

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS • MARCH 2013

Ensign



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"We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see."

President Boyd K. Packer,
President of the Quorum
of the Twelve Apostles,
"Agency and Control,"
Ensign, May 1983, 66.

See also "You Are Free"
on page 38.



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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS
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Family Home Evening Ideas

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



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CODY BELL © IRI

“The Power of the Word of God,” page 50:

Read with your family the section entitled “The Sacredness of the Word” and discuss how the scriptures can be our iron rod. You may wish to invite family members to share an experience when they felt the power of the scriptures in their lives. Consider discussing Elder Teh’s challenge to study the scriptures regularly and how to apply that challenge individually and as a family.

“Bitter and Sweet Plums,” page 54:

Read this short article as a family and discuss how Jennifer’s positive,

friendly attitude affected Heather’s. Discuss how a positive attitude can create opportunities for learning and growth in our lives and the lives of those around us.

“The Blessings of Tithing,” page 60:

Consider sharing one or more of the stories gathered here about the blessings members received as they paid tithing. To further your family’s discussion, you may also want to review insights from President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) regarding tithing in “Our Law of Tithing,” page 10.

UTILIZING THE NURSERY MANUAL

I was determined to hold family home evening consistently, even after I became a mother to triplets. The nursery manual, *Behold Your Little Ones*, has been the light at the end of the tunnel on Monday nights. The lessons are easy to prepare; all the pictures, scripture references, and activities are contained within the manual. *Behold Your Little Ones* is a tremendous resource and has been instrumental in our efforts to hold consistent family home evenings.

Barbara Mecham, Utah, USA

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DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

We welcome donated submissions showing the gospel of Jesus Christ at work in your life. Please submit articles

through ensign.lds.org, or send them to Ensign Editorial, 50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420, Salt Lake City, UT 84150-0024, USA. On each submission, please include your name, address, telephone number, email address, and the name of your ward and stake (or branch and district). Authors whose work is selected for publication will be notified.



By President
Thomas S. Monson

Peace, BE STILL

One day a few years ago, after taking care of matters at the office, I felt a strong impression to visit an aged widow who was a patient at a senior care center in Salt Lake City. I drove there directly.

When I went to her room, I found it empty. I asked an attendant concerning her whereabouts and was directed to a lounge area. There I found this sweet widow visiting with her sister and another friend. We had a pleasant conversation together.

As we were talking, a man came to the door of the room to obtain a can of soda from the vending machine. He glanced at me and said, “Why, you are Tom Monson.”

“Yes,” I replied. “And you look like a Hemingway.”

He acknowledged that he was Stephen Hemingway, the son of Alfred Eugene Hemingway, who had served as my counselor when I was a bishop many years ago and whom I called Gene. Stephen told me that his father was there in the same facility and was near death. Gene had been calling my name, and the family had wanted to contact me but had been unable to find a telephone number for me.

I excused myself immediately and went with Stephen up to the room of my former counselor, where others of his children were also gathered, his wife having passed away some years previous. The family members regarded my meeting Stephen in the lounge area as a response by our Heavenly Father to their great desire that I would see their father before he died and answer his call. I also felt that this was the case, for if Stephen had not entered the room in which I was visiting at precisely the time he did, I would not have known that Gene was even in that facility.

We gave a blessing to him. A spirit of peace prevailed. We had a lovely visit, after which I left.

The following morning a phone call revealed that Gene Hemingway had passed away—just 20 minutes after he had received the blessing from his son and me.

I expressed a silent prayer of thanks to Heavenly Father for His guiding influence, which had prompted my visit to the care center and led me to my dear friend Alfred Eugene Hemingway.

I like to think that Gene Hemingway’s thoughts that evening—as we basked in the Spirit’s glow, participated in humble prayer, and pronounced a priesthood blessing—echoed



the words mentioned in the hymn “Master, the Tempest Is Raging”:

*Linger, O blessed Redeemer!
Leave me alone no more,
And with joy I shall make the blest harbor
And rest on the blissful shore.*

I still love that hymn and testify as to the comfort it offers:

*Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea
Or demons or men or whatever it be,
No waters can swallow the ship where lies
The Master of ocean and earth and skies.
They all shall sweetly obey thy will:
Peace, be still.¹*

Through tears and trials, through fears and sorrows, through the heartache and loneliness of losing loved ones, there is assurance that life is everlasting. Our Lord and Savior is the living witness that such is so.² His words in holy writ are sufficient: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). I testify to this truth. ■

NOTES

1. “Master, the Tempest Is Raging,” *Hymns*, no. 105.
2. See Richard L. Evans, “So Let Us Live to Live Forever,” *New Era*, July 1971, 18.

TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

This message can comfort those who have lost a loved one to death or those who are struggling with a trial. In addition to President Monson’s message, consider sharing one of the following scriptures, based on the needs of those you teach: Job 19:25–26; 1 Corinthians 15:19–22; Mosiah 24:13–15; Doctrine and Covenants 122:7–9. If prompted, you could testify of the peace the Savior has given you in your trials.

Please Heal My Heart

By Kelsey LeDoux

On the anniversary of my brother's death, I reflected on my time since he died. I remembered not only the extreme pain I felt but also the blessings God gave to me.

I never understood how people could say that the death of a loved one could bring blessings. I couldn't understand how I could possibly have joy and gratitude for something that hurt me so deeply. There was one night, however, that changed my perspective entirely.

I woke up in the middle of the night with the heaviest heart I'd ever had. The pain was suffocating me. I fell to my knees and sobbed a prayer to my Heavenly Father. All my life I had been taught about the Atonement and Jesus Christ's miraculous healing power. Now my faith was being tested. Did I really believe? I asked my

Father in Heaven to please heal my heart. The pain was too much for me to deal with alone. Then a feeling of peace, comfort, and love swept over my entire body. I felt as though God had wrapped His arms around me and was protecting me from the intense pain I had felt. I still missed my brother, but I was able to see with different eyes. There was so much for me to learn from this experience. I know the Lord's love and peace are available. We need only to partake.

Kelsey LeDoux lives in Minnesota, USA.



Choose to Be Still

President Monson says that when we are still and reverent, we can feel peace and gain a stronger testimony of our Heavenly Father. And the Holy Ghost can better prompt us of ways we can help others.

Which of the children below are being still?



Write down or discuss with your parents one way you can be still. Then take time this week to try it. After you do, you could write in your journal about the feelings and promptings you had.

VISITING TEACHING MESSAGE

Prayerfully study this material and, as appropriate, discuss it with the sisters you visit. Use the questions to help you strengthen your sisters and to make Relief Society an active part of your life. For more information, go to reliefsociety.lds.org.

Activation

Our prophet, President Thomas S. Monson, has encouraged us to “reach out to rescue those who need our help and lift them to the higher road and the better way. . . . It is the Lord’s work, and when we are on the Lord’s errand, . . . we are entitled to the Lord’s help.”¹

Many years ago LaVene Call and her visiting teaching companion visited a less-active sister. They knocked on the door and found a young mother in her bathrobe. She looked ill, but they soon realized her problem was alcohol. The visiting teachers sat and talked with the struggling young mother.

After they left, they said, “She is a child of God. We have a responsibility to help her.” So they visited often. Each time, they could see and feel a change for good. They asked the sister to attend Relief Society. Though reluctant, she eventually attended regularly. After encouragement, she and her husband and daughter attended church. The husband felt the Holy Ghost. He said, “I’m going to do what the bishop suggests.” Now they are active in the Church and have been sealed in the temple.²



From the Scriptures

3 Nephi 18:32; Doctrine and Covenants 84:106; 138:56

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Monson, “The Sacred Call of Service,” *Ensign*, May 2005, 55, 56.
2. Letter to the Relief Society general presidency from the daughter of LaVene Call.
3. Brigham Young, in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 107.
4. Eliza R. Snow, in *Daughters in My Kingdom*, 83.

What Can I Do?

1. Am I confident asking a less-active sister to attend a Relief Society meeting with me?
2. Do the sisters I watch over feel comfortable asking me questions about the gospel?

Faith, Family, Relief



From Our History

Helping those who have gone astray come back to the gospel of Jesus Christ has always been part of being a Latter-day Saint and a member of Relief Society. President Brigham Young (1801–77) said, “Let us have compassion upon each other, . . . and let those who can see guide the blind until they can see the way for themselves.”³

Eliza R. Snow, second Relief Society general president, gratefully acknowledged the efforts of sisters in Ogden, Utah, USA, to strengthen one another. “I am well aware that a great deal is donated [in terms of service] that never reaches the [record] books,” she said. But recognizing that a heavenly record is kept of the sisters’ work as they reach out to those whose hearts have grown cold, she said: “President Joseph Smith said this society was organized to save souls. . . . Another book is kept of your faith, your kindness, your good works, and words. . . . Nothing is lost.”⁴

OCTOBER CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

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

As you review the October 2012 general conference, you can use these pages (and Conference Notebooks in future issues) to help you study and apply the recent teachings of the living prophets and apostles and other Church leaders.

STORIES FROM CONFERENCE

Enjoy the Moment

My wife, Harriet, and I love riding our bicycles. It is wonderful to get out and enjoy the beauties of nature. We have certain routes we like to bike, but we don't pay too much attention to how far we go or how fast we travel in comparison with other riders.

However, occasionally I think we should be a bit more competitive. I even think we could get a better time or ride at a higher speed if only we pushed ourselves a little more. And then sometimes I even make the big mistake of mentioning this idea to my wonderful wife.

Her typical reaction to my suggestions of this nature is always very kind, very clear, and very direct. She smiles and says, “Dieter, it's not a race; it's a journey. Enjoy the moment.”

How right she is!

Sometimes in life we become so focused on the finish line that we fail to find joy in the journey. I don't

go cycling with my wife because I'm excited about finishing. I go because the experience of being with her is sweet and enjoyable.

Doesn't it seem foolish to spoil sweet and joyful experiences because we are constantly anticipating the moment when they will end?

Do we listen to beautiful music waiting for the final note to fade before we allow ourselves to truly enjoy it? No. We listen and connect to the variations of melody, rhythm, and harmony throughout the composition.

Do we say our prayers with only the “amen” or the end in mind? Of course not. We pray to be close to our Heavenly Father, to receive His Spirit and feel His love.

We shouldn't wait to be happy until we reach some future point, only to discover that happiness was already available—all the time! Life is not meant to be appreciated only in retrospect. “This is the day which the Lord

hath made . . .,” the Psalmist wrote. “Rejoice and be glad in it.” [Psalm 118:24.]

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” Ensign, Nov. 2012, 23–24.

Questions to Ponder

- How can you find joy in the journey of your life?
- How can you bring joy into the lives of those around you?
- What is the relationship between gratitude and joy?

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

Additional resources on this topic: *True to the Faith* (2004), “Atonement of Jesus Christ,” 14–21; “Gratitude,” “Happiness,” and “Repentance” in Gospel Topics on LDS.org; Richard G. Scott, “Finding Joy in Life,” *Ensign*, May 1996, 24–26.

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

Drawing Parallels: Marriage and Family



Some of the most important topics are addressed by more than one general conference speaker. Here is what four speakers said about marriage and family. Try looking for other parallels as you study conference talks.

- “The joining together of a man and a woman to be legally and lawfully wed not only is preparation for future generations to inherit the earth, but it also brings the greatest joy and satisfaction that can be found in this mortal experience.”¹ —Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “Children need the emotional and personal strength that come from being raised by two parents who are united in their marriage and their goals.”² —Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

- “The foundation of kindness and civility begins in our homes. It is not surprising that our public discourse has declined in equal measure with the breakdown of the family.”³ —Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
- “We have much to do to strengthen marriage in societies that increasingly trivialize its importance and purpose.”⁴ —Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

NOTES

1. L. Tom Perry, “Becoming Goodly Parents,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 27.
2. Dallin H. Oaks, “Protect the Children,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 45.
3. Quentin L. Cook, “Can Ye Feel So Now?” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 7.
4. D. Todd Christofferson, “Brethren, We Have Work to Do,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 49.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

1. “A Christian has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .
2. “A Christian believes that through the grace of God . . . we can repent, forgive others, keep the commandments, and inherit eternal life.
3. “The word *Christian* denotes taking upon us the name of Christ. We do this by being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.
4. “A Christian knows that . . . God’s prophets have always testified of Jesus Christ.”

Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Being a More Christian Christian,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 90.

Prophetic Promise

“The Savior can wipe away our tears of regret and remove the burden of our sins. His Atonement allows us to leave the past behind and move forward with clean hands, a pure heart, and a determination to do better and especially to become better.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, “Of Regrets and Resolutions,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 24.



By President
Howard W. Hunter
(1907–95)

OUR LAW OF TITHING

Howard W. Hunter was born on November 14, 1907, in Boise, Idaho, USA. He was ordained an Apostle on October 15, 1959, and was ordained and set apart as the 14th President of the Church on June 5, 1994. He passed away on March 3, 1995. The following excerpt comes from a general conference address given in April 1964. For the full address, see Conference Report, April 1964, 33–36.

The tithe is God’s law for His children, yet the payment is entirely voluntary. In this respect it does not differ from the law of the Sabbath or from any other of His laws. We may refuse to obey any or all of them. Our obedience is voluntary, but our refusal to pay does not abrogate or repeal the law.

If tithing is a voluntary matter, is it a gift or a payment of an obligation? There is a substantial difference between the two. A gift is a voluntary transfer of money or property without consideration. It is gratuitous. No one owes the obligation to make



The payment of tithing strengthens faith, increases spirituality and spiritual capacity, and solidifies testimony.

a gift. If tithing is a gift, we could give whatever we please, when we please, or make no gift at all. It would place our Heavenly Father in the very same category as the street beggar to whom we might toss a coin in passing.

The Lord has established the law of tithing, and because it is His law, it becomes our obligation to observe it if we love Him and have a desire

to keep His commandments and receive His blessings. In this way it becomes a debt. The man who doesn’t pay his tithing because he is in debt should ask himself if he is not also in debt to the Lord. The Master said: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

We can't walk east and west at the same time. We can't serve both God and mammon [see Matthew 6:24]. The man who rejects the law of the tithe is the man who has not given it a fair try. Of course it costs something. It takes work and thought and effort to live any of the laws of the gospel or any of its principles.

A Sacrifice and a Privilege

Are we willing to keep God's commandments even though it costs us something? King David refused the gift of the threshing floor and the oxen for the burnt offering because it cost him nothing. He wanted to be in the position of having made the gift, the sacrifice, himself. [See 1 Chronicles 21:18–26.] Even tithing is not sufficient if it costs nothing for the giver.

It may be that we make a gift and also pay an obligation with our tithes. The payment of the obligation is to the Lord. The gift is to our fellow men for the upbuilding of God's kingdom. If one thoughtfully observes the proselyting done by the missionaries, the teaching program of the Church, the great educational system, and the building program to erect houses of worship, there will come a realization that it is not a burden to pay tithing, but a great privilege. The blessings of the gospel are shared with many through our tithes.

The principle of tithing should be more than a mathematical, mechanical compliance with the law. The

Lord condemned the Pharisees for mechanically tithing herbs without coming into the circumference of spirituality [see Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42]. If we pay our tithes because of our love for the Lord, in complete freedom and faith, we narrow our distance from Him and our relationship to Him becomes intimate. We are released from the bondage of legalism, and we are touched by the Spirit and feel a oneness with God.

Blessings Will Come

The payment of tithing strengthens faith, increases spirituality and spiritual capacity, and solidifies testimony. It gives the satisfaction of knowing one is complying with the will of the

Lord. It brings the blessings that come from sharing with others through the purposes for which tithing is used. We cannot afford to deny ourselves these blessings. We cannot afford not to pay our tithing. We have a definite relationship to the future as well as to the present. What we give, and how we give, and the way we meet our obligations to the Lord has eternal significance.

A testimony of the law of tithing comes from living it. Like all other of God's laws, when we live them we receive the blessings. I know God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, and that blessings do come to us by living the law of the tithe. ■

Capitalization and punctuation standardized; subheads added.

A testimony of the law of tithing comes from living it.



RAISING Resilient Children



*How well children
respond to setbacks
depends largely on
how well their parents
helped them develop
the attitudes and the
skills of resilience.*

By Lyle J. Burrup
LDS Family Services

Life is full of trials. The Lord says that He has chosen us “in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10), that we will be “tried, even as Abraham” (D&C 101:4), and that adversity will “give [us] experience, and shall be for [our] good” (D&C 122:7). This sounds quite daunting. We may wonder, can we be happy and at peace in the midst of trials? The scriptures teach us that we can (see 2 Corinthians 12:10; Hebrews 5:7–8; D&C 127:2).

While counseling missionaries at the missionary training center (MTC) in Provo, Utah, I noticed that the most common cause of emotional problems was a lack of resilience. When an intelligent, talented missionary with no history of emotional problems struggled, priesthood leaders and others often wondered why. In many cases, the missionary just hadn’t learned how to deal with challenges well. Parents can help their children avoid such problems by teaching principles that foster greater resilience.

Attitudes of Resilience

The original definition of the word *resilience* had to do with a material’s ability to resume its shape or position after being bent, stretched, or compressed. Today we commonly use the word to describe our ability to bounce back from adversity.

We know two things about adversity and resilience: First, there is “an opposition in



all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). Second, obtaining anything of great worth often requires great sacrifice.

As children become resilient, they understand and accept these two facts. They see life as challenging and ever changing, but they believe they can cope with those challenges and changes. They view mistakes and weaknesses as opportunities to learn, and they accept that losing may precede winning.

As children develop resilience, they believe they can influence and even control outcomes in their lives through effort, imagination, knowledge, and skill. With this attitude, they focus on what they *can* do rather than on what is outside their control.

Another mark of resilience is to see great purpose and meaning in life and people. A sense of purpose will help our children avoid giving up, in spite of setbacks and pressure to do so. If our children are becoming more resilient, they will develop deep values that



guide them: charity, virtue, integrity, honesty, work ethic, and faith in God. They will involve themselves in what is happening around them and opt for commitment to values rather than feel alienated and avoid struggle.

The gospel teaches and reinforces these values and perceptions.

Lessons of Resilience from Childhood

When I was a child, many adults in my life—parents, neighbors, teachers, and Church leaders—taught me and my brother and sisters the following lessons. These five principles may be helpful for your children:

1. *Paying the price for privileges.*

I knew that freedom to play with my friends in the coming days depended on whether or not I came home on time.

2. *The law of the harvest.*

If I wanted money, I had to deliver the newspapers for my route and collect the money each month.

3. *Personal accountability and responsibility.*

I had to complete my own homework, science fair projects, and merit badges.

4. *The law of restitution.*

I could make up for misbehavior by apologizing and repairing the wrong. My parents sometimes suggested that I complete extra chores, such as pulling weeds.

5. *Learning from mistakes.*

If I made my bed poorly, did not wash the dishes properly, or did not pull weeds properly, I had to redo these tasks correctly.

—Lyle J. Burrup

Perfectionism Undermines Resilience

One thing that hinders the development of resilience is a misunderstanding of the commandment to be perfect (see Matthew 5:48). This misunderstanding is the most common factor I've seen undermining resilience in new missionaries. They want to be perfect in everything because they love Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ and do not want to disappoint Them. But they do not understand that the Lord works through weak, simple servants (see D&C 1:19–23) and that striving to be perfect does not mean we never make mistakes but rather that we become fully developed or complete through the Atonement of Christ as we strive to follow Him (see Matthew 5:48, footnote *b*).

This misunderstanding may also stem from what society teaches our youth: that their worth depends on talent and performance. In schools and communities, sometimes even at church or at home, youth see their peers get acceptance, admiration, approval, and praise for being talented at something. So they try to measure up. As they do so, they start to fear failure and mistakes. They choose what to do based on how successful they think they will be. They procrastinate when they do not feel confident. They worry about what others will think if they make mistakes. They fear loss of approval. They view their performance as the measure of their worth. Their perfectionism becomes a mean taskmaster, and it wears down their resilience.

For instance, because missionaries at the MTC cannot choose what they are going to do or not do as part of their training, they make mistakes as they learn how to speak a new language, teach gospel concepts, and perform other missionary tasks. They make these mistakes in front of strangers, and if they haven't gained a sense of resilience, they feel distressed and overwhelmed.

Helping Children Develop Resilience

So how do we help our children develop resilience? Our Father in Heaven provides the model. He treats us with great love and respect, even when we make mistakes. He reminds us of our potential (see Moses 1:39) and our great worth (see D&C 18:10), which are based on our identity as His sons and daughters. He gives us laws so we know what He expects (see D&C 107:84), allows us to make choices (see 2 Nephi 2:15–16), and honors our choices (see D&C 130:20). He allows for learning and instruction to correct mistakes (see D&C 1:25–26) and for repentance and restitution to correct sin (see D&C 1:27–28).

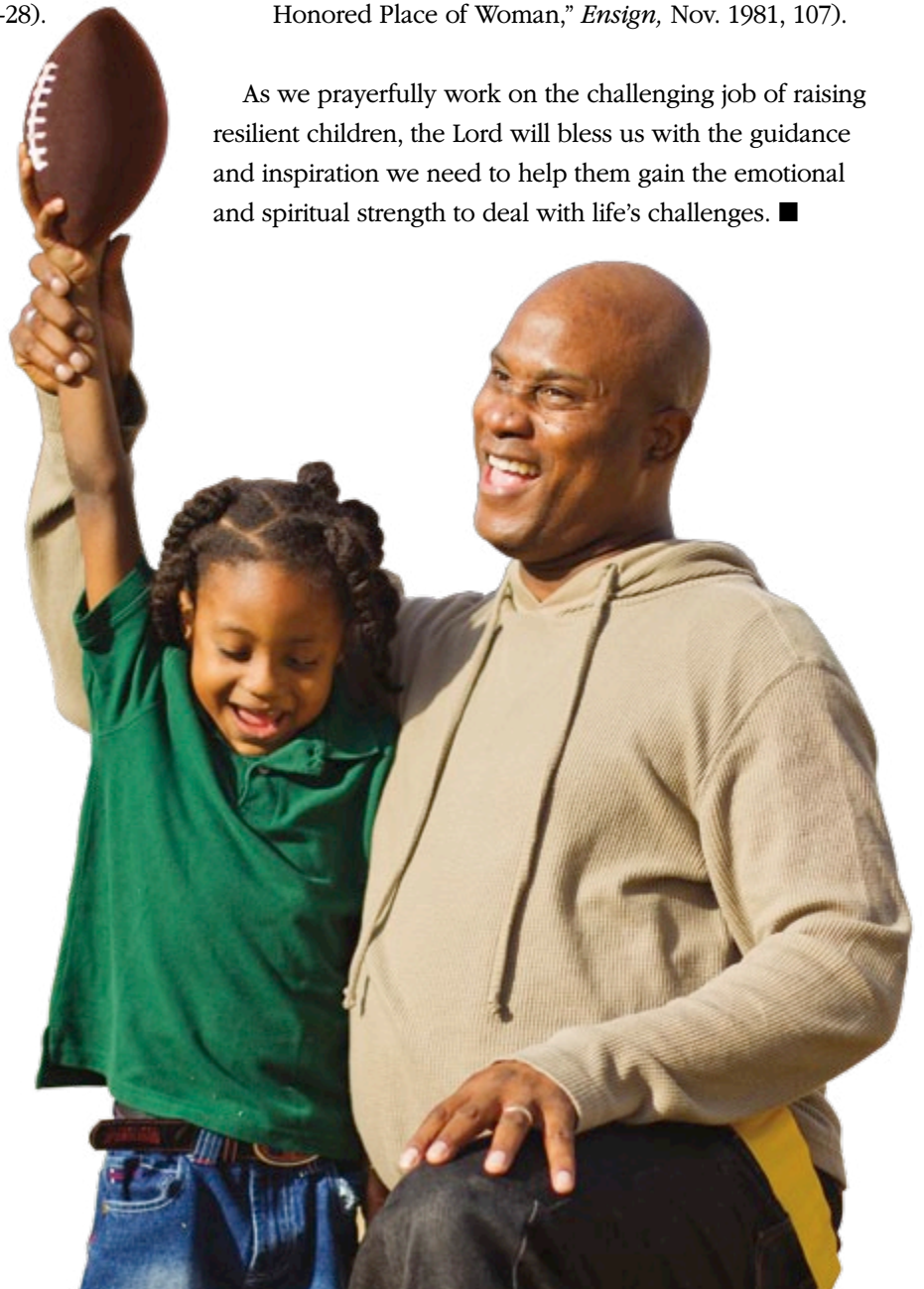
Here are some recommendations for how we might apply these principles in our homes:

- Pray to understand your children's strengths and how to help them with their weaknesses.
- Be patient and realize that children need time to develop resilience.
- Strive to understand that mistakes and failures are opportunities to learn.

As children develop resilience, they believe they can influence outcomes in their lives through effort, imagination, knowledge, and skill. They focus on what they can do rather than on what is outside their control.

- Allow natural, logical consequences to serve as the disciplinarian.
- Respect children's decisions, even if their poor choices lead to lost privileges.
- Refrain from berating children for breaking the rules.
- Do not discourage effort by criticizing harshly.
- Rather than praising accomplishment, encourage and praise effort.
- "Praise your children more than you correct them. Praise them for even their smallest achievement" (President Ezra Taft Benson [1899–1994], "The Honored Place of Woman," *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 107).

As we prayerfully work on the challenging job of raising resilient children, the Lord will bless us with the guidance and inspiration we need to help them gain the emotional and spiritual strength to deal with life's challenges. ■



Recommendations for Raising Capable, Resilient Children

While parenting requires a personalized approach for each child, some principles seem to be nearly universal. The following principles have proved effective.



Instead of Doing This . . .

Set random or arbitrary rules and consequences.

Allow children to avoid the consequences of their choices.

Give mostly correction.

Be arbitrary and inconsistent in requiring obedience.

Praise only outcomes.

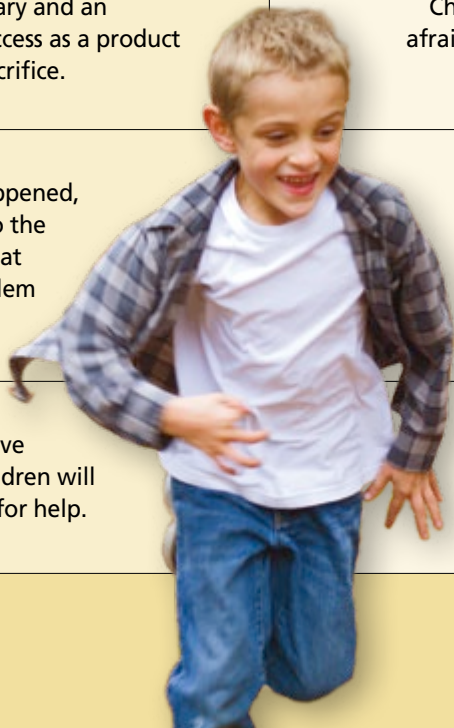
Send the message to children that their self-worth depends on outcomes.

Talk about failures or successes as being connected to luck or talent.

Try to solve children's problems by giving them all the answers.

Make children feel dumb by criticizing them, their effort, and their accomplishments.

| Do This . . . | And Get This Result . . . |
|--|--|
| <p>Discuss rules and set logical consequences that are reasonable, related to the behavior, and respectful of both parent and child.</p> | <p>Children know what to expect and learn that choices have consequences.</p> |
|  <p>Allow children to experience natural and logical consequences of their choices.</p> | <p>Children learn accountability and responsibility for their choices.</p> |
| <p>Give mostly praise. Celebrate small steps in the right direction.</p> | <p>Children learn what parents want. They feel encouraged, worthwhile, and appreciated.</p> |
| <p>Consistently offer desirable rewards for the actions and behaviors you would like to reinforce.</p> | <p>Children learn that they don't have to want to do hard things; they just have to do them.</p> |
| <p>Praise for effort regardless of outcome.</p> | <p>Children feel encouraged, confident, and more willing to take on challenges.</p> |
| <p>Tell children they have inherent worth because they are sons or daughters of God and have divine potential.</p> | <p>Self-worth will be attached to the child's eternal potential instead of temporary success or failure.</p> |
| <p>Define failure as temporary and an opportunity to learn. Define success as a product of hard work and sacrifice.</p> | <p>Children are less discouraged by or afraid of setbacks and are more willing to be persistent.</p> |
| <p>Help children (1) identify what happened, (2) analyze what contributed to the outcome, and (3) identify what they can do to avoid this problem next time.</p> | <p>Children develop perceptions of being capable, will address and solve their problems, and will see that they have control in their lives and can overcome challenges.</p> |
| <p>Listen and be supportive and encouraging so your children will want to come to you again for help.</p> | <p>Children feel more comfortable discussing their mistakes and problems with you.</p> |



THE ENABLING POWER OF THE Atonement

We do not need to carry our burdens alone. Our Savior took upon Himself our pains and sicknesses (see Alma 7:11).

By Carolyn J. Rasmus

Some time ago, while serving as an institute teacher, I discovered that my students would occasionally come to me for comfort when they had problems. Over a period of many months, I became acquainted with a woman who shared with me her life story. It was not pretty. As a child she had often been abused, and this had led to years of therapy—and at times institutionalization—because she could not cope.

I remember the day she came to my office pleading for help. I could clearly see her pain, but I was just a teacher. I had had no training in how to comfort people who had suffered such things, and I pled with the Lord to know how I might help.

I recommended that she counsel with her bishop, but I also felt impressed to play some recorded Church hymns. After a time, when she was calmer, I seated her in my office chair. On the wall at eye level was a painting of Jesus Christ. I invited her to look into His eyes as I read to her from the scriptures:

“Fear not, little flock. . . . Look unto me in every thought; doubt not, fear not” (D&C 6:34, 36).

“The Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. . . . For can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should

not have compassion on the son of her womb? . . . Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (1 Nephi 21:13, 15–16).

“Behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature” (2 Nephi 9:21).

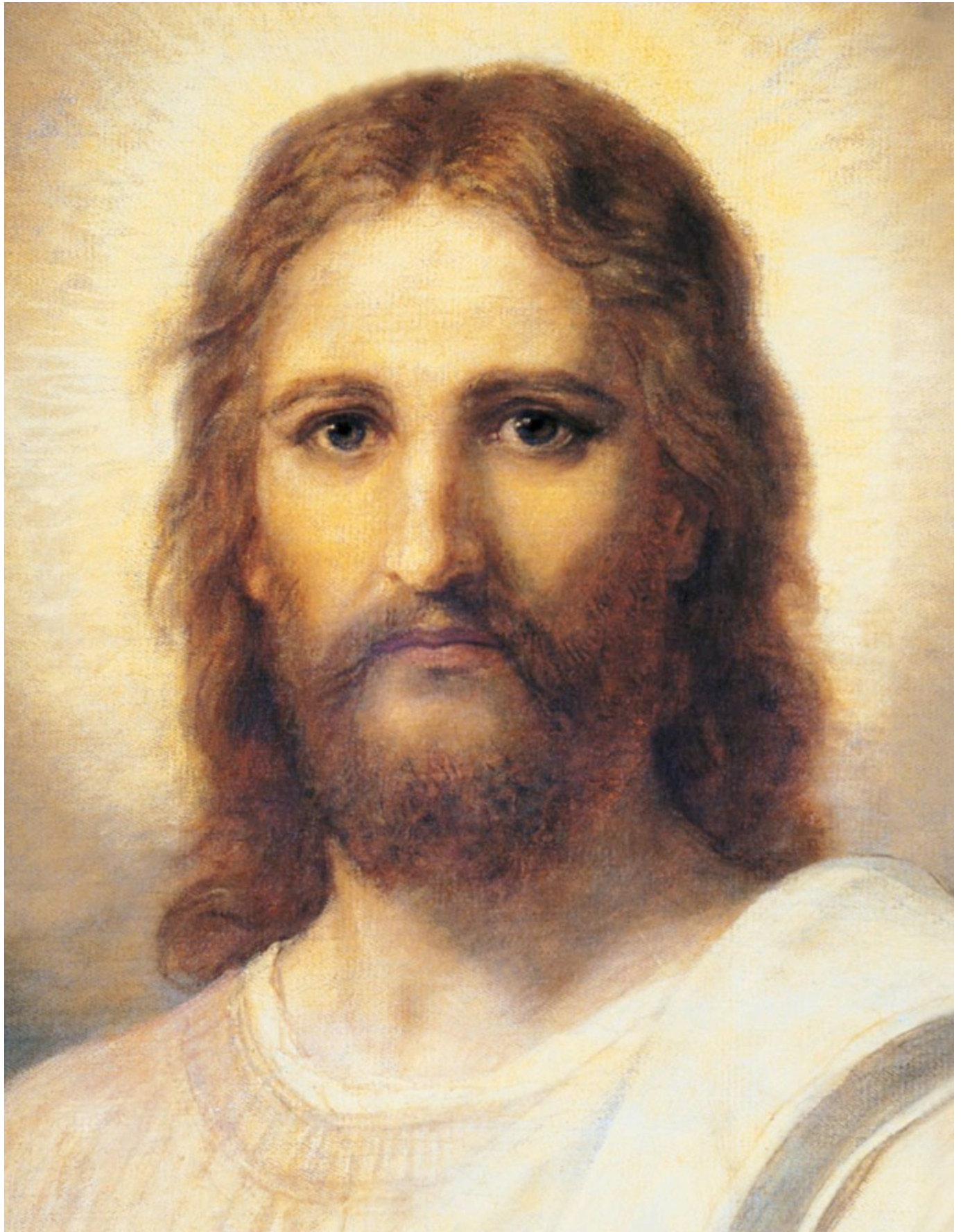
“Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause” (Jacob 3:1).

As each scripture came to my mind, I felt that I was being prompted by the Spirit to know and do things beyond my natural ability. She later described having felt “an overwhelming feeling of love and peace.”

To help my friend, I had called on Heavenly Father to help me in an area of weakness, and He granted me help. This kind of divine assistance, often given through the influence of the Holy Ghost, is one of the gifts of the enabling power of the Atonement.

Accessing the Atonement

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “I suspect that [we] are much more familiar with the nature of the redeeming power of the Atonement than we are with the enabling power of the Atonement.”¹ He suggested



CHRIST'S IMAGE, BY HEINRICH HOFMANN, COURTESY OF C. HARRISON CONROY CO.



THE ATONEMENT STRENGTHENS US

“The enabling power of the Atonement strengthens us to do and be good and to serve beyond our own individual desire and natural capacity.”

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Atonement and the Journey of Mortality,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2012, 42–43.

that most of us understand that Christ came to earth to die for us, to pay the price for our sins, to make us clean, to redeem us from our fallen state, and to enable every person to be resurrected from the dead.

But, Elder Bednar said, “I frankly do not think many of us ‘get it’ concerning [the] enabling and strengthening aspect of the Atonement, and I wonder if we mistakenly believe we must make the journey from good to better and become a saint all by ourselves through sheer grit, willpower, and discipline, and with our obviously limited capacities.”²

The belief that through our own “sheer grit, willpower, and discipline” we can manage just about anything seems to be widespread these days. This simply is not true. Heavenly Father and the Savior can inspire, comfort, and strengthen us in our time of need, if we remember to cast our burdens at Their feet.

Feel Confident in God’s Hands

On the eve of Jesus Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane, He issued this benediction to His disciples: “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). Of this invitation, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “[This] may be one of the Savior’s commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed; and yet I wonder whether our resistance to this invitation could be any more grievous to the Lord’s merciful heart.” Elder Holland added, “I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when he finds that his people do not feel confident in his care or secure in his hands.”³

Christ stands ready with outstretched arms as He waits for us to come unto Him and be encircled in the arms of His love (see D&C 6:20). It is here that we can be healed, nourished, loved, enabled, strengthened, and made whole. Although the trial may be hard and the relief may not be immediate, we need to learn to allow God to help carry our burdens. We can do this by turning to Him regularly to seek His enabling power.

To the faithful followers of Alma, who were struggling with heavy persecution from the wicked priest Amulon, the Lord declared, “I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, . . . that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.” In fulfillment of that wonderful promise, “the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord” (Mosiah 24:14, 15).

Rely on the Atonement

Another friend of mine struggles under difficult circumstances. Across a lengthy time period, she lovingly cared for her brilliant husband, who experienced early-onset Alzheimer’s disease. She was widowed at age 55.

She told me, “There are times when the sadness is overwhelming. I get on my knees and plead, ‘Please carry this for a while. I can’t do this alone.’ And I feel God’s strength—strength enough to allow me to move forward one day at a time.

“To me, this is the power of the Atonement. I know I cannot change my situation, but I can change how I respond—I have to humble myself and depend on Him for help. The scriptures teach that the Savior is a merciful

God. Through this experience, I am learning that truth on a personal level. I've learned that He is someone whom I can trust and turn to for comfort in times of trial."

My friend's reliance on the Atonement enables her to carry on when her burdens seem too heavy and her pain too intense to bear. She truly has come to depend upon "the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah" (2 Nephi 2:8).

Recognize the Need for Grace

In a familiar hymn, Christ speaks to us, saying:

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

*When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design . . .
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.⁴*

These words indicate that it is through the grace of God that we shall be sustained. As we come to recognize our need for that grace—both for our ultimate salvation and also for its enabling power every day of our lives—we can be uplifted and strengthened.⁵ When we feel troubled, unsure, afraid, or discouraged, doing the following can help us access the power of grace and the Atonement:

- Believe in the Father and in the Son and all They have promised to do for us.
- Obey God's commandments and partake of the sacrament regularly to build spiritual strength.
- Pray, fast, study the scriptures, and worship in the temple to feel God's love and know of His promises.

Strength beyond Our Own

When we understand the enabling power of the Atonement, we will be changed; we will have access to strength beyond our natural abilities, our weakness can be turned to strength, and we can know that "in the strength of the Lord" we can "do all things" (Alma 20:4).

Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have the power and the desire to help us overcome our feelings of grief, despair, inadequacy, discouragement, pain, and temptation. They constantly offer us comfort, peace, hope, love, and strength. They can heal our feelings of fear, distrust, anger, self-doubt, sorrow, discouragement, and inadequacy. They can be the best resource we have to help us get through difficult days and trying times. If we but come unto Christ, He will lead us to the Father and a fulness of joy in Their presence.⁶ ■

Based on an address given at the Brigham Young University Women's Conference in Provo, Utah, USA, on May 5, 2006.

Carolyn J. Rasmus lives in Utah, USA.

NOTES

1. David A. Bednar, "In the Strength of the Lord," in *Brigham Young University 2001–2002 Speeches* (2002), 2.
2. David A. Bednar, "In the Strength of the Lord," 3.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Come unto Me," *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 19.
4. "How Firm a Foundation," *Hymns*, no. 85.
5. See Proverbs 3:34; 1 Peter 5:5; Doctrine and Covenants 88:78; 106:7–8.
6. See John 17:3–24; Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–33.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

What do Latter-day Saints believe about grace?

We believe that God's grace is what ultimately saves us; yet it does not save us without our doing all that we can to live God's commandments and follow Jesus Christ's teachings. We do not believe salvation comes by simply confessing belief in Christ as our Savior. Faith, works, ordinances, and grace are all necessary.

We believe that "it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus, made possible by his atoning sacrifice, that mankind will be raised in immortality, every person receiving his body from the grave in a condition of everlasting life. It is likewise through the grace of the Lord that individuals, through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ and repentance of their sins, receive strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means. This grace is an enabling power" (see Bible Dictionary, "Grace").



THE Temple Stairs

My life had been a difficult climb for years.



By Tracy Hickman

One day I stood at the bottom of the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple staircases gazing up, when a sister ordinance worker quietly stepped over to me.

“I can show you where the elevator is,” she whispered.

I smiled. I work the Friday morning shift at this temple. My wife and I had been workers here since the day it opened. I climb up and down these stairs perhaps a dozen times a day in the course of my shift. Of course, she didn’t know that. We had come this Tuesday morning because it was the first opportunity for us to return following one of the semiannual closings of the temple for cleaning, and we didn’t want to wait until Friday to return. But to this good sister I appeared to be staring up the staircase as though it would be a difficult climb.

Twenty-eight steps on the west staircase. Twenty-nine steps on the east. “And yes,” I thought, “it is a difficult climb.”

My Personal Staircase

My life had been a difficult climb for several years.

It had been about that long since my wife, Laura, and I moved to the Salt Lake area, Utah, USA. Our children were grown and our business was in a slump, or so we thought at the time. Laura and I felt a call to sell our home in St. George, Utah,

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

How many Latter-day Saint Temples are there?

As of December 2012, there were 140 operating temples throughout the world. Several more are under construction or have been announced.

We build temples because our Heavenly Father wants us to return to Him. As members of the Church, we have each been baptized and confirmed by one having priesthood authority. We may also go to the temple to receive the saving priesthood ordinances performed there. Because many of God's children have not had these same opportunities, He has provided a way for them to receive their priesthood ordinances. He has asked us to perform ordinances for our ancestors in the temples.

and move northward. Some people joked that we were moving in the wrong direction for potential empty nesters, who don't usually move from warm climates to cold ones. But we had felt inspiration calling us to move north. To us, it was a matter of being obedient when we put our home up for sale.

It was the worst possible time to sell a home. The housing market had already begun to slide when we put our sign up, and the price of our home couldn't fall fast enough to catch the plunging market. We did manage to sell our home—a blessing in itself—but we lost nearly all of our equity in the sale and with it, most of our savings. Still we felt sure that our tight finances, too, were just a bump in the road and that things would recover soon. God would take care of us. We moved into a home just down the street from the site where the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple was being built.

Summer faded into a cold winter. Then, the Saturday before Christmas, my only brother, Gerry, was gone—taken from us through a horrible accident during his usual Saturday bicycle ride. Two weeks earlier, he had looked forward to bringing his entire family to celebrate Christmas at our parents' ancestral home in rural Utah. Instead, we were laying him to rest in that same town next to where his beloved and long-departed grandparents lay.

I couldn't help but wonder, "How could God take from us this great man—the younger brother I looked up to?"

We carried our grief with us into spring. Laura and I saw the Oquirrh Mountain Utah Temple completed and volunteered to help for the open house. We were soon called as ordinance workers and began working at the temple on the first Tuesday morning that it was

open. We saw our youngest son off on his mission, and surely, we thought, blessings were due to us. We were doing everything we knew how to do to contribute to the kingdom of God.

Yet the slump in our business became a free fall, right along with the rest of the economy. My previously stable and dependable profession went flat. We drained every resource we had and more. We foolishly went into debt, telling ourselves that the "temporary" problem would be corrected soon and that our business would recover. We did not understand that our line of work had completely changed without our noticing it and that the way we had conducted our business for almost 30 years had suddenly become obsolete. We would have to rebuild our business, and we were saddled with mounting debt. We were granted the opportunity to move our temple shift to Friday so that we could have more time to recover our business, but it wasn't enough.

I was in anguish. I began to wonder, "Why is this happening to me? I'm a good member. I pay my tithing. I attend my meetings and serve in my callings. My son is serving a mission. Why isn't God supporting me in my righteous efforts? Where are the blessings that I should be harvesting? Why has everything gone so wrong when we have been trying so hard to do what is right?"

Serving in the Temple Changed Me

Subtly, quietly, serving in the temple began to change my life. It was more than the peace that the temple brought to me; I was being reshaped by my service, forged anew with an understanding of the difference between the eternal and the temporal.

One Friday morning my wife and I arrived



My brother, Gerry, was gone, but because of the promise of the temple, we can be family forever.

late for our morning shift. I had forgotten to set the alarm, and instead, Laura awoke with the hymn “Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise” (*Hymns*, no. 41) playing in her mind. We hurried to put ourselves together and drove to the temple.

I was the last of the brothers out of the dressing room at the temple. Once again I was dressed for ordinance work and was feeling some measure of the peace I usually feel when I’m dressed in white in the temple of our God.

But this particular morning the cares of the world weighed heavy on my shoulders as I entered the great, vaulting atrium in the center of the temple. When I came to the bottom of the stairs, I just stopped. The workers for our shift were already in the chapel at the top of the stairs, and our morning prayer meeting had begun. But something marvelous had happened. The brethren were singing the same hymn that my wife had heard in her mind when she awoke earlier that morning. I could see the silhouettes of the temple workers against the glass beyond the landing above.

*Let Zion in her beauty rise;
Her light begins to shine.
Ere long her King will rend the skies,
Majestic and divine.*

As I stood there, I felt that this moment was close to what heaven would be like.

I could imagine a place just like this on the other side of the veil. I might be standing at the bottom of similar

stairs, dressed in similar white clothing. Everyone and everything that truly mattered would be at the top of those stairs. My grandma Nan and my grandpa Sam and my dear, dear brother, Gerry—all my family bound together in the eternities—could all be there waiting for me and singing. The cares of the world would slip away.

I was filled with a joy that could not be contained, and I hurried up those temple stairs!

He Gives Us What We Need

“I can show you where the elevator is,” she had whispered.

Twenty-eight steps on the west staircase. Twenty-nine steps on the east. “And,” I thought, “it is a difficult climb.”

The temple is a place where we can put the world aside for a time. It offers us a spiritual perspective that contrasts with the limited view of the mortal world beyond its walls. Now with that perspective I can look at difficulties with new understanding. I can see that God *did* provide miracles all along the way that have carried me through. He did not provide me with the miracles that I *wanted*; He provided me with the miracles that I *needed*.

Another hymn now has new meaning for me: “How Firm a Foundation” (*Hymns*, no. 85). I especially love the end of the second verse: “As thy days may demand, so thy succor shall be.”

My business is still rebuilding; my brother is still gone. But what I’ve come to know is that God did not promise me wealth; He promised me peace. God did not promise to take my burdens from me; He promised to make them lighter. God did not promise to keep my brother from being subject to mortality; He promised that we would be family forever.

I still think about what those stairs have taught me. Our Heavenly Father doesn’t want me to take the metaphorical elevator. He wants me to climb those stairs, both in the temple and in the world, for *His* sake, for my own sake, for my family’s sake.

The stairs are still high—but now I climb them with joy. ■
Tracy Hickman lives in Utah, USA.

CREATING Christ-Centered EASTER TRADITIONS

*At Easter we celebrate the gift of our Savior:
the Atonement.*

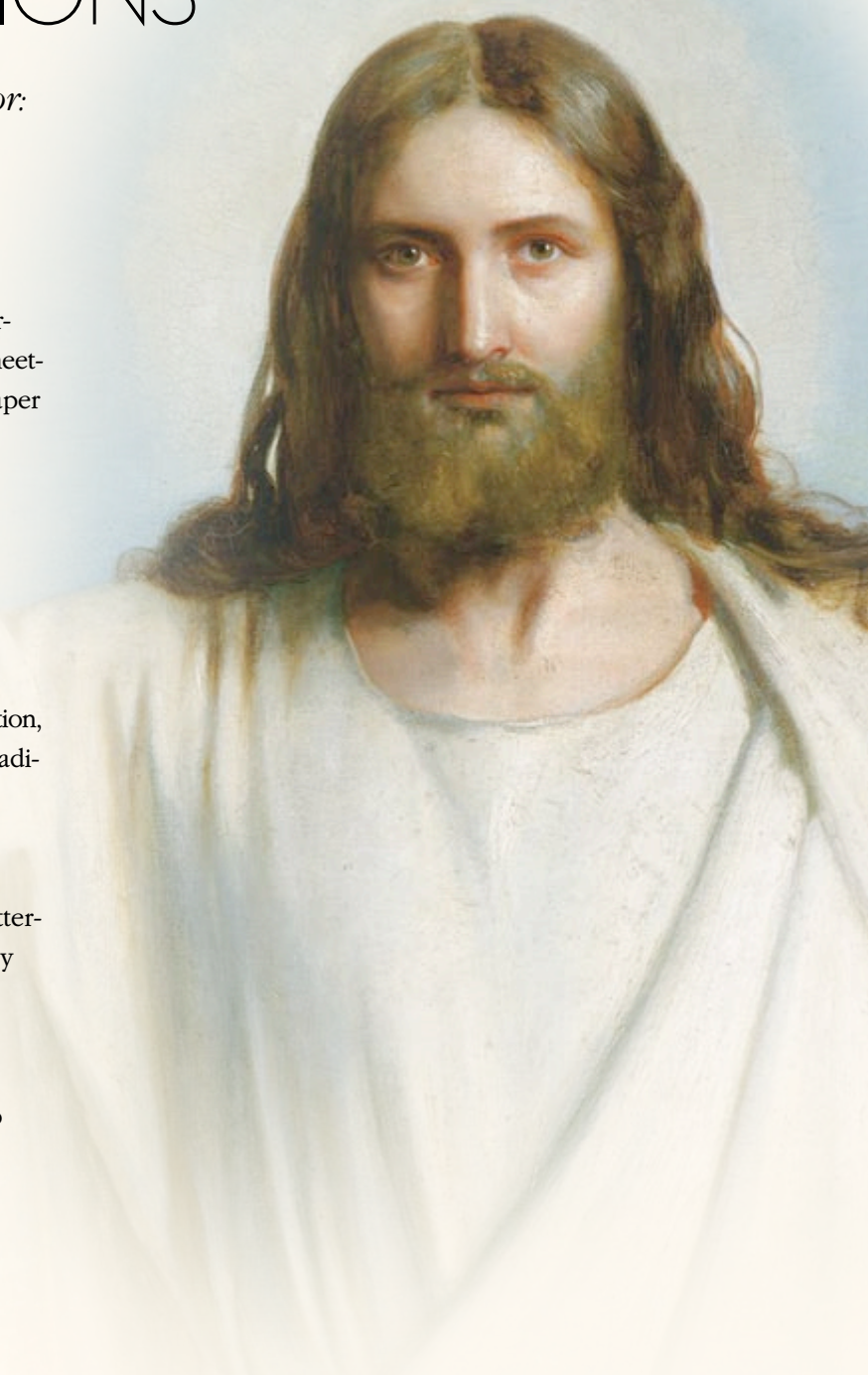
By Diane L. Mangum

On Easter Sunday some years ago, my four-year-old son Ben came down the hallway of our meetinghouse after Primary, happily waving the paper he had colored. He called out with pure excitement, “Mom, Mom, have you heard about the Resurrection?” He wanted to make sure I had heard the good news. Something his Primary teacher had said really touched Ben’s heart so that he joyfully began to understand the Resurrection. How nice it would be for all of us to feel that same joy every Easter!

The Atonement of Jesus Christ, including the Resurrection, is at the very core of Easter. Creating Christ-centered traditions will help us focus on these gifts of our Savior.

Sunday Worship and Traditions

Without extra feasts, parades, or festivities, we Latter-day Saints worship together on Easter as we do every Sunday. Our ward and branch leaders plan speakers and musical numbers that focus on Jesus Christ. Of Easter Sunday, Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “The Lord has not been so explicit in providing us religious customs along the order of feasts and festivals to remind us of the blessings we receive from Him today. However, the practice of having traditions to keep us close to the



DETAIL FROM CHRIST THE CONSOLATOR, BY CARL HEINRICH BLOCH © IRI; BORDER BY PATRIC GERBER

great heritage which is ours to enjoy should be something every family should try to keep alive” (“Family Traditions,” *Ensign*, May 1990, 20).

Following are a variety of traditions from families as they celebrate Easter and draw loved ones close.

Sharing Testimonies of Christ’s Resurrection

- Janice and Kirk Nielson started a special “Grandparents Night” that has become an Easter tradition. Sister Nielson said, “I believe that the most effective thing we do as grandparents is to go to our children’s homes and sit down with our grandchildren and let them know we have a testimony of the Savior.”
- When their children were young, Hector and Sherilyn Alba made time each evening during the week before Easter for a short lesson on the things that happened during the last week of the Savior’s life.
- Some families visit the graves of loved ones. They talk with their children about family members who have passed away and express gratitude for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The egg has become an almost universal symbol of Easter to represent the Savior’s breaking the bands of death through His Resurrection. Thus coloring and hiding eggs for an Easter egg hunt and giving Easter baskets are common traditions around the world.

- In Russia people often greet one another on Easter by saying, “Jesus is risen.” The other person replies, “Truly, He is risen.” In Albania the tradition is similar; they click red egg rocks together and say, “Christ is risen.”
- Karen Spencer treasures the memories of her Danish grandmother’s Easter celebrations and still likes to dye eggs with boiled purple onion skins just as her grandmother did. Her family finds it a good time to talk about the egg as a symbol of new life and the Resurrection.

- Some families with young children enjoy Easter egg hunts with a message. They place inside a plastic egg a small item that symbolizes something related to Christ’s death and Resurrection and a scripture to read. Then they number the eggs in sequence of the Easter story. As the children open the eggs in order, they learn of Christ’s Atonement and Resurrection.

Sharing Easter Music

Music can have a wonderful influence on us at Easter.

- David and Joyce Beer enjoy seeking out Easter-related concerts to help them remember the Savior’s sacrifice.
- Dave and Nancy Harmon enjoy listening to George Frideric Handel’s *Messiah*, which Sister Harmon feels “is really more about Easter than Christmas.”
- One mother encourages her children who are taking music lessons to practice an Easter song that month.
- The Dale and Sara Okerlund family gather at the piano to sing hymns and Primary songs about Easter.

Sharing an Easter Meal Together

A family meal is another meaningful Easter tradition throughout the world.

- One family eats ham and talks about how Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. Another family eats fish to remember the things Jesus ate. The Eliza and Michael Pereira family eat a meal that includes lamb, and they talk about the symbolism in the Passover story.
- After my family’s Easter dinner, we take a photograph of all the family members and other dear friends who shared dinner with us. We have a special Easter scrapbook that now chronicles more than 30 years of happy family memories.
- One couple whose children are grown invites other adult friends to a special dinner. Here they share memories and reflect on what Easter means.

- In some countries the Easter holiday includes Friday and Monday. In Tahiti, family members often picnic together on other islands. In Central America, some Latter-day Saints use the extra time to visit with their family, share a meal, and then attend the temple.

Sharing Non-Religious Traditions on Another Day

Latter-day Saint families often hold non-religious activities that involve Easter on a day other than Sunday.

- In Brazil on Friday or Saturday before Easter, one Latter-day Saint grandmother leaves one or two nibbled carrots in a visible place and hides Easter eggs near the carrots.
- On the Monday after Easter, the Joyce and Scott Hendricks family enjoy a cookout and a special Easter egg hunt.

Always Keep Christ in Easter

Learning about Jesus Christ in family home evening, listening to Easter music, or enjoying a special meal can bring a spiritual boost at any stage of life. Celebrations don't need to involve a large group. A personal tradition of an Easter celebration within a single home or heart is just as meaningful.

We too can remember and celebrate the joyfulness of Easter just like little Ben, who came down the meetinghouse hall wanting to share the good news about the Resurrection. ■

Diane L. Mangum lives in Utah, USA.



DETAIL FROM BEHOLD MY HANDS AND FEET, BY HARRY ANDERSON © IRI

Bearing Testimony at Home

My husband and I had been pondering how to help our four sons learn about bearing testimony. We felt inspired to include the opportunity for testimony bearing in our family home evening routine. At first our oldest boys were embarrassed to stand and share their testimonies, and our youngest boys didn't really know how to bear their testimonies. We would prompt them by asking questions about how they felt about Jesus, the Book of Mormon, the prophet, and the Church. As we did this, our testimonies began to grow, we became comfortable sharing spiritual things as a family, and we learned to be reverent during spiritual moments.

To help our children learn how to share their testimonies, we prompted them by asking questions about Jesus, the Book of Mormon, the prophet, and the Church.

We echo the teachings of Elder David A. Bednar: "Feeling the power, the edification, and the constancy of testimony from a spouse, a parent, or a child is a rich blessing. Such testimony fortifies faith and provides direction. Such testimony generates light in a world that grows

increasingly dark."¹ We testify that these promises are fulfilled as we bear testimony with those we love during family home evening each week.

Kim Melanson, Oregon, USA

NOTE

1. David A. Bednar, "More Diligent and Concerned at Home," *Ensign*, Nov. 2009, 19.





MAKE KNOWN HIS WONDERFUL WORKS

SELECTIONS FROM THE NINTH INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

▲ A Circle of God's Work, by Hidekazu Ina, Japan. This sand-etched glass dish illustrates the circle of missionary work, symbolized in part by the growth of a seed. In the center, twelve stars representing the twelve tribes of Israel surround a large star that represents our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All good gifts come from God, and He has given each of us spiritual and physical gifts (see Moroni 10:8–18). We are to exercise these gifts and not idle away our time or bury our talents (see D&C 6:11; 60:13). We are to “pray unto the Lord, call upon his holy name, [and] make known his wonderful works among the people” (D&C 65:4).

The message taught by the Book of Mormon prophet Ether to his people also applies to us today: “Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God” (Ether 12:4).

Here we see the “wonderful works” of several Latter-day Saint artists from around the world who have used their gifts to glorify God. To view these and other works from the Ninth International Art Competition, visit history.lds.org/event/9th-art-comp. ■



▲ Great Are the Words of Isaiah, by Joyce Stewart, USA. Each of the nine floral blocks in this quilt with crystal embellishments represents a scripture from Isaiah. The grapevine border represents abundance of life and the life of the Savior.

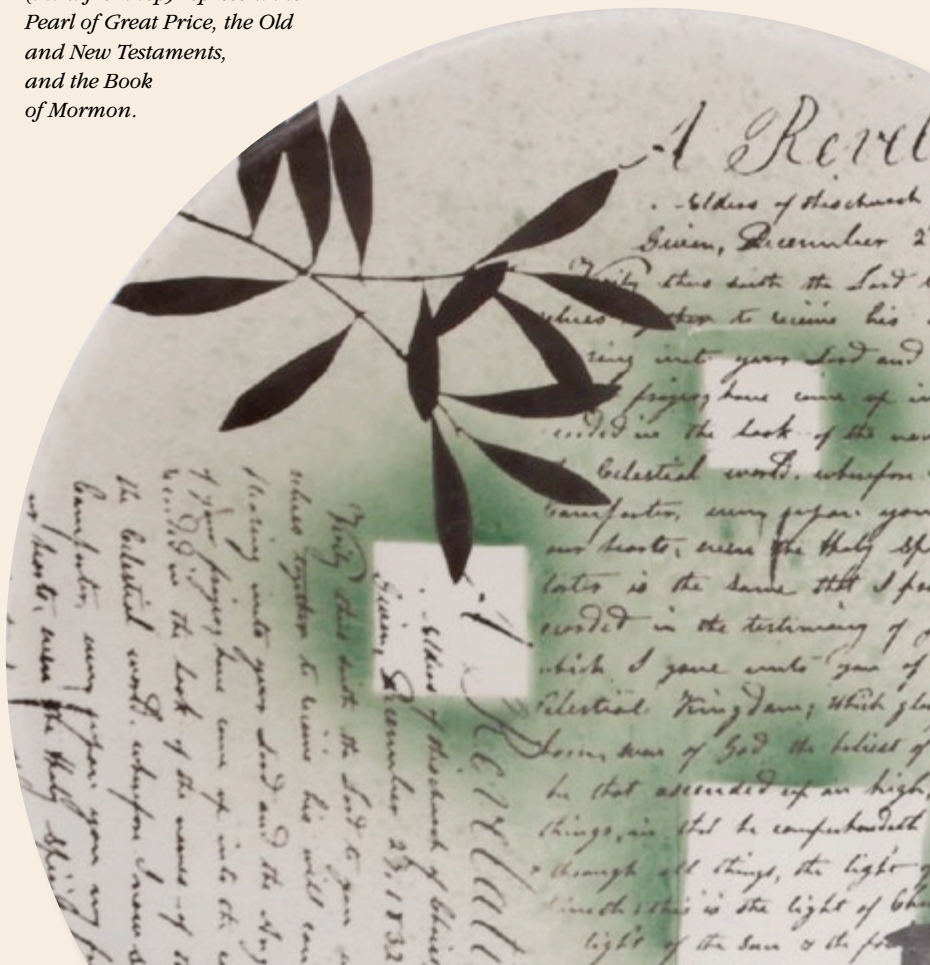


▲ Sealed, by Emily King, USA. This image of a mother and child created from hand-cut paper depicts the importance of family and the opportunity to be sealed to loved ones for eternity.

▼ The Heavens Declare the Glory of God, by Janetta Isabella Stoddart, United Kingdom. This handwoven tapestry captures the moment when the artist sat in the Sahara Desert and gained reverence for the vastness of all God's works.



► The Standard Works, ceramic pieces by E. Clark Marshall, USA. "The Olive Leaf" (top and enlarged below) features Doctrine and Covenants 88; "The Book of Abraham" (second from top) and "Isaiah 29" (third from top) represent the Pearl of Great Price, the Old and New Testaments, and the Book of Mormon.



▼ “I Love to See the Temple” Chest, by Mary Jane Smith, USA. Each drawer of this painted wood chest features a temple that has significance for members of the artist’s family. Lyrics from the song “I Love to See the Temple” also appear on the drawers.



▲ Morning Has Broken, by Claire Lynn Jones, USA. This silk-thread embroidery on linen fabric depicts many of Heavenly Father’s wonderful creations.

▼ Kyiv Ukraine Temple, by Valentyna Mustienko, Ukraine. This cut-paper artwork depicting the Kyiv Ukraine Temple expresses gratitude for the first LDS temple in the former Soviet Union.



► His Works—My Blessings, by Diane Fairbanks Brinton, USA. Each appliquéd picture block in this quilt represents a blessing the Lord has bestowed upon His children.



Left: Rhythms of the Planets, by Andrew Watson, USA. The movements of the stars and the handiwork of the Supreme Creator are captured in the coloration and painting of this porcelain vase. Right: The Good Serpent, by Alene Kells, USA. This wheel-thrown, fired clay piece celebrates the good serpent of brass raised by Moses to heal the children of Israel.



THE Right Time TO MARRY

Ane and Benjamin knew that education was important, and they both wanted to study at a university. How would their potential marriage fit into this plan?

By Alissa Strong
Church Magazines

When Ane was in high school, she looked forward to the day that she would attend a university. There were so many subjects she could study and so many careers she could choose from! “I had many, many interests and could do so many different things,” she says.

Although Ane lived in a small town in Norway, she attended a very good high school. Her school encouraged its students to work hard for good grades and to attend a university. Many students at Ane’s school began university studies immediately after graduating. From a young age, Ane had planned to do the same. Going to school, however, was only one of the goals Ane had set for herself.

“I have been well taught in Young Women through lessons and Personal Progress,” Ane says. “My goal has always been to marry in the temple.”

When Is the “Right Time”?

One evening at the local institute, Ane met a recently returned missionary named Benjamin. “From the first

moment I saw him, he impressed me in so many ways,” says Ane. “It was so easy and nice to talk with him. We could easily talk about the gospel.”

Benjamin asked her on a date, and it went well. Over the coming months, Benjamin and Ane dated more. They played soccer and volleyball, went on hikes, and watched movies. Gradually they came to know each other better, and their friendship grew into romance.

As their courtship continued, their thoughts and plans turned to marriage. Ane and Benjamin were happy to have found the person they wanted to be with for eternity. However, this relationship became serious sooner than either of them had expected. What would happen to all the plans they had made when they were young? Would they still be able to seek an education? Would the decision to marry mean that their other goals would be postponed?

Some of their friends and family thought that this would be the case.

“Many people around me—at home, at school, and at work—were very concerned about how this relationship would affect my education,” Ane says. “They would question whether I even knew this relationship was going to last.

“Friends my age thought that getting married would prevent me from attending university,” she said. “To them, it seemed like I would be wasting my talents and opportunities.”

Some of Benjamin’s acquaintances felt the same way. “People wanted me to believe that we were too young, that my soon-to-be wife should complete an education first, and that if we got married, it would mean that we would have children, which we were also too young for,” he says.

Although Ane and Benjamin believed in the gospel’s emphasis on family and marriage, others not of



their faith did not generally share this priority—at least not for young adults. “People in my town are strongly focused on education and work,” Ane explains. “This is good, but it does not leave much room for family—or religion.”

Benjamin says, “I had always thought that the right thing to do was to return from my mission, find someone I liked, then loved, and then, after having made a decision to marry and having received a witness from the Holy Ghost, get married. It seemed so simple to me, but suddenly everything had become confusing, dark, and difficult.”

What Does the Lord Say?

Both Benjamin and Ane were concerned about the advice and opinions given by their friends. For a whole year they struggled to decide on the right time to get married. They knew that ultimately the most important guidance would come from the Lord, so they spent much time searching the scriptures and words of the prophets for talks about family, marriage, and education.

“All these sources talk about how important both marriage and education are,” Ane says. As she continued in her search for direction, clarity finally came in a conversation with an institute leader. “She told me, ‘When you have the right person and the right place (the temple), it’s the right time!’” Ane remembers. “This really eased my mind. I received many

Benjamin and Ane with their daughter, Olea.



promptings from the Spirit confirming that this was the path I should take. I came to know that Benjamin and I would get married and that it was the right thing for me to do at this time.”

Ane knew that she would still work toward getting an education, because that was also something that the Lord’s prophets encourage. But for now she knew that marriage would be her first priority.

Ane felt sad because she knew that few people would consider her marriage at that age something to be happy about. But she chose to focus on learning to recognize the promptings of the Spirit and on what the Lord thought instead of what her peers thought. “This was what I would need to stand strong and upright with the choice I had made,” she says.

Benjamin never experienced a particular turning point in which he realized that marriage was the right decision at that time for him. Instead, he says, “I realized that I had to go back to the basics. Why was I here? What was my purpose on earth?”

As he searched the scriptures and the words of prophets and apostles, Benjamin turned to Heavenly Father in prayer. He also received priesthood

blessings. “It became clear to me that I was sent to earth to return to God with my family,” he says. “There was no greater work or other task to supersede that. It’s in ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World.’ If I knowingly disregarded this and did something else, I would be disobeying God’s commandments.

“Once it was revealed to me that what I had been taught all my life was so true that it had priority over others’ opinions, I felt enlightened. I decided to follow what I had been taught.”

Ane and Benjamin were married on July 16, 2009, in the Stockholm Sweden Temple. “When the day of our temple sealing arrived, I felt such peace,” Ane says. “It was all very simple. Beautiful. No worldly trappings. It felt so good to be with my parents and siblings in the temple—and with Benjamin. It was a time filled with true love.”

The Blessings That Follow

Although the months leading up to their marriage were hard, Ane is grateful for the trials she went through. “It forced me to take a stand,” she says. “God helped and strengthened me through scriptures, prayers, and priesthood blessings. Many of the

people who were originally negative have come to acknowledge that what I chose was good and right. They see that I truly have found happiness. They have thanked me for trusting myself and the Lord.”

After their marriage, Ane and Benjamin moved to a new town where they both began their university studies. Soon they welcomed their daughter, Olea, and Ane temporarily put her studies on hold. Ane will continue her education part-time and online, allowing her both to get an education and to stay at home to nurture their daughter. Although she knows that such an arrangement will be hard work, Ane will still be able to get the education she desires.

“Some people may have thought that I had to sacrifice many things to get married and start a family,” she says, “and it could have looked that way. But in reality I have gained everything. I know that when I choose to put the Lord first, everything else will be given me. I am very excited and thankful to get my degree. But most of all I am thankful that we have the opportunity to be an eternal family!”

Benjamin agrees. “God has guided my life in such a way that I have been taught to put Him first,” he says. “For me, it wasn’t a choice between family or education; it was family first and education at the same time. Other decisions are the same. It isn’t God or nothing. It is God first; then everything else follows.” ■



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES TO MARRIAGE

In a devotional address to young adults, Elder Earl C. Tingey, emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, addressed six concerns young single adults might have about marriage:

“1. There may seem to be less encouragement for returned missionaries to get married. If that is your understanding, it is false. All returned missionaries should be encouraged when they return home to remain active in the Church, secure an education, acquire employment skills, and move in the direction of finding an eternal companion.

“2. Some young men feel they cannot meet the expectations of some young women. . . . Proper communication can address that uncertainty.

“3. An emphasis on education or career may put marriage in a lesser role. Marriage, education, and career can go together. A career without family, where family is possible, is a tragedy.

“4. Do not let your life be simply an existence that is fun or selfish. Life is more than an amusement park. Do not be hooked on obtaining possessions. Accept responsibility.

“5. A negative perception of marriage . . . may deter one from marriage. Some say, ‘Why get married when there are so many divorces?’ The existence of divorce does not mean you cannot have a happy and successful marriage. Don’t let the actions of others make your decisions. Determine that your marriage will not be a failure.

“6. Some put off marriage for financial reasons. Postponing marriage until money is sufficient to sustain a stylish living is not wise. So much of life together—struggling, adjusting, and learning to cope with life’s challenges—is lost when that happens.”

From “Three Messages to Young Adults,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2007, 38.



By Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

You Are Free

What God requires is the devotion portrayed by Jesus.

The gospel, said President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), “is a plan of freedom that gives discipline to appetite and direction to behavior.”¹ This plan puts us on a path of increasing knowledge and capacity, increasing grace and light. It is the freedom to become what you can and ought to be. But for your freedom to be complete, you must be willing to give away all your sins (see Alma 22:18), your willfulness, your cherished but unsound habits, perhaps even some good things that interfere with what God sees is essential for you.

The Master’s Voice

My Aunt Adena Nell Gourley told of an experience from many years ago with her father—my grandfather, Helge V. Swenson, now deceased—that illustrates what I mean. She related:

“My daughter and I were visiting in my parents’ home. Along about sundown my mother asked if we would like to step out

on the back porch and watch Father call his [five] sheep to come into the shelter for the night. Father . . . is a stake patriarch, and . . . the personification of all that is good and gentle and true in a man of God.

“. . . Father walked to the edge of the field and called, ‘Come on.’ Immediately, without even stopping to bite off the mouthful of food they were reaching for, all five heads turned in his direction, and then [the sheep] broke into a run until they had reached his side and received his pat on each head.

“My little daughter said, ‘Oh, Grandmother, how did Grandfather get them to do that?’

“My mother answered, ‘The sheep know his voice, and they love him.’ Now I must confess that there were five sheep in the field, and five heads went up when he called, but only four ran to Father. Farthest away, clear over on the edge of the field, looking straight toward Father, stood [a] large [ewe]. Father called to her, ‘Come on.’ She made a motion as if to start but didn’t come. Then



Father started across the field, calling to her, ‘Come on. You’re untied.’ The other four sheep trailed behind him at his heels.

“Then Mother explained to us that some few weeks before this, an acquaintance of theirs had brought the [ewe] and had given it to Father with the explanation that he no longer wanted it in his own herd. The man had said it was wild and wayward and was always leading his other sheep through the fences and causing so much trouble that he wanted to get rid of it. Father gladly accepted the sheep, and for the next few days he staked it in the field so it wouldn’t go away. Then he patiently taught it to love him and the other sheep. Then, as it felt more secure in its new home, Father left a short rope around its neck but didn’t stake it down.

“As Mother explained this to us, Father and his sheep had almost reached the [straggler] at the edge of the field, and through the stillness we heard him call again, ‘Come on. You aren’t tied down any more. You are free.’

“I felt the tears sting my eyes as I saw [the sheep] give a lurch and reach Father’s side. Then, with his loving hand on her head, he and all the members of his little flock turned and walked back toward us again.

“I thought how some of us, who are all God’s sheep, are bound and unfree because of our sins in the world. Standing there on the back porch, I silently thanked my Heavenly Father that there are true under-shepherds and teachers who are patient and kind and willingly teach us of love and obedience and offer us security and freedom within the

*It is exciting
to realize that
we can expand
our freedom by
perfecting our
obedience.*

flock so that, though we may be far from the shelter, we’ll recognize the Master’s voice when He calls, ‘Come on. Now you’re free.’”²

It is exciting to realize that we can expand our freedom by perfecting our obedience. In the words of President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “We are not obedient because we are blind, we are obedient because we can see.”³

Our choice in this life is not whether we will or will not be subject to any power. Our choice is to which authority we will yield obedience: God’s or Satan’s. As Lehi stated, it is a choice between liberty and captivity (see 2 Nephi 2:27). If it is not one, it is necessarily the other.

Our yielding to God and His right to rule and reign over us brings other blessings. Among the foremost are the faith and confidence that permit us to live with peace. The Lord said to Joshua:

“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . .

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest” (Joshua 1:5, 7).

“I Have Overcome the World”

If we likewise “observe to do according to all the law,” we will also have the

confidence that God is with us as He was with Moses. With the Psalmist we will be able to say, “In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me” (Psalm 56:11). Has not the Lord promised, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33)?

Years ago I presided in a Church disciplinary council. The man whose sins were the subject of the council sat before us and related something of his history. His sins were indeed serious, but he had also been terribly sinned against. As we considered the matter, my soul was troubled, and I asked to be excused to think and pray about it alone before rejoining the council.

I was standing in front of a chair in my office pleading with the Lord to help me understand how such evil could have been perpetrated. I did not see but rather sensed an immense pit with a covering over it. One corner of the covering was lifted slightly for just an instant, and I perceived within the pit the depth and vastness of the evil that exists in this world. It was greater than I could really comprehend. I was overcome. I collapsed into the chair behind me. The experience seemed to take my breath away. I cried silently, “How can we ever hope to overcome such evil? How can we survive something so dark and overwhelming?”

In that moment there came to my mind this phrase: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Seldom have I felt such peace juxtaposed with the reality of evil. I felt a deeper appreciation for the intensity of the Savior’s suffering and had a better, even frightening, appreciation for the depth of what He had to overcome. I felt peace for the man who was before us for judgment, knowing he had a Redeemer, whose grace was sufficient to cleanse him and also repair the injustices he had suffered. I knew better that good will triumph because of Jesus Christ, whereas without Him we would have no chance. I felt peace, and it was very sweet.

The Prophet Joseph Smith understood this when he said, “Let us cheerfully do all things that lie in our power;

and then may we stand still, with the utmost assurance, to see the salvation of God, and for his arm to be revealed” (D&C 123:17). The promise to those who submit to God is that His arm, His power, will be revealed in their lives. The Savior said:

“Fear not, little children, for you are mine, and I have overcome the world, and you are of them that my Father hath given me;

“And none of them that my Father hath given me shall be lost” (D&C 50:41–42).

To live with this assurance is a blessing perhaps greater than we can appreciate. All of us—sooner or later, in a moment of looming disaster or wearying confusion, having chosen God as our guide—will be able to sing with conviction, “Sweet is the peace the gospel brings.”⁴

We should not expect peace or freedom or faith or any other such gift from our divine head if our acceptance of His leadership is lukewarm or grudging. If it is ritual rather than real righteousness, we should not expect a reward. A detached, aloof allegiance is for Him no allegiance at all. Our submission must be full, wholehearted, and unstinting. What God requires is the devotion portrayed by Jesus, who was asked to drink a cup so bitter that it amazed even Him, the great Creator (see Mark 14:33–36; D&C 19:17–18). Yet He did it, “the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

I leave you my witness that through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, we may become one with God, just as Jesus prayed that we might be (see John 17:20–23). May your allegiance to Them be the shining guide of your life forever. ■

From a devotional address given at Brigham Young University on October 19, 1999. For the full text in English, go to speeches.byu.edu.

NOTES

1. Gordon B. Hinckley, “A Principle with Promise,” *Improvement Era*, June 1965, 521.
2. Adena Nell Swenson Gourley, “I Walked a Flowered Path” (unpublished manuscript, 1995), 199–200.
3. Boyd K. Packer, “Agency and Control,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 66.
4. “Sweet Is the Peace the Gospel Brings,” *Hymns*, no. 14.

MY LIFELINE WAS Prayer

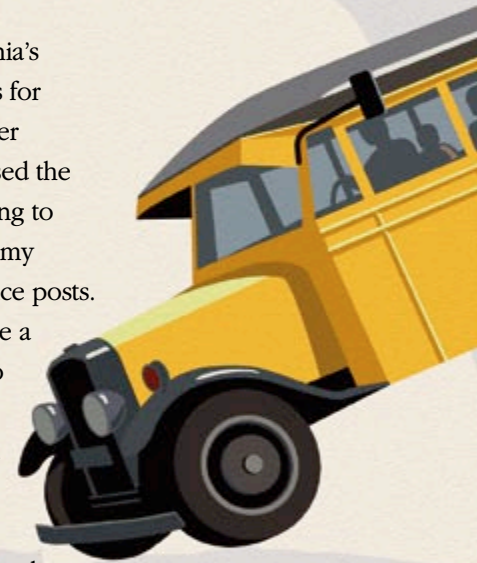
*When the dust had settled, I was found underneath the bus—
my face showing through a broken window.*

Phyllis Bishop

My uncle Alfred drove the school bus for our small community in Pahrnagat Valley, Nevada, USA. In September 1934, I was just beginning the third grade. My 13-year-old sister, Virginia, and I were on the bus on our way home from school when we came to a portion of the road along a cliff. Something broke in the steering mechanism, and the bus careened over the embankment, plunged down the cliff, and landed in a ditch on its side.

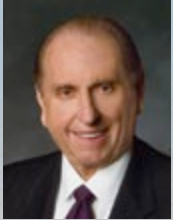
When the dust had settled, I was found underneath the bus—my face showing through a broken window. The glass had severely lacerated my scalp, and my body was crushed in several places. Miraculously, no one

else was seriously injured. Virginia's arms were pinned under the bus for a brief time, but some of the older boys found a fence post and raised the bus enough to release her. Hoping to remove me from under the bus, my uncle sent the boys for more fence posts. Each post, however, snapped like a toothpick when the boys tried to lift the bus. My uncle, with tears streaming down his face, prayed for divine help. After he prayed, he tried another fence post and this time raised the bus high enough for me to be pulled out alive. There amid the fragments of glass, my uncle knelt and gave me a priesthood blessing stating that I would live and that my body would be made whole again.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID MEKLE





PRAYERS OFFERED IN FAITH

“Wherever we may be, our Heavenly Father can hear and answer the prayer offered in faith.”

President Thomas S. Monson, “Come unto Him in Prayer and Faith,” *Ensign*, Mar. 2009, 7.

Doctrinal Points

- Prayer is the act by which we align our will with the will of Heavenly Father.
- Prayer is a means to secure blessings that God is already willing to give us.
- Prayer is a form of work.

(See Bible Dictionary, “Prayer.”)

Our bishop owned one of the few cars in our farming community. Upon hearing about the bus accident, he rushed to the scene. He and my uncle carried me up the steep incline to his waiting car. They decided to take me to Caliente, a small railroad town some 60 miles (97 km) away. They hoped they would find a doctor there who could provide me with the medical attention I needed.

On that same afternoon, my father and others were on horseback driving a herd of cattle to Caliente. It had been a very long day for him. He had been driving the cattle for two days. The sun was going down, and he had become very uneasy. The feeling that something terrible had happened was so strong that he could not ignore it any longer. He left the cattle drive and rode his horse toward the highway. He made it to the highway just in time to stop our bishop’s car and learn that I lay injured in the backseat. He slipped off his horse, told it to go home, and got into the car.

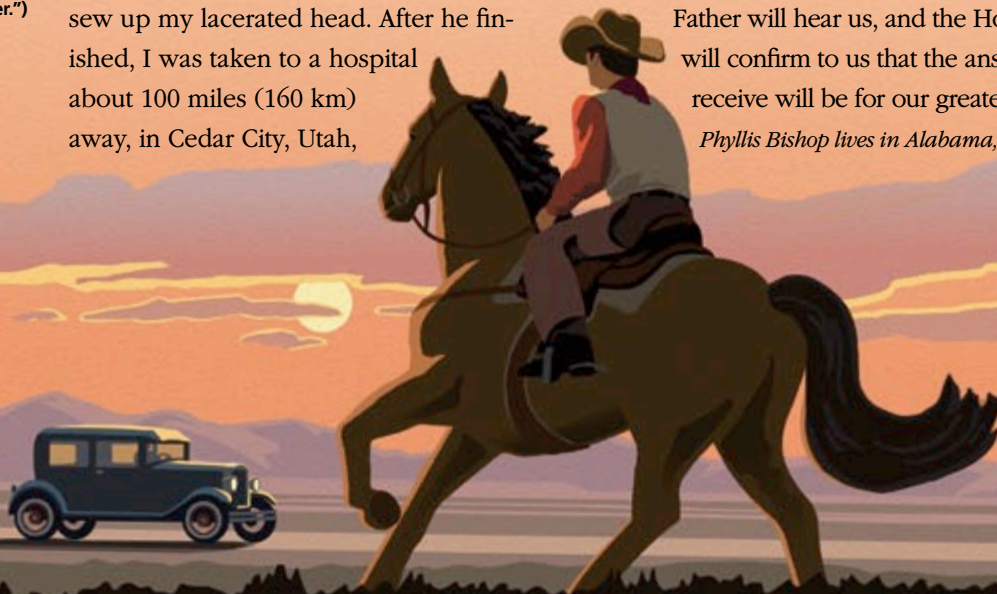
Upon arriving in Caliente, we learned that the only doctor was out of town on another emergency. Sometime in the middle of the night, a kind dentist said that he would try to sew up my lacerated head. After he finished, I was taken to a hospital about 100 miles (160 km) away, in Cedar City, Utah,

USA. The doctors were amazed that I was alive and that my scalp had been so skillfully sewn up. They told my father that I was paralyzed from the waist down and would never walk again. My right hip was broken in several places, and the extent of the spinal injury was unknown. My hips were bound with tape, and the doctors did all that they could do to help me.

In a week or two, I was released from the hospital and sent home with instructions for my father to massage my legs, back, and hip areas three times a day. It was the day before Thanksgiving that I felt a tingling in both legs. When I told my father, his eyes glistened with tears and were full of pure joy. As the feeling returned to my legs, I learned to crawl, and eventually I learned to walk again.

My uncle offered a prayer of faith during my time of need, and Heavenly Father answered that prayer abundantly. With the power of prayer as our lifeline, we need never be alone or without hope or protection. We are promised that our sincere prayers will be answered. The answer may be different from the one we are seeking, but I know this: our Heavenly Father will hear us, and the Holy Ghost will confirm to us that the answer we receive will be for our greater good. ■

Phyllis Bishop lives in Alabama, USA.





THE Incubator

By Jenielle Bailey

*My tiny soul
in His warm hands
glows and grows
with the care of
a Father
who forms
stars
from dust.*

HOW DID SHE KNOW I Needed Help?

I desperately needed help but was too ashamed to ask. How hard could one child be?

By Julie Penrod

I cried silently as I rocked my baby in our hand-me-down rocking chair. Although Tennyson was almost a month old, I was anything but accustomed to my new role as a mother. My nearest family members lived over 300 miles (480 km) away, and though my husband was supportive, he was enrolled in a rigorous law school program that kept him busy much of the time. I was physically and emotionally drained, still hurting from a traumatic delivery, and starting to feel like I wasn't cut out to be a mom after all.

On this particularly difficult night, I looked around our one-bedroom apartment and felt overwhelmed. Laundry was piled high, the kitchen counter was strewn with dirty dishes, and the cupboards and refrigerator were running low on food. I knew my husband wouldn't mind having cereal for dinner—again—but I couldn't help feeling like a failure. Other moms in the ward had five or six children at home and seemed to have it together. I was barely hanging on with one child. I desperately needed help but was too ashamed to ask for any. How hard could one child be?

As I rocked my baby, I said a silent prayer, asking Heavenly Father to help me. Within a few minutes the phone rang. I slowly stood up, wiped away my tears, and answered as cheerfully as I could. It was Sister Faerber. She had

given birth only a few months earlier and was a busy mother of three.

"I was wondering if you've made dinner yet," she said. "I cooked some sweet-and-sour chicken and have a lot left over. Would you like some?"

The Relief Society had brought in meals the first few days after Tennyson's birth, but it had been a few weeks since this had last happened. By this time, I figured, most moms could handle a new baby and dinner. How did Sister Faerber know I needed her help?

"That would be wonderful," I replied, grateful for her offer.

Soon she arrived with several containers filled with chicken, salad, and cookies for dessert. The food tasted delicious, and my body and spirit felt invigorated and hopeful.

The days ahead were still difficult, but I knew I wasn't alone. Sister Faerber's simple act of service taught me that I could rely on God and His children to help me along the way. Since this experience, I have resolved to live so that I can be sensitive to the Spirit and, I hope, help someone else the way Sister Faerber helped me. I will forever be grateful for this sweet sister who listened to the quiet promptings of the Spirit and met my needs during a difficult time in my life. ■

Julie Penrod lives in New Jersey, USA.

JOY IN SISTERHOOD

I think being with a group of women in Relief Society is very powerful. We help build strong communities. For generations we have created networks to look after and raise children. Relief Society gives me and other women the opportunity to share knowledge, build the kingdom of God, and support each other. It is a society where you can find relief on many levels. I've found genuine joy in Relief Society by singing a hymn, listening to the lesson, talking to the other sisters, or feeling a comforting hand on my shoulder and hearing a kind voice asking how I'm doing.

—Valerie Vamanrav,
London, England





Mosetta

Until I met Mosetta, I hadn't known that such a deep level of spiritual sensitivity was possible.

By Heather M. Scott

In October 1995 my husband and I moved to the Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi, USA. One Sunday, I ended up sitting next to a middle-aged woman in Relief Society. I quickly realized she was deaf, and my heart started to pound. Six years earlier, when I was in high school, I had participated briefly in a sign language club. I still remembered some of what I had learned, but I was nervous to try signing again. After church ended, I went to the restroom, where I found her washing her hands.

Despite feeling nervous, I approached her and signed, “My name is H-E-A-T-H-E-R. What is your name?” She stood there stunned and then signed back to me, “M-O-S-E-T-T-A.” She then became very excited and started signing rapidly. I was lost, but Mosetta was all smiles. She hugged me, and we became instant friends.

I learned that not only was Mosetta deaf, but she also had trouble speaking. She knew a southern dialect of ASL, could read simple things, and had learned to write the necessities: “I want to . . .”

Each Sunday, Mosetta sat next to me, and I would help her participate as best I could. Before long I also started giving her a ride to church.

Sharing Her Testimony at Home

Some of my most profound experiences with the Spirit happened in her home, a small, cinder-block duplex. I remember the first time I went there. I had gone around

the time of her birthday to give her a gift.

She motioned for me to sit down. It became clear that she wanted to talk about the gospel. She pulled out her copy of the Book of Mormon that the missionaries had given her before she joined the Church. She then showed me some other pamphlets she had received from representatives of other religions who had knocked at her door. She shook her head and signed, “No—not for me!” and then, holding the Book of Mormon, smiled and nodded her head “Yes!” while placing her hand on her heart.

I sat there amazed, wondering how she could have embraced the Church and all there is to know about the gospel. With her limited access to gospel knowledge, how did she know she wanted to commit herself to this Church? Did she really know all that Latter-day Saints believed? (At that time there weren't as many materials as there are today for members who are deaf.) As I thought about it, the answer came swiftly and simply. She knew it was good because she had felt the Spirit in her heart, and that was enough. That realization strengthened my testimony, and I found myself wanting that kind of spirituality in my own life. Until I met Mosetta, I hadn't known that such a deep level of spiritual sensitivity was possible. (See Alma 32:28.)

On another occasion at her home, Mosetta stood in her small kitchen facing me and then bowed her head and

For more information about Church materials for those who are deaf, visit asl.lds.org and disabilities.lds.org.

mumbled sounds while she signed—perfectly—the Lord’s Prayer (see Matthew 6:9–13). I folded my arms while she prayed with her hands, but I opened my eyes to peek at how beautifully she prayed. It was a powerful image: her eyes reverently closed, lips moving, and hands flowing from one word to the next. When she was done, I hugged her, enjoying how good I felt having prayed with her. I learned that there is beauty and power in humble, sincere prayers—even repeated ones—if they are heartfelt. I knew Heavenly Father heard her prayers, and I felt certain that He loved them. I did too.

Sharing Her Testimony at Church

Mosetta continued to come to church with me for several years. Each week, she sat patiently with a smile on her lips for three long hours on hard chairs. She never heard a word and never made a comment, but she was there.

My favorite memory of Mosetta was the Sunday before my last Christmas in Mississippi. A young college student, Nicole, was going to sing “O Holy Night” as part of the sacrament meeting program.

With Mosetta in mind, Nicole had decided to add

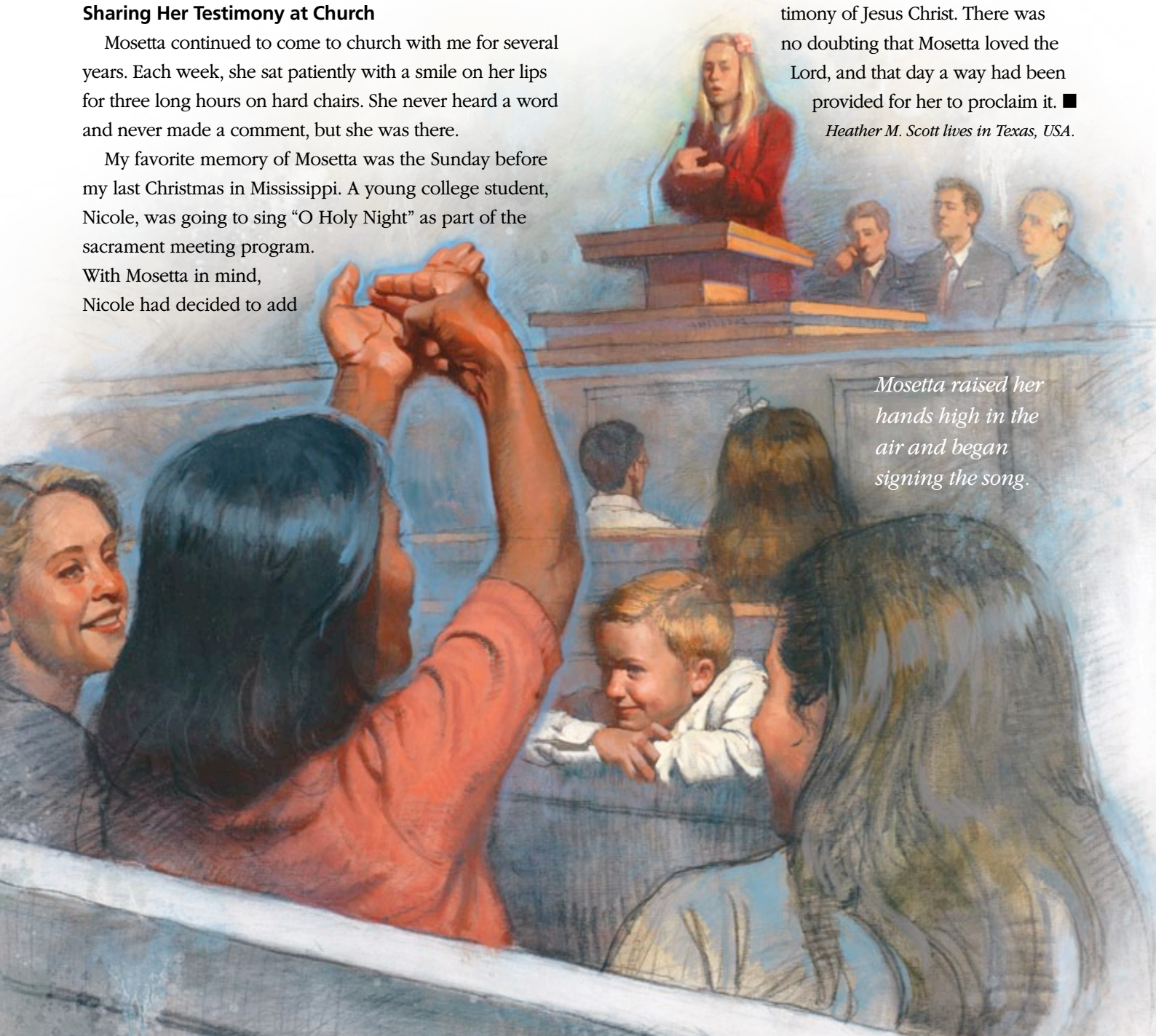
sign language to the song. Upon realizing that Nicole was signing, Mosetta sat up to “listen.”

Nicole became nervous, though, and started to forget some of the signs. Seeing this, Mosetta, who had been watching intently, raised her hands high in the air and began signing the song. Nicole, watching Mosetta, began following her, and together they finished the song. Before leaving the pulpit, Nicole signed, “Thank you,” and Mosetta smiled and nodded her head.

Tears flowed down my cheeks as I silently wondered how many years Mosetta had come to church and sat in silence, never hearing a word, rarely able to share her tes-

timony of Jesus Christ. There was no doubting that Mosetta loved the Lord, and that day a way had been provided for her to proclaim it. ■

Heather M. Scott lives in Texas, USA.



Mosetta raised her hands high in the air and began signing the song.



By Elder Michael
John U. Teh
Of the Seventy

THE Power OF THE WORD OF GOD

Few other activities will bring us greater spiritual benefit than the daily, consistent study of the scriptures.

While I was serving as a bishop many years ago, my counselors and I decided that we would visit all of the members' homes once a year. During one such visit we walked along an abandoned railroad track that was lined on both sides with small cardboard-box homes no larger than six feet by six feet (about 2 m by 2 m). This small space served as a family's living room, dining room, bedroom, and kitchen.

The adults living in that area have set ways and established routines. Men are mostly unemployed or underemployed. They spend much of their time gathered together around makeshift tables smoking and sharing bottles of beer. The women also gather, focusing their conversations on the most controversial news of the day, sprinkled with backbiting and gossiping. Gambling is also a favorite pastime for the young and old.

What disturbed me most was that the people seemed content to live out their entire lives in that manner. I later concluded that perhaps for most of them, hopelessness allowed them to believe they were consigned to this fate. It was indeed a heart-wrenching sight.

Later I learned that my counselor, who was an engineer, used to live in that area. I never would have guessed it because his family was much different from the families I saw there. All his siblings were educated and raising good families.

My counselor's father was a simple man. After I met him, questions came to me. How had he elevated himself? How did he pull his family out of those conditions? What made him catch a vision of what could be? Where did he find hope when everything about him seemed hopeless?





REDISCOVERING THE SCRIPTURES

“I am convinced that each of us, at some time in our lives, must discover the scriptures for ourselves—and not just discover them once, but rediscover them again and again.”

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Spencer W. Kimball* (2006), 62.

Many years later, in the Manila Philippines Temple, I attended a gathering of all the mission presidents and their wives then serving in the Philippines. A wonderful surprise greeted me as I entered one of the rooms in the temple. Standing before me was the father of my counselor—that quiet, unassuming man—dressed in white.

At that moment there opened before my eyes two scenes. The first scene was of a man drinking beer with his buddies and wasting away his life. The second scene showed the same man dressed in white and officiating in the ordinances of the holy temple. The stark contrast of that second glorious scene will forever remain in my heart and mind.

The Power of the Word

What allowed this good brother to elevate himself and his family? The answer is found in the power of the word of God.

I believe that few other activities will bring us greater spiritual benefit than the daily, consistent study of the scriptures. In section 26 of the Doctrine and Covenants—a revelation given “to strengthen, encourage, and instruct”¹ the Prophet Joseph Smith and others—the Lord counseled, “Behold, I say unto you that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the scriptures” (verse 1).

The Book of Mormon tells us, “The preaching of the word . . . had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them” (Alma 31:5).

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, has taught: “True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior. The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior.”²

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said: “The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would take people out of the slums. Christ takes the slums out of people, and then they take themselves out of the slums. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature.”³

Growing up in the Philippines, I learned that as recently there as the early 1900s, access to the Holy Bible was limited to religious leaders. People were not allowed access to or ownership of sacred writ.

In contrast, we live in an age when access to the scriptures is unprecedented. Never in the history of the world have God’s children had the opportunity to enjoy these sacred materials as they do now. Written copies of the scriptures can be readily purchased in bookstores or online. Electronic copies can be accessed instantaneously through the World Wide Web and downloaded to numerous devices. Preparing talks, writing articles, and searching for information has never been easier.

God has given us this new technology for a wise purpose. The adversary, however, has stepped up his offensive and uses technological advancements—intended by God to help us—to further his purpose of making us “miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:27).

Hence, we have a responsibility to learn to use what our Heavenly Father has given us in an effective, consistent, and proper manner.

The Sacredness of the Word

We Latter-day Saints accept and value the scriptures, but our actions and regard for them sometimes say otherwise. A lack of

understanding of the value and importance of scripture is aptly described in Lehi's dream:

"And I saw numberless concourses of people, many of whom were pressing forward, that they might obtain the path which led unto the tree by which I stood.

"And it came to pass that they did come forth, and commence in the path which led to the tree.

"And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost" (1 Nephi 8:21–23).



To think that we need only to commence on the path without clinging to the rod of iron is folly and will surely lead to destruction. Nephi explained what it means to hold fast to the iron rod: "Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, *feasting upon the word of Christ*, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life" (2 Nephi 31:20; emphasis added).

Let us further examine what happened to those who recognized the significance of the rod of iron as they tried to reach the tree:

"And whoso would hearken unto the word of God, and would hold fast unto it, they would never perish; neither

could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction" (1 Nephi 15:24).

In the book of Alma we read:

"It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

"And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

"And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction" (Alma 12:9–11).

I believe that neglecting to study the scriptures on a regular basis is a form of hardening our hearts. I fear that if we persist in that course, we will be given a lesser portion of the word and eventually know nothing of God's mysteries. Drinking daily from the scriptures, on the other hand, will help us build spiritual strength and knowledge, unmask the deceptions of the devil, and discover the snares he has laid to catch us.

As you ask yourselves the following questions, I invite you to allow the Holy Ghost to speak to your mind and heart:

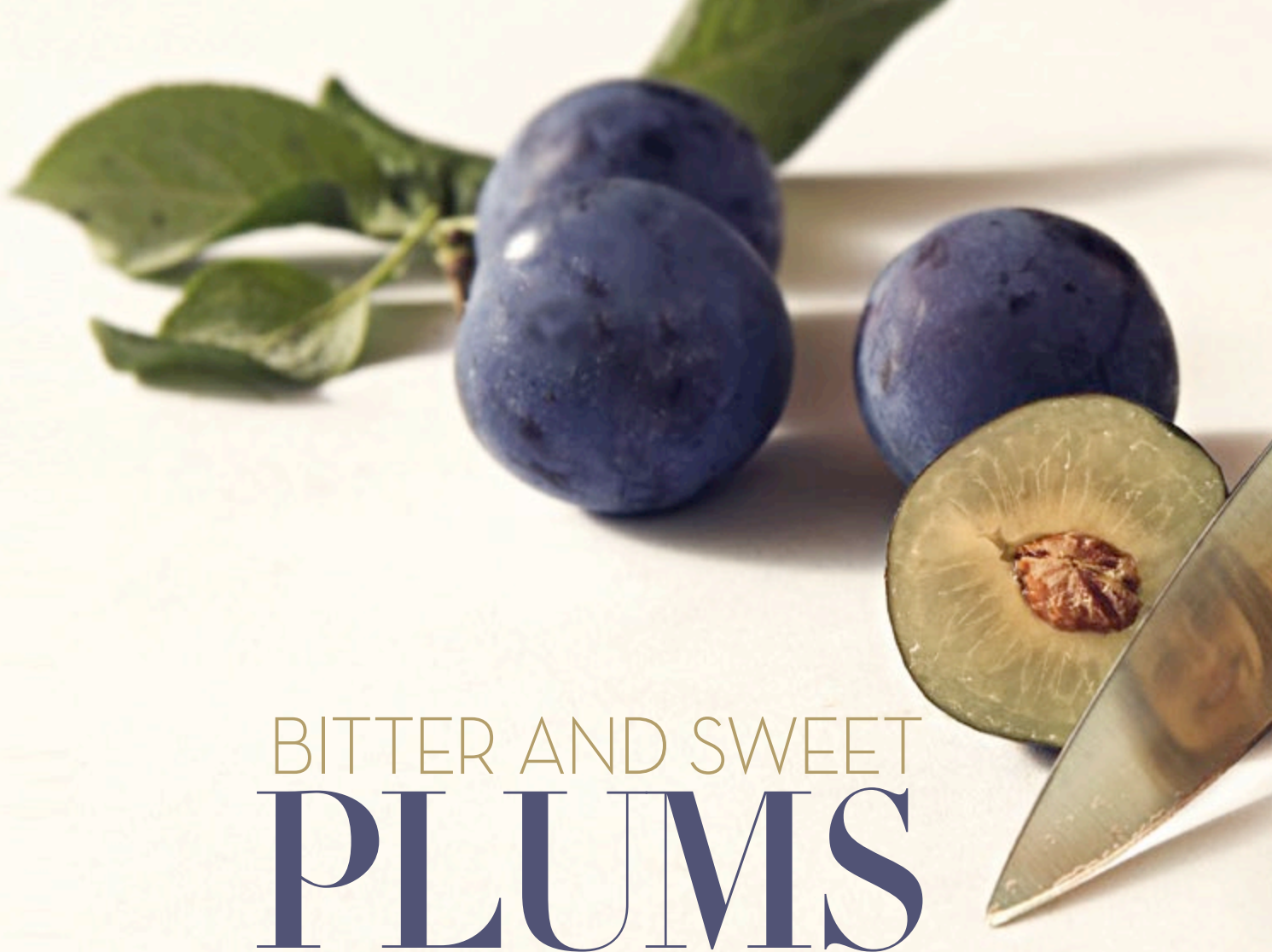
- Do I take time to study the scriptures every day?
- If not, what excuse do I have for not doing so?
- Will my excuse be acceptable to the Lord?

I challenge you to commit to reading the scriptures daily. Do not go to bed tonight until you have read. As you read, there will come to you a greater desire to do the will of the Lord and to make changes in your life. ■

From a devotional address delivered at Brigham Young University–Hawaii on March 22, 2011. For the full address in English, go to devotional.byuh.edu/archive.

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 24, section introduction.
2. Boyd K. Packer, "Do Not Fear," *Ensign*, May 2004, 79.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, "Born of God," *Ensign*, Oct. 1985, 6.



BITTER AND SWEET PLUMS

Just as the bitter plums ripened into delicious sweetness, the bitterness I felt toward Jennifer and her family had been replaced with sweet friendship.

By Heather Jackson

Life had become extremely challenging for our young family. My husband's business had failed, we owed more on our home than it was worth in a collapsing housing market, and with five children 10 and younger, I was pregnant with twins.

We filed for bankruptcy and put our home up for sale—the beautiful home we had invested so much time and money in—and prepared to move in with my parents so we could start over. It was a difficult time, and I felt bitter about our loss.

With one day left before our move, I looked outside and noticed that one of our plum trees was full of plums. I filled several bags with them, not caring that the plums were not ripe. Life was not being fair to us, so I was not going to let anyone else have my plums! The plums were so green they were downright bitter. I ate them anyway,

feeling satisfied that I had salvaged what belonged to me.

Compounding my misery was the fact that my parents' home was right next to our old home. I could look into my old backyard every day, which only increased my bitter feelings toward the family who had purchased our house. I hated to see them out there playing on "our" grass, using "our" covered deck, and enjoying "our" home. I felt like my unhappiness would consume me.

I knew I needed a change of heart, and I prayed for charity and courage every day. But I couldn't bring myself to go visit our new neighbors. My heart was just too heavy.

One day as I was taking the garbage out to the curb, I encountered Jennifer, the woman whose family had moved into our lost home. I recognized this as an answer to my prayers: Heavenly Father knew I could not bring myself to visit the new family, and He provided a different



opportunity for me to speak with the mother. I needed to act on His answer.

Jennifer knew who I was and how hard it had been for our family to leave our home. We were both uncomfortable, and the initial silence was more awkward than I could bear. Finally, I broke the ice by asking her if she liked the neighborhood. The conversation that followed surprised me. Our personalities clicked. I knew we could be friends. She invited one of my boys over to play with her son that same day.

Then, several days later, Jennifer called to invite me to pick plums from the tree I thought I had left bare. I was amazed to see how many plums I had missed. I easily filled several bags, secretly glad I hadn't taken them all earlier. The fully ripe plums were sweeter and more delicious, to my thinking, than they had been in any previous summer.

Just as the bitter plums ripened into delicious sweetness, the bitterness I felt toward Jennifer and her family has been replaced with sweet friendship. I am grateful for

a Heavenly Father whose hand is in my life, both in small ways and big ways, creating opportunities for growth and learning. I am grateful for the experience with plums both bitter and sweet. ■

Heather Jackson lives in Utah, USA.



THE LORD'S WAY

"There is enough heartache and sorrow in this life without our adding to it through our own stubbornness, bitterness, and resentment. . . . We must let go of our grievances. Part of the purpose of mortality is to learn how to let go of such things. *That is the Lord's way.*"

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, "The Merciful Obtain Mercy," *Ensign*, May 2012, 76–77.

JUST THREE MORE Rehearsals

*Easter was nearing,
but it seemed impossible for
our choir to be ready in time.*

By Erin Hill Littlefield

The choir was struggling. Three weeks remained before we were to sing “Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs” from George Frideric Handel’s *Messiah* in sacrament meeting on Easter Sunday, and we were nowhere near ready.

When I was called to direct the ward choir, I had felt prompted to tackle “Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs.” Handel’s music was often difficult, but this song was relatively simple and only four pages long.

The text of the song comes from Isaiah 53:4–5: “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him.” The beginning of the song is forceful; the ending is even more so and then resolves into something sublime.

The ward choir was excited to sing this piece. We started in January, dusting off thick, gray *Messiah* scores. For three practices we sang along with a Mormon Tabernacle Choir CD. Of course we could not match all the notes, but we were getting a feel for the majesty of the song. I thought it would get better.

I was wrong. After weeks of persistent effort, our choir seemed no closer to mastering the song. After an additional three weeks of diligent practice, we still lacked confidence—not to mention good pitch. I started to worry that we wouldn’t have time to learn the replacement selection.

I decided to express my concern at the end of one choir practice. “I’ve been thinking,” I said to the choir as they packed up the gray books, “that we’ve bitten off more than we can chew.” A few people nodded in agreement.

I told them that since I was a child I had cherished this music’s message that Christ paid the price for each one of us. The song was a touchstone of my testimony. It was gospel truth in musical form. Handel had composed the oratorio in a miraculous fashion, and it would be hard to deny that God had His hand in this music.

“I do think we have tried our very hardest,” I reminded the choir. “I think we can pray for some help in fulfilling this responsibility so we can sing in front of our ward.” Wry smiles scattered across the faces of the faithful choir members.

We decided that each choir member would make it a matter of specific prayer that we could learn the music and sing it in a way that would bring the Easter spirit to our ward. I felt an assurance that if we would pray for Heavenly Father’s help, our singing talents would be magnified, and I promised the choir that we would still sing on the scheduled Sunday. These were bold words, considering the state of our musical mastery, yet at the end of that discouraging rehearsal, our hearts felt lighter.

During that week, seeing my *Messiah* score reminded me to pray. Many choir members added their prayers. I invited the stake music leader, a trained soprano, to sing with us.



The following rehearsal, I felt nervous, but we jumped in. The men knew their entrance. I was actually hearing the tenor notes. Did we have extra sopranos? I counted the regular faces in the front row, but their sound had doubled. We actually made it all the way through—a first!

And then we stopped. I could tell that our choir, after just one time through, felt the hand of our Heavenly Father in our efforts. Sure, we had places to improve, but it would be manageable. He had answered our prayers. We would be able to sing “Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs” after all.

We had a few bumps the following Sunday. The accompanist couldn’t attend, and the CD tempo threw us off. Quickly we were reminded how much help we really needed. Despite our fluster, however, there was hope. We knew Heavenly Father was blessing us, and we knew we needed to keep asking Him for that blessing.

We had faith. We had humility. We also had just one more practice. That week, people may or may not have practiced, but they did get down on their knees.

Everyone was there on Sunday morning when it was time to sing. The introduction was the right tempo; our entrance was together. Hallelujah! The altos came in powerfully, and the baritones followed confidently. Even I was able to sing the tenor line without reading the musical score. We found the right note in a tricky measure. Our stake music leader’s exquisite voice provided substance, especially during those sustained high notes. Even with a small choir, the music was full.

It was nice to hear the positive comments after sacrament meeting, only because it confirmed how far Heavenly Father had taken us. The congregation was not aware of the progress of our singing. It was our faith in Heavenly Father, not our voices, that allowed us to sing beautifully. ■

Erin Hill Littlefield lives in Texas, USA.

The Voice of the Spirit

Words and music by
Janice Kapp Perry

Reverently, as a prayer ♩ = 63-72

mf

1. Oh God, my E-ter - nal Fa - ther, I
(2. Oh) God, my E-ter - nal Fa - ther, I

long to see Thy face, But a veil was drawn be - tween us, that I might live by
long to hear Thy voice, But I left Thy lov - ing pre - sence and came to earth by

faith. And yet I'm ver - y cer - tain I do not walk a - lone, For when I seek Thee
choice. And yet I feel Thy guid - ance each time I kneel to pray. Thy kind and car - ing

hum-bly, Thy wis - dom is made known. The voice of the Spir-it comes so qui - et - ly, — And deep in -
Spir - it il - lu - mi - nates my way. The voice of the Spir-it is so sweet to me; — It whis - pers

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This notice must be included on each copy made.

side of me — it speaks Thy will. The voice of the Spir-it comes as light to me, — Gent-ly re-
 peace to me — thru thoughts di - vine. The voice of the Spir-it is so real to me. — Truth is re-

mind-ing me — of all that's real— A gen-tle voice, so still, so small, A voice that hard - ly can be
 vealed to me — in heart and mind— A gen-tle

heard at all, — A voice so clear to me, — A voice that pier-ces me to my soul. — 2. Oh — The

voice of the Spir-it is so sweet to me, — A voice that teach - es me all Thou would have me know. —



The Blessings of Tithing

The Lord has commanded us to pay tithing. In return, He promises to “open . . . the windows of heaven, and pour . . . out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). His blessings, however, come in His own way and in His own time and can be spiritual or temporal.

In times of economic or family difficulty, the Lord’s blessings promised to those who faithfully pay tithing may seem distant. But as the following Latter-day Saints observe, paying tithing helps Church members better recognize the hand of the Lord in their lives.

Paying tithing brings great blessings, especially in helping us better recognize the hand of the Lord in our lives.

Tithing Increases Faith

Shortly after we married, my husband and I moved to a faraway town in eastern Bolivia where we were the only members of the Church. My husband was a new convert, and we wanted to comply with all the commandments of the Lord.

Every month we would save our tithing in an envelope until we could deliver it to our bishop. My husband had a strong conviction that if we complied with this law, we would be blessed and protected.

We lived in a hot, expensive, uncomfortable hotel room while we looked for a home to rent. For many days our search proved fruitless. The only house we could find was a small, pretty one whose owner lived in another city. Many outsiders had tried to rent the home, but they could never find the owner.

One morning just as we had finished praying about our situation, a young man knocked on our door. He told us that the owner of the home had returned for a short visit. My husband rushed out to meet with her while I continued praying that we might get the house. When he returned, he reported that the lady had rented the house to us at an incredibly low price. What added to our joy was that the home was already furnished. At the time, all we had was two large boxes and a suitcase full of our things.

The law of tithing does not have to do with money but rather with faith. My husband wasn't earning much, but as we faithfully paid our tithing, the Lord blessed us to find a good home and enabled us to provide for ourselves.

Lourdes Soliz de Duran, Bolivia

Tithing Brings Peace

I have always trusted in the Lord and His commandments. When the economy took a turn for the worse, however, I lost my overtime hours and my salary dropped. I stopped paying tithing and told myself that the Lord would understand. Nevertheless, my debts grew and my paychecks shrank.

Seeing my struggle, several relatives told me that above all else I should pay my tithes because this would help me overcome my trials. But I always ended up paying my bills instead. I was willing to pay tithing when my financial seas were calm, but I became afraid when my financial situation was stormy (see Matthew 14:28–31).



Heading home from work one afternoon after getting paid, I thought of all my debts. I closed my eyes and prayed, “Father, what am I going to do?” At that moment I opened my eyes and noticed on the ceiling of the bus a poster of Peter sinking into a stormy sea with the Savior reaching out to rescue him. At the bottom of the poster were the words “Unshaken Faith.” I realized I needed to pay my tithing if I ever wanted to pay off my debts.

FOR PARENTS

In the story “Just One Coin” (*Friend*, Aug. 2011, 32–33), Daniel learns that paying tithing is a good choice—even if his contribution is a single coin. An accompanying activity explains some of the ways tithing money is used. Reading this article as a family could be a great way to start a conversation about tithing. To help your children remember how the Church uses tithing, consider using some of the pictures in the activity to decorate their tithing jar or box.

Previous editions of the *Friend* can be found online at lds.org/friend.

When I arrived home, I found a tithing envelope and put my tithing inside. As I sealed the envelope, I heard the words “All is well” and felt a joy that brought peace to my soul.

I know that God will bring His blessings into my life when He deems it prudent to do so. Until then the sea may remain stormy, but the peace I feel for obedience is more than enough.

Ricardo Reyes Villalta, El Salvador

Tithing Brings Conversion

The issue of paying tithing came up in our family when our daughter joined the Church. At the time, neither my husband nor I were members. She was earning her own money, but because she lived with my husband and me, we all shared our earnings. I could not imagine how we would manage without the 10 percent of her income that she decided to pay in tithing, but I gradually became accustomed to my daughter’s decision. Whenever she brought her paycheck home, my first question was, “Have you set aside your tithing?”

Eventually I became interested in learning about the gospel, but I decided not to join the Church because I would have to pay tithing. Two tithing payments from one family budget were just too much!

After attending church for more than a year, I began to feel dissatisfied and uneasy. As I pondered and prayed, I realized that I wanted to pay tithing. I was surprised at my desire, given my previous opposition.

The following Sunday, I asked the branch president for a tithing slip. I was disappointed to hear that until I was a member, I could not pay tithing. I could, however, make a donation. And so I donated 10 percent of my income to the Lord’s Church. Immediately I felt comfort, joy, and satisfaction. I could hardly wait for the day of my baptism so I could pay a real tithe.

I know that the temporal blessings we enjoy in our family come from paying tithing. But the greatest blessings are the incomparable feelings we have when we obey our Heavenly Father: satisfaction from being obedient, confidence that our Heavenly Father will not abandon us, and feelings of peace and happiness.

Ol’ga Nikolayevna Khripko, Ukraine

Tithing Blesses Families

I grew up in the Church but drifted away in my teens. When I returned to the Church, my husband, Dale, supported me but was not interested in meeting with the missionaries.

After becoming active, I met with the bishop for a temple recommend interview. He asked if I was a full-tithe payer, and I was pleased to announce that I was. To my surprise the bishop asked, “Does your husband know that you pay tithing?” I was shocked—why did it matter? The bishop kindly asked me to return after I had told Dale I was paying tithing.

One Sunday morning I finally got up the courage to tell my husband I was paying tithing. Dale stunned me

by simply saying, “I know.” This was the first of many tithing miracles.

A short time later, Dale turned the family finances over to me. When I explained that I would pay a full tithe on all our income, he approved because he saw the blessings tithing could bring.

Now our cupboards are always full, we hold family prayer every day, we have the missionaries over at least once a month, and my husband participates in family home evening. I believe that someday Dale will join the Church and that his conversion will have started with our decision to pay a full tithe together.

Sandie Graham, New York, USA

Tithing Opens the Windows of Heaven

Several years ago my husband lost his job. We struggled to pay our bills and buy food with the small pension I received, but we managed to survive.



ANSWERING QUESTIONS

How Is Tithing Used?

The principle of tithing—voluntarily giving one-tenth of our income to God’s work—has been taught since Old Testament times (see Genesis 14:17–21). This is how the Lord funds His Church. Today tithing funds are used for (1) constructing temples, chapels, and other Church buildings; (2) providing operating funds for the Church; (3) funding the missionary program (this does not include individual missionary expenses); (4) preparing materials used in Church classes and organizations; and (5) carrying out other important work, such as temple and family history work.

Although supportive of my commitment to the Church, my husband was frustrated that I paid tithing when we could hardly pay our bills. I felt, however, that I should continue to obey this commandment.

Though we had little money, we did have a small garden. When spring arrived, we planted carrots, potatoes, peas, tomatoes, red peppers, and herbs, among other vegetables. Our garden flourished throughout the summer, and we had a bounteous harvest. Our plum trees almost broke from the weight of the fruit. I spent a busy summer bottling and freezing fruit and vegetables, making jam, baking pies, and sharing extra produce with neighbors.

One day as I walked through our small garden, I remembered God’s promise to open the windows of heaven and “pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Thinking of my freezer bursting with produce, I realized that Heavenly Father had truly blessed us. Our small garden provided enough to sustain us during our time of need—enough and to spare. I am so grateful that God blesses us as we obey His commandments. ■

Jacqueline Kirbyson, England



LIVING THE PRINCIPLES OF

Self-Reliance

By **Larry Hiller**, Church Magazines
and **Kathryn H. Olson**, Welfare Services

Luis Quispe, of La Paz, Bolivia, may have sight in only one eye, but he has a clear vision of his goal to be self-reliant and provide for his family. Though he faces economic challenges and health problems, Luis is confident in his future. He does everything he can to help himself while acknowledging his dependence on his Father in Heaven. “I have learned that nothing is impossible when you have our Father’s help,” he says.

Self-Reliance: A Spiritual and Temporal Principle

For the past eight years, this 46-year-old father of six has alternated work and study to gain a degree in agronomy. Luis’s years of study involved traveling about 60 miles (97 km) from his small town of Achacachi to attend the Universidad Mayor de San Andres. Despite this sacrifice, Luis completed his education successfully and is now focused on his next goal of obtaining his own farm.

Luis is a good example of self-reliance in temporal things, such as work, welfare, and food storage. But the principle of self-reliance is as much spiritual as it is temporal. Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of



the Twelve Apostles has defined *self-reliance* as “taking responsibility for our own spiritual and temporal welfare and for those whom Heavenly Father has entrusted to our care.”¹

The Lord has said that He has never given a law that was solely temporal (see D&C 29:34–35). Perhaps the command to work is meant as much to bless us spiritually as to provide for us physically (see Genesis 3:17–19).

Spiritual Self-Reliance

The blessings of temporal self-reliance become especially obvious in times of crises such as natural disasters, unemployment, or financial turmoil. But spiritual self-reliance is equally crucial in such times. Those with firm spiritual foundations are blessed with peace, reassurance, and greater faith when calling on Heavenly Father for help.

Church leaders counsel us to prepare for spiritual crises. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said:

“We have been taught to store . . . food, clothing, and, if possible, fuel—*at home*. . . .

“Can we not see that the same principle applies to inspiration and revelation, the solving of problems, to counsel, and to guidance? . . .

“If we lose our emotional and spiritual independence, our self-reliance, we can be weakened quite as much, perhaps even more, than when we become dependent materially.”²

Giving and Receiving

Self-reliance should not be mistaken for complete independence. After all, we are ultimately dependent on our Heavenly Father for everything (see Mosiah 2:21). We need

His continual guidance, preservation, and protection.

We also depend on one another. Since we are given different spiritual gifts, we are expected to share what we have been given so that all may be blessed (see D&C 46:11–12). The key is to become self-reliant where we have the power to do so, to serve others when we can, and to allow others the blessing of serving us as the need arises.

The more self-reliant we are—both spiritually and temporally—the greater our ability to be an agent for good. Elder Hales explained: “Our ultimate goal is to become like the Savior, and that goal is enhanced by our unselfish service to others. Our ability to serve is increased or diminished by the level of our self-reliance.”³

A Personal Responsibility

Luis Quispe has seen his perseverance and trust in the Lord result in temporal blessings of work, a college degree, and a stronger family. In turn, those temporal gains have strengthened his faith. He follows the admonition of President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985): “No true Latter-day Saint, while physically or emotionally able, will voluntarily shift the burden of his own or his family’s well-being to someone else. So long as he can, under the inspiration of the Lord and with his own labors, he will supply himself and his family with the spiritual and temporal necessities of life.”⁴ ■

NOTES

1. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare: Faith in Action,” *Basic Principles of Welfare and Self-Reliance* (2009), 1–2.
2. Boyd K. Packer, “Solving Emotional Problems in the Lord’s Own Way,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 91–92.
3. Robert D. Hales, “A Gospel Vision of Welfare,” 2.
4. Spencer W. Kimball, “Welfare Services: The Gospel in Action,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 77–78.

The more self-reliant we are—both spiritually and temporally—the greater our ability to be an agent for good.





*My grandfather
wanted "no empty
chairs" in his
family. Because of
my drug addiction,
I had become
an empty chair.*

NO Empty Chairs

Name withheld

I was born of goodly parents. They taught me right from wrong. I had grown up with the gospel, married in the temple, and started a family. Somewhere along the way, however, my life started to unravel. I had chronic back issues that kept me down a lot. Sadly, my marriage ended. When my husband and I divorced, I was left to raise our four little boys on my own, and I was desperate for work. For what I considered to be a lack of better options, I took a job in a nightclub.

The job was beneath my standards. I was ashamed of myself, but I told myself I needed the money. I reasoned that if I was open about my religion and never drank, I would be okay.

I should have known better.

After about a year of working at the nightclub, one of my new “friends” offered me a drug, insisting it was an easy way to lose weight. My curiosity and desire for acceptance overcame the bad feeling I had. “Just this once,” I reasoned.

My grandfather’s face flashed across my mind just before I decided to put the deadly poison into my system.

The next morning, I found out that he had died during the night. My grandfather, feeling that his death was imminent, had recorded a tape to be played at his funeral. In it he told us that he wanted to see every single one of us on the other side of the veil. “Always remember,” he said in his tape, “no empty chairs.” As I listened, I felt sad and embarrassed about my inactivity in the Church and about what I had done.

But the shame I felt didn’t stop me. That first time was all it took. I was hooked. I had become an instant slave to the drug.

The next two years were hellish. Every cent I made went to support my habit. When that ran out, I would steal to get my next fix. When I “came down” from the high, I crashed hard. All I ever thought about was the drug. I stayed awake for days, thinking I was on top of the world. When I didn’t have the drug, I slept.

It was the worst time of my life. True, I lost weight as my co-worker said I would, but I lost everything else too: money, my home, and my children, who now chose to stay away and live with their dad.

The monster of drug addiction ravished every part of me and of my life. I stopped wanting to live. I hated myself.

I had become an “empty chair.” I felt as though Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ could never forgive me for what I’d done. Every time I would even consider trying to clean up my life during the moments when I could think clearly, self-loathing and discouragement took over. I would then give up on myself again.

Finally, two years after I’d first taken the drug, I mustered up what courage I had and decided I could not go on like this anymore, or I would end up dead. There was an LDS church across the street from where I lived. I knew what I needed to do, and although I was scared, I walked across the street. I did not know who the bishop was; I just knew I had to talk to him.

I will never forget that bishop who invited me in with such kindness, charity, and compassion. When I met him I was very nervous. I didn’t know what to expect, and I was afraid of what he would think of me. Gently, he asked me to explain everything to him. My tears flowed as I told him about my drug addiction and that I wanted to stop. I choked on my words, terrified of how painful quitting would be, but I felt nothing but love from him. In fact, I felt relief! He assured me that the Savior did indeed love me. How I cried!

With his encouragement, I decided to start the quitting process. I went home that day and poured every last bag of that drug down the sink. I went through severe, horrible withdrawals.

It took months of hard, hard work to put my life back in order, but I persisted—supported by my forgiving, loving family. I found a new job. Sometimes it was hard to go in for my shifts because the withdrawal process was so painful, but I did it anyway. I cut myself off completely from



THE PROMISE OF THE ATONEMENT

“Save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ.

“How all can be repaired, we do not know. It may not all be accomplished in this life. . . .

“This knowledge should be as comforting to the innocent as it is to the guilty. I am thinking of parents who suffer unbearably for the mistakes of their wayward children and are losing hope.”

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness,”
Ensign, Nov. 1995, 20.

my so-called friends who had introduced me to drugs. I stopped taking their calls. It took about six months, but they finally stopped coming around and calling. I stayed away from anything and everything that had to do with drugs.

A lot of people say that it’s hard to come back from drug addiction, and it is, but I never felt my Savior so close to me as I did during that time. I reached out to the Lord and the scriptures with everything in my power. I was on my knees more often than not. I often felt as though I could see the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane and how He suffered for my sins. And I didn’t want to be unappreciative of what He’d done for me, so I found the faith to persevere. I did not want my chair to be empty anymore.

During my fall into drug addiction and the long repentance process that followed, my children had grown up. My son was getting ready to receive his endowment in the temple in preparation for a mission, and I wanted to be in the temple with him. I didn’t know if it would be possible, but as the day approached, I felt at peace. Then, five days before he was to go to the temple, I got my temple recommend back! What a tender mercy that was to me. I knew then that the Lord had truly forgiven me. I have kept a current recommend since that day more than 15 years ago.

When people look at me now, they don’t know that I was once a drug addict. That is because the Atonement is real. My Savior guided me throughout the whole recovery and repentance process. I have “tasted of his love, and have received a remission of [my] sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in [my soul]” (Mosiah 4:11).

The lesson was hard, but I have so much joy in my life now. I know my Savior loves me! He has blessed me more abundantly than I could have imagined. I’ve been sealed in the temple to a wonderful man. As a family, we barely talk about my addiction anymore because we feel that I have become a different person from who I was then. The Savior did what He did because, like my grandfather, He does not want any empty chairs at His table. ■

BREAK FREE FROM ADDICTION

“You can recover and enjoy all the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you suspect you are addicted and if you feel even the smallest desire to break free, we invite you to join us in studying and applying the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . We assure you that if you follow this path with a sincere heart, you will find the power you need to recover from addiction” (introduction to *Addiction Recovery Program: A Guide to Addiction Recovery and Healing* [2005], vi).

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

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

The family is under attack in today's world. That is why it is more important than ever that children and youth gain a testimony of the importance of the family in Heavenly Father's plan (see *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 14). On pages 14–15 of the March *New Era*, Ann M. Dibb, second counselor in the Young Women general presidency, recommends ways to help youth gain testimonies of families.

For example, she writes, “As you read the [family] proclamation, make note of the doctrines, counsel, warnings, and promised blessings and what they mean to you personally.”

Suggestions for Teaching Youth

- Read “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” and the section on family in *For the Strength of Youth*. Talk about how these guidelines apply to your own family. Consider sharing your testimony about the importance of family.
- Consider holding a family home evening on the importance of family (a good resource is the “Marriage and Family” topic in the new youth curriculum at lds.org/youth/learn).
- Visit youth.lds.org. Select “For the Strength of Youth” and then

“Family” to find resources to help you better understand the doctrine of the family: scripture references, videos (see, for example, “Fathers and Sons”), Mormon Channel radio programs, questions and answers, and articles, including talks by General Authorities.

Suggestions for Teaching Children

Here are some examples of ways you could visually track your family's progress toward spiritual goals:

- Get a small, clear jar. With your children, set a realistic goal that will strengthen your family, such as holding family home evening each Monday or reading the scriptures each day as a family. Ask your children to create a label for the jar with the goal written on it. Every time your family completes the activity, put a small object like a marble or bead in the jar. When the jar is full, consider celebrating by having a special family dinner or activity.
- Ask each child to draw a picture of family members doing a daily activity you would like to encourage, such as family prayer or scripture study.



Following the counsel in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” can strengthen and protect our families.

Display the pictures in a place everyone can see. Begin the day with the pictures face up. When your family completes the activity illustrated on the page, turn it over. The pictures still visible will remind your family of your goals and what they can do to strengthen your family that day. Turn the pictures face up again at the beginning of each day.

Also help your children see the blessings that come to your family for doing these activities. Helping children identify the good feelings that come from having the Spirit in your home will increase their desire to follow the patterns of righteous behavior that strengthen families. ■

WHAT IS THIS CHURCH?

Several years ago I needed to get my car inspected for safety and emissions standards. I arrived at a garage one afternoon to find the line for inspections eight or nine cars long.

It was a beautiful spring day, so I decided to roll down the windows, turn off the car engine, and pull out a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” which I kept in my car along with other Church materials. My stake president had recently counseled stake members to commit the proclamation to memory. This free time gave me the perfect opportunity to do so. Eventually, my turn came to have my car inspected.

One of the men who did the inspections indicated that he would drive my car into the garage. Then he

asked me to wait in an adjacent room until the inspection was completed. Time passed as I watched other customers come and go. After a while I began to think that something serious must be wrong with my car.

Finally the mechanic came from the garage into the waiting room and indicated that my car had passed inspection. What a relief! I paid the cashier and walked out to where he had parked my car and found him waiting for me.

“Miss,” he said, looking at me intently, “can I please talk to you for a minute?”

“Of course,” I told him.

“I want to apologize for taking so long with your car inspection. You see, when I drove your car into the garage,

I noticed a piece of paper on the passenger seat that talked about families. Instead of immediately returning your car to you, I sat in the garage and read that piece of paper over and over.”

He continued, “What is this church? What is this document on the family? Can I have a copy of it? It says it was written by Apostles. Do you mean to tell me that there are Apostles on the earth today just like in Jesus’s time? Please, I need to know.”

I was almost speechless but gathered my thoughts. I told him that there are indeed apostles *and* prophets on the earth, just as in the time of Jesus Christ. I told him about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Restoration of the gospel. I then gave him all the Church materials I had in my car. He gave me his name and phone number so the missionaries could contact him. Our conversation ended with his sincere expression of gratitude.

As I drove away, tears filled my eyes. I was grateful I had left a copy of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” on the car seat.

I have never forgotten the look of eagerness in that man’s eyes. This experience was an unforgettable lesson on the power of the proclamation on the family, the reality of modern-day revelation, and the importance of sharing the gospel in everyday—and sometimes unexpected—situations. ■

Angela Fallentine, New Zealand



I noticed a piece of paper on the passenger seat that talked about families,” the mechanic told me. “I sat in the garage and read that piece of paper over and over.”

OUR TITHING CAME FIRST

In the summer of 2006, my husband was working as a truck driver. Because he was away from home for about two weeks at a time, the responsibility of paying the bills was primarily mine. His career was such that our income would fluctuate from month to month, so budgeting our finances was tricky.

That July his paycheck was smaller than usual and less than I had planned on. After I had deposited his check, I compared the amount in the bank to our list of expenses due. I concluded that if I paid every-

thing, including our tithing, we would be about \$30 short. We were full-tithe payers, having learned our lesson the hard way a few years before when we got behind in paying tithing. Skipping tithing this time was not an option.

I remembered hearing stories of people who wrote their tithing check first when money was tight and then received money by miraculous means. I usually wrote the checks in order of what needed to be mailed that day, so our tithing check was rarely the first one I wrote. But that day I decided I needed to write our tithing

check first, knowing that the Lord would provide a way for us to pay our bills.

The following Monday I received word that a community class I'd signed my oldest son up for was canceled, and the \$20 check I wrote the month before was being returned. When I balanced my checkbook, figuring back in that \$20, I realized I had made a \$23 mistake in calculations the week before. In addition, two days later we received a refund check of \$36 from our pediatrician's office for overpayment of a bill. Now, rather than being \$30 short, we had almost \$50 extra.

The Lord had fulfilled His promise in Malachi 3:8-12 that if we paid our tithing, He would pour out blessings. I know that it is because of our response to follow the Lord's commandment to pay our tithes first that we were blessed. ■

Carrie Dalby Cox, Alabama, USA

I concluded that if I paid all of our expenses, we would be about \$30 short. But skipping tithing was not an option.



STAY IN CAPE TOWN

Ever since I had served my mission in the England London Mission, I wanted to return to live and work there. Having recently finished a master's degree, I decided it might be the right time for me to move to London. I secured a job and was feeling positive about the move.

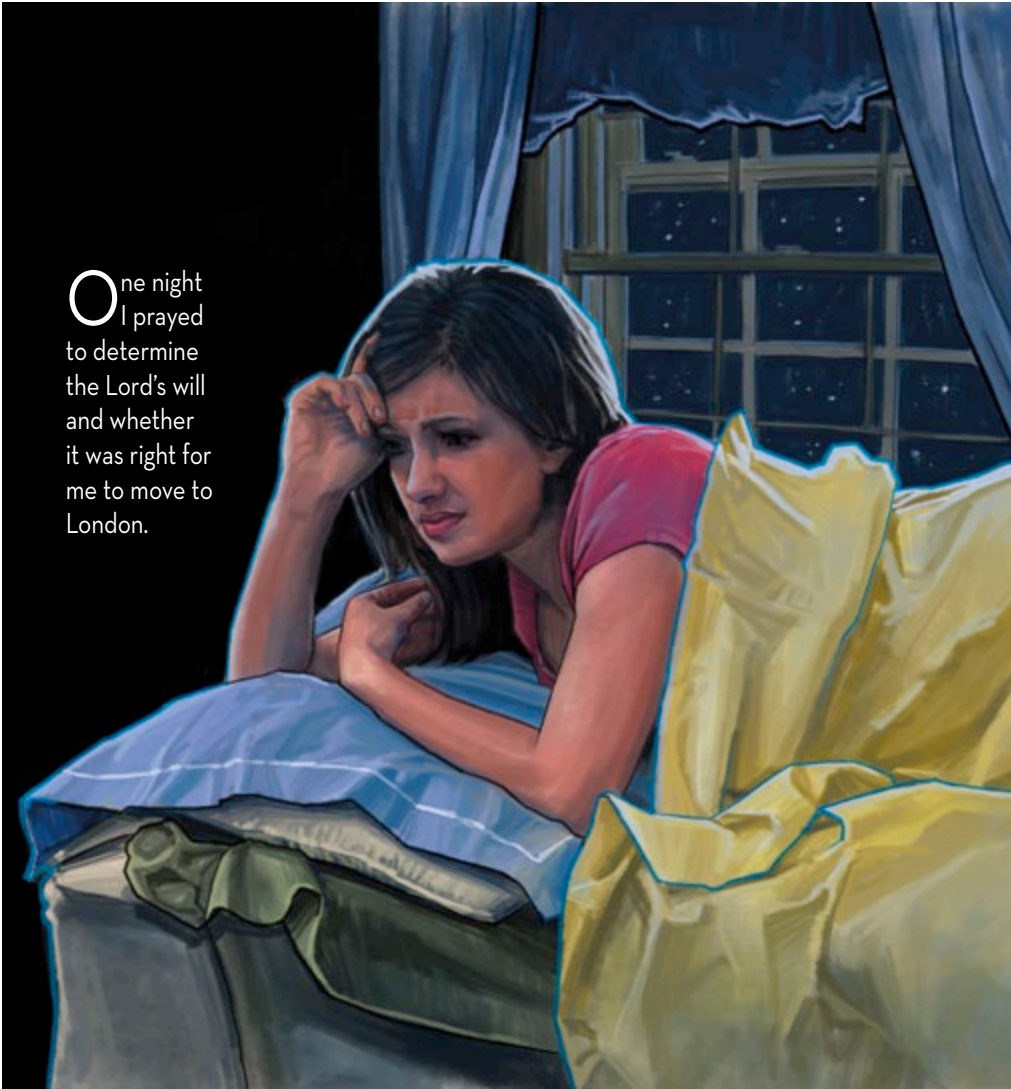
One night, however, I prayed to determine the Lord's will and whether it was right for me to move to London. While I was trying to fall asleep, a thought kept running through my head: "You need to stay in Cape Town." This thought recurred for several hours. Finally I concluded that God wanted me in Cape Town. So, although I wanted to move, I decided to stay. Immediately afterward I fell asleep.

The next day I began to rationalize what had happened the previous night and continued to wonder if I should go to London, after all. But that night the experience from the previous night was repeated. The thought "You need to stay in Cape Town" played over and over in my mind. As I pondered these thoughts, I became convinced that the Lord really did want me to stay in Cape Town, and I wanted to do what the Lord wanted me to do.

The following week my stake president called and asked me to meet with him. Immediately I knew that the Lord had a calling in mind for me. The Spirit testified that the reason I needed to stay in Cape Town was that the Lord had a work for me to do.

I accepted the calling as the stake Young Women president, and while serving over the next few years, I was able to be an instrument in the Lord's hands. As a result, my life and the lives of the people I served were blessed. I grew in leadership abilities, and the Lord taught me many things through my service to others.

Since that time I have come to develop greater trust in the Lord. How grateful I am for the quiet promptings of the Spirit that guide me in knowing and doing His will. By doubting less and being willing to follow the inspiration I receive, I am led to experience great joy and peace, knowing that my Heavenly Father is pleased with my life. ■
Nicky Burgoyne Smith, Utah, USA



One night I prayed to determine the Lord's will and whether it was right for me to move to London.

WHY DO YOU STILL PAY TITHING?

A few years ago my husband was laid off. His employers, apparently sorry for what they had done, offered him a different job, but it would require a difficult move. Nevertheless, we foresaw many blessings, including continued employment.

After moving, however, we discovered that the job was no longer available. No one had a reasonable explanation. The only thing we knew was that we were in a new place, out of work, and nearly out of money because we had paid our debts before moving and had spent the last of our savings in making the move.

My husband tried every way possible to find a full-time job. In the meantime he did minor jobs, and I did handicraft work, which provided us just enough to support ourselves after paying our tithes to the Lord. We were frugal in everything, but it was not easy paying school expenses, buying food and clothing, and finding money my husband needed to go out and look for work.

We wept much, but we never quit trusting that the Lord would bless us. And we gave thanks for the blessings we already had: daughters who were healthy and faithful, a united marriage, and supportive relatives and ward members.

Many friends who were not members of the Church asked us, “If you



After moving, we discovered that my husband's job was no longer available. We were in a new place, out of work, and nearly out of money.

are in such need, why do you still pay tithing?” The answer was always the same: because the Lord has commanded it, and we do not want to rob God (see Malachi 3:8–9).

We always knew that if we were obedient, the Lord would bless us—perhaps not in the way we had hoped but certainly with what He considered best for our family. We never used our financial problems as an excuse to quit serving the Lord; in fact, our

desire to serve Him increased.

Today my husband has a job that helps us make headway against the debts we acquired while he was out of work. It will still be a long time before we can relax financially, but we know that if we “bring . . . all the tithes into the storehouse,” God will open the windows of heaven “and pour [us] out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10). ■
Raquel Pedraza de Brosio, Argentina

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Visit news.lds.org for more Church news and events.

Elder Andersen Sees Commitment, Testimony of French Saints during Visit

By Marianne Holman, *Church News*, and L. Hollie McKee, Frankfurt Germany Area Public Affairs Office

It was a joyful day for Latter-day Saints in France as they celebrated the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Bordeaux France Stake and welcomed Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

For Elder Andersen, accompanied by his wife, Kathy Andersen, the assignment to France was a return to their mission and his first return while on official assignment as an Apostle.

“Looking at the progress over 40 years,” Elder Andersen said, “we now see many families in the second and third generations. We see a strength of commitment and testimony.”

While in France, Elder and Sister Andersen visited members, leaders, and missionaries in Bordeaux, Lyon, Paris, and Angers, and urged them all to lift the light of the gospel to all around them.

Members of the Church in France listened to Church leaders speak with conviction about the Savior Jesus Christ and the responsibilities of discipleship.

A significant moment during Elder Andersen’s assignment was a special meeting in Versailles with all of the French-speaking stake presidents and mission presidents in the France, Belgium, and Switzerland areas.

Blake Roney, president of the France Lyon Mission, recalled how personal Elder and Sister Andersen’s visits with the members seemed to be.

“There were an unusual number of very faithful Saints who loved the Andersen family when they were here 20 years ago and love [them] still



PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES DALRYMPLE

Elder Neil L. Andersen and his wife, Kathy Andersen, visit with members in Bordeaux, France.

today,” he said. “All who listened were lifted and brought closer to their Savior.”

President Roney said that Elder Andersen discussed the circumstances of this particular time and advised that this is the “dawning of a new day, a day when the Lord is blessing this special part of the world.”

Elder José A. Teixeira of the Seventy and Europe Area President commented following Elder Andersen’s visit: “There is a renewed sense of purpose and urgency in the work in France and the French-speaking countries of the Europe Area to continue to build up the Church because of the visit of Elder Neil L. Andersen. [He] met with priesthood leaders and spoke and testified to them in their native language. This was a blessing that will be felt for a long time.” ■

Young Church-Service Missionaries Find Joy in Service

By Carolyn Carter

Church News and Events

Elder Ernesto Sarabia wore a black missionary badge each day of his mission. But his mission assignment was unique from many others'—Elder Sarabia served as a young Church-service missionary (YCSM) in the Mexico Hermosillo Mission office.

"We recognize that it may not be wise for some of our young men and young women to face the rigors and challenges of a full-time mission," Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has said. But

this, he said, does not mean they can't participate in the blessings of missionary service ("One More," *Ensign*, May 2005, 69).

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, "A mission is a voluntary act of service to God and humankind"

("Ask the Missionaries! They Can Help You!" *Liahona*, Nov. 2012, 18), and there are many ways of offering that service.

For those who are honorably excused from serving full-time proselyting missions, or for those who must return home early for various reasons, the YCSM program can provide meaningful mission experiences.

Requirements to Serve

YCSMs must be physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally able to perform the duties of their calling, to which they are carefully matched.

YCSM assignments vary from 6 to 24 months and can range from serving a couple of days a week to working full time. There are opportunities to serve in the community as well as from home. Potential YCSM assignments include family history research, information technology, mission office assistants, bishops' storehouses, and more.

Family and Priesthood Support

Parents, priesthood leaders, and Church members can help potential YCSMs prepare to serve missions.

Sister Eliza Joy Young's family has been a strong support for her,

driving her to and from the Church offices in Sydney, Australia.

Elder Michael Hillam, who works in the Hong Kong Distribution Center, said, "My early morning seminary teachers and Young Men leaders helped me prepare."

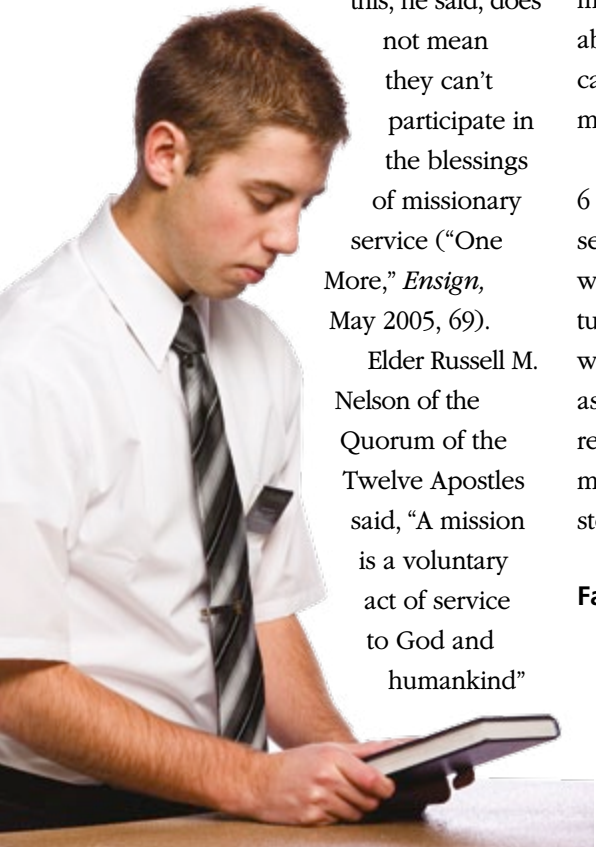
Sacrifice Brings Blessings

Sister Young sacrificed her days off from her part-time job to serve a Church-service mission. She said, "I feel closer to my Heavenly Father knowing I am helping Him."

In addition to spiritual blessings, serving a Church-service mission gives young missionaries valuable social and professional opportunities. "My mission has shown me that I am able to work in open employment," Sister Young said. (She had previously worked only in assisted employment.)

Though not all young adults who would like to serve may be able to, great effort is made to accommodate every worthy young adult. Young men and women who would like to serve in this way can talk to their bishop or branch president, who can find appropriate opportunities for them.

Read more at news.lds.org by searching "young church-service missionaries." ■



Young Women and Relief Society General Leaders Tour Asia Area

By Brenda Frandsen, Asia Area media specialist

With contributions from David O. Heaps, Paul Stevens, and Linda Rae Pond Smith

For nine days in November 2012, Mary N. Cook, first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, and Linda S. Reeves, second counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, instructed and inspired sisters young and old all across the Asia Area.

The trip coincided with the announcement of the revised youth curriculum, *Come, Follow Me*, which Young Men, Young Women, and youth Sunday School classes began using in January 2013. The new curriculum is designed to help teachers teach more like the Savior did and develop stronger connections with class members.

Following Sister Cook and Sister Reeves's visit to the Asia Area, many Asian youth and their

parents reflected that they are now more motivated to purify and refocus their lives and become examples to their local communities.

In Hong Kong, Sister Reeves promised the youth, "If you will stay clean in your life, you can stand with confidence before anyone!"

Inspired by her words, 12-year-old Tang Kak Kei commented after the meeting, "I know that I need to read the Book of Mormon every day. Learning to repent and live righteously is what *For the Strength of Youth* has taught me to do so the Light of Christ and true happiness can radiate through me."

In India, Sister Cook met with members in the new meetinghouse in the Chennai India District and with members of the new Hyderabad India Stake and admonished the young adults to prepare for the future. "Qualify yourselves educationally," she urged, "with skills to help you build up the kingdom. Focus on your family and what you can do to bless your family members, and on your spiritual preparedness so you will be worthy of those spiritual promptings and so you will know where to go and what to do."

In Indonesia, Sister Reeves participated in the first stake conference of the new Surakarta Indonesia Stake. "We felt of their humble and loving spirits. What faithful members!" she said.

Sister Reeves then visited Malaysia, where she discussed with a group of Relief Society sisters the most pressing issues for the Relief Society as an organization in Malaysia and how the Church can provide guidance and inspiration.

In Taiwan, Sister Reeves commented on the strength and dedication of local members. "We are so happy to know of their faithful lives and consistent temple attendance. . . . The members are loving examples to their friends and neighbors," she said. ■

***In Taiwan,
Mary N. Cook
and Linda S.
Reeves met
with area
authorities and
Taiwan priest-
hood leaders
and members.***



PHOTOGRAPH BY YANG CHIEH-WEN



PHOTOGRAPH BY CASEY CLUFF

Elder Mike Cranney, Stacey Banner, and Chris Banner pose by Rocky, a horse used to pull a wagon in Nauvoo, Illinois.

Missionaries Help Raise Funds for Nauvoo Hay

By Whitney Evans
Church News

Casey Cluff, facilities manager at Nauvoo Facilities Management, faced a dilemma when severe drought conditions spread across the Midwest this past summer.

The horse-drawn carriage and wagon rides, a long-treasured tradition in Nauvoo, Illinois, offer a way for missionaries to talk to people who are not familiar with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, said

Mike Cranney, former head teamster missionary in Nauvoo. He said the casual environment allows people to relax and be more receptive to the story of the Church in Nauvoo.

However, the dry conditions in 2012 threatened the horses. The hay crop was far smaller than usual. A normal crop will yield 26 to 28 inches of grain, according to Brother Cranney, and each year generally yields three crops. The cattle feed off the pasture through the summer, and the surplus hay feeds the horses from October or November through the winter. There was no more hay production after the first crop this year, and because of the dry weather, the horses were not able

to feed off the pasture. The supply was used up by July.

The most obvious alternative would be to buy hay, which would cost several thousand dollars and request more funds from Church headquarters for this emergency situation.

Brother Cluff reached out to former teamster missionaries, including Brother Cranney, who finished his mission in October 2011 and lives in Oakley, Idaho.

As a teamster missionary, Brother Cranney and other missionaries fed, harnessed, and worked with about 20 horses. Brother Cranney resumed his leadership role as teamster head when he found out about the need for hay and sent letters out to other former teamster and Nauvoo missionaries.

They received \$10,000 from more than 30 people, donations ranging from \$50 to \$1,000. The donations allowed them to buy about 41 tons of hay that could last through spring, when a fresh crop of hay will be ready to harvest.

Brother Cluff was overcome when he found out about the donation.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he said.

At the root of the donation are the fond feelings each missionary has even after they leave their work.

Brother Cranney said the Church probably could have provided the hay, “but those teamsters, they love those horses and they wanted to be able to sustain the program.” ■



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA SMITH

expressing love and hope for those with same-gender attraction.

“As a church, nobody should be more loving and compassionate,” Elder Cook said. “Let us be at the forefront in terms of expressing love, compassion, and outreach. Let’s not have families exclude or be disrespectful of those who choose a different lifestyle as a result of their feelings about their own gender.”

Church Preparing Online Resources for Youth Activities

In an effort to strengthen Latter-day Saint young men and young women worldwide, the Church is preparing an online resource for youth activities. The new youth activities section of LDS.org is being developed to help youth leaders and their adult advisers plan meaningful activities for Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes in stakes and wards throughout the Church.

The site is intended to support the Church’s ongoing emphasis on strengthening youth, which was highlighted by the recent changes to age requirements for full-time missionary service, the new youth learning resource *Come, Follow Me*, and invitations for youth to participate in family history.

For young men, the site complements the spiritually focused Duty to God program with resources for physical, social, and educational development.

Mormonsandgays.org contains more than two hours of videos featuring Church leaders, Church members who are attracted to people of the same sex, and family members and friends of those who experience same-sex attraction.

Church Website on Same-Sex Attraction Offers Love, Understanding, and Hope

In an effort to encourage understanding and civil conversation about same-sex attraction, the Church recently launched a website, “Love One Another: A Discussion on Same-Sex Attraction” (mormonsandgays.org), which features a number of videos from people who share real experiences from their own perspectives on a sensitive and sometimes emotionally charged topic.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said the website is important because it seeks to further understanding.

Elder Oaks said that because we don’t understand everything about this subject it is wise to stick to the revealed word of God as found in the scriptures. “What we do know is that the doctrine of the Church—that sexual activity should only occur between a man and a woman who are married—has not changed and is not changing. But what is changing and what needs to change is to help our own members and families understand how to deal with same-gender attraction,” he said.

Elder Quentin L. Cook of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles stressed that Latter-day Saints should be an example to the world of

IN OTHER CHURCH MAGAZINES

THE NEW ERA

Questions about Resurrection

This month, the *Come, Follow Me* lessons for youth focus on the Atonement of Jesus Christ. One of the lesson outlines for Aaronic Priesthood and Young Women asks, “What is the resurrection?” Find answers to frequently asked questions about resurrection in “What Happens After We Die?” on page 28.

Clean Language

It can be hard for youth to avoid hearing crude language in the hallways at school, but

there are things they can do to help keep their thoughts clean. Read ideas in “Protecting Yourself from Profanity” on page 6. Then find out how one young man created a plan to help others maintain clean language in “The (CM)² Project” on page 8.

Blessings of Personal Progress

A group of young women in Iowa, USA, helped each other discover the true value of Personal Progress by mentoring one another and strengthening their testimonies. See page 10 to read about how these young women are standing as witnesses of Jesus Christ.

COMMENT

The Ability to Change

The ability to change one's life is what I found most poignant in the incredible story of love, faith, and patience by Al and Eva Fry, “Never Give Up,” in the July 2012 *Ensign*. As a result of poor choices and a rebellious heart, I have been incarcerated, but I have gone through sore repentance during this time and have developed such a desire to read and study the Lord's word. I now look forward in faith to rebuilding a relationship with my companion and having Heavenly Father direct our lives to a happy and fulfilling marriage such as Al and Eva have experienced.

Name withheld, Ontario, Canada

CORRECTIONS

The Vigil family, discussed in the article “Sacred Transformations” on page 36 of the December issue, was baptized in July 2010, not June 2011. Also, Andrea Vigil was born in July, not August, 2012.

THE FRIEND

Picturing Easter

Easter is right around the corner! Your family can prepare for this special holiday with a countdown activity on pages 24–25 of the March *Friend*. During the week before Easter, add a new piece to the

featured picture each day as you complete activities that turn your thoughts to Jesus Christ.

Conference Is for Children

Do your children ever feel that talks in general conference are mostly for adults? Share “A Message for Michael” on pages 44–45, the true story of a boy who listened for—and heard—a conference message just for him. You can also find a treasure trove of conference stories, coloring pages, and activities online at lds.org/friend.

THE MINEFIELD RESCUE

By Russell Westergard

During the Gulf War, I led a team of soldiers into Kuwait. Once the defenses were breached, we searched the enemy's fighting positions to make sure we would be safe and looked for anything of intelligence value.

I had just entered a captured command post when I heard a British sergeant shout frantically, "Stop! Don't take another step!" Sticking my head out of the bunker, I saw one of my soldiers in immediate peril. She had walked into an open area to pick up a document and was now standing in the middle of a large minefield. When she heard the sergeant's shout, she stopped and realized her danger.

Gathering on the edge of the minefield, our team could see that the young soldier was so panicked that she was physically shaking. We needed to act quickly but couldn't send soldiers to get her without risking their lives as well as hers. Without discussion or hesitation we began talking to the soldier, calling out words of comfort, encouragement, and instruction. We could see tears streaming down her face and hear fear in her responses, but she began to calm slightly at our reassurance.

After a moment she had enough courage to look back the way she had come, and she told us she could see her own footsteps



We couldn't go get the trapped soldier, but we could encourage her, cheer on her efforts, and rejoice in her success.

faintly in the sand. With our encouragement, she hesitantly began retracing her path. By placing her feet gently on each of her previous footprints, she walked out of that minefield, flying into our waiting arms as she took the final step. The considerable crowd of soldiers on the sideline shouted with joy as we welcomed her back. Tears of fear were replaced with smiles and hugs.

Few of us have stood on the edge of an actual minefield. But many of us know those who have left spiritually safe ground to be trapped in the minefields of life. Like that young soldier, they too may feel alone, scared, and unsure. But that soldier was never alone. She had a team on the sidelines cheering her on, friends who needed her back and didn't give up. She had leaders offering guidance and encouragement. She was the one who had to walk out of the minefield, but we collectively helped her find the strength to do so. In the end we celebrated her rescue with genuine love and joy.

Spiritual rescues can be just as dramatic. Whether we reach out as a family, as friends, or as a ward or branch, our efforts can make all the difference. Timely words of encouragement and guidance probably saved the life of the soldier. Likewise, we can help rescue others from the perils of spiritual darkness by offering the encouragement and guidance that may ultimately bring them back. As we do, great shall be our joy—not only for a moment in this life but for eternity as well (see D&C 18:15). ■

Russell Westergard lives in Virginia, USA.

INSIGHTS



How can I become a disciple of Christ?

“The first step on the path of discipleship begins, luckily enough, in the exact place where we stand! We do not have to prequalify to take that first step. It doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor. There is no requirement to be educated, eloquent, or intellectual. We do not have to be perfect or well-spoken or even well-mannered. You and I can walk in the path of discipleship today. . . . It is always the right time to walk in His way. It is never too late.”



*W*ise parents who want their children to succeed will teach principles of resilience and self-reliance. “Raising Resilient Children,” on page 12 of this issue, points out that resilient children cope well with challenges and changes, and they accept that losing may precede winning. The article on page 64, “Living the Principles of Self-Reliance,” teaches that our self-reliance enhances our ability to be agents for good.