

Ensign

A young boy with a short haircut, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt and a dark blue tie, is smiling warmly at the camera. He is holding a blue book with both hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, possibly a schoolyard or a market, with other people and structures visible in the distance.

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p. 30**

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“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

Matthew 7:9-11

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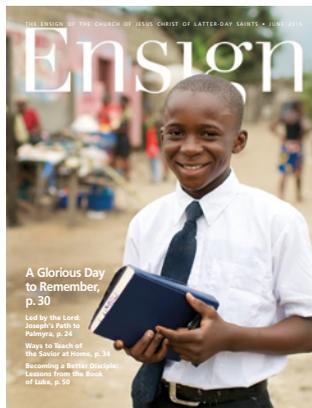
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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



“The Glorious Day of Priesthood Restoration,” page 30: Consider explaining how the priesthood has been passed down by drawing a simple line from one person to

another, beginning with Adam and continuing on through the other Old Testament prophets and then from Jesus Christ and His Apostles to Joseph Smith. You might try memorizing the words John the Baptist spoke when conferring the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 13:1, and discussing the significance of that event.

“Helping Children Appreciate Their Bodies,” page 72: Carefully read the article in advance to decide what to focus on with your family. You may want to begin family home

evening by singing “I Will Follow God’s Plan” (*Children’s Songbook*, 165). Consider using the poster found on pages 74–75, which has scriptures and simple statements that can help you start a family discussion about our bodies and about body-image issues. For additional ideas, see *A Parent’s Guide* (online at lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide) or the resources listed in the notes section of the article.

SOME THINGS WE’VE LEARNED

Through several years of holding family home evenings with our five children, we learned to prepare by studying the scriptures and Church magazines and prayerfully seeking Heavenly Father’s direction. We also learned to keep our family home evenings simple—a prayer, a spiritually uplifting lesson focused on group participation, games, and a closing prayer. In addition, we included a variety of age-appropriate activities that reinforced the lessons and promoted family togetherness. One of our favorite activities was acting out scripture stories, with part of the family performing while the others guessed the story. In this way we grew to love the scriptures and created unforgettable memories.

Sharon Griffel Weaver, California, USA

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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Please submit articles through ensign.lds.org. Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.



**By President
Henry B. Eyring**
First Counselor in
the First Presidency

FAMILIES CAN BE TOGETHER Forever

The priesthood power to bind families eternally is one of the greatest gifts of God. Every person who understands the plan of salvation longs for that lasting blessing. Only in sealing ceremonies performed in dedicated temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does God offer the promise that families can be bound together forever.

The priesthood keys that make this possible were restored to the earth by the prophet Elijah to Joseph Smith in the Kirtland Temple. Those priesthood keys have been passed in an unbroken line through living prophets in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the present day.

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

It is only in the celestial kingdom that we can live in families forever. There we can be in families in the presence of our Heavenly Father and the Savior. The Prophet Joseph Smith described that wonderful experience this way in the Doctrine and Covenants:

“When the Savior shall appear we shall see him as he is. We shall see that he is a man like ourselves.

“And that same sociality which exists among us here will exist among us there, only it will be coupled with eternal glory, which glory we do not now enjoy” (D&C 130:1–2).

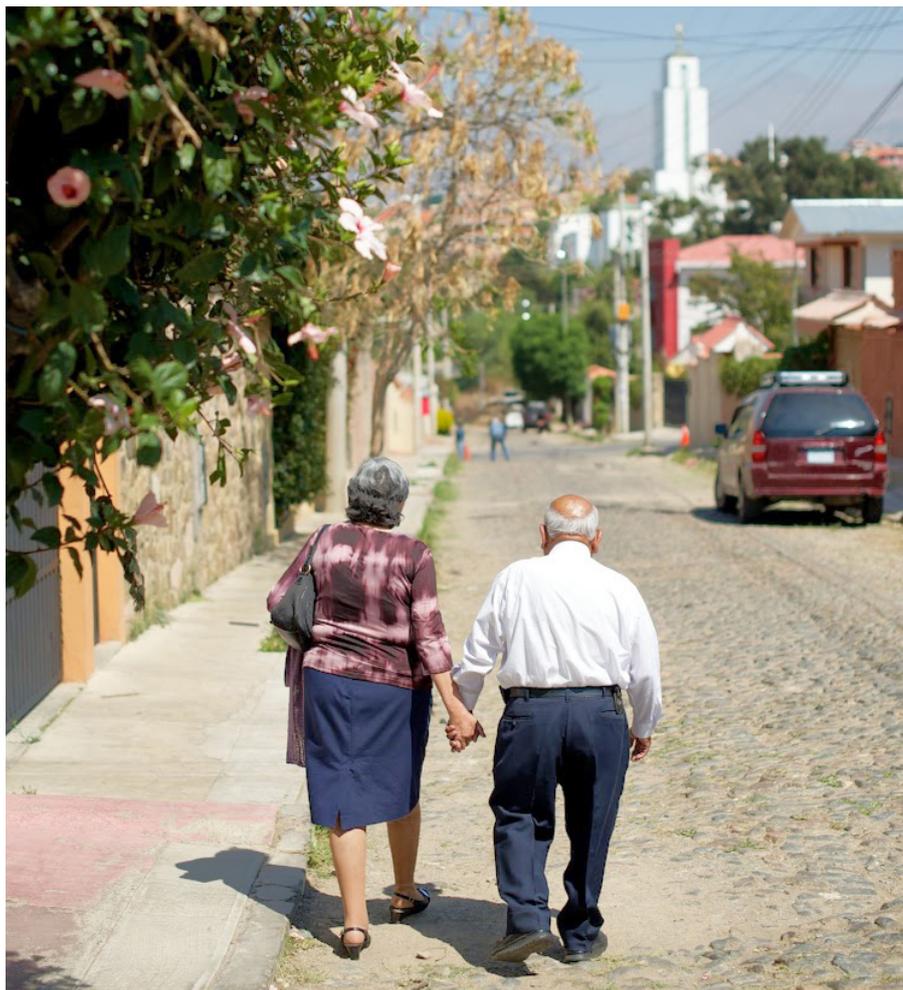
This scripture suggests that we can with confidence aim for a heavenly standard in our relationships within our families. We can care enough about our family members, living and dead, to do all that we can to offer them the priesthood ordinances that will bind us in heaven.

Many of you, young and old, are doing that. You have looked for names of ancestors who have not yet received the ordinances that can seal you together.

Almost all of you have living relatives who have not been sealed in families by priesthood power. Many have living relatives who have received priesthood ordinances but are not keeping the covenants they made with God. God will bless you that you will be able to help reach out to all of those relatives in faith. You have a promise that the Lord makes to His disciples who go to bring others to Him:

“And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my Spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up” (D&C 84:88).

From my office window I see brides and grooms every day having their pictures taken among beautiful flowers and shooting fountains. The groom often carries his bride



in his arms, at least for a few staggering steps, while the photographer shoots wedding pictures. Every time I see that, I think of couples I have known who in time—sometimes in a very short time after their wedding day—had to carry each other in other ways when life became hard. Jobs can

be lost. Children can be born with great challenges. Illness can come. And then, habits of having done unto others as we would have them do unto us—when it was easier—will make us heroes and heroines in those trying times when it takes more than we thought we had in us.

We owe our families the kind of relationship we can take into the presence of God. We must try not to give offense or take offense. We can determine to forgive quickly and fully. We can try to seek the happiness of others above our own. We can be kind in our speech. As we try to do all these things, we will invite the Holy Ghost into our families and into our lives.

My assurance to you is that, with the Lord's help and with repentant hearts, we can catch a glimpse in this life of the kind of life we want to have forever. Heavenly Father loves us. He wants us back with Him. The Savior, through the power of His Atonement, makes possible the change in our hearts we need to make in order to enter holy temples, make covenants we can then keep, and in time live in families forever in celestial glory—home again. ■

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

As you share the doctrine of eternal families, consider what Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said: "Always seek to strengthen families. Teach with a vision of the importance of families being sealed in the temple. . . . When you have the vision of the sealing ordinances of the temple, you will help build the kingdom of God on earth" ("I Have Given You an

Example," *Ensign*, May 2014, 34). How can you help those you teach develop a vision of the importance of being sealed in the temple? Invite those who have not yet been sealed to discuss steps they could take toward that ordinance. Invite those who have been sealed to discuss how they can keep the vision of their eternal family and work to improve their relationships with one another.

Eternally Linked to My Family

By Laura Burton

When I was adopted at age three, my birth mother allowed the adoption to be finalized only if my parents agreed to have my Church ordinances done after I turned 12. She thought I needed to be old enough to make the choice for myself, but it was really difficult to wait.

Yes, it was hard to see many of my friends get baptized when they turned eight, but what was even harder was knowing I couldn't be sealed to my adoptive parents and five older siblings until I was 12. I was scared that something would happen to me and I wouldn't be able to be sealed to them.

As my 12th birthday approached, we began planning for my baptism and sealing to my family. My parents let me choose which temple we would be sealed in. I had always thought that the San Diego California Temple was the most beautiful, so my entire family agreed to drive to California for the sealing.

I couldn't wait to become an eternal family with my parents and siblings. During my sealing, I felt the Spirit so strongly that it is hard to put into words. Now that I am finally sealed to my family, my feelings of worry have been replaced with comfort and peace, knowing I am now eternally linked to them.

The author lives in Utah, USA.



CHILDREN



Looking to the Temple

President Eyring explains that because of the priesthood, we have the chance to go to the temple to be sealed together with our family for eternity. Draw or find a picture of your favorite temple and keep it in a place where you will see it every day. Make a list of how you will prepare to go to the temple someday.

Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding the divine attributes of the Savior increase your faith in Him and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.



Faith, Family, Relief

Divine Attributes of Jesus Christ: Virtue

This is part of a series of Visiting Teaching Messages featuring divine attributes of the Savior.

Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven” (D&C 121:45).

What is virtue? President James E. Faust (1920–2007) said: “Virtue in its fuller sense encompasses all traits of righteousness that help us form our character.”¹ President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) added: “Love of God is the root of all virtue, of all goodness, of all strength of character.”²

Of the relationship between women and virtue, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “Women bring with them into the world a certain virtue, a divine gift that makes them adept at instilling such qualities as faith, courage, empathy, and refinement in relationships and in cultures. . . .



“Sisters, of all your associations, it is your relationship with God, your Heavenly Father, who is the source of your moral power, that you must always put first in your life. Remember that Jesus’s power came through His single-minded devotion to the will of the Father. . . . Strive to be that kind of disciple of the Father and the Son, and your influence will never fade.”³

Additional Scriptures

Psalm 24:3–5; Philippians 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3–5; Alma 31:5; Doctrine and Covenants 38:23–24

NOTES

1. James E. Faust, “The Virtues of Righteous Daughters of God,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 108.
2. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1996, 73.
3. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 29, 31.
4. Virtue has power (see Mark 5:30).
5. In Guide to the Scriptures, “Priesthood” is defined as “the authority and power that God gives to man to act in all things for the salvation of man (D&C 50:26–27).”

From the Scriptures

Today, virtuous women, full of faith, reach out to the Savior. In Luke 8 we read of a woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years that could not be healed. She sought healing when she “came behind [Christ], and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood [stopped]. . . . And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue⁴ is gone out of me.” This virtuous faithful woman fell down before Him, declaring “unto him before all the people” that “she had touched him” and “was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole” (see Luke 8:43–48; see also 6:17–19).

Through His virtue,⁵ Christ can heal, enable, strengthen, comfort, and cheer when we choose with courage and faith to reach out to Him.

Consider This

How does virtue empower and strengthen us?

SERVING UP GENERAL CONFERENCE FOR FAMILY HOME EVENING

By Jessie Christensen

I knew I needed to give the idea of using conference talks for family home evening lessons a try.

When general conference rolled around in October 2013, I realized it was the weekend my children were scheduled to spend all day Saturday with their father, my ex-husband. On the one hand, I looked forward to a day of actually getting to hear the talks and ponder them in quiet peace, without the stress of trying to help three small children sit through four hours of talks in a somewhat reverent manner. On the other hand, I do take seriously the counsel to encourage our children to participate with us during conference.

Over the past decade since becoming a parent, I have sought to make watching or listening to general conference a significant family tradition. To help engage the children during the broadcasts, I've tried special foods, coloring packets, bingo, key-word activities, and going for scenic drives. Most commonly, I've simply required them to be in the room doing something quiet.

But what was I to do when my children weren't even going to be around for half of conference?

“Mom, He’s Breathing My Air!”

As I pondered this question during the days before conference, I kept getting the feeling that I should try using the talks for family home evening lessons during the following months. I resisted this feeling—my children are young, they might find the talks hard to understand, and I just wasn't sure there would be any kid-friendly subjects.

Then, Saturday morning the second talk during conference was from Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, titled “General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony.”¹ That was my answer—I knew I needed to give the idea of using talks for family home evening at least a try.

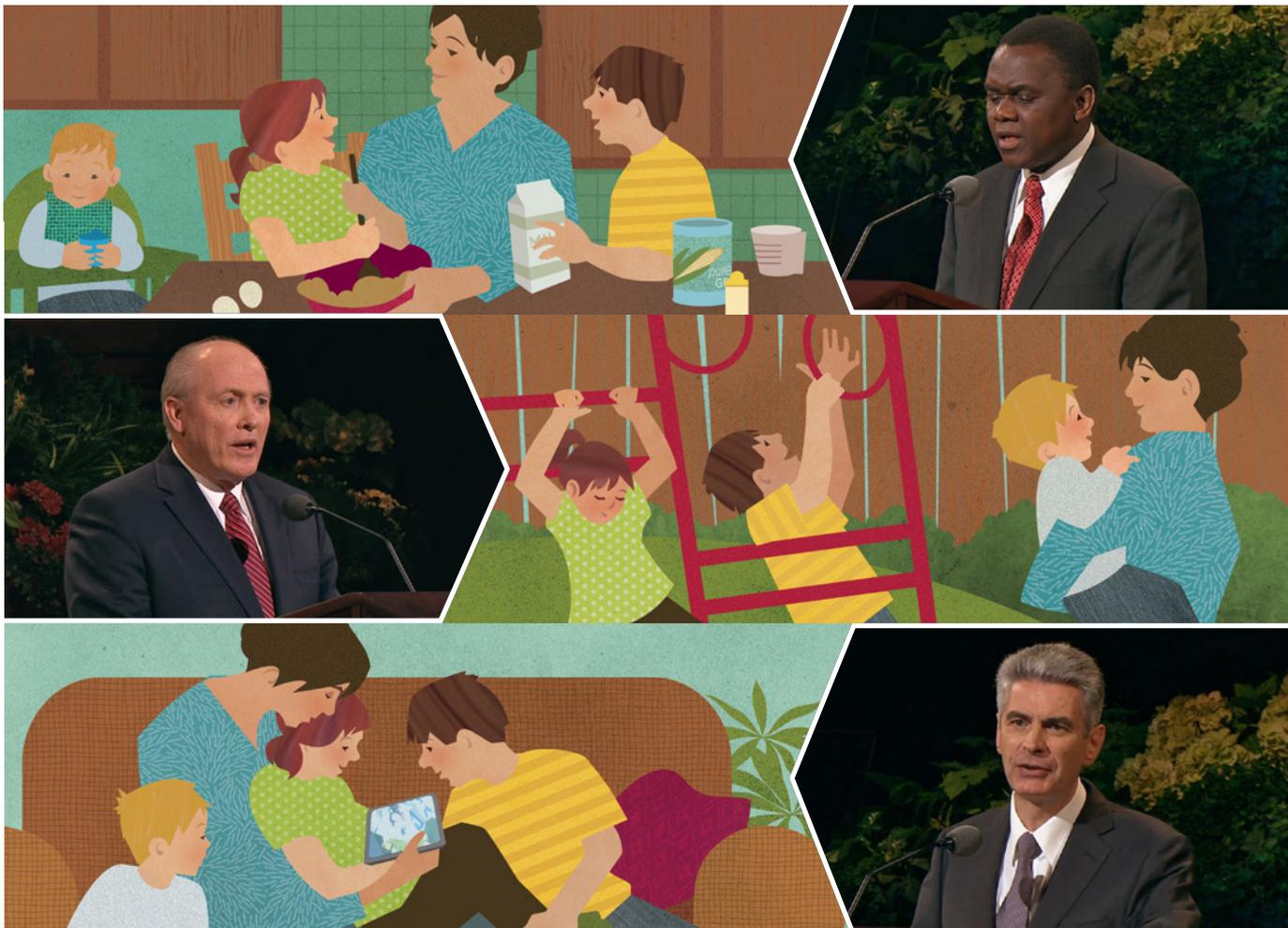
It could be a complete disaster. Most of the time our family home evenings resemble those described by Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “Sometimes Sister Bednar and I wondered if our efforts to do these spiritually essential things were worthwhile. Now and

then verses of scripture were read amid outbursts such as ‘He’s touching me!’ ‘Make him stop looking at me!’ ‘Mom, he’s breathing my air!’”²

Our results have been mostly in line with what Elder Bednar described—small miraculous moments of family bliss interspersed with total chaos. Using general conference talks has not completely transformed our family home evenings or my children, but I think the overall effect has been positive.

Zimbabwe Family Home Evening

At our house, family home evening lessons usually last less than 10 minutes. Starting with the talk by Elder Hales from October 2013 general conference, we have followed a similar outline for our lessons. First we find information about the particular General Authority or general officer giving the talk. The Church website has biographies for all these leaders, and we've also used Google to find background information about their home countries or anything else



mentioned in their talks. Then we discuss the content of the talk, possibly do some kind of activity, and watch the last few minutes of the talk to hear the speaker's conclusion and testimony.

Sometimes we have been pretty elaborate with our activities. Once we used material about Zimbabwe from the *Friend* to cook traditional food, read about a child from that country, and play a native game before studying a talk given by Elder Edward Dube of the Seventy.³ Sometimes we have kept things simple, such as when we studied "The Strength to Endure" by Elder Richard J. Maynes of the Presidency of the Seventy⁴ and did

some strength challenges in the backyard to learn about building our physical muscles. We've often found other resources online, such as when we studied "Ye Are No More Strangers" by Bishop Gérald Caussé, first counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, and watched the Mormon Messages video about bullying.⁵

Great Discussions on Gospel Topics

I had a few goals for this experiment: help our family study recent general conference talks; focus our family home evening lessons more on gospel topics; and become familiar with the different General Authorities and general officers of the Church. We've

had some great discussions about gospel topics, and I've realized that my children know more than I have given them credit for. Most important, I feel strengthened by the fact that I took on something that seemed challenging and stuck with it. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. See Robert D. Hales, "General Conference: Strengthening Faith and Testimony," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 6–8.
2. David A. Bednar, "More Diligent and Concerned at Home," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 19.
3. See the *Friend*, Mar. 2014, 14–17, and Edward Dube, "Look Ahead and Believe," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 15–17.
4. See Richard J. Maynes, "The Strength to Endure," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 79–81.
5. See Gérald Caussé, "Ye Are No More Strangers," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 49–51, and "Bullying—Stop It" (Mormon Messages video), [lds.org/go/bullyingE615](https://www.lds.org/go/bullyingE615).

MY LESSON IN LOVE

By Janice Tate

I didn't expect the simple service project to teach me so much about Heavenly Father's love for His children.

It sounded like a typical service project: round up a group of Relief Society sisters to put on a short choir program at a local hospital's respite care center, though no one from our ward was a patient there.

We found ourselves crammed into a small room with nine elderly patients facing us in their wheelchairs. Their faces seemed blank, empty of expression. It was hot and stuffy, and I thought, "Let's get this over with."

I was to lead the music, so I turned my back to the patients and concentrated on the program. As we began, I heard one patient calling, "Mama,



LOVE IN ACTION

"There is a serious need for the charity that gives attention to those who are unnoticed, hope to those who are discouraged, aid to those who are afflicted. True charity is love in action. The need for charity is everywhere."

President Thomas S. Monson, "Charity Never Fails," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 124.

Mama," while another clapped and made noises. I felt uncomfortable, but in a few minutes we would finish and go home.

As we prepared to sing our last hymn, "How Great Thou Art" (*Hymns*, no. 86), we invited the patients and medical personnel to join with us. I turned around to lead everyone in the singing, and that's when I saw her—a tiny, wrinkled, white-haired lady with a lap full of tissues wet with her tears.

She motioned for me to come to her. I did so, and when I bent my head to listen, she took my hand. Her whole body trembled as she whispered, "I'm a Latter-day Saint. It's so wonderful to have my sisters come."

The Spirit filled my soul, and I knelt beside her, tears streaming from my eyes. She put a frail arm around me and patted me as if she understood my emotions. Everyone began singing the hymn, but I couldn't get the first verse out.

As the patients and staff sang of God's greatness, the Spirit filled the

room, and all were touched. I finally gained control of my feelings and joined the others, singing:

*When Christ shall come, with shout
of acclamation,
And take me home, what joy shall
fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble
adoration
And there proclaim, "My God, how
great thou art!"*

After the program the Relief Society sisters mingled with the patients and staff. The white-haired sister told us she had been lonely and had felt surrounded by strangers until we came. We didn't know she would be there, but Heavenly Father did.

I was reminded that all of these people were our brothers and sisters, that they needed love and comfort, and that someday I could be in their place. I was touched that we could be instruments of a loving Father, and I was grateful that our service project had taught me a powerful lesson about love. ■

The author lives in California, USA.



THE HUMMINGBIRD RESCUE

By William Hoggan

In rescuing a hummingbird, we learned how to help the spiritually weak.

At Young Women camp in the mountains of California, girls and leaders waited for dinner in an A-frame lodge. As we waited, some girls noticed something under a table. A hummingbird had somehow flown into the lodge, couldn't find its way out, and finally collapsed on the floor. They asked me to help.

The bird looked near death, its beak wrapped with cobwebs and its feathers askew. I gently put it into a cup and carried it outside. I hoped it would recover on its own but realistically expected it to go the way of all nature. However, as I tipped the cup to gently deposit the hummingbird onto the ground, in mid-slide the hummingbird grasped the rim of the cup with its tiny talons. I held the cup upright, the bird perched on the rim, its eyes closed. Now what?

One leader, seeing the bird, mixed a solution of sugar and water and brought it to me. First I gently brushed the cobwebs from the needle-sharp beak. The bird didn't flinch. Then I dipped a finger in the sugar water and held a drop to the tip of the beak. The drop disappeared, even though the bird didn't move. Perhaps

the liquid seeped into the beak? I dipped my finger again and held it to the bird's beak. This time a tiny tongue, thinner than a hair, licked my fingertip.

For 10 or 15 minutes, the hummingbird drank one drop after another. By then, several other leaders had gathered around me, and I offered them a try at feeding it.

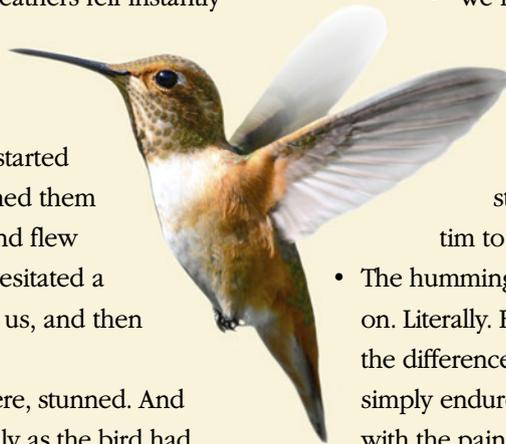
Suddenly the bird opened its eyes, and its ruffled feathers fell instantly into place. After drinking a couple more drops, it started its wings, warmed them for a second, and flew straight up. It hesitated a moment above us, and then shot away.

We stood there, stunned. And then, as suddenly as the bird had flown away, the spiritual lessons came:

- Often, as we reach out to the less active, our efforts don't seem to make a difference. But the love we offer does slip into the cracks—like the nectar into the unmoving beak of the

hummingbird—providing spiritual nutrition that one day may produce results.

- At times we can't go further on our own; we need a kind, caring hand up.
- Sometimes people get tangled in the cobwebs of sin or addiction and need the help of a friend or priesthood leader and the Savior's assistance to get free.
 - We need regular spiritual nutrition in order to endure, else we run out of spiritual strength and fall victim to evil influences.
- The hummingbird kept hanging on. Literally. Hanging on made all the difference. At times, we must simply endure in faith as we deal with the painful and sometimes horrible challenges of life.



The New Testament says that the Master is aware of even the sparrow's fall (see Matthew 10:29–31). I now know He is also aware of a hummingbird's fall. And He is aware of you. ■

The author lives in California, USA.

SAVING CHRISTOPHER

By Karen Anderson

Our grandson was not breathing. When doctors finally revived him, he began having seizures.

Our daughter's third pregnancy had been difficult, and she went into labor prematurely at home. After a hurried call to the doctor, Kathy and her husband, Tony, sped to the hospital. As they pulled up to the emergency room, their doctor raced through the snow to meet them.

An emergency cesarean section was performed quickly. Baby Christopher was not breathing. When the doctors revived him, he began having seizures.

Arriving at the hospital's intensive care unit nursery, I saw the discouraged look in Tony's eyes. As he related the news, I felt terror rip into my heart. I also thought of the impact this would

have on my daughter and son-in-law, who were not members of the Church.

Shortly thereafter, my husband, Gary, arrived with a member of our bishopric, Brother Carlson. We held a family conference with the frightened mother and quiet father. Kathy implored her father to give her baby a blessing.

After scrubbing and donning sterile clothing, Gary and Brother Carlson entered the intensive care unit, where medical personnel labored to keep Christopher alive. Although none of the medical personnel were Latter-day Saints, all action and noise in the unit stopped as they respectfully watched the ordinance. As Gary placed his

hands on Christopher's head, the baby twitched strongly once, and then the seizures ended. The blessing continued, and a feeling of peace came into our hearts. We felt reassured by the words of the blessing, which promised help for Christopher and hope for his family.

As everyone settled down, my husband suggested that Tony go home to care for his other two sons and tell them what had happened. I also left for home. Gary stayed with Kathy.

The day's events had overwhelmed me, and as I climbed into my car, I began to cry. I asked the Lord to help me with my fear and weak faith. Immediately, the third verse of the hymn "How Firm a Foundation" (*Hymns*, no. 85) came to mind:

*Fear not, I am with thee;
oh, be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still
give thee aid.
I'll strengthen thee, help thee,
and cause thee to stand, . . .
Upheld by my righteous,
omnipotent hand.*



SUITED TO OUR NEEDS

"Healing blessings come in many ways, each suited to our individual needs, as known to Him who loves us best. Sometimes a 'healing' cures our illness or lifts our burden. But sometimes we are 'healed' by being given strength or understanding or patience to bear the burdens placed upon us."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "He Heals the Heavy Laden," *Ensign*, Nov. 2006, 7–8.



“We don’t know what to say,” one finally said. “We can’t find any evidence of the seizures. They may come back, but for now they are gone. Similar instances usually cause extensive brain damage, but Christopher is acting like a normal little baby. We just can’t explain it.”

Looking across the room at one another, we smiled, grateful for the priesthood’s healing power.

Later that day, Kathy’s doctor, who described himself as an agnostic, came back to see her. He explained that, logically, Christopher should have suffered extensive brain damage. Kathy just smiled at him and said, “You don’t understand. He is a miracle.” The doctor studied the floor for a long time. Finally, he looked at her, admitted that she was right, and thoughtfully added, “There is just no other way to explain it.”

Today Christopher is a healthy adult, and the only negative consequence of those intense seizures—as far as we know—is that he has some reading impairments. In many ways our family has witnessed the Lord’s power made manifest through priesthood blessings. ■

The author lived in Minnesota, USA, but passed away while this issue was being prepared.

Peace entered my heart, and the Lord answered my prayer in a very direct way. I felt impressed to go home and pray for my grandson to be healed. When I reached home, I knelt by my bed and poured out my heart to my Heavenly Father. Comfort from the Holy Ghost entered the room, and I knew that God had heard my prayer. I realized that our family had been and would continually be blessed by the priesthood’s healing power. I didn’t know if Christopher would be healed, but I did know

that the Lord would help our family through this challenge.

Much later my husband returned home. He reported that he had also felt the presence of the Holy Ghost and that Kathy said she had too. We knew that whatever happened was the Lord’s will and that we must be strong enough to accept it.

Christopher underwent more testing after a long weekend. We waited anxiously until the doctors finally filed into the hospital room looking sober—yet puzzled.



By Elder
Joseph B. Wirthlin
(1917–2008)

Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles

HELPING OTHERS IN THE LORD'S WAY

If the Savior were among us in mortality today, He would be found ministering to the needy, the suffering, the sick.

As we reflect on the life of the Savior and His Resurrection, certainly the many images of those who petitioned Him for help come to my mind. I can easily imagine the deformed legs of a man unable to walk since birth or the tears flowing down a widow's cheek as she follows the body of her only son as it is carried to its tomb. I see the empty eyes of the hungry, the trembling hands of the sick, the pleading voice of the condemned, the disconsolate eye of the outcast. All of them are reaching toward a solitary man, a man without wealth, without home, without position.

I see this man, the Son of the living God, look on each of them with infinite compassion. With a touch of His holy hand, He brings comfort to the downcast, healing to the sick, liberation to the condemned. With a word, the dead man rises from his bier and the widow embraces her enlivened son.

These and other miraculous acts of mercy and kindness, some widely known, others quiet and gentle, define for me one of the salient

characteristics of the Savior: His love and compassion for the downtrodden, the weary, the weak, the suffering. Indeed, these acts of compassion are synonymous with His name.

Although nearly 2,000 years have passed since the mortal ministry of the Son of God, His loving example and His teachings remain an integral part of who we are as a people and who we are as a church. Today, through its inspired welfare program, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members strive to emulate His example as we seek to relieve suffering and foster self-reliance. . . .

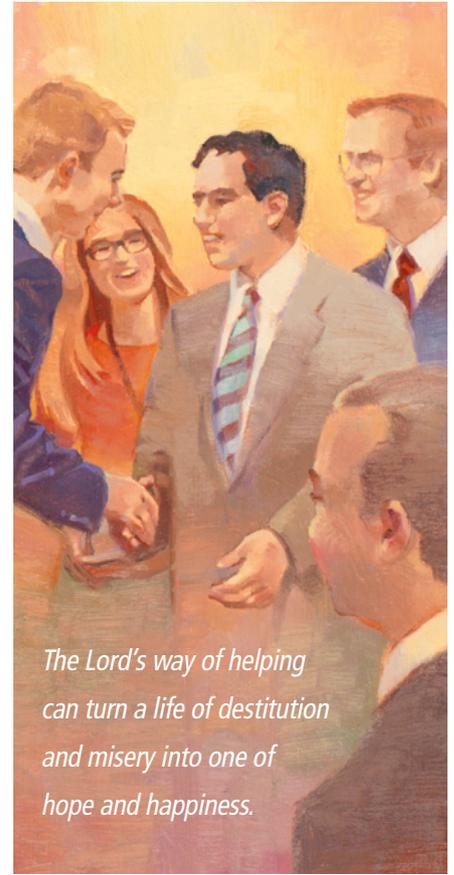
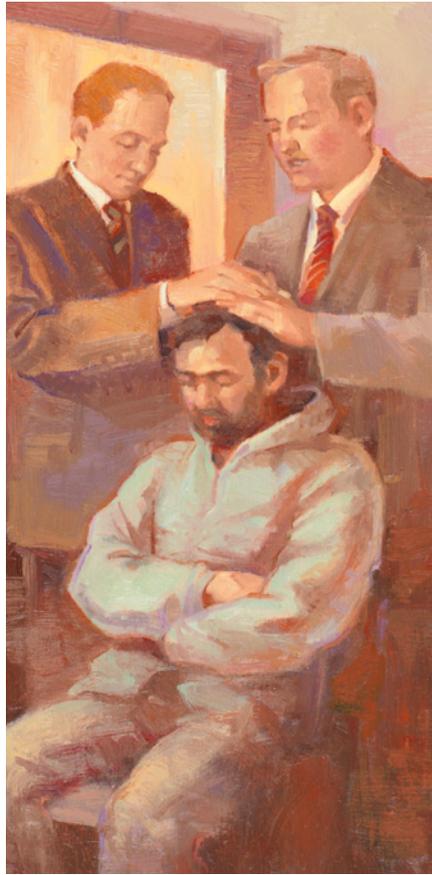
The Lord declared in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith: "It is my purpose to provide for my saints. . . . But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low" [D&C 104:15–16]. The Lord's way consists of helping people help themselves. The poor are exalted because they work for the

temporary assistance they receive, they are taught correct principles, and they are able to lift themselves from poverty to self-reliance. The rich are made low because they humble themselves to give generously of their means to those in need.

We teach members to be self-reliant, to do everything possible to sustain themselves, and to seek help from their families for needed assistance. When members and their families are doing all they can to provide necessities but still cannot meet basic needs, the Church stands ready to help.

In the Church, the bishop has the specific charge to care for "the poor, the needy, the single parent, the aged, the disabled, the fatherless, the widowed, and others who have special needs."¹

I am aware of how one bishop marshaled his resources to assist a man who came to him for help. The man had been happily married for years, but because of a later addiction to alcohol and drugs he was left without a job, home, or family.



*The Lord's way of helping
can turn a life of destitution
and misery into one of
hope and happiness.*

Hard years of living on the street had degraded and humiliated him. With tears streaming down his face, he pleaded with his bishop for help.

The ward welfare committee discussed this challenge. One man knew a dentist who might be willing to replace the man's broken front teeth. The Relief Society president suggested that nutritious food from the bishops' storehouse might improve his health. Another suggested that this man needed someone who could spend time with him daily and help him find the strength to overcome his addictions.

As the suggestions streamed in, the bishop realized that an entire ward of concerned brothers and sisters stood ready to help.

Soon the bishop began to notice improvements. Priesthood brethren gave the man a blessing. A charitable dentist replaced his broken teeth. Food from the bishops' storehouse improved his health. A faithful elderly couple agreed to serve as special home teachers. They were with him daily to help him stick to his resolve.

Following established principles, this good brother offered to help others in the ward. Slowly his life began to improve. Gradually the look of desperation and misery gave way to one of joy and happiness. Although it was a painful process, he was able to free himself from his addictions. He became an active member in the Church. A life of destitution and

misery turned into one of hope and happiness. This is the Lord's way of caring for those in need. . . .

If the Savior were among us in mortality today, He would be found ministering to the needy, the suffering, the sick. Following this example may be one of the reasons President Spencer W. Kimball said: "When viewed in this light, we can see that [welfare] is not a program, but the essence of the gospel. *It is the gospel in action.* It is the crowning principle of a Christian life."² ■

Excerpted from an April 1999 general conference address. For the full address, "Inspired Church Welfare," visit conference.lds.org.

NOTES

1. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1: Stake Presidencies and Bishoprics* (1998), 14.
2. Spencer W. Kimball, "Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action," *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77.

By Lena Hsin-Yao Cho

I left my home in NanTze, Taiwan, to serve as a full-time missionary in northern California in 2005. The area my companion and I were assigned was small enough that within four and a half months we had knocked on doors of every street in the main town area. The missionary work was difficult, and people often yelled at us. We had few investigators. It seemed to me that the work was not going anywhere. After about four months there, I was ready to leave. I was convinced I would be transferred.

Sunday night I waited by the phone until my zone leader called. When he reported that I was assigned to stay in the same area for another six weeks, I couldn't believe my ears. I thought there must have been a mistake!

The following week was a total disaster for me and probably for my companion and the people under our stewardship as well. I refused to believe this was the right decision. Still, I put on a big smile whenever we saw or talked to people, but deep inside I remained unhappy. In my pride I continued to tell myself that I



N Transfer

My mission president must have made a mistake—what could I possibly learn from staying longer in this area?

was not where I was supposed to be. I still hoped that my mission president would call and tell me that I was being transferred to another area.

How Reassurance Came

The next Sunday morning while I was grudgingly getting ready for church, the phone rang. It was the mission president. He greeted me with his usual kind, sincere voice and then said, “Sister Cho, yesterday at lunch I thought of you and had a feeling that I needed to call you to let you know you are in the right place. You are where you’re supposed to be.” I teared up when I heard his words.

I thanked him and hung up the phone. As I began to cry, a crystal-clear feeling came strongly to my heart that there *were* unfinished assignments waiting for me in our area. I also knew that my Heavenly Father knew my thoughts and frustration. He understood my weakness, and He sent His servant to reassure me.

After that phone call, I began to pull myself together. I prayed for strength every day, asking to see more clearly how I could do what the Lord expected me to do. Throughout the next five weeks, my companion

and I witnessed many miracles as we exercised enough faith to work hard. A very prepared investigator moved into our area and was baptized within that transfer.

We were also invited into homes of people who originally hadn’t welcomed us. We met many new people who were having a hard time and were blessed to share the comforting words of God with them. Although some didn’t then choose to be baptized, I will never forget their shining faces or how the Spirit and the love of God touched their hearts—and mine.

What I Learned

I learned that the Lord is truly aware of every one of us; He doesn’t send His missionaries to places without a reason. I learned that when we are assigned to an area, the Lord wants to use us there as instruments to accomplish His work. When we put ourselves in His hands, miracles happen and hearts soften, even when we don’t see how this is possible.

Importantly, I learned that my mission president, like other Church leaders, was truly called of God to be His servant. The Lord qualifies our leaders to receive the revelation and inspiration we need for the welfare of our souls.

I am forever grateful for the experiences that came as a result of *not* being transferred. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



TRUSTING IN THE Assurances OF THE LORD

We may not always be delivered from our trials, but as we seek the assurances of the Lord, we can know that all is well even in trying times.

By Mindy Anne Leavitt
Church Magazines

I sat in the celestial room of the temple, contemplating the direction my life was taking—certainly off course from what I'd planned. As with many other young adults, worries monopolized my mind: How could I balance good grades and

a social life? Should I quit my job? find a second one? How could I save money when I didn't have any? Why wasn't I married yet? The list went agonizingly on and on. I had gone to the temple seeking comfort, praying for the assurance that my life was in Heavenly Father's hands. "Is everything going to be all right in my life?" I questioned. The answer came swiftly and surely to my mind: "All is well."

In that moment, I understood that even though my life wasn't going as I had planned, it was still going according to *His* plan and He was in control. That sweet assurance that He is aware of and taking care of me, even if He doesn't always take away my trials, has carried me through many hardships. As we come to understand, seek, and wait for these assurances, we can know that the Lord supports us through the burdens placed upon us.

Assurance over Deliverance

Clearly, immediate delivery from our trials is not always the Lord's answer to our pleadings. Instead, He may bless us with invaluable moments of assurance through personal revelation—assurance that He is guiding our lives and will deliver us from our trials. These assurances might not deliver us from our trials but perhaps will give us the strength we need to deliver ourselves, even if that deliverance is simply the comfort of the Holy Ghost. I've noticed many examples in the scriptures of how the Lord often sends assurances before deliverance.

While Helaman was leading his 2,060 stripling warriors and other Nephite forces, they experienced an assurance of the Lord. After waiting many months for provisions and reinforcements, they were on the brink of starvation when food arrived with a small band of men. Fearing that this meager addition to their numbers

was not enough, they finally turned to the Lord and “did pour out [their] souls in prayer to God, that he would strengthen [them] and deliver [them].” After they prayed, Helaman recounts, “the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him” (Alma 58:10–11). These assurances gave Helaman and his warriors strength to persevere and triumph over their enemies.

Joseph Smith also received an assurance of the Lord while imprisoned in Liberty Jail. As he prayed fervently, he was told:

“My son, peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment;

“And then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8).

This assurance gave Joseph the courage and fortitude to carry on through near-incapacitating hardships.

In these and many other examples (see, for instance, Mosiah 24:8–16), the Lord didn’t just deliver the faithful from their trials right away. Rather, He visited them with the *assurance* that He *would* deliver them in His own time. These assurances, to borrow the words of Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, are



THE ASSURANCE OF HIS POWER

“We all must deal with adversity. . . . It will comfort us

when we must wait in distress for the Savior’s promised relief that He knows, from experience, how to heal and help us. The Book of Mormon gives us the certain assurance of His power to comfort. And faith in that power will give us patience as we pray and work and wait for help.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Adversity,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 24.

like “packets of spiritual sunlight” that Heavenly Father places in our path “to brighten [our] way.”¹ Sometimes that assurance is all we need to persevere through trials, knowing that there will be an ultimate deliverance.

Seeking Assurances

Life is hard. There are times when we question, when we lack confidence in ourselves and in our abilities to triumph over adversity, when we lose hope. Often it can feel like our trials will never end. And although

some assurances come through no effort on our part, more often than not we need to seek out those assurances that tell us there will be reprieve from our trials.

The assurances of the Lord often come through the voice of His servants: local leaders, institute and Sunday School teachers, and especially His prophets and apostles. Carol F. McConkie, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, reminded us that “in their words we hear the voice of the Lord and we feel the Savior’s love.”²

These assurances also come through the voice of the Spirit as we sincerely commune with Heavenly Father through fervent prayer, as we read and ponder the scriptures, as we attend the temple and our Church meetings, as we serve others and try to do what’s right. In short, the assurances of the Lord come when we “seek him with all [our] heart and with all [our] soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29) and obey His commandments.

Helaman and his armies received an assurance after many sincere prayers; Joseph Smith received an assurance after praying and pondering. In both situations, the Lord tested their patience and faith before giving an assurance—a good reminder that during trials we should hold on to our faith and practice patience.

Waiting for Assurances

As with any other test of patience, the Lord's assurances might not come how or when we expect. We may need to pray to have "eyes to see" (Ezekiel 12:2) the hand of the Lord and His assurances in our lives. Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about how the tender mercies of the Lord can include these assurances and said that they "do not occur randomly or merely by coincidence. Faithfulness and obedience enable us to receive these important gifts and, frequently, the Lord's timing helps us to recognize them."³

Often, waiting for either deliverance or an assurance of deliverance takes more patience than we think we possess. We may have to face serious trials before receiving any kind of assurance. As Elder Scott explained, the "packets of spiritual sunlight" the Lord provides "often come after the trial has been the greatest, as evidence of the compassion and love of an all-knowing Father. They point the way

to greater happiness, more understanding, and strengthen [our] determination to accept and be obedient to His will."⁴ As we remain faithful and obedient through our trials, the assurances of the Lord will come to help us continue to be so.

Our Greatest Assurance

Ultimately, no matter how many assurances we receive that Heavenly Father is aware of us and our situation, it won't be enough to help us endure to the end if we don't have faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Through His Atonement, we can have the absolute hope that we will one day be delivered from all of our trials. We can also know that our Savior is there to empathize perfectly with us, for He has "descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things" (D&C 88:6). He understands our trials and our sorrows because He "suffer[ed] pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . that he may know . . . how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11–12).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "Of greatest assurance in God's plan is that a Savior was promised, a Redeemer, who through our faith in Him would lift us triumphantly over those tests and trials. . . . It is only an appreciation of this divine love that will make our own lesser suffering first bearable, then understandable,

The "packets of spiritual sunlight . . . often come after the trial has been the greatest, as evidence of the compassion and love of an all-knowing Father. They point the way to greater happiness."

and finally redemptive."⁵ Learning of Him and His Atonement is an assurance in and of itself.

All Is Well

As we understand, seek after, and wait for assurances from the Lord, they will surely come. We ought to remember those priceless moments, write them down, and think about them often. Most important, we need to trust in them and believe, as Helaman and his men and the Prophet Joseph believed, that the Lord will fulfill the promises He has made to us. He reminds us of those promises through His assurances, and even though they may not make our trials disappear, we can know that Heavenly Father is there with us to support and sustain us through anything.

After my experience in the temple that day, my trials didn't lessen. I didn't suddenly have perfect grades or more money or a lot of dates. But what I did have was a calm assurance that despite my trials, I would be OK because the Lord still intended on keeping His promises to deliver me. With that assurance I know that all *is* well. ■

NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 17.
2. Carol F. McConkie, "Live according to the Words of the Prophets," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 77.
3. David A. Bednar, "The Tender Mercies of the Lord," *Ensign*, May 2005, 100.
4. Richard G. Scott, "Trust in the Lord," 17.
5. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Like a Broken Vessel," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 40.



IT'S A Short Flight

By Jessica Garlick Dyer

My husband, Travis, and I had been sleeping all night in the airport in Denver, Colorado, USA. At 6:00 a.m. I got in line to try to get added to the next flight home. Our flight the night before had been canceled, and we were exhausted.

For us, the exhaustion wasn't just physical—Travis had a midterm exam to take the next day, we had been flying across the country for PhD program interviews, and just five weeks earlier we had suffered the painful stillbirth of our daughter after 34 weeks of pregnancy. Life seemed full of difficulties.

The Father on the Plane

Thankfully, we ended up getting on the plane. As we waited to board, I spotted a couple with a teenage daughter with disabilities who were also trying to get on the same flight. It appeared that they, too, had slept

in the airport. My heart hurt for them. Once on the plane, I noticed that they got seats on the row directly across from us. The tall blond teenager was noticeably nervous. Almost the moment they sat down, she began to fuss. It was a cycle of crying, then silence, and then questioning her parents in a loud voice. She used child-like phrases, causing some to stare or act annoyed.

It was obvious the girl was scared. She had no choice but to be on that plane to get to her destination. When we boarded, the plane ride must have seemed exciting to her—but as soon as the plane left the solid concrete for the air, she panicked.

The girl talked the entire flight, repeating over and over, "It's a short flight, right, Dad?" Sometimes she yelled. She repeated this query the whole way from Denver, Colorado, to Salt Lake City, Utah, sometimes



The sweet interaction I witnessed between a father and his daughter enhanced my appreciation for Heavenly Father and His plan for us.

stammering the words through tears and then moments later with confidence. At times she started to cry hysterically, but her dad would calm her down, saying in a soothing tone, "Yes, it's a short flight."

I sat in awe the whole flight—watching, listening. The girl's father was ever so patient and calm, reassuring his daughter every few minutes. "Yes, it's a short flight." I had no doubt that it must have felt like the longest



flight ever to him. He let his wife sleep while he cared for their daughter, constantly allaying her fears. How tiring it must have been.

My mind was racing: this man and his wife would likely take care of their daughter full-time for the rest of her life, without a break. Still, this father was unruffled. He was noticeably exhausted, yet he never once raised his voice, got upset, or ignored his daughter. I felt humbled, keenly aware of the impatience I had sometimes shown in facing some of my own challenges.

That morning caused me to reflect on what it must be like for our Heavenly Father to watch us panic in a time of trial, only to console us with perfect patience and compassion. He knows “the end from the beginning” (Abraham 2:8). I was also reminded that *everyone* has trials as I admired a father so patiently and lovingly handle a very trying situation.

Just a Short Flight

It's a short flight, right, Dad? I realized that I often ask Heavenly Father this question myself, sometimes with tears and crying. And He responds so constantly and lovingly: *Yes, it's a short flight. You can make it.*

I was relieved for this girl and her dad when the plane skidded on the runway in Salt Lake City. The flight was over. As soon as we landed, in a voice I can still hear in my mind, the girl exclaimed to her dad excitedly, “It was a great flight! It was a short flight, huh, Dad?”

And her father agreed. “Yes, it was a great, short flight.”

I have a feeling that's how we will respond when our individual flights on this earth are over. It is difficult not to know what hard things are around the next turn—but I can testify that, because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we are enabled to do

what we need to do in this life to become more like Him. This knowledge brings power, no matter how smooth or bumpy our flight gets.

In the grand scheme of eternity, our mortal passage really is just a great, short flight. ■

The author now lives in North Carolina, USA.



TRUST THE LORD

“My young friends, today I say to you that if you trust the Lord and obey Him, His hand shall be over you, He will help you achieve the great potential He sees in you, and He will help you to see the end from the beginning.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “See the End from the Beginning,” *Ensign*, May 2006, 42.

The Path to

PALMYRA



*The path to Palmyra—the site of the First Vision
and the resting place of the golden plates—was anything
but a path of sweetness and light for Joseph Smith
and his family.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE ANDERSON, COURTESY OF CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

By Matthew S. Holland

This is the first article in a two-part series about the Prophet Joseph Smith. The second article, "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," will appear in next month's issue of the Ensign.

Make no mistake about it. Whether you are a full-time missionary or not, all Latter-day Saints are called to take the message of the Lord Jesus Christ to "all the world" (Matthew 24:14). We are called to share the pure principles and organizing practices of *His* gospel in *His* name. In order to do so, we must also remember that it is essential to teach and testify that Joseph Smith was His instrument in restoring those pure principles and organizing practices to the earth.

With so very much at stake, you would be wise to ask yourself if you stand ready to step forward and declare with clear conviction and sweet boldness that "on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty,"¹ Joseph Smith walked into a secluded grove of trees, knelt, prayed, and the world was never the same again. If you would be the servants of God you are called to be, you must be ready to do so.

Decide now to become a student of the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith. There is power and wisdom in his life like no other, save the life of the Savior Himself. As you earnestly and prayerfully familiarize yourself with the details of Joseph's life, I promise that you will find your affection and admiration for him grow, you will find comfort and encouragement for those particularly hard days of life and service, and you will bolster your understanding against the sneer of modern critics so sure that worldly evidence proves Joseph could not be what he claimed. To those ends, consider just a few glimpses of this most remarkable man.

A Painful Path

There is every reason to believe that the morning of the First Vision was as glorious and idyllic as the hymn "Joseph Smith's First Prayer"² makes it



Following three years of failed crops in Vermont, Joseph Smith Sr. took the fateful step of moving his family 300 miles (482 km) southwest to the town of Palmyra, in upper New York.

proceeds while spinning tales that the venture had been a bust, producing only a chest full of tea as reward.⁵

Meanwhile, just as this swindle was unfolding, the payments for a large inventory of merchandise had fallen due at the Smith store. In the face of demanding creditors, the Smiths hit a desperation point. To pay their debts, Lucy gave up a wedding gift of \$1,000 that she had saved for years, and Joseph accepted \$800 for the family farm in Tunbridge.⁶ The farm was the one thing that would have

out to be. But in relishing such a picture, we must not lose sight of what it took to get to that morning. The path to Palmyra—the general location of this sacred, singular moment—was anything but a path of sweetness and light for this boy prophet and his family.

The Prophet's parents, Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, married in Tunbridge, Vermont, USA, in 1796. After six years of fairly successful farming, the Smiths moved to nearby Randolph to try their hand at storekeeping.³

The line of goods Joseph Sr. acquired with the help of Boston-based creditors moved quickly to eager new customers—not for cash but for promises of payment once harvests came in at the end of the growing season. As he waited for promised payments to pay off his creditors, he jumped into a new investment opportunity.

In those days Chinese markets were clamoring for crystallized ginseng root. Though Joseph Sr. had a hard-cash offer from a middleman for \$3,000 for the ginseng root he had collected and prepared for shipment, he decided on the riskier but potentially more lucrative strategy of taking the product to New York himself and contracting with a ship's captain to sell his goods in China on consignment. By eliminating the middleman, he stood to make as much as \$4,500—an immense sum in those days.⁴

As bad luck or sinister planning would have it, Joseph Sr.'s shipment ended up on the same boat carrying the son of the middleman with whom he had declined to do business. Taking advantage of the situation, this son sold the Smith ginseng in China “at a high price” and kept the



at least guaranteed a modicum of economic stability and long-term physical security in the often harsh world of the early American frontier. Now, penniless and landless, the Smiths would be forced to move eight times in 14 years, constantly looking for a way to provide for their family.

At least one of those moves was triggered by the financial difficulty of accumulated medical bills incurred from the 1813 typhoid fever epidemic that struck all the children of the Smith family with great and debilitating force. A few weeks after Joseph's fever had passed, he experienced tremendous pain in his shoulder. A local doctor misdiagnosed the pain as a consequence of a sprain. Two weeks later, when the pain had escalated to excruciating levels, the doctor returned and discovered a pool of infection linked to Joseph's extended fever.⁷

When Joseph Smith arrived in Palmyra, the Lord had brought His foreordained prophet to the physical resting place—a nearby hill—of a treasure of inestimable value.

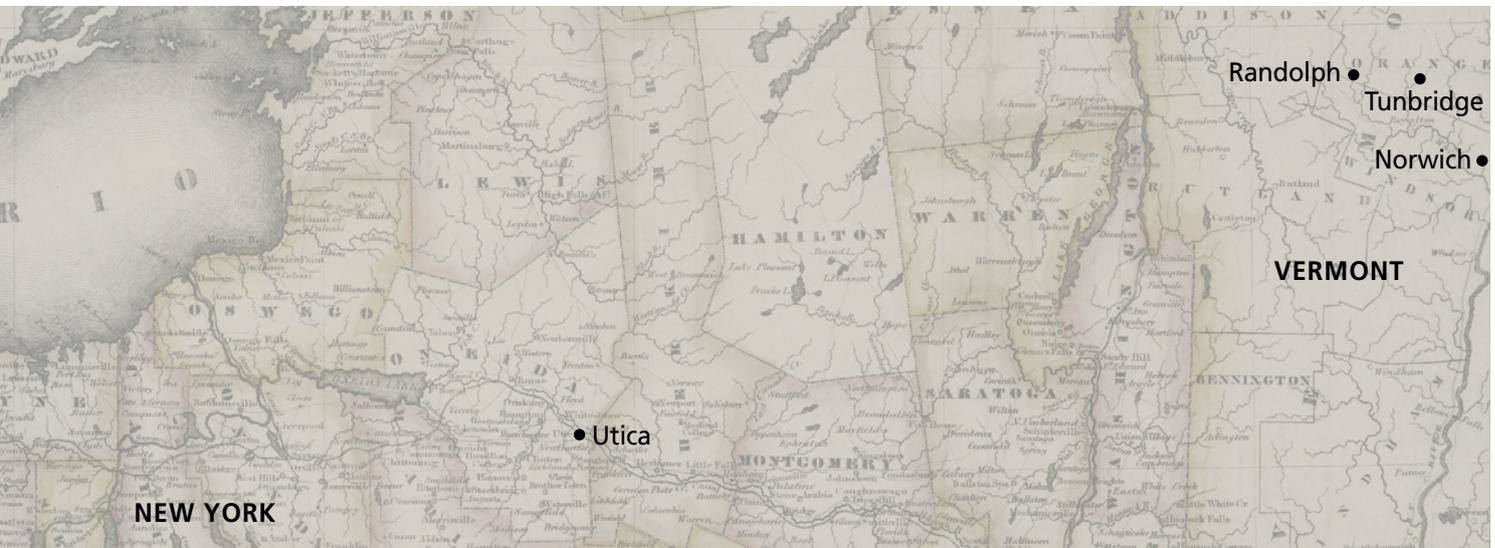


A lancing of the sore area drew out a quart of infected matter, but the procedure was incomplete, and new infection moved to Joseph's lower left leg. For this, a surgeon was summoned. He made an eight-inch (20 cm) incision from the knee to the ankle, which eased the pain somewhat. But the infection, unfortunately, shot into the bone.⁸

At this point the family sought the latest medical advice from leading authorities at Dartmouth Medical College. Lucy insisted that the most logical and customary procedure,

memory. There was Joseph lying in a blood-drenched bed, "pale as a corpse, [with] large drops of sweat . . . rolling down his face, whilst upon every feature was depicted the utmost agony."¹¹ Fortunately, the operation was a success, but Joseph would spend the next three years on crutches.

After this ordeal, the family hoped that a new start in Norwich, Vermont, would finally bring the stability and prosperity they so urgently sought. But once again their hopes were dashed. In their first year of trying to make a



amputation, *not* be used. Instead, the Smiths would try a new and painful procedure—one without promise of success. Doctors would open Joseph's leg and bore two holes in each side of the bone. Then they would chip off three large pieces of the bone to remove all the infected area.⁹

All of this was to be done without the advantages of today's general anesthesia. As a consequence, the family was urged to give Joseph alcohol or to tie him to the bed so he would not jerk away in pain during the delicate procedure. At the tender age of seven, Joseph refused both options. Instead, he made two requests—that his father hold him and that his mother leave the room.¹⁰

When Joseph's cries became so great that his mother could not be kept away, twice she entered the room over his pleading objections. What she saw seared an indelible

go of farming on rented land, their crops failed. Their crops failed again the second year. In year three, 1816, Joseph Smith Sr. determined to give it one more try, convinced that things simply had to get better.¹²

Half a world away in 1815, Mount Tambora in Indonesia had erupted and spewed tons of ash into the earth's atmosphere, disrupting normal weather cycles. From June to August of 1816—dubbed the "year without a summer"—four killing frosts hit New England, ruining summer crops yet again.¹³

With famine setting in and thousands leaving Vermont in mass exodus, Joseph Sr. took his most fateful step yet. He decided to leave the roughly 20-mile (32 km) radius of family, friends, and farmland he had known most of his adult life and headed 300 miles (482 km) southwest to the town

of Palmyra in upper New York. There, it was reported, land was fertile and long-term credit was readily available. Out of necessity Joseph Sr. left in advance, leaving behind Lucy and the eight children to pack up their household goods and follow him.¹⁴

It was winter as Lucy and her brave little band loaded everything they owned into a sleigh and later into a wagon. After paying off several creditors, Lucy had little money left for the trip. By trip's end she was giving away clothing



and medicine to pay innkeepers. She recalled arriving in Palmyra with “barely two cents in cash.”¹⁵

Along the way the man hired to drive the sleigh forced young Joseph off to make room for two pretty daughters of the Gates family, whom they had encountered traveling in the same direction. Joseph—still not fully healed—was forced to limp “through the snow 40 miles [64 km] per day for several days,” experiencing what he called “the most excruciating weariness & pain.”¹⁶

When Joseph's devoted older brothers, Hyrum and Alvin, pleaded with the man to relent, he knocked them to the ground with a violent thump from the handled end of a whip. In Utica, when it became clear that Lucy was out of cash, the man abandoned the family—but not until after a

failed attempt to steal their wagon, during which he tossed their belongings to the ground.¹⁷ Somehow the family pressed on until all arrived safely in Palmyra, tearfully collapsing into the arms of Joseph Smith Sr.

Perhaps the most heart-wrenching detail of this journey, though, is found in an underappreciated postscript Joseph later added to the original account of his family's journey: “On our way from Utica I was left to ride on the last sleigh in the company, but when that came up I was knocked down by the driver, one of Gate's sons, & left to wallow in my blood until a stranger came along, picked me up, & carried me to the Town of Palmyra.”¹⁸ The significance of this should not be missed.

A Treasure of Inestimable Value

Just two miles (3 km) south of the center of Palmyra sits a grove of trees that would become the site of one of the grandest visions in human history. Three miles (5 km) beyond that sits the Hill Cumorah, repository of a then-unknown set of golden plates.

When Joseph arrived in Palmyra, the Lord had brought His foreordained prophet to the physical resting place of a treasure of inestimable value. This treasure would signal that after centuries of general spiritual darkness and confusion, the heavens were again open. This treasure would show that Jesus's ministry was far more expansive in both doctrine and geography than the Christian churches of that day could possibly know. This treasure would affirm that, in miraculous fashion, God is sweepingly active in the affairs of men across time, languages, and continents. And this treasure would promise teachings so pure and powerful that if you planted them deep into your soul, you could personally be transformed, tasting of something so delicious as to make it the ultimate and unmatched feast of your desires.

With mortal eyes, we might be tempted to envision that a more fitting path for such a man and such a moment would be a path of greater ease, efficiency, and acclaim. In recognition of the earth-shattering events about to happen as a consequence of this boy entering this town at this time, could

A short distance south of Palmyra sits a grove of trees that would become the site of one of the grandest visions in human history.



not the Lord, who so carefully orchestrated the placement of the golden plates over a millennia earlier, have provided a straighter, more comfortable and heralded path of arrival?

Yes, He surely could have, but He did not.

There was no prominent, prophetic anointing of Joseph in his childhood (see 1 Samuel 16:11–13). There was no directive dream pointing him to a promised land (see 1 Nephi 5:4–5). There was no curious Liahona to help his family avoid missteps along the way (see 1 Nephi 16:10; Alma 37:38). And there certainly was no open-air limousine traveling along a sunny, streamlined parade route with cheering masses providing a triumphant welcome.

Rather, for Joseph and his family, there was a wildly meandering trail of sorrow marked with bad luck, ill health, poor judgment, natural disaster, crushing pain, callous injustice, continuing obscurity, and unrelenting poverty. This is not to suggest that the Smith family lived in one continual round of abject misery; they did not. But the path to Palmyra was anything other than direct, prosperous, and publicly notable. Lame, limp, and bloodied, the Prophet literally had to be carried to his unparalleled rendezvous with destiny by a nameless stranger.

Remember this as perhaps the first lesson of Joseph’s life and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In spite of failure, mishap, and bitter opposition—and in many cases precisely *because* of those things—Joseph Smith got exactly where he needed to be to fulfill his mission. So, if now or on some future day, you look around and see that other perhaps less-devoted acquaintances are succeeding in their jobs when you just lost yours; if major illness puts you on

your back just at the moment critical tasks of service seem to come calling; if a call to a prominent position goes to someone else; if a missionary companion seems to learn the language faster; if well-meaning efforts still somehow lead to disaster with a fellow ward member, a neighbor, or an investigator; if news from home brings word of financial setback or mortal tragedy you can do nothing about; or if, day after day, you simply feel like a bland and beaten background player in a gospel drama that really seems made for the happiness of others, *just know this*: many such things were the lot of Joseph Smith himself at the very moment he was being led to the stage of the single most transcendent thing to happen on this earth since the events of Golgotha and the Garden Tomb nearly 2,000 years earlier.

“But,” you may say, “my life and earthly destiny will never be like that of the Prophet Joseph.”

That probably is true. But it is also true that your lives do matter to God, and your eternal potential and that of every soul you will meet is no less grand and significant than that of the Prophet Joseph himself. Thus, just like our beloved Joseph, you must never give up, give in, or give out when life in general, or missionary work in particular, gets utterly painful, confusing, or dull. Rather, as Paul teaches, you must see that “*all* things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28; emphasis added).

Just as He did with young Joseph Smith, God is shaping and directing you every single day to ends more glorious than you can know! ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith—History 1:14.
2. *Hymns*, no. 26.
3. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (1853), 37, 45. For a concise summary of events related to the Smith family’s move to Palmyra, see also Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith:*

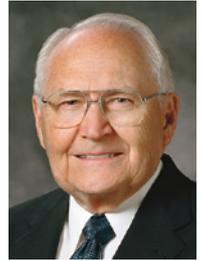
- Rough Stone Rolling* (2005), 17–29.
4. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 49.
5. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 49–50.
6. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 51.
7. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 60, 62.
8. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 62–63.

9. See LeRoy S. Wirthlin, “Joseph Smith’s Boyhood Operation: An 1813 Surgical Success,” *BYU Studies* 21, no. 2 (1981): 146–54.
10. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 64.
11. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 65.
12. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 66.
13. See *Church History in the Fulness of Times*, 2nd ed.

- (2003), 24.
14. See Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 67.
15. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 68, 70.
16. Joseph Smith, in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, 2 vols. (1989), 1:268.
17. See *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:268.
18. Joseph Smith, in *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:268–69.



By Elder L. Tom Perry
Of the Quorum of
the Twelve Apostles



THE GLORIOUS DAY OF Priesthood Restoration

*How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored
His Church and His priesthood to the earth.*

When the Savior Jesus Christ came to earth, one of the first things He did was organize His Church. The New Testament tells us that He “went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” When He came down the next morning, He called His disciples together. “And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles” (Luke 6:12–13).

Later on He took Peter, James, and John up into a mount apart, and there Peter received the keys of the priesthood (see Matthew 17:1–9; see also 16:18–19). Peter became the one responsible for holding all the keys on earth in leading the Church after the departure of the Savior.

Obedying the Savior’s injunction (see Mark 16:15), the Apostles preached the gospel and organized branches of the Church. In many cases, they had the opportunity of visiting branches only once, which gave them little opportunity to teach and train. Paganistic ideas soon crept in, and different aspects of the Savior’s doctrine were changed or modified (see Isaiah 24:5). As apostasy spread, it became necessary for the Lord to take the priesthood from the earth. As a result, the earth was without the blessings of the priesthood for quite a period of time.

To establish His kingdom again on the earth with the powers of the priesthood, the Lord restored the gospel.

Remember the Restoration

As Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon and Oliver Cowdery was acting as his scribe, they came across the story in 3 Nephi of the resurrected Savior visiting the Western Hemisphere. As they learned of His teachings about baptism (see 3 Nephi 11:23–28), they wondered about the many forms of baptism being used in their day and about who had authority to baptize.

Joseph and Oliver decided to appeal to the Lord, praying in the woods near Joseph and Emma’s home. There, the great revelation occurred wherein John the Baptist appeared, put his hands on their heads and said: “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” (D&C 13:1).

That was a glorious event. I hope all priesthood bearers remember May 15, 1829, as a sacred event in the history of the Church and as a special event in the history of the world.

The Articles of Faith tell us “that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5).

Men are not called randomly; they are called by inspiration and prophecy. There’s a direct line of inspiration from the Lord to those who are called to exercise the priesthood. That is the way the Lord governs His Church, and that is the way He called the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Be Worthy of the Priesthood

Receiving the priesthood is not a rite of passage that comes automatically in accordance with age. We have to be worthy and “faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods” (D&C 84:33). We should carefully read the oath and covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which specifically points out conditions we must understand and agree to in order to accept the priesthood:



“Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved.

“But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come” (D&C 84:40–41).

That’s pretty serious. You might think men would shy away from the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods, but the next verse says, “Wo unto all those who come *not* unto this priesthood” (D&C 84:42; emphasis added).

If we accept the priesthood and live worthy of it, we receive the blessings of the Lord. But if we break our covenant and turn from our priesthood, we will not receive the Lord’s blessings or become “the elect of God” (D&C 84:34).

The Aaronic Priesthood, which is received by covenant, helps prepare young men to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is the greater priesthood received by oath *and* covenant.

Reach Out in Service

The priesthood is a great brotherhood—probably the greatest brotherhood on earth. The relationships among our priesthood brothers should be greater than any other relationships except for those within our individual families. In addition to being a brotherhood, the priesthood is

a service organization where we give of ourselves to help others and make things better.

From the time a young man receives the Aaronic Priesthood and is ordained a deacon or a teacher or a priest, he belongs to a quorum. That quorum brotherhood continues when he receives the Melchizedek Priesthood and is ordained an elder. Quorums in the priesthood are vital.

Recently a young man going on a mission spoke in sacrament meeting. In his talk he explained that he and four friends had started out together in the deacons quorum. He said the friendship and support they gave each other as they faced challenges and moved forward through the ranks of the Aaronic Priesthood helped them to reach their goal of serving full-time missions.

I belong to a quorum. It's a very special quorum. It's made up of men from all different types of occupations and professions. But when we act as a quorum, we're united in purpose.

When quorum members agree unanimously on a course to follow and act together under the influence of the Holy Ghost, they act in accordance with the Lord's will. Unless

you have complete agreement by members of a quorum, you do not proceed. Think of how that can protect you throughout life.

Every quorum leader ought to

have a list of the members of his quorum, and he should be conscious of those who are having trouble defining the way they should be living. If a number of such young men belong to the quorum, the leader prioritizes his list, giving attention to those in most urgent need of nurturing. Then he and other quorum members start visiting them, making them friends and associates of the quorum in a way that draws them back into the fellowship.

A priesthood quorum has the duty and responsibility "to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59). Service in a priesthood quorum is essential to our development here on earth. Therefore, all quorum members should consider these duties as part of

their service obligation in our Father in Heaven's kingdom.

We all know that we face challenges in our mortal probation. Unless we have support to help us as we proceed through life, we will find ourselves without a firm plan, a firm direction, or a firm road map to lead and guide us. A properly functioning quorum helps us form a plan and a road map that will lead us back to the presence of our Father in Heaven.

Be Grateful

Bishops hold priesthood keys to preside over their ward, including the young men of the Aaronic Priesthood. The bishop, in fact, is the president of his ward's priests quorum. He helps the young men to be worthy to receive and advance in the Aaronic Priesthood and to prepare for the Melchizedek Priesthood. He helps them understand the obligations and blessings that come to bearers of the priesthood. He helps them learn to magnify the priesthood by giving them assignments that help them serve and minister to others.

The keys belonging to the Aaronic Priesthood remind us that we should always be grateful for the restored priesthood, with its power, authority, and responsibilities: "The power and authority of the lesser, or Aaronic Priesthood, is to hold the keys of the ministering of angels, and to administer in outward ordinances, the letter of the gospel, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, agreeable to the covenants and commandments" (D&C 107:20).

I challenge young men to honor the priesthood they hold and to prepare to advance in each office of the Aaronic Priesthood as they prepare for the additional blessing of receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood, serving the Lord as full-time missionaries and eventually marrying in His holy temple.

I testify that no mortal man leads this Church. It is the Savior's Church, and He directs it through the priesthood, which He delegates to men on earth so they can act as His agents in leading His Church and performing sacred ordinances. How grateful we should be that the Lord has restored His Church and His priesthood to the earth. ■

The priesthood is a great brotherhood—probably the greatest brotherhood on earth.



“How We Preach of Christ” in Our Home



By Darren E. Schmidt

During Easter time one year, my wife suggested that we read as a family the scriptural accounts of the Savior's final week in mortality. Each night at bedtime, we read the New Testament and showed our children a short video clip of each event and discussed questions that arose. I was amazed at the questions our children brought up as well as the Spirit that permeated our home during our reading and discussions.

At the conclusion of the week, I felt a more profound gratitude and love toward the Savior, having reflected much on His sacrifice and the eternal consequences that result from all that He went through for us. Along with my own stirrings, I knew my wife had been inspired, and I sensed a deeper understanding and love for the Savior in our children as well as a greater desire to demonstrate Christlike demeanor toward one another.

Since then we have explored other ways that we might “talk of Christ” and “preach of Christ” more in our conversations and lessons, knowing that by building upon a foundation of Jesus Christ, we are promised great resistance against the storms of life (see Helaman 5:12).

“We talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26).



An Example of Teaching about Prayer

For example, let's say that you are teaching the importance of prayer. You might use Doctrine and Covenants 10:5, where we are instructed to “pray always,” or Nephi's counsel that the “evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8). These scriptures teach the doctrine of prayer powerfully. As you discuss them, let's say you ask something like “How did the Savior pray?” or “What were the Savior's

prayers like?” If you have younger children, you might ask, “What do you *think* the Savior's prayers were like?”

Take a moment to think of how you might personally answer this question by considering the scriptural accounts that come to mind. I think immediately of the Savior's visit to the Americas, when “he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . . Eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father” (3 Nephi 17:15–16).

Later in the account we discover that the people tried to pattern their prayers after His and as a result “did not multiply many words, for it was *given unto them* what they should pray, and they were *filled with desire*” (3 Nephi 19:24; emphasis added). At this point, you might invite your children to share a time when they were filled with a desire to pray, or you could share a time when you were given the very words to say while praying. Then you could testify of how different a prayer is when it is given this way, as the Savior taught.

Think of the difference you could have on your children if they were to act on the principles of prayer found in these verses and in the testimonies you and they have

Make the Savior the Focus of Your Teaching

One of the things we have discovered is that when we bring the Savior's example and teachings into our family discussions and interactions, they have become much more powerful and purposeful. To use an analogy from the Savior Himself, He taught, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit” (John 15:5). If we apply this analogy to our teaching, we teach gospel principles not as unrelated ideas but as appendages of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, as the Prophet Joseph Smith declared them to be.¹ This is how we make the Savior the focus of our instruction and not just merely leaves that we have plucked from His true vine.

If we make Him the center of our instruction, we are promised nourishment, strength, and growth, including fruit-bearing branches—in other words, that our discussions and lessons will have greater converting power and long-term results. One way that we have found to do this is to teach a gospel principle and then ask our children a question such as “How did Jesus demonstrate this principle or teaching?” or “What did the Lord say or teach about this very thing?”

borne. Think how this could improve their ability to feel and recognize the Spirit, magnify their callings, give priesthood blessings, and later raise a family of their own, being directed by the same Spirit that “teacheth a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

If the Savior’s example or teachings were left out of this instruction, we could still have a good discussion on prayer, but including His example and teachings adds greater depth and power.

Gospel-Centered Artwork

Another thing we have sought to do to establish a more Christ-centered home is to have pictures of Christ, the temple, and other gospel-related things where they can readily be seen and where our children can know what is truly important to us.

A few years ago, while sitting with our children at tithing settlement, our bishop invited our 10-year-old son to take a small picture of the Savior and decide where in our home to place it, where it would be a constant reminder of our family’s commitment to follow Him. After returning home, he placed the picture on the front door, where, our son said, “each of us would see it the most.” This has been a great blessing and constant reminder to all of us every day in a small but powerful way of our promises to follow Jesus Christ.

Regardless of where pictures are placed in your home, it would be worth the effort to note the pictures on the walls and the messages you are sending to your children. Is the art in your home portraying the message that you are committed to following Christ?

Other Ways to Teach of Christ

I admit I have laughed on more than one occasion when one of my children has asked me if Jesus was tougher than a cartoon superhero, yet I have found that my child’s inquiry has always made for a great discussion about what makes the Savior superior to a superhero. Along with everyday conversations such as these, here are a few

additional ideas that you might consider in order to make your home more Christ-centered:

- Use the Book of Mormon to teach your children about the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The word *Atonement* or *atone* appears 39 times in the Book of Mormon.
- Use Mormon Messages videos, Bible videos, and other Church media that teach of Jesus Christ to enhance your family home evening lessons and scripture studies.
- Learn and sing the hymns about the Savior together and discuss their teachings and meanings.
- Find ways to emphasize that prophets are powerful witnesses of Jesus Christ.
- Seek consistently to improve your own relationship with the Savior.

I have come to know through careful study and fervent prayer that Jesus Christ lives and that His great gift of the Atonement is real and gives our lives, and the lives of those we love, meaning and purpose, with the grand and glorious hope that our families can and will be ours for eternity. May each of us realize the great importance of establishing a Christ-centered home, recognizing “that there is no other way or means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ” (Alma 38:9). ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

NOTE

1. See *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 49–50.



AN Exquisite Visit

No matter who you are or how much (or little) you know about the Church, visitors' centers and historic sites provide a marvelous opportunity to learn more.

By Richard M. Romney

Church Magazines

My 17-year-old daughter, Charlotte, and I were already going to San Diego, California, for a lacrosse tournament when she surprised me with a question: “While we’re there, could we visit that Mormon Battalion place?”

“Sure,” I answered, glad for her interest. Since we were driving, it wouldn’t take much to adjust our itinerary.

A few days later, when the tournament was over, we arrived at the Mormon Battalion Historic Site early in the evening. A sister missionary, a native of Hong Kong, served as the guide for our small group that included two tourists from the Philippines who had walked in from the street, a man interested in history who had traveled from Louisiana to California just to explore the

site, one less-active member who lived nearby, and my daughter and me.

As our tour began, right away we were immersed in the experience of the Mormon Battalion. What my daughter called “some really cool tech” allowed us to interact with the characters and learn their stories in a fun way that none of us were expecting. We witnessed over and over again that their actions were based on their faith in Jesus Christ.

We also saw historic artifacts. My daughter even got to put on a pack and pick up equipment identical to what battalion members would have used. We gained new appreciation for the weight they carried for 2,000 miles (3,200 km). At the end of our tour, we were invited to have our photo taken as honorary members of the battalion.

Afterward, various members of our group lingered. Some shared their email addresses or phone numbers so that they could remain in contact with our sister missionary guide, and the couple from the Philippines asked if they could discuss some specific questions they had before leaving. Then our guide visited with us and helped us to locate the nearest meetinghouse so that we could attend church the next day. Our visit was, in every sense, a pleasant experience. To this day my daughter speaks of it as one of the highlights of the trip.





AT A GLANCE

Church visitors' centers and historic sites:

- Receive millions of visitors each year.
- Are staffed by more than 1,200 full-time missionaries, including young sisters, senior sisters, and senior couples.
- Find tens of thousands of new investigators that local missionaries begin teaching throughout the world every year.
- Occasionally feature traveling exhibits that move between the visitors' centers and historic sites. For example, one exhibit features original paintings depicting prophets from various dispensations.
- Host concerts, activities, and other special events throughout the year.
- Welcome families and serve as great locations for parents to teach children about the gospel and Church history.
- Provide a friendly environment where less-active members can feel the Spirit, rediscover Church history, and be reminded of the joy of membership and activity in the Lord's Church.
- Offer warm and inviting settings where members can bring friends, neighbors, and business colleagues to learn more about the gospel and the Restoration.

Family Opportunities

Over the years, visitors' centers and historic sites have provided many opportunities for our family. While staying with family members, we have

Panning for gold (left) is one of the many family-friendly activities available at the Mormon Battalion Historic Site (above). Other exhibits use technological innovations to show how, throughout their journey, battalion members relied on faith in Jesus Christ.

toured visitors' centers at temples in St. George, Utah; Mesa, Arizona; and Idaho Falls, Idaho. On vacation we have been to the Mormon Battalion site and to Cove Fort in southern Utah. We have also visited Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, many times for family home evening.

More than once, a visit has prompted a discussion about temple marriage,

Many exhibits allow visitors to have experiences that bring Church history to life.

how to be a member missionary, or preparing for full-time missionary service. My sons and daughters have gone to centers and sites for youth activities, firesides, and dates. Years ago, while on a business trip, I was able to visit the Smith Family Farm Historic Site in Palmyra, New York, and ponder what I would have done as a teenager witnessing a “war of words and tumult of opinions” (Joseph Smith—History 1:10).

A relative in California reports that the Los Angeles Temple Visitors’ Center has served as a place of guidance for friends and family members, active or less active, who for one reason or another needed to restore or strengthen their faith. And, of course, these special places have regularly provided all of us with a welcoming environment where we can introduce friends, neighbors, business associates, and out-of-town guests to our beliefs without any pressure.

I believe that one reason our family loves to go to visitors’ centers and historic sites is that the sisters and senior couples who serve there are, through their example and kindness, extending the same tender invitation, given in the scriptures, to “come unto Christ” (Jacob 1:7; Omni 1:26; Moroni 10:32; D&C 20:59; see also Matthew 11:28; *Preach My Gospel: A Guide to Missionary Service* [2004], 1.)

Missionary Opportunities

In fact, this invitation blesses both visitors and missionaries.

“I love it here,” says Sister Marianne Orndal of Manchester, England, who admits she was surprised to receive her call to the Utah Salt Lake City Temple Square Mission. She says that sisters who serve at visitors’ centers are constantly helping and teaching, whether it is to bolster the testimony of a member or to



WHAT'S NEW?

The Church regularly releases new films and opens new exhibits at visitors' centers. To learn about new exhibits, films, and special events in your area, "like" the Facebook page for the site you're interested in.

Recently Released Films

- *Meet the Mormons* (in English and Spanish)
- *What Is a Prophet?* (four visitors' centers)
- *God's Plan for Families* (in five additional languages this year)
- *Growth of the Church* (Peter Whitmer Farm)
- *The Nativity* and *He Is the Gift* (Christmas films)
- *Because of Him* and *He Is Risen* (Easter films)

Soon-to-Be-Released Films

- New feature films at the Priesthood Restoration Site (under development) and the Peter Whitmer Farm
- New films for Christmas and Easter

New Exhibits

- "Following Christ through the Book of Mormon" (seven visitors' centers so far)
- A large display on the "History of the Church in Mexico" (Mexico City Temple Visitors' Center)
- A cutaway model of the temple and a children's area at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center
- "Kids' Corner" (Peter Whitmer Log Home)
- "8 Stories," narratives from the lives of full-time missionaries (Los Angeles Temple Visitors' Center and Temple Square)

Pageants

- Alternating every other night with the Nauvoo Pageant, the British Pageant that enjoyed so much success in the United Kingdom is now also presented at Nauvoo, Illinois.

Pageants, films, exhibits, special events—there's a lot to see and do at visitors' centers and historic sites. Families can enjoy wholesome entertainment while they learn the gospel together. Exhibits, films, and live performances share the joy and peace that Latter-day Saints find through righteous living.



Strengthening faith and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ—that's what visitors' centers and historic sites are all about.

explain Joseph Smith's life to someone who has never heard his name before.

On a typical day at the Laie Hawaii Temple Visitors' Center, "there will be 60 to 70 guests here at a time," says Sister Lana Cavalcante from Fortaleza, Brazil. "We could be greeting a couple from India at the temple exhibit one minute, turn around and teach a Korean man at the Book of Mormon exhibit, then go outside to take a family from New York on a tour of the temple grounds. It's a privilege to share our testimonies with people from all over the world."

In addition, sisters at visitors' centers spend two or three hours daily sharing the gospel online with guests who have expressed an interest to learn more. After going on a tour at a center, missionaries invite guests to continue to learn by meeting with local missionaries. Visitors' center missionaries then continue to teach interested

With the help of sister missionaries, children at the Mexico City Temple Visitors' Center (below) explore exhibits developed especially for young visitors. Centers and sites also provide opportunities for family home evenings, youth activities, firesides, and dates.



CENTERED ON SHARING

Tens of thousands who are now members of the Church first learned about the Restoration of the gospel at a visitors' center or historic site. Many others had their faith strengthened or restored there. Here are some examples.



Sasha "Alex" Mokrohuz moved from Ukraine to the United States three years ago. He entered the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center out of curiosity and was given a tour by one of the senior missionaries. Invited to return, he came back one week later. Sister missionaries began teaching him. "He would meet with us at the visitors' center," explains Sister Paige Kohler. "He told us that he felt 'warm' whenever he talked with us there. He believed in Jesus Christ and was intrigued by the Holy Ghost, so we encouraged him to read and pray about the Book of Mormon." A few days later they received a Facebook message from Alex: "I got my answer. I want to be baptized." When the local missionaries proposed a baptismal date, he requested that the date be moved up. As a new Latter-day Saint, Alex continues to attend church every week. He just received the Aaronic Priesthood and is contemplating a full-time mission.

In Washington, D.C. (below), visitors can see a cutaway scale model of the temple. Missionaries use technology (below right) to stay in touch with those who express interest in knowing more. They help them to find missionaries and meetinghouses where they live and to continue learning about the gospel.



Richard Bourne was a less-active member living in Seaside, Oregon. He noticed how happy his wife was each time she returned from serving in the Portland Temple. One time he made the two-hour drive to the temple with her and then sat in the car. On another, later trip, the new Portland Temple Visitors' Center was open, and he decided to wait there instead. He viewed all of the exhibits, then told a senior missionary, "If the spirit in the temple is anything like the spirit I feel in the visitors' center, I should speak with the bishop and do what I need to do to be in the temple with my wife." He has since received his endowment, been sealed to his wife, and served as a member of an elders quorum presidency. The Bournes now live in the state of Washington.



Rachel Magaoay from Honolulu, Hawaii, was in college in California when she visited a friend in Utah. Her friend took her to Temple Square. "We watched *The Testaments of One Fold and One Shepherd*," she says. "I was filled with joy as I remembered who my Savior is." Back in California, she requested that missionaries teach her more. Later, in Hawaii, she continued learning about the gospel and was baptized and confirmed. When she decided to serve a full-time mission, she was called to Temple Square. "As I invited others to come unto Christ," she says, "I continued to feel the same spirit I felt when my friend took me to the visitors' center and the Holy Ghost bore witness to me."



Visitors' centers and historic sites can help bring you and others closer to the Savior.

guests after they leave, via email, social media, mormon.org chat, or other appropriate means.

“We see miracles in the lives of people we meet through the visitors' center,” says Sister Alexandria Finau of Rancho Cucamonga, California, who serves in the center at the Mesa Arizona Temple. “After they leave the center we continue to help them online by inviting them to read the Book of Mormon, pray, and attend church. We provide support as local missionaries teach them. I personally have made friendships that will last a lifetime—friends who have been



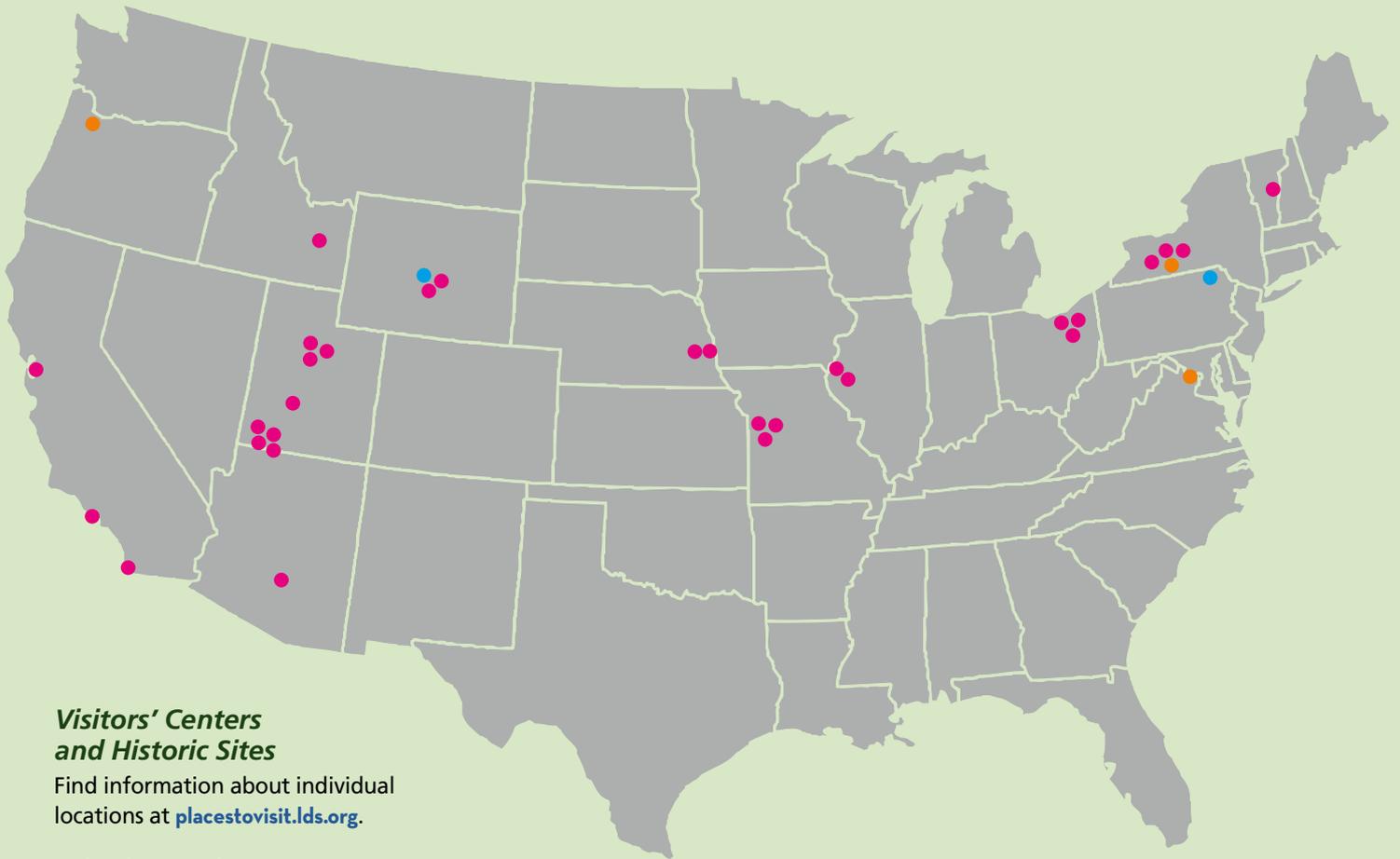
baptized, others who are preparing to enter the temple, and some who have decided to come back to church again.”

“When they are being taken care of by members and missionaries where they live, we continue to stay in touch,” says Sister Danielle Van Der Leek of Bloemfontein, South Africa, who serves at the visitors' center of the Hyde Park Chapel in London, England. “We want them to know we still care.”

Missionaries who serve at visitors' centers and historic sites are, in fact, busily engaged in the same activities that all full-time missionaries enjoy—they teach, testify, and explain the gospel “to the understanding” of those who visit (see 2 Nephi 31:3). What's more, they are blessed to serve at a special place that's been dedicated to the Lord, where the Spirit is constantly present, and where people walk in the front door and ask to know more. That's not only a great environment for full-time missionaries to share the gospel; it's an ideal place for us as members to learn how to strengthen our faith and experience the blessings of sharing it with others. ■

A child (left) feels reverence as he learns about the Savior, while (above) an exhibit about local Church history attracts visitors in Mexico City. Sites and centers offer a welcoming environment where we can renew and strengthen faith and where we can introduce others to our beliefs.





**Visitors' Centers
and Historic Sites**

Find information about individual locations at placestovisit.lds.org.

- *Sites in operation*
- *Sites recently opened or remodeled*
- *Sites under construction or announced*



MAP IMAGES BY HSERUS (TOP) AND NIKITEEV_KONSTANTIN (BOTTOM)/ISTOCKTHINKSTOCK



Fishers OF MEN



By Elder
Scott D. Whiting
Of the Seventy

*All who have accepted the call to lead
in the Church have accepted the Savior's
invitation to become fishers of men.*

While raising our young family in Hawaii, my wife and I were grateful for the wonderful Latter-day Saints who assisted us. These dear members embraced us and treated us as their own family. On several occasions men in the ward would take my young son on ocean fishing adventures. These excursions did not involve boats but rather ancient fishing techniques developed by the early Hawaiians.

Using one such method, a skilled fisherman would meticulously fold and layer a circular net that had weights attached to the perimeter. He would then carefully carry the net to a location along the rocky shore above a clear pool of water. As he would see fish entering the pool, at just the right time and with great skill, he would throw the net, which would unfold to its full capacity and land in a large circular pattern on the water below, quickly sinking to the bottom and enmeshing the gathered fish.

While the skill of any such fisherman is impressive, he will be the first to

tell you that without a good net that is clean, mended, and in full repair, his efforts would be futile. Experienced fishermen know that their success is contingent upon the integrity of their fishing nets and that effective, productive fishing does not begin until the nets are inspected and in good order.

We see an understanding of this principle among the original Apostles, several of whom were fishermen by trade. We are introduced to these fishermen in the early chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, where they are casting, mending, and washing their nets when they first encounter their future Master (see Matthew 4:18, 21; Mark 1:16, 19; Luke 5:2). These men fed their families and the families of others by toiling daily to catch fish. Their fortunes and their families depended on their preparation and skill and on the integrity of their nets.

When Jesus invited them to “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” “they straightway left their nets,” “forsook all, and followed him” (Matthew 4:19, 20; Luke 5:11; see also Mark 1:17–18).

I have thought of this example many times as I have considered that those who stand at the head of the Church have responded with similar faith to the invitation to “follow me.” Like the ancient Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led by prophets and apostles, who have forsaken their nets and their hard-earned professions and have developed new skills in order to serve and follow the Master.

Leaders of Men

What does it mean to become “fishers of men”? In His simple words of invitation to the early Apostles, the Savior introduced what was to become His common and powerful form of teaching—teaching in parables. He knew that those called to follow Him would understand, to a degree, what He meant by the words “fishers of men.”

President Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) taught, “To become ‘fishers of men’ is just another way of saying ‘become leaders of men.’ So in today’s language we would say . . . : ‘If you will keep my commandments, I will make you leaders among men.’”¹

A leader of men is someone who is called to help others become “true followers of . . . Jesus Christ” (Moroni 7:48). *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* says, “To do this, leaders first strive to be the Savior’s faithful disciples, living each day so that they can return to live in God’s presence. Then they can help others develop strong testimonies and draw nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.”²

All who have accepted the call to lead in the Church have accepted the Savior’s invitation to become fishers of men.

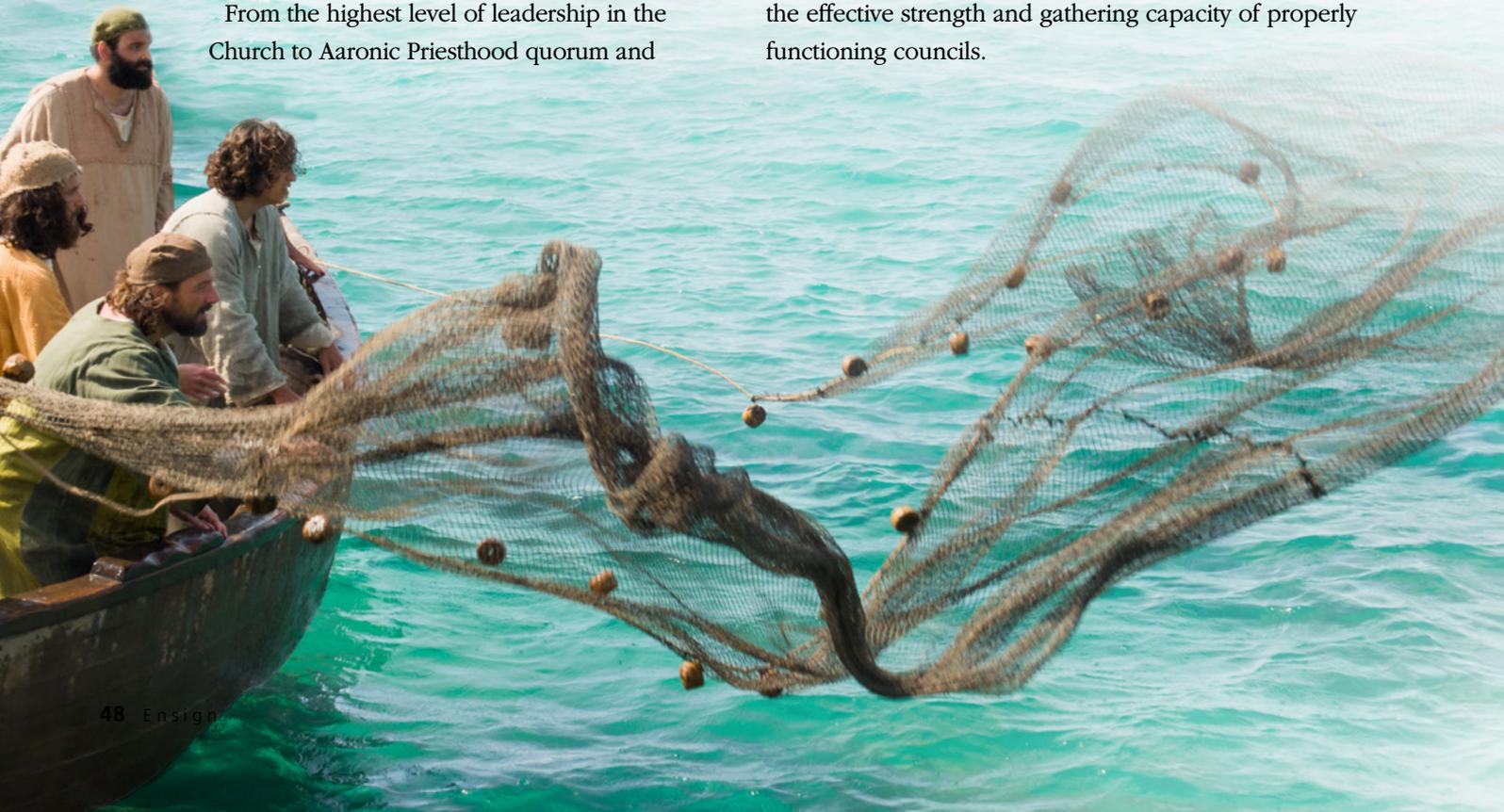
Nets and Councils

From the highest level of leadership in the Church to Aaronic Priesthood quorum and

Young Women class presidencies, leaders are organized into councils. Leaders are instructed to prepare spiritually, participate fully in councils, minister to others, teach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and administer the priesthood and auxiliary organizations of the Church. Additionally, they are to build unity and harmony in the Church, prepare others to be leaders and teachers, delegate responsibility, and ensure accountability.³

Just as the early Apostles applied their knowledge of fishing to become fishers of men, we can apply the principles found in their use of nets to the councils of the Church. Like a net, these councils are organized and prepared to gather Heavenly Father’s children—each council member acting as an important and integral strand of the net. Just as a net is effective only if it is in good repair, so are our councils compromised when council members are not organized, focused, and functioning as they should.

Leaders of councils follow the example of the ancient Apostle fishermen by regularly inspecting and mending these “nets.” Council leaders do so by providing regular training, leading out in council meetings, giving timely and appropriate feedback to council members, and offering love, encouragement, and praise. There is no substitute for the effective strength and gathering capacity of properly functioning councils.



The Ward Council

Perhaps the council with the greatest opportunity to influence individual members of the Church is the ward council. Men and women in this council are truly called to be fishers of men with the charge of leading the work of salvation in the ward, as directed by the bishop. They live and serve in their respective wards, where they can know and associate with those they have been called to lead.

“Members of the ward council strive to help individuals build testimonies, receive saving ordinances, keep covenants, and become consecrated followers of Jesus Christ (see Moroni 6:4–5). All members of the ward council have a general responsibility for the well-being of ward members.”⁴

Members of ward councils play an integral role in hastening the work of salvation. When the ward council is not functioning as it should, the work slows. The gathering capacity of the “net” is compromised, and council efforts yield limited results. But when the ward council is organized and focused on strengthening individuals and families, the results can be astonishing.

I am familiar with a ward that struggled with an ineffective ward council. It was difficult for the bishop to embrace the direction found in *Handbook 2* because he was comfortable in his ways and liked his old patterns. After much counseling and training by a loving stake president, however, the bishop softened his heart, repented, and began in earnest to organize the ward council as instructed. He watched training videos available at LDS.org, he read sections 4 and 5 of *Handbook 2*, and he acted upon what he learned.

Members of the ward council quickly embraced the changes, and a spirit of love and unity settled on them as they focused on strengthening individuals and families. In every meeting, they spoke at length about investigators, new converts, less-active members, and members with needs. Their hearts began to be drawn out to these brothers and sisters, and miracles began to happen.

The bishop reported that almost immediately after these changes were made to the ward council, previously unknown less-active members began to attend church. These members said they suddenly felt moved upon to return to the Church. They said they had received a clear



JOIN THE RANKS

“During the Master’s ministry, He called fishermen at Galilee to leave their nets and follow Him, declaring, ‘I will make you fishers of men.’ May we join the ranks of the fishers of men and women, that we might provide whatever help we can.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Our Responsibility to Rescue,” *Ensign*, Oct. 2013, 4.

and compelling impression that they needed to once again associate with the Saints. They knew they would be loved and that they needed the support members would offer.

The bishop shared with me that he is certain Heavenly Father was just waiting for him to follow the counsel he had received and organize the ward council as instructed before He could put the desire into the hearts and minds of these less-active members to return to activity in the Church. The bishop realized that he needed to create the loving, nurturing environment these members needed before the Spirit would lead them back. His words remind me of the experience of Peter the fisherman:

“And [Jesus] entered into one of the ships, which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

“Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

“And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

“And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes” (Luke 5:3–6).

As we listen to and follow the counsel given us by modern-day prophets, seers, and revelators—true “fishers of men”—and as we inspect and mend our nets while serving, our capacity to hasten the work of salvation will be greatly increased and we will become instruments in Heavenly Father’s hands to gather His children. ■

NOTES

1. Harold B. Lee, in Conference Report, Oct. 1960, 15.
2. *Handbook 2: Administering the Church* (2010), 3.1.
3. See *Handbook 2*, 3.2.1–5; 3.3.2–4.
4. *Handbook 2*, 4.4.





PAINTING BY JUSTIN KUNZ

THE SAVIOR'S TEACHINGS ON Discipleship

In Luke's account of Jesus Christ's final journey to Jerusalem, we see the Savior giving us a clear pattern for how to follow Him.

By Casey W. Olson

Seminaries and Institutes

Just four months before the Savior's death, "when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly [or resolutely] set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51).¹ In the preceding weeks, Jesus Christ had carefully prepared His disciples for the difficulties and transcendent spiritual events that lay ahead.

For example, immediately after Peter testified of Jesus Christ's divinity at Caesarea Philippi, the Savior spoke to His disciples about His approaching death and Resurrection for the first time in plain, unmistakable terms (see Matthew 16:13–21; Mark 8:27–31; Luke 9:18–22).² Jesus also brought Peter, James, and John with Him "up into an high mountain," where He "was transfigured before them" (Matthew 17:1–2). There, the Savior, Moses, and Elijah bestowed priesthood keys upon Peter, James, and John. Moses and Elijah also offered comfort and support to Jesus as they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31).³ Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles referred to this experience on the mount as "the beginning of the end" of Jesus Christ's mortal ministry.⁴

These events show that when Jesus Christ “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” He clearly knew He was commencing the journey that would culminate in His death. The book of Luke, which provides the most detail regarding this journey, records that as the Savior “went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem” (Luke 13:22), a company of disciples—both men and women—traveled with Him (see Luke 11:27).⁵ While walking together, Jesus tutored His followers on the demands of discipleship. As we study the Savior’s teachings in context of this journey, we can gain a greater appreciation of how He reinforced His instructions on discipleship with the power of His own example.

Three Responses to Jesus Christ’s Instruction to “Follow Me”

Shortly before the Savior began His final trek to Jerusalem, He declared: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). Later, as Jesus and His disciples traveled toward Jerusalem, “a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” (Luke 9:57). The Savior responded that “the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Luke 9:58), perhaps indicating that “life was very inconvenient for him,” as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once observed, and that “it will often be so” for those who choose to follow Him.⁶

Next, the Lord “said unto another, Follow me” (Luke 9:59), but the man requested that he be permitted to first go and bury his father. Jesus replied, “Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:60).⁷ The Savior’s words do not mean it is wrong to mourn the loss of a loved one (see D&C 42:45). Rather, they emphasize that devotion to the Lord is a disciple’s highest priority.

A third individual remarked, “Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house” (Luke 9:61). Jesus responded with an analogy of a plowman, whose task requires him to focus on what

is ahead rather than what lay behind (see Luke 9:62). The lesson for this man was simply to follow the example of the Savior, who “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem” (Luke 9:51) and did not look back.

The Road through Samaria

As Jesus and His disciples passed through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem, some of the Samaritans “did not receive him” (Luke 9:53)—likely because they recognized Jesus and His disciples as Jews.⁸ In response, James and John sought permission to call down fire from heaven to consume their offenders (see Luke 9:52–54). In this volatile

*Like the good Samaritan,
Jesus ministered to each wounded
soul He encountered.*

setting, the Savior demonstrated patience and forbearance while admonishing His disciples to do the same (see Luke 9:55–56).

Shortly after this episode, the Savior told the parable of the good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25–37). In addition to satisfying the questions of a disingenuous lawyer, this parable may have reminded the Savior’s disciples that there are no exceptions to the commandment to “love . . . thy neighbour as thyself” (Luke 10:27; see also verses 25–29).

In addition, the Savior’s disciples may have recognized similarities between the actions of the good Samaritan and those of Jesus. The love the good Samaritan demonstrated for a Jew mirrored the charity Jesus had recently displayed toward hostile Samaritans. Also, in the coming weeks, the Savior’s disciples would witness Jesus encountering many wounded souls on the road to Jerusalem (see Luke 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 19:1–10). Like the good Samaritan,



who paused on a dangerous, thief-infested highway and placed the welfare of another ahead of his own, Jesus would minister to each wounded soul He encountered, thinking not of Himself even as He drew closer to His own death.

The Savior Teaches Mary and Martha

During His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus stopped at the home of Martha (see Luke 10:38). While Martha “was cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40), her sister, Mary, “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (verse 39). Hospitality was very important in Jewish society, and it seems Martha was diligently seeking to fulfill cultural expectations regarding her role as hostess.⁹

Although Martha demonstrated marvelous devotion and faith in the Savior in another setting (see John 11:19–29), here she complained, “Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me” (Luke 10:40). To help Church members learn an important lesson from this episode, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once cited a Brigham Young University devotional address by Professor Catherine Corman Parry:

“The Lord did not go into the kitchen and tell Martha to stop cooking and come listen. Apparently he was content to let her serve him however she cared to, until she judged another person’s service. . . . Martha’s *self-importance* . . . occasioned the Lord’s rebuke, not her busyness with the meal.”¹⁰

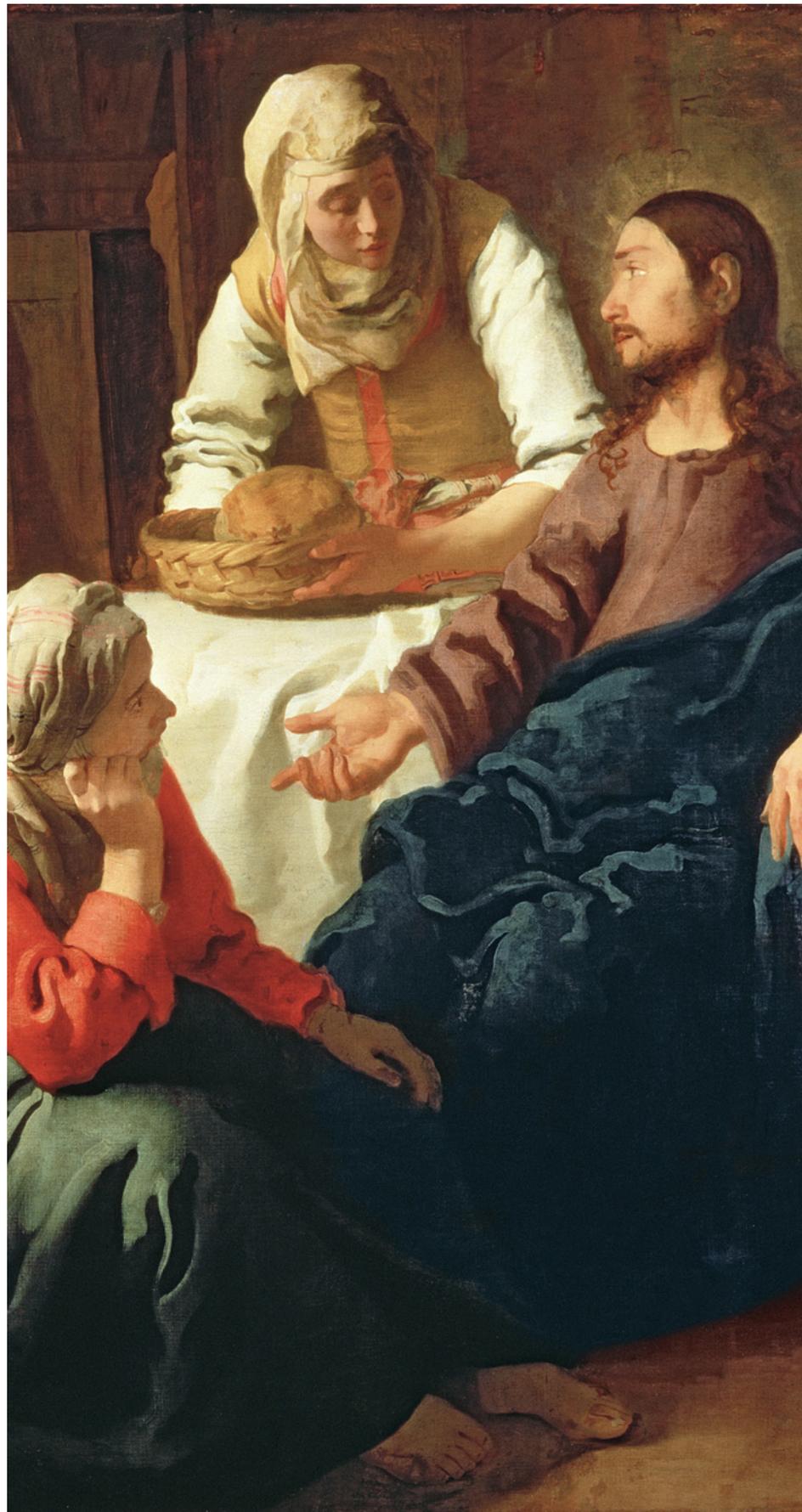
Martha’s primary mistake on this occasion seems to have been focusing on herself—even as she was serving others. The Savior helped

Martha understand that it is not enough to simply serve the Lord and our fellowman. We must learn to lose ourselves in the process of serving and seek the Lord's will to guide our desires and motives as well as our actions (see Luke 9:24; D&C 137:9). Disciples must overcome the tendency to think first of themselves and learn to serve Heavenly Father and His children with an eye "single to [His] glory" (D&C 88:67). Later, after her brother's death, Martha showed her focused faith by setting aside temporal concerns and immediately going out to meet the Savior when she heard He was coming (see John 11:19–20).

The Savior Expounds on the Demands of Discipleship

Later on in the Savior's journey to Jerusalem, a man requested, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Jesus responded by addressing the root of the man's problem: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). He then gave the parable of the rich fool (see Luke 12:16–21).

In the parable, one reason for God's characterization of the rich man as a fool may have been the man's selfishness. In Luke 12:17–19 the rich man uses the words *I* and *my* 11 times, revealing his concern with self.¹¹ Not only was the man consumed by selfishness, but he also failed to recognize the source of his riches. In no way did he acknowledge, as the Savior did, that it was "the ground" that "brought forth plentifully" (Luke 12:16), nor did he thank the Lord for creating the earth in which his crops grew.



Ultimately the man was condemned not for the wise practice of storing temporal provisions but for failing to prepare spiritually for the future. Being “not rich toward God” (Luke 12:21), the man was eventually deprived not only of the treasure he had temporarily accumulated on earth but also of “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not” (Luke 12:33). His choices in life left him impoverished in eternity.

In direct contrast to the rich fool who hoarded material possessions before unexpectedly dying, Jesus purposefully marched toward His death, deliberately giving God all that He had and was—including His life and the fullest measure of His will (see Luke 22:42; Mosiah 15:7).

Like Mary and Martha, we must learn to lose ourselves in the process of serving and seek the Lord’s will.

He declared, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Luke 12:50). Having already been baptized with water, Jesus here was referring to His Atonement. Soon He would descend below all things and His body would be covered in blood and sweat as He suffered for our sins and experienced our pains and afflictions.¹²

Later, when some Pharisees warned Jesus that Herod Antipas would seek to have Him killed, the Savior simply affirmed that He would continue to seize each opportunity to teach, bless, and heal others (see Luke 13:31–33). He would spend the last days of His mortal life—like all His days before—serving others.

While drawing closer to Jerusalem, Jesus directed His disciples to count the cost of discipleship—to put forethought into their decision to follow Him (see Luke 14:25–28). He did not seek to sugarcoat the difficult realities they would

encounter if they continued as His disciples. Rather, He firmly declared: “Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). However, the Savior also promised that as we lose ourselves on the pathway of discipleship, we will gain so much more in return (see Luke 9:24). The blessings He has promised His disciples include “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).

Although we do not have the opportunity to walk with Jesus Christ to Jerusalem, we can show our willingness to replicate that journey in our own lives. Remembering the Savior’s own willingness to sacrifice and serve in accordance with Heavenly Father’s will can give us strength to “go, and do . . . likewise” (Luke 10:37). ■

NOTES

1. See A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (1971), 240.
2. Veiled references to the Savior’s suffering and death from earlier instances in His ministry include Matthew 9:15; 16:4; John 2:19; 3:14.
3. See James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. (1916), 373.
4. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 373.
5. In contrast to Mark and Matthew, who only briefly mention the Savior’s departure from Galilee for the last time in mortality and His trek to Jerusalem (see Matthew 19:1–2; Mark 10:1), Luke focuses great attention on this journey (see Luke 9:51–53; 13:22, 34; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11). John’s Gospel varies significantly in content from the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and does not mention the Savior’s final departure from Galilee to Jerusalem.
6. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Inconvenient Messiah,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1984, 68.
7. Respect for parents was very important in Jewish culture, including the responsibility to provide a proper burial for them. After preparing a body for burial and placing it in a tomb, family members typically returned a year later to place the bones in a stone box called an ossuary, which remained in the tomb as a secondary burial among the remains of other deceased family members. (See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* [2006], 78–79.) If the disciple in this case was speaking of a secondary burial rather than an urgent need to care for the body of his recently deceased father, then his request demonstrated a desire to prioritize a cultural tradition over a singular opportunity to walk to Jerusalem with the Son of God and be tutored by Him.
8. There was considerable animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans at the time of Christ. These two groups typically avoided association with each other. In this case, the Samaritans evidently deprived Jesus and His disciples of customary elements of hospitality, such as provisions and lodging. (See Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, *Making Sense of the New Testament* [2010], 140; Ralph Gower, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times* [1987], 241–42.)
9. See Gower, *New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, 244–45; Fred H. Wight, *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* (1953), 69–77.
10. In Dallin H. Oaks, “‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 12–13; emphasis added.
11. See Jay A. Parry and Donald W. Parry, *Understanding the Parables of Jesus Christ* (2006), 122.
12. See Luke 22:44; Alma 7:11–13; Doctrine and Covenants 19:18; 88:6.

A prompting to be kind to my estranged husband was the last thing I expected to hear.

Name withheld

Many years ago I married in the temple. But 21 years later my husband left me. I was devastated. I could not understand why. I loved my husband with all my heart. It is hard to explain the deep pain I felt as I struggled with losing my hopes and dreams. I attended the temple regularly, prayed, read the scriptures, and fasted for help. Many sleepless nights I would rise and read the *Ensign* or the scriptures. I desperately pleaded with the Lord for help—help with my pain, help for my children, help for my future, help to bring peace back to my life.

The custody and visitation arrangement set up by a court mediator meant that the children would miss church every other week and every general conference to be with their father. I worried for my children's spiritual welfare.

One Sunday I was at home watching general conference by myself. It was the second general conference I had watched without my children. I was feeling especially heartbroken, missing my children and thinking of what they were missing. Each talk was so meaningful, the Spirit so strong. I started pouring out my soul, asking again in sincere prayer for *help* for my children and me.

The Answer

Then the unexpected answer came. A soft voice said, "Be kind." My mind was drawn to my estranged husband. I thought, "What do you mean be kind? *He* is the one being mean to me!" Again the prompting came, "Be kind. It will help him to stop blaming you and accept responsibility."

I was stunned at this answer. I had been asking for help for myself and my children. Now the answer came that I must help the man who had left me. I pondered the answer. I didn't understand, but I determined I would obey.



ILLUSTRATION BY TAYLOR GALLERY

The Unexpected
ANSWER



Following the Spirit

At first it was very hard. When he would call and get angry on the phone, it would take all my control to speak calmly. When he would come to my house to pick up or drop off the children, sometimes he would say hurtful things to me that would usually have started an argument. Instead I would say nothing angry but try to steer the conversation back on track, limiting our discussion to appropriate topics.

For a while it seemed to make things worse. I realized that when he hurt me and brought me to tears, I was allowing him to have control over me. I realized that by being kind I was beginning to take back control over my thoughts and feelings. Eventually, he started to calm down, and things started turning around. As I remained calm and kind, he started responding positively.

One of the first tests of my new method of kindness came on our youngest son's birthday. According to the visitation schedule, it was my turn to have him for his birthday. His father came over to give him a birthday present, and my son privately asked me if his dad could stay for dinner. I struggled inwardly with even the thought of it. But I quickly asked if he would like to stay for the birthday dinner. He said yes. Dinner was somewhat awkward, but I remained kind and polite. After he left, my son hugged me and said, "Thank you for letting him stay." His appreciation filled my soul. It

had been hard for me to share this day with his father, but I knew it was what I needed to do. I needed to think more of my children and less of myself.

This was the first of these family birthdays together. It was much easier to invite the children's dad and celebrate birthdays together than to have the children feel sad that they weren't with one parent or the other.

Recognizing Our Blessings

The unexpected answer brought the blessings I had been praying for. We were able to have calm, productive discussions that helped resolve the remaining divorce issues. My efforts to be kind softened his heart, and he began allowing the children to come home early from visitation to attend church each week and watch general conference. I learned that being kind was a much better example for my children. I needed to include praying for their father in our prayers. I had to forgive and let go of the past. This helped me heal my own sadness, and it increased my spiritual strength. My building a polite relationship with their father also allowed my children to continue a loving relationship with him, without being torn apart by choosing between their parents.

The answer was so unexpected, so opposite of what I had been asking for. I realized that Heavenly Father did indeed hear and answer my prayers. I have learned that I can go forward in faith, continuing to listen to and act upon the guidance of the Spirit, even when it's the unexpected answer. ■

WORDS OF THE Prophets *Just for You*

By LaRene Porter Gaunt

Church Magazines

Ashish Pokhrei, a young single Latter-day Saint in India, had some serious questions, but he trusted he could find answers to them by listening to the prophets during October 2012 general conference.

“Just as young Joseph Smith prayed to get answers to his questions,” Ashish says, “I went upstairs to the terrace in the early morning to pray before general conference. I wrote down five questions and prayed that during conference I would hear the answers to my questions. I felt I would receive my answers like Joseph Smith had.”¹

“One of my questions was, how can I be happy when it seems that so many things I plan for go wrong? The answer came when President Dieter F. Uchtdorf said: ‘We are commanded “to give thanks in all things” [Mosiah 26:39]. So isn’t it better to see with our eyes and hearts even the small things we can be thankful for, rather than magnifying the negative in our current condition?’²

“My heart started beating faster and tears came to my eyes. I did not hear a voice from heaven, but the answer came so clearly that I knew exactly what God wanted me to do. Did I have reasons to

rejoice? Yes! And I needed to focus on my reasons to rejoice rather than ‘magnifying the negative.’

“One by one my questions were answered during conference. I am grateful I am a part of this true and living Church. I know all the things shared by God’s prophets are what we need at that point in time.”

We are led by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, whom we sustain as prophets. We can have experiences similar to Ashish Pokhrei’s when we believe in and follow these living prophets as we seek answers—often during general conference. Of this two-way relationship between conference speakers and conference listeners, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “If we teach by the Spirit and you listen by the Spirit, some one of us will touch on your circumstance, sending a personal prophetic epistle just to you.”³

Ashish found that by writing down specific questions and taking them to God in prayer as the Prophet Joseph Smith did, all five of his questions were answered during general conference. What will you find?

A group of men in dark suits and ties are walking in a line. The man in the foreground is smiling broadly, looking slightly to his right. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie with a small white pattern. The background shows other men in suits, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The setting appears to be an indoor event, possibly a church or a formal gathering, with wooden paneling visible on the right side.

*What will you
find when
you listen
carefully to
the words
of the living
prophets? Five
Latter-day
Saints share
what they
found.*

Here are four additional experiences where Latter-day Saints were blessed when they sustained the prophets by following their counsel.

I Found Tolerance, Love, and Peace

Ashlee Cornell is a night nurse at a pediatric hospital in Oklahoma, USA. “It can be a rough place at times,” she says. “Activity is constant and stress is high. So on my breaks, I go to a quiet room and pray. Then I read the general conference issue of the *Ensign*. The inspired words of our prophets and leaders help me gain the spiritual focus I need to do my job, even at 3:00 a.m. Their words increase my tolerance and love toward God’s children and help me to bring peace to others, whether they’re staff members, patients, or patients’ families.

“When I get home I tell my husband and children about spiritual promptings I had and how the Holy Ghost helped me. I have learned that when I apply what I learn in conference messages, it invites the Spirit into everything I do.”

Ashlee found comfort in the words of the prophets and spiritual focus in her work at the hospital. What will you find?

I Found the Right Major for Me

As a freshman in college, Kylie Earl of Washington, USA, began praying about which major to choose. One day she saw a class of elementary students. “Something about seeing them completely filled me with joy,” she says. “Maybe elementary education was the right major for me. Soon it was time for general conference. I prayed that I would be inspired to know if I had chosen the right major. During his talk at the end of the Sunday morning session, President Thomas S. Monson began listing all of the things we had to be grateful for. When he mentioned ‘teachers who teach,’⁴ my heart was filled with the Spirit. I knew this was the answer I had been waiting for.”

Kylie found confirmation that she should become a schoolteacher. What will you find?

I Found Reasons to Repent and to Rejoice

Donna K. Maxwell, a Latter-day Saint who loves to study the scriptures, says, “Years ago, a Relief Society instructor told us she studied the conference issues of the *Ensign* the same way she studied her scriptures. I decided to try it.

“I was in the habit of studying my scriptures for half an hour first thing every morning, using a study notebook to record inspiration and insights. The next time a conference issue arrived, I began studying it for 30 minutes each day. I made my way through all the talks, marking them and writing things that applied to my life in my notebook. I was delighted to learn that it *was* like latter-day scripture. I found many things in the printed version that I had not remembered from watching conference.

“Since that time I have always studied the conference talks as well as my scriptures. I often notice things that apply directly to my life. Just as in the standard works, I find reasons to repent or try harder and reasons to rejoice, and there is much to ponder. It’s refreshing when the conference issues arrive, a marvelous opportunity to study the words of the prophets and other leaders.”

Donna found increased understanding of the gospel by studying the words of the prophets. What will you find?

I Found a New Priority

Sierra McGugin, a young single adult, was baptized because she had a testimony of the Book of Mormon and the support of many loving members of the Church.

“I recognized that this was God’s true Church,” she says, “so I naturally accepted President Thomas S. Monson as a living prophet. I enjoyed attending general conference and reading the talks in the *Ensign*, but I never thought much about how I could follow the prophetic counsel in those talks. I admired President Monson for his life of service and devotion but sometimes viewed him more as a role model than as the Lord’s prophet.

“When I started college I found my testimony being tested in new and increasingly difficult ways. Early in



my first semester, I wandered down the street to the institute building associated with my campus. I had considered taking a class, but it was at the bottom of my to-do list. I reasoned that I would go only if I could find time in my busy schedule.

“As I approached the entrance to the institute building, I noticed a poster attached to the window. It was a picture of President Monson, the man I had raised my hand to sustain as a prophet of God. Underneath the picture was a quote: ‘Make institute a priority. . . . I promise you that as you participate in institute and study the scriptures diligently, your power to avoid temptation and to receive direction of the Holy Ghost in all you do will be increased.’⁵ After that, I chose to make institute a priority. Now every time I go, I know I am following the prophet. That decision continually blesses my life.”

Sierra found a stronger testimony that President Monson was a prophet. She found increased knowledge of the gospel and friends with high standards. What will you find?

Following Our Prophets

Ashish, Ashlee, Kylie, Donna, and Sierra have borne testimony that they found inspired answers unique to their situations. You too can find answers, strength, and glimpses of eternity in the words of our living prophets. And if you listen by the Spirit to our prophets who are teaching with the Spirit, you will receive a “personal prophetic epistle” sent just to you. ■

NOTES

1. See Joseph Smith—History 1:13.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 24.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “An Ensign to the Nations,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 113.
4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Divine Gift of Gratitude,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 88.
5. Thomas S. Monson, poster available at institute.lds.org/about/quotes.



PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP

“We . . . sustain Thomas S. Monson as President of the Church, . . . the counselors in the First Presidency, and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. Think of that! We sustain 15 men as prophets of God! They hold all the priesthood keys that have ever been conferred upon man in this dispensation. . . .

“The Church today has been organized by the Lord Himself. He has put in place a remarkable system of governance that provides redundancy and backup. That system provides for prophetic leadership even when the inevitable illnesses and incapacities may come with advancing age. Counterbalances and safeguards abound so that no one can ever lead the Church astray. Senior leaders are constantly being tutored such that one day they are ready to sit in the highest councils. They learn how to hear the voice of the Lord through the whisperings of the Spirit.”

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Sustaining the Prophets,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 75.



SEEKING
Rescue

By Connie Goulding

On August 5, 2010, 33 Chilean miners were trapped by a massive cave-in after the rock inside the mine collapsed. They were restricted to a small safe area and to the mine shafts below the collapse, 2,300 feet (700 m) deep inside the earth.

The situation looked bleak. They were separated from home and family by almost a half a mile of unmovable rock overhead, and they had only a small supply of food and water. Although they had tools and knowledge, because of the instability of the mine they could not save themselves. Their only chance was to be found and rescued.

In spite of this, they chose to have hope. They organized themselves, rationed their food and water, and waited. They had faith that those on the surface were doing what they could to rescue them. Even so, it must have been hard to hold on to that hope as they waited in the dark. Days passed, and then weeks. Their carefully rationed food ran out.

I suffered a tremendous collapse in my own life. Before my eyes, my beautiful, funny, full-of-life eight-year-old son was killed in an automobile-pedestrian accident. I held his body as his blood spilled out on the roadway and his spirit slipped away and returned to his heavenly home. I pleaded with my Heavenly Father to let him stay, but that wasn't in my son's life plan.

I was lost in the dark, overwhelmed with the burden of my grief. I was weary, unable to rest, as the problem of mortality clouded my eyes. I came to know that a broken heart is a true physical feeling. Where once I had a heart, there was now only a dark hole that was raw and painful.

I believed that I should just be strong enough to get over it. Many people had suffered more. But like the miners,

Like the 33 men trapped by a mine collapse in Chile, we may feel trapped by our trials and weaknesses; however, through the plan of salvation we can find hope of a rescue.

trapped by the unmovable rock that held them captive, I could not lift the burden of my grief.

In many ways we can all feel trapped. Some may feel trapped by personal trials, weaknesses, or difficult circumstances in life. Nevertheless, there is comfort in knowing that mortal life is a time when we grow stronger as we face our sorrow and grief. We find hope in Jesus Christ.

A Ray of Hope

On the 17th day of their trial, hope was renewed for the miners when a small shaft was created by a drill bit that broke through the rock that held them captive.

The trapped men, wanting the rescuers on the surface to know they had been found alive, pounded on the drill bit and fastened a note written in red marker to the end of it. It read, "*Estamos bien en el refugio, los 33*" ("We are well in the shelter, the 33"). Hope was restored. They had been found.

Through a small hole, the circumference of a grapefruit, communication was established with the world on the surface. Food, water, medicine, and notes from loved ones were sent down the shaft to the miners.

It must have been with mixed feelings that the miners realized their situation. Although they had overwhelming joy and relief that they had been found, their situation was

still precarious. Even though those on the surface knew where they were, it would take time to put a rescue plan into place, and they could only hope it would even work.

The rescuers reluctantly informed the miners that it would be months before they could be brought to the surface. They hoped to have the miners back with their families by Christmas, which meant the miners faced an entombment of an additional four months. However, now they waited with hope.

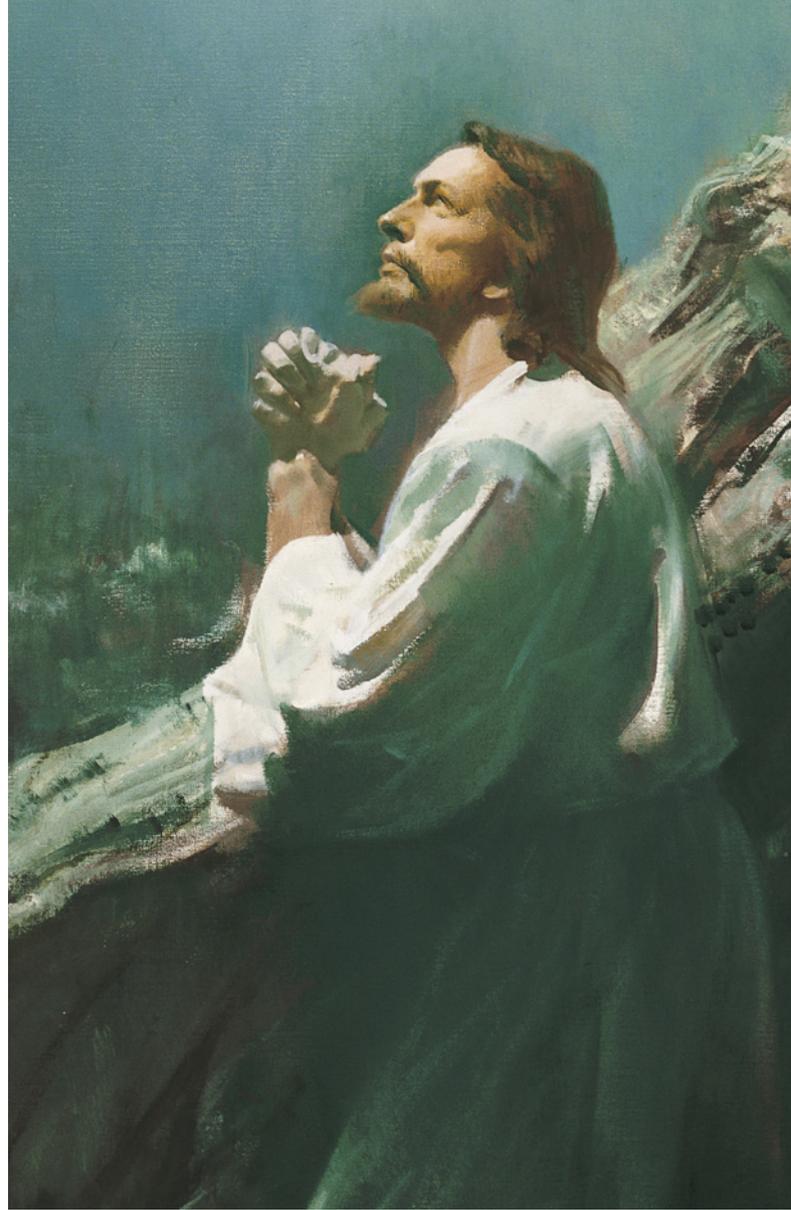
We too have a ray of hope. Before this world was created, a plan was put into place to rescue us. Heavenly Father provided us a Savior, who would save us from our mortality, from our sins, from our weaknesses, and from all that we would suffer in this life. He is the giver of hope and of life. He paved the way for us to return to our Heavenly Father and to be reunited with the loved ones who have gone on before us. He stands beside us to take the weight of the burdens that we carry, to dry our tears, and to bring us peace. He came to bring us home, if we follow the plan He has set.

The Rescue

Although different attempts were made to rescue the miners, only one drill followed a straight path, through one of the small pilot holes that had been drilled previously to locate the miners.

The miners were not passive in their rescue. As the drill pounded its way to their rescue, rock fell down the smaller shaft and heaped up in the cavern where the miners were trapped. They moved the rock as it came down, clearing the way for the larger drill.

The rescuers built a capsule to be lowered down the narrow shaft using cables. The rescue capsule was barely



We must each choose to surrender our will to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.

big enough for a man to fit inside. The capsule was only four inches (10 cm) narrower than the shaft that was driven through 2,300 feet (700 m) of solid rock.

When the time came for the miners to be rescued, each man was faced with a choice. One man at a time stepped into the capsule; each would ascend alone. As each man chose to trust in the plan, he had to hope that

the capsule would be drawn up the narrow shaft in a true and straight ascent and not become off balance and get stuck. The plan had to work, or all hope was lost. Each miner stepped into the capsule and gave his will over to the plan and the rescuers.

One by one the miners made the solitary journey up from the darkness and into the light. They were greeted by their loved ones as the whole world watched and cheered.

The rescue plan succeeded; not one man was lost. They were redeemed on October 13, 2010—69 days after the mine collapse and 52 days after they had been found alive.

Trust the Atonement of Jesus Christ

Just as with the miners, our rescue is an individual rescue. Though salvation is available to everyone, our relationship with the Savior is an intimate and personal one. We must each choose to surrender our will to trust in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Because of the eternal sanctity of man's agency upon which this mortal life was founded, the Savior cannot take from us our will. We are free to choose. The Savior stands beside us waiting to heal our wounds and to lift us into eternal salvation, but He can only do that with our invitation. We must choose Him. For us, there is only one plan of rescue; it is in and through His atoning sacrifice. He descended below all things to rescue us.

My rescue came when I was on my knees in the depths of grief over my son's death. Like the miners as they entered the capsule, I was at a pivotal point: should I try to overcome my challenges with my own strength and knowledge, or should I reach out to my Heavenly Father and ask for help?

Oppressed by the weight of my grief, I decided to turn to God. As I appealed to my Father in Heaven, I told Him how weary I was and asked Him to please lift the burden of my grief. Before I stood again, the weight of my sorrows was lifted from my shoulders. I still had to work through the pain and loss, but the unbearable load was gone.

It was there that I came to know that the Savior stands by our side, waiting to lift us, waiting only for us to ask Him, waiting for us to lay our burdens upon His shoulders, waiting for us to put our hand in His so that He can rescue us.

We—like the miners, who had to pull the capsule door closed behind them and trust their rescuers—must surrender our will to the Savior and trust in His rescue plan for us.

It is my hope that when I make that solitary journey from this life into the next, there will be joy as I am reunited with those who have made the journey before me! In the meantime I know that my Savior lives and loves me and stands beside me. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE SAVIOR'S ATONEMENT CAN LIFT YOU

"We acknowledge that your path will at times be difficult. But I give you this promise in the name of the Lord: rise up and follow in the footsteps of our Redeemer and Savior, and one day you will look back and be filled with eternal gratitude that you chose to trust the Atonement and its power to lift you up and give you strength."

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "You Can Do It Now!" *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 57.



By Elder Claudio
R. M. Costa
Of the Seventy

Faith

TO LEAVE THE HARBOR

If you have faith in God, you will have the lighthouse of the gospel to help you and to bless your life.

Years ago, while visiting an institute building, I saw a beautiful painting on the wall. It was of a 16th-century ship with the sails tied to the mast, anchored safely in the harbor. At the bottom of the painting was this inscription: “A ship is safe in harbor, but that’s not what ships are for.”

Looking at that beautiful painting in the institute building, I was reminded that ships are meant to navigate the oceans and to experience adventure. I was also reminded that it is the same with us.

While pondering the meaning of that painting, I thought about the early members of the Church who sacrificed so much to do what the Lord had asked them to do.

Such a Spectacle

Joseph Beecroft, who traveled by train with a group of 700 Saints from Boston to Iowa City, was among those early pioneers. They spent the first part of their journey in cattle cars, sitting on their luggage.

“Joseph Beecroft reflected on how the gospel bonded people from different economic classes. For part of the way he rode next to a wealthy convert named Thomas Tennant. Joseph wrote about him with admiration and awe:





“We had among others Squire Tennant for a carriage passenger. . . . He had his wife, her mother, and his child. What has Mormonism done? Such a spectacle was scarcely ever witnessed as to see one who has been so rich [and] so high in life come [to] be huddled together with the poorest of the poor. [To] see how patiently he endures all things is truly wonderful.”

Before he left England, Thomas paid \$25,000 for a home Brigham Young was selling to raise money for the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. This payment “provided the greatest single contribution to financing the 1856 emigration.” Thomas, however, never saw the home. He died in October 1856 in Nebraska.¹

Another example is George Careless, who was known as a musical pioneer. He was 11 years old when he joined the Church in England in 1850. George, who had a clear soprano voice, gave up a position in a cathedral choir, which included a salary and musical training, when he accepted the gospel.

“In 1859 George began formal studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He passed the four-year course of studies in only three years and in 1862 began playing [violin] professionally. During the next two years

George played under many of the famous conductors then working in London. He also conducted the Goswell Branch choir and presented concerts for Church members and their friends as part of the London Conference meetings of October 1863 and January 1864.

“One Sunday evening early in 1864, Elder William Staines approached him. ‘Brother George,’ he said, ‘I had a dream about you last night, and was shown that you were advancing so rapidly in your profession that your fame and fortune would be made if you remained in London, and that you would not be able to sacrifice it if you did not immigrate to Zion this year.’”

Elder Staines counseled George to sail for Utah as soon as possible. He even offered to loan George money for the voyage. After trying for half an hour to persuade George to leave London, Elder Staines said, “You are wanted in Zion and I want you to go. What do you say?”

“I will go,” he said.

George Careless went on to serve as the “Chief Musician of the Church” and as director of the Tabernacle Choir. He is the author of many Latter-day Saint hymns. He sacrificed much, and he received great honors in his lifetime. Most

important, he remained a willing servant of the Lord.²

One more story comes from the life of Ida Jensen Romney, wife of President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), who served in the First Presidency. Her maternal grandparents joined the Church in Denmark.

“[My grandfather] left a wet farmland, green with fertility, to come to Zion. The missionary told him how wonderful it was to live in Zion and that he would be given 40 acres of farmland when he came. He was sent down to [central Utah] to colonize a land that was not nearly as verdant as the land he had left behind. He wanted to get on the first wagon

Being anchored with no progress in the harbor, my wife and I could not have experienced the color and excitement that have come into our lives.

that would take him back to the old country. Grandmother insisted that they stay.”³

Leaving the Safe Harbor

As I thought about these pioneers and the painting of the ship in the harbor, my thoughts took me back many years ago when I heard the story of Jonathan Napela, who joined the Church in 1852 after being taught the gospel by young missionary Elder George Q. Cannon. They became good friends, much like Alma and Amulek.

Jonathan (also spelled Jonathon and Jonatana) H. Napela was a judge and a

brave pioneer for the Church in the islands of Hawaii. He helped Elder Cannon translate the Book of Mormon into the Hawaiian language. He organized a school to instruct missionaries from Utah. He also served as a missionary. He was a good man, and he was married to a beautiful woman.

In 1873 tragedy struck when Jonathan’s beloved wife, Kitty, contracted leprosy. It was the custom of that time for persons with this terrible disease to be sent to live in confinement on another island. We can only imagine the intense suffering and degrading circumstances they endured.

Jonathan chose to leave his safe harbor and move with his sweet wife to the leper colony. He loved her so much and could not leave her alone in that dreaded place. Jonathan also contracted leprosy, but even in his own suffering he continued to serve the temporal and spiritual needs of his people in the leper colony. He died in 1879, a little over two weeks

before his sweet and eternal wife.⁴

I thought about my own wife at the time we were married. She was safe and comfortable in the harbor of her family. As a single woman, she lived with her parents and had a high position in her profession. She was making good money. She left the security of her harbor and married me. She came to live with me in very humble conditions. We had a small studio apartment.

I thought about the great adventures of our mortal lives when we decided to have a family. Each time one of our four children came into the world, it was like leaving the



CHART YOUR COURSE, SET YOUR SAIL, AND PROCEED

“The lighthouse of the Lord beckons to all as we sail the seas of life. Our purpose is to steer an undeviating course toward our desired goal—even the celestial kingdom of God. A man without a purpose is like a ship without a rudder, never likely to reach home port. To us comes the signal: chart your course, set your sail, position your rudder, and proceed.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Guided Safely Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 68.

harbor and navigating the oceans in a new and marvelous adventure. Bringing children into the world brought more responsibility to us, and it also brought great joy.

I testify that every time we left the security of our harbors, it brought more happiness to our lives. It has been much better than being anchored with no progress in the harbor, where we could not experience the color and excitement that have come into our lives.

Even when turbulence caused by the storms of life comes our way in this mortal existence, we can be led by the lighthouse of the gospel and by our testimonies of the Savior Jesus Christ.

The Savior's Example

I am reminded of our Savior and Redeemer, who left the comfort of being at the right hand of His Father to give His life as an atoning sacrifice for all mankind. All that He did in this life He did because He loves us, and He set the example for us.

He had committed no sins but went to John the Baptist to be baptized “to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15).

He stood against the temptations of Satan and admonished, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

Our Savior knew at all times what it was like to leave the safe harbor: “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20).

He taught us to have perfect faith: “Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . .

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:31, 33).

When Jesus was in Gethsemane, he “began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy” (Mark 14:33). He was feeling the weight of our sins and the injustices of mortality.



He prayed, “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt” (Mark 14:36).

It would have been easier for Him not to experience the agony of Gethsemane, but Jesus chose to do the will of His Father. He chose to carry out His assignment because of His love for His Father and for us. Just as we might prefer not to suffer, Jesus prayed, “Take away this cup from me.” But again, He set the example for us in our suffering: “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly” (Luke 22:44).

In every way, Christ set the example for how to live, how to serve, and how to find the answers we need to meet the daily challenges of life.

Don't Be Afraid

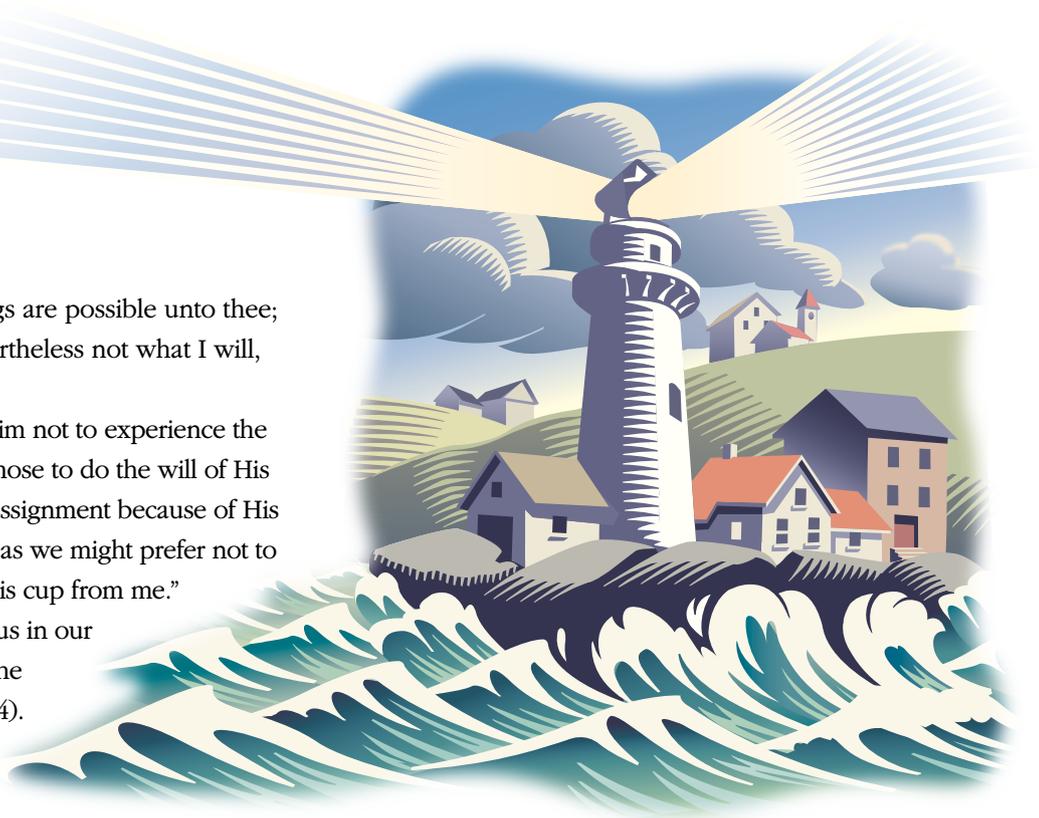
I know that when you make decisions about the future, the Lord will show you in which oceans you need to navigate. Don't be afraid to leave for the open sea. Don't be

Even when turbulence caused by the storms of life comes our way, we can be led by the lighthouse of the gospel and by our testimonies of the Savior Jesus Christ.

afraid to confront the waves of your future, the storms of professional challenges. Prepare to the best of your ability for the challenges of having a spouse and family.

Abraham took Isaac on that long walk to the altar, believing it would be his last moments with his beloved son. The Lord had commanded Abraham, “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, . . . and offer him . . . for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:2). I am sure this was not a safe harbor for Abraham. But he obeyed God's commandments.

President Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975), a former member of the First Presidency, said that God commanded



Abraham to sacrifice Isaac because “Abraham needed to learn something about Abraham.”⁵

Of course, this is the lesson for all of us: to grow in faith and obedience so that we will have the confidence to do what the Lord asks us to do. We have examples from the scriptures and from Church history of people who had faith to leave their safe harbors and accomplish great things. We have the capacity to follow their example.

I promise that if you have faith in God, you will have the lighthouse of the gospel to help you and to bless your life. God will be with you. You are part of the most marvelous generation that has lived on the earth, and you are a great hope for the world. Your example and testimony will touch the lives of all you meet in the great adventure of your mortal life. ■

From a devotional address, “Ships Are Safe in the Harbor,” delivered at Brigham Young University on November 2, 2010. For the full address, visit speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. See Andrew D. Olsen, *The Price We Paid: The Extraordinary Story of the Willie and Martin Handcart Pioneers* (2006), 227–28.
2. See David Maxwell, “The Morning Breaks’: George Careless, Musical Pioneer,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1984, 47–50.
3. Ida Jensen Romney, in Maurine Jensen Ward, “General Authorities’ Wives: Sister Ida Jensen Romney,” *New Era*, June 1975, 18.
4. See Joseph H. Spurrier, “Jonathon Napela: Quiet Hero of Hawaii,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1978, 49–51.
5. Hugh B. Brown, in Truman G. Madsen, *The Highest in Us* (1978), 49.

Helping Children

APPRECIATE THEIR BODIES

*What can we do to help
children and youth see their
bodies as gifts from God?*

By Marissa Widdison
Church Magazines

Picture a child in your life—a son, a niece, a friend’s child, or a youth in your ward. Imagine living a day in that child’s shoes. What messages are being taught about his or her body? Where are these messages coming from? How might these messages make the child feel?

Now imagine that same child with the Savior, perhaps in a setting similar to those described in the Bible or the Book of Mormon, or perhaps while sitting together in a family home evening. “He took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them” (3 Nephi 17:21). If the Savior were speaking to children about their bodies, what messages might He share? How would those messages make them feel?

We have the chance to be Christlike ministers to children, who receive mixed messages from the world about the worth of their bodies. As we talk openly with them in a safe and loving way, we can uplift, strengthen, and protect them. Here are some thoughts from professionals and Church



leaders that may prompt your own ideas for talking about our bodies and body-image issues with the children you love.

Seek Heavenly Help

Jesus Christ, the Master Teacher, can help us understand what and how we should teach our children.

“Remember, you are not alone.

The Savior has promised that He will not leave you comfortless,” taught

Bishop Gary E. Stevenson, Presiding Bishop of the Church. He went on to say: “You have the Savior of the world on your side. If you seek His help and follow His directions, how can you fail?”¹

Teach Doctrine

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents.”² The poster on pages 74–75 (also found in the *Friend*, July 2014, 24–25) has scriptures and simple statements you could use to start a conversation about these and other important truths.



Identify Harmful Messages

Listen to what your children say about what is beautiful or desirable. Lindsay Kite, who has a PhD in the study of media and body image and co-directs the Beauty Redefined Foundation, describes how digitally altered media messages often present a narrow definition of what is ideal—tall, young, thin, tan women and extremely muscular men, for example. Pursuing these ideals becomes a lifelong struggle for some people. Sister Kite suggests trying a family media fast. Set a specific amount of time—anywhere from three days to a month—and avoid as much media as you can.

“Without this stream of idealized images and messages, you become more sensitive to those that are unrealistic

or that trigger anxiety,” Sister Kite says. “Then use that awareness to unsubscribe, un-like, un-follow, turn off, and turn away.”

Pornography is another way that harmful messages about the human body are delivered. Resources for talking about pornography and protecting your family from its influence can be found at overcomingpornography.org.³

Focus on the Positive

Parents can stop talking negatively about their own bodies and instead express gratitude for all the things bodies can do, says Justin McPheters, who has a PhD

in marriage and family therapy and works with LDS Family Services. Family outings, trips, and even injuries can give us opportunities to talk with our kids about how wonderful our bodies are.⁴

“We should regularly be highlighting all that our bodies are able to do,” Brother McPheters says. “Even a body with many physical limitations is able to do some wonderful things like smile, laugh, and cry.”

Consider Talking about Sexuality

Because the topics of sexuality and body image are related to and affect each other, a discussion about bodies could include a discussion about sexuality. The Church has produced a guidebook to help parents hold age-appropriate conversations with their children about intimacy and sexual development (available online at [lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide](https://www.lds.org/manual/a-parents-guide)).⁵

Talk about Bodies as Part of a Whole

The *Friend* magazine recently shared the true story of a girl who didn't like her freckles. When she looked in the mirror, that's all she seemed to see. Her mom encouraged her to pick up a pebble and hold it close to her eye.

“What do you see?” she asked. The daughter responded that all she could see was the rock. The mom told her to put the pebble down and take another look. Now what did she see?

“Lots of things,” the daughter said, pointing out the ground, flowers, and grass. The mom then taught the daughter that she is much more than just her freckles—she's smart and patient and a daughter of God.

“Think of yourself as a whole garden, not just one pebble. Then you'll be able to see yourself the way the Savior sees you.”⁶

As we teach our children these important truths with the help of the Spirit, our own testimony of the plan of salvation can be strengthened, and—as one Primary song so beautifully expresses it—we can “follow God's plan for [us], holding fast to his word and his love.”⁷ ■

NOTES

1. Gary E. Stevenson, “Your Four Minutes,” *Ensign*, May 2014, 85, 86.
2. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.
3. Visit the “Resources” section of [overcomingpornography.org](https://www.overcomingpornography.org) for suggested family home evening lesson plans.
4. See Susan W. Tanner, “The Sanctity of the Body,” and Jeffrey R. Holland, “To Young Women,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2005, 13–15, 28–30.
5. For brief videos on talking to children about sexuality, visit [lds.org/go/intimacyE615](https://www.lds.org/go/intimacyE615).
6. See Kelly J. Hunsaker, “Freckles and Pebbles,” *Friend*, Oct. 2014, 26–27.
7. “I Will Follow God's Plan,” *Children's Songbook*, 165.



WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT HAVING A BODY?

Our bodies are so important and holy that the Lord calls them temples (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17). And having a body is fun too! Bodies can run, sing, climb, laugh, draw, swim, dance, and do other fun activities. Also, we can use our bodies to learn, help people, create families, and make the world a better place.



WHY DO WE HAVE BODIES?

Before we were born, we were spirits without physical bodies. There were a lot of things we couldn't do until we had a body. God sent us to earth to get bodies. We need both a spirit and a body to become like Heavenly Father. (See D&C 88:15.)

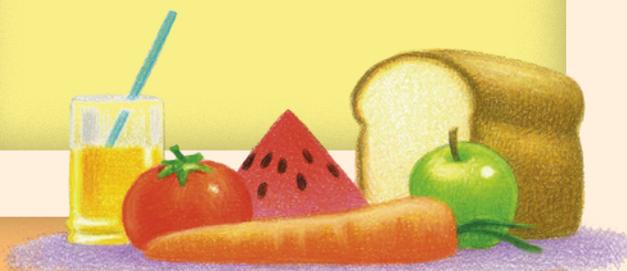
My Body

WHAT IF THERE ARE THINGS I DON'T LIKE ABOUT MY BODY?

Sometimes our bodies don't look, move, or work the way we want them to. But no matter what our bodies are like, we can choose to be grateful for them and use them to do good things here on earth. Someday, each one of us will be resurrected and have a body that is perfect (see Alma 40:23). God loves us no matter what our bodies are like, and we can love ourselves too.

WHY DOESN'T EVERYONE LOOK ALIKE?

Bodies come in many shapes, colors, and sizes, and this is part of Heavenly Father's plan. Even though each body is different, all of us are created in the image of God (see Genesis 1:26). That means that our bodies are patterned after His perfect body. Every single body is beautiful because each one is a gift from our loving Heavenly Father.



HOW SHOULD I TREAT MY BODY?

We should treat our bodies the way we would care for any priceless treasure—with love and respect. Through the prophets and the Word of Wisdom, Heavenly Father has told us what is bad for our bodies and what is good. There are lots of things we can do to care for our bodies:

- Eat healthy foods and exercise.
- Dress modestly and keep our bodies clean.
- Respect other people's bodies.
- Don't mark our bodies with tattoos or piercings.
- Don't use drugs, alcohol, tobacco, coffee, or tea.
- Play games that are safe and fun and stay away from activities that are dangerous.

When we take care of our bodies, we are better able to feel the Holy Ghost.

*As we care for our bodies the way God has commanded, we will be blessed!
(See Mosiah 2:41; D&C 89:18–21.)*

Is a TEMPLE



MY EXPLODING PEACHES

I thought I was the perfect parent . . . until I had children.

For me, parenthood has been a refiner's fire. My weaknesses seem to come out as I become stressed, sleep deprived, worried, or upset. Of course, parenthood's blessings make up for those moments, but I have found that I have a temper. It's humiliating to admit, but I used to yell or throw things to get my children's attention.

I would resolve time and again not to lose my temper, but I would still lose it in times of stress. Heavenly Father knew I needed something dramatic to help me.

One evening after a long day of bottling peaches, I put on the last batch and decided to take a short nap. I was sure I would wake up in time to take the bottles from the steamer.

I didn't.

My husband, Quinn, and I were startled awake by the sound of exploding jars. I ran to the kitchen and saw shattered glass and gluey peaches over every surface of the room. Apparently, the steamer water had evaporated, heat and pressure had built up, the top of the steamer had blown off, and six of seven peach jars had exploded.

"I think I'll clean this up in the morning," I said.

Bad idea.

By morning the hot peach muck had solidified into hardened, glass-filled mounds all over the kitchen and

dining room. The plastered peach-glass tidbits had even found their way behind countertop appliances and into every nook and cranny, including behind the fridge.

Cleanup took several hours. I had to soak the glass-filled mounds with wet paper towels and then try to wipe them up without cutting myself.

As I cleaned, a familiar voice

ran into the kitchen and saw shattered glass and gluey peaches over every surface of the room.

whispered to me: "Mary, when your temper explodes, as did these jars, you cannot easily fix things. You cannot see where and how your anger hurts your children and others. Like this mess, that hurt hardens quickly and is painful."

Suddenly, the cleanup took on new meaning. The lesson was a powerful one. Like my anger, there was no quick cleanup. Weeks later I was still





DID WE DO THE RIGHT THING?

finding little clumps of peach rock embedded with glass.

I pray that someday my patience will become as great a strength as it was a weakness. Meanwhile, I am grateful that the Lord's Atonement is helping me better control my temper so that I can spare my loved ones any more messes caused by exploding anger. ■

Mary Biesinger, Utah, USA

I was a well-known journalist who had written for some good magazines and newspapers in Lima, Peru, but my way of life—far from God—was tormenting me more each day. Because of this, I accepted a job as a proofreader for a magazine in the Ventanilla District, located far from my home. I was desperately seeking a way to get away from my current circle of friends. In Ventanilla, I felt in my heart that my life would change.

I was occasionally attending church with my girlfriend, María Cristina, when two good, stubborn missionaries convinced me to ask Heavenly Father in prayer if the Church was true. I did so, and what I experienced was indescribable. I had never felt the Spirit so strong as on that unforgettable day.

Married and baptized a short time later, María Cristina and I rented a small, uncomfortable room in Ventanilla. Because of my hard work, I was advanced from proofreader to editor at the company's magazine and newspaper. I had never been an editor before, and I was happy with the position. Even so, things started to change when our publications began to lower their standards, publishing items of questionable morality. These changes, ordered by our directors, opposed Church principles and values.

I had always wanted to be an editor, but the situation made me

uncomfortable. Our bishop suggested that if we did things that pleased our Heavenly Father, He would bless us. After my wife and I thought it over and prayed about it, we felt prompted that I should quit my job.

A few days later I was beginning to feel stressed out and wondered if I had done the right thing. After resigning, I had sent résumés to several companies but had heard nothing back. María Cristina suggested that we pray again, and we did so. We prayed that everything would turn out well and that we would not lose faith even though the bills were piling up.

A few hours later my wife encouraged me to call one of the companies. Somewhat unbelieving, I called. I was astounded when an official there said he was just about to call me. He wanted to know if I could start the next day!

We wept for joy. Our Heavenly Father had answered our prayers.

We had to leave our ward and many good friends for my new job, but we left with stronger testimonies. I now have respectable work and a good salary, and we have a nice place to live. Above all, we have been blessed with the certainty that when we do the things that please God, we receive His blessings. ■

Carlos Javier León Ugarte, Lima, Peru

I LOVE YOU

As my mission's zone conference was coming to a close, I stood outside wondering, "What am I doing in this foreign country? How am I going to do all that is expected of me?"

I had been in Sicily, Italy, for little over a week, but already I felt discouraged. My time in the missionary training center had seemed like a wonderful dream, but because of my inadequacies, I now felt as though I were in a nightmare.

"Dearest Father," I prayed, "I wanted to be a great missionary. Now that I am here, I realize I don't have the talents, skills, or intelligence to accomplish what I have been sent to do.

I thought I knew this language, but everyone speaks so quickly, and any words I try to utter just get tangled up in my tongue. I don't think my companion likes me. My mission president can barely speak English. I don't have anyone to talk to. Please help me."

I knew I had to go back inside, but I lingered on the street just a few minutes longer. Suddenly I felt three tugs on the back of my overcoat. I turned around to find a beautiful little girl and slowly knelt down next to her on the cobblestone street. She wrapped her arms around my neck and whispered in my ear, "*Ti voglio bene.*"

"What did you say?" I replied in

English, knowing perfectly well she didn't understand me.

She stared at my name tag. "Sorella Domenici," she read, "ti voglio bene."

I knew the meaning of the phrase. It was one of the first phrases we had learned as missionaries. It was a phrase that could speak directly to the soul. It means, "I love you."

Those words were just what I needed to hear at that moment. The Savior had sent a special messenger to deliver them to me. I led the little girl into the building.

"She must be the child of one of the members," I thought. I wove my way through groups of missionaries, hoping her mother would spot her.

When I found my companion, I asked, "Have you seen this little girl before?"

"What little girl?" she replied, looking confused.

I looked down at my side. The little girl was gone.

I stood in the open doorway of the building and glanced up and down the deserted street. As I pondered, a whisper I not only heard but also felt echoed through my soul: "Sorella Domenici, ti voglio bene."

I didn't know who the little girl was, but I knew that the Savior loved me. ■

Natalee T. Frstrup, Utah, USA



I turned around to find a beautiful little girl and slowly knelt down next to her on the cobblestone street.



The next afternoon I felt prompted to take what I was cooking for dinner to Sister Morgan and her husband for their anniversary.

WAS MY MEAL TOO SIMPLE?

For a couple of years, I visit taught a neighbor and friend named Sister Morgan. She was a few decades my senior, so I learned as much from her and her life as she did from my visiting teaching messages.

While I was her visiting teacher, Sister Morgan was diagnosed with cancer. I marveled at how bravely she endured her medical treatments and how she almost always had a smile on her face.

During one of my visits, she mentioned that the following day was her wedding anniversary. Our conversation soon led to other things, and our visit ended.

The next afternoon I felt prompted to take what I was cooking for dinner to Sister Morgan and her husband for their anniversary. At first I ignored the prompting because I was cooking an ordinary weekday meal. Surely such simple food would not do justice to such a special occasion.

But the prompting would not leave me. I called my husband at work, hoping he would agree that the idea was a bad one. Instead, he encouraged me to call Sister Morgan and tell her I was bringing over dinner.

Embarrassment over my simple meal and what I thought was presumptive behavior on my part kept me from calling my friend, but I could not shake the feeling that I should share my dinner. So I put the food on a serving dish and nervously walked across the street.

As I entered their yard, I found Brother and Sister Morgan getting into their car. I announced that I had brought dinner for their anniversary and that I hoped they didn't mind.

A smile spread over Sister Morgan's face. She explained that they had resigned themselves to celebrating their anniversary at a local fast-food restaurant because her cancer treatments

left her too tired to cook or go anywhere else. She looked relieved to be able to stay home for dinner.

A sense of relief and happiness washed over me as they accepted my simple meal.

Not more than two months later, just as Sister Morgan had completed her cancer treatments, her dear husband passed away from a sudden illness. Their anniversary just weeks before was their last.

I learned a great deal that summer about following the Spirit's still, small voice in serving others. The service we are asked—or prompted—to give may be uncomfortable, inconvenient, or simple in our eyes, but it may be just what is needed. This experience gave me courage to serve in any capacity the Lord needs me, and it increased my faith to do "the errand of angels" ("As Sisters in Zion," *Hymns*, no. 309). ■

Jennifer Klingonsmith, Utah, USA



**By President
Boyd K. Packer**

President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles

LEAVE IT ALONE

My friend's world was shattered. He had lost his wife.

If you suffer from worry, from grief or shame or jealousy or disappointment or envy, from self-recrimination or self-justification, consider this lesson taught to me many years ago by a patriarch. He was as saintly a man as I have ever known. . . .

He grew up in a little community with a desire to make something of himself. He struggled to get an education.

He married his sweetheart, and presently everything was just right. He was well employed, with a bright future. They were deeply in love, and she was expecting their first child.

The night the baby was to be born, there were complications. The only doctor was somewhere in the countryside tending to the sick. . . .

Finally the doctor was located. In the emergency, he acted quickly and soon had things in order. The baby was born and the crisis, it appeared, was over.

Some days later, the young mother died from the very infection that the doctor had been treating at another home that night.

John's world was shattered.



Everything was not right now; everything was all wrong. He had lost his wife. He had no way to tend both the baby and his work.

As the weeks wore on, his grief festered. "That doctor should not be allowed to practice," he would say. "He brought that infection to my wife. If he had been careful, she would be alive today."

He thought of little else, and in his bitterness, he became threatening. . . .

One night a knock came at his door. A little girl said simply, "Daddy wants you to come over. He wants to talk to you."

"Daddy" was the stake president. . . .

This spiritual shepherd had been watching his flock and had something to say to him.

The counsel from that wise servant was simply, "John, leave it alone. Nothing you do about it will bring her back. Anything you do will make it worse. John, leave it alone." . . .

He struggled in agony to get hold of himself. And finally, he determined that whatever else the issues were, he should be obedient.

Obedience is powerful spiritual medicine. It comes close to being a cure-all.

He determined to follow the counsel of that wise spiritual leader. He would leave it alone.

Then he told me, ". . . It was not until I was an old man that I could finally see a poor country doctor—overworked, underpaid, run ragged from patient to patient, with little medicine, no hospital, few instruments, struggling to save lives, and succeeding for the most part.

"He had come in a moment of crisis, when two lives hung in the balance, and had acted without delay.

"I was an old man," he repeated, "before I finally understood! I would have ruined my life," he said, "and the lives of others."

Many times he had thanked the Lord on his knees for a wise spiritual leader who counseled simply, "John, leave it alone." ■

From "Balm of Gilead," Ensign, Nov. 1987, 17–18.

INSIGHTS



What attitude is important in life?

"This life is the time to prepare to meet God. We are a happy, joyous people. We appreciate a good sense of humor and treasure unstructured time with friends and family. But we need to recognize that there is a seriousness of purpose that must undergird our approach to life and all our choices."



In Church Magazines

Ensign: We may not always be delivered from our trials, but we can always be assured that the Lord is aware of and willing to help us through them (page 18).

New Era: This month, youth can experience the power of good music (pages 6–13). Also, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf gives counsel on how to live in a fast-paced world (page 2).

Friend: This month's *Friend* can help members of your family strengthen their testimonies. Read the stories on pages 4 and 28, then do the block activity on page 6 and make your testimonies strong!

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