beliefs about the eternal family and statements by other prominent Christian leaders make it easier to understand why we are so dedicated to nurturing, protecting, and promoting traditional families.

Secular Support for Religious Views

There are those who think that such doctrine and statements are irrational religious voices. However, the U.S. Supreme Court went out of its way in June 2015 to acknowledge that sincere and reasonable people could hold a different opinion, even when recognizing same-sex marriage:

"Marriage is sacred to those who live by their religions. . . .

". . . There are untold references to the beauty of marriage in religious and philosophical texts spanning time, cultures, and faiths, as well as in art and literature in all their forms. It is fair and necessary to say these references were based on the understanding that marriage is a union between two persons of the opposite sex. . . .

". . . Marriage, in their view, is by its nature a gender-differentiated union of man and woman. This view long has been held—and continues to be held—in good faith by reasonable and sincere people here and throughout the world."⁶

The Supreme Court correctly recognized that many sincere and reasonable people in the world continue to recognize traditional marriage.



Faith, Family, and Freedom

Understanding that reasonable and sincere people may view marriage as only between individuals of opposite gender, the public square must accommodate, and religious freedom must protect, such views. Indeed, because religious beliefs can affect how believers view the very purpose of life, such views will inform how they interact with society.

I am reminded of the news story about young children whose schoolteacher read a story to them about two princes falling in love. The teacher presented this material with no warning or notification. When parents asked to be notified if this story was to be read again in the future, the school refused.⁷

Would it really have harmed school administrators to let parents withdraw their children when the material being taught was contrary to their beliefs? The school's decision seems like a direct assault on the role of parents in raising their children.

We live in a time of extremes. Often compromise seems difficult and distant. We hear stories of people who have tried to be true to their standards, only to be accused of bigotry or intolerance or to be punished on a seemingly unreasonable scale.

Most of the world's nearly 200 nations, including the United States, acknowledged parents' prerogative in teaching their children when they signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 18 of this treaty states, "The . . . Parties . . . undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents . . . to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."⁸

This international human rights protection is consistent with the Church's position, which states in the family proclamation: "Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness . . . and to teach them to love and serve one another, [and] observe the commandments of God. . . . Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations."⁹

It may feel like the tide is against us, but we have plenty of support to continue holding our views of traditional marriage. I have identified only a few sources. Many more exist.

We must rally all the support we can to strengthen and protect our faiths, families, and freedoms. Some individuals are actively trying to strip us of these rights. One news

story reported that millions of dollars have been poured into defeating religious freedom protections in the United States.¹⁰

To these kinds of threats, I believe that my colleague Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has put it best: “Even as we seek to be meek and to avoid contention, we must not compromise or dilute our commitment to the truths we understand. We must not surrender our positions or our values.”¹¹

If those who oppose us are genuine in their commitment to the values of diversity and equality, we should be able to work together to find compassion and peace. Forcing the beliefs of one onto another, as happened with the children being read material contrary to their parents’ wishes, diminishes diversity and skews the scales of equality. By engaging in compromise and extending love to all of God’s children, who are our brothers and sisters, we can create a peaceful, diverse tapestry of ideals and beliefs.

Guiding Principles on Loving One Another

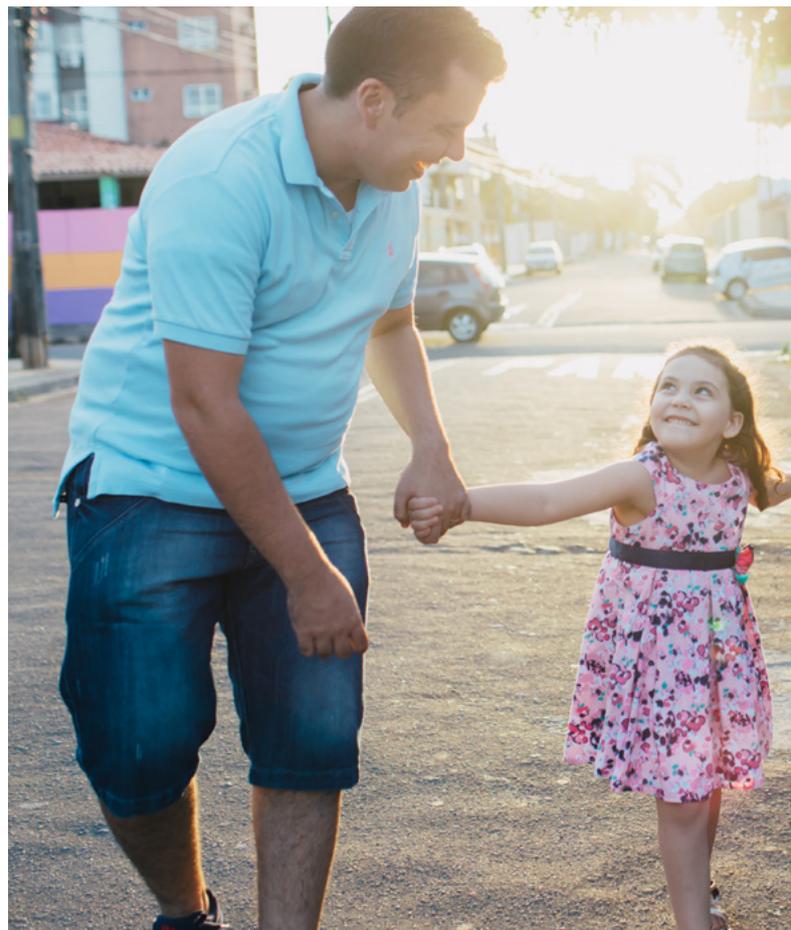
Now that I have described the importance of traditional marriage and that we must defend our rights, let me explain why we should extend a hand of fellowship to those with whom we disagree. Jesus Christ commanded:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:44–45).

Just as we do not and should not shun family members with whom we disagree, we cannot and should not shun those who look or think or act differently than we do. We demonstrate our best humanity when we show love and kindness to all of God’s children. We demonstrate our discipleship when we refuse strident tones, when we refuse derisive labels, and when we enter the public square seeking fair outcomes through understanding and mutual respect.

The Church recently supported legislation that balanced the concerns of the LGBT community with the



concerns of those who have traditional religious sensitivities. The legislation protects LGBT people from being fired or denied housing because of their sexual orientation or identity. At the same time, religious conscience and the right to practice deeply held religious beliefs are protected by this robust legislation.¹²

None of the parties achieved all they wanted, but our work with the LGBT community and the Utah legislature lessened the divisiveness in our communities without compromising on key principles.¹³ We can love one another without compromising personal divine ideals. And we can speak of those ideals without marginalizing others.

Jesus Christ was the ultimate example of loving others. Just hours before He began the painful process of paying for the sins of each of us, He met with His Apostles to partake of the Feast of the Passover—His Last Supper—and to give them the final instructions He would offer in mortality. Among His teachings is the stirring, life-changing declaration “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).



We can be specific and passionate about the benefits of man-woman marriage without disrespecting or injuring those who think otherwise. Regardless of belief or practice, as brothers and sisters we should strive to understand one another. Remember that in the end, married or single, we are each a unique part of God's grand plan.

Conclusion

The Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were murdered on June 27, 1844, by a mob while they were held in state custody. After their martyrdom, persecution and mobs threatened to destroy members of the Church while they were building the Nauvoo Temple. But they pressed on even while knowing they would have to abandon it. Before being driven out by mobs, they attended the temple day and night to make sacred promises that would unite them eternally as families.¹⁴

In making the trek to the Salt Lake Valley, great-grandparents on both my mother's and my father's sides paid a monumental price in suffering and privation. Pioneer families were separated by death, and despite burying children,

spouses, parents, grandparents, and friends along their barren trek west, they pressed forward.

Their faith in a divine plan designed by Heavenly Parents who love us gave them courage in the face of tremendous challenges. They sought a place where, without persecution, they could raise their families to love God and to serve Him. I thank them for leading the way.

The doctrine and theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints literally start and end with family. I repeat what I said earlier: we believe that we lived prior to this earth life as members of the spiritual, premortal family of God and that as children of Heavenly Parents, we are to prepare while on earth to return to receive the blessings promised to those who keep God's commandments.

This knowledge will prepare each of us for that day when we die and then surely know, upon our return to God's holy presence, the true purpose of His plan for us. And so, as noted in the family proclamation, "we call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society."¹⁵ ■

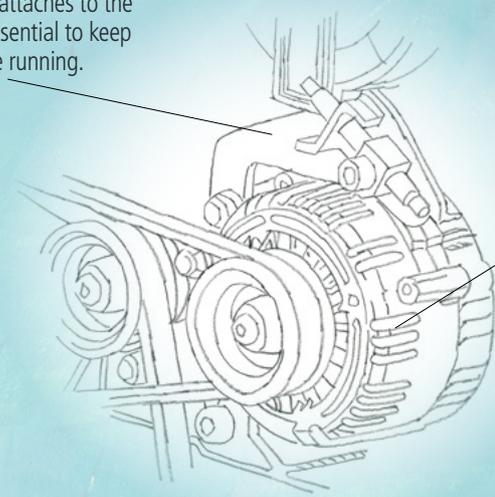
From an address delivered on October 27, 2015.

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7. See "Teacher, School Sued over Gay Fairy Tale," NPR, Apr. 27, 2006, npr.org.
8. "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights," Article 18, United Nations Human Rights, ohchr.org.
9. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.
10. See Kevin Jones, "LGBT Grant-maker Wants to Win Religious Liberty Fight within Three Years," Catholic News Agency, July 29, 2015, catholicnewsagency.com.
11. Dallin H. Oaks, "Loving Others and Living with Differences," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 26.
12. See Dennis Rombo, "LDS Church, LGBT Advocates Back Anti-Discrimination, Religious Rights Bill," *Deseret News*, Mar. 4, 2015.
13. See "Utah Lawmakers Introduce Bill Balancing Religious Freedom and Nondiscrimination Protections," Mar. 4, 2015, mormonnewsroom.org.
14. See *Church History in the Fulness of Times Student Manual*, 2nd ed. (Church Educational System Manual, 2003), 302–4.
15. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," 129.

An alternator attaches to the engine. It is essential to keep an automobile running.

The alternator is a generator that converts mechanical energy into electrical energy.



Unless my alternator was repaired or replaced, I could not continue my journey.





By Elder
W. Mark Bassett
Of the Seventy

Look and Live

*When we turn toward God,
we generate a constant source
of spiritual renewal.*

As I was growing up, it was a regular event for my family to drive between Northern California and Utah, USA. It wasn't the journey through the desert we enjoyed; it was the arrival at the destination and the joy of visits with family members there.

The summer before I left for my full-time mission, I traveled once again to visit relatives in Utah. But this time my younger brother David and I traveled alone. We were 16 and 18 at the time. We had made the 10-hour journey often enough with our family that we had high confidence in our ability to travel well.

We visited our Uncle Kay, Aunt Dianne, and cousin Michelle. Then, while David extended his visit, I had to return to California on my own for a dental appointment.

Nightfall was approaching when I left Spanish Fork, Utah, to begin an overnight drive. Everything went well in the beginning. I soon left the highway that goes south and north and took the one that goes east and west. I turned on my headlights and hurried across western Utah. As the miles passed and the desert night became darker and darker, I noticed that I was having more and more difficulty seeing the road. Finally, I realized my headlights were becoming increasingly dim. They finally went out, the engine stalled, and the car rolled to a halt on the side of the interstate.

The battery was dead. The car could not go any farther. Although I had been careful to make sure I had plenty of fuel and had even noted where I would stop for gas, I was not prepared for the complete loss of electrical power.

What Is an Alternator?

I was raised by a father who prided himself in personally maintaining our family automobiles. He taught us about auto mechanics, so I knew that a good battery would not die while the car was running unless there was a problem with the alternator. An alternator is an electrical generator that converts mechanical energy into electrical energy. It uses the kinetic energy of the running engine to produce magnetic energy that is transformed into electric current that continually recharges the battery. This allows the headlights, radio, air conditioning, and other electrical devices to operate without interruption. It also keeps the engine running.

Now something was wrong with my car's alternator. It needed to be repaired or replaced before my journey could continue.

In an age before cell phones, my only choice was to begin walking. Eventually, a man picked me up and drove me to the next town. At a pay phone I called for a tow truck. I sat in the cab with the driver during the one-hour

trip back to the car. Then I sat with him again as we drove back to the small town with my car in tow. Finally, four hours after first leaving my car, I was back inside it, sleeping in front of a service station until it opened.

When the manager arrived, he laughed at the idea that his small town would have the part I needed. He could place an order, but it wouldn't arrive for two or three days. Then he took pity on me. He told me he could put my battery on a charger for about three hours. That might give me enough power to drive the car to the next town. Perhaps they would have the part I needed.

With the battery charged, I set off without turning on anything that would waste precious electricity. I made it to the next town, but they didn't have the part I needed either. This cycle continued—a three-hour charge for a two-hour drive from one town to the next. After finding kind people in towns all along the way, I finally pulled in my parents' driveway, exhausted after a 30-hour journey but safely home.

Spiritual Manna

There's a parallel between my journey and the desert journey of the Israelites in Old Testament times. For 40 years the Israelites were constantly replenished by food from heaven called *manna*. (See Exodus chapter 16 and Numbers chapter 11.)

In our day we have a similar need for food from heaven, spiritual food. Fortunately, we can create a “spiritual alternator” that will “generate” the “spiritual manna” we need. Since our spiritual needs are met through maintaining our relationship with our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, then just as the Israelites spent time each day gathering physical manna, we today must gather spiritual manna through prayer, gospel study, and striving for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

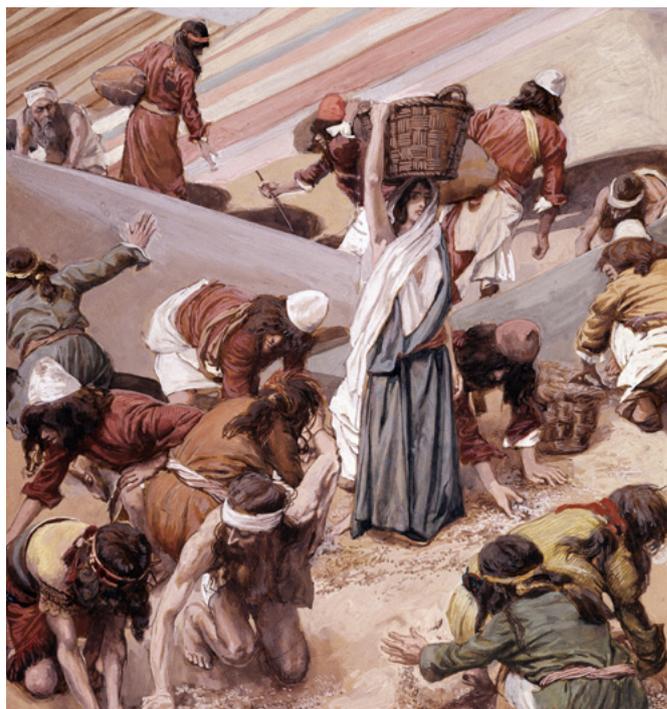
The Israelites eventually tired of gathering physical manna and “fell a lusting” for things they left behind (Numbers 11:4). If we allow ourselves to tire of gathering spiritual manna, we may find ourselves longing for things that aren't

in our best spiritual interest. Like the frustrated Israelites, we risk losing sight of our original purpose—to arrive at the promised land. We might even wish we had never left our “Egypt” (see Numbers 11:5–6). Eventually, our spiritual alternator stops generating, and we are unable to progress. We find ourselves stranded, starving, and longing for rescue.

Seeing the Miracle

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught: “Sometimes it seems we take the scriptures too much for granted because we do not fully appreciate how rare a thing it is to possess them, and how blessed we are because we do have them. We seem to have settled so comfortably into our experiences in this world and become so accustomed to hearing the gospel taught among us that it is hard for us to imagine it could ever have been otherwise.”¹

We should never take for granted our need for consistent scripture study, prayer, and obedience because they help us maintain the companionship of the Holy Ghost. If we neglect the spiritually charging activities in life, become bored with them, or merely perform them routinely, then our spiritual alternator isn't fully functioning. We can slowly become spiritually discharged, perhaps so gradually that we hardly perceive it. At such a time, the only way to recover is to turn



to Jesus Christ and repent. Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and sincere repentance, all things can be restored.

Look and Live

When the Israelites complained, they lost their gratitude for the blessing of nourishment. As punishment, “the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died” (Numbers 21:6).

Finally, “the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

“And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived” (Numbers 21:7–9).

Modern Serpents of Brass

The brass, or brazen, serpent is a symbol of Christ being raised up on the cross (see John 3:14–15). As we look to the counsel of modern-day prophets, we are looking toward Christ because they direct our focus back to our Father’s plan and to Jesus Christ’s central role. Like the kindhearted people who allowed me to recharge my battery, living prophets, seers, and revelators recharge us spiritually by reminding us that we are children of our Father in Heaven and that it is His “work and . . . glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). They have specifically counseled us that as we more effectively worship on the Sabbath day, we will increase our faith in Heavenly Father, in His plan of happiness, and in Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

The story of Moses and the serpent of brass is also referred to in the Book of Mormon, where we are told that “many did look and live” (Alma 33:19; see also verses 20–22). Others, however, refused to look. “The labor



which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished” (1 Nephi 17:41). Could it be said of us someday that we refused to look to prophets and their counsel because of the easiness of the way?

“If ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes that ye might be healed, would ye not behold quickly[?] . . .

“ . . . Then cast about your eyes and begin to believe in the Son of God” (Alma 33:21, 22).

I am grateful for the blessings that come to us as we continue along our “highway to heaven” and encourage others to do the same. I am equally grateful for the opportunity, when we stray, to repent, leave behind bad habits, and return to an appropriate path. The blessings are immeasurable.

Another passage in the Book of Mormon that talks of the Israelites’ experience concludes, “And as many as should look upon that serpent should live, even so as many as should look upon the Son of God with faith, having a contrite spirit, might live, even unto that life which is eternal” (Helaman 8:15).

Heeding the counsel of modern prophets trains our hearts in faith. It strengthens us to overcome obstacles along our journey, just as I had to press forward on that summer night in the desert. I testify that as we look to our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, we will find meaning and purpose in our journey. ■

You can find family home evening ideas for this article at [lds.org/go/11811](https://www.lds.org/go/11811).

NOTE

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 61.



By Jean B. Bingham
Relief Society
General President

THE Temple Gives US *Higher Vision*

Some of our most vivid and significant memories of living in the midwestern United States as young parents are of yearly visits to the temple in Washington, D.C. At the time, it was the only temple in operation east of the Mississippi River. Knowing that temple ordinances are essential for all of Heavenly Father’s children gave a sense of urgency to our efforts.

Like many of you, we arranged for friends to care for our small children, traveled through the night with a busload of fellow members, spent a couple of precious days doing as much temple work as we could, and then rode the bus home through the night so we could attend our Church meetings on Sunday. Those trips did not seem to be sacrifices; they were cherished because of the spiritual uplift that fed our souls for months afterward.

A few years later, we were thrilled to welcome the Chicago Illinois Temple, the first temple built in the North America Central Area since the Cardston Alberta Temple 62 years earlier. With a temple only 45 minutes from our home, it was a joy for us to attend more often than once a year and to receive that spiritual food on a regular basis.

Yet today, though some of us live within closer reach of a temple, we may still find it difficult to attend frequently. It may be that the easier availability of a temple lulls us into thinking, “I’ll go tomorrow, when I have more time.” It is easy to become distracted by immediate pressures and let more important opportunities slide away. Elder Richard G. Scott (1928–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “I encourage you to establish your own goal of how frequently you will avail yourself of the ordinances offered in our operating temples.”¹

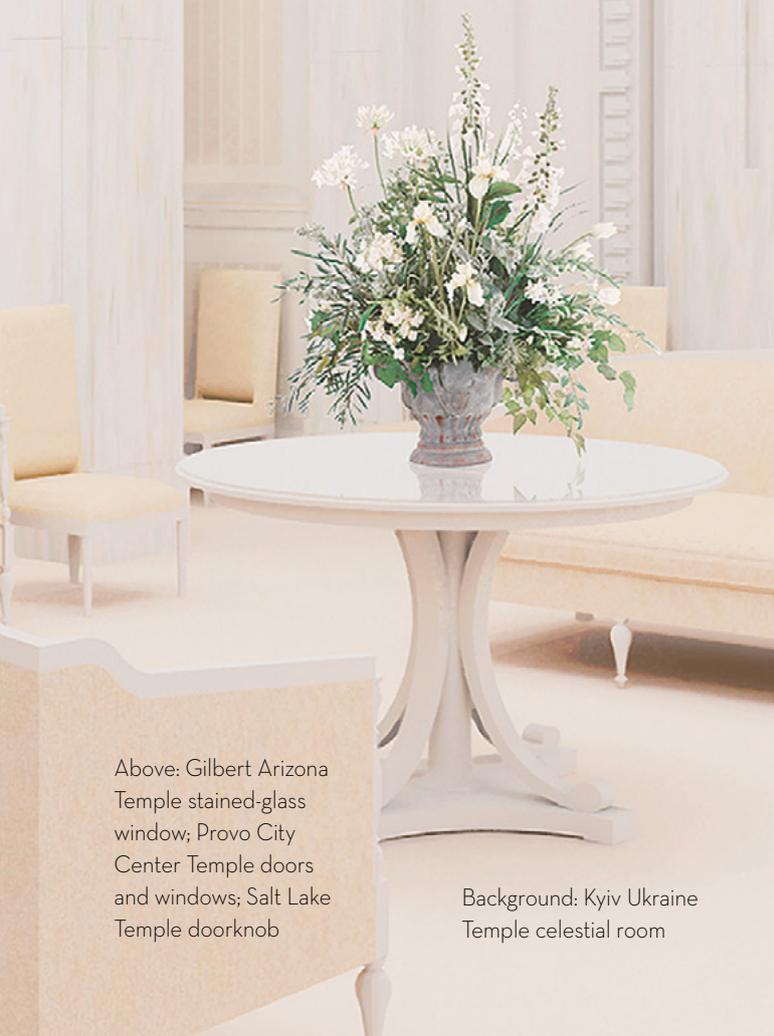
Left: Hartford Connecticut Temple celestial room

At 288 feet (88 m), the Washington D.C. Temple is the tallest temple.



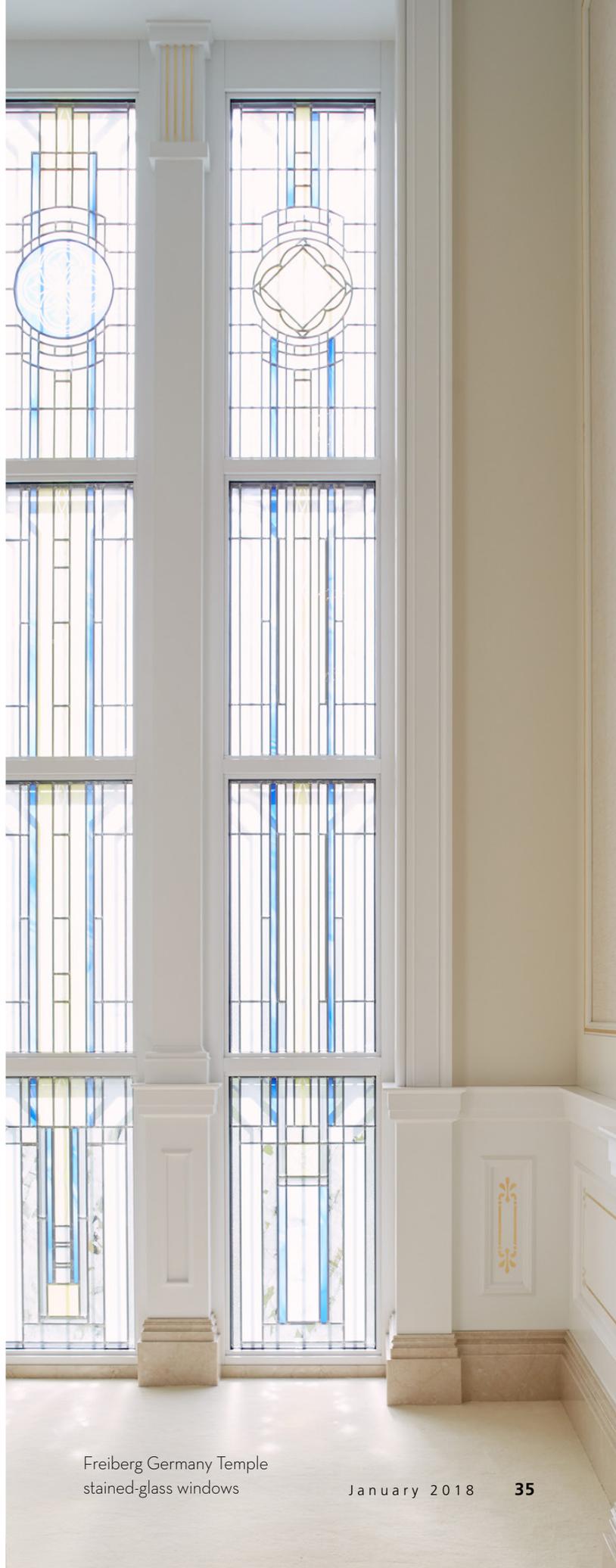


*Like a telescope focused
on the stars beyond our
sight, the temple opens our
minds to a higher and
broader vision.*



Above: Gilbert Arizona Temple stained-glass window; Provo City Center Temple doors and windows; Salt Lake Temple doorknob

Background: Kyiv Ukraine Temple celestial room



Freiberg Germany Temple stained-glass windows



Kansas City
Missouri Temple



If we neglect the opportunity to attend as often as our circumstances allow, if we take lightly the opportunity to go to the temple when it is right in our backyard, so to speak, we may forfeit future blessings and opportunities our Father and His Son have in store for us. “I, the Lord,” He said, “am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

When it seems that events conspire to prevent us from going to the temple, we can remember Jesus Christ’s assurance: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). As we persevere and attend the temple despite stumbling blocks, we’ll have the Savior’s help to overcome the world in which *we* live. One time as my husband and I were preparing to leave for the temple, one problem after another cropped up. Finally, as we were nearly out the door, we had a strained “marital moment.” As the two of us walked silently to the car, we could hear our oldest daughter reassure her sister, “Don’t worry; they always come home happy from the temple.” And she was right!

Temples Remind Us of the Span of Eternity

Whether we come to the temple with hearts full of joy or heavy with sorrow, the temple is the place for *every* worthy member with an open heart to be lifted and strengthened.

I have come to the temple almost floating in deep gratitude for a blessing granted to a struggling loved one; I have also shed quiet tears of great sorrow for my own failures. I have received promptings and instruction

From left: staircase in the Nauvoo Illinois Temple, which was dedicated on the 158th anniversary of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith; Idaho Falls Idaho Temple garden room; Calgary Alberta Temple door handle; Hartford Connecticut Temple interior (background)



Left: President David O. McKay, Sister Emma McKay, and other Church leaders attended the 1955 dedication of the Bern Switzerland Temple, the first temple constructed in Europe.



Below: Star Valley Wyoming Temple stained-glass window

and even rebukes from the Spirit while serving as proxy for someone receiving the ordinances that will allow her to progress through eternity. All of those experiences have lifted and strengthened me. And yes, I've sat through many an hour in the temple as a "duty," simply fulfilling my obligation, and I even found myself dozing off during temple sessions in my years as an early-morning seminary teacher! But every single time I've gone to the temple, I have been blessed. Whether we are granted an immediate blessing or our efforts accrue toward later blessings, every bit of time we spend in the temple results in some personal increase.

Being in the temple reminds us of the span of eternity, both looking back at our ancestors and forward to our children. Our children are also strengthened in their eternal perspective when they focus on the temple. How can we best prepare them for the temple—a vital step in their eternal progression? President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, counseled, "Parents should teach the importance of the temple from a child's earliest days."² President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) advised parents to put a picture of the temple in their children's bedroom so they can look at that sacred reminder every day until it becomes part of them.³ You can also share with your children the blessings you receive from attending the temple as well as your testimony of the joy you anticipate in eternal

relationships with them. And you can support your teenagers in their desire to perform baptisms for the dead.

Remember in your family home evening lessons and teaching moments that "the temple is the object of every activity, every lesson, every progressive step in the Church."⁴

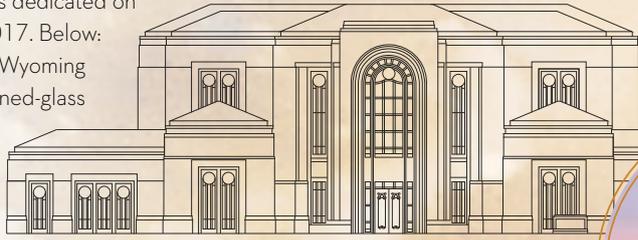
As you sing with your children, "I love to see the temple. I'll go inside someday. I'll cov'nant with my Father; I'll promise to obey,"⁵ you will help them feel a desire to enter the Lord's holy house. And your own heart will swell with gratitude for Heavenly Father, for His plan of salvation, for the Savior and His Atonement, which have made it possible for you to be with your loved ones forever. The Savior's "way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come."⁶ That path leads to and through the temple!

Temples Are a Refuge from the World

Worldly influences can pull us away from the temple. A dear young friend has been troubled by opinions and speculations about the Church that he read on the internet. He decided to forgo attending the temple until his questions are resolved. With all my heart, I plead with you who may have questions that affect your testimony to continue participating in personal prayer and scripture study and to continue attending the temple while you work to find the answers that will bring you peace. Stay focused on the gospel to avoid being



The 156th operating temple, the Paris France Temple, was dedicated on May 21, 2017. Below: Star Valley Wyoming Temple stained-glass window



Right: carving in the Papeete Tahiti Temple; Fort Lauderdale Florida Temple; Hartford Connecticut Temple interior



Below, left: The smallest temple is the Colonia Juárez Chihuahua Mexico Temple.



distracted by clever but false ideologies. One wouldn't seek to heal a physical ailment by asking a star football player for medical advice any more than significant spiritual questions can be correctly resolved by someone who has a limited understanding of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, who bears witness of "the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5), "will tell you in your mind and in your heart" (D&C 8:2) what is eternal truth.

One of the places to access that Spirit most abundantly is in the temple. If you are worthy to enter the house of the Lord (as determined by you and your bishop), please come to the temple with your questions and receive the assurance that even if you do not understand all things now, the Lord does. Remember all that you *do* know and understand. The things you *do* know and have received a spiritual witness of will lead you to "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, [and will] keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). I testify that the understanding and peace you seek will come as you continue to have faith that your Father in Heaven will lead and guide you to the truth.

Isaiah reminds us that the temple is "a place of refuge . . . from [the] storm" (Isaiah 4:6). President Thomas S. Monson's words are equally reassuring: "As we enter through the doors of the temple, we leave behind us the distractions and confusion of the world. Inside this sacred sanctuary, we find beauty

and order. There is rest for our souls and a respite from the cares of our lives."⁷

As troubles in the world increase and the pressures of daily life build up, we must keep our focus on the things that really matter. It is easy to focus on the negative and on worldly woes, as if we were looking at our failures and problems through a microscope. Being in the temple reminds us to keep an eternal perspective. Like a massive telescope focused on stars beyond our immediate sight, the temple opens our minds to a higher and broader vision. It allows us to see, hope for, and work toward becoming all that Heavenly Father has designed us to be. It helps us focus on eternal truths—on Heavenly Parents who love us and desire to help us, on our true worth as Their children, and on what we are capable of becoming as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17). In the temple, the plan of God is taught and eternal covenants are made. In the temple, we are given the tools to become our highest and best eternal selves.

"As we attend the temple," counseled President Monson, "there can come to us a dimension of spirituality and a feeling of peace which will transcend any other feeling which could come into the human heart. We will grasp the true meaning of the words of the Savior when He said: 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' [John 14:27]."⁸





Your Temple Service Will Touch Others

The spirit you bring from your service in the temple will touch many within your circles of influence—some you may not have even considered. At the conclusion of one of our visits to the temple in Washington, D.C., the group of members shared testimonies as the bus rolled across the miles toward home. One after another, participants shared their joy and gratitude for the immediate and eternal blessings of the temple. Our nonmember bus driver finally couldn't stand it any longer. He grabbed the microphone and expressed appreciation for being with us. He then said, "I don't know what you people have, but I feel something different here." Of course, a ward mission leader on the bus got his contact information and later gave it to the missionaries.

May I invite you to take advantage of the gift of the temple near you as often as your circumstances allow. You will be strengthened and find peace in the house of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the light and the life and the hope of the world. As these latter days progress toward His promised return, may you receive His light and feel the hope that is offered in His holy temples. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Temple Worship: The Source of Strength and Power in Times of Need," *Ensign*, May 2009, 43–45.
2. Russell M. Nelson, "Prepare for Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, Mar. 2002, 17.
3. See *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 301.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Prepare for Blessings of the Temple," 17.
5. "I Love to See the Temple," *Children's Songbook*, 95.
6. "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles," *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2.
7. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," *Ensign*, May 2015, 91.
8. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," 91–92.
9. Thomas S. Monson, "Blessings of the Temple," 15; emphasis added.
10. "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, July 1997, 73; emphasis added.
11. Richard G. Scott, "Receive the Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 1999, 26; emphasis added.

SPECIFIC PROMISES

Prophets and apostles have given specific promises to those who attend the temple. Remember that God is bound when we do what He says, but when we do not do what He says, we have no promise (see D&C 82:10).

- President Thomas S. Monson has promised: "As we go to the holy house, as we remember the covenants we make therein, we will be able to *bear every trial and overcome each temptation.*"⁹
- President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) promised: "If you will go to the house of the Lord, you will be blessed, *life will be better for you.* . . . Avail yourselves of the great opportunity to go to the Lord's house and thereby partake of all the marvelous blessings that are yours to be received there."¹⁰
- Elder Richard G. Scott promised: "Regular [temple] attendance will enrich your life with *greater purpose.*"¹¹



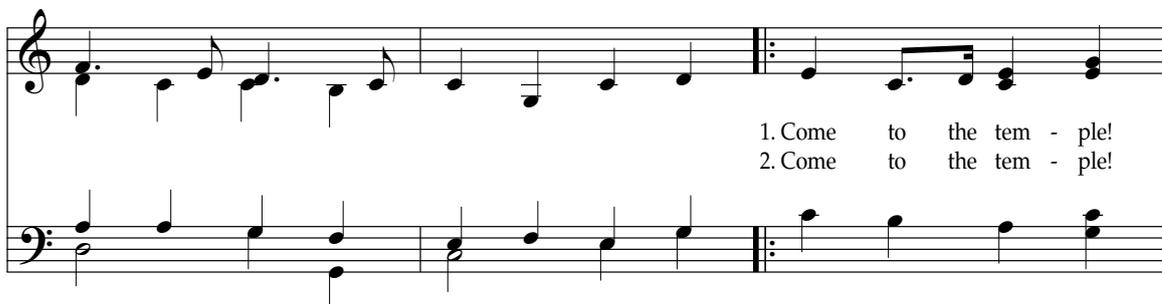
Read how one couple's efforts to attend the temple blessed their family (page 42 of this issue).

Five temples feature an angel Moroni statue holding the golden plates: the Los Angeles California Temple (left), the Washington D.C. Temple, the Seattle Washington Temple, the Jordan River Utah Temple, and the Mexico City Mexico Temple. For more information, visit temples.lds.org.

Come to the Temple

Words by Jan Pinborough
Music by Michael F. Moody

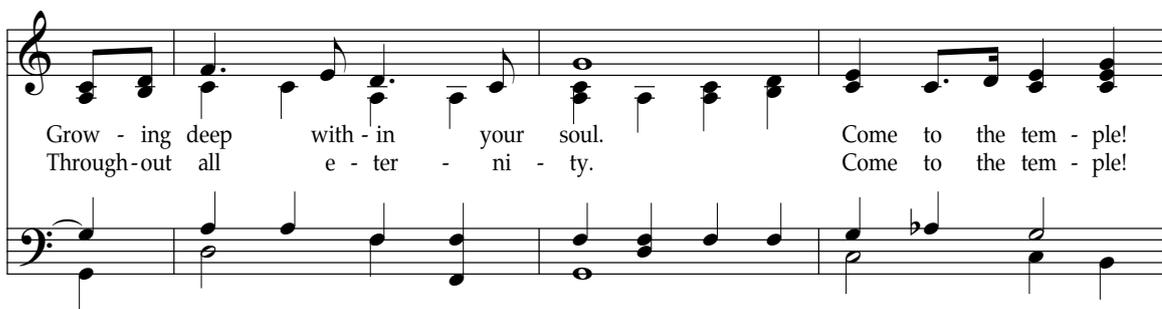
With nobility ♩ = 63-69



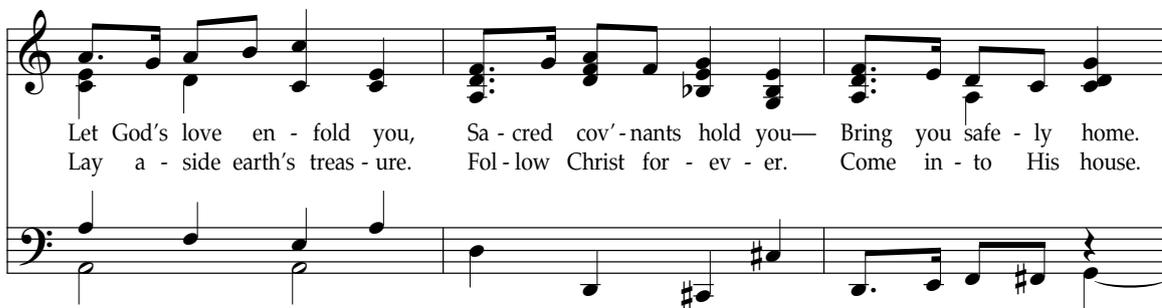
1. Come to the tem - ple!
2. Come to the tem - ple!



See its beau - ty glow - ing; Feel its pow - er grow - ing Deep with - in your soul,
Let your heart be healed there, Loved ones dear be sealed there For e - ter - ni - ty,



Grow - ing deep with - in your soul. Come to the tem - ple!
Through-out all e - ter - ni - ty. Come to the tem - ple!



Let God's love en - fold you, Sa - cred cov' - nants hold you— Bring you safe - ly home.
Lay a - side earth's treas - ure. Fol - low Christ for - ev - er. Come in - to His house.

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This song may be copied for incidental, noncommercial home and church use.
This notice must be included on each copy made.

They will bring you safe - ly home.
Come in - to His ho - ly house.

Oh, come in - side _____ with - out de - lay. _____ With o - pen

arms He wel - comes you; With love He bids you stay. Come to His house _____ of peace and

1. prayer. _____ The Lord a - waits to bless you there.

2. waits to bless you there. _____
molto rit.



A Promised Blessing for Attending the Temple

*I had wanted to attend the
temple more—little did I know how much
it was going to bless my family.*

By Cheri Evans

A few years ago, President Oldroyd, a member of the stake presidency, visited my ward and said something I will never forget: “I promise you that if you attend the temple, *every* part of your life will be blessed.”

As I thought about it, I couldn’t imagine how attending the temple could touch every part of my life. But after church, I decided I would take his challenge anyway and attend the temple on a more regular basis. I wanted to test his promise. My husband had wanted to go to the temple more often, but I was reluctant because we had young children. We would have to drive an hour and a half to the temple in San Antonio, Texas, USA, complete an endowment session, and then drive home. It didn’t work to ask someone to watch our kids for seven or eight hours.

The Beginning of a Blessing

At first we tried trading babysitting with another family, but someone inevitably got sick or had something come up. We decided that we just needed to set the dates for the entire year and go! We then came up with the “pizza and play” method. We would drive to the temple together. One parent would go to a temple session while the other would take the kids to get pizza. Then we would

switch: the second parent would do temple work while the other parent walked the temple grounds with the kids. This worked well. Our kids knew the temple was important to us—they knew all the other things we could have been doing on a Saturday—and we got to spend time as a family.

Little did I know how much going to the temple was going to bless my family. After we had been going more often for over a year, I was sitting in

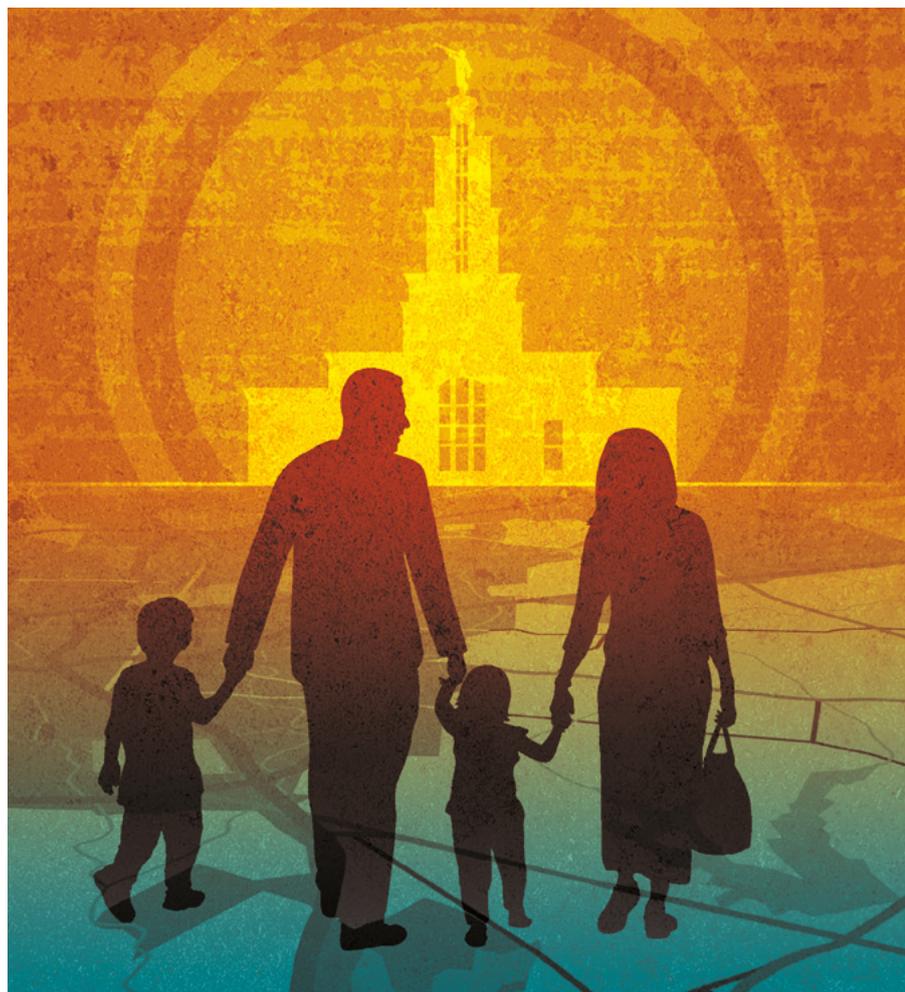
a session when I noticed a quadriplegic man. I thought it was amazing that he was there. On the way out of the temple, I saw him sitting near the parking lot, so my husband and I thought we would say hi.

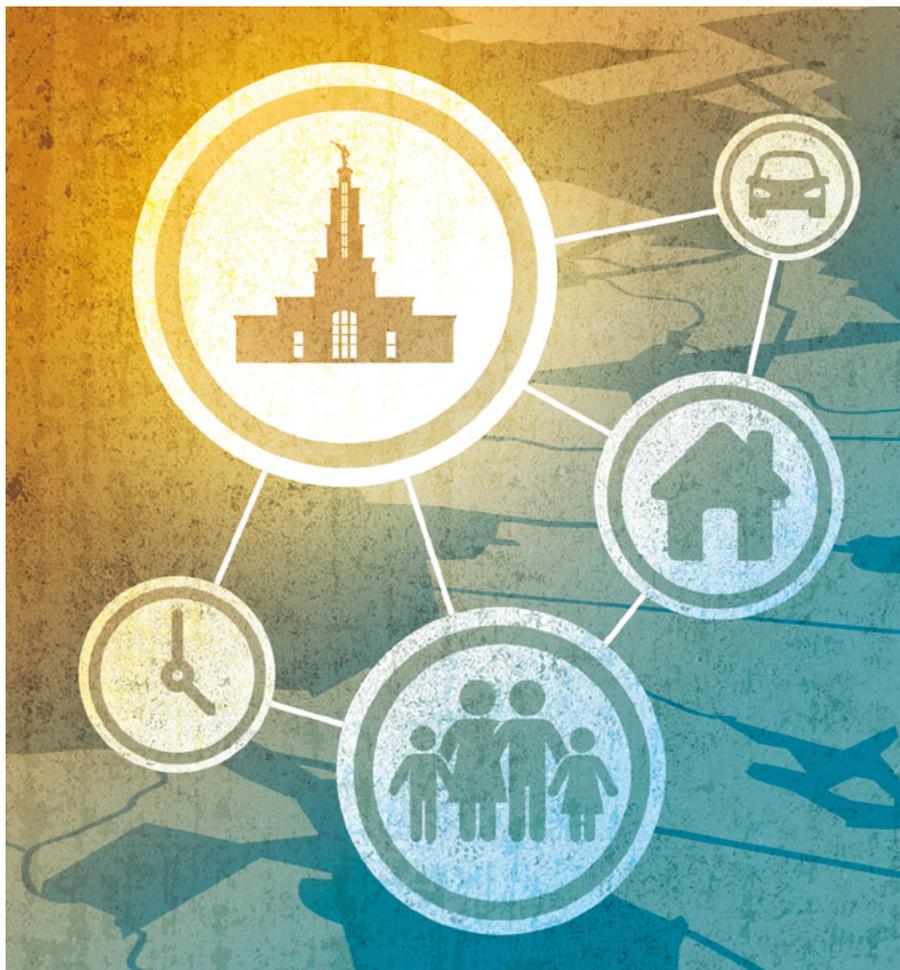
The man asked my husband, Chad, and me if we could help him make a phone call. We agreed to help, and the man told Chad where his phone was. Chad dialed the number for him and then handed him the phone. The man could not reach out for it, though he smiled kindly. Chad looked down at the man’s arms, which were strapped to his wheelchair, and quickly realized he needed to hold the phone up to his ear. The city bus service that was supposed to pick the man up was late. We stayed with him and talked until his bus came. We were amazed that, despite his challenges, he was at the temple. He had such a great attitude. He had a bright smile. Before he left, we exchanged contact information and learned that his name was Max Para.

If Brother Para could get himself to the temple, we could get ourselves to the temple—no excuses!

Brother Para’s Example

We decided to visit him the next month as part of our visit to the temple. We called ahead, and he said we could come in when we got to his home. We drove into San Antonio and found Brother Para’s small home. He was lying on his bed with a white





sheet covering his body up to his chin. He moved his head to the side and talked with us, his smile still beaming. He told us how he became quadriplegic after falling off a roof when he was in his 30s. He shared his struggle and his testimony.

A one-time visit to Brother Para turned into years of visits. He became a special part of our lives. We didn't know what to do for him—his challenges were huge. What we did know is that we could be his friends. We could bring him small gifts: a picture of the Savior, a Book of Mormon CD in Spanish, a picture of the temple, a bag of fresh oranges. We could visit him, sing Primary songs, and listen to him. What an incredible experience this was—you cannot give a crumb to the

Lord without receiving a loaf in return.¹

He taught us gratitude, which changed *every* part of our lives. We learned to have gratitude for our knowledge of the gospel; for our relationship with God; for our knowledge of the plan of salvation; for our home, cars, food, and clothing; for our ability to use our bodies; for the chance to do good for our community; and for good people around us. Brother Para changed our definition of the words *hard* and *trial*. We had reason to rejoice in our many blessings and used those blessings to uplift others.

Learning to Serve

Once when Chad was at the temple with one of our friends, Brother Gonzales, he again saw Brother Para at

the temple waiting for a van to come get him. Brother Para had been waiting for a long time. Chad and Brother Gonzales decided to take Brother Para home themselves. Brother Gonzales had a big black truck. Just then, a carload of priests from our stake pulled up, and they helped put the heavy wheelchair in the back of the truck. Then they carried Brother Para into the truck, buckled him up, and held on to him so he would not fall over. I bet that day was awesome for Brother Para—how could he even imagine that he would be riding home from the temple in his dream truck!

Blessed in Every Way

On our last visit to the San Antonio Temple before we moved, we were able to visit Brother Para. On this special last visit, Brother Para had our whole family over for dinner.

I am very grateful that I put President Oldroyd's promise to the test. My family would never have met Brother Para if we had not attended the temple. I am a different person—I am becoming who the Lord wants me to be. As we put the Lord first and attended the temple, our lives were blessed in *every way*. ■

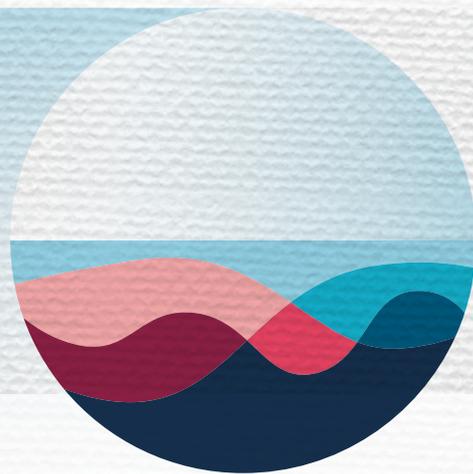
The author lives in Utah, USA.

Find six tips to make temple trips easier at lds.org/go/E11842.

NOTE

1. See Melvin J. Ballard, in Marion G. Romney, "Welfare Services: The Savior's Program," *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 93.

You, the Youth, AND THE Mutual Theme



How can the Mutual theme unite us?

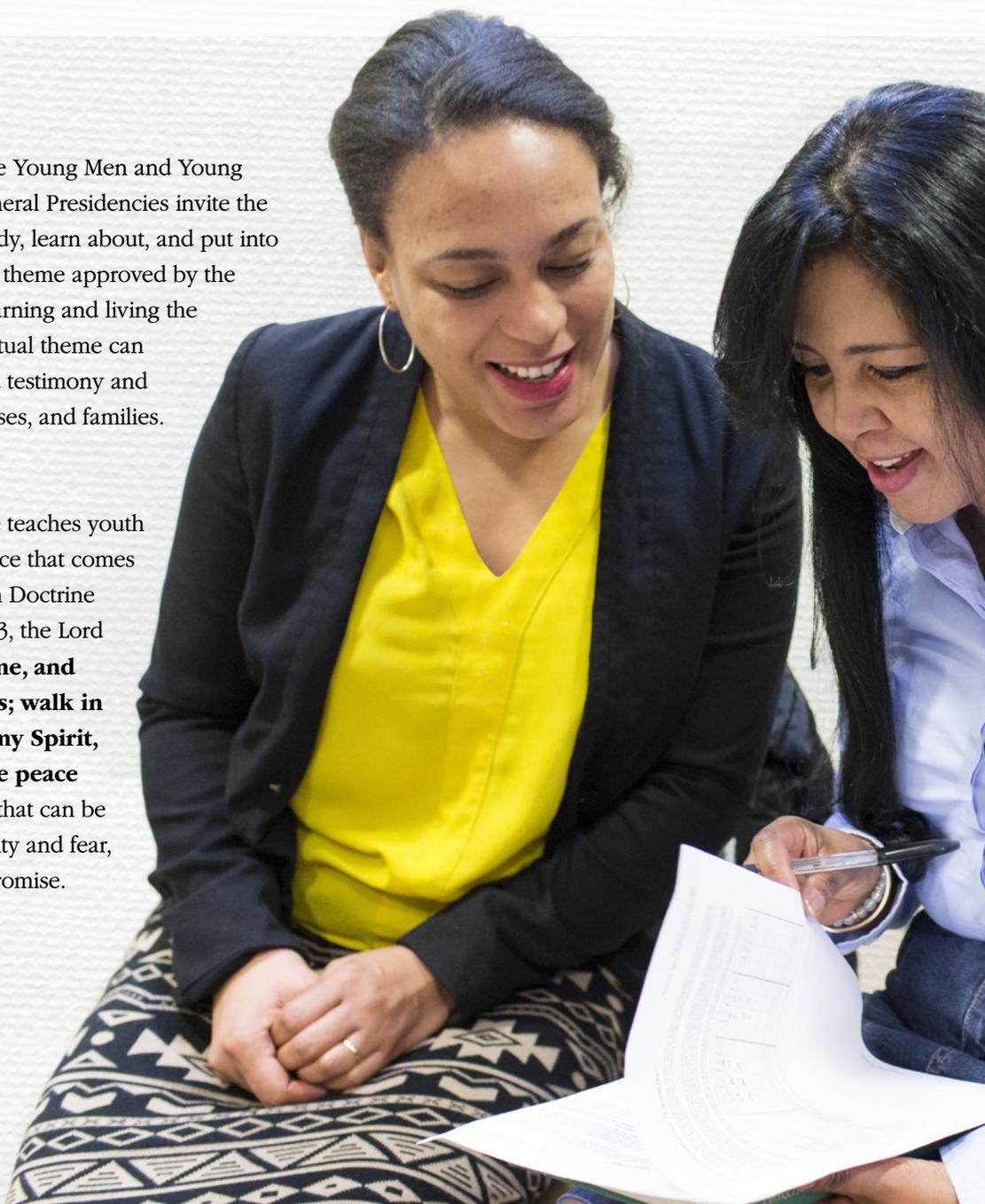
By Jessica Griffith

Church Magazines

Every year the Young Men and Young Women General Presidencies invite the youth to study, learn about, and put into practice a scriptural theme approved by the First Presidency. Learning and living the teachings in the Mutual theme can strengthen faith and testimony and unite quorums, classes, and families.

The 2018 Theme

This year's theme teaches youth how to find the peace that comes from Jesus Christ. In Doctrine and Covenants 19:23, the Lord invites, **“Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.”** In a world that can be filled with uncertainty and fear, this is a powerful promise.



This scripture provides parents, leaders, mentors, and teachers an opportunity to teach patterns that can strengthen the youth through challenging times.

How Can I Use the Theme?

The Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies have invited us to memorize the scripture, study the doctrine, and apply the principles in our lives. Although these things can be done individually, doing them together can help unite and strengthen the youth and their families.

There are many opportunities to incorporate the theme into the lives of our youth. It can be used in family home evening, in lessons at church and in seminary, as a topic for youth sacrament meeting talks, to enrich Mutual opening exercises, and to provide focus for youth activities, including camps, youth conferences, combined activities, New Beginnings, and devotionals.

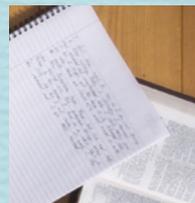
A Few Activity Ideas

The following are a few ideas for incorporating the Mutual theme throughout the year.

For more ideas, visit youth.lds.org.

“Learn of Me”

Learning about Jesus Christ is important to finding peace in Him. There is peace and assurance in knowing what He is like, learning how He lived, and understanding what He does for us.



When he was 14 years old, President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) was asked whether he had read the Bible all the way through. “I had read many books by that time, the funny papers, and light books, but my accusing heart said to me, ‘You, Spencer Kimball, you have never read that holy book. Why?’”¹ From that point on, President Kimball made it a point to “feast upon the words of Christ” (2 Nephi 32:3).



- Consider asking the youth to keep a study notebook to record what they are learning about Jesus Christ and His gospel.
- You might invite the youth to commit to take President Russell M. Nelson’s challenge to “consecrate a portion of [their] time each week to studying *everything* Jesus said and did as recorded in the [scriptures].”² In class or in family home evening, you could ask them to report on what they’re learning and how they’re applying it in their own lives.

Resources

- James 1:22; Moses 1
- “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Drawing the Power of Jesus Christ into Our Lives,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 39–42.
- David A. Bednar, “A Christlike Character,” *New Era*, Oct. 2017, 2–5.

“Listen to My Words”

Listening to the Savior’s words includes not just hearing but hearkening (or obeying). Great peace and assurance can come from knowing that we are living in harmony with His teachings.



When he was eight years old, President Thomas S. Monson decided to have a campfire with his friend Danny. There was just one problem—the field they wanted to use was dry, prickly, and full of weeds. It was then that young President Monson had an idea: “I said to Danny, ‘All we need is to set these weeds on fire. We’ll just *burn* a circle in the weeds!’ He readily agreed, and I ran to our cabin to get a few matches. . . .

“ . . . I recall thinking that the fire would burn only as far as we wanted and then would somehow magically extinguish itself.

“I struck a match on a rock and set the parched June grass ablaze.” Soon realizing the fire would not go out on its own, the boys ran for help, and the blaze was put out after several hours of work.

“Danny and I learned several difficult but important lessons that day,” said President Monson, “not the least of which was the importance of obedience.”³

- Ask the youth to study obedience in chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel*, including the obedience section of the attribute activity at the end of the chapter.
- Talk about things that could distract us from listening to the Lord’s words. For example, you could invite the youth to replace 10 minutes of screen time with 10 minutes of scripture study.
- Take regular opportunities to ask youth what they will do because of what they have learned.

Resources

- Exodus 20; Matthew 5:1–12
- “Obedience,” *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* (2004), 122.
- Hadley Griggs, “Ten Minutes a Day,” *New Era*, Sept. 2017, 26–29.
- Robert D. Hales, “If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 35–38.



“Walk in the Meekness of My Spirit”

Learning and listening describe what we need to do. Walking in the meekness of His Spirit is how we need to do it.

Being meek means “enduring injury with patience and without resentment,”⁴ something that takes both strength and humility. In 1838, Thomas B. Marsh, the first President of the Quorum of the Twelve, left the Church, in part because of his resentment that Church leaders didn’t side with his wife in a dispute over milk. In his later years, he lamented the blessings he had lost and returned to the Church, saying: “I have frequently wanted to know how my apostasy [*sic*] began, and I have come to the conclusion that I must have lost the Spirit of the Lord out of my heart. . . .

“ . . . I felt angry and wrathful; and the Spirit of the Lord being gone, as the Scriptures say, I was blinded.”⁵

- The Savior’s life wasn’t easy. Find examples in the scriptures of times when Jesus demonstrated meekness in the face of challenges. Discuss how we can apply the Savior’s example in situations we might face today.
- One way to become meek is by serving others. Consider different acts of service the youth could do individually or as a group.

Resources

- Titus 3:2–5; Moroni 8:26; Doctrine and Covenants 112:13
- Ulisses Soares, “Be Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 9–11.
- Neal A. Maxwell, “Meekness—A Dimension of True Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1983, 70–74.



“You Shall Have Peace in Me”

Peace can mean different things to different people—hope that healing is possible, certainty that there is a way through hard times, or reassurance that we’re on the right path.



- Find stories about how others have found peace in Christ at [Mormon.org/easter](https://www.mormon.org/easter) and on pages 28 and 31 of this month’s *New Era*. How have you found peace?
- Consider watching the 2017 Easter video, “Prince of Peace,” at [Mormon.org/easter](https://www.mormon.org/easter). You might invite the youth to share the video online with a testimony of how they’ve found peace in Christ.

Resources

- John 14:27; Philippians 4:7
- W. Christopher Waddell, “A Pattern for Peace,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 90–93.
- Quentin L. Cook, “Personal Peace: The Reward of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 32–36. ■

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Read the Scriptures,” *Friend*, Dec. 1985, inside front cover; see also “What I Read as a Boy,” *Children’s Friend*, Nov. 1943, 508.
2. Russell M. Nelson, “Prophets, Leadership, and Divine Law” (worldwide devotional for young adults, Jan. 8, 2017), [broadcasts.lds.org](https://www.broadcasts.lds.org).
3. Thomas S. Monson, “Obedience Brings Blessings,” *Ensign*, May 2013, 89–90.
4. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “meekness,” [merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com).
5. Thomas B. Marsh, in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:206–7 (see also Kay Darowski, “The Faith and Fall of Thomas Marsh,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg [2016], 57–59).



TO SIT IN Council

BRINGING GREATER
POWER TO MELCHIZEDEK
PRIESTHOOD AND
RELIEF SOCIETY

Foreword by Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

During my apostolic ministry, I have consistently emphasized the power and importance of councils, including stake, ward, auxiliary, and family councils. I believe that working through councils is the most effective way to get real results.

This month, we implement some simple but important changes in the curriculum that members of Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Societies study when they meet in their respective organizations each Sunday. In addition to studying the words of living prophets from the most recent conference, we will also “sit in council” (D&C 107:89) together to discuss issues we face and needs we have.

As we learn to counsel together more effectively, God will bless us with an increased flow of revelation and understanding and greater power to accomplish His work.

By Michael Magleby

Director of Curriculum, Priesthood and Family Department

Before this world was created, Heavenly Father accomplished His work through councils (see D&C 121:32). Beginning with Adam and Eve, God’s people have sought His counsel in councils. In fact, God referred to Himself as “Man of Counsel” (Moses 7:35). Early in this dispensation, Joseph Smith began restoring “the order of Councils in ancient days.”¹ Today, the Church is governed by councils at every level.

In recent months, general Church leaders have counseled together about strengthening Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society Sunday meetings. The result is a new



curriculum titled *Come, Follow Me—For Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society*, which increases the use of general conference messages and extends the power of counseling into our priesthood quorums and Relief Societies.

“Where we were, we’ve done much good,” said Elder Christoffel Golden of the Seventy, who helped direct this change. “But the Lord wants us to move forward. Progress will come as a result of this shift to studying the words of living prophets and sitting in council.”

Recently, the Relief Society General Presidency and members of the Seventy met in council to discuss how counseling invites revelation, increases unity, and brings power. They offer

the following principles, knowing that you will build on these ideas as you discover solutions that are right for you, your ward or branch, and your quorum or Relief Society.

Power in Purpose

“As ye have assembled yourselves together . . . , and are agreed as touching this one thing, and have asked the Father in my name, even so ye shall receive” (D&C 42:3).

Councils are an avenue through which we “collectively seek the Lord’s will.”² In other words, it’s not enough just to share ideas; by counseling together, we invite revelation so we can learn what the Lord wants us to do in our situation. We will have more success in having such a revelatory experience as we remember the following:

1. *Focus—start with a specific, meaningful issue or need.* Focusing on a single issue or need increases our ability to make meaningful progress. Focus also helps us to see beyond visible symptoms (what is happening) and seek for understanding about root causes (why and how something affects people). For example, we might counsel about how to mentor and connect our youth with heaven rather than discussing the time youth spend looking at screens.

2. *Perspectives—frame the issue or need as a question.* A topic phrased as a question can draw out doctrinal insight. We might ask, “How can we address the situation in a helpful and

healing way?” or “What doctrine, if better understood, would help resolve the issue?”

3. *Power—seek revelation.* While councils may brainstorm solutions, the purpose of the council is to discover God’s will, not just to list best practices or to say, “This is how it was done in my last ward.” As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, we don’t need meetings; we need revelatory experiences.³ Counseling together reveals powerful solutions leading to action.

Power in Participation

“Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege” (D&C 88:122).

In councils, the interests of individuals and the organization—the ward or branch—come together in a unique way, especially if participants understand the following:

1. *Each council member has a vital role.* Council members should actively participate in but not dominate the council. As Paul taught, “The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (1 Corinthians 12:21–22).



2. *Council members seek to add light.* The Prophet Joseph Smith taught “that every man, before he makes an objection to any item that is brought before a council for consideration, should be sure that he can throw light upon the subject rather than spread darkness, and that his objection be founded in righteousness.”⁴

3. *Council members seek to be unified.* Despite different perspectives, council members unite in seeking to “receive guidance from the Holy Ghost.”⁵ Joseph Smith once said during a council that “to receive revelation and the blessings of heaven it was necessary to have our minds on God and exercise faith and become of one heart and of one mind.”⁶

Power in Action Plans

“Every man may act in doctrine and principle pertaining to futurity, according to the moral agency which I have given unto him” (D&C 101: 78).

A council is incomplete without plans to act on revelation received. Council participants should be invited to make specific commitments that they will act upon. “At the end of your council, you need to have assignments,” said Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief Society General President. “The most important work happens between meetings.”

The leader guides the council toward understanding and consensus.

Then he or she leads out in making and recording assignments for later follow-up. Sister Sharon Eubank, First Counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, adds: “The power is in us. As we bind ourselves to act, the Lord will sanctify our efforts (see D&C 43:9). Volunteering for and reporting back on assignments is the meat of covenant action.”

Role of the Leader

“The preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal” (Alma 1:26).

To improve our councils, we avoid worldly concepts of leadership. In the Lord’s kingdom, the leader is “servant of all” (Mark 10:44). Similarly, the council leader, whether a presiding authority or a teacher, provides focus but is not the focal point. He or she avoids being the dominant voice or taking a position before hearing from the council.

The council leader plays an important role in framing the purpose, facilitating discussion, and inviting participants to make commitments to act. The council functions better as the council leader listens, guides, invites, protects, and validates.

1. *Listen.* Good leaders listen to the speaker and to the Holy Ghost. “I believe the gift of discernment operates more effectively,” said Elder Bednar, “when we’re listening as opposed to when we’re talking.”⁷

2. *Guide.* A council leader guides the conversation, allowing ideas to build. As necessary, the leader reframes the discussion or lovingly redirects it.

3. *Invite.* The Lord scatters revelation among members of a council. Inviting everyone—including the reticent—to offer ideas increases the potential of learning the will of the Lord.

4. *Protect.* A council leader creates an environment for sharing safely and appropriately by caring for those who share and protecting against criticism and judgment. Sensitive topics require careful guidance. Matters that are confidential remain so.

5. *Validate.* As participants share thoughts and ideas, a leader validates input by offering appreciation and connecting related ideas. This



validation helps participants feel part of the revelatory process and stretch themselves to ensure that their input is helpful.

New Curriculum, New Commitment

With this new year and new curriculum comes an era of new commitment. We are blessed with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility and privilege to seek for His guidance and do His work. This step forward in our Sunday Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings isn't about just having a lesson about the work; rather we "sit in council" and promote righteous action—action that will "push many people to Zion with songs of everlasting joy" (D&C 66:11). ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in "Minutes, 17 February 1834," josephsmithpapers.org.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 2.4.4.
3. See David A. Bednar, "Panel Discussion" (worldwide leadership training meeting, Nov. 2010), broadcasts.lds.org.
4. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 94.
5. *Handbook 2*, 3.3.2.
6. Joseph Smith, in "Minutes, 27–28 December 1832," 3, josephsmithpapers.org.
7. David A. Bednar, "Panel Discussion."

WHAT IS DIFFERENT IN MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD AND RELIEF SOCIETY MEETINGS?

On the first Sunday of each month, discussions in Melchizedek Priesthood and Relief Society meetings are led by a presidency member or group leader. These meetings are councils in which we "instruct and edify" (D&C 43:8) as we counsel together about issues and needs. These discussions lead to action—both individual and collective.

On other Sundays, we report and follow up on our discussion and assignments. As needed, we make and record new assignments. Discussions during these meetings focus on doctrine taught in general conference messages and special topics selected by general Church leaders and are led by a presidency member, a group leader, or a called teacher. The feelings we have in these discussions inspire us to individual action and change.

PREPARE THY HEART

By Leone O. Jacobs



This new series highlights the lives of devoted women and their messages, excerpted from the book *At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women* (2017). Selected chapters are available at churchhistorianspress.org/at-the-pulpit.

One of the most glorious principles of life is that we can always rise above our present level. How discouraging life would be if once we found ourselves involved in unworthy conduct we could not lift ourselves up and out and on to better ways, but we do not have to remain as we are. Each day offers a fresh beginning. . . .

Lives can be changed, can they not? The course of our lives can be rerouted, but how? Let us call it preparing our hearts.

Well, what does preparing one's heart mean? It means checking up on oneself, scrutinizing one's daily life to see what is there, to see what is there of value and what should be thrown out. It means humbling oneself before the Lord. It means ridding oneself of bitterness and selfishness. It means complete forgiveness of all wrongs inflicted upon us, real or imagined.

It means opening wide one's heart to righteousness, putting oneself in an attitude to receive good. It means clothing one's life differently.

Picture in your mind a field, plowed and harrowed from end to end, leveled near perfectly; weeds burned down along the fence line; everything possible done that is conducive to the growth of good seed. We can put our hearts in that very same condition, in an attitude of receptiveness to good. We can plow under the old useless habits and smooth down the rough places of error, but we hear someone say: "I wish I could enjoy working in the church like Mrs. So-and-so does. I wish I could enjoy living the gospel like she does."

They can. It is all in the set of the heart. It is all in preparing one's heart to want that sort of living. We hear other people say: "But I don't see how

ABOUT SISTER JACOBS

Before her service on the Relief Society general board, Leone Openshaw Jacobs (1903–90) and her husband, Joseph, served missions in Palestine and Syria. Joseph began his service as mission president in July 1937. Leone and their children, 11-year-old Geraldine and 7-year-old Lamont, could not join him until December 1938, after Leone had recovered from major surgery.

Sister Jacobs's mission work included fellowshipping members, learning Turkish, hosting a Christmas party for Church members, and preparing meals for mission guests and missionaries. She also supported Relief Society and youth activities and played the organ for meetings. At the start of World War II, in 1939, the Jacobs family was called home to the United States, leaving behind 79 members to maintain the Church in Asia Minor.

At the war's end, Sister Jacobs was called to serve on the Relief Society general board, which she did from 1945 to 1956, when heart disease forced her to resign.

This article is an excerpt of a talk Sister Jacobs gave at the Relief Society general conference on September 29, 1949.

you ever get the time for it all.” . . .

. . . If we are too busy to serve the Lord, we are too busy doing other things that are not worthwhile.

In the Old Testament we read this: “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it” [Ezra 7:10]. . . .

What a lovely ideal for us to work to. . . .

. . . I fully believe that as far as

living the gospel is concerned, we can do what we want to do, if we want to enough. . . .

We know that living the gospel means sharing it with others, and visiting teaching is indeed a challenge in sharing the gospel. True, it takes great preparation, great thought and tact and wisdom, and I am quite sure that visiting teaching has not as yet reached its full possibility. . . .

Remember, if you are too busy to serve the Lord, you are too busy. Prepare your heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and in every way possible help others to prepare their hearts for righteousness. I pray to our Heavenly Father that he will help us to plan the course of our lives in the straight and narrow path, and that we may diligently pursue that course. ■



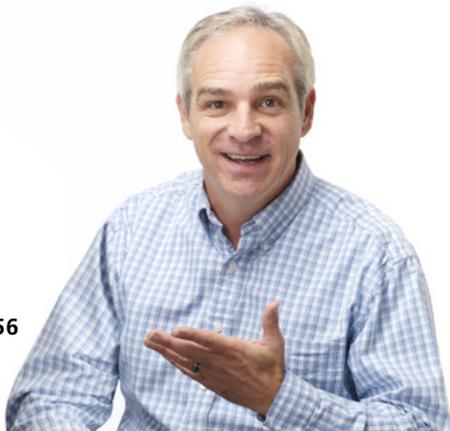
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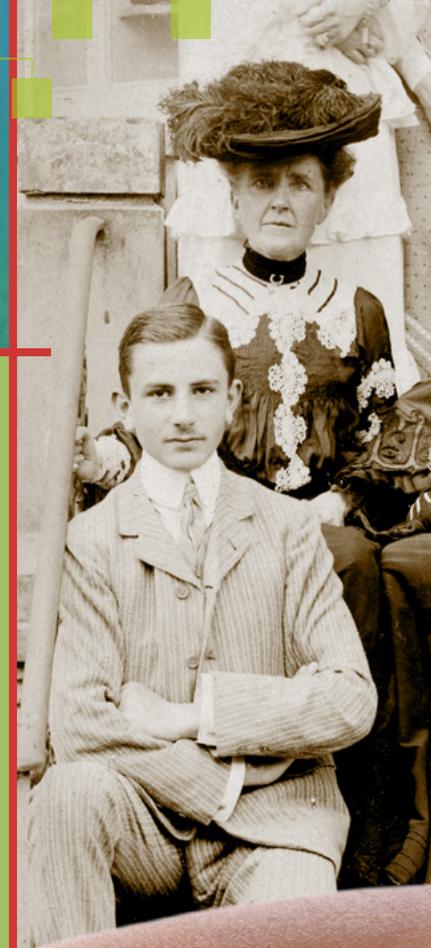


DID YOU KNOW?

You have access to
80% more data than
50 years ago—

ALL ONLINE!





By Margot Hovley
Church Magazines

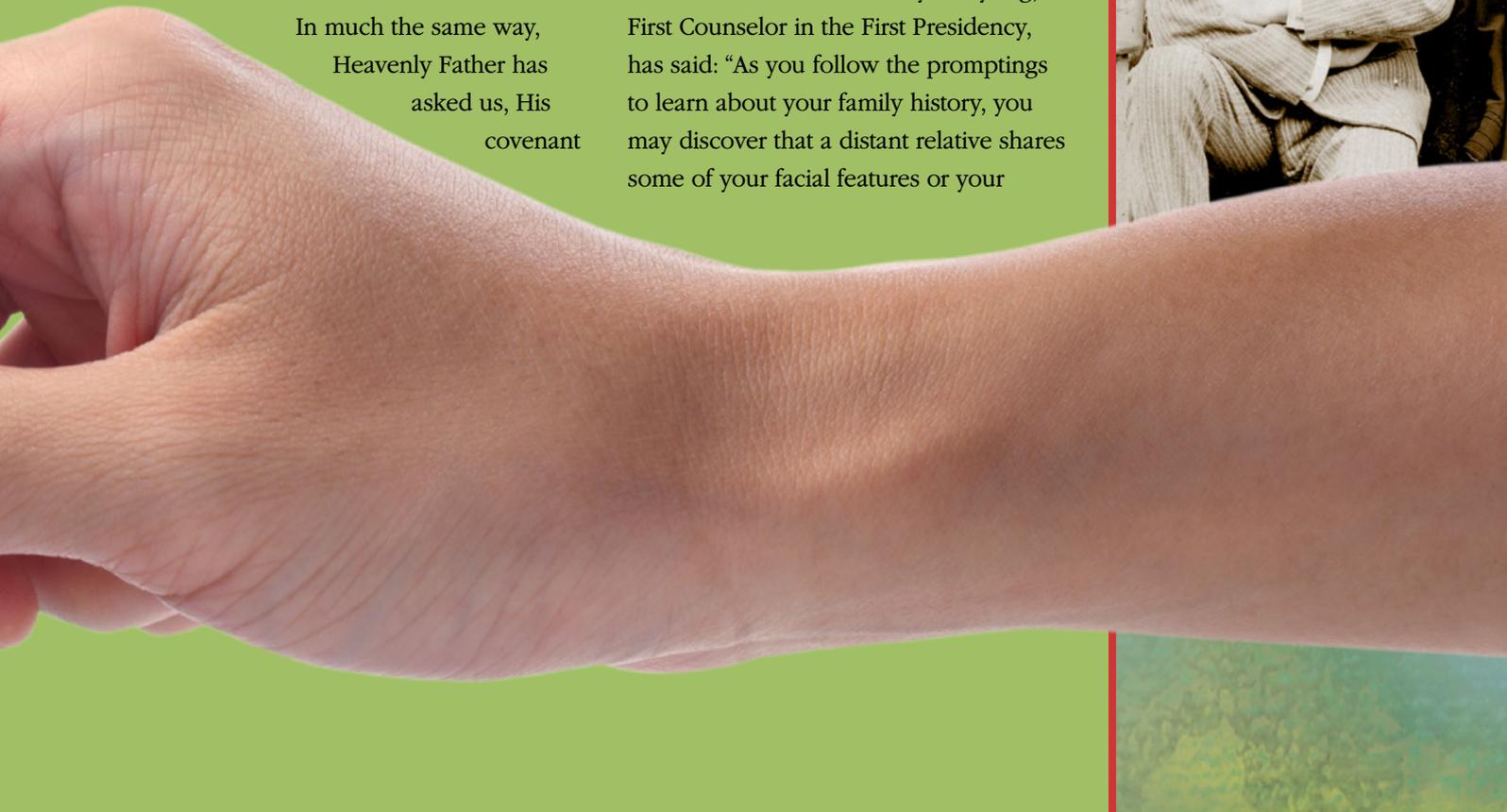
Imagine a mother and father gathering their children around a dinner table for nourishment and feelings of love and belonging. As the family members sit down, there's joy on their faces from being together and perhaps some happy anticipation of the delicious meal to come.

In much the same way,
Heavenly Father has
asked us, His
covenant

children, to gather our ancestors. As members of God's family, in a future heavenly day we'll sit down together in peace and love. We'll nourish each other and feel the joy of togetherness.

To create this beautiful picture, we need to act. President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has said: "As you follow the promptings to learn about your family history, you may discover that a distant relative shares some of your facial features or your

LOWER LEFT AND TOP: PHOTO
ILLUSTRATIONS BY LESLIE NILSSON



FAMILY HISTORY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

FAMILY HISTORY MISSIONARIES

There are many opportunities for seniors to serve as family history missionaries all over the world. Image capture is just one example. Some require language ability but not all. Some missions would be particularly appropriate for missionaries who might enjoy historical records or a more introverted missionary experience. To learn more about these opportunities, visit familysearch.org/mission.



interest in books or your talent for singing. This could be very interesting and even insightful. But if your work stops there, you will sense that something is missing. This is because to gather and unite God's family requires more than just warm feelings. It requires sacred covenants made in connection with priesthood ordinances."¹

Our Heavenly Father has inspired the development of many types of technology that have made this gathering faster, easier, and more accurate. President Eyring continued: "We do not know what marvels God will inspire people to create to help in His work of gathering His family. But whatever marvelous inventions may come, their use will require the Spirit working in people like you and me. This should not surprise us. After all, these are beloved sons and daughters of God. He will send whatever inspiration is needed to give them the opportunity to return to Him."²

DID YOU KNOW?

You can serve as a family history missionary anywhere in the world! Or in your own home—full or part time.

WE NEED MORE!

Preserving Records

The Church's miraculous work of gathering and preserving records is picking up speed, with 300 camera teams spread across the globe. Once the images are acquired, they undergo a quality-check process. Then they can be indexed, making the information easier to search and work with.

Joy Rife and Raelynn Klafke of Texas, USA, served about six months in Melbourne, Australia, as record preservation missionaries, digitally capturing various records at an archives center. Sister Rife says of their experience:

"Prior to coming to the archives, some of the records had been stored in a room with a leaky roof and an open window, while some were well taken care of and stored properly.

"As we opened the records, there was a clear realization that some of these names had not been seen or spoken for many decades, sometimes 150 years. At times there were clear promptings if we had missed a page.

"Many images are captured in quick succession, without actually reading the names they contain. But sometimes we were inspired to read the names on a page. When this happened, we saw our own family names in the record.

"What a blessing to make images available for people around the world to find their own families!"

FamilySearch reports that as of 2016, 320,000 people are helping with indexing, processing millions of images per year. Families can then quickly utilize these records. Still, camera teams are far



Over **140** **MILLION** records are captured each year.

Time it takes to capture images by **MICROFILM— 2 YEARS**



DIGITALLY SCANNED—
2 WEEKS

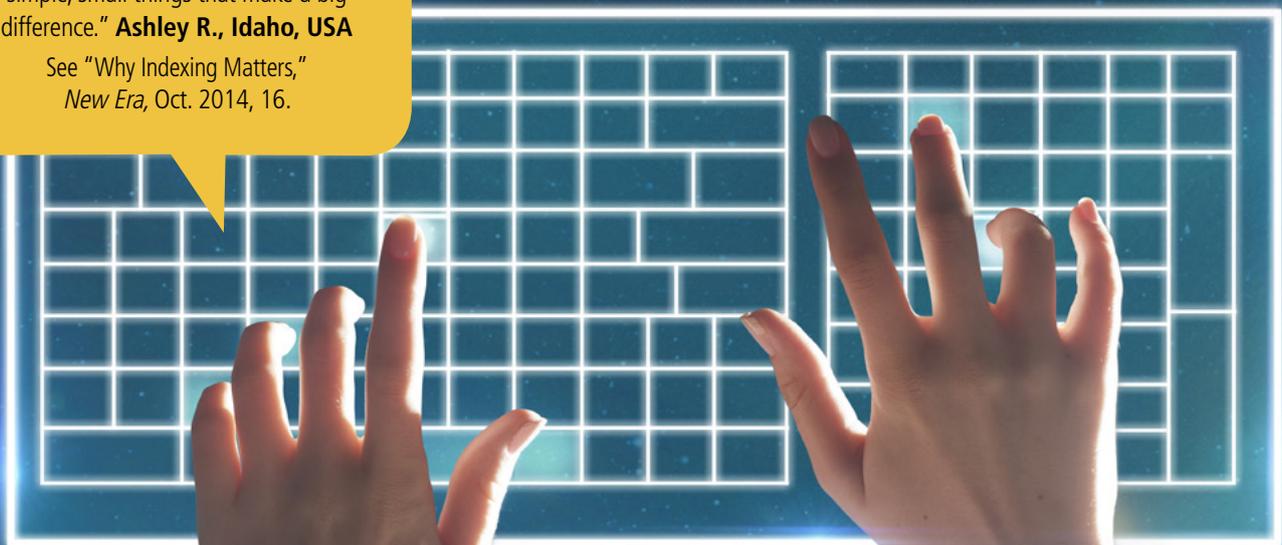
Over **275** camera teams are digitizing records in **48** countries.



“Indexing taught me that some of the most important things we can do are simple, small things that make a big difference.” **Ashley R., Idaho, USA**

See “Why Indexing Matters,” *New Era*, Oct. 2014, 16.

Indexing matters!



outpacing what is indexed. However, by increasing the number of indexers and by forming partnerships with other genealogical groups, the goal is to index these records in a single generation—20 to 30 years. Miracles have happened over and over in the past in regard to this work, and they will happen again, and as many times as needed.

Did Aunt Mary Really Do It All?

Many Latter-day Saints, especially those whose families have belonged to the Church for generations, assume that their family

history work has all been done. Sometimes these families have an Aunt Mary or Uncle John who devoted years to this research, completing beautiful, meticulous books full of family group sheets and pedigree charts. These faithful people combed through every possible source they could find and often considered the work finished.

And so it might have been—at the time. But consider the fact that we currently have about 80 percent more data in FamilySearch than was available to Aunt Mary. The dead ends she encountered may possibly now have new information for them. And more is being added all the time, at an astonishing rate. Camera teams are capturing about 500 million records per year. That's well over one million records per day.

Billions more records are being added as FamilySearch creates partnerships with other genealogy databases, such as Ancestry.com, MyHeritage.com, FindMyPast.com, and Geneanet.org. FamilySearch is often able to trade access to new records with these partners, opening up even more availability.

With such a wealth of new data, it would actually be surprising if a person was unable to add to Aunt Mary's work. The speed at which records are being added to the collection is nothing short of miraculous, demonstrating that God's hand is in the work.

Making Family History Come Alive

Sharing things to the "Memories" section of FamilySearch can do something very important. It can help us turn our hearts to our fathers. An image of an ancestor helps us to remember that these were real, live people with hopes and dreams, with families, struggles, heartaches, and joys much like our own.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can access FamilySearch on your cell phone.

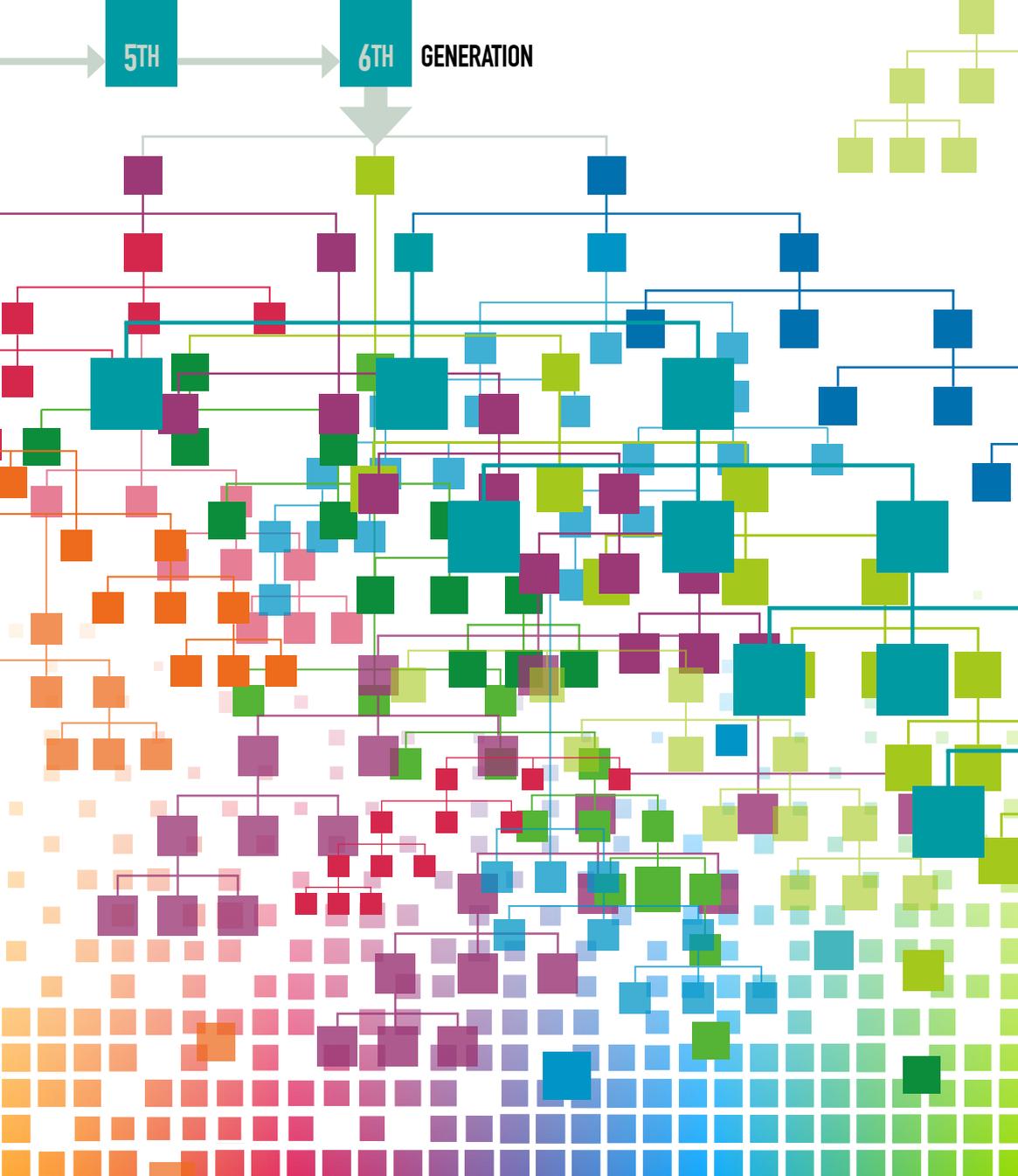
DOWNLOAD THE APP!



5TH

6TH

GENERATION



WHO ARE MY COUSINS—EXACTLY?

- Brothers and sisters of our direct-line ancestors.
- Descendants of the above.

Thirty-Eight Thousand Cousins

Some mistakenly believe that we are only responsible to do family history and temple work for our direct-line ancestors. However, cousins are also part of our family. We should feel comfortable extending warm family ties to provide family history and temple work for them.

Aunt Mary usually stuck to her direct line, so it's sometimes possible now to find temple opportunities by looking at cousin lines. (Note that for six generations, there are approximately 63 direct-line ancestors versus 38,000 cousins!) Using the descendency view on FamilySearch can simplify this process.

WHAT ABOUT SPOUSES OF OUR DIRECT-LINE ANCESTORS?

- We should do temple work for the spouses of direct-line ancestors.
- Leave the temple work for the ancestors of those spouses to their direct-line descendants.

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of names in FamilySearch has increased from about

2 MILLION

to

179 MILLION

in only

6 YEARS!

A story about them can bring them to life. Even the smallest mention in a newspaper or land record can help them become real to us, and connections and bonds between us form.

Plus, don't forget about the family that's still around us. Take the opportunity to interview relatives and capture their memories while those memories are still fresh.³

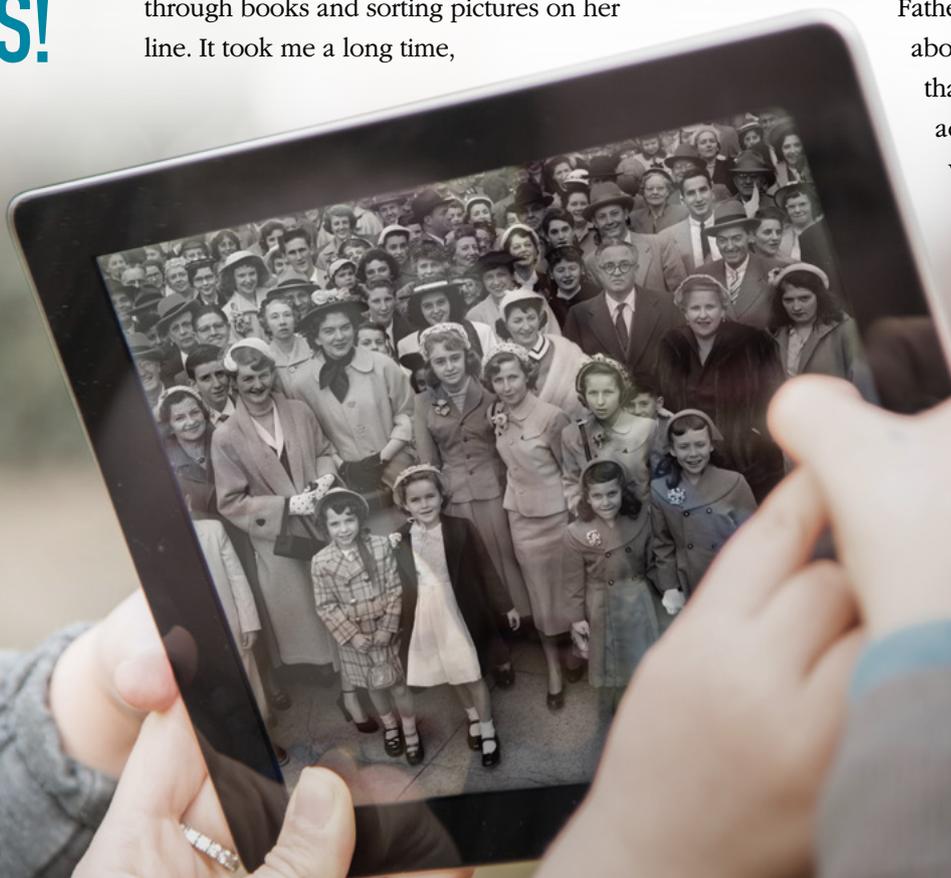
Family members of all ages can get involved. Children can help ask questions of grandparents. Teens can record interviews on their smartphones and help scan photos and documents. Maybe one family member can be in charge of organizing and tagging the uploads, while another can share them on social media for the rest of the family to enjoy.

Teenager Mariah Ashcraft says, "My mother is a convert, so not much family history had been done. I started looking through books and sorting pictures on her line. It took me a long time,

but as I entered the names of my ancestors into FamilySearch, I connected their names to their pictures and it all became real to me. I realized I was really doing the Lord's work. He had truly blessed me. Now I have family names to do baptisms and confirmations for in the temple. I feel closer to the Spirit and have a stronger testimony. This experience has not only changed my life but the lives of those beyond the veil."

New technology is flooding the earth. Computer applications are continually being improved, and we might be startled to see what options and features our children will have to work with. Many people carry in their pocket a cell phone with computing power that far outstrips the power of the systems that controlled the first moon landing, an idea that only a few years ago was unheard of. Our Heavenly

Father will bring about the things that are needed to accomplish the work.





REACH OUT FOR HELP

Don't be afraid to reach out for help with family history. Trained volunteers are ready to assist you in a variety of ways via phone, chat, or email. In-person help is available from family history consultants in your ward or stake. To find support options, visit familysearch.org/ask/help.

God's Help Is Real

At the 2017 Rootstech conference, Wendy W. Nelson, wife of President Russell M. Nelson, observed: "President George Q. Cannon, who was counselor to four Presidents of the Church, taught that in these latter days, those who are joining the Church are joining quite precisely because their ancestors have been praying for one of their posterity to join the Church so that they, the ancestors, can receive their essential ordinances by proxy. That's when I invite the missionaries to consider that one of their most effective prayers might be, 'Please lead us to those whose ancestors have already received the gospel on the other side of the veil and who are desperate to receive their ordinances.'"⁴

Let us continue to gather our ancestors together into eternal families, praying always for help and inspiration from the Holy Ghost and our kindred dead. Consider what sacrifice of time is appropriate for you to be able to do more family history and temple work this year. God has prepared a bounteous table of blessings for us for faithfully doing this work. Keep

fresh in your heart the picture of gathering with our brothers and sisters in our heavenly home, sitting down together in peace and love. ■

NOTES

1. Henry B. Eyring, "Gathering the Family of God," *Ensign*, May 2017, 21.
2. Henry B. Eyring, "Gathering the Family of God," 22.
3. For personal history helps and ideas, see familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories.
4. Russell M. Nelson and Wendy W. Nelson, presentation at RootsTech conference, Feb. 11, 2017, lds.org/topics/family-history/familydiscoveryday; see also "Open the Heavens through Temple and Family History Work," *Ensign*, Oct. 2017, 38.



LEFT: BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY H. ARMSTRONG ROBERTS/CLASSICSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

RIGHT: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MATT REIER

EMPTY CUPBOARDS AND A CHERISHED PIANO

*As we struggled financially yet tried to be full-tithe payers,
we enjoyed several tender mercies from the Lord.*



By Lauralee Burton Hill

When we had been married just over 10 years, my husband left a promising career in advertising, sought additional education, and began a second career as a professor. Our hope was that although he would make less money, we would enjoy more time together as a family. In order to begin his teaching career at a small private college, we moved our family across the country, far away from familiar territory and loved ones.

During these years we experienced severe economic challenges, as the cost of living was much higher than we had expected. Every month when I paid the bills, I pleaded with the Lord, praying for miracles and asking for help to know how to survive financially. Miracles did come but not always in the way that I would have expected or chosen.

Two experiences during this time cemented my trust in Heavenly Father and the Savior and Their gifts. One occurred soon after our move. As we neared the end of another desperately lean month, I looked around our kitchen for something to serve our children for dinner but found the cupboards largely empty. Thirty minutes later I reluctantly called our children to the table for dinner and produced a pot of plain rice with a little butter and salt to put on top. We prayed to give thanks for the food, and I began to fill the children's bowls. To my surprise they ate with gusto. During the meal one of my sons said, "Mom, this is delicious. Why don't we have it more often?"

I was incredulous. In fact, I wouldn't have believed it had I not witnessed it—and then I felt deeply grateful. As I reflected on this experience later, I realized that the Lord could transform a pot of rice into a feast

and a little into enough. What a profoundly beautiful lesson!

The second experience occurred several years later. Our financial situation had improved a little, but money was still scarce, particularly during the summer months when our monthly paycheck decreased because of the college's summer break. During this time we fell behind on the payment of our tithes. As the time for tithing settlement approached, I became more and more anxious. My husband and I wanted the peace and blessings of being full-tithe payers. We also wanted our children to see that being full-tithe payers was important to us. We could think of no solution but to repent and commit to be full-tithe payers in the year to come.

As we spoke with our branch president, he asked if there was any way we could make up the shortage by the end of the year so we could claim the full blessings of paying tithing. We could see no way. Most of the furniture we owned had been given to us and wasn't worth much. We did not own our vehicles outright. We were renting our home. We even spoke of selling our wedding rings, but both were modest, and we knew that their sale would not be enough to cover our shortage.

That evening I walked through our home, wondering if there was anything I had overlooked that was valuable enough. My eyes rested on our piano, and I felt a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach. We had purchased the piano several years earlier at a closeout sale, and I was using it to teach my children and others to play. I often played it for relaxation and enjoyment. We used it to learn hymns, Primary songs, and other music, and we caroled around it at Christmastime. It had a built-in computer for composing, and the



**TITHING:
A TEST OF FAITH**

"While tithing is paid with money, more importantly it is paid with faith. I have never met an individual who paid an honest tithe who complained about it. Rather, he put his trust in the Lord, and the Lord never failed him."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), "Let Virtue Garnish Thy Thoughts Unceasingly," *Ensign*, May 2007, 117.



sound and touch were designed to simulate the sound and feel of a grand piano. It was worth enough to allow us to pay our tithing if we sold it, but would anyone really want to purchase it right before Christmas on top of the other holiday expenses and busyness? How would our children feel about its sale? Could we bear to part with it?

When we presented the idea to our children at scripture study the next morning, there were many tears. The decision, however, was unanimous: we would attempt to sell the piano. We knew that our family could not live safely and successfully without the blessings of tithing. The day after posting it online, we found a buyer. It was a miracle.

That night I sat in my dark bedroom rocking my baby and crying. There was a tiny part of me that had believed that being *willing* to sell the piano would be enough to receive a miracle from Heavenly Father. But now we were really doing

it; we were actually going to sell our piano. I laid my baby in his crib and then curled up in my own bed, crying quietly. Then a deep sense of calm began to enter my spirit, and it grew larger and larger. I had the impression that I was being held—cradled like a baby—and that I was loved immeasurably. The anguish over selling the piano dissipated gradually until it was completely gone and I was asleep.

The even greater miracle came when I spoke with my children the next morning during scripture study. “I’m not sad about the piano anymore,” I told the children. “The Savior has taken my sadness, and I feel very peaceful. It is a miracle.” My intent was to testify to the children how the Savior had healed me. I hoped to direct them to the same healing and peace. I was astonished when one of my sons (the one who had seemed the saddest when we decided to sell the piano) cheerfully said, “Mom, I’m not sad either.



I haven't been sad since we talked about it the first time." One by one the other children agreed. I was flabbergasted. I had not expected the Savior to work so quickly. It seemed that, in a sense, being willing to sell the piano *was* enough. As soon as we committed, He healed us.

We discussed how our family had experienced the power of the Savior's Atonement. We remembered how sad we were when we decided to sell the piano, but now none of us felt sad at all. The Savior had done what He claims He can: He had taken our sorrows and healed us (see Isaiah 53:4–5).

There will probably be times in our lives when we will face other difficulties greater than the challenge of selling our piano. On those days we will cast our minds back on this experience (see D&C 6:22) and look toward Heavenly Father and the Savior for help. We will remember this experience as a building block of our testimonies.

We helped wrap up the piano when the movers came to take it away. As it went out the door, no one cried. And when we handed our tithing envelope to the branch president and declared ourselves full-tithe payers, we felt victorious.

The day after the sale of the piano, a friend called. "How strong is your back?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" I inquired.

"I have a piano here that you can borrow until your family is able to acquire another," she said. "All you have to do is come and get it."

I am grateful for the Savior, who can turn a little into enough, who can heal troubled hearts, and who surrounds us with friends. I'm also grateful for the blessings that came to us during our lean years. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

Helping Children Choose

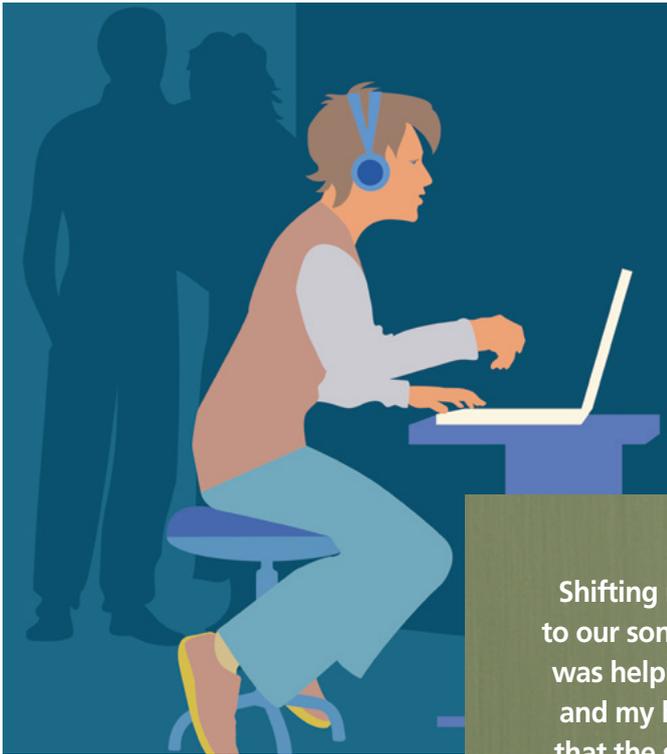
*Teaching our children how
to make their own righteous decisions will
help them throughout their lives.*

We all want the best for our children. We strive to teach them and direct them as they move from infancy to adulthood. But is it possible to direct them too much? How can parents lead appropriately without stifling their children's independence or impeding their personal growth?

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves."¹ Parents can play an active, guiding role in their children's lives while still recognizing their children's individuality and respecting their agency. When we teach our children true gospel principles and lead them by example, we pave the way for them to make their own righteous decisions.

In the following accounts, two mothers share how they were inspired to trust their children to find their own way.





Backing Off

By Denalee Chapman, Idaho, USA

My husband and I have always had high expectations for our children. When they were younger, I monitored their progress in school through an online platform. Each day I'd log in to look at their current grades and assignments. I made them complete their assignments before they did any fun activities. For the most part they stayed on top of things. But then when Bryan was in high school, he decided to match wits with me.

At first he was just a little slow getting things done. But soon it became a battle between us. When I found out about missing schoolwork, I would take away Bryan's computer and phone time and even make him go to bed earlier. When he finally completed the assignment, I would call the school and persuade the teacher to accept the tardy work. Day by day our relationship got more strained. I became exhausted and stressed. When I tried to reassure Bryan that I loved him, he would respond with a grunt.

I spent weeks pondering, praying, and studying, trying to figure out a solution to the problem. Finally, I had an epiphany. I realized that my relationship with Bryan was more important than his grades. If I backed off, what was the worst that could happen? He might not graduate. Could I

live with that? When I realized that the alternative was staying on the road of constant contention, I decided I could.

Instantly I was filled with immense peace and relief. I loved my son no matter what, and I didn't want to damage our relationship any further. I knew that my job as a parent was to teach my children and help them on their path to an eternity of progression. I wanted Bryan to become a

mature adult who took responsibility for his choices.

That day when Bryan came home from school, I told him that our relationship was more important to me than his grades. I gave him a choice: We could continue the way we had been, with me checking up on him and helping him at every step. Or I could back out completely and let him take care of everything.

"If I back out," I warned, "I won't talk your teachers into accepting late work or intervene in any way. Do you want some time to think about this?"

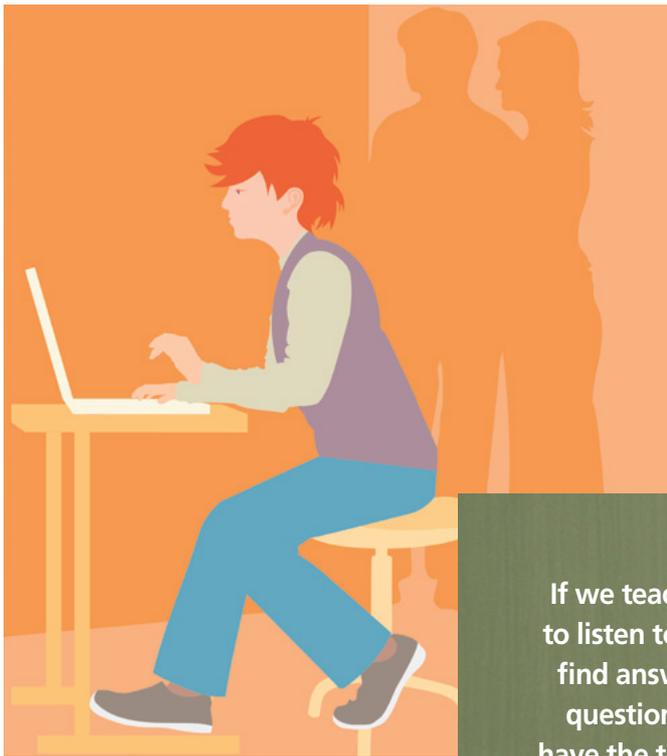
Bryan's face lit up. He didn't need any time to decide. He was ready to take full responsibility.

Life got instantly better for both of us. The rift between us healed, and Bryan and I developed a comfortable relationship of love and respect.

For the last two and a half years of Bryan's schooling, I did not know what his grades were. At first, not knowing made me nervous, but I could see that shifting the responsibility to Bryan was helping him grow. I realized that this approach would not always be the best for each child and circumstance, but my heart told me that the sense of independence my son felt was just what he needed. And what had once taken up a huge chunk of my time and thoughts was no longer an issue.

Bryan graduated with an advanced honors diploma. Later he served the Lord on a mission, using the autonomy we felt inspired to allow him to develop. Bryan has become an instrument in the Lord's hands, and I couldn't be prouder of him.

Shifting responsibility to our son for his grades was helping him grow, and my heart told me that the sense of independence he felt was just what he needed.



If we teach them how to listen to the Spirit to find answers to their questions, they will have the tools and skills they need to withstand the world.

Letting Evan Choose

By Lisa Hymas, Idaho, USA

When my oldest child, Evan, was halfway through the fifth grade, we needed to decide which middle school he would attend the coming year. The public school system where we lived at the time (Florida, USA) allowed him to apply to four different middle school programs. As I spoke to other moms and looked up school ratings, trying to sift through the various options, I was not sure which school he should attend. I had been praying about schools for a while, hoping we would be led to pick the best one for him.

One day I had the impression that Evan should decide on his own which school he should attend. At first I thought, “How can I let a 10-year-old make a big decision like that?” But I felt strongly that he needed to begin to learn how to receive personal revelation.

I spoke with my husband about my impression. We sat down with Evan and told him we thought *he* should choose which school he would attend the following year. We reviewed with him the steps he needed to follow to make his choice. We suggested that he make a list of what he liked and didn’t like about each school. We explained that after he had considered each option carefully, he would need to make a choice. Then he would need to

pray to Heavenly Father and ask if his choice was right. We assured him that we were prepared to support his decision.

Evan and I spent the next few weeks attending open houses and gathering information about each school. During the car rides we had the chance to talk about his list of the pros and cons for each one.

Finally Evan had all the information he needed. I reminded him that he needed to make his decision and then pray and ask Heavenly Father for help in knowing if his choice was right. I told him that he would feel either good or uncertain about his choice. The next day he told my husband and me that he had made his decision. He had prayed three times and felt good about it. Not only were my husband and I confident in his choice, but Evan was too. He knew

that the Spirit helped direct him to a certain school because that is where Heavenly Father wanted him to be.

We can strengthen the rising generation by giving our children the chance to make important life choices. If we teach them how to listen to the Spirit to find answers to their questions, they will have the tools and skills they need to withstand the world. ■

NOTE

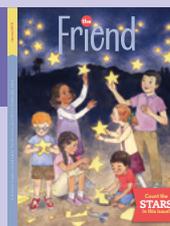
1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 284.



WISE PARENTING

“Wise parents must weigh when children are ready to begin exercising their own agency in a particular area of their lives. But if parents hold on to *all* decision-making power and see it as their ‘right,’ they severely limit the growth and development of their children.”

Elder Larry Y. Wilson of the Seventy, “Only upon the Principles of Righteousness,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 104.



Use the Friend magazine to help your family understand a different sensitive topic each month.

DEALING WITH DIFFERENCES

From a young age, children notice differences in the people around them, and when they point them out, it can be uncomfortable. But by letting children ask about differences and helping them focus on what people have in common, we have a powerful opportunity to help children see everyone as a child of God, regardless of race, religion, ability, or gender.

Talk positively about various differences people might have, and read and learn with your children about people who aren't like you. This month's *Friend* has stories that can help your family get the conversation started on just a few differences.

“Forts and Friendship” (page 10)

Callie and Marco have different religions but help each other choose the right. You could use this story to talk with your children about how their friends might do things differently from your family, but those friends can still be good examples.



“An Answer for Lucia” (page 26)

Lucia is the only member of the Church in her school. Her classmates are unkind to her because she

believes in a different faith. Talk with your family about how we should treat those who are different in our school or neighborhood. We can always be kind.

“A Friend for Mr. Maurice” (page 16)

Carter thinks his neighbor Mr. Maurice is really grouchy, but then they get to know each other and become friends. What neighbors could your family get to know better? You can also read “Lucas and the Bully” (page 32) and talk about the power our words can have—for bad or good.



TALKING POINTS

- If children ask about someone's differences in public, answer honestly, apologize to the person if necessary, and don't avoid interacting with the person just because you might feel embarrassed. We can show children that differences aren't something to shun or be scared of.
- When children make broad claims (like “boys are good at music”) or assumptions about race or religion, you can say, “Oh, who are you thinking of?” They most likely have someone in mind, and you can talk about the specific incident and explain that broad claims aren't accurate.
- Help children focus on specifics. For example, instead of declaring, “Girls can do anything,” try “You can do anything.” When we focus on generalizations (even positive or neutral ones), we teach children that being part of a group determines who you are and what you can do.

RELATED TEACHINGS

- Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “As we become more like [Jesus Christ], we learn to treat others as He does, regardless of any outward characteristic or behavior” (“Our Good Shepherd,” *Ensign*, May 2017, 29).
- Sing “I'll Walk with You” (*Children's Songbook*, 140–41). Talk about specific ways we can show love for other people.

Find stories, activities, and media about other gospel topics at lessonhelps.lds.org. For past *Friend* Connection articles, visit FriendConnection.lds.org.



The New Era magazine is there for your teens—and for you. See how this month's issue can help you talk with them and teach them.



A New Year, a New Mutual Theme

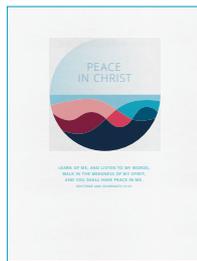
The 2018 Mutual theme comes from Doctrine and Covenants 19:23: “Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me.” This month's *New Era* contains articles related to the theme.



Message from the Young Women and Young Men General Presidencies



Breakdown of the theme scripture verse



Mutual theme poster



New song: “Peace in Christ”

QUESTIONS ANSWERED THIS MONTH

Here are questions youth can find answers to in this month's *New Era*:

How can I support a family member who is going through depression?

Choosing a spouse will be a big decision, and it makes me nervous. How will I know I've made the right choice?

“Q&A,” pages 42–43

TALK WITH THEM

Here are some questions you might ask:

- Why do you think Church leaders want your age-group to focus on a scripture that talks about how to find peace?
- Is finding peace something that other teenagers are really concerned with?
- Have you seen other people try to find peace in their lives by doing things that you know won't bring them peace? What would help them?

TEACH THEM

In family home evening or other teaching settings, consider using something you saw in the *New Era*. For instance:

- Read quotes about the purpose of the theme from the article by the Young Men and Young Women General Presidencies (page 22).
- Use “Line upon Line” (page 26) to help youth learn the meaning behind each aspect of the scripture verse.
- Read the story “My Strange Neighbor” (page 31), and ask youth if they know anyone in a similar situation or with a similar experience.







PORTRAITS OF FAITH

As life became challenging in Amanda's teenage years, she fell away from the Church looking for new experiences. After several years, Amanda felt empty. Finding happiness began with an important question.

CODY BELL, PHOTOGRAPHER

Amanda Jiri

Cape Town, South Africa

I was inactive for about eight years. During this time, I got mixed up with the wrong friends. My mom was terminally ill. I was quite down. I felt an emptiness in me. I started wondering, "When was I last truly happy?"

Then I thought about when I was in Young Women. I realized that's when I last felt true happiness. I decided to go back to church the following Sunday. I met with the branch president and began my journey of repentance.

A short time later, I was called to work with the Young Women. When we recited the Young Women theme, I remembered it instantly! Today, each time I recite the theme, I receive a confirmation that the Church is where I belong.

FIND MORE

See more about Amanda's search for happiness at [ensign.lds.org](https://www.lds.org/ensign).

Learn more about how to find happiness from President Thomas S. Monson at [lds.org/go/11839](https://www.lds.org/go/11839).

ANSWERS TO EACH OTHER'S PRAYERS

I was finishing my mission in the Illinois Chicago South Mission when I received special permission to visit a previous area and have dinner with the Tremillo family. I had served in their ward for a whole year and had grown close to them.

During dinner, Brother Tremillo encouraged me to share at least one message of happiness on my way home. He said the Lord would put someone on my flight who would need my help. I promised him that I would.

From that time to the time I left Chicago, I was also praying to receive confirmation that the Lord would accept my sacrifice of serving as a full-time missionary.

Three weeks later, I boarded the

plane that would take me home. As I approached my seat, the person in the seat next to mine looked up. “No way!” she said. “I can’t believe it!”

My first thought was, “Great, she hates Mormons!” When I sat down, she told me that her name was Kelly and that she was a recent convert. She expressed how happy she was that a missionary was sitting next to her. Kelly told me that the last person she had sat next to was anti-Mormon and unkind in how she expressed her opinion of Kelly’s newfound faith. Kelly was distraught and had questions. She had been praying for answers and comfort.

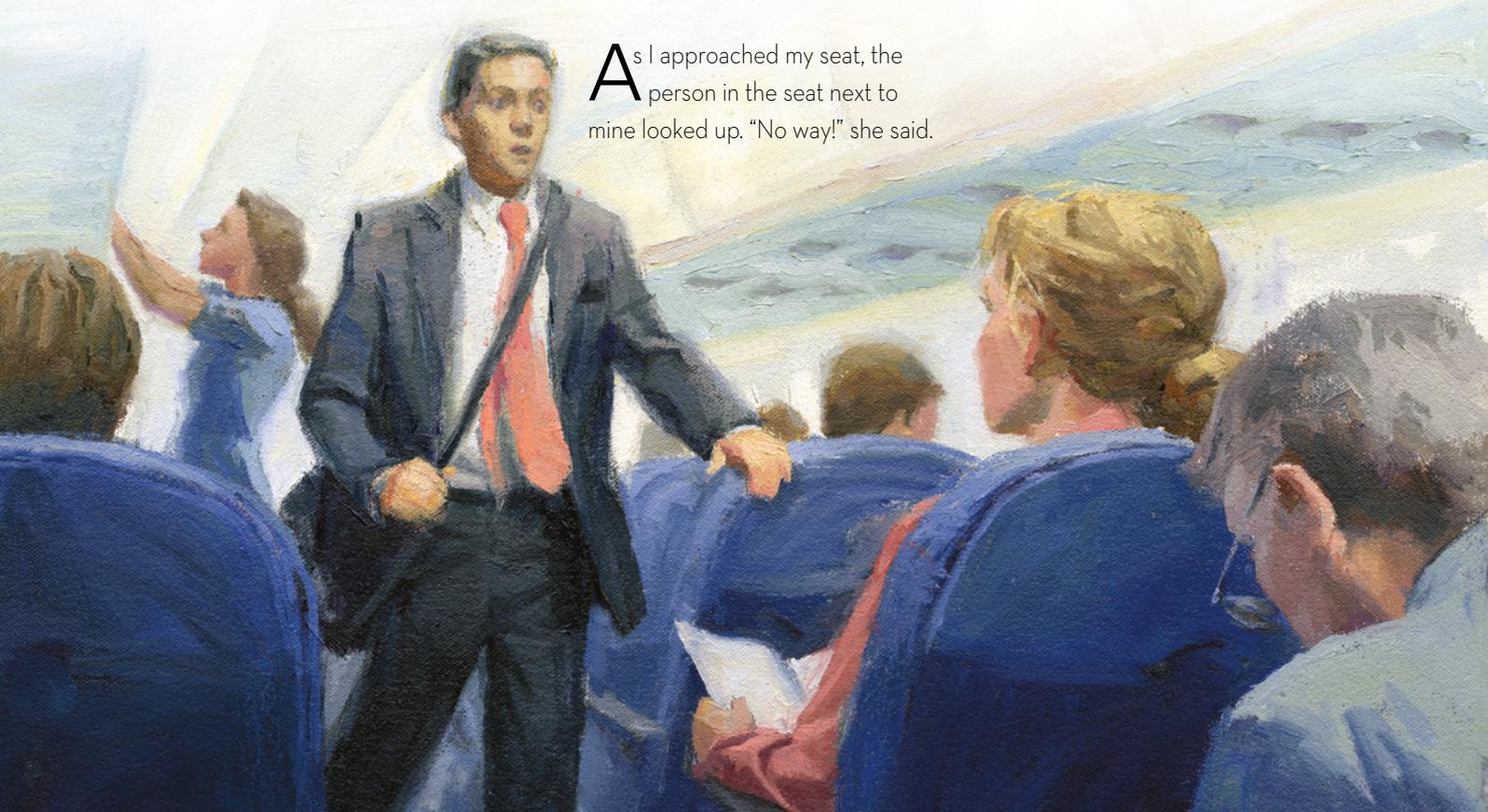
I said a prayer in my heart and testified of the truth of the gospel and of God’s love for His children, including

her. I told her about the advice I had received from Brother Tremillo. I said that God had prepared this special moment just for her.

With tears in her eyes, Kelly thanked me. She also said, “I can tell that you were a good missionary and that the Lord accepts your sacrifice.” At that moment, I felt God’s deep love for me. It was my turn to cry. With tears in my eyes, I thanked Kelly and told her that she had been an answer to my prayer. I answered a few more of her questions, and we exchanged email addresses.

Our flight landed and we waved goodbye as she walked to her next flight. I will always be grateful that Heavenly Father was willing to bless us in such a tender way. ■
Levi Kempton, Arizona, USA

As I approached my seat, the person in the seat next to mine looked up. “No way!” she said.



TAKING CARE OF MY SICK BABY AND MY CALLING

When I was called to serve as a counselor in my ward's Young Women organization, I accepted the call, but I was concerned about how to do it. I felt unprepared, and I was struggling with a trial.

Three months before receiving this calling, following a high-risk pregnancy, my baby boy, Nicolas, had been born. He needed constant medical care. A few weeks after his birth, a small red spot appeared on his eyelid and began to grow gradually. Our pediatrician explained that it was a benign tumor and would disappear after Nicolas was a year old. But the tumor developed rapidly. It occupied his ocular cavity and would eventually cause permanent damage to his vision if not treated.

We made the difficult decision to start chemotherapy. Nicolas's fragile body reacted negatively to the treatment. He had daily fevers, constant infections, and low weight. The process made him cry a lot. My calling became harder and harder to fulfill under these conditions. I didn't know how I could do it.

Thankfully, my husband supported me. Together, we felt I should continue.

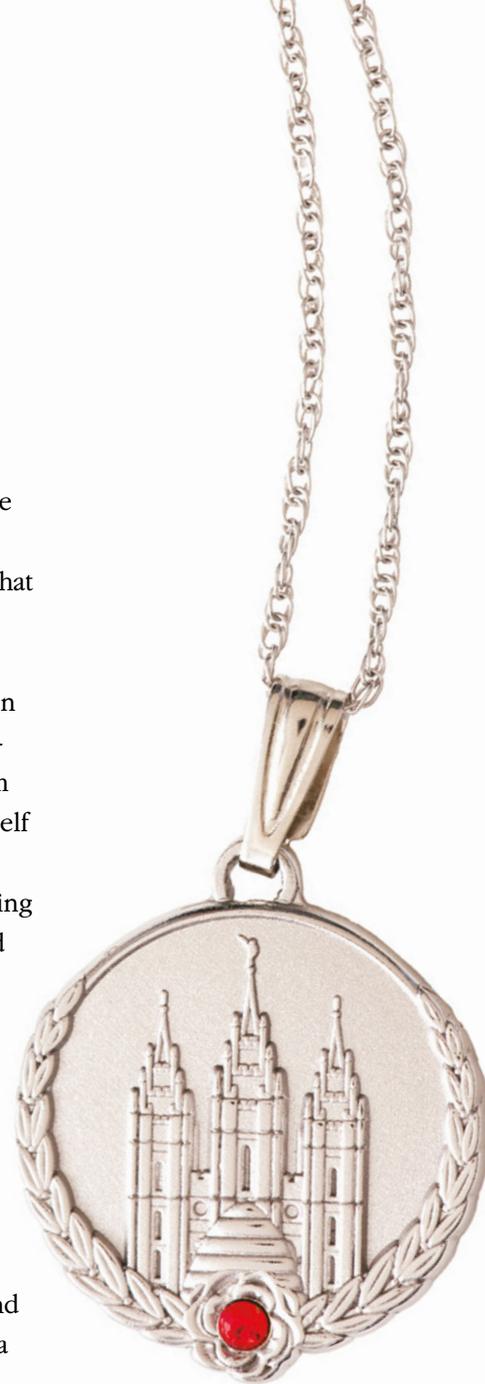
The Young Women president also supported me. She was a faithful and patient sister. She helped me see qualities I did not know I had and helped me find ways I could serve that I hadn't thought of.

Being with the young women each week helped me not fixate on the routine of injections, examinations, and doctors. It kept me from wasting time feeling sorry for myself or questioning why this was happening to my small angel. My calling was a blessing, and before I realized it, Nicolas was growing and the treatment had concluded. Nicolas became a happy and healthy boy who was full of energy.

Serving those valiant daughters of our Heavenly Father has helped me overcome feelings of inadequacy, develop eternal bonds of friendship, discover my talents, and improve in my responsibilities as a mother and wife.

The Lord does not always take trials from us, but I know with all my heart that He is always willing to help us have the strength to confront them. ■

Ariele Queiroz Meyer Fischer, Santa Catarina, Brazil



My calling in Young Women became harder and harder to fulfill. I didn't know how I could do it.

MY ROOFTOP PRAYER

One rainy fall day, I went into my attic and noticed a leak. Water dripped off the ends of roofing nails between two sets of rafters. Years before, I had done many repairs to my home and wasn't afraid to attempt new projects. But at this time I was facing personal struggles and lacked confidence. I didn't feel like I had the emotional strength to deal with the leak, even though I knew something needed to be done before winter came.

A week or two later, I got on my roof with a utility knife, a putty knife, and a caulking gun loaded with roofing tar. I figured I just needed to find the source of the leak and cover it with goeey tar. But I had no idea where the source was. I felt discouraged. I paused and said a prayer, asking the

Lord to direct me to the right spot so I could fix the leak. I expected Him to just show me the spot. Instead, one word came to my mind: *investigate*.

This wasn't the answer I wanted, but I began to look around. My eyes focused on a vent. I tore off two small shingles by the vent and saw what looked like the source of a leak. I cut out old, dry tar and applied a liberal amount of new tar. I replaced the shingles, and in less than one hour I had completed the job. My depressed spirits were lifted, and I felt good about myself for what I had done to solve the problem. During the next rain, I looked in the attic for leaks and found it dry!

I thought of Oliver Cowdery, who had "[taken] no thought save it was

to ask" (D&C 9:7). Like him, I had expected the Lord to simply give me a quick answer to my prayer with no effort on my part. And I thought about how much my spirits were lifted when I had to put forth my own effort to "study it out" (D&C 9:8)—to investigate. I learned that the Lord will not do everything for us. He will help and guide us, but we are also expected to do what we can on our own because this brings personal growth. ■

Valiant K. Jones, Michigan, USA

I just needed to find the source of the leak, but I had no idea where it was, so I paused and said a prayer.

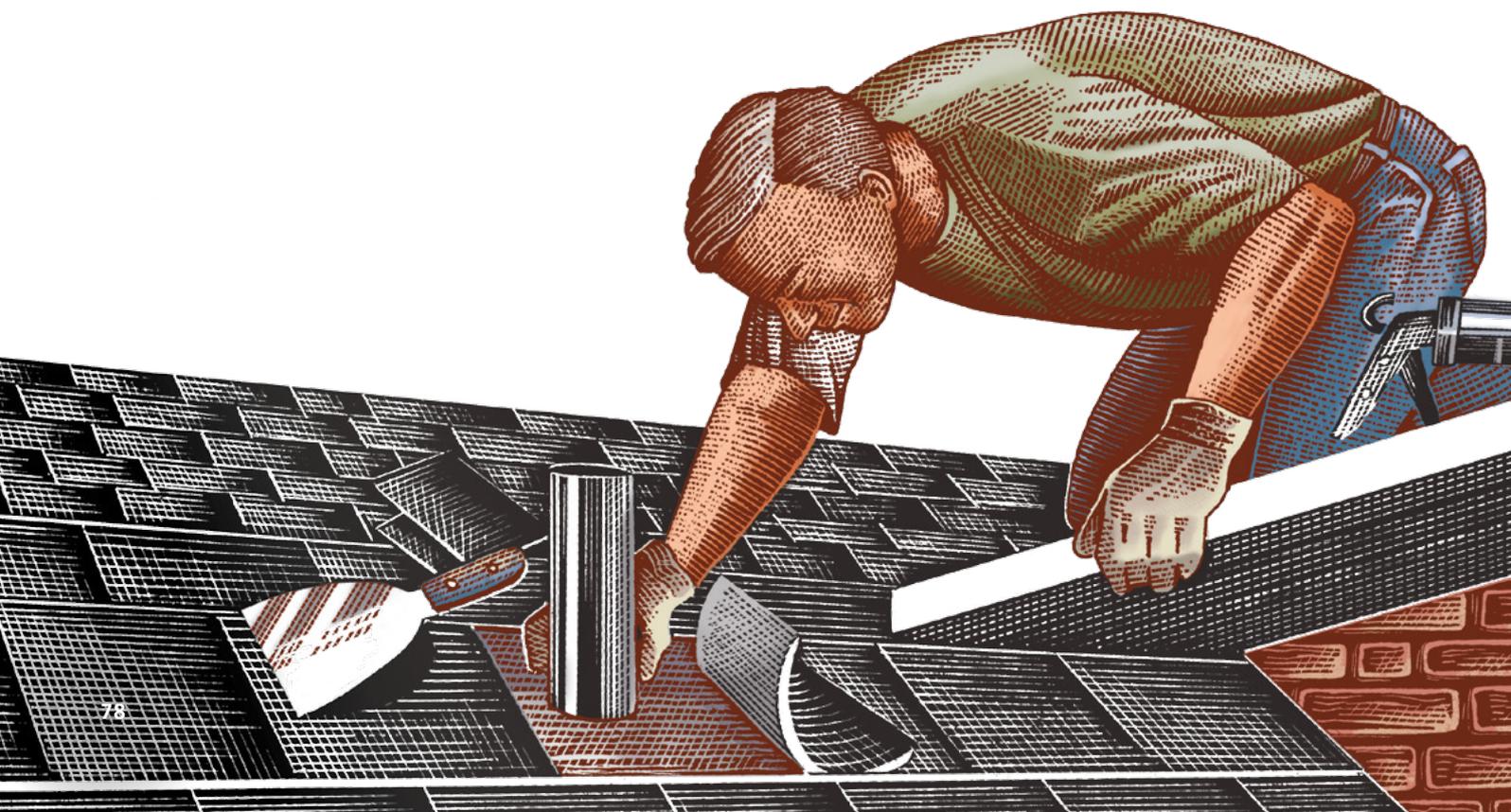


ILLUSTRATION BY CAROLYN VIBBERT

WAS THIS THE END OF MY LIFE?

I was the healthy father of two beautiful children and the husband to a wonderful and hardworking wife. I had a good job with a stable income. Life seemed to be perfect, but my world started to fall apart when I was diagnosed with nasopharyngeal cancer, a rare type of head and neck cancer.

I was serving as a counselor to the bishop at the time, and we were holding our annual basketball tournament at the church when I began to feel very sick. I went to see the doctor, and after many lab tests, he announced that I had stage 4 nasopharyngeal cancer. I was worried and scared. I wondered if this was the end of my life and what would happen to my family if I died. The only thing I could really depend on for guidance and

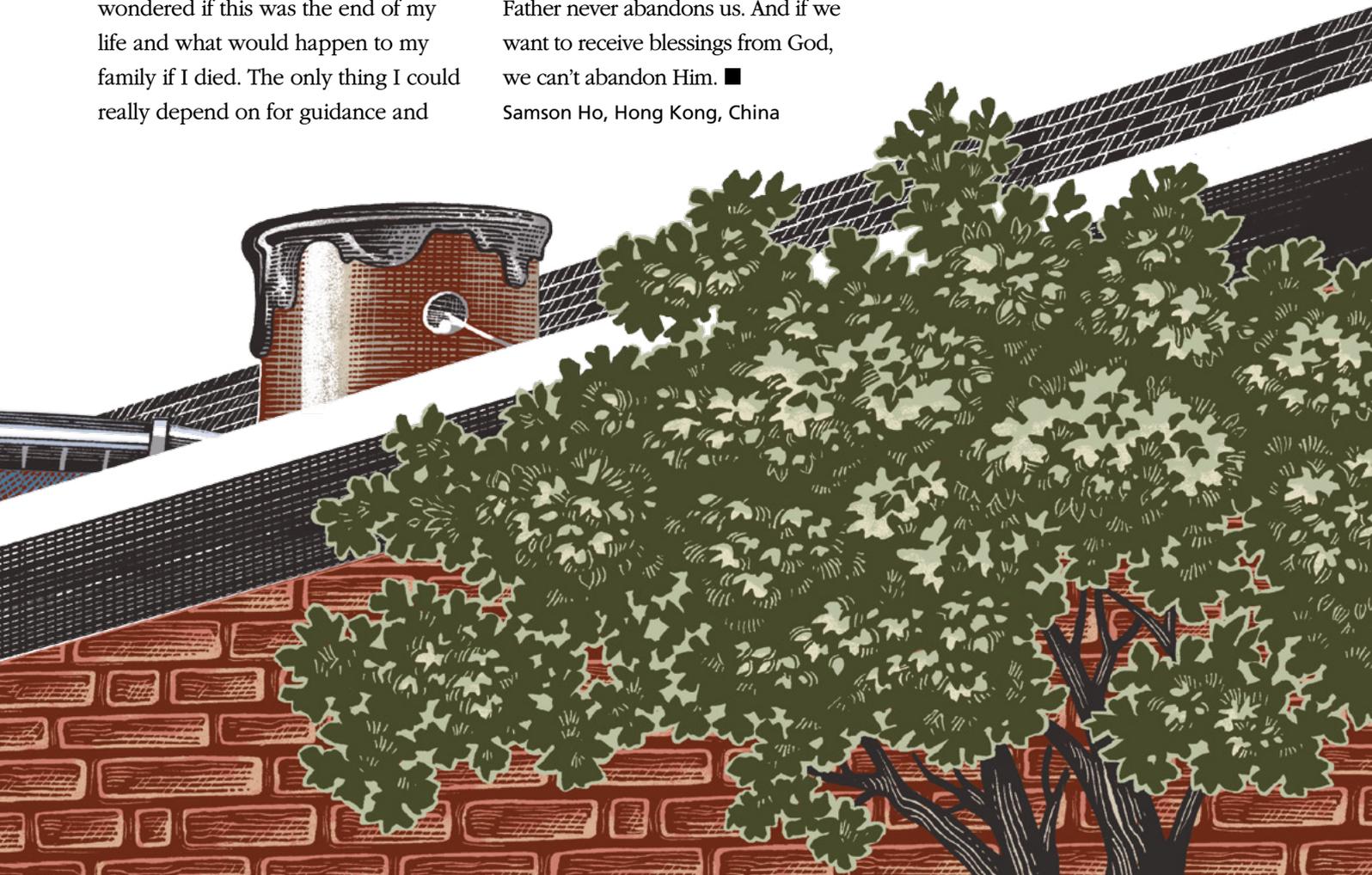
comfort was prayer to Heavenly Father.

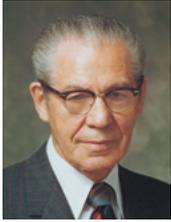
After three days of constant prayer, I felt as if a soft voice whispered, “Fear not.”

From that moment on, the fear of death was no longer on my mind. Things were still difficult for me. There was a time I couldn’t swallow any food and I was too sick to sleep, but I never gave up or turned away from God—and He has helped me.

My cancer has been in remission for more than 18 years. I don’t know how long God will allow me to live, but I’m glad that I can still serve my brothers and sisters. I know that our Heavenly Father never abandons us. And if we want to receive blessings from God, we can’t abandon Him. ■

Samson Ho, Hong Kong, China





By President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982)
First Counselor in the First Presidency

THE PURPOSE OF THE CREATION

We can each make of our home a heaven on earth.

Let us consider . . . the purpose of the creation of the earth. The scriptures make it clear that it was . . . to provide a place for the sons and daughters of God to dwell in mortality and prove themselves worthy, through keeping the commandments, to return to the presence of God from whence they came.

Following the creation of the earth, “God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . .

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it” (Genesis 1:26–28).

When God created woman and brought her to the man, he said:



“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, and following that first reference to husband and wife, we find recurring scriptures as evidence that men and women became husbands and wives in marriage ceremonies. . . . We are not here just to “eat, drink, and be merry” (2 Nephi 28:7). . . .

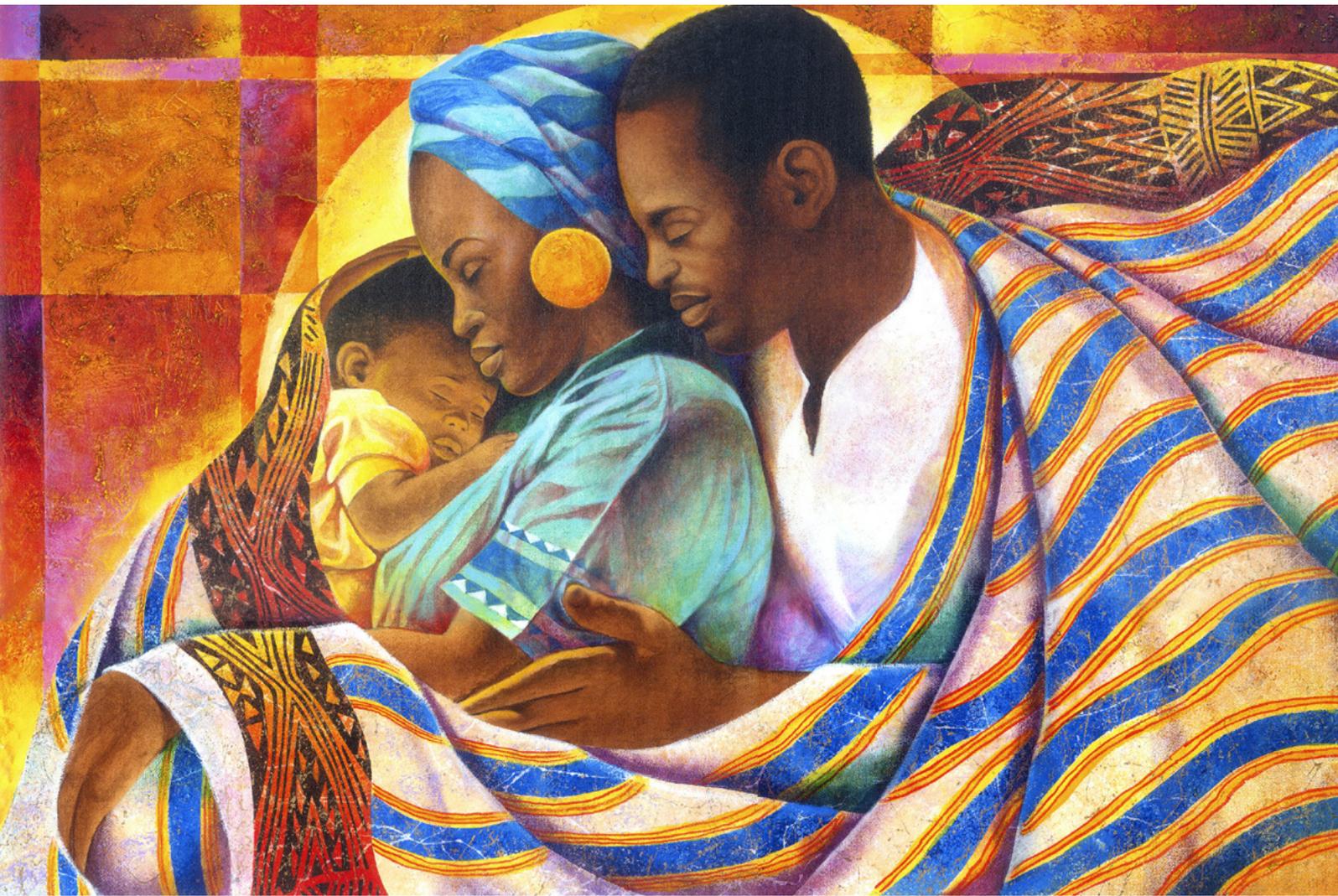
It is important for us to understand, as we can learn from the scriptures, that God is eternal, that His creations are eternal, and that His truths are

eternal. Therefore, when He gave Eve to Adam in marriage, that union would be eternal. . . .

. . . When parents understand the purpose of their existence, that they are literally the spiritual offspring of their Father in Heaven and that they have a responsibility to provide mortal bodies for others, then they rejoice in the miracle of birth as they realize they are copartners with God in the creation of each child who comes into that home. . . .

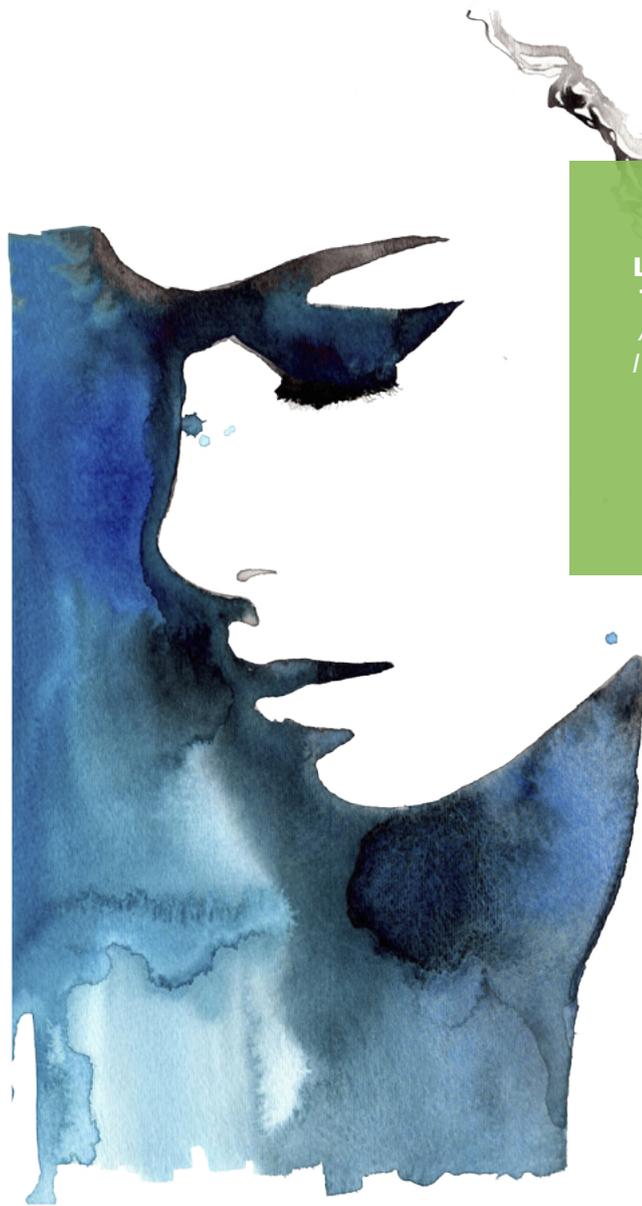
I know that through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and through keeping the commandments of God and the covenants we make with Him, we can each make of our home a heaven on earth while we prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. ■

From “Celestial Marriages and Eternal Families,” Ensign, May 1980, 15–18. Spelling and punctuation standardized.



**PRECIOUS LOVE,
BY KEITH MALLET**

God's great plan of happiness includes the opportunity for each of us, as His spirit children, to come to earth to gain a mortal body and to live in a family unit where relationships can flourish in unity and love. Within our homes on earth, we can prepare ourselves and our children to return to our Heavenly Father. (See Genesis 1–2; Mosiah 18:21; Alma 42.)



YOUNG ADULTS

LAYING MY SINS AT THE SAVIOR'S FEET

After confessing my sins, I felt a strange emptiness. I realized I needed to let the Savior's sacrifice work in my soul.

18

VISITING TEACHERS
A NEW FOCUS ON MINISTERING EFFECTIVELY

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RETURNED MISSIONARIES
HOME EARLIER THAN PLANNED

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PARENTS AND LEADERS OF YOUTH
USING THE MUTUAL THEME

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LEADERS AND TEACHERS
COUNSELING TOGETHER IN SUNDAY MEETINGS

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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS