

Ensign

A photograph of a man in a white shirt being embraced from behind by two young boys, also in white shirts. They are all smiling and appear to be on a beach. The background shows a sandy beach with some people in the distance under a clear sky.

**How Fathers Bless
the Lives of Their
Children, pp. 4, 10, 52**

Missionary in Japan, Presiding
Bishop, New Apostle: Elder
Gary E. Stevenson, p. 26

How the Book of Mormon
Restores Spiritual Eyesight, p. 54

14 Questions Answered about
the Afterlife, p. 64



"They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

1 Nephi 21:10; see also Isaiah 49:10

Contents June 2016

Volume 46 • Number 6



20

MESSAGES

FIRST PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

4 **Our Father, Our Mentor**
President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

7 **Temple Ordinances and Covenants**

ON THE COVER

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Inside back cover: Photograph by Leslie Nilsson.



YOUNG ADULT FEATURES

14 **I Felt the Blessings of the Temple When . . .**
Young adults share how the temple has blessed their lives.

18 **Champions for the Sabbath**
Samantha McFadyen
The choice was ours: either play on Sunday and try to become national rugby champions or forfeit the game and keep the Sabbath holy.

20 **Tenacity and Discipleship**
Elder David F. Evans
We need tenacity to become true disciples of the Savior and achieve our righteous goals.

24 **Starting Our Marriage with Nothing but Faith**
Elisabeth Allen
We were newlyweds and didn't have much, but we learned to trust the Lord.

FEATURES

26 **Elder Gary E. Stevenson: An Understanding Heart**
Elder Robert D. Hales
Elder Stevenson serves with a heart that understands the promptings of the Spirit, the blessings of the Savior's Atonement, and the ability of the Church to bless those in need.

32 **Seven Tender Miracles along the Way**
Ephrem Smith
My journey from humble beginnings as an orphan to serving the Lord as a missionary was nothing short of miraculous.

34 **Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home, Part 2**
Alicia Stanton and Natalie Campbell
Ideas for learning about the monthly youth topics as a family.

38 **Standing Up for Clean Language**
Craig Redding
How can we encourage those around us to use clean language?



26



40

40 Vienna Jaques: Woman of Faith

Brent M. Rogers

Learn more about the only woman besides Emma Smith mentioned by name in the Doctrine and Covenants.

46 Experiencing a Change of Heart

Elder Edward Dube

When our daughter fell ill, I realized my heart needed to change as much as Alma's had.

50 Fly-Fishing and Family Time

Dennis S. Dahl

In setting aside a personal interest to spend time with my wife, I didn't realize how much I would gain.

52 A Father's Love

Pauline Richardson

As I watched a loving father help his deaconage son pass the sacrament, I learned a priceless lesson.

54 The Eyes of the Blind Shall See

Elder Lynn G. Robbins

The Book of Mormon is a second eyewitness of Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel.

60 Taking the Bus to Kolob

John Barney

I was 41, single, and without direction. But then a bus ride with Emilie changed it all.

64 What Do We Know about Life after Death?

David A. Edwards

We can help answer others' questions about life after death because of the plain and precious truths of the restored gospel.

68 The Education of a Lifetime

Devin G. Bost

Once homeless and without hope, I found peace and an education pathway that transformed my life.



13

DEPARTMENTS

3 Family Home Evening Ideas

8 What We Believe: We Believe in Following the Prophet

10 Our Homes, Our Families: My Father's Loving Example

Name withheld

12 Reflections: Hooray!

G. Craig Kiser

13 Serving in the Church: Not on My Watch!

Brett J. Porter

72 Music: Come, All, unto the Temple

Toni Thomas and Brett Stewart

74 Turning Hearts: Keeping Memories Alive

Melissa McKneely

76 Latter-day Saint Voices

80 Until We Meet Again: The What and Why and How of Bearing a Testimony

President Spencer W. Kimball

60



Ensign

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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.



“We Believe in Following the Prophet,” page 8: This article teaches, “As we sustain the prophet and apostles, we gain a testimony of them as servants of God.” You can increase your testimony of prophets by reading or listening to general conference talks. As a family, consider reading one of President Monson’s recent talks and choosing a specific piece of his counsel to live by. As you live what the prophet has asked, try to recognize how you are blessed.

“Come, Follow Me: Teaching the Basics at Home, Part 2,” page 34: President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught, “Our success,

individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel at home.” Consider

studying a *Come, Follow Me* topic as a family for a month. You could study aspects of your chosen topic each week, using the scriptures or other study aids like *Preach My Gospel*, LDS.org, the Topical Guide, and *The Life of Christ Bible Videos*. At family home evening each week, you could share what you’ve learned and felt. Consider recording your thoughts and impressions in a study journal and sharing what you’ve learned with your friends via social media.

BOOK OF MORMON PICTURES

For one of our family home evenings, we used some Book of Mormon images from the LDS Media Library (see lds.org/go/picturesE616) to go along with the story line of the Book of Mormon. The pictures helped to engage our children, who were eager to answer questions about the different stories and prophets we had prepared to discuss with them. The evening was exciting but peaceful. Small and simple things can sometimes make a big difference. In fact, I think this was the best family home evening lesson we’ve had in ages!

Melanie Sanders, Utah, USA

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FROM OUR READERS

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



**By President
Dieter F.
Uchtdorf**

Second Counselor
in the First
Presidency

Our Father,

OUR MENTOR

Have you ever opened a box of parts, pulled out the assembly instructions, and thought, “This doesn’t make any sense at all”?

Sometimes, despite our best intentions and inner confidence, we pull out a part and ask, “What is that for?” or “How does that fit?”

Our frustration grows as we look at the box and notice a disclaimer that says, “Assembly required—ages 8 and up.” Because we still don’t have a clue, this does not boost our confidence or our self-esteem.

Sometimes we have a similar experience with the gospel. As we look at some part of it, we may scratch our heads and wonder what that part is for. Or as we examine another part, we may realize that even after trying hard to fully understand, we just can’t figure out why that part was included.

Our Heavenly Father Is Our Mentor

Fortunately, our Heavenly Father has given us wonderful instructions for structuring our lives and putting together our best selves. Those instructions work regardless of our age or circumstance. He has given us the gospel and the Church of Jesus Christ. He has given us the plan of redemption, the plan of salvation, even the plan of happiness. He has not left us alone with all the uncertainties or challenges of life, saying, “Here you go. Good luck. Figure it out.”

If we will only be patient and look with a humble heart and an open mind, we will find that God has given us many tools to better understand His comprehensive instructions for our happiness in life:

- He has given us the priceless gift of the Holy Ghost, which has the potential to be our personal, heavenly tutor as we study the word of God and attempt to bring our thoughts and actions into alignment with His word.
- He has given us 24/7 access to Him through prayers of faith and supplications of real intent.
- He has given us modern-day apostles and prophets, who reveal the word of God in our day and have the authority to bind or seal on earth and in heaven.
- He has restored His Church—an organization of believers who work together to help one another as they work out their salvation with fear, trembling, and unparalleled joy.¹
- He has given us the holy scriptures—His written word to us.
- He has given myriad tools of modern technology to help us in our walk of discipleship. Many of these marvelous instruments can be found at [LDS.org](https://www.LDS.org).

Why has our Heavenly Father given us so much help? Because He loves us. And because, as He said of Himself,



“This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”²

In other words, Heavenly Father is our God, and God is a mentor to us.

Our Father in Heaven knows His children’s needs better than anyone else. It is His work and glory to help us at every turn, giving us marvelous temporal and spiritual resources to help us on our path to return to Him.

Every Father Is a Mentor

In some parts of the world, fathers are honored by families and society in the month of June. It is always good to honor and respect our parents. Fathers do many good things for their families and have many admirable attributes. Two of the most

important roles fathers have in the lives of their children are those of being a good example and a mentor. Fathers do more than tell their children what is right or wrong; they do much more than toss a manual at them and expect them to figure out life for themselves.

Fathers mentor their precious children and show by their good example the way an honest life is lived. Fathers do not leave their children alone but rush to their aid, helping them to their feet whenever they stumble. And sometimes when wisdom suggests, fathers allow their

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

You may want to begin by asking those you teach to think of a moment when Heavenly Father mentored them. You could then ask them to think of the similarities between that moment and a moment when they felt mentored by their earthly father. Invite them to write down the similarities in how they were mentored. You could challenge them to try to emulate the thing they wrote down in an effort to be a better example to others.

children to struggle, realizing that this may be the best way for them to learn.

We Are All Mentors

While earthly fathers do this for their own children, the spirit of mentoring is something we need to offer all of God’s children, regardless of age, location, or circumstance. Remember, God’s children are our brothers and sisters; we are all of the same eternal family.

In this sense, let us all be mentors—eager to reach out and help one another to become our best selves. Because we are God’s offspring, we do have the potential to become

like Him. Loving God and our fellowmen, keeping God’s commandments, and following Christ’s example are the straight, narrow, and joyful path back into the presence of our heavenly parents.

If the God of the universe cares so much about us that He is a mentor to us, perhaps we too can reach out to our fellowmen, regardless of their color, race, socioeconomic circumstances, language, or religion. Let us become inspired mentors and bless the lives of others—not only our own children but also all of God’s children throughout the world. ■

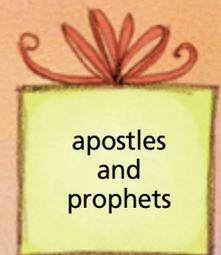
NOTES

1. See Acts 13:52; Philippians 2:12.
2. Moses 1:39.

CHILDREN

Heavenly Father’s Help

Because Heavenly Father loves us, He has given us many tools, or gifts, to help us. Match each gift with its picture below. How can you use these gifts to bless your life and to bless others?



Prayerfully study this material and seek to know what to share. How will understanding “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” increase your faith in God and bless those you watch over through visiting teaching? For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.



Faith, Family, Relief

Temple Ordinances and Covenants

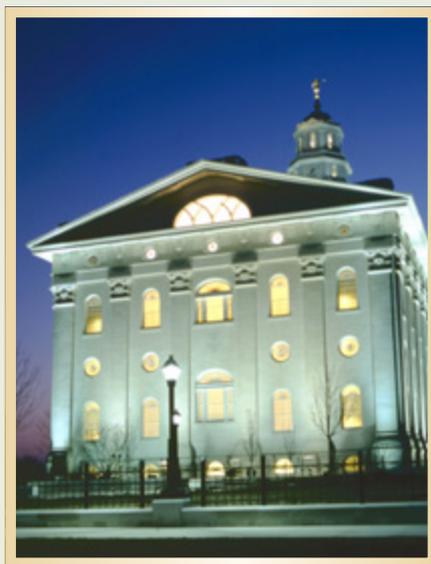
All the ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation are accompanied by covenants with God. “Making and keeping covenants means choosing to bind ourselves to our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ,” said Linda K. Burton, Relief Society general president.¹

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The Lord said, ‘In the ordinances . . . the power of godliness is manifest.’

“There are special blessings from God for every worthy person who is baptized, receives the Holy Ghost, and regularly partakes of the sacrament.”²

“When men and women go to the temple,” said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “they are both endowed with the same power, which is priesthood power . . .

“ . . . All men and all women have access to this power for help in their lives. All who have made sacred



covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, to commune with God, to receive the fulness of the gospel, and, ultimately, to become heirs alongside Jesus Christ of all our Father has.”³

Additional Scriptures

1 Nephi 14:14; Doctrine and Covenants 25:13; 97:8; 109:22

Living Stories

In 2007, four days after a massive earthquake in Peru, Elder Marcus B. Nash of the Seventy met branch president Wenceslao Conde and his wife, Pamela. “Elder Nash asked Sister Conde how her little children were. With a smile, she replied that through the goodness of God they were all safe and well. He asked about the Condes’ home.

“‘It’s gone,’ she said simply.

“ . . . ‘And yet,’ Elder Nash noted, ‘you are smiling as we talk.’

“‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I have prayed and I am at peace. We have all we need. We have each other, we have our children, we are sealed in the temple, we have this marvelous Church, and we have the Lord. We can build again with the Lord’s help.’ . . .

“What is it about making and keeping covenants with God that gives us the power to smile through hardships, to convert tribulation into triumph . . . ?”

“The source is God. Our access to that power is through our covenants with Him.”⁴

Consider This

How do temple ordinances and covenants strengthen and empower us?

NOTES

1. Linda K. Burton, “The Power, Joy, and Love of Covenant Keeping,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 111.
2. Neil L. Andersen, “Power in the Priesthood,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 92.
3. M. Russell Ballard, “Men and Women in the Work of the Lord,” *New Era*, Apr. 2014, 4–5.
4. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign*, May 2009, 19, 20–21.

WE BELIEVE IN FOLLOWING THE PROPHET

Like the original Church that Jesus Christ established during His mortal ministry, the Church today is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). We have twelve Apostles, as well as the President of the Church and his counselors, who are prophets, seers, and revelators. They are called to testify of Jesus Christ and preach His gospel throughout the world.

The Savior chooses His prophets and prepares them through many experiences to direct the Church. When Church members speak of the prophet, they are referring to the

President of the Church, the only person on earth who receives revelation for the whole Church.

Because the President of the Church speaks for the Lord (see D&C 1:38), it is not wise to pick and choose just the parts of his counsel that we want to follow. Rather, we treat his counsel and invitations as if we had received them directly from Jesus Christ, “in all patience and faith” (D&C 21:5).

As we choose to listen to and follow the prophet and the other apostles, we are blessed in our efforts to become like Jesus Christ, and we are protected from the insecurity and deceptions of the world (see Ephesians 4:11–14).

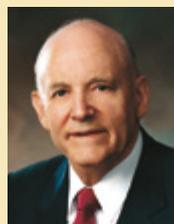
For example, we find spiritual safety in a world of shifting morals and values by living the unchanging standards that the prophet and apostles teach. We also find temporal security in following prophetic counsel to avoid debt, set aside savings, and store food.

As the President of the Church and the Apostles give their lives to the Lord’s work—traveling the world testifying of Christ, teaching the Saints, and overseeing the administration of the worldwide Church—He sustains and blesses them and their families. We also sustain them as we pray for them, obey their counsel, and seek to have the Holy Ghost confirm to us the truths they teach.

As we sustain the prophet and apostles, we gain a testimony of them as servants of God. Even though they are not perfect, Heavenly Father will not allow them to lead us astray (see Deuteronomy 18:18–20). ■

You can learn more about following the prophet by reading “Sustaining the Prophets” (*Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 74–76) by President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

GUIDANCE THROUGH A LIVING PROPHET



“God has spoken anew and continues to provide guidance for all his children through a living prophet today. We

declare that [God], as promised, is with his servants always and directs the affairs of his Church throughout the world.”

Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Howard W. Hunter (2015), 115.

These are some of the blessings that have come to us through living prophets:



The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) translated the Book of Mormon “by the gift and power of God” (see introduction to the Book of Mormon). Since its publication in 1830, it has blessed the lives of millions of people.



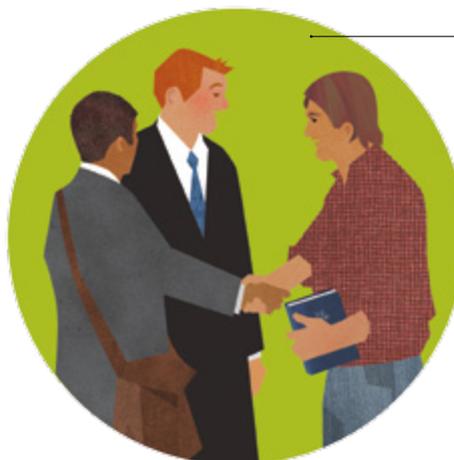
In 1936, during the Great Depression, President Heber J. Grant (1856–1945) announced what would become the Church’s welfare program. Today this program assists people of all faiths around the world.



In April 1998, when the Church had 51 temples in operation, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) announced a program to build many small temples. These temples now bless more and more members of the Church throughout the world.



In 1915, President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) and his counselors invited Church members to begin holding family home evening. Families still reap the great blessings they promised would result.



In 2012, President Thomas S. Monson announced that the missionary service ages for men and women were lowered to 18 and 19, respectively. Thousands of families and missionaries have been blessed by the resulting expansion of the missionary force.

MY FATHER'S LOVING EXAMPLE

Name withheld

My father showed me how to love my wandering children.

I joined the Church after accepting an invitation from two friends to attend seminary. My parents were always supportive of my decisions to be baptized, serve a mission, and marry in the temple. I recall, however, the pain I felt (and I assumed that my parents also experienced) at knowing that they were kindly waiting in the Provo Utah Temple waiting room while my bride and I were sealed.

We later had four children, and I remember the joy in knowing that each of them was sealed to us because they were born in the covenant. Our children were the first grandchildren, and although my parents and siblings never joined the Church, they grew very close to each of my children. For many years we lived near each other, and my parents were able to see our children participate in school and youth sports events. They attended each of our children's baptisms.

By the time our children reached their teens, however, my work

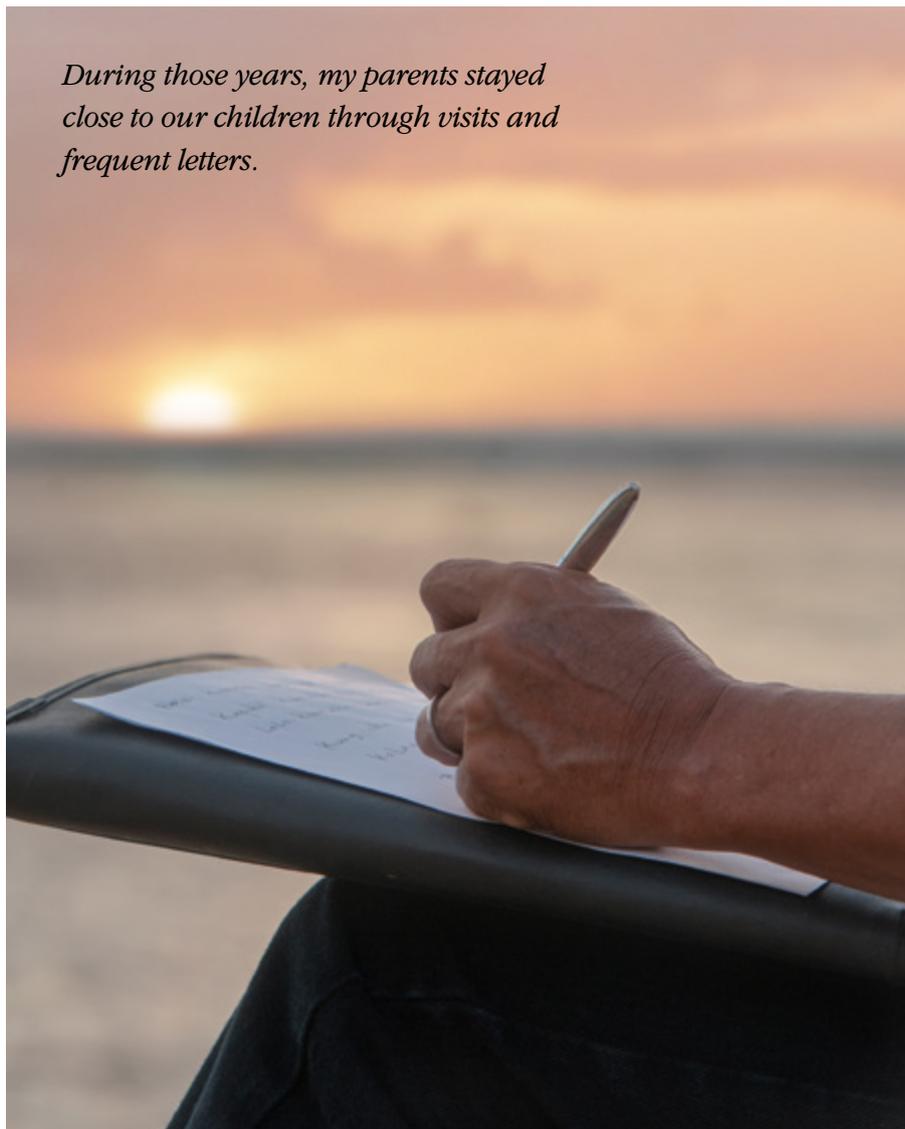
assignments had moved our family to another state. But even during those years, my parents stayed close to our children through visits and frequent letters.

As my parents reached middle age, my mother encountered early-onset

Alzheimer's. My father was determined to faithfully serve as her caretaker, even when her condition required full-time care. Even through these latter years, my father reached out to me through weekly—and, in some periods, daily—phone calls and



During those years, my parents stayed close to our children through visits and frequent letters.



letters. I had always had a close relationship with both my parents, but during the last 10 years of my father's life, we became particularly close. I realized then too that he was equally successful in drawing near to my three siblings in the same way—even given the differences in interests and faiths we chose as we all grew older.

My parents and my family lived on opposite coasts of the United States during those last years, and they made two cross-country visits, even though my mother's Alzheimer's had advanced to the point where assisting her on a long-distance flight was very difficult for Dad.

At this same time, one by one my children all decided to stop attending church. Two eventually had their names removed from Church records. This has certainly been the trial of both my wife's and my life. And even though he wasn't a Latter-day Saint, my father was pained and confused by our children's choices as well. He was a privately religious man, and

he joined us through those years in praying for them.

In 2005 my father passed away after being diagnosed with cancer, and my mother passed away three years later. My wife and I rejoiced in acting as their proxies in providing temple ordinances after their deaths.

I've long prayed to understand how best to relate to our children now that they're adults, some with their own spouses and children, none of whom are LDS. We are emotionally close to all four of our children, and we are grateful that they often reach out in love to us.

I eventually received a very clear answer of how I must conduct myself, possibly for the rest of my life, regarding these adult children. I needed to do what my father had done with me. In spite of the different lives we lived and the different religious perspectives we had, my father was determined to draw closer to me as a father and a friend while I experienced the pain of seeing my children choose different lifestyles and beliefs from mine. I realized I must follow the example of my father, who taught me how to treat children of a different faith: love them completely, just as the Savior would. ■

HOORAY!

By G. Craig Kiser

A four-year-old helped me appreciate the sacrament in a new way.

My mind was focused on the Savior as the congregation finished singing the sacrament hymn, but as I started to close the hymnbook, the music continued. A large congregation that day made it necessary for the organist to play two more verses while the priests finished breaking the bread. I was grateful for the extra time. It allowed me an additional moment of reverent meditation before the sacramental prayers.

During the prayers, I followed carefully the words the priests spoke as they blessed the emblems of Christ's sacrifice for us. Just as the final prayer concluded and at the moment when the congregation voiced their assent, a four-year-old boy's voice from two rows behind me sprang from the midst of the "amens."

"Hooray!" he exclaimed.

His spontaneous expression was loud enough to cause several children

nearby to giggle. I confess that it brought a quizzical smile to my lips.

"Hooray?" I thought. That's an odd response to the sacrament prayers. It was certainly a response I'd never heard before and likely will never hear again. After all, we end our prayers with "amen."

Perhaps that young child had sensed more of the truth than I had.

Hooray communicates excitement. It is an exclamation of joy, usually for a victory. Sometimes it's shouted to

show approval for someone who has finished a difficult task well.¹

Instantly, my mind caught hold of the idea. Yes, I thought, hooray that Jesus Christ overcame death so we can all be resurrected! Hooray that because of His Atonement, He can forgive our sins! More to the point, He can forgive me of *my* sins! Hooray that through His grace I may return to my Heavenly Father and enjoy the hope of eternal life! Yes! Hooray!

As I silently shouted these praises of thanks to my Heavenly Father, the Holy Ghost flooded my heart with a joy that nearly brought me to tears. I had been led that day by a little child (see Isaiah 11:6), and I rejoiced with fresh vision for the blessings of the Savior's Atonement in my life. ■

The author lives in Oregon, USA.

NOTE

1. See *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th edition (2003), "hooray"; see also en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hooray.



NOT ON MY WATCH!

By Brett J. Porter

The key to our success was to love the young men while we served them.

I was close to a family who had a son in Young Men. During an activity while he was a deacon, a leader got after him and embarrassed him in front of his peers. He subsequently felt further discredited, quit attending activities, and sought friends outside his ward.

That experience had a tremendous impact on me. I determined that something like that would not happen on my watch if I were called to work with young men. Two years later I was called to work with the deacons.

Within a few months I found myself dealing with a young man who was constantly pushing the boundaries in his behavior.

“This is the line,” I finally said regarding his actions. “Do not cross it.”

He crossed it, we had a bit of a verbal altercation, and he left.

Later, I had a chat with him to resolve our differences. I said, “David, I love you and you’re a good young man, but I don’t love some of the things you do. The other young men look to you as a leader, and if they see you getting away with something improper, they may try it as well.”

We patched things up, he felt accepted, and we leaders helped temper some of his personal challenges. When he turned 14, he asked me to ordain him a teacher. Today, years later, he gives me a big bear hug whenever he sees me, and he talks with admiration about his time in Young Men.

When we love the young men and enjoy being with them, they know it. That’s why my counselors

and I took a genuine interest in our young men. We never did an activity just because it was in the book; we did it because we knew the young men would learn a skill, grow, and have fun.

On one occasion, we had a young man whose parents were not interested in our program.

“That’s OK,” I told them, “but do you mind if your son still comes, learns, and has some fun?”

We included him in our program, and before long his parents said OK to his full involvement. They saw that their boy was learning and having fun. Later he served a full-time mission. His younger brother blossomed as well and also served a mission.

We saw a correlation between leaders taking an interest in a young man and that young man learning, growing, and eventually serving a mission. It’s satisfying to watch young men grow, and it’s enjoyable to learn with them. The key to our success was to love them while we served them. ■

The author lives in California, USA.



I Felt the Blessings of the Temple When . . .



The house of the Lord provides protection and hope that can't be found anywhere else. Young adults share how the temple has blessed their lives.

I KNEW I NEEDED THE TEMPLE

When I was single and living in Taiwan, the only temple was five hours away, and our ward took a bus to the temple once a month. I always enjoyed being with friends at the temple.

Eventually, however, going to the temple became more than just a fun monthly trip. When our temple president spoke during stake conference, he stressed how much we need to attend the temple, and his words gave me new perspective.

I know how important it is to serve in the temple, blessing the lives of those who have passed. But time spent in the temple can bless us too. The temple president said that when we entered the temple, we could leave our troubles at the door and enter to feel the Lord's peace. He encouraged us not to hurry to finish

temple ordinances but to tarry inside the temple.

I decided to fast each time before our monthly temple visits and to stay inside and read scriptures after finishing baptisms. I was profoundly impacted. Never had I felt as close to heaven as I now did in the temple. I looked forward to each temple trip—not only for the bus ride with my friends but also for the incredible peace and love I felt in the temple.

I am now married and live in the United States, where I continue to enjoy attending the temple. When I'm prepared, the peace I feel in the temple is indescribable. I always leave feeling full of hope and happiness, and I am reminded that with my Father's help, I can make it through any trial.

Grace Huang Marsden, Idaho, USA



I WANTED AN ETERNAL FAMILY

From watermelon fights at the dinner table to chasing each other around the house, growing up in a family of seven was an adventure. As the second-youngest child, I often had to defend myself from my brothers' teasing. During Sunday lessons about eternal families, I would think, "I don't want to be picked on for eternity!" I loved my family, but I didn't know if I wanted to be with them forever.

That changed when my family took a trip to The Gila Valley Arizona Temple open house. Walking through the temple, I felt something I'd never experienced before. My family had just entered the celestial room when my dad turned to me and said, "Michael, one day when you go through the temple, you will enter this room and our family will be waiting for you." I realized that the feeling I had was love—unconditional love for the Savior and my family. Now I knew that I wanted to be with my family forever; there is no greater blessing.

Sometime later, as I was preparing for a full-time mission, I went through the temple and had the blessing of entering the celestial room and seeing my loving family waiting for me—just as Dad said they would be.

Michael Skidmore, Arizona, USA

I CHOSE TO SERVE

One Sunday, my bishop bore testimony that becoming a temple worker was the best thing he ever did. He said that it totally changed the direction of his life. The Spirit promised me then that if I became a temple worker, the same would happen for me.

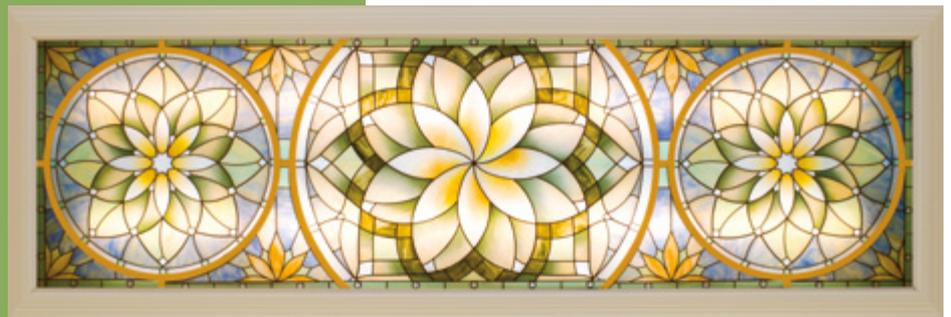
When I became a temple worker a few months later, though, it was surprisingly demanding. On top of that, I discovered that I still had to struggle with temptations, some that I felt I had put behind me. I nearly quit.

But I stuck it out, and as I focused more on my time inside the temple, I came to some realizations. I realized that my struggle with temptation came not because of the temple but because I'd been neglecting parts of my spiritual life. I believe Heavenly Father prompted me to serve as a temple worker in order to strengthen and *prepare* me so that I wouldn't fall.

Working in the temple was like a spiritual resurrection. As I learned all the ordinances by memory, concepts that had seemed old and stale became new and beautiful. Pure doctrine stood out clearer than ever. I would leave the temple with a deeper understanding of Christ's gospel and His Church. I was filled with strength and determination to choose the right.

I know that the temple is key to our success here on earth. Making our temple service more meaningful will bring us closer than ever to God. The temple has the power to make you and your testimony new again.

Alex Masterson, Utah, USA



I FOUND PEACE DESPITE LONELINESS

So much about life in our world can stifle hope and damage the sensitivity we need to hear the Spirit's voice. When I hear about tragedy in some far-off place,

when I'm faced with personal despair or family anguish, I always know I can go to the temple for relief. In the temple, the small, everyday wounds of

living in the world are healed, although it often happens so quietly I hardly notice. The circumstances surrounding our grief won't necessarily change just from worshipping in the temple. But as we exert the effort to make the temple a priority, I know firsthand that Heavenly Father will shed His light upon us, soothing and purifying our hearts, extending our perspective, and clarifying our vision, which can sometimes strain to find Him in a difficult world.

I've felt this most strongly when plagued by loneliness. Singles and young adults are not the only ones who may feel alone, it's true, and my personal struggles don't qualify my solitude as more potent than anyone else's. Nevertheless, there are dark days when it's easy to blame too much on my situation. It's at these times when the temple has become an essential refuge for me. Reminded through the ordinances of my personal worth and eternal goals, I can leave with a burden more bearable and a heart more cheerful than before my service (see Mosiah 24:13–15). I know through repeated experience that the house of the Lord can heal us spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically.

Jonathan Baker, Utah, USA





I MAGNIFIED MY CALLING

I had just been called to be the temple trip coordinator in my young single adult ward when the bishopric suggested that we do sealings. As a young single adult, I worried that participating in sealings would be awkward, but I wanted to fulfill my calling. So when our monthly temple day arrived, I found myself in a sealing room of the Mesa Arizona Temple with a few members of my ward.

As I participated in the sealing ordinance, I pondered how the sisters I was being proxy for might have felt. It seemed almost unfair that they'd been born without the gospel. But the Spirit touched my heart as I listened to the blessings in the ordinance. Although these people hadn't had the gospel on earth, they could still receive all of Heavenly Father's blessings. He would compensate them for all that seemed unjust.

As I pondered this, I saw interesting parallels with my own life. As an older young single adult, I hadn't yet been sealed to a worthy spouse. It sometimes seemed unfair that I had to wait longer than many others. However, I knew that Heavenly Father loved me and that as I lived worthily, I would not be denied any blessing.

I left the temple feeling grateful for the gospel and confident in Heavenly Father's desire to bless me. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don't come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come.*"¹
Carrie Cox, Utah, USA

NOTE

1. Jeffrey R. Holland, "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 38; emphasis in original.



I DID ORDINANCES FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

I had recently been to the temple to do baptisms for those who are deceased when I heard my mom telling my older brother about a dream she had. In the dream her great-aunt told her to look through birth records for Puebla (the birthplace of our ancestors) and to do the temple work for some of our family members.

Overhearing that conversation reminded me of a promise in my patriarchal blessing—it says that I will be a savior on Mount Zion (see Obadiah 1:21). I realized that it was never too early to start doing genealogy, and I decided to try to find the spirits that seemed to be waiting.

I knew I couldn't do it alone, so I knelt down in prayer and pleaded for help. I began reading through the names already on my family group sheet until I came to the name of my third great-grandmother Natividad Merino. I began looking through FamilySearch records until her name came up. She needed to be baptized! Next, I found the names of her siblings, whose work hadn't been done either. My heart filled with gratitude. I knew that the Holy Ghost had guided me.

Two days later, my mom, my younger brother, and I went to the temple to do baptisms for my third great-grandmother and her siblings. While I was in the font, it was as if I could feel their joy. My love of temple work grew tremendously.

I know that when we do the work for our ancestors, we are guided. I feel so grateful to Heavenly Father for giving us temples to unite families.

Analiz García Flores, Mexico City, Mexico

Champions for the Sabbath

By Samantha McFadyen

When my rugby coach told our team that our quarter-final game in the national championship tournament was scheduled for a Sunday, all I could think was, “Why now?”

My team, the 2010 Brigham Young University women’s rugby team, had been preparing for the championship all season. We were looking forward to playing the team that had defeated us in the tournament the year before. I was confident we could win—we had some of the best players in the nation. We wanted to prove ourselves to the rugby world by winning a national championship, but it turned out that Heavenly Father had a different path for us.

Sticking to Our Standards

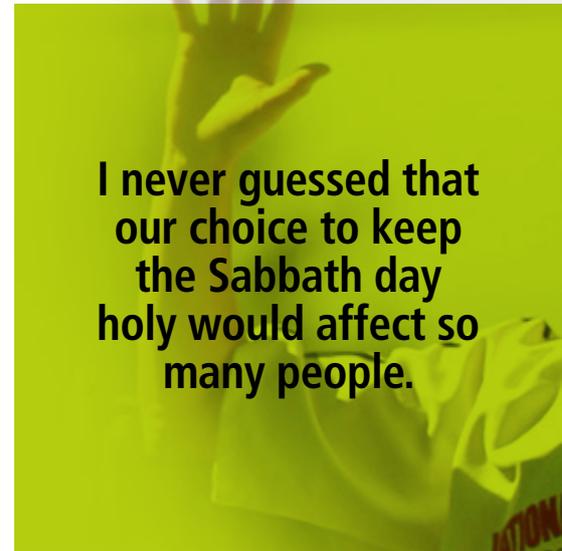
Tournament officials had assured us that our games would be scheduled on Friday and Saturday, but because of a mistake, the games were instead set for Saturday and Sunday.

We did not find out about the mistake until five days before the tournament, which was being held in Sanford, Florida, USA. Since women’s rugby was not an official BYU team at the time, the decision of whether to play or not was ours to make. We chose not to. It was a unanimous decision, and no one complained.

Playing on Sunday was not even an option. For me, it never had been. My parents taught me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and I honored that commandment my whole life. Obeying Heavenly Father’s commandments was more important than a rugby game.

But knowing that we were doing the right thing did not make it any easier. We were disheartened as we flew to Florida knowing that whether we won or lost, Saturday would be our last game.

After arriving in Florida, we received a call from a *New York Times* reporter who wanted to cover our story. We were stunned. We never

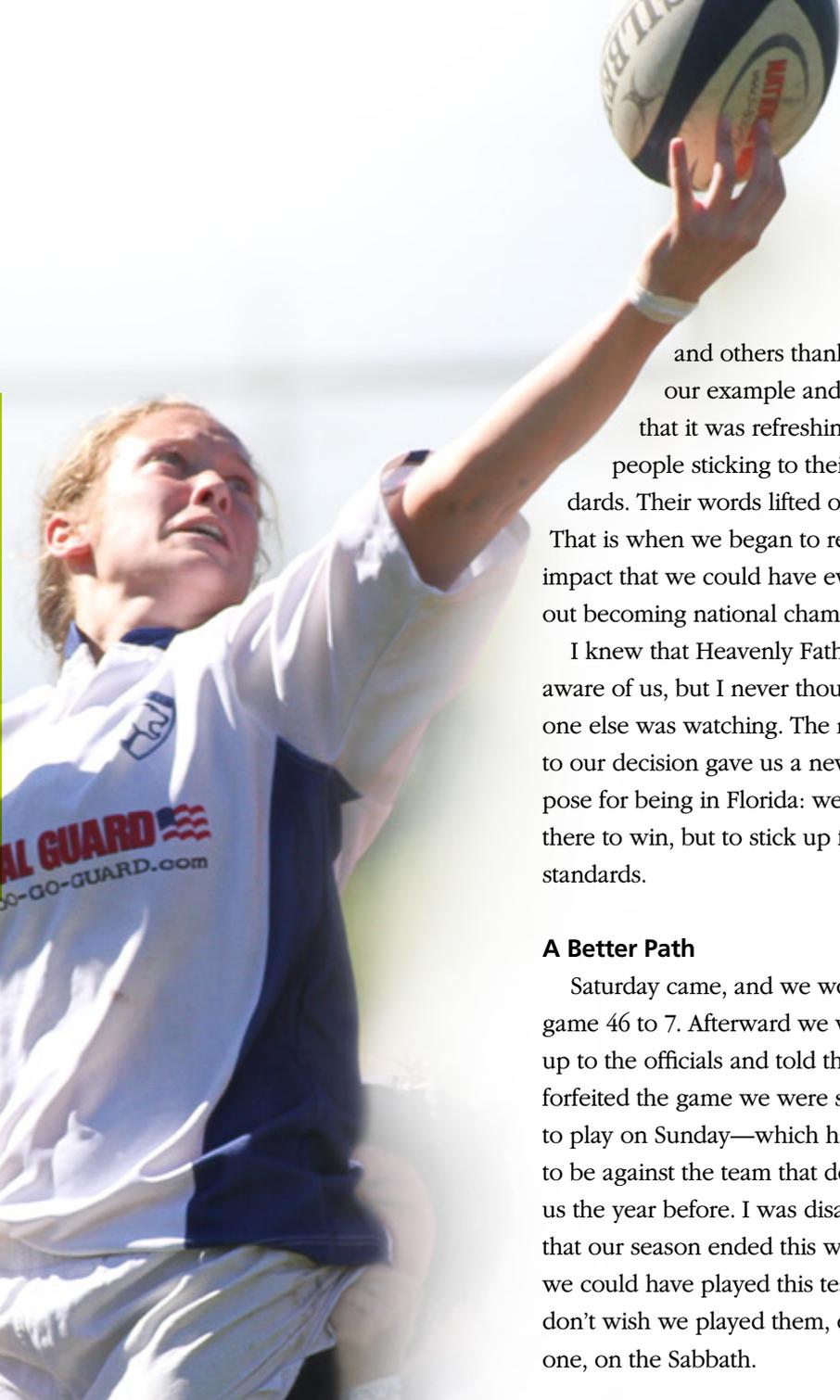


I never guessed that our choice to keep the Sabbath day holy would affect so many people.

expected anyone to care about our choice to honor the Sabbath, much less a national newspaper.

On Friday, at the time we would have been playing if the scheduling mistake hadn’t happened, we went to the Orlando Florida Temple to do baptisms for the dead. After we performed the ordinances, the temple president spoke to us. He pulled out an article that had been written about us and read some of the comments readers had posted online supporting our decision.

Later our coach read us more comments he had received. Latter-day Saints



and others thanked us for our example and told us that it was refreshing to see people sticking to their standards. Their words lifted our spirits. That is when we began to realize the impact that we could have even without becoming national champions.

I knew that Heavenly Father was aware of us, but I never thought anyone else was watching. The response to our decision gave us a new purpose for being in Florida: we weren't there to win, but to stick up for our standards.

A Better Path

Saturday came, and we won our game 46 to 7. Afterward we walked up to the officials and told them we forfeited the game we were scheduled to play on Sunday—which happened to be against the team that defeated us the year before. I was disappointed that our season ended this way. I wish we could have played this team, but I don't wish we played them, or anyone, on the Sabbath.



HONORING THE SABBATH DAY

"The Savior identified Himself as Lord of the Sabbath. It is His day! Repeatedly, He has asked us to

keep the Sabbath or to *hallow* the Sabbath day. We are under covenant to do so.

" . . . [We] simply ask [ourselves], 'What *sign* do I want to give to God?' That question [makes our] choices about the Sabbath day crystal clear. . . .

" . . . We know that wherever we live we are to be examples of the believers among our families, neighbors, and friends. True believers keep the Sabbath day holy."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Sabbath Is a Delight," *Ensign*, May 2015, 129–30, 132.

Dozens of articles were written about us, and we continued to get supportive letters and emails. By sticking up for our standards, we reached more people than we ever could have if we had won the championship.

I have learned to trust Heavenly Father to lead me to a better path than I have in mind for myself. My team wanted to prove ourselves by becoming champions, but now I realize that Heavenly Father wanted us to make a different point entirely. He led us to the opportunity to be examples when we thought no one was watching, and He was able to use us for good because we chose to obey. ■

The author lives in Washington, USA.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF WOMEN'S COUGAR RUGBY (BYU) AND PAUL MEYERS



By Elder
David F. Evans
Of the Seventy

Tenacity and Discipleship

One online dictionary defines *tenacity* as “persistence, perseverance, and stubborn determination.” It also states, “Tenacity is the quality displayed by someone who just won’t quit—who keeps trying until they reach their goal.”¹

We need tenacity in order to become true disciples of the Savior and to achieve the truly good goals—becoming a great missionary, completing our education, finding an eternal companion, and starting a family—that our Heavenly Father knows we need to achieve to prepare for eternity. Our ability to be tenacious in all good things will determine whether we become the sons and daughters of God that He knows we can and must become.

Today’s generation of full-time missionaries has been called “the greatest generation of missionaries in the history of the Church” and has been compared to Helaman’s 2,000 stripling warriors.² Notwithstanding the remarkable attributes and tenacious faith and effort

of these young men, Helaman, their leader, states: “There were two hundred, out of my two thousand and sixty, who had fainted because of the loss of blood; nevertheless, according to the goodness of God, and to our great astonishment, and also the joy of our whole army, there was not one soul of them who did perish” (Alma 57:25).

They were delivered “because of their exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe—that there was a just God, and whosoever did not doubt, that they should be preserved by his marvelous power” (Alma 57:26).

Helaman says of them: “They are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually” (Alma 57:27).

So it must be with us. In life, it is when the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow and beat upon us and on our house that we determine whether our faith is strong and whether we put our trust

Have faith in God and His promises, and do what is right all the time, regardless of who knows.

in God continually. There simply is no test until there is adversity.

Faint Not

Some years ago my wife, Mary, and I presided over the Japan Nagoya Mission. The terms *valiant*, *courageous*, *strong*, *active*, and *true* that describe the 2,000 stripling warriors (see Alma 53:20) also describe the missionaries with whom we served. Another description of the 2,000 stripling warriors—some



fainted (see Alma 57:25)—also describes some of our missionaries.

A mission is not easy. Neither is life. All will be injured in some way. Some of this hurt comes from unresolved transgression. Some comes by way of accident or illness. Some comes when we see those we love either reject the gospel of Jesus Christ or become unfaithful to what they know to be true. But through all of this we come to know God, and we grow to become the Savior's disciples. Our hearts change, and that change becomes permanent as we continue to choose righteousness over sin and doubt.

Those 2,000 stripling warriors were tenacious in their desires. They simply would not give up, even when their path was difficult. A generation earlier their fathers and mothers were taught by Ammon and his brethren. Those missionaries had great success, but they also had to hold on and not give up when their missions became difficult and discouraging.

Ammon describes those times: "Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success" (Alma 26:27).

With patience and tenacity, Ammon and his companions worked through their afflictions and ultimately achieved remarkable success.

Gospel Tenacity

In 1999, Sister Marci Barr came to the Japan Nagoya Mission from Columbus, Ohio, USA. Japanese was not easy for her, but she was tenacious. Once she learned to communicate, she never stopped talking with people about the gospel.

Great promises are made to faithful, persistent, and tenacious missionaries who open their mouths with boldness and love and who work with all their might in the ways the Lord has set forth (see D&C 31:7). But some missionaries become fearful of rejection and let their fears overcome their loving boldness.

Not Sister Barr! She found and taught, and she taught and found all of her mission.

On the last day of her mission, Sister Barr was traveling to the mission home in Nagoya. That night I would interview her and tell her that she had done a wonderful job. The next day she would go home.

As she traveled, she saw a group of high school-age girls talking together on the subway. She approached them and asked if she could visit with them. She spoke of the gospel and its Restoration. Then she gave a missionary tract to one of the girls who seemed interested and told her of the sister missionaries who could teach her the gospel.

Then Sister Barr came to the mission home and had her interview, never telling me of her experience on

the subway. To her it was unremarkable. She was simply doing what she knew was right, all the way to the end. Perhaps this is the best definition of gospel *tenacity* I know: No matter what, continue to have faith in God and His promises, and do what is right all the time, regardless of who knows.

Sister Barr returned home to Columbus. There in a student ward she met her husband, and together they are raising a family in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The girl on the subway—Hitomi Kitayama—was taught by the sister missionaries. Hitomi persevered and displayed her own form of tenacity as she embraced the truths of the gospel, overcoming opposition from family members and her own doubts.

We met Hitomi nearly six years later at a mission conference in Tokyo, where she was serving as a missionary. She told us of meeting Sister Barr on the subway and of her subsequent conversion to the gospel.





STRIVE FOR GREATER DISCIPLINE

"I encourage everyone, young

and old, to review goals and objectives and strive to exercise greater discipline. Our daily conduct and choices should be consistent with our goals."

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Choose Wisely," *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 49.

After her mission she met and married another returned missionary, Shimpei Yamashita. Interestingly, Shimpei is the son of a man whom Elder Randy Checketts and I taught in the summer of 1971 while I served my first mission to Japan.

It is not just in spreading the gospel that we need the tenacity to do what is right. We need this same righteous tenacity as we seek to overcome personal sin and temptation, complete our education, and seek temple marriage and an eternal family. We will need tenacity, love, and resilience as we hold on to our spouse and children and work through the challenges that come to every marriage and family. And we will need tenacity, commitment, and patience when the blessings we seek don't come in the time frame we anticipate.

In all of this and in every other righteous thing, our commitment to do right and be right will be challenged by the world. But we must not quit. We need to keep trying until we reach our goal. Our goal, ultimately, is eternal life with our husband or wife, with our children, and with their children for generations to come.

Set Worthy Goals

How do we develop our commitment to do right, and how do we gain strength to keep it?

First, we establish goals worthy of achievement and compatible with our ultimate goal of eternal life. This includes education and employment goals that will lead to and be compatible with family, personal growth, service, activity in the Church, and personal happiness. Part of making these goals will be our own personal choice, but another part must include prayer and personal revelation. If you care enough to seek God's will, He will answer.

Among the many things you should pray about is finding a worthy companion with whom you can go to the temple and make sacred covenants. *If you want to make and keep sacred covenants and have the motivation to achieve your most righteous goals, prayerfully seek the blessings and responsibilities of marriage.*

In this and in other areas of your life, find out what God would have you do.

Study it out. Make decisions. Take them to the Lord and find out. Then move forward with achieving your goals.

In all of this, if we are going to be tenacious in righteous things, we must stay close to the Lord through righteous living. Few things will distract us more from achieving our righteous goals than being unworthy of the blessings of the Spirit in our lives.

Make righteous goals. Always pray and seek the Lord's guidance. Be worthy and avoid those things that will distract from or hinder your progress. Have and use your temple recommend. Keep your covenants, especially when life is hard. Seek the blessings of eternal marriage and family. Then hold on. Don't give up. Don't quit.

Be tenacious in every righteous thing. You will see your faith strengthened, and you will see your strengths and talents deepened and magnified as your faith increases. And remember what Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has promised: "Some blessings come soon, some come late, and some don't come until heaven; but for those who embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, *they come*."³ ■

From a devotional address, "Tenacity," delivered at Brigham Young University on November 4, 2014. For the full address, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Vocabulary.com/dictionary/tenacity.
2. See M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 47, 48; for how the Book of Mormon describes them, see Alma 53:17–21; 56:17, 45–48; 57:20–21.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 38.



STARTING Our MARRIAGE

with Nothing but Faith

By Elisabeth Allen

When I married Matt, he came with a hand-me-down, beat-up, rusty old car, a couple of worn-out mission suits, some other clothes, his own toothbrush, and three semesters of school under his belt. We went on our honeymoon in a borrowed car to a teeny lodge room in West Yellowstone, ate food his aunt had given us, spent almost no money—because we had almost no money—and had a great time.

Our first apartment was less than ideal—it was only 500 square feet and smelled bad—but we lived there because we could independently afford it. We worked hard in the jobs we could find, scrimped and saved, and looked at life on our college-student budget as a fun adventure.

When we were expecting our first baby, a girl, we had no idea how we would pay the bills, but we believed that it would work out. Around this time we received an unexpected

\$1,000 check in the mail from Matt's grandma. At that point in our marriage, \$1,000 was more money than we had ever had at one time. Grateful, we thanked first God and then Grandma for it, and we set it aside to put toward the impending baby bills. Another day Matt got an odd job fixing a pothole—another \$250. The blessings kept coming.

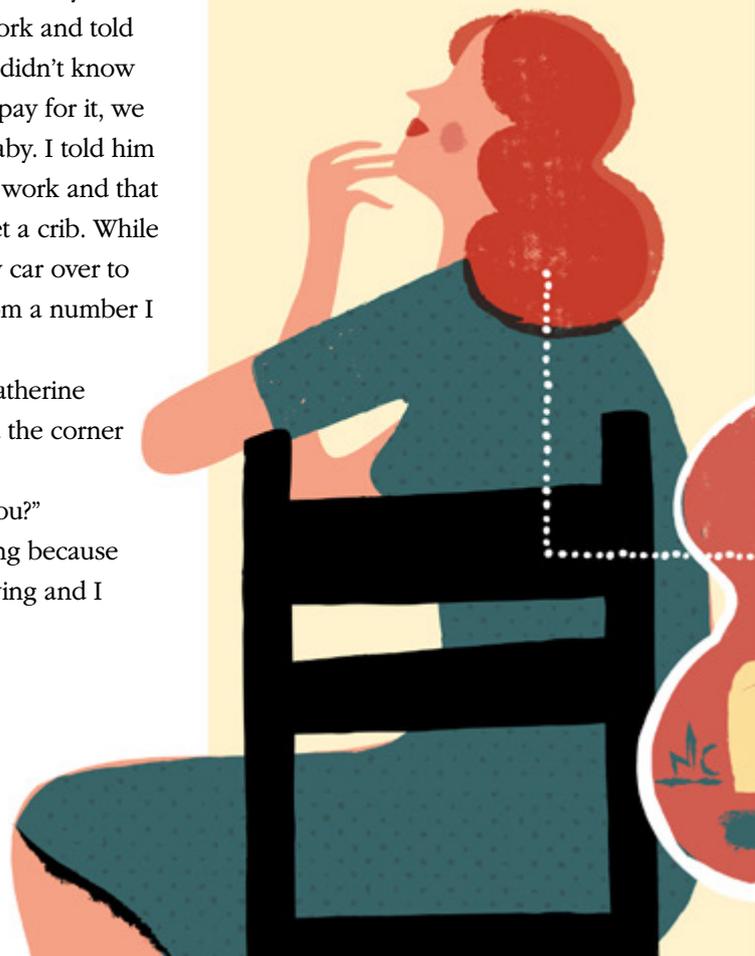
Two weeks before our baby was born, I called Matt at work and told him that even though I didn't know how we were going to pay for it, we needed a crib for the baby. I told him I would pick him up at work and that we were going to go get a crib. While on my way, I pulled my car over to answer a phone call from a number I didn't recognize.

"Hello, Liz? This is Katherine Anderson. I live around the corner from you."

"Oh! Yes! How are you?"

"I am fine. I am calling because this morning I was praying and I

Getting married and having a family with virtually nothing taught me that the Lord really does take care of His children.



had a feeling that you needed a crib. I have one here for you. I had five babies and couldn't have lived without a changing table, so I have one of those for you too."

I sat in stunned silence.

"I know your car is small," she continued, "so I'd like you to come over and use my car to get these things over to your apartment."

Tears and more silence.

I still think of how much God blessed us through that wonderful woman!

Even though we did not start our marriage with things—not even a dresser or a bed—what we did start with was a lot of faith and a lot of dreams. We started our marriage with the determination to always trust in God. We started our marriage

with faith that if we worked hard, we would enjoy the blessings of providing for ourselves through the Lord's help. Even now I look around my home and see that almost all of our furniture has been handed down to us. None of it matches. All of it is old. But it is so beautiful to me! All of it reminds me that when I needed a crib, Heavenly Father sent me a crib.

We have trusted in, sacrificed for, and served God. It has been good for us. It has made us happy. It has made us grateful. We have found that we can utilize the talents God has given us and that we will be blessed for moving forward in faith. We learned to be creative and have fun on a Friday night without spending money on a movie or takeout.

We learned to be happy in a rented apartment. We know that when we are faithful and determined, Heavenly Father will give us what we need, when we need it.

Matt and I have now been married for over 10 years, have four amazing children, and are enjoying living in our first home. I will forever treasure the love I felt as I answered the phone call from a neighbor that day in my car. I am so thankful that Heavenly Father continues to bless us, just as He promised, for trying to follow Him. I have a strong testimony that while the road ahead of us may not be free of challenges, it will be a happy one, as long as we trust in Heavenly Father and continue to try to live as we know we should. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY IKER AYESTARAN



Elder Gary E. Stevenson

AN UNDERSTANDING HEART

By Elder Robert D. Hales
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles



Growing up in Cache County, Utah, USA, with the Logan Utah Temple nearby (see opposite page), Gary Stevenson gleaned many lessons from the teachings of his father and mother. His father taught him to follow the Holy Ghost, and his mother motivated him to choose the right. As a teen he learned to appreciate the fellowship and service of his priesthood quorums, part of his preparation to serve today in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

When Gary Stevenson was about 11 years old, his father took him hiking. “I was jumping from rock to rock in front of my father,” he remembers. “I intended to climb a large rock and look down. As I clambered toward the top of the boulder, he grabbed me by my belt and pulled me down.

“‘What’s the matter?’ I said, and he replied, ‘Don’t climb on that rock. Let’s just keep on the trail.’ A moment later as we looked down from higher up the trail, we could see a rattle-snake on top of the rock, basking in the sun.

“‘That’s why I pulled you back,’ my father explained.

“‘Later as we were driving home, I knew he was waiting for me to ask the question: ‘How did you know the snake was there?’ He said, ‘Let me teach you about the Holy Ghost.’ We had an impromptu lesson about the roles the Holy Ghost can have in our lives: protector, comforter, and one who testifies. ‘In this case,’ my father shared, ‘the Holy Ghost was protecting you through me. He warned me to pull you away.’”

This experience, though simple, helped Elder Stevenson to understand that when promptings of the Spirit are received, they



should be accepted and acted upon. It was one of many lessons gleaned from his father.

Marvelous Mother, Marvelous Mentors

According to Elder Stevenson, his mother was an example of pure goodness: “Her expectations motivated me. Almost every action I made was measured against the thought, ‘I do not want to disappoint my mom.’”

Together, his parents reinforced gospel principles during family home evening and other family activities or gatherings. “They anchored our home in the teachings of the gospel. It was the foundation of our lives,” he says.

Other significant mentors also guided him. “I remember in some of my early training as



a General Authority that President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, suggested we make a list of 20 people who had a positive impact on our lives. I think everyone could benefit from such an exercise. It was inspiring to think of all the good men and women who were there to help me, especially in my youth.”

Fortified by Family and Friends

Gary Evan Stevenson was born on August 6, 1955, and raised in Logan, Utah, USA. His parents, Evan and Jean Hall Stevenson, had four children. Gary was the second child and oldest son.

“I had a close association with my brother and sisters. My older sister, Debbie, expected me to do what was right. My younger siblings, Merilee and Doug, expected that I would be an example. We all felt a responsibility to live righteously and participate in Church activities.” His extended family



also held high expectations: “For example, when my oldest cousin left on a mission, he signed a \$2 bill and passed it to the next cousin preparing to serve. That \$2 bill passed through 16 cousins who served missions throughout the world, reminding each one that we were united in serving the Lord.”

Priesthood friends also influenced him for good. “I learned early in life what it means to be associated with a quorum, not only on Sunday but also in the neighborhood and in school,” he says. “It gave me a sense of identity, belonging, brotherhood, and service.” He specifically remembers accompanying a quorum member to collect

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE STEVENSON FAMILY. EXCEPT AS NOTED, LEFT: FLOWERS BY TUKKATA/ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK; ABOVE: PORTRAIT © BUSATH.COM; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPH OF LOGAN, UTAH, TEMPLE BY JARVIE DIGITAL



Elder Stevenson served a full-time mission in Japan (below right) and developed a love for Asia and its people. When he returned home, he met his future wife when they attended an institute class together. They married in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple and became the parents of four sons: Craig, Bryan, Brett, and Kyle. Elder Stevenson's eyes light up when he speaks of his wife, "the sunshine in and of my life."

fast offerings from a sister in the ward who was homebound, blind, and without much income. "Despite her circumstances, she always had a nickel or a dime as a fast offering," he recalls.

A Gift That Requires Work

After graduating from high school and a short time attending Utah State University, Elder Stevenson was called to serve in the Japan Fukuoka Mission. "I felt anxious about learning Japanese. My concern continued to mount in the missionary training center. Yet after about six weeks, fervent prayer and diligent study led me to a sense of peace that the Lord would bless me to learn Japanese, but not without hard work. This taught me that the gift of tongues is like faith and works and other gospel principles.

After you have done all you can do, then you are endowed with the blessing."

Following his mission,

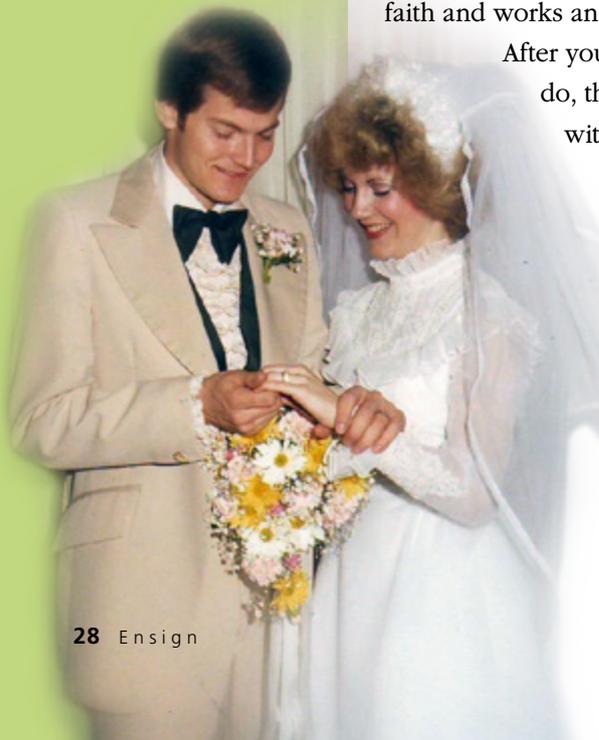
Elder Stevenson developed a passion for Church history, studying the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, and delving into historical journals and family histories. He took particular interest in Joseph Smith and his family, the Whitmer family, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris. He researched the translation and publication of the various editions of the Book of Mormon.

Once again he learned that faith and hard work go hand in hand. "Every answer to every gospel question does not come immediately," he counsels. "The Lord expects us to read, study, ponder, and pray. And when we do this with faith and a righteous desire, over time a sweet witness will come."

Through the years, he has felt especially blessed when called to teach youth Sunday School, Gospel Doctrine, and Young Men classes. These callings have allowed him to testify of his deep feelings for the truthfulness of the scriptures, a conviction developed from years of study.

Back at Utah State University, Elder Stevenson returned to his studies in business administration and marketing. He spent long hours in the library. "Each time I entered, I was greeted by a sign . . . that read, 'And with all thy getting get understanding' [Proverbs 4:7]." This scripture became engraved on his heart and years later became the theme of a devotional address he gave at Brigham Young University.

"This understanding comes through *an interdependence of study and prayer*," he explained in that address. "As we trust and rely on the Lord, a greater measure of understanding comes from Him into our heart."¹



Institute Romance

During an Old Testament class at the institute of religion, he met Lesa Jean Higley, who had moved from California to Idaho and was now a student at Utah State. “The teacher asked Lesa to role-play as Eve and for me to play the role of Satan to tempt her. As a result, it took a while for me to convince her to go out with me,” he recalls with a smile. They dated for just over a year and then married in the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple in 1979.

Elder Stevenson’s eyes light up when he speaks of Lesa. He refers to her as “the sunshine in and of my life.”² Sister Stevenson graduated with a degree in home economics education, taught school early in their marriage, and was constantly contributing her time and talents to schools, civic and community boards, organizations, and other endeavors. However, Elder Stevenson considers her gifts as a homemaker to be among her most God-given traits: “She has an ability to create a gospel-centered home, a safe and welcoming environment where the Spirit dwells.” This ability, coupled with a deep understanding that true joy comes through serving others, has blessed the lives of her husband, her family, and many around her.

Elder and Sister Stevenson became the parents of four sons. “We have enjoyed everything together through the years,” he says. “The boys played basketball, football, baseball, and tennis. We all share a love for outdoor activities such as four-wheeling, snowmobiling, skiing, snowboarding, and various water sports. Nevertheless, Lesa influenced our sons with a measure of culture as well, developing in them an enjoyment of music and art. And in order to extend the gift of service to others through our family, it was necessary that she engage the ‘horsepower’ of the boys.”

Building a Business

Elder Stevenson’s business career grew out of his love for the people of Asia. When he returned home from his mission, he and two lifelong friends started importing gift accessories from Asia. This evolved into selling fitness products. Over the next three decades, their small business grew



into a successful firm that employed over 2,500 people.

One employee remembers what was in Elder Stevenson’s heart as a businessman: “We were discussing a difficult business decision. I told him we had to make sure to do what was legal. He told me we had to not only do what was legal but that we had to do what was right.”

“Letting good principles absorb you in business is good for business,” Elder Stevenson states. “Integrity, hard work, compassion, treating people with respect—and at the same time requiring accountability—are not precepts you talk about and practice only on Sundays. They are to be practiced every day of the week.”

As the business grew, so did demands on his time: “I was a young bishop with young children and also making multiple trips to Asia each year. My father approached me and said, ‘I observe that when you are with your family, you are not really *with* them. I am afraid that might mean that when you are at work, you are not completely focused there, and when you are acting in your role as bishop, you might be worried about your work or family. You need greater balance in your life.’”

This counsel had a profound impact. Elder Stevenson says, “I learned that it is important to maintain a balance of family, profession, and Church calling, and to make certain that you take care of yourself as well.”



As a Seventy and as Presiding Bishop, Elder Stevenson was known for compassion as gentle as the blossoms on a cherry tree (cherry blossoms are a celebrated symbol of Japan). He reached out to people close to home and far away to share “the healing balm of our Savior’s love.” As an Apostle he will continue to reach out to the poor and needy, to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5).

Called to Serve—Again and Again

A respected business leader once encouraged Elder Stevenson to “learn, earn, and serve.” In 2004 the “serve” part of that equation was tested when Elder Stevenson and longtime business partner Scott Watterson were both called to serve as mission presidents. They felt they needed to explain to various stakeholders and customers why they were temporarily leaving their company. One by one they visited them.

“When we described our call and that we would serve for three years without compensation from the Church, they respected the goodness of that,” he says. They left the business in the hands of a trusted executive team, and it prospered.

As president of the Japan Nagoya Mission, Elder Stevenson found that his love for Asia deepened. “I consider it my second home,” he says. His depth of love for his wife also increased as he watched her embrace the local culture, reach out to others

including missionaries and members, and continue to raise their two sons who accompanied them. Several convert baptisms came in part as a result of her efforts to befriend those around her.

They had been home from their mission for only seven months when Elder Stevenson was called to serve in the First Quorum of the Seventy in 2008.

“I was stunned and humbled. I thought, ‘There are many others who could serve much better than I can.’ Yet I thought of previous times—as elders quorum president, high councilor, bishop, and counselor in a stake presidency—when I felt I was not seasoned enough to do the things I was asked to do. I have learned that before we are called, we may *not* be qualified, but the call *begins* a heavenly qualification.

“One of my favorite scriptures tells us two things we should do when we are called: First, ‘be faithful.’ Second, stand in the office in which you are appointed. (See D&C 81:5.)

To me this means to exhibit faith, learn what is needful, and then do all you can to magnify the call. If we do this, the Lord will magnify and qualify us to bless others.”

To Asia Again

As a Seventy, Elder Stevenson was assigned as a counselor in the Area Presidency and then as president of the Asia North Area.





In March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami devastated Japan. The 9.0-magnitude temblor generated a seismic sea wave that left 20,000 dead, displaced thousands, and destroyed 550,000 homes.

He visited the disaster zone many times. “As we met with people, our emotions ran from one end of the spectrum to the other,” he recalls. “We simultaneously observed tragedy and loss mixed with hope and restoration. Over and over again our hearts were touched as we witnessed the healing balm of our Savior’s love.”

In addition, he witnessed firsthand how the Church helps those in need: “To be able to react to a calamity and to help shape a response—that was a manifestation of the Church of Jesus Christ filling one of its divinely appointed responsibilities of caring for the poor and needy.” He described it as a sacred privilege to minister to those in need and see others do the same: “We learned about the goodness of humanity.”

The Legacy of Bishops

His understanding of compassion entered even more profoundly into his heart when in 2012 he was called as Presiding Bishop. In that capacity he managed a broad Church network that delivers welfare assistance and emergency response to Latter-day Saints and others, as well as humanitarian aid to Heavenly Father’s children in “some of the most difficult places, some of the most impoverished places, some of the most oppressed places around the world.”³

The role of bishop holds special significance for Elder Stevenson. “When I was 12, my father was called as bishop,” he recalls. “The ward had many widows, and Dad would often take me along when he ministered to them. He would have me take care of the garbage cans, clean

up something in the house, or get my friends to join me in raking leaves or shoveling snow. When we left, I always felt good inside. Visiting the widows helped me realize that part of what bishops do is minister to people one on one. The bishops of the Church are my heroes.”

A Promise from a Prophet

On the Tuesday prior to the October 2015 general conference, then-Bishop Stevenson received a call requesting that he meet with President Thomas S. Monson and his counselors.

“President Monson [extended] a call to the Quorum of the Twelve to me. He asked me if I would accept. . . . I responded affirmatively. And then . . . President Monson kindly reached out to me, describing how [when] he was called many years ago as an Apostle, . . . he too felt inadequate. He calmly instructed me, ‘Bishop Stevenson, the Lord will qualify those whom He calls.’ These soothing words of a prophet have been a source of peace [ever since].”⁴

Elder Gary E. Stevenson is truly a man without guile. As an Apostle, as he did as Presiding Bishop and as a Seventy and as he has done throughout his life, he will continue to reach out to the poor and needy. He will follow the scriptural charge to “succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees” (D&C 81:5). It is a challenging calling, but one to which he is well suited because of his understanding heart. ■

NOTES

1. Gary E. Stevenson, “Lean Not unto Thine Own Understanding” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 14, 2014), 2, 3, speeches.byu.edu.
2. Gary E. Stevenson, “Plain and Precious Truths,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 92.
3. Gary E. Stevenson, press conference, Oct. 3, 2015.
4. Gary E. Stevenson, “Plain and Precious Truths,” 91.

SEVEN TENDER Miracles ALONG THE WAY

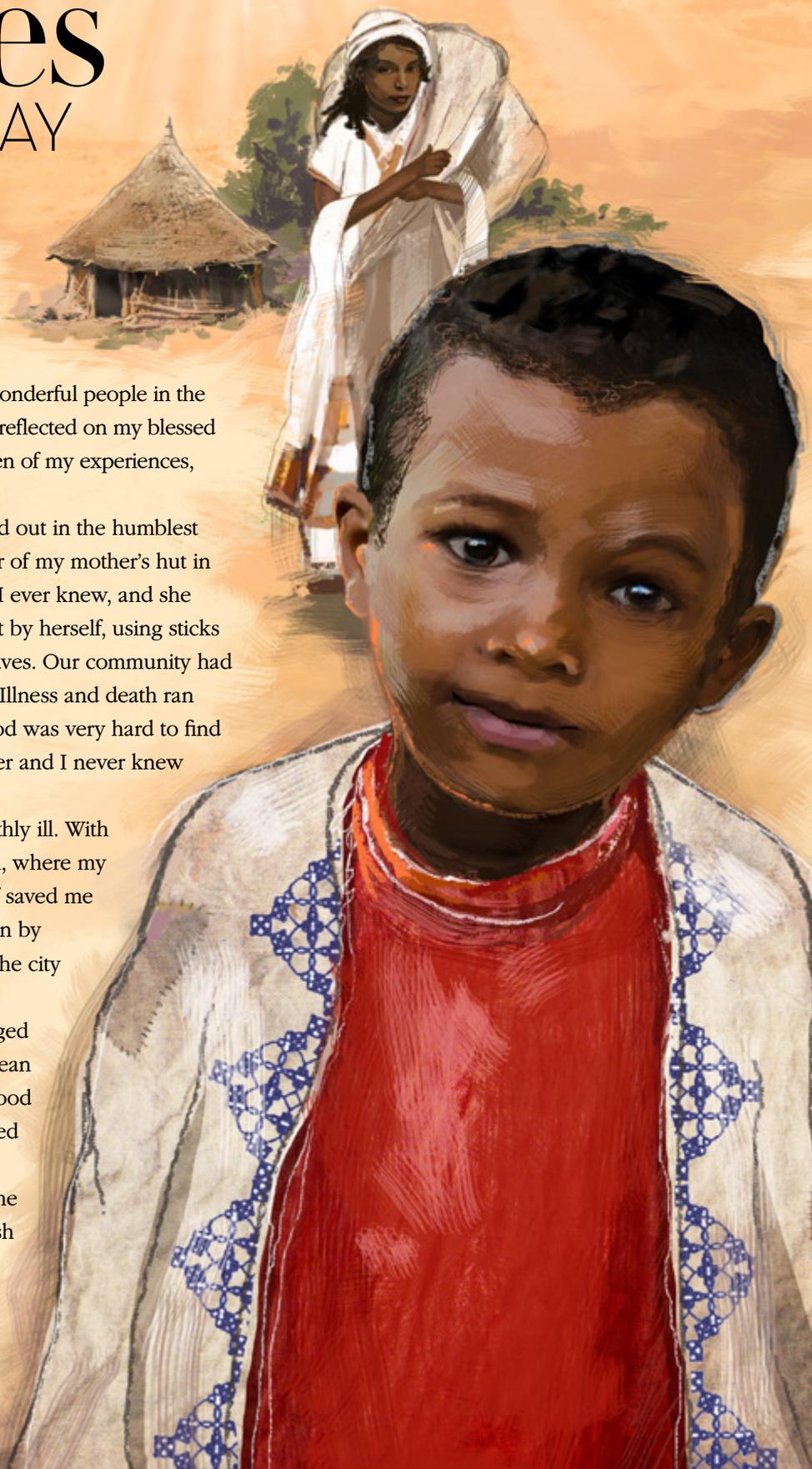
By Ephrem Smith

While teaching and serving many wonderful people in the Texas Fort Worth Mission, I often reflected on my blessed life. I marveled particularly at seven of my experiences, which I consider to be miracles.

First, I survived my early life, which started out in the humblest of circumstances. I was born on the dirt floor of my mother's hut in Dessie, Ethiopia. Mom was the only relative I ever knew, and she built our eight-foot (2.4 m) dome-shaped hut by herself, using sticks and mud that she covered with grass and leaves. Our community had no running water and no restroom facilities. Illness and death ran rampant in our *kebele*, or neighborhood. Food was very hard to find and impossible for us to purchase. My mother and I never knew a day without hunger.

When I was four, my mother became deathly ill. With her last bit of effort, we trudged to a hospital, where my beloved, weary mom died. The hospital staff saved me from life in the streets and death by starvation by arranging for me to live in an orphanage in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

The second miracle came as my life changed dramatically. In this orphanage I lived in a clean building, slept in a real bed, and ate all the food I wanted. Other orphans had also experienced the loss of a loved one, and they taught me how to deal with the loss of my mother. In the evenings we gathered to sing songs in English and pray in Amharic, our mother tongue. We prayed for each other and asked God to bless us to be adopted into "nice, kind,





The Lord has blessed my life with miracles that have helped me follow the path He has for me.

loving homes.” Both the music and the prayers impacted my life in a huge way. I never quit praying.

Third, I was introduced to the missionaries and the Church when I was eight. I was invited to see the dedication of the first LDS Church building in Ethiopia on Sunday, November 30, 2003. At the dedication I felt the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, and the missionaries in attendance radiated joy, happiness, and that same powerful spirit. I remember thinking that I wanted to be just like them. But I had no idea how I could ever reach this goal.

The fourth miracle came soon after. A family in the United States adopted me. My new father picked me up from the orphanage and took me home. We started the process of becoming acquainted, and I began to settle into my new environment.

Numerous challenges surfaced immediately upon my arrival. Everywhere I went people laughed at my English. My limited education caused problems in school. I prayed for help, and then I worked harder and smarter to close the knowledge gap, especially with English. Once again Heavenly Father answered my prayers. Two years later I proudly skipped a grade.

Then my home life fell apart. Prayers to the Lord, high personal goals, and a deep desire to succeed carried me through that extremely tough time. Finally, with a social worker’s help, my father and I agreed to terminate the adoption. This was a time for prayer, patience, faith, and help from Heavenly Father.

Now 15 years old, I went to live with a foster family for about a year. That was when the fifth miracle came.

While sleigh riding with two friends, I met an LDS family with two nice daughters. During the ride home, one of the daughters spoke up, saying, “I think the Lord wants us to adopt Ephrem Smith.” Remarkably, the other three members of the family had also received the same inspiration. The father worked with the Department of Social Services, and soon I moved to my new home. From the very beginning my amazing new father gave me agency. For example, he explained that their family goes to church on Sundays. He allowed me to choose to join them or stay home; he said that they still would love me if I chose not to attend church. I chose to attend church, and I have since made many other righteous decisions.

Miracle six came as I received a testimony of the gospel. One Sunday I sat in sacrament meeting singing “I Stand All Amazed” (*Hymns*, no. 193). Huge tears began running down my cheeks as I received a personal testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that the Church is His Church.

Finally, nine years later, I knew how to become like those missionaries! The missionary age was now 18, but my adoption had not yet been finalized. I waited seven long months until my adoption was completed. Finally, my missionary papers could be submitted. Four days later I received my mission call. In just one week the Lord blessed me with final adoption papers and a mission call. I treasure both papers exceedingly! They are my seventh miracle. Yes, indeed, it took many miracles along the way from that mud hut in Ethiopia to my treasured mission. ■

The author lives in Nevada, USA.

COME, FOLLOW ME: Teaching the Basics at Home

Following the examples of these members, you too can bring the principles from the youth curriculum into your home.

By Alicia Stanton and
Natalie Campbell

As prophets have repeatedly taught, “Our success, individually and as a Church, will largely be determined by how faithfully we focus on living the gospel in the home.”¹

Living the gospel is the best way to learn and teach the gospel. As we live these doctrinal principles, we will bring our families and ourselves closer to the Spirit. With the Spirit’s help, we can best learn and teach these principles. We will be guided to the most effective learning methods for our needs and circumstances and, with our families, grow closer to the Savior.





JULY:

Ordinances and Covenants

Priesthood ordinances and sacred covenants—promises we make with Heavenly Father—bring powerful blessings into our lives. One way to envision the purpose of ordinances is to think of them as milestones on a path leading back to Heavenly Father’s presence—eternal life. We stay on that path by keeping the covenants we have made.

For example, a young woman describes how she stays on the covenant path: “I once had a classmate ask me for help. I didn’t think much of it, just gave her the help she needed. But afterward, the Spirit reminded me that by helping bear her burdens, I was keeping the covenants I made when I was baptized (see Mosiah 18:8–10). I am grateful for the opportunities Heavenly Father gives me every day to choose to walk the covenant path.”

As a family, you might identify the ordinances each member still needs to receive and then evaluate how well you are keeping the covenants you have made. For example, what does your preparation to receive the weekly ordinance of the sacrament reflect about your commitment to your covenants? The Holy Ghost can teach you how to make improvements.



TOP: PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STOKER

AUGUST: Marriage and Family

Marriage and family are central to our happiness and to Heavenly Father’s plan for our salvation. The family is the fundamental unit in time and eternity.

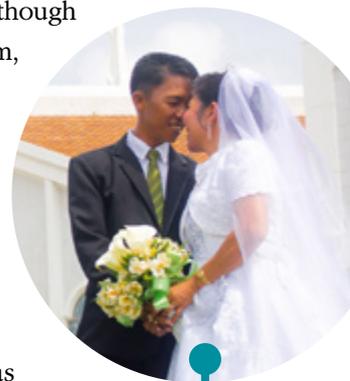
Teaching your children about marriage and family can be as easy as sharing a personal experience. A young adult shared how she gained an appreciation for her temple sealing:

“I remember sitting alone in an empty celestial room in the temple. I was anxious, not knowing if I would be sealed in the temple that day because of a miscommunication about the recommends my fiancé needed.

“I began to pray earnestly that the Lord would allow us to be sealed in His temple that day. As I did, a thought occurred to me: Although you are alone in the celestial room, the celestial kingdom is celestial because you won’t be alone. You will be with your eternal family and your heavenly family. That’s why you are being sealed.

“Forty minutes and a few phone calls later, my husband and I were able to be sealed. I was overwhelmed with gratitude and relief. The ordinance became more meaningful to me because we could build a celestial life with God where we would never have to be alone.”

What experiences have taught you about the role of marriage and family in Heavenly Father’s plan? The Holy Ghost can help you remember and share appropriate experiences. Regardless of your family situation, the Holy Ghost can teach you how to apply the principles of marriage and family in your life.





SEPTEMBER: Commandments

Commandments are the laws and requirements given by a loving Heavenly Father to bless our lives.

One powerful way to study them is by searching the scriptures to learn about the blessings that come from obedience, as this young adult did:

“When I study about a commandment, I like to read all the scriptures I can find about it and make a list of the blessings Heavenly Father promises for my obedience. Learning more about promised blessings has strengthened my testimony that Heavenly Father loves me and wants to bless me.”

To learn or teach about the commandments, you could read with your children lesson 4 in chapter 3 of *Preach My Gospel*, study the associated scriptures, and make your own lists of promised blessings. You could use this approach to learn about the blessings related to any of the principles of the gospel.

OCTOBER: Becoming More Christlike

During Christ’s ministry, He commanded us, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). We strive toward perfection when we simply work on developing one of Christ’s many attributes at a time and try to improve in that area with His help. One young man started by working on diligence.

“I wanted to develop more Christlike attributes, so I studied my scriptures and *Preach My Gospel*. In chapter 6 of *Preach My Gospel*, I found a suggested pattern for developing Christlike attributes and decided to try it with the quality of diligence. First I wrote down my own definition of diligence and the questions I had about it. Then I went through the suggested scriptures on diligence and recorded my impressions and answers I found as I read. Afterwards I set a goal to be more diligent with my schoolwork and have found myself feeling more motivated and consistent as I pray each night for diligence.”

As you strive to develop and teach your children how to develop Christlike attributes, Church resources can help you know where to start. The scriptures always supply Christ’s example, and resources like *Preach My Gospel* offer patterns that help us establish habits of studying and setting goals. When used together, the scriptures and other resources help us apply what we

learn so that we can become more like Christ.



NOVEMBER:

Spiritual and Temporal Self-Reliance



Developing self-reliance means exercising our agency to care for ourselves and our families and doing our best to find solutions to our own problems. Becoming more self-reliant gives us increased capacity to serve in our homes, the Church, and our communities. One of the best ways to teach these concepts is by example, as this member describes:

“For as long as I can remember, my mom has risen early each day to study the scriptures. I have seen how she has developed a spiritual strength that carries her through difficult times. She depends on her own relationship with Heavenly Father to be her support. Along with her spiritual strength, I’ve been impressed by her ability to care for our family. I’ve watched her budget, sacrifice her own wants, seek education, and show a lot of humility in ways that have allowed her to meet our family’s financial needs and still be at home with her children after school. I want the kind of strength that she has, and I’m so grateful for her example that teaches me how to get it.”

How could you be a better example of provident living to your children? If you don’t know a lot about certain aspects of self-reliance yet, you can invite your children to learn along with you, and that will be a great example in itself.



DECEMBER:

Building the Kingdom of God in the Latter Days

“Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14). This is the type of question you can ask yourself and your children as you discover what your roles are in building the kingdom of God.

This member learned to trust the Lord to help her build the kingdom: “I remember my parents teaching me from a young age that we always accept our callings because they are given by the Lord. While in college I was extended the call of Relief Society president. I was overwhelmed, but it never crossed my mind to say no. So I began the year with over 100 women to care for, little experience, and faith that the Lord would make up the difference. A year later I was released. As I thought back on the moments of revelation when I knew exactly what lesson to give or comment to share, or the many times when someone would make me a meal because I was too busy to cook, or the pile of encouraging notes I’d received, I knew with a surety that the Lord had magnified my efforts in building the kingdom.”

As you and your children think of ways to build the kingdom of God, remember to offer them encouragement and opportunities to serve. You might consider discussing ways to minister to others in the callings you hold. What other ways can you help the work roll forward? No matter where you serve, your efforts are valuable. As President

Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, said, “Stand close together and lift where [you] stand.”² ■

The authors live in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball, “Living the Gospel in the Home,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 101; see also L. Tom Perry, “Discipleship,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 60.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Lift Where You Stand,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 56.

Part 1 of this article was published in the January 2016 Ensign.

STANDING UP FOR Clean Language

By Craig Redding

My wife works for a major airline and associates with a new crew of people every month and new passengers every few hours. One day a hardworking and friendly co-worker bombarded her with foul language. With a painful look on her face but a friendly tone in her voice, my wife said, “Are you aware of how much bad language you use? It’s making me want to stay away from you.”

Surprised but not offended, he said, “I didn’t realize how much I was swearing.” And he stopped. Several weeks later he thanked my wife and told her how much his own wife appreciated the change in his language usage.

Sometimes the only way to help others understand our concerns about their use of profanity is to tell them directly, especially when our work regularly brings us into contact with new people who are likely unaware of our standards. If that is the case, we should be respectful and not speak with an air of superiority. If we ask in a spirit of friendship, people are more likely to not take offense and to not use foul language around us, especially if they enjoy our friendship.

There are other ways, however, that we can help co-workers become aware of what we stand for and radiate a commitment to decency and purity. These ways are most

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effective when done in a manner that builds relationships on a foundation of mutual trust and respect.

We can personalize our workspace in tactful, non-offensive ways. Perhaps our computer screensaver or other materials in our work area could share positive, uplifting messages. Often a little humor goes a long way to influence a co-worker’s behavior. For example, many would likely smile—

and carefully consider their words—after seeing the Mormonad that features a young man perched next to a giant parrot under the words, “Foul language is for the birds.”¹

Although not every situation will be resolved as easily as my wife’s, we can find ways to explain our beliefs that let our colleagues see that we are not judging them. Our courage to address the situation increases as we seek guidance through prayer and as we deepen our concern for our fellow brothers and sisters. It is important to address things in a way that can strengthen relationships with our friends and co-workers as we stand for the gospel principle of clean language. ■

Adapted from “Questions and Answers,” Ensign, June 2001, 70.

The author lives in Michigan, USA.

NOTE

1. *New Era*, May 2011, 27.



KEEPING OUR LANGUAGE CLEAN

“The words we use can lift and inspire, or they can harm and demean. In the world today there is a profusion of profanity with which we seem to be surrounded at nearly every turn. It is difficult to avoid hearing the names of Deity being used casually and thoughtlessly. Coarse comments seem to have become a staple of television, movies, books, and music. Bandied about are slanderous remarks and angry rhetoric. Let us speak to others with love and respect, ever keeping our language clean and avoiding words or comments that would wound or offend. May we follow the example of the Savior, who spoke with tolerance and kindness throughout His ministry.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Be an Example and a Light,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 86.

USE
LANGUAGE
TO BUILD



UPLIFT
THOSE
AROUND YOU.

PRESIDENT THOMAS S. MONSON

"Preparation Brings Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2010, 65.

When a mob attacked the Church's print shop and tossed the press and papers into the street, Vienna attempted to gather up the papers amid the confusion.





VIENNA JAQUES Woman of Faith

*From her baptism until her death at age 96,
Vienna Jaques stood as an example of faith in difficult times.*

By Brent M. Rogers

Church History Department

Vienna Jaques¹ had been in her new home in Jackson County, Missouri, USA, for only six weeks when violence erupted on July 20, 1833. Local residents had demanded that the Latter-day Saints leave the county, but Church leaders demurred to accept. Mobs in the area then attacked Church members and their property.

On that day, 46-year-old Vienna saw the mob tar and feather Edward Partridge, the bishop in Missouri, and Charles Allen. Meanwhile, others demolished the Church's print shop and threw the printing press and papers out the window, including unbound and incomplete copies of the Book of Commandments.² After the attack, Vienna knelt in the dirt road alone, furiously collecting scattered pages of the Book of Commandments. A mobber came over and hovered menacingly over her, declaring, "Madam, this is only a prelude to what you have to suffer."³ This traumatic event affected Vienna for many years. Still, she courageously remained faithful, even after this intensely violent episode in Missouri.

This event is one of many examples of Vienna's faith in the face of hardship. Though she lived more than 100 years ago, Vienna's life stands as an example to members of the Church today. She was strong-minded when it came to the gospel of

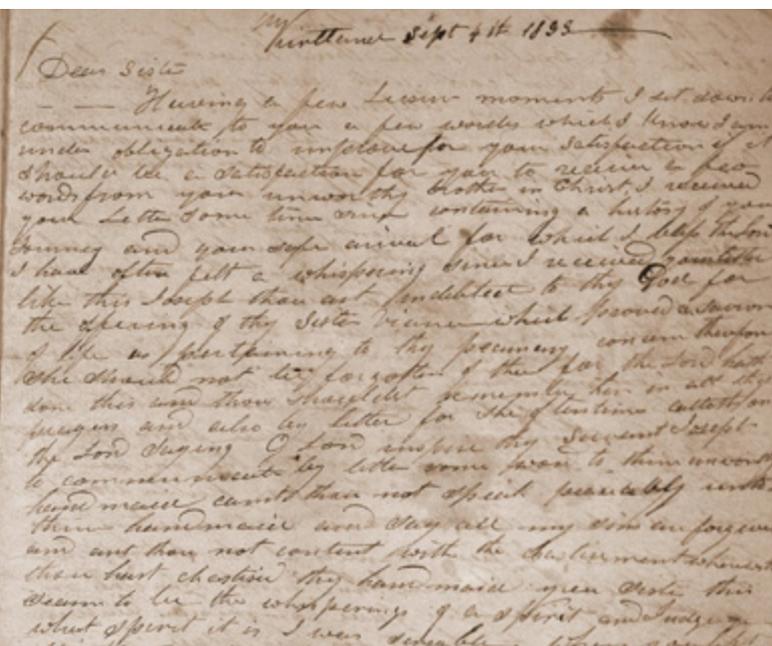
Jesus Christ. She had a testimony that Joseph Smith was a prophet, and she followed his leadership. She freely gave all she had temporally and spiritually to help build the kingdom of God during this crucial time in Church history.

Life in Boston, Massachusetts

Born on June 10, 1787, in Essex County, Massachusetts, to Henry and Lucinda Jaques, Vienna Jaques grew up to be a woman who enjoyed self-reliance. She lived into her 40s in Boston, Massachusetts, as an unmarried woman with considerable financial means. She also had a secondary residence in Providence, Rhode Island, with friends and family there. City directories over the years listed her as a nurse, midwife, and laundress.

When she first encountered Mormon missionaries in 1831, she was 44 years old and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But Vienna was a spiritual seeker who sought after truth. Upon hearing of Joseph Smith, Vienna obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon. According to her obituary, she did not fully comprehend the importance of the book when she first read it. Then, one evening as she

Dated September 4, 1833, this letter from Joseph Smith to Vienna Jaques is among the earliest surviving letters written by him.



considered what to include in her prayer, she had a “vision of the Book of Mormon” that prompted her to ask the Lord about this new scripture. Subsequently, “she was firmly convinced of its divine authenticity.”⁴

Vienna then wanted to meet the Prophet Joseph Smith, so she traveled alone to Kirtland, Ohio, in the summer of 1831 by canal boat and stagecoach. She was baptized while there. Vienna returned to Boston in the fall of 1831, and during the next year her faith made her an excellent missionary as she helped Joseph’s brother Samuel Smith and Orson Hyde establish a small branch in Boston. She provided housing for the two missionaries, and she connected them with her network of friends, family, and acquaintances. This gave the men a constant audience for preaching.⁵

Samuel Smith’s diary provides examples of how Vienna Jaques taught the gospel and bore a strong testimony of her faith. Samuel wrote on July 13, 1832, that he and Orson Hyde arrived in Providence, Rhode Island. “Some of the people were believing,” they discovered, because they “had heard Sister Vienna tell concerning the Book [of Mormon]. Some of them came in the same evening and we taught them.”⁶

Life in Kirtland, Ohio

Vienna left her comfortable living in the Boston area to gather with the Saints in Kirtland in the fall of 1832 and remained there through the spring of 1833. The Prophet Joseph received a revelation on March 8, 1833, that called Vienna by name to go to Zion—which referred to Jackson County, Missouri, at the time—to receive her inheritance (see D&C 90:28, 30). The revelation also gave her a promise for the future. She would receive a reward in “due time” and be able to “settle down in peace inasmuch as she is faithful, and not be idle in her days from thenceforth” (D&C 90:29, 31).⁷ Vienna thus became one of two 19th-century women mentioned by name in the Doctrine and Covenants (the other being Emma Smith).

By the time of that March 1833 revelation, Vienna had freely given to the Church a substantial financial offering—a sacrifice borne out of faith. Her gift came at a propitious time, as Church leaders were planning to purchase several



Vienna, who had worked as a nurse and a midwife, helped care for members of Zion's Camp when cholera hit the company near Jackson County, Missouri.

parcels of land in Kirtland, including the land on which the Kirtland Temple would be built.⁸ The Church needed funds to carry out such transactions, and her contribution aided these endeavors.⁹ In fact, Joseph wrote that this single sister's financial offering "proved a savior of life as pertaining to [the Church's] pecuniary [financial] concern."¹⁰

Life in Jackson County, Missouri

After the revelation in March 1833, a Church council encouraged Vienna to move to Jackson County. She left Kirtland in May and arrived in Jackson County by June 7, 1833. Vienna had donated precious funds and moved to Missouri in anticipation of living in peace in accordance with a divine message through a living prophet, but in the aftermath of the July violence where two men were tarred and feathered, such a situation seemed doubtful.¹¹

A few weeks after the attack on the Church's print shop, Joseph Smith wrote a letter of gratitude and comfort to Vienna, stating that he felt prompted to answer her prayers through a letter. He wrote words of reassurance and guidance to Vienna, as well as his own prayer to the Lord in her behalf: "After this great tribulation, let Thy blessings

fall upon Thy people, and let Thy handmaid live till her soul shall be satisfied in beholding the glory of Zion. Notwithstanding her [Zion's] present affliction, she shall yet arise and put on her beautiful garments and be the joy and glory of the whole earth." The Prophet Joseph further counseled Vienna to "live in strict obedience to the commandments of God and walk humble before Him and He will exalt thee in his own due time."¹²

As a result of mob violence in Jackson County, the Prophet Joseph Smith led a company of about 200 faithful volunteers from Kirtland called Zion's Camp to aid Church members in Missouri. They departed on this rescue mission in May 1834. On June 19 they arrived at a fork in the Fishing River. Here a fierce storm protected them from their enemies. However, at the end of June, cholera hit the company and eventually killed thirteen camp members and two other Church members residing in the area.¹³ Vienna helped attend to the sick. Writing of those who helped, Heber C. Kimball stated, "I received great kindness from them and also from sister Vienna Jaques, who administered to my wants and also to my brethren—may the Lord reward them for their kindness."¹⁴

Life in Nauvoo, Illinois

Vienna continued faithful through the remainder of the turbulent 1830s that saw the Church evicted from the state of Missouri, only to re-emerge stronger in Nauvoo, Illinois.

When the first baptism for the dead took place on September 12, 1840, in the Mississippi River, Vienna was there.¹⁵ Less than a month later in general conference, she heard Joseph Smith explain that the Saints had the opportunity to introduce to their dead ancestors the fulness of the gospel, thereby giving them “the privilege of coming forth in the First Resurrection.”¹⁶ Vienna gained a great appreciation for the sacred work she could do for her deceased ancestors. Indeed, while she lived in Nauvoo she acted as proxy in more than 50 baptisms for the dead, most of which were for her own ancestors.¹⁷

In the winter months before they left Nauvoo, the Saints

finished the Nauvoo Temple and thousands received their endowments. Vienna received her temple covenants on January 22, 1846. Over the next 40 years she developed an understanding of the temple’s importance and made every effort to share her perspective and appreciation for the sacred ordinance work that the temple allows.

Life in the Salt Lake Valley

Vienna Jaques experienced the further tumult and violence in Illinois, eventually resulting in the migration of the Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. Vienna too journeyed in faith to the valley, driving her wagon across the plains in 1847 in the Charles C. Rich company. Members of this group were among the first to settle in the valley. Vienna was given a city lot in the Salt Lake 12th Ward. Here she ultimately found the place of rest promised her in the March 1833 revelation.

At age 60, Vienna drove her own wagon in 1847 from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley.



A few historical snippets from the rest of her life reveal her continued faithfulness and diligence in the Church. Vienna was indefatigable in her work and service in the Salt Lake 12th Ward Relief Society. Some of her statements and testimony reveal that the work and focus of the Church, and of the Lord, are also, in many ways, remarkably constant. At one meeting Vienna felt “called upon to say a few words” on the subject of prayer. She stated that she had learned through her experience—perhaps alluding to her earlier prayer inquiring about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon—that prayer was most effective for her when she thought “to simply ask for those things which she needed.” She offered additional counsel, telling the women in a beautifully simple way that they should never “be afraid to do good. You will never be sorry. Don’t neglect your duties. When we neglect our duties, we lose; when we lose, the adversary gains.”¹⁸

Vienna also continued to appreciate the privilege of doing ordinance work for deceased ancestors and encouraged others to make the temple a priority.¹⁹ At a June 1876 Relief Society meeting, she remarked that her mind had “been very much occupied in regard to the temple.”²⁰ That same month, when aged pioneers were honored at an event in Provo, Vienna traveled by railroad with Church leaders John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Orson Pratt. She was among the featured speakers who addressed an audience of about 800 people, sharing accounts of her exciting, difficult, and faith-building experiences in the early Church.²¹

As Vienna moved into her 90s, she remained self-reliant. An article in the July 1878 *Woman’s Exponent* said of her: “She lives entirely alone, . . . does all her own housework, including washing, ironing and cooking, writes many letters, and does a great deal of reading. Sister Vienna is very familiar with the Scriptures. This last Spring she has made sixty-one pounds of butter, and milked her own cow.”²²

Enduring to the End in Faith

Vienna Jaques died in her own home in Salt Lake City, Utah, on February 7, 1884, at the age of 96. She was “strong and full of faith in the principles of the Gospel”²³ and was

generous in her dealings with others.²⁴ She led a truly Christlike life that demonstrated her devotion to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Her history offers us an excellent example of discipleship. Like the lives of so many other Church members in history, Vienna’s life teaches us much about the power of faith and also the importance of seeking after truth with humility, compassion, and sacrifice. ■

Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been standardized in some quotations.

NOTES

1. Vienna consistently spelled her last name Jaques, not Jacques.
2. See “Letter from John Whitmer, 29 July 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2014), 186–98.
3. See Vienna Jaques, Statement, Feb. 22, 1859, Church History Library, Salt Lake City; see also “A History, of the Persecution, of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints in Missouri,” December 1839–October 1840,” *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847*, vol. 2 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2012), 209–11.
4. See George Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” *Woman’s Exponent*, Mar. 1, 1884, 152.
5. See Samuel Harrison Smith, Diary, June 22–Aug. 7, 1832, Church History Library; Orson Hyde, Journal, June 25–Aug. 7, 1832, Church History Library.
6. Smith, Diary, July 13, 1832.
7. See “Revelation, 8 March 1833 [D&C 90],” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, vol. 3 of the Documents series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (2014), 30–31.
8. See *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 30; Edward W. Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (1877), 441; Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” 152.
9. See *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 46–50, 108–12.
10. “Letter to Vienna Jaques, 4 September 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 292.
11. See “Home Affairs,” *Woman’s Exponent*, July 1, 1878, 20–21; Hamlin, “In Memoriam: Vienna Jaques,” 152.
12. “Letter to Vienna Jaques, 4 September 1833,” *Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, 293. Note that this is the earliest surviving letter from Joseph Smith to a woman other than his wife, Emma.
13. See Thomas G. Alexander, “Wilford Woodruff and Zion’s Camp: Baptism by Fire and the Spiritual Confirmation of a Future Prophet,” *BYU Studies*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2000), 146.
14. Heber C. Kimball, “Extracts from H. C. Kimball’s Journal,” *Times and Seasons*, Mar. 15, 1845, 839–40.
15. See statement in Addresses, 1839–1842, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library; see also Jane Neyman Statements, Nov. 29, 1854, Joseph Smith History Documents, 1839–1860, Church History Library.
16. Vilate M. Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, Oct. 11, 1840, Vilate M. Kimball Letters, Church History Library; see also *Times and Seasons*, Oct. 1840, 186.
17. See Susan Easton Black and Harvey Bischoff Black, eds., *Annotated Record of Baptisms for the Dead, 1840–1845: Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois*, 7 vols. (2002), 5:3256–65.
18. In Twelfth Ward Relief Society Record Book, Church History Library, 177.
19. See Vienna Jaques to Brigham Young, July 2, 1870, Brigham Young Incoming Correspondence, 1839–1877, Church History Library.
20. In Twelfth Ward Relief Society Record Book, 233.
21. See “A Gay Excursion Party,” *Deseret News*, June 21, 1876, 330.
22. “Home Affairs,” 20–21.
23. “Home Affairs,” 21.
24. See “Funeral Services,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 13, 1884, 57.



*We find joy
in the consis-
tent effort of
experiencing a
change of heart
as we embrace
the Atonement
of Jesus Christ
in our lives.*

EXPERIENCING a Change of Heart



By Elder
Edward Dube
Of the Seventy

Rosemary, our firstborn child, was a new pretty baby when my mother visited us from her village in central Zimbabwe. As brand-new parents, my wife, Naume, and I were so excited for my mother's visit. We were eager to learn everything we needed to know about raising a child.

Upon arriving, my mother brought out a round cloth necklace. Wrapped in the cloth, she explained, was a magical object. She held out the necklace to Naume to put on Rosemary's neck. Sensing Naume's hesitation, my mother immediately said: "From an early age my mother and maternal grandmother gave me this magical object, which has protected me and all my children, including your husband. This amulet will protect your daughter from diseases and from all sorts of spells that might befall her, and she will overcome any difficult situation in life. She will need to wear this until she is five years old."

At that time I was serving as branch president, and I immediately thought, "What will the members of my branch think when they see this 'magical' necklace on our baby's neck?" Then I thought, "Maybe we could cover it so that it will not be so visible." I looked at Naume; her expression told me that we should not accept this gift. I asked my mother if she could make a small, thin necklace, one that might not be so visible. She responded that it was not possible and that the magical object worked best in the format she had prepared it.

Again, Naume gave me a look that clearly expressed her disapproval. I turned to my mother and explained

that as a branch president in our local congregation, I would not be comfortable placing the necklace on our child. My mother replied with a warning: she told us that without the necklace our baby would die.

A Moment of Panicked Crisis

A few weeks after this incident, our little Rosemary fell very ill. We did not have money to take her to the doctor. It was at night, and at that moment I started thinking about what my mother had said in her warning. I began wishing I had accepted the necklace. I would have taken it and put it on Rosemary's neck. At this moment of panic, I heard a still, small voice urging me to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I immediately got dressed in my Sunday best. I took our baby in my arms and pronounced a priesthood blessing. I felt peace and comfort, and I sensed that my wife felt the same way. Almost immediately both Naume and little Rosemary fell into a peaceful sleep. Our daughter Rosemary was healed. In the proceeding days she slowly recovered and regained her full health. What a miracle we witnessed! The Lord in His tender mercies reached out to me and strengthened my faith in Him.

I was grateful but also a little ashamed. Here I was, a returned missionary serving as a branch president, but I was more concerned about what people would say rather than believing in God (see Mosiah 4:9). Yes, even my mother, whom I love and admire so much, could not comprehend all things. I needed to be something more than just a returned missionary;



something more than a branch president; I needed to change—to experience what Alma experienced.

A Moment of Mighty Change

Alma, priest of wicked King Noah, likely examined himself closely when the prophet Abinadi asked this searching question: “Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?” (Mosiah 12:27). Just like Alma, I needed to have a “mighty change wrought in [my] heart” (Alma 5:12).

As a priest in King Noah’s court, Alma was accustomed to a life of privilege. He received support for his living through the people’s taxes. He enjoyed a position of power and prominence. He was one of those who “were lifted up in the pride of their hearts” (Mosiah 11:5). Yet when Alma learned about the Savior’s coming into the world—of His teachings, suffering, death, and Resurrection and that Jesus Christ is “the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death” (Mosiah 16:9)—he was ready to change. He was even ready to die if necessary.

Surrounded by opposition and life-threatening dangers, Alma courageously pleaded with King Noah to let Abinadi depart in peace. Alma’s actions came from his heart; he had felt the love of the Savior extended to him through the Lord’s prophet Abinadi.

When my mother offered me a necklace of protection to put on my baby’s neck, I based my concern on outward appearance.

I was worried about what the members of our branch would think of me. Apparently, I had not yet fully experienced that “mighty change of heart.” I have since come to realize that our success and happiness is based on how fully we are willing to take the gospel into our hearts. In order for us to find true happiness, joy, and peace, “the pure gospel of Jesus Christ must go down into [our] hearts . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost.”¹

An Opportunity to Testify

With this kind of change, looking up to the Savior in all things and in all places enables us to reach out to others. Alma became a mighty missionary, reaching out to so many and organizing the Church of Christ among his people who fled from King Noah.

Can you see how I missed an opportunity to share the gospel with my mother when she offered us that magical object, which she believed had always protected her and her children? I could have been an instrument in the hands of the Lord—just like Alma—who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ and “changed their

I took our baby in my arms and pronounced a priesthood blessing.



CONTINUING CONVERSION

“We need to experience a continuing conversion by increasing our faith in Jesus Christ and our faithfulness to His gospel throughout our lives—not just once but regularly.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Stay in the Boat and Hold On!” *Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 90.





Alma courageously pleaded with King Noah to let Abinadi depart in peace.

hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God” (Alma 5:7).

As I reflect on that occasion with my mother, I wonder what would have happened had I responded more like Alma. My mother may have been awakened unto God, and her change could have had a positive impact upon my siblings. This change could then have had a great impact in the lives of my siblings’ children and on to their posterity.

Alma’s mighty change was felt not only by those whom he taught and to whom he testified but also by his children and his posterity. His son, Alma, when preaching to the people in and around the land of Zarahemla, reminded them of his father’s testimony of the Savior Jesus Christ:

“Behold, I can tell you—did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi? . . .

“And according to his faith there was a mighty change wrought in his heart” (Alma 5:11–12).

For a young person like Alma, this mighty change of heart, which began through the invitation by Abinadi to apply one’s heart to understanding the word of God, was the key to his happiness and success in reaching out to others: “And behold, he preached the word unto your fathers, and a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts, and they humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God. And behold, they were faithful until the end; therefore they were saved” (Alma 5:13).

Make an Ongoing Change

Some young people today are caught between choosing what is right in the sight of God or pleasing their parents or guardians, who may not share the same feelings they have about the truthfulness of the gospel. When faced with such a choice, ask yourself, “Does this decision help me to feel that my ‘works have

been the works of righteousness’ (Alma 5:16), and does it still make me feel ‘to sing the song of redeeming love?’” (Alma 5:26).

While we should all love and admire our parents, we need to know that the choices we make will have a direct impact upon our children and our posterity. To some of us it may be necessary to move away from our comfort zones, as did Alma, who fled from the servants of King Noah and taught the gospel in very difficult circumstances. He brought about change not only in his family but also in others. To experience a change of heart, it is important that we think of others and “join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who [know] not God” (Alma 6:6).

What if our baby Rosemary had not survived her illness—even after the priesthood blessing I pronounced upon her? The Lord’s admonition is a great strength to me: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 10:39).

We find joy in the consistent effort of experiencing a change of heart as we embrace the Atonement of Jesus Christ in our lives. I am grateful for this knowledge, and I know in my heart that our Savior went forth, “suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people” (Alma 7:11). I know that there is real safety and protection in looking to the Lord and following His counsel. ■

NOTE

1. Henry B. Eyring, “We Must Raise Our Sights,” *Ensign*, Sept. 2004, 16.



FLY-FISHING & Family Time

On a fishing trip, I couldn't help but reflect on the short life cycle of the caddis fly. Somehow I felt drawn toward a new life cycle of my own.

By Dennis S. Dahl

Two weeks before the 43rd anniversary of our temple sealing, my wife unexpectedly passed away. A few days later, I was going through her desk and found a little card addressed to me. I flipped it open. The words were in her strong, flowery handwriting, indicating that she had written them quite some time ago: "Congratulations to the world's greatest fisherman. Only the truly great give up what they love for the benefit of others. Thank you! Love forever and always, me."

A wave of astonishment and surprise flooded over me. I remembered one of our Friday afternoons many summers ago. I was knee-deep in my favorite spot on the Madison River in Montana, USA. Water gurgled around my legs and pressed on my waders, the pea gravel shifted under my boots, and my arm worked the fly rod in rhythmic sweeps. I noticed that the earliest caddis flies were just starting to emerge and dance on the surface of the water.

Pausing for a moment to change fishing flies, I looked downstream and saw my wife sitting on the grassy bank of the river. I hoped she was enjoying herself as much as I was during our time out here together in the fresh air, far away from the business and home and children and

Church callings that otherwise took up our time. In fact, it was because of these pressures that we had reserved every Friday to spend time together.

Together?

As I stripped out some line and turned back toward the fish, I couldn't help but reflect on the short life cycle of the caddis fly. Somehow I felt drawn toward a new life cycle of my own.

After the children were off to school the next Friday, I reached into my closet for my fishing gear but left the waders on the peg. That day I learned about my wife's new flower press. The next Friday I left my fishing vest behind, and I learned the names of several new birds from her. After that, I left all of my gear at home and began a journey with my wife into the natural world of flora and fauna that went far beyond caddis flies and trout. Eventually I began to see glimpses of life through her eyes, feminine and tender and strong all at the same time.

Over the years she taught me the names of dozens of wildflowers, identified over 300 different birds, and collected countless rock samples. She had an infectious way of finding joy and beauty everywhere, of seeing colors and



light and goodness, of hearing laughter in the breeze. She taught me the wonder of poetry, and I even memorized some of my favorite poems. We hiked, rode our horses, and stopped at every antique store and tourist trap we encountered. Sometimes we drove all day, exploring a new road. Sometimes we sat in a meadow or on a ridge-top until the sunset. Our Fridays together evolved into weeklong trips to the Oregon coast or the deserts of the southwestern United States.

I had long ago given up any notion of nobility in the sacrifice of my fly-fishing rod. Eventually I came to understand that I had simply traded a few trout for a vibrant and new dimension of life. Even during the past several years, when severe back problems and asthma had prevented my wife from going outside, we still took short drives to see the bird migrations or the change of the seasons, ever mindful to keep our Fridays together.

Over the years my family, especially my sons, have puzzled about why I quit fishing. They still invite me to go fishing with them often. Usually I pass. When I do go, it is just to get outside for a few hours or be with my grandchildren. I lose interest in the fishing quickly and try my best to show them what I had overlooked, run past, or shoved aside for so long, to help them see beyond the fishing, to help them understand the gifts my wife has given me.

I folded the card, the words becoming blurry through my tears. How I missed her! She had never said a word to me in all these years about my giving up fly-fishing, and yet here it was in my hands, a thank-you delivered to me from beyond the grave. She still surprised me, and I forced a weak smile when I plainly heard her clear voice saying, "Don't forget to take time and smell the flowers." ■

The author lives in Idaho, USA.

A Father's Love

Andrew had recently been diagnosed with a debilitating disease, but he wanted to fulfill his duty as a deacon and pass the sacrament. With his father's help, he did.

By Pauline Richardson

As the sacrament prayer ended, I raised my eyes and looked at the neat and reverent row of deacons receiving their sacrament trays to pass to the congregation. Moments later, my gaze fell on a young man who I knew was passing the sacrament for the first time. It was Andrew. He was dressed nicely in his pressed white shirt and tie. He stood tall with his shoulders pulled back and showed great care as he administered to his assigned rows along one side of the chapel. His father was standing right behind him and was still and reverent.

I watched Andrew carefully hand the tray down the row and then glance up at his father, who nodded with approval. After the tray was passed back to Andrew, a loving smile grew on his father's face as they advanced down the aisle together with quiet respect, carefully balancing the tray as they slowly stepped forward.

As I watched this father-and-son team pass the sacrament, I remembered that Andrew had been recently diagnosed with a disease called Friedreich's ataxia. It is a debilitating disease that seriously affects one's balance, among other things. This diagnosis brings with it a very

altered lifestyle. Many typical childhood activities would not be in this young man's future.

I remembered the sadness I felt when Andrew's mom, my good friend, found out about her son's condition. I had prayed I could somehow help her. Ultimately there was little I could do, but I knew she and her husband would rely on Heavenly Father to help them in their time of need.

As I watched Andrew and his father attentively move along the rows, I became overwhelmed with a sweet feeling of peace. I saw this gentle father steady his son's frail and wavering body against his arm and help him hold the tray. As they moved from row to row, the father continually gave silent nods of approval to reassure his son. Suddenly the imagery was too much for me and I broke into tears.

That day I witnessed an inspiring example of a loving parent leaning on the Lord to help him help his son and of a child leaning on his father for help. I also saw a deeper meaning of the sacrament, as I reflected on the sacrifice our Savior made for us so we could lean on Him through life's challenges. Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, support us every day as we struggle with personal,



BUILDING FATHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

“As a father, I wonder if I and all other fathers could do more to build a sweeter, stronger relationship with our sons and daughters here on earth. Dads, is it too bold to hope that our children might have some small portion of the feeling for us that the Divine Son felt for His Father? Might we earn more of that love by trying to be more of what God was to His child?”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Hands of the Fathers,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 15.

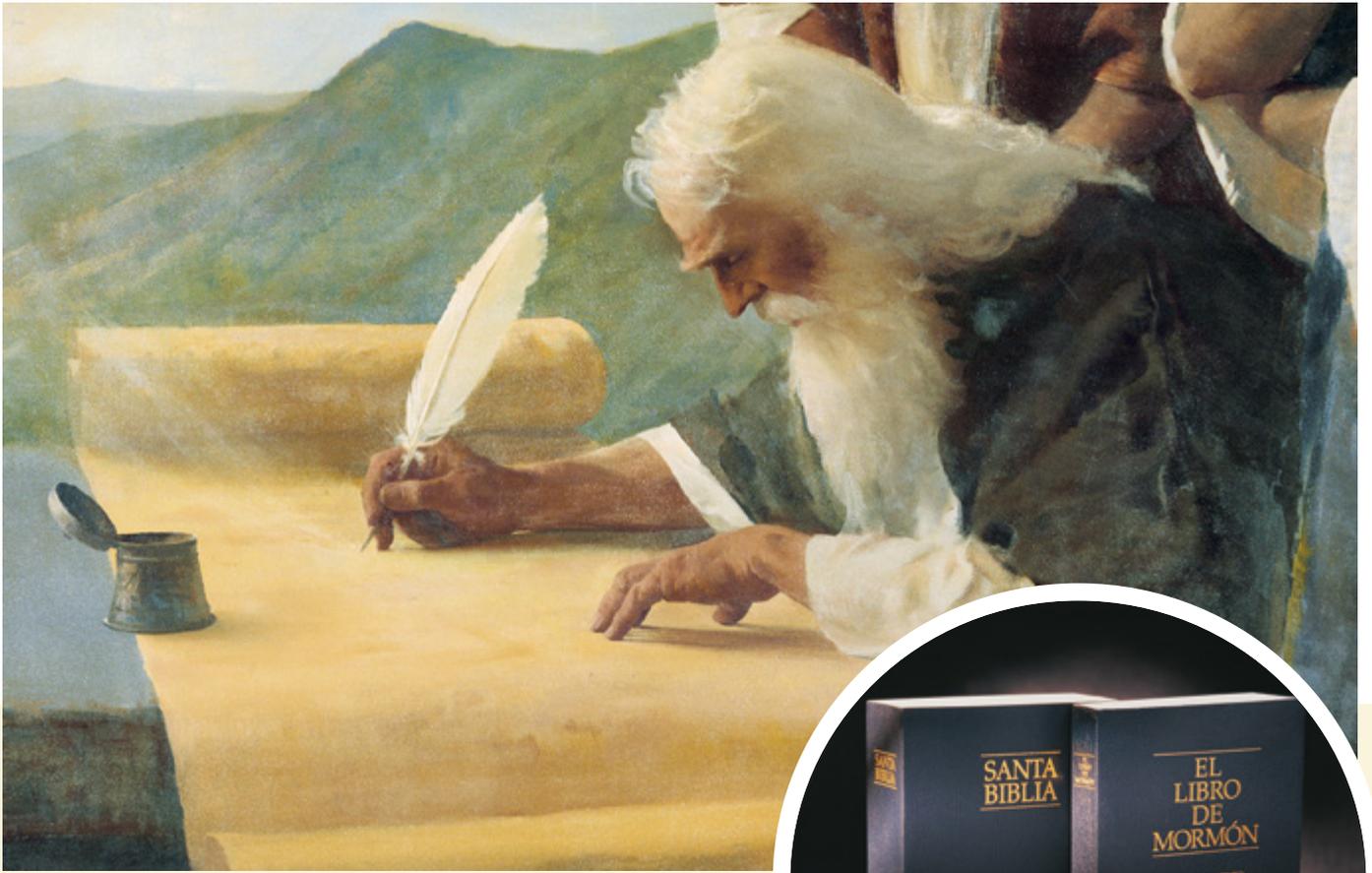
physical, or spiritual weaknesses. They are ready to steady us, strengthen us, and help us fulfill our duty.

Andrew wanted to fulfill his calling as a deacon in spite of his circumstances, and he dared to do something a little different from the other boys. He had his father stand right beside him to steady him as he passed the sacrament. I was especially thankful that I

could be in the room to witness such a sweet similitude of what our Heavenly Father and our Savior do for us.

It turned out that this was one of the few times Andrew was able to pass the sacrament. He overcame a tough challenge that Sunday, and I will always be thankful for the lesson I learned about courage, faith, and love. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE EYES OF THE BLIND Shall See

*We may consider the coming forth of
the Book of Mormon as a miraculous restoration
of spiritual eyesight.*



By Elder
Lynn G. Robbins
Of the Presidency
of the Seventy

Isaiah prophesied that in the latter days the Lord would proceed to do “a marvellous work and a wonder,” and he foretold the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, stating that “the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness” (Isaiah 29:14, 18).

An “Awful State of Blindness”

In the days prior to the glorious First Vision, the religious fervor of Manchester, New York, USA, was extremely confusing. In Joseph Smith’s words, “So great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person . . . to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” (Joseph Smith—History 1:8).

The Book of Mormon refers to this pre-Restoration confusion as an “*awful state of blindness* . . . because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church” (1 Nephi 13:32; emphasis added).

Over the centuries, the clear spiritual eyesight provided by the Bible *blurred* as many plain and precious parts were lost, sometimes unintentionally through flawed translation and sometimes intentionally by corrupt editing, “that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might *blind the eyes* and harden the hearts of the children of men” (1 Nephi 13:27; emphasis added).

“Whereas I Was Blind, Now I See” (John 9:25)

One of the most common of the Savior’s miracles was restoring eyesight to the blind.¹ The Savior’s more important mission and miracle, however, was healing the spiritually blind. “I am come into this world,” He said, “that they which see not might see” (John 9:39).

Using Isaiah’s metaphor and Nephi’s vision of spiritual blindness in the latter days, we may consider the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a miraculous restoration of spiritual eyesight.

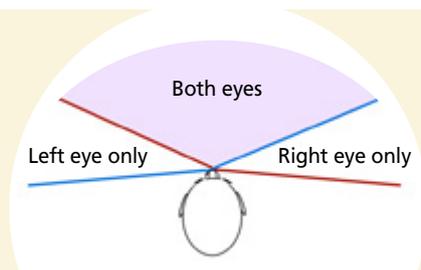
“Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall

Both “established in one” is the way two eyes see or function. Because I have glaucoma, I have to apply sight-saving miracle drops in both eyes twice a day to prevent blindness. Before doctors discovered that I had glaucoma, I had already lost partial vision in one eye. I am profoundly grateful for modern-day medicine and that I am not blind. I am also thankful for my second good eye, which compensates for the partial loss of vision in the other. The two-eye metaphor has profound and personal relevance for me.

Multiple scientific analyses illustrate the advantages of two eyes over one. I will explore six of those advantages



2A. A child’s toy demonstrates the power of superior depth perception.



1. Humans have a maximum horizontal field view of around 190 degrees with two eyes, approximately 120 degrees of which is seen by both eyes.



2B. In the animal kingdom, two eyes give potential prey precise depth perception, helping it break the camouflage of predators.

forever remain in that awful state of *blindness*. . . .

“. . . I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, inasmuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel. . . .

“For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, . . . [and] these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.

“And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

“. . . These last records . . . shall establish the truth of the first. . . . They both shall be established in one” (1 Nephi 13:32, 34–36, 40–41; emphasis added)—coming together to help us see the truth.

and their spiritual parallels with the Book of Mormon as a second *eyewitness* of Jesus Christ in *restoring* spiritual eyesight to the world.

1. Two Eyes Increase the Field of Vision and Enhance Clarity

Humans have a maximum horizontal field of view of around 190 degrees with two eyes, approximately 120 degrees of which overlaps or is seen by both eyes. Beyond the converging field of view, each eye also has a peripheral field unique to that eye.²

After centuries of plain and precious things being lost, the Bible enjoyed something less than perfect eyesight. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon with its perfect eyesight not only increased the field of spiritual vision but also

gave much-needed clarity to the overlapping portion of the two spiritual eyes, or the binocular field of vision (see image 1)—scripturally we call this the law of two witnesses (see Matthew 18:16; Ether 5:4; D&C 6:28).

The overlapping field of vision, or *binocular summation*, enhances the ability to detect faint objects.³ We see things more clearly as the separate views received in each eye are combined into a single image, giving us a convergence of the *visual axis*⁴ and thus eliminating the “confusion and strife” that so bewildered young Joseph (see Joseph Smith—History 1:8).

The fact that *two eyes are better than one* is such a universal and self-evident fact that Isaiah couldn’t have chosen a better metaphor for worldwide identification: “the eyes of the blind shall see” (Isaiah 29:18). We hope that those who currently see with just one spiritual eye, the Bible, will recognize the wisdom of not rejecting the Book of Mormon as a second eyewitness of Jesus Christ before they even give it a try. They will discover that “the stick of Judah” and the “stick of Joseph” (Ezekiel 37:19) converge as two eyes synced in perfect and clear unison—an *eye-opening* experience!

2. Stereopsis—Avoiding Deception

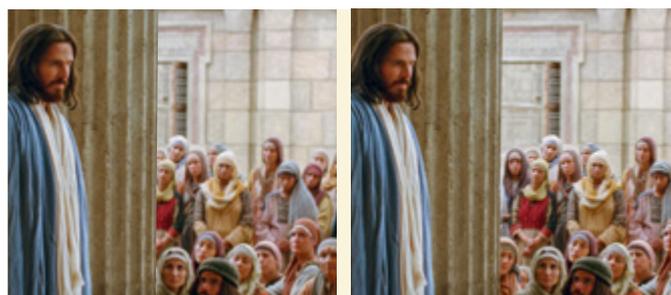
“Binocular vision . . . allows humans to walk over and around obstacles at greater speed and with more assurance” because of more precise depth perception.⁵ An example of this superior depth perception is demonstrated in the 3-D clarity of a stereoscope image over a simple photograph (see image 2A).

In the animal kingdom, two eyes give potential prey *stereopsis*, or precise depth perception, and the ability to discern 3-D disparities, thus helping it “to break the camouflage of [a potential predator]”⁶ (see image 2B).

The Book of Mormon provides the world with similar protection by restoring clarity and divine depth perception to the spiritual binocular field, allowing us to avoid Satan’s camouflage and deceptions. He cleverly introduced confusion by blurring the meaning of many biblical passages. The

Book of Mormon broke his camouflage with crystal-clear corroboration, “unto the confounding of false doctrines” (2 Nephi 3:12) and the “divid[ing] asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil” (Helaman 3:29).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) shared this reassuring promise of the Book of Mormon: “There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to *avoid deception*. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path.”⁷



3. Binocular vision helps a person see more of, or all of, an object behind an obstruction. Can you tell the difference?

3. Seeing around Obstructions

Binocular vision helps a person to see more of, or all of, an object behind an obstruction. This advantage was pointed out by Leonardo da Vinci, who noted that a vertical column obscuring an object might block some or all of the object from the left eye but that the object might yet be visible to the right eye⁸ (see image 3).

A spiritual example of this is found in the Savior’s words to the Judeans: “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16).

Because Jesus did not identify those other sheep, the Jews could not decipher His statement. However, with the *additional perspective* from the Book of Mormon, that which was hidden became visible: “And verily I say unto

you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (3 Nephi 15:21). The result was a clear field of vision with no misunderstanding of what the Savior meant—no more *obstacle* illusions.

4. The Peripheral Advantages of Each Eye

“Peripheral vision is a part of vision that occurs outside the very center of gaze.”⁹ In other words, we are aware of things in the field of vision on which we aren’t actually focused. Part of that field of vision—that which is outside the range of the binocular field, or *stereoscopic* vision—is unique to each eye (see image 1).

We are profoundly grateful for the Bible and what it uniquely and magnificently gives us—most important, the history of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

We are also deeply grateful for the Book of Mormon and the 20/20 untainted vision it provides for us, which clarifies the doctrine of Christ and reveals His teachings through the prophets of ancient America and His personal visitation and ministry to the Nephites.

Like two eyes divinely paired, the Bible and the Book of Mormon complement each other, resulting in a spectacular binocular panorama, as well as vistas unique to each.

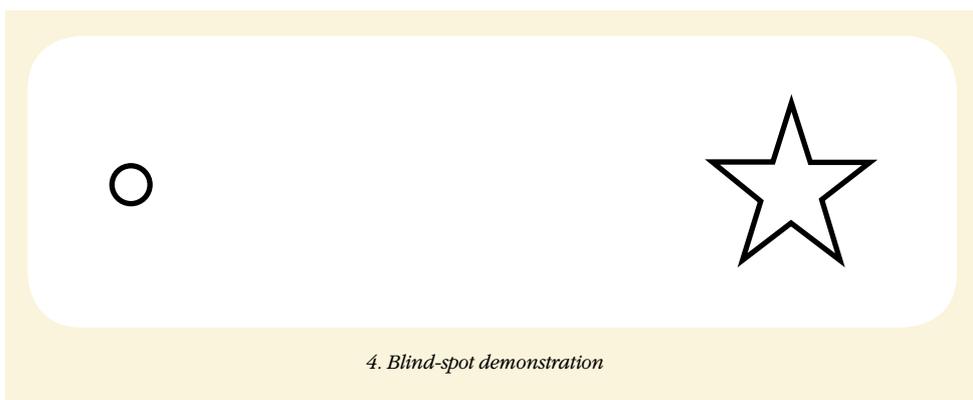
5. Eliminating Our Blind Spot

We all have a blind spot in our field of vision that is relatively easy to identify. Hold the illustration of the circle and star (image 4) straight in front of you at arm’s length. Close your left eye and focus your right eye directly on the small circle. With your right eye staring at the circle, slowly begin moving the image toward you. Somewhere around halfway, the star will disappear from the *peripheral* view.

Surprised? You didn’t know you have a blind spot? Just as your second eye compensates for this blind spot, the Book of Mormon provides a similar benefit to the Bible.

And just as the star vanished before your very eye, Herod had not seen the Bethlehem star and had to ask the Wise Men “what time the star appeared” (Matthew 2:7). It was in his spiritual peripheral *blind spot*. Only those *looking* for the star had noticed it.

Today there are many, like Herod, who refuse to look for and see the things of the Spirit. “Wo unto the blind that will not see” (2 Nephi 9:32). Pride also caused the Jews to



“[despise] the words of plainness, and . . . blindness came [to them] by looking beyond the mark” (Jacob 4:14).

One of the sobering *in-sights* of the Book of Mormon is a forewarning about the universal blind spot of *pride*, “a sin that can readily be *seen* in others but is rarely admitted in ourselves.”¹⁰ It is like bad breath—obvious to everyone but the offender.

“In the premortal council, it was pride that felled Lucifer.”¹¹ It was “the pride of . . . the Nephites, [that] hath proven their destruction” (Moroni 8:27). It is the proud who will burn as stubble when God cleanses the earth by fire (see Malachi 4:1; 3 Nephi 25:1).

The trailhead of the strait and narrow path is posted with a looming “warning” sign: “BEWARE of pride, lest ye become as the Nephites of old” (D&C 38:39; emphasis

added). The tragic irony is that the “BEWARE” sign *itself* is usually in the blind spot of the proud. Therefore, “let him that is [proud] learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see” (D&C 136:32).

6. The Eye-Brain Connection

This clever anagram (see image 5) appears to be an accurate equation, but it isn’t entirely correct. It is actually the brain’s imaging system that tells us what our eyes are seeing. The brain creates our dreams by night and interprets what we see by day. Seeing isn’t necessarily believing or seeing correctly. For example: “But though [Jesus] had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him” (John 12:37). The eyes alone are insufficient to foster belief or *true seeing*.

Just as the brain works in tandem with the eyes, the Spirit works in tandem with the scriptures, which help us see spiritually. Merely reading the scriptures isn’t enough to produce spiritual sight because “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

For the Book of Mormon to function as a spiritual eye, we must accept and sincerely follow Moroni’s invitation in Moroni 10:3–5. It is an invitation with a promise that God “*will* manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (verse 4; emphasis added).

Witness and Gratitude

To avoid spiritual blindness, Lehi’s sons risked their lives to obtain the brass plates (see 1 Nephi 3–4). Without the plates, they “would have dwindled in unbelief” (Mosiah 1:5). Today, thanks to the printing press and digital tools, we have easier and quicker access to the scriptures. It makes little difference to Satan, however, whether he keeps people from obtaining them—his strategy in the Dark Ages—or tempts people not to read them—his strategy in the latter days. Either way, his “mists of darkness [successfully] . . .

blindeth the eyes . . . of the children of men . . . that they perish and are lost” (1 Nephi 12:17; emphasis added).

Like my *daily* eye drops, it is only by “*continually* holding fast to the rod of iron” (1 Nephi 8:30; emphasis added) that we can avoid being blinded by the latter-day mists that are so subtle and prevalent. Whenever a person becomes less active or leaves the Church, it’s almost a certainty that person has stopped reading the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ is indeed a marvelous work and a wonder. It is a second

the eyes = they see

5.

eyewitness of Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel, offering all the advantages of a second eye.

May we continually hold fast to the iron rod that we too may be worthy of the Savior’s praise to His disciples: “Blessed are your eyes, for they see” (Matthew 13:16). ■

NOTES

1. See Matthew 9:27–31; 12:22–23; 15:30–31; 21:14; Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52; Luke 7:21–22; John 9; 3 Nephi 17:7–9; 26:15.
2. See “Binocular Vision,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
3. See Randolph Blake and Robert Fox, “The Psychophysical Inquiry into Binocular Summation,” *Perception & Psychophysics*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1973), 161–68; see also “Binocular Vision.”
4. See “Vergence,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
5. “Binocular Vision.”
6. “Binocular Vision.”
7. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (2014), 141.
8. See “Binocular Vision.”
9. “Peripheral Vision,” Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org.
10. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 18; emphasis added.
11. *Teachings: Ezra Taft Benson*, 231.

TAKING THE BUS TO KOLOB

Now, I ask you, could my life progress toward eternal life driving a bus? My answer is, “Yes!”

By John Barney

Emilie and I met one week before I turned 42, and we have been married now for six years. Prior to that, I was a seemingly lifelong single Latter-day Saint man.

I can tell you from experience that it was not easy for me to remain steadfast in the gospel without being yoked to a supportive partner. Lots and lots of people do it, but it can be tough. My testimony was never rocky, but my enthusiasm waned every now and again.

Nevertheless, I made a promise to myself and to the Lord a long time ago that when things got somewhat challenging, I would always stay here, inside the fence. And I did.

Doctrines from the Family Proclamation

In the past, when accused of being too picky about a potential spouse, I would tell people I had only two requirements in choosing a wife: (1) I must love her; (2) she must love me. But here was the catch—they had to happen at the same time!

I honestly used to think that “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” didn’t apply to me very much. Like the photographer who takes the family photos, I just wasn’t in the picture. Then I realized what a dumb thing that was for me to think. As a result, when I started to feel spiritually paralyzed, I focused on two doctrines in the family proclamation to give me the strength to continue my activity in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First: My Heavenly Father loves me. I can’t deny there were times during my lonely sojourn that I felt some bitterness toward God. I felt that I must have missed my opportunity to have a family due to some sin on my part, or maybe just because I was too shy at the wrong moment. It frustrated me to think there might have been some point along the way that the person I was to marry was there, but for lack of being able to hear the whisperings of the Spirit, I missed her because I was somewhere between sin and repentance. I tried not to believe this was the case, but those unhealthy and unholy thoughts would sometimes creep into my mind and lead to self-pity.

Second: God has a plan for me. I accepted His plan in the premortal existence. His plan is that I come to earth and obtain my physical body and gain the earthly experience I personally need to progress toward perfection and eternal life. And it is also true that my wife, Emilie, needed to gain the experience that she personally needed to progress toward perfection. Since Em and I feel we were meant to always be together—always—who am I to say when our meeting should have taken place?

My Plan for My Life versus God's Plan

God's plan didn't necessarily match the life I planned out as a young man. I was quite sure of the following:

- 1. I would go on a mission to Japan at age 19. I went to Kentucky at age 20.
- 2. I would go to Brigham Young University from age 21 to 25. I went to Miami of Ohio from age 25 to 29.
- 3. I would marry in the temple at age 23 and have five or six kids. I married at 43. Em has three kids.
- 4. I would work for IBM, or someplace like that, and make a great salary. Didn't happen.



When things didn't work out as I planned, it was all I could do to maintain hope for family happiness until I was 41. At that point I really and truly gave up. A year later I met Emilie and everything changed. I can bear testimony that you can trust in God's plan for your life. The family proclamation is alive and well and hanging on a wall in our home.

Both Em's life and my life really started to progress together toward eternal life on a bus ride. Here's how that happened.

My Desperation Job—Driving a Bus

In 1996, after graduating from college, I moved back home to Spanish Fork, Utah, to help my dad take care of my mom. I landed a desperation job driving a bus from Spanish Fork to BYU in Provo. It was supposed to be a temporary job, but I stayed.

Now, I know one doesn't need a B.A. degree in history

and psychology to become a bus driver. So it was difficult for me to not constantly question my life, especially when I struggled to pay off my student loans. Thoughts of "I'm a loser" often weighed on my mind as I carried folks to and fro.

Then it happened! I met Emilie! Now, I ask you, could my life progress toward eternal life driving a bus? My answer is, "Yes!"

Em lived in Cedar City, Utah, at that time, which is not far from the northernmost part of Zion National Park. One of the big attractions in that part of the park is a collection of beautiful red-rock canyons appropriately named Kolob Canyons. In the scriptures, Kolob is the star "nearest unto the throne of God" (Abraham 3:2).

Em's car had been totaled in Cedar City the day before she was to travel north to her parents' house in the small town of Elmo for Thanksgiving. She decided to rent a car to make the trip, but then there was a big snowstorm in the



mountain pass between Cedar City and Elmo. So she drove the 200 miles up to Spanish Fork to pick up her sister, Lysie, who happened to be a friend of mine—and who also thought I would make a good match for Em. They decided to leave for their parents' home a day later than planned so that Em and I could get to know each other.

That's the day Em rode with me on my last bus route for the day. We talked and talked, and then after I finished my route and dropped off the bus at the garage in Spanish Fork, we decided to watch a movie. Everything just clicked.

Kolob—Our Favorite Place

After our first date, I made a lot of trips to Cedar City to date Em. We often spent time in Zion National Park, especially Kolob Canyons. Of course, being “nearest unto the throne of God,” it felt like heaven. We even took our wedding photos there.

I honestly don't know how to express the strength of my conviction that Heavenly Father loves me, that Jesus Christ died for me, and that Jesus Christ lives. I'm grateful to know of my own divine nature and destiny, as well as Emilie's divine nature and destiny. I'm grateful that our two destinies are sealed together for eternity. I'm not really a loser—never was one.

This is my story, and I realize that not everyone's story will include marriage in this life. So for those of you getting close to or having already passed your “give-up point,” my advice is to remember these two things: (1) you are a child of God, who loves you, and (2) God has a plan for you. We can and must continue to trust in a bright, eternal future. One day you will find your spouse in your own way and according to your own timetable—just as Em and I did, taking a bus bound for Kolob. ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.





By David A. Edwards
Church Magazines

Throughout the ages, countless people have asked the question posed by Job: “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14). To shout “Yes!” in answer to such a question is the great privilege of those with a testimony of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection.

Yet many around us are passing through this life “without God in the world” (Ephesians 2:12) and must navigate between various facts and beliefs regarding death. For one, there’s the evidence of their eyes, or the “harsh reality” that death is universal and absolute—they’ve never seen anyone come back. Then there are the widespread reports of near-death experiences, with remarkable consistencies between them. And then there is the fact that human cultures all over the world have always had a concept of some sort of after-life, another consistency that begs an explanation.

But the assurance that our lives don’t end at death comes from God, who has revealed it from the beginning through numerous witnesses, including prophets, apostles, and, most important, the Holy Ghost.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT Life after Death?



*“If a man die,
shall he live
again?” Yes!
But then what?*

From the Beginning

The plan of salvation was first taught on this earth to Adam and Eve, our first parents. They learned about the gospel of Jesus Christ and how to return to Heavenly Father’s presence—and they understood that *returning* meant that we had been with Him before. So, from the beginning, Adam and Eve knew very clearly that this life isn’t all there is. They knew—and taught their children—that because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, they would be resurrected after this life and, if they were obedient, receive eternal life (see Moses 5:10–12).

Secular theories posit that the belief in an afterlife is an independent outgrowth of some universal psychological need. But the widespread idea of life after death instead constitutes a sort of ancestral or collective memory (if not a premortal memory) of what was revealed in the beginning and then passed from generation to generation. What President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) once said about some common religious practices also applies to common beliefs such as life after death: “Undoubtedly the knowledge of [it] . . . was carried by the posterity of Adam into all lands, and continued . . . through Noah . . . to those who succeeded him, spreading out into all nations and countries” (“Discourse,” *Deseret News*, Feb. 19, 1873, 36).

Thus, the idea of a life beyond this one is so universal because its origin coincides with the origin of the human race itself.

Plain and Precious Truths

As Latter-day Saints, we can help bring hope into the lives of those living without God in the world by confidently bearing our witness of the truth about our existence: death is not the end. In addition, we can answer many questions about life after death because of the plain and precious truths of the restored gospel that have been revealed. Here are brief answers to a few such questions.

A photograph of a smiling bride and groom in wedding attire. The groom is wearing a dark suit and a yellow tie, and the bride is wearing a white lace wedding dress with a veil. They are standing in front of a temple entrance with large arches.

What happens to us right after we die?

At the time of death, our spirits separate from our bodies and then enter the spirit world (see James 2:26; Alma 40:11).

What are our spirits like?

Our spirit bodies look like they did in premortal life: human bodies in a perfect adult form (see Ether 3:16; *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* [1998], 131–32). After death, our spirits will have the same attitudes, appetites, and desires we had at the time of our physical death on earth (see Alma 34:34).

What is spirit?

Spirit is a kind of matter, only “more fine or pure” (D&C 131:7).

What is the spirit world like?

There are two major states or divisions among the spirits in the spirit world: paradise and spirit prison. Righteous spirits go to paradise, which is “a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow” (Alma 40:12). The spirits of people who haven’t yet received the gospel of Jesus Christ are said to be in spirit prison (see 1 Peter 3:18–20). They can still choose good or evil and accept or reject the gospel. The spirits in paradise can preach the gospel to them (see D&C 138). Those whose spirits and bodies are separated for a long time view this separation as “a bondage” (D&C 45:17; 138:50).

What is heaven?

Heaven is generally understood to be the place where God dwells and where righteous people may eventually dwell. In this sense, it is different from the paradise of the spirit world.

What is hell?

In the scriptures, *hell* can refer to one of two things: (1) “the temporary abode in the spirit world for those who were disobedient in mortality” or (2) “the permanent location of those who are not redeemed by the Atonement of Jesus Christ” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Hell,” scriptures.lds.org). In a general sense, it is the spiritual condition suffered by those who have rejected

the gospel. Joseph Smith taught, “The great misery of departed spirits . . . is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 224).

What is resurrection?

Resurrection is the reuniting of spirit and body in a perfected, immortal state (see Alma 11:43).

Who will be resurrected?

All people who have lived on earth will be resurrected (see 1 Corinthians 15:22; Alma 11:44).

When will we be resurrected?

People will be resurrected at different times. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ ushered in the First Resurrection, or resurrection of the just. Some righteous people have already been resurrected since that time. After the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, many



more righteous people will be resurrected. During the Millennium, other good people will be resurrected. After the Millennium, the wicked will be resurrected. (See D&C 76:32–112; 88:97–101.)

What are resurrected bodies like?

Resurrected bodies are flesh and bone (see Luke 24:39), immortal (see Alma 11:45), perfect (see Alma 11:43), glorious, and beautiful. “There is nothing more beautiful to look upon than a resurrected man or woman” (President Lorenzo Snow [1814–1901], *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1996], 99).

What happens after we’re resurrected?

After all people have been resurrected and the Millennium has ended, we will be brought into the presence of God to be judged according to our words, deeds, thoughts, and desires (see Revelation 20:12; Alma 12:14; D&C 137:9). Jesus Christ will be our Judge (see John 5:22, 27–29; Romans 14:10).

What happens after the Final Judgment?

After the Final Judgment, we will receive one of the following eternal rewards:

Celestial kingdom: the home of Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and all those who have qualified for eternal life by making and keeping all the gospel covenants (see D&C 76:50–70). This includes those who accept the gospel in the spirit world who would have received it in this life but did not have the opportunity (see D&C 137:7).

Terrestrial kingdom: the home of those good people who did not accept the gospel of Jesus Christ but received it in the spirit world or who were not valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ in life (see D&C 76:71–80).

Telestial kingdom: the home of those who were wicked and did not accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, who were not resurrected until after the Millennium (see D&C 76:81–89).

Endless punishment: the final state of the sons of perdition, as well as the devil and his angels (see D&C 76:31–49).

What will people do in the celestial kingdom?

Those who inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom will be exalted, which means they will have eternal life, become like our Heavenly Father, and receive all that the Father has. To become like Heavenly Father means to acquire His attributes of perfection, including love and service.¹ It also means to share in His work and glory, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Exaltation includes being sealed in marriage for eternity, living in eternal families, and having eternal spirit offspring. (See D&C 76:59, 62; 130:2; 132:19–23.)

What will people do in the other kingdoms?

Those in other kingdoms will be angels, which “are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory” (D&C 132:16). They will not be married or have spirit offspring (see D&C 131:1–4; 132:16–17). ■

NOTE

1. “Service is not something we endure on this earth so we can earn the right to live in the celestial kingdom. Service is the very fiber of which an exalted life in the celestial kingdom is made” (President Marion G. Romney [1897–1988], Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “The Celestial Nature of Self-Reliance,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 93).

THE Education OF A LIFETIME

By Devin G. Bost

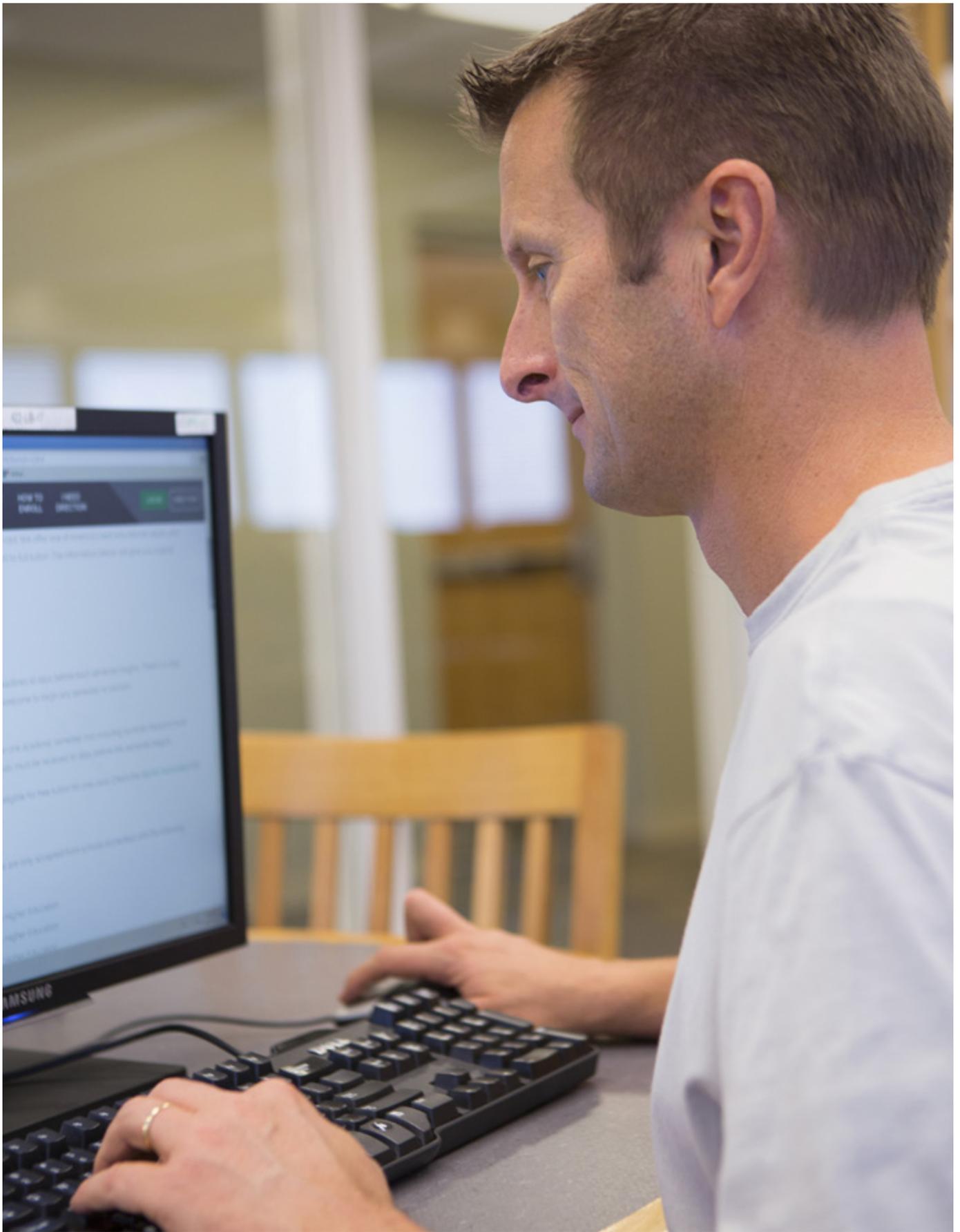
During my life, I have struggled with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). But nobody asked me if I had been evaluated for the disorder until I reached high school. In high school, I was placed into advanced classes, but when I couldn't focus on my homework, I began having trouble, and my grades began to drop. As soon as my grades began to drop, I started feeling a lack of self-confidence about school that I had never felt before. (I later learned that this is a common pattern among students with ADHD.)

The drop in my grades resulted in additional pressure to catch up, which meant I had to spend more time studying. To complicate matters further, my mother needed additional help with her business, so I needed to spend my evenings working instead of studying. I began feeling hopeless as I watched my world spiral out of control. When I became too depressed to attend school, my mother became extremely concerned. I started seeing a psychiatrist for my depression, not realizing that my depression resulted from my inability to focus, something that my peers didn't struggle with.

My psychiatrist suggested that I take some medication. Due to the effects of the drugs, I felt better, even though my problems were getting worse. Unfortunately, the medications made it even more difficult for me to focus.

The resulting chains of bondage extracted the remaining hope from my life until I attempted suicide. After I was discharged from the hospital (I was only 17 at the time), I moved away from home, and for almost two years I had no contact with my mother, my father, and my younger brother. I started living in a shelter for homeless youth and began working to support myself and save for an education.

Homeless and without hope, I finally reached out to God in prayer. I found peace and a pathway to success and happiness.



An Important Decision

After the two hardest years of my life, I reconnected with my father, started treatment for ADHD, and later reconnected with my mom and brother. With a broken heart and a contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20), I finally decided to cry in prayer to God and ask if He existed. This was the single most important decision I ever made in my life. Three days later, on April 10, 2011, to my complete and utter astonishment, my prayer was answered in a sacred and personal way that changed my life forever.

Realizing that I needed to learn more, I began a search for truth about this God who answered me. That prayer led to more prayers, and those prayers ultimately led me to a logical deduction, beyond any reasonable doubt, that there was only one true church upon the earth: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Subsequently, I was baptized in June 2011.

I discovered feelings of peace and hope that I had never before experienced. I hadn't even known it was *possible* to obtain feelings of peace and hope of this magnitude. Finally, I knew with certainty that God existed, that the priesthood had been restored, and that God loved me personally and had a glorious plan for my future (see Moses 6:52–62).



EDUCATION: THE ABILITY TO HELP OTHERS

"There is no shortcut to excellence and competence. Education is the difference between *wishing* you could help other people and *being able* to help them."

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Will You Choose to Increase in Learning?" *New Era*, Sept. 2014, 3.



The author (second from left) with his Pathway class.

Enrolling in Pathway

Sometime later, my bishop recommended that I enroll in the Pathway program, a low-cost education option in partnership with Brigham Young University–Idaho. It combines online courses with local in-person gatherings and allows students to earn credit that can lead to a degree or professional certificate. After a recommendation from my stake president, I decided to take a leap of faith and join the program. I was in the second class to complete the program in Portland, Oregon, USA.

Pathway helped me become true and faithful and focused on success. I learned to integrate prayer into my secular study, and I began to see the Lord direct my studies (see D&C 130:18–19). As I obtained the companionship of the Holy Ghost, I found myself learning more quickly, so I began praying more frequently and asking more difficult questions in my prayers. Those questions led to answers by revelation (see James 1:5). Consequently, the pieces of my broken life finally began to assemble.

This education completely transformed my life. It gave me the study skills that helped me maximize the use of my time and the financial preparedness skills that helped me maximize the value of my resources. Combined with the treatment I was obtaining for ADHD, this program accelerated my path toward success. I obtained the Melchizedek Priesthood and learned how to make decisions that helped me retain the Spirit. For example, I destroyed *all* of my worldly music and media and replaced them with media that

invited the Holy Ghost. Finally, I began moving in a direction toward greater happiness. I was blessed to be able to baptize my father and later receive my temple endowment.

An Individualized Learning Experience

Thanks to the miracle of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, I learned that God will individualize our learning experience. This experience led me to an exciting career in software engineering. As I learned to trust in God and His promises, I received faith-building experiences and an increased capacity to learn from others. These experiences led me to develop my own software company, and as I began investing in people who needed the help (see Matthew 19:21), miracles began to occur. I reached a major breakthrough on

an unsolved problem, leading me to new insights in artificial intelligence.

Never before in my life would I have imagined all of this to be possible. Never before in my life have I felt the happiness that I currently feel. And never before in my life have I felt so strongly that God loves me.

Everything I have learned in my life has brought me to the realization that nothing anybody can do or say will ever change the fact that Joseph Smith is the prophet of the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This gospel will lead us to more happiness in this life than anything else we can ever experience, and every decision I've made to apply the gospel has been among the greatest decisions of my life, yielding more hope than I ever thought possible. ■

The author lives in Oregon, USA.

HOW PATHWAY WORKS

In partnership with Brigham Young University–Idaho, Pathway is a one-year, low-cost educational program that offers online academic courses, religious education, and local face-to-face gatherings with other students.

The Pathway experience helps participants develop confidence, become self-reliant, build leadership experience, and gain employable skills while learning by the Spirit within the framework of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Two program versions are available: one for native English speakers and one for individuals with low English proficiency.

After Pathway, participants may pursue a variety of opportunities, including applying to the BYU–Idaho Online Degree Program, where they can work toward a professional certificate



or degree—and continue to pay the low Pathway tuition rate.

Visit pathway.lds.org to apply, learn more, or find a location.

BY THE NUMBERS

Students: 14,983

Locations (for in-person gatherings): 387

Countries served: 39

Average age of participants: 34



EDUCATION FOR PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

“I believe that the community which education should serve is the whole world. . . . Just as our obligation is to our local students, to prepare them to serve the world, we must also find ways for this college to serve young people whose needs are shaped by a great variety of cultures and situations and who may not be able to come to this campus. . . .

“ . . . We will find direct ways to move the blessing of education—the struggle for perfection—from this campus out into the lives of men and women everywhere.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, at his inauguration as president of Ricks College (now Brigham Young University–Idaho), Dec. 10, 1971.

COME, ALL, UNTO THE TEMPLE

Words by Toni Thomas
Music by Brett Stewart

With conviction ♩ = 108–112

1. Come, all, un - to the tem - ple, Where ho - li - ness a - bides, Where
 2. Come, all, un - to the tem - ple, Where per - fect love a - bounds, Where
 3. Come, all, un - to the tem - ple, Where peace un - meas - ured flows; From
 4. Come, all, un - to the tem - ple, Where end - less truth is found In

hands are con - se - crat - ed And hearts are pu - ri - fied. Through
 hearts are tuned to - geth - er, One sweet and sol - emn sound. As
 wells of liv - ing wa - ter Drink sol - ace to your soul. As
 per - fect course, un - wav - 'ring, Of one e - ter - nal round. As

cov - e - nants of pow - er, Our im - per - fec - tions yield;
 fam - i - ly for - ev - er To - geth - er we are sealed, The
 heav - y hearts un - bur - den, As bro - ken hopes are healed,
 we're en - dowed with know - ledge, There from the world con - cealed,

mys - ter - y of god - li - ness In tem - ples is re - vealed.

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HONOURS TO THE LORD - THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

KEEPING MEMORIES ALIVE

By Melissa McKneely

When I was prompted to involve my children in family history, our family was blessed in unexpected ways.

A few years ago I had a powerful impression to start involving my four young children in family history, which evolved into what we called “family history nights.” My parents lived close by, and I invited them to prepare some stories about their lives to share with my children. My parents were so excited! They prepared well and brought pictures, maps, old

toys, and cherished belongings. We didn’t know how long my children’s attention span would be, but we were pleasantly surprised that even after an hour, they still wanted to know more. Because my parents have other grandchildren who don’t live close by, they wanted to record their stories on video, and so we did.

First we had an evening about my dad, followed by an evening about my mother. Next they planned to share stories about their own parents, then their grandparents, and so forth. Consequently, our third family history night featured my grandfather’s life

as told by my dad. My children really enjoyed the life stories, pictures, and items that belonged to their great-grandfather Lewis.

Less than a week after this meeting was Memorial Day weekend, and my family was out of state for a wedding. I got a phone call informing me that my mother had died in a car accident. A reckless driver had crossed over a center median, hitting her head-on and killing her instantly. She was only 59 years old.

One of my first thoughts upon hearing of her passing was of the video we had made. What a treasure



The video we took of my mother (left) and pictures of her with my children (right) are family treasures.



LEFT: IMAGES COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR; TOP RIGHT: BACKGROUND BY FUETI/STOCK/THINKSTOCK



this video of her sharing her life story is to us now! When I told my children of her death, some of the first questions they asked through their tears were, “What about our family history? Who will tell us about her parents?” It was then that I realized what an impact our family history nights had made.

I will be forever grateful that I listened to the prompting to involve my children in family history. Watching that video of my mother brings peace, comfort, and healing.

I now take lots of opportunities to share memories of my mom with my children. I tell them of her favorite things and things that made her laugh.

I have found pictures of her with each of them, and the pictures are framed in their bedrooms. On her family history night, she showed us a toy tea set she’d enjoyed as a child. My daughters were fascinated with it, and plans were made for a tea party. Although the party never happened, the tea set is now ours, and when we use it, we think about her. Through these things, my mother isn’t forgotten. She lives on in our hearts through the stories, pictures, and videos that keep her memory alive. ■

The author lives in Texas, USA.

Find out how to discover your family’s story at lds.org/topics/family-history/to-turn-our-hearts.



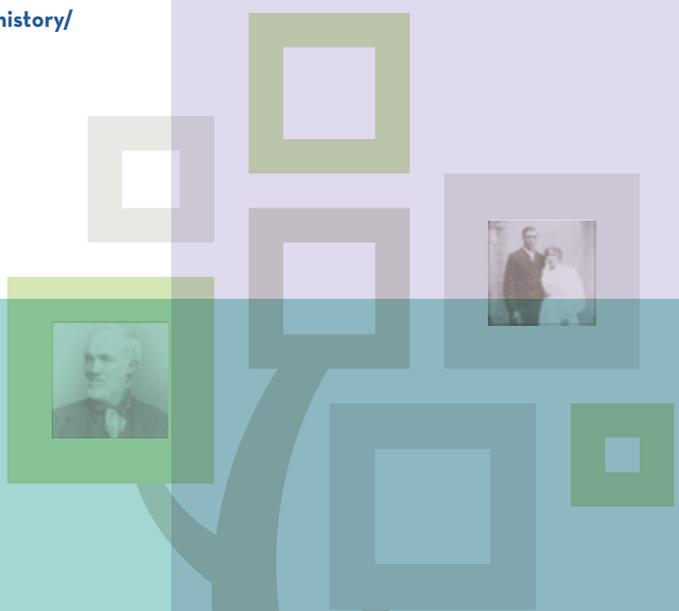
EXCITED TO LEARN

“Our young people are excited to learn about the lives of family members—where they came from and how they lived. Many have had their hearts turned to the fathers. They love the stories and photos, and they have the technological expertise to scan and upload these stories and photos to Family Tree and connect source documents with ancestors to preserve these for all time.”

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Roots and Branches,” Ensign, May 2014, 47.

HOW TO PRESERVE YOUR FAMILY’S STORY

Start preserving your family’s story using FamilySearch’s “Memories” feature (familysearch.org/photos). You can share your family photos, documents, audio recordings, and stories and know that they will be preserved for future generations.



ALL CAN LEARN FROM A PROPHET

When I was 17, I worked at an inn in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, USA. Working as a bellhop, I saw many famous people as guests of the hotel, including John Wayne, Dorothy Lamour, and Esther Williams.

One evening, after most of the guests had arrived, I was taking a break at the front of the hotel when a black limousine stopped at the curb and seven men got out, dressed in black pants, white shirts, and ties. Another man in a black suit accompanied them. After the driver parked their car, all of them went into the dining room for dinner. I thought they looked like FBI agents as I went back inside to continue my duties answering room-service calls.

About an hour later, I was outside the hotel smoking a cigarette while the group I had seen earlier came back out to return to their limo, which was waiting at the curb. They went down the walkway to the car and opened the rear door to allow the black-suited man to get in. But instead of entering the car, the black-suited man stopped, turned around to look at me leaning against the building, and walked up to me.

He was tall and thin, with wire-rimmed glasses and a small white goatee. He extended his hand to shake mine and put his other hand on my shoulder. I was struck that such a distinguished-looking man would come and talk to me, a young man he didn't even know.

I cannot recall all the words he spoke to me other than to say that “those things are bad for you,” referring to my cigarette. His kindness and demeanor made quite an impression on me.

Over a year later I took discussions from the missionaries and was baptized.

While looking through pictures of leaders of the Church, I noticed a picture of President George Albert Smith (1870–1951) and recognized him immediately as the kind and distinguished man I'd met in front of the inn. I was even more impressed that the

President of the Church would do such a thing to someone like me, a boy who wasn't even a member of the Church and of no particular importance.

What a great man he was to show such love and concern for a young boy working in an unnoticed position and having no understanding of the gospel or our Heavenly Father's love for us.

Sixty-five years later, I have a great understanding of that care and love, and I strive to see those around me as President Smith saw me. ■
Henry Serion Sr., Hawaii, USA

Instead of entering the car, the black-suited man stopped and walked up to me.



ILLUSTRATION BY ALLEN GARNIS

IS IT REALLY WORTH IT?

Our four-year-old son, Coleton, proudly presented a slip of paper given to him from his Primary teacher detailing his part in the upcoming Primary program. Our job was to teach him his seven-word line before the program was presented in two weeks.

On Monday evening we converted family home evening into a full-on rehearsal. With a smile on his face, Coleton made dozens of practice attempts, with my wife and me giving feedback like, “Don’t be silly as you say it” and “Be sure to speak clearly.”

Despite all of our efforts, even I wasn’t sure we were any better off than we had started.

Preparing for church the next Sunday morning included two lost socks, a teething eight-month-old, and a crying four-year-old.

Once the meeting began, we scarcely made it past the opening hymn before I made two trips to the hall with a crying child. By the time the choir stood to sing, I had nearly

abandoned hope of any of the family having an edifying experience and hoped instead that we would simply make it to the end of the meeting.

As the final amen was said, I let out an exhausted sigh of relief. Yet as I celebrated the victory, I couldn’t help but wonder, “Is it really worth it? Are we really making any progress with our kids by bringing them to church every week?”

The words of Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles came to mind. He said: “At times Sister Bednar and I were exasperated because the righteous habits we worked so hard to foster did not seem to yield immediately the spiritual results we wanted and expected. . . .

“Sister Bednar and I thought helping our sons understand the content of a particular lesson or a specific scripture was the ultimate outcome. But such a result does not occur each time we study or pray or learn together. The consistency of our intent

and work was perhaps the greatest lesson—a lesson we did not fully appreciate at the time” (“More Diligent and Concerned at Home,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 19).

With renewed confidence, I returned home and continued to practice over and over with my son. When his moment to speak came, we were thrilled to hear him clearly and confidently proclaim, “Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

We had heard him say the line dozens of times before the performance, but something about hearing him say it away from home, on his own, was different and far more satisfying.

We have a lot of teaching to do before our little boy becomes a man, but we’ll keep doing our best to attend our meetings, hold our family home evening, and say our daily prayers in hopes that one day when he’s away from home and on his own, he’ll again remember that ever-so-important line: “Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ■
Brandon Comstock, Utah, USA





Callie was eager to take her children to the temple so they could touch it.

FEELING THE SPIRIT OF THE TEMPLE

I had the opportunity to visit my daughter Callie in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, where she had recently moved with her husband and two children. Callie's ward met at noon, so we had a nice leisurely morning to get ready and discuss some options for after church. Since Callie hadn't had a chance to visit the temple yet, we decided to go and take some pictures of the children on the temple grounds.

As with all temples, the grounds of the Las Vegas Nevada Temple were beautiful and well kept, with beautiful fountains and flowers.

After reading a story President Thomas S. Monson told, Callie was eager to take her children to the temple so they could touch it (see "Finding Peace," *Ensign*, Mar. 2004, 5–6). The first thing she did was explain the sacredness and importance of the temple to her daughter, Stella.

Stella understood as well as any three-year-old would, and we urged her to touch the temple. We took several pictures of Stella and her three-month-old brother touching the temple.

When it was time to leave, Stella was especially reluctant to go. We thought we understood why; she was having a great time in a beautiful setting and was undoubtedly feeling the same spirit we were.

After getting her in the car and buckled up, we began to leave. I turned around, waved, and said to Stella, "Say bye-bye, temple." She looked at the temple, waved, and said, "Bye-bye, temple. Bye-bye, Grandpa." I wasn't sure I had heard her correctly, but when I turned to Callie and saw her eyes fill with tears, I knew we had both heard the same thing.

Stella's grandfather—my husband, Tim—had passed away four years

before Stella was born. She certainly had seen pictures of him and heard the family talk about him, but he hadn't come up in our conversations that day.

When Tim passed away, we had only one grandchild. Now we have 12, and whenever I hold one of those precious new babies who so recently left our Heavenly Father's presence, I want to ask, "Did you get to meet your grandpa? What words of advice did he send you off with?"

My testimony of the sacredness of temples was strengthened that day. We may not be able to take our young children inside with us, but we can take them right up to the doors and allow them to put their hands on the doors that countless worthy members have used to enter the house of the Lord. ■

Kathy Rossier, California, USA

WHAT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME?

About halfway through my third year at college, I realized that the money I had saved to pay for rent and utilities would not be sufficient to get me through the summer. It was that time of year when I could work to pay for the next semester. I found a part-time job as a shop assistant.

All went well until my work schedule changed to include Sundays. During the job interview, I hadn't said anything about not working on Sundays because at the time the store was closed that day. Nevertheless, the job was important to me, and I liked what I was doing. I worked with a friend, and between us we could be free on two Sundays and work the other two. This let me attend some Church meetings and attend to my calling.

However, soon I found that I could not keep up with this schedule. I actually had a feeling that I wasn't able to fulfill my Sunday responsibilities even if I didn't work every Sunday. I started asking myself what I could do to change this situation. After I had prayed to ask for a way to soften the heart of my supervisors, I read 1 Nephi 7. I remembered reading verse 19, where, after Nephi had prayed, the hearts of his brethren were softened. Finally, I was able to speak to my employers about not working on Sundays.

I told my superiors that I was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints, and they asked me about what Latter-day Saints believed. When I asked them if I could have Sundays off, the response was no. They pointed out that during my first interview, I had said I was available to work any day of the week and had never mentioned any religious needs.

The months passed without any change until one Sunday I rushed out of Church meetings to hurry to work. I asked myself, "What is most important to you?" The response was immediate and impossible to miss: the Church, the gospel, service in my calling, participation with all my heart in Sunday meetings, and discipleship in word and deed.

I decided that I would ask again

One Sunday I rushed out of Church meetings to hurry to work. I asked myself, "What is most important to you?"

not to work on Sundays, but this time I would do it with a letter of resignation in my hands, in case they told me no a second time.

I had prayed, fasted, and received supportive text messages from friends.

At the moment of my interview, even though my heart was fluttering, I was calm because I knew I was doing the right thing. This time my supervisor said yes. My prayer had been answered. I tore up my resignation letter as soon as I got home.

I received many blessings from this experience, but the most immediate and tangible blessing was that I was able to keep my job and still keep the Sabbath day holy. For that I am truly grateful to the Lord. ■

Eleonora Sonnellini, Trieste, Italy





By President
Spencer W. Kimball
(1895–1985)

Twelfth President
of the Church

THE WHAT AND WHY AND HOW OF BEARING A TESTIMONY

Every time you bear your testimony it becomes strengthened.

Every soul in this world may have a revelation, the same one that Peter had [see Matthew 16:13–17]. That revelation will be a testimony, a knowledge that Christ lives, that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of this world. Every soul may have this assurance, and when he gets this testimony, it will have come from God and not from study alone. Study is an important element, of course, but there must be associated with study much prayer and reaching, and then this revelation comes. . . .

Testimony meetings are some of the best meetings in the ward in the whole month, if you have the Spirit. If you are bored at a testimony meeting, there is something the matter with you, and not the other people. You can get up and bear your testimony and you think it is the best meeting in the month; but if you sit there and count the grammatical errors and laugh at the man who can't speak very well, you'll be bored, and on



that board you'll slip right out of the kingdom. . . .

Every month the First Presidency and the Twelve meet with all the General Authorities in the temple. They bear testimony and they tell each other how they love one another just like all of you. Why do the General Authorities need a testimony meeting? The same reason that you need a testimony meeting. Do you think that you can go three, and six, and nine, and twelve months without bearing your testimony and still keep its full value?

Some of our good people get so terrified at triteness that they try to steer around and away from their testimonies by getting out on the fringes. Don't you ever worry about triteness in testimony. When the President of

the Church bears his testimony, he says, "I know that Joseph Smith was called of God, a divine representative. I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." You see, the same thing every one of you says. That is a testimony. . . .

A testimony is not an exhortation; a testimony is not a sermon (none of you are there to exhort the rest); it is not a travelogue. You are there to bear your own witness. It is amazing what you can say in 60 seconds by way of testimony, or 120, or 240, or whatever time you are given, if you confine yourselves to testimony. We'd like to know how you feel. Do you love the work, really? Are you happy in your work? Do you love the Lord? Are you glad that you are a member of the Church?

. . . Don't you sit there in your fast meeting and cheat yourself and say, "I guess I won't bear my testimony today. I guess that wouldn't be fair to these other members because I have had so many opportunities." You bear your testimony. And one minute is long enough to bear it.

You have a testimony! It needs building and lifting and enlarging, of course; and that is what you are doing. Every time you bear your testimony it becomes strengthened. ■

From "President Kimball Speaks Out on Testimony," New Era, Aug. 1981, 4–7; capitalization standardized.

INSIGHTS



How can we sense the love that Heavenly Father has for all of His children?

“To effectively serve others we must see them through a parent’s eyes, through Heavenly Father’s eyes. Only then can we begin to comprehend the true worth of a soul. Only then can we sense the love that Heavenly Father has for all of His children. Only then can we sense the Savior’s caring concern for them. We cannot completely fulfill our covenant obligation to mourn with those who mourn and comfort those who stand in need of comfort unless we see them through God’s eyes.”

Elder Dale G. Renlund of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Through God’s Eyes,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 94.

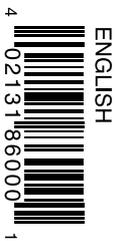


In Church Magazines

Ensign: We had to decide between keeping the Sabbath day holy and trying to win a national rugby championship against our rivals. In the end, we won more than we had expected. See “Champions for the Sabbath” (page 18).

New Era: This month, youth can get some tips on how to prepare emotionally for missionary service (page 36), as well as some ideas for how to use their unique gifts to do good (page 26). Also, get to know Elder Gary E. Stevenson, one of the new Apostles (page 24).

Friend: Help your children learn about baptism and confirmation this month. Make a baptism bag (page 11), read a story (page 18), and learn about how we feel the Holy Ghost (page 10). And don’t forget to share your own testimony about the covenants you’ve made!



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS